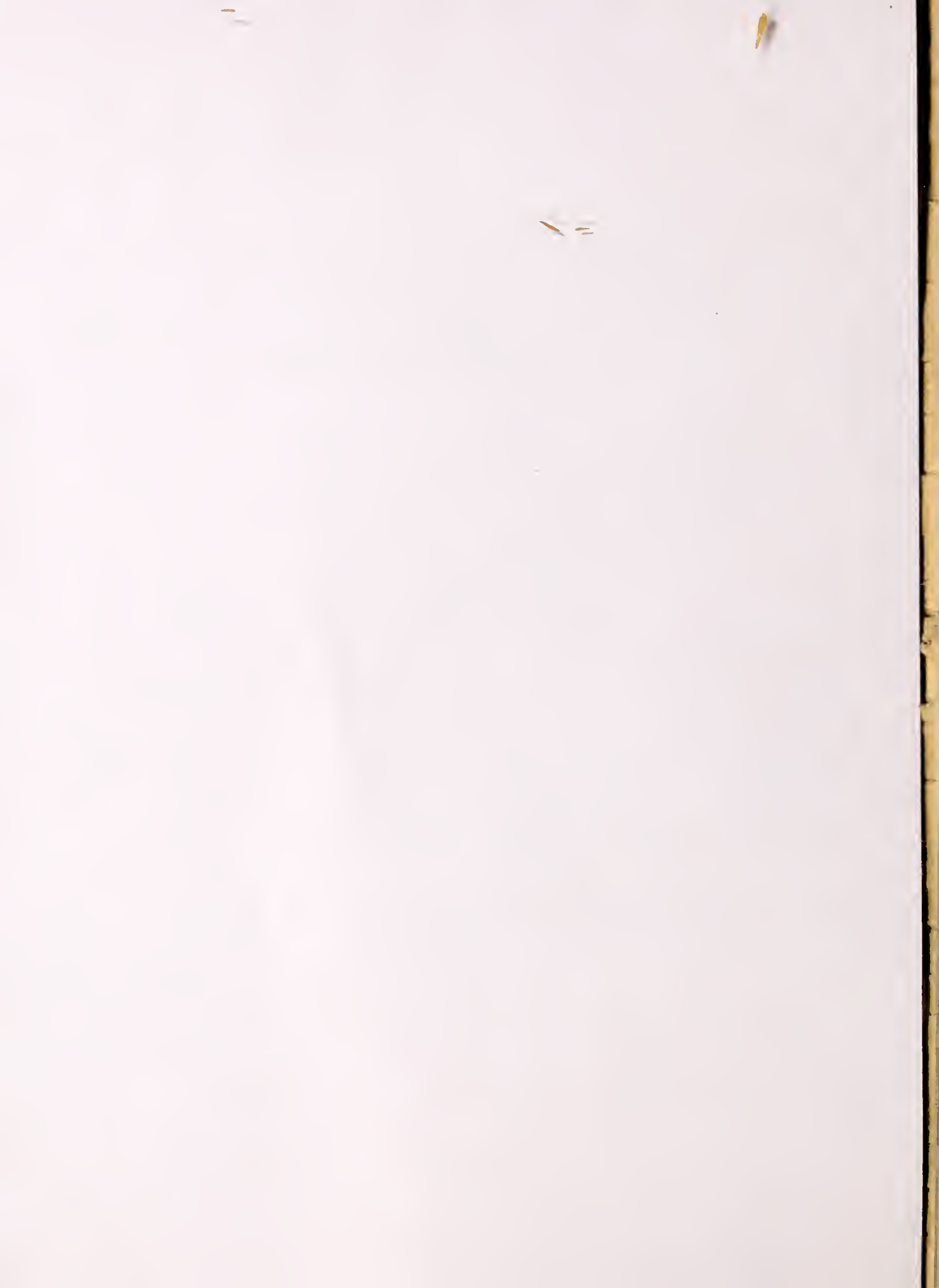


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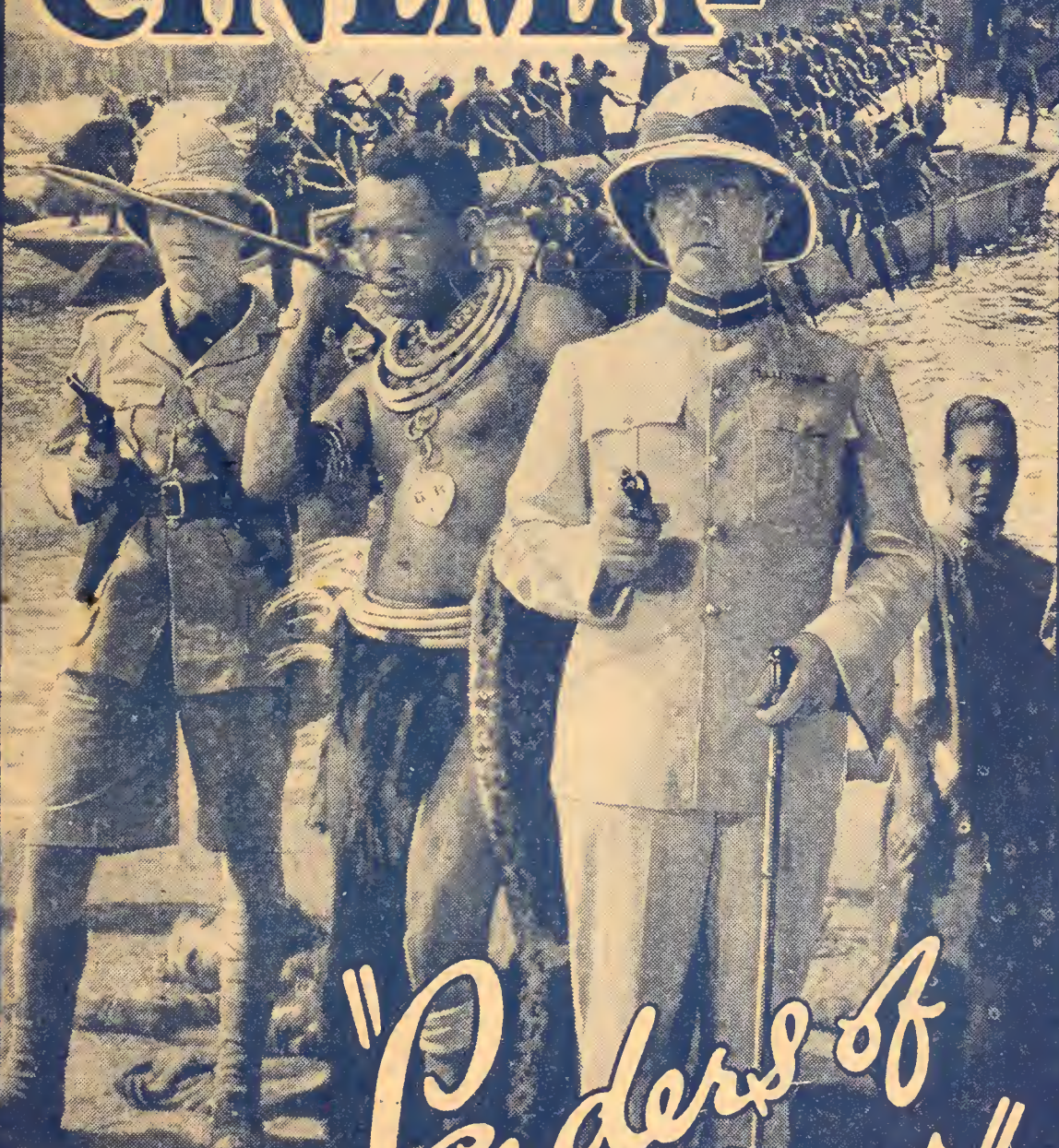
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BOY'S CINEMA 2^D

THE FOREMOST
AND
BEST PAPER
FOR
LATEST FILM
STORIES

EVERY TUESDAY,
No 804,
MAY 11TH 1935.



"Sanders of the River"

A London Film
Production,
Based on the
Famous Novel
by EDGAR
WALLACE

A GRIPPING
FILM STORY
OF THE
AFRICAN JUNGLE.



The News Reel

All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 220, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

"Sanders of the River"

A West African barrack square, surrounded by the offices of Commissioner Sanders and the quarters for his native troops, was constructed at Elstree for some of the studio sequences of "Sanders of the River," most of which was filmed in Africa. This scene had to match up with some sequences taken in Africa, and the tropical midday sun beating down on the square was reproduced by one of the largest assemblies of sun-arc lights ever used in a motion picture.

Across the square was drawn a company of the Royal West African Frontier Force, native Hausa soldiers in red fezes, khaki tunics, and shorts, bare feet, rifles, and bayonets, and long, heavy knives at their sides for use in jungle country. Some shots of this native Hausa force, renowned for their smartness and bravery, were secured in Africa. The manoeuvres of the studio contingent were brought to a high standard of efficiency by ex-Sergeant-major Bird, of the Brigade of Guards, who has assisted in military scenes in several London films.

Survey for suitable locations to shoot the film in Africa were made by plane. On one occasion, when the plane came low down, a magnificent herd of three hundred elephants was sighted, and as it flew over them at a height of a few hundred feet, they raised their trunks and pawed the air with their forefeet as if trying to reach the plane. This herd was cleverly photographed and incorporated in the film.

A certain amount of filming was done in the Nabugabo district of Nasaka, Uganda, where Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer had made "Trader Horn" a few years previously. There were very few monkeys in that district, and the "Trader Horn" unit had transported some there from other localities. The "Sanders of the River" expedition found that these monkeys had multiplied, and the place was now literally overrun with them, and their chattering and mischievous ways interfered with the sound-recording vans.

Many of the principal scenes were photographed at Gulu and other places with the special permission of the Governments concerned, and have never before been recorded. The most important scenes were taken among the Acholi natives at Gulu, in Uganda—a primitive but intelligent people, wearing no clothing and of wonderful physique. Their strange customs, war dances, songs, and marriage ceremonies form part of this marvellous film.

These Acholi natives understood what was required of them, and entered wholeheartedly into the spirit of the scenes. One native in particular was a perfect example of a natural actor. He was called Aboya, stood six feet six inches in height, and had a wonderful voice for singing the tribal songs.

Paul Robeson, as Bosambo, with a native choir of forty voices, has recorded some original songs. His deep, rich voice is admirably suited to these African songs, and they form one of the highlights of "Sanders of the River." An
May 11th, 1935.

NEXT WEEK'S GRAND PROGRAMME



JOHNNY MACK BROWN

IN

"RUSTLERS OF RED DOG"

Red men and Whites waging a bitter struggle for the mastery, while bandit renegades hunt the wagon-trails for plunder. Don't miss the first instalment of this mighty serial drama of the Pioneer days in the Far West.

"MEN OF THE NIGHT"

As a detective, "Stake-Out" Kelly relied quite a lot upon his fists and his six-gun; but more than once his fate depended upon the wits of a girl when he set out to capture a gang of jewel thieves. A first-rate thriller, starring Bruce Cabot.

"THE WINNING TICKET"

He bought a ticket in a sweepstake, and because his wife hated gambling, hid the little slip of paper. That ticket entitled him to a fortune, but the lucky voucher had vanished. An amusing comedy-drama, starring Leo Carrillo and Louise Fazenda.

extremely difficult task has been accomplished by Mr. Arthur Wimperis in composing the lyrics for these songs, as they had to be written to the rhythm of the original native music.

The Temperament of the Untamed

Temperament, much discussed in connection with human actors of the screen, is as nothing compared to that of wild animals acting before camera and microphone. And temperament with them takes queer twists.

Interesting instances are related by Chester M. Franklin, director of Metro-

Goldwyn-Mayer's animal sensation, "Sequoia"—pronounced, by the way, "See-quo-yah"—in which absolutely wild and untamed animals were used. Its central players are a deer and a puma, raised together from infancy and kept with human beings so that all were good friends.

"We put them together when Malibu, the deer, was a fawn, and before Gato, the puma, even had his eyes open," relates Franklin. "They learned to be friends naturally.

"Every morning I used to pass their pen and say 'Hallo!' to them. The puma, when pleased, has a peculiar whistle. Soon I'd whistle before he saw me, and he'd answer. Jean Parker—the star of the picture—always fed them. The big cat was like a kitten round her. "Sometimes, while we were shooting, we'd move to another location and tie the puma to a tree to wait. He'd get lonely and yell like a dog that's tied up at home while the family goes out. We'd bring him over to where we were working, and he'd be perfectly happy. That proves that animals, even wild ones, learn to enjoy human companionship.

"He loves to ride in motor-cars and hates to ride in lorries. One night he was in the rear of a sedan, and didn't want to come out and work. We begged and cajoled in vain. He liked it in the car, and wouldn't budge. Finally, we all had to haul on the collar attached to his chain."

Answers to Questions

Here are the addresses you require, John Bradley, Johnny Weissmuller and Maureen O'Sullivan, c/o, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios, Culver City, California, U.S.A.

Pat O'Brien was born on Sept. 1st, 1900, at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, D.C. His hobby is boxing.

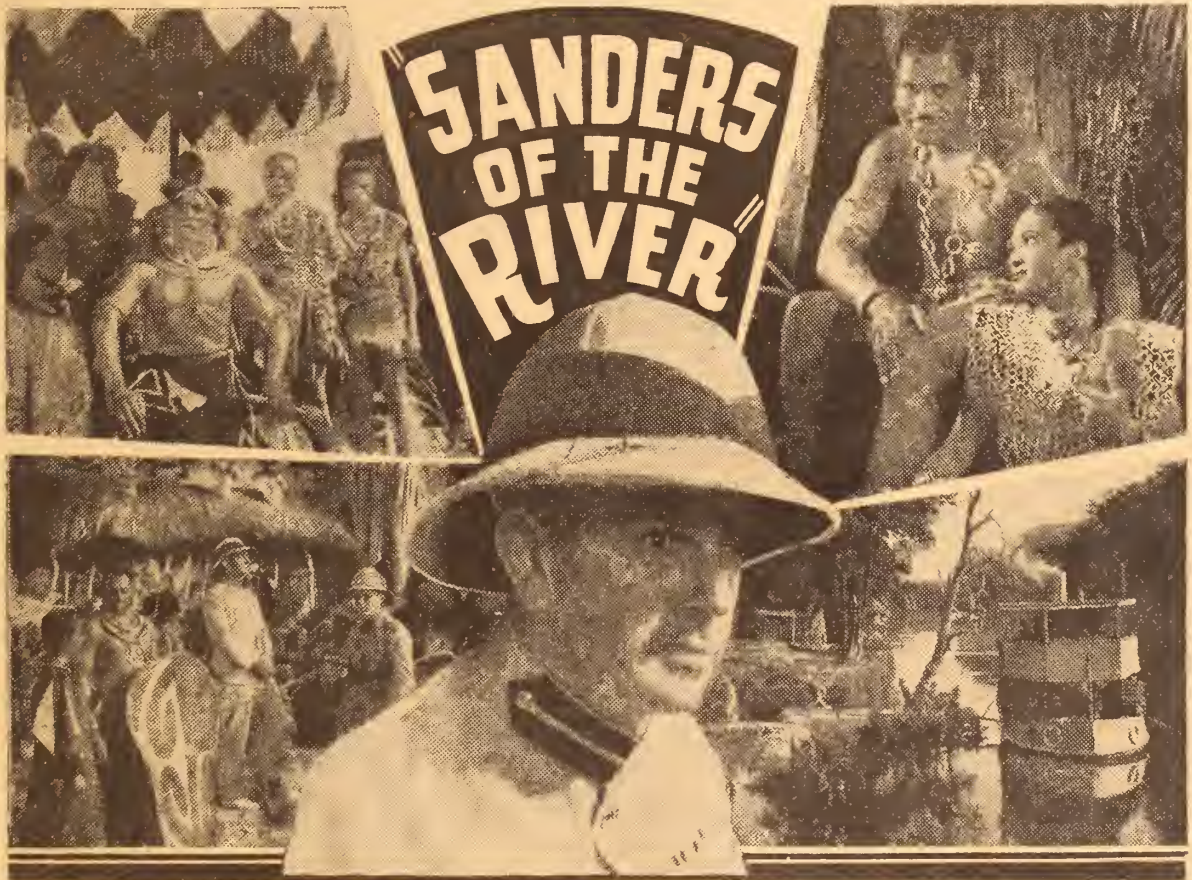
THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"SANDERS OF THE RIVER"—*Commissioner Sanders, Leslie Banks; Bosambo, Paul Robeson; Lilonga, Nina Mae McKinney; Lieutenant Tibbets, Robert Cochrane; Ferguson, Martin Walker; Captain Hamilton, Richard Grey; King Majolaba, Tony Wang; Farini, Marquis de Portago; Smith, Eric Maturin; Father O'Leary, Allan Jeayes; Governor of the Territory, Charles Carson; and Members of the Acholi, Sesi, Tesik, Juruba, Mendi and Kroo Tribes of Africa.*

"SEQUOIA"—*Toni Martin, Jean Parker; Bob Allen, Russell Hardie; Matthew Martin, Samuel S. Hinds; Bergman, Paul Hurst; Joe, Ben Hall; Sang Soo, Willie Fung.*

"WHEN A MAN SEES RED"—*Buck Benson, Buck Jones; Mary Lawrence, Peggy Campbell; Dick Brady, LeRoy Mason; Barbara, Dorothy Revier; Ben, Sid Saylor; Radcliffe, Frank La Rue; Mandy, Libby Taylor; Padre, Charles K. French; Silver, Himself.*

One man held sway over a territory where death and treachery lurked in every native kraal. His name alone was the Law of the River! A gripping drama of the Dark Continent, starring Leslie Banks and Paul Robeson



The Law Maker

SOLDIERS and sailors and merchant-adventurers, these were the pioneers who laid the foundations of the British Empire, and to-day their work is carried on by the Civil Servants, keepers of the King's peace.

Far beyond the limits of civilisation, out on the remote fringes of Britain's vast possessions, small groups of white men hold sway over territories peopled by many nations, each with its own chief, its own tribal customs, but all with the common instincts to raid, kill, and plunder.

To these the men of the Civil Service give the law, maintaining order where chaos and carnage once reigned; and the story of their work in those savage lands is an unsung saga of courage and efficiency.

The territory of Commissioner Sanders embraced an immense tract of country in Nigeria, and the wide, treacherous river was the highway that traversed it. Here, in the Residency that overlooked the swift waters rolling onward through the dark jungles to the sea, the Commissioner enforced justice according

to the lights of the British Constitution.

He had two capable assistants in Captain Hamilton and Lieutenant Tibbets, and a small force of native troops, Hausas. With these he policed an area as large as England, and, such was his character, that he had established peace among the tribes in the space of a few years.

To more than two million savages he was known and feared as Lord Sandi, feared as a stern father might have been feared by his children. To the Colonial Office, closely concerned with the activities of its agents, he was known as one of the finest men in the Service.

One morning after the rains, when the river was in flood, Sanders might have been seen in the company of his junior assistant, Tibbets, a pleasant young fellow and a typical product of the English Public schools.

They were discussing Hamilton, who had departed some days previously on a trip up-country, and who should have returned ere now.

"Do you suppose he's all right, sir?" Tibbets was asking anxiously.

Sanders frowned. There was some-

thing striking about Sanders, not in his height or physique, for he was of medium build, but in his features, which seemed to suggest a strength of will tempered by an inherent kindness.

"There's no telling what might happen to a fellow in these parts," he murmured.

"Shall I take a company of men and start up-river to look for him, sir?" Tibbets proposed in urgent tones.

Sanders made an impatient gesture.

"No, no," he said. "Don't be so confidently hot-headed, Tibbets. You know, you're still thinking of earning a Victoria Cross, aren't you?"

The younger man looked a trifle sheepish. At the same time, he could not help marvelling at his chief's calmness. Hang it all, Hamilton was not only the Commissioner's right-hand man, but he was the brother of Julia Hamilton, Sanders' fiancée.

Tibbets did not realise it, but Sanders was considerably more worried than he appeared to be. He was not the type to show it, however.

"Listen," the Commissioner went on. "I was once like you myself. But after

Jubilee Greetings From Boy's Cinema To Their Most Gracious Majesties. Long May They Reign Over Us!

you've been here as long as I have, you'll find you've lost all your ideas about glory. The only decorations you're likely to get here, Tibbets, are mosquito bites."

The youngster laughed, and Sanders turned to pour himself a whisky-and-soda. It was as he was on the point of drinking it that the door of the Residency was pushed open, and a man of about his own age crossed the threshold.

He was Captain Hamilton, dressed like his colleagues in khaki shorts, a military tunic, and a shirt that was open at the neck. He was obviously suffering from the intense heat, for he was wiping his face and throat with a handkerchief as he entered the lounge.

"Hallo, Hamilton!" Sanders greeted him, with a placidness that gave no indication of the relief he felt at seeing him. "You're just in time to join me in a drink."

"Thanks," the other said. "I need one."

He sat down, and the Commissioner handed him a whisky-and-soda.

"Any news of special consequence to report?" Sanders asked him.

"Yes," Hamilton answered, "I dropped in on friend Oboja, chief of the Acholi tribe. Found a couple of gin bottles in his village."

Sanders and Tibbets exchanged a glance as they heard this. There were two commodities which were taboo in the territory, for obvious reasons. One was spirits, and the other firearms.

"I had a long talk with Oboja," Hamilton continued. "He said that he was your brother, Commissioner. He said that you had the magic and the wisdom of all the witch doctors who ever lived, that you had ears as long as an elephant's, and eyes in the side of your head, in the back of your head, and where other men sit down." He smiled, and then added ruefully: "But he wouldn't tell me where he got the gin."

"That's easy," Sanders commented. "I had word from one of my spies several days ago, telling me that Farini and Smith were passing through the territory. They're the culprits all right."

There was a pause, and then Hamilton spoke again.

"By the way," he mentioned, "I ran across a queer sort of fellow a few miles upstream. He was in an Ochori canoe, but I'll swear he was no Ochori. He said he wanted to see you, but wouldn't tell me why."

Sanders was listening attentively. "Was he a tall man, Hamilton?" he inquired.

"Why, yes," the other rejoined, "very tall. But out of the two million natives in this territory, don't tell me that you can pick out the very man I'm talking about. Your 'black children' say that you're capable of all kinds of magic, and you'll have me believing it myself pretty soon."

"No, seriously, I think it's possible that I may know something about your acquaintance of the river," Sanders stated. "We'll soon see, anyhow."

He summoned an orderly who was standing on the veranda outside, and told him to fetch the black who had arrived with Captain Hamilton. Then he invited Hamilton and Tibbets to join him in his office, where the three of them sat down.

A minute or two afterwards a magnificent specimen of negro manhood was shown into the room. Well over six feet in height, he was splendidly proportioned, and Sanders was at once struck by the alertness and intelligence of his bold features.

The giant native looked from one to another of the three white men, and finally his eyes became focussed on the Commissioner, as if he guessed that this was the personage he was seeking.

"Who are you?" Sanders asked him.

"I am Asaba, son of the old chief Sulabu, who died some moons past. I rule the Ochori in his place, lord."

The answer had come glibly—too glibly. Sanders eyed the negro with a touch of reproach in his gaze.

"Is that not a lie, man?" he said in a quiet voice.

The black looked uncomfortable, and then hung his head with an air of defeat.

"It is a lie, Lord Sandi," he murmured.

Sanders rose from his chair and crossed to a filing cabinet. From this he produced a document which bore a picture of the negro who stood before him, and underneath the photograph he read the following description, which he quoted aloud:

"Bosambo. Six feet four inches in height. Wanted at Monrovia, in the Republic of Liberia. Convicted for petty larceny. Escaped from the prison of St. Thomé."

The black's uncasiness increased as the Commissioner moved towards him. Then he began to talk volubly again.

"Lord," he protested, "I am living honestly now. I have made myself chief of the Ochori people, and have taught them to live in peace, according to your laws. Were not the Ochoris always troublesome to you, before I came?"

"That may be so, man," Sanders rejoined. "But no one in the territory may become chief without my sanction."

Again Bosambo hung his head, and then the Commissioner addressed him once more.

"Why did you come here?" he asked.

"Lord Sandi," the black answered, rousing himself hopefully, "I bring a high and important message for you."

"Is that not another lie, man?" Sanders remarked.

Bosambo shook his head.

"Lord," he said, "I lie when it is good for me to lie. But to you I will never lie again."

"That will be wise," the Commissioner told him.

"The people of the river say that Lord Sandi knows all," Bosambo went on. "They say that he has great magic. But I know that he has many spies—I, too, have my spies, now that I lead the Ochoris—and that is why I bring you this high and important message."

"One moment," Sanders said. "You knew that in a month I would come to the Ochori village—at the time of the taxes. Is that not why you are here—in the hope of making a good impression so that I may let you remain as chief of the people who have adopted you?"



"King Mafolaba," Sanders ground out, "I warn you! If you harm one servant of the Government, be it only a carrier-pigeon, I will grind you into the dust and you shall be king no more!"

Bosambo looked at him humbly. He was beginning to realise that "Lord Sandi" could probe the very minds of his "black children." Nevertheless, the big negro had not lied concerning the high and important message.

"Lord," he said, "I have told you that I bring news, and it is this: Certain warriors of the Old King have passed through the country of the Oehori on their way towards the coast."

Sanders, Hamilton, and Tibbets looked at one another quickly. Then the Commissioner glanced at Bosambo again.

"The warriors of King Mafolaba?" he breathed.

Bosambo nodded gravely, and Sanders pursed his lips. Of all the native potentates of the river, Mafolaba had proved the most difficult to handle. He had more men at his command than any other tribal monarch—fighting men notorious for their savagery and cruelty; and although he had learned from stern experience to fear Commissioner Sanders, yet he was still prone to make trouble whenever an opportunity occurred.

"You say that some of Mafolaba's men passed through the country of the Oehori tribe," Sanders muttered. "Did you try to stop them?"

Bosambo drew himself up to his full height.

"Lord," he said, "Mafolaba is a great and powerful king, but there is one man on the river who does not fear him, and I am that man. Nevertheless, I did not stop his dogs, because that would have meant war, and I know that this you do not desire. Therefore I sent spies after them, to follow their movements."

"That is well," the Commissioner rejoined. "Now listen, Bosambo. Every nation on the river has Government pigeons, and here at the Residency we have the pigeons of every nation. By these birds messages are sent— But what are you grinning at, man?"

"Lord," Bosambo replied, "the Oehori pigeons that you have here are so old and fat that they can hardly fly. I have brought four more, which I have given to a sergeant out in the compound."

Sanders had already made up his mind regarding Bosambo. The black might be an escaped convict from the Republic of Liberia, but the Commissioner had sensed the sterling qualities of the man, and he had no intention of returning him to captivity on an extradition warrant. Whatever the fellow had done in the past, Sanders was resolved to give him a chance.

"Tibbets," he said, turning to his junior assistant, "have you got a chain and medal of chieftainship?"

"I have them here, Lord Sandi," Bosambo broke in, smiling now as if completely at his ease.

He had brought one hand from behind his back, and grasped in it was a metal chain with a pendant that bore the inscription G. R., symbol of the British Crown.

"The one worn by old Sulabu, your predecessor, eh?" the Commissioner murmured, and, taking it, he placed it around the big fellow's neck.

"Bosambo," he continued, "I am going to give you a six months' trial as chief of the Oehori people. See that you do not fail me."

The black dropped on one knee, paying homage to him in the native fashion. "Lord Sandi," he said gratefully, "I am your servant."

A moment afterwards he had retreated from the room and was gone.



"Do you want to marry the chief as well?" Sanders demanded of her.

Palaver

TWO or three days later, a telegraph message from Government House informed Commissioner Sanders that the warriors dispatched by King Mafolaba had raided the French territory of Dahomey, seized two or three hundred natives, and were marching back to their own country via the land of the Oehoris.

Five minutes after the receipt of that message an Oehori carrier-pigeon was released from the cote at the Residency, and later the same day it reached the village of the people over whom Bosambo had made himself chief.

The bird was brought to him in his hut, and he removed a tiny roll of paper that was attached to it. The contents of the missive read as follows:

"From Lord Sandi at the Residency to Bosambo, chief of the Oehori.

"King Mafolaba's warriors will return through your country from slave raid. Stop them and hold their captives until my arrival."

Ere long the beat of tribal drums was resounding through Bosambo's village, summoning his fighting men to arms, and with his followers in full force behind him the ex-convict took his shield and his spear and led the way from the kraal.

Away in the Bush, far to the west, the slave-raiders from Dahomey were on the march with a column of abject prisoners, men, women and children. Their course lay across the northern corner of the Oehori country, and towards sunset they were still plodding onward in the direction of Mafolaba's realm, when the leader of the expedition perceived a solitary figure on the jungle track ahead of him.

It was the figure of Bosambo, standing there like some magnificent statue—strong, resolute and implacable.

Mafolaba's jackal called a halt, and advanced alone to meet Bosambo.

"Whose dog are you?" he asked, pausing when he was a few yards from the Oehori chieftain.

Bosambo did not answer the question. "You go no farther," he said, lifting his spear threateningly. "That is Lord Sandi's command."

"You know who I am, dog?" the other retorted in proud and disdainful tones. "I am the Captain of King Mafolaba's Guard."

"Lord Sandi says to stop you and hold all men and women whom you have seized," Bosambo announced grimly. "Turn round and march to my village, if you know what is good for you!"

The spear of the Oehori chief was levelled at the other's breast, but that was not all. There had been movements in the long grass and the undergrowth, and now King Mafolaba's minion saw the glinting assegais of many warriors. For the first time he realised that Bosambo was not alone, but possessed a force that outnumbered the slave-raiders by three to one.

Mafolaba's jackal ground his teeth. The party which he himself headed was but one-twentieth of his King's manpower. Away in the city of that powerful monarch, beyond the mountains which shielded his domain, there were regiments which could have wiped out the Oehoris to the last man—many hundreds of fierce warriors flaunting the headdress of ostrich feathers worn by all the Old King's troops. If only two or three hundred of those warriors were here!

But the Captain of Mafolaba's Guard was in a tight corner, and he had no option except to obey. With a scowl he turned and moved back to the spot where he had halted his men and their prisoners.

He had gone only a few steps when he chanced to look back and see that Bosambo was glancing round triumphantly at his Oehori followers. On the instant Mafolaba's captain thought he saw his chance to strike a blow that would demoralise the enemy, and, wheeling unexpectedly, he hurled his spear straight at the Oehori chieftain's breast.

Out of the corner of his eye Bosambo caught the glint of the weapon in the



"You cold-blooded swine!" Smith grated. "I'm clearing out of here, and nobody is going to stop me!"

nick of time, and with a swift movement he warded it off with his shield. Then he lunged forward, and all the strength of his mighty arm was behind the shaft that sped to the heart of the Old King's minion.

It pierced the man's body, and he fell with a great cry. Next second the jungle echoed to a medley of wild yells as the Ochoris leaped from cover to cover and rushed upon the slavers.

Led by Bosambo, they swarmed towards the foe in numbers that overawed the Old King's men, and, having witnessed the fate of their commander, these were in no mood to offer a resistance.

They were speedily taken prisoner, and after his men had disarmed them and herded them together, Bosambo took stock of the wretches whom they had intended to sell as slaves. Like the ladies' man that he was, it was the feminine element among these which most closely engaged his attention.

The unfortunates who had been seized by King Mafolaba's raiding-party included ten girls, all of whom were attractive according to negro standards, but there was one in particular who took Bosambo's eye—a slender girl with a touch of white blood in her, strangely alluring in her dark, native way, with an expression that was winsome and yet bold.

Singling her out, Bosambo looked down on her with admiration and interest.

"What's your name, girl?" he asked her.

"Lilongo," she answered coolly.

"Lilongo," he murmured, as if the name were sweet to his ears. "It is like the sound of a stream running over little stones—Lilongo—"

He paused, and then:

"Where do you come from, girl?"

"You wouldn't know my home," she told him. "I am from the coast." May 11th, 1935.

He smiled reminiscently.

"I know all about the coast," he rejoined. "Lilongo, we shall talk some more—you and I."

He summoned one or two of his men, and ordered them to take charge of the rescued slaves. Then the entire band set out for the Ochori village, where the Old King's captive warriors were kept under guard until the arrival of Sanders and young Tibbets a couple of days later.

The Commissioner and his assistant reached Bosambo's kraal by an antediluvian paddle-steamer, Sanders' means of transport up and down the river—the relic of a generation of Civil Servants. It was known as the "Zaire," and it had accommodation for a company of soldiers, whom the white Lord of the River had taken the precaution of bringing along with him.

Sanders first congratulated Bosambo on the manner in which he had handled a tricky situation, and then he informed him that he had dispatched a messenger to King Mafolaba requesting his presence at a palaver outside the Ochori village.

"He should be here before the day is out," he said. "That is, if he obeys my command."

"He will be here, Lord Sandi," Bosambo declared. "He is afraid of you."

The big negro's prophecy was no idle one, for that same afternoon a great concord of warriors was sighted, and as they approached the Ochori village it was seen that they wore the ostrich plumes of the Old King's fighting men. Mafolaba himself was in advance of them, reposing in a litter borne by four of his servants. Above his gross body and ugly face was a gaudy canopy, which protected him from the heat of the sun.

Sanders, Tibbets, and Bosambo awaited him, the two white men seated

on chairs, the Ochori chieftain kneeling with a spear grasped in one hand. Close by, the company of Hausas from the Residency stood at ease, smart as Guardsmen, the butts of their rifles resting on the ground. Bosambo's warriors were in the background.

Mafolaba and his followers came on, and when they were thirty or forty yards from the village they halted. The Old King then alighted from the palanquin in which he had been carried, and one of his servants hastened to place a chair for him, a ceremonial chair decorated with fiendish symbols.

King Mafolaba stepped forward, and, with a distance of several paces separating them, he and Sanders exchanged salutations, after which the negro potentate sat down.

He was a striking figure, fat and evil, with a countenance at once truculent and cunning. His thick, woolly coiffure was hung with beads, and, though he was nude to the waist, his nether person was swathed in a long garment of bright colours.

Sanders leaned forward to speak to him, resting his weight on a cane that he was holding.

"King Mafolaba," he said, "when I summoned you to palaver I did not ask you to bring all your warriors."

An ugly glint was playing in the negro monarch's wicked eyes.

"Sandi," he answered, "I brought them so that a dog of a little chief might tremble at the power he has provoked."

He looked venomously at Bosambo as he spoke those words, but the Ochori chieftain gave him eye for eye. Then Sanders raised his voice again.

"King Mafolaba," he said, "you know full well that slavery is forbidden throughout the territory."

"That is the white man's law," the other retorted. "Before white men set foot on this land, my ancestors were great kings here for three hundred years. To-day, I, Mafolaba, am the greatest king in this country."

"My King is the greatest king on earth!" Sanders rapped out. "His law is the law of this country, and, when petty chiefs and kings bring shame on him, we, his servants, must stamp them out. Take heed of that, Mafolaba, and let there be no more slave raids by your warriors."

The old king's face was working, but he succeeded in mastering his wrath. He was afraid of this Sandi, afraid of those Hausas standing so impressively nearby, soldiers in the pay of the great white Emperor.

"Sandi," he said, "I am your friend. I will do as you ask. But one thing I tell you now—I shall not forget that a dog of a little chief once chopped the captain of my guard."

Again he directed a malevolent glance at Bosambo, but Sanders' voice quickly summoned his attention once more.

"The chief of the Ochori was acting on my instructions," the Commissioner snapped. "He intercepted your captain in my name, but your jackal chose to disregard my commands."

Mafolaba showed no signs of being pained.

"In my village there are nine drums," he said for the benefit of Bosambo. "Each of them is covered with the skin of a little chief who has offended me. I think I know whose skin will cover the tenth!"

"King Mafolaba," Sanders ground out, "I warn you! If you harm one servant of the Government, be it only a carrier-pigeon, I will grind you into the dust, and you shall be king no more!"

The negro potentate clenched his hands savagely. It was only by an effort of will that he controlled himself. "You may go now," Sanders went on in a calmer tone. "The palaver is finished. As for the men of your guard who were captured, they will be sent back to your village when I think fit." Mafolaba rose from his ceremonial chair and turned away sourly. A minute or two later he was in his litter once more, and as he was borne from the scene the serried ranks of his warriors wheeled round to march in the same direction, chanting gloomily as they did so.

Farewell to the River

AN hour after the departure of Mafolaba, Sanders resolved to set free the raiders who had been captured by Bosambo and his men, and, when these had been told to make their way back to their own country, his next concern was the erowd of natives who had almost become victims of the slave trade. "Tibbets," he said, "you'd better get them together and take them back to the Dahomey border under escort. Half the company should suffice." The young assistant hurried off to carry out his chief's orders, and Sanders turned to engage Bosambo in conversation. He had only been talking to him for a few minutes when Tibbets reappeared. "I'm sorry, sir," he reported in some agitation, "but I can't do anything with those girls. The men are willing enough to go back to Dahomey, but the girls simply won't budge." "Won't budge?" Sanders echoed in bewilderment. "No, sir," Tibbets answered. "I think Bosambo has something to do with their attitude." Sanders directed a sharp glance at the Ochori chief, who looked singularly uncomfortable. Then he marched across to a group of dusky females who were sitting outside a hut some little distance away. They were the girls who had

been rescued from Mafolaba's slave-raiders. "What is this I hear?" Sanders asked of them. "Don't you want to go back to your homes and your parents?" "No, lord," they answered in one voice, with loud emphasis. "We would like to be the wives of Bosambo, chief of the Ochoris." "What, all of you?" Sanders demanded. Nine woolly heads nodded in response, and again the Commissioner glanced at Bosambo, who had followed him across to the hut uncasily. "Listen," Sanders announced, turning to the girls once more. "Don't you know that Bosambo has five other wives who are just now in different villages? Don't you know that those five wives are old and sour-tempered—that they will beat you and give you much work to do?" The girls looked impressed, and Sanders silenced Bosambo as the latter attempted to protest against the fictitious story that the Commissioner had told. "Now will you go back to your homes and parents?" the white man asked. "Yes, lord," nine feminine voices answered hastily. Sanders smiled, and was about to turn away when Tibbets laid a hand on his arm. "Just a minute, sir," he exclaimed. "I understood that there were ten girls among the natives who were rescued from Mafolaba's raiding party, and I see there are only nine here." Sanders counted the girls and verified his assistant's words; and upon inquiry he learned from the dusky maidens that one of their number, Lilongo, was now at the chief's house. Looking pretty hard at Bosambo, the Commissioner ordered him to take him to his hut, and here the missing Lilongo was located. "Do you want to marry the chief as well?" Sanders demanded of her. "Yes, lord, but I won't marry him unless he gets those other nine females

out of his village!" the girl said vehemently. "Lilongo, they are already leaving," Bosambo assured her. "Lord Sandi will tell you so himself." "Yes, and I can tell you of Bosambo's other wives," Sanders remarked. "There are five of them in other villages—all of them old crones who will beat you." Lilongo had begun to smile. "Lord Sandi, that is not true," she said. "Bosambo has no other wives. While I have been here I have watched him. He is too fond of other men's wives to have so many of his own." "Lilongo, that is not true, either," Bosambo protested. "Marry me, and I promise you that no other woman will ever take your place in my heart." "I shall see to that," Lilongo retorted firmly. "But there is something you have forgotten, Bosambo. I am a Mohammedan." "Well, and so am I," the big fellow declared. Sanders looked at him swiftly. "What's this?" he demanded. "Why, only this afternoon you were telling me something of your life, and said that you were a Christian, having been educated at a mission school on the coast." Bosambo was not abashed by this reminder. "Lord Sandi," he said, "for you I am a Christian. I know all about Marky and Lukey and Johnny—and that other Johnny that lost his head over a certain dancing-girl called Salome." "But for you, Lilongo," he added, turning to the girl from Dahomey, "for you I am of the true faith." "H'm, you'd better make up your mind," Sanders commented. "But you two want to get married, eh? Do you think you can hold him, Lilongo?" "I think I can," she answered with a twinkle in her dark eyes. So Lilongo and Bosambo were made man and wife amid great ceremony and rejoicing, and as the days became weeks, the weeks months, and the months years, the chief of the Ochori



"King Mafolaba," Farini declared emphatically, "you can take it from me that Sandi will not come back." May 11th, 1935.



A shower of arrows sped towards the panic-stricken fugitive, and two of the shafts pierced him through the back.

and his mate lived blissfully in their jungle paradise, their people prospering under their joint rule.

During that time two sons were born to Bosambo and Lilongo, and the elder was a constant source of pride and joy to his father, who saw in him a boy who might one day become a great chief—more powerful, perhaps, than King Mafolaba, who sulked and schemed up there beyond the mountains, his hatred of Bosambo still rankling in his mind, his fear of Sanders alone preventing him from attacking the Ochori village in force.

Mafolaba knew too well that the king or chieftain who brought war to the jungle must answer for it to Sandi—Sandi, whom men called the Tiger, and the maker of laws.

For four years the current of the river swung seaward through a territory of peace and plenty, carrying with it no memory of the bushman death-yell or the slash of spear and shaft. And at the end of four years a temporary change was made at the Residency.

Sanders was now entitled to a year's furlough, and during it he intended to marry Captain Hamilton's sister, and spend a six months' honeymoon in England. Meanwhile his quarters at the Residency were to be occupied by one Ferguson, a deputy-commissioner of undoubted courage, though he lacked his predecessor's knowledge and experience.

On the day of Ferguson's arrival, Sanders had a long talk with him, giving him a good deal of valuable advice.

"Well," said Ferguson, when the Commissioner had finished talking, "I only hope I can handle this territory half as well as you've handled it. I can tell you that I'm not looking forward to the next twelvemonth."

"I understand how you feel," Sanders mused. "I was just the same when I first came here. Didn't think I'd ever get the hang of it. But one does. You know, some years ago it was impossible to go upriver and show yourself on deck without a shower of spears coming at you from the jungle. And now—"

"Now it's as safe walking through this territory as it is going across London, eh?" Ferguson remarked with a smile.

May 11th, 1935.

"Oh, safer," the Commissioner laughed. "There's no traffic here. But getting down to serious matters again, how about getting acquainted with all the chiefs before I leave? And when I say all the chiefs, I include the Old King."

"Mafolaba?" Ferguson breathed. "No, Sanders, I've heard all about that bird, and I'd rather see the other chiefs first before I make his acquaintance. I want to feel sure of myself before I have any dealings with him."

Mafolaba was therefore excluded from the palaver that was called and, with that one notable exception, the petty chiefs of the river assembled in the compound before the Residency two or three days later, having travelled many miles in response to the messages despatched by Lord Sandi.

With the chiefs lined up in front of him, Sanders introduced Ferguson, and then addressed the tribal leaders collectively.

"Chiefs and kings," he said, "for fifty moons there has been peace on the river, with no man's hand raised against his brother. Gone are the days of pillaging and plunder, when no woman dared leave her village and no man slept easily in his hut. Is it not true that the people of this territory have become rich and fat in consequence?"

There was a murmur of acquiescence, and one chief, carrying an umbrella over his shoulder, moved forward a pace.

"Lord," he declared, "the people of my tribe have become so rich that even the common men can afford three wives."

"So!" the Commissioner murmured. "Then your people must see that peace is good, eh?"

"Yes, lord," the chieftain answered. "But you know, as well as I know, that if one madman rushes amongst five men who are not mad, then very soon all of them become mad. That is war."

"Your words are wise, Luao," Sanders agreed, and then turned to a chief who had once caused him a good deal of trouble.

"And what have you to say on the matter, Kilonga-longa?" he asked.

"Lord," came the naive reply, "the young men of my village do not make war because if they did so you would punish them."

"Your words, too, are wise," Sanders commented. "Now, listen to me, kings and chiefs. I am going away, and twelve moons will pass before I return. During that time I want you to obey the Lord Ferguson as you have obeyed me. See that you bring no shame upon him, lest my king, in his wrath, punishes you mightily by sending many soldiers against you."

With this final warning he dismissed them, but there was one who lingered, and that one was Bosambo, who now came forward to bid him farewell.

"Lord Sandi," he said, "it grieves me to see you go. You have been father and mother to the people of the river."

The Commissioner smiled. "I shall come back," he rejoined, taking the giant negro's hand in a warm and friendly grip. "Tell me, Bosambo, how is your wife?"

"She is well and happy, lord," the black answered. "Lilongo, she is the light of my life—and a good cook, lord. And my first son, he grows straight and tall, like a palm tree. While the little one, he is so-high. Lord, when you marry I hope your wife will be a good cook—and bear you many tall sons as well."

"Thank you, Bosambo," the Commissioner said amusedly. "And now, good-bye!"

Bosambo gripped his hand tightly. "Remember me, lord," he told him in a voice that was none too steady.

"I'll remember you," Sanders rejoined fervently.

The Jungle Aflame

SOME days after the departure of Sanders from the Residency, a big canoe might have been seen ploughing upstream. A dozen natives were driving it through the water with long strokes of their paddles, and near the bow sat two white men, one a Portuguese outcast known as Farini, the other a renegade Englishman who answered to the name of Smith.

The cargo of that vessel consisted of gin—"enough gin to make the whole jungle drunk," as Smith had already remarked. Liquor that could be bartered for goods which fetched high prices in the markets of civilisation. What did it matter if the stuff was liable to arouse primitive passions and savage

instincts which had been kept under control for more than four years?

"We'll soon be in Mafolaba's country, Smith," said Farini. "Strange, isn't it, that our presence in these parts should coincide with Sanders' departure on twelve months' leave?"

"A lucky break for us, I'd call it," Smith commented. "But, you know, his very name is enough to throw a scare into the blacks. Even though he's well out of the way, we're likely to experience some difficulty in trading with them. We've found that out already. They're sort of reluctant to buy gin now, knowing that their precious Lord Sandi disapproves—and knowing that he has ears as long as an elephant's."

Farini's eyes narrowed craftily. "I've thought of that," he said. "Do you know what I'm going to do, now that Sanders has been gone for some days? I'm going to give out the word that he is dead, and pretty soon it will be broadcast all over the jungle?"

"How?"

"By lokali drums, the telegraph of the bush," Farini answered, and by way of illustration he leaned forward and tapped his fingers on one of the crates that formed the cargo of the vessel.

"Sandi is dead," he said smoothly. "There is no law any more." Think what that will mean to them, Smith. And besides, we'll get our own back on Sanders for sending us across to the coast in irons some years ago. He'll be pretty sick when he hears that his black children have become savages again, eh?"

Twenty-four hours later the signal-drums were beating in every village, sending forth the news that had come from the lips of Farini and Smith.

"Sandi—is—dead. There—is—no—law—any—more!"

Day and night the drums throbbled their message, while Farini and Smith set about plying their unholy trade in liquor from the quarters which they had, by this time, taken up in the stronghold of King Mafolaba.

The air of the jungle quivered to the diapason of the rapid, oft-repeated notes: "Sandi is dead! Sandi is dead! There is no law any more!" A message that erased every vestige of fear and restraint from native hearts, fomenting license and rapaciousness in their stead. And soon the first outbreak had occurred—a raid by the warriors of one village upon the inhabitants of another.

Like wildfire the trouble spread. Black demons, crazed with gin, and inspired by the savage rites of the Blood Dance—sweeping through the bush to kill and to pillage. Kraals blazing fiercely in the tropic night. The death yell ringing loud and clear once more. Isolated families of whites trembling in their remote bungalows, waiting for the moment when they would be overwhelmed by the uprising.

As yet it was inter-tribal warfare, but who could tell what turn the situation might take at any moment?

Down in the Residency, Deputy-Commissioner Ferguson listened to the beat of the lokali drums like a man on the verge of a breakdown.

"Again and again and again," he groaned to Hamilton and Tibbets, pressing his hands against his temples. "What are they saying now?"

"It's always the same," Hamilton answered. "'Sandi is dead. There's no law any more.'"

There was a knock on the door of Ferguson's office, and a white man crossed the threshold. He was a minister of religion, a tall man with features that had become lined with care during the last few hours.

"Father O'Leary," Tibbets exclaimed. "What are you doing here?"

"They have burned my church to the ground," the missionary said. "I got away with Mr. and Mrs. Dawson and left them at the Baileys to come on here. But the Baileys themselves are in mortal fear of an attack."

Ferguson clenched his hands. "Sanders' black children," he breathed. "They're nothing but beasts—wild beasts."

"No, Mr. Ferguson, they're not," O'Leary said.

"Then what are they?" Ferguson broke out. "Do you realise that they might have killed you?"

"I realise that, but I didn't come here because I was afraid for my life," the missionary rejoined. "I came here because I learned that Farini and Smith have been peddling gin among the natives."

"Farini and Smith?" the Deputy-Commissioner echoed. "Sanders warned me about those two. I didn't know they were back in the territory again."

"I understand they have made the Old King's village their headquarters," O'Leary informed him. "Mr. Ferguson, that's the seat of the trouble."

Ferguson was silent for a moment, and then he turned to his assistants.

"Captain Hamilton, I am leaving you in charge of the Residency," he said. "Lieutenant Tibbets, you will parade half a company of men and accompany me up the river with them. We daren't take more, for the Residency may be attacked, and we shall have a good many refugees here before long, I'm thinking."

"But what do you propose to do, sir?" Tibbets demanded.

"Travel upstream as far as we can," Ferguson rejoined. "I shall then take ten men and go over the mountains to the Old King's country."

"To the Old King's country?" Hamilton blurted. "Sir, you can't do that! It's suicide—"

"Sanders would have done it, wouldn't he?" the Deputy-Commissioner interrupted tersely.

Hamilton made a desperate gesture. "But, sir, you can't—"

"You heard my orders, captain," Ferguson ground out. "Lieutenant Tibbets, parade your men!"

Forty-eight hours later, having parted with Tibbets and disembarked from the Zaire with ten men of the Hausas, and having entered the lion's den to demand the surrender of Farini and Smith, Deputy-Commissioner Ferguson found himself tied to a stake in King Mafolaba's village.

The ten men of the Hausas were already dead, butchered by the warriors of the Old King. Poor Ferguson! He had purposely brought a small escort to show Mafolaba that he was not there as the potentate's foe, but it had been in vain. The black heart of the fat scoundrel had leaped at the prospect of inflicting torture and death on an agent of Britain's King-Emperor.

It would be some small consolation for the manner in which he had had to bend the knee before the much-feared Sandi. Ferguson, another of these hated English commissioners, would pay the price!

While many hundreds of dusky natives looked on, a witch-doctor clad in the skin of an animal, and wearing a fiendish mask, proceeded to caper before the helpless white man, taunting him with weird gestures. It was a pantomime that continued for some time, and then the Old King rose from a bench on which he was seated and advanced to the stake of sacrifice.

With a movement of his arm he dismissed the witch-doctor and scowled at Ferguson savagely.



The rescue party swarmed into the village, and the underlings of Mafolaba retreated before them in alarm.

"White man," he said, "you came against me with your soldiers."

"That is a lie," Ferguson answered thickly. "I came in peace."

"You came with soldiers," Mafolaba repeated. "They are dead. You, too, will die!"

The captive's face was wet with perspiration, yet he looked at the Old King defiantly.

"You may kill me, Mafolaba," he said, "but the Lord Sandi will avenge me. He will make his way to your village here and crush you. Do you hear? He will crush you, as he has crushed other kings!"

Mafolaba's eyes betrayed a hint of fear, but he quickly recovered himself. "Sandi is dead!" he answered with an impatient gesture.

"Sandi is not dead!" Ferguson breathed. "Sandi lives, and, whatever happens to me, I shall be avenged. You won't escape him, Mafolaba. Wherever you hide, he will track you down—slay you—throw your body to the fishes!"

They were his last words. Mafolaba had intended that he should suffer a slow and lingering death, but rage overwhelmed him, and, raising a spear that he was clutching in his fist, he plunged it deep into the defenceless white man's chest.

A half-stifled groan escaped Ferguson, and his body slumped in the thoughts that bound him to the stake. Back came Mafolaba's hand, dragging out the blood-stained assegai with which he had struck. Then again and again he drove it into the Deputy Commissioner's sagging form—jeering as he lunged—until his victim breathed no more.

From a hut near by, two renegade whites had watched the whole scene. They were Farini and Smith, and now the latter wheeled round like a man in a panic and snatched up a revolver.

"Farini," he panted, "I'm getting out of here. This thing has gone beyond us. I'm getting out."

"Don't be a fool," the other snarled. "We're making our fortune peddling that gin, aren't we? Yes, and they'll want plenty more before they're finished."

"Farini, supposing—supposing they find out that Sanders isn't dead!" Smith gasped. "You saw what they did to Ferguson. You saw the way Mafolaba finished him. Oh, it was horrible—horrible!"

The Portuguese eyed him contemptuously.

"You're getting soft, Smith," he sneered. "Sanders is away at the coast, and soon he'll be en route for England. No one can dispute our contention that he's dead, and long before his year's leave is up we'll be away from here. As for Ferguson—well, he's lucky to have died so easily."

"You cold-blooded swine!" Smith grated. "I'm clearing out of here, and nobody is going to stop me. I'm—"

He got no further, for with an oath Farini knocked aside his revolver and struck him on the jaw, sending him in a heap to the floor. Next instant the Portuguese had pounced on him to disarm him, and he had barely wrested the gun from his accomplice's grasp when a native appeared in the entrance of the hut.

"White men," the black announced, "King Mafolaba summons you to council."

He vanished, and Farini dragged Smith to his feet.

"Come on," he snarled, "and don't act like an idiot! We're liable to fetch up against trouble all right if you lose your head!"

He pushed him out of the hut, and May 11th, 1935.

together they made their way across to the royal bench, on which Mafolaba was seated again. In passing the stake to which Ferguson's dead body was fastened, Smith kept his eyes averted, but Farini glanced at the limp figure coolly enough.

They walked up to the Old King, and he motioned them to a couple of stools in front of him. Sitting there amongst his councillors he looked precisely what he was, a pompous villain steeped in sin, and the devilish emblems that decorated his village seemed singularly in keeping with his character.

"Is—Sandi—dead?" he demanded of Farini in deliberate tones.

"Yes, of course," the Portuguese answered. "Didn't I tell you so?"

"Can Sandi come back?"

"How can he come back?" Farini protested. "I repeat, Sandi is dead."

The Old King beamed.

"When you say that, your voice is as sweet as honey to me," he said.

"But—"

And suddenly his expression changed to a look of intense ferocity.

"But if there is a devil in your heart, then you will die as Ferguson died!"

"King Mafolaba," Farini declared emphatically, "you can take it from me that Sandi will not come back."

The Old King was satisfied, and now he looked round upon his councillors.

"Four years ago, a little dog of a chief chopped the Captain of my Guard and brought shame to me before his village," he ground out. "I want the skin of that little chief. Let the warriors muster for the Blood Dance! To-morrow they swoop down upon the Oehori!"

The Return of Sandi

THE scene was Government House, at Lagos, on the coast, and a reception was in progress there. It was a reception which Commissioner Sanders and his fiancée had attended, and they were dancing to the rhythm of a waltz, when an orderly informed Sanders that the Governor wished to speak with him in his study.

Quitting the ball-room, the Commissioner made his way to his superior's sanctum, and found him standing by his desk, with a missive in his hands.

"I'm sorry to interrupt your dance, Sanders," the Governor apologised gravely, "but I have just received bad news. Trouble has broken out in your territory—serious trouble. Two men, known as Farini and Smith, have been selling gin to the blacks. They are located up in the Old King's country, it seems."

"Farini and Smith," Sanders breathed. "I know them all right. You must remember them, too. Some years ago I sent them here in irons. They came back to the River after serving sentence, but slipped over into French territory before I could lay hands on them."

"They're back," the Governor muttered, "and the situation is bad. All your work ruined in the space of a few days, Commissioner. This is a message I've had from Father O'Leary, and here is how he sums things up: 'Send four battalions, or Sanders.'"

The Commissioner smiled.

"I'm afraid it'll have to be four battalions, sir."

"I'd rather you went, Sanders. This is urgent. I could soon have a plane ready for you."

"No, sir," the younger man protested. "I'm on leave—planning to get married and go back to England on a honeymoon. It wouldn't be fair to my fiancée if I were to alter my arrangements now."

The Governor frowned.

"Let me see, isn't she Hamilton's sister?" he inquired.

"Yes," Sanders rejoined quickly. "Her—her brother's all right, isn't he, sir?"

"At present, yes," was the reply. "Tibbets is all right, too—though he lost half a dozen men after taking Ferguson to the mountains."

"To the mountains?" Sanders echoed incredulously.

"Yes," the Governor answered. "He went into Mafolaba's country with ten men. I understand he said that's what you would have done under the circumstances."

The younger man was looking at him in horror and dismay.

"What's happened to him?" he jerked.

"Is he—"

The Governor shrugged his shoulders. "No news," he said.

In the small hours of the morning a plane left Lagos. It was a plane which carried Commissioner Sanders in its passenger cockpit, and the drone of its powerful motor startled the beasts of the karroo as it winged its way towards the interior.

Shortly after sunrise Sanders was at his office in the Residency overlooking the Niger River, and later that day, while he was in conference with Hamilton and Tibbets, a welcome visitor was announced in the person of Bosambo, to whom the Commissioner had dispatched a message by carrier-pigeon immediately on his arrival in the territory.

"Bosambo," Sanders said, "you are the one chief who has been able to hold his people in check, I am told."

"It is because I have not allowed Farini and Smith to come into my country, Lord," the giant negro answered.

"You are wise, Bosambo," the Commissioner rejoined. "Now tell me what you know of Lord Ferguson."

"Mafolaba killed him," was the answer. "He died like a brave man—a swift death by the spear. This one of my spies has told me."

Sanders heaved a sigh.

"Then Ferguson wasn't tortured," he said fervently. "At least we can thank Heaven for that."

He stood up, and turned to his fiancée's brother.

"Hamilton," he stated, "I want you to take charge here. Tibbets and I will leave with half the garrison and see if we can restore order in the lower reaches of the River. We may need support—and if so, Bosambo's people can be relied upon to provide it!"

Once again the lokali drums were throbbing through the jungle, but now their voice was couched in no tone of exultation. Alarm was the keynote of their strange, weird rhythm.

"Sandi is not dead. The law is back on the River."

Thus spoke the drums, and much more they had to tell—startling news that reached the ears of King Mafolaba as he sat in conference with certain of his chief advisers.

One of his councillors had begun to interpret the beat of a lokali whose rapid notes were coming from afar.

"Sandi—is not dead! The law—is back—on the River! Sandi—and his soldiers—with the warriors of the Oehori—have smashed the army of Mafolaba!"

Dismay seized the Old King as he learned of the annihilation of the fight-

(Continued on page 26)

The love of one animal for another though enemies by nature. A story of the primeval forests and of a young girl's efforts to bring up a fawn and a puma in captivity. Starring Jean Parker and Russell Hardie



The Fawn

IN the High Sierra Mountains, where whispering foliaged giants of ancient lineage keep benign vigil over all creatures of the wild, the dawn of a new day was just breaking.

In a beautiful wooded dell a herd of deer were grazing, while, separated from them a little, a doe had settled down with her young fawn.

And back in a more thickly-wooded section of the forest, a sleek puma dozed and blinked drowsily at the rising sun whilst her young cub snuggled up to her side.

But as the sun climbed higher the puma rose lazily to her feet, yawned, then padded off determinedly, her cub gamboling at her heels. As she passed silently and swiftly over the ground, the deer became suddenly alert, their delicate nostrils sniffing the air currents suspiciously. The puma was now within sight of them and, with one concerted move, they broke into a run. With a snarl the great cat was after them, leaving the baby puma behind, whining and sniffing.

Over great boulders and through thick grasses went the great beast. The deer were some way ahead, but there was a doe that could not travel so fast because of her fawn—the tongue salivated at the thought of meat. With each step the puma was gaining, but in her triumph she lost caution. Without warning a trap opened under her, and in the wild struggle to free herself a boulder in the pit became loosened. The stone crashed down on the puma's head.

And on a work-bench in Will Bergman's log cabin, the clumsy, soiled hands of Joe Lucas, his half-breed assistant, were busily engaged in build-

ing just such another trap. On the wall of the cabin hung a Californian State License, identifying Bergman as a guide, and entitling him to "ranch" deer.

Joe was a thin, ratty-faced individual. "I reckon by the time the season opens there ain't gonna be no deer around here. Not if we don't trap some of these 'ere puma mighty quick."

A burly, unshaven rascal with small beady eyes grinned to show broken, stained teeth.

"We'll get 'em!" cried Will Bergman. "Even if I have to lie out nights and shoot 'em."

"You lie out nights!" sneered Joe. "Why—" He saw the murderous expression. "Oh, I know you'd do it, but what's the good when you can't see a yard in front of yer nose. But if we don't get them cats they'll kill every deer in the place."

"Then the sooner you get that trap finished the better!" shouted Bergman truculently. "You make the traps and I'll get all the puma in these woods."

His last words were punctuated by a sudden burst of frenzied barking from the dogs outside. The two men went hurriedly across to a window to see the dogs tearing madly down their runaway, following a doe running parallel with their fence. A wild scrambling at the rotten boards, and the three dogs were through. The doe stopped, trembling with fear, saw the dogs and blindly fled towards the densest part of the forest.

Joe grinned. "Dogs is lucky. They can't read game laws."

"Yeah; but them dogs will go tearing through the woods and scattering

any deer far and wide!" Bergman snarled. "It'll be hours afore they'll come back. In the morning we gotta make that enclosure stronger. What's more, when I went into town I heard that the Rangers are on the watch. We don't want to lose them dogs or our licence."

On through the woods sped the doe with the dogs close to her heels. The doe made a spirited effort and drew away, and her gam gave her the chance to save her fawn. The dogs had lost the scent and were snuffing round, and during that time the doe hid her fawn in the undergrowth. Then she darted out and away, her one idea being to lead the oncoming dogs away from the hiding place.

The dogs heard the crackling of the dry branches as the doe sped away and, yelping furiously, gave chase. For a while the doe eluded the dogs; she swam streams and brooks, but always the dogs kept to her trail. In an effort to escape the dogs, the doe leapt for some high boulders, but she was exhausted, and she slipped back. In a moment the dogs were at her, and she was pulled down, a quick victim to her pursuers.

The fawn, who had been hidden away so carefully in the undergrowth, lay there quietly and obediently for a time, then curiosity and something more—a vague premonition of dread—impelled it to move out to the open ground.

With nightfall the fawn ventured timidly forth, a lonely, pathetic and dispirited little figure as it wandered along, helplessly alone, starting nervously and running at the howl of the wolf, the hooting of an owl, or the roar

of a mountain lion. All night the little creature wandered round in terror.

By morning, almost dead with fright, the fawn came out of the trees into the sunlight, and picked his ways over some rocks towards a stream, then came to a stop at the water's edge, bending forward his thin neck to drink.

Perhaps the rippling of the water over the stones may have lulled the animal to a sense of security, because the fawn appeared not to notice the human being lying flat on a rock and watching so intently.

A man, no—a young girl in thick serge trousers, serviceable knee boots, and a white silk shirt. A dark-eyed youngster, who held her breath as she watched the fawn.

Pursued By Bergman's Dogs

SO worn out was the fawn that he made no effort when a soft voice called to him. He looked up and met such kind, affectionate eyes, and instantly his fears were assuaged.

"Hallo, little man!" whispered Toni Martin.

His pathetic bleat answered her.

"Why, what's the matter?" asked the girl, and very slowly stood up. She held out her slim hand in a friendly gesture, and the fawn stood motionless like a figure carved out of stone. "What are you trying to tell me, baby?" crooned the girl, slowly crossing the stream to the animal's side.

The fawn sniffed at Toni's fingers, and then looked up at her from gentle, appealing eyes. She stroked his back soothingly, and her whispered endearments soon gained his confidence. To his little whimpering bleats she said softly:

"Come here! Don't be frightened, because I want to be friends."

The girl picked the fawn up in her strong young arms and, except for a few bleats, he made no attempt to escape. A tongue came out and licked her cheek.

"I guess I'll have to take you home," announced sixteen-year-old Toni. "Have you lost your mother, darling?"

As the fawn made no attempt to escape and nestled in her arms, the girl was certain some tragedy had overtaken the mother. Suddenly, before her path, she saw the trap and the dead body of the puma. A quick glance showed her how the big creature had died. Lying close to the dead mother was a young cub. Toni quickly knelt down to stroke it, and instantly the wildling put out its baby paws and tried to claw her.

"Here, stop that!" Toni chided it. She reached out again, but once more the paws went out at her with aggressive savagery. All the while the fawn tucked under her left arm fidgeted as if the sight of the puma terrified him.

Toni held him all the tighter, and turned again to the cub.

"You may not know it, but you're in a bad way here." Her eyes glistened as she gazed at the dead puma. "Poor little feller," she continued, a catch in her voice. "It's pretty sad to lose your mother—I know." She had adored her mother, but illness had decreed that it should be otherwise.

Toni swooped suddenly and grabbed the baby puma by the back of the neck. He snarled at her like an angry kitten. She tucked him under her right arm, and then looked from one to the other.

"You cute things," she said. The puma immediately made an attempt to claw the fawn. "Here, here, none of that! Better manners, sir! You don't know it, but I'm taking you home, and I'm going to make you bosom friends."

Slowly she walked through the woods May 11th, 1935.

holding close to her strange pets. Suddenly her heart leapt up to her throat. She heard the yelping and barking of dogs growing louder and louder. She knew it must be the fierce dogs of that rascally guide, Bergman—they must have escaped. Without a second's delay she began to run, terror gripping her, for she knew she would not be able to save her charges if the dogs caught them; in fact they might even attack her.

The dogs had got the scent and soon they heard her running feet. They began to gain steadily on the panting girl, who was hampered by her wriggling charges. A mist came before Toni's eyes and blood pounded in her temples. She could almost feel the hot breath of the dogs on her neck.

Then she stumbled and fell prone to the ground, but Toni clung tenaciously to her pets, and the mother instinct made her draw them close as she lay there panting, too exhausted to rise.

Then unexpectedly Toni heard a masculine voice. And almost before she could realise it a man with a rifle-butt in his hands was racing towards her. The butt of the rifle caught one dog a fearful smash in the ribs, and that knocked much of the savagery out of the creature. The other two dogs showed their teeth and snarled, but hefty kicks from strong hoots drove the dogs away, whining and whimpering.

Toni took a quivering breath and staggered to her feet. A glance round her told her where she was. In her dazed terror she had taken the path to the ranger's look-out, and the ranger on duty had seen her. The girl smiled at her rescuer, and realised the ranger was a young, square-shoulder person with a most fascinating smile.

Breaking The Law Of The Wild

"THANKS. Thanks ever so much." Toni said very seriously. "If you hadn't appeared I don't know what would have happened."

"I'm glad I happened to be on duty."

Toni laughed.

"So am I." She looked at him curiously. "You're new here—aren't you?"

He smiled and bowed.

"At your service, miss."

"I'm Toni Martin," she went on, then indicated with a little nod the animals she still clutched. "And these are my children. I've just adopted them, and so I'm taking them home."

The ranger glanced dubiously at the snarling puma.

"Let me take this child off your hands. Maybe I can help you get your children home."

"Oh, that's awfully nice of you. Thanks!" Toni handed the puma over; then she and the ranger fell into step and started for her home.

Toni soon found out all about the handsome ranger.

"When I had finished my course of forestry I wangled a ranger's job—and here I am." By that part of the story they had reached the steps of a well-built wooden bungalow. "And here you are!"

"Please come in!" begged the girl, and laughed. "I'd like to show you to father."

A spare, grey-haired man sat before a typewriter, and the young ranger noted with an amused twinkle that torn scraps of paper lay about the floor. He had turned round at the sound of the door opening, and naturally the first thing he saw were the fawn and the puma.

"Am I seeing things?" came his incredulous query.

Toni began to explain rapidly the ex-

citing incidents, and her father listened with a grin, to glance occasionally at the young man nursing the puma.

"So you've brought home two pets—starting to make this shack a sort of menagerie, eh?" The father chuckled. "I think, Toni, you should introduce the gentleman who saved you from the dogs."

"Bob Alden's the name." The ranger held out his hand. "Guess I'll have to tell Bergman that his dogs will be shot next time they break loose. Glad to be of service." He shuffled his feet nervously because Toni's expression was rather like hero-worship, and he was a modest young man. "Guess, sir, your daughter's going to have trouble bringing up those two together."

Martin nodded and caressed the fawn. "You're right. See this mark on its back?" He pointed. "A most distinctive mark, and it will grow larger. I guess one could recognise this creature when full grown by that saddle mark."

The father made the ranger at home, invited him to stay and have a meal; but Bob shook his head—he was on duty. He stayed a little while to smoke a cigarette.

"I'm a writer, and I've come to the wilds to get ideas and write nature stories," Martin explained. "I've started about six yarns and torn them all up. I'm running out of ideas—and incidentally money."

"I wish you never had to think about money," Toni had placed the animals on the ground. The fawn did not seem inclined to leave her, but the puma crawled away in search of adventure. She looked at Alden. "Can't you give dad a plot for a story?"

"Not much in my line, but you can always get twenty dollars from the state for the puma."

"For that baby kitten?" Toni was horrified.

"A puma's a puma," Alden stated solemnly. "Young or old. As a matter of fact it's part of my job to kill them on sight, but"—he grinned teasingly at the girl—"but perhaps I just didn't see any puma—that is," he paused to add seriously, "if you'll turn him loose."

Toni's eyes blazed.

"I'll do nothing of the sort. I'm going to keep him—and the fawn. I'm going to bring them up together, and make them love each other."

"Can't be done—they're natural enemies. Young Mr. Puma may be docile enough for a while, but you wait till he gets a taste for deer meat."

"I wonder," Martin joined in. "I've a theory that only sheer necessity makes animals prey on each other. I'm almost ready to believe with Toni—that if this baby puma is fed adequately and the little deer brought up not to fear him, that they could be friends." His eyes lit up. "By Jove, what a grand experiment, and what a plot for a story. The originality of—"

Next moment their ears were suddenly assailed with the snarls of the cub and the terrified bleating of the baby fawn, coming from the direction of the kitchen.

"Doesn't look as if it's going to work out." Alden cocked an eye in the direction of the kitchen.

Toni glared at him and dashed to the kitchen. She swooped down and cornered the two little creatures under the sink. The puma was spitting and snarling, whilst the fawn whimpered with fear.

"Stop it, you two!" admonished Toni, shaking them both. "You ought to be ashamed." She put them down again. "Behave yourselves!"

The Chinese cook's baby was calmly eating his crackers and milk through the

rumpus, but as Toni turned away to take some dishes and milk off the shelves, the puma and the fawn dipped their heads in the baby's bowl and starting helping themselves avidly to the milk. This time the puma's snarling had no effect on the fawn, but it had effect on the Chinese baby, who screamed lustily.

The cook had been outside chopping firewood, and, at the noise, came rushing in and spluttered with horror at sight of the animals. He grabbed up the baby.

"Don't be so silly," Toni frowned. "They're only babies, too. They won't hurt anybody."

"You not keep them?" Sang Soo said suspiciously, as Toni poured milk into two bowls, taking one to the fawn and one to the puma.

Toni nodded. Alden winked slyly at Mr. Martin.

Sang Soo threw up his fat hands in despair.

"No good, missie. Everybody know tiger and deer no good company."

"He's not a tiger—he's a puma," the young girl corrected. "And they're going to stick together."

Sang Soo snorted. "Maybe stick together all lite; but stick together him"—he pointed to the fawn—"inside other's belly."

Toni was quite angry because her father and Alden dared to laugh.

"You come back here in a fortnight's time and you see the difference."

"I'd like to come before that, if I may," said Bob Alden.

"You'll be very welcome. Won't he, Toni?"

"Of course, dad." The girl held out her hand. "Perhaps, Mr. Alden will come round and have supper with us to-morrow night?"

Bob accepted the invitation with alacrity, and hinted that it would be

wise to say nothing about having a baby puma in the shack.

Malibu And Gato

SOME weeks later Mr. Martin was hard at work on his manuscript, which he had entitled "Sequoia—the story of a strange friendship," when Toni entered the room and motioned to him. Silently they tiptoed to a corner where the puma and the fawn lay peacefully side by side in the little basket that was their bed.

Toni beamed at her father, then looked down fondly at her two pets.

"Cute, aren't they?"

There was a knock on the door.

"Come in!" Martin called.

Bob Alden stepped into the shack.

"Hallo, thought I'd look round and inquire how everyone was getting along."

"You've come at the right time." Toni smiled a welcome. "We're trying to think out names for these little fellows. Any suggestions?"

"I've got a name for the deer," stated her father. "Malibu. It's an old Indian word, and it means 'Rough Going.' Nobody has a rougher road to travel than a deer."

"Talking of Indian names gives me an idea for the puma," spoke Bob. "How about Gato?"

"What does that mean?" asked Martin.

Alden's eyes twinkled.

"I think it means 'The Misunderstood One.'"

"That's a grand name," enthused Toni. "As a reward, would you like to come to supper to-night?"

The young man nodded eagerly. Mr. Martin suppressed a smile and went back to his work.

Some months later the writer was studying a book entitled "The Language

of the American Indian," and curiosity prompted him to look up the word "Gato." He whistled when he read what was written there, and got to his feet to go in search of his daughter.

A great clatter from outside made him rush to the window. In the backyard was an old broken-down dog-house. On the other side of wire netting sat Toni, and here she kept a number of rabbits. These were scurrying about in search of some safe cover. The girl sat on a fallen tree, and in the palms of her hands she held two small chipmunks. He could see how intently the girl was gazing at the old dog-house, from which all the noise was emanating.

Martin's eyebrows went up in amusement and amazement as Gato came sailing out of the kennel as if he had been shot from a gun. The cub rolled up against a log, completely winded, and lay there passively. Then Malibu stuck his head out of the kennel and glared defiantly at Gato.

"What's going on here?" Toni came on the scene of battle and looked things over with an experienced eye. Her father opened the window the better to hear.

"You should be ashamed." Malibu hung his head, but came out of the dog-house slowly. The girl took both animals into her lap. "I wonder what you two have been up to."

Gato purred.

"You're not fooling me. It takes two to make a fight."

"Was all that squabbling earnest?" called out her father.

Toni screwed up her nose and shook her head violently.

"No—only fun."

"Toni, I've got a shock for you." Her father looked grave. "In this old Indian book I had lent to me I've found out the real meaning of Gato!"



"I'll kill anyone who dares to touch him!" blazed Toni, and then in her misery sobbed her heart out on her father's shoulder.



The puma hissed and snarled, whilst the guide's breath came gaspingly from his heaving chest as they rolled over and over in the struggle.

"What does it mean, dad?" Mr. Martin was quite serious now. "Gato means outlaw or murderer." Toni gasped. "But Bob said—" "I know, but he was wrong," Martin answered. "Maybe this book is wrong. We'll hope so. Toni, those pets of yours are growing."

"I know they are." Toni picked up the puma and placed the animal close to the fawn. "And I'm going to make him redeem his name."

But even as she spoke Gato made a quick, nasty little swipe with his paw at the fawn.

Death In The Night

WINTER came and passed, and now the puma and the fawn were almost a year old. Mr. Martin was glad that the creatures were so happy and playful together, because they were such pals for Toni. Without the animals and the attentions of Bob Alden his young daughter might have grown lonely in this wild, beautiful, but desolate seclusion.

One morning in spring Bergman stood looking at a broken coop and a heap of feathers.

"If you'd 'a' laid them traps like I told you," he growled at Joc, "this wouldn't have happened."

"I did—but look, Will." The smaller man pointed excitedly. "There's his tracks. Smart, that's what he is. Ife stepped right over it."

"Don't waste time arguing," snarled Bergman. "I'm going out to get him. I'll follow his tracks."

But Bergman cursed heartily when the tracks of a year-old puma ended at the side of a brook. A snapping twig made him jump round and raise his gun, but with an awkward grin he lowered the weapon at sight of Alden.

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"Hallo!" Bergman called out. "Seen anything of a puma round here?"

"The only ones I've seen are those you've collected bounty on," Alden answered sharply. "Don't tell me you've missed one?"

Bergman nodded morosely. "Yeah, and a smart one, too. Raided my chicken coop last night, and I'm out for him."

"How old would you think this puma to be?" Alden asked.

"From his tracks, about a year. Wish you'd pass the word along to the rest of the rangers to keep an eye out for him. Maybe they can get a line on his hide-out. I ain't had much luck."

"I'll get busy on it," Alden promised, and rode away in thoughtful mood. Was Bergman's poacher Gato?

That evening the Martins were very pleased to have a surprise visit from the young ranger. Toni took him to a window and with pride showed him Malibu busy lapping up a dish with evident relish, whilst Gato lay stretched out full length on a rug, taking his ease. He had to admit that they were fine creatures, and laughed when Toni explained that Malibu adored ice-cream.

"I'm a little worried over Gato." The girl shook her curly head. "He used to adore my ice-cream, but the last few days he's seemed off his food. I've let him sleep by the dying embers of the fire because I thought he might be cold out in that dog-house, and Malibu does take up such a lot of room. And if Gato takes up too much room Malibu lashes out in a most spiteful way."

"They never try to fight each other?" "No, Bob, never. They play at quarrelling sometimes." Toni laughed. "Let's go out and talk to them."

Malibu came forward to lick the girl's hand, and then turned to sniff at Alden. The fawn was now a handsome young

buck, and the head came up to the girl's waist. The puma was the size of a big dog, and seemed bored and sleepy. The creature eyed Alden without the least show of fear and yawned.

Alden stroked the fawn and then knelt to caress the puma. He looked very closely at the mouth of the mountain cat.

"I think it's time for all good little boys to be in bed," Toni cried. "Off you go." Malibu pranced away and entered his house. The girl smiled down at the puma. "The poor dear looks rather seedy. I shall let him have another night near the fire."

Bob managed to have a few words alone with Mr. Martin before he left. Frankly he told of his meeting with Bergman and the year-old puma taking his chickens.

"I may be wrong, and I hope so," he concluded. "There are slight marks round the mouth that look like blood, and Gato seems to have lost his appetite."

"Just because the poor cat didn't want his ice-cream doesn't prove anything," argued Martin.

Alden ignored that. "See that Gato is shut in to-night, will you, Mr. Martin?"

"You won't say anything to Toni?"

"No," Alden answered as he raised the latch of the door. "And I don't want to have to—you understand? Good-night!"

It was well past midnight, and the living-room was alternatively streaked with darkness and bright moonlight. Seemingly the room was deserted until Gato moved out into the moonlight. Sniffing first at one closed window and then at another, he moved against the kitchen door and opened it. Here again he encountered a closed window. Walking away from it, his great cat's body disappeared for a moment into the darkness. Only his eyes could be seen, gleaming like red-hot coals.

Now he had found the door to Sang Soo's bed-room, where the Chinese cook and his motherless baby slept peacefully. With one leap Gato was at the window-sill and out of the open window into the night.

Padding swiftly over the ground, he was soon crouched on the roof of the low shed on Bergman's ranch. Some pigs could be heard squealing and stirring restlessly. With a silent feline movement Gato dived in under the shelter. The next instant there was the scream of a pig in agony.

Some time later Gato made his silent return through Sang Soo's window. Just as he was about to pass through the door he suddenly turned, and crawling along the baby's bed sniffed it carefully. Then he moved across to the cook's bed and a long tongue shot out and licked Sang Soo's face, as if the young puma were trying to tell her of his happiness. The cook moved restlessly, but did not wake. Silently Gato slid out of the room back to the comfortable rug near the glowing embers of the fire. He licked his lips, yawned, and fell into a contented sleep.

Early the next morning Bergman came through the woods with two of his best dogs on a leash. Alden kept step with him. The guide had appeared at the National Park Rangers Station to report the visit of the puma, and Alden had offered to inquire into the business. It was easy to trail the puma.

Bergman's teeth curled back in a savage grin, as the dogs, with an exuberant burst of speed, shot up to the front door of the Martin cabin. Ife pounced angrily on the door with the butt of his rifle.

As Toni opened it the dogs tried to

break loose to enter. From within there came the fierce snarl of Gato. Toni screamed and tried to shut the door. It was Alden who yanked the dogs away, and Bergman pushed into the house, with the ranger at his heels.

Toni stood and faced them as her father hurriedly got up from the breakfast table.

"What's the matter, Bergman?" asked Martin, after a quick glance at Bob's serious face.

"I trailed this cat from my shack," Bergman pointed to the snarling Gato. "He was in my pig pen last night and got two of 'em."

Toni would not at first believe, and cried that Gato would not kill anything.

"I'm awfully sorry, Toni," Alden said quietly. "The truth is that your pet's an outlaw, and even if Bergman doesn't I'll have to kill him."

"I'll kill anyone who dares to touch him!" blazed Toni like a young goddess, and then in her misery sobbed her heart out on her father's shoulder.

"Those two pigs cost me——" began Bergman.

"Bob, make Bergman go away," Martin said. "Fix a price for the pigs and damage and tell him to call later for the money."

When Alden came back into the shack he found Toni had dried her tears.

"Twenty dollars will fix the damage," Alden reported. "And he'll be back this evening. He threatens to take action if you don't get rid of that puma. Toni, Gato's got to go!"

"You can't kill him, Bob," whispered the girl.

"I shall come back here this evening with Bergman to see he gets his money and gives a receipt. Also I shall have to prove to the rascal that Gato is no more." Bob's expression did not change. "A creature like Gato might easily escape."

Martin took his daughter in his arms when they were alone.

"I know how you feel, Toni, but if Gato isn't out of here we may get young Alden into trouble." He coughed.

"Malibu is growing up."

"What do you mean by that, dad?" "Turn him loose as well and give him a chance," her father answered. "I know Malibu is gentle and harmless, but we can hardly take him back to our apartment in town."

"Oh, we are leaving?"

"Yes, dear. My book's nearly finished."

That afternoon Toni walked through the woods, her pet following closely. A mile away and near a ravine the girl called the fawn to her, patted his graceful neck and kissed him good-bye.

Over Gato she lingered a few minutes longer, fearful of what the future might have in store for him. Then she shooed them away. They stared at her solemnly and seemed to understand. Through tear-filled eyes she saw them move away. Gato stopped uncertainly for a minute to gaze at the receding figure of Malibu, then he, too, walked away in another direction and was soon out of sight.

Friend or Foe

TWO winters later, and this scene is far away from the haunts of man. The only sound is the falling of snow from the trees and the faint sighing of an icy breeze.

From some pines appears a herd of young deer, and at their head Malibu, a magnificent four-point buck, powerful of body and fleet of limb, with a handsomely spreading pair of antlers.

A solitary doe wandered incautiously away from the others, and browsed down the side of the ravine. It was then that a mountain puma, padding down a slope, saw her and, with deadly intent, began to stalk her. The great cat crept nearer, gathered itself together and sprang. But it had taken that deer just a split second to hear him as his haunches came away from the

ground, and with incredible speed the doe flung herself away, and the lion was left standing alone on the very spot where the deer had been just a second before. The great tail thrashed angrily, and the gleaming eyes seemed to blaze. It was useless to follow the doe, but suddenly the scent of the herd of young deer tickled his nostrils.

Malibu moved slowly forward, and the herd watched their leader. The buck went slowly to a water-hole in the snow and drank deeply. It was then that the puma, standing on top of a rocky ledge, caught sight of him.

Moving with exquisite grace, he edged towards Malibu until he had reached a ledge just above him. Then he crawled cautiously to the edge, and looked at the drinking buck. Over the rocks the puma made his noiseless way, determined to make up for his earlier mistake in losing the doe.

Malibu raised his head for a moment, then, seeing nothing, resumed his drinking.

Stealthily, the mountain puma crept closer and closer until he had reached the perfect vantage point. Then, gathering his muscles of steel, he prepared to make his spring.

It was then that Malibu raised his head and looked straight into the eyes of the cat. For one single second their gaze held, as they both stood, frozen to stillness.

The puma was the first to move, and the savagery of his demeanour had changed to a puzzled bewilderment. He moved nearer as if uncertain—Malibu stood stock still and stared. The puma came slowly to the side of the water-hole, and with complete trust and confidence Malibu moved towards him, for he had recognised his old friend and playmate, Gato.

Approaching each other, their noses touched in mutual greeting. In an excess of joy Gato rolled over on his back, and Malibu playfully prodded him in



Gato shook his head and Malibu moved across to him.

the belly with his antler. The lion rolled swiftly to his feet and moved to the water-hole to drink, and nose to nose the two friends drank their fill. Then, after frolicking together for a few moments, they rose and trotted happily off together into the thicket. Needless to say the rest of the herd had gone a long time ago.

A sudden sound caused the animals to stop and freeze in their tracks. It was the merry jingle of sleigh-bells. From the top of a ravine they stared downwards. Soon the sleigh and its occupants were plainly visible. There was Martin, Toni, Sang Soo and Sang Soo's little boy. After a long stay in town they had answered the call of the wild.

Malibu looked at Gato and then moved swiftly down the hillside to the valley. Gato whisked his long tail and bounded swiftly after the buck.

The Trap

THE Martin cabin that night was brightly lit. Toni and her father had just finished dinner.

"It's grand to be back," sighed Toni. "I wonder what's happened to Malibu and Gato?"

"And Bob Alden?" laughed Martin, who knew his daughter had not forgotten the young ranger.

"I shall go round and inquire if he's still here!" Her eyes danced. "Just to ask if he's seen my two pets."

"I expect the deer have moved on to better feeding grounds," teased her father. "And the mountain pumas have followed the deer."

Toni smiled back good-naturedly.

"I'd have resented that a couple of years ago as aimed at Gato." She stared at the fire. "You know, dad, we've a lot to thank Malibu and Gato for; they gave you a wonderful plot for a story, and the book went into six editions."

"And I'm hoping to get another plot from this visit," her father laughed. "my publishers want a sequel to 'Sequoia.'"

Not very far from the Martin home a sleigh slid smoothly over the frozen trail. Joe was driving whilst Bergman tossed huge forkfuls of hay on the ground behind them. Now and again the driver glanced round as if scared that someone might be watching.

A deer corral had been constructed at Bergman's ranch. As the sleigh drove through the suspended gate, Bergman dumped a final forkful of hay just inside the corral. Then the rascally guide spread the hay around so that it completely concealed the trap that would spring the deadfall gate.

At precisely that moment Malibu emerged from the woods and approached the gate of the Martin shack. He considered it solemnly, then looked towards the lighted windows. Gato clawed his way up a tree so that he could direct a glance at the cabin. Lightly Malibu leapt the gate, and Gato followed an instant later. They raced forward until they were just under the windows. Malibu craned his neck and peered through the glass wistfully as he saw Toni and her father sitting comfortably in the sitting-room.

Gato, however, sniffed around in old remembrance. Climbing a wood-pile just under the kitchen window, he stared intently at Sang Soo, who was, at that moment, drying and polishing the dishes. The Chinaman saw those great staring eyes and dropped the entire pile of dishes to the floor with a resounding crash.

Toni ran into the kitchen to find Sang Soo almost petrified with fright.

"What's the matter?"

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Then her jaw dropped with astonishment, for she had seen Gato's head framed in the window. In a flash it disappeared.

"Gato!" Toni cried.

With a glad cry she flung up the window, just in time to see the puma pounding away. Then into Toni's unbelieving vision, there came the second of that night's miracles. Leaping past with the fleetness of the wind, came Malibu, antlers held high, his arched legs barely touching the ground. Then he, too, had disappeared into the velvety blackness of the night.

"Malibu!" Toni called, and hoped against hope that he would come back.

But when a few seconds had elapsed she made a quick decision. Opening the kitchen door she shouted into the snowy wilderness: "Gato! Malibu! Wait for me!" Then, turning back into the kitchen, she dashed excitedly into the living-room and grabbed up a woollen cap and a short plaited coat.

"They're here, dad!" she screamed at her father. "Gato and Malibu!"

"I thought I heard you call their names. Here, where are you going?"

"Going after them," cried Toni. "I'll be right back." The door slammed after her.

Malibu, after his sudden fright at Toni's over-exuberant call of greeting, had walked slowly along the snow-covered trail, following the marks made by Bergman's sled and nibbling at the tempting bunches of hay scattered on the trail. And always he kept nearing the unsuspected danger.

Toni, not far behind him, quickened her pace as Malibu's trail became more and more distinct in the moonlight. Every now and again she halloed and shouted "Malibu! Gato!" Now she was running, a triumphant smile on her lips, for she knew that Malibu was almost directly ahead of her.

Following the hay trail, Malibu climbed the hill towards Bergman's corral. The wind was in his face, so that he did not hear his name. His eyes glistened greedily as he saw the big bunch of hay that covered the spring trap. A few more steps and he was passing under the deadfall gate.

Then Toni spied the ranch and the corral. A shuddering gasp shook her slight frame as she saw him walk beneath the deadfall.

"Malibu!" she shouted, but too late. The great gate crashed down, making him a prisoner.

Toni ran to the great gate and exerted all her young strength to lift it, but it would not give an inch. But Malibu had moved close to her now, so she could reach out and pat him.

"Quiet, now!" she hissed. "Don't you worry. I'll get you out!"

Furiously she set to work unslashing and removing some of the bars, at the same time whispering low words of encouragement to the frightened buck. But Bergman and Joe had heard the noise of the great gate. They had a prisoner, and chuckled gleefully, but they did not hurry.

Bergman raised his lantern and started as he heard the crashing of timber. The two men saw a slight figure and rushed forward. Someone was tearing down the walls of the corral and trying to let a great big deer escape.

Toni heard them and worked desperately to make an opening for Malibu. "Malibu, come on—jump!" she screamed, heedless of her own danger.

The buck gathered himself together for the jump to freedom. With a flying leap he went up and through the hole that the girl had made in the corral. Toni shouted with delight, then fear-

lessly turned to face the two men who were hurrying towards her.

Bergman lost no time. Reaching Toni, he fired at Malibu, only to have his aim deflected as the girl knocked the rifle up in the air. The buck disappeared among the trees.

Livid with rage, Bergman turned on the girl. He dropped his rifle and gripped the girl by the collars of her coat. His evil face leered at her.

"I'll teach you to interfere with—"

But he never finished his sentence because there came a terrified scream from Joe.

"Look out!" The little man's face was convulsed with fear.

Toni and Bergman turned, and there, crouched on a fallen tree-trunk, was Gato, in feline readiness to spring to the aid of Toni and Malibu.

It was the girl who saved the situation. She pushed Bergman away.

"Do as I tell you!" she ordered the two cowering men. "Maybe I can keep him away from you."

Gato was snarling and hissing furiously, fully ready to tear to pieces the creatures who had threatened his mistress. Slowly, inch by inch, the two men backed warily away from the puma.

"Get back to your cabin, but move slowly!" Toni whispered.

Edging backwards as rapidly as possible, the two men barely drew breath until they felt themselves at a safe distance from the gleaming eyes fixed hungrily upon them. Although the snarl had left Gato's face, he was not wholly pacified by Toni's endearing whispers. Uncurling himself gracefully, he jumped past the girl and bounded after the men.

Arms waving madly, Bergman, on the steps of the cabin, shouted:

"Let me in, there! Get out of my way!" And, yanking the other back, he bolted into the cabin, with Joe close on his heels.

Gato prowled around the cabin for a few more minutes, then satisfied that he had scared off his mistress' attackers, he moved towards the woods.

"Gato! Gato!" called the girl.

The puma hesitated and turned his head. Somewhere in the woods was his friend, Malibu.

Toni saw the mountain cat and she moved towards him, but Gato bounded away down the trail. Often she called their names as she wended her way through the trees, but she did not see them again that night, though both were lurking among the trees.

And that night Malibu again trotted the snow-covered forest—unharned, majestic, and kingly in his wild beauty.

Bob Alden's face lit up when Toni appeared the next morning at the rangers' headquarters. She knew from the ardent intent of his gaze that she was far from being forgotten. The knowledge gave her a strange thrill.

She told him all about the return of Gato and Malibu and how Bergman was trapping deer.

"Trapping native deer is a serious offence," he commented. "I'll have a few words to say to that skunk. Another break, and he'll lose his licence." He smiled at her. "Say, I'm glad you're back. How's your dad?"

"Dad's fine and the book's a great success. They want him to write a sequel."

"I'd like to see him again." Boldly he took her arm. "And I'd like to walk home with you."

"And I should like you to walk home with me," she answered with simple coquetry. "I'm so glad to be back in the forests."

(Continued on page 24)

At first she hated him, then came a day when, on the brink of a bullet-swept gorge, he faced death for her sake. The story of a hard-riding Westerner who saves a wilful Eastern girl from her own folly and the wiles of an unscrupulous rustler. Starring Buck Jones and Peggy Campbell



Mary Lawrence Decides

IN the studio of her apartment on Riverside Drive, Mary Lawrence, the beautiful, but spoiled darling of New York's younger set, was putting the finishing touches to the painting of a cowboy riding a bucking horse. Standing back, she surveyed her handiwork critically, then shook her fair head.

"No, Ethel, it's really not what it should be," she sighed.

"Nonsense, my dear," returned the other girl. "It's splendid, and I'm sure the Academy will think so, too."

Somehow Mary felt a little annoyed. Her friend's flattery did not have the ring of sincerity about it and, to tell the truth, she was getting a little tired of meaningless compliments.

"As it happens, this isn't for the Academy," she announced. "It's for my Uncle Jed. I thought if I could send him a painting to show him that I'm doing something really worth while here, he might stop bothering me. He writes every day or so, insisting that I come West."

Ethel laughed.

"You? In the West? My dear, how absurd!"

"But that's not all," went on Mary, throwing her brush down and leading the way over to the settee. "This morning I had a letter saying he has sent his foreman, Buck Benson, to try and persuade me to change my mind. And there was another note, too, from this foreman or whatever he is, telling me that he has arrived in New York, and asking when he may call!"

"Do you know this Benson person at all?" asked Ethel, raising her eyebrows.

"No; but I think I have a picture of him somewhere, taken with Uncle Jed

at the ranch." Mary went over to a bureau, and began to rummage about in a drawer. "Ah, here it is."

She looked at the snapshot of the two in their wide sombreros, studded chaps, and sagging gun-belts, and a smile came to her lips. Ethel, when the picture was handed to her, laughed out loud.

"But, my dear, what are you going to do? You can't possibly have that kind of person hanging around. People will laugh at you—oh, it's too ridiculous! You can't possibly see him!"

Mary looked thoughtful, and a sudden gleam came to her eyes.

"Yes, I'll see him," she said slowly. "And people will laugh—but not at me!"

Already she was beginning to feel hostility against this man whom her uncle had sent. She had no intention of leaving her art studies in New York for some dead-and-alive ranch in the wilds of California, and a plan for humiliating this unknown messenger was forming in her mind. "I'm going to give a party, and Mr. Benson will be the guest of honour. I'll get Tom and Nellie to come, and the Hoyts and the rest of our gang, but as I want our visitor from the wide, open spaces to feel quite at home, we'll make it a real Western party!"

"You mean—"

"I mean we'll all dress up as cowboys and cowgirls, just to poke fun at him."

The party was arranged for the next evening, and by the time Benson was due to arrive, Mary's apartment was filled with young people, garbed in Western clothes, who were passing the time in a most un-Western manner—chatting, drinking cocktails, and dancing to the strains of a jazz band.

At last the door opened and Mandy, Mary's coloured maid, came in.

"He's here, Miss Mary," she announced.

Mary put down her cocktail.

"All right, show him in, Mandy."

Mandy's round, ebony-black face held rather a bewildered look.

"Don't you think you ought to see him alone, first?" she inquired.

"Certainly not!"

"But, Miss Mary—"

"Didn't you hear what I said?" snapped Mary. "Show him in, Mandy!"

"Yes, 'm," murmured Mandy, turning away obediently.

"Now, let's have that Western music," Mary told the band leader. "Listen, everybody—nature's nobleman has arrived!"

The band struck up "The Cowboy's Lament," and a chorus of cheers and jeers arose from the guests. Then the door opened, and as the expected visitor entered, the noise and the laughter died down and a faint gasp of astonishment went up. For, although the newcomer was a big man, darkly bronzed, and with the stamp of the outdoors upon him, he was immaculately clad in evening dress, and instead of appearing uncouth and ill-at-ease he seemed remarkably self-possessed. He looked around at the company, at the made-up "cowgirls," at the white-faced, absurdly soft-looking "cowboys," and his mouth twisted in a faint smile of amused contempt.

"That's Miss Lawrence, sittin' on the arm of the chair," Mandy told him.

He strode across to Mary and regarded her gravely.

"Miss Lawrence? Let me introduce myself—I'm Buck Benson. I hope I'm

not intruding." He spoke with a Western drawl, and his teeth gleamed white and even in the brown of his face.

He was so different from the kind of man she had expected that, for a moment, Mary felt a loss.

"Not in the least," she murmured. "I trust that you feel quite at home."

Once again his keen, deep-set grey eyes flickered over the roomful of New Yorkers.

"If I'd known of this masquerade I would have postponed my visit," he said.

"We both seem to be masquerading, Mr. Benson," she returned.

He came a little closer. So big was he that he seemed to dwarf everybody else in the room.

"I don't want to spoil your party, but I'd like to speak to you alone, if convenient."

"I'm afraid you're wasting your time," said Mary, with a smile. "I've heard all Uncle Jed's arguments, and I tell you as I've often told him—I will never go West. My career is here."

"Your what?" he inquired.

She detected the sarcasm in his voice, and flushed.

"My career. I'm an artist." She led the way over to the studio. "Maybe you'd like to see a sample of my work."

She showed him the painting of the bucking horse, but instead of making any comment he just stood and looked at it, and shook his head.

"Well, what do you think of it?" she asked.

Although a lot of the details in the cowboy's dress were all wrong, Buck Benson could see that the painting, as a whole, was really quite good, but he was determined not to give her any encouragement. From the first he had sized her up. This niece of old Jed's had been spoiled all her life. Well, she wouldn't get any flattery from him! What she needed was to be put in her place.

"Frankly, I think it's terrible!" he told her. "Painting broncs is an art you'll never major in, Miss Lawrence. That is, unless you come West and study and—"

"Perhaps you had better say what you came to say," interrupted Mary coldly. "I'm sure it has nothing whatever to do with art."

Buck turned to her.

"I did have quite a speech made up, but I'll cut it short. Your uncle is a very sick man, and unless you go to him quickly, I'm afraid it'll be too late."

A look of surprise and concern crossed Mary's face. Although she had only seen her uncle on his rare visits East, she felt a genuine affection for the old man.

"He never mentioned anything about being ill in his letters," she said.

"No, he was in hopes you'd come without that," was the answer.

It was at that very moment that Mandy came in, holding something in her hand. "Telegram for you, Miss Lawrence."

Mary took it. Before she opened it she knew what she was going to find. Coming, as it had, just when they were talking about Uncle Jed's illness, she felt a strange flash of intuition, and she knew she would never see the old man again.

"There'll be no answer, Mandy."

"Yes, ma'am."

The print danced before Mary's eyes as she read it. She handed it to the big Westerner, and he took it without a word.

"Oh, I'm so sorry!" broke out Mary, her eyes bright with sudden tears. "I

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didn't know. I'll start West as soon as possible."

Buck Benson's face hardened.

"There's no hurry now. I'll take care of the funeral—and I don't think it'll make a bit of difference to Jed whether you come or not."

Turning on his heel he made for the door. Mary followed him, whilst the guests looked on, silent and self-conscious. Suddenly he stopped and turned to her again.

"On second thoughts," he told her curtly, "you being his only heir, it'll probably be necessary for you to be there at the reading of the will. I'll let you know the date. Good-night, Miss Lawrence."

Mary's eyes flashed.

"I'll be there, if it's only for the pleasure of discharging you!" she cried out after him.

When the door had closed on his broad back she broke down, and dropping into a chair and waving off her girl friends who tried to comfort her, she sobbed as though her heart would break.

The Runaway

ON a morning when the Californian sun lay hot on sagebrush and cactus, and there was an electric sparkle in the air, Buck Benson drove a buckboard down the Los Gatos trail towards the railroad station where he was meeting Mary Lawrence's train. Beside him sat Ben, a lean, bow-legged cowboy with ears that stuck out from his head and a solemn expression on his perpetually puckered face.

With the reins gripped in one large, capable fist, Buck held the two half-wild broncs to a brisk trot. He was late already, but that was not worrying him much. At the moment he was more concerned with affairs back at the ranch.

Since Jed's death the management had naturally passed to him, and in the last few days a lot of the young stock ranging on the river section had mysteriously disappeared. That meant only one thing. Rustlers. In his own mind he was pretty sure who the rustlers were, but the trouble was that he could not prove it. If only he could catch them red-handed!

"How come you handle wild broncs as easy as you handle men?" jerked out Ben, as the foreman swung the team round a sharp bend in the precipitous trail.

"I understand broncs and men," returned Buck.

"Ever try your hand with women?"

Buck thought of Mary Lawrence.

"When I do I'll use both hands! Giddap!"

When, some time later, they clattered into the station yard, they found Mary seated on a trunk on the platform. Mandy was standing behind her, beside an enormous pile of luggage. Leaving Ben to hold the horses, Buck jumped down and went forward.

He took off his sombrero.

"How d'you do, Miss Lawrence. Sorry I'm late."

Mary, tapping her heel on the platform impatiently, looked up at him.

"So you finally got here. Where is the car?"

"Car? Oh, that's it!" Buck grinned, and pointed to the ramshackle buckboard. "And those things attached to it in front," he explained politely, "are horses." He stared in amazement at the luggage. "Are all these yours?"

"Of course," was the indignant reply.

Buck shrugged, and began to help the station agent load the trunks and suitcases on to the buckboard. A place was found for Mandy between the luggage

and the front seat. Buck turned to help Mary up, and then swung on to the seat beside her.

"These are my horses, I presume?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Then I'll drive them," she announced.

Buck caught Ben's eye, and the cowboy was frantically motioning "No!"

"Listen, miss," said Buck; "if you haven't been driving for quite a while, this is hardly the team for you to start with."

"I'll thank you to mind your own business, Mr. Benson!" flared the girl, and with the words she seized the reins and the whip.

"Are you sure you know what you're doing?" queried Buck.

Mary's only answer was to settle herself more firmly in the seat, and with her chin in the air she took a fresh grip of the whip. The near-side horse rolled his eye wickedly, and his ears went back.

Buck began to feel a grudging admiration for the girl beside him. She looked mighty pretty, with her fair hair and her clear eyes and determined little chin. She was spoiled and stubborn as a mule, but she had plenty of spirit, and he liked spirit, whether in a horse or a woman.

"All right," he told Ben. "Let 'em go!"

Ben let go, and jumped back as the broncs reared and plunged forward. Mandy screamed, and the next instant the light wagon went bouncing and swaying out of the yard and on to the trail in a cloud of dust, both horses pounding along at a mad gallop. Buck glanced back, and saw Ben leap on to the back of a saddle horse which had been tied to a hitch-rail in the yard, and start in pursuit, apparently with the idea of rescuing some of the luggage that was being shaken off and scattered along the trail.

Mary, her face white, her teeth clenched, sawed desperately at the reins, but the tough-mouthed and only half-broken broncs had taken the bit between their teeth and were bolting. Buck knew that if he took the lines from her he could soon bring the team under control, but, instead of that, he kept his seat and said nothing. This part of the trail ran fairly straight, and it was an instinct with horses, even bolting horses, to keep to a trail. Before they came to the first bend he would take over, but not yet. She had wanted to drive, and drive she should. This would teach her a lesson!

Suddenly, however, to Buck's horror, one of the reins broke, and the free end flipped back into Mary's face. The broncs, now under no control at all, shot forward at an even faster rate, whilst Mary, clutching the one useless rein, gave a little scream of fright.

Ahead of them, a bare hundred yards away and getting rapidly closer, was a sharp bend in the trail, and Buck knew that unless the runaway team were stopped, or at least slowed down before reaching it, the buckboard would be overturned and smashed to kindling wood. There was only one thing to do, and Buck Benson did it. Without a moment's hesitation he stepped over the dashboard and on to the wagon-tongue between the galloping broncs, and began to edge his perilous way forward. One false step meant being dragged down and mangled under the thundering wheels.

At last he was far enough forward to catch the dangling length of line. Swinging himself astride the nearside horse he gathered both reins, and pulling back with all the steely strength of

his big arms he brought the sweating broncs to a trot, and from that to a halt.

"Mah goodness gracious!" moaned Mandy, as Buck dropped off and led the team to the side of the trail. "I don't want no more rides like that. I'se walkin' next time."

Buck looked up at Mary. "Throw me that line!" he ordered curtly.

Mary tossed him the broken line which she was still holding.

"That was splendid!" she told him. "I want to—to—"

"You want to be your age, and not a stuck-up snob," he cut in, starting to splice the rein. She flushed angrily, but said nothing, and when he had finished he climbed up beside her again and thrust the reins into her hand. "Here, take this line and drive. You asked for it."

"I will not!" she blazed, furious.

"All right, I'll throw 'em away. Giddap."

As the team sprang forward again he made as though he were going to toss the reins loose.

"No!" screamed Mary, snatching at them.

By now most of the steam had been taken out of the broncs, and Buck knew they would give no more trouble, so for the rest of the way he made Mary drive. Not once on the long journey did she speak to him, but sat there in stony silence, stiff-backed and tight-mouthed.

When they arrived at the El Fanita ranch-house they found a group of cowboys waiting for them. As Mary brought the team to a stop the lounging, hard-bitten range-riders eyed her

with interest and curiosity. Buck jumped off and helped her down.

"Gentlemen, may I present Miss Mary Lawrence."

The men grinned, raised their hats and looked rather self-conscious.

"You are all personal friends of Mr. Benson's, I presume?" Mary asked, looking them over.

"We sure are," assented some of the cowboys emphatically, whilst others nodded and smiled.

"Then consider yourselves discharged the moment I take possession!" flashed out Mary. "Have my luggage brought into the house immediately," she told Buck, with an imperious toss of her head. "Come, Mandy."

And with the men gaping after her in astonished dismay she stalked off into the house, followed by the obedient Mandy.

Buck, stunned by this unexpected bombshell, could only stand and watch her go. Then, hands on hips, he shook his head sadly.

"Well, can you beat that?" he muttered.

The New Boss

THE next morning found Buck seated before a table on the porch engaged in the unpleasant job of figuring out the men's time and writing their pay checks before dismissing them. He had always got on well with his men. They were a hard-working, cheery bunch, and he hated to see them kicked out suddenly like this. The time-book showed that one of them, Murphy, so far from having anything coming, was twenty dollars short.

When Murphy heard that he shook his head sorrowfully.

"Guess I'll have to leave my saddle. I ain't got no twenty bucks. Walkin' sure goin' to be tough, though."

"Don't worry about it," Buck told him. "We'll see what we can do for you."

"Thanks, Buck," grinned Murphy, gratefully.

"I sure never expected she'd fire all us old hands," put in Ben, rolling a cigarette. "We're going to miss you a heap, Buck."

"You needn't feel so sorry for yourself," grunted Buck. "I'm fired, too."

At that moment a buggy drove up before the porch, and a tall, elderly man alighted. It was Radcliffe, the lawyer, and Buck remembered then that this was the day the will was to be read.

"Hallo, Mr. Radcliffe," greeted Buck. "Miss Lawrence is expecting you."

"Howdy. Howdy." Brief-case under his arm, the lawyer came on to the porch and looked around at the group of cowboys. "Well, what's the matter with all you boys?" he demanded. "You look and act like you were going to another funeral."

"We are," returned Buck grimly. "We're burying a lot of pleasant memories to-day. We're all fired."

Radcliffe laughed.

"Well, the newcomer has ideas of her own, eh?"

"That's not funny to us!" growled Buck.

"Come on, Buck," said the lawyer. "I want you to introduce me to Miss Lawrence." When the foreman hesitated he took him by the arm. "Come on, come on," he urged, smiling.

Buck did not feel like meeting the



"You needn't worry about taking him to the ranch," rasped Buck. "He's going to gaol!"

girl at the moment, but he led the way into the living-room and sent Mandy to fetch Mary. When Mary's step was heard outside the door Buck, with a muttered: "Say, I haven't got any business here," started to leave, but the lawyer stopped him.

"Now don't get excited," soothed Radcliffe. "Everything's going to be all right." He thrust the brief-case into Buck's hands. "Just hold this, will you?" Then he turned to greet the girl.

Mary was feeling and was looking in a better temper than when Buck had last seen her. She had slept more soundly than ever before in her life, and the zestful air had put a keen edge on her appetite. She was beginning to admit that perhaps the West might prove to be rather a wonderful place after all—if only something interesting would happen to relieve the dullness.

"Well, well, so this is Miss Lawrence—Mary Lawrence," broke out the lawyer, going towards her. "My, my, but you're more beautiful even than your uncle said you were. And I've heard about you ever since you were knee-high to a grasshopper. Let me look at you."

She turned round for his inspection, and seeing Buck, frowned.

"It seems like you ought to be a little girl," chuckled Radcliffe. He led her over to theavenport. "Sit down right here, and we'll get this business over in a hurry. Oh—er—Buck, bring my brief-case, will you?" When Buck came over the lawyer motioned him to sit down. Awkwardly Buck sat down next to Mary. "Now I won't have to read so loud and we'll all be more comfortable," announced Radcliffe.

Mary got up.

"Is it necessary to have a witness?" she inquired stiffly.

"No-o-o," murmured Radcliffe.

"Then I consider Mr. Benson's presence unnecessary," she said.

Buck started up.

"I told you I didn't want—"

The lawyer put out a restraining hand and turned to Mary.

"But, you see, Buck is not a witness. Fact is, he's mentioned in your uncle's will."

The Will

"WITH your permission," went on Radcliffe, taking a document out of the brief-case, "I'll skip all superfluous matter and get right to the first bequest." He cleared his throat and began to read:

"To my only living blood relation, Mary Lawrence. I do hereby bequeath all my worldly possessions providing and according as set forth herewith.

"One. The property known as El Fanita Ranch, comprising sixty-two sections, or thirty-nine thousand, six hundred and eighty acres.

"Two. All money as is deposited in the State Bank, amounting to three hundred and twenty-six thousand, eight hundred and forty dollars."

The lawyer smiled at Mary.

"So you see, your uncle has made it possible for you to be a very wealthy young lady."

"And when may I take possession of my inheritance?" Mary wanted to know. Radcliffe scratched his neck thoughtfully.

"Well, let me see—I guess Buck will have to answer that."

Mary and Buck looked at him in surprise.

"You see," he explained, "it says here, 'In the endeavour to safeguard the interests of my heir, Mary Lawrence, it is a condition precedent to this agreement that she live continuously for at least one year at El Fanita Ranch, and I hereby appoint my foreman; Buck Benson, guardian of my heir and estate to serve without restraint until such time as he believes my heir, Mary Lawrence, capable of managing her inheritance.'"

There was a moment's silence, then Mary got up.

"May I read that last part?" she asked in a small voice.

"Certainly, certainly, my dear," agreed Radcliffe handing over the will. Buck felt dazed.

"Does this mean that I'm still the boss?" he demanded. "That she can't do anything unless I say so?"

"It sure does. Old Jed would never have rested in peace unless he knew it would be that way." The lawyer turned to Mary. "Well, Miss Lawrence, is everything satisfactory? Do you accept the terms of the will?"

Mary nodded.

"Certainly."

Soon afterwards the lawyer took his departure, and when he had gone Buck went across to Mary.

"This will," he said, rather at a loss for words. "I—it puts me in rather an awkward position. I assure you I knew nothing about it."

Mary smiled. And when she smiled like that, Buck forgot a lot of the hard things he had been thinking about her.

"Now that I understand your official position, Mr. Benson," she said, "don't you think we should be at least friendly enemies?"

"Friendly enemies? Why enemies?"

"I'll ask you the same." Again she flashed out that dazzling smile. "You know, I think I'm going to like the West."

Buck came closer, his grey eyes looking into her blue ones.

"You know, I think I could like you an awful lot if you'd just be yourself," he said.

"Thanks for the compliment," laughed Mary. "I'll try!"

Buck hesitated.

"I guess you didn't mean what you said about firing all my boys?"

"No; I've changed my mind," confessed Mary. "I was feeling furious at everybody at the time, and I had to take it out of somebody. I was sorry about it afterwards."

"Thanks!" grinned Buck, turning away. "Then I guess I'll go and break the good news to the boys right away."

The Rustler

IT was about five weeks later that Buck, riding along by the northern boundary of the ranch to see if there was still plenty of feed in that section, noticed the hoofmarks of a shod horse. Puzzled, he swung his horse, Silver, round, and followed the tracks up the hillside. They were fresh imprints, and could not have been made by one of his own riders as he had sent all the men to round up some steers on the southern side.

On the hard, burnt ground of the hill-top the tracks were hard to follow, but Buck's hawk eyes missed nothing. He saw where a stone had been kicked out of place, where a bunch of grass had been trampled, and he followed the trail till it wound down into a draw where sage-brush and cactus grew thick, then up to the top of a rise.

Suddenly he caught a glimpse of movement on the plain below, and in a flash he wheeled Silver behind a clump of tall bushes where he could watch unseen. And as he watched, Buck Benson's eyes narrowed, and he hitched forward his Colt .44.

About a half mile away a man was hazing a small bunch of two-year-olds

before him, making for the wild country that lay to the north-east of the El Fanita. So this was the way the rustlers had been working! Sneaking off a few head at a time.

A thin smile creased the corners of the foreman's mouth. For a long time he'd been wanting to catch the mangy thieves red-handed, and at last luck had been kind to him. Spurring his horse forward, and keeping under cover as much as he could, Buck started in pursuit. By this means he managed to halve the distance between them before the rustler saw him. Once the thief caught sight of the foreman's big grey, however, he wheeled and fled, with Buck after him.

Silver, stretching out into a raking gallop, gradually overhauled the rustler's pony, and as Buck got closer he recognised the man.

"Dick Brady!" he muttered. "I knew it. The king-pin of the whole bunch!"

Suddenly the fleeing rustler turned in the saddle, and two shots rang out. Dust spurted by Silver's flying hoofs. Buck's mouth tightened and he fired back, but Brady had crashed into the cover of a cottonwood thicket and was soon lost from view. Heedless of the branches that whipped his face, Buck followed, and when he emerged on the other side, he saw Brady had doubled back and was heading for the rocks and gorges that bordered the swift flowing Thunder River.

Grimly Buck kept after him. Again Brady fired at him, and again missed. Buck raised his gun, but changed his mind. No use wasting shots when the range was too long; he'd wait till he got closer. Brady couldn't get away. He had him cornered against the river.

The foreman, however, had not allowed for the rustler's craftiness, for when he had nearly reached the precipitous gorge Brady flung himself from his horse, ran forward, dropped his gun, and dived into the swirling waters far below. Galloping up, Buck was just in time to see him striking out for the opposite bank.

Buck's brain moved fast. He saw that the swift stream was carrying Brady along, and that the rustler would be swept around the bend before he could reach that other bank. There was just one chance to head him off, and that was to jump the gorge at the Devil's Leap—a spot where the river narrowed and the sheer sides of the gorge leaned towards each other till their edges were a bare thirty feet apart.

Desperately Buck raced along. Silver's pounding hoofs striking sparks from the rocks. Straight at the gap he spurred. If any horse in the world could clear that canyon, with its steep approach and treacherous take-off, Silver could.

Faster! Faster! The gap yawned before him.

"Come on, old boy!" he urged. He felt Silver's muscles bunch under him as the grey gathered himself together; then he was soaring through the air and had landed cleanly on the other side.

"You beauty!" Buck muttered, leaning forward to pat the silky neck. "Thanks to you, I've got Mr. Brady right where I want him." And cramping Silver's head round, he started to find a way down to the spot where he knew the rustler must land.

Mary Flouts Her Guardian

AS it happened, there was somebody else in the vicinity of the Devil's Leap that afternoon, and that was Mary Lawrence. The beauty of the rugged cliffs and flowing water fascin-



Buck's iron grip fastened on Brady's wrist, and his right came round in a smashing blow

ated her, but that was not the only reason for her presence.

Buck, fearing that she might come to harm if she went riding unaccompanied in this dangerous, canyon-scored spot, had told her to keep away from it, and that had made her more determined than ever to visit it at every opportunity. This was the fifth day running she had come here.

She was lazing on the sun-warmed rocks by the water's edge when she heard shots some way off on the far side of the river. Thinking it was only Buck or one of the men out after grouse, she took no notice, but soon afterwards she was startled by a cry of "Help!" And looking up she saw a man struggling desperately in mid-stream. Caught in the eddies of the strong current, he was plainly exhausted.

For a moment Mary hesitated, then she ran to where she had tethered her horse in the shade of some elders, and snatched the rope from the saddle-horn. Again came that half-choked cry. Stumbling in her haste she hurried back to the bank, and swinging the riata round her head the way she had seen the punchers do, she flung it out with all her strength. The loop fell close enough to the struggling man for him to catch it, and in a few minutes Mary had hauled him to the edge and helped him out. He lay for a bit, getting his strength back, then rose to his feet.

"Thanks a lot!" he gasped. "I was pretty near finished."

Mary saw that he was tall and dark, with a handsome face, marred by a peculiar expression in his brown eyes. At the same time, from the corner of her eye, she saw Buck and the easily

recognised Silver scrambling down the cliff face towards them.

"I think you'll be all right till Mr. Benson and I can get you to the ranch," she said.

"Benson?" He looked startled and, following her gaze, saw the approaching Buck. "No—I can't let him find me here!" he jerked out.

"Why not?" returned Mary. "He's my foreman."

"You?" He stared at her. "You are the owner of the El Fanita Ranch?"

"Why, yes."

A strange glint came into his eyes.

"Listen, I'm an officer of the law on the trail of cattle thieves," he said quickly. "My name is Brady, but nobody must know my real purpose here, not even Benson. He thinks I'm a rustler, and although I could easily explain matters to him my hands are tied. I'm trusting you not to betray my confidence. You'll help me, won't you?"

Mary nodded and, as Buck dismounted and strode up to them, she turned to the foreman.

"Mr. Brady here has been hurt," she told him. "You must help me get him to the ranch."

"You needn't worry about taking him to the ranch," rasped Buck. "He's going to gaol!"

"But there must be some mistake," put in Mary. "I can vouch for Mr. Brady's integrity."

"Then the mistake was on your part," retorted Buck. "This man is a rustler. I caught him running some of your cattle off." He grabbed Brady's arm. "Come along, feller!"

Mary pushed herself between them.

"I hoped it wouldn't be necessary for me to make any explanations," she said

haughtily, "but the truth is that Mr. Brady is my friend." Something in her seemed to delight in opposing Buck, and the fabrication rose glibly to her lips. "He has been in my employ for the last month, and anything he has done has been with my knowledge and consent."

Brady's eyes gleamed with triumph, and Buck's face hardened.

"May I ask what his official capacity is?" demanded the foreman.

"I employed him as special investigator to check the assets of the ranch," was Mary's quickly thought-up answer. "I must insist that you don't interfere with him."

Buck reddened with anger.

"I think I can do any investigating you want done; and as your guardian I demand that you discharge this fellow immediately!"

"And if I refuse?" asked Mary, raising her chin.

"You won't refuse!" returned Buck grimly, and turning his back on them he swung up on Silver and rode off without another word.

Brady watched him go.

"Maybe, as he's your guardian, I'd better keep away from you," he suggested doubtfully.

"I'll show him he can't browbeat me!" flared Mary. "You shall stay at the ranch as my guest."

"You're mighty kind," drawled Brady. He gave her a long, appraising look that brought the colour to her face. "Shall I get your horse?"

"Please."

As they moved off together, Mary felt a thrill of excitement. Although there was something about the man beside her that she could not wholly trust, the adventure appealed to her.

Especially as it meant antagonising Buck Benson!

Thus it was that Buck, coming out on to the patio of the ranch-house that same evening, was confronted with the sight of Mary and Dick Brady sitting close together on a bench. Not only that, but this man, whom he knew to be a rustler, was strumming on a guitar and singing a love song in a crooning baritone, whilst the girl, with a far-away expression in her eyes, showed every sign of being completely fascinated.

It was too much for Buck. He strode across to them.

"I thought I told you to discharge this man?" he rasped.

"I don't want to do that," murmured Mary. "He plays wonderfully." To infuriate Buck still further she gave Brady a languishing glance. "Besides, I like him."

"Well, by the time I've finished with him he won't be quite so pretty to look at!" gritted the foreman between his clenched teeth; and with the words he seized a fistful of the rustler's shirt and jerked him up off the bench.

With a savage oath, Brady lifted the guitar and aimed a fierce blow at Buck's head. Buck dodged beneath it, caught Brady's wrist and twisted it till the guitar dropped from his grasp. Then he smashed his fist in the rustler's mouth and sent him reeling against the wall. Mary screamed, but this time she had started something it was beyond her power to stop.

With blood trickling from his cut lip and his face contorted in fury, Brady charged back and whipped in a savage blow that landed under Buck's heart with the thud of a horse's kick. Buck staggered, then recovered, and slammed home a left and right that made Brady gasp and hang on desperately.

Resorting to every dirty trick he could think of, the rustler ground the edge of his wrist against Buck's eyes, and then, when he had the foreman half-blinded, tried to butt him under the chin. Up came Buck's fist in a lightning uppercut that ripped Brady's head back.

With the speed of a striking snake Brady's hand went to his gun holster, stark murder staring out of his dark eyes. But Buck was too quick for him, and as the gun leaped to the rustler's fist, Buck's iron grip fastened on Brady's wrist, forced it downwards. The Colt roared deafeningly, and the bullet spattered against the stone floor of the patio. The next instant Buck finished the fight with a terrific right to the jaw that smashed Brady half-senseless to the ground. With his foot he kicked the rustler's gun out of reach.

The fight had brought several of the men on the scene, Ben and Murphy among them.

"Escort this gent to the ranch gate, and see that he keeps going!" ordered Buck.

Ben caught Brady by the collar and pulled him to his feet.

"Come on!"

As the cowboys hustled him off the rustler turned, a baleful gleam in his eye.

"You'll pay plenty for this, Benson!" he snarled.

Wild Cattle

IN the days that followed Mary contrived to see a lot of Dick Brady.

The very fact that her guardian had forbidden Brady to come near the ranch only strengthened her determination to stage a flirtation with the man. Nearly every day she arranged secret meetings.

May 11th, 1935.

and even started to paint his portrait. Although there was a side to Brady that frightened her, she was convinced Buck was mistaken and that Dick was not really a rustler. A bit wild, maybe, but not a thief.

One morning, when the picture was nearly finished, Dick swung down from his horse, where he had been posed motionless for nearly half an hour, and came over to the girl. From some way off came the lowing of cattle and the faint "Yip! Yip!" of the punchers who were herding them, but at the moment neither the man nor the girl took any notice, for they had chosen as their meeting-place a spot that was fairly well screened by trees.

"You're about the best model I've ever had," Mary told him with a smile.

He came close to her, looking down at her. Then, so suddenly that it took her breath away, he clasped her in his arms and kissed her.

"You're wonderful, Mary," he said hoarsely. "Wonderful."

He was tall, good-looking, and in spite of herself she felt his attraction. But she was not in love with him, and she knew she never would be.

"Please, some of my men are coming." She wrenched herself free. "They might see you."

The sound of the moving herd was indeed nearer, and through the trees they caught a glimpse of a milling, jostling mass of cattle.

"All right, I'll go. But will you meet me again to-morrow? By the river, where we first met?" Brady's voice was urgent.

"Well, perhaps," Mary replied. "You see, I'm expecting a visitor—one of my Eastern girl friends—and I'm arranging a dance for her to-morrow night."

"A dance?" Dick's eyes lit up. "You know, I think I'll come to that party."

"But Buck—"

"Don't worry about Buck Benson," returned Dick. "Leave him to me!" He caught his horse and mounted. "Good-bye—till to-morrow." And with a last wave of his hat he cantered off and had soon disappeared from view.

For a while Mary sat musing on his words. What did he mean about Buck? There had been menace in his tone, and in spite of her feud with her guardian she didn't want Buck to come to any harm. And Dick was the desperate type who would stop at nothing once his enmity was aroused.

A crashing in the undergrowth roused her from her reflections, and she looked up, startled, to see three or four steers coming towards her. Apparently they had broken away from the main bunch. One of them, long of horn and wild of eye, came to a halt about a hundred yards off and stood, with lowered head, looking at her.

Mary had a woman's instinctive fear of cattle of all kinds, and with a little cry she turned and ran. To her horror the steer began to trot after her, and as Mary ran faster the beast's trot lengthened into a lumbering gallop. Panic-stricken and spurred on by her fear, she tore blindly along, stumbling and gasping. Headless of the thorns and brush that ripped her clothes, she heard the pounding hoofs gaining on her, and a scream of sheer terror left her lips.

At the same time she became aware of another sound—the faster beat of a galloping horse. She glanced back over her shoulder. Behind the steer, and gaining rapidly on it, was a rider on a white horse. Buck Benson!

Her foot caught against a stone and she fell headlong. Scrambling up, she saw the steer was almost on top of her.

Then horse and rider were alongside, and Buck had dropped from the saddle, caught the end of the brute's horns, and, hanging on with his whole weight, twisted its head round so that it stumbled off at an angle and missed Mary by a few feet. Seizing her opportunity, the terror-stricken girl dashed across to a stunted tree near by and climbed on to the nearest limb.

From this vantage-point she watched breathlessly whilst Buck brought the steer to a standstill, and, using his great strength to lever the long horns downward, wrestled the maddened beast to the ground. When at last he took his weight off its head, the steer scrambled up and ambled meekly off, beaten and cowed.

"Oh, Buck, I was never so glad to see anyone in all my life!" gasped Mary, as the foreman walked over to her.

"You'd have been all right if you had just stood still," he told her, helping her down. "You must never run. Cattle chaso people that run."

"You're telling me!" remarked Mary feelingly.

"Come on, let's go and collect your painting outfit." He whistled, and Silver trotted up obediently. "I'd like to see how you're getting on."

Mary hesitated, but with a grin Buck picked her up, lifted her in front of the saddle as easily as if she had been a child, and swung up behind her. When they reached the easel he looked for a long time at the likeness of Brady which stared up at him from the canvas.

"This rustler must've made a deep impression on you for you to remember him so well," he said slowly. "Looks like he might have posed for it."

Mary coloured.

"He did," she admitted.

"Are you in love with him?" Buck asked in a quiet voice.

The tears sprang to Mary's eyes.

"Oh, Buck, I'm sorry! It isn't because I was in love with him, but I was lonesome—romantic." She began to cry. "And I didn't want you to boss me all the time."

Buck gathered up the easel and the palette and tied them on behind the saddle.

"Here, here, don't cry and get your pretty eyes all red!" he soothed, patting her shoulder. "Barbara won't understand."

Mary looked surprised.

"Barbara?" she ejaculated.

"Yes, she arrived this morning. That's why I was out trying to find you. After all, she's your visitor."

Mary felt a queer little pang of jealousy.

"How is it you call her Barbara so easily?" she wanted to know. "You've always called me Miss Lawrence."

"Oh, I've known her a long time!" he returned casually. "Met her back East at the polo matches. Well, guess we'd better be getting home."

"Leave Buck Benson to Me!"

WHEN Dick Brady left Mary he rode hard, mile after mile, till he reached a certain well-hidden canyon in the wild and rugged country that bordered Los Gatos. Following the dry canyon bed he came at length to the camp which he and his band used as their headquarters. Horses tethered in some bushes nickered at his approach, and three hard-faced men, lounging around a fire, rose to their feet. They looked at him inquiringly.

"Well, did you fix things?" one of them asked.

"I sure did." Brady swung down and came across to them. "Boys, we make our play to-morrow night."

"To-morrow?" One of the men, bow-

legged and evil-looking, scowled. "Why wait till to-morrow?"

"They're holding a dance at the ranch-house to-morrow night, that's why," Brady told them. "And you know what the El Fanita dances are like. Every last puncher on the ranch will be there, and they'll have nobody out riding night-herd. Sheriff Corson will probably be there, too, with his deputy and some of his men."

"Huh, I don't see nothin' favourable in that!" grunted the bow-legged one. "He's a tough hombre, that sheriff. I'd sooner he was somewhere's else."

"Don't worry, Steve," said Brady. "I'm going to that dance myself, and before I leave I'm going to let down the corral rails and drive off every saddle horse in the ranch yard."

"You're going?" Steve stared at him in astonishment. "Takin' big chances, ain't you?"

"I'm going to get the girl." Brady grinned. "If things work out the way I think they will, we'll be married by dawn the next morning. I'll have two of the boys waiting at the rocks by the Devil's Leap with a priest from the San Jacinto Monastery."

A tall man whom the others called Hank shook his head and spat.

"Boss, I don't like it," he muttered. "Girls and rustlin' don't mix too good."

Brady's hand went to his gun.

"Who's running this outfit?" he snarled. Then he forced a smile.

"Listen, I'm figuring on driving off every head of stock on that river section at one swoop. I don't reckon on there being any hitch, but if anything did happen to go wrong, as husband of the girl who owns the ranch, I'd be able to straighten everything out."

"He's right," said Steve. "We'd be in the clear. What do you want us to do, boss?"

"You and Hank will come with me," Brady explained. "I'll leave you about half a mile from the ranch-house and go in to fetch the girl myself. She'll be willing all right, and I'll fix it somehow. Shorty and Kergan will be waiting at the Devil's Leap with the priest. Lufe and the rest of the boys will have the whole herd rounded up and moving north, and as soon as the priest has married us, I'll join you. And if Buck Benson and his men trail us, so much the better!"

"How d'you mako that out?" grumbled Hank.

Brady's mouth twisted into a cold grin.

"Did you ever see a better spot for ambushing a posse than the gorge by the Devil's Leap?" he said softly. "We'll be waiting for them. But just one thing—I want you to leave Buck Benson to me!"

Although Mary had been looking forward to seeing her friend again, Barbara had not been at the ranch very many hours before Mary bitterly regretted having invited her. For from the very first moment Buck and Barbara seemed to get on very well together. So well, in fact, that Mary, to her own surprise, found herself being burnt up with jealousy. Only now did she begin to realise what Buck meant to her.

Because she had known Buck in the East, Barbara seemed to look upon him as her own private property, and flirted with him at every opportunity. She treated him with the familiarity of an old friend, and was continually saying: "Buck darling, don't you remember that day at Meadowbrook?" or: "I shall never forget the time that we first met, will you?" until Mary was heartily sick of the sound of her voice.

Had Mary but known, Barbara meant nothing at all to Buck, but she amused

him, and though at times he felt rather embarrassed, he was too polite to rebuff her. The climax came the night of the dance; a climax that played directly into Dick Brady's hands.

Except for a few dances which the sheriff and some of the men claimed, it seemed to Mary that Barbara had nearly every dance with Buck. Naturally, Buck danced with Mary, too, but when he did, Mary felt so furious that she made matters worse by treating him distantly and snubbing him. Buck, unaware of the real reason, took it as a sign of her usual hostility towards him, and for the rest of the night kept out of her way.

The night was nearly over, and most of the dancers were getting tired, when Mary, strolling out on to the back veranda for a breath of fresh air, came upon Buck and Barbara sitting together in the shadows. She had no intention of eavesdropping, but even as she turned to go she saw Barbara put her arms round Buck's neck and heard the sound of a kiss. Head in the air, her face flaming, Mary stalked off and out on to the patio as far away from them as she could get.

In the east the sky was beginning to turn pearl grey with the approaching dawn, and a cool breath of air fanned her cheek. Suddenly someone close by called her softly by name.

"Mary."

Startled, she looked round. Then Dick Brady was beside her.

"Dick, you shouldn't have come!" she gasped.

"Why not?" Brady laughed, and pulled her gently to him behind a large shrub. "I said I'd come, didn't I?"

"It will only cause trouble," Mary whispered. "If Buck and the sheriff

"I had to see you," broke in Dick. "You know I'm crazy about you. Look, I've got a horse waiting for you. And a priest. We'll be married—at once!"

His voice was husky and urgent, and Mary felt herself carried away by the glamour of it all. Still, she would not have listened if it had not been for the thought of Barbara and Buck. She was feeling hurt and wounded, and, obeying a sudden impulse, she caught Dick's arm.

"All right. I'll come. But wait for me a minute. I can't leave dressed like this."

She hurried off to her room, changed into her riding things, and scribbled a note which she gave to Mandy.

"I want you to give this to Mr. Benson," she told the surprised maid. "Not now. Not for at least an hour. Do you understand?"

"Why, yes, ma'am." Mandy's eyes were two round saucers. "But, mah goodness, what ever is you aimin' to do?"

"Never mind now. And don't forget—give that note to Mr. Benson in an hour's time. Not before."

"Yes, ma'am."

Creeping downstairs, Mary left by a side door and rejoined Brady unobserved. Together they stole softly from the patio, and were soon mounted and riding away.

The Fight on the Ledge.

AFTER Mary had gone, Mandy felt very troubled. The more she thought about it, the stranger did Mary's actions seem. And at last, in spite of Mary's instructions, she decided to wait no longer, but to give the note to Buck. She found him talking to the sheriff, and when he ripped the note open and read it his mouth tightened.

"Dear Buck"—he read—"I have left with Dick for the spot by the river where he and I first met. It is useless for you to follow us, for by the time you get this note we shall have been married."

"MARY."

"How long is it since she left?" rapped out Buck.

"About fifteen minutes, I guess," replied the frightened maid. "Maybe a little more."

At that moment a cowboy stumbled into the room. His face was streaked with dust and sweat, and he limped from a bullet wound in the ankle.

"Rustlers!" he gasped. "Down on the river section! They've got the whole darned herd rounded up! They winged me. Couldn't do anythin' on my own, there was too many of 'em."

Immediately all was pandemonium.

(Continued on Page 27)

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(Continued from page 16)

Sanctuary

WITH daybreak the puma and the deer went their various ways. There was some queer bond of understanding between them. Perhaps they knew that their lives were different, and that it was impossible for them to remain together always—one was a hunter and the other the hunted. But they knew now each other's haunts.

Some weeks later Malibu came upon a heard of does, who turned to stare at the new cavalier who had come within their midst. The big buck, the master of the doe herd, resented the presence of a younger rival, and charged at Malibu. There was a great crashing noise as their heads struck together, their horns locking.

Malibu was young and very strong, whilst the old buck was big and heavy; and, after a titanic battle, Malibu became the master of the doe herd. And soon, on a day when a light snow was falling, the young buck found shelter for himself and the doe he had chosen. Set in between some boulders and trees, it was ideally located on the crest of a small knoll.

Then, as time passed, the snow melted and vanished from the ground, and the beauty of summer was again in the forest, with its green trees and wild flowers in full bloom. Now the shelter housed a new-born fawn. Malibu watched it proudly hour after hour as it lay nursing by the side of its mother.

One day as he was leaving the shelter to plunge into the forest, the doe, after a minute of indecision, trotted along with him. The fawn watched them for a few moments, then darted after them.

In the woods that day, Bergman's helper, Joe, was engaged in the task of tying a bunch of carrots to a piece of rawhide hanging to a tree. Close by Bergman deftly attached a gun to a neighbouring shrub, then, standing at the butt, he sighted off to get a bead on the carrots.

"If the rangers get wise," mumbled Joe, "we'll get gaol."

"If they find out!" sneered Bergman. "Besides, we can't stay here and starve. Then pesky rangers have corralled most of the deer in the preserved areas, cuss 'em!"

Malibu and his little family nibbled busily at the tender grasses as they wandered through the thicket. Then, raising her head towards the low branches, the doe's eyes lit on the carrots. She stared at them, moved closer, snuffing around at them suspiciously with a backward glance at Malibu and the fawn.

Gradually she became convinced it was safe to eat them. Putting up her head to nibble at them, she jerked them to one side. Simultaneously there came the loud report of a rifle.

At the base of the tree the doe crumpled and fell to the ground, mortally wounded, her last agonised glance searching for her family. Malibu and the fawn ran to her side. It was pitiful to see the grief of the fawn. He glanced at his father in mute question—why was his mother so still? Malibu could only stand there in shocked bewilderment.

The fawn bent and licked its mother's ear. At this Malibu tried to force him aside by nudging him gently with his nose. Instinctively the fawn tried to cling to its mother, but now, Malibu, fearful of what might happen next,

pushed the fawn to its feet, then indicated by walking away that his son must follow.

From the shelter of high grasses Malibu looked back. Two men had appeared and were stooping over the dead doe. The buck knew those men, and his head lowered as if he would charge them, then he looked at the shivering fawn and nosed the little fellow to move towards the high ground.

Lonely and disheartened, they moved over the boulders, and when night had fallen approached the Martin cabin.

They vaulted the low hedge and stopped at a point just between some trees, and Malibu carefully inspected the house. He saw Toni at the window, and was reassured. He put down his head and rubbed noses with the fawn lying on the ground. Instinct told Malibu that here the fawn would be in the best of care. After a while the fawn slept, and with gentle, stealthy tread, Malibu stole away and disappeared into the night.

All night the great buck waited and watched, and with the dawn went to the high ground overlooking the cabin. When he saw Toni with the fawn in her arms, Malibu tossed his head and turned away. No harm would come to the fawn.

Murderers in the Woods

IT was amazing how Malibu and Gato would appear when least expected. Toni would not see them for weeks, and then one day she would see Malibu outlined against the sky, or Gato slinking through the bushes. Nearly always Toni took the fawn with her.

On one occasion Toni had a bathe in a mountain lake and left the fawn and Sang Soo's baby roped together to a peg. Tragedy might have occurred if the watchful Malibu had not appeared on the scene. A rattlesnake slid rapidly over the ground towards the frightened fawn and the crying baby. As the rattles sang out their song of death, Malibu's forehoofs trampled the snake into the ground with deadly violence. The rattler tried to strike back, but the lightning-like hoofs mangled the vicious creature to an untimely end. Like a statue Malibu waited for Toni, and his eyes seemed to warn her to take more care in future.

"Malibu, be careful." She kissed the buck's wet nose. "Soon these woods will be full of men and guns. I know you're smart, but be careful." She pointed to the distance. "Go way up in the mountains and don't come back till there's snow on the ground."

With a last affectionate hug she took Feng Soo and the fawn and left him.

On another occasion Toni was startled by a deep-throated growl, and looked up to see Gato comfortably ensconced in the crotch of a tree, and, after some persuasion, the puma lazily descended to the ground. The girl caressed his velvety back, and soon he was purring like a small motor. For a while the great cat lay with his head on her lap, until a distant shot made both start.

Toni sobered and faced the puma seriously.

"Gato, this is no time for playing. There are men in these woods who have a perfect legal right to shoot you on sight, so go off to the mountains and see what old Malibu is doing."

The puma yawned, licked her face with his tongue, and strolled away. Another shot sounded, and nearer, and that made Gato vanish with the speed of an express train.

That evening Toni met Alden at the look-out tower by appointment. By now there was an understanding between the two young people, and they had the blessing of Mr. Martin.

The girl described her meeting with

Gato and how she feared for the safety of the two creatures.

"Things are going to be better," Bob Alden assured her. "For years big city magnates, game-hunters, and other riff-raff have come here to shoot deer, and it's been more like slaughter than anything else. Deer have become so scarce that the reserved areas have been enlarged and protected, whilst the season has been shortened. In two days' time the season closes, and Master Malibu will be safe—Gato will never be safe."

"That rascal Bergman's the worst menace you've got, Bob."

"Yes, he's always poaching and trapping deer, but we can't catch him," Bob nodded grimly. "When we do, out he goes."

They encountered the gentleman in question with a party of hunters, and from the surly expression on Bergman's face knew that the sport had been bad. The game-hunters paid according to the sport. This year the game preserves had robbed Bergman of much of his usual income, and with only two days to go it meant that the rascal would have to find work in a lumber camp instead of drinking himself stupid on his dirty earnings.

Bergman glowered after the ranger and his girl.

"Stuck up young hussy," he told the huntsmen. "Puts on airs. She tried to tame a puma and it robbed my ranch. The pesky brute's about here still, and one day I'll get it."

"How about getting us some deer instead?" someone suggested. "Not much action for the price we're paying."

Bergman looked at them craftily.

"Wait a minute, gents. I'll give you a guarantee. No deer, no pay. How's that?" There was a grunt of agreement. "To-morrow I'll take you to a special place where if you don't get a buck apiece it'll be your fault, not mine."

Stampeding the Herd

THAT night Bergman sat nervously on his horse looking around furtively every now and then as he waited outside the high wire fence which bore the sign "U.S. National Park. Boundary Line. Hunting prohibited. Department of the Interior." In the moonlight he sighted Joe moving behind several does and bucks. Skilfully Joe drove the half tame creatures through the opening in the barrier.

"Nice work, Joe," hissed Bergman, and slipped from his horse. Quickly the two men set to work to replace the wires of the boundary fence. "If these dudes can't hit them they can't hit nothing."

"They're sure tame enough." Joe shook his head. "If the rangers get wise we're—"

"Cut out all that whining cant!" snarled Bergman. "We got to live, ain't we? And if you double-cross me and squeal I'll—"

"Not so loud, Will, not so loud!" begged Joe. "Course I won't squeal. I ain't yeller."

Dawn was just breaking as the herd of deer followed by Bergman and Joe neared the corral.

"I'll keep 'em moving whilst you get the corral gate open," ordered Bergman.

High upon a rock Malibu had halted to watch the scene that was taking place before him. He snorted a little as he saw the deer move into the corral and saw the heavy trap fall into place. The deer were racing round the corral seeking a way of escape.

Joe and Bergman, their task completed, moved towards their own cabin. "Just as soon as we're through with breakfast we'll get busy," Bergman nodded his head. "They'll be dressed by now." The hunters were staying in a nearby shack. "Then you slip out and come down and let the bucks out one by one. I'll have the boys stationed up the drive that the bucks will take on their back to their old feeding ground, and our friends will think they're great shots—the lunkheads." He chuckled wickedly to himself.

Malibu soon arrived at Bergman's secret corral. Moving along outside, he sensed the danger to the herd and carefully searched for a low spot in the fence. Finding it he vaulted lightly over. Then landing on the ground he moved in and around the herd. Finally he turned and made for the fence at the run, hoping that his fellow-creatures would follow his example. They moved towards the fence and saw Malibu sail gracefully to freedom. The buck looked back and once more vaulted the fence. Twice he repeated this manoeuvre, but the does and bucks did not seem to understand.

Bergman and Joe appeared on horseback. The two men saw a great buck sail over the fence and then back again. They did not for the moment understand what Malibu was trying to do, but when one buck did follow and escape then Bergman yelled lustily: "He's stampeding the herd!" He was nearly choking with rage. "It's that big buck with the white saddle-mark."

Back went Malibu because the rest had hesitated; but they had heard Bergman's voice, and when the buck leapt the fence they did not hesitate.

Cursing and swearing, Bergman urged his horse forward and arrived at the corral as the last of the herd leaped to freedom.

"I'll get him if it's the last thing I do!" shrieked Bergman. He raised his rifle, but Malibu was too far away. "I'll get him! I'll get him!"

The rascal dug his spurs viciously into the flanks of his horse.

Man Versus the Wild

BERGMAN rode off in the same direction that Malibu had gone.

Cunning Bergman rode around a huge rock and waited for a moment. Malibu appeared from the right and paused to try and locate his enemy. Up went the gun, but in that second the deer moved, and the bullet missed by yards.

The guide spurred his horse up the hill, and then up went the rifle as he sighted Malibu climbing. The gun spoke, and Bergman gave a shout of triumph as the deer tumbled to the ground head over heels.

Instantly, however, Malibu had picked himself up and dashed away, his ruse having worked successfully, for Bergman had relaxed his watch. The guide cursed heartily to see a fleeting figure away among the trees.

Malibu did not flee away, but came back to dodge in and out of the trees—he had to get that herd back over the boundary. Perhaps it gave him joy to tantalise the man who had slain his doe. He left the shelter of a boulder and skipped through a shallow stream to the other side. And Bergman spurred his horse on with renewed zest as he rode through the stream, seemingly hot on the deer's trail.

The buck moved cautiously round a large rock as Bergman came riding through the brush. Malibu slipped into a cave and watched his enemy ride past. Bergman gritted his teeth in over-

whelming rage because his four-footed foe had escaped.

But Bergman was not so easily shaken off. He reined his horse in and scanned every shrub and clump of brush closely. Malibu poked his head warily out of the cave and moved away. A quick turn of the head and the deer jumped back—he had been seen. Again the bullet sped wide.

Bergman charged after the deer, his murderous intent blinding him to the form of Gato who was lying nearby on a rocky ledge, watching the chase with sombre, heavy-lidded eyes. Never taking his eyes from the pursuer and the pursued, the puma rose to his feet and hurried after them.

In full flight now Malibu flew on, down a steep slope and on to a log that projected out into the stream. Then with a desperate look round he jumped from the log and swam across.

Bergman, on a high knoll, looked down just at that moment. Then his lips curled back in a savage grin. He brought his gun to his shoulder. There was the crack of the rifle and the water splashed as two or three slugs hit close to Malibu. Filled with wild fury that he had missed, Bergman now rode his horse towards the stream, only to be thwarted again, for Malibu had reached the opposite bank and was racing off into the thicket.

Bergman rode away at full speed, planning to cut off the deer on the other side. Filled as he was with a consuming determination to finish the deer off, he had not noticed the spent condition of his horse. Suddenly it stumbled, throwing him heavily to the ground. He rolled over and over to crash into a tree-trunk. Collecting his dazed senses, he watched his riderless horse disappearing rapidly into the distance. But his determination to go after Malibu had not abated a whit. He started through the woods, stopping hopefully every now and then at some slight noise.

Then, projecting out of a bush, he saw Malibu's head. He tried to settle his jumpy nerves, so that his rifle arm would serve him well. Taking careful aim he fired, sure this time, he had scored a bullseye.

But Malibu was moving away, when suddenly he stopped. Then he turned his head and licked a bloody spot on his flank where Bergman's last bullet had grazed him.

Malibu made his way to the top of a saudy bluff—a dangerous, steep incline, which he started to descend. Skillfully leaping down the slanting slope, he reached the bottom just as Bergman came to the top and moved to the edge.

After a few steps the guide lost his footing and started to slide, rolling over and over to the bottom. As he stood up, shaken and much the worse for wear, Gato began cautiously picking his way down the slope after him.

Over the rocky ground Bergman hurried, with Gato always just a little in the rear, silently stalking him. Then he veered a little to the left of Bergman, leaping to a rock that he meant to use as an observation point.

Approaching this very rock, Bergman decided to rest against it to renew his strength. As he walked round it, Gato, from his higher vantage-point, followed his every move with watchful, glistening eyes, never removing them for a second, even when Bergman dropped wearily

down and stretched his arms with a wide gesture of relaxation.

Malibu was now approaching a sheltered cave in the rocks. He sprang up to the side of a boulder to enter the cavern, but weak and spent by the bullet wound, he fell back helplessly.

Suddenly Bergman saw him and jumped to his feet. It was the chance he had been waiting for, for Malibu was at his mercy.

But Gato, too, had been waiting for this moment. The raised gun was his own private signal to come forth in defence of his friend. Springing forward, he landed, a huge furry burden, on Bergman's shoulders.

Bergman was flung forward, and the shock sent the rifle out of his hands. He scrambled to his feet to find the great cat preparing to spring at him again. Panic made him turn and bolt for his life. Gato was after him, leaped up in the air and landed on Bergman's shoulders. Now Gato was on top of him, both of them rolling over and over in the struggle. The cat hissed and snarled, whilst the guide's breath came raspingly from his heaving chest.

Malibu, standing in the entrance of the cave, pricked up his ears at the savage sounds of battle. With head thrust forward he left the cave and was soon running through the woods in the direction of the sounds.

Bergman still struggled frantically with Gato, knowing that he was fighting for his very life. Pushing drastically, he made iron bands of his wrists and shoved off the great cat with all his strength.

But his respite was brief, Gato was back again, one of his great paws at Bergman's throat. His sharp claws had already pricked through the skin, leaving a number of tiny red marks that would have meant death had they been deeper.

Bergman became desperato with fear, and, exerting his great strength, threw the puma from him and managed to get to his feet.

The force with which he had hurled Gato to the ground had stunned the puma for a few seconds, just long enough to give the guide a chance to run off. Gato leaped up in pursuit of him.

Bergman was now approaching the river bluff. Once, in an agony of exhaustion, he staggered and fell to the ground. Then, as he saw Gato not far away, he picked himself up and continued running. His eyes were glazed over with fear and weakness, but he persisted on.

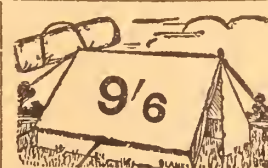
Then, just as he reached the bluff, Gato, with a long flying bound, attacked him again. Landing squarely in the middle of Bergman's back, he knocked him to the ground, biting and clawing at him. They fought, their struggles bringing them closer and closer to the edge of the bluff with the river below.

Bergman's eyes were starting from his head as he saw the dripping jaws come nearer and nearer to his face. Now he tried to summon to his aid his very last ounce of strength. They were on the very edge of the bluff, and suddenly the man managed to bring his knees up

(Continued on page 28)

THE ROAMER TENT

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"SANDERS OF THE RIVER"

(Continued from page 10)

ing regiments whom he had dispatched against Bosambo's people. Then a cold fear went through him, to be swiftly followed by a paroxysm of rage, and he turned an ugly glance towards the hut which had been placed at the disposal of Farini and Smith.

Farini was loitering in the entrance of the dwelling, and Mafolaba beckoned him viciously. As the white man approached, the Old King barked a question at him.

"Do you hear what the drums are saying?" he bit out.

Farini spread forth his hands in a deprecating gesture.

"How can I tell what they're saying?" he rejoined.

"Sandi is not dead!" Mafolaba snarled. "Sandi is back on the River. Sandi has wiped out my army!"

Farini had turned pale. He saw the Old King rising up before him with wrathful countenance, and with a quick gesture he made a grab for his revolver, only to be seized by half a dozen of the negro monarch's retainers before he could draw it—only to be struck down by dagger and club.

From the hut Smith had witnessed the fate of his accomplice, and with a gun in his fist he made a dash for the river bank near by. A native tried to stop him, but went down with a shriek as the renegade's revolver belched death. A moment later the white man was blundering into a canoe.

He snatched up a paddle and thrust the craft through the water. Behind him there was a furious uproar, and numbers of Mafolaba's people were running towards the river's edge, armed with spears and bows.

A shower of arrows sped towards the panic-stricken fugitive, and two of the shafts pierced him through the back. Uttering a scream that echoed across the river, he plunged lifelessly into the water, and the current swept his body downstream.

Back in the village Mafolaba was holding a hurried conference with his advisers.

"If Sandi comes here, it was the white men Farini and Smith who chopped Ferguson," he said. "Everybody remember that."

"We shall remember, Lord," one of his councillors rejoined. "But Sandi will not dare to come through the mountains with soldiers until after the rains."

"That is true," the Old King mused. "Listen, this delay will give me time to trap a leopard known as Bosambo. How would you trap such a leopard?"

"I would first get the right bait," another of his councillors replied.

The Old King's eyes narrowed cunningly.

"The right bait," he said. "The woman Lilongo, eh? Yes, she sets great store by her, and it would be an easy matter to take her now—while he and all his warriors are out on the warpath with Saudi."

He summoned three or four of his underlings who were squatting near by.

"Go get me the bait that will bring the leopard into my trap," he ordered harshly. "Go get me the woman Lilongo!"

In Mafolaba's Power

PEACE had been restored to the River again. Chastened and humbled by Sandi's Hausas and their Ochori allies, the tribes of the

jungle had learned a lesson which they were not likely to forget in a hurry.

A momentous palaver was held on board the Zaire. It was attended by all the chiefs of the River excepting the Old King, with whom Sanders intended to deal in the spring. And for the benefit of the assembled penitents, the Commissioner delivered a lecture that fairly burned their ears.

He dismissed them at last, and then prepared to bid good-bye to the faithful Bosambo, whose war canoes were lying alongside.

"Bosambo," he said, "you have made the Ochori the bravest people on the River, and I thank you for your loyalty. Go back now to your village, and to your wife and your little children."

"What of the Old King?" the big negro asked. "Is he not to be punished, Lord?"

"He shall be punished, indeed," Sanders rejoined. "But although we have defeated his army he still has many fighting men at his beck and call, and an invading force would find the mountains impassable at this time of the year. When the rains are over and the spring comes round I shall return with four battalions of soldiers, and your brave warriors will join me. Then we shall deal with Mafolaba."

"My warriors will be ready, Lord Sandi," Bosambo told him.

"Good," the Commissioner said. "And now farewell, my friend."

He passed a weary hand across his forehead, and then turned to Tibbets, who was standing near by.

"Tibbets," he murmured, "I think I've got a touch of fever coming on. If it takes me badly, I want you to anchor the ship well out in midstream and wait until the bout passes."

"Yes, sir," his assistant replied. "You're not looking well, sir. Why don't you get to bed right away?"

Sanders nodded, and departed in the direction of his cabin. Meanwhile Bosambo had rejoined his warriors, and, standing at the prow of one of his canoes, with two score of ebony backs bending to the strokes of as many paddles, the chief of the Ochori sang a deep-toned tribute to the Lord of the River.

Late that afternoon, Bosambo and his followers beached their canoes in front of their village and marched towards the huts. But if they expected a clamorous welcome from the families whom they had left behind them, they were sorely disappointed, for the shadow of gloom was heavy on the kraal, and the women and the children and the old men sat in silent groups.

It was Malibu who broke the news to Bosambo—Malibu, the aged negro who acted as major-domo in the chief's household. With trembling voice he told of a surprise raid by a party of the old king's men, told how they had slain the few guards left at the village and how they had carried off Lilongo.

As he listened to the grim story, Bosambo's face was that of a man stricken by grief and rage. Then all at once he wheeled and strode into his hut, where he wrote a note for Lord Sandi. This he gave to Malibu.

"Go," he commanded, "and take my little sons with you. Sandi will care for them. Tell him I have left for the country of the old king."

Malibu gave him a look of fear.

"But lord," he said, "an army could not pass the mountains at this season!" "An army, no—but one man, yes," Bosambo answered slowly. "That is why I go alone."

That evening he was following the

jungle trails that led to the mountains, his spear grasped in one hand and his shield in the other; and before a new day had dawned the throb of lokali drums was rising from certain villages that he had passed—telegraphing the news that Bosambo, chief of the Ochori, was hastening northward alone.

About that same time, old Malibu was standing on the deck of the Zaire with the chieftain's two small sons, and the note that Bosambo had written was being delivered to Sanders by Tibbets.

Sanders was in his cabin. He had passed a pretty bad night, and though he had dosed himself heavily with quinine, the ravages of fever were still upon his face and in his eyes. Yet, as he listened to the story that Malibu had given Tibbets, he forgot the illness from which he was suffering.

The commissioner opened Bosambo's message and scanned it swiftly. It read as follows:

"Even you could not go to the old king's country until the spring. Lord Sandi, I give my little sons into your charge—that they may be schooled on the money which the Government has paid me and brought up as the children of the Government."

Sanders jerked himself to his feet.

"Tibbets," he said, "I'm taking the Hausas north. I want you to escort Malibu and Bosambo's boys to the Residency, with a party of picked men—"

"No, sir," the younger man interposed quietly.

"I beg your pardon," Sanders snapped.

"I said 'No, sir.' I'm going with you, sir."

The Commissioner glared at him for a moment; then his face relaxed and he laid a hand on the lieutenant's shoulder.

"Oh, all right, Tibbets," he said. "Give the order to turn the ship upstream, will you? We're pushing our way through to Mafolaba's village."

His assistant looked startled.

"I suppose you know, sir, that no ship ever got so far up the river as that?" he mentioned.

"This one will be the first to do it," Sanders retorted. "I know all about the shallows, Tibbets, but the floods may help us."

The Upraised Knife

THE sun beamed down upon the riverside village of the old king.

Likewise Mafolaba beamed as he sat amidst his people and looked upon the features of a captive who was bound to one of the sacrificial stakes.

The captive was Lilongo, and, while he hearkened to the sound of distant drums, the old king addressed her mockingly.

"You know what they are saying?" he asked her. "They are saying that a dog of a little chief is on his way here."

"The drums lie to you, King Mafolaba," Lilongo answered. "Bosambo will not fall into your trap. He is too cunning for you—"

But the words froze on her lips, for even as she spoke them she saw a figure making its way through the mob of natives in the foreground. It was the figure of her husband, and with countenance set and tense he forced his way to her side and placed an arm about her shoulders. Then he turned his glance upon the grinning face of her tormentor.

"So, clever one," the old monarch said with a leer, "where is your cunning now? Have I not brought you here without a spear behind you—into my trap?"

"King Mafolaba," Bosambo told him. "I come in peace, but you may do with me what you will. This woman is the light of my life, and I would rather die than rule over my people without her."

His wife's lip trembled as she looked at him fondly. Then Bosambo spoke again.

"King Mafolaba," he went on, "let her go free, and I promise you that she will send back two thousand pieces of gold."

The old king laughed huskily.

"It is not your gold I want," he jeered. "It is your skin! Little dog of a chief, you chose to offend me once. For that you will die a slow death. But first you will see your woman die!"

A fierce cry escaped Bosambo, and with an involuntary gesture he drew back his spear, but ere he could strike with it he was seized by half a dozen of the old king's minions, who quickly disarmed him and dragged him to a stake several paces distant from the one to which Lilongo was tied.

Ho was lashed to the post with thongs, and then, while the village resounded to the beating of drums, the witch-doctor of the tribe capered towards Lilongo and began to dance before her maddeningly, even as he had danced in those few moments before Deputy-commissioner Ferguson had met his death.

Lilongo stared at him in horror, and then closed her eyes. Fastened to the other stake, Bosambo looked at her despairingly, tortured by the emotions that had welled up within his breast. The muscles in his cheeks were quivering spasmodically, and he was struggling to break the bonds that held him—struggling in vain.

The witch-doctor continued to go through the motions of the death dance, till at last Mafolaba ordered him aside and summoned his executioner, a powerful savage armed with a knife. This jackal advanced deliberately until he was face to face with Lilongo, and now he raised the dagger that he was clutching.

Lilongo closed her eyes again, and, watching her, watching that blade as the executioner prepared to plunge it into her heart, Bosambo groaned aloud. Then he, too, shut out the scene from his gaze, for this was something that he could not bear to witness.

The smash of a shot broke the trend of Bosambo's thoughts. It was followed by a second report, and he opened his eyes to see Mafolaba's witch-doctor and executioner falling to the ground, while Lilongo stood there with an amazed expression on her face, marvelling at her sudden deliverance from death.

Then came the deadly chatter of a machine-gun, and in the same instant Bosambo beheld the Zaire. Startlingly enough so far as those in the village were concerned, the ship had turned a bend in the river and was moving towards a crude landing-stage built against the bank.

Confusion reigned in the heart of Mafolaba and in the minds of his followers. Panic-stricken and unresisting, they watched Sanders, Tibbets and a company of Hausas disembark from the Zaire and advance at the double.

The rescue-party swarmed into the village, and the nuderlings of Mafolaba retreated before them in alarm. Within a few seconds Bosambo and Lilongo had been released, the former recovering his shield and spear.

Sanders held him back as he attempted to make for the old king, who was standing nervously in the forefront of his tribe.

"Leave him to me, Bosambo," he

said, and then turned to fix the elderly potentate with stern gaze.

"Mafolaba," he ground out, "do you remember what I told you once at a palaver in front of the Ochori village—that if you harmed one servant of the Government, be it only a carrier-pigeon, you would be a king no more?"

"I have harmed no servant of the Government," Mafolaba protested.

"Then who killed Ferguson?"

Mafolaba turned a sly, grinning face towards his people and invited them to answer Lord Sandi's question.

"White men Farini and Smith, they chop Ferguson," came the instant response.

Sanders looked at them grimly.

"That is a lie," he said. "I know that Mafolaba spared Ferguson to death, and for his crime I—"

The Commissioner checked abruptly, for all at once the old king's spear came up, and fear and hatred were mingled in the black scoundrel's expression as he tried to plunge the weapon into Sanders' heart.

The shaft never left his hand, for Bosambo was too quick for him, and the assegai of the Ochori chieftain sped straight and true, thudding into Mafolaba's gross body and sinking deep.

The old king collapsed with a cry that was the last sound he ever uttered, and before any of his followers could give trouble they were hemmed in by the Hausas, whose rifles threatened them steadily.

Again Sanders faced the cowering horde of natives.

"Who killed Ferguson?" he demanded. "Answer me! Who killed Ferguson?"

"King Mafolaba chop Ferguson, lord," a host of voices answered.

"Yes, and look at him now," the Commissioner rasped, pointing to the lifeless body. "Ho isn't king any longer. No, and I'm going to set up a new king in his place—a king who won't waste the lives of his people in wars, a king who will be monarch of the whole river, paying homage to none but the greatest King of all, whom I and Lord Tibbets serve."

Some days later, at a palaver to which he had summoned the chiefs of the upper and lower river, Commissioner Sanders formally proclaimed Bosambo overlord of all the tribes in the territory.

It was a proclamation that met with general approval, and when the palaver was over Sanders received the grateful thanks of Bosambo and Lilongo, both of whom were almost inarticulate with pride.

The Commissioner smiled at them, and then took Bosambo by the hand.

"Good-bye, my friend," he said. "I am going away now, and I know that in twelve months' time, when I return, I shall find this country is still a land of peace under your rule. For already your new people seem to like you, Bosambo—even the people who once served Mafolaba."

"Lord Sandi," Bosambo told him, "the people will always like me, for I have learned from you the secret of good government. It is this, lord: a king should be loved, not feared."

"That is the secret of the British, Bosambo," the Commissioner murmured.

(Specially written from incidents in the film "Sanders of the River," which was adapted from Edgar Wallace's novel of that name. By permission of London Film Productions, Ltd., and United Artists Corporation, starring Leslie Banks and Paul Robeson.)

"WHEN A MAN SEES RED"

(Continued from page 23)

The sheriff called to his men, and with Buck's punchers they dashed outside for their horses.

"Where are those broncs?" went up a shout as they found the slip-rails down and the corrals and stables empty.

Buck knew that Silver wouldn't be far off. The grey wouldn't stray away from the corrals even if he were turned loose and chased off. The foreman whistled, and pretty soon Silver came trotting up. Flinging a saddle on him, Buck saw to it that his gun-belt was crammed with cartridges. Then he vaulted up and thundered off on to the river trail, his face set and hard, his eyes drawn down into two steely slits.

Ben, one of the first to catch up a horse, galloped after Buck, whilst the sheriff and the others stamped off on foot after the rest of the straying broncs.

Instead of going the long way round, Buck headed straight for the river, determined to swim it if he had to. It was thus that he came into contact with a party of about six rustlers who were driving the tail-end of the herd along the stony banks. Without hesitation he rode at them, guns flaming. Two of them tumbled from their saddles. A third yelped like a kicked dog and slumped, swaying and clinging to his horse's neck. The rest, panic-stricken, scattered, whilst the scared cattle broke back and thundered up the bank.

Buck kept on along the river, crashing through the alders and leaping the huge boulders that strewed the way. From the far side a shot rang out, and a bullet fanned his cheek. Another struck fire from the stones ahead of him. Glancing across, he saw, clear in the early morning light, Dick Brady and Mary. They were on a rocky ledge like a platform, far up on the top of the gorge. Behind them he could make out the robed figure of a priest, with two of Brady's men standing on each side of him. Even as he watched, Mary grabbed at Dick's arm, frantically trying to prevent him from firing, but the rustler flung her loose and fired again.

Buck dropped from the saddle, tossed away his gun-belt, plunged into the stream, and struck out for the opposite bank.

A bullet plunked into the water by his head. Then another, so close that the water spouted into his face. With a deep breath he dived and swam under the surface.

After what seemed an age, he reached the other side. His lungs seemed to be bursting as he drew in great gulps of air and dashed for the cover of the rocks. Foot by foot he began to climb the gorge, protected from Brady's bullets by the precipitous cliff face.

Meanwhile, on the ledge above, Mary was watching, frozen with horror. She had hardly left the ranch with Brady before fear began to lay cold fingers on her heart. Then, when she rode out on to the river's edge and saw the cattle being driven off before her very eyes, she knew the man beside her for what he really was.

A rustler! A sneaking cattle-thief! How could she have been such a fool?

She wheeled her horse and tried to flee, but Brady was too quick for her. "No, you don't!" he rasped, catching her horse's bridle.

"You beast! Let me go!" she had cried in loathing.

But Brady had only laughed and

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hustled her along. Then, soon after they had reached the ledge, and when the priest, who was obviously in the power of the men who stood guard over him with drawn guns, had been about to start the ceremony, Buck had appeared.

She knew now, when it seemed hopeless and too late, that she loved this man who was climbing to her rescue. All she could do was look on, whilst Brady stood with drawn gun, waiting for a chance to shoot Buck down.

At last Buck's head and shoulders appeared above the ledge. Brady raised his gun, and, as he did so, Mary screamed and tried to throw herself on him, but one of the rustlers caught her and held her back.

The gun roared. Clutching his shoulder, Buck slid from view. Blood trickled through his fingers as, still holding his shoulder, he flattened himself against a rock. For a moment he hesitated. Unarmed as he was, it would be suicide to climb over the exposed rim of the ledge. His only chance was to rush Brady from behind.

Painfully he crawled off at an angle, and gradually worked round in a wide detour. As he did so he caught sight of a rider making his way along the edge of the gorge towards him. Gritting his teeth, he gathered himself together and dashed forward.

Surprised by this totally unexpected manoeuvre, Brady wheeled, and in that moment Buck was on him. His fist sent Brady stumbling backwards, but the momentum of the blow swung Buck himself off his balance. He stumbled, tried to recover, and sprawled headlong.

Again Mary saw Brady raise his gun. This time he could hardly miss.

A shot rang out, and Dick Brady staggered. For a moment he swayed, then crumpled in a heap.

Bewildered, Mary looked round, and saw the pucker of Ben appearing from the cover of a boulder. A smoking gun was in his hand, and he had apparently ridden up and crawled forward unnoticed. At the same time a posse of riders under the sheriff came thundering along the top of the canyon. Cursing, the rustlers on the ledge took to their heels with the posse in hot pursuit.

But Mary was oblivious to all this, for Buck's one good arm was round her, pulling her face towards his.

(By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Buck Jones and Peggy Campbell.)

"SEQUOIA"

(Continued from page 25)

sharply beneath the puma. Then his hands came up, and with a grip of iron he closed them around Gato's throat, closing his eyes and groaning with the effort of thrusting the animal away from him.

It was a crucial moment in the fight, the only moment that could have saved Bergman's life.

With a kick that had all his weight behind it and a directing shove he pushed Gato over the edge of the ledge. The puma turned over and over before hitting the river.

Though the guide had saved his own skin it had not been at the expense of Gato. Coming to the surface, the puma shook his head, then calmly swam to the bank and climbed out.

Bergman, in a sweat of exhaustion and badly mauled sank to the ground as if he would have liked to lie there for ever. He shook from head to foot at the thought of the horrible death he had just missed. A sound made him look up.

A scream of terror came from his lips. Twenty yards away stood Malibu, and his head was lowered.

Bergman tried to stagger to his feet, but his strength failed him. His face contorted in horror for the last time as Malibu, not slackening his pace, came full head on, his antlers crashing against the hapless guide.

Over the ledge Bergman went, his body striking some of the undercliffs, then hitting the water, it disappeared under the surface.

Malibu looked down from the cliff for a long moment until the water ripples had subsided, and the guide was seen no more.

The Watchers

SOME weeks later, Toni and Sang Soo were driving through the forest, which again had its gleaming coverlet of snow. The sleigh stopped abruptly as the girl heard a familiar voice hailing her.

"Hallo?" Toni beamed at Alden over the side of the sleigh.

"You're just the person I was looking for," Alden cried. "You must get out

of the sleigh. Over there is something you must read." He pointed to the trees.

Toni promptly handed the reins to Sang Soo.

"You wait here. I'll be back in a minute." Then she hopped out of the sleigh with the quite unnecessary but willing assistance of Bob's strong arms.

Sang Soo laughed.

"Every day you say back in a minute," he pointed out. "Every minute two hours. I go home. You take a walk, eh?"

"All right." Toni laughed to hide her blushes.

Bob led her to where a big notice was pinned against a great pine. It read:

"The boundary lines of the National Forest Reserves have been extended for a fifty-mile radius in every direction. No hunting. U.S. Department of the Interior."

"It's a life insurance policy for your pals," Alden said, watching the happy glow on the sweet face.

The two young people smiled at each other, and Bob's arms drew her close to him.

They may have thought there were no witnesses to their embrace, but over on the rocky crags Malibu watched them interestedly, while Gato sat close by. They turned and looked at each other through the falling snow, then Gato shook his head, and Malibu moved across to him. Their noses met in an affectionate caress. Then they settled themselves comfortably again, the better to watch the two humans whom they loved.

(By permission of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, starring Jean Parker as Toni.)

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SUPERSPEED



The News Reel

All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 220 The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

He Didn't Know How to Smoke

David Niven, the handsome young British actor, whose name is being linked romantically with that of Merle Oberon, recently created consternation on the "Splendour" set in Hollywood.

The script of "Splendour," Samuel Goldwyn's latest picture, starring Miriam Hopkins, called for Niven to light and smoke a cigarette—gracefully, man-of-the-worldly. Unfortunately, Niven doesn't smoke—never has—so that when he gingerly took a cigarette and proceeded to light it, he looked exactly like a fourteen-year-old making his first experiment. It took just half an hour, and a packet of cigarettes, for Elliott Nugent, the director, to teach the Briton how to smoke with proper nonchalance. And that half-hour hold-up cost the producer approximately £200.

Johnny Weissmuller Swimming Teacher for Siam's King

Johnny Weissmuller, Tarzan of the screen, is to be swimming teacher for the King of Siam.

He is arranging to photograph a series of his own swimming strokes, to send, with detailed explanations, to the Siamese monarch at Bangkok, as a sort of custom-made correspondence course in natation.

The Siamese King, who is intensely interested in swimming, met Johnny when he visited the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios on his recent world tour. Since then the two have corresponded. The Siamese King asked many questions about swimming, and finally suggested that if he had pictures of Johnny's strokes he could follow the lessons better.

So Johnny is arranging a complete pictorial course for the monarch, and is to film the pictures immediately on completing his present rôle in "Tarzan Escapes," in which he and Maureen O'Sullivan are reunited in another jungle romance.

DeMille on the Trail

If there are any of the erstwhile associates of Colonel William ("Buffalo Bill") Cody in England they had better get in touch with Cecil B. DeMille, who is to make a picture based on the life of the cowboy hero.

He wants the oldest living plainsman who fought side by side with Buffalo Bill, and the oldest living Indian who fought against the colonel.

When they are discovered and their claims authenticated, they will be taken to Hollywood, shown the sights of the town as DeMille's guests, and given rôles in the picture. Letters from hundreds of persons variously allied with Cody

December 25th, 1935.

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"STORM OVER THE ANDES"

An intrepid airman adventurer, who fought for any country who would pay well for his dare-devil flying. He was a hard-boiled soldier of fortune and he played a lone hand in this stirring story of air hawks in a war between two South American States.

"UNKNOWN WOMAN"

Larry Condon, a young lawyer, becomes the unwitting dupe of a gang of bond thieves, befriends a beautiful girl caught in a raid on a gambling den—and helps her to search for some "papers" which are really stolen bonds at the risk of his life and hers. A first-class thriller with a surprising climax, starring Richard Cromwell and Marian Marsh.

also

Another smashing episode of the grand serial:

"THE ROARING WEST"

Starring Buck Jones and Muriel Evans.

during his lifetime have already reached DeMille.

Not Continued in our Next

The comedian, Edward Brophy, who is playing a comedy gangster in "Snatched," an anti-crime picture, had a supreme test of nerve control when he had to lie, with closed eyes, pretending to sleep while a newspaper, covering the upper part of his body, was on fire and blazing in close proximity to his face. What made it harder, Brophy had

to remember to keep on loudly snoring till the last possible second.

The scene, calculated to draw laughter from an audience, was anything but funny to the victim. Premature movement would spoil the effect, so Brophy, with the paper blazing all around him, had to lie there straining his ears for Director George Marshall's signal to leap up just in time to escape cremation.

"Say, this is going too far!" exclaimed Brophy indignantly, as he stood looking at the charred remnants of paper after the scene was shot.

"What's the matter, Ed?" inquired Director Marshall solicitously. "Did you get scorched?"

"Yes, but I don't mind that. What I'm squawking about is the paper burnt up. It's the one in which I was reading that serial story."

How Charlie Discovered Himself

Most people know Chaplin as a brilliant master of pantomime, but few are aware that he discovered his genius for miming almost by accident.

Many years ago, as an unknown youngster, he toured the Channel Islands with a variety company. After performing before an unappreciative audience the players were informed that most of the islanders spoke a French patois, only a few understanding English.

The company refused to admit defeat, and in their next performance omitted the dialogue and relied solely upon action and gesture. It was in this performance that Chaplin's talent revealed itself, and showed him the tremendous possibilities of pantomime in surmounting the barriers of language.

Subsequent foreign tours confirmed this lesson, and Charlie gradually perfected the technique which was later to endear his name to every race, white, black or yellow, reached by the cinema.

(Continued on page 28)

"SUPER SPEED" — *Randolph Rogers, Norman Foster; Billie Devlin, Florence Rice; Nan Gale, Mary Carlisle; Terry Devlin, Charley Grapewin; Philip Morton, Arthur Hohl; Wilson Gale, Robert Middlemass; George Stone, George McKay.*

"WESTWARD HO" — *John Wyatt, John Wayne; Mary Gordon, Sheila Manners; Jim Wyatt, Frank McGlynn, Jim; Ballard, Jack Curtis; Red, Yukima Canutt; Young John, Bradley Metcalfe; Mark Wyatt, Hank Bell; Hanna Wyatt, Mary McLaren; Lase Gordon, Jim Farley; Young Jim, Dickie Jones.*

Employed by Gale Motors largely on the strength of his fame as a football player Randolph Rogers invents a supercharger that promises to revolutionise the industry. but his invention is made to appear a failure for the benefit of a rival company. A high-speed story of a fight for success, starring Norman Foster and Mary Carlisle



A Game—and its Sequel

A RECORD crowd had flocked to the Stadium that afternoon to watch the final football match of the season between the State University of Southern California and Stanford College, for Randolph Rogers was making his last appearance as a player for the State University, and Randolph Rogers had become one of the most famous quarter-backs in the country.

Nan Gale, daughter of Wilson Gale, the silver-haired president of Gale Motors, Incorporated, watched the game with excitement from her seat in the front row of the grandstand, and after a particularly fine effort on the part of the hero of the hour cried out: "Dad, isn't that Randy Rogers marvellous?"

"Quite a player, Nan, quite a player," conceded her father, who had been no mean centre-forward in his own remote college days, but who now turned the scales at fourteen stone and was fifty.

Praise, but not nearly praise enough, from the point of view of the golden-haired enthusiast; and as her idol achieved a masterly kick, foiled only by the Stanford goalkeeper, she exclaimed:

"Dad, I'll bet you a new hat he kicks the goal for the extra point!"

"You ought to give odds on that," protested her father. "He's only missed two all season."

Nan should have been content with that, but she wanted a new hat, though she certainly did not need one.

"You're a big help," she sighed.

On Wilson Gale's left sat Philip Morton, general manager of Gale Motors, Incorporated, a very tall and very self-contained sort of person for whom Nan had no great liking. His

chin was weak, but his brown eyes were cunning, and his mouth was cruel beneath a wisp of a moustache. He seemed to be absorbed in the game, but a little smile flitted across his lips.

No new hat would have been forthcoming, however, either for daughter or for parent, had the bet been accepted. With two minutes to go to the end of play and with no doubt whatever as to the issue the head-coach decided to let Randolph Rogers rest on his laurels, and gave instructions for another man to take his place.

Nan opened her blue eyes and her scarlet little mouth in astonishment as the referee announced the decision.

"Barton for Rogers! Rogers out!"

"Oh, look, they're taking him out of the game!" she shrieked.

"Probably tired," said Philip Morton, who knew very little about football, and cared less.

Randolph Rogers walked off the field, removing his leather helmet as he made for the passageway under the grandstand that led to the dressing-rooms. The spectators were on their feet and cheering vociferously, and Nan sprang up to join in the general clamour.

"Come on, both of you, give him a nice big hand!" she shouted.

With the roar of the crowd in his ears Randolph Rogers entered the passageway, where the head-coach gripped him by the hand.

"Nice game, Randy," he said appreciatively. "Sorry it's your last."

"Thanks, coach," returned the black-haired young man with rather a wistful grin on his clean-shaven face. "So am I—sorry and glad."

"I understand," nodded the coach; and then the stalwart policeman who

guarded the way to the dressing-rooms stepped forward.

"Randy, how about a souvenir for my kid?" he asked eagerly.

"Sure." Without the slightest hesitation Randy held out his helmet. "Give him this."

"Thanks," murmured the overwhelmed cop, and drew a long breath. "Gosh, he'll go crazy!"

Randy walked on through the concrete tunnel under the stand upon which men and women were shouting themselves hoarse and stamping their feet and clapping their hands.

"Listen to 'em!" commented the policeman. "They're tryin' to wreck the joint."

"Nice send-off," said the coach. "But he's heard plenty of that."

"Sure he has," agreed the policeman, gloating over the helmet he had acquired for his small son; "but it never made his head too big for this."

Nan Gale, who had lost all interest in the match now that her hero had departed, tugged at her father's sleeve. "Come on, dad," she said, "let's go."

At eight o'clock in the evening she and her father and Philip Morton were having dinner in the pillared restaurant of the Lake Café, in Los Angeles, when the manager sped to the platform on which an excellent little dance band functioned and whispered to the conductor.

Abruptly the strains of a slow fox-trot ceased and the conductor turned to raise his hands for silence.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he boomed, "I have a little unexpected surprise for you. We're honoured this evening to have one of the greatest football players of State University. He's just come into the café, so I suggest we all give him a nice big hand. Randy Rogers."

Randy walked in at the glass-panelled doors from the vestibule, a splendid figure of vigorous young manhood in evening clothes, and he looked distinctly embarrassed by the applause that greeted him. From all parts of the room people deserted their tables to swarm round him, and Nan flung down her serviette.

"He's here!" she burst out rapturously.

"So I judge," grunted her father. "Dad, don't you think he's good-looking?"

Wilson Gale glanced over his shoulder at the centre of attraction.

"Yes, clean-cut boy," he nodded, much as he might have approved some rival firm's make of car.

"He certainly sells himself," remarked Philip Morton; and that annoyed Nan.

"Randy Rogers doesn't have to sell himself!" she flared. "Everybody's sold on him!"

It occurred to her that a scheme she had in mind was ripe for fruition, and she leaned towards her father.

"Put his reputation in with Golden Arrows," she said brightly, "and you could even sell them!"

"Sell Golden Arrows?" Wilson Gale frowned at what he considered to be an insult to the cars manufactured by his company; but suddenly ceased to frown, possibly because his general manager had dared to sniff.

"Say, wait a minute!" he exclaimed, and looked again at Randy and at the crowd that besieged him. "So long as people insist on making fools of themselves over this boy they might believe in his recommendation of a car. We've had testimonials from bankers and doctors, but never from a football player."

"You do have ideas," purred Nan, "and that's a honey. It would be the slickest thing conservative Gale Motors ever did. Make him a salesman."

Wilson Gale pursed his lips and considered the suggestion, but Philip Morton expressed disapproval in his own fashion.

"After all," he said, "you've never gone in for the spectacular."

"Well, that's what's wrong with the company," declared Nan, "and I'm about to fix it."

She pushed back her chair and rose to her feet impetuously.

"Wait, Nan!" cried her father. "Wait till we decide."

But Nan was not prepared to wait at all and she flitted off between the tables to squeeze past Randy's admirers.

"Nan must have her heroes," said Morton drily.

"Well, this one may be useful," retorted Gale.

Without the slightest ceremony Nan pounced upon her prey.

"Hallo, Mr. Rogers," she said with a bewitching smile. "Remember me? Nan Gale—at the Junior Prom last year."

Randy did not remember her, but was far too gallant to say so.

"Oh, yes, yes, of course," he murmured.

She slipped her arm through his in the most possessive manner imaginable, and she said:

"Come on. I want you to meet my father."

Willy-nilly he was marched over to the table and introduced to Wilson Gale.

"Dad was in the class of nineteen-hundred," Nan informed him.

"It's a real pleasure, Mr. Gale," said the rather bewildered young man.

"Glad to see you, Rogers," returned the motor magnate. "This is Philip

Morton, the general manager of our company."

Morton exchanged greetings without any sign of enthusiasm, and stood up.

"I'm sorry to run away," he said, nodding in the direction of an elaborate bar at the far end of the room, "but I see somebody I know over there."

He drifted away, and at Wilson Gale's suggestion Randy occupied the chair he had vacated.

"I believe you're graduating," said Gale.

"Yes," Randy replied. "This spring." "I suppose you're going into some broker's office as a customer's man?"

"As a matter of fact," replied Randy emphatically, "that's the last thing I want to do."

"I don't quite understand."

"I'd like to get into something I know," was the unexpected answer.

"You see, I'm taking engineering."

"Engineering?" exclaimed Gale.

"Well, that's quite a coincidence. I was just saying to my daughter—"

"He was just saying," Nan broke in without too strict a regard for the truth, "that he'd like to have you with Gale Motors."

Her father rewarded her with a frown. "We thought," he began again, "we might interest you in—"

"You know," interrupted Nan, "your popularity and Golden Arrows—"

"Wait a minute, Nan, wait a minute!" expostulated her father. "We want to make sure—"

"Oh, he'll be interested!" cried the determined girl. "Won't you?"

Randy gave her a little twisted smile, but addressed the head of the firm.

"Are you offering me a job, Mr. Gale?" he inquired.

"Of course he is!" Nan interjected, and her father had hardly any option but to say:

"I think we might find a spot for you."

"That's fine," said Randy. "I've had a few prospects—pro football, and so forth—but this is the sort of thing I really want to do."

Further discussion was arrested by the intrusion of a reporter and two Press photographers who had heard of Randy's presence in the café and wanted a picture of him for the "Times." Nan was elated, but Randy protested that it was not a football field.

"That's all right, Randy," one of the photographers assured him airily. "We don't mind. Look this way, will you?"

The reporter stared at Nan.

"Say, aren't you Nan Gale, daughter of old man Gale?" he asked.

"Yes, of course I am," she replied, with a wave of her hand. "And this is 'old man Gale'!"

The reporter, quite unabashed, greeted the manufacturer of motor-cars. Nan seized upon the opportunity.

"Mr. Rogers," she said, "has just accepted a position with Gale Motors—haven't you, Randy?"

"Well," Randy hesitated, "I—er—I—"

"I'll have a story for you gentlemen in the morning," Gale interposed hastily.

"Swell," quoth the reporter. "Get 'em all, boys, in a family group. We've happened on something."

While flashlamps were blazing and cameras clicking, Philip Morton consumed a whisky-and-soda at the bar in conjunction with his friend, a stockily built man with a wide face and very prominent nose named Gordon Holmes, who was associated with United Motors.

"What's a football hero more or less?" quoth Holmes derisively. "He can't do anything but take old Gale for a couple of grand—and I'm sure we won't mind that!" He gazed shrewdly at his com-

panion and added: "Or is it the daughter you're thinking about?"

"Don't be ridiculous!" snapped Morton, and the subject was changed.

"Seriously," said Holmes, "how long do you think Gale will last once United Motors put the pressure on him?"

"He's a fighter," said Morton.

"Oh, I've seen champions go down fighting!"

Morton looked thoughtfully into the glass he held.

"You know sometimes I'm sorry for Gale," he said slowly. "Golden Arrows have been his life for twenty years—the best car for the best people."

"Aw, swallow your drink or you'll have me crying!" jeered Holmes.

"There's no room for sentiment in business. The world and motor-cars must move. They must progress—time marches on."

He raised his glass.

"Here's to United Motors," he said, "the mother of the motor-car industry."

"Mother or stepmother," said Morton—and drank.

Randy Speaks His Mind

ON a particularly sunny morning, some weeks later, Wilson Gale

dropped a sheaf of papers on the blotting-pad of his desk in his own private office of Gale Motors, Incorporated, and turned to the general manager with a gloomy expression on his face.

"Frankly, Morton," he confessed, "I'm beginning to be seriously worried. Too many things are going wrong."

Philip Morton, lounging back in a hide-covered armchair at the end of the desk, seemed slightly startled.

"What?" he blurted.

Gale walked over to the fireplace before he answered slowly:

"The cost of raw material is going up, and the attitude of the banks is unfriendly. We have inexcusable delays at the plant, and in the middle of the best selling season our sales are falling off instead of increasing."

Morton rose from the chair to perch on a corner of the desk so that he could face his employer.

"We've gone over this before, Mr. Gale," he said. "It's just a condition we can't control. After all, Golden Arrow is an expensive car."

"But a good car," declared the president of the company warmly. "We've stood by our dealers and our customers."

"Times are different."

"But people aren't. They're always willing to pay for quality."

Morton reached over to the blotting-pad to pick up the papers that had dismayed Gale.

"In my opinion," he said impressively, "there's only one solution—United Motors."

It was not a solution that appealed to the founder of the firm, nor was this the first time it had been suggested to him.

"Morton," he said, "I've fought this thing out alone for a long time. Golden Arrow will never become a cheap car made by United. That's final!"

The general manager shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm only advocating what appears to be the least expensive course," he argued. "Better give stockholders something for their money than let creditors take charge. We can't stand present competition. You know what I mean—other companies bring out new wrinkles to appeal to buyers: free-wheeling, hydraulic brakes, knee action—"

"If the day ever comes when we have to resort to that sort of thing," Gale broke in angrily, "we still won't sell out to United Motors. We'll quit!"

The door swung open and Nan walked

into the room together with her football hero.

"Hallo, dad!" she cried. "I've just been showing Randy round the plant!"

Wilson Gale stared.

"You remember Mr. Rogers, the all-American football player?"

"Oh, yes—yes, the football player. Of course, I remember. How are you, Rogers?"

Randy replied that he was fine; Nan reminded him that he had met Mr. Morton.

"I made him come right over to see you, dad," she explained. "He graduated last week."

"I see," nodded Gale. "And now you're ready to go to work, young man?"

"Not only ready," Randy answered, "but anxious."

Philip Morton tucked the sheaf of papers under his arm.

"If there's nothing else you care to take up with me, Mr. Gale," he said rather stiffly, "I'll get back to my office."

"I'll call you later," Gale responded. "Sit down, children."

The "children" sat, the general manager retired, and the president went round to his own chair behind the desk and lit a cigar.

"We were looking at the new roadster in the show-room," said Nan.

"You like it?" The question was addressed to Randy.

"Like it?" said he with enthusiasm. "Mr. Gale, it's a car to dream about—class, power, and speed to bum."

"We've never specially stressed speed."

"Well, I thought—"

"Oh, it'll do sixty-five."

"It'll do seventy-five," declared Nan, "if it's hopped up like mine."

"Perhaps," said Wilson Gale, with a grimace, "my daughter knows Golden Arrows better than I do."

"Naturally," retorted the daughter. "I drive one!"

Randy stood up.

"I was hoping I might be able to help a little," he said, "but it seems Gale Motors don't need any help."

Nan perched on the arm of her father's chair and nudged him secretly with her elbow, whereupon he said:

"As a matter of fact, I was just talking to Morton about sales. They do need stimulating, and that's where you come in. I want you to pick out the smartest-looking car on our floor, then make a tour of our branches, meet old friends and former students of the State University who'll be impressed with the famous all-American football player. Mix with them generally—and boost Golden Arrow."

"You mean you want me to be a salesman?" asked Randy.

"Exactly," was the reply. "I can't think of anyone better known to college men than you are just now."

"Oh, isn't that exciting, Randy?" cried Nan; but Randy did not find it anything of the kind, and looked distinctly disappointed.

"I was sort of hoping you might put me in the production end," he stated.

"Maybe a short time in the shops would help," said Gale. "But only a couple of weeks. Remember an all-American reputation doesn't last for ever."

"There's one point we ought to clear up, Mr. Gale," declared Randy, stabbing the air with a finger. "I haven't the slightest desire to capitalise on my football career. I've studied engineering. All my life I've worked with motors, and when I started my engineering course I began providing for my future career. Right now I've got a supercharger—"

But Wilson Gale did not want to hear anything about superchargers, or any variations of his offer, and Nan knew it by his suddenly aloof demeanour, and slid from the arm of the chair to stay the flow of words.

"I'm sure dad will be interested, Randy," she cut in, "but another time."

"Report to Mr. Morton in the morning," said her father, and opened a drawer to indicate that the interview was at an end.

"I'm not sure I want the job on an all-American basis," complained Randy.

"Well, think it over," was the impatient rejoinder.

"Yes, come on, Randy," said Nan. "We're due at the golf club at noon."

In her own roadster that could do seventy-five miles an hour she swept him off to a perfectly delightful golf course at Pasadena with the pine-clad heights of Mount Wilson for background; but Randy's mind was not on the game they played there, and on the ninth green he abandoned it.

"That's all to-day, boys," he said to the caddies, pocketing his ball and handing over his putter. "I'll see you at the club-house."

"I thought we were going to play eighteen holes!" Nan exclaimed in astonishment.

"That was your idea," said he, "but there are a few things you and I have to talk over before we go any further. Come on!"

He caught hold of her arm, marched her off to a seat under a massive fir-tree, and dumped her down on it.

"Well?" she challenged as he sank down beside her.

"The first thing I want to talk to you about," he returned almost grimly, "is football."

"Which game?" she inquired.

"The final one."

She raised her brows in a puzzled fashion and tilted her head at him.

"What do you mean?" she asked blankly.

"Just what I say," he replied. "You don't seem to realise it, but I'm through with all that."

"You're still a national hero."

The phrase had become hateful in his ears.

"When I hung up my uniform," he said, "I left that idea for some other fellow to dream about. Football and I are finished. I'm sick of people rushing up to shake hands with me because I'm an all-American."

"You seem to forget that you're famous!"

"So famous," he scoffed, "that the only thing I have that anybody wants is a past reputation. And that's just bunk!"



"There's one point we ought to clear up, Mr. Gale," declared Randy, stabbing the air with a finger.

"Dad doesn't think so," she protested. "That's the second thing I want to talk to you about. When I accepted your dad's offer I only did it because I thought it would give me a chance to work on my supercharger, but it didn't pan out like that."

Her eyes were on his set face, and for the first time she realised the depth of his disappointment at being offered a mere salesman's job.

"I'm sorry," she said in all sincerity. "I didn't know it meant that much. But you know dad's a conservative old thing. He doesn't go in much for radical changes."

"And that," growled Randy, "makes it look as though I'm on the wrong job."

"Why don't you speak to Philip Morton?" she suggested. "He's the general manager."

"That's an idea," he said, with renewed hope. "I have to report to him, anyway."

"A Fanciful Gadget"

PHILIP MORTON'S office was on the same floor as the president's at the Gale motor works, and was only one degree less elaborate in character, with its paneled walls, thick pile carpet, and fittings.

Randy walked into it next morning with a roll of blue prints under his arm, but not too much confidence in his heart because he had gained the impression that the general manager was not very favourably disposed towards football players.

To his surprise Morton seemed to be quite interested in the blue prints, which he opened out upon his desk and examined with critical eyes.

"You see," expounded Randy, "this isn't like an ordinary supercharger, Mr. Morton. Generally there's a resultant loss in economy, but with this carburettor hook-up there should be a saving of about twenty-five per cent."

"That'll be quite a saving," said Morton gravely. "An increase in power with the use of less fuel."

"That's right, sir."

"Humm!" Morton leaned back in his chair, toying with a pencil. "What makes you think it's practical?"

"Well," admitted Randy, "I can't be certain yet. Not until I've built a practical test model. But it wouldn't be expensive to try it."

Morton reached over to a dictograph on a flap of his desk and flipped its speaking-key.

"Get hold of George Stone and send him to my office," he directed, and turned again to Randy. "Tell you what I'm going to do, young fellow," he said crisply. "I'm going to talk Gale into letting you prove your theory before you go on the road."

Randy, of course, was elated. "I don't think you'll regret it, Mr. Morton," he blurted.

"Well, I hope you're right," returned Morton, with a smile. "That's why I've sent for Stone. He's the best mechanic in the plant. I want him to work with you."

"Just give us some space," said Randy eagerly. "Any—"

"I'll do better than that. Stone's got a machine shop in the experimental department. You can work there undisturbed."

It sounded almost too good to be true, and Randy had sudden misgivings.

"What about Mr. Gale?" he asked. "You think I ought to see him and explain?"

Morton waved aside the suggestion with his pencil.

"I'll handle him," he said; and then the dictograph buzzed and he spoke into

it again. George Stone had arrived from the works across the yard that divided the office building from the machine shops. "Send him in!"

A shortish but thickset man entered the room, wearing overalls—a clean-shaven man of about forty, heavy-browed and rather lined of face.

"George," said Morton introductively, "this is Randy Rogers."

"How are you?" said Stone in a toneless voice.

"He's got a supercharger and carburettor hook-up that looks interesting on paper," Morton went on. "I want you to help him build a model and test it. It might be sensational."

Grey eyes looked into brown eyes across the blueprints.

"Okay with me," said the owner of the grey ones, and his voice was still toneless.

"Get going then. To-morrow morning."

Randy rolled up the blueprints. "I don't know how to thank you for this, Mr. Morton," he murmured gratefully.

"Don't try," returned the general manager. "Just keep me posted, and let me know after you've made your first test."

With the roll of blueprints once more under his arm Randy hovered in the region of the door, expecting to be taken to the experimental department by the mechanic. But George Stone said:

"I'll pick you up outside, Rogers. I've got to see Mr. Morton a minute."

Randy nodded and went out, closing the door behind him; and then Stone's manner changed completely.

"What is it?" he asked, as one speaking to an equal rather than to a superior. "Have you got something?"

"Certainly not," replied Morton scornfully. "Just a fool idea!"

"And I'm supposed to discourage it?"

"On the contrary; you're going to be of every assistance to him."

George Stone looked nonplussed.

"But I thought—"

"I'd rather have him in your shop than on the road. On the road he might be able to pep up sales a little."

"Oh," nodded Stone, "I get it!"

"You're getting it," retorted Morton. "And when this fanciful gadget of his doesn't work we haven't lost anything."

"Suppose it does work?"

"Don't make me laugh. He's a football player."

"Oh!" said Stone, and went off chuckling.

Randy spent most of that day in the experimental department of the vast plant, minus coat and waistcoat, and he displayed a technical knowledge which surprised the mechanic.

Work on the supercharger was commenced next morning, and before the end of the week he and George Stone stood in front of a running-block on which a motor-car engine had been mounted and connected with a dynamometer.

"All set," announced Stone. "Okay," said Randy. "Let's turn her over."

The engine was started, and the hand on the dial of the dynamometer crept up from zero to seventy-five.

"Is that tops for this motor—normal?" inquired Randy.

"That's right," nodded Stone. "Now cut in your supercharger."

The supercharger was connected to the engine, and the hand moved on round the dial to a hundred. Stone stared at the dial as though he found it difficult to believe the evidence of his own eyes, then stared at Randy whose face was radiant with triumph.

"You satisfied?" cried the inventor. "A hundred horse-power brake test for a stock eight motor."

"It looks good," admitted the mechanic.

"Wait till we get a car on the track. It'll probably do—"

"A hundred and ten," Stone completed for him; "but I'll wait till I see it roll that fast." He looked at a wall-clock. "You'd better go to lunch."

It was Randy's turn to stare.

"Well, there's one thing," he said with a mirthless laugh; "nobody could accuse you of being over-enthusiastic."

At that moment an elderly man, spare of build and a trifle shorter than Stone, walked in upon them from the covered yard outside. A yachting cap was perched at an angle upon his grey head and he was in working clothes which suggested an association with the water. Stone waved a hand to him.

"Hallo, Devlin!" he said. "I got that gear out for you."

He went over to a bench and returned with two gearwheels, which the newcomer took and inspected.

"Fine!" he said. "What do I owe you?"

"Oh, nothing," replied Stone. "It's charged to a new experiment. I had it done in duplicate."

"Thanks, but don't get yourself into any trouble."

"I won't," said Stone airily. "Randy Rogers, shake hands with Terry Devlin. He builds speedboats."

Randy had liked the look of Devlin at first sight. There was something fine and honest about his weatherbeaten face and his blue eyes had a twinkle in them. The two shook hands, and then Terence Devlin's eyes roamed in the direction of the running-block, and he stepped over to it.

"Say, what's this here?" he inquired with professional interest. "Looks like a supercharger you've got on here."

"No telling what it is until after it's tested," said Stone.

"Well, I'll come back and look it over as soon as I've taken these gears out to Billie," decided Devlin; and Randy, nettled by the mechanic's words, said wryly:

"See what you think of it. I'm just going out to lunch—I'll take 'em for you."

Devlin thanked him and handed over the gearwheels, and he went out into the covered yard. A shabby two-seater was standing there, an open one, and on the side of it near the wheel was perched a boyish-looking figure in overalls and a cap.

"Here's the gears, son," said Randy.

The boyish-looking figure swung round, and he perceived that it was a girl he had thus addressed, a particularly pretty girl, brown-haired and very bright-eyed.

"Thanks," she said, and dropped the two gearwheels on the floor of the car and smiled impishly at him.

"Oh, I'm sorry," he exclaimed in confusion. "I thought—"

"Don't apologise," she laughed. "It's happened before."

"Well—er—well, why—"

"Why do I wear overalls?"

"Y—yes."

"I like 'em. They're comfortable, and, after all, you can't wear dresses when you work around a machine shop."

"Here I am, Billie," boomed a voice from the doorway, and Terry Devlin walked over with George Stone. "This is Randy Rogers," he said. "He's working here with Stone. My niece, Mr. Rogers."

"Oh, yes," said Randy. "She was just telling me she works in a machine shop."

"That's right," nodded Devlin. "And there isn't a better mechanic or speed-boat pilot on the waterfront."

Billie flushed and slid down behind the wheel. George Stone said to Randy:

"You'd better go to lunch and get back on the job if you expect to make that test Monday."

"Okay," said Randy. "Good-bye, Miss Devlin. If you're really interested in motors drop around about ten on Monday. You'll see a demonstration of something new."

"That's a bet," the girl assured him, and waved her hand as he walked off out of the yard.

"Pretty smart boy," remarked the builder of speedboats.

"Smart?" echoed Stone with a sly glance for Billie. "Smart enough to have old man Gale's daughter to back him."

Terry Devlin climbed into the car beside his efficient niece.

"Thanks again for the gears, Stone," he said.

"Mind if we come to the test run?" asked Billie.

"Why, glad to have you," said Stone, but without any heartiness.

The two-seater was backed out from the covered yard and the mechanic made his way to the office building, where he ascended to the general manager's room.

"Well, Stone, how's your protégé?" inquired Morton, looking up from his desk. "About to revolutionise the automobile industry?"

"He might do that," was the unexpected reply.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, we finished the model and hooked it on to an old straight eight motor for a brake test."

"Go on!"

"It developed a hundred horse-power on the block."

"You're crazy!" exclaimed Morton incredulously; but George Stone shook his head.

"I'm telling you that kid's got something," he declared. "He's worked on an angle that everyone else has forgotten about. He dampens the air that feeds into the mixture."

Morton pinched his lower lip between finger and thumb and glared at an inoffensive letter-tray.

"If it's as good as you think," he growled, "it'll pull Gale out of a hole and save this company."

"Right," agreed Stone. "He wants to drive a test Monday. How about it?"

"Let him make it."

"You don't want it to work?"

"Sure," drawled Morton, "if it will."

"But I thought we—"

"We are, but I'd like to know what this thing'll do. When that's proved we can make an official test for Gale."

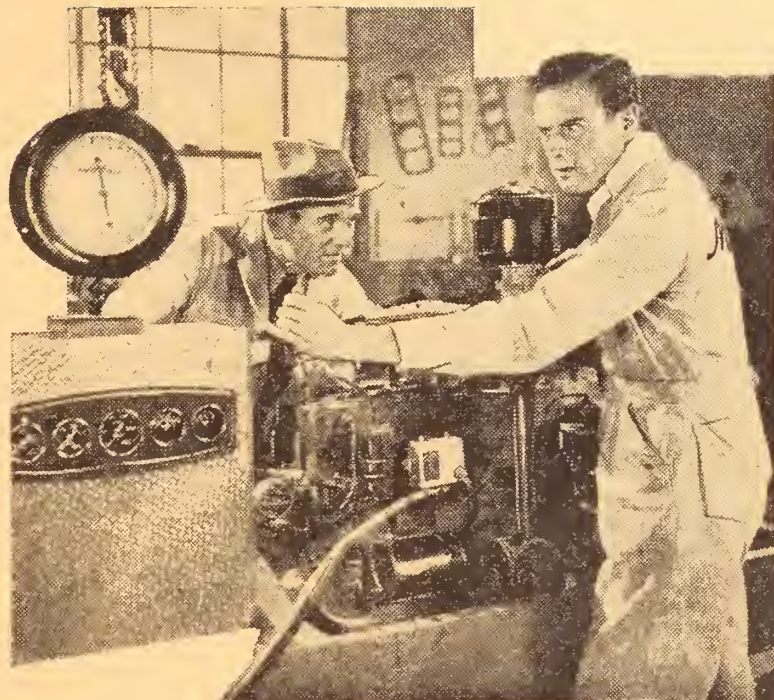
"In other words, this test is for you and me?"

"Exactly." Morton helped himself to a cigar from a box on the desk and lit it. "We can decide about Gale's demonstration later."

The Test

LIKE most American motor-car manufacturing concerns, Gale Motors had a private testing ground at some little distance from the works, built very much like a racing track. Just after ten o'clock on the following Monday morning Randy set off from its starting line on a stock Golden Arrow, sporting model, equipped with his supercharger, while George Stone leaned against a rail with a stop-watch in his hand.

Terry Devlin and his pretty niece had



"You satisfied?" cried Randy. "A hundred horse-power brake test for a stock eight motor!"

arrived in good time to witness the test of the new contrivance, and they were with the mechanic. Billie, looking as boyish as ever in her overalls and cap, was also holding a stop-watch, and her lips were parted with excitement as the car gathered speed and came roaring over the white line past the group.

The track was an oval one, five-eighths of a mile in circumference, and on the second lap the supercharger began to make itself felt.

"Plenty of nerve!" exclaimed Billie. "He's really laying his foot on that throttle."

The car flew, the white line was crossed again.

"I caught him that lap!" she cried triumphantly. "Over ninety!"

George Stone nodded confirmation, though he was none too pleased that she had brought a stop-watch with her.

"Looks like he's got something," he said grudgingly.

"And you say that's an old test car?" demanded Terry Devlin.

"That's right."

Billie shaded her eyes against the sun to watch the progress of the car on the far side of the track.

"He's opening up!" she shrieked. "You clock him this lap."

The car whizzed past them, and Stone kept his eyes on the stop-watch he held while she concentrated on Randy's driving.

"Can he handle a car?" she cried. "Look at him go into that turn!"

The Golden Arrow came flying round the bend and was over the white line again.

"What does it say—what does it say?" clamoured Billie breathlessly.

"Hundred and four and a fraction," replied Stone.

"Almost a hundred and five miles an hour," she exulted.

"Can you imagine what his hook-up'd do on a new motor?" said her uncle.

George Stone had nothing to say to that. He put away his stop watch and looked along the track.

"He's slowing down now," he said.

Randy was slowing down. He had caught sight of a smart roadster careering across the grass towards the rails and had recognised the girl at its wheel. But Billie was too far away to recognise her.

"Who's that driving in?" she asked. "Gale's daughter," Stone informed her with a malicious smirk.

Nan Gale ran her car on to the track through a gap in the rail and sprang down from it to greet Randy as he braked and stopped.

"Oh, have you tried it yet?" she cried out.

"Yes," he replied, pushing his goggles up over his crash helmet. "Just finished."

"Oh, gee, I'm sorry I was late!"

"Aw, that's all right," he returned. "Let's see what the official time was for that last lap."

They walked together towards the three by the starting line, and Billie cried out as they approached:

"Hundred and five!"

"Oh, that's fine!" quoth Randy with infinite satisfaction. "Miss Gale, may I present Miss Devlin and her uncle, Mr. Devlin. You know Mr. Stone, of course."

Nan shook hands all round and the whole party walked towards the test car.

"Looks like your father has some thing in this new invention of Randy's," remarked Terry Devlin on the way.

"Oh, that's splendid!" said she. "We must go and tell dad at once, Randy."

"I have to report to Mr. Morton first," protested that young man.

"We'll report to dad," she insisted. "Come on, I'll drive you in my car."

Randy hesitated, but George Stone said:

"Go ahead. I'll take that job over." "All right," surrendered Randy, "but I'll have to get my jacket."

He shed his overalls and flung them into the test car, together with his helmet and goggles, and he took his coat from the seat and put it on while

Nan conventionally assured Billie and her uncle that she was pleased to have met them.

"I'll let you know how we come out, son," said Stone, and then Randy helped Nan into her car and climbed in beside her, and the test ground was left behind.

Philip Morton was in Wilson Gale's room when the office building was reached. He had presented some papers and made a report that badly disturbed the president of the company.

"But this isn't possible, Morton!" Gale ejaculated.

"You can see the figures for yourself, Mr. Gale," returned Morton with a gesture of regret. "We sold fewer cars in the last thirty days than in any month last year."

The door swung wide and Nan burst into the room.

"Dad!" she cried, and turned to tug Randy in after her. "We've come to save Gale Motors."

"To what?" exclaimed her harassed parent.

Randy smiled apologetically at the general manager.

"I meant to report to you first, Mr. Morton," he said, "but Nan insisted." "Of course I did," said she.

Morton compressed his rather thick lips, but Wilson Gale was inclined to be annoyed.

"Nan," he began severely, "if this is just another of your schemes—"

"It isn't," she assured him gleefully. "It's Randy's."

Her father threw down the statements that had helped to upset his peace of mind.

"All right," he barked, "let's hear it."

It was Randy he had addressed, but Nan could not wait for her hero to make any sort of explanation. She was far too excited.

"The old model K demonstrator did a hundred and five miles an hour!" she exclaimed.

Her father stared from her flushed face to the slightly calmer face of the football player he had engaged to boost the sales of Golden Arrows.

"You mean to tell me one of our stock cars did over a hundred miles an hour?" he demanded in bewilderment.

"Yes," said Nan.

"How?"

"It's a new theory of carburetion," said Randy, "combined with a super-charger to give speed. Your new model cars could be made capable of doing, say, a hundred and ten miles an hour, and they'd use even less gas than they do now."

"Why, that's impossible!" snorted Gale. "Morton, have you made an investigation of this?"

"Superficially," replied the general manager. "You remember I suggested allowing him to work it out because it seemed to have possibilities."

Wilson Gale leaned back in his chair. "Well," he said after a while, "if it is practical it may give us just the sales stimulation we need."

"I'm ready to prove it's practical," Randy assured him.

"When?"

"To-morrow at the testing ground."

Gale looked at Morton.

"Hadn't we better check Rogers' plans thoroughly first?" he asked.

"Why look over plans, Mr. Gale?" demurred the wily general manager.

"To-morrow you'll see one of your own cars perform."

"Very well then," said Gale.

December 28th, 1935.

The Second Test

THAT afternoon Billie Devlin called round at the experimental department for another speedboat gadget. Stone had had stamped for her uncle. Stone was not in the machine shop, and Randy attended to her requirements with the utmost readiness. She appealed to him far more than Nan Gale had ever done.

"Thanks," she said. "Now we're all set."

"So we are," said Randy. "Mr. Gale himself has promised to watch the test to-morrow."

She glanced round the shop to make sure there were no listeners.

"I suppose you know Gale Motors are practically on the rocks?" she asked.

"Why no," returned Randy in surprise. "As a matter of fact, I didn't."

"Well, it's common gossip," she informed him.

"That's probably all it is," he decided. "Just gossip."

She watched him at work for a while across a lathe, then asked abruptly:

"How long have you known Nan Gale?"

He knitted his brows in an effort to remember when it was Nan claimed to have met him in the first instance.

"Oh, about a year!" he decided.

"Why?"

"I just wondered," she replied evasively.

"She's the one that got her dad to give me my chance."

"And now you're giving him a chance—a chance to stay in business!"

"Oh, come now!" he protested. "It can't be as bad as all that!"

"Uncle says so."

"Mr. Gale would know it if it's true!"

"Maybe we'd better drop the subject," said Billie. "Anyway, I've got to get back on the job—we want to finish that new speedboat I'm going to try out at the end of the week."

She offered her little hand, and he held it.

"You're not going to be too busy to have dinner with me to-night, are you?" he asked. "I'll call round for you and we'll go to the Lake Café—if that suits you."

"All right," she nodded. "And after you become rich and famous I'll remind you of the evening you spent with a poor working girl. Good-bye!"

George Stone's absence from the machine shop was due to his presence in Philip Morton's office. Morton had sent for him to ask questions about the test.

"And you're sure about it, Stone?" he insisted, handing back the blue prints over which they had both been poring.

"Positive," declared the mechanic. "The thing would put wings on a tractor. It's going to be a sensation!"

"It would be worth a lot to United Motors."

"Sure it would, if they could get it! But he's been smart enough to take out his patents on it, and as it stands now it's going to fall right into Gale's lap."

"Taken out his patents, eh?" mused Morton, puffing at a cigar. "I'm in! Well, Gale won't want it. He isn't crazy!"

"Won't want it?" echoed Stone in amazement. "Why won't he want it?"

"Because," was the significant reply, "to-morrow it isn't going to work."

"Oh!" said Stone. "I see."

"That's just it—you see that it doesn't. Later on I'll probably be able to buy it up reasonably, and you and I can get a nice price for it from United Motors."

"Right," said the mechanic, and went off with the blue prints and a grim smile.

Next morning, after a memorable evening with Billie Devlin, Randy drove to the testing ground with George Stone,

where they proceeded to tune up the experimental car.

"Sorry Billie and her uncle won't be here to-day," remarked Randy, busy with the engine.

"That's all right," said Stone, with a cryptic grin, "they'll hear about it. Got that oil drained yet?"

"Sure."

Stone removed a can of oil which was standing on the ground, and a few minutes later Nan drove up to the track in her roadster with her father beside her.

"Hallo, young man!" greeted Wilson Gale as he descended. "Everything set for the test run?"

"All set," replied Randy, and then Morton arrived in his own car and walked over.

"Remember one thing, both of you," said Nan proudly. "I discovered Randy!"

"You boys all ready to go?" inquired Morton.

The bonnet of the experimental car was closed, and Randy put on his crash helmet and adjusted his goggles as he seated himself at the wheel. Stone stood back.

"Okay, Randy," he said. "Take her away."

Randy drove slowly towards the starting-line.

"Good luck!" Nan shouted after him. The broad white line was crossed, and the car began to travel.

"He's just warning her up," said Morton as the first lap was accomplished at about sixty miles an hour.

"You certainly had a hunch when you let him build that model," said Gale.

"I thought it might have possibilities," was the meek response.

"Possibilities? Why, that invention should revolutionise the industry!"

The car roared past them at a good eighty-five.

"Yes, Mr. Gale," purred Morton, "it should. Ought to be able to tell pretty quick now."

Faster and faster the car travelled, and the fourth lap was achieved at close upon a hundred miles an hour, but with a, unaccountable cloud of black smoke belching from the exhaust.

A few seconds later another black cloud began to vomit from the bonnet, and Nan climbed on to the rails to stare in alarm across the track.

The car became hidden in its own smoke at the turn, but out of the smoke there came a crash, a rending of wood-work, and the car became visible again on the grass beyond the rails, where Randy had managed to bring it to a standstill.

He heaved himself down from it, flung back the bonnet at the cost of burnt fingers, and squirted a chemical extinguisher at the almost red-hot engine, his eyes bloodshot and his face black with grime.

Nan raced across to him in high concern.

"Randy," she shrieked, "are you hurt?"

"No," he replied a trifle shakily. "Just roughed up a bit."

The others streamed up.

"What happened?" asked Wilson Gale anxiously. "It looked like the motor began to buck."

"It did," said Randy in a very gloomy voice. "Just as soon as I get a chance to look it over I'll tell you."

George Stone stooped in front of the engine.

"Here's your trouble," he announced. "Motor's froze!"

"You mean it's bound from overheating?" asked Morton.

"That's about the size of it," replied the mechanic.

Wilson Gale sighed.

"I thought it was too good to be true," he lamented.

"Well, it isn't the fault of the hook-up, Mr. Gale," declared Randy. "It worked perfectly yesterday."

"It couldn't be the fault of the motor," retorted Gale. "It's a Golden Arrow, isn't it?"

Randy bit his lip and stood gazing ruefully at the engine.

"How long since you changed your oil, Rogers?" asked Morton.

"Why, just before you got here."

Stone spread his hands with a gesture of pity for an amateur engineer.

"Well, that's the trouble with all those high-speed hook-ups," he said. "The lubrication fails to keep up with the turn-over."

"But I made allowance for that!" cried Randy.

"You did on paper," said Gale. "There's a vast difference between theory and practice."

Philip Morton seized upon the opportunity to add to Randy's humiliation.

"Didn't you say you were a graduate engineer, Rogers?"

"Yes," said Randy.

"And you didn't know that an oil-pump couldn't possibly lubricate a motor at the speed a supercharger develops?"

"I told you I took that into consideration."

"Oh, why go into it any farther?" growled Wilson Gale. "It's just another experiment gone wrong. Let's be getting back."

He walked off towards the waiting roadster and Philip Morton went with him; but Nan lingered.

"How about a lift to town?" she suggested.

"Never mind," said Randy gruffly.

"You can still go on that tour for the sales department—I'll fix it with dad."

"No, thanks."

He turned away from her, but she tugged him back again.

"Why don't you be smart, Randy?" she pleaded. "As an engineer you may be bust, but you're still good newspaper copy."

"I wish you'd forget that," he said bitterly.

"But why forget it when it means a good job for you?"

"I don't want that kind of a job. I won't be a football pensioner, if you know what I mean."

"All right," she surrendered. "See you to-morrow."

Her father was calling to her, and she ran off. Stone jerked his thumb at the derelict.

"Tow ear'll bring this in," he said.

"I'll wait for it," returned Randy.

"Okay," Stone walked down the track to the car that had brought them from the works, and after he had gone Randy proceeded to examine the engine more thoroughly.

He travelled back in the tow-car when it arrived, and he was not in the mood to talk to the man who drove it. He entered the covered yard of the experimental department, but stopped short in the doorway of the machine shop where he had toiled with such high hopes. George Stone was at a telephone with his back towards the door, and Randy gathered that Billie Devlin had rung up and did not hesitate to play the eavesdropper.

"Oh, Billie," he heard Stone say expansively, "how about a little celebration to-night? I feel like spending some money. What? Randy Rogers? Oh, he cracked up. Yeah, I told him from the beginning his invention was a flop. Eh? Well, have dinner with me to-night and I'll tell you all about it."

Evidently Billie declined the invitation, for in a disappointed voice Stone



"You're a little fool!" roared Randy, and Billie would have struck him in the face had not Terry caught hold of her wrist.

informed her that he was sorry she couldn't make it and hung up. Randy crossed the threshold as he moved away from the instrument and he swung round.

"Tough luck, kid," he said with pretended sympathy. "I told you to watch that oil pressure."

Randy strode towards him, and his brown eyes were fierce.

"You know there was enough oil pressure to lubricate that motor!" he stormed.

"I don't know anything," retorted Stone. "It's your invention."

"It's my invention," agreed Randy, "but somebody tampered with the oil in that motor. I found traces of emery dust in it. Do you know anything about that?"

Stone clenched his fists.

"If you're insinuating—" he began heatedly.

"I'm just asking," Randy interrupted grimly.

"Then I'm just telling you. You're talking through your hat. I don't know anything about it."

For several seconds they eyed one another inimically; then Randy pulled off his overalls and turned away to get his hat and coat.

Morton Shows His Hand

RANDY wiped the dust of the "Home of the Golden Arrows" from his feet that day. His parents, both of whom were dead, had not left him any very large sum of money, but he was proud and he believed in himself.

In the weeks that followed he avoided Nan Gale and saw nothing of Billie Devlin. In his comfortable flat on the fifth floor of an apartment-house in Hobart Street he got out fresh drawings of his invention and could find nothing wrong with the earlier ones.

Meanwhile the sales of Golden Arrows continued to diminish and the inevitable happened. United Motors ac-

quired Gale Motors, and Wilson Gale fulfilled his vow to retire from business rather than be associated in any way with the triumphant company. He was already a millionaire, and though his heart was in the motor business he was in a position to spend the rest of his life in leisured luxury.

Randy read all about the merger in the newspaper, and he was not altogether surprised when he received a letter from Philip Morton, who had been appointed general manager of the "Golden Arrow" division of United Motors, requesting him to call.

He found Morton installed in the imposing private office that had been Gale's.

"Glad to see you, Rogers," said the suave crook, toying with a pencil. "D'you know I had quite a job locating you."

"I've shifted my quarters," said Randy quietly. "There didn't seem to be any reason why you should want to know where I lived. The last time I was here—"

"Yes, yes, I know," Morton interrupted, "but I haven't forgotten your splendid efforts, Rogers, and I thought I might still be able to help. Sit down."

Randy seated himself in a chair and a box of cigars was pushed in his direction, but he declined to smoke.

"Things are different since United Motors absorbed Golden Arrow," said Morton.

"So I see," returned Randy, glancing about the room. "By the way, what happened to Mr. Gale?"

"Well, he always said he'd quit before he'd sell out to United, so when they took over his company on a decision of the stockholders he kept his word."

"It seems a shame."

Philip Morton shrugged his shoulders and put down the pencil.

"Business, my boy," he said smoothly. "You want to look out for yourself all the time. That's what I had to do when

they asked me to take over for United." He lit one of the cigars Randy had rejected. "However, one of the first things I remembered was your invention."

Randy was on his feet in an instant. "What about my invention?" he demanded sharply.

"Regardless of its disastrous test," was the guarded reply, "it has possibilities. I talked to Stone about it, and he tells me that all you need is a little more time to perfect it."

Randy leaned over the desk and planted a fist upon its polished surface. "Just what do you want, Mr. Morton?" he challenged.

"If I offered you a job to develop this hook-up and offered you every practical assistance necessary to develop it, would you be interested?"

"I might."

"Of course," purred Morton, "experiments cost money, but I have a friend who might put it up if you were willing to dispose of those patents you hold."

So this was it! The cards were on the table at last!

"If I let my patents go you'll give me a job, that's what you mean, eh?" said Randy.

"You put it rather bluntly," responded Morton, and picked up the pencil to stab the blotting-pad with it, "but that's about what it comes to."

"It seems a little funny, Mr. Morton," Randy bit back at him. "My experiment proves a failure, and now you want to buy it."

"I've made you an offer in good faith."

"Yes," cried Randy seathingly, "the same good faith you used when you grabbed the Golden Arrow for United Motors. Don't try to deny it, Mr. Morton—everybody in the auto world knows what your appointment here meant."

Philip Morton's face became almost purple and his eyes malignant.

"Get out of here!" he roared.

"Okay," drawled Randy, and he put his hat on his head and turned towards the door.

"You can be sure of one thing, too, Rogers," Morton shouted after him. "It'll be useless for you to offer your invention or your services to any other manufacturer!"

"We'll see about that!" Randy retorted over his shoulder, and though he was in a fine temper he did not slam the door behind him.

Figuratively, however, he found all other doors closed to him when he set out to justify his defiance. He tried in vain to interview important people in the automobile world, and he called on works managers only to meet with rebuffs.

Months had elapsed and his funds were running low when he searched the waterfront in quest of a job and quite by accident found one. It was on a wharf in Los Angeles harbour that he heard two men talking, and pricked up his ears.

"Where's the other boat, Joe?" asked one of them, a typical waterman of enormous bulk.

"Didn't show up this afternoon," grunted Joe, who looked almost a skeleton beside his companion. "He's probably on another binge."

"There's a big crowd out on the fishing barge this afternoon," complained the bulky one, "and we need both boats. The fleet will be coming in within the hour."

The harbour was crowded with shipping; the blue waters of the bay beyond the wharves and piers sparkled in the sunlight, and a mile farther along the waterfront a speedboat was

putting out from a narrow strip of planking. Randy looked at a sturdy vessel moored to the wharf on which he stood—a motor vessel, half boat, half launch, with a pilot-house amidships, known locally as a water-taxi, and walked up to the two men.

"I hear you need a pilot," he said. They stared at him, but they were in a dilemma, and the man who possessed no waistine chewed tobacco and spat on the boards of the wharf.

"Can you run a motor-boat?" he inquired.

"Sure," replied Randy with the utmost confidence, "I can run a fleet of 'em."

"We'll see! Here, take this boat out to the Ocean Queen fishing barge. Joe, you go with him the first trip. If he can run her, pick up the other boat."

Randy and Joe went aboard the water-taxi, and Randy started up the engine and took the wheel after Joe had cast off. They stood together in the pilot house as the vessel chugged across the water.

The speedboat parted company from the float against which it had been resting, and Randy caught sight of Terry Devlin standing on the boards, shielding his eyes against the sun, and recognised him.

The speed-boat streaked towards the water-taxi, and Randy guessed that Billie was at its wheel, though she was wearing goggles. He increased speed, seeing that her intention was to cut across his bows, and he leaned out of the window of the pilot-house to griu mockingly down at her.

"Hi, landlubber!" she shouted.

Randy laughed aloud and drew in his head to make a real race of it.

"Somebody you know?" inquired Joe curiously.

"Yeah," nodded Randy.

A fussy little tug and a stately clipper were left behind, and then the engine of the speedboat began to splutter. A harbour service station loomed ahead, and it became evident that Billie proposed to put in beside its floating platform to see what was wrong.

"I'm going to give her a bath!" announced Randy, and gripped the wheel.

The water-taxi swung round in a quarter of a circle just as the speedboat was drawing alongside the pier, creating a huge wave that drenched the girl from head to feet.

"Landlubber yourself!" bellowed Randy from the window of the pilot house—and the water-taxi swept on its way.

"Somebody ought to report that guy!" exploded a mechanic who ran out from the service station to Billie's assistance. "He's crazy!"

"Oh, he's all right!" laughed Billie. "He's a friend of mine."

An Unexpected Visitor

ALL that afternoon Randy travelled to and fro between the Ocean Queen and the shore, running the water-taxi by himself after the first trip.

But after his task was at an end and he had received payment for services rendered, he made his way along the waterfront to Terry Devlin's speedboat works.

These works were unpretentious but picturesque, consisting of wooden sheds with long, narrow landing-stages and a workshop of corrugated iron labelled, modestly enough: "T. Devlin, Marine Mechanic."

He received quite a warm welcome from Billie and her uncle, and was provided with tea in the workshop. Billie asked him all about the test run which had proved such a failure, and he said emphatically:

"I'm positive somebody added something to that oil just before I started."

"Well," said Terry Devlin, "according to Stone your supercharger blew up the oiling system."

"We saw it work perfectly the day before!" cried Billie. "I think Randy's right. Somebody didn't want that test to succeed!"

"Whatever it was," sighed Randy, "it certainly spelt my fun-sh with Gale Motors."

"Why didn't you look us up?" asked Terry. "I can always use a good mechanic."

"Well, I didn't think—"

"Say," exclaimed Billie, "would that supercharger work on an outboard motor?"

"I don't see why it shouldn't," said Randy.

She marched him over to a bench on which a two-cylinder outboard motor reposed, and Randy decided that his supercharger could be adapted to such a machine.

"Uncle Terry, look!" Billie cried excitedly. "If Randy's supercharger could give us as much added speed as it did that car, we could cop that race. Then we'd be flooded with orders!"

Terry Devlin caressed his rather scrubby chin.

"Maybe Randy isn't anxious to—" he began; but Randy cut him short.

"I'm anxious to do anything that'll prove my hook-up will work," he declared.

"Then it's settled!" rejoiced Billie. "We install one on the Phantom and show 'em all up!"

They shook hands on it, and next morning Randy started work on a new supercharger to fit the requirements of an outboard speedboat. Billie proved as good a mechanic as her uncle had described her, and all three got on perfectly together.

The Phantom, a white stream-lined boat, was run out from one of the sheds some days later, and Randy set up the outboard motor, complete with the new supercharger, while Terry Devlin helped. When all was ready he stepped into the boat, and Billie squeezed in beside him, eager for adventure.

"Look," said Randy, "we'll start at the club-house and time her to the break-water and back. That's about an even mile."

"Okay," said Billie.

The engine buzzed, and the speedboat slipped away from the narrow landing-stage and sped off across the harbour. Terry was standing on the boards with a pair of binoculars to his eyes, watching its progress, when a feminine voice hailed him from the end of the stage.

"Hallo! You're Terry Devlin, aren't you?"

"Reckon I am," he called back, and lowered the glasses. "Why, it's Miss Gale!"

It was Nan Gale, looking delightfully fresh and cool in a yachting costume, and he walked along to her.

"I understand Randy Rogers is working for you," she said. "Where is he?"

"He's out on the water," Devlin replied. "He—he'll be back after a while."

"I'll wait," she decided.

He held the binoculars to his eyes again. The supercharger was evidently functioning, for the Phantom was streaking across the water with its nose in the air.

"Look at 'em go!" he cried. "They must be doing better than sixty!"

Nan took the glasses, but held them only for a few moments.

"I take it that's fast for a motor-boat," she said.

"That's faster'n any outboard ever went around here!" rejoiced Terry.

"First time one was ever driven by an all-American, isn't it?"

"A what?" Terry had never bothered his head about football.

"Randy Rogers," said Nan. "He's quite a pilot, isn't he?"

"It's that supercharger hook-up of his," explained Terry. "That's where he's getting that speed."

Nan looked startled. "I thought his supercharger idea was a failure," she said.

"Doesn't look like it, does it?" demanded Terry, the binoculars once more glued to his eyes. "They're timing a lap now."

The club-house on the far side of the harbour had been reached, and the speedboat was racing towards the breakwater and the Pacific Ocean.

Billie, with her hair blowing and her face smudged with oil, was looking after the engine while Randy guided the craft.

"Get her up to sixty-five," he shouted, "and I'll lay you the best dinner in town to-night!"

"That's a bet!" she shouted back.

Terry Devlin might almost have heard, for at that moment he said to Nan Gale:

"He and Billie make a great team. They can both handle motors."

"Must be nice for Randy to have someone with him who's as expert as he is," said Nan. "This Billie—does he work for you, too?"

"Billie?" Devlin's attention was concentrated upon the speedboat. "Oh, yes, yes. Billie's the best boy I ever had working for me."

The Phantom had reached the breakwater and was coming back, slapping the water as though trying to escape from it altogether.

"Sixty-seven," Billie presently informed Randy. "How's that?"

"That's great!" he replied.

"I'll take steak and fried potatoes."

The clubhouse was passed, speed was slackened, and the harbour was crossed. The Phantom slid in between the two narrow landing-stages and came gently to rest almost at Terry Devlin's feet.

"Sixty-seven!" Billie cried triumphantly as he held the boat for her to step ashore.

"That's fine," he said.

She scrambled out on to the boards and Randy followed. Nan ran to meet

him and his eyes widened at sight of her.

"Well, this is a surprise!" he gulped. "Where—"

"Dad's yacht is in the harbour," explained Nan, "and I heard the pilot of the water-taxi talking about your new motor-boat."

"Oh," said Randy. "Well, I'm glad you hunted me up. You remember Mr. Devlin?"

"Yes, indeed," she replied. "He's been telling me all about you and your friend."

"My friend?" Randy looked puzzled. "Yes, the boy you were racing with."

"Oh!" Randy grinned with sudden comprehension. "Oh, you mean Billie." He turned to Billie, who was standing stockstill, none too pleased by the re-appearance of the "Gale girl." "Come here, Billie."

Billie advanced with an unpleasant feeling of inferiority, knowing that her hair was all blown and her face was very dirty, and Nan gaped at her.

"You know each other," said Randy with a grin.

"Glad to see you again," lied Billie, with as much nonchalance as she could summon.

"How d'you do?" murmured Nan.

"Kind of blowy after the run," said Billie. "Will you excuse me while I freshen up a bit?"

She ran off to a cabin which formed the domestic quarters of her uncle and herself, and Terry Devlin called out:

"You go ahead, Randy—I'll take care of the boat."

"All right," Randy returned, and he walked with Nan from the landing-stage to a wooden seat outside the corrugated iron workshop, where they sat with all the harbour spread out before them.

"Now I understand your interest in motor-boats," said Nan slyly, and that rather irritated Randy.

"Her uncle was the only one that'd give me a break when I couldn't get a job," he informed her warily.

"She seems very sweet."

"Oh, sure," he agreed. "We're good friends. I sort of depend on her."

"Yes, I can see that."

Randy rose up indignantly. "Billie's the best outboard driver I ever saw," he declared more warmly.

"She's going to help me put this supercharger of mine over."

Nan perceived that she had gone a little too far.

"Wait a minute, Randy," she said. "Sit down, I want to talk to you."

He sat down again rather stily, and she said with a pout:

"You haven't learned yet, have you?"

"Learned what?"

"That things aren't handled like that. It takes publicity and advertising to put anything over. Here you are, a former all-American, and only chance led me to find out where you were."

"Well," he retorted, "if we win the speedboat race to-morrow maybe a few people will know. But it'll be honest commercial publicity based on an engineering accomplishment, and not on a football game."

She accepted the rebuke without comment.

"Is your boat entered in the race?" she inquired, rather unnecessarily, and he replied that it was.

"Think you can win?"

"Sure of it," he asserted, "and this time nobody's going to tamper with the oil."

She looked at him sharply.

"What do you mean by that remark?" she asked in manifest surprise.

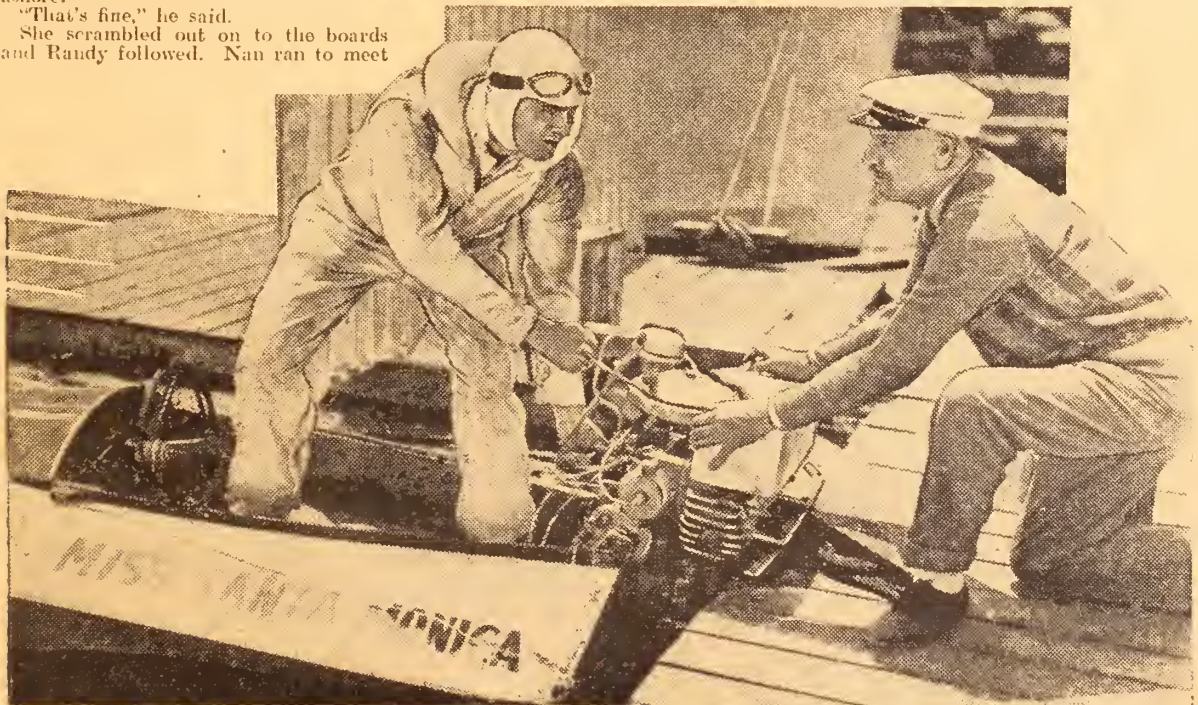
"I might as well tell you the truth, Nan," he said bitterly. "Somebody didn't want your father to see a successful test run."

"Who?"

"I don't know," he confessed with a shake of his head, "but I guess it would be somebody that would want him to sell out cheaply and retire, just as he did."

She did not seem to be as concerned about the matter as he had expected her to be, but that was because she had something else on her mind.

"Randy," she asked abruptly, "what



"Give her my compliments," said Randy, "and tell her I hope she finishes a good second."

would you say if I told you that dad was going back into business?"

"Is he?" exclaimed Randy. "You mean that?"

"Maybe I'm telling state secrets, but in a few months you'll see an announcement of a new car on the market—the 'Gale' eight. Old friends who still believe in dad have formed a company."

That opened up an entirely new vista, and Randy's eyes sparkled.

"Then there's still a chance to convince him, isn't there?" he said. "If he sees the race to-morrow he must be convinced. Do you think he will see it?"

"Come to the yacht club for dinner to-night," she suggested, "and tell him just what you've told me."

The appointment with Billie was forgotten.

"Do you think he'll believe me?"

"I'm sure of it," declared Nan.

The Way of a Girl

A TAXICAB drew up in the roadway behind the car Nan had left standing there and a tall, red-headed young man in a slouch hat descended from it and walked over to the form on which Nan and Randy were seated.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, tipping his hat. "My name is Ward, representing the 'Tribune.' I saw the specification of your motor in the entry for to-morrow's speedboat race. It sounded different. Is there a story in it for my paper?"

Randy said he didn't think there was, but Nan cried out:

"You bet there's a story in it. Do you know who this modest young man really is?"

"Oh, wait a minute, Nan!" protested Randy; but it was too late. The reporter screwed up his eyes and said:

"Well, the name does sound rather familiar."

"You played it all over your front pages last year," prompted Nan.

"Say, thanks for the tip, lady. Randy Rogers, the all-American!" The reporter beamed at Randy. "Gee, that is a story! If you don't mind I'll rush along now and get it in an early edition. Good luck, Rogers."

He seized hold of Randy's hand and shook it vigorously, then rushed back to his taxi.

"I wish you hadn't mentioned that," Randy said reproachfully to Nan, but she only laughed.

"You'd better wash up," she said. "I'll wait for you in the car. I have one or two things to do in town, and I guess you'll want to go home and dress. We'll have tea somewhere first."

"Sure you don't mind waiting?" he asked.

"Not for you, Randy," she assured him.

She went off to the car, in which she proceeded to make up her face, while he turned towards the cabin. Billie was in the living-room, clean of face but still in her overalls, and he had a sudden suspicion that she had been listening, for she greeted him with:

"Hi, landlubber, what's the hurry?"

"Why," he stammered, "I—"

"Take your time," she said. "I'm not all that hungry. Besides, I've got to dress."

He remembered the bet and her selection of steak and fried potatoes, and he bit his lip.

"Look, Billie," he said rather meekly, "something has come up. Miss Gale told me to—"

"Oh, is she still here?" bridled Billie.

"Well—er—would you—er—would you mind very much if we postponed our dinner until to-morrow night?"

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"Why?" she challenged.

"Well, you see, I promised—"

"You're going out with Miss Gale; is that it?"

Billie had a very decided little chin, and at the moment it was tilted angrily. There were sparks in her hazel eyes, too. But Randy was not sufficiently acquainted with the ways of women to realise that she was jealous.

"It's strictly a matter of business," he said. "Her father—"

"No need to make excuses!" flamed Billie. "Our date's off! It never existed!"

"But Billie," he protested, "you don't understand."

She flounced away from him to the door, and in the doorway she brushed past her uncle, who was carrying the outboard motor which he had removed from the boat he had put away.

"Oh, Billie," he said joyfully, "I just checked the oil in the motor, and it's as good as when—"

"Forget it!" she snapped and disappeared into the workshop.

Terry Devlin gaped at Randy.

"What's the matter?" he inquired blankly. "You and Billie had a fight?"

"No," growled Randy. "I guess I just don't understand women."

"Well," returned Terry with a grin, "if you think anyone has a patent on that, son, you're crazy!"

Randy shed his overalls, washed his hands and face and combed his hair, and went off with Nan Gale without seeing Billie again.

At half-past six in the evening, just as Philip Morton was signing letters in his office, George Stone bust in upon him and dumped a copy of the "Tribune" upon his desk.

"I thought that might interest you," he said.

A considerable amount of space on the front page of the paper was devoted to the speed-boat race which was to take place on the morrow, and Randy's name occurred in headlines. With frowning eyes Morton read all about the boat the young man was to pilot.

"So here's got it working again!" he muttered.

"Yes," said Stone, "and between ourselves, we know that supercharger's a great hook-up."

"Yeah," Morton flung down the paper. "The car that grabs it will put quite a dent in the sales of United Motors."

"Do you think he'd sell?"

"Not to us. He's not the kind you can take more than once."

"Which means that one of our competitors is sure to land it," said Stone gloomily.

Morton shook his head.

"I don't think so," he said, looking straight into the mechanic's face. "But it's going to put a little job right in your lap, Stone."

Stone beamed at the prospect.

"I think I'll look those boats over to-morrow," he drawled.

"Before the race," said Morton meaningly, and looked at the paper again. "He's driving the Phantom—owner's name is Terence Devlin."

"I know Devlin," returned Stone, "and I know his place."

"That may make it easy," said Morton, "but it ought to make you careful."

Randy had tea with Nan Gale at the famous Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, after which she dropped him outside the apartment-house in Hamilton Street, to which he had removed his old quarters; and he was arrayed in

evening clothes when she called for him soon after seven o'clock.

She swept him off to the Long Beach Yacht Club, across the bay, and in the luxurious club-house he had dinner with her and her father to the soft music of a first-class orchestra and with millionaires and commercial magnates at the other tables in the spacious restaurant.

Afterwards the three went out on to a balcony overlooking the harbour and its twinkling lights, and there Wilson Gale reverted to the story Randy had told him during the meal.

"It's hard to believe, Rogers," he said, "that anyone would deliberately jeopardise your life and future as well as ruin my business. Why, if you hadn't acted so quickly the car would have been in flames!"

"Yes," agreed Randy. "And the worst part of the whole thing is that it's so hard to prove anything, except in one way—the hook-up does work, and it's no different from the first one."

"You'll see that in the race to-morrow, dad," chimed in Nan.

"I must certainly see the race," decided Gale. "And all I can say is that if your supercharger works under racing conditions it must be all right."

"I was never more certain of anything in my life, Mr. Gale," averred Randy.

"And it does work?" said Nan to her father.

"Well," he replied, contemplating the glowing end of his cigar, "if I can make a deal with Rogers, we'll install it as a regular feature of the new Gale eight."

Randy looked gratefully at the girl who had done her best to help him.

"I won't be hard to do business with," he murmured; and then Wilson Gale took out his watch.

"Will you excuse me now?" he asked pleasantly. "I've got to talk to some bankers. I'll be at the finish-line to-morrow."

Randy expressed his thanks. Nan bade her father good-night.

"Don't worry about me, dad," she said. "I've garaged the car, and Randy will take me back to the yacht."

Randy and Nan were left together on the balcony in the moonlight. Through the open doorway of a ball-room only a few yards away came the strains of a languorous waltz.

"Your dad's been fine about everything," breathed Randy.

"Oh, dad's all right!" returned Nan. "But you've got to win to-morrow. Now let's forget about boats and motors."

"Shall we go inside and dance?" he inquired.

The balcony was broad and comparatively deserted.

"Why go inside?" she asked softly.

So they danced on the balcony.

A Blow for Randy!

WHEN Randy reached the speed-boat works next morning he made straight for the shed in which the Phantom was housed. The outboard motor was standing on a bench, but the supercharger was missing.

Filled with apprehension, he shouted for Billie and for her uncle at the top of his voice while he looked all about the shed for his invention.

Billie sauntered in at the door, her hands in the pockets of her overalls and her head in the air.

"Looking for something?" she asked disdainfully.

(Continued on page 25)

With relentless fury John Wyatt persecuted the outlaws of the West, and with his band of Vigilantes he smashed up gang after gang; he swore never to give up the trail of vengeance until he had wiped out the fiends who had murdered his parents in the early settler days



**STARRING
JOHN WAYNE**

Vigilantes

VIGILANTES were a self-constituted judicial body, organized in the Western States of America for the protection of life and property. Settlers and pioneers in the early days had to wage continual warfare with Red Indians, and when the latter had been tamed there rose the menace of desperadoes and renegades. These men formed themselves into bands and they pillaged covered wagon trains with less mercy than the bloodthirsty Redskins. Their power increased, and many a small settlement was seared to take any action because the mayor, the sheriff, or the saloon-keeper were in the pay of these rascals. In June, 1851, at San Francisco, the crimes of the desperadoes who had immigrated to the gold-fields caused some men to collect at a secret rendezvous. As everyone in power seemed corrupt and there was no law they would make themselves the law, and these men called themselves "Vigilantes." They cleared the city of the scum. Other states followed their example, and Vigilante bodies came into prominence in Idaho, Montana, and California. These organisations sprung up when outlaw bands were raiding and pillaging, and lasted until the band had been wiped out. The Vigilantes were usually masked, and they gave their prisoners a brief trial before hanging them. This story deals with a band of Vigilantes who rode white horses and ruthlessly persecuted the bad men of the West. The story opens in the years 1848 and ends in 1863.

Ballard's Callous Crime

IT was a morning in early summer when Mark Wyatt crossed the plains of Southern California. With him were his wife Hanna, their two young sons, John and Jim, and about half a dozen pioneers and their dependants. There were four wagons in the train, two hundred head of cattle, and the destination was Maple Valley. A lonely, out-of-the-way valley, but rich in vegetation and containing many springs of fresh water.

Mark Wyatt had sold up his small store in the state of Wisconsin and trekked towards the fertile valleys of California. Falling in with other pioneers they had formed themselves into a wagon train.

To the boys it was a grand adventure this coming to a new land. John was ten, and very grown-up for his age. He could drive a wagon, fire a gun, ride any of the horses and could cook and sew. Jim was five and a mischievous imp. One of John's tasks was keeping an eye on Jim and seeing he kept out of mischief. On this day John was driving a baggage wagon and Jim was on the seat beside him.

They got a big thrill in looking out for wild animals. Caribou, moose, elk, antelope, mountain sheep, beaver, otter and mink were only seen on rare occasions, but they saw plenty of deer, coyotes and jack-rabbits. Musk rats and skunks were creatures that might be found in Maple Valley. Blue grouse, partridges, pheasant and quail abounded in large numbers, whilst the streams were full of speckled trout.

But though it was a holiday for the boys it was grim business for Mark

and Hanna Wyatt and the other settlers. All their worldly belongings were in these wagons and it would be a hard fight for existence in Maple Valley. Huts would have to be built, land cultivated and crops planted. This valley might not be so fertile as depicted and the land barren.

The sun beat down mercilessly on the wagon train. Mark Wyatt showed his wife the distant smudge on the horizon, and told her it was a forest at the foot of the Saddle Mountains. Soon they would see the hills, where Maple Valley was situated.

It was growing dusk when the great plain was almost crossed and the promised land lay ahead. Mark Wyatt decided to push on and make camp by a small wood. Two miles more and the great trek would be almost over. The pioneers, though tired and exhausted, gazed eagerly at the vast Saddle Mountains and quickened their pace.

In a narrow canyon were a number of mounted men. An evil, unpleasant bunch of rascals. Bad men and renegades, under the leadership of Mat Ballard. The leader was a monster of a man, heavy-jowled, dark and sinister. A clatter of hoofs and a horseman, a young, hard-eyed youth with the face of a hawk, rode up the canyon at a hard pace.

"What news, Red?" Ballard asked. "Our luck's in," came the answer. "Have just sighted a train of six wagons with about two or three hundred head o' cattle."

"Any escort?" "Nothing to speak of." Red shook his
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head. "We could get to close quarters before they got wise to our game."

"We could get a good price for those cattle at Mountain Creek." Mat Ballard's face twisted into an avaricious grin. "All right, boys, let's go."

Not many minutes later Ballard and his gang stared down at the wagon train.

"Ride down in a body and then open up," he decided. "You, Red, will take six of the boys to the right flank. Farley, you do the same to the left, and I'll attack from the front. If they show resistance shoot 'em down." John was whistling blithely when he stopped abruptly.

"Coo, look at all those riders. Wonder who they are?"

"Are they Indians?"

"No, but I don't like the look of them. Hallo, what's happening?" John pointed. "Pop's turning."

Mark Wyatt had sensed these men were enemies and decided that his best chance was to get all the wagons together. The wagons would make a barricade. It was an old method of fighting Indians when they rode round on their circle of death.

But Ballard's horses were swift and he had expected such a move. The raiders swept down and round the helpless wagon train and soon the guns were blazing.

Poor Mark Wyatt was struck down by a bullet, and bravely his wife took the reins when her husband slid off the box-seat to the dust. They showed no mercy did that gang of murderers. Hanna Wyatt toppled backwards with a bullet through her heart.

The other pioneers tried to put up a fight, but it was a spirited effort. One bullet did fetch down one of Ballard's men, and that made the rascals so angry that they not only shot down men and women, but also murdered the children.

A hullet struck one of the horses of the baggage wagon and sent both animals mad with fright. They bolted, and John was unable to hold them. The wagon crashed over some stones, and John, losing his balance, was flung from his seat. He hit the ground with a thud and lay still.

Little Jim had toppled backwards into the baggage, but the kid had spirit and managed to seize hold of a rifle.

The gang rounded up the wagons, removed everything of value, and then fired them. The cattle were driven towards the hills to a secret canyon. The last wagon to round up was the runaway, but Red rode alongside the maddened horses. They were about to lift the flap at the back when a rifle was poked through and a childish voice cried:

"Hands up!"

Red grabbed the harrel, and then they saw it was a small boy.

Ballard roared with mirth.

"Say, that kid's got nerve. Let's take him along with us."

Howling and screaming they strapped Jim to a saddle, and, gloating in their victory, rode away.

It was dusk when John Wyatt stirred and sat up. He blinked his eyes and wondered what had happened until he saw the blazing wagons, then he remembered. There was no sign of the raiders, and John did not care very much as he got to his feet and staggered across the plain.

First he found the body of his father and gazed down as if this were some terrible nightmare, then dazedly he moved forward till he came to the figure of his dear mother. He knelt beside her, and though he did not touch her he knew she was dead.

There and then he vowed an oath

that he would never rest till he had revenged himself for the murder of his parents. No sign could he find of his brother, and he stayed till morning for a last search. If his brother lived he would find him if he went to the ends of the earth.

Two days later John was seen and rescued by another wagon train, who chose another route when they heard the boy's story of the massacre.

The Forming of the Vigilantes

THOSE settlers soon found that John Wyatt was a useful lad and respected his silent ways, but as the boy grew older the shadow of the past faded but never grew dim. He listened to the advice of elders that it was better to forget.

"One may forget but never forgive," he had answered. "And when I am old enough I am going to search for my brother and the people that killed my mother and father. Never shall I know peace until I have found those fiends"

A settler adopted John, taught him well and coached him with riding and roping. At fifteen, John was the brightest lad in the settlement and the best horseman. At sixteen he experienced a brush with outlaws. It was John who warned the encampment. It looked as if the settlers would be trapped in a peaceful valley, but John had explored the rocks, and with three men gained the safety of the cliffs. From cover they shot down with deadly accuracy on the raiders, who finally rode off leaving six men dead and two badly wounded.

At eighteen John was a trapper and scout, but he had developed wanderlust. He would leave the kindly folk that had adopted him and vanish for days at a time. They knew he was seeking news of the murderers of his parents.

The west was still overrun with rogues and renegades, and John, at nineteen, was in command of a wagon train when attacked. The enemy were surprised at the speediness of the settlers in putting themselves in a state of defence and alarmed by the deadly shooting. When they fled John Wyatt pursued them and brought down two before they reached the safety of the hills.

The kindly folk that he called mother and father died and left John a very valuable ranch. John was twenty-one when they passed over, and for the next three years he worked like a slave making the ranch one of the finest for hundreds of miles around. Moreover, he erected stout barricades round the ranch and had watchmen always on duty. His men rode range always in couples. Two were killed and a hundred head of cattle rustled, but John found out and got his cattle back with four prisoners.

These prisoners were taken off to the nearest gaol, and an angry mob broke into the cell, took the rustlers and gave them a necktie party from the nearest tree. John was too late to do anything. It was primitive justice, and he could not blame the people. There was a lot of unrest among the ranches, settlements and villages, and justice had a way of going astray.

John reached the age of twenty-five, and was satisfied that he could safely leave matters in the capable hands of his foreman, Campbell. He announced that he was going away, and the foreman knew that Wyatt was renewing his search.

In the small cowtowns John noticed the unrest and uneasiness prevailing. Rustling, robbery, pillage and murder were everyday occurrences. The saloons prospered and the towns were full of gamblers, who would shoot anybody for the price of a few drinks. It was then

that John thought of those men bursting into the gaol and dragging out those four outlaws and hanging them.

One day he rode into the big town of Custer and was present at a trial of two outlaws. Obviously guilty, they were pardoned and went away laughing.

Custer was the centre of all the evil that prevailed, and the next day John had audience with the mayor and members of the council.

Frankly and fearlessly he spoke and explained his idea, and they listened in silence.

"Gentlemen, advance me some money and I will rid you of these pests," he concluded. "I will give a large sum of my own money as well. But not only do I want money—I need power. Power to form together a body of men to fight these crooks. Grant me permission to form this body and I will clear Southern California of this scourge."

John looked at them hopefully.

The mayor looked at his councillors and knew that his opinion was the same as their own.

"John Wyatt," he began. "We have heard of you, the tragedy of your youth, and the fine deeds that you have done as a young man in fighting outlaws. We also know that the Orchard Ranch is one of the finest in California, that it is superbly run and so well protected that it is almost impregnable. I speak on behalf of all present when I say that we agree with all that you have told us in this room to-day, and that we would willingly help—if we were able." He paused. "You have told us of the deplorable conditions existing, and we are only too well aware of them, but we have no money and little power. I am risking a bullet in speaking as frankly as I do, but I think that every member here is for justice. But though we're for justice our hands are tied. Not only are the coffers empty, but to suggest the organisation of such a body would be to start a massacre in this town."

"But, surely, the people would back you up?"

"They are cowed like we are," the mayor said. "The judges are corrupt and there is scarcely a sheriff, that is not in with these outlaws. If a peaceful citizen dares to voice an opinion he is likely to be shot. If there is a shooting affray all the people scuttle to their slacks like rats. John Wyatt, we are powerless."

"I am a peaceable citizen till I am roused," John Wyatt cried. "I will see if I cannot find a few brave men. I thank you, gentlemen, for listening to me. You'll either hear of my body being found or you'll hear something very different. Good-day!"

Very carefully John Wyatt went to work on a daring idea. He had heard of attempts to form bands of Vigilantes in other towns and he was determined to do the same. At the end of the month John had found out a great deal about certain of these peaceful citizens.

At last came the day.

A grimy blacksmith at work in his forge heard a knock at his door, and he found a note pinned to the woodwork by a sharp peg.

"Your wife was shot dead when you decided to settle in California. Outlaws shot her down and your only child. If you want justice be at Thacker's barn one hour after sunset."

All men who had suffered at the hands of these desperadoes received a similar letter. If they wanted justice to be at Thacker's barn one hour after sunset.

Every one of those men answered the call and went. There were sixty men, old and young, in that barn. By the

light of flickering torches John Wyatt talked to his audience and held them spellbound by the power of his words.

"I want twenty picked men," Wyatt cried. "Men that are fearless and can ride and shoot well. They must be prepared to do and risk everything for the cause. No danger must be too great. Every man shall ride a white horse, wear a dark shirt and have a light necktie. In the hills above Custer there is a canyon that would make a fine hide-out. I want twenty men to meet me there in three days from now. Who will join me?"

They all wanted to go. Carefully he questioned those that wanted to serve with him, and finally he picked the twenty that were the strongest and seemed the most fearless. Then he dismissed the others with instructions to be ready at any time to answer the call of justice. To his picked men he gave his orders.

A few days later there rode out of Pasco Canyon a party of horsemen. Their leader rode a great white stallion, and all the other horses were white. The Vigilantes were going to wage a lone fight against the outlaws and desperadoes.

Justice With a Vengeance

VERY soon people began to talk about the White Riders, who came out of the hills to protect travelers and settlers. They did not hang any outlaws, but they killed many and took numbers of prisoners. The latter they would hand over to the nearest sheriff, and woe betide that cowtown if something were not done. Once or twice the prisoners were freed and were generally brought back within a few hours with a grim warning to the sheriff that justice must be done.

One sheriff, in the pay of a gang, tried to round up the White Riders and was himself captured. John Wyatt handed the man over to the citizens he had persecuted. With a rawhide whip the sheriff felt the weight of their wrath. They gave him a horse and he rode away never to return.

After a while, John found hundreds of pioneers who wanted to join the White Riders. He did not wish to make his band too large, and always kept the number at two dozen men. He did organize another band and give them a leader, but would have nothing to do with the command.

"Many help me in the cause," were his parting words to the man he had appointed. "I have spies and friends the width and length of California, and I shall only seek you out if I hear that you and your men are not working for the cause of justice. Look after the eastern section of the Yakima district and you relieve me of a great responsibility. Good luck!"

Many a time desperadoes would ride down on an apparently defenceless wagon train to find that each wagon was bristling with armed men. Wyatt had corralled his horses and lain hidden in the wagons. Gang after gang he broke up by his daring.

His men were better mounted and they were a grim, resolute body of men. No ride was too hard or too long if it were to help the cause. Sometimes the bad men would bring off a raid or indulge in a shooting affray, but within a few hours the White Riders, who had been reported as many hours ride away, would appear as if by magic. The name of John Wyatt came to be dreaded by the wrongdoer.

Of every prisoner that he captured John asked questions, and they concerned the gang that had murdered his parents. He knew when a man was

lying, and it was seldom that prisoners refused to talk. An ominous display of guns and the playful handling of a rope were enough to scare the truth out of these cowardly curs. Wyatt learnt many facts and particulars, but he could not find any man who had been connected with his own tragedy.

Report came to him of trouble in the San Juan district, which was a part of California in which the White Riders had not yet operated. Among the rocks of the Cactus Mountains the White Riders had a well-earned rest, though Wyatt had his scouts patrol commanding positions of the fertile plains.

On the third day a scout reported a small wagon train moving in an easterly direction. John Wyatt ordered his men to horse.

The wagon train was jolting over the plains when Wyatt and his men appeared on the trail that snaked down the mountain side. It was a gradual descent, and Wyatt kept the train constantly in sight.

"Are you expecting an attack?" a White Rider asked.

John smiled.

"I was expecting that train. I heard that some miners were anxious to go to a certain canyon to seek for gold, and were hesitating about starting on account of danger. I went and saw the leader, and told him to start when he was ready and that I would be on the look-out for him. He was to tell no one of his talk with me, but let it be known that he was crossing the plains and that he wasn't scared of outlaws. Whether the bait will lure the enemy remains to be seen." The leader's face hardened. "He also had instructions to exaggerate the value of his wagon train, and I think that'll bring some of the rats out into the open."

A scout appeared and reported that he had seen six horsemen watering their horses at a stream a mile ahead.

"A tough-looking bunch, John," reported the scout. "All are well armed, and they are obviously out for mischief. I got near enough to hear their plans. They do not intend to attack in the open, but he in the rocks and shoot down the pioneers as they pass up that gorge." He pointed. "See those jut-

ting cliffs? Well, the trail leads up the gorge between."

John Wyatt ordered the scout to lead the way, and to call a halt at a safe distance from the stream.

Then the leader of the White Riders went on alone and looked at the men, who were camped near the stream, and knew at once that these men were as cut-throat a crowd as he had ever seen. He guessed that at least one more must constitute this band, and that they were waiting here for news of the wagon train.

On returning to his men Wyatt ordered a smoke-signal to be sent up. He was sure that the desperadoes would not see the signal, but that the wagon train, warned to look out for anything unusual, would understand.

The wagon train halted about a mile from the gorge as if camping there for the night.

The scout of the gang must have reported what had happened because the outlaws were seen riding at a fast gallop towards the train. Wyatt sent half of his men in pursuit and half to cover the retreat to the gorge.

The gang had called on the wagon train to lay down their arms and surrender when the White Riders were noticed charging across the plain. At once these hardened scoundrels were in a panic and galloped wildly for the security of the gorge.

Out rode some of Wyatt's men to meet them, whilst others took up positions on the rocks.

Of the eight riders five were shot down and one was flung from his horse, but two, better mounted than the rest, managed to make a getaway. Little did Wyatt know who one of those riders was.

The one prisoner, an elderly, sly rascal, was brought before Wyatt, and refused to talk until he saw the White Riders toying with their guns in an ominous manner.



"Say, that kid's got nerve," said Ballard. "Let's take him along with us."

"If you can give me the information I require you can go free," John told the man. "But you would be advised to leave this part of the world because it would be just too bad if you were caught again. If you can't talk, then a sheriff shall decide your fate, and you can guess what that will be. So loosen your tongue!"

"What do you want to know?"

Briefly, John Wyatt asked if he knew of a gang that used to operate near Maple Valley twelve to fifteen years ago. "That would be Ballard's gang," the furtive-eyed scoundrel answered. "I joined them six years ago because there wasn't any work for an honest, hard-working cowpuncher."

"Given your chance you'd be honest again—if it paid you," Wyatt rasped out. "Tell me more of this Ballard. Was it his gang that we scattered to-day?"

The man nodded.

"Yeah, that's so. But we were only a few of Ballard's men. It was a small wagon train, and only a few were thought necessary. We didn't think you were in this district."

"So Ballard has a lot of men. Where's their hideout?"

"They got dozens of small canyons in these hills, and you can find scores of caves—Ballard never uses the same place twice. But—" he hesitated. "You swear you won't give me away?"

"We don't squeal in this outfit."

"Promise I can go free if I say where you might find Ballard?"

"I promise!" John Wyatt answered. "Ballard's often to be found at Black Diamond."

"That's a pretty big town on the Black River," spoke Wyatt eagerly. "What's Ballard like?"

The rascal described vaguely a big, florid man with drooping moustache and small bloodshot eyes.

"All right," Wyatt said when the man had said all he knew. "Here's your gun—get to horse and out of this State. Every man here knows you, and if you ever return no mercy will be shown. Get goin'!"

The outlaw was given a horse and rode away at a mad gallop. John Wyatt watched for a moment before turning to his men. "Escort this train to safety and meet me in two days' time at the gorge at one hour after sunset. Should you not find me there, go to that stream where we first saw Ballard's men. You remember the stunted pine—in it there may be a message. If there is no message lie hidden in the rocks overlooking the gorge and wait till I come to you."

Jim Wyatt, Outlaw

IN a shack, hidden away in the forests, sat Ballard and his henchman, Red. Ballard was grosser and dirtier, whilst Red's face was a lined mask from which the eyes blazed balefully. Ballard's hair was thinner, and his eyes more bloodshot—Red had a livid scar down one cheek. Fifteen years ago they had not been pleasant to gaze upon, and now their appearance was wholly evil.

"So these cursed White Riders have come to San Juan!" snarled Ballard.

"We guessed they'd visit these parts," answered Red. "We warned Jim to look out for a trap, and the fool blundered into it. Six good men lost."

"Pah, we can raise a score more if we need 'em!" sneered Ballard. "They've gone off with that wagon train, and maybe won't return. They may think they've rounded up all the boys."

"Their leader is no fool." Red leaned over the dirty table. "I have found out somethin' about him. He seeks those that killed his parents fifteen years ago."

"I suppose the bunch that killed his

folk are dead." Ballard with age was not so quick-witted.

"Have you forgotten the killing near Maple Valley?"

"What d'ye mean?"

"I mean that this leader of the White Riders is none other than John Wyatt—Jim's brother!"

"Not so loud, you fool!" Ballard gave a nervous jerk of his head. "Jim may be outside—he has sharp ears."

"Jim and Hank were all in when they made this shack at daybreak," answered Red.

"So John Wyatt leads the White Riders?" The evil face of Ballard had gone flabby with sudden fear. "He must never know that Jim—"

"Only you and I know the secret of Jim's identity, for the rest of that gang have gone," interrupted Red. "Jim Harper, a waif of the plains, is all that he is ever likely to find out."

"What of Bull Bradley?" Ballard demanded suddenly. "He was not with us in those days, but he joined us not many years afterwards. Jim reckons he was taken prisoner."

"Bull knows what happens to quitters," Red laughed harshly. "He wouldn't dare talk. I spoke to Hank, and he saw Bull flung from his horse—the fall must have broken his neck. Chief, what do you aim to do?"

"We've planned a clean-up in Black Diamond, and I ain't quittin' till I've got the gold!" Ballard's eyes glistened. "Joe of the Purple Brand saloon is our man, and he has sent word that a big load of gold dust is comin' into Black Diamond within a few days. We got headquarters in that saloon, and we're just punchers come in for a good time. We'll have a final clean-up."

"That gold dust won't go far among the boys," stated Red. "We want the gold and something more. Listen! The White Riders have gone, and I know how to make enough for all. Travelling north from Beaver Flats is one of the biggest herds of cattle ever seen in these parts. If there are not two thousand head of cattle I'm not in my right mind. The cattle belongs to some old fool who is going north to new pastures, and he thinks that as the Valley of the Black River has never been the scene of a raid he's safe. There are half a dozen wagons, and the same number of herdsmen. We know who will buy those cattle, Ballard."

"They would fetch a good price."

"Yes, and with the gold dust we make enough to slip down to Mexico." Red rubbed his thin hands together. "Where we lie low for several months and then collect together a new band or some of the old boys. You don't want to stay here, Ballard, and wait for John Wyatt to get you. If he ever finds out, you're a doomed man."

"Not so much of this talk of doomed!" snarled Ballard. "You were as much in that killing as I was."

"John Wyatt is a deadly enemy!" Red banged a clenched fist on the table. "We must not forget it. Listen, chief, to what I have planned. This wagon train is well armed, and we can't waste men. Not easy to attack in that wide valley, but near Yellow Canyon the cliffs close in, and there is the place to make the attack. They could follow the course of the river and go miles farther, but near Yellow Canyon there is a gorge through the hills. We will send Jim Wyatt—"

"Harper—Harper," hissed Ballard. "Be careful of your tongue."

"Jim Harper let it be," Red shrugged his shoulders. "And Jim will join the wagon train, and persuade them to go through the gorge. Some of the boys then drive the cattle into Yellow Canyon. No one will ever hear of the affair, and

we can quietly dispose of the beasts. If inquiries are made it will be after many weeks have passed, and by that time we shall be down south."

"After disposing of the cattle we get the gold dust?" asked Ballard.

"Yes, and we'll have to hustle," agreed Red. "Jim Wyatt's the best-looker and he has a glib tongue. We've broken Jim into this game, and he's the quickest on the draw in this bunch."

"We'll do it," decided Ballard. "But I'd like to do something else before I quit these parts. It's been easy round San Juan, and I don't fancy Mexico. Maybe we might try to get this John Wyatt and his cursed riders. Jim Harper must be pretty sore against being fooled, and he might jump at the chance of getting square. Call Jim in, Red. Maybe he'll have the chance to get John Wyatt—his own brother."

Red pushed back his chair.

"Don't try any fool tricks with John Wyatt. Many a man has tried to get him and failed."

All unaware that John Wyatt was within a few miles of the hide-out, Ballard and his men prepared for their final and largest clean-up.

The Greenhorn

JOHAN WYATT spent his time searching the hills for any sign of his enemies. On the second day he passed through the hills and looked down upon a wide valley and a deep river. This must be Black River.

Dismounting, Wyatt crawled out on to a ledge that overlooked the valley, and, shading his eyes, gazed searchingly in all directions. Except for wild deer there seemed little signs of life, and he was about to get to his feet when he noticed a certain amount of excitement among the deer. In the far distance a cloud seemed to be rising. It was not smoke, but dust. After a while he realised it was a big herd of cattle moving in a northerly direction.

The White Rider lay there and watched the herd draw ever nearer. Wagons appeared, and he saw cowboys riding on the flanks of the herd and cracking long whips.

It was growing dark, and almost opposite the place where Wyatt lay hidden the wagon train halted and camp was made. All through the moonlight rode Wyatt, and by morning he was at the gorge. The White Riders were waiting their leader. By noon the White Riders were on the high ground overlooking the river. As he expected, camp had been broken, and a cloud of dust showed them that the train was a good two miles away.

John Wyatt had made many maps of the districts he had helped, and they were remarkably accurate. Already he had made a rough sketch of the San Juan country, and it was to Yellow Canyon that he told his men to ride and wait his orders. Then John went down into the valley, swum his horse across the river and galloped after that distant cloud of dust. Would Ballard and his men be lured into his trap?

No reason why anyone should be scared of a lone rider, especially a frank-faced youngster like Wyatt. The driver of the rear wagon told him that Lufe Gordon, the owner of this outfit, was in need of extra hands and that he was right ahead.

"You'll soon locate him!" chuckled the driver. "He has a voice like a bull, but look him in the eye, son, and you ain't got a thing to fear."

John Wyatt grinned when he heard a mighty voice roaring threats at cattle that lagged behind. He found the owner was a big, well-made man; blue eyes stared at him beneath slaggy brows;

here was a true Westerner. He eyed the young man critically and asked his business.

"Making my way north," John explained. "Got tired of the life south, and decided to get back to my old ranch. I know a job waits me there. It's lonely ridin' in these parts, and I didn't make a fortune south, and I thought maybe I could earn my keep with this outfit." His arm embraced the surrounding country. "I've trapped and hunted these parts, and I know the country better than most men. I could guide the cattle the shortest way and pick out good places to make camp."

"I like you, son. You're hired. What's your name?" bellowed Gordon. "John W. Wilson." It was hard to lie before that frank gaze.

"Better get on ahead. You'll find several of the boys. Don't want to force the pace, but I'll be glad when we're out of the valley. You'll be cattle and trail boss to the end of the trek."

"Thanks, Mister Gordon," John answered. "You can rely on me."

John rode forward along the flanks of the slow-moving herd. He spoke to several of Gordon's men. Finally, he reached the head of the herd and sent the man who had been acting as guide to report back to old man Gordon. It was shortly afterwards that he observed a lone rider way out near the river. He galloped across the grassy plain to find out what the rider was doing.

"Say, blockhead, what do you reckon you're doing?" he called out.

The rider was evidently startled at the sound of his voice and seemed to sway in the saddle. A head was turned, and John could just see a small face peering at him with fright and evident anger.

"You're likely to come to harm wandering away from the train," John brought his horse to a standstill. "And you should be doing a job of work tending to those cattle. Every man—" The brim of the sombrero was turned up and John's voice died away.

It was a girl.

"Who are you?" snapped a pleasant but not friendly voice.

"John Wilson," was his ready answer.

"Sorry I swore at you, but I took you for one of the boys."

"What are you doing here, Wilson?"

"Just taken over as trail boss for Lafe Gordon, who runs this outfit. Who are you?"

"I'm his blockhead daughter, and I ride where I like and when." Her eyes were frosty.

"Then you keep within sight or I'll come after you," he countered with a grin. "I know this country better than

most, and often when it looks peaceful and beautiful, then it is that it's most dangerous." He waved his hand to embrace the hills and the valley. "Who knows what bunch of crooks may lie hidden here, what wild animal lurks in yonder mesquite, and last, but not least, the river banks are treacherous. Do you like snakes, lady, because there are plenty of rattlers?"

"I am quite capable of looking out for all those dangers." The girl stared at him curiously. "Say, stranger, what's brought you so far from the beaten track?"

They rode back, and John told her that he was heading north back to his old ranch, and that he had asked her father for a job with the train.

"One gets kinda lonely riding alone," he told her.

"Well, John, I'm glad you've joined up with us, though I didn't like you very much at first sight. My name is Mary."

"Always riles me to see a person courtin' danger when it ain't necessary." He smiled. "Sorry for my rudeness, Mary."

They were good friends by the time they rejoined the wagon train.

John was just thinking about calling a halt for the night when he saw a man on foot. The man was lurching and staggering as if all in, and as John urged his horse to a gallop the figure sprawled full length in the dust.

Lafe Gordon and his daughter galloped after John, and found the new cattle boss putting a water-bottle to the sick man's lips.

"Seems to be all in, boss!" cried John.

The man's eyes opened.

"Robbed by a bunch of coyotes," he mumbled. "Took my horse, my dust and my gun. I've been walking for days."

"Poor lad!" cried kindly old Gordon. "We'll give him a ride in one of the wagons. Guess a night's rest will cure him, and we can do with an extra hand."

Thus did Jim Harper join the wagon train he intended to betray into the hands of the vile Ballard.

Lafe Gordon is Wounded

BY next morning the young man seemed quite recovered. Lafe Gordon and his daughter believed his story, especially when he showed them bullet holes in his sombrero—the bandits had fired at him as he had run for his life.

John Wyatt was not so certain. For a person who had gone through privations and hardships Jim Harper made an extraordinary quick recovery, and the tale about using him as a target did not ring true. He would watch the newcomer closely.

Jim Harper knew that in the trail boss he had an astute Westerner who would not be so easy to bluff and deceive. John Wilson was a puzzle to the bandit spy. The wagon train had scarce got on the move when the two young men became involved in a dispute. Harper asked Lafe Gordon the route the herd was taking, and when he learnt that they were following the course of the river suggested going through Dead Pine Gorge, John answered that the gorge was too narrow.

"Go through that gorge and you save a whole day," said Harper.

"The gorge is narrow and the trail half obliterated by landslides," John told old Gordon. "All those cattle thundering through there might easily shake down those cliffs. A small fall might cause a stampede. It may be a day longer by the river, but it's safer in more ways than one."

"What you mean by that?" demanded Jim aggressively.

"That gorge would make a great place for a trap," John stared at his questioner. "I'm trail boss, and I don't fancy Dead Pine Gorge."

John Wyatt rode off on a round of duty, and when he was out of hearing Jim began to question Gordon slyly about the trail boss, and heard to his surprise that John Wilson was a recent addition to the train.

"If a cowpuncher is heading north it's queer he should come this way." Jim watched the old man closely. "Gold-miners and maybe trappers might come this way, but it's way off the beaten trail. After what I've been through, Mr. Gordon, I'm kinda suspicious of everyone. Is John Wilson genuine or playing some game?"

Mary overheard and was indignant.

"Of course John's genuine. We know as much about him as we do about you."

Jim smiled.

"That's true. My only proof is my old sombrero and the fact that the bandits had cleared me of everything. I couldn't have lived more than a few hours longer if you hadn't found me. I ain't got anything much against the trail boss except that he takes the river trail. I wish I could find someone else that knows this district because they'd tell you that at least a day and perhaps more is saved by goin' through Dead Pine Gorge. Also the river trail is a



Ballard's men began to round-up the cattle.

long, treacherous trek, and in several places it's so narrow that the cattle can only go about three abreast along the river bank, and—"

"He told me the banks were treacherous," Mary interrupted, and then shook her head. "I'm certain John's straight."

"You know best, Miss Gordon." Jim gave a sad smile. "But if you're betrayed into a bunch of coyotes don't blame me."

Having sown the evil, Jim Harper went back to a wagon to rest as he still felt weak from his ordeal.

That night Gordon argued with John about Dead Man's Gorge and the saving of a day, but the trail boss answered that the trail was dangerous and whilst he was running this outfit the cattle should follow the river. He excused himself and went off to make final arrangements for the night.

"I thought you were the boss around here," sneered Jim. "But Wilson gives the orders. I don't like the look of things, and that's plain speaking."

Satisfied that all was well with the herd, John came back to his own quarters. He was well aware that Jim was trying to turn the Gordons against him, and it amused him to pretend not to notice.

The horses were hitched by some trees, and the shrewd eyes of the young man saw that a horse was missing—the grey that had been given to the newcomer. Quickly John dismounted and tried to read the trail. The Indians had taught him their magic, and once clear of the camp the trail was easy to find. He slid from the saddle and placed his ear to the ground. Many horses could he hear, so it behove him to ride with extreme caution. In a clearing he observed Jim talking with a number of riders, and he edged close enough to hear their plans.

The bandits were to watch from the hills, and if the wagon train went down Dead Pine Gorge they must wait till most of the cattle were in the gorge, but should Jim be unable to stop the trail boss from following the river, then the gang were to attack close to Yellow Canyon.

Most of the night John rode, but he was back by morning, and there was a grim expression on his face as he smiled a good-day to Jim Harper. He had overheard a promise on the previous evening that if the trail boss showed any signs of making a fight it was Jim's duty to shoot him in the back.

When Lafe Gordon hinted that he thought they should try Dead Pine Gorge John shook his head.

"I can get you through the river country, but I take no responsibility for that gorge," he answered. "Maybe you'd like Jim here to guide you. Queer that he seems to know this country so well, and yet this is the first time he has ever prospected this valley."

Mary wondered which of the young men could be trusted, and she looked longest at John.

By Yellow Canyon Ballard's men attacked, but the fat leader did not risk his hide, and remained with Red watching from the mesa. Jim stealthily drew his gun as John formed the wagons together in a circle, but slid his hand away from the butt because of the intent gaze of the trail boss. Ballard had instructed some of his men to round up the cattle and the rest to attack the wagons.

Scarcely had the fight begun when out of Dead Pine Gulch came a number of dark-shirted riders on white horses.

"The White Riders!" went up the cry, and instantly there was panic among Ballard's men. The men that fought for justice were fitter and better shots. They swooped down on the wavering outlaws

with a grim determination and fury that terrified the cowardly rascals. Ballard's men fired their guns wildly at the huddled wagons, and did make a weak attempt to stand against the White Riders, but they soon fled in scattered groups.

Jim Harper's face was white with fury as he cowered behind the wheel of a wagon. He had been tricked a second time by the cursed Riders, and it was obviously from the way John Wilson was riding out to meet the Riders that he was one of them. Then Jim knew that John Wilson must be John Wyatt, their leader, and cursed himself again for being so blind. Well, he must play his own game, and trust that a chance might occur to turn the tables, so he fired his rifle high in the air and over the heads of the fleeing outlaws.

Six were killed and several men who were wounded were captured. There was only one serious casualty among the defenders, and that was brave old Lafe Gordon, who got a bullet through the shoulder. The old man was tended by his daughter.

The White Riders, after a consultation with John Wyatt, rode off with their prisoners in the direction of Dead Man's Gorge. Jim Harper wondered at the reason, and to impress everyone suggested that he might be allowed to go after some of the outlaws that had escaped.

"Guess I could find some of the caves and crevices where these skunks are hiding."

"Don't bother, Jim," John Wyatt rode up and jumped lightly from his horse. "Those rats won't give us much more trouble." He looked down at the wounded man. "By gar, I'm sorry this should have happened, Mr. Gordon, but these rats attacked a bit quicker than my men expected."

"You're John Wyatt, the leader of the White Riders." Mary looked up from tending her father. "I think you might have trusted us." There was a hurt look in the blue eyes.

"Sorry, Mary, but I can't trust anyone in this business. I hope you and your father will forgive me?"

"Sure we do," instantly answered Lafe Gordon. "Did you join my outfit because you knew they were going to attack us?"

"I wasn't sure, but I hoped your cattle might lure them out into the open." John glanced towards the hills. "I was hoping to have corralled the whole dirty bunch." Then he knelt beside the old man. "Let me have a look at that wound."

"I don't think it's very serious," cried Jim. "Pesky bad luck the boss should have stopped a stray."

"Tough luck," agreed Wyatt, and smiled in apparent friendly fashion at the other. "Fraid the boss has lost a good deal of blood. The wound's not serious, but this is a case for a doc. Guess I'm taking you back to Black Diamond."

"How about the cattle, John?" questioned Gordon.

"Don't you worry about the cattle, Lafe," Wyatt grinned. "I'm giving orders for the herders to get busy. They'll take the cattle along the valley. Twenty miles from here lies open country, and you're out of Bad Man's Land. The White Riders will be watching from the hills, in case any fool outlaws try to cause trouble. We'll fix you up, Lafe, and you can rejoin the outfit in about two or three days—that depends on the doc."

Mary went with her father and John Wyatt. Jim Harper waited till they were out of sight, got to horse and went out as if to help the herders, but his destination was Black Diamond.

The Fight in the Saloon

JOHN WYATT handed the wounded man over to the doctor.

"I will stay with dad," said Mary. "I want to have a look round this town," Wyatt told her. "I've heard tales of this place and I want to give the folks the once-over."

"Be careful, John."

Wyatt smiled at her. "You're great, Mary. 'Fraid there hasn't been a lot of time in my life for girls, but you're different. I'll be extra careful. I'll try not to be long."

John Wyatt dismounted outside the saloon and as he hitched his horse to the rail, took a quiet look round the main street. There was a deserted air about the dusty street, the shacks looked dirty and ill-kept, whilst the few inhabitants seemed to hug the side-walk as if they were in fear of their lives. There were a number of unshaven, down-at-heel loafers outside the saloon.

John pushed open the swing doors and strolled inside. The place was half full, and the swift glance he gave round was not reassuring. A cutthroat crowd, and the place stunk of smoke and stale spirits. He went to the bar and ordered a drink from the watery-eyed attendant.

Two men thumping a greasy pack of cards looked round at the tall youngster, and one shot a hand across the table.

"Red, take a good look at that guy. He's mighty like John Wyatt of the White Riders!"

Red turned slowly and then gave a faint nod.

"I never thought he'd have the nerve to come to this place. A word from me and he'd be dead meat."

"Then why don't you give the word?" The other fingered his gun. "Through his cursed Riders we lost a lot of the boys."

"Stay here," hissed Red. "I gotta tell Ballard upstairs. Warn me if he looks like quitting."

Red slipped quietly up the stairs. The swing doors opened and a dark-skinned man came into the saloon, and instantly John turned his back. The newcomer nodded in surly fashion to a number of men before coming to the bar. Chance took him to the place next to John Wyatt.

Red got a shock when he found Jim Harper with Ballard. The younger man had come in by a back entrance. The two were rowing over the last failure. Ballard thumping and banging the table in a frenzy, and Jim looking as if he could kill the older man.

"John Wyatt is downstairs," rasped Red. "What yuh gonna do?"

"Wyatt mustn't see me!" cried Jim. "Don't go down into the saloon," ordered Ballard in a shaky voice. "Red, if we can get Wyatt the White Riders won't have a leader and—"

His words died away as there came a crash from downstairs, and then the sounds of a violent scuffle.

Very slowly John Wyatt turned, and then his two hands gripped the newcomer by his dirty shirt.

"Bull Bradley!" Wyatt rasped out. "What are you doing here?"

Bradley had returned to Black Diamond with a lying tale that he had escaped, but had a bad fall from his horse that had meant hiding in one of the hills till he was better. He had returned on the previous day, and Ballard had been very suspicious. Bradley knew that if Wyatt started talking he was a doomed man—the boys would shoot him down.

The crook wrenched himself free.

"Get him, boys!" he shouted. "It's the leader of the White Riders!"

His vicious blow at John was parried neatly, and then a right came up beneath Bradley's jaw with a force that lifted the rascal off the floor. Bradley crashed back against a table, and glasses were scattered in all directions.

Four men rushed at Wyatt, who waited calmly as if he were amused. The first man went down before a left and right to the face, another was gripped and swung up into the air as if he weighed next to nothing, and the other two received their comrade in their chests.

From the top of the stairs they saw a two-fisted tornado battling against overwhelming odds. John Wyatt was in his element. One man drew a gun, and it was John's booted foot that smashed the man's wrist. On the bar were a number of bottles and these were flung with deadly aim—two men going down as if they were pole-axed.

A leap and Wyatt was on the bar. Five or six ruffians surged forward, and like a battering ram he hurled himself down on them with arms outflung. The whole lot rolled to the floor winded and bruised, and John effectively cracked two heads together before punching his way to his feet. Once more back on the bar. Directly above his head was a veranda. All the rooms upstairs had a veranda that faced into the saloon. Wyatt gripped a rail and swung himself up with scarce an effort, and had just clambered over the rail when one of Ballard's men rushed out of a room at this fearless fighter.

A right hook and a left uppercut thudded to the rascal's jaw. The man staggered back against the balustrade, which collapsed upon the shock. With a yell of terror the wretch thudded down on to the crowd below.

Inspired by the action of this fearless fighter several of the more spirited of Black Diamond's inhabitants attacked Ballard's men, but they quit hurriedly when guns began spitting lead.

A bullet sang past Wyatt's ears, and he knew it was time to go. His own gun barked twice, and then he darted into a room and slammed the door. He crashed the door shut and jerked open a window. When the angry mob burst into the bed-room they found the open window, and as one raised a gun Wyatt dropped off the roof into the saddle of his horse.

Down the street he went like the wind. A few stray bullets flew wide of their mark as his horse's hoofs kicked up the dust.

"Wyatt's gone to get his White Riders!" raved Ballard, and shook his fist at Jim. "You're to blame for this, you fool!"

"You make me sick!" retorted Jim. "One man against a dozen and they couldn't hold him. A lot of yellow-livered skunks!" His eyes gazed round contemptuously. "Not one of you would dare go after Wyatt—you're scared!"

There was angry muttering, but that died when they saw Jim slide a hand to his belt.

"Get out of here!" Ballard mouthed at his men. "We gotta get busy. Get ready to leave town."

Ballard, Red and Jim were alone. "You've got us into this mess, Jim," sneered Red. "What yuh gonna do?"

"Get you out." Jim was standing by the window. "Look over there. See who has come out of Doc Raines' house? That's Jeff Gordon's daughter, Mary. The old man got wounded and Wyatt brought him to see the doc. Wyatt must have left the father and girl to come here. Wyatt's crazy about the girl. If we get the girl we can dictate to him our terms."

A right nook and a left uppercut thudded to the rascal's jaw and he staggered back against the rail with a yell



"Get the girl and bring her here." Ballard's evil eyes lit up. "Then you go after John Wyatt, Jim, and say the girl is in that canyon outside this town. We'll take her to Horseshoe Canyon, and if he wants her to live he must come alone. I'll have the boys hidden in the rocks and they won't miss."

"But how do I explain myself?" demanded Jim.

It was Red who solved that problem.

"You can say that the herders refuse to move without their trail boss or Lafe Gordon, and you came into town to fetch Wyatt. Seeking him, you were just in time to see him make his escape, then you saw the capture of the girl, and overheard what they planned to do with their hostage. You rushed forward to try and rescue the girl and were overpowered. Your life was spared on the condition that you ride after Wyatt and tell him that if the girl is to live he must go alone to the canyon."

"The boys will settle Wyatt and then we'll clean up the gold and quit town," added Ballard. "Get busy, Jim."

"I'll tell her Wyatt's been wounded and needs her," Jim grinned. "This is where I square accounts."

Unsuspecting, Mary came to the saloon and they brought her upstairs. Too late she guessed she had been tricked. They bundled her into a back room. Jim Wyatt got to horse and went out to find the White Riders.

Ballard laughed hoarsely as they watched Jim ride down the main street.

"Get the boys together. I want four to go to the canyon and wait for Wyatt. The others will be ready to clean up the gold in the bank."

"Aren't you waiting till Jim comes back?" asked Red.

"Why wait for Jim?" chuckled Ballard. "Without him we get the biggest share of the dust. He'll get back to find us gone. Serve the young fool right. He will have killed his own brother, and will have to answer to the

White Riders. Let's hope they got him."

"What of the girl, boss?"

"Leave her—she's served her purpose," Ballard laughed callously. "He's sent his own brother to his death. Ha, ha! Jim Wyatt, I guess that finishes you."

Mary had her ear close to the door and she heard every word.

Jim Learns the Truth

A MILE outside the town Jim came upon the White Riders, and with upraised hand called them to a halt. He told his story to John Wyatt.

"You're one of the gang," cried Wyatt. "I've known it all along." His face darkened. "Are you lying?"

"Not about Mary being in Ballard's hands," Jim sneered. "She dies within the hour unless you ride to Horseshoe Canyon—alone!"

In spite of protests by the White Riders John bade them wait here for his return. "I'm going alone into Horseshoe Canyon, and if I'm not back in half an hour, come and get me."

"What do we do with this snake?" asked a White Rider.

"I have to go with you, Wyatt," quickly spoke Jim. "I have to come as far as the mouth of the canyon in case of treachery."

The two brothers rode away, but no word was spoken until the canyon was sighted about a mile away.

"My job's done," Jim laughed hoarsely. "I hope you're not too late."

The canyon was so near to Black Diamond that within five minutes Jim was back in the town. He arrived at the saloon, and when he leaped from the saddle stared round in surprise. How quiet everything seemed. No one about and all windows seemed barred and shuttered, then he saw an object that made him stiffen—a motionless figure sprawled in the main street. Something had been going on while he had been away—a man had been shot.

The saloon was empty. Every sign of

hurried flight. Jim rushed upstairs and into the small room that Ballard used. It was empty. A suspicion that he had been betrayed seized him, and he looked wildly round.

Ballard had double-crossed him. They had robbed the bank and shot their way out of town.

A sudden hammering made him jump round and whip out his gun.

There was a prisoner behind that door. It would be the girl.

Jim wrenched open the door and Mary staggered out.

"Where have they gone?" he shouted at her.

"They robbed the bank and have gone," Mary looked at him scornfully. "They have paid you in your own coin, Jim Wyatt!"

"I'm Jim Harper!"

Mary shook her head.

"You're Jim Wyatt! I overheard every word whilst I was a prisoner in that room." Her eyes were tragic. "You've sent your own brother to his death. Ballard killed your parents and saved you because it amused him. He brought you up to be as vile as himself, and finally got you to send your brother to his doom. If I had a gun I could kill you."

"John Wyatt, my brother!" He said the words slowly. "John is my brother." His eyes cleared. "I can just remember the big brother who meant everything to me, but it was all so hazy. So I've betrayed my brother."

"Are you going to stand there and do nothing?" Mary grabbed his arm. "Are you going to let him die?"

"No!" His eyes blazed. "Mary, the White Riders are waiting on the bluff two miles out of town on the trail you took from the Black River. Ride and get 'em, and tell them to ride like the wind for Horseshoe Canyon. I'll try to keep 'em at bay till they make it."

Down the stairs rushed Jim, and the girl was only a split second after him. The two horses galloped madly down the main street, and the people behind the barred windows peered forth fearfully.

Side by Side

JOHN WYATT rode at a gallop to Horseshoe Canyon. It was narrow with precipitous cliffs, yet there were ledges and fissures where men could lie in wait.

The White Rider was no fool, and he knew that danger lurked ahead. When Jim Harper had told him that Mary was in peril he had rushed blindly to her rescue, but now that he saw this grim canyon he wondered if this were a trap. The outlaws might have captured Mary, but that did not mean the girl was here. There might be gunmen in those rocky fissures.

But John was fearless. He would go into Horseshoe Canyon, and woe betide anyone who tried to play tricks on him. He dismounted, left his horse by a small cove and proceeded on foot. The canyon twisted and turned, and soon was so narrow that it was like walking on a pebbly track with gaunt, ugly rocks looming all round, and but a glimpse of daylight—the canyon was now two hundred feet in depth.

Wyatt took cover behind a loose boulder. If Ballard's men expected to meet him for a discussion they would have shown themselves before. He took off his sombrero and pushed it over the boulder.

Crack!

When he looked at his hat it had two holes neatly bored. Certainly he had walked into a trap, from which it would not be so easy to escape. He managed to get a quick glance over the boulder and saw a man's head and shoulders.

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His gun spoke and there came a cry of pain.

"One!" softly murmured Wyatt.

Bullets began to spatter round him. If his enemies changed their positions they would find that this boulder did not completely protect him, or they could push over a rock from above—he hoped the idea would not occur to them.

A lull in the fighting, and then John swung round. Someone was coming up the canyon. What a shock to see Jim Harper.

"Don't shoot, John!" he called out.

And John seeing the other's hands were raised above his shoulders was amazed. Jim darted down behind the cover of the boulder.

"What have you come to tell me this time?" John demanded.

"Little time to talk," Jim panted out.

"I captured Mary and helped plan this trap. You were our deadliest enemy. I left you and hastened back to Black Diamond to find that Ballard and the others had double-crossed me. I, who had done all the dirty work, had been left to my fate. I heard a hammering in Ballard's room and remembered the girl. I let her out and demanded that she tell me what had happened." He paused. "She had overheard Ballard talking with Red Mengis about the fool they'd made of me since I was a kid. My name isn't Jim Harper, but Jim Wyatt—I'm your brother!"

John was speechless with amazement. He studied the other's face and he could see the resemblance to his own father. "You can't be the Jim I've searched for all these years."

"I have only a vague recollection of the wagon train, but I can remember you and I driving a wagon. The massacre by Ballard I cannot remember, but I have known all about it because Ballard was always ready to boast of what he did. Ballard never let on that he had saved me from the killing out of some strange sense of humour, and I've always thought my parents were a bandit named Harper and his Indian wife—both of whom have been dead for years."

"Jim"—John Wyatt held out his hand—"I have always thought that you were alive, but never guessed that Ballard brought you up with his gang."

"He taught me to rob and pillage, so that I thought I was but taking my own," Jim scowled. "Easy to sink so low that you deny everything that is decent and honest. Your fight, John, in the saloon made me wish that I had been different. Why couldn't I have done deeds like that, instead of crawling about like some rattlesnake—hated and loathed by all decent folk." A bullet crashed into the cliff face. "The skunks are wondering what is my game. That's a hint for me to show myself," he laughed harshly, "and stop a bullet. Probably they may have guessed that I've found out that Ballard has done a double cross."

"Keep down." John pushed his gun round the side of the boulder and fired. "How did Ballard double-cross you?"

Swiftly Jim told of the gold dust raid, and of other events. The bullets spattered the rocks more frequently, and to stay meant certain death.

"We gotta get out of this place," Jim cried, and pointed. "See that corner. Make it, and I'll keep the skunks at bay."

"But, Jim—"

"Don't argue!" shouted the younger brother aggressively. "I'd shoot every one of that dirty bunch and not turn a hair. I'm for the cause of the White Riders, whose leader is my brother. I seem to remember clearly now what Bal-

lard and his men did. You have travelled miles for your revenge—well, it's my revenge as well. Make that corner or we haven't a chance."

The two brothers made the corner. Bent double, they darted from cover to cover, pausing to fire a few rounds to keep the enemy in check, before they went down the canyon to safety.

One of the gang rashly exposed his head to fire at John, and it was Jim who shot the man down.

Horseshoe Canyon was getting wider. John did not notice his brother reel and clutch at his side. With a great effort Jim followed his brother—the mouth of the canyon was only a few yards away.

Suddenly firing broke out above their heads, and John knew that the White Riders had come to the rescue. Some of them had gone to the high ground and were firing down on the outlaws, who were now caught in their own trap.

"Well, Jim—" John turned and noticed the drawn expression on the other's face. He was just in time to catch him in his arms.

"Get Ballard—get Ballard!" the dying man muttered fiercely. "He's got the gold dust—south trail towards Summersville. Go get him, brother!"

John's hands found the wound and knew that it was fatal. Jim lay so still that he thought his brother was dead. "Jim—Jim!" His voice broke.

The dying youth's eyes opened and a slight smile twitched the lips.

"I'm going, John, and I'm not sorry. I kinda feel I've done something at the end that wasn't all bad. Say you forgive me, John, and I'll die happy."

"There is nothing to forgive. And you saved my life, Jim—" His voice broke.

A slight moan came from the wounded man. The eyes opened for the last time.

"Go, get Ballard. John, get Ballard! It is my last wish."

So Jim Wyatt died and was at peace. John heard a sob and looked up to find Mary looking down at the youth who had sacrificed his life for his brother.

The End of Ballard

JOHN WYATT knew that he must ride fast if he would overtake Ballard and his men. The one surviving gunman in Horseshoe Canyon saved John a lot of trouble by surrendering. Six of the White Riders he detailed to take Mary, the prisoner, and the body of his brother into Black Diamond. Two Riders were dispatched to the wagon train to halt, as there was now no need for immediate hurry. With the rest of the Riders—a dozen in all—he went in pursuit of Ballard.

Once clear of Black Diamond, the scoundrel had set a good pace, but it was far from a break-neck gallop, moreover, he had to consider the old prairie schooner which he had stolen to carry his gold. It was clumsy and heavy; Ballard did not worry, because he thought he would be miles away before anyone thought of pursuit. Besides, no one would dare to follow him. The White Riders had lost their leader, so he had nothing to fear in that direction.

John knew of a track over the hills, and thus, after two hours' riding, they could look down into a valley and see a number of horsemen cantering along a twisty trail.

"Keep to the woods," ordered Wyatt. "We must make a surprise attack. They must not know that we are close behind them."

What a surprise for Ballard and his

(Continued on page 23)

Over the prairies swept a torrent of pioneering humanity, bent on seeking wealth in virgin territory. But the promise of riches beckoned rogues as well as honest men, and the settlers' trails were blazed with feud and death. A smashing serial of the lawless West, starring Buck Jones and Muriel Evans

"The ROARING WEST"



EPISODE 9.—

"Death Holds the Reins"

Read This First

Montana Larkin, an ex-deputy, is planning to join in a land rush with Jinglebob Morgan, his friend, whose brother has provided them with the map of a claim which contains rich mineral deposits.

Montana and Jinglebob make the acquaintance of a rancher named Parker, and are introduced to his daughter, Mary, and his niece, Ann Hardy. From Parker they learn the details of the projected land rush, and agree to ride in company with the cattleman and his party.

Parker's foreman, Gillespie, is a crook, however. Discovering the purpose of Montana and Jinglebob, he beats them to their claim with some of his hirelings, and records it in his name.

Later, Jinglebob's brother Clem arrives on the scene, and reveals the fact that the land secured by Gillespie is worthless, owing to a flaw in the map which Jinglebob had possessed.

Gillespie attempts to force information from Clem, but postpones his efforts when he is hired by a man named Marco Brett to loot a wagon-train, which is owned by Ann Hardy's father.

The attack on the wagon-train failing, Gillespie turns his attention on Clem again, the latter being kidnapped and carried off to a deserted ranch. He is traced, however, and under cover of a desperate gun battle Montana attempts to rescue him from a building that has burst into flames, part of the roof collapsing even as Montana is carrying Clem to the front door.

Now Read On

In Sicomoro Again

THE mass of blazing timber dropped immediately behind Montana's staggering figure, the crash of it resounding in his ears, and all about him there arose a whirl of uplung sparks.

The collapse had missed him by inches, one flaming rafter actually grazing his back as it fell. Yet, like a man in a daze, Montana was scarcely aware of his narrow escape. Faint with the blistering heat of the inferno, half-suffocated by the clouds of smoke, he was only able to keep his feet by sheer will-power, an indomitable spirit urging him forward with the inert body of Clem Morgan clasped tightly in his arms.

He kicked open the door of the burning ranch-house and lurched forth into the night air, and the glare of the conflagration revealed his stalwart form to Jinglebob and the boys who were sheltering in the scrub. With indescribable relief they saw him stumble from the porch and totter in the direction of the ridge where he had left Mary Parker and Happy.

"He's safe!" Jinglebob whooped. "He's safe, an' he's got Clem with him!"

A blatter of gunplay from the barn caused Jinglebob to crouch lower, and the rest of the men in the scrub did likewise. No shots were fired at Montana, however, for the intervening ranch-house still concealed him from the view of Gillespie and his gang, and as yet the outlaws were unaware of his presence.

Not until Butch Riley gained the

barn did the crooks learn that the ex-deputy had arrived on the scene.

"Where's Clem Morgan, you fool?" Gillespie demanded of Butch in savage tones. "Why didn't you bring him out? You know what that gold claim o' his means to us, don't yuh?"

Riley wiped his scorched and battered countenance with a begrimed, shaking hand.

"Gil, I—I tried to bring him out," he panted. "But Montana Larkin showed up. I did my best, but Larkin is dynamite. You know that!"

"Larkin!" Gillespie bit out the name through clenched teeth. Then he swung round on his hirelings.

"We've got to get Clem away from Montana!" he jerked. "Best thing we can do is to draw off to the corral back of this barn. Our horses are there. Come on!"

They dodged out of the building in which they had taken shelter, their appearance being greeted by a rapid fusillade from the scrub, but without casualties they reached the corral and prepared to mount.

"Look!" Hank Rodgers shouted all at once. "There's Montana now, and he's luggin' Clem along with him!"

From the corral the gangsters could now discern the figure of the ex-deputy, toiling up the moonlit slope of the ridge with his human burden and making for the buckboard in which Mary and Happy were waiting.

"After him!" snarled Gillespie; but even as he spoke those words a band of horsemen suddenly topped the ridge to stand silhouetted against the starry skyline.

They formed the main body of the December 28th, 1935.

Parker ranch-hands, the reinforcements mustered by Al Mackay, and at sight of them a lusty cheer rose from the scrub in which Jinglebob Morgan and his comrades were lying.

"Gil, we're sunk!" flank Rodgers gasped. "They're too many for us now!"

He was right. The odds were now in favour of the besiegers—only slightly, perhaps, but the Gillespie gang were not of the breed to show fight unless the advantage was on their own side. To give their leader his due, Gillespie himself was not lacking in courage when sufficiently hard pressed, yet he knew the shortcomings of his men, and after a moment's hesitation he gave the order to flee.

"Beat it!" he rapped out. "Head for the hills!"

He scrambled astride his bronc, and his accomplices were not slow to imitate his example. A few seconds later they were galloping from the neighbourhood of the blazing ranch, gouging the flanks of their ponies with their spurs.

Mackay and the newcomers rode in pursuit, and the chase was taken up by Jinglebob and his party as soon as these had secured their horses. On into the heart of the hill-country they dashed, following the band of fugitive outlaws, firing at them as they swept through canyon and valley, but the ponies of the crooks were fresh, and ere long the men of the Parker outfit began to lose ground steadily.

An hour after quitting the Carron ranch, Gillespie and his hirelings drew rein to give their mounts a "breathe," being satisfied that they had thrown off the pursuers. Nor were they mistaken, for at that very moment Jinglebob and the full muster of the Parker hands were cantering slowly and disappointedly homeward, consoling themselves with the reflection that Clem had been rescued even if his foes had not been captured.

As for Gil and his men, these turned in the direction of Hell's Gate as soon as their broncs had recovered their wind, and, travelling at a walking pace, they reached their old hide-out there in the early hours of the morning.

In that cave near Hell's Gate they slept until sun-up, and then, after breakfast had been cooked and eaten, Gillespie gave the word to hit the trail again—this time for Sicomoro.

They gained their destination by nine o'clock and rode boldly enough into the thriving town, for although Gillespie knew that he was liable to arrest on several counts now, he was equally well aware that the law had very little hold in this boom settlement of Sicomoro.

Entering the main street, Gil and his gang made straight for Marco Brett's saloon, and after tying their horses to the hitch-rail, they trooped into the bar-room and marched over to the counter.

"Brett in?" Gil inquired laconically of a waiter.

"He's in his office, talkin' to a cattle buyer," came the reply.

Leaving his cronies at the bar, Gillespie crossed to the door of Brett's private room and pushed it open without the formality of knocking. He at once observed the saloon owner in conversation with a man whom he recognised as one Edmund Yountis, an honest cattle-dealer from Auburn City.

"Then you advise me to see Jim Parker?" Yountis was saying.

"I do," Brett rejoined. "Make it a cash deal, Yountis, and he'll meet your price."

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He paused, suddenly becoming aware that Gillespie was standing on the threshold, and with a hearty greeting he invited Gil to step in.

"You know Gillespie, Yountis," the saloon-owner remarked. "He used to work for Parker."

"Used to?" Yountis echoed. "I thought you were foreman of that outfit for life, Gillespie."

Gil changed the subject, and, after some further conversation, Yountis rose to go.

"Well, Brett," he said, "I'm sorry we can't do business. But I'll take your advice and run over to Parker's ranch at Dry Creek."

He departed, and when the door had closed behind him, Brett favoured Gillespie with an odd smile.

"I just turned down a big deal, Gil," he commented. "The railroad is gonna be extended from Auburn to Sicomoro. Yountis is actin' for the company, and wanted me to supply the construction gang with beef—knowin' that cattle was one o' my side-lines."

"And you turned it down?" Gillespie ejaculated.

Brett laughed softly.

"We didn't do so good the last time we tried to raid a herd o' steers, did we?" he observed. "No, so this time we'll let Yountis make a cash deal, and then we'll go after the dough. That's why I put him on to Parker—and that's why I urged him to pay him off in bills, not by cheque."

"H'm," Gil mused appreciatively, "smart idea, Brett."

"I'll say it's a smart idea," the other stated. "But what brings you here, Gil? You got some news for me?"

Gillespie had news—bad news. In gloomy tones he related all that had occurred the previous night, and when he had finished his story Brett eyed him sourly.

"You know, I used to think you were a pretty useful man," he grunted. "What's come over you lately?"

"Luek's runnin' against me," Gillespie muttered. "But I'll get what I'm after. Brett—don't you worry."

"Well, meantime you can help me in this Yountis deal," the saloon-owner declared. "Branded cattle is too tough to get rid of so close to home, Gil, so when Parker collects—"

He did not finish the sentence, but Gillespie understood him clearly enough.

"I get you, Brett," he said. "Listen, I'll have Tex Sanders ride over to keep an eye on the Parker outfit, an' he can give us the low-down."

"Right," the other man agreed. "You know, Gil, it's gonna be much easier relievin' Parker of cash instead o' cattle—seein' that money don't carry a brand."

Gillespie nodded, and then poured himself a drink from a whisky bottle that was standing on Brett's desk.

"You're right," he announced, "and here's luck to the proposition!"

Brett Takes Command

EDMUND YOUNTIS had called at the Dry Creek ranch and transacted a piece of business that was satisfactory both to himself and to Jim Parker, and when the cattle-buyer from Auburn had taken his leave, the owner of the ranch made his way from the house in search of Montana.

He located his new foreman near a little corral in which an unbroken pony was penned. The ex-deputy was in conversation with Mary, and was indicating the finer points in the bronc's

physical appearance as Jim Parker came up.

"Excuse me, Mary," the rancher said to his daughter, "I want to have a little talk with Montana."

He proceeded to tell the new foreman of the deal he had clinched with Yountis, and added that he had promised speedy delivery of five hundred head of steers as a first shipment.

"Okay, Mr. Parker," Montana rejoined. "Where do you want 'em taken?"

"Yountis says there's an old deserted corral just before you hit Auburn," the rancher observed. "That's where you'll head for. You'd better take the boys down to the lower range and round up the herd there, Montana."

"Dad," Mary put in, "will it be all right if Ann and I go along with Montana and the men as far as the lower range? I feel like a gallop, and I guess Ann will, too."

Ann and her wounded father, Bill Hardy, had been driven to Dry Creek from Sicomoro late the previous night, after the affair at the Carron ranch; and though the injured wagon-boss was confined to a bed in the house, he seemed comfortable enough, so that his daughter Ann had no hesitation in accompanying Mary and the hands on the trip to the lower range, a distance of several miles.

The party set out, and Parker waved adieu to them from the ranch-house porch, being joined there by Clem Morgan and Happy, the last-named having been ordered to stay at home and attend to various domestic duties.

"Hey, Clem," called Jinglebob, who had elected to trail along with Montana, "don't get into no more scrapes while I'm away at Auburn with the boys."

"Don't worry," his brother answered fervently, "I'm stavin' indoors till you fellers get back. Reckon I'll keep old Bill Hardy company. I ain't feelin' so good myself after what happened last night."

Neither the departing riders nor the trio in the porch were aware that this exchange of words was heard by a skulking figure in the brushwood thickets not far from the outfit. It was Tex Sanders who was lurking there—Sanders, who had been dispatched by Gillespie to keep vigil at the Dry Creek outfit—and with a final glance at the party headed by Montana, he sneaked off through the vegetation and mounted his bronc, which he had left in a glade some distance away.

Once in the saddle Tex Sanders galloped at top speed for Sicomoro, and some time later he might have been seen clattering into the town, drawing rein only when he was abreast of Marco Brett's saloon.

Dismounting, Tex hurried into the bar-room and crossed to Brett's office at the back of the premises, where he found the crooked saloon-owner in conference with Gillespie and the rest of the gang.

"What's up, Sanders?" Gillespie rapped out, as his hireling appeared in the doorway.

Tex closed the door and answered him jerkily.

"Montana and the Dry Creek boys are startin' after the cattle," he said. "There ain't nobody at the ranch-house now but old man Parker, Happy, and Clem Morgan."

"Fine," Marco Brett cut in. "This is our chance to get that dough, Gil. And, what's more, we can grab Clem Morgan, too."

"Yeah," Gillespie breathed, his eyes narrowing, "we'll make it a day. All we have to do is to rush that Dry Creek outfit while Larkin' and the cowpokes are ridin' herd."

Brett laid a hand on his arm.

"No," he growled, "we won't rush 'em this time. Even three men might be able to hold off a gang until help arrived. No, Gil, I've been figurin' things out, and this time we'll outsmart 'em. Listen, the stage coach that comes through Clear Valley don't carry any passengers—so Pete, Butch, Jake and Limpy can ride it, while the rest of us wait at Devil's Pass. Get the idea?"

"No, I don't," Gillespie muttered.

"Well, a stage coach will be able to get right up to that Dry Creek without bein' shot at, won't it?" Brett retorted.

He proceeded to go into the details of his plan, and then, announcing that he intended to accompany the gang and see that no slips were made, he arranged to meet Gillespie and his men outside the town within five minutes.

Not long afterwards Brett and Gillespie were pounding along the Dry Creek road with their band of accomplices strung out behind them, but when they were still two or three miles from the Parker ranch they turned aside and climbed a slope that overlooked a wide valley.

A quarter of an hour later a stage coach hove into sight on a ribbon of trail that wound through the depression between the hills, and at a sign from Brett four of the gang rode down to intercept it.

The four men in question were Pete, Jake, Butch and Limpy, and, suddenly swinging into the path of the vehicle, they held up the driver with drawn guns.

"Get down off that box-seat, feller," Jake commanded. "We're borrowin' this outfit."

The man on the stage descended to the ground in a perplexed fashion, wondering what Jake and his companions were after, since the coach contained nothing of value. And he was still wondering when the gangsters clambered aboard the vehicle and drove off, Jake taking the reins, and the other three

entering the interior of the equipage.

The saddle-horses having been hitched to the back of the stage prior to this, Jake made for the hill where Brett, Gillespie and the rest of the band were assembled, and on rejoining the main body of the outlaws, the occupants of the coach received final instructions.

"All right, get goin'," Brett said at length. "We'll take care of your broncs for you. And remember, when you've got Clem Morgan, head for Devil's Pass."

The saddle-horses had already been untethered from the rear of the vehicle, and without further delay Jake drove back on to the Dry Creek trail. Fifteen minutes later he was in sight of the Parker ranch, and, slouching the brim of his sombrero, he called down to his passengers and ordered them to hold themselves in readiness for action.

At that very moment Jim Parker was seated in the living-room of his home, and was giving Happy certain directions regarding the feeding of the unbroken pony in the little corral, directions that were interrupted as he beheld the coach that was bearing down on the ranch-house.

"Why, there's the stage," he exclaimed, moving to the window. "What brings it here?"

"Couldn't say, boss," remarked Happy. "Fummy, ain't it?"

He followed his employer out to the porch as the stage drew up in front of the building, and he was as astonished as the rancher when Jake and his accomplices sprang to the ground with their six-shooters levelled threateningly.

"Keep your hands off your hardware!" Butch Riley warned Parker and Happy. "An' don't make any fuss!"

The gangsters closed in on their startled victims and bundled them across the threshold of the house, two of the rogues carrying lariats, with which they proceeded to bind the cattleman and his companion.

Parker attempted to struggle, but a gun-butt was raised menacingly above his head, and he was forced to give up his futile efforts. Meanwhile the out-

law who had lifted his hand against him was questioning him viciously.

"Where's Clem Morgan? Come on, tell us where he is, and make it snappy!"

Even as the words were spoken there was a footfall on the stairs leading from the upper floor of the ranch-house, and an instant later Clem appeared, having heard the scuffle below while keeping Bill Hardy company in one of the bedrooms.

He was promptly seized, and, under the eyes of the helpless Jim Parker and the tremulous Happy, he was hustled out to the stage by Limpy and Butch. There he was tied hand and foot, then bundled into the interior of the coach.

Butch and Limpy returned to the living-room to find Parker and Happy bundled in a couple of chairs, Jake and Pete being engaged in opening a safe that stood in a corner of the apartment.

"All right, leave it to me," Jake Conroy was saying. "Gil knew the combination of this crib, an' he give it to me afore we left him."

The safe door was unfastened, and the notes which had been paid over by Yountis that morning were transferred to Conroy's hip-pocket, Parker and Happy looking on impotently the while.

"Okay, men," Jake declared. "Let's breeze."

The crooks tramped out of the house, leaving Parker and his ranch-hand securely bound, and Bill Hardy a powerless invalid in an upstairs room. A few seconds later they were driving away from the outfit, Jake Conroy on the box-seat again, and the other three rogues sharing the inside of the vehicle with the irate Clem Morgan.

In another ten minutes they were entering Devil's Pass, where Brett, Gillespie and the remainder of the gang were awaiting them eagerly.

"How'd yuh make out?" Brett jerked, riding close to the stage.

"Here's the dough," Jake said with a grin, tossing him the batch of notes from Parker's safe. "An' Clem Morgan is inside with the boys."



The gangsters closed in on their startled victims, two of the rogues carrying lariats, with which they proceeded to bind the cattleman and his companion.

There was a murmur of satisfaction from the band of outlaws. Then Gillespie swung himself from the saddle of his horse and handed the animal's rein to Hank Rodgers.

"Take care of my bronc, Hank," he ordered. "I'll ride in the coach with Morgan. Come on out, Limpy—you, too, Butch—and you, Pete."

Clem's "fellow-passengers" emerged from the stage, and Gillespie clambered in, leering at their captive villainously. Then, with the rest of the gang ready for the road, Jake Conroy whipped up the team of ponies harnessed to the vehicle, and the whole cavalcade moved off in a south-westerly direction.

Hot on the Trail

MARY and Ann had reached the lower range with Montana and his party, and had paused there to watch the Parker hands round up the five hundred head of cattle intended for Auburn. When this task had been accomplished, Montana rejoined the two girls on the slope from which they had witnessed operations.

"Well, looks like we are on our way to Auburn," he said to them. "Would you like some of the boys to ride back to the ranch with you? Three or four of us could easily handle the herd."

"Oh, no, Montana," Mary answered considerably. "I guess the men are all looking forward to a little spree when they get to town, and I don't think we ought to deprive them of their fun. Ann and I will be all right."

"Okay," the ex-deputy agreed. "Have it your own way."

He carried his gloved hand to his sombrero and then wheeled to ride off in the direction of the herd, the girls following him with their eyes until he and his comrades were driving the cattle at a steady pace across the range.

"I believe you like Montana Larkin, don't you?" Ann commented, giving Mary an arch, sidelong glance.

The rancher's daughter coloured a trifle, and then smiled.

"Who wouldn't?" she retorted. "What's more, I believe he likes me, too."

"I shouldn't be surprised," Ann murmured knowingly, and a moment later she and her cousin were turning for home.

For a while they rode at a canter, but presently, in a spirit of gaiety, Mary challenged the other girl to a race, designating the Dry Creek ranch-house as the winning-post.

"All right, then," Ann agreed with a laugh. "I'll back my pony against yours any day."

The two of them urged their horses into a gallop and dashed across-country at breakneck pace, each vying with the other in her efforts to draw ahead, and each enjoying the freshness of the wind as it whipped a bloom into her face. But at length Mary's bronc began to force its way in front, and, though still a fair distance from home, the rancher's daughter felt confident that her mount would last the course, for she knew it was in the peak of condition.

She was thirty yards in front of Ann when she topped the crest of a smooth, rounded hill, and it was as she reached the summit of this that she descried something which caused her to draw rein abruptly.

A troop of horsemen were passing through a valley away below her, a troop of horsemen who were strung out behind a lumbering stage coach.

Ann came abreast of her and brought her pony to a standstill.

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"What's the matter?" she demanded of her cousin. "Why have you stopped?"

"Ann," Mary ejaculated, "those look like some of Gil Gillespie's gang!"

She was pointing into the valley, and, following the direction of her extended arm, the other girl descried the men who were travelling along the bed of the great hollow.

Yes, they were Gillespie's gang, sure enough. Even though they were a good way off, it was possible to recognise some of them.

"You're right, Mary," Ann breathed. "We'd better get under cover for fear they happen to spot us."

They backed into a copse, and from the shelter of the trees they gazed down at the crooks without any risk of being observed.

"What do you suppose they're doing with that stage?" Ann queried.

"I don't know," Mary rejoined. "I imagine there's been a hold-up of some kind, but it beats me why they should want to take the coach along with them."

Her cousin pursed her lips. "Anyway," she opined, "I guess we'd be well advised to wait here until they're out of sight. I don't think we'd be too popular if they knew we'd seen them."

"I'm with you there, Ann," Mary answered. "We'll wait until the coast is clear."

Wait they did, and then, crossing the valley, they continued their journey towards home at a moderate pace, the interrupted race being quite forgotten now. And a short time afterwards they gained the Dry Creek ranch-house, little dreaming what was to meet their eyes as they entered the living-room.

Halting in front of the dwelling, they slid to the ground and tethered their ponies, after which the two of them climbed the steps of the porch.

Mary was the first to set foot on the threshold of the living-room, and as she beheld the trussed figures of Happy and her father she uttered a sharp cry. An instant afterwards she was joined by Ann, from whose lips there came a half-stifled scream.

"Dad!" Mary gasped, running forward to the chair in which the elderly cattleman was huddled. "Oh, dad, what happened?"

"Four of the Gillespie gang were here," Jim Parker told her strainedly.

"The Gillespie gang!" Ann broke in. "Oh, Uncle Jim, is my father all right?"

"Yes, it wasn't him they came for, dear," he replied in reassuring tones. "But they rifled the safe, and they took Clem Morgan away in a stage coach."

"A stage coach!"

Ann and Mary reiterated the words in the same breath and exchanged a startled glance. Then the rancher's daughter spoke again.

"You untie dad and Happy," she said to her cousin. "I'll go after Montana and the boys!"

She rushed from the house and scrambled astride her pony, unhitching it from the rail of the porch and jabbing her heels into the animal's flanks. Next second the creature was bounding away from the ranch, and at the top of its speed it bore her over the mesquite in headlong style, with the silken hair of its mane streaming back from its graecifid neck.

Onward Mary galloped, racing through canyon and vale, breasting cane-brakes and thickets, weaving her way through belts of woodland; and at last she espied a great cloud of dust

ahead of her, dust that rose from innumerable hoofs.

The cloven feet of the Parker herd en route for Auburn were responsible for that haze, and, catching up with the men who were driving the cattle onward, the girl drew rein alongside Montana Larkin.

"Mary," her father's foreman exclaimed. "Is anything wrong?"

"Plenty!" came the terse rejoinder. "Gillespie's gang have got Clem in a stage coach, and the last I saw of them it looked as if they were headed for Hell's Gate."

Montana ripped out an imprecation and turned to Jinglebob, who was close by.

"Your brother can get into more jams than any man I ever knew!" he said. "Mary, you'd better go back to the ranch. I'll take a bunch of the boys and see if I can head off Gillespie and his men."

"You stand a good chance," she told him. "They weren't travelling fast."

"Good!" Montana jerked, and then, summoning his comrades, he explained the situation to them and instructed two or three of them to take charge of the herd while the rest followed him towards the Hell's Gate trail.

Leaving Mary to return homeward and the cattle to proceed for Auburn under the care of the men detailed for the job of taking them thither, Montana and the rest of the band swung southward with determined mien; and soon the hoofs of their broncs were beating a staccato tattoo upon the sun-swept prairie levels that lay between the rescuers and the hill country.

With their ponies going at full stretch, the hard-riding punchers left the plains behind them and clattered into the rougher terrain of the mountain realms, and half an hour after quitting the Auburn trail they swept clear of a gloomy ravine, to see the Gillespie gang and the stage coach not five hundred yards in front of them.

They were spotted by the outlaws a few seconds later, and there was a confused stir amongst the rogues the instant they became aware that trouble was bearing down on them in the shape of the Parker ranch-hands.

"Larkin and his mob!" shouted Butch Riley.

There was a plunging and a wheeling of ponies, a drawing of guns and a desultory racket of firing, hot lead whistling amid the oncoming men of the Dry Creek outfit. And in swift response the "artillery" of Montana and his comrades belched flaming death.

Brett's voice rose above the tumult of the forty-fives, restoring order where chaos had threatened.

"Beat 'em back!" he roared. "Give 'em all you got, fellers, and stand your ground!"

The crooks rallied and fusilladed the advancing cowboys mercilessly, so that with two or three of their men struck down, Montana's party were forced to slacken up in order to make effective reply. Meanwhile Brett was pulling his horse across to the coach occupied by Jake, Gillespie and their prisoner.

"Go right ahead with Clem Morgan," the saloon-owner barked. "We'll hold off Larkin an' his bunch. On your way, Jake! Beat it, will yuh?"

Conroy seized the whip and lashed at his team of horses, driving them forward along the rough trail, so that in the interior of the stage Gillespie and Clem were pitched from side to side by the mad momentum of the vehicle. As for Brett, he turned to resume com-

mand of the men who were firing at the Dry Creek 'punchers.

At that same instant Montana Larkin was preparing to cut adrift from his followers and play a lone hand.

"Look, the coach is makin' a run for it," he rapped out. "Jinglebob, you and the boys keep that pack of gunmen busy while I get past them."

He swerved aside and left the trail to dash across a stretch of open ground to the right of it, effecting a wide detour to outflank Brett and his party; a move that did not pass unnoticed, for leaden slugs whistled around him as he streaked over the turf in a desperate gallop. But, true to instructions, Jinglebob and the boys kept the gangsters busy, and two outlaws who tried to strike off and intercept, the ex-deputy were knocked out of the saddle by bullets.

Bent forward over his horse's head, Montana raced onward fiercely and succeeded in his design—working to the rear of the position taken up by Brett and company, then veering over to the trail again and taking up the chase of the fleeing stage.

Gillespie thrust his head out of one of the windows and opened fire on him. Simultaneously Brett and the gang turned right-about and hammered along the track in pursuit of the ex-deputy, some of the outlaws blazing at Montana's howed back, and the hindmost exchanging shots with Jinglebob and the Parker ranch-hands, who had surged forward the moment the foe had wheeled.

With shot after shot coming at him from the stage and blasts of lead threatening him from the rear, Montana seemed to hear a charmed life. Once and once only was he touched, a bullet cutting a hole in his shirt-sleeve and blistering his left arm, but beyond that slight graze he suffered no hurt.

He was making up on the coach, too, and all at once Gillespie's gun was empty. As he saw the man making feverish efforts to reload it, Montana urged his bronc into a final burst that taxed the gallant creature to the utmost.

"Come on, Silver!" he coaxed huskily. "Come on!"

The animal answered nobly, overhauling the stage in a frenzied spurt, and now Montana ceased to be a target for the men who were pounding after him away along the trail, for they did not dare continue their shooting for fear of hitting Gillespie or Jake.

Speeding alongside the coach, Montana leaned towards Gillespie and with a slashing blow struck out of his hand the gun that he was striving to reload. Then he saw that Jake had dropped the reins and was tugging a forty-five from his holster.

Montana's own "iron" was in his fist, and he jerked the weapon upward, pulling at the trigger. Yet the hammer snapped harmlessly, and, realising that he, too, had used the revolver's last cartridge, the ex-deputy hurled the Colt at Conroy's head.

It struck the driver a glancing blow and rattled his wits. Next instant Montana was clutching the luggage-rail at the top of the stage and swinging himself from saddle to box-seat.

Jake recovered himself and wrenched his six-gun from its sheath, but by then his antagonist was at grips with him, and, with a sharp twist, he forced the crook to drop the revolver.

The forty-five fell on to the trail and pitched into the scrub alongside as Gillespie's had done before it. Meanwhile the coach was careering forward at unabated speed, and, up on the box-seat,

Jake and Montana fought a desperate battle for the mastery as the madly swaying vehicle dashed over the pitted road surface.

Jake clutched the younger man by the throat, and his blunt thumbs pressed fiercely into Montana's windpipe, but with a powerful effort the ex-deputy broke the gangster's hold and drove his fist into the rogne's jaw.

It was a six-inch jolt that sent the fellow sprawling on to the roof of the coach, and though Jake was quick enough to rouse himself and renew the combat, he was met by a flashing uppercut that hurled him clean off the stage.

He thudded to the trail and was lost for a moment in the clouds of dust set up by hoofs and wheels. Then the haze cleared as the vehicle receded swiftly from the spot where he had come to rest, and he was struggling to his feet in a dazed condition when Brett and the gang thundered past.

One of the outlaws had charge of Jake's horse, and this man stopped to lend him a hand and help him into the saddle. Meanwhile, up on the box-seat of the stage coach, Montana had again become a target for the guns of the foe, and he quickly made up his mind to let the vehicle's team of ponies keep going until he had dealt with Gil Gillespie.

Gripping a hand-rail at the side of the coach, Montana lowered himself to the footboard under the off door, and promptly received a heavy blow in the mouth from Gillespie's bunched fist. Almost he was knocked to the ground by the impact of that vicious punch, but he managed to hang on, and, wrenching open the door, he forced his way into the interior of the stage.

Gillespie grappled with him, and the two men lurched to and fro in furious conflict, watched by the anxious eyes of Clem Morgan, who lay helpless on the rear seat, helpless and unable to render any material assistance.

Both combatants were striving might and main to gain the upper hand, but the fight was singularly open, if only on account of the wild motion of the coach, and suddenly the pair of them were pitched into a corner.

Montana was undermost, but he succeeded in heaving Gillespie away from him, and he was on his feet once more when the gang-leader came back at him. Next second the ex-deputy had whipped his right into action, and, with blood spurting from his nose, Gillespie reeled backwards.

The off-side door was behind him, swinging open on its hinges, and the outlaw nearly plunged through—only saved himself by what seemed to be a miracle. Then he threw himself towards Montana again, closing with him determinedly.

Neither Gillespie nor Montana was aware of it, but at that very moment the ponies harnessed to the stage were approaching a sharp curve in the trail, approaching it at a pace which spelled disaster; and on the left-hand side of that trail the ground now sloped away into a dry, barren gully.

The horses reached the bend and took it at headlong speed. The coach rocked after them, but came up on two wheels, and all at once there was an ugly splintering of wood as the body of the vehicle sundered itself from the front portion of the undercarriage.

Over it went, bounding from the trail and hurtling down the hillside with its human freight!

(To be continued in another thrilling episode next week. By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Buck Jones and Muriel Evans.)

"SUPERSPEED"

(Continued from page 12)

Randy swung round from the bench. "Billie," he exclaimed in a strained voice, "somebody's tampered with the motor! My supercharger's gone!"

"Nobody's tampered with the motor," she informed him with exaggerated calm.

"But look—the whole hook-up's been removed!"

"I know it," she retorted. "I took it off."

"You took it off?" he gasped. "Why did you do that?"

She took her hands from her pockets to plant them on her hips, and her chin went up.

"The Phantom happens to be my boat," she said icily, "and this is my motor. If I choose to race it without your supercharger that's my affair."

Randy rather lost his head.

"Are you out of your mind?" he cried. "Why, we've got this race sewed up!"

"The Phantom's still pretty fast," she retorted. "I'll take a chance in her—and drive her myself."

"Oh!" snorted Randy. "Well, if you wanted to drive her yourself, why didn't you tell me?"

"It isn't that!" she snapped.

"Then what is it?" he demanded. "What did you do it for? Mr. Gale will be at that finish-line to-day, and if we win—"

"He and his daughter will undoubtedly be very pleased!" she completed for him scornfully.

"Pleased?" howled Randy. "Do you know what he's promised if—"

"There isn't a bit of use discussing it!" she broke in, and glared defiantly at Terry Devlin, who had just entered the shed. "I'm not interested in Mr. Gale, or his daughter!"

"You're a little fool!" roared Randy, and that so infuriated her that she would have struck him in the face had not Terry caught hold of her wrist.

"You'll find your invention in the workbox over there!" she cried, freeing her wrist to point a finger. "But it's not going on my boat!"

With a toss of her head she went off, and Randy blinked at her uncle, who shrugged expressive shoulders.

"D'you know what she did?" Randy vociferated.

"I sat up half the night with her," was the gloomy response, "trying to get her to change her mind."

"But why did she do it?"

Terry Devlin shrugged again.

"Well, of course, I can only guess," he said, "but something tells me that it was because a certain young man broke a date with her last night and took another girl out to dinner."

"Aw, that's foolish!" growled Randy. "Not to a girl," declared the older and wiser man.

"I went to dinner with Nan Gale last night because I had to talk to her father before the race."

"Oh, you saw old man Gale?"

"Yes." Randy gave a brief account of his conversation with Wilson Gale.

"He's going to be at the finish-line to-day, and if we win he's promised to install our rig on every car he turns out."

"Umm!" grunted Terry. "That sort of puts us in a hole, doesn't it?"

"Completely!"

"No, not completely. When I found

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out what Billie was up to I got busy myself. I didn't want to see you left out of the race entirely, so I dug up another boat and a motor."

The cloud that had settled down upon Randy's face lifted.

"You did?" he cried. "Where is it?"

"That boat ought to be here in about five minutes, the motor's in the workshop. That gives you less than three hours to get your hook-up fixed."

Randy took off his coat.

"Let's get ready to go to work," he said.

"Come on, then," said Terry. "Let's run Billie's boat out of here."

The Phantom was run out to the landing-stage and made fast there for Billie to prepare it for the race, and a few minutes afterwards the boat Terry Devlin had managed to "dig up" was towed to the other landing-stage by its builder.

Randy got to work upon it with a will after he had telephoned the race officials. It was a boat very similar to the Phantom in general appearance, and its name was Santa Monica, but it was a new boat, and there was no time to try it out. The motor, on the other hand, was not by any means new, and though it performed well enough on the bench, Randy was not too sanguine concerning its capabilities.

For hours he toiled, while the bay was cleared for the race so far as the course was concerned, and crowds began to gather at all sorts of vantage-points along the water-front. Terry helped, kneeling on the landing-stage, and at last Randy announced with a sigh of relief:

"Well, I guess that's the best we can do."

"Better get some gas in, son," said Terry. "You've only got about twenty minutes before the starting gun. I'll go and see if Billie's all set."

"Yeah," said Randy, who was still feeling sore about the whole business. "Give her my compliments and tell her I hope she finishes a good second!"

"I'll do that little thing," promised Terry, and went off to the other floating stage. "All set, Billie?" he called out.

"All but the oil," she replied, and he went back to a store-room which George Stone had visited that morning, before daybreak, and returned with a can of motor oil.

Nan Gale arrived in her car while he was gone, and Billie watched her jealously as she walked round the sheds looking for Randy.

"Hallo, Nan!" hailed that young man. "Just getting ready to start."

"Dad's at the finish-line," she informed him. "I'm going to join him as soon as you shove off."

"Well, hope for the best," he returned, and the tone of his voice surprised her.

"What's the matter?" she asked. "You don't seem so cheerful to-day. You're still sure you can win, aren't you?"

"No," he replied, "not sure."

"But you were yesterday! Oh, Randy, you've got to win! This means your whole future!"

"I know what it means, Nan." He dashed off into the store-room and returned with a new can of oil, which he proceeded to use, and she stood watching him with worried eyes.

"Oh, I can't imagine what's happened!" she exclaimed.

"Nothing's happened," he said bitterly, "except that I've had to switch to another boat at the last minute!"

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"Isn't this the boat you were driving yesterday?"

"No, I've had to put my rig in this new one without even testing her."

"Well, who's driving the Phantom?"

"Billie," he replied, and set down the can and climbed into the boat.

"But I thought that—"

"I'll tell you about it later," he interrupted. "I've got to pull out now."

"I'm still going to wish you lots of luck, Randy," she assured him, and went back to her car.

The Race

TEN speed-boats were competing in the race, and in a very little while they were all lined up in a row some little way behind the pylon that marked the start. On a stand specially erected for the occasion, close to the edge of the water, officials and favoured spectators were gathered together, and amongst the officials was an expert commentator whose voice rang out from loudspeakers all along the shore.

"Well, here we are, ladies and gentlemen," he said, "under a blue sky, facing a lot of blue water. We are about set for the start of the annual outboard races. Last-minute information reaches us that a switch in pilots is declared that may upset all the odds."

There was a pause, and then:

"The Phantom is not to be driven by Randy Rogers, as previously announced, but by Billie Devlin, the madcap of motordom. Rogers, in a late entry, will pilot the Santa Monica, a new boat of which very little is known."

Another pause while the commentator used his binoculars.

"They are bunched together, ten wingless birds, motors hitting perfectly, all ready for a flying start. Billie Devlin will be the only woman entered."

A shot echoed and re-echoed across the bay.

"There goes the gun!" cried the commentator. "The boats leap towards the line! They're off—and the race is on! The little girl in the Phantom got away to a slow start, but she's got a lot of nerve and experience to back it up, though."

The speed-boats flapped the water, travelling at a rate that looked dangerous, bunched together as they were. But long before the conical buoy over by the entrance to the harbour was reached, Randy and Billie had drawn ahead of the others. Even the commentator became excited.

"There goes Randy Rogers opening up!" he said. "He's pushing the Santa Monica for all it's worth! There he goes—out in front! But Billie Devlin's right on his tail! He's driving like a madman! My word, just look at him at that buoy! Wow, he didn't miss it by a foot!"

The supercharger was doing its work. The buoy had been rounded, and Randy came swooping back on the second lap well ahead of all the other boats.

"He's making the water smoke!" exaggerated the commentator. "Going a mile a minute! He must have made up a hundred yards by taking that wild chance. Anything happens in a race like this, folks."

"Here comes Billie Devlin from the centre in the back, trying to work her way up to the front. The leaders are certainly setting a terrific pace. Oh, boy, if they keep on travelling like this we're sure going to see a world's record set on this course to-day!"

The last words were only just uttered when thick black smoke began

to ascend from the motor of the Phantom and grew in density. Horrified shouts rang out from all along the water-front, pierced by the amplified voice of the commentator.

"Something's wrong with the Phantom! Billie Devlin's boat—the engine's smoking! The—The Phantom's afire! She's lost control!"

It was only too true. Flames were jetting the cloud of smoke and the speed-boat was running erratically, causing other competitors to swerve in haste to avoid it. Billie, at the wheel, was almost blinded by the smoke, and as the flames leapt up at her she shrank back.

But Randy had looked back to see how the others were progressing, and the mere sight of the smoke was enough to tell him that it was the Phantom the smoke concealed. What had happened to the car had happened to the boat the unknown enemy had expected him to pilot!

Without the fraction of a second's hesitation he swung the Santa Monica round in a great arc and went roaring back to save the girl he suddenly realised meant everything in the world to him.

"She's surrounded by flame!" cried the commentator in a voice that cracked. "But Randy Rogers has abandoned the race to save her! There she goes, overboard!"

To fling herself overboard was the only thing Billie could do. She had no idea that Randy was at hand, but with masterly control of the boat he drove, he slowed down beside her as she came to the surface, reached over the side at the risk of upsetting, and hoisted her on board. Then he swung towards the pylon, one arm round Billie's waist.

"What a gesture of sportsmanship!" exclaimed the commentator. "Rogers is back in the push, and—believe it or not—he's trying to overtake the other boats! In my estimation it's a hopeless job, for all the other boats are half a lap ahead of him. But he's making the Santa Monica hum!"

The pylon was reached and rounded: two labouring speed-boats were overtaken, and two of the leaders crashed into one another and overturned. The Phantom was a mass of flames as Randy shot past it, and Billie shivered.

"Jackson and Smith are leading," the commentator boomed a few minutes later, "but Randy Rogers is well after them! I've never seen anything like this before. Rogers is carrying the added weight of the girl, but he's certainly giving that boat the works!"

There was another spill, and then Randy, who was round the buoy and leading the way home, except for Smith, whom he passed half a lap from the finishing-line.

The nearest competitor was a full quarter of a lap behind when the line was passed and he cut out the motor. The race was won, the future was assured, and the enemy was defeated. All along the water-front voices shouted themselves hoarse as the speed-boat drifted and Randy and Billie looked at one another.

Water was streaming from her overalls and her face was as black as a chimney sweep's, but she was supremely happy.

"Did it!" she cried; and then rapturously they hugged one another, and Randy's face became dotted with the imprints of two sooty lips.

(By permission of Columbia Pictures Corporation, Ltd., starring Norman Foster, with Mary Carlisle and Florence Rice.)



BING CROSBY
The Paramount Crooner

"WESTWARD HO"

(Continued from page 20)

men when, without warning, horsemen came out of the forests that lay close to the trail. Men in blue shirts and riding white horses. At their head was a tall figure, and a cry of fright came from Ballard's lips.

Ballard had not trusted anyone with the gold and was driving the prairie schooner himself. Wildly he lashed at the horses in a desperate effort to escape. He shouted to his men to stand and fight—so that he might get away with his gold.

Ballard's men knew that in flight they had little chance as the White Riders were better mounted, so they made an effort at fighting. Remorselessly the Riders swept down on them, rode them down and shot them down. When Red fell with a bullet through his brain, the remnant took to the woods.

John Wyatt had reserved Ballard for himself: The scoundrel, hearing the shots, thought for a moment that he was getting away from the fight. The gold might be all his. Then he looked back and saw the tall rider on the white horse. He seized a rifle and fired, but the schooner swayed too much for good shooting.

Every second John Wyatt drew nearer, and Ballard tried another shot, but the dust kicked up by the hoofs of the horses and the rocketing wagon made his target a dim blur.

A sudden spurt, and through the dust John drove his horse alongside. His arms shot out and gripped the sides of the wagon. Ballard lashed at his sweating horses and then spun round to find the reason of the strange sounds. He saw John clambering on to the wagon, and he lashed out wildly with his whip.

John sprang forward and wrenched the whip away. Ballard tried to draw a gun, and that was wrested from his hand. The old scoundrel fought desperately, whilst the maddened horses dashed forward with the reins trailing in the dust. Ahead the trail turned and twisted, with a drop of thirty or forty feet to a dried-up stream that was full of great boulders.

"At last we come face to face!" Wyatt shouted. "I've trailed the West to find the man who murdered my mother and father, and now I've got you!"

Ballard cursed and snarled at Wyatt.

Without thought of himself he charged at Wyatt in an effort to fling the younger man off the schooner.

John drove his fists to the flabby body and knew that the fight was nearly over. A lurch made him glance ahead, and he saw the danger, but as he moved towards the driver's seat, Ballard gripped him round the waist. Exerting his strength, John broke the grip, spun round and drove his fist hard to the hideous features.

The schooner was at the corner. The horses swung round at a mad pace and the wheels went over the edge. John Wyatt saw what was going to happen and dived over the side of the wagon, twisting in the air to break his fall.

Every bone in his body was jarred by the impact, and he lay there winded. Vaguely he heard a splintering sound, a yell of terror, and then distant crashing.

John staggered to his feet. Ahead he saw two horses galloping with a broken shaft trailing behind them. He peered over the edge of the trail and saw bits and pieces of a smashed schooner, and, sprawled near by, the figure of Ballard.

It was the end of the trail for John Wyatt.

John accompanied the Gordons down the valley of the Black river.

"I am going back to my ranch. I have been away too long," he told Mary, when open country had been reached. "The trail is ended for the White Riders—our mission finished."

"Then we may not see you again?" Mary asked wistfully.

"I was aiming to ask a certain young lady to marry me," John looked at her closely. "But I'm far too scared to be so bold. It would be terrible hard if she should say 'No.'"

"Of course I don't know what you're talking about, John." Mary's eyes twinkled mischievously and happily. "But I've always wanted to go to Northern California and be a rancher's wife."

Thus did John Wyatt, seeking revenge, find great happiness.

(By permission of the British Lion Film Company, starring John Wayne as John Wyatt, Sheila Mannors as Mary Gordon, and Frank McGlynn, Jun., as Jim Wyatt.)



(Continued from page 2)

Daredevil Horse-leaping in New Picture

It looks as if the daredevil days of the screen are back again. William Wellman, directing "Robin Hood of El Dorado" for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, is reviving the wildest cowboy stunts of the daredevil era of the screen.

One of the wildest thus far reported is the feat of a cowboy in jumping a horse across a deep chasm a la the very best Tom Mix style. Still another is a flying leap from the seat of a runaway stage-coach to the saddle of a galloping horse. Three hundred horsemen participated in a running gun-fight that is said to have had its share of real as well as reel thrills.

Appearing with Warner Baxter, the star, are a number of the best known daredevil horsemen of Hollywood, including Hank Potts, Pardner Jones, Yakima Canutt, Duke Green, Jose Dominguez, Lee Phelps and others who have ridden high and handsome with Mix, Bill Hart, the late Fred Thomson, and other cowboy stars.

The story is based on the adventure-some life of Joaquin Murrieta, the dashing bad man of the days of '49.

The Elephant Boy!

Patric Knowles, who plays the lead in the new Fox British picture, "Wedding Group," has a most original hobby—he collects elephants!

He has had this hobby for some time now, and he has over eighty different kinds of elephants. Some he has picked up on his travels, but most of them have been presents from friends who knew of his collection. They range from minute ivory ones to great big ebony and teak "tuskers"—there is even one that a friend made from pipe-cleaners!

At one time and another Patric has had a lot of trouble with his elephants. The superstition is that they must always face the door of the room and never the window. If they face the window, all the luck will go out of it. It was no easy task seeing that eighty elephants all had their faces to the door, and the maids who dusted Patric's room always would put them back the wrong way round. Eventually, he got so tired of moving them that he banished all the smaller ones to a cabinet, and kept only the large ones about the room.

If the collection continues to increase at the present rate, Patric reckons he will have to rent a wing of the British Museum to house it within the next ten years!

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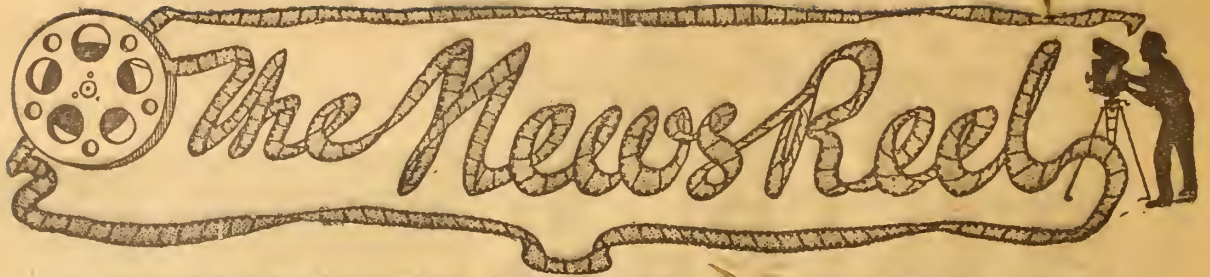
No. 841. EVERY TUESDAY January 25th, 1936.

2^D



The IRISH in US

The Adventures of a Fighting Family
Starring James CAGNEY, Pat O'BRIEN & Frank Mc HUGH



The News Reel

All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 220, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

A Flashlight Sets Radio Picture Studios a Problem

When is a flashlight not a flashlight? The answer to this Hollywood riddle is: "When it's in films."

Powerful as the modern commercial hand-lamp is, it fails to function on a film studio stage. In opposition to the intensely brilliant spots and sun-ares of picture-making, even when dimmed for night scenes, the usual flashlight glows but feebly and scarcely registers on the film.

Studio technicians therefore had to perfect a new type of hand-lamp for use in "Seven Keys to Baldpate." Gene Raymond's first starring picture for Radio under his new contract, since many flashlight scenes were called for in the script of the mystery farce.

This was accomplished by building a tiny arc-light inside a regular flashlight case, using carbons no larger than the lead of a pencil, and giving the device power either from a miniature storage battery concealed under the users' coat, or by running concealed wires to the regular lighting circuits.

Several of these high-powered lamps were constructed, and in the hands of Gene Raymond, Margaret Callahan, Erin O'Brien-Moore, Moroni Olsen, Eric Blore and other members of the cast, proved highly realistic in the exciting sequences of the picture.

The Studio Conjuror

"Props" must have one of the most difficult jobs in a film studio. He never knows what he is going to be asked for next, and he is expected to produce odd articles like rabbits out of a conjurer's hat!

The other day, on the set of "Wedding Group," the new Fox-British picture now in production at the Wembley studios, the Scottish minister, played by Alastair Sim, had to offer his guest a cigar. After a little deliberation the directors decided that the ordinary cigar-box was not quite in period.

"Props," shouted the assistant director, "get me a cigar-box, period 1853!"

"Props" looked rather bewildered at this sudden request, but after several minutes of rummaging in his collection of oddments, he returned with a varied assortment of boxes.

Sure enough, amongst the collection there was one which proved suitable to hold a minister's cigars, in the year 1853. Shooting continued—no one seemed to be impressed by "Props" finding such a box at such short notice!

"Extra" Gets a Break

The possession of a wrist-watch proved very fortunate for one of the crowd artistes on the "Ticket of Leave" set at Elstree recently. In one of the scenes John Clements, as "Lucky Fisher," a gentleman-crook in flight from the police, is seen standing by the lift-shaft waiting to go up to meet Dorothy Boyd on the second floor. A detective is watching him. He quickly

January 25th, 1936.

NEXT WEEK'S LONG COMPLETE FILM DRAMAS



BORIS KARLOFF

IN

"THE BLACK ROOM"

Because of a legend in the De Berghman family to the effect that, when twins were born, one will kill the other, a room in which murder has been done is bricked up after the birth of Gregor and Anton. But Gregor grows up to become a fiendish tyrant—and the Black Room takes its toll. A powerful melodrama.

"BARBARY COAST"

San Francisco in the early days of the Gold Rush. A haunt of gamblers and rogues, until the Vigilantes rose in protest, defying law and order to establish the law. A tense drama, starring Edward G. Robinson, Miriam Hopkins and Joel McCrea.

also

Another grand episode of the serial:

"THE ROARING WEST"

Starring Buck Jones and Muriel Evans.

looks at his watch, jumps into the lift, slams the doors in the detective's face, and the lift whizzes up.

When rehearsing this action, Mr. Clements took a slim gold hunter from his waistcoat pocket, but Michael Henkinson, the director, decided that a wrist-watch would be more in keeping with the character. "Somebody loan me a watch, please," he said, and a crowd player stepped forward.

When the scene had been made, Mr. Clements was about to hand the watch back to its owner, but the director interposed. "You'll have to keep it right through the sequence now," he said.

In order that the watch and its owner should be available at all times the extra, who was originally wanted only

for one day, was engaged for the rest of the week.

From Prop-boy to Director

Five years ago Charles Barton was one of the many prop-boys at the Paramount studios in Hollywood. Which means that he spent his time fetching and carrying and doing odd jobs.

Now he has become a director. He made "The Last Outpost," which features Cary Grant, Claude Rains, and Gertrude Michael.

For nearly three years he spent his spare time hanging about the executive offices at Paramount, and at last his chance came. The studio decided to film Zane Grey's "Wagon Wheels." Charlie got the job of assistant director, and within three days the director fell ill.

So the job was handed over to this young man, who is not much over five feet tall, and he made such a good picture, especially in the out-of-door camera work, that when the studio purchased "The Last Outpost" it was handed over to him right away.

It Happened One Night

This, they tell me, is true. It happened to one of the gag-men— he particularly desires his name to be withheld—who was working on the new Jack Buchanan—Fay Wray comedy, "When Knights were Bold," for Capitol Films. He had spent the weekend with his wife, who was away for a short holiday.

He reached his home from the studio on the Monday night, let himself into the empty house, thought he heard noises, went to investigate, and found himself pinioned in the arms of two burglars.

They tied his hands and his feet. One of the ruffians said to the other:

"How about a gag?"

The gag-man misunderstood.

"Sure. Have you heard about the old Etonian at Harar—"

But then the rubber truncheon fell.

Fogged!

John Clements, leading man in "Ticket of Leave," the new Paramount production just completed at Elstree, is nothing if not obliging.

Preparing to leave the studios after working late the other night the players were confronted by a thick fog, and Mr. Clements offered Dorothy Boyd, the leading lady, a lift home in his car. After an hour's crawl through the foggy lanes they found themselves not in London, but at St. Albans. On the return trip they ran out of petrol, eventually arriving home at four a.m.

However, they were both on the set and all ready made up by 9 a.m. next morning. They kept themselves awake during the next day, when not on the set, by singing comic songs, despite the marked lack of appreciation by George Merritt, Wally Patch, Max Kirby and other members of the cast.

Danny O'Hara is a trial to his brother Pat because he persists in managing unprofitable boxers instead of getting a regular job. Worse still, he falls in love with the girl Pat hopes to marry; and his latest "champion" becomes unfit to fight at the crucial moment—with highly dramatic results. A first-rate yarn full of laughs and punches, starring James Cagney and Pat O'Brien



False Alarm!

"A DAB of butter I can let you have," Mrs. O'Hara informed Mrs. Adams across the well that divided the kitchen of her flat from the kitchen of the flat occupied by the neighbour who was always borrowing things, "but it's only six eggs that I've got in the place, and those I'll be needin' for breakfast."

Sharp-featured Mrs. Adams expressed her gratitude in rather a lukewarm fashion, being disappointed about the eggs, and Mrs. O'Hara left the window she had opened to get the butter, which she wrapped in grease-proof paper and placed in a paper bag.

An Irishwoman of very ample proportions, she was the mother of three grown sons for whom she lived and laboured, and she did not believe in disturbing the slumbers of those sons a moment earlier in the morning than was absolutely necessary; for which reason she was none too pleased with the woman who had made quite a lot of noise to attract her attention.

From the brick wall beside the open window to the brick wall across the well there stretched a double clothes-line, on pulleys, for the benefit of both tenants of the tall apartment-house. Mrs. O'Hara pegged the paper bag to one of the ropes, and with the other hauled it across the chasm to the borrower, who detached it and shouted:

"I'll be paying you back this afternoon."

"Whist, woman!" rebuked Mrs. O'Hara. "Haven't I asked you not to shout so loud at this time o' the mornin'?"

Mrs. Adams, possessed of the butter, could afford to retaliate, and did so.

"Well, it's time they were up, anyway!" she vociferated.

"Let me be the best judge o' that!" flamed Mrs. O'Hara, and she closed the window with violence to find that the kettle on the stove was whistling and that the clock in the sitting-room was striking seven.

She put coffee in a metal pot and added boiling water, then went out from the kitchen into a wide and carpeted passage and knocked on a door.

"Pat!" she called. "Are ye up?"

Pat O'Hara, eldest of the three sons, raised his red head from a very comfortable pillow in the bed-room beyond the door.

"Coming right out, mother!" he called back.

"S-s-sh!" she hissed, afraid lest her youngest son Danny should be disturbed. "Now see that Mike gets up."

Michael O'Hara was fast asleep and snoring peacefully in an adjacent bed. Lying on his back with his mouth open he did not look a particularly brilliant specimen of young manhood, but in his more active moments he was quite a capable member of New York's Fire Brigade, Company B.

Pat slid out from between the sheets, stretched his arms, shed his pyjamas, donned a pair of blue trousers issued to him by the police department of New York City, and viewed the sleeping beauty from the edge of his own bed as he put on his boots.

"Hi, false alarm," he barked, "out of the feathers!"

A louder snore was his only reward, and he rose to pull the bedclothes off his brother and to shake him by the shoulder. Mike opened a pair of bleary blue eyes and blinked them owlishly.

"Oh," he muttered. "Oh, all right, Pat—all right, Pat!"

The blue eyes became closed again,

the mouth open. Pat shook the recumbent form more vigorously than ever.

"Come on!" he commanded.

"All right, Pat," Mike murmured sleepily. "All right, I'm wide awake! I'm wide awake!"

He sat up and yawned.

"I'm wide awake!"

"Stay that way," said Pat, and in his vest and trousers went off whistling to the bathroom at the end of the passage, where he proceeded to wash, to shave, and to brush and comb his dishevelled red hair.

Mrs. O'Hara greeted him as he passed the door of the kitchen, broke four eggs against the side of a frying-pan, dropped a piece of eggshell into the coffee-pot to clear the beverage it contained, and presently stole to the bed-room door to listen for sounds of activity within.

No such sounds reaching her ears, she went into the room—and there was Mike, fast asleep on the top of the bedclothes.

"Oh dear, oh dear!" she lamented. "Oh, you would fall off! Michael! Michael! Wake up!"

Mike stirred, but did not waken, so his mother went to a washstand behind the door, and with a knife that was in her hand smote a water-jug which stood empty in its basin.

The effect was almost electrical. Mike shot out of bed on to his feet before he even opened his eyes.

"Oh!" he cried. "Oh—er—hallo, mother! I—I thought that was the alarm."

"Not so loud," she enjoined. "Hurry up and come out. You're late!"

"All right, mother!"

She went out, whereupon he tumbled back on to the bed; but in less than two minutes she returned and stood over him.

"Get up!"

Mike obeyed with reluctance, and the bed was stripped.

"And stay up!"

"All right, mother," yawned Mike.

"All right."

This time he discarded his nightshirt, as soon as she had gone, and put on his official trousers and boots. He went out to the bath-room, but the door of the bath-room was shut and bolted. He banged a fist on it and shouted:

"Come on, Pat! What're you doin' in there? Makin' your will? Hurry up! Give someone else a crack at it, will you?"

There was no response from inside, but Mrs. O'Hara came running out from the kitchen.

"S-s-sh!" she warned. "S-s-sh!"

"It's not fair, ma," complained Mike. "It was my turn to be first this morning!"

Mrs. O'Hara called out, but not too loudly:

"Patrick, you hurry out of there! Are ye shavin'?"

The door was opened, and Pat appeared with a comb in his hand and a towel over his shoulder. He tapped Mike's massive chest with the comb and grinned at his mother.

"No, sweetheart!" he boomed. "I'm just combin' my hair."

"S-s-sh!"

He frowned at her.

"Mother, what is all this keep quiet business?" he demanded.

"Well, Danny was out late last night, and he's still asleep," she replied.

"Oh, Danny was—?" Scorn changed to consternation as Mike dived past him into the bath-room and slammed the door. "Hi!"

But the bolt was shot, and he had to finish his toilet in the bed-room.

A few minutes later, completely dressed in his uniform, he sat down at the table in the living-room, and Mike arrived in his uniform with a cap upon his head. Mrs. O'Hara, serving the fried eggs from the pan, perceived the cap.

"Tako off the hat!" she said sharply.

The cap was transferred from Mike's dark-brown head to the tablecloth.

"Not on the table!"

Mike restored the cap to his head and regarded with aversion two fried eggs upon his plate.

"Aw, eggs again?" he said dismally. "Look, mum, ain't you got a steak or something? We had a three-alarm fire last night."

"A steak?" bridled Mrs. O'Hara. "What do you think this is, the Ritz? You'll eat it and like it—and quiet, both of ye!"

Pat, who had been glowering at a vacant chair on the other side of the table, sprang to his feet.

"Now look, mother!" he exploded. "Danny's no different than the rest of us—except he won't work! I'm gonna get him up out of bed!"

"You'll do nothin' o' the kind," declared Mrs. O'Hara. "He's a growin' boy and he needs his strength."

"She's right, Pat," said Mike, nodding his head sagely. "Don't you remember he didn't even have the chicken-pox until he was six years old!"

At that moment a door was slammed out in the passage, and Mrs. O'Hara exclaimed:

"He's up! Now I hope the both of you are satisfied!"

Pat Loses His Temper

DANNY O'HARA had emerged from a bed-room in trousers, boots, and a skimpy vest. He was a couple of inches shorter than Pat, slenderer of build than Mike, and the youngest of the three. Like Pat he was a red-head, January 25th, 1936.

and like Pat he had an Irish temper; but there the resemblance ended.

Having slammed the door behind him he opened it again and looked anxiously into the room, then closed it quietly, sailed away into the living-room and saluted his mother.

"Are you all right, Daniel?" she asked.

"I am now," he informed her gaily. "Being greeted first thing in the mornin' by the most beautiful woman in the whole world. Give us a kiss!"

"Go away wid ye!" laughed Mrs. O'Hara, but she gave him a kiss and was hugged. He had more blarney than either of the others, and in that respect took after his dead father.

Pat looked on with scornful eyes, and Danny made a face at him.

"What's the row?" he inquired. "You guys been at it again?"

"No," snapped Pat, "but you and me'll be, if we don't come to some understanding."

"Now, Patrick!" chided Mrs. O'Hara, and she stood between the two brothers. But Danny neither needed, nor sought, protection.

"Wait a minute, ma," he said.

"What's on your mind, sour-puss?"

"When are you gonna get a job?" shouted Pat.

"Why, shame on ye, Pat!" cried Mrs. O'Hara. "Takin' that attitude towards your brother an' all. Has he ever done anything to either of ye to hurt your feelings?"

"I don't know about that, mother," remarked Mike with his mouth full of fried egg and buttered roll. "When I had the mumps, who stood in front of me and sucked a lemon?"

"Be quiet, Mike!" commanded Mrs. O'Hara.

Danny walked round to the vacant chair and occupied it with an air of dignity. Pat resumed his seat and began to devour his breakfast, and presently all three were feeding. But what Pat had said rankled, and Danny looked across the table.

"Say, what's the idea of starting all this business about me gettin' a job?" he demanded.

"Because," replied Pat, "I'm figuring on gettin' married."

"Why, Pat!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Hara in astonishment. "You never even told me you had a girl!"

Pat seemed to be a trifle embarrassed.

"Well, mother," he said, "I was goin' to. I—I only met her a couple of weeks ago."

"This is kinda sudden," said Mike.

"I'll have to think this over."

"Congratulations," said Danny brightly, and stretched a hand across the table—a hand that was ignored.

"Forget the congratulations and find a job!" Pat snapped at him. "You're gonna have to help out, after I leave here. You've been gettin' away with it long enough!"

"He ain't gonna give up his career, no matter how long he lays around," Mrs. O'Hara declared stoutly.

"Oh, career me foot!" snorted Pat.

"If he could make any money handling prizefighters he'd be a genius!"

"With the fighters he's had," supplemented Mike, "he'd have to be a magician!"

Danny nursed his chin and cheek with the rejected hand.

"I'm just lettin' you guys talk!" he jeered.

"And you know yourself, Pat," defended Mrs. O'Hara, "Lucian O'Malley wasn't bad at all, until he got into the ring."

"And then he was indifferent," commented Mike.

"Yeah," said Pat. "And that—that

Haymaker Hayes." He laughed derisively. "There was a lulu, too!"

"He went two rounds in Perth Amboy, didn't he?" challenged Mrs. O'Hara; but unfortunately Mike remembered that New Jersey battle, and he chuckled:

"That's right, ma—flat on his back!"

"Ho made the hay all right," said Pat reminiscingly, "but you could never get him out of it!"

"I ought to know," said Mike. "I was in his corner."

"That was just the trouble," Danny retorted. "Ho had three men against him—the referee, the guy he was fighting, and you!"

"Aw, forget the alibis!" Pat flipped an impatient hand. "You gonna take that police examination, or not?"

"Not!"

"It pays fifty dollars a week," said Mike. "Of course that ain't as much as we firemen get, but at least—"

"You keep your oar out of it, Michael!" Mrs. O'Hara interrupted. "Of course, Danny, Pat could help you an awful lot if you would let him—"

"D'you want me to be a cop?" howled Danny.

"Well, that's up to you," she conceded. "Though, Danny, I—I was a little hurt when you wouldn't take the Civil Service examination to be a letter-carrier."

"Don't want to be a postman!" said Danny.

"Let me tell you something!" roared Pat. "There's lots worse things than bein' a cop!"

"But I don't want to be a cop!" Danny vociferated.

"No, you don't want to be a cop!" Pat leaned forward over the table, a fine figure of a policeman who had lost his temper. "What d'you want to be?"

"I don't want to be a cop!"

Mike pushed back his chair and rose. "Aw, this is too much for me," he growled. "I'm goin' down to the fire-house where there's a little peace and quiet. Good-bye, mother!"

He went off in disgust, and Pat threw down his serviette and rose stormily to his feet.

"Will you take that examination and at least try to get on the force?" he roared.

Danny screwed up his face.

"Oh," he derided, "I have to be a cop just so you can get married, eh?"

Pat clenched a fist, but Mrs. O'Hara caught at his arm.

"Let him alone, Pat!" she enjoined.

"Okay, mother!" Pat tossed his head. "I'm always wrong. I give up!"

He made for the door, but she called him back.

"Did you ever see your father, drunk or sober," she asked plaintively, "go out of that front door without kissin' me good-bye?"

He murmured apologies, kissed her, and rammed his peaked cap on his head.

Then, in the passage, he opened the front door of the flat; but she ran after him.

"Oh, Pat!" she cried. "Pat, you were jokin' about gettin' married, weren't you?"

He turned with a sheepish grin. She stood no higher than his shoulder, her waist had disappeared with her youth, and at fifty-five she was more than merely plump; but her face still bore a measure of the beauty that had been hers when she had married a man in far Donegal, and she was his mother. Whatever resentment he felt against Danny he could not visit upon her, nor could he deceive her.

"Well," he admitted, "I really haven't asked her yet. She's a swell girl, though."

"She's got a mighty fine fellow!"

That was pleasant in his ears, and he kissed her for it.

"I think you'll like her," he said, and added with pride: "She's Captain Jackson's daughter"

Mrs. O'Hara's brown eyes widened, but there was no girl in all the world too good for any of her three sons, at all events, in her estimation.

"Pat," she said, "do me a favour! Bring her up to supper to-night—I'll have something special!"

"All right," nodded Pat, "I'll try and get her to come. Of course I—I don't know her awfully well yet, but I think she will. Good-bye, mother."

Mrs. O'Hara went back to the living-room to clear away the breakfast things, and she was washing-up in the kitchen when she saw Danny mount a chair in the passage with a piece of screwed-up newspaper in his hand. She went out to him.

"What are you doin' up there?" she asked curiously.

"It's a secret," he informed her, and wedged the paper between the striker and the dome of an electric bell on the wall above the front door, then descended beside her. "Say, listen, mum—have you got something nice for breakfast? Something like a—like a big steak, for instance?"

"Are you that hungry?"

"No, no," he laughed, "it's not for me. It's for a guest."

"A what?" she asked blankly.

He held her fat arms, danced her along the carpeted passage.

"Ma," he exulted, "at last my luck has changed! I've got a champ!"

"What, another one?" She broke loose from him. "You and your champs!"

"On the level, ma," he insisted. "He's in my room—he stayed with us last night."

It was not by any means the first time Danny had brought alleged champions home with him to roost.

"What's his name?" she inquired.

"Carbarn Hammerschlag," he replied.

She repeated the surname without any idea that it was German for the sparks

that fly when a blacksmith is at work and asked if he were a Russian.

"No," said Danny, "he's a conductor."

"I thought you said he was a fighter!"

"Well, he is! He licked three men down at the car barns last night—knocked out all three of 'em in two seconds!"

"He did?" breathed Mrs. O'Hara.

"Why?"

"Well, you see the motorman forgot and rang the bell. Oh, I'm not kidding! You see, he—he's just a little bit peculiar. He used to be a fighter, but flopped, and now every time he hears a bell ring he starts slugging."

"If he's so good, why did he flop?"

"Bad management."

"And you got him? Well, I can see his troubles are over!"

Danny put the chair back in its place and followed her into the kitchen.

"Now, look, ma, look," he wheedled. "here's what you do. You wrestle up a big steak, and some—er—some hot cakes, and I'll tell you what I'll do."

"See that he eats them, I suppose?" she returned dryly.

"No, oh no, better than that. What I'm goin' to do for you I wouldn't do for anybody else in the whole world! And here's what it is! For fifteen bucks I'm goin' to give you a piece of Carbarn Hammerschlag!"

The offer was not appreciated. His mother had opened the pantry door, but she turned to smite him on the chest.

"Oh, no you don't!" she cried. "When you got me to put the rent money on 'Tiddleywinks' O'Malley, that was the end!"

"But, ma, you haven't seen him yet. He's terrific! I'll go and get him right here!"

The "Champ"!

CARBARN HAMMERSCHLAG had risen from the spare bed in Danny's room, but had got no farther than the edge of it, where he sat with his elbow on his knee and his chin in his hand, recalling the events of the night before.

He was a big fellow and a broad-

shouldered one, but he did not look like a professional boxer. He was full of face, weak of mouth, and had a nose of such proportions that it ought to have been broken to justify Danny's faith in him.

He heard that young man's voice at the door, but did not budge or even answer. Danny entered the room, but stopped short as his gaze encountered the thoughtful figure.

"Oh, excuse me, Champ," he said hurriedly. "Excuse me! I'm sorry!"

He sped back to the kitchen.

"What's he doing?" inquired Mrs. O'Hara.

"Thinking," Danny replied.

"For one of your fighters that sounds encouragin'!"

"I'm tellin' you, ma," said Danny with enthusiasm, "he's a potential gold mine! With my management he's a cinch for the title!"

"So was Haymaker Hayes," she reminded him. "Where will this goldmine fight?"

"Well—er—I'd like to get him a shot at the Garden."

"What?" Only the most famous boxers appear at the stadium in Madison Square Gardens, and Danny had flown a trifle too high.

"But—er—he'll take Cohen's Barn in Jersey City," he said. "Now, look, ma, you get that steak ready, and I'll get him right out here. Go ahead!"

Off to the bed-room he went again, and this time he interrupted the thinker's meditations.

"Come on, Champ," he said, "I want you to meet the mother."

Carbarn Hammerschlag rose up in his underclothes, and Danny seized upon a gaudily patterned dressing-gown and helped him into it.

"Come on," he said again. "She's gettin' breakfast ready now."

Carbarn permitted himself to be piloted as far as the door, but stopped there to yawn prodigiously and to stretch his arms.

"This way," said Danny, and tugged him along the passage into the kitchen, where Mrs. O'Hara turned from the



"If he could make any money handling prize-fighters," snorted Pat, "he'd be a genius——"

stove to contemplate the alleged gold-mine and was introduced.

"How do you do, Mr. Hammerschlag?" she inquired. "Danny's been telling me he thinks you stand a good chance for the title."

Carbarn shook hands with her.

"Mother," he boomed, "when he says 'thinks' he's bein' pessimistic! Feel me biceps!"

"I'd rather take your word for it," she decided. "I'm fixing you a steak."

The "gold-mine" frowned at the frying-pan.

"What, no mushrooms?" he said.

"Oh, Champ!" Danny intervened. "You want to wash, don't you? Come on, I'll show you the bath-room."

"Not me, pal," protested Carbarn with vehemence. "Every time I wash in one of those things I get embarrassed. Gimme a sink any day!"

He made for the kitchen sink, found some liquid soap there, and turned on the tap.

"I'll get you a towel," said Mrs. O'Hara, and she went off to the linen-cupboard, pursued by Danny, who asked her eagerly what she thought of him.

"Well," she replied non-committally, "he's got plenty to say."

"Just think," urged Danny. "I'm offering you ten per cent. of him for fifteen dollars!"

Mrs. O'Hara found a towel.

"Why, I've only got fourteen," she said.

"Ah-h!" Danny wagged a finger at her. "There's that wee bit o' Scots comin' out again! It's a bargain?"

"I'll think it over. Fancy, that's the last clean towel! I never can keep a towel in this place!"

Danny returned to the kitchen with the towel to find Carbarn bared to the waist and washing vigorously under the running tap. He gave him the towel and told him he would dig up a suit.

"You can't wear that conductor's uniform any more," he said.

"Just give me a sweater," suggested Carbarn. "I can still wear me conductor's pants."

Danny scurried off to the bed-room Pat shared with Mike, and his mother was still at the linen-cupboard when he emerged from it carrying a lounge suit of a very pronounced check pattern. She stared after him.

"Hi, what are you doin' with Pat's hest suit?" she called out.

"Why, I—I'm taking it to the cleaners," Danny responded—and took it into his own bed-room.

When he returned to the kitchen his mother was turning the steak in the frying-pan and Carbarn Hammerschlag had dried himself and was buttoning his vest. Down in Seventh Avenue a motor fire-engine passed the apartment-house with clanging bell, and to Mrs. O'Hara's astonishment the hoxer suddenly adopted a fighting attitude, striking out in all directions.

"Here, here, what's the matter with you?" she gasped.

Danny swept up behind the excited tram-conductor and pinioned the waving arms with his own.

"How d'you like him now, ma?" he asked.

"How do I like him?" gurgled Mrs. O'Hara. "I'm goin' to get the fourteen dollars!"

The Girl in the Case

IN common with a number of other officers attached to the second precinct of New York's Police Department, Pat lined up for duty in the station situated in Greenwich Street. A sergeant appeared from another room and spoke to the desk sergeant who had been addressing the men collectively.

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"O'Hara!" barked the desk sergeant. "Here," returned Pat.

"Fall out, O'Hara! Right face! Forward march!"

Pat deserted his colleagues to approach the desk.

"Captain Jackson wants you to report to him before you go to your post," he was informed.

"Okay," he said with a salute. "Thanks."

He went back across the room to a door labelled "Captain W. W. Jackson," and he turned the handle and stepped into a plainly furnished office, the principal feature of which was a massive desk, set almost in the middle of the floor.

"You sent—" he began, and stopped short to gape at a very beautiful brown-haired girl who was occupying the captain's leather-covered armchair behind the desk—a girl in a white hat and a striped frock who saluted him mockingly.

"Hallo, Lucille!" he exclaimed.

"A very fine entrance," said she. "It's too bad father wasn't here to see you. He might have promoted you!"

"I'm just as glad he isn't," declared Pat, moving nearer to the desk and perching on it. "I'd rather talk to you, anyway. How long's he gonna be gone?"

"Only a minute," she replied. "I came down to wheedle some shopping money out of him. And got away with it!"

"Yeah, I'll bet that was tough—all you had to do was smile once!"

"No, twice to-day," she corrected.

"I wish you were around when we're tryin' to get something out of him!"

"Is he that bad?"

"Well," said Pat, "you don't take after him. You know I was gonna—"

"Sorry to keep you waiting, honey," said a well-known voice behind him, and he sprang up and stood to attention.

"Hallo, Pat!"

"Good-morning, sir," said Pat.

Captain Jackson, an elderly and nearly bald-headed man with a blob of a nose and a pair of shrewd eyes as blue as his daughter's, walked round the desk and sat down in the chair Lucille had vacated.

"You've met Mr. O'Hara?" he inquired.

"Oh, yes," nodded Lucille, and was handed some money.

"Huh! Now run along and see if you can spend it all."

She thanked him and tripped away towards the door, which Pat opened for her.

"Wait for me outside," he whispered.

She smiled and vanished, and he turned to face his superior officer.

"You sent for me, sir?"

"Yes," Captain Jackson replied. "Last night the commission appointed me general chairman of the Annual Police Benefit."

"Well, I'm glad to hear it, sir," said Pat, eager to escape.

"They recommended that you be given charge of the programme. Spoke very highly of the way you worked last year's benefit, and I agreed with them that you were probably the best man for the job."

"Well, thank you, sir," Pat seemed to be on pins and needles. "But there—er—there are plenty of men in the department who could handle it much better than I."

"Nonsense!" quoth the captain. "You can do it. I've already put you in charge."

"Well, I'm only too glad to help out the show, as far as that goes, but I—er—"

"What's the matter with you?" asked

the captain gruffly. "Have you gotta go some place?"

"No, no, no, sir," stammered Pat. "I—er—I—"

"Well, for heaven's sake stand still!"

"Yes, sir," Pat did his best to obey.

"Is—er—is that all, sir?"

"No! What's this business of my daughter calling you 'Pat'?"

Pat gulped.

"Me?" he asked innocently.

"Yes."

"Oh, well—well, you see, Lucille—er—Miss Jackson—she went to Coney Island the other night, and—er—well, of course, she being your daughter, I thought maybe I'd better look after her!"

"Huh!" Captain Jackson looked stern.

"From now on I recommend you to concentrate on the benefit. That's all."

"Y—yes, sir," Pat saluted and dived out at the door; whereupon the captain's features relaxed and he even grinned behind his hand.

Outside the station Lucille was waiting at the wheel of a smart two-seater which had probably cost her several smiles. Pat crossed the pavement and leaned over her.

"I wanted to ask you something," he confided. "I couldn't very well do it up there. I had a tough time getting away from your old man—I mean your dad."

Lucille laughed gaily and asked what it was he wanted to ask her.

"Mums wants you to come up to supper to-night," he blurted.

"Why, I'd love to come!" she declared. "What time?"

"Oh, seven o'clock," he said delightedly. "I finish at six-thirty, so I'll pick you up."

"No, don't do that," she protested. "It wouldn't give you much time. I can drive over all right. What's the address?"

"One-eight-two-four Seventh Avenue. I'll be waiting for you out in front."

"All right." She waved a hand and pressed the self-starter. "See you at seven."

Pat clicked his heels and touched his cap, then went back up the steps into the police-station. At the earliest opportunity he rang up his mother, in the privacy of a telephone-box, and informed her joyfully that Miss Jackson was coming to dinner.

"Oh, isn't that nice!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Hara, all of a flutter. "I'll phono Mike right away to be sure and get his hair cut on the way home."

"All right, mums," approved Pat. "and look, do me a favour, will you? Tell those lugs not to mention the fact that I'm goin' to marry Miss Jackson. As far as that goes, why can't Mike and Danny eat out to-night?"

That last suggestion in no way met with Mrs. O'Hara's approval.

"Aw, look, Pat," she objected, "I couldn't ask the boys to eat at a lunch-room—and besides, I'd like to show them off a little to Miss Jackson."

"All right, honey," surrendered Pat. "but for goodness' sake show Mike the difference between a knife and fork, will you? And for once in his life have him eat those mashed potatoes without a tablespoon!"

"Sure, I've been meanin' to speak to him several times about that, Pat," declared Mrs. O'Hara, "so you don't need to worry. To-night I'll absolutely see that he eats them with a teaspoon."

A Chance Encounter

LATER in the morning, while Pat was functioning as a policeman in the streets of New York City, Danny and his new protégé travelled up-town by train, wearing sweaters, and proceeded to do some road-work in the residential district of Yonkers.

Carbarn Hammerschlag had many pounds of superfluous flesh, and as the two trotted side by side past spacious lawns and fine estates it was he who panted, not his trainer, and Danny talked to divert attention from mere physical discomfort.

"Is Hammerschlag your right name?" he inquired.

"No," was the reply. "My right name's Hoiskerwitz, but it was too hard to say, so I changed it to Hanunerschlag."

"Oh!" Danny considered that point while several hundred yards of roadway were covered. Then: "Come on, get those legs up high!" he barked. "Move those arms! Come on!"

"I wish I could worry," announced Carbarn presently.

"Why?"

"Because then all I'd have to do would be to sit down and take off weight."

Lawns gave place to fields and trees, with hills in the distance. Carbarn remarked plaintively that the scenery was "swell." A riding establishment loomed up on the left, and he turned his head to gaze appreciatively at two girls in riding-habits who were talking together beside a horse.

"Oh, listen, Champ," said Danny, "there's something else I want to say to you. You'll never get anywhere if you get a dame on your mind, so from now on don't forget that wine, women and song, as well as late hours, are out!"

"Don't be foolish, pal," growled Carbarn.

"Take Robinson Crusoe, for instance," expounded Danny. "He didn't have any women in his life, and look what it got him! They wrote a book about him! Now come on and get those legs up higher! Move those arms!"

Carbarn raised flagging arms, and his fists moved up and down with the movements of his legs. The riding-school was left behind, but he was getting tired and he coveted a rest.

"Hi, an accident!" he exclaimed a few minutes later.

An open two-seater was stationary at the side of the road and a girl was evidently underneath it, since a pair of silk-clad legs and part of a skirt projected near the off-side rear wheel.

Danny stopped, and Carbarn stopped beside him.

"Give me a hand to get her out," said Danny.

Carbarn grabbed hold of one silk-clad leg, Carbarn grasped the other, and a highly indignant girl was dragged screaming from underneath the car and sat up. She was Lucille Jackson, but, of course, they were not to know that.

"Well, what's the big idea?" she stormed.

Danny leaned weakly upon the back bumper; Carbarn, with his hands on his hips, achieved a sickly grin.

"Excuse us, lady," he mumbled. "We thought you was ran over."

"Well, I'm not!" cried Lucille. "And if you'd had any sense at all you'd have looked under the car to see what I was doing!"

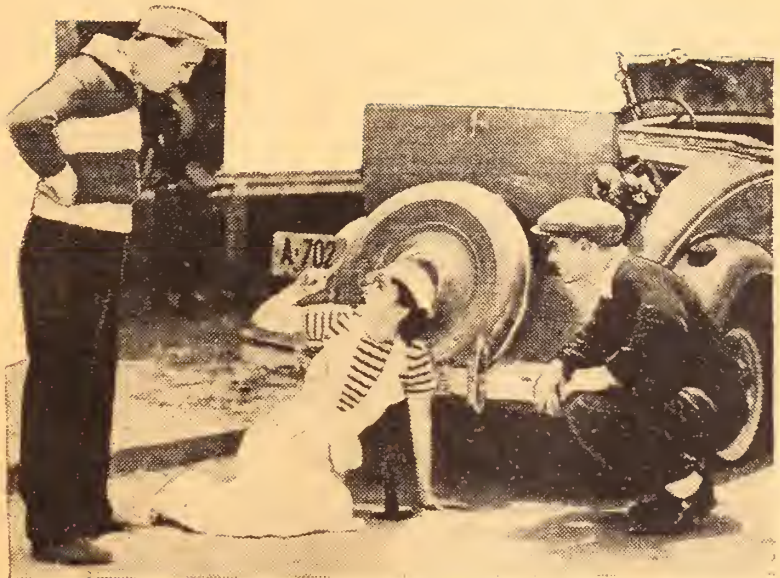
"If you're goin' to get sore about it," said Danny, "we can put you right back underneath there without any trouble at all."

"If you're so strong," retorted Lucille, "I'll just lie down and you can push the car over me!"

She picked up a jack which she had been trying to adjust under the back axle, and they saw that the tyre of the off-side rear wheel was flat.

"Here, let me do that," said Carbarn. "You'll spoil your dress."

"It's spoiled already!" she snapped at him, and Danny straightened up with a wry expression on his face.



Danny leaned weakly upon the back bumper. "Excuse us, lady," mumbled Carbarn. "We thought you was ran over!"

"Come on, Champ," he said. "Let's get going."

But Carbarn was obstinate.

"I'll have this bus jacked up in a second," he declared.

"Thanks!" Lucille rose to her feet and beamed at him. "At least, you're a gentleman!"

"Sure," agreed Carbarn with becoming modesty. "The name is Carbarn Hammerschlag. You'll hear a lot about me pretty soon."

He knelt to place the jack under the axle, but it was evident that he was no expert, and Danny called out to him to mind his fingers.

"Got a pair of gloves?" inquired Carbarn with a languishing smile for the girl in distress.

She said at first that she hadn't, then remembered that there were a pair in the dickey, in her golf-bag, and she went to open the dickey.

"But the fingers are cut off," she said.

Danny became impatient, thrust Carbarn aside, and knelt to adjust the jack.

"Can I help you?" asked Lucille.

"To do what?" he growled with his head under the car.

"To hear it all."

"Aw, you're so sweet!" he jeered; and she turned her back on him and regarded Carbarn with critical eyes.

"You must have a marvellous physique, Mr. Hammerschlag," she murmured.

"Well, I don't want to brag," said the ex-conductor of tram-cars, "but at the trolley-men's picnic, when I took off my bath-robe and stood in the sun wearing a pair o' shorts, you should-a heard the chatter of the ladyfolks."

"Were you boxing?" inquired Lucille.

"No, I was in the potato race."

While these two were becoming quite friendly Danny jacked up the car, removed the off-side wheel and substituted the spare. It was a very warm day and he perspired freely in the process; also he acquired considerable greasy dirt upon his hands and a smudge upon his nose.

He completed his task to find Lucille and Carbarn seated side by side on the running-board, and Carbarn smoking a forbidden cigarette which Lucille had given him.

"I hope I haven't kept you waitin' too long," he said with sarcasm.

"Not at all, pal," drawled Carbarn, puffing a cloud of smoke. "Take your time."

"Throw that away!" thundered Danny.

"Huh?"

Danny knocked the cigarette out of the offender's hand into the dust, and Lucille realised that she had made a mistake.

"I'm sorry," she said contritely. "It's my fault. If I'd known he was in training I wouldn't have offered it to him."

"Forget it," said Danny with a wave of his hand. "Your car's ready. Come on, you—up on your feet!"

Carbarn rose with manifest reluctance, but Lucille, who had decided that she liked Danny after all, cried out:

"Wait a minute! You look awfully warm, and I've got a thermos flask full of cold lemonade."

Danny declined the offering, but Carbarn announced that he was thirsty.

"I'll get it," said Lucille, and she ran round the back of the car to get the flask. Danny pushed Carbarn down on to the running-board again and commanded him to stay there.

"You're in training!" he barked.

He joined Lucille at the door by the wheel and he drank from the flask she pressed upon him.

"Are you always so disagreeable when you first meet people?" she asked with a pout.

"No," he replied, "but this is serious. Here I've got a fighter who's supposed to be in trainin', and it's not for him to do garage work, drink pink lemonade or smoke cigarettes. Why, smoking's plain poison!"

"You're convinced of that?" she asked, restoring the flask to the pocket on the door. "Then you'd better get to him, because he's taking another dose."

Carbarn's head was invisible from where they stood, but a spiral of smoke was ascending from the other side of the car. The half-smoked cigarette had been retrieved from the dust.

Danny flew round to the breaker of rules.

"What are you doin' with that?" he shouted.

"Throwing it away," Carbarn responded, and he dropped the end.

Danny ground his heel upon it. "Up on your feet!" he ordered. "Up on your feet! Start runnin' now!"

Carbarn rose, but did not run. "Thanks for helping me," said Lucille.

"You're very welcome," said Danny. "Hi, gimme a swig o' that lemonade, will you?" clamoured Carbarn, but she shook her head.

"No, I won't!" she informed him firmly. "You're in training!"

Danny caught him on the nose with a back-hander, and then the road-work was resumed.

The Missing Suit

MIKE was the first to reach home that evening, and he had duly had his hair cut. His mother marched him into the living-room and proceeded to give him lessons in table-manners till at last he complained that he had so many things to remember his ears were buzzing.

"Is that so?" said she, grimly. "Then we'll start all over again!"

They had started all over again when Pat burst in upon them.

"What's the matter?" he snapped at Mike. "D'you have to ring a fire siren for you to answer? Hallo, mother!"

"Did you forget your keys, then?" inquired Mrs. O'Hara.

"No," replied Pat, "but I wanted to see how the bell'd be answered when Lucille—er—when Miss Jackson got here."

"You'd better tip Danny off, then," said Mike, "for he's liable to yell 'What d'you want?' or something uncouth."

"Oh, and I suppose you'll be all right, eh? Listen, do me a favour. I'm tryin' to make an impression to-night, so lay off those wisecracks of yours!"

"Don't worry, Pat," said Mrs. O'Hara. "Everything's goin' to be all right."

"Well, I'm goin' in to change my clothes," he announced. "If you hear the door-bell be sure and take off your apron."

"Patrick!" Mrs. O'Hara called him across to her. "How do you like my table?"

She had taken a lot of pains over the table, and was pardonably proud of it. A bowl of flowers formed a centre-piece.

Pat assured her that it was fine, and went off to his room; then she retreated to the kitchen to ice a big cake she had made for the occasion, and Mike presently followed her there.

"If this Jackson gal don't hurry up and get here pretty soon," he complained, "I'm gonna crack under the strain!"

His mother gave him the knife with which she had been smoothing the icing, and he licked it with avidity.

"One thing more, Michael," she said. "Not a word to Miss Jackson about Pat goin' to marry her."

"I get it!" he nodded slowly. "Everybody's on to it but her! That's pretty rich!"

"Ho wants to surprise her," Mrs. O'Hara explained.

"Surprise her? He'll knock her cold!"

Pat's voice was heard from the bedroom, and Pat himself appeared in the doorway wearing only his underclothes.

"Where's my suit?" he demanded.

"Oh!" Mrs. O'Hara looked startled. "Why, Danny took it to the cleaners early this mornin'."

"But I had that suit pressed and cleaned yesterday!" exploded Pat. "I wish Danny'd let my stuff alone! It's seven o'clock now, and—"

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A rapping at the front door caused him to break off in consternation. Lucille had arrived, in a check frock with a white collar, and had tried to ring the bell, just as Pat had tried to ring it, but then had used her knuckles.

"That's her now!" he gasped. "What'll I do?"

"Oh—oh, you hurry and get dressed," said Mrs. O'Hara, all in a flutter. "I'll let her in."

She went to the front door, forgetting about her apron, and Pat fled to the bedroom. But Mike had got there first, to change his clothes and the door was fastened.

"Mike, Mike! Let me in!" yelled Pat, hammering on the door. "I haven't got any clothes on! You feather-brained cluck, let me in!"

Mrs. O'Hara was admitting Lucille, and in a panic Pat dived into Danny's room.

"Mrs. O'Hara?" said Lucille sweetly. "I'm Lucille Jackson."

"Oh, how d'yo do?" purred the Irish-woman. "Pat's been tellin' me many nice things about you, but I can see now with me own eyes he hasn't said half enough."

"Oh, that's very charming of you," murmured the visitor.

The front door was closed and Mrs. O'Hara led the way to her own bedroom. Pat looked out from Danny's and ducked back again.

"You can take off your things in here," said Mrs. O'Hara. "The boys'll be home in a minute. Dinner's almost ready."

Mike, having opened the bed-room door and found no Pat outside, walked along the passage looking for him. His head appeared, furtively, and he said:

"Get me some clothes, will you?"

"Get 'em yourself," said Mike. "No body can see you."

Pat stepped forth, but before he had progressed very far his mother's voice reached his ears.

"We'll go into the parlour and wait for the boys," she said.

"Get back!" warned Mike. "Get back! I'll get you some clothes!"

Pat scuttled into the bath-room, because it was nearest, and Lucille was conducted into the sitting-room, which Mrs. O'Hara always called the "parlour," a comfortable sort of room, and one really worthy of more stylish furniture than it contained. Lucille sat down in a chair near a piano, and Mrs. O'Hara sat facing her.

"Patrick's been tellin' me," she confided incautiously, "that you and him were figurin' on gettin' married. Oh dear, I wasn't supposed to say anything about it!"

"Is that so?" laughed Lucille. "Well, did Pat say who we were getting married to?"

Mike conveyed an overcoat to the bathroom.

"Couldn't get me a cane to go with it, could you?" asked Pat with scorn, but he was glad even of the overcoat and put it on. "Is she lookin'?" he asked anxiously.

"No," said Mike. "It's all right: come on!"

The door of their bed-room was reached, but it was closed, and appeared to be fastened.

"Th—that was your idea," faltered Mike, "to put a spring lock on this door."

Pat put his shoulder to the door in an effort to burst it open, and the noise brought his mother running out from the sitting-room with Lucille close behind her. It was an embarrassing moment, but Lucille was amused.

"Hallo, Pat!" she gurgled. "Going out?"

"Why—er—no—yes—er—I—er—"

Mrs. O'Hara took the situation in hand.

"Hurry up and get dressed, Pat," she said. "Dinner's almost ready. Come, darlin'!"

Lucille went back with her to the sitting-room. Mike turned the handle of the bed-room door, and to his amazement the door opened.

"Well, can you beat that?" he exclaimed. "It wasn't locked at all. It must have been stuck, eh?"

"Get out of here!" roared his brother.

So Mike went off to the sitting-room and there did his best to entertain Lucille while his mother was busy in the kitchen, and he was showing her the family album when Pat appeared, dressed once more in his police uniform.

"Sorry to keep you waiting," he said, "but I wasn't long, was I?"

Lucille looked him up and down, and she said:

"Did it take you all that time to wash your face?"

"No," he replied. "I—I took a shower."

"What d'you mean—a shower?" scoffed Mike. "All you did was to take your uniform off and put it on again. What d'you want to lie to the girl for?"

"Dinner is served," Mrs. O'Hara opportunely announced from the living-room.

Carbarn Hits Out!

MIKE was the first to reach the dining-table and he sat down in his accustomed place; but in the nick of time he remembered his lessons and sprang up to offer Lucille a chair.

All four became seated, and apart from offering hot peas to go with cold salad, and eating his own peas with a spoon, Mike did not behave too badly. Half-way through the meal he produced some slips of paper from a pocket.

"Want to buy a couple of tickets to the Firemen's Ball?" he asked Lucille.

"I'm takin' her to the ball," said Pat.

"Well, do you want to buy a couple of tickets?"

"Got my tickets."

"Well, that's what I call loyalty!" said Mike bitterly. "Wouldn't even buy a couple o' tickets from your own brother!"

"Go out and sell 'em," retorted Pat, "like I do."

"All you gotta do," complained Mike, "is to go around and tell a guy he's parked wrong, and he's gotta buy a ticket. I can't go around burning down houses just to sell tickets!"

The front door slammed, and the wad of paper which had put the electric-bell out of action fell to the floor. Danny had entered the flat with Carbarn, and Carbarn was wearing Pat's suit.

"When do we eat, pal?" he inquired anxiously.

"You go ahead and wash, and I'll find out from mother," Danny replied, and he walked into the living-room while his protégé made for the kitchen sink.

Mrs. O'Hara rose hurriedly from the table as Danny approached it. She saw that he was staring at Lucille and that Lucille was staring at him.

"Oh, Miss Jackson," she said, "may I present my youngest son Daniel?"

"We've already met," said Danny with a broad grin.

"Yeah?" snapped Pat. "Where?"

"Danny fixed a flat tyre for me on the road this morning," explained Lucille.

Carbarn walked into the room at that moment, and Pat's attention became diverted to the very conspicuous suit which encased him. Mrs. O'Hara introduced the alleged champion, who laughed.

"Pleased to meetcha again, Miss Jackson," he said; and then Pat rose up in anger and stalked round the table.

"What is this? What is this?" he howled. "Oh, my suit went to the cleaners, eh?"

An accusing finger pointed, and Danny tried to wave it away.

"I'll tell you about it, Pat," he said glibly. "I can explain everything."

"I don't care what it was!" shouted Pat. "What right have you got to lend out one of my suits?"

"That's a hot one!" cried Mike, and laughed in a most unseemly manner. "One of his suits!"

"Patriek! Michael! Danny!" shrieked Mrs. O'Hara. "Will ye stop liftin' your voices?"

The front door bell rang stridently, and Carbaru Hammerschlag seemed suddenly to go mad. Lucille cried out in alarm as his fists shot out to left and to right; but Pat received a jab to the jaw that sent him crashing against a sideboard, whence he collapsed to the floor with a wounded head as well as a measure of concussion.

Mike tried to defend himself, but was knocked nearly silly and sprawled on the carpet. Danny, who knew more about the noble art than either of his brothers, evaded all the blows aimed at him and socked Carbaru on the nose, then gripped his arms and tried to force them down.

"Stop that bell!" he bellowed.

Mrs. O'Hara flew to the front door and dealt with a persistent messenger-boy who had come to the wrong flat. The bell ceased to ring, and Carbaru became quite tame again.

But the damage was done. Pat was carried to bed unconscious, and a doctor was summoned by telephone, and then Danny raised Mike to a sitting position and held Mrs. O'Hara's smelling-salts under his nose.

Mike muttered incomprehensible things, opened his eyes, and blinked at his brother.

"What started that?" he asked feebly. "I—I remember you."

"How does your head feel now?" inquired Danny. "Any better?"

"Like it was hit by a freight train."

Danny looked up at his mother and at Lucille, two very agitated women.

"Oh, it's marvellous!" he rejoiced. "You know, he's got an awful lot o' power in that right of his! Why, that punch didn't travel more'n six inches."

"Don't kid me!" wailed Mike. "He brung it up from the basement!"

The doctor came, a spectacled practitioner who managed not to exhibit any surprise at what he was told, and Pat's head was bandaged and his senses were restored.

"What kind of a club did that guy hit me with?" was one of his first questions.

"Is he all right, doctor?" asked Mrs. O'Hara with a tremble in her voice.

"Yes, he's not badly hurt," was the reassuring reply. "Just keep him quiet to-night, and don't let him get out of that bed. I'll see him to-morrow, and we'll take the bandage off then. Good-night."

After the doctor had gone Mrs. O'Hara went to look after Lucille, and Danny took her place beside the bed.

"I'm awfully sorry this happened, Pat," he said, trying not to grin.

"Oh, shut up!" groaned Pat. "I ought to punch you right in the nose! I bring a nice girl home to dinner and ask you guys to behave for once in your lives, and what do I get? You turn the joint into a trainin' stable for a punch-drunk prize-fighter that can't stand on his heels!"

"What d'you mean?" challenged Danny, his sympathy completely

evaporated. "You don't feel so good."

Mrs. O'Hara returned to announce that Lucille had decided to go home, and since Pat was not fit to escort her, Danny had offered to do so instead. Pat objected strongly, but Lucille put her head into the room to say good-bye and accepted the substitute.

"All right, then," capitulated Pat. "Good-night, Lucille. Pick you up to-morrow night at nine o'clock without the bandage."

She shook hands with him and then with his mother.

"Good-night, Mrs. O'Hara," she said; and added, with unintentional irony: "I've had such a nice time."

She had parked her car in a yard at the side of the apartment-house and she and Danny descended to it. Danny insisted on driving, but instead of proceeding straight up Seventh Avenue towards Youkers, he swung right into Houston Street, and thence into Broadway.

"I guess I shouldn't have brought Carbaru to the flat to-night, eh?" he said with a laugh.

"He's quite an athlete," murmured Lucille.

"But you won't hold that against Pat, will you?" he went on. "Pat's a swell guy—make you a grand husband, too!"

Lucille sat up.

"Danny," she said in rather a strained voice, "you and your mother have somehow got the wrong impression. Pat and I have never talked about getting married."

"No?" Danny glanced round at her in surprise. "Well, what's that big dope been talkin' about, then?"

"I don't know."

Broadway was reached, and not far ahead—on the right—an illuminated sign proclaimed the presence of "Joe's Supreme Steak House."

"You're in love with him, aren't you?" asked Danny.

"No!" she instantly replied, and into that one word was compressed much.

"No?" Danny let forth a whoop of joy. "Say, that's something!" He took one hand from the wheel to point. "Tell me, does that sign read the same to you as it does to me?"

"I'll say it does," she responded.

There was a garage quite near to Joe's Supreme Steak House. The two-seater was deposited in it, and Danny and Lucille repaired to the rather crowded establishment and were provided with a separate table at which they devoured steak, fried onions, and chips with much relish.

As they ate they talked—mainly about Carbaru Hammerschlag.

"If only he could uncork that right of his in a match, some night," declared Danny, "it'd be blankets for the other guy."

Joe Gardner, proprietor of the place and himself a former pug, visited their table to ask what they thought of the steaks.

"Fine!" Danny assured him. "Fine!" "They oughta be," declared the broken-nosed caterer. "They're ground out of the finest Kansas City steer beef. Say, you oughta drop in some night and try one of our top sirloins. Bring your wife with you."

Lucille burst out laughing. "Everybody seems to be set on getting me married!" she cried.

"Well, it ain't a bad idea," returned Joe, in no way abashed because he had made a mistake. "I've been married twenty years."

He drifted away to another table.

"What was I talkin' about?" said Danny, his face rather flushed and his eyes very bright.

"Carbaru Hammerschlag," she replied, apparently completely mistress of herself. "I don't know how you can forget him so easily."

"No," he agreed. "No, I—well, what I wanted to say—er—that is—well, you know, he's hopeless when there's a woman around. Why, right now he's talkin' about breakin' trainin'!"



An accusing finger pointed, and Danny tried to wave it away. "I'll tell you about it, Pat," he said glibly.

because he wants to go to the Firemen's Ball!"

"I don't blame him," said Lucille. "It's going to be a lot of fun. Pat's asked me to go with him."

"He has?" Danny frowned, then grinned. "I'll probably see you there. I—er—I always take mum, because she—er—she likes the brass buttons and the band, and all that. Oh, you finished?"

"Uhuh," nodded Lucille.

He drove her home in the moonlight, but the moonlight was not apparent till they had left the brighter electric lights of Broadway behind. Then she nestled closer against him, and he—full of poetry that could not be expressed—ducked his head towards hers and said:

"Swell night, isn't it?"

"Beautiful," she whispered.

After the Ball

THE Firemen's Ball took place at the Central Hall three nights later, and from the point of view of most of those present it proved an exceedingly enjoyable affair. The Firemen's Band provided appropriate music, and the vast floor was crowded with dancing couples.

Mrs. O'Hara, who went with Danny, wore her best lace frock for the occasion. Lucille went with Pat, and she looked positively bewitching in a low-cut gown of pale grey satin, while he was resplendent in evening clothes.

Some of the firemen were in their uniforms, but Mike wore a dinner-jacket suit he had hired and would have been highly pleased with himself if he had known how to dance and his shoes had not pinched.

Danny rescued his mother from him in the middle of a fox-trot, whereupon he practised all by himself—to the considerable inconvenience of other dancers. At the end of the fox-trot Pat left Lucille with him and claimed his mother for a waltz, but no sooner had the waltz started than Danny pounced.

"Shove over, Nijnski," he said, and sailed away with Lucille, while Mike retreated to a palm lounge and removed his troublesome shoes.

"How's your pal Carbar?" Lucille inquired as she and Danny circulated.

"Oh, I had to lock him up at home," was the reply. "I was afraid to let him loose with all these fire bells around. But look, don't let's talk about Carbar to-night."

"That's all we've talked about before," Lucille reminded him.

"Yeah, but this is different." He piloted her skilfully in and out amongst the other couples on to a balcony under the stars. "It gets awful hot in there with all those firemen around, doesn't it?"

"Uhuh," nodded Lucille. "But I'm having a grand time."

"I'm beginning to feel I shouldn't have come at all," said Danny.

"Why?"

"Well—er—aw, forget it!"

He leaned over the parapet of the balcony beside her, tried to talk about unimportant things, and broke off in the middle of a sentence to exclaim:

"Oh, what's the use? I may as well say it and get it over. You know, I've been fallin' for you ever since that first day on the road, and—er—well, I can't get you off my mind. I can't think about anything else."

"You are in a bad state," she said sympathetically.

"I'm in an awful state," he declared, and pulled her round to look into her eyes.

"So am I, Danny," she whispered.

She was in his arms, and he was kissing her, when Pat came striding out on to the balcony. The expression on his

face alarmed Lucille, who gave vent to a startled "Oh!" but he looked out across the city and he said:

"Well, what d'you know about that? You can almost see the tower of the Empire State Building from here!"

"Yeah," said Danny, "we were just saying the—er—"

"Smoke?" Pat whirled round with a packet of cigarettes in his hand almost as though it were a gun, and Lucille cried out:

"Pat, let's stop it! Danny, will you please go inside? I want to explain something to Pat."

"It—it's not up to you to do any explaining," Danny protested.

Pat turned to the open doorway, but paused there.

"I'm goin' to see if I can find mums," he said. "See you later." He glared at Danny. "And I'll see you later!" he added significantly.

He disappeared into the building, not in search of Mrs. O'Hara, but in search of the bar; and it was in the bar that Danny found him with a mug of beer in his hand.

"Say, listen, Pat," he pleaded, "just let me explain."

"Explain?" Pat banged down the mug and struck him violently in the face.

Danny clenched his fists to hit back, but dropped them again.

"All right, Pat," he said hoarsely.

"If that's the way you want it!"

He went back to Lucille, but Lucille insisted on going home after he had reported what had happened. He saw her to her car, but both Pat and his mother had disappeared when he went back into the hall, so he went home himself.

Pat and his mother were already there. Carbar was sleeping peacefully in the spare bed, but Pat had changed into the check suit and was gathering together his other possessions in his own room. It was evident that Mrs. O'Hara knew all about the affair, for she was following him tearfully from cupboard to dressing-table when Danny looked in at the door.

"To think that a girl could come between two brothers," she lamented. "And the hard thing about it is that Lucille is a good girl. What are you lookin' for, Pat—soaks? I mended two pairs and put 'em in the second drawer. That's Mike's drawer you're lookin' in."

"What's goin' on here?" inquired Danny as he entered.

"Get outa here!" Pat bellowed at him, and Mrs. O'Hara implored him to go to his own room. But Danny would not go.

"Just a minute, ma, please," he said, and went over to his brother. "Will you stop actin' like such a dumb-bell? If anybody's gonna leave this place it's gonna be me!"

Pat flung down a tie to threaten with his fists, but Mrs. O'Hara thrust herself between her two sons.

"Pat!" she sobbed.

"You rotten little chiseller!" Pat shouted over her shoulder. "You haven't been any good since the day you were born!"

Mrs. O'Hara had her own Irish temper. She smacked his face for that, then wept because she had done it.

"That's okay, mum," Pat told her gruffly. "I guess I had it comin'."

"Say, look, let's be sensible about this thing, ma, will you?" pleaded Danny. "Pat's the bread-winner. He's the guy that gets the dough, and I haven't got a job or anything. Besides, there's—"

"Danny," whimpered his mother, "will you stop?"

"Well, I think it'd make it a whole lot simpler all round if I went out and

got a room some place for a while," Danny persisted.

"Do you really want to go?"

Danny looked at his scowling brother and nodded.

"Yeah," he said, and went off to his own room to pack.

His mother followed him there and tried to persuade him to stay till the morning at least; but he was adamant.

"Oh, no, there's no sense to it, ma," he protested. "It'll only start more trouble. And look here, will you stop worryin' about me? I'm not goin' to leave the country!"

She made him promise to come to see her every day, or, at least, to telephone, and she asked him how he was fixed for money.

"All right," he declared. "I'll get along fine."

"You wait here," she said, and went off to a little bureau in the living-room where she kept her savings. But when she returned with some notes for him he had gone.

Mike came home about an hour later to find Pat lying on his bed only half-dressed.

"What's the matter?" he asked, surveying the prone form. "Why don't you go to bed? And say, what's the matter with mother? She didn't meet me at the front door."

"Oh, I don't know," growled Pat. "She's tired, I guess. She danced a lot to-night."

"So did I," said Mike. "My feet's killin' me!"

He sat down to remove the offending shoes, but seemed reluctant to shed his hired garments.

"You know, Pat, I ought to buy a suit like this," he remarked.

"Yeah." Pat rose from the bed. "I'll be back in a few minutes."

He went off to his mother's room, and, as he had feared, she was still up, a huddled figure in a rocking-chair.

"Why aren't you in bed, mother?" he asked huskily.

"Oh, it's easier to think sittin' up," she replied.

"Aw, come on, let's forget it. I'll go out and bring Danny back."

She shook her weary head.

"No, Patrick, it's no use," she said sadly. "He's stubborn like his father. Lucille is a darlin' sweet girl, and I understand how you feel."

"And I understand how you feel," he returned. "Danny's your pet. You don't think you're foolin' Mike and me, do you?"

She wiped her eyes with a handkerchief.

"No, Patrick," she protested, "Danny isn't my pet. I love every one of you alike. Maybe I show a little more towards Danny because—well, because he's the youngest."

"Sure, I know," he nodded. "Now do me a favour, will you? Go to bed, sweetheart—you must be awfully tired."

"All right," she promise. "I will."

Deception—and the Truth!

NEXT morning Danny, who had spent the night in a cheap lodging-house, called for Carbar Hammerschlag and whisked him off to the Broadway Gymnasium, which was not in Broadway, but in Beeker Street. The proprietor, who was more or less of a friend, had been prevailed upon to provide them with quarters on a strictly business basis.

Carbar's training was continued there, as well as on the open road, and Danny visited his mother, or rang her up on the telephone, every day, as he had promised.

A week elapsed, and then, since the Annual Police Benefit was drawing very



"He's sick," said Rex Martin with a grimace, "and he's passed out!"

near, Pat was released from his ordinary duties to concentrate upon the programme. One of the features of the benefit was to be a fifteen-round boxing contest at the Yankee Stadium, and Captain Jackson suggested to Pat that it would be a very big draw if Joe Delancy, the middle-weight champion, could be induced to take part in it.

Pat interviewed Doc. Mullins, the champion's ugly manager, and by appointment Joe Delancy met the captain in his office to discuss the matter. Doc. Mullins went with him, and Pat was present as well as two uniformed sergeants.

Delancy, a curly-headed fellow of fine physique, wanted to keep in with the police, but was not at all eager to fight.

"I'm willin' to appear and help the boys out," he said vaguely, "but you know how it is."

Doc. Mullins, with a big cigar in his mouth, hastened to explain.

"You see, Joe's not in such very good shape."

"In other words," suggested Pat bluntly, "you want a set-up! Is that it?"

"No, no," protested the champion. "I just don't want to go in for a long trainin', that's all."

Doc. Mullins elaborated the point.

"We don't want to make it a waltz without music," he said with an expressive gesture, "yet at the same time you can't expect a champ. to go in the ring looking off form."

"You want someone not so tough to beat, eh?" suggested Captain Jackson.

"That's the idea," agreed Delancy.

"Okay!" boomed Pat. "I've got just the guy for you! He talks a great fight, but he can't punch his way out of a paper bag!"

Doc. Mullins inquired the name of this very desirable opponent, but on being given it declared that he had never heard of him.

"Who has?" said Pat. "He's just

some slug my brother picked up. Punches guys around car barns."

"That sounds okay to me," decided Mullins in quite a satisfied way, and Joe Delancy looked relieved.

"He'll do," he said.

Captain Jackson shook hands with him.

"Good," he said. "Pat, tell Danny to come in and we'll sign up articles."

Pat made a grimace.

"Oh, no, captain," he objected. "You'd better handle it yourself. Danny and I ain't talkin'."

The captain raised bushy brows at him.

"Oh," he said slowly, "I see! All right, I'll deal with it. Thanks, Delancy, for the favour."

A policeman was sent in quest of Danny and the articles were signed. Practically all the newspapers, next morning, carried a story of the projected fight, and Car barn's training was intensified at the Broadway Gymnasium.

Not without complainings, however.

"Can't we lay off this?" he asked lugubriously, as he and Danny lay side by side on the floor, in their shorts, with their legs in the air. "I ain't gonna hit the guy with me feet!"

"Will you stop your crabbing?" retorted Danny. "You've got the chance of a lifetime for a build-up. After you've boxed the champ. I can get you a match any place."

"Yeah," said Car barn, waving his feet, "but why do I have to practise lyin' on me back? I ain't gonna fight the guy from this angle."

"You hope!" Danny stood up. "Come on—on your feet! Get the skippin'-ropel"

They skipped together, while in a ring across the floor two other future champions sparred at one another, and the proprietor of the place dozed in a chair with a towel over his shoulder and a bucket of water at his feet. All about the big room pupils were hard at work.

"How about givin' me five minutes to

get me wind?" panted Car barn, after the skipping-ropes had been abandoned; but Danny grabbed up a pair of boxing-gloves.

"No wind?" he cried. "Here, get these gloves on! Come on!"

In the sparring bout that followed Danny hit hard and often, shouting instructions all the time. A hefty blow struck home on a sensitive ear, and Car barn lost his temper and jabbed with his right to such good purpose that his tutor went down on his back.

"How's that?" shouted Car barn.

"Beautiful," declared Danny, bounding up again. "Come on, rubbing-table next!"

Car barn, flat on a rubbing-table, was protesting loudly at the way he was being handled by greasy hands when one of the attendants pushed his way in, at the swing-doors and approached.

"There's a dame outside wants to see you," he stated.

Car barn jerked himself into a sitting position.

"Who, me?" he demanded eagerly.

"Tell her I'll be right out!"

"Not you, you dope!" snorted the attendant. "She wants Danny."

Car barn sank down again, and Danny covered him with a blanket, enjoined him to lie still, then went out into the hall of the gymnasium. Lucille was waiting there, a little felt hat perched on her brown head and furs round her shoulders.

"Hallo, Lucille!" exclaimed Danny. "Surprise, eh? Want me to show you around?"

"No, thanks," she replied gravely. "I want to talk to you. Danny, is it true you've left home?"

"Who told you that?" he demanded. "My father. What did you and Pat quarrel about?"

"Oh, about things in general!"

"Danny, was it—was it about me?"

He admitted that it was, and to his dismay perceived tears in her blue eyes.

"Don't you think you're being very silly?" she asked, trying to control her voice. "Oh, I know it's partly my fault, but just because we were on a balcony in the moonlight, and I let you kiss me, is no reason for you to think I'm madly in love with you. You and Pat had no reason to quarrel on my account. I'm not in love with him, and I'm not in love with you. What you're fighting about, I don't know!"

Danny stared. She looked quite as upset as he felt, but it did not occur to him to doubt her words.

"Well," he managed to say with an effort, "I—I guess that's that."

"I'm sorry, Danny," she murmured wretchedly, and turned and fled.

She had left her car outside, and she drove away in it to the flat in Seventh Avenue, where Mrs. O'Hara was almost as surprised to see her as Danny had been.

"Come right into the parlour, honey," she said, "and make yourself at home. You know, you'll have to excuse the place, because it's right in the midst of cleaning."

The sitting-room was entered and the blinds were raised, letting in the early spring sunshine.

"I always keep the shades down to fool the moths," Mrs. O'Hara explained with a smile for her beautiful visitor. "Sit down, and I'll go and make a cup of coffee."

"No, no, please don't!" said Lucille. "I won't stay long, and I couldn't drink it. I—I'm too upset."

"I know, darlin'—it's the boys, ain't it?"

Lucille nodded.

"I wouldn't have them quarrel over me for anything in the world," she declared. "You're not angry with me for what's happened, are you?"

"Not a bit! It's too bad Danny had to fall for you, if you and Pat were in love."

"That's what makes me feel so bad about it," Lucille interrupted. "You see, Mrs. O'Hara, I've never been in love with Pat."

"You mean you've never had an understandin' or anything?"

"Never. Oh, I liked him! I liked him a lot, but I never was in love with him. I—er—I—"

"But you do love Danny, is that it?"

Lucille bit her lip.

"Why, I've just seen Danny," she said, "and I—I told him that he took too much for granted. I told him that I never really cared for him."

Mrs. O'Hara was not to be deceived so easily as her son.

"You were lyin' to Danny, weren't ye?" she asked sagely.

Lucille shook her head, but burst into tears—and found herself in compassionate arms.

"What are ye cryin' for, darlin'?"

"Oh, what's the use?" wept the unhappy girl. "I do love Danny!"

"There, there, now!" soothed Mrs. O'Hara. "I never saw anything happen yet that time couldn't heal."

Toothache!

ON the day of the fight Danny called round at the flat. He had wheedled his mother into embroidering Car barn Hammerschlag's name on the back of Pat's dressing-gown, and it was all ready for him.

"Oh, gee, ma, that looks great!" he exclaimed.

"It won't when Pat finds out it's his dressing-gown!" retorted Mrs. O'Hara, whose conscience was not altogether easy. "Come and have something to eat."

Danny protested that he couldn't stay.

"I've got Car barn waitin' for me," he

said. "We fight to-night, you know. Don't you worry about your Danny. He gets three square meals every day."

"I know you're lyin' now," rebuked his mother. "Come on and sit down. I've got some soup."

"Thanks, mum," Danny hesitated. "I—I really don't care for any. What kind have you got?"

"Clam chowder," she informed him, "the way I make it."

"Who am I to turn that down?" he laughed, and put his arm round her and marched her off into the kitchen, where she filled a plate with steaming hot soup for him.

"Have you seen Lucille lately?" she asked, sitting down beside him. "I say have you seen Lucille lately?"

"Who, me?" Evidently the question was not to be evaded, so he adopted a casual air. "Oh, no, I haven't seen her, ma! I—I've had other things on my mind."

"She's a mighty fine girl, Danny. She'll make somebody an elegant wife."

"Yeah, sure she will," Danny drank some of the soup. "Let Pat marry her—"

"I'm not the marryin' kind. Anyway, what do I want with a wife? I've got you, haven't I? Say, let me have some bread, huh?"

Some of the papers that day suggested that Joe Delancy was risking his title at the police benefit, and one of the sporting writers who had visited the Broadway Gymnasium several times stated:

"Although practically an unknown, and possessing a style of boxing which even critics cannot fathom, Car barn Hammerschlag is expected to give Joe Delancy a stiff go of it to-night via the fifteen-round route."

Joe Delancy became rather disturbed after reading this, for he had not troubled to do any hard training for the event; but Car barn suffered from greater qualms. During the morning a hollow tooth began to ache, and by the evening his face began to swell, and what with pain and apprehension he was in a fine state of nerves by the time he reached his dressing-room at the Yankee Stadium.

Mike, who accompanied him and Danny, went off to get some toothache tincture. Most of the seats in the vast building were filled by that time, and two stalwart members of the police force were entertaining the crowd with a vigorous if rather unscientific display in the ring.

Danny, with his coat and waistcoat off, had got his protégé all ready for the fray and invested in the borrowed dressing-gown.

"Now you sit right there and relax," he said, pushing Car barn down on to a chair. "Take it easy, d'you hear? You haven't got a thing to worry about."

"Aw," groaned the sufferer, "this tooth is killin' me!"

"Well, don't you think about it, and it'll go away. D'you hear? Don't think about it!"

Car barn sat crouched forward with his left elbow on his left knee, nursing the swollen cheek and making a rumbling noise.

"What are you doin'?" demanded Danny.

"I ain't thinkin' about it," was the reply.

There was a bang at the door, and Doc Mullins entered the room with Joe Delancy, both fully dressed. Mullins introduced himself to Danny, and Danny introduced Car barn. Mullins offered his hand, but Car barn did not shake it.

"Hallo!" he said with gloom.

"He's right on edge," laughed Danny.

There came another bang at the door, and a messenger-boy put his head round it to announce that he had a telegram for Mullins.

"Here," said that messenger, and he took the proffered envelope and tore it open.

The message it contained seemed to disturb him.

"Listen, Champ," he said to Delancy, "we got to blow to Canada right after this fight."

"Why?" inquired the middle-weight champion.

"The guy you fought in Scranton last month died in the hospital this morning."

Car barn shivered slightly, and Mullins pocketed the telegram and gazed pityingly at him.

"Well, good luck, kid!" he said.

"Bo seeing you," drawled Joe Delancy.

They sauntered out from the room, and Car barn rose up in alarm, only to be pushed back into the chair by Danny, who said scornfully to him:

"Listen, nut, don't worry about a thing! That's the oldest gag in the fight business—Cohen's manager used it for years. They're tryin' to throw a scare into you. Now you stay right there where you are! Everythin's gonna be all right. Listen, I gotta go and look for Rex. Stay there."

He turned towards the door, and in the doorway encountered Mike, whom he commissioned hurriedly to look after Car barn.

"Take good care of him," he said. "See that he relaxes. Be right back."

Mike went over to Car barn.

"I couldn't get the toothache tincture," he stated, "but I got something that'll do just as good. Look!"

He produced a bottle of dry gin from his coat pocket, and Car barn gaped at it.

"Hi, listen," he complained, "I can't take that now!"

"You ain't gonna take it now," Mike informed him. "All you're gonna do is take a mouthful and hold it against your gum for a minute like this."

He removed the cork from the bottle, tilted a small quantity of spirit into his mouth, tilted his head sideways for a few moments, then gulped down the spirit and beamed.

"There!" he said. "Like that! Only don't you swallow it!"

He handed the bottle to Car barn and fetched a pail. Car barn filled his mouth with gin, but instead of spitting it out he swallowed it.

"Couldn't get me head back far enough," was his explanation.

"It's as easy as A B C," declared Mike, and acquired the bottle and demonstrated—but swallowed because there was no particular reason why he should not swallow. "Just tilt your head to one side and hold it against your gum for a minute and then spit it out again in the bucket."

Car barn followed all these instructions save the last. Mike held the pail, but there was no contribution for it.

"It must have evaporated," said Car barn.

Again Mike demonstrated, and again Car barn tried, groaning with his mouth full.

"Does it still hurt?" Mike asked. Car barn gulped.

"Awful!" he said.

"But you swallowed it!"

"I had to swallow it to answer you, didn't I?"

The process was continued, the hollow tooth becoming less troublesome, but the neat gin began to take effect on both of them.

The Substitute

UPSTAIRS in the stadium, where the two policemen were battering each other, Mrs. O'Hara and Lucille sat together by the ringside. Captain Jackson was on the other side of his daughter; Pat was on the other

side of his mother, and in their immediate vicinity were several members of the Police Commission.

The attention of the men was concentrated on the fighters, but Mrs. O'Hara looked at Lucille, and she whispered to her:

"Won't you let me tell him, darlin'? What's the use of both of you bein' miserable?"

"Oh, I wouldn't have anyone tell him for the world!" Lucille whispered back. "He—he'd think I was chasing him."

"I wouldn't come right out and tell him," Mrs. O'Hara assured her. "I'd just say that I'd heard in a roundabout way that you love him. You know—kinda hint, like."

"You're awfully sweet." Lucille glanced round to make sure that Pat was not listening. "You know if everything did turn out all right you're such a dear person I'd feel sort of mean taking Danny away from you."

"You little sweetheart, you! Maybe I would have to take second place with Danny, but—but I'd be gettin' a daughter, wouldn't I?"

Battler Higgins, of the forty-second precinct, kissed the mat with a thud, but they were not even aware of the circumstance.

"And I couldn't have a better daughter if I'd one of me own," Mrs. O'Hara added almost out loud.

In the dressing-room by this time the bottle of gin was more than half-empty, but none of the spirit was in the pail.

"How does the tooth feel now?" Mike inquired with rather muzzy solicitude, binding Carbarn's right hand.

"I wouldn't even know I had a tooth," was the reply.

"It just goes to show you a man is a fool ever to have a tooth extracted. There you are!"

Carbarn held up the bandaged hand to inspect it, and found that it was united to Mike's by the strip of linen.

"How'd that happen?" he asked blankly. "That's third time you done that."

Mike went to step back and nearly fell over.

"Can't figure it out," he muttered, and unwound the bandage. "I gottern idea. You wrap it up yourself, and I'll keep my hands in my pockets."

Carbarn took a swig from the gin bottle and wound the linen round his hand, tucking in a loose end.

"Tha'sh awful quick," quoth Mike admiringly. "Gi'sh bottle!"

While he was drinking Carbarn rose, adopted a fighting attitude, and made a number of fanciful jabs at his companion's face without hitting him.

"Boy, bring on that Delancy!" jabbered the jabber. "I don't think I'll even let him stay one round. Give him a fire-hose and me a pair o' boxing-gloves, and he won't even get me wet!"

"You know, Carbarn," said Mike, "when you start throwin' those hands around like that you look like a centipede."

He laughed foolishly and heard a knock at the door.

"Come in!" he cried.

Doc Mullins entered with Delancy, and Delancy was dressed—or, rather, undressed—for the fray.

"Just wanted to take a peek at the bandages," said Mullins.

"Sure," said Mike.

"Certainly," said Carbarn, and held up his hands. "Bandagin' my knuckles is a waste of time for me, and, w'ash more, I don't believe that story about that guy in Scranton, see?"

The door was wide open, and somewhere in the building a bell clanged. Carbarn, hearing that summons to battle, clenched his fists and struck out at Joe Delancy.

"Look out!" bellowed Mike.

Delancy side-stepped the onslaught and shot out a straight left that caught his opponent on the point of the jaw and knocked him down—and out.

Doc Mullins looked horrified; Mike gaped at the unconscious figure; and then Danny burst into the room.

"Say, what's goin' on here?" he demanded fiercely.

"I couldn't help it," snapped Delancy. "He slugged me first."

"The 'phone bell rang," said Mullins, "and the fool started hittin' out like he'd gone crazy."

"Well, you didn't have to put him away for it!" Danny shouted. "Now you've done a fine thing for me!"

"Yeah?" sneered Delancy. "Well, what are we supposed to do—cry about it? If he can't make it, call off the bout."

"No, no, you can't do that!" said his trainer with concern. "This is the main event. You bring him to, O'Hara, and then drag him into the ring."

"All right," said Danny grimly. "You get out of here—go on."

Boxer and trainer departed, and Danny went to work on Carbarn, kneeling beside him and slapping his cheeks.

"Anything I can do?" asked Mike, and he tried to conceal the gin-bottle as his brother looked up.

"Yeah," said that brother savagely.

"Drop dead!"

"Now?" asked Mike.

"Now!"

"That's askin' too much!" Mike pulled himself together and waddled from the room, leaving Danny to resuscitate the fallen Carbarn as best he could.

Not many minutes later the call-boy banged on the door and shouted that Delancy was in the ring.

"All right, all right!" howled Danny, and he raised the semi-conscious Car-

barn to uncertain feet and dumped him in a chair.

Delancy was in the ring, and the crowd in the stadium had begun to clap their hands and stamp their feet, clamouring for the main event to start. Captain Jackson stood up to speak to Pat.

"There's something wrong," he said. "You'd better go and see what it is."

Pat rose to make his way to the dressing-room, but Doc Mullins intercepted him before he could reach the nearest gangway.

"I'm not gonna keep my man here all night," he stated blusteringly.

The proprietor of the Broadway Gymnasium, who had promised to act as second for Carbarn, strolled into the dressing-room while Pat was on his way to it. His name was Rex Martin, and Danny had been looking for him. He was a big fellow, in a bowler hat.

"Where you been?" snarled Danny, with one arm round Carbarn's neck.

"They forgot to wake me," said the staring late-comer. "What's the matter with him?"

"Liquor!" was the terse reply "Passed out!"

Pat appeared in the doorway, and Doc Mullins was with him.

"Well, you're just in time for the ring," barked Pat. "They're waitin' for your prize-packet!"

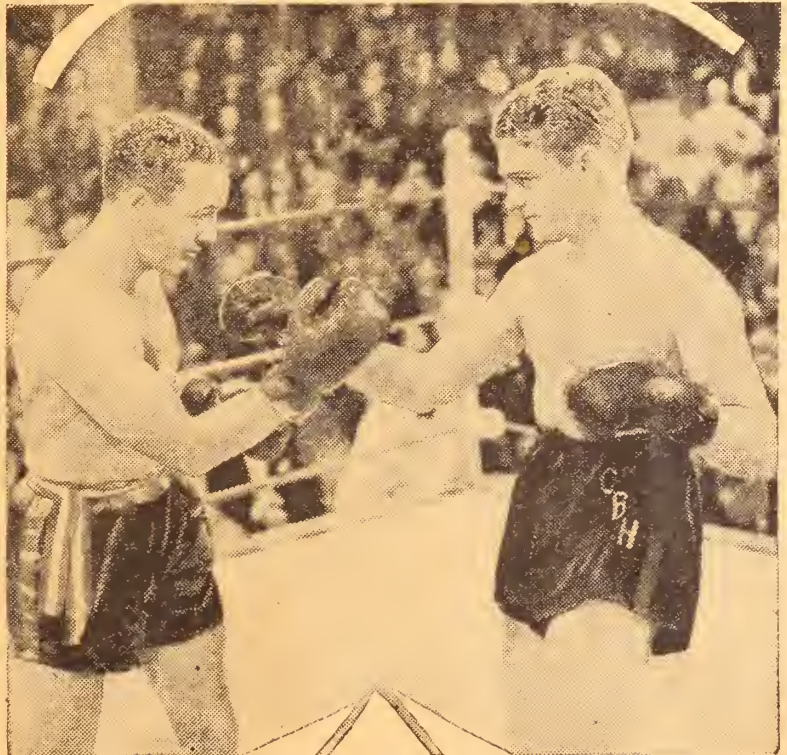
"He's sick," said Rex Martin with a grin, "and he's passed out!"

Pat viewed the wreck of a fighter and walked farther into the room.

"Well, maybe that tough brother of mine 'ud like to substitute for him," he said with withering scorn.

"Maybe you think I wouldn't?" retorted Danny.

"Yeah?" Pat waved a hand in his angry face. "Well, you're not goin' to! Not that I don't want to see your head get kicked off, but I've guaranteed the fans a good show."



The bell sounded and Delancy and Danny advanced towards each other, both sparring for an opening.

"Why don't you tell the truth?" raved Danny. "You're still sore at me because you think I double-crossed you with Lucille! That's what you've got in the back of your bean!"

"Okay," returned Pat, controlling his voice but not his temper. "For that crack you're gonna get your ears punched off! That is, if the Commission okays it!"

He went back to the stadium and conferred with Captain Jackson, while Danny and Rex Martin, between them, deprived Carbarh of his shorts and dressing-gown and Danny changed into them. Pandemonium reigned in the stadium while four members of the Police Commission discussed the emergency in one of the rooms beneath the stands, and the official doctor was present.

Danny was summoned to the meeting and the doctor examined him. He seemed to be fighting fit, but he was not of the same physique as Joe Delaney, and Captain Jackson cried out:

"I won't stand for it! This kid is not in condition—it'll be massacre in the ring!"

Danny stepped forward with the doctor's hand on his shoulder and Rex Martin close behind him.

"Now, just a minute, captain," he said eagerly. "Don't forget you've got a whole lot of people out there who've paid a lot of good dough to see Delaney fight. Now, who else are you gonna get?"

That was indeed a poser, and the doctor intervened.

"He's in good shape, commissioner," he said to the tall and distinguished-looking man who held the highest position in the New York Police Department.

"All right," growled Captain Jackson. "I'm out-voted. Go ahead! But if you're takin' too much punishment, O'Hara, the fight's goin' to be stopped, I'm tellin' you!"

The Deciding Factor

A VERY few minutes later Danny made his way to the ring, almost unnoticed, and climbed up into it between the ropes. Captain Jackson was squeezing past a number of people to his seat; Mrs. O'Hara started up from hers.

"Why, look!" she cried. "It's Danny!"

Lucille did look, and she also sprang up.

"What's he doing in there?" she gasped.

"Oh, I'm going to stop him!" Mrs. O'Hara shrieked; but Captain Jackson made her sit down.

"Something's happened to Carbarh," he said. "Danny is substituting. Nothing's goin' to happen. Don't worry!"

He dropped beside his agitated daughter, but Mrs. O'Hara leaned over both of them to speak to Pat.

"Can't you do something to stop it, Patrick?" she cried.

"Aw, he'll be all right, mums!" said Pat cheerfully.

Danny blew a kiss to his mother from the ring, and Mullins whispered to him:

"Don't worry, kid. The champ'll carry you."

"Thanks," murmured Danny; and then the announcer invaded the ring and raised his hands and lifted up his voice to still the din.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he proclaimed, and his voice was amplified by loudspeakers all over the building, "we are now presenting the main event. January 25th, 1936.

fifteen rounds. In this corner the middle-weight champion of the world, at a hundred and fifty-seven pounds, Joe Delaney!"

Delaney rose up and bowed amidst tremendous applause.

"And in this corner," the announcer went on, waving a hand, "substituting for Carbarh Hammerschlag, the challenger, at a hundred and fifty-five pounds, none other than Danny O'Hara!"

Danny, in his brother's dressing-gown, with the name of Carbarh Hammerschlag embroidered upon it, stood up and was received with cheers.

"Referee," said the announcer, "Mushy" Callahan. Timekeeper, Billy Coe."

The timekeeper and the referee climbed into the ring; the announcer departed, and the two contestants met and shook hands in front of the referee.

"You know the rules, boys," said that official loudly. "No foul punches, and in case of knock-down walk to your mutual corners. Get back to your places and come out fighting!"

Danny and Delaney retired to their respective corners, and Doc Mullins whispered to Delaney between the ropes:

"I told him you'd carry him. Knock him out as soon as you can."

The fight began, and the fight was fierce, Joe Delaney doing his best to polish off his opponent before the gong went. Danny defended himself well, but his thoughts wandered and what Pat had said rankled. He received pretty severe punishment, and he was down on his face, and the referee was counting him out, when the gong saved him.

"Oh, Danny!" cried Mrs. O'Hara, and Lucille's face was white and very strained. But Pat sat gloating in his seat.

Mike climbed the stone steps of one of the numerous entrances from the regions below, but was challenged by a uniformed attendant, and, since he could not produce a ticket, was driven away. He stumbled down the passage-way and made for another entrance.

The second round was in progress by the time he ascended again. He saw Danny knocked nearly through the ropes, and he was shouting encouragement when another attendant pounced on him.

"I don't need any ticket!" howled Mike. "I belong here!"

The attendant called a policeman, and the policeman pushed the supposed intruder down the steps.

Danny made no impression on the champion in that round, but retired shakily to his corner at the end of it.

"I wanna stool," he wailed, and as a stool was put through the ropes for him and he sank down on it, he looked up at Rex Martin. "Think I could have some water?"

A bucket of water was held to his lips and he gargled his parched throat.

"The champ said he was gonna carry me, huh?" he muttered. "He meant right to the emergency ward!"

Captain Jackson turned with annoyance to one of his colleagues.

"Why haven't they got a decent second?" he growled. "That kid doesn't know what to do!"

"Can't you get one of the boys to help him, dad?" asked Lucille; and Mrs. O'Hara, with a scornful glance for her eldest son, cried out:

"Boys, nothin'! Why isn't Pat in there helpin' him?"

The bell sounded and Delaney and Danny advanced towards each other, both sparring for an opening. Mike, who had sneaked up a fresh flight of

steps and appropriated a vacant seat, waved his fists in the air and bellowed: "Hook him, kid! Hook him! Hook him!"

Almost as though Danny had heard, a left hook was smashed into the side of the champion's jaw and a straight right to the nose followed with lightning-like rapidity.

"He hooked him!" exulted Mike. "Did you see him hook him? Did you—"

"That's my seat!" interrupted a man harshly. "Attendant!"

"Yeah, I'm going," said Mike—and once more he vanished into the depths, presently to reappear on the other side of the stadium and to see his brother go down with a thud.

No attendant could bar his way then. The one that tried to do so was swept from his path, and he almost fought his way to the ringside, shouting wildly:

"Hi, that's my brother! What's the count? That's my brother! Stay where you are, Danny—I'll be right there!"

Once more the gong saved the situation, and Danny was staggering towards his corner when Mike reached the ring, flung off his coat, and heaved himself up into it.

"Gimme that stool!" he yelled at Rex Martin. "Gimme a towel! Gimme a sponge!"

Danny was dumped on a stool and his brother ministered to him, uttering encouraging things all the time.

"You look fine!" he declared, none too truthfully. "Now keep goin' right after him!"

In the round that followed Danny gave a far better account of himself, and though he was knocked all about the ring, he landed one or two blows that jarred Joe Delaney. Indeed, at the end of it that boxer complained to his manager:

"Say, this guy's no set-up!"

"Well, end it as soon as you can," said Mullins.

The fifth round went very badly indeed for the substitute, and Lucille became really alarmed.

"Pat!" she cried. "Pat, can't you do something to stop it? Oh, you've got to! He's taking a terrible beating! He'll get killed!"

Pat leaned across to her, badly disturbed by the anguish in her voice.

"What can I do, honey?"

"Oh, why, get up there in the ring with him where you belong and help him!"

"You really love Danny, don't you?"

"Yes, Pat," she confessed, "I do."

"Can I tell him that?"

"Yes."

Pat drew a long breath, then stood up.

"Watch him win!" he said, and flung off his coat and waistcoat and threw them on his seat. The bell rang just as he reached the corner. Mike had got hold of Danny, who seemed to be completely dazed and badly wounded.

"Don't worry, honey," Mrs. O'Hara said reassuringly to Lucille. "Pat'll take care of him!"

Danny was deposited on the stool and Rex Martin fanned him with a towel; but Pat took charge of the sufferer, driving Mike out of the ring to look on with anxiety between the ropes.

"Take deep breaths!" Pat commanded. "Take deep breaths, I tell ye!"

Danny did his best to obey.

"Call yourself a fighter, eh?" Pat wielded a sponge. "Thought you could take on the champ, did ya? You'll kiss

(Continued on page 28)

Poison gas, rising in a yellow choking fog, sweeping onward, blotting out all life—human, plant and animal. Two men and a girl are trapped in a house. Will their radio call for help be heard? Starring Lloyd Hughes



A Life of Danger

"SO you got your men, Riley!" The grey-haired man behind the big desk smiled approvingly at the square-shouldered, frank-faced young man, who stood stiffly at attention before him. "Take a seat—make yourself comfortable."

Ted Riley, Government Agent, wondered what was on his chief's mind. One was not sent for to be congratulated on the capture of a couple of chief thugs without some reason. This opinion of something in the wind was increased when he was offered a cigar. He smiled and waited.

"Ted." The chief studied his cigar ash. "Smart work getting those two thugs. I understand you got a bad kick on the ankle in the fray."

"All in the day's work, chief. It was nothing."

"Those two thugs belonged to a certain gang." The chief gave Ted a sharp glance. "And we'd feel far happier if their leader were dead or behind bars. Now we know that this gang is out of action at the moment. I mean by that that twenty or thirty toughs are mooning round the night haunts of Frisco killing time and getting drunk. Why? Because their leader is out of town."

"They have orders to lay off anything criminal until their leader gets back," said Riley. "And you're telling me, chief, that there'll be fireworks when he does show up."

"You've guessed it." The chief nodded his approval of the other's acumen. "That leader is Danny Murdock, who made the Bowery so hot for him that he came to the West for his health. Rather to our surprise he has done nothing but organize this tough bunch, and all he seems to have done is take this bunch out into the desert

and give 'em shooting practice. Headquarters has the feeling that Danny is up to no good and that it's something big."

"I've heard of Danny Murdock, but never met him," Riley said. "It does look, chief, as if Danny is planning a coup, and that it's so big he needs an army of sharpshooters. Any idea where Danny has gone?"

"Oh, we know where he is, and we could arrest him," the chief explained, "but we haven't got much on him save that of assumed identity. We want something to get that guy for keeps. Danny is at Diamond Island and he's posing as a Major Gray, Government Inspector. Somehow or other he has got certificates and credentials—they're genuine to a certain extent. He was in the army once, and after quitting New York must have hibernated in some small burg, where he convinced some State official that he was just the man for the Government. Through that official he has become a Government servant, and his only bad offence is the assumed name."

"Diamond Island," Riley frowned. "I went down that way on vacation two years ago. Went there for the fishing and had a grand holiday, and we wanted to land on the island but found it belonged to somebody who did not welcome visitors."

"That island has been a smugglers' haunt, and heaven knows what else, for hundreds of years," the chief said. "We've had grave suspicions of that island for the past ten years. A racketeer named Sherwell had it and I guess it was a hide-out for his stores. When America went wet the island wasn't of much use to him, and so Gray has the use of it. Loaned to him by Sherwell. We've only just located Gray on this island and we want to

know what's going on. He has a nasty reputation, Ted, but I regard you as not only the most fearless Agent on my staff, but one with a certain amount of intelligence. You've done grand work these last ten years, and if you can get Danny behind bars you can look on promotion as a certainty. I suggest you go on another fishing expedition."

"You want me to start at once?"

"Yes, and remember this, Ted." The chief paused. "If you get in a jam we can't help you unless you've got all the dope on Murdock. This is a sort of unofficial inquiry—guess you understand?"

"Sure, chief, and I think that if you let me draw up to a thousand dollars I can do something," Ted grinned. "Knowing how poor America is I'll try and keep it down, but it takes money to fit out a motor-boat for fishing."

"You can have what money you like as long as you get results!" The chief signed a form. "This will give you all the money you need."

Ted Riley left headquarters and went outside to his car, a powerful two-seater. As he drove away an open touring car parked on the other side of the road moved away from the kerb. The four men in that car were very interested in Riley's car.

"That's the guy!" growled one. "Let's get him!"

Danny Murdock's gang were a murderous, vengeful lot. Riley had dared to walk into a saloon, which they haunted, and yank out Slick and One Eye, when they started a rough house. Riley had gone to the saloon disguised as a sailor in the hope of learning the movements of the various waterfront gangs. Slick and One Eye had been suspicious of his clean appearance and picked a quarrel. The result was the dickens of a scrap and the prime mover

taken to gaol. The four men in the car were out to get Riley.

It was late afternoon, and Ted, as he drove out to his lodgings on the outskirts of Frisco, turned over in his mind his plans for the fishing expedition, on which he must start first thing in the morning. His direction was left at the cross-roads, and he glanced up into the mirror to see if anything was behind. There was a car close behind.

Ted became thoughtful when he found the same car behind him at the next cross-roads. His home was near the shore and rather quiet—he decided not to go home yet. He turned his car in the direction of the hills, and grinned to find that car still dogging him. At the next cross-roads he swung left and headed back for town, and now his foot was down on the pedal.

A glance at the mirror showed that he had gained a hundred yards or more, but the other car appeared to be gaining. This section of road was rather quiet for two miles, and he decided that it was not healthy. At the end one dropped down into the heart of the city and there a clever driver could have a lot of fun.

Riley dodged in and out of small turnings, into the drives of several private houses, down roads that were under repair, through a factory yard and eventually eluded the pursuit by getting across a control before the cop in charge held up the traffic.

But on his way out to the coast they came out of a side-turning, and the chase was on again. Ted soon became aware that he had a flat tyre and guessed that a gun with a silencer had burst it. Angriily he swung the car off the road on to the grass. He had no chance at gun play, but he might try bluff.

The other car swung alongside and four guns covered him:

"Reach for the sky!" drawled a voice. "What's the idea chasing me around?" cried Riley, as his hands shot upwards.

"Exchange is no robbery, buddy," the crook sneered. "You're coming to stay along of us, and maybe if two friends of ours were paroled we might do the same with you. If they ain't released quick you may get a ride."

"And some of you guys would go to the chair," retorted Riley. "That sort of talk don't scare me."

"Get the wheel changed, buddy," came the order. "We're taking you and your car."

Ten minutes later the two cars were back on the road. Two crooks travelled with Riley, with the other car close behind. Ted sat next to the driver, with a crook and a gun in the back seat.

What they did not know was that Riley had several little inventions of his own about that car. They came to a hill and Ted's hand went down the side of the seat and pressed a knob—it disconnected the brakes. Another knob put the gears into free-wheel. The car bounded forward.

"The brakes have gone!" yelled the driver.

The car was moving at a good fifty when Ted pressed those knobs again—instantly the brakes and gear came into action. He had braced his feet for the shock, but the crooks hadn't. One winded himself over the wheel and the other lurched forward to crash into Riley's fist. Riley released the brakes and the car went down the hill at a reasonable pace. He dragged the winded crook away from the wheel and hit that rogue over the head with a wooden bludgeon that he took from a car pocket. The dazed crook behind him was showing signs of recovering, and the same

bludgeon put the rascal back into oblivion.

The other car was not far behind, and they could see that something was wrong. Riley stepped on the accelerator and at the next cross-roads saw a steam lorry and truck. The driver signalled that he was turning left, and Riley sped forward with the crook car close behind. The crooks had not seen the truck driver's signal.

By inches Riley got through and laughed to hear the truck-driver's curses. The crooks realised they couldn't make it, and applied their brakes too late. They hit the back of the lorry, as they tried to swing their car back to the centre of the road, ripped off one side of their touer, lurched across the road and crashed into a stationary car that was fortunately unoccupied.

That night four more of Daniel Murdock's gang were behind prison bars.

Diamond Island

THREE days later a small motor fishing boat might have been seen chugging along the coast. At the wheel sat a young man in blue serge trousers, blue sweater and open shirt. Around him was the outfit of a fisherman—a net, two or three rods, lines and bait. In a soap-box were plenty of shavings and two cans of petrol. In the far distance was a faint smudge that was Diamond Island.

From a locker he pulled out a small box with a fuse and examined it. He pushed it close to the box of shavings. Satisfied that everything was set, he took up glasses and scanned that distant smudge. Diamond Island was low lying and he should be within a mile of the shore within the next half-hour.

Two miles from the island he anchored and began to fish. After a while he got down under the gunwale of his craft and got out his glasses. Those on the island must not see the fisherman's interest in their activities. There seemed a number of sheds and one large house on the highest part of the island, which was composed of low-lying sand hills. There was something near the foreshore that he could not see very clearly on account of haze, so he heaved up the anchor and changed to a place nearer the island. It turned out to be a large boat-house, slip-way and small pier.

Ted took out a map and studied it closely. Now he had the bearings of the island. A boat called every week with supplies and mail from the mainland, and this pier must be the one shown on the map. Here was the only deep water, as round the rest of the island were rocks and coral reefs.

The island seemed deserted, but not uninhabited. Smoke came from a chimney of the house and also from the sheds. On the pier was a long wicker-work deck chair. A sunshade was over the chair so that he could not see that it was occupied. He fished for a bit and then decided it was time to get busy.

After starting the motor he added far too much oil, and as the craft chugged along a trail of smoke was wafted away by a slight breeze. If there were anyone on the island they could not fail to see the boat. More than likely Murdock had men constantly on the watch for vessels.

Riley took out a cigarette, drew the box of shavings closer and took out the stopper of the petrol can. He pushed over the can and saw the petrol soak into the shavings. He glanced at the island and steered his craft towards the shore. At eight hundred yards he lit his cigarette and nonchalantly tossed the lighted match into the shavings.

On the platform in the sand hills knelt

three men—the background of sand made them almost invisible. Two of the men were rough-looking seamen, but the third man was of different class. Danny Murdock was a giant of a man. He wore buckskin riding breeches, a polo shirt and a sports collar.

A fourth man, bent double, joined them. A wiry, swarthy man in a very out-of-place blue suit.

"What do you make of him, Franklin?" Murdock asked.

"Seems to be just an ordinary fisherman," was the answer.

"Ordinary fishermen don't come fishing round this island," cried Murdock. "The fishing's been dud for the past twelve months, he's six miles from the nearest port and he seems too mighty interested in this island." He laughed. "Seems to be a pretty poor hand with an engine—look at that smoke."

"If he is a Government Agent he might be making that smoke on purpose," hinted Franklin. "By making his presence obvious he can banish our suspicions."

"Maybe you're right," Murdock picked up his glasses. "Can't see much of him, but he don't look much like a fisherman."

"What's that?" One of the scamen pointed. "Looks to me as if his craft were on fire."

"Over oiled the engine," added the other. "And set himself afire. The guy's crazy."

Murdock again studied the boat.

"Yes, he's certainly on fire. Looks as if he's trying to beat out the flames. Gosh, that boat is blazing quickly. Ah, he's taken off his coat and boots as if he thinks his only chance is a swim to the shore." He glanced at Franklin.

"Two minutes ago there was just a small flicker of flame and now the boat is blazing from stem to stern. Pretty swift, isn't it?"

They saw Ted Riley jump overboard and swim from his boat, which was now a mass of flames. A sudden roar and the whole boat seemed to be lifted bodily in the air.

Murdock turned to the two seamen.

"That settles it," he shouted. "His craft blows up mysteriously and he swims to this island. Go down to the pier and go out to the rescue in my motor-boat. You handle the motor, Sparky," he instructed the biggest of the two men. "You, Bruno, take the sharpest boathook you can find. In attempting to rescue this fisherman you accidentally drown him, spear him, or run him down. I don't care what happens as long as he doesn't reach this island alive. Get going!"

The two seamen got to their feet and rushed towards the pier.

But the explosion, which had been far louder than Riley had intended, had attracted someone else. The deck chair had an occupant. Under the sunshade had sprawled a girl in a bathing suit. She had been reading, but had fallen asleep. The explosion awakened her and she saw, when the smoke lifted, a smouldering wreck that had once been a boat. Her keen eyes saw a figure thrashing the water—Riley was pretending he was in difficulties. He had blown up his craft to hide all traces of shavings and petrol, but had made a bad miscalculation about the explosive. Before he was rescued he must think out some reason. Little did he know of the sort of rescue Murdock planned for him.

The girl got to her feet and raced along the pier. Moored to a pile was a small craft with an outboard motor. She jumped in, swung the engine and was off like a flash.

Rescued

TED RILEY thrashed the water with his hands and bellowed hoarsely for help. He must make this realistic or Murdock might get suspicious. He had decided that he could explain the explosion by admitting that he had some dynamite on board and that he was taking same to another fisherman, who lived along the coast south of Diamond Island. They intended to use the dynamite for widening the entrance to a small cove.

It was somewhat of a surprise to find that two motor-boats were dashing to his rescue. The water was rather popply and he could not get more than occasional glimpses. The smaller craft had a good start, but the bigger vessel was coming up fast.

"Help! Help!" gurgled Riley, and prided himself that his plot to land on Diamond Island was succeeding.

Ah, the big motor-boat with its two seamen was passing the smaller vessel. Riley was surprised, because the backwash of the bigger craft might cause the small outboard to upset. What he expected nearly happened, and the small craft was swept nearly round in a circle.

Riley saw a big, round-faced fellow in the bows of the approaching craft, and he did not like the leering grin. The craft was going at a terrific speed, and Riley had a sudden sense of intense peril. He jerked back his head, and the point of the boathook missed his head by inches.

The motor-boat swept past and then began to circle.

Riley knew what to expect. That craft had not tried to rescue, but to destroy him. They had failed with a boathook the first time. Again the launch came straight at Riley, and the Agent knew this time his head might be smashed in by the nose of the vessel, after which the evil boatman would probably finish off the rescue with the boathook. In the nick of time Riley sank beneath the waves.

"Help! Help!" he shouted as soon

as he broke surface again. It was some measure of relief to see the small outboard coming in his direction.

The launch again came towards him. "Stay still, mister, we'll get you!" he heard the ugly seaman bellowing. "Yeah, but I don't wish to be got," muttered Ted, and did a very realistic act of a man going under for the second time.

This time the outboard kept clear of the wash and speeded forward as the launch tore over the spot where Riley had been. A head bobbed up.

"Help! Help!" gurgled Riley, and, seeing the outboard, splashed towards it.

For the first time he realised the occupant was a girl, but he had no time to wonder as he heard the roar of the launch. His arms gripped the pointed nose of the craft.

"Don't stop the engine!" he bellowed. "Get her away, or the backwash may upset your boat."

The girl pushed over the gas control, and the outboard shot away, and Riley was glad because, as he hung on for dear life, he caught a glimpse of the face of the man with the boathook—an expression of malignant, baffled fury.

"Slow up!" Ted shouted. "I'm coming aboard!"

The flat bottom of the boat of the light craft made it possible to pull himself across the closed-in bow, and the girl assisted by lying to the starboard side to counterbalance his weight.

"Thanks!" gasped Ted Riley as he lay flat on the thin woodwork and stared at the prettiest girl he had seen in all his life. "Do you mind hopping back to shore quick before those clumsy loons decide to run you down or do something equally unpleasant?"

"I think they must be drunk." The girl let the engine have an open throttle.

Riley hung on grinning, and was very glad when they were close to the pier. The launch was some way behind them, and Ted felt that they would not make

another attempt to kill him—at any rate, not for the moment.

"Sparky and Bruno are supposed to be excellent seamen," the girl remarked. "They were clumsy. They might have run you down."

"If you hadn't been around, lady, I might certainly have been in Davy Jones' locker," grinned Ted Riley, and his heart missed several beats when the girl smiled back at him.

Next moment the outboard was alongside the pier. Riley assisted her to jump ashore.

"Thanks for saving my life," Riley said. "I was warned that these were dangerous waters for fishing, and that I was a fool to go out without a boatman. Guess I've been lucky." He held out his hand. "You handled that boat of yours marvellously."

Her firm grip of his hand gave him a pleasant thrill.

A Warning

THE girl insisted that the young man come to the house at once. Her father would lend him some clothes whilst his own were drying. He learnt that her name was Ann Baker, and that she lived in the big house with her father. Easy to see that this charming girl was very tired of Diamond Island. Something must have stopped Ted from giving the girl a false name, and it turned out just as well he didn't. The girl was in such a hurry to get him into dry clothes that he did not have any need to talk about himself, except that fishing was a mug's game.

Inside the house a dapper, grey-haired little man was in the hall to meet them. "I heard an explosion, and—" He broke off. "It's Ted Riley."

"Hallo, Professor Baker!" Ted was equally surprised. "Well, you are the last person I expected to meet."

"So you know my father?" laughed the girl. "What an extraordinary coincidence."

"When I was at college I learnt a lot from your dad about chemistry,"



"Reach for the sky!" drawled a voice.

plained Ted as he shook the professor's hand. "And though I've forgotten a great deal, there's some of his wise teaching still in my head. What he taught me has been of great service, Miss Baker. Well, professor, you don't look a day older."

"A little thinner on top, my boy." The professor became serious. "Lun, my Japanese servant, told me that some boat blew up. Were you on that boat?"

"Not at the time of the explosion, fortunately for me." Ted grinned. "I chanced this way on a fishing expedition, over oiled my engine, caught fire, and had to jump for it as there was some explosive on board."

"Explosive?" Ted hesitated. Should he tell the professor of his mission? He knew he could be trusted, but was it wise? He decided to wait for a better opportunity.

"Business and pleasure." Ted spoke casually. "I was taking the explosive to a fisherman farther down the coast, who wants to blow away part of a natural cove so he can use the place for several of his boats. Your daughter, professor, heard the explosion and came to my rescue." He frowned. "Another launch put out with two seamen aboard, and their efforts at rescue work nearly resulted in my undoing."

"Sparky and Bruno, dad," Ann explained when her father glanced inquiringly at her. "I always did think they were the most hopeless couple of men I've ever met. They nearly upset me, and then did their best to run Mr. Riley down."

"I don't like those men very much," the professor admitted, and dismissed that subject with a snile. "I suppose you're wondering what I'm doing on this lonely island? Well, I'm on Government research work. Can't tell you more than that, except that the Government's Agent, Major Gray, brought me here to carry out important investigations. You understand, Ted, that this is in confidence."

"Sure, I understand." Ted nodded his head and wished he could ask a lot of questions. "So you brought your daughter to keep you company. I'm glad I blew up."

"Dad, Mr. Riley is wet." Ann spoke decidedly. "He must change his clothes at once, and we'll have them dried for him."

"I'll get Lun to—" the professor began, but stopped as the door behind them opened. "Ah, here is the major!"

Ted Riley liked neither Gray nor his friend Franklin, and it was apparent by the way they looked at him they were not enamoured with his presence on Diamond Island.

"You're the stranger Miss Baker picked up." The big man plaited himself in front of the Government Agent. "What in Hades caused that explosion?"

Ted explained as convincingly as possible, and Gray granted non-committally at the end. The Agent was uncertain whether his story had been believed or not. Gray would have asked a lot of questions if Ann Baker had not intervened and insisted that her father's old pupil be allowed to get out of his wet clothes.

A sleek, white-coated little figure conducted Riley to a room upstairs. Eyes that were curiously keen looked at the Agent through powerful glasses.

"Gentlemen have had luck lose boat," Lun said as he fetched out the largest trousers he could find. "Now no boat leave island plenty days. Stay here not too good."

"Why not?" Ted asked sharply.

"Very bad this island for health." The almond eyes looked fixedly into Riley's. "Take tip and leave island pretty damn quick. Master call me if

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he need me." He paused at the door. "Plenty danger."

Noiselessly the door closed behind the little Jap.

Poison Gas

THE warning convinced Ted more than ever that there was some mystery attached to Diamond Island. Why was the professor being used by Gray for important researches? Old Baker was one of the most trustworthy and honourable of men, and on no account could one associate anything shady with him. It seemed apparent that Danny Murdock had bluffed the professor into the belief that he was representing the Government, persuaded the old boy to come to this lonely island, and the reason was something that Ted intended to find out.

No time like the present with Ted, and without bothering to change, he pulled up a window and crawled out on to the tarred roof. He found a tree growing by the side of the house, and that enabled him to reach the ground quickly. A glance round and he felt certain no one had seen him. He noted a stout wooden pillar that supported the veranda round the upper rooms, and decided that he could easily swarm up it to the roof.

On the way up from the pier Riley had been noting all the buildings, and he had been particularly interested in a squat stone building near the house. A window was open, and there seemed to be all sorts of glass bottles and tubes linked together. Ted only got a brief glimpse, but they crossed a little run-away channel, and the banks were eaked with a vivid yellow slime. Obvious that chemical experiments had caused this discoloration.

Ted found the same window open and crawled inside. It was a laboratory on very up-to-date lines. This was where Professor Baker experimented for Major Gray and imagined he was working for the Government. What on? Suddenly Ted snapped his fingers as he remembered the professor's great interest in various gases. That yellow slime was something to do with sulphuretted hydrogen.

Not wishing his absence to be discovered, Ted could only make a quick examination of the laboratory. There were all kinds of retorts, test tubes and electrical devices, bottles full of queer liquids, and a number of huge gas cylinders. He took a chance and opened the valve of a cylinder, but there came no sound of escaping gas. He tried two more and they were empty. The retorts and test tubes were linked together and seemed to indicate that they had been in recent use—most of them were stained yellow. The experiments seemed to begin with a small oven in which the professor had baked ingredients that had formed a gas that passed along the various tubes, through liquids, and pieces of metals to finish in a large glass tank. This huge glass container seemed to be full of yellowy-white smoke.

"Poison gas," decided Ted, and determined that it was time to get back. He had learnt enough for the moment. Back through the window and a sprint across to the house, up the veranda support like a monkey, and then across the roof to the room. Quickly he dragged off his damp clothes and got into the much-too-small clothes of the professor.

Ted came down the stairs and was relieved to find that the bogus Major Gray and his companion, Franklin, had left.

"Major Gray was concerned about you, Ted," laughed the professor. "It is so important that everything that is done on this island is in the strictest secrecy that he feared you might be a spy, but I told the major that you had been a pupil of mine for quite a number of years. Gray told me that enemies of the United States had their agents everywhere, and that even Americans would sell State secrets if the price were high enough. I would like you to stay for a few days, Ted, as the major thinks—"

"Major Gray does not trust me," interrupted Ted Riley. "And he does not wish me to leave until he is satisfied that I'm on the level."

"You always were quick at understanding." The professor was relieved. "I can't guarantee good fishing, but there are some horses and you can ride. The island is about three miles long and a mile wide. I am busy all day, but Ann would be pleased to show you round the island."

"I don't mind how long I'm a prisoner here," Ted said, and his eyes smiled into those of Ann Baker.

"But haven't you got your job?" questioned the professor. "By the way, Ted, what are you doing, if it's not too impertinent?"

"I'm a Government Agent," quietly answered Ted.

"I must tell Gray that," excitedly cried old Baker. "He'll be delighted to have someone he can discuss matters of importance with perfect freedom. You'll be of great help to him. He'll be delighted to find you are a Government man. What sort of branch do you represent, Ted?"

"Ever heard of 'G' men?" "Oh, yes, most dangerous sort of life." The professor was impressed. "And are you down this part of the world on business or pleasure?"

"Business," snapped Ted. "And I'm after Major Gray!"

"After Major Gray?" cried the girl. "What do you mean?"

"Guess I've got to be perfectly frank." Ted glanced from father to daughter. "Gray is a dangerous crook by the name of Daniel Murdock, and I've been sent here by my Department to find out what Danny is doing on Diamond Island. Maybe if you tell me what all those experiments in poison gas mean I'll know what are Danny Murdock's plans."

The professor told Ted frankly that he had thought Major Gray's papers and testimonials to be genuine. It was after an announcement of a lecture of his discovery of a new poison gas that the major had come to the professor with an offer of help for the carrying out of extensive experiments. Papers purporting to come from Washington stated that the reason for this interest in the professor's experiments was because the Government did not wish a poison gas to fall into enemy hands. They knew his reputation as a scientist, and they wished him to perfect his poison gas. With such a gas they could dictate peace to the whole of the world.

"You have a trusting disposition, professor." Ted's smile was grim when the scientist had finished. "I know Murdock has a glib tongue, but America dictating peace to the world I think should have made you think. I don't blame you. Now, what we've got to do is scheme out what to do next. From your account, this gas is very deadly."

"My experiments are complete." The professor spoke gloomily. "I have promised to conduct experiments at the south side of the island soon after dawn.

My gas will destroy everything living, whether it be human, plant or animal."

"I think it's horrible that a father so nice as you should want to mess about with deadly gasses," argued Ann. She turned to the young man. "Ted, what does Murdock plan to do?"

"Sell it to the highest bidder, use it as a means to make himself very rich, or to stir up some revolt against civilisation. Who can say what Murdock is planning? But we know he is a fanatical rogue, and if he finds out the secret of this gas he could shatter the peace of the world." Riley shuddered. "Professor, you had better conduct your experiments at dawn, but do not let Murdock know you do not trust him."

Little did they know that the Japanese servant, Lun, had his ears close to the door of the room.

A Murderous Attack

JUST before dawn Ted crept from the house by means of the roof and found his way to the south side of the island. He took up a position among some rocks that overlooked the beach.

Two masked figures appeared, and by the height it was easy to tell which was Murdock. The crook was carrying a huge cylinder, whilst the professor laboured under yards of piping. The end of the piping was placed against a bank of grasses and ferns and then linked up with the cylinder.

Murdock signalled with his hand that the experiment should begin. The two men adjusted their masks and the professor allowed the gas to escape.

A yellowish smoke began to creep over the bank, and then the gas must have been turned off, for the two men walked forward to investigate. Ted shaded his eyes so that he could see better. It looked as if the bank had been withered up by the gas and was now no more than a blackened waste. The two masked figures went back to the cylinder and once more the gas was released.

A great cloud of yellow white smoke

quickly appeared and seemed to expand. Ted got a shock when he saw a number of seagulls crash into the sea. A flock of wild duck flew over the island, and Ted saw them flutter wildly when above the cloud of poison gas. He shut his eyes as the birds came hurtling down as if they had been shot.

Ted decided that he had seen enough. Moreover, the gas cloud seemed to be drifting in his direction, and he did not wish to suffer the fate of those birds. He decided to make his way down to the beach, as it provided a certain amount of cover. He was walking noiselessly on the firm sand when a cascade of small stones came down the cliff face. He waited with his fists clenched.

A figure jumped down to the beach, and Ted did not wait to ask questions, but sprang forward. His arms gripped the man by the shoulder and flung him to the sand. A surprise for Ted to find that he had captured the Jap servant, Lun.

"What the devil are you doing here?"

"You let me go queek." The Jap's eyes flickered fearfully. "I tell you plenty danger. If we stay here both die. The gas—" He pointed a shaking hand. "Look!"

Ted glimpsed over his shoulder a white cloud. The wind had unexpectedly freshened and they were in the path of the gas. Already wisps of the gas were coming along the sands like ghostly menacing spectres.

Lun wriggled to his feet and sped down the beach like someone in dread terror. Ted got a faint strangling smell of the gas, and then he took to his heels and ran for dear life. A glance back showed that he was getting away from the cloud of deadly fumes.

Riley got back to the house, but he was seen by Bruno, who reported the matter to Franklin.

Ted was surprised to learn from Ann that Lun was nowhere about

the house. They were discussing what could have happened to this perfect Jap servant when Murdock and Franklin appeared at the house. The big man was in a towering rage, and held up a twisted piece of pipe.

"Somebody has been down to the pier and tampered with my launch," he shouted. "Look at this busted petrol pipe. Your boat, Ann, has been sunk, and I want to know who did it."

"Well, why look at me?" demanded Ted.

"Who else could have done it?" shouted Murdock. "I'm not satisfied with your credentials, Riley. You were seen snooping round this island in the early hours. Why?"

"Didn't feel like sleep, so had a walk round." Ted looked the crook straight in the eye. "And I thought someone had set the island on fire by all the smoke I saw down the south end."

"Well, we don't intend you shall see any more or damage our craft," sneered the big man.

"Professor Baker knows me and he's told you so," cried Ted. "I didn't damage your boat—why should I?"

"To prevent us leaving Diamond Island. I'd like to ask a few questions of the professor." His tone lost its harshness. "If he satisfies me I may change my mind about you, but at the moment"—he held up the pipe—"I have my doubts about you. You'll find the professor in the stores near the pier. I'll join you there in a few minutes, Riley. Franklin, point him out the way."

Ted had no option but to obey. Franklin pointed to one of the sheds and then said he must get back to Major Gray.

The Government Agent was thoughtful as he walked towards the shed. One moment Murdock had been like a raging bear, and then had changed his tone. He had also intercepted a queer glance exchanged between Franklin and Murdock. He looked round as if he expected to get a bullet in the back. He quickened his footsteps towards the shed. Funny the professor should not come to the house after the gas experiments. All very peculiar. Then there was the matter of the boats. Riley changed his direction and went to the pier—one look told him that for once Murdock had not lied.

On reaching the shed Ted paused to give the place a good survey, and decided it was a deserted, broken-down building—a curious place for a discussion on his credentials. Why not Murdock's own office above the laboratory? He walked up some steps to a wooden door and saw it was not latched. Suddenly he shot out a foot and kicked it open. The result was a howl of pain. Riley jumped through the opening

"What the devil are you doing here?" demanded Ted.



and his eyes took in the scene. On the floor lay Sparky, and in his arms was a looped rope, whilst Bruno, the other seaman, was standing near the door with a great block of wood in his hands. Bruno seemed paralysed by the fall of his companion, but now he made a wild swing at Riley, who dodged the blow. Now Ted understood the change of tone of Danny Murdock—this was the second attempt on his life.

Ted Riley was incensed by the treachery and waded into the two burly seamen like a whirlwind. Bruno had his club wrenched from his hands and got a punch between the eyes that made him yell with pain and fright. Sparky tried to get his looped rope over Ted's head and got two pile-driving blows in the ribs that doubled him up. Ted flung the rope in the gasping ruffian's face.

"You two mugs had enough?" shouted Riley. "If you want any more, just say the word and I'll flay you both."

Something in Bruno's eyes made Ted jump round. Coming stealthily up the steps was Franklin, and the man carried a gun. Ted slithered like a shadow to the door, and he glanced slowly at the two ruffians and made his expression convey that if they opened their mouths he would kill them both.

"Sparky! Bruno!" cried Franklin. "Where are you two fools? Have you got Riley?"

"No!" yelled Ted, and out and up went his boot. It connected hard to Franklin's wrist as the shifty-eyed secretary rashly entered the store.

The fight on the veranda was short and sweet. Bang! Crash! Wallop! Ted did not spare his punches, and the short fight ended with him forcing Franklin over a rail and dropping the terror-stricken crook on to hard ground, which was a drop of ten yards and must have hurt.

What should he do next? Where

was the professor? Ted decided to try the laboratory. Now that the gas had been proved successful, Murdock would want to quit the island with the formula of the gas. Danny Murdock would not hesitate to murder Ann and her father to keep their mouths shut.

Quietly Ted stole to the laboratory and reached the door without being seen. The professor, with his arm round Ann, was facing Murdock, who was laughing triumphantly and exultantly. Ted clenched his fists.

The Fight in the Laboratory

"If you value your life, forget you ever saw Diamond Island," the big man shouted. "You put a lot of easy money my way, professor, and I ain't got the heart to send you byes, but if you spill one word I'll sure get you. I've dealt with that cursed Government spy, and at dusk my launch will be ready. I'm destroying all this before I leave, and when we reach the mainland we say farewell, and don't forget my warning, professor."

"What are you going to do, you scoundrel?"

"An Eastern Power needs this gas, and they'll get it at a price," chuckled Murdock. "Maybe after that there'll be a beautiful war, and you can read all about it. All thanks to you, professor."

"And I thought I was working to make war an impossibility," bemoaned Professor Baker.

"I've got the formula, and I guess it's mighty swell of me to let you two live." He gave a fiendish laugh. "I'd like to see your faces when that war starts."

"It will never start!" came a voice, and Ted recognised it as that of Lun. There was a gallery round the laboratory, and the Japanese was lying on the boards, with a gun pointing at Murdock through the rails.

For a split second Murdock stared at the little Jap and then his hand moved like lightning to his hip. The two guns

roared at the same instant, and Ted heard a bullet ricochet off the floor mighty close to his head. Murdock was famed as a gunman, and his bullet had sped true to its mark.

A coughing moan and a gun clanged to the laboratory floor. The Jap staggered to his feet and Murdock fired again and again. The emissary of a country that desired peace swayed against the rail of the balcony. A rendering snap and the lifeless body of Lun crashed to the floor.

"So perish all those who stand in my path," shouted Murdock. "Danny Murdock strikes ruthlessly at all who dare—"

Murdock did not finish, because Ted Riley had come across the laboratory with the speed of a panther. His steel-like fingers wrenched the gun away from the killer.

"Fight with your hands, you dirty murderer!" taunted Riley. "You've tried twice through your hirelings to get me and failed, now see what you can do yourself. And know this, Danny Murdock, that if you fail to get me you go to the chair for your many crimes."

For a long moment the two took measure of each other and Murdock laughed scornfully. "I can smash you with one hand."

Riley's answer was an unexpected leap forward and a swinging left that landed on the heavy chin. Murdock went down, and when he got to his feet his eyes were blazing with mad rage. He rushed at Ted swinging his muscular arms, but the Government man jumped away.

It was science against brute force. Ann clung to her father and prayed for Ted's victory in a fight that she did not see how he could possibly win.

Ted Riley landed many powerful punches to the face and body, but they seemed to have little effect on Murdock. Ann gave a gasping cry when Murdock's arms wrapped themselves round the younger man, but Ted knew a trick of Ju-jitsu to break the hold. It was a ritual with Ted to practice half an hour each day with the medicine ball, and many bouts he had had with boxers and all-in wrestlers, and his training enabled him to make such a magnificent fight against a man easily two stone heavier. Once he fell, and as Murdock jumped forward up went Ted's feet to the bigger man's body, and Ann gave a cry of excited joy as the crook was sent sprawling over the other's head. Blood was trickling down Murdock's face as he got to his feet.

The crook swung up a chair, but the blow was broken by an arm parry. A vicious short-arm left jab thudded to Murdock's ribs and the chair dropped from his hands. The big man backed away badly winded, but he knew what this fight meant, and soon came back to the attack.

Ann was rejoicing that her hero was winning when she gave a gasp of dismay. There in the door was the figure of Franklin. The man looked as if he had been in the wars.

Murdock rushed and Ted side-stepped to catch the man with a vicious right-handed slap to the jaw.

Franklin saw his chief sent sprawling and decided that it was up to him to help.

"Ted, look out!" warned Ann.

Ted swung round to face the new danger and rushed at Franklin, whom he floored with an uppercut. Franklin went down, but Murdock was on his feet. Ted was not quite quick enough and staggered back before a punch in the chest. He crashed backwards and collided with a table covered with bottles and test-tubes. Everything was swept

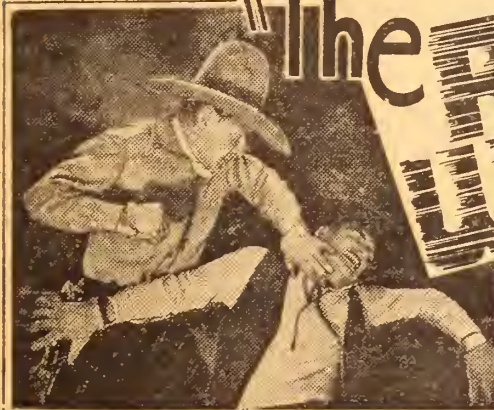
(Continued on page 25)



"The gas! The gas!" came the warning cry of the professor.

Over the prairies swept a torrent of pioneering humanity, bent on seeking wealth in virgin territory. But the promise of riches beckoned rogues as well as honest men, and the settlers' trails were blazed with feud and death. A smashing serial of the lawless West, starring Buck Jones and Muriel Evans

"The ROARING WEST"



EPISODE 13.—

"Flaming Torrents"

Read This First

Montana Larkin, an ex-deputy, is planning to join in a land rush with Jinglebob Morgan, his friend, whose brother has provided them with the map of a claim which contains rich mineral deposits.

Montana and Jinglebob make the acquaintance of a rancher named Parker, and are introduced to his daughter Mary, and his niece, Ann Hardy. From Parker they learn the details of the projected land rush, and agree to ride in company with the cattleman and his party.

Parker's foreman, Gillespie, is a crook, however. Discovering the purpose of Montana and Jinglebob, he beats them to their claim with some of his hirelings, and records it in his name.

Later, Jinglebob's brother Clem arrives on the scene, and reveals the fact that the land secured by Gillespie is worthless, owing to a flaw in the map which Jinglebob had possessed.

Gillespie attempts to force information from Clem, but postpones his efforts when he is hired by a man named Marco Brett to loot a wagon-train, which is owned by Ann Hardy's father.

The attack fails, and subsequent efforts on Gillespie's part to learn the whereabouts of Clem Morgan's claim are alike unsuccessful.

On the night that Clem files his claim in town, Gil and his men confront Montana and some of the latter's friends in Brett's saloon. There are high words, in the midst of which Montana is shot down from behind.

Now Read On

The Road Back

FOLLOWING the smash of the gunshot and the collapse of Montana there was a blank silence in Marco Brett's saloon, but it was a silence of only a moment's duration, for suddenly it was broken by an outcry at the entrance of the bar-room.

Jinglebob and Clem Morgan were responsible for that outcry. Returning from the Land Office, where the elder brother had filed his claim, they had reached the swing-doors of the saloon in the very instant that the blast of the unseen assassin's revolver had put an end to the grim altercation between their friend and Gil Gillespie.

The shouts raised by Clem and Jinglebob caused Gillespie and his rogues to wheel round, but almost simultaneously the younger of the two brothers plucked his "iron" from its holster and pumped lead at the bar-room lights, shattering them in swift succession.

The roar of Jinglebob's six-shooter and the fall of utter darkness created the wildest disorder and chaos. Already keyed up to a state of high alarm by the shot that had dropped Montana, the regular patrons of Brett's saloon were thrown into a mad panic by this fresh outburst of gunplay, and scattered in every direction, some rushing for the exit, some diving behind tables and counter, all inspired by a common desire to give the Gillespie gang and the Parker ranch-hands as wide a berth as possible.

It was not precisely what Jinglebob had bargained for. It had seemed to him that Gil and his men held the trump cards, with Montana's huddled body at their feet and their forty-fives covering the ex-deputy's partisans, and

he had fustilled the lights in the hope of giving the Dry Creek cowboys a chance to draw their Colts and avenge the shooting of their leader.

At the same time he had planned to take a hand in the fray himself, along with Clem.

But, far from plunging into any desperate duel, the Morgan brothers found themselves overborne all at once by a mob exodus of terrified citizens, and were bullocked out into the street by that surge of fleeing humanity—to go down beneath trampling, blundering, stumbling feet.

Meanwhile, tumult was raging in the saloon. The Dry Creek boys had taken advantage of the darkness sure enough, and the flashes of their guns were rending the gloom. But the duel was one-sided, for Gillespie and his band were sheering off, swarming in a body towards the private room that was Marco Brett's office.

Into that room they dashed, the first to cross the threshold being Gillespie, who promptly collided with two men who were already in occupation.

The two men in question were Marco Brett and Tex Saunders, and although the office was in darkness, Gil recognized them.

"Which of you fired the shot that knocked over Larkin?" he jerked out. "It was Tex, Gil," Brett jerked. "I was asleep on the couch, and woke up to see him standin' at the door with a smokin' gun in his fist."

"Fool!" Gillespie snarled, addressing Saunders. "I wanted information—not a killin'! You went an' spoiled everything, blast yuh!"

He swallowed his wrath, and then turned to the rest of his hirelings,

"We've gotta get out of here," he grated. "Come on, the side door."

"An' I'm makin' myself scarce, too," Brett put in grimly. "Sheriff Denver an' some of his deputies are in town, and I need an alibi—in case they try to pin the shootin' of Larkin on me."

The crooks ducked out into an alley alongside the building, and a few seconds later Gil and his followers were mounting their horses while Brett was hastening along the street on foot, the saloon-owner keeping to the shadows and heading for the house of a friend who could be trusted to bear him out in any story he might tell.

The Gillespie gang were soon clattering from the town, but once on the open range their leader called a halt and laid a hand on the saddle of Jake Conroy, whom he counted as one of his best men.

"Listen, feller," he said, "you go back an' watch points. See if you can find out what the Morgans aim to do. When you want to get in touch with me you can locate me in the hide-out at Hell's Gate."

Jake nodded and, detaching himself from the party, he watched his comrades gallop off through the night. Then he cantered into the main street of Sicomoro again, where he hitched his brone to the veranda-rail of a store some little distance from Brett's saloon, and lowered himself to the ground.

The sounds of gunplay no longer echoed through the town, though a good deal of shouting still issued from the bar-room, where the disturbance had taken place. As for the street itself, it was deserted except for the figures of Jinglebob and Clem, who were picking themselves up in a sorry fashion and brushing dust and grime from their clothes.

Jake saw the two brothers totter into the saloon, and then he noticed that people were beginning to filter from the dwellings on each side of the thoroughfare—men and women, who gathered in ever-increasing numbers outside Brett's premises.

With his hat slouched low over his eyes Conroy joined that inquisitive and excited crowd and, by dint of much shoving and elbowing, he forced his way to the porch of the saloon. He was actually peering through the swing-doors when Sheriff Denver arrived on the scene with three or four of his subordinates.

The saloon was still in darkness, but, having gained admittance to it, Denver speedily took control of the situation, and before long a naphtha lamp had been fetched.

By the light of that lamp Jake Conroy and those around him gained an impression of the bar-room, and it was a sight typical of a brawl's aftermath—with chairs and tables overturned and scared non-combatants emerging warily from cover.

Conroy's attention, however, was chiefly focused on a group of men near the counter. It was a group that included Steve Randall and the Dry Creek ranch-hands, Clem and Jinglebob Morgan, Sheriff Denver and his deputies—and they were gathered around the prone form of Montana Larkin, whom they were examining anxiously.

There was blood on Montana's scalp, but presently he opened his eyes and looked about him dazedly, and over at the swing-doors Jake Conroy heard Clem Morgan speak in a relieved tone.

"He'll be all right," the old prospector said. "Just creased, that's all."

"How'd it happen?" Sheriff Denver wanted to know.

It was Steve Randall who answered him. "There was an argument with Gil
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Gillespie and some of his pals, sheriff, and suddenly there was a shot. It seemed to me as if it came from Brett's office over there—"

The words were scarcely uttered when Jake Conroy felt someone pushing past him, and as he turned his head he saw Mareo Brett himself. A moment later the saloon owner was striding into the bar-room, with a well-feigned expression of concern on his heavy features.

"What happened?" he demanded, accosting the group of men who stood near the counter. "What's this about a fight on my premises?"

Montana had been helped to his feet now, and he eyed Brett shrewdly.

"You sound as if the whole thing was news to you," he said, steadying himself.

"Somebody took a shot at me from that private room o' yours while I was havin' a little discussion with your friend Gillespie. And a short time ago one o' your barmen happened to mention you were asleep in there."

"Then he was mistaken," Brett announced with sharp emphasis. "I was down the street at Jim Bellamy's place. Bellamy can tell you that himself. Say, what are you drivin' at, anyway, Larkin?"

"Never mind," Montana rejoined. "But maybe it's lucky for you that you've got an alibi."

He turned to Denver, and addressed him inquiringly.

"You seem to be spendin' a lot of time in Sicomoro lately, sheriff," he commented. "Have you got jurisdiction over this new territory now?"

"Not yet," Denver replied, with an ominous glance at Brett. "But I'll be empowered to take in this section for the administration of law and order as soon as the Government gets around to it. And when I do, there's gonna be a heap of cleanin' up."

"Well, sheriff," Montana stated, "if you need any help when the time comes, I reckon you can depend on the Dry Creek outfit. We've got an interest in this new strip ourselves—"

He paused, and then diverted his attention to Clem and Jinglebob.

"Which reminds me," he added. "I stalled off Gillespie so that he and his gang wouldn't find out what you were up to. If they'd known, they'd have stopped at nothing to try and prevent you filing that claim. Did you get it recorded all right?"

"Sure did," Clem answered heartily. "We've got a legal right to that piece o' land now, Montana, and nobody can take it from us."

"Then I think it would be a good idea if the two of you started working it as soon as possible," the young foreman declared.

Clem frowned at him.

"The two of us!" he reiterated. "Didn't I tell you that there's four of us in this deal—you an' Parker as well as Jingle an' me? Come on, let's all go back to the ranch and break the good news that we're gettin' busy on that claim to-morrow."

There was a grunt of assent from Jinglebob, but long before the Morgans and the Dry Creek boys eventually left the town of Sicomoro a horseman might have been seen spurring northward in the direction of Hell's Gate.

That horseman was Jake Conroy, and an hour after quitting the porch of Brett's saloon he was entering a narrow canyon whose walls were riddled with caves; and at the entrance of one of these caves he was challenged and recognised by Limpy Dawson.

Passing into the cavern, Jake swung himself from his pony, left the animal with the rest of the gang's mounts, and

strode forward until he rounded a bend in the rocky den; and here, in spite of the gloom, the handiwork of man was noticeable in the tunnel's aspect, for a timber wall had been built across it.

In this wall stood a door through which chinks of light were shining, and, thrusting his way over the threshold, Jake stepped into a crude room occupied by Gillespie and his minions.

Gil looked round quickly as Jake put in an appearance.

"Well," he asked, "what did you find out?"

"Plenty," Conroy said. "First of all, Montana Larkin only got creased."

"Dadblast it!" Ted Sanders cut in. "I thought I'd missed him. One o' Brett's barmen happened to move into the line o' fire at the last minute, an' that put me off. So I only clipped him—"

"Pipe down," Gillespie snapped at him. "You picked the wrong time to take a shot at Larkin, anyhow. But go on, Jake, what else did you learn?"

"Clem Morgan has legally filed his claim," Conroy announced darkly, and at that the gang leader jerked himself to his feet.

He stared at his informant for a spell, and then began to pace the rock floor of the hide-out in silence, a minute or two clapsing before he finally turned on his assembled hirelings.

"A fine bunch of dead-heads you've turned out to be," he breathed. "If it hadn't been for the way you saps have bungled every move I ever planned, we'd have had that gold location in our hands long ago."

There was a chorus of protests, but Gillespie interrupted the remonstrances of his gangsters with a savage gesture.

"All right, all right, never mind the alibis," he rasped. "But from now on there's gonna be no more slip-ups. Clem Morgan has got his land staked, filed, and everything, has he? Okay, we can still jump his claim and work it ourselves."

Jake plucked at his sleeve.

"I heard Clem say that they'd leave for the claim to-morrow, Gil," he mentioned. "Right now they're on their way back to the Parker outfit."

"Right," Gillespie declared. "We'll be in sight of Dry Creek to-morrow at sunrise, and we'll trail that bunch until we find out where the gold location is."

Towards the Claim

IT was morning at the Dry Creek Ranch, and preparations were afoot for departure, a couple of supply wagons having been loaded with stores and equipment.

Beside one of these wagons stood Montana and Parker, and both of them were ready for the long journey to Pine Ridge. Meanwhile the other vehicle was being occupied by Clem, Jinglebob, and two of the ranch hands, Happy and Shorty.

"Montana," Jim Parker was saying. "I've just been talking to Ann and Mary, and they're eager to come along. Yep—Ann, too. She reckons her father is well enough now to do without her."

"Okay, Mr. Parker," the younger man replied. "I'd like to have them with us. How about the ranch? You're leavin' the rest of the boys in charge, I suppose?"

"Yes, with Steve Randall as head man," Parker stated. "I know he was once in tow with Gillespie, but he's proved his loyalty to me, Montana, and I've taken him back into the outfit—permanent. As for Gillespie—well, the Law will deal with him when it gets authority in the section that's been opened up."

Little did Jim Parker know it, but at that moment Gillespie and his crew were

a considerable distance from the new territory, being much nearer home—skulking amidst the brush, in fact, on the south side of the Dry Creek outfit.

From the edge of those thickets Gil and his men were keeping watch on the movements of their rivals, and presently they saw Ann and Mary emerge from the house, the former climbing into the wagon that contained Happy, Shorty and the Morgans, the other girl joining her father and Montana.

A minute or two later the two vehicles were rumbling away from the ranch, and, after following them with his eyes until they had disappeared from view, Gillespie turned to his accomplices.

"Good," he muttered. "Parker's left most of his cowpokes at home. Now, listen—I want you, Hank—and you, Limpy—to ride on ahead of us and keep our quarry spotted. Skirt around until you're outa sight of the ranch, and then pick up the trail of them wagons. But be sure you don't let Parker an' his friends discover that they're bein' followed."

"We get yuh, boss," said Limpy. "Then pull out!" Gil ordered. "We'll be comin' up slowly behind you. If there's anything to report that we can't see for ourselves, turn back an' let us know."

"We will," Hank Rodgers rejoined. "It's a good idea, Gil, sendin' us ahead. Two men stand a better chance of keepin' under cover than a whole gang. But don't lie too far back, or you may lose track of us yourselves."

Gillespie informed him gruffly that he knew what he was doing, and ere long Hank and Limpy were cantering off through the thickets, the pair of them effecting a wide detour in order to avoid any chance of being seen by those of Parker's employees who had been left at the ranch.

Some time afterwards they were diligently shadowing the two wagons occupied by Jim Parker and his companions, being careful to remain at a respectful distance and taking every precaution to ensure that their presence on the trail

was unsuspected. And in the meanwhile, much farther to the rear, with attention always riveted on Hank and Limpy, but seldom setting eyes on the party from the Dry Creek outfit, Gil and the main body of the outlaws were moving at a slow pace over the range.

The toilsome journey continued for hour after hour, and so well did Hank and Limpy perform their task that never once were they in danger of detection by those in front of them. Indeed, if the wagons occupants had at any moment happened to turn and look back they would have discerned no sign of the trackers, with such skill and cunning were they dogged.

At noon they were on the edge of the dense woods that masked the country around Pine Ridge, and it was here that Clem Morgan called a halt.

Both wagons were brought to a standstill, and the trio in the first vehicle glanced round inquiringly.

"What is it, old-timer?" Montana asked of Clem.

"There's a disused cabin up the left fork," the prospector announced. "Supposin' you and Parker and Miss Mary take possession of it—and fix it up, comfortable-like, as quarters for the lot of us. While you're doin' that, the rest of us will travel a-ways along the right fork."

"What for?" Parker wanted to know.

"Well, there's a tunnel in this strip that I want to find," Clem explained. "I bored it myself when I was prospectin' here years ago—before I was driven out by the Injuns that lived on the territory then."

"Right you are, Clem," said Parker. "But supposin' Happy comes along with us and helps to clean up this cabin you mentioned."

Happy transferred to the first wagon and the journey was resumed, both vehicles being kept on the same course until they reached a point where the road diverged into two separate branches. Here Montana, Happy and the Parkers exchanged a few words of farewell with the Morgans, Ann and Shorty.

"Are you sure you wouldn't like to team up with us?" Mary sang out to her cousin.

"No, thanks," Ann replied with a smile. "I'd rather see this tunnel that Clem's spoken about. It sounds intriguing. Besides, I hate housework."

Mary laughed, and then signed to her father to go ahead, and the rancher cracked a whip above the horses that were drawing the first wagon. They at once plodded forward on to the left-hand fork, and at the same time the vehicle containing Ann and her companions swung off down the right-hand trail.

Back in a covert of tall thickets, not far from the spot where the roads diverged, Hank Rodgers and Limpy Dawson exchanged meaning glances.

"Contact with Gil and the boys, Limpy," said Hank. "Tell 'em what's happened. I'll take the right fork and keep track of Clem Morgan's bunch."

The gangsters parted, Limpy riding to the rear and encountering Gil and the rest of the outlaws shortly afterwards.

"What's up?" Gillespie demanded.

"They've separated," his hireling reported. "Montana, Happy an' the Parkers have turned along the left fork. The others have branched off to the right."

"Why?" Gillespie muttered.

"They was hollerin' to one another afore they split up," Limpy declared.

"We couldn't hear everything, but I believe Clem's party is headed for the gold location, and Montana's for a cabin where they aim to fix up quarters. Hank has taken the right fork, stickin' close to the Morgans."

Gillespie turned to his men and spoke tersely.

"Jeff, you and Tex Sanders and Jake Conroy go with Limpy," he ordered. "Corral Montana and his party in that cabin. Tie 'em up for the time being so they can't interfere with our plans. Then



Montana was seized and disarmed, and his wrists were bound behind his back with a strip of rawhide cut from a lariat.

ride back and wait at the fork. The rest of us will join up with Hank."

Tex, Jeff and Conroy moved alongside Limpy Dawson, but before the quartet took themselves off, Gillespie added a caution.

"I don't want no gunplay," he said. "There's a good many lumberjacks scattered through the woods, and shoot-in' might bring 'em down on you. And don't let any harm come to Mary Parker. Remember that."

Limpy and his comrades nodded, and then they kicked their heels into the flanks of their ponies, departing at a brisk pace and leaving the remainder of the gang to follow in a more leisurely style. A few minutes later the four who had been instructed to deal with Montana's party were swerving on to the left fork, and before long Gil and the other members of the band might have been seen trooping along the right-hand trail—the one taken by Shorty, Ann and the Morgans—and by their shadower, Hank.

On the left fork, Limpy Dawson and his associates were slackening speed by then, and were going ahead at a mere canter, keeping a close look-out for any sign of a habitation; and they had been riding for something like twenty minutes when they suddenly espied a small clearing in front of them.

A cabin stood in that clearing. It was in a fairly good state of repair, and from the point of view of any settler, it was conveniently close to water, for it was within a hundred yards of a broad, swiftly flowing river.

Outside that cabin was the wagon which had been driven by Jim Parker, and the rancher was alighting from the vehicle with his daughter, Montana Larkin and Happy.

Limpy and his accomplices drew rein and dismounted, concealing their horses amidst the tall undergrowth. Then they focused their eyes on the cabin again, and watched the three men and the girl push their way across the threshold of it.

Happy reappeared after a brief interval with a bucket in his grasp and started for the river, having been dispatched, apparently, for water. The gangsters peered at his receding figure for a little while, and then Limpy volunteered a comment.

"Right, now we've only got two men and a girl to handle," he breathed. "Let's sneak up on that shack and grab 'em. We can attend to Happy when he comes back."

The proposal found favour with the other three rogues, and they began to steal through the underbrush until they were close to the cabin. Then, with no further cover available, they redoubled their caution and crawled to the very porch of the dwelling on hands and knees.

Voices reached their ears from within, for the front door was wide open. Beyond the threshold they caught glimpse of Jim Parker tidying one of the rooms in the cabin—and another glimpse of Montana and Mary in a back kitchen.

The foreman and the rancher's daughter had seemingly decided to prepare a meal, for the girl was kindling a fire, and, with an apron fastened comically around his waist, her stalwart admirer was slapping rashers of bacon into a pan.

"Now ain't that a sweet, domestic picture!" Tex Sanders whispered mockingly.

Limpy silenced him with a gesture, and then, drawing his gun, he made for the cabin doorway.

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The other three followed him, and the crooks were inside the log hut before any of its occupants realised what was happening. Next second Jim Parker found himself covered by Limpy Dawson's six-shooter, and, at the same time, Jeff, Sanders and Conroy charged through to the kitchen with their irons trained on Mary and Montana.

"Forget you're packin' a forty-five, Larkin," Sanders bit out, "or we'll plug yuh like a dog! All right, tie him up, fellers!"

It was useless to resist. Montana was seized and disarmed, and his wrists were bound behind his back with a strip of rawhide cut from a lariat. Then some rope was discovered in a cupboard, and, to make certain of him, Jeff thrust him into a chair and lashed him firmly to it, so that he could move neither hand nor foot.

Parker was now marched into the kitchen by Limpy, and, having been relieved of his gun, the rancher was disposed of in the same manner as Montana. This done, Sanders spoke again.

"What do we do with the girl?" he growled, nodding towards Mary, who was in the grip of Conroy.

"There's a key in the door o' that cupboard," said Jeff. "Lock her in there."

Struggling, protesting furiously, the cattleman's daughter was bundled into the narrow confines of the pantry and the door was fastened upon her, after which the crooks returned to the porch. And it was as they emerged from the cabin that they beheld Happy away at the river's edge, stooping inquisitively over a canoe that was lying high and dry on the bank.

"Come on," Dawson commanded, "we'll go down an' get that hombre!"

The words were hardly uttered when Happy chanced to turn round, and as he saw the four gangsters striding from the shadow of the cabin his jaw fell and his mouth opened wide. Thus for a space he stood dumbfounded, paralysed with fright. Then, living up to his chicken-hearted if likeable disposition, he gave vent to a yell of alarm and took to his heels.

Sanders ripped out a curse and lifted his six-gun, only to have his arm struck down again by Limpy.

"No shootin', you fool!" the latter harked. "Remember what Gil said. Come on, after that guy!"

They gave chase, but Happy had a good start and he ran with the speed of a man in terror of his life, plunging into the heart of trees and undergrowth and disappearing like a jack rabbit going to cover. Nor did Gillespie's hirelings succeed in picking up his trail, though they scoured the locality for nearly half an hour before admitting defeat.

"A clean getaway," Dawson muttered then. "What are we gonna do about it?"

"What can we do?" Conroy retorted. "We've gotta get back to the fork and wait for Gil. That's orders. Ah, don't worry about Happy. If I know him, he won't stop runnin' until he's clear o' the woods. He won't come back here, anyway."

Limpy Dawson looked somewhat dubious, yet there seemed nothing else to do but abandon the hunt and hope for the best, and soon the four outlaws were trudging back to the spot where they had left their horses.

Mounting the broncs, they set out in an easterly direction, bent on keeping their rendezvous with their leader and the rest of the gang.

Informo

RIDING through the tall timber by way of the trail they had chosen to follow, Gil Gillespie and his party had penetrated into the forest for a distance of two or three miles when they suddenly detected the figure of Hank Rodgers in front of them.

He was motionless in the saddle of his pony, and as they came abreast of him he indicated a side-track that was grooved by the ruts of a wagon's wheels.

"Thought I'd wait a spell an' see if you showed up," he said. "Clem Morgan an' his bunch turned off again—right here."

The Gillespie gang swung on to the side-track, and pushed along it for another mile before they drew rein in sight of a barren cliff, which was separated from them by a strip of rough, stony ground devoid of trees.

In the shadow of that cliff they saw the wagon that had been occupied by Ann, Shorty and the Morgans, who had now alighted and were peering into a tunnel that was half screened by shrubbery—a tunnel that was no creation of nature, like the caves at Hell's Gate, but a monument to human industry, for it was bolstered up by wooden beams.

"Clem Morgan's gold location," Gillespie whispered, his eyes glittering.

"This is all right, I'll guarantee—" And then he stopped, for at that instant two strangers hove into view. Mounted on horseback, they were—long, lean fellows who had spurred from a neck of the woods farther to the north—and on perceiving them Gil and his comrades drew well back into the shelter of the trees.

Watching, the crooks saw the strangers ride to within fifty or sixty yards of the Morgans and their friends. Then one of the newcomers gave a hail.

It was answered by Jinglebob, and Gil and his gang heard every word of the conversation that followed.

"Howdy, there," Jinglebob called. "What can we do for you?"

"You can't do nothing for us, pardner," the foremost of the two horsemen replied. "We're forest rangers, and I'd advise you to clear out of this section plenty pronto. There's a big fire broken out, and it's sweepin' along both sides of the river. It spread across the narrows a mile or two west of here, and it's liable to sweep this way."

Hidden among the trees, Gil and his men eyed one another askance. Forest fire! They were well aware of the rapidity with which a conflagration could travel when fanned by a high wind.

"Better pull our freight," Hank Rodgers muttered. "Get clear o' the timber afore we're trapped. We know where that gold is now, an' we can allus come back to it."

Gil and the rest of the outlaws were of the same mind, and lost no time in making themselves scarce. Indeed, they were well on their way when Clem Morgan raised his voice to sing out:

"Hey, we've got some friends in that old cabin up the left fork. Is there any chance of gettin' through to them?"

"I guess so," he was informed. "But don't you worry about that. We're headin' that way ourselves, and we'll warn your friends for you. You beat it for the east."

A moment later the rangers had wheeled, and, leaving Clem and his party to seek the safety of the open country beyond the woods, they themselves galloped off in the direction of the left fork.

They were destined never to reach their objective, for about ten minutes

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"THE MYSTERY OF DIAMOND ISLAND"

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to the floor with a mighty smash, and Ted somehow kept his balance and did not fall on the broken glass. Then the two crooks made a combined attack and Ted retreated. With a cry of fierce exultation Murdock charged forward to finish the agent—a foot shot out from nowhere and the crook went sprawling. Ted had tricked him again.

Franklin jumped on Ted's back, and the youngster staggered.

"Mind out!" yelled the professor, because he saw how close the two fighters were to the glass receptacle that contained enough poison gas to destroy a nation.

But Riley did not hear the warning. He resorted to a wrestler's trick and tossed the wretched Franklin over his head.

A yell of fear came from the professor as Franklin's body crashed down on the glass receptacle. The glass gave with a crack like a pistol-shot.

Franklin staggered away and collapsed on top of the upturned table. A cloud of white smoke shot out of the broken gas container. The battered Murdock was too exhausted and hurt to rise.

"The gas! The gas!" came the warning cry of the professor.

Ted Riley was staring down at the prostrate Franklin and did not realise the deadly peril that beset them. Then the hiss of the escaping gas made him give a cry of horror.

"Run! Run!" yelled the professor. "The house—it's our only chance."

Ted's chief consideration was for the girl and her father. He pushed them to the open door. Murdock and Franklin could fend for themselves.

Franklin stirred as Murdock got painfully to his feet.

"Danny! Danny!" screamed Franklin. "Get me out of here!"

But Murdock's only thought was his own safety, and he lured out of the door. The choking fumes of the gas followed after him. He tripped and fell, and as he dragged himself up some of the gas swirled round him.

A Call for Help

THE professor and Ted half-led, half-carried Ann back to the house.

They rushed to the door and Ted darted to a window. A great cloud of gas was pouring from the laboratory and seemed to be spreading all over the island.

"We've got to plug up all holes," shouted Ted. "Ann, close every window. Professor, help me drag these rugs close to the door."

Very soon the house was enveloped in a fog of poison gas, and they spluttered as it seeped through cracks. At last they were compelled to vacate the living-room and go up the stairs to the professor's bed-room. With blankets and sheets they stuffed up every crack and hole.

"We're caught like rats in a trap," cried Ted. "We'll stifle unless we can do something." He went to a window. "Professor, what's that wire? Is it an aerial?"

"Yes—yes!" The professor spoke painfully, for he had sniffed some of the gas. "I believe he used to send messages. The machine is in the next room."

In a small ante-room Ted found an up-to-date wireless adapted for reception and sending messages. This instrument was powerful enough to send out sound waves that any ship within fifty miles ought to pick up.

Ted had a fair knowledge of wireless, but this set was a type that was new to him, and whilst Ann and her father fought to keep out the gas he endeavoured to find out how to operate it. At last he found the switch that brought the set into action. In Morse he rapped out an S.O.S.

Government Agents have information on many matters and Riley knew that certain ships of the United States Navy patrolled these waters, and he knew their code signal. There came no answer, and he feared the attempt was abortive when suddenly there came a long buzz. Ted spoke into the microphone.

"S.O.S. Diamond Island calling any patrol ship of the United States Navy."

Ted switched off and turned on the loud-speaker; "U.S.S. Washington on coast patrol twenty miles due North of Diamond Island."

"Poison gas over Diamond Island," answered Riley. "The gas has escaped and three of us are imprisoned in the only house. Trying to keep out gas but can't hang out for long. Come to island with all speed. Landing party with gas masks required. Will try and hold out. Ted Riley, Government Agent S143, speaking."

"Changing course," the Washington replied. "Look out for landing party. Making sixteen knots."

Ted went back to their fight against the gas. The island was completely blotted out. The only satisfaction that they had was that Murdock and Franklin would not trouble the world any longer. But life is sweet, and with scarves fastened round their mouths and nostrils they plugged every minute hole. Amazing the way that gas found some tiny aperture.

Ann collapsed, and after water had brought her back to her senses they made her lie on a bed with a quilt round her head. Ted found himself reeling

about the room like a drunken man. It seemed hours since their call for help had been answered. The professor sank to the floor in a coma.

Ted shook the old man back to wakefulness.

"Keep going," he cried. "Help will be here any moment now."

A thin trickle of yellow white gas was seeping through a cracked window, and Ted rushed forward to plug the crack with rags and paper.

The gas had a stupifying effect and Ted longed to lie down and sleep—a sleep from which one would never awake. He found himself nodding, and then swayed to his feet to see that the professor was sagged forward in a chair.

A pail of cold water made the professor gasp and sit up. Ted went to look at Ann and did not like the pallor of her cheeks. He shook her and her eyes opened, she smiled at him and would have gone back to sleep if he had let her.

"You must keep awake," he shouted. "That patrol ship must be near the island. You must keep awake."

"I'm going to help you," Ann sat up.

"Walk about for a bit, but don't go near the windows," he advised, and staggered away to plug up another hole.

The room was becoming misty, but the gas was a little lighter than air and had drifted towards the rafters. They found one could breathe a little better by sitting on the floor.

"Tap! Tap! Tap!"

Ted Riley looked round. Where was the sound coming from? "Tap! Tap! Tap!" He glanced at the windows and at one of them there seemed to be a blurred shape. He swayed across the room and his heart gave a leap as he saw a masked face. A closer look revealed an officer of the United States Navy.

"They're here! They're here!" Ted wheezed out. "We're saved!"

Ted tried to pull himself together and think. If he opened the window the gas would pour into the room and they would perish. The ante-room from which they had sent the call for help—would that do? Ted got across the room to the door—the ante-room was full of choking fumes.

The only chance was for three gas masks to be thrown into the room. It must be done so that little of the gas got into the room because it would take a moment or two to fit the masks. Ted went to the window and tapped. The masked officer came closer. Ted touched the window and shook his head and then pointed across the room to the main door. The officer nodded, and Ted held up a hand to stay him.

Ted went across to the door and made a pretence of opening it, then shutting it quickly, and from the floor gathering up objects—he held up three fingers. He

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went back to the window and the mask nodded.

Innumerable minutes passed before Ted heard footsteps outside and then three sharp raps. He soaked a towel in water, went to the door, fixed the towel round his face and dragged the door open. He heard three objects land on the floor, and he jerked the door shut.

A considerable amount of the gas had come into the room, but not enough to do much harm. He picked up the masks and carried them to the professor and Ann. He fixed their masks and then coughed as a wisp of the gas caught him. Quickly he grabbed up the last mask and slipped it over his face.

Then Riley opened the door of their prison and outside were several of the masked landing party. Ted signalled that he was okay, but that the other two would have to be carried.

The rescue party conducted them through the wall of poison gas—and what joy when they heard the sound of breakers on the beach! Here the gas was much thinner, and Ted noticed that a breeze had sprung up.

Eight hundred yards out it was quite clear and the masks were removed. Ted briefly explained that a gas container had burst and they had been trapped.

"That should be all gone by the morning." The officer pointed to the island.

"The breeze is freshening."

"Better warn all shipping to keep clear of Diamond Island," advised Ted.

"Already done," answered the officer. "By the way, our landing party came upon two terror-stricken scamen swimming in the sea and shouting for help. The first boat put back with them. They told us it was certain death to land on the island, and that everyone must be dead."

"That would be Bruno and Sparky, a pair of cowardly rascals," Ted decided. "I'm glad you've got them, because they'll be able to do some talking if they want to go on living."

The officer lowered his voice. "We came upon the bodies of three men—one had been shot."

"A brave man who perished in the services of his country," Ted explained. "The other two deserved to die."

The professor and Ann felt very little ill-effects from the gas, and twenty-four hours later the Washington landed the three people she had rescued at San Francisco.

Ted was congratulated on his bravery and for ridding America of a public enemy. His chief pointed out that the inquiry would be private and that the professor's name would be kept out of it as much as possible. The professor had been aiding and abetting a criminal, but the old man's reputation was so good that the authorities would accept his story that he did believe that Major Gray was a genuine Government official.

"Just a matter of form," explained the chief. "I understand that the other person concerned in this matter is going to marry one of the most promising of the Government Agents, so there seems nothing more to be said on the matter." He passed over an envelope. "After that gas you need a holiday. There is enough in that envelope for a honeymoon trip, and when you return I can promise you a fat job at head office."

"Thank you very much, chief." Ted Riley shook the outstretched hand. "Guess I'll be on my way. I've got the prisoner waiting for me outside."

(By permission of Pathé Pictures, Ltd., starring Lloyd Hughes as Ted Riley, Grant Withers as Major Gray, and Marion Burns as Ann Baker.)
January 25th, 1936.

"THE ROARING WEST"

(Continued from page 24)

later they were breathing air that was tainted with smoke, and ere long they beheld the gleam of flames in front of them—flames that seemed to stretch from east to west as far as the eye could see, like an army of vivid, devilish spectres, surging through the forest, roaring through the underbrush, coiling themselves around the trunks of tall pines, blasting everything in their path.

The rangers pulled up, and one of them spoke grimly.

"Have to turn back, Phil," he said in laconic accents. "We could never hope to get through that lot. Come on. The folks in that cabin on the left fork have probably realised their danger by this time, anyway."

But he was wrong. Pinioned to a couple of chairs in the kitchen of the dwelling in question, Montana Larkin and Jim Parker had no inkling of their desperate peril—nor had Mary, a helpless captive loomed in the cupboard.

True, they had heard their wagon moving off a little while before as the horses had broken into a gallop, but they did not suspect that the animals had fled before an oncoming inferno that was destroying the forest.

It was likewise true that there was smoke in the prisoners' nostrils, but the bacon that Montana had intended to fry for a meal was burning in the cooking-pan, and it was this circumstance that was chiefly responsible for the thick atmosphere in the shack.

The cabin itself was like a hothouse, for the front door was closed and the windows were sealed, and through those windows it was impossible to see the ring of fire that was sweeping around the clearing, so thickly were the panes coated with dirt and grime.

"I wonder if Happy got away from those rats," Jim Parker mused all at once. "If so, there's a chance he might sneak back and cut us loose."

"I doubt it," Montana grunted. "We'd have seen something of him by now. But listen, Parker, I've got an idea we may not need any outside help. Supposin' I could edge close to you. Do you think you might be able to get your hands to these thongs around me?"

It was a suggestion worth trying, and Montana did his best to jerk his chair inch by inch across the floor, a difficult feat considering that he was securely roped to it, and more than once he was almost brought crashing to the boards. But at last he managed to force the chair into such a position that he was sitting back-to-back with Parker, and the older man then contrived to tackle the bonds that fastened the ex-deputy's wrists.

He had to work blindly, his fingers cramped by the cords around his own wrists. Yet he finally succeeded in not only untying Montana's hands, but also in slackening off the rope that held him to the chair, and as the coils of hemp fell from him loosely the big fellow pulled himself to his feet.

Within a few seconds of being set free, Montana had released his employer. Then he unlocked the cupboard door and caught Mary in his arms as she lurched against him weakly.

"Come on," he said, clasping her around the waist, "we're getting out of here!"

He hustled her across the kitchen, and Jim Parker followed them. A moment

later they were out on the porch, and it was then and only then that they realised their desperate plight.

Clouds of smoke were swinging across the clearing in grey gusts, driven by the wind. The forest on every hand presented a blazing barrier of fire, impenetrable, spelling doom to any mortal creature who might strive to pierce the inferno. The very grass around the cabin was beginning to burn, so that presently the log dwelling would most likely be alight as well.

To remain in the clearing meant death by suffocation, if not worse, and it was fortunate for Montana and his companions in distress that the big ex-deputy suddenly remembered an object that he had seen on the river bank when they had first entered the glade.

"Down to the water!" he panted. "I noticed a canoe there. Probably been lyin' around for months, but it may still be sound. Quick, it's our only chance!"

They broke into a run, fighting their way through the dense, stifling masses of smoke, and they were going forward as fast as their legs would carry them when they heard a great tree come thundering down behind them. Clean across the glade it fell amidst a shower of sparks, to lie like a dead giant in flames.

They gained the river's edge and the canoe that lay on the bank. It contained two paddles, and as they floated it they saw with relief that its seams were water-tight. Next instant they were seating themselves in the craft, Montana at the bow, Parker at the stern, and Mary huddled between them.

The two men had seized the paddles, and they steered the canoe out into mid-stream, the strong surge of the current bearing it swiftly onward at the same time.

Aided by the powerful flow of the river, Montana and Parker thrust the canoe through the water at express rate, plying the paddles tirelessly and never easing up for a second until they had outstripped the mighty conflagration that was travelling with them. But even as they were congratulating themselves, and considering the possibility of beaching their craft farther downstream whenever they felt that they had a safe start—even as this plan was running through their minds they heard a new and ominous sound that caused them to hesitate.

It was not like the muted sound of the inferno which they were leaving behind them on each bank of the river. It was the sound of tumbling waters, the thunder of a cataract, and all at once Jim Parker gave vent to a hoarse cry.

"The falls!" he shouted. "Devil's Falls! We must be close on them!"

He was right. The air was still thick with smoke that had been driven ahead of the forest conflagration by the wind. Through that smoke, however, the occupants of the canoe suddenly discerned the peril in front of them, where the torrent poured tumultuously over the rim of a forty-foot drop, and where misty vapour rose to mingle with the fumes of the forest fire.

"Turn into the bank!" Montana roared.

It was too late. They were not sufficiently close to either bank to reach it in time, with the terrific urge of the current bearing them onward so relentlessly. A brief, losing battle, and then they were plunging over the falls in their frail craft, to go down into the heart of a mad welter of foam!

(To be continued in another smashing episode next week. By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Buck Jones and Muriel Evans.)



LESLIE BANKS
scores another success in the
Gaumont-British picture,
"The Tunnel"

"THE IRISH IN US"

(Continued from page 14)

the canvas again before the next round is over!"

"Oh, yeah?" Danny's flagging spirit was roused. "Well, however hard he hits me, he can't lick me!"

"All right, tough guy," Pat said, as the bell rang, "get out in front!"

Groggily, but with renewed courage now that he had Pat with him as well as Mike, Danny stepped forward to meet his enemy, evaded a terrific left intended to put him out for good and all, and changed over from defence to attack. But most of his punches were aimed at Delancy's face and chest, and Pat yelled:

"Not there, Danny—below!"

"Don't get excited!" Mike rebuked.

"This isn't a fire," retorted Pat, turning to scowl. "It's a fight!"

Danny had heard, and he obeyed his brother's behest. Guarding his own face and body better than he had done before, he aimed all his blows lower, achieved a solar plexus punch that sent Delancy temporarily against the ropes, and, after a clinch broken by the referee, got in a thump to the heart that sent the champion down on his knees.

That round went distinctly in Danny's favour, and the crowd roared. But Danny was glad of the stool and of his brother's attentions.

"So I was gonna kiss the canvas, eh?" he said, breathing heavily.

"Shut up!" snapped Pat. "Save your

breath and listen! He's as open as the hunting season! Play him low down—play the body!" A towel was vigorously applied. "D'you get it? D'you hear me?"

"Yeah," muttered Danny. "I hear you."

"Well, listen, Danny, this is the round! End it this round! See? You can't expect a dame to think you're a hero for ever!"

Danny had closed his eyes, but he opened them very widely at that statement.

"What dame?" he asked blankly.

"Lucille."

"Oh, no, not me!" He shook his aching head. He was not going to be taken in by that sort of talk.

But Pat was in dead earnest, and time was short.

"Look, look, look, Danny," he said urgently. "I've stepped out! D'you get it? D'you understand, or do I have to slug you, too?"

Danny was convinced in spite of himself.

"Oh, Pat—"

The bell went, and he got to his feet.

"Remember what I told you," exhorted Pat. "Down below!"

Danny almost heaved himself forward towards the advancing champion, and there was a strange light in his blood-shot eyes.

"Down below, Danny!" vociferated Mike.

"In the kitchen, Danny!" yelled Pat. "In the kitchen!"

Danny sparred, smote, and received a whack in the ribs that would have sent him reeling in any of the earlier rounds, but in this one it seemed not even to concern him. He parried a right sweep with a swing of his right, and then, with his left, he drove straight at Delancy's solar plexus.

The whole weight of his body was behind that blow, and the thud of it was heard all over the stadium. Joe Delancy went down like a log, and the referee stood over him and began to count.

"One—two—three—four—"

"Come on, Joe!" shouted Doc Mullins. "Come on!"

Delancy rose by easy stages to his knees and then to his feet, and he faced Danny again. But all the fight had been knocked out of him, and two swift jabs between his ribs put him down again—to stay down.

"Oh, Danny!" shrilled Mrs. O'Hara, above all the uproar of the crowd.

The referee counted; the fatal ten was reached without any sign of movement on the part of the defeated champion, and Mike scrambled up into the ring, crying:

"That's my brother! That's my brother!"

"Oh, Danny!" Mrs. O'Hara turned triumphantly to Lucille, who was on her feet like practically everybody else. "Now what do you think of him?"

A policeman tried to prevent her from climbing into the ring.

"You can't go in there!" he rapped.

"Who says I can't?" she defied him. "It'll take more than you to stop me!"

Joe Delancy, inert and unconscious, was being carried away by some first-aid men. Captain Jackson thrust the policeman aside.

"It's all right, Collins," he said; and he helped Mrs. O'Hara up under the ropes and his daughter after her.

"Hallo, ma!" said Danny feebly, but happily, hanging on to Pat. "Hallo, darling!"

The ring became filled with excited people. Danny flung his free arm round Lucille and kissed her, and then a microphone was held in front of his mouth.

"Just a word, please," insisted the wireless commentator who had thus intruded.

Danny nodded happily and spoke.

"Folks," he said, "I want you to meet the champion of the world—my mother!" He beckoned with his gloved hand. "Say something, ma!"

"What'll I say?" asked Mrs. O'Hara, viewing the microphone with disuay.

"Say—say 'Hallo!'" suggested Danny; and he hugged Lucille again while his mother stammered that word into the instrument.

(By permission of Warner Brothers Pictures, Ltd., starring James Cagney and Pat O'Brien, with Frank McHugh, Olivia de Havilland and Mary Gordon.)

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"HEIR TO TROUBLE"

Ken Plays the Fool

It seemed to most of the startled inhabitants of Sicoma City that Ken Armstrong had gone completely mad.

Out from the Wagon Wheel Saloon he came abruptly with a six-shooter in his hand, and whooping at the top of his voice twice discharged the weapon at the inoffensive sky, then vaulted from the veranda on to the back of his white horse Tarzan and set off down Main Street at a gallop, yelling and firing in a fashion that sent many people scuttling into doorways and others diving headlong into alleys and yards.

"Whoo-oo-ee! Yippi, yippi, yippi, yi! Whoo-oo-ee!" he bellowed, and bang! bang! bang! went his gun.

In Jefferson with three deputies, Augustus Morgan, the middle-aged city marshal, strode forth from his office at the bottom of the street just as the wild rider swung left at the corner into Jefferson Avenue.

The deputies had drawn their guns, but the marshal recognized the flying figure, and though furious at so flagrant a breach of the peace shouted imperiously:

"Don't shoot! Get that maverick alive!"

He and his assistants freed their horses from the hitching-rail outside the office and mounted them, and as the quartet set off in pursuit the roadway of Main Street became filled with excited men and women who hoped their lives were no longer in danger.

In Jefferson Avenue buggies and buckboards were driven hastily out of the way as Ken, still yelling with all the force of his excellent lungs, thrust an empty gun back into its holster and drew another one.

February 29th, 1936.

There were women on the board-walks as well as men, and three of the women were spinsters of uncertain age but undoubted courage, and one was a married as well as a spectacled woman named Mrs. Bumps. These four scorned to seek shelter, and Ken—possibly for their benefit—loosed his feet from the stirrups in full career and heaved himself upright upon Tarzan's saddle.

It would have been quite a spectacular trick in any circus, and many who witnessed it held their breath in grudging admiration while it was accomplished. But one of the spinsters, a tall and shrewish-looking dame in a white coat and a helmet-like hat that accentuated her sharp features, cried scornfully:

"Of all the fools!"

Mad or sane, Ken Armstrong was a wonderful horseman. Bracing himself upon the saddle of his careering mount, and still shouting lustily, he whipped off his big white cow-hat and waved it with his left hand while he shot holes in the atmosphere with the gun in his right.

The city marshal and his deputies appeared round the corner, and another of the spinsters—an ugly little woman in a spotted frock whose front name was Amanda and who had never been able to change her surname from Witherspoon, cried out:

"I hope they catch that lunatic before he kills somebody!"

"Who is he?" inquired Mrs. Bumps.

"Why," replied Amanda Witherspoon with a sniff, "it's that Ken Armstrong!"

"And he's gone plum crazy," declared the tall and shrewish-looking spinster, whose name was Tillie Tilks.

Half-way down Jefferson Avenue the frame-buildings of commerce gave place

to houses and shacks set in their own gardens, the roadway became exceedingly dusty, and there was no audience for the disturber of the peace. Just beyond the spinsters, therefore, Ken used a booted foot to cause his intelligent mount to turn about.

Tarzan turned readily enough, but at the pace he was going his foothold was none too sure. Ever so slightly he stumbled, but the stumble was enough to dislodge his yelling master from a very precarious perch. Ken descended into the dust on all fours, and the marshal and his deputies shot past him as he was scrambling to his feet.

Hurriedly the representatives of law and order turned their steeds and dismounted to grab him. But Ken evaded them with astonishing agility, put away his smoking gun, and reached with a bound the porch of the Sicoma Hotel, a long and rambling building of wood. There he seized upon a form intended for the use of weary patrons and raised it above his head.

Augustus Morgan and his three deputies were advancing in line to take him prisoner, and too late they realised his intention. The form was hurled broadside at them and they hit the dust together.

Augustus Morgan, despite his years and weight, was active enough when he liked. He was on his feet while the other three were no more than on their knees, two of them holding aching heads. But Ken had not wasted even a fraction of a second. Above the porch was a balcony, and the balcony was supported by posts. He swarmed up one of the posts like a monkey, and from the balcony he whooped defiance.

"There he goes, boys!" shouted the marshal.

"Look out, boys!" jeered Ken, and from the balcony he proceeded to hoist himself on to the flat roof of the hotel with the aid of another post.

"Get up there, boys!" vociferated the marshal. "Head him off!"

The more agile of the deputies endeavoured to climb, but one of them flew after the marshal into the hotel and up a flight of stairs to a ladder that led to a skylight; and these two reached the roof before the climbers and were cheered by the crowd in the street below.

Ken, however, had not waited for their coming. Racing across the flat roof he had come to a yawning chasm where a yard divided the hotel from the office of the Wells Fargo Express Company, and there a mighty jump landed him on the other roof, which was at a lower level.

The marshal reached the chasm, liked the look of it not at all, and retreated to the skylight, shouting:

"Come with me, boys! We'll have him!"

He and the deputy with him descended the ladder and the stairs; the other two, who had got no farther than the balcony, clambered in at an open window and also reached the stairs.

Once more in the street, Morgan belated to Ken to come down and give himself up, not because he expected to be obeyed, but to engage the attention of the troublesome one while his men invaded the Wells Fargo office and a store that adjoined it.

Ken whooped and waved defiance, but he started running across the roofs of single-story buildings the moment the deputies rose up out of skylights in his vicinity.

"Looks like they're going to catch him!" exclaimed Tillie Tilks, craning her neck to watch the chase.

"Yes," said Amanda Witherspoon, "if he don't break his fool neck first!"

Ken seemed to have no regard whatever for his neck. He turned to fire his last shot over the heads of his pursuers, then flew across more roofs, most of them joined to one another.

He came to one a couple of feet higher than the rest—the roof of premises belonging to a maker of saddles and harness—and there he looked down.

Outside the shop-window stood a dappled grey horse, complete with saddle and bridle. Actually it was a wooden horse, used by the maker of saddles and harness to advertise his business, and its hoofs were attached to a board; but from up above it looked very much like a real animal—especially to a disturber of the peace who was more or less at bay.

Ken put a hand on the coping of the higher roof, stepped down on to the covering of a porch—and jumped. He landed with a thud on the back of the wooden steed, and instantly realised the mistake he had made.

Derisive laughter on the part of some of the onlookers did not annoy him in the least. He put away his gun, waved his cow-hat above his sleek black hair, and whooped joyously. But the marshal ran to capture him, and in the same moment a buggy passed the saddle-maker's, headed out of town.

Almost automatically Ken reached for a lariat, and found one where a lariat should be. The rope sang through the air, the noose descended over the back of the seat of the buggy and was drawn taut, and the wooden horse and its rider were dragged along the roadway in the wake of the vehicle by two astonished horses which were very much alive.

"Hi, that's horse stealing!" shouted the baffled marshal indignantly. "You can't do that!"

"Whoo-oo-ee! Yippi, yippi, yi! Whoo-oo-ee!"

Ken, thoroughly enjoying himself, although the progress of his steed did not make for comfort, tugged at a useless bridle and flourished his hat.

In haste the deputies descended from on high, reaching the street through various tradesmen's premises; and they had just rejoined the marshal when the driver of the runaway buggy slashed with the blade of a clasp-knife at the rope attached to the back of his seat.

The rope was severed, the wooden horse swayed violently and toppled over on its side, and Ken's capture seemed

certain to those who watched. But Ken was on his feet even as the wooden horse fell, and as he looked rather desperately about him, his own white horse came flying up.

Ken's left foot was in a stirrup before Tarzan could stop, and then Tarzan knew quite well that there was no need for him to stop.

At his leisure, as it seemed, Ken swung himself up into the saddle while the white horse increased his speed—a feat of horsemanship which compelled the admiration of less capable cowboys in the crowd.

"On your horses, men!" roared Augustus Morgan. "We'll round him up!"



Actually it was a wooden horse, but from up above it looked very much like a real animal—especially to a disturber of the peace who was more or less at bay.

—And Wins a Bet!

OUTSIDE the Sicoma Hotel marshal and deputies remounted; but several minutes elapsed before they were in full career, and by that time Ken had passed the last of the houses and shacks in Jefferson Avenue and was pelting along in the general direction of the little mining town of Blue Rock, with sand and scrub on either side of him.

He came to the mouth of a lane that branched away to the left from the coach-road, and there he stayed Tarzan's wild course and looked back.

The marshal and his men were a quarter of a mile away but riding furiously, and straggling behind them were nearly twenty of the male inhabitants of Sicoma City.

"All right, Tarzan," said Ken, "let's show 'em the old thread-the-needle chase."

He turned into the lane, a winding one which led up into the hills, and the scrub was left behind and trees and boulders of rock lined the way. Clouds of dust rose up from Tarzan's hoofs, but he took a steep rise without any slackening and emerged from the lane on to a great rocky butte above Blue River.

On that height the wind was strong. It caught at the wide brim of Ken's cow-hat and sent it sailing from his head, but he did not stop to retrieve the hat. Straight across the flat he rode, and became visible to those who were after him.

"There he goes!" shouted the marshal. "After him! Fan out, men!"

The united forces spread out across the butte so that if Ken turned he must be captured, whereas if he held straight on he must come to a sheer precipice of limestone at the bottom of which the river made almost a U-shaped turn.

The marshal, with two of his deputies, waited at the end of the lane to cut off the last possibility of escape, should Ken manage to elude the others. Time passed, and he saw nothing of the fugitive.

"They must be herdin' him to the edge of the cliff," he rejoiced. "He'll have to give up now!"

Ken had indeed ridden right to the edge of the rock that overhung the river and there had slid from the saddle. But he had no intention of giving himself up. He looked down at the water, a sheer forty feet below, turned his head to whoop mockingly at those who were closing in on him, then jumped into space.

There was a mighty splash as the water engulfed him, but the surface was smooth again by the time his would-be captors dismounted on the cliff-edge to peer down at the spot where he had disappeared.

"He's got more nerve than I have," growled one of the deputies, a man named Link. "Well, that's the end of him! Come on!"

Once more in the saddle, the whole party rode at leisure back to the lane, and Augustus Morgan saw as they approached that they had no prisoner, and was mortified.

"Well, Link, what happened?" he demanded gruffly.

"The darned fool jumped off into the river," replied the deputy. "Must have killed himself!"

The marshal rubbed his chin.

"Let's go down below the gorge," he said. "Maybe we can find his body."

Off they rode, all of them, down from the butte on its eastern side towards a grassy region where the banks of the river were low and sloping beyond the rocks. Their way lay through a steep

and narrow pass, and for half a mile or more the river was hidden from them.

Ken had been hidden from most of them, too, but not because he was drowned. On the contrary he came up from a lengthy dive close under the precipitous wall of rock and he swam so close to the rock that he could have touched it had he wished.

The current was strong, but it suited his purpose to swim with it for a while ere he turned over on to his back and floated more or less at ease. With water no longer in his mouth he whistled several times in a shrill and curious fashion.

Tarzan heard, pricked up his ears, and set off along the cliff with an answering neigh. Not for him the narrow pass filled with horsemen who were his master's enemies; there was a way along the ridge which no rider would dare to take, since the foothold was insecure, but it seemed quite a good enough way to a horse whose master needed him.

At a considerable pace, yet with all due caution, Tarzan negotiated the edge of the cliff in its downward sweep, sometimes sliding on his hanches, and he reached the grassy bank while the riders were still in the pass.

Ken shouted encouragement from the water.

"Hold on, boy! Hold on! Oh, good boy! That's the way of it! Wait a minute! Hold it, boy!"

Tarzan sought a place on the sloping bank that was free of reeds and bushes and stood there, swinging his tail. Ken ceased to float and struck out manfully, though with tired arms. He reached the bank, stood breast-deep in water for a while, gulping air into his lungs, then crawled up the bank and reached the horse.

Water streamed from his wet clothes as he hoisted himself into the saddle, but he shook his shoulders as a dog might do and cried:

"They figured on out-smarting us, but two can play at that game! On your way, old fellow!"

Tarzan shot off across the grass, reached a beaten trail, and became headed south-east. The marshal and his posse emerged from the pass into the open to see the young man they had thought dead speeding towards a road more than half a mile away. There was no mistaking the white horse.

"Well, I'll be danged!" exploded Augustus Morgan. "He's headin' for the Bar-X ranch! We'll pick him up there! Giddap!"

The Bar-X ranch was an extensive one and Ken was already on the fringe of it, but the ranch-house and the bunk-houses were a good three miles away—and five from the boundaries of Sicoma City. Ken knew every inch of the rolling pastureland, for he had been foreman of its owner's outfit before he had deserted cattle-raising to dig for gold.

He reached the road and flew along it, and as the corals and the outbuildings loomed up in the distance he stooped to unfasten the girth of the saddle upon which he sat. A supreme horseman he kept his seat without the slightest difficulty while he performed this operation, and Tarzan took a five-barred gate in his stride so perfectly that Ken did not even lurch.

Straight towards a muck-pond the white horse was guided, and Ken descended neatly with saddle and bridle in his hands just before the hurdles that fenced in the muck-pond were reached.

Tarzan, free of all trappings, went over the nearest hurdle as though it were a stick of wood and arched his noble head.

"The mud, Tarzan," directed Ken. "Roll in it, boy!"

Down went the white horse in the oozy mud around the pool, and kicked up his hoofs. His white coat became a dirty brown one, and he was busy deepening the colour when Ken walked on past the pond to the yard where the bunk-houses were situated.

He clicked the latch of a door and burst in upon five cowpunchers who were his friends.

"Here I am!" he proclaimed triumphantly.

The ride from the river had dried his clothes to some extent, but he still showed traces of his immersion. The five clustered round him, and a lean-faced fellow who looked as though he ought to have been a comedian instead of a rider of the range inquired:

"Did you get away with it, Ken?"

"Reckon I did, Hank," chuckled the fugitive.

A score of men on horseback streamed into the farmyard, after one of their number had opened the five-barred gate, and they looked in all directions for the white horse and its rider.

"He's given us the slip again, marshal," complained Link.

Tarzan whinnied, deliberately drawing attention to himself, but he was no longer a white horse and they ignored him.

"Ain't no sign of his hoss around," remarked another deputy.

"No," said Augustus Morgan savagely, "but he headed this way, and I'm gonna take a look in the bunkhouse all the same."

The door of the bunkhouse in which Ken was sheltering had been closed in haste, but Hank was at a window. He saw the marshal and several other men striding into the yard, and he cried warningly:

"Looks like the old mossback's comin' in!"

Ken ran with the others to the window, but deserted it immediately to fling himself at full length upon a bunk.

"He is coming here," he said, "and it's up to you hombres to keep me hid."

He whisked a blanket from a bunk over his head and covered himself with it.

"Strike up some music, some of you," he urged, "and the rest act natural—you know, kinda dumb like."

Hank Carter was not a musician, but several of his companions fancied themselves both as players and as songsters. A guitar, a fiddle, and a banjo were grabbed, and their owners dumped themselves on the edge of the bunk where Ken lay concealed and began to render with zest a lively dance tune.

The door flew back and Augustus Morgan stamped in over the threshold with three of his men.

"Where's Ken Armstrong?" he shouted.

The music ceased, and Ken raised an edge of the blanket to peep round the broad back of the cowpuncher who was holding the fiddle.

"Ain't seen him," lied a little fellow in a bequeered shirt.

The marshal pointed a finger at Hank.

"I'm askin' you!" he rasped.

"Where's Ken?"

"Why, marshal," returned Hank, as though in surprise, "don't you know?"

"If I did," was the explosive rejoinder, "I'd have him in the lock-up, dad-burn his ornery hide!"

The musicians resumed their playing, but with less volume.

"Why, what's he done?" inquired Hank. "Committed murder or something?"

"He's disrupted the peace and quiet of Sicoma City," roared the marshal,

"and he's due for thirty days in the lock-up and fifty bucks fine the minute I set eyes on him!"

"Say, that's a mighty serious charge," said Hank, "but tell me, you being nothin' but the city marshal, how come you be chasin' a man outside the jurisdiction of your office?"

A very shrewd question and one that flustered Augustus Morgan.

"Well," he stammered, "well—er—the hombre got me so all-fired upset, I—I didn't think— Aw, come on, boys!"

The musicians abandoned the dance tune to make a rude noise with their instruments as the discomfited marshal and his underlings retreated to the door, and that insult was not to be borne in silence.

"Just the same," snapped the marshal, "I'm gonna keep my eye on that maverick, and the first time he sets foot in Sicoma City into the jug he goes, and that's that!"

He went out, slamming the door behind him upon ironic laughter. Ken sat up and throw off the blanket, thrust his long legs between two of the friends who had hidden him, wriggled past them on to the floor, and perched on a table.

"Fooled 'em that time, boys, didn't we?" said he.

"Sure did," agreed Ted Hawkins, more commonly known as "Spurs," who was one of the bright sparks of the Bar-X outfit; and he put away his banjo to fish ten rather grubby dollar-notes from his hip-pocket. "Well, here you are, Ken! You win the bet, but it was sure worth it to see how burnt up that marshal was!"

"Thanks, Spurs." Ken put away the notes. "It was a lot of fun playing bad man, to say nothing of gettin' a ten-spot for doing it."

Hank Carter perched on the table beside him.

"Yeah, but you heard what the marshal said, Ken," he commented. "He'll pick you up the minute you hit town again—and you're due to see Jane this afternoon before she leaves."

"Oh, oh!" exclaimed Spurs. "That more'n repays me for losing the ten!"

Ken clapped a hand on his shoulder. "Say, listen, Spurs," he said. "I want to make another bet with you—only this time I want odds."

"All right," said the loser, readily enough, "what's your proposition?"

"I'll bet you another ten that I'll say good-bye to Jane, and the marshal won't get me, either. That is, providin' you go outside and clean the mud off of Tarzan for me."

"Where'd he get the mud from?"

"Oh, rollin' around the muck-pond."

"Aw, now wait a minute—that's a job!"

"That's part of the odds," Ken informed him with a broad grin.

The others waited expectantly, for Spurs dearly loved a gamble.

"Well, all right, pardner," he said, after a very brief interval. "You're on!"

He went off straightway to perform the task imposed as part of the bet, and Ken was delighted.

"When he gets through cleaning that mud off Tarzan," he said, "I can tell you right now I won't get any more bets out of him!"

Disturbing News

JANE, the girl to whom Hank had referred, was Jane Parker, the brown-haired daughter of Ephraim Parker—and Ken's fiancée. Her home was a very pleasant ranch-house on the western outskirts of Sicoma City, but she was leaving home that afternoon with her father and mother for the

junction on the Union Pacific line, whence she was to travel by train to Laramie.

She had an aunt in that important city, but the object of the trip was not so much to visit the aunt as to buy clothes for her forthcoming wedding.

She was in the sitting-room of the ranch-house, waiting for Ken, when her mother appeared with a capacious leather bag in one hand and a sheet of paper in the other. Jane looked round from a musical-box she had set in motion.

"Here's your bag, Jane dear," said Mrs. Parker, "and here's a list of things for your trousseau. Perhaps we'd better check them over again."

The bag was deposited on the floor, and Jane looked over her mother's shoulder at the sheet of paper. She was not very tall herself, but Mrs. Parker was almost tiny.

"Are you sure you have everything down?" asked Jane. "White kid shoes, three white petticoats—"

A resounding knock at the front door caused her to break off abruptly, and her mother said slyly:

"Now I wonder who that could be?"

It was Ken, of course. He had ridden right through Sicoma City, even past the marshal's office in Main Street; but no one had expected him to do anything so daring so soon after his morning's escapade, and Tarzan flashed through the thoroughfare at such a speed that hardly anyone recognised the young man in his smart white coat.

Mrs. Parker admitted him and pointed smilingly to the sitting-room; Jane awaited him eagerly enough, but pouted as he swept over to her and took her in his arms.

"You know you're late?" she said severely.

"I know I am," said Ken, kissing her, "but— Oh, Mrs. Parker, I didn't know you were in the room!"

Mrs. Parker had laughed in the doorway.

"I was beginning to wonder if you'd get here before Jane left," said she.

"Why, a whole herd of stampedin' horses couldn't have kept me away," Ken declared.

"Well, I'll leave you two alone to say good-bye. Father will be here any minute with the buggy—he had to go into town."

"That's fine!"

Mrs. Parker went out, and Ken was kissing Jane again when the musical-box stopped. He rewound it and substituted a fresh disc for the one that had been played.

"Gee," he said, "you know, Jane, I—I— Say, you won't be gone long, will you, honey?"

"No, dear," she assured him. "I'll hurry with the shopping. I'm as anxious to be back as you are to have me—more so, perhaps, judging by how late you are!"

He was not at all keen to discuss that matter.

"Jane," he said, "just think of it! Two more weeks and we'll be married!"

A buggy had come to a standstill outside the garden gate, and Ephraim Parker, an elderly and grey-haired man in a dark lounge suit, had walked up the garden path to the porch. He opened the front door and crossed a little hallway.

"Jane!" he called out. "Mother! We've got to hurry!"

He entered the sitting-room to find his daughter in her lover's arms.

"Hallo, Ken," he said, "glad to see you! Come on, Jane—get your duds on!"

Jane scurried off to put on a hat and a little jacket, and Mr. Parker shouted for his wife, who appeared quite promptly in a bonnet that made her look even smaller than ever. The rancher went to pick up the bag, but Ken said that he would take that. Jane returned, and the precious shopping list was thrust into her hand.



"Wait a minute, there," snapped Ken. "I'm not in the hold-up business, and I'm not in the habit of bluffing."

"Come on, mother," said Mr. Parker, and he and his wife went out to the buggy.

But Ken lingered. It was one thing to ride through the town; it was quite another thing to go to a railway station and stand on a platform where he might be caught.

"Let's say good-bye here, honey," he said with some emotion. "I can't bear to think of goin' to that depot and seein' you leave on that train all alone."

Saying good-bye seemed to take quite a while, and Mr. Parker, who had helped his wife on to the driving-seat of the buggy, followed her and picked up the reins, became impatient.

"What's keeping that girl?" he growled.

"Oh, leave them alone, father," said Mrs. Parker. "You were young and romantic yourself once."

Mr. Parker was no longer young, or romantic, and he knew that trains would not wait for those who were. He shouted his daughter's name.

"I have to hurry, Ken," said Jane; and Ken picked up the bag and went with her from the house.

The bag was stowed under the back seat of the buggy and Jane took her place on the seat and leaned down to kiss her lover. Mr. Parker stared.

"Ain't you comin' along, Ken?" he asked in surprise.

"I don't think I will, Mr. Parker," that young man replied. "I couldn't bear—"

"Oh, that's all right, father," Jane interposed. "I understand."

"Oh!" Mr. Parker did not understand, but he remembered something. He fished an envelope from his coat pocket. "Here's a letter for you," he said. "I picked it up at the post office."

"Thanks," murmured Ken. "Good-bye, honey! Hurry back, won't you?"

A whip cracked, and the horses attached to the buggy went off at a snail pace down the leafy lane that led to Sicoma and the junction. Ken and Jane waved to each other till the trees intervened, and then Ken walked over to a rail fence and squatted on it to tear open the envelope of the letter and read what it contained.

Tarzan, who had been waiting patiently for his master near the entrance to the yard of the ranch-house, looked round and saw that he was holding the letter in his hands and staring into the distance with a most unhappy expression on his fine, clean-shaven face. He ambled over and knocked his nose in mute sympathy against the fence.

"Tarzan," said Ken with a heavy sigh, "we've lost an old pal."

He put the letter back in its envelope and thrust it into a pocket. Then slowly he got to his feet and mounted the white horse.

It was no part of the bet he had made with Spurs that he should ride back through Sicoma City, but he had his own ideas of fair-play, and through Sicoma City he stroaked—and was seen only by a few frequenters of the Wagon Wheel Saloon who were half-asleep on its veranda.

Straight along the road that led to Blue Rock he galloped for several miles, then turned into a well-worn trail that provided the easiest and nearest way to the Bar-X ranch.

The boys who had shielded him from the marshal in the morning were back in the bunkhouse for their afternoon rest, and as he opened the door the air was thick with tobacco smoke and they were singing lustily:

February 29th, 1936.

"Skies were clear, October twenty-third; Skies were clear when we were riding herd

With a ki, yi, yippy yippy yi—"

Instruments and voices alike were stilled as he entered.

"Hallo, Ken!" chorused his friends.

"Hallo," said Ken, biting his lip; and they became aware that he was troubled about something.

"What's the matter?" inquired Hank Carter. "Didn't you see her?"

"I saw her," said Ken, and he took off his ceremonial white jacket and tossed it up on to a bunk. "She won't be away long."

"Well, don't look so downhearted at losin' the bet," jeered Spurs. "After all, it was really my ten spot—and it was worth all of that to clean up Tarzan."

"I saw Jane all right," returned Ken with gloom, "but I got a letter containin' some bad news."

He reached up to the jacket for the envelope, and he extracted the letter.

"Boys," he said solemnly, "most of you remember Jack Swift, don't you?"

"Sure," responded several voices.

"We remember Jack Swift all right."

"Well, ho's come to the end of the trail. I gotta letter here from his lawyers. I'll read it to you."

He opened out the letter, and they gathered round him.

"Here's what it says," he announced, and proceeded to read:

"Dear Sir,—Mister Jack Swift, deceased, has instructed us to send his son to you, subject to certain terms and conditions set forth in his will. The young man will arrive in Sicoma City by train the evening of the 20th, at 9.20. We are sending the above-mentioned terms and conditions to our legal representative in your city immediately. He is Mister Uriah Potts, attorney-at-law. Yours truly, Bird & Walsh."

A little silence followed the very slow reading of this epistle; then Hank Carter stepped nearer.

"What're you gonna do when he gets here?" he inquired. "Keep on with your mine, or come back here as foreman?"

"Keep on with the mine," Ken replied without the slightest hesitation. "I need a future now more than ever."

"Mining," commented Spurs, "is a pretty tough job for one man. I'm mighty glad you're gettin' somebody who can help you."

"That's right, Spurs," agreed Ken, and put away the letter. "I'm goin' over there in the morning. I gotta tidy up the place a bit before this boy arrives."

"You've only got two or three days," said Spurs. "Want me to meet him, just so's you won't get mixed up with that city marshal?"

Ken considered the point, but shook his head.

"Thanks, Spurs," he said, "but it wouldn't look right. I'll manage to meet him somehow."

Johnny Watts, a tousle-headed little fellow in a chequered shirt, but a thoroughly good cow-hand, jumped up from a bunk.

"Me and old Jack," he boomed, "uster play and sing half the night through when we was ridin' the range together. He sure was fond of music!"

"You're right, Johnny," said Ken, "and I guess he'd like that kind of a farewell, too." He turned to Mike Andrews, who was nursing a guitar on his knees. "Can I have that old box, partner?"

"You bet you can!" The guitar was handed over. "What're you gonna play, Ken?"

Ken twanged the strings and reflected, "Let's play that old favourite of his," he suggested, "the 'Cowboy's Lament'—shall we?"

Everybody approved, and so everybody sang—as a sort of requiem to a dead friend—that mournful ditty:

"I come out of Austin's fair city— Austin's fair city—'twas early one day.

I spied a young cowboy—a handsome young cowboy, All dressed in white linen, and cold as lay.

We gathered around him; we cried aloud o'er him,

While he told us a story

Of a cowman's sad fate.

He warned us, quite gently, to leave

off a-roving—

To leave off a-roving

Before it's too late."

Not a very suitable requiem, perhaps, for a cowpuncher who had deserted the range to marry a girl in a distant town and settle down as a tradesman; but Jack Swift himself would have appreciated it, and there were tears in the eyes of all the mourners before they had finished.

An Offer Refused

THE Union Pacific Railroad prides itself on keeping to scheduled times, despite the vast distances those trains cover, and it was only a few minutes after 9.20 in the evening of the 20th of May that the express from Chicago drew in beside the long, low platform of the junction.

Quite close to the track, beyond the tail-end of the platform, a horse-wagon had been waiting for some time, for the train carried several box-trucks as well as passenger coaches, and in one of the box-trucks there were goods for Sicoma City.

Augustus Morgan leaned against the side of the wagon while Jack Green, the local carrier, conveyed crates and boxes from the train to his vehicle.

"If we could always have shipments like this," quoth the carrier, resting awhile between his labours, "Sicoma City would soon be a mighty important railroad centre."

"You betcha," assented the marshal, puffing at his pipe. "I figured my presence was necessary—don't want any hold-ups!"

"No, sir!" Jake Green, who was none too young and had a limit to his powers of endurance, viewed with some dismay a huge packing-case which the baggage attendant had heaved towards the open double doors of the box-truck. "Guess I'll have to have a little help, marshal!"

The marshal moved slowly to his assistance, the station-master sped along the platform to urge them to be careful—and Ken looked out from the door of the booking-office. He had reached the junction safely on Tarzan, leading a brown horse for the accommodation of Jack Swift's son, but he had waited till the last minute to venture on to the platform.

A conductor who had stepped down from one of the passenger coaches turned to speak to someone still in his corridor.

"Stay there," he said. "I'll see if I can find him."

He looked up and down the platform, and he caught sight of Ken.

"Hi, there!" he shouted. "Your name happen to be Ken Armstrong?"

"Why, yes," Ken replied, and ran forward.

"There's someone inside expecting you."

"Yeah, I know."

"Wait here!" The conductor climbed the steps of the coach. "Here you are," he said, jerking a thumb. "That's the party you're looking for."

To Ken's surprise, a very homely looking woman in bonnet and shawl emerged from the corridor and looked down at him from the steps. She had a baby in her arms.

"Would you be Mr. Ken Armstrong?" she inquired with a brogue that proclaimed her to be an Irish woman.

"Why—why—er—yes, ma'am, I am," stammered Ken.

"Well, here you be, then!"

The baby was thrust upon him, and he had no option but to take it in his arms, gazing at the woman as he did so.

"The poor little spalpeen," she said as the infant began to whimper, and Ken managed to find his tongue.

"But—but— Why, I—I was expectin' a—a young man."

"Sure, and this is a young man," he was informed. "He's after being Mister Dick Swift himself, the wee lamb. Now, you stay there, and I'll go and get his clothes and things."

She vanished before he could stop her, and he was waiting there, with the baby in his arms when the stationmaster happened to look round, and saw him.

"Marshal," he exclaimed, "there's Ken Armstrong down the other end of the platform!"

Augustus Morgan had just helped to transfer the heavy packing-case to the wagon. One glance was enough for him and he set off along the platform, bellowing:

"Hi, there, Ken, I wanta talk to you! Wait a minute! Wait!"

But Ken did not wait for anybody or anything. At the sound of that voice and the sight of its owner he turned and

fled with the baby, reached the booking-office, and dived through it.

"Come back here!" howled the marshal, hotly pursuing. "Come back here, Ken!"

The Irishwoman scrambled down from the coach with a bundle of clothing in her hand.

"Here's the baby's clothes!" she cried.

But Ken tore out from the station, managed to mount Tarzan without dropping the baby, and rode off into the night, leaving the brown horse—which belonged to Hank—to follow at its leisure.

He spent that night in his own shack, up in the hills, a few miles from the Bar-X ranch, and the baby slept peacefully in his bed while he rigged up a number of gadgets for its benefit and constructed a cradle mainly out of a barrel which he split in two.

At the back of the shack there stretched a broad expanse of grass and woodland, but in front of it there was a sandy space out of which a hill of brush-strewn rocks rose abruptly. At the foot of the rocks there was an opening, shored up with timber, where a ladder led down into the mine he had acquired a year or so before.

It was a drift mine—a natural passage in the earth and rock—and his holding was not a large one; but already he had dug and blasted a considerable quantity of gold-bearing quartz from it, and was convinced that sooner or later he would strike a really rich lode.

He was not the only one of that opinion. Next morning, an hour or so after sunrise, three men rode up from the valley and dismounted within a hundred yards of the shack. One of them was John Motley, a tall man and rather a handsome one, who was quite a prominent member of the community in Sicoma City, and with him was a shorter and more heavily built man of forty, a mining engineer named Bill Dwyer.

The third man, Ike Davis, was merely one of Motley's workers.

Bill Dwyer led the way to the shored-up opening in the rocks, pointing as he did so.

"That's Ken's drift mine, Mr. Motley," he said. "It's a one-horse digging, but liable to cause us plenty of trouble."

John Motley looked back over his shoulder.

"Take care of the horses, Ike," he directed, and the henchman was thus condemned to remain out of earshot while his employer and the engineer entered the mine and looked down the shaft.

"Has he a clear title to this claim?" asked Motley, twisting the ends of his moustacho and speaking in rather a contemptuous manner.

"Yes," Dwyer replied.

"Well, offer him a thousand dollars—that'll fetch him."

Dwyer laughed mirthlessly.

"I've already offered him ten thousand," he said, "and he's turned that down."

"Ten thousand?" Motley backed out from the opening with a scornful gesture. "Say, you let me handle it! I'll bring him around!"

"Yes," said the engineer, "but our tunnels are up to his claim now!"

He walked out into the morning sunlight, and he picked up a stick.

"Here," he said, "I'll show you." With the stick he drew lines in the sand. "Our south tunnel is here. Ken's boundary line is here. Then we skip his claim and start our other tunnel."

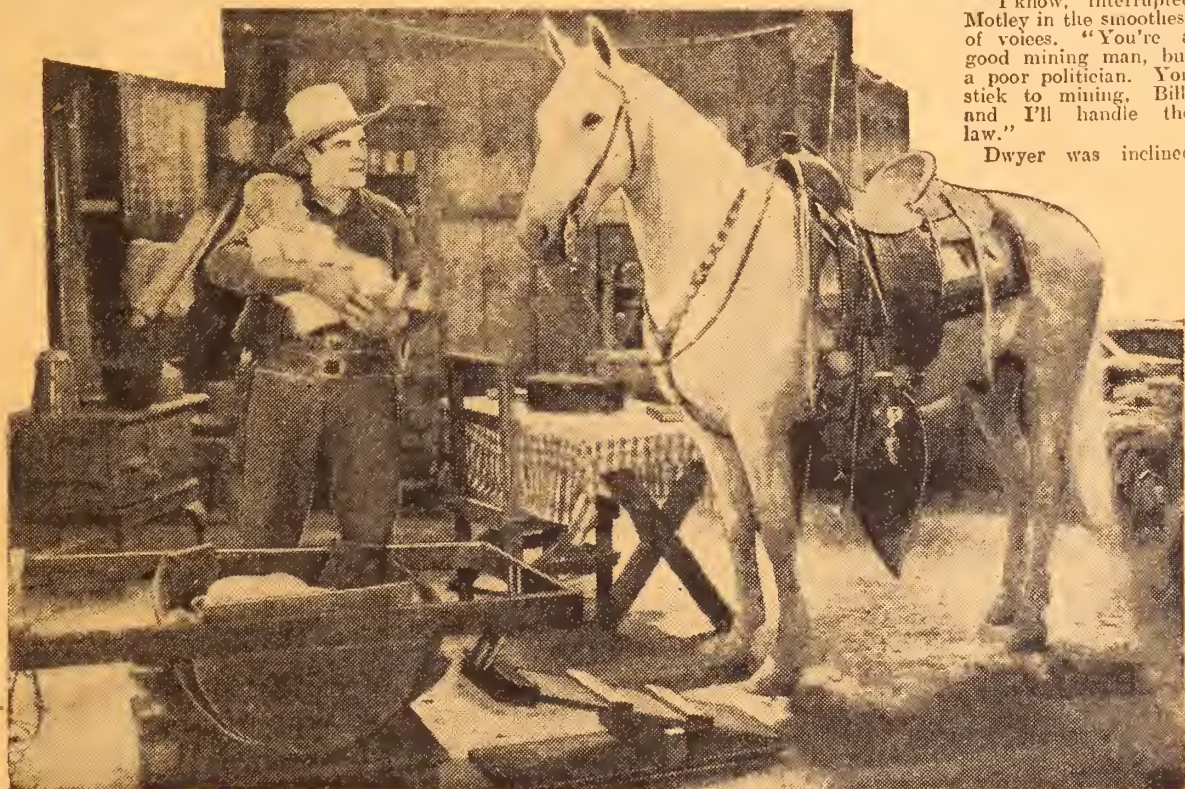
John Motley pursed his lips and studied the rough plan. Ken's mine, it was all too apparent, was in the way.

"Oh, I see," he said. "Well, you keep on working—and right through his property, too. Understand?"

"But, sir," protested the engineer, "there's a law against—"

"I know," interrupted Motley in the smoothest of voices. "You're a good mining man, but a poor politician. You stick to mining, Bill, and I'll handle the law."

Dwyer was inclined



"Well, Tarzan," said Ken, "just one more rehearsal now, because I've got to go to the mine."

to argue, but at that moment Ike called out:

"Here comes Ken Armstrong now, boss!"

Ken had walked out from the shack to a barrow in front of it containing quartz. He had a hammer in his hand, and he was taking a piece of quartz from the barrow when John Motley stepped over to him. Dwyer threw down the stick and followed:

"Hallo, Ken," said Motley, "we were just talkin' about you."

"That so?" Ken did not seem to be particularly interested.

"Yeah. You know, ten thousand dollars is a lot of money—a lot more than that hole in the ground is worth."

"I'm not selling, Motley," returned Ken quietly. "That mine assays a fortune—enough to keep me in comfort for the rest of my life, and I've got no intention of passing it up."

"You're tryin' to run a hold-up on me," accused Motley.

"Wait a minute, there," snapped Ken. "I'm not in the hold-up business, and I'm not in the habit of bluffing. I don't intend to be bulldozed into sellin' my mine for one cent on the dollar either!"

Motley was furious, but controlled his fury.

"Come on," he said curtly to Dwyer, "we've wasted too much time already."

He and the engineer went back to their horses, and Ike Davis rode behind them as they cantered away.

"I want you to rush them tunnels," Motley said, "and pay no attention to boundary lines. I'll show that cowpoke he can't put anything over on honest John Motley. Understand?"

"Yes," growled Dwyer.

A Woman's Help

KEN tipped the quartz out of the barrow, threw some tools into it, and trundled the barrow over to the mine. He descended the ladder in the shaft, and for a couple of hours was busy in the depths, toiling in the light of a lantern.

By that time he was hungry, and decided that the baby was probably awake and hungry, too. He deserted the mine, entered the shack and picked up a bucket, and went out at the back door to a white goat who had recently had a kid.

"Easy there—easy there, girl!" he said as he knelt to milk the goat, pushing the kid aside. "I'm sorry, young fellow, but from now on you're goin' to have to share your meals with my new partner."

Milk strained into the bucket and the kid tried to drink it, but received a smack.

"Hi, hi, hi—get out of there, little 'un!" commanded Ken. "That's not for you!"

Voices hailed him, and round the shack rode Hank Carter and Spurs Hawkins, to dismount beside him.

"Just thought we'd bust over and welcome the tenderfoot to the west," announced Hank.

Ken tried to hide the embarrassment he felt.

"That's mighty nice of you, boys," he said. "But couldn't you make it later—when he gets used to our ways, kinda like?"

Hank was quite definite on the point. "No," he said, "wouldn't be neighbourly."

Ken picked up the bucket and stood looking across the landscape, biting his lip.

"Well, where is he, Ken?" demanded Spurs. "Down workin' in the mine?"

The landscape was beautiful in the sunlight, but it was not in any way

helpful. Ken sighed and nerved himself for the worst.

"Well, well," he said slowly, "you may as well know now as some other time. Come on!"

He led the way into the one big room of the shack, with its bare floor and its scanty furniture, and while the others stared about them went over to a bed in a corner on tiptoe.

"S-s-sh!" he warned, and pointed.

"There he is!"

The two cowpunchers gazed down, wide-eyed, at a chubby little six-months-old baby, still fast asleep.

"Gee!" gasped Hank.

"Gosh!" breathed Spurs.

"Cute, ain't he?" whispered Ken.

"Yeah," nodded Hank.

Silently the three stole away from the bed to the front door, and Ken was quite relieved to have shared his shock.

"Say," he confided, "I'm figurin' on you boys helpin' me out."

"Eh?" Hanks looked startled.

"How?"

"Why, listen, I gotta have a whole outfit for him—clothes, nursin' bottles—everything. The marshal saw me at the depot, and I had to beat it before I could get 'em from the nurse. I'm dependin' on you boys to go to town and get 'em for me."

"Not me!" blurted Hank in comic dismay. "I don't want to be mixed up in no baby business!"

"Nor me, neither," declared Spurs fervently. "It—it—it'd be scandalous, that's what it'd be!"

Ken glanced in the direction of the sleeping infant and drew a very long breath.

"Look, boys," he said unhappily, "I can't go myself. The marshal would be sure to pick me up."

A very awkward situation, and one that called for considerable thought. Spurs caressed his chin; Hank scratched the back of his neck.

"Oh, I got it!" said Spurs suddenly.

"Queenie! You know Queenie, down at the saloon, Ken—she'd help you!"

Ken brightened. Queenie Moore was a singer and dancer at the Wagon Wheel Saloon, and used to the ways of rough men; but she was a woman, and a warm-hearted one at that.

"Oh, yeah!" he murmured. "She was an old flame of yours, wasn't she?"

"Well, sorta," admitted Spurs.

"She's got a heart as big as a beer keg. You just tell her I sent you."

"It's a mighty good idea," confirmed Hank. "You could sneak in at the back door of the saloon."

"Yeah," supplemented Spurs, "and me and Hank'll sort of ride herd on the kid while you're gone."

"Sure," agreed Hank.

"It's a good idea," decided Ken, and added hastily: "But don't try to feed the kid, if it should wake—you might choke it. I'll be back just as soon as ever I can."

He changed swiftly out of his mining clothes into his cowboy outfit, put on his big white hat, and went off to get Tarzan.

Spurs looked at Hank.

"Say," he mused, "I wonder how Jane Parker's gonna—gonna—well, you know."

"Why, all right, of course," said Hank. "All women love kids."

"Sure," nodded Spurs, "but they don't reckon to take 'em on their money-moon with 'em!"

In the stress of circumstances, Ken himself had forgotten about his approaching marriage, but, even if he had remembered it, the infant son of Jack Swift would still have needed garments and drinking utensils suitable to its age. He rode down from the hills

towards Sicoma City, avoided the main thoroughfares of that ambitiously named town, reached the back of the Wagon Wheel Saloon, across several fields and a yard, and opened its back door.

From the back door he made his way cautiously into a little room used for private parties, and there he stood on a chair to peer through the transom of the door that opened into the long bar-room.

The marshal was not at the bar, nor was any enemy. He shook the bell affixed to the wall beside the transom and jumped down from the chair as he saw Butch Strong, the proprietor, advancing in shirt-sleeved corpulence with his thumbs under his braces.

Butch Strong arrived and stared.

"Hallo, stranger!" he exclaimed. "What's the idea of comin' in the back way?"

"I didn't want the marshal to know I was in town, Butch," explained Ken.

"Oh, that's all right!" Butch waved the irregularity aside. "What can I do for you, Ken?"

"I want to see Queenie," was the unexpected answer.

"Queenie, eh? Well, she's awful busy rehearsin'—can't you make it some other time?"

"I'm afraid not, Butch. It's terrible important."

Butch Strong blinked, but was accommodating. He conducted the visitor out from the little room and along a passage to another room at the side of the bar, which contained very little more than a few pictures on the walls, a couple of chairs on the floor, and an upright piano and other musical instruments.

A man was seated at the piano, and Queenie, arrayed in a gorgeous frock of black velvet with all sorts of scintillating trimmings, was practising a new song, and at intervals reviling the accompanist because he couldn't get the tune right. She was quite young, golden-haired, and beautifully shaped, if by no means slender.

"Oh, that's wrong!" she cried as Butch entered with Ken. "Try it again!"

The accompanist struck a couple of chords, and Ken said:

"Howdy, Queenie?"

"Ken Armstrong!" Her blue eyes rounded at sight of him. "What in the world brings you here?"

Butch Strong vanished; Ken walked forward.

"Well, Queenie," he said diffidently, "I just come here to ask you to do me a little favour."

"Why—sure, Ken," said she quite readily. "Have a seat—I'll be with you in a little while."

"But, Queenie," he faltered, "I—I'm in a terrible hurry."

Something in the tone of his voice impressed her, and she marched him well away from the piano and the man who was seated at it.

"What can I do for you?" she asked curiously.

Ken looked across at the staring pianist.

"Will you excuse us, partner?" he said, and with that grabbed hold of her arm and tugged her away to the little room by the back door, watched by the wondering Butch.

"What's all the mystery?" she inquired.

"Queenie," said he, "I—I've acquired a baby—a little tiny one. And he ain't got no clothes!"

"Most of 'em come that way," said Queenie, who had an idea that this was an ill-timed joke.

"But this is serious," Ken assured her. "This is old Jack Swift's son—"

you remember Jack Swift, who struck the trail East to marry a girl and become a shopkeeper Chicago way, don't you? Well, his wife died, and then he died, and the kid's an orphan now."

Queenie looked shrewdly into a handsome but worried face, yet was not entirely convinced.

"Say, is this on the level?" she asked. "Absolutely!" he assured her. "And, Queen, old Spurs Hawkins said you might be willing to help. Him and Hank are out there at the shack, ridin' herd on the little fellow right now till I get back."

Queenie made a grimace, knowing the rough ways of cowboys.

"The poor little thing!" she exclaimed. "What is it you need?"

Ken told her of what had happened at the junction the night before.

"So I need everything," he wound up. "Clothes, nursing-bottles—well, you know a darn sight better'n I do!"

He fished some notes from the pocket of his shirt and pressed them into her hand.

"Take this along with you," he said. "Don't be particular about the cost."

"All right," she decided. "I'll do it, Ken. You wait here for me—I'll be back as soon as possible."

"Queenie," said Ken with heartfelt gratitude, "you're swell! Hi, but—er—don't forget some—er—don't forget to get some—some of them white bandanas. You know."

Queenie would not have forgotten napkins, anyway, but she nodded understandingly.

"All right, Ken," she said—and went off to change her frock.

A Chance for Motley

THE firm of attorneys who had written to Ken in such misleading terms from far-away Chicago had a reputation for honest dealing of which they were proud, but the agent in Sicoma City, selected at a venture from an official law list, was not worthy to represent them.

His name was Uriah Potts, as they had mentioned in the letter, and his office was situated in Main Street, not very far from the town hall. He was a lean-faced man with almost cadaverous cheeks and a hawk-like nose, upon which his spectacles were usually lowered so that he could look over their rims.

It was none to his credit that he acted for John Motley; but John Motley was a useful client, paying well for advice which enabled him to do all manner of underhand things without actually breaking the law.

While Queenie Moore was making purchases on Ken's behalf, Uriah Potts sat at an old-fashioned roll-top desk in his dusty office, listening to Motley.

"So you see," said the smooth-tongued rascal, "we've simply got to get hold of Ken Armstrong's claim by fair means or—other means."

Uriah Potts sat patting his hands against each other in a seemingly abstracted fashion, and this annoyed his client, who suddenly exploded:

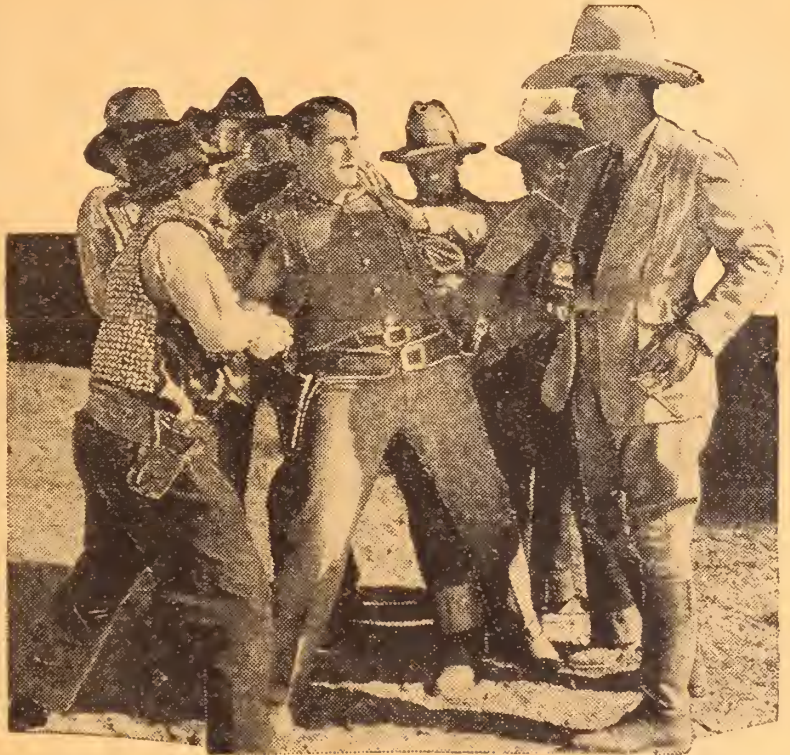
"What's the matter, Potts? You're not paying any attention!"

The attorney's thin lips parted in an insinuating smile, and he reached across the desk to take up a bundle of papers tied with pink tape.

"Ken Armstrong's got a bigger goldmine in these legal documents," he said, "than you have in all your holdings put together!"

"What d'you mean?" demanded Motley, staring at the bundle in blank astonishment. "What are they?"

"Just a few documents," Potts replied, unfastening the pink tape, "in-



"When I've finished with you," rasped Motley, snatching Ken's guns from their holsters, "you'll wish you hadn't been born!"

cluding—and concerning—the last will and testament of one Jack Swift—deceased."

He opened out the probate of the will to which he had referred and tossed it to his client.

"It seems," he continued, "that the said Jack Swift had managed to acquire the said fortune as well as an infant son. The child has been sent to Ken, according to my information, and when the proper legal steps have been completed he will become the sole administrator of the entire estate—and that, mind you, without any sort of bond or interference."

John Motley frowned at the probate. "Isn't there some way we can cut in on this?" he asked.

"There is—definitely," Potts replied.

"Swift drew his own will, without the aid of any lawyer, and, although he specifically directed that the child be sent to Ken Armstrong, he also very clearly states"—he repossessed himself of the document and ran a finger down it—"well, here it is: 'When my son Dick has been legally adopted the foster-father shall become sole administrator,' and so on and so forth."

"Well, I still don't see."

"His foster-father," said Potts significantly, "not necessarily Ken—although that was Swift's intention. Any man who legally adopts—"

"Oh, I get you!" Motley beamed with delight. "In this case it will be me? All right, you fix up the legal details and I'll get the child."

Uriah Potts raised a restraining hand.

"Not so fast," he said. "Not so fast! We can't do it with kidnapping, or force. Just drop a gentle hint to the Ladies' Society that Ken Armstrong is not a fit person to have the child, and let them start the rumpus. Then we'll get old Justice of the Peace Simpkins to issue an order, and the child will be turned over to a proper person—in this case, yourself!"

Motley left the attorney's office very well satisfied with the interview, and on the boardwalk in Main Street he encountered Tillie Tilks and Amanda Witherspoon, who had evidently been shopping, since they were carrying parcels. Just ahead of them was Queenie Moore, still more laden, and the two had been trailing her for the past ten minutes.

"Good-morning, Miss Tilks," greeted Motley, raising his hat. "Can I have a word with you?"

"You follow that hussy, Amanda," said the tall and shrewd-looking spinster to her companion. "Well, Mr. Motley?"

"Miss Tilks," responded the schemer, "you being president of the Sicoma City Ladies' Literary and Cultural Advancement Society, I feel there is something you must know."

In the ordinary way, Tillie Tilks would have listened quite greedily to anything he had to impart, but at the moment there was another matter on her mind.

"And you being a leading citizen of our fair city," she instantly returned, "there is something that you should know, Mr. Motley. That dance-hall woman, along there, has been in every store in town buying baby clothes!"

"Queenie buying baby clothes!" Motley exclaimed. "For what?"

"That's exactly what we intend to find out!"

Motley twisted the ends of his moustache.

"I wonder!" he breathed. "Of course, Miss Tilks, you know that Ken Armstrong has a baby at his shack up at the mine?"

"Ken Armstrong!" she gasped. "A baby!"

"Yes."

"Oh, but Ken Armstrong—" She broke off as Amanda Witherspoon came flying along the boardwalk from the

direction of the Wagon Wheel Saloon, crying excitedly:

"Tillie! Oh, Tillie! Oh, Tillie!"

"Amanda," said Tillie, "what did you learn?"

"She gave the baby things to Ken Armstrong!" shrieked the ugly little woman, her eyes bobbing nearly out of her head. "I watched her through the window in the yard."

"Then it's true!" exclaimed Tillie, turning to Motley. "It's true! Amanda saw them together with her own eyes!"

"It's scandalous!" declared Amanda vehemently. "Simply scandalous! What are we going to do?"

Motley seized upon the opportunity.

"Well," he said, "my advice would be to call a meeting of the Ladies' Society and have the baby turned over to a decent and responsible person. Mr. Potts will take care of the details—and, of course, at my expense. Wherever this baby came from, it is obviously in the wrong hands."

"I'll call a meeting for this very night," decided Tillie Tilks; but Amanda shook her head.

"How can you, Tillie?" she protested. "The Cattleman's Association is meeting in the town hall to-night."

"As president of the school board," said John Motley promptly, "I offer you the school building for your meeting."

The spinsters were delighted, especially the president of the Ladies' Literary and Cultural Advancement Society, who purred:

"Mr. Motley, how can we ever repay you?"

"I am not thinking of myself," lied their benefactor, "only of the welfare of our beloved city."

"This is going to be a terrible blow to poor dear Jane Parker!" exclaimed Amanda.

"Yes," agreed Motley. "It's a good thing she's out of town."

"But she's returning to-night," said Tillie. "Mr. Parker told me so just now."

"Then," said Amanda firmly, "she must come to the meeting. It is our duty to protect a nice girl like that."

"You're absolutely right, Miss Witherspoon," endorsed Motley. "Well, ladies, I'll see you at the meeting to-night."

He had caught sight of Dwyer, waiting for him in the doorway of Uriah Potts' office, and he raised his hat to the spinsters and walked back to the engineer.

"I want you to mine that south tunnel with dynamite and gunpowder," he stated, "and hook it up to a plunger."

"I don't think I understand," returned Dwyer gruffly. "If we are to blow up that tunnel nothing on earth'll save the Armstrong claim."

"Don't you worry about the Armstrong claim," retorted Motley. "You just do as I tell you."

"But it's a dangerous thing to do," the engineer objected, "and Armstrong will squawk."

Motley laughed.

"He's in bad now," he said, "and no one will believe a word he utters. You go straight ahead with the job."

A Shock for Jane!

FEMALES of all ages made their way to the school building in Jefferson Avenue that evening, and Tillie Tilks lost no time in opening the meeting she had called. She was explaining its object to the surprised assembly when Jane stepped into the main corridor, tired from her long journey but curious to find out why so urgent a summons had awaited her.

February 23th, 1934.

John Motley, who had been lurking there for more than half an hour, greeted her almost effusively. Lest the outcome of the meeting should cause her to think any ill of himself, however, he pretended to try to dissuade her from entering the principal class-room where Amanda Witherspoon had just been called upon to tell the members of the society exactly what she had seen.

"Don't go into the meeting, Jane," he said. "There are things being said that I'd rather you didn't hear."

His attitude had exactly the effect he had counted upon. Jane insisted that it was her duty to attend the meeting, and she pushed open the unlatched door.

There were three women on the platform, two of them seated at a table, the other—Amanda—was standing and speaking.

"I followed that Quenie woman from store to store," she was saying, "while she bought the baby things, and then I followed her to the saloon."

"And she met a man there?" prompted Tillie Tilks, who was seated on her left.

"Yes," said Amanda firmly, "she met Ken Armstrong. She gave him the baby things, and then she gave him some money."

Mrs. Bumps, the other woman who was seated at the table, instantly sprang to her feet, the light of battle gleaming in her eyes behind the lenses of the spectacles she wore.

"Why, I never heard of such a brazen flaunting of the conventions," she cried, "and I move that this society petition the proper authorities to remove that child from a mere shack in the hills where there is no one to give it the care and attention it needs. The whole thing is perfectly dreadful!"

A woman who was sitting in a cramped position at one of the little desks rose up to second the motion, and Jane slipped out from the room badly upset and very nearly in tears.

Motley was waiting for her, apparently full of concern.

"Jane," he said gently, "Jane, let me take you home."

"I still don't believe it," she faltered.

"Well, I'm afraid it's true," he lamented. "The child is up at Ken's shack."

She looked at him piteously. It had been a very nasty shock to her to hear that the young man she loved and was about to marry had actually become possessed of a baby.

"Have—have you seen it?" she asked stammeringly.

"No, not personally," admitted the suave scoundrel, "but I'm quite sure it's there."

"I'll never believe it till I see it with my own eyes!" she cried.

"You're right," said he, "and neither will I. I'm driving out to Ken's shack in the morning, and if there's no baby there I'll make this society give him a public apology."

"Take me with you."

"Are you sure you want to go?"

"Please."

"All right," he said with secret satisfaction, "I'll pick you up about eight o'clock."

Ken was up very early next morning, and for several hours he was hard at work in his shack, elaborating all manner of gadgets for the benefit of the baby.

After he had prepared and eaten his own breakfast he washed and dressed his tiny charge with clumsy but very careful hands, then went off to feed and groom and saddle Tarzan. He led the white horse into the big room and

showed him over and over again how the gadgets worked. Tarzan thereafter was called upon to work them himself, and proved an apt pupil.

The baby had reposed on the bed during the course of instruction. Ken picked it up and carried it over to the cradle, to which runners had been attached and connected to a sort of treadle arrangement.

"Well, Tarzan," said Ken, "just one more rehearsal now, because I've got to go to the mine."

He deposited the infant in the cradle and stood up.

"Show me what you do when the baby cries," he commanded. "Go on."

Tarzan put a hoof on the treadle and the cradle was rocked.

"That's it," said Ken. "I guess that'll work out all right. That's it—that's good, old boy. Now show me what you do when he's hungry. There. Over there. Show me."

Tarzan ambled over to a rope which ran through pulleys across the wooden ceiling. His end of the rope was weighted by an iron bar; to the other end, directly over the cradle, Ken had affixed a feeding-bottle which was upside down and full of milk. With his teeth the horse lifted the rope, and the bottle descended till it was well within reach of the baby's little hands.

The baby crowed; the bottle rose again.

"That's right," approved Ken. "Attaboy! Now over here, and show me what you do. Pick it up, pick it up. Come on, show me how you get my breakfast!"

A pot of water was on the iron stove, and over the pot a wooden trough had been fixed at a slant from the wall. To a rope that passed through more pulleys was fastened a trapdoor over an inclined box. Tarzan tugged at the rope, the trap was opened, and down the trough into the pot rolled several eggs.

"That's right," applauded Ken. "Tarzan, you're a wonderful horse—a horse that can cook. You're all right, Tarzan, you're wonderful!"

He walked over to yet another rope near the door, the upper end of which passed through a hole in the wall.

"Now look at here," he said. "Whenever you want me for anything, ring this bell. See it? Ring it like this."

He tugged at the rope and a cowbell outside the shack created a din. Tarzan took a turn at the rope, which he tugged even more vigorously and was patted for his intelligence.

"That's fine, old man," said Ken, and went back to the cradle, where he knelt to make the baby comfortable upon its pillows.

"I've got you fixed up pretty nice now," he said. "Yes, I have. Now there you are, Dick. I'm gonna leave you in charge of Tarzan, and you're in good hands."

He stood up and walked to the door.

"Take care of him, old man," he enjoined, and went out.

John Motley had called for Jane with a buggy, and Ike Davis was with him on horseback. He drove up into the hills off the coach road to Blue Rock with Jane beside him, and the shack was in sight when Ken stepped out from it and turned towards the mine.

"There goes Ken now," Motley said, pointing a gloved hand. "We'll be able to find out about the baby right away."

Jane, who was almost sorry she had asked to come, watched her lover enter the mine and bit her lip as the horses were brought to a standstill.

"I hate this spying!" she said in a worried voice. "This sneaking around behind his back."

"I know," Motley nodded, "but how else are we going to prove that he's innocent? He's out of sight. Come on!"

He sprang down from the buggy and helped her to the ground.

"Keep your eyes peeled, Ike," he directed, and that ugly employee remained in the saddle while they walked over to the shack and entered it.

Tarzan viewed them dubiously. Jane he knew well and liked, but Motley he neither liked nor trusted. Jane looked down at the cradle, and the baby laughed at her.

She burst into tears, and then the white horse knew that something was wrong.

"I'm sorry, Jane," said Motley regretfully. "If I'd known this I'd never have brought you."

Tarzan clattered across the bare boards to the rope against the wall, and the cow-bell rang noisily.

"That's probably a signal for Ken," exclaimed Jane in alarm. "Let's hurry away from here!"

The bell was still ringing as they went out from the shack and back to the buggy, and before they could take their seats Ken came running out from the mine and saw them.

"Jane!" he shouted.

"Jane!" There seemed to her to be no sense in trying to escape, even if there were time to do it; so she turned and waited.

"Jane, when did you get back?" Ken cried as he reached her. "I wasn't expectin' you."

"Apparently not," she retorted scornfully, "judging from that child."

"Child?" he echoed. "Oh, I can explain that!"

"There's no need to," she flamed at him. "I know all about it, and that Queenie woman, too! Let me go!"

But Ken, who had grabbed hold of her, would not let her go.

"Jane," he insisted, "you must listen to me."

"Let me go!" she shrielled; and then Motley stepped nearer.

"Can't you hear what she says?" he demanded. "Let her go!"

Ken released his grip on Jane to glare at her companion.

"How come you to horn in on this, Motley?" he snapped.

"I'm here to protect Jane," was the reply.

"Well, you get goin' pronto!"

"You can't bluff me," sneered Motley.

"You get off my property before I throw you off!"

Motley clenched his fists.

"Say, who do you think you're talkin' to?" he roared.

Almost simultaneously they struck at each other, but the blow intended for Ken's jaw was side-tracked, and it was Motley who bit the dust.

He rose to his feet in a fury, and a fierce battle raged between them. Ken did not go without punishment, but Motley very speedily regretted that he had resorted to fistcuffs. Once Ken went down, but only once, and then—over by some bushes towards which the encounter had led them—he seized his opponent in a deadly arm-lock and heaved him bodily over his shoulder.

Ike, who had been waiting his opportunity, whipped out a gun. But Jane saw him about to fire, and in that moment forgot all about the baby.

"Look out, Ken!" she shrieked.

Ken's six-shooter was in his hand even as he dropped to his knees, and he fired while a bullet was whizzing over his head. Ike, with a shattered wrist, fell from his horse and lay in the dust, groaning, and Motley sat up in a dazed fashion to see Jane climbing into the buggy.

"Jane!" Ken shouted; but Jane slashed at the horses and drove off down the hill.

Gritting his teeth, Ken went back to Motley and jerked him to his feet.

"Now looka here, you!" he rasped. "If ever you meddle in my affairs any more it's gonna be too bad for your future health! Now collect your gunman and get out of here!"

Motley picked up his fallen hat and walked none too steadily over to his henchman, whom he kicked in the ribs. "Get up, bungler!" he snarled.

Ike Davis rose, clutching at his wrist, and saw that his employer was hoisting himself on to the back of the horse. Hastily he scrambled up behind him, and the horse went off with its double burden.

An Official Visit

HALF-WAY down the hill John Motley turned into a narrow way between rocks and came to his own mine.

Not far from its shaft Bill Dwyer and three workmen were gathered round a sort of canister, not unlike a petrol-can in size and shape, but they straightened up at the sound of hoots, and they stared at Motley and at Ike Davis.

"Get down!" Motley commanded curtly as he drew rein.

Ike endeavoured to heave himself off the back of the horse, but fell to the ground and lay there motionless. Motley looked down at him with contemptuous eyes.

"Fix him up, Bill," he said.

"What happened?" inquired Dwyer.

"Oh, the bungler stopped a bullet!"

Motley slid down from the saddle. "Never mind about him—your men can't tend to him. Got that hooked up yet?"

"Not yet," Dwyer replied. "I don't like the idea of this thing at all, Mr. Motley. It's mighty dangerous hooking that plunger up over the explosives."

Motley looked at the canister contrivance, with its plunger, and saw that it was not connected with a flex that trailed across the ground to the shaft of the mine.

"Lost your nerve, eh?" he jeered.

"Well, get it hooked up, or you lose your job!"

Ike, whose wrist was being bandaged by one of the workmen with a handkerchief that was far from clean, scowled in the direction of his employer.

"I'll get Motley for this," he growled vindictively. "He can't kick me around like a dog! Go ahead, Mike, I can stand it."

Motley remounted the horse that was Ike's.

"Get busy on that wiring," he said to Dwyer. "I may need it sooner than I expected. Keep the fellows working on that hook-up. I'm going over to Armstrong's mine."

"All right," returned the engineer surlily.

"I want five men. Can you spare them?"

"Well, while they're with you they won't be working with me," was the reply. "But if you want 'em you can have 'em."

Five men were summoned from below the surface, and on horseback they went off with John Motley.

By this time Ken was hard at work in his own mine, considerably puzzled over Jane's actions, and Tarzan was rocking the cradle in the shack because the baby had begun to whimper.

A wagonette drawn by four horses climbed the hill, driven by a weather-beaten old fellow who piled for hire in Sicoma City, and from the driving-seat on either side of him two men clambered down over the front wheels. One was Uriah Potts, the other a little elderly clerk from the courthouse named Jinks.

These two went round to the back of the vehicle, and, with their assistance, Tillie Tilks, Amanda Witherspoon, and Mrs. Bumps descended.

Solemnly Uriah Potts led the way to the front door of Ken's shack and opened it, and the three dames followed him in over the step, and the little clerk brought up the rear.

Tarzan was rocking the cradle, and they viewed the phenomenon with staring eyes.

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"A horse!" exclaimed Tillie Tilks. "Well, for ever more!" gasped Amanda Witherspoon. "Is this a stable or a house?"

They approached the cradle and they looked down at the baby.

"Why, Tillie," breathed Amanda, "it's really quite cute."

"Amanda!" rebuked the shocked president of the Ladies' Society. "A child without a name cute?"

Tarzan knocked her away with his nose, and Jack Swift's offspring liked that and gurgled. Tillie stared at the horse, which had ceased to rock the cradle.

"Why, for goodness' sake!" she exclaimed. "He acts like he don't want us here! We're not going to hurt the baby!"

Amanda ventured nearer the cradle, and was smitten in the face twice by Tarzan's nose.

"Stop that, you old goat!" she cried; but Tarzan bumped against her sideways and sent her staggering.

The whole quartet retreated in haste. "Imagine leaving a horse in charge of a baby!" fumed Tillie Tilks. "And just look at all these contraptions."

The three women proceeded to investigate Ken's domestic arrangements; the tinned stuff upon a row of shelves, the mysterious ropes and pulleys, the bed in the corner.

"What'll we do?" said Jinks, the clerk, to Potts, the attorney. "Ken Armstrong is not here to be served with the order of the court."

"That's all right," replied Potts calmly, "just deliver the child to Mrs. Dwyer and leave the papers here so that Ken can find them when he comes back."

Tarzan went straight to the rope attached to the warning cowbell and tugged at it again and again; but Ken did not arrive on the scene, though he heard the summons.

Five men pounced on him as he came up out of his mine, and though he struggled valiantly enough against such overwhelming odds they held him fast.

"All right, boss, we've got him!" one of his captors shouted, and John Motley strode forward.

"When I've finished with you," he rasped, snatching Ken's guns from their holsters, "you'll wish you hadn't been born!"

The butt of one of the guns was smashed into Ken's face, knocking him nearly unconscious.

"That'll hold him," said Motley, in no way ashamed of his brutal action. "Mount up and take him away."

Ken was dragged away to the horses, which had been concealed behind some rocks, and was flung across the back of one of them. A man mounted behind him, and the whole party went off at a gallop, not past the shack where the cowbell was still ringing, but straight on over rock-strewn ground and out of sight.

Tillie Tilks opened the door of the shack and out flew Tarzan, convinced that something had gone wrong. He reached the mine, and there the sound of hoofs beating on rock reached his alert ears. Without the slightest hesitation he followed the trail of the men who had captured his master.

A buckboard driven by a red-headed man climbed the hill to the shack and was stopped beside the wagonette. A pleasant-faced and middle-aged woman was sitting beside the driver, and the weatherbeaten old fellow on the wagonette greeted her.

"Howdy, Mrs. Dwyer?" he shouted. "How d'you do?" returned the woman, who was Bill Dwyer's wife.

Those inside the shack heard and

came out, Tillie Tilks carrying the baby.

"My dear Mrs. Dwyer," she said, handing over the infant, "I'm sure that you will take splendid care of this child until the law decides what to do with it."

Thanks to a Horse!

JANE had driven almost recklessly down the hill into the coach road at the foot of it, but as she drew near to Sieoma City she slowed the horses to walking pace. She had passed first the wagonette and then the buckboard, and she realised that Ken was about to be deprived of the baby he had so suddenly acquired.

Already she had begun to repent of having given Ken no opportunity to explain matters, and she was debating in her mind whether to turn about or to go home when Hank Carter and Spurs Hawkins came riding towards her, Hank nursing a jar of liquor which he had acquired at the saloon.

She stopped the buggy as they pulled rein beside it.

"Howdy, Miss Jane?" said Spurs. "Say, ain't that Motley's outfit?"

She nodded, and the two cowpunchers saw that there were tears in her eyes.

"If that hombre's done anything to make you cry, Miss Jane," blurted Spurs, "I'll take him apart."

"It isn't that," said Jane haltingly, "it—it's about Ken, and—and his baby."

"Oh, the baby?" Spurs looked at Hank and Hank looked at Spurs. "Oh, don't let that worry you any, Miss Jane. Ken's sure got a kid out at his shack, but he couldn't help that. He inherited it from his old pal Jack Swift, who's died."

"Inherited him?" echoed Jane, her eyes very round and her brows uplifted.

"Sure."

"How do you know?"

"I saw the letter, and Hank saw it, too. Didn't we, Hank?"

Hank nodded, and abruptly Jane snatched up a whip and lashed at the horses attached to the buggy.

"Hi, where you going?" cried Spurs, as the vehicle was turned almost in its own length.

"Back to Ken!" shouted Jane.

She drove back to the shack, passing the wagonette at the foot of the hill. Tillie and Amanda hailed her, but she paid no attention to them. Mrs. Dwyer, with the baby, was on her way to Motley's mine in accordance with the instructions she had received, and so Jane did not encounter the buckboard.

She reached the shack only to find it deserted, and she sat down to wait for Ken, imagining him to be in the mine. But Ken had been bundled into quite another shack over by Motley's workings, pending the completion of preparations for blowing up the tunnel.

Ken tried to force open the door of his prison with a piece of wood, after the footsteps of his captors had died away, but the door was a stout one and had been securely fastened.

He found a metal poker at the stove, and was about to attack the door again with it when a sudden knocking at the side wall caused him to drop the poker and to listen intently.

He whistled a shrill and curious little whistle, and immediately there was an answering neigh from outside. He knew then that Tarzan had found him and that it was Tarzan who had knocked

From the back of the stove an iron flue rose up to an elbow-joint whence a long length of pipe passed out through the side wall at an angle. It was a matter of minutes to detach the pipe

from the elbow-joint, and then he pulled the pipe in from the wall and looked out through the circular hole it had occupied.

He saw Tarzan and spoke to him. "Good boy, Tarzan," he said, his voice husky with emotion. "Wait there just a minute, old man."

He searched his pockets for paper, but could find none. He took out a handkerchief, still more or less white, and with a charred stick of wood from under the stove wrote upon it at the table.

Back at the hole he called guardedly through it to the horse.

"Come close, boy. Come on."

Tarzan moved close to the hole, and Ken thrust his hand and arm through it and managed to tuck the handkerchief under the saddle.

"Now take it to Hank, at the Bar-X. Tarzan," he directed, and Tarzan backed away from the side of the shack and made a bee-line across country for the bunkhouse of Ken's friends.

He reached it in record time, while down in the south tunnel of Motley's mine a long train of gunpowder was associated with a charge of dynamite, a connection between the gunpowder and the electrical plunger up above was established, and the men started to ascend the shaft.

Hank himself was in the farmyard when Tarzan bounded over the five-barred gate near the muck-pond and made straight for him.

"Well, what are you doin' around here?" exclaimed the cowpuncher.

Tarzan reached his head round to the saddle and managed to pull the handkerchief away in his teeth.

"What you got there?" Hank asked, curiously, and the handkerchief was offered to him.

He read the message, and in a state of wild excitement rushed off to round up all the available members of the Bar-X outfit.

"Look here what Tarzan's brought!" he shouted. "Look what Ken's writ on this here handkerchief! 'Held prisoner in tool-shack at Motley's mine. Come a-runnin', Ken.' Let's go, fellers! Get your horses!"

A hundred yards or so from the entrance to the shaft of Motley's mine, Dwyer watched the last of the workmen emerge from the workings, then said to his employer:

"Well, it's all set now. I'll move the plunger over about a hundred yards. That ought to be safe enough."

"All right," said Motley, and looked round as he heard the sound of wheels. "There comes your wife now!"

The buckboard driven by the red-headed man was approaching, and on it was Mrs. Dwyer with the baby in her lap. Her husband waved a hand, then picked up the canister arrangement and carried it farther away from the mine and set it down near a boulder. Motley went to meet the buckboard.

"Hallo, Mrs. Dwyer," he said, holding out his arms, "let's have a look at what represents so much money."

Jack Swift's offspring was handed down to him, and he was looking into its dismayed little face when Tarzan came flying through a gap between tall rocks near the entrance to the mine, and behind him pounded the boys of the Bar-X outfit, fourteen of them all told, with their guns out.

Dwyer saw them and shouted: "It's Ken's friends! Let's get out of here!"

Shots rang out as the miners made for their horses and scattered in haste upon them. Some of the cowpunchers dismounted at the shack and began to

(Continued on page 23)

In the heart of Africa, two men of remarkable similarity come face to face. The year is 1914 and war clouds are gathering. One of the men vanishes in the jungle and the other goes to England to take part in a foul attempt to ruin the Mother country.

Starring Edmund Lowe

"The GREAT IMPERSONATION"



East Africa, January, 1914

A SAFARI was crossing a stream in the dense jungle of the interior of British East Africa. Most of the men were armed with spears and shields, every other man carried a torch to scare away the wild beasts, then came porters with baggage and guns, with two white men bringing up the rear.

It was dark, but the guide knew the way and the safari made a good pace as its destination was nigh. Moreover, this part of the jungle was alive with wild beasts and it was not wise to linger.

Little did the men know that ahead of them a white man, his clothes torn to ribbons, his bearded face white and drawn and his eyes blood-shot, staggered and swayed. Now and again the man would pause to take breath, and always behind him he heard sounds that told him that he was being stalked. He would break into a shuffling run, crashing into trees and bushes as he tried to get to some place of safety—an instinct of self-preservation kept him going. His ammunition exhausted, he had flung away his rifle.

The safari, to keep up their spirits and scare the lions, began to chant some rhythmic song, and the white man heard. His dimming senses tried to figure the direction from which the sound came. Hearing that stealthy rustling he tried to increase his pace, and came into a small clearing lit by the rays of a weak moon. He splashed through a stream and up the bank. He was exhausted. Fearfully he glanced round to see a huge lion appear on the other bank. With a moan he began to run, but his knees and legs had no strength; he fell heavily, but desperation drove him on. The chanting seemed to be so near and yet so elusive. Safety was close at hand, and he tried to make his weary body respond, but his strength was spent, and with a

hoarse cry he sprawled among the undergrowth.

The lion crept towards his prey, then roared because, through the jungle, balls of fire were moving towards him. He sniffed at the still figure, then slunk back into the jungle.

The white man lay right in the track of the safari, and the guide nearly stepped on the body.

"Onaku, Onaku—Watzumbi!" he shouted.

The blacks clutched their spears and muttered in amazement at the sight of the white man, whom they thought dead. The halt of the safari caused the two white traders to hurry forward to find out the reason for the halt, and they looked down in surprise as great as the natives at this white man. This part of East Africa was almost unexplored.

The leader—a tall, heavily built man—turned the body over and stared at the deathly white face. He shouted to a boy to hold a torch closer, then he turned to the other man and gave an imperious gesture. The latter knelt and made a swift examination.

"He's alive!"

"We must take him with us to the Von Ragastein camp," decided the leader, and at once gave orders for porters to make a stretcher.

The thing that had once been a man began to moan and mutter in delirium. He struggled futilely when they tried to lift him from the ground, and before sinking into a coma begged them to let him die in peace.

The safari continued on its way, the chanting started again as if nothing unusual had happened, and at last a light gleamed ahead. The safari came into a large clearing, where there were a wooden shack and a number of grass huts.

The sick man was carried into the shack and laid on a trestle-bed. A tall,

gaunt man with a monocle in his left eye and a portly man, who was a doctor, promised to do all they could for the sick man. The white traders accepted a drink and resumed their journey.

The doctor examined the unshaven wreck of a man, whilst the other man watched closely.

"Exhaustion and alcoholism." The doctor stood up.

"Do you notice anything about this man?"

"Yes, a remarkable resemblance to yourself," was the reply. "Shave that beard off and he'd be your double."

The gaunt man adjusted his monocle and grinned.

"Years ago we were even more alike."

"Do you know him?"

"We were at Oxford together. His name is Everard Dominey."

The breath whistled through the doctor's teeth at this amazing news.

"And you meet here like this?"

"Long odds, eh, Trenk?" The tall man stared down at the unconscious Dominey. "Perhaps my luck is changing."

"Your—your luck?"

"I've been in this hole three years—three life-times. Maybe this is my chance for freedom."

"Chance for freedom?" questioned the doctor.

"Yes, and—!" He broke off. "Look out! Look out! He's coming round."

Everard Dominey muttered vague, incomprehensible words before opening his eyes. The sick man lay there muttering foolishly, then the eyes opened wider as the brain began to function.

"There now—there now." The doctor pressed him back as he strove to lift his head. "You're all right."

Dominey leered foolishly.

"How about a drink?"

"You've had too much to drink," reproved the doctor.

"Maybe you're right." The exhausted

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man lay back and his eyes closed, but they soon opened again. "Where am I?"

"Safe in camp among friends," the doctor answered.

Dominey nodded weakly and turned his head to look with bloodshot eyes at the comfortably furnished bed-room. He moved his head slowly until at last he saw the tall, monocled man, and his eyes seemed hypnotised by what he saw.

"You are not seeing double." The tall man removed his monocle. "Don't you remember me?" He laughed. "Number five in our boat?"

"You're—you're Leopold—Leopold von Ragastein—Rags!" the sick man cried hoarsely. "Well, I'll be darned!"

"What on earth are you doing in Africa?"

"I've been hunting lions," Dominey grinned. "My boys robbed me and ran away. Then the lions started to hunt me. Rags! How many years has it been?" He tried to get up.

"Now, now—you must rest." The doctor firmly pushed his head back against the pillow. "When you wake up you can have a long talk."

"And a longer drink," murmured Dominey, and sank back as if the effort of talking had overtaxed his strength.

The doctor bent over Dominey.

"He's asleep."

Leopold von Ragastein tiptoed to the door, and beckoned to the doctor to follow him.

A Callous Scheme

EVERARD DOMINEY slept all through the night and far into the next day, and when he did wake the first thing he asked for was a drink. That and a good square meal and Dominey had recovered a great deal of his strength.

That night the three men sat on the veranda talking and drinking.

"Never have I seen two men so alike." The doctor stared from one to the other. "Of course, your face is a bit more oval," he decided after a study of Von Ragastein. "There seems a slight difference about the lower lip, but only a very close scrutiny reveals it."

"I wish the tradesmen at Oxford had been so observant," laughed Dominey. "They used to send me his bills."

"Why not?" replied Von Ragastein. "You were always charging things to my account."

They all laughed, and then Dominey looked across at his double.

"Tell me—what do you do in this pestilential country?"

"I represent Sir Ivan Brunn, head of the Internationale Munitions."

"Oh, I see, you supply the natives with pea-shooters?"

"We have saltpetre mines nearby," Von Ragastein explained. "Also—I keep my finger on the pulse of affairs."

"What? Here in Africa?"

"When even a little war breaks out we like to have our salesmen first in the field—on both sides."

"You'll be rather busy in Europe if these war rumours are true." Dominey finished his drink and helped himself liberally from the bottle. "Tell me, Rags, don't you ever long for your beloved Vienna—theatres, music, beautiful ladies?"

"Constantly. If I were in your shoes—with no business ties—I would leave for England to-morrow."

"Well, I'll never see England again." Dominey's face had changed—the face of a man despairing and with no hope for the future. "From now on this is my life." He raised his glass. "And hunting big game in Africa."

Dominey would have reached for the bottle again, but the doctor was firm.

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"No more to-night. That constitution of yours has brought you back quickly, now give it a chance. At this rate you'll be dead in six months."

"What of it?" sneered Dominey.

"Think of the fun."

The doctor insisted that Dominey go to bed, and the man who had been so near death, with a last, longing look at the bottle, did as he was ordered. Leopold von Ragastein wished him pleasant dreams, and sat back in his chair.

In a few minutes the doctor returned.

"My friend," Von Ragastein hissed out his words. "The code book—quick!"

"The code book?"

"Yes. Hurry! Get our fastest runner."

Dr. Trenk glanced at his employer in surprise. What was Leopold planning? Without a question he fetched the code book and then went for their fastest runner.

By the time the doctor had found Noga, the swiftest runner, the message was complete.

"Take this to the telegraph station—wait for the reply," Von Ragastein ordered, and went to the veranda rail to watch the man vanish down the jungle track. Satisfied, the white man came back to the table and picked up the bottle of whisky.

"Where are you going?"

"To talk to the Englishman."

"He should rest."

Von Ragastein adjusted his monocle and smiled.

"After he has talked to me." He held up the bottle. "This will loosen his tongue."

Everard Dominey was delighted to see his host and the bottle of whisky.

"Doctors don't always know what is right." Von Ragastein poured out two liberal doses. "Finest medicine in the world. At any rate this one won't do you any harm. Besides it's so seldom I get the chance to talk with people from the outside world that I felt you wouldn't mind my coming in for a yarn."

Dominey took a large swig and gasped his appreciation.

"Grand! You can talk all night whilst this medicine lasts."

After the second or third drink Von Ragastein began to talk of his own private affairs. He was in exile in Africa because of a woman. He produced a picture of Stephanie, a princess of Austria. He had fallen in love with her, and her husband had challenged him to a duel, with fatal results to the husband. The emperor had banished him from Austria and he was doomed to spend the rest of his days in the jungle.

"I can guess from what you've said that you consider yourself a poor unfortunate." Von Ragastein filled Dominey's glass. "It is curious that both of us should be in exile in Africa, but I would wager all I possessed that your story cannot be as miserable and sordid as mine."

"I'm afraid it's even worse," mumbled the half-drunken Dominey.

By constantly refilling the other's glass, Von Ragastein heard the reason why Everard Dominey had buried himself in darkest Africa.

"Little more remains to tell," concluded Dominey. "Doctor Harrison set my arm and I left for Africa to forget." He laughed inanely and stared at his host through half-closed eyes. "Why do I tell you all these things? I've never talked so much to anyone."

"I hope I haven't tired you." Von Ragastein got up from his seat on Dominey's bed. "I don't know when

I've been so interested. It is nearly daylight, so I think I'll go to bed. Good-night."

"Good-night," mumbled Dominey, and sprawled back against the pillows. His eyes closed and his head sagged limply.

Von Ragastein smiled, then tiptoed out of the bed-room. Dr. Trenk was asleep at the table with his head on his hands. A quick and vigorous shake awoke him.

"The messenger?"

"Not back yet." The doctor yawned.

"Ah, there he is."

With fingers that shook, Von Ragastein opened the envelope that Noga handed to him. Impatiently he waved the native away and got busy with the code book. When he had deciphered the message his face lit up with joy.

"Proceed as suggested." The doctor was puzzled. "What does that mean?"

"It means I'm proceeding to England," cried Leopold von Ragastein. "I am getting out, Trenk. No more flies, dirt, heat. No more of this."

"But how can you?"

"Because Sir Ivan Brunn says so. You know why I have been slaving for him. He is the most powerful man in the world. His organisation is complete in every country—except for a leader in England. I am going there—as Sir Everard Dominey."

"But you can never carry it through. His friends would know you at once."

"Nonsense! He has been away," Von Ragastein cried. "I was educated for the part. That's why I dared cable Sir Ivan. He has been waiting for a chance like this. As Everard Dominey I would move in official circles and be above suspicion. It is perfect."

"Baron! Baron!" cried the doctor. "Consider the consequences. You can't succeed."

Von Ragastein got up and began to pace the room.

"I must! I will!" he cried. "If I do, Sir Ivan's influence will release me from exile. A civilised life, and I shall be with Stephanie again."

"Not so loud—not so loud," hissed the doctor, and pointed to the bed-room.

"He will hear you."

"He's asleep—dead drunk," sneered the Austrian.

"Suppose he should return home?"

"He won't." Baron von Ragastein laughed harshly. "In two days we will send the Englishman north with a small safari, to hunt rhino. Fill his water bottles with nothing but whisky. His food bags with one day's rations—very salty."

"That's murder!" gasped the doctor.

"He does not wish to live." Von Ragastein shrugged his shoulders.

"You said yourself he would not last six months. It will be so simple, and I need your help. Put Ghana in charge. If the Englishman drinks—they will leave him in the heaviest jungle—alone—at night. If he does not drink—they will bring him to my camp—at the bend of the Blue River."

The doctor shuddered and glanced towards the bed-room and their victim.

"I think it will be better if he drinks."

The Great Sir Ivan Brunn

INTERNATIONALE MUNITIONS had factories in every part of the world. The more war the more money they made; and it was to their advantage to stir up strife than try to work for peace. Every factory was working now at high pressure.

In a luxurious office in Paris, Sir Ivan Brunn, director-general of Internationale Munitions, was looking at a large globe of the world. He looked a tall, grey-haired, well-dressed financier, but it was

the eyes that were so keen, so hard and so cold. Standing by the largo desk was a thin-faced man, whose sensitive lips never seemed to be still and whose eyes were just as hard and cold as those of his employer.

"War is just around the corner, my dear Seaman, practically in our midst," Sir Ivan swung round the globe. "If we do not prepare a suitable reception for the gentleman from Mars—it would be very bad manners—and deplorable business."

"I quite agree, sir."

"You will instruct our factories in all countries to go on a three-shift basis—"

"Immediately, sir."

"And in all countries we do not take sides—we take cash." The great man smiled. "Gold, Seaman, from now on."

"Quite so, sir!" purred his confidential secretary.

"This is not going to be a localised squabble like yesterday's Balkan affair. Our agents have made sure of that. With scrupulous impartiality they have kept all the War Offices informed as to one another's plans and preparations." Sir Ivan revolved the globe slowly. "Each country will want the advantage of striking first. They will all inevitably strike at the same time—soon. This war will involve all Europe and may tax our capacity." He pointed a lean finger. "England over-balances the situation—too strong. I like a fair fight—and a long one. We should make a lot of money out of this world war, Seaman."

"A beautiful plan, sir." Seaman rubbed his hands together. The telephone buzzed, and after a nod from his employer he picked up the receiver. "Hallo?" He listened, and then placed his hand over the 'phone. "Baron von Ragastein, sir."

"Admit him." Sir Ivan waited till the necessary order had been given. "Remember, Seaman, we can't afford a

scandal. At all times our hands must seem to be immaculate. The moment anyone suspects Von Ragastein's true identity he must be put out of the way."

Seaman's face twisted into a cold, fiendish expression. "I'll attend to that—personally!"

Baron Leopold von Ragastein was shown into the great man's presence. In Africa one had seen a gaunt man in faded drill, sporting an eyeglass, hair cut short and with bristling moustache and a drunken wreck, unshaven and debauched. This man looked so different in his smart grey suit—different from both of them, yet when he took out an eyeglass and placed it in his eye one saw at once the resemblance.

"Herr Baron." Sir Ivan Brunn held out his hand. "I congratulate you. I like a man who thinks fast. This is a great plan of yours—to kill a man and take his place."

"Thank you, sir." One could hear the faint accent.

"Ah, baron, I envy you." Sir Ivan sat back in his chair. "You will have the perfect reward—the laurels of a national hero and the income of a millionaire. That is—if you succeed."

"I can't fail," came the answer. "The only man who can contradict my identity is dead."

"Splendid. You will proceed at once to England and take your place as Sir Everard Dominey. You are no longer an impoverished baronet, Sir Everard, for you have made a fortune in African gold mining. Congratulations!"

"Thank you, sir." Von Ragastein gave a little jerky bow.

"Try again for Parliament." Sir Ivan gave a twisted grin. "Your predecessor tried once and nearly got in. With money you can win through to Parliament. It gives access to political secrets."

"Naturally."

"Dominey Hall will be our British

headquarters." Sir Ivan pointed to his secretary. "Seaman here is my intermediary. He is to be obeyed implicitly. As master of Dominey Hall you will provide a safe hiding-place for our operatives. Our plan is a simple one." He paused for effect. "Delay and cripple the effectiveness of England's mighty war machine. The moment to strike is the moment when England decides on war."

"I will do my very best, sir."

"I rely completely on your patriotism—and your greed." Sir Ivan opened a drawer. "This dossier contains photographs and data to guide you. Your relatives and friends—their attitudes towards you, their distinguishing eccentricities, and a complete history of your past life. It is not a very pleasant one. You must memorise every detail." He opened the dossier. "This is your wife."

The imposter took the picture.

"She's most attractive. What a fool he was to leave her."

"Sir Everard Dominey was involved in a tragedy, and like a coward fled the country." Sir Ivan passed over the dossier. "Everything is there. You must not fail. You think you can get through with this impersonation? That monacle—that accent—"

The schemer's laugh interrupted the great man.

"Do not be alarmed, sir. I shall not fail."

"When do you leave for London?" Sir Ivan glanced at his secretary.

"At four o'clock," was the reply. "Sir Everard lunches with his solicitors to-morrow."

"Good!" Sir Ivan held out his hand. "Do not fail us, Sir Everard. Internationale Munitions has a severe way of dealing with failures. Good-day, Sir Everard."

The new Sir Everard Dominey bowed himself out of the presence of the great Sir Ivan Brunn.



The man struggled futilely when they tried to lift him and begged them to let him die in peace.

February 23th, 1936.

The Princess

IN a quiet, but select, restaurant quite close to Leicester Square Sir Everard Dominey sat at lunch with Leslie Mangan, who had been concerned with the affairs of the Domineys for the past five years.

"Sir Everard." Mangan looked at his client with great interest. "I still say frankly that I would never have recognised you."

"Particularly when I pay the bill." The solicitor laughed and shook his head.

"Even your voice seems changed." "I am thinking of going down to Dominey Hall to-night." There was a sharpness about the tone, as if the conversation had not been to his liking.

The solicitor frowned. "Isn't that a bit risky?"

"Perhaps, but I'm going." "You'll find it in bad shape, as you know—there's been no money. The place is mortgaged to the hilt."

"You can notify the bank I'll pay off the mortgage at once," announced Sir Everard.

"What with?" the solicitor asked. "I not only gained my health in Africa—I also made money." He tossed the waiter who had served the wines a ten shilling note. "Whilst hunting wild animals I walked into a district that had never been explored. Rich in gold and easy to mine. Simple, my dear Mangan."

"You amaze me, Sir Everard," the solicitor answered. "You're the first Dominey that has made any money for centuries. What time, Sir Everard, had you intended starting for—"

But that was as far as Mangan got because a short, plump, pleasant woman of middle age rushed up to the table. She gushed over Everard. Why hadn't he let her know he was coming back from India—the tall man with her intervening to say Africa—when had he come home—how well he was looking—and a lot of talk all about nothing. The tall man at last succeeded in shaking hands with Sir Everard and introduced a young man named Eddio Pelham. Pelham had had a fall from a horse and had an arm in a sling. Caroline, Duchess of Devon, would have stopped and talked all about the accident if the Duke—the tall, tired man—had not taken her away. Where was Everard staying—he must come and see them. The duchess gave her husband an amazed look when Sir Everard said he was going to Dominey Hall that night.

"Oh, Everard, don't go down there and torture yourself. You went through all that before. Why try it again?"

"I feel as though I should." Sir Everard looked at his watch.

"Well, if you've made up your mind—there's nothing I can do." The duchess had taken the hint. "Look us up as soon as you get back to London." The duke took her arm firmly.

"Your cousin is a charming woman," said Mangan.

"My cousin—oh, yes." Sir Everard laughed. "Shall we go?"

"If you like I could drive you down to Dominey," suggested the lawyer.

"Thanks very much—save me a lot of trouble."

"I'll go and get my hat and stick," Mangan said. "I'll meet you out in the lounge."

Sir Everard Dominey walked into the lounge and went across to a large gilt table, against which he leaned with apparent boredom. Seated in a chair with a magazine in his hands was Seaman, and that worthy nodded his approval—so far the scheme was running smoothly. Into the lounge came a slim, attractive, well-dressed young woman—she did not

look English. She paused to look round at the people in the lounge and a glad light showed when she saw the lounging figure of Sir Everard.

The baronet was smoking and smiling to himself as if pleased at his own astuteness, but he stiffened when a voice called:

"Leopold!" He glanced round and saw the beautiful foreign lady, and with a slight air of surprise, bowed:

"I'm sorry—I think you've made a mistake." The girl seemed angry and perplexed.

She came closer.

"Fancy seeing you in London of all places. Why didn't you let me know?" Sir Everard shook his head.

"You have me confused with someone else."

Now anger flamed in the dark eyes. "Are you denying that you're Leopold von Ragastein?"

"My name is Everard Dominey." Then she smiled.

"You'd rather not talk here—is that it?" she whispered.

"I can only repeat—you are mistaken."

A stamp of the foot. "Are you fool enough to believe that I don't know you?" she laughed. "I insist upon talking to you. My room is No. 412. I'll expect you there in five minutes."

The girl might have said more, but she observed a man approaching them. It was Mangan. She hurried away.

"Wasn't that the Princess Eiderstrom?" he asked.

"I don't know the lady." Dominey flicked the ash from his cigarette. "She mistook me for someone else. Mangan, there is an odd letter or so I should write, and I'd like to meet you here at some time convenient to you. We could have dinner on the way down."

"Then I'll meet you here about seven."

The time was agreeable, and after a hearty handshake the two men parted. Seaman, who had been watching everything, went across to a door, and with a slight movement of the head beckoned Dominey. They whispered together and then went upstairs to Room 412.

Dominey waited outside, till Seaman asked him to step inside. The beautiful dark girl was waiting for them.

"Congratulations, Sir Everard," cried Seaman, shutting the door. "You are doing very well. There wasn't a trace of an accent in the lounge. You were grand."

"Sit down, Leopold." The girl pointed to a chair. "Mr. Seaman has explained all about your being Sir Everard Dominey, and how important it is for you to succeed." She came close to him and he did not attempt to touch her or sit down. "Leopold, tell him that our seeing each other won't interfere."

"It's bound to," Dominey spoke curtly. His eyes seemed anguished.

"I'm no child," was her answer. "Surely, after all we've been through together—the scandal—the duel—the heartbreak—surely you can trust me."

"It isn't that, Stephanie," Dominey answered. "Anyone who knew us before—seeing us together—would recognise my true identity at once. You do not seem to realise that Sir Everard Dominey is a married man. Until my work is finished, Stephanie, we must stay apart."

"You can't mean that?" Princess Stephanie seemed aghast.

"Sir Everard is right," interposed Seaman.

"You let him make rules about us!" cried Stephanie.

"We have been separated so long now—a short time longer will not matter much." He turned away as if it were anguish to look at her. "If I can carry through this deception we can be together for always, but it would mean failure and separation for ever if we met now. You must understand."

"Princess." Seaman had opened the door. "When you've thought it over you'll realise that this way is best. Sir Everard has a very important engagement. Please excuse him. Good-day, princess."

Princess Stephanie stamped her foot when the door closed behind the two men.

The Haunted Room

THE car passed gates that were rusty and went on up an over-grown drive to pull up before a huge red-bricked mansion. On one side were pretensions of battlements, many of the windows were shuttered and the whole place, like the garden, seemed neglected. A Norman archway was the entrance, and the door was a heavy wooden affair studded with iron bolts.

The two men got out of the car. "Cheerful-looking place," remarked Dominey.

"I told you it was run down, Sir Everard."

"Very much so." He gave a short laugh. "Have to see what can be done about it. My architect, Mr. Seaman, will be down here to-morrow."

Mangan walked up the stone steps and rapped on the door, which was swung open almost immediately. An oldish man in porter's uniform peered forth.

"Well, Middleton, here's your master."

"Welcome home, squire," he stammered out and pulled the heavy door wide.

"Thank you, Middleton." Sir Everard nodded and came into a great stone hall. A bare place except for several suits of armour, a huge candelabra with only a few candles lighted, a wide uncarpeted staircase, and a number of high doors. From a door under the stairs three men and a young girl appeared. Two were gardeners and one an under-butler, whilst the girl was a maid.

The men gave jerky bows, but the girl curtsied.

"How long have you been here?" "Surely you remember my daughter, sir?" said Middleton.

"Oh, yes, yes, of course," Sir Everard grimed. "She's grown much prettier since I went away, but you're the same old piece of parchment."

"Can't say the same for you, sir," Middleton spoke with the familiarity of an old servant. "You look a new man. So hearty—not like when you left. This is a happy day for Dominey Hall, sir."

"Thanks." The baronet smiled at the butler. "Will you bring in my bags, please?"

Sir Everard waited whilst the bags were brought in, and chuckled when old Middleton opened a door and said there was some whisky and glasses in the study.

The sound of heavy footsteps made Sir Everard pause as he turned towards the study. A woman in a long, dragging shapeless dress, tied at the waist with a girdle, and having no form of decorations save black beads with a cross suspended, was walking slowly down the wooden stairs. Her hair was grey, her face expressionless, but the eyes were wide and staring.

"You murderer!" Her voice was a husky whisper. "Get out of this house!"

Mangan and Middleton glanced anxiously at Sir Everard.

"No one wants you here. Go back

into hiding where you came from!" raved the woman.

"Mrs. Unthank," Mangan stepped forward. "Be quiet."

"How dare you come here?" The woman stood before Sir Everard and glared at him.

"This is my home, Mrs. Unthank."

"If you wish to keep your position you will learn to respect your master," cried the angry lawyer.

"Respect him?" The woman laughed harshly. "The murderer of my son." Her expression was sinister. "And making a mad woman of his own wife."

"I'll have no more talk from you," Sir Everard pointed to the stairs. "Go to your room."

"You ran away once, and you'll go again," was the taunting hint.

"This time I intend to stay!" Sir Everard replied sharply.

The woman backed again and her laughter was high-pitched.

"Oh, no, you won't, Sir Everard! The screams of Roger's ghost will drive you off."

"I'll risk that."

Mrs. Unthank pointed vaguely.

"He haunts the Black Bog, where you killed him on your wedding-night. Because he loved her and you took her from him—he'll haunt you. He'll haunt you out of this house." She backed to the stairs. There was silence as she climbed those stairs so swiftly. At the landing she looked down. "Go before it is too late."

"Quite a welcome," Sir Everard gave a shaky laugh as the woman vanished.

"The woman's insane!" cried Mangan. "You can't keep her here."

"We'll take care of Mrs. Unthank in due time."

Sir Everard squared his shoulders.

Middleton cackled.

"That did my heart good, sir," he muttered with a shake of his head. "She's been needing a sitting on. It's mostly on her account that folks still believe you murdered Roger Unthank."

"If that were true, Middleton, why was Roger's body never found?" questioned the lawyer.

Middleton looked at his master.

"They claim it sank where you threw it, sir. In the Black Bog. I've tried to tell 'em you was nigh murdered yourself—covered with blood, your arm hanging down. It don't do no good, sir."

His master frowned.

"What's all this nonsense about Roger's ghost?"

"That's no nonsense, sir. Every week it howls around the place at night—like an animal that's hurt. Most people say it was that and fear of the law that caused you to go away," Middleton said with an air of defiance. "They forgot no Dominey was ever a coward."

"I seem to have broken the rule."

"Tisn't being a coward to run off because you love someone and know the sight of you drives her to madness."

"How do you know that?"

"I saw the hurt and the suffering on your face that night her ladyship went into hysterics and ran at you with a knife."

"Sir Everard, I had no idea," murmured the amazed Mr. Mangan.

"Maybe I spoke too freely, sir," apologised the butler.

"That's quite all right, Middleton. I have no secrets from Mr. Mangan." The baronet rubbed his chin. "Do you know if she still feels the same?"

Middleton gave a scornful laugh.

"With Mother Unthank feeding her on hate. Why shouldn't she?"

"I shouldn't see her to-night," urged Mangan. "I should leave it till the morning."

Sir Everard insisted upon his lawyer having a drink. When Middleton said that the bags were inside, Sir Everard suggested going to bed. Middleton, carrying a bag and holding a three-pronged candlestick, led the way.

"Mrs. Unthank has prepared your old room, sir," whispered the butler. "But you don't want to sleep there."

"Why not?"

"The devil walks that part of the house by night, sir."

"Good!" Sir Everard gave a short laugh. "He and I can talk over old times."

Middleton looked shocked.

"It's no joke, sir. My daughter has got another room prepared for you, sir."

"Where does Mr. Mangan sleep?"

"The Blue Room, sir."

"Good, then take Mr. Mangan to his room. I'm sleeping in my old room."

"But something might happen to you, sir. I beg you don't—"

"I hate to disappoint anyone, let alone the devil," snapped his master. "Sleeping in there will put me in touch with things again. Don't argue, Middleton, I have decided."

Middleton insisted upon carrying his master's bag to the room Mrs. Unthank had prepared, but he shivered as he looked round and lit the candles. Sir Everard bade Mangan and Middleton

good-night and closed the door. Taking up a candlestick he went round the panelled room, with its stolid, old-fashioned furniture and great four-poster bed. Satisfied that there was nothing to fear, he opened one bag and took out pyjamas, dressing-gown, and a few of his most necessary requirements.

Before getting into bed he pulled back the heavy curtains and glanced out of the window at the grounds of Dominey Hall. The moonlight cast weird shadows. He blew out all the candles save the one by his bedside and climbed between the sheets.

Hands behind his back, he lay there thinking. The wind seemed to get up and whistle round the windows, which rattled. He sat up with a jerk. Had he heard a queer, moaning sound? It was the shriek of the wind. He yawned and blew out the light. He had parted the curtains slightly to have plenty of air, and a moonbeam gave a faint light to the room.

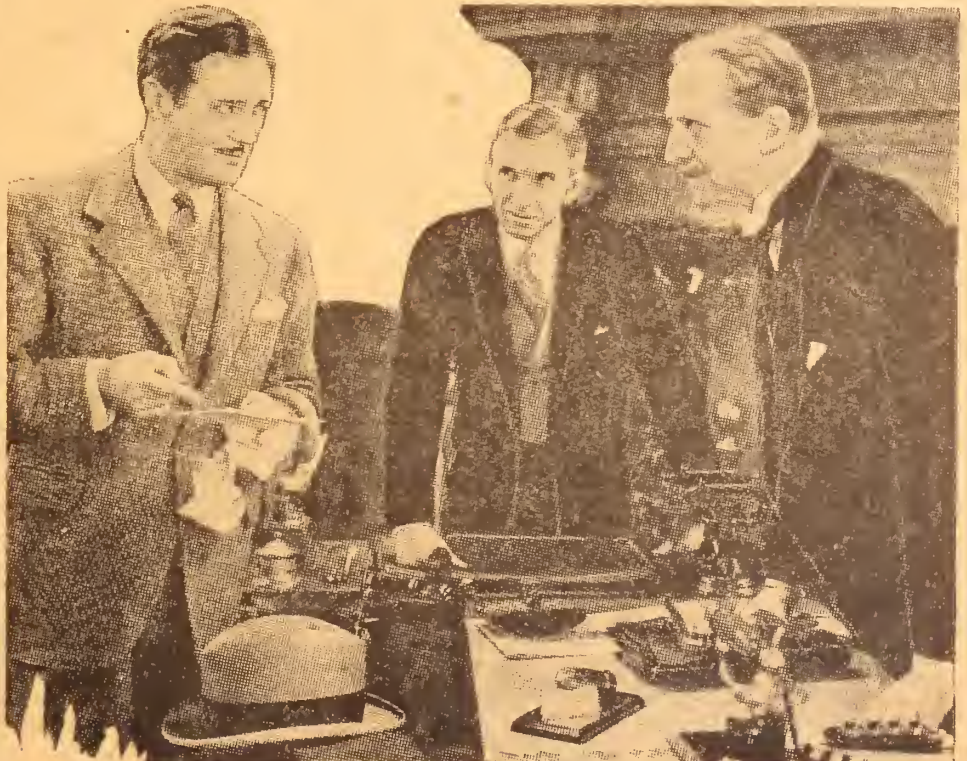
Soon the tired traveller was asleep. The tapestry behind his head rustled and parted. A baro arm came forth, and in the hand was a long knife. Slowly it descended, and as the pointed end touched the sleeping man's chin he awoke.

"Don't move!" came a voice out of the darkness. "I swore that if ever you spent a night under this roof, I'd kill you!"

The arm went up for the fatal blow, but the intended victim was wide awake. He shot out an arm from beneath the bedclothes, and his steely fingers gripped the bare wrist. He turned his hand.

A scream of pain in a voice that sounded like a woman's, and then the arm was jerked back with such force that he was unable to maintain his hold. The hand and dagger vanished.

Sir Everard dragged back the tapestry, but all he saw was bare wall. The killer had vanished through some secret panel. With hands that shook he lighted a candle and slipped into his dressing-gown. Suddenly a queer, high-pitched



"Do not be alarmed, sir," said the schemer. "I shall not fail!"



The policeman seized Mrs. Unthank by the arm, whilst the others stared curiously at the dead Roger.

screaming made him jump round. That wasn't the wind, and it was in the grounds below his window. He jerked back the curtain and peered forth.

At first he saw only the moonlight and many shadows. Something moved, and from some bushes came a thing that was bent almost double. It ran across the lawn with a swift, shambling movement. It was not like a man or a woman, but seemed inhuman.

The adventurer touched his chin and looked at his fingers—blood. It was a long while before he got back into bed.

The Second Attempt On His Life

IN the morning Parkins awoke Sir Everard at eight with some tea. The valet was a talkative old man. He had come down the previous day with a footman and three maids, and already he knew all about the place being haunted.

"Get my bath ready and get out my riding things," ordered his new master. "Yes, sir," Parkins suddenly remembered. "Mr. Seaman, the architect, and his assistant are downstairs, sir. Arrived very early, sir. They stayed at an inn near here and came over early. They seem very anxious to start on the house, sir."

"Tell them to have some breakfast," ordered Sir Everard. "I'll join them shortly, and don't pay too much attention to tales of ghosts. Ghosts don't exist these days."

Attired in perfect-fitting riding breeches—the two men had been almost identical in build—Sir Everard Dominey came down to breakfast. He was stopped on the way by Middleton. Had he heard the ghost last night?

"I'm an old hand with ghosts," cried his master. "I did hear a few noises, but they weren't made by Roger's ghost. Get the horses ready, Middleton. We'll ride round the place."

In the study Seaman sat before a loaded breakfast table. A young, February 29th, 1936.

foreign-looking man was also at the table.

"Good-morning, Sir Everard," greeted Seaman. "This is Du Baret." "How do you do?" The two men shook hands.

"I'd like to get him started on the north tower immediately," said Seaman. "We have decided the tower is the best location."

"You're not wasting time." Sir Everard helped himself from a hot dish.

"If you'll excuse me," Du Baret stood up. "I've finished my breakfast." He picked up a number of blue-prints. "I know the house very well, sir, from these plans. We have workmen arriving at midday."

Seaman waited till the door had closed.

"You heard the news from Servia?" The other paused in the act of pouring out coffee.

"What news?" "The Archduke Ferdinand of Austria was assassinated there yesterday," Seaman grinned. "I see you're surprised. This probably means war. We must get our radio installed and keep in touch with Sir Ivan."

"Seaman, we can't move so fast." Dominey shook his head.

"We've got to," rapped out the pseudo architect. "Scotland Yard's been snooping round my office."

"This affair is more complicated than we ever dreamed." Sir Everard glanced at his fellow confederate. "Strange things happened here last night. A ghost tried to knife me, and—"

Without ceremony the door opened and Mrs. Unthank walked into the room.

"I'll request you to keep your servants out of my part of the house. They disturb my mistress."

"I think that can be arranged." The master glanced at her sharply.

"How is Lady Dominey this morning?"

"As well as can be—with you here." "I wish to see her."

"She won't see you." Mrs. Unthank's voice became harsh, threatening. "She wants you to go away and not come back."

"Are those your words or hers?"

"Hers!" She looked at his chin. "You're a fool to stay here. She hates you."

"That will do, Mrs. Unthank, you may go."

"I will—with pleasure!" The door slammed after her.

Seaman glanced inquiringly at his partner.

"Now you see it's not so easy," was the answer to that glance. "If I cannot make peace with Lady Dominey I cannot stay here."

"Don't be absurd," rasped Seaman. "You must stay. We need you. Lady Dominey is ill. She could die."

"Don't be absurd," Sir Everard said sharply. "We are deep enough without that. Her death would turn the whole countryside against me." He wiped his mouth with the serviette. "I'm going to take a ride round this place and figure out some scheme."

"You have your problems, I have mine." Seaman's eyes were cold. "How you solve yours is your affair, but they must be solved. Failure would be very disastrous for you, Sir Everard."

"I realise that." "I shall be back and forth between here and London." Seaman stood up. "Tell your servants to let me have the run of the house."

Sir Everard went out for a ride with Middleton and gave the old servant, who had been head groom and butler since his master left five years ago, instructions to ride where he thought fit.

"I see the mill-yard wall is down." Middleton looked at his master in surprise.

"That wall's been down for twenty years, sir."

"Oh, yes, I forget. Have it repaired."

"Certainly, sir." Middleton smiled. "It's like old times, having the squire take a real interest."

Sir Everard smiled but made no comment. They came at last to a stream and then a railed-off quagmire that seemed to stretch for some distance among the trees. The master reined in his horse and glanced keenly at the stagnant water, the oozing mud and the decaying vegetation.

"Has this place ever been explored?"

"Why, there isn't a man in all Norfolk that'd go into the Black Bog, sir." He shook his head. "No matter what you paid him. It's naught but a quagmire, and foul with poisonous things."

"Nothing lives there?"

"Snakes, swamp birds, a few wild dogs—"

"Wild dogs?"

"Don't belittle things, squire," the old servant said solemnly. "You heard it yourself last night."

"Bosh!" Sir Everard said sharply. "You sound like Dr. Harrison. Only he says that the whole thing is in her ladyship's mind. I wish you'd tell him that you heard it, sir."

"What good would that do?"

"It might help him to get at her ladyship's trouble."

"There may be something in what you say." The owner of Dominey Hall stared at the Black Bog and then turned away as if the place did not interest him. "I'm going to ride down to the village. You can go and see the tenants on my estate and ask about any repairs they need. Bring me a report, later and I'll get them fixed. Later, I'll talk to you about the houses

and cottages in the village that belong to me."

Middleton stared after the new master.

"My, but he's changed. He rides better and he looks better; he went away a pauper and now he seems rolling in money. It's a mystery to me."

In the village a rustic informed Sir Everard that Dr. Harrison was at the White Hart playing quoits with some of his cronies. The doctor at once left his game to come and shake Sir Everard by the hand.

"Welcome—welcome!" cried the tall, gaunt doctor. "Why, you're looking better than when you went away. I heard you'd been dissipating—gone completely to pot."

"Pure gossip." Dominey stroked his moustache. "Can you spare a moment?"

"Of course."

"Let's walk down to the common. I want to talk to you about Lady Dominey."

Dr. Harrison talked during the walk of the treatments he had tried. There were times when Lady Dominey would be so much better, and others when he despaired of her sanity.

"I'm convinced that the only hope for Lady Dominey's return to normal life lies in your love. If that can be rebuilt it may blot out these things that now dominate her mind," the doctor concluded. "But I find it hard to advise because the mere sight of you may bring on an attack—a mental relapse."

"I realise that. That's why I came to you."

"On the other hand, if you are careful, kind, gentle, you may accomplish a great deal. For days she seems perfectly normal, then she suddenly breaks out in an hysterical fit of hatred against you. At such times she seems almost hypnotic."

"If I could only talk to her alone—get Mrs. Unthank out of the way."

The doctor shook his head dubiously.

"I've sometimes doubted the wisdom of keeping Mrs. Unthank on, but your wife depends upon her, clings to her."

"A morbid influence," stated Dominey. "Of course, I could bring a nurse down from London."

"If Lady Dominey would consent that would be wise," the doctor agreed.

"If you get her to come to you instead of forcing yourself on her, you would have a better chance."

"I'll find a way."

"When I heard you had returned I was a bit worried, but your manner reassures me." The doctor beamed his approval.

"You look twice the man you were when you went away." The old man touched the other's shoulder.

"Why, the arm seems as good as ever."

"The arm—oh, yes, of course. It doesn't hurt me at all."

"I did a fine job when I set that fracture. Drop in some time and let me examine it. Are you busy now?"

"Yes, I'm in a hurry—must get back—lot to do." Dominey held out his hand. "Thanks for your advice."

"A pleasure." The doctor raised a finger. "Move cautiously with Lady Dominey."

After parting with the doctor, Sir Everard Dominey rode back in thoughtful mood towards Dominey Hall. He pulled up for a moment near the Black Bog; blew his nose as a whiff of unsavoury odour floated towards him, and rode on. The rest of the day he spent with Middleton discussing repairs and complaints concerning houses and cottages. Seaman and the architect assistant went back early, and soon after ten Sir Everard retired to bed. Several times he had thought about trying to see Lady Dominey, but the doctor's advice made him hesitate upon



"Are you hurt, sir?" cried the distressed Middleton.

such a step. He went to bed, but he did not sleep.

At half-past ten he heard that weird, wailing screaming and went to the window. There was no moon, but he fancied that he saw a shadow flit across the lawn. He went over to the bed and pulled back the tapestry, laid his ear against the woodwork, and then dealt it a slight rap. It gave forth a hollow sound. He blew out the candles, but did not get into bed. On a table was a flashlamp, and he took a chair near the lamp. He sat there in the darkness and scarce dared to breathe.

An hour passed, and Sir Everard was thinking of going to bed, when there came a sudden, sharp click near the bed. He leaned forward and tried to pierce the darkness. Then he saw that a white patch was forming. It became lighter and lighter, until he saw that a panel in the wall had slid back and that the other side there was a light. So unexpectedly that it made him gasp, a vision in white was framed in the opening. A beautiful woman, who held in one hand a lighted candle and in the other a wicked-looking revolver.

He stood up, and the beautiful woman with the fixed, staring eyes slowly raised the gun.

"Why do you want to kill me?"

"His spirit cries and cries—telling me I must."

"What you think is his spirit, is only the howling of the wind." He eyed the gun nervously.

"No, it's Roger." Lady Dominey spoke like some lost soul. "Why did you kill him?"

"I fought only to keep him from killing me."

She came closer.

"His blood is all over you. I can see it."

"No, Eleanor." His voice was very soft. He beckoned. "Come closer. Let me show you it isn't. Touch me."

Lady Dominey was under hypnotic influence, and he had learnt in Africa of strange practices among the natives. He knew that his eyes could be compelling. She came towards him, and then she stared slowly at him.

"There isn't any." Her voice was a little different. Her eyes sought his.

"Why are you here?"

"To help and protect you."

"But I don't need you. Mrs. Unthank does that."

"Suppose Mrs. Unthank went away?"

"At once the gun arm stiffened."

"No!"

Dominey showed no sign of his fear. "But she's worked very hard." He was crafty. "She needs a rest and a holiday. I want to get a nurse down from London. Dr. Harrison's suggestion. Oh, you can have Mrs. Unthank around if you like—near you."

The expression in Lady Dominey's face had changed—the hypnotic look was going. The eyes had softened.

"She could live in Middleton's cottage." He moved a step nearer. "I want you to get better, Eleanor."

"I can see her whenever I want?" Lady Dominey whispered. He nodded.

"You want me to be happy?"

"Very happy." Dominey put his hand out and took the gun from her hands.

"You are so kind." Now her eyes were puzzled. "I thought I hated you."

"You don't hate me, Eleanor."

"No, I don't believe I do." She seemed to sway. He slipped the gun into the pocket of his dressing-gown, and then grabbed the candle. This he placed on the table. Her eyes were closed. "Sometimes, when I'm tired, I can't always remember."

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Dominey caught her as she swayed towards him. He picked up the unconscious woman in his arms and walked towards the open panel. A passage and in the distance a light—her bed-room. Gently he put her back into bed and drew the clothes over her. He bent over her and saw she was sleeping.

"In a month's time we'll have you as well and as strong as ever," he whispered. "Lady Dominey, you're very lovely." He blew out the light and tiptoed towards the open panel, closed it, walked along the short secret corridor, closed the panel into his room, and went to bed. It was hours before he slept.

Stephanie Makes Trouble

WHEN Seaman came down to Dominey Hall, two days later, he complimented his confederate on his great progress. Leopold von Ragastein had a reputation for being a capable man, but Seaman had not expected to find someone quite as capable as himself.

A host of men were busy on the estate. The gardens were being weeded, replanted and repaired, new walls erected, fountains set in order and trees pruned. In the house there was new furniture, new carpets, and engineers were busy building an electric plant. The tenants and the village had benefited by the generosity of the master they had never expected to see back in England. Roofs, walls and property were repaired and restored. The local hospitals received generous cheques. Also Sir Everard had succeeded in making friends with his wife.

"Doesn't she suspect you?" Seaman asked.

"No," Dominey laughed. "She has been very ill, and is still far from strong. I act the part of a man who is more a sorrowing friend than a husband. Within a week I hope to have her downstairs, and to be able to ask some influential people here." He glanced round. "There must never be any suspicion, and if we are to succeed we must try to win over not only the people, but those in high places."

"You are doing well, Sir Everard," Seaman chuckled. "Sir Ivan will be delighted. I am doing my part, and all is progressing well. I am going to have alterations done to the North Tower—no one save myself and my men must go there. You understand?"

"Of course. I should like to see the place when it is finished."

"Certainly, Sir Everard," Seaman bowed. "I shall see and report to Sir Ivan in the morning about progress here. I propose to tell him that you are contemplating going into Parliament in the near future."

"Certainly, but expense—"

"Money will be placed to your account," Seaman said with a sly wink. "No expense will be spared to ensure success."

A fortnight passed. To the surprise and delight of the district, Sir Everard spent freely. Everything that needed alterations and repairs was dealt with, and the screaming and howling had ceased. Mrs. Unthank had been placed in Middleton's cottage, and told that if she wished to remain at Dominey Hall she would mind her tongue and her manners. Seaman was there most of the time, but busy with the North Tower. On this day the representative of Internationale Munitions had gone to London; he returned early, and encountered Sir Everard just returning from a drive in the country.

"War comes closer to England every day." Seaman rubbed his thin hands

together. "It is only a question of days before the entire Continent will be one great battlefield."

"What makes you seem so sure?"

"This morning the innocent bystander was invaded. The little chap in between always gets crushed."

"England has guaranteed its neutrality." Dominey gave the other a searching glance.

"London is stunned. Waiting for the inevitable moment of playing her part," Seaman smiled. "It is excellent news, and we are prepared."

"We must meet to-night to discuss plans, and—"

A car flashed round the bend in the drive. "Hallo, who is this?"

To the amazement of the men, who should get out of the car but Princess Stephanie. The girl, quite at ease and smiling triumphantly, walked towards them.

"How dare you come here?" cried Seaman.

"This is impossible," stormed Dominey.

"But, Leopold—"

"Don't call me by that name."

"My dear, I couldn't stay away a moment longer." She smiled at her lover.

"Princess, if you persist in interfering—"

Seaman began. "The matter is out of your hands, Mr. Seaman," was her haughty, contemptuous interruption. "I've been to see Sir Ivan Brunn. That surprises you. He approves of my being here—as a casual friend of Sir Everard Dominey. Why not? I know all about your plans—I'll help you. I can talk to the women, and bring you news you wouldn't get otherwise. Oh, I'll be careful and so discreet, Leopold."

"Don't call me—"

He broke off. "Bo quiet—here is my wife."

Lady Dominey came out of the house and across the lawn to them. She was very attractive and looked very well. Her brown eyes smiled happily at her husband, and Stephanie clenched her small hands. The two women were introduced, and Dominey explained that Princess Eiderstron was an old friend, whom he had met in Africa and who had come unexpectedly to England. Lady Dominey insisted that the princess join the house-party.

"Oh, I almost forgot!" Stephanie had turned to accompany Lady Dominey. "I have some regards for you. I saw Dr. Trenk in Calais."

"In Calais?" Dominey was surprised.

"Yes, he's been invalidated out of Africa with fever."

"Is he coming to London?"

"He said not." Stephanie smiled at him, but there was no response.

The two men watched the two women walk towards the house.

"This is dangerous." Seaman touched his companion's arm. "But you must not make an enemy of Princess Stephanie. To be involved with one woman is bad enough—two would be fatal."

"What do you mean?"

"I understand that you give every sign of being in love with Lady Dominey."

"You are well served, Seaman."

Dominey's mouth twisted into a hard grin. "She is very attractive, but don't worry. Nothing on earth will soften me or interfere with my job. You had better cable Sir Ivan, and tell him Stephanie's presence jeopardises our plans."

"I will do so." Seaman came closer.

"By the way, our work here is complete and perfect. You must see it."

(Continued on page 26)

Death among the clouds! War in the sky as intrepid flyers clash with the forces of organised crime! Tailspin Tommy returns to the firmament of Fame in a smashing drama that blazes its way across the Pacific to islands of hidden wealth, of lawlessness, of savagery and cannibalism. A wonder serial of unforgettable thrills, starring Clark Williams and Noah Beery, Jun.



Read This First

Tailspin Tommy, famous civilian flyer and ace of the Three Point Aerodrome, is hired by a wealthy business man named Curtis to make aerial surveys of the oil-bearing island of Nazil, in the far tropical realms of the Pacific Ocean.

Curtis is the uncle of Betty Lou Barnes, Tailspin's sweetheart, and is in partnership with Don Alvarado Casmetto, who owns most of the island of Nazil, and whose daughter Incz has been holidaying in the United States.

The services of Skeeter Milligan, Tailspin's mechanic, are also engaged by Curtis, and the party set out in two planes. But word of their approach is later conveyed to Don Alvarado's unscrupulous stepbrother, Emanuel Casmetto, who seeks to oust his kinsman from Nazil, and who is backed by Raymore, a shady American financier.

An airman known as Frondo is dispatched by Raymore and Emanuel in a fighting plane, with instructions to force Curtis and his friends down on the isle of Mandrogos, inhabited by cannibals.

The machine containing Curtis, Betty Lou and Incz is compelled to land in a jungle clearing, and Frondo then turns his attention on the craft occupied by Tailspin and Skeeter. Ere long, however, Frondo himself is attacked by a mysterious aviator who appears on the scene unexpectedly, a man who calls himself the Eagle.

Yet it seems that the Eagle has intervened too late, for with their plane in difficulties Tailspin and Skeeter plunge headlong towards the crater of an active volcano.

Now read on

EPISODE 3.—

"Hurled from the Skies"

On Mandrogos

THE machine in which Tailspin and Skeeter were seated was diving straight for the lake of molten lava that boiled and simmered in the crater of Fire God Mountain, and, crouching in the forward cockpit of the falling plane, Skeeter heard his friend's voice calling to him through the telephonic apparatus which kept mechanic and pilot in touch with each other.

"The controls are jammed!" Tailspin jerked out in accents of despair. "It's all up with us, old-timer!"

Whether one of Frondo's bullets had damaged the ship's gear the Three Point airman could not tell for certain. He only knew that the joystick would not budge, despite his frenzied attempts to steer the craft out of its headlong plunge.

Below them lay the yawning crater, and the youngsters were swooping towards their doom at a velocity that left them well-nigh breathless. Indeed, the pair of them had given themselves up for lost when the stick suddenly slackened in Tailspin's grasp.

With a shout of relief the youthful airman pulled it back, and the plane answered immediately, gliding out of its furious dive, flying at a level altitude over the Mountain of the Fire God and then soaring skyward again.

"Gosh!" Skeeter panted, as he realised with difficulty that all danger was past. "Gosh, that—that sure was a close one, Tommy!"

Tailspin made no response. He had turned his head and was staring in the direction of the two machines which were engaged in mortal combat high above the jungle—the Eagle's machine and the outfit piloted by the scoundrel who had forced Betty Lou to descend.

Both the Eagle and his antagonist were clearly no novices in the grim business of aerial warfare, but it was soon obvious that the former was more than a match for Emanuel Casmetto's hireling. For with consummate skill he out-manoeuvred Frondo again and again, pumping lead at him from that hidden weapon whose muzzle was lodged in the centre of his ship's propeller.

Within a few minutes of the Eagle's appearance on the scene a burst of lead raked Frondo's plane from nose to tail. At the same time the Spaniard was seen to throw up his arms as a bullet pierced his fallow neck, and as he slumped lifelessly in his seat his craft took a sudden plunge towards the jungle-clad terrain of Mandrogos, tumbling to destruction amid the dark fastnesses of that savage isle.

The ship crashed to earth in a clearing not far from the volcano, and it burst into flames an instant later. Almost simultaneously the Eagle's plane veered off to the north, belching dense clouds of smoke from its exhaust-pipe, and vanishing within the black confines of the screen.

When at length the fumes had dispersed there was no sign of the Eagle or his strange machine, and once again Tailspin and Skeeter were left to ponder over the identity of their unknown benefactor.

"I'd give my right arm to know who that guy is," Skeeter said.

"He seems to be a friend in need as far as we're concerned, anyway," Tailspin rejoined in a puzzled fashion. "But let's see if we can find out who that other fellow was—the one who tried to shoot us down."

Shortly afterwards the two youngsters were landing in the glade where the hostile aviator had crashed, but on arrival there they realised that they were not likely to obtain many clues from what was left of their foe's ship. It was a mere skeleton of charred and twisted metal, and the body of the luckless airman who had flown it was so terribly burned that none could have recognised him.

Tailspin and Skeeter recoiled from the ghastly spectacle with horror in their hearts, even with a reluctant feeling of sympathy, despite the fact that this unknown scoundrel had endeavoured to hurl them to their doom. Then the mechanic observed a portion of fabric which had escaped total destruction in the fire, and which bore a curious emblem in the form of a panther's head.

He picked up the blistered strip of aeroplane fabric and was examining it when a hail attracted his attention. As he and Tailspin looked round they saw Betty Lou, Inez and Curtis hurrying towards them.

The youngsters made haste to join them and prevent the two girls from approaching the awful sight which the burnt-out plane contained, and as they met in the centre of the glade Betty spoke in a tremulous voice.

"Our ship's in a clearing a little to the east of here," she said. "We watched you boys come down. Oh, Tommy, I thought both of you were gone when your machine started to fall in the direction of the crater."

"It sure was a close call," Tailspin answered through clenched teeth. "But what happened to your outfit?"

"A broken strut," Betty told him. "I was lucky to land without cracking up the plane. I think Skeeter will be able to fix it, though."

Tailspin nodded, and then turning to Curtis he indicated the portion of fabric that Skeeter had carried away from the wreckage at the other side of the glade.

"I don't suppose you happen to know anything about this insignia, do you, sir?" he inquired, with reference to the painted emblem of the panther's head.

It was not Curtis, but Inez Casmetto, who offered a reply.

"Yes, I've seen that insignia before," she exclaimed. "On one of my uncle's planes. It was piloted by a man named Frondo, who once belonged to some South American Air Force."

Tailspin looked at her keenly.

"You mean to tell me that Emanuel Casmetto has a flock of airman working for him?" he breathed.

"Yes," Inez rejoined soberly. "There is a man called Raymore who has financed him—"

"Listen!"

It was Betty who had interrupted the daughter of Don Alvarado, and as she held up her hand in an imperative gesture that commanded silence, an ominous sound became audible to her companions—the deep, reverberating note of drums, echoing sinisterly through the eternal shadows of the jungle.

"Savages!" gasped Inez Casmetto.

"Savages?" Skeeter echoed in alarm.

"Yes," Inez cried. "This island of Mandrogos is peopled by cannibals. While Betty was searching for a landing place a little while ago we passed

over one of their villages. We must waste no time if we're to get away before they assemble and attack us."

Quick to act upon her words of warning, the other members of the party followed Inez to the glade where the cabin plane had descended, and here Skeeter speedily repaired the machine's damaged strut. Then he stepped back and proceeded to hustle Curtis and the two girls into the craft.

"There she is, good as new," he said. "You'd better get her in the air, Betty. Hurry, now!"

"What about you two boys?" Betty faltered uncertainly.

"Never mind about us," Tailspin struck in. "We'll be right on your tail. Go on, Betty, close that door and pull out of here. Give her the gun!"

A few seconds later the cabin plane was on the move, and, crossing the ground at ever-increasing pace, it rose bird-like into the blue heavens and circled above the trees ere swinging westward.

Meanwhile, Tailspin and Skeeter were racing through the jungle towards the glade where they had left their own plane, and as they ran it seemed to them that the roll of the native drums sounded louder and yet louder in their ears. Indeed, by the time they gained their ship the forest was alive with a confused tumult, so that their hearts were fairly thumping against their ribs when they scrambled into the craft.

They had scarcely taken their places when there was a fearsome uproar at the edge of the clearing, and as they looked back they beheld a powerful band of dusky warriors swarming from the trees and undergrowth—half-nude, capering figures who bounded forth with shrill outcry, a savage horde armed with spears, machetes, bows and arrows.

Skeeter heard Tailspin start up the motor of the plane, and in the same moment the mechanic broke open a crate that was resting between his feet in the forward cockpit. It was the crate which had been brought from Three Point and which was marked "explosives," and, plucking out one of the grenades it contained, Skeeter drew the pin of the missile and then hurled it at the oncoming natives.

The grenade burst with a shattering detonation immediately in front of the foremost warriors, and half a dozen stricken forms were thrown to the ground. Next instant the remainder of the savages were turning tail, and ere they had recovered from their panic the ship from Three Point was storming across the glade.

With scared eyes the discomfited natives watched it soar skyward and turn in the direction of the west, the direction already taken by Betty Lou, Inez and Curtis.

Prisoners

TWO hours after leaving Mandrogos the occupants of the cabin plane beheld the shores of another island ahead of them, and ere long they were passing over a collection of buildings which were peculiarly reminiscent of a cantonment, or military station.

"Well, this is Nazil," Inez Casmetto told Betty. "Right below us is my uncle's stronghold. My father's place is away at the other side of the island."

Curtis at that moment was leaning forward to "tune-in" on the radio, and soon he was calling Don Alvarado's hacienda. Within a few seconds an answer was received from an operator in the Don's employ, and, at the express request of Curtis, the aristocratic Spaniard was sent for.

It so happened that Don Alvarado was talking to Garcia just then—Garcia, the

planter who had bought on lease a tract of the Don's land up in the interior, but who was actually in the pay of Emanuel; and, as Don Alvarado was summoned to the wireless-room, his guest contrived to follow him and take up a position near the threshold of that apartment.

"Senior Curtis!" he heard the Don exclaim into the radio telephone. "It is so good to hear your voice. What kind of a trip have you had? Where are you now? What time do you expect to get here—"

"Hold on there," came the jovial response, which was also audible to Garcia. "Not so fast, my dear fellow. First of all, we've just passed your step-brother's headquarters, so you can work out the time of our arrival for yourself. As for the trip—well, it was thoroughly enjoyable until we reached Mandrogos, where we ran foul of one of Emanuel's flyers."

"You did!" Don Alvarado jerked out. "What happened?"

"He attacked us, but came off worst and crashed into the jungle. I'll tell you all about it when I see you."

Garcia drew back, pursing his lips. Here was disturbing news, and news that must be conveyed to Emanuel and Raymore without delay. As soon as Don Alvarado came out of that wireless-room, Garcia would have to offer his excuses and depart.

Meanwhile, Don Alvarado's conversation with Curtis was being brought to a close, and the link between the cabin plane was severed as the radios ceased to make contact.

In the snug interior of the plane, Curtis turned from the wireless-set and looked back through the craft's windows.

"I don't see any sign of Tommy and Skeeter," he commented, "but the sky's clouded up, and visibility isn't so good as it was."

"Don't you worry about the boys," Betty Lou told him. "They're following us all right. They weren't very far behind us the last time I caught sight of them."

The two youngsters in the open plane were a mile or so to the rear, and when they descried the island's shores their friends were still so well in advance of them that neither ship was within the other's view.

"Say, that must be Nazil down there now," Skeeter declared, as he scanned the panorama below.

Tailspin answered in the affirmative, and, after a moment's silence, Skeeter spoke again. His interest had become focused on the stronghold of Emanuel Casmetto.

"I wonder what that place is," he mentioned. "It has a landing field, but it doesn't fit Inez's description of her father's outfit. Besides, the cabin plane isn't there."

"You're right, Skeets," Tailspin rejoined, "but we've got to stop off here, all the same. We're mighty low in gasoline, and I can't take the chance of going on."

Little dreaming that he was courting danger, the young pilot turned into the wind and descended towards the landing-ground that Skeeter had pointed out, and in a little while the plane was speeding across a dusty compound which was almost entirely surrounded by abode buildings.

Scarcely had the machine come to a standstill than a number of men emerged from one of the dwellings nearby. They were wearing khaki uniforms and sun-helmets, and were armed with rifles and bayonets; and it was in no friendly manner that they sprinted across to the ship and surrounded it.

Tailspin and Skeeter sat motionless in their 'plane as the armed men covered them with their rifles. Sinister-looking fellows they were, these swartly soldiery, but the young Americans did not guess that they were the paid hirelings of Emanuel Casmetto.

One of the men spoke in Spanish, addressing some curt inquiry to the two flyers, but neither Tailspin nor Skeeter had any knowledge of that tongue and could only shake their heads to signify that they did not understand.

"Does anyone speak English here?" Tailspin demanded. "We're on our way to the hacienda of Don Alvarado Casmetto, but we're short of gas."

It was clear that none of the soldiery comprehended him, yet at the mention of Don Alvarado's name sharp glances were exchanged. Then, after a brief discussion among themselves, the group of armed men indicated by gestures that the youngsters must alight from their 'plane.

Tailspin and Skeeter had no recourse but to obey—nor did it occur to them to do otherwise, for even now they were completely ignorant of the dubious nature of their position. Therefore, they clambered out of the cockpits that they had occupied, and without a word they allowed themselves to be escorted across the compound.

They were marched towards a hacienda at the far side of the enclosure, and upon entering this residence they were conveyed to a large, well-furnished room in which two men were seated—one a dark-skinned, thick-set person of truculent expression, the other a tall man with rugged features and shrewd, narrow eyes.

The thick-set person was Emanuel Casmetto, and his companion was Raymore.

One of the soldiers spoke to Casmetto, who listened to him in silence and then, after directing a swift glance at Tailspin and Skeeter, turned to the American who had financed his establishment.

"It appears that these two strangers have made some mention of Don Alvarado," he observed in English.

Raymore started, and eyed the youngsters keenly.

"What's Don Alvarado to you?" he wanted to know.

It was Tailspin who answered him, looking at him steadily the while.

"We've come here to work for him," he explained. "He's engaged us to blaze a trail from the air for a certain pipeline that he intends to lay—"

He paused, for at that moment the door opened and a sallow man in white ducks entered the room. Striding towards Emanuel Casmetto, the inter-rupter engaged the Spaniard in close conversation for a brief spell, and then Casmetto gripped Raymore by the arm.

"A radio message from G," he ground out. "He reports that Frondo crashed to his death on Mandrogos Island! Raymore, there is no longer any doubt that the cabin 'plane which passed overhead a short time ago was the machine flown by my step-brother's partner and the two girls! Nor is there any doubt that these young countrymen of yours, who stand before us now, are the aviators whose services Don Alvarado and Curtis have enlisted. They have admitted it!"

Tailspin and Skeeter had become tense, aware at last that they were in a parlous situation. As for Raymore, his face was a study in dismay.

"Frondo—dead," he breathed. "How did it happen?"

Emanuel Casmetto switched his dark, malevolent eyes upon the two youngsters from Three Point.

"I do not know," he muttered. "You had better ask these fellows here, Raymore."

Tailspin and Skeeter held their peace, however; they had no mind to be communicative now that they realised they were in the presence of foes; and, all attempts to cross-examine them proving fruitless, Casmetto and his associate finally abandoned their inquiries into the fate of their luckless agent.

"Very well, then," Casmetto said harshly. "We will forget Frondo. The fact remains that you are conspiring with my step-brother to rob me of the oil fields of Nazil."

"We haven't conspired at all," Skeeter retorted hotly. "As for robbing you, we've reason to believe that you and this guy Raymore are pretty well up in the art of wholesale looting. Those oil fields belong to Don Alvarado, and you're the ones who are trying—"

"Silence!" Emanuel Casmetto snarled, but Tailspin promptly interposed himself between the mechanic and the Spaniard, facing up to the latter defiantly.

"Listen, you," he said, "we've got a job to do, and we aim to do it. Moreover, we happen to be American citizens, and if you think you can send out some shady aviator to murder us, and get away with it—well, you're liable to run your head right into a noose, see?"

"You show spirit, eh?" Casmetto rapped out, glaring at him. "Maybe you do not understand that I am the Law in this part of Nazil, and that no one questions my authority. American citizens— Bah! you are too far away from your country to talk in that strain."

Ho signed to the armed guards who had brought Tailspin and Skeeter from the compound, and the men closed in on the two prisoners, making it plain that any attempt to escape would be futile. Then Casmetto spoke again.

"We have a dungeon where you will have plenty of time to regret your contract with Curtis and my step-brother," he remarked with an ugly leer. "There you will be kept under lock and key until Senor Raymore and I have decided what should be done with you."

He barked an order to his hirelings, and rough hands were laid upon the captives' shoulders. A moment later the two youngsters were being hustled out of the room, whence they were marched along a dim corridor to a filthy cell built below the level of the ground.

Thrust across the threshold of this prison, Tailspin and Skeeter blundered down half a dozen worn steps to the grimy floor of the apartment, and as the door of the cell was fastened behind them they brought up short within a few feet of a gruesome object that fairly chilled the blood in their veins.

It was a human skeleton enclosed within an iron cage that hung from the dungeon's ceiling—doubtless the remains of some unhappy creature who had fallen foul of Emanuel Casmetto—and with horror in their hearts the youthful Americans recoiled from the grinning countenance which it presented to them.

Averting their glance from the hideous spectacle, they retreated to the middle of the cell and took furtive stock of the room. Dirt and grimo were everywhere, and the atmosphere was permeated with mustiness and decay, the foul air seeming to find no outlet—not even through the solitary window with which the dungeon was provided.

This window was barred with thick



Tailspin and Skeeter sat motionless in their 'plane as the armed men covered them with their rifles.

rods of iron, and it was situated high up in the right-hand wall, flush with the broad compound in which Tailspin and Skeeter had landed some time previously—a circumstance which they discovered when they stumbled towards the aperture for a breath of fresh air.

They made another discovery as they raised themselves on tiptoe and pressed their faces close to the bars. Some of Emanuel Casmetto's underlings were engaged in the task of pushing their plane across to a gasoline pump at the far side of the enclosure.

"They're going to refuel her," said Skeeter.

"Yes, but not for our benefit," Tailspin rejoined grimly. "No doubt Casmetto means to make use of her. He'll probably fit her out with a machine-gun, so's she can take the place of the ship that the Eagle destroyed."

"The Eagle," Skeeter mused, pronouncing the name in a low voice. "I sure wish he was around now. Whoever that guy is, he's certainly on our side."

Tailspin bit his lip.

"Yeah," he said gloomily, "but even the Eagle couldn't get us out of this jam—"

Escape!

HALF an hour after Emanuel Casmetto had ordered the removal of the captives to the dungeon, Bill McGuire was summoned to the room in which the Spaniard and Horace Raymore were seated.

"McGuire," Casmetto told the rotund Yankee cook in peremptory tones. "There are two prisoners in the cell at the end of the corridor. After you have fetched a meal for Senor Raymore and me, you had better take them something to eat. Nothing very palatable, you understand. Bread and water will suffice."

McGuire nodded briskly, and then made his way back to his own quarters, where he prepared a repast for Casmetto and Raymore. This having been served, he next set himself to the task of providing for the occupants of the dungeon, and shortly afterwards he might have been seen tramping along the corridor that led thither.

In his plump hands he carried a tray on which two flagons of water and some slices of bread had been placed, and on reaching the door of the dungeon he exchanged a greeting with a slovenly sentinel who was squatting outside it.

The armed guard made as if to rise and open the door for him, but McGuire restrained him.

"Don't put yourself to any bother, amigo," he said in Spanish, addressing the sentry with some sarcasm. "I've got a key, anyway."

He let himself into the dungeon, and was standing at the top of the steps that led to the floor of it when he gained his first impression of the captives; and at sight of them his florid face was transformed by a look of utter amazement.

It was an expression that was reproduced on the features of Tailspin and Skeeter, for in that corpulent form at the top of the steps they recognised Bill McGuire of the "San Francisco Tribune," a newspaper man who had been in close contact with them some months before, when he had been writing a series of articles on civil aviation!

It was with one accord that the two youngsters started forward to greet him, but McGuire had the presence of mind to prevent them from speaking, and with a quick movement of his head he indicated the sentinel who was huddled in the corridor.

Tailspin and Skeeter drew back, and waited in silence until McGuire had closed the door, set down the tray of

food and joined them on the lower level of the dungeon's floor.

"Mac!" Tailspin said then, speaking in a hushed voice. "What in the world are you doing here? What made you give up the newspaper racket?"

"Yeah, and what brought you to a hornet's nest like this?" Skeeter put in. "Gee, Mac, I thought you were on the staff of the 'Tribune' for life—"

McGuire glanced back over his shoulder cautiously, and then leaned closer to the two friends.

"I'm still in the newspaper racket," he whispered. "Sure, and I'm gettin' the best story that was ever written for the old 'Tribune'—a story that will one day cover the front page, boys. 'Wealthy American financier plans seizure of rich oil fields on tropic island. Supports Spanish terrorist in attempt to plunder Nazi's resources.' Can't you see those headlines?"

Tailspin and Skeeter looked at him dully, too bemused to grasp his meaning.

"Listen," McGuire continued, "you don't think I'd team up with an outfit like Raymore's and Emanuel Casmetto's, do you? No, sir, I'm here on account of an investigation that started way back in San Francisco, and, before I'm through, the whole world will know just what kind of a rat Horace P. Raymore is. But, say, how did you fellers get here?"

They gave a brief account of their adventures, and when they had finished the newspaper man stroked his fat chin thoughtfully. Then he addressed the pair of them in a solemn tone.

"I've got to get you out of this dump," he stated. "There's no tellin' what Raymore and Emanuel Casmetto might do to you. See here, when I close the door of this dungeon it'll lock automatically, but I've got a key with me, and if I give it to you, you can let yourself out."

He produced the key by which he had gained admittance to the cell, and he handed it to Tailspin, who accepted it thankfully enough, though not without some concern regarding the safety of the reporter.

"Won't Raymore and Emanuel suspect you, Mac?" the youthful airman inquired anxiously. "They've only got to find out that your key is missing, and they'll put two and two together."

"Don't worry about me," McGuire rejoined. "I'll tell 'em you must've stolen it from me while I was dishin' out your grub. But listen, wait until high noon before you make your getaway. Everybody around here will be takin' a siesta then. It gets too hot for 'em to stay awake."

A minute or two later the newspaper man stepped out of the dungeon, and as the door closed behind him Tailspin and Skeeter were left alone in the murky atmosphere of their prison, where they whiled away an hour that seemed like an eternity.

By that time the sun was at its zenith, and was beating down upon the compound and the surrounding dwellings with blistering fierceness, so that even in the dark confines of the dungeon the heat was almost unbearable.

By that time, also, the drone of a man's snoring was audible to the captives beyond the stout door of their prison, a sound which told them that the sentry in the corridor had lapsed into a deep slumber.

They waited another quarter of an hour, and then Tailspin broke the silence that had befallen upon them.

"I guess it's now or never, Skeets," he said.

"I'm ready when you are, Tommy," his mechanic answered in an undertone.

Together they moved across to the steps and climbed to the door, and a moment later Tailspin was inserting the key in the lock. Softly he turned it, and, as he drew open the door without a sound, he and his chum saw the recumbent form of the sentinel beyond the threshold, his rifle lying athwart his knees.

The two friends crept out of the cell, and, coming abreast of the sentry, Skeeter stooped to lay hold of the man's rifle. In doing so he must have disturbed the sleeper, for the fellow roused himself all at once, but, ere he could apprehend what was happening, or give vent to any outcry, Tailspin leapt on him pantherishly and dealt him a blow that scattered his wits.

Next second, the young aviator and his mechanic were hurrying along the corridor, and soon they had gained the compound, where they espied their plane standing near the gasoline pump from which it had been refueled.

There were a couple of soldiers drowsing in the shadow cast by its wings, and these were startled into wakefulness as Tailspin and Skeeter arrived beside the machine. One fell to the butt of the mechanic's borrowed rifle, however, and the other to the bunched knuckles of the pilot's right hand—and both were lying prone on the ground when the ship took off with the young Americans ensconced in the cockpits.

It was the sudden roar of the 'plane's motor that raised a general alarm in the stronghold of Emanuel Casmetto, and as the craft was still climbing steeply from the compound groups of armed men swarmed from the buildings on every hand. Then there ensued a desultory blatter of musketry, and hot lead whistled close to the ascending fugitives.

Several of the bullets ricocheted off the fuselage of the 'plane, but the occupants were unscathed, and the swift-moving ship bore them higher and yet higher till there was little to fear from the rifles of their foes.

A graver danger threatened them, however. For some of Emanuel Casmetto's hirelings had dashed across the compound to an anti-aircraft gun, and soon this was being trained upon the soaring aeroplane.

"Tommy," Skeeter gasped, "they're going to blast us out of the sky with shell-fire!"

Tailspin scarcely heard him. His head was turned towards the north, and his eyes were riveted upon an object that had appeared amongst the clouds. It was another 'plane, a 'plane of unmistakable design—and one which the two youngsters from Three Point had learned to regard with a friendly if bewildered gaze.

"The Eagle!" Tailspin ejaculated.

The mystery ship was bearing down on Emanuel Casmetto's stronghold, was above the compound before the men at the anti-aircraft gun could load the breech; and suddenly a stream of death was raking them, cutting them down where they stood.

Discharged through the propeller-shaft of the Eagle's 'plane, the rain of iron swept half the gun crew out of existence and drove the other half into a panic-stricken flight. It was a fight in which the remainder of Casmetto's hirelings joined as the withering fire spread right and left amidst them, and in the space of a few minutes the entire compound had been cleared—except for those who had fallen under the fusillade.

Ere then, Tailspin and Skeeter were flying in a south-westerly direction over the rolling panorama of Nazi, and as

they looked back they saw once again the phenomenon of the smoke-screen that poured from the exhaust of the Eagle's 'plane and masked his departure. "We're safe!" breathed Tailspin. "Safe—thanks to McGuire and the Eagle."

"Yeah, and I wish I knew who the Eagle was," Skeeter declared fervently, "and why he's takin' so much interest in us."

The Three Point 'plane cruised onward, with the indicator on the wing registering a speed of well over a hundred miles an hour, and some time later its pilot and passenger descried a large settlement on the fringes of the island's seaboard.

This, beyond all doubt, was the domicile of Don Alvarado Casmetto. They recognised it from a description that Juez had given them, and as they dropped towards it they saw the cabin 'plane standing at the edge of a landing field which was overlooked by an impressive hacienda.

Five minutes later Tailspin and Skeeter were under escort of a group of soldiery once more, but this time the reception was friendly, and they were at once conducted into Don Alvarado's palatial home, where they met with a warm welcome.

Having been introduced to the Don, they proceeded to explain why they had been delayed, and their audience listened to their story in an awe-stricken silence. Then Inez's father spoke:

"You have had a sample of my stepbrother's tactics," he said slowly. "You will realise now why this once-peaceful settlement of mine is an armed camp, and why I curse the day that I ever allowed Emanuel to establish himself in the northern part of the island. Incidentally, a portion of the great oil fields lies within his domain."

"Has he developed it at all?" Tailspin inquired.

"I believe work has begun," Don Alvarado replied, "but he has spent most of his time and a great deal of Raymore's money in building fortifications. You see, there have already been outbreaks of hostility between his people and mine, and the day is fast approaching when one or the other of us must fall."

"What's the extent of these fortifications you've mentioned?" Skeeter put in. "How strong are they?"

"That I do not know," the Don answered, "but it would be advisable to find out, and you and Senor Tompkins are the ones who can do it. You can reconnoitre them from the air, and—photograph them."

"That should be easy enough," Tailspin commented. "Skeeter's packed a motion-picture camera, and we can get the whole lay-out for you to-morrow. We'll leave for the north immediately after breakfast."

This was agreed upon, and the remainder of the day was spent in a quiet and restful manner. Towards evening, however, Skeeter devoted himself to the task of overhauling his camera, and was engaged on this job when a visitor arrived at the hacienda.

The visitor was Garcia, and Garcia lingered for some time at the residence of Don Alvarado, learning during the course of his stay something of the arrangements for the morrow; and when at length he took himself off, his first concern was to communicate with Emanuel Casmetto, stepbrother of the man who trusted him.

Little did Don Alvarado know that Garcia was an enemy in the guise of a friend. Little did he know, when he went out on to the flying field the fol-

lowing morning, that the mission on which Tailspin and Skeeter were to depart might well be their last.

Accompanied by Curtis, Inez and Betty Lou, the Don followed the two youthful Americans across the landing ground to their 'plane, and a little while later he was calling "Adios!" to them as the craft moved off, a graceful, bird-like vessel that taxied rapidly across the level sward and rose into the air on wide wings.

Later still, Don Alvarado again heard the roar of a motor on the field, and an agitated retainer brought news to him that his daughter and Betty Lou had departed for the north in the cabin 'plane.

It was a piece of news that affected Curtis more than it did Alvarado Casmetto.

"I might have guessed something like this would happen," the American said. "Betty urged me last night to let her follow Tommy and Skeeter with that cabin 'plane, but I naturally refused. That niece of mine is going to get herself into trouble one day with her foolhardiness."

"Well, there is no reason why she should meet trouble to-day, Senor Curtis," Don Alvarado observed. "This reconnaissance of my stepbrother's fortifications should be a simple matter, especially as Emanuel will not be prepared for it."

Thus spoke the Don, and for a while he might have retained that complacency of spirit even if it had been possible for him to witness the progress of his two intrepid agents when they reached the northern tracts which were under Emanuel's sway.

Scouting above the panorama at a height of several thousand feet, Tailspin

gave Skeeter ample opportunity of using his camera effectively, and again and again shots were obtained of defensive works created by Raymore and Don Alvarado's stepbrother.

It was a reconnaissance that was carried off without incident until the young aeronauts from Three Point sighted a derrick which marked an attempt by Raymore and Emanuel to here for oil.

A number of men were gathered near the derrick—holding themselves in readiness for a grim act of war, had Tailspin and Skeeter but known it. And as the Three Point 'plane flew within range there was a sudden rush towards a shrouded object that proved to be an anti-aircraft gun.

Thirty seconds later the muzzle of that weapon belched destruction, and as the thunder of the discharge went echoing through the island's hills and forests, a shell burst to the left of the two American flyers, scattering shrapnel in all directions.

Tailspin exchanged a glance with Skeeter, whose face was a study in consternation.

"Looks as if those guys down there had expected us, Skeets," he said tersely, his voice reaching the mechanic through the earphones attached to the latter's flying-helmet. "Yeah, and prepared a welcome for us, too!"

"I was 'thinkin' the same!" gasped Skeeter. "The way they turned out to man that gun—it was just as if they'd been layin' for us. Tommy, do you suppose someone from Don Alvarado's hacienda could've tipped 'em off? Do you suppose somebody back there is playin' a double game?"

It certainly seemed as if treacherous information had been conveyed to Emanuel Casmetto's party, else why should an attempt be made to wreck a passing 'plane that might have no connection with the Don's organisation?

"A spy in our camp, eh?" the Three Point aviator breathed. "Well, this is no time to figure it out, anyway. They're loading the breech again."

Tailspin promptly drew back the joystick and climbed steeply—was still climbing when a second shell exploded close at hand—and suddenly pilot and observer felt the 'plane lurch sickeningly, knew that it had been hit!

Almost simultaneously they were blinded by streaming jets of gasoline that spurted from a damaged wing-tank, and their knuckles were pressed into their tortured eyes as the craft plunged to disaster.

(To be continued in another grand episode next week. By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Clark Williams and Noah Beery, Jun.)

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"THE GREAT IMPERSONATION"

(Continued from page 20)

He glanced at his wrist-watch. "There is plenty of time before dinner."

Seaman had got so much rubbish and debris on the north side of Dominey Hall that it was quite a task getting to the Tower. He explained that it discouraged visitors. Eventually they climbed the circular stairs of the Tower till almost level with the battlements. A heavy door was their object.

"This is an attic, full of dust," chuckled Seaman. "Come and have a look."

Three times he rapped, and then the door swung open and the two men stepped inside.

It was Du Baret, Seaman's assistant, who had admitted them. The only other person there was a footman, who was seated before a large switchboard. Dominey glanced round at everything, and then grinned his appreciation at Seaman.

"I must say you've handled this job well. Looks to me like the very latest in radio stations."

"It is," Seaman walked across and touched a switch. "This makes the radio antenna pass through the trap-door in the roof. Watch!"

Dominey saw a frame that was obviously an aerial move towards the roof, saw a trap-door open, and gasped his surprise.

"No, sir—not in day-time!" begged Du Baret.

Seaman turned back the switch.

"All right, Hugo, I know." The apparatus slid back into place. Seaman pointed to a lever. "One signal from this and the country's helpless. Either Hugo or Hansen is always on duty."

Dominey shook his head.

"But I don't understand."

"Every one of our operators has a receiving set," Seaman explained. "The instant that we are sure that England will enter the war this sends out a warning, and all the strategic military bases all over the nation are wiped out. You wonder how. Our men have their instructions and the necessary explosives."

"Where are the men?"

"In houses—offices—shops."

Dominey peered at the various gadgets.

"Should I not have a list of them, in case something happens to you?"

"I'll go over the details with you in the morning," Seaman decided. "We'll clean out my London offices and move everything here."

"A very wise move."

"By the way, Sir Everard, cultivate Lord Allison," hinted Seaman. "An old family friend of your wife and a man whom you seem to get on with very well. He is Minister of Munitions. Also get busy with that idea of standing for Parliament—think of the secrets you can unearth."

"I know that all the plants with which Lord Allison is connected are running at capacity," answered Dominey. "I hope to get the names of all these plants, strength of personnel, guards, ammunition being made, et cetera, within the next few days."

"Excellent!" Seaman was delighted, then his face became serious. "But be careful of the princess. That woman might be dangerous."

The princess was delighted to stay the week-end, and she watched Sir Everard like a cat watches a mouse, February 29th, 1936.

and her anger and jealousy grew as she noticed the attention that the adventurer bestowed on Lady Dominey. Obvious also that Leopold was trying to avoid her.

The Duke and Duchess of Devon and many distinguished guests came to Dominey Hall. Eddie Pelham, the friend of the duchess, was there, and Dominey tried unsuccessfully to palm Eddie off on the princess, but without success.

Dominey was talking to Seaman about his Parliamentary venture—well aware that Stephanie was waiting to pounce on him—when a butler informed him that a Mr. Wolff wished to see Sir Everard. Seaman gave an understanding nod, and the two men hurried to the library. A big man, obviously a foreigner, bowed as they entered.

"How are you, Wolff?" Seaman cried. "This is Sir Everard Dominey—you may speak freely."

"The neutral countries have applied to England for aid," stated Wolff.

"England can't refuse," said Sir Everard.

Seaman gave a shrug.

"I don't know—she may."

"Sir Ivan cabled me to get maps showing the points to be attacked here," continued Wolff. "I am to take it to him."

"It was completed this afternoon."

Seaman produced a long envelope. "I was expecting you."

"Thank you." Wolff placed the envelope in his pocket. "One other matter before I leave. It concerns Sir Everard. A very disquieting rumour has reached us from our representative in Africa. A native chieftain says that the Englishman is not dead."

"Not dead!" Seaman looked in consternation at Sir Everard. "Didn't you make sure?"

"He came to my camp raving drunk," rasped Dominey. "He had been deserted by all but one boy. To finish him was simple."

"Well, it must have been just a rumour," said Wolff. "Sir Ivan thought you should know." He glanced at his watch. "I suppose there isn't a car that could take me to the station—must get back to-night."

"Mr. Pelham is going back to London to-night," cried Sir Everard. "I will have him drive you to town."

When Wolff had gone the two men went back to the guests.

"That rumour worries me," muttered Seaman.

"Pure nonsense!" scoffed his confederate. "Is it not dangerous for Wolff to be carrying that map around England?"

"It means nothing to anybody who doesn't understand our plans," explained Seaman. "I alone know the names of our men."

Stephanie was standing by a table laden with glasses, and she eyed the two men narrowly as they approached. Seaman, with a word of apology, went off to dance with the duchess.

"Don't you think you could be spared to walk on the terrace?" suggested the princess.

"I'm afraid not—it's too risky—you'll excuse me."

Sir Everard left her and looked across to Lady Dominey, who smiled her welcome.

Stephanie's expression became shrewish, and after a moment's hesitation she slipped away to the study.

"Operator, get me the Lafayette Hotel in Calais," she whispered into the phone. "Quick!"

It was half an hour before the princess got through to Calais. And as a result of the conversation Dr. Trenk promised

to leave for London immediately, and would come direct to Dominey Hall.

The Black Bog

WHEN the guests had retired to their rooms Sir Everard escorted Lady Dominey to her suite. He did not attempt to kiss her.

"A few weeks ago I could scarcely walk." She smiled. "Aren't you glad I'm better?"

"You know I am."

"You're so kind." Her eyes sought his. "You do care for me, don't you?"

"More than anything on earth," he reassured her.

"I know I shouldn't, but that's the way I feel about you."

His eyes were startled.

"Why shouldn't you?"

"Because I know you're not my husband," she told him. "I've suspected it for some while, but to-day I just seem to know."

"But, Eleanor, that is absurd. Why

"My husband was so reckless, wild, and helpless. You're so thoughtful and considerate. And you never kiss me. Then your moustache curls upwards. Who—"

Lady Dominey never completed the sentence, because a wailing scream pierced the stillness of the night. It came from beneath the window of the room.

In a moment Lady Dominey seemed to change. Her eyes became wide and staring, and she looked at him with horror and dread.

"It's Roger—Roger!" she whispered. "Can't you hear him?" She looked at him and shrank away. "You're covered with his blood." With that she fainted.

Sir Everard handed the unconscious Lady Dominey over to the nurse and went to his room. He was determined to clear up this mystery, and he felt that the solution lay with the Black Bog.

Very early Middleton was roused, and the two men rode down to the Black Bog. Here Sir Everard dismounted and walked along the edge of the morass.

"Middleton, look at this." He pointed. "Spirits don't leave tracks." There were marks of huge feet going into the heart of the Black Bog. "I know how to settle this one. Middleton, get some men and dig a ditch here and connect it with the stream. The ditch will drain off a great deal of the water. Get fifty drums of kerosene, run it through this end of the bog, then surround it. When I give the word we fire it."

"I'll have to pay double wages, sir."

"Pay treble if necessary," ordered his master. "Now get busy."

Dominey returned to the house to find Seaman for the first time showing signs of panic. He had got to go up to London at once. Wolff had been arrested.

"The report hasn't been confirmed yet, but we can't be too careful." Seaman held out a large envelope. "I am handing you these papers for safe keeping. There is a list of spies you may find useful—they'll do anything for money. Also the designs of the latest U boats. We may be able to trade them for some information here."

"You would betray your own country?"

"We owe allegiance to no nation," Seaman answered. "Guard these papers well."

"Rely on me," Dominey nodded. "By the way, is the list of our operatives here?"

"No, I'll give you that later—I have no time now." Seaman looked at his watch. "I must hurry. I may return to-night—that depends on Sir Ivan."

After Seaman had departed Dominey

enjoyed a hearty breakfast. Middleton appeared to report that the job was in hand, and would be ready to burn by dusk. Breakfast was nearly finished when Eddie Pelham appeared.

"Hallo, Eddie, when did you get back?"

"Just arrived. Been driving for hours."

Dominey tossed across the packet. "Lock this in the desk in my study, and then get some rest."

Later in the day a dishevelled Mrs. Unthank demanded to see Sir Everard Dominey.

"You plan to burn the Black Bog?" she demanded.

"I do."

"If you go on you will not live through this night."

"Your threats don't scare me. I'll take that chance."

Mrs. Unthank reeled back.

"Everard Dominey never spoke like that. Who are you?"

He did not answer, but turned his head. A strange, unusual sound came to them. Mrs. Unthank rushed to the window.

"You fiend! You demon!" she raved. "Stop it! Stop it!"

Dr. Harrison and two of the footmen appeared—they had been waiting.

"Take care of her, doctor," Dominey ordered, and hurried from the room.

The bog was blazing furiously when Dominey joined Middleton. They walked along the wall of fire to see that every man was at an interval of seven paces. Suddenly there was a hoarse screaming. Right in the heart of the flames they saw a creature that looked like a gorilla. Screaming hoarsely, it vanished from sight.

The screaming came nearer, and it was too much for some of the superstitious workers—they fled. Through the flames dashed a misshapen, bearded creature that snarled and showed terrible teeth. Huge hands swung a great club. As Dominey and Middleton raced towards the creature it turned, and, screaming horribly, dashed off towards the Hall.

"Don't let him get away!" Middleton shouted to his men.

Dr. Harrison had succeeded in quietening to some extent the sobs and moans of Mrs. Unthank when from the great Hall came the sound of terrible screaming. The doctor was startled out of his wits, but it brought Mrs. Unthank to her feet. She rushed out of the room.

Dominey, Middleton, the local policeman, and a score of men burst into the Hall. They found Dr. Harrison bending over the unconscious figure of Middleton's daughter.

"She's only fainted," the doctor reported. "But this weal on her face shows that someone struck her or knocked her down."

"He's in here!" Dominey jumped for the stairs. "We've got to capture him before—"

He recoiled as the sound of that terrible screaming rang through the Hall, and then came the sound of a woman's cry of fear and agony. On the landing above they saw the creature with Lady Dominey in its arms, and as Dominey leaped up the stairs there came a shot.

They saw the creature scream horribly, drop Lady Dominey, and sway back against the stairs as if seeking to escape. At the very top the creature swayed and then crashed down in a huddled heap, to come to rest in a hideous, contorted shape by Sir Everard's feet. More drama was to follow. A voice from the top of the stairs spoke. It was Mrs. Unthank, and in her hand was a gun.

"I saved my son." She looked at Dominey. "I'd rather have him dead

than have you get him. I know it was wrong keeping him there and taking him food—upsetting her. But he was happier that way—happier than he would have been shut up with a lot of crazy people. He loved her—I loved him. We kill the things we love." The gun slipped from her hands.

The policeman rushed forward and seized Mrs. Unthank by the arm, whilst the others stared curiously at the dead Roger.

Sir Everard left Mrs. Unthank in Dr. Harrison's charge, instructed Middleton to remove the body, and himself carried the limp form of his wife back to her room. She seemed so lifeless that he yelled for Dr. Harrison to come at once.

"After a shock like this, if she pulls through she may be perfectly normal or her case may be hopeless." He gestured towards the door. "Hear that noise—that's Mrs. Unthank. She's quite mad and raving about all that happened on the fatal night. That mystery is cleared up." He bent down. "There are signs she is coming round. I think it would be unwise for you to stay."

Sir Everard was pacing up and down outside the bed-room when a servant appeared to say that Mr. Seaman had just arrived and wished to speak to him.

To Save England

SEAMAN looked pale and worried. "Sir Ivan has left England but sent me a message. I must leave for the Continent at once. You will be in full charge here. England will declare war to-night."

"How do you know?"

"My information is always correct," Seaman pointed to the clock. "It is now eight-thirty. At nine we send our signal and carry out our plan. You know the code word?"

"Strike!" answered Dominey. "But with you gone I must know who all our men are."

Seaman produced a list. "All the names are here. Woolwich and Rosyth will be destroyed first."

"Excellent. I'll give the signal at nine." He touched a bell. "Eddie Pelham is here and running up to London on a job for me—he'll give you a lift."

"I can't see why you encourage that young ass round here," Seaman muttered. "No brains."

"Nor have a lot of other people," said Dominey. "But Eddie is a good driver. Ah, here he is. Eddie, you're

taking the roadster to town—I want you to give Mr. Seaman a lift."

"I'll be ready in five minutes, Sir Everard." His eyelid seemed to twitch.

Scarce had Pelham gone when the door opened, and who should walk in but Princess Stephanie and Dr. Trenk.

"Hallo! Thought you had gone back to town this morning!" cried Seaman.

"I went back to meet Dr. Trenk," Stephanie spoke clearly. "For some while I have been suspicious of our friend here. He played the part of Sir Everard Dominey too well. Dr. Trenk will identify him."

"My dear doctor, this is a great pleasure," Dominey's voice had changed. It was harsher and had an accent.

Dr. Trenk stepped closer.

"Your accent does not deceive me," he cried. "You are not Baron Leopold von Ragastein. It is the Englishman!"

"What?" gasped the incredulous Seaman.

The princess pushed the doctor to one side.

"What did you do with Leopold?"

"Baron von Ragastein is dead," Dominey answered, and turned to Dr. Trenk. "When you discussed your plans with Von Ragastein, to do away with me, you should have chosen a house with thicker walls."

"So you tricked us!" raved Seaman, and whipped out a gun.

Crash! Dominey had swung his fist hard to the crook's jaw. Before Trenk could make trouble Dominey seized him by the shoulders and hurled him across the room. A rush to the door, and Dominey laughed as he locked the door.

Outside the house Eddie Pelham was waiting.

"Get to London headquarters quick. Tell them to round up these spies!"

The car roared away, and Dominey charged back into the house. Middleton, a number of plain-clothes detectives, and several servants appeared—they had been told to stand by in case they might be needed.

"Upstairs—my study!" Dominey shouted.

A gun crashed. Seaman had blown the lock away with his gun and escaped. Dominey knew he would make for the North Tower. The time was now ten minutes to nine.

In the study Princess Stephanie stood with her back against the desk, whilst Dr. Trenk cowered back against the window.

"Watch them!" Dominey rapped out, and was gone. "Some of you men follow me."

Dominey flung open the door that led into the North Tower.

Crack! A bullet ricocheted past his head but he did not hesitate. Up the stone stairs he charged, and saw Seaman ahead of him. He flung himself flat as the gun spoke again, but the shot had gone wide of the mark. The traitor did not wait, but moved towards the radio-room—the message "Strike" must be sent.

Near the door Dominey caught up and flung himself on the other's shoulder, but Seaman managed to wriggle free, and, bringing up the gun, fired blindly. Dominey staggered, fell and slipped down the hard stone stairs. The other laughed vindictively and swung open the door of the radio-room.

Painfully, Dominey got to his feet and staggered to the open door, clutching at his shoulder.

"Quick! Send the message!" Seaman shouted to Hansen, the footman.

From his pocket Dominey drew out a gun and, summoning his failing strength, fired at the valves on the switchboard. The tubes were shattered and the set ruined. With a snarl of fury, Seaman

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"HEIR TO TROUBLE."—Ken Armstrong, Ken Mynard; Jane Parker, Joan Perry; John Molloy, Harry Woods; The Davis, Martin Faust; Hawk Carter, Harry Bowen; Spurs Hawkins, Wally Wales; Tillie Tilks, Dorothy Wolbert; Amanda Witherpoon, Fern Emmett; Bill Dwyer, Pat O'Malley; Tarzan, Himself.

"THE GREAT IMPERSONATION"—Sir Everard Dominey and Baron Leopold von Ragastein, Edmund Lowe; Elmor Dominey, Valerie Hobson; Princess Stephanie, Vera Engels; Seaman, Murray Kimmell; Eddie Pelham, Henry Mollison; Mrs. Unthank, Esther Dale; Middleton, Brandon Hurst; Dr. Harrison, Ivan Simpson; Duchess Caroline, Spring Byington; Duke Henry, Lumsden Hare; Sir Ivan Bruan, Charles Waldron; Mangan, Leonard Mudie; Sir Gerard Hume, Claude King; Dr. Trenk, Frank Reicher; Parkins, Harry Allen.

swung round to shoot down the man who had ruined his plans. The detectives burst into the room, a gun roared and Seaman collapsed in a heap.

With a groan Dominey sank to the floor.

"Are you hurt, sir?" cried the distressed Middleton, as he bent over the prostrate body of his master. Sir Everard groaned feebly and went limp in his arms.

One detective stood over the prostrate form of Seaman, whilst another covered the bogus servant. They were not taking any chances against these two traitors.

Dr. Harrison was summoned, and after a quick examination, reported that a bullet was embedded in Sir Everard's shoulder, and that though there was no immediate danger it was essential that an ambulance take the wounded man to London.

With the help of Eddie Pelham, who had been in the know about Sir Everard's true identity almost from the start, a whole nest of traitors and spies was arrested and enough explosive to blow up most of London was seized. The Secret Service had been keeping a close watch on Sir Ivan Brum, and with the help of the French police the millionaire owner of Internationale Munitions was arrested in Paris.

In a private ward of the big hospital Sir Everard Dominey was propped up in bed. He was reading a number of daily papers, and the headlines made him smile: "Sir Everard Dominey Exposes Internationale Munitions Ring—Sir Everard's Thrilling Exploit Rewarded."

The door opened and in stepped a very beautiful woman. Lady Dominey kissed her husband fondly and proudly—she was completely cured from Mrs. Unthank's hypnotic influence.

"Sir Gerard Hume wishes to see you, dear," whispered his wife.

Sir Gerard was brief. "The War Office needs men like you. You must hurry up and get well"—a glance at Lady Dominey. "With a nurse like this it should be a matter of minutes."

"Give me a week and I'm game for anything," laughed Sir Everard.

"A week it shall be," answered Sir Gerard Hume, and talked for a while of the war and how an offensive had been begun on a hundred-mile front. "You've done a great thing for England, Sir Everard," were his parting words.

"England has done a great thing—for me!" retorted Sir Everard, and smiled at his beautiful and happy wife.

(By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Edmund Lowe in the dual rôle of Sir Everard Dominey and Baron Leopold von Ragastein.)

"HEIR TO TROUBLE"

(Continued from page 12)

hammer in the door with lumps of rock—and Dwyer raced away to the buckboard, sprang up on to it, and snatched the reins from the driver's hands.

Motley, holding the baby, yelled to him to stop, but with bullets singing past his ears Dwyer turned the horses and sent them careering downhill.

The miners and surface workers had disappeared, the door of the shack was sagging on its hinges, and the cowpunchers were swarming round Ken whom they had released. Motley scurried over to the plunger, deposited the baby on the ground, and stood waiting.

Ken saw him. "Gimme that gun, Hank," he said, and with his chum's six-shooter in his hand advanced towards the crook.

The rest of the outfit followed him, but Tarzan had caught sight of the baby on the ground and sensed danger for his charge. Off he ran round the rocks, passing Ike Davis, who was lurking there with a rifle in his left hand, and he reached the boulder.

Motley stood over the plunger, wild-eyed and desperate.

"The game's up, Motley," said Ken sternly when he and his companions were within twenty yards of him. "You'd better come quiet!"

"Don't come any closer," roared Mot-

ley, "or I'll blow us all up! This place is undermined! Clear out!"

Ken stopped short, and as he did so he saw Tarzan streak round the boulder, pick the baby up in its clothes between his teeth, and gallop off with it back behind the rocks.

"There's nothing else for us to do, boys," he said. "Let's fall back slowly."

Reluctantly the cowpunchers backed away from the instrument of destruction and the man who crouched over it. But Ike Davis had climbed a rock, and on the top of it he rested the rifle, took aim, and, with the forefinger of his left hand, pulled the trigger.

A shot rang out and Motley, with a bullet in his back, fell forward over the plunger.

A terrific explosion followed, almost, as it seemed, under the feet of Ken and his friends. The mouth of the mine belched smoke and fragments of rock, a cloud of dust ascended, and for a few minutes everything was blotted out by a pall of blackness.

The earth was shaken by that explosion, and several of the cowpunchers fell flat upon their faces. But gradually the air cleared, and the dust and the debris settled; but Ike Davis had been shaken from his perch and had broken his neck, and John Motley was dead.

Tarzan came running round the rocks with the baby, and the baby was unharmed.

"Good work, old man," said Ken shakily. "You saved his life!"

Jane came driving up on Motley's buggy. Tired of waiting for Ken in his shack she had just started off for home when the explosion had frightened her nearly out of her wits, but it had caused her to turn in the direction of Motley's mine.

She saw Ken with the baby in his arms, and Tarzan when fussed over by the boys of the Bar-X. She stopped the buggy and sprang down from it, and she ran to Ken with outstretched hands.

"Oh, Ken," she cried in a panic, "whatever's happened? Whatever's happened? Are you hurt?"

"Not me," replied Ken grimly, "but your friend Motley's come to a bad end, and it looks like he's made a wreck of his mine!"

She looked down at the baby, and it smiled at her; she looked at Ken and caught hold of his arms.

"I've been an idiot, Ken," she said, with tears in her eyes. "Can you forgive me?"

"So far as I'm concerned," he replied, kissing her in front of all the cowpunchers, "there's nothing to forgive. But it does look uncommon like as though we might have to take a baby with us on our honeymoon, Jane!"

(By permission of Columbia Pictures Corporation, Ltd., starring Ken Maynard.)

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"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Here we are again! Bill Adams and his bonny, bounding, boxing wonders. And when Bill Adams, former light-weight champion of the world, says they're wonders you can bet they're boxing wizards."

The scene was Banbury Fair, one evening in early May. The booth was a dilapidated one, lighted by spluttering oil lamps, and its walls were decorated with badly drawn and very faded pictures of famous boxers of the past. On the platform outside the tent stood a little man in a grey suit—much worn—and wearing a grey bowler, almost white from much washing. He was beating upon a large drum. With arms folded across their chests were his boxing wonders; squatting on the platform was a huge bulldog, as a symbol of English pluck and endurance.

Such was the boxing-booth of the famous Bill Adams. His men were billed as coming champions, but a humorist remarked that he reckoned they should be billed as "going." The thin, weedy boxer with the mournful expression was Perky Pat, the much-too-fat veteran was Hurricane Hal, whilst the other two were of no importance because they were just fair hands who stopped well and helped to make a show. The admission prices were sixpence and a shilling. The crowd was small and not very enthusiastic or eager for admission.

"Here I have a stable of as likely a bunch of lads as ever hit the squared circle," shouted Bill. "Walk up! Walk up! The world's greatest demonstration of scientific pugilism is about to start. Bill Adams, the man what never lets you down, has a bunch, with every one the March 14th, 1936.

fighting technique at their finger-tips—a knock-out in every punch."

Feeble clapping but no attempt towards entering the booth.

"Ladies and gentlemen, just to whet your appetites, I'm going to introduce to you the greatest fighter of the day." A curtain was pulled aside and on to the platform stepped a tall, fierce, unshaven rascal, who squared his mighty shoulders and scowled like a gorilla. "I have the honour to present Big Bob Ruffer, heavy-weight champion of the Navy, three years cruiser-weight champion of Brittany, the Canary Islands, Jamaica and British Somaliland." As an afterthought, he added: "And Champion of Australia."

"I come from Australia," cried a voice from the crowd. "And I thought—"

"As I was saying, the Champion of Austria," Bill cried quickly. "Ladies and gentlemen, the champ challenges any gent present who thinks he can stay three rounds. And if he does, I, personally, will pay him the magnificent sum of five guineas. What gent will have a go?"

"I will," boomed a voice, and a broad-chested man pushed his way to the front. "I'll knock his block off."

"Blimey!" Bill muttered, then spoke out of the corner of his mouth to Pat, who was holding a pair of boxing-gloves. "Give 'im the go-by."

"Gimme the gloves," boomed the man, who was a blacksmith.

"Don't let 'im have 'em," whispered Bill. "Chuck 'em to somebody soft."

Strange how a fair will lure people with the sound of its strident music of the roundabouts, the shouts of the coconut-shy owners and other stalls. A tall, peaceful youth, rather clumsy of build and wearing thick, horn-rimmed

spectacles, felt the lure and somehow found himself before the boxing-booth. Pat spotted him as a mug, and tossed him the gloves, which he foolishly caught.

"Good lad!" roared Bill. "Step this way!"

Thus did Don Carter, who was down on a week's holiday, get involved in the boxing game. Before he knew what was happening he had been pushed on to the platform, and everyone was cheering—except the blacksmith, who was muttering something about a frame-up.

"But I don't want—" began the sallow youth.

"Go on!" yelled Bill to drown his words. "He won't hurt you."

"But I can't box."

Bill winked to the other boxers, and Don Carter was taken into the tent, whether he liked it or not. Quite a fair proportion of the crowd followed, and most of them had sixpennyworth, much to Bill's annoyance.

Now, a tall, handsome woman and a very pretty young girl chanced to come to Banbury Fair. Mrs. Stafford, known to most of her friends as Aunt Fanny, had a country house not many miles away, and staying with her was her niece, Ann Haydon. Fearing that eighteen-year-old Ann might be a little bored with country life she took her to the fair, and after sampling the various stalls they were making for the car when they passed the booth. Pat, at the pay box, was shouting mournfully to those that seemed loath to part with sixpence, that a titanic struggle for a purse of five guineas was about to start. A battle of giants.

"Room for a few more only," moaned Pat. "Ruffer, the champ, versus the Mystery Man. Walk up! Walk up!"

"A fight!" cried Aunt Fanny, her eyes alight. "Come on, Ann!"
 "But won't it be rough and gory?" protested the girl.
 Aunt Fanny snorted.
 "It'd better be, or I'll demand my money back. Come on!"

They were given ring-side seats. Aunt Fanny looked first at the big Ruffer, and curled her lip, then inspected the Mystery Man. Don had stripped to the waist, but looked strange wearing trousers that seemed to want to come down. She had to smile at the thick, horn-rimmed glasses.

Hurricane Harry was acting as a second and was holding Don's coat and waistcoat. Aunt Fanny saw the young challenger take out something thin and brittle from his pocket.

"That's a very old piece of church window," said the young man. "It's very valuable to me. I collect stained glass, you know."

"You think about yer business," muttered Harry. "And let's 'ave these windows as a start." He removed the spectacles.

"Now for the fight of the century," Bill Adams shouted from the centre of the ring. "A three-round contest for a purse of five guineas. Let me introduce the antagonists. On my left, Big Bob Ruffer, the champion—undefeated." Little applause, much to his disappointment. "On my right, the Mystery Man from Nowhere—the great Unknown. One hundred and sixty pounds of dynamic energy."

"Cut the tackle!" yelled a voice.
 "Such a kid against that big hulk," whispered Ann to her aunt. "It seems a shame."

"Don't be too sure," answered Mrs. Stafford. "The kid looks fit; the big palooka's full of fat and beer."

The preliminaries finished, the two men shook hands and the bout commenced with sparring tactics. Ruffer was playing with his man.

"How much in the 'ouse?" whispered Bill Adams by the ropes.

"Two pounds three shillings and a French franc," Pat answered. "I hope Ruffer—"

"Pipe down," hissed Bill, and moved away. He was also acting as referee of the fight.

Ruffer suddenly let loose a number of wild swings. Carter instinctively ducked and backed away hastily. Ruffer, leering horribly, went after him. The boxers circled the ring, Ruffer swinging wildly and Carter just managing to stay out of reach.

"What's this?" shouted the blacksmith, who had got into the tent somehow. "A walking match?"

The youngster was much lighter on his feet than the ponderous Ruffer. He continued to back away, and Ruffer at last lost patience, flung himself forward, and loosed a mighty swing. Carter ducked and Ruffer swung round like a top. It was the Mystery Man's chance and he smacked the champ hard on the ear. Ruffer staggered, let out a bellow of rage and rushed at the man who had dared to strike him. The collector of glass did not like his expression and ran, with Ruffer chasing round the ring after him.

"Run home to yer granny and let a real feller tackle him!" roared the blacksmith.

The bell sounded the end of round one. The crowd had enjoyed the fight for more reasons than one. It was the funniest fight they had ever seen, and they had seen the big ape get a sock in the ear. In their excitement several clambered up the poles of the tent for a better view.

"If I was you, I'd try and hit him," Bill Adams advised his man a little anxiously. The champ was puffing and blowing.

Don Carter, in his corner, was as fresh as a daisy. The simple youth was rather enjoying the experience, and for some extraordinary reason he had a keen desire to hit the champ in the face.

Bill Adams glanced across the ring.

"I'll advise him to wade into you," he whispered. "Then let him have it."

The champion nodded, and Bill walked across the ring to the other corner. "Listen, kid, you've got him winded. Wade into 'im this round and it's all over."

The bell went for round two. Don sprang out of his corner, rushed across the ring, and socked the astonished Ruffer in the jaw with a blow that rocked the Champion of Austria.

Ruffer staggered back, waved his arms foolishly, and then rushed at Don, who stepped to one side and landed another punch to the unshaven face. Ruffer was hurled back against the ropes, which broke, and the champion landed in Aunt Fanny's lap. Aunt Fanny, aided by the blacksmith, pushed Ruffer back into the ring. Bill rushed across and began feverishly tying up the ropes.

The champion was enraged, and he sprang forward with the intention of smashing Don Carter to pulp. Hammer and tongs they went at it, both displaying very little skill, but just a trifle more quickness and accuracy by the challenger. A left hook landed to Ruffer's chin and the Canary Island champion went down with a bang to lay still.

Bill Adams took a long time before he thought about counting.

"You shut up!" he yelled at the crowd. "Can't make meself heard. One—two—" He kicked the prone Ruffer. "Get up, you big sissy, get up. Four—I mean two—three—" He kicked Ruffer again. "Four—don't make so much noise!" This was to the shouting, jeering crowd. "Five—six—" He glanced across the ring at Pat and gave a faint nod. "Seven—eight—" Pat clanged the bell.

"Somehow," Aunt Fanny said, loudly and acidly, "I don't fancy this fight's on the level."

"What's the matter with you?" hissed



Bill Adams took the cheque and stared at it as if it were too good to be true.

Bill Adams in Ruffer's car. "We ain't got five pounds. Get that into your fat head. Listen, if you can't beat this kid keep away from him; you got to stick out the next round or we're sunk."

Don Carter was enjoying himself now. This fight racket was grand fun. Clang, it was the bell, Carter landed with a body blow that made Ruffer grunt and go into a clinch. Ruffer forgot Bill Adams' advice and charged at Carter with his remaining strength. There were a few seconds of hard fighting, and Ruffer did land a punch that must have hurt. Carter just shook his head, grinned, and came back into the fight. Don took the fight to his man and Ruffer waved his arms in a futile effort to evade the rain of blows.

He sagged back against the ropes and slid to the canvas.

It was at that precise moment that the pole of the tent decided that it could not bear four stalwart men any longer and proceeded to snap. Part of the cheap sixpenny seats were supported by cross-hairs from the main pole to smaller poles. This staging sagged, people were flung forward and a mild panic started.

Don Carter, perceiving that a nicely-dressed woman and a very pretty girl looked like being trampled upon, decided that they needed his help. He vaulted over the ropes, got between the two women and the struggling crowd. Part of the tent came down with the pole and sagged across the ring. The crowd, in a panic, burst their way through the wall of the tent by slitting it with a knife. Don Carter did not mind very much what happened because he had a protecting arm round Ann.

Bill Adams, staring in dismay, suddenly had a brain-wave. He stood in the middle of the smashed ring and yelled.

"I give the fight to the champ. The kid's disqualified for leaving the ring!"

Ruffer Vows Vengeance

ON the seat of a caravan sat two young people, Don Carter and Ann Haydon.

"They seem to have made a good old mess of that booth." Don looked across at the wreck of a tent. "You know, I feel ashamed of myself—fighting in a fair ground."

"You needn't. A clean fight is nothing to be ashamed of."

"Fighting doesn't interest me."

"What does?"

"This!" He drew out the precious relic, "Ancient stained glass."

"I adore stained glass," said Ann, but her face belied her words.

"Do you?" Don Carter had not seen her face. "I'm so glad. Now take the fifteenth century—"

A much more important scene was being enacted inside the caravan, which served as a sort of dining-room for the more important members of the fair. Bill Adams, Hurricane Harry and Perky Pat lolled about and stared morosely at Big Bob Ruffer, who was busy stuffing clothes into an ancient kit-bag. Near the oil stove sat Mrs. Stafford.

"So you're going?"

Ruffer turned on Bill Adams. "You bet I am," he snarled. "I ain't staying 'ere if you're taking on amateurs. Think I'm going to stay 'ere with you 'nting you would like to 'ave that spotted-boob working for yer—not likely. If I weren't ill I'd knock him flat. I got a reputation to take care of. You can keep your perishing show."

"Perishing show is right," sighed Bill. Big Bob Ruffer eyed them all malevolently.

"I've been wasting my time and my skill with this dumb show, Bill Adams. March 14th, 1936.

You gave me a lot of promises and ain't fulfilled any of 'em. I don't owe you nothing, but one day I'll pay you back. See if I don't!"

"I didn't fulfil 'em," Bill Adams retorted. "And why? Because you would never train—your idea of training was beer."

Big Bob Ruffer clenched his fists. "I should go if I were you," Aunt Fanny said softly. "There is an in-offensive young man not far from this caravan and I think he could deal with you very effectively. Good-evening!"

Big Bob Ruffer stamped out of the caravan. The two young people edged aside to let him pass.

"Good-evening," Don Carter said politely. "No ill feelings I trust?"

"One day I'll push your face in," threatened Ruffer, and slumped off quickly for fear the placid young man with the punch might take exception to the remark.

Inside the caravan Aunt Fanny was laying down the law.

"Why moan over that drunken waster? You've told me how your takings have been falling off for months, and how you've not dared to put Ruffer up against a good man on account of the drink. Why don't you use your brains? You've got hold of a natural fighter in that boy. Obviously he isn't keen on going back to his clerking job, and if you're wise you'll persuade him to stay with you. I know a scrapper when I see one. All he wants is training."

"If I could get hold of a real champ I'd give my right eye." Bill Adams fingered a damaged eye and winced. "Er—me left one."

"Get out of this fair-ground racket," Aunt Fanny rapped out. "Start working on that lad." From a handbag she produced a card. "Here, take this, it's my card. I'm interested in that boy." She glanced at her wrist-watch. "Gee, I must be moving. So long!"

Aunt Fanny nodded her head and grinned as she saw the two young people seated close together. Well, she would rather have Ann fall for a fighter than some of the soft young men that seemed to trail around after the girl.

"I liked your fighting," vigorously exclaimed Aunt Fanny, after she had coughed discreetly. "One day I'll hope to see you in the Albert Hall. Bill's got the place where we live—only a few miles away. Look us up. Come on, Ann!"

Vigorously she shook hands. Ann gave the youngster her hand shyly, but her eyes were very bright. Don Carter stared after them till they were lost among the crowd in the fair ground.

It was Bill Adams slapping him on the shoulder that disturbed him.

"Do you know who that was?" He waved the card about. "Mrs. Fanny Stafford. She's one of the greatest sportswomen in the country. Her old man was a cowboy millionaire. She likes the shape of you. Here, take off that coat."

Hurricane Harry, Perky Pat and Bill Adams dragged off the coat and shirt of the bewildered collector of stained glass. Bill Adams began to feel his muscles, his stomach—in fact, a general inspection.

"Not bad," cried the ex-champion. "A pound off here and there, straighten those shoulders, brace some of these flabby muscles and we might make something of you." He turned on the other two boxers. "I reckon it can be done. What do you boys think?"

"I agree with what the lady said," muttered Hurricane Harry. "He's raw, but he's a find—we might do worse."

"It's a bet!" Bill Adams shouted.

"But I don't quite follow what you're

talking about," murmured Don Carter. "What are you betting about, may I ask?"

"Come inside and we'll talk it over," Bill Adams grinned, and took Don's arm. "Better not stand outside 'ere like this, or some of the folks will think you're baby."

Like a lamb Don Carter allowed himself to be led into the caravan. Thus did he embark on the career of a boxer. The fact that Ann lived in the district had a great deal to do with it.

The Fight Promoter

BILL ADAMS found a dilapidated old barn, which he managed to get at a cheap rental. Bill paid the first week's rent, and was full of excuses when the landlord demanded the money for the ensuing weeks. Eight weeks had Bill managed to stay in the barn, but he felt that he couldn't hope to stay there much longer without paying. Hurricane Harry and Perky Pat acted as sparring partners to Don Carter, and they went at their task with a will in spite of the fact they had not been paid for weeks.

With punch-bag, medicine-ball, gymnastics, sparring with Harry and Pat, and road work, Bill Adams was turning the collector of stained glass into a first-class fighter.

Very soon Don Carter was able to make rings round Hurricane Harry, and the veteran had to beg the youngster to pull his punches as his ribs weren't as good as they used to be. It was a happy life the four led, and the only cloud on the horizon was the landlord—daily that cloud grew larger and more ominous.

Queer how rumour flies, but it was known pretty soon in the boxing world that Bill Adams had left the fair-ground business and had started a training school and that he had a new lad that showed promise. Those that passed on the story scoffed at the idea of Bill Adams finding a promising fighter. But one man who heard the rumour made a note of it and decided that some afternoon he would look in on Bill Adams—it was always as well to be on the safe side. The occasion of his visit was a sunny afternoon when Bill Adams was dodging round the barn and out-houses trying to elude the landlord.

Don had a fast try-out with Hurricane Harry, whilst Pat leaned on the ring and shouted advice to which neither paid the least attention. Naturally, they did not observe the large, smooth-faced man with the bowler hat slightly at an angle and an aggressively large diamond ring on a fat finger. Such was Madigan, trainer and fight promoter.

Madigan, cigar in corner of mouth, leaned against a rickety door and watched the scrap with critical eye. Now and again he would nod his head as if approving, and when Hurricane gave in through want of breath, Madigan strolled forward.

"How do, boys?" Madigan grinned at Harry and Pat. "I'd like a private word with this gentleman, if you don't mind."

"Sure," agreed Hurricane. "I gotta give Don a rest anyway."

Madigan twirled the cigar and waited till they were alone. "My name's Madigan—you heard of me?"

"No"

That jolted Madigan for a moment, but that oily smirk was seldom far from his face.

"I'll tell you something—you're shaping well for a youngster. You got style." He took out a card. "But you'll get nowhere with Bill Adams. Why not join my string and have a real manager?"

"I don't quite get your meaning?" Don answered.

"I'm making you a proposition I don't make to any raw kid. Everybody knows me—I'm managing the coming champion. What I've done for him I can do for you."

"Are you asking me to leave Bill?" Don said sharply.

"Just that!" was the blunt reply. "Well, you're wasting your time." Don's answer was just as blunt.

Madigan shrugged his shoulders. "There's my card. If you change your mind you know where to find me. Good day."

A moment later Bill Adams came rushing into the barn. "Don, what was that crook after?"

Don smiled. "Nothing. Only told me you were a dud, and that I was wasting my time with you. If I had nothing better to do he would be pleased for me to join his string. I said 'nothing doing'!"

"One day I'll lay my fist across his kisser," Bill Adams was wrathful. "He would come nosing round when I'm dead broke."

Don started to do some skipping. "Have you pacified the landlord?"

"No!" Bill answered. "Swears he'll out me if I ain't got the brass by to-morrow noon." He scratched his head. "I think he means it this time!"

Harry and Pat made their appearance and stated that they had also seen the landlord, who had threatened to take the goods and chattels of the Adams School if he did not get his money.

"Isn't there some lad round here I could fight?" suggested Don.

"We've got to get some money," cried Bill. "And if we had some dough we could issue a challenge, but one can't fix a purse if you ain't got a cent to put in it."

"The local lad is Sailor Dan," said Hurricane. "He ain't so hot. It took him two rounds before he could knock me out."

"And that was only ten years ago," chimed in the mournful Pat.

"You could beat the Sailor easy," decided Bill Adams, looking a trifle more hopeful.

"I'd like to fight at Banbury," Don said eagerly. "They've got some grand stained-glass windows there. They say that some of the red is made from blood and—"

"I got enough trouble without you going nutty," shouted Bill. "Stained glass! You tell me how to get some dough! If only—" He broke off to snap his fingers. "Got it! Harry!"

He jumped round. "Listen—you get the kid set for a match against the Sailor—any time within the next four weeks. I'm off promoting." He fished out a card. "Mrs. Stafford said that she was interested in our Don, so I'm just going to touch her for some money."

"But supposing—" began Pat.

"Don't you worry," Bill Adams was full of assurance. "I'll just hypnotise her with my personality."

Bill got out his best suit and tie—a loud check and a yellow abomination. By bus and foot he reached the house of Mrs. Stafford and found the lady was home but engaged. Bill informed the butler that Mrs. Stafford had told him to look her up and insisted that the man take in his name.

In the lounge sat Mrs. Stafford, and she looked a pleasant figure in her neat riding kit. Curiously enough, the person with whom she was engaged was Madigan.

"I guess I've got a world's champion in Williams," boasted Madigan. "How about coming in with me? I've not done so bad for you in the past."

"Yes, we certainly made a bit on that French feather-weight until he got swollen-headed—then we lost a packet."

"This time I'm taking no chances," the man assured her. "Nothing's going to stop Williams."

"That's the trouble, Madigan," Aunt Fanny gave him a straight glance. "It's a business with you—but it's a sport with me. I don't think we exactly fit, and your venture does not—"

There was a knock and the butler entered. "Yes, James?"

"A Mister Adams to see you, madam." He saw she was puzzled.

"A Mister Bill Adams."

"Oh, show him in."

"Now I can make you a tempting proposition," argued Madigan. "Let's settle it before your fair-ground friend butts in."

Aunt Fanny did not like his tone. "Stick around—plenty of time to talk that over."

Bill Adams breezed into the room but he pulled up sharply at sight of the other visitor.

"You've met Mr. Madigan?" said Aunt Fanny.

"Yes, I've had that displeasure."

"Well, what's on your mind?"

"Mrs. Stafford, you were good enough to say you'd be interested to hear about young Don."

Aunt Fanny nodded. "Sure! How's the kid shaping?"

"He's getting better every day," muttered Bill Adams, quite aware of the sarcastic leer on Madigan's face.

"He takes to the game like a teetotaller takes to water."

"When's his first fight?"

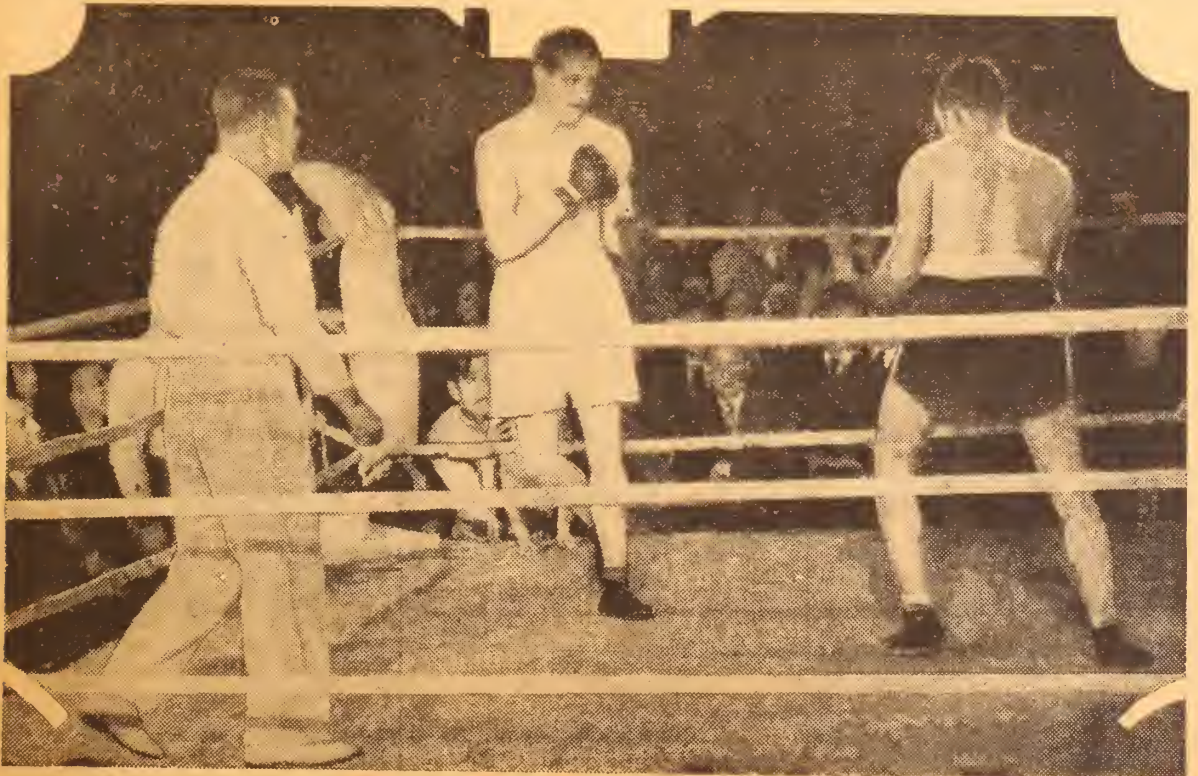
Bill Adams twisted his hat in his hands. "Well—er—that's what I've come to see you about. I'm thinking of hiring the Banbury Town Hall and promoting a match with Sailor Lewis."

"Lewis is small time." Mrs. Stafford knew everything about the world of boxers. "But he's a scrapper—oughta give the kid a good fight."

"Say, have you gone crazy," Madigan came round to stand in front of her.

"Why waste your time listening to this cheap little fair-ground faker?"

"Would you mind if I punched him on the nose?" Bill asked.



Don came slowly out of his corner to face the rushing Sailor Lewis.

"Yes, his nose might bleed and spoil my carpet." Aunt Fanny showed signs of keen interest. "You want to match Don against—"

"He's trying to pull your ear for a touch," shouted Madigan. "He's trying to swing—"

"Be quiet!" snapped Aunt Fanny. "You weren't, I suppose? Well, my deal with you is off. You'd better go."

"Don't worry, I'll go." Madigan picked up his hat. "There's a distinct odour of old pug about this room."

"But for you, lady, I'd have slaughtered him," growled Bill when the door had closed. "One day I'm going to give him such a sock in the jaw."

"Take it easy." Aunt Fanny moved so that he could sit down beside her on the couch. "Come and tell me exactly what you want."

Bill Adams explained that he fancied Don against the Sailor, but there was one drawback—money. He required money to hire the Town Hall, and also for a deposit to the printers. Without hesitation, Mrs. Stafford agreed to finance the fight, but expressed a desire to see Don on a work-out. Bill agreed on the morrow.

Ann appeared and seemed very interested in hearing all about Don Carter. Bill told the girl what an improved fighter Don had become, and that every day he did a work-out on a certain quiet stretch of road.

"I suppose a car would make a good pace-maker?" asked Ann.

"Sure," agreed Bill, and wondered why Aunt Fanny gave her niece such a sharp glance.

Next morning Mrs. Stafford arrived at the barn good and early, and after a look round the training quarters, asked for Don. Bill answered that Don was out on his road work.

"Let's go and find him."

"Suits me," agreed Bill, who had sighted the obnoxious landlord hovering in the background.

In a quiet country lane Aunt Fanny pulled up the car and they got out to wait for the runner. At last a small sports car appeared and behind ran a sweated figure. It was Don and the driver of the small car was Ann.

"Just pure chance I met him, auntie," innocently explained the girl. "I offered to pace him."

"Pure chance." Aunt Fanny shrugged her shoulders. "Fancy trying to tell that sort of nonsense to me." She glanced at the slightly breathless runner. "Hum, you have filled out."

"Don't you think he looks grand?" cried Bill.

"Certainly looks better," agreed Aunt Fanny, and came closer. "Useful legs." She touched his arms. "Yes, pretty good development. Not bad, Bill Adams. Let's get back to your training quarters and we'll talk this over." She looked at her niece and Don. "You two can follow, and when I say follow, I mean follow."

They got to the barn, and there was the confounded landlord.

"I want to know when—"

"Go away," muttered Bill. "You're spoiling things Harry, if he won't go clock him."

Very businesslike, Aunt Fanny sat down at a table.

"Now, you propose to hire the Town Hall, advertise, and do everything to make this fight a success. You'll need some brass to promote the fight." She opened her bag. "Take this cheque. I made it out before I came here. It should be enough to meet all expenses."

Bill Adams took the cheque and stared at it as if it were too good to be true. He began to dream of hiring the Albert Hall.

March 14th, 1936.

'The Fight—and What a Finish!

THE Banbury Town Hall was packed. There were a number of small fights, but the main feature was a ten-round contest between Sailor Lewis and Don Carter.

In ringside seats were Mrs. Stafford and Ann, the former quietly confident and the other terribly worried and excited. Sitting in ringside seats on the other side of the roped square was Madigan and a fair-haired woman, handsome, but the expression was hard. Directly behind them sat Big Bob Ruffer, who had come to the Town Hall to see the man who had taken his place get a pasting.

"Fancy coming to this place." The woman looked round disdainfully. "I didn't know ploughmen could box."

"There may be a Dempsey here—you never can tell." Madigan puffed at a hugo cigar.

"You're wrong, gov'nor, if ye expect to find anything here to-night." Ruffer had heard. "You can't match a kid amateur against an old-timer like Lewis and expect to see a fight."

"What do you expect to see?" rasped Madigan.

"A blooming massacre."

"Don't be too sure." Madigan settled back in his seat. "And Lewis is past his prime."

The preliminary bouts were over, and the crowd craned their necks to see the fighters enter the ring for the next bout. They looked at the slim figure of Don Carter and compared it with the mighty tattooed sailor, and decided the youngster hadn't a chance.

"Keep away from him in the first three rounds," Bill Adams advised. "If you get a chance use yer left jab—but get him winded first. Get the idea?"

Aunt Fanny left her seat to come round to Don's corner.

"I've just taken a squint at the Sailor. Boy, he's your meat—just waiting for the skewer. Wade right into him while you're fresh, kid. Use your right hook and you'll knock him cold in the first round."

"Ere, wait a minute!" cried Bill. "I'm giving orders and—"

Aunt Fanny inspected Bill through her lorgnettes, and then glowered at his yellow tie.

"Your tie, Mr. Adams, is like an intoxicated rainbow."

Then Ann appeared to whisper shyly:

"Good luck, Don!"

"Thanks, Ann!" Don smiled at her.

"Don't you worry."

Bill Adam got rid of them.

"Listen—you ain't taking orders from no petticoats, see? You just do as I told you—stay with him for the first three rounds. Get me?"

The announcer had been talking all this while about the many famous people that were patronising the Banbury Town Hall that night, and liking the sound of his own voice would have carried on if the crowd had not made it clear that they had come to see a fight and not hear him talk.

Just before the fight started the hall manager came round to report that the takings had beaten the last record by fifty pounds, and that made Bill Adams rub his hands together.

Don Carter shook hands with his opponent, and decided that he did not like this hairy boxer with the battered nose, cauliflower ears and tattooed chest. Perhaps it would be best to take Mrs. Stafford's advice and go for his man while he was fresh.

Don waited in his corner for the gong. The gong went and Don came out of his corner not knowing what tactics the Sailor would adopt. The Sailor rushed and landed a stinging punch to Don's

ribs. That shook Don, and he jumped clear. The Sailor rushed to the attack, and then Don slammed home a punch to the jaw, this he followed with a whirlwind of jabs and hooks. The bewildered Sailor Lewis vainly attempted to protect himself, but his defence was weak, and Don's blows had hurt. Before a rasping right hook to the jaw Sailor Lewis toppled backwards and crashed full length to the canvas.

The young boxer stared in amazement at his fallen foe.

"One—two—three—four—five—six—seven—eight—nine—ten. OUT!" shouted the referee.

Don Carter had won his first fight in just over one minute.

"Grand! Grand!" shouted Bill Adams, who did not mind that Don had disobeyed orders as he had won. "What a punch Don gave him!"

But the crowd were disappointed. They had come there to see a battle of giants that would last at least six of the ten rounds, and instead they had seen a scrap that had lasted a minute. Someone in the crowd shouted: "Call that a fight!" Instantly someone else cried: "Lewis didn't try!"

Big Bob Ruffer, venomous and disappointed not to see Carter bashed to pulp, realised in his evil mind that here was the chance to make trouble.

"The fight was squared!" he roared. "It's a frame-up!"

Equally turbulent and rowdy members of the crowd sided with him, and the situation became ugly.

"Ask Lewis how much he took to lie down!" bellowed Ruffer.

People began to knock over chairs and shout "Crooks! Frame up! Swindlers!" And other remarks of a very offensive nature.

The hall manager climbed into the ring and tried to restore order. The perplexed Bill Adams came and stood by his side. They shouted "Order!" but without any result.

"I'll hold you responsible, Mr. Adams, for any damage done to the hall!" cried the manager.

"Gentlemen!" Bill shouted. "The fight was perfectly fair!"

"Liar!" shouted Ruffer. "Give us our money back!"

The crowd began to chant: "We want our money back! We want our money back!"

The manager saw his beautiful hall being wrecked, and raised his hands.

"Quiet, please! We don't want any damage. Anyone who wants his money back can have it!"

"Ere, 'arf a minute!" cried Bill.

"That's my money you're giving back, you know."

"You're not in a boxing-booth now," the manager answered coldly. "If you want a bill for a new Town Hall just say so."

Madigan had managed to get out of the hall, and he took the fair-haired woman's arm.

"That was no frame-up. That knock-out was as clean as a whistle."

"He's almost in Williams' class, isn't he?"

"A few more performances like this and he'll be challenging Williams."

"Williams would kill him."

"The kid would kill Williams, you mean!" retorted Madigan.

"What are you going to do about it?"

"Lucille," Madigan chuckled. "I always believe in walking up to trouble. The sooner he meets Williams the better."

"But—"

"So whilst I get busy fixing up the fight, you're going to work on Don Carter." He squeezed her arm. "Get the idea?"

The woman gave an understanding nod.

A Call of Distress

BILL ADAMS and his family were depressed. Don had won his first fight, but as all the takings had been paid back they were worse off than before. Most of Aunt Fanny's money was gone, and with the local papers hinting at a frame-up what chance had Bill of fixing Don with another fight? In the midst of this depression arrived Aunt Fanny and Ann, with the news that Madigan had seen Carter and had offered him a fight.

"It looks like a short cut to the headlines," she told the amazed Bill.

"Sounds fishy to me," muttered Bill. "Why should Madigan want to help a young unknown to lick his man?"

"Madigan figures that he can put Carter out of the running right now, while he's inexperienced," was her answer. "Madigan could see that Don has a punch. He recognises that he is lacking in ring craft, but fears that with time Don will improve and perhaps interfere with Williams' path towards the championship. I think Don can beat Williams and I'm for accepting. If we don't, Madigan will put every obstacle in the way of Don getting any fights. Let's take a chance—a chance that I'm willing to back with money."

"Mrs. Stafford, I don't know how to thank you," Bill said hoarsely. "What can I do to repay you?"

She glanced fiercely at a red and yellow atrocity. "Go and buy yourself a new tie. So long!"

Don Carter found his road work very pleasant because often Ann made the pace in her sports car, and even if she did not pace him, she usually appeared some time during the work-out to have a chat. She was a very keen rider and often she would cut across country on the spirited mare that Aunt Fanny had given her to meet Don by arrangement.

All very pleasant and exciting because Don had hinted that if he could win the fight with Williams there was something he wanted to ask her. Naturally she wanted to know, but on these occasions he would start to talk about stained-glass windows.

One morning when Don knew that Ann would be at certain cross-roads, he arrived earlier than usual, and found a car with two people, and would have run on if a male voice had not shouted: "Hey—Carter!"

In the car was Madigan and the woman Lucille.

Now Carter was a simple fellow and one of those rare types who think that every person is honest. He had not paid much attention to what Bill and the boys had said about Madigan, and a man who could smile as pleasantly as this person in the car must be genuine—that applied to the smiling, bright-eyed Lucille.

"Carter," cried Madigan as the boy ran to the car. "Meet one of your most ardent fans. Saw you fight the other night."

"You were wonderful," Lucille said with a soulful glance.

"How do you fancy meeting Williams?" asked Madigan.

"I can hardly believe any good fortune, Mr. Madigan."

"My money's on you," murmured Lucille.

"Ha! Ha! Listen to that," boomed Madigan. "Calls herself a friend of mine and has her money on you." The smile vanished. "Young man, new blood's always welcome to the game. My man will try and beat you, but



Before the weight of numbers Don went down. . . .

for all that I say 'Good Luck' and you'll find me the first to congratulate you if you win. Won't I, Lucille?"

"Honest John Madigan," she murmured, and then looked up at Don. "I'm often down these parts as I belong to a club on the river—in fact, I'm sort of secretary and hostess. The Cocktail Club. I wish you'd come round some time."

"It's awfully nice of you," muttered Don. "But, you see, I—"

"Fix him up a table for to-night," interposed Madigan. "We'll call it a date."

"I'll expect you to-night. Don't forget," murmured Lucille.

Madigan started the car. "About eight, old fellow," he shouted. "We'll expect you."

Don Carter was staring after the car when the clutter of horse's hoofs made him turn. Ann had witnessed the scene and overheard some of the conversation. Her nose was very much in the air.

"I suppose you'll go to-night." She was foolish in her anger to be sarcastic. "Why not go? It will be a short cut to the championship—training on cocktails."

"Maybe I will!" Don retorted, stung by the injustice of her words.

"Then I wish you good morning," said Ann, and put spurs to her horse.

Don completed his run in a very discontented state of mind. He tried to phone Ann but she was not at home—she was teaching him a lesson. He became so angry that at eight o'clock that night he went to the Cocktail Club and met Lucille and Madigan.

But though Lucille succeeded in separating Ann from Don, she did not make the youngster break training. She was clever enough to know that he would at once turn against her. Ann made matters worse by her haughty aloofness whenever she met Don, and no longer did she act as pace-maker.

So the time passed until at last came the day of the fight.

The fight was at nine at the Ring, and it was about tea-time that a telephone call came for Don. It was Lucille on the 'phone, and she was a good actress.

"Oh, Don, I must see you," came her voice with a sob in it.

"The fight's only a few hours away—I'm sorry," was his answer. "Won't after the fight do?"

"But the flying field's only two miles away. I really must see you before I go—you're the only friend I can trust."

"Couldn't you come here?" Don suggested. "Time's getting short, and

"Surely you can spare me a few minutes, Don?" she begged. "Meet me at the 'plane in ten minutes. Don, you must—I'm desperate—I must see you. Don, I promise to keep you only a few minutes, but I must have your advice. I can't tell you over the 'phone, but if you don't want to hear of someone jumping in the river come at once."

Don Carter ran most of the way to the flying field. He saw a small cabin 'plane and heard the motor of the machine running. The pilot was in his seat. Nearby, a man was working levelling out some rough ground. The cabin door of the 'plane was open and Lucille waved a handkerchief to him. He raced across the field.

"Oh, Don, thank heavens you've come."

"What's happened?" he asked in genuine concern.

"Get in here," she lowered her voice. "No one must see us talking. Come in and I'll tell you."

Unsuspecting a trap, Don entered the 'plane and took the seat beside Lucille. The man repairing the ground glanced round and moved swiftly towards the machine. He slammed the door, a yale key was in the handle, a turn and Don Carter was locked in the

'plane. The engine woke to life and the machine shot away.

A moment later the machine rose gracefully from the ground and began to climb.

"What's the idea?" cried Don, staring at Lucille.

"Probably giving us a free trip," laughed Lucille, and then gripped his arm. "Don, some money is missing from the club, and I think they suspect me of taking it."

She tried to hold his attention with a trumped-up story, but Don was not listening. Finally he told the pilot to turn back and land.

"Can't I've got to make Paris on time?"

"Paris?" gasped Don.
"Paris!" cried Lucille. "But isn't this Captain Strange's machine?"

"No!" snapped the pilot. "I was detailed to take two passengers to Paris, and naturally I thought you were the two. In Paris I'm meeting—"

"I don't care who you're meeting, but you get this 'plane back to town or there'll be trouble," threatened Don. "Why, that's the sea!"

"Can't we land somewhere?" begged Lucille. "Or get back to the flying field?"

"Must go on to Paris," said the pilot. "To go back is against orders—will try and land at Folkestone."

"It's all my fault," sobbed Lucille. "Maybe if we get a car when we land we'll make the Ring in time."

The pilot took nearly an hour before he could find a place to land, and then it was on the cliffs between Folkestone and Dover.

Brutal Kindness

ONE can imagine the state of mind of Bill Adams, Aunt Fanny and the rest of them when time passed and Don did not show up. All that was known was that Don had received a telephone call and Harry, who had answered the call, knew it was a woman's voice. Don had gone off and shouted to Harry that he would be back on time. They had waited down at the barn till the very last moment, and then Harry and Bill had come to town, leaving Pat behind in case Don showed up.

No sign of Don anywhere. Not a message—not a note—not a call. The officials demanded to know why Don Carter had not show up, and Bill Adams thought of every excuse he could find for the sake of gaining time. Already he had spent a small fortune in coppers phoning likely and unlikely places.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," the promoter of the boxing tournament told Bill Adams. "I'll put the other bout on. That will give you about another half hour."

"That's grand," cried Bill. "I know Don wouldn't let me down."

Aunt Fanny was round in the dressing-rooms, and her expression was very grim.

"Something's haywire about this," she affirmed. "It's not like the kid to let us down."

They heard running, hurrying steps and looked at each other hopefully. It was not Don but the promoter.

"Knock out—first round. Get your boy in the ring."

"Ho ain't here," Bill had to admit.

"Well, I'm waiting no longer," cried the promoter. "I'm putting in a substitute. You've made a fool of me, Adams, and I shan't forget it. I'll have you and this cheap boxing wonder out of the game. Thought you'd swing here another frame-up like you did at Banbury?"

March 14th, 1936.

Fifteen minutes later Bill Adams told Mrs. Stafford that whether Don turned up now or never it didn't matter, and that he might as well see them home. Suddenly the door of the dressing-room burst open and there was Don, dishevelled and out of breath. Behind him was a woman, who looked on the point of collapse—Don had almost dragged her since leaving the car.

They stared at Don and the woman in amazement.

"Am I in time?" Don began to peel off his coat.

"It was my fault," Lucille stepped into the room.

"Your fault?" rasped Aunt Fanny. "Who the heck are you?" A withering glance of scorn and she ignored the woman to look at Don. "You're too late to fight, so you might as well explain what happened. I'm sure it will be interesting."

"I was in a 'plane with this young lady," Don began, "when it suddenly took off by accident. We had got into the wrong 'plane. The pilot was bound for Paris, and finally I got the man to land me near Folkestone. The conditions were bad and it took him a terrible time, but finally we landed between Folkestone and Dover on the cliffs. We got a car into Folkestone, and as there was no train we had to hire another car—"

"Why did you go off without leaving any message a few hours before the fight?" demanded Aunt Fanny. "You should have been leaving for London, and instead you vanish and tell us you

went with this person to a flying field. Why? Why?"

"That is a private matter," Don said stiffly. "She required my help and advice. She often goes flying and gets taken up by the pilots. Lucille thought it was Captain Strango's machine, and —"

Ann had walked to the door. She gave Lucille a disdainful look. "I can't stay here and listen to a tissue of lies. Either this is a frame-up or else somebody seems to have turned yellow."

Mrs. Stafford looked at her niece and hesitated. Ann walked out of the room with head held high. "I guess she's right," muttered Aunt Fanny, and hastened after her.

"It's the truth, Bill," Don said pleadingly to his trainer. "I swear it. Lucille was in trouble, and—"

"And now I'm in trouble, you're in trouble, and we're all in trouble," Bill Adams answered fiercely. "We shall be called before the Boxing Commission and wiped off the map, and no matter how many lies you can tell it ain't going to save you." He glanced at Harry. "Come on!" They went out and slammed the door.

A mocking gleam showed in Lucille's eyes, but she was sobbing when he turned to her for comfort.

In the weeks that followed Lucille seemed to be his only friend. He began to drink down at her Cocktail Club. Madigan had told Lucille that she could have as much money as she liked, but she was to keep Carter down and make him stay down until after Williams had won the championship.

A fortnight after the fight, Aunt Fanny sought out Bill Adams, and found that gentleman having a few words with the landlord's bailiff. She removed that scourge and then drew the trainer aside for a quiet talk.

"Bill, do you think Don was yellow and a double-crosser?"

"Dunno what to make of it."

"In your heart of hearts you don't think it," Aunt Fanny spoke in her crisp, assured manner. "And neither do I. Young Ann's going about with a face as long as a fiddle. Don went to see her, and she accused him of letting us all down, and the boy went away in a huff. From what I can gather, that drove him straight into the arms of this Lucille person, who apparently is on friendly terms with Madigan."

"I got an idea that rat was behind that aeroplane business," shouted Bill. "One day I'll sock that guy good and plenty."

"It is only supposition, but it means that Don might have got into that aeroplane on a sob story," stated Aunt Fanny. "And he's one of those strange imbeciles who believe everything a sobbing girl tells them. Therefore, as it might be true we must give Don another chance."

"He spends most of his time drinking at the Cocktail Club."

"I know, Bill, and this Lucille appears to have a lot of money specially allocated for keeping Don cauned." She drew up her sparse frame. "I think it's about time we took the sap out of this damo's hands, and I propose going to the Cocktail Club to-night. You will accompany me, and bring Harry and Pat."

That night they walked into the Cocktail Club and there at a table sat Lucille and Don.

"I'll do the talking!" hissed Bill. "Yes, after me!" Aunt Fanny hissed back at him.

They stalked across the dance floor and Lucille eyed them nervously. There was

(Continued on page 25)

NEXT WEEK'S BIG FILM DRAMAS



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"Wanderer of the Wasteland"

On the Road to Fortune

TO Adam Larey, as he stood on the deck of the little steamer that was carrying him up the river to the mining town of Picacho, the world was very bright. For Adam was twenty-six, tall, strong, good-looking and full of the joy of youth; and under such conditions life always looks at its best. Furthermore he had plenty of money in his pocket and was on his way to join his elder brother Guerd at the mining camp. For Guerd had written to him telling him that he was foolish to be wasting his time as he was going in his steady employment, and had advised him to come straight up to Picacho where really big money was to be made. And so impressed had the younger brother been by the letter that he had packed up his things, given notice at his job, and was now on his way to the new Eldorado which he felt sure was awaiting him.

He had another even bigger cause for happiness, too, at the moment, for pretty Ruth Virey had only that day promised to be his wife, and though her father had shown no very great enthusiasm about him so far, yet the young man was not worrying about that. Ruth loved him—that was all that mattered.

As the steamer approached the quay he gazed eagerly at the little town that was ever drawing nearer. It was a long time since he had seen his elder brother, but he felt all a younger brother's gratitude towards him for the big chance offered to him.

Yet had Adam Larey been able to see his elder brother as the steamer was approaching Picacho, and been privileged to overhear his conversation with Sheriff Collishaw in the local saloon he would

have most probably registered considerable amazement.

"I hope he'll turn up all right," said the sheriff as he helped himself to a drink.

Guerd Larey scowled. For he had caught the slightly sarcastic note in the other's voice, and it annoyed him. He was in his debt to the tune of fifteen hundred dollars, and he knew that Collishaw wouldn't wait much longer for it. It was for this reason that he had sent the glowing accounts of Picacho to his younger brother. He knew that Adam had been saving money, and he had planned with the sheriff when once he got him out there to sell him some dud mining claims at big prices.

"Of course he'll turn up," he retorted. "And he'll bring all his savings with him, what's more, and then you'll get your money. We shan't have any trouble with him—you never do with these young greenhorns. He reckons I've made my pile out here, and he's grateful to me for giving him the chance to do the same."

He glanced at his watch and rose to his feet.

"The boat's due to arrive very soon," he said. "Comin' down to meet him?"

Ruth, because she was a woman, couldn't help contrasting the two brothers when they met. And because she was very much in love with Adam she watched the two a little uneasily. For on her lover's side she saw straightforward, boyish warmth and delight as he greeted his elder brother. But she saw things in Guerd that aroused her suspicions instantaneously. She saw him profess equal delight at seeing Adam, but the look in his eyes told her of an

interest that wasn't founded on genuine affection. She suspected him and the sheriff from that moment, though when Adam introduced them to her she merely greeted them both with a pleasant smile. "I'll be seeing you all again very soon," said Adam gaily as he waved good-bye to the girl and her parents.

As Guerd linked his arm in his younger brother's and led him away Ruth saw him exchange meaning glances with the sheriff over Adam's shoulder, and it worried her very considerably.

The Fight in the Saloon

IT was four days later, and Guerd and Collishaw were sitting in the saloon drinking. The sheriff was talking, but from the expression on Guerd's face it was not very pleasant talking.

"I tell you it's no darned good," he said savagely when the other had come to an end. "The young fool—confound him!—isn't the mug I thought he was; at any rate, as far as parting with money is concerned. I've tried him with every one of our mines, and there's nothing doing; you can take it from me."

The other coolly shifted his cigar over to the other side of his mouth.

"That's your funeral, not mine," he retorted with a slightly contemptuous smile. "You told me that as soon as this guy arrived you would pay me that fifteen hundred dollars you owe me. And I said I'd wait for it till he did arrive. Well, he has arrived, but my money hasn't, and I'm getting a bit tired of waitin', friend Guerd. If you take my tip you'll get a move on."

The other swallowed hard. There was a note in Collishaw's voice that made him uneasy.

"What in hades am I to do?" he

demanded angrily. "D'you expect me to steal it from him?"

A grin came over the other's face. "As sheriff of this camp and an upholder of what's lawful and right," he said—and Guerd succced openly—"I shouldn't dream of suggestin' such things. I'm just advisin' you to get hold of fifteen hundred dollars and hand same to me pronto. How you do it's your funeral."

Guerd sat for a few moments in sullen silence. Then he spoke, lowering his voice:

"If I can get him into a game of poker—" he began, and as he stopped the other nodded quiet approval.

"Between us," he replied, "I reckon we could make it a pleasant little game—not to say a profitable one."

Both looked up at that moment as the door opened and Adam Larcy walked into the saloon. He looked in the gayest of spirits, and Guerd hailed him with every appearance of friendliness.

"Hallo, Adam, come into a fortune?" "Not exactly!" smiled the younger brother as he came over to the table. "Morning, sheriff! Congratulate me, Guerd. Ruth and I are engaged."

Guerd jumped up in a second and shook his brother warmly by the hand. "Fine hearin'," he replied. "Boys, this brother of mine's engaged and the drinks are on me!"

It was not at Adam's wish that the game of poker started. He didn't want it, and would have preferred to avoid it. But the sheriff and Guerd had both insisted on standing him numerous drinks, much against his will, and when they had suggested poker for an hour or so he yielded, rather than appear in any way churlish.

But he failed to notice one or two of the glances that were exchanged as he and the others sat down to play.

They had been playing for over an hour, and the game had gone as Guerd and Collishaw had intended it to go. That is to say, Adam was losing about four thousand dollars, and Guerd and Collishaw between them were winning precisely the same amount. And though one or two of the onlookers knew perfectly well that Adam was being cheated and were sorry for him in their rough way, they were afraid to interfere. For Collishaw being sheriff was by no means a man to fall foul of.

Adam Larcy, however, played on quietly, losing steadily, but giving not the slightest indication that he suspected anything was wrong, though actually his suspicions had been aroused for some little time, and he was far more on the alert than any of them imagined.

So though he was amazed, horrified, and boiling with indignation to think that his own brother was deliberately cheating him out of his money, he was waiting until he could catch him red-handed before he made a scene.

Guerd dealt. It was an ace-pot, and the pool was a good-sized one. Adam opened, two men threw in their hands, and Adam, Guerd and Collishaw came in. Guerd gave the required cards to both men, who studied their hands.

"I take two," announced Guerd; but his eyes were on Adam, who seemed to be deep in his hand; and he slid a couple from the bottom of the pack.

But even as he did so Adam looked up in a flash.

"Hey, you can't get away with that!" he exclaimed. "I saw you take two cards from the bottom of the pack!"

He was on his feet as he spoke, facing his brother, who had gone livid with rage. Then Guerd's fist leaped out, and Adam staggered back, but the next moment he had hurled himself at Guerd, March 14th, 1936.

and the latter crashed heavily to the floor.

Guerd lay there scowling furiously, but making no attempt to move. The others in the room had crowded round, not altogether displeased at the turn events had taken. Adam, with his hands clenched, was standing gazing down at his brother. They wondered vaguely what was going to happen, for they knew from the expression on Guerd's face that there was murder in his heart. And they knew, too, that he was a dangerous man to cross.

"You dirty rat!" went on Adam, breathing heavily. "Cheating your own brother! I fancied at the start you were playing crook stuff on me, but I could hardly believe it. So I waited to make sure if it was true. Well, I'm through with you, d'you hear?"

Guerd got up slowly to his feet, but even as Adam turned contemptuously away, the other grabbed Collishaw's gun, and the next moment the two men were struggling together. And then, as they fought for the mastery of the weapon, Adam wrenched it from his brother's hand; there was a sharp report, and Guerd staggered back and collapsed heavily to the floor and lay very still.

The Wanderer

ADAM stood gazing down dazedly at the body of his brother that lay sprawled out inertly on the floor in the deathly silence that followed. The gun was still in his hand, but for the moment all coherent thought had gone from him. Such horror as he had never known was holding him numb. Nothing had been farther from his thoughts than the killing of his brother. All he had known was that the latter was furiously trying to kill him, and he—Adam—was wrestling with him to get the gun from him.

The sheriff, who was on one knee beside the still body, looked up, and there was a world of menace in his voice when he spoke.

"He's dead—you've killed him," he said.

Adam found his voice then. "You know as well as anyone that I never tried to kill him," he replied in low tones. "I was wrestling for the gun—he drew it on me—and it went off. It was an accident."

The sheriff's eyes were merciless.

"I'm sheriff here," he said, "and I saw you accuse him of cheating. I saw you knock him down, and I saw you fling yourself at him when he took my gun to protect himself. And my view of it is that you deliberately tried to kill him. So I'm arresting you, Adam Larcy, for wilful murder!"

He rose to his feet. Adam never moved, but his brain was working rapidly. The silence of the room told him that even if they wanted to do so, no one would perhaps dare to contradict what the sheriff had said.

And other things were leaping in on him, too. The sheriff and Guerd were always together. It had been the sheriff who had suggested the game of poker, and Guerd who had immediately seconded the proposal. If the sheriff arraigned him for murder and chose to swear away his life, he would have little chance.

In a flash his mind was made up, and the gun, still in his hand, was menacing them as he backed to the door.

But it was to the sheriff he spoke.

"This is a deliberate frame-up," he exclaimed, "and all of you know it, just as you know that this man and my brother were in league together. So you're not getting me after all—see?"

In a flash he was out of the room. Horses were outside, and he leaped on the first one he saw and was riding down the street for dear life. Though before he was a hundred yards away he could hear his would-be captors in thundering pursuit.

He stood breathless and panting, shrinking behind the shed. For as he had been riding along it had come to him that he couldn't ride away, a fugitive from justice, without seeing Ruth and letting her know the truth. So as he neared her house, which stood close to two roads which led from the town, he had slipped in a moment from his horse, lashing it as he did so and watching it race away into the darkness.

Shrinking back against the shed, he heard his pursuers pull up; wondered whether they had spotted what he had done. But as he heard them start up again and dash away, he realised that his trick had succeeded.

In the little sitting-room Ruth listened to his story with dismay in her face. But there was love and sympathy there as well as she gazed into his eyes with his arms around her.

"I believe you, dear," she said simply. "I know you never meant to kill him. But what are you going to do, Adam?" "Get away into the desert," he answered. "Lose myself there—it's my only chance. One of these days—"

But at that moment voices and the tramp of feet came from the outside, and the girl clutched him frantically. In a moment she had rushed him into her bed-room.

"Go out that way," she whispered, pointing to a door on the other side. "If you can reach the stable you will find a horse there."

For one moment they elung to each other. Then, as he slipped across the room, a loud knocking came to her door. She stood perfectly still. Then, as the knocking was renewed, she spoke.

"Who's that? What d'you want?"

Her father's voice answered her. Actually he had seen the two together and had gone for the sheriff after he had overheard their conversation. He had hoped that thereby he would get a substantial reward.

"Let us in at once, Ruth!"

"What on earth d'you want?"

"Let us in at once! D'you hear me?"

"But I'm dressing, father," she expostulated.

His angry voice came back.

"I tell you to let me in at once or I'll break the door in!"

"I think you must have gone mad," she said as she fumbled with the lock.

"Where's Adam Larcy?" he demanded as he gazed round the room.

Her eyes were guileless and amazed as she met his question. Every moment she could gain was of value to her lover.

"Adam? Are you crazy, father?"

"What on earth should he be doing here?"

He strode across to the other door, and rattled it.

"Where's the key of this door?" he thundered.

"Probably on the other side," she answered coolly, knowing full well it was at that moment in her pocket. "I do wish to goodness that you wouldn't come storming into my bed-room in this extraordinary manner. If you have quite satisfied yourself that Adam isn't here, perhaps you'll be good enough to go out and let me finish my dressing in peace."

She watched them go out, listened breathlessly as she heard them tramping

round the house, exploring every inch of the yard and the stables. Then she heard them come into the sitting-room once more and heard her father's voice.

"He was here and in this house, I saw 'em talking together. She's a liar, that's what she is."

But to her utter relief she heard her mother's voice.

"She's nothing of the sort. If she told you he hasn't been here you may be sure he hasn't."

As she heard them troop out of the house Ruth drew a deep breath of relief, and a prayer went up from her heart for the safety of the man she loved.

The Old-timer

A WASTELAND of sand and low scrub stretching for miles, with the hot noonday sun beating pitilessly down upon it. And one living thing only in sight—a man who staggered and stumbled along with his eyes gazing feverishly ahead as if hoping against hope that he would see some rescue or shelter from the burning heat that lay above and around.

A pitiable object, this man, doubly pitiable as the only living thing in that terrible desert. He was in his shirt-sleeves, and as he stumbled along, every now and then he would sink to the ground as if he would never rise up again. Then, after an interval, he would stagger once more to his feet, and drag himself wearily along.

"I must go on," he muttered, "I must go on! If I stay here—I shall die! I must go on! I must go on!"

And then he slid to the ground, rolled over on his face and lay very still.

Dismukes, old prospector, was crossing the desert with his mules on the way to the Death Valley, where he had his mine. A real old-timer was Dismukes, with a gnarled figure and a furrowed old face, yet with kindly old blue eyes that were gazing frowningly now over the wasteland as he halted his mules.

"Durned if that ain't a man," he muttered. "What in thunder's he doin' here and all alone? Come on, you durned coyotes"—addressing his mules—"we've got to investigate this."

But long before he reached the spot where Adam Larey lay sprawled out inertly he found himself wondering whether his investigation wouldn't be too late. For already, above, he had caught sight of the vultures hovering in the sky.

Dismukes scowled at them.

"But whatever he is, you ain't havin' him," he said.

He raised Adam up in his arms, putting his water-bottle to his lips. He was pretty far gone, he knew that; but he wasn't dead, and Dismukes had no intention of letting him die. A fine young fellow like that, he told himself, ought to be worthy of many more years of life.

Then, as Adam's eyelids fluttered at last and he began to gulp eagerly at the water, the old man spoke.

"Go easy, son," he said. "You've been dyin' for want of it, and you ain't a-goin' to die from too much of it."

Then, finally, he lifted him up into his arms as easily as if he had been a baby and set him on one of the mules.

"Now, you durned old coyotes, you've got to get a move on," he said.

"Well, son, maybe you'd like to tell me your name and what you're doin' takin' a walk out here all alone," he said when, later on, they had made camp under some trees, and Adam, refreshed by a hearty meal and suoking

a pipe, had been thanking the old prospector for the kindnesses he had rendered him.

"I have sounding ungrateful, but I'd sooner not," replied the young man.

"Have it your own way," answered the other coolly. "I reckon it don't matter the hades of a lot to me. Where are you makin' for?"

"Anywhere where I shan't be known and can make enough to keep me."

The old man nodded and smoked steadily as he gazed out over the desert.

"Riders comin' across in this direction," he said laconically.

Adam sprang to his feet. Panic was in his face. Far away on the horizon he could see tiny specks.

He swung round to the old man.

"You may as well know that I'm wanted for killing a man," he said quietly. "It was accidental, but they framed it up on me, and I think they mean to kill me."

"Oh, it was accidental all right," replied the other calmly. "I was there and saw it happen. Reckon the sheriff don't love you, son."

Adam stood staring at the tiny specks that had now grown to bigger specks.

"You needn't know anything about it," he said quietly, "or they might rile up with you for harbouring me."

"Yes, I guess you're right," answered the old man.

He got up to his feet, and, picking up his spade, started shovelling away the sand vigorously.

"What are you doing?" demanded Adam.

Dismukes paused.

"Want to be strung up?" he queried.

"What d'you think?" retorted Adam bitterly.

"Well, I figured it out same way," replied the other as he bent to his digging again. "And I reckon you may just as well be buried as hung. Now, just you plug up your ears, son, and tie your coat over your head, and

we'll soon fix these guys when they come nosin' here. That brother of yours only got what's been comin' to him for a mighty long time. There were lots more who had a fancy for shootin' him, though they'd have hated for it to be accidental. Catch hold of that kettle and clap it over your mouth, and with the spout stickin' just above ground you'll have a chance to breathe.

"Hop in here," he went on, indicating the grave he had just dug, "and then we'll fix you up as comfortably as we can."

He was sitting on the ground, smoking his pipe, when the riders pulled up and dismounted.

"Say, old-timer, have you seen a guy come this way—a young guy, clean-shaven, dark curly hair?"

Dismukes took his pipe from his mouth.

"I'd have kept him if I had," he replied. "I'm fond of company in this durned desert. Friend of yours?"

"Friend nothin'," retorted the other.

"We're after him. He killed Guard Larey in the saloon in Picacho yesterday morning."

"Did he, be jabbers? Then if he comes this way you bet I'll nab him. Like some coffee—I've got some good stuff?"

Both of the men assured him that they would, and he proceeded to search around for it. Dismukes was far too old a hand to let them think that he was in a hurry to get rid of them.

But after searching about for a couple of minutes a rueful expression came to his face.

"Durned if I haven't forgotten it," he said.

A quarter of an hour later, with the two men once more specks on the horizon, but this time disappearing, Adam Larey, dug out of the sand and little the worse for his interment, sat drinking coffee with the old prospector, who was making plans for the future.



Ruth and the old prospector stood facing the outlaw.

And the following day the two men set out for old Dismukes' mine in the Death Valley.

Adam to the Rescue

EVERYBODY in Tecopah and the neighbourhood knew "Big Jo's" bar. It was as popular as Big Jo herself; for the latter was as big in heart and kindness as she was in size, though the girls who worked for her—as well as the rough miners who frequented the saloon—knew quite well that you could play no tricks on Big Jo. Big-hearted she might be, and undoubtedly was, but she was a very sound judge of human nature, and such a thing as fear found no place in her make-up.

Ruth Virey had come in there one day, and, at the girl's request, Big Jo had given her a job there, for she had taken a liking to the girl at first sight, and though the latter had vouchsafed little about herself, Big Jo had sensed some tragedy and had taken her on. But though she had been with her now for nearly a year, she was still puzzled about her. She could see that she was different from the other girls—quieter, more reserved, though eminently hard-working and always willing.

So it was that when Dismukes was in the saloon one day saying that he was wanting some capable young woman up at the mine to keep house, cook and look after himself and his men, Big Jo suggested Ruth. For she knew that the old prospector would look after her like a daughter, and she fancied that it would be a far better life for the quiet, sensitive girl than the rough atmosphere of her saloon.

Ruth listened to the proposal, nodded her acquiescence. She declared herself quite willing to go on her present employer's recommendation. But she seemed to have no enthusiasm about her, and Big Jo tackled her then.

"I wish you'd tell me what all the trouble is, kid," she said. "You've been here for the thick end of a year, and you ain't no different now to what you were when you came. I don't want to butt in any, but maybe I could help you."

The other smiled faintly.

"You've been real kind to me, Jo," she replied, "but I guess there's no one can help me."

"A man?" queried Big Jo, after a pause.

The other nodded.

"I may as well tell you," she said, and proceeded to tell her story.

"So when my father and mother died," she went on, "I just started to wander around in the hope that one day I'd come across him. You see, he was innocent, Jo, but the sheriff was in league with his brother, and no one in Picaecho dared to cross the sheriff. So Adam just had to clear out, and maybe he's still in hiding. But if I could find him I'd marry him. I love him, you see, and I told him, when we parted a year ago, that I'd never marry anyone else. And I know he won't, either."

Big Jo was silent. Her experience of men was making her a bit sceptical, but she wasn't saying so.

"Well, cheer up, honey," she said. "The world's a big place, and all sorts of queer things happen in it. What d'you say to havin' a change and goin' up to this mine with old Dismukes? He's a funny old fellow, but he's white all through, and I reckon you'll have a better deal than you get here."

The next day Ruth set off for the Death Valley with the old prospector.

It was hardly an accident that brought March 14th, 1936.

Adam Larey to Big Jo's bar on the following day, for things had been happening to him and he was riding post-haste to old Dismukes at the Death Valley mine. And Tecopah lay in his way, and he had heard of Big Jo from the old prospector.

So, hitching up his horse outside, he strode into the saloon, called for a drink, and in a very few minutes was in private conversation with Big Jo.

She listened attentively to his tale, but she never doubted the truth of it. She could see that Adam was speaking the truth. He had told her that he had been robbed and captured by a band of desert outlaws, and, while a prisoner, had heard them planning a raid on old Dismukes' mine.

"I managed to escape, ma'am," he finished, "and I'm on the way there now; but I shall want help. You're a friend of Dismukes, and he saved my life."

"Wish you'd been in here yesterday," said Big Jo. "He left for the mine with one of my girls, Ruth Virey—"

But that was as far as she got, for the next moment Adam had leaped to his feet, excitement in every line of his face.

"Ruth Virey?" he almost shouted. "What's she like? Where does she come from? D'you mean to say—"

But she calmed him, told him what she knew. Though long before she'd finished he had rushed from the saloon, flung himself on his horse and was rushing over the desert at a furious speed.

Adam's brain was whirling as his horse bore him along. Wild delight and exultation were in his heart at the thought that very soon he would be seeing Ruth once more, even in spite of the knowledge that with the stigma of the crime hanging over him he could never ask her to marry him. Yet, despite his exultation a terrible dread was on him that the outlaws might reach the mine before he could.

Then suddenly he uttered a sharp exclamation, for in the distance he could see a rider approaching him at a rapid pace, though, as the latter drew near to him fear once more leaped to his heart, for he saw in a flash that it was old Dismukes' Chinese servant.

"Massa, massa," exclaimed the other, "the robbers are at the mine. They've got missie and master, and I'm riding for help, and—"

But Adam waited for no more. With a shout to the Chinaman he set spurs to his horse and was racing towards Death Valley, which lay only a few miles ahead.

In the meanwhile the old prospector and Ruth stood facing two outlaws. Ruth stood perfectly still, her calm eyes on Ben, the leader of the gang, whose gun was menacing them both. Dismukes' hands, holding his gun, were above his head.

Then Ben spoke, and there was a cruel smile on his face.

"Now then, come on, old-timer," he said. "Where have you got all your gold? Speak up, and speak quick. Otherwise you're for it."

Ruth shivered involuntarily. She had heard of Ben, knew the sinister and brutal reputation he bore. Dreadful deeds of cruelty had been whispered about him, and she was horribly afraid. She and the old prospector were seemingly all alone. There was no sign of the Chinese servant, and she wondered dully whether he had bolted precipitately or whether the rest of the robbers had got him.

Then she heard old Dismukes speaking, and a thrill surged over her at the quiet, steady indifference in his voice.

"I reckon you can find it for yourself, you white-livered skunk," he said. "I'm not telling you."

The outlaw scowled heavily. Fury was in his eyes.

"Oh, that's your tune, is it?" he snarled. "We'll soon change it for you."

He addressed the man who was at his side.

"Take this girl and lash her to a post so that she can see what's goin' on," he said brutally. "If this old fool won't speak, maybe she'll speak for him very soon. I'll deal with him."

The memory of what followed lived with Ruth for the rest of her life, for driven outside at the gun-point she soon found herself lashed securely to a post in full view of the ore-crushing machine, and her heart went down with horror as she realised what Ben was going to do. But struggle as she would when they had bound her, she knew only too well that she could never free herself. They had tied her too firmly for that.

It was a primitive ore-crushing machine. There was a deep, circular pool of raging water, fed by the river, which rushed down the mountain side; rocks were round it in the form of a low wall, and the grinding machinery was set in motion by mules which were harnessed to the creaking timbers, and walked round and round the pool.

But they harnessed old Dismukes this time, jeering at him, taunting him and raining heavy blows on him as they did so. And as the machinery began to move and the grinding of the ore sounded in the roaring pool below, Ben belaboured his helpless old victim with a chain, cursing him and abusing him as he staggered round and round.

"You won't tell us where you've hidden your gold, you old fool, won't you?" he screamed. "We'll soon see whether you'll change your mind!"

Ruth's head went down and she closed her eyes. Such agony was in her heart as she had never known. Above the roaring of the water and the grinding of the rocks below she could hear the outlaw's savage curses as he lashed at the old man.

Adam Larey did the last quarter of a mile on foot. For as he surmounted the hill and looked down on the mine he saw in a flash what was going on; and though fierce fury was in his heart he knew that only by exercising extreme caution could he hope to rescue Ruth and the old man.

Actually it only took him a few minutes to worm his way among the boulders to a point immediately above the ore-crushing machine. But even while he did so his eyes were roaming everywhere, and his hopes of success were growing every minute.

Then, suddenly he heard a footstep, and crouched among the boulders as he saw a man approaching him. But the man did not see him. His gun was in his hand and his eyes were roaming the valley left and right.

Adam held his breath. He knew that what he had to do would have to be done quickly, and he sent up a swift prayer to Heaven that there should be no mistake. Out of the corners of his eyes he could see old Dismukes below coming nearer and nearer to where he was, Ben lashing him furiously. And nearer and nearer came the unsuspecting sentry.

He leaped then, and his fist shot out, catching the man clean and true on the point of the jaw and sending him crashing down among the rocks to lie very still. Though Adam never waited to see that. In a flash he had swung round and had leaped the fifteen feet to the

(Continued on page 27)

The strange adventures of Mr. Blank, who fanatically assists charity through a form of blackmail. He steals some treasured possession and holds it as security until his victim sends a cheque to a specified charity. He turns detective when a man is robbed, a safe cleared, and himself involved. Starring Ellis Irving and Aileen Marson



The Two Burglaries

LONDON was at the height of the season when a series of strange and daring robberies commenced. Some heirloom would be stolen, whilst all other valuables would be ignored: then, within a few days, the unfortunate loser would receive a short note in block lettering:

"When you send a cheque for one hundred guineas to the Home for Incurables, your treasure will be faithfully returned to you.—Signed, M. BLANK."

The charities varied, so did the ransom amounts. It seemed clear that Mr. Blank knew his victims—they were always rich, mean people.

Lady Minecot was a victim in the early evening of one of her bridge parties. She was furious when she discovered that her beautiful diamond necklace had vanished from her jewel-case. She rang up the police and Detective-inspector Murray came hurrying to her mansion in Portman Square.

"It's disgraceful!" cried her ladyship. "What are you police doing?"

Murray, heavy-jowled, short and dour, put a hand up to his thick moustache. "We can't be everywhere, Lady Minecot."

"You might be somewhere sometimes!" she snapped. "This is the fourth robbery in this square alone! My diamond necklace taken—my love-liest thing!"

"Looks like that Mr. Blank again," said Murray. "He'll tell you to-night, I expect."

"But I'm most charitable!" Lady Minecot almost shrieked. "Are you suggesting—"

The telephone bell sounded and she snatched up the instrument from her

desk. She listened a moment, then thrust the receiver towards the detective.

Murray listened awhile.

"Of all the confounded impudence!" He turned to the irate lady. "It's Mr. Blank," he told her. "He says that if you'll post a cheque for five hundred pounds to the Margate Sea-bathing Hospital, the necklace shall be instantly returned."

Lady Minecot collapsed into a chair.

"Did you—did you say five hundred?"

Murray, still listening in, nodded.

"He says your necklace is worth ten thousand pounds."

Lady Minecot groaned.

"Tell the scoundrel 'Yes'! And I hope the next time he's burglar—someone will shoot him!"

She wrote the cheque and gave it to her secretary, who went straight to the post with it. Murray called into the phone:

"All right—the cheque has gone. You can take my word. Inspector Murray this end. Now, where's the necklace?"

He slammed down the phone.

"He says it's with the artificial flowers in this room, your ladyship."

Lady Minecot dashed to a pedestal vase in the corner of her boudoir. She plucked out a bunch of paper roses, scattering them, plunged her hand into the vase and—drew out the necklace!

"Can't I stop the cheque?" she gasped hysterically.

"You'll be asking for further trouble if you do," growled Murray.

Just before ten o'clock that same evening the house of Lord and Lady Waring in Portman Square was visited by a gentleman in rubber shoes and a dark, tightly buttoned-up suit, who preferred to come in by the balcony window rather than by the front door.

The room he entered was Lady Waring's own especial study; it was inkily dark and the big house was silent as the grave. The burglar made his way by the light of his torch towards the wall safe, and set down his basket of tools in order to drill through the lock of the safe.

He had scarcely started when a gentle voice sounded from behind him:

"You'll never do it like that."

The burglar put down the drill. He turned about to peer through the darkness at a shadowy figure. He dimly perceived that across its nose a large patch of black silk was tightly drawn.

"Lummy, gov'nor—you startled me!" he muttered.

"Nothing like the outside alarm bells would have startled you when you opened the window," came the cool answer, "if I hadn't cut the wires. Get away from that safe."

The dark figure knelt before the safe and put clever fingers on the knob of the combination lock, twiddled the knob, gave a little pull at the safe door—and it silently came open. A gloved hand was thrust in and a drawer full of jewels was drawn forth.

"Gov'nor, you're a marvel!" The burglar flashed his torch on the sparkling gems. "Let's hop it before the mice get at us!"

"I am taking this emerald pendant," stated that steady voice. "And this being done—you are going to hop it, empty-handed, the way you entered."

"But, lummy, gov'nor, I'm Jimmy Glass, professional! You're only an amateur—doing things for a lark! I tumble to you—you're Mr. Blank!"

The Black Mask told him:

"The butler is listening at the door." Jimmy Glass picked up his bag.

March 14th, 1936.

"I'll go—because I've taken a fancy to you."

He moved towards the window. Mr. Blank heard him fumbling for the hasp. "Be careful!"

It was too late. Jimmy had knocked on an inside burglar alarm. A strident ringing of bells shattered the night. Both men made a dash for the window and dropped from the balcony into the dark garden below.

"Search Me!"

A CLEANLY-SHAVED, frank-faced young gentleman strolled into the portico of Lady Mincot's mansion. At the door was a tall, broad-shouldered man waiting entrance. He turned about.

"Hallo, Verrell—you schoolboy! Been ringing all the bells in the square?"

"A fire-alarm, I imagine," Verrell smiled. The butler had opened the door. "After you, Davidson."

They entered the house and presently were being received by their hostess.

"You're late," she informed them. "I've filled up all the places. Oh, here's Sir John and Lady McTavish—that just makes another four for bridge."

She turned to greet a thin, cadaverous Scotsman who had just entered with a lady in black, who at once gushed:

"My dear, we've brought our niece Jean with us. You don't mind?"

"You'll have to play rummy if there's five of you," Lady Mincot stated in her abrupt manner. "What's the matter now, Hopkins?"

The butler was waiting at the door. "It's the detective gentleman, my lady. He says—"

Murray had followed him in. "Sorry, Lady Mincot, but I have to trouble you. There has been a burglary at Lord Waring's, across the square, and Lady Waring's emerald pendant is missing. The burglars were disturbed by the alarm bells—and one of the pair was seen to enter this house."

"Good gracious!" Lady Mincot exclaimed. "When?"

"Within the last few minutes!" Murray was eyeing Sir John.

"I have just entered," he said haughtily. "D'you think I'm a burglar?"

"We came in together just now," spoke the big Davidson, glancing at Verrell. "Do you accuse us?"

"Or me?" cried Lady McTavish. "Or my niece Jean, downstairs, who's changing her shoes?"

"I don't accuse anyone," Murray answered them. "The fellow was in evening dress, and I've just picked up this, outside."

He held out a black silk mask. "You'd better search us," Sir John ordered icily. "Begin with me."

Murray signalled to a plain-clothes man who had quietly slipped into the room. Sir John held up his arms and the detective ran deft hands over him.

"Now me," said Davidson, smiling at them.

Verrell had seated himself at a table. He had just drawn out his handkerchief when a handsome girl came into the room behind him. Unseen, she watched him feel for and glance at a visiting-card which he took rather surprisedly from his breast-pocket.

"My turn," he said, standing up for the search.

He submitted lazily. "Give me back that card, inspector, please. I may want the address."

Murray and his man retired baffled.

The five late-comers settled down to a boisterous game of rummy. Miss Jean McTavish much interested in young Mr. March 14th, 1936.

Verrell. It was plain to her that he had something on his mind.

Three flights up a small staircase in a Bloomsbury lodging-house young Mr. Verrell toiled the next morning. He tapped at a door on which there was pinned a visiting card exactly like one he held in his hand. A voice called out: "Entray!"

Mr. Verrell entered the small room. "Professor Slavinski?"

"Wee! I am ze professeur," answered an assumed voice.

Said Mr. Verrell: "You're a liar—you're Jimmy Glass!

Where's that pendant you stole from me last night?"

"Sleight-of-hand, gov'nor—same as you read on the card I shoved in your pocket last night! Professor Slavinski, Entertainer and—Expert. Children's Parties attended at moderate fees. Here's the blinking pendant."

Verrell took the glittering thing and put it carefully into his breast-pocket.

"Thanks. They nearly had me last night," he added.

"You need a partner, gov'nor. What about taking me in? I'm fair nuts on you. The way you opened that safe was lovely!"

"I work alone, Jimmy."

"I'm just as willing to be honest as to be t'other way," said the professor earnestly. "I'll be your valet, your servant—anything you like."

Said Verrell: "Lady McTavish is giving a party to-night at her place in Audley Street. Be there at ten o'clock—to give an entertainment. Number 33."

He nodded to Jimmy and departed. In ten seconds he was back again.

"Where's that pendant—you light-fingered scoundrel!"

"Sorry, gov'nor—I just had to take it," Jimmy passed it back. "Put it in your trousers pocket this time!"

"Sir John—He's Dead!"

PROFESSOR SLAVINSKI was a great success at the McTavish party. He asked for the help of three ladies and three gentlemen in the corner of the big room where he was demonstrating—and managed to steal something from each one without their being in the slightest degree aware of the fact!

Jean McTavish was very surprised to find her dress bag denuded of its purse.

Davidson was rather annoyed at discovering a door key taken from the pocket of his white dress waistcoat. Sir John looked on and applauded loudly at the conclusion, boasting:

"But you couldn't catch me, professor!"

"You 'ave nozzing worth ze taking, hein?" grinned Jimmy, complete with a short, spade-shaped beard and a pretended Russo-French accent. "But I take madame's bracelet, yes!"

"Good gracious, my ruby bracelet's gone!" gasped Lady McTavish, staring at her bare wrist. "An heirloom—it was my grandmother's!"

"Ere it is, madame!" Jimmy made a grab in the air and appeared to catch the bracelet as it fell from the ceiling.

"Is it not wonderbar?"

He handed it to Lady McTavish with an exaggerated bow. He flashed a glance at Verrell, who crossed the room to speak low to him:

"Better go now."

"That bracelet isn't the goods, gov'nor," Jimmy breathed. "Paste imitation!"

"I guessed so. I'll get the real thing presently."

"You make that old Sir John pay handsome," counselled Jimmy. "He

never gives away a penny. Tried to cut down my fee!"

Verrell went back to Jean, dancing with her as often as he could.

"Lady Waring's emerald pendant has been returned to her, I hear," he remarked casually.

"Lord Waring had to send a thousand guineas to Guy's Hospital," Jean told him. "I suppose you heard that, too?"

The "professor" was very busy at the buffet. Jean smiled at him, whispering to Verrell:

"Your friend is clever. He knew at a glance that auntie's bracelet was a fake."

Verrell was handing her champagne. "A fake, eh?"

"Yes, the real one is in the safe in Sir John's library. The safe is hidden behind a picture over the mantelpiece. Mr. Blank himself wouldn't be able to steal anything of uncle's," she added.

Verrell nodded.

"Here's Davidson come to claim you for a dance. Say you're engaged."

Jean checked him.

"You must dance with Miss Hardcastle."

Davidson came to them, murmuring low to Jean:

"Lady McTavish is asking for you."

Jean presented Verrell to the not-very-young Miss Hardcastle and watched them depart, arm-in-arm, for the ball-room.

Verrell soon invented an excuse to get away. He crept up the stairs to the library, where only the freelight flickered in the grate. All was dusky quiet. He went straight to the picture over the mantelpiece and moved it sideways. There, behind it, was a flat knob almost hidden in the carved panelling.

Verrell manipulated the knob and opened the panel. A small recess was revealed.

It was quite empty.

Verrell smiled to himself. Jean evidently suspected him and had laid a little trap. He moved noiselessly out of the room and got back to Miss Hardcastle with a glass of champagne from the buffet.

"Couldn't get served," he explained. "So sorry!"

A bare five minutes later Jean came running down the stairs, her pretty face ashy pale. She came tottering to Verrell.

"Sir John!" she gasped. "In the library. He's—dead!"

She collapsed into Verrell's arms.

A Clue?

DETECTIVE MURRAY and a policeman were conducting a preliminary investigation. Verrell and Davidson were in the card-room—most of the other guests having hastily departed. Lady Mincot, as the oldest friend of the McTavish family, was telling Murray:

"I was here playing cards with Mr. Davidson and Lord and Lady Waring," she explained, "when Mr. Verrell came to us with the dreadful news. I have sent Lady McTavish to bed—she is with her niece. Sir John has died of heart trouble, of course?"

Murray shook his head.

"Best to let everybody think so," he stated. "He was in the library collapsed on a couch. He had been shot through the back."

"You mean—murdered?" Lady Mincot stared in horror.

"Beyond doubt," Murray answered. "There is no sign of the weapon, but the house must be searched. No one should have been allowed to leave."

"But we should have heard the report," Lady Mincot tried to argue.

"Not necessarily," came the quick



A small, furtive man silently entered the hall with a revolver clutched in his hand.

answer. "The pistol used may well have had a silencer—or the noise in the house may have drowned all else—What are you doing with those cards, Mr. Verrell?"

"There's a smudge of burnt gunpowder on this one." Verrell held up a card from the back on the table.

Davidson put in:

"That card was in my hand. We were playing euhre. The mark is from the ash of a cigarette I was smoking."

Lady Mincot said:

"Mr. Davidson was winning every hand!"

Murray took the card.

"I don't know why you should think this a gunpowder smudge," he told Verrell, giving him a straight look. He added, as he flung the card aside. "The small private safe in the library has been opened and rifled of all its contents."

Next morning when Verrell called at the McTavish home he was received by Jean.

She asked him:

"Are you wise to come?"

Verrell questioned bluntly:

"Do you think I killed Sir John?"

Jean put out her hand to him.

"I know you didn't," she answered. "But Mr. Blank did take auntie's bracelet."

"No," he assured her. "Mr. Blank merely opened the safe." He added: "I'm glad you trust me, Jean."

"Don't stay," she urged. "Murray suspects you. He thought you were trying to put suspicion on Davidson last night."

As Verrell was leaving the house, he almost ran into a bespectacled, side-whiskered gentleman in a black frock coat and black trousers, who removed his tall hat with a jerky movement, muttering sepulchrally:

"Good-morning, sir—a sad business. I am the undertaker."

Late that afternoon Jimmy called at Verrell's chambers. Verrell greeted him:

"Well, undertaker, did you bury the body?"

"Now, gov'nor, none of your jokes! I had to get in the house, didn't I?" Jimmy reminded him. "And I didn't pinch a single thing—except this photo that I lifted out of Lady Mac's dressing-gown pocket."

He passed over to Verrell a carte-de-visite of a pretty brunette. Verrell turned the card over, to read in a sprawly handwriting:

"With love from Phyllis Newcombe."

Jimmy asked:

"Make anything of it?"

"Phyllis Newcombe is the cabaret girl at the Winchester." Verrell's face grew grave. "I imagine she gave this to Sir John and—his wife found it."

"You don't think Lady Mac popped him off?" Jimmy shook his head. "Gov'nor, believe me, she isn't the sort."

"We must follow this up," Verrell decided.

Detective Murray had closely interrogated all the staff at the McTavish home, with no result. The chauffeur

was the only one who had given him the slightest help. He had seen, from the garage, lights in the library go up about eleven o'clock for a few minutes.

"I guessed Sir John had come up to fetch a book," he told Murray.

Miss Newcombe received two pretended policemen at her flat that night. She told them that Sir John was "just a friend" who had danced with her at the Winchester. He had asked for her photograph.

"Would you care to have one, inspector?" she smiled at Verrell.

"I would!" cried Jimmy. "Lummy, rather!"

When they were outside the flat, Verrell said:

"You gave away the whole thing!"

"Not me, gov'nor!" said Jimmy.

"There was a man's gold cigarette-case on a side table." Verrell frowned. "One I've seen before. I tried to tip you the wink to pinch it."

"I got her latch key," grinned Jimmy, "anyhow."

That night Verrell entered the McTavish mansion by the library window. He wore a buttoned-up overcoat over his dress suit and a black mask.

With the aid of a torch light he made his way to the picture, slid it back and manipulated the combination-knob lock. He felt inside the circular hole behind the small door with deft fingers until he found the secret spring he had guessed to be hidden within. A faint click rewarded him—a whole panel at the side of the fireplace slid open in its grooves.

Verrell withdrew the ruby bracelet from the safe and put it in his pocket. Then he took out some legal-looking papers.

A tense whisper came from behind him.

"Many thanks! That safe has bothered me a lot. Don't move, or I'll drill you through the back!"

Without turning, Verrell answered, in his cool way:

"Then it was your cigarette-case, Davidson?"

"I don't understand, and I don't care," came the reply. "Put those documents on the table. Now come away from the safe. Stand against the bookshelves!"

Verrell obeyed. He knew that he had a desperate man to deal with.

Total darkness held them hidden from each other. Verrell set his teeth, waiting immobile. Suddenly the lights were flashed on and Davidson's voice sounded from the passage.

"Mr. Blank, inspector. I caught him in the act. You will find he has Lady McTavish's bracelet. You'll excuse my going?"

Murray snapped a sharp command to a manservant and two uniformed policemen.

"Seize him!"

Verrell dashed aside the detective's out-tretched hand, then flung himself at the hesitating footman. As the two policemen closed in on him, Verrell grabbed at their legs and overturned

(Continued on page 28)

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Death among the clouds! War in the sky as intrepid flyers clash with the forces of organised crime! Tailspin Tommy returns to the firmament of Fame in a smashing drama that blazes its way across the Pacific to islands of hidden wealth, of lawlessness, of savagery and cannibalism. A wonder serial of unforgettable thrills, starring Clark Williams and Noah Beery, Jun.



Read This First

Tailspin Tommy, famous civilian flyer and ace of the Three Point Aerodrome, is hired by a wealthy business man named Curtis to make aerial surveys of the oil-bearing island of Nazil, in the far tropical realms of the Pacific Ocean.

Curtis is the uncle of Betty Lou Barnes, Tailspin's sweetheart, and is in partnership with Don Alvarado Casmetto, who owns most of the island of Nazil, and whose daughter Inez has been holidaying in the United States.

The services of Skeeter Milligan, Tailspin's mechanic, are also engaged by Curtis, and the party set out in two 'planes. But word of their approach is later conveyed to Don Alvarado's unscrupulous stepbrother, Emanuel Casmetto, who seeks to oust his kinsman from Nazil, and who is backed by Raymore, a shady American financier.

Tailspin and Skeeter fall into the hands of Emanuel and Raymore, but escape with the help of Bill McGuire, a newspaper man who has obtained a job as chef at Emanuel's stronghold, solely for the purpose of investigating Raymore's activities.

The two youngsters are also assisted by a mysterious aviator who calls himself the Eagle, and who for some reason makes himself their friend and ally.

Later, while investigating a secret hangar in Emanuel's territory, Tailspin and Skeeter and Betty Lou discover a subterranean passage. But Emanuel has learned of their presence at the hangar, and it is bombed from the air by Gomez, one of his minions.

Now Read On

March 14th, 1936.

EPISODE 5.—

"The Torrent"

The Unknown Protector

EVEN as the bomb struck the hangar and shattered the building to smithereens, Betty Lou gained the comparative safety of the underground tunnel with Tailspin and Skeeter.

A hot rush of air swept down into the subterranean gallery, and dust and debris poured through the open trap-door overhead. But, unharmed, the girl and her two companions reeled along the dimly-lit passage for a short distance, then came to a halt and listened to the deep reverberations of the explosion that had just taken place.

The echoes of the blast died away, and they heard the drone of the aeroplane flown by Gomez, Emanuel Casmetto's ace. Judging from the sound of the craft's motor, the fellow had dropped to a low altitude and was circling over the clearing, doubtless viewing his grim handiwork, but gradually the engine-note became less distinct and they realised that the hostile aviator must be quitting the vicinity.

The hum of the 'plane's motor grew more and more remote, until at last it was audible no longer. Then Tailspin spoke to Betty Lou.

"I reckon the coast's clear now," he said thickly. "Get back to our ship and wait for us there, Betty. No doubt the guy that bombed the hangar thinks we've all been wiped out."

Betty gave him an anxious glance. "What are you and Skeeter going to do?" she wanted to know.

"We aim to find out where this tunnel

leads to," the young airman told her. "Don't worry, we can take care of ourselves. You make your way to the 'plane, if you can get through the wreckage of the shed."

Betty Lou was reluctant to leave them, but Tailspin persuaded her to return to the steps which led up to the trap-door, and it was as she was climbing towards the tunnel's outlet that she heard a sudden commotion behind her.

She turned her head quickly, and as she did so she saw a group of armed and uniformed men swinging round a bend in the underground gallery—men who raised a sharp outcry at sight of Tailspin and Skeeter, and who rushed upon the youths before they could take to their heels.

Betty checked in dismay, and there was an expression of alarm on her pretty face as she watched the newcomers surround her friends and seize them. Next instant a furious scuffle was in progress, and in the throes of that losing battle Tailspin shouted frantically to the girl on the stairway.

"Run for it, Betty!" he yelled. "Go on, make your getaway in the 'plane!"

Betty Lou hesitated only for a moment, and then, realising that she could serve no purpose by remaining but might fetch help if she made her escape, she scrambled up the steps and pulled herself through the opening above—an opening that was now latticed by splintered planks that had fallen athwart it.

As she disappeared through the tunnel's outlet two of Emanuel Casmetto's hirelings detached themselves from the struggle in the gallery and dashed in pursuit of her. Within a few seconds they were also clambering up through

the trap-door, and as they hauled themselves clear of the secret passage they found themselves amid the piled wreckage of the hangar.

Betty was stumbling and tripping over the broken timbers that lay strewn upon the ground, and the two dago soldiers gave chase determinedly. The girl blundered from the debris of the hangar with a fair start, however, and sped across the glade towards the 'plane in which she, Tailspin and Skeeter had made the trip from Don Alvarado's hacienda.

Could she reach it and take off into the air before Emanuel's men overhauled her, though? She had frenzied doubts about this, and, looking back fearfully as she ran, she beheld her pursuers behind her.

And then suddenly, out of the blue, there came deliverance—deliverance in the form of a strange, incongruous flying-machine that swooped over the trees and banked steeply to wheel above the clearing like some wide-winged bird of prey!

It was the mysterious Eagle's 'plane, and as its monstrous shadow passed over the glade its hidden machine-gun belched death through the spinning propeller-shaft.

A stream of bullets ripped a furrow in the path of Betty Lou's pursuers, and they stopped in their tracks, looking up with appalled eyes at the craft which roared above them; and, as they stood uncertainly there, the ship wheeled again to bear down on them a second time, its machine-gun threatening them with a fresh hail of lead.

The invitation to make themselves scarce was too stern to be defied. The soldiers fled in helter-skelter style, bounding like antelopes to the ruins of the hangar and regaining the entrance to the underground tunnel in record time.

They vanished through the opening, tumbling down the steps, and they were seen no more by the unknown pilot who had put them to flight, and who now soared higher with attention focused on Betty Lou.

The girl had reached Tailspin's 'plane, and was hoisting herself into the forward cockpit. Satisfied that she needed no further assistance, the Eagle waved a gloved hand to her and swung away to the north. But Betty did not take off, made no attempt to set her ship in motion.

It was not because the controls presented any difficulties to her. There was not a 'plane in existence that she could not have flown. Nor was it because of any damage caused by the bombs that Gomez had dropped, for Emanuel's aviator had been careful to avoid injuring the craft, probably reflecting that it would be a valuable acquisition for his master.

No; Betty's sole reason for delaying her take-off was the possibility of Tailspin and Skeeter breaking away from the men who had attacked them.

It was a forlorn hope, as Betty might have realised if she could have seen what was happening down in the tunnel below the ruined hangar.

The Americans had put up a terrific fight, but the odds were too great, and at the moment when Betty Lou's discomfited pursuers rejoined the party in the underground gallery, Tailspin and Skeeter were helpless in the grip of their captors.

The two men who had fled from the Eagle began to tell their story in Spanish, and their comrades listened in silence, none of them showing any desire to climb from the tunnel and brave an engagement with the unknown

aviator if he were still within range. As for Tailspin and his mechanic, they could not make head or tail of the narrative, being ignorant of the language in which it was delivered, but they at least obtained the impression that Betty was safe.

A brief discussion now took place between their guards, and at the end of it the two prisoners were marched onward through the tunnel. It was a journey that occupied a considerable time, but at length the captives and their guards emerged from the subterranean passage, and Tailspin and Skeeter immediately found themselves in the neighbourhood of Emanuel Casmotto's headquarters.

Like Don Alvarado, his stepbrother, Emanuel was overlord of a settlement inhabited by a mixed population of Spaniards and half-breed islanders, and his actual stronghold stood on the outskirts of that settlement. Towards this citadel the prisoners were led, and as they were crossing the compound to the main building of the military station Bill McGuire showed up.

A look of distress appeared momentarily on the newspaper man's plump face when he recognised the young Americans, but he was quick to hide his true feelings, and spoke to Emanuel's band of soldiers heartily enough.

"I see you've got these rascals again," he said. "Well, that's fine, that's fine!"

"Si, amigo," one of the guards replied, in broken English that was flavoured with his native Spanish, "eet ees ver' fine and none weel be better pleased than Senor Emanuel. But for us, dey might have got away."

McGuire strolled on after exchanging a surreptitious glance with the captives, who were then hurried forward by the men who had taken them prisoner, and soon they were being escorted past a 'plane that stood in the middle of the compound—a 'plane that was the very craft which had bombed the hangar.

Sixty seconds later the youthful Americans were standing in a room occupied by Emanuel Casmotto, Horace Raymore and Gomez, and from the lips of one of the guards these three heard the story of the youngsters' capture.

"We set out to block up the secret tunnel as you suggested, Senor Casmotto," the narrator said, speaking in English for Raymore's benefit, "and we came across these dogs. They had escaped death by the bombs which Gomez dropped. There was a girl with them, too, but she got away—thanks to the airman who flies the ship that looks like a great eagle."

Emanuel Casmotto frowned darkly, and asked for further details. When they had been given he was silent for a while, and then Raymore spoke:

"Did you block up that tunnel?" he demanded of the man who had told the story.

"No, senor; we hurried back with our prisoners," was the reply. "But there is a cask of powder in a niche in the tunnel, and it will not take long to blow in the south entrance."

"Then you'd better see to that right away," Raymore growled. "Leave Tompkins and Milligan here in charge of four or five of your men."

Several of the guards were detailed to remain in the room with the prisoners, and the rest of the soldiery departed. When these had filed out, Emanuel Casmotto fixed his malevolent eyes upon Tailspin and Skeeter.

"So!" he barked. "You have been caught again while doing devil's work for that stepbrother of mine! Do you know what I have a mind to do? I have a mind to put the two of you to death without any more delay. It was

intended that you should die when Gomez bombed the hangar—"

"Just a minute, Casmotto."

It was the voice of Raymore, and the financier laid a restraining hand on the Spaniard's arm, but ere he could say more Emanuel addressed him impatiently.

"Leave me to handle these meddling cubs, senor," he snapped. "I am in command here."

"You may command the citadel," the crooked oil magnate retorted. "But I command the money that established it. Listen, we planned to get rid of these two fellows, but it's occurred to me that they might prove useful."

Emanuel eyed him dubiously, but held his peace as Raymore turned to the captives.

"What's your price?" he queried briskly. "You know what I mean. What are Don Alvarado and Curtis paying you?"

"Don Alvarado and Curtis aren't paying us anything," Tailspin answered in a cold voice. "They made a bargain with Paul Smith, of Three Point, for our services. He's the man who employs us, and he pays us a fixed salary."

"Then I'll double your salary if you'll join up with our outfit," Raymore said. "That's a pretty good offer, I guess—especially as you'll be on the winning side if you work for me."

Skeeter flared up at the Yankee financier.

"Does your side always win?" he bit out. "I thought we got the better of you once or twice. And as for your dirty bribe, Mr. Horace P. Raymore—"

Tailspin plucked at his mechanic's sleeve. He resented the financier's proposal as much as Skeeter, but had been quick to see that it might be to their advantage if they made a pretence of appearing interested. A point-blank refusal would probably mean death.

"Quiet, Skeets," the young airman said, and then, looking at Raymore thoughtfully, he invited the crook to explain precisely what he meant.

"The situation's clear enough, isn't it?" Raymore grunted. "My partner and I control some of the richest oil-fields on this island, and with you two on our side it won't be long before we grab the rest. That is, if you agree to fight for us."

"Yes, if you fight for us and help to drive my stepbrother out of Nazil," Emanuel struck in venomously.

Tailspin appeared to consider the prospect, and, if Skeeter stared at his friend in dumb amazement at first, it gradually dawned on him that the ace from Three Point was only playing for time—whereupon the mechanic also assumed an interested expression.

"It sounds like a pretty good idea," Tailspin murmured at length, "though I guess we couldn't go back to our old jobs after this racket is finished. Supposing you give us a day or two to think it over?"

"We'll give you till to-morrow morning," the financier declared. "Meantime, you can go any place you want to inside the settlement."

"What's that?" Emanuel Casmotto cried out angrily.

"All right, all right!" Raymore exclaimed. "Don't get so hot under the collar. Let me finish, will you? I was just going to tell them that they'll be constantly attended by these guards—and that any attempt to escape would be mighty bad for their health."

With an ominous inclination of his head he dismissed Tailspin and Skeeter, and, virtually prisoners in spite of the concession that had been made to them, the youngsters turned away.

They were followed from the room by their guards, and when the door had closed behind them Raymore signed to Gomez.

"Listen," he said. "I want you to take up the bomber and scout around for that guy who calls himself the Eagle. Should you locate him, tangle with him and bring him down with your machine-gun. And another thing, if you happen to run across that girl who was with Tompkins and Milligan—force her to land her 'plane."

Gomez saluted, and hastened from the apartment. A short time afterwards he was in the compound, across which Tailspin and Skeeter and their escort were now sauntering, and a few minutes later Emanuel Casmetto's aviator might have been seen flying southward in the bomber.

It was as the big 'plane was cruising over the hinterland of jungle that a man on the edge of the forest gazed up at it curiously. The man in question was Bill McGuire, who had wandered from the settlement some time previously, and he was following the receding craft with his eyes when he suddenly heard a stealthy movement close at hand.

McGuire glanced round, and, in the instant of turning, he saw a tall figure in the kit of an airman stride from a mass of thickets near by. It was the figure of a man whose countenance was hidden behind a mask that was attached to his flying helmet, leaving nothing visible but his strong jaw—and his dark eyes, which gleamed through a pair of tinted goggles that were part of the mask.

The stranger was grasping a revolver, and, startled by his unexpected appearance, McGuire was thrown into a panic. "N-no!" he blurted. "N-no, mister! Don't shoot! I'm a—I'm a friend—whichever side ye're on!"

"It's all right, McGuire," the other said slowly. "Don't get scared. I know you're on the right side."

Somewhat reassured, Bill McGuire fingered his collar tremulously and looked at the stranger in an awed fashion.

"Who told you my name?" he faltered. "Who are you, mister?"

"Men call me the Eagle," came the deliberate reply. "Tell me, McGuire, what happened to Tailspin Tompkins and Skeeter Milligan?"

"Th-they were taken before Emanuel Casmetto and Raymore," Mac breathed. "but they haven't come to no harm yet, for I saw 'em comin' away from the compound only a few minutes back. They were surrounded by guards, but looked as if they were free to go where they pleased. I haven't figured it out yet."

There was a spell of silence, and then the Eagle spoke again.

"We must think of some way to get them out of there," he said. "Meantime, I'm going to follow the course of the bomber that passed overhead just now. I want to know where it's bound for. Listen, McGuire, my ship's in a clearing a little to the west of here, and I want you to come there with me. On the way I'll show you how you can help me."

The newspaper man accompanied him through the jungle, and as they walked amid the shadows of the trees the Eagle explained to McGuire a method of signalling which the reporter could employ in any emergency.

"I need someone like you to keep me posted," the mysterious aviator observed, "and you can always get in touch with me by the means which I've just described to you."

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They were entering a clearing as he spoke these words, and in the centre of that clearing stood the Eagle's 'plane. Advancing towards it, the unknown airman climbed into the machine and then leaned down to address McGuire for the last time.

"Don't forget," he reminded him, "if help is needed, give me the sign. I'll look for it right here."

Standing by the 'plane, Mac nodded his assent. Then he drew aside, and sixty seconds later he was watching the strange ship as it soared skyward—watching it with a nonplussed expression on his rotund features.

A Duel in the Clouds

IN the glade where the hangar had lately stood, Betty Lou Barnes had lingered a long time in the faint hope that her friends might reappear. But at last she had been forced to conclude that they had been taken prisoner, and at the very moment when the Eagle was parting company with Bill McGuire, Betty was starting the motor of Tailspin's 'plane.

The engine was still warm, but she waited a little while to make certain that it was firing evenly and would not "stall" during the take-off. Then she opened the throttle and drove the craft across the stretch of turf until it was travelling at speed.

She now drew back the joystick, and the 'plane rose gracefully from the ground, soaring into the wind as it cleared the tree-tops and climbing swiftly towards the clouds.

And even as it climbed Betty saw another machine approaching from the north, a machine that was near enough to recognise as the bomber that had destroyed the aeroplane shed in the glade below!

With a thrill of alarm Betty swung away from it and tried to gain height, but she had become aware of her danger too late, and before she could escape, Gomez was on the tail of her ship.

Flying close behind his victim's craft, the pilot of the bomber gripped the trigger of the machine-gun with which his 'plane was equipped, and next instant the roar of engines was punctuated by the staccato blatter of that deadly weapon, hot lead belching from its muzzle in a menacing stream.

The bullets slashed past Betty's head, for Gomez was not trying to hit her, but to scare her into grounding her ship. He did not succeed, however—reckoned without the girl's nerve and spirit—and cursed under his breath as she veered away to give him the slip.

She meant to out-manoeuvre him, did she? Bah, he would show her!

This Gomez told himself resolutely, but in the grim pursuit that ensued he quickly realised that he was up against no mean pilot. Circling, soaring, diving to follow her down on the occasions when she chose to plunge, he strove to stick close to the tail of her 'plane and harass her with bursts of gunfire. Yet such was her skill with the controls that her craft might have been a fly, so rapid and confusing were its movements, and time and again she eluded him.

It was probably lucky for Gomez that her ship carried no armament, or he might have found himself in the position of defender instead of aggressor. As it was, he became savage and wrathful, and, in his chagrin and impatience, lost much of the cunning that he himself undoubtedly possessed.

Most likely, Gomez might have triumphed in the end if the affair had lasted long enough. In all probability

he would have succeeded finally in his design. But while Betty Lou Barnes was still leading him a dance among the clouds, a third 'plane loomed into the desperate scene—the fantastic 'plane manned by the Eagle.

It was roaring into the engagement almost before Gomez was aware of its presence, almost before the Spaniard could swing off and take up a fighting position; and in another moment the Eagle's gun was challenging his own, and the slugs were whipping thick and fast between the combatant ships.

Betty dived out of harm's way and then straightened out to head southwards, looking back with upraised glance to watch the fierce dog-fight that was now in progress. Drawing farther from the locality at a cruising speed, she gazed wide-eyed at the two warring 'planes and saw the rival pilots making every effort to gain the upper hand.

The Eagle it was who ultimately secured positional advantage, proving himself a master in the tactics of aerial conflict, and suddenly Gomez found himself in the rôle of a hunted fugitive.

Frantically he tried to evade his foe, but could not. The Eagle was behind him, and the Spaniard could not shake him off; and he, Gomez, was under the sights of the Eagle's gun without being able to answer the fire of that weapon.

Bullets ripped along the length of his 'plane, tearing into the fuselage, into the fabric of the wings. From afar Betty saw his machine go into a sudden spin and fall earthward with fumes trailing from it—saw it drop into the heart of the jungle, where it was lost to sight amongst the trees, the fate of its pilot being in doubt.

Had Emanuel Casmetto's mission crashed to his death, or had he managed to ground his damaged ship without sustaining fatal injuries?

Betty did not know. She only knew that the Eagle was now bearing off towards the north, to vanish—as he always did—behind a dense smoke-screen thrown from his exhaust.

Betty flew on in a southerly direction, and about half an hour later she was circling above the landing field near Don Alvarado's hacienda. As she dropped lower she saw two or three figures emerge hurriedly from the Don's home, and by the time she had brought her ship to a standstill on the level sward she had recognised Don Alvarado, Inez and the planter known as Garcia.

They came running across to her and confronted her anxiously when she clambered from the 'plane.

"Senorita Betty Lou!" gasped the Don. "What happened? Where are the boys? Inez, here, told me that you had gone off with them on their reconnaissance. I have been so worried. You have been absent so long."

"Where's Uncle Ned?" Betty demanded.

"Senor Curtis has departed on a tour of Don Alvarado's oil-fields, senorita," Garcia broke in. "But tell us, where are Senor Tompkins and Senor Milligan?"

Betty Lou answered him shakily, never guessing the true reason for Garcia's eagerness to know what had occurred, never suspecting that this man, who affected to be a friend, was in reality a spy in Emanuel's pay.

"Tommy and Skeeter were captured by hostile soldiers," she panted. "I hoped they'd get away, but I waited and waited, and they never showed up."

She proceeded to relate the whole story in detail, and when she had finished, Don Alvarado ground his teeth together.

"Any hasty and ill-planned tactics must necessarily prove dangerous," he said, "but we shall have to take a chance. I'll mobilise a force and attack Emanuel's settlement and stronghold. We'll march without delay. It may be that we shall be defeated and wiped out, but we must at least make an attempt to rescue those boys!"

There was a silence, during which Garcia summed up the situation swiftly. True, it was possible that Don Alvarado's men might fail in their purpose, but there was also a likelihood that Emanuel might not be able to assemble his troops in time to meet the assault.

"Don Alvarado," the planter murmured, "before you make so rash a move, I suggest that other methods are tried first. Now I know a place where an aeroplane could be set down secretly within a mile of your stepbrother's headquarters, and I am willing enough to make an attempt at rescuing our young friends. In this matter, one man might succeed where a thousand would effect nothing."

The Don looked at him keenly.

"You—you would be prepared to take such a risk, senior?" he stammered, deeply impressed by Garcia's offer.

"I am prepared to do anything that will help your cause, Don Alvarado," the planter announced in a high-sounding tone.

He paused, and then turned his glance upon Betty.

"To carry out the plan I have in mind," he continued, "I should need an experienced pilot."

"An experienced pilot," Betty Lon declared at once. "Then you don't have to look farther than me, Senior Garcia. I'll be your pilot."

"Oh, no, Betty!" Inez Cassetto ejaculated in alarm.

"No, there is too much danger," Don Alvarado agreed. "My daughter is

right, Seniorita Betty. Already you have gone through perils enough."

But the American girl was in no mood to listen to arguments. With a set expression on her pretty face she addressed Garcia stubbornly.

"When do we start?" she wanted to know.

"As soon as you like," the planter rejoined, and, despite the pleas of Don Alvarado and Inez, preparations were made for an immediate departure.

Ten minutes after Garcia had volunteered his proposal, the plane in which Betty had arrived was ascending towards the clouds again, and, wheeling northward, it was soon visible to the Don and his daughter only as a mere speck in the sky.

At a speed of more than a hundred miles an hour the machine cruised high above the panoramic savannahs and mountains of the island—onward until the more open country of the south gave place to the great belt of jungle that split the territories of the rival stepbrothers. Then suddenly Garcia spoke to Betty through the telephone tube and indicated a clearing somewhat to the east.

"There's the landing-place I had in mind," he told her. "Can you set the ship down there?"

The girl nodded, and, altering her course, she circled the glade a couple of times before swooping towards it with the engine almost silent.

The landing she made was faultless, and as the craft came to a standstill pilot and passenger climbed out, Betty looking around in a cautious fashion.

"I want you to stay here, while I work close to Emanuel's stronghold and get what you call the 'low-down,'" Garcia said to her. "Don't worry, I think I know a way of smuggling the boys out of captivity."

Betty was none too sure of the ruse Garcia intended to employ in order to bring about the release of her friends,

but the man seemed so extraordinarily confident that she had implicit faith in him. Nevertheless, it would have been more to her liking if she could have accompanied him.

"Can't I go with you?" she asked.

"No, seniorita," he replied. "It is better that you should remain here and hold yourself in readiness to start the plane at a moment's notice. The boys and I may be hotly pursued."

"All right," Betty said. "You can depend on me to be here."

He left her and made his way into the trees, disappearing from view. But if Betty could have followed his movement her faith in him might have been shaken before many minutes, for as soon as he was no longer visible to her he broke into a run, and did not halt even when he emerged from the jungle and saw Emanuel Cassetto's citadel ahead of him.

A party of slovenly soldiers were straggling from the direction of the settlement, and Garcia hailed them—spoke to them rapidly in Spanish as they joined him. Then he hurried on to report to Emanuel and Raymore, while the soldiers marched in the direction of the forest with resolute steps.

A quarter of an hour later that group of uniformed men reached the clearing in which Betty Lon was waiting with the plane, and, taking the girl completely by surprise, they rushed upon her from the woods and seized her ere she could make any attempt to escape.

The Deepest Dungeon

IT was as Emanuel and Raymore were rousing themselves from an afternoon siesta in the lounge of their quarters that a sentinel entered the room and announced Garcia.

"Garcia, eh?" Raymore commented. "He must have important news for us, or he wouldn't be here. All right, show him in."



Rough hands were laid on Tailspin and Skeeter, and they were bundled out into the corridor by their guards.

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Garcia entered the apartment a moment afterwards, and bowed to his employers as they looked at him inquiringly.

"Buenos dias, gentlemen," he greeted. "I come with tidings that will be very acceptable to you, I think. I have brought the niece of Curtis here—the Senorita Betty Lou Barnes. I left her in a clearing about a mile from here, and on my own initiative I have already sent some of your men to pick her up, Señor Emanuel."

His listeners stared at him, and Garcia went on to give them a full account of the manner in which he had tricked Betty.

"Do you not see?" he added finally. "With the senorita here as well as those Three Point flyers, you can hold a pistol to the heads of Don Alvarado and Curtis. Threaten to harm the girl and her fellow-prisoners, and Curtis is bound to persuade the Don to accept any bargain you may choose to put up. In short, amigos, you can dictate your own terms."

Emanuel and Raymore looked at each other significantly, and then the American spoke.

"Garcia, you've done a fine piece of work," he congratulated, "and if Curtis and Don Alvarado knuckle under on account of it, I'll see that a big bonus is paid to you."

"Thank you, señor," Garcia answered, his eyes kindling with avarice. "But one thing more—Don Alvarado was talking of sending an expedition here. I advised him against it, but when the Senorita Betty fails to return to his hacienda he may adopt war-like measures."

"We'll be ready for him if he does," Emanuel retorted viciously. "Yet I do not think he will try it, Garcia—not when he is informed that it might mean death to his partner's niece and the young Gringo airmen. Carai—if that stepbrother of mine were to dare—"

Emanuel stopped short, for at that instant there was a tap on the door, and once again the sentry who was on duty outside the room presented himself.

Closing the door behind him, the man hastened to Emanuel's side and spoke to him in the Spanish tongue, giving Don Alvarado's half-brother some message that caused the commander of the citadel to scowl.

"Raymore," Emanuel started, turning to the financier, "this is what comes of the leniency you showed to Tompkins and Milligan. They are outside with their guards, who have told this sentry here that the pair of them tried to escape."

Raymore drew his brows together, and then shot a glance in the direction of Garcia.

"You'd better make yourself scarce," he said. "I'm going to have a talk with those young cubs, and it wouldn't be advisable for them to see you here."

Garcia slipped into a back room, and Raymore gave instructions that the flyers from Three Point were to be brought in. A few seconds later the young Americans were hustled across the threshold by their escort, who were now carrying fixed bayonets.

Emanuel and Raymore glowered at the captives, as the pair of them were thrust into their presence.

"It seems," the financier remarked grimly, "it seems that you've come to a decision about that offer I made you. And apparently you've turned it down."

"Aw, no," Skeeter protested. "We
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just got tired of these guys followin' us around, that's all. We haven't really come to any decision at all."

Emanuel stepped closer to him and spoke to him savagely.

"I have an idea that you and Tompkins are trying to make fools of us," he grated. "In any event, we shall treat you differently now. Because of your attempt to escape, you will both go to my deepest dungeon. Take them away, men!"

Rough hands were laid on Tailspin and Skeeter, and they were bundled out into the corridor by their guards. Then they were marched at the point of the bayonet towards the rear of the building, finally coming to a flight of steps that led down into realms of semi-darkness.

They were compelled to descend, and en route to the nether regions of the stronghold they passed cell doors that were fitted with narrow grilles. Not until they were at the lowest level which it seemed possible to reach did their armed escort call a halt, however, and then one of the men pointed to the threshold of a murky room.

"In there, Gringos!" this fellow commanded tersely. "Vaya, Carrambo!"

The Torrent

HE made a fierce gesture, but Skeeter and Tailspin lunged back, only to be propelled forward by angry and impatient exertions on the part of the guards. There ensued a brief scuffle which was foredoomed to end in defeat so far as the Americans were concerned, since the odds against them were too heavy.

Cursing, prodding at the captives with their bayonets and jabbing at them with their musket-butts, the soldiery drove them into the gloomy cell. Yet even now the prisoners had not reached their ultimate destination, for one of Emanuel's hirelings opened a trap-door in the floor, and the two youngsters were forced to make their way down the rungs of a ladder into a foul-smelling dungeon.

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"EXCUSE MY GLOVE."—Don Carter, Len Harvey; Bill Adams, Archie Pitt; Ann Haydon, Betty Ann Davies; Aunt Fanny, Olive Blakeney; Hurricane Harry, Wally Patch; Pat, Ronald Shiner; Madigan, Arthur Finn; Lucille, Vera Boggotti; Williams, Don McCorkindale.

"WANDERER OF THE WASTELAND."—Adam Larey, Dean Jagger; Ruth Virey, Gail Patrick; Dismukes, Edward Ellis; Guerd Larey, Monte Blue; Ben, Larry; Buster, Crabbe; Big Jo, Trixie Triganza; Mr. Virey, Charles Waldron Sen.; Mrs. Virey, Anna Q. Nilssen; Collishaw, Stanley Andrews.

"TWO-FISTED."—Hap Hurley, Leo Tracy; Chick Moran, Roscoe Karns; Sue Parker, Gail Patrick; Clint Blackburn, Kent Taylor; Marie, Grace Bradley; Jimmy, Billy Lee; Parker, Gordon Westcott; Mason, Ferdinand Munier; Taxi-Driver, Akim Tamiroff.

"THE BLACK MASK."—Jimmy Glass, Wylie Watson; Jean McTavish, Aileen Marston; Verrell, Ellis Irving; Davidson, Wyndham Goldie; Lady McTavish, Joyce Kennedy; Sir John McTavish, Herbert Lomas; Detective-Inspector Murray, John Turnbull; Phyllis Newcombe, Marjorie Rodgers; Lady Mincot, Kate Cutler.

The ladder was drawn up as they tumbled from it, and, as it disappeared through the aperture above, the trap-door was closed with a slam and mado fast. Then came the tramp of feet as the guards retired from the apartment overhead, and Tailspin and Skeeter were left alone in the silence of their deep cell.

Neither of them uttered a word at first, but Tailspin produced some matches, and striking one after another, began to roam round the walls of the dungeon like a caged and resentful lion; and he had been prowling in this manner for several minutes when Skeeter raised his voice.

"Take a load off your feet, Tommy," he grunted. "You may as well resign yourself to spending the rest of your days in this hole. We mayn't be here long, at that. I think Emanuel and Raymore realise that we've no intention of accepting their offer."

Tailspin made no reply. He was stooping close to the wall—seemed to be examining one of the stone blocks which comprised it—and all at once he gave vent to an exclamation.

"Hey, Skeets," he rapped out, "here's a loose stone. Do you—do you think it may cover some secret outlet?"

Skeeter was by his side a moment later, and together they strove to remove the loose block of stone that Tailspin had discovered.

It was no easy task, but at last they succeeded in shifting it out of position and lowering it to the floor, and, by the light of one of the matches, they found themselves looking into a small cavity.

This was not an outlet, but they saw a lever there, and, thinking it might possibly operate some mechanism that would swing a section of the wall aside, the two of them laid hold of it.

They had to exert all their strength to force down that switch, but in the instant that they did so they had reason to regret their efforts—aye, and regret them with a vengeance.

For sure enough a portion of the wall yawned open, but not to lay bare an avenue of escape. Instead, a surging cataract of water was admitted that hurled them to the floor and swept them to the other end of the dungeon.

Gasping, pale with alarm, they struggled to their feet amidst the foaming swirl and blundered to the fatal lever that they had dragged down, and with frantic hands Tailspin reached into the niche which it occupied.

"Quick, Skeets!" he panted. "Help me with this cursed switch!"

But if they had had difficulty in forcing down the lever, the task of lifting it was one that utterly defied them. It was as if it had jammed, and, while they toiled and fought, the torrent which they had released was pouring steadily into the cell with the tumult of a mill-race.

The water rose higher; it reached their throats, their lips and their nostrils, so that at length they were forced to abandon the lever and swim to and fro between the dungeon walls for dear life.

And as they swam they shouted for help, but shouted in vain. No answering sound reached their ears except the echoes of their own cries, and they knew that they were doomed—doomed to drown like rats when they sank from sheer exhaustion, or when the rising waters met their prison's roof.

(To be continued in another grand episode next week. By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Clark Williams and Noah Beery, Jun.)

"EXCUSE MY GLOVE"

(Continued from page 8)

only one commissioner on duty at the club, and he was certainly not capable of handling three men, not forgetting the masculine Aunt Fanny.

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" cried Aunt Fanny.

"Not this child," grinned Don. "What's it to you if I am drunk? I'm yellow and I ran out of the fight. If you think that, do so! Who cares?"

"You leave here at once," Lucille jumped up. "How dare you come here and insult him? You turned him down and—"

"Shut up, or I'll turn you over and spank you," cried Aunt Fanny. "Bill, get him out of here."

Don swore he wouldn't go, so ex-champion Bill Adams had to administer the knock-out, and as Bill said afterwards it hurt him more than it hurt Don. They carried the body out of the Cocktail Club.

It took Bill and the boys two days to sober up Don Carter, and the young boxer admitted that he had been a fool to go on the booze, but he was so depressed.

"Aunt Fanny—Mrs. Stafford—is speaking to the Boxing Commission," Bill told him. "And she reckons she can get us back in the game. She has a lot of influence."

And Aunt Fanny got them back in the game and fixed up a small fight for Don Carter. The youngster tried to repay them all for their kindness by working hard, but Bill Adams, after a fortnight's work, came to see Aunt Fanny.

"His fighting spirit has gone wrong," Bill confessed. "There's no snap in his work. His punch has no pep, and even old Hurricane Harry can stand up to his. He's lost his guts. Will you have a word with the kid?"

"I've got a lass in this house in the same state," Aunt Fanny answered. "I think I can cure him."

Mrs. Stafford did not mince her words when she got Don Carter to herself. He had no go because he thought it was all finished with Ann. It deserved to be finished. Ann had placed him on a pedestal and he had flopped off, but, strange as it might seem, she was still in love with him, though pretending that the name of Don Carter meant nothing to her.

"Young man, fight back and square your shoulders," she urged. "You've got to win back your good name both in the boxing world and in her eyes. And if you climb to success you may yet win my niece. I might give my consent to her marrying a man, but not a spineless collector of stained glass."

There was a new light in Don's eyes after Aunt Fanny had gone. He won his first fight in the fifth round. A month later he gained the decision over Seaman Jones. Tiger Watson, an ex-champion, was so badly beaten that his seconds threw in the towel in the fourth round. Thus did Don Carter's name begin to be known in boxing circles, and each time he fought his name was in increasingly large letters.

During this time Williams had a fight with Danny Merlin, the champion, and after a bout of holding that went the whole way Williams got the verdict and became the new champion.

Foul Play

BIG Bob Ruffer had changed his tone in regard to Don Carter. The man still hated Bill Adams and Don, but

he had to admit that the youngster could box.

Madigan found Ruffer a useful man for doing dirty jobs. For money the man would almost go as far as murder.

"Guv'nor, Carter can stop Williams in six rounds," he opined. "And yet I hear you're letting the kid have a scrap with the new champion and with the title at stake. You're not betting on Carter, are you?"

"No, and I've backed Williams rather heavily—that's why I sent for you," Madigan smiled. "With a certain bookie I have a bet of five thousand that Carter won't dare to face Williams on the actual night, and that I think he'll run like he did last time. Naturally, the bookie was willing to gamble that Carter would show up, and I have a level five thousand that he won't. A good investment."

"Investment!" sneered Ruffer. "Sounds to me you've gone crazy."

"A fortune-teller told me Carter won't show up," laughed Madigan.

"You can't pull that sob stuff again."

"No, but I can pull something else." Madigan nodded his head confidentially. "A champion can't lose his title if he has no one to fight with, and if you carry out your end, Ruffer, you get one-fifth of my investment. Have a drink, and listen."

The day of the fight loomed and Don Carter was in perfect trim. Bill Adams was confident of his man.

Don received many telegrams wishing him success, and one that arrived at mid-day caused the youngster to jump to his feet. It was from Ann. He had been told by Mrs. Stafford that Ann was reading all about his fights and even talking about him, and that if he won the championship or if he went down in a glorious defeat it was safe to say that Ann would take him back into her friendship. This telegram showed that she had forgiven him.

"Can't you look in before fight—want to wish you good luck alone—Ann."

Don crammed the telegram into his pocket. If he told Bill that he was going out there might be a scene. Best if he got a taxi and went down to Ann's place at once—he could be back in an hour. Best if he slipped out of the window and went across the fields—the training quarters were still at the barn. Little did he know that the barn was being watched. Don made for the main road that passed the barn some half mile away—Madigan had schemed that Don would get out the back way. On reaching the main road Don was pleased to see a car approaching—little did he know that the masked driver was the same man who had piloted the aeroplane. The car stopped and the driver said he would be pleased to take him to where he wanted to go.

Don jumped into the car, and instantly two men crouching there sprang on him and clubbed him into oblivion.

When Don came to his senses he opened his eyes and looked round. He was in some sort of cellar. Slowly it came back to him.

He had been tricked by a fake message. He looked at his watch. He must have been here some hours, and from the reeling pains in his head guessed the gang must have doped him. Soon time for the big fight. If he could get out of this place he could just do it.

Quickly Don looked round and saw a heavy barrel. He picked it up in his arms. He would smash down the door. Crash! The timbers shook under the impact. The door was almost broken down when it was burst open and Ruffer, followed by four or five men, charged into the cellar. Before the weight of numbers Don went down and the men pinioned his arms.

"You might as well keep cool," snarled Ruffer. "You've only got another hour and then everything will be all right. Understand?" He emphasised this with a brutal kick in the ribs.

Don gritted his teeth and feigned to go limp, then he stiffened and twisted, rolling one man off his chest. Somehow he got to his feet. A man rushed at him and zonk—that man went down like a felled ox. A man leapt on his back and Don tossed the rascal over his head to land with a thud on the stones.

They got him down and Ruffer began brutally kicking him, but the pain gave Don renewed strength, and he flung them away. A right and left settled a third man.

"Now, you skunks!" yelled Don, and waded into Ruffer and the remaining crook. He broke Ruffer's nose and crashed the other man against the wall.

Holding his side, Don staggered up the steps, and with difficulty dragged aside the broken door. He managed to get to the street and there stood the car that had brought him to this place. He turned the car and drove at a furious speed towards London.

The Fight

ONE can imagine the consternation in the Adams camp when Don Carter vanished the second time. Neither Pat and Harry nor any of Don's sparring partners had any idea what could have happened. Ann was responsible for the discovery of the disappearance. Through Aunt Fanny she had come to the barn to wish Don good luck, and she had arrived half an hour after the telegram. Aunt Fanny was summoned, and that good lady was staggered by the news.



LET DAD SEE . . .

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 March 14th, 1936.

Everyone was brought before her and questioned, but no one had the slightest clue.

"He's walked out on me," wailed Bill. "Why's he done it?"

"After this is all over he'll probably trot in with a blonde alibi like last time," cried the angry Ann.

"Not so fast, young woman," cried Aunt Fanny. "I've every confidence that Don will show up at the fight. Maybe he's heard of some place with stained glass and gone there."

At last came the time when it was impossible to remain any longer at the barn. It was decided that all Don's kit should be taken to the Albert Hall, the venue of the fight, and hope desperately that he would show up.

Again a bout had to be substituted to save a riot, and there was much muttering from the vast crowd. And the manager had given five minutes before he declared Williams the winner when Don pulled up outside the hall and, getting out, staggered round to the dressing-rooms. Bill, Harry and Pat were pacing the room when Don appeared, this time more dishevelled, but alone.

"Gosh, kid, where you been?" gasped Bill. "Never mind, that'll have to wait. You got here, and that's the main thing. For the love of Mike, change quickly, Don."

"Bill, I'm afraid the fight's off," Don gasped out, and no one noticed how he clutched his side. "You see, I've br—"

The door opened and in walked Aunt Fanny and Ann.

"Mrs. Stafford, Don's showed up at last," yelled Bill. "And he says he won't fight."

"Where's the blonde this time?" sneered Ann.

"So you're a quitter," cried Aunt Fanny. "Come on, Ann, we're getting out of here."

The women swept out of the room, and with agonised eyes Don saw them go. He looked appealingly at his friends.

"Bill, I'm in no condition to fight," he pleaded.

"You were this morning when the doctor examined you," cried Bill. "What's the matter with you this time?" "You're scared of Williams!" accused Harry.

"You've gone yellow!" added Pat. "I'm not yellow, Bill." Don looked at his trainer, and saw that the little man thought so. "All right, if that's what everyone says the fight's on."

Aunt Fanny and Ann were on the point of leaving the Albert Hall when they heard that the rumour that the fight was off which had been spreading round the crowd was wrong, and that Don Carter was at that moment entering the ring. The two women hurried back to their seats.

Pat and Harry were seconds, and it was the former who saw Don vince as he climbed into the ring.

"You hurt?" Pat questioned.

"Got involved in a rough house," Don answered in a whisper. "It's my rib."

"You haven't cracked it?" gasped out Harry.

"I don't know, but I've got to go through with it," Don whispered back. "Don't let Bill know."

The loudspeaker woke to life:

"Spike Williams is about to defend his title—the challenger is Don Carter. Both men are in the pink of condition—Williams weighs twelve stone fifteen ounces. Carter weighs exactly twelve stone."

The M.C. announced:

"On my left Spike Williams, cruiser-weight champion of Great Britain, and on my right, the challenger, Don Carter, of Banbury."

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Madigan was startled out of his placid content at sight of Carter. Those fools had failed and he had lost five thousand. He sent word to Williams to go all out for a quick knock-out—through his glasses he could see that Don's face was white and strained, and guessed that he had been in a scrap with Ruffer and the gang.

"Protect your rib with your elbow," advised Pat before the gong went.

The fighters shook hands and went back to their corners, then the gong went and the fight was on. Williams came out first, and Don rather slowly. Williams was the first to attack, he feinted and attacked with both hands. The crowd gasped when Don went into a clinch.

Williams was a shrewd fighter, and he knew by heart Carter's type of boxing and instinct told him that Don was not himself, and he was quick to see that Don kept his left hand lower than usual and well into the body. He backed away, forcing Don to lead with his left. Williams was playing to get that left away from the body, and he trapped Don into giving him an opening. Williams slipped inside with a right to the body that landed plumb on the injured rib. He saw Don vince with pain as the youngster went into a clinch.

The referee forced them to break, and before the round ended Williams had landed again to that broken rib. Don was in bad shape when he got to his corner.

"What yer guarding yer ribs for?" Bill demanded angrily.

"Was I?" panted Don. "I didn't notice it."

"If you want to know, I'll tell you." Pat placed his mouth close to Bill's ear.

"The kid's got a broken rib."

"A rib gone?" cried Bill. "Here, you ain't going in there again. I ain't going to have you crippled."

"I can take care of myself," rasped Don. "I'm going on with this fight—you keep out of it."

Aunt Fanny watched the second round with dismay and incredulity. Something was wrong. Don had never fought like this before, and she knew by his agonised expression that Williams' body blows were hurting. Don was down for a count of five and got up like a drunken man. Williams rushed in and floored Don again, and only the gong saved the challenger. The third round was even worse. Don was beaten all round the ring. Always he tried to protect his rib, and now he was getting so dazed that Williams was landing telling punches to the face. It was all the champion's fight, and when at the end of the third round Aunt Fanny saw Bill whispering and clutching a towel, she quickly left her seat to hurry to Don's corner.

"You can't fool me," she hissed at Bill. "Don's hurt."

"Busted a rib in a fight with some of Madigan's bunch," Bill told her. "I guess the only thing is to chuck it in the towel."

"I'm going on!" gasped Don.

"Brave lad," Aunt Fanny smiled at him. "Stick it. I'm going back to Ann, and she'll be shouting for you."

Don did make a better show in the fifth round, and only at the end of the round did Williams manage to land on the busted rib. Don was in a sorry state as he got to his corner. Aunt Fanny had some more advice.

"You've got to change your tactics, Don," she whispered. "It's your only chance. Lead with your right and get him guessing. I'll be something he least expects, and it'll keep him away from that rib."

Williams was taken by surprise by the right lead, and in the middle of the round Don saw his chance and landed a left hook. The champion went down, but he was not so badly hurt as he appeared. He had learnt much in the Madigan school. He was feigning grogginess. He staggered to his feet at "Seven!" and Don, his confidence restored, sprang forward, and Williams, stiffening to action, whipped a cruel blow to the damaged rib. Squirming, Don went down, and Ann sobbed to see his distress.

Aunt Fanny yelled in the uproar for Don to get up, and though he could not possibly have heard her, he was up at "Eight!" Williams forced Don back against the ropes and tried everything to knock his man unconscious. Don did manage to protect his rib, but came in for terrible punishment about the face before the gong went.

"Don, watch that slug," hissed Aunt Fanny, pushing Bill Adams to one side, "and try the same trick on him. If he can play that groggy stuff, so can you. Go on leading with your right and use your brains."

In the seventh round, after a fierce exchange of blows, Don went down, but was up at "Six!" He staggered away from the whirlwind attack. Williams went after him to get the knock-out that should settle the fight. Then, to the amazement of the crowd, Don came back to life with a vengeance. He parried a blow with his right forearm and sent in a lightning stort left hook which connected with Williams' chin. The champion went down, but got up, badly shaken, at "Eight!" and then Don gathered together all his strength. Rights and lefts battered the champion, and the crowd gasped when Don finished off the fight with another left hook. Williams took the count. Don Carter was the new cruiser-weight champion.

The crowd went nearly mad when the M.C. told them that Don Carter had won the fight in spite of fighting with a smashed rib.

Ann was one of the first to congratulate Don, but the new champion had something else to deal with first.

"Bill"—he pointed—"see that fellow with Madigan? That's the driver of the car that took me for a ride, and close behind is that crook Ruffer."

"Just as I thought—Madigan's behind this," Bill showed his teeth. "I always said that some day I'd smack that guy in the beezel!" And he hurled himself across the ring, and as he went he jabbed his hand into Don's right glove.

Madigan was trying to get through the crowd, but the masses would not let him pass. A hand gripped his shoulder and he swung round with a snarl of rage.

"Mr. Madigan!" cried Bill Adams. "Excuse my glove!" And he landed a punch that knocked the crook out for an hour.

When Madigan woke he was in gaol, and so were Ruffer and the rest of the gang.

And some weeks later Don had a chance to look at more stained glass. This time in a church. At the same time that Don married Ann, so was Aunt Fanny married to Bill Adams. That good lady said that someone had to marry him to stop him wearing those dreadful yellow ties. Poor Bill was himself managed from that very day.

(By permission of Associated British Film Distributors and Alexander Productions. A film story based on the work of Mr. R. Howard Alexander, starring Len Harvey and Archie Pitt.)

"WANDERER OF THE WASTELAND"

(Continued from page 12)

ground below, and as the outlaw swung round and his hand went to his gun, Adam was on him, bearing him to the ground.

Ben was a strong man, and he had fought and conquered many in his day, but he had little chance against the fury of Adam's onslaught. Just for a moment the two fought and panted and wrestled. And then, as the outlaw broke loose and staggered back, Adam launehed himself once more, and his fist crashed into the other's face, crashed once more, and, with a scream, the other grabbed at the low wall—but too late, and with another shriek he toppled over and hurtled down into the pool.

Adam stood fighting for breath. Then, with a supreme effort, he pulled himself together and out came his knife, and in another moment the old man and Ruth were free.

Picacho

A DAM LAREY rode slowly across the desert. There was little or no happiness in his heart, even though the memory of his interview with Ruth was still fresh in his mind. For she still loved him, had told him so, and was ready to marry him and link her life with his for better or for worse.

But he had refused to let her make the sacrifice and had told her so.

"It can't be," he had said. "I've still got this shadow hanging over me, and until I can clear myself, Ruth, I can never marry you. It wouldn't be fair."

She had tried to reason with him, had begged him to stay, but he had steadfastly refused.

"There's only one way, my dear," he had said, "and I'm takin' it. It's a pretty slender chance but it is a chance. I'm ridin' for Picacho, and I'm givin' myself up. This thing's goin' to be settled once and for all."

So now he was on his way to the mining camp which only one short year ago had held such high hopes to him when he had first landed there. For he knew that now old Dismukes and Ruth were safe at last. Before he had left the mine help had arrived, all the robbers had been killed or captured, and the old prospector, in spite of his injuries, would soon be all right again.

As he came in sight of the mining camp of Picacho he set his teeth.

"I wonder what will be the end of it all?" he mused as he made his way into the town.

He pulled up before a shack where a man was working in his garden. He had been puzzled at what he had so far seen, for the once thriving camp seemed almost to be deserted and he failed to understand it.

"Say, stranger, where can I find the sheriff?" he demanded.

The other turned, straightened up, surveyed him coolly.

"Guess you don't have to find him," he replied laconically, as he opened his coat to display the badge of office. "You're lookin' at him."

But Adam's next words came out quite calmly.

"My name's Adam Larey," he said, and waited.

The other nodded.

"Glad to know yo., Adam Larey," he replied coolly. "Can I sell you a dawg? I've got some nice dawgs here. Now there's a dawg I've got—"

He walked coolly over to a shed, coming back with a dog in his arms.

"Now here's a real nice pup, Mr. Larey, and you can have him for five dollars. Of course—"

But here Adam broke in. He utterly failed to understand what was going on.

"Leave dogs alone for the moment," he said. "I'm Adam Larey, and I killed a man here a year ago and I've come to give myself up."

The old man scratched his head with a puzzled look on his face.

"Is that so, Mr. Larey?" he said. "Well, I guess it's the first I heard of it. When they made me sheriff of this town—the last one got killed—"

"Got killed?" broke in Adam quickly.

"Sure thing," replied the other. "He'd had it comin' to him for a long time, too. He wasn't popular in these parts. And who was it you happened to kill, Mr. Larey?"

"It was accidental," answered Adam steadily. "He was my brother, Guerd Larey."

"Oh, him?" said the old man carelessly. "He ain't dead. He cleared out six months ago when the gold petered out. I saw him ride out. But let me show you a dawg I've got hero that I reckon would suit you. He's a real fine dawg, and cheap, too."

He shuffled over to his shed, talking as he went.

"Now, there's a dawg as anyone would be proud to—why sufferin' cats, what's the—"

From his point of view he had good reason to ask. For as he stood there with the dog in his arms all he could see was a rider who was rushing away out of the town as fast as his horse would carry him.

And the direction he was taking was the direction in which the Death Valley lay.

The old man stood scratching his head. "Now why didn't no wait to have a look at you?" he said, as he stroked the dog's ears.

But Adam Larey, flying across the desert towards the Death Valley, with amazement, excitement, and happiness in every line of his face, could have given him an answer to the question.

(By permission of Paramount Pictures, Ltd., starring Dean Jagger and Gail Patrick.)

"TWO-FISTED"

(Continued from page 16)

feeling that the big black-haired man in the other corner was not only looking as if he had as good as won, but was feeling the same way.

He looked anxiously round at the spectators. Beautifully-dressed women, immaculately-dressed men; and all laughing and joking as they chattered eagerly and made their bets.

"I guess some of them wouldn't be quite so happy if they were in my place," he reflected.

"Now go in and win," whispered Hurley as the gong went.

"Rather," exclaimed Chick, and danced gaily into the middle of the ring.

Chick never quite knew what happened in that first round. He had a vague idea that a steel whirlwind had suddenly descended on him and there seemed to be no escape from it. He tried to cover up, to dodge away from it, but it seemed to be little good. Blows seemed to be coming from all over the place, and he could hear roars of applause from the crowd. And every time he tried to hit his man, his man somehow wasn't there to receive the blows, yet always there to hand out more. And then, all of a sudden, he realised that he was on the floor, and that the referee was holding his opponent off.

"Get up, get up!"

Chick sat up, staring dazedly about him. He seemed to hear Hurley's voice shouting at him, wondered vaguely why it was, then suddenly heard the gong and found himself being dragged back to his chair.

It was while he was sitting in his chair wondering vaguely how he would ever get through the next round that Marie appeared, and as she heard what had happened her eyes sought Chick anxiously. But Chick's eyes at the moment happened to come to rest on hers, and she smiled brave encouragement, little knowing that that was all Chick needed.

It was Pinky and the spectators who got the surprise in the next round. Pinky advanced carelessly, thinking he had the easiest task imaginable on hand; but before he quite knew what was happening, Chick had suddenly hurled himself at him like a tiger and was driving him all round the ring before he could recover from his surprise, while the amazed spectators stood up and cheered wildly, and Parker muttered curses under his breath.

"Fine, Chick, fine!" said Hurley, as his man lay panting in his seat at the conclusion of the round. "Can you do that again?"

"Oh, I've only just begun!" retorted the other, as he danced up to his feet for the third round.

It was scarcely a fight under all the required regulation rules. For an elderly lady had been installed at her own request as timekeeper, and the rounds were of slightly unequal length owing to her keen interest in the fight. But when the fourth round came up, everyone was agreed that the fight had swung round slightly. Chick was holding his own and fighting with desperation.

Three times had he been knocked down, but each time he had struggled up again and had gone in at his opponent with redoubled fury.

And then, while the two men fought, came strange diversion. For a maid had

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slipped quietly into the room with an agitated face to tell Marie that Jimmy was missing from his room, and Marie had screamed and fled, and the room was in a hubbub in a moment, with everyone flying for the door.

And it was at that moment that Chick turned his head, wondering what was happening, and Pinky hit him, sending him full length on the floor. For a moment or so he lay there, wondering vaguely why no warning voice rang out the seconds. Then he suddenly lifted himself, and at one glance the position flashed to him. Pinky had turned away, firm in the belief that the fight was over; and a tiny voice was whispering to Chick that Pinky had hit him just now when he was not looking.

And no missile out of a catapult launched itself straighter or more forcefully than did Chick at Pinky, who turned just one second too late.

Happy hurried Chick from the room. On the floor lay Pinky, whose seconds were endeavouring to revive him and demanding loudly that it was no fight.

"The kid's missing," urged Hurley. "We must go and search the grounds." But even as they searched outside, they heard strange noises in the big garage which they had been using as a gymnasium, and both ran swiftly towards it.

"What on earth's goin' on here?" panted Chick as they drew near, for young, excited voices were heard coming from the inside of the lighted gymnasium.

But as they reached the half-opened door, both of them pulled up with a jerk, clutching each other and stiffening into silence.

"Gosh, can you beat it?" whispered Hurley.

It would have been hard to do so. There was a ring roped off in the middle of the room, for it had been there that Hurley, Chick and Blackburn had already had many a set-to.

But it was no empty ring now. Round the ropes were four excited little figures, and inside was Jimmy Parker and another tiny boy, dressed in the regulation shorts, with diminutive boxing gloves on their hands, while they slapped viciously at each other, accompanied by cheers from the four spectators.

"Say, I reckon Mrs. Parker ought to have a sight of this," murmured Hurley. "Let's go and find her."

Together they sped away to the house.

(By permission of Paramount Pictures, Ltd., starring Lee Tracy and Roscoe Karns.)

"THE BLACK MASK"

(Continued from page 19)

all three on the floor. He made a dash for the light switch and shut it off.

Confusion reigned in the again pitch-dark library. When Murray could get at the switch Verrell had gone.

Escaping by the window, he made his way to Jimmy's apartments, to find his ally stamping furiously about the little room.

"Lummy, guv', you've been a time coming! I 'phoned you half an hour ago!"

"You 'phoned me—where?"

"Your rooms. Don't pretend—you answered all right!"

"The police have taken possession," Verrell decided. "One of them answered you. Did you give this address?"

"Am I a mug?" Jimmy asked, adding: "I copped a little feller coming out of Lady Mac's while I was waiting for you. I brought him here and telephoned you, holding him up with his own pistol. Then he suddenly sprang at me, knocked the gun out of my hand and hopped it!"

Verrell asked, doubtfully:

"A little man?"

"A regular little rat!" said Jimmy angrily.

"Love Will See Us Through!"

VERRELL had just found the cigarette-case in Phyllis Newcombe's seemingly deserted flat when the telephone bell rang. He heard someone in the outer hall lift the receiver from its stand—heard a man's voice answer the call.

"Thanks, Phil! That fool Murray must have missed him."

Verrell stood very still. There was no window to escape from this time. The lights flashed up and big Davidson pushed open the glassed partition which separated the hall from the lounge. He held an automatic outstretched.

"You've done it once too often, Mr. Blank Verrell!"

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"Looks like it," V well replied with a shrug.

Davidson continued:

"The forged bonds you so obligingly got for me out of McTavish's safe aren't here. And Phyllis isn't coming back—she's going away with me to-night. Your body will be found to-morrow morning—so will Lady McTavish's bracelet, in one of your pockets! The papers to-morrow will headline: 'Murderer of Sir John kills himself in an actress' flat.' I shall put this gun in your dead hand after wiping off my own finger-prints."

Verrell inquired conversationally:

"I begin to understand. You borrowed money on those bonds from Sir John and he found out that they were duds. So you killed him."

"Oh, shut up! I'm going to shoot!"

A small, furtive man had silently entered the outer hall. He crouched low; Verrell had but a glimpse of him when his gun snapped out. Davidson dropped his automatic with a howl of baffled rage, clutching at a shattered arm.

Verrell sprang forward and snatched up the pistol, covering Davidson with it at the moment Murray and a posse of police came charging into the flat. They seized the little, furtive man.

"Just in time, inspector, eh?" Verrell called to the detective.

"Seems so," Murray grunted.

Jimmy's voice was heard from behind the police.

"That's the little bloke who killed Sir John. I copped him when he went back to get the doings."

The little man snarled.

"It was him!" He pointed a trembling hand at Davidson. "I only engraved the bonds. They were beautiful—beautiful. He wished to destroy them—"

"That's enough!" Murray silenced him. "You can say your piece at the Yard. Mr. Davidson, you'll have to come along." He snapped at Verrell: "And you, Mr. Blank!"

Jean pushed her way through.

"We make no charge against Mr. Verrell. I am acting for Lady McTavish."

Murray glared from one to the other. Jimmy, grinning cheerfully, crossed to Miss Newcombe's wireless set and switched it full on. The announcer's voice boomed out from the B.B.C. studio:

"The band will now play a fox-trot, 'Love Will See Us Through!'"

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*A Drama
of the
Waterfront*

Starring Spencer TRACY & Jean HARLOW

**RIFF
RAFF**



He was the greatest tuna fisherman on the coast. He was fearless and hard-headed. The girl was beautiful, had a tongue like a knife, and a heart of gold. Because of his bullying and boasting he was crushed and became a hobo, and the girl went to prison because she stole to help her man. A human, pulsating drama of the waterfront, starring Spencer Tracy and Jean Harlow



A One-day Strike

IN a tumbledown shack on the Frisco waterfront lived one large family. There were three bed-rooms and an attic under the rafters. "Pops" Warner might have been called the head of the family; but, as he was mostly drunk and out of work, he did not count for much. His eldest daughter, Lil, was the manageress of the home, though one could hardly call her the boss.

Lil had a shrill voice, was very plain, but her great asset was a heart of gold. She had married Pete Hoskin when she was seventeen, and she had two children—Jimmy, who was eleven, and Rosie, aged four. They were the delight, but the worry, of her life. She had another worry, too—her sister, Hattie, who was twenty-one.

Hattie had hair that was flaxen, a body full of healthy youth, a figure that was perfect, a skin that would have been an advertisement for any beauty treatment, and perfect features. In fact, Hattie was a very beautiful girl; but that shapely jaw could become very stubborn, and the soft voice could become strident when aroused to anger.

On this summer morning Lil got her husband off to his job at a meat store, washed and helped the children to dress, and then yanked Hattie out of bed to go to her job at the fish cannery. Having been out on the binge the previous evening, Pops was allowed to remain in his room.

When she had got rid of the children, Lil came to see what progress her sister was making.

Hattie, clothed in a gaudy slip, was April 4th, 1936.

perched on the end of her bed and yawning.

"Didja have a good time at the ball?"

"Sure, I won a beauty prize." Hattie laughed. "That made some of the cats jealous."

"What will Dutch Miller say when he hears?"

"That false alarm!" sneered Hattie. "If he'd come near the place they'd have turned the hose on him."

"He's going out with the fleet this morning after tuna."

"Yeah, I know." Hattie yawned again. "I'm gonna throw my arms round his neck, put my head on his shoulder, and tell him to jump down a whale."

Lil crinkled her nose.

"Makes you feel better, don't it, honey, running a guy down when you're struck on him!"

"Who? What? Dutch Miller? I don't mean nothing to him, and he means less to me, so that makes us both happy."

"Well, in that case why do you keep his picture stuck in the mirror?" Lil pointed. "Why don't you throw it away?"

"It reminds me not to like him."

"Lil! Lil! Hat!" They heard a voice from below.

"Oh, my, that's Pete!" Lil looked all distressed. "Now, I wonder what's wrong?"

Hattie hurriedly pulled on a blouse and skirt and dashed downstairs. Pete was talking excitedly to his wife.

"Hat, the fleet ain't going out," shouted Pete. "The fishermen are

gonna strike. They're milling around the docks. The cops are there."

"The cops!" Hattie cried. "Let's go. We'll miss all the fun."

The two girls, Pete and Jimmy hurried towards the docks, where they found a large crowd gathered listening to a big, unshaven, rascal who was standing on a barrel.

"Only chance of getting a better percentage on your haul. You are doing all the work, and somebody else is taking all the profits. Is that what you're working for?"

"Sounds like somebody's making a speech," whispered Lil. "Gee, I hope there ain't gonna be trouble."

In a cheap restaurant close to the waterfront a square-shouldered man sat eating at a table. He was a fearless, stubborn fellow, and not bad-looking. One could see the strength in his great hands and mighty shoulders.

A bell tinkled and a little man darted into the restaurant. Curious the friendship between these two exact opposites the wolf and the weasel.

"I'm getting worried." The little man pulled up a chair. "Listen to 'em!"

"Don't bother me, Lew," cried Dutch Miller. "I ain't had my breakfast yet."

"How can you think of eating breakfast? The guys out there are talking about going on strike. You might lose your job."

"Pah, what a hope! I should worry!"

The little man shook his head despairingly, but brightened when the bell rang and an elderly man hurried into

the restaurant—a homely, keen-eyed man, and his face looked worried. He drew up a chair at the table.

"Hi, 'ya, Brains?" greeted Dutch. "Just having a little snack before we shove off."

"Don't look like we was going, Dutch," answered the man, who had got his nickname because of his powers of leadership. "Things are pretty tough out there. The men won't listen to me. They don't care whether I'm the head of the union or not."

"Don't let that mob get you. They never do nothing but yap."

"I'm worried," muttered Brains. "We ain't got dough enough in the treasury to strike. In a few weeks we'll all be starving in the streets. Nick wants the men to walk out."

"You'll never make me believe that," laughed Dutch. "I kinda reckon the boys is right to strike, and I'll bet Nick gives them a raise."

"Not on your life," Brains shook his head emphatically. "Nick Louis wants the men to walk out. He wants us to break the five-year agreement we signed so he can bring in cheap labour."

"He what?" Dutch put down his coffee-cup.

"It's a fact, but the men don't understand, and I can't make 'em listen. You know Nick and his methods."

"Why, the dirty double-crosser. He can't get away with this."

"He will if the men walk out. I think you ought to talk to them, Dutch. They'll listen to you."

"They'll listen to you all right—"

"No, you tell 'em, Dutch," piped Lew. "You can make 'em eat dirt and like it."

Dutch stood up. "If they strike, my name ain't Dutch Miller. What do you want me to say to 'em?"

"Don't let 'em play into Nick's hands," urged Brains. "Get 'em to go back to the boats and make 'em stop listening to Belcher. He's a Red if ever I saw one."

"Why, the gas-bag!" Dutch laughed sneeringly. "I'll break him in half. I'll give him what for!"

"No violence, Dutch," begged the older man. "Just talk to 'em. Appeal to their reason."

Lil and Hattie were craning their necks to hear and see when they saw a movement in the crowd. Someone was shoving and pushing his way to the fore.

"You take those boats out to-day, and our cause is lost!" roared Belcher.

"Aw, shut up and get off that barrel! Where do you think you are, Russia?" taunted Dutch Miller.

"No, I wish I was," answered Belcher.

"Well, swim over there and see how you like it!" yelled Dutch, and suddenly gave the barrel a mighty push.

Belcher lost his balance, gave a yell and toppled backwards into the dirty water of the harbour.

Police, on the outskirts of the crowd, expected trouble to start.

Dutch Miller straightened the barrel and climbed on to it. Some of the crowd were laughing at Belcher's downfall, but others were growling threateningly.

"Who put you up there?" someone shouted.

"Wait a minute," Dutch's mighty voice roared out. "I'll tell you why I'm up here. It's because you won't listen to Brains, but you ain't got the nerve not to listen to me. When we was kids we used to fight like wild-

cats, but if an outside gang came in we stuck together and threw 'em out. Brains says that Nick wants us to strike. Do you get that?"

There were cries of disbelief. "He wants us to strike. He thinks we're suckers," yelled Dutch. "We ain't gonna fight—and I'll sock the first guy in the puss that says we are."

"You ain't gonna sock nobody!" jeered a big man, and one of Belcher's gang. "Is that so?" sneered Dutch, and next second he was off that barrel. Wonk! His fist landed with a thud on an unshaven jaw.

One second later a glorious scrap between those for striking and those against was in full progress. Lil, Hattie and Jimmy managed to wriggle out of the scrum as the police charged into the fray.

"Come on! Break it up, break it up!" yelled the police.

Dutch Miller was about to leap on another would-be striker when a policeman gripped the two men by the shoulders.

"Let me go, bud. I'm trying to establish law and order!" argued Dutch.

"All right, wise guy," sneered the cop. "I'm locking you up."

Hattie, from the fire-escape of the cannery, had witnessed the scene between the cop and Dutch, and her nimble brain sought to find some way to save the man she scorned and yet admired. Glancing round, she spied a crate of tins, and quickly she seized one, wrapped it up in a piece of paper and tied it with a string from her apron. She dropped it neatly near the cop and the struggling Dutch.

"Watch out below! It's a bomb!" she screamed.

Policemen and fishermen scattered in all directions, and the officer holding Dutch ran the fastest.

The hesitant strikers had had enough.

and they raced towards their boats. They knew with the meeting broken up the police would not follow. One officer ventured to upwrap the bomb, and his expression when he saw it was "SEA QUEEN TUNA" was a sight.

Dutch Miller scurried towards the boats, and there he raised his hands.

"Get aboard your boats and let's get some work done."

"Nice work, Dutch," Brains was at his side. "Much obliged."

"Nothing at all—nothing at all. Any time you get a tough nut to crack just call on me. I'll be glad to oblige," Dutch cried, with pompous conceit. "Only next time you don't have to tell me what to do. I can always get the gang to do anything I want 'em to."

Standing at an open window was a swarthy fellow in a loud suit with padded shoulders. A diamond gleamed in the bright tie and another huge diamond glistened on one of the man's fingers. By his side stood a ferret-faced person whose upper lip was bared in an unpleasant grin.

"He catches my goat, that Dutch Miller," muttered Nick Louis. "He smart guy, huh? He settles my strike. Maybe some day I settle his hash."

Hattie was in the cleansing department of the cannery, and she should have gone back to work now that the trouble was over, but she told Lil that she was going round to tell the swell-headed Dutch who had saved his skin.

Apparently the Press and their cameramen had had wind of trouble among the tuna fishermen, and they had been loitering round the docks for days on the chance of a story.

Hattie found Dutch Miller standing on the side of the wharf with Pressmen interviewing and others taking his picture. A news-reel man was also in action.

"Mr. Miller, will you say something for the Metrophone News while we take your picture?"



Dutch Miller was about to leap on another would-be striker when a policeman gripped the two men by their shoulders.



"Hey, listen!" truculently Dutch interrupted. "If you want to talk percentages with anybody, talk it with me!"

"Sure—sure! I'll stand by the gangway—that should look swell." Dutch grinned. "Do I start now? Okay."

"Dutch, you were marvellous!" Hattie had pushed her way through and came to his side. Admiration was triumphant over scorn—for the moment.

"Hey, get out of this!" shouted Dutch. "Can't you see they're taking my picture?"

"If it hadn't been for me you'd have got pinched!" hissed the girl, her eyes gleaming. "That bomb was a can of fish."

"All set!" shouted the cameramen, eager to get to business.

For a moment Hattie's words had nonplussed Dutch, but he wasn't being robbed of his publicity.

"Shove off!" he shouted at her.

Hattie backed away.

"I'm gonna take a sock at you some day, Dutch Miller!" she screamed. "And it'll split that swelled head of yours wide open."

"Scram!" He glared at her, then beamed at the cameramen. "What do you want me to say, folks?"

"Oh, just a few words about how you stopped the strike."

"Sure! Well, you see, it was like this." Dutch stuck out his chest. "This guy that we work for, Nick Louis, is strictly a heel; but I was thinking things over, and I decided that this was no time for a strike."

"Listen to the big 'I am' rave," muttered Hattie.

"Well, what I have done was no more than what anybody would have done who—who used their brains in the same situation," boasted Dutch. "And I want to add that I don't—"

It was more than Hattie could endure. Near her was a barrel full of fish, and she grabbed one. She drew back her arm and flung it, and her aim was deadly. It hit Dutch right in the mouth. He lost his balance, his legs

went up in the air, and, like Belcher, he fell backwards into the dirty water of the harbour.

"Now kiss him good-bye!" derided Hattie, facing the cameramen like a tigress.

Lil gripped her arm. "If you don't get back to work," hissed that practical woman, "you'll get canned!"

Trouble on the Fairy Queen

NOW Nick Louis, for all his money and his diamonds, could not obtain the one desire of his heart. He wished to marry some beautiful girl, and the most desirous of them all was Hattie Warner. But he had found that wealth would not buy him everything, and though he had dangled a purse of gold before the maiden's eyes he had not been very successful. But for that blustering fool Dutch Miller, he felt that Hattie would have agreed to marry him.

Naturally, he heard all about the girl throwing a fish at Dutch and knocking him into the harbour, and he chose the occasion to renew his suit. He sent for her, and said that it was a pity that one so good-looking and refined should waste her time in a cannery. Nick Louis would send her to a night school, and make her his private stenographer.

"No, thanks, Nick. I'll stick to the fishes," was her answer.

Then Nick had offered her a beautiful fox fur for her neck, and asked her to accompany him to an entertainment on the Fairy Queen to celebrate the famous Fourth of July. It was Hattie's chance to show Dutch what she thought about him, and she accepted.

Everybody who could scrape together some money went to the Fairy Queen that night to dance, see the entertainment and watch the fireworks. Lil and Pete were there, and they had to bring Jimmy and Rose because the two children would have got into mischief if left alone.

Nick, with Hattie on his arm, walked

into the saloon of the Fairy Queen, which was a one-time luxury liner now used as a fun city, and glanced round as if he were some sort of king. Close behind him walked the man who seldom left his side—his bodyguard, Flytrap was the only name the underworld knew.

Sitting at a table with Lew and the two girls was Dutch Miller, and he laughed hoarsely when Hattie and her escort seated themselves at the next table. Hattie played with the fur round her neck, and looked across to see the effect on Dutch. All that resulted was a sullen scowl.

The liquid refreshment was beer, and the new arrivals had just been served when there came a shout for silence.

"Ladies and gentlemen, if you'll be quiet for a few minutes I'll show you the news-reel pictures of how Dutch Miller stopped the recent tuna fishermen's strike."

Dutch Miller stood up and grinned.

The film was entitled, "Hostilities Averted on West Coast," and showed shots of Nick standing on a barrel, fighting with the mob and seated in his car.

"Angry fishermen, ready to walk out for higher wages, greet owner of the Sea Queen Packing Company as he arrives at his office. However, Dutch Miller, No. 1 tuna fisherman, quickly persuades them to reconsider. Miller, a strong, silent man, offers his own modest comments on how he stops strikes." There came a pause, and then Dutch's voice: "Well, you see, it was like this. This guy that we work for, Nick Louis, is strictly a heel."

"Hey, boss," Flytrap hissed in his chief's ear, "want me to knock his block off?"

Nick shook his head and grinned unpleasantly. Then came some more boasting from Dutch, and the face-out was a fish hitting him in the mouth, sending him toppling back into the harbour.

Everyone laughed and Dutch Miller scowled round with bottom lip thrust forward aggressively.

"Let's go to the bar," he said to Lew. Dutch had to pass by Louis' table.

"So I am strictly a heel, huh?" sneered the cannery owner.

"Yeah."

"That's a nice way for you to talk about your bread-and-butter."

"Why don't you fire me?" Dutch thrust forward his chin. "I'll tell you why. Because I bring in the biggest haul of anybody in your whole fleet. You can't get along without me."

Hattie saw trouble brewing, and she quickly stood up and signalled to Nick to do the same, then she turned up her nose at Dutch.

"Come on, why waste time with this riff-raff?"

"Hey, look what's calling me riff-raff—a cheap little can-cleaner!" He looked at the fur. "Where did you get that skunk?"

"Skunk indeed!" Hattie froze. "Wise guy, you ain't never seen enough money to buy one of 'em."

Dutch pulled out a wad of notes, waved them tantalisingly in her face, and went off with his arms round the two girls. Hattie sat down again at the table, and her eyes were like a wild-cat's.

But after a while Hattie's jealousy abated a little because Dutch, who had been dancing, kept smiling over the head of his partner at her, and when Dutch lurched across and asked for a dance she did not hesitate to accept. Nick's hands clenched and unclenched, but he just smiled and inclined his head. He knew to thwart Hattie might ruin his chances.

"You dance, Nick good sport."

But Nick could not contain himself when he saw the two dancing. It was more like a hug, and Hattie had her head close to Dutch's cheek. Not an unusual form of dancing in America, but hardly wise under the nose of the man who had brought Hattie to the Sea Queen. Moreover, Dutch had the impudence to leer triumphantly at Nick. It was more than the cannery owner could stand. Followed by Flytrap, he pushed his way through the dancers and touched Hattie on the shoulder.

"Hey, is that what you call dancing?"

The hand stopped.

"Take your hands off her!" cried Dutch.

"It's your to take your hands off her!" retorted Nick, then he smiled at Hattie. "Come on, honey, we go home; this place is too crowded with cheap people."

"Hey, stop telling me what to do!" cried Hattie. "You ain't running no cannery here."

"Atta girl!" shouted Dutch. "That's the way to talk. Say, listen, big shot, a little more respect from you or I'll tie up your whole dirty waterfront."

Brains McCall pushed his way through the crowd who had gathered round in anticipation of a row.

"Pipe down, Dutch, this ain't the place," he warned.

"Lemme alone. I got a right to talk," Dutch shook off the restraining hand. "I'll bust him if he tries tricks with me."

"You're heading for trouble, Dutch," cried Brains.

"Everybody will be sober in the morning," sneered Nick. "You try to make more trouble among the men, and they spit in your eye."

"Is that so?" roared Dutch, and socked Nick Louis in the jaw.

Down went Louis like a felled ox, and out flashed a knife in the hands of Flytrap.

"Look out, Dutch!" screamed Hattie.

Dutch missed the knife-thrust by inches and aimed a vicious punch at Flytrap. There were others of Louis' men there, and they tried to get at Dutch. There were men who hated Louis as a tyrant, and they joined up with Dutch. The dance floor became a yelling, struggling mass.

Someone turned off the lights in an effort to stop the fighting, and made matters worse. Friend fought friend as well as foe. A case of fireworks was suddenly upset and set alight by a cigarette-end. Blazing fireworks added to the confusion. Lastly, there came the dreaded sounds of police sirens on the waterfront, and that stopped the fight like magic.

A firework showed Hattie struggling in a group of brawlers, and, waving his fists like battering rams, Dutch Miller rescued the girl, swept her up in his arms and made for a side door. A rush across the deck, and down a rope ladder to a small boat. On the deck of a deserted fishing schooner they found refuge.

That Dutch should have endangered himself to rescue her meant a great deal to Hattie, and she made no effort to stop him putting his arm round her trim waist. Dutch was feeling sentimental about the girl, because, but for her warning, he might have got knifed. So sentimental that he asked her to marry him.

Hattie was delighted, but the wedding date was nearly cancelled when Dutch Miller grabbed the fur from round her neck and chucked it into the harbour.

"You ain't taking nothing from that

big ape." Dutch gripped her shoulder. "Not now you're marrying me."

Finally Dutch pacified the girl.

"We ain't never going to fight no more, are we?" She kissed him.

"I'll say we ain't," was his answer.

They sat and watched the fireworks. Order had apparently been restored on the Sea Queen, and the celebrations were back to normal. They stayed there till a chill came in the air, and Hattie said she must be getting home or Lil would worry.

"I may not amount to much right now, but I gotta be free when my chance comes along." Dutch told her as they walked along the deserted wharf. "I don't want no family or no brats holding me down. But with you and me it's gonna be different. Just a couple of crazy kids having a lot of fun together."

Hattie looked sharply at the man she had promised to marry, opened her mouth, and then thought better of it. Maybe Dutch would think differently about children after they were married.

Not Wanted by His Union

A MONTH later Hattie and Dutch were married. It was a hectic and lavish affair. Dutch insisted upon half the fishing fleet being present, and the liquid refreshments were not stinted.

Lew was best man, and Brains McCall made a speech wishing bride and bridegroom every good wish. It was typical of Dutch's nature that when Mrs. McCall congratulated them he should make a remark that caused those that heard it to look askance at the bride.

"Thanks, Mrs. McCall, for your good wishes," Dutch said. "I've done this wedding on a slap-up scale. It's a great break for Hattie, but she's a good little girl. She deserves it."

It was so patronising and arrogant.

There was one small incident. It happened when the happy couple were setting out on their honeymoon.

"Good-bye, Hat," Lil had sobbed.

"If anything happens you can always come home to your old sis."

"What kind of a crack is that?" Dutch had been instantly up in arms.

Lil had a temper.

"If ever you lay a hand on my sister except in kindness, Dutch Miller, you'll hear from me."

"I'm not going to stand for that sort of wisecrack!" Dutch had shouted.

"Now, I'll ask you to stop that kind of talk," Hattie's father had interfered.

"You keep your red nose out of this, you old rum hound!" was what Dutch answered, and then the party had looked like becoming rough. Hattie had interceded, and finally they had all kissed and shook hands.

Dutch was very mysterious about where they were going to live after the honeymoon, and what a surprise awaited Hattie. On getting back to town her husband took her to the high ground overlooking the harbour and walked into a fair-sized block of sea-view flats. Hattie found herself staring with wide-open eyes at a flatlet, containing bedroom, morning-room, kitchenette and a bath-room.

"Everything in here is electric," cried Dutch, like an orator. "Electric ice-box, electric stove, electric washing machine, electric irons and electric radiator. There's a radio. It's small, but I guess it will do in a pinch for the two of us."

"But with all the dough you spent on the wedding and everything, I don't see how you had enough." She looked round with eager eyes. "We won't get into debt over this, will we?"

"I bought it all on the instalment plan, and the first instalment is paid on everything," Dutch answered in lordly style. "Once a month, Hat, we'll have to pay out. Mark you, I didn't only get it for ourselves. I had to have a place where I could sorta hold meetings."

"Meetings? For what?"

"Well, the gang want action, and they want it quick. We've been stalling



"Where's Dutch?" Hattie demanded. "What's he done now?"

around here too long letting this guy Louis get away with anything."

"You're not meaning a strike?" Her hands went to her cheeks.

"Yeah, and they want me to lead it." Dutch puffed out his chest.

"What does Brains think of this?"

"He don't know nothing about it. We ain't told him yet. Brains ain't the big shot in the union any more; the guys are kicking him out and electing me leader."

Hattie was distressed.

"But, Dutch, Brains is such a swell guy."

"Sure, he's a swell guy," Dutch had to admit. "He's the greatest guy I ever knowed, but he's too soft. They need somebody with nerve. What they gotta have is a guy that's a natural-born leader, like me. It was all fixed the day before we got married. We're striking for more dough, and we'll get it. All that about cheap labour was just boloney."

"But Nick has enough money to hold out for years."

"Not against what I'll cook up for him. What ye looking so worried about?" He saw her anxious expression.

"I don't want you to be a mug and lose your job," cried Hattie.

"I can't lose my job." He laughed boisterously. "I can't lose it because I quit the day we got spliced. Yeah, and we're all walking out on Nick tomorrow; we're tying up the whole fleet."

"So you called a strike in honour of our wedding." She gave a derisive laugh. "And you call yourself a smart guy."

But Dutch Muller was not quite so clever as he imagined, though he would have been the last to admit failure. At the end of the tenth week of the strike he was still shouting that Nick Louis must give in any day. There were hunger and starvation on the waterfront, and none of the women had a good name for Dutch, and their tongues were beginning to turn the strikers against their leader.

And in that same week Nick Louis put a new fleet into action. Cheap labour and bad fishermen, but they succeeded in bringing in a certain quantity of fish. The police were ready should the strikers try any rough play.

A fortnight later Dutch Muller and Brains McCall had a parley with Nick Louis.

"These scabs you've hired ain't fishermen," spoke Brains. "Fifty per cent of the load of tuna is spoiled because they don't know how to pack it in ice after they catch it. You need the men. They're real fishermen. You've never lost a pound of tuna out of their catches."

"Maybe there is something in what you say, Brains," Louis admitted. "Nick, he always like to play fair. You and me talk percentage, and maybe I put men back to work."

"Hey, listen!" Truculently Dutch interfered—he was the leader. "If you want to talk percentages with anybody, talk it with me. I'm the guy what's running the union. You keep out of this, Brains."

"I don't care whether you're running the union or not," retaliated Brains. "Our families are starving."

"Brains"—Nick smiled and looked in sinister fashion at Dutch Muller—"you want to talk deal for men is okay with me, but you and me fix, not Miller."

"So you won't deal with me, huh?"

"Listen, Dutch." Brains gripped the younger man's arm. "If Nick wants to

talk to me about settling, let him. I'll handle it."

"Oh, no, you won't!" bellowed Dutch. "Yes, I will, Dutch; it's for the men," Brains said determinedly.

"All right, I'll show you how much you will," Dutch raged. "I'm gonna call a meeting right now. This thing is gonna be run like I say."

The meeting at the Fishermen's Union was a great hurt to Dutch Miller's pride. When Brains announced that Nick Louis wanted to take them back, they turned against their new leader. They were tired of his brastling, bullying ways that had earned for them nothing but starvation. They clamoured for their old leader. It was put to the vote—Brains McCall or Dutch Miller. Only one hand was raised in support of Dutch, and that was his faithful friend, Lew.

"I don't want none of you," Dutch raved at them. "I'm walking out for good."

Dutch walked out and walked home, to find the bailiffs taking his furniture and all the treasures of their home. What Hattie had to say was terse and to the point.

News travels fast, and soon the whole Warner family had shown up, and when Pops offered to let Hattie and Dutch come and live in the attic, the big fellow only flew into a rage and ordered them out of the house. He was like a bear with a sore head.

Kindly Brains McCall appeared and asked to have a few moments alone with the young couple.

"Dutch, what's the use of getting sore?" he asked soberly. "What's done is done, and you ain't the kind to squawk. I've been talking it over with the boys, and they're willing to forget the whole business. They want you to keep your union card and stick with 'em."

"Ain't that nice of 'em?"

"You can't get along without the union," argued Brains. "Why not take the bitter with the sweet, and don't make it so hard for yourself? Come on back to work with us."

"So you want me to crawl!" sneered Dutch. "Well, I ain't no yella snake, like the rest of you."

"Don't talk like that," interposed Hattie.

"I'm a guy that calls a shovel a shovel."

"Yeah?" Hattie gave a bitter laugh. "Well, you get in wrong with the union, and you'll see what you'll be doing with that shovel. You got a screw loose, going against the union."

"Is that so?" Dutch laughed. "Well, get this. I'm out of the union for good. Red's gang want me to be their State leader in Frisco."

"Don't run before you learn to walk." Brains spoke tersely and to the point. "It's time you forgot your conceit and stopped thinking you're bigger than anybody else. You're no leader. You never was and never will be."

Then Dutch did a thing that he remembered afterwards in the long, dreary months. He smacked Brains' face.

The old man gave a slight wince but did not move.

"I watched you grow up ever since you was a little kid. And I thought as much of you as if you were my own boy. I figured you'd forget your conceit when you got older, but I guess you'll never be anything else but a swell-headed fool. I give you up."

When Brains had gone, Dutch tried to make excuses to Hattie for losing his temper with Brains.

"Can't you see, Hat? Can't you understand? I gotta make good."

"Let's start all over again," Hattie pleaded. "We'll both go back to work and—"

"I couldn't let you do that," he burst forth. "I can't let you work for me. Everybody'd be laughing at me. They'd say I'd flopped. I can't go back to the union. I gotta show 'em I was right. I'll have to go away."

"Can't you swallow your pride just for me?"

"I got to make good," he said stubbornly, then tried to smile. "And if I make good I'll send for you." Then his eyes seemed to stare at nothing. "If I don't, you'll never see me again."

"After knowing how much I love you, knowing how I'd be willing to work for you, even to starve with you, you're still gonna walk out on me." There was now a shrill note of anger in her voice.

"I gotta, Hat. I gotta. Don't you see?"

"So you gotta!" She placed her hands on her hips. "Well, if you walk out on me, you can keep going and never come back."

"All right, I'll go if that's how you feel about it," Dutch muttered, and without a backward glance he went out of the small flat that had been his joy. For the first time for years Hattie gave way to a terrible outburst of grief. But Dutch did not come back.

Prison

THE weeks passed without any news of Dutch Miller. Hattie went back to live with her own folks, and Lil did her best to comfort the sorrowing girl. Lil kept on saying that she should forget her scallywag of a husband and see her old friends again. Nick Louis wanted to see her, and was still crazy about her. At last she gave way to Lil's pleading and went to a party given by Nick. She made more noise than anybody, but it was all false gaiety.

Hattie started going about a great deal with Nick, and one day she agreed to let Nick's lawyer get out divorce papers against Dutch on the grounds of desertion. And that very night she heard a stone at her window. She rushed to open it, thinking it might be Dutch. She saw a very dirty face looking up at her. It was Lew. She scurried downstairs and opened the door to him.

"Lew, where did you come from? What's up?"

"Nothing's up. I just came ashore. I been working on a swell yacht. Thought I'd drop in and say hello!"

His eyes would not meet hers. "Guess that yacht's carrying a load of coal."

She knew he had been working on a coal barge.

"I fell down as I was coming off the wharf." Lew gave a sickly grin. "I must have got a little dirty."

She guessed why he had come. "Where's Dutch? What's he done now?"

"Dutch has been kinda sick," Lew answered. "He'd kill me if he finds out I told you. He's in a hobo camp south of Sacramento. Maybe you could lend me five bucks and I could say I earned it. I'll take it to him."

"Five bucks ain't no good to him!" Her mind was made up. "I'll get some money from Nick."

"That barracuda ain't gonna give you no money to go to Dutch," argued Lew.

"He'll do anything for me. He said he would. Now you be off before the others hear. Seram, Lew, and thanks a lot!"

Hattie pushed him out of the front door.

Round a fire sat two men—Red Belcher and Dutch Miller. Both were unshaven and haggard.

"You and me ain't gonna pull off no revolution, and you know it," growled Red. "We're rotting out our brains and insides in this dump. Miller, you're a flop if you don't get off your mind what you're thinking about all the time."

"I ain't thinking of nobody," shouted Miller. "And don't you worry about me being a flop. I'll show you, and I'll show everybody—in my own way and my own time. Now get out of here and leave me alone."

Red Belcher slouched away to sit by another fire.

It was in the dead of night when Hattie arrived at the halt station near the woods that was the hobo camp. The air was damp, chilly, and evil. She saw many fires flickering among the trees. Fearlessly she walked amongst those down-and-outs, and one hobo knew of Dutch Miller and told her roughly where he was to be found. She got lost, and, seeing a tramp kneeling by a dirty pool, turned to ask him about her husband.

"Belcher!" she gasped.

"Hullo?"

He gave her a surly scowl.

"Where's Dutch? I've been looking all over for him."

Belcher pointed.

"He's over by one of them fires."

"Is he alone?"

"No, there's a bunch of us dosing close by."

"Will you tell him I'm here?" begged Hattie.

"Tell him I gotta see him alone. I'll meet him at the passenger shed at the junction."

"All right," Belcher mumbled, and slouched away.

Hattie retraced her steps to the

station. She did not know that Miller, on hearing that Hattie was at the hobo camp, had jumped to his feet and cursed. Hattie was not going to see him down and out, unshaven, ragged, and unwa-hed. Without a word he disappeared in the night.

Dutch headed for the railway junction. He was going to jump a train. He could see Hattie, but he remained hidden in the bushes till a freight train appeared and slowed. Out of cover Dutch dashed and scrambled up between two cattle trucks.

But Hattie had seen that scurrying figure, and recognised her husband. She rushed down the platform and on to the track.

"Dutch! Dutch!" she screamed. "Here I am!"

The freight train gathered speed and soon left the girl far behind. Sad and dispirited, she went back to the station. Belcher was waiting for her.

"I tried to tell him, but he left in a hurry."

"I see. I suppose he had a date with a bank president, or something," she said with irony. "Didn't he know I was trying to help him?"

Belcher's eyes glistened.

"If you got anything for him, I can get it to him. I'm gonna meet him up north day after to-morrow."

"Give him this," Hattie handed over a pile of notes. "And tell him to buy a hat if he can find himself one big enough to fit him."

A car appeared, and Belcher made himself scarce. It was the police. They had trailed Hattie to the hobo camp.

"No use playing innocent. Hat," the police officer cried, when she protested her innocence. "Nick's burning up. You'll get plenty for this."

"I'll pay him back!" Hattie cried fiercely. "I asked him for the dough, but he wouldn't give it to me. That's why I took it. I left him a note, didn't I? I had to have it."

"You'll have to explain that to Nick," the police officer answered not unkindly. "But I guess you'll get sent up."

Nick was hard-hearted. Fancy daring to steal money from him for that scoundrel of a husband! He was without mercy in his prosecution, and, as a result, Hattie was sent up for six months.

In the Soreno Valley Women's Prison a son was born to Hattie Miller, and the authorities decided that the child should be handed over to the care of Hattie's sister, Lil. Hattie wept bitterly when she parted with her baby. Lil promised that the child should be well looked after and washed every day.

"Lil, you keep mum if Dutch shows up," were her parting words. "He never wanted no kids."

"That one!" sneered Lil. "He'll never show up, the big blow-hard."

The news came to Dutch Miller that his wife was in prison, and he knew that she had stolen to try to help him. That touched him on the raw. It broke something of his pride. He returned to the waterfront, and went straight to the office of Nick Louis. If Nick would use his influence to get his wife out of prison he would do something for Nick in return—he would come back and work for him.

"Sincerely thanks, you don't work for me, Mr. Miller," Nick shook his head. "All I get from you is trouble. I don't want no more and I don't want you around."

"Well, I'm gonna be around," Dutch retorted with some of his old fire. "I'm going over to the union, and I'm gonna make them take me back, then I'll be working for you whether you like it or not."

But it was not to be. The fishermen had had enough of Dutch Miller, and, in spite of the pleading of Brains McCall, they refused to have the trouble-maker back. Dutch's shoulders were bowed indeed when he left the shack belonging to the Fishermen's Union.



"I'm okay," said Dutch, "but you'd better get them other guys to hospital!"

It took several days for Dutch to get back some measure of his conceit. The union had done it because they were seared of him. Well, who cared? He decided to go to the prison and ask to see Hattie. He was a little nervous of how she would receive him. The matron granted a private interview.

"Hallo, Hat?" he greeted her, when a door opened and his wife, garbed in neat prison froek of red-and-white print, entered and stared at him as if he were a stranger.

"So you have shown up at last?" Hattie said coldly.

Five minutes later the matron and several wardresses rushed to the room because they could hear Hattie screaming.

Sobbing and choking, Hattie pointed a finger at Dutch Miller.

"Make him get out of here, and don't ever let him come back! I'd rather stay here the rest of my life and rot than ever to see you again."

They led the sobbing Hattie away.

The Prison Break

MAISIE and Sadie, the two women who shared a cell with Hattie and worked on either side of her in the laundry, gave curious glances when their cell-mate joined them.

"Is he going to take you out?" whispered Sadie.

"Sure, he's got a fourteen-room house and three cars!" sniffed Hattie.

"What did he come up for, then?"

"Oh, nothing! He just wanted to help me break out of prison."

"Break out—how?" whispered Sadie.

"Instead of being kinda humble and decent he was all full of himself—he was going to bust the prison wide open, take me down to Mexico, where we would get along some way. I told him I wasn't giving up my good-conduct stripes to live like a couple of gypsies, and that started the row."

"Tough, kid—tough!" Maisie edged nearer. "Tell us how he aimed to get you out of the pen."

"He is in with a guy in the construction gang that's fixing the drain-pipe in the prison yard," explained Hattie. "It runs clean outside the prison wall. The first night it rained I was to sneak into the culvert, go with the water, and he was to meet me where the pipe comes out at the bottom of the hill with a car. Thinking and planning for me, he said. The dizzy dope!" She threw some dirty clothes viciously into the wash. "Aw, what's the use of kidding myself! I'll never get over it. What a sap I was, sending him away. Maybe Mexico wouldn't have been so bad, after all."

Maisie and Sadie were looking at each other in a curious manner. They were both in the pen for life for removing their husbands by violent means, and they had no desire to remain. Here was a simple way of escape.

"What do you do to forget a guy like that?" Hattie cried angrily.

"I cut his throat!" Sadie laughed.

"That didn't do no good."

Maisie and Sadie talked earnestly that night to Hattie, and for a while she would not agree to their plan to make a bid for freedom. Her man would be gone for good if she didn't go after him, they argued, and so Hattie at last agreed.

Three days later it began to rain, and it rained all that day. The women knew that near the foot of the hill a car would be waiting—Maisie had got a message out to a friend. The prison was infested with huge rats, and that morning some had been caught in a cage. At eight that evening, and when the prisoners were clearing up after their supper,

Sadie let a couple of huge rats escape in the mess-room.

"Look out!" screamed Sadie. "Rats!"

Amazing how hard-bitten women can be seared of a mouse, but one can imagine their panic with two huge rats rushing round the place. Matron, wardresses, prisoners—they all screamed in fear—they jumped on to tables and chairs.

There was an axe in the butcher's room and Maisie secured it in the panic. Everyone was rushing sound and yelling, and the three women were able to slip through the door and out into the prison yard. It was deluging with rain. They dashed across the yard and reached the man-hole cover of the drain. Maisie wielded the axe in her strong arms.

The alarm was given by the Matron and guards round the wall heard the siren go that denoted it was a prison break. The women had got the cover open when the guards saw them. Without hesitation up went their rifles. Maisie jumped down, found herself knee deep in rushing water and flung

herself forward; Hattie went next, but Sadie did not follow—a bullet had hit her in the shoulder and brought her to the ground.

It seemed miles in the culvert. Hattie thought she would drown, but always she managed to get an occasional breath of air. She was bumped and bruised against the walls of the culvert, but at last she was shot out into a pool. Maisie dragged her out.

"Sadie didn't make it," Hattie gasped. "They got her."

The two women found the waiting car. In the car the two women changed into the dry clothes the driver had brought. The police did not succeed in capturing them that night.

A Desperate Encounter

DUTCH MILLER went to see Brains McCall at the latter's comfortable home. The comfort of the place made Dutch feel that somehow his ideas had been all wrong. Reluctantly he had to admit something of this to Brains, who placed an arm round his shoulder and tried to persuade him to stay to have supper with Mrs. McCall and himself. Again the stubborn pride of the man prevented him from confessing that he was starving. All he wanted was Brains to do his best to get him back into the union.

"Brains, I gotta go to work," was his confession. "I don't care what it is, even if it's the rottenest job on the waterfront. It's for Hat, Brains. I gotta get her out. It's my fault she's up there—it's me that's done that to her. Brains, I gotta make good, even if she don't love me no more."

"There's an oil tanker coming in tomorrow—they need a watchman when she's tied up in the dock. 'Tain't much, but it don't call for a union card," answered Brains. "I could put in a word for you."

So the finest tuna fisherman on the West Coast became a night watchman, and the next day started his duties. That evening, torch in hand, Dutch was pacing the wharf when suddenly he observed a curious head peering at him round a bale of merchandise. He flashed his torch.

A grotesque masked head. Dutch wondered if he were seeing things. The mask laughed and sent popped the cheeky face of young Jimmy.

"Say, you're a swell night watchman. I could have set the tanker on fire and burnt up the whole waterfront."

"Where did you get that mask?"

"I borrowed it from the guy that sells 'em."

"Yeah, you borrowed it," laughed Dutch. "You'll borrow yourself right into a reform school one of these days."

"Not me—I'm a smart guy," boasted the boy. "Say, why don't you get yourself a good job?"

"Say, what are you trying to do?" rasped Dutch. "Make a mug outta me? Go on, get out of here, go on home—before I give yer a good larrapping."

"I ain't going home, I'm gonna catch a sandab. Do sandabs run at night?"

"Yeah, sandabs and fresh kids like you."

"If I catch one I'll fry it on you. I got you hot enough. Ha, ha!" Jimmy turned and ran.

With a grin Dutch Miller resumed his pacing of the wharf, when he heard a sound that made him whip round. It was heavy footfalls and he switched on his torch. It was Red Belcher and two of his cronies of the hobo camp.

"Hi'ya, Dutch? How's everyting?"

(Continued on page 25)

NEXT WEEK'S THREE LONG COMPLETE FILM THRILLERS



TIM MCCOY

IN

"FIGHTING SHADOWS"

When Tim O'Hara, as a "Mountie," was sent to the Indian River district to deal with a ruthless band of fur-raid-ers, his task was complicated by the fact that he had been a trapper there himself at one time, and had fallen foul of Brad Harrison, who was determined that he should fail.

"BARS OF HATE"

An innocent man awaits the electric chair. His loving sister and a deputy warden struggle desperately with the powers of the underworld to bring the proofs that will save his life. A crook thriller, starring Regis Toomey and Sheila Terry.

"GREAT GOD GOLD"

When ambition for wealth drives a stock-market operator into crooked dealings, he forgets that those he ruins will seek vengeance. He meets his match in a reporter, a girl, and—a man with a gun! A brilliant drama of kid-glove crime, starring Sidney Blackmer and Martha Sleeper.

Also

Another fine episode of the fighting serial:

"THE GREAT AIR MYSTERY"

Starring Clark Williams and Noah Beery, Jun.

A young athlete is mysteriously attacked by crooks at a railway halt. They mistake him for a diamond broker, almost his physical double. His love of adventure draws him into a desperate enterprise, in which the stake is a valuable packet of diamonds. Dare-devil Richard Talmadge at his best

"NOW OR NEVER"



"Lost Your Hat, Norman?"
WHEN the "Western Bound" express stopped at Springport, four men who had been lounging near the booking hall drew together. A youngish, hook-nosed fellow in a lounge suit and pulled-down soft hat spoke quietly.

"We'd best spread out again—so's we can watch the whole train," he said. "No matter what else you do—just keep our friend from getting on to it."

The speaker plucked at the coat sleeve of one of the four, adding:
 "You stay around with me, Riley—see?"

"Suits me, Braun," came the slow answer.

"You and Billy lie low," went on the man named Braun, addressing the other two. "And no gun play, Rafferty." He fixed cold, piercing eyes on them. "We don't want to annoy the cops."

"You've said it," answered the thick-set Rafferty. "Come on, boy."

He and the tough named Billy strolled over to the roadway palings. Braun and the dour Riley moved along beside the train from carriage to carriage, scampering in a casual way. They almost missed a well-built, athletic young fellow, bareheaded and clad in grey flannels, as he came lapping down from the steps of a coach to hurry along to the station bookstall.

"There he is," muttered Riley, suddenly spotting the young man. "Let's get round at the back of him."

They followed their quarry as far as the bookstall, and watched him buy a paper from the smiling girl behind the counter.

"Rafferty'll head him off from the yard

gate," whispered the leader to his obedient mate Riley.

An open car drew along the yard and stopped outside the booking hall. In it were two people—a pretty, blue-eyed girl, and a young fellow in a dark suit, who was driving. He lifted his hand from the wheel with a gesture of vexation.

"I can't take this train, Audrey!"

The girl turned to stare at him.

"Why ever not?"

"I've just remembered something. I'll have to go on later."

"You are a wretch, Norman—getting me down here for nothing. You know I had a breakfast engagement!"

"I'm sorry, Audrey." The young fellow jerked into reverse and began to back out. "You drop me at the office."

His restless eyes were on the backs of the two crooks leaning against the rails. But they were too busily watching the grey-suited youth at the bookstall to give heed to the touring car which wriggled its way out of the yard, swung round, and rapidly disappeared into the busy street traffic outside the station.

The blonde girl at the bookstall was asking the flannel-clad young man:

"Can I help you, sir?"

"Why, yes—have you a good novel? Something to keep me awake?"

"What would you like?" she asked, noting his cleanly shaved, round, likeable face with approval. "Romance? Adventure?"

"Adventure, please."

Braun and Riley had sidled up to the stall and were now either side of him.

"Here's something," said the girl. "Great reading for a long train ride. Seventy-five cents—thank you."

He handed her a dollar bill, and she gave him his change.

"Twenty-five, sir."

As he turned away, Braun, leaning against the stall, fixed gimlet eyes on him.

"Just a minute, Norman—we want a talk with you. Come along with us."

The young man eyed him, hands-clasped about the book. He made no reply—he had become aware of Riley, who, right hand in his jacket pocket, was gently pressing the muzzle of a hidden gun against his ribs.

"You're not getting on to that train, Norman," Riley told him.

"What's the idea?" asked the youth. "You making a mistake?"

Braun grimaced, showing yellow teeth.

"If you know what's good for you—you'll meet us at your office."

"You're mistaking me for someone else. I'm Dick Rainey."

"Oh, yes?" sneered Braun. "What are you trying to give us? You come away where we can talk quiet."

The bookstall girl was busily serving other customers. With Riley's gun sticking into his back, there was nothing for it but to obey. The three of them moved off in the direction of the pair by the rails.

The young man who had given the name of Dick Rainey began to push the book he had bought into his pocket. Riley mistook the gesture and clutched at his fingers with his free hand, whereupon Rainey made a sudden side-step and swept his left fist with a smashing punch into Riley's chest, knocking him clean off his feet. Braun made a grab at the youngster just a split second too

late. Like a flash of greased lightning Rainey was heading back for the train he had just vacated.

The two crooks by the rails closed in. The four of them made no outcry and no noise. They wished to avoid attention—not attract it. They moved at a kind of shuffling run after their man, who, seeing himself cut off from the train, made for the sidings where a freighter was standing. He took a flying leap into an open van and slammed the door close behind him just as Braun made a second grab at him, only to trip up over the metals.

"At him, Billy!" he spluttered. "Don't let him go—"

Billy, and his mate Rafferty, a couple of real toughs, had already bounded on to the freighter and were shinning up to the roof of the car. They had spotted Rainey crouching down as he hustled along the roofs of the coaches—evidently intent on getting back to the Western Bound express which was now beginning to show signs of departing.

Rainey spotted them also, and stood back a little, waiting for them. Two to one against this youngster. Billy and his friend had no qualm of fear; they clambered up the sides of the coach, planning to take him back and front.

But this was bad strategy—Rainey jumped at Billy as he came up to the roof and hit him so cleanly on the point of the jaw that Billy went back to the road with a crash—while his friend caught such a sideways smack in the face as his head appeared that he had no option but to follow his mate's downward career!

Rainey now gathered himself for a spring from the coach roof to one of the near running sheds. It was a clear nine feet distant, but this young athlete made a jump so straight and true that he landed right over his mark and—almost lost his balance!

Braun and Riley were after him now—the latter so mad that he was aiming his gun at arm's length. Braun snapped at him:

"Put that away, you fool! You'll have the cops on us!"

There was a short ladder against the wall of the running shed. Braun's sharp little eyes found it in an instant. He got to it, straightened it up, and shot up it like a monkey, but Rainey was quicker than he by a hair's breadth. The young fellow stooped to seize the ends of the ladder, one in each hand, and hurled the ladder backward with Braun clinging to it. Luckily for him Riley was there to break his fall!

Their quarry now ran up the incline of the shed roof, then down on the far side. A barrier along the platform prevented the crooks from getting round to him, but luck went against Rainey. The guard's whistle shrilled, and the engine of the Western Bound gave forth a booming note. Short, noisy puffs of smoke ascended from the black funnel, and the train began to move. Rainey ran across the lines helter-skelter, and made a desperate attempt to mount the steps of the last coach—but just couldn't reach them. The train gathered speed and left him staring after it.

He turned about to see what his enemies might be doing. They had vanished as quietly as they had come.

Braun had called them together.

"There's no other train till to-night," he told them. "He'll go back to his office, and we can round him up how and when we like. We won't have any show-down here—the cops are too plenty, and they ain't got enough to do."

Young Rainey, after making sure that the coast was clear, decided to have a look at this big town at which he had

been compelled to alight. He also knew there was no train until the evening. He brushed the dirt off his hands and walked along the tracks until he was clear of the sidings. Then he vaulted a railing and found himself in a side street.

He walked along this until he came to the main thoroughfare, where he joined the crowd and moved along, ready for any sign of the gang who had failed to kidnap him. A young lady, stepping briskly past, gave him a bright look.

"Morning, Norman! Lost your hat?"

Rainey put up his hand

"Why, yes. But I've kept my head!"

The young lady hadn't waited to hear. He turned to see her tripping away. A news-vendor at the corner called to him.

"Here's your paper, sir!"

"Eh? Oh, thanks!" Rainey took the outstretched paper and put his hand in his pocket. The man shook his head.

"You've already paid me, Mr. Gray."

"Did I?" Rainey puzzled.

"Sure you did, sir. Last Monday you paid for the week."

Rainey walked along.

"Gray? Norman Gray?" he muttered to himself. "What's the idea, I wonder? Seems to me they're all mad in this burg." He shook open the newspaper, glancing at the news.

On the front page, first column, were "professional cards." Almost the first one read as follows:

"Mr. Norman Gray. Room 210, Bard Building, Main Street. Broker and Assessor."

Rainey refolded the paper.

"I'll call on this guy and get him to stand me a lunch and show me arround. It's the least he can do, I guess!"

A Quick Change

BRAUN and his gang were in Main Street on the opposite side of the road to a big building, staring upward at a couple of closed windows on the third floor.

"We'll get in and wait for him,"

Braun decided. "Come on!"

They strolled across the road and went up the stone stairs of the block. They paused outside Room 210. One of them was nursing his left hand with the fingers of the other fist.

"I got to get something for this thumb of mine," he muttered. "Seems sort of bent backward."

"You can baby it later," said Braun unfeelingly. "We got to be inside."

"How you going to crash this gate?" Riley inquired.

"Four shoulders oughter do it," Braun retorted.

"Give a knock first," Billy suggested.

"There may be a clerk there."

Braun gave him a withering look, but knocked all the same with a sharp rap of his bony knuckles.

"Come in!" called a voice. The four exchanged glances. Braun put his fingers about the door handle and cautiously turned it. The door opened as he pushed—and the four trooped in.

A round-faced, youngish man, as much like Dick Rainey as two peas might be in a pod, greeted them with a cut nod.

"Well, what is it?" he asked.

"How did you get here so soon?" asked Braun, glowering at him.

"Changing your clothes and all?"

"I've been here since nine o'clock."

"Oh, skip it!" Riley broke in irritably. "Didn't we see you down at the station trying to hop off with our rocks?"

The young fellow had risen from his seat at their entrance. He now surveyed them with a pitying look.

"Do you mutts expect me to dispose of stolen diamonds in the same town where you pinched them?" he inquired.

"We certainly do!" snapped Braun, his hooked nose curving more than ever downward. "You've got a hundred thousand dollars' worth of stuff—and we took a big chance of getting it. So we're not losing sight of you, Norman."

The young fellow shrugged his shoulders.

"If you think I'm crooked, you boys better find another fence," he stated. "And that's that."

Again they exchanged glances. Billy put in his word:

"I'll bet he's sold 'em already!"

"Sure thing!" agreed Riley, who was still nursing his thumb. "He can't show 'em to us—oh, no!"

The proprietor of Room 210 laughed mirthlessly.

"You're yellow, Tom Riley—and you think everyone else the same!"

Braun pushed forward.

"Let's see 'em!" he barked.

"O.K." The young fellow went to his safe, twiddled the combination-lock handle, opened the heavy door and stooped to draw out a small, red-leather case. He snapped it open, displaying about a score of unset large diamonds of varying sizes lying on the padded lining.

"Here they are," he said. "All big enough to be identified. It'll be suicide trying to sell these in Springfield."

"It'll be suicide for you, Gray, if you try to leave Springfield," said Braun.

"We'll give you twenty-four hours to cash these and split the doings."

"And remember," put in Rafferty, "we got our eyes on you all the time."

"And no more of your athletics like you pulled at the station," added Riley.

"I nearly busted my hand jumping about after you."

They shuffled out of the room. Norman Gray watched them go, the case of diamonds still held in his hand. When the door closed, he stooped again to the safe and pushed the case back under some loose papers. Then he straightened himself and lit a cigarette.

He sat down in his chair a moment, then got up to cross to the windows. He peeped out—to note that Riley and Billy were standing by a shop on the far side of the road. Gray's frowns made him less like Dick Rainey now, but the resemblance was still very striking, except to a close observer.

The ends of Rainey's mouth turned up, because he was always happy—Gray's mouth was inclined to a downward curve. There were thin, wrinkled lines at the corners of Gray's eyes, b-tokening sleeplessness at nights. But the two were amazingly like each other, both in face and build.

Gray was studying a time-table when again came a knock at the door of Room 210. Gray pushed the time-table into a drawer and seated himself at his desk.

"Come in!" he called irritably.

Dick Rainey's smiling face peeped round the edge of the half-opened door. His grin broadened as he announced himself.

"Well, I guessed there was someone in this town looking like me, but I didn't think it would be so close! My name's Richard Rainey—mostly called Dick."

"Mine's Norman Gray. Sit down, won't you?" Gray stared at his visitor in perplexity as he asked. "How did you know I was your double?"

"Some fellows told me when I got off the train to buy a book," Rainey chuckled. "Told me with a gun and their fists! Tough eggs they were—you sure must be pretty popular. Mr. Gray, the way your friends want to keep you in Springfield!"

"Friends, you call them!" Gray spoke bitterly. "They know I have to carry diamonds around. Planning to rob me, I guess."

"It's a good thing you weren't taking that train, then." Rainey seated himself. "Four to one isn't so amusing."

Gray nodded, still intent on Rainey's face. "You sure are like me," he allowed. "They attacked you, thinking it was me." He pushed along the cigarette-box. "Help yourself, Mr. Rainey."

Dick shook his head.

"No thanks—not so early. I'm in training, too for the Hollywood Sports."

Gray hesitated a moment more; then made up his mind.

"I'd have been out a hundred thousand bucks if they'd got my diamonds. This consignment isn't insured. And the likely buyer, Mr. Ferry, lives out in the suburbs. After your experience, well—"

He made a gesture of vexation.

"Could I help you?" asked Rainey. "I've got to be here until the next train to Los Angeles. It doesn't call at Springport till late this evening. And it's only just after breakfast now, so I've got rather a long wait for it."

"It's very kind of you," Gray tried to appear easy. "You could help—being so like me. I'll fix up a fake packet just like the case in which I've got the diamonds. You could start off with the fake along to Ferry's place—it's a big white house standing in its own grounds on Arbour Avenue, turning south out of Main Street. They'll follow you—and I'll get away with the real goods."

"And when they stick me up, I'll have the laugh," Rainey agreed with a chuckle.

"I can get round to Ferry's by a cross-country route," Gray got up from his chair to open the safe. He brought out the case of diamonds and handed it to Rainey. "Have a peep at them—they're beautiful." He pulled out a drawer and took from it another jewel-case, snapping it open. "Empty," he laughed. "That's all they'll get, if they get you!"

"Fine!" Rainey echoed his double's laugh with boyish enjoyment. "I owe them something for manhandling me the way they did." He passed back the diamonds, and Gray shut the case.

"Exactly alike, you see," he said. "Red leather and gilt." He flung a few paper fasteners into the empty case and closed it. He wrapped it round with some tissue-paper and gave it to Rainey, who thrust it into his outside right-hand pocket. "Now I'll cover this one."

The genuine case was wrapped about with tissue-paper.

With a would-be-easy laugh he placed the case inside his coat in the breast-pocket.

"Take a look out of the window," Gray went on. "You'll see my roadster down below, parked close in. Don't let anyone spot you."

"You don't think they'll start any real gun-play?" asked Rainey, going to the window.

"They're a pack of rats," Gray answered contemptuously.

Rainey stood away from the window.

"I see the car. There's no sign of the gang that tried to hustle me at the station."

"Good!" Gray unthinkingly peeled off his coat. "Here, you'd best go down in this. Leave yours here."

A moment later Rainey was clattering down the stairs of Baird Building to vault lightly into the driver's seat of Gray's car. He started up and swung out into the busy traffic.

"This Man's an Impostor!"

RAINEY had scarcely slid into third gear when Riley and Billy spotted him. There was no time to seek Braun and Rafferty, so they ran round to where the gang's fast car was parked in a side street. They leapt aboard and started the chase.

Along Main Street it was easy to keep the roadster in view, but when Rainey came to the crossing and swung round into the comparative quiet of Arbour Avenue, it was another matter altogether. Rainey trod on the gas and sped along at a good seventy miles an hour—leaving Riley's car looking like a funeral coach—for the moment. But what one could do, so could the other. Presently the two cars were streaking along at top speed, dodging cars and cutting in on others in a way that seemed utterly crazy.

If Rainey had known the way to Ferry's house he would have shaken off the crooks, but he was afraid of overshooting his mark—with the result that Riley was able to hang on to the tail of Gray's roadster until at a narrow curve with a high-rising embankment, he shot in front and forced Rainey up the bank.

With a shriek of the brakes Rainey saved the roadster from overturning.

He slid from behind the wheel to face the two who had chased him.

"Say, handsome—didn't I tell you not to try getting away?" demanded Riley as the pair got out of the car.

"Where's the fire?" asked Rainey. "You might tell me."

"None of your lip," growled Billy. "Or I'll—" He made a gesture towards his coat-pocket.

"Easy does it." Riley warned his companion. "We're on the public road. We don't want to call up the cops. Pass over them rocks, Gray."

"Take 'em and welcome," Rainey felt for the fake jewel-case. "Why—" He turned a puzzled face towards the watchful crooks. "I had them a minute ago." His hand slid over Gray's coat. "Here they are." He drew out the jewel-case from the breast-pocket, realising on the instant that, in changing their coats, he and Gray had messed up things.

"You aren't trying to slip us an empty box?" demanded Riley, quick to note that something had gone wrong.

"You don't think I'd be running away if I hadn't the real goods?" asked Rainey, thinking hard.

"I don't think anything about you," snapped Riley. "Pass 'em over—we can't loaf about here all day!"

He put out his hand for the case. Rainey took a sudden spring from the seat of the roadster and landed full on top of the eager pair, knocking them together in a heap. Then, still clutching the jewel-case in his right hand, he jumped on Billy's sprawling back and used it as a springboard for a second leap which took him clean over the roadster on to the high bank. A third leap brought him to the top of it, and before the crooks could right themselves Rainey and the diamonds had vanished.

They got up—to make a wild dash at the steep bank, sliding and slipping on the dry grass. They reached the top—to see their quarry vanishing again into a hollow. They ran across a ploughed



"I know I'm in a jam," cried Rainey, "but that girl is in a worse one. She is in deadly danger!"

field to peep over the edge, and—there was Rainey boarding a car, at the wheel of which sat a pretty girl who had drawn in for him.

"They're only round the bend!" gasped Riley. "Gosh, I ought to have remembered!"

"That's Audrey Ferry," Billy checked him. "Keep cool. We'll get back to the car and follow up. She's heading for home—maybe she was just waiting for him."

The girl in the car was glancing at Rainey.

"Well, well," she smiled. "You sure came aboard in a hurry!"

"Some fellows were trying to rob me," he panted. "Do you mind if we step along?"

"That was some jump you took," she said, accelerating. "I heard you following me up and glimpsed you in the mirror. I was never so thrilled in my life!"

"You weren't half as thrilled as I was," Rainey told her, settling down. "Are you going back to town?"

"Why, Norman, that jump must have affected you—can't you see I'm driving home?"

"Of course you are!" Rainey forced a laugh, thinking to himself: "Now, who's this, I wonder?" He added, as the girl's car flew along: "I'm a bit worried about those diamonds."

"You're bringing them to dad?" came the quick question. "Why, that's fine—I'll see them first."

"They really ought to be in a safe," Rainey drew easier breaths now, telling himself: "This is Ferry's daughter and—I'm in luck."

The girl, blue eyes studying the road ahead of them, said:

"Dad's got a safe, Norman—the very latest. You saw it only last week."

"So I did. I—I quite forgot. I guess that jump did affect me."

"You certainly don't seem all yourself," she allowed as she turned the car in at some gates. "I've got to call here. I won't be a minute. You get down and hide yourself."

She gave him a queer look.

Rainey got out of the car and stood behind it. The car couldn't be seen from the high road, nor could he see what might be passing. The girl was away at the house nearly five minutes. She greeted him with a half-smile on her return.

"They didn't follow up?"

"I didn't see them," he answered.

"Let's get along home, then." She climbed into her car.

When they drew up at the front door of a big house, Rainey ran round the bonnet to help the girl alight. Her small gloved hand rested in his in a friendly grip, and he felt that the adventure was beginning to shape up in style.

Riley and Billy were crowded together behind a pillar of the massive entrance, hidden from sight and silently intent. The front door opened, and they heard the girl greet an old manservant.

"Oh, Robert, don't let any strangers in—under any pretext. Mr. Gray was held up on his way here and almost robbed!"

"Very well, Miss Audrey."

Rainey had released that small gloved hand.

"I reckon I'd better pass over the diamonds," he said.

"Come in and we'll put them in the safe," she answered, leading the way in to the hall. Riley and Billy heard the door close and crept from their hiding-place.

"Try this window," whispered Riley. His companion tiptoed to a half-curtained window at the side of the front double doors.

April 4th, 1936.

"She's heading for the safe," Billy murmured. "But I can't see where it is. Let's break in."

"Aw, shucks!" Riley checked him. "And spoil the whole thing. We'll lay off until he leaves. It'll be a lot easier getting them from the girl."

Rainey watched the girl go to one of the family portraits hanging on the wall. It was a picture of an oldish gentleman. She stood on a chair and touched a concealed spring on the side of the heavy gold frame. The picture quietly opened outward from the frame on well-oiled hinges and revealed a small iron door let into the stone wall behind the picture itself.

She touched the small flat safe knob.

"Oh, Robert," she called to the butler.

"You do it." She sprang down from the chair. "I've forgotten the number."

The old fellow got on the chair and twiddled the combination lock. The safe door opened. The precious jewel-case was placed inside—as soon as the girl had peeped delightedly at its sparkling contents.

"Aren't they lovely?" she cried.

"I'm glad they're locked up," said Rainey devoutly.

The picture was swung back into its frame. The old butler announced:

"There's a telegram for your father, Miss Audrey. Will you open it?"

"It can wait until he returns," she decided. She turned to Rainey. "Can I offer you anything?"

"No, thanks." Dick Rainey was anxious to get away. "I'll be going along."

She again gave him that speculative glance.

"I'll run you down to where you left your car." She crossed the hall to the telephone box. "Excuse me," she called.

Taking the 'phone, she hastily dialled a number. She listened, her back turned to Rainey.

"Hallo, Norman—this is Audrey. There's a young man here—" She paused, listening again. "Mr. Gray not in?" she asked in a surprised tone. "Oh, all right! I'll call down presently. Miss Audrey Ferry speaking."

She put down the 'phone and made a sign to the old butler, who came across the hall to her.

"I've just called Mr. Gray's office, and I know he answered me," she murmured.

"Mr. Gray's here," the old fellow smiled. "He can't be in two places at the same time, Miss Audrey."

She whispered, her blue eyes on Rainey on the far side of the hall:

"This man's an impostor. He isn't Norman Gray." She checked the old butler's start of surprise with a warning shake of her head. "I'm going to play him up and see what game he's after."

She came back to Rainey.

"Ready, Norman?"

"Sure. I'll call back for your father's cheque."

"You ought to know dad isn't buying them," she said. "I can't make you out at all this morning."

"Miss Ferry—I'm not Norman Gray."

She faced him.

"I've more than guessed it. Who are you?"

"Gray got me into this because I resembled him," Rainey answered in his frank way. "If you'll run me back to my car, I'll explain everything."

She hesitated a bare moment.

"All right, I'm ready."

"You've Sold Them—But You Don't Sell Us!"

BRAUN and the other crook Rafferty had come back to their watch upon Bard Building. Braun's ferret eyes peered here and there.

"Riley and Billy have beaten it," he stated. "Why?"

"They're okay."

"Of course they are!" sneered Braun. "All the same, we'll put across the road and take a dekho on Gray."

They were stopped by the telephone girl in the hall of Bard Building.

"What is it?"

"Mr. Gray," said Braun, lifting his hat. "Room 210."

"He's speaking now," she answered, lifting her hand from the 'phone mouth-piece. "Yes, sir—I'll call up Car Rentals. You want a fast car at the side entrance? At once? All right, Mr. Gray." She nodded to the attentive Braun. "You can go up. You'll just catch him."

Braun and Rafferty lost no time. Gray heard them at the door and opened it at their call, his face a study when he noted Rafferty's hand sliding round the door gripping a gun. But he tried to be easy with them.

"Why, hallo, boys!" he cried. "Back again?"

"You won't need that fast car, Gray," spoke Braun crowding in behind Rafferty. "We're going to sell the diamonds ourselves. Put that firework away, Raff—all friends here."

"Sure!" agreed Gray. "But what about my percentage?"

"It's on," Braun told him. "But we'll do the selling, see? Easy money for you. Hand over the rocks."

"What's the idea cutting me out?" Gray tried to argue.

"Come on—come on!" snapped Braun. "Don't you see Rafferty's getting all excited with that gun? Pass 'em over."

Gray put his hand to his breast-pocket.

"Here they are. Take 'em—I'm sick to death of you fellows."

The inside pocket of his coat was empty. Then his hand slid down and felt the case in the outside pocket. He pulled it out and tossed it on his desk.

"Lucky for you," said Braun.

Rafferty wasn't satisfied.

"We'll check up on this." He tore off the tissue wrappings. The red leather and gilt case reassured him.

"Seems okay," he muttered. "We'll go."

Gray's heart stood still. He realised what he'd done. That fellow Rainey had the correct case. In the hasty changing of their coats the cases had been changed, too. He tried to keep a stiff upper lip, but Braun's rat's eyes had noted the sudden tightening of Gray's mouth.

"Maybe we'll have a peep inside," he said, taking up the case and flicking it open with deft fingers. The bright brass of the paper fasteners within read doom to Gray.

"You weren't trying to put anything over on us, Norman?" asked Braun very gently.

"I—of course not. I—I can't understand it—" The sweat stood out in beads on Gray's forehead.

Rafferty's gun was levelled at his breast.

"Where are they?"

"I—I gave them to a fellow to take to Ferry's. He's there now." Gray held himself in leash, seeking madly for a means of escape. "I'll ring him—"

"This box," Braun tapped the case. "Empty! You've sold 'em, but you don't sell us. Pass over the dibs—No, you don't!"

Gray had made a dash for the window. He had got it half-open when Rafferty fired.

Captain Klein, head of the Springport Police, lifted the 'phone from his desk at H.Q.

"Yes? Who is it?"

"Hallo, hallo!" squeaked the receiver.

"Police Department—quick!"

"Police speaking," growled Klein.

"Spit it out."

"Butler at Mr. Ferry's, Arbour Avenue, calling," came the second squeak. "Urgent! Something's very wrong at Mr. Gray's office, Bard Buildings. We can't get any reply."

Klein answered curtly:

"Don't worry! You can reckon we're there already!"

"D'you Think This is a Parlour Game?"

R AINEY came dashing up the stairs of Bard Buildings. He rapped sharply at the door of Suite 210. There was no answer.

He waited a few seconds, then rapped again, and then opened the door with the key found in the pocket of the coat Gray had lent him. He pushed in jubilantly.

"Guess I've fixed things, Gray!" he called. "The diamonds are up at Ferry's. I think it's going to be a sale."

His voice died out. Gray was lying full length on the floor, face downwards, just below the window.

Rainey stared a moment, then crossed to him.

"Say, what's the matter?" He half-turned the body over. Then very quickly stood up, face white as chalk. "They've got him!" he muttered. "Gosh!"

He was thinking quickly. Better ring up Ferry's and tell Audrey.

He lifted the 'phone.

"Operator, give me Mr. Ferry's house in Arbour Avenue, please. This is City 9607."

A few seconds later he heard the girl's voice answering:

"Hallo, hallo—who is it?"

"Dick Rainey. I'm at Gray's office, and I've found him on the floor, shot through the heart. It's the gang—they'll be after the diamonds. I'll come straight back."

Audrey's voice was heard.

"Oh, how dreadful! How awful—"

A piercing scream sounded in the receiver, then a man's rasping voice:

"Don't squawk!"

Then dead silence.

Rainey listened. He shook the 'phone. Listened again.

Not a sound.

He was at the door of Gray's chambers when he heard rapidly ascending feet. He ran out to the landing to face an inspector of police and two constables.

"Hallo, what's the hurry?"

The inspector stood squarely in Rainey's path.

"Miss Ferry! She's in danger. I heard her scream in the 'phone just now!"

"Did you? Well, Ferry's butler has just 'phoned me to look in here. I'm Inspector Klein, chief of the bureau." He made a sign to his men, who ranged up on either side of Rainey. Klein entered the suite and saw Gray's hunched-up body. "No wonder you're in a hurry!" he called back to Rainey.

"Why, I had nothing to do with that," Rainey answered hotly. "Let's go to Ferry's—"

"Bring him in!" Klein cut him short.

"You're under arrest, and anything you say now will be used against you!"

Rainey, feeling the two policemen's hands on either arm, had to obey. He gabbled out:

"I know I'm in a jam, but that girl's in a worse one! We've got to get to her. She's in deadly danger!"

"We'll check up on it," said Klein, lifting the 'phone. "Give me Mr.

Ferry's house in Arbour Avenue, sharp! Inspector Klein this end."

A tense silence followed. Then Klein asked:

"That you, Miss Ferry? Inspector Klein speaking. We've got a report that you're in danger. None at all? Thank you, I thought not. Sorry to have bothered you."

He put his hand over the 'phone mouthpiece, freezing Dick with his eyes.

"Can't you see she's being forced to lie to you?" Dick panted. "I heard her scream. I heard a man's voice—"

"The butler's."

"No! For heaven's sake, tell her if she's in danger and being forced to lie to say something with the word 'help' in it!"

Klein put down the 'phone.

"Say, d'you think this is a parlour game? Come on, take him in! Call up the Homicide Squad and the coroner."

Rainey stooped forward, pulling the two policemen with him. He suddenly somersaulted clean over their hold on his arms, freeing himself as they over-balanced and tumbled forward on their hands and knees. With a bound he was out of Suite 210 and had slammed the door upon the three of them, hooking up the night watchman's "catch" that hung outside the door.

He went bounding down the stairs four at a time, out into the road, hand-springing into Klein's hooded ear. There was a policeman's top-coat and cap in the back, "spares" that Klein always kept handy when he didn't want

to appear as inspector. Rainey shuffled out of his coat—Gray's coat—and slid into the top coat like lightning.

He was at the wheel, sitting tight, peaked cap pulled down over his eyes, when Klein came tearing into the street.

"Calling all cars!" Klein roared at him. "Get to H.Q. 'quick! Escaping prisoner, six feet tall, brown hair, round face, North American, light trousers! Wanted for murder!"

"I saw him run out," grunted Rainey. "Went westward."

He started up the car and swung out, leaving Klein staring doubtfully after him.

"Atta, Girl!"

UP at the Ferry home Riley was holding Audrey Ferry by the arms, twisting them cruelly. Billy had the old butler covered with his gun.

"You've worked here a long time, hey?" asked Billy, egressing the trigger of his automatic with a loving finger.

"Y-yes, sir," quavered the old man. "You wouldn't like to see her hurt, I guess?" Billy went on coaxingly.

"Of course not, sir."

Billy nodded to his companion in crime.

"Let him see."

Audrey set her teeth, but the pain of that arm-wrenching was so intense that she couldn't repress a little cry of anguish. The old butler called frantically:

"Stop—stop! I'll open the safe!"



The four crooks were intent on the study of a red leather and gilt jewel case. . . .

Billy's smile was a fiend's.

"Okay! Step on it!"

Riley thrust the half-fainting girl into a chain, clapping a coarse hand over her mouth.

"You sit tight and say nothing!" he threatened her. "You did the telephone trick all right, and I'm not angry with you—yet!"

She had to watch while the old servant opened the picture and revealed the safe in the wall behind it. Sick and helpless, she had to see him open the safe and hand over the diamonds.

"Thanks," said Billy, still grinning. "Put everything straight, and don't either of you try out any funny stuff!"

Riley was already at the 'phone.

"Give me South 4181," he muttered into the mouthpiece, glancing at Audrey, who, slumped in her chair, seemed to have fainted in dead earnest. "That you, Braun? Riley this end. We got the rocks. You stay around until we pick you up."

He slammed down the 'phone, whipped out his penknife, and slashed the flex through and through. Then, with a nod to Billy, who had crammed the red jewel-case into his pocket, he hurried across the hall to the window by which they had entered.

The instant they had gone the old butler ran to his young mistress. She sat up, gasping and shaken, trying to think what they could do.

"You all right, Miss Audrey?" the old man asked, tremblingly.

"Get me a glass of water." Car wheels were heard grinding over the gravel drive. "See who it is. Don't open the door until you're sure."

The old fellow peered from a side window.

"It's the young gentleman who's so like Mr. Gray."

"Let him in."

Rainey came in at a rush. He had flung off the policeman's hat and coat. He called:

"You're not hurt? I'm so thankful, so glad."

"I'm glad you're here," she answered, pulling herself together. "They've got the diamonds. Robert had to give them up."

"I've got to get them back." Rainey spoke quickly. "I must. The police think I killed Gray to get those stones. I've got to catch those fellows—or go to gaol for murder!"

"I heard one of them at the 'phone calling up South 4181." As Rainey dashed to the 'phone Audrey shook her head. "No use—they've ripped it out."

"I'll check up the number at your local drug store." Rainey turned to her. "And get the address."

He hesitated, not caring to leave her. "I'll come with you," she told him, smiling a little wryly. "I—I may be useful."

"Atta, girl!" cried Rainey joyously. "It's now or never! What's life without adventure?"

Old Robert pleaded:

"You'll take care of her, sir? Adventures are all right when it's a man who's doing them."

"Don't you worry," Rainey promised him. "I'm just as keen on taking care of Miss Audrey as you." He gave her a quizzing look. "Maybe—keener."

At the Hide-out

THE police will pick you up in about two ticks," Rainey opined as they sped along Harbour Avenue. "They're wirelessing all patrols, I bet. We'll make for the nearest drug store and see who lives at South 4181."

"Just here." Audrey pointed to a row of shops up a side road off the Avenue. "Phillips and Brown." April 4th, 1936.

Rainey jumped from the car and hustled into the shop. In ten seconds he was out again.

"That number is at 4538, Ohio Avenue," he said crisply.

Audrey answered.

"I know where it is. Let me have the wheel."

"Okay!" He vaulted in beside her. "I feel quite safe with you driving, Audrey."

She didn't answer as she swung the car out into the road. She drove with the sure touch of experienced hands. Rainey, glancing at her determined profile, decided that he liked her very much. She wasn't one who'd waste time talking—she was the sort of girl who always acted promptly.

They hadn't made a mile ere the hooting of a speed cop, who had leapt to his bike in pursuit of them as they passed by, told them the hunt was up.

"What did I tell you?" laughed Rainey. "They're on to us already. Let's go!"

Audrey stepped her little foot on the accelerator, and—they went!

"Doing a trifle over the limit, what?" called Rainey to her above the rattle of the car.

"Shut up!" she snapped at him. "We've got to get there first, haven't we?"

The speed cop was outdistanced by the fast car—Inspector Klein's own especial Ford, made to move. They had the risk of being picked up by other speed cops as they hurtled along, but luck held with them, and they reached Ohio Avenue without mishap. It was situated in a busy part of Springport, near the docks, and No. 4538 turned out to be a small-fronted garage with high, flat-roofed buildings behind it.

Rainey signed for Audrey to drive past the place.

"I'll go in," he decided. "You wait around for the police. You won't have to wait long."

"I wish you'd wait, too," she said. "Going in there by yourself—"

"I'll be all right. They'll think me a ghost," he chuckled. "They'll be scared stiff."

He waved gaily to her as he ran back to the garage and entered the gloomy, forbidding, narrow front gates.

No one was about. The tunnel-like entrance opened out into a big yard where some cars were parked. Beyond this yard were bricked storehouses. Rainey strolled across to where drawn back doors had given him a glimpse of some high-piled, well-filled sacks, probably potatoes. It was evident to him that the garage proprietors merely had parking rights in a yard that served for several other businesses.

He gathered also that these warehouses were close upon the banks of the river.

The place seemed utterly deserted. It was barely two o'clock, and the hands were still at midday lunch. It seemed to Rainey that the potato sacks would give him a good hiding-place—his sharp eyes had noted that the long touring car which had tried to hold him up in Harbour Avenue was parked in the yard. He crept into the cool of the storehouse and immediately became aware of hushed voices.

These furtive whispers came from beyond the piled sacks. Rainey climbed up to the top of the pile and peered over. There they were, the whole four of them, intent on the study of a red leather and gilt jewel-case which Riley was holding out towards Rafferty.

Braun, a half-smoked cigar lax in his right hand, was arguing:

"We'll have to sell 'em as they are. There isn't time to cut 'em down."

Rainey took a flying leap from the top of the sacks, landing with both feet

on Rafferty's neck. He went sprawling, but his fingers closed automatically upon the case, snapping it to. Rainey made a grab for it, as the others, startled out of their wits, went scurrying out of the shed.

"It's Gray!" squealed Braun, "It's his spook!"

The others made answering squawks—for about a couple of seconds. Then Rafferty, on his back amidst the sacks, with Rainey on top of him and Rainey's left hand clutching his coat, gasped out: "Catch!"

He flung the case high in the air over the sacks. It fell with a clatter somewhere in the semi-darkness. Braun ran back to Rafferty, his sudden fright ended, and with snarls of rage flung himself into the fierce struggle now going on betwixt Rafferty and Rainey.

Braun's yells brought Billy and Riley back to the shed. A regular scrum among the potato sacks followed; but Rainey, with a couple of well-directed punches, knocked two of the gang to the concrete floor. Then he took a flying leap upward into an open trap by which sacks had been lowered from the floor above.

"After him!" shrieked Braun, scuttling up the tumbled sacks. "Fix him with your rod!"

But Rainey had disappeared. Billy shinned up chains that hung down from the trap, his little pig's eyes full of menace. He called down:

"He's got 'em! But I'll get him!"

Rafferty grunted:

"I reckon the case fell among the sacks."

"We can't play hide-and-seek here!" Braun shouted. "And we got to settle him this time! I'm after you, Billy!"

Billy was already up the chains and had found foothold on the upper floor. Braun went after him like a monkey, but Riley and Rafferty remembered the stairway at the far end of the place. The four of them came together on the first story—to hear Rainey scuttling overhead on the roof.

Came Braun's triumphant cry:

"We've got him now!"

They ran up the iron steps that led to the roof and thrust open the skylight. They glimpsed Rainey on the parapet of the building, looking downward.

"Jump!" called Braun with a savage chuckle. "That'll suit us fine! Both your legs broken!"

Rainey, with a derisive glance at him, jumped.

But not downward. With his athlete's skill and strength and fine judgment of distance, he leapt from the parapet clean across the yawning gulf to the coping of the next building! He landed fair and square—to be instantly followed by Rafferty, who made a mess of the jump and must have gone crashing head down to his death on the cobblestones of the yard below had not Rainey managed to grab him by his right arm and his flapping coat.

Riley and Billy stood staring. They didn't dare to fire now—not with Rafferty there, where so many eyes might see. Windows overlooked them from all sides, and police whistles were shrilling fiercely in the streets below.

Rainey's right hand was seen thrusting into Rafferty's pocket.

"Gee!" crowed Braun. "He ain't got the rocks! He's feeling for 'em. Follow me, boys. I got an idea."

Riley and Billy scuttled after their leader back through the skylight, basely abandoning Rafferty.

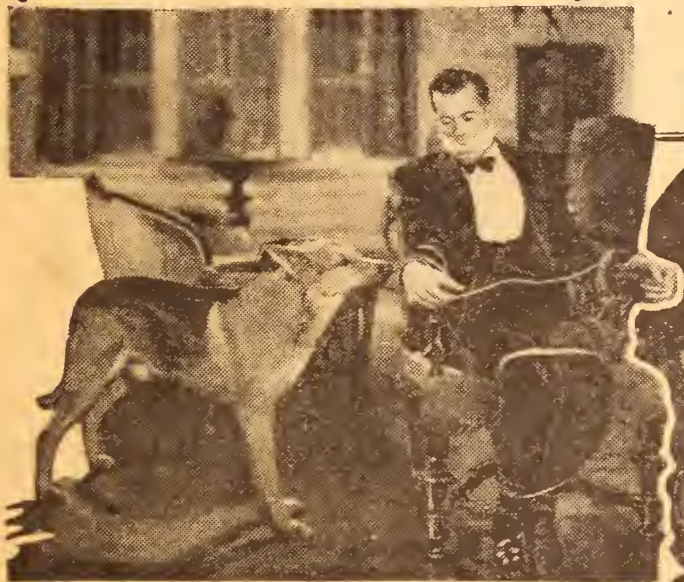
"You aren't going to—throw me over?" Rafferty pleaded. "Guess I've broken my ankle."

Rainey jerked the gangster off the parapet.

(Continued on page 25)

Special Investigator Kennedy and his wonder police dog, Tarzan, are called in to investigate the persistent robbery of a warehouse. A breath-taking thriller, starring Reed Howes and Tarzan

"MILLION DOLLAR HAUL"



Hasty Tempers

OLD Boswell, head of the firm of Boswell Brothers, shippers and warehousemen, was sitting at the top of the long table in the board-room in his office on the waterside. He was a fine-looking, frank old fellow, with a clean-shaven face and a mop of grey hair. But to-day he was looking very worried.

"Gentlemen," he began to the half-dozen men seated around the table, "we have reached the limit of our insured protection against theft. The insurance companies now consider us a bad risk. It is evident that we have become victims of a well-organised gang of waterfront thieves, and, to put it in a few words, we'll have to stop these warehouse robberies or—go out of business."

A thin, tall man, sitting at his right hand, called across the table to a neat-monstached dapper fellow:

"Graham, you're in charge of the warehouses. Any suggestions?"

The answer came sharply:

"Why pick on me, Chandler? You're in control of all transportations, and I haven't a thing to say about the deals until the goods are stored."

A short, youngish man, lounging in his chair next to the first speaker, put in gently:

"The thefts occur in the warehouses. You never heard of any robberies from our ships, Graham."

"And you never heard of my department giving out any information, Tom Rodney!" snapped Graham. "Mr. Boswell says we're up against an organised gang—well, they must get a line on the shipments somewhere or somehow."

Rodney stood up.

"Are you suggesting there's any leakage in our department?"

Graham answered sneeringly:

"It can't be all luck that robberies time with the arrival of valuable shipments."

Rodney clenched his fists.

"I consider that remark a distinct reflection on Chandler and myself!"

Graham shrugged his shoulders.

"You heard what I said."

"Just a moment, boys," put in old Boswell. "Squabbling won't help us out. I know you're all keen on your departments—and that's the proper spirit. Now, remember—we've just unshipped another cargo—"

"I've done all I can to protect it," Graham broke in. "And no one knows a thing about it outside ourselves here present." He glared defiantly at Rodney; but Boswell was intent on smoothing things down.

"No one's suspected here, Graham," he stated. "I'll tell you what I've done. I asked the best insurance company for help, and they've sent down a special investigator."

"You mean a detective?" Graham inquired scornfully. "Fat lot of good he'll be!"

The hand telephone buzzed on the table in front of Boswell. He took up the instrument and listened.

"There he is, right on the minute!" He spoke into the receiver. "Send Mr. Kennedy up at once!" He pushed a box of cigars along to Graham. "Help yourself and pass them round."

While they were standing about and lighting up, the door opened. A round-faced Irishman stepped into the room with a big Alsatian dog at his heels. He took in the company at a glance as he introduced himself:

"I'm Dan Kennedy, sent along by the Employers Insurance Company."

"You're prompt, Mr. Kennedy," smiled old Boswell. "I want you to meet my associates. Mr. Graham, general manager of warehouses. Mr. Chandler of the shipping department. Mr. Rodney, next to him, is his assistant. These other gentlemen are my partners—fine dog, Mr. Kennedy."

"His name's Tarzan," Kennedy answered the compliment. "And he's my partner."

"He's friendly," said Rodney, who was patting the dog's neck.

"Dogs always know regular people," Kennedy smiled. "They're queer that way. Sit down, Tarzan."

"Let's all sit down," said Boswell. But Tarzan had come across to Graham and was sniffing at him.

Graham asked quickly:

"You're sure he's friendly?"

"Mr. Kennedy tells us dogs know regular people," said one of the partners.

Graham pushed the dog's muzzle away. "Get out! This might be a case where the man bites the dog!"

The Alsatian moved round to his master and laid down obediently at his feet. Boswell began again:

"Let's get to business. Mr. Kennedy knows our problem, and I've asked you here to listen to his opinion. Now, then, Kennedy."

The round-faced man stopped to pat his dog's head. He spoke in a very Irish accent:

"From your information and from the records, sir, I'd say at once that the robberies are inside jobs."

"What makes you think so?" Graham asked cuttingly.

"Because they seem always to time

with the arrival of your shipment. It would be easy for someone in the firm to pass the word."

Boswell put up a hand.

"But, Kennedy, every one who has any inside information is right here now in this room!"

"Then I'm to understand that only those you can trust have been invited to this conference?"

"That's so." The dog had got up and was standing by a closed side door, sniffing under the crack. Kennedy rose and went to the door, sharply jerking it open. A girl with pencil and pad in her hands was just outside.

"Come in!" cried Kennedy snappily.

The girl did so, exclaiming:

"I was just going to knock."

Boswell called:

"It's Miss Sheila Mallory, my secretary. It's quite all right, Kennedy!"

The detective offered a chair.

"Perhaps you'll sit down, Miss Mallory?" He turned to Boswell. "You're sure everybody is here now?"

"Quite. And you can take it that Miss Mallory wasn't eavesdropping," Boswell told him.

Graham had risen from his chair and was cycling Kennedy with much disfavour. But the detective merely called his dog to heel.

"Come here, Tarzan! All's correct—or will be when the lady shows me her notebook."

The girl flushed to the roots of her fair hair.

"Are you suggesting that I've been taking notes?"

"Let me see the notebook," Kennedy persisted, while Graham glowered still more fiercely. Miss Mallory flung the note-pad on the table.

"I resent this," Graham cried. "I strongly resent it!"

Kennedy glanced at the notes, then faced him:

"What have you got to resent?"

"I object to your intimidating trusted employees!" Graham shouted.

"If I'm in charge, I handle things my own way," came the cool answer. "And I'll tell you something—you're all under suspicion. There's a leak somewhere, and—"

"Are you trying to say that you suspect me?" Graham roared, advancing on him with threatening fists.

Tarzan at once leapt up, putting his front paws on Graham's chest. The great dog pushed Graham backwards, gently but very firmly, until the man was against the wall, raging at him:

"Call your dog off, you!"

Kennedy commanded:

"Down, Tarzan—down!"

For a few moments there had been quite a rumpus. But Graham, free of the dog, suddenly pulled himself together.

"Sorry, Kennedy. I lost my temper. Too bad of me!"

The detective nodded agreeably.

"Okay, Mr. Graham. I did, too. I apologise, gentlemen. This dog's my partner, and sometimes he gets a bit up and doing—" He turned to them. "Am I still on the case?"

"Sure you are!" old Boswell told him. "I like your style."

"Well, then, I'll get about my business. Come on, Tarzan!" He moved to the door. "I'll make a few inquiries in the office. See you later, gentlemen."

Kennedy strode out of the room, the dog moving gracefully at his heel without another glance for any of them.

"Fine Vi'lets!"

AS Sheila Mallory came out of the yard gates for lunch she found Kennedy and his dog waiting.

April 4th, 1936.

The detective pulled at the brim of his soft hat.

"I'm very sorry for what happened this morning—" he began.

"You certainly should be!" she retorted. "Why didn't you put the handcuffs on me while you were at it?"

"You don't understand, I—"

"I don't understand?" she checked him.

"I think I do. You regard me as being some kind of accomplice with whoever's doing a dirty business at Boswell's. I suppose you have full proof of Mr. Graham's guilt as well?"

"Now, listen, Miss Mallory," said Kennedy. "I don't accuse anybody. But I have to investigate everyone."

"And everyone's guilty while you blunder around?"

"Blunder?" Kennedy was hurt. "Why, Miss Mallory—I don't blunder!"

"No?"

The detective laughed in such a pleasant way that the girl forgot her vexation.

"Yes!" she cried. "Yes, yes, yes!"

Kennedy touched her arm.

"Come and have lunch with me," he suggested. "Then we'll talk it over."

They walked across the street to an open-air café and seated themselves on high stools at the outside counter. Tarzan followed up in a slinky manner, charmed with the idea of lunch.

Kennedy asked his pretty companion:

"Why don't you put yourself in my place, Miss Mallory?"

The bartender came along as she questioned:

"And what would that make of me?"

"Hamburger sandwich," Kennedy told the bartender. "Two. Plenty mustard in mine."

"Say, Sherlock, why don't you try mustard on the Boswell case?" Sheila fired at him.

"You're not being nice to me," Kennedy complained. "How can I ask you policeman's questions while you go on this way?" He took his Hamburg sandwich and handed the girl hers. "Coffee?"

"Iced coffee." She regarded him with amused blue eyes. "Guess I'm a better detective than you."

"I'll agree you're easier to look at," said Kennedy, putting out a hand for his sandwich. "Why, where's my Hamburger?"

Tarzan was moving away, licking his lips with a long, satisfied red tongue.

"You must have ate it," said the barman. "Two iced coffees." He put down the tall, creaming glasses.

Sheila laughed outright.

"There's a mystery for you. Maybe that's the way our stores go—just when no one's looking!"

They went for a turn in Kennedy's car after lunch.

"You may as well drive me home," she said. "Then you'll know where I live and you can put on one of your men to shadow me."

"Guess I'll do that myself," Kennedy answered. "D'you like my dog?"

"Like him?" she smiled, patting Tarzan as he sat bolt upright on the car seat between them. "I love him."

"You know the old saying—love my dog, love me—"

"You've got it all wrong, Sherlock!" she teased. "Anyway, we'll skip it!"

When they reached her house she jumped out of the car.

"Dad's night watchman at Boswell," she told Kennedy. "Maybe you'd better call around this evening. Then you'll be able to question him. He's sure to be in bed just this minute—I'm only going in to see that he's okay."

"I'll wait and run you back," he offered.

Tarzan came out of the car, very

sedately carrying the girl's bag which she had left on the seat.

After he had left her at Boswell's, Kennedy went along the main street of the town, thinking over the problem before him. It was one of those he had met in the board-room, for certain, who was betraying the firm. But which of them?

Could it be the girl? Odd her being at the door like that—with note-pad and pencil. He had satisfied himself that the notes on the pad were innocent enough—just shorthand pencillings of her duties for the day.

Kennedy didn't like to suspect her. But her father was night watchman—

Ahead of him he spotted Graham talking to a flower-seller who had come out of a little side shop. Kennedy paused by a delicatessen window as if studying the dainties inside. He saw Graham buy a bunch of violets, then pass on, carrying the bunch loosely in his hand.

As the detective followed him up the flower-vender called:

"Vi'lets—fine vi'lets! So fresh dey is dis morning—chust gathered!"

"How much Dutchy?"

"Ten cents. Zank you, sir!"

"Doing a good trade?" Kennedy glanced after Graham's retreating figure.

"All de chentlemens buy from me," spoke the man, with a grin. He gave Kennedy a sly look from under the peak of his ragged cap as Kennedy passed onward.

Graham seemed to have eyes at the back of his head. After a few minutes he returned to the flower-seller.

"I'll take another bunch," he said casually. As the man stooped to draw out the violets from his basket, he whispered:

"Watch your step—that fellow's a dick."

"Don't I know?" came the quick answer. "Where's de stuff to-night?"

"Number six, third compartment. Get there early and tell the boys to have a boat."

"I gotta haf a bigger cut dis time—"

"Talk to Savonne about it," Graham took the second bunch of little purple flowers and paid for them.

Kennedy had been watching from the far side of the road, wishing that he had ears long enough to listen. It seemed harmless enough, viewed from a distance, but why had Graham gone back?

"Saw me talking to the Dutchy," Kennedy decided. "I'll talk to him again, maybe. But not just now."

He went on his way; the big dog padding along softly, a pace or two in the rear.

Kennedy is Puzzled

SHEILA was getting her father's supper ready—which was breakfast to the old fellow. His "day" commenced at nightfall and ended soon after daybreak. Their home was a comfortable little lodge at the far end of the docks—Mallory liked the walk of a mile to and fro to Boswell's.

He was a quiet-spoken man, occupying his leisure with his pipe and his newspaper. Sometimes he went down to the local club for a drink and a chat with his cronies, but mostly he liked to be with his daughter in those few hours which their varying occupations afforded them.

She was telling him about Kennedy.

"You know, dad, I felt silly—stauding there when he jerked open the door. I guess it did look a bit suspicious."

"You don't mean he had the check to think that you were a crook?" questioned Mallory, frowning his brows.

"Not in so many words. But he's the sort to suspect everybody. If he comes here—mind you tell him nothing."

"Got nothing to tell," her father answered.

Sheila laid the cloth and put on knife, fork and spoon.

"Here you are, dad—fish and salad, bread-and-butter. Coffee to follow." She fussed over him, adding: "You know, dad—I sort of like his nerve."

"You better start a bottom drawer right away," chuckled Mallory. "I can see a wedding ahead. Or a detective agency!"

"Don't be silly, dad!" But Sheila blushed a little. "Hallo, who's this?"

The latch clicked up. Tarzan's black muzzle pushed itself round the outer door, his paw having thrust the door open after he had nosed up the outside latch fastening.

"If it isn't Slowfoot Sherlock's dog!" cried the girl. "I suppose the Master Mind is somewhere near." Kennedy entered, Tarzan making way for him. "Come out from behind that face—we know you!"

"What are you doing?" he demanded.

"Are you asking that as a sleuth, or personally?"

"Personally," he answered, nodding to Mallory. "I've come to invite you to lunch to-morrow. Same place."

She wrinkled her little nose at him.

"Meet my father. Dad, this is Mr. Kennedy, the world's detective."

Mallory held out his hand.

"Sit down, sir. Join me in fish and salad?"

"I'll have a cup of coffee," Kennedy glanced at the girl. "That lunch to-morrow okay?"

"You can look for me," she smiled at him. "Mind you, I won't say you'll see me. Good-bye for now—I've got an appointment."

"Graham?"

"Mind your own business!" She kissed her father, patted the dog, and hurried away, giving Kennedy a bare glance.

"The coffee's on the stove," said Mallory, getting another cup. "Make yourself at home, Mr. Kennedy."

They sat awhile talking about general things; the latest kidnapping case and President Roosevelt's New Deal. Kennedy came to the point after he had drunk his coffee.

"I'm a special investigator. What's your opinion of things at Boswell's?"

"My opinion is that Sheila's a fine girl. The best ever."

Kennedy nodded.

"What about Graham? Is he—is she —"

He didn't know how to put the question.

"Sheila hasn't gone to meet him," Mallory stated. "And Graham's okay, even if she had."

"Hot-tempered—what?"

"Who isn't in hot weather? That's a fine dog you got."

"Sure." Mallory had risen and was crossing the room to take up his coat from the back of a chair. "Tarzan," Kennedy called, "fetch the gentleman's coat!"

The big dog went straight to the chair and drew the coat off it with careful teeth. He brought it to Mallory.

"Help the gentleman on with his coat," Kennedy directed.

The dog shook out the coat and stood up behind Mallory, who, much amused, put his arms into the sleeves. Tarzan gave the collar of the coat the correct jerk as it slid on to the old man's shoulders.

"Well, well!" cried Mallory. "If that don't beat the band!"

Kennedy was very pleased with this praise of his dog.

"My partner, he is," he stated. "You're off to work soon, I guess?"

"I am."

"Taking anything with you?"

"Well, no—"

"I'll show you something," Kennedy broke in. "Give me that." He pointed to Sheila's shopping basket. Mallory handed it across, whereupon Kennedy scribbled on a leaf of his pocket-book and tore it out. "I've ordered you a Hamburger with onions," he told Mallory, who was staring at him. "That'll cost a quarter. Then a half-bottle of home brew—that's thirty cents, including five on the bottle. Here's a dollar bill." He dropped the note and money into the basket and shut down the lid, then offered the basket to the dog.

"Take this to Dave's lunch counter, where you pinched my Hamburger this morning." Tarzan harked once, then took the handle of the basket in his mouth.

"There'll be forty-five cents change," Kennedy went on. "Don't let Dave ditch you for it. Bring the lot back here to the gentleman."

Tarzan trotted to the door, Mallory opened it, and the dog went padding along the dusty street, basket in his mouth.

"He'll be back before you go on duty," Kennedy promised.

With a wave of his right hand he took his leave, Mallory staring after him with a puzzled grin on his face.

Kennedy strolled along under the night. He had plenty to think about, and was glad that the generally busy street should now be so quiet. It was lighted on only one side of the road—the warehouses fringing the river bank on his right were dead black and lifeless.

His quick eyes hadn't failed to notice the double bunch of violets in the vase on the mantelshelf in the Mallory home. But Sheila hadn't gone to meet Graham—however prettily he might have given her the flowers. Kennedy deduced this fact, despite his teasing question, from

his common sense—Sheila would have worn the violets in her dress if she had been going to Graham.

Kennedy was bothered. He had talked with Chandler and Rodney, and had gone through the shipping department without getting even a hint as to the cause of the trouble at Boswell's. Graham, too, had been very agreeable this afternoon, trying to make up for his display of temper in the morning. The other partners at Boswell's had given no help—they clearly hadn't a constructive idea between them.

Mallory, the night watchman. Well, he seemed a decent enough old fellow. As for Sheila, she presented doubts—but doubts only. Kennedy was glad he hadn't given her the violets he had bought. He'd kept the bunch loose in his coat pocket—he took them out now and tossed them away.

He came to the yard gates. No sign of Tarzan at "Dave's Snack Bar." The dog was probably heading back to Mallory's. He must have gone there by some circuitous, doggy route of his own.

Kennedy retraced his steps, noting the few people with speculative eyes that he passed or overtook.

Tarzan's Shopping

TARZAN went straight to the snack bar opposite the gates and dumped the basket on the counter. The cook cried out:

"Hey, what you doing?"—when Tarzan put big front paws on the counter.

The cook lifted the basket lid and saw the note and the dollar bill and took them out.

"Dawg's called for a Hamburger with onions," he grinned. "Guess he'll eat it half-way home!"

He put the sandwich in the basket and closed the lid. Tarzan barked sharply.

"What's the matter?"



Joe was just behind and crashed down the butt of his gun on Kennedy's head.

The dog barked again, then nosed up the lid.

"Forgotten the home brew, eh?" The bottle was put in. "Okay, old son?"

Again Tarzan nosed up the lid and barked.

"Why, I'm leaving out the change!" the cook chuckled. "Did you ever see such a dawg?"

Forty-five cents in dimes and nickels were counted out and put in an envelope which was tucked under the sandwich. Tarzan put up a paw and closed down the lid of the basket, then took the handle in his mouth and dropped back to his four feet.

Tarzan headed straight for the yard gates. He had scented his master. But Kennedy wasn't there. This puzzled the dog, and he ran backwards and forwards before the closed gates very undecided what to do. At last he carried the basket to a dark corner, put it down, and returned to the gates. Backing from them, he took a flying leap over and landed in the yard. Here he began to sniff the night air, taking in full breaths of it.

Suddenly he became very quiet. Two lurking shadows nearby one of the warehouses had attracted his attention. He padded silently towards them, standing very still when his scent told him that neither of these was his master. He cocked his ears when the men began to whisper, and was sharp enough to sense that these whisperings were hostile to himself.

"Here's his dog, Joe! Shall I put a hole in him?"

"And wake the neighbourhood?" came the muttered reply. "Don't worry about the beast. Gee, it's a swell idea coming in across the docks! We can make an easy get-away."

"I don't like them little boats. Make me seasick. We oughter get more dough for this, Joe. The job's hot."

"We'll get more this time, Ed. Say, who passed you the word this time?"

"Don't talk. Just foller me. The night watch has come in."

The shadows melted away. Tarzan went back to the gates, preparing to jump them again. That Hamburger oughtn't to be wasted. Maybe his master had meant it for him—and the beer bottle for himself?

Why, of course! In his doggy mind the whole thing became clear as crystal. He jumped the gates, went back to the basket, opened it, and lifted out the sandwich.

Gee, it was good! But he had a slightly guilty feeling after he had devoured the last crumb. Supposing master hadn't quite intended things this way? Tarzan's ears folded back; he glanced right and left. He finally curled himself down by the basket and pretended to go to sleep.

Meantime, Ed and Joe had made contact with two other toughs who had come into Boswell's over the road fence. They hid themselves in a warehouse when they had opened the door with a pass-key which Ed possessed.

"I got to get these keys back," he told them. "Got to hand 'em over to-night. You boys will have to do the carting. The cases are marked with a chalk cross. Flick a torch, Bing, and let's see what there is."

A little beam of light shone out, circling here and there on the piled cases of merchandise. It rested on one on which a small blue cross had been pencilled.

"Take it, Randy," Ed ordered. "Joe, you hold the light while Bing takes the next. We got to work fast."

Two "blue-crossed" cases had been picked out from those in the warehouse and had been carried down the back April 4th, 1936.

stairs which led to the waterside, Ed having opened the door here with a second pass-key. Bing and Randy were back for more when old Mallory heard their furtive movements as he was walking round the yard.

He had come in by the side gate. He had been amused by Tarzan's tricks with his coat, but hadn't expected the dog to bring him a snack and a drink.

Mallory located the thieves in Warehouse No. 6. He crept along past the first and second bays and spotted the electric-torch flickering from somewhere within the third set of long windows. Most rashly he rapped on the door with his stick, calling loudly:

"Come out of that, whoever you are!"

A voice whispered at his ear.

"Shut up—you!"

Something hit him on the back of his neck. He fell like a log below the bay.

Ed touched him with his foot. No sound came from the old fellow. The crook stepped over his body and went in to the rest of the gang.

"Night watch," he whispered. "I koshed him. Look slippy—someone may have heard him beat."

Bing and Randy had removed a dozen cases when Kennedy crept up the stairs from the wharf side. Tarzan was at his heels, having suddenly reappeared on Kennedy's entrance at the yard gates. The dog now gave him away by uttering a low growl and leaping forward at a tallish man who appeared to be directing the operations.

As Tarzan sent this fellow sprawling over on his face, Ed made a quick pass at Kennedy, who flashed out his left and caught the gangster squarely under the chin, knocking him backwards full length. But Joe was just behind, and crashed down the butt of his gun on Kennedy's head so expertly that the detective's senses left him on the instant.

"Dowse the gim!" called Joe, stepping on the torch which the third man had let fall. "Choke off that dog, Graham!" He moved through the blackness to his chum. "Okay, Eddy?"

"I'm all right."

Ed's voice was husky and dazed, but he pulled himself together. Graham and Tarzan were struggling wildly. The dog, a little bewildered by the sudden darkness and anxious for his master, gave way as Graham punched savagely at him. With a whimpering cry Tarzan turned about, to dart behind one of the tumbled-down cases.

Graham stood up. Joe's voice came urgently:

"Help me chuck this fellow in the river, boys! He'll drown, and no one will know who's done it."

Kennedy was lifted—a dead weight. They bore him down the stairs; then, with a swinging of Joe and Ed's arms, he was flung out over the wharf side into the tideway, his body splashing noisily as it fell.

"Into the boat!" Graham snapped. "All of you!"

Bing and Randy were at the oars. "I'll get back for an alibi," Graham went on. "How many cases did you get?"

"Maybe a dozen."

"Good! Shove off. I'll meet you at Savonne's." Graham was already scuttling along the wharf. "Watch out for that signal boat."

He was swallowed up by the night. The four others pushed off the heavy tub in which they had crossed the river, the packing-cases weighing down the stern till the bows rose high out of the tide.

The sudden shock of the cold water had restored Kennedy to consciousness. He swam aimlessly for a few moments, unable to get his bearings. He heard

the boat's departure and tried to swim after it. Then something was swimming beside him, making better headway than himself.

"Tarzan!"

A gulping bark answered him. The dog came alongside, trying to get a grip on his master's coat sleeve. Kennedy rolled over on his back, letting himself float. The dog got a hold and towed him against the rushing stream to where there was an iron ladder hanging downwards from the bankside to the river.

Kennedy turned over to catch at the bars of the ladder. He climbed up; then, safe, if dripping wet, he reached down a hand to help up the faithful dog who had so cleverly saved his life.

"Coffee, Sherlock?"

NEXT morning Boswell was in conference once more with his managers. He held up the morning newspaper, on the front page of which the overnight's robbery was boldly featured.

"Our loss is someone else's gain," said the old fellow, shrugging. "That's the best I can say of it. We're spread out all over this rag—made to look mighty foolish."

"We can do without this kind of publicity," Graham frowned.

"A dozen raids on our warehouse in as many months," sighed Boswell. "Pretty well a million-dollar haul."

Chandler put in: "Queer that fellow Kennedy not turning up."

Graham asked: "What about that blamed dog of his? Was it drowned?"

The door opened, and Kennedy came in. He nodded to them, then addressed himself to Graham:

"No, he wasn't drowned. Nor me. But Tarzan's under the weather to-day, and I'm working alone."

Boswell pushed along the cigar-box.

"Help yourself and take a pew. Glad you're all right."

Graham offered his petrol-lighter. "The papers are full of lies, Kennedy! They said you'd been sandbagged and that the dog was missing."

"And that the night watchman was suspected," Kennedy supplemented. "And that he threw a mock fit when he heard the signal boat putting in."

Chandler shook his head. "Mallory isn't in it." He glanced at Kennedy. "Nor his daughter."

Kennedy didn't mind this little kick. He had liked Chandler from the outset. So had Tarzan. He smoked awhile, listening to the others, then presently put in:

"Unless you take extra precautions, Mr. Boswell, the Press will soon have another chance to write you up."

"What do you suggest?" Boswell asked. "Can you suggest anything? I'm utterly mystified as to how these fellows get tipped off."

"Double your warehouse guards," Kennedy advised. "And I may have another suggestion after I've done a little more prowling around."

Graham turned to him. "Got a lead, then?"

"I fancy I'm on the trail of your robbers' roost."

"You don't tell me!" Graham cried derisively.

"I'm telling no one," Kennedy answered, rising. "Well, I'll be on my way."

He went out, puffing at his cigar. Shortly afterwards the conference broke up.

Kennedy went straight along to the Mallory home. Sheila hadn't come in at Boswell's—therefore her father had been more hurt than was supposed.

He found her getting Mallory's break-

fast. The old man's head was bandaged up, and he was glaring under the bandages at the newspaper.

"Look at that!" he cried to Kennedy. "Night watch suspected." The stupidity of people thinking I'd take a beating like that—just to cover my tracks!"

"Cut your forehead?" Kennedy asked, pulling the paper away from him. "I guess you fell face forwards, same as I did. Forget it. How d'you feel in yourself?"

"Not so very bad. Sheila here has been cossetting me."

"Sure—," Kennedy gave her a stolid look. "She's a grand doctor—but she shouldn't have let you get at the newspapers. All lies. Look at me—said I was killed, and my dog, too."

Sheila asked:

"Coffee, Sherlock?"

"With you," he replied. "Blame me if we aren't always drinking coffee together! Sorry the old dog didn't bring you the sandwich, Mallory. He ate it. And I've drank the home brew and kept the change."

"You would," said Sheila.

"Listen, Vincgar. Will you take dinner with me one time at Savonne's Blue Moon Café?"

His eyes were quietly on hers as he spoke the name. She made no sign.

"Maybe. But it's a swagger place, and they don't like policemen a lot." "I'm going to dress up," he told her. "Cut you out, anyway. Okay, it's a date."

She handed him a cup of hot coffee.

"When?"

"I'll give you notice," he said. "Maybe it'll be when the next shipment is due at Boswell's. 'Bye, folks!" He turned at the door. "I'll be seeing you lunch-time, Sheila, at Dave's counter. Here's some violets I bought for you this morning from a Dutchy on Main Street. 'Bye."

"Thanks. Maybe I'll come. Maybe I won't."

After he had gone she asked her father:

"Dad, shall I meet him?"

"Of course you will," said Mallory. "You girls are funny that way, saying no and meaning yes!"

At the "Blue Moon"

KENNEDY went along to the Police Bureau in the afternoon to see some suspects picked up by the police. He took Tarzan with him, and the pair sat with the Commissioner in front of the little stage across which the men had to pass. As each man stepped out of the side room to take the stage, the facts known concerning him were read out by a policeman unseen behind a screen.

Came the harsh, official voice as a weedy-looking youth moved into view:

"Harry Smith. Gives address 1455, Lanchester Boulevard. Aged eighteen. Arrested on a charge of pocket-picking."

"It's a lie!" stated Harry Smith crisply. "I was jostled against the gentleman by a feller behind me!"

The Commissioner glanced at Kennedy, who shook his head.

"No," he whispered. "Pass along, Mr. Smith"

The next man came on the platform, neatly dressed, but very pale and ill-looking.

"James J. Thompson. Arrested for disorderly conduct late last evening. Says it was his birthday," spoke the voice.

Kennedy again shook his head, and Mr. Thompson was allowed to stagger off the stage.

The third man was of a different type. Short and small, with shifty eyes and a rat's face.

"Bert Evans, residing common lodging-house. Says he's out of work," boomed the voice. "Charged with loitering near Boswell's yard gates. Says he was only seeking work, but he was watched there off and on from nine o'clock last night till past twelve."

Tarzan had pricked up his ears. A low growl came from him.

"That's one of them," Kennedy whispered. The Commissioner looked doubtful.

"We've nothing on him. No previous record." The Commissioner asked Kennedy: "What makes you so sure?"

"My dog. He has come in contact with this fellow somewhere and knows he's a wrong 'un."

"I can't hold a man on a dog's dislike," the Commissioner decided. "He wasn't doing anything chargeable, beyond the fact that he was hanging around the gates."

"Nevertheless, get all the dope you can on him," Kennedy advised. "And let me know."

He went along to the post office and put through a call to New York, asking there for the City Hall. When he was through to the bureau, he asked to be put on to Public Safety Department. Getting that, he asked in a low voice:

"Give me Number twenty-seven."

After a minute's waiting, a woman's voice answered silkily:

"Operator twenty-seven this end. Who is it?"

"Number nineteen."

"I'm listening."

"Meet me Savonne's Blue Moon Café, Trenton, to-night. Evening dress—eight o'clock. Wear a bunch of violets. I want to get a line on a fellow who's taking out a girl I know."

"Okay!"

He put down the receiver and stepped out of the box. Tarzan, outside the box, had kept listeners-in, if any, at a respectful distance.

Kennedy, resplendent in black trousers and vest, black tie and white shirt and collar, was sitting in the lounge of the Blue Moon Café, smoking a cigarette and reading the evening paper. Presently a slim, dark young woman in a fashionably cut black satin frock under her white cloak was ushered into the lounge by the hall-porter. Kennedy rose from his chair and went across to her.

"Hallo, Rea—good of you to come. I've booked a table. What will you take while we're waiting?"

"A gimlet, Danny. You're looking very magnificent."

"All dressed up for you," he smiled. "Two gimlets, boy."

They sat sipping their lime-juice and spirit, smoking and chatting. A big palm-tree in a tub hid them from view of those crossing the lounge on their way to the super-dance. Presently the young woman asked:

"Got anything yet?"

"Hints and whispers," he told her. "This place is the H.Q. of the gang—or I'm an also ran. They came last night."

"I read it in the papers. You got slogged."

Kennedy chuckled.

"I sure did! Muzzed me out of time for a few minutes. They chucked me in the river, but the dog got me out. Watch those two—"

He flicked an eyelid towards a couple just coming in. It was Sheila and Graham. The policewoman nodded her sleek head.

"The gang will come again to-night," Kennedy went on. "Two nights running is a favourite trick with the reg'lar fellers. They guess you'll never believe they'd have the check. Now we'll go in, Rea, and behave fashionably. Order what you like best."

They sauntered into the restaurant and took seats at a tucked-away table for two. The menu was scanned and



Without another sound he collapsed on the floor and lay there with closed eyes.

dinner was ordered. The head waiter brought Rea a spray of orchids:

"With the compliments of the management," he bowed.

At a swift sign from Kennedy the young policewoman unpinned a bunch of violets from her dress and took the orchids with a gracious: "Thank the management from me."

Kennedy, without looking directly at them, had noted most of the diners and dancers.

"Where's the dog?" asked Rea, settling herself to the iced grapefruit before her.

"Sitting tight and waiting my signal."

"Your girl has spotted you," she murmured presently. "She doesn't look too pleased."

"We'll dance while they're fixing the next course," Kennedy rose. "Allow me the pleasure."

The orchestra was playing a waltz, and Kennedy made no further attempt to hide himself.

"There's that fellow who has made trouble for your father," Graham sniggered. "Got a dame with him, too!"

"All right, I know," Sheila answered tartly.

"I'm pleased you like my flowers," Graham went on.

"It's a bunch Mr. Kennedy gave me," she told him. "They're faded already." She unpinned the violets and tossed them under the table.

"Good for you!" Graham approved. "He's got a nerve making up to you after practically charging you with theft. Let's dance."

They had scarcely stood up for the waltz when the head waiter came to them.

"A telephone call for you, Mr. Graham," he announced. "I have put it through to Mr. Savonne's private room."

Amusement darkened Graham's face.

"Oh, all right—I'll come!" He turned to Sheila. "Will you excuse me a minute?"

"I think I'll be getting back to father," she answered. "Thanks for the entertainment."

Graham's frown deepened.

"Very well, if that's how you feel."

He strode sharply across the dance floor and went into the lounge. Then across it to a door on the left of the entrance hall. Here he rapped three times with his knuckles. A little grating in the upper panel opened and two keen eyes glistened from behind it.

Nothing was said. The door opened and Graham went into a small lobby where a squat-faced, ugly fellow told him:

"Boss' been waiting for you!"

"I'm not late."

"Pass in and tell him so," came the sudy answer.

Graham opened an inner door and entered a narrow room which seemed full of smoke. He was hailed by a smooth-haired, stout man sitting at the head of the table, round which were half a dozen men of all ages but of one type—criminal and base.

"Hallo, Handsome—you forgotten this is our busy night?" their leader greeted Graham. "You letting dames interfere with business?"

"A man has to play around sometimes," Graham told him aggressively.

"Listen here, we didn't get the right cases yesterday. Maybe it wasn't your fault. But you know where the real stuff is. Sit down!"

April 4th, 1936.

"Good Dog—Good Dog!"

KENNEDY had noted Graham's departure. He asked Rea, who was sitting opposite him and so had a view of the lounge:

"Did you spot where he went?"

"He crossed the hall and turned to the left. A private door opened and shut."

"Thanks!" He rose from his seat. "You better stay here. I'll have to do the rest."

"You won't make it alone," she warned him. "Too many of them here are in the game. I've recognised three of our 'card indexed' gentlemen already. The head waiter's one of them. We'll try out an old stunt."

She got up sharply from the table and hurried from the restaurant—crossed the lounge at a run, coming breathlessly to the cloak-room girl.

"Give me my wrap!" she panted. "There's a man here has insulted me! Get it quickly, please!" She tossed her check ticket on the counter, and the girl went along to get her cloak.

Kennedy came lurching after Rea. "Say, what's the trouble, girlie?" he muttered huskily. "I didn't mean a thing." He put his arms about her.

"Let me go!" Rea struck at him with little clenched fists, aware that a small panel grating in the door opposite her had slid open. "Let me be, can't you? I want to go home!"

"Aw, girlie, be a good scout!" Kennedy was clumsily trying to draw Rea back to the restaurant.

"Stop it!" she cried. "Stop it!" The grating closed with a snap. The door was jerked open. A squat-faced man jumped out.

"Hey, what's all this?" he snarled. "You can't get away with that stuff here!"

Kennedy had released Rea. His left fist shot out like a cannon-ball at close range. It caught the fellow full on the point of his chin. Without another sound he collapsed on the floor and lay there with closed eyes.

"Stout girl!" Kennedy whispered. "Now, Rea, beat it to where you're staying. I'll ring you later."

The door marked private was wide open. Feeling in his pocket for his gun, Kennedy went into the little lobby and closed the door swiftly behind him. The policewoman grabbed her cloak—the girl behind the counter, losing interest in Rea's black satin frock, spotted the sprawled figure on the floor.

"Say, was it him insulted you?" she asked indignantly.

"Yes. He was tipsy."

"Topsy-topsy-turvy, I'd call it," the attendant stated with scorn. "Well, he's got what he always wants!"

Kennedy was listening at the inner door of the private room. He heard Graham's quick voice.

"Well, now, you've got all the dope.

The cases are marked with a red chalked cross this time. I saw to it myself. Warehouse five, to-night, not six. The one over the archway. Bay three—the cases are small and easy to handle. There are extra guards on duty, but that's your worry. I must be going."

"Not you," came another voice. "You're coming with us. Listen, Graham—I'll double your split—"

Kennedy broke in upon them.

"Stick 'em up!" he snapped. "I've got plenty on you birds now!"

There was dead silence for a few long moments. Then hands were raised. A stout man, sitting in a big chair, eyed Kennedy warily.

Then suddenly Kennedy's arm was knocked up—a rat-faced little chap had come in behind him. Graham shouted:

"Grab him, boys! Hold him!"

A tremendous scuffle followed—Kennedy hitting out like a prizefighter, but with much more purpose in his blows. Three of them were floored, and Graham had a cut chin before Kennedy was finally overpowered.

The stout man directed the field. At the end of the fight he ordered:

"Gag him. Now tie him up in my chair, arms to the chair-arms. Pull the rope round his knees and ankles."

It was done neatly and speedily. Again the leader barked commands:

"Put that gun away, Bert Evans. I'll send up Louis to take care of this interfering guy. Louis knows just what to do—you needn't worry a bit. We've got plenty quick work at Boswell's."

The gang slid out of the private room, and Kennedy was left to his thoughts and bruises.

He vainly tried to free himself, wishing he hadn't been quite so impetuous. The squat-faced man came in.

"Don't waste your strength, mister. If you got loose, I'd have to put a bullet in you!"

He grinned at Kennedy.

"Mighty clever, weren't you?" he went on. He crossed to one of the windows and jerked up the lower sash.

"Gee—but this place reeks of seegats! Listen, honey. I'm going to get something to drink. I feel kinder muzzy—you sure hit me in a vurry mean way."

He ambled off, closing the door behind him. Kennedy heard the key click in the lock. Then he heard another sound—an anxious little whine. Tarzan leapt in from the street through the opened window—

The dog came to his master, surprised to find him without any words of greeting. Kennedy signalled to him with his eyes, but Tarzan wasn't sure. It might be some new kind of game—his master sitting there in a chair, all corded up with a handkerchief tied across his mouth.

But he sensed that something was wrong. His brown eyes fixed an appealing gaze on Kennedy's eyes, asking what he was expected to do.

Just then Louis came back.

"Get out of here, you!" he shouted at the dog, threatening him with his great fists.

This was understandable. Tarzan crouched back snarlingly, his teeth bared. He made a flying leap at Louis, knocking him backwards with his great front paws. Low, vicious growls came from him. Louis fought him off with a desperate effort and flung him aside; then jumped back to the doorway and—bolted for his life!

Kennedy wagged his loose fingers. Tarzan got a glimmering of the idea. He ran back to his master and gnawed at the knotted rope about Kennedy's right wrist. A sharp, keen bite, then another, then a pull on the rope, and Kennedy's wrist was free!

The rest was easy. Gag plucked out of his mouth, Kennedy praised Tarzan: "Good dog! Good boy!" as he whipped off the rest of his bonds. Tarzan went back to the door, growling again, keen to head off Louis, if he dared to come back!

Kennedy stood up stiffly. His gun was lying in a corner of the room where Bert had flicked it away from him. He picked it up and called to the dog.

He climbed out over the window-sill; Tarzan taking it on one jump so soon as his master was clear.

Kennedy ran along the street to the nearest call-box. He rang up police H.Q. and got his friend the commissioner. Quickly and clearly he gave the news that the gang were at work at Boswell's.

"Meet us there," came the crisp

(Continued on page 27)

Death among the clouds! War in the sky as intrepid flyers clash with the forces of organised crime! Tailspin Tommy returns to the firmament of Fame in a smashing drama that blazes its way across the Pacific to islands of hidden wealth, of lawlessness, of savagery and cannibalism. A wonder serial of unforgettable thrills, starring Clark Williams and Noah Beery, Jun.



Read This First

Tailspin Tommy, famous civilian flyer and ace of the Three Point Aerodrome, is hired by a wealthy business man named Curtis to make aerial surveys of the oil-bearing island of Nazil, in the far tropical realms of the Pacific Ocean.

Curtis is the uncle of Betty Lou Barnes, Tailspin's sweetheart, and is in partnership with Don Alvarado Casmetto, who owns most of the island of Nazil, and whose daughter Inez has been holidaying in the United States.

The services of Skeeter Milligan, Tailspin's mechanic, are also engaged by Curtis, and the party set out in two planes. But word of their approach is later conveyed to Don Alvarado's unscrupulous stepbrother, Emanuel Casmetto, who seeks to oust his kinsman from Nazil, and who is backed by Raymore, a shady American financier.

Tailspin and Skeeter fall into the hands of Emanuel and Raymore, but escape with the help of Bill McGuire, a newspaper man who has obtained a job as chef at Emanuel's stronghold, solely for the purpose of investigating Raymore's activities.

The two youngsters are also assisted by a mysterious aviator who calls himself the Eagle, and who, for some reason, makes himself their friend and ally.

Later they visit a new oil well which has been sunk by Don Alvarado's employees, and, while they are there, a bombing raid is attempted by one of Emanuel's hirelings, Mandro by name.

Tailspin "takes off" and wounds him after a desperate fight. Then, with his own control-stick jammed, he sees

**EPISODE 8.—
"Wings of Disaster"**

Mandro's 'plane coming straight for him!

Now Read On

At the Oil Well

IT was lucky for Tailspin Tompkins that he had donned a parachute before engaging Emanuel's hireling, and as he realised that a crash was inevitable he abandoned the useless control-stick of his 'plane and heaved himself over the side of the cockpit.

He plunged head first through space with a velocity that snatched his breath away, but at the count of three he tugged the release-ring of his 'chute and the package on his back unfolded itself immediately, the silk ballooning out like an enormous hood as the wind caught it and filled it.

He felt the sudden strain on his shoulders, a jerk that arrested the hair-raising impetus of his descent and swung him into an upright position, and almost in the same moment he saw his 'plane collide with Mandro's away above him.

There was a sickening impact that seemed to send a quiver through the air, an ear-splitting smash that was instantly followed by the louder blast of detonated bombs as the deadly cargoes of the two ships went off with a shattering roar. To Tailspin, drifting earthward under the fat folds of the parachute, it was as if the whole heavens reverberated to that awful ex-

pllosion, which he could only liken to some terrific thunder-peal.

The locked 'planes had disappeared in a vivid outburst of flame, and from that monstrous blotch of fire all manner of debris came hurtling—fragments of bomb-casing, fragments of wings, struts and fuselage, and twisted metal ripped from shattered engines.

Wreckage hissed past him. He himself was being tossed to and fro like a cork in an angry sea, for his parachute was reeling and swaying under the concussion that had smote it. But it finally steadied itself and carried him downward at a smoother and more even rate of progress.

He looked up again, his ears still ringing from the shock of the explosion. In the sky overhead a few faint wreaths of smoke were drifting away on the wind, but apart from these there was nothing to reveal the catastrophe that had just occurred. The machines involved in the crash had been blown to pieces, and so had Mandro.

The emissary of Emanuel Casmetto had made his last flight. . . .

Far below, in the neighbourhood of the oil-workings that Mandro had attempted to destroy, Tailspin's friends had covered their faces in horror as they had seen the 'planes dash towards each other in mutual annihilation, and it was only when the echoes of the explosion had died away that they raised their eyes once more.

They then discerned the parachute that was bearing the lone survivor towards them, and at sight of the figure which was floating from the heavens Skeeter Milligan uttered a hoarse cry.

"Yes!" Betty Lou sobbed hysterically. "But who— who? Tommy—or— Emanuel's pilot?"

It was impossible for them to tell yet, but as they calculated the approximate spot where the parachutist seemed likely to fall they broke into a staggering run, being followed by Inez, Don Alvarado and Ned Curtis.

At the same time the men who had been working on the new oil well came streaming from the various points where they had taken cover during Mandro's raid. They were led by Burke, the Irish-American foreman, and were on the scene almost as quickly as Skeeter and his companions when Tailspin eventually landed near the edge of a wood on the north side of the field.

It was with shouts of relief that Skeeter and his party recognised their friend, and eager hands helped the youthful airman to extricate himself from the harness of the parachute. Within a few seconds he was standing before his sympathisers, a little white and shaken, but able to conjure up a reassuring grin, none the less.

"Oh, Tommy," Betty found herself staying, "thank heavens you're safe!"

"Yeah, I'm safe all right," he breathed. "Gee, I was lucky to get out of it alive, though."

"And you're not even hurt?" the girl faltered.

Tailspin shook his head, but, despite his claim that he felt none the worse for his experience, he was prevailed upon to rest for a while in Burke's quarters, and here Skeeter kept him company with Inez and Betty Lou for almost an hour.

During this time, work on the new oil well was resumed, and the preparations for bringing in the expected "gusher" were very nearly complete when Curtis and Don Alvarado put in an appearance at Burke's office.

"Thanks to you, Senor Tommy, we are practically ready to 'shoot' the well," Don Alvarado announced genially.

"Thanks to me?" Tailspin echoed in a somewhat bewildered tone.

"Why, yes," the aristocratic Spaniard replied. "If it had not been for you, there would have been no well. The whole plant would have been wrecked by that agent of my devilish step-brother."

"The Don's right, Tommy," Skeeter put in fervently. "This outfit owes a lot to you. Come on, let's go and see 'em shoot the works."

Tailspin rose, and, accompanied by his mechanic and the two girls, he left Burke's quarters on the heels of Curtis and Don Alvarado. A minute later they were gathered together under the towering derrick where the Irish-American foreman was superintending operations.

"We're lowering the casing into the hole we've already drilled," Burke explained for the benefit of the newcomers. "We've reached oil-sand, and once we've got all the casing in position we'll send down a charge of explosive in the form of a big capsule. That ought to do the trick as soon as it goes off."

The last length of casing was hanging over the shaft from a pulley in the derrick, and Burke spoke to the workmen who were preparing to drop it into position.

"Swing it over a little to the right! That's it—hold it! Now down with it."

The casing began to sink into the well, and Burke turned to Don Alvarado's party again.

April 4th, 1936.

"There's the capsule I mentioned," he said, indicating a sinister-looking object that stood on the floor of the derrick. "There's enough nitro-glycerine in it to bust up a fair-sized house."

"You don't say!" Skeeter interposed, with a whistle. "Boy, I'd like to feed about a quart of that nitro to Emanuel and then drop him from a 'plane.'"

The bystanders greeted this comment with a grim laugh, and then Burke spoke again.

"We've got to be pretty careful," he observed, "because we're apt to strike a pocket where there's a tremendous amount of pressure. If that happens, there's always a chance of a gusher rising with such force that it will blow casing-*rig* and everything sky-high."

He was silent for a moment, and only the clanking of chains and the rattle of the pulley overhead were audible in the derrick.

"By the way, Don Alvarado," Burke continued, after he was satisfied that the final length of casing was in position, "you realise, of course, that we can't dispose of the oil we mine until the pipe line has been run to the coast?"

"Quite," the Don answered. "But Senor Curtis tells me that you can cap the well when the gusher comes up."

"Yep," the foreman agreed. "We're all ready to do that. Now, while the boys are screwing home that last piece of casing, I suggest you folks make yourselves scarce. We'll be ready to drop in that capsule then—a 'go-devil,' as we call it—and when it hits, this will be no place for you."

Don Alvarado and his companions took Burke's advice, and they were already at a safe distance from the derrick when they saw the Irish-American and his gang of miners run from under the framework of the tower.

In the meantime, numbers of hands who had not actually been engaged in the last-minute operations at the well had assembled near the spot where the Don and his party were standing. A few platoons of uniformed soldiery were also present, for in view of his stepbrother's activities Alvarado Cassetto had been compelled to meet force with force and raise a small army, and as a precautionary measure some of his troops were always on duty at the oil-field.

Across that field Burke and the men from the well were now travelling at the double, and even as they joined the rest of the onlookers there was a distant rumble that seemed to come from the very core of the earth.

Next instant black, bubbling liquid was seen to surge upward from the deserted shaft—raw petroleum that shot higher and higher into the framework of the derrick with ever-increasing force and volume, until the very peak of the tower was drenched in the ceaseless smother of that enormous column of spouting oil.

Up from the sandstone stratum four thousand feet below ground, up through the steel casing that lined the shaft it soared; mineral wealth that spelled a fortune for Curtis and Don Alvarado, and generous bonuses for all who were in their employ.

Workmen and soldiers cheered the spectacle to the echo. As for Tailspin, Betty, and Skeeter, they stood and marvelled, for the sight of a "gusher" was something new in their experience.

"It's wonderful!" Betty kept saying. "It's wonderful!"

Her uncle turned to her, smiling at her enthusiasm.

"When Tommy and Skeeter have blazed a trail, and the pipe line's been laid, we can barrel the oil at Don Alvarado's settlement and load it straight

on to the tankers," he declared. "Until then, the well has got to be sealed."

Burke and some of the men were returning to the derrick by this time, anxious to close the shaft lest the gusher attained a force that might cause damage. Soon they were at the tower again, and, begrimed by the spouting oil, they started to operate a valve-wheel which fastened a powerful cap of metal over the bore, thus shutting off the flow.

"Well, that's that," Curtis said to Don Alvarado, as the gusher was checked. "And now we've got to hang fire till the pipe line has linked the oil-field to the coast."

Plan of Attack

A WEEK had elapsed, and, during that week, Emanuel Cassetto and Horace Raymore had received tidings which were by no means welcome.

In the first place they had learned that Tailspin Tompkins and Skeeter Milligan were still very much alive, contrary to the fond belief that the crooked financier and his accomplice had nursed. In the second place they had learned why Mandro had not returned with the bomber in which he had been instructed to raid Don Alvarado's oil-field, and it had been a severe blow to them when they had been told that the 'plane and their agent were no more.

The source of their information was Garcia, the shady planter who posed as the Don's friend, but who was in reality a spy in the service of Emanuel, and one morning, just seven days after the death of Mandro, Garcia might have been seen at the small township over which his secret employer held sway.

Passing through the main street with its two rows of adobe buildings, Garcia made his way to the outskirts of the settlement and reached the headquarters of Emanuel, where he was challenged by a sentinel posted at the gates of the campound.

"Officer XX," Garcia remarked to the soldier.

This was the alias by which he was commonly known at Emanuel's stronghold, only a chosen few being aware of his real name. If it had been noised abroad that a planter called Garcia was in the habit of paying frequent visits to the northern shores of Nazal, the news might have reached the ears of the Don and set him thinking.

"Officer XX?"

The sentry at the gate of the compound repeated the pseudonym and drew aside, whereupon Garcia strode past him and marched across the parade ground within.

Groups of men in uniform were lounging about the great patio, but the visitor paid no attention to them and walked straight to the hacienda of Emanuel, and here he was stopped by another sentinel.

This time he gave his correct name, for the guard was one of Emanuel's most trustworthy men, and a few seconds later Enrico Garcia was being shown into a lounge occupied by Don Alvarado's unscrupulous kinsman and Horace Raymore.

"Ah, Garcia," Emanuel Cassetto exclaimed, a gleam of interest appearing in his narrow eyes as he recognised the caller. "I had an idea you might be here to-day. Is there anything to report?"

"Yes," was the reply. "I was with Don Alvarado and Curtis last night. They tell me that Tompkins and Milligan are making good progress. Every day they may be seen flying over the territory that lies between the oil-field and the coast—bombing such obstructions as might interfere with the job of laying their pipe line—in short, clearing

the ground for the engineers. If you are going to prevent Curtis and your stepbrother from making capital out of their property, you had better waste no time, Senor Emmanuel."

"You are right, Garcia," Emmanuel said thickly. "That is what I have just been telling Senor Raymore. A whole week has elapsed since that fool Mandro got himself killed, and we have done nothing—nothing."

Raymore shot an impatient glance at him.

"You know why we've been idle," he snapped. "When we learned that we'd lost our only remaining 'plane, we just had to sit tight."

"We could have attacked Don Alvarado's oil-field with our land forces," Emmanuel growled.

"With Tompkins and Milligan harassing us from the air?" the American retorted. "And the Eagle as well, maybe! Why, our men would have been scattered in no time. No, I still think we were wise to wait until the delivery of the new bomber which I ordered soon after we lost our first ship."

Emmanuel Casmetto rose from the chair in which he had been seated.

"And to-day the new bomber arrived," he said, "so I see no reason for waiting any longer."

Raymore nodded briskly.

"I agree with you on that point," he stated. "What's more, I think you can still use your land forces. We'll make this a mass attack, Casmetto. While Gomez bombs the Don's oil-well from the air, your troops can open fire from the woods on the north side of the field."

Emmanuel greeted this suggestion with approval, and the two conspirators were discussing details when Garcia interrupted them.

"One moment, gentlemen," he remarked. "You speak of Gomez, but why not give him a rest from flying and let him lead the land forces? He has not been too successful in the air lately."

"Because of that accursed aviator who calls himself the Eagle," Emmanuel broke out fiercely. "And, talking of the Eagle, Garcia, have you any idea who he is yet?"

The planter shook his head.

"No," he admitted, "and, strange as it may seem, I am convinced that Don Alvarado himself does not know, though the Eagle has helped your stepbrother's party consistently."

"You were talking of Gomez," Raymore interposed at this juncture. "You said something about giving him a rest from flying."

"Yes," rejoined Garcia. "He has not been lucky, and besides—I think you need a better man for this job, a man who could deal with the Eagle if he happened to run foul of him."

"And where can we find such a man?"

Raymore demanded.

Garcia smiled, his sallow features assuming a self-confident expression.

"You don't have to look farther than me, senor," he observed.

"You?" The American seemed astonished. "You, Garcia?"

"Oh, yes, Garcia has seen service with one of the South American Air Forces," it was Emmanuel who spoke. "Did you not know, Raymore? Let me see, you were dismissed after having a hand in an attempted revolt, Garcia, weren't you?"

"Yes," the planter said thoughtfully. "I would have been a made man if that rebellion had been a success. As it was, I was lucky to escape a firing-squad. But that's all finished with now, and I seldom talk of it. H'm, Don Alvarado and his people do not even know I can fly a 'plane."

Raymore had moved closer to him.

"Just how well can you fly?" he asked.

"I was reckoned to be the best army pilot south of the Panama Canal," Garcia answered, with some pride. "I might add that I have had actual experience of warfare, amigo, and when I think of this mysterious aviator who calls himself the Eagle—well, I am tempted to go looking for him, that's all."

"Forget the Eagle, Garcia," the Yankee said. "You're going on a bombing raid, and you're going to make good where Mandro failed. Emanuel, send for Gomez and tell him he's in charge of the land forces."

Gomez was summoned from his quarters, and, the plan of campaign having been made clear to him, he was instructed to assemble the troops in Emanuel's pay.

"Get the men into the trucks and leave at once," Raymore finished. "When you reach the woods on the north side of the Don's oil-field, wait there until you see Garcia pass overhead in the new bomber. He won't take off for an hour or two yet, of course, because the 'plane's got to undergo inspection and tests, and it will have to be equipped with ammunition and explosives."

Gomez inclined his head, and then, with a smart salute, he turned and made his way from the room. A moment later he was hastening along the corridor that led to the compound, and it was as he emerged from the hacienda that he collided with a stoutish man in the garb of a cook.

The cook was Bill McGuire, the keenest newspaper investigator who had ever come out of San Francisco, though on that tropical island of Nazil he was regarded as a harmless numskull by the majority of Emanuel Casmetto's hirelings.

"Hey!" he ejaculated, as he recovered his balance and looked at Gomez indignantly. "Hey, what's your hurry, pardner? You want to be more careful."

Gomez favoured him with a tolerant glance.

"I am in a hurry all right, companionero," he said. "The time for action has come. We are going to attack the oil-field and wipe Don Alvarado's party out of existence."

He passed on, and left Mac standing there with a startled expression on his plump features, an expression that was succeeded by a look of rapt attention when the reporter heard the notes of a bugle ring out across the compound.

The "assembly" was being called, and soon, from his vantage-point in the doorway of the hacienda, Bill McGuire witnessed the departure of a formidable contingent of armed men—truckloads of soldiery under the command of Gomez, who occupied an open car at the head of the procession.

The column moved out, and McGuire fidgeted nervously. He was clearly anxious to quit the hacienda, but he had a meal to prepare for Emanuel and Raymore, and he did not dare to arouse suspicion by abandoning his duties.

Reluctantly he directed his steps towards the kitchen and set to work, but the moment he had finished his activities as a menial he lost no time in making himself scarce.

There was an ancient car which he was permitted to use. Rain or shine, it stood in the open night and day, and Mac had to swing the crank-handle to start it; and it was as he was engaged in this task that he observed the new bomber standing some distance away.

A crew of mechanics were fussing around it, and a man in flying kit was watching them. That man was Garcia, but, though he had seen him before, Bill



He was standing on the wing of his 'plane, a revolver in his fist, and, heedless of the shots that were whistling around him, he was sniping at a platoon of Emanuel's ruffians.

McGuire did not know him by name. He noticed now, however, that the fellow was wearing a leather helmet on which two X's had been roughly stiched.

The reporter continued to turn the crank-handle of his car, and, as the engine fired at last, he scrambled into the automobile and settled himself behind the steering-wheel. Then he made for the road that led southward into the jungle, and presently the trees had swallowed the vehicle and its driver.

Two miles from Emanuel's stronghold, McGuire halted his car in a lonely clearing and gathered up a length of grimy cloth that was lying on the seat beside him. Then he climbed out of the auto and ran to the edge of the glade, where he snapped off a stout twig from one of the overhanging tree-boughs.

To this twig he fastened the length of cloth, which streamed out like some dirty, tattered banner, and now he looked up into the sky as if hoping to see something there, but he had to cool his heels for half an hour in that remote jungle clearing before he heard a sound that dispelled his agitation.

It was the note of a 'plane's motor, and he scanned the clouds expectantly. A few seconds later he beheld a strange craft flying from the west, and as he recognised it an exclamation of relief broke from his lips.

He began to wave his improvised flag, and was still signalling with it frantically when the 'plane came overhead. Nor did he lower the ragged cloth until it was clear to him that the pilot of the machine had espied him and was turning into the wind to make a landing.

The 'plane descended to the glade, sped across the turf and rolled to a standstill thirty yards from the waiting reporter, who promptly dashed towards it and confronted the ship's solitary occupant.

Only the airman's head and shoulders were visible above the edge of the cockpit, and his identity was concealed by a curious mask that was fitted with a pair of tinted goggles. He was the Eagle—the mystery flyer who had prevailed upon McGuire to act in co-operation with him—the aviator whom Emanuel Casmetto and Horace Raymore had learned to fear.

"Thank heavens you happened to show up!" Mac breathed. "You're needed badly!"

"I don't let many hours go by without checking this spot and looking out for a signal from you," the Eagle replied. "What's the trouble, anyway?"

"Emanuel is sending troops to surprise Don Alvarado at the oil-field," McGuire told him. "Can you warn the Don?"

The Eagle nodded. "I'll tip him off," he said, and was leaning forward to lay a hand on the throttle when the newspaper man stepped closer.

"Hey, feller," Mac blurted, "I guess I'm of an inquisitive turn of mind, being connected with the Press, and I hope you'll make allowances on that account. But just where do you come from? Where are your headquarters?"

"In my 'plane," was the cool response. "Then where do you get your supplies?"

The eyes behind the tinted goggles were regarding Mac in an amused fashion.

"That's my secret," the unknown airman announced.

"Yeah, I know," McGuire protested, "but don't you think I'm entitled to a certain amount of confidence? Who are
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you, and why are you helping Don Alvarado's crowd?"

The Eagle was silent for a spell, and then he addressed the reporter deliberately.

"I'm no stranger to you, McGuire," he said, "and I know I can trust you. But listen, before I show you who I am you've got to give me your Bible oath that you won't betray my identity to a soul—not even to Don Alvarado or any of his people."

Mac drew in his breath.

"I swear," he answered in low, solemn tones, and with that the Eagle raised his hand to the mask he was wearing.

Slowly he lifted the covering, and for the first time the reporter looked upon the features of the man of mystery—looked upon them and recoiled in amazement.

"You!" he gasped. "You!"

The Eagle lowered the mask again. "Remember," he admonished. "Not a word to a living soul!"

"I—I gave you my word, didn't I?" Mac faltered, and, moving aside as the Eagle signed to him to stand clear, he watched the 'plane swing round and return to the far side of the glade, whence it started to taxi over the turf at ever-increasing speed till it soared from the ground.

Gazing after it, the newspaper man saw it rise above the trees and veer southward in a long, graceful swerve, to disappear at last among the clouds.

The Battle Opens

IT was early afternoon, and, after snatching a hurried meal at the oil-field canteen, Tailspin Tompkins and Skeeter Milligan were preparing to set off in the direction of the coast and resume their task of clearing the territory through which the pipe-line was to be laid.

Theirs was a peaceful enough mission, even though hand-grenades were required to carry it out, and they had been presented with a spare 'plane that had been conveyed north from Don Alvarado's settlement to replace the one which had crashed with Mandro's ship.

They were on the point of entering the cockpits of this machine now, and the Don and his daughter were bidding them good-bye with Curtis and Betty Lou.

"We'll expect you back before dusk," Curtis was saying to the youngsters. "Don't make it any later, or we're liable to get worried about you."

"We'll be back by dusk all right," Tailspin answered. "But say, I think we'll need some more bombs. Skeets, you slip over to the arsenal just there and ask Burke to let you have a sack of 'pineapples,' will you?"

Skeeter dropped to the ground and turned in the direction that Tailspin had indicated, but before he had taken a dozen steps he became aware of a familiar drone somewhere amidst the clouds above.

The rest of the party had heard the sound, too, and as they raised their eyes to the heavens they saw a 'plane swooping towards the oil-field; a 'plane that awakened some alarm in them at first—until Tailspin gave vent to a sudden ejaculation.

"It's the Eagle!" he cried out.

The Eagle it was, and as his ship roared above the workings at a height of three or four hundred feet, a tiny parachute dropped from the craft and floated down through the air.

"He's flung out a message," Betty Lou exclaimed.

The miniature parachute sank steadily through space and came to earth midway between Tailspin's stationary 'plane and the arsenal. Consequently it was Skeeter who first reached it, and as he picked it up he saw that there was a note tied to it.

He had detached the scrap of paper and unfolded it by the time Tailspin and the others joined him, and it was in breathless accents that he read out the warning which it contained.

"Emanuel planning to attack you by land. Be on your guard against him."

He looked up and saw that the Eagle's ship was disappearing into the clouds again. Then he glanced at Don Alvarado.

"Did you hear that, sir?" he jerked. "Your stepbrother is planning an attack."

The Don ground his teeth together.

"Yes," he bit out, "but thanks to the Eagle, we shall be ready. We have troops of our own here, and the workmen will fight, too. There's ammunition in plenty at the arsenal, and rifles. Moreover, I can send for reinforcements by radio."

"This means our job of blazing the trail for that pipe-line has got to be postponed, Don Alvarado," Tailspin cut in. "Skeeter and I aren't going to miss this battle—not for anything."

Inez's father nodded, and then, along with Curtis, he hastened off to find Burke and muster every man who could handle fire-arms. Meanwhile, had Don Alvarado and his partisans but known it, the troops of Emanuel were gathered in a clearing not more than a mile from the oil-field, and about the time that preparations were being made to receive the attack a bombing 'plane lauded close to the position occupied by Gomez and his column.

Garcia stepped out of that craft as it came to a standstill, and Gomez approached him.

"I've bad news, Officer XX," the commander of the troops muttered. "Another aeroplane flew over here a few minutes ago, travelling towards the oil-field, and I recognised it as the Eagle's."

"The Eagle, eh?" Garcia rejoined, his eyes narrowing. "Well, what of it, amigo? He does not scare me."

"I don't like it," Gomez said anxiously. "There is something supernatural in the way that fellow always shows up when there is trouble."

"Bah!" scoffed Garcia. "I will soon account for him if I have the luck to run across him. Now, listen, you get your men to the edge of the woods and start shooting. I will support the attack by bombing the oil-workings from my 'plane."

Gomez nodded, and returned to the head of his column, ordering the troops to dismount from the long line of vehicles. Then he instructed them to deploy, and presently the soldiery were moving forward through the trees in scattered formation, Garcia remaining by his 'plane and watching them until they were well out of sight.

The troops continued their steady advance, and had spread out far and wide by the time that the fringe of the forest was reached; and here, crouching among the thickets, they at once became aware of the intense activity that was afoot in the vicinity of the oil-well.

Men were running to and fro between the outlying sheds—men in uniform and men in civilian clothes. Miners and

(Continued on page 28)

"NOW OR NEVER"

(Continued from page 14)

"Who has them?" he growled.
"Braun's got 'em," whined Rafferty.
"I saw him pick up the case—the dirty double-crosser!"

Rainey flung him into an angle of the roof.

"Stay there!" he ordered. "If you meddle any more, I'll have to get real angry with you!"

He took a flying jump back from the roof to the other building. The skylight had been fastened from the inside, but he went over the far edge of the roof, to slide down a stack-pipe to the ground without wasting an instant. He caught sight of Braun and the other two toughs running across a landing-stage towards some river steps where a boat was moored.

Rainey was after them like a flash. Billy, desperate now, half-turned to take a shot at him, but missed by yards. Rainey heard Braun yell at Riley, and saw that worthy deliberately thrust out an arm at Billy and push him off his feet sideways into the flowing river.

Rainey was sure now that the jewel-case was with Braun.

"The little rat will try it on the other fellow next."

He fairly leapt upon Braun just as he reached the top of the steps. A straight flash of his left fist between Braun's shoulders sped that gentleman clean down the whole flight head foremost. A hand-grip on Riley swung him round and round through the air until Riley came to rest with a hollow kind of "plonk" on the rails. A plain-clothes policeman, who had just landed from the river ahead of his party, gasped in such surprise that he stood quite still with fists still clenched and his mouth wide open!

"There's a fellow drowning!" panted Rainey. "I couldn't get him."

Other police, uniformed, came running up from their boat. Their sergeant spluttered:

"Don't apologise—he isn't dead. But he's full up of water!" He glanced down at the stunned Braun. "Have you finished with this one, mister?"

"No. He's got some stolen goods on him I'd like to have."

The sergeant stooped to Braun to run practised fingers over him. The red jewel-case was drawn out of his inside pocket.

"Yours?" asked the sergeant, handing it over to Rainey, who now saw Audrey coming towards him with another party of police, headed by a Federal officer in uniform.

"There's a fourth fellow up on the

roof somewhere with a broken ankle," said Rainey. "I think his name is Rafferty."

"We've got him," stated the Federal officer crisply. "He's told us he killed Gray. So now's the moment for a little presentation."

The police ranged themselves round about Riley and Braun, who had been jerked to his feet. He had fished his cigar stump out of a pocket, and he stuck it in the corner of his mouth, watchful and alert as a weasel.

Billy didn't look too good, but he still managed a grin. Riley alone was dour and sulky. But the feel of the policeman's hand on his arm kept him satisfied to stand still.

Rainey addressed himself to Audrey: "I couldn't clear myself by letting these gentlemen hop off with the diamonds." He gave Braun and Company a glance, then turned again to the girl. "So I just had to stop them! I have much pleasure in handing the stones to you, as agreed with poor Gray."

Braun's eyelids flickered.

"I knew you weren't a ghost!"
"Sure you did!" agreed Dick. "That was why you squawked!"

Audrey had taken the jewel-case.

"Thank you, Mr. Rainey. I now pass this over to the police for safe custody. Is there anything further, captain?"

"Nothing more, Miss Ferry," spoke the Federal officer, "beyond chucking these fellows into the prison van along with their friend Rafferty. But we'll do all that. Good-afternoon, miss—pleasant journey, Mr. Rainey! Squad, take the prisoners!"

As Dick walked away with Audrey, she asked:

"Shall I drive you to the railway depot?"

"Well, no. I've an idea I'll get a job at Springport and settle down."

"I can't imagine you settling down!" she said.

"I was wondering if you'd help me," Dick hinted.

"Why, I scarcely know you," she smiled, adding demurely: "Leastways, not as well as I'd like to."

When they got back to the Ferry mansion, Mr. Ferry had returned.

"I think you must be Norman Gray," he declared, staring his hardest at Dick.

"Maybe I can take his place here," Dick answered in his brisk way. "If Audrey doesn't hate me too much?"

She put her hand in his for answer. Mr. Ferry called to the old butler:

"Robert, get us something to eat! Guess we're all mighty hungry after such a busy day. And, Robert, bring along a bottle of the old Madeira. Seems to me we've got to drink healths!"

(By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Richard Talmadge.)

"RIFF RAFF"

(Continued from page 8)

Belcher's unshaven face broke into a grin.

"Where do you think you was going?"

"Now don't get excited, Dutch," remonstrated Belcher. "We just thought you might be a little lonesome around a job like this, so I thought I'd come over and talk to you."

"We got nothing to talk about."

"I hear the union give you a pretty raw deal," Belcher said with significant meaning. "You know, I was talking to some of the boys about it, and those guys ought to go down on their knees and crawl to you to get you to come over and talk to them."

The two boys—ugly, evil-looking men—slunk forward and lined up alongside Belcher.

"Hi'ya, Dutch?" they cried.

"You remember these dudes, Dutch," said Belcher. "Joe and Ed."

"Sure—sure." Dutch had not missed the package under Red Belcher's arm and he had an idea of its nature.

"We think it's the rottenest deal," went on Red. "It's persecution, and we're all with you if you want to do anything about it."

"Well—er—well, what do you think we could do?" Dutch asked.

"Now you're talking," Belcher laughed. "Let's go on board the freighter so we can be private."

"Somebody might see us up there," Dutch answered. "Let's go over behind them bales."

"Dutch, if they ain't gonna let us work, we ain't gonna let them work," the hobo ruffian explained when they had reached the bales. "See what I mean?" He held up the paper parcel, and then tore off a corner to reveal the contents.

"That's a great idea," Dutch seemed to be delighted. "That'll blow up the whole joint. The union and all."

From behind a bale peered the small face of Jimmy. He had heard enough. No one heard his bare feet as he raced away to give warning of the attempt to destroy the waterfront. The boy went straight to the union house and found a meeting in progress.

"Hey, fellows! Hey, Brains, I just seen Red Belcher and a couple of mugs talking to Dutch," he shouted. "They gotta a bomb and they're going to blow up the whole waterfront, or something."

"I told you you couldn't trust Miller!" a man shouted at Brains

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McCall. "You oughtn't to have let the guy come back."

"We'll soon find out," rasped Brains. "Come on, let's go!"

But Jimmy had been bluffed just as Belcher and his pals were tricked. Dutch Miller had no intention of allowing these thugs to blow up the wharf and set everything ablaze, but he had to lure them into confidence in himself, get their hands away from the guns that they must carry, and try some way to defeat their nefarious scheme. And Jimmy was just near the union house when Dutch acted—he hit Belcher over the head with the electric torch.

The other two men flung themselves on Dutch. They dared not fire in case it aroused the alarm. They tried every trick they knew to overcome Dutch, who fought gallantly. Ed he felled with a punch in the chest that broke a rib, and he was doing his best to throttle Joe when Belcher revived and laid grimy hands on his throat.

The three rolled about on the wharf in a squirming heap. Close by lay the paper parcel that contained the deadly bomb.

Belcher clawed his hands down Dutch Miller's face before the latter landed a neat punch definitely below the belt. The fat crook gasped and flopped out of the fight. Joe, in desperation, whipped out a gun and Dutch had to struggle to keep the man pinned to the boards. Belcher's mauling and a kick from a boot had weakened Dutch, and it was all he could do to keep Joe from turning the gun on him.

Somewhat he wrenched the gun out of the crook hobo's hands, but the effort sapped his strength and Joe managed to squirm free. A fist pounded at Dutch's stomach and the pain so maddened Dutch that it gave him a moment of titanic strength. His right came round in a swinging uppercut that put Joe out for the count.

The fishermen came pelting along the wharf with Jimmy in the lead. They found a small battlefield. Belcher and Ed lay groaning, whilst Joe sprawled out motionless, and Dutch was weakly trying to get to his feet. In his arms he held a paper parcel.

"Gee, I musta got this all wrong," gasped Jimmy.

"Are you all right, Dutch?" Brains helped the battered night-watchman to his feet.

"I'm okay, but you'd better get them guys to a hospital." Dutch managed a grin. "Here, take care of this. They are bringing you a present."

"It's a time-bomb!" someone shouted.

"Throw it away! Throw it into the water!" yelled Brains.

They carried Dutch Miller from the wharf shoulder high.

Even Policemen are Human

DUTCH MILLER collapsed on reach the union, and Brains McCall insisted upon the hero of the hour being taken to his own house. A doctor was summoned, and reported that except for cuts and bruises there was little wrong, though he added a suggestion that a good feed-up would restore the patient quicker than medicine.

As Mrs. McCall was supreme boss of the household, Dutch Miller was kept in his bed for two days, rested and fed. He was told that only on the third day would he be allowed to get up. That day was going to be a special occasion because the boys were giving Dutch a welcome-back party on the Fairy Queen.

Besides the account of the attempt to blow up the waterfront, the papers contained headlines regarding the two escaped girl convicts. So far they were

still at large, but detectives were close on their trail.

Dutch Miller knew nothing of Hattie's escape for the very simple reason that Brains told his wife that it would be unwise for the big fellow to hear the news. It must be broken to him gently.

"Poor Hattie! Goodness knows what's happened to her or where she is," lamented Mrs. McCall. "She might get shot, or something, and never see Dutch again. It ain't right, Brains, keeping this from him. If ever she needed Dutch, she needs him now."

"Dutch can help her only one way," said wise old Brains. "And that's by keeping his feet on the ground. He's straightened out now, and he's got to be kept that way."

In a house close to the waterfront Lil Hoskin was facing a plain-clothes detective.

"Look here, Bert Scanlon," cried Lil. "Hat ain't here. Do you think Hat's dumb enough to come here? She's probably across the border by now. I don't know nothing about Hat, and I'll thank you not to turn my home into a cop's sitting parlour. Bert Scanlon, if you wake up my kids I'll crown you."

But Bert Scanlon had his job to do, and he informed Lil that whether she liked it or not he was going to search her home from top to bottom. He searched, but did not find Hattie.

"You ain't fooling me," the detective told Lil. "Why ain't you getting dressed for the party the boys are giving on the Fairy Queen?"

"Cos I got other things to do," shouted Lil Hoskin. "You look after my bunch of kids, and maybe I'll go."

The detective decided to go to the Fairy Queen and interview Dutch Miller. He left a man to watch Hattie's old home.

When the detective had gone Lil went to a bed-room window and opened it. Crouched on the tiles was Hattie. Lil signalled that it was safe for the girl to come out of hiding.

"I've just gotta see Dutch before they see him," Hattie clung to her sister. "I just gotta. I gotta talk to him."

Round-eyed Jimmy wriggled out of bed. That boy knew everything. Dutch was going to the party at the Fairy Queen, and would be on his way there now. Give him the word, and he would tell Dutch that Hattie wanted to see him.

"Well, find him and tell him to come here and get me," urged Hattie. "Tell him I broke gaol like he said, then we're beating it to Mexico—understand?"

"Mexico," Jimmy nodded. "Sure, I'll tell him."

"The cops are outside," warned Lil.

"I'll go out of the window and down by the outhouse," the boy decided.

"They'll never see me."

Dutch Miller and Brains McCall were about to step aboard the Fairy Queen when Bert Scanlon showed up and barred their way.

"Just a minute, Dutch. What do you know about this?"

"Search me, the guys are giving a party, and I feel like going," answered Dutch, with a grin. "Are you going, too?"

Bert laughed unpleasantly.

"I suppose you're going to tell me in a minute you don't know Hattie lammed out of gaol. Where was you to-day and yesterday? Come clean!"

"He's been at my house ever since the fight," stated Brains.

"What are you talking to me about

Hattie breaking gaol for?" Dutch seemed unmoved by the news. "She means nothing to me. I told her off so long ago I forgot what she looks like."

Scanlon stood to one side, and the two men went aboard.

"I was hoping you wouldn't find out about Hat," whispered Brains. "You gotta keep your head, Dutch. Promise me you won't do anything rash tonight."

"I ain't interested," muttered Dutch, but his eyes gleamed strangely.

Bert Scanlon was suspicious of Dutch, and ordered policemen to keep a watch on the dock and the Fairy Queen.

It was a surprise to Dutch to find a draped platform and a huge crowd. He found himself reddening when the crowd shouted his name. Brains piloted him to the platform, and there was Nick with outstretched hand. Nick had been advised that if he wanted to go over well with the men it was best to forget old scores.

"Hallo, Dutch, my friend!" Nick held out his hand. "We was waiting for you, my friend. Come on, we got a big surprise for you."

"You know what this Dutch Miller has done for us all," Nick addressed the meeting. "He saved my ships, he save you your jobs, maybe he save us all our lives. Because he do this it give me gorgeous pleasure to present this big hero this one hundred dollars from Nick, Louis, his great friend. I thank you."

Dutch Miller found himself holding a bulging envelope. He blinked his eyes and grinned sheepishly—he was beyond words. How everyone cheered.

Then Brains stepped on to the platform, and he had an envelope in his hand.

"I have great pleasure in giving you this, too." He handed it to Dutch. "As an appreciation from the boys."

Dutch Miller had got his union card back.

"I don't know what to say," mumbled Dutch, when there was silence.

"Say it with a drink, Dutch!" shouted someone. "Come on, we're buying Dutch Miller a drink."

They bore Dutch in triumph to the bar.

Dutch Miller was sipping his drink and shaking hands with old friends when he felt a touch on his sleeve. He looked round, and there was Jimmy, but close behind the boy was the observant Bert Scanlon. The boy knew, and his mouth moved as if trying to give a message. Hattie was with Lil, and though Dutch glowered at the boy he had read the message.

"You're hanging around because I'm in the dough again," Dutch cried.

"You're sucking around for more nickles. Go on home—kids should be in bed. Beat it!"

Jimmy looked at the suspicious Scanlon, and decided he could do no more. He went back to report his failure.

Dutch Miller had several drinks, and then said he reckoned he would like a wash. He walked towards the wash-place with Scanlon watching him suspiciously. But Dutch did not enter the gentlemen's place, but darted into the place marked "Ladies." He locked the outer door.

Two women powdering their noses screamed at sight of Dutch, but he did not bother about them. Up went a window, and out climbed Dutch. A moment later he was down on the wharf. He could hear Bert Scanlon shouting and yelling.

Hattie was in despair. Jimmy had returned to say that Dutch would not listen. She was sitting dejectedly on the bed when there came a sound at the

window, and into the room climbed Dutch Miller. Hattie flung herself into his arms.

The girl freed herself. "We can't stand here talking," she cried. "We gotta go."

Dutch hesitated. "Nick give me a hundred slugs. Look, I got me union card—the fellows gave it back to me. Kind of funny, ain't it? Hat, what are we gonna do in Mexico?"

"You ain't backing out on me!" she gasped. "Me what broke the pen!"

"Hattie, quit hollering. There's something I gotta tell you," Dutch spoke quietly. "I just want you to know that I ain't the big shot I thought I was. Belcher kept telling me I was Trotsky, or somebody; but I ain't. I know what I am now. I'm just the best fisherman on this coast." He squared his shoulders. "And I can still knock the nut off any guy who thinks he's big enough to say that I ain't. And that's all."

A police siren made them look nervously at the window.

"I ain't going away with yuh?" said Hattie.

"Well, what did you break out for?"

"Because I love you, Dutch, and I'd have followed you to Mexico or Timbuctoo, right or wrong; but now you don't wanna go to Mexico. I broke out of stir for nothing. I—"

"Quit hollering, I gotta think what's best to do," Dutch shouted. "Now I'm in swell with Nick and the boys I was figuring it were best to stay here. Nick has influence, and so has the union. Maybe the authorities—" A child began to cry. "Will you shut that kid up?"

"Don't you touch that kid!" Hattie was like a tigress. "And I'll tell you why, Dutch Miller—he's mine and yours, you big chump!"

Dutch Miller walked over to the cot and stared at his son.

"You hated kids, and I didn't dare to tell you," sobbed Hattie.

"Who said I didn't like kids?" said Dutch, who was making absurd faces at the baby. "I'm nuts about 'em! Gee, we can soon start to make him the best tuna fisherman on the coast next to me. I never seen such a good-looking kid—he kinda looks like me, don't he?" He held out his arms to his wife. "Reckon this settles the issue, Hat. We stays here and faces the music."

Down below Lil Hoskin was facing Bert Scanlon. The detective knew his quarry was upstairs.

"Oh, please, Bert, you ain't gonna—" sniffled Lil. "They made it up, Bert. She only took the money for him. You heard what they said—they ain't running away."

"But I gotta, Lil." Bert rubbed his chin nervously.

"Not now, Bert," cried Lil.

Bert Scanlon moved towards the stairs, then hesitated. The house was surrounded, and Hattie could not escape.

"Can you put me up for the night?" he asked.

"Sure!" Lil laughed happily through her tears. "Pops ain't never home. I'll put you in his room." And, to the big police detective's embarrassment, she kissed him.

Later Lil crept up to the door of the bed-room and listened. There came the faint murmur of voices. Lil smiled, and crept softly down the stairs.

"I guess they got a lot to talk over to-night," she told herself.

(By permission of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Ltd., starring Spencer Tracy as Dutch Miller and Jean Harlow as Hattie.)

"MILLION DOLLAR HAUL"

(Continued from page 20)

response. "Twenty-seven's here; we were just starting out for the Blue Moon Café. Okay, Kennedy, we'll be seeing you!"

Caught Out

AN ambulance had drawn up at Boswell's, tooting its gong urgently. Mallory hurried to open the gates wide. He ran out into the dark night, and the driver stepped down from his seat.

"Riot squad!" he told the wondering Mallory. "Extra police protection."

"Oh, sure!"

The night watchman went round to open the door of the ambulance.

Next instant he was seized from behind and a drugged handkerchief was forced over his mouth.

"Take a long breath, buddy!" were the last words he heard as his senses left him.

He was carried to a corner and flung down. Savonne, Graham and the rest of the gang had tumbled out of the big car.

The gang, dark shadows, crept after Graham. Rat-faced Bert had closed the yard gates and drawn the bolt. They caught the "extra" men, playing cards inside Warehouse 5, squatting either side of an old box, with a shaded candle stuck at their feet.

"Stiek 'em up, you two mugs!" cried Savonne from out of the darkness. "Not a hope of anyone raiding Boswell's with you two fine fellers keeping guard, eh?"

The others rushed in on the discomfited pair when their arms went up. They were gagged and tied hand and foot, then were tucked away in a dusty corner of the huge warehouse.

"Which are the cases?" asked Savonne. "We don't need to wait about."

Graham flashed a torchlight on some of the piled-up boxes.

"All those red-crossed," he muttered. "Get busy, boys!" came Savonne's quick command.

Meantime, news of the theft of the

ambulance was being wirelessed all over the town. The Commissioner, with his posse of police, picked up Kennedy and the dog at the Boswell yard gate.

Kennedy told them. "The ambulance has been driven round to the docks entrance. I was just in time to see it go."

"Hop in with me!" the Commissioner invited him. "And the dog."

Their car raced round to where the ambulance had been drawn in by the front doors of a warehouse entered under an archway.

The Commissioner, with Kennedy and Tarzan, tumbled out of their car. In the dim light they could see two men by the doors, which opened a little to let two more men come out of the warehouse with boxes on their shoulders, which they flung down on seeing themselves trapped.

Tarzan leapt at them, stretching one fellow flat on his back in the roadway.

Kennedy grabbed at another, a thick-set brute who slashed at him with a knife. A straight, right-hand hook on the jaw knocked this fellow sideways into muzzy slumber.

The Commissioner got a third man all safe and sound. There was no fight in this one. But the fourth gangster jumped for the ambulance, which immediately started up and thrust itself clear of the police car and out into the highway. The second car-load of police hesitated a priceless second or so, and the ambulance shot past them ere they could challenge it or turn.

The Commissioner yelled to them and they ran to secure the three crooks.

"Take 'em to H.Q.," snapped the Commissioner. "We'll follow up the rest. Search up above for any others."

Kennedy and Tarzan jumped back after him into their car. A stern chase commenced in which—thanks to the wirelessing—the ambulance was headed off again and again. Finally, in the darkness and confusion, it took a wrong turn and crashed into a wall at seventy miles an hour.

The Commissioner called to Kennedy as he leapt from his car. Savonne and Graham, with Joe and Ed and two others of the gang, had been in the ambulance, now smashed into smithereens. Graham was dead—his neck broken; Savonne was under Joe, groaning with two broken legs. Joe and his mate had been knocked stiff. The others were a miserable, breathless lot, who surrendered without a word.

The Commissioner called again to Kennedy. Getting no answer, he went to the police car where Tarzan was sitting at his master's feet, whining mournfully.

"Why, boy, what's the matter?" gasped the policeman.

"Fellow got me with his knife," spoke Kennedy with an effort. "Didn't feel it at the time. Guess it isn't much."

The policeman took him along to the hospital. Next morning his first visitor at the ward was Sheila Mallory.

"Hallo, Danny!"

"Hallo, Sheila! Stay for lunch?"

"You're better," she decided, studying him.

She patted Tarzan's head, then fired at Kennedy.

"Say, Slowfoot, who was the girl at the café?"

"One of the operators from the C.I.D.," Kennedy answered.

Sheila nodded her head.

"That's a good thing, too!" she told him. "Yes, I'll stay for lunch!"

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"**RIFF RAFF.**"—Hattie Miller, Jean Harlow; Dutch Miller, Spencer Tracy; Nick Louis, Joseph Calleia; Lil Hoskin, Una Merkel; "Flytrap," Victor Kilian; Jimmy, Mickey Rooney; "Brains" McCall, J. Farrell Mac Donald; "Pops" Warner, Roger Imhoff; Rosie, Juanita Quigley; Belcher, Paul Hurst; Lew, Vince Barnett; Bert, Wade Boteler; Pete, William Nowell; Maizie, Helen Costello; Matron, Rafaelo Ottiano.

"**NOW OR NEVER.**"—Dick Rainey and Norman Gray, Richard Talmadge; Audrey Ferry, Janet Chandler; Riley, Ed Davis; Braun, Otto Metzetti; Butler, Thomas Ricketts.

"**MILLION DOLLAR HAUL.**"—Dan Kennedy, Reed Howes; Tarzan, Tarzan, the police dog; Sheila Mallory, Janet Chandler; Mallory, William Farnum; Graham, Robert Frazer; Boswell, John Ince; Savonne, Charles King; Rea, Margaret McConnell; Police Commissioner, Dick Rush; Ed, Vance Carroll; Joe, Tom London; Bing, Jack Grant; Randy, Bruce Randall.

(By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Reed Howes, Janet Chandler, and Tarzan, the police dog.)
April 14th, 1938.

"THE GREAT AIR MYSTERY"

(Continued from page 24)

soldiers alike, all of them ready to fight for the cause of Don Alvarado, were hurrying to arms and taking up positions in preparation for an expected raid.

It was immediately clear to Gomez that he and the force under his command had been deprived of the immense advantage they might have gained if their attack had come as a complete surprise. Plainly the Don and Curtis had been put on their guard, and it was easy for Gomez to give a guess at the identity of the informer.

"We have been betrayed," he snarled to the men nearest him, "and you may be sure we have to thank the Eagle for that. Carrambo, if only we knew who that devil is, and how he finds out so much!"

He clenched his fists, and then spoke to the soldiery again, uttering terse commands.

"Let them have it!" he rapped out. "We can at least give them a taste of lead before they are thoroughly organised. After that, much will depend on Officer XX. Come on, rapid fire!"

There was a racket of musketry that shattered the silence of the woods, and as the echoes of the first volley were rolling away amongst the trees there came fresh bursts of fire from the right and left, fusillades that told Gomez the rest of his men were playing their part.

Bullets whistled across the open ground beyond the forest, bullets that swept the oil-field in a hail of death and cut men down in their tracks. In one prolonged storm of gunplay the conflict opened, and the leaden slugs flew thick and fast, rattling against the derrick of the new well, splintering the timbers of store-sheds and dwellings, ploughing through human bodies.

Scuttling figures pitched to the dust, some writhing as they fell, others falling forward and lying motionless. Confusion and panic seized numbers of the Don's followers, and might well have spread through the entire mining camp but for the heroic efforts of the Spaniard himself and the stout support he received from Curtis, Tailspin, Skeeter and Burke.

Inspired by the example that their leaders set them, the workmen and soldiery in Don Alvarado's pay were prevailed upon to keep their heads

True, there was a rush for cover, but it was no disorderly flight, and the wounded were not forgotten, murdered as the fire had become.

From sheds and bunkhouses, from canteen and derrick, the defenders began to answer the volleys of the foe. The din of the fight waxed louder as more and more rifles came into play, and, over at the smoke-hazed fringe of the woods, stricken men were seen to topple backwards or drop face downwards in the undergrowth. The casualties suffered by the Don's partisans during the first moments of the combat were being avenged.

Most of the miners and soldiers in Don Alvarado's employ had taken shelter now, and from innumerable vantage-points were waging a grim duel with the attacking force. There were a few reckless spirits, however, who seemed to scorn danger and who were still more or less exposed to the enemy's fire, and among these was Tailspin.

He was standing on the wing of his plane, a revolver in his fist, and, heedless of the shots that were whistling around him; he was sniping at a platoon of Emanuel's ruffians whose dodging heads he could just see.

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Twice the slugs from his gun took effect, and then suddenly he chanced to notice Skeeter away to his right, blazing at the foe from the miserable cover afforded by a ragged bush.

That was not all. Armed with rifles, Betty Lou and Inez were crouching beside the mechanic, in peril of their lives.

Tailspin dropped from the wing of his plane and hared across to them with the bullets singing past him as he ran. A few seconds later he was throwing himself alongside Skeeter and the girls.

"Get Betty and Inez out of here!" he panted.

"They won't go!" Skeeter said tersely. "I told 'em to beat it as soon as the shootin' started—but they wouldn't."

"They wouldn't, eh?" Tailspin ground out the words and then pointed to a hut in the background. "Come on, Skeets, give me a hand."

Between them, the youngsters

managed to shepherd the reluctant girls to the hut, and, blundering across the threshold with them, slammed the door.

"Do you want to get killed?" Tailspin stormed at them.

"We can shoot as well as you boys," Betty Lou retorted. "Why shouldn't we have a hand in this fight?"

"Listen, your uncle and Inez's father couldn't have seen you out there, or they'd have got themselves knocked off trying to reach you. For the love of Mike, Betty, don't act so crazy—"

"You weren't crazy yourself, by any chance," she interrupted, "standing on that wing. And what about Skeeter, with nothing but a clump of scrub for shelter?"

Tailspin attempted to make some answer, but before he could do so the sound of an aeroplane's engine reached his ears, and with a tense expression on his good-looking face he wheeled towards one of the hut's windows, half expecting to see the Eagle's ship swooping from the clouds again.

Instead he saw a craft which he did not recognise—the craft piloted by the man who was known at Emanuel Casmetto's headquarters as Officer XX—and before another thirty seconds had elapsed Tailspin knew that the aviator in charge of that machine was an enemy.

Something dropped from the plane and burst with a terrific detonation a hundred yards away. Smoke and earth, ripped with flame, surged high into the air in a mighty column.

"Another of Emanuel's bombers!" Tailspin grated. "Skeets, we've got to tackle him. Come on, we'll make a dash to the arsenal—grab a sack of grenades—then sprint across to our ship. If we can get near enough to that rat up there we can blast him out of the sky!"

They ducked out of the hut, and, exchanging an anxious glance, Betty Lou and Inez stumbled to the windows and watched them racing across the open ground towards the arsenal, with bullets from the forest whining about them.

It was as if Tailspin and Skeeter bore charmed lives. Half-way to the arsenal they ran, and never a shot so much as grazed them. Half-way to the arsenal—

And then, out of the sky, like a bolt from the blue, a second bomb from Garcia's plane hurtled to the field, and to Inez and Betty Lou it seemed to fall immediately behind the two youngsters from Three Point.

There was a deafening roar, and Tailspin and Skeeter were lost to view amidst an upheaval of dirt and debris.

(To be continued. By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Clark Williams and Noah Beery, Jun.)



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When Tim O'Hara, as a "Mountie," was sent to the Indian River district to deal with a ruthless band of fur-raiders, his task was complicated by the fact that he had been a trapper there himself at one time, and had fallen foul of Brad Harrison—who was determined that he should fail. Starring Tim McCoy



The Way of a "Mountie"

IT was a thin trail of blood in the snow that led Trooper Tim O'Hara to the log cabin under the pine trees.

He was on his way back to Marblehead to report the death of a wrongdoer who had succumbed to fever before the law could catch up with him, and though as a "Mountie" he was disappointed that death should have robbed him of his quarry, as a saddle-worn young man he was looking forward to some sort of rest.

The men of the Royal North-West Mounted Police are famous for their endurance, their courage, their tenacity of purpose, and their resource, and Tim O'Hara was in every way worthy of the scarlet tunic and navy-blue riding breeches he wore. Though his thoughts were wandering as he rode, his keen blue eyes missed no detail of the way that led down-hill through waste and woodland.

The snow that lay upon the ground was not thick. The vagrant storm which had brought it overnight had travelled south a couple of months before its proper time, for autumn was no more than half-way to winter. But the snow made conspicuous the spots of blood upon its surface and informed Tim that some wounded horseman had ridden that way within the last hour or less. The hoof prints were plain enough to be seen, but Tim would not have followed them save for the crimson splashes that went with them.

He turned left at a half-gallop, and it was not long before he came to the cabin. But he knew before he reached it that the wounded man was a "Mountie" like himself, for to the April 11th, 1930.

front wall of the structure was affixed a board upon which was painted:

"Border Patrol. R.N.W.M.P. Do Not Trespass."

Within a yard of the door stood a brown horse from which obviously a rider had fallen in a feeble effort to dismount, and Tim believed he recognised that horse.

With a troubled expression on his clean-shaven face he heaved himself from his saddle and opened the door. Just inside, a broad-brimmed hat of brown felt had fallen sideways upon the bare boards of a deserted room fitted with bunks. He picked it up, and the name of its owner was written upon the band inside the crown: "Robert V. Rutledge."

"Bob!" he shouted in high concern. "Bob!"

There was no reply, and with the hat in his hand he pushed open the door of an inner room.

In that room there were a couple of chairs and a table, and on the table were writing materials; but sprawling forward in a chair, with his head upon a blotting-pad, was a younger man than Tim, clad in the uniform of the "Mounted." His left arm was under his pallid face, a pen had fallen from his right hand and had rolled across the table, and his eyes were closed.

Tim dived round the table and looked down at a sheet of official paper upon which the wounded man had been trying to write.

"Inspector Rutledge, Marblehead Post," he deciphered with some difficulty. "Sir, I have the honour to report an engagement with fur smugglers. Was shot by man called 'Bull' Maddigan. . . ."

True to the code of the scarlet jacket,

Bob Rutledge had used the last of his ebbing strength to scrawl those words. Tim raised the fallen head gently between his hands and frowned at a patch of crimson upon the coat of scarlet.

"Bob," he said huskily, "what happened?"

Slowly a pair of eyes as blue as his own were opened and a look of recognition crept into them.

"Tell dad," mumbled the trooper feebly, "I—did—my best."

The men of the "Mounted" are not doctors, but they are skilled in first-aid work—especially in relation to knife and bullet wounds—and all necessary appliances were in the cabin. Tim did not attempt to remove the bullet that had lodged in Bob Rutledge's ribs, to the left of his heart, but he bathed and dressed the wound expertly enough.

Thereafter he prepared a meal from tinned stuff that lined some shelves in the outer room, and later in the day he set out with his patient for Marblehead, riding close beside him and supporting him whenever he needed support.

Bob Rutledge had youth on his side, and the bullet had not pierced his lung. He spent some weeks in hospital at Marblehead, while Tim, instead of enjoying a rest, was sent off with a warrant in his pocket for the arrest of Bull Maddigan, "charged upon oath that he did, upon the 5th day of October, 1912, feloniously attack Constable Robert V. Rutledge, R.N.W.M.P., at Val Marie, in the province of Saskatchewan."

That chase proved to be one of the longest in his career, for he travelled upon a trail that was cold, and months elapsed before he knew definitely that

he was catching up with his man in the snowy heights of Alberta.

Throughout the depths of winter the chase continued, and in one trading post after another Tim gleaned sufficient news of his elusive quarry to stick relentlessly upon the trail.

It was north of the Churchill River, in a snow-mantled pine-wood, that he finally sighted the wanted man, who had fled in the night from a shack near Carter Lake, on foot and without food or even snow-shoes.

Maddigan had only his rifle, and from behind a tree-trunk he used it when at last his strength was at an end and he had fallen several times. But his aim was anything but true, and Tim was swift to take cover before the outlaw could fire again.

"Lay down your rifle, Maddigan!" he shouted.

Maddigan heard but did not obey. With a snarl of defiance he ran on from the trees across an expanse of whiteness towards a denser wood.

A service revolver jettied flame, a bullet pierced the fur coat of the fugitive, who reeled and fell and rolled in the snow, and Tim moved swiftly forward on his snow-shoes to look down into the bearded face of the man he had hunted and caught at last.

"You ought to know better than to fire on the King's police, Maddigan," he said sternly. "You might kill one, but another would take his place, and another, and another. They'd be on your trail till the day you died!"

Maddigan raised himself on an elbow, breathing heavily, his left hand clutching at his right shoulder.

"Now that you've got me," he panted, "what are you going to do with me? I'm too weak to—"

His voice failed him, and Tim went down on one knee to raise him up and hold a flask of spirits to his lips.

"Here, take some brandy," he said gruffly. "It'll steady you."

Maddigan gulped, coughed a little, and groaned. Tim put away the flask.

"My job," he said, "is to get you back to Marblehead, alive if possible. That's only a shoulder wound you've got there. We'll get you patched up and be on our way."

He unfastened the outlaw's coat and shirt and bound what was merely a flesh wound with his own handkerchief.

"I'm all in," complained Maddigan. "I've got to have some rest."

"We can't stop in this cold, without a fire," said Tim, and he helped the fellow to his feet and led him back to the trees. But only a little way under the trees Maddigan tugged away from him to lean against the trunk of a fir, his head drooping till his chin touched his chest.

"I can't help it, I tell you," he muttered. "I've got to have some sleep—just a few minutes' sleep."

"Sleep?" echoed Tim. "In this cold? We'd freeze to death, and you know it."

"I don't care—I'm so tired."

"No matter how tired you are," insisted Tim, "we've got to keep moving! Here, put on my snow-shoes! We'll be in Fort Frandall in an hour or so, and you can rest there."

He removed his snow-shoes and fastened them to the moccasins of his prisoner, and together they plodded on through the snow. But considerably more than an hour had elapsed before the wood was left behind, a steep hill was descended, and they crossed a frozen lake to the Fort that Tim had mentioned.

An Unpleasant Task

SPRING had come again, and the grass was green on the prairies of Saskatchewan, when Tim returned to Marblehead. There were old

friends in the barracks of the "Mounted," but he rode straight to the office of Inspector Rutledge, Bob's white-haired father, who was in command of the post.

The inspector looked up from his desk at the tall, alert figure on the other side of it as Tim saluted and stood stiffly to attention.

"So you're back!" barked the inspector.

"Yes, sir," said Tim.

"Well, according to your report, you've been six months and eleven days on this detail."

"Yes, sir," said Tim. "It's a long time, O'Hara."

"My orders were to bring Maddigan in, sir."

The inspector nodded. Although his voice was gruff his grey eyes twinkled.

"Right," he said. "While strict obedience is expected, it is none the less to be commended."

"Thank you, sir," murmured Tim.

"O'Hara, last fall you saved the life of my son Robert. Now if I were to tell you that I'd cited you for promotion, would you think I'd done it on that account?"

Tim grinned. "I'd probably think it had helped, sir," he said.

"Well, you'd be mistaken! As an officer I recommended your promotion on the strength of your record only. We have no right to personal feelings that in any way interfere with our service. Remember that, O'Hara!"

"Yes, sir," said Tim meekly.

"Now about this man Maddigan—did he give you any information about the men he works with?"

"It wasn't necessary, sir. I know him. His real name is Hartley. He hails from the Indian River."

"Indian River?" The inspector frowned reflectively, then reached over



"I tell you I didn't shoot him," declared Tim. "My guess is that he was shot by someone who was afraid he might talk."

to a wire letter-tray. "That's rather curious—I've just got a letter from the Hudson Bay Trading Post there."

He found the letter in question and glanced through it.

"It says that someone has been terrorising the trappers, forcing them to sell their furs for little or nothing. Do you know that district?"

"Very well, sir," confessed Tim. "I used to trap there before I came into the service."

"Good! Then leave at once and take such action as may be necessary."

"Yes, sir."

Tim compressed his lips. He had expected a little breathing space, a little well-earned rest, but it was not the loss of a rest that disturbed him.

"If I might offer a suggestion, sir," he ventured, "I think that any other man could do better on that detail than I could."

"What do you mean?" rapped the inspector.

"I left Indian River because I had a quarrel with a rival trapper."

"What sort of a quarrel?"

Tim drew a long breath.

"Someone stole a silver fox from his trap-line. I caught one the same morning. He swore it was his, and wanted me to give it up, or leave Indian River."

"And you left?" demanded the inspector incredulously.

Tim nodded.

"If I'd stayed," he said, "it would have meant a fight to the finish, and I couldn't very well risk that, sir, because I—well, I—er—I was in love with his sister."

"Oh, I see." Rutledge frowned at an inkpot. "But just what has all that to do with the matter in hand?"

"He'd probably make a personal issue of the matter, sir."

"It's up to you to see that he doesn't, O'Hara! While you're wearing that uniform there can be no personal issues. Now is that clear?"

"Yes, sir," said Tim, none too happily.

"Good! Then proceed to Indian River at once, and act accordingly."

"Yes, sir," Tim saluted, turned about, and went out from the office. In the passageway that led to the front door of the wooden building he encountered Bob Rutledge, completely restored to health and strength, and on his way to see his father.

"Tim O'Hara, you old fox!" Bob exclaimed delightedly, and smote him playfully in the chest with his fist.

"Hallo, Bob," said Tim. "I hoped I'd see you before I got away from Headquarters."

"Why, I didn't even know you were back! Why didn't you look me up?"

"Haven't had a chance," was the reply, "and I'm on my way out again."

"Come on over to the barracks—I've got a lot to tell you."

"Can't do it," regretted Tim. "Headed for Indian River under orders."

Bob looked boyishly crestfallen. "Say, listen, fellow," he protested, "at least give me a chance to thank you for saving my life."

"Aw, forget it."

"Not me!" cried Bob vehemently. "Nor dad, either! Oh, by the way, did he say anything about you being up for promotion?"

"Yeah," Tim nodded. "I wouldn't make any bets on it, though, if I were you, until I got back from this detail. And don't let the inspector hear you call him 'dad,' either!"

"Why not?" asked the inspector's son blankly.

"Men in uniform," retorted Tim with

a reminiscent grimace, "are not supposed to indulge in personal issues. Well, so long, Bob!"

They shook hands with each other, and Tim went out to his horse while Bob went in to see his father. The inspector looked up from his papers, and there was no twinkle in his grey eyes because he did not receive the salute to which he was entitled.

"O'Hara," blurted Bob in a puzzled manner, "was just telling me something about men in uniform and personal issues. D'you know what he meant, dad?"

"Yes," snapped his father. "And the next time you call me 'dad' while you're on duty, or come into this office without saluting, you'll get three days in the guard-house!"

Bob saluted in haste and rather raggedly. The inspector opened a drawer in his desk and took some papers from it.

"That's all!" he barked.

"Yes, sir," Bob saluted again—and made himself scarce.

Warning!

THE Indian River Trading Post was situated in the Hudson's Bay Company's territory north-east of the prairie belt in a region of forests, swamps, lakes, and sudden hills, where no farming development had ever taken place. It was a little settlement of rough shacks and cabins, in which mainly trappers lived, and it was dominated by the Hudson Bay Company's depot, where the trappers sold their pelts and acquired their stores.

Some of the trappers lived in cabins they had built in the pine-woods, away from the general community, and Tim was quite near to one of these cabins, riding towards the settlement, when a crackling sound reached his ears.

He spurred his horse forward, reached a grassy clearing, and saw that a deliberate attempt had been made to set fire to the log-built home of a French-Canadian named Larue. Brushwood had been heaped against two of the walls and was blazing; but though the flames were licking at the solid logs it was evident the fire had not long been started.

Tim sprang down from the saddle and proceeded to kick the burning stuff away from the walls; and two men hidden behind trees to the left of the clearing watched his efforts with scowling eyes. Both men were armed with rifles, and one of them presently raised his weapon to his shoulder.

"What's the matter with you?" hissed his companion. "Are you crazy?"

"Why?" growled the fellow who had been about to take aim at Tim.

"You might get by with that where you come from," was the reply, "but not up here! If you ever draw on a Mountie, you're through! Let's go and warn the others!"

The rifle was lowered, and presently the two stole away under the trees, while Tim kicked the last of the burning brushwood away from the cabin and walked round to its front door.

Just inside the door, on the bare boards of a roughly furnished living-room, Anton Larue was lying on his face, and it took Tim no more than a few minutes to make sure that he was dead. A slip of paper on the back of the blood-stained jacket engaged his attention. On it was written, in pencil:

"Warning. This man refused to sell his furs at our price."

Tim folded the slip of paper and tucked it in his belt, then stooped and picked up the murdered man and carried him into an inner room, where he

laid him upon a bed. There were no signs of any struggle anywhere to be seen, and he decided that the elderly trapper had been shot down in the act of opening the front door to someone who had knocked.

He was on his way out from the cabin when he heard a familiar whistle and saw a queer little figure crossing the clearing—the figure of Hank Bascom, an old acquaintance and a character.

Hank hadn't a tooth in his head, and that made his whistle different from other people's. A queer sort of cap, made partly of fur and partly of cloth, was perched on his tousled brown head; his trousers were of some plaid material and his coat was of quite a noisy pattern. He had a scrubby moustache and beard, and his chin was even more prominent than his very prominent nose.

"Well, tan my pelt!" he exclaimed, as Tim went out to him. "Tim O'Hara!"

"Hallo, Hank," said Tim.

"And in a Mountie uniform, too!"

Hank surveyed the stalwart trooper with his head on one side like a bird's. "Well, I always told your friend Harrison that you'd come back some time and make him say 'uncle'!"

"You're wrong, Hank," said Tim quietly. "I'm not back looking for trouble with Harrison."

"You ain't?" The toothless old fellow seemed thoroughly disappointed to hear it. He grounded the rifle he was carrying and rested his hand on the top of its barrel. "Then what in tarnation bring you back?"

"The trouble you fellows have been having with these fur-raiders," replied Tim. "What's it all about?"

"Aw, there ain't nothing to that," scoffed Hank. "Some fellers are tryin' to scare us trappers into selling our furs for nothing, and some of 'em are doin' it, too. But most of us are sitting tight to see what happens. To-day's the deadline. I came over to sit with old Larue, just in case something starts—but of course it won't. Where is the old musk-rat? Inside?"

"He's inside," said Tim, but raised a hand. "Wait, Hank! There's nothing you can do for him now."

"You mean to say—they've actually done for him?"

Tim nodded and produced the slip of paper from his belt.

"Now who are the men who've been threatening you?" he asked, after Hank had blinked at the warning.

"Nobody knows. They work through a helpless little skunk named Stalkey."

"Where'll I find this man Stalkey?"

"He's a timber-land agent at the settlement, but he don't know nothing."

"I think I'll go and have a talk with him, anyway," decided Tim.

"I'll go with you."

Tim walked over to his horse and swung himself into the saddle. The Indian River Trading Post was five miles away.

"Do you want to mount up behind me?" he suggested.

"What are you trying to do?" scorned Hank. "Wear me out ridin' a horse? Come on!"

Shouldering his rifle he started off across the clearing, and he seemed to have no difficulty whatever in keeping pace with the horse, though the horse cantered along the trail that led through the wood.

Beyond the wood the way lay downhill beside the river that gave the settlement its name, crossed rough grassland, and swung left to a wooden bridge over a creek that was a minor tributary of the river. Across the bridge the trail became an ill-made

street, lined with shacks and cabins, and at the end of the street stood the Hudson Bay Company's depot, the biggest structure in the place, built of wood, adjoining which was a gaol.

There were quite a number of men in the depot that morning, mostly trappers, and they were discussing the situation. James Duncan, the bulky and grey-haired factor of the post, was behind the counter, listening to the conversation but taking no part in it. Bradley Harrison, a powerfully built young man with no claim to good looks, yet with some redeeming quality about his ugly, clean-shaven face, was sitting aloofly on a sack of meal, and at the counter his sister Martha had been making purchases.

Martha Harrison, one of the few feminine members of the community, kept house for her brother. She was a beautiful girl, somewhere in the early twenties, and even in a plaid skirt and a little knitted cap she looked singularly attractive—and self-reliant.

Gavin, a clean-shaven man with heavy-lidded eyes and a cleft chin, waved a hand expressively at the others.

"Well, that's how it is, men," he said gloomily. "To-day's the last day. Either we give up the furs or take the consequences."

"What are we goin' to do about it?" demanded a bearded trapper named Hawkins.

"Let us ask the factor," suggested a French-Canadian named Duquesne; and most of them streamed over to the counter, where a trapper named Jones appointed himself spokesman.

"Mr. Duncan," he said, "as factor of this place, what do you think we ought to do?"

Duncan handed Martha Harrison a parcel he had made of her purchases and pursed his lips.

"Much as I want your furs for the company," he responded judicially, "I have no right to make a decision that may cost some of you your lives."

"You think their threats are serious?" demanded Jones.

"I have no right to say," replied the factor, "because it's not my life that's in danger."

"Well, isn't there some way you can help us?"

The factor shrugged his broad shoulders.

"I've done all I can," he said slowly. "I've sent to Marblehead for the law."

That was news to all of them, and they stared at him.

"The law?" echoed several voices.

"If these fellows had listened to me," exploded Brad Harrison, "there'd be no need of the law!"

Martha Harrison put down the parcel she had picked up and swung round on him.

"Brad," she cried, "please don't get started on that again!"

"Well," growled her brother, "we should have dragged the truth out o' that little weasel Stalkey and handled things to suit ourselves."

"You couldn't do that, Harrison," protested the factor.

"What's to stop me?"

"Your own common sense, I hope. You couldn't take the law into your own hands."

"Oh, yes I could," Brad retorted. "And there's still time for it, if some of these sheep would only back me up!"

"Sheep?" howled Jones. "What d'you mean, sheep?"

"Coming from you, Harrison," rasped Gavin, "and just at this time, that sounds like a stall to me."

Brad Harrison rose truculently from the sack of meal.



"You come with me," commanded Tim, "and if anyone tries to interfere with what I'm going to do, you stop 'em with that old blunderbuss."

"What do you mean, Gavin?" he roared.

"With a reputation like yours," was the significant reply, "that might be a good way to turn suspicion away from yourself!"

"Why, you skunk!" Brad's left fist smashed into the cleft chin. Martha cried out in alarm, and two of the men grabbed hold of her brother and pulled him away, urging him to take it easy.

"Anybody else feel the same way about me as Gavin does?" he challenged fiercely, flinging off the hands that held him.

"No," chorused several voices. "No, you're all right, Brad."

"Well, if some of you want to stick with me, we'll hunt up Stalkey and wring the truth from him."

Gavin made a grimace and picked up his peaked cap, which had fallen to the floor. Duquesne gestured.

"It seems to me a ver' foolish t'ing to do," he said, "but I will stick by you, my friend."

"I'll see it through," decided Jones.

"Well, what are we waiting for?" snapped Brad. "Come on!"

He turned towards the door, and all the others save Gavin and the factor trooped after him. But just before they reached the door a little rat-like creature crossed the threshold in seeming haste, and they stopped short and gaped at him; for he was Martin Stalkey.

The Arrest of Stalkey

STALKEY stood about five feet seven inches in his boots and appeared shorter than that because he had a stoop about his sloping shoulders. He was an unpleasant-looking fellow in the middle fifties, with greying hair and a seraggy neck, and his nose was long and his face was thin. He was not a man that anyone could like, and Martha almost shivered at sight of him.

He had a slip of paper in his hand, and with no more than a furtive glance for those who were staring at him he brushed past them to the counter.

"When I opened my office this morning," he said to the factor, "I found another note that I think ought to be made public."

The factor took the proffered slip and read what was written upon it in pencil: "This note says," he announced, "War is declared. The opening gun's been fired. The rest of you have till sundown to bring in your furs."

Brad Harrison strode over to the counter and gripped Stalkey by the arm.

"What does that mean, 'the opening gun's been fired'?" he rapped.

"I don't know," muttered the little man.

"Who wrote the note? You know that, don't you?"

"No, I don't, Harrison," was the quavering reply. "I swear I don't."

"You must know! Where have you been getting the money to pay for those furs you bought?"

Stalkey did not answer that question. He shrank away from Brad, eyeing the others nervously.

"Slipped under my door it was," he said, "in a sealed envelope—and late at night."

"You're lying to me, Stalkey," thundered Brad. "And you won't get away with it! I'm going to get the truth out of you if I have to twist it out!"

"I don't know, I tell you," Stalkey protested. "And if I did they'd kill me for telling."

"You may wish you had, before I get through with you!" Brad retorted between his teeth, and he pounced on a rack of whips and seized hold of one of them and cracked its thong. "We'll see how much you know!"

Duncan, the factor, flew round the

counter; Martha mad; for the door in a panic.

"You can't do this, Harrison!" cried Duncan.

"You keep out of this!" shouted Brad, and swept him aside to raise the whip.

"Get Father O'Donovan!" Duncan called after Martha. "Maybe he can stop this!"

"You stay where you are!" Brad commanded harshly. "Martha, come back here!"

But Martha flew out from the depot, stumbling over the step; and she blundered right into Tim, who was swinging himself down from the back of his horse with Hank Bascom close beside him.

"Quick!" she cried. "Inside!"

Tim turned, and she caught at her breath.

"Why, Tim!" she gasped.

"Martha!" he exclaimed.

A look of fear filled her blue eyes as he held her.

"Oh, you shouldn't have come here!" she faltered. "You mustn't stay here!"

"I've got to stay," he returned grimly. "I'm here under orders."

"But you don't know what it'll mean!"

"On account of Brad?" he asked. "I don't think I'll have any trouble with him."

Through the open doorway he heard the slash of a whip and Brad's voice:

"You don't know anything, eh? You're lying to me, Stalkey!"

"Don't, Harrison!" whimpered Stalkey's voice. "Don't, Harrison! I can't tell you—I don't know!"

"You do know, and you will tell!"

Like lightning, Tim dived into the depot, and he wrenched the whip away and flung it across the floor.

Brad Harrison whirled round on him, but dropped his fists at sight of the uniform the fraction of a second before he realised who wore it. Hank hurried in over the step with his rifle, and Martha was close behind him. Brad recovered from a momentary shock and hooked his thumbs in his belt.

"Tim O'Hara, eh?" he jeered. "So you finally figured a way you could come back to the district and get even with me? And in a Mountie uniform, too! The only thing you could hide behind that you knew would keep me from giving you what I promise you if I ever saw you again!"

Tim bore the insult with calm. Stalkey was leaning heavily against the counter; the rest of the men were looking on with tense interest—especially those who had known Tim in his trapper days.

"My coming here," Tim said in a tone of authority, "has nothing to do with our quarrel. I'm here to establish order."

"You establish order!" cried Brad with a scornful laugh. "The law must be pretty hard up when it has to depend upon a man of your kind to defend it!"

He turned to the others.

"Not so long ago," he said, flinging out an arm, "this brave officer was a trapper. He stole a fox fur off my trap line, and when I found out about it I ran him out of the district."

"That's not true!" stormed Martha. "He left because I asked him to, not because he was afraid to stay!"

"That's what he made you believe," sneered Brad. "He left because I told him to go, and he left like a whipped curl. He stayed away till he could find a means of coming back in a uniform that'd make him safe."

Tim stepped nearer to him, outwardly composed, inwardly controlling his feelings with difficulty.

"Our personal quarrels have to wait, April 11th, 1936.

Brad," he said, "till I get to the bottom of the fur-raiding in this district."

"You won't get to the bottom of it, O'Hara," Brad retorted. "I'll make it a point to see that you don't!"

"That's a foolish threat. I could put you under arrest for that, you know."

"That's just the kind of a thing you would do—use your office to square a grudge!"

"If you interfere with my work," said Tim sternly, "you'll be shielding a murderer. Anton Larue was killed this morning."

The statement caused quite a sensation amongst the trappers, and Brad Harrison seized hold of Stalkey again.

"Tell me who shot him, you rat," he roared, "or I'll—"

Tim grabbed him by the coat-collar and forced him aside.

"The law will do the questioning from now on," he snapped. "Well, Stalkey, what have you got to say?"

"Nothing," replied the ugly little fellow defiantly. "I got nothing to tell."

Tim's blue eyes bored into his shifty dark-brown ones.

"Since you're acting as agent for these raiders," said Tim, "I'll have to take you back to Marblehead for questioning. Let me have the key to the gaol, will you, Mr. Duncan? I'd better lock him up till I'm ready to start back."

Gavin and one or two of the others seemed inclined to object, but the factor went and fetched a key, and Tim marched his prisoner out from the depot and along the front of the building to the little gaol with its stout door and barred window.

Duncan went with them, and the others followed. As Tim slipped the key in the padlock the two men who had watched him in the wood edged round the side of a shack, and the one who had raised his rifle before raised it again.

"Don't, you fool!" warned his companion, a man named Horn; but the rifle cracked, and a lantern over the door of the cell was shattered, and broken glass fell upon Tim.

"Who was that?" shouted voices. "Who did that?"

Tim saw the man who had fired scampering off along the ill-made street, and almost in the same moment Hank Bascom brought his own rifle to his shoulder. But Tim knocked it down again.

"I want him alive!" he cried. "You guard Stalkey!"

He ran back to his horse, and on it went flying after the fugitive.

The Second Shot

A LITTLE way along the street, the man who had fired the shot—an ill-favoured ruffian named Randall—dodged between two of the cabins on the right into a patch of woodland that stretched between the creek and an abrupt hill.

Horn followed him at an angle, while Tim galloped after him under the trees. Randall scuttled from one massive trunk to another, and he would have fired again, but just as he was about to do so he stumbled over a spreading root and went sprawling. Tim swept up to him on his horse and his gun was out.

"Now get on your feet!" he commanded.

Horn crouched behind a bush while his former companion was compelled to walk out from under the trees back to the trading post with his hands in the air. Stalkey had been bundled into the cell by Hank, and the others gathered round it; but Tim put away his gun, dismounted, and opened the door.

"Stalkey," he said sharply, "now that I've got this man I won't hold you. But

don't leave the Post in case I need you as a witness."

Stalkey shuffled out into the sunlight clapping his long, claw-like hands.

"No, sir," he said gruffly, "and thank you."

"If my friends don't get me out of this," Randall shouted, "you won't need any more witnesses! I'll tell plenty!"

Tim thrust him into the cell and padlocked the door.

"Mr. Duncan," he said, "have you got a horse I can borrow to take the prisoner in?"

"I know where I can get you one," was the reply, and the factor went off. Brad Harrison lounged against some boulders outside a shack; Stalkey drifted over to Gavin by the wall of the depot.

"If that Mountie ever gets Randall back to headquarters," he said in a low voice, "it'll be the finish for the rest of us. You heard what he said."

"How're you gonna stop him?" grunted Gavin.

"I'm not," returned Stalkey. "You are!"

"Not me," said Gavin. "You don't expect me to shoot a Mountie, do you?"

"Handle it your own way, but see to it that he don't get out with Randall."

He walked off down the street to his own cabin beyond the bridge, but several of the trappers lingered in the street while Tim hitched his horse and had a meal with the factor, who had made arrangements for a spare mount.

Horn returned to the settlement and conferred with Gavin in his own little one-roomed shack, and Gavin rode away to the woods; but Horn was on horseback outside the depot when Tim sallied forth to collect his prisoner and start on the long journey back to Marblehead.

Nearly the whole community turned out to watch his departure. Randall was brought out from the cell and made to mount the hired horse. Horn, with a pipe in his mouth, fished a tobacco-pouch from his pocket as Tim was about to swing himself up into his own saddle.

"Come back some time, O'Hara," Brad called out deviously, "when you're not in uniform."

"I can't think of anything I'd rather do," Tim paused to fling back at him.

"If you ever do," taunted Brad, "bring the price of my silver fox with you!"

Tim put a foot in the stirrup, but while he was no more than half-way to the saddle Horn flung a handful of tobacco clean in his eyes, momentarily blinding him, at the same time nudging Randall, who shot off down the street in a bid for freedom.

Tim did not know who had thrown the tobacco, and the others had not noticed exactly what had happened. He landed in the saddle and with streaming eyes saw his captive riding furiously away.

"Halt, Randall, in the king's name!" he shouted, and spurred his horse in pursuit. But Randall had the advantage of a good start, and he knew that a Mountie would not shoot if the use of firearms could be avoided. His horse clattered over the planking of the bridge and swung to the right, across the grass-land and under the pines.

Tim pounded after him, and beneath the trees began to gain rapidly upon him. But Gavin was waiting behind a massive trunk, and his rifle was ready as the fugitive swept past his hiding-place.

"Stop, Randall!" Tim bellowed again, and he drew his gun with the intention of firing a warning shot over his escaping prisoner's head. But somewhere away to the left, even as he pulled the trigger, he heard a rifle crack, and, to his consternation, he saw

Randall pitch sideways from his horse and roll upon the ground at the foot of a tree.

He galloped up and dismounted, while Gavin made his way furtively back to his own horse and rode away. Randall, breathing in a painful fashion, was struggling in vain to sit up when Tim knelt beside him.

"What happened, Randall?" he inquired gruffly.

"What happened?" panted the wounded man acingly. "You know—what—happened. You shot me—you shot me in the back."

Tim put away his gun and looked round, but he could see no sign of anybody among the dense trees, and the noise of the adjacent river, swirling over stones in its rocky bed, prevented him from hearing any sound of hoofs.

He bent over his prisoner and saw that he had lapsed into unconsciousness, and he picked up the limp body, draped it over the saddle of the hired horse, and rode slowly with it back to the trading post.

The trappers were still congregated round the depot when he reached it, and it seemed to him that Hank was the only friend he had amongst them, judging by the sullen silence with which they viewed him and his wounded captive.

On the factor's instructions Randall was carried off to the cabin of Father O'Donovan, who was not merely priest to the community, but doctor as well; and then Brad spoke what was in his mind.

"Sure is nice of you, O'Hara," he said scornfully, "being concerned about his health after shooting him in the back. I thought Mounties weren't supposed to use their guns except in case of emergency?"

"I didn't shoot him," declared Tim. "I fired in the air."

"And hit him square in the back!"

"I tell you I didn't shoot him. My guess is that he was shot by someone who was afraid he might talk."

Brad addressed the others. "Any of you boys hear more than one shot?" he demanded.

"No," chorused most of the men, while Hank and the factor remained silent. Brad spat as with contempt.

"Fine officer of the law you are!" he said.

"I tell you I—"

"I don't care what you say!" Brad straightened up from the boulder against which he had been leaning. "In or out of uniform, shooting unarmed men is murder!"

Tim let go of the bridle of his horse to grip him by the shoulder.

"I've stood about all I intend to from you, Harrison!" he roared.

"Easy, Tim," urged the factor, and caught hold of his arm and drew him away. "I'm sorry this happened, Tim. It's turned all the trappers against you."

"That's what Harrison intended it to do," Tim growled.

"Hadn't I better write headquarters and ask to have you relieved?"

"And have him boast that he ran me out of the country again?" said Tim wryly. "No, thanks!"

"With everyone against you it'll be a mighty tough fight, Tim."

"I knew it would be when I came in," Tim returned with grim determination. "I'm not backing out now!"

Duncan nodded appreciatively and patted him on the back.

"Go to it!" he said gruffly, "and good luck to you."

In Stalkey's Office

A FAINT light was still on the hills, but darkness had gathered in the valley, when Tim walked down

the street that evening, knocked on the door of Father O'Donovan's cabin and entered a little living-room which seemed almost to have a religious atmosphere. Hank was sitting in a chair with his rifle between his knees, but rose immediately.

"Has he regained consciousness yet?" inquired Tim.

"Yep," replied the toothless one. "He's in the bed-room. Father O'Donovan wouldn't let me stay in with him."

Evidently Father O'Donovan heard their voices, for he emerged from the inner room, a tall and almost venerable figure in his long, black robes and his snow-white hair.

"Father," said Tim, dropping his hat on a table, "my name is O'Hara. I'm the man who brought in your patient."

"I suspected as much," returned the priest gravely.

"Do you think it would be safe to have a little talk with him now?"

Very slowly and very solemnly the priest shook his head.

"He'll never speak again in this life," he said.

"Oh!" Tim looked blankly at Hank and went out with him. "Well, here I am," he said with a helpless gesture, "worse off than when I started."

"I wouldn't say that," protested Hank, rubbing his scrubby chin. "You might worm something out of Stalkey."

"Of course!" Tim exclaimed. "I'd forgotten all about him."

Hank led the way to the cabin beyond the bridge, which was Stalkey's office as well as his bachelor home, for he was supposed to do more or less of a trade in timber. But Brad Harrison was in the office with the little man he had lashed with a whip, and one might have gathered from their conversation that they were on the friendliest of terms.



Tim turned his attention to Gavin as Brad knocked Stalkey flat on his back and struck out at Horn.

"I tell you," said Brad urgently, "your only chance is to hide out for a few days, at least until you have time to get out with the furs you've collected. If you don't, O'Hara is going to find a way to make you talk."

"But where am I goin' to hide?" asked Stalkey, sucking at a pipe that had gone out. "He'll search every cabin in the district."

"Go out to my place," suggested Brad. "He wouldn't expect you there. He wouldn't dare go after you, even if he did. You write the note I suggested, and I'll fix it so that it'll look like there's been a struggle. Come on!"

There was a roll-top desk in the room, with a rack of shelves above it, affixed to the wall. There were several chairs, a filing cabinet, and a table upon which an oil-lamp burned. Stalkey wrote upon a pad at the desk while Brad overturned the chairs, emptied the drawers of the filing cabinet all about the floor, and upset the lamp.

The sound of approaching footsteps sent him hurriedly to a window, where he peered out into the gloom.

"Quick!" he exclaimed. "Here he comes!"

Out from the office the two scurried through a living-room to the back door, and they were edging round the outside wall of the building when Tim knocked at the front door and stepped, with Hank, into the disordered office.

A bracket-lamp was still alight on the wall, illuminating the apparent wreckage. Hank surveyed the scene in open-mouthed as well as open-eyed astonishment.

"Well, I'll be doggoned!" he exclaimed. "Something's happened to the poor little rabbit!"

Tim dived into the living-room, but found it deserted, looked into an untenanted bed-room, frowned at the back door—which was shut—and returned to the office. The overturned lamp on the table was examined.

"He can't have been gone more than a minute," he announced. "The oil's still running out of this lamp, and the glass chimney's still warm!"

He looked down at the papers on the floor, picking several of them up and dropping them again. His keen eyes roamed the room, while out by the creek Brad Harrison said in a whisper to Stalkey:

"Take to the woods and head for my place. I'll stay here awhile so they won't suspect anything."

Stalkey streaked off into the darkness, and Brad hovered by the bridge for some little time. In the office Hank discovered the writing-pad on the desk and blinked at a message written on its uppermost sheet:

"If Stalkey's safety means anything to you, don't crowd us."

"Hi, look what I've found!" he cried, holding up the pad. "The dirty polecats have kidnapped the poor little fellow!"

Tim took the pad and read the message, but he was not by any means convinced as to its genuineness.

"There's something about this doesn't look just right to me," he said, gazing thoughtfully about him. "One little man couldn't put up such a scrap! It's overdone!"

He looked at the pad again, and both the writing and the paper seemed familiar. He fished from his belt the slip of paper he had found that morning in Larue's cabin.

"Let's see how the writing of this note compares with the one I found on Larue," he said, and placed them side by side on the table, away from the

pool of oil that was there. "The writing's the same!"

Hank joined him at the table, gripping the barrel of his rifle, gapping down at the two notes.

"Stalkey's one of the gang!" cried Tim. "This note I found on Larue is written on the same pad! Look! It's what they call sectional paper—all pale blue squares."

"Well, dog my cats!" breathed Hank, his lips working excitedly over his toothless gums. "That sure tells us all we want to know about Mister Stalkey, the little toad!"

"Yes," said Tim, "but what good does it do? He's probably on his way out of the country now, and we don't know which way to look."

He dropped heavily into the only chair that was standing upright, a picture of gloom. But Hank pursed his lips and scratched his chin.

"He ain't left the country," he presently decided. "He wouldn't go off without the furs he's collected—and it'll take figurin' to get them out. I'll bet a coon's skin against a last year's bird-nest that he's hid somewhere within shootin' distance!"

"Do you know who his friends are?" asked Tim.

"Shucks, he ain't got no friends!" scoffed Hank. "I know one way you could find him, but I calculate you wouldn't do it."

"What is it?" demanded Tim. "I'll do anything."

"Get all the trappers on his trail. They know every hide-out within fifty miles."

"There isn't one of 'em would lift a finger to help me after what happened this afternoon."

"If Brad told 'em to they would," asserted Hank confidently. "They eat out of his hand."

"I wouldn't ask Brad Harrison to help me," snorted Tim, "not even if he would!"

"Me neither," declared the artful little trapper. "But I'll betcha it'd work if you did. Of course, some folks might think it was your duty, but not me. I wouldn't ask help of a man I didn't like if every trapper on Indian River got shot!"

Tim frowned at him, deceived by the sincerity of his manner.

"Yes, you would!" he exclaimed. "So would any other man that amounted to a hoot!"

He had committed himself by those words, and he rose and thrust the pad and the slip of paper into Hank's hands.

"Here, take these!" he commanded. "Tell the factor to lock 'em in his safe. I'll see you when I get back."

Tim Pays a Call

STALKEY made his way swiftly through a wood to the left of Indian River, along a familiar and well-beaten trail, and in less than ten minutes came to a commodious and well-built cabin of logs in a clearing of considerable extent.

Mounting the porch, he knocked on the door with the butt-end of the rifle he carried, and presently Martha Harrison opened the door—and seemed anything but pleased as she recognised the visitor.

"Hallo, Martha!" said Stalkey, edging past her into a living-room which bore many traces of feminine attention. "You alone?"

"Why—er—yes," she replied reluctantly. "Brad's at the post."

"I know," said Stalkey. "He sent me out here so I could stay out of sight for a few days."

"You can't stay!" she cried, staring at him aghast. "I'm not going to let Brad get mixed up in these fur-raids just to vent his spite on Tim!"

Stalkey put his back to the door, holding his rifle in both hands, and his eyes were evil.

"What makes you think he's not already mixed up in them?" he demanded.

"I know he isn't!" she flamed. "He's headstrong, but he's honest."

"All right, let him do his own talking." The sound of galloping hoofs caused him to open the door a few inches, and he closed it again in haste. "Hide me, quick!" he exclaimed. "The Mountie's coming!"

"I'm not hiding anyone from the law!"

"Have it your own way." He swept past her into the kitchen and looked menacingly back at her. "No tricks! I'll have him covered until he leaves."

Tim, who had ridden across the clearing, hitched his horse to a rail and mounted the steps of the porch. Martha opened the front door even as he knocked at it.

"Why, Tim," she faltered, "I—"

"Is Brad here?" he asked.

"No, he isn't," she replied. "And you mustn't wait for him. If he finds you here he'll be furious."

"I hope not," said Tim grimly. "I'm here on police business."

He stepped into the living-room and closed the door, and she immediately stood between him and the kitchen, where Stalkey lurked with his rifle.

"Tim," she said, "you don't think Brad's mixed up in these raids, do you?"

"I'm certain he's not," he assured her.

"Then don't wait for him," she pleaded. "It'll only make matters worse, and they're bad enough now."

He moved nearer to her, resisting a temptation to take her in his arms, and he said earnestly:

"There's nothing you could ask of me that I wouldn't do for you as an individual. I proved that once by running away and letting people think I was yellow rather than do something that might hurt you. I didn't come here because I wanted to, but because I had to."

The front door swung wide and Brad burst in upon them.

"I've been waiting to see you, Harrison," said Tim.

"That's a lie, O'Hara!" roared Brad. "You came here to do just what you are doing—make love to Martha! You think, because you've got that uniform on, I have to stand for it; but I don't! This place is mine—you get out of it!"

"I'm here on official business," said Tim. "Stalkey got away this evening, and I'm after him. He tried to make it look like he was kidnapped, but it didn't work. What's more, he left evidence that proves he's implicated in the murder of Larue."

Instinctively Martha glanced in the direction of the kitchen, and once more she stood between Tim and the half-open door. Brad flung off his coat.

"You're not tryin' to tie me up in this, are you?" he rasped.

"No," replied Tim. "I came here to ask your help. I never did a harder thing in my life. I want you to get your trapper friends to scour the country for him. They'd do it for you when they wouldn't for me."

Brad's rather thick lips curled with scorn.

"Round up your men for you, eh?"

he snorted. "So you'll get the credit and be promoted? If I knew where the raiders were, I'd bring 'em in myself, just to show you up!"

"Brad, please!" cried Martha. "If you weren't in uniform——" threatened her brother.

"If I weren't in uniform," retorted Tim, "I wouldn't stand for some of the things I have to now. Good-bye, Martha!"

He put on his hat and went out, and Brad was watching him go, through a window near the door, when Stalkey ran out from the kitchen with the rifle in his hands and a murderous look on his ugly face.

Martha cried out in alarm, and her brother turned from the window to snatch the rifle away.

"Not so close to my cabin, you fool!" he shouted.

"He knows too much about me," growled Stalkey.

"Well, it ain't gonna help matters to have a killing to your credit, is it? We've got to work fast, if we're going to save those furs. Where did you hide 'em?"

"Why should I tell you?" challenged Stalkey. "The others don't know."

"So we can get 'em out of the way before O'Hara finds 'em."

Stalkey considered that point, while Martha looked horrified.

"If you were O'Hara," said the cunning little crook after a while, "where would you start looking?"

"There's only one place to look," asserted Brad. "In your cabin. If I didn't find 'em in it, I'd look under it."

"Well, that's where they are," said Stalkey. "There's a trap-door in the back room."

"Fine!" quoth Brad. "Before morning I'll have those pelts where O'Hara will never find 'em!"

"You can't do it, Brad!" cried Martha. "I won't let you!"

"You keep out of this!" snapped her brother. "I know what I'm doing."

"But you don't know what you're doing!" she shrieked. "Getting mixed up with murderers just because you hate Tim O'Hara!"

She ran into a bedroom and reappeared wearing a cloak; but Brad barred her way.

"I said keep out of it," he shouted at her, "and I mean it!"

"All right," she replied, "I will keep out of it. But I'm going to the Cartwrights, and I'm going to stay there until you come to your senses—or find yourself in prison with the rest of the gang!"

Brad moved aside and she went out from the cabin, slamming the door behind her; a proceeding which did not suit Stalkey at all.

"Call her back!" he cried, pointing a skinny finger. "She's liable to talk!"

"Aw, she won't talk," said Brad with confidence. "She wouldn't betray me—and she'd be in the way here, anyhow."

"If she does talk, Harrison, or you double-cross me——"

"Why should I?" Brad demanded curtly. "Ain't it enough that we're double-crossing the others? Say, and speaking of the others, you've never told me the names of the men that are working with you."

"What you don't know," retorted Stalkey, dropping the rifle on a couch, "won't hurt you, nor anybody else."

Bob Acts for the Best

TIM rode back to the settlement, put away his horse, and some little time later went out with Hank Bascom from that little trapper's shack, carrying a dark lantern. Taking

care that no one saw them, they made their way round to the back of Stalkey's cabin, and there Tim posted Hank under a tree.

"You wait here in case somebody follows me," he directed.

He stole in at the back door, and in the office he extinguished the bracket-lamp on the wall, then proceeded to search the place thoroughly in the light of the lantern.

In the living-room he pulled back a rug on the floor and beneath it found what he was looking for—a trap-door. He raised the trap and climbed down a vertical ladder into a cellar; and the rays of his lantern shone upon piles of furs, stored in such a fashion that none of them touched the concrete walls.

Several times he climbed the ladder laden with pelts which he heaped on the floor of the room above, while Hank leaned against the tree-trunk out at the back of the cabin, keeping watch and munching cheese.

Nothing occurred to disturb the silence, so far as Hank was concerned, but Brad Harrison reached the front of the cabin without his knowledge and tiptoed into the office. The door into the living-room was open and a faint light moved about in there. He looked through the crack at the back of the door, and he saw that the trap was open and that Tim had just dumped

a pile of pelts in a corner of the room.

Furiously he strode through the doorway, and Tim swung round with the lantern in his hand. Its light struck Brad full in the face as he hurled himself at his enemy. The lantern crashed to the boards, and in the darkness the two fought and struggled with each other.

It was a fierce battle, but Hank did not hear a sound of it, though it continued for many minutes ere fortune favoured the aggressor. Then Tim stumbled on the edge of the trap, lost his balance, clutched wildly at nothing, and pitched headlong into the cellar.

Breathing heavily, Brad climbed down the ladder and struck a match. Tim was lying on the stones below as senseless as a log of wood, and the rest was easy. Brad climbed up with the remainder of the pelts, found a rope and descended again to bind Tim's arms and legs, then climbed once more to carry the pelts away from the cabin by instalments.

Two hours elapsed, and then Hank became concerned about Tim, though nothing had aroused his suspicions. He went over to the back door and opened it, and he called into the blackness of the cabin:

"Tim! Tim, where are you?"

Naturally there was no response, and Hank became really alarmed. He passed into the living-room, and, missing the open trap by inches, trod on the lantern. Fishing a box of matches from his pocket he struck one and looked about him, and presently he lit the lantern and descended with it into the cellar.

Tim had just regained consciousness and he opened his eyes while Hank was severing his bonds.

"Are you hurt bad, Tim?" he asked anxiously. "What happened?"

Tim blinked at the lantern and at the scrubby face above it, then remembered what had happened.

"Brad," he said weakly, "I found the furs. They're upstairs."

"I didn't see no furs," declared Hank.

"Then Brad got away with them!" Tim got to his knees and tried to rise to his feet, but sank down on a rung of the ladder. "Hank, I can't make it," he muttered, "Go to Brad's cabin—see where he hides those pelts."

He held a hand to his aching head and motioned with the other; but Hank was not willing to desert him.

"I'm gonna get you over to Father O'Donovan's first," he declared in a voice that defied argument, and he propped his rifle against a wall to help Tim up the ladder, and some little time later supported him out from the cabin and over the bridge to Father O'Donovan's place up the street.

The priest was retiring for the night, but readily took charge of a new patient, and then Hank went off with his rifle to play the spy round the home of Brad Harrison.

A newly risen sun was climbing above the hills to the east and reddening the tops of the fir trees in the valley when Tim walked out from Father O'Donovan's cabin. He was feeling quite himself again and he had thoroughly enjoyed a modest meal.

"Good-bye, Father," he said gratefully, "and many thanks."

Hank, who had been standing with his back to a post of the porch for quite a while, ran to him as he walked erectly down the steps.

"Tim!" he cried excitedly. "Guess what! Brad's got Stalkey hid in his cabin!"

Father O'Donovan had closed his door and probably intended to get a little

NEXT WEEK'S BIG FILM DRAMAS!



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sleep. Tim walked slowly up the street with Hank.

"Brad hiding Stalkey?" he said incredulously.

"Yep!" declared Hank. "I stood outside the window, and I heard everything they said."

Tim frowned at the depot ahead; Gavin's cabin was passed.

"What about the furs?" he demanded.

"Brad ain't got 'em," was the unexpected answer. "He said you got 'em."

"Said I've got 'em?"

"Yeah." Hank mouthed his toothless gums. "He told the damndest yarn you ever heard—how you took the pelts and hid 'em, and how you was waitin' for him, and how he whipped you, and left you bound and gagged in the cellar and shut the trap-door."

"You couldn't have heard right," scoffed Tim.

"Yes, I did, too! And what's more, they're gonna leave you in the cellar all day and come back to-night and make you tell 'em where you hid the furs."

Tim considered that statement and found an explanation that fitted.

"I get it!" he exclaimed. "Brad's going to double-cross Stalkey! Going to leave him in the cabin and pull out with the furs!"

The depot was reached, and Hank rubbed his chin.

"If that's it," he commented, "you'd better work fast, brother."

"I'm on my way right now," Tim assured him, and he went round to the stables and saddled his horse. But as he led the horse out from its stall he frowned again.

"I'm all wrong, Hank," he said gloomily. "I can't arrest Brad without the furs—I can't prove anything!"

The street was deserted when they emerged from the yard of the depot, but with startling abruptness a rider came clattering over the bridge towards them, and the rider was wearing the scarlet and navy blue of a Mountie.

Tim recognised Bob Rutledge with astonishment, and that very bright young man hailed him as he rode up.

"What are you doing up so early?" he inquired, as he dismounted beside the pair. "Been out all night?"

"Just about," said Tim, and introduced Hank. "What are you doing here?"

"Dad sent me to relieve you," was the reply.

"Relieve me!" exclaimed Tim. "Oh, but I can't leave now! Harrison will think he ran me out of the country."

"Harrison?" echoed Bob. "Is that the fellow you told dad about?"

"Yes. He's torn me to shreds, knowing I can't fight back—turned the others against me—boasted I'd never finish my job up here. Don't you see, Bob, I can't go back now?"

"You've got to, Tim. Your promotion's come through!"

"My promotion!" Tim had almost forgotten about that.

"Yes, I've brought the notification for you."

An official-looking envelope was produced, but Tim would not take it.

"Promotion or no promotion," he said doggedly, "I stay right here till I arrest Harrison."

"Has he done anything he could be arrested for?" asked Bob, putting the envelope back in his pocket.

"Has he? We had a fight, last night, over some furs. He knocked me out and got away with the evidence. I've got to stay right here till I can prove my case and put him under arrest."

"There's one little item you've over-

looked. Tim. You couldn't arrest him even if you had the proof against him. This is the eighteenth of the month—doesn't that mean anything to you?"

Tim shook his head.

"Doesn't mean anything to me," he said. "Dates don't mean much, except when you're writing out a report."

"Well, this one ought to. Your term of enlistment expired the day before yesterday!"

Tim's face lit up.

"Now I know I'm not going to leave!" he cried. "I'm staying right here; not as a Mountie, but as a private citizen—and the first man to hear about it is going to be Harrison!"

"Listen here, Tim," said Bob severely, "you can't throw away your career over a petty quarrel like this. Think of your future."

"You think of it," retorted Tim, turning towards his horse. "I'm in a hurry."

"All right," gritted Bob, "I will think of it. I won't let you do it. You're too good a friend."

"You can't let personal issues enter into the Service, my boy," Tim reminded him; and Bob promptly clapped a gloved hand on his shoulder.

"If that's the way you want it, O'Hara," he said stiffly. "I arrest you in the King's name!"

Hank, who had listened to the conversation with growing surprise, gaped and mouthed; Tim became annoyed.

"If you think this is a joke, Bob—"

"I don't," Bob interrupted. "You're an armed civilian looking for trouble—a menace to the community! I hope you'll come along peacefully."

Tim shrugged and permitted himself to be marched along to the cell. His Service revolver was removed from its holster and the door was slammed upon him. The padlock was unfastened and hanging from its staple, and Bob snapped it home.

"Now," he said through the bars of the little window. "I'll bring in your man Harrison, and I'll want you as a witness."

He asked as to the whereabouts of Brad's cabin, and he rode away down the street. Hank leaned against the wall of the cell, and Tim pulled off his gloves, suddenly remembering that he had not returned the key of the padlock to the factor.

He fished the key from his pocket and held it out between the bars.

"Hank," he said urgently, "take this and unlock the door."

But Hank blinked at the key and would not touch it.

"I daresn't," he protested. "You get five years for galloping!"

"And you're the fellow that said things couldn't get any worse, eh?" growled Tim, and fell to pacing savagely up and down the narrow cell.

"Personal Issues"

BRAD HARRISON was having breakfast in the kitchen of his cabin, and Stalkey—in his shirt-sleeves—was looking moodily at him when a beat of hoofs caused him to turn to the window in alarm.

"It's O'Hara!" he exclaimed, grabbing up his rifle.

Brad ran to the window, and he saw Bob Rutledge riding across the clearing.

"That's not O'Hara," he said. "It's a stranger! You get in that bed-room, and no matter what happens, don't let him see you."

Stalkey vanished into the indicated bed-room, and Brad crossed the living-

room to the front door, which he opened as Bob was mounting the steps.

"Morning," he said gruffly.

"Good-morning," returned Bob. "Your name Bradley Harrison?"

"That's right. What can I do for you?"

"I arrest you, in the King's name," was the stern reply, "on suspicion of fur-stealing!"

Brad scowled and backed into the room, and Bob followed. Stalkey, just inside the bed-room door, released the safety-catch of his rifle.

"O'Hara afraid to come out and make his own arrest?" sneered Brad.

"The man hasn't been born yet that O'Hara's afraid of," Bob retorted, gazing about the room. "Mind if I have a drink of water?"

"You're the boss." Brad went into the kitchen and returned with a dipper full of water, and Bob took it and drank.

"If you're lookin' for furs," said Brad, "you won't find any around here."

"Mind if I take a look in this room?" Bob walked out into the kitchen, glanced at the table, and moved round it to deposit the dipper in the sink.

Stalkey hastily elbowed his rifle, and as the young Mountie was passing the open door of the bed-room, he brought the butt-end down with all his might upon a head protected only by an Army hat of soft felt. Bob went down with a thud, completely knocked out, and Stalkey emerged from the bed-room.

"I could break your scrawny little neck for that!" roared Brad.

"Well, I wasn't going to have him arrest you if I could help it," said the little crook.

"Why not? You could have got me out to-night, and we'd have left with the pelts. Now, if he dies, we'll both swing for it!"

"Aw, he won't die! I just put him outa commission for the rest of the day."

"Yes," said Brad grimly, "and now we can't wait till night to go after those furs! Somebody's liable to come here and find him! Say, maybe we could use this fellow to help us, though."

Twenty minutes later Tim was still pacing up and down the cell, pausing now and then at the door to glare at Hank, who remained outside it.

"If you don't get more sociable," threatened the little trapper, "I ain't gonna stay and visit with you."

"I don't care what you do, if you're not going to let me out of this place," snapped Tim.

"I don't want to violate the—"

Hank broke off in the middle of his protest. "Great catamounts!" he exclaimed. "Look what's comin' up the street!"

Tim could not see the street from the cell, though he tried to do so.

"I don't care what it is," he growled; and then, as Hank continued to stare: "What is it?"

"Brad Harrison," replied Hank. "He's bringing in your Mountie friend, draped over a horse. Look like he's hurt."

Brad was riding his own horse and trailing Bob's, and Bob was hanging limply over the saddle. Trappers came out from their cabins, asking questions, and quite a procession followed the two horses to the depot. Tim had a glimpse of Bob as he was carried into the building, and Hank asked him what he figured had happened.

"It's quite clear what's happened,"

(Continued on page 27)

An innocent man awaits the electric chair. His loving sister and a deputy warden struggle desperately with the powers of the underworld to bring the proofs that will save his life. A crook thriller, starring Regis Toomey and Sheila Terry



"BARS of HATE"

The Stolen Handbag

A YOUNG man flashed along the main thoroughfare of a big city on the West Coast of California. For weeks he had been hard at work on Government matters, and it was grand to be free for a day. He would drive out into the hills and visit some friends.

Ted Clark happened to glance up into the reflector mirror, and a low whistle escaped him. He was being tailed by a speed cop. The speedometer showed that the car was at the moment traveling between forty-five to fifty miles an hour.

With a grin the young man put down his foot and zoomed away. He slithered round the next corner, took the next turning to the left and eventually came back to the main road. But if he imagined he had shaken off the cop he was mistaken—a sound not far distant made him give another glance into the mirror.

The young man decided that this was much better fun than driving on a hot afternoon out along dusty roads, and he proceeded to have a grand time dodging round corners, doubling on his tracks, going through private roads attached to gas stations and doing everything he could to elude the persistent speed cop.

The speed officer stuck gamely to his task, and swore that he would serve a summons or burst in the attempt.

Ted came round a corner, and his eyes widened at sight of three men attacking a fourth, whilst a girl stood by and yelled at the top of her voice. Now he hated to see an unequal fight, and decided that it was up to him to play a part. A wrench on the wheel, and he swung the car across the road to charge straight at the fighting men.

The screech of his horn caused the three attackers to dart away, whilst the fourth stared in fear at the approaching car. With a screech Ted slowed his car.

"Hop on!" he yelled. The lone fighter sprang on to the running-board, Ted accelerated, and tore back on to the road.

He glanced at his passenger. A thin, mournful fellow, with dark, baleful eyes. The latter glanced at the driver nervously. Ted laughed and went down the street at sixty.

"Mister, what's your hurry?" "A cop is after me," Ted chuckled, and pointed to the mirror. "See him?" "He's gaining on us."

"We'll take him round a few more turnings and then pull up," Ted grinned. "Then you watch him laugh."

In a quiet street the driver slowed his car and permitted the speed cop to drive him into the kerb. The officer lifted his machine on to its rest and took out a notebook.

"Well, what's the alibi?" the officer said sharply.

"Well, I haven't one really," Ted smiled sweetly. "I was just trying to see if I could give you the slip."

"You did?" The officer licked his pencil. "Well, now I'm going to give you a slip. What's your name?"

"Ted Clark."

"Let's see your driver's licence." Ted fumbled and then frowned. "Sorry, officer. I left it in the office."

The officer's grin was chilsome. "Well, ain't that too bad? I suppose you'd like me to get it for you?"

"That certainly would be nice of you, officer; it isn't very far." Ted produced a card. "You'll find the City Hall close by."

The nervous person who had been

rescued from the three apparently desperate characters peered over the driver's shoulder and had a surprise to read: "TED CLARK. Deputy Warden." The officer was not only surprised—he was nonplussed.

"I suppose you were on business?" He had a strong idea that the deputy had been having a joke at his expense. "You're new to this district," Ted grinned. "And I like to find out if officers are handling their jobs all right. I'll tell the chief you're okay."

Ted watched the officer as the latter replaced his summons book, mounted his machine and rode away. A movement made him look round—his passenger had got cautiously out of the car.

"Hey, wait a minute." "Thanks for the lift," the passenger answered, and stepped out smartly.

Ted Clark slipped swiftly out of his car, and with a resigned expression his passenger waited on the kerb. The latter's smile was very forced.

"What did those fellows want with you?"

"Oh, a lady's handbag." "I don't understand."

"Well they thought I was a purse-snatcher."

"Why, you look like an honest man to me," stated the deputy warden.

"I am," sniffed the stranger. "That's what gets me down."

Ted Clark clapped him heavily on the back.

"Don't let it get you down, my lad, you're not the first one." Another hearty slap. "Just square your shoulders and—"

A handbag had slipped beneath the stranger's coat and lay on the pavement. "Well—well!" The little man opened

his eyes wide. "How do you suppose that got out of my coat?"

Ted Clark picked up the bag.

"I should turn you over to the police."

"It's an unfortunate habit of mine. I don't mean no harm really—me fingers kinda let me down."

"Well, let's see who the bag belongs to."

"Here, you can't do that—I'm the guy that swiped it."

Ted had to laugh.

"It's almost your property, I suppose." He opened the clasp. "I presume the lady I heard bellowing was the owner of this bag." He glanced at the other, who was looking thoroughly ashamed. "I see she was." He dived into the bag and drew out a card. "Ann Dawson. This is a lucky break for me."

"What ye mean by that, mister?"

"I've been trying to meet this Dawson damo for three months," the deputy warden answered. "I'm going to return this bag and get acquainted."

"Not so fast!" cried the bag-snatcher. "How do I know you're on the level?"

"You'd better come along and find out," chuckled Ted. "What's your name?"

"Danny Dawson. Are you really a warden?"

"Sure as I'm here." Ted pointed to his car. "You're coming with me, Danny Dawson, and it depends just how well you behave yourself where you sleep to-night. Unwittingly you've helped me, and for that I'm inclined to be lenient. Get in!"

Without any argument Danny got into the car, and Ted drove the car round to Acacia Lodge, Sea Avenue. It was a quiet suburban district of small modern villas. Outside the lodge was a small two-seater. Farther down the road was a powerful four-seater.

"There she is—getting into that car now!"—Danny pointed.

A smart, slim, dark-haired, athletic young woman had appeared from a gate and entered the powerful two-seater.

"How could you take a bag from a nice-looking girl like that?" Ted was indignant. "You certainly deserve to go to gaol!"

"It was the bag I looked at—not the girl," said Danny. "You going after her? If you catch her I'll apologise."

"Good for you. I guess—" Ted broke off sharply. The small car had turned at the first corner, and immediately the big car had roared to life and vanished in the same direction, but not before the deputy warden had glimpsed four men.

"Let's see what this is all about!" Ted Clark spoke grimly.

The Rescue

TED CLARK roared round the corner and grinned to see the big car some way ahead. It vanished round a corner.

"That car is following Miss Dawson," Ted told his companion. "But they're keeping well back as if trying to kid her. She seems to be heading towards Stanville, and there's a long stretch of arterial road between the two districts—an ideal spot for desperate men."

"What's their game?"

"That's what I propose to find out," answered Ted. "Hallo, they're stepping on it. She's got wise to 'em."

Sure enough, on the arterial road the big car roared from thirty to eighty miles an hour. The girl must have made a desperate bid to escape because it was not till the outskirts of Stanville were reached that the big car succeeded in driving her off the main road into a shallow ditch.

The big car had not bothered to see if they were being followed. Ted saw

the ditching as he had been travelling almost as fast as the big car. He switched off his engine and put his foot down on the red knob that operated the free-wheel. His car glided forward and came to a rest alongside the big car. The four men were out of their car and clustering round the girl.

"Hand over that letter!" a big, thick-set fellow was shouting.

"I haven't got any letter," they heard the girl answer.

"Don't lie—you stole it from the safe."

"I don't know where it is."

"So you did take it!" the chief crook yelled. "Where is it?"

The girl was frightened by those grim faces.

"It's in my hand-bag—somebody stole it."

"That tale won't work, sister," the crook cried. "Come on and tell it to the boss."

"Leave that lady alone!" drawled a voice—Ted's.

The four men turned round as if they had been shot. They saw what appeared to be two perfectly ordinary men.

"Scram, or you'll get a punch on the nose," cried the spokesman, and turned his back.

Ted glanced at Danny and rubbed his hands together, then he stood up on the seat of his car.

"Sister, get out of that car!" came the order.

"Don't do any such thing!" shouted Ted, and when the leader spun round the intrepid deputy warden dived over the big car straight at the surprised crook. They were so surprised that they allowed Ted to land some hurtful punches before they turned on him snarling all kinds of threats.

Whereupon Danny decided it was time he joined in the fight. Though four against two, the crooks found that Ted and Danny were fighting wizards.

"Get your car started!" Ted ordered the surprised girl.

The crooks rushed. Crash! One was hurled back as if struck with a battering ram; Danny got another with a blow that was very much below the belt.

The girl started her car, and with a roar clambered it out of the shallow ditch. The car bumped back on to the main road. Her eyes lit up as she saw the strange young man pick up one of her assailants as if he were a child and fling him violently to the ground. Another staggered up and got a sock in the jaw that made her gasp as if she had stopped the mighty punch herself. Then she observed the small man doing his best to strangle a man with a very thick neck.

"Get to the lady's car!" Ted shouted to the friendly bag-snatcher. "Hurry!"

A moment later he was racing towards the small car.

"Let her rip!" he shouted as he jumped on to the running-board.

The small sports car whirled away in a cloud of dust.

The crook, who had done all the talking, staggered to his feet and nursed an aching jaw.

"Don't you guys let her get away," he yelled to the others. "Get up, you scum!" The other three staggered up looking very much the worse for wear. "I'm going to use that guy's roadster and report to the boss."

The big car tore off in pursuit of the small sports car, whilst the leader took Ted's roadster and hastened off in the opposite direction. Ten minutes later he was talking to a very tall man of foreign origin. Jim Grant, in spite of such a name, was a Mexican Pole, who lived for years in the States—Grant was not his real name. He was an evil-looking man with eyes that made people

shudder at the evil lurking in their depths.

"A bunch of fools!" he shouted at his chief man. "Gilroy, why didn't you burn that letter?"

"I thought it would be better in the safe."

"That letter is enough to send us to the chair!" raved Grant. "If that Dawson girl ever gets it to the Governor her brother will go free and you know what we'll get."

"What we're going to do, boss?" asked Gilroy.

"We've got to get that letter back," Jim Grant drew out a gun. "We've got to get it back if we kill half California."

Surrounded

THE girl was eager to put as much distance as possible between herself and the crooks, and so no time was wasted in talking. Ted and Danny kept on looking back.

"Take the first fork right," Ted shouted in the girl's ear.

"Where does that lead me?" the girl demanded.

"To the place where I live!" rapped out Ted. "We can talk there. Now turn sharp right and keep going till I yell to you to stop."

At a safe distance the crooks in the big car followed.

At Ted Clark's yell, the girl pulled up before a smart, white-walled villa. The trio hurried inside and the deputy locked all the doors.

"Just in case we have any cavedroppers." He smiled at the girl. "Now, let's all go into the lounge and talk this thing over. You're wondering who we are and I want to know about your friends, so let's clear everything up. This way. My folk are away on holiday in the hills, and they've taken our only servant."

"I like your place," Danny looked round appreciatively, especially at a cabinet full of silver cups.

"I got those for athletics at school," Ted had followed the direction of his gaze. "There's a secret lock that if forced open sends two million volts through any meddlesome mike's arm. Now, lady, will you sit down and tell me what all this is about?"

"Thank you for helping me," the girl took the seat he offered. "You see I was out this morning shopping when somebody stole my hand-bag, and in that bag was an important letter."

"What kind of a bag?"

"A black one with an 'A' on it."

Ted produced the bag that Danny had stolen.

"Is this it?"

"Why, yes!" exclaimed the delighted girl. "Where did you find it?"

"I'm the one that stole it, lady," modestly explained Danny.

"Ho has a gift that way—take no notice," Ted reassured the girl, who was clutching the bag nervously. "But I don't get the connection between your bag and the three men, Miss Dawson."

"You know me?"

"I've been trying to meet you for three months," Ted admitted. "You see, I've seen you a good many times. At court—during your brother's trial. You have my deepest sympathy, Miss Dawson—I still think he's innocent."

The girl's face became drawn and haggard.

"He is—ho didn't kill that girl!" she cried. "I've got the letter that will prove Jim Grant did it." She opened her bag feverishly and then gave a sigh of relief. "Read it, please!"

Ted Clark scanned the letter. Not only was it a threatening letter to the murdered girl, but it gave time and

places that proved beyond doubt that Grant had a hand in the crime.

"How in the world did you ever get this?"

"I've got it—that's the main thing," Ann was evasive. "Forty-eight hours more and it would have been too late. Will you go to the District Attorney's office with me, please? Actually I was on my way when I lost my bag. You helped me when I was planning to visit the various police stations to trace it."

"The District Attorney is out of town." Ted looked worried. "I know, because I'm a deputy warden. We'll have to get in touch with the Governor. The chances are he's at the Capitol. I'll 'phone."

"Please do!" Ann's voice shook. "I don't know what I should have done without your help."

Ted Clark got through after some delay. The Governor was away. He was informed that he was on a week-end vacation at Idlewild.

Ted hung up.

"Our luck seems to be out," he muttered. "Still, we can make it all right. Idlewild is a hunting lodge about six hours from here. I know the train service round these parts, and I'm sure there's an afternoon train we can make. In a few hours your brother will be a free man."

Danny had been strolling aimlessly round the room admiring the various objects of value, and by chance he came to the window. Being inquisitive, he pulled aside the curtain to see what sort of garden there was to the house.

"Look! Come here!" he called out.

Ted ran to the window. Two men were peering cautiously round a bush at the house. In the road was a powerful car.

"They've trailed us—maybe a whole bunch of them!" Ted pushed him away from the window. "Mustn't let them know we've spotted 'em. I'll 'phone the police."

But it was soon apparent to Ted that the 'phone was dead.

"The wires have been cut." Ted slammed down the receiver. "This is not so funny. We've got to get out of here. How are we going to do it? Suppose Danny and I take the letter and make a break—we'll get shot before we get any distance. Those crooks were following you, Miss Dawson, and they'd follow you again. If you slipped out and got away in the car they'd go after you, Danny, and I could make a get-away when the coast was clear." He shook his head. "Too dangerous! I'm not changing those thugs drilling you."

"Ted, I've got an idea," shouted Danny. "You folk have been square by me, and here's my chance to do something for you. I'm the same height and much the same build as Miss Dawson. I've done female impersonations at one or two local shows, and I'd love the chance to try my stuff out in real earnest. Let Miss Dawson change clothes with me, and I'll give them the wildest chase they ever had, leaving you two a chance to make the train."

It seemed the best chance they had, and swiftly the girl undressed behind a screen and passed her clothes to Ted, who collected Danny's clothes to bring to the girl. Finally he gave a critical look at the two of them.

"You both look pretty terrible," he admitted frankly. "Miss Dawson, you must get that collar right, and tuck that hair of yours under the hat. Pity you can't lend Danny some of it. Danny, you look like nothing on earth, but we've got to go through with it. I'll let you out through the back door and get to Miss Dawson's car. We'll get a lift some way to the station. I don't think they'll dare start shooting on account of the neighbours. Good luck, Danny! Look me up in the morning at the D.A.'s office."

From behind the curtains they watched. They saw Danny clamber over

a hedge and heard men shouting. Danny sprinted towards the next house and disappeared. They saw three of Grant's men chasing over the flower-beds. Then came a terrible suspense, and Ted began to fear they had captured Danny when the bag-snatcher appeared on the other side of the road. He reached Ann Dawson's car and was away in it, as the crooks appeared. They leaped into their big car and gave chase.

"So far so good," Ted smiled at the girl. "Now for the railway station."

They caught the train for Idlewild, and thought their adventures were at an end.

Danny Up Against It

DANNY managed to cover about five miles before the big car drew alongside, and a menacing face peered over the side. A large hand with a revolver made Danny hastily apply the brakes. He buried his face in his hands.

"All right, sister! Cut out that crying," a gruff voice ordered. "Give me the letter."

Something about the way Danny sat, or the absurd angle of Ann's hat, must have made one of them suspicious, because his hands were jerked away from his face.

"It's the smart guy!"

"Where did the Dawson girl go?" a thick-set ruffian demanded.

But Danny just refused to talk. They bundled him out of the car into their own. Not long after he was standing before the tall, evil-faced Jim Grant.

"You'll talk if I break every bone in your body," threatened Grant. "Now spill it!"

"Ain't anything to spill," Danny answered. "I've always wanted to do an impersonation act, and I bluffed you mugs easily. My friends thought it was a good idea, and bet me I couldn't do it." "Stop being funny!" snarled Grant. "This means, boys, that the other two



Though four against two, the crooks soon found that Ted and Danny were fighting wizards.

April 11th, 1933.

slipped away whilst you were chasing this fool. They would head for the station." He laughed unpleasantly. "That will be as far as they get. I've got Slim planted there." The 'phone bell rang. "That, maybe, is Slim. Hallo?"

Danny grinned as he saw the look of rage that appeared on Jim Grant's face.

"You mean to say they made that train—they're on their way to Idlewild? You got scared because you saw a couple of cops? One can't trust any of you fools. Go straight to the airport, and jump to it!" Grant slammed down the receiver. "Listen, you guys!" He faced Gilroy and the gang. "We've got a job to do, and if we fail it's our last! If I go to the hot seat—I'll have company. We've got to go after these two, and we gotta stop 'em. Let's get out of here."

"What about the smart guy?" demanded Gilroy.

"That's your job, Monahue." Grant looked at a big, leering fellow. "If he gives you any trouble, don't hesitate to bump him off."

Soon Danny was alone with Monahue, who nursed a large gun and grinned at him unpleasantly.

"If you get on my nerves the boss told me to bump you off," Monahue laughed hoarsely. "I think I'll take you for a ride. I can't stand your face; I don't think you got long to go, stranger. I'm gonna give the paper the once-over, read all about Dawson's last hours, and then you can say your prayers."

"You should read everything," nervously murmured Danny. "That train smash in Nevada; trouble in Europe; long-distance flight—"

"Shut up, or I'll croak you right now!" yelled Monahue. "If you want to smoke, take the chance. It's your last!"

There was silence for a while. Danny peered round cautiously. He had been pushed into a chair near a table. Monahue was two yards away, and hidden behind the daily paper, and chuckling over the comic strip. On his lap lay the gun.

Danny decided it was too risky to try to dive for the gun, and Monahue was much stronger than himself. On the table were some matches in a stand.

A sudden quick gleam came into Danny's eyes, and he took out his cigarette case. He put a cigarette in his mouth and took another peep at Monahue, then he reached forward and took a match; but he did an unusual thing with that match. He fixed the match firmly in the toe of his boot. What luck the sole was parting company with the uppers! Fixed to his satisfaction, he took another quick look round. Monahue was still reading. He drew that match-stand closer, and managed to strike the match without breaking it. Monahue still did not look round! Very quietly Danny turned and moved his leg, with the match well alight, towards the paper. Monahue was reading so intently. The match flame touched the edge of the paper—a flame appeared.

Suddenly the paper burst into flames and with a yell Monahue jumped up, hurling the gun to the floor.

"What the blue blazes!" yelled the crook. "I'll—I'll—I'll—" the words choked in his throat because his gun was now held by Danny, who was grinning unpleasantly.

"One word from you and you do the croaking!" hissed Danny.

"Don't shoot—don't shoot!" moaned Monahue. "I've got a thousand dollars April 11th, 1936.

in cash I'll give you if you'll spare me." He was in a pitiful state of fear.

Danny laughed. "I lifted them during the ride in the car. They'll come in handy, so will your clothes." The gun moved threateningly. "Take off them clothes. Then, pal, we're going for a ride."

Not many minutes later the two men were in one of Grant's cars. Monahue sat at the wheel, with Danny tickling his ribs with a gun. Their destination was the airport.

They got to the airport in time to see a big plane rise from the ground and disappear into the haze. A few discreet inquiries soon revealed that Grant and several of the gang had been on the plane, but their destination was Saugus. Danny had a good idea of the reason. The train stopped at Saugus en route for Idlewild, Grant and his men would get aboard the train, and his two new friends would be at their mercy.

Danny saw a pilot busy giving an overhaul to his machine. "I want to catch the Idlewild train. I got the cash to pay for a trip, and a bit extra if you can start at once."

"That ought to be easy. She stops at Saugus," answered the pilot. "I know that," said Danny. "But I've got to get on that train before she stops. Matter of extreme urgency."

The pilot stared at him. "You mean you want me to drop you on that train?"

"Yes."

"What are you, some kind of a daredevil?"

Danny grinned. "Well, I will be if I can get away with this one."

"If you've got the cash it's okay by me," the pilot answered. Danny took out the money he had taken from Monahue and handed over two hundred dollars. The pilot rubbed his hands. "This is my lucky day. Stranger, you've got a chance because my plane has a rope ladder—get in."

Danny climbed into the passenger's cockpit and the plane took off. Very soon they came in sight of the railroad track and the machine kept the lines in view. An hour's flying and they saw the train below them. Danny reached forward and touched the pilot's shoulder, immediately the plane began to swoop down.

"Steep grade a few miles ahead," the pilot informed his passenger. "Train has to slow—that's your place."

Danny blinked his eyes nervously as the train drew nearer and nearer—the ordeal ahead was not to his liking. The pilot knew his job and brought his machine to within a hundred feet, and waved his hand. Danny lifted the rope ladder out of the cockpit and pushed it over the side. The machine dropped lower and the pilot gave another signal—it was the moment.

Danny climbed out of the cockpit and with eyes shut went down the ladder. Several times he was nearly swept away by the rushing wind, but he managed at last to get his feet on the bottom rung and dared to open his eyes.

The train slowed to a crawl and the plane dropped as low as the pilot dared. The top of the coach was ten feet away—Danny let go. He found himself clinging to a roof ventilator with all the wind knocked out of him. For some minutes he lay there gasping and then he began gingerly to work his way along the roof. Sheer grit carried him through and then he climbed down between the coaches to the footboard.

What relief when he tugged open a carriage door.

Ted Clark was having a pleasant tête-à-tête with charming Ann Dawson

when a dusty, bedraggled Danny found their compartment.

"Danny, how in the world did you get on this train?" gasped Ted.

"Never mind that—you two have to get off!" panted Danny.

"But we must reach Idlewild."

"Grant and his men are going to get on at Saugus," was the answer. "It's their last chance to stop you and they're desperate. They won't hesitate to shoot."

Actually Danny was not quite right. Grant on reaching Saugus had determined to take no risks. Gilroy and two others were to get on the train and wait their chance to get Ann and her fool of a helper. He was going on by plane to the Idlewild Hunting Lodge in case they failed. This plan meant that Grant would not be involved in any gun play.

Ted heard Danny's brief account of what had occurred, and looked perturbed.

"We'll be in Saugus in ten minutes." He fingered his chin. "Our only hope is to get off when they get on."

The exit or entrance to most American trains is at the front and end of each coach. The three, hearts beating fast, kept their heads low as the train steamed into Saugus. Luck favoured them. They saw three of the gang enter the middle of the train, so they got off from the last coach as the train started to move.

The Hold-up in the Air

TED decided that the only way to get to Idlewild was by air, and so they hired a car and raced off to the airport.

"The next plane to Idlewild leaves in four hours," said an official in answer to their inquiry. "One just took off."

"Can't you radio it back?" questioned Ted.

"Only if it were very important."

Ted took out his card. "I'm from the District Attorney's office. This is official business."

"Get your tickets in the next office," the official nodded. "You're practically on board."

Grant was the only passenger when the machine took off from Saugus, but he sat up quickly when the plane banked and changed direction. The relief pilot came out of his cabin to explain that they had received a radio call to return to port for some extra passengers. It would only be a short delay. The master crook got a shock when he saw that the three passengers were Ann Dawson, Ted Clark and Danny. He turned up his coat collar, pulled his felt hat over his eyes and took a seat at the back of the cabin.

"This is exciting." Ann's eyes were dancing as she stepped into the main cabin. "I've never been up in a plane before."

"Well, don't get nervous," laughed Ted. "You'll like it."

"It's a lucky thing for us we got this plane," muttered Danny, when they were seated, and the machine was well on the way to Idlewild.

"I'll be glad when we get this letter to the Governor," said Ann.

"You're not going to get it to the Governor!" drawled a voice.

"Jim Grant!" gasped Ann, and went very pale.

"Don't scream! Sit down!" Grant covered them with a gun. "I've got you all covered. We're gonna talk this thing over quietly."

"What's on your mind, Grant?" Ted demanded coolly.

"I'm going to take care of all of you." Grant's laughter was shrill and

the eyes seemed to blaze. "They can only send me to the chair once, and after Bruce Dawson gets his, I don't care what happens."

"But my brother is innocent."

"He wasn't innocent of taking my girl away from me."

"That's a lie, and you know it," stormed Ann. "Why, she was through with you before she and Bruce fell in love."

"You killed that girl, Grant," interposed Ted. "And you planted the gun on Bruce Dawson; we can prove it."

"Not without that letter," Grant stepped forward. "Hand it over!"

"Not a chance." Ted had his hands at his side.

"Give it to me or I'll drill you where you stand!"

"Grant, you're insane," Ted spoke recklessly.

"I'll give it to him," Ann hastily intervened. She liked Ted too much to see him killed before her eyes. From her bag she took the all-important letter. "Here it is."

Jim Grant, for a moment, forgot caution in his anxiety to get the letter that meant life or death to him. He stepped forward and grabbed the letter, and the next second received an uppercut under the jaw that lifted him off his feet. Next moment the gun was wrenched from his hand.

"Grant, you're through!" mocked the deputy warden. "Stand up!"

Jim Grant got to his feet, but before the gun he could not do a thing, and had to submit to being lashed to his chair. Ted summoned the relief pilot, explained that he was a warden and that they had captured a desperate man. It was decided that the plane should return to Saugus.

Taxis were attached to the airport, and bundling his prisoner into a car, Ted gave orders to drive to the sheriff's offices. After leaving the airport the

driver thought fit to explain that the sheriff was out hunting with the Governor.

"Then take us to the Idlewild Hunting Lodge," decided Ted, and turned to Ann. "We'll turn the letter over to the Governor and this man at the same time."

They arrived at the Idlewild Hunting Lodge, which was a sort of club for big-game hunters. The manager appeared.

"This man is a murderer," Ted pointed to his prisoner. "I want to turn him over to the authorities. Where's the Governor?"

"The Governor isn't here. He's out shooting."

"He and the sheriff are together?"

"Yes."

"What time do you expect him back?"

"He'll be back around sundown."

"But supposing he doesn't come back?" Ann was frightened.

"Please don't worry," Ted smiled reassuringly. "We have plenty of time." He turned to the manager. "Have you a place where we can lock this man up?"

The manager conducted them to the library, where Ted, with Danny's help, bound the prisoner securely to a chair, then they went out and locked the door behind them. Ted felt better when that was done. His next request of the manager was permission to place a letter of great importance in the safe. That done Ted ordered a quick meal before they set about finding the Governor and the sheriff.

Grant Escapes

COMING away from locking up the letter they encountered a good-looking maid, who saw Danny, and nearly fainted on the spot. Apparently Gertie and Danny had been engaged when Danny had gone away for a holiday against his will. Gertie had said that she was finished with Danny for ever, but at sight of him she held out

her arms. Ted winked at Ann, and they left the two alone.

"Are you still in the old racket?" demanded Gertie.

"Honey, I'm through with all that," Danny assured her. "I'm going straight—honest to goodness I am. If you'll marry me, Gertie, I'll even give up safe-breaking."

Danny had to take Gertie off to be introduced to Ann and Ted.

"Meet my future warden," Danny laughed. "I'm going to do a life stretch."

"Congratulations!" cried Ted. "Best of luck!"

"Thank you," murmured Gertie, then she looked suspiciously at her man. "Say, what brings you to Idlewild?"

"We captured Jim Grant—he's a murderer," Danny explained. "We got him locked upstairs. The manager has sent for the police."

A bell rang and Gertie asked to be excused. They were short-handed and she had to be on duty that afternoon in the reception-hall. She met the manager, who asked her to see who was at the door.

It was Gilroy and his two men. Having failed in their mission at the station they had hastened to Idlewild Hunting Lodge according to orders.

"Is Mr. Grant here?" demanded Gilroy.

"Are you the police?" asked Gertie.

Gilroy was taken aback at her question. He looked keenly at the girl, and wondered what she meant. A voice carried to him from the dining-room—a girl's laughter. It flashed to Gilroy that this must be Ann, and that his chief must have been tricked like they had been.

"Yes, we're the police," he spoke gruffly.

"I'll show you where he is. This way, please."

The three crooks followed Gertie up



Danny stooped before the safe and within a few minutes the door swung open.

the stairs and into the library. There, bound to a chair, was Grant. They began to cut his bonds, and Gertie stared in amazement.

"Aren't you the police?" she began, but got no farther. They gagged and bound the girl and locked her in a cupboard.

"I thought you guys were never going to get here," Grant rasped out. "They got wise to our game and dodged out of that train at Saugus. Got into my plane and I was taken by surprise."

"Did Ann Dawson get to the Governor?" questioned Gilroy.

"No!" Grant shook his head. "Our only chance now is to stop him from getting back here. The execution is at seven in the morning and we've got to hold the Governor till that hour. You boys get a space gun?" They handed him a deadly automatic. "The manager pointed out the direction taken by the Governor, and we'll go get him. Come on, let's get out of here."

Their meal finished, Ann, Ted and Danny crossed the hall to set out in their search for the Governor.

"Help, help, help!"

"That's Gertie!" exclaimed Danny, and dashed up the stairs.

They found the girl in a state of collapse in the cupboard. She had managed to free her mouth from the gag. She told them how she had mistaken three men for police.

"They released Grant, and I heard them say they were going to stop the Governor from getting back here."

"This is a show-down—we need guns," Ted rapped out. "Let's call the manager and see if he can help us."

The manager said that he had two revolvers that he kept in the safe. They called out the combination to Danny, who felt just like a criminal as he worked on the lock. The manager placed himself and his car at their disposal, and not many minutes after Grant and his men had left another car was speeding through the woods.

The Fight Among the Trees

GRANT and his men had gone some distance when they sighted, from a hill a car down in the valley. The Governor and the sheriff were returning.

The murderer ordered his men to get out of the car and to stand around as if the car had broken down.

"I want the car in such a position that they have to slow," ordered Grant. "I'll wave to the Governor to stop. Have your guns ready if the old bird shows trouble."

Naturally the Governor slowed his car when he saw the other car and a man waving to him to stop. Neither he nor the sheriff had any idea that in these peaceful woods they were to be held up.

Grant came round to the driver's side. "Are you the Governor?"

"Yes."

Grant pulled out a gun.

"Then get out of the car!"

"What's the meaning of this?" spluttered the elderly sheriff.

"Never mind—you'll find out soon enough—get out!"

"How dare you!" began the Governor.

"This'll mean—"

"Get out!" snarled Grant. "I'm kinda hasty at times on the trigger."

The Governor and sheriff obeyed the curt command. Grant asked Gilroy to look in the car for some rope to secure their prisoners.

"What do you want with me?" demanded the Governor. "What are you going to do?"

April 11th, 1938.

"Keep you under cover for a few days," laughed Grant.

"For what reason?"

"Cut out the questioning," Grant scowled. "And if you value your skins don't try any funny stuff."

Grant had sent one of his men to watch the road and this man came panting up.

"Ann Dawson and three men are headed this way," he shouted. "They saw me."

"You boys scatter," Grant ordered. "Get behind the trees, and don't waste your lead." He nudged the sheriff. "You and the Governor come with me."

Ted Clark had seen the crook. The three men at once got out of the car. Ann was to remain in the car and keep down out of the way in case there was any firing. The manager had brought his own gun and they had plenty of ammunition.

They rounded a corner and ahead they saw the two cars.

"We've got to get busy," Ted looked round at Danny. "They're liable to get away. Listen!" They stood still and distinctly they heard dried twigs snapping under heavy feet. "They're around here some place. Let's separate."

Green, the manager, was detailed to take cover behind a tree and watch the road. Danny was to go to the right, whilst Ted decided to take a line from the cars.

Ted Clark had been on plenty of man hunts, and his keen ears were attuned to the least noise of movement among the trees. A crook darted out of hiding. The wretched fellow knew that the deputy warden and his friends were drawing in on him and his nerve had gone. He fired his gun wildly and dashed among the trees.

Grinly Ted pursued the man, and then he sighted Gilroy and another crook peering round a thick tree. Up went Ted's gun and neatly he drilled Gilroy through the shoulder. The other man fled. A gun barked—Danny had brought the crook low.

The third crook had had enough. He took to his heels and fled, leaving Grant alone with his two prisoners.

Behind a great bole of a tree Jim Grant made a final stand. The Governor and sheriff, whose arms were bound by the rope taken from the former's car, could only hug the ground and hope that all the bullets passed over their heads.

Ted and Danny closed in on the man they sought. They kept their aim high for fear of hitting the Governor and sheriff.

At last Jim Grant's ammunition gave out, and he would have fled, but Ted Clark's gun brought him down in a sprawled heap.

But the murderer was not badly hurt—only a shoulder wound.

As Ted came out of the trees Grant's arm holding the gun stiffened. But for the sharp eyes of the sheriff the young warden might have been killed. The cry of warning caused Ted to jump to one side and the bullet missed him. Before Grant could fire again both Ted and Danny had fired their guns. Jim Grant's crooked career had come to its end.

Gilroy and the other man were more scared than hurt, but Jim Grant was dead—a bullet had taken him through the heart.

"What's the meaning of all this?" the Governor demanded. "Who are you and who are those men?"

Ted passed over his card, then pointed

to the prone figure. "Governor, that's the man who killed Jean Francis."

The Governor was amazed.

"You mean that Bruce Dawson is innocent?"

"That's exactly what I mean!" said Ted.

"I wish I could believe you. Have you any proof?"

"We've got Grant's confession," answered the deputy.

"Where is it?"

"At the Idlewild Lodge—in the safe. Could you come along with me, sir, and see this proof?" begged Ted. "Ann Dawson, the condemned man's sister, is with us, and she's sick with worry."

Back to the Idlewild Hunting Lodge went the Governor. The wounded gangsters were left in the hands of a very angry sheriff, who resented anyone daring to hold him up.

All difficulties were not quite over. The manager had the combination of the safe on a piece of paper, which he had given to Danny when the guns had been required. To everyone's horror Danny said he had destroyed it.

"I promised Gertie I'd never open another safe," Danny murmured unhappily. "I didn't want to be tempted so I threw the paper away."

"Can you open the safe without the combination?" asked the Governor.

"As easy as opening a sardine tin," admitted Danny. "But what will Gertie say?"

So Gertie was fetched. Of course he was to open the safe. Opening a safe to get out a valuable paper was an entirely different matter from safe-cracking. Danny stooped before the safe and within a few minutes the door swung open.

"This will certainly clear him." The Governor folded the paper and placed it in his pocket. "I shall leave at once for my office. I can assure you, Miss Dawson, that your brother will be a free man in a few hours. He will know almost at once the good news, but there are a few formalities that waste time. I advise you to return home and wait for him."

The kindly Governor departed.

Gertie took Danny firmly by the arm. "Mr. Green," she said to the manager, "you need a good man around this place, don't you?" The manager nodded. "Please give him a job, so I can keep my eye on him."

The manager was more than willing, and took the happy couple to his office to fix up all details.

"I had better take the Governor's advice and go home," Ann spoke hesitatingly when they were alone. "I should be there when Bruce gets back."

"Do you mind if I go with you?" asked Ted. "I think that Bruce and I should know each other."

"So do I." The girl laughed happily.

"Do you remember what you said to me on the train just before Danny arrived out of the skies?"

"Sure."

"You proposed to me." The girl blushed. "You offered me any part of the name of Ted Clark."

"But you only took Ted."

"I know, but I think I'll take the Clark any time you wish." She looked at him anxiously. "That is, if it isn't too much trouble."

"Trouble!" shouted Ted, and clasped Ann to his heart.

(By permission of Pathé Pictures, Ltd., starring Regis Toomey as Ted Clark and Sheila Terry as Ann Dawson.)

When ambition for wealth drives a stock-market operator into crooked dealings, he forgets that those he ruins will seek vengeance. He meets his match in a reporter, a girl, and—a man with a gun! A brilliant drama of kid-glove crime, starring Sidney Blackmer and Martha Sleeper

"GREAT GOD GOLD"



Hart Gets Out!

THE securities' room of the Wall Street Stock Exchange was having one of its busy days. It was a time of boom prices, and stocks were soaring.

Seated in a comfortable chair, watching the clerks chalk the prices up on a huge board, was John Hart. He seemed quite indifferent to the fact that others in the room were watching him disinterestedly.

Mostly he was motionless. Now and then he would lean slightly towards his broker and give a buying or selling order in low tones, but apart from that he did not seem to be taking even the mildest interest in the proceedings.

The door of the room suddenly opened, and a young man, with a grin that seemed to have been stuck permanently on his face, strolled in casually. One of the clerks saw him and waved.

"Hallo, Phil Stuart!" he called. "What about that drink you owe me?" "See you later," Phil replied, and threw himself into a chair at the back.

He was the financial reporter of the "Morning News," and every day he came to the exchange to make notes on the day's prices. But he did not very often come into the securities' room—there was not enough excitement there for him. He preferred the big general stock hall outside, where fortunes were made or lost in a few minutes, where big financiers crashed almost weekly, and where small men who had never been heard of before would suddenly leap to their feet and yell:

"Dono it! I've made a million!"

That, to Phil, was drama.

But he was a little tired of drama just now. During the last few weeks he had had rather too much of it. Hence his visit to the operators in Government securities and gilt-edged stocks, hoping he could get a story that for once was just a little different.

For some minutes he did not take any particular notice of anybody. Then he suddenly found himself staring at John Hart's back. There was something very quiet and cocksure about that back—something which merited further attention.

He shifted his place so that he could see John Hart's face. It was rugged and strong—the sort of face that inspires confidence.

He leaned over to a broker he knew slightly.

"Who's the guy with the mug like a sphinx?" he asked, indicating John.

The broker chuckled at the description.

"That's John Hart," he replied. "He's only been operating on this side for the last three months, but in that time he's cleaned up a fortune—all in small rises, too!"

"Thanks," said Phil. "I must get to know him."

There was a vacant chair on the other side of John. For the second time Phil changed his position. He watched John for a minute or two, then pulled out his card-case.

"Good morning, Mr. Hart!" he said. "Here's my card. I'm Phil Stuart, of the 'News.' I've heard a lot about you, Mr. Hart, and would be grateful if you'd give me an interview."

John turned his head slightly, glanced for the briefest of moments at Phil, then resumed his former position.

"Some other time," he said. "I'm busy."

"Suits me," replied Phil. "I'll stick around." He took another hard look at John and came to a quick decision about his character. "I've got a front-page

position reserved for you, so it's worth a long wait."

A faint smile flickered for a while about the corners of John's mouth.

Front-page news! He had never been that before.

He leaned over and gave some inaudible directions to his broker, then stood up.

"Come to my office, Mr. Stuart," he said.

Phil followed him across the room and out through a door, grinning to himself the while. He was grinning because of his victory. Most stock-market operators were vain over their importance as news, and apparently John Hart was no exception.

John led the way to an office he rented in the building, and waved Phil to a chair. Phil disregarded the invitation, watching with amusement the show John was putting on for his benefit. John first went to the tape machine, frowned at something he saw on the ever-growing ribbon, then sat down at his desk and scribbled some notes on a pad. Finally he leaned back, his finger-tips together, and said:

"Well, Mr. Stuart, what is it you want to know?"

Phil fished in his pocket for paper and pencil, and got busy.

"I want your views, Mr. Hart, on the present stock-market boom."

John did his best to look thoughtful.

"Well—" he began, then stopped as Phil interrupted him.

"Of course," Phil went on, "there is no need for you to comment on the obvious. Like all big operators, you know that, following every boom, there is a crash. You know, too, that when the markets show signs of toppling, the big men of finance step aside and unload their holdings as fast as they can."

"That's true," John admitted. "I have always noticed—"

"And who is it that suffers?" Phil swept on. He wanted this interview his own way. "Why, the small investor; also known as the sucker. This sucker, following the lead of the big shots, buys to the limit of his savings, thinking that he, too, can make a fortune. But unfortunately, not having the advance market information of those he seeks to copy, he buys too late."

"Naturally——"
"And then what?" Phil was not even letting John say a single word that mattered. "Why, then the sucker has to get on holding his stocks on a falling market. He can't sell because there is no one who will buy, and he can't hold the market up because he's playing a lone hand and does not have the advantage of collective bargaining."

"I don't think I altogether agree——"
"Then does the cycle swing the other way. With prices crashing, the big men buy in again, hold for long as it suits them, then send values skyrocketing once more. In other words, Mr. Hart, when the big men want to buy there's a depression on, but when the suckers want to buy there's a boom. So it goes on—the rich preying for ever on the poor. Oh, boy, what an interview!"

John Hart sat stiffly in his chair. He was not inclined to interrupt now. As a comparative newcomer to the stock markets, he had found his money extraordinarily easy to make, but what Phil had just said had started him thinking.

Suddenly he became aware that Phil had stopped and was writing industriously.

"Then your theory is that a boom must always be followed by a crash?" he asked softly.

"Always," said Phil. "And if my advice is any good to you, you'll get out while the getting is good. If you don't you'll burn your fingers. I've seen plenty of this sort of thing in my time."

John rubbed his chin reflectively.
"When will that interview of mine be appearing?" he asked. "Not before to-morrow morning, I hope."

"No," said Phil. "It's for our morning's edition."

John got up and held out his hand.
"Well, thanks for looking me up, Mr. Stuart," he said. "Any time I can be of further assistance to you, don't fail to let me know."

Phil nodded and went out. John waited until the door shut behind him, then picked up his telephone and got through to his broker.

"Sell everything, Dan," he said. "I want every one of my holdings converted into liquid cash. But do it slowly—I don't want the market disturbed more than can be helped."

"What's happened?" asked the broker eagerly. "Have you heard something?"

"No—nothing in particular," John replied. "I feel that I need a rest, that's all."

And with a self-satisfied smile about his lips, he replaced the receiver on its hook.

A Proposition

WHEN, the next day, the interview with John Hart appeared in the "Morning News," it created little short of a sensation, and its effect upon the stock markets was instantaneous.

Brokers were flooded with selling orders—not from the big operators, but from the small investor. The selling orders grew in volume as they came in by telephone and telegram, and by early afternoon the markets were in a panic.

As might have been expected, it was April 11th, 1926.

the big operators this time who were left high and dry. In vain they banded together and pooled their gigantic resources in an effort to keep prices up—nothing could stem that overpowering flood.

By the end of the week the fight was over. The small investors, by dint of acting together, had won the big money battle, and John Hart was famous. The biggest newspapers and financial advisers in the country came to seek his advice and interview him, and when the news got round that he had come out of the crash with a tremendous fortune he became a national hero.

And John, just sat in his office and laughed.

But after a while he began to wonder what he could do with himself. It would not be safe to operate on the stock markets any more—if he did and the big men got to hear of it, they would combine into a syndicate to smash him.

Not that he was worrying about it. Ifa had enough to keep him in comfort for the remainder of his life. At the same time he was used to working hard, and this enforced idleness was beginning to irritate him.

Relief came in the form of a telephone call from a firm of lawyers with whom he had occasionally done business. It was the senior partner of the firm who got into touch with him—a man named Nitto.

"Hallo, John!" Nitto said. "I hear you're finding time hanging heavily on your hands. Want a job?"

John knew Nitto well, and Nitto's reputation was not of the best.

"What sort of a job?" he asked cautiously.

"A job that will bring you in money so big that you won't know how to spend it fast enough," Nitto replied. "Anyway, it won't hurt you to come over here and learn what the proposition is, will it?"

"That's true," said John, not particularly eagerly. "I'll be along in half an hour."

Punctually at the end of that time he turned the knob of Nitto's office door and walked in. He found the two lawyers waiting for him. Nitto was a fat, gross-looking man who always smoked cigars with much the air of a Rothschild, while his partner Simon was thin and wiry and wore horn-rimmed spectacles.

Nitto's face was wreathed in smiles as he saw John enter. He shook hands expansively and waved John to a chair.

"So you have come!" he said, and pulled a cigar out of his vest-pocket. "A smoke? No?" He put the cigar back again. "And now, my friend, to business."

John interrupted him.

"Before you say anything, Nitto," he said. "I think I ought to make it quite clear that if this proposition is at all shady, you can count me out. I won't touch anything that's dirty."

Nitto raised his hands in horror.

"John!" he said. "Do you think I would be mixed up in anything dishonest?"

John chose to ignore that question.

"Go ahead," he said. "Let's have it."

"Very well," said Nitto. "The position, John, is this—that, owing to the stock-market crash, hundreds of corporations that were prosperous a few months ago are now finding themselves in a tight corner. Creditors who would not have worried them before the crash are now pressing for their money, and—well, you know how it is. Very few firms, however rich, can lay their hands at short notice on sufficient funds to pay their debts. The reason is quite

simple to understand—they cannot get in money that is owing to them. You follow?"

"I follow," John replied restlessly. "But why give me a lecture on elementary finance?"

Nitto leaned closer and lowered his voice. His partner Simon, his eyes glittering, came across the room and placed himself on the other side of John.

"You can see what is going to happen," Nitto continued. "Hundreds of those firms will pass into the hands of receivers. Well, we are going into the receivership business, and we want a man who is well known to the public—for instance, John—to take charge. He will be appointed receiver in certain selected cases, and——"

"Just a minute!" John held up his hand. "Who said he would be appointed receiver? That's a matter for the courts."

Nitto gave an oily smile. "Judge Simmons of the Industrial Court is a very great friend of mine," he said. "He will fix that." He put his hand on John's arm. "Don't you see, John, there is a fortune in it? We shall control the finances of every company that passes into our hands. The receivership fees will be tremendous. So long as the slump lasts, we shall make a hundred thousand dollars a month."

John looked at him suspiciously. "And how much does Judge Simmons get out of it?" he asked.

Nitto made a gesture of resignation. "Don't be like that, John," he said. "It's all perfectly above-board. If we don't get the receiverships, other folks will. Why let good business pass us by? And think, John—it will mean unlimited power, unlimited money. You would be one of the most important men in the world."

John's eyes narrowed. Without knowing it, Nitto had raised a shrewd thrust at his vanity.

"Power!" he repeated. "Unlimited money!" Then he shook his head. "I don't like it," he said suddenly. "Sorry, gentlemen, but I'm not coming in with you."

He started for the door. Simon rushed after him and barred the way. Nitto snatched up a document from his desk and followed.

"Think, John—think!" Simon implored. "You are throwing away the chance of a lifetime."

"And," Nitto added, "we split three ways. That means thirty-five thousand dollars a month for you, John."

John shook his head and endeavoured to thrust Simon aside. At that moment the door opened and a young man came in. He had a foxy face and hard eyes that were alight with triumph.

"Got it!" he said as he kicked the door shut behind him. "We've a fifty-one per cent control of creditors' votes. It's in the bag."

Nitto beamed and turned to John. "This is my son John," he said.

"Frank, meet Mr. John Hart."

Frank Nitto looked at John with reverential awe.

"John Hart!" he exclaimed. "Gosh, I never expected I would have the honour of meeting you, sir."

Again that touch to John's vanity. John smiled.

"Frank has been looking into the affairs of the Excelsior Hotel for us, John," Nitto explained. "It is in a bad way, and I'm afraid it's got to be wound up. That's the hotel owned by George Harper—I expect you've heard of him."

"Slightly," said John, and once more made to go. "Well, I wish you luck, Nitto."

He got no farther. The door opened again, and this time a girl came in. She was small and very lovely, with very dark, almond-shaped eyes.

Frank Nitto's face was transformed into a mask of tenderness, as he kissed her.

"Elena!" he exclaimed. "You are early."

John looked at her, and his heart seemed to stand still. He had never been particularly interested in women up to that moment, but there was something about Elena that got him.

He coughed and went up to them hopefully.

"I don't think we've met before, have we?" he said.

Frank Nitto looked up, his eyes suddenly suspicious.

"This lady is my wife, Mr. Hart," he said.

John smiled disarmingly.

"Even so, I should be honoured by making her acquaintance," he said.

"How do you do, Mrs. Nitto?"

Nitto senior came forward rubbing his hands.

"It is Mr. John Hart, the great financier, my dear," he said, and exchanged significant glances with Simon. "Frank, my boy, you had better slip over to the Industrial Court with those proxies and register them. Ask for a receivership. I will telephone Judge Simmons and tell him to give you an early hearing."

Frank nodded ill-humouredly, gave John another look, and then went out. Nitto spoke briefly on the telephone.

While he was doing so, Elena moved towards the door. She smiled invitingly at John and held out her hand.

"Good-bye, Mr. Hart," she said. "I am glad we have met. Perhaps we shall become great friends."

"Very great friends, I hope," said John. "And I expect we shall be seeing quite a lot of each other in the future."

She smiled again and went out. John watched the door close behind her and then turned briskly to Nitto and Simon.

"After thinking things over," he said. "I am going to change my mind. I'll come in with you on that proposition. Shall we shake on it?"

Nitto and Simon laughed joyously as they all shook hands.

Marcia Speaks Out

FRANK NITTO, as the one who did all the dirty work of the new firm, appeared before the Industrial Court an hour later and made a formal application for a receivership in respect of the Excelsior Hotel. He put in proxies showing that a majority of the creditors of the hotel wanted a receivership, and also put forward the name of John Hart as the receiver they wished to have appointed.

As a matter of course, Judge Simmons made the necessary order.

Frank, pleased with himself at the smooth way he had handled everything, went to the court office right away and obtained a summons—a document which called upon George Harper, as owner of the hotel, to hand over everything to John Hart. Then he went straight round to the hotel with the necessary witness, gained access to George Harper's office unexpectedly, and thrust the summons into the harassed hotel-owner's hand.

"Sorry, Mr. Harper," he said, grinning, "but these things will happen, you know."

George Harper appeared to be stunned. He stared at Frank like a man demented, and Frank, scared by the look, made a hurried exit.

Late that afternoon, newspapers were on sale in the streets carrying the story

of George's Harper's suicide. Harper, unable to face the loss of something he had devoted a whole lifetime in building, had shot himself.

Frank was in his father's office when the news came through. He was terrified.

"Gosh, I never thought the old fool would do a thing like that!" he blubbered. "What's going to happen to me now? There'll be trouble, and the authorities will be after me."

Nitto senior hid a smile. He patted his son on the shoulder kindly.

"You're worrying yourself unnecessarily, Frank," he said. "The best thing you can do is to take a holiday somewhere—go to Europe, have a couple of weeks in Paris, then come back again. Everything will have blown over then."

He glanced at his partner Simon and closed one eye. "You'd better go alone, too—just in case you have to keep on the move for a while." He pulled out his pocket-book and extracted some notes. "Here, take this thousand dollars. One of the Cunard steamers leaves this afternoon."

Frank clutched at the notes gratefully.

"Thanks," he said. "I'll be on it. See Elena for me and explain, will you?"

"I will," promised Nitto senior, and Frank hurried out.

Nitto laughed. Simon, his forehead creased in a frown, came forward wonderingly.

"Why did you let the boy go?" he asked. "He can't get into any trouble just because Harper blows his brains out."

"I know," replied Nitto softly. "But Elena and John Hart are getting on so well together that it would be a pity to spoil things by having a husband around, wouldn't it? You see, my dear Simon, Elena is expensive, and once she induced John to start spending money on her, he will have to keep in with us in order to make more."

"But will John fall for her as hard as that?" Simon asked.

Nitto stuck a fat cigar into the corner of his mouth and lit it.

"What do you think?" he murmured. "Elena is clever, and John has just the kind of vanity a woman like that can use to her own advantage." He shook his head sadly. "Ah, me! Vanity is an expensive thing!"

Simon smiled then. He could see what Nitto was driving at.

"I think I'll have a cigar, too, Nitto," he said. "This is one of life's great moments."

Early the next morning, John Hart arrived at the Excelsior Hotel in order to take possession. He made himself known at the reception desk, and one of the attendants took him to the private lift which led to George Harper's suite.

As they reached the lift, its doors slid back and a girl came out. She was dressed in black, and her eyes reflected a deep sorrow. She paused for just a moment and looked at him, recognising him, then quickly she passed on.

John stared after her interestedly.

"Who is she?" he asked.

"Miss Marcia Harper, sir," replied the attendant. "Daughter of the late owner of the hotel."

John nodded and turned to the lift.

"Nice-looking girl," was his only comment. "Tough on her—all this business."

That was his first meeting with Marcia, but it was destined not to be his last.

For a whole month he did not see her again. During that time the firm of Nitto and Simon was fairly busy, and company after company began to pass into their hands. Money poured into their banking accounts in a never-ending stream—money that ought to have been paid out to creditors, but which had been side-tracked by John Hart as "receivership fees."

Big as John's fortune had been before, it grew bigger and bigger every day now. He took over a whole floor of the Excelsior Hotel, converted half of it into



"If my advice is any good to you," said Phil, "you'll get out while the getting is good."

luxurious offices, and the other half into magnificent living quarters.

Now and then Phil Stuart of the "News" came in to see him. John made a point of being great friends with Phil, because Phil used to print long articles about him—mostly flattering.

One day Phil strolled into the outer office of John's suite after a story. He paused by the desk of John's secretary and grinned down at her.

"Hallo, Gert!" he said. "The chief busy?"

Gert shook her head.

"No," she said. "Go right in."

Phil went right in, not noticing a girl sitting nearby, her mournful eyes following him dejectedly. It was Marcia.

"Well, John," he said, sitting himself on a corner of the desk, "what's the latest news? Anything big?"

John shook his head, smiling.

"No—nothing," he replied. "Two more companies passed into my hands since you were here last, but they're only small."

Phil looked at him admiringly.

"I don't know how you do it," he said. "If I didn't know you were dead straight, I'd start thinking there was something phoney in the racket."

John looked just a little uneasy.

"If there were anything phoney in it," he said, "I wouldn't be here now. You can be perfectly certain of that." He laughed. "It was a mirthless sound. 'I suppose I have a flair for acting as receiver to defunct companies—that's why the Court thinks it fit to appoint me each time.'"

There came a knock on the door. Gert entered with a card.

"That girl's outside again," she said. She's getting madder and madder. She states that unless you see her right away, she's going to bust her way in. What do I do?"

John took the card and read the name "Marcia Harper" on it.

"All right," he said. "I'll try to see her in a minute." He waited until Gert had gone, then turned to Phil. "Listen, Phil, I want you to do something for me." He handed Phil the card. "This wretched woman has been trying to get hold of me for a week now. She's the daughter of George Harper. Get rid of her for me, will you?"

Phil looked at the card curiously.

"What's eating her?" he asked.

"I don't quite know. I think she's got some crazy notion in her head that I'm responsible for her father's death. Take her out to tea somewhere and try to convince her that she's wrong. I might get some peace then."

Phil chuckled.

"Is she pretty?" he asked.

"She isn't exactly hard to look at," John replied.

"Then leave this to me." Phil flipped the brim of his hat. "I'm good at this sort of thing. And I'll charge the cats up to you. So long!"

He went out. Marcia was still sitting there. She half rose as he shut the door behind him, then dropped back again hopelessly.

He went up to her.

"Miss Harper?" he asked, and when she nodded went on—"Mr. Hart gave me word that he can't see you yet. He's too busy. But if there's anything I can do—Hi, what's the big idea?"

She swept him aside, her face white with anger. Before anyone could stop her, she had thrown open the door of John's office and was inside.

"You're going to listen to me, Mr. Hart," she cried fiercely. "I came here intending to discuss my father's estate with you, but as you haven't even the

courtesy to see me willingly, I'm going to say something else. I've been making inquiries into these receiverships of yours, and I know that you're nothing but a cheap crook. And if it's the last thing I do, I'll break you!"

She turned and slammed out, leaving Phil gaping after her.

Phil made a quick recovery. Much as he liked John, he scented a story, and shot after Marcia like a whirlwind. He caught her by the lift and took off his hat.

"You're a dame with ideas," he said. "Let's have tea somewhere."

Marcia surveyed him contemptuously. "You're a friend of his, I suppose," she said.

"I'm a journalist first," replied Phil. "Where shall we go?"

Big Ambition

JOHN, unaware of what had been happening outside, returned calmly to his work. For half an hour he did not move from his chair. Then he was disturbed by someone entering through the door that led from his private suite. It was Elena!

He jumped to his feet, alarm on his face.

"Elena!" he said. "You mustn't come here! If anyone should find out, there would be the deuce to pay."

Elena laughed and came over to him. "There is the deuce to pay already," she said. "At least, there might be very soon. Frank suspects that I am interested in someone else. He has bought a gun!"

John passed his tongue over his suddenly dry lips.

"Does he suspect—me?" he asked. She shook her head. She seemed to be greatly amused by the whole situation.

"No, John," she replied, "he does not suspect you. But he is sure to find out one of these days."

John passed his fingers through his hair agitatedly.

"Heavens, what a mess!" he said. She looked at him with sudden eagerness.

"John," she whispered, "you do love me, don't you?"

"You know I do," John replied.

"Then why should all this worry you?" She smiled up into his face. "After all, Frank can easily be dealt with. All you have to do is to make lots of money quickly—then we can go away together, get a divorce, and be married. It is all perfectly simple, isn't it?"

John nodded absently.

"Yes, it is all quite simple," he replied.

She clutched hold of his arm, suddenly apprehensive.

"John, you really do care for me, don't you?" she asked. "You're not just playing with me? Because if you are—"

"No, no—I'm not playing with you. And I'll see what can be done." He looked over his shoulder apprehensively. "And now you must go. I am expecting people."

"All right," she said, reassured. "I will see you this evening, John?"

John nodded, and she went away again.

For a long time after that, John paced up and down his office, his hands behind his back, thinking. The fact of the matter was, he was tired of Elena now, and would be glad of any opportunity to get rid of her.

But to do that he would have to leave New York and go somewhere where she could never find him. He would have to do it quickly, too, because if Frank ever got to find out—well, he was

the sort of emotional fool who would stop at nothing. Even murder!

John shivered, and racked his brains for a way out.

The idea came to him late in the afternoon. He had paused by the window, and a sky-sign had suddenly lit up over the way. It said—

CONTINENTAL UTILITIES

His eyes glittered. He swung away from the window and picked up his phone.

"Get me Nitto and Simon!" he shouted.

He resumed his pacing while the connection was made, then sat down again at his desk.

"Nitto?" he said. "Listen, I want you and Simon to come over here first thing to-morrow morning. Get here at nine. I have something big for you both. Understand?"

He hung up again, went to his private suite, and changed from his business-clothes into something more comfortable. Then he returned to his desk and began planning his last great coup.

Sharp to time the next day, Nitto and Simon arrived. They found John waiting for them, his expression brisk.

"Well, John, what is the big news?" Nitto asked cheerfully.

By way of reply John opened a drawer in his desk and took out two thick wads of notes. He placed them in a neat stack before Nitto and Simon.

"That is your share to date," he said. "Twenty-three thousand dollars odd—a very satisfactory return for only a few weeks' work. Incidentally, that ends our old arrangement."

Nitto's eyes narrowed.

"What do you mean—that ends our old arrangement?" he asked.

"Just what I say," said John. "Hitherto we have been splitting three ways while I have been doing all the work. In future we split only two ways. I take half; the other half you can divide up between you."

Simon's face went purple.

"You can't do a thing like this, John," he said. "It isn't ethics."

"Nor is our racket," John snapped. "It's a dirty game from top to bottom, and as I'm taking the biggest risks I'm going to have the biggest cut."

Simon turned to Nitto and spread out his hands resignedly.

"I always said we ought to have had a contract with him," he groaned. "Not that we could have enforced it in any court, but it would have at least involved the three of us so that we couldn't double-cross each other. He's got us where he wants us."

Nitto grunted, his eyes on John's face. His expression was far from pleasant.

"Well, maybe it's our fault for trusting you, John," he said. "You're ambitious, and sooner or later this was bound to happen. But before we put any more business your way we want something in black and white. I'm not grumbling at the way you're fixing things, mind—you've made for both of us far more than we anticipated—but there isn't going to be any more pinching of terms. Get it?"

John laughed. He had been wanting them to say something like that.

"Come here a minute," he said, and walked to the window. He pointed to the sky-sign. "You see that?"

"Continental Utilities," Nitto said. "Well?"

"Get that concern into my hands, and I'll sign anything you want."

Nitto gasped.

"John, you're mad," he said. "Continental Utilities! Why, it's too big. It controls power companies, railways—"

goodness knows what else. It's beyond us."

"Is it?" John's eyes were gleaming. "Could it pay all its debts in liquid cash if pressed? Could it?"

"No," admitted Nitto, "I don't suppose it could. But who would press it?"

"Who would have pressed those other companies that are now under our control had we not secured creditor-proxies?" John retorted. "That is your side of the business, Nitto. Pull this off, and I'll personally guarantee each of you a cool fifty thousand dollars. Do I need to say any more?"

Nitto turned slowly to Simon, and the two lawyers stared at each other wonderingly. Then Simon suddenly snapped his fingers.

"We'll do it," he said. "Goodness knows how, but we'll do it."

John held out his hand. "When you have," he said, "bring me your agreement, and I'll sign it."

Nitto sighed wistfully. "You're a hard man, John," he muttered, "but you certainly do know how to bring in the dough. Seeing that we're completely in your hands, we can't grumble, I suppose." He chuckled ohlessly. "But we're not being caught again, John. Everything must be in black and white after this."

John saw them out and closed the door after them. Then he returned to his desk, smiling.

"There isn't going to be any after, Nitto," he murmured to himself. "But you're not going to know that—yet!"

Evidence

It was Frank Nitto who was put on to the Continental Utilities job. It was the kind of concern whose stock was mainly held by small investors, and during the weeks that followed Frank went round to these people, and by vaguely hinting that something was wrong with the concern got their signatures to the necessary proxies. Creditors, too, listened to his persuasive words, and gave their proxies also.

John during all this time had completely forgotten about Marcia and Phil Stuart. But they had not forgotten about him. And when Phil heard what Marcia had been able to find out about the receivership racket he threw his whole weight into the task of bringing it to an end.

Using the resources of his paper he did not take long to hear of the plot against Continental Utilities. Having heard, he went along to see the concern's president, a man named Dupont.

In the course of time Frank Nitto succeeded in getting sufficient proxies to be able to appear before the Industrial Court. Almost automatically Judge Simmons granted him the necessary summons, which he took back to John Hart.

The following morning John, armed with the summons, went to the Continental Utilities Corporation offices and asked to see Dupont. He was shown in at once, to find Dupont waiting for him.

John showed the summons.

"I'm sorry about this, Mr. Dupont," he said, doing his best to look it. But there was no hiding the triumph in his expression.

Dupont shrugged his shoulders. "That's all right," he said. "I'd heard something of the sort was likely to happen. If the creditors and stockholders want it that way, it's their business." He bowed. "I formally relinquish control to you."

John stared at him, puzzled. "But surely you are staying on?" he said. "I am only appointed to super-

viser. You will continue in office as usual, won't you?"

Dupont shook his head.

"Quite unnecessary," he said. "My secretary has the whole situation at her finger-tips, and will tell you anything you want to know. Besides, sir, I have been my own master all my life, and am too old now to start taking orders from anyone. I wish you a very good day."

He thrust past John and went out. John laughed and went to the desk, where he pressed a button for the secretary.

He did not recognise her at first when she came in.

"Good morning," he said. "I've seen you before somewhere, I think! Haven't I, Miss—Miss—"

"Harper—Marcia Harper," was the quiet reply.

"Of course," John nodded. "You were very angry with me once, and uttered all kinds of threats, didn't you?"

Marcia nodded.

"I'm afraid I did," she said ruefully. "But I've forgotten all that now. You must forgive me, Mr. Hart, but I was upset by my father's death."

"That's all right," said John. "I'm glad to see you have taken things so sensibly, and are now getting on in the world. You have a very good job here, you know."

The bell of the house telephone went. Marcia answered it, then turned to John.

"Two gentlemen to see you, Mr. Hart," she said. "Mr. Nitto and Mr. Simon."

John frowned impatiently.

"All right—I'd better see them, I suppose," he said. "Have them come up—and while they're with me, I don't wish to be disturbed."

"Very well, Mr. Hart," she replied, and gave the necessary orders into the telephone.

John wandered across the room, lighting a cigarette and thinking about the forthcoming interview. Marcia, unnoticed by him, quietly put up the switch of the dictograph that stood on John's desk, then went out.

A moment later Nitto and Simon came in. They were in a cheerful mood—Nitto especially.

"Well, John," Nitto said, "you have got what you wanted, and I have brought along our little contract." He laughed in an oily way. "No more misunderstandings between us, eh? In future, all receiverships we get for you are on fixed terms."

Marcia, sitting at her desk in the outer office, heard every word. The dictograph, a loud-speaking telephone which is generally installed for inter-departmental use, picked up every word.

"Have you signed your copy?" John asked. "If any of us are going to sink, we all sink together."

"Here it is," said Nitto.

John signed and they exchanged copies. Then, after a few words of idle conversation, John showed the two lawyers out by a private door.

He returned to his desk and reached out towards the dictograph, intending to call Marcia in. It was then he noticed that the switch was up. He scowled at it thoughtfully, then rose and went to the door of the outer office.

"Miss Harper," he called. "Would you come in a minute?"

Marcia came in. John deliberately walked over to the window and pretended to be absorbed in lighting a cigarette.

"There are some papers that Mr. Dupont left on the desk, Miss Harper," he said. "Perhaps you'd file them away."

Marcia went to the desk and picked the papers up. She reached out towards the dictograph, intending to return the switch to its normal position, then sud-



"I'm sorry about this, Mr. Dupont," said John Hart in deep concern, but there was no hiding the gleam of triumph in his eyes.

deuly drew her hand back. Quietly she went across to the filing cabinets.

John strolled to the desk again, fully expecting the switch to be altered. When it wasn't, he got a shock. For a moment he wondered whether his sudden suspicions that Marcia had been listening had been unfounded.

It was something he couldn't be sure about.

He went to the filing cabinets and stood watching Marcia for a moment or two. Then he said:

"Miss Harper, you and I have got to be great friends. We have a great work to do together, trying to save this vast corporation from disaster. Naturally, at the moment, I am completely in the dark as to its affairs, and I look to you to explain them all to me."

"Yes, Mr. Hart," said Marcia quietly, going on with what she was doing.

"I was wondering if—" He broke off, seeing the document that was in her hand. It was the contract between him and the lawyers, and she was in the act of filing it with the other papers. In the shock of finding the dictograph switch up, he had momentarily forgotten all about it. "I'd better take charge of that," he said. "It's private."

He watched her narrowly as he took the document out of her hands, and thought he detected a tiny flicker of disappointment pass over her face.

Slowly he folded the document up and put it away in his inside pocket. Then he went on:

"I shall probably retire from active business when I have finished my work here. It is my intention to go for a trip round the world, and, of course, I should need a secretary." He moved closed to her and put a hand on her arm. "Why not come along to my place to dinner to-night and talk it over?"

She turned, her head and looked at him, her heart pounding wildly. She wanted that contract he had just signed, because with it she would be able to ruin him.

"I'd love to," she whispered softly. At that moment the door opened behind them, and Elena stood looking at them. A smile had been on her face as she came in, but when she saw them so close together it vanished. An expression of intense hatred took its place.

They sprang apart guiltily, and John was just in time to see her before the door slammed again. He passed his fingers round the inside of his collar, and laughed uneasily.

Perhaps it was just as well, he reflected. Elena would not pester him any more now. He had just come to the conclusion that Marcia was completely charming, and so far as he was concerned Elena was finished.

The Reckoning

AT seven o'clock that evening he sat in his suite waiting for Marcia to arrive. He had taken particular care that everything should be exactly right—the table appointments were the best in the Excelsior Hotel, the suite was dressed gaily with expensive flowers, and the food and wines were to be above reproach.

He heard the motor of the private lift start humming, and hurried to a mirror to straighten his tie. The lift doors slid back, and he turned with a smile of welcome on his face.

Then, abruptly, the smile died. Standing before him was Frank Nitto.

"What the devil are you doing here at this time of the day, Frank?" he snapped irritably. "I'm expecting guests, and have no desire to deal with business matters. You must leave your call for another—"

April 11th, 1936.

He broke off, suddenly frightened by the expression on Frank Nitto's face. Frank stood there like a sphinx, his right hand out of sight under his jacket.

Hastily John backed away towards the bell.

"What's the matter?" he gabbled. "What do you want?" "Stand still!"

The words whipped across the room like a pistol shot, and Frank's right hand came into view. In it was a small revolver.

John put his hands out defensively. "Stop playing the fool!" he said. "You can't come here and do things like that."

Frank advanced a couple of paces, his weapon pointed straight at John's chest.

"Your sins have found you out, Hart," he said. "Elena has told me everything. Have you anything to say before I kill you?"

John's voice became a pitiful whine. Bold as he had been when handling other people's money, he was now showing himself to be a physical coward.

Secret Service Codes

An international gang plans to rob the Bank of the Thames, equipped though it is with the latest modern safeguards. They fail in their attempt, as you can read in a code message from the bank manager to his head office:

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"Kill me!" he muttered. "Frank, think what you're saying! If you kill me, you'll die, too. The law will see to that."

Frank shrugged his shoulders. "What do I care?" he replied. "I have nothing else to live for. Elena is already dead. Next, it will be you; then me."

John made a sudden dive for the bell. Without moving from where he stood, Frank pulled the trigger. His gun kicked, and the next instant John, his hand just underneath his heart, slid coughing into a chair.

Frank turned and walked towards the lift. Before reaching it, he stopped.

"Don't bother to inform the police," he said. "I'm going to do that myself right away."

The lift motor started whirring again. He backed into a corner behind a bureau and waited. Presently the lift doors slid back and Marcia stepped into the room. Frank laughed gently to himself, hurried into the lift unseen by her, and the next moment was gone.

Marcia walked towards John uncertainly, rather surprised that he did not get up. His face was strangely pale, and his eyes reflected pain. Yet somehow he managed to smile.

"Hallo, my dear," he said. "So you came after all!"

"Yes." She hurried over to him. "But you look ill. I'd better call a doctor."

"No, don't do that." He closed his eyes momentarily, then he opened them again. "Sit down a minute and listen."

Puzzled, she obeyed. He went on: "I want you to tell me something—truthfully, mind. Are you still trying to revenge your father's death?"

The question took her unawares. She tried to find something to say.

"I—you see—"

"All right," he interrupted. "I understand. It doesn't matter now, anyway, because I'm through with business for ever." He found himself slipping down in his chair and made an effort to pull himself together. From his pocket he took the contract he had made with Nitto and Simon. "This is what you came to get, I expect," he went on. "Take it. You're too late to do anything about me, but you'll at least be able to deal with the others who were involved."

She took the document automatically.

"Please let me do something for you," she said. "I know you must be terribly ill. Mr. Stuart is down in the lobby—he'd go for a doctor if I asked him."

John laughed. It was a dangerous thing to do, ending as it did in a fit of coughing.

"So Stuart was on your side, was he?" he said. "Tell me, are you and he—in love with each other?"

"Yes," she replied.

John nodded.

"He's a good lad," he said. "One day he'll do big things. And now, my dear, you had better go. The dinner is off. As you go through the lobby, tell the hotel manager to come up, will you?" He held out his free hand. "Good-bye—and good luck!"

Marcia took the hand and pressed it.

"Good-bye," she said, and hurried towards the lift.

But before she could even reach the lobby, John Hart was beyond human aid. His affairs had passed into the hands of the greatest Receiver of all.

(By permission of Pathé Pictures, Ltd., starring Sidney Blackmer and Martha Sleeper.)

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"FIGHTING SHADOWS."—Tim O'Hara, Tim McCoy; Martha Harrison, Geneva Mitchell; Brad Harrison, Ward Bond; Bob Rutledge, Robert Allen; Hank Bascom, Si Jenks; Martin Stalkey, Otto Hoffman; James Duncan, Ed le Saint; Horn, James Mason; Randall, Bud Osborne.

"BARS OF HATE."—Ted Clark, Regis Toomey; Ann Dawson, Sheila Terry; Danny Dawson, Snub Pollard; Gertie, Molly O'Day; Governor, Robert Warwick; Jim Grant, Fuzzy Knight.

"GREAT GOD GOLD."—John Hart, Sidney Blackmer; Marcia Harper, Martha Sleeper; Phil Stuart, Regis Toomey; Gert, Gloria Shen; Nitto, Edwin Maxwell; Frank Nitto, Ralf Harolde; Elena Nitto, Maria Alba; Simon, John T. Murray.

Death among the clouds! War in the sky as intrepid flyers clash with the forces of organised crime! Tailspin Tommy returns to the firmament of Fame in a smashing drama that blazes its way across the Pacific to islands of hidden wealth, of lawlessness, of savagery and cannibalism. A wonder serial of unforgettable thrills, starring Clark Williams and Noah Beery, Jun.



Read This First

Tailspin Tommy, famous civilian flyer and ace of the Three Point Aerodrome, is hired by a wealthy business man named Curtis to make aerial surveys of the oil-bearing island of Nazil, in the far tropical realms of the Pacific Ocean.

Curtis is the uncle of Betty Lou Barnes, Tailspin's sweetheart, and is in partnership with Don Alvarado Casmetto, who owns most of the island of Nazil, and whose daughter Inez has been holidaying in the United States.

The services of Skeeter Milligan, Tailspin's mechanic, are also engaged by Curtis, and the party set out in two planes. But word of their approach is later conveyed to Don Alvarado's unscrupulous stepbrother, Emanuel Casmetto, who seeks to oust his kinsman from Nazil, and who is backed by Raymore, a shady American financier.

Tailspin and Skeeter fall into the hands of Emanuel and Raymore, but escape with the help of Bill McGuire, a newspaper man who has obtained a job as chef at Emanuel's stronghold, solely for the purpose of investigating Raymore's activities.

The two youngsters are also assisted by a mysterious aviator who calls himself the Eagle, and who, for some reason, makes himself their friend.

Later they visit a new oil well on Don Alvarado's property, and are present when an attack is launched by troops in the pay of Emanuel. At the same time a hostile plane shows up, equipped with bombs and manned by Garcia, a treacherous planter who has pretended to be the Don's friend.

Garcia's first bomb appears to wipe out Tailspin and Skeeter!

Now Read On

EPISODE 9.—

"Crossed and Double-Crossed"

Direct Hit

TO Betty Lou and Inez it seemed that the bomb from the enemy plane had burst immediately behind Tailspin and Skeeter, and sure enough, when the smoke of the explosion had cleared away, the two girls saw the prone figures of the youngsters lying huddled on the ground.

But the hole that the bomb had gouged in the earth was some considerable distance from the youthful airman and his mechanic. Actually, the missile had not fallen so close to them as Betty and Inez had imagined, and, though the concussion had swept them off their feet, they were only dazed and shaken.

With indescribable relief the girls who had taken shelter in the hut saw the two boys struggle up, and from their movements realised that they were unhurt. Then all at once, even as Tailspin and Skeeter were collecting their wits, another bomb was released by the hostile pilot in Emanuel Casmetto's plane.

It did not land anywhere near the Americans, but it struck the derrick of the new oil well that had recently been sealed by Don Alvarado's employees, scoring a direct hit that wrecked the tower and killed half a dozen miners who were grouped below the lofty structure. Into the bargain it ripped away the cap that had been clamped down over the shaft, and it ignited the petroleum that instantly gushed forth.

An immense column of angry flames leapt high into the heavens, roaring upward through the twisted ruins of the derrick, and, circling far above the oil-field, Enrico Garcia smiled a sinister smile as he surveyed the result of his grim handiwork.

Yet that smile was soon to vanish from his features, for suddenly he beheld a strange craft swooping towards him out of the clouds, a plane so distinctive in its design that there was no mistaking it.

It was the ship flown by the mysterious aviator who called himself the Eagle and who had so often proved his friendship for Don Alvarado's party! With a startling unexpectedness it had appeared once again in a moment of crisis—coming from nowhere, it seemed—and now it was racing towards Garcia at tremendous speed.

Emanuel's hireling bared his teeth and prepared for action. Confident in his own ability as a pilot, he felt no qualms, only a fierce sense of exultation. He had looked forward to an encounter with the Eagle, telling himself that he would bring the unknown ace to book and write "finis" to the man's long list of successes. And now the time was come. . . .

Meanwhile, down on the oil-field, Tailspin and Skeeter were under the fire of the enemy troops who were hidden in the woods, but as Emanuel Casmetto's forces became aware of the Eagle's presence in the sky their fusillades dwindled away.

So did the volleys of Don Alvarado's men, and there was a curious lull in the battle that had been raging in the neighbourhood of the well. True, some small amount of shooting was still kept

up, but the occasional blast of a rifle only served to accentuate the tension and the quiet that had settled upon the locality.

The eyes of nearly every man, friend and foe alike, were turned heavenwards in the direction of those two 'planes up there—two 'planes whose engine-notes mingled in one deep-toned, ceaseless drone.

As for Tailspin and his mechanic, they had forgotten their previous intention of collecting hand-grenades from the oil-field arsenal and going up in their own ship to do battle with the hostile pilot. They could only stand and gaze at the enemy bomber and the craft which had challenged it.

Far overhead, a machine-gun came into play from one of the manoeuvring 'planes, its deadly chatter punctuating the hum of the motors. It was the machine-gun of the ship manned by Garcia, better known at Emanuel Casmetto's headquarters as Officer XX.

Almost in the same moment the Eagle's gun answered it with a prolonged burst of fire, discharging through the propeller-shaft of his 'plane. The fight was on, each warrior of the sky striving to rake his rival's craft with lead, each endeavouring to gain the all-important advantage of position and bring the other man fairly under his sights.

Garcia was no amateur. He had had experience in aerial combat, and handled his ship well. He was probably as skilful a pilot as ever the Eagle had met. Yet in less than five minutes Don Alvarado's mysterious ally was proving that he had the measure of his man—and Garcia, alias Officer XX, had lost the self-assurance that had marked his conduct at the beginning of the duel.

The Eagle was not only his master as an airman. He had a 'plane that out-classed the bomber which Garcia

was flying. Efficient as that craft was, it seemed to lack the speed and flexibility of his opponent's, and soon the cold sweat of panic was breaking out on the Spaniard's forehead.

Five minutes ago, he had visualised the destruction of the mystery pilot. Now he was battling for his very life—desperate—"on the run"—doing all he could to keep clear of the Eagle's bullets.

It was in vain. He had imagined that he knew every trick in this stern game of dog-fighting, but the Eagle had a wider range of experience than he, and that 'plane of his was like forked lightning.

Suddenly the Eagle was behind Garcia, suddenly the wonder ship was lying close to the bomber's tail, following it like a big bird of prey in pursuit of a frantic victim. And, let loose from the machine-gun muzzle that was hidden in the propeller-shaft, a blistering hail of lead ripped along the fuselage of Garcia's ship.

A slug pierced the Spaniard's arm, and with a hoarse cry of pain he slumped in his seat. His 'plane dived, and it was only by an effort of will that he managed to lay hold of the control-stick again and steer the craft out of its headlong plunge, looking back fearfully as he did so.

Garcia's one desire now was to cry "enough" and make a landing, but he was terrified by the thought that the Eagle would chase him down with machine-gun belching murder. Garcia himself would have done that if the positions had been reversed.

The Eagle, however, was no cold-blooded slayer. He knew that Garcia had been wounded, and he could see that the man was no longer a menace. Therefore, he veered away and left Emanuel's hireling to find a landing-place.

Half-fainting from pain and loss of

blood, Garcia managed to seek out the clearing where he had held a final conference with Gomez, leader of Emanuel Casmetto's troops, and before long the wounded airman was bringing his ship to a standstill beside the vehicles that had carried the column of soldiery overland. . . .

The men who had occupied those vehicles were still on the edge of the woods, whence they had opened fire on Don Alvarado's property, and, though dismayed by Garcia's defeat they believed that victory over the defenders of the oil field was still within their grasp.

The well itself was in flames. At the moment a crowd of miners in asbestos suits were rushing from one of the out-lying sheds with fire-fighting equipment. They were led by Burke, their foreman, and were determined to brave gun-play and conflagration to overcome the disaster which had been created by Garcia's last bomb.

Seeing them from the thickets on the edge of the forest, Gomez lost no time in rousing his men to action.

"Garcia's out of it, but he's done his work," he grated. "The rest is up to us! Pass the word along for a general advance. We'll sweep Don Alvarado and his crowd clean off the oil field!"

Sixty seconds later Gomez led his armed bands of soldiery from the trees in rousing style. On they came, yelling lustily, and firing from the hip as they ran, and from the shacks and store-houses where Don Alvarado and his men were ensconced there arose answering blasts of musketry, so that once again the loud tumult of battle raged across the open ground between the forest and the burning well.

The lull that had occurred during the Eagle's engagement with Garcia was at an end. The smashing uproar of countless rifle-shots filled the air and smoke gathered upon the scene—gun-smoke that merged with the black fumes which were pouring from the blazing oil well, where Burke and his party were working like Trojans.

The Irish-American and his gang of fire-fighters toiled on as if regardless of everything but the inferno they intended to quell. Meanwhile, the gun-play of their comrades in the shacks was covering them, and none but the dead and the wounded were idle. Don Alvarado himself was handling a rifle, as was Ned Curtis. Tailspin and Skeeter, out in the open, were making good use of their revolvers, and even Inez and Betty Lou were taking a hand in the action; shooting from the windows of the hut where they were installed.

Numbers of Emanuel Casmetto's hirelings bit the dust. Nevertheless, the advance continued, for the attackers could afford to suffer heavy casualties and still press home the onset with the odds overwhelmingly in their favour. It seemed, indeed, that the weaker faction which was defending the oil field must sooner or later be massacred or driven out.

But Gomez and his soldiery had reckoned without the Eagle, and all at once the mystery airman dived down on them from the clouds, flattening out when he was scarcely a hundred feet above their heads and spraying machine-gun bullets into the midst of them.

That storm of lead took heavy toll, and men fell by the dozen. The advance was checked, and the troops began to waver. Wavering, they were subjected to a fresh onfilade as the Eagle wheeled to fly over their breaking ranks again with his machine-gun chattering relentlessly.

Gomez and his men started to retreat, and the retreat developed into a panic-



In one of the cockpits they found a discarded flying helmet, and as they examined it they noticed that two crosses had been stitched to the leather.
April 11th, 1936.

stricken rout when the Eagle proceeded to circle above them and harass them with bombs as well as gunfire. Fleeing in abject terror, they dashed back to the woods and plunged into the depths of the undergrowth, leaving the field of battle strewn with maimed bodies.

From storehousings and dwellings came the defenders of the oil well, staring gratefully at the soaring aeroplane whose pilot had gained the day for them. Then groups of miners hastened to the aid of Burko and his gallant company, and within a quarter of an hour the fire at the shaft had been got under control and the deep bore had been "capped" again.

In the interval others of Don Alvarado's men had devoted themselves to the task of attending to the wounded, the enemy's casualties as well as their own, and it was while this work of mercy was going ahead that the Don and Curtis joined Tailspin and Skeeter.

"Have you seen the girls?" Ned Curtis panted. "Are they all right?"

"Yes, there they are," said Skeeter. "They're safe, thank heavens."

"Over there in the doorway of that hut. The two older men glanced in the direction which he had indicated, and a look of intense relief crossed their features. Then Don Alvarado raised his eyes towards the plane that was hovering high above the edge of the forest.

"It is the Eagle we must thank," he breathed. "He has saved us all. I only wish I knew who he was, and why he has chosen to befriend us."

The Eagle a Prisoner

STREAMING through the woods, Gomez and the remnants of his force reached the big clearing where they had left the vehicles which had conveyed them from Emanuel's stronghold, and it was as they blundered from the trees that they beheld Garcia standing beside his plane.

Gomez hurried across to the injured airman, and spoke in a tremulous voice.

"We thought that accursed Eagle had finished you, Officer XX," he said. "Are you badly hurt?"

"No, a flesh wound," Garcia bit out. "I shall be all right in a little while—fit enough to fly the bomber home again. What happened to you fellows?"

Gomez explained all that had occurred. His tone was that of a man who had been badly shaken, but there was a note of bitterness in it, too.

"And now there is nothing for it but to return to headquarters," he completed. "Look, my men are piling into the trucks as if they had all gone crazy. They are demoralised."

"You had better try to control them," Garcia muttered. "Meantime, I'll stay where I am until I feel up to handling my machine again. But wait, Gomez. You might leave two of your men and a first-aid kit with me. I've got to staunch this wound, or I'm liable to bleed to death."

The other acquiesced, and a short time afterwards, when Gomez led the survivors of his mobile column from the scene, Garcia was receiving medical attention from a couple of men known as José and Carlos.

The last truck in the column moved out of the clearing, and Garcia was left alone with the two soldiers who had been detailed to see to his wound. Seated with his back to the bole of a tree on the fringe of the glade, the airman grimaced and bit his lip as the orderlies treated the injury, but they had finished their work in a few minutes, and at length he rolled down his sleeve and fastened it at the cuff.

He soon felt better, and presently he

made as if to rise, but in the very moment that he was pulling himself to his feet he heard the engine-note of an approaching plane, and, on looking up he saw the Eagle's ship flying towards the clearing.

For a second or two he watched it with bated breath, and then all at once he spoke tersely to José and Carlos.

"He's going to land! Quick, get under cover, both of you! This may be our chance to seize that devil!"

His companions stumbled into a clump of shrubs near by, and Garcia himself dropped flat on his face as if he had become insensible. He was still lying there in a prone attitude when the Eagle set his plane down in the clearing and swung himself from the cockpit to the ground.

As Garcia had hoped, the Eagle had failed to notice José and Carlos while he had been flying towards the glade. He had not even noticed the figure of his defeated rival, and now walked straight over to Garcia's bomber, climbing on to one of the wings and peering into the craft's two empty seats. Only when he turned to scan the clearing did he observe the body of Emanuel Casmetto's hireling.

The Eagle moved across to Garcia then, and bent over him.

"Dead or alive, you asked for what you got, old man," Garcia heard him murmur, and knew from his voice that the mysterious aviator was an American.

The Eagle stooped lower, and was in the very act of examining the Spaniard when José and Carlos sprang upon him, taking him completely by surprise and bringing him to his knees before he could offer resistance.

Garcia scrambled to his feet at once, and plucking out a revolver, covered the unknown pilot. At the same time he barked a command to the men who had felled him.

"Strip off his helmet and jacket!" he ordered.

His instructions were carried out, and the American's mask coming away with the helmet, Garcia saw the handsome, weather-beaten features of a man in the thirties; a man who was a complete stranger to him.

"So!" the Spaniard grated. "You are the Eagle, eh? Carrambo! I ought to kill you where you stand. But no, Señor Emanuel and Señor Raymore may want to ask you some questions before you are disposed of—"

He paused, and then quickly handed his revolver to José, bidding him keep a close watch on the "Americano."

"When your hand gets tired of holding the gun," he added, "let Carlos cover him. Meantime, I am going on a little journey in his plane."

"Yes, my friend, the Eagle," he said, turning to meet the steady and defiant gaze of the prisoner, "I am going to borrow your plane, together with your identity. For it has occurred to me that it would be a good idea to convince Don Alvarado beyond all doubt that I am his ally. Not that he has ever suspected me of being anything else, I might observe, but, if he thinks I am the one who has been so helpful to him, I fancy he will confide in me much more than he has done in the past."

With a glitter in

his eyes the Eagle lunged towards him, only to be driven back by the gun in José's fist. Then, with a mocking smile, Garcia donned the leather jacket and the headgear that the captive had worn, carefully drawing down the mask which was attached to the helmet.

A minute later the Spaniard was in the Eagle's plane, and, although his wound was still causing him some discomfort, he made a faultless take-off that carried him high above the trees at the far side of the clearing.

Swinging southward, Garcia headed for the oil field, and during that brief flight he had an opportunity of appreciating the qualities of the machine he was handling. He had piloted many different planes, but never one with a turn of speed such as this, and, although its controls seemed a trifle strange at first, the craft became amazingly responsive to them once he had made himself familiar with them.

Arrived above the locality where the recent battle had taken place, Garcia turned into the wind and glided earthward. A little later he was bringing the ship to a standstill about a hundred yards from the wrecked oil derrick, and as it rolled to a halt he saw Don Alvarado and Curtis hurrying towards him, accompanied by Tailspin, Skeeter, Betty Lou and Inez.

They looked wildly excited, and as they came up it was clear from Don Alvarado's first words that they had recognised the plane as the one which the Eagle had flown.

"Buenos dias, señor," the Don gasped. "I—I have to thank you for your aid. But for you, my partner and I would have lost everything. Señor, I want you to know that everything I have is yours—and that is no idle statement, but a sincere expression of my gratitude."

Slowly the man in the plane raised the mask that concealed his features, and as Don Alvarado and the other bystanders beheld the countenance of their supposed ally they stared at him in astonishment.

"Señor Garcia!" Don Alvarado faltered. "My good friend!"

"Señor Garcia!" echoed his daughter Inez. "Señor Garcia! But why didn't you tell us? Why didn't you let us know you were the Eagle? Santa Maria, we didn't even know you could fly!"

Enrico Garcia smiled.

"I thought I would be of more help if Emanuel did not know I was aiding you, and, as he may have spies working for him in your camp, I decided it would be best to hide my identity even from you."

As he spoke these words he made haste to draw down the Eagle's mask again, assuming a cautious air. Then he lowered his voice guardedly.

"I have revealed myself to you now,"

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he said, "but remember—let no one know who I am."

"You can depend on that," Tailspin broke in. "But tell me, señor, how did you pick up the trail of the dirigible—the first time we set out for Nazil?"

Garcia was quick-witted enough to give an explanation, pointing out that he had known Inez was aboard and had flown to America to keep watch and ward over her.

"I have always been devoted to Don Alvarado and anyone belonging to him, you see," he added. "I have met with such kindness from him ever since I settled here on the island of Nazil."

"And you actually flew to America, señor?" the Don interposed. "Carai, that must have been the time when you said you were going off on a cruise for your health."

Garcia fingered the scarf that was tied around his throat. He had gone for a cruise, and remembered thankfully that he had been absent from Nazil for a week or two. It was a circumstance that bore out his lying story.

"Yes, Don Alvarado," he murmured. "Er—yes, that's right. I pretended I was going for a cruise on a tramp-steamer. But tell me, how are you fixed here? Was much damage done during the fight?"

"The derrick has been smashed, as you can see," answered the Don, "and we have lost a dozen men. Poor fellows, I wish that they—"

"But the oil well?" Garcia interrupted, almost with impatience. "And all your plant?"

"The well was saved," Don Alvarado replied, "and Burke tells me that we shall soon have another derrick rigged up."

"Splendid," said Garcia, though the word was not a true expression of his thoughts. "Don Alvarado, I am happy that I have been of some service to you, and you may rest assured that I shall continue to aid you. Meanwhile, I propose to reconnoitre Emanuel's property and see what is happening there."

Thus spoke Garcia, but when he left the oil-field his destination was the clearing where the Eagle had been taken prisoner, and on arrival there in the mystery airman's plane he ordered the captive to climb into the passenger cockpit of the machine.

The Eagle was forced to obey him at the point of José's revolver, and then Garcia spoke to the two dago soldiers.

"I shall take this fellow to headquarters," he said, "and then I shall return to Don Alvarado's camp. Meanwhile, I want you men to stand guard beside my own ship until Emanuel and Raymond can send out another pilot to fly it home."

José and Carlos nodded, and a short time afterwards they were watching the Eagle's plane as it soared into the heavens again, with Garcia at the controls and the captive American in the forward cockpit.

The craft was soon out of view, but if José and Carlos could have followed its flight beyond the range of the human eye they might have witnessed an incident that spelled disaster for the man whom they knew as Officer XX.

The plane was ten miles north of the clearing in the forest when the Eagle recalled that there was a six-shooter in a pocket of the forward compartment which he occupied, and all at once Garcia found himself looking straight into the barrel of that gun.

"Bail out, feller!" the Eagle commanded grimly. "Come on, bail out! You're wearing a parachute, and you're going to use it!"

Garcia stared at him for a moment, April 11th, 1936.

and then he rose in a hesitant fashion. Next second, however, he was throwing himself towards the American, and, sprawling along the fuselage, he tried to disarm the mystery flyer.

He struck at the Eagle's wrist, but only succeeded in jarring the latter's hand so violently that the revolver went off, and suddenly Garcia was plunging into the void with blood glistening on his temple.

The bullet from the Eagle's gun had merely clipped him, yet it had scattered his wits, and as he hurtled through space with widespread hands he made no attempt to clutch the ripcord of his parachute. His mind, indeed, was still a blank when he crashed to his doom amongst the jungle trees far below.

Up in the fleecy summer clouds that were passing over the island of Nazil the Eagle took undisputed charge of the plane from which Garcia had fallen. The craft was fitted with dual control, and from the forward cockpit the American turned it in a southerly direction, intent now on making for Don Alvarado's territory.

Mistaken Identity

"I TELL you that the Eagle's name is not Garcia. I'm under oath not to reveal his true identity, but you can take it from me that he's never owned a plantation on Nazil."

The speaker was Bill McGuire, who had motored to Don Alvarado's oil-field in order to satisfy himself that Emanuel Casmetto's followers had been beaten off, and now he was in conference with Tailspin and Skeeter.

"I'm not acquainted with this fellow Garcia," he went on, "but your description of him don't tally with the Eagle. He's an impostor, that's what he is, and it's a lucky thing you happened to mention him to me."

It took him some time to convince the two youngsters that they had been fooled, and even when he had finished talking they seemed reluctant to believe that Garcia had deceived them. Nevertheless, they elected to fly northward in the hope of investigating McGuire's statement, and, after seeking out Don Alvarado and repeating all that the newspaper man had told them, they "took off" in the aeroplane that had been placed at their disposal.

Five minutes later Tailspin and Skeeter were passing over the belt of forest that separated the Don's territory from the domain of his stepbrother, and it was as they were cruising above the woods that they saw the bomber in which Garcia had raided the oil-field.

"Look!" jerked Tailspin. "There's the ship that was operating against us a while ago. See, a couple of men are hovering near it! We're going down, Skeets; but be ready to use your forty-five!"

They dived steeply, and before long their plane was coming to rest in the clearing where the bomber stood, and where José and Carlos had been left as watch-dogs.

Both the dago soldiers had lost their rifles in the rout that had followed the battle at the oil-field, but José was armed with the revolver that Garcia had given him, and he immediately opened fire on Tailspin and Skeeter. His first bullet, however, was answered by a couple of shots from the guns of the Americans, and all at once the luckless José was recoiling with a shattered head.

He and Carlos then tried to make off, but were brought to a halt by the threatening shouts of Tailspin and his mechanic, and with a sullen air they

remained motionless as the newcomers alighted from their craft and approached them.

"Who does that bomber belong to?" was Tailspin's opening question.

Neither José nor Carlos seemed disposed to offer a reply, but a significant movement of the young ace's revolver helped to loosen their tongues, and little by little the two Americans obtained vital information that bore out McGuire's words.

True, there was no mention of Garcia, for José and Carlos only knew him as Officer XX. But they told of the Eagle's capture, and admitted that Officer XX had borrowed the Eagle's identity for the purpose of fooling Don Alvarado.

"Skeets," said Tailspin, turning to his mechanic, "this proves that Mac was right, and Garcia is a double-crossing spy, sure enough."

Skeeter nodded, and then he and his chum ordered the two dago soldiers to make themselves scarce, after which the youngsters moved across to the bomber.

In one of the cockpits they found a discarded flying helmet, and as they examined it they noticed that two crosses had been stitched to the leather.

"Officer XX, eh?" Tailspin commented. "Alias Garcia. Skeets, you're a punk aviator, but you're safe enough on a calm day. Do you think you could take that plane of ours back home?"

"Yeah," the other rejoined. "But what are you gonna do?"

"I'm going to take up this bomber here," Tailspin answered deliberately, "and I'm going to scout around in the sky for a double-crossing rat."

Skeeter was by no means anxious to part company with his friend, but Tailspin's mind was made up, and some sixty seconds later the young pilot from Three Point was soaring out of that clearing in the battle plane that had raided the oil-field.

Climbing high above the jungle, he wheeled towards the north, and it was as he did so that he beheld another craft sailing in his direction from a bank of misty clouds, a craft which he immediately recognised as the Eagle's.

But Tailspin did not know that its solitary occupant was the American mystery flyer. According to José and Carlos, Officer XX had planned to take the Eagle to Emanuel's stronghold and then return southward, and, unaware of what had occurred ten miles farther north, Tailspin imagined that the man in control of that ship was the traitor Garcia.

Pulling back the joystick of the bomber, the youngster from Three Point gained height rapidly. Meanwhile the Eagle's plane was coming on steadily, and it was comparatively close when Tailspin lined it up under the sights of the bomber's machine-gun.

"Garcia," he said between his clenched teeth, "you've asked for what I'm going to give you. You've betrayed the folk that believed you were a friend and this is your finish!"

Thus spoke Tailspin in grim soliloquy, unaware that he was taking aim at an ally.

As for the Eagle he had recognised the ship ahead of him as the one in Emanuel Casmetto's service, and was holding himself in readiness for action.

He did not know that its pilot was Tailspin Tommy—Tailspin, whose hand was even now on the trigger of the bomber's gun.

In another moment that weapon was belching fire and leaden death!

(To be continued. By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Clark Williams and Noah Beery, Jun.)

"FIGHTING SHADOWS"

(Continued from page 10)

declared Tim bitterly. "Either Harrison or Stalkey has killed Bob."

"He wouldn't bring him in if they had," objected Hank.

"Just what he would do to throw off suspicion," said Tim.

Quite a crowd of men streamed into the building, where the factor had Bob conveyed to a bed-room, and Father O'Donovan was summoned and attended to the patient, who, apart from a nasty bruise, had suffered nothing worse than mild concussion, while out in the big room by the counter Brad waited with those who questioned him.

Hank, filled with curiosity, informed Tim that he was going to find out what had happened, but Tim thrust a hand between the bars and held on to him.

"You're not going anywhere," he said fiercely, "until you unlock this door! Bob's down, and someone's got to act for the law!"

"Well, all right," surrendered Hank. "I'll probably get life for it, but maybe it'll be worth it."

So Tim was released, and outside the cell he looked down the deserted street and then at the depot.

"You come with me," he commanded, "and if anyone tries to interfere with what I'm going to do, you stop 'em with that old blunderbuss."

"Just what I was aimin' to do," asserted Hank.

They moved along to the depot, and they entered it just as Brad was saying: "All right, I'll tell you, boys. It's a long story, but I'll make it as short as I can."

"You don't have to tell them, Harrison," thundered Tim, striding forward. "I'll give them the truth."

The trappers stared, and Brad hooked his thumbs in his belt with a grimace.

"If Constable Rutledge was shot in your cabin," accused Tim, "he was shot either by you or your friend, Stalkey, whom you were hiding there!"

"Hiding Stalkey?" exclaimed several voices.

"Stalkey's not only the agent for the fur-raiders," said Tim, "he's one of them! So's Harrison!"

"I suppose you can prove that?" drawled Brad.

"I can! Last night I found the stolen furs in Stalkey's cabin. I was coming out of the cellar with them when you attacked me and knocked me out. When I came to you were gone—and so were the furs!"

"Your saying so doesn't prove anything."

"Not my word alone," agreed Tim, "but Hank Bascom went to your cabin afterwards for me, to see where you'd hidden those furs—and he found you were hiding Stalkey. Also, he overheard you say that you had gone to the cellar for the furs. Is that right, Hank?"

"That's what I heard," declared Hank, projecting his scrubby chin aggressively. "Back up, you muskrat! I gotta gun!"

"This morning," pursued Tim, "Constable Rutledge went out to this man's cabin to arrest him—and was hurt, either by him, or by Stalkey. And now, perhaps, you'll tell these trappers, Harrison, where you've hidden their furs?"

"That's what we want to know!" cried Jones, and several others echoed his words.

"Just how do you figure to make me talk?" Brad shouted defiantly at Tim. "More or less the same way you were going to make Stalkey talk!"

Duncan, the factor, came out from the room where Bob was lying in time to hear that statement, and it did not by any means meet with his approval.

"Careful, Tim!" he said warningly. "No agent of the law is allowed to force a confession by violence."

"I know that," returned Tim quite calmly, "but it so happens that I'm no longer an agent of the law. My enlistment expired just two days ago!"

A murmur of surprise ran round the group of men, but Brad proceeded joyfully to shed his coat.

"Well, what a long time I've been waiting for a chance like this!" he boomed. "And just to think that you asked for it yourself!"

Tim's hat flew across the big room and then he ripped off his tunic. The trappers made room for a fray that was to make history—and Hank climbed up on to the counter to obtain a really good view.

The two men, both fighting fit and both yearning to fight, advanced upon each other—and Tim sent Brad flourishing against some crates for a start.

He was up again almost instantly, and excitement reigned in the depot as the two exchanged blows—and snowshoes showered down from a rack upon them and sacks of flour were overturned.

For the better part of ten minutes the battle continued all about the floor of the depot, to the accompaniment of shouts of encouragement and the occasional dislodgment of all manner of wares.

A perfectly timed upper-cut had caught Brad under the chin and deposited him once more against the counter when the door was flung wide and Stalkey bounded in over the step with his rifle to his shoulder; and with him were the self-confessed members of his gang, also armed—Gavin, Horn, and another man named Johnson.

"Don't make any move!" snarled Stalkey malevolently. "Stick 'em up, all of you!"

Obediently the trappers raised their hands, and Tim and Brad suspended hostilities.

"Take 'em into the other room," directed Stalkey, "all but O'Hara and Harrison."

The trappers and the factor were driven away into a big store-room and its door was bolted. But Hank had jumped down behind the counter and hidden beneath it, and he was overlooked. Stalkey flung down his rifle, whipped a .45 Colt from his coat-pocket, and swept over to Tim as Gavin and Horn held him.

"Start talking, O'Hara, about those furs!" he rasped.

"What makes you think I know where they are?" asked Tim, and Brad strode up.

"Because I told him so," he shouted. "Just to help you remember, take this!"

Out shot his left to Tim's mouth, but he pulled his punch, and, in the act of delivering it, winked. Tim made a pass at him, read what was written in his eyes, and abruptly turned his attention to Gavin as his supposed opponent whirled round on Stalkey, smashed both fists into the ugly face of the little crook and knocked him flat upon his back, then struck out at Horn.

Johnson, the third man, was too bewildered by these swift happenings to do anything before Hank rose up behind

the counter with his antiquated rifle, and by then Horn was on his knees and Gavin was staggering backwards before Tim's onslaught.

"Get up, you varmint, and stand against that wall before I start combing you out of my hair!" vociferated Hank.

"Go on, back over against that wall!" Stalkey was still lying inert upon the floor, but Gavin, Horn and Johnson were against the wall, with their hands in the air, when the door of the bedroom was opened and Bob Rutledge appeared on the scene with a bandaged head and a very white face.

"Say, you fellows," exclaimed Brad, wiping blood from his mouth and cheeks, but seemingly quite elated, "would you like to know where I hid them furs?"

"We certainly would," announced Bob, tottering forward; "but I must warn you, Harrison, that we'll use anything you say against you."

"I don't think so," chuckled Brad. "They're back there in that store-room with the men they belong to. I knew Stalkey would never think to look for them there!"

"B-but I don't understand," stammered Tim. "I thought you were working with Stalkey."

"I wasn't," said Brad. "I guess I was just tryin' to play both ends against the middle. I wanted to round up the gang myself and make you look silly."

Tim digested that admission while Brad grinned at him.

"D'you still think I stole that fox pelt?" he presently inquired.

"Well," drawled Brad, "I'm beginnin' to doubt it, but I'd sure like to know who did get it. It had the finest brush on it I ever saw on a female fox."

"Female!" echoed Tim, staring at him. "Why, you poor woodchuck, the one I had was a male!"

In the afternoon of that day there was quite a gathering of the community in the depot, and Brad and Hank sat side by side on the counter while Martha Harrison stood very near to Tim. Bob Rutledge, who had discarded his bandage for the occasion, took an official envelope from his pocket and addressed the company at large.

"I've asked you people to be here," he said, "at this formal presentation of the document that starts Constable Tim O'Hara on the way to fame, fortune and a career."

Amid the cheering that followed he walked up to Tim and held out the document, in question.

"I have the extreme honour," he stated, "to hand you this paper, which you refused like an idiot when I tried to give it to you before."

Tim accepted the paper, and Martha caught at his arm.

"What is it you're promoted to, Tim?" she asked eagerly.

"Whatever it is, Tim," said Bob, "let me be the first to congratulate you."

Tim gave one glance at the paper, then stiffened officially.

"Don't call me 'Tim,'" he barked. "And the next time you come into the presence of a superior officer without saluting it'll be three days in the guard-house! Remember, Rutledge, there's no room in the Service for personal issues—unless no one is looking!"

Bob saluted with much ceremony and turned his back; but all the others were looking as Tim took Martha in his arms and kissed her.



The News Reel

All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 220, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Victor McLaglen at Home

On a hilltop in the La Canada district, not far from Hollywood, is a ten-acre estate called "Fairhaven." It is the home of Victor McLaglen, and is at once among the most beautiful and unique in the film colony.

McLaglen, who has just finished "Klondike Lou," with Mac West, at Paramount, not only has a beautiful English-type home and garden on the estate, but an extensive collection of animals that is the marvel of Hollywood.

He has four riding horses, seven dogs, four cats, five deer, three cows, two goats, a dozen or so pheasants, several hundred birds, a flock of quail, two Mexican ant bears, and dozens of chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese and rabbits.

The actor's wife and daughter are both accomplished horsewomen, and have won numerous horse-show prizes with their superb mounts. They have a small training field with jumps of various sizes.

Victor's dogs include two huge Irish wolfhounds, named Granite and Brian, both of which have won ribbons. Each weighs more than 175 pounds. "Rowdy," a belligerent English sheep dog, a Scotty, two Spaniels and a Pekinese complete the kennels.

McLaglen has three deer, captured in Arizona, and two young fawns, bred and raised in captivity, that are tame enough to eat from his hand.

In a small building in one corner of the estate, McLaglen has built a complete gymnasium. Every possible type of athletic apparatus, plus a steam bath, light machines, cabinets and all modern trimmings, is included.

A swimming pool, tennis court and an outdoor play-room with various kinds of games complete the estate.

No Stone Was Left Unturned!

What did the Bastille look like? What did Paris of that day look like? What did the people there wear, eat, drink? Of what materials were their clothes, and how were they cut? Did the rooms have wallpaper, or were the walls bare? What pictures, if any, decorated the rooms?

Was the guillotine of 1789 different in construction from the guillotine of today? How were the tumbrils built which carried unfortunates to the place of execution? Did they have two wheels or four? Were the wheels solid or spoked? What sort of pavement was on the streets? What kind of shoes did people wear?

These were a few of the problems to be tackled before Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's "A Tale of Two Cities" could be started on production. They are typical of the preparatory work involved on any production of this scale and accuracy. No wonder that a whole year of preliminary work was necessary before one set could be built and that the services of nearly 5,000 people in three nations were necessary.

Cameramen were dispatched to France and England to find ancient relics, old rooms which have not been changed in two centuries—old wallpaper, door-knobs, inns, houses. Hundreds of things were purchased and shipped to the studio to be used or duplicated. Thousands of other things were photographed, so that those who had to duplicate the items could be guided accurately. Detailed research in many fields was necessary—legal, accounting, property, wardrobe, architecture, casting, reading, music, drapery, engineering, hair-dressing, make-up, sound, and art.

Ancient Indian Tongue to be Heard in Film

A language that is almost forgotten to-day, and that never was spoken by more than a few thousand persons at any one period, will be heard on the screen for the first time in Wheeler and

Woolsey's new Radio Picture, tentatively titled "The Wild West."

The language in question is that of the Sac Fox Tribe, now almost extinct, but which formerly lived in what is now Illinois and Nebraska. Jim Thorpe, the famous Indian athlete, is a member of this group, and, playing the rôle of a medicine man in the film, delivers a long harangue in the Sac Fox tongue.

Incidentally, few of the fifty-odd other Indians in the picture understood Thorpe's speech, since most of them come from the Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Apache, Cherokee and Arapahoe tribes, which all have their own distinct languages.

Gary Cooper's Hat

Before Gary Cooper started work in his latest Paramount picture, "Peter Ibbotson," he put on a hat and then immediately took it off again.

It's a pet "superstition" of Gary's, for he says that he would part with almost anything he has except his battered old Stetson.

It's all because he is firmly convinced that this hat led him from a Montana ranch to the high peaks of Hollywood. He wore it when he went up to see the casting director of his first film. And he had to wear it because he hadn't enough money to buy another one.

So Gary has always a ritual that he goes through before he starts on a new picture.

He gets out the old Stetson, slams it on his head, and gazes into the mirror at it. Finally, he takes it off and carefully puts it away. Then he's ready to start a new picture.

Cococub News

Children who insist on having the cocoa with the "toy in every tin" and who belong to the Cococubs now have a monthly magazine of their own, The Cococub News, which records the adventure of the Cococub animals and many other interesting things. The first issue includes instructions for making a toy theatre in which the animals are the actors. This is sent free from Bournville to all Cococubs.

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"TOO TOUGH TO KILL"

and

"THE SAGEBRUSH TROUBADOUR"

Long Complete Film
Thrillers Inside!



“TOO TOUGH TO KILL”

A DYNAMIC DRAMA
OF TUNNEL-BUILDERS

Starring Victor JORY



The News Reel

All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 220, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Screen Villain "Killed" for 200th Time

The most frequently killed man in Hollywood will die his 200th death in "Special Investigator," Richard Dix's new starring vehicle for Radio Pictures.

Ethan Laidlaw, a Montana miner who left the copper fields of Butte for the gold field of Hollywood some fifteen years ago, has played in just 221 films to date, and in all but twenty-one of them he has met a villain's doom in the last reel.

Never has Laidlaw played a sympathetic rôle. Once, a long while ago in the silent era, he was cast for a hero's part opposite Evelyn Brent, but various difficulties arose and the picture was never made. Always he is seen as a "heavy," and he has died in every possible way that the super-active mind of a scenarist could conceive.

Playing with Broken Wrist

If grit is half the battle for screen success then Don Briggs, the young Universal player, is well on his way to cinematic fame.

This young man has played in three pictures, "The Adventures of Frank Merriwell," "Sutter's Gold," and "Love Before Breakfast," with a broken wrist, while keeping his affliction a secret from director, members of the cast and studio officials.

He broke his wrist while playing polo. Afraid that his mishap might cost him rôles that would mean advancement in his career, he decided to say nothing about it to studio executives. Three persons only were taken into his confidence. The doctor made a special splint with a knob which Briggs held in the palm of his hand; the make-up man aided in the deception, and the wardrobe man lengthened sleeves to his costumes to aid in hiding the injured member.

Briggs did the best acting of which he was capable, for he was suffering intense pain that was aggravated by strenuous bits of action required by the rôles he portrayed.

He has postponed the further playing of polo indefinitely!

Players Suspect Each Other in Mystery Film

Sharing an experience hitherto reserved for audiences only, players in "Moonlight Murder," now before the cameras at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, are completely in the dark as to which one of them is to be exposed in the final reel as the mysterious slayer of the picture!

The unusual situation has everyone, including the stage-hands, wagering on the outcome.

Director Edwin L. Marin is resisting all blandishments and saying nothing. He is the only one on the set who possesses the "solution" section of the script.

Lest any of the players fathom the baffling technique the killer employs for his homicide, Marin has taken the further precaution of scheduling the death scene for the final day of production.

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NEXT WEEK'S BIG PROGRAMME!



KEN MAYNARD

IN

"WESTERN COURAGE"

As foreman of a "dude" ranch, Ken Baxter brings down upon himself the scorn of a beautiful heiress and decides that she needs taming; but in rescuing her from a worthless fortune-hunter both he and the girl fall into the clutches of a notorious outlaw—and Ken is unarmed! An unusual Western.

"SHADOWS OF THE ORIENT"

A gang of crooks are smuggling Chinamen into the United States via the Mexican border, and a detective on the Immigration Department vows to get the man behind the smugglers. Starring Regis Toomey and Esther Ralston.

"CAPPY RICKS RETURNS"

The grey-haired, irascible old veteran of San Francisco's dockland comes out of retirement to try to save the business he has passed over to his son-in-law. A stirring comedy drama, starring Robert McWade and Ray Walker.

Also

Another fine episode of the smashing serial of uncanny adventure:

"FLASH GORDON"

Starring Buster Crabbe and Jean Rogers.

"This way," he explains, "the players have a very real sense of the disquiet and curiosity that they would feel if actually under suspicion and unaware of the killer's identity."

Chester Morris, who enacts a young detective in the picture, has thus far accused three of his colleagues of guilt. Madge Evans, who assists him in unravelling the crime, has pointed a stern finger at two. Leo Carrillo refuses to disclose his suspicions, contenting himself with accepting wagers on the outcome.

The picture is being produced by Lucien Hubbard and Ned Marin.

Bobby Watson Rebels

A one-boy revolt was staged recently by Bobby Watson, five years old, when he was handed the costume which he is to wear in the rôle of a peasant boy in Radie's "Mary of Scotland," starring Katharine Hopburn and Fredric March.

The garment is a smock-like costume, belted at the waist, but in Bobby's eyes it was a dress.

"I won't be a girl," Bobby announced, when an attendant from the wardrobe department attempted to put him into it. No amount of persuasion would induce him to wear the garment.

"It's a dress," he insisted, between sobs, "and I won't wear it."

It was at this point that John Ford, the director, stepped into the matter. He took Bobby over to the dressing-room of Donald Crisp, who Bobby knows and likes, and showed him Crisp attired in a kilt.

"Scotsmen wore skirts in those days," Crisp told the youngster.

"All right," said Bobby, "I'll wear 'em if you will."

Grand Opera at Last!

Does the British filmgoer want opera on the screen? For years this burning question has exercised the great minds of our film magnates, keeping them awake o' nights and turning their scanty locks prematurely grey.

One British producer, more courageous—or more reckless if you like—than the rest, has acquired the film rights of Puccini's "I Pagliacci," and will shortly put the operatic problem to a practical test.

But, alas! once again America has forestalled us, for within the next week or two there will be presented, positively for the first time on any screen, "Mickey's Grand Opera," co-starring Madame Clara Cluck, the world-famous coloratura soprano, and Signor Donald Duck, a tenore robusto of great power and range. M. Miki Mouse, the celebrated maestro whose brilliant conducting of the "William Tell" overture in "The Band Concert" will long be remembered, will wield the baton.

M. Mouse's business manager, Mr. Walt Disney, declines to divulge the name of the opera concerned, but declares that it is definitely not "I Pagliacci." "Signor Duck," he says, "is a tenor of considerable promise, but I am afraid he is not yet capable of tackling 'On with the Motley'—but for heaven's sake don't tell him I said so."

All Out of Step—Except One!

Gregory Ratoff discovered to his confusion that he can't keep step.

Ratoff, representing a Legionnaire in the 20th Century Fox production of "Under Two Flags," invariably led with his right foot when Director Frank Lloyd commanded a group of 600 movie soldiers to march.

Because every good soldier leads with his left, Gregory Ratoff beat a hob-nailed dissonance which was not very good for the camera and microphones.

(Continued on page 28)

When hard-as-rock John O'Hara, beset with troubles in the construction of a tunnel section of the Colorado River Aqueduct, orders a girl reporter out of camp, a landslide prevents her from going—and to that circumstance, in the end, he owes his life. A powerful drama, starring Victor Jory



The Board Decides

GREY-HAIRED James Whitney, president of the Whitney Construction Company, stabbed an ash-tray with the stub of his cigar and glanced at the expressionless face of the young man on his immediate right at the long board-room table. He and his companion had waited quite a while to be summoned into the presence of the chairman and members of the board of the Colorado River Aqueduct Syndicate, and the waiting had been a strain for Whitney, because he had much at stake.

In rather a frigid silence the chairman walked over to a relief map on the wall—a map of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, as well as of a considerable portion of the State of California.

"Here's the story, Whitney," he said, pointing a finger at the map. "Parker Dam completed at a cost of millions. Three hundred and fifty miles of canal, conduit and tunnel ready for use. Billions of gallons of water waiting to be turned into these pipes—and thirteen cities clamouring for it. But your portion, eighteen miles of tunnel, is tying up the entire project!"

"Mine's the most difficult section of the job," blurted Whitney. "You know that!"

"Yes," agreed the chairman, deserting the map to resume his seat at the head of the table, "but we've made concessions and given you plenty of time. You're still six months behind schedule."

"But that's on account of accidents," Whitney protested, "mishaps over which I have no control. Those things cause delay."

"You should have considered that before you undertook the contract," reported an elderly member of the board who sat opposite.

"You must realise, gentlemen," said Whitney, in a voice hoarse with anxiety, "that I'm taking the loss of millions of dollars if you turn this work over to someone else now."

"That doesn't answer the people who have subscribed two hundred and twenty million dollars to have this project completed," admonished the chairman.

"But I was one of the pioneers in this enterprise!" cried the contractor, jumping to his feet. "Fought for it for years—finally saw it go through. I've invested every cent I own in the world in my part of it, and now you want to see it swallow me up—ruin me!"

He sank back into his chair, and his obvious distress moved even the hard business-men with whom he had to deal.

"What do you want us to do?" inquired the chairman almost gently.

"I want to put John O'Hara, here, on the job," Whitney replied, indicating the young man on his right. "You all know his record, gentlemen. If there's a hard-rock man in the business to complete Whitney Tunnel, he's the one."

All eyes were turned upon John O'Hara, an engineer reputed to be as hard as the rock he bored and blasted, a master of men completely master of himself, despite his youth and good looks.

The chairman leaned forward.

"What have you to say, O'Hara?" he asked.

"I know the country down there," was the quiet reply. "If I didn't think I could handle it, I wouldn't undertake it."

"Give us a short extension of time," pleaded Whitney, and a man at the bottom of the table nodded approval.

"We all know Jim Whitney," he said, "and what he's been up against. We know O'Hara's reputation. Let's give him the extension he asks for."

There was a general murmur of assent, and the chairman waved a hand.

"All right, Jim," he said cordially; "let's see what you can do with it. But if your man O'Hara can't make better progress than the men before him, we'll have to turn the contract over to the next lowest bidder."

Whitney bowed and rose, and John O'Hara rose with him. They went out from the board-room and out from the office beyond it; but in the corridor Whitney stopped short.

"You see how things stand, son," he said slowly and impressively. "I'm depending on you to come through."

"I'll do the best I can," promised O'Hara.

"That's all I can ask for," Whitney clapped a hand on the young engineer's shoulder. "And don't forget," he added, "if you make it we'll tackle the next job as partners."

The second lowest bidder for the contract James Whitney so narrowly had retained was an unscrupulous man named Amos Mulhern, whose office was in another part of the city of Los Angeles.

Two hours after the momentous board meeting of the Colorado River Aqueduct Syndicate, Mulhern stood behind his desk in his own private room, talking to a tall and rather lean-faced man with close-set eyes and a clipped moustache, who worked for the Whitney Construction Company, but was also in the

rival contractor's pay. Bill Anderson was his name.

"Well, the contract still evades us," growled Mulhern, "and our chances of getting it seem to be farther off than ever, now that Whitney's got an extension and this new engineer."

"Don't worry," returned Anderson, with smooth confidence. "It doesn't make much difference who Whitney sends down there. With this last time-limit on construction the contract's as good as in your hands."

"I'm not so sure about that, Anderson, with O'Hara on the job!"

"It's not the man, Mr. Mulhern," was the significant rejoinder. "It's the conditions he'll find when he gets there."

"But O'Hara has a knack of handling tough jobs," Mulhern reminded him.

"So had the three men before him, and I took care of 'em!"

Mulhern frowned and shook his head.

"Self-confidence is all very well, Anderson," he said gruffly, "but don't ever make the mistake of underestimating your man."

Anderson laughed unpleasantly.

"As his assistant," he declared, "he won't get any farther away from me than the other three did. I'll see to that!"

"I hope so." Mulhern shook hands. "Keep up the good work, and when you get that contract there'll be a cheque here waiting for you."

"Thanks," Anderson went to the door and opened it. "For that kind of money, I'd—" He broke off and looked out into the corridor to make sure there was no one within hearing distance, then said with an evil grin: "Well, read the papers and see how far John O'Hara's going to get!"

A telephone-bell rang as the door was closed, and Mulhern picked up the instrument on his desk.

"Hallo!" he said. "Yes? Managing editor of the 'Chronicle'? No, I haven't any statement to make—things are just as they were. Why, of course I want to see him complete the contract. Jim Whitney's a friend of mine. My being the next lowest bidder has nothing to do with it!"

"Yeah?" jeered a voice in his ear. "Says you!"

A Shock for Ann

DOWN went the telephone, and at the same moment Howard Egerton Hubbel, managing editor of the "Chronicle," slammed down the instrument into which he had fired that parting shot, and scowled at two reporters who had just entered his room on the fourth floor of a massive building in Hill Street.

"Oh, so you've got back, eh?" he rapped.

The two reporters, both young men, exchanged glances. Hubbel, an explosive person at all times, was evidently in a bad mood.

"Yeah," said one of them, Peter Davis by name, and jowly faced by nature. "Just arrived—and we've come straight in to see you."

Howard Egerton Hubbel rose to his full height of six feet one inch, and the floor supported his full weight of fourteen stone four ounces. He flung out a shirt-sleeved arm with a clenched fist on the end of it, and his voice travelled a lot farther than the glass-panelled partition which divided his office from the reporters' room outside it as he roared:

"And you two mugs call yourselves newspaper-men! Go down on an assignment like the Whitney Tunnel, live two weeks through a Federal investigation, and all you come back with is a squib announcing rumours of a new engineer

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in charge! D'you call that an angle?"

"Got as much as the investigators, Mr. Hubbel," protested Eddie Clark, the junior of the pair.

"That's the point, chief," supplemented Davis. "They closed the gates! There's no angle!"

Hubbel flung back a mane of greying hair with his left hand, as though to relieve some of his pent-up feelings.

"When a two-hundred-billion-dollar bond issue is floated to supply this city with water," he bellowed, "and somebody throws a monkey-wrench into the works, don't tell me there isn't any angle!"

"Well, accidents will happen," chirped Eddie Clark.

"Not regularly every two weeks, they don't!"

"The men down there say it's a hoodoo section," stated Peter Davis; whereupon Hubbel became more furious than ever.

"Hoodoos belong in your grandmother's cupboard with the bogey-man!" he vociferated contemptuously. "They're to frighten little girls with! All I know is there's been a disaster of one kind or another down there as regularly as there's been a change in the moon!"

He thumped the desk with his fist, and some papers flew off on to the floor and the inkpots danced.

"Now, there's one thing you fatheads seem to have forgotten," he went on. "This paper has sponsored that project from the very beginning. We owe it to our readers to tell them the truth about what's going on down there, and you want me to tell 'em that Whitney's behind schedule because of—of hoodoos! All I need on this paper is a couple of guys with sense enough to bring me in some news to print!"

The two reporters were speechless, afraid that they were about to be sacked.

"What are you standing there gaping at me for?" howled the managing editor. "Get out of here!"

They got out in haste, and Peter Davis closed the door. At a desk on the right Willie Dent, a weak-chinned young fellow in charge of the photographic side of the sports section of the paper, was placidly sucking an orange. At a desk on the left Ann Miller, of the woman's page, had been listening with interest to Hubbel's outburst.

She was a very beautiful girl, and a very efficient member of the "Chronicle" staff, though she had a languid air that often misled her victims. She looked up at the two reporters with a pair of impish and very dark blue eyes, and she said mockingly:

"That's right, tell him where to get off! He couldn't talk to me like that and get away with it!"

"Aw, he's cracked," growled Peter Davis, leaning against a filing-cabinet. "It'd be different if someone had scooped us on the yarn. Just a series of accidents, that's all."

"Yeah," chimed in Eddie Clark scornfully. "When somebody gets bumped off in a traffic accident, that guy thinks there's an international plot behind it!"

Ann sat back in her chair and crinkled her brows.

"Well, I don't know," she said thoughtfully. "The same thing can't keep right on happening."

"Who said it can't?" demanded Peter Davis. "A guy falls down and breaks his leg, but that doesn't say he can't do it again."

"Perhaps not," conceded Ann. "But if he slipped on the same piece of banana-peel he'd been an awful chump!" She smiled from one to the other. "Why don't you two guys admit

that you're just not good enough to crack this particular nut?"

"Oh, I suppose you've got an angle?" snorted Davis.

"An angle?" scoffed Eddie Clark. "She's got a story! She's only holding out for the movie rights!"

"Well, it's a sure thing I wouldn't go down there like you did," she retorted. "I'm from the 'Chronicle,' buddy—what goes on?"

"I suppose you'd wear a disguise?" sneered Peter Davis.

"Sure," she drawled. "Why not? You two guys go down there to interview an engineer, and come back with a picture of him after he's been killed! Nice work! Say, old mother Hubbel let you off easy! Now, if I were running this rag, d'you know what I'd do?"

Abruptly the door behind her was opened, and Howard Egerton Hubbel stalked out from his room.

"Well, what?" he demanded, standing over her.

Quite calmly she tilted her head and looked sideways up at him, and quite calmly she replied:

"I'd send you down there."

Hubbel gulped and glared, then reached one of his swift decisions.

"Well, seeing I'm still running this rag," he retorted, "I'm sending you down!"

"Me!" she exclaimed in dismay.

"Yes, you! And you can take Dent with you."

Willie Dent sprang up, with a half-consumed orange in his hand and a horrified expression on his face.

"But there's no athletic sports down there," he objected.

Hubbel paid no attention whatever to him.

"Oh, but I'm on the Patterson trial," said Ann.

"That case goes to the jury tomorrow," rapped the managing editor. "They'll bring in a verdict in two hours. You can leave the next day."

He re-entered his room and slammed the door.

"Oh, you're going to love it down there," gurgled Peter Davis.

"It's only a hundred and twenty in the shade," said Eddie Clark.

"What shade?" Peter Davis grinned most irritatingly at Ann. "Now, you'll have to get yourself a nice, cool disguise! Why don't you go as a fan dancer?"

"How about a long beard?" suggested Eddie Clark. "You could be one of those wandering desert characters, and look for gold in them thar hills!"

"Oh, you're going to like tunnel work," mocked Peter Davis. "Happy diggings!"

Ann screwed up a sheet of paper and flung it at him as he went off with Eddie Clark. Willie Dent buried his mouth in his orange, then wiped his funny little moustache with the hack of his hand.

"What an assignment!" he groaned. "I wouldn't take it, if I were you!"

"What would you do?" inquired Ann. "Quit?"

"No, I'd resign."

"And then what?"

"Oh, Miss Ann," was the fervent reply, "I'd make a down payment on an orange ranch in Pomona." She spread out his arms. "Trees and fresh oranges, gardens with fresh vegetables, chickens with fresh eggs. What a life! Oh, you'd love it!"

"Before you go into the chorus," piped a boy behind him, "they're looking for you down in the dark-room."

Ann, left all by herself in that particular corner of the reporters' room, picked up a copy of the "Chronicle" still damp from the press. Headlines on

the front page informed her that John O'Hara had taken over the post of chief engineer at the Whitney Tunnel, filling the vacancy caused by the accidental death of Robert Belton, his predecessor. She studied a picture of O'Hara, printed with the story, and made a grimace at it.

"I'll be seeing you," she said flippantly.

O'Hara Takes Charge

THE Whitney Construction Company's camp in the mountains was situated two hundred and fifty miles away from Los Angeles, beyond the Mohave desert. It occupied a rocky hollow, and the only road that led to it had been made by Whitney's men all the way from the little town of Indio.

This road curved and twisted like a snake between high banks, and crossed a tributary of the Colorado River on a trestle bridge, and the camp was not very far east of the bridge. It consisted of rows and rows of corrugated iron sheds, between which stretched narrow gauge railway lines that converged near the mouth of the tunnel in course of construction and disappeared into its depths. A power-house provided current with which the tunnel was lighted.

John O'Hara arrived in the camp unannounced, conversed for a while with a clerk in a shed fitted up as a two-roomed office, hung his hat upon a peg—and suddenly ran out to climb on to a "muck-car," because he had seen through the window of the office that a little motor truck to which several of such cars were attached was moving towards the tunnel.

A number of miners were on the open trucks, most of them stripped to the waist because of the heat, and they were wearing steel hats and iron-toed boots to protect their heads and feet from falls of rock. They stared at the bare-headed young man in a lounge suit who scrambled in amongst them, but O'Hara explained that he was the new engineer in charge, and concentrated his attention upon the tunnel as the trucks clattered into it.

For some considerable distance the walls and roof were one complete semicircle of reinforced concrete, then came a bare network of steel rods not yet covered with concrete, and after that the trucks ran under rough rock past a junction, and so to the end of the workings, where the din of pneumatic drills was almost deafening.

Perspiration was streaming down the chests and backs of the men who were working the drills, or "jackhammers," but they were about to be relieved by the men on the approaching trucks.

A swarthy little Italian was in charge of the main valve of the compressed air line, and beside him towered an enormous fellow, black-haired and heavy-browed, who was foreman of the shift, and therefore known as a "shifter." Dave Shane, to give him his name, was proud of his weight, which exceeded eighteen stone, and was a bully.

From the motor truck, as it came to a stand-still, a member of the clerical staff dropped to the ground and ran forward to Shane. He shouted something at the top of his voice, but the words were lost in the noise of the drills. Shane swung round on the little Italian.

"Hi, shut off that valve!" he bellowed, and, because the Italian did not hear, and did not immediately understand, gave him a push that sent him staggering against the wall of rock.

The compressed air was cut off by the shifter himself, the drills ceased to function, and in the almost uneasy silence that followed he turned to the messenger.

"Now what's eating you?" he demanded.

"Anderson wants to see you right away," was the reply. "It's very important. He's waiting for you down at the conduit."

"All right," said Shane, but Tony Moreno stood indignantly before the giant.

"Say, what's a-happen?" he asked.

"Why you push?"

"When I give an order," snarled Shane, "you pay attention."

"But I cannot hear you when the drills she's a-go," the Italian protested.

"Well, the next time you keep your eyes on me!"

"Well," said Tony, "the next time no push."

Shane gripped the little man fiercely by the collar of his shirt and smashed a massive fist into his face, knocking him down.

"Nobody gives me any of their lip around here, d'you understand?" roared the bully, holding on to the shirt-collar of his victim as though about to jerk him to his feet and strike again. "Next time you keep your eyes open and on me!"

Men on the muck-cars and men who had swarined down from them looked on without any attempt to interfere, but John O'Hara had seen and heard and disapproved. He strode over to the giant and in vice-like grip he held the fist that was raised to deliver another blow.

"Why don't you just kick him and save your hands?" he asked scathingly.

Shane let go of Tony, wrenched himself free, and turned on O'Hara like an infuriated bull.

"Visitors ain't allowed in here!" he roared.

"Maybe if I was his size," returned O'Hara, "you'd put me out?"

"Maybe I can put you out anyway!"

"Maybe."

Shane hit out, but the blow was neatly sidestepped, and a straight left caught him between the eyes, causing him to realise, as he recovered his balance, that his black-haired opponent was not one to be despised, despite his own strength.

He advanced more warily, but caught a clip on the side of the jaw that rocked him on his feet, and made him throw caution to the winds. The men over whom he played the tyrant were looking on, and he knew that they would enjoy his downfall, but he did not believe for a moment that the stranger could bring that about.

The stranger, however, proved to be a born fighter, and the battle that followed filled the onlookers with joy. O'Hara went down with a smack in



"Why don't you just kick him and save your hands?" asked O'Hara scathingly.

the mouth that jarred his teeth, but he was up in an instant—and Shane paid for that blow.

Five times the shifter was sent reeling back against the rock, and his face became bruised and battered and his nose bled profusely. The thud of fists against flesh echoed and re-echoed along the tunnel, mingling with the murmurs of the men who had suffered from Shane's tyranny; but only Tony ever had any doubt as to the issue.

Finally, with a swift upper-cut to the chin that would have lifted the bully off his feet had he weighed a couple of stone less, O'Hara sent him flat on his back and unconscious.

A cheer rewarded him and, smoothing his tumbled hair with his hand, he addressed the men collectively.

"My name's O'Hara," he said. "I'm the new boss around here. When this shifter comes to, you can tell him I said he's through, and he's to get his pay and clear out of camp."

Tony Moreno ran up to him, beaming all over his face.

"Grazie, signor!" he cried ecstatically. "Grazie!"

"You run the air?" asked O'Hara.

"Oh, sure!" replied the Italian.

"Well, run it!"

"Oh, sure, I run it!" Tony almost danced over to the wheel-valve. "You bet your life I run it!"

O'Hara walked slowly back through the tunnel to the office, and in the inner room, which now was his, proceeded to go through a number of files. Shane, a very crestfallen giant, joined Bill Anderson outside the equipment warehouse some little time later, and gave him a more or less accurate account of what had happened.

"Huh!" snorted the assistant engineer. "Ten minutes after O'Hara comes on the job you get yourself fired! A lot of good you're gonna be to me now!"

"Maybe you can do something about it," suggested Shane.

"Maybe I can," said Anderson curtly.

"Listen," blustered Shane, "you've got to get O'Hara out of the way the same as the others, haven't you? Well, I'll take care of that guy—and like it."

"All you can do now," Anderson retorted, "is to hang around town till I need you. Go on, now. Get your dough and beat it out of camp."

Another Dismissal

HAVING allowed a sufficient interval for the shifter to collect his pay and set off across the trestle bridge in the direction of Indio, Bill Anderson sauntered along the railway track in the direction of the office, and he met O'Hara at the door.

"O'Hara?" he inquired pleasantly. "My name's Anderson. Sorry to have missed you when you arrived. Didn't expect you till to-morrow."

"That's all right," said O'Hara, viewing his assistant with appraising eyes.

"I heard about that Shane episode," ventured Anderson, stroking his little clipped moustache. "D'you mind my saying something?"

"Go ahead!"

"Well, from what I heard he had it coming to him all right; but he's a valuable tunnel man, and they're scarce around here."

"I'm afraid he wouldn't be much good to me, Anderson," returned O'Hara grimly. "I'd probably have him in the hospital most of the time."

The assistant engineer realised that it would not be profitable to pursue the subject of Shane's dismissal.

"Care to have a look round the office?" he asked.

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"I don't work in an office," said O'Hara, who had changed into working clothes. "Let's see how the wheels go round—or why they don't!"

"Sure." Anderson fell into step with him and they went from one corrugated iron building to another. In the grindery the machines were idle, and there was not a man to be seen.

"Why isn't this place running?" demanded O'Hara sharply.

"Not enough work to keep a crew on," Anderson replied.

"Sounds impossible." O'Hara approached a bench on which a heap of drill-steels were lying. "Are these what they're using?"

"Yes."

Several of the steels were picked up, one after another, only to be tossed back again.

"This steel is full of flaws," said O'Hara disgustedly. "They're seconds! Doesn't this stuff crack under the heat?"

"That's another reason why this place isn't working," stated his companion. "No use sharpening them."

"No wonder each crew's only driving two feet instead of eight! Have you reported this?"

"They won't listen to me. Maybe you can do something about it."

"Yeah, maybe I can."

They visited the power-house and the stores, and then, on a motor-truck driven by a mechanic, they travelled into the tunnel. Some way beyond the junction O'Hara pointed downwards at a patch where the rails ran over metal plates instead of earth or rock.

"What's that?" he asked.

"That's where we had the bad cave-in last March," Anderson explained. "Ground gave way without warning, but those new steel liner plates seem to be holding all right."

Beyond the metal covering of the floor of the tunnel O'Hara saw something that made him ask abruptly:

"Who's the inspector here?"

"Swede Mulhousen," replied Anderson, with a frown. "Good man. Why?"

"Better get a new inspector. The ground along here looks as if it had been swelling for about a month. If he hasn't seen it by this time he'll never see it until there's another cave-in!"

The bad patch was passed, the noise of drilling grew louder, and the truck came to a standstill near the spot where Shane had met more than his match. Anderson motioned to Tony Moreno to turn off the compressed air, then addressed the men who turned to see why their work had been stopped.

"This is Mr. O'Hara, our new engineer," he announced. "I believe he's got a few words to say."

O'Hara stood up in the truck.

"Well, boys," he said, "making speeches isn't my business, and I don't intend to go through this routine with the other two shifts, so all I have to say you can pass on to the others. Now, to begin with, there's a lot of bunk being spread around about this being a jinx camp—a hoodoo section. Well, I don't believe in jinxes or hoodoos. I know that when accidents happen there's only one reason for them—negligence!"

Some of the men looked rather pointedly at Anderson, who was standing beside O'Hara, but he appeared to be unaware of the fact.

"It means," continued the new engineer, "that somebody's laying down on the job. Well, from now on that's all over, boys. Either you work and you work hard, or you get out! This section is months behind schedule, and we're going to make up that time. But that doesn't mean I expect the impos-

sible. I won't ask any of you to do anything that I won't do myself. But between us we're going to lick this job!"

"Like you did Dave Shane?" one of the men inquired with a grin.

"Well, something like that," said O'Hara, and turned to Anderson.

"Where's that inspector?"

"Swede!" Anderson shouted. "Swede Mulhousen!"

A big, thick-lipped fellow hurried along the track to the truck from the direction of the junction.

"You Mulhousen?" asked O'Hara.

"Yeah," replied the man, with a note of defiance in his voice.

"There's a timber segment down the line a quarter of a mile that's ready to crack—looks as if it's been that way for about a month. Now if I see anything like that again, you're through! Get it fixed!"

"All right."

"Start the hammers, Tony," directed O'Hara, and the tunnel became filled with the noise of the drills once more.

That day O'Hara wrote to the head office of the Whitney Construction Company ordering all sorts of equipment which he deemed necessary, and it was not till late at night that he sought his own quarters—a two-roomed structure near the camp gates—and went to bed.

In company with Bill Anderson, two days later, he stopped short beside a machine for mixing concrete which had broken down. The man in charge of it was lousing against its platform, smoking a cigarette, which he threw away as O'Hara strode towards him.

"How long have you been running the mixer?" O'Hara inquired.

"Ever since this job started," was the reply. "Why?"

"Did it ever occur to you to use a little oil?" An accusing finger pointed.

"Those cables are rusted through!"

"I'm doing the best I can," grumbled the man.

"That isn't good enough!" snapped O'Hara. "Two days are going to be wasted getting that thing fixed!"

"Say what you like," Anderson interposed, "there is some sort of jinx on this section."

"Well, I'm going to run 'em out of camp one after another," retorted O'Hara. "Get your time, you, and clear out!"

"Huh?" The man in charge of the mixer gaped at him as though he could not believe his ears.

"You heard me!"

The fellow went off, scowling.

"Machines jamming," growled O'Hara, "drill-steel snapping, cave-ins! What a construction camp!"

"How're you gonna beat it, chief?" purred Anderson.

"I'll get new equipment down here if I have to build it myself!"

A clerk from the office came up to them.

"Mr. O'Hara," he said, "Mr. Billings, the company engineer, is waiting for you in your office."

"Thanks!" O'Hara made a grimace at Anderson. "Now comes the squawk about the new equipment I ordered," he said.

Ann Meets Her Match

ALONG the winding road from Indio a grey touring-car travelled swiftly between the high banks of rock, and Ann Miller was at the wheel and Willie Dent was sitting beside her.

"According to the signs," said Ann, "we ought to be there any minute."

"That means it's just as hot there," lamented Willie Dent. "Aw, gee, Ann, I wish we'd stopped at Pomona!"

The road presently narrowed and a board beside it informed those who approached that there was danger of falling rocks. Ann did not notice the board, but she stopped the car beside two men, bare to the waist, who were clearing away an overnight downfall of rock.

"Can we get through here?" she asked.

"Can't you read, lady?"

A grimy thumb was jerked in the direction of the board, and Willie read aloud:

"Dangerous but passable. Slide area. Beware of falling rocks." He looked at the man who had spoken. "What makes them fall, mister?"

"Someone's up there pushing them down on passing motorists, just for fun," said Ann with sarcasm, but the labourer took her seriously.

"No, lady, that ain't what happens at all," he corrected.

"No?" Ann raised her brows as though surprised.

"No; it's the blasting in the tunnel that keeps on shaking the hills, and the rocks that ain't solid, they slide."

A sudden noise as of subterranean thunder seemed to make even the roadway quiver.

"What was that?" asked Ann.

"Blasting," replied the man.

"Oh, let's get out of here!" cried Willie, but Ann, completely reassured, drove on.

Another bend was rounded, the trestle bridge was crossed, and the car sped in at the open gateway of the camp and pulled up outside the building labelled "Office."

With Willie close behind her, Ann entered the clerks' room and addressed the man who had informed O'Hara of the arrival of the company engineer.

"Like to see Mr. O'Hara, please," she said.

"He's busy," said the clerk, who was neither young nor impressionable.

"Sure he's busy," drawled Ann. "So am I! But for how long?"

"That's hard to say. I don't dare disturb him."

"Oh, is he asleep, or just resting?"

The clerk did not appreciate such levity.

"I'm afraid you'll just have to wait," he snapped.

"Okay!" Ann consulted her wrist-watch. "I'll wait fifteen minutes. If he's not out by then, I'll fire him!"

She dumped herself on a wooden seat against the wall, and Willie Dent sat down beside her. It was thirty-two minutes past twelve.

In the inner room O'Hara was seated at his desk and Steven Billings, the white-haired company engineer, was leaning forward in a chair with several sheets of paper in one hand and a half-smoked cigar in the other.

"But this requisition of yours," Billings complained, "calls for the outlay of thousands, O'Hara!"

"I'm sorry," O'Hara returned, "but I can't see any other way of driving the tunnel. I've made my figures as low as possible."

"Probably you don't understand our position. Now—"

"Wait a minute!" O'Hara raised a hand. "You talk about speed, and you don't know how to get it. Three men before me drove their crews almost beyond endurance, but that didn't remove hard rock—it only removed men! It's impossible to go on without that equipment!"

Billings flicked some ash from his cigar and pursed his lips.

"Well," he said slowly, "let's go over

these figures of yours again and see if we can't cut them down a little."

Item by item O'Hara fought for the things he had ordered, and time passed. At twenty-five minutes past three Billings turned over the sheets of paper upon which the requisition had been made out. A few items had been struck through, a few quantities had been reduced, but, from his point of view, little had been gained by nearly three hours of argument.

"Well," he said ruefully, "that doesn't cut it down much."

"It's as far as I can go," declared O'Hara stubbornly.

"All right," Billings folded the sheets and pocketed them, then picked up his hat. "I'll get that new equipment down to you just as quick as I possibly can, O'Hara," he said, offering his hand.

In the outer office Willie Dent was nearly asleep, but Ann had become furiously.

"I tell you I'm not going to wait any longer!" she cried, bouncing over to the clerk. "Three hours! What does he think he is? A visiting celebrity, or something?"

"You heard me tell Mr. O'Hara you were here more than two hours ago," said the clerk.

"No wonder the tunnel isn't being built!" she stormed. "I thought they were dug under mountains, not over desks!"

Billings had opened the door to which O'Hara had accompanied him, and both of them heard that outburst.

"Friend of yours?" laughed the company engineer with an appreciative eye for indignant beauty. "Good-bye, Mr. O'Hara, and good luck. If anyone can put this through, you can!"

"If I don't," O'Hara assured him, "it won't be because I didn't try."

Billings went out to his car, and O'Hara walked over to Ann, who stood no higher than his shoulder.

"Your opinions on tunnel construc-

tion," he said with a wry little smile, "are very interesting, Miss—"

"Miller," she completed for him with an ingratiating, upward glance. "Ann Miller. Sorry for that outburst just now, Mr. O'Hara, but I've come such a long way through the hot sun to see you, and it looked for a while as if I wasn't going to get the chance after all."

O'Hara was not by any means blind to her beauty, and she gave him the impression of possessing brains; but he was not to be beguiled.

"What can I do for you?" he asked rather stiffly.

"You know you're a pretty famous man, don't you?"

"No, Miss Miller, I don't."

"But you are. Everyone's read of your exploits on the Gautemala bridge job and the Ecuador tunnel." She smiled seductively, but decided not to tell him she was from a newspaper. "I'm from the woman's magazine, 'Lovely Homes,' and I think in this magnificent task you're attempting there is a wonderful story that will appeal to every woman. The romance and the drama of the terrific battle you wage against the elements so that my lady may have her bath. Won't you take me in and show me around?"

It was excellently done, but it didn't appeal to O'Hara in the least degree.

"I can give it to you right now, Miss Miller," he said brusquely. "There isn't any romance in digging a tunnel. Just sweat, dirt, and hard work. The men are not blasting rocks so my lady can have a bath. They don't care when she bathed last, or when she'll bath again. They're working underground eight hours a day, under the most difficult conditions, just to support themselves and their families. That's the whole story."

"That's your story," said Ann, "but I'm not sticking to it, if you don't mind. Surely, if you're too busy, you can arrange for someone else to show me around?"



Willie wriggled his way to the camera-case and, in spite of bound wrists, tried to get hold of the flash-lamp which was lying on the floor.

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"That's impossible!" barked O'Hara in a voice that caused Willie Dent to sit up with a jerk.

"Why?" she challenged.

"For one thing, these hard-rock men are very superstitious. They like a woman anywhere but in a tunnel." He took a steel hat from a peg. "If you'll excuse me."

"Oh, no, I won't excuse you at all!" she cried, standing between him and the open door. "I came a long way to get something, Mr. O'Hara, and I'm not going home without it!"

Her dark blue eyes were no longer languishing; they were full of spirit and determination. She was actually daring to match her will against his!

"Now, Miss Miller," he said, much as though he were addressing a rebellious child, "why don't you be a good girl and go on back instead of bothering people?"

"It doesn't look as though I'm getting very far by bothering some people!" she foamed.

"I'm sorry."

"Let me tell you something, Mr. Arrogant Bull O'Hara! When I go after a thing, I get it!" She tilted her head at him. "I'm not from any woman's magazine! Just pick up tomorrow's 'Los Angeles Chronicle,' and you'll see a little yarn about the slovenly inefficiency of the engineer in charge of this job that'll make your hair stand up curlier than it is now!"

"Miss Miller," said O'Hara curtly, "you can write anything you like, but do it in your own office."

He put the steel hat on his head, then lifted her up by the arms, set her down near the wall, and went out over the doorstep.

Ann, boiling with rage, yet, somehow, amused, roused Willie Dent from renewed slumbers.

"Wh-where are we?" he stammered, blinking at her like an owl.

"On our way back to Los Angeles," she replied, and tugged him to his feet.

The Landslide

OUTSIDE the door of a shed near the mouth of the tunnel, a powerfully built young man with no claim to good looks, yet with some redeeming quality about his ugly, clean-shaven face, was talking excitedly to Anderson as Ann and her companion climbed into the grey touring car.

"I tell you there's some dynamite missing!" he insisted. "You'd better phone into the tunnel and tell 'em to hold that blast!"

Anderson scowled at him.

"Don't try to teach me my business, Danny," he said angrily. "We're driving tunnel here. That shot's going off on time!"

"Better wait until we check with Mr. O'Hara," expostulated Danny Morgan.

"You're responsible for the dynamite," retorted Anderson. "You know how many boxes you gave them."

"I gave them the right amount. But I can't figure out where the rest of the stuff has disappeared to."

Danny Morgan's voice carried a considerable distance, and John O'Hara heard that last statement on his way to the workings, and hurried forward.

"What stuff's disappeared?" he demanded.

"Dynamite," Danny replied. "Somebody's broken into the magazine, and—"

"Well, stop the blast until we find out what happened to the rest of it!"

"Too late!" growled Danny and at that moment there was a deafening explosion in the tunnel, clouds of smoke belched out from it, and away beyond the gates of the camp one of the banks overhauling the road gave way.

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O'Hara, alarmed for the safety of the girl he had told to go back to Los Angeles, raced to the scene of the landslide, shouting to some of the men as he went. The roadway between the gates and the bridge had become buried beneath a mass of broken rock and rubbish, and part of the bridge itself had been wrecked; but Ann had stopped the car in the nick of time within a few inches of a great boulder that had crashed down even as she braked.

She was drooping over the wheel, her face as white as chalk when O'Hara reached her. Willie Dent had pitched forward from his seat beside her and was doubled up on the floor.

"Are you all right?" asked O'Hara anxiously.

"I—I think so," stammered Ann, "but you might take care of my friend down there."

O'Hara turned to the men who had followed him.

"Danny and Swede," he directed, "get this chap out!"

Willie was lifted out from the car and carried off towards the camp. There were no lumps of rock in the car, and O'Hara was puzzled.

"What struck him?" he inquired.

"Nothing," Ann replied. "He fainted. He does that!"

She smoothed her hair with her hands and readjusted her hat.

"Your timing was very poor, Mr. O'Hara," she said impishly.

"What do you mean?" he exclaimed.

"I suppose you're going to deny that you planned that landslide to happen when I was under it?"

He liked her for that. Willie Dent had fainted, but she was no longer even shaken.

"Well," he said, suppressing a grin, "this road's the only way out, so it looks as if I'll have to put up with you for a while."

She thanked him mockingly, and the car was backed into the camp, and he escorted her to the office, where he gave instructions for a cabin near his own quarters to be prepared for her use.

Danny Morgan and Swede Mulhousen had not conveyed Willie to hospital, though the camp possessed one. They decided that he was quite uninjured, and at Danny's suggestion they deposited him on the ground beside a tool-shed, where Danny proceeded to slap his cheeks and to empty a pail of water over his face.

The treatment was rough, but effective. Willie presently sat up and stared about him. He remembered that he had been nursing a camera-case.

"Where's my camera?" he asked.

"Swede put it in the tool-shed for you," replied Danny with a flip of his hand; and Willie scrambled to his feet and tottered into the shed just in time to see a workman heaving the camera-case on to a high shelf.

"Say, that's my camera, you big—"

"What?" roared the workman, swinging round.

"N-nothing," stammered Willie.

Danny's grinning face vanished from the doorway because O'Hara had called to him. The chief engineer was with Anderson outside the shed in which explosives were stored.

"Who was the shifter in charge of that blast?" he demanded.

"Nick Pollack," replied Danny, and pointed to a motor-truck which was approaching from the tunnel. "Here he comes now."

The truck stopped, and a thin-faced man with a very long nose jumped down from it quite close to the group of three.

"Get your pay and get out of camp!" said O'Hara sternly.

"What for?" asked Pollack, with a

side glance at Anderson. "What's the matter?"

"You know what's the matter! It's a lucky thing for you someone wasn't injured in that blast!"

"I don't know what you're talkin' about, chief."

"I've got a way of making myself clear," O'Hara rapped at him. "Get out of camp!"

Nick Pollack walked reluctantly off, and O'Hara turned to Danny and Anderson.

"Who holds the keys to the powder magazine?"

"Why," said Anderson, "I have one and Danny has the other."

"I'll take those keys!" O'Hara held out his hand, and the two keys were surrendered. "From now on I'll issue every stick of dynamite that goes into that tunnel!"

"All right," said Anderson sourly.

That evening Ann and Willie found their own way to the big mess-room on the eastern side of the camp. They were very hungry, and pleasant odours from the kitchen helped to guide them.

Forty or fifty men were seated on forms at long tables and were already eating. The clatter of knives and forks mingled with a buzz of conversation. Three negro waiters were moving about the room, collecting empty plates.

"Wouldn't you think they'd have been polite enough to wait for us?" said Willie, as he and Ann surveyed the scene from just inside the main doorway.

"S-s-h!" warned Ann. "Be quiet!"

Anderson, who had entered the room only a few moments before, jumped up from his seat at the top table and sped over to them.

"I don't think we've met before, Miss Miller," he said with a little bow, "but my name is Anderson. We have a place for you at our table. Will you join us?"

Ann thanked him, and they went to the table. A chair at the top of it was vacant, and Willie promptly appropriated it; but that chair was O'Hara's, and he was beckoned out of it by Anderson, who provided room on a form for Ann on his right and for Willie on his left. Four men in the immediate vicinity were introduced by name as members of the clerical staff.

"Shall I make a speech?" asked Willie.

"No," said Ann. "Just sit down."

They were served with food that was plain but good, and quite well cooked. Anderson cultivated Ann's acquaintance.

"Although this landslide means a lot of extra work," he said in a voice intended to be heard all over the room, "I'll bet there isn't a man here who's complaining."

"What's your position here, Mr. Anderson?" inquired Ann.

"Well, assistant to Mr. O'Hara, I guess," was the reply; and just then John O'Hara himself walked into the room, nodded distantly to the girl, and seated himself in the empty chair without a word.

Anderson held out a plate of bread to him and a waiter provided him with soup. Ann gave him her shoulder.

"Then you really work inside the tunnel, don't you?" she said to Anderson.

"Been at it for fifteen years all over the world."

"Must be thrilling, romantic," breathed Ann.

"Well, sometimes it's exciting. Sorry about the food—I guess it isn't exactly what you're accustomed to."

"The food," said Ann, whose soup-plate had been whisked away to make room for a plate of meat and vegetables, "is a little more interesting than some of the people."

O'Hara heard and was annoyed.



"Now, where's that plunger?" rasped Danny. "Look for it, Willie, and when you find it disconnect the wires."

"Perhaps you'd like the chef to bring in some caviar," he said rather spitefully. "Or maybe you'd prefer quail on toast?"

"Personally," retorted Ann, "I prefer good manners."

"On toast?"

Several of the men had looked round, but the advantage was not to be left with Ann. O'Hara raised his voice.

"Boys," he said, "I want to change the routine a little, and now seems as good a time as any to tell you about it. I want that road cleared as soon as possible to receive a shipment of supplies and equipment. Gangs working on both sides to the middle, and all hands out of the tunnel to rebuild the broken trestle and clean the place."

The workmen nodded and went on eating. Ann ate in silence for a while, then gave O'Hara a bewitching smile.

"You wouldn't be hurrying up the work just for my benefit, would you?" she inquired sweetly.

"That's not the only reason," O'Hara returned quite coldly. "but it helps."

"The Whitney tunnel seems to make men serious, doesn't it?" she said to Anderson; and O'Hara rose abruptly and went out.

Anderson, secretly amused, informed her that the Whitney tunnel was the toughest section of the whole aqueduct.

"What makes it so tough, as you put it?" she asked.

"Many things," he replied. "More than one can tell over a cup of coffee."

"Mr. Anderson," said she, "I'm terribly interested. Won't you show me around the camp after dinner?"

"Why, of course, if you like."

"Mr. Anderson," piped Willie, "has your chief any of those marvellous sun-kissed oranges from Pomona?"

Stopped!

DARKNESS had settled down upon the camp while the meal was in progress, but electric lamps gleamed here and there, and by their

light Ann had no difficulty in finding her way to her cabin, there to wait till Anderson should call for her.

Willie fell in with Tony Moreno outside the mess-room, and the two became friendly. Tony offered to show the sports photographer of the "Chronicle" round the camp, and during their wanderings he produced a flask of whisky from which they both drank at intervals.

"Pretty good, eh?" said Tony, leaning against a bank of rock.

"Yeah," agreed Willie, and imbibed again. "What's that?"

Two dogs, chained up near the gates, were making a dismal row.

"The dogs," explained Tony, "always howl when the hoodoo she comes around."

"Hoodoo?" Willie handed him back the flask. "What's the hoodoo?"

"Sometimes," Tony informed him, "it's like-a da wolf—sometimes like-a da big-a bear." His voice sank to sepulchral depths. "Sometimes just big black shape."

"I—I'll meet you down in the tool-shed," stammered Willie. "I—I got to go to see somebody."

He lurched across the camp to Ann's cabin and banged on the door.

"Come in, Willie," she said, as he raised the latch and put his head into a plainly furnished room where she was combing her hair; and then, as Willie entered: "Why, you've been drinking!"

"Just a nip," he admitted. "Listen, we came down here to get a story and an angle on the accidents, didn't we? Well, I got it!"

"Where, out of a bottle?" she derided, putting down the comb.

"No, not out of a bottle! Tony told me all about it—Tony the Italian. He said there's a hoodoo—"

"Oh, you go and chase your hoodoos, Willie." She pushed him towards the door. "I've got something else to do."

Willie was bundled forth—and received in his face a fist in the act of knocking; Anderson's fist.

"What's the idea?" he demanded, but did not wait for an answer.

Anderson stared after him, and then Ann emerged from the cabin.

"What's the matter with him?" asked Anderson.

"Nothing," she replied. "Just a touch of the heat, that's all. I could do with a cooling system myself. Is it always this hot down here?"

"Why, this is some of our cooler weather," he laughed. "You should be down here when it's hot."

"No, I shouldn't! Shall we start on our tour?"

They strolled off together, visited the power-house and other places of interest in the camp, and after a while approached the tool-shed. Willie was in there with Tony, trying to get his camera-ease down from the high shelf by standing on the Italian's bent back. He managed to remove the heavy ease, but Tony could not support such a combined weight, and they both went down on the floor with a thud.

"No push!" exploded Tony, sitting up. "I told you no push. Hi, what you call-a dis?"

The camera-ease had burst open, and he had picked up Willie's flashlight.

"That's a flashlight, that is," said Willie, taking it from him. "I'll show you how it works."

The sudden blaze of light that shone through the windows of the shed—and almost instantly was gone again—startled Anderson. He dived in at the open doorway, switched on the ordinary lights, and glared at the two on the floor.

"What's that? What's going on?" he rasped.

"I was just showing Tony how my flash-bulb works," explained Willie; and Ann laughed.

"Maybe we'd better take him with us just to keep him out of trouble," she

suggested. "Come on, Willie—and bring your camera."

She had coaxed Anderson to show her the inside of the tunnel, and Willie went with them to the entrance, carrying his camera and his flashlamp. But at the entrance Dany was on duty, and he stopped them.

"Sorry, Mr. Anderson," he said, stretching out his arms, "but I can't let you take them in the tunnel."

"Why not?" snapped the assistant engineer.

"Mr. O'Hara's orders."

Anderson told him curtly to get out of the way, but O'Hara himself strode out from the equipment warehouse.

"Wait a minute, Mr. Anderson!" he commanded. "You're not allowed to take visitors in the tunnel. You know that!"

"But——" Anderson began.

"I need you and Danny down at the road. Go on. I'll meet you there later."

Danny went off blithely enough; Anderson with a very ill grace. Willie disappeared in search of Tony, and Ann made a defiant little gesture at the man who had spoiled her plans.

"I thought I told you to stay in your cabin," he said.

"I couldn't," she pouted.

"Why not? Has someone been bothering you?"

"Oh, no, nothing like that! It's just that everyone has some sort of a kink, like watching ships go in and out of harbour, or chasing fire-engines. I'm an excavation wateher."

"Miss Miller," said O'Hara grimly, "I don't want to be any more disagreeable than I——"

"I'm sure you don't," she interrupted. "D'you know I've been fired from three jobs because I simply couldn't tear myself away from excavations. They fascinate me!"

"But you must go back to your cabin," he insisted. "You can't go running around the camp like this at night. It—it isn't safe."

"Oh!" She looked meekly up into his set face. "Then if it isn't safe, don't you think you should take me home?"

"No, I don't!"

"Ah, but you will, won't you?" She turned in the direction of her cabin, and in spite of himself he fell into step with her. He had never met a girl like her before, so fearless, so self-possessed, so determined to have her own way.

"Did that landslide set you back any?" she asked.

"About thirty-six hours."

"Don't you ever get discouraged?"

"I haven't time."

"Did it ever strike you that these delays might not be accidental?"

"I know they're not."

"Then why not report it to the company?"

"I have. Some time next week a couple of gum-shoe investigators will appear."

"By that time," said she, looking up at him, "you could pretty well take care of it yourself."

"You can't play detective and drive a tunnel at the same time," he growled.

"But you can't drive a tunnel unless someone else plays detective. You know some people—well, just take my business, for instance—if they don't like their jobs they quit."

O'Hara remarked that whether one quitted or not depended on the person and not on the business.

"That's the way. I feel about it," said she. "So now you can understand why I must get some angles on what's causing these accidents and some pictures of that hole in the mountain."

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It was artfully contrived, but he was adamant.

"That's out!" he said crisply. "You can't go in that tunnel!"

"Then I'll either quit, or Hubbel will fire me."

"Who's Hubbel?"

"My boss."

"Well, if he thinks he can do any better, tell him to come down here and try it himself!"

"Don't you understand a woman's determination?" She tilted her head at him as they were passing a lighted window. "I'm going to get in that tunnel in spite of you!"

"If you do," he retorted quietly, "I'll have you thrown out."

The cabin was reached, and he opened the door for her and took off his steel hat.

"I'm beginning to think," said she, "that you're a pretty determined person."

"That makes us even," said he, holding out his hand with a grin. "I like you, too!"

The Cave-in

THE men of the night shift were still in the tunnel next morning when most of the others were at breakfast in the mess-room. Ann, at the top table with a cup of coffee in her hand, was talking to Anderson when a siren shrieked twice.

"It's an accident!" somebody cried, and the men sprang up from their seats and made for the doors.

O'Hara was one of the first to rush out into the sunlight, and he shouted orders. Mucking-cars were attached to a motor-truck, stretchers were whisked out from a shed beside the hospital and piled on one of the cars, men climbed on to the others, and O'Hara started the engine of the motor-truck.

The string of cars moved off along the track into the tunnel as Ann reached the tool-shed. She asked eagerly of a man at the door what had happened.

"Cave-in, miss," was the reply.

"Anybody hurt?"

"Can't say yet."

Another man came running over from a telephone to a group of miners who had been too late to travel on the train of trucks.

"Report just received," he announced, "is two dead and three injured."

"What caused it?" asked Ann.

"How do I know?" growled the fellow. "I wasn't there!"

Ann caught sight of Willie and dashed over to him.

"Where have you been?" she cried. "Listen, Willie; we've got to get in that tunnel. It's just what we came after—couldn't have been better if it had been staged for us!"

Willie got his camera and his flashlamp from the tool-shed, and he and Ann squeezed through the crowd that had gathered round the mouth of the tunnel, but a very tall man barred their way.

"Where d'you think you're going?" he challenged.

"Press," said Ann, and produced an official card issued by the "Chronicle."

"Press," said Willie, and produced a similar card. "You can't stop the Press, mister!"

"No," said the guardian of the tunnel, "but I can stop you. Beat it, both of you. Seram!"

Without the slightest ceremony he thrust them back, and they became engulfed by the crowd of none too friendly miners. Ten long minutes passed, and then the train that had entered the tunnel came clattering out from it and was switched on to a siding. Ann caught sight of several covered forms on the stretchers, and then there was a rush

on the part of the miners to help carry the wounded across to the hospital.

Danny superintended; O'Hara jumped down from the motor-truck beside Anderson and Swede Mulhousen, and he gripped the inspector by the collar of his coloured shirt.

"The first day I arrived on this job," he thundered, "I noticed that spot when I went through the tunnel. Those lagging and timber segments were cracked. I told you to have them replaced!"

"Say, listen," protested Mulhousen; "a man can't be in three places at once. I was working somewhere else."

"That doesn't answer for the death of two men!"

"I can't help what happened to them."

"No?" roared O'Hara. "Then maybe you can help this!"

His left fist shot out like a sledgehammer, and the thick-lipped Swede went down on his back and sat up to nurse an aching jaw.

"Now get out!"

To murmurs of approval on the part of those who looked on, the ugly inspector rose up and shuffled away.

"I'm sorry about that, O'Hara," said Anderson, with a regretful shake of his head. "We should have fired that guy a long time ago."

Ann had witnessed the downfall of Swede Mulhousen and then had sped across the camp to O'Hara's office. She found it deserted, just as she had expected, and she put through a long-distance call on the telephone to the "Chronicle" office in Los Angeles.

O'Hara, who had seen her run and had suspected her intention, crossed the threshold while she was talking over the line to Howard Egerton Hubbel.

"Cave-in," he heard her say. "Unsafe section. Yeah, two men killed and three injured. Sheer negligence. That's the story you've been waiting for!"

Like lightning he streaked over to her, wrenched the telephone from her hand and banged it down on its plunger and held it there. Ann was furious, and shouted at him.

"Keep your shirt on, you big hruiser!" she cried. "Before I'm finished I'll have enough pictures to fill the rotogravure section!"

"You won't!" grieved O'Hara.

"You can't stop news!" she stormed.

"A story like this is bound to get out. There'll be a coroner's inquest. By tomorrow this place will be over-run with reporters, and they're going to get in!"

"Not if I can keep them out!"

"But that's just the point—you can't stop them!" She had cooled down sufficiently to give him a contemptuous smile.

"What are you going to do? Stand in front of a tunnel, stretch out your arms, and hold back fifty men with police cards?"

"Maybe."

"You know they're going to get in. Listen, I happened to be here first, so I'm lucky. Why don't you give me a break?"

He looked at her with scornful eyes, and he said bitterly:

"Two men have been killed and three injured who may not pull through, and all you're worried about is a story! Is that what newspapers do to a woman?"

That hurt almost more than anything else he could have said, and, ashamed and repentant, she went straight out from the office and across to the hospital. Willie had taken pictures of the wounded on the stretchers, but that she did not know till afterwards. She entered a big ward in which a spectacled doctor was bandaging the wrist of a man who had suffered only minor injuries.

There were a dozen beds in the ward, and in three of them men lay groaning.

Ann walked over to the doctor and asked if she could be of any assistance.

"I don't know," he responded doubtfully. "Have you had any experience in this sort of work?"

She confessed that she hadn't, but seemed so anxious to help that he told her she could clean a number of instruments which were lying on a glass-topped table.

"It isn't exactly a nice job," he said. "Oh, that's all right!" she declared. "I don't mind."

After she had left the office, John O'Hara used the telephone he had taken from her. He put through a call to the head office of the Whitney Construction Company, and Swede Mulhousen was passing by the open window when he heard something that caused him to crouch against the wall and strain his ears.

O'Hara hung up, and Mulhousen scurried off to find Anderson, who was down by the tunnel.

"I was just coming from the paymaster's office," the Swede informed him excitedly, "when I heard O'Hara talking to the main office over the telephone. He asked for a whole new crew, and it looks like he's gonna get it!"

Anderson made a scornful noise in his throat.

"A new crew won't do him any good after to-night," he said.

Five minutes later, O'Hara entered the hospital and was astonished to see Ann, with her sleeves pushed up over her elbows, scrubbing dirty instruments. He looked round at the occupants of the three beds.

"How are they, doctor?" he inquired. "Are they going to pull through all right?"

"Don't see any reason why they shouldn't," was the reply; and then O'Hara crossed over to Ann.

"You don't have to do that," he said gruffly. "I can get a man in."

"If you don't mind," said she, "I want to do it."

"Still looking for romance in a tunnel?"

"It's a tough break for you, isn't it?" He nodded.

"I've got to lick this job, Ann—that is, Miss Miller."

"Ann will do," she said softly, and added: "I'd like to help you."

"It's a man's job," he said, but not in any disparaging way. "Women can't help very much."

Danny Morgan looked in at the door, saw him standing very close to Ann, and walked over.

"Say, boss," he exclaimed, "there's some trouble down at the tracks! You'd better come down there!"

Where the rails converged near the entrance to the tunnel Swede Mulhousen was standing on a truck and holding forth to a considerable number of men who had gathered round.

"It ain't a question of how much they're paying, or an extra bonus, or nothing!" he cried. "They got to guarantee our safety! What's the good of an extra ten bucks this week if you ain't here to enjoy it the next? I say we oughta walk out—and when this tunnel is safe for a man to work in we'll come back, and not before!"

Several voices shouted approval.

"I was fired for something I couldn't help," Mulhousen went on. "And why? Because the blame for the cave-in had to be put on somebody's shoulders and I was the goat. Is that fair?"

"No," agreed some of the malcontents who were in league with Anderson; but Tony Moreno scrambled up on to the truck beside Mulhousen, and he vociferated:

"Dis man he only make-a da trouble!

Somebody cause all da accidents what is inside da tunnel, and Meester O'Hara he only try-a to stop dem, dat's all! I—"

Swede Mulhousen clapped a hand over his mouth and seized him by the throat with the other.

"I'm doin' the talkin' here!" he snarled.

"Leave him alone, Swede, and sit down!" shouted O'Hara, who had just arrived with Danny; and the captive was released, and Mulhousen got down from the truck in baffled rage as O'Hara mounted it.

"Now wait a minute, boys!" O'Hara said in a voice of command. "I wouldn't blame any of you for walking out, and I'm not offering alibis, but negligence was the reason for that cave-in—and you know as well as I do that we've got to plug up that cave-in, or the whole mountain will come pouring through it!"

He paused, and no one had a word to say. Willie had arrived with his cantera; Ann, unable to resist the instincts of a newspaper woman when there was any sort of story about, had run out from the hospital and joined him.

"Now when I first came here on this job," O'Hara went on, "I told you boys I wouldn't ask you to do anything that I wouldn't do myself. Well, I won't. But there's work to be done now, in the tunnel as well as on the road. I need a crew to go with me into that tunnel!"

"We'll go!" chorused the majority of the men, and O'Hara swung round on Mulhousen.

"I told you to leave camp!" he rapped. "Maybe you didn't quite get the idea—clear out!"

The Swede swaggered off towards the gates. A string of muck-cars were couple up, and the men swarmed on to them. O'Hara and Danny climbed into the motor-truck, and Ann pointed to an empty muck-car at the tail-end of the train.

"D'you think it's going to be safe in there?" whispered Willie.

"Of course," she replied.

They boarded the car and crouched down in it, but just as Danny started the train the man who had refused to let

them enter the tunnel reached over from the next car and tugged at a lever.

The muck-car tilted sideways, and Ann and Willie were shot out on to the track.

"What happened?" howled Willie, sitting up and staring after the disappearing train.

"They let us off at Pomona," said Ann.

A Murderous Plot!

IT was quiet enough in the camp throughout the rest of the day, but there was activity in the tunnel and out on the road beyond the gates. Ann paid a visit to the road just before dusk, and she saw that the trestle bridge had been repaired and that the toilers in the roadway, working like niggers, had already cleared a passage wide enough for a car.

She was in her cabin, after dinner that evening, and she was packing a suitcase, when Willie banged at the door and burst in upon her.

"Ann!" he cried.

"You seem excited, Willie," she said. "I suppose you're going to tell me the road is open and we can go back to Los Angeles. I knew that an hour ago!"

"Not that," said Willie. "Tony and I have been doing a little snooping."

"Where? In a bottle again?"

"No," Willie was sober and in earnest. "Listen, we saw Anderson out behind the conduit. He and the three men O'Hara fired were holding a conference, and it wasn't any peace conference either! I couldn't get close enough to hear exactly what they were saying, but I did hear something about a meeting at the tunnel to-night."

"Why, Willie," exclaimed Ann, staring at him, "maybe you've stumbled on something. It might be the angle we've been looking for!"

"I think we ought to tell O'Hara."

She shook her head at that.

"No," she said definitely. "He'd pass it up and think I was looking for an excuse to stay here a little longer."

"But we've got to do something," insisted Willie. "We'll have to leave to-night!"



The giant seized the hand that held the gun and jerked it backwards over O'Hara's shoulder.

"You wait here till I come back."

She went out from the cabin and across the camp to the spot where the grey touring car was standing under sheets of corrugated iron supported on posts. It was almost on the edge of a bank above the river.

She reached over the side of the car to the dashboard and the self-starter buzzed, while away at the other end of the camp O'Hara knocked at the door of the cabin she had left, and entered it to find only Willie in the outer room.

"Where's Miss Miller?" he asked.

"Why, she just stepped outside," Willie replied. "Told me to wait."

"Where'd she go?"

That Willie did not know, so O'Hara waited, too; and in a little while Ann returned, a trifle breathless because she had been running.

"Oh," she said banteringly, "farewell committee of one, I suppose?"

"Something like that," returned O'Hara.

"Well, no use waiting. Willie, will you get the car?"

Willie obediently disappeared; Ann fastened her suitcase.

"I can't seem to realise I'm leaving," she said with a hint of irony. "This place has been just like home to me."

O'Hara did not want her to stay, yet somehow he did not want her to go.

"You know I'm sorry for the way I've acted, once or twice," he blurted. "Will you accept my apology?"

"I'll think about it," she said.

"Thanks. It's nice to have you leave with something to think about. I'm going to try to get up to Los Angeles next week, and—"

"My office is on the fourth floor of the 'Chronicle' Building," she cut in. "But don't you dare to come up!"

The door flew wide and Willie rushed in upon them.

"Say, what do you think's happened?" he gasped. "The car's gone over the embankment!"

"Why, that's impossible!" cried Ann.

"But it did!" howled Willie. "You can see for yourself! It's down in the river!"

"I'll take a look," decided O'Hara, and he ran out.

Ann went to a window and pressed her nose against its glass.

"Now how do you suppose that happened?" she said, watching O'Hara as he moved swiftly away into the darkness.

"I don't know." Willie had his suspicions, though he did not voice them. "I had the emergency brake on—I even had it in gear!"

Ann turned about and smiled at him.

"You don't think Mr. O'Hara did this just to keep me here, do you?" she asked.

"No, I don't," he replied emphatically. "Say, Ann, you're not falling for that guy, are you? You don't belong in a racket like this! Why don't you let me make the down payment on the orange ranch in Pomona, and—"

"At a time like this you stop to talk about an orange ranch?" she chided. "Come on!"

She caught hold of his arm and hurried him out from the cabin in the direction of the tunnel.

"That O'Hara's not the sort of guy for you," he declared, keeping pace with her because he had no option. "He's just a stiff, playing around with a lot of mountains!"

"I'll be the judge of what kind of man John O'Hara is," she retorted. "Come on, we've got things to do! There goes Anderson!"

A motor-truck had just come out from the tunnel and Anderson was driving it. He applied the brakes, a few feet from

the tool-shed, and jumped down on the track with something in his left hand much the shape of a petrol can. He entered the tool-shed, and Ann and Willie scurried round some stationary trucks to the side of the building and crouched there.

Inside the shed the man who had been in charge of the concrete-mixer, until O'Hara had summarily dismissed him, was waiting with Swede Mulhousen. Anderson dumped the canister-like object on the earthen floor.

"Hi, fellows," he said in a voice that reached the alert ears of Ann and Willie, "get this plunger connected with the telephone wire. Step on it!"

Joe, late of the concrete-mixer, picked up the plunger. His companion lurched forward, and Anderson viewed him suspiciously.

"You're drunk!" he stated accusingly.

"He's all right, chief," said Joe; and the two proceeded to connect the canister to the wires of a wall-telephone.

"Nick and Shane," stated Anderson, "are coming in from the East Morengo entrance to the branch tunnel. I'm going to the junction to see if they've got the powder all set."

He went out from the shed, climbed back into the motor-truck, and went off on it back into the tunnel. Willie, crouching beside Ann, shivered.

"You know I'm not crazy about this," he whispered. "I heard somebody say the tunnel goes for miles, and there are miles of mountain on top of it! We're not going in there, are we?"

Ann pulled his car.

"Why, Willie, you're actually cold," she rebuked.

"I wish I was in Pomona," shuddered Willie.

Wires of Destruction

MOST of the debris blocking the tunnel as a result of the cave-in had been cleared away before O'Hara visited Ann's cabin, but a gang of men were still working hard to make the roof and floor secure in that particular section.

The sound of their activities, however, was quite faint at the junction, and there Nick Pollack and Dave Shane were running wires along the ground towards a telephone attached to the rough wall of rock.

Anderson stopped the motor-truck a few yards away from them and sprang down from it, completely unaware of the fact that Ann and Willie had sped along the track in the wake of the truck and were not very far behind it when he addressed his two accomplices.

"Powder all set?" he asked.

"Enough to blow the top of the mountain off," Nick Pollack assured him. "Come and look!"

He and Anderson went farther along the tunnel, while Shane completed the job of joining wires from the charge to the wires of the telephone and then concealed the charge wires beneath earth and bits of rock. Ann and Willie reached the truck, climbed into the back of it without a sound, and crouched watchfully out of sight.

Anderson came back with Shane to Pollack.

"Anybody see you come in?" he asked.

"No," said Shane. "Where's the plunger?"

"Joe and Swede have got it in the tool-shed."

Ann crawled from the back of the motor-truck into its driving-seat without being seen.

"Now here's the lay-out," explained Anderson. "When we're all set I'll get O'Hara on the 'phone and tell him

there's been a big accident at the cave-in. We know how far it is from the entrance of the tunnel to the cave-in, don't we?"

"Sure," agreed Shane, "but there's a lot of guys still working there."

"Can't help about them," returned Anderson callously. "We've got to get O'Hara, and that'll be easy. We know how fast he can travel. We'll time the explosion to catch him just as he reaches the men."

"The motor of the truck was running. Ann switched into reverse."

"We've got to warn O'Hara!" she said.

The three men looked round in alarmed astonishment as the truck began to move. They saw Ann driving and Willie standing up beside her. Shane flew, caught up, and gripped the side of the truck with the intention of heaving himself aboard. But Willie stamped on his knuckles, and he let go and fell.

"I got him!" cried Willie triumphantly.

"Good work," said Ann.

Anderson had made no attempt at pursuit.

"They won't get very far!" he snarled, and on the telephone he rang up the tool-shed and spoke to Joe, explaining in as few words as possible what had happened. "Get 'em when they come out and hold 'em," he directed. "We'll be right along."

He hung up, and with Nick Pollack reached Shane just as that angry giant had risen to his feet, sucking damaged knuckles.

"When I get hold of the little rat that did this to me," exploded the sufferer, "I'll wring his blamed neck!"

"Come on!" cried Anderson impatiently. "They'll both be in the tool-shed by the time we get out—I've 'phoned Joe."

The truck rattled along through the tunnel and out from it under the stars. Ann stopped it by the equipment warehouse, and she and Willie got down on to the track.

"We've got to find Mr. O'Hara," she said—and then Joe and Mulhousen pounced on them from either side, and they were dragged off to the tool-shed, struggling violently but in vain.

"You can't do this to me!" howled Willie. "What's the matter with you? You can't do this!"

Swede, gripping him by the throat, forced him backwards against some shelving, half-choking him. Joe, not caring to treat Ann too roughly, found her more than a handful.

"You big bully, let me go!" she screamed, and kicked because her hands were held.

In at the door came the three who had been compelled to walk back from the junction, and Dave Shane snatched Ann from her captor, held her arms with one hand and clapped the other over her mouth.

"Too bad you had to get mixed up in this," Anderson said to her. "Nick, get some rope and tie 'em up!"

The prisoners' wrists were bound behind their backs and both were roped about the knees. Handkerchiefs were tied over their mouths, and they were dumped in a sitting position near one of the walls.

"I'm going to get O'Hara on the 'phone," said Anderson. "Put those lights out!"

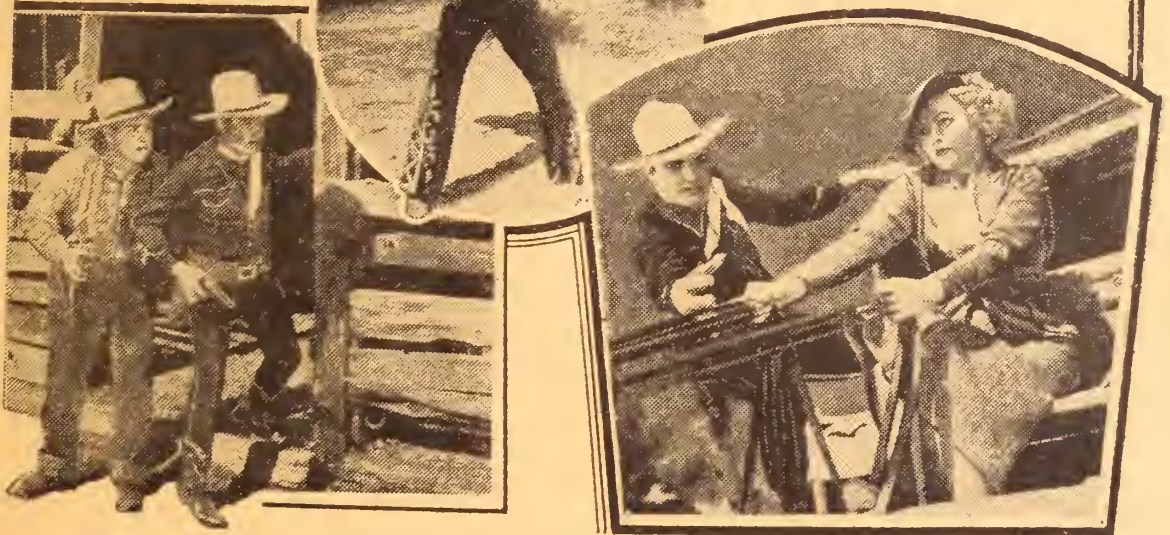
The shed was plunged into darkness, except for such light as came through the windows, and Anderson rang up the office.

O'Hara was in his room there, and Danny Morgan was with him because

(Continued on page 25)

A Western range ace, with guitar and six-gun, solves a murder mystery and captures a blonde cyclone. Starring Gene Autry

"The SAGEBRUSH TROUBADOUR"



The Horse and Guitar String

TWO troubadour cowboys rode at a leisurely pace along the trail. The tall, powerful, smiling young fellow on the glorious white horse was Gene Autry, and the thick-set, clumsy, cheerful fellow on the mettlesome brown mare was "Frog" Millhouse.

On a lazy and dispirited mule were a number of musical instruments. On a squat grey horse, which had an extraordinarily shaped back, were their own personal kit. As they rode Frog twanged upon a guitar whilst Gene did the singing.

"Way out West in Texas,
That's where I long to be
Riding on the prairie
With a good hoss under me.
Three long years I bummed around.
My heart is sad and blue.
I'm going back to the woolly West,
Where your friends are always true."

Here the two men sang the chorus:

"Way out West in Texas,
Where the atmosphere is light,
You roll up in your blanket
On the prairie every night.
Where the rattlesnakes and the old
horn toads,
They sleep right by your side."

This is the verse that Frog contributed:

"Way out West in Texas,
When they round up in the spring
You'll hear me sing this little song
While riding on the range.
Your Broadway lights appeal to you,
But moonlight suits me fine.
I'll settle down in Texas,
And I'll leave my blues behind."

The song at an end, Frog Millhouse cleared his throat preparatory to singing a Western comedy number, but there came a nasty twang, and he realised that one of the strings of his instrument had snapped.

"You got a guitar-string?" he asked.
"There's a box of them in the pack."
"Couldn't you lend me that one in your pocket?" Frog yawned. "Just for a little while—I won't lose it."

"I'm not taking the chance of you losing it," Gene shook his head, and took out a neatly rolled piece of gut. "What would we use for evidence? This string's going to put a rope round somebody's neck—when we find the guitar it belongs to."

"Whose neck, and what guitar?"
"It's our job to find out." Gene pocketed the string, and stared towards the horizon. "The trail may be a long one, but we'll never give up. I've a hunch, Frog, we got plenty of hard work ahead."

Whether the music did not soothe Frog's brown mare and had a ruffling effect on the creature one cannot say, but it is a fact that soon after the song they parted company. The mare did a bronco-busting act and deposited Frog on the hard, stony trail. It was little consolation that his partner laughed.

"Now you've got to admit you can't handle that horse!" cried Gene. "Stay there—I'll go get him."

But the brown mare was a mover, and after going two miles or more Gene abandoned the chase. He returned to find Frog rubbing himself tenderly.

"She got away from me," Gene had to admit. "That hoss sure hated your company, for she went like the wind. She must have dodged down one of the many canyons that abound here, and as

we ain't got time to organise a search you'll have to ride the swayback."

"That ain't no horse—that's a nightmare!" muttered Frog, looking gloomily at the old grey horse.

"Well, that hoss may be a nightmare, and it's sure going to give someone bad dreams," grimly answered Gene. "Don't forget that's the animal that old man Martin was riding the day he was murdered."

"And you want me to ride it, like I was old man Martin's ghost!" Frog shivered. "Guess as my hoss got away from you there ain't nothing else for it. I never thought this old rocking-chair would ever get me. I only hope I don't get seasick."

An hour later they came to a rough but well-worn trail, and Gene glanced round at his companion.

"We should hit town before night-fall." He studied a map. "This must be the trail from the railroad halt. We should reach Sandy Hook in a couple of hours provided you don't fall off the swayback or put its feet down a gopher hole."

"You can well laugh," growled Frog. "You're sitting pretty on Champion, whilst I gotta ride this—". He turned. "Say, pal, did I hear anything?"

Gene bent his head.
"You sure did. It's a coach or some sort of wagon—and they seem in a hurry."

Over the crest of the hill came a four-horse coach. A girl was in the driver's seat and the horses were going at a full gallop. For a moment Gene thought the horses had gained the mastery and that an accident was inevitable, until he heard the girl shouting encouragement—they weren't going fast enough for her.

Peering out of the coach window was a head, and the owner did not seem too

happy because the vehicle was rolling and swaying through the pace and the unevenness of the trail.

Frog Millhouse hurriedly removed himself and mule from the trail, but Gene only moved Champion a little to the side as he expected the girl would slow.

"Get off the road, you limpets!" came her shout.

And Gene had to touch Champion with a spur or else the horses would have charged into him. An old man cackled derisively from the coach window as the vehicle whirled past. That infuriated Gene, and he went after the coach like the wind.

The girl urged her horses to their utmost, but Champion had a reputation for speed, and soon the white stallion was alongside the coach. The girl gave Gene a defiant grin.

"I wanna speak to you, young woman!" bellowed Gene.

"I'm in a hurry!" she shouted back.

"Bye!"

She might be a pleasant-faced, attractive young woman, but she couldn't defy the Sagebrush Troubadour in this manner. He urged Champion closer to the coach, kicked his feet clear of the stirrups and then shot out a hand to grip a rail. His strong hand got a firm hold, the muscles stiffened for the task, and then he swung himself from the saddle to the driver's box.

The girl was amazed to find the man beside her, and she was still more amazed when strong fingers took the reins from her hands. Though furious, she had to admire the man's courage, and it was obvious that he could handle horses.

The coach lured round a corner, and the girl gasped because she realised that at the mad pace she had been going it would have been impossible to have made the turn. Gene had been checking the horses, and he just managed to turn with one wheel kicking stones over the edge. The girl looked at the drop of a hundred feet into a gully and gulped—it would have been a nasty accident. She had been away so long she had forgotten this danger spot.

Gene swung the horses away off the trail and up an incline—that took all the exuberance out of the leaders. A foot lurch down on the brakes and the coach lurched to a stop.

"I oughta turn you across my knee and spank you!"

Blue eyes opened wide.

"You don't dare!"

"Don't I?" Gene gritted out, and next moment she was across his knee. She struggled and kicked, but she got a spanking. With a grin Gene let her go, and she would have smacked his face but for the glint in his eyes. She didn't want another spanking, because this young giant had a heavy hand.

The old boy had got out of the coach and was staring up at Gene in truculent fashion.

"Say, what's the idea practising your circus stunts on my stage-coach?" he demanded.

"You ought to know better than to let this crazy girl drive your stage!" Gene replied sternly.

The driver showed tobacco-stained teeth in an angry snarl.

"If I wanta let Miss Martin drive this coach, that's my business."

Gene studied the girl with interest.

"Are you Miss Joan Martin?"

"Yes!" she snapped at him. "And you'd better not be in this country when I tell my Uncle John that you—you dared to strike me."

Gene chuckled.

"Well, it hurt me more than it did you. Take my tip and let Hank take the coach into town."

May 16th, 1936.

He jumped lightly from the coach into the saddle of Champion, who had kept close to the coach.

"My name ain't Hank!" The driver climbed to the box seat. He pointed at the swayback, who had just jolted off the trail into the scene. "Where'd you get that old critter?"

"Ain't he a dandy?" grinned Frog. "He's a genuine thoroughbred, and can move like the wind." He doffed his sombrero to the girl. "You look kinda warm, missee."

The young lady was flushed with anger, and not because of the heat of the sun. She nudged the old man.

"Will you please get started?"

The coach was turned, whilst Gene and Frog watched.

"How far is it to the next town?" Gene asked, because he wanted to delay the girl.

"You follow the road and you'll find out!" retorted the driver. "We ain't got any welcome for hombres like you."

The girl looked at Gene as if he were dirt, but she could not face the merry twinkle in his grey eyes. The coach bumped back on to the trail and vanished in a cloud of dust.

With chin cupped in his right hand Gene sat back in the saddle and shook his head.

"She's a pretty nice girl, ain't she?" demanded Frog. "What ye shaking your head about?"

"She's old man Martin's granddaughter, and we've got work to do at the Martin ranch. What a swell reception we're going to get."

"Well, that just proves that you shouldn't spank girls before you're introduced to them."

Gene gave a wry grin.

"Frog, does anything peculiar strike you about this meeting? Can you tell me how I know she's been out of this country for quite a while?"

"That's sure got me beat."

"She didn't recognise her grandfather's horse." Gene pointed to the swayback. "Well, we'd better get back to the trail. Wonder what'll happen when that dame sees we've shown up in Sandy Hook."

"She won't want to kiss you," retorted Frog. "Can you tell me how I know that?"

Old Man Martin's Will

SANDY HOOK was a fair-sized cowtown on the Mexican Border.

There were a number of big ranches, and one or two mines that kept the place pretty busy.

On this sunny, warm afternoon most people were indoors having a siesta, but a greasy Mexican in the picturesque attire of his people, if somewhat worn, lounged against a bullock cart. The clatter of hoofs made him look up as the coach came into the square. Instantly the man was on his feet and running across the road to the saloon.

Leaning against the bar was a tall big-built middle-aged man. The expression was ugly and discontented.

"Senor Martin, the stage-coach—she has come with Senorita Joan."

"Thanks, Pablo." The man swallowed his drink. "Why couldn't the little fool have stayed East another month?"

Martin hurried across the square and was there to help the girl alight from the box. He was all smiles.

"Howdy, Joan?" he inquired pleasantly. "It sure is good to have you back home again."

"Oh, it's nice to be back, Uncle John." She kissed him. Then her pretty face clouded. "Tell me about—about granddad."

"Well—" He hesitated. "It ain't

a very nice business, Joan, and—" Quick footfalls made him turn.

A short, wiry young cowpuncher was striding quickly towards them. John Martin scowled.

"If it ain't Joan Martin!" cried the newcomer.

"Hallo, Lon?" The girl held out her hand.

"The East certainly has changed you some," he said ardently. "You've grown up—you're prettier."

"Thank you!" Her smile was a little forced. Lon Danvers was a young man who had paid her marked attention before she went to New York for her finishing education, and she did not like him very much.

"I reckon I'll have to start calling on you, Joan," Lon said boldly. "With serious intentions."

John Martin scowled at him.

"Save your courting talk for later, Lon—we've got to see Lawyer Nolan now."

Martin took the girl's arm and moved away. Lon Danvers' eyes narrowed as he watched them go. He saw them enter the lawyer's office, and then he acted strangely. By a circuitous route he came to the lawyer's office and bending down, crept round till he was beneath Lawyer Nolan's window. He could hear everything that was being said.

Lawyer Nolan was a sleek, pale-faced person. He jumped up from his chair and held out both his hands when John Martin brought the girl into his office.

"Why, it's our little Joan!" he cried. "I hardly know you. Welcome home."

The girl sat down in the chair the lawyer offered.

"Mr Nolan, I want to know how granddad was killed?"

The listener outside the window strained nearer to hear the answer.

"Your grandfather was murdered by someone unknown, who throttled him with a guitar string."

"Oh!" The girl could not check her little cry of horror.

"Probably murder wasn't intended," John Martin suggested. "They may have tried to worm some secret out of the old man."

"Secret?"

Nolan nodded his head.

"He's right, Joan," he sighed sadly.

"Why, your grandfather had secrets he didn't even confide in me—his lawyer."

"He was a smart man," said John Martin.

The girl did not miss the sneer in her uncle's voice. The lawyer and her uncle could not be very good friends. She felt that as Uncle John was her poor dear dead father's only brother she ought to like him more, but he was so morose. She had not cared very much about him even when her father was alive, and though three years had passed, he seemed just as overbearing as of old. Her mother had died when she was very small, and her father when she was fourteen. Granddad had been such a dear, and when she was seventeen had sent her to New York. She had been thinking about returning to the West when the tragic news of the old man's death had reached her. She had left New York the next morning.

"I have the will of the late John Martin in my safe," the lawyer said with his oily smile. "Would you care to hear it?"

"Of course, we'd like to hear it," answered Martin.

Nolan unlocked his safe and produced a blue document. He smiled at Joan, cleared his throat, and began:

"To my only remaining son, John



Next moment she was across his knee, and, in spite of her struggles, she got a spanking.

Martin, I leave the sum of five thousand dollars." The lawyer looked at Martin, who seemed very angry. "Not a very large amount, is it?"

"The mean old——" Martin eeked himself. Carry on. Maybe he mentions me again."

"He does!" The lawyer grinned and turned back to the document. "To my granddaughter, Joan Martin, I bequeath all the balance of my property, both real and personal. But in the event of her death the entire estate shall go to my only remaining son, John Martin." He paused to look at his two eager listeners. "In the event of the deaths of both my granddaughter and my son, then my entire estate shall go to my good friend and legal adviser, Henry Nolan."

Martin's lip curled. "You'd sorta be lucky, wouldn't you, Henry, if anything happened to Joan and me?"

The lawyer replaced the will in his safe before turning to smile in his mocking, sinister way at Martin.

"And you'd be a rich man, John, if any harm came to Joan."

"How can you men joke about such things?" Joan demanded, her cheeks flushed with indignation.

"We're sorry, Joan!" both men cried together.

"Liars!" muttered the listener outside the window, and, bent double, he crawled away because the seraping of a chair told him that the interview with the lawyer was at an end, and he had no desire to be caught eavesdropping.

The Demand for the Swayback

GENE AUTRY and Frog Millhouse came at last in sight of the town of Sandy Hook. Gene reined in his horse.

"Now, remember, we've got to use our eyes and ears and yet make folks think we're dumb and simple."

Frog scratched his unruly thatch of hair.

"Well, acting dumb is going to be pretty hard for me."

Gene laughed heartily, much to his companion's disgust.

"We're just wandering cowboy minstrels," he said at last. "Going from town to town picking up jobs by playing and singing."

Soon after entering the town they sighted a tumbledown place that announced that cheap stabling could be had there. They hitched their animals to a rail, and hammered at a door. A big, lazy person appeared.

"Howdy?" Gene smiled in his friendliest fashion.

"How ya?" yawned the man. "I'm Hank Polk."

"My name is Gene Autry, and this funny-looking galoot here is my partner, Frog Millhouse."

"Howdy?"

"How about a little food for our animals?"

"Oh, sure!" yawned Hank.

"We'll be laying around here for a few days," said Gene. "Do you know of any parties or weddings that will be needing a two-man orchestra?"

"Well, no," Hank grimed. "The boys hung a Chinaman yesterday, but they'll be burying him without music." He studied Gene's horse, looked at the mule, and then for the first time seemed to notice the swayback. "Say, there's an old lady that wants me to get her a gentle buggy horse. How about trading that horse of your pard's for a good fast one?"

Gene gave the man a searching glance. There was a curious gleam in Hank's eyes.

"Well, I don't think——" Gene said slowly.

The other quickly interrupted. "I'll even throw in a good saddle."

"I'll have to consider it." Gene winked slyly at Frog.

"I'll give you free feed," Hank urged.

"Why, man, if that ain't a bargain I don't know one."

A man was running along the dust street. Lon Danvers had been sneaking away from the lawyer's window when he had sighted the newcomers.

"Hey, wait!" Lon shouted.

Gene whistled softly to himself.

"Boys," Lon Danvers panted out. "I'll give you a good horse and a hundred dollars for that swayback!"

Hank Polk clenched his fists.

"You stay out of this, Lon. This is my deal."

"I'll make it a horse and two hundred dollars." Lon ignored Hank and looked at Gene.

"Two-fifty!" shouted Hank.

"Three hundred!"

"Four hundred!"

"I'll make it five hundred dollars!" hoarsely cried Lon.

"Six hundred!"

"Seven hundred!"

"Eight hundred!" yelled Hank.

"Hey, wait a minute!" interrupted Gene. "What's the great idea?"

The two bidders glared at Gene, who seemed vastly amused by the whole affair.

Meanwhile someone else had spotted the swayback. The Mexican half-breed, Pablo. This greasy fellow raced across the square. John Martin and the lawyer were alone, because Joan had gone into the only store to make some purchases.

"Senor," Pablo gasped out to Martin, "two strangers have the old swayback. Hank Polk and Lon Denvers are trying to buy it."

The news seemed to startle the two men. Martin turned to his Mexican foreman.

"All right, I'll fix it."

With long strides he set off across the square, and, hearing footsteps behind him, turned to find that the lawyer was there.

"Well, where are you going?"

Nolan gave an unpleasant grin.

"The same place as you are, and for the same reason."

Martin scowled, but with a resigned

slung of his shoulders allowed the lawyer to catch him up. The two men walked rapidly towards the stable.

Gene Autry listened with interest to these two men arguing over the horse and whose right it was to buy the creature. Any moment he expected them to come to blows. From the side-carrier of the mule he took out a Spanish guitar.

"What kind of a horse would you give me for this?" he asked.

"I don't use no guitar," answered Hank.

"I don't like music," replied Lon.

"How about trading that horse?"

Gene gave a decisive shake of his head.

"We can't trade that horse. A fellow said he belonged to Frank Martin—said Martin'd pay a good reward for him."

"Martin is dead!" Lon answered at once.

"And a good job, too," cried Hank. "The old skinflut. He beat me out of a big bill he owed me."

"So that's how you feel about it, eh?" Instantly Lon had turned. "Maybe you're the one who—"

"Maybe you'd better keep quiet," interrupted Hank, and turned to Gene. "He didn't like the old man because he said no darned storekeeper could marry his granddaughter."

"So you're the owner of the store," remarked Gene, eager to encourage these two to talk. He had already picked up quite a lot of information. Frantic signals from Frog made him glance round. Two men—one tall and the other short—were hastening down the street.

"Strangers," John Martin called out. "That horse belongs to me. I'm John Martin."

"Just a moment," Nolan held up his hand. "As the lawyer settling this estate. I'll take charge of this horse."

"Hold on, there," truculently spoke Hank Polk. "I claim that nag for the money old Martin owed me."

Lon went to peer at the swayback. "Well, if it comes to that, possession is nine points of the law, and I don't see any brand on him." He slipped a hand down to his gun-holster.

"One moment, folks!" Gene raised his voice. "I found this horse, and I'm not surrendering it to anyone until ownership is proved. You fellows settle it among yourselves, or we'll let the sheriff decide." He noticed uneasy glances at mention of the sheriff. He walked across and touched his bewildered companion. "Come on, Frog, let's go find some place to eat. We'll talk about stabling, Hank, when we get back. See you gentlemen later."

Four disgruntled men watched Gene and Frog move leisurely down the street.

Hank turned on Lon. "If you hadn't butted in I'd have got that horse."

"Ain't that too bad?" sneered the other.

"John," Nolan touched the tall man's sleeve. "As a lawyer I wish to point out that none of us can legally claim that horse."

"Well?"

"The sheriff, if consulted, would naturally say it was Joan's property," the lawyer said in his soft, oily manner.

"There's no need to put it to the sheriff. Can't we get together over this business?"

"You're quite right." The lawyer took the tall man's arm. "Let's get away from these two—don't want them in our schemes. I've got something figured out."

"What's your plan?" asked Martin, when they were out of earshot of the two squabblers.

May 16th, 1936.

The lawyer lowered his voice to a whisper.

An Invitation

THE two friends walked in silence till they had almost reached the square. Frog was the first to speak.

"You're not really aiming to see the sheriff?"

"That'd spoil all our plans," laughed Gene. "I want to force their hands. I had a hunch that as soon as we struck town with that old swayback in tow things would start humming. You'll see—they'll make the next move."

"Well, it beats me," mumbled Frog. "Either that old boss has been grazing in the mint or swallowed the Crown Jewels. Say, why do you suppose everybody wants to buy that old swayback?"

Gene looked grim. "When we find that out, we'll know why old man Martin was murdered—and maybe who did it."

They walked on and reached the square. They were in time to see Joan Martin come out of the store and look round for her uncle. She moved from the veranda shelter of the store to take a good look at the square and must have caught her foot in a loose board, for she stumbled and dropped her bag, scattering its contents.

Gene Autry hastened across to assist her. The girl was about to stoop to retrieve her possessions when Gene appeared on the scene and forestalled her.

"Lipstick, comb, mirror, and powder," he murmured politely, as he handed back her fallen possessions.

"Thank you!" Joan replied, and then her eyes opened wide as she recognised the man who had spanked her such a short while before.

"You're quite welcome," Gene bowed ironically. "Nice weather we're having—but a little chilly."

Her looks were more than chilly—they should have frozen. The girl gave a haughty toss of her head, and walked quickly away. It was a relief to see her uncle and the lawyer on the opposite side of the square. She hastened to them.

"Joan," John Martin spoke very seriously. "I want you to give a dance to-night. A homecoming celebration." He pointed across the square. "And you can ask those fellows to furnish the music."

"No, no, I couldn't do that, with grandfather dead—murdered!"

"Joan, I must get that big man out to the ranch, and hold him there."

"Why?" Joan demanded, mystified.

"Because we suspect him of murdering your grandfather."

"I don't believe it," Joan had decided that the man who had handed out that humiliating rebuke was an impudent fellow, but not a murderer.

"He plays the guitar," Martin was enacting the crafty plan suggested by the lawyer. "You remember the guitar string. And he has shown up with the horse your grandfather was riding the day he was murdered."

"Well, why don't you notify the sheriff?" suggested the girl.

"Not yet." Martin gave a decisive shake of his head. "I want to question him—watch him—before making such a grave accusation."

The girl's expression became hard.

"I'd do anything to find out who murdered granddad. All right, I'll ask them." She looked at her uncle. "Tell me what I've got to say."

"They're talking about us," Gene told Frog. "We'll just stick around and see what comes of it."

"You're right, pal," hissed Frog.

"They're stepping across the street, and I'll wager my last cent we're their meat."

Martin, Nolan and the girl approached, and Gene drew his own conclusions from the fact that the girl was smiling—very forced.

"Mr. Autry, I'm giving a dance—a masquerade—to-night," she stated.

"Could you furnish the music?"

"Why sure, that's our business," Gene smiled as if delighted.

"I'm glad you fellows can do this for my niece," John Martin chimed in.

"Say, why not come along to the ranch with us right now and have dinner there?"

"Suits us," agreed the troubadour.

"Well, let's get going," suggested Martin.

"I'll ride along with you," the lawyer said with a meaning glance at Martin. "Guess as Joan's lawyer I should be at this masquerade."

"If you could wait here a few minutes we'll gather together our traps," Gene looked at the girl. "We've only got to go across the square—we won't be long." "We'll wait," Martin answered for his niece.

When they were the other side of the square Gene gave a quiet chuckle and Frog glanced at him in surprise.

"I told you they'd make the next move," Gene gave an ominous nod. "I don't trust Joan's uncle or that fawning lawyer. I wonder what they aim to spring on us at the ranch. The sooner we get there, Frog, the sooner we'll find out."

One Mystery Partly Solved

THEY collected their possessions, and mounted on Champion and the swayback hastened across the square to join the others. Joan rode in a buckboard with the greasy Pablo driving, whilst Martin and Nolan rode behind on well-broken-in mustangs.

They had gone about a mile when Martin suggested that Autry sing them one of his Western prairie songs. Gene smiled and signalled to Frog to get out a guitar.

"I'd love to wed a girl I met

In a stage coach on the prairie.

I'd love to say to-day's the day

When you and I will marry.

But I must find a girl that's sweet.

You see the point, of course.

If frown she must, I think it just

To stay in love with my horse."

Joan glanced round and met the mocking grin of the singing troubadour, and she knew that she was the motive of the song.

"Please drive faster, Pablo," she spoke sharply.

A cunning gleam came for a split second into the man's eyes, and then was gone. Pablo urged the horses to a gallop, and Joan for a while grinned as the buckboard drew farther and farther away. But Gene had sharp eyes, and he urged his horse into a canter. There seemed a peculiar wobble to one of the back wheels of the buckboard. Suddenly he urged his horse to a gallop because he was now certain that the wheel was likely to come off at any moment.

The trail was narrow and on one side was a nasty drop into a rocky ravine. Champion seemed to understand and stretched himself out into a swift gallop.

Pablo heard the thunder of hoofs behind and urged his horses on. The buckboard swayed dangerously. The Mexican cursed and swore as if the horses were out of control, and all the while he was ready to leap for safety when the wheel collapsed.

Joan clung on for dear life and just

when she expected the next moment was going to be her last Gene drew level. It was at that moment that the wheel came off the axle, and Pablo leapt. But the buckboard with Joan did not crash over the edge because Gene's strong arm had reached out and lifted the girl from the buckboard on to the pommel of his saddle.

Pablo rolled over and over down the incline to crash into a great mass of mesquite. When he staggered to his feet it was to see the smashed buckboard nearby—it was smashed to pieces. The horses had been fortunate in that the shafts had snapped and they had managed to keep to the trail. But what made the Mexican so livid was to see on the trail above him the girl safely held in Gene's arms.

Out flashed Pablo's gun and he fired, but his aim was not quite deadly enough—it drilled a neat hole in Gene's sombrero. The troubadour slid the girl to the ground and whipped out his six-gun. Pablo dropped his gun as if it were red hot. He came out of the mesquite and began talking with a lot of gestures and looking round, then he dived back into the mesquite and held aloft the gun.

"Pablo's gun dropped from his holster and went off by accident," explained Martin.

"Well, if that was an accident," Gene said caustically. "I hope he aims at me next time. You all right, Miss Martin?"

"Yes, thank you." The girl looked searchingly at him as if she did not know what to believe. "I'm quite all right."

"Good!" Gene seemed unperturbed with his narrow escape from death. "Better take my horse, Miss Martin. I can manage with one of the buckboard broncs."

They reached the Martin ranch without further incident. The place was on the phone and Joan at once got busy sending out invitations, whilst the servants prepared the large ranch-house for the festivities.

Gene and Frog found a comfortable stable for the swayback. It was Pablo who supplied the padlock and key.

"Is this the only key?"

"Si, senor."

"Frog," Gene said when the Mexican had gone, "I don't trust that greaser. You stay here and watch the swayback. I've got some investigating to do."

Gene prowled round the ranch and the corral and found nothing that gave him any clue. It was near the ranch-house that he saw an old guitar on a rustic chair, and nearby on a table a powerful magnifying glass. He was busy examining the strings when he saw Pablo peering at him covertly, and briskly he called the Mexican across. Pablo came unwillingly.

"Did you ever see a guitar string through a magnifying glass?" Gene watched the man closely.

"No, senor," Pablo replied. "That is old Senor Martin's reading-glass. He was very near-sighted."

"He used this glass to read by?"

"Si, senor, but not very well because Senor Martin was almost blind."

A startled look, quickly suppressed, and then Gene dismissed the Mexican with a casual gesture. He hastened round to the stable, where Frog was nearly asleep.

"Wake up and give me the key."

"What's up?"

"I just learned something. Old man Martin was almost blind."

"That don't mean a thing to me," muttered Frog.

"He must have depended on that old horse to find the way whenever he rode him." He unpadlocked the stable. "I'm going to take the horse out and let it show me its secret. I want you to remain on guard as if the swayback were still here. Don't let anyone know I've taken him."

The conspirators led the old horse out of the stable. No one saw them, and when Gene was safely on his way Frog

returned to his post. As there was nothing to guard he decided that it was his chance to enjoy a siesta.

Turning the Tables

IN the sitting-room of the Martin ranch four angry men faced each other, and each suspected the other of trying a double-cross. Hank Polk and Lon Danvers had come out to the ranch and stated very frankly that they did not trust Martin or the lawyer, and as they were themselves very interested in the swayback they did not intend to be ticked out of their rights. They all argued about who had the greatest right, and in the end decided to divide everything into quarter shares.

"Let's take this swayback right now," shouted Hank. "Before this Austry feller gets away with it or finds out its secret."

"Suppose I refuse," cried Martin, who was still rebellious about letting in anyone else. "Why should I cut you in on this horse business?"

"Because if you don't, we'll tell Joan the truth," sneered Lon. "The horse belongs to her, anyway."

"They've got you," said Nolan, and grinned slyly.

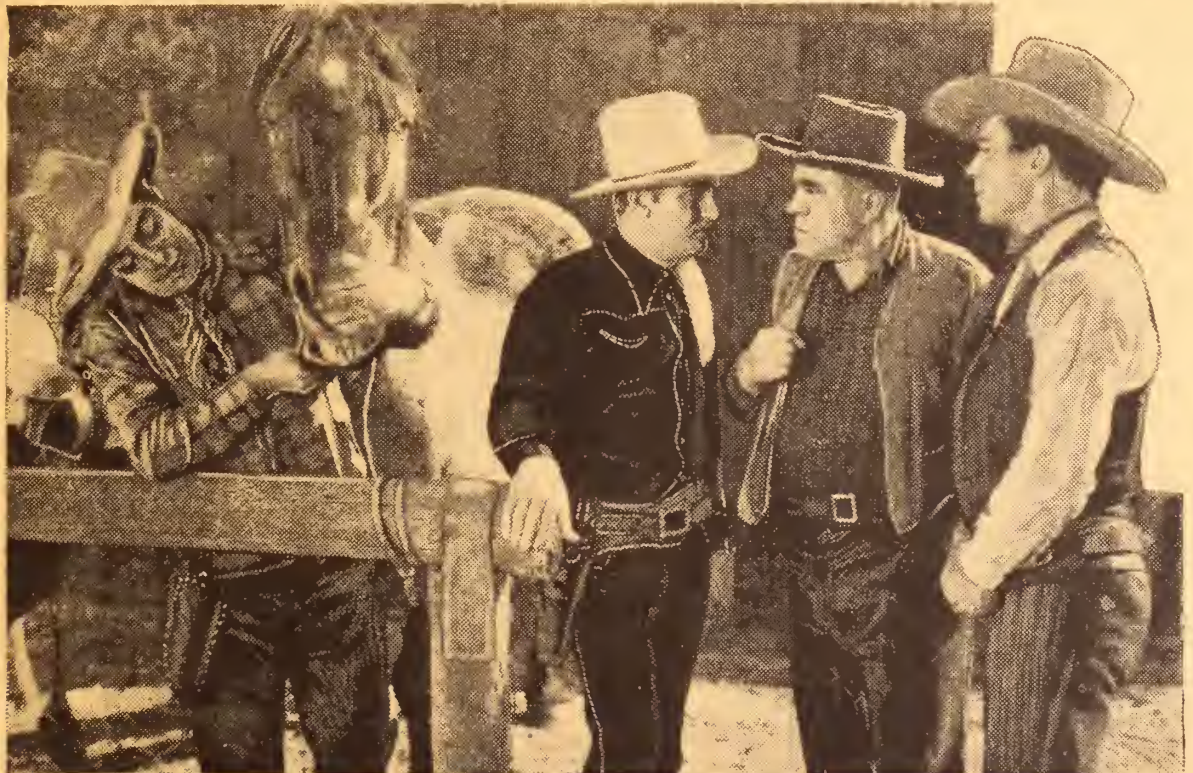
"Well, let's get the horse." Martin made his decision. "There's enough of us here to do it."

Frog Millhouse woke up and tried to prevent them entering the stable, and managed to knock the lawyer down before his arms were pinioned. Then the lock was broken and the fact that the swayback was gone was discovered.

"Where's your pardner and the horse?" Martin yelled at Frog.

"I don't know," was the answer, and no manner of threats would make Frog Millhouse talk. It was the lawyer who suggested searching the prisoner, and in one pocket they found a guitar string, and that gave the crafty Nolan an idea.

"A guitar string?" He looked at the others.



The two bidders glared at Gene, who seemed vastly amused by the whole affair.

"Yeah, and it's like the one that choked old Martin!" shouted Danvers. "And he came here riding the dead man's horse," added Hank.

Nolan nodded his head ominously. "Boys, guess you've got the same notion as me. This man should be handed over to the sheriff."

"I'll get Pablo to telephono the sheriff to come right over," Martin decided, and turned on Frog. "There's enough evidence against you to hang you for murder."

"Better get some rope and tie him up," suggested Nolan. "He's a slippery customer."

A horseman rode quietly up to the ranch and his quick ears heard the sound of several voices near the old stable. His horse made no sound as Gene urged the intelligent animal round some store buildings to a position where a view of the barn could be obtained. A slight whistle of surprise escaped his lips as he saw Frog with his hands above his head and Martin cowering him with a gun. The other men were bunched together with shoulders stooped forward, as if longing to leap at Frog's neck; hurrying towards the scene was Pablo with a length of rope.

Gene took a rope from the saddle of Champion and looked at it thoughtfully. He reckoned he could do it.

The clutter of hoofs made the conspirators whip round, but as their hands went to their hips a loop came sailing through the air. It was a perfect throw, and as the men got to their guns the whirlwind Champion had flashed past and the loop was jerked taut. Martin, who might have fired, had not guessed what the horseman planned until it was too late.

Pablo and the lawyer were not caught in the ring, but Frog dealt with them. One blow floored the lawyer and then the big fellow got a strangle grip on the half-breed's throat.

Martin, Hank and Lon were swept off their feet and dragged some distance before Gene freed the rope from the pommel of his saddle. The discomfited rascals found themselves looking at a gun held by a steady hand.

"Look here," began Martin. "You can't—"

The gun twitched significantly. "Cut it!" snapped Gene. "I don't want to hear a word from you thugs."

Gene and Frog used the rope that Pablo had brought to bind the five men securely together, then at the point of the gun they were marched into the empty stable and flung on the straw.

"That'll keep 'em quiet for a bit," Gene smiled as he stared down at their squirming captives.

"They've sent for the sheriff," whispered Frog.

"Then get a horse quick—jump to it!" Gene pushed his companion as a gesture to hurry. He gave the captives' bonds a quick examination. "I'll see you at the dance to-night, gentlemen." He went out and lashed the broken loek with rope.

Frog appeared with a big brown mare, and the two friends galloped towards the lulls.

"Do you really mean to be at that dance to-night?" asked Frog after they had gone some distance, and sighed when Gene gave a curt nod. "You'd walk into certain death just to see that girl."

"She's in danger," Gene was serious now. "That buckboard wheel coming off was no accident, nor was the shot that nearly got me. My hunch is that the same man who murdered her grandfather is trying to get rid of the girl. And that's why we've got to go to the dance to-night."

May 18th, 1936.

"Pal, we'll be there," Frog cried boisterously, though he felt far from cheerful. "But I'm gonna be shakier than a hula-dancer."

The Masquerade Dance

THE sheriff was not able to show up at the Martin ranch until the evening, and he was surprised to find the place all lit up with small coloured lanterns, buckboards and ancient cars filled the corral, and there was the sound of many voices. Briefly the lawyer explained that the dance was being held because they suspected the troubadours of complicity in the murder of old man Martin. They had thought it best to tell Joan their suspicions. That afternoon Autry and Millhouse had acted in their true colours, had held up the ranch, thrown them into a dirty stable and made off for the hills.

"From what you tell me this Autry seems the guilty man," the sheriff agreed.

"Yes, his partner wouldn't have the brains or the nerve," added Nolan.

"Autry's got nerve," Martin told the sheriff. "He said he'd be at the dance to-night."

"Do you think he really means it?"

"Sure, sheriff," Lon spoke venomously. "I've seen him staring at Joan—he'll try to see her again."

The sheriff made a quick decision. "I'll deputise you men. With my own two deputies we can tackle these two ruffians. Are you all armed?" He saw that they were. "Good! Don't forget he's a desperate character."

Martin drew Hank Polk and Lon Donvers to one side.

"You two will have to furnish the music. You won't be as good as Autry and his pard, but do your best. Make plenty of noise."

"Okay, but I want to have a dance with Joan," said Lon.

"Later," Martin agreed. "Now keep a sharp look out for Autry and his pard among the dancers. It's a masquerade and they might try to make it. Nolan and I will watch the front door. The sheriff will be outside, and Pablo will be helping the sheriff. And if they come we've got 'em just where we want 'em."

The dance proceeded merrily. Every guest was in fancy dress and masked—the only people that looked out of place were the sheriff's two deputies, who eyed everyone suspiciously. Lon and Hank were doing the same, but they saw no sign of the troubadours. Little did they know that the men they were looking for were within a few feet of them. Gene and Frog had made the ranch without being seen and had crept round to the big mess-room that had been cleared for the dance. Lon and Hank were on a platform and behind them was an open window. Lou gave Gene his chance when he announced a short interval. The dancers filed off to another room for refreshments, and the deputies went with them.

Two hands came through the window and seized Lon and Hank as they were preparing to leave the platform. In spite of their struggles they were yanked through the window and back to the same barn.

"We're only borrowing your costumes for a while, boys," announced Gene. "Take 'em off, and move to it quickly."

Two minutes later Gene wore the clothes of a Mexican caballero and Frog the striped outfit of a convict. Lon and Hank were securely bound.

"I didn't fix the other bonds overnight," Gene told them, "because I didn't want you mugs to stay tied up for long, but if you can untie those knots, you're clever. See you later."

Martin came into the mess-room to tell the band to get going, and was surprised to find the platform empty. He looked at Nolan, and both men were about to call out when Gene and Frog climbed in through the window. Frog felt that his mask was terribly small.

The lawyer grinned. "They must have gone out for a smoke."

Frog picked up a concertina and Gene took a guitar. They played a liting waltz, to which Gene harmonised this charming verse:

"My prayer for to-night
'Neath the heavens so bright
Is the plea to our Maker above.
May I always dwell in the land that
I love.
May the Joshua trees and the warm
desert breeze
And the rolling white sand to my eyes
Be a haven of rest in the heart of the
West
Till I go to my home in the skies."

The dance went on and the guests clapped their approval because the band seemed to have improved a hundred-fold since the interval. Gene grinned when he heard the sheriff say to all the deputies that he was of the opinion that the troubadours were afraid to show up.

The band took a rest, and Gene saw Joan with her partner sitting out in an alcove. He heard her partner make some excuse and leave her. Gene wished he could go across and speak. Suddenly he saw something flicker at the open window behind the girl. Just like this, claw-like fingers.

Gene impulsively crossed the room and looked out of the window, whilst the girl stared at him in some surprise.

"Did you hear anything behind you just now?"

"No."

"I would have sworn I saw someone."

The girl stood up and peered at him.

"You're not Lon. You're Gene Autry. Why are you here?"

"Because I promised to play for you."

"But the sheriff—Uncle John—they all believe that you're the—" She hesitated.

"But you don't believe them, do you?" he questioned gently.

"I don't know what to believe."

Gene noticed that the room was filling and that Nolan had entered. The lawyer was too lynx-eyed for his liking.

"Dance with me—will you?"

They glided round the room, and Nolan watched them covertly. He had not known that Lon Danvers could dance so skillfully.

As they danced Gene was whispering in her ear.

"Here's something you should know. Your grandfather discovered a very valuable gold mine. Being almost blind, the only way he could get to the mine was—"

"On the swayback," interrupted Joan. "Granddad depended so much on that wise old horse."

"Quite right. But he was killed before the claim was recorded."

"I see"—the girl nodded her head—"so that's why everyone wants the swayback—to guide them to the gold."

"Yes," answered Gene, and saw Nolan watching him. "But don't say anything of what I've just told you—just yet."

"But you—you shouldn't be here." Her eyes were wide with fear. "You're in terrible danger."

"Don't worry about me. I'm concerned about you." He glanced round because the music had stopped. "Frog had managed two pieces on his own and

was looking despairingly towards him. "I must go. Not a word to anybody, Joan, and watch out for danger."

Gene went back to the platform, and at once the people in the room began to dance to a stirring fox-trot.

"They're going to be unmasking soon," Frog said out of the corner of his mouth.

"We can't leave until—" Gene broke off abruptly. He had been playing a concertina, and had decided to change to a guitar. He noticed that one string of the guitar was missing. "Who's been handling this instrument?"

"I didn't see anybody touch it," Frog answered. "But a lot of folk have been crowding round."

Gene said no more for a while. Everyone kept applauding, and mechanically he went on playing. Joan had worn the dress of a Spanish señorita, and he had recognised her in spite of the mask, and he realised with a sense of dismay that she was not among the dancers.

"Joan's not here." He looked at Frog. "Sing, play—do anything, but entertain them."

"I'll do my best."

Gene paused at the entrance of the room to look back. Frog was singing one of his famous comic songs, and by the way the guests were laughing, it was going over well. He was safe for five or ten minutes. Nowhere could he find a sign of Joan on the veranda, so he wandered towards the corral. He saw something white and hastened forward, and to his surprise a shadow moved away from the whiteness and was gone. Then the white shadow seemed to fall.

It was Joan that Gene lifted to her feet, and round her neck was tightly twisted a guitar string. Swiftly he loosened it, and to his joy he heard her breathing. A moment later the white-

faced girl opened her eyes, she gave a cry of joy at seeing Gene, and clung to him.

"What happened?"

"I stepped outside for a moment for some air," she explained in a faltering voice. "Someone grabbed me, and then it felt as if my neck was being cut in half."

"Lucky I showed up," growled Gene. "The skunk saw me and slid. You mustn't wander around here alone—you're in danger."

"But who would want to harm me?"

"The same man that killed your grandfather," Gene took her arm. "We must get back to the dance before I'm missed. Please, Joan, don't go outside again."

"But I don't understand why you—"

He touched his lips.

"I will explain everything later, but you must trust me."

"I do." He thrilled to the slight pressure on his arm.

Gene got back to the platform to find Frog Millhouse perspiring freely. The eyes behind the mask seemed to flicker. Gene noticed that not only was the sheriff near the platform, but so were Martin, Nolan and the deputies.

"Our playing ain't quite the same as the other guys," hissed Frog as Gene picked up a concertina. "I reckon they've rumbled us. Sing 'em something, Gene."

So Gene sang his best, but he did not miss the little grins that passed between Martin and Nolan or the significant nudges that the deputies gave each other. Gene finished his song and would have started another if Martin had not stepped on to the platform and raised a hand for silence.

"Just a minute, everybody!" he shouted, and waited till he had their attention. "There's a reason why we've waited so long to unmask. It

was because two desperate men boasted that they'd be here—we waited till we were sure we had them trapped. Now, everybody, unmask—at once!"

The guests hesitated. It was unpleasant to think that two desperate men might be in this room and that any second guns might be roaring. Best not to keep the mask on too long or else they might come under suspicion. Men and women removed their masks—they looked at each other for signs of a strange face. They did not think for the moment of the band till they saw the dramatic manner in which Martin was pointing, then a gasp went up as they realised the significance of his gesture—the two troubadours were still masked.

Gene was determined to fight for his liberty, and was wondering what he should do when there came a welcome interruption.

The sheriff and deputies had drawn their guns, but for certain reasons Gene and Frog had no desire to shoot it out, and yet the plans to capture the real murderer would be spoilt if they revealed their true identity. The interruption came in the persons of Hank Polk and Lon Danvers.

These two had wriggled and squirmed until Lon had managed to get to his feet; by rubbing his bound wrists against a nail he had eventually worn through the thick strands. Lon had cut his companion free, and the two men had rushed towards the mess-room, and they entered by the open window behind the band platform.

Dishevelled and attired only in their underwear, they presented a comic sight, and naturally everyone's attention was drawn to them as they scrambled into the room.

"There they are!" hoarsely shouted Lon, pointing at the masked troubadours. "They took our clothes!"



"So you're the treacherous cur that downed old man Martin?" rasped the sheriff.

But for valuable seconds the attention of the sheriff and the deputies had been distracted, and Gene acted. His gun flashed out and roared. The great oil lamp that lit the room was smashed and the place was plunged in darkness. A chair was whipped up by Gene and sailed through the air to catch the sheriff full in the chest. That worthy upholder of the law was flung back into the arms of his deputies, who dropped their guns, and Martin got a sock in the jaw that made him yell with anger and fright. Frog was quick to copy the action of Gene, and a drum caught Nolan full in the chest. Lon and Hank, blinking their eyes and trying to see, were suddenly flung violently to one side.

Out through the window went Gene and Frog. The deputies' guns blazed a few seconds too late. People flung themselves down for fear of being hit, whilst the sheriff yelled for everyone to cut out the gun-play—he was afraid that friend, not foe, might get hurt.

The sheriff produced an electric torch and ran to the open window. His torch revealed two scurrying figures.

"Get your horses, boys!" the sheriff yelled. "We got to follow them. The moon will be up soon and they can't get away."

The deputies and cowboys, eager to round-up the desperadoes, forced their way out of the room and ran to their horses. They heard the clatter of hoofs. Hurriedly everyone got to saddle and took up the pursuit with the sheriff in the lead.

Martin's Treachery

THE blow that Martin took was severe, and it was some minutes before he was able to regain his feet. Dimly he knew that the sheriff and the deputies had gone after the two troubadours. He determined to get a horse and join in the chase.

As he reeled from the room he was accosted by an excited Pablo.

"Senor, the swayback! I've found out where they hid it."

That news cleared Martin's aching head like magic.

"You have the swayback? Good work, Pablo. When everyone has gone bring it to me at the stable."

"Si, senor."

"Uncle John, you've no right!" a clear voice cried. "What are you planning to do with the swayback?"

It was an angry, puzzled Joan.

Seeking someone in whom she could confide her worries, she had inquired for her uncle and heard that he had been seen staggering from the dance-room. She had gone after him, and had overheard his conversation with the half-breed.

Martin's face contorted with rage.

"Don't interfere in my affairs."

"But I will interfere. That swayback is as much mine as anybody's, and I demand to know what you're going to do."

"A certain mine belongs to whoever locates and records it," Martin told her. "And as I reckon I have the best right to the mine I ain't letting a chit of a girl interfere." He jumped forward and seized her. "I'm locking you up until I've recorded my claim."

The girl struggled fiercely, but his arms were very strong. Pablo swung open the door of a shed and Martin staggered inside with the girl. Roughly he flung her to the ground, and then rushed out, barring the door after him.

Joan beat fiercely on the walls, but this shed was some distance from the ranch. She had never liked her uncle very much, and now she realised his
May 16th, 1936.

true nature. She shouted for help, but the thick wooden planking seemed to deaden her cries.

Gene and Frog were well mounted and had a good start, but Gene had no intention of being driven out of the neighbourhood. They came to a wide, but shallow stream, and the water left no trail marks. The sheriff and his deputies came to the stream and were baffled to know which way the two troubadours had gone.

"We'll head for the spot where Martin was murdered," the sheriff decided. "I reckon they know the whereabouts of the mine and if they're headed that way they'll have to pass where we lie hidden in the trees."

When the troubadours realised that they were no longer being pursued Gene turned Champion towards the hills. In a clearing Gene reined in his horse and pointed towards the distant town of Sandy Hook.

"Do just what I told you and don't let anyone stop you."

"I'm on my way," grinned Frog. "I'll ride like the wind, pal. I got everything by heart, and you can bet your saddle it's as good as done. I'll be seeing you." He dug spurs into the brown mare and disappeared among the trees.

Gene turned Champion in the direction of the Martin ranch, and after half an hour's brisk riding could see the place like a grey haze in the moonlight. He dismounted near the stables and went forward on foot. The place seemed very quiet. There were a few lights in the ranch-house, and he guessed the Mexican staff were still awake. The guests had departed after the dance had been broken up.

"Gene! Gene! Gene!"

Where had the voice of Joan come from?—it sounded like a call of distress. He turned and the call came again. An arm fluttered from a small grating, and a few seconds later his powerful body was crashing against the wood-work of the door. It burst with a crash, and then Joan was in his arms.

"Gene, Gene, thank heaven you came back."

"Who locked you in here?" he demanded fiercely.

"My uncle. He and Pablo rode off with the swayback."

"I thought that uncle of yours was a treacherous hound," Gene snapped out.

"Will you take me to his room, please?"

"Why?"

"Don't ask questions now." He spoke sharply. "Please do as I ask."

In John Martin's room he found a guitar. "There is one string missing!" He looked at her significantly.

"Oh, you don't think my uncle is the one who killed granddad?"

"I'm not saying." Gene put back the guitar. "Right now I've got to ride. You stiek inside this ranch, and don't go out. I warned you before you were in danger. Stay here, Joan, till I get back. Adios!"

Gene rushed from the ranch, and the girl ran out after him. She saw him vault into the saddle of Champion and urge the white horse into a gallop.

"I'm not staying around here to be murdered," the girl muttered. "I'm going to find out what all this mystery means." Her eyes lit up at sight of the buckboard with its two sleepy horses. Pablo must have left them there in case any of the guests needed driving back to town. She scrambled on to the seat and picked up a long whip.

Crack! The horses woke to life. At a furious gallop Joan drove the buckboard in pursuit of Gene Autry.

A Troublesome Girl

THE sheriff and his deputies took up their position on the crest of a hill that overlooked the valley where old man Martin's body had been found. A guitar string drawn tight round the throat had been the cause of death.

Having been enrolled as deputies Lon and Hank were in the posse, and they were quick to notice that neither Martin nor Nolan was there.

"Nolan was with us when we set out after those two hombres," hissed Lon. "Reckon he must have slipped away when sheriff said we were to make for this gulch. Looks kinda queer to me."

"Lawyer Nolan is a crafty twister," Hank said with a scowl. "He and Martin are a fine pair—I wouldn't trust either of those guys. Seems to me we should do something, Lon. Maybe they've located the mine. What do you opine we should do?"

"Slip away from the posse," Lon said with his mouth close to the other's ear. "We'll get farther up the valley, and if that don't tell us anything I'm all for hitting the trail back to the ranch. I'll feel happier when I see either Nolan or Martin."

The two seekers after the Martin gold mine managed to get away from the posse in the half-light. At four would come the dawn, and though the moon had gone there was a grey light that heralded the rising of the sun.

They had not been gone long before the sheriff sighted a lone rider, and was surprised to recognise it as the deputy he had left in charge back at Sandy Hook. This man had ridden out because of a strange missive that had been brought to him. The note was signed by Gene Autry and had been flung through a window by Frog Millhouse. It gave directions on how to find the gold mine, and told the sheriff that, if he wanted to know the murderer of old Martin, he should go with the posse to the mine when dawn was breaking. The printed heading of the paper made the sheriff whistle his surprise, and he gave the necessary orders.

Gene Autry had not gone more than a mile when he turned in his saddle. He had fancied that he was being followed. After going on some distance he turned again to listen, and this time was certain. He took cover in some pines. The rumble of wheels and the pounding of hoofs, and along the trail came the buckboard with Joan.

Joan was determined to catch up with Gene and she was driving the horses at a furious pace. Gene had to admire the girl's audacity. She flashed by, and with a grin Gene set out in pursuit.

It soon became apparent that the horses had got out of control. The ground was full of stones, hillocks, small streams and undulating ground that caused the buckboard to sway and lurch in an alarming manner.

Champion seemed to understand and exerted himself to overtake the run-aways. The buckboard got on to a slope and the pace increased. Every moment Gene expected to see the girl sent flying.

Heedless of danger to himself Gene urged the wonder horse to his utmost capacity. He drew alongside and with cool daring reached out to grip the iron rail on the driver's box. A similar exploit to the one when he had first made this girl's acquaintance, but this time far more hazardous. He got a grip and kicked himself free of his stirrups, and next moment was dangling with his feet almost touching the ground. The buckboard rocketed drunkenly, and with a great effort he pulled himself on to the seat beside Joan.

(Continued on page 28)

Beyond the stratosphere to a new world where science marches hand in hand with savagery. Follow the adventures of a young American on the strange planet of Mongo, realm of monsters and domain of the War-Lord Ming. An unforgettable serial of thrills and suspense, starring Buster Crabbe and Jean Rogers



Read This First

The entire world is in a state of terror. The Earth is threatened with total destruction by the planet Mongo, which, rushing through the void, is controlled by the Emperor Ming, ruler of a strange race of people living on that unknown planet, and a man who has probed the fundamental secrets of Nature.

In America, a scientist known as Dr. Zarkov maintains that he can save the Earth from disaster, and by means of a rocket ship which he has invented he attempts to blaze a trail through the stratosphere.

He is accompanied by Flash Gordon, son of an astronomer, and by Dale Arden, Flash's sweetheart.

The attempt is successful. Travelling through millions of miles of space, the rocket ship sets down the adventurers on the forbidding planet of Mongo, where they are taken prisoners by some of Ming's guards.

Ming spares Zarkov, thinking he might prove useful. He also spares Dale, marvelling at her loveliness. But he orders Flash to die, and the young American is thrown into a room where he fights three barbarians.

Flash overcomes the wild men, but Ming now condemns him to a worse fate, heedless of the angry protests of his daughter, Aura, who has become interested in Flash.

Aura tries to rescue him. In doing so she shares his peril and, as the floor yawns beneath them, Flash and the daughter of Ming are plunged—to what?

Now Read On

**EPISODE 2.—
"The Tunnel of Terror"**

The Net

IN the instant that she dropped out of sight with Flash Gordon, a ringing scream burst from the lips of the Princess Aura, and it was a scream which was echoed by Dale Arden as, held fast in the grip of Ming's guards, she saw her fiancé and the emperor's daughter plunging into the darkness.

And Ming himself uttered a great cry, for he had never intended that Aura should suffer the same fate to which he had condemned the young Earth man.

It was to the sinister monarch's credit that, despite the suddenness and the unexpectedness with which the situation had arisen, he did not lose his presence of mind.

"Torch!" he shrieked. "The net! Quick—save my daughter!"

The captain of his bodyguard sprang to action as the emperor's command resounded through the council-chamber. With a bound he reached the switch-board on the wall, where the hand of a dying man had drawn down the lever that had hurled Flash and Aura from view, and with a desperate gesture he tugged at a second lever there.

Torch was not a moment too soon. Already Aura and Flash Gordon had plunged far down into the abysmal gloom, but as the captain of the bodyguard threw that switch a grating of some light but strong material whipped

across the pit, just about thirty feet from its base.

Into this framework of wire Flash and Aura fell, and it trembled quivering as it received them. Then three other bodies landed beside them—the figures of the barbarians over whom the youthful American had triumphed.

Slowly Flash Gordon and the daughter of Ming aroused themselves and, looking up, they saw the heads and shoulders of several men far above them at the distant summit of the pit. Immediately afterwards Aura heard one of those men cry out:

"They are safe, your Majesty! They are in the net! We can just see them!"

"Then go down by way of the underground galleries and make prisoners of them both," came the answering voice of Ming.

The heads of the soldiers disappeared. Meanwhile, Flash had struggled to his feet and, amazed by the fact that he was safe and sound, he balanced himself on the trembling meshes of the net and offered Aura a helping hand.

"Are you all right?" he gasped.

"Yes," she panted. "I am unhurt. The spring in the net broke our fall. My father must have ordered one of his men to move the switch that operates it."

"A lucky thing for us, too," the American began fervently, and then stopped dead as he heard a queer, grunting sound beneath him.

He peered down through the tracery of wires on which he was standing and, in the dim light below, he beheld a pool of stagnant water, and suddenly, in that stagnant water, he discerned the

loathsome forms of half a dozen ghastly reptiles—reptiles of a kind unknown in the world from which he and Dale and Zarkov had come.

They were rearing themselves out of the slimy pool, their staring eyes upturned towards the net, and their cruel, hungry jaws wide open to reveal gleaming rows of teeth.

"What are they?" Flash breathed in horror.

"The dragons of death," Aura told him with a shudder. "They would have torn us to pieces if we had struck the water. Listen, you must get out of here before the guards reach us. There should be a secret door close to us."

She moved past the bodies of the three wild men who had fallen with them from the room above, and who were obviously insensible, and presently Flash realised that she was questing to and fro around the walls of the pit. Then all at once, when she was at the far side of the net, he heard the creak of hinges and saw a great block of stone swinging aside to disclose a broad passage-way.

Aura beckoned to him, and he followed her through the aperture into a gallery that was faintly illuminated by subdued lights. Down this gallery they hastened, and they must have travelled a distance of a hundred yards when the tramp of feet reached their ears.

"The guards!" hissed Aura, and promptly dragged him into a corridor leading off to the right.

Skulking there, they heard the guards troop by, and gained a fleeting impression of Torch marching at the head of them. Then they waited until the footsteps of the soldiery had receded and, as silence fell again, the daughter of Ming conducted her companion back into the main gallery.

"Hurry!" she said. "They will soon discover that we are no longer in the net!"

They broke into a run, heading in the direction whence Torch and the guards had approached, but before long Aura was leading the way out of the main gallery and turning into another side-passage—one that branched off to the left, this time.

They started along this. It sloped downward in a fairly acute gradient, so that it was almost difficult to keep their feet, and at intervals there were steep flights of steps which had to be descended. It became increasingly clear to Flash that this route certainly would not lead them back to the palace. On the contrary he could have imagined that it was penetrating to the very core of this weird and fearsome planet of Mongo.

"Where are you taking me?" he demanded of Aura, after a lapse of several minutes. "I want to return to your father's stronghold. I want to find out what he's doing with Dr. Zarkov and Dale—particularly Dale."

"No doubt he is holding them captives;" the princess rejoined, and then, after a slight pause:

"You like the Earth woman, don't you?" she added.

There was a hint of spitefulness in her voice as she made the comment, and for an instant her olive-skinned face was like that of a perverse and wilful child. But Flash did not notice her manner.

"Dale Arden is my fiancée," he told her. "We were planning to get married—but the danger that threatened our world put all such thoughts out of our minds. Do you know what marriage means, you who belong to this other

planet? Do the men of Mongo take wives?"

"Yes," she answered slowly. "I think we are much like the Earth people. We have our loves—and our hates. But come, you must trust in me, for I alone can help you now."

He had no choice but to proceed, and together they pushed on until at last they saw the light of day before them. A few seconds later they were stumbling out into the open, and, looking around him in bewilderment, Flash found that they had emerged from a cavern-mouth at the very foot of the mountain on which Ming's city was built.

From away above them came the peculiar discord of sounds which issue from a metropolis where human activities are in progress. But those sounds seemed far off and remote, for the lower slopes of the mountain were barren, and the plain on which Flash and Aura now stood was desolate and forlorn.

There was no life here—unless, perhaps, there were monsters basking amidst the great rocks which abounded—monsters such as those which Flash, Dale and Zarkov had seen when they had first landed on the planet.

Flash shivered slightly at the thought of those brutes, and then gave a start as Aura touched him on the arm. Glancing at her, he discovered that she was pointing to a curious-looking craft which was standing amongst the rocks nearby.

He had not observed it when he had hurriedly scanned the surroundings a moment before. It appeared to be some kind of rocket ship, similar in many respects to Zarkov's, but with a nose that tapered into a keen point.

It was clear that it was empty, and, leading him across to it, Aura opened a door in the side of it and passed into the interior of the machine. He accompanied her, and as he stepped through the doorway she spoke to him quietly.

"You will be safe in here until I have talked with my father," she said.

"No," he retorted. "If you're going back to the palace I'm returning with you. I must find out what's happened to Dale."

Aura laid a hand on his arm.

"You could do no good," she told him. "Your presence would only do harm. My father is a strange man, and I am the only one who has any influence with him. Perhaps I can appease the wrath that you so foolishly aroused in him by your defiance. I cannot promise, but I will try."

Flash looked down at her somewhat shamefacedly.

"You must think me ungrateful," he said. "If it hadn't been for you, I wouldn't be alive now. I appreciate that—but just the same, I can't stay here without making any effort to reach Dale."

"I insist that you stay here," Aura replied. "And listen, if any of my father's men should come this way you must be prepared to take flight in this ship immediately. Look, I will show you how to control it."

She managed to convince him that her influence with her father was likely to prove far more effective than any reckless scheme that he could put into practice, and then she spent the next two or three minutes in explaining the mechanism of the rocket ship to him.

She also pointed out that the craft was equipped for fighting, and indicated a lever by which explosives that were lodged in a compartment of the vessel could be dropped on a foe; and by the time she had left him Flash Gordon possessed a fairly adequate knowledge of that rocket ship.

From the windows of it he watched

her make her way towards the cavern whence they had emerged a little while previously, and after she had vanished from sight he turned to make a fresh inspection of the craft's interior.

It was as he was carrying out this inspection that he came upon a locker which contained some articles of clothing such as the people of Mongo wore—a pair of dark trunks made of some stuff that resembled wool, an embroidered tunic, a hide belt studded with metal buttons, and a pair of high boots.

He decided to change into these garments, reasoning that he would appear less conspicuous in them than in the tell-tale apparel of a son of the Earth.

While Flash was donning the clothes that he had found in the rocket ship, the Princess Aura was moving along the steep subterranean gallery by which she had conducted him to the plain, and as she passed through the ascending cavern a slight smile seemed to play about her lips.

And once, as she was climbing one of the many flights of steps, she gave tongue to her secret thoughts in a low, soliloquising voice.

"Never have I seen anyone like the Earth man," she mused. "So fair and so strong, so pleasing to the eyes. My father may do as he will with the girl, but he shall not harm the Earth man—"

The Lion Men

UP in the council-chamber of the palace, the Emperor Ming was awaiting the return of Torch and those of the guards who had hastened to the nether regions below his stronghold, and, while he waited, he glanced often at Dale and Zarkov.

"She is beautiful, is she not?" he said once to Zarkov, motioning to Dale with a thin hand and leering as he spoke.

The doctor made no answer, and presently Ming turned to the maidens of his court, now gathered around the lovely girl who had come amongst them from the distant planet known as the Earth.

"It is common knowledge," he remarked, "that I have wished to marry again ever since the death of Aura's mother. But until now there has been no one on whom I have looked with favour."

He had spoken in English, and on hearing his words Dale Arden paled. Then suddenly Dr. Zarkov strained forward in the arms of two soldiers who were grasping him.

"Your Majesty!" he exclaimed in a voice that shook. "You cannot mean—"

"That the Earth girl would be my choice of wife?" Ming interrupted, glancing at him swiftly. "Why not? It would be a great honour for her!"

"But you know nothing of her!" Zarkov cried. "And she is in love with Gordon!"

Ming's lids narrowed.

"I behold her loveliness," he said. "That is enough for me. As for this insolent Earth man whom you call Gordon, he is no more. You heard me instruct Torch to remove my daughter from the net and then withdraw it, so that Gordon would be cast to the dragons of death!"

Dale screamed out at that, and began to sob distractedly, whereupon Ming turned his sinister eyes upon her.

"Do not weep for a dead man, my pretty one," he said in a callous tone. "You will have a living emperor to comfort you."

Then, signing to the women of his court, he rapped out a brusque command.

"Take her to your quarters in the palace," he ordered. "See that she is attired in the wedding gown of a prin-

cess of Mongo. And summon the high priest. I wish to speak with him."

The maidens of the palace laid hands on Dale, and the struggling, grief-stricken girl was hurried from the council chamber, disappearing through the great doorway in the far wall.

When she had been removed, Ming looked at the men who were holding Zarkov.

"Torch should have returned by now," he muttered. "Listen, one of you remain here and tell him to report to me in the laboratory. Tell the High Priest that he may also come to me there. The rest of you follow me with the scientist from the Earth—"

"No, wait," he added on an afterthought. "Before we take him to the laboratory, see that he is fitted out with more suitable garments, such as one of my servitors might wear."

He paused, and eyed the learned American quizzically.

"Dr. Zarkov," he said, with the hint of a sneer in his voice. "I think that was how you called yourself, was it not? Dr. Zarkov, you will permit me to remark that those Earth clothes are offensive and incongruous to me, and, since you are to work with us, you must look like one of us."

Zarkov was consequently forced to change—not into a costly robe like the one that draped Ming's skinny frame, but into a kind of uniform which, had he but known it, was similar to an outfit that Flash Gordon was donning at this very moment, down in a rocket ship on the plain.

Having dressed himself in the clothes of a citizen of Ming's capital, Zarkov was conducted through the palace to a spacious apartment which he recognized at once as a laboratory, not very different from his own laboratory in America, but much more lavish, and

fitted out with a great deal of apparatus that was new to him.

In the presence of the guards Ming proceeded to describe the equipment to Zarkov, and for the moment the doctor forgot his loathing for the heartless monarch of this strange planet—this emperor, as he termed himself, who had delved deep into the mysteries of science, and vested himself with an amazing power, which he could only see fit to use as a means of furthering his own mad ambitions.

For the moment Zarkov even forgot Dale and Flash, impressed as he was by the scientific wonders which Ming was now revealing to him.

The laboratory presented a spectacle of mechanised energy and electrical activity. Strange appliances crackled and sparkled on every hand, and mighty dynamos hummed ceaselessly. Before each and every unit of apparatus Ming paused to give an explanation of its purpose, and the alert, trained mind of Zarkov was quick to grasp the nature of those innumerable devices.

At last they halted in front of a great telescope, and Ming indicated it with a twisted smile.

"You may see your world through those lenses with startling clearness," he said. "Your world to which we are hurtling through the void. Strange, is it not, Zarkov, that a planet can travel through the firmament at an incredible rate, and yet seem motionless to those who live upon it? Aye, and stranger still that I am the one who is guiding its course—by the instruments in this room!"

Zarkov was gazing through the telescope, and the Emperor Ming regarded him coolly.

"Aye, watch your world, Zarkov," he continued. "Minute by minute you can see the outlines of its continents grow

more distinct while it turns on its axis. We are rushing nearer—nearer—"

"But we are near enough for my purpose even now, Zarkov; and see, I have but to touch a switch and the onward momentum of the planet Mongo is checked."

He had turned to a massive control-board close by, and was drawing down a lever there.

"That is all," he murmured. "We feel nothing. Our senses register no change. But Mongo has ceased to rush towards the Earth. Look through that telescope again an hour hence—a day hence—a year hence, if you like. Mongo will be no nearer to your world."

Zarkov drew in his breath. If Ming were to be believed, then he had just seen him perform a miracle.

"Now tell me," the emperor said, "how does my workshop compare with those on Earth?"

"There is no comparison!" Zarkov exclaimed. "This—this is a scientist's paradise. The control of radio-active energy here is great enough to dominate the entire firmament, the entire universe!"

"To conquer the entire universe," Ming put in viciously, exultantly. "And that I intend to do with your aid, Zarkov. For, odd as it may seem, I need you. You can forge the last link in the chain of my ambitions—you, who had made a discovery that has hitherto escaped me—you, who can teach me how to build ships that can fly through space from planet to planet!"

Zarkov made no response, but kept his thoughts to himself. He was no coward—he merely realised that he alone stood any hope of saving the peoples of the Earth from this power-drunk fanatic's designs. He must pretend to bow before Ming's will, and bide his time.

Thus did the doctor reflect, and then



Flash seized him by the throat, and simultaneously Thun pressed his sword against the wretch's body.

all at once the door of the laboratory was opened and Torch appeared.

"Your Majesty," the captain of the bodyguard reported tensely, "the Earth man Gordon has escaped. We found no trace of him or of the Princess Aura on the net—only the three barbarians, whom we cast to the dragons. And we have searched the passages in vain, your Majesty."

It was heartening news for Zarkov, but not for Ming, whose eyes blazed venomously.

"My daughter will return," he barked. "We shall learn where this man Gordon is then."

He dismissed Torch, and it was as the latter was making his way from the laboratory that an elderly man in striking raiment crossed the threshold.

The newcomer was the High Priest, and, bowing gravely to the emperor, he spoke in a sepulchral tone:

"I have just learned of your Majesty's desire to wed the Earth girl," he said, "but the maidens of the court ask me to inform you that she refuses to become your bride, and I do not have to remind your Majesty that the gods frown upon a marriage in which either the man or woman is an unwilling participant."

Ming scowled, and fingered his dark beard.

"We could use the hypnotic machine," he muttered at length. "The machine which reduces the mind to a passive state and leaves the victim submissive to the will of others. The Earth girl would not be in a position then to anger the gods by expressing unwillingness. You see, my friend, science can overcome all things—even the human emotions."

The High Priest bowed again, and departed from the laboratory, and Ming turned to note that Zarkov was eyeing him bitterly.

"You do not seem to be in favour of my plans regarding the Earth girl," he observed, as he saw the doctor's expression.

Zarkov attempted to make some reply, but before he could do so there was a scuffle of feet in the doorway of the workshop, and a seared-looking soldier burst into the room.

"Your Majesty," the fellow panted, "the ships of the Lion Men are approaching in the sky! Four of them, your Majesty! They are coming to attack us!"

Ming's sallow face changed colour, and, striding to the windows of the laboratory, he peered forth to see four machines of the gyro type cruising towards his mountain citadel.

He swung around as Zarkov joined him.

"They must have learned that my fleet was absent on an expedition into the distant country of the barbarians!" he said harshly. "They would not have dared to attack otherwise."

"Who are these enemies of yours?" Zarkov demanded.

"The Lion Men, as they call themselves!" Ming snarled. "They are a people on Mongo who have long stood in my path. Now they send four emissaries to strike at me when I am unprepared. These four ships can do great damage—they can wreck my entire palace—my entire city—they can smash this workshop to atoms. My laboratory! My laboratory!"

The four gyro-ships were approaching swiftly. In sixty seconds they were above the mountain metropolis; above the palace; and suddenly there was a reverberating explosion as some deadly missile fell within a short distance of Ming's stronghold.

It was followed by another and another, and the walls of the laboratory trembled. In the meantime the Emperor

Ming was wringing his hands and acting like a man bereft of his senses, and he seemed in an extremity of despair when Zarkov clutched him all at once by the arm.

"Look!" the doctor exclaimed, pointing through the windows to the boulder-strewn plain away at the foot of the mountain.

From that distant plain a bullet-shaped craft had soared unexpectedly, was speeding now to engage the machines of the Lion Men. Like a meteor it soared, and, though the occupants of the gyro-ships tried to gain height so that they might meet its onset, the lone vessel rapidly outstripped them in altitude.

Then it swooped down upon the helicopters of the Lion Men, and in another instant a desperate duel was in progress high amid the clouds.

"It is one of my own rocket-ships!" Ming cried. "A gallant pilot—single-handed—has come to my aid!"

"A brave man," Zarkov commented feelingly.

"Yes," the emperor jerked, "and he will be royally rewarded if he lives through this fight."

It would have amazed them both if they could have discovered that the gallant pilot of the rocket-ship was none other than—Flash Gordon!

The Claws of the Monster

IT was fortunate for Flash Gordon that he had paid heed to Aura's instructions when she had told him how to control the rocket-ship, and it was fortunate for him, too, that the capabilities of the craft were far superior to those of the helicopters flown by the Lion Men.

Diving upon one of the hostile machines, he pulled the switch that sprung the trap containing those explosives which the rocket-ship was carrying. An object resembling a bomb was promptly released, and there was a burst of fire as it struck its mark.

It did not wreck the enemy vessel, but crippled it, and the helicopter veered away. Next moment Flash was challenging another of his adversaries, all of whom were endeavouring to close in on him.

Glittering fingers of light shot from the gyro-ships, searchingly, and Flash guessed that ray-guns were included in the equipment of those machines. Remembering what he had seen of such ray-guns in Mongo already, he did his utmost to keep his craft clear of them—at the same time singling out one of his antagonists for retaliation.

The flexibility of the rocket-ship was his salvation. Within the space of a minute he had damaged another of the helicopters so severely that it, too, was forced to retire from the combat, and it had not gone far on its way when a third gyro was making off like a wounded bird.

With three of the raiders departing in the direction whence they had come, Flash concentrated his attention on the remaining vessel, whose pilot seemed undaunted by the fate of his comrades, for he was still trying to bring the American under the sights of his ray-gun.

Flash managed to outwit him, and, soaring high, put the rocket-ship into a dive and swooped over his opponent's craft. But this time when he tugged at the bomb-release switch there was no result, and he realised with dismay that he had used his last missile.

Meanwhile his dive had carried him beyond and below his enemy's helicopter, and, wheeling, he saw a death-ray strike out from the gyro-ship. It passed above him, but he knew that it would soon find its target, and in desperation he sent his machine straight at

the foe, determined that if he were to die he would first make sure that the raider did no further damage to Ming's palace.

With the rocket-ship coming towards him the pilot of the other craft lost his head, however, and made an attempt to swerve.

He only succeeded in turning broad-side-on to the rocket-ship, and there was a grinding shock as the keen nose of the latter pierced the tough shell of the gyro. Then both machines began to fall, the propeller of the gyro still spinning and its motor still giving the vessel a tendency to remain in the air, though the weight of the machine that was embedded in its metal plates was dragging it down.

Locked together, the two ships descended slowly through the void, and, drifting high over the roofs of the Emperor Ming's city, they finally sank upon an expanse of level terrain away on the other side of the mountain.

As the vessels grounded, Flash Gordon stumbled out of the rocket-ship, bruised in every limb and badly shaken. Yet, dazed as he was, he was aware of a figure crawling from the buckled gyro—the figure of a man whose hair was like a lion's mane and whose chin was hidden behind the tangled locks of a great beard.

His back and chest were encased in armour, and, oddly enough, he was clutching a heavy sword, a weapon that seemed almost incongruous in his hand, considering the craft from which he had emerged and the ray-gun with which it had been equipped.

Yet that sword was capable of dealing death, and with upraised blade the bearded man rushed at Flash impetuously.

The young American was unarmed, and his brain was by no means clear. But somehow he managed to collect his wits, and, leaping aside even as his antagonist came within striking distance, he dodged the swing of the sword. Then, in the moment that the fellow was blundering past him, Flash whipped his bunched knuckles into action and caught him with a punch that sent him sprawling in the dust.

The sword slid from the bearded man's grasp, and with a swift movement Flash seized it, lifting it from the ground and standing over his foe, who lay where he had fallen and looked up at the American with an expression of dumb resignation in his eyes.

"Get on your feet," said Flash.

His vanquished opponent stared at him, and then, after a brief silence, he rose with an effort and spoke to the younger man in English.

"Why do you not slay me?"

"I have no quarrel with you," Flash replied. "I saw you pass over the mountain and start to bomb Ming's stronghold, so I attacked you. But I fought only to save two friends of mine who are prisoners in that palace."

"Then—you are not an ally of Ming's?"

Flash shook his head, and proceeded to explain how he and Dale Arden and Zarkov had come to Mongo, and how he had fared at Ming's hands; and when he had finished his story the bearded man looked at him keenly.

"I am Thun, Prince of the Lion Men," he said. "Ming is also my enemy. And since you have spared my life, Earth Man, I will help you free the prisoners of whom you speak."

Flash hesitated.

"I promised to await the Princess Aura at a cavern on the far side of the mountain," he breathed. "But she may

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"TOO TOUGH TO KILL"

(Continued from page 12)

O'Hara had sent for him, disturbed by the complete disappearance of Ann and Willie.

"I haven't seen 'em around," Danny declared.

"Well, where the devil can they be?" growled O'Hara. "I left 'em in Miss Miller's cabin."

"I guess it'll be a relief to have that girl out of the way, won't it?" suggested Danny; but O'Hara was not prepared to admit that.

"If all of us were as interested in doing our work as that girl is," he said, "we'd get somewhere around here."

The telephone bell rang, and Danny answered the call.

"What?" he exclaimed. "Wait a minute!" He held out the instrument. "There's been an accident at the cave-in!"

O'Hara spoke to Anderson.

"I'll be there right away," he said when he had heard the schemer's story, and down went the telephone. But before he went out with Danny he took two automatics from a locked drawer of his desk, and he handed one to Danny and pocketed the other.

In the tool-shed Swede Mulhousen was left in charge of Ann and Willie, and Anderson went out with the others.

"Be quiet," he said to them, "and keep out of sight until O'Hara has gone by."

Mulhousen sat on an upturned box under the shelf to which Willie's camera-case had been restored. He looked at the two prisoners, yawned, and produced a flask of spirits from a pocket.

"Here's looking at you," he said ironically, and drank deep.

It had seemed very dark in the shed when first the lights were switched off, but Ann and Willie could see each other quite clearly now. Swede Mulhousen closed his eyes and leaned back against the wall, and Ann knocked her head against Willie's face to draw his attention to the fact that there were several heavy things on the shelf over their custodian's head, as well as the camera-case.

The shelf was supported by wholly inadequate brackets and a prop of wood. Willie, following with his eyes the direction of Ann's persistent nods, understood at last. He rolled over and over across the floor and suddenly struck out with his bound feet at the prop.

The prop fell, the shelf gave way—and down cascaded half a dozen boxes of tools and the camera-case, mostly on Swede Mulhousen's bent head. He fell forward on his face unconscious, and Willie wriggled his way to the camera-case and in spite of bound wrists tried to get hold of his flash-lamp which was lying on the floor.

At the third attempt he succeeded, and just as O'Hara was passing the shed with Danny a vivid flash of light startled them.

"See what that is," directed O'Hara, and jumped on to the motor-truck Ann had used and drove it on into the tunnel.

Danny entered the tool-shed; Anderson and his companions ran out from the equipment warehouse.

"It's O'Hara all right!" Anderson proclaimed with evil satisfaction. "We'll time him!"

They went back into the warehouse, and they did not see the lights go on in the tool-shed as Danny entered it. But Danny saw Ann, sitting on the floor

bound and gagged, and he saw Willie drop the flash-lamp.

Swiftly removing the handkerchief from the girl's mouth he set her on her feet to unfasten the ropes.

"They're going to kill him!" she exclaimed, as soon as she could find her voice.

"Who?" asked Danny. "Anderson?"

"No—O'Hara! They're going to blow up the tunnel from here, somehow! We've got to stop him before he gets too far inside it!"

"If they're gonna do it from here," said Danny, unfastening the last of the knots in the rope that bound her legs, "there must be a plunger around." He glanced all about the shed. "Where is it?"

"I don't know." She turned towards the door.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"I'm going after him!"

"You can't do that!" He caught hold of her arm. "It's suicide! The only chance you've got to stop him is to telephone one of the stations along the line."

"I'll try that," she promised, and then he let go of her and she ran out.

A motor-truck was on a siding, a little way south of the shed. She set the points for the line that went into the tunnel and then she climbed on to the truck and set it going.

Anderson, in the equipment warehouse, looked at his watch.

"We'll give him three more minutes," he decided; and at that moment the sound of a truck on the rails sent him and his companions crowding round a window.

"It's the girl!" exclaimed Joe in amazement.

"Let her go," said Anderson.

"Couldn't have fastened her up very tight, Nick, but it'll save us a lot of trouble. Come on, let's get on that plunger!"

They streamed out from the warehouse; but Danny and Willie were waiting for them at the side of the tool-shed, and Danny had an automatic in his hand.

"Stay where you are!" he commanded harshly, striding towards them; and the four stopped short in dismay. "Start reaching, all of you! Stick 'em up!"

Up went four pairs of hands, and their owners were driven backwards into the shed, where Willie switched on the lights again.

"Now where's that plunger?" rasped Danny.

"I don't know what you're talking about," blustered Anderson.

"Look for it, Willie," said Danny.

"When you find it, disconnect the wires."

Willie searched all over the shed, but he could not find the plunger.

"Here, take this," said Danny, "and keep them covered. I'll find it."

He handed over the automatic, and Willie held it none too steadily. He was not used to firearms.

"You're crazy!" exploded Anderson, watching Danny as he prowled about the shed.

"Maybe I am," said Danny, and came to the telephone and looked down at a bare wire on the floor in front of it. Anderson made a movement, but Willie immediately cried out:

"No, you don't! Start reaching for the stars, or something!"

On the floor near the bare wire was what appeared to be an empty box, upside down. Danny stooped and raised it—and underneath was the plunger.

He flung away the box and ripped two wires from the terminals on the canister-like contrivance. But behind Willie's back Swede Mulhousen had sat up and

was staring at the upraised hands of his fellow conspirators.

The telephone bell rang. Ann had reached the first wall-instrument in the tunnel and was trying to get O'Hara at the junction. Mulhousen rose up, lurched forward, and knocked the automatic out of Willie's hand.

Anderson and Shane promptly rushed at Danny, who sprang up to defend himself. Mulhousen struck out at Willie, but over-reached himself and went sprawling, and Nick Pollack tried to grab the little sports photographer, only to receive a jolt in the jaw that surprised him. Willie was not quite the weakling he looked.

Ann Gets Her Man!

AT the junction, O'Hara stopped the truck he was driving and jumped down from it because the telephone bell was ringing. To his astonishment it was Ann's voice he heard as he put the receiver to his ear.

She told him of all that had happened, and she said frantically:

"You've got to get out of there! They're liable to blow up the place any minute!"

O'Hara looked along the tunnel for wires, or any sign of a charge, but could see neither. But he could not doubt Ann's story.

"Listen," he said, "there are men at the cave-in. I've got to get them out."

"You haven't time," she protested. "You don't understand! You're going to be killed any minute!"

"Ann," said O'Hara, "you get out of the tunnel—I'm going ahead!"

He slammed the receiver back on its prongs, climbed on to the truck, and drove on to the scene of the cave-in.

There were nearly twenty men at work there, until he stopped them, and it was impossible for them all to crowd on to one motor-truck. On its side lay a muck-car which had been knocked off the rails by the fall of rock in the morning and was half-buried under rubbish.

"Our only chance to get out of here alive," he cried, "is to get this car back on the track! Come on, boys, come on!"

They were all working feverishly to get the muck-car clear and back on the rails when a rumble of wheels grew louder and louder, and they turned to see Ann speeding towards them on a motor-truck. O'Hara flew to meet her.

"I told you to get out of this tunnel!" he cried in horror as she applied the brakes.

"But I had to come after you," she said with a little twisted smile of defiance.

"Well, at least you've given us a chance to get out of here alive!" He beckoned to the men. "Come on!" he shouted urgently. "Half of you on each truck—quick!"

The men needed no second bidding; they scrambled on to the two trucks, and Ann sent hers rattling back through the tunnel, and O'Hara followed on his.

The region of bare rock was left behind, the junction was passed, and the concreted section was reached, while in the tool-shed Danny fought desperately against overwhelming odds, and Willie was knocked down again and again, only to rise for further punishment.

Several times Anderson tried to find the automatic, but it had fallen behind some sacks of cement. Mulhousen tried to find it, but was knocked completely out by a shovel Willie brought down upon his head. Danny, at last, was held powerless against a wall by Joe and Shane, and Willie was sent spinning against a crate by Anderson, who yelled to Nick Pollack to connect the wires to the plunger.

The wires were connected, and Anderson tightened the terminals.

"There, that's got it!" he cried. "Let her go!"

Down went the lever, and somewhere in the distance there followed an explosion that seemed to make the very air in the shed vibrate. Dense clouds of smoke issued from the mouth of the tunnel as Anderson looked out. But with the smoke came two motor-trucks, crowded with men, and Anderson dived back into the shed as he saw O'Hara leap down from the second truck.

"He's not dead! He's here!" he howled. "Get him!"

Shane let go of Danny, and as O'Hara burst in at the door with an automatic in his hand the giant seized the hand that held the gun and jerked it backwards over O'Hara's shoulder. But with his left hand Danny gripped the hand that had wrested the gun away, and with his right hand he secured the weapon.

O'Hara whirled round and his assailant went down like a log. Danny handed back the automatic.

"Thanks," said O'Hara, and he drove the rest of the crooks into a corner with their hands above their heads. "Call the police at Indio, Danny, and tell 'em to get down here right away!"

Danny obeyed only too readily. Willie, a dishevelled wreck, tottered forward holding a hand to his head.

"I-I held 'em back as long as I could," he stammered.

"Good boy, Willie," said O'Hara. "Where's the girl? Are you fit enough to go and find her?"

Willie went out from the shed, very weak at the knees, and he staggered across the camp to the office because he was quite sure he would find Ann there.

He was not mistaken. She was in O'Hara's room, sitting on his desk with his telephone in her hands, ringing up the "Los Angeles Chronicle."

O'Hara was in the city of Los Angeles sooner than he had expected to be, because he had to attend the trial of Amos Mulhern and Bill Anderson.

Mulhern was charged with tampering with the Whitney Tunnel construction; Anderson confessed to attempted murder. Mulhern was sentenced to five years' imprisonment, Anderson to twenty-five.

Swede Mulhousen, Nick Pollack, Dave Shane, and Joe Gibbons received severe sentences for their part in the murder plot, and Ann herself wrote the story that appeared in the "Chronicle" of John O'Hara's promotion to partnership with James Whitney.

She was at her desk, the morning after the jury had given their verdict, when O'Hara walked into the reporters' room with his hat in his hand and a smile on his face. Whether she had expected him, or not, it was lunch-time and her hat was on her head. She stood up and made a face at him.

"I thought I told you not to come up here when I gave you my address," she said. "Besides, you're late! I ought to have gone to lunch ten minutes ago!"

O'Hara's smile broadened.

"There's an excavation down the street," he lied. "I simply couldn't tear myself away."

"Any steel reinforcements, or timber segments to lean on?" asked Ann brightly.

"Sure."

"Then what are we waiting for?"

"They went out from the reporters' room arm-in-arm."

(By permission of Columbia Pictures Corporation, Ltd., starring Victor Jory with Sally O'Neil.)

May 16th, 1936.

"THE SAGEBRUSH TROUBADOUR"

(Continued from page 20)

Gene took the reins from her numbed fingers and exerted all his strength. There seemed a sheer drop ahead and he strove to turn the runaways. He succeeded, but it was too much for the buckboard. An axle snapped, the buckboard sagged and one corner ploughed its way into the soft ground. The man got a grip of the girl and next second they went hurtling through the air.

Over and over they rolled with Gene striving with one free hand and his feet to check their pace. A hillock brought them up with a jolt that nearly broke his back. Winded and bruised they lay huddled close together—from a distance seemingly dead.

"Why don't you stay home where you belong?" Gene gasped out, as the girl gave a faint moan.

Her eyes opened and she flashed him an indignant glance.

"I would have made it if you hadn't tried that circus act. You try spanking me and see what you get."

The pounding of hoofs made Gene turn his head, and he saw two horsemen some distance away.

"Lie still and feign you're out," whispered Gene. "And you will get spanked if you don't do as I say."

It was Lon and Hank. They had seen the whole incident from their look-out on the hillside. They dismounted and stared down at the prone figures.

"Knocked out," Lon chuckled. "Dunno what this means. Maybe this pesky killer was going to kidnap Joan. We'll bind him."

"And share the reward," suggested the crafty Hank.

But they got a surprise when they laid hands on Gene, for he came unexpectedly to life. Hank was tossed over his head and Lon got a punch in the ribs that robbed that young adventurer of all his breath. They got to their feet to find themselves staring down the barrel of a gun.

"Keep your hands in the air," drawled Gene. Neatly he frisked them of their guns and tossed them away.

"Do your worst," defiantly cried Lon. "We ain't scared of you. You don't kill us like you did old Martin."

"You two are after Martin's gold mine, aren't you?" questioned Gene.

They looked at him suspiciously.

"What if we are?" growled Hank.

"Well, I'm not you'll be pleased to hear," Gene grinned. "You've known for a long time that Martin had found gold and you've been snooping around trying to find it, but without success. You must have learnt about the mine when you came to the ranch to see Joan, and either you told Hank or he found out some way."

"Martin owed me a bill and——" began Hank.

Gene silenced him by turning the gun in his direction.

"We're not interested, but for your information I'll tell you how to find the mine." He gave them explicit instructions. "And if you want to go and look at the mine," he concluded, as he pouched his gun. "we won't stop you."

Lon and Hank raced for their horses, sprang into the saddle and were gone.

Joan got up slowly from the ground. "My mine!" she said with heavy sarcasm. "This mine isn't recorded, and those two cheap chisellers can now take the mine for themselves."

"Perhaps!" Gene laughed tantalizingly, and whistled. Champion trotted towards them.

"What kind of game are you playing?" she demanded after he had helped her into the saddle. "Who are you?"

"Contain your curiosity for just a while longer." Gene jumped up behind her. "And then you'll know who murdered your grandfather."

The Gold Mine

JOHN MARTIN and Pablo led the J swayback as far as the spot where old Martin had been murdered and then released the curious-shaped animal. The swayback trudged stolidly towards the hills, and dawn was nigh when they came to what seemed barren rock. It was Pablo who forced his way through a clump of mesquite and shouted that there was an opening in the cliff face.

Martin noticed an old barrow and other signs that once human hands had been at work. He felt that Martin's gold mine was as good as his. He flashed a torch and entered a shallow tunnel.

After going a short distance the two men found themselves in an inner cavern. Plenty of signs of human occupation but no signs of gold. The place was musty and thick with cobwebs. There were a number of shovels and picks in one corner, an old table and a broken chair, but no sacks of gold dust.

"There's no gold here," cried Martin. "Senior, there must be," answered the half-breed. "Look, there is a door."

Martin forced open a rickety door and passed into a smaller cavern. Again there were a chair and a table, picks and shovels, sieves, and bags that were full of cement. Rough boarding was on the floor, but there was no sign of any other door.

"It's the old man's headquarters right enough," cried Martin. "But where's the mine?"

"Senior, look!" Pablo pointed at a trapdoor and a ring. "I think, senior, that there is your mine."

"Help me lift the trap." Martin rushed forward, and they had just succeeded in lifting up the heavy wooden trap when both men stiffened. They had heard a sound.

Martin whipped out a gun. Into the room came a dusty, perspiring Nolan.

"Tried to double-cross me, did you?" he snarled at them. "But I fooled you. I followed you all the way from the ranch."

"I found this mine first and you're too late," sneered Martin. "For once you ain't been so clever. Don't make a move, Nolan, or I'll drill you full of lead. You're staying here with Pablo whilst I ride into town and record——"

The words died away on his lips because he had heard voices. A moment later came the sound of heavy footfalls. Martin's face was ugly as Lon and Hank appeared.

"Looking for something?" he drawled.

"So you beat us to it!" raged Lon. "Still you ain't recorded your claim yet, and we'll make town before you do."

"Oh, no, you don't," Martin shook his head. "You guys are keeping Lawyer Nolan company down in the mine. Make the most of it because you won't be invited into my mine again."

All this while Nolan had been edging nearer and nearer to Martin. Suddenly he rushed and knocked up the gun hand. There was an explosion that brought down stones from the roof. Lon and Hank jumped forward, and in a moment it was a fight of three against two.

Almost leisurely Gene and the girl rode towards the mine. Joan had tried questioning, but the big man refused to

give any explanation. When they reached the mine Gene pointed to the horses and the swayback.

"I think most of our friends have arrived." He pointed to a ridge. "See those specks. That's the sheriff and his posse. We're going to have such a pleasant little party."

"But if the sheriff catches you here you'll be arrested."

"I don't think so. Come, Joan, let's go inside and see how everyone is getting along." He pushed back the mesquite so the girl could pass. Then he bent his shoulders to enter the mine. They came into the first cave.

"What's going on in there?" demanded Joan. "It sounds like men fighting."

"Probably fighting over who shall have the mine," Gene drew out a gun. "Let's go and join the fight."

Very quietly they entered the inner room and found Martin and Pablo getting the worst of the fight.

"Folks!" Gene bellowed, and that stopped the fight. Five angry, suspicious men glared at Gene and Joan, but they didn't try anything because of the gun that the big fellow carried.

"Guess this is where we have a little pow-wow," drawled Gene, and with his gun indicated the various sacks. "Be seated—make yourselves comfortable."

That gun made them obey his orders. "You killed Martin!" accused Hank Polk.

"We'll find that out when the sheriff shows up," answered Gene. "Unless my ears mistake me that's the sheriff and his men."

When the sheriff and his deputies rushed in he found Gene calmly holding up five cowed men. His gaze was bewildered, and questioning.

"Take a seat, sheriff," Gene requested. "I got some talking to do." He waited until they had taken up various positions. "I'll begin by telling you I'm a Ranger—assigned to the Martin murder case. Now, Mr. Nolan, as a lawyer associated with the late Mr. Martin, suppose you tell us the reason the killer or killers might have had for the murder."

Nolan's small, beady eyes flickered nervously. "Well, it's probable that the murderer only wished to torture Mr. Martin—to make him tell where the mine was. But the victim was weak—half blind, and he died. The killer got frightened—and he fled—without removing the tell-tale guitar string."

"Now anyone here could have had a motive for the crime," Gene looked all round the gathering. "As a matter of fact, the killer is here right now!"

"Ain't you a smart detective," sneered Lon.

"The killer wasn't very smart, Lon." Gene took from his pocket the fatal guitar string. "This string shows that it was played with a pick—very unusual in this part of the country. Hank Polk plays a guitar, and so do you, Lon Danvers—and you both use picks." Gene produced a small pick. "On this little stick are the fingerprints of the murderer. My fellow ranger, Frog, is a fingerprint expert. At the ranch he got the fingerprints of all you suspects. These fingerprints were compared and prove conclusively who killed Martin. The man was—"

"You'll never take me alive," Nolan snouted hoarsely as he leapt to his feet.

Before anyone realised quite what the lawyer planned to do he was climbing down through the open trapdoor. Joan wondered why Gene did not use his gun. All heard a scuffling, and then to the surprise of all except Gene, the lawyer scrambled back into the room and stared round like a cornered rat. A moment later up bobbed the head and shoulders

of a convict—it was the grinning face of Frog Millhouse. Gene put a protecting arm round the girl, whilst the other arm gripped Nolan.

"Sheriff, that's the man that killed old man Martin." Gene indicated the lawyer. "Arrest him!"

The sheriff produced handcuffs and snapped them over Nolan's wrists. He drew out his gun. "So you're the treacherous car that downed old man Martin? I always thought you was a rattlesnake."

Lon walked across to the open trapdoor.

"How did you happen to be hiding in the mine tunnel?"

Frog grinned.

"That was Gene Antry's plan. He knew where this place was—he followed the swayback up here yesterday. Any more questions, pard?"

There were none. The sheriff took charge. He eyed the sockers after the Martin gold mine severely.

"Guess it would be wise if you men hit the trail. I'd like a talk with you, Antry."

Only three people remained at the mine—Joan, Gene and Frog.

The last-named scratched his head.

"I heard you say something about me being a famous fingerprint expert—how come I got such a reputation?"

"You haven't," Gene laughed. "That was a bluff to force the guilty man to show his hand."

"I suppose you know that Uncle John, Hank and Lon are racing for town," spoke Joan. "The mine belongs to the one that first records it."

Frog chuckled and winked at his partner.

"Well, ma'am, them hombres are sure gonna be embarrassed when they hit town. You see, Gene had one of the Rangers record the mine in your name yesterday."

Then did Joan fully appreciate what Gene Antry had done for her, and her eyes shone with gratitude. Gene gazed fondly at the girl and took her unresisting hands in his own large ones. Frog Millhouse produced his guitar and began to strum, and the birds were silent as Gene Antry began to sing:

"I'd love to wed a girl I met

In a stagecoach on the prairie.

I'd love to say to-day's the day

When you and I will marry.

But I must find a girl that's sweet,

You see the point, of course—

If frown she must, I think it just

To stay in love with my horse!"

But Joan Martin was not frowning.

(By permission of the British Lion Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Gene Antry, Smiley Burnette and Barbara Pepper.)

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"TOO TOUGH TO KILL."—*John O'Hara*, Victor Jory; *Ann Miller*, Sally O'Neil; *James Whitney*, Thurston Hall; *Willie Dent*, Johnny Arthur; *Bill Anderson*, Robert Gleckler; *Nick Pollack*, George McKay; *Howard Egerton Hubbel*, Robert Middlemass; *Dave Shane*, Dewey Robinson; *Danny Morgan*, Ward Bond.

"THE SAGEBRUSH TROUBADOUR."—*Gene Antry*, Himself; *Frog Millhouse*, Smiley Burnette; *Joan Martin*, Barbara Pepper; *John Martin*, Frank Glendon; *Lon Danvers*, Denny Meadows; *Henry Nolan*, Hooper Atchley; *Hank Polk*, Fred Kelsey; *Pablo*, Julian Rivero; *Sheriff*, Tom London.

"FLASH GORDON"

(Continued from page 24)

not have been successful, and I'm anxious to find out what's happened."

"Then follow me," Thun told him. "I know something of Ming's palace, for we were not always enemies. There is a secret passage on this side of the mountain, too, and it will take us to his stronghold, though we must exercise great caution."

Thus it was under the guidance of this prince of the Lion Men that Flash Gordon found his way back to the palace of the Emperor Ming, and about half an hour after their encounter on the plain he and Thun might have been seen stealing along a corridor in the sinister monarch's imposing residence.

It was as they turned an angle of this corridor that they came face to face with two men who were hurrying in the opposite direction.

One was a member of Ming's body-guard, and Thun instantly threatened him with his sword, which Flash had returned to him. In the same moment the American leapt towards the other man who had appeared with the emperor's hincing, but stopped short as he recognised Zarkov.

"Flash!" the doctor ejaculated. "Where did you come from?"

The younger man gave him a brief account of his adventures, Thun keeping a watch on Ming's retainer in the meantime, and only taking his eyes off the latter when Flash presented Zarkov.

"Thank heavens you are alive, Flash, anyway," the doctor said at length. "And listen, I have something to tell you. The Earth will not be destroyed—no clash of planets will take place for the progress of Mongo towards the world has been checked."

"Good," his fellow-countryman rejoined in a heartfelt tone. "But I want to hear about Dale. Where is she?"

A look of distress crossed Zarkov's features at mention of the girl's name.

"Ming intends to make her his bride," he answered huskily, "and has placed her in a trance for that purpose. I saw her a little while ago. She was like a creature in a dream. That fiend! He ordered me to be present at the ceremony, and I was on my way there with this soldier when you came face to face with us!"

Flash was staring at him in horror, and for a minute or more he seemed unable to speak. Then he clutched the doctor by the arm.

"Zarkov, we can't let him get away with this!" he cried out. "We've got to stop him! We've got to! Where is this ceremony to take place?"

"In an underground room below the palace," the older man rejoined. "I believe a flight of steps at the end of this corridor leads down to it. Ming and his court are already there—and I understand the Princess Aura is there, too, acting as one of Dale's hand-maidens. Apparently she returned some time ago, but would not say where you were hiding."

Flash ground his teeth together. "Never mind the Princess Aura," he rapped out. "It's Dale we've got to think of. Come on, we're going to break up that ceremony."

He turned in a hot-headed fashion but Thun laid a hand on his arm.

"Wait, my friend," he commanded. "You would be killed on sight by Ming's guards. Your only hope is to take everyone in that room by surprise, and, re-

ing your Earth girl, escape before they have recovered. But first let your friend Zarkov proceed to the ceremony. Ming may send men to look for him if he delays much longer."

Flash persuaded Zarkov to depart, and Thun and the young American were left alone with the trembling and silent creature whom the prince of the Lion Men was threatening with his sword.

"What's your plan," Flash demanded of Thun, "if you have one in mind?"

"I know that there is a secret entrance to the room where the weddings of Ming's court take place," was the reply. "I cannot tell you how to reach that secret entrance, but this man here will show us the way, and assuredly we can launch a surprise from it—a surprise that may well leave the emperor and his guests completely dumbfounded. At least, I am willing to take the risk with you, Earth man, for you spared my life down there on the plain."

Flash turned towards the soldier who was cowering before Thun.

"You know the way to this secret entrance?" he queried sharply.

"Yes," the man panted, "but I'll not take you there!"

Flash seized him by the throat, and simultaneously Thun pressed his sword against the wretch's body. In a few seconds the captive was gasping out an appeal for mercy.

"Listen," he stammered, "listen, I will take you to the tunnel that leads to the secret entrance Thun has spoken of. But I will not go into the tunnel with you, for it is the lair of a monster. That tunnel—is the lair of a monster."

Flash threw the man from him contemptuously, ordering him to act as their guide and waste no time in doing so. Whatever this fellow might babble concerning monsters, the young American was resolved to do all in his power to prevent Ming from carrying out his design.

With hesitant steps the soldier began to move towards a gallery that was an off-shoot of the corridor in which they had been standing, and Flash and Thun followed him, warning him that he would pay for any treachery with his life.

Slowly and warily they moved on, and at length they descended into a realm of vaults below the palace. Through several of these vaults they passed, and then they came to a halt before a heavy door of timber.

"The tunnel is beyond that door," their guide said querulously. "It will take you to a secret panel behind the statue of the god Taos, in the wedding-room—"

He stopped, for at that instant a dim, booming sound was heard, a sound like

the stroke of a gong somewhere in the distance.

"What was that?" Flash muttered. It was Thun who answered him.

"A signal from the wedding-room. It means that the ceremony is about to begin!"

Flash Gordon's face seemed to tighten, and, wheeling upon the door which their abject guide had indicated, he unfastened the bolts that held it and dragged it open.

Even as he did so he heard a shout behind him, and turned to see two figures hurrying through the vaults. They were the figures of two of Ming's underlings, who must have had occasion to come down to those subterranean regions for some reason or other, and who had unluckily caught sight of the intruders near the tunnel door.

One of the newcomers was unarmed, but the other was grasping a weapon which both Thun and Flash recognised as a ray-gun.

The guards advanced, and the man who had guided Flash and his ally to

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the vaults stepped forward to join them, blurting out a feverish account of the manner in which he had been taken prisoner. But before he was half-way through his narrative Thun had leapt upon the soldier with the ray-gun, striking the deadly instrument from his hand.

Next second a furious scuffle was in progress, a scuffle into which Flash was about to hurl himself when he became aware of a movement behind him.

Involuntarily he looked over his shoulder, and the blood froze in his veins at the spectacle which met his eyes—at the hideous, ghoulish thing which suddenly loomed up amid the shadows of the tunnel, with slaving beak and baleful eyes, with awful claws that seized his body in a vice-like grip and swept him from his feet!

(To be continued in another big episode next week. By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Buster Crabbe and Jean Rogers.)



(Continued from page 2)

So Director Lloyd—a true diplomat, by the by—settled the problem in an unilitary way. He instructed the 600 soldiers to keep step with Ratoff—and the expedient bore results.

"Under Two Flags," the most ambitious of the series of pictures which Darryl F. Zanuck is to produce personally, is cast with Ronald Colman, Claudette Colbert and Victor McLaglen in the principal rôles.

Playing "L"

The technicians of Capitol Films invented an amusing new game during the production of "Love in Exile," which co-stars Clive Brook and Helen Vinson with such talented support as Mary Carlisle, Ronald Squire, Cecil Ramage, Will Fyffe, and Tamara Desni.

From their perches high above the studio floor the technicians made daily notes of the number of times a player ruined a "take" by "fluffing" dialogue or forgetting movements or gestures.

At six o'clock each evening a learner-motorist's "L" sign was fastened on the dressing-room door of the unfortunate player who had made most mistakes during the day.

The cast thoroughly enjoyed the joke—an atmosphere of good humour helps the making of a comedy film tremendously—but neither words nor wealth could extract from anyone the name of the most frequent Learner.

Her Narrow Escape

Tutta Rolf, the Swedish film actress who is playing the leading rôle opposite her husband, Jack Donohue, in the new Fox-British production, "Rhythm in the Air," is an expert swimmer.

It was her ability at swimming and her powers of endurance that saved her life on one occasion.

On her first visit to Hollywood, she was washed overboard from the steamer during a midwinter gale in the Bay of Biscay. For nearly an hour she fought death in the icy water, as the huge waves buffeted her about.

Finally, a lifeboat which had been put over from the ship picked her up, exhausted. During her struggle she calmly divested herself of her hampering skirt, coat, blouse and slippers, and was attired only in some scanty lingerie when she was hauled into the lifeboat.

The crew of the lifeboat which effected the rescue were awarded Carnegie Life Saving Medals as a result of this episode.

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*Ken
Maynard*

in

WESTERN COURAGE

As foreman of a "dude" ranch, Ken Baxter brings down upon himself the scorn of a beautiful heiress and decides that she needs taming; but in rescuing her from a worthless fortune-hunter both he and the girl fall into the clutches of a notorious outlaw—and Ken is unarmed! An unusual Western, starring Ken Maynard



WESTERN COURAGE

The Way of the West

THE train that had stopped at the little station of Sandy Fork long enough only for three passengers to descend from it, in company with their luggage, had become a mere speck in the southern distance. The Californian sun blazed down upon the bare platform, and the heat was intense.

All around was magnificent scenery, but there was not a human habitation in sight, and the only other human being—who was stationmaster, booking-clerk and signalman—had disappeared into his office.

According to their various natures the three passengers reacted to their discomfort. They were husband, wife, and daughter.

Henry Hanley, a millionaire whose bulk and greying brown hair suggested that he was half-way through the fifties, sat placidly on a brass-bound trunk with his back to the wall of the wooden structure which provided shelter for merchandise and for cattle, but not for wealthy holiday-makers.

Mrs. Hanley, a tallish and handsome woman considerably younger than her husband, prowled restlessly up and down the platform, and became hotter than ever as a result of her exertions.

Gloria Hanley, the spoiled daughter of these two, dumped herself on a suitcase within a few yards of her male parent and gnawed her enamelled finger-nails. She was a beautiful girl, but a petulant one, brought up in luxury and accustomed to having her own way.

Ten minutes passed, and then the auburn-haired prowler advanced to open the brass-bound box as to battle "Well, Henry Hanley," she exploded, "I hope you're satisfied!"

The millionaire merely grinned.
May 23rd, 1936.

"Why we ever had to come to a 'dude' ranch, I can't understand!" complained Gloria.

"You know very well why we came here," retorted her mother. "It was your father's idea! And here we are, without a soul to meet us, marooned in this broiling heat, without shelter, without water!"

"But not without words," said Mr. Hanley. "Besides, this is my vacation, and I—" In the distance he heard the sound of wheels and he broke off to look along the dusty road that paralleled the railway-track for a while, then curved away from it and disappeared downhill. "Here comes someone now!"

A buckboard drawn by two horses had breasted the hill and was approaching the station at leisure. Mrs. Hanley frowned in its direction.

"The very idea!" she exclaimed. "The least they could do is to hurry!"

"I've often thought that about you, my dear," purred her husband, "when I'm waiting for you to get dressed."

Driving the buckboard, or, to be more accurate, permitting the horses to pull it, was a bright-eyed and stalwart young fellow dressed in typical cowboy fashion, complete with gun-belt; and beside him lolled another cowpuncher, lean of face and of body, whose name was Herbert Dawkins, but who was known—quite appropriately—as Slim.

"Looks like we're a mite late, Ken," said Slim, viewing the three figures on the platform with a broad grin.

"Looks like it," agreed the holder of the reins.

The station was reached, the buckboard was stopped, and Slim proceeded to gather up the luggage on the platform while his companion tipped his

cow-hat and greeted the three passengers collectively.

"Howdy, folks?" he said pleasantly.

"Are you the Hanleys?"

Mrs. Hanley bridled, but her husband rose instantly from the brass-bound trunk.

"Yes," he replied. "I'm Henry Hanley."

"I'm Ken Baxter, foreman of the Rancho Vista."

Hanley introduced his wife and daughter; Slim deposited suitcases and hat-boxes in the back of the buckboard.

"I'm not in the habit of being kept waiting," said Mrs. Hanley severely.

"Why weren't you here on time?"

"Why, the horses, ma'am," replied Ken. "I didn't want to get 'em overheated."

"I suppose it never occurred to you that my daughter and I might also get overheated?"

"Oh yes, ma'am," drawled Ken.

"I'm terribly sorry about that, but you see, in these parts, between horses and humans, we always favour the horses."

He went off to help Slim with the brass-bound trunk before Mrs. Hanley could utter another word.

"I'm going to like that bird!" quoth her husband delightedly.

The luggage was stowed away, chiefly under seats, and the Hanleys walked out to the buckboard.

"Hope we don't lose any o' this lot," remarked Ken. "Quite a few! All aboard, folks!"

Mrs. Hanley decided to ride in the back, and Slim helped her up into a seat.

"Any objection to my riding in front?" inquired Mr. Hanley.

Ken assured him that there was no objection at all; but Gloria had decided

that she was going to sit beside the driver.

"Dutiful husbands should ride with their wives," she said. "I'll take the front seat."

"Some people like to ride in the front," said Ken, with a wink for Slim, "and some in the back. You can't always tell."

"I'm used to being helped," snapped Gloria.

"Oh, yes, ma'am." Ken lifted her up as though she were a feather, and dumped her in the front seat with a thud that sent her hat awry. "Oh, excuse me—I'm sorry. Slide over, now, will you?"

Indignantly she moved to the other end of the seat and straightened her hat. Her father had climbed into the back beside his wife, and Slim was perched on the brass-bound trunk. Ken took his seat and picked up the reins.

"All set?" he inquired over his shoulder.

"Yeah, let her go, Ken," responded Slim.

"We're off!"

He gave the reins a tug and the horses set off at a brisk pace. The station was left behind, the hill was descended. At the foot of it the road twisted between wire fences for a while, then lush pasture-land gave place to wooded patches and another downhill stretch.

Mrs. Hanley became aware that Slim had drawn a gun and was toying with it. She eyed him nervously and squeezed nearer to her husband. There came a sharp bend in the road and then a wall of rock on the right. At the wall of rock Slim fired the gun, and Mrs. Hanley jumped in her seat as though she herself had been shot.

"Slim, what're you doing back there?" shouted Ken.

"I was just practising," Slim shouted back.

The horses had trebled their speed and Ken was apparently tugging at the reins. Gloria took a cigarette-case and a lighter from her handbag and a cigarette from the case.

"Would you mind slowing down while I light this cigarette?" she asked in a voice that made the request practically a command.

"I'm sorry, miss," replied Ken. "I would if I could. The team's running away!"

"What?" she shrilled.

Faster and faster went the horses, and the buckboard swayed alarmingly round bends and corners. Gloria dropped the cigarette and held on to the back of the seat. Her mother, convinced that her last hour had come, clung to her husband and gritted her teeth in a determination not to shriek.

Down a steep hill tore the horses, as though utterly out of control, and then raced upwards, under trees. A gateway loomed up on the left—the gateway of a drive leading to a picturesque building of white adobe, Spanish style, with arches and balconies and a broad terrace above steps.

Mother and daughter were far too agitated to notice the building, but they could not fail to notice a crowd of people round the gateway, for as the horses miraculously slackened speed a fall score of voices chorused loudly:

"Welcome to Rancho Vista! How'd you enjoy the ride?"

The horses came to a standstill, just beyond the crowd, and Slim heaved himself from the buckboard to hold their heads. Ken descended.

"End o' the trail, folks!" he announced. "Everybody out!"

He grabbed hold of Gloria and set her down on her feet.

"I'm sorry I scared you, miss," he said, beaming at her. "It was all framed for a joke, but they actually got away from me."

"Oh, you didn't frighten me!" she snapped at him.

"Well, you'll get a chance to laugh at the others to-morrow."

"I won't laugh at the others," she retorted, "because I don't like practical jokes."

"Or practical jokers!" cried Mrs. Hanley, scrambling off the buckboard unaided.

"Most people around here don't mind, Mrs. Hanley," said Ken, quite unrepentantly. "Come on, Slim, let's get the baggage off of here."

"Well, I never!" The millionaire's wife, treated by a mere foreman as though she had ceased to exist, marched in at the gateway with her daughter.

The crowd of holiday-makers, having enjoyed the spectacular arrival of the new guests, had melted away into the very pleasant grounds of the ranch-house. At the foot of the steps that led up to the terrace Henry Hanley was talking to the proprietor of the place, an elderly man of military bearing who looked far more of a gentleman than a rancher.

"This is Colonel Austin," said Hanley, as his wife and daughter reached the steps. "He's the owner of the ranch."

Mrs. Hanley was gracious because the colonel was courtly. Gloria knew that "dude" ranches were run with all the comfort of hotels for the benefit of people who wanted to see the Wild West under the most agreeable conditions, but had fully expected to meet a rancher, unshaven, wearing guns, and chewing tobacco. Grey-haired Colonel Austin was wearing a tweed coat of excellent quality, riding breeches and boots such as gentlemen wear, and a half-smoked cigar was in his left hand.

"I'll show you to your quarters," he said. "I think I can make you comfortable. Will you come this way, please?"

They followed him up the steps, across the terrace on which some of the guests were lounging, and into the house. Out in the roadway Ken and Slim dealt with the luggage.

"That gal's sure easy to look at, ain't she?" remarked Slim.

"She's that all right," agreed Ken. "Kinda reminds me of a wild horse, though—plumb worthless till you tame it down. You know, I'm about half-tempted to do the job myself."

"Well, o' course," said Slim, "you've tamed a lot o' wild horses, Ken!"

The Fortune-hunter

HALF an hour after their arrival the new guests descended from their rooms into the stone-flagged hall of the ranch-house. They had breakfasted on the train in which they had spent the better part of three days, and it was still an hour short of noon.

Mrs. Hanley had changed into a lace-trimmed frock, but Gloria and her father had put on riding kit, both of them keen for exercise. A girl on the terrace was playing a mandoline as they wandered out through the doorway. A young man in a very loud sports coat, a chequered waistcoat and particularly baggy trousers, was leaning against iron railings under one of the numerous arches, apparently with no object whatever in view, but nevertheless keeping a watchful eye on the doorway.

He was tall, well-built, and exuded self-conceit. His hair was as black as Ken's, his eyes were brown and none too honest; his name was Eric Simpson.

"Gloria!" he cried, as Gloria appeared with her parents.

"Eric!" cried Gloria, and sped over to him. "Well, what in the world are you doing here?"

Henry Hanley scowled, and turned in manifest annoyance to his wife.

"How did that nitwit get here?" he demanded suspiciously.

"Nitwit?" Mrs. Hanley tossed her auburn head. "Are you sure that term doesn't apply to you, Henry? You drag us to this place to break up their romance, only to throw Gloria right back into his arms again!"

Gloria, very close to Eric Simpson, whispered:

"Eric, how did you manage to get here ahead of us?"

"I took a plane when I got your wire," he replied in a very low voice. "Thought it would keep your father from being suspicious if I was already here when you arrived."

She nodded approvingly and marched him to her parents.

"Oh, mother," she gushed, "can you imagine finding Eric here?"

Mrs. Hanley shook hands with the young man and informed him that she was glad to see him. Henry Hanley was glumly silent.

"I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw Gloria and you and Mr. Hanley," declared the "nitwit."

"Humph!" grunted Mr. Hanley incredulously, and Gloria said hastily:

"Oh, we—that is father and I—were just going for a ride. Won't you join us, Eric?"

"Why can't he stay here with your mother?" asked Hanley with marked aversion. "She's just dying for a bridge partner."

"Oh, that'll be lovely, Eric," said Mrs. Hanley, whose abiding passion in the social circles of far-away Boston was bridge; and Eric, not daring to disappoint a valuable ally, declared that there was nothing he enjoyed more than a good game of contract.

"Come on, Gloria," said Hanley masterfully, "let's mingle with the horses."

Eric accepted his fate with a good enough grace, but he called out:

"Oh, say, Gloria, there's a garden party to-night. May I have the first dance?"

"You certainly may," she assured him. "Good-bye till then."

She waved a hand and went off with her father down the steps and round the white-walled building to the stables. Corrals, at the Rancho Vista, were kept for cattle—and cattle were kept mainly to provide meat and milk for the guests. The stables would have done credit to a racing establishment.

Several cowboys were in the yard, and Ken was leading a splendid white horse out from one of the stalls—a stall marked "Private."

"There's Ken now!" exclaimed Mr. Hanley. "Let's claim him for our guide!"

Ken saw them crossing the yard, and he shouted to the cowboys:

"You'd better saddle up about three more. We're goin' to have a lot o' ridin' this morning."

"Hallo, Ken," greeted Hanley.

"How about having you for our guide?"

"Fine," replied Ken, tightening the girths of the saddle he had placed on the white horse.

"Oh, what a beauty!" cried Gloria.

"I'll take this one—it's my horse from now on! Don't let anybody else ride him while I'm staying here!"

"I'm sorry, miss," said Ken, "but this is my horse. No one but me's ever rode him, and—"

"But you'll let me ride him, won't you?"

"No," said Ken quite definitely "I'm sorry."

Her blue eyes blazed at him and she tossed her head.

"Then I'll buy the beast!" she stormed. "How much is he worth?"

"I don't know as you could buy him," drawled Ken.

"And why not? My father could buy this ranch and then forget about it!"

"Well, you may be right about the ranch, but this is my personal horse, and I ain't aimin' to sell him."

"Oh, I see! And—and you wouldn't even allow me to ride him?"

Ken shook his head.

"I'm sorry, Miss Hanley."

She founced out of the yard with her proud little chin in the air, and Ken said wryly to her father:

"Looks like she ain't gonna ride!"

"Ken," said the millionaire warmly, "you're a man after my own heart. I wish I could say 'no' to her once in a while."

"I'm afraid it's too late for that now." Ken gazed thoughtfully after the retreating figure and saw a harmless flower severed from its stem by a riding-crop. "She sure does need a good taming, though."

"Yes," agreed Hanley, and patted the neck of the white horse. "Magnificent animal—what's his name?"

"Tarzan," Ken informed him. "Ready to go for that ride now?"

Mr. Hanley was ready, and a brown horse was ready for him.

"Get mounted and we'll go," said Ken, swinging himself up on to Tarzan's back with easy grace. "I think you'll like that little pony—does quite a nice fox-trot."

Mr. Hanley mounted the brown horse neatly enough, in spite of his weight, and the two cantered out from the yard. They covered a good twenty miles of picturesque country before lunch-time, and their liking for one another increased with every mile.

The rest of the day passed uneventfully. Mrs. Hanley rested during the afternoon in her own room; her husband dozed in a wicker chair on the terrace; Gloria and others played the cowboy game of quoits with horseshoes.

Eric Simpson had his first dance with Gloria, and then Colonel Austin, master of ceremonies, announced an old-fashioned waltz and secured Mrs. Hanley for partner. Eric surrendered Gloria to her father because a dark-haired girl had beckoned to him from the bottom of the steps.

He followed the girl along a paved path to a wooden seat set against some shrubs, passing Slim, who had the curiosity to follow. The dark-haired girl was older than Gloria and of quite a different type, but she possessed good looks.

"You might at least give me one dance," she said complainingly, as Eric reached the seat and sank down on it beside her.

"Listen, dear," he returned, "I can't afford to have the Hanleys see me with you—it might spoil our chances. We've got to work this carefully."

Slim had not ventured near enough to hear more than the murmur of their voices. He hastened back to beckon frantically to Ken, who presently put down his violin and joined him under a chestnut-tree.

"Come and look," Slim whispered excitedly; and together they passed round to the other side of the shrubbery, where Ken pulled some branches aside to get a view of the two on the seat.

"You're not fooling me," he heard a

jealous feminine voice declare, "you're crazy about that Hanley girl!"

"Oh, don't be silly," rebuked Eric Simpson. "If we didn't need the money I couldn't stand her for five minutes!"

"If I thought that you—"

"Well, don't think!"

Ken did not see Eric take the dark-haired girl in his arms, but he heard him kiss her and saw him as he rose to his feet.

"Listen, darling, I've got to get back," said the schemer. "I'll see you later on."

He went swiftly along the path towards the lawn in front of the house, never dreaming that the shrubbery sheltered two spies. The girl, whose name was Betty Johns, walked off in the opposite direction.

"Hanley was right," said Ken, rubbing his chin. "That bird is a four-flusher all right!"

"Yep," agreed Slim. "What're you goin' to do about it?"

"I don't know for sure—but I'm a-goin' to horn in, somehow or other."

The waltz came to an end as they reached the chestnut-tree, and Colonel Austin released Mrs. Hanley to clap his hands and shout:

"Listen, folks! Next on the programme is a tag dance. Strike her up, boys!"

Males sought partners. Mr. Hanley bore down on his wife, but she said:

"No, this is Eric's dance—I promised him."

"Aw, come on," insisted her husband. "Let him out in later."

Eric appeared at that moment, smiled at Mrs. Hanley, and swept on to Gloria. He whisked her away from a young man who was on the point of asking her to dance with him, and numerous couples began to circulate in a slow fox-trot.

"Here's where I horn in," Ken informed Slim, and he threaded his way to Eric and Gloria, thumped Eric in the back, and took possession of his partner.

Eric glared, but Gloria did not protest. After all, Ken was a handsome fellow, and for all she knew it might be the custom, at dude ranches, for the foreman to dance with the guests.

She found that he was an excellent dancer, even in riding-boots and spurs.

"I ain't aimin' to butt into your affairs," he said after a while, "but you ought to be mighty careful who you go around with."

"One has little chance to choose," she retorted, "during a tag dance!"

He took that with a grin, piloting her away from the crowd.

"Please," he said earnestly, "let's sit this dance out, will you?"

He took silence for consent and stopped at a bench on the edge of one of the paths. Gloria sat down and looked up at him.

"Well, Mr. Cowboy," she said, "what's on your mind?"

"Seems like all we ever do is quarrel," said Ken.

"I know, but you always start it!"

"I'm just tryin' to help you. All kinds of people come here, you know, some good and some bad."

"I'm perfectly capable of taking care of myself," she informed him tartly, "anywhere and any time."

"Maybe so," he returned in a voice that expressed doubt, "but maybe some of these people who seem to be so interesting around here are just fortune-hunters after your money."

"I know who you mean," she said with spirit, "and I still believe him to be a gentleman." She stood up. "Oh, let's dance before we start to quarrel again!"

"All right," said Ken; but Eric Simpson came striding over and thumped him in the back.

"According to the rules," he proclaimed, "the rest of the dance is mine."

"Of course," said Ken with a mocking bow.

Ken Becomes a Guest

THE Rancho Vista comprised several miles of hill and dale, though it was nothing like the size it had been when in the possession of former owners who raised cattle for the stockyards. Half-way down a grassy hill, two miles south of the ranch-house, a natural shelf of sand had been converted into a promenade fringed with trees and provided with seats.

This promenade would probably have been more popular with Colonel Austin's paying guests had it been less distant, for from it one obtained an enchanting view of rolling pasture-land, wooded hollows, winding trails, and a silver thread of a river, with majestic hills in the background.

Eric and Gloria rode down to the promenade after luncheon on the day following the dance, and they tethered their horses to a tree and sat facing the scenery. But it was not of the scenery that they talked.

"Why go on like this?" asked Eric plaintively. "You know your father will never give his consent."

"I do know," said Gloria, "but what can we do?"

"Why not elope?"

A voice behind them made them jump. "I'm sorry, folks, I didn't know you were here."

It was Ken, and he was lying, for he had sighted them from the top of the hill and had deliberately ridden down it.

"Do you always travel up and down this lovely boulevard?" demanded Gloria angrily as she sprang to her feet.

"No, miss," replied Ken, dropping lightly from Tarzan's broad back and producing a spanner from his pocket, "but that fence needed fixin', and I thought I might just as well do it now."

He indicated the wire fence, supported by posts, which divided the lower part of the hill from the promenade.

"Don't let us keep you," said Gloria.

"I won't," said Ken, and he walked over to a post and proceeded to tighten one of the wires.

He was far too near for Eric to continue to talk about an elopement, and Gloria looked indignantly round at him.

"Oh, and while you're at it," she said, as one speaking to a servant, "fix that broken stirrup on my saddle so I can ride back."

Ken turned in her direction with an irritating grin.

"Seeing as how I distinctly remember you said you could take care of yourself any time or any place," he drawled, "I guess you'll be able to take care of a little detail like that."

Gloria clenched her fists.

"How I'd love to hit him!" she said between her teeth.

"I know what I'd like to do!" snorted Eric.

"Did you say something, mister?" inquired Ken.

Eric knew better than to speak; but Gloria spoke.

"I still believe I can take care of myself in any situation, Mr. Cowboy!" she cried; and with that she ran over to the white horse, put a foot into a stirrup, and hoisted herself into the saddle. "Go on, boy!"

Tarzan set off uphill, obediently enough.

"Hi, come back here!" shouted Ken; but Gloria urged the purloined steed to greater effort.

Ken could have stopped him instantly

with a curious whistle, but instead he ran over to one of the horses under the tree, unfastened it, mounted it, and set off in pursuit. Eric, with less dexterity, released and mounted the other horse and followed.

At the top of the hill a sandy road curved towards the ranch-house between fields, dipped down amongst some rocks, and rose again to wind upon the flat into the drive near the gateway. Gloria, on Tarzan, flew along the road, but Ken cut across the grass on a brown horse with a broken stirrup, shot down behind the rocks, and induced his mount to take a rail fence in its stride at the top of the rise.

He reached the roadway close behind Gloria, and in full view of a number of guests on the terrace of the ranch-house caught up with her and whisked her clean out of the saddle on to his knees.

Mrs. Hanley, who had run out from the house with her husband to see what all the excitement was about, gasped at that exhibition of horsemanship; but something even more spectacular was to come. Ken dumped Gloria on the saddle between his knees and hurled himself off the brown horse on to Tarzan, who was running alongside fully expecting his master to perform that trick of the old-time pony-express riders.

"Did you see that?" cried Colonel Austin, who had a very high opinion of his foreman.

"Oh boy, what a rider!" exclaimed a male guest.

"My daughter!" shrieked Mrs. Hanley.

Side by side the two horses reached the drive and the entrance to the stable-yard. Gloria would have ridden on to the steps of the terrace, but Ken caught hold of her bridle.

"Now just a minute, young lady," he rapped, and stopping both horses, dismounted, and pulled her down beside him.

"You know your horse is not a bit like you!" she said angrily. "He doesn't seem to object at all if somebody rides him! And please remember, Mr. Prac-

tical Joker, that I don't allow cow-punchers to man-handle me!"

"You had no right stealin' my horse and ridin' him off the way you did," Ken retorted.

"Huh!" she snapped finger and thumb in his face.

Down the steps from the terrace flocked the guests, and out from the stable-yard streamed members of the outfit.

"Colonel Austin," said Mrs. Hanley wrathfully, "I demand this man's apology and his immediate dismissal!"

The colonel drew a long breath.

"I'm sorry, Ken," he said with a wink which only his foreman saw, "but you'll have to go for a while."

"From what I saw of this thing," declared Henry Hanley with some heat, "it's my daughter who owes the apology!"

His wife glared at him.

"Surely, Colonel Austin," she burst out, "you wouldn't let anyone influence you in this matter?"

"Well, frankly, Mrs. Hanley, I'd be awfully sorry to lose Ken," was the reply.

"I distinctly heard you dismiss him a moment ago—or was that merely for my benefit?"

Ken smiled reassuringly at her.

"Don't worry, lady," he said cheerfully, "the colonel's dismissal goes. I'm off the pay-roll." He reached into a pocket of his red shirt and fished out a roll of notes. "I think I'll stick around, though, for a while," he went on, "as a guest."

He peeled off a twenty-dollar note.

"This'll pay my way for a few days," he said, enjoying the utter discomfiture of Mrs. Hanley. "Well, take it, colonel—or ain't I good enough to be a guest?"

The colonel nodded and took the note, and Ken was thrusting the roll back into his pocket when Eric Simpson rode up, dismounted awkwardly, and stalked furiously towards him.

"You'll answer to me for this!" he shouted.

"Suits me all right," drawled Ken.

"I guess there ain't any objections to guests fighting among one another. I figured it'd take you too long to become a cowboy, so I decided to become a guest."

Eric was flabbergasted. He wanted to show off in front of Gloria and the others, and he had thought it would be easy enough to put a hired man in his place; but this talk of being a guest and of guests fighting was not at all to his liking.

"It's easy enough to be insulting when you're carrying two guns on your hips!" he sneered.

"Oh, I'll take care o' that all right." Ken unfastened his belt and let it fall upon the turf. "Got any more excuses, hombre?"

"Well, I—I'm not in the habit of fighting in front of ladies."

"Just what I thought!" quoth Mr. Hanley, in a particularly loud and scornful voice. "Yellow clean through!"

"I'll make you take that back!" howled Eric, swinging round on him; but Ken jerked him back again.

"Your fight's with me, mister," he said grimly.

"Take your hands off me!"

Ken dropped the gloved hand that was on his shoulder, but tapped him on the nose with the other. Gloria caught hold of Ken's arm, trying to pull him away, and Eric saw what he thought was his opportunity and struck out with both fists.

Empty air was all that he hit, however. Gloria staggered back against her father as Ken's arm was suddenly wrenched from her grip, and Eric Simpson sprawled on the grass with a pain between his eyes.

He scrambled up, boiling with rage, and he hurled himself at Ken; but a thump in the mouth that jarred several teeth and made his lips bleed taught him caution. He began to spar defensively, waiting for an opening that never presented itself.

Ken played with him, even accepted occasional punches to encourage him to his undoing, and Colonel Austin and



Slowly and painfully Eric Simpson raised himself on one arm, and feebly he extended the other in token of surrender.

Henry Hanley watched with undisguised delight while Mrs. Hanley shuddered and Betty Johns bit her lip. Gloria was not at all sure, in her heart, which of the two contestants she really favoured, but she shouted encouragement to Eric.

The battle swayed from the edge of the lawn to a tree against the trunk of which the back of Eric's head thudded. He lost his hat in a literal sense and his head in a figurative one. With a bellow such as some wild animal might make, he rushed at Ken, and one lucky blow that caught the cowboy in the neck spun him sideways; but a left hook caught the fortune-hunter under the jaw, and a straight right that followed it knocked him flat and dazed upon the lawn a full five yards away from the tree.

Ken stood waiting for him to rise and renew the combat, but there was no fight left in him. Slowly and painfully he raised himself on one arm and feebly he extended the other in token of surrender.

"I wish you'd never brought me here!" fumed Mrs. Hanley, but her husband paid no attention whatever to her outburst.

"Just what he needed, Ken!" he cried jubilantly.

Ken walked off across the grass: Gloria ran, to her vanquished suitor, who rose unsteadily to his feet and held his aching jaw.

"Gloria," he said hoarsely, "let's get away from here and ride over to Fairville for the rest of the afternoon."

"All right," she nodded. "Let's go and get some fresh horses."

Betty Johns retreated sulkily to the ranch-house, and the other guests drifted away in quest of fresh diversion.

Gloria Changes Her Mind

UNDER some trees on the far side of the lawn Ken sat on a bench, stretched his long legs, and rubbed that portion of his neck which had come into violent contact with Eric Simpson's fist. Henry Hanley found him there, and sat down beside him.

"I really don't know how all this business started," said the millionaire, "but I suspect my daughter had a hand in it. I'd like to make up, in a measure, for what she's causing you to lose."

He took his wallet from his coat-pocket and a whole sheaf of notes from the wallet; but Ken would not accept the notes.

"Money ain't never goin' to make up for your girl's actions," he said quietly. "Fact is, it's your money that's spoiled her—that and her good looks."

"You're right," Hanley agreed with a grimace, "but what can I do?"

"There ain't much you can do yourself, I guess," said Ken, "but that girl needs taming!"

"Well, if you can tame her," said Hanley, folding the notes and putting them away, "it would suit me fine for you to do it."

Some little time later Ken entered the stable-yard to get Tarzan, who had been put away in his stall, and was astonished to be greeted with mocking bows on the part of half a dozen cowboys there assembled.

"How d'you do, Mr. Baxter?" inquired Slim, the ringleader, with a flourish of his hat.

"What's the idea?" demanded Ken.

"Well," Slim replied, "the idea is that we've got orders to treat all the guests with the utmost respect, and you're a guest, ain't you, sir?"

"Sure, I'm a guest." Ken drew himself erect and motioned to them all to bow again, which they did. "But I wouldn't trust one of you mavericks as a guide, or let you cinch a saddle on any horse I was ridin'!"

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He dropped his pose.

"Listen, boys," he confided, "I'm gonna get on my pony and breeze out of here before one o' those dudes ropes me into a bridge game or a cup o' tea! So long!"

He sauntered past them and round a long hitching-rail to the stall Tarzan occupied, and he opened the door of the stall.

"Come on, old man," he called. "We're going places. Come on!"

Tarzan emerged with promptitude, and Ken was re-saddling him when a cowboy named Luke Wilton entered the yard and walked over to him.

"Hi, Ken," he said, "just a minute! I wanta pay you back that five bucks I owe you. Here, take it out of this twenty."

Ken completed the saddling process and stared at the twenty-dollar note in Luke's hand.

"Where'd you get all that money?" he asked. "Stick up a bank?"

"Easier'n that," laughed the cowboy. "That there Mr. Simpson give it to me—and just for showin' him the trail to Fairville!"

Ken's brows came down and his grey eyes narrowed.

"What did he want to go there for?" he inquired.

"You can search me," returned Luke with a guffaw, "but he was mighty anxious to learn if there was a minister there."

"Did he go alone?"

"No, siree! That there Hanley girl's with him. Hi, whassa matter?"

Ken had mounted Tarzan in haste and was galloping out from the yard without any apparent desire to collect the five dollars that were owing to him.

"Hi, what's the hurry?" bellowed Luke; but Ken did not even look back.

Out from the yard he flew, and out from the drive into the roadway, where he turned in the direction of the railway station at Sandy Fork, because the town of Fairville was situated in a valley a good ten miles beyond it.

The station was passed before he caught sight of Eric Simpson and Gloria, riding side by side under over-arching trees. They were moving at a leisurely pace, and the pounding of Tarzan's hoofs reached the alert ears of the fortune-hunter, who had been fearing all the time that they might be followed.

To provide for that contingency he had borrowed a rifle from Luke Wilton, on the pretext that he might get a chance to shoot some rabbits, and abruptly he stopped his horse, grabbed up the rifle, and slewed round in the saddle.

"What's the matter?" cried Gloria, as he raised the rifle to his shoulder and took aim.

"It's Ken Baxter!" he snarled. "He'll never butt in on me again!"

With a sweep of her arm Gloria knocked the rifle aside even as he pulled the trigger, so that a bullet whizzed harmlessly into a tree several yards away from Ken, who had ducked low in the saddle.

Eric gave one scared glance at him as he straightened up and spurred forward, then galloped off as fast as he could induce his mount to go.

"Eric!" shouted Gloria.

But Eric paid no attention whatever to her, concerned only for the safety of his own skin, and Ken caught up with her, swept an arm round her waist, and lifted her off her own horse on to his right knee without the slightest slackening of speed.

"Eric, help me!" she screamed.

"Eric, help me!"

Eric looked back, but rode on.

"Well," said Ken cheerfully, "he don't seem to be too anxious to rescue you, miss!"

"I guess father was right, after all," she lamented.

Heavy clouds had come up across the sky against the wind. The sun vanished behind the clouds, and a sudden flash of lightning caused Gloria to fling an arm round Ken's neck and caused her own horse to belt. Tarzan merely quivered.

"Whoa! Whoa there!" shouted Ken; but the riderless horse was streaking for home, and Tarzan could not possibly equal its speed with a double burden on his back.

"Now we're in for it!" growled Ken as thunder echoed and re-echoed among the hills. "Only one horse between us, and a bad storm about to break!"

"Take me back to the ranch at once," shivered Gloria; but Ken shot off in a different direction altogether.

"I'm taking you up to a line shack in Creek Canyon," he informed her.

"You wouldn't dare!" she cried.

But Ken did dare, and he held on his course, which led downhill, away from the road and between walls of rock.

"We've got no time to make the ranch," he informed her. "It's the nearest shelter. I'm afraid we're in for a soakin', the way it is. Come on, boy, come on!"

The air became ominously still and the darkness of night enveloped them, split every few minutes by vivid lightning. Thunder rattled and banged, and down came a deluge of rain. They were practically wet through by the time they reached a cabin set against the cliff-like wall of a narrow canyon.

Right up to the door of the cabin Ken rode, and set Gloria down on its stoop.

"There you are, miss," he said, dismounting beside her and opening the door. "I'll have a fire goin' in just a minute. Tarzan, stable up in the lean-to."

Tarzan trotted away, evidently quite familiar with the premises, and Ken followed Gloria into darkness and slammed the door. Rain lashed against the windows of a big room, very roughly furnished, and a peal of thunder crashed—as it seemed—right over the roof.

Ken lit a lamp that stood on a table, took off his cow-hat and shook it, then dropped it on a wooden chair and went over to a fireplace. There was brushwood on the hearth and there were logs beside the hearth. He made a fire which soon was blazing up the chimney.

Gloria looked disconsolately about her. She was very wet, but she liked her new surroundings not at all. There were a few chairs in the room and a couple of stools, but there was no comfort anywhere. A cupboard stood against one of the board walls, and there was a door in another wall. On the mantelpiece stood a storm-lantern and a bottle with a bit of candle in its neck. There was not a scrap of carpet on the floor.

Ken looked round from the fireplace at her discontented face.

"Better come over here and absorb some of this heat," he suggested.

"I'm not staying!" she snapped. "Take me back to the ranch immediately!"

Thunder made conversation impossible for half a minute or so, then Ken stated definitely:

"I'm not taking you back to the ranch during this storm. You'd better make yourself comfortable."

"You don't seem to realise what you're doing!"

"I know what I'm doing, all right."

he assured her, and turned away from the fire to unfasten his belt and drop it on the table. "I'm not taking you back to the ranch till this rain stops. In the meanwhile I'm right anxious to find out what kind of a cook you are."

He walked across the room to the cupboard and opened it to take out a basin and a box of eggs, and immediately she pounced on the belt, snatched out the two guns, and swept over to him.

"Perhaps these will persuade you to take me back!" she cried.

Ken grinned at her. She was holding the guns in a very businesslike fashion, but they were heavy .45's, and they looked too big for her little fists.

"You'll be havin' a lot o' work to do around here," he said quite calmly, "so put 'em down afore your hands get too tired."

"You seem to forget," she bit back at him, "that I'm giving the orders from now on!"

An outburst of celestial artillery made her jump, and Ken's grin broadened.

"You can't give orders with them, miss," he said. "They're not loaded."

With a very crestfallen expression on her face she surrendered the guns to him as he held out his hands for them.

"Thanks," he drawled, and thrust one into his pocket and opened the other to take out and display one of six very live cartridges. "Sorry to have tricked you, Miss Hanley, but if you're goin' to act like that I guess I'd better put 'em back on!"

She watched him with furious eyes as he put the cartridge back in its chamber, restored the belt to his person and the two long-barrelled .45's to their holsters. The storm raged, but he knew quite well that it was not as yet at its height.

"In the meantime," said he, "if you're still bent on going, that door ain't locked."

"A night alone in the storm would be a pleasure, compared to a night here with you!" she retorted, and darted over to the door.

Ken watched with amusement while she opened the door and went out and slammed it violently behind her.

A terrific flash of lightning nearly blinded her on the stoop, and the rain was heavier than ever. Thunder seemed to rend the very firmament, and, scared nearly out of her wits, she dived back into the cabin and leaned, half-crying, against the door she was glad to use as a shield against the elements.

"Back so soon?" mocked Ken.

"There was a rattlesnake out there," she faltered.

"First time I ever knew rattlesnakes liked wet weather!"

"That's it," she whimpered, "gloat over my helplessness."

"Helplessness?" echoed Ken. "I still remember you told me you could take care of yourself."

"If—if you'll cover up the windows"—she shuddered after another blaze of lightning had been followed by a bombardment of thunder—"I'll try to help with the food."

"That's the spirit," approved Ken. "Sure I will."

He fixed some sacking over the window-panes, and at least most of the lightning was shut out.

"Now is that better?" he asked when he had completed his task.

She nodded, appeared to be grateful. "I don't think I've had very much practice with cooking," she confessed, "but—"

"Aw, it's never too late to learn," he cut in. "Come on! Here, take these!"



Ken turned and blinked at her, the coffee-pot in one hand, the cup in the other. "What're you gonna do now, you little fool?" he challenged.

He handed her the basin and the box of eggs, but she asked helplessly what she was to do with them.

"We'll stir up some old-fashioned flap-jacks," he replied. "Come over to the table with 'em—I'll show you."

Unwelcome Visitors

ERIC SIMPSON rode back to the ranch-house through the storm because there was no longer any point in going on to Fairville, and he had seen Ken ride off with Gloria in quite a different direction.

He left the horse in the drive, scuttled up the steps to the terrace, and burst into the hall to the accompaniment of a deafening clap of thunder.

Some of the colonel's guests were congregated there, others ran out from various rooms and gathered round him as he halted at the foot of the stairs, dripping water. They had expected Gloria to be with him, and they plied him with questions.

Mrs. Hanley nearly fainted when she heard the story he had to tell—a story from which he omitted all reference to the rifle he had used. Mr. Hanley seemed strangely calm, but then, he had had a long conversation with Ken and placed implicit trust in that young man. Eric swung round on Colonel Austin.

"Why don't you and your men go and rescue Miss Hanley?" he cried. "There's no telling what the crazy cowboy will do with her!"

"You should have thought of that," returned the colonel sternly, "before you ever let Ken take her from you!"

"What could I do?" howled Eric. "He had his gun pointed straight at me!"

"If I loved a girl," said Henry Hanley witheringly, "I'd rather die than let some other man take her from me."

Eric Simpson appeared to be too

upset to realise that he had played a very sorry part in the affair, even according to his own version of it.

"But why don't you do something?" he bawled.

"There's nothing we can do till the storm lets up," declared the colonel.

Mrs. Hanley tottered away to a chesterfield and sank down on it with her hands over her ears as the crack of thunder that had driven Gloria back into the cabin echoed and re-echoed among the hills. Eric drew Mr. Hanley aside.

"Why don't you offer a large reward?" he suggested. "Perhaps that would serve to get them started."

"That's a good idea, Eric," approved Hanley, "but to tell you the truth, I'm unable to do it. You see, unfortunately, I'm broke."

"Broke?" Eric stared at him aghast.

"Yes, but of course, that won't make any difference to you. Now you're a wealthy man, and you want to make Gloria your wife. Why don't you offer the reward—say, five thousand dollars?"

"Y—yes," stammered Eric, "I—I believe I will. But excuse me a moment though, will you? I simply must change out of these wet things."

"Wait a minute!" Hanley caught hold of his arm as he was making for the stairs. "Announce the reward first." He raised his voice. "Listen, folks, Mr. Simpson wants to offer a reward!"

There was no escape from it, so Eric, avoiding the indignant eyes of Betty Johns, called out:

"Yes! I offer five thousand dollars for the return of Miss Hanley, safe and sound, and the capture of her abductor, dead or alive!"

Mrs. Hanley heard that, in spite of the hands that covered her ears, and as Eric ascended the stairs she flitted over to Colonel Austin.

"Oh, that dear boy!" she cried. "I knew he'd do what he could to save her!"

"Five thousand is a heap of money," returned the colonel gruffly, "but it won't stop this storm. We'll still have to wait, reward or no reward."

Henry Hanley smiled to himself and drifted off into the drawing-room; the guests argued amongst themselves as to the wisdom, or otherwise, of the decision. Betty Johns waited in the background for a while, then climbed the stairs.

On the floor above she opened a door without knocking and looked into a bed-room where Eric Simpson was conveying shirts and collars from the drawers of a dressing-table to a suitcase he had opened upon a bed. She entered the room.

"What's the big idea?" she asked stormily.

Eric made a face at her. "Hanley's just told me he's broke," he said, "and in order to save my face I had to promise that reward for Gloria's return. Now I'm beating it before someone calls my bluff."

"But you're not going without me," she challenged. "What about the storm?"

"Never mind the storm," he growled. "Beat it and pack—and make it snappy! We've got to get out of here!"

All through the night the storm raged with unabated fury, and the rain was streaming down when two wet and thoroughly unhappy people boarded a train for San Francisco which the stationmaster at Sandy Fork had been prevailed upon to stop for them. But Gloria, after a preliminary period of restlessness, slept quite soundly upon a very hard bed in the inner room of the cabin in Crook Canyon, behind a bolted door, and Ken—who was used to hard-lying—slept equally well upon the boards of the outer room with only the sacking from the windows to cover him.

Gloria, initiated into some of the mysteries of cooking over-night, made more flap-jacks for breakfast—Ken prepared the coffee. The line shack seemed to possess everything one really needed in the way of food, though it was mostly in tins and bottles, and not the sort of fare to which Gloria was accustomed.

Ken's flap-jack was badly burned and he pushed his plate away after he had eaten very little of it. Gloria, who had hardly touched her own, sprang up indignantly.

"I suppose you don't like my cooking?" she cried.

"It's nothing to brag about," said Ken. "Maybe you can do better washing the dishes."

She had never washed dishes in her life, and she had no intention of starting to do so that very dark and very wet morning. She snatched up cups and saucers and plates, one after another, and hurled them to the floor, while Ken sat grinning at her.

"That for your old dishes!" she cried as the floor became littered with broken crockery and her temper rose. "Now nobody will have to wash them!"

"There's some more over there," said Ken, with a jerk of his thumb, "and more still in the cupboard. Break 'em all, if you want to—I'm used to eatin' out of a pan. Don't know how it'll appeal to your jaded appetite, though."

She flounced over to the fireplace, where logs were blazing, and stood there with her hand on the mantelpiece and her chin in her hand. Ken rose up with his own cup and saucer—which she had not dared to destroy—and went to a stove on which a metal coffee-pot was standing.

He picked up the coffee-pot, and with it was about to refill the cup when she streaked up behind him and whipped his two guns from his belt.

"Maybe these will shake your calm!" she cried.

He turned and blinked at her, the coffee-pot in one hand, the cup in the other.

"What're you gonna do now, you little fool?" he challenged.

For answer, she flung the guns into the heart of the blazing logs, and with a cry of dismay he ran to the fireplace, caught up a poker, and kuckt to rake them out upon the hearth.

"I hope nothin' ever happens to make you regret this," he said grimly. "Next to a horse, a man's best friend is his gun in this country."

Gloria, ashamed of the damage she had wrought, but not in the least degree prepared to admit it, vanished into the bed-room and slammed the door. Ken looked down at the guns he had retrieved, but knew that they were too hot to handle and probably were ruined. He got to his feet and blew out the bit of candle in the bottle on the mantelpiece.

Dawn had broken several hours before, but it was still as dark as night outside the cabin, and rain was lashing against the window-panes. He walked over to the table and turned down the flame of the lamp because it was smoking.

A sudden banging on the front door startled him, and he went hurriedly to the door of the bed-room.

"Miss Gloria," he said uneasily, opening it a few inches so that he need not shout, "there's someone knocking. You'd better stay there till I come for you. No tellin' who it might be."

Gloria was sulkily silent, but he hoped she would do as he had suggested, and he closed the door and went and opened the front one.

Three men stepped in over the threshold; one of them a brown-haired feisty two inches taller than himself, clean-shaven, and curiously ugly, wearing a tweed jacket and striped trousers which were sodden; behind him came a lanky ruffian with a squint, and a little man scrubby with chin. They were all wearing guns.

"I hope you will pardon us, friend," said the leader in a soft and rather educated voice, "but the storm forced us to look for shelter."

A pleasant smile accompanied the words, but Ken offered no welcome.

"Where are you headed for?" he asked gruffly.

"Gorgo Pass," was the reply. "I was afraid we couldn't make it in this kind of weather."



The left hand of the outlaw was thrust against Ken's cheek and jaw, forcing his head sideways, and a clenched fist was drawn back to strike.

"Fairville lies just this side of the Green Horn," said Ken. "The mountain'll shelter you the whole way from here."

"Unfortunately, I've reasons for wishing to avoid Fairville. I hope our little stay won't inconvenience you?"

"All right," said Ken. "I—I only hesitated because—well, you see, my wife—she's a bit—er—demented."

"You have my sympathy, sir."

"Sometimes she has a notion I ain't her husband," Ken went on more glibly.

"Wants to be rescued from me, and things like that. If you just won't pay any attention to her."

"You can depend on me."

"Thanks," Ken was considerably relieved. "You see, my wife's liable to go into tantrums most any time. I hope you'll overlook it if she stays in her room. I don't want to embarrass you with her—er—her nervousness. Well, get out of your wet slickers and warm up there by the fire, won't you? I'll look in on the missus and see if she's all right."

The three gathered round the fire and Ken went to the door of the bedroom. He would have rapped on it with his knuckles, but the unwelcome visitors were watching him, so he raised the latch and walked straight in.

Gloria was lying on the bed in her riding clothes, and he gathered from the expression on her face as he went over to her that she had just deposited herself there after listening to the conversation.

"I'm sorry I couldn't knock," he said. "I'm sorry I had to lie about you. But that smooth-spoken hombre out there is Ed la Crosse. I recognised him from his high-falutin' lingo. He's the most feared outlaw in the West. Whatever you do—"

"What is this," broke in Gloria scornfully, "another one of your tricks?"

"No," he replied in a very serious voice, "and I wouldn't be worried now, if you hadn't ruined my guns. As it is we've gotta be careful, for there's no tellin' what he may do. Understand?"

Gloria sat up and eyed him with suspicion, despite his earnestness.

"Are you certain it isn't someone come to rescue me?" she asked.

"For whatever I've done I'm sorry," he said, "but whatever you do, stay here."

The Way of an Outlaw

BY the fireplace in the other room Ed la Crosse had stooped and picked up the two .45s. left on the hearth; but they were back in their former position when Ken emerged from the bedroom.

"I hope your wife's feeling better," said the outlaw solicitously.

"She is, thanks," returned Ken. "By the way, we're none too flush on grub, but I'll do the best I can for you."

"That's kind of you," said La Crosse. "We could stand some sort of a meal."

Gloria had deserted the bed for the door. She opened it a bare inch and listened, while Ken mixed more batter in a basin and poured some of it into a frying-pan over the stove.

"This isn't goin' to be very much," he said, "but it'll be better than my wife could do."

Gloria heard and was filled with indignation. She took a little note-book from a pocket of her riding-breeches and a pencil from the back of it, and on one of the sheets she wrote a note which she tore out and folded.

Ken was stooping over the frying-pan, cooking a second flap-jack, when she peeped round the edge of the door, and his bent back was towards her. She thrust out a hand with the note prominently displayed in it.

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"Coming along pretty good," announced Ken. "Won't be so many minutes now."

"It smells very enticing, my friend," said La Crosse, and then his lanky henchman noticed the hand at the door and drew the outlaw's attention to it with his eyes.

La Crosse, who was on his feet, backed slowly towards the hand and secured the note. He opened it out and read it, then strolled back to the fireplace, took out a cigarette, and twisted the tiny sheet of paper into a spill which he lit at the flames.

Ken carried the two flap-jacks over to the table on a metal plate.

"Sorry we're short of crocks," he remarked, and pointed significantly to the fragments on the floor. "Bit o' trouble before you arrived."

La Crosse and his companions proceeded to demolish the food.

"We'll be leaving as soon as the storm lets up," said La Crosse, and Ken went to one of the windows. The clouds had

broken, and here and there were patches of blue sky. Rain was dripping from the eaves, but there was no longer any deluge.

"Looks like it's stopped now," he said. "About rained out, I guess!" He opened the window. "Yeah, the storm is over!"

"For us, yes," said La Crosse and sprang up with a six-shooter in his hand. "For you it is just beginning! Kindly raise your hands!"

Ken turned from the window and stared as though he could not believe his eyes.

"What's the idea?" he exclaimed.

"Get 'em up there high!" rasped the outlaw; and then, as Ken's hands were raised above his head, reverted to his customary mode of speech. "The idea's a very chivalrous one, my dear sir. We're about to rescue a lady in distress!"

Ken made a sudden rush at him, risking a bullet, but the two henchmen pounced, and his arms were locked in theirs.

"Violence, my dear fellow," drawled La Crosse, "must always be discouraged. Tie him up tightly, comrades!"

He reached down a larfat from a nail in the wall and tossed it to the two men who had forced Ken into a sitting position on the floor, then went to the bedroom and tapped on it.

Gloria walked out and smiled at him as he bowed.

"Permit me, lovely lady," he said, "your rescuer."

"Thank you," Gloria tossed her head at Ken, who was being bound hand and foot. "Looks as though I can play a practical joke just as well as you can!" she cried.

"Gloria," said Ken hoarsely, "you're playing right into their hands! That's La Crosse! He's wanted for murder, and worse!"

"Ah, my friend," jeered the outlaw, "so you know me, eh?" He smiled reassuringly at Gloria. "It seems rather ungentlemanly," he said to her, "to contradict a man who is temporarily helpless, but I'm afraid he's subject to hallucinations, Miss Hanley."

"Such as being my husband, for instance!" said she.

La Crosse put on his hat because his men had finished their labours and the sun was shining.

"We may as well get started," he said. "Rusty, will you get the horses, please?"

The lanky fellow with the squint eyes, thus addressed, went out from the cabin.

"Come, Miss Hanley," said La Crosse; but Gloria looked down at Ken with an unexpected feeling of compassion for him in his plight.

"Aren't we taking him?" she asked.

"Well, that would be very inconvenient, I think," returned the outlaw.

"You see, we have only sufficient horses for ourselves—our three and the white one we found in the lean-to."

"Don't go with them, Gloria," pleaded Ken. "You don't realise what you're doing!"

"I'm afraid the young lady has already made up her mind," purred La Crosse.

"I don't think we should leave him that way," protested Gloria.

"Oh, there's nothing to fear. It will be for but a very short time he will remain like this."

"Well," said Gloria doubtfully, "if you're certain he'll be perfectly safe—"

"Oh, absolutely!" Ed la Crosse turned to the scrubby-faced little man.

"Batt, will you see that the gentleman is made comfortable? Miss Hanley, the horses are at the door and your parents must be frantic."

Gloria went out with La Crosse, who helped her into the saddle of a black horse and himself mounted Tarzan. Batt

made Ken "comfortable" by sending him flat on his back with a kick in the chest and went off grinning.

The door was slammed and the sound of hoofs died away across the canyon. Ken struggled with his bonds, but his hands were fastened behind his back and the rope would not give.

From where he lay he could see the lamp on the table, still alight. Slowly, and with much effort, he managed to roll over and over upon the floor till he was near enough to the table to heave a shoulder against one of its legs.

The table tilted, and finally went over with a crash; the glass container of the lamp was smashed and a pool of oil from it caught fire. It had been Ken's intention to sever the rope about his wrists in the flame of the lamp, but the blazing pool defied him to roll near it.

The table began to burn, and Ken watched it helplessly till it became a flaming mass and the heat caused him to wriggle and twist towards the door away from it. The boards of the floor became involved in the conflagration; the room was filled with smoke and fire.

Ed la Crosse, with Gloria and his two henchmen, had crossed the canyon and started to climb a trail that zigzagged upwards amongst outcroppings of rock at the foot of Green Horn Mountain; but Tarzan, who bore his rider placidly enough at first, began to sense that something was wrong because his master had not appeared.

Abruptly he started rearing and plunging, and La Crosse could not control him, despite good horsemanship.

"What's the matter?" bellowed the outlaw, jerking viciously at the bridle. "Hold still!"

But Tarzan would not hold still. Like some bucking bronco, but far more artfully, he rose up on his hind legs, dived down on his forelegs and kicked his heels in the air, only to rear up again with incredible swiftness. La Crosse was flung out of the saddle and scrambled to his feet to see the white horse flying towards the canyon.

"Shall I go after him, boss?" asked Rusty.

"No, never mind," growled the outlaw. "I'll ride double with Miss Hanley."

He mounted the black horse behind Gloria, who was beginning to have serious misgivings, but did not dare to give expression to them, and the uphill journey was continued.

Tarzan raced back to the cabin in the canyon to see flame and smoke belching from its heat-broken windows. He struck at the door with a hoof and whinnied loudly.

"Tarzan!" cried Ken from the other side of the door, gasping for breath. "Come on, boy, break it down! Tarzan!"

Tarzan stood up on his hind legs and beat at the door till the latch gave way. Acid smoke belled out at him as the door flew wide, but he did not hesitate. He heard his master's voice, and that voice mattered to him more than any other sound in the world.

"Here, Tarzan, here!" called Ken chokingly. "Here, pick it up!"

Into the raging inferno clattered the white horse, and with his teeth he caught hold of the rope that fettered Ken and dragged him out over the step and the steep into the sunlight.

Ken filled his lungs with clean air. "Untie me, boy!" he said. "Drag it, boy! That's the stuff!"

Tarzan applied his teeth to the rope that held Ken's wrists, and in a very little while the wrists were free.

"Good work, old man!" approved Ken, and he fished out a clasp-knife and cut through the rest of his bonds, then

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got to his feet and climbed into the saddle. "Come on, old boy, we gotta trail 'em!"

Saved!

THE moment the storm had abated, Colonel Austin had gathered the members of his outfit together in the stable-yard, and all his horses were got ready for an organised search-party.

Those of the male guests who cared to take part in it were with him, but the ladies were left behind. Henry Hanley decided to ride with the owner of the ranch, who consulted Luke Wilton.

"What about the line shack?" suggested the colonel.

"That's just about where Ken would have headed for," agreed the cowpuncher.

"All right." The colonel mounted his horse. "Have some of the boys go that way with these gentlemen. I'll light off with the rest in the direction of Gorgo Pass, in case he went for one of those caves up there. Get 'em started, Luke!"

Luke rode out from the yard with three of the hands and eight or nine excited guests. Five cowboys and Henry Hanley remained, on horseback, with the colonel.

"Let's ride," said he; and while the first party screamed off along the road that led past Sandy Fork, he led the way down past the hillside promenade towards Green Horn and the pass that ran through the foothills of that mountain.

Gloria, at a bend in the zigzag trail that led up to that pass, looked back over the valley far below. She was in strange territory, and she did not recognise any of her surroundings.

"Aren't we going the wrong way?" she asked nervously.

"There are two roads," replied the man who shared the saddle with her.

"Are you sure?"

La Crosse did not reply to that question. He and his companions had stopped to let their horses take breath, and the sound of another horse climbing the trail had reached his ears.

"Say, there's somebody coming!" he exclaimed. "You two ride back and find out who it is. Miss Hanley and I will continue up the pass."

Rusty and Batt turned their horses and went down past a shoulder of rock which hid them from the oncoming rider.

At a second bend below, Batt and Rusty rode in amongst some boulders of limestone and looked down. They saw Ken rounding a sharp turn on the white horse that had run away, and Rusty took aim at him with a six-shooter and fired twice.

Ken fell from his saddle, and Tarzan stopped short.

"Let's go get his horse," suggested Batt as their victim lay motionless in the dust.

"You go," said Rusty, and put away his gun. "I'll take the news to the boss."

"All right." Batt rode down to Tarzan and dismounted; but Ken was only shamming. He had not even been grazed by either bullet, and as the scrub-faced little ruffian tried to grab hold of a horse that eluded him, he scrambled to his feet and rushed at him.

Down went Batt with two hands at his throat and the weight of Ken's body on top of him, then his gun was taken from its holster and the butt of it was brought down with a thud upon his head.

Ken left the fellow to recover from that blow at leisure, pocketed the gun, and went off on Tarzan. Rusty, meanwhile, had caught up with La Crosse.

"Did you discover who was following us?" inquired the outlaw.

"There ain't nobody following us now, boss," responded the lanky one significantly.

"Good!" La Crosse looked back because he heard more hoof-beats. "Who's that?"

"That's only Batt," said Rusty.

They rode on; but presently La Crosse looked back again, and this time he glimpsed a rider on a white horse climbing the corkscrew trail.

"I thought you said that was Batt!" he exploded. "Go on back, and this time don't miss him!"

Rusty turned his horse and drew his six-shooter. He reached a corner and there once more dismounted amongst rocks and waited. Ken came within range and the six-shooter barked; but the aim was not true. A bullet sang past Ken's left ear, and before another could be fired he was too low in the saddle to present much of a target, and the gun he had taken from Batt was out and ready.

Tarzan swept upwards and Rusty exposed himself to shoot again. Two guns set erect in the saddle again, for his would-be murderer had fallen on his face with his arms outflung.

Colonel Austin and his party were by this time among the foothills.

"Shots!" exclaimed the colonel. "Up Gorgo Pass way! Come on, boys!"

Ken passed the spot where Rusty had fallen, urging Tarzan to greater effort; but the noise of fire-arms had dismayed La Crosse, and he stopped his horse by a narrow opening among the boulders on his right, slid to the ground, and pulled Gloria from the saddle.

"Where are you taking me?" she cried as he bundled her into the opening.

"Up those rocks!" he snapped.

"No!" she shrieked, and tried to break away from him.

"You do as I say!" He thrust her before him. "Come on! Get up there! Come on!"

She tried to dodge past him, but the way was too narrow for that. He gripped her by the shoulder in a fashion that bruised her flesh, and she was compelled to clamber up the steep cleft.

Ken reached the opening, saw the black horse standing beside it and looked up. At the same moment Gloria looked down.

"Ken!" she screamed. "Ken!"

Ken was out of the saddle in an instant and climbing the rocky way. But La Crosse swung round, holding Gloria in front of him as a shield, and fired over her shoulder at the pursuer.

Ken dived behind a rock and fired back, but he was too afraid of hitting the girl to hit the outlaw, who disappeared with his captive between more rocks and climbed again.

From behind another and higher mass of limestone La Crosse used his gun again, but Ken had plenty of cover and used it without staying his upward progress. Again and again La Crosse fired at him from various vantage points till both his guns were empty. Just above, now, was a great flat bluff which, on its farther side, overhung Gorgo Pass, and he made for that bluff.

Ken, among the litter of rocks, saw him move aside from Gloria without letting go of her arm, and he took a step forward to fire. But he caught his right foot in a crevice and stumbled. His right hand struck against a rock

(Continued on page 26)

A gang of crooks are smuggling Chinamen into the United States via the Mexican Border and a detective on the Immigration Department sets out to get the man behind the smugglers. Starring Regis Toomey and Esther Ralston



"SHADOWS OF THE ORIENT"



Silenced

"CALLING X-26—calling X-26—
X-26—calling X-26—calling X-26—"

A swarthy, thin-lipped man sat before a wireless set and droned out the call, whilst a short, thick-set man with the face of a pugilist sucked nervously at a cigarette.

"Go on calling!" snapped out the latter. "They're after him, Rod."

Rod, the operator, went on calling, and then there came a buzz.

"That's Dawson, Spud."

The ex-pugilist went to the microphone.

"Watch out, Flash," he said. "Patrol 'plane scouting. Try to land and save the load."

An aeroplane was flying high over the sea, and Flash Dawson, after receiving the warning from Spud Nolan, leaned over the side of the 'plane to glance downwards. He could see no sign of any machine below. His glasses showed no sign of a patrol ahead, but when he looked back his eyes narrowed—that was that speck that glittered in a fleecy cloud?

Flash revved up his engine, and after a while took another covert glance along the fuselage and saw that the 'plane was closer. Out came the glasses, and Flash knew that an immigration 'plane was tailing him. If he were caught with this load it meant at least five years behind bars. He looked at the lever by his side and hesitated. Another glance back showed that the patrol 'plane was gaining rapidly. He dived for a bank of clouds, and, when safely

hidden, he gripped the lever and pulled it slowly back.

A trap-door in the under-carriage opened. Flash Dawson shuddered, and quickly closed the trap-door.

The patrol 'plane forced Dawson to land, and, after an examination, the pilot was allowed to proceed on his way over the Mexican border into the United States. He landed at the Borderville Air Port and took a car into the prosperous town of Portland. He left the car in a main thoroughfare, and, glancing round to see if he were followed, made his way to the foreign quarter.

The shop window of Chin Shieu was full of Oriental treasures and antiques, but Dawson did not enter by the main doorway; he knocked three times at a side entrance, a shutter flew back, and then the door was opened.

In a room full of ancient carpets, Ming vases, cases of jewellery, Chinese suits of armour and other treasures, were two men. The sleek Oriental in the dark European clothes was Chin Shieu. The man in the perfect dinner jacket was James Moss, collector. He was engrossed in the examination of a jade necklace when a panel slid back and Flash Dawson was shown into the room by two Chinese servants.

"Hi, Chin," greeted Flash, "you got some dough for me?"

Chin Shieu jumped up from his chair by the large mahogany table.

"I have bad report from you?" His face was contorted with savage anger.

Flash shook his bullet head and showed his teeth in a nervous grin.

"Sorry, Chin, but there was no chance for me to land that load, and I wasn't going to let them catch me with it."

"And you expect me to pay you for murdering my countrymen?"

"Say, what is this? You mean I don't get my dough?"

"Not a cent!" sneered the Chinaman.

"All right, then, you get another flyer," shouted Flash Dawson. "But I'm not through."

The panelling closed and Dawson had gone. James Moss had all this while paid no attention to the conversation—he was too engrossed, so it seemed, in the necklace. The panel moved again and a half-caste Chinaman slid into the room. He received an order in Chinese to follow Flash Dawson and find out where he went—to act accordingly.

Flash left the antique shop and entered a small all-night restaurant next door, where there was a telephone. He inserted a coin and dialed a number.

Inspector Sullivan had been in the service of the Immigration Department for many years, and he was very angry when the telephone by his bedside rang at two in the morning. He grabbed the 'phone.

"Hallo! Hallo! Yes, yes, this is Inspector Sullivan. What the devil do you want at this hour of the morning?"

"If you'll come down to Chinatown," came a husky voice at the other end.

"I'll show you how to get that whole smuggling ring."

Sullivan was awake at once.

"What's that? Who's speaking?"

"Never mind who it is—this is the
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goods. If you'll rush down to the Canton House I'll lead you to the chief of that ring."

"Yes, all right," snapped out Sullivan. "Where'll I meet you? Hallo—hallo—hallo—hallo!" The 'phone was dead. At last the inspector got the operator. "Trace that call. Get me Market 44—quick!"

It seemed hours before a voice spoke. "This is Sullivan," he bellowed. "Get the raid squad to the Canton House. I'll meet you there."

Flash Dawson had not finished his conversation because the half-caste had fired through the window of the telephone booth. The tongue of Flash Dawson had been silenced!

The Raid

CHIN SHIEU was a bland and cunning rascal. His antiques and curios were just a blind to prevent people knowing the real nature of his business. At the back of his shop were a number of elaborately appointed rooms that were devoted to gambling for moderate and high stakes. There were rooms where the man of the street could buy his chips and have a modest gamble, and there were rooms where a person could lose a thousand dollars in a few seconds.

In this room that night were gathered a motley throng. Wealthy foreigners, Chinese merchants and a sprinkling of American Society folk. Viola Avery was there—a pretty but a very wilful young woman. She was the only daughter of a very sedate judge, and, having lost her mother when quite young, had been allowed to do much as she liked ever since. The judge had had to lay down the law recently, as some of her exploits were more than his patience could stand—the notoriety did not do him very much good. Though petted and spoiled, Viola was quite a nice girl at heart.

Viola had heard about the gambling-rooms behind Chin Shieu's antique shop, and had insisted that Oscar, one of her many young admirers, should escort her there. Oscar, poor lad, knew that, if he said "No," then he would be right out of favour and some other fellow would get the chance. But there are limits to a man's patience. They had arrived just before eleven in a party, and now everyone wanted to go home with the exception of Viola.

Viola was enjoying the thrill of gambling because it was one of the things that would have made the judge lose most of his few remaining hairs. Also she had been winning about five hundred hucks and now she was down two hundred. She was staying till she got that back.

"Vi, for the last time, will you go home with us now?"

The judge's stubborn daughter smiled. "No!"

So Oscar and his friends bado her good-night and good luck. She got her two hundred huck and should have gone home, but gambling is hard to leave. Her luck might be in, and she wanted a new car. Her allowance was all gone; here was her great chance.

At that precise moment Hong Chow, who had shot down Flash Dawson, was whispering to his august master that he "Think flyer 'phone inspectors; think police come quick." Chin Shieu at once gave orders that the Chinese sheltering under his roof be told to get out before the police arrived.

Viola had just lost the two hundred and had decided on doubling her stakes when a Chinaman shuffled up to the dealer and whispered in his ear. At May 23rd, 1936.

once things began to happen. Money and counters vanished, the table became an innocent affair with a cloth and a bowl of flowers. The girl wondered what was amiss; she did not like the way people were hurrying from the room and why there was so much whispering. A door opened and a number of dirty-looking Chinese rushed in and hurried across the room, to disappear through some curtains. A feeling of panic gripped her, and then she gasped—faintly she heard the sound of a police siren.

It was a raid!

All the Chinese had gone by the time the police arrived. They had special orders on how to get out of the place quickly and where to hide in cases of emergency. But the public did not know the quick ways out of Chin Shieu's gambling dive, and they got in each other's way. They began to pour out into the street as the police jumped from their cars.

"Get back—get back, everybody get back! Let no one get away!" bellowed old Sullivan. "Everybody back inside. Oh, would you?" This to a man who had tried to slip past—that same man was a hospital case.

Viola tried to get through the crowd, but some of Sullivan's men stopped her. The old inspector twisted his lined face into a ferocious scowl.

"Where do you think you're going, young lady?"

"Take your hands off me!" Viola said indignantly to the police officers.

"You're staying here with the rest of them."

"But I'm Viola Avery." The girl was distressed. "If my father learns I've been here in this raid, I'll be in an awful jam."

"You're in an awful jam now," sneered the inspector.

From a curtained recess James Moss watched the little scene. He had been waiting a chance to get away without being caught, and now he saw a perfect way of achieving that end.

Sullivan's eyes narrowed suspiciously as the elegantly attired Moss appeared out of the shadows. The inspector gripped the girl's arm and placed a restraining hand on the newcomer.

"I beg your pardon, inspector," drawled Moss, "but this young lady is Viola Avery."

"Did I say she wasn't?"

"But you don't understand," Moss spoke patiently. "She's Judge Avery's daughter."

Sullivan was startled.

"Federal Judge Avery?"

"None other."

"Why didn't she say so in the first place?" The inspector signalled his men to stand back. "How was I to know?"

"Miss Avery came here to see Chin Shieu's antiques, and I had the honour to be her escort." He gave a warning pressure to her arm, which he had taken. "Then it will be all right if we proceed, inspector?" Sullivan rubbed his chin as if uncertain, and then signalled that they could pass. "Thank you, inspector. I shall remind the judge of your kindness."

Sullivan watched them walk away arm-in-arm, and he rubbed his chin harder still. He had a kind of feeling that a bluff had been put over, and that made him mad. His irritation was further increased when they found no sign of any smuggled Chinese. There were a number of Chinamen there, but these all had signed permits. He tried to bully Chin Shieu.

"Where have you got these Chinamen hidden?"

"No understand, Honourable Inspector," bleated Chin Shieu.

A detective came up and nudged the inspector. "They got those Chinks away in a truck."

"Somebody tipped them the works," Sullivan rasped. "I told you a man 'phoned me. See any sign of him?"

"Yeah!" The detective gave a grim smile. "We found him outside the 'phono booth in the restaurant two doors up the street—stone dead. They shot the squealer. Of course, the Chink that runs that cats don't know a thing."

"I'll check up on them," muttered the discomfited Sullivan. "We'll hold all this bunch for investigation. Maybe some of them can tell us something."

But Inspector Sullivan went back to bed having learnt precisely nothing.

The Knight-errant

ON leaving the premises of Chin Shieu, Moss hailed a taxi and held open the door for Viola Avery to enter. He told the driver to make for Main Street.

"I thought it best to get out of there before that inspector changed his mind," laughed Moss, as he sat down beside her. "You can give the address as soon as we get back to civilisation."

"Thank you, Sir Walter Raleigh!" Viola stared admiringly at the handsome stranger. "You certainly saved me from the morning papers' mud."

"The pleasure was all mine!" Moss smiled back gallantly and courteously. "Tell me, what were you doing in Chinatown at this hour of the morning?"

"Watching little buttons move from one pile to another."

He whistled softly.

"Fan-tan, eh?"

"Yes. Were you at it, too?"

He shook his head.

"Oh, heavens, no! I was searching for some unusual curio. I like to go to those sort of places when I'm not likely to be disturbed." He laughed. "This time I got a disturbing I didn't expect."

"So you collect curios—how strange!" Viola was fascinated by this mysterious person.

"It's a disease with me." He shrugged his shoulders and took out a gold case. "Cigarette?" She accepted it, and he flicked a lighter. "I must confess that Orientals have a peculiar irresistible fascination for me."

"You arouse my curiosity."

"I, or my collection?" he asked, with a mocking grin.

"Your collection, of course!" laughed Viola.

"I was afraid of that." He leaned back. "Well, anyway, I'd be delighted to have you see my collection. By the way, I'm having a cocktail party tomorrow evening—just a few people. Won't you come?" He saw that she was hesitating. "Why don't you bring your father? I'd be honoured to meet him. I shall be terribly disappointed if you don't come. I've got some treasures in my collection that have amazing stories attached to them, jewels that I think you'd like, and some marvellous paintings."

"Now I understand why you were able to sway that inspector so easily." Her smile was tantalising. "You are very persuasive."

Moss gave a sigh of content.

"Then you will come?" And he smiled when she nodded. For a second it seemed to the girl that this man's eyes had narrowed, and that there was a touch of the Oriental about him.

Superseded

CAPTAIN GRAVES, one of the chiefs of the Immigration Department, sent for Sullivan and stared at him disapprovingly.

"You haven't been very successful in this case, Sullivan."

Sullivan gave his chief a quick glance, then looked at the wall.

"Well, chief, things kinda ran badly last night. You see—"

"I know all about last night," interrupted Graves. "No need to go through all that again. I'm not censuring your failure, but we must break up that ring and stop this smuggling of Chinamen. I believe your methods are antiquated, and I'm going to try out one of the younger school. Sullivan, you will turn your case over to Baxter and become his partner."

"I'm to be under Baxter?" gasped the inspector. "Why, he's only a kid! I've been in the service twenty-four years now, and—"

"That's just what's the matter with you. I believe you'll learn something from Baxter's methods." The captain pressed a bell. "Where you've failed he may succeed."

A spruce, upright, smiling young man entered the room.

"You called me, sir?"

"Yes, come in, Baxter," Graves nodded. "I'm switching Sullivan to you—work together. Study this case and see what you can do. Better get busy."

Old Sullivan was in a very surly frame of mind as he left the chief's room and went into the outer office. He glowered at the younger man.

"I don't know what this department's coming to. If it wasn't that I'd be eligible for a pension next year I'd resign right now."

Baxter smiled in a friendly though jubilant manner. "Don't take it so hard, Sullivan," he said. "You and I should make a good team. Come on, let's get down to it. Take a chair and let's talk this case over." He stared at some notes he had made. "Did you question Miss Avery?"

"Well—er—no."
"How do you know it was Miss Avery? Anybody else could have used her name."

"I know my business, young man!" Sullivan exclaimed angrily. "I can tell when anybody's trying to hoodlum me. Besides, I got her purse." He produced a sequin bag. "It is obviously her bag. We found it at Canton House after she'd gone."

"That still doesn't prove it was Miss Avery," coolly stated Baxter. "Anyone could have found or stolen Miss Avery's bag, and used it. There are master minds behind this racket, Sullivan, and they're up to all the tricks. I'll ring the lady." He looked at a card taken from the bag and dialed a number.

It chanced that Viola was having breakfast with her father, and was looking nervously at the account of the raid. If her name got into the affair her allowance would be stopped and her father might send her into a convent or do something equally drastic. The butler appeared with a portable telephone. An inspector from the immigration office was on the 'phone. She saw her father peer over the top of his paper.

"Yes, this is Viola Avery. What, I—in a raid! Of course not, how preposterous! You have my purse? I've had one stolen. That must explain how you found it. You'd like me to identify it? Very well, I'll come round."

Viola Avery saw her father lay down his paper, wipe his spectacles, and push back his chair. She knew she was going to be questioned. She fled before he had the chance to say a word.

In the immigration office young Baxter looked at the older man.

"There you are, Sullivan. The real Viola Avery knows nothing about it.

People who use fictitious names are the sort that play a big part in this smuggling. There was a man with the woman and you did not ask his name. No wonder old Gravey was a trifle riled with you. He reckoned you did right to let Judge Avery's daughter get away, but he'll be sore when he finds it was some other dame."

They were still discussing the case when one of the staff entered and informed them that Miss Avery was outside.

"She's been quick," grinned Baxter. "Okay, show her in."

Sullivan jumped to his feet. "Why, that's the girl—she's the one that was in the raid."

"Take a seat, Miss Avery," Baxter rose and offered her a chair. "You've come after this purse?"

"Yes!" The beautiful young woman stared at him anxiously.

"Why did you lie to me over the 'phone?"

"Well, you see, I had to. At the time it would have been unpleasant to tell the truth." She smiled. "I was having breakfast with my father—the judge. She studied a tiny wrist-watch. "I must be getting back. I hadn't properly finished my breakfast."

"Have you a car?" questioned Baxter.

"No, why?" She opened her eyes in surprise at his question.

"Then I shall drive you home." He gave a twisted grin. "I wouldn't think of depriving you of your breakfast, but there are things I must learn, and we can talk on the way."

"How pleasant!" Viola was haughty. "A sort of inquisition."

"Call it that if you wish." Baxter took his hat from a peg and turned to his new assistant. "Sullivan, you go down to the morgue and see what you can find on that body. I'll meet you there."

Sullivan saw Baxter open the door of

the office and saw the two young people leave.

"What a way to conduct an inquiry," he sneered. "If it wasn't for that pension I would resign."

Baxter conducted the judge's daughter to a serviceable, high-powered two-seater car. They drove for some distance in silence.

"When are you starting this third degree?" the girl frowned at him. "What are you waiting for?"

"Just thinking what I should ask you." He gave her a very imperious, casual look. "You lied because of your father?"

"Yes, if father finds out he'll have about seventeen fits," she answered. "Especially if he finds out I was down there alone."

"Alone?"

"That man wasn't my escort, just a chance acquaintance."

"Tell me about him—I'm interested."

"This man was a perfect gentleman. Her look was significant. "Which is more than can be said of some people."

"Because you're a judge's daughter you think I should let you have your purse, aid and abet in keeping the fact that you were foolish to go to a gambling hell from the Press and your father, and not dare to force my obnoxious presence upon you." He smiled sarcastically.

"I'm sorry, but I have my duty to perform. Also this person may have been a perfect gentleman, but gentleman can be criminals."

"Not this one. Ever hear of a curio collector committing crimes? Why, they're always the victims."

"What does this gentleman collect?"

"He possesses one of the most valuable collections of Oriental curios in the States. This afternoon at the cocktail hour I shall be privileged to gaze upon the one and only imperial robe of the Ming dynasty. I suppose a man who owns such treasures would naturally be a criminal."



The inspector gripped the girl's arm and placed a restraining hand on the newcomer.

"Improbable, but not impossible. His name and address?"

"I didn't like to ask him."

Baxter did not speak for some minutes.

"Judge Avery is a very astute man. I presume that my telephone call may have been overheard by him. Might he not put two and two together?"

"Yes, and make five. I've got to think of something to tell him when I get back."

"I tell you what I'll do," Baxter beamed at her. "I'll come in with you and say you were out with me last night, or I can fix some excuse for that bag being in the Canton House. In return you take me along to this cocktail party, and we'll see your escort's collection."

"I'll not have you snooping around a gentleman's home. Besides, I'm quite capable of telling father a tale."

"I bet you are." He turned off in a wide thoroughfare. "Very nearly home, Miss Avery. So you don't know his name and address, but you know where this cocktail party is being held. Where is it being held?"

"Why, Sherlock Holmes, you find out."

"I will—I'll meet you there." Neatly he brought the car to the kerb, and opened the door.

"If you try to shadow me I'll get my father—" she began.

"Your father will have seventeen fits if you do." He raised his hat and got back into his car. "I'll see you at the party. Good-bye!" With a derisive grin he drove away and left the girl staring after the car.

Clues

BAXTER drove straight to the mortuary, where he found Sullivan looking disgustedly at some blood-stained attire.

"Not a thing," Sullivan told his new chief. "No chance of identification. They were taking no chances."

"We must learn this man's identity."

"We might put the corpse through a third degree and see if he'll talk to us," sneered Sullivan. "He wouldn't even whisper to me."

"Maybe you didn't use the right kind of language," Baxter was looking at the clothing. "You missed this for a start. See that pin-point design that's shaped like a pair of wings? Doesn't it speak to you?"

"Either I'm stone deaf, or it's talking awfully low."

Baxter held up a garment.

"Hey, smell that. Doesn't that tell you anything?"

"Not a thing," Sullivan answered. "And you're not kidding me that it means a thing to you."

"I'm trying to prove that dead men do tell tales," Baxter was very patient. "That pin-point shows that a pair of wings was sewed on these overalls. This man must have been an aviator. But these wings being removed show that at one time the man was permanently grounded, but the oil spots and the smell of this jacket show that he's been working at his trade recently."

"Wait a minute. Why couldn't this flyer have been an automobile driver?"

"Did you ever see a car-driver leave marks like this?" Baxter pointed. "See that line inside his knees? That's from gripping a stick when occasionally he has to use his hands for something else. See these gloves—one practically new, and the other much used? Motor-drivers use both hands, but flyers use only one. This guy was left-handed."

"Sounds pretty good," Sullivan had to admit. "But it don't tell you his name."

"That's what you're going to find out," Baxter chuckled. "Take a picture May 23rd, 1936."

of the stiff, and check it with all permanently grounded flyers. You should be able to identify him that way. I'll meet you at the office later."

"Hey, where you going?"

"To a cocktail party."

"Cocktail party!" growled Sullivan, when he was alone. "And he leaves me to do all the work."

It was a surprise to Viola Avery to arrive at the cocktail party to find among the distinguished guests a Mr. Keeler—in other words, Mr. Tony Baxter of the Immigration Department. Moss had to talk to his guests so that Baxter had a moment alone with the girl.

"I am a maniac on Oriental lore," he explained with a grin. "I came especially to see a Ming robe. Most collectors are terribly vain. All I had to do was to call and contend he had a fake robe. He instantly invited me over to gloat over my discomfiture. As regards the address—you spoke it to a taxi-driver on leaving your house. It was 'phoned to me at once. I arranged for your taxi to be delayed a few minutes, and now you know how I'm here."

"He will find out you are a fraud."

Baxter shook his head and pointed to a figure.

"This little Buddha was smuggled from a Lasha monastery probably at the cost of hundreds of lives. Artistically it is priceless, actually it is worth about fifteen thousand dollars. You see, Miss Avery, it's part of my job to be well-versed." His gaze was admiring. "Say, did anybody ever tell you how lovely you are?"

"Am I supposed to be flattered by that remark?"

"Why, you should be insulted!" The bold young man seemed quite at his ease. "How about dinner one night?"

A slow, tantalising smile showed for a moment.

"I might—it all depends to the answer to one question: Do you still suspect the gentleman?"

"Well, even a curio collector might have a dual personality. You have heard of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde?"

"Yes, you remind me of him," sweetly murmured the girl, and walked away as she saw Moss coming towards them.

But Baxter was not ruffled. Without actually saying so he made it quite clear to James Moss that he knew Judge Avery's daughter quite well, and the girl was not the sort to betray him, though her eyes did their best to wither him with scorn. That failing, she did her best to flirt with Moss.

Viola Avery had her own machine and a pilot's licence, but her father had locked up her 'plane because she would loop the loop and take daring risks. She had had over three hundred hours' solo, and she was dying to fly again, and when she heard that James Moss had a 'plane she begged him to let her fly it. Moss smiled and said he valued his friendship with Viola Avery too much to risk losing it by incurring the judge's wrath. He might be barred from calling. When Viola left so did Baxter.

"You're a very silly girl if you don't stay clear of Mr. Moss, his home and his 'planes. It's my honest opinion that—"

"Did I ask for your opinion?"

"A little wisdom wouldn't harm you." He hailed a taxi and held the door open. "Don't be alarmed; I'm not inflicting myself on you any more—for the moment." He bowed, and then had the impertinence to wink.

Baxter then went back to the Immigration Department, where he found Sullivan waiting for him. The old inspector was strutting about like a peacock.

"I've been looking over that corpse

and I got his name. It was easy for me. His name's James Dawson, better known as Flash. Permanently grounded for taking up a 'plane while grounded. I got an address, but a year old."

Down they went to Baxter's car and out to the address. A year since Dawson had been there, but they found where he had gone. So from address to address went the two men until they came to the cheap lodgings where Flash had resided prior to his death. They turned his rooms upside-down, but they found nothing that gave them any assistance among letters and personal belongings, but there was a paragraph in a paper marked in blue pencil that interested Baxter.

"Aviator wanted," he read out. "Must be young, healthy, fearless, ready to take a chance. Good pay. Box 264, 'Morning Record.'" He folded the paper. "That's fine."

"What's fine?" demanded Sullivan.

"Why, you big Lummo, don't you see the connection?" Baxter sighed.

"No, I'll have to tell you. Fearless, ready to take a chance hints at a racket. Now listen if my deduction isn't correct. Dawson 'phoned you to tip you off about the smuggling. How could he have known who the chief was unless he was working with him? Isn't it natural to suppose he got this job by answering this advertisement?"

"Why should Dawson want to turn informer?"

"Don't know. Might have been a million reasons, none of which concerns us, though I'll wager dough and revenge play their part. The thing we're interested in is catching that gang."

From his pocket he drew out that day's paper, and turned to the advertisement page.

"Look at this. The day after Dawson is killed, the same advert reappears in the paper. Do you call that a coincidence?"

"What do you call it?"

"A lucky break for us," chortled Baxter. "I'm going to answer that advert and see what happens."

Into the Lion's Den

THE next morning saw Sullivan and Baxter down by the river quarter of the town. They left their car in a side street and proceeded on foot till they came to a number of warehouses, factories and store yards. They halted close to an old shed, and Sullivan peered cautiously round the corner.

"Well, that's the place."

"Better keep this for me," Baxter was wearing blue overalls, had not shaved and looked rather dirty. "I guess this outfit will pass me by these mugs. I may need a little time. It's hard to tell what might happen."

Sullivan shivered.

"You'd better let me go along with you."

"They know you as well as you know them," grinned Baxter. "They don't know me."

Inside a shed sat a number of men—Spud Nolan's gang. Spud himself was there, and the gang were watching him because he had been reading from a letter.

"Tricky Thomas?" Spud glanced round. "Anybody know him?"

A number of them had heard the name but never remembered actually coming in contact with him. Three raps on the door caused each man to slip a hand to his pocket. The latch clicked, and Tony Baxter stepped into the shed.

"What do you want?" Nolan demanded menacingly.

"I guess you're the man I want to see—about that letter," Baxter indicated the letter in Nolan's hand.

"Whateha talking about, fellow?" snarled the suspicious Nolan.

"That's all right, buddy," Baxter gave a knowing grin. "You don't have to put on any act for me. I'm Tricky Thomas, the guy that wrote it."

"How'd you get here?"

"I followed that dumb cluck you sent over to the newspaper office to fetch the letter. A fool way to get a flyer if you ask me. Suppose some dick had smelt that advert and had come poking around?"

"I guess we can look after anyone who wants to poke his nose into our business," Nolan leered unpleasantly.

"I guess you're right," Baxter said as he glanced at the tough characters sprawling around the room. "What about that job? Is it still open?"

"Yes, that is, if you're Tricky Thomas of the McDown bunch."

"Here's my old pilot's licence and some junk to prove I'm Tricky Thomas," Baxter produced a number of papers from his pocket. "Now what's the racket, and how much do I get?"

"Chinamen. You get two-fifty dollars a load."

"Two fifty?" cried Baxter. "What is this—charity work?"

"The last flyer dropped his load and we had to cut the prices."

"I'm not dropping anything, and I'll tell you what I'll do. Three hundred dollars and I'll play ball."

Nolan hesitated for only a moment.

"All right, that's a deal, but get this, Tricky, no cargo no dough."

"Okay, I'll take it. All right, when and where?"

"I'll tell you when after I have checked up on you," Nolan handed back the papers. "One of the boys goes over the Border with you and you land the load at our field in Mercer Canyon." He went to a 'phone and dialed a number. "Spud talking. What 'plane you got ready? Is X-26 ready?"

"Sure!" came the answer of the mechanic in charge of the 'planes that were housed in an old factory. "You got a flyer?"

"Yeah, we got a flyer," spoke Nolan. "Tricky Thomas. You know him?"

Baxter covertly watched Nolan's face. "I thought that whole McDown outfit went up for a stretch," the mechanic replied. "Better make sure you ain't got a 'phoney, Spud!"

Baxter saw that quick look that Spud Nolan gave him before concluding his call.

"What'd you say if I told you Tricky's up the river?" Nolan had whipped out a gun, and so had all the others.

"I'd say you were cracked," Baxter looked contemptuous and sneering. "I'm not up the river because I skipped bail. That's why I need ready dough and a hideout. Say, do I look like a sucker? Would I be fool enough to stick my neck in here if I wasn't right?"

Spud put away his gun and rubbed his cheek. He was uncertain. One of the gang spoke:

"What'll we do about him, Spud?"

"I don't know. We need a flyer awful bad. I'll 'phone Steve again." He got through to the mechanic. "Spud speaking again. This guy swears he's Tricky Thomas and that he skipped bail. Do you know anybody who could identify Tricky Thomas of the McDown gang? You do? Then get him and bring him over here." He hung up. "Sorry, Tricky, but I can't take a chance. Rod, you and Tiger take him downstairs and hold him till Steve shows up with this other guy. I'll go over and see what the chief wants me to do."

There was no alternative for Baxter but to obey, and with a resigned shrug of his shoulders he made no protest when

two of the gang indicated a wooden staircase down into the basement. But he knew he was in a tight corner.

Impetuous Viola is Tricked

JAMES MOSS, garbed in a silk mandarin's cloak, was reclining on a divan when a servant announced that Spud Nolan wished to see him.

"I had to come, Chief. I'm in a jam."

"I told you that you must keep away from me," Moss sat up angrily. "It is dangerous for us to be seen together."

"No one knows of this hide-out of yours by the river," answered Nolan. "Beside, Chief, I had to see you. I can't get a flyer, and there's that load over the Border."

"Has no one answered the advertisement?"

"Yeah, one did, but he may be a phoney. I got to wait for a check-up on him. I got him across the way with the boys. Says he's Tricky Thomas, but I ain't taking chances—got a pal of Steve's coming across. If this guy ain't Thomas then I'm done, and the boys are grumbling because they ain't had any dough."

"We must collect that load," decided Moss, "and time's pressing." He buried his face in his hands, and when he looked up there was a smile on the bold, reckless face. "I've got a hunch that may work." He turned to the 'phone and dialed a number. "Oh, hallo, Miss Avery! This is James Moss. I'm terribly sorry, but I'm afraid I'll

be unable to keep my engagement to-day. I've been called away on some urgent business at my ranch, so urgent, in fact, that I must fly there at once."

"Fly to your ranch?" Viola's voice was shrill with excitement. "Oh, how thrilling! Say, why couldn't I go along?"

"I'm sorry, Miss Avery, but under the circumstances I'm afraid you can't. I might be unavoidably detained, then you'd be forced to fly the ship back alone."

"But that would be glorious! Oh, do be an angel, and let me come. Please!"

"All right, I can't refuse you. But not a word to a soul, understand?" Moss grinned across at Nolan as he spoke. "I wouldn't want your father to be angry with me about you. How soon could you be ready to leave? You can leave at once—that's fine. I'll come right over." He listened for a bit, then, with a curt "Good-bye," hung up.

"I've got a flyer, Spud," Moss announced. "I'll go down and let this flyer come back alone. Her father's a judge, so we're in clover. Best get going, Spud. Have a truck down at the field ready for a pick-up."

Old Sullivan had seen Nolan depart and he saw the man hurry back. The inspector noticed that a man lounged round the entrance to the building—evidently a watcher. How had young Baxter fared in that den of crooks?

Nolan went into the basement, and Baxter sighed with relief to see it was the gang-leader. If it had been Steve



It was lucky for the inspector that the three gangsters did not look up.

May 23rd, 1936,

and the other man the position would have been desperate.

"I want you two to stick around here till they show up," ordered Nolan. "I'm taking the other boys with me. We're landing a load pretty soon, and I got to go."

"I thought you said you didn't have another flyer?" Baxter asked.

"The Chief just got another one," Nolan answered, then looked significantly at the two guards. "Red outside will watch for Steve. If the mug he brings along fails to identify this guy, let him have it. You know what to do with the body."

Sullivan was wondering what he should do when he saw three of the gang emerge, and it was a rude shock to realise they were coming in his direction. Desperately he glanced round for some place to hide. If he ran he might make a getaway, but that would make it awkward for Baxter. A telegraph-pole attracted his attention—it had steps fixed in the wood for line operators to use when making repairs. The inspector clambered up the pole.

Nolan and two of his gang passed close to the pole, and luckily for Sullivan never looked up.

"If that guy ain't Tricky Thomas, he's in a tough spot," muttered one of the gang as they passed.

"Suffering cats!" gurgled Sullivan when they were out of hearing. "I gotta get that young pup outta this jam." He climbed down the pole. "Maybe I should wait a while longer." He took up his old position.

In the Nick of Time

TONY BAXTER smoked a cigarette and eyed his two guardians warily.

So far he had had no chance to make a break for it. His bluff had been called, and if he wanted to see another day he had to get out of this place before Steve showed up.

The Tiger went upstairs to get some cigarettes and that gave Tony his chance. Rod was half asleep in his chair with the gun held limply in his hand. A dive forward and the gun was wrenched away, a full-bodied punch to the jaw and Rod went flat on his back. The Tiger heard the fall and then his pard's yell.

Tony got to cover behind a packing-case. The Tiger sought refuge behind an iron furnace. The guns roared and bullets whined dangerously close. Rod on the floor sat up, and his evil face became suffused with rage as he felt his aching jaw. He looked round and saw a heavy balk of timber; he crawled to it, then crawled towards the crate behind which Baxter was hiding.

Meanwhile, Sullivan had seen four men approaching, and one he recognised. Even he could guess the reason of these men being here—to identify Tricky Thomas. Sullivan made a bee-line for the nearest call-box.

"I just saw Steve Garlow go in with some of his tough mugs," he reported to the captain. "I'm not going to wait any longer."

"Right, Sullivan," came the voice of Graves. "I'll send men down there right away. They're standing by—with you in five minutes."

Tony Baxter was peering round the crate to get a chance at the gunman when the balk of timber crashed down on his head.

"Don't shoot, Tiger, I got him!" yelled Rod. "Guess I'm going to give it to him now."

The ferocious, scarred rascal that was the Tiger came out of hiding.

"Wait a minute, Rod," he cautioned. "We know this ain't Tricky Thomas, or he wouldn't have pulled this, but May 23rd, 1930.

you ain't running this show. Spud Nolan gave us orders. We'll tie this mug up and wait for Steve to get here."

"All right," Rod agreed reluctantly. "Throw me that rope."

They dragged the limp body of Baxter from behind the crate and bound him to a chair. A pail of water caused the young man to open his eyes. He found himself staring into two cruel, leering faces.

"I'm going upstairs to look for Steve," Tiger stated. "Think you can handle him?"

"Yeah, I'll take care of him," snarled Rod. "If he as much as moves an eyelid I'll blow his brains out."

Tiger went upstairs and had not been there more than a few minutes when there came a rap at the door. Red entered, Steve and two other men close at his heels.

"Here's Steve," said Red. "Better take 'em down below." He went out, closing the door behind him, and resumed his job as watcher.

Steve Garlow went down into the cellar, and the two gangsters went with him. They turned the lights so that a good view could be had of Baxter's face. The man who had been called to do the check-up whispered in Steve Garlow's ear. That rascal grinned unpleasantly.

"Boys, my buddy here says that if this is Tricky Thomas, then he's King Kong."

"A phoney, huh?" The Tiger's expression was fiendish. "Keep your eye on him, Rod, whilst I see the boys outa here."

A number of plain-clothes men were peering round a building as the door opened and out came Steve Garlow and his two gangsters.

Then Sullivan gave the signal, and four plain-clothes men rushed forward. "Get their guns, and get the whole bunch round to the cars," Sullivan ordered. "One move from you, Red, and I'll drill you. Stand away from that door."

Sullivan and two of his men rushed into the building. They saw the cellar and the stairs. The detective walked to the bottom.

"This place is surrounded," he shouted. "No one has a chance to make a get-away, and unless you're crazy, any mug here should ditch any fire-arms and hold his hands high."

Rod turned his evil gaze on Baxter, but even that callous rascal hesitated. If he killed this police spy it would mean the chair, because he hadn't a chance of shooting his way to safety. He flung his gun on the table.

Sullivan whipped out a knife and severed Baxter's bonds.

Baxter smiled at the older man. "Thanks a lot. Guess I'd better listen to some of your ideas after this."

"Never mind about that," Sullivan shook his head. "All in the day's work. What did you find out?"

"Listen, they've got a 'plane, number X-26," Baxter was himself again. "It's due in with a load right now."

"Where?"

"Mercer Canyon," was the answer. "They've got a ground crew there for the pick-up. Now you rush over there with the men. I'll take off in my 'plane and cruise around in case somebody warns them and they try to skip it."

The Hostage

MOSS drove round in a magnificent car and picked up Viola Avery.

He was full of compliments and attentions. They drove out to a flying field, which he explained belonged to a private company in which he was in

terested. A large machine was ready. Moss was himself a skilled pilot, but to the girl he pretended to know very little about flying. He never dreamt of soiling his own hands by flying Chinamen into the States.

After an uneventful flight Moss indicated some buildings below and told the girl that this was his ranch. Viola had expected to find something more important than a number of shacks. She made a perfect landing.

"Well, here we are," cried Moss, as he helped her to alight. "Not much of a ranch, but it serves my purpose."

From the ranch-house came a big, broad-shouldered, weather-tanned man. His open shirt and wide sombrero seemed so typical to Viola. She was not surprised to learn that Mr. Lufkin was the ranch foreman.

"Now, will you please excuse me," Moss said after some general conversation about cattle and crops. "I have some business to attend to. Lufkin, I will turn Miss Avery over to you. I suggest that Chang, our Chinese cook, brew you a pot of tea. I shan't be very long."

Quite unsuspecting, Viola allowed Lufkin to conduct her to the ranch-house and a comfortable room, where a sleek, young Chinaman bowed to her and assured her that he was famous for his tea. The foreman talked for some while of life on the open range.

Viola would have been surprised if she had followed Moss. The rogue went to one of the sheds, knocked twice and an elderly Chinaman appeared and gave a slight bow.

"Where's my letter for this load?" "One moment. Before I give letter for you take Chinamen, you must leave hostage with me."

"I don't understand, Yung Yau." "Hostage to insure my countrymen," the Chinaman explained. "Last time they die."

Moss tried to laugh. "You don't need a hostage with me. This load will go through without any accident. I might fly it through myself. Will that satisfy you?"

Yung Yau shook his head. "No hostage—no Chinamen."

The smuggler thought for a moment. "All right, I'll leave you a hostage. How about the young lady who came with me?"

Yung Yau nodded quickly. "Lady all right, make good hostage."

A letter was produced and it was inscribed with a number of quaint characters and sentences. Solemnly it was torn in half, and one half was handed to Moss. Then a group of Chinamen hurried from the hut towards the machine. There was a closed cabin behind the passenger cockpit—Viola had not noticed it.

Viola got rather tired of discussing ranch-life, and Lufkin said he would go out to see how Mr. Moss was getting on. The girl had her tea and time passed. She went across to the window, but trees hid the machine from view.

"I guess I'd better go," she told the Chinese cook. "Someone has started her up for me, though the machine doesn't need a warm up. I guess Mr. Moss is ready to leave."

"You no go," said the Chinaman. "You our hostage."

"Hostage?" Her eyes opened wide in surprise. "What do you mean?"

"I mean you stay here. If Chinamen die, you no go home."

A cold fear gripped Viola. She remembered Baxter's warning. The young Chinaman was smiling at her in a most sinister manner. She knew well

(Continued on page 28)

The grey-haired, irascible old veteran of San Francisco's dockland comes out of retirement to save the business he has passed over to his son-in-law. A stirring comedy-drama, starring Robert McWade and Ray Walker



"CAPPY RICKS RETURNS"

A Long-distance Call

IN the brand-new office of the Ricks Lumber Company, Incorporated, two harassed gentlemen were studying an act of the legislature just in from the printers. One, a tight-lipped, oldish man with toothbrush moustache under his thin nose, was glaring at the other, a largish, younger man with a clean-shaven, much-worried face.

"If we ring him up at the farm, he'll come snorting back here by the next express—full of cuss-words for both of us!"

"Don't I know it!" muttered the much-worried one. "But he's got to be told." He tapped the official paper. "If it gets the Governor's signature, it's the law—and red shingles for roofs are things of the past!"

"And the Ricks Lumber Company can shut up shop, Peasley!"

"You've said it, Skinner."

For a long minute they continued to glare at each other. Then Skinner, bristling his moustache with vexation, stated the thought in both their minds.

"He'll say it's our fault!"

Clean-shaven Peasley nodded. "But how were we to know that Blake was behind the bill—Ossy Blake and his snide lawyer Winton?"

"They've certainly rung it on you, Matt Peasley."

"On me?" Peasley flushed up. "And on you, Tom Skinner!"

"You're his son-in-law—and you ought to have been looking!"

Peasley grabbed up the telephone.

"I've got it!" he cried, settling down at the desk. "I'll ring up the farm and ask Florry how she's getting along. Cappy will certainly bounce in on a long-distance call, and then—"

"And then?" broke in Skinner with heavy sarcasm.

"Then you'll tell him about the dirty trick Ossy has played us."

"I certainly won't!"

"But see here, Tom—we're both in it. Cappy will blame you for letting this bill get so far. You're the older man."

"Rot!" Skinner snapped. "You're afraid of old Cappy! Gimme the 'phone!"

At Wildwood Farm, way up country, life was jogging along very pleasantly for old Captain Ricks, retired from the big business he had built up with his own hands until it had become the finest lumber company in the state. For the last five years he had lived at ease, helping with the lambs and smoking cigars and pottering round the acres with a gun and the dogs—sitting in his special chair in the stone-flagged kitchen at nights, talking of old times with the farm-hands; his pretty daughter Florence always running down from 'Frisco every third or fourth week to tell him the news of the great city and of the growing prosperity of the firm.

"Matt's a good boy," old Cappy would allow, his crab-apple face smoothing out into a large smile. "He's got no brains, Florry—but he's straight. That's why I let him marry you. Then there's old Skinner Skinfint—well, he don't let grass grow under his box-calf shoes! And Bill Peck, a salesman I trained myself. Yeah—the Ricks Lumber Co. is bound to keep moving on and on!"

Florry, fresh-faced and very likeable, agreed. She was staying a long spell this time, helping with the spring lambing. Her father, dressed in his oldest clothes, was feeding milk to a

tiny lamb from a baby's bottle, his face puckered up with interest.

"Takes it beautiful, doesn't he?" he grinned. "Thinks I'm his mother!"

Just then the telephone-bell buzzed. Florry went to the instrument in the hall, and old Cappy cocked his ears.

"Who is it, Flo?" he called.

"It's Skinner, dad," she called back. "Ringing you from 'Frisco? Why, what's come to him, spending all that on a 'phone call?"

The old boy put the tiny lamb away in a cot by his side and came trooping into the hall. His daughter was saying "yes" and "sure" and "I'm fine, thanks—" when Cappy snatched away the receiver from her.

"There's something wrong," he prophesied. "That you, Tom Skinner? Yeah, it's Cappy this end. What's that?"

His smiles faded into a frown.

"You telling me you've let Blake get in a fast one on us? A bill to stop houses being roofed with red shingles? Why, you doddering dodo—what you been doing? Doing nothing, I guess! An act of the legislature sneaked through the house by Lawyer Winton? Well, of all the mutts, mugs, and dithering idiots—if you and Peasley aren't the prize samples! I'll be along by this afternoon's express!"

"Where's Bill Peck?"

BURTON, the new outside clerk at the Ricks office, was busy at his shining mahogany desk. A rough-looking old fellow in a tweed suit and a nautical cap came barging into the office, and, pushing open the swing-door of the counter, made a bee-line for the private room of the partners.

"Hey!" called Burton, swinging

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round, his hatchet face scandalised. "You got an appointment?"

The old man stopped dead in his tracks.

"Who are you?" he snapped.

"Comes to that," Burton snapped back, "who are you?"

"Listen, you dude! I'm Cappy Ricks, who owns this joint, look, stock and barrel! Is Skinner inside?"

"Mr. Skinner's in conference," Burton's voice lost its sharpness. "I'll announce you, Mr. Ricks."

"I'll announce myself." Cappy pushed open the door and burst in like a hurricane on his partners. "Morning, you two! Who's the sharp lad outside?"

"Oh, good-morning—good-morning!" Skinner tried to be genial. "Glad to see you. That's Burton, our confidential clerk." He offered his seat at the desk. "Matt and I were just considering—"

"Considering? I'll bet you were!" Cappy fixed beady eyes on Peasley. "Brain storms coming on, hey?"

"How's Florry, pop?" asked his son-in-law mildly.

"Never mind Florry—she's my girl and takes care of herself! Now then, what's all this hokum about Ossy Blake?"

Skinner, with a nasty look at Peasley, put the morning's newspaper before the old man.

Cappy read the head-lined news, mouth awry. A bill had been prepared by the state, prohibiting the use of all inflammable material for house roofing. The bill would become law as soon as it had been signed by the Governor of California, who was away at Washington attending the Senate.

"When's he coming back?" Cappy demanded, already making mental plans to defeat the bill.

"Fifteen days from now," said Peasley. "I'm glad Florry's all right, pop."

Cappy crumpled up the paper.

"Gimme the telephone!" He snatched up the instrument and grabbed off the receiver.

"Operator, quick!" he shouted. "You've got to dial the number you want," said Skinner. "Allow me"—he drew the 'phone away. "Who d'you want?"

"T. Osgood Blake." Cappy watched the dialing. "Some new-fangled idea, what?" He glared round the brand-new office. "Gosh—what you fellers been doing here? White paint and tin fittings." He got up from the chromium chair: "This bird cage don't look a bit too safe to me!"

"We have to keep up-to-date, pop," Peasley explained.

"Have you kept up with Ossy Blake?" demanded Cappy. "I guess he's left you way up in the hills! Got him? Let me talk to him." He took back the 'phone. "That you, Ossy? Cappy this end. Lovely spring morning—what's this bill you've been shoving through with Winton?"

Far-off crackling laughter was heard by the anxious Skinner and Peasley. Then Cappy's voice:

"Oh, yeah? Red shingles is prohibited for roofs, hey? What's going in their place?"

Sudden fury showed in his weather-beaten old face.

"Why you—you old crow! Only patent roofing made by the Blake Company? Of all the dirty, shabby tricks—going to cut me out and yourself in? Not on your life, Ossy—no, sir! What's that?"

He listened dumbly for a moment or

two, then banged the receiver on to its hooks.

"Did you hear, you fellers?" he asked hoarsely. "He says I'm old! He says I've let the parade go by!" Cappy's eyes flashed sparks. "Where's Bill Peck? I want him!"

The two junior partners exchanged very worried glances. Then Skinner said, awkwardly:

"Peek's—er—gone. Turned us down."

Cappy swung round to face him.

"Whaffor?"

"He—er—wanted more money."

"And you wouldn't give it?"

"Cappy, the business has got to be run on business lines."

"Fetch Bill Peck back here!" roared the old chap, thoroughly worked up.

"This minute!"

Peasley put in, in his mild way:

"Bill's gone to Honolulu on a cruise."

Cappy snapped:

"What's the name of the ship?"

"Southern Star."

"Send a wireless to him to come right back. I'll meet him on the quay at five o'clock to-morrow!"

"It can't be done," said Skinner.

"I'll wireless him—but it's a waste of money."

"Bet you five hundred that Bill's there," cried Cappy. "Come on, skin-flint—back your fancy!"

"It's taking easy money, Cappy." A smile was creasing out those tight lips.

"Another five hundred you lose!"

The old war horse snorted.

"It's a bet," said Skinner. "Have a cigar?"

"Sure I'll have one of my own cigars." Cappy helped himself from the box on the desk.

Skinner got out his petrol-lighter and offered it to Cappy, who took it with a dubious glance. He flicked at it and nothing happened. "Can't ever make these blamed things work!"

Skinner took it back, deftly flicked up a flame, and Cappy smoked. "Keep the lighter," said Skinner in a moment of generosity. "A clever fellow like you will soon learn the knack."

Bill Comes Back

ON the Southern Star, well out from Frisco harbour, a pleasant young man in flannels was stretched out in a deck-chair, eyes half shut, his attitude one of complete peace with the world. A crowd of girls in bath-wraps came scuttling up to him.

"Bill Peck," clamoured their blonde leader, "come out of it! A morning like this calls for a game of water polo!"

"Never swim on vacation," spoke Bill, lazily. "Can't swim."

At once a babel broke out, checked by the arrival of a steward. "Radio for Mr. Peck!" he stated, hand out for a tip.

Mr. Peck opened his eyes.

"That's me." He took the flimsy paper. "Jumping Gechosoplat!" His eyes had caught the signature. "It's the voice of duty, girls! I gotta go home!"

Again a babel, but Peck rose up and pushed a way through the pretty crowd. He went up to the bridge, calling to the captain.

"Cap'n, I got to go back. Reverse engines!"

The ship's chief officer waved a hand at him.

"Don't be funny! Next stop's Honolulu!"

Bill was beginning a protest when he spotted a cargo boat crossing the Southern Star's course. He flung off

his flannel coat, and, running to the side, took a clean header into the sea. The captain rang his bell angrily, giving quick orders. The cry went round the decks—"Man overboard!"

Bill was seen trudging lustily for the cargo boat. The blonde said bitterly: "And he told us he couldn't swim!"

Bill was seen by the cargo boat's crew. They stopped and picked him up.

"Good!" spluttered Bill, knocking the water out of his eyes. "I wanner go back to 'Frisco."

The mate of the small, solid ship shook his head.

"Jest out from 'Frisco, buddy. Back there in three days."

A Japanese "fisher" was chugging near by—evidently headed for port. Bill said "thanks awfully"—and took another dive!

The Japs were more obliging, but their boat was full of fish—over which Bill had to straddle his legs.

"Take cloes," offered the polite Oriental in charge. "Lend macintosh."

So Bill stripped off his wet flannels and got himself into a very fishy macintosh. The perfume of fish was terrific, and Bill felt inclined to heave his heart up. But the Southern Star was under steam again, leaving him every minute. The wireless operator on board the cruising liner flashed the news to San Francisco.

"Madman swimming fifty miles homo to port! Name of Bill Peck, Ricks, Lumber Company."

Bill arrived at the quayside at ten minutes before five that afternoon.

"Gimme my clothes," he called to the polite Jap.

"Throw overboard," smiled the little man. "No darn good. All shrank up!"

So Bill Peck climbed up to the quayside in a filthy old macintosh, covered with fish scales and smelling like rank sardines!

A small crowd of Pressmen were waiting for him. They had picked up the radio and were out for a "scoop."

At almost the same moment a steam pinnace had run in to land a very pretty girl, who was busy greeting her father and a tallish, cynical-looking man.

"Look!" cried the very pretty girl pointing a little hand. "Newspaper boys come hot-foot to snap little Barbara Blake for the front page! Isn't that just too sweet! Let's make ourselves beautiful!"

But the newspaper boys totally ignored her. They shouted, "We want Bill!" and rushed at him and surrounded him.

"Let's have the story!" they hooted.

"Why did you do it? Was it a bet? Who's who—and what's it all about? Gee willikins, but how you smell!"

Bill pushed them aside.

"Sorry, boys—I gotta date. Five o'clock—to meet my boss. There he is, Cappy Ricks—and he don't like being kept waiting!"

The very pretty girl put herself in his way as he prepared to charge down the quayside towards Cappy and Skinner.

"Who are you?" she demanded.

"Taking all the high spots?"

"I'm Bill," he told her. "I'm a fishmonger!"

"You certainly smell that way," she retorted, lifting her little nose. "And you aren't over-dressed a lot. But I'd like to know—"

"Some other time," Bill interrupted her. "I've swum the Pacific to meet Cappy Ricks. And he's just poison if he's kept waiting!"

She stood aside. Bill gave her a second look. She was pretty! His heart gave a thump under the fishy macintosh. But her small nose was still up in the air as she walked back to join her friends.

Cappy received Bill, watch in hand. "You were nearly late!" he stated. "But it isn't five o'clock yet and I win my bet. That's a thousand dollars you owe me, Skinner!"

He hurried Bill into a taxi. "I'll say you smack of the sea, Bill!" he declared. "But we'll soon get you going in a new suit and shirt. There's quick word ahead of us."

"What you say, Mr. Ricks," smiled Bill, "goes!"

The very pretty girl was talking with her father and the cynical one.

"He's Bill," she told them. "And he's a fishmonger. And he's meeting Cappy Ricks."

Her father, a sly looking, round-faced, clean-shaved old lad, corrected her.

"That's Ricks' go-getter," he said. "There's mischief ahead, Winton."

Winton snapped his fingers. "They can't do a thing! The bill slides through in fifteen days!"

Said Barbara, thoughtfully: "A boy who'll swim the Pacific just to get going—is a danger and a menace! You leave me to deal with him, dad."

Winton Makes a Sporting Offer

A COUNCIL of war was being held in the Ricks' office. Bill, having grasped the situation, gave his advice.

"We gotta get up a petition to the Governor to have the bill put to a plebiscite vote of all the householders in the State. We gotta get fifty thousand signatures."

"In fifteen days?" asked Skinner. "Don't talk rot!"

"It's certainly a tall order," agreed Peasley.

"If it's to be done," said old Cappy,

"Bill will do it. I'll start him in an office in the main thoroughfare, and he can draw all the cash he wants."

"In reason," Skinner qualified.

"In and out of reason!" cried Cappy.

"If this bill goes through, all the lumber men in California are bust!"

So Bill was installed in a neat office and began to prepare for a huge campaign. He had to cover nearly a hundred and sixty thousand square miles and talk to everyone who owned a house. And all in less than a fortnight!

Within two days of his settling down, a young lady called at the new office. The office boy showed her into Bill's room.

"Why, if it isn't Miss Impudence!" "I'm looking for a job, Mister Bill."

"Peck," Bill corrected. "Bill Peck. Sit down. What can you do?"

"Typing, shorthand, organising—getting rid of people you don't want to see. Keep accounts; punctual; don't mind work; generally cheerful," she told him all in a breath. "Fair wages—paid promptly. References A 1."

"You're engaged," declared Bill. "What name?"

"Smith. Barbara Smith." There was a little hesitation, but Bill was so busy looking at her twinkling brown eyes that he didn't trouble to take notice. She opened her bag and brought out a typed reference as to character from the minister of a church. Bill read it through.

"He calls you just 'Barbara,'" said Bill. "Doesn't say 'Miss Smith.'"

"Great friend of my father's," she explained. "Most everyone calls me Barbara."

"Okay." Bill regarded her with pleased eyes. "Listen, Barbara, this is what we have to do."

Half-way through the morning there was another caller. A sly-looking

gentleman with affable manners. Barbara showed him in.

"Mr. Winton to see you."

Bill rose up.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Winton?"

"Just a sociable call, Mr. Peck. It's about this roofing business. You've got an all-time job getting signatures for your petition. Now, there's a Women's Federation Society meeting in the Cloth Hall this afternoon—delegates from all over the State—ladies with pretty powerful influence."

Winton took the cigarette Bill was silently offering. "Thanks, I got a light. Well, now, what say you and me go down and address them? I'm for the new Act; you're against it. You put your views forward first and I'll follow with mine. A sporting offer—all fair and friendly."

Barbara Smith sat at her desk, saying nothing. Bill glanced at her, then glanced away. He said:

"This seems very kind of you, Winton."

"Not at all. The Act was drafted by me, and naturally—"

"Naturally Ossy Blake was behind you," said Bill. "He wants to put over his patent roofings and cut out red shingles."

Winton shrugged padded shoulders.

"Progress, Mr. Peck! Safety for the householder."

"And all the work and money for Ossy and you?"

Winton smiled a little.

"Maybe. But I'm suggesting that you talk to the ladies and say your piece first. The one who gets the Women's Federation vote is going to win."

Winton again glanced at Barbara, but she was busy with the piles of blank petition forms on her desk.

Bill made up his mind.



Cappy read the headlined news, his mouth awry.

"Okay, Winton! You let me talk first—and you won't have to say one single word!"

"Who'll Sign the Petition Now?"

THE Cloth Hall was crowded with delegates from all over the State.

They had settled most of their business and had got down to the Roofing Act. Bill was on the platform, full of confidence. He had made a good speech and the women were nodding to each other in approval. Samples of red shingle and the new patent "non-flam" Blake roofing—a small slip of pliable asbestos—had been passed round the audience for inspection. Cappy Ricks was seated in the front row, with Florry Peasley on his right and a round-faced old fellow on his left. Just behind them sat Skinner and Matt Peasley.

Skinner whispered in Cappy's ear: "They've got us in a jam. This is where Peck is clean bowled!"

Cappy didn't answer. He was offering a cigar to his neighbour on the left.

"Here you are, Ossy."

"Thanks," grinned T. Osgood Blake. "I got one."

So Cappy stuck the cigar in his mouth and felt for his matches. Florry whispered:

"Use your new lighter, dad—it'll please Mr. Skinner."

Cappy fished out the petrol lighter from his vest pocket. The strip of Blake Patent Roofing was lying on his lap. Cappy fumbled and flicked at the lighter in vain.

"Allow me!" said Ossy Blake, producing a match.

"Never could work these dratted things," Cappy grunted. "Thanks."

Winton had come down to the edge of the platform.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, you have heard a very eloquent and persuasive speech from Mr. Peck. He certainly knows how to put it over. I'm no speech-maker—I'm here just to demonstrate the splendid qualities of the Blake Patent Roofing. What's the one thing you ladies dread on putting the kiddies to bed and telling them good-night? You know well enough—it's the awful, terrible risk of fire!"

T. Osgood Blake turned to wink at Cappy.

"You hear, Ricks? You get the idea?"

Cappy puffed at his cigar. "I'm listening," he growled.

Skinner fidgeted—and Bill began to see he had walked into a trap.

"Yes, ladies, fire is the terrible thing that hangs every night over the peaceful homestead," Winton went on. "Anything may start it! Your house becomes a raging inferno and you lose everything. Red shingle wood is inflammable—no one can dispute it. Whereas the Blake Patent Roofing absolutely defies fire. I will now prove it to you—Mr. Peck is sportsman enough to help me, I know. He will hold the little strip of Patent Roofing and I will apply a lighted wax taper to it, and—you'll all see for yourselves."

Skinner breathed heavily. Matt Peasley looked frightened. Bill frowned. Barbara Smith, on the platform with him, sighed deeply. She had already learned to like Bill.

"If Mr. Ricks will pass up the sample of Patent Roofing which I observe is lying on his lap," said Winton very sweetly, "the test shall be made. I have here a taper." He struck a match and lit it. "Now, Mr. Peck, your kind assistance."

The strip of asbestos was handed up by Cappy. Osgood Blake was all smiles. May 23rd, 1936.

The taper glowed with a little bead of smoky golden light. Bill took a hold of the strip and set his teeth—confound Winton and all his tricks!

"Now, ladies, just watch!" cried the lawyer, sure of his triumph. "I can hold this taper to Blake's Patent Roofing for all time if necessary—and not even a smoulder of fire!"

He applied the light. High-explosive sparks shot up with most startling puffs. The Patent Roofing burned merrily with crackling blue and yellow flames and dense clouds of sooty smoke!

Blake's face was a study—so was Cappy's. Bill nearly dropped the strip, but managed to hold on. Winton gasped, his small eyes pin-points of rage. Barbara seemed surprised, but kept cool in the midst of all the instant commotion.

"Who'll sign my petition now?" shouted Bill jubilantly. "Come on—come on! Walk up, folks! Red shingles and old-time beauty for ever!"

He flung down the flaming strip of asbestos and trampled on it; then jumped off the platform to mount a chair near a table where he had piled his blank forms for the petition against the Act. He handed them out right and left, Barbara facing him with the queerest kind of a smile.

"We pay canvassers ten dollars for every filled-up sheet of signatures and addresses!" chortled Bill. "Two-fifty names on each sheet! Money down when the completed sheets are handed in! No time to lose, ladies and gents! All set now for the old, well-tried-out red shingle roof!"

Gangster Methods

ALONE together in their office, Barbara Smith asked Bill:

"How did you do it?"

"Do what?"

"Make that fool-proof asbestos burn like paper!"

Bill's expressive face was quizzical.

"Fool-proof, hey? How d'you know?"

"Winton had that piece specially made for the test."

"Who told you?"

"I—I guessed it," she answered, not so readily. "It's what he would do. Now let me in."

"My child," said Bill paternally, "there are things you mustn't ask. Anyway, I can't answer 'em. Blame me if I know how it happened—but happen it did!"

"Funny that Mr. Ricks didn't seem the least bit surprised," Barbara hinted.

"He's a great feller," said Bill. "He never lets on whether he's surprised or disappointed. Now we'll get along with our work—we've got to send two good, reliable men to Los Angeles to pay out for the signatures as they come in there. We'll fix up the town lot here."

For a day or two all went well. Then town collectors began to come back to Bill with stories that they had been set on by toughs, who had taken away their sheets and torn them up as soon as they had got them full.

"Gangster methods," said Bill. "We'll have to do something."

"Tell the police?" queried Barbara.

"Not on your life!" cried Bill. "They'd find a hundred ways to hinder us!"

He sent the collectors round the towns in pairs, disguised as tallymen, book salesmen, Hoover sellers. This worked for some days; then, instead of one tough appearing suddenly from round the corner and brow-beating the collector, small gangs turned up and the

collectors were knocked out and their labours frustrated.

One of the Press "story-getters" called in at Bill's office the morning after a nasty little affair up at Berkeley, in which Bill's collectors had been properly beaten up. This Pressman had given Barbara a glance when she had received him and had seemed suddenly shy when she had settled down at her desk in Bill's room.

"Sorry about that affair at Berkeley, Mr. Peck."

"We got the signatures all right," Bill answered him. "My boys had had the gumption to post 'em on. And I don't forget it—paid 'em double and gave 'em a bonus!"

"Sure," agreed the Pressman. He again glanced at Barbara. "See you alone a minute, Mr. Peck?"

Barbara rose up before Bill could stop her. She smiled at their visitor as he opened the door for her.

As soon as she had gone the Pressman stepped close to Bill to whisper:

"What's she working here for—against her poppy?"

"I don't get you," said Bill.

"Well, then you have the enemy in your own camp," the young man said in a puzzled air. "You know that Ossy Blake and Winton are behind the thugs who beat up your boys and frighten your girls?"

"Sure I know it. But I can't prove it."

"It's odd that Miss Blake should be in with you, Mr. Peck, isn't it?"

"That isn't Miss Blake. That's Miss Smith."

The Pressman persisted.

"She's Barbara Blake. I'll bring you a cutting and picture from our paper when she had her twenty-first birthday last year."

Bill shook his head.

"You're mistaken—absolutely. She's Miss Smith."

His visitor contented himself with:

"One does make mistakes sometimes—even in our trade. So-long, Mr. Peck. I've got to call on Mr. Ricks. See you later."

He came back that afternoon to pass Bill a folded-in copy of an old issue of the "Frisco Herald."

"Something you asked for, Mr. Peck." He paused a moment. "D'you know what a journalist is?" He didn't wait for a reply. "A journalist is a Pressman out of a job. So don't you give me away. We shan't say anything now about Berkeley. 'Bye."

Bill opened the paper when Barbara was away for tea. On an inside page was her picture, with the caption: "Miss Barbara Blake comes to Years of Discretion. But we guess she was born so."

Bill sat staring at the picture. Barbara knew every move of the collectors: where they'd be almost at every hour of the day, who they were and how they were disguised. He meant to have it out with her; but, queerly enough, she didn't come back to the office from her tea.

Bill went along to the home address she had given him. It was an "accommodation shop," where one can have letters addressed.

When he got back to the office he found old Cappy waiting for him.

"How's it going, Bill? There's only two more days before the Governor gets back."

Cappy had a longish, loose brown-paper parcel lying across his knees.

"Everything's lovely!" Bill beamed at him. "We got the Act busted! Signatures pouring in! We've just been



"We pay canvassers two dollars for every filled-up sheet of signatures and addresses!" chortled Bill.

doing a count—fifteen thousand from the city alone! Then there's all the south to come in—thousand upon thousand! I'm expecting 'em to-night—that's why I came back."

"Well, well, isn't that fine?" smiled Cappy. "I thought, maybe—oh, never mind! We old fogies get the wind up sometimes." His voice took a serious note. "You see, Bill, this Act means ruin to the lumbermen—blank ruin. So spare no expense."

Bill nodded.
"But I won't waste a cent—not one! Have a cigar?"

He passed the box. Cappy helped himself. Bill flicked a flame in his petrol lighter.

"It's amazing how you do that, Bill." Cappy puffed at his cigar. "I never can get the knack of it."

Bill studied those keen old eyes under their bushy brows.

"No?" he questioned.

"I tried hard at the women's meeting the other day," Cappy went on. "Sorter made me feel foolish to see Ossy so cute with it. But it warn't any kind of use; my fingers seem all thumbs when I try out one of these fool things. Gimme a lucifer match every time."

Said Bill.

"Spilled out the petrol, didn't you? Into your lap?"

Cappy solemnly winked an eye.

"Let's change the subject. This parcel here—" He passed it across to Bill. "There was a Japanese feller got up a petition for lower dock dues or something. Then didn't use it, because he died. Fifty thousand genuine signatures and addresses there, Bill"—he ges-

tured towards the parcel. "I thought, maybe—"

"You aren't suggesting we should use them, Cappy?" Bill stared. "Why, Cappy, that would be the very last thing—"

"Wait a minute, Bill—don't get all het up! I got these signatures cheap. Nobody wanted 'em, and it seemed a pity to waste good stuff."

"Take them away!" Bill was firm. "They're no manner of use to me."

"Okay, Bill." Cappy wasn't in the least put out. He adjusted his cap at its usual jaunty angle, then took up the brown-paper parcel; then dropped his cigar.

Stooping for the cigar, he slid the parcel under the big chair in which he had been sitting.

He straightened up.

"Now, Bill, about these signatures coming in from the South to-night? Don't you think you ought to have a bodyguard here?"

Bill shook his head.

"Why, what ever for? Can't I look after myself? I've got three reliable fellows bringing them to me, and, once those forms are here, Cappy, they're as good as on the Governor's desk in his office. Besides, I can do a spot of boxing myself."

Again Cappy said:

"Okay, Bill." Then, glancing round, he asked: "Where's Barbara?"

Bill's smile faded out.

"She—she's gone. Got cold feet over the job."

"Nice girl, Bill." Bill didn't answer.

"I liked her," Cappy continued.

"Maybe she'll come back?"

"Not she." Bill spoke in miserable

conviction. "I—oh, let's change the subject, as you said just now!"

"I must be going, Bill. Skinner's raising the skies about your expenses. But don't mind him—I riled him a lot giving that outside clerk the sack."

"Burton? Why, what ever for? Burton's all right."

"I didn't cotton on to him, Bill. Well, so-long!"

Cappy ambled off. Bill went back to his counting and scheduling the forms he had received that day. He packed them up and took them down to the bank for safe custody. Then returned to the office to sit down and wait for the arrival of the signatures from Los Angeles and the South.

Time ticked on slowly.

Presently Bill spotted the brown-paper parcel under the chair. He was drawing it out when a knock came at the door.

Barbara walked in.

"Hallo!" Bill gruffed at her.

"I've come back," she stated, rather unnecessarily.

"Have you, now?" Bill wouldn't look at her. "I've got some signatures here to be counted." He put Cappy's parcel on the desk and began to untie the string.

"They've come early, then?" Barbara's pretty face lit up. "I'm so glad! Wait till I get off my hat and coat and we'll slip into them. Gee, what a lot! It'll take us all night."

"I don't think so," said Bill grimly. "I guess I hear somebody who'll maybe help us. Come in!"

His sharp ears had caught furtive sounds outside the door. Almost as he spoke, the door was pushed open and a heavy-jawed Irishman stepped in—

(Continued on page 27)

Beyond the stratosphere to a new world where science marches hand in hand with savagery. Follow the adventures of a young American on the strange planet of Mongo, realm of monsters and domain of the War-Lord Ming. An unforgettable serial of thrills and suspense, starring Buster Crabbe and Jean Rogers



Read This First

The entire world is in a state of terror. The Earth is threatened with total destruction by the planet Mongo, which, rushing through the void, is controlled by the Emperor Ming, ruler of a strange race of people living on that unknown planet, and a man who has probed the fundamental secrets of Nature.

In America, a scientist known as Dr. Zarkov maintains that he can save the Earth from disaster, and by means of a rocket ship which he has invented he attempts to blaze a trail through the stratosphere.

He is accompanied by Flash Gordon, son of an astronomer, and by Dale Arden, Flash's sweetheart.

The attempt is successful. Travelling through millions of miles of space, the rocket ships sets down the adventurers on the forbidding planet of Mongo, where they are taken prisoners by some of Ming's guards.

Ming spares Zarkov and Dale, but Flash is condemned to death, and is only saved by the intervention of Aura, the emperor's daughter, who helps him to escape.

Later, Flash meets with Thun, prince of a nation at war with Ming. Accompanied by Thun, he returns secretly to Ming's palace, and learns that the movement of the planet Mongo towards the Earth has been arrested.

He also discovers that Ming intends to force Dale Arden to marry him, and while attempting to prevent the ceremony the young American is seized in the claws of a ghastly monster!

Now Read On

May 23rd, 1936.

EPISODE 3:—

"Captured by Shark Men"

The Jaws of Death

IT was in vain that Flash Gordon struggled to escape from the talons of the hideous brute which had clutched him. For all his magnificent strength, he could not break the grip of the claws that had fastened upon his body, and, dragged into the gloom of the tunnel, he was lifted from his feet as if he had been a child.

Writhing, he saw the loathsome head of the creature in whose grasp he had been seized, a dragon-like head swaying upon a thick, fleshy neck. He saw its glittering eyes and the yawning cavity of its mouth, from which deep-toned growls were issuing. He saw the gleam of terrible fangs as he was drawn slowly but surely towards those jaws of death.

Meanwhile, Thun had scattered the three guards with whom he had been in mortal combat, and, standing above their prone figures like some bearded Titan, he waited for them to rise again and renew the fight.

He was unaware of Flash Gordon's peril—scarcely realised, indeed, that the young stranger from the Earth had not figured in the scuffle with Ming's underlings. But suddenly, as Thun stood there, over his fallen adversaries in menacing attitude, he heard the ugly sounds that were coming from the throat of the monster which had snared the American in its talons; and in the same instant the voice of Flash reached his ears in a strangled cry for aid.

"Thun! Help. Thun! Help!"

The Prince of the Lion Men wheeled and stared into the tunnel to behold his companion's plight, to see the dreaded claws of the foul brute lifting him towards its cruel teeth. It was a spectacle that brought a hoarse exclamation from Thun's bearded lips, and one that might well have paralysed many a man with horror.

Not Thun, however. With a swift presence of mind he bethought himself of the ray-gun that he had struck from the hand of the foremost guard a few seconds before, and, pouncing on this, he snatched up the weapon and levelled it at the evil jaws to which Flash was being carried.

He pressed the trigger, and a blistering stream of fire leapt from the muzzle of the gun, a stream of fire that seared into the monster's throat and withered the life from its huge body in one brief moment of time.

The beast crumpled to the floor of the tunnel, and its victim fell with it, then rolled free as the grip of the creature's talons relaxed. Almost simultaneously Thun's attention was diverted by movements on the part of the three soldiers whom he had knocked to the flagstones, and as he swung round again he discovered them in the act of scrambling to their feet.

One glimpse of the ray-gun in Thun's hand was enough for those men. Turning tail, they dashed off through the vaults in a panic, and, after starting forward as if to pursue them, the Prince of the Lion Men checked himself and moved back to the tunnel in which Flash was lying.

He assisted the young American to rise, and spoke to him tersely.

"Are you hurt?" he panted.

"No," Flash answered, drawing in his breath. "No, I'm all right, thanks to you. Gee, I'll say that ray-gun came in handy!"

He looked at the great, huddled carcass of the monster which had come so near to devouring him, and a shudder passed through his stalwart frame. Then he braced himself and caught Thun by the arm.

"Quick!" he gasped. "To the chapel! We haven't a moment to lose if we're going to stop that ceremony!"

"We shall not be able to return this way," Thun said to him. "Those guards who fled just now will bring reinforcements."

"Then we'll have to find some other means of escape," the younger man retorted. "But first we've got to rescue Dale Arden. Come on."

Together they pushed forward through the gloom of the tunnel, and they had travelled some fifty or sixty paces when they found themselves confronted by a massive door.

The chanting of many voices reached them through that door, voices raised in some strange anthem that was doubtless a feature of the marriage ceremonies on Mongo.

Flash glanced at Thun, and the latter whispered a comment.

"The wedding has begun," he said, "but we are not yet too late. When the hymn ends, three strokes on the sacred gong of the god Taos will complete the rites. We must act before those strokes resound, or Ming and your sweetheart will be man and wife in the eyes of all Mongo's peoples."

"This door!" Flash rapped out. "It's locked, Thun! We've got to force it!"

By way of response the Prince of the Lion Men thrust him to one side and directed the ray-gun at the lock of the door, and a moment later a tongue of vulcan-fire had destroyed that lock, reducing the metal of it to a molten fluid that dripped to the floor.

The mighty door swung open on its hinges, and beyond it Flash and Thun saw the figure of a ponderous idol wrought in stone, an idol that seemed to dominate a room in which a number of people were gathered.

Between the two intruders and this idol stood a man who was posted beside a burnished gong, one arm upraised and a hammer in his fist. He was waiting to strike the notes that would seal the ceremony which was in progress, waiting for the moment when the swelling anthem of the choir should draw to a close.

It was this man who first clapped eyes on Flash and Thun as they advanced from the doorway of the secret tunnel, and with a startled expression on his face he blundered towards them, lifting the hammer of the gong high above his head in a threatening gesture.

Flash was too quick for him. Springing at the man, he dealt him a blow that crashed home against his jaw, and the fellow hurtled backwards against the idol of the god Taos, that heathen deity which Ming and his followers worshipped.

For all its colossal proportions, the idol was top-heavy, and the impact of the man's body shook it from its base. It tilted, swayed forward, and there was an outcry from the assembly in the chapel, an outcry that interrupted the singing of the choir. Then there arose a sharp scuffle of feet as the figure of the deity plunged to the floor.

It descended with a shock that sent a tremor through the paving of the

room, and there was a splintering of masonry as the idol broke into a dozen fragments. And then, only then, did Flash and Thun gain a clear impression of the chapel into which they had found their way.

In the middle of the vaulted room stood the Emperor Ming and Dale Arden, the girl still under the influence of the hypnotic spell by means of which her consent to the marriage had been obtained. Beside them was the high priest who had been officiating at the ceremony, and close at hand was Dr. Zarkov, an unwilling witness. The remainder of the company was made up of the choir, a small group of soldiery commanded by Torch, captain of the royal bodyguard, and the women of the Court, among whom was Ming's daughter Aura.

One and all were staring in horror at the shattered effigy of the god Taos—all, at least, with the exception of Zarkov and Dale, for Dale seemed in a state of oblivion and Zarkov had eyes only for Flash and Thun, whose presence now filled him with hope.

Such was the scene upon which Flash and the Prince of the Lion Men gazed as they moved fairly into the chapel. Then, while Thun covered Ming and his adherents with the ray-gun, the young American stepped to Dale's side and gathered her in his arms.

Ming seemed to rouse himself from the stupor into which he and his followers had been thrown by the fall of the idol.

"Stop!" he snarled. "You shall not take that girl!"

He attempted to restrain the American, but was balked by Thun and the deadly weapon in the Lion Man's hand, and drew back a pace as the muzzle of that weapon threatened his breast. A moment later Flash and Thun were retreating across the chapel to a postern in the far wall, the younger man clasping Dale, and his bearded ally keeping a watchful eye on their foes.

They reached the postern and Flash kicked it open. A dimly lit passage lay before him.

"I don't know where this will lead us, Thun," he ground out, "but we'll take a chance. If anyone tries to follow us, let them have it with that ray-gun!"

They ducked into the corridor, Flash supporting Dale in his arms, Thun stumbling after him with head turned in the direction of the chapel.

Deep Down

FOR several seconds a blank silence reigned in the chapel following the disappearance of Flash, Dale and Thun, a silence during which Ming's partisans continued to stare in awe and dismay at the wrecked idol of their heathen deity.

Then the emperor found his voice, and, wheeling upon Torch, he bit out a savage command.

"To the control-room," he ordered through his clenched teeth. "The Earth man and Prince Thun shall not escape with the girl. That corridor will take them over the water-trap, and you have but to throw the switch that operates it. Quick, to the control-room!"

Torch seemed still to be in a confused state of mind.

"To the control-room, your Majesty?" he faltered.

"Yes, you fool," Ming answered harshly. "Throw the switch that operates the water-trap. The instant they set foot on that trap it will then give way and plunge them into the sea-caves of King Kala's realm, and does Kala not pay homage to me?"

The captain of the royal bodyguard understood now.

"Shall I send a message to Kala, King of the Shark Men, your Majesty?" he asked.

"Of course," was the reply. "Tell him to dispatch some of his minions to seize the Earth girl and her companions. Tell him to hold the girl prisoner, but to put Gordon and Prince Thun to death."

His daughter Aura clutched him by the arm as she heard this, and voiced a cry of protest.

"No, father!" she exclaimed. "You must spare the Earth man—for my sake!"

"Silence!" Ming snapped, eyeing her furiously. "You have already tried my patience to the limit by your accursed interference."

He turned to the captain of his guard once more and spoke to him imperiously.

"Obey my instructions," he said.

Motioning to the other soldiers to accompany him on this mission, Torch hastened from the chapel, but the tramp of the men's departing footsteps had scarcely died out of earshot when Aura swung away from her father and darted towards the passage into which Flash, Dale and Thun had vanished a little while before.

"Aura!" Ming shouted angrily. "Come back!"

The girl paid no heed, and in another instant she was gone from view, leaving the emperor to fume over the wilfulness of her nature. Then all at once Ming felt a hand pluck at his sleeve, and looked round to see Zarkov at his elbow.

"Your Majesty," the doctor begged, "I appeal to you to countermand your orders regarding Flash Gordon. I know he is headstrong, but he is in love with Dale Arden—"

"Your plea is useless," the emperor cut in. "Gordon must die, and I intend to wed the Earth woman whose loveliness is like the light of the sun."

"Your Majesty!" It was the voice of the high priest, a voice that rose on a note of distress. "Your Majesty, that wedding must not take place. Already it has brought about the destruction of the image of Taos."

"Gordon was responsible for that," Ming retorted, "not I."

The high priest made a gesture of remonstrance. He was obviously one of the few men about the palace who dared to reason with Ming.

"The catastrophe would not have occurred if you had not desired this match with the Earth girl," he said. "See, the image of Taos lies shattered, and I warn you that the spirit of Taos will take vengeance upon us all unless you appease it by giving up all thought of marrying the woman of your choice."

Ming was clearly impressed, and Zarkov marvelled to see the play of conflicting emotions on his sinister features. It was difficult to believe that a man so far advanced in the sphere of scientific research should yet remain a prey to superstition and a worshipper of heathen deities.

Such was the case, however, and, though the wish to take Dale Arden for his wife had become more than a freakish fancy with Ming, he was powerfully affected by the high priest's words.

When he spoke again there was a hint of uncertainty in his tone.

"We shall see," he muttered. "We shall see. Perhaps the god Taos will be appeased by the sacrifice of Gordon and Prince Thun."

He wondered darkly if the two men

who he had named had fallen into his snare yet.

Had it been possible for him to see Flash and his bearded ally at that moment he would have discovered that they were still some considerable distance from the water-trap, which by this time had been set in readiness for them by the movement of a lever in a remote control-room up in the palace.

Oblivious of the danger towards which they were making their way, Flash and Thun were hurrying down a long flight of stone steps, and the American was carrying Dale Arden in his arms, for in her trance-like condition she had seemed incapable of rapid movement.

They had already descended many flights of steps in this manner, and now Thun spoke in hopeful accents.

"We are passing through the very core of the mountain on which Ming's city stands," he said. "I believe this underground route will take us to the plain."

"If it does, we may be able to reach Zarkov's rocket ship and fly it to the territory of your people, Prince Thun," Flash rejoined. "We'll be safe there, won't we?"

"Yes," was the reply. "But what of your friend Zarkov?"

Flash pursed his lips.

"Zarkov won't come to any harm," he stated confidently, "not while Ming thinks he can make use of him in his laboratory. If Zarkov had been in any doubt about that he'd have followed us."

"Why did he not follow us?" demanded Thun. "Surely he does not wish to serve Ming?"

"No, but if you ask me, he wants to stick close to the emperor and watch his every move. Ming plans to conquer the Earth, from which I came, and Zarkov is only biding his time to foil him in his mad ambitions."

They had now reached the foot of the steps which they had been descending, and calculated that they must be near the base of the mountain. Indeed, it seemed to them that a current of cool, fresh air was playing against their cheeks, and it was with feelings of expectation that they pushed forward along a twisting tunnel to which the last flight of stairs had brought them.

Thirty seconds later they rounded a bend in that tunnel and came face to face with two armoured men who were leaning against the rock wall of the subterranean gallery—two of Ming's hirelings who were apparently on sentry duty there.

Those men knew nothing of what had transpired in the palace, but they instantly recognised Thun as a foe, and before the latter could make use of the ray-gun which he was grasping they flung themselves upon him with loud cries.

There was a violent scuffle, and Flash made haste to set Dale Arden on her feet and turn to Thun's aid. Even as he did so he saw one of Ming's soldiers sprawl to the floor with blood streaming from his temple, the wits dashed out of him by a blow from the butt of the ray-gun.

Next moment Thun was grappling savagely with the remaining sentinel, and, tripping him, bearing him to the ground, the bearded Prince of the Lion Men called to Flash in a strident voice.

"Go!" he shouted. "Take the Earth girl out of here! I can handle this fellow!"

There was no doubt of Thun's ability to master the struggling wretch with whom he was now fighting, and Flash wheeled towards Dale. It was then that he realised a change had come over the May 23rd, 1936.

girl, for the blank expression on her lovely face had given way to a bewildered look, and she was passing her hand across her forehead like one awakening from a dream.

She was recovering from the hypnotic spell under which she had been placed, and all at once she recognised her fiancé and reeled into his arms.

"Flash!" she moaned. "Oh, Flash, where am I? What happened? They—they told me that you were dead, and that I was to marry the Emperor Ming! I tried to resist them, but they strapped me to some strange and awful machine, and I—I don't remember any more."

Flash caught her about the waist, and, throwing a glance over his shoulder to satisfy himself that Thun needed no help, he stumbled ahead with her and explained as briefly as he could the incidents which had led up to her rescue from Ming's clutches.

He was still giving her an account of all that had happened when they turned another curve in the gallery and saw the light of day some sixty or seventy paces in front of them.

"The plain, Dale," Flash ejaculated. "We've only to get to Zarkov's ship, and we can reach the territory of the Lion Men. They're Prince Thun's people, and Thun is my friend."

They were blundering onward as he spoke, and they were half-way to the outlet of the tunnel when the floor beneath them suddenly gave way, casting them into a yawning pit that seemed abysmal in its depth.

Down they plunged, and from the lips of Dale Arden there issued a shriek of terror. It was a shriek that rang in the ears of Thun as he rounded the bend of the tunnel, fresh from his combat with the two sentries, the second of whom he had left more dead than alive.

Thun gained an impression of Flash and Dale hurtling through the cavity in the tunnel's floor, and, charging to the edge of the pit, he saw them falling away from him until their bodies were lost in the gloom. And then, from somewhere far below, there came the sound of a heavy splash.

Meanwhile that section of the floor which had given way under the feet of the young couple was slowly rising into place again, and, operating on silent hinges, it at last swung back to its normal position, so that if Thun had not witnessed the fate of his companions he would never have suspected the existence of the trap.

The Prince of the Lion Men stood there with clenched fists, and with a look of bitterness in his sombre eyes. How long he remained thus he never knew, but he was finally aroused by the patter of footfalls behind him, and he spun round in readiness to meet an attack.

It was a girl who was approaching him, however, and presently he made out the figure of Aura, daughter of the Emperor Ming. He lowered his hands then and waited for her to come up.

"You have made short work of two of my father's men, Thun," she said. "Where are the others?"

"Why do you want to know?" the Prince of the Lion Men ground out.

Aura looked at him appealingly. "I do not hold with my father's ways, Thun," she told him. "At least, not when they concern the blond stranger known as Gordon. Tell me where he is."

For answer Thun pointed to the floor, and Aura understood the gesture.

"The water-trap," she breathed. "Then my father's plan has been successful. They are in the hands of Kala's Shark Men by now."

Thun stared at her, and there was a silence. Then Aura spoke again.

"Listen," she said, "the girl will be spared, but Gordon will meet his doom, unless—unless it is possible for us to save him. We can try, Thun—you and I. It seems that we both admire him."

The bearded Lion Man squared his powerful shoulders.

"To-day Flash Gordon gave me my life," he rejoined. "For that I am willing to risk it in his service."

"Then follow me," Aura declared. "I know how we can reach the stronghold of Kala, deep down amongst the sea-caves."

She beckoned to him, and, after a momentary hesitation, Thun followed her from the vicinity of the trap that had cast Flash and Dale into the unknown depths.

Kala, Monarch of the Underworld

FAR below the tunnel from which they had plunged, Flash Gordon and Dale Arden were floundering wildly in the murky waters of an immense cavern.

It took Dale Arden several minutes to recover from the shock of her fall, and she was still beating the water with her arms when Flash swam close to her and caught hold of her protectively.

His presence beside her and his firm embrace served to reassure her to some extent, and she became calmer. Then she realised that he was speaking.

"Dale," he said, "this water is tainted with salt. I know, because I took about a gallon of it down my throat when I hit the stuff. Ugh! It tasted pretty foul, I can tell you."

"You don't have to tell me," she panted. "I've swallowed quite a lot of it myself. But, Flash, if this is brine water the cave must lead to the sea."

"Yeah? I don't remember getting a sight of any sea when we landed on this planet with Dr. Zarkov. Anyhow, if there is a sea, which way does it lie, and how far is it?"

They were treading water now to keep themselves afloat, and they began to look about them searchingly. Nor was it difficult to take stock of their surroundings, for the great cavern was not pitch black, the rock walls seeming to be phosphorescent in character and throwing out an uncanny twilight.

It was in this twilight that they suddenly detected movements some little distance away, and, each a prey to uneasy thoughts, they strained their eyes in an attempt to discover what these movements meant.

Then all at once Dale gave vent to a startled exclamation.

"Flash!" she gasped. "I can see men—and they're swimming towards us!"

She was right, for even as she spoke Flash himself made out three or four human heads moving through the water in their direction, the heads of men who were wearing tight-fitting skull-caps, and whose bare arms rose and dipped in long, powerful strokes.

"Come on, Dale!" Flash rapped out. "We're not taking any chances with those fellows."

They turned and began to swim with all the speed and strength at their command, but, though Flash might have kept ahead of the mysterious swimmers who had appeared in the cavern, Dale was no match for them, and was overtaken before she had travelled fifty yards.

Flash saw the foremost pursuers lay hold of her, and, regardless of his own safety, he swam back to her assistance. By the time he reached her half a dozen of the enemy were on the scene, and the tough American was immediately

engaged by those who were not grappling with his fiancée

Two of them dived for his legs, and two more seized him around the body. Struggling, he was dragged down—managed to kick free and come to the surface, but was promptly clutched again and pulled below the water a second time.

He fought desperately, yet in vain. If only he had had these men on firm ground he could have given them a taste of Anglo-Saxon medicine, scattered them with the bunched knuckles that had stood him in such good stead on many another occasion. But he could not hit out at them under water, and he was at a terrific disadvantage.

The brine seemed to be almost a natural element to these foes of his, too. No doubt they could drown just as other men could drown, but their lungs could apparently withstand the strain of suspended respiration far longer than those of the normal human being, for they were still fresh enough when Flash was at the last gasp.

The American was limp in their hands when they brought him to the surface and proceeded to swim back with him in the direction whence they had come. As for Dale, she was already some distance away, a helpless and drooping figure in the grip of a pair of stalwart captors.

Onward swam the men in the skull-caps, drawing their prisoners with them, and neither Flash nor Dale had any distinct knowledge of what was taking place until they found themselves beside a strange craft that bore some resemblance to a submarine.

They were carried into the interior of this vessel, and when at length they were in full possession of their wits again they were standing in a long, tapering control chamber.

They had a better opportunity now of studying their captors, four of whom were holding Flash tightly, the other two being concerned in looking after

Dale. Stripped to the waist, they were men of powerful frame, these denizens of an underworld realm, almost as splendidly proportioned as the blond young giant who was now in their clutches together with his sweetheart.

Flash looked at them through his fair, tangled locks.

"Who are you?" he demanded. "Who are you, and—and what do you want with us?"

He was answered by one of the men who were grasping Dale.

"We are servants of Kala, King of the Shark Men. You are the Earth people whom we have been ordered to take before him."

Without another word the speaker left Dale Arden's side and moved forward to a control-board. A few seconds later a tremor ran through the ship, and next moment it was gliding far down beneath the water.

The craft dived for twenty fathoms, and then, levelling itself, nosed its way onward within a few feet of the cavern's bed, a rocky bed which was visible through windows in the hull of the vessel. Staring out through those windows with fear-stricken gaze, Dale Arden caught glimpses of uncanny forms moving clear of the submarine's course—aquatic creatures such as she had never seen before—and once a shiver passed through her as she beheld a monstrous thing dragging itself off into the murk, an evil brute with many tentacles, reminding her of a giant octopus.

Flash did not see it, for his attention was riveted on the man at the controls, and he was watching his every action, reflecting that a knowledge of this craft might yet prove valuable.

He was still watching the control-board when the submarine swung slowly round and set its nose against a massive door built in the rock wall of the cavern.

The man in charge of the submarine now leaned forward and spoke into a

mouthpiece. What he was saying Flash could not tell, but apparently he was communicating with someone beyond that under-water door by radio-telephone, for in a few seconds the door rose like a shutter to admit the vessel into a spacious chamber, which was flooded from ceiling to floor.

Once the ship had passed through, the man at the control-board again spoke into the 'phone. The door behind the craft was then closed, and, shortly afterwards, Flash realised that the water in the chamber which the vessel had entered was being pumped out by some hidden mechanism.

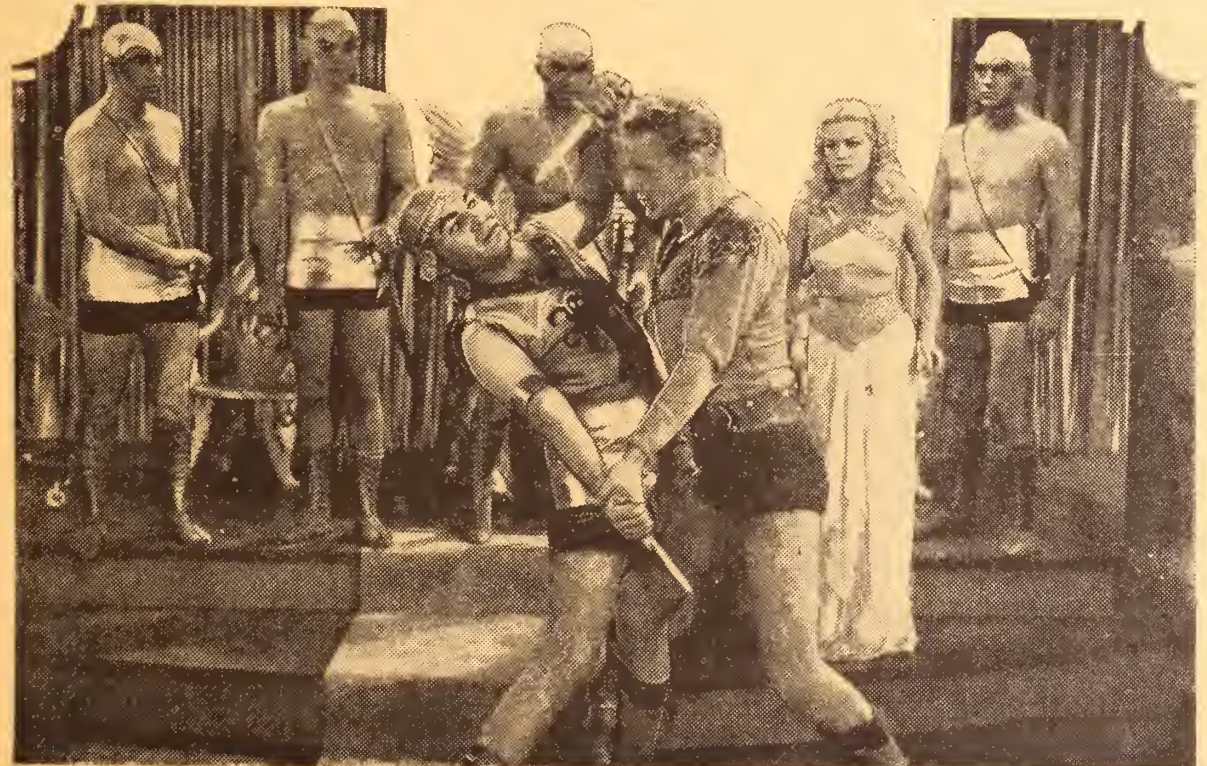
Within the space of a few minutes the entire room had been drained and the submarine was resting on the dry bed of its lair; and now Flash and Dale were marched out of the ship by their captors and forced towards a postern in the farthest wall of the chamber.

This was opened, and they passed through into a veritable labyrinth of corridors. By a route which they felt they could never have retraced without a guide they were hurried onward in a silence that was never once broken by the men who had seized them.

And then at last the party turned into a gallery that brought them to a spacious room in which a cloaked figure was seated upon a throne, the figure of a man who had obviously been awaiting the prisoners, for at sight of them his eyes gleamed with satisfaction.

The throne was set upon a dais that was approached by a short flight of wide steps, and the captives were led to the foot of these, whereupon the man who occupied the throne looked at the two Americans long and interestedly.

Returning his gaze, Flash and Dale could not help reflecting that his appearance was at least favourable by comparison with Ming's. His face lacked the soul-chilling sinisterness of the emperor's—a broad and swarthy face, this—cunning, perhaps, and cruel,



With the eyes of Dale Arden and the guards riveted upon them Flash and Kala fought like the gladiators of old.

but less evil than the face of the monarch whose city dominated the highest peak of Mongo.

At length he spoke, addressing himself to Dale. His voice was slow, deliberate.

"You are the Earth girl whose name is Arden," he said. "His Supreme Intelligence, Ming the Merciless, has ordered that you be returned to him."

Flash strained forward in the arms of those who held him.

"For what reason?" he grated.

The man in the cloak turned his glance on him and eyed him narrowly.

"One does not question the orders of Ming, Earth man," he observed. "They are obeyed."

"Yes," Flash retorted contemptuously, "obeyed by you and other puppets!"

The words seemed to whip a deeper shade of colour into the other man's face, and his hands closed hard on the arms of the throne on which he was seated.

"Dog of an Earthling," he rasped. "do you know that I am Kala, King of the Shark Men? Kala the Strong? Aye, Kala the Strong—strong enough to break you between my two hands!"

"Kala the Puppet," Flash scoffed in defiant mood. "You call yourself king, you call yourself strong. You boast that you could break me between your hands. But do you know what I'd call a man like you, who sits there and talks in that strain to a prisoner who is helpless? I'd call him a braggart and a coward!"

Dale was looking on in alarm, fully expecting that Flash would be struck down there and then for the taunts he had thrown at this monarch of the underworld.

"Tell your men to turn me loose," Flash challenged, "and we'll soon see if you can make good that boast of yours!"

Kala glared at him for a space, and then, with a quick gesture, he cast aside his cloak.

"Set the Earth man free!" he ordered the guards who were clutching Flash.

The young American was released, and, scarcely giving him time to prepare himself for action, Kala flung himself upon him and caught him in a vice-like grip. And, thus taken at a disadvantage, Flash was brought to the floor in a sprawling heap with his adversary atop of him.

He had soon recovered himself, however, and though Kala had clapped a hold on his right arm and seemed intent on fracturing the limb, the athletic Yankee managed to elude his grasp by a sudden twist.

Both men rolled apart, and both scrambled to their feet almost simultaneously. Next second Kala was bounding towards Flash again, but this time he was met by an upper-cut that lifted him clean off his balance and knocked him to the foot of the dais, from the steps of which Dale and the guards were watching the encounter with bated breath.

Kala roused himself, and with an oath he rushed at his young antagonist furiously, attempting to bear him down. But instead he found himself seized in a wrestling hold that he had never before experienced, though it would have been familiar enough to any instructor of ju-jitsu in the gymnasiums of the Earth.

Kala was thrown, and, pouncing on him before he could pick himself up, Flash snared him with another hold that rendered him powerless, so that after a few seconds of strain the man had to

choose between crying "Enough!" or suffering a broken leg.

He gasped out a surrender, and his opponent's hands relaxed. A moment later Flash was rising from him, but as he did so he saw two or three of the vanquished monarch's guards moving forward threateningly.

They were checked by Kala, who struggled to his feet and waved them off.

"Back!" the King of the Shark Men said thickly. "Leave the Earthling to me. He may know how to wrestle, but we shall see how he fares with the knife. Lend him a dagger, one of you!"

A blade was thrust into Flash's hand, and once more he hardly had time to put himself on the defensive before Kala launched an attack—Kala, who whipped his own dagger from its sheath and leaped at the younger man pantherishly.

It was only by a rapid side-step that Flash avoided a deadly lunge from the knife in the monarch's fist, and then the pair of them closed in mortal combat, each striving might and main for the advantage.

With the eyes of Dale Arden and the guards riveted upon them, Flash and Kala fought like the gladiators of old, but once again it was the American who proved himself the master. Preventing Kala from striking by exerting a steady and agonising pressure on the man's wrist, he succeeded in bringing the point of his own dagger nearer and nearer to the swarthy throat of the underworld potentate, despite the latter's efforts to force his hand aside.

And at last the King of the Shark Men crumpled under the strain—was at his foe's mercy—must have died under a single thrust of Flash Gordon's knife if the youngster had been out for blood.

As it was, Flash let the blade fall to the floor and stepped back without a word, and then, after looking at him in silence for a moment, Kala spoke in a husky voice:

"I salute you, Earthling," he breathed. "You are the first man who has ever defeated me in hand-to-hand fight."

He turned to his guards and eyed them meaningly.

"Let the son of the Earth be treated as my guest," he said. "Let him occupy the room adjoining this one."

The Shark Men started, and exchanged glances. Then two of them approached Flash and took him by the arms.

"Just a minute," he protested. "Kala, what about Dale?"

"We shall discuss the Earth girl later," was the reply. "Meanwhile, enjoy my hospitality, my friend."

The men who had stepped towards Flash were drawing him across the room, and, reluctant as he was to be separated from Dale, he suddenly found himself beside a door. Next instant that door had been flung open by one of his escort, and ere he could see what lay beyond it, the American was thrust through the aperture.

There were steps leading down from the doorway, and he tripped and fell—but not to the floor of a guest-room. It was into six feet of water that he plunged, into an apartment half flooded with brine, and as he sank through that water he saw something lurking near by, a monstrous thing of many tentacles, a thing that bestirred itself ominously as he tried to flounder away from it!

(To be continued. By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Buster Crabbe and Jean Rogers.)

"WESTERN COURAGE"

(Continued from page 10)

and the six-shooter was knocked out of it and disappeared down the crevice.

Unarmed but determined, he clambered higher, and from the fact that La Cross did not use his guns again he judged them to be empty. Throwing caution to the winds, he reached the foot of the bluff on a shelf of rock and jumped from it clean on to the outlaw, bearing him down against a boulder.

Together they rolled and fought, while Gloria watched and feared the issue. Together they rose up, and, in rising, La Cross had the advantage, for Ken slipped and fell against a boulder. The left hand of the outlaw was thrust against his cheek and jaw, forcing his head sideways, and a clenched fist was drawn back to strike when Ken desperately jerked up his left knee and sent his opponent staggering sideways.

Again they rushed at one another, hammered with their fists, and, fighting furiously, reached the great flat mass of rock high over the pass.

Gloria followed them. She saw Ken fall and roll to the very edge of the cliff, and she cried out in horror, for his body disappeared, though his hands clung.

Colonel Austin, with Mr. Hanley and the five cowboys, had reached the mouth of the pass, far beneath the great overhanging bluff, and they had reined their horses to watch the battle up against the sky-line. They saw Ken roll over the edge of the precipice and hang there by his hands, trying to pull himself up again; and they saw La Crosse standing over him and stamping on his hands.

Again and again La Crosse stamped on those clinging hands, but he could use only one foot at a time, and somehow Ken managed to retain his hold for what seemed to him to be agonising centuries.

And then suddenly Tarzan, who had climbed amongst the rocks in search of his master, came streaking across the bluff and saw what was happening.

Roaring with rage and baring his teeth, he hore down on the outlaw, who turned about too late to save himself. Up went two powerful hoofs; down they came with violence—and La Crosse was sent reeling backwards to fall nearly a thousand feet to his death.

Ken, breathless and nearly exhausted, managed to drag himself up on to the rock and lay there panting, while Gloria knelt beside him in speechless relief.

Down at the mouth of the pass, Colonel Austin shouted to the others to follow him; but they were less than half-way up the zigzag trail when Ken got to his feet, more or less himself again, and went to Tarzan.

"Thanks, old man," he said with emotion and infinite gratitude.

The white horse neighed with pleasure and rubbed his long nose against a very strained face; and then Gloria went to Ken with outstretched hands.

"It was all my fault," she said contritely. "I'm sorry for everything, Ken—even for riding your horse. I won't do it again."

Ken took hold of the outstretched hands and summoned a grin.

"Well, maybe," he said, "we could ride double."

"I'd love to!" declared Gloria.

(By permission of Columbia Pictures Corporation, Ltd., starring Ken Maynard.)

"CAPPY RICKS RETURNS"

(Continued from page 21)

carrying a gun in his right fist. Behind him were six others, the scum of the big city.

"Mister," spoke their leader, covering Bill with the automatic. "Let's do this peaceable. Them papers has gotter be torn up, see? You and the young lady jest sit quiet—and then nothink else will happen!"

Cappy to the Rescue

CAPPY had gone down to the docks to revisit one of his old haunts. He entered a little quayside inn and asked the bartender for a drink, adding:

"And I want Menzel."
"He's in the parlour, Mr. Ricks, I'll fetch him."

The bartender returned with a huge, bearded giant of a Swede, clad in an old blue jersey and immense slacks. He held out a fist like a leg of mutton to Cappy, then slapped him on the back.

"Well, say, what's brought you along?"

Cappy confided:
"A little spot of bother up at a friend's office."

"Far away?"
"Down town. I got a car at the corner."

The bartender had dashed out to the yard. He called to a long slab of a boy.
"Jack, Menzel's got a job with Cappy Ricks!"

The boy dropped his wood-chopping and turned down his shirt-sleeves. When Cappy and big Menzel walked out purposefully from the inn, the bartender and the "slab" fell into step close behind them. Two gentlemen in grimy dungarees going the other way turned sharply about and also fell into line.

Cappy led the squad of five stalwarts up the stairs to Bill's office.

"The door's locked," Menzel muttered in his beard, after trying the handle.

Murmurs and mutterings could be heard. Then a sudden loud smack. Then a shrill scream. Then wild cries and heavy smashings, as tables, chairs and desks were overturned. Menzel battered in the door with one mighty blow of his huge fist. Cappy and his party charged into a scene of indescribable confusion and uproar.

The floor was strewn with torn-up papers. Barbara was slumped in a chair by the window. Bill was engaged in fighting five toughs at once. A pistol lay on the floor—Cappy kicked it out of the way.

He then flung himself into the fray—only to be sent spinning into a tottering bookcase by the leader of the gangsters. Menzel promptly swept two of the crooks off Bill's back with one single irresistible blow.

The leader seized a big flower-vase and banged it down on Menzel's curly pate. The vase shivered into atoms, but the Swede didn't even blink. He brought his fist down like a sledgehammer on his assailant's head and—down he went!

Scraps of torn paper flying everywhere; dust and battered-in hats and shirt-collars which had been wrenched off! Squeals and yells came from Cappy, high above the din—he had now thrust his right hand into a brass pot and was striking out at the gangsters at every chance. The slab, the bartender, and the dungaree gentlemen rendered yeoman service in hauling out the breathless bodies of the dazed crooks and

blinging them down the stone stairs outside the door.

In five minutes Bill's office had been cleared of the riff-raff, and the conquerors were able to gaze upon the scene of desolation and destruction. Menzel wiped beads of perspiration off his brow.

"Seems like you're going to start a paperchase, mister," he said to the panting Bill.

"The signatures from the South!" gasped Cappy, pulling his hand out of the brass pot.

Bill, despite a cut chin and many bruises, managed a wink.

"It's lucky the Japanese gent don't want 'em," he grinned.

Cappy gripped Bill by the hand:

"You and Barbara come round to my office first thing in the morning!"

But Barbara had disappeared.

"The young lady went away," volunteered the chatty bartender. "Seemed in a kinder hurry."

While they were looking for her a police-sergeant and squad solemnly trooped up the stairs with three men carrying a large wooden box.

"The signatures from the South," said one of the three men in answer to Bill's questioning gaze. "Hundreds of thousands of them! Thought it best to bring 'em here under the sergeant's escort."

"I'll stay and count them, Cappy," said Bill. But again the man in charge spoke:

"All done, sir, at Los Angeles. To save time. Shall we take them to the bank now we've reported?"

"I'll go with you," Bill decided. "I feel in need of a little fresh air."

Cappy Clears the Sky

NEXT morning, Bill, brushed up and in his best suit walked into the office of the Ricks Lumber Company at unimpaired, unchallenged by any Burton.

Skinner and Matt Peasley were there with Mrs. Peasley.

"Everything fine, Bill," Cappy smiled at him. "The signatures are at the City Hall, and the Governor's granted a plebiscite of the State. You can reckon the Roofing Act is done for." He stretched out a warm hand. "Congratulations, my boy, on a grand bit of work! You're back here on your old job at double the salary."

"Thank you, sir. I'm very grateful. But—"

"No buts, Bill! Skinner, tell him you're glad to see him. Matt, slap him on the back! Florry, give him a kiss!"

Bill stood up to them, saying:

"Thank you, Skinner—much obliged, Matt. Thank you, Mrs. Peasley." Then his usually cheery face set in gloom.

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"WESTERN COURAGE"—Ken Baxter, Ken Maynard; Gloria Hanley, Geneva Mitchell; Henry Hanley, Charles French; Mrs. Hanley, Betty Blythe; Eric Simpson, Cornelius Keeffe; Ed la Crosse, Ward Bond; Colonel Austin, Captain E. H. Calvert; Betty Johns, Reneo Whitney.

"SHADOWS OF THE ORIENT"—Viola Arvey, Esther Ralston; Tony Baxter; Regis Toomey; James Moss, Sidney Blackmer; Sullivan, J. Farrell MacDonald.

"CAPPY RICKS RETURNS"—Cappy Ricks, Robert McWade; Bill Peck, Ray Walker; Barbara Blake, Florine McKinney; Tom Skinner, Lucien Littlefield; Winton, Bradley Page; Florry, Lois Wilson; Ossy Blake, Oscar Apfel; Matt Peasley, Kenneth Harlan.

"I'm going to Canada, folks. I—I can't stay around here."

"Is that so?" said Cappy. "Leave Bill to me a minute, people. I got to talk straight to him." He gave his daughter a nod. "When I ring, Florry!"

As soon as they were alone, Cappy asked Bill, in a kind of puzzled wonder: "What's on your mind?"

"It's Barbara. I—I-I sort of liked her, too."

"Did you, Bill?" Cappy was all sympathy. "Just too bad, wasn't it?"

"I didn't dream she'd sell us out. I didn't even dream she was Blake's girl. I fell over for her, Cappy—I was a prize mutt! She had me on a dog lead—then went along telling Winton everything I did. She came in with all that lot of thugs at her heels last night."

Bill was staring out of the window, seeing nothing but a grey, cloudy sky. Cappy felt for the bell button with his gnarled old hand.

"Bill, you've got her all wrong. She didn't even dream that those fellers were going to march in and tear up the Jap's signatures." She didn't know a word about 'em.

"Working in my room," Bill grunted. "Calling herself Miss Smith—making me like her!"

"She started out to help her dad, Bill. That's only right, hey? Then she saw how things were shaping—and she came to me. Yes, sir—she did! But I'd found out for myself that Burton was whisking all the news across to Ossy and Winton. That was why I sacked him."

Bill's frowns departed. The grey skies were changing into sunlight.

"Why, Cappy, you don't mean—"

The door opened. Barbara, looking prettier than ever, came in.

"Did you ring, sir?" she asked Cappy in a shy voice.

Cappy jerked a thumb towards Bill. "It's him. He don't want to stay in 'Frisko any more. Tell him good-bye, Barb."

A minute later Cappy was ringing up Blake's office.

"That you, Ossy? Cappy this end. Lovely morning, what?"

Receiver to his ear, his old face all a-grin, Cappy went on:

"Can you hear anything going on just behind me? Two young fools arranging to get married. Barbara—tell your poppy."

Barbara wriggled away from Bill to call breathlessly into the mouthpiece of the 'phone:

"Hallo, dad—Bill and I are going to Honolulu for a honeymoon. Cheer-o, dad!"

Cappy took the loudly crackling 'phone:

"No go, Ossy! The Act's dead as mutton! Shingles hold the day! Too bad Winton's boys got dusted down last night—after tearing up the wrong papers so hard. Yes, Ossy, that's so—they weren't our signatures at all—just a lot of duds I got ready in case— You're getting old, Ossy, you know! The parade's passing you by! But you can come along to the wedding. Twelve o'clock at this office. 'Bye, Ossy! I'll be seeing you!"

He helped himself to a cigar. Took out of his vest pocket his petrol-lighter. Flicked it at it—and it flamed up. He regarded the little blue point of light with delighted surprise.

"Folks, I've done it at last!" he crowed. "What d'you know about that!"

But Bill and Barbara were too busy to take any notice!

(By permission of the British Lion Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Robert McWade and Ray Walker)

May 25th, 1933.

"SHADOWS OF THE ORIENT"

(Continued from page 16)

enough that the raid on the Canton House had not only been for gambling, but for smuggled Chinese. It was Baxter's job to stop this smuggling, and it was obvious that he suspected Moss.

Viola dashed to the door—it was locked. The Chinaman came towards her. She picked up a chair and hurled it straight through a window, and she was on the sill before the Chinuk had recovered from his surprise. She raced across the field towards the 'plane.

It chanced that no one was watching the machine.

Moss was arguing about prices with Yung Yau when the Chinese cook burst in upon them.

"Lady go. Look, lady gone!"

He waved his arms.

Moss saw the machine taxiing across the ground, and saw it take off to climb skywards.

"Give me back the letter!" cried Yung Yau.

"I can't give you back the letter, you fool!" angrily shouted Moss. "The load's gone." He turned to his foreman. "Lufkin, get that other 'plane out. We've got to get that girl before she lands that load of Chinamen. Hurry—hurry!"

But the machine had to be fuelled, and valuable minutes passed before Moss took off. From his pocket he took out a deadly pistol, and his face was contorted with baffled fury.

Baxter was also in the air and was cruising round Mercer Canyon on the look-out for any suspicious machines. Down below the machine was being watched by Sullivan and his men.

Viola returned by the same route that she had taken, but as she came in sight of Mercer Canyon she realised that to land here might be foolish. If Moss were a crook he would have informed his men at the flying field, and when she landed they would seize her. Far best to fly on and land at the aerodrome.

Baxter sighted the 'plane and was certain that here was the 'plane carrying the Chinamen, and when Viola passed the field he reckoned that the pilot had sighted his machine and guessed he was a patrol, and was try-

ing a get-away. Baxter grinned and dived earthwards.

Viola realised this machine was very interested in the machine she was flying. She had no idea it was a patrol, and foolishly tried to rev up her engine. It was an unpleasant shock when machine-gun bullets whistled round her and she saw a white-helmeted figure signalling her to go down.

After that a lot of amazing things happened. No sooner had she landed than two car-loads of men came at a furious pace across the field. Out jumped Sullivan and his boys. They gave her one look, and then gathered round the machine. She saw sliding doors and a number of frightened, luddled figures. She had smuggled Chinamen across the Border. The other machine landed, and she gasped to see the pilot was Tony Baxter.

"Tony!"

"Viola!" He was startled. "I might have killed you. What are you doing flying this 'plane?"

"I didn't know there was anyone in there." She pointed towards the Chinamen. "I just took the 'plane to get away from Moss. He was going to leave me over the Border. How was I to know? I just went because it was a chance to fly."

"You wouldn't take my tip, you silly nitwit." Sadly he shook his head.

"You had to have your thrill."

"I'm sorry."

"Sorry? What good is that going to do?" Baxter cried gruffly. "Don't you realise you're implicated in this now. I've got to arrest you."

Sullivan thought the young man was being unnecessarily harsh. He missed the twinkle in the younger man's eyes.

The sound of a 'plane made Baxter gaze skywards, and out came powerful glasses.

"A similar bus to X-26," he muttered. "Perhaps Moss or one of his men followed me," suggested Viola. "There were several hangars at that ranch."

"Well, I will soon find out."

Baxter snited the words by dashing back to his machine.

Those on the ground witnessed the greatest thrill imaginable—a fight in the air. The glasses showed Baxter that the pilot was Moss, and he signalled the other to go down. Moss flew close, and then tried to empty his gun at the immigration inspector. At that distance shooting with a revolver was not

easy, and Baxter was not hit. Rat-tat-tat! went his machine-gun, and he went after Moss like a demon. The rogue twisted and turned and then tried to escape, but the Government machine was faster, more modern, and armed. His bullets connected with the petrol-tank, and Moss was forced down in flames.

Moss staggered out of the blazing wreck, and when Baxter landed nearby he tried to shoot the young inspector. Baxter wrenched the gun away, and Moss sagged limply—a bullet had smashed his right shoulder.

Sullivan appeared, and that worthy was holding a long strip of parchment covered with quaint characters—it was the half of a letter, and had been found on one of the smuggled Chinamen.

"Baxter, if we could only find the half of this we'd have all the evidence we need," he shouted.

And on James Moss they found the other half of the letter.

"They match," chorled Sullivan.

"I suppose you won't resign now?" teased Baxter.

"Maybe I'll think it over," Sullivan muttered, then pointed to the girl, whom they had brought in one of the cars to the scene of the crash. "What you going to do with this girl?"

"Well, there's nothing I can do but take her with me," Baxter seemed quite gloomy. "Give me your hand-cuffs." Sullivan handed them over. The girl looked for once in her life quite cowed and frightened. "I hate to do this, Viola."

Sullivan saw Baxter clip one cuff over the girl's wrist and then slip the other cuff on his own wrist. Baxter took the girl's arm and urged her towards his machine. Sullivan scratched his head.

"What'll I tell Graves about this?" he demanded.

Baxter grinned round.

"Tell him I eloped with the secret agent that helped me solve the case. I shouldn't hand in your resignation for a fortnight, because I'll be away all that time on a honeymoon."

Sullivan blinked his eyes—the young female prisoner had flung herself into her captor's arms.

(By permission of Pathé Pictures, Ltd., starring Regis Toomey as Tony Baxter and Esther Ralston as Viola Avery.)

"I take my stand on this!" says 'ALLY PALLY'



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Lucie Manette

MR. LORRY, when arrived at the Royal George in Dover, and unwrapped of his mufflers and overcoat, appeared as a very orderly old gentleman. He was neat, cleanly shaved and carefully dressed. He wore a brown suit with knee breeches and a flapped waistcoat, and on his head he sported a little crisp brown wig. He ordered his dinner and had just finished it when a rattling of wheels in the courtyard heralded a new arrival.

A minute later the waiter came to his table to say that a young lady was asking to see him.

He went to the apartment which the young lady had reserved. It was a large, dark room lighted by two candles, and, for a moment, Mr. Lorry did not see the girl, in a riding cloak, holding her hat in her hands, who was steadily regarding him from a pair of very blue eyes.

"Be seated, sir," she said in a gentle voice. "You are from Telson's Bank?"

"I am," Mr. Lorry now saw her plainly, with her fair hair and pretty face. She looked about seventeen, her eyebrows were almost knitted together in a queer little perplexity as she went on:

"I am told, sir, that some discovery has been made in connection with my poor father, so long dead."

"That is so," Mr. Lorry remained standing. "I am to take you to Paris. I am very proud of the privilege."

She came close to him, still searching his kindly old face. "Are you quite a stranger to me, sir?"

"Am I not, Miss Manette?"

She shook her fair curls.

"I do not know." She became sud-

dehly agitated. "You have something to tell me. Please—please do so quickly."

Mr. Lorry sat down.

"I wish to speak of a—of a customer of Telson's in Paris. A doctor of repute. I was at the French house at the time he—he disappeared, and his affairs were entirely in my hands—"

"You are telling me of my father," spoke the girl hurriedly. "I began to think it was you who brought me to England when an orphan of barely three years—" She checked herself to ask: "Am I right?"

"It was I," Mr. Lorry agreed. "Now, my dear child, pray control yourself. I have good news. That is to say, not bad news." He felt some difficulty now. "Your father's disappearance when you were a baby—"

"Disappearance, sir?" She dropped to her knees before him. "Twice you have used that word!"

"Don't kneel to me, my dear. Your father was thrown into prison. It was thought the Bastille— But, courage, my child, he has been released. We are going to Paris to fetch him. There, now—all is told!"

"Alive?" The word came from her as a cry from the heart. She sank softly to the floor.

"Good gracious! Miss Manette—Lucie, my child! Don't go on like this! Your father is recalled to life!"

A wild-looking woman, dressed in red, in a tight-fitting fashion and gifted with a head of fiery red hair, rushed into the room. She brushed Mr. Lorry aside and flung herself down beside the girl.

"Go and get things!" bawled this extraordinary person. "Don't stand

staring at me, you in brown! G&G' smelling-salts, cold water, vinegar!"

But Lucie Manette had already come to. She allowed the red-haired one to lift her and carry her to a chair. She opened her blue eyes to smile faintly.

"I think she's all right," Mr. Lorry ventured.

"My darling pretty!" cried the red one. "No thanks to you in brown! My ladybird, my beloved!"

"I hope," said Mr. Lorry, "that you accompany Miss Manette to Paris?"

"Is it likely I'd leave her to you?" came the snapped answer. "Yes, I'm coming—thank you for nothing! I'm her companion. I'm Miss Pross!" She brought out the name with such fearful emphasis that poor Mr. Lorry quite quailed.

The Shoemaker

A LARGE cask of wine had dropped from a cart and had burst its hoops. It lay on the stones just outside the wine-shop, with the red wine pouring forth. Everyone on the instant, in that narrow, unsavoury little street of the Ward of St. Antoine, in Paris, left their business, or their idleness, to rush to drink the spilled juice of the grape.

Noise and laughter and scrambling! Some flung themselves flat and lapped up the red pools like dogs. Others tried to scoop it up in their hands.

One fellow dipped his finger in a puddle of it and then scrawled the word "BLOOD" on a wall near by.

The master of the wine-shop, a big fellow in dull green clothes and yellow waistcoat, came away from the door where he had been standing. He spoke to the joker.

"What do you write there, my Gaspard? Is this the place for such jesting? Is there—no other place"—he lowered his voice—"in which to write such things?"

He swept his great hand across the noxious word, obliterating it. He went back to his shop, where his wife sat knitting behind the counter.

There was character in the face of this woman. She said no word, but her husband's attention was drawn to two persons in the crowded little shop, sitting together at a table. An elderly gentleman and a girl.

The wine-shop keeper took no notice of them, but moved along to where three men sat at dominoes in a corner. "How goes it, Jacques Defarge?" asked one of them. "Is the spilt wine all swallowed?"

"Every drop, Jacques," answered Defarge.

"It is not often," spoke the second of the three, "that these poor, miserable ones know the taste of bread, let alone wine."

"It is so, Jacques," Defarge returned.

The third man laughed as he pushed the double six into position. "Ah, so much the worse! Am I right, Jacques?"

"You are right, Jacques," agreed Defarge. "I wish you gentlemen to meet my wife."

The three named Jacques accompanied the fourth Jacques—M'sieur Defarge—to speak with madame, who greeted them with great calmness of spirit and never dropped one stitch of her knitting whilst they conversed in low tones with her.

The elderly gentleman came across from his table to Defarge.

"I wish a word with you," he whispered.

Defarge stepped to an inner door and opened it. The elderly gentleman whispered again. Almost at the first words Defarge started and became deeply attentive. At the end of the whispers, he answered:

"I will take you to him."

The elderly gentleman signalled to the girl.

Defarge told her:

"It is very high—many steps. We will go slowly."

"Is he alone?" she breathed.

"Who should be with him?" answered Defarge. "You are his daughter, I imagine? Yes? I am his old servant, Jacques Defarge. Step carefully." He led the way up a tortuous flight of stairs.

At the top landing they paused. Defarge unlocked and opened a door.

"It is better that I go in first."

A faint hammering had stopped on the opening of the door. Lucie glimpsed an old man with a ragged white beard, a hollow, dead face and exceedingly bright eyes. He was sitting before a trestle-board with a shoe in one hand and a hammer in the other. His clothes were in rags—he put up the hand that held the shoe and one could almost see the light from the window through it.

"Visitors," said Defarge. "Tell the gentleman what you are making."

"A lady's walking shoe," came a faint voice. "It is the latest style." He turned towards Lorry. "Did you ask my name? It is One Hundred and Five, North Tower." He put the shoe and hammer on the trestle-board.

"Doctor Manette," said Lorry earnestly. "Don't you remember me?"

The brightly vacant eyes turned to him, then away. Lorry asked again:

"Surely you remember me? You remember this man, Defarge, your old

servant? You recollect the Bank, Telson's, where we used to meet?"

Defarge put a hand on his arm.

"Hush! Let her speak with him."

Lucie had come forward. She knelt down before the wreck of a man whose memory was gone. She put one arm about him and he spoke in a kind of dying sigh.

"Who are you?" He touched her hair. "It is the same," he muttered. "But how is it possible?" He felt for a little soiled paper in his broken pocket and brought it out. Opened it and showed her a few brittle hairs. "She had laid her head on my shoulder that night when I was taken away—and these hairs were on my sleeve."

Lucie's tears fell fast. But she held him safely. His eyes rested on hers and he knew her for herself, when she whispered brokenly:

"Father, dearest father—I have come to take you home!"

"Only a Child Killed—"

THE Marquis de St. Evremond was a very fine gentleman indeed. A high-and-mighty gentleman who considered all others, with the solitary exception of His Majesty King Louis, to be as dirt beneath his noble feet. He was just now returning from a reception at the King's Palace of the Tuileries to his country house at Versailles, and monsieur le marquis was in a deuce of a hurry.

His gilded chariot of four horses and two postilions was racketing along the narrow streets of the Ward of St. Antoine with a supreme disregard of those mean folk on foot who were in the street about their usual business. With a rattle and clatter the chariot was dashing down a particularly narrow street when, just by a wine-shop, a little boy ran out of a house into the road.

A loud cry followed a sickening jolt of the wheels. The chariot stopped and monsieur le marquis looked out of the window.

"What has gone wrong?" he asked languidly.

A shortish fellow in a red nightcap had caught up a small bundle from amongst the feet of the four horses, now very restive and inclined to bolt. This fellow in a nightcap laid the small bundle on the kerb and began howling like a wild animal.

"Pardon, m'sieur le marquis," spoke a submissive man from those in a crowd round the chariot. "It is Gaspard. It is his child."

The man in a nightcap started up, his ugly face distorted by rage and grief. "Killed!" he screamed. "My little one! Dead! Dead!"

Those in the crowd regarded monsieur le marquis with eyes which told him nothing. He regarded them as if they had been rats come out of a drain.

"It is extraordinary," he said, "that you people cannot take care of yourselves and your children. How do I know what harm you have done to my horses?" He drew out his purse and took a gold coin from it. "See—give him that." He tossed the money at the man in a nightcap.

A thick-set fellow had come out of the wine-shop. He tried to comfort the heart-broken father who was still crying, "Dead—dead!"

"Better dead, my Gaspard," said the man from the wine-shop. "than to live in this misery which seems never ending."

The marquis sank back in his seat and called to the driver:

"Go on—waste no more time!"

An hour late for his dinner, he arrived at his country house. A tall, dark, handsome young fellow was talking on the steps of the château to a thin, tired, elderly man. M'sieur le marquis greeted them.

"Ah, Gabelle, you see I am arrived at last! A tiresome matter on the road delayed me." To the dark young man he said: "And you, nephew Charles—you are from London?"



"You have had your bottle, Sydney!" said Mr. Stryver, pointing accusingly at him with the stem of his pipe.

"Yesterday. I return at once."
"M'sieur le marquis pinched his lips together.

"May one ask why?"

"I cannot endure to see the unhappiness and injustice which surround us, sir. The needless misery—I believe our name to be the most detested one in the whole of France."

"Detestation of the high is the involuntary homage of the low," smiled his uncle. "Continue, dear Charles—Gabelle and I are most interested. By the way, Gabelle, has a gentleman from England called for me?"

Gabelle answered deferentially.
"Yes, sir. But he did not give his name."

"I will see him. Good-bye, then, nephew. May you find things more to your peculiar fancy in England. I cannot stop talking with you—it is too cold."

"I came to tell you that I renounce all rights in this property," said the young man. "I am going to work in a country for which I can have respect. Where men try, at least, to be fair to their fellows."

He climbed into the saddle of his horse and rode off under the growing mists.

"Do not be harsh in judgment upon him, sir," Gabelle said. "He is young."

"He is a fool," said m'sieur le marquis. "And you are his tutor!"

In the waiting-room in the château a sly-looking, hook-nosed man was standing. He bowed low to monsieur on his entry.

"Barsad," said the marquis "Follow my nephew to England. See that he is arrested under one of their absurd laws. Give evidence—I wish him laid by for a season. He will call himself Darnay, I expect—his mother's maiden name. You can draw on M'sieur Gabelle for a hundred English pounds. Don't stop to chatter—go!"

On Trial

IT was early spring in King's Bench Walk in the Temple in London. At the small hostelry at the west gates of the Temple a young man was sleeping in a chair beside the newly lighted fire in the bar parlour. He was unkempt, untidy and yawning prodigiously when the man at the tavern came to him.

"Ten o'clock, sir. Past ten o'clock."
"Eh?" yawned the young man, sitting up. "Ten o'clock at night?"

"Morning, Mr. Carton. You told me to call you."

The tavern-keeper stirred the fire, making as much noise as he could. Mr. Carton stood the racket awhile; then suddenly got up, flung on his shabby old hat and walked out. He slouched into the Temple Gardens and rather aimlessly wandered along to the chambers of his employer, Mr. King's Counsel Stryver. He entered and flung himself at once into a chair by the fire.

Mr. Stryver came to him from his private room.

"You are late, Sydney."

"A little. Nothing worth mentioning."

"You have had your bottle, Sydney," continued the portly Mr. Stryver, pointing accusingly at him with the stem of the pipe in his fat hand.

"Two, my dear fellow. Possibly three."

"There's a treason case on this morning at the Bailey," said Stryver with reproach in his booming voice. "The Attorney-General is prosecuting."

"Him?" said Carton. "Oh, him?"

"A strong case, Sydney. Have you prepared our defence?"

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"Give me the papers," yawned Carton. Stryver, frowning horribly, did so. The disgruntled young man glanced at them. "Information laid against Charles Darnay, Frenchman, accused of treason at the instance of John Barsad, gentleman, and supported by one Roger Cly." He lifted his eyes to Mr. Stryver. "I don't like these names. Barsad and Cly—you can tell at once that they are scoundrels. Whereas Darnay"—he shrugged—"an agreeable, if scarcely French, name."

"It is actually d'Aulnais," came the answer. "His mother's name. He calls himself Darnay."

Carton grinned at him.

"Leave me alone for an hour," he said, spreading the papers out before him. "Get me a drink. Have one yourself."

"Something hot?"

"Hot and strong," said Carton, studying the papers before him.

"You drink too much," grumbled his employer.

"So do you," Carton retorted. "If any man can drink too much, which I doubt." He added, lazily: "I fancy I know Barsad—a tavern acquaintance. I'll look him up."

In the Court at the Old Bailey, at five minutes to twelve, Mr. Stryver was there in wig and gown, sitting at his desk. Sprawling in a seat next to him was Sydney Carton, gown awry on his shoulders, his wig more or less in place over his tumbled hair. His good looks were sadly marred by his general untidiness as he stared unseeingly at the high, dirty ceiling of the Court. His hands were thrust deep in his breeches pockets.

In the dock, handsome and upright, stood Charles Darnay, guarded by two warders. In the seats reserved for witnesses were prominently two men—one a sly-looking, hook-nosed person, the other a low fellow with beetling brows and unwashed face. Not so prominently were four others—an elderly, white-haired gentleman with bright eyes, but now no beard. A sweet-faced fair girl sat next to him, dressed in a fine, neat manner—next to her, a brown-suited old gentleman. Next to him, a strong-featured, red-haired woman who surveyed the whole Court, including the Lord Chief Justice, with utter contempt.

The case against the prisoner was outlined in fiery words by the Solicitor-General. It appeared that the prisoner was a "false traitor to our serene and illustrious and noble prince, our gracious King, George the Third—and that, by traitorous comings and goings between the dominions of our said serene and illustrious King and the Court of the French Louis, had been able to reveal to the said Louis what forces our said illustrious, etc., had in preparation to send to Canada and to North America."

Mr. John Barsad, gentleman, was called. He had seen the prisoner handling papers to a Frenchman.

Mr. Stryver rose, but Mr. Carton plucked at his gown:

"No questions yet!" he whispered.

Mr. Roger Cly was called and stated, with great volubility, that he had been in service with the prisoner and, in arranging his clothes, had found lists of names of officers and gentlemen in the King's service. He had felt it his duty to bring this information before the Court. He was a true Briton and hoped he had done the right thing.

Carton whispered to Stryver, who rose to cross-examine.

"Have you ever been charged with theft?" he asked Cly very sweetly.

"Me, sir? No, sir!"

"I have a note here that you were con-

victed last year of stealing a silver teapot," said Stryver, still sweetly.

"It was a mustard pot! And it was only plated."

"Thank you," said Stryver. "That's all!"

Mr. Jarvis Lorry was called and gave evidence that he had seen the prisoner on a packet ship on a certain night in the last November. He added:

"I was travelling with two companions. A gentleman and a lady. They are here."

"Thank you. I call Miss Lucie Manette."

The fair girl rose in her place and, with a piteous glance at the prisoner, stepped forward to take Mr. Lorry's place in the witness-box.

"Miss Manette, have you seen the prisoner before? You have? You are the lady referred to by Mr. Lorry?"

"Most unhappily, I am!"

The judge took a large pinch of snuff. "Answer the questions—don't remark upon them!"

"Miss Manette, did you have any conversation with the prisoner?"

"When he came on board he noticed that my father"—Lucie turned to rest her blue eyes on Dr. Manette—"was much fatigued and ill. I had made a bed for him on the deck—that he might have the air. There were no other passengers but we four—my father, my companion, and Mr. Lorry. And this gentleman."

"Do you mean the prisoner?" demanded the judge. "If so—say so!"

"The prisoner was so good as to advise me how I could shelter my dear father from the cold wind. He arranged the bed for me. He expressed great gentleness and kindness for my father's weak state—"

"Let me interrupt you a moment," said the Solicitor-General. "Had the prisoner come aboard alone?"

"There were two French gentlemen with him. They only stayed a few minutes on the ship."

"There were papers handed about? Like these?" He held up some documents.

"I didn't see anything of the kind. The gentleman—prisoner, I mean—was most kind to us. Most considerate—"

Her voice broke. "I hope I may not be doing him harm to-day."

"Did he not speak about America?"

"He tried to explain to me how the quarrel between England and the Colonies had arisen. He added, in a joking way, that perhaps George Washington, one day, might have as great a name in history as King George the Third. There was no harm in saying so—it was only a joke."

"A joke?" The astute lawyer glanced at the jury. "A joke, gentlemen—you hear?"

Dr. Manette was called. He had little to say. He had no remembrance.

"My mind is a blank," he told the judge. "I had been in prison in the Bastille for eighteen long years. I employed myself in making shoes, but I am a properly qualified doctor of medicine. I am practising again in Soho."

Mr. Stryver, prompted by Carton, rose again.

"I would like your Lordship's permission to recall Mr. Barsad."

Barsad came back to the witness-box rather doubtfully. Stryver's first question was not very encouraging:

"Ever been kicked downstairs?"

"Never! I received a kick at the top of a staircase and—fell down of my own accord."

"Ever borrow any money from the prisoner?"

Gabelle stared out over the parched countryside—he thought he was alone.



"Yes."

"Repaid him?"

"I'm going to."

Stryver boomed suddenly:

"You are quite sure the prisoner is the man you saw treacherously handing a Frenchman these alleged lists of His Majesty's Forces in America?"

"Positive."

Stryver turned to Carton.

"Stand up, Mr. Carton, please. Take off your wig—thank you. Now stand beside the dock. Mr. Barsad, look well at these two men. Are they not very like each other?"

Allowing for Carton's careless and slovenly appearance, they were so like each other that an audible gasp of astonishment went round the Court. Stryver thundered:

"Now, Mr. Barsad—are you still positive it was the prisoner?"

"I—well, no. That is to say—not quite so positive."

"Thank you. You can sit down!"

The jury retired. Ten minutes later they brought in a verdict of "Not Guilty." The judge helped himself to snuff and dismissed the prisoner.

In the well of the Court they gathered round Charles Darnay to congratulate him—Lucie, Sydney Carton, Mr. Stryver—and Miss Pross. This red-haired lady expressed the general feeling somewhat crudely:

"You're a lucky young man! If they'd found you guilty, you would have been put on a hurdle and then half hanged, then you'd have been taken down still alive—and cut into four pieces!"

"So they tell me," said Darnay quietly. "And I am all the more obliged to my friend here." He gave Stryver a grateful glance.

"You can thank this one," said Stryver, with a hand on Carton's shoulder. "He prepared the defence—though how he came to notice you two were so alike beats me! Looking at you now, well—it isn't so striking."

"I had to play a game of skittles with

Mr. Barsad," stated Carton in a whimsical way. "I had to find out a few things. It involved a certain quantity of mulled ale." He had been covertly regarding Lucie: "The idea that you were like me, Darnay, came as an inspiration. I hope Miss Manette thinks no worse of me?"

"I am deeply thankful to you, sir," she answered.

Dr. Manette had come to them. He put his hand on Lucie's arm.

"I would like to go home," he muttered. "I feel dazed here—uncanny—afraid."

Lucie drew his hand into hers.

"Come, dearest, I am more than ready." She turned to Carton. "I hope you will call upon us, sir, at our address in Soho. Mr. Stryver is aware of it. You also, sir," she added to Stryver.

"I will," boomed the King's Counsel. "A very great pleasure!"

Mr. Lorry was talking to a red-faced man in a corner of the Court.

"Jerry Cruncher, take this message." He had written on a card the one word, "Acquitted!"

Sydney Carton and Darnay left the Court together.

"Let's go and celebrate," Carton proposed.

"I hardly seem to belong to this world again," said Darnay.

"You are glad to belong to it?" Carton drew him away. "As for me, my greatest desire is to forget that I belong to it."

He led Darnay down Ludgate Hill into Fleet Street; thence up a covered way into a tavern. Here, in a little private room, they dined together. After dinner, throughout which Carton drank a whole bottle of Burgundy, the young lawyer asked, rather sneeringly:

"My double—why don't you give your toast?"

"What toast?"

"It's on the tip of your tongue!"

Darnay raised his glass.

"You are right." He stood up.

"Lucie Manette!"

Carton didn't rise.

"Lucie Manette," he repeated. He drank deeply; then flung his empty glass across the room, shattering it to fragments against the wall. "Waiter, another glass!" he shouted, drunkenly.

Footsteps!

THE lodgings of Doctor Manette were on a street corner not far from Soho Square. On the afternoon of a certain Sunday, Mr. Lorry walked from the sunny streets of Clerkenwell, where he lived, to visit the doctor. Miss Pross was at home—Lucie and her father were walking out.

Miss Pross welcomed Mr. Lorry in her especial manner.

"It's you—is it?"

"I believe so," said Mr. Lorry. "May I come in?"

Miss Pross had just been cleaning the house down—she showed Lorry all the improvements she had effected. In the doctor's bed-room, in a corner, stood the disused shoe-maker's board and his box of tools, much as they had stood in that fifth-floor room over the wine-shop in that mean suburb of St. Antoine, Paris.

"I wonder that he keeps these reminders of his sufferings," said Mr. Lorry.

"Why wonder!" came the quick inquiry. "Pooh!"

Mr. Lorry changed the subject.

"And how are you in health?"

"Nothing to boast about," said Miss Pross. "I'm much worried. I don't want dozens of people, not at all worthy of my ladybird, calling and calling here!"

"Dozens?" questioned Mr. Lorry.

"Hundreds," emphasised Miss Pross. "But perhaps they keep the doctor from thinking too much about himself. I'm always afraid he may relapse."

Mr. Lorry agreed with a shake of his brown wig.

"I often wonder that Manette, unquestionably innocent of any crime, should never mention the name of the enemy who so brutally brought about his punishment."

"He's afraid of the whole subject," said Miss Pross. "Touch ever so lightly upon that string—and he always changes for the worse. Sometimes I hear him in the night, pacing the room—up and down, up and down. Does he think then of his long imprisonment? You know he does," she went on accusingly. "So don't argue!"

"I wasn't going to," said Mr. Lorry. "Ah, I hear the front door—they have returned."

"Yes," said Miss Pross. "And now the thousands of visitors will appear—like leaves in autumn!"

But the only visitor was Mr. Charles Darnay—and he seemed most modest and charming.

They had an early dinner; then afterwards went into the garden. Miss Pross and Mr. Lorry brought chairs, and they sat under the shade of an old plane tree. It was oppressively hot, as if a storm was brewing.

Darnay talked about London, asking Lucie if she had seen this and that place. He asked if they had visited the Tower of London.

"I have been there," he added with a grim smile. "I saw it very much from the inside! I was told a strange story while I was waiting trial." He shuddered a little, despite the heat. "Some workmen, whilst making alterations, came upon an old dungeon built up and forgotten for many years. The stones were covered with inscriptions cut by prisoners who had languished there—dates, names, wild, unhappy prayers. Below one inscription—'D.I.G.—dig,' they examined the floor, and in the trodden earth, beneath a stone, was found a mildewed paper which once had borne writing. It may have been the last will of some poor creature—"

"Father!" cried Lucie, breaking in. "What is the matter? You are ill!"

Manette had started up, his hand to his head. His manner and looks terrified them. He recovered himself almost at once.

"It is raining," he stuttered. "Don't you feel it? Large drops—a storm. . . . Let us go in."

They returned to the parlour, and Miss Pross made tea. Sydney Carton came in, but no dozens and hundreds of people as yet! Mr. Lorry kept looking for them.

"The rain is falling," spoke Manette. "But it comes slowly."

"It comes surely," said Carton.

They listened, all of them, to the hurry in the streets—of people speeding to shelter before the storm should break. This corner house was a corner for echoes. Footsteps coming and going—yet never a footfall there.

"A multitude," said Darnay, "and yet a solitude."

"Sometimes I have sat here of an evening," said Lucie, "until I have fancied, while listening, that all these echoes are echoes of the footsteps that are coming and going in all our lives."

"There's a big crowd coming into our lives then," Carton smiled.

"A foolish fancy," Lucie went on. "I only yield to it when I am alone."

"I take all those echoes into my life," said Carton. "I ask no questions and make no stipulations. If there are great crowds bearing down upon us, I take them all to myself! I will see them."

Lightning flashed as he spoke, followed by a crash of thunder.

"And I will hear them!" he laughed scornfully. "Whether they come like that—fast, fierce, and furious!"

The rush and roar of the storm silenced him. No voice could be heard in it.

Late that night Jerry Cruncher, with his lantern, was escorting Mr. Lorry to his home in Clerkenwell. Mr. Lorry, May 30th, 1936.

mindful of footpads, always had Jerry to call for him and light him on his way.

"What a night!" said Mr. Lorry. "Almost enough to bring the dead out of their graves!"

"I never see a night what would do that," Jerry declared.

Carton and Darnay had walked with them to the main road. All four stopped at a corner.

"Good-night, Mr. Carton!" said Lorry. "Good-night, Mr. Darnay! Shall we ever see such a night again together?"

Perhaps! Perhaps see a great crowd of enemies, with hideous rush and roar, bearing down upon them!

"Tell Me Your Secrets When I Ask"

A YEAR had gone by. Mr. Charles Darnay had become a clerk in Telson's Bank. In the evenings he taught French to young people in the neighbourhood of Soho.

It was the close of a summer day, when he knew Lucie to be out walking with Miss Pross, that he called on Dr. Manette. He found the old gentleman sitting in his armchair by an open window.

Manette was a very different man. He looked well and strong, and the removal of that shaggy beard had added years of youth to him. He greeted Darnay with heartiness.

"Charles, I rejoice to see you. I am all alone."

"Doctor, I want a few words with you. I knew that Lucie would be out—"

"Bring a chair close to me, Charles," said Manette gently. "Is it Lucie you wish to speak about?"

"I love her, doctor. I dearly love her."

"I believe you, Charles. I do you that justice." Manette's manner had become constrained. "Yes, I believe you."

Manette's voice was low when he asked:

"Have you spoken to her?"

"No, sir. I—I think she knows. I hope she knows. I have dared to hope." Darnay took a firm tone. "I came to you, sir, to ask that I may speak to her. I must tell you, first, about myself. Like you, I am an exile—a voluntary exile from France—driven from it by the injustice and unkindness towards their fellows which I have seen perpetrated there by the high and the rich. I am working hard in this land of my adoption, and I am, in a small way, succeeding."

"Do you seek any promise from me?" asked Manette.

"I do," Charles answered. "Without you I would have no hope. I understand that Lucie will never leave you. Her father comes before everyone—everything."

"I do not know what my daughter thinks," said Manette.

"You don't think there is someone else?" cried Charles in alarm.

"You have seen Mr. Carton here"—Manette's manner became more easy—"also the important Mr. Stryver. But I will not tease you, Charles, although I have seen that Lucie likes young Carton. She is grateful to him. Can you guess why? I fancy you can. But this is idle talk. What do you wish of me?"

"Your help, sir. I will tell you who I am, and why I left Versailles—"

"Stop!" cried Manette sharply. "Stop!"

"I must have no secrets from you," Darnay was saying, when Manette laid cold hands upon his as they sat together.

The old man spoke with trembling passion:

"Tell me your secrets when I ask—not now! If your suit with Lucie

prosper, you shall tell me on your wedding morning. I don't want to know." His voice shook. "No, no, never!"

It was as if he put something horrible from him. His eyes were bright and burning.

"Leave me now. I think you may hope. . . . I will not stand in your way. . . . Promise me you will speak no word of who you may be to Lucie?"

"I promise."

"God bless you and keep you, Charles!"

When Lucie returned, she heard a sound of hammering in her father's bedroom. She crept upstairs and peeped in, unseen. Manette was at his bench, making shoes.

The marriage day was shining, the sun was warm and kindly. They were waiting, the beautiful, fair-haired bride, and Miss Pross in a new, very stiff and starched frock, and Mr. Jarvis Lorry. Charles and the doctor were having a little confidential talk behind closed doors.

"This is a great and happy day," said Mr. Lorry. "Don't cry, Miss Pross."

"I am not crying!" snapped the red-haired one. "You are!"

"I? Oh, really, no!"

"I saw you," Miss Pross denounced him. "And after such a present as you've sent! Silver plate—not a fork nor a spoon in the whole collection that I didn't cry over last night when I unpacked them."

"Did you now?" said Mr. Lorry, much gratified. "Ah, dear, dear me! To think I might have been married any time these fifty years!"

"You were a bachelor in your cradle," rejoined Miss Pross. "You couldn't help yourself."

The parlour door opened and the doctor came out with Charles Darnay. The doctor was deathly pale, but he was composed and steady. He offered his arm to Lucie.

"Come, my darling. I am going to give you to him."

Lucie clung to her father a little hysterically. But the sun was shining and Charles was gazing upon her with such love and tenderness. Nothing but happiness ahead.

A quiet marriage at the little church, soon over. Then back to the little house in Soho. Lucie whispered to her husband:

"Was Sydney there? I didn't see him."

"I saw no one but you," said Charles. They were happy, all of them. Presently the young couple, radiant as the sun itself, drove away. Manette waved to them from the doorstep until their carriage was out of sight. Then he went up to his room. Mr. Lorry went back to Telson's for an hour or two; then came back, a little uneasy in mind.

Miss Pross met him at the door with a face of woe.

"Listen, listen!" she wept. "Do you hear?"

A low sound of hammering tolled like a midnight bell through the quiet house. "What's that?" Mr. Lorry gasped.

"What's to be told to my ladybird?" asked Miss Pross. "He's—he's making shoes again!"

Mr. Lorry ran past her up the stairs. He opened the bedroom door—to see Manette hard at work at his bench. He looked down as Lorry entered.

"A young lady's walking shoe," he muttered. "The latest style."

"Manette!" cried Lorry firmly.

"Look at me! Think again—that is not your duty. You are a doctor—put aside those things."

The shoemaker stared at him. "My duty?" he questioned in a puzzled way. "Do you mean there is someone ill and needing me?"

"Yes," spoke Lorry. "I need you. I am very ill!"

Manette flung down his tools. "My dear old friend—why didn't you tell me!"

His madness passed from him. He was once again the kind, clever doctor. Lorry submitted himself to stethoscope and a severe medical examination.

"Dear, dear!" sighed Manette professionally. "I must prescribe a tonic." He thought a moment or two. "I know—let's go for a walk in the air!"

"With all my heart!" Lorry agreed. "A walk—why not?"

"This from Jacques!"

It was a hot, airless July night in 1789. The heat brooded like a shroud over all France and made more stifling still the narrow streets of Paris, especially those of the sordid suburb of St. Antoine. In the little wine-shop kept by M'sieur and Madame Defarge there was much coming and going, much furtive whispering between one and another of the patrons. In their especial corner sat the three men named Jacques; for ever, seemingly, playing dominoes.

Madame Defarge knitted from morning to night, serene and watchful. She was tireless at her knitting, and laid aside each garment with care when it was finished. She had beside her a cut rose in a vase of water. Sometimes she lifted this flower from its vase and placed it in her dark hair.

Whenever she did this, the wine-shop emptied itself of its customers, save that one to whom she wished to speak. Some messenger from one of the many hot-

beds of unrest which were springing up all over France.

Monsieur Gabelle, secretary to Monsieur le Marquis de St. Evremond at the château at Versailles, was a man borne down by cares. He ventured to speak plainly to the guests at one of the marquis' receptions. He dared to warn them that there were dark clouds gathering. He had been laughed at, sneered at, and told by m'sieur le marquis to mind his own business.

"Which, after all, is my business, Gabelle," m'sieur concluded. "You are oppressed with the system under which we live? My friend, I find the system very good." He glanced round the luxurious room in which they were talking—m'sieur le marquis in his gold-and-brocade chair; Gabelle standing, as a servant should, before him. "I will die, my dear, stupid Gabelle, in the system under which my family has always lived."

"There will come trouble," Gabelle told him. "Great trouble. It is impossible to remain unaware of it. The people are living in misery. They are starving whilst we revel and waste meat and bread. They are living in hovels unfit for pigs, whilst we—"

"Live in some degree of comfort." St. Evremond finished for him. "Do you intend to give up your position?"

Gabelle was silent.

"It is said," continued his master carelessly, "that England is a refuge for many. You remember a compatriot who has found a refuge there. A doctor?"

"I do."

"With his daughter," went on St. Evremond. "He spent many years in prison. Gabelle, you may also remember, for interfering with my plans. But you are fatigued—let us go to bed. Ring for my valet."

In his bed-room, the valet come and gone, m'sieur le marquis prepared for

sleep. He rang for Gabelle when he had got himself leisurely into the great golden bed. Gabelle, grave and sick at heart, came again to him.

"A shadow seemed to pass my window," said Evremond. "Perhaps it was my fancy, but I would like you to step out to the balcony and make sure there are no shadows. It is very warm to-night, Gabelle—you must see that my room is properly aired each day."

Gabelle went to the balcony, with its quaint, gargoyled stone faces against the creeper-clad walls. If there was another gargoyled living face there, it was hidden in the gloom as he stared out over the parched countryside. The sky was blue-black with heat. A dull silence prevailed everywhere.

Down in the miserable village was complete darkness.

"They cannot afford to buy even a farthing candle!" Gabelle told himself bitterly. "They are hungry, naked, suffering—they are hating us with all the dreadful strength of their weakness."

He returned to his master. "There is nothing, sir, but the coming of a storm."

"How fortunate, my dear Gabelle, that we are so safe from storms," spoke Evremond sleepily. "Good-night—I look to the pleasure of seeing you again in the morning."

Gabelle tiptoed out of the great bedroom.

Shadows gathered, deepening the night. The curtains at the open window moved softly. A still deeper shadow came out of them—it held a dagger in its hand; it crept towards the golden bed. It paused for a moment to make sure that m'sieur le marquis was lying on his side asleep. It felt for his breast, then, as m'sieur stirred a little, the dagger was struck home straight into the arrogant heart beneath the lace-covered breast.

A choking cry was unheard in the sudden boom of thunder that rolled up along the fields and gardens.

Round the hilt of the dagger was a frill of paper. On it was scrawled:

"Drive him fast to his tomb! This from Jacques the Fifth!"



"You'll never pull this off!" Barsad muttered.

Taking the Bastille

THE murder of St. Evremond was a warning. But the approaching footsteps of a deeply embittered people found no echo in the mincing measures of the minut. A week went by—Gaspard (Jacques the Fifth) was caught and hanged by the neck on a gibbet outside the Bastille, and allowed to swing there, naked and dead, under the scorching sun.

Foreign soldiers were brought in to quell any risings of the people.

Said Madame Defarge, always knitting:

"Starving people might wait a long time before fighting French soldiers, but against hired foreigners—" She shrugged her shoulders. "Any day, any hour!"

A huge woman, with wild, streaming black hair, cackled a high, shrill laugh:

"Say, any minute!" she cried. "As sure as they call me La Vengeance—any moment!"

A sly, hook-nosed gentleman entered the wine shop. Madame Defarge saw him without turning her head. She carelessly picked up the cut rose in the vase and twined it in her hair. One by one the customers went out, La Vengeance last of all.

"Cognac," spoke the hook-nosed one. "The best you have."

Madame served him.

"You come from England, m'sieur?"

"I? Oh—well, yes. I am John Barsad—half-French." Defarge had entered the shop. "And this is M'sieur Jacques Defarge?"

Defarge shook his great head.

"You mistake. My name is not Jacques."

"I'm sorry, m'sieur. My business here is in regard to the late Marquis de St. Evremond. The heir to the title is residing in England—he is a clerk in a bank."

Madame Defarge questioned slyly:

"He will soon reside at the château at Versailles, no doubt?"

"It was burned to the ground last night," said Barsad, swigging at his brandy-and-water. "Another glass, please. The gentleman is married to the pretty daughter of Dr. Manette—you remember the doctor?"

"Do I?" Madame had to think. Just then a company of foreign soldiers came marching by. Barsad ran out to join them, forgetting his drink. Madame Defarge glanced at her husband and removed the rose from her hair.

The wine shop filled up. The three domino men—called Jacques One, Two, and Three—came in together. Their leader called sharply to Defarge:

"It is come, Jacques! The people wait your command!"

Defarge flung off his apron.

"Keep near to me, Jacques Three!" he cried. "And do you, Jacques One and Two, separate and put yourselves at the head of as many patriots as you can. Where is my wife?"

Madame reappeared from the parlour as he spoke.

"Here you see me," she answered. "I do not knit to-day. I go with you, for the moment. Presently I will lead the women."

Dense crowds of people had poured into the narrow street. All were armed with sticks, axes, bars of iron, pikes—any weapon they could find. A tremendous, never-ceasing roar rose from their throats, briefly silenced when Defarge came to the door of his shop.

As a whirlpool has a centre, so all the raging circled round him.

"Patriots and friends!" cried Defarge. "We are ready! My comrades

will serve out arms—all that I have been able to collect—"

Yells of triumph rent the torrid air.

"We will make history this fourteenth day of July!" went on Defarge. "Come forward all those who can handle a musket and shoot straight!"

A scene of wild confusion followed, but soon Defarge was marching at the head of a living sea, rising wave upon wave. Alarm bells were ringing, drums were beating—but the sea of long-oppressed, furious people was thundering loudest of all.

"To the Bastille!" Defarge shouted.

They came flooding the square before the grim, gaunt battlemented building. They swept the foreign soldiers away like chaff before the wind. They began to shoot at the guards seen on the roof as these hurriedly fired down upon them, trying to pick out the leaders.

Deep ditch, double drawbridges, massive stone walls, eight great towers, cannons on the battlements—fire and smoke and the ceaseless roaring of an unchained mad monster—the common people of the city! An hour of riot and confusion; then Defarge was seen on a ladder, axe in hand, with Jacques Three, ascending under a hail of bullets, to the chains which held the main drawbridge. A lull came whilst thousands upon thousands of eyes watched their dauntless leaders.

The strokes of the axes resounded on the coupling links of the great chains; a ceaseless firing came from the roof of the doomed building—then came a sudden, mighty rush and a crash as the drawbridge fell brokenly across the ditch!

Defarge dropped down to lead his army.

But yells and cries told him of something amiss. French troops had come charging into the square. The mob fell back before them, sullenly.

The soldiers formed into double ranks, with muskets at the "present." They faced the mob.

"About!" shrieked their captain. The soldiers faced the Bastille, muskets elevated to sweep the battlements.

"Fire!"

On the instant with this salvo, the cheers of the people rent the smoke-laden burning air.

"The soldiers are with us!" came the cry.

Unheralded, un hoped for, Frenchmen in uniform had joined the Frenchmen in rags. Rebellion had turned to Revolution!

Defarge was swept into the Bastille at the head of as motley and ferocious a mob as the world has ever seen. A white flag fluttered from one of the eight great towers. The Bastille had fallen!

"Release the prisoners!" screamed a voice. At once it was taken up by ten thousand throats. "Release the prisoners!"

Billow upon billow of that mighty sea swept over the prison. When the foremost billows had passed, Defarge laid his hand upon the breast of one of the trembling warders.

"The North Tower!" he hissed. "Cell 105!"

"There is no one there," quavered the man.

"Kill him!" spoke Jacques Three.

The terrified man put up a hand.

"I will take you to the cell!"

"Quickly, then!" They came up many stairs to a small prison—four blackened walls with a rusted iron ring in one of them. Defarge's fierce eyes scanned the place. "Here, Jacques—"

He pointed to some cut-in words on a

brick at the side of the small fireplace. "See 'A. M.'—Alexandre Manette! See also 'A poor physician.' Lend me your crowbar."

Defarge loosened the brick on which the initials had been cut, forcing the crowbar through into the chimney. Something fluttered to the hearth—Defarge snatched it up and thrust it into his pocket.

"Collect straw and wood and fire the place," Defarge commanded. "We will burn this den of infamy to the ground!"

The Bastille was soon blazing from end to end. Eight great towers fell in, one by one, as night came to make the scenes in Paris more dreadful still. All the great houses had been sacked; the shops had been pillaged; hundreds of the hated "aristocrats" had been caught and hacked to death. Thousands had been herded like sheep for slaughter in the civil prisons, to wait a trial where the verdict of "Guilty" was already pronounced.

A Cry of Despair

IN Telson's Bank the staff were very busy. Nobles and rich folk from France had come flying post haste to London. They crowded into Telson's to get money, freely mortgaging their estates. Telson junior (aged seventy), called on Mr. King's Counsel Stryver for advice.

Mr. Stryver, accompanied as ever, by his "brain"—Mr. Sydney Carton—gave forth the beginnings of his opinion in the private room at the bank.

"These aristocrats are fools," Stryver was booming. "They aren't firm enough! They should hang a few of these rascals to lamp-posts—let 'em swing—and that's all the revolution there would be!"

"The time may come," said Carton gently, "when George Washington will be a better remembered Englishman than George the Third."

"Eh?" Stryver turned to him.

"What's that?"

"Your kind of talk lost us the American colonies," said Carton. He turned to Telson junior, a mild, bald little man. "You business fellows read nothing but ledgers. You're badly informed. This revolution has got to be spelled in capital letters. I wouldn't lend these runaway French nobles one single penny. Their estates are already gone beyond recall."

"Exactly what I was going to say," declared Stryver. "My considered opinion!"

Telson junior rang for Mr. Lorry.

"The bank will advance no more money on properties in Paris or France," Telson junior stated. "Inform the cashiers, Mr. Lorry, if you please."

In the bank, Darnay was sorting letters just in from abroad. Amongst them was one addressed to himself under the title "Marquis de St. Evremond." It was from his old tutor, Gabelle. It ran:

"M'sieur. I have been seized and brought to Paris on a charge of treason. I am to be summoned before the Tribunal of the People, and shall lose my head unless I have your immediate personal assistance. I am confined in the prison of the "Abbaye" in Paris—it is in vain that I tell them I have never collected, nor ever sent you any rent moneys. I do not know how or where to address this cry of utter despair—but Citizen Defarge, who is now a great power, states that you are employed in the bank of Messrs. Telson, and that you alone can save me. So I write to you, m'sieur, praying that this

may reach you before I am destroyed. Your afflicted old friend—GABELLE.”
 “14th Sept., 1789.”

Darnay acted without hesitating one moment. He applied for leave or absence from the bank and sent Jerry Cruncher to book him a seat in the Dover coach.

He asked Lorry to break the news of his departure to Lucie—and to their little one, Lucie the second, now aged nine years, and as pretty as her pretty mother.

“I must go,” Darnay told his friend. “It seems that Gabelle, my old tutor, has been arrested on a charge that he has sent moneys out of the country to me. He is in danger of death. I shall return within the week.”

“I am going to Paris next month,” Lorry interrupted him. “I am to take over our Paris branch. Can I not clear your friend? I do not like the idea of you going there alone, Charles.”

“There is no danger for me,” Darnay answered, “any more than for you. Gabelle is in great danger—not a moment is to be lost.”

Gabelle was already past all hope. He had been urged to write the letter by Madame Defarge, and had been stabbed through the back before the ink had dried on the page!

Lorry, strange misgivings beneath his brown tunic, saw Darnay off by coach. He went with Carton to the house in Soho where the young couple lived with Dr. Manette and Miss Pross—now governess to the little Lucie.

Carton, as a privileged person, went upstairs to where Lucie was playing with her child. Lorry stayed below, talking with the doctor. He told him that Darnay had gone to Paris.

Manette started up, his face white as ashes.

“But they will kill him!” he cried. “Let us go after him before it is too late!”

“They will not harm Charles,” said Lorry. “He is of the people—like themselves.”

“He is the Marquis de St. Evremond,” Manette broke in, his eyes burning bright. “I should have told you—I promised to tell Lucie on her wedding-day! But I could not—the name is one of hatred to me. Hatred and fear. It was his uncle who caused me to spend those terrible years in the Bastille.”

“Gracious heaven!” Lorry gasped. “Oh, my dear friend, why—why did you not speak before!” He wrung his old hands. “We must go to Dover and bring him back. Pray with all your soul we may not be too late!”

Manette had recovered himself.

“We will follow him, if he has already left Dover. As a victim of the aristocrats I shall be welcome in France. I can save him!” He added in a choking voice: “How strange that I, who suffered so at the hands of an Evremond, must go now to save one of that name!”

The Tribunal

THEY were executing fifty to sixty aristocrats every morning in the square, before the ruins of the Bastille.

The Tribunal was sitting on a raised platform in a hall near by. A statue of Justice was a prominent figure behind them. A jury of patriots sat on the left hand of the judge, a sinister fellow upon whose head was a huge black plumed cap. He called the names of the prisoners, reading them from a list before him.

“Former Count d’Estournelles!” he read out.

A tall, handsome man was thrust forward from the little crowd by the door leading from the charge-room. He advanced firmly to the cleared space before the Tribunal—a motley gang drawn from the very dregs of the people.

“You are charged with treason against the common safety, former Count d’Estournelles,” spoke the judge. “Have you anything to say?”

“Nothing that I could say would make any impression on you,” came the quiet answer. “I prefer the dignity of silence.”

The judge turned to the jury. “You hear, comrades—he prefers the dignity of silence!”

A roar of laughter followed. “Vote!” called the judge when the cruel laughter had ended.

Shouts of “Guilty! Guilty!” came from them.

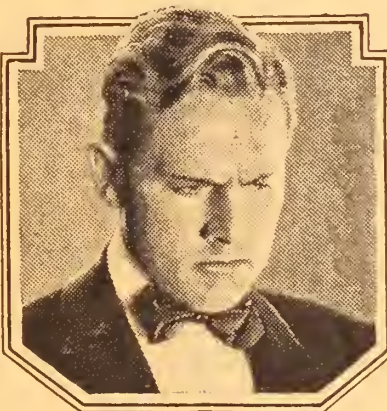
The judge waved a dirty hand to the guards.

“Death within forty-eight hours! Take him away!”

The count was hustled across the court to another door. A young girl was brought in. Madame Defarge, sitting below the judge, ceased her knitting to stare at the poor, trembling child. The judge bent his black brows upon the girl.

“What is your profession?” he demanded.

NEXT WEEK'S GRAND FILM THRILLERS!



ROBERT ALLEN

—IN—

“GUARD THAT GIRL”

When Larry Donovan and Budge Edwards are asked by an attorney to provide a girl to impersonate—for a few days—an heiress whose life is in danger, they decline the commission; but Budge's beautiful secretary, Helen Bradford, insists on playing the part of the heiress, and so the three become involved in perilous adventure.

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Also

Another smashing episode of the serial—

“FLASH GORDON”

Starring Buster Crabbe and Jean Rogers.

“I am a seamstress, citizen,” came the faint answer.

“You are accused of consorting with one, Pierre Coty, a traitor, who has paid the penalty.”

“He was my friend, citizen. I grew up with him.”

“You should not have such friends, Jeanne Fontaine.” He turned to the jury. “Vote—vote!”

With one accord they shouted “Guilty!”

The judge waved her on. “Death within forty-eight hours!”

The poor girl uttered a piteous cry, but the guards quickly surrounded her and hustled her away. Madame Defarge resumed her knitting; the judge was handed up some bread and cheese on a plate. He began to eat, spluttering mouthfuls of food betwixt his teeth.

“The Marquis de St. Evremond—called Darnay!”

Charles was thrust forward. He advanced boldly to the Tribunal.

“You are suspected as an enemy to the Republic,” said the judge, breaking off a hunk of bread.

“I deny it,” said Charles. “I am a friend of the people.”

Sitting in a space reserved for prisoners' witnesses were Lucie, Dr. Manette, and Mr. Lorry. Lucie was drying her tears—the fate of the poor little seamstress had affected her deeply.

“You are also accused under this decree which forbids the return of all aristocrat emigrants.” The judge read from his paper.

“I am not an emigrant, nor an aristocrat,” Darnay answered. “I gave up my titles years ago. I felt I would rather live on my own industry than on the overburdened people.”

Madame Defarge called out:

“A lot he cares about that! Away with him!”

The judge asked:

“Tell us why you came back to France.”

“I came to save a friend of the people—one who is unjustly accused. I hope that is not criminal in the eyes of the Republic?”

The jury whispered together, nodding their red-capped heads. They were impressed with this reply.

“What is the name of this friend?” the judge asked.

“Citizen Gabelle.”

“Call him,” the judge ordered. The ragged ushers raised a shout of “Gabelle! Gabelle! Citizen Gabelle!” There was no reply.

“He is evidently not here,” the judge stated. “That is strange—the man he came to save is not here. Have you any other witness?”

Darnay had been surprised and confused by the non-appearance of Gabelle. He began to fear he had been trapped. “Dr. Manette will speak for me,” he answered.

Manette stepped down to the cleared space. He stood bravely before the jury.

“Citizens, you all know of my long imprisonment in the Bastille. How I was released by my good friends and yours, Jacques and Thérèse Defarge. I know the prisoner well—I know where his sympathies are. They are with you, the people. They always were. He is a true citizen—what better proof can I give you than, when he asked my daughter's consent in marriage, I gave my consent gladly?”

The jury again whispered together, nodding their approval. Manette continued earnestly:

“My daughter's happiness is in the hands of the prisoner. I have suffered
 May 30th, 1936.

enough from my enemies. From you, citizens, to whom I owe my liberty"—he half turned towards Jacques and Madame Defarge—"may I not ask a final blessing? To enjoy that liberty which you have given me?"

The jury were all ready to vote "Not Guilty" when Madame Defarge flung down her knitting and sprang to her feet.

"Stop!" she shrieked. "I accuse the man St. Evremond, called Darnay! One of a family of tyrants who have bitterly oppressed the people! I bring witnesses!"

"Name them," spoke the judge.

"My husband. Myself. And—Dr. Manette!"

Manette cried:

"I protest. It is a lie! I do not denounce this man!"

Madame Defarge had plucked a faded crumpled paper from the bosom of her dress.

"How can you say so when it is here! Let me read." She opened the paper. "Listen, all! For what the St. Evremonds have made me suffer, for all that they have made the people suffer, I, Alexandre Manette, in this hour of my unbearable agony, do denounce the whole family of St. Evremond, them and their descendants, to the last of their race. This was written in the Bastille by Dr. Manette in serapings of soot and charcoal, mixed with his own blood!"

Manette stared at her aghast.

"Number 105," he slowly muttered. "I had forgotten." He reeled and would have fallen, if one of the ragged warders had not rushed to support him.

Madame Defarge went on.

"It tells of how, as a young doctor, he had been summoned to the bedside of a girl, dying through the merciless oppression of the Marquis de St. Evremond! It tells how her young brother was slain when he tried to rescue her. It describes the agonies of those two innocent children. That boy is dead—that girl is dead. All that family have died through the cruelty of the St. Evremonds! All but one—a sister. She was hidden from them—and she lived. She lives to-day. I am that sister, and I demand the life of the last of that black brood. I demand it!"

"But this prisoner," cried Manette, "he had nothing to do with it."

The judge held up his hand.

"Vote, citizens!"

Yells of "Guilty!" rose from the throats of all. "Guilty!"

The judge scarcely waited for silence. "Death within forty-eight hours!"

Carton Comes to Them

IN a room over Telson's Bank, in the Rue St. Honore, they were gathered together in utter despair. Lucie, old Lorry, Dr. Manette, Miss Pross and little Lucie, who was playing with a dreadful toy, something given to her by a woman in the streets. It was a little wooden model of the guillotine:

Manette, old and shaking, faltered:

"There is yet a chance. I will go to Citizen Danton, the head of the Revolution. I will implore him to save Charles."

"Dear father," whispered Lucie. "Heaven be with you!"

A few minutes later came a knock at the door. Sydney Carton entered. He had heard the dread news. He kissed the cold hand Lucie extended to him.

"You come in a sad hour, Sydney," she murmured, checking her sobs. May 30th, 1936.

"Forgive me if I go to my room. I cannot help my tears."

Carton came to the little girl and saw the toy. He took it gently from her.

"Go to your mother, dear. Comfort her." He turned to Lorry when the child with Miss Pross had gone. "When is the—the execution to take place?" he asked Lorry.

"To-morrow morning."

"You are leaving Paris?"

"I am taking her away. Nothing can be done."

Carton made no comment on this. He only asked:

"Do you know if Barsad is in Paris?"

"He has gone over to them, of course," Lorry answered fretfully. "I am not interested in him."

"I am much interested," Carton stated. "Especially if he should be connected with the prison of La Force, where Darnay is held."

"He is an officer there."

"You all have your permits to leave Paris?" Carton asked.

"We have." Lorry heard footsteps and ran to the door. Manette entered, his eyes very bright. He advanced into the room, ignoring both Lorry and Carton. Lucie came out from her bed-room.

"Father, have you seen Danton already?" she cried, running to him in hope.

"How can I make my shoes if you don't give me any thread?" he answered dully.

Lucie lifted drowning eyes to Carton. Lorry whispered to her:

"It is of no use. He doesn't even hear you. I'll take him to his room."

Carton drew near to Lucie when they were alone. She murmured:

"If only I could see Charles again. But once—!" She clutched at Carton's hand. "I can't even do that!"

He gently pressed her icy fingers. Lorry came back.

"Your father is calling for you, Lucie."

He led her away, then returned to Carton, who had helped himself to wine from a decanter. Lorry frowned as he said:

"That is all you can do!"

Carton shrugged.

"It helps me to think. You all have permits to leave this city? Miss Pross, Lucie and her child, Manette, yourself? That man of yours—Jerry?"

"I've told you so!"

"Lucie is in great danger. So is the little one. The doctor is suspected, too. Therese Defarge, that tigress, has sworn to exterminate them all. I hear Lucie went to the wine-shop to-day to make a vain appeal to her. Folly—utter madness! Defarge will have your permits cancelled." He felt in his pocket. "Here's mine—take it!"

Lorry did so.

"Why do you give me this?"

"At eight to-night have the carriage ready. Leave immediately my place is occupied. Drive away without delay or any argument." He added, in a changed voice: "Yours is a long life to look back upon, Mr. Lorry."

"I'm seventy-eight. Nobody will weep for me."

"Not Lucie? Ah, you know she will! If you had gained neither love, nor even respect, it would be a bitter thought." He took up Lorry's big overcoat. "May I borrow this? Thanks. Don't let anything change your plans. Go, on the instant my place is occupied in the carriage."

He filled his glass and drained it, took up the big, loose coat, and swaggered out of the room.

He went to the prison of La Force and waited about the great forbidding door-

way. Many came and went; but Carton, clad in Lorry's coat, only lounged and watched.

At last Barsad, very official now, came forth.

"Hey, old friend—you work late!" Carton called to him.

Barsad stared suspiciously.

"It's you, Mr. Carton. What are you doing here?"

"I want an interview with Darnay."

"What good will that do?" Barsad questioned.

Carton whispered low to the spy:

"You cannot refuse me! How long would your head stay on your shoulders if I told the Committee of Public Safety that you were once in St. Evremond's service?"

"Hush! Don't whisper it even!" Barsad's hook nose went a dirty white. "You can see him. I'll come with you. But it's quite hopeless."

They went into the prison together. A gaoler came forward.

"You return, Citizen Barsad?"

"With a friend, Citizen Victor. Which is the Evremond cell?"

"Third on the left, citizen. Ten minutes—no more."

They walked together in the semi-darkness.

"Wait here," said Carton.

He rapped on the door of cell twenty-three and entered, whilst Barsad stood uneasily outside.

Darnay, sitting at a table beneath a heavily barred window, sprang up.

"Carton—of all people!"

"I bring you a request from Lucie. She begs you to do exactly as I say."

"Dear fellow, it is useless to attempt any form of escape."

Carton drew near to him.

"Don't waste time, Charles. Take this pencil and paper—and write."

Darnay wonderingly did so. He sat at the table on the rickety chair. Carton dictated:

"The time has come to prove what I once told you. That I would give everything to save a life you loved. This is no subject for regret or grief." He looked over Darnay's shoulder. "Hurry, hurry!"

"There's something smelling queer—" Darnay was saying, when Carton suddenly clapped a handkerchief over his face.

Darnay struggled up, but Carton held on to him. They swayed and struggled together; then softly Darnay collapsed and fell into his friend's arms. Carton laid him down on the straw bed.

He flung off the big overcoat and, with quick hands, stripped Darnay of his outer clothes. He tore off his own, he put them on Darnay—now senseless under the narcotic with which the handkerchief had been saturated. He dressed himself in Darnay's cast-off clothes. He combed back his hair into the fashion in which Darnay wore it. Barsad was at the door.

"Time's up!" he whispered. He stared from one to the other. He shook his head. "You'll never pull this off," he muttered.

"Do as you're told. Get him to Telson's Bank by eight."

He lifted Darnay to his feet and put Lorry's coat around him. Darnay was like a drunken man. He wound an arm about Barsad's shoulders.

"There's got to be someone here!"

Barsad spoke in terror.

Carton answered:

"I shall be here."

He picked up Darnay's unfinished letter and thrust it into the pocket of the big coat. He forced his hat down over Darnay's ruffled hair.

(Continued on page 27)

A young detective finds a blood-stained coat and knows that the owner is wanted for the murder of the District Attorney. He trails the killer, and then gets a shock to find it is his father whom he thought dead. What shall he do? A stirring drama, starring Ray Walker



"The LAST ASSIGNMENT"

The Blood-stained Coat

"WHO is this bearded man?" The speaker was a thin, elderly man. He sat before a hugo desk in an imposing barn of a room and stared at the headlines of that morning's paper. Looking over his shoulder was a thick-set young man.

The headlines announced that the District Attorney had been shot down in cold blood the previous evening as he was leaving his offices. In the semi-light several people had sighted the killer, but except that the man was broad of shoulder and had a dark beard, none could give a description.

John Russell, head of the Criminal Investigation Department of the city, glanced round at Bob Norton, one of the smartest detectives on his staff.

"All the papers and incriminating evidence against Krane vanished with the D.A.'s dispatch-case, and Krane should have come up for trial to-day," Russell stated. "Enough evidence had been collected to put Krane and his murdering gang of counterfeiter away for life, now all that we can hope for is a week's adjournment of the case, and at the end of the week, if there is still no evidence, Krane's twisty attorney will be screaming about damages for his client."

"The boys have combed the city," answered Bob. "Every dive has been searched, and they can't get a line on this bearded man."

"Bob, I want you to take up the case." Russell looked shrewdly at the young detective. "For more reasons than one. Firstly, because I think you're one of the best men on the force, and secondly because I should like

to see you gain promotion. Two thousand dollars reward goes with the capture of the bearded man, and that would make a pleasant wedding present."

Bob grinned.

"Thank you, chief. Mighty nice of you to give me this chance. I finished that dope-smuggling case last night, and I'm free to start right away. When I say right away, I would like to look up Marie for a chat. I've been out of town on this dope case for over a week."

"Get all the facts from Hendricks, decide how you'll tackle the case, and spend the evening with Marie if nothing urgent occurs," suggested the kindly chief. "Best of luck, Bob."

Bob Horton thought himself a very lucky young fellow. He was engaged to marry Chief Russell's daughter, Marie. The chief had been a great friend of Bob's mother, and when the latter had died while the boy was still at college, he had treated him almost like his own son. Bob had been enrolled as a member of the force, and at the age of twenty was the chief's right-hand man. No wonder he whistled merrily as he went off to seek Hendricks.

That dour-faced detective scowled when informed that Bob was now on the case. Hendricks did not like Horton, and the chief reason was Marie. With ill grace he gave his rival the most important facts of the case.

"If you think you can find this bearded mystery then you're welcome," sneered Hendricks. "Every hide-out in this city has been searched, but this guy has gone to earth—if I can't find him I'm darn sure you can't."

"I can but try." Bob refused to be drawn into a quarrel. "I might get a lucky break and pick up some clue."

"Not this year!" was the other's jeering comment.

Bob grinned and made no answer; he had little time for Hendricks. After studying the evidence and deciding that there was little he could do that day, Bob went off to his comfortable apartments. After a clean up, he rang Marie and told her that he was coming round.

"Maybe we could go to a show or a dance this evening?" he suggested over the phone. "Any rate, I'm going to look round at the cleaners and collect that dinner suit I left before I went out of town. I'll get it on the way to your place. Gee, I'm looking forward to seeing you, Marie!"

On leaving his apartments, he drove his powerful two-seater car across town to a busy little thoroughfare in the foreign quarter. The quick-clean laundry had never given him cause to grumble. He nodded to the man in charge and tossed over a ticket.

Lounging against the counter he gazed idly around. There were dozens of suits, overcoats, and other garments arranged on hangers, and he wondered how many there could be. He lit a cigarette as the man seemed unable to trace his suit and, for the first time, noticed a bundle of clothing lying on the counter. Absently he fingered the dark material, and for something better to do pulled the coat towards him.

There was a dark stain on one elbow. Instantly Bob Horton was roused. One touch of the dark patch on this brown suit told him it was blood.

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Blood on both sleeves. He examined the inside of the sleeves and noticed that the lining was not stained. The owner of this coat had come in contact with some wounded, badly bleeding body. The D.A. had bled profusely, and the bearded man, in wrenching away the dispatch-case, must have come in contact with the body—probably had searched the pockets of his victim.

"Here's your suit, sir." The laundry man's voice disturbed him. "Got placed in the reserved section."

"Where did you get this coat?" snapped Horton, his eyes alight.

"Delivered about an hour ago, sir. It's an urgent job."

"I'll bet it is." Bob produced a badge that proclaimed his calling. "Just spill all you know about this suit."

"Brought in this morning by a woman," explained the laundry man. "As far as I recollect she runs some sort of an apartment house—I've got the address. This suit belongs to one of her lodgers. She told me of the blood-stains, and that her lodger had helped someone badly hurt in a car smash."

"That's possible," decided Horton. "Give me the address and I'll call round. Better keep my suit—I'll call back for it."

It was an apartment house, and he was shown in to see a Mrs. Gordon, who showed symptoms of a breakdown when she saw the badge—the police always gave her a turn. Bob Horton decided that at some time she might have run foul of the law. If necessary, he would inquire into her record.

"No harm's coming to you, Mrs. Gordon, if you answer a few simple questions," he told her. "You took a suit to the cleaners this morning for one of your lodgers. Describe what occurred and what this lodger is like."

Mrs. Gordon told the same tale of the car smash and her guest's eagerness to have the suit cleaned. He was an elderly, broad-shouldered man, and had a beard. He seldom went out, and always at night, coming home at all hours of the morning. Horton became more and more certain that by luck he had found the murderer of the District Attorney. It was a thrill to hear Mrs. Gordon say that her lodger was in his own room on the next floor.

Horton went to the phone and got through to headquarters and his chief. The latter answered that he would instruct Hendricks and two car-loads of police to go at once to the lodging-house.

Mrs. Gordon gasped when Bob Horton took out a revolver from his pocket.

"I'm going up there to see this lodger with the beard," the detective said. "I reckon he's the guy we want for the murder of the D.A. When the boys get here, tell them where I've gone."

Very quietly he went up the stairs and tiptoed down the corridor to Room No. 24.

A Terrible Choice

VERY cautiously Bob Horton turned the handle of the door and gave the faintest of pushes—the door was not locked. He listened with an ear against the panelling and could hear gurgling water. The lodger might be in the bath-room attached to the room. Soon he had pushed the door sufficiently far open to glance into one side of the room. The gurgling water was mixed with splashing sounds.

Noislessly he entered the room with his gun ready for any trouble. There was no one—the lodger was in the bath-room. He edged over the carpet till he could glance round the open bath-room door. A man in his shirt-sleeves

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was standing before a mirror, and in his hand was a razor.

Bob made no sound as he watched the man shaving off a thick, stubbly black beard. The task was complete, and the detective edged nearer the door to gain a glimpse of the man, and it was then that the suspect, looking into the mirror, saw the face of a man depicted there. He whipped round.

"Stiek 'em up!" shouted Bob. "One move from—Dad!"

Bob Horton found himself looking at the father whom he thought dead.

The elder man stared intently, almost eagerly—a half-smile on his lips—and then he saw the gun. His face hardened.

"Well?"

"You were reported killed!" Bob gasped out. "Why have you never let us know? It's five years since—"

"I made a prison break," said the father, his mouth twisted in a smile. "Got into a boat and tried to escape. The boat upset and the three gaolbirds in it drowned. One of the bodies was supposed to be me, but I hid in the marshes and got away." He laughed. "And I'm not such a fool as to imagine that you would have been pleased to see your convict father. Besides, Bob, it was best for your sake that I remain dead."

"Don't say that, dad," argued Bob. "You could make a clean start."

"After a gaol break?" He gave a sneering laugh. "What a hope! If they had caught me I would have been back in the pen for five years. And just suppose I hadn't made a break and I'd served my sentence. Would people have rushed forward to give me a job? No, they'd have spurned me as if I were a mangy cur. Once you've gone over to the wrong side of the street it's mighty hard to get back."

Bob had to admit to himself that this was true. His father had been a big man in engineering at one time, had lost his money in wild speculation, and helped himself to trust funds on a gamble on gold-mining shares. The mine was barren and Horton senior went to prison. After serving a year he had been the ringleader in a prison break.

"How did you trace me?"

The question brought the younger man back to realities. He stared at his father with dread.

Bob hesitated, then squared his shoulders:

"You were shaving off a beard in there—why?"

"I thought a beard didn't suit me." Horton could not face his son's eyes. "Made me look too old."

"You sent Mrs. Gordon round to the cleaners with a suit," Bob persisted. "It was blood-stained. What's your explanation?"

"I told Mrs. Gordon that—"

"I've heard that tale, and I don't believe it!" rapped out the son. "I might have, if it hadn't been for that beard. The D.A. was shot and the papers concerning the Krane case vanished. Before the crash came you were very friendly with that cheap crook. Did you kill the D.A.?"

"Yes."

Now Jim Horton faced his son squarely.

"You murdered him?"

Horton bowed his head.

"I was driven to it. For the last five years I've been working for Krane and haven't had the nerve to break from his clutches. I've wanted to give myself up, kill myself and end it all, but I've been a coward. But I'm glad now the law has got me—it'll be the end of a living hell."

"But you killed a man in cold blood!"

"He was responsible for my five-year sentence," raged the father. "He was a man who would use false evidence and try any dirty trick to win his case. Krane swore that if I did this he would never bother me again, but fate, son, had other ideas."

The sound of a siren made Bob start nervously.

"The police! I warned them I had trailed a likely suspect."

Jim Horton shrugged his shoulders.

"I forgot for the moment that you were one of the force's brightest detectives. Truly an irony of fate that a son should take in his own father. Horton's a common name; I won't let them know you are my son. You'll get the credit for arresting the murderer of the D.A. and—"

"Be quiet, father!" raved Bob. "I can't do it. You're my own flesh and blood. I believe all you say about the D.A., but if he had been the grandest of men, and you had murdered a hundred people, I couldn't do this to you. You've got to escape."

"Too late, son," Horton smiled. "The police-cars are outside."

"The fire-escape and the roof!" quickly cried Bob. "Get out through the bath-room, and I'll pretend you got away from me. There are several other fire-escapes, and I'm sure it is a long, flat roof. Make a break for it. I hope you make it, but I'd rather you made an attempt than have to take you in to certain death. If they get you, dad—well, I'll be mighty sorry, but I want you to do your best to escape and then clear right out, and, even if you starve, go straight. I'll always help you."

"Your mother's child." Jim Horton smiled proudly. "I get your reasoning, Bob. I'll try it."

The door was bolted, and Hendricks and his men had to break it down. They were surprised to find Bob Horton, whose hair was disarranged and on the ground lay his gun.

"He slugged me," he muttered. "Made a getaway."

They rushed into the bath-room, and someone sighted a figure on the fire-escape. The detectives rushed up to the roof, and Bob Horton went with them.

Bob sighted his father lurking by a chimney stack. He fired his gun when the others weren't looking and shouted that he had seen a bearded man going down one of the fire-escapes. They fell for the trap, and left the roof clear for the killer to escape down one of the other fire-escapes.

Hendricks was seething in his remarks, and said that Bob wasn't capable of looking after a lot of school kids.

The Frame-up

THE next morning Chief Russell sent for Bob. He stated that he had had a report from Hendricks, and that it did not read too well regarding Bob's share in the affair.

"I can't imagine you letting this man get away!" the chief cried. "Nor can I understand you imagining you saw someone escaping from the roof."

"That wasn't imagination!" cried Bob. "I did see the killer!"

"Hendricks said that if that were so they would have seen the man when they made for the fire-escape."

"There were lots of rooms near the escape." Bob could not face his chief. "Probably he dived into one of them." He shuffled his feet. From his pocket he took his badge. "Guess, chief, I'd better turn this in. I resign."

Chief Russell was astounded. He read Bob a long lecture on not being able to stand a reprimand. Every good



"Where did you get this coat?" snapped Horton.

detective made a mistake or slip some time.

"You've been overworking and need a break." The chief patted his shoulder. "Forget all about it, Bob. Now Marie expects you at her party to-night. You're going to come to that, and then I'm to insist that you take a vacation. Some place where you can forget all about crime and cops."

"But, chief, I got a reason for resigning!" cried Bob. "I didn't bring that man in because—"

"Not another word, or you'll be a mental case," firmly interrupted the chief. He looked at a watch. "I've got an appointment. See you at Marie's party to-night, and I'll talk to you then about your vacation."

"But, chief, I got to talk to you."

"Not now—some other time." The chief led him to the door. "Go and see Marie—take it easy."

Bob went to the party, but he was quite the most dismal person there. He could think of nothing but his father. Wondering what had happened to him and what he himself should do, Hendricks was at the party, and chuckled and hoped that Bob had quarrelled with Marie. Hendricks was enjoying this party, and once or twice he patted his pocket where a pocket-book rustled pleasantly. A little graft for doing a job that was a pleasure. Someone wanted Bob Horton "fixed," and it gave Hendricks keen joy to get paid for doing it.

Cheerful Charlie Brandon, a newcomer to the force and a great friend of Bob's, also noticed his friend's pre-occupation and was bold enough to draw Marie's attention to the fact.

"You don't think I haven't noticed, do you?" Marie said with heavy sarcasm. "I can't get a word out of him. Everyone thinks we've quarrelled and we haven't. I'm afraid some blonde must have taken him from me."

"Piffle!" exclaimed Charles. "That I don't believe for a second. Something's

worrying Bob, and I do know one thing—the escape of D.A.'s assassin rattled him badly. Go and have a talk with him, Marie."

In the conservatory Marie had a surprise. Bob told her that he must break off their engagement.

"You love someone else?"

"There will never be anyone but you!" he cried fiercely. "But I—I—I cannot marry you."

"It's because you let this crook killer escape?" accused the girl. "Oh, Bob, as if I care."

Bob told her that he was thinking of leaving the force and going to South America on a ranch. He was no good as a policeman. Bob was busy telling a lot of untruths when a maid appeared and stated that Mr. Horton was wanted on the 'phone. With a curt apology to Marie he rushed away—he could not have kept the pretence up much longer.

A strange voice spoke to Bob and said that if he wished to help his father he should come at once to a certain address. Bob grabbed his hat and left the house.

Five minutes later Hendricks was called to the 'phone. The same voice spoke.

"I've just fixed young Horton. Hasten round to 715, Forty Street, and be on the watch."

Grimming unpleasantly Hendricks got his hat and went out of the house.

Bob found the place easily enough. A one-room basement in the worst part of the town. He rapped at a door, which opened after a face had peered through a grill. He entered to find himself face to face with a dark-skinned, evil-looking man, whom he knew to be Krane.

"You 'phoned me?" accused Bob.

"I did," Krane grinned unpleasantly. "You see, I've known for some time you were Jim Horton's son and had my mind to use you if such an occasion rose. I never thought one would, but now that you've blundered into your father and

helped him to escape I think I can make use of you."

"You're wasting your breath, Krane."

"Oh, no, I'm not," jeered the crook. "I've got quite a lot on you. You assisted your father to escape, and I might talk. That would get you axed from the force, but it would also mean the chair for your old man. Do all that I ask you and I'll see your father makes his get-away."

"You wouldn't dare open your ugly mouth," retorted Bob. "If you told the cops that my father killed the D.A. it would be almost as good as a confession that you were behind the crime. But for you my father would have never got mixed up in this racket. Now, if you've finished with threats I'd like to see my father."

"He isn't here," Krane muttered surlily. "He left this message. There's an address inside." He swung open the door. "Go and read what the poor old fool has to say by a street lamp, not in my place. I don't want to see either you or your father again."

Bob's fists clenched. Fighting would do no good. He went out of the place and up to the street, and by a lamp opened the envelope. He drew out a large wad of notes.

A mocking, jeering laugh made him jerk round—Hendricks stood there, rocking with hoarse mirth.

"Taking a bribe—graft, eh?" jeered the detective. "Chief Russell will thank me that his daughter never married a double-crosser."

Father and Son Defy the Law

HENDRICKS did not waste time in reporting the matter to the chief, and Bob was not surprised to get a summons to report at his chief's house. Bob was glad in a way, because the events of last night had given him the answer to his problems. He was shown into the chief's library and study. He found his benefactor seated at his desk.

"Exactly what is the matter with

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you?" inquired the chief. "This tale of Hendricks that you were taking graft I can't imagine for one moment to be true, but you have been behaving in a manner that I can't understand. You let the bearded man slip through your hands, you saw him on the roof, you don't talk and look sullen, at my daughter's party you break off your engagement for no apparent reason and rush out of the house without even having the decency to say 'Good-night.' Then to cap everything I get this amazing story from Hendricks that he sees you coming away from Krane with a wad of notes. What is the explanation?"

"I was doing my best to tell you, chief, last time I was before you," Bob replied. "But before I explain why I wanted to resign I wish to say that last night was a frame-up. I have broken up several of Krane's dirty schemes and it was just a mean attempt to get one back. An effort to get me out of the force. Bad luck for me to be seen by Hendricks opening an envelope that contained nothing but money, especially as I had expected something entirely different."

"A letter from Krane?"

"No, sir, a letter from my father."

"Your father? What connection has Krane with your father?" The chief was amazed. "Besides, you know that your father was drowned when—"

"He made his escape by hiding in the marshes," Bob interrupted. "But if you want my explanation, chief, I'd like to tell it in my own way."

"Go ahead!"

"By means of a blood-stained coat I traced the killer of the District Attorney," Bob began. "It led me to a house owned by a Mrs. Gordon, and from her description of a lodger, whose name she knew as Wilson, I guessed it was the bearded man. I phoned my discovery and you instructed Hendricks to take two car loads of police to this lodging-house at once. I told you over the wire that I would get this lodger. It was my intention to hold him prisoner till the police showed up. I found his room, and hearing the sound of running water decided he was in the bath-room. The door was not locked. I entered the room, and found that my surmise was correct; I tiptoed across the room and was able to look into the bath-room." He hesitated.

"Go on—go on!" impatiently cried the chief.

"I could not see much of his face as his head was bent, but I could see what he was doing—he had almost finished shaving off a black beard." Bob squared his shoulders for the part that was most difficult. "In the mirror he caught sight of me, and as he turned my gun was ready. I found myself face to face with my own father."

"Your own father!" gasped Chief Russell. "But, Bob, that's impossible—"

"I told you, chief, that he hid in the marshes." Bob turned away in shame and anguish. "All these years I've thought he was drowned and then suddenly to come face to face when I'm searching for a bearded man!"

"The wrong bearded man, of course?" Russell questioned sharply.

Slowly Bob shook his head.

"No, chief, the right bearded man. He admitted having killed the District Attorney in order to free himself from the clutches of Krane. My father made no attempt to escape, but I couldn't arrest him. It was impossible for me to jeopardise my father's life, so I fixed it so that he was able to escape. I couldn't take him in to certain death."

Russell's face had hardened,
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"Duty must always come first, and you have betrayed the oath you took when you joined the force."

"Chief, I don't care what I swore, but duty to a father has to come first with me," cried Bob in ringing tones. "Now you know why I wanted to resign."

"You have disobeyed the rules and regulations and covenants." Chief Russell stood up and his voice was stern. "You have broken your oath. Do you imagine that I would have allowed anything to make me break my solemn word—"

"It wasn't your father, chief."

"That'll be enough from you!" the chief shouted. "You know the penalty for aiding and abetting a dangerous criminal to escape. I place you under arrest and you will be brought up before the Court in the morning. It distresses me to have to arrest and charge someone whom I regarded almost as a son, but you have betrayed the confidence I placed in you. I have my duty to perform even if you don't seem to realise yours."

In the tenseness of such a situation it is not surprising that neither the chief nor Bob had heard the door open slowly, nor had they observed a broad-shouldered man slip quietly into the room.

With blazing eyes Jim Horton heard Chief Russell condemning his own son for his dastardly conduct in letting a murderer escape. He would be arrested and charged with complicity in the crime.

But as Chief Russell turned to his desk to summon detectives to take Bob away to the detention cells he heard a harsh laugh, and looking up found himself covered by a gun.

"One move to that 'phone or to summon assistance and you're a dead man," cried Jim Horton. "Keep your hands about your waist."

Bob was so astounded to see his father in the chief's house that for a moment he could not find his voice.

"Father, why are you here?" he demanded at last.

"I came here to give myself up," grimly answered Jim Horton. "I may have been a poor specimen of a father, but I haven't sunk so low that I'm going to stand by and see my son gaoled because he had the guts to chuck up everything to stand by a wrong 'un. To stand by a father, who had done him nothing but evil, and because of that to sacrifice his own career, his happiness—everything. And you dare to sneer at him, Russell, for putting his father before your cursed Law. You would even have him arrested and flung into a prison like a common criminal. Well, you're doing no such thing."

"You're only making matters worse for yourself, Horton," cried the chief. "Your son has broken his oath and—"

"Shut up!" rapped out the elder man. "I don't want to hear a lot of talk that don't mean a thing to me. Your snivelling, sanctimonious mind would drive my son into being branded by prison bars, but whilst I live you're not getting the chance. I'm getting out of here and Bob's coming with me, and if you make an effort to stop us I'll drill you without the least hesitation or compunction."

Bob Horton stared from one to the other in uncertainty. He felt it was the turning point in his life. Chief Russell represented the powers of good, whilst in his father were the powers of evil, and yet that reasoning seemed to be wrong. His father had been willing to give up his liberty for the sake of his son. That was a deed that required nerve and sacrifice. He, himself, had made a clean breast of everything to Chief Russell. His eyes narrowed. Chief Russell had

been too harsh in blaming him for letting the killer of the D.A. escape. He stepped closer to his father's side.

Anxious to speak to her father about Bob's strange conduct of the previous evening Marie hastened downstairs to speak to him before he set out for headquarters. A strange sight met her eyes. A man was holding up her father, and behind the stranger stood Bob.

"You're Marie Russell, aren't you?" snapped out Jim Horton.

"Who are you?" Then her hand went to her lips as she saw the resemblance.

"He's my father, Marie," spoke Bob.

"It'll mean a long sentence for you, Bob Horton," the chief cried. "You know what it'll mean for aiding and abetting a criminal."

"You were arresting me for that very crime in any case," Bob spoke bitterly. "Nothing you can say will change me from the determination to stand by my father."

Jim Horton smiled proudly at his son and gave a significant gesture. Father and son backed to the door.

"If you raise the alarm before we're out of this house you know what I'll do," the old man threatened. "The same fate will be yours as came to that worthless skunk of a D.A."

Bob Horton opened a door and peered round it.

"Okay, dad," he whispered, and before the door closed behind him his eyes gazed beseechingly at Marie as if craving forgiveness.

In Krane's Power

FATHER and son succeeded in making good their escape, but they knew that in a very short while the entire police force would be searching for them. Jim Horton had decided that their only chance was to make for Krane's hide-out. When the hue and cry had eased up then Krane would help them get out of town. Knowing the treacherous nature of this murderous crook, Bob was not so optimistic. Still, he followed his father's directions, and about half a mile from the hide-out they abandoned their car to take one parked from the next street. In time they reached some tan yards and factory buildings. Jim whispered that Krane had his hide-out in some old offices.

They walked past a number of sheds and every moment Bob expected to hear the dread sound of a police siren. They came to a door and the elder man rapped four times. A shutter flew back.

The door opened and Jim Horton beckoned his son to follow. The ex-detective found himself in a bare room. There were a table and a number of old chairs.

"What's the idea coming here?"

Bob peered at the big, heavy-jowled man and recognised him as Baker, whom the police wanted for several hold-ups. He watched the crook's face as his father explained all that had happened and how he hoped that Krane would help them to make a get-away when the hue and cry had abated.

Baker whipped out a gun.

"Stick 'em up—both of you!" he snarled.

"But—" began Jim Horton.

"If you and your precious son want to live another second stick up your hands!" They had no option but to obey. He frisked them for guns and then stood back. "Krane will be here soon, and he can decide what's best to be done with you two mugs. If you think you're going to get a welcome then it's a shock that's coming to you. We've got enough trouble with the cops without you two causing us a lot more. Line up against the wall, and if you flicker an

eyelash I'll start shooting. Help you to make a get-away—what a hope you've got!"

"You dare talk to me this way after all I've done for you two skunks," yelled the older man. "You treacherous—"

"Don't waste time arguing with him," cautioned Bob. "Take it easy till Krane shows up."

Directly the two Hortons had gone, the chief got busy and within five minutes every police car in the city knew by radio the news of the escape. The chief got out his car in order to assist in the search, and as he was about to drive away Marie jumped into the spare seat.

"I'm coming with you," Marie cried. She had much of her father's stubbornness in her nature. "I am determined to go with you, so it is useless, father, to argue. Besides, I want to know what all this means."

"Bob is a scoundrel," raved the chief. "He is helping a murderer to escape justice."

"Supposing I had killed someone, what would you do about me?" questioned the girl.

"That would be ridiculous!" answered the chief, and relaxed into silence.

The chief was thinking of the extraordinary situation that had arisen, and wondering whether he had been over-harsh with Bob when suddenly he observed the driver of an open car.

"That's Krane," he exclaimed. "Now that the case against him has practically fallen through he thinks he can go about openly." He turned to his daughter. "I'm going to trail him just on the slim chance it might lead to something. You'd better get out, and get a car home."

"I'm coming with you," Marie stuck out her determined little chin. "Better get going or you'll miss him."

The trail led them to the tar yards. Krane parked his car against the kerb, got out, looked all round to see if anyone were watching him, and disappeared

down a narrow lane. He never saw the chief. The latter gave orders for Marie to remain in the car whilst he went to investigate.

Krane came to the hide-out, which he also used as a counterfeit den, and, knocking four times, the door was opened. The chief saw those four raps and decided to wait for a few minutes to see if the crook would reappear.

When Krane saw the two men that Baker was keeping covered with a gun, he whistled softly, and his evil face hardened to a cruel leer.

"We got the news with our radio," Krane said slowly. "We pick up all police calls, and know all that's afoot, but when we heard you two had held up the chief we didn't think you'd have the nerve to come here."

"Nerve!" exploded old Horton. "Where else should we come? Aren't we all in this together?"

"You may be, but we ain't!" sneered Krane. "We don't know a thing about the D.A. or why you shot him. Now you're here we'll have to entertain you. Kinda glad you two called because it saves us having to go after you."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Bob.

Krane frowned, then smiled.

"Well, the cops are gonna find you two in some alleyway, and they'll be mighty mystified how you got there, but you won't be able to tell 'em. I give you one guess why you won't be able to talk."

"You callous coyote!" shouted the elder Horton. "So this is how you keep a promise!"

Krane drew out his gun and his expression was murderous. Bob jumped in front of his father, and faced the gangster fearlessly.

"You've got enough against you as it is, Krane, without any more of your foul work. Killing us isn't going to help you—it'll only send you all the quicker to the chair."

"I'll take 'em for a ride, boss," cried

Baker. "They've got too much on us."

"They can wait," Krane fingered his bristly chin. "I ain't figured out yet whether Bob Horton mightn't be useful as a hostage. They might be more useful alive, and—"

Four raps at the door startled them. "Open up, Krane!" It was the voice of the chief. "I want a talk with you."

"Baker take 'em into the next room," hissed Krane. "One sound from either of you two mugs and Baker gives you the works."

When Russell stalked in there was nobody there except the smirking Krane. "Kinda nice of you to drop in," he drawled.

"Won't be so nice when I'm through," the chief retorted in his fearless manner. "Jim Horton's confessed to the shooting of the D.A., and we know who was behind Horton."

"Looks to me as if town's getting a bit hot for me, chief," mocked the counterfeiter. "Ain't you kinda indiscreet to come here without any of the body-guard?"

"I'm not scared of any of you rats!"

A girl's cry and the sound of scuffling made Krane whip round, then came four raps. Krane pulled back the grill, then swung open the door. It was Marie that was dragged into the room by a burly ruffian.

"Found her nosing round this joint," said the man.

"Your daughter, chief," Krane looked at the now perturbed officer in speculative manner. "Say, this is real kind. I had a hunch I could use you to get out of this burg, now I'm sure of it. You're the kind of old fool that would rather be shot than help a guy, but you would help if your daughter's life were in danger. If you want her to see the day through you'll escort us out of town, chief. Refuse and it'll be just too bad."

Every word of this conversation had carried to the Hortons. Baker, unable to conceal his curiosity, had an car



"If you raise the alarm before we're out of this house, you know what I'll do!" Jim Horton threatened.

against the door, as if he did not want to miss a single word. He did not see Bob Horton edge towards him until a fist caught him below the belt with sickening force. He doubled up with a groan and his gun dropped from his hands.

As Bob tried to wrench open the door Baker gripped him round the legs and brought him down.

The scuffle was heard in the next room, and for a moment Krane's vigilance relaxed and he swung round uncertain what to do. The other crook swung open the door and was at once seized by Jim Horton. The crook struggled to turn his gun on the older man, but it was twisted from his hands.

Krane leapt forward to get at the Hortons, and Marie saw her chance. She darted to the door and swung it open. Krane turned too late, and with a curse brought up his gun. The door slammed. The girl was at the end of the alley by the time he got it open. He started out in pursuit, and then realised the folly of such an attempt.

From the first telephone booth Marie got through to police headquarters and screamed for help. But in spite of her fears she was able to tell the police where Krane had his hide-out.

A Fight to a Finish

KRANE dashed back into his den, and his face was contorted with rage.

Chief Russell had been uncertain how to act. The instinct to protect his daughter urged him to chase out after her and Krane, but his conscience told him that he should take a part in the struggle ensuing in the next room. He was still undecided when Krane reappeared, and the chief whipped up a chair in self-defence. Crash! Krane had fired, and with a smothered cry the chair crashed to the floor—the bullet had smashed the chief's right wrist.

Jim Horton had succeeded in getting a stranglehold on his man and throttling him into oblivion. The sound of the shot drew him to the open door. He saw the murderous gleam in Krane's eyes.

"When the cops get here," snarled the crook, "all they'll find will be the bodies of you and the Hortons. Fools that try and thwart me always get what they deserve. Your daughter has signed your death warrant, Russell!"

Horton turned his head. His son and Baker were evenly matched, and their struggle could wait for a minute while Jim Horton thought how to save the chief from this murderer's hands. There seemed only one way, and he charged straight at Krane.

Whether Krane had intended to kill the chief in cold blood or was just trying a bluff no one will ever know, but he was quick enough to the trigger when Horton senior attacked him.

Chief Russell saw Horton sway, clutch at his left side and drop in a heap.

The shot must have given Baker an extra lease of strength, for he managed to break free from Bob's grip and land a punch that winded the younger man. He staggered into the next room.

"We gotta get away from here!" Krane shouted. "Before those cursed—" He broke off as there came to their ears the distant sound of a police siren. "Come on!"

Keeping the chief covered, the two crooks opened the door and were gone. They did not worry themselves over the fate of their companion.

Bob Horton, still dizzy from the blow, appeared from the other room, and the first thing he saw was the prone figure of his father.

"Dad!" he cried in fear. He knelt by the still figure and lifted the body to a sitting position.

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Jim Horton's eyes opened, and he smiled to see his son. "Better this way, Bob."

Chief Russell, holding his bleeding wrist, looked down at the man he wanted for murder.

"He saved my life." He spoke as if he could not comprehend this fact.

Jim Horton smiled again.

"A worthless life, chief, is best at its end. If you think you owe me anything, keep my son the right side of the street."

Bob knew that his father's wound was going to prove fatal, and he was stirred by a desire for vengeance. The murderer of his father should not escape. Feebly his father's hand gripped his, and then a spasm of pain wiped away the smile. Jim Horton stiffened in his son's arms.

"Chief"—Bob Horton gently let his father's body sink to the floor—"I'm going after that skunk Krane, and I'll get him if I go to the end of the earth."

Bob Horton dashed out of the place and made for the car. Baker saw him, and whipped out a gun before Krane could stop him. The bullet caught the ex-detective in the shoulder, but that did not stop him. Somehow he managed to get into the car and start it up. Krane's car flashed away, and after him went Bob Horton.

Back in the Force

GINGERLY Bob felt his shoulder, and winced as he touched the wound. The bullet was pretty deep, but there did not seem a great deal of bleeding, and he had to keep that going till he had overtaken Krane. Quite what he planned to do when he got close enough was a problem, because Bob was unarmed.

Bob kept his quarry in sight, and then realised that by choosing side streets the crooks were getting to the outskirts of the city, and that he was growing weaker and weaker with every mile. He remembered then the siren on his car. His father was dead, and nothing seemed to matter to Bob save that these two fiends must be brought to justice. What did it matter if he himself were put into prison if his father's death were avenged?

Krane and Baker got a shock when the siren sounded some hundred yards behind them. They gave a startled look back. It was clear to these men that Bob was out to get them or have them caught.

Baker took out his gun and nudged Krane, who nodded. The gun spat out its leaden missiles, but Horton was almost out of range.

All the while the cursed siren screamed its message. A patrol saw the two speeding cars flash past, and recognised both crooks and Bob Horton. He got in touch with headquarters, and at once every car in the city was given the direction taken by the participants in this grim road chase.

Krane and Baker heard a new note to the siren, and saw behind Horton another speeding police car. A moment later the volume increased, and they guessed others had joined in the chase. Krane became desperate, and began to take chances at cross-roads.

The speedometer needle went from sixty to seventy, and the car approached a cross-road at close on eighty when a big lorry came right across their track. Krane tried to swerve inside, and the tyres burst as they touched the kerb. The car skidded, twisted round, caught the back of the lorry, and then smashed straight into a brick wall.

Bob Horton brought his car to a stop and clambered with difficulty out of it.

The two men with the lorry were

crawling out of their overturned vehicle, and, except for a bad shaking, seemed none the worse; but Krane and Baker had not been so fortunate. Their car was a jumbled mass of scrap iron, partly buried in a brick wall and on its side.

Police cars arrived on the scene and got busy on the wreckage, and it was some while before they got the two crooks from beneath the wreckage. They had paid the price.

Hendricks came across to where Bob Horton stood.

"The chief wants a word with you, Horton."

"If you're thinking of using handcuffs use my right wrist," answered Bob. "I guess my left arm isn't so good."

"I'll drive you back in your car," Hendricks answered. "I guess I owe you an apology, Horton. I had a hunch you'd let your man escape and that you pulled a bluff on that roof, but I guess I'd have done just the same if it had been my father."

A week later Bob Horton was allowed out of the hospital, and, much bandaged, had another interview with his chief.

"I'm not the sort of person that admits to making a mistake," announced Chief Russell. "But when Krane threatened my daughter's life in order to get a free pass out of town, it opened my eyes to the fact that a man can be driven against his will. I know then that I had not realised the terrible predicament with which you were faced. But when Krane threatened my girl, and I had to decide whether I must act up to the law or help these murderers to escape justice in order that my daughter should live, I knew that I would make any sacrifice, break any vow, to help her." He gave Horton a quizzical glance. "Natural, Bob, that is in confidence. When you came to see me after the smash I told you that everything would be all right, and sent you off to hospital."

"How can you make everything all right, chief?"

"One can pull strings," Russell smiled. "With the death of Krane and Baker that little gang is finished. We've got the brains, and that's all that matters. The death of the D.A. is not likely to cause a great deal of sorrow." He glanced at the young man. "I am afraid he was not very popular. Therefore the trial of someone who is now at rest will do no good. As far as the annals of this crime are concerned it is registered that the D.A. was shot when held up, and that he would not have been shot if he had not tried to wrest away the gun. The fact that your father saved my life enabled me to alter the charge sheets. And now, Bob, there is someone who is eager to see you and to give you something, which you will please me and all the department by accepting."

"Thank you, chief!" Bob's voice was hoarse. "I appreciate a lot what you've done for me."

The chief pressed a button, and it was Marie who answered the summons. She held out her arms to Bob, and with his one sound arm he drew her close.

"Make the presentation," prompted the chief.

Bob's eyes were misty as she held up his badge of office. She kissed him, and pushed the badge into his coat-pocket.

The chief stood up.

"I have some important business in the next office." He coughed. "I will leave you two to discuss your own affairs. I rather favour a midsummer wedding."

The chief was smiling as he quietly closed the door of his office.

(By permission of Pathé Pictures, Ltd., starring Ray Walker as Bob Horton and William Farnum as Jim Horton.)

From saddle to dress clothes—a punch-packed drama of the West, starring that ace of cowboys—Hoot Gibson



Father and Son

AT Kansas City Fair a rodeo was in full swing and old John Gibson was keenly watching the various performers in their antics on the backs—or rather on and off the backs—of their spirited mounts.

His weather-beaten old face was alive with pleasure when he noted one of the riders expertly holding on to his bucking bronc, despite every effort on the part of the horse to throw him. The animal tried every trick the equine mind could compass to unseat this stockily built young fellow who rode without spurs or saddle—only just a bare bridle and short reins and a pair of clever hands, strong legs, and a cool head.

"That's the winner of the prize saddle," said Gibson to those about him in the grand stand. "He's a rider—Number Forty-nine—what's his name?"

"Neil Craig," answered Septimus Smith—another of the judges, glancing towards old Gibson with a half smile.

"Never heard of him," came the snapped comment. "Don't you agree that he's easily the best?"

"Sure I do," said Smith. "And so does Davis, hey—Davis?"

"My vote goes for Craig," spoke the third judge briefly.

At the end of the show the prize-winners came along for old Gibson's handshake and their prizes. He had a good word for each and a smile—until Craig stepped up to claim the prize saddle for the best all-round display. Old Gibson glared under his bushy eyebrows when the young fellow stood before him on the platform in riding kit and brown shirt—with coiled rope and big hat in his left hand.

"Why, you—" Gibson checked himself with an effort. "So it's you, huh?"

"Yes, judge, I'm Neil Craig."

Number Forty-nine stood straight and square before them.

Gibson was speechless as he scanned the frank face and steady mouth and laughing eyes of Number Forty-nine.

"Aren't you going to give him the saddle?" prompted Davis.

"Hey? What? Oh, yes, of course." Gibson took the gaily decorated saddle from its place on the prize bench. "Here you are," he growled. "First prize." He thrust it towards Craig. "Take it—you've won it!"

"Thank you, judge—I'm obliged." Craig put the saddle under his free arm. "I'll be going. Thank you!"

Old Gibson shouted after him. "Report to me at my office, nine o'clock to-morrow!"

The two other judges exchanged glances. Davis winked solemnly at Smith—but their clean-shaven faces were masks when Gibson shot one of his stares at them.

"Neil Craig," he muttered furiously. "I'll Neil Craig him!"

"Serve him right if you were to cut him off with a shilling," spoke Davis without even the hint of a smile.

Old Gibson flamed up. "When I want your advice, Davis, what to do with my only son," he roared. "I'll ask for it!"

Number Forty-nine went along the rapidly thinning stand until he came to a couple waiting for him—a dark girl as like him as any sister can be like a brother—and a largish nosed young gentleman in a blue serge suit.

"Gee, Neil—you were great!" chortled the young gentleman. "Gwen and me nigh had fits when you rode that buck jumper! I guess we ought to celebrate." He pulled a flat bottle out of one of his side pockets.

"Put that away, Bert Randall," Gwen

Gibson said, much in her father's peremptory manner. "Or I don't ever speak to you again!"

"She's right, Bert," said Forty-nine.

"Well, well—well!" lamented Randall, putting back the flat bottle. "Aren't we all getting Sunday schoolish! Where's the funeral?"

"You'll be there right enough," grinned Forty-nine. "If you keep on parking hoodlum whisky!"

At the office of Gibson & Company, old Gibson was listening with impatience to his head clerk the next morning.

"Yes, yes—I know all about it!" he replied testily. "Ride's a horse like he was born to it. A great fellow at cow-punching—throws a rope like a Red Indian—got a left that would stop a steam engine! But what good's all that?"

"Maybe you speak too sharp to him, Mr. Gibson."

"Me? Why, I don't speak sharp to anybody!" cried old Gibson, thoroughly surprised. "I'm the easiest man to get on with anywhere in this city! What's the time?"

"Five minutes to nine, Mr. Gibson." "He'll be here directly. I'll be mild as milk—although I feel like kicking him in the pants!"

The office door opened to admit Gwen Gibson.

"Hallo, dad?" "Hallo—what d'you want?"

"I want you to go slow with Neil. Give him a chance. Hold your temper."

Old Gibson gazed at his daughter. "Why, Gwen—Harry here will tell you I'm so gentle that it seems always like spring when I'm around. Isn't it, Harry?"

"Sure!" agreed the head clerk. "Well, I'll be getting on with the day's work."

Left alone with her father, Gwen put an arm round his neck as he seated himself at his desk. "You and Neil are alike as two peas," she smiled. "All ready to pop at a second's notice. Now, listen—let him say his piece and—hold your temper."

"Got Randall outside?" grunted old Gibson.

"Yes. I did bring him along."

"Can you handle him the way you're trying to handle me?"

"I'm getting him down to one drink a day."

"I bet that's a long one," said her father. "Here's nine o'clock—hop off! I'll talk to Neil alone."

Gwen Gibson, shrugging pretty shoulders, went back to the corridor.

Number Forty-nine—otherwise Neil Craig, otherwise Neil Gibson—was chatting with Bert Randall.

"Now, Neil," said Gwen, "dad's all honey this morning—so mind you hold your temper."

"I never let go of it, Gwen," spoke Neil aggrievedly. "Folks say I'm just too easy-going. You and Bert wait for me—I want to take you down town."

He nodded to Randall, gave Gwen a brotherly pat on the shoulder—then strode into the office where his father met him with:

"Morning, Neil—what the blazes d'you mean calling yourself Craig? Isn't Gibson good enough for you?"

"I thought you mightn't like me figuring in the rodeo as old Gibson's son—"

"Old? Old? Now, listen to me! I'm young enough to give you a jolly good hiding yet, Neil Gibson! And I'll tell you something else—I won't have you loafing around cow-punching and horse lifting—"

"I never lifted a horse in my life!" roared Neil, banging his fist on the desk. "And if you weren't my father—"

"You're an absolute waster—that's what you are! You're work-shy—you're a born-tired! You and your precious buddy Randall are a couple of finger-posts showing the wrong way to everywhere! If you had a spark of sense in you—you'd do something!" Old Gibson was furious, his brow black as thunder. "Yes, sir—if you wanted to show me you've any sense, you'd go to my cattle ranch down West and do your cow-punching there. But not you—you prefer loafing round and putting my name in the mud—"

Neil Gibson banged the desk again, making the inkpot jump its contents all over the clean blotter.

"Stop right there! I won't be your son! I'll be Neil Craig for keeps! I won't take a penny piece from you! I'll—I'll—" He snapped his fingers loudly under his father's nose. "Good-bye—and I mean it!"

He pulled his hat down over his blazing eyes and turned about, thrusting open the office door with a blow of his fist. Gwen and her beau had gone below to the hall—Neil went clattering down the stone steps.

"Bye, Gwen! See you later, Bert!"

His sister called after him, but he didn't even hear.

"A waster, eh? Born-tired?" he muttered. "Gee, I'll show him! I'll show the world!"

"A Talking Sausage!"

THAT night, young Randall was having his daily "one" at his favourite café. Clad in evening dress and sitting at a small table with two boon companions, he had, speared on a fork, a small cold fried sausage.

"You're telling me," said Randall, ad-

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dressing the sausage. "That you ain't a hot dog. Well, I know it. I know a lotter things about you. You ain't so young as you used to be—and everybody knows that, too." He turned to his two friends, one of whom had his head on the table while the other was leaning back in his chair gazing into vacancy. "You fellers hear what this hamberger's saying? No, you ain't able to listen. George!" he bellowed to the shirt-sleeved waiter. "Come right over here—someone wants to tell you something!"

George, big and burly, came to the table. The sleeping fellow at the table sat up, while the other man tried to look intelligent.

"George," said Randall, "look well upon this sausage." He held it out. "He's one of last week's also rans."

"Now, sir, please don't hinder me. This is my busy time," said George.

Neil Gibson came along from his seat. He was slightly flustered, but completely clear in his mind.

"George," he admonished, wagging a forefinger at the waiter. "This is serious. Bert wouldn't play a joke on you."

"He tried to trip me up just now," said George. "Put out his feet when I was hurrying with a tray of glasses."

"It was this hamberger who did it," stated Randall. "I saw him do it. Deliberate. He up and he put out his foot. He's a nasty piece of work. You oughter chain him up in the backyard. He's—he's dangerous!"

George shook off Neil's hand from his shoulder.

"Now, gentlemen, please! I got a lot of work to do."

"This hamberger's saying he don't like you, George." Bert fixed owlish eyes on the irate man. "He's saying you don't treat him right. He's telling me you want to start something. But he's going to start first—"

Bert snatched the sausage off the fork and flung it at George, who promptly ducked. The sausage went flying across the room over the bar-tender's white-capped head and landed amongst a row of bottles on a shelf. For a tense second the bottles swayed to and fro—then the whole shelf of them crashed down behind the bar-tender. Almost simultaneously George's hand flicked a resounding smack on Bert's face.

Neil jumped into the fight—so did the two gentlemen at the table. Other gentlemen, sitting around, also came into it—the pure love of the thing. Plates flew about, tables turned over, chairs were smashed shivering, bottles fell off shelves as flying plates caught them. A scrambling, kicking heap of gentlemen, young and old, presently littered the sawdusty floor.

George, battered and bruised, yelled for the manager. Bert, under the impression that he had got George, was struggling wildly in the arms of Neil. Broken tables and chairs lay about the room almost as picturesquely as the several more or less conscious young gentlemen.

"Shut it!" grunted Neil. "You fat-headed ass!"

"Lemme get at you," raved Bert, flinging up an arm. "Lemme hit you just once!"

The manager, with a rally of George and several attendants, charged out of a side room and fell upon Neil and Bert. Fists whirled again and the uproar recommenced. Five minutes of stiff battle followed, in which Neil and his friend Bert were overpowered and hammered practically senseless.

"Get 'em out of here quick!" ordered

the manager. "We'll have the cops on us!"

George and three others hurried Neil and Bert out into the yard which backed on to the railway sidings. A freighter was just starting—Neil and Bert were shot into an empty oil tank and left to sleep it off. The gentlemen lying about on the floor of the café were hastily gathered up, dusted down, and put into unbroken chairs at righted tables. The wreckage was cleared—all was normal when, ten minutes later, a sergeant of police looked in.

"Thought I heard a bit of a rumpus going on?" he said inquiringly.

"All peaceful here, sergeant," answered George, concealing a black eye with his left hand. "Must have been them engines shunting trucks in the sidings."

Signed on at Ware's Ranch

BERT and Neil woke up next morning inside a stationary, very smelly, oil tank.

"Let's get out," said Neil. "I've an idea we aren't where we started from last night."

They climbed out of the tank. The freighter was just preparing to leave a countryside halt. The little station-shed was labelled "Marlowe"—which didn't convey anything to either of them—except that it wasn't Kansas City.

Their dress clothes were torn, dirty, and smeared with oil. Their faces were unwashed and their hair was on end. Their heads ached—and they hadn't any hats to protect them from the blazing sun.

A group of cowboys were gathered at the halt, lounging on the shady side of the shed. They gazed in sudden silence at the two scarecrows emerging from the oil tank.

A thin, hatchety-faced fellow in a once white sombrero put up a hand.

"Boys," he said in an awe-struck tone, "I'm seeing things. Get me ice water, quick!"

Neil had jumped down to the tracks. Bert followed in a kind of blind stumble just as the freighter, with a reverberating jerk, resumed its way. The two chums marched up to the staring cowboys.

"What's Marlowe?" Neil demanded of the hatchety-faced one. "And why?"

The hatchety-face relaxed slightly.

"Buddy," he answered, "it's a halt for Rainbow's End—a place where fellers ain't got time to answer fool questions."

"No?" questioned Neil, temper rising at once.

"No!" replied the other, spitting past his ear by a bare inch.

Neil fixed him with glassy eyes.

"Are you trying to start something?" he asked.

"Maybe," came the retort.

Neil's answer was a straight left to the man's chin. He went down like a clean-bowled ninepin. Next instant the little station was the scene of a cheerful free and easy fight in which Bert more than took his part. They were all in it; hitting and going down and springing up again; punching and dodging and thoroughly enjoying themselves when, above the din and commotion, a quick, high voice was heard calling:

"Stop at once—all of you!"

A tallish, fair-haired young woman was on the platform. Her dark eyes were stern.

"Get up, Butch!" she ordered. "And everybody keep quiet while Butch tells me the meaning of all this."

Hatchet-face saluted and stood to attention. The other boys drew back—Neil and Bert dusted themselves down.

"We was stretching out a hand of welcome to these two dudes," Butch stated. "Kinder friendly, Miss Ann."

"That's right," agreed Neil. "Sort of house-warming. We've just arrived." The girl drew nearer to him.

"And who are you?" she asked. "I'm Sir Walter Raleigh," Neil smiled, liking the haughty look in the girl's dark eyes. "And this is the Duke of Wellington."

Bert gave Miss Ann a large smile. "Present and correct," he told her. For a long moment the girl studied them, turn by turn.

"And what are you doing here?" "Looking for a job," said Neil. "What can you do?" she questioned.

"Most anything," Bert answered cheerfully. "I can ride a horse or rope a steer," Neil added.

A heavy-jowled man had lumbered up from the fields and stood behind the girl scowlingly.

"These loafers giving you any trouble, Miss Ware?" he inquired.

"They want work," she told him. "Maybo they'll be useful while we're branding the stock. Sign them on, Dorgan." She indicated Neil with a careless gesture. "This one's named Rowley—his friend is called Duke. Take them along to the cook-house and give them breakfast, a change of clothes—and a wash."

Dorgan eyed the chums sourly. "C'm on!" he rasped. "And you other fellers git busy—stead of lazing round here!"

Washing Dishes

A SWIM in the river which bordered the ranch made new men of Neil and Bert. They ate their breakfast with zest and managed to shake down very well with the other hands.

Butch, who had been so up and doing when they had arrived, was very friendly now.

All the boys seemed a good lot—except Dorgan, the foreman, a natural bully and boaster.

Butch told Neil that the girl was running the ranch; her father, old Adam Ware, having to lay up with a bad patch of gout.

"And that ain't the only trouble," confided Butch. "Place is mortgaged pretty heavy—and Adam is asking the bank for five hundred to carry on till we sell stock. But the bank won't give him another bean."

"Why not?" Neil asked. "If there's plenty of security—as there seems to be—what's the matter with the bank?"

Butch winked an eye towards Dorgan, sitting alone in the cookhouse at the far end. "He knows what's the matter. It's that feller Stark who's got the ranch south-west of this one."

"Stark?" Neil fancied he had heard the name. He was trying to remember when Butch's next words made it all clear.

"Gibson and Stark," said Butch grumpily. "Gibson's the sleeping partner in Kansas City. Don't ever come near the place—leaves it all to Stark, who's just a dirty dog!"

He spat in contempt. Neil watched a chance to tell Bert the interesting news.

"Next door here is our property—Gibson and Stark's ranch. One of the places dad always wanted me to visit. And Gibson and Stark are trying to crowd out this place and double their holding."

"Well, why shouldn't they?" Bert demanded.

"I'm surprised at you, Bert Randall," Neil answered. "Thinking such a fool

thing when that girl saved your life only this morning."

"If you helped your dad to get this farm on the cheap—wouldn't he be pleased?" Bert wanted to know.

"He would not," said Neil. "Dad's got a whole heap of faults—but he's straight as a die. I'm going to stay here and help old man Ware. And so are you."

"It's the girl you're going to help," said Bert.

"You trying to start something?" asked Neil aggressively. "Why, I didn't hardly look at her!"

Dorgan came lurching along the cook-house.

"Quit talking, you two! We start down at the corral in half an hour." He eyed Bert. "You're to go to the sink and wash dishes."

"Me wash dishes?" gasped Bert.

"And wait at table," said Dorgan. "Anything you drop—you'll pay for."

The morning passed off very well for Neil. His skill with the horses and the steers soon made him popular with the boys. But Bert fell foul of the Italian cook just about dinner-time.

"What for you playa with dem dishes?" Toni demanded, when Bert started spinning three soap plates in the air and deftly catching them.

"Drying 'em," said Bert, adding a fourth to the trio.

"You putta dem down!" cried Toni.

"Not so good that way of drying tings!"

"Watch me!" said Bert, adding a fifth soap plate to the crockery he was juggling with. Toni made a flick at him with his dish cloth and the spin came to a disastrous end.

Bert surveyed the breakage, then picked up the china tureen. He sent it in a kind of boomerang whirl at Toni, who promptly ducked. The large basin cracked against the kitchen window, smashed a way through, and went whizzing outward just as Dorgan was coming along.

Dorgan was bullying one of the men and didn't have time to duck. The tureen crashed on the side of his bullet head.

Dorgan made a sudden dash for cover. Toni had responded with a plate which very neatly followed the soup basin. Next instant a battle royal was raging in the kitchen, in which Bert's voice,



Bert was struggling wildly in the arms of Neil. . . .

could be heard inquiringly, above the snashes and crashes of breaking china:

"Starting something, eh?"

The boys, headed by Neil, made a charge through the hut into the kitchen. Neil flung himself between Toni and Bert, who both had missiles poised for a "kill."

"Hey, wait a minute!" roared Neil. "What's this—a mad-batter's tea-party?"

Dorgan, at the back of the crowd, said nastily:

"I'll settle with these fellers, Rowley. You stand aside!"

Bert immediately put down the dish with which he had been intending to finish off the little Italian. A sweet smile wreathed itself under his large nose.

"Suits me!"

"We'll have dinner first," growled Dorgan. "Then I'll wallop the two of you together. Get going!"

Neil winked at Bert.

"Clear up this mess, Duke," he counselled. "This wasn't the way you won Waterloo! Feed the troops—that's the motto."

"He tried to killa me!" wept Toni.

After a quick meal the boys went out to see the promised fight. But Toni wasn't at all eager.

"I cooka da supper," he argued.

Dorgan gave him a clout that sent the little man flying across the room.

"I'll take his place," Neil offered.

Dorgan glared at him under heavy brows.

"Come on!"

They went out into the yard. Dorgan wanted to lay into Bert first, but Neil smilingly checked him.

"We haven't got time," he stated. "Too much to do."

"Stand out of my way!" roared Dorgan, infuriated by Bert's grin.

He made to fling Neil aside, but Neil was waiting for him. He caught the bully's wrist and, with a ju-jitsu trick, doubled up Dorgan's arm behind his back. The fellow gave a yelp of pain as he vainly struggled to free himself.

Neil held the big arm in position.

"Say you're a naughty boy!" he ordered. "And then we'll forget all about it!"

The men stood around astonished. They had expected Dorgan to half-kill these two dudes. But Rowley, as they called him, cool and smiling, was holding their foreman, bent double, as easily as one could hold a little child!

"Say you're a naughty boy?" Neil repeated.

"Lemme—lemme go!"

"Naughty boy!"

"Oh, yes!" The pain of his doubled-up arm was acute.

Neil let go. Dorgan drew in a deep breath of rage and hate.

"I'm quitting!" he spat out. "You men best foller me over to Stark's. There isn't a week's wages here."

He strode out of the yard amid the silence of the boys.

Refusal

IN the parlour of the Ware ranch, old Adam was lying on a sofa, right leg bandaged up. His daughter was standing behind the couch. Her father was trying to hide a letter from her.

"Tell me what they say," Ann requested.

"Why, Ann, it's nothing to worry about," her father tried to soothe her. "Seems the bank is a bit pressed for money and can't give us another cent just now. But in the fall—"

"In the fall's too late," she answered. "And the bank pressed for money?"

Her voice had scorn in it. "Stark is

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behind this—he wants to buy us out, and he has told the bank what to do."

"If this foot of mine weren't so bad," grunted old Adam, "I'd be stumping off to Kansas City and tell Gibson what's going on." He turned his head towards the girl. "What's all this about Dorgan?"

"He's gone over to the enemy," came her answer. "To Gibson and Stark's ranch. The boys were going to walk out with him, but Rowley—the new hand—stopped them, I've asked Rowley to be foreman in Dorgan's place."

Old Adam noted the change in her tone.

"You falling for this Rowley? What's he like? Who is he? Quick work, Ann!"

"Don't be so foolish, dad." But Ann couldn't quite stop her colour rising. "Why, I don't even know him."

She went to the parlour door to call sharply:

"Rowley—my father wants a word with you!"

Neil came into the room.

"Howdy, Mr. Ware? I'm your new foreman."

Old Ware sat up as straight as he could. His eyes focused on Neil. "I didn't appoint you, Rowley."

"Miss Ann fixed all that," Neil announced. "So we'll pass along to other matters. My friend Duke wants to invest some money in a good concern. Rainbow's End has taken his fancy—he hasn't a lot of dough, but he has enough put by to keep things busy till the stock is sold."

"It sounds too good to be true," grunted old Adam. But Neil's smile was so infectious that he couldn't keep a stiff lip. "All right, Rowley—it's not for me to refuse help when help is needed. You're appointed. Show him what to do, Ann."

Neil just glanced at her.

"I know what to do all right! First thing is to get back to the corral while Duke gets a telegram through from Marlowe Halt to his folk."

He strode out of the parlour.

"Bit masterful?" old Adam queried. Ann nodded.

"I'll keep him in order."

The door opened to admit a sleek-looking man, cleanly shaved and fiftyish. He spoke in a hearty voice.

"Why, Ware—I'm sorry to see you laid by like this," he said. "My secretary, Williams, was telling me the bad news only this morning."

"You came to see if it was true?" Ann questioned.

"Hoping it wasn't," he corrected her. "My secretary is one of those college fellows—too clever by half." He stood by old Ware, looking down on him. "Not worried about anything, Adam?"

"Only my foot, Stark. Sit down and tell us your real business."

Stark shook his iron-grey head as he took off his slouch hat.

"You're right in a way—it wasn't merely to ask about your gout that brought me along. Dorgan has quit Rainbow's End and wants me to give him a job. I don't like doing things underhand, Adam."

"We don't mind," Ann put in. "We've got a new man already."

"I met him in the yard," said Stark. "Seems okay at first glance. Any references?"

"The best kind," said Ann. "Excuse me, please—I must attend to the house."

When she had gone, Stark addressed old Ware in the pleasantest manner:

"I was wondering whether you'd care to sell the ranch? Seeing the way things are—you being laid by and

Dorgan leaving you all at a moment's notice."

Ware raised quiet eyes to those of his visitor.

"Did you stop my request to the bank?"

Stark was all puzzlement.

"You don't mean the bank won't give you help? It's just too bad! But this being so—hadn't you best take our offer of five thousand dollars?"

"I'm not selling," said Ware. "Bye—shut the door after you!"

Stark gave him an ugly look.

"You'll be sorry, Adam!"

He strode out of the house, leaving the door wide. Crossing the yard to his buggy he encountered Neil.

"You're the new foreman, I hear. I'm Stark."

Neil nodded.

"I guessed so."

Stark studied him closely.

"Seems to me I've seen you somewhere?"

"I think not."

"Someone like you?"

"No."

Stark's smile faded.

"Okay!" He climbed into his seat.

He drove away without another word. When he reached the Gibson-Stark ranch he jumped down from the buggy, calling sharply:

"Dorgan—where are you?"

Beetle-browed Dorgan was in the hall. He came to the door to let Stark in. The two eyed each other.

"He won't sell," Stark announced, adding fiercely: "But I'll make him!"

"I'll tell you why," Dorgan muttered with a glance round. "Come inside."

When they were in Stark's little office, Dorgan closed the door. "Ware's got help from one of those dudes. Fellow they call Duke. He's getting a wad of notes for Ware. He's going up to Marlowe Town bank to fetch 'em."

Stark waited, smiling thinly.

"I guess I'll bring him here first," Dorgan went on. "That is, if you'll come with me?"

"Sure I'll come with you."

Dorgan didn't smile.

"Let's go."

"If you're selling me another pup, Dorgan—ground out Stark."

"Didn't I keep you posted about Rainbow's End all the while I was there?"

"Maybe you told me a lot of lies," Stark retorted.

Dorgan shrugged heavy shoulders.

"Shall I go back and tell 'em you're rounding up their cattle and getting 'em branded G and S?"

The two conspirators faced each other, both ugly enough now. But Stark's lips creased into his oily smile.

"Aw, Dorgan—don't mind me!" he said quietly. "I got a bit riled with Adam just now and I haven't worked it off!"

Stark Gets Busy

BERT found the old ranch car stuck fast when he came out of the Marlowe bank with his savings.

A very pleasant gentleman, who was passing by, pulled up his runabout.

"Anything wrong?" he inquired.

"Looks like someone's been monkeying with her," said Bert, fiddling at the gears. "She won't go."

The pleasant gentleman got out of his car and helped Bert awhile. But there wasn't even the hint of a kick in the old bus.

"Tell the garage man down the road to send up for her," advised the stranger. "Where do you want to go?"

"Rainbow's End."

"I'll run you there. I'm going to

Gibson and Stark's ranch next to it. Jump in."

Bert seated himself beside this friend in need. They called at the garage lower down Marlowe Main Street, then tooted along the road and out into the country. A man hailed them from the roadside presently, asking for a lift.

It was Dorgan. Bert didn't like the look of things, but fear never entered his heart. He had sublime confidence in himself. Dorgan was allowed to climb into the dickey seat. The pleasant stranger didn't seem to know Dorgan at all. He went on chatting to Bert about President Roosevelt's New Deal and how it was working—proving himself a most interesting companion until they came to a side turning.

"A short cut," said the stranger, accelerating the runabout.

It was a very winding short cut, and it brought them to a farmhouse set near the road.

"Come on in," invited the stranger. "I live here."

"Are you Stark?" Bert asked.

"Sure, I'm Stark. Come in."

Dorgan had got out of the dickey. He stood lowering at Bert, who was thinking rapidly. He decided to get out—Stark was an oldish man, and Bert felt equal to the pair of them.

But he wasn't equal to Stark—who suddenly started up the little car and swung it round so sharply that Bert took a broadside smack from it. Dorgan pounced on him as he stumbled—and his gorilla arms went about him. Stark bounced out of the car and hit Bert a swipe on the back of the neck with the butt of a six-gun that temporarily put him to sleep.

They carried him bodily into the house and dumped him into a chair in a little side room.

"I'll trouble you for those dollar bills, Mister Duke," said Stark when Bert opened his eyes.

Dorgan a d d e d raspingly:

"And don't keep us waiting!"

Bert's dizziness was passing, but he guessed he had better play for time. There might be others in the house. He went all limp and wet.

"O k a y," he mumbled. "I don't know what you're up to—but I reckon it's something dirty."

Stark merely smiled as he reached out a hand for the wad of notes which Bert had lugged out of his breast-pocket.

"Ware owes me money and won't pay," Stark stated in even tones. "So I'm helping myself. You'll find he won't argue when you get back to Rainbow's End."

Dorgan added: "When he gets back!"

"Mister Duke will prefer to stay as my visitor," Stark decided. "I'll lock the door—to keep out anybody who might want to hurt him."

The notes duly locked away in Stark's safe in the wall, they went out together, leaving Bert with closed eyes and breathing through his large nose as if about to do a fade out. But soon after he heard the key grate in the lock; he got up and crept to the little barred window. Stark and Dorgan were getting back into the car. It went chugging away down the road.

Bert was considering his next step when he saw a pale, thin, young man step furtively out of the hall into the garden. He came sidling along to the window as Bert drew back.

"They've gone to the corral," whispered the young man.

Bert opened the small lattice-pane in the iron-framed window.

"Lemme out!" he demanded.

"I can't. Stark's got the key and they'll be back before we can do anything. I'm Williams—they've gone to the corral to brand the cattle they've stolen from Rainbow's End."

Bert nodded.

"How d'you stand in the deal, Williams?"

"Nowhere. I'm quitting here. If I can't work square—I don't work at all. I've wired Gibson to come over."

"You don't have to wire him. He's over at Rainbow's End right now."

The pale, thin youth stared in at Bert's face, dimly seen through the small window.

"You're crazy—Mr. Gibson hasn't been here in years!"

"You telling me?" cried Bert, ready to jump through the brick wall at him. "Neil and me came along together."

Williams opened his mouth in a gasp of understanding.

"I get you! Rowley is old Gibson's son!"

Bert flapped a hand at him.

"Forget it! I oughtn't to have told anybody."

Williams glanced fearfully around.

"They'll be back in a few moments."

I'll go across to Adam Ware's ranch and get Rowley."

Bert thought hard.

"Wait a minute! You know the safe combination?"

"Yes. Two-three-seven-one-five."

Bert was already at the wall safe. He twiddled the knob and got the door open. Next instant the wad of notes was being passed out of the window to Williams.

"Take those to Neil—Rowley, I mean—and tell him Duke's here, waiting to start something with Dorgan. If you want to be in at the finish, you'd best hurry!"

Starting Something

NEIL was doctoring Ann's little terrier dog. He had got hurt while Butch & Co. were rounding up the cattle. Ann was very concerned for her pet, and was at the shed door watching Neil's dexterous fingers as he felt around the broken foreleg.

Barker—as they called him—let out a yelp.

"You're hurting him!" cried Ann.

"Don't stand there doing nothing!" Neil snapped at her. "Get me a basin of cold water."

She glared at him, then decided to obey.

As soon as he had begun to bathe the injured paw, Neil called:

"Hop about! Get me a bandage and a stick for a splint."

"All right—all right!" Ann busied herself once more. Neil bound up the leg carefully.

"Now put him in his basket in the kitchen," Neil ordered. "And stay by to see he don't get out. Okay, Barker, old man—uncle's your doctor!"

Ann took the little dog in her arms.

"Am I allowed to give him his dinner?" she asked sarcastically.

"Sure you are. That's what girls are for—to give folk dinners."

(Continued on page 26)



"What d'you think you're doing with my partner?" demanded Gibson senior.

May 30th, 1936.

Beyond the stratosphere to a new world where science marches hand in hand with savagery. Follow the adventures of a young American on the strange planet of Mongo, realm of monsters and domain of the War-Lord Ming. An unforgettable serial of thrills and suspense, starring Buster Crabbe and Jean Rogers



Read This First

The entire world is in a state of terror. The Earth is threatened with total destruction by the planet Mongo, which, rushing through the void, is controlled by the Emperor Ming, ruler of a strange race of people living on that unknown planet, and a man who has probed the fundamental secrets of Nature.

In America, a scientist known as Dr. Zarkov maintains that he can save the Earth from disaster, and by means of a rocket ship which he has invented he attempts to blaze a trail through the stratosphere.

He is accompanied by Flash Gordon, son of an astronomer, and by Dale Arden, Flash's sweetheart.

The attempt is successful. Travelling through millions of miles of space, the rocket ship sets down the adventurers on the forbidding planet of Mongo, where they are taken prisoners by some of Ming's guards, and conveyed to the emperor's palace.

Ming spares Zarkov and Dale, but Flash is condemned to death, and is only saved by the intervention of Aura, the emperor's daughter, who helps him to escape.

Later, Flash meets with Thun, prince of a nation at war with Ming. Accompanied by Thun, he returns secretly to Ming's palace, and learns that the movement of the planet Mongo towards the Earth has been arrested.

Flash and Thun rescue Dale, but the American and his fiancée fall into the hands of Kala, a puppet of Ming, who rules an under-water domain, and the

May 30th, 1936.

EPISODE 4:—

"Battling the Sea Beast"

American is thrown to a giant sea beast resembling an octopus!

Now Read On

In the Toils

THE instant Flash was hurled into the tank-room Dale Arden realised that Kala's apparent friendliness had been a cruel sham, and with an exclamation of alarm she ran to the door through which the young American had been thrust.

Even as she reached that door it was closed by the two men who had disposed of Flash, and the girl found herself looking up at their evil, grinning faces.

"What have you done with him?" she cried in an impassioned tone. "What have you done with him?"

She tried to push them aside and grip the handle of the door, but they quickly seized her, and were holding her powerless when Kala strolled across to them.

"What have you done with Flash?" Dale repeated frantically. "What have you done with him?"

Kala leered at her, his flat, swarthy face the picture of malevolence. Then he glanced at the men who were clutching her.

"She desires to know the fate of her lover," he remarked complacently. "Come, let her see for herself."

He moved towards a circular window that was set into the wall of the council

chamber, and his vassals dragged Dale after him. A moment later she was standing beside Kala at the window, and as she stared through its thick pane of glass a scream of abject horror broke from her lips.

For she was gazing now into a room built on a lower level than the council chamber, a room half-filled with water, the tank-room into which her lover had been cast; and there, before her eyes, she saw Flash struggling to escape the tentacles of the ghastly sea beast that was imprisoned in the flooded compartment.

He had been clutched around the body by the simous feelers of the brute, and though his head was at present above the surface of the water, he was being dragged down, down—to suffer terrible agonies by the crushing embrace of the sea beast's tentacles, and to find relief only in death by suffocation.

The anguished girl at the window beheld his distorted face as he fought his vain battle, beheld the loathsome, fleshy coils that were wrapped around his writhing figure, beheld the shimmering form of the monster that lay below the water with the vacuoles of its gross body holding it fast to the floor. And in a frenzy of distress she turned to Kala and cried out to him appealingly:

"Spare him!" she implored. "Don't let him die! Save him, for pity's sake. I'll do anything—anything you ask—if only you'll save him."

He shook his head.

"It is Ming who has condemned him, not I—"

He paused, for at that moment his

attention was diverted from the window by an insistent buzzing that came from a control-board upon the left-hand wall of the council chamber.

Above that wall was a small, translucent panel which could have been likened to a miniature cinematograph screen, and upon it the image of a man's head and shoulders had begun to take shape.

The image had been thrown on the screen by some process akin to television, and as the picture grew clearer the sinister face of the Emperor Ming became recognisable.

A voice issued from the panel. It was the unmistakable voice of the emperor, speaking from his distant palace on Mongo's highest peak and demanding audience with Kala, his puppet ruler of the realm below the sea.

Kala hastened across to the screen and spoke up into it.

"Your Majesty," he said, "I have taken the Earth people prisoners, as you commanded. The girl will be returned to you. The man, even as I talk to you, is near to death."

"And Prince Thun?" came the voice of Ming. "What of him?"

"Prince Thun?"

"Yes, yes. He was with the Earth girl and her lover. Was that not made clear to you?"

"We saw no sign of Thun, your Majesty," Kala mumbled. "Only the two strangers from the Earth."

The face on the screen assumed an ugly expression of annoyance, and then, after a brief interval, Ming's voice reached Kala's ears again.

"Thun must have escaped the trap that threw the Earth people into your clutches," he ground out. "Well, his time will come, nevertheless. Meanwhile, do not let the girl Dale Arden out of your sight. And listen, Kala, I have reason to believe that my daughter Aura is on her way to your domain."

"Your daughter Aura?"

"Yes," was the curt reply. "She is interested in the Earth man, Gordon—would save him, if she could. If she reaches your palace make her a prisoner, and return her to me together with Dale Arden."

"Your instructions will be obeyed, your Majesty," Kala answered submissively, and then the vision on the screen slowly faded from view, leaving the panel blank once more.

Kala turned now, and was about to retrace his steps to the window through which Dale and the guards were watching Flash Gordon's struggles, when a young woman entered the council chamber by the main doorway, a dark-haired and dusky-skinned woman who was one of the hand-maidens of the underworld monarch's court.

"Ah, greetings, Zona," Kala observed. "You have arrived at an opportune time. I have a guest here who needs a chaperon."

He turned to indicate Dale, and as he did so he realised that the Earth girl was in a half-fainting condition, overwhelmed as she was by the grim spectacle which she was being forced to witness.

Kala strode towards his guards, all six of whom were by this time assembled round the window.

"You may go," he told the men. "Zona will look after our fair captive."

The guards departed from the council chamber, and Zona approached the window, laying a firm hand on Dale and peering through into the tank-room with Kala.

Her hard, cold features remained impassive at what she saw—Flash

snared in the tentacles of the sea beast, going under as those sinuous arms pulled him down. Rising once more as by some superhuman effort, he managed to resist their relentless drag.

Thus the battle proceeded, but, though Flash Gordon's head broke water time after time, always he was drawn beneath the surface again; and soon enough it was clear that his strength was giving out, that he could not last much longer, that his desperate struggles were waning, waning.

Sagging in the grasp of the woman Zona, unable to watch the plight of her lover, Dale Arden looked at Kala imploringly.

"Save him!" she faltered. "Save him!"

"Your pleas are useless," he rejoined in callous accents. "Ming ordered him to die, and, even if the emperor had not so commanded, I should have shown Gordon no mercy. No man may pit his strength against Kala—and live."

He glanced through the window again, and saw that the one-sided combat between Flash and the monster was almost at an end. The young American was sinking below the surface in the grip of the tentacles, and it was obvious from the feeble movements of his hands and the hopeless look on his countenance that he could not prolong his fight for life.

"The Earth man has given us good sport," Kala remarked, "but the entertainment has very nearly reached its close. He is being dragged down for the last time, to rise no more."

There was an expression of brutal satisfaction on the man's face as he spoke those words, and the heartless tone of his voice seemed to bore into Dale's numbed mind even as the last shreds of consciousness were leaving her. And then, suddenly, in the very instant that she was willing in Zona's grasp, another voice struck upon her ears.

"Not a move, King Kala, or you die!"

The Nick of Time

IT was the voice of Aura which had rung through the council chamber of Kala's underworld palace—Aura, who had led Thun safely and secretly to the submarine realm of her father's ally in the hope of rescuing Flash Gordon from death.

Hearing that voice, Dale roused herself with an effort and stared in the direction whence it had come, and in the doorway of the spacious apartment she beheld Ming's daughter and the bearded stalwart who had befriended Flash.

There was a ray-gun in Thun's hand. It was trained on the astonished Kala, and, keeping the latter covered, the Prince of the Lion Men now advanced with Aura until he was only a few paces from the spot where Dale Arden and her two captors were standing.

"Give no alarm, Kala," Ming's daughter warned, "or Thun will blast the life from your body. What have you done with the Earth man—Gordon?"

Kala's face was a sickly hue, but he strove to speak in a tone of firmness and determination.

"Your father has ordered Flash Gordon's death," he said. "He has also ordered that you be returned to him, Princess Aura—a prisoner."

The emperor's daughter eyed him scornfully for a moment, and then glanced at the window through which Kala, Dale and Zona had witnessed the plight of Flash. In another second Aura had thrust her way past the monarch of the underworld, calling

upon Thun to keep a strict watch on him as she did so.

One glance through the circular window was enough to drain every vestige of colour from Aura's cheeks, and for a brief interval she seemed too horrified to utter a sound. Next moment, however, she was wheeling round to confront Kala menacingly.

"Stop that fight in there," she rapped out, "at once!"

Kala raised his eyebrows.

"How can it be stopped?" he retorted. "Do you think one can give commands to a sea beast?"

"You know as well as I do how that fight can be stopped!" Aura flung at him. "Somewhere in this very room there is a switch that drains the water from the sea beast's lair. Drain that water, Kala, and the monster is rendered powerless. Do I have to waste words in reminding you of this?"

The king of the underworld glared at her and attempted to offer a show of defiance, but Thun promptly moved a step closer to him.

"The switch, Kala!" the Prince of the Lion Men barked. "If Flash Gordon dies, then your doom is also sealed!"

The other recoiled in alarm as the ray-gun was levelled threateningly, and it was with some haste that he stumbled towards the opposite wall, where he touched some hidden spring that raised a cunning shutter.

Behind that shutter was the switch that Aura had mentioned, and, breathing hard, Kala forced it down. Meanwhile, Ming's daughter was gazing through the window of the tank-room, and it was with a hopeful expression in her eyes that Dale Arden wrenched away from Zona and joined the dark-haired princess.

Aura gave Dale a cold, sidelong glance which showed more plainly than words could have done that she was not interested in the Earth girl, and that it was only on Flash's account that she had helped Thun to stage a rescue. Then she looked through the window again, and ere long she was satisfied that the turn of the lever which Kala had been forced to operate was producing the desired effect.

The level of the water in the tank-room was falling. Rapidly it subsided, draining away through some outlet that the switch had opened, and, as it left, the body of the sea beast uncovered, so the strength of that monster seemed to dwindle—even as Aura had prophesied.

Deprived of the natural element in which it existed, the giant creature became an enfeebled and helpless thing. The mighty grip of its tentacles relaxed, the sinuous limbs sagging to the floor and out of their terrific embrace reeled the bruised figure of its victim, to sink down in a state of utter exhaustion.

Aura turned now from the window of the tank-room and sped to the door through which Flash had been hurled some time before. Dale followed her, and was close upon her heels when the other girl unlocked the door and entered the chamber wherein the condemned man had so nearly met his death.

Thun, in the meantime, was watching Kala and Zona, and was quick to hold them at bay when the two of them attempted to make separate dashes for the main doorway of the council-room. Springing back, he prevented their escape and forced them to retreat, and they were cringing before him when Aura and Dale reappeared.

The two girls were supporting Flash, who seemed scarcely able to drag one leg after another, but in a little while,

the big fellow showed signs of recovering, and managed to stammer out a few words of appreciation to Aura and Thun.

"I—I don't know how you got here," he panted, "but I guess you showed up—just in time. That big baby in there sure had me down for the count. I'm—mighty grateful."

Thun spoke to him—without taking his eyes off Kala and Zona, however.

"Are you able to walk, Flash?" he asked tersely.

"Give me a couple of minutes and I'll do more than walk," the American answered. "I'll—break that guy Kala in pieces—for giving me that giant octopus as a playmate."

Prince Thun smiled a twisted smile. "Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see you break Kala into pieces," he said. "But there is no time for that, Flash. We have yet to make our way from his domain, and we cannot afford to delay."

"You are right, Thun." It was Aura's voice. "You are right, and we may find it more difficult to leave this realm than to enter it. If we return by the way we came we will only find ourselves back amongst the galleries below my father's palace."

"You fear your father, Aura?" Thun muttered.

The girl shook her head.

"I do not fear him on my own account," she said. "But I fear for the safety of Flash. Until I can prevail upon the emperor to pardon him and spare him, Flash must not fall into his hands."

"Then what is your plan, Aura?" Dale interposed tremulously.

Ming's daughter directed a chilling glance at her.

"My plan is to make for the dry docks where Kala's under-water ships are housed," she replied. "We can make our escape in one of those ships and cruise through the caverns to the open sea. When we gain the surface, Thun can take care of you and Flash, and I will return to my father's palace."

"Do you know how to reach the dry docks from here, Aura?" asked Thun.

The princess inclined her head.

"Yes, I know how to reach them. But we may have to fight our way to them if we run foul of any of Kala's men."

Kala had been listening attentively to the conversation, and now he growled a comment.

"You will never succeed in your design," he said, "and as for you, Thun, I warn you that you will regret this invasion of my realm!"

"If there are any regrets," the Prince of the Lion Men retorted grimly, "you will not live to gloat over them. Should any of your guards try to stop us, Kala, yours will be the first life that I shall take. Meanwhile, you and Zona are going with us as hostages. We do not intend to give you an opportunity of raising an alarm."

He motioned to Aura to lead the way from the council chamber, and, first satisfying herself that the coast was clear, Ming's daughter stole out across the threshold of the room, with the others following her in single file—Thun bringing up the rear and menacing Kala and Zona with the ray-gun.

They passed slowly and cautiously along the wide corridor by which Flash Gordon and Dale Arden had been dragged to the council chamber some time before, and presently they might have been seen turning into another gallery. Ere a quarter of an hour had elapsed they had travelled for a considerable distance through the network of underground tunnels which honey-

combed Kala's domain, and counted themselves lucky in not meeting with a soul.

Aura seemed to know every foot of that labyrinth, and, moving a few yards in advance of her companions, she proved an invaluable guide, never once showing any sign of uncertainty or hesitation. But suddenly, just as she reached an angle of one of the corridors, she came to an abrupt halt and signed to the rest of the party to remain where they were.

Flash and the others paused, and Thun made a significant gesture with the ray-gun to remind Kala and Zona that they would court destruction if they attempted any outcry, for it was clear to him that the Princess Aura must have seen someone ahead.

In another second or two Aura had retreated to where her companions and the hostages were standing.

"The control-room is beyond that corner," she whispered. "We must pass through it to get to the dry docks, and one of Kala's men is on duty at the great switchboard—the switchboard that generates the air for this submarine realm and gives the outer barriers the necessary resistance to hold back the sea water of the caverns."

Flash looked at her keenly.

"You mean—one man stands between us and freedom?" he queried. "I guess I can handle him all right. Thun, you stay right here and see that Kala and Zona don't give any trouble. Dale, you help Thun to keep an eye on them."

"Do you think you can handle the man in the control-room, Flash?" Dale asked him anxiously.

"Sure," he answered. "I'll admit I had a tough time with that giant octopus, but I'm all right now."

With a confident expression on his handsome features he advanced towards the angle of the corridor, and Aura elected to accompany him. A moment later they had reached the entrance of the control-room, and, staring through the doorway, they riveted their attention on the man at the switchboard.

"Leave him to me, Aura," Flash breathed, and then he crept across the threshold and began to steal upon Kala's minion from behind.

He was within two or three paces of the man when the latter chanced to turn his head, as if warned of his danger by some instinct that could not be defined, and at sight of Flash he uttered a hoarse exclamation.

Next instant he had snatched up a ray-pistol that was lying close at hand, but before he could train it on Flash the American was upon him, striking the weapon from the fellow's grasp and seizing him by the throat.

And now there ensued a desperate scuffle, a scuffle that Aura watched with bated breath. Back and forth the two men rocked, fighting like demons in their efforts to gain the mastery, for if Kala's hireling had been taken almost by surprise, he had been quick to recover himself and show resistance.

He was a man of powerful frame, too, and at first he seemed to be a match for the American, who was still suffering from his battle with the octopus in spite of the reassuring statement he had made to Dale Arden. Yet, even if his strength had been impaired by the ordeal in the tank-room, Flash possessed the will to win, and gradually he took the upper hand again.

At last he managed to throw his antagonist, and from the doorway Aura saw the pair of them roll across the floor. Then she became aware that the guard's ray-pistol was lying near them, and that Kala's minion was trying to reach out for it.

The girl dashed across the room and picked up the weapon before the man's fingers could close on it, and with the pistol safely in her grip, she drew back to the threshold. A moment afterwards she was watching Flash as he pounded his adversary with clenched fist.

Crouching astride the guard's prone body, Flash drove his bunched knuckles into the fellow's jaw again and again, until at length the wretch lay insensible. Only then did the young American rise to his feet, and, panting from his exertions, he staggered towards Aura. "That ought to keep him quiet for a while," he gasped. "Now to reach those dry docks you spoke of, Aura. We—"

He checked, for at that very second there was a commotion in the gallery that led to the control-room, and, exchanging a startled glance with Ming's daughter, he lurched out through the doorway with her.

There, in the gallery, he beheld a scene that caused him to grit his teeth and steel himself for further fight. For he saw Thun struggling in the arms of two of Kala's men, who must have been passing that way and come upon the bearded Lion Man unawares.

They were now grappling fiercely with Thun, while Kala and Zona held Dale and prevented her from going to his aid.

Flash started forward with a shout on his lips, but with a swift movement Aura caught him by the arm and pulled him into the control-room again. Then, before he realised what was in her mind, she wheeled in the direction of the great switchboard and levelled the ray-pistol at it.

A stream of flame burst from the muzzle of the weapon and played across the dials and levers of that massive instrument-board, and all at once there was an ugly crackling of sparks that flew to right and left in successive showers. Simultaneously, the casing of the switchboard seemed to buckle and split, and fragments of intricate machinery rattled to the floor.

Flash gazed at Aura dully as she lowered her hand.

"What's the idea?" he demanded.

"Why did you do that?"

"Did I not tell you," she answered, "that this board controls the generators which provide air, and which also sustain the pressure that keeps water out of Kala's domain?"

"Then why destroy it?" cried Flash.

"Because by doing so our chances of escape are increased! In the panic that must now spread through this whole realm we can get to the dry docks without much fear of hindrance, and once we are inside one of Kala's submarine ships we shall be safe from the fate that will overtake his city!"

She clutched Flash by the arm.

"Come," she went on urgently. "We just have time to reach our goal—a submarine ship that will carry us to the open sea when the outer barriers give way. But we must hurry, we must hurry!"

He stood his ground as she attempted to draw him towards another doorway at the far side of the control-room.

"You're forgetting Dale and Thun!" he jerked.

"You must not think of them now," she exclaimed impatiently. "There is no time to lose. Every moment is precious to us. A delay of seconds, and we may never reach dry docks. Flash, it is yourself you must consider. I can save you—and hide you till I am able to make my father see reason—"

The handsome American tore away from her. His face had gone pale, and there was a wild light in his eyes.

"I'm not leaving Thun and Dale!" he ground out.

"Flash!" Aura called distractedly. "Don't go back. The noise of that fight will soon bring more of Kala's men. Worse still, the air in the galleries will be exhausted within a few minutes, and the water will burst down the harriers—"

But Flash was not listening. Already he had bounded forth in the corridor where Thun had been surprised, and in headlong style he charged to the rescue of his ally, throwing an arm round one of Kala's underlings and dragging the man aside—then landing him a terrific punch that hurled the fellow against the wall of the passage.

The back of the guard's head came into violent contact with that wall, and, uttering a hollow groan, he slumped to the floor in a heap. Then Kala himself tried to take a hand in the affray, but blundered into an upper-cut that knocked him clean off his balance.

In the meantime, Thun was disposing of the remaining guard, whom he now had little difficulty in handling, and when Flash turned from the prostrate form of Kala it was to see the Lion Man's opponent going down beneath a blow from the butt of the prince's ray-gun.

At the same instant he saw Zona running off along the corridor, doubtless to give the alarm and bring reinforcements to the spot, but before she had gone far she appeared to falter—to reel against the wall—and to raise her fingers to her throat as if an unseen hand were strangling her.

It was then that Flash became aware of a change that had taken place in the atmosphere of the gallery; found himself breathing hard, not so much because of his recent exertions, but because there seemed to be a lack of air.

He looked at Thun, and then at Dale, who was standing nearby. Both of them were open-mouthed and clutching at their throats.

"Flash," Dale gasped, "Flash, what's happening? I—I can't breathe. I'm—choking."

It was Aura who answered her; Aura, who had moved from the doorway of the control-room. Her features were pale, and yet strangely calm.

"I have wrecked the switchboard that governs the air generators and the pressure that keeps the water at bay," she said simply. "Kala's realm is doomed. It is only a question of seconds now."

Flash caught her by the wrist. "You spoke of the submarine ships," he panted. "If we can get away in one of them—"

"Too late!" she interrupted. "Too late! Before we reached the dry docks we should die for want of air, or else drown in the flood-waters that will soon pour through these galleries. No, Flash, our only chance has gone. You delayed in order that you might help your friends. That delay has cost you your life, and cost me mine."

"You could have made your escape alone," he said, speaking with difficulty.

"Why didn't you?"

"Because, like you, I am not afraid to die."

She stopped and looked at Kala, who was struggling up from the floor. He had heard what had passed between her and Flash, and his complexion was grey as he tottered to the door of the control-room and gaped at the damaged switchboard.

"Aura!" he babbled. "It is true! You have sealed our destruction! We are lost—all lost!"

From afar there came a vague tumult, as of men and women crying out in tones of abject despair, and the distant clamour told Kala that his people in all parts of the subterranean realm were beginning to realise from the shortage of air that something was wrong.

For an interval he stood there with a distracted expression on his countenance, and then all at once a faint gleam of hope awakened in his eyes.

"Ming can save us," he said hoarsely.

"From his palace he controls duplicate machines that can supply us with oxygen and raise enough pressure to hold back the flood-waters. Ming can save us—"

if only we can get a signal to him—if only we can get a distress signal through to him!"

He made for the switchboard, and Flash and Dale followed him, accompanied by Aura and Thun. By now all of them were fighting for breath, and beads of perspiration were streaming down their faces. They were suffocating, and in their plight all hostility was forgotten. For the moment, at least, their common peril had united them—this puppet monarch Kala and the quartet who had held him hostage.

Four pairs of eyes watched Kala as he fumbled with a switch on the damaged control-board.

"Unless the mechanism has been completely wrecked, we may be able to make contact with Ming's palace by the visual rays," he groaned. "We can but try. We can but try—"

Despair

LITTLE did Kala know it, but, while he was attempting to communicate with Ming, a man in the emperor's laboratory was endeavouring to send out signals on a much more ambitious scale.

That man was Dr. Zarkov, and he had spent an hour or two of experimental research in the amazing workshop of the potentate who was virtually holding him a captive. In the privacy of this room he had delved deep into the emperor's secrets, partly to keep his mind from speculating on the fate of his friends, partly to discover if he could make use of the vital apparatus which the laboratory contained.

He was now standing before a transmitting set that was far in advance of any broadcasting equipment known to his fellow-scientists of the Earth, and by means of it he was sending out a call which he hoped might reach some station on that distant globe.

"Dr. Zarkov speaking from Mongo," he repeated again and again, as he manipulated the dials on the transmitting set. "Dr. Zarkov speaking from Mongo—the planet Mongo!"

He was still repeating his call in the hope that it would be picked up when he



A moment later they had reached the entrance of the control-room, and, staring through the doorway, they riveted their attention on the man at the switchboard.

heard footsteps outside the door of the laboratory, and he at once made haste to switch off the transmitting set and devote his attention to a machine in which he had interested himself an hour or so previously.

He had scarcely taken up his position beside that particular appliance when the robed figure of the Emperor Ming entered the room.

Down sweeping the floor, the sinister monarch moved towards Zarkov and eyed him shrewdly, a crooked smile playing around his thin-lipped mouth.

"Well, my friend," Ming said, "have you improved upon any of my inventions here? Remember, I spared your life because I believed you might be useful to me, but if you do not show me results then I shall be compelled—to get rid of you."

Zarkov clenched his hands spasmodically.

"Before we discuss scientific matters, your Majesty," he rejoined in a steady tone, "may I ask what has become of my friends from the Earth?"

Ming smiled again.

"Unless I am much mistaken," he remarked, "Kala has already disposed of Flash Gordon. As for the lovely Dale Arden, she is probably on her way to my palace here even now. But come, Zarkov, tell me of your work in the laboratory."

The doctor gave him a bitter glance, and was silent for a space. Then he indicated the appliance by which he was standing.

"Shortly before you came in I was examining this apparatus, your Majesty," he observed, "and I think I can improve upon it by introducing a new ray which I discovered about a month ago."

"A new ray?" Ming echoed, with interest. "Will it be of help in furthering my plans to become ruler of the entire Universe—ruler of Mongo, of the Earth, of all Creation?"

"It may," Zarkov conceded reluctantly. "It is a variation of the ray you have been using, but, being of a higher frequency, it is more flexible. If you can follow me, it is built up from the negative side rather than the positive."

Ming was listening to him with a keen expression on his thin, evil features.

"Tell me more about this ray," he said, but before the doctor could proceed there was an interruption.

A man in armour appeared on the threshold of the laboratory. He was Torch, captain of Ming's hodyguard, and it was with an anxious look in his eyes that he came forward to salute the emperor.

"Your Majesty," he reported, "someone is trying to communicate with us from Kala's domain, but we can make nothing of the message. I think something must be very wrong indeed down there."

Ming frowned, and then, bidding Zarkov follow him, he hastened from the laboratory with Torch and quickly made his way along the gallery that led to the throne-room.

Here a number of his guards were assembled, their eyes upturned towards a luminous panel that was built into the wall; and on this panel, or screen, several indistinct shadows were visible—obviously the shapes of four or five human beings, though the impressions were so blurred as to be unrecognisable.

A voice was issuing from the screen, a voice as indefinite as the group of shadows, a voice that uttered inarticulate sounds which were a mere jumble of broken syllables, defying comprehension.

Ming thrust his way through the party of soldiers and stared at the panel. Joining him, Zarkov realised that he was

gazing upon some form of television which either was in an experimental state or else functioning inaccurately.

Ming stood silent for fully a minute, watching the screen, listening to the voice that babbled from it. Then he glanced at Torch.

"That voice is Kala's," he rapped out. "There is no mistaking it. But I cannot make out a word of what he is saying. What has happened to this apparatus? It has never failed us before."

He reached for a switch under the screen and turned it slowly. For a moment there was no result, the shadowy forms on the panel above him still remaining indistinct and Kala's voice becoming no less incoherent. But suddenly, just for the space of a second, the scene grew clearer.

"Look!" cried Torch.

Kala's head and shoulders became visible on the screen, and, in the background, the faces of Thun, Flash, Dale and Aura were revealed—faces which, like Kala's, were distorted with suffering.

Only for an instant did the picture remain thus well defined, only for an instant did the watchers in Ming's throne-room see the vision of those five human beings as clearly as they might have done if they had actually been standing before them in the doomed realms far below the base of the mountain.

In that same instant of time a single word trembled audibly from the screen in Kala's voice:

"Destruction—"

Then swiftly the vision faded again into shadowy incompleteness, and once more the tones of Ming's ally were rendered inarticulate.

Thoroughly alarmed now, Ming persevered savagely with the switch that he had been turning, but to no purpose.

"Destruction!" he hissed through his gritted teeth. "Destruction! What did Kala mean by that?"

It was a question that none in the throne-room could answer, for none who stood there knew that the air in the galleries and chambers of Kala's domain was fast giving out, that the relentless waters in the deep caverns were pressing in upon the safety-barriers with a force which the toughest metal could not have withstood.

Soon those barrier-doors would buckle under the strain. Air pressure had provided them with the power to resist the tides that swept the caverns, but now that the air supply was gone they would fall before the might of Nature, and Kala's kingdom would be flooded from end to end.

Twenty thousand feet below the palace of Ming, the abject Kala turned from the switchboard at which he had been making his forlorn attempts to contact the emperor. His face seemed to have fallen in, his eyes were hollow with despair and his hands were clawing at his throat as he fought for breath.

"I cannot—make them—understand," he groaned. "I cannot make them—understand."

He looked haggardly at the two men and the two girls who stood beside him. Thun and Aura had lurched against the wall and were leaning there weakly. Flash was supporting Dale in his arms, endeavouring to comfort her and encourage her, though his voice was dry and cracked.

Death was closing upon them all, slowly, agonisingly. Death by suffocation. . . .

(To be continued. By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Buster Crabbe and Jean Rogers.)

"RAINBOW'S END"

(Continued from page 21)

"Thank you, Mister Craig!"

Neil gave her a sideways look.

"Hallo, hallo! Didn't I tell you I was Sir Walter Raleigh?"

"I heard Duke call you Craig—but maybe I'm still wrong. Your evening shirt, which I've washed for you, is initialed N. G. No good, I reckon."

Butch came running up.

"Oh, Rowley—we're four hundred beeves short. Someone's rustled 'em in the night!"

"Four hundred?" gasped Ann. "Why, how can that be? Four hundred?"

"They're gone!" spoke Butch ruefully.

Almost on his heels came a young fellow on a panting, lathered bronc. He swung down out of the saddle.

"Which is Rowley?" he cried. "I want him—Duke's held up in Stark's house."

"I'm Rowley," said Neil with another glance at Ann.

"Here's some money for you—from Duke. I'm Williams." The young fellow thrust a roll of dollar bills at Neil. "I'm Stark's secretary—least-ways, I was. I've quit. He isn't square—he's branding a whole lot of beeves just come in from goodness knows where. He didn't buy them from you, did he?"

He addressed Ann, who was holding the small dog almost too tightly in her agitation. It whined a little.

"Now who's hurting him?" cried Neil.

"Never mind—take him inside."

Williams, quite forgetting, asked:

"You're Neil Gibson, aren't you? I've worried for your father to come— Oh, sorry!"

Neil had given him a black look.

"Now that everybody has been introduced," he snapped, "perhaps you'll put that poor dog in his basket, Ann Ware!"

Ann turned away without a word and went across to the house.

"I'll take your bronc," Neil told Williams. "You stay with Butch—I'm going to talk to Stark."

He swung himself into the saddle and was gone in a flash.

"We'll follow!" called Butch, scenting a fight. But Neil hadn't heard.

He rode like the wind to the Gibson-Stark ranch, while Ann told herself: "He's gone—and he won't come back!"

Meantime, Dorgan had returned and had unlocked the door of Bert's prison. Bert was peacefully dozing in a chair. Next thing that caught Dorgan's attention was the open door of the wall safe. He crossed the room in a couple of strides—a glance showed him the notes had gone.

He swung round on Bert.

"Tip 'em up!" he roared, grabbing Bert by the collar.

Bert awoke with well-acted surprise.

"Why, Dorgan—you come back all by your little self?"

"Gimme them dollar bills!"

"Sorry. They're at Rainbow's End—where they belong."

Bert stood up, yawning. He gently but firmly removed Dorgan's hand from his coat-collar; then, with a sudden back-handed swing of his right, he got Dorgan fair and square under the chin, shutting his snarling mouth with a click that told of breaking teeth. Dorgan went over backwards with a crash—only to spring up in a split second. He made a

mad bull rush at Bert, who stepped aside nimbly and slobbered him again, this time under the left ear.

Dorgan closed in on Bert with sledge-hammer fist at Bert's large nose. For a moment stars danced before Bert's eyes; then he had closed with his bulky opponent, and the pair were rolling together on the floor, punching at each other with grim determination.

It was a great fight. Sometimes Bert looked like winning, then Dorgan would recover and come at him again. They fought all across the room and out into the hall, Bert seeking to get a real smasher at his foe.

But Dorgan knew the house, and at last got Bert up against the closed kitchen door. Here they got themselves locked together in a breathless embrace, pushing and jabbing and thrusting at each other until suddenly the door-latch gave way and flew open, when both of them went headlong over the couple of steps down from the hall floor to the kitchen level. While they were picking themselves up, the door-spring shot back the door.

Dorgan, head lowered like a goat's, butted at Bert's stomach. Bert stepped aside, slid over some grease on the floor and went sprawling. Dorgan butted straight into the refrigerator, then, with a gasp, went down and stayed down.

When Neil reached the ranch the front door was open. He leapt off the brone and strode into the house. Stark was in the hall, standing very still, as if listening. There was no sound of life until Neil barked at him:

"What have you done to my buddy?" Stark turned cold eyes upon him.

"Get out of my house!"

Neil didn't waste breath. He hit Stark in the face, knocking him sideways. Stark was no coward, and was at Neil on the instant, in such a cold fury of rage that he bore Neil right before him to the doorstep, Neil having all he could do to ward off the storm of blows which Stark showered on him.

Neil didn't want to hurt a man much older than himself, so he waited his chance to get Stark in a clinch. Then he ran him backwards into the hall, and, lifting him right off his feet, flung him into a chair, where he fell with a crash that shook the house.

"Now then!" stormed Neil. "Tell me about this!" He thrust an open letter into Stark's hand.

Footsteps were heard outside. Two people had sprung from a car. Into the hall came hurrying old John Gibson, followed by Ann Ware.

Gibson senior pointed a finger at the recumbent Stark, as he snapped at Neil:

"What d'you think you're doing with my partner?"

"Asking him a plain question," said Neil, face all frowns.

"Is that the way gentlemen ask questions?" asked Gibson senior.

"Don't mind him," said Stark. "He's no one. Only a mad fellow from Rainbow's End who thinks he's Napoleon."

"Sir Walter Raleigh," Ann corrected gently.

"Listen here," spoke Neil, controlling himself. "Stark has been stealing Adam Ware's cattle and branding them as yours and his. And he has been double-crossing you! See that letter he don't dare to read? It was written by the Marlowe bank-manager at Stark's instigation. It's the bank's refusal to help Ware, who's one of the very best!"

"You're a liar!" Stark snarled. "I didn't have a thing to do with the sending of this." He flung the letter contemptuously on the floor.

Old Gibson turned on him,

"Do you tell me my son's a liar, James William Stark? Come on outside!"

He lugged Stark up from the chair and rushed him out into the yard. Sounds like a bull-fight followed immediately.

"Stop them!" Ann pleaded. "Not on your life!" said Neil. "I'll have ten dollars to one with you on dad!"

But somebody else had got out of the car on seeing old Gibson hammering away at Stark. Gwen Gibson, flustered and indignant.

"Hold your temper, father," she cried, "or I'll have to set about the pair of you two wicked old men!"

Bert emerged from the kitchen, nose swollen, one eye fast blackening.

"That you, Gwen?" he called cheerfully. "You starting something?"

Stark tried to trim his sails.

"I can explain everything, Mr. Gibson."

Neil calmly put an arm about Ann's waist as Gwen Gibson came hurrying towards her battered Bert, followed by old Gibson and the discomfited Stark.

"What have they been doing to you, darling?" Gwen almost wept, her threats forgotten as she clung to Bert.

"I fell over a couple of steps," he answered, always cheerful. "So did the other fellow. He's still counting 'em."

"Oh, Gwen," called Neil. "I want you to meet your sister-in-law that's going to be."

He pushed Ann forward a little way, but didn't let her go.

"And, dad, I'm foreman at Rainbow's End, the next ranch to this. What say we kick Stark out and run the two ranches together?"

"Suits me," growled Gibson senior, fixing Stark with a glance that said, "Now, don't you put up any difficulties, hear me?" He next studied Ann's blushing face. "Do you really want to hook up with this good-for-nothing son of mine?"

"I'll risk it," said Ann.

"We'll have a double wedding," grinned Bert. "It'll save a lot of expense and bother."

"Okay," agreed old John Gibson in his dour fashion. "Hop it, Stark—you aren't invited!"

(By permission of Associated British Film Distributors, starring Hoot Gibson and June Gale.)

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"A TALE OF TWO CITIES,"—*Sydney Carton*, Ronald Colman; *Lucie Manette*, Elizabeth Allan; *Miss Pross*, Edna May Oliver; *Stryker*, Reginald Owen; *Marquis St. Evremont*, Basil Rathbone; *Madame Defarge*, Blanche Yurka; *Dr. Manette*, Henry B. Walthall; *Charles Darnay*, Donald Woods; *Barsad*, Walter Catlett; *Gaspard*, Fritz Leiber; *Gabelle*, H. B. Warner; *Defarge*, Mitchell Lewis; *Jarvis Lorry*, Claude Gillingwater; *Jerry Cruncher*, Billy Bevan; *Jeanne Fontaine*, Isabel Jewel; *La Vengeance*, Lucille Laverne.

"THE LAST ASSIGNMENT,"—*Bob Horton*, Ray Walker; *Marie Russell*, Joan Woodbury; *Jim Horton*, William Farnum; *John Russell*, Earle Dwire; *Hendricks*, Sid Saylor; *Krane*, Mathew Betz; *Mrs. Gordon*, Clara Kimball Young; *Brandon*, Reed Howes.

"RAINBOW'S END,"—*Neil Gibson*, Hoot Gibson; *Ann Ware*, June Gale; *John Gibson*, Oscar Apfel; *Stark*, Warner Richmond; *Gwen Gibson*, Ada Ince; *Bert Randall*, Charles Hill; *Dorgan*, Stanley Blystone; *Adam Ware*, John Elliott; *Butch*, Buddy Roosevelt.

"A TALE OF TWO CITIES"

(Continued from page 10)

"You remember how alike we are. Good-bye!"

Barsad, wondering, impressed despite himself, almost carried Darnay out of the cell. Carton seated himself at the table below the window.

A gaoler, passing along, came to Barsad.

"Fainted, eh? I noticed he staggered as he came in. Let me help you, Citizen Barsad. We'll put him in the cart outside. Funny how it affects some people—saying good-bye! Weak-minded, I call it!"

Escape—and Sacrifice

THE coach was at the side door of Telson's Bank, in the Rue St. Honoré. Lucie and Mr. Lorry were in their places, a muffled figure between them. Dr. Manette and little Lucie sat opposite, holding each other by the hand. Miss Pross and Jerry Cruncher were to follow in a small trap with the luggage. "Don't wait," called Lorry to the driver.

The coach drove away into the thickening darkness of the evening.

Miss Pross was coming down to join Jerry, when she remembered a small bag left in Manette's room. She returned for it. On coming back to the landing she met Madame Defarge ascending the stairs at a run. At once Miss Pross placed herself in front of the door of Manette's room.

"Let me pass!" ordered Madame Defarge. "She is there—that wife of St. Evremont. Let me pass—in the name of the Republic!"

Miss Pross didn't understand a word, but she understood that this woman was an enemy.

"No!" she shouted.

"Pig and imbecile!" cried Madame Defarge. "Get away from that door—or I kill you!"

Miss Pross shook her head. Madame Defarge sprang forward and Miss Pross clutched at her round the waist. The two women, furious with each other, rolled over and over on the floor.

"No!" panted Miss Pross. "You shan't! I know what you're after. . . . My ladybird—but you won't get her! . . . Oh, no, you don't!"

Madame Defarge was trying to get at a pistol hidden in her skirt pocket. Miss Pross, strong as a lioness, rolled her enemy all over the floor. But Madame Defarge got at the pistol—Miss Pross saw what it was, struck upward at it—struck out—a flash, and a crash, and a piercing scream!

Then she felt Madame Defarge heavy and limp upon her breast. Miss Pross threw her off and got up, dazed and horrified. She gave but a glance at the twitching shape of Madame Defarge, then went rushing headlong down the stairs to Jerry Cruncher.

"They've gone," he said. "I thought you was never coming!"

"I don't hear you," Miss Pross chattered. "I don't hear a sound. There was a crash—and then a stillness."

"Come on!" urged Jerry. "Sooner we're out of this town the better I'll like it!"

In the place of execution there is a vast crowd on the next morning. The guillotine stands in the centre, a dreadful thing erect upon a low platform. Drummers stand to attention; the tumbrels roll up

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towards this platform with their pitiful burden. In the front seats on a staging opposite the guillotine sit many women, some of them knitting. La Vengeance is there, but she does not knit. She laughs shrilly as each victim ascends, under a roll of the drums, the steps of the scaffold. She calls presently:

"Where is Thérèse? Who has seen her? Why is she not in her place?"

In the great hall of La Force the prisoners are being shepherded into sixes to go forth and take their places in the tumbrels.

"Twenty-two! Twenty-three!" comes the hoarse call.

Sydney Carton, in Darnay's clothes, sits in a corner in the hall. The little seamstress, Number Twenty-two, stares at him.

"Hush!" Carton whispers.

She mutters:

"You are going to die in his place? Why?"

"He is my friend."

The little girl puts out her hand.

"How brave you are! Will you hold my hand? I am so afraid. . . . I am so weak—so very afraid."

"I'll hold you," answers Carton in a suddenly breaking voice, "to the last!"

So they go forth from La Force to take their places in the tumbrel, hand in hand. So they hold on to each other, the strong one whispering:

"Courage, my child! Keep steady! I will hold you to the last."

So they reach the centre of the vast, mad, blood-drunk crowd, and stand, hand in hand, at the foot of the steps. A roll of drums is heard, a voice cries from somewhere:

"Jeanne Fontaine, seamstress! Number Twenty-two!"

The little girl lifts her cheek to Carton's kiss. They loosen their fingers. He murmurs:

"Keep your eyes on me. Mind nothing else."

She tries to answer, but they are dragging her towards the steps. She ascends them. . . . The drums roll. . . . There is a sudden thudding crash. . . .

"Number Twenty-three! Charles, former Marquis de St. Evremond!"

Carton goes up the steps. There is a wolf's howl of rage and hate from the frenzied crowd. The drums roll—there comes the crash of the descending knife of the guillotine.

One can almost hear the last thoughts of this man who has given his life to save, for Lucie's sake, the life of the one dearest to her.

"It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done. It is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known."

The drums roll—Number Twenty-four has been called. . . .

(By permission of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Film Co., Ltd., starring Ronald Colman, Elizabeth Allan, and Donald Woods.)



All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 220, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

They Met at Last in "Absolute Quiet"

Louis Hayward and Wallace Ford were friends in England, then Ford moved away to Canada and then to the United States.

When Hayward went to Hollywood, a year ago, under contract to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, his first thought was to get in touch with his old-time pal, Ford. They were never able to manage a meeting.

Finally, Ford was cast in "Absolute Quiet," at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, and the first person he saw on the set was his old friend, Hayward.

Ford is to play the rôle of Jack the desperado. His long list of screen successes includes an important rôle in "The Informer."

In addition to Hayward and Ford, Ann Loring, Stuart Erwin, Irene Herve, Lionel Atwill, J. Carol Naish, Robert Livingston, Edwin Maxwell and Bernadene Hayes are featured in the picture, which is being directed by George Seitz and produced by John W. Considine junior.

Finding a Cantor Story

At least six months of preparation are necessary for the making of a Cantor film, and "Strike Me Pink," his latest frolic for Samuel Goldwyn, was no exception.

Always the chief difficulty is the finding of a suitable story. The search for Cantor material is continuous and unending. While the studio is shooting this year's offering the Goldwyn literary scouts in Hollywood and New York are wading through stacks of manuscripts. Produced and unproduced plays, books, magazines and foreign material are searched for the germ of an idea for next year's film.

No single mind is ever responsible for the completed script of a Cantor picture. Four to eight people are likely to be implicated before the job is completed. Frank Butler wrote the adaption of "Strike Me Pink," and Francis Martin and Walter DeLear the screen play.

Many more, including Cantor and Director Norman Taurog, laboured on the dialogues and gags. Several weeks before the picture goes before the camera, Cantor makes a tour of theatres for the purpose of testing dialogue and laughs.

"Strike Me Pink" occupied ten weeks' actual shooting time and cost Goldwyn over £350,000.

Boles Nearly Snapped Up

A major sequence of "A Message to Garcia" required that John Boles and Wallace Berry, co-starred in the film, crawl through an alligator-infested swamp, reproduced faithfully on the studio set. A number of alligators were hired from an alligator farm.

In order that realism be maintained, it was necessary to disturb the reptiles in their long winter sleep, then in progress.

"To do this," explained E. B. Fish, in charge of the reptiles, "it will be necessary to raise the temperature of the water in the set to about seventy-five degrees. At that temperature, they will be active, but not dangerous."

An interested audience of film-folk watched as Fish caused an old fire-engine to be backed up to the swamp and a steam-line connected. After several hours he pronounced the temperature correct, and the alligators were introduced into the swamp. They promptly came to life and began to crawl around.

The steam-line was left connected to maintain the temperature.

As cameras began to grind, Beery and Boles began to crawl through the swamp, the alligators manoeuvring slowly around them. All had gone well for a few minutes when Boles suddenly heard a resounding snap behind him, while a cry of alarm went up from the camera, and sound crew.

Turning, Boles saw the yawning jaws of one of the reptiles. The first snap had missed, and he was preparing again for a nice dish of Boles for lunch.

The alligator expert hurriedly entered the swamp with his prodding pole and shoved the alligator away.

Investigation revealed that the reptile had found an extra warm spot, close to where the steam-line entered the swamp, and the temperature, many degrees above the seventy-five intended, had fully awakened him.

"Of course," Mr. Fish explained to the badly jolted Boles, "you really can't blame the alligator. They've been practically asleep for two months, and have built up quite an appetite. I've seldom before seen one attempt to bite a human being."

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BOY'S CINEMA

No. 860.

EVERY TUESDAY

June 6th, 1936.

2^D

THE FOREMOST
AND
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FOR
THRILLING FILM
STORIES

MILLIONS
AT STAKE
and
A MADMAN
AT BAY

*A Gripping
Thriller*

STARRING
ROBERT
ALLEN



"Guard *that* Girl"



The News Reel

All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 220, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Non-suited

"When giving directions on the set to erectors, carpenters and other helpers on a film set, care should always be taken that one's instructions are clear, precise and readily understood."

If ever he writes a textbook on the procedure for his arduous vocation, F. G. (Bill) Bangs, assistant-director of the "Two on a Doorstep," the new Paramount British production at Elstree, will probably commence the opening chapter with something like the foregoing.

As a rule, Bill can usually make himself fairly well understood, but an incident which occurred recently, during the filming of "Two on a Doorstep," a greyhound-racing story in which Anthony Hankey, Harold French, and Kay Hammond have the leading rôles, has caused him to reflect that one can never be too precise.

In one of the scenes Harold French, who is supposed to be a bailiff's man enjoying the involuntary hospitality of Kay Hammond and Anthony Hankey, is given a shake-down for the night on a settee in the drawing-room. All Mr. French had to do in this scene was to wear a suit of silk pyjamas and make himself comfortable on the settee. His gents' D.B. lounge, shirt, collar, tie, braces and etceteras were draped gracefully over a chair. When the scene was in readiness Lawrence Huntington, the director, decided that the heap of disembodied clothes rather spoil the picture.

"Take the clothes away!" shouted Mr. Bangs, but his voice was drowned by the hammers of the carpenters working on the set.

"The clothes. The clothes. Lose the clothes!" appealed Mr. Bangs, a little louder this time, and the clothes vanished.

About half an hour later, Anthony Hankey was in an affecting scene with Kay Hammond when a wild and dishevelled, semi-nude figure straggled without warning across the set.

"What's the idea of ruining the scene?" wailed Anthony Hankey and Miss Hammond in concert.

The distraught, pyjama'd figure drifted by unheeding.

"I want my clothes! I want my clothes!" it mumbled piteously as it plodded wearily on.

Actors' Raw-meat Diet

Before they took part in the hunting-scene in the Forest of Arden, during the filming of "As You Like It," twelve of the actors had a snack of one pound of raw meat apiece, washed down by copious draughts of water.

They were Great Danes, from Ripley, Surrey, beautiful fawn-coloured animals as big as ponies and weighing between nine and ten stone each. Champion Joan is the prize animal, while Bernard has sired more fawn champions than any other dog in the country.

An expert declares that these dogs are descendants of the original boar hounds June 6th, 1936.

NEXT WEEK'S GRAND FILM DRAMAS!



MELVYN DOUGLAS

— IN —

"THE LONE WOLF RETURNS"

Evading the police after a jewel robbery, Michael Lanyard, alias the "Lone Wolf," mingles with the guests of an heiress next door named Marcia Stewart. He falls in love with the girl and resolves to go straight; but other jewel thieves involve him in the theft of Marcia's emeralds—and a very clever detective is called in to run him down. A gay, yet thrilling, mystery drama

"EXCLUSIVE STORY"

Fighting a villainous gang of crooks with headlines instead of bullets! A drama of the power of the Press. Starring Franchot Tone, Madge Evans and Stuart Erwin.

Also

Another grand episode of the dramatic serial of unusual adventure:

"FLASH GORDON"

Starring Buster Crabbe and Jean Rogers.

of Shakespeare's days, and are therefore correctly cast for their part.

The hounds behaved perfectly and thoroughly enjoyed their acting experience. They strained at the leash and led the hunting party through the woods without once "blowing up" (screen jargon for making a mistake) or causing a re-take.

The "Drapery" Man

An important but little known studio-worker is the man responsible for the design and selection of curtains, tapestries and other draperies for the various settings. Appropriately enough, he is referred to as the "drapery" man. Frank Pondelak, the man in charge of this department in the Selznick film, "Little Lord Fauntleroy," was one of the most famous "drapery" men in

Austria. Shortly before the war, at the request of Emperor Franz Josef, he supervised the selection and hanging of all draperies in the Kaiserhof in Vienna. He first undertook film work with Jesse Lasky, over fifteen years ago.

Johnny Downs a Tray

Johnny Downs, appearing in "Everybody's Old Man," now being made by Twentieth Century-Fox, in Hollywood, got the opportunity to satisfy a long-repressed ambition.

He had to drop a fully loaded cocktail tray—glasses, shaker and all—for a scene in which he unexpectedly sees Norman Foster kissing Rochello Hudson.

"It's a pleasure," Downs informed James Flood, the director. "I've always wanted to drop a tray, just for the fun of it—and now I'm going to get paid for doing it."

"All right," said Flood, "but just let it drop. Don't give it a push."

To his delight, Johnny had to drop the tray twice, the second time for a close-up.

Once a Criminal—?

Ralf Harolde, as nasty a scoundrel as was ever typed a villain in Hollywood, who is currently menacing Claire Trevor and Brian Donlevy in "Human Cargo" at Twentieth Century-Fox, has a plan all figured out how to achieve at least one sympathetic screen rôle before he retires.

"Just for the fun of it—just to say that I've done it," explains Ralf, "I'm saving my money, and some day I'm going to produce a picture myself. Unless, of course, someone saves me the trouble and gives me a sympathetic rôle meanwhile."

Harolde doesn't want to play a dashing, romantic lead—he doesn't want to play a rib-tickling comedy rôle—all he wants to do is NOT to be a villain for one picture. Harolde had been a leading man on the New York stage for several years when he was picked out of the production of the "The Front Page" for a gangster's rôle in a Hollywood production. Since then he has done nothing but "heavies." He has been killed in most of his films, and always to the relief of the audience.

"I don't mind dying in a picture," says Ralf. "But I'd like to be given the opportunity to die just once under circumstances which would permit the audience to be at least indifferent about my death, instead of being glad about it."

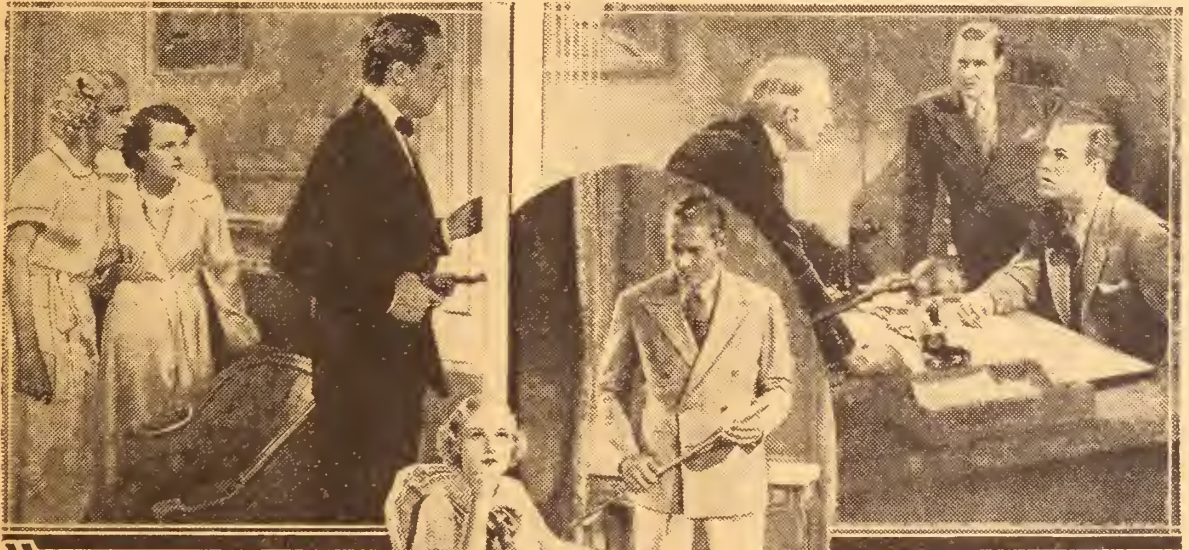
Taboos for Stars

Daily, new taboos are handed to the film players, to remain in effect as long as they are actually at work in productions.

Clark Gable was forbidden to drive his high-powered car more than forty-five miles an hour, and forbidden to shave during the last two weeks of "San Francisco."

(Continued on page 28)

When Larry Donovan and Budge Edwards were asked by an attorney to provide a girl to impersonate—for a few days—an heiress whose life is in danger, they decline the commission; but Budge's beautiful secretary, Helen Bradford, insists on playing the part of the heiress, and so the three become involved in perilous adventure. Starring Robert Allen, with Florence Rice and Ward Bond



GUARD THAT GIRL

A Partner for Budge

IT was only too evident that the financial standing of Edwards Detective Agency was in a hopeless condition. Budge Edwards, its sole proprietor—nobody ever called him George, although that was his proper name—frowned ruefully at the statement he had just completed on a scribbling-pad.

One hundred and fifty dollars were overdue for rent of the two-roomed office in unfashionable Third Avenue; one hundred and five dollars were owing to Helen Bradford for salary; and forty-eight dollars sixty-two cents were owing to the "New York Times" for the insertion of "Want Ads."

Three hundred and three dollars and sixty-two cents in debt—and Budge had precisely three dollars twenty-five cents in his pockets, and nothing at all in the bank!

He flung down his pencil and lifted up his voice.

"Helen!"

From the outer office a golden-haired girl appeared with promptitude. She was graceful, beautiful and efficient, and she looked distinctly businesslike in a neat costume with a black bow at the neck. Budge tore from the scribbling-pad the sheet upon which he had been labouring and looked up at her as she stood beside his desk.

"How many cases have we handled in this last three months?" he asked gruffly.

"Two," she replied, "but only one of them paid us."

"Well, I've been figuring."

"What?" she challenged, her blue eyes studying his troubled, clean-shaven face which at the best of times could

not be called handsome yet somehow was attractive.

"This"—he handed her the slip of paper. "Now don't you think you'd better quit?"

She glanced through the figures and handed back the slip.

"No," she said definitely.

"Well, I do. This agency is about to fold up!"

Even that statement she received with calm.

"What are you going to do?" she inquired.

"I'm going to get a job and pay off those debts."

"What doing?"

"Oh, police work of some kind. I guess."

A sound as of someone opening the door between the outer office and the corridor beyond it reached his ears, and he sat upright.

"Say, look busy," he urged swiftly. "It might be a customer!"

Helen moved across the room, and he straightened his tie and called loudly after her:

"Oh, Miss Bradford, 'phone the Hill-mark Bank and tell them the information they require will be ready by noon tomorrow."

Helen reached the door, but a young man had already invaded the outer office—a good-looking young man in a dark lounge suit with a soft-felt hat on the side of his head and a parcel and a book under his left arm. He grinned at Helen and swept past her into Budge's presence.

"Nice act!" he said approvingly. "Shame you wasted it!"

"Oh," growled Budge, "it's you!"

The invader's name was Larry Dono-

van, and he was a friend, not a client. He greeted Helen, removing his hat, and he greeted Budge, who complained:

"You gave us heart failure—though you were a client!"

"So I gathered!" laughed Larry. "Well, anyway, I bring gifts." He held out the book. "A novel for Helen."

"Thanks," said she, accepting the volume, "but I really haven't much time to read."

Larry laughed again at that, and walked across the carpet to a German sheep dog, lying watchfully at full length. He opened out the parcel and produced from it a massive aitch-bone.

"You didn't think I was going to forget you, did you, Lobo?" he said. "There you are, old fellow!"

The bone was deposited on the carpet in front of the dog's pointed nose, but Lobo was well trained and did not touch it. Instead, he looked up at his master.

Helen went out with the book.

"All right, boy," said Budge, "you can have it."

Sharp teeth immediately attacked the bone, and Larry wandered over to the desk.

"How did you get away this early?" asked Budge. "Did the bank go bust?"

"No," Larry quietly replied. "I quit."

"Pretty soft!" Budge looked at his watch. "Quits work for the day at one-fifteen!"

"Not for the day, boy," corrected Larry. "For good."

Brown eyes stared at him.

"You on the level?" demanded their owner.

"Absolutely."

"What's the matter? Did you have a fight with your dad?"

"No, with myself."

"Who won?"

"The bank—it got rid of me."

"All right," growled Budge, "we'll begin at the beginning. Why did you quit working at your father's bank?"

Larry drifted away to a window and looked down into Third Avenue.

"For three reasons," he said after a while, and jabbed a finger against a dusty pane to punctuate those reasons. "First, because I didn't like the work; second, because I'd never be any good at it; and third, because I was being promoted too fast."

"That's a goofy reason," quoth Budge, referring to the last of the three.

"No, it isn't, Budge." Larry returned to the desk. "Listen, I'm Lawrence Donovan, junior, and because of that I'm promoted over the heads of men who've worked eight and ten years for advancement. It isn't fair, and I don't like it."

Budge nodded understandingly, if not altogether approvingly.

"Is your dad sore?" he asked.

"Disappointed," said Larry, "but he understands."

"Got any plans?"

"Sure. I'm going to loaf around this office with you until I find a nice lively business to go into."

"Sorry," said Budge, "but you can't do that."

"Why not?"

"After to-day, no office." Budge handed him the little slip of paper. "It adds up to this, Larry. To-night we present the janitor with the key and our blessings."

"Wrong again, my thick-headed buffalo," said Larry and dropped the slip on the desk to take out a wallet from which he extracted a number of notes. "I have here my life savings—three hundred and forty-one dollars. That leaves approximately thirty-seven bucks for a mild party to-night. I said 'mild'—not 'wild.'"

The notes descended upon the blotting-pad, but Budge rejected them.

"Nothing doing!" he declared. "I've flopped at this business. Let me retire from it gracefully, will you?"

"No," protested Larry, "you can't close this office. I've got to have a place to loaf. Pick up that money!"

"No!"

"I always did say you were part mule. Why not sell me an interest in the business?"

"There isn't any business. You know that!"

"Yes, but there could be."

"How?"

"By simply taking one word out of your advertisement and off the front door out there. Have it read 'any ease' instead of 'any honest ease.'"

He went over to the door of the room and opened it. Helen was sitting at her own little desk in the outer office, looking at the book he had given her.

"Come in here a minute, Helen," he said; and as she rose and obeyed he proclaimed dramatically, "You're a witness! I've just bought an interest in the business!"

"What?" she exclaimed in astonishment.

"Say, how much of an interest?" Larry demanded of Budge, who replied slowly:

"Well, if you must be a sap, a half-interest."

"A half-interest," repeated Larry. "The firm is now Edwards and Donovan. Say, do I get my name on the door?"

"Oh, sure, in capital letters," jeered Budge and turned to Helen. "He wants a place to loaf. Here, take this money, June 6th, 1936.

pay the back rent, send a money order to the 'Times,' and the rest is yours."

Helen picked up the money, and then picked up the brown paper in which Lobo's witch-bone had been wrapped.

"We are now solvent," added Budge.

"And we have thirty-seven bucks left for a party to-night," Larry informed Helen, "and you're the guest of honour."

"Invitation accepted," she said with a little bow, and went out with the dog.

"Swell girl!" remarked Larry as the door was closed.

"The best," declared Budge.

"You interested?"

"No, but you are!"

"What makes you say that?"

Budge laughed derisively.

"Look here," he said, "I may be dumb, but I'm not blind. Why do you think I let you waste that three hundred bucks?"

"Because you know the firm needs new blood—somebody with ideas," retorted Larry.

"All right, but you're not fooling me."

"Oh, a detective, eh?" said Larry.

A Dangerous Case

HELEN went down to the ground floor to pay the rent and to the nearest post-office in Third Avenue to obtain the money order, taking Lobo with her. While she was gone an elderly man with grey hair, a lined face, and a stoop climbed the stairs to the third floor and entered the deserted outer office.

He was carrying an overcoat on his arm, although the day was warm, and there was an old-fashioned cut about his clothes which was accentuated by the wing collar and bow he affected.

Finding nobody in the outer office he tapped on the door of the inner room, opened it, and looked in upon Budge and Larry.

"I beg your pardon, gentlemen," he said in a cultured voice that made them jump because they had not heard the tap. "Which one of you is Mr. Edwards?"

"Why, I'm Edwards," replied Budge.

"This is Mr. Donovan, my partner. Won't you sit down?"

The visitor deposited his coat and hat on one chair and pulled up another to the side of the desk, viewing the two partners in appraising silence.

"Well, what can we do for you?" asked Larry.

"I take it for granted," said the visitor cautiously, "that anything I say here is confidential?"

"Oh, absolutely, sir," affirmed Budge.

"Most of our business is confidential," declared Larry.

"My name is Seranton."

The name was strange to Budge, but not to Larry.

"Joshua Seranton, isn't it?" he suggested—and received a sharp and rather suspicious glance.

"That's correct," admitted the visitor. "I'm an attorney and trustee for the estate of the late Carl Hudson, my closest friend, who died some fifteen years ago and left a daughter, Estelle, who was five years old at that time."

It seemed to Budge that the pause which followed this statement had to be filled, so he filled it.

"Is she sole heiress to the estate?" he inquired.

"According to the will," nodded Joshua Seranton, "she is the sole heiress, inheriting almost three million dollars on her twenty-first birthday—to be exact, at ten o'clock on Thursday night."

A calendar on the desk recorded the fact that it was Monday, the 22nd of April.

"Is she lost, or something?" asked Budge.

"No," was the reply, "but for her own safety I've kept her hidden ever since her father's death."

"Why?"

"Because of a foolish oversight in the drafting of his will. He made no provision for the disposition of his fortune if his daughter failed to reach the age of twenty-one and claim her inheritance."

"Who is next in line?" asked Larry.

"Five relatives would have sound legal claim if anything should happen to her."

"Why do you need us?" asked Budge.

Helen, who had just returned from the post-office, opened the door in time to hear that question and she neither advanced nor retreated. It seemed that the new partnership had begun with a case.

The lawyer, unaware of her presence, replied gravely:

"I concealed Estelle in Europe for many years. The Hudson relatives have continually tried to discover her whereabouts. They have even doubted her existence. So I have agreed to produce her at my office to-morrow, and that means Estelle Hudson will be known by sight and in a vulnerable position for almost three days."

Budge saw Helen at the door but appeared not to notice her.

"You want us to guard this young lady," he suggested. "Is that it?"

"More than that!" was the emphatic and surprising answer. "I want you to procure a girl who will impersonate Estelle Hudson from to-morrow until Thursday night at ten o'clock, at which time I will bring forth the real heiress to claim her heritage in safety. You may guard the girl you choose in your own way. Her safety is your problem; but the risk is great, and I do not wish to minimize it."

Budge drew a long breath and glanced sideways at Larry.

"Why are you so sure that somebody will strike at her?" he challenged.

"Someone has already struck!" Joshua Seranton leaned forward in his chair.

"I intended to send Estelle to the Hudson estate at Piermont. I hired a guard, posing as a chauffeur, and a woman to assist him, in the guise of a maid. I sent them on ahead to look the ground over. Their car was wrecked and burned. I'm convinced it was not an accident."

"Any evidence?"

"Nothing tangible," the lawyer admitted. "But I'm sure enough of the danger to feel justified in offering you a fee of ten thousand dollars for the service I require."

"How soon must you have an answer?"

"Immediately."

Budge turned to his partner.

"What do you think of it, Larry?"

"I don't like it."

"Ten thousand dollars," said Seranton, "is a lot of money."

"I know it is," returned Larry quietly, "and we sure could use it. But I certainly don't like the idea of putting some girl on the spot—setting her up like a duck in a shooting gallery!"

Budge concurred with that point of view, and he said in a tone of finality:

"I'm sorry, Mr. Seranton, but we can't handle it."

Helen stepped into the room and slammed the door behind her, attracting the attention of all three.

"I overheard Mr. Seranton's proposition," she said, advancing towards the desk, "and I don't think you should turn it down."

The lawyer rose to his feet, eyeing her with interest. Budge frowned.

"You don't understand, Helen!" he exclaimed. "Oh—er—Mr. Scranton, this is Miss Bradford. She's—"

"A member of our organisation," Larry completed for him.

"How d'you do?" murmured the lawyer.

"Budge," said Helen, "I understand the situation perfectly, and I'm willing to take Estelle Hudson's place for as long as is necessary."

"Oh, you can't do it!" exploded Larry.

"We won't let you!" declared Budge. "If you two can't keep me from getting hurt for a few days," retorted Helen, "I don't think much of you!" She smiled at the lawyer. "Is my appearance satisfactory, Mr. Scranton?"

"Perfectly," he assured her.

"Then it's settled."

"Listen, Helen," protested Larry, "this isn't an ordinary case. There are three million dollars at stake."

"And ten thousand for us," she reminded him. "If you and Budge don't agree, and Mr. Scranton is agreeable, I'll do it without your protection!"

"That threat made an end of argument. "All right," growled Budge, "you win! We'll take the case, Mr. Scranton. Give us the details."

The lawyer, beaming with satisfaction, stated that he would provide a car and a trustworthy maid who spoke French fluently.

"One of you had better pose as a chauffeur," he suggested.

"That's my spot," decided Budge, who was an ardent motorist.

"Fine! Then Mr. Donovan can be a friend Miss Hudson met in Europe."

"Fiancé," amended Larry with undisguised eagerness.

"Perhaps that would be better," said Scranton thoughtfully, and took out a wallet. "Here is an advance for suitable wardrobes. Get the best."

Notes showered upon the desk to the tune of several hundred dollars.

"The maid will report here at noon to-morrow. Her name is Jeanne Martin. You will meet the Hudson relatives at my office at one. Here is my card with the address."

"Have you any particular suspects?" inquired Budge.

"No, but most of them seem capable." Scranton took a folded sheet of paper from the wallet and put the wallet away. "Here is a complete list, in case you wish to investigate any of them."

He picked up his hat and overcoat and offered his hand to Helen while Budge studied the list.

"Thank you, my dear," he said warmly. "I sincerely hope that all my suspicions are unfounded. Oh, Mr. Edwards, you can pick up a sedan at the Jensen Motor Company and it will be charged to me. Good day."

After he had gone Budge gathered up the notes.

"Larry, you worked in a bank," he said. "Is this money real?"

Larry examined the notes, one by one, and pronounced them all to be genuine.

"D'you think he's nuts?"

"No," said Larry, "but I still don't like the set-up."

"I could do without the fiancé part of it," stated Helen with a toss of her golden head.

"Yeah," Larry responded, "but that gives me a chance to stick very close to you."

"Well, don't overdo it!"

"Hi," interposed Budge. "we'd better get busy—we got things to buy! I'll pick up a uniform and get that sedan."

"Right," said Helen. "I'm going shopping."

"And I'll go with Helen," said Larry; but Budge caught hold of his arm.

"Oh, no!" he barked. "You take this list over to Johnny Monohan at the 'Tribune' office. Tell him I sent you, and I want him to find out all he can about these Hudson relatives."

Larry accepted the list of names with none too good a grace. Helen thought of something else.

"How about Lobo while we're away?" she asked.

"He goes along as your dog," Budge promptly decided. "He's more protection than any six men I know."

Helen departed with some of the notes.

"If anything happens to her," quoth Larry fiercely, "I'll shoot every Hudson in the 'phone book!"

"And I'll help you," Budge declared. "Now get started. Take Monohan some cigars, but don't get good ones."

The Hudson Clan

LARRY, arrayed in a smart lounge suit, arrived at the office in Third Avenue, a little before noon, next morning, to find Helen in sole possession of the inner room. She was wearing a brand-new frock that looked expensive, with a fur-trimmed coat over it, and a fashionable little hat was perched sideways on her golden head.

On the floor stood a quantity of luggage—cabin-trunks, suitcases, and hat boxes. But none of the luggage looked new, and every piece of it was plastered with labels bearing the names of European hotels and railway stations. Larry, having surveyed Helen with admiring eyes, examined the luggage.

"Pretty smart of Budge," he commented, "to dig up all those stickers for the bags."

"In this kind of work," Helen informed him, "every little detail is important."

"I'll remember that." He gazed again at her rather flushed face. "Boy, you certainly look like three million dollars!"

"That," she returned calmly, "is also one of the details."

"I wasn't referring to the clothes—" he began; and then a slender slip of a girl ventured in upon them and said timidly:

"Miss Hudson?"



Larry, by no means satisfied, asked Reynolds what he was doing there. "Taking a walk," was the surly reply, "until that beast attacked me."

"Yes," Helen replied.
"I'm Jeanne Martin. Mr. Seranton sent me."

The newcomer, who was brown-haired, was dressed as a personal maid very well might be dressed—quietly and in dark clothes. She had a piquant little face and a very straight nose, and her eyes were as blue as Helen's. She held out an envelope addressed to that young lady, who extracted from it a brief letter of introduction signed by Joshua Seranton.

"We were expecting you, Jeanne," she said pleasantly. "We'll be leaving in a few minutes. You understand, of course, that this isn't an ordinary job?"

"Yes, I understand," replied the girl. "I'm to act as your maid, and Mr. Seranton explained that there might be danger."

The outer door was opened again, and Budge appeared. He stood six feet two inches in his socks, but he looked taller than ever in the uniform of a chauffeur.

"Your car's ready, Miss Hudson," he announced, touching his peaked cap for the benefit of the strange maid.

"All right," said Helen. "Jeanne, this is Edwards, my driver."

Budge beamed at the girl, who reached barely to his shoulder, and picked up some of the luggage. Down at the kerb, in the street below, a roomy and high-powered dark green sedan was standing, and when all the luggage had been stowed away in it Larry sat beside Helen in the back, and Budge helped Jeanne up into the front seat beside Lobo.

A grey coupé had drawn up close behind the sedan, and the man at its wheel had taken full stock of the four as they crossed the pavement. He was rather an unpleasant-looking fellow with beady brown eyes, thick lips, and a receding chin, and a little moustache did not improve his appearance. Budge passed between the two cars to get to the driving-seat, but he did not even notice the watcher.

He drove up-town to the office of Joshua Seranton, which was situated in Broadway not very far from Riverside Park, while in the big private room of that attorney-at-law the relatives of Estelle Hudson gradually assembled.

Aunt Catherine Manderville and her daughter Sarah were the first to arrive. Aunt Catherine was a middle-aged widow whose hair was turning white and whose tongue was even sharper than her features; her daughter was rather a mannish type of woman, who dressed as severely as she did her hair, wore spectacles, and looked tragic.

Next came Dr. Silas Hudson, brother of Estelle's father, who also wore spectacles and was understood to be a trifle eccentric but a clever physician.

Close on his heels came an enormously fat cousin, named Elwood Hudson, who was far younger than he looked and inclined to gabble; and then William Hudson, another cousin, arrived with his blonde wife Elaine.

Joshua Seranton stood behind his desk, gave a little cough, and addressed them collectively.

"You are all relatives of the late Carl Hudson," he said, "and in a minor degree interested in the disposition of his estate. Through your attorney, Mr. Kaufman, you have threatened undesirable publicity which makes it necessary for me to produce Estelle Hudson here to-day. I am prepared to do that at exactly one o'clock."

"Joshua," rapped Aunt Catherine, "you sound like a judge! Well, where is she?"

"Yes, where is she?" echoed William
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Hudson, taking out his watch. "It's one o'clock now."

There came a rap at the door and Seranton's secretary entered to announce that Miss Hudson had arrived.

"Have her come in, please," directed the lawyer; and Helen presently entered with Larry, feeling none too comfortable under the concentrated gaze of so many pairs of eyes.

"You are very punctual, my dear," said Seranton, hurrying over to her. "This is Miss Estelle Hudson and her fiancé, Mr. Donovan." He led Helen across to Aunt Catherine and her daughter Sarah, who were sitting close together, and introduced them.

"They've been caring for the Hudson estate at Piermont," he said, "where you will live."

"We've been there so long," said Aunt Catherine in her curiously hard voice, "we feel like it was our own."

"I hope my coming back won't change that feeling, Aunt Catherine," murmured Helen.

"Well, my dear, you'll try to make you comfortable. You've turned out pretty—too pretty for a Hudson! Most women in our family look like Sarah, here!"

Helen smiled at Sarah, who made no response whatever, and was introduced to Silas Hudson, who greeted her formally.

"William Hudson, your first cousin," said Seranton.

"And my wife, Elaine," added that youngish man rather stiffly.

"We've waited a long time to meet you, Miss Hudson," remarked the blonde wife in a languid voice.

"I'm glad to have finally come home," said Helen.

"I hope you won't have reason to regret it!"

It seemed to Larry that there was a menace in the words, but Helen appeared not to notice. She was introduced to Elwood Hudson, who shook hands with her effusively.

"Well, well, well," he gabbled, "you were worth waiting for! Aunt Catherine was wrong—you're not pretty; you're beautiful! I—I'm bidding for a chance to take you around and show you the town. I know all the places, too. You see, my connection at the store—"

"He sells drapery and rugs," interrupted Aunt Catherine tartly. "The only places he knows are cafeterias."

Elwood Hudson sat down and gulped indignantly. Seranton conducted Helen and Larry to chairs, then retreated behind his desk.

"Miss Estelle," he said, adopting the manner Aunt Catherine had criticised as that of a judge, "will be twenty-one years of age at ten o'clock on Thursday night of this week, when, according to the terms of her father's will, the bulk of his estate will be transferred to her, and other beneficiaries will be informed of the amount of their legacies. You are all requested to be at the Hudson estate at that time. Thank you very much."

"Better not come till after dinner," said Aunt Catherine acidly. "Don't want the place cluttered up with you!"

The members of the Hudson clan began to drift away; first William and his wife, then Elwood, and then Silas. Budge and Jeanne were sitting on a bench in the outer office, with Lobo between them, and the doctor stopped on his way out to look at the dog.

"Trained?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir," replied Budge. "Police-trained in Germany, as a guard."

"Hum! Looks intelligent."

Aunt Catherine had walked with her daughter to the door.

"I'll ride out with Estelle," she said.

"You go back in our car."

"I'd rather you didn't!" returned Sarah vehemently.

"Why not?" snapped her mother.

"Stop being tragic!"

Sarah went dismally out from the office, and Aunt Catherine returned to the desk where Joshua Seranton was saying good-bye to Helen and Larry.

"I'll try and see you before Thursday, my dear," he said to Helen. "If you wish anything in the meantime, 'phone me."

"We'll take care of her, Joshua," said Aunt Catherine sharply. "I'm riding back with you, Estelle. Give us a chance to know each other." She made a grimace at Larry. "I'm not sure I'm going to like him!"

"But you will, though!" laughed Larry.

"What makes you think so?"

"Because I'm convinced I'm going to be very fond of you, Aunt Catherine."

"You'll be a novelty if you do!" retorted the dame. "Come on, Estelle."

Arrival

IN the dark green sedan, Larry occupied a seat in the back between Helen and Aunt Catherine, and Lobo sat bolt upright between Jeanne and Budge in the front. The car travelled smoothly, the city of New York was left behind, and the residential district of Yonkers gave place to country roads fringed with trees.

"Mr. Seranton was telling us about a car turning over and burning," remarked Larry as the crest of a hill was reached and he caught a glimpse of the Hudson River, sparkling in the afternoon sunshine, far below on the left. "Was it on this road?"

"We passed the place about a mile back," replied Aunt Catherine.

"I understand the chauffeur was killed in the accident."

"He wasn't a chauffeur and it wasn't an accident! The man was a detective and it was murder!"

"Are you sure?" asked Larry.

"I can't prove it."

"But why was he killed?" asked Helen.

"Because someone thought the woman riding in the car was you!"

Helen shivered slightly, and the subject was not pursued. In the front seat Jeanne Martin was fondling Lobo, who seemed to be pleased with her attentions.

"You like dogs?" suggested Budge.

"I like this one," said Jeanne.

"He's lucky!" quoth Budge, who had long since decided that the girl was nice to know.

Half an hour afterwards, on Aunt Catherine's instructions, the green sedan deserted the roadway for a winding drive, swept past trim lawns and borders gay with flowers, and was brought to a standstill by Budge at the foot of stone steps leading up to the front door of a big brownstone mansion.

An elderly butler opened the door and bowed beside it as Aunt Catherine mounted the steps with Helen and Larry.

"This is Campbell, my butler," she said. "He knew you when you were a small girl, Estelle."

A spacious hall was entered. A broad staircase stretched up from it to the floor above, and three shallow stairs led down to the principal rooms. At the foot of these stairs four servants were standing in a row—two females, two males. Aunt Catherine viewed them with scornful eyes.

"What's this?" she exclaimed. "Who lined you up like a lodge parade?"

"Miss Sarah thought it'd be a nice

way for us to meet Miss Estelle," replied a middle-aged and plumpish woman at the left end of the row.

"Oh, she did, did she?" scoffed Aunt Catherine. "Well, this is Miss Estelle, and this is her fiancé, Mr. Donovan. Since you want to play soldiers, march up here and meet her. Norah, supposed to be a cook!"

The middle-aged and plumpish woman mounted the stairs and curtsied.

"It's a great pleasure you give us in coming—" she began in a quavering voice.

"No speeches!" interrupted Aunt Catherine severely. "Just nod and go about your business. Annie, her daughter."

The cook retreated; a rather untidy girl took her place and bobbed.

"Does general housework," said Aunt Catherine. "Practically useless! Joseph, my driver."

The man who took the maid's place was thin and elderly, and his cheeks were sunken.

"Had him since we used horses and buggies," said Aunt Catherine. "That's what he should be driving now! Reynolds!"

Joseph exchanged places with the long-featured and weak-chinned man who had watched from behind the wheel of a grey coupé in Third Avenue that morning, but who was now wearing a green apron.

"Hired him as a gardener," said Aunt Catherine. "Hope he is one!"

The servants disappeared about their duties.

"I imagine you'd like to see your room," Aunt Catherine said to Helen, leading the way to the staircase. "I'm giving you your father's room—I'll show you."

Helen followed her with Larry; but half-way up the stairs she leaned over the banisters to instruct the butler to help with the luggage, and the cook reappeared from the direction of the kitchen to inquire what time dinner should be served.

"Well, what time do we usually have it?" rapped her mistress. "Seven, of course."

Norah turned about and almost collided with Sarah, who had emerged from the drawing-room and was staring up at Helen.

"Oh, you scairt me!" exclaimed the cook.

"She's beautiful, isn't she?" said Sarah with venom in her voice. "Do you think mother likes her?"

"Why not?"

"Well, I don't!" was the fierce rejoinder. "I hate her!"

"Oh, now, Miss Sarah," the cook protested, "don't be talking like that. I—I must be getting the dinner."

She hastened back to the kitchen, and just then the front-door bell rang and Sarah reached the door before the butler and opened it—to stare at Elwood Hudson, who crossed the threshold encumbered with a golf-bag and a heavy suitcase.

Aunt Catherine looked down over the banisters from the landing above.

"Sarah, who was that?" she demanded.

"It's Cousin Elwood, mother," her daughter replied.

"You didn't let him in, did you? If you did, get rid of him!"

Elwood waddled forward and looked up.

"Oh, oh, auntie," he protested, "you know you're always glad to have me."

"You heard what I said at Joshua's office!" retorted Aunt Catherine.

"Yes, I did," responded the bulky intruder shamelessly, "and I understood. You meant that for the others."

Helen's luggage, and Larry's, was conveyed to their respective rooms; the green sedan was put away in a garage, and Elwood's two-seater was housed beside it.

Budge and Jeanne were both in the large meal-room of the servants' quarters, about three hours later, when Reynolds sauntered in from the grounds

with a cigar in his hand. He had discarded his green apron and with it his air of servility. He asked for a match, and he gazed suspiciously from one to the other as he lit the cigar.

"You're the new driver, eh?" he said to Budge. "Been a chauffeur long?"

"Too long," drawled Budge.

"Drove for a lot of people, I suppose, and got good references?"

"Good enough to satisfy Scranton and Miss Hudson!"

That was a rebuke, but Reynolds did not seem to mind it.

"Did you hear what happened to the other fellow they hired to drive for her?" he asked.

"Sure."

"Better keep your eyes open!"

"Thanks for the tip," retorted Budge. "But I never sleep—at the wheel!"

The First Arrow

IN the dining-room that evening, after the coffee stage had been reached, Elwood Hudson—who had eaten plentifully and with relish—beamed all over his fat face at Aunt Catherine, seated primly in a high-backed chair at the top of the table.

"Auntie," he said, "the dinner was delicious."

"Hope it disagrees with you!" snapped his unintentional hostess, and he looked across at Helen.

"I suppose you'll be returning to Europe when the estate is settled, Cousin Estelle?" he queried.

"I doubt it very much," Helen replied.

Lobo, who was lying on a rug by the fireplace, suddenly sprang up with a growl, streaked across the room to an open french window, and jumped the rail of a terrace outside it. A startled cry rang out in the darkness of the grounds, and Larry was instantly on his feet.

"What is it?" gasped Aunt Catherine as he whipped a six-shooter from a pocket of his dinner-jacket.



"A couple more minutes of that wire," said Budge, "and they'd have finished him. He's got a bad smash on his head, too!"

"Somebody outside," he answered, and strode forth on to the terrace. "Whoever you are, you'd better stand still out there!"

He vaulted the rail and came to a tall figure shrinking away from the snarling dog against some bushes.

"All right," he said sternly, "step out into the light!"

Aunt Catherine appeared on the terrace.

"Oh, it's only Reynolds, the gardener!" she exclaimed as the tall figure moved forward and stood revealed in the light from the dining-room.

Budge came running round the house and caught hold of Lobo. Larry, by no means satisfied, asked Reynolds what he was doing there.

"Taking a walk," was the surly reply, "until that beast attacked me." "You must have sneaked up, or he wouldn't have gone for you!"

Reynolds exhibited a half-consumed cigar.

"A man doesn't sneak with a lighted cigar in his face, does he?" he countered.

"No harm done," said Aunt Catherine. "Come on, Larry! We'll play some bridge."

Larry put away his gun and mounted the steps of the terrace. Reynolds scowled at Budge.

"You'd better keep him tied up," he rasped. "Something might happen to him."

"He can take care of himself," said Budge.

The gardener walked off along the path towards the front of the house, and Jeanne came running round from the back.

"What was it?" she asked anxiously.

"Nothing," returned Budge. "I guess Lobo doesn't like Reynolds."

"Neither do I," she confessed.

Sarah Hudson took no part in the game of bridge in the drawing-room, but sat on a chesterfield knitting. Larry had Helen for partner; Aunt Catherine had Elwood, whose bidding was erratic. For a little over two hours they played, and then Aunt Catherine folded her arms.

"Well, I hate to go to bed this early," she said, "but I can't stand any more of Elwood in one night! What do we owe?"

Larry totalled the score. "Just thirty-eight dollars," he announced.

"Huh!" Aunt Catherine gazed witheringly at her partner.

On a lawn facing the drawing-room windows there was a wooden seat. Budge was sitting on it with Jeanne beside him and Lobo was lying at his feet. They had been there practically ever since the incident with Reynolds.

"Miss Hudson will want me," Jeanne said abruptly, and stood up. "Good-night—and thanks a lot."

"Thanks for what?" asked Budge, holding the little hand she offered.

"For letting me sit out here and talk with you," she replied.

"Letting you?" Budge chuckled. "Don't be silly, you're doing me a favour!"

"I'd like to ask you something," she said earnestly. "Do you think Miss Hudson's really in danger?"

"Oh, probably not. We don't know yet."

"I hope she isn't—she's so nice." The little hand was removed from the big one that squeezed it. "You'll be careful, won't you?"

"Oh, sure."

They said good-night again, and then the girl tripped away into the house.

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Budge dropped back on the seat, and Lobo made little complaining noises.

"So you're jealous, eh?" said Budge, patting the sleek head. "Well, maybe you've got a right to be, boy. Come on, let's you and I scout around a little."

The bridge party had deserted the card-table; Sarah had retired for the night, and Aunt Catherine was waiting to go, but Elwood caressed his double chin and hovered, studying Larry.

"You know, Mr. Donovan," he said, "I've seen your face somewhere, but I can't quite place—"

"Certainly you have, you idiot!" interrupted Aunt Catherine. "To-day in Joshua's office! Come on! Don't you suppose engaged people ever want to be alone?"

She marched him off with her to the stairs, and Larry promptly slipped his arm round Helen's waist.

"Must you do that?" she demured.

"Oh, absolutely," he assured her.

"We're engaged!"

"Supposed to be," she corrected.

"Got to be realistic, anyway. Can't tell who might be watching."

"Funny you should say that," said she. "I've had a feeling that someone is watching, several times—someone I couldn't see."

"Oh, that's nerves," Larry pronounced reassuringly. "To-day's been a strain."

"Perhaps I'm just tired." She tried to shake off a feeling of foreboding. "I think I'll go to my room now."

"I'll walk up with you," he decided.

The butler was in the hall and watched them ascend the stairs together. Jeanne was on the landing, with a little tray in her hand, and she flitted ahead of them and opened the door of the room that had been Helen's father's and switched on the lights.

"What time do you think you'll have breakfast?" asked Larry.

"Oh, about nine o'clock," Helen replied.

"I guess I can get up that early! Now you get some sleep—and don't worry. Budge and I are going to take turns watching outside. Good-night, dear."

She dismissed the maid and entered the bed-room, but as she closed the door something whizzed past her head, and the metal barb of a long arrow buried its point in the woodwork.

She caught at her breath, then opened the door in haste.

"Larry," she called, "come in here a minute!"

Larry came racing back from the stairs, and Jeanne followed. Helen pointed to the arrow.

"Have you searched the room?" asked Larry.

"No."

Out came his gun, and he looked round the well-appointed bed-room. Curtains were drawn over the windows, but no one was concealed behind them.

The door of a wardrobe cupboard was locked and the key was in the lock, but he opened the door and made sure that no one was in among the frocks Jeanne had hung upon a rail earlier in the evening. He went back to the two girls, who were staring at the arrow.

"Well, whoever put that there isn't here now," he growled.

"Pretty, isn't it?" said Helen.

"Murderous!" He tugged the arrow from the woodwork. It was of the type used by natives for hunting big game. "A good bow would drive that clean through a horse!"

A piece of paper was rolled round the shaft of the arrow and held there

by a thin rubber band. He snapped the band and opened out the piece of paper. On it, in block letters, was written:

"Give up your inheritance. The third arrow will kill."

Helen read it over his shoulder and took the piece of paper from him and gave it to Jeanne.

"It's only fair that you should see this," she said. "Well, what's the next move, Larry?"

"To get out of here!" he gritted.

But Helen shook her head.

"I wouldn't do that, and you know it," she said doggedly.

"All right then," Larry took the note from Jeanne. "We won't say anything about this for the present. Keep this door locked! Budge and I will see that nobody gets near the windows."

"Miss Hudson," ventured Jeanne, "perhaps you'd like me to stay here with you to-night. I could sleep on the chaise longue."

A long chair, comfortable as any sofa, stood quite close to the bed. Helen glanced at it.

"You aren't afraid?" she asked.

"No," declared Jeanne. "Please let me."

"I'd appreciate it very much," confessed Helen gratefully.

Larry went off with the arrow and the note, but he did not descend the stairs until he had heard the key turned in the lock of the door. Sarah Hudson peeped out from her room farther along a broad corridor, and her dark eyes watched him till he had disappeared from sight.

The Second Arrow

OUT in the grounds, Budge circled the house with Lobo at his heels.

He passed the garage and the back door, passed the terrace, eastern side of the house, and was turning a corner when Lobo, with a sudden growl, flew ahead into a shrubbery.

Budge heard a snarl of rage, a strange swishing sound, hurried footsteps, and with a six-shooter in his hand, plunged through the bushes ahead. In the faint light of the stars he glimpsed Lobo, motionless on the ground and the figure of a man scurrying off along the drive.

He fired, and the figure swung round and fired back, twice. Larry heard the first shot as he reached the hall, and he got the front door open and jumped the steps outside it before the second shot was fired. He saw the dark figure whirl about, and he heaved himself at Budge's legs and brought him to the ground with a thud just as the second shot rang out.

Two bullets sang harmlessly over them as they sprawled together on the gravel, and for a while they were winded. Then Budge sat up.

"Lucky thing you dropped me with that tackle of yours," he said.

"I wasn't sure it was you," said Larry, getting to his feet. "What happened?"

"I don't know, but I think he got Lobo."

They ran together back to the bushes, while in the house Aunt Catherine hammered on the door of Helen's room, her hair in curlers and an old-fashioned horse-pistol in her hand. She was in her night-clothes and an ugly dressing-gown.

"Estelle, are you all right in there?" she cried.

"Yes, Aunt Catherine," Helen called back.

She and Jeanne had undressed for bed, but they had slipped on wraps at the sound of the shots. Helen opened the door and Aunt Catherine invaded the room.

"What was that?" she demanded.

"Shots out in the grounds I think" replied Helen.

Budge and Larry had found Lobo lying on his side with a loop of wire round his neck, and the other end of the wire was attached to a pole. Budge loosened the loop and removed it, but Lobo remained inert.

"Think he'll be all right?" asked Larry.

"He's still breathing," replied Budge gruffly. "A couple more minutes of that wire and they'd have finished him. He's got a bad smash on his head here, too!"

Larry looked up at the windows of Helen's room.

"You'd better get him to a vet," he suggested. "There's probably one in the village."

A car had slid silently out from the drive into the road beyond the gates and had turned left. From the other direction Reynolds entered the drive on a bicycle while Budge was carrying the unconscious dog to the sedan in the garage; but the gardener deserted the gravelled way for the grass and pedalled round to the back door where Sarah Hudson was waiting, and handed him a note.

Budge saw the two at the door as he backed out from the garage, but he was too concerned about Lobo to trouble his head about them just then. He drove off as fast as he could go to Piermont.

When he returned from that village, Larry was where he had left him, examining the wire which had very nearly choked the dog, and the pole to which the wire was attached. He had found a label on the pole, which read: "Jackson's Garden Tools"; and he had also found a piece of cloth, evidently torn from a trouser-leg.

The two sat together on a stone bench and talked.

"Johnny Monohan," commented Budge, "says that Elwood Hudson seems silly but is no fool."

"He also says that Dr. Silas Hudson's only diversion is archery," Larry reminded him. "He's an expert."

"All the more reason why he wouldn't use an arrow for a warning," decided Budge.

"A rake-handle was used on Lobo—and Reynolds is a gardener."

"Yeah," said Budge, rubbing his chin which was already beginning to need a shave. "You know, that fellow puzzles me. I don't understand Sarah Hudson sneaking out of the house to hand him a note. But then again, look what's just happened! I take Lobo to the village and I see William Hudson and that blonde wife of his going into the drug-store! They're supposed to be in town!"

"Think I ought to call up that fellow Scranton?" asked Larry.

Budge shrugged broad shoulders.

"It's our headache," he said, "but, boy, we sure could use Philo Vance."

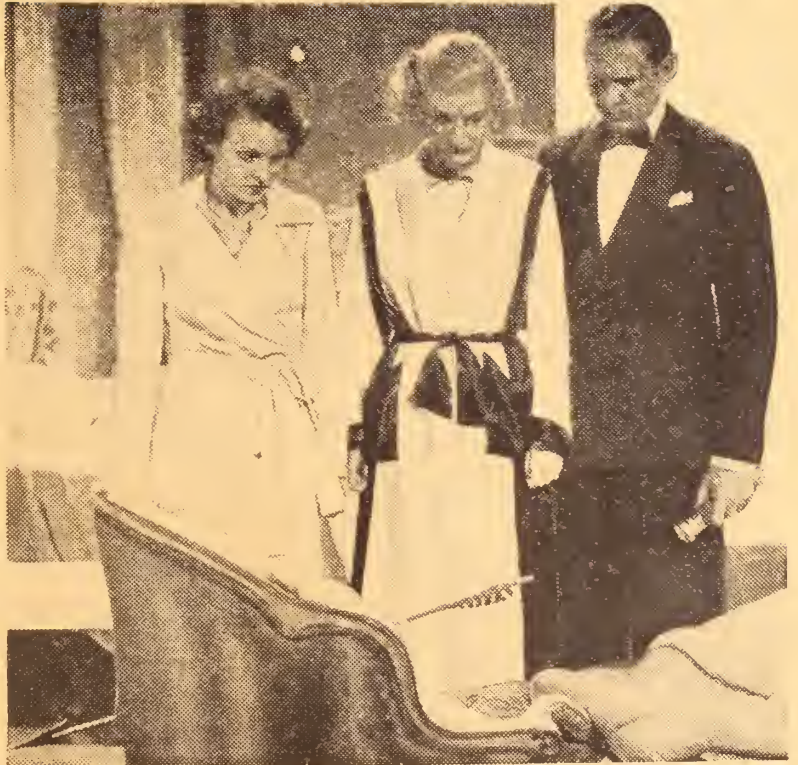
"Yeah," said Larry wryly, "he'd fit this piece of cloth into somebody's trousers before morning—in a book!"

"Lobo almost got a piece of him, didn't he?" said Budge. "Next time he will—any time and any place they meet!"

Larry thrust the piece of cloth into a pocket.

"How long did the vet say he'd be laid up?" he asked eagerly.

"Only for a day or so," Budge replied. "Why?"



"Number three!" growled Larry. "And they meant it!" cried Helen. "Jeanne was sleeping there, but she jumped over to protect me."

"I've got an idea! We'll let everybody around here think he's dead!"

"It's a good idea," approved Budge. "All right, Larry. I'll take this stuff up to my room and lock it up. You go to bed—I'll watch the rest of the night."

Dawn was not far away and Larry felt none too warm in his thin dinner-jacket suit, but he protested that they were supposed to be taking turns.

"I can sleep in the daytime, you can't," said Budge. "Go on, now. Beat it!"

"Okay," Larry stood up. "Boy, you sure named it when you called this job a headache! You know, I think I will phone Mr. Joshua Scranton and spoil his night's sleep."

"Suit yourself."

The rest of the night passed uneventfully, but in the morning Larry descended to breakfast after all the others were seated at table because he had overslept. He received ironical greetings, and walked round to Helen.

"Good-morning, darling," he said in the approved style of a lover. "Did you sleep well?"

"Sleep?" snorted Aunt Catherine. "With the garden turned into a shooting gallery?"

"How's Lobo?" asked Helen. "The vet couldn't save him," Larry lied regretfully. "I'm awfully sorry, darling."

"Well, don't stand there like a wooden Indian!" snapped Aunt Catherine. "Sit down and have your coffee!"

Larry seated himself beside Helen and the meal progressed. Elwood asked if anybody would care to join him at golf.

"Nobody in their right mind!" Aunt Catherine said crushingly.

"I was going to suggest a swim," said Larry, and Helen declared that she would like a swim.

"Well, wait till an hour after eating,"

said Aunt Catherine. "You'll get cramp if you don't!"

When breakfast was over, Sarah went off with the professed intention of writing letters. Elwood attired himself in a particularly noisy-patterned suit of plus-fours and disappeared with his golf-bag, and for over half an hour Helen and Larry wandered about the extensive grounds before they changed into bathing things and met again on a wooden pier beside a backwater of the Hudson River which wound in and out of the estate.

Jeanne was in attendance on Helen, but she had not brought the jug of wine and glasses that stood on a glass-topped table at the edge of the pier.

"Thirsty?" asked Helen, filling one of the glasses from the jug.

"No," said Larry, "and I don't think you are, either." He took the glass from her hand. "This may be all right, but we're not taking any chances."

The wine was tossed into the water, and he marched Helen off to a spring-board.

"Ladies first," he said.

"And maybe you think I can't!" retorted Helen, and dived gracefully into the stream and struck out for the opposite bank.

Larry dived after her, and they were swimming together when Budge sauntered up to Jeanne on the pier. Considering the fact that he had been up all night, he looked remarkably fresh and fit.

"Nice-looking team, eh?" he said. "Good swimmers, too—both of 'em."

"Yes," agreed Jeanne. "How are you to-day?"

"A little sleepy," confessed Budge, "but outside of that I'm okay."

"I'm awfully sorry about last night. I was terribly frightened when I heard the shots. I thought perhaps you'd been hurt."

"Well, you were almost right," said Budge, "but I'm sure glad to hear you

say that, because I—well—er—I mean it's mighty nice of you to worry about me like that."

They wandered off to a seat against the rough-cast wall of a boat-house. Above their heads was a narrow window, almost like a transom over a door, only there was no door. Unnoticed by them this window was opened, slowly and noiselessly, as Helen and Larry clambered up out of the water on to the pier.

"What really happened last night?" asked Helen.

"Enough to convince me that Seranton's suspicions are correct," Larry replied. "How about a boat-ride? We can talk safely out there."

A skiff was tied to the pier, and they got into it, wet as they were, and Larry took the oars and pulled out into mid-stream.

"We could walk along the shore there, and still watch them," suggested Budge, and he and Jeanne rose and walked towards the bank.

Through the narrow window sped an arrow with such violence that its metal head went clean through the side of the skiff close to Helen, and Larry broke off in the middle of a sentence to yell to Budge.

"They're coming in!" exclaimed Jeanne.

"Something's wrong," decided Budge.

They ran to the pier and waited for the boat.

"What happened?" asked Budge, as Larry helped Helen up on to the pier and followed her.

"That!" said Larry, and handed him the arrow.

It was precisely like the one that had imbedded itself in the bed-room door the night before, and a piece of paper was rolled round its shaft. Budge snapped the rubber band that held the paper and they all read this very brief warning, written in block letters like the previous one.

"Number two. Last warning. Third will kill."

"Where did it come from?" asked Budge.

"Somewhere near the house, I think," returned Larry, and they all looked in that direction. Sarah was walking towards the garage with Reynolds, and Reynolds was holding a long package.

"You and Jeanne catch up with them, and find out what's in that parcel," said Larry.

Budge handed him his own gun and went off with the maid.

"You come over with me where there's some protection," Larry said to Helen, and he led her across to the seat Budge and Jeanne had occupied. The narrow window was closed.

"Now you've got to listen to me," he went on masterfully, "because you're going to give this thing up and get out of here to-day!"

"You're wrong, Larry," she declared obstinately. "I won't do that!"

The window above their heads was opened again, slowly, soundlessly.

"Sweetheart," pleaded Larry, "if somebody can deliver arrows numbers one and two where and when they like, what's to stop number three? You've got to get away now!"

"You know what's at stake," Helen reminded him.

"I don't care what's at stake, nickels or millions! You're leaving with me!"

"What right have you to dictate to me?" she rebelled.

"The best right in the world," he said, "I love you!"

"Larry, you know I care." She put a hand on his shoulder. "But I'm going to see this thing through, and you're June 6th, 1936.

going to help me. I'll stay in the house from now on, if you think it's safer."

"I do," he said, abandoning argument. "There's thirty-six hours to go, but it's to-night I'm most afraid of."

"How can anyone reach me at night?" she countered. "The windows locked, the doors locked, and you and Budge on guard outside the house?"

"To-night," decided Larry, "Budge watches out there, but I'm staying right close to your door. For the last time, Helen, will you give it up?"

"No," she answered stubbornly.

The Secret Way

HE went with her into the house, and after they were both dressed he put the second arrow in a drawer of the dressing-chest in her room. They heard the sound of a car in the drive, and then the voice of Elwood.

"Elwood back from golf, eh?" said Larry. "I think I'll find out if he's really been playing."

"How can you tell?" asked Helen.

"By his clubs."

He went out on to the stairs and looked down into the hall. The butler had admitted the golfer, but Aunt Catherine had sailed out from one of the rooms.

"Well, I suppose you broke the course record—for conversation!" she decided.

"No, auntie," said Elwood, "what I really had was a seventy-nine, but Willie—"

"Willie?"

"Oh, yes, I forgot to mention it. He and Elame are staying in the village. I played with them."

"I wouldn't talk about that!" snapped Aunt Catherine.

"Oh, I'm not so stupid as you imagine."

The butler approached with the player's golf-bag.

"Your clubs, sir," he said. "You left them in the car."

Elwood took the bag; Larry went on down the stairs and greeted him.

"Hallo," said Elwood. "Told the caddy to clean these clubs before I left, but I don't suppose he did." He reached a hand into the bag, but withdrew it with an agonised "Ouch!"

"What did you do?" asked Larry.

"Mmm!" Elwood sucked a wounded finger. "It's something sharp in there!"

Larry took the bag from him and fished out from it an arrow similar to the other two arrows, but with no message rolled round its shaft. Aunt Catherine had gone off, but the butler stared.

"Did you play golf with this?" demanded Larry dryly.

"Certainly not!" Elwood viewed the arrow with round eyes. "I can't understand how it got in the bag! What is it?"

"It's a big-game-hunting arrow, capable of killing a bear. They aren't common."

Elwood did not seem to notice the note of accusation in Larry's voice.

"Someone must have put it in my bag by mistake," he said. "They have a range at the club."

"Archers don't use this type of arrow on targets!"

"Well, it cut my finger," complained Elwood. "and probably scratched some of my clubs. If somebody put it in there for a joke I can't see the humour of it. Well, you'll have to excuse me—I must get some iodine for this wound."

He lumbered up the stairs, taking his golf-bag with him, and Larry presently ascended to Helen's room with the arrow and compared it with the one he had put away in the drawer.

"Identical!" he said. "Now I'll compare this with No. 1, that Budge has."

"Well, where did this third one come from?" asked Helen.

"I'll tell you later. You keep this door locked."

He went off to the garage and climbed some stairs to a room above it which had been allotted to Budge. Budge himself had just entered.

"Oh, that parcel," he said, "was one Sarah had given Reynolds to post—at least, that was his story, and it was certainly addressed to someone in New York. Say, what are you doing with those arrows?"

"Where's the one we found in the door?"

"Locked up in that steel cabinet with the other exhibits. Where did you get two?"

Larry explained, and was handed the key of the locker; but when the tall door was opened there was no sign of any arrow inside.

"It was there this morning," said Budge blankly. "And so was the rake-handle and that first note."

"Boy," said Larry grimly, "from now on I'm not letting Helen out of my sight, except to sleep—and then I'm watching the door!"

"And if I see anyone sneaking around to-night," declared Budge, "I'll shoot first and find out who it is after they've fallen!"

"You'll probably get Reynolds at the first shot!" Larry handed back the gun he had borrowed. "Now put those arrows where nobody will find them."

Helen stayed indoors throughout the rest of the day, which passed without incident. Bridge followed dinner, and in the region of half-past ten Aunt Catherine decided on bed.

Jeanne slept on the chaise longue in Helen's room, and Larry set a chair outside the locked door, but found that sitting on it induced drowsiness, and paced up and down the corridor. Occasionally he looked out of a window, and in the faint light of a newly risen moon saw Budge on duty in the grounds.

Helen slept peacefully in her bed, but Jeanne was restless on the chaise longue. One of the curtains had not been drawn completely across a french window which opened on to a little balcony, and as the moonlight strengthened objects in the room became visible.

Suddenly a portion of the panelling near the fireplace moved outwards, a gloved hand came round it, and Jeanne, roused by a creaking sound, gave a shriek as she turned her head and saw an arrow projecting from the opening.

Helen awakened and sat bolt upright.

"What is it? What is it?" she cried.

Jeanne flung aside coverlet and sheets and heaved herself from the chaise-longue on to the bed to protect Helen with her body.

"The wall!" she gasped. "That panel!"

They heard the twang of a bow-string, the whir of an arrow in flight, and then the wall was complete again and Larry was banging at the door.

"Helen! Helen!" he shouted. "Let me in!"

Jeanne slid from the bed and switched on the lights, then hurriedly she and Helen donned wraps, and Helen opened the door. Larry rushed in, his gun in one hand and an electric torch in the other. He saw the arrow, sticking in the padded side of the chaise longue, and he flew to the french window, opened it, and stepped out on to the balcony.

Budge was near the slubbery below, and he hailed him.

"If anyone comes out of the house," he yelled, "drop him!"

He went back to the terrified girls, and he looked down at the arrow. No

slip of paper was rolled round the shaft of this one.

"Number three!" he growled.
"And they meant it!" cried Helen.
"Jeanne was sleeping there, but she jumped over to protect me."
"Lucky she did!"

In at the open door stalked Aunt Catherine, complete with curlers, old-fashioned dressing-gown, and horse-pistol. Behind her came Sarah, fully dressed, and Elwood in a very jazzy dressing-gown over pyjamas, carrying a golf club as weapon.

"What's going on in here?" demanded Aunt Catherine sharply.

"Nothing," replied Larry, "but it was almost a murder! There must be a secret panel in this wall! D'you know how it works?"

Aunt Catherine disclaimed all knowledge of secret panels and commanded Sarah and Elwood to go to bed. They disappeared with reluctance while Larry searched everywhere for a hidden spring, and after a few minutes Aunt Catherine left him to his task, closing the door behind her.

Larry's groping fingers encountered a tiny lever, concealed in the moulding of a panel, and a section of the woodwork opened outwards like a door. He pulled it wider, and the light of his torch shone down a steep stairway no more than eighteen inches wide.

"Larry," pleaded Helen nervously, "don't go down that stairway, please!"

"Why not?" he asked gruffly.

"He may still be hiding there!"

"I hope he is!" Larry shook off her detaining hand and dived through the opening, the torch in his left hand, the gun in his right.

In the Den

AT the bottom of the narrow stairs was what looked like a blank wall; but the light of the torch shone on a metal catch, and Larry raised the catch and pushed. The wall, which was really a masked door, swung outwards, and he found himself in a large room, close beside an elaborate mantelpiece.

He had never seen the room before, but with the aid of the torch he picked out panelled walls, bookshelves reaching from floor to ceiling, a costly rug upon a drugget-covered floor, furniture, in-

cluding a carved desk, and a french window which was wide open.

On his right, as he stood looking about him, was a door which evidently communicated with the hall, and every muscle in his body became tense as he heard the handle of that door turned.

But it was Aunt Catherine who entered the room, switching on the lights as she did so, and seemingly not in the least surprised to find him there.

"So you found out how to work that thing, eh?" she said, advancing towards him with a little grimace. "I guess our friend got away."

"I thought you didn't know about the stairway?" challenged Larry.

"I didn't," she replied, "but I guessed it led down here. Carl Hudson probably had it built so that he could get from his den to his bed-room without using the hall. He was just as crazy as the rest of the family."

"I see," said Larry, though by no means convinced. "Is this room used now?"

"No." She shook her head. "We keep it locked—I don't know why it wasn't."

"Well, that window isn't locked, either!" He strode over to the french window and out on to the terrace beyond it. Budge was on the lawn and he hailed him.

"See anyone come out of here?" he shouted.

"No," Budge returned; and then Aunt Catherine appeared in the doorway.

"Young man," she commanded, "come in here a minute!"

Budge put away his gun, mounted to the terrace, and followed Larry and the dame into the room which had been Carl Hudson's den.

"What agency do you work for?" she rapped.

"I—I don't understand," stammered Budge.

"Oh, stop acting dumb! I know you're a detective, or supposed to be one, and that he's in on it, too!"

"Why, Aunt Catherine—" began Larry; but she cut him short.

"Don't try to fool me!" she cried. "He's too good a driver to be a professional chauffeur, and you might as well admit it!"

Silently Budge produced a professional card which she snatched from him.

"Edwards Detective Agency," she read aloud. "'Any honest case,' Hu! Surprised Joshua hired you! He thinks most honest men are idiots! Are you Edwards?"

"Yes," Budge admitted sheepishly. "I suppose you saw all the precious relatives at Joshua's office?"

"I watched them come out, yes."

"Well, who's trying to kill this girl?"

"I'd like to ask your gardener some questions."

"Reynolds?" She tossed her head. "Bosh, he's my man! Hired him myself! He's a detective, and a darned good one!"

That was a shock for Larry and for Budge, and they had not recovered from it when the voice of Reynolds rang out from the drive:

"All right, stand there unless you want me to shoot a piece out of your backbone!"

Aunt Catherine swept out on to the terrace.

"What is it, Reynolds?" she called out.

"A prowler I caught," was the reply.

"Bring him in here!"

Reynolds drove a man before him up the steps on to the terrace, jabbing a six-shooter into his back, and just inside the french window the man stood revealed as Dr. Silas Hudson, a scared but distinctly guilty expression on his flabby face.

"Silas!" exclaimed Aunt Catherine. "What was he doing here?"

"I don't know," confessed Reynolds, "but he parked his car on the edge of the grounds, sneaked up here, saw the lights on, and settled down to wait. So I jumped him."

Silas had nothing to say; he looked not altogether unlike a hunted animal.

"He couldn't have shot the arrow, then," remarked Larry.

"Another arrow?" Reynolds looked astonished.

"How do you know about the arrows?" barked Budge.

"I found one in your locker. The note with it told its own story. I put back everything except the wire from the rake handle, a little while ago."



The doctor staggered up with his hands on the arms of the chair, and his face was ghastly.

"Thanks," said Budge; and then Aunt Catherine faced the captured doctor.

"Silas, what were you doing here?" she demanded.

Silas moistened his lips with his tongue.

"There are three German medical books on the shelves of this room," he said, "that are priceless. They're rotting in the dust when they could be of use to humanity. I meant to take them."

Budge made a scornful noise in his throat, but Aunt Catherine said:

"All right, get 'em and get out! And be here to-morrow night before ten o'clock!"

Silas Hudson went eagerly over to the book-shelves and from one of them greedily removed three volumes with which he returned to the french window.

"You're not going to let him go, are you?" howled Reynolds.

"Certainly I am," replied Aunt Catherine; but the detective caught hold of the doctor and stared at the books.

"Anybody here read German?" he asked plaintively.

"I do," said Larry, and he walked over and read the titles on the backs of the books. "The histories of one thousand cancer cases, by Von Dresen of Vienna. Well, I hope they help you, doctor."

Silas went off across the terrace with the books, but Reynolds was still dissatisfied.

"You know you're making a mistake," he complained. "He's mixed up in this!"

"Ridiculous!" fumed Aunt Catherine. "I know Silas Hudson. He'd kill five people for those three books, but money wouldn't tempt him."

"Just the same," decided Reynolds, "I'm gonna tail him to his ear and make sure he goes."

He went off across the terrace, and Aunt Catherine tilted her head at Budge.

"Well, Mr. Detective Edwards," she said challengingly, "who do you like now?"

"I'm not satisfied with Reynolds yet," Budge replied slowly. "I don't like Elwood particularly."

"Nobody likes Elwood," she retorted. "Here's a tip! When you solve all this mystery, you'll find Willie Hudson and his slinky blonde wife with their fingers in the pie!"

"They've been staying in the village the last few days," remarked Larry.

"Oh, you know that, too? I suppose you'll be suspecting me next?" She glanced in at the dark, secret way, then turned towards the hall. "Good grief. I'll bet those girls are having fits upstairs!" she exclaimed. "I'll go tell 'em the show's over for to-night—and I hope it is!"

"Tell them I'm sleeping down here in case anyone tries to reach those stairs," said Larry.

"Smart idea," she approved. "Good-night."

"Do you really suspect the old girl?" asked Budge, after she had gone.

"Well, not of shooting the arrows," Larry replied, "but she knows a lot more than we think. You'd better watch the upper floor, Budge—Reynolds will take care of the grounds, I guess. I'll ring Scranton and tell him what's happened."

Budge nodded and departed; Larry went to a telephone which was on the desk and put through a call to the lawyer's house in White Plains, about ten miles away. But Joshua Scranton, he was told by a servant, had not returned from a theatre.

"Well, ask him to 'phone Mr. Dono-

van, at the Hudson estate, the moment he gets in, will you?" said Larry.

Reynolds entered the room from the terrace as he hung up.

"I had a talk with Dr. Silas," he announced, "and I guess he's in the clear. I'd be glad to work with you fellows, though—we may be pointing in the same direction."

"Maybe," said Larry, and looked at his wrist-watch. "We'll work together, by all means."

The erstwhile gardener went out at the french window and Larry closed it. It was very quiet in the room as he sat waiting for the telephone bell to ring, and a creaking sound in the secret way brought him to his feet with his gun in his hand. Someone was descending the narrow stairway.

"All right," he said loudly, "step out into the room!"

The panel that was really a door was pushed more widely open, and he pocketed the gun in haste, for it was Helen who walked out into the room, carrying an eiderdown quilt.

"I just wanted to bring you a cover and to tell you of my suspicions," she said. "I'm afraid of Sarah."

"Sarah?" he echoed, taking the quilt from her and dropping it on a chair.

"Yes, the way she looks at me. The cook told Jeanne that she was jilted in her only love affair. She's hated the world and herself ever since. She's mad about her mother and insanely jealous of her, and Aunt Catherine's been very nice to me."

"Hmm!" mused Larry. "She's a powerful woman with strength enough to handle a bow. She may feel that you're taking this home away from her, too. We'll keep an eye on her. Anyway, I guess the excitement's over for to-night."

"Oh, I hope so!" said Helen. "And you will be careful, won't you?"

The telephone bell rang, making both of them jump.

"That's Scranton," said Larry. "I put through a call for him. Good-night, dear."

He kissed her and she went back through the secret way while he went to the telephone. Scranton was on the other end of the line, and he listened to all the things Larry had to tell him without interrupting. Then:

"Mr. Donovan," he said gravely, "I can't think of anyone except Catherine and myself who would know that panel existed. Sarah might, possibly. Please don't take the slightest chance. You're dealing with a very resourceful person."

"We're finding that out!" said Larry.

The Winged Death

BUDGE, in his echauffeur's uniform, entered the den next morning to find Larry reclining in his shirt-sleeves on two chairs, one of which was set against the secret door. The eider-down quilt covered him; his dinner-jacket lay on a club-kerb beside the fireplace. Budge tapped him on the shoulder, and he sat up with a start.

"Did you rest well, Mr. Donovan?"

"Don't be funny!" yawned Larry.

"I've got a crick in my neck!"

"You've got a visitor at the window, too!" said Budge.

It was Reynolds at the french window, and Larry admitted him.

"I just thought I'd tell you," said the detective, "that I'd be in the village most of the day. I can't very well 'phone from here, and I'm tracing that clue I told you about."

"Right," said Larry. "If anything breaks, I'll 'phone a message to the post office."

Reynolds went back to his bicycle,

which he had left in the drive, and Larry fastened his collar, and was tying his dress-bow, when the door from the hall was opened and Jeanne entered the room.

"Miss Hudson's ready for breakfast," she announced, "and is waiting for Mr. Donovan."

"She'll have to wait a bit longer," chuckled Budge. "Now that you've got that bow tied, Larry, you can go upstairs and change all your clothes!"

Larry went off with a rueful expression on his face, and Budge stretched his arms and yawned prodigiously.

"Up all night again?" asked Jeanne sympathetically.

"Uhuh! But we're on the last lap. Ten o'clock to-night, and my job'll be finished!"

"Mine, too," said she, and sighed. "I'll be sorry."

"Well, I won't!" he growled. "It's creepy! A gun would be different, but those arrows— No sound! And the feeling that any minute one might stick through somebody like a spit through a roast beef!"

She shivered.

"I'll be glad the danger's over," she said, "but I'll be sorry that we won't see each other any more."

"Who says we won't?" he blurted.

"Well, you'll be going back to town, and I may stay here—if Miss Hudson wants me."

He gazed at her wistfully, rather at a loss for words.

"Say, Jeanne, d'you like being a maid?" he asked abruptly.

"Not very well," she admitted. "Why?"

"Well, I thought maybe there was something else you'd rather be. A— a wife, for instance."

"Whose wife?" she asked smilingly.

"Mine!"

"I'd like that much better," she demurely assured him—and found herself in his arms.

There were no more shocks that day between breakfast and dinner. In the drawing-room, after the evening meal was over, the butler set the card-table for an inevitable game of bridge; and in the servants' sitting-room Budge was in the act of switching on a wireless set when Reynolds returned from the village.

"Not much of a programme to-night," the detective said, leaning over Budge.

The cook and her daughter Annie were in the room, as well as Jeanne, but they did not see a folded piece of paper change hands.

"You try it," said Budge. "I can't get anything."

He went off into the kitchen and opened out the piece of paper. On it was written in pencil:

"Get word to Donovan that I'll know by 9.30. Waiting for a telegram."

Aunt Catherine and her flock were on the way from the dining-room to the drawing-room when the bell of the telephone in the hall rang. The butler hurried to the instrument; the others stopped short.

"It's for you, madam," said the butler. "Mr. William— he seems excited."

"Probably misplaced his blonde wife," commented Aunt Catherine, taking the telephone from him. "Put out two new packs of cards, Campbell."

The butler returned to the drawing-room.

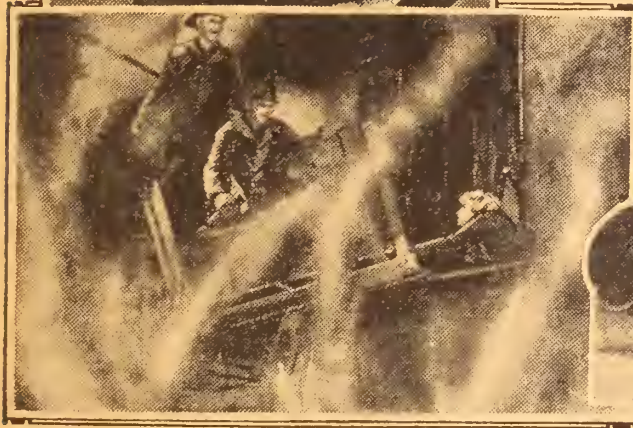
"Hallo, Willie, what is it?" Aunt Catherine said into the transmitter. "You did?" Her voice ascended several tones. "Where? It isn't serious? You

(Continued on page 25)

A story of peace-time heroes who guard your homes from the devouring flames. The adventures of a rookie fireman who did his best to be a hero and at first succeeds only too well. Thunderous thrills with Norman Foster in the starring rôle



"SUICIDE SQUAD"



A Bright-eyed Youth

LARRY'S late, isn't he?" remarked Mrs. Dawson, and a smile appeared and her shrewd old eyes twinkled as she saw the effect of her simple remark. Tim, her husband, rustled his paper angrily; Ed Melville, a big, heavy-looking young man, curled his lip in a cynical smile; Mary, her daughter, smiled happily and a trifle dreamily; Mickey, her twelve-year-old son, rushed over to the window and peered out anxiously for sign of the young man who was keeping dinner waiting on the occasion of Mary's twentieth birthday.

Mrs. Dawson having received no answer, which did not worry her very much, returned to the kitchen, where she reigned supreme. Tim Dawson lowered his paper, fingered his big moustache, glowered at the birthday-eake, and went back to his paper. Ed gave a resigned sigh and gazed with pitying eyes at the very attractive Mary Dawson. Mary was busy sewing and she did not hear the sigh or see the pitying gaze; if she had she would have probably thought Ed was suffering from indigestion, and rushed off to get him some tablets. Mickey tried to push his head through the glass in his efforts to see down the street.

The telephone-bell shrilled. "That may be Larry," cried Mickey. "Won't it be dreadful if he can't come."

"Why in heaven's name should it be dreadful?" His father jerked down his paper. "Dinner's ten minutes late as it is, and—answer that 'phone, someone."

Mary took the call, and Ed scowled

when he saw how her eyes lit up and she smiled.

"Oh, is that you, Larry? Where are you ringing from?" Pause. "Oh, I know the place. You're finished for the day and you're be right along? How soon?" Another pause. "Five minutes? That will be quite all right, for dinner isn't ready quite. 'Bye, Larry."

"Hurray!" shouted Mickey, who adored Larry.

"Not so much noise," thundered his father. "How the dickens can I read with all this noise going on? Mother!"

Mrs. Dawson poked her head round the kitchen door.

"Did someone call me?"

"Have we got to wait for Larry Johnson until it's dark?" he demanded.

"Yes, dear," was all Mrs. Dawson answered, but it settled all arguments. Her husband rustled the paper angrily and buried himself in it. Ed looked unhappily at Mary, who was going round the table and seeing that everything was in its correct place. Mickey sniffed, not because he had a cold, but because roast beef and roast potatoes are enough to make any boy sniff—especially cooked by such a mistress of culinary art as Mrs. Dawson.

Honk, honk, honk!

At once, Mickey, who had abandoned his position at the window to see how his silk-worms were getting on, rushed across the room. It was a race between him and his sister who got there first.

"It's Larry!" he shouted. "Dad, it's Larry!"

"Who cares?" muttered his father, with more rustling of paper.

Ed Melville rawned, but shut his

mouth quickly because Mary had nearly caught him.

The two young people waved.

Larry Johnson grinned merrily and waved back. He was a slim young fellow with a cheeky smile and the merriest of laughs. He slammed the door of the taxi that he had been driving for hire, and made for the apartment-house steps.

"Mother, Larry's here!" Mary called out.

"At last we can have dinner," growled her father.

Mrs. Dawson reappeared.

"Did you say Larry was here?" She saw her daughter nod her fair head. "I'm glad the boy could come. Wouldn't have been a party without him."

Tim Dawson opened his mouth to say something, thought better of it, and read the racing news for the third time. A violent hammering and ringing made him lay down his paper and open his mouth to shout his wrath, when Mrs. Dawson came out of the kitchen and was all smiles. He shook his head gloomily.

Larry Johnson bounced into the room. His eyes were sparkling, his face was one great grin, and he looked full of the joy of life.

He kissed Mrs. Dawson, who said: "Oh, my!" and then kissed Mary who made no complaint.

"A small present." Larry fished out a packet. "It's nothing good, but I thought it would suit you."

"Oh, Larry!" She had to kiss him again.

"When are we going to have dinner?" cried old Dawson, who could contain himself no longer.

"You put on your coat and brush your hair," ordered Mrs. Dawson. "Then we can make a start."

"Many happy returns of the day, old dear." Larry completely ignored everyone. "Gee, I like that dress."

"Mother helped me make it."

Then Larry beamed at Mrs. Dawson. "You're a wonder—don't know how you do it and manage to look so young."

"Pah!" snorted Pa Dawson, and went off to brush his hair.

"Mickey!" Larry dived in his pocket and brought out a paper bag. "Some aniseed balls."

"If you eat one of those before your dinner I don't know what I'll do to you," said Mrs. Dawson, then she smiled at Larry. "You spoil that boy."

Ed Melville shook his head enviously. Some people certainly had the technique. They could put it over. Fancy a kid staring goggle-eyed at a young man who gave him a few cents' worth of aniseed balls, or a girl that went into raptures over a necklace that came from some ten-cent store! The flowers that he had brought had cost two dollars, but he would have got just as hearty thanks with a bunch of daisies.

Mrs. Dawson, her daughter and her son approved of Larry Johnson. They were on his side every time. But Tim Dawson thought Larry was a lazy, harum-scarum, no-good young man, and he had a certain good excuse for that opinion. If Larry had been in one job in the last six months, he had been in a dozen. Moreover, he was not very keen that his daughter should marry a taxi-driver, when such a splendid fellow as Ed Melville of the Suicide Squad was head over heels in love with her. Ed Melville disliked Larry and would willingly have punched him on the jaw, but Larry's slimmess was deceptive, and it annoyed Ed to think that his rival might go so far as to punch him back.

Mrs. Dawson brought in the beef and roast potatoes, and that settled all arguments for the time being.

A New Recruit

AS repasts go, it was a successful meal. Ed Melville did not enjoy it very much because Mary had eyes only for one person. Tim Dawson enjoyed the meal reluctantly. He would like to have found something to complain about, but that beef was just wonderful. Larry Johnson always had a ruffling effect on his temper, because no matter how sarcastic one might be it had no effect. Larry just grinned and made some completely asinine rejoinder. Moreover, old Tim was a little apprehensive, because of late his wife, who had the sweetest of natures but an iron determination, had talked vaguely of Larry wanting to join the fire-fighters, or Suicide Squad. Mrs. Dawson had so far been vague, but the old man felt it was the beginning of a campaign to get him to sign papers on the lad's behalf, and that he vowed would be something he would never do.

A violent honking caused Larry to go to the window. It was a furo. With mumbled apologies he went downstairs, and returned some minutes later to say that he had settled that problem. He was off duty and wasn't doing business—actually, he was not off duty. The customer was a little merry, and Larry had got rid of him by threatening physical force.

Ed Melville contributed very little to the conversation, though he tried his best to be pleasant to Mary, and didn't do himself any good when he decided

Larry's statement that he had done a certain journey of sixty miles in a few minutes over an hour.

The meal concluded, Larry asked Mary to go out to the pictures, and before Tim could make any opposition his wife had said it would be quite all right. Tim decided he must speak to his wife, and though a fearless fire-fighter he did not fancy the task. The young people were ready to leave when there came more honking.

Larry looked out of the window and saw a man peering round the car.

"I'll teach that guy to come nosing round my bus!" he cried.

The man seemed to be examining the clock when Larry appeared. The man's back was to Larry, and that was unfortunate for Larry, who, on the spur of the moment, administered a kick in the pants.

"What the dickens do you think you're doing?" began Larry. "That's my—er—I'm sorry—" He tailed off because he was staring into the flushed, angry face on one of the taxi-company inspectors. "I didn't know it was you."

"A pity for you," shouted the inspector. "I came along here an hour ago, and this cab hasn't moved from the kerb since then. Not the first time you've done this sort of thing. The other Saturday you took this cab out to a baseball match for a customer, and though not hired, you stayed to see the match through, and last Tuesday you faked a breakdown so you could go on the spree." Larry looked uncomfortable, because he had gone to the pictures on that occasion with Mary. "And now you've acted in a way that leaves only one course open. You're fired!"

"You can't do this."

"Oh, can't I?" The inspector took out his pocket-book and some money.

"This is your share of what little you've earned, and you're discharged." He climbed into the driver's seat.

"One moment," shouted Larry as the inspector started up the engine. "Are you plying for hire in this cab now?"

"I am."

"Good!" Larry swung open the taxi door and pushed Mary inside. "All right, my man, drive me to the Odcon, and be quick about it!"

That night, when Mr. and Mrs. Dawson had retired, the good lady stated definitely that as Larry had left the taxi company, which was no sort of job for a nice young man, she would like her husband to get the lad into the fire-fighting force.

"No!" her husband shouted.

"Larry has nerve and doesn't know what fear is," countered Mrs. Dawson. "Just the type of man you want. I can't understand—nor can Mary—what objection you can possibly have."

"I'll tell you"—he wrenched off a collar—"Larry's all talk. He's just a harum-scarum ne'er-do-well. It's the riot squad he should join. He'd be late for parades, turning up at the wrong fire, breaking his neck on ladders and undermining all the good work that has taken me years. I insist upon discipline, and I can't see that pup obeying rules and regulations."

"He isn't a pup, Tim." She fixed a steely eye on her husband. "I know he would obey all the rules and regulations."

"Why can't Mary fall for a chap like Ed Melville?" said her husband. "There's a fine fellow for you. Doesn't drink, smokes very little, and a devout admirer of Mary's. Saves his money, and I know has a nice sun put by. A steady-going lad and just the sort I'd

like our Mary to marry." He paused for breath. "Larry has just lost his latest job in the same sort of way he's lost all the others. He hasn't got a cent in the world, and my daughter's not marrying a pauper."

"When you married me, Tim Dawson, you were out of work."

That was a body blow.

The argument started about eleven at night. Still arguing, they got into bed at midnight. At one they put out the light, but the argument was still raging. Several times Tim said he wished to go to sleep, but Mrs. Dawson had a shrill voice at times—and a sharp elbow. She wanted Larry Johnson to have a chance. At three in the morning her husband capitulated.

"All right"—he sat up in bed—"get Larry Johnson to fill in the papers and I'll sign them. And if he don't obey the rules and regulations I'll fire him and finish with him for good. Now for goodness' sake, woman, let me sleep."

"Thank you, Tim." Mrs. Dawson relaxed with a smile.

Tim Dawson lay there thinking what an idiot he had been. No, a thousand times no, he would not sign Larry's papers.

"Nellie, I'm not going—" he began, and then in the faint light noticed his wife's eyes were closed. A gentle snore made him purse his lips. It was asking for trouble to wake his wife once she was asleep. He resigned himself to defeat and the softening effects of slumber.

His First Fire Call

LARRY JOHNSON'S papers were signed, approved and passed. He came through the medical examination, much to Ed Melville's disappointment, and was sent to an instructional course. Here he endured a fortnight's intensive training.

Now, Mrs. Dawson had had a quiet talk with Larry, and he vowed that in return for the kindness that she had shown him he would stick to his job, no matter how tough it might prove.

It was tough. They were got out of bed at all hours of the day and night, taught all about the driving, control and mechanism of fire-engines, shown the right and wrong way of handling the hose, given ladder work, tested for giddiness on heights, and made to jump many yards down into nets. Much to Ed Melville's disgust, Larry was quite the best pupil and the most fearless. He was passed as fit for service and drafted to Number Five Station, which was commanded by Captain Tim Dawson.

"Keep your eye on Larry," the old man told Ed Melville. "Just because he's a personal friend, no favouritism to be shown. Report to me on his progress, and see he doesn't get into any mischief." He shot a glance at the younger man. "I don't trust that young gentleman any farther than I can see him, so I think it would be best if we kept him on work which will not allow him to do something foolish. You understand?"

"Certainly, captain." Ed Melville answered with a grin. When by himself, Ed rubbed his hands together.

Ed Melville proceeded to make life just as unpleasant for Larry Johnson as he could. It gave his small-minded nature intense satisfaction. He obeyed the captain's orders to the last letter.

Larry, not being dumb, had a strong idea why Melville was making his life hot, and though several times he very nearly lost his temper, he just managed to check himself in time. Answering back a superior would have meant

instant dismissal. What Larry objected to most were the menial, insignificant tasks allocated to him. All day long he seemed to be polishing brass and cleaning fire-engines. Melville was always snooping round, trying to catch him out for breaking some rule or regulation. Several times he was on the mat for minor offences.

Every time there was a fire call Larry was detailed to remain at the station as a messenger, to answer telephone calls and prepare to rush out with the salvage lorry. At one fire he did get a call for a new hose, as the one in use was almost burnt through. Larry got to the fire, three miles away, in about five minutes, and instead of getting praise, was reprimanded by Captain Dawson for endangering people's lives by driving too fast through the streets.

Larry had a great friend in "Snap" Wilson, a free-lance Press cameraman who earned a living by getting pictures of fires, smashes, accidents, fights, and anything exciting. He assured Larry that on the first chance that occurred he would get his picture into the papers.

"You do something big, and I'll get your picture doing it," stated Snap. "That's the way to gain promotion."

"You're right," agreed Larry. "I don't want to be a run-around all my life, nor do I want to spend about twenty years waiting for promotion. If I can only get a break I'll show 'em."

Larry had been at the station a month when he nearly had a fight with Melville. Larry was taking Mary to a big dance, and as he was about to go off duty Melville sent for him to

detail him for night duty. Captain Dawson wanted a man and Larry was the man Melville selected. Then Larry rang up to explain to Mary why he could not go, and found that Melville had been on the 'phone to her—as Larry could not go, might he take her? Melville nearly got socked for that, but the youngster remembered his promise to Mrs. Dawson.

There was an epidemic of influenza in the district, and several men were down sick when Captain Dawson got a call to a big grain-store fire. As they were short of drivers, Larry was in charge of a fire-escape.

They reached the fire and Larry was all set to play his part when Captain Dawson rushed up to him.

"You stay here and guard the escape," he ordered. "We may need you or we may not, but if you do get the call, jump to it."

There was not going to be any publicity in this fire.

With bored gaze Larry stared at the fire. A lot of smoke and a certain amount of flame, but it should be subdued pretty easily. He yawned as Snap came up and suggested a picture of him standing by the machine.

"Take one if you like." Larry shrugged his shoulders. "It may come in useful when they do give me a break."

He was chatting dully with Snap when he observed two men get out of a yellow car, glance round and then hurry up the steps into a big building. He yawned and stared at the fire, still smoking and looked like going on smoking. He turned and saw the two men come out of the building. One darted down the steps, whilst the other stood by the swing doors.

Larry frowned in perplexity. The men seemed to strike a jarring note. The first man started the car and gave

an imperious gesture to his companion standing by the door. This man came slowly down the steps and kept on looking round. Larry noticed that he was carrying a bulky case. On reaching the car he placed the bag on the back seat, ran round and got in beside the driver.

"What's that building over there?" Larry asked his friend.

"I think it's a bank," Snap answered.

"Is it?" Larry was on the alert. "Those two guys were acting kinda queer. I wonder—" He did not continue because the swing doors had discharged two or three black-coated figures, whereupon there came an explosion and the sound of tinkling glass. The figures dived back through the swing doors and the yellow car sped away.

"It's a bank stick-up," yelled Larry, and clambered into the driver's seat of the fire-escape.

Captain Tim Dawson rubbed his eyes when the escape went charging down the street at a terrific speed.

A Bold Capture

LARRY JOHNSON drove the escape with skill and daring, and Snap, who had jumped aboard on the chance of a scoop, thought his last hour had come when the cumbersome vehicle skidded round corners at forty miles an hour.

The people of the city were amazed to see the escape charging through the streets, and they thought the driver must have gone mad. There had been a hold-up at the bank, and already every police car had had the information.

Every time the two men in the yellow car looked round they saw behind them the huge escape. Rather foolishly they did not dream that they were being followed until the escape began to gain on them. There was something about the intent look of the driver that urged



Larry gripped the crook by both wrists and heaved him over his shoulder.

them to go all out, but the escape had plenty of power. By now the police knew all about the yellow car being pursued by a fire-escape, and sirens were screaming all over the city.

The crooks swung down a side street and tried to dodge Larry, but that young fellow manœuvred the escape in an amazing manner. Desperately the crooks made for their hide-out, which was a ramshackle apartment-house. They left their car and darted inside the place with their loot.

Out leaped Larry, and fearlessly he rushed for the front door. He opened it and at once two guns blazed, but he had jumped back in time.

An officer on a fast motor-cycle arrived.

"Are you after two crooks?" hissed Larry.

"Yeah. Held up the State bank and got away in a yellow car," was the answer.

"They're in there," cried Larry. "You watch this door and leave the rest to me."

He raced round to a fire-escape, sped up the iron stairs and clambered in at a window. Cautiously he crossed an empty room and found himself in a passage. He came to the stairs and tiptoed down them towards the first floor. At the top of the stairs stood two men with their guns ready for anyone foolish enough to try a rush.

Larry crept down and then dived on their backs. The impact flung both men to the ground. They were not hurt very much, but badly winded. One man moaned, and Larry hit him hard in the jaw. The other crook reached for his gun.

When the police-officer ventured up the stairs he found one crook lying sprawled on the floor and another taking a bad hiding from a fierce-eyed fireman. The officer covered the sprawled crook as the latter showed signs of wanting to get up. Larry gripped the other crook by both wrists and tossed him over his shoulder on to his companion. That ended the fight, and the two rascals were taken away in handcuffs.

Before they departed for gaol, Snap took pictures of the police-officer, Larry and the two bank-robbers.

Larry, deciding that perhaps it would be as well to get back to the scene of the fire, sped back through the streets. The fire was nearly out, but Captain Tim Dawson was burning up.

"Where have you been?"

"Two guys held up the Stato bank and tried to get away with a lot of dough," Larry grinned expectantly. "They shot at the bank officials and made a getaway. They would have done it but for me. I went after them and forced them to take refuge in a building. I got 'em, chief—they're safe in gaol now."

"And you feel mighty pleased with yourself, I suppose?" Tim Dawson seemed even angrier, much to Larry's surprise. "You might have endangered hundreds of lives."

"Me? How?"

"That escape is meant for rescuing people and not for wild-goose chases through the streets!" yelled Captain Dawson. "What does a bank or its money mean when human lives are at stake?"

"I didn't know any lives were at stake."

"They weren't, thank goodness!" The captain was purple in the face. "But suppose there had been people trapped in that grain store. They would have died because the escape was not
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there. Does that penetrate your thick skull?"

When the evening papers came out with the picture of Larry and the two crooks and a glowing account of a fire-fighter's heroic bravery, then old Dawson nearly choked. On the morrow he ordered a parade, and made Larry Johnson stand out in front of the other men. Ed Melville had a twisted grin on his smug features.

Captain Dawson cleared his throat and read out certain rules and regulations in regard to disregard of orders.

"If a man gets an order to go into a flaming building he does his best to carry out that order. If a man is placed in charge of a fire-escape and to await orders he must be ready for those orders, not suddenly decide to go racing through the streets after a couple of crooks."

"If you wish for my resignation, captain, you can have it," Larry answered.

Ed Melville leaned forward hopefully.

"I do not wish for your resignation.

But I reprimand you for disobedience of orders," replied the captain. "You will lose three weeks' good conduct—"

An orderly had entered. "What is it?"

"Captain Wilson from headquarters, chief."

One of the biggest men in the fire-fighting establishment. Captain Dawson hurried away to greet this person of importance. Captain Wilson insisted upon speaking to the men, and after a few words about their fine work, asked for Larry Johnson to step forward.

"I am proud of what you did yesterday," was the big man's astounding opening remark. "The Promotion Board have instructed me to express their gratification for your bravery and presence of mind, and, as a reward, to give you a good-conduct stripe."

Ed Melville's face went a sickly yellow, whilst Captain Dawson nearly choked.

Larry Johnson stepped back into the ranks with a self-satisfied smirk on his face. The afternoon editions had pictures of him with the stripe on his sleeve.

There was only one drawback to his elation—the chilly reception given to him by Mary when he called that same evening.

"I know it was very brave, but all this publicity is wrong," she told him. "It's praise you don't deserve."

"Why not?" he wanted to know.

"Well, you deserted your post," she replied. "If you were in the army and on sentry-go and you cleared off they would have shot you."

"Thanks very much!" cried Larry, and there was very nearly a row. Maybe there would have been one if good-natured Mrs. Dawson had not poured oil on troubled waters.

In the next few weeks there were several fire-calls, and Larry stuck rigidly to his duties, though he was still convinced that quick-action methods and publicity were the sure way to promotion. Then came the second publicity outburst.

Now, to give Larry his due, he did not think of the publicity at the time; afterwards, perhaps, but at the time it was just the saving of human life. It happened this way.

There had been a district call to a big hotel, where there had been an explosion in the basement thought to be caused through a leakage of gas. At any rate, the basement was on fire and choking black fumes were pouring from manholes and cellars. Already the fire had penetrated to the first floor, and the whole hotel was in danger.

As per usual, Larry was detailed to play a minor part. Captain Dawson

ordered him to look after the life-line. The fire-fighters had to don gas-masks and go down into the smoke-filled basement, and the leader held the end of a thin wire line. This was on a small wheel or drum, and it was Larry's job to stand near the entrance to the basement and pay out this life-line.

All went well until the fire spread and burst through brackets supporting a live cable connected to a power plant in the next building. The cable fell into the street, which was crowded with people, and the end of the wire at once began to "earth," causing it to dance and whip about like an electric eel. Anyone coming in contact with the squirming cable would get a shock that was certain to prove fatal.

The crowd tried to back away, but there was such a congestion of people and held-up traffic that there was a solid jam. The cable squirmed to within a few feet of a mass of screaming people, mostly children, and then squirmed away again.

"Hold this!" Larry cried to Snap, who was hovering round taking pictures. He handed the drum of the life-line.

Larry glanced round and whipped out a knife. He cut a good length from a roll of stout rope and advanced on the squirming cable. People watched him, and thought he must be struck dead. Several times the cable gave a spasmodic jerk and nearly got him. But he persisted, and at last got a rope under the cable, a quick knot and the live cable was a prisoner.

The crowd cheered madly. He waved his hand to them and lashed the cable to some railings. Someone rushed off to get the electric company to turn off the power, which should have been thought of before.

Suddenly the grin faded from Larry's face as he saw Snap taking pictures of him.

"I got you roping the cable," Snap said in awed tones. "It'll make a superb picture."

"How about that life-line?" gasped Larry.

When Snap put a shaky hand to his mouth, Larry knew there was trouble ahead. He charged over to the basement, and the smoke was pouring out thicker than ever, but there was no sign of the drum. He saw Snap, and seized the cameraman in a vicious grip.

"What did you do with that drum?"

"I didn't think it was of very much importance, and there was such a scoop with that wire, so I dropped it," weakly murmured Snap. "Was it important?"

"You mane chump!" yelled Larry, and looked at the smoke clouds in horror.

He was about to hurl himself into the smoke when a figure stumbled out. A moment later came another figure, and then two men supporting a third who had been overcome by the fumes.

Snap took some pictures, and then hastened away to get them to the papers. If he had waited he would have seen his friend get a bad reprimand for his bravery.

"This ain't the time or place to tell you what I think of you!" Dawson said angrily. "I'll deal with you in the morning."

Ed Melville, who had been a spectator of this little scene, had difficulty in concealing his jubilation. Larry would not have a chance of getting old Dawson to give his consent to their marriage after this.

In the morning Larry was again had up before the whole company. This time Captain Dawson did not spare the unfortunate victim of his wrath. Publicly he stripped Larry of his good-conduct stripe for disobedience of orders and endangering the lives of his fellow-

men. He had sent his own account of the affair to Captain Wilson and condemned Larry Johnson as someone who thought of nothing else but cheap publicity.

That was true to a certain extent, but it was harsh action all the same, and though Captain Dawson was a fine old man this treatment was prompted by his distrust of Larry. Ed Melville encouraged this distrust. The captain felt he was doing the right thing.

Not a murmur did Larry make nor a word say in his own defence. The hardest part was Mary's unfriendly attitude. She would consider only her father's and Ed's version of the incident, and he was too proud to say that it was because of the number of lives in danger that he had deserted his post. It ended with a quarrel and Larry having the last word.

"Everyone says I'm wrong, and maybe I was wrong, but I should do just the same again if it occurred to-morrow. You tell your father that, and then he'll have just the excuse he wants for firing me. Good-night."

His Rival in Danger

IT did nothing to restore peace that the papers had much to say in praise of Larry's action. Snap wanted permission to tell the whole story of the treatment Larry had received from Dawson on account of the live cable, but that young man stuck out his jaw and threatened to punch Snap's head if he did.

The quarrel between Mary and Larry was patched up, but there wasn't the same friendly relationship as of old. He knew that Mary was disappointed in him, and it made him bad-tempered to find that Ed Melville was round at the Dawson's house nearly every day. He was getting used to being detailed for duty about an hour before an appointment with Mary.

"Snap," he confided to his friend, "if you knew the trouble I have to check myself from socking that palooka you'd sympathise with me. There ain't a day

that passes without he does something to rile me."

"I think Captain Dawson is an old fool."

"I'll sock you if you talk that way," threatened Larry. "You I can sock and get away with it. Ed I can't. Captain Dawson is one of the old school, and unfortunately I don't seem to meet with his approval. But I like him even if he don't like me."

On the Monday of the thirteenth week—thirteen can be unlucky—there came a general call. A big factory fire. The whole building was ablaze, and on either side were warehouses packed full of inflammable goods. A number of hands were trapped on the roof of the factory.

The fire broke out some few minutes before midnight. The alarm went, and everyone was out of bed like a flash. A dive into clothes and down the slippery pole from the dormitories into the station. Open swung the great doors and out raced the two engines with the men finishing their dressing as the machines tore through the dark streets.

As usual, Larry Johnson was driving the spare fire-escape.

The sky had a great red patch, and they could tell by this that it was a tremendous fire.

Captain Dawson was proud to find that his engines were the first on the scene. The hoses got busy. A fire-escape was run up to the roof and a number of factory hands rescued by fire chute.

Larry's own escape was called into use, and that young man begged for the chance to go up the ladder. Captain Dawson told him to stand on one side. A number of people were saved, but several were badly injured and burnt.

Larry reckoned if he had been allowed to go up the ladder these people would have been rescued quicker and with less injury. He did not voice that opinion, but his eyes narrowed and his hands clenched, when he found he was the only one not required to take an active part in the fire. He was detailed to pay out a life-line.

Once he saw a ladder was blazing, and rushed up to inform Captain Dawson, and got harsh words for his pains.

"Get back to your post!" thundered Dawson.

"Nothing I do seems to be right," Larry grumbled to himself.

It had been decided that the fire must be attacked from the other side, and that the best way to get there was through the cellars. The fire had started on the second floor and worked down to the first. So far the cellars were immune but full of smoke and fumes. Captain Dawson led the party of masked firemen, and Larry had to pay out the line.

"Pay out the line, and don't try any other act," warned Captain Dawson, as he helped one of his fire raisers don a gas outfit. "This man and others are dependent on you."

Soon afterwards Dawson donned an outfit and dived below. Larry vowed that nothing would move him from his post.

Ed Melville was left in charge, and ran about shouting orders and looking important. An outer wall looked in danger of falling, and Ed Melville decided to get to the roof of an engine-house that was attached to the side of the factory. If the wall fell valuable dynamo would be damaged.

Larry had climbed on to the driver's seat of the escape and was disconsolately staring at the blaze when he saw Ed clamber up the short ladder to the engine-room roof. But Larry from his vantage-point observed something that no one else could possibly see—a number of bricks that crashed down from above and floored Ed Melville. Larry jumped up—then remembered the life-line that he was holding.

Everyone else was busy. Other fire-engines were arriving, but there was not a soul whom Larry could get. Ed Melville did not rise. A few more bricks crashed down, and it looked as if the wall would not last long.

Larry leapt down, and he fixed the



"This isn't the time or place to tell you what I think of you," Captain Dawson said angrily. "I'll deal with you in the morning!"

stick of the drum into a notch. This allowed the drum to pay out as if he were holding it.

There was no idea of publicity, because for once Snap was taking pictures near the worst of the fire. All animosity was forgotten. It was just a human being whose life was in danger. He even looked round to find someone whom he could tell what he was doing. Surely they could not blame him for trying to save one of the chief men of No. 5 Station.

Up the ladder went Larry and on to the roof. It was dark, and for a moment he could see nothing; then he sighted the sprawled figure of Ed Melville. A rumbling above made him look upwards. Was the wall giving? He gripped Melville by the shoulders, and the hurt fire-raiser opened his eyes and knew it was his rival. Just in time Larry dragged Ed clear, because a moment later a whole mass of brick and rubble crashed down on the spot where he had lain.

One brick caught Larry a glancing blow, and but for the helmet he wore might have knocked him out. He lay prone wondering how much of the wall were coming down, and fighting the wave of blackness that gripped him. He struggled to his feet and swayed dizzily. Everything seemed whirling round. It cleared, and he stared around for Melville. He found him, and managed to sling him across his powerful shoulders. With his burden he staggered to the edge of the parapet.

It was no easy task holding that great weight across his shoulders and getting over the parapet to the ladder. More of the wall came crashing down, and through an aperture burst red angry flames. Slowly Larry climbed down, and all the while Melville groaned weakly.

The ground at last, and Larry thought he was safe. A brick whistled past his head, and he glanced up quickly. The wall seemed to be sagging outwards.

He gathered his strength and staggered away from the danger. With a roar the wall caved outwards and crashed down on the power house, squashing the building almost flat. But Larry had got clear with his burden, and gasped as he realised what a touch-and-go they had had with death. It gave him a certain amount of grim satisfaction to know that Ed Melville owed his life to a breach of the rules.

Larry placed the limp body against a wheel of the escape and went to see how the life-line was doing. The drum had gone. He could not believe his eyes. The line must have paid out, and the strain of someone pulling on it had jerked it from its precarious hold.

The fire was gaining in intensity, and the smoke from the basement was twice as thick.

Captain Dawson and the others might be trapped. The fire had a sound grip of the ground floor, and with the girders and floors crashing down from above might give under the strain. He got out another life-line, tied the end to a wheel of the escape, and, holding the drum, without bothering about his gas and smoke apparatus, he dived down into the choking fumes.

He managed to get beneath the smoke, which was thick near the ceiling of the basement. It was choking enough as it was, but he wrapped a handkerchief over his face and nostrils, and that enabled him to breathe better. He set out to search for Captain Dawson.

A part of the ceiling crashed down and just missed his head. The heat was intense, and in one place the ceiling was on fire. It was but a matter of minutes before the whole building collapsed. He vowed he would rather die there than give up the search. He found them at

last. A group of despairing men, completely lost. They had pulled on the life-line, and just when they thought they were getting near the exit the line had gone slack, and Captain Dawson, in the lead, had stared through his goggles at an empty drum.

Larry gave the new drum to the captain. He helped to carry a badly hurt fireman. Slowly the party followed the life-line. A roar and part of the flooring collapsed. Out came the axe from his belt, and he helped to hack away the smouldering debris. A new danger was scalding water that poured through the aperture, but they got past the danger, and Larry could have shouted his relief when they reached a room that he recognised.

His senses were reeling, but grim determination kept him going. They climbed up some steps and were out of the smoke. It was only then that Larry Johnson collapsed in a heap.

Snap rushed forward with his camera as they lifted Larry to his feet, and he got a picture. Someone from the window of a nearby building had seen Larry dive into the smoke, and this time Snap thought he had a story that must make his pal famous. It was the final straw in Larry's downfall. If Snap had stayed he might have had his eyes opened by the captain's first remarks on removing his gas-mask.

"The third and final time, Larry Johnson!" he shouted hoarsely. "Whatever your reason it won't be good enough. To-night you nearly cost me my life and the lives of six others. By a miracle we've escaped. To-morrow you're quitting the force for ever."

Ed Melville, clinging to the side of the escape, heard every word, but he said nothing in Larry Johnson's defence.

Forced to Resign

LARRY felt like braining Snap when he picked up the morning paper and found that enterprising picture fiend had been busy. There was a paragraph about Larry penetrating into the smoke and fumes without a gas-helmet and leading his comrades to security. Naturally, there was no mention of the fact that he had saved Ed Melville's life.

This time Larry felt sure everything would be all right. He had a strong idea that Captain Dawson was mad with him about leaving the life-line, but all would be forgiven when Ed revealed the reason. The only fly in the ointment that Larry could see was the publicity stunt of that idiot Snap.

Perhaps it would be as well to ring up Mary and find out if everything were all right.

Mary answered his call.

"Larry Johnson," came her voice, and there was a break in it. "You're nothing more or less than a publicity hound. You don't care a cent about endangering the lives of your fellow-men as long as you get your picture in the paper. Here you are all lauded up for something for which you deserve no credit. Praised for deserting your post, for not doing your duty properly, and for risking the lives of others needlessly."

"But, Mary, surely Ed—"

She swept on ruthlessly.

"You left your job to pose against a background of flame and get yourself splashed all over the front pages as a hero. A hero—why you're nothing but a sham and a fraud!"

"Didn't Ed tell you why I left that life-line?"

"Ed has no idea where you went to," stated Mary. "And like father, like all of us, thinks you're a disgrace to the station."

"So you think I'm a disgrace, do you?" Larry was quick to anger.

"I do, and I never want to speak to you again," Mary sobbed. "Mother got you your chance and all you've done is to bring disgrace on us."

"I suppose Ed's with you and backing you up," shouted Larry. "I expect that mealy mouthed microbe is asking you to have done with me for ever. You'd believe anything he says rather than listen to me."

"Stop calling Ed names. Dad says he's a grand fire-fighter. He doesn't want his picture in the papers. He didn't call you names; in fact, he asked dad to give you another chance. He stood up for you."

"That was nice of him. I'll adopt him as a brother."

"I think you're mean and spiteful," Mary cried. "Just because your attempt to win glory by false pretences has failed you're vengeful. This is the end, Larry Johnson."

"That suits me." Larry was so angry that he did not control his tongue. "But I'll tell you one thing which you can believe or not as you please. I didn't get that picture and paragraph put in the papers, and if I'd known Snap had done it I would have tried to stop it. I admit I left the life-line and endangered the lives of your father and the rest of the boys, but I ain't got a thing on my conscience for doing it. But knowing what I know now about a certain person I wouldn't act in the same way if the same situation were to happen again to-night. You don't understand what that means, and I don't suppose you ever will."

"Why don't you make some sort of excuse instead of shouting at me over the 'phone?"

"Because I'm not sorry," he yelled. "You believe anything they like to say against me, and that hurts me more than anything else. I don't want anything to do with a girl that thinks I'm nothing but a cheap swanker. Kiss Ed for me!" He slammed down the receiver.

That morning the whole station was summoned to hear what Captain Dawson had to say to Larry Johnson.

Tight-lipped Larry stood there and his lips curled as he looked at Ed Melville, who had his head in bandages. He grinned sardonically when Captain Dawson made praising remarks about Ed's bravery and devotion to duty.

"You think yourself a hero for rushing into the smoke without a gas helmet," Dawson shouted at Johnson. "Just the kind of fool thing you would do. Other men would have been overcome, and it's lucky for us that you didn't, because if you had we should have perished because of your vain desire to see your own face in the pictures."

Larry grinned mirthlessly at Ed Melville, who looked hastily away.

"Have you nothing to say in your own defence?" demanded the captain.

"What I did last night I would do again," Larry faced him squarely, then looked at Ed meaningly. "I don't know why I would, in fact a little while back I thought the opposite, but now I'm positive I would again leave the life-line, and chance the lives of all of you."

He stared round. "I can see the look of horror you feel at my words, and it leaves me cold. Everyone here thinks I have broken every rule and regulation and that I'm not fit to be a member of this unit—well, go on thinking." He took off his badge. "I'm through with your old fire-brigade. You'd like to kick me out as a disgrace, but I'm not giving you the chance. I'm resigning. I'm not ashamed of what I did. I can look any

one of you in the eye, but I'm mighty sure one guy here couldn't look me in the eye."

"So you have no shame, Larry Johnson!" sneered Captain Dawson. "You're owning yourself beaten. I knew you'd be a failure, and you've run true to type. You don't understand discipline, and you never will. I shall accept your resignation."

"Even if you didn't I wouldn't stay another moment." Larry flamed up. "And don't any of you guys come in my taxi because I'll take you for a ride you won't forget."

Defiantly he glowered at the amazed fire-station before stalking out of the room. By evening he was back on the road as a taxi-driver.

The Excursion-steamer Explosion

CAPTAIN TIM DAWSON went about with a heavy frown on his homely features. His conscience was troubling him. He had been told quite frankly by his wife that Larry Johnson had not been given a proper chance.

"It seems to me that you and Ed spent all your time trying to pick holes in everything that boy did. You even turned Mary against him."

"You don't like Ed, do you?"

Mrs. Dawson gave her husband a straight look

"I don't dislike Ed, but I don't think he has the nerve or brain of Larry Johnson. Larry tried to make good by doing something heroic and getting a boost from Snap and the Press."

"We don't want that sort in the brigade."

"But what he did wanted a lot of pluck. He wasn't thinking about publicity when he went after those bank-robbers," argued his wife. "True, he made too much of it after the event. Then came the first life-line incident. He imperilled a lot of lives, but he saved a good many by securing that live cable. Supposing he had not acted as he had a lot of bystanders and children might have been killed and hurt—people might have termed him a coward—but the fire-fighters would have been safe. Yes, it wasn't anything like this last fire, for there wasn't much chance of you people getting hurt. So, Tim, if he had done your notion of duty, folk might have died—he did his notion and no one died."

"And what did he do?" blustered Tim. "Stuck out his chest and rushed round to get his picture taken for the papers. Public Hero Number One!"

"Maybe his friend Snap was more to blame than Larry." Mrs. Dawson folded her arms over her ample figure. "Now with regard to this last affair. Once more Larry fails you. You admit that he was very courageous in diving into the smoke and fumes and that hut for him it would have been the finish for all of you. Now—"

"But—"

"I'm talking, Tim Dawson. Knowing what had happened the last time he deserted his post don't you think Larry must have had a very big reason for falling the third time?"

"What do you mean by that, my dear?"

"I don't know," she admitted. "Except that I think there must have been a very vital reason. He hasn't given any reason. No one seems to have asked him where he went, though all of you were ready to suggest the very worst you could imagine. You told me of the defiant attitude he took, and you called it impudent cheek. You mentioned that Larry said he could look anyone in the eye, and that's why I feel there's more



"Pay out the life-line, and don't try any other act!" warned Captain Dawson.

behind this than you know. Larry may be all you say about him, but I know he's honest and straight."

"I might find out what he was doing?" Tim scratched his head. "I could write to him."

"And you wouldn't get an answer. He's proud. I'm the only one in this household save Mickey who's spoken to him. We didn't say a word, but the way he looked at me made me feel certain that Larry doesn't feel ashamed, and if he had done something wrong that night his face would have told me. I know that boy better than most of you. Mickey told me something that Larry said when I wasn't with them. He said: "Mickey, I was a fool on two occasions. A news hound after cheap publicity. But on the third occasion, pal, it was a very different matter. But that's just something between you and me." He asked after Mary and then went off whistling jauntily."

"How does Mary feel about it?"

"All the colour has gone out of her cheeks. She's listless and sleeps badly. She smiles a wan sort of grin," Mrs. Dawson sniffed. "Otherwise she's grand."

"She wants a change," decided her father. "A sea outing will do her a world of good. Captain Dixon of the Pleasure Steamer Company tells me that he'll be delighted if Mary and Mickey will take a trip as his guests the next time he's taking out a ship. He's taking out the Blue Star to-morrow."

It was decided that Mary and Mickey should go for the excursion, and it chanced that Larry had dropped a fare at the docks when he saw them alight from a motor-bus. Larry left his taxi and dodged behind some merchandise to watch them. This was the first time he had seen his sweetheart for three weeks. How he missed her! Captain Dawson had brought them in order to introduce

them to Captain Dixon. The latter's words carried to the listener.

"Your pop's brought you two mighty early." A booming laugh. "He always was a one for punctuality. We sail with the tide and that ain't full for nigh on two hours. But you two get aboard and make yourselves at home in the saloon. Plenty of papers and hooks there to amuse you."

Larry saw the two old friends go off to a neighbouring saloon to renew their acquaintanceship and saw the two young people go on board the ship. When they had disappeared down a gangway Larry sauntered back to his taxi, where he leaned against a door and stared moodily at the ground. Should he lower his pride and go aboard to speak to her? He was debating this point when there came a terrific explosion.

Startled, he whipped round. A cloud of smoke was coming from the Blue Star. The explosion had been on board. There came a strange rumbling and then a huge cloud of steam seemed to burst from all parts of the ship.

"Boilers have burst!" Larry muttered in a whisper.

To his horror he saw the stern of the ship give a lurch and she rolled away from the dock-side. Two rope hawsers snapped as if they were string, and the pleasure steamer slid over on her side.

Waking from his trance, Larry rushed forward. Two wire hawsers as tight as violin strings, still held, and seemed to be keeping the ship from turning turtle. He dived into a telephone booth and got through to the station. Melville answered.

"Larry Johnson speaking!" the youngster gasped out in anguished tones. "The Blue Star has had a boiler explosion and she's lying on her side. May turn turtle any moment. Mary and Mickey are on board. Get the boys here. Bring a diving suit—it may be needed. Don't forget the acetylene torches and

the compressed-air cylinders. Hurry—there's not a second to waste."

Larry rushed out of the booth back to the dock. A number of people had already collected and were staring in amazement at the capsized ship. From a porthole several people managed to wriggle through. One man suddenly appeared in the harbour. They were all helped ashore.

One of the saved was an officer.

"The boiler burst and must have blown a hole in the side. The water rushed in and blew the other boiler. Wilson was trapped, but managed to dive deep. There were only a few men on board, and they seem to have escaped. The three firemen are beyond hope." He told this to a police officer.

"How about the passengers?" demanded Larry.

"I think there are five and a stewardess," was the answer. "The stewardess had taken them to the saloon."

"Well, don't stand there talking," yelled Larry. "Do something."

The two captains had heard the explosion. Captain Dawson went white as death when he heard the news. Captain Dixon stared at his ship as if this were some dreadful nightmare. The clanging of bells and the screech of a siren told Larry that Number Five Station had answered his call.

A Fight Against Time

IT was Larry who took command of the situation. He rushed up to the dazed Captain Dixon.

"What are the chances for anyone trapped in the saloon?"

"I think they'll be alive," Captain Dixon answered. "The water is never very deep in this dock even at high tide. She can't turn turtle because of the funnels and the bridge, which must be touching the bottom. But the tide's coming in and it'll rise another two feet."

"Suppose she does turn, what then?"

"Pretty hard to cut through the steel hull even though the plates aren't very thick. There'll be an air-lock in that saloon, but the air will get used up."

"Can't you do something, Larry?" Old Dawson appealed to the youngster.

"Standing here talking won't help."

"Get the boys here with the acetylene torches and the rest of the kit!" ordered Larry. "Hurry, chief!" He turned to Captain Dixon. "If I get through that porthole can I reach the saloon?"

"Two bulkhead doors." The captain shook his head, then his eyes lightened. "If you could get through that porthole you might do something." He pointed.

"There are bulkheads on either side of that porthole and that's keeping the ship partly floating. If one of these firemen could get to that bulkhead he might also be able to reach the second bulkhead. You would have to use a torch to open those doors."

"If he got to the saloon could he get them back the same way?"

"With the rising of the tide she'll start to fill—I doubt it," was the captain's opinion. "But a torch would burn through the plates in no time."

Captain Dawson and a white-faced Ed Melville had listened to Larry talking to the captain. They were powerless to think or act for themselves.

"Get me one of those torches and be prepared to pay out a lot of tube," Larry shouted at them. "I'm going to get to that saloon and burn a hole from the inside. Captain Dixon will show you the best place on the outside. You can tell from the heat where I am operating. Let's go!"

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They gave Larry the torch, and once through the porthole he lit it. The power of the compressed air made it possible for the flame to keep alight under water. Through knee-deep water he reached the first bulkhead, but by the time he had burnt through the bolts the water was up to his waist. The door gave and he was swept through. He fought his way to the second bulkhead. The ship was giving curious shudders that filled him with alarm. The second bulkhead went and he was through.

Several cries for help gave him heart. They were alive. Up till then those in the saloon had been dry because of the bulkhead, but now the water rushed in and they thought it was the end. Luckily the funnels were still resting on the bottom. He waded into the saloon.

Mary thought it was a ghost when Larry appeared, and with a sob of joy she held out her arms to him. Brave Mickey even managed a grin. The stewardess, completely unnerved, wanted to cling to him as well.

"Stand away, woman, or I'll frizzle you with this," warned Larry, pointing the torch at her. He glanced round and saw two members of the crew. "Try and keep my tube from getting kinked," he ordered.

Scarcely had Larry turned his flame on the plates and the whole saloon seemed to go upside down. They lost their balance and found themselves floundering under the water, but Larry clung to the torch. He came up spluttering. The ship was beginning to roll over—he must find another place to burn through. By some miracle the lights had remained on, but now they went out and the only light was the acetylene torch. Larry produced a special type of torch and gave it to Mickey to hold.

The flame began to blacken the plates. Amazing how it burnt into them as if they were no more than tough wood.

Melville and the others working on the hull had nearly been flung into the harbour when the Blue Star lurched. They thought that Larry and the trapped passengers were doomed. The captain saw histers appearing in the grey paint, and they knew Larry was not yet beaten.

"If she completely turns turtle what will happen?" old Dawson asked his friend.

"Don't think about it, Tim!" cried Dixon. "Get those boys busy on those plates. You've got to get through before she does turn turtle."

No word was said by those trapped, and they watched spellbound as Larry tackled those plates. Luck had favoured them in that the tube had not fouled or kinked. Once the flame did give a splutter, but it was nothing.

There came a rapping from above, and they knew that the others were working to save them. Larry rapped back. The plates began to melt under the burning force of the acetylene torch. Larry asked one of the crew to find him something heavy. They swam to him with an iron crowbar that they had secured before Larry had appeared—they had been futilely trying to smash a hole in the ship's side with it. The crowbar proved useful now. Two hard punches and the plates began to give.

How their hearts lifted as they saw a chink of daylight. Then the plates gave. A neat square had been cut out of the side of the ship. Willing hands bent down, and Larry helped Mickey up. The youngster was dragged through.

Captain Dawson blubbered like a child at the sight of his son. Then came the stewardess.

The Blue Star gave a convulsive lurch. "Hurry—hurry!" shouted everyone. One of the crew became panicky and

pushed Mary out of the light. He scrambled through the opening. Larry and the other man lifted Mary, and she was dragged to safety. Larry gestured to the member of the crew, and wisely the man did not waste time in argument.

The ship began to turn as Larry scrambled through the square hole.

"Get off her before she turns," Larry bellowed at his late comrades. "Tim okay!"

Larry was scrambled over the side of the ship as she rolled over and he was flung into the water. Mary gave a scream of anguish as he vanished, but he came up grinning and swam to the hull.

"Gee, that guy's got a nerve!" muttered someone in the crowd.

"That's my pal!" cried Mickey.

On reaching the keel, Larry managed to stand up, and Snap appeared from somewhere with his camera. Instantly Larry's face became distorted with rage.

"I'll break every bone in your body if you start taking pictures!" he yelled. "You get to blazes out of this!" He hurled himself at the rope that someone chucked down. "Pull me up—I wanna murder that guy!"

But Snap had taken a picture and had fled by the time Larry got to the dock-side. A great cheer went up from the vast crowd that had gathered, but the thing that mattered most to him was the timid smile of Mary Dawson.

"Larry," she cried, and held out her arms to him. "Forgive me, Larry!"

The crowd nearly went mad with romantic delight when they saw the hero clasp the heroine in his arms. They cheered themselves hoarse.

"Your Helmet, Larry!"

ED MELVILLE hesitated, then, plucking up courage, walked across to Mary and Larry.

"I'd like to wish you two the best of luck." He glanced at Larry, then looked away. "You've got the right man, Mary. It was my life he saved that last time."

"You, Ed?" questioned Mary.

"I can explain everything," quickly interposed Larry, who was disposed to be generous. "You see Ed at risk of his own life went on to the roof of a building and a high wall threatened to crash down at any moment. He wanted to see how long that wall would last. Bits of masonry and brick kept crashing down and one laid Ed flat. I was the only person to see it, and so I parked the life-line on the escape to go and see what had happened. Didn't think I'd be away more than a few seconds. Some bricks laid me out, so it was some while before I got back to the escape, and the life-line had worked loose."

Mary looked at Ed.

"Why didn't you tell me this before? Why didn't you say anything at the inquiry?"

"Well, Mary, you see—"

"His memory went." Larry winked, and Mary did not see it. "Your memory's only just come back, hasn't it, Ed?"

"Yeah, that's right," Ed smiled his relief. "Everything since that night has been hazy. I knew I went up a ladder to a roof, and all I remembered after that was lying against the escape with a lump as big as a rock on my head."

"I'm glad your memory came back." Mary spoke a little sharply.

"It's very common." Larry grinned. "I knew my old pal Ed Melville wouldn't let me down. Thank you, Ed. If you get any more trouble with your head I should see a doctor at once. Don't you agree, Mary?"

Ed smirked uncomfortably and held out his hand.

(Continued on page 26)

Beyond the stratosphere to a new world where science marches hand in hand with savagery. Follow the adventures of a young American on the strange planet of Mongo, realm of monsters and domain of the War-Lord Ming. An unforgettable serial of thrills and suspense, starring Buster Crabbe and Jean Rogers



Read This First

The entire world is in a state of terror. The Earth is threatened with total destruction by the planet Mongo, which, rushing through the void, is controlled by the Emperor Ming, ruler of a strange race of people living on that unknown planet, and a man who has probed the fundamental secrets of Nature.

In America, a scientist known as Dr. Zarkov maintains that he can save the Earth from disaster, and by means of a rocket ship which he has invented he attempts to blaze a trail through the stratosphere.

He is accompanied by Flash Gordon, son of an astronomer, and by Dale Arden, Flash's sweetheart.

The attempt is successful. Travelling through millions of miles of space, the rocket ship sets down the adventurers on the forbidding planet of Mongo, where they are taken prisoners by some of Ming's guards, and conveyed to the emperor's palace.

Ming spares Zarkov and Dale, but Flash is condemned to death, and is only saved by the intervention of Aura, the emperor's daughter, who helps him to escape.

Later, Flash meets with Thun, prince of a nation at war with Ming. Accompanied by Thun, he returns secretly to Ming's palace, and learns that the movement of the planet Mongo towards the Earth has been arrested.

They rescue Dale, but together they fall into the hands of Kala, an ally of Ming, who rules an under-water domain. Then, during an attempted escape, Aura wrecks the machines which

EPISODE 5:—

"The Destroying Ray"

supply air to Kala's realm and which also keep out the sea.

Now Read On

The Open Sea

THEY were gathered about the damaged switchboard—Dale in a half-fainting condition, her body limp in Flash Gordon's arms—Thun and Aura leaning weakly against the wall—Kala on his knees, babbling like a man demented.

The air supply had almost gone, and it was only a question of seconds before the pressure of the water in the distant caverns broke down the barriers and poured through the galleries, to flood them from end to end.

It seemed that Kala's realm was doomed and that all living things within this strange kingdom must soon breathe their last.

Kala himself had given up all hope. He had failed to contact Ming, the only one who could have saved them from destruction, and he was meeting death like an arrant coward, with tremulous and unmanly cries—cries that gradually trailed away into silence as his senses left him.

He fell forward on his face and lay motionless at the feet of Aura and Thun, who stared at him dully for a moment, their hands clutching at their throats as they fought for breath. Then all at once Aura stumbled to

the control switch of the damaged apparatus by means of which Kala had tried to acquaint Ming of their peril.

There seemed little prospect of succeeding where Kala had failed, yet the girl made a last, forlorn attempt to avert the consequences of her own headstrong action.

She was responsible for all that had happened, she was responsible for the threat of disaster that overshadowed Kala's domain, and now she strove to undo the harm she had wrought.

If only she could make her father understand their plight! From his distant mountain palace he could rescue them by setting in motion the duplicate machines that would feed air into these deep corridors and vaults. From his far stronghold he could provide them with the means to breathe and live, and at the same time supply the force which would hold the sea waters at bay.

Up in the throne-room of Ming's palace, twenty thousand feet above Kala's kingdom, Aura's father was standing in front of the television screen that had partially recorded the scene in progress away below.

Hazy, shifting figures were visible on the panel, and a voice was issuing from it, uttering words that were altogether too indistinct and confused to be understood.

"That's not Kala speaking now," said Zarkov, who was at Ming's elbow. "It's a woman's voice."

"It is my daughter's voice," the emperor rejoined tersely. "What can be wrong? It is impossible to make

out what she is saying. What can have happened to this accursed apparatus? It has never failed us before."

It was at that very instant that the vision on the screen became clear again, and once more the watchers in the throne-room obtained a well-defined impression of Aura, Thun, Flash and Dale—and of Kala, too, who lay prone and insensible.

And this time the impression remained clear for an interval of about half a minute. By some lucky chance it stood out in strong relief for thirty precious seconds, and, as the picture sharpened in outline, so the voice of Aura was rendered more audible.

The girl's efforts with the control switch had met with success, and she was aware of it immediately. For down in the vault which she and her companions were occupying there was a screen similar to the one in Ming's throne-room, a screen which had also registered the haziest impressions but which now showed plainly the figures of the emperor, Dr. Zarkov and the group of soldiers who were with them.

"Father!" Aura cried out. "Father you must save us—you must save us! You alone have the power!"

"Save you from what?" came the tones of Ming. "Quick, tell me what has happened!"

His daughter answered him with an effort. She was finding it increasingly difficult to speak because of the lack of air.

"The generators have been wrecked, father!" she panted. "We can scarcely breathe, and the water in the caverns will tear down the barriers at any minute—at any minute!"

The vision on the screen began to fade. The apparatus was failing again. But it had served its purpose, and Aura knew from the look of dismay which she saw on her father's countenance that she had not appealed to him in vain.

Much as he resented her interference with his plans, she was the only one human being for whom he had any true affection. Besides, there was Dale Arden, whose loveliness had aroused in him a desire to make her his consort. And there was Kala, King of the Shark Men, his allies.

No, Aura had not appealed to her father in vain.

She turned from the switchboard and looked at her companions. Like herself, they seemed at the last gasp, but ere long a change was to come over them—a change brought about by a sudden, cooling breeze that swept soothingly through the deep realms of Kala's dominion.

It played against the faces of those who stood in the control-room; life-giving air with which they filled their aching lungs. It revived them and caused them to look at one another with relief in their eyes, and even Dale managed to arouse herself, though she had been on the verge of losing consciousness.

"We are saved!" Aura gasped. "My father has saved us—by the auxiliary generators in his palace."

"And the flood waters?" Flash Gordon demanded huskily.

"They will not break through now," was the reply.

A silence fell upon the two men and the two girls, a silence during which they heard a faint commotion in the distance. It reached their ears through the network of galleries that honey-combed the domain of the Shark Men, and they guessed from it that the suffocating population of Kala's realm had become aware that they had been

saved from destruction by some means or other.

There was a note of joy in that faint commotion, but to Flash and Thun it spelled danger, for they knew that they would have short shrift if they fell into the hands of Kala's minions.

Kala himself still lay motionless on the floor, together with the guard whom Flash had knocked out a short time before. There was nothing to fear from them, but doubtless other foes would soon appear on the scene, and in ever-increasing numbers, too.

"We must get away from here," Thun said all at once. "Aura, we are in your hands."

"Yes, and you can depend on me," Ming's daughter rejoined. "We can reach the dry-docks now and make our escape in one of Kala's under-water ships. Come."

She led them to a doorway at the far side of the control-room, and they followed her into a broad gallery that was illuminated by strange lights. Onwards they hastened, and had not gone far when they heard an outcry somewhere behind them.

"Some of Kala's people have reached the control-room," Aura hazarded swiftly. "When Kala recovers he will send them in pursuit of us."

"Aye, and there may be foes between us and the dry docks, for all we know," Thun said. "Pray heaven that the gods are on our side."

"Gods or no gods," Flash retorted, "we'll do our best to make it tough on anybody that tries to stop us!"

They pushed ahead at a more rapid pace, running until they were panting from their exertions, and, fortunately for them, they met with no resistance, though once they stumbled across the bodies of three or four men who had obviously fallen insensible when the air supply had failed, and who had not yet come round.

A few minutes after they had passed these men they turned into a corridor that was flanked on one side by a number of heavy doors, and Aura opened one of them by a touch on a switch.

Shutter-like, it rose to reveal a spacious chamber in which a submarine ship was housed—possibly the very craft that had conveyed Flash and Dale to Kala's realm.

"Generally, the whole operation of allowing the vessels to pass in or out these dry docks is controlled from the main switchboard," Aura explained. "But, fortunately for us, there are other means at our disposal. First we must flood that compartment, and it can be done from the inside."

They entered the dock, and Aura stepped to a panel in the wall and pressed several buttons thereon. The door which had admitted them immediately closed down again, and at the same time water began to find its way into the chamber by two ports just above the level of the floor.

The princess and her companions quickly gained the interior of the submarine and sealed its conning-tower, and they had not long to wait before the dock was completely flooded. Then Aura moved towards the nose of the ship.

"I'm not sure if I can handle this vessel," Aura murmured, "but I'll do my best."

"Maybe I can help," Flash struck in. "I kept my eyes peeled when Dale and I were brought here in one of these contraptions."

Between them they managed to start the motor of the craft, and turned the submarine so that it faced a door in the far wall.

"Now forward," Aura commanded. "There is an invisible ray in front of us. It was thrown across the width of the dock when I pressed one of the buttons on the panel a minute or two ago. When we pass into that ray and break it, the outer barrier will rise."

The ship moved ahead, and, sure enough, the metal door in its path suddenly began to lift. A few seconds later the vessel was passing out into the immense caves, and as it slipped clear of the dock the great barrier sank behind it into its normal position.

With Aura at the helm the submarine stole through the murky waters of the caverns, the uncanny shapes of sea monsters floating past its windows, and for a long time it continued to make good progress through those flooded, underground realms. Then, after the lapse of an hour or two, it seemed to the occupants of the vessel that the gloom outside the windows was becoming less opaque.

"We shall soon be through to the open sea," declared Aura.

Less than a minute afterwards they were cruising out of that labyrinth of caves, and the nose of the craft was then raised. Swiftly the ship climbed, and presently it was breaking the surface to admit the refreshing light of day through its windows.

Before them Flash and his party saw a wide expanse of sea, but astern was a lonely shore strewn with boulders. It was in the direction of this shore that they turned, and when at length the submarine grounded in shallow water Flash was the first to climb out of it via the conning-tower.

He was followed by Thun and Dale, and, wading on to dry land, they looked about them curiously.

"How desolate!" Dale murmured.

"Desolate, but safe," Flash answered. "We must be miles from Ming's palace. Look, far away in the hinterland, you can just make out the peak of a mountain. That must be the mountain on which the emperor's city stands."

Attack from the Sky

ENGROSSED in a study of their surroundings, Dale and the two men beside her were unaware that Aura had not yet emerged from the submarine, and two or three minutes must have passed before they realised that she had still to disembark.

Thun called the princess by name then, and in a little while she climbed into view, splashing through the surf to join them.

"What have you been doing?" Thun demanded.

"Sending a message to my father by the ship's radio," she answered simply. "I told him where we had landed."

Thun's bearded countenance seemed to darken.

"You—told him where we were?" he grated. "You told Ming?"

"Calm yourself," Aura replied. "He will send some of his men here, but by the time they reach this spot you can be far away. I shall remain, but you can take Flash and the Earth woman to your father, the King of the Lion Men."

Thun was reassured.

"It is well," he said, "and we had better start at once. Flash and Dale Arden will be safe in my father's domain, which we can reach—"

He stopped short, for while he had been speaking he had chance to raise his head, and suddenly he had discerned something in the sky, something that caused a gleam of anxiety to appear in his eyes.

As they observed his expression the others followed the direction of his

gaze, and they saw what at first appeared to be a covey of large birds flying towards them along the shore.

They watched them curiously, and then, as the oncoming group drew nearer, it dawned upon the stunned minds of Flash and Dale that these were not birds of the air, but men—men on whom Nature had bestowed the amazing gift of flight—men who were formed on the likeness of other human beings, but who possessed great, powerful wings as well as mortal limbs.

Flash Gordon and his fiancée were thunderstruck, and if they had not encountered so many marvels upon this planet of Mongo, they could not have believed their eyes. As it was, they stood there wondering if they were the victims of some freakish prank of the imagination—until a shout from Thun broke in upon their stupefied thoughts.

"King Vultan's Hawk Men!" he ejaculated.

"Allies of my father!" gasped Aura. Flash roused himself and shot a swift glance at her.

"Allies of your father!" he cried. "That means trouble for us. They may have heard that Dale and Thun and I are wanted by Ming. We'd better run for it."

"It would be useless to run," Aura told him quickly. "You could never outstrip them."

The American squared his broad shoulders and thrust out his jaw resolutely.

"Then we'll fight them!" he rapped out. "Aura, what did you do with that ray-pistol?"

It had been left in the submarine, and there was no time to obtain it, for the Hawk Men were almost overhead now and were swooping. Six of them, Flash counted, helmeted and wearing hauburks, or coats of mail; and each of them armed with a spear.

Flash was empty-handed, must rely

on his fists. Thun carried a ray-gun, though, and it might prove invaluable in beating off an attack.

The Hawk Men were dropping out of the sky. As they bore down with widespread wings their shadows darkened the spot where Flash and his companions were standing. Then, soundlessly, the weapon in Thun's grasp sent up a death-dealing stream of fire.

The foremost assailant was struck, and his body seemed to wither in mid-air. Uttering a strangled scream he crashed lifelessly at Thun's feet, and lay there in a heap with wings faintly quivering.

The others veered away to the right, but as they swerved one of them hurled his spear at Thun, and it struck the bearded Lion Man a glancing blow on the temple.

Lucky it was for Thun that the missile was hurriedly aimed, or it might have crashed through his brain. Instead, it ripped a superficial wound in his scalp and brought him to his knees in a dazed condition.

The ray-gun fell from the bearded prince's fingers. Flash made a dive for it, but with incredible rapidity the Hawk Men again altered their course, and two of them closed with him, their wings folding on their backs the instant they touched ground.

Two more seized Thun, beat the senses out of him with their clenched fists, and then, lifting him between them, soared into the sky as swiftly as they had descended. In the meantime, Flash was battling like a madman against the pair of winged stalwarts who had engaged him, but, fiercely as he fought, he was aware of the fate that had overtaken Thun—and aware, too, that the fifth Hawk Man had singled out Dale and was struggling with her.

He tried to break away from his antagonists and go to his sweetheart's rescue, but before he could wrench him-

self free Dale had fainted, and, a dead weight in her captor's arms, she was borne up into the heavens to be carried off in the same manner as Thun.

Too late, Flash cast his enemies from him, and gazed in mingled horror and despair at the departing men who were flying heavenward with his friends. Then he was compelled to defend himself once more against a fresh onslaught by the two warriors who had been left to deal with him.

They were still carrying their spears, and one of them made a lunge at him, but he side-stepped the thrust and grabbed the shaft of the weapon, wresting it from the fellow's clutch and using it in retaliation.

He handled it as he might have done a staff, and caught its owner a sweeping blow that took him on the side of the head and sent him to the dust. In that same instant, however, the remaining Hawk Man sprang close and prepared to drive his spear through the American's body.

Flash had no chance to put himself on his guard, and but for Aura he must have met his doom there and then—Aura, who had been ignored by the winged raiders, but who had now snatched up the ray-gun that had fallen from Thun's hand.

She discharged it, and was not a split second too soon in drawing trigger, for the finger of fire that leapt from its muzzle struck Flash Gordon's opponent even as the man was bringing his arm forward to send the spear through the American's heart.

The wretch crumpled as if a blistering fork of lightning had smote him down, and a moment later Aura accounted for the warrior whom Flash had just felled, for out of the corner of her eye she had seen that man arousing himself to renew the combat single-handed.

High above, the other Hawk Men were hovering over the scene with their



"We're making for King Vultan's city," said Flash. "You told me we could reach it by rocket ship—and, by thunder, that's what we're going to do!"

captives. It was plain that they had believed their comrades could overcome Flash, and, though they knew otherwise now, they made no effort to descend to the shore again. Undoubtedly they feared the ray-gun that had slain their fellows, and after some hesitation they flew off with their prisoners, disappearing from view within a few minutes.

Helpless, Flash watched them with anguished eyes until they had vanished from his sight, and then, as he stood there, he felt the touch of Aura's hand on his arm.

"I saved your life, Flash," she said. "At least you can be thankful for that."

He looked at her, and, though he knew that he should express gratitude, yet there was bitterness in his voice as he spoke.

"I may owe you my life," he told her, "but you could have helped Dale and Thun."

"Dale Arden?" she retorted. "Dale Arden and Prince Thun? What are they to me? You are the one who interests me, and you alone."

Flash ground his teeth together. "Where are those Hawk Men taking them?" he bit out. "We've got to follow them!"

"Follow them?" she echoed in a faintly mocking tone. "How shall we follow them? One cannot reach King Vultan's city except by a rocket ship, and we have no rocket ship here."

"You mean—King Vultan's city is built on some inaccessible mountain?"

She shook her head. "No," she replied startlingly. "I mean that King Vultan's city is suspended in the sky. It has no contact with the surface of this planet. It cannot be reached except by his own Hawk Men—or by rocket ship."

Flash stared at her incredulously. For a moment he could not bring himself to believe that she was in earnest, even though he had come across so much that had amazed him in this strange new world.

"You must be mad!" he breathed. "What you say is impossible!"

"What I have told you is the truth, Flash," she answered deliberately. "On this planet of Mongo there are wonders which are doubtless beyond the wildest dreams of Earth people. You yourself have beheld many of them, but there are others in store for you, Flash. Yes, others in store for you."

Zarkov Finds a Friend

AWARE only that Dale, Flash, and Thun had been saved from the disaster which had threatened to overwhelm Kala's realm, Zarkov had returned to Ming's laboratory on the emperor's instructions and had tricked to occupy his mind with the remarkable apparatus which that workshop contained.

He found it difficult to concentrate on the scientific marvels there, however, for he could not dismiss Flash Gordon and his companions from his thoughts.

True, the imminent danger that had come so near to sealing their doom had been averted by the last-minute efforts of Ming. But there was small consolation in knowing this, for if they were delivered into the emperor's hands what would the future hold for them?

What else but death for Flash and Thun—and, for Dale, an enforced and hateful marriage?

Alone in the laboratory, Zarkov sat brooding upon these gloomy reflections, and he had been contemplating the cheerless prospect for some considerable time when all at once he heard the door open and softly close.

He looked round, and saw that a man in helmet and cuirass had entered the

room—a big, handsome man in the thirties, clean-shaven except for a well-trimmed moustache.

Zarkov recalled that he had seen the fellow several times about the palace, but he had never paid any particular heed to him, and it came as a surprise to him when the man approached him quietly and spoke in a voice that was full of significance.

"You are concerned about your friends, doctor," the stranger said.

Zarkov favoured him with an inquiring glance.

"Who are you?" he asked. The big fellow drew himself to his full height, and a glitter seemed to play in his bold eyes as he answered the doctor's question.

"I am Prince Barin, the true ruler of this territory," he declared. "When I was a child I was deprived of my heritage by Ming the Merciless, who killed my father. I have grown up to hate Ming, but have been forced to bend the knee to him. Believe me, it has not been easy to hide my feelings, and always in my heart I have prayed that one day I might be avenged. And now, Zarkov, you have come amongst us—you, a man of the Earth, and by all accounts a scientist of genius—one who is almost the equal of Ming himself."

He paused, and there was a spell of silence, during which the doctor contemplated the younger man shrewdly. Then Barin spoke again.

"It dawned on me suddenly, like an inspiration," he said, "that you might help me to overthrow the usurper who slew my father."

"I help you?" Zarkov echoed the words in a tone that held little enthusiasm. "And what should I gain by that?"

"First of all you will gain the safety of your friends," replied Barin. "Do you know that they have escaped from Kala and are on the shores of the Great Sea? It is the truth, doctor, for a short time ago Ming received a communication to that effect from his daughter Aura. And now Ming awaits the return of his fleet of rocket ships from an expedition to the country of the barbarians. When that fleet arrives here he will send men to seize Thun, Gordon, and the Arden girl—unless we can get there and carry them off to the domain of Prince Thun's father."

"How are we to do that?" "By means of your own rocket ship," Barin told him, "the craft that brought you from the Earth."

Zarkov bit his lip. "My rocket ship is on the plain," he said, "and I could never reach it. I would be stopped by Ming's guards if I attempted to leave the palace."

Prince Barin laid a hand on his arm and addressed him rapidly.

"You would not be stopped if I acted as your guide," he stated. "I could take you out of here by the secret passages that lead down through the mountain. And I'll do it, Zarkov, in exchange for the allegiance of you and your friends."

The doctor made no response for a few seconds. Then he rose slowly from the chair on which he had been sitting, and looked Barin full in the face.

"I welcome your suggestion," he said, "but, in all fairness to you, I don't see that my friends and I can be of much aid to you against Ming."

"Zarkov, you can be of the greatest assistance," was the rejoinder. "Your genius as a scientist may well prove invaluable, especially if I can persuade Thun's father to take up my cause—which I believe he will do, for he is Ming's greatest enemy."

The possibilities of the situation seemed to become clearer in the doctor's mind now, and it did not take him long to make a decision.

"Very well, Prince Barin," he said all at once. "I am your man, and here's my hand on it."

They gripped, eyeing each other solemnly as they did so. Then Barin signed to Zarkov to follow him, and together they slipped out of the laboratory, first making sure that no one was in the corridor beyond the doorway.

Five minutes later the two men were in the passages beneath the palace, and with unflinching tread Barin conducted Zarkov down the successive flights of stairs that connected these subterranean galleries.

They travelled at a good pace, now hurrying along the dimly lighted tunnels, now descending the winding staircases until Zarkov judged that they must be many thousands of feet beneath the mountain metropolis of the Emperor Ming. And then at last, after what had seemed an eternity, they saw the gleam of sunshine ahead of them.

They hastened forward, and stepped into the light of day to find themselves amidst a cluster of huge rocks that partially concealed the cave-mouth from which they had emerged. A moment later Barin was leading the way through the tumbled boulders, and Zarkov followed him with some timidity, for he had not forgotten that it was in this very neighbourhood that he had seen two of the prehistoric monsters which inhabited Mongo.

If they encountered any such brutes now, they would be lost. For Zarkov was unarmed, and Barin carried only a sword, which he had drawn from its sheath some time before and was grasping in his right hand.

Yet they met with no grim and ghastly creatures of the plain as they passed among the rocks, and presently they stumbled on to the open ground where the doctor's rocket ship was standing.

They entered the vessel by the door in its side, and Zarkov moved to the controls. Then he turned to speak to Barin.

"I'll handle the ship," he said, "but you must lay the course for me."

The other nodded, and a few seconds later the craft was on the move, soaring high into the heavens with her motor operating at full speed. Then, when the ship had attained an altitude of several thousand feet, Barin indicated the direction in which Zarkov should steer.

Astern they could see the mountain peak that was dominated by Ming's citadel, but so rapid was their progress that this was soon dimmed by distance, and it was almost lost to view when they finally beheld a blue expanse of ocean in front of them.

"We are near the coast!" exclaimed Barin. "Drop lower, Zarkov, and fly along the shore."

The doctor obeyed, and they were cruising at a much-reduced rate over the rock-strewn seashore when they suddenly espied two human figures on the ground below, the figures of Flash Gordon and the Princess Aura.

Zarkov effected a landing not far from the spot where Flash and Aura stood, and the rocket ship had no sooner come to rest than the doctor and Barin stepped down from it. In another instant the scientist and his youthful fellow-countryman were face to face.

"Flash," Zarkov jerked out, "where are Dale and Thun?"

"They were captured by bird men,"

(Continued on page 27)

"GUARD THAT GIRL"

(Continued from page 12)

and Elaine will still be able to make it? Oh!"

Down went the instrument and she turned to the others.

"That's too bad," she said. "Willie and Elaine were on their way out here when their car was wrecked. Willie maintains that it wasn't an accident!"

"They weren't injured?" asked Larry.

"Not badly enough to keep them away. They're coming along in a taxi."

Budge appeared from the servants' quarters and approached Larry. At the same moment the front-door bell rang, and Aunt Catherine waved the butler back into the drawing-room and went to it herself.

"Reynolds slipped me this note," confided Budge. "I'm going to the village—you know why. I'll be back by nine-thirty."

"Check with me when you get back," said Larry; and then the front door was opened and Dr. Silas crossed the threshold.

"Well, Silas," said Aunt Catherine tartly, "I see you've found the right door this time! Come in—all set for bridge. Even your bad play will be a relief after Elwood's!"

Budge had gone, but Jeanne was in the hall because Helen had asked her to stay close beside her after dinner. The whole party entered the drawing-room, and four of them sat down at the card-table. Sarah retreated to the chesterfield; Elwood stood behind Aunt Catherine's chair, and after a while that outspoken dame swung round upon him with indignation.

"Must you snort at the back of my neck like that?" she rapped.

"Auntie," said Elwood plaintively, "if I annoy you I'll take a walk. Coming, Sarah?"

Sarah rose, and they went out from the room together and out from the house. Budge had driven away to the village in the green sedan to collect Lobo, and at the house of the veterinary surgeon he received a rapturous welcome from the dog, who had recovered completely from the murderous attack upon him.

At nine-thirty, or thereabouts, a messenger disturbed the bridge-party with a telegram for Reynolds, but the butler directed him to the garage, over which the supposed gardener had a room adjoining Budge's. The boy had no occasion to climb the stairs, however, for Reynolds was in the yard.

The telegram was delivered to him, and after the boy had ridden away on his cycle the detective tore open the envelope and read the message it contained in the light of a lamp over the open garage doors.

On the edge of the drive, a dozen yards away, a bush moved slightly and out from its foliage shot an arrow. With a choking gasp Reynolds pitched forward on his face, the metal barb of the arrow buried in his back.

A few minutes later the green sedan swung in at the gates of the drive and progressed along the gravelled way to the entrance to the yard. There it came to a standstill, and Budge switched off its lights and jumped down from behind its wheel.

Lobo would have followed him, but

was commanded to stay in the car, and Budge entered the yard to reach the back door of the house. Near the garage he caught sight of the prone form of Reynolds on the ground and ran to him.

Five minutes afterwards a taxicab from the village drew up outside the front door of the house, and William Hudson and his wife descended from it. William Hudson was arranging with the driver to wait, when a black coupé streaked up from the gates and Joshua Seranton got down from it with an overcoat over his arm and a leather brief-case in his hand.

"So you two have got here?" he said. "It's a wonder!" returned Elaine rather shrilly. "Our car was driven off the road!"

"An accident?" inquired Seranton.

"We don't think so!"

The subject was not pursued, because just then Elwood and Sarah arrived from the direction of the backwater.

"Shall we go in?" suggested Seranton.

The butler admitted them, and Sarah took the lawyer's overcoat and hat. At the sound of their voices Aunt Catherine emerged from the drawing-room, and the others trooped after her.

"Well, Joshua," said Aunt Catherine, "I see you got here without an accident!"

"Yes, fortunately," he replied, and turned to Helen. "Ah, my dear, I'm glad you're all right." He smiled at Larry. "You've taken good care of her, Mr. Donovan. Well, we're all here now, and, in deference to Carl Hudson's memory, I'd like to suggest that we hold our meeting in his den."

"Hold it in the yard, if you want to!" said Aunt Catherine testily. "Let's get it started and over—we're in the middle of a bridge game!"

She led the way to the den and opened the door, but Larry and Helen lingered in the hall.

"When is he going to explain about me?" whispered Helen.

"I don't know," Larry whispered back.

"He came alone! Where is she?"

"We'll find out soon enough."

Budge stepped out from the kitchen. Larry and Helen were alone in the hall, and he called to Larry, who went with him into the drawing-room.

"Reynolds is dead," he said tersely. "Shot in the back with an arrow!"

Larry compressed his lips.

"You'd better call the police," he decided. "We won't tell the others yet. Have you got Lobo?"

"In the car."

"Good! Wait outside the french window of the den till I give you the signal."

"All right," said Budge grimly. "Watch your step in there. Have you got your gun?"

"Sure," returned Larry, and he went back to Helen, who had just been joined by Jeanne.

"What is it?" Helen asked anxiously. "A message from Reynolds?"

"Yes." Larry thought it advisable not to tell her the truth. "We'd better go in."

The Murderer Unmasked!

JOSHUA SCRANTON had deposited his brief-case on the desk in the den and was standing behind the desk. Dr. Silas Hudson had dropped into an armchair near him, and Elwood was leaning against the bookshelves. The

others had seated themselves about the room, with the exception of Aunt Catherine, who stood by the fireplace with her hands clasped together.

The lawyer glanced swiftly at Helen and Larry as they entered the room with Jeanne, then unfastened the straps of the brief-case.

"I guess we all know why we're here," he said, adjusting his pince-nez. "So we'd better get to—"

"Just a minute, Joshua," Aunt Catherine interrupted. "I'd like to get one thing straight. It's my understanding that Estelle Hudson should be present!"

"That's quite true," agreed the lawyer.

"Well," Aunt Catherine pointed a finger at Helen, "I like this girl very well, but I'm convinced she's an impostor!"

"That's also quite true," Seranton admitted while the members of the Hudson family stared, "but the real Estelle Hudson is present." He smiled across at Jeanne. "You may step forward, now, my dear."

Jeanne moved modestly from Helen's side into the middle of the room, and she bore the startled scrutiny of the family of which she was a member without the slightest embarrassment.

"The substitution," Seranton resumed smoothly, "was made for Estelle's protection, but she refused to sanction it unless she could be present and at least share the danger."

Jeanne—or Estelle, as she really was—flushed.

"She certainly has done that!" cried Helen.

"Miss Bradford," said the lawyer, "you and Mr. Donovan have done your work well, and it is finished. You have fully earned the large sum agreed upon."

"Not yet," said Larry quietly. "It isn't ten o'clock."

Joshua Seranton took out his watch, looked at it, and laid it on the desk.

"Not quite," he confirmed, "but it is only a matter of minutes." He sat down in the chair behind the desk. "At exactly ten o'clock I will read the terms of Carl Hudson's will."

With alarming abruptness the lights in the room went out and there was a sudden thudding sound. Somebody screamed and frightened voices cried: "What is it?" "What happened?"

"Open the hall door, quick!" shouted Larry, who had whipped out his gun.

The door was opened, and light streamed in from the hall, silhouetting the figure of the butler.

"Campbell," said Aunt Catherine sternly, "look at the fuses! Hurry!"

The butler vanished; Larry stood back in the shadows with his gun.

"I can see everybody in the room," he said in a very grim voice, "and I'll shoot the first person that moves!"

"Is anybody killed?" quavered Elwood.

"No," retorted Larry, "but you will be if you don't stay just where you are!"

Several long minutes elapsed, and then as abruptly as they had gone out the lights came on again. Joshua Seranton pointed a quivering finger at the paneling just over Estelle's head. The point of a long-bladed hunting-knife was buried in the woodwork.

"The secret panel!" he cried, shifting his finger to indicate the wall beside the fireplace. "It came from there!"

"No," said Larry definitely. "I nailed that door on the inside to-day. That knife was flung by somebody in this

room! Aunt Catherine, open the french windows and call Edwards!"

"Without the slightest hesitation Aunt Catherine obeyed, and Budge walked into the room with Lobo on a lead, but stopped behind a chair. At almost the same moment the butler reappeared from the hall.

"It was a fuse, madam," he reported, "and I repaired it."

"Step into the room, Campbell," commanded Larry, "and close that door."

The door was closed and the butler stood nervously against it. Lobo was hidden by the chair.

"Edwards and I," said Larry, "came out here as detectives. I guess we're not very good ones, but we do know a sure way to find out the person who just tried to kill Miss Hudson, and who murdered Reynolds. All right, Budge!"

While Aunt Catherine gasped at the news that her own private detective had been killed, Budge stepped forward with Lobo—and several of those present stared blankly at the dog they had understood to be dead.

"The guilty person also tried to kill this dog," Larry went on, "and he'll know that person! Go on, Budge!"

Budge led the dog towards Aunt Catherine, but she was not afraid of him.

"Hallo, big fellow," she said, and patted his head. "Glad they didn't get you."

Helen greeted Lobo as an old friend, and he pawed her; but Elwood exhibited signs of panic as the dog came sniffing towards him.

"Stand still," said Larry. "If you're innocent he won't hurt you."

William Hudson cringed away from the dog, but Lobo displayed no interest in him, or in his blonde wife. At Sarah Hudson he growled, but only in dislike; and then Budge led him towards Silas Hudson, and with a snarl Lobo strained so furiously at the lead that Budge lost his balance and dropped on his knees.

The doctor staggered up with his hands on the arms of the chair and his face was ghastly.

"Silas!" exclaimed Aunt Catherine in a shocked voice.

But it was not Silas the dog was trying to reach; it was Joshua Seranton, and not even Budge could hold him. Up on to the desk he leapt, and his fangs were at the lawyer's throat when Budge grabbed hold of his collar and dragged him back.

Seranton, wild-eyed and trembling all over, reached a hand into his brief-case; but Larry sprang forward and jabbed his six-shooter between his ribs.

"Better take it easy, Seranton!" he rasped.

The sirens of two police-cars shrieked in the drive, and the lawyer buried his face in his hands.

"They're coming for you, Seranton!" said Larry.

In the drawing-room, after the police had departed with their prisoner, Larry said with a little sigh of relief:

"Well, our job's finished! I do think, though, that one of you might have mentioned the fact that Seranton was Carl Hudson's brother-in-law, and, therefore, almost as entitled to inherit as any of you in the event of Estelle's death! He might have murdered the lot of you in turn!"

"What made you first suspicion him?" inquired Aunt Catherine.

"The third arrow," replied Larry. "It was directed at Jeanne—or Miss Hudson—June 6th, 1936.

son, as we now know her to be. Because of that I guessed who she was and figured he was the only one who knew it. Then I timed him until he answered my telephone call last night. By driving fast, he could just make it."

"And he picked you," commented Aunt Catherine with a scornful laugh, "because he thought you were dumb!"

"Reynolds knew, too," said Larry. "The wire used on the dog was a fine aeroplane cable, and he traced its purchase to Seranton. That's why Reynolds was killed!"

"Well—well—well, how did he turn out the lights?" stuttered Elwood.

"By running a paper clip into the desk-light socket and blow out the fuse. He knew the room well, and he had his knife ready in his brief-case—along with the revolver I didn't give him time to pull."

Budge came in from the drive.

"They found the bow and some more arrows locked in Seranton's coupé," he announced. "Looks like a cinch case!"

Jeanne—otherwise Estelle—rose up from the chesterfield on which she had been listening.

"There are a few things I'd like to say," she announced. "First, I want to thank you all for helping me, and to apologise for having entertained certain suspicious."

Budge, with an expression of utter dismay on his face, whispered to Larry:

"Is Jeanne—I mean—er—is she the real heiress?"

"Sure," replied Larry. "Didn't you know that?"

"And I just proposed to her this morning!"

"What did she say?"

"Never mind." Budge was thoroughly upset. "I'll see you in town later. Come on, Lobo!"

He went out from the room with the dog while Estelle was still speaking.

"Aunt Catherine and Sarah," she said, "this is your home for always."

"My dear!" exclaimed Aunt Catherine, and there were sudden tears in her eyes.

"Uncle Silas, the books in the den are all yours. Larry, I can't pay for what you've done with money, but whatever Mr. Seranton offered you I'd like to double. Why, where's Budge?"

"Gone," replied Larry. "He seemed to be in a terrible hurry to get back to town."

"Oh!" Without another word for anyone she flew from the room across the hall and stumbled down the steps from the front door.

Budge had commandeered William Hudson's taxi-cab and bundled Lobo into it. He had given the driver instructions, and he had got into the cab with the dog, and he was slamming the door when Estelle shouted frantically:

"Wait!"

The driver removed his hand from the self-starter as she rushed round to the other door, opened it, and scrambled breathlessly in beside Lobo.

Budge gaped at her.

"Jeanne—I—er—I mean Miss Hudson," he stammered, "I—I told him to go clear back to town."

Estelle smiled serenely.

"Lobo," she said, "I wonder if you'd mind?"

Evidently Lobo did not mind, for he immediately jumped down from the seat so that she could nestle against her diffident lover.

(By permission of Columbia Pictures Corporation, Ltd., starring Robert Allen, with Florence Rice and Ward Bond.)

"SUICIDE SQUAD"

(Continued from page 20)

"Best of luck!" Larry took the proffered hand, and so did Mary. Ed, glad to escape, left them.

Captain Tim Dawson hastened forward as soon as Ed had gone. He looked just a little uncomfortable.

"Guess I owe the lives of my two kids to you, Larry."

"All in the day's work, chief."

"Do you know what Ed's just told me?" cried Mary. "It was Ed that Larry saved that last time. Ed got knocked out by some falling bricks and Larry got him to safety. That was why the life-line was left unattended."

"Why the dickens didn't you say so?" gasped old Dawson.

"Guess I was a bit stubborn and proud," answered Larry. "I thought Ed would have said something, but then I wasn't to know he had lost his memory on account of the wallop he got from those bricks."

"Do you mean Ed had forgotten you saved his life?" Captain Dawson could not credit his ears.

"Sure, you read about it every day in the papers," Larry said, with a sly grin. "When he saw me crawling out of the Blue Star it all came back to him with a rush. Funny, isn't it?"

"I should call it more than funny," muttered old Dawson.

Larry had discarded his taxi-cab helmet, and someone anxious to be pleasant to the hero of the moment found it and brought it to him. Larry put it on his head.

Tim Dawson went back to his men and to talk with Captain Dixon about his ship. When he was through he found that Mary was still there with Larry, with Mickey hopping round trying to get a word in now and again.

"Here, this won't do." Tim Dawson strode back to them.

"You're both wet through, so off you get, Mickey, and that goes for you, too, Mary!" he cried. "Larry will be round to supper this evening, so tell your mother to have something special. I'd like a word with you, son, before you go."

"What is it, chief?" Captain Dawson held out his hand.

"I'm always willing to own when I'm wrong, and I sure made a big mistake about you, Larry." He gripped the younger man's hand. "Now that head-wear kinda offends my eye." He stepped back to cast a critical eye at Larry. "We never fired you, and we never accepted your resignation, so what'd you mean by wearing that thing?" He took off his helmet. "This is what you're going to wear in future."

Larry grinned as the big helmet nearly slid over his ears.

"Thank you, chief!" His grin faded. "There's Snap—I believe he took a picture. What'll I do about it?"

"Nothing, son." Tim Dawson took his arm. "If the papers do get your picture I'll not complain. And if Snap calls round to-morrow he can have one of you in your uniform with two good-conduct stripes. Now you get into that old cab and get out of those wet togs. Mind you show up prompt at seven."

"He'll make a grand son-in-law." Tim Dawson muttered happily to himself as he watched Larry Johnson jump into his cab and drive away.

(By permission of Pathé Pictures, Ltd., starring Norman Foster as Larry and Joyce Compton as Mary.)

"FLASH GORDON"

(Continued from page 24)

was the hoarse reply. "Winged men, doctor—"

"Hawk Men!" Barin interrupted, looking at the bodies of the three warriors who had been killed by the ray-gun. "Followers of King Vultan, Ming's ally."

Flash looked at him, and then shot a questioning glance at Zarkov, who proceeded to introduce the big fellow.

"This is Prince Barin, Flash," he said. "He came to me as a friend and sympathiser. He has good reason to dislike Ming, and hopes to overthrow the emperor."

Aura had been listening attentively, and now spoke for the first time.

"So, Barin!" she rapped out. "You would plot against my father!"

"Against the man who has wronged me, Aura," Barin retorted. "I hold no grudge against you, his daughter, but—"

She broke in on him sharply, at the same time covering him with the weapon she held in her hand.

"Prince Barin," she said threateningly, "you and Zarkov are going to take Flash Gordon to the safety of the Lion Men's realm. Then you will return with me to my father's stronghold."

"No!" It was Flash who spoke, and as he uttered the word he snatched the ray-gun from Aura's grasp and gripped her by the arms. "No, we're making for King Vultan's city. You told me we could reach it by rocket ship—and, by thunder, that's what we're going to do!"

The girl stared at him in dismay.

"You do not know what you are saying," she cried. "What could you do against King Vultan? He would kill you!"

"I'd rather die than leave Dale and Thun at the mercy of one of your father's satellites," Flash ground out. "Zarkov, you'll help me, won't you?"

"And I, too," Barin interposed, as the doctor gave ready response to his young friend's query. "I have an idea that Vultan may not be so well disposed to Ming as he professes to be. Perhaps I may be able to gain his goodwill if I have the opportunity of talking to him."

"Then let's be on our way," Flash declared. "Aura, you had better stay here. Ultimately, your father's men will pick you up."

The girl hesitated, and then, as the three men began to move towards the rocket ship, she hurried after them.

"I'm going with you," she announced with emphasis. "I think Barin's hopes are likely to prove false, and, if they do, then you will have need of me."

Thirty seconds later Zarkov's ship was in the air again, carrying Flash Gordon and his companions high above the seaboard of Ming's domain.

Brought Down

AT sight of King Vultan's city, floating above the clouds, the eyes of earthly mortals might have widened in sheer wonder—yes, and registered an expression that would have betrayed incredulity.

They would have seen it as a conglomeration of stately palaces and homes built upon a vast platform of stone that hung suspended in space, poised there by anti-gravitational forces which were

unknown to scientists in that world whence Dale Arden, Flash Gordon and Dr. Zarkov had come.

It was to one of the palaces in this amazing sky city that Dale Arden had been taken, and on recovering from the swoon that had robbed her of her senses she found herself lying on a couch in a spacious room.

A strange, gilded throne stood against one wall of the room, but Dale scarcely noticed it, for as she opened her eyes she became aware of a gross figure bending over her, the figure of an enormous man dressed like some Viking of old.

There were other men standing nearby—winged men, like the bloated person who was stooping above Dale with a leer on his ugly face, and who now addressed her in a deep, lusty voice.

"Ah, my fair guest awakes!" he said with a chuckle.

Dale struggled into a sitting posture, and there was terror in her gaze as she looked at him.

"Who are you?" she panted. "Who are you?"

"I, my dear?" the massive creature rejoined. "I am Vultan, King of the Hawk Men. And you are Dale Arden, the Earth girl, eh? Yes, news travels fast on Mongo. We have heard of you and your friends Gordon and Zarkov."

"Flash—where is he?" Dale cried out in alarm. "Where is he? And where is Thun?"

King Vultan fingered his heavy jaw.

"Thun has been put to work in the atom furnaces which generate the forces that keep this city in the void, my pretty one," he said. "As for Gordon, he fought too well, and it seems that he was able to avoid capture with the aid of the Emperor Ming's daughter."

He paused, noticing the relief with which Dale received the news that Flash was safe. Then he stroked her arm.

"You are very fair," he observed, moistening his thick lips. "I hear that Ming was much attracted by you, and now that I see you, I can well understand his interest in you. H'm, I understand it so well that I doubt if I can bring myself to give you up to him."

He pawed her arm again with his heavy, brutal hand, but frowned as she recoiled from him.

"What?" he grunted. "You do not like King Vultan?"

She tried to speak, but fear stifled her voice, and when she made no answer he drew back with a sly grin and pressed a button on the wall. Instantly a panel slid aside, and to Dale's horror a brutish form was revealed, an animal whose hirsute body resembled that of a bear, and who shambled forth into the room with an awkward gait, uttering savage growls as it did so.

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"GUARD THAT GIRL."—Larry Donovan, Robert Allen; Helen Bradford, Florence Rice; Budge Edwards, Ward Bond; Joshua Scranton, Wyrley Birch; Jeanne Martin, Barbara Kent; Reynolds, Arthur Hohl; Aunt Catherine, Elizabeth Risdon; Sarah Hulson, Nana Bryant; Dr. Silas Hulson, Thurston Hall; Elwood Hulson, Bert Roach; Lobo, Himself.

SUICIDE SQUAD.—Larry Johnson, Norman Foster; Mary Dawson, Joyce Compton; Ed McVie, Phil E. Kramer; Tim Dawson, Robert Holmans; "Snap" Wilson, Jack Luden.

"Perhaps you would prefer my pet," Vultan said to Dale. "I call him Urso. Come here, Urso!"

The monster's baleful eyes turned slowly upon the King of the Sky City, and as if in response to a familiar voice, it moved obediently enough towards the burly monarch, approaching in its shuffling fashion and coming to a halt by his side.

As the lion-tamer dominates the beasts of the circus arena and holds them in restraint, so King Vultan seemed to render this creature meek and docile by means of some hypnotic spell. Yet Dale sensed the latent ferocity of the animal, and looked on it in the utmost terror as its master stroked its fearsome muzzle.

King Vultan glanced round, and suddenly grasping the stricken girl by the wrist, he tried to draw her towards the beast.

"Come, my pretty one," he said with a leer. "Come, make friends with Urso!"

"No, no!" screamed Dale. "Take him away! Take him away!"

A hoarse laugh escaped Vultan, but with a word of command he sent that strange brute back to its cell and closed the panel again. Then he turned to the girl once more and was about to make some comment when a messenger hurried into the room.

"Your Majesty!" the newcomer ejaculated. "An unknown rocket ship approaches. It is not one of Ming's craft."

Vultan looked at the man quickly.

"Not one of Ming's craft?" he echoed, his brow darkening. "Then it must be an enemy. Run no risks. Bring it down with the ray of destruction."

The messenger saluted and departed in haste, and if it had been possible for Dale to have followed him she would have seen him mount a spiral stairway that led to a turret of Vultan's palace.

On a platform at the summit of that tower a group of Hawk Men were assembled. They were gathered around a machine that might have been a searchlight, and their attention was riveted upon a vessel that was flying swiftly towards the sky city.

"Bring down that ship!" said the messenger who had come from the throne-room. "His Majesty's orders!"

The men on the turret bestirred themselves, but, rapid as their movements were, the oncoming vessel was circling above the palace before they could bring into play the apparatus around which they were ministered.

Suddenly, from this machine, a thin beam of light seared upward through the void, a quivering finger that passed close to the ship which had appeared over the stronghold.

The craft was the rocket ship containing Zarkov, Flash, Barin and Aura, and, gazing upon the miraculous city that hung below them in the sky, the two Americans were not immediately aware of the sinister ray that had reached up towards them. But Prince Barin and Ming's daughter saw it, and with loud cries they tried to warn Zarkov of the danger.

"Turn back!" shouted Barin. "If that beam makes contact with the ship the motors will be paralysed!"

He spoke too late, for even as he uttered the words the course of the ray was changed—and in the instant that it touched its target the vessel checked, faltered, and then plunged like a stricken bird!

(To be continued in another breath-taking episode next week. By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Buster Crabbe and Jean Rogers.)
June 6th, 1936.

The News Reels

(Continued from page 2)

Spencer Tracy, in the same picture, had to forgo polo for five weeks.

James Stewart was "grounded"—warned that he could not fly an aeroplane while he was working.

Freddie Bartholomew appeared at the studio on a motor-cycle. It was promptly confiscated upon orders from studio executives. Freddie represents too large an investment to risk a broken arm or leg.

Mickey Rooney has strict instructions that, when he is working, he must not play football or baseball or engage in dangerous sports. In the midst of a production last year he broke an arm while tohogganing.

Jean Hersholt has instructions never to shave his moustache, though he may grow whiskers. Charles Butterworth faces a permanent ban against smiling or laughing in front of the camera. He is more valuable on the screen as a "poker-faced" comedian.

Nat Pendleton, former world's amateur champion wrestler, is forbidden to wrestle professionally. He has often challenged other wrestlers, but studio executives have always stepped in, just on time to prevent trouble.

When Charles Laughton was working in "Mutiny on the Bounty," he had an agreement with Director Frank Lloyd not to gain an ounce of weight. He kept a masseur constantly with him to that end.

Richard Dix Completes His Sixty-first Starring Part

Richard Dix has just completed his sixty-first starring picture, "Special Investigator," which also is his twentieth starring feature for one studio—Radio Pictures.

With this he must establish some sort of a record.

Dix, who passed through the transition from silent films to talkies with increased popularity, has played almost every conceivable type—aviator, engineer, cowboy, doctor, football star,

author, convict, soldier of fortune, diplomat. He has also been indirectly responsible for the mantle of stardom later draped on many brilliant young actresses who were his leading ladies.

In "Special Investigator," Dix adds to his collection of rôles by portraying for the first time a Federal agent, a "G-man," to use the publicly accepted term. He also has a new leading lady in the person of Margaret Callahan, a clever Irish-American actress.

Smoke Got In Her Eyes

Acting a difficult close-up while technical aides just out of range blow cigarette, cigar, and pipe smoke in her face, is not Mary Ellis' idea of a pleasant experience.

But she had to put up with it for the sake of realism in a scene for Walter Wanger's Paramount production, "Fatal Lady."

The action required the star to sing a number in an Apache café in Paris. Because the haze from the crowded background did not drift in front of the lens to suit cameraman Leon Shamroy, he stood as near to Miss Ellis as possible with ten other men, and they all puffed smoke in her face.

Not to be Shorn

Two thousand sheep will wear their winter coats a few weeks longer than usual because Twentieth Century-Fox is going to make "Ramona" in colour.

Weather and location requirements for colour will not permit filming of the picture until May and June, far past the usual shearing-tune. There is an important shearing sequence in "Ramona," but not even Hollywood would attempt to photograph shorn sheep being shorn again.

So Henry King, who will direct a cast headed by Loretta Young as "Ramona," has hired two thousand unshorn sheep for the picture.

Montgomery Gets a Complete Book of Clippings from Fan

Robert Montgomery has just received 150,000 presents in one, from a single fan.

It was a huge scrap-book containing Press clippings about the Metro-

Goldwyn-Mayer actor from his first appearance in "So this is College," up to his current picture, "Suicide Club."

The fan, a young girl from Ohio, who asked that her name be kept secret, offered to "trade" Montgomery the book for an autographed picture. The picture, autographed and framed, was on its way to Ohio by air-mail special delivery within a few hours.

The girl, in her letter, added that she had formed a trading society all over the world to get the clippings from magazines and papers. She conducted her "trading society" by sending a clipping of a player to a person in another country in return for one of Montgomery.

She had planned to keep the book, but when she learned that the actor's scrap-book, which he started when he arrived in Hollywood, had been destroyed by fire, she decided to sacrifice her treasure.

World's Speed Records Sought for Motion-picture Scenes

Hopeful of shattering a world's speed record for motion pictures, automobile technicians in Hollywood have built a high-speed racing-car that may revolutionise automobile designs.

The racer, christened "The Falcon," is twenty-six feet and two inches in length, is powered with a 675-horse-power motor, and is capable of a speed of 180 miles per hour.

Originally, the car was designed by Arnold Gillespie and built by Harlan Fenger and Lou Moore, former champions of the roaring speedway, for scenes in Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's picture, "Speed."

In the speed tests for the picture, "The Falcon" performed so satisfactorily that Producer Lucien Hubbard and Director Edwin L. Martin have given Fenger and Moore permission to use the car in attempting to shatter the world's twenty-four-hour speed record on the Utah salt-beds upon completion of the picture.

The record was established on the salt-beds last September by Captain George Eyston of England, when he reached an average speed of 140 miles per hour for the twenty-four-hour run.

"I've never found anything so refreshing as this Fountain of Sherbet" says ALLY PALLY

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BOY'S CINEMA

No. 862.

EVERY TUESDAY

June 20th, 1936.

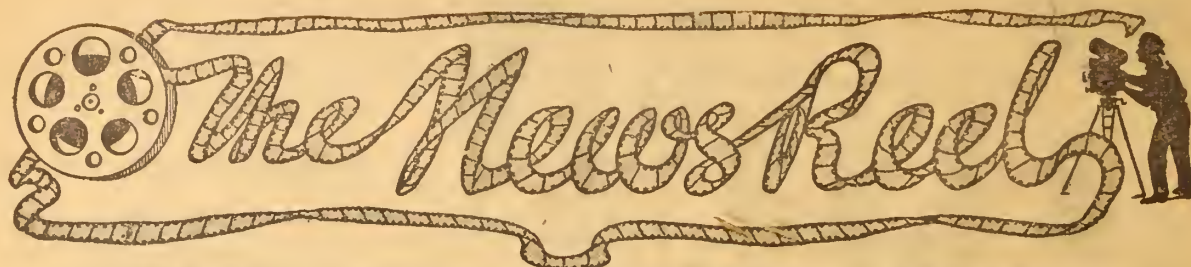
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TWO LONG
COMPLETE FILM
STORIES IN
THIS ISSUE!

A
THRILLING
STORY
OF A
DETECTIVE
WHO LOST
HIS NERVE



**We're
ONLY HUMAN**



The News Reel

All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 220, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Eleanor Powell Writing a Book on Tap Dancing

Eleanor Powell is educating her fingers to tell other people how to educate their toes.

The girl who became the World's Dancing Sweetheart after her sensational work in "Broadway Melody of 1936" is writing a book on dancing.

She has received thousands of letters from men, women and children asking her various questions about tap dancing, so she has decided to answer all of the letters in the form of a book.

The book is also to contain many illustrations from her picture and will show toe as well as tap dancing.

Writing has always been one of Miss Powell's hobbies, but this is the first time in her life that she has had the chance to write a book.

Gaston Glass Returns to Screen

Fighting his way back in an attempt to regain some of the laurels that once were his in an industry that formerly paid him a four-figure salary each week, Gaston Glass has completed his fifth consecutive rôle since his return to the screen a few months ago.

Glass was once leading man to Sarah Bernhardt, and later enjoyed great success as a star of the silent screen.

His most recent films are the Katharine Hepburn picture, "Mary of Scotland," "Under Two Flags," in which Ronald Colman plays the leading male rôle, the Carole Lombard-Fred MacMurray Paramount picture "The Princess Comes Across," "A House Divided," and now comes his latest, "Fatal Lady," the Walter Wanger production for Paramount release, which has Mary Ellis as its star.

Blackmail!

Eddie Cantor, whose latest picture, "Strike Me Pink," has been such a success, is convulsing Hollywood with a story about a minor operation which he underwent a short time ago. The surgeon who operated used a local anaesthetic, and Eddie was therefore able to carry on a conversation with him. About half-way through the proceedings the surgeon asked his patient if he would consent to appear at a concert in aid of the hospital.

"You mean when I get well?" queried Eddie.

"I mean if you get well," solemnly replied the surgeon.

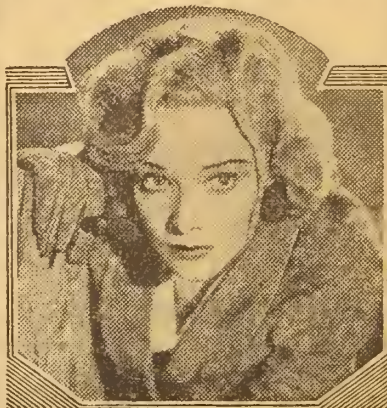
Eddie did get well (he never was in any real danger) and the concert was a big success.

Mob Storms Prison

One thousand men, women and children rioted a little while ago in a small town nestled within the walls of the big Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studio, climaxing their lawlessness by burning to the ground a prison in which a kidnap suspect was being guarded.

A battery of cameras recorded the spectacular scene, which marks the dra- June 20th, 1936.

NEXT WEEK'S BIG PROGRAMME!



MADELEINE CARROLL

IN

"SECRET AGENT"

An English officer is sent to Switzerland to trace a spy who is forming a link between Germany and Turkey. A strange being, "The General," and a beautiful girl are sent by the Government to help him to destroy this secret agent. A story full of thrills.

"THE OREGON TRAIL"

It was renegade treachery that had caused Colonel Delmont's death. That was why his son rode the vengeance trail and braved a hundred perils to track down the veteran cavalrman's slayers. A swift-moving epic of the old frontier days, starring John Wayne and Ann Rutherford.

"THE RETURN OF JIMMY VALENTINE"

A daring young reporter sets out to discover the identity of the once notorious Jimmy Valentine, but through his investigations he lands an even more notorious crook and his gangsters in prison. A thrilling drama, starring Roger Pryor and Charlotte Henry.

Also

Another smashing episode of the serial of unusual adventure:

"FLASH GORDON"

Starring Buster Crabbe and Jean Rogers.

matic climax of "Fury," co-starring Sylvia Sidney and Spencer Tracy, under the direction of Fritz Lang.

A three-story prison, complete in every detail, was constructed for the attack. Surrounding the building, as authentic background, were two streets lined with typical small-town business structures. A large park occupied the square in front of the prison.

Innumerable small touches lent added life to the entire three-acre set: automobiles, trucks, and even large passenger buses moved through the streets;

smoke drifted from the chimneys; hotel guests stared uneasily from windows and a second-floor balcony.

And then the mob stormed the prison in what observers pronounced one of the most vivid examples of mass action ever filmed in Hollywood.

A strong cast in the new film includes Eric Linden, Bruce Cabot, Walter Abel, Frank Albertson, Walter Brennan, Edward Ellis, Fred Burton, Howard Hickman, Edwin Maxwell and Morgan Wallace. Joseph Mankiewicz is the producer.

A Ten-year-old Fight

Myrna Loy and Warner Baxter roared their applause the other day at the boxing match between Jack Dempsey and Gene Tunney.

They were doing it all for their new film "To Mary—With Love," and the fight they saw, which took place ten years ago, was being "back-projected"—a bit of movie magic now an important part of picture-making.

Back-projection is the process of filming players against a moving background. It is possible, by this method, to reproduce any important event of the past fifteen years and play modern actors and actresses against it.

John Cromwell, the director of "To Mary—With Love," decided to include the famous fight in the film.

The process department procured a copy of the newsreel in which the fight appeared.

A special camera projected it on to a screen, and a hundred feet or so in front of that screen the players and a thousand extras saw re-enacted an event that had transpired a decade ago.

A second camera, the one used in production, "shot" this group of boxing fans and principals, while, in the background, Tunney expertly dodged the vicious onslaught of an enraged Dempsey.

William Powell Takes Up Canoe-boat Sailing

Canoe sailing, the trickiest variety of nautical sport, is the latest pastime to be adopted by Hollywood's screen players. Robert Armstrong is its sponsor. He is forming a racing club in the film colony. James Cagney is one of the charter members, and William Powell is the latest recruit.

Armstrong himself is being taught the finer points of the exciting sport by his uncle, Ralph Armstrong, who chances to be its world's champion. Because he is visiting California, Ralph Armstrong will not defend his world's title for the first time in several seasons when the annual championships are held on the St. Lawrence river.

The Balboa Yacht Club is headquarters for the screen canoe sailors. The fragile craft can match the speed of cup-defending yachts of the larger classes, according to Robert Armstrong. They require the most expert handling, and novices must be prepared for plenty of duckings.

As a detective, Pete McCaffrey was daring enough in tackling crooks, but that was because he did not know fear. A bullet that caused his eyes to be bandaged for a week reduced him to quivering cowardice—and then the girl who loved him stung him into facing the guns of a gang with true valour, because he was afraid. A gripping drama, starring Preston Foster



A Sensational Capture

DETECTIVE - SERGEANT PETER McCAFFREY was playing on a pin-table just inside the doorway of the lunch-room, but he was not achieving any great score because he was looking more often at a mirror on the wall than at the little metal balls he shot at intervals from the trigger of the machine.

The mirror reflected a portion of the roadway outside the lunch-room and some of the houses on the other side of the street—old-fashioned houses, stone-fronted, with steep steps leading up to their front doors over basement entrances.

The detective was a young man and a tall one; clean-shaven and good-looking. He might very well have passed for an ordinary customer with time to kill; but his blue eyes narrowed and glinted as he saw in the mirror a black car draw up outside one of the houses opposite; for the black car had a wide door at the back of it, instead of the usual side doors, and the driver and another man—both dressed sombrely in black—descended from the front seat to open the back door and pull out a long wicker basket.

Few of the pedestrians in Second Avenue paid any attention to the car, or to the men with the basket, for quite frequently in New York City the dead are conveyed in wicker shells to the "funeral parlours" of undertakers. But McCaffrey was more than interested. With the aid of the mirror on the wall he watched the two men carry the basket up the front steps of the house and disappear into it with their burden.

Into the lunch-room from the street stepped Matt O'Brien, Press photographer on the staff of the "Daily Star," his camera slung over his left shoulder; and with him was a slim and very bright-eyed girl in a check costume. But so intent was McCaffrey on what was happening across the way that he did not notice either of them till O'Brien stopped short and spoke.

"How're you, flatfoot?" he inquired breezily.

"If I thought you could read," retorted the detective, "I'd write you a letter and tell you."

"If I thought you could write," returned O'Brien, "I'd learn how!" He grinned at the girl who was with him. "What'd you think of that? You ain't met the pride of the force yet, have you?"

"No," she replied, "but I'd like to." "This is Pete McCaffrey," O'Brien introduced with a flip of his hand, "an honest dick—to hear him tell it! This is Sally Rogers."

"How do you do?" murmured the girl; and McCaffrey detached his gaze from the mirror to bestow a casual glance upon her. She was beautiful, in her own dark and slender fashion, but beauty had no appeal for him at the moment.

"How are you?" he almost grunted.

"Sally's just started on the 'Star,'" O'Brien informed him. "She's from Kansas City."

"Welcome to America," said the detective dryly.

That, doubtless, was intended as an insult to Kansas City, but Sally Rogers appeared not to understand it. She touched O'Brien on the arm.

"How about our coffee and rolls?" she asked.

"Cup of coffee, detective?" suggested O'Brien.

"No, thanks," replied the preoccupied sleuth. "It keeps me awake."

"Nothing could do that," jeered the photographer; and then he and Sally drifted away to a long counter and climbed on to adjacent stools.

Out from the house across the street came the two men in black who had entered it, and they carried the long basket down the steps in a slow and careful manner that suggested it now contained something heavy. To the astonishment of several people who were entering the lunch-room, McCaffrey whipped a six-shooter from his hip-pocket.

"Get out of the way!" he shouted, and forced a passage to the pavement and flew across the roadway, escaping the front wheels of a motor-van by inches.

The men in black were about to stow their burden in the sable car as he drew near them.

"Drop that basket!" he bellowed. "Come on, drop it!"

They gaped at him and at the gun in his hand, and they lowered the basket to the asphalt. Startled passers-by stopped and increased in numbers.

"Get over there!" rasped McCaffrey. "Get over there!"

The undertaker's men backed hurriedly on to the pavement, well away from their vehicle; the gathering crowd of men and women were driven from the immediate vicinity of the basket.

"Over there!" yelled McCaffrey. "Over! Over!"

Suddenly a woman gave vent to a

piercing scream, and men shouted. The lid of the basket had been heaved sideways and a very live corpse was sitting up in the thing itself—a dark-haired fellow in dark clothes, who was holding a long-barrelled six-shooter.

Out from the basket he scrambled to his feet, his gash of a mouth twisted in a murderous fashion as he levelled the gun at the detective.

But McCaffrey was on him like lightning, bearing him back against the car, and the hand that held the gun was forced backwards as in a vice before the trigger could be pulled.

Shots rang out and bullets sang through the air, to the accompaniment of screams and cries, but no one was hit by the bullets. It was the man who had been in the basket that suffered. McCaffrey hit him in the face with the butt of his own gun again and again before it was sent spinning.

Matt O'Brien and Sally Rogers witnessed the battle that followed from the doorway of the lunch-room; the more timorous members of the crowd ran off, and a patrolman came running up.

McCaffrey lost his hat as well as his gun, but he would not let go of his captive. Fighting and struggling with equal desperation the two swayed to the kerb, stumbled against it, and crashed down upon the pavement.

For a few moments they lay there, clawing at one another, panting for breath, then struggled up together. The detective, jerking his left hand free, delivered a swift uppercut to an ugly jaw that sent its owner flat on his back, and he stamped on a hand that was trying to take aim with the six-shooter it still held.

The hand relaxed, the weapon was kicked into the gutter, and McCaffrey dumped himself astride his prisoner, fished out a pair of handcuffs, and, in spite of fierce resistance, manacled a pair of wrists.

Matt O'Brien came rushing across from the lunch-room, with Sally Rogers close behind him, and as McCaffrey stood up and tugged his captive to his feet, the photographer focused his camera on the battered and dishevelled pair.

"Hold it, Mac!" he cried.

McCaffrey looked round and the shutter of the camera clicked. The crowd closed in; a mounted policeman slid from the saddle of his horse and thrust his way to the detective's side.

"I called the wagon, sarge," he announced.

"Okay," said McCaffrey. "My hat and gun, and his gun, too, are around here somewhere. Hang on to him!"

The officer grabbed hold of the handcuffed man, but at that moment a patrolman arrived with the detective's hat and the two guns. O'Brien took another picture.

"You've never met my pal, have you?" said McCaffrey, brushing his hat with the sleeve of his coat. "This is Lefty Berger. You know, Public Enemy Number— What is your number, Lefty?"

"Whatever it is," snarled the crook, "you ain't got it!"

"Not a bad rehearsal, though, is it?"

Behind the muslin curtains of a window on the first floor of the house Berger had left in a basket a stockily built fellow with a slouch hat pulled down over his eyes had snatched an automatic from a shoulder-holster under his coat as though with the intention of shooting through the glass at the detective down below.

"Why, you dumb, flatfooted—" he began wrathfully.

"Are you crazy?" snapped another

man who was standing behind him—a tall man, lean of face, with a weak chin but a high forehead. "D'you want to bring them in here?"

Tony Ricci, a member of Berger's gang, put the automatic back in its holster, but glared accusingly at the speaker.

"Who tipped the cops, Martin?" he rasped.

"How should I know?" shrugged Martin. "I'm a lawyer, not a fortune-teller. Listen, Ricci, I planned this whole thing, didn't I? It was all my idea, wasn't it, to get him safely out of town? Can I help it if some dumb cop—" He broke off, as though more than half-scared by Ricci's threatening attitude. "Do you think I'd double-cross Berger?" he asked plaintively.

"Tain't what I think that counts," Ricci retorted. "It's what Berger's gonna think!"

Sirens shrieked in the street, and a police patrol wagon scattered the crowd. From a car behind it policemen descended.

"How do I get out of here?" Ricci demanded. "It's your house!"

"Come on," said Martin. "There's a very useful back way."

Salute!

MATT O'BRIEN, with his camera slung over his shoulder, rejoined Sally Rogers, who was watching Berger being marched towards the patrol wagon.

"Let's grab a cab," he said. "I've gotta rush these negatives to the office."

"You go ahead," said she, "but flash the office first for me. I'm staying here to find out what this is all about."

O'Brien nodded and squeezed his way through the crowd to find a taxi-cab. Sally stood beside the open door of the patrol wagon as Berger was bundled into it.

"Go on, get in there!" McCaffrey commanded. "And all the way in!"

Sally put a hand on the rail and a foot on the step as though to follow the crook, but the detective caught hold of her arm.

"Wait a minute!" he cried. "Where d'you think you're going?"

"You wouldn't do a girl out of a story, would you?" she asked sweetly.

"Come on, sister," barked the sergeant in charge of the wagon, "get down!"

She got down, but with her big hazel eyes on McCaffrey she said scornfully.

"What's the matter with you New York coppers? Don't you like to see your names in print?"

That was one back for the insult to Kansas City, and McCaffrey grinned.

"Let her on," he said to the sergeant, and Sally thanked him and entered the vehicle.

Berger had dumped himself sulkily on a seat. McCaffrey dropped down beside him and crossed his long legs. Sally sat opposite, and the door was closed and fastened. The sergeant walked round to the front of the wagon and climbed up beside the uniformed driver, who sounded his siren and started the engine.

"This is certainly a swell show," said Sally appreciatively, as the crowd was left behind, "and you're a swell guy to do this for me."

"That's okay," returned McCaffrey in an airy manner. "It was all for you. I hired Berger, here, special—just for this morning." He dug an elbow between the ribs of the crook. "Say 'hallo,' mug!"

Berger looked evilly at the girl, but did not open his mouth.

"I've heard of you," she remarked conversationally.

"That's funny," snarled the prisoner. "I never heard of you."

"Say 'hallo'!" insisted McCaffrey.

"Hi!"

"There you are." The detective flipped a hand. "All done by kindness."

"How did you know he was in the basket?" asked Sally.

"Me?" McCaffrey laughed. "Oh, I'm a mind-reader."

"You ain't got a mind to read with!" scoffed Berger. "Somebody blew!"

"Pipe down, now," rapped his captor, "or I'll slap you down!"

There was silence in the patrol wagon for a minute or two, then Sally inquired:

"Is this the Lefty Berger who escaped from Sing-Sing?"

"That wasn't an escape," McCaffrey facetiously assured her. "He just came down to say 'hallo' to a couple of his pals. Didn't you, Lefty?"

Berger closed his eyes.

"You certainly have plenty of nerve, Mr. Caffrey," said Sally, and the tribute was not insincere.

"Detective-Sergeant to you, honey," returned the gratified detective. "So you think I did all right, eh?"

"I certainly do," she replied emphatically.

"What are you doin' to-night?"

"Why, nothing that I know of."

"Fine! I'm not doin' anything either. How about dinner?"

"I wouldn't mind," she decided. "In fact, I'd like it."

"It's a date! Meet me at Chung's chop suey house, Fifty-Eighth and Seventh, at eight o'clock."

Sally looked distinctly disappointed, and he asked what was the matter.

"Nothing," she replied slowly, "only I thought you said 'dinner.'"

The patrol wagon travelled across town by way of Madison Square and Broadway to West Forty-Seventh Street, wherein police headquarters of the Eighteenth Precinct are situated. But Sally was dropped off at the corner of West Fortieth Street so that she could hurry along to the "Star" office and write her story of the sensational arrest.

William ("Lefty") Berger was personally conducted behind bars by McCaffrey, who said, as he unfastened the handcuffs and restored them to his own person:

"There you are, sweetheart. Just like being home again!"

"Yeah?" was the surly response.

"Well, I ain't gonna stay any longer than I did the last time."

Several plain-clothes men were in the corridor, and as McCaffrey turned away from the cells they fell into step with him.

"Nice work, Mac," said one of them.

"How did you get him?"

"I'm a detective."

"What did the chief say?" inquired a round-faced little man named Casey.

"Nothing yet," McCaffrey replied boastfully, "but I'm liable to walk out of his office a captain. What d'you think of that?"

The big general-room outside Inspector Richard John Curran's office was reached, and there more plain-clothes men were congregated.

"How about your autograph, Mac?" asked one of them with jocularly tinged with envy.

"No autographs," McCaffrey retorted, "but if you want a couple of souvenirs you can go back to where I got Berger and pick up some of his teeth."

"Still slappin' 'em around, eh?" drawled Casey.

"And why not?"

The inspector's clerk emerged from the inspector's office,

"All right, McCaffrey," he said. "Well, boys, there it is," McCaffrey said to the others. "And to show you I'm a right guy, I'm gonna leave the door open so you can all get an earful." He opened the door, but looked back to add: "And listen, when I come out of there, you guys salute!"

Inspector Curran, a man in the early forties and something of a martinet, was seated at his desk with a sheet of paper in his hand. He had a bull neck and a pair of fierce grey eyes.

"Good morning, inspector," said McCaffrey.

"Sit down!"

A curt reception, but then Curran was usually curt. McCaffrey deposited himself in a chair and angled for praise.

"Well, we didn't do such a bad day's work on just a sinker and a cup of coffee, did we, inspector?" he said.

"We?" barked Curran.

"Me and Walsh. It's there in the report."

The sheet of paper Curran was holding was flung down upon the desk and Curran smote it with his hand.

"No," he said with sarcasm, "you and Walsh did fine—especially since Walsh's wife 'phoned in that he was sick and couldn't report to-day!"

McCaffrey stared.

"Danny Walsh sick?" he exclaimed.

"Not according to your report!"

"Well, anyhow, I made a good job of it, didn't I?"

"You made such a good job of it," rapped Curran, "that for two cents I'd send you back to pounding a beat!"

"What d'you mean?" McCaffrey asked blankly. "We've been after Berger for a month, haven't we?"

"Sure we've been after Berger." The inspector rose up in wrath. "And what's more important, we've been after his whole mob, too. But you had to do a single-o! You had to make a one-man job of it!"

"D'you think it was any push-over, taking Berger?"

"I'm not talking about that. You're a brave guy, all right, and if it ever sinks into your head that you've got a department behind you, you'll make a great copper. When you got that tip on Berger you had plenty of time. Why didn't you 'phone it in?"

"Why, I thought—"

"You can't think with your knuckles. I've told you that fifty times. I'm tired of trying to pound it into your thick head."

In the outer room McCaffrey's colleagues were gurgling with delight; the door had not been left open for nothing.

"Bravery is no fault," Curran went on scathingly, "but bravery without brainwork is no good on the police force. Now do you understand that, once for all?"

"Yes, sir," said McCaffrey meekly.

"Well, hereafter see that you keep Walsh out of your reports when he isn't with you."

"Yes, sir."

"And that's all!"

Mae rammed his hat on his head, stood up and squared his shoulders and walked out from the room. The inspector's clerk and five plain-clothes men were waiting for him.

"On your dogs, men!" commanded Casey as he appeared. "Salute!"

With grinning faces on either side of him and to the accompaniment of mock salutes, McCaffrey made his way unhappily to the street.

In the Rain

AT her own desk in the reporters' room on the fifth floor of the "Star" Building, Sally Rogers had begun to type her version of Berger's arrest when George Dayton Morgan, the news editor, strode out from his den and looked down at the sheet of paper in her typewriter.

"The brilliant work of Detective-Sergeant McCaffrey," she had written, "led to the arrest this morning of William 'Lefty' Berger, who escaped—"

"Just a minute." The news editor ripped the sheet of paper from the machine. "Where did you get this?"

"I was there," Sally replied. "I saw it."

"Well, forget it!" The sheet of paper was screwed into a ball and tossed into a yawning waste-paper basket.

"McCaffrey's lucky he's still on the Force after the boner he pulled."

"Boner?" Sally looked up indignantly.

"Yes, boner!" snapped Morgan.

"Gimme something like this: 'The stupidity and bull-headedness of Detective-Sergeant McCaffrey, member of Inspector Curran's squad, acting on an underworld tip, to-day resulted in the capture of William 'Lefty' Berger and the escape of the entire Berger mob.'"

Sally's hazel eyes widened.

"Where did you get that?" she asked rebelliously.

"Wilson just 'phoned it in from the Press-room at headquarters."

"Well, why don't you get Wilson to write it?" she flamed. "I think it was the bravest thing I ever saw, and there was certainly nothing bull-headed or stupid about a man wading in single-handed."

George Dayton Morgan, like most news editors, was an irascible man, and he certainly was not going to be dictated to by a girl reporter newly on the staff.

"Wait a minute!" he bellowed. "You're not a dramatic critic, you're

just a reporter. You can tell 'em what a great guy McCaffrey is when you write his obituary. Come on, get busy!"

So Sally, much against her will, typed quite a different story, and in a special edition of the "Star" the story appeared on the front page under a banner headline: "Detective's boner spoils wholesale capture of Berger mob."

Detective-Sergeant Michael Casey acquired a copy of the paper from a newsboy in West Forty-Seventh Street, and he attached it to the bulletin board with drawing-pins and infinite satisfaction.

Other members of the squad gathered round and read the headline.

"Will he do a burn on that?" chuckled one of them.

"Poor old Peter the Great!" mourned Casey, and caught sight of McCaffrey advancing along the corridor. "Salute!"

McCaffrey resented very strongly this repetition of the morning's insult.

"Go on, be funny!" he snapped.

"What's the matter, kid?" inquired a plain-clothes colleague. "Can't you take it?"

"I'm takin' it, ain't I?" growled Mac, and then Casey pointed to the bulletin board.

"How does it feel to be famous, Mac?" he jeered.

"How would you like a smack in the nose?"

McCaffrey stepped over to the board, and he read the headline. His blue eyes blazed.

"So that's the way it is, eh?" he bellowed, and tore the paper from the board and went off with it.

"Is he frying?" exulted a detective who looked like a comedian.

Nearly bursting with suppressed rage McCaffrey made straight for the office of the "Star," and on the fifth floor he



The photographer focused his camera on the battered and dishevelled pair. "Hold it, Mac!" he cried.

reached Sally's desk and flung the offending newspaper upon it.

"This morning, when I let you ride in the wagon," he shouted at her, "I was a hero. Now I'm a heel."

Sally tried to explain, but he would not listen to her.

"I don't want any eyewash!" he exploded. "When I landed the guy it was: 'Oh, Mr. Caffrey, that's just wonderful!' From now on you keep your nose outa my business, understand? And if you know what's good for you—"

"Wait a minute, will you?" she interrupted angrily. "I don't make the news. I just write it."

"Yeah?" He thrust his face into hers. "Well, I make it, see? And for my dough you don't have to write it."

"Yes, but for my dough I do!" she retorted.

Matt O'Brien wandered in at an adjacent door and leaned against a filing cabinet.

"What's the matter, Mac?" he asked.

"I'm being made a sap of," snorted McCaffrey, "that's what's the matter!"

"Umph!" grunted the photographer. "That isn't news."

"He doesn't like the yarn," said Sally.

"Funny." O'Brien made a grimace. "That's the first complaint we've had to-day."

Mac swept over to him, prodded him in the chest.

"Listen, Out-o'-Focus," he said threuteningly, "you keep out of this."

"Now, sergeant, keep calm," admonished the photographer.

"I'm plenty calm," raged Mac, "but I'm telling you this—if you were a man I'd tear you apart!"

"He is a man," said Sally.

O'Brien promptly made himself scarce, and McCaffrey vented his ill-temper on the newspaper by tearing it to shreds. He was on his way to the door when Sally called after him:

"What about our date to-night?"

"What about it?" he rapped at her over his shoulder, and was gone.

There had been a touch of spring in the air of New York City that morning, but during the afternoon the sky clouded over, and by seven o'clock it was raining heavily.

At a quarter to eight Sally stood under a lanip-post in Seventh Avenue, near the corner of Fifty-Eight Street, and looked about her. Rain was streaming off the umbrella she held over her head and was dripping from the macintosh that covered her costume. On the other side of the street the lights of Chung's chop-suey house beckoned, but there was no sign of Peter McCaffrey.

She waited another five minutes, splashed by passing cars, then entered a shop devoted to the sale of watches and clocks. Timepieces of all sorts and sizes stood on shelves and showcase, but Sally was seeking shelter from the downpour without losing sight of Chung's premises.

"Can I do something for you?" inquired an assistant behind a counter.

"Yes," said she. "Which one of these is right?"

"That one," was the smiling reply, and a clock on the wall was indicated.

Ten minutes to eight.

"Thanks," she murmured. "Mind if I wait here a minute?"

"Help yourself."

She helped herself to the extent of a full half-hour, and then through the glass panel of the shop door she saw McCaffrey at the corner with the collar of his macintosh turned up about his June 20th, 1936.

ears and the brim of his hat pulled down over his eyes.

She went out from the shop, opened her umbrella, and holding it well down in front of her walked towards him. The umbrella smote him in the chest.

"Why don't you look—" he began; and then the umbrella was lowered and they stared at one another in apparent astonishment.

"Why, Sarge, what are you doing here?" she exclaimed.

"I'm on a case," he replied. "What do I look like I'm doing?"

"You look like you're taking a shower to me."

"Do I? What are you doing here?"

"Me? Oh—er—I'm on a story!"

"Yeah? Well, now that we've both finished lying to each other, let's have that chop suey!"

He took her arm and marched her along to Chung's establishment, which seemed to both of them a perfectly delightful place after the wet street. In a little alcove screened by bead curtains they sat at a bamboo table and were waited on by a slippered yellow man.

"What made you so sure that I'd turn up to-night?" asked Sally.

"You did, didn't you?" challenged McCaffrey.

"All right," she said, "I asked for that. But I had a reason. I wanted to straighten you out on that Berger story."

"Okay, forget it." He grinned sheepishly. "I'm sorry I bawled you out."

"Do you always bawl out your lady friends that way?"

"I don't go in much for women."

"No?" She frowned at him. "What do I look like, an animal cracker?"

"Now don't get tough," he enjoined.

"No kiddin', I think I'm gonna like you."

"Not really?"

"I meant it! How would you like to be my girl?"

"Can I have every other Thursday off?"

"Stop clowning, I'm serious!" He fidgeted with his collar and added: "It's not so much for me, it's Mrs. Walsh."

"Mrs. Walsh?" she echoed, crinkling her brows.

"Danny's wife. You know Danny Walsh is my partner. I live with them. She's a swell dame, and she's done plenty for me, too. But a couple o' years now she's been beefing that I oughta have a girl, and—well, you look like you wash behind the ears. It might just as well be you."

Sally, instead of being insulted, was considerably amused.

"But maybe Mrs. Walsh won't like me," she purred.

"I'll fix that!" he declared in his masterful way.

"That'll be just ducky," she informed him.

A Foolish Boast

IN the living-room of a comparatively cheap but comfortably furnished flat in East Ninety-Ninth Street early next morning, Peter McCaffrey sat down to breakfast in his shirt-sleeves at a round table, poured himself some coffee, and shouted at the top of his voice:

"Danny! Danny!"

The door of a bed-room was opened, and Detective-Sergeant Danny Walsh appeared in dressing-gown and slippers. He was at least fifteen years older than McCaffrey, lean of face and inclined to baldness. An old sock was fastened round his throat with a safety-pin, and he coughed as he sat down at the table.

"Well, what ails you?" demanded Mac.

"The old lady thinks I've got tonsillitis," Danny replied in a very hoarse voice.

"Yeah? And what is it?"

"Sore throat."

"You sure picked a swell time for it all right!"

"Is it my fault I got sick?" grumbled Danny. "Listen, I gotta temperature."

"Yeah," scoffed Mac, "about ten below—in the feet!"

"You never had it, I suppose?"

"You suppose right, and what's more I'm never gonna get it!"

"I know," said Danny with a cough.

"That's why you made the sucker play you did takin' Berger single-handed."

"You knew I had the tip."

"Sure I did."

"Then what were you doin', sitting up here with a sock around your neck that oughta be on your foot?"

"I'm careful. I used to be like you till one night on a call I stopped a knife with my ribs, a forty-five slug with my leg, and another one with my shoulder, and got over it."

"Just a careful cop, eh?" jeered Mac.

"The only guys in this racket of ours that get hurt are the careful guys. Remember I told you that, Danny."

Danny decided that argument was not merely useless but painful when one was suffering from tonsillitis. He shook his head and drank some of the coffee Mac had poured out for him.

The front door was opened with a key, and a woman of enormous bulk sailed into the room with a bottle in her hand. She was Danny's wife, grey-haired, double-chinned, a managing sort of woman in a figured frock and an apron. "I had to go to three places," she complained, "before I could get a simple little thing like cough mixture."

"I don't need no medicine," growled her husband.

"You're sick, ain't you?" derided Mac, and Mrs. Walsh turned on him for that.

"Who made the coffee?" she asked tartly.

"I did," said Mac.

She sipped from Danny's cup and made a face.

"Ugh! I might have known it would taste like that if I didn't make it!" she said with housewifely scorn. "What you need is a good wife!"

McCaffrey looked up at her with his mouth full of bacon she had fried before setting forth on her errand.

"What would you say if I told you I've got a girl?"

"What do you want a girl for?" wheezed Danny.

"To make a man out of him, the same as I've made a man out of you," his wife retorted. "What kind of a girl, Mac?"

"Just a girl," replied that detective.

"What kinda girls are there?"

"Married ones and single ones," said Danny—and received a rap on the bald part of his head for that pleasantry with a spoon by Mrs. Walsh.

"There's the right kind and the wrong kind," she stated severely, and took the cork from the bottle of cough mixture and poured a dose into the spoon.

"The girl I've got's a nice number," declared Mac.

"I'll believe it when I see it! Come on, Danny, take your medicine!"

With the utmost reluctance Danny swallowed the contents of the spoon and gulped some coffee to take the taste out of his mouth. McCaffrey rose and transferred himself to a couch, where he lit a cigarette.

"I'm taking Berger up the river this afternoon," he announced. "I think the trip would do you good."

"He's going to stay right here," retorted Mrs. Walsh, "where I can take care of his throat."

"Take care of it?" snorted Mac. "If I was you, I'd cut it!"

The New York State prison known as Sing Sing is some way up the Hudson River from the city. That afternoon, in the absence of Danny Walsh, Detective-Sergeant Michael Casey was handcuffed to Lefty Berger, and in one of the carriages of a train that puffed out from Grand Central Station he dozed beside the ugly crook while Mac sat opposite with a newspaper in his hands.

The city had been left some way behind when a man in a grey suit entered the carriage from an adjoining one and sauntered slowly along the central aisle. Berger looked up at him as he passed and evidently received some sort of signal, for a few moments later he leaned forward and said:

"Hi, what's the chance of getting a smoke?"

McCaffrey roused Casey by giving him a kick on the ankle.

"He wants a smoke," he said as the little detective sat up with a start.

It was not a smoking carriage they were in, so Casey went with the prisoner to the lavatory at the end of it. He gave him a cigarette from a packet of his own.

"Mind if I wash my hands first?" asked Berger.

"No, help yourself." Casey went with him to a basin and half-filled it with water. "Go ahead."

"Ain't you even gonna take 'em off for that?"

The little detective shook his head. "Might be too much trouble to get 'em back on again," he growled.

Berger shrugged his shoulders and proceeded to wash his hands, which was not a very easy matter with one of them manacled. Several times Casey's right hand was dragged into the water; but Casey himself looked out of the adjacent window at the fleeting landscape.

The towels were in a rack above the basin. Berger reached up to one of them with his left hand and his fingers closed

on a gun which had been hidden in it. The train was approaching a level-crossing and a bell was clanging. Casey was still looking out of the window, and he did not see the gun.

A shot rang out, and the detective fell to the floor with a bullet in his lungs. Berger knelt beside him, found the key of the handcuffs, and unlocked them. A few seconds later he was in an unoccupied carriage, smashing the glass out of a window with a heavy spittoon from the floor.

The bell was still clanging because the gates of the level-crossing had not been opened; the train was slowing almost to a standstill. Berger climbed out of the window and dropped from it on to the track.

His escape was not discovered till too late, and at half-past seven that evening McCaffrey stood unhappily before Inspector Curran in that officer's room.

"You draw a five-day suspension. McCaffrey, without pay," said Curran sternly. "That ought to give you a little time to think things over, and maybe it'll do you some good."

"Yes, sir." Mac took his gun from his pocket and his badge from under the lapel of his coat and laid them on the desk.

"That's all!"

As he went out and closed the door, newspaper reporters swarmed round him clamouring for details of Berger's escape.

"I've got nothing to say!" he roared at them. "Go on, now—beat it!"

"Don't take it out on me!" howled one of the men he thrust from his path; and Matt O'Brien interposed.

"Listen, Mac," he said persuasively, "don't be so hard-boiled. These guys are only doing their jobs. Why don't you tell 'em something?"

"Yeah, why don't you?" chorused the rest.

"Okay," yielded Mac. "Okay, I'll loosen up. What's the date?"

"April the tenth," they informed him. "All right. Here's something you can make a lot of. I'll have Berger back in the can in thirty days—and you can quote me!"

A foolish boast, and one that he was to regret; but the reporters liked it.

A Shock for Martin

SALLY was in a taxicab, with her head out of the window, when he descended the steps outside headquarters of the 18th Precinct, and she called to him.

"Well, aren't you glad to see me?" she asked as he crossed the pavement to her with a very gloomy face.

"Sure," he replied. "Don't I look it? You're a nice number."

"Nice nothing!" she retorted. "I've got to get a story. Come on, get in!"

He got in, and he sat beside her. "I thought there was a catch in it," he grumbled.

"I'm awfully sorry about your tough break, Mac," she said sympathetically. "Don't be sorry about me," said he.

"Be sorry for Casey."

"It might have been you!"

"Well, don't start buyin' flowers for me yet. I'm gonna do a lot of damage around here before I go out."

"Sure you are," she encouraged. "Everything's going to come out all right. When did you eat last?"

Thus reminded that he had been without food since somewhere in the region of noon, Mac suggested chop suey.

"Chop suey!" quoth Sally with scorn. "What you need is a little real food inside you! Look, why not stop and get some things on the way and have a nice quiet little meal at my place? After dinner, you can tell me all about it."

"Why not?" The prospect pleased him. "A good home-cooked spread wouldn't go so bad."

The driver was told to stop at the first delicatessen shop in Ninth Avenue, which



To the accompaniment of mock salutes McCaffrey made his way unhappily to the street.

suggested that the "spread" was not to be cooked at home after all. Sally's little self-contained flat was on the third floor of a drab building in Ninth Avenue, facing the elevated railway, and the shop outside which the taxicab drew up was not very far from it.

Mac went with Sally into the shop and was surprised at the number of purchases she made.

"Anything else?" inquired the proprietor of the place, after packages had accumulated on the glass-topped counter. "Oh, yes," said Sally. "A bottle of milk!"

"Say, is this just a meal?" demanded Mac.

"You'll eat it, and you'll like it," said she.

The bill came to just four dollars, which Mac paid, and the packages were loaded into his arms except for a bottle of pickles he stowed in a pocket and the bottle of milk which he carried in his left hand by the neck.

"You go ahead and put 'em in the cab," said Sally at the door. "I've forgotten something."

She sped back to the counter, after she had opened the door for him, and he was about to cross the pavement when a dark blue saloon came racing along the street and guns blazed from it.

The bottle of milk was shattered, leaving only the neck in Mac's hand, and three of the parcels fell as he backed hastily into the doorway. The blue saloon vanished round a corner and Sally appeared in a panic.

"Why, sarge, they might have killed you!" she gasped.

"I'll bet they thought of that!" gritted Mac. "Just look at this!"

He held up the broken neck of the bottle.

"Don't stand there!" implored Sally. "I'm not gonna stand here," he assured her, and flung the useless bottle-neck into the gutter. "I'm gonna get another bottle of milk!"

In the living-room of her flat, about three-quarters of an hour later, Mac lit a cigarette while she gathered up empty plates and dishes.

"Now don't you feel better?" she asked.

"Sure," he replied contentedly. "Haven't got a toothpick, have you?"

"Where I come from," she rebuked him, "they don't use toothpicks."

"What's the matter, don't they have any teeth where you come from?"

"Uhuhu!" She reached across him for a vegetable-dish. "But they also have table manners."

He thought over that statement while she conveyed the crockery to the kitchenette; but when she returned to him it was an entirely different subject that was in her mind.

"How do you know those were Berger's men that shot at you?" she asked.

"Well," he drawled, "I've got an idea they don't like me."

"Don't you ever take anything seriously?"

"Sometimes." He looked up at her with an appreciative grin. "How about a kiss, baby?"

She removed the tablecloth without answering.

"Don't you want to kiss me?"

"No."

"Then why didn't you say so?" he laughed.

They parted good friends, not very long afterwards, and Sally rang up the "Star" with a story that made headlines.

In the five days of Mac's suspension she saw a good deal of him; and the more she saw of him the more she liked

him, in spite of his tremendous self-conceit.

He called for her in a police car just before she left the office on the day he returned to duty, and he drove to the house in Second Avenue outside which he had captured Lefty Berger, leaving her in the car while he ascended the steps and rang the door-bell.

A black woman-servant admitted him to the hall, but barred his way to the stairs.

"Well, is he in, or isn't he in?" demanded Mac.

"Yes, he's in," replied the negress. "I done told you he's in, but for three whole days he's sick in bed."

"That's all right, I got nice bedside manners!"

John Martin appeared at the top of the stairs, clad in pyjamas and dressing-gown, and looking very far from fit.

"What's the trouble, Molly?" he called out, and, seeing Mac in the hall, descended to him. "What is it you want?"

"I want Berger," was the curt reply.

"Berger?" The crook lawyer's jaw dropped and his fever-shot eyes rounded.

"You got Berger!"

"I had Berger!" corrected Mac.

"What are you saying?"

"Don't you read the papers?" Mac whipped a copy of the "Star" from his coat pocket and held it out.

"Berger escaped!" faltered Martin.

"B-but how could he escape? I thought he was on the way to Sing Sing."

"So did we," gritted Mac. "Where's he headin' for?"

"I don't know!" declared the lawyer in a terrified voice. "How should I know? Listen to me, Mac, he mustn't escape, do you hear me! You've got to get him!"

The newspaper fell from a shaky hand.

"Listen, McCaffrey, I'll give you a grand—I'll give you five grand!"

"I've got to get him without your five grand," snapped Mac.

"But you don't understand! Berger thinks I double-crossed him. My life ain't worth a nickel with him loose! If you don't get him—"

"If this is an act you're putting on," Mac interrupted, "it smells!"

He turned away to the front door and opened it.

"Where are you going?" Martin cried in dismay. "What are you going to do?"

"I'm gonna get an ice-cream soda," jeered Mac, and went out and slammed the door.

Sally was waiting anxiously in the police car, but all he said as he climbed in beside her at the wheel was:

"Where to, baby?"

"Anywhere you like," she replied.

"What did Martin have to say?"

"Oh, Martin?" The car started, and a radio set in it was switched on. "Oh, he said—he said he didn't like the seashore because it was too near the ocean."

"Stop kidding, Mac," expostulated Sally. "This is my job. I've got to turn in something."

A voice from the loudspeaker made her jump.

"New York Police Department," it said, "calling car twenty-seven."

"What did Martin say?" she insisted.

"Wait a minute, wait a minute," urged Mac. "Car twenty-seven, that's Danny!"

"But Mac—"

"Wait!"

"Thirty-eighth and Sixth Avenue," the voice went on. "Thirty-eighth and Sixth. Investigate ringing of burglar alarm. That's the Drover's Savings

Bank, Thirty-eighth and Sixth Avenue. Hurry! That is all!"

"A Scared Cop"

DANNY WALSH was on duty in a radio police car that night, and he, and a plain-clothes man with him, were already outside the bank premises when Mac drove up and jumped down on to the pavement.

"You stay there," he said to Sally, and mounted the steps of a broad-columned entrance. "It's me, Danny! What's up?"

Danny turned back from a glass-pannelled door through which he had been peering.

"I don't know," he replied. "The bell ain't ringing, but there oughta be a light in there."

The plain-clothes man was sent off to watch the back of the building, and Mac and Danny went to the glass-pannelled door together. It was unfastened, but as Mac went to open it a gun jettied the dark interior with flame, and he jumped aside just as a bullet shattered a pane of glass close to where his head had been.

"That's all I wanted to know," he said grimly.

"Whew, that was close!" breathed Danny.

"We're goin' in after them."

"Don't be dumb! Let's figure this out first!"

"You don't expect 'em to come out to you, do you?" scoffed Mac. "Cover me; I'm goin' in!"

He went to draw his gun, but suddenly remembered he hadn't got it with him. That made no difference to his determination, however, because Danny had a gun. He went down on his hands and knees and crawled to the door.

"You ready?" he whispered.

"Go ahead," returned Danny.

More shots rang out as the door was opened, but they whizzed harmlessly over Mac's head as he crawled inside, and Danny fired back. He reached a column and stood behind it; then Danny entered the bank, to the accompaniment of more shots, and Mac knew that one of the men was against a partition inside the counter, and that the other was crouching behind a desk.

He dropped to the floor and crawled towards the counter. A bullet sang past his left ear as he reached it; another one almost scorched his cheek as he clambered up and exposed himself. Danny fired twice in rapid succession, and then Mac hurled himself upon the fellow by the partition, bore him to the floor and handcuffed him.

He reached for his hat, which had fallen from his head in the struggle, and he looked about him. The darkness had seemed intense when first he had entered the bank, but his eyes had become accustomed to it by now, and a street lamp was shining in at one of the windows. He saw that the man who had been crouching behind the desk was lying on his face, motionless.

"Get up!" he rasped at his captive, and, as the command was obeyed, dragged him across the floor to his confederate and found that the confederate was dead.

"Well, he ain't gonna cost the State anything," he remarked. "You're lucky! You'd have been lyin' right alongside of him if I'd had my gun! Come on!"

Out from behind the counter he dragged his prisoner, and he called out triumphantly:

"We got 'em both, Danny!"

"That's—great—Mac," responded

feble voice from across the big room; and Mac immediately opened one side of the handcuffs to fasten his prisoner to a brass grille on the counter, so that he could go and find his colleague.

Danny was slumped against a wall with his chin on his chest.

"You got hit!" exclaimed Mac, catching hold of his arm. "You got hit!"

"In the middle," faltered Danny.

There was a telephone for the use of customers not very far away. Mac dived into the box and dialed the operator.

"Send a police ambulance to the Drover's Bank right away," he directed, and went back to Danny.

"I knew you'd get hit," he said miserably. "I told you you would! Why didn't you sail in like I did? Why didn't you listen to me? You're too careful—you've always been too careful. That's the trouble! I told you to wade in! I've been tellin' you that ever since I've known you!"

"Sure," murmured Danny, "I know, Mac—but I guess we don't figure the same."

"What's that gotta do with it?" complained Mac. "If you're gonna be a cop you've gotta be a fightin' cop. It's the careful guys that get hurt! I've told you, and I've told you, and I've told you! Now look at you! You've got plugged—plugged because you stood out there like a target, waitin' for 'em!"

Danny held a hand to his stomach and sagged forward, and Mac, in high concern, held him up.

"Does it hurt much, Danny?" he asked gently.

"Gettin' plugged like this ain't so bad," muttered Danny. "It's getting a slug in the wrong place. You know, bein' crippled, spendin' the rest of your life with somebody washin' you and dressin' you, and pushin' you around."

"But Danny," said Mac, "when you're afraid—"

"Who's afraid?" Danny interrupted, a cold perspiration streaming from his brow and his face all twisted with agony. "You think you're brave, but you'll never be brave, Mac, till you've been scared—and bein' scared ain't bein' yellow."

"I didn't say you were yellow, Danny," protested Mac.

The police ambulance arrived and Danny was taken off to hospital; a patrol wagon was summoned, and the uninjured crook was taken off to gaol. About an hour afterwards, Mac opened the front door of the flat in East Ninety-ninth Street, and Sally was with him.

"Is that Danny?" Mrs. Walsh called out from the sitting-room, where she was darning a pair of her husband's socks.

"No, it's me!" Mac marched into the room. "This is Sally Rogers, the girl I was telling you about."

Mrs. Walsh approved of Sally at first glance and put her arms round her shoulders.

"I'm so glad to see you," she said warmly. "It's about time he brought you around."

Tears flooded Sally's eyes and Mac turned away to the window. Mrs. Walsh looked from one to the other in bewilderment.

"Is anything wrong?" she asked.

"Danny's dead!" blurted Mac. "He stopped a slug down at the Drover's Bank."

"Mac!" Sally cried in a horrified voice; but Mrs. Walsh seemed stunned. She stared at Mac as he strode about the room, then bowed her head and buried her face in her hands



He knelt with the note in his hand beside the fallen messenger, and he shook the chin he had assaulted with his fist.

"I warned him!" raged Mac. "I warned the guy a hundred times, but he wouldn't listen! He had to play it careful, but you can't give a crook an even break. I told him he'd get it! I told him time after time, you gotta get the other guy before he gets you. You gotta sail in! 'It ain't gettin' slugged,' he kept tellin' me, 'it's gettin' hurt.' That's what he was afraid of—gettin' hurt!"

Mrs. Walsh sank into a chair and Sally leaned over her. But Mac continued to stalk back and forth like a caged animal, giving vent to his own feelings without a thought for the feelings of a woman rendered speechless with grief.

"Now look where he is because he wouldn't listen! It happens every time! A scared cop is a dead cop!"

"Shut up!" Sally blazed at him. "Get out! Go on, get out!"

He stared at her in blank astonishment, and then Mrs. Walsh began to sob and he went hurriedly out from the room.

In Broad Daylight

APRIL passed; May came. The thirty days that Mac had given himself in which to recapture Lefty Berger expired on the tenth of May, but the convict was still at large a week after that date.

The boastful detective was on his way out from police headquarters on the morning of the twentieth when a man stopped him on the steps.

"McCaffrey?"

"Yeah."

"Here's a message for you."

Mac accepted the envelope which was offered to him, and the man who had delivered it rushed down the steps and disappeared before it was opened. Inside was a newspaper cutting with the headline, "I'll have Berger back in gaol in thirty days," and over the headline

was written in red ink: "Don't make me laugh!—B."

Mack hadn't any idea whom "B." might be, but he was furious. He thrust the cutting into a pocket and went off to a lunch-room round the corner in Broadway, where he perched on a stool and ordered a sup of coffee.

In a mirror behind the counter he caught sight of Sally, seated at a table. It was the first time he had seen her since the night of Danny's death, and he immediately descended from the stool and went over to her.

"Remember me?" he asked.

She looked up at him—and at the hat upon his head.

"I don't remember the face," she said, "but the bad manners are familiar."

Off came the hat.

"Mind if I sit down?"

"I wouldn't mind if you fell down!" she retorted.

He seated himself beside her and a fat waiter immediately approached the table, but was ignored.

"Still sore, eh?" he suggested.

"I never was sore," she declared.

"Then why didn't you answer your telephone? I've been calling you for the last four weeks!"

"I had nothing to say."

"You could listen, though, couldn't you? I had plenty to say."

The waiter coughed to attract attention.

"What do you want?" Mac rapped at him.

"That's what I'm supposed to ask you," the man replied with a grin.

"I don't want anything! Beat it!"

Sally's empty cup and saucer were placed upon an empty plate and the waiter went off with them. Sally rose. "Been frightening any more widows lately?" she asked pointedly.

"Haven't had any time," he replied, getting to his feet and walking with

ner towards the pay-desk. "I've been too busy trailing Tony Ricci."

"Ricci?" she echoed. "What good will that do you? I thought it was Berger you were after."

"He's a Berger's man, and one of these days he's gonna lead me right smack to him."

"Won't that be fun?"

"Berger won't think so."

She paid her own bill and she walked out from the lunch-room in a manner that discouraged him from accompanying her.

On the tenth of June a perfect stranger stopped him in the street, asked him if his name was McCaffrey, and handed him an envelope. At the same moment a newsboy pestered him to buy a paper, and the stranger vanished into a big office building.

Mac opened the envelope with misgivings which were justified. Inside it was a calendar page for the month of June, with a red circle round the date!

That day he had an interview with Inspector Curran because the inspector had sent for him.

"I've got twenty different stools working in twenty different places," he asserted, "but Berger might just as well have dropped off the face of the map."

"What about Ricci?" asked Curran. "I've done everything but sleep with him."

"If only you hadn't promised to have Berger back up the river in thirty days," said Curran bitterly, "the papers wouldn't be jumping on us now!"

"He's gotta show up one of these days," growled Mac, "and when he does it's gonna be just too bad for him."

"And if it isn't soon," retorted the inspector, "it's going to be just too bad for us! All right!"

About a week later McCaffrey trailed Tony Ricci to a telegraph office on the east side of the city and waited in an adjacent doorway till the swarthy crook came out and went off in a car. Then, full of high hopes, he entered the office, displayed his badge to the girl behind the counter, and demanded to see the message which had just been dispatched.

The telegraph form was produced for his inspection. On it was written:

"Detective-Sergeant McCaffrey,
Police Headquarters, 18th Precinct,
City.

"Thirty days hath September, April,
June and November.—Ricci."

He went back to West Forty-seventh Street in the worst of tempers, and he was mounting the steps outside headquarters when a black-browed man stopped him.

"Know where I'll find McCaffrey?"

An envelope was in the man's hand, and that was more than enough to infuriate the already discomfited detective.

"Right here!" he roared, and struck out with his left fist to such purpose that the man fell backwards down the steps to the pavement and sprawled there.

Mac sped down to him and picked up the envelope which had dropped on a flagstone. He ripped it open while a patrolman and pedestrians gathered round.

"Smart guy, eh?" he snarled. "This time you'll wait for an answer!"

A folded sheet of paper was extracted from the envelope, but the expression of wrath on Mac's face changed to one of utter consternation as he opened it out and read:

June 20th, 1936.

"Meet me in the lunch-room on Second Avenue. I'm hungry.—SALLY."

He knelt with the note in his hand beside the fallen messenger, and he shook the chin he had assaulted with his fist.

"Hi, fella!" he said remorsefully. "Look, look! Honest I didn't mean to do that! Honest I didn't!"

Within half an hour he was seated beside Sally at a table in the lunch-room where he had made her acquaintance and was overjoyed to find her quite friendly again. They had a meal together and talked.

"You sure like coffee," commented Sally, after he had had his cup refilled for the third time.

"I must," he returned, "or I wouldn't drink so much hot water just to get a little of it."

Matt O'Brien entered the lunch-room with his camera slung over his shoulder, saw them, and seated himself at their table.

"How are you, flatfoot?" he said.

"What d'you know?"

"Everything," replied Mac, who was none too pleased at his arrival. "What do you want me to tell you?"

"Where's Berger? You're the guy that said you'd have him back in thirty days!"

Mac grabbed up a bowl of sugar with the intention of tossing its contents into the grinning face of the photographer; but he put the bowl down again and sprang to his feet as shots rang out in the street, followed by screams.

Out from the lunch-room he flew and across the roadway, with Sally and Matt O'Brien close behind him. On the opposite pavement a crowd was gathering round a man in dark clothes who lay with his head on the second step of the house whence Lefty Berger had been carried in a basket.

"It's Martin!" Mac exclaimed, and he dropped on his knees beside the prone form and felt at a wrist in which there was no pulse.

"It—it was de feller in de car," said an excited man who was standing against the railings of the area with a small boy beside him. "We saw de whole thing, me and Tommy. Golly, it was just like in dem detective magazines!"

Mac looked up at the speaker, obviously a Swede, thin of face but by no means lean of body.

"You saw it, eh?"

"Sure I did," was the emphatic reply. "Me and Tommy, we was just walking down de street when dis car came by."

"How many men were in it?" demanded Mac.

"Dere wasn't anybody else in de car—only de driver."

"All right."

Mac stood up, and he drove the crowd back so that O'Brien could take photographs of the eye-witness and his small son. Sally took out a notebook and asked questions.

The name of the Swede, she ascertained, was William Anderson, and he lived at Tatum Place, in the Bronx. Police officers arrived, an ambulance was summoned to convey the dead body of the lawyer to the mortuary, and Sally and O'Brien took a taxicab to the office of the "Star."

The Lie Detector

THAT evening, in his own home, William Anderson proudly displayed to his very plain wife and his aged mother a picture of himself and his offspring on the front page of the "Star," a picture which was captioned:

"William Anderson, accountant, and his nine-year-old son Tommy, of 1,824, Tatum Place, eye-witnesses in the fatal shooting of John Martin, noted criminal lawyer."

"It's a wonder you didn't get shot!" shuddered Mrs. Anderson.

"Sure it is," agreed her spouse proudly. "Gosh, bullets was flying around just like another World War, wasn't it, Tommy? Mamma, I bet you never t'ought we'd get our names in de paper dat way, and our pictures, too."

"It's awful!" said Grandma Anderson.

Her daughter-in-law suggested that another copy of the paper should be obtained and sent to a certain Cousin Eric.

"I t'ought o' dat," said Anderson, "and I bought a couple."

He went out from the living-room into the lounge hall and returned with nearly a quire of "Stars" which he stacked upon a table.

"A couple!" quoth Grandma Anderson, viewing the pile.

"Well, it ain't every day we get our pictures in de paper."

A telephone-bell rang and Mrs. Anderson went to the instrument, which reposed on a sideboard.

"Hallo, yes?" she said. "Well, this is Mrs. Anderson. Yes, I'm Mr. Anderson's wife."

Anderson swept over to her.

"Who is it?" he asked eagerly.

"Who is it?"

"Will you give me a chance to hear?" she silenced him. "What? No, I was just talking to my husband. Now what is it? Tell him what?" Her eyes widened and her face paled. "He'd better keep his mouth shut? You—you mean you'd kill him?"

"Kill me!" gasped William Anderson. "Who—who is dis?"

With a very shaky hand his wife replaced the instrument.

"He wouldn't give me any name," she faltered. "He just said you mustn't tell the police anything at all about seeing Martin get shot, or something'll happen to you. Why did you have to say anything? Suppose they was to do something to us."

William Anderson became terrified. "B-but, you see, dey asked me so quick, I—I already told dem I saw it," he stammered. "What can I do?"

His wife considered that point.

"Ain't a person liable to forget?" she asked. "D'you want to get us all killed? If the police talk to you again say you don't remember. Understand? You don't remember."

"I don't remember," repeated her husband, like one learning a lesson.

He repeated the phrase again next morning at headquarters. Inspector Curran had sent for him, and he sat very uncomfortably in a chair facing that officer with plain-clothes men all around him.

"What d'you mean, you don't remember?" rapped Mac. "You knew all about it yesterday."

"Are you keeping quiet because you're afraid to talk?" asked Curran shrewdly.

"Honest, I don't remember," protested Anderson. "You see, I—I don't see so good. It's my eyes—"

"You're an accountant, and your eyes are no good, eh?" scoffed Mac. "Yesterday you told me in the presence of this patrolman that you saw the guy who did the shooting as he went by in the car. What does he look like?"

"I don't remember," persisted Anderson.

One after another the inspector laid six cards on the desk in front of him,

and on each of the cards were side-face and full-face photographs of criminals, including Lefty Berger.

"Do you recognise any of these?" he asked.

Anderson said "No" to all of them, and it seemed to Curran that he was most emphatic about the last one.

"You're lying!" he accused.
 "I'm not lying," Anderson averred.
 "I'm telling you I don't recognise any of dem."

At a signal from Curran two of the plain-clothes men pushed forward a little wheel-table on which a curious instrument stood.

"Did you ever hear of a lie instrument?" thundered Curran.

Anderson shook his head and gazed apprehensively at the instrument.

"Take off your coat and roll up your right sleeve."

The unhappy man obeyed and sat down again, whereupon an attachment such as is used for taking blood-pressure was fastened to his arm and a flex was passed round his body over his heart.

"You may lie to us," said the inspector, "but you can't lie to that."

A dial on the machine was turned and the sound of a high-frequency current rose to a shrill hum. Curran pointed to a chart beside the dial and to a recording needle above it.

"When you tell a lie," he said, "your pulse quickens and this needle shows it on the chart. All right, we know that one of these six men shot Martin, and we also know by your own admission that you saw him. Now, do you recognise this man?"

"No," Anderson replied, and the needle of the machine did not deviate in the least from a straight line it traced upon the chart.

The other five cards of photographs

produced equally negative results, though perspiration stood in beads upon the Swede's brow.

"Take it off!" said Curran, and the band was removed, the flex was removed, and the lie detector was wheeled away.

"Very well, Anderson," Curran said sternly, "if you won't help us we can't make you, but I just want to tell you this. The citizens of this city are quick to complain about the slow work of the police, but the police are slow only because of people like you. Instead of helping justice you hinder it because you're a coward. It isn't that you don't remember; you won't remember. You're scared."

He sat down and waved his hand in dismissal.

"All right, you can go now. When we want you again we'll send for you."

Anderson did not stop to put on his coat. He grabbed it and his hat, and he went out from the room as fast as his legs could carry him. The other officers were dismissed save Mac, and the inspector said to him disappointedly:

"Well, it couldn't have been Berger!"

"No?" returned that detective sceptically. "Well, I wouldn't give you a dime for a dozen of your lie detectors. Martin told me Berger was after him. I know it was Berger."

"Then why don't you bring him in?"

"I often wonder!"

A clerk entered with two photographic prints which he placed on the desk before the inspector. They looked precisely similar, but actually they were micro-photographic enlargements of two separate bullets.

"That," said the clerk, pointing to one of them, "is the bullet that killed Martin. It was fired from the same gun as this one, which is the bullet with which Berger killed Casey."

"From the same gun, eh?" exclaimed Mac. "So it wasn't Berger, eh? I told you those lie detectors are

no good. Why, if a guy's a good liar—"

"Wait a minute, wait a minute!" interrupted Curran with a sudden inspiration. "There's nothing wrong with that lie detector. Use your head. How long is it since you saw Berger?"

"The night he escaped," Mac replied. "Two months ago."

"This bullet says 'Berger,' but when Anderson saw Berger's picture nothing happened. D'you know why? Because Berger has had his appearance changed. Who says the lie detector doesn't work? Anderson didn't recognise these photos. Nobody knows what Berger looks like now, nobody but his own mob and that little rat Anderson."

"Then Anderson's got to talk!" howled Mac.

"Listen, McCaffrey," said Curran, "there'll be no more of that."

When Mac went off duty that evening he carried with him a number of matt bromide prints of Berger, enlarged for him by the photographic department from the record cards. He took them home with him, spread them out on a chesterfield and with a pencil made various alterations to Berger's face, adding a moustache in one print, an imperial in another, and so forth.

Sally called by appointment at eight o'clock, but instead of getting ready to take her out to dinner he continued with his self-appointed task.

She sat on the arm of the chesterfield for over half an hour without a word from him, then rose with an air of determination and picked up her coat and handbag.

He looked round as she opened the door, but she went straight out to the stairs, and he called after her in vain. He rushed out from the flat, and down in the hall he caught up with her.



"All right," said the inspector, "we know that one of these six men shot Martin, and we also know by your own admission that you saw him. Now do you recognise this man?"

"Where you goin'?" he asked. "Thought we were going to have some dinner together. What's the matter? Don't you feel good?"

She looked him straight in the eye, and she said coldly:

"For the first time in a long while, Mac, I guess I don't feel at all, or rather, I'm beginning to feel sorry I've made such a fool of myself."

"What're you talkin' about?" he asked in a puzzled sort of way.

"We're wasting our time, Mac," she replied. "I'm wasting mine, and you're wasting yours. I had it all figured out once before—that night Danny Walsh died, but I didn't have sense enough to realise it. You don't go in for mush or sentiment or heart, Mac, and that's why this is no good."

"Now wait a minute!" howled Mac, but she went on relentlessly:

"At first I thought it was your job, this being an eternal policeman—a two-legged bloodhound. But it isn't; it's your nature, and you can't change that. But women are funny animals, Mac. You see, women are full of mush and sentiment, and they overlook a lot, but all of a sudden they can't overlook any more, and then they up and out—just like I'm doing now."

"Aw," said he rudely, thrusting his hands in his pockets, "what you need is a powder."

She opened the front door, and when she was out on the top step she slammed it behind her.

In the Dark

SOME little time later Mac travelled up into the Bronx in the police car he usually drove, and he found the Andersons' house in Tatum Place without any great difficulty. It was a frame building of no great size but with quite a pretentious porch, and it stood in its own neat little garden wall well back from the road.

William Anderson opened the front door to him, and he would have shut it in his face had he not been denied the opportunity. Mac had called to question the small boy Tommy, and question him he did, in the presence of his indignant parents and his equally indignant grandmother.

"Come on now, think hard," he insisted. "What did the guy with the gun look like?"

"The cowboys," piped the youngster. "What would that child know about it?" stormed Grandma Anderson.

"How can you expect a kid his age to remember?" William Anderson demanded plaintively.

"Bad memories run in your family, don't they?" sneered Mac, and turned to the boy again. "D'you know what happens to kids when they tell lies?"

"Let go o' me!" whimpered the youngster.

"All right," said Mac grimly, "that's that. Get your hat, Anderson, and his, too."

"But Tommy shouldn't go out this time of night," complained the old lady. "It's past his bedtime now."

"When I want information from you," Mac retorted, "I'll ask for it. He's going down to headquarters."

On the other side of Tatum Place, as Mac went out from the house with Anderson and the boy, a dark blue saloon was standing. Tony Ricci was in it with another member of Berger's gang, and they were watching the house. There were two men in the front seat.

"What's the idea of takin' the kid?" growled Ricci's companion.

"Forget the kid," returned the swarthy crook. "He don't know what day it is."

June 20th, 1936.

"If he gives that guy the works once more—"

"Shut up!" hissed Ricci.

Anderson and Tommy were driven down to headquarters, but Mac got no farther with them than the switchboard in the outer office, for there the officer on duty informed him that someone had just been trying to get him on the telephone.

"Male or female?" asked Mac, foolish enough to think that Sally might have relented.

"Well, it sounded like a man to me," was the reply, "but it could have been a woman with a bass voice. They said to tell you not to worry, they had Anderson's mother, and you could tell it to the guy that was with you."

"My mother?" gasped Anderson.

"How long ago?" demanded Mac.

"I said just before you came in," replied the officer at the switchboard.

"Berger's got her!" decided Mac. "Come on."

Back to the house in Tatum Place McCaffery drove as fast as traffic and traffic lights permitted. The dark blue saloon had not moved, but Tony Ricci was on the sidewalk now, peering round the back of it and a six-shooter was in his hand.

Anderson was out of the police car the instant it stopped, and Tommy jumped down after him. They were running along the garden path when Mac descended from the wheel, jumped a low hedge, and ran across a lawn to catch up with them. He heard a shot, felt something hit him in the forehead, and went down with a thud upon the turf.

Anderson looked back from the porch, and his wife came running out from the house; Tommy screamed. On the other side of the road Tony Ricci scrambled into the blue saloon and the hum of its engine died away in the distance.

Mae tried to raise himself as Anderson stooped over him, but sank down again with a groan.

"Are you hurt?" asked the Swede foolishly.

"I feel fine," gritted Mac. "Get an ambulance."

"But my mother—how about my mother?"

"Get an ambulance."

Mrs. Anderson telephoned for an ambulance, and Mac was swept off to hospital in it. He was kept in a dark ward for two days, and then was taken home with a bandage not merely over the wound in his forehead, but over his eyes as well.

For three days Mrs. Walsh suffered almost as much from his temporary blindness as he did himself, for he was afraid to be left alone even for a few minutes.

In the evening of the fifth day after Ricci had shot him Danny's widow said several uncomplimentary things about Sally as she cleared away the remains of a meal.

"She's a fine sort of a girl!" she fumed. "You shot, and her not coming near you to see how you are. I knew you'd pick out some lightheaded fool who wouldn't give a snap of the fingers whether you lived or died."

Mae remained silent in his chair. His pride would not permit him to explain the true circumstances.

"Well, aren't you goin' to say something?" she snapped at him, sweeping towards the kitchen door with a loaded tray.

"Where you goin'?" he cried out.

"I'm only carrying these dishes into the kitchen," she replied. "Don't be so jumpy."

"How would you be," he demanded,

"if you were sittin' here with your eyes tied up, not knowing what's going on?"

"Well, the doctor says you've got to stay there and not remove the bandage," she reminded him. "If you'd been shot a fraction of an inch lower—"

"Stop it, will you?" he burst out. "Why do you keep harping on that all the time?"

The doorbell rang, and he leaned forward, listening intently as she put down the tray and went to answer its summons. Sally was outside.

"Oh, come in," said Mrs. Walsh.

"Why, we were just talking about you."

"Who is it?" bellowed Mac.

"It's me—Sally," replied Sally, entering the room. "How do you feel?"

Mae relaxed in his chair.

"Fine," he said with sarcasm.

"I didn't know it was this bad," she murmured sympathetically.

"Oh, it came near to being a lot worse," said Mrs. Walsh. "I'm so glad you've come. I haven't got a thing in the place for breakfast, and he won't let me step a foot out of this room."

"You go ahead," urged Sally. "I'll stay here until you come back."

"I won't be any time at all."

The tray was conveyed to the kitchen and Mrs. Walsh shed her apron, put on a hat, and went off to make some purchases.

"I thought you were all washed up with me," said Mae after a while.

"Who said I wasn't?" Sally retorted.

"I know," he drawled. "You just came around because you hate me."

"Listen to me, Mister Detective-Sergeant," said she severely, "we've been through all that before. Why don't you just put it down to the fact that I want to be friendly—that I want to help?"

"I sure would like to be able to figure you out!"

"If you'd just figure yourself out," she informed him, "you'd have no trouble understanding me."

"Huh!" he grunted. "Got a cigarette?"

She had no cigarettes with her, and a box on the mantelpiece to which he directed her was empty.

"I'll go out and get you some," she said.

"No, never mind!" he cried. "Stay here, will you?"

"But it's only down to the corner, sarge. I'll be back in just a minute. Take it easy."

"Take it easy?" he howled. "Take it easy? That's all right for you to say. You've never been like this! Suppose somebody was to take a crack at me, what could I do? I tell you it's like having your hands tied! Anybody could do anything to you!"

"But nobody's going to do anything to you," she said soothingly. "Now pull yourself together—I won't be a minute."

She patted him on the shoulder, picked up her handbag, and went out. He heard the front door being opened and closed, and he sat bolt upright in his chair with every muscle tense.

The flat was so quiet that the ticking of the clock on the mantelpiece beat into his ears. The window of the living-room was open, because the night was warm, and outside the window was a well on to which the windows of other flats opened. Across the well somebody raised a creaking sash, and Mac sprang up in alarm and whipped a gun from a pocket of his dressing-gown.

"Say something!" he shouted wildly.

"Why don't you say something? Say something, d'you hear?"

He blundered against a little table, and

(Continued on page 25)

The shooting of this girl was so wonderful that the manager of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show signed her up. Toby Walker, the rifle champion of the world, was with the show and his arrogant, boastful ways made him far from popular. Eventually, Annie wrests the title from him and Toby starts on the down grade. In a contest he wounds her and is fired by an irate Colonel Cody—they thought it was revenge! A smashing drama, starring Barbara Stanwyck



The Two Champions

THIS story goes way back to 1885, when Cineinatti was just a smallish town composed mostly of wooden buildings, and the MacIvor Hotel was its only decent place for a night's lodging.

Outside Lem Jordan's store a bill-poster was busy fixing a large notice. It proclaimed that "the Great Toby Walker, World's Champion Shot," would give a shooting display at the Bijou Theatre during the week of August 13th.

On the steps of the store stood the sheriff, Lem Jordan and several of their cronies. All were staring curiously and expectantly at a slip of a girl who was gazing solemnly at the poster. Thick brown curls tumbled from beneath a funny old felt hat; her ealico dress was worn and faded—and yet this girl was remarkably attractive. Her smile was so bright and happy.

Seated on an old wagon, which was loaded with stores, were an elderly woman and two youngsters—a boy and a girl. They were the young woman's mother and her sister and brother. They were just as absorbed as the men in watching. The opinion of Annie Oakley was valued even though she was no more than twenty years of age.

"Gosh, ma—ain't he prime?" Annie exclaimed. "He's the greatest shooter in the whole world."

"All right, buddy"—Lem Jordan waved to the bill-poster—"you can leave it up."

If Annie had ordered that notice to be torn down and trampled in the dust it would have been done. Shooting meant so much in Annie's life. For five years Annie had supported her widowed mother, Susan and Wesley by her skill with a gun. The gun she had inherited from her father had made Annie famous. She supplied countless tables with a delicacy—quail. Every bird Annie brought down with a single shot. Annie had driven up to Lem's store with six dozen fine quail when the bill-poster had started his task. The decision of whether it should remain had been left with the girl.

Lem paid for the quail, and then the girl and her family drove away. The men watched the old wagon till it was out of sight.

"I'll wager that gal could knock the eye out of a bumblebee at fifty yards," muttered the sheriff.

"Yeah!" Old Lem nodded his head. "Them quail she shoots don't know what hits 'em. Slap in the head every time. She's a regular little wonder."

The Challenge

I N the saloon of the MacIvor Hotel there were a great number of men.

Most of them were members of the sporting fraternity. They wore the latest style in morning coats and many wore tall hats.

Little MacIvor—he of the bushy eyebrows, drooping whiskers and canny disposition—came bustling out of the kitchen. He had just been to see that

his black chef was roasting correctly the quail that Annie had shot. There was to be quite a banquet that night at his hotel, for the great Toby Walker was residing under its roof.

In the saloon it was not very hard to find out which was Toby Walker. He leaned against the bar with an air of patronage and self-importance. Toby was a tall and very handsome man, but his enormous conceit and arrogance had made him far from popular. That did not worry Toby very much, for everyone had to step to one side and knuckle down to a person so important as himself. He was the greatest shot in the world, and, in Toby's opinion, quite as important a person as the King of England.

Whilst Toby's clothes were of a loud pattern, those of the slim, clear-eyed and clever man standing near his side were of modest black. But those clothes were of good cloth and well cut, and the wearer of a commanding appearance that almost amounted to good looks. Jeff Hogarth was a very important person. He was the manager of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, and that very morning he had succeeded in signing up the crack sharpshooter.

"Well, Toby Walker," Hogarth raised his glass. "Here's to a new member of Buffalo Bill's happy family." Toby grinned.

"Guess you've done a good day's work, Jeff."

"Yes, I think so," came the answer. The brown eyes studied the big man

speculatively. "Colonel Cody and I don't sign up any second-raters, only champions."

A somewhat inebriated sportsman chanced to overhear the last remark, and swayed towards the saloon bar. Hogarth laughed and managed to save the drunk from falling.

"So you're a champion shooter, huh?" the sportsman leered. "I don't believe it. Bet I could beat you myself."

Toby Walker was amused.

"Well, money talks, captain. Why not make a contest with me?"

The sportsman was not quite so drunk as to accept the challenge. He gave a sheepish grin and swayed in Hogarth's arms. But some of the others joined into the conversation and asked Toby Walker if he were prepared to lay any odds on himself.

"Three to one," was the champion's reply. "And you gentlemen can name your own targets and distance."

It was disappointment to the champion that no one accepted these odds. It was in saloons, where drink flowed freely, that he usually lured some fool sportsman into making a challenge for some considerable sum of money, which he always won with the greatest of ease.

"Ain't there one sport in this one-eyed town?" Toby said with a curl of the lips. "I'll give you four to one."

Old MacIvor paused, and into the shrewd, canny eyes there came a sudden gleam.

"Could you make it five to one, Mr. Walker?"

"Mac, you keep outa this," chuckled the champion. "We ain't betting marbles. This is for money."

The proprietor smiled.

"Well, I believe I've got someone who might make it interesting for you."

"How about a little bet of a hundred dollars, to make it more interesting?"

"Hundred dollars?" MacIvor shook his head. "I don't think that would interest me. But two hundred might."

"It's a bet!" Toby cried, and grinned triumphantly. Some more easy money was coming his way. "But you'll have to see my new boss here to arrange the details."

It was arranged that the contest should take place the following morning at the Gun Club. MacIvor, in a moment of extraordinary generosity, invited the sportsmen to have drinks on the house, and when he saw how many crowded round the bar, wanted to make it "beers all round." When everyone had gone, the proprietor wondered if he had done a foolish thing. He hastened to the telephone, which, in his words, was a "new-fangled instrument of torture," and managed, after some while, to get through to Lem Jordan's store.

"Hallo, Lem. I want you to get hold of that quail-shooter. The one that sells you the birds you send up here. I've got a shooting match—a shooting match for him. Get him, and I'll give you thirty dollars. What's his name?" The 'phone was very bad and Mac was a little deaf. "What's that? Oakley. It's Oakley—Andy Oakley? All right, Lem, have him here in the morning." He was about to ring off when he thought of something. "Oh, Lem, Lem—make certain sure he's sober."

The Shooting Match

THERE was a big crowd at the shooting club on the morrow, and Toby Walker, resplendent in an ornate garment of white buckskin and a stonemason to match, strutted about like a peacock. He told someone that he was shooting against a rube from the hills by the name of Oakley, but doubtful if this person would put in an appearance.

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Old Mac was feeling rather sorry he had made the wager.

"Anyone that can hit quail in the head with single ball can shoot for my money," he cried, but his smile was rather pathetic.

Just when Walker announced that he could not wait all day, a girl in aingham frock came and touched old MacIvor on the sleeve.

"Are you looking for me? My name is Oakley."

"Oakley?" questioned the hotel proprietor. "Where's your father?"

"Why, he's dead."

Mac gave a startled grunt.

"Then where is your brother?"

Annie pointed to a small, rather plump youth.

"This is my brother." She indicated a young girl. "And this is my sister, Susan."

"I expect it's your cousin or uncle I want," Mac muttered. "You see, I'm looking for Andy Oakley, who's been supplying me with game."

Annie laughed.

"I guess you've made a mistake, mister. Not Andy Oakley—but Annie. It's me you sent for."

"A girl!" His eyes nearly protruded from his head.

Mac made quite a scene. He cried that it was someone's idea of a joke, and that the contest was off. Jeff Hogarth heard old Mac arguing and came over to see what the trouble was, and he laughed heartily when he found this slip of a girl was the champion that Mac thought could beat the one and only Toby Walker. But he became quite serious when Annie indignantly stated that she wanted to back herself for forty dollars, and that this was not her money, but that of Sheriff Briggs and Lem Jordan. Though her clothes were so old and quaint, she made a pleasing picture, and Jeff took a great fancy to her.

"Miss Oakley," he assured her, "you're going to have your chance. You shall shoot against Toby Walker." "Toby Walker!" Now it was Annie's turn to have a surprise. She had thought she had to shoot against some local sportsman, but the idea of competing against this champion terrified her. "It's not because I'm scared to shoot against him," she explained to Jeff. "But it don't seem right, somehow."

"You wouldn't have a chance, girl," cried Mac. "I ain't scared he can beat me!" flared Annie.

"We're going through with the contest," decided Jeff. "Mac made a wager with Mister Walker, and all these sportsmen have gathered here to see the fun. I shall be the first to congratulate you if you win, Miss Oakley. I am sure you will put up a great show against Toby."

Toby Walker had been talking boastfully of his shooting exploits, and there were many eager to listen to this great personage. Jeff Hogarth had to push his way through a small crowd to get to the man he had just signed for Buffalo Bill's Show.

"All set, Toby!"

"Ah, so this rube's shown up at last," grinned Toby.

"If you'll take your place by the table with the guns I'll send the challenger out to you." A slight smile twitched Jeff's sensitive lips.

Toby Walker sauntered across to the table, and, just to show off, began to pick up his guns and strike a pose with them. Just to give the people something to think about and his challenger a sinking feeling, he fired a number of shots at small bottles and broke the tops off. Everyone cheered loudly.

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Annie, carrying her father's gun, came nervously towards the table. She eyed the guns admiringly, and was so impressed that she put down her weapon to pick up one of Toby's.

Toby turned and saw her.

"Hey, don't meddle with those guns!"

"I'm sorry, mister." She smiled in friendly fashion. "But whenever I see a gun, I always feel I must handle it."

A sarcastic grin appeared on the man's face. He adopted a patronising attitude.

"What's a kid like you know about guns?"

Annie picked up her father's musket. "I got one here—it went clean through the Civil War."

He roared with laughter.

"Don't tell me you shoot with a thing like that."

"Of course I do!" Her eyes flashed indignation.

"Well, you hang around"—he peered down the barrel of a gun—"and then you'll see some shooting that is shooting."

Jeff Hogarth came up and touched Toby on the shoulder. He was grinning as he indicated the girl.

"Meet your opponent, Miss Annie Oakley."

"What do you mean?" gasped Toby, and, seeing the Scottish proprietor behind Hogarth, pushed forward to grip him by the arm. "Hey, Mac, is this your idea of a joke?"

"It ain't funny to me," Mac said dismally.

"You can't expect me to shoot against a half-baked kid, and a girl at that?" angrily shouted Toby.

"He's right, Mister MacIvor." Annie seemed amused. "He'd look awful silly if I beat him in front of all these folks."

"Beat me! Why, you—" Toby controlled himself with an effort. "Get those targets ready."

"Make him earn his money, Annie," whispered Jeff.

A bracket with a number of bottles was set up. The size of the bottles varied, with the largest on the left and a minute specimen on the right.

"As the challenger, you shoot first," Steele, the president of the gun club and the referee for this match, explained to the girl. "Start with the end target. Clear the range, boys."

Up went her gun and she smashed the smallest bottle. That made Toby Walker blink.

"You started at the wrong end," corrected Steele.

"I like starting with the hardest first," Annie answered. "Will you set it up again, please?"

Annie broke those bottles at thirty yards range as if they were as easy to shoot as large balloons. Then Toby Walker had a similar target, and broke all his bottles. The crowd roared its approval. They made the bottles smaller and farther away. All the bottles were broken again.

"This is too easy," cried Walker. "Give us something to shoot at."

"Certainly," answered Steele. "We'll use moving targets if it's agreeable with Miss Oakley."

"Well, I never shot a quail while it was sitting down," was Annie's reply, and it made Toby Walker glare at her. She was so calm and assured.

"You'll shoot alternatively," decided the referee. "The first one to miss will lose the contest. Is that all right with you?" He looked at Annie.

"Yes."

"And you, Mr. Walker?"

"Fine."

"And you, Mr. MacIvor?"

"It's fine with me," the Scotsman nodded.

"Just call 'Ready!'" added Steele, "and the boys will release a clay pigeon from the pits. You shoot first, Miss Oakley."

"Ready!" called the girl.

"Throw!" ordered Steele.

The clay pigeon was catapulted up into the air; up went Annie's gun. Crack! The target was smashed into small pieces.

"A hit!" called the referee.

"Good shot!" grudgingly muttered Toby Walker.

Then it was Walker's turn to shoot, and he hit the pigeon without any difficulty. The pigeons shot out at all angles, but they seemed to present no difficulty to these two crack shots. The excitement became intense when each had scored a dozen hits in succession. Toby Walker was not looking so debonair and sure of himself. He kept on staring at Annie as if he could not believe it possible that a girl with an old musket could be hitting these elusive targets.

When each had scored a hit for thirty-six successive efforts, the referee called a halt and ordered the boys in the pits to try to release the pigeons so that the shooting became harder. It made no difference to Annie and Toby Walker.

It was rather fun battling against this handsome Toby Walker, but after a while Annie felt worried and upset. In the short rest she overheard several people talking to Hogarth and saying that he had signed up the wrong person. She heard Jeff Hogarth answer that Colonel Cody would not care to

have a man in his outfit that had been beaten by a girl. Then Mrs. Oakley did not pour oil on troubled waters.

"Honey, I hope you ain't going to be the cause of that young man losing his position. They do say he's just signed a big contract."

All this was troubling Annie as the match progressed. She glanced at Walker as he was firing and she saw that now his face looked lined. Though Annie admired Toby and thought him the most attractive man she had ever met, she was quite aware that the sportsmen at the Gun Club did not like him very much, as they shouted themselves hoarse every time she brought down the clay pigeons.

The score was forty-nine all and the grey look on Walker's face decided her. She could go on shooting quail all her life, and this match meant so little to her.

"Ready!" called Annie.

"Throw!" cried Steele.

Annie fired and the crowd gasped—it was a miss! Toby Walker squared his shoulders and glanced round triumphantly. The clapping was poor when he registered a hit and victory.

"Sister, don't take it too much to heart." Magnanimously he held out his hand. "You gave me about as good a match as anybody does."

"Thanks, Mr. Walker."

"You know, you've got possibilities. Too bad I won't be around to give you a few pointers." He laughed aggressively and too loudly.

Jeff Hogarth's eyes narrowed and he looked at Walker with an angry gleam in his brown eyes. He saw the girl with her mother and the two younger

children get into the old wagon and drive away. Suddenly Jeff snapped his fingers and, ignoring Walker's invitation to come and have a drink, raced off to his own buggy.

Annie was very quiet on the drive away from the club. She pulled up outside Lem Jordan's store, gave her mother a look that was full of meaning, and went into the store. She had to break the news that she had been beaten and lost their money.

Sheriff Briggs, Lem Jordan and their cronies were there and discussing the match. How their Annie had fired shot for shot against the champion and then missed the easiest target of all. They grinned at her a welcome.

"Folks, I'm gonna pay you folks back the money I lost if it takes a whole winter's shooting."

"Aw, forget it, Annie," cried the sheriff. "You done the best you could."

"That's just it—I didn't," Annie lunged her head. "I missed the last shot a purpose."

"You missed it a purpose?" reiterated Lem.

"I—I couldn't beat that feller," Annie made a sound like a sniff. "I didn't have the heart. He was—he was just too pretty."

They had nothing to say. They never argued with Annie. If Annie chose to miss then there was nothing more to be said about it. She sighed and went out of Lem's store.

"Hallo, Miss Oakley."

Annie looked up with a start to find the kindly natured manager standing there, hat in hand.

"Hallo?"



Up went her gun and she smashed the smallest bottle.

"Miss Oakley, you know, in all the excitement I completely forgot to get that bet of yours covered, and when I remembered, I had to chase all this way to find you."

Annie's face was wreathed in smiles. "Honest—you didn't bet the money?"

"No, I didn't. Here it is." He handed her some notes.

"Gee, now I can pay back the boys." "Oh, just a minute." He stayed her with a touch on the arm. "There is something else I want to see you about." He turned and addressed the older woman. "Mrs. Oakley, this daughter of yours is one of the finest shots I've ever seen."

"We're mighty proud of her," Mrs. Oakley beamed.

"And we'd be mighty proud to have her with the Buffalo Bill Show," stated Jeff Hogarth.

"Buffalo Bill?" both women gasped. "Why, yes," Jeff smiled. "I'm a partner of Colonel Cody's."

"I hope you ain't suggesting that Annie go galavantin' around the country with a lot of cowboys and wild Indians," Mrs. Oakley looked horrified.

"What would ma and the kids do without me?" Annie questioned.

"Oh, we'd pay you good money, and just think of it, Annie Oakley in the greatest shooting act in the country, billed right next to Toby Walker."

Jeff watched her closely. He was an astute man of affairs, and had not missed the admiring glances that Annie had given to the champion.

Annie clapped her hands. "You don't mean he's going to be there?"

"Every day for the next two years, rain or shine."

"Mister," Annie held out her hand, and laughed happily, "it's a deal."

Buffalo Bill

IN the tent before a large table covered with papers sat one of the most amazing men the world has ever known. Colonel Cody, or as most people know him—Buffalo Bill. The greatest scout and pioneer of the West, the most fearless man of the age and now the owner of the most famous of Wild West Shows.

Buffalo Bill was tall, powerfully built and his eyes gleamed like those of an eagle. Frank of face and loud of voice, but the colonel was genuine. A great friend but a deadly enemy. His raven hair hung over his shoulders and a tufted beard sprouted from his chin. He stared at the man perched on the edge of his table with a far from friendly gaze.

"Reckon the first thing you'd better know about this outfit is how I figure on running it. This is a real Wild West Show, with he-men doing the things they did on the plains. Now if you're carrying any sleight of hand up your sleeve, you'd better forget it. I want the real, genuine article or nothing."

"That's what you're getting, colonel. And naturally I expect to get billed at the top."

Colonel Cody smiled in a manner that was quite ferocious.

"I don't suppose you'd mind, Walker, if we put Buffalo Bill's name on the posters, too?"

It was like water off a duck's back. "Oh, I think that would be all right," Toby laughed in his braggardly way. "Guess I'll go along to my tent if that's all you want. Thanks for the friendly chat, colonel."

Scarce had Toby Walker gone to his quarters than Jeff Hogarth arrived and with him a very nervous Annie Oakley.

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"Now you wait right here while I break the news to the colonel," advised Jeff.

"I hope he'll like me." "Can't help it," chuckled Jeff.

Cody looked up and grinned to see his manager and partner.

"Well, you old horse thief, 'bout time you showed up."

"I'm sorry. I was a little delayed, Bill."

"I should think you would be. Probably ashamed to show your face after sending me that New York buckaroo."

"Toby Walker?" Hogarth questioned, and grinned when the colonel nodded. "Why, he's the greatest shot on earth, with the exception maybe of a gun-slinger I've just signed up."

"Another one?" Cody frowned. "What's his name?"

"Annie!" "Annie!"

"Annie!" Buffalo Bill shot to his feet. "What in tarnation thunder do you think we're running around here, a darned burlesque?"

"Now calm yourself, Bill," Hogarth gestured for the big man to sit down. "Annie Oakley's as good a shot as anyone I ever saw."

"Did I hear someone call my name?" said a gentle voice.

"Colonel Cody, meet Miss Annie Oakley," Jeff introduced.

"Well, dog my cats," exploded Cody. "How do, little missy?"

"Howdy?" "And Bill, she shoots as pretty as she looks."

"Maybe so." The colonel gave her an appraising glance. "But I never knowed any woman could shoot good enough to join this outfit."

"They say you're a mighty fine shot yourself, Mr. Buffalo Bill. How much you got says I can't beat you?"

"Bust my nuttuns," guffawed the scout approvingly. "How much you got says I can."

"Now, hold on you two," Jeff interposed. "With a woman who can outshoot most men she would soon be the greatest attraction in your show."

An ominous shake of the head. "Supposing she be a grand shot, how would it look on the billing? Buffalo Bill's blood-curling Wild West Show with the dainty Annie Oakley."

He looked at his manager. "And how will the boys take it—having a woman in the show?"

"Let's call 'em out and we'll talk to them right now," cried Jeff.

Buffalo Bill had more than two hundred men working for him. Cowboys, fighters, acrobats, athletes, Indians, carpenters, stable-hands, and all sorts. They looked at Annie Oakley askance and muttered among themselves that Buffalo Bill must be getting soft. But Annie smiled at them all so fearlessly that they hesitated to make any protest, and when she came into the big mess tent and took her place by the colonel's side they glanced at each other questioningly. As girls went she did not seem a bad sort of baggage. Time to voice their disapproval later, and needless to say within a week there wasn't a man who wouldn't have gone out of his way to help Annie. She became almost a saint to those hard-bitten men.

Annie at that first meal met a fat, jovial little man with side-whiskers and bright, twinkling eyes. Ned Buntline, the show's Press agent and campaign organizer.

Toby Walker, hearing that dinner was served, came in and got a surprise to find Annie in the company. When he heard that she had been signed on he opened his mouth to say a few scathing remarks, but the eyes of the girl were upon him. Toby cooled off

at once and managed to secure a seat next to Annie.

"Good luck, kid," he whispered. "Any time you want any advice or help you come to me."

"Ned," Jeff spoke across the table to Buntline. "It's up to you to put Miss Oakley across."

"You might even write her into those dime novels you write about the colonel here," suggested Toby Walker.

"A good idea, if it's all right with the colonel," Ned agreed. "How's this for a start. 'When she was a wee mite, Bill here saved her from Chief Sitting Bull's Redskins.'"

"Sitting Bull?" exploded Cody. "Sitting Bull's a valuable asset to any book," argued Buntline. "I happened to know that old Bull's in Washington, calling on the great white father." He turned to Hogarth.

"We've got to grab him, Jeff."

"It would be a great way to start our season," nodded Jeff. "Especially if we got him out for the opening night."

The colonel made the knives and forks rattle as he crashed down his fist.

"Not to see the show—to join the show!" he thundered.

"Why drag in a dirty Sioux to mess up a good outfit?" Toby sneered. "He might forget himself and try another massacre."

"I'm certain Mr. Bull's learnt some manners since he chased up General Custer," said Annie in her frank way. "I think he would be a great draw to the show, colonel."

"Then somehow, Ned, you've got to lure that old Redskin into my outfit," decided Cody. "Besides folks'll pay good money to see him."

Toby Walker laughed harshly. "Out in the woods maybe, but as long as you play these eastern spots, Toby Walker's the lad who'll pack your arena."

"It seems to me, buddy, that we ain't got to worry about the gal," one of the men whispered to his neighbour. "I think it's this bragging upstart that's going to get me riled. They say he learnt his shooting in the Bowery. We'll send him back there if he ain't mighty careful."

"A Bowery cowboy," answered his companion. "That brone's begging to be busted."

Colonel Cody had taken a great fancy to Annie, and he ordered that her tent be placed near his and Jeff Hogarth's. Toby Walker had to move his tent to another part of the big field. The big shot would have argued, but a watchman told him sharply that those were the colonel's orders. Still he did manage to have a few words with her before she retired.

"I guess you thought I was sorta fresh coming up to Cincinnati to shoot against you?"

"Why, no, kid," he answered in his most lordly manner. "What put that idea into your head?"

"I don't know. You being Toby Walker and famous and all that. I must say you shoot mighty well."

"I'm the greatest ever!" cried Toby, sticking out his chest.

"I gave you a bit of a scare." Her eyes were twinkling.

"I beat you in the end, though I have to admit you lasted longer than I expected."

"I could have gone on shooting those absurd pigeons till doomsday. Didn't occur to you that it was quite a simple target that I missed?"

"What are you hinting at?" he demanded.

Annie came quite close to him. "I let you beat me," she laughed gaily. "Good-night, Toby."

Toby Walker walked away fingering his big chin and thinking over what Annie had said. He stopped abruptly outside his tent. "Dang me, but I do believe she missed that pigeon on purpose." Then he gave a little chuckle. "But if she had not missed then she couldn't have lasted very much longer. I was bound to have beaten her in the long run. No man's got a chance against me, certainly not a slip of a girl. Still, I gotta admit she's got nerve, and she certainly has the looks."

How Sitting Bull Was Won

FOR all his boasting and bragging Toby Walker not only knew how to shoot but he knew how to put his stuff across. Colonel Cody watched both Toby and Annie at work, and he went to talk the matter over with his manager.

"Afraid she doesn't know how to sell it, Jeff."

"She hasn't had a chance yet. Anyway, you don't see her missing, do you?"

"No, but she's just a shooting machine—no colour to her work." The colonel laid a sympathetic hand on Jeff's shoulder. "I'll be as sorry as you are, but I don't think she'll make the grade."

That she did make the grade was due entirely to Toby Walker. Success had gone to his head and made him a conceited boaster. And yet so sweet was the nature of Annie Oakley that he could not feel any antagonism against this girl. Almost against his will he felt compelled to help her, because like Buffalo Bill and Jeff he had watched her work-out. What she lacked was showmanship. If he taught her a few tricks he would win her gratitude, and maybe put out of joint the nose of Jeff Hogarth.

So Toby Walker showed her some of his tricks. How to shoot a number of holes in wood forming the outline of a familiar face—that of Buffalo Bill. Up till now Annie had only had two ideas about targets—quail and clay pigeons. Shooting a picture was something she had never thought about. He showed her how to shoot a cigarette from a bracket, and after a while she could shoot that cigarette out of a man's mouth. It was Toby who taught her to throw three targets up in the air, jump over a table, grab up a gun and hit the targets before they reached the ground. She learnt how to shoot a coin from a man's hand.

"You shoot as good as I can," Toby actually admitted to her. "All you need is good showmanship and some cute clothes."

Annie was quite small on the bill of events and very nervous the first time she did her shooting act. She did her shooting very well and received quite a lot of applause, though nothing like the deafening cheers that went to Toby Walker.

The Wild West Show came eventually to Washington, and Ned Buntline succeeded in getting Sitting Bull and an Indian interpreter to the opening performance.

Tiers of seats surrounded the sandy arena, and there were five thousand people there that day. The show opened with some daring, spectacular riding, followed by a musical ride, bull-dogging steers and some clever roping. One of the great scenes was the attack by Redskins on a prairie schooner and the audience would go nearly mad with excitement when the Indians did their famous circle of death round the schooners. What a cheer when cavalry rode up in the nick of time to save the pioneers being massacred!

Ned Buntline was not finding it easy



He swung a mighty punch to Dan's jaw that hurled the man from the tepee.

with Sitting Bull. The huge Indian, garbed in civilized attire, sat with arms folded, and with stolid gaze looked at the show. Nothing made the famous Indian register a spark of interest.

Rain-in-the-Face, the interpreter, explained that Sitting Bull would go home if the show did not improve. His eyes narrowed a little when Toby Walker was announced as being the next item. Ned Buntline watched the Indian closely when Toby Walker shot a two-bit piece out of a man's fingers. Sitting Bull spoke quickly to his interpreter in the Indian tongue.

"White man doing all right hitting fifty-cent piece," translated Rain-in-the-Face. "But he could have hit ten-cent piece. Show not bad for pale-face."

Later they announced: "Miss Annie Oakley, one of the world's greatest shots," and when Annie rode in on a huge piebald horse then did Sitting Bull actually turn his head.

Toby Walker had taught the girl to throw up two targets, but Annie was out to help that day. She had five targets shot into the air, and after leaping the table succeeded in hitting every target before they could reach the ground. She was dressed in a dark, close-fitting riding suit with a black stetson. She made a picturesque sight standing out there in the sun and shooting so calmly at all these difficult targets.

Ned Buntline for the first time saw a real healthy gleam of interest in

Sitting Bull's expression, and when Annie's act was over the old Indian went nearly mad with excitement. He rushed down the gangway and clambered into the arena, and wobbled—he had grown rather fat—across the ring to where Annie Oakley was standing by the side of Toby Walker and Colonel Cody. Sitting Bull began to jabber away and wave his hands at Annie.

At last he was pacified and Rain-in-the-Face translated what Sitting Bull had said. He had christened her "E-pow-now," or Little Sure Shot, and that if Colonel Cody would do that event every day he would join the show. "Chief, it's a bargain!" cried Ned Buntline.

Sitting Bull did a lot more of the sign language and Rain-in-the-Face explained solemnly that Sitting Bull would consider himself greatly honoured if Annie would be his squaw.

"Considering his great hatred of the white people, that's the greatest compliment he could pay you," laughed Jeff Hogarth.

"Well, I guess he'll be unlucky. Chief Sitting Bull, I expect, has about a dozen squaws as it is," Annie smiled. "Rain-in-the-Face, tell Sitting Bull that I should like to be counted as one of his friends."

The fortnight at Washington was most successful. The story of how Annie Oakley had been the cause of persuading the Redskin to join the show had been spread by Ned Buntline, and

Annie was given a marvellous reception. Toby Walker, with a bitter smile playing round the corners of his mouth, listened to the applause. She was getting as much cheering as he received now. It gave him a certain amount of satisfaction to know that all the tricks she knew he had taught her. It seemed that Toby Walker had made a rod for his own back.

Rivalry

NED BUNTLINE had decided that Annie Oakley must appear in one of his books on the exploits of the great Buffalo Bill. On a train journey three months after Annie had joined the show he read out to a crowded saloon coach a special paragraph entitled "Buffalo Bill's Ward." "Buffalo Bill's trusty rifle barked and another Redskin bit the dust. Riding like the wind he swept from the ground the beautiful girl, last survivor of the ill-fated wagon train. He spurred his mustang to greater speed, sending leaden messages of death into the ranks of the foe, but the Redskins with fiendish screams still pursued him. Little did the doughty plainsman realise that this tiny prairie primrose was one day to blossom into womanhood's fairest flower—Annie Oakley."

"Ned, you're a genius!" cried the colonel, when he had recovered from his laughter. "Fifty thousand people will be wanting to see her after reading that. You know what I'm going to do?" He gazed proudly at the girl. "I'm gonna bill her right up, name for name, with Toby Walker."

"Oh, but, colonel—" Annie gave Walker an anxious glance.

"So I'm to be aceed out of my own act, huh?" sneered Walker.

"Listen, Walker"—Hogarth spoke angrily because he did not like the champion—"Colonel Cody and I are still running this outfit. Since you're asking for it I may as well tell you something. When it comes to draw, you're not quite the biggest thing out."

"And no wonder, with everybody else getting the limelights," Toby retorted. "Fancy taking a green kid and billing her up even with me."

"Oh, Mr. Walker, you know I wouldn't do anything to hurt your chances."

"You hurt my chances?" he derided. "Not you or anybody else with this troupe. I'll still be headlining when the rest of you are working in livery barns."

"Just one big happy family," murmured Buntline. Suddenly the fat little man jumped to his feet. "Just a minute—just a minute, colonel. I see gold in this squabble. I can see it on the billboards. Toby Walker versus Annie Oakley—male against female. A gigantic battle of the sexes for the rifle championship of the world."

"Ned, you're the cleverest hoss-thief in history." Cody slapped his Press agent heartily on the back. "It's a dandy. Durned if this don't call for a drink all round."

Some time later noticing Toby sitting at a table all by himself Annie went and joined him.

"I'm sorry, Toby. If it wasn't for you I wouldn't be with this show."

"Don't take it personal, kid." His hands went out and gripped hers.

"Business is business. Besides, I enjoy a brush with those guys once in a while. Don't you worry. You're aces with me."

It was in Chicago that Ned Buntline had huge bills printed that announced that Toby Walker would compete with Annie Oakley for the rifle championship of the world.

June 20th, 1933.

Crowds came to watch the struggle. All kinds of targets were used, and points allotted. Clay pigeons, bottles, coins, ringed targets, firing over shoulder and using a mirror, trick shooting and even shooting from a galloping horse.

At first Toby Walker was ahead, then Annie crept up and drew level. At the end of a week Toby was still just a few points ahead, but on the tenth day Annie was in smashing form and for the first time gained the lead. The remarkable ovation given her by the crowd upset Toby Walker very much, and that night he drank far too much so that on the morrow his nerves were all ragged. Annie went further ahead. At the end of the second week Annie was proclaimed the new rifle champion of the world.

Annie sought out Toby on that last Saturday night. He offered her his arm and they left the big tent to stroll along the bank of a river. The moon shone down on them and the stars twinkled merrily.

"Mad, Toby?"

"No, Annie." He spoke very quietly. "Gee, it's a funny world! Once you used to think I was so gosh-durn grand, and now you've got me beat. If it were anyone else but you I'd be so mad I'd want to kill someone. You know why I'm glad you beat me? I got a fool tongue that runs away with me. I say things I regret, and though I may have been kinda rude to you I've loved you ever since that first day you missed that clay pigeon a purpose."

"Oh, Toby, I'm so happy!" Her eyes were shining.

Toby kissed her, then freed his arms. "Look, honey, we can't let anyone know we're struck on each other. It's good show business if we act as if we're enemies. People pay to see us battle, kid. I don't care no more who wins those matches. I know you can beat me, and I'm proud of you. Never thought I'd see the day when I could stand that; but now—"

"Toby, I'm gonna tell everybody how wonderful you really are."

He shook his head.

"No, honey, we gotta give the folks who think we hate each other a run for their money. Now remember, you hate me."

Annie flung her arms round his neck and kissed him.

"Mister, I hate you like blazes!" she cried happily.

The Drunken Gunman

SO the weeks passed. Sometimes Toby Walker would win, but the majority of victories went to Annie. The bitter enmity that seemed to exist between the two brought crowds to the Wild West Show. Even Buffalo Bill and the majority of his people thought that they were enemies. Only two people knew differently. Jeff Hogarth and Sitting Bull.

Jeff Hogarth loved Annie Oakley. Jeff was a fine manager and one of the kindest of men. One cannot blame him for his dislike of Toby Walker, who was even more loud-mouthed than before his defeat by Annie. Perhaps Jeff, being far-sighted, read that look in the girl's eyes when she smiled at Toby. Naturally, it made him wild to think that Annie could have any soft feelings for a man who seemed to be rude and insulting to her every hour of the day. Perhaps he may have guessed that these two were not such bad friends as they seemed.

Often to get away from prying eyes they would wander among the Indian tepees and squat down on each side of

old Sitting Bull. That wise old Redskin nodded his head.

One day Annie asked Toby what Sitting Bull was saying and what he meant by the signs with his fingers.

"Sitting Bull say that two can live in tepee cheap as one," Toby explained with a grin. "He suggest that we live in a tepee and that we have plenty papoose."

"When we've saved enough money and our act ain't the star feature of the colonel's Wild West Show, we might have a pow-wow with Sitting Bull," Annie answered. "Tell him that, Toby."

That night Toby whispered to Annie that he reckoned they had been far too friendly of late, and that it would be advisable for him to act in his most unpleasant manner towards her. So if he said anything she didn't like she was not to take any notice.

The trouble with Toby Walker was that his unpleasantness was so extreme. He said a few biting remarks about life in a Wild West Show at dinner that night, and naturally Colonel Cody took the bait.

"If you can't say something decent, Walker, just don't say nothing at all."

"I just told Annie a thing or two. I'm getting sick and tired of pulling my shots just to make her look good."

"Pulling your shots!" scoffed Jeff.

"What a cheap, low-down remark!"

The colonel banged the table. "Walker, one of these days somebody's gonna bust that gas-bag you call your head."

"Better cowboys than you have tried it, colonel," jeered Walker.

"Why, you low-down, yapping Bowery pup!" exploded the colonel. "I'd like to ram my fist down your throat!"

"You'd like to, colonel!" mocked Toby. "Why, I'd bite your hand off."

As the colonel looked like having a fit Toby decided it would be as well if he went for a walk to let the matter cool. He winked slyly at Annie as he passed, and she gave a disapproving shake of the head. There were times when she would like to have put Toby across her knee and spank him.

Toby decided that he would go to have a chat with Sitting Bull. Though Bowery-bred, Toby had taken the trouble to learn the Indian dialect, and had a fair knowledge of sign language.

Sitting Bull was delighted to see him.

Three men approached the tents or tepees of the Indian people, and one, a thick-set, bearded rascal, had a ferocious, evil face. His two companions were furtive, hang-dog fellows, and all seemed the worse for strong spirit.

"Where'd you keep them Indians?" demanded their leader of one of the show people.

"The Indian village is right over there," was the reply. "In fact, if you hurry, you'll find Sitting Bull at home."

"What ye going to do, Dan?" asked one of the men, when they were alone.

"They'll dig Sitting Bull a new home when I get through with him," leered Dan.

"Why don't you forget it, Dan?" one asked. "The Indian war is all over."

"Lemme alone!" came the snarling retort. "I ain't forgetting I had a brother with Custer at Little Big Horn."

Arm-in-arm the three men made their way to the Indian village. Furtively they slunk past tents, where solemn-faced Indians and their squaws sat feeding. There was a clearing in the centre of the tepees, and they guessed that the gaudily bedecked tepee was that of Sitting Bull. In the half-light they saw the famous Redskin.

"That's him, Dan."

Sitting Bull saw the men, and he did

not like being stared at by drunken white men, so he got to his feet and went into his tepee. Toby Walker was there and examining some tomahawks owned by Sitting Bull. The great chief wished him to accept one as a token of friendship.

Dan pushed his companions away and strode forward.

"Now, you Sioux snake, I'm paying you off for one of Custer's boys!" He drew out a gun.

Toby Walker looked round at the sound of that harsh voice, and to his surprise a hand appeared holding a gun. It was pointed straight at Sitting Bull, who thought that the hunting grounds were very close. Toby leapt forward and grabbed the gun wrist.

Dan fought like a demon, and snarling fearful oaths tried to turn the gun on Toby. The weapon exploded close to Toby's eyes, and for a moment he thought he was blinded.

Sitting Bull rushed out of the tepee. "There is a big fight going on!" he shouted to his people in Sioux language. "One man is fighting for us. Come and chase them away."

Dan's two friends rushed at Sitting Bull and knocked him down. Two Indian braves rushed to the rescue, and soon a glorious fight was in full swing.

Toby clung on to his man, and then his vision seemed to clear. He swung a mighty punch to Dan's jaw that hurled the man from the tepee. Dan scrambled up and got another sock in the jaw.

The three creators of trouble had had enough, and they turned and ran with a number of yelling braves trailing after them.

Toby helped Sitting Bull to his feet, and the Sioux stared anxiously at the man who had saved his life. He touched his own eyes, and understanding the gesture Toby gingerly felt his face. Everything seemed very tender, and the right eye was very painful.

"Gosh, I wouldn't a wanted that blast much closer to my peepers," Toby muttered.

"Sitting Bull never forget," the Sioux cried in his native tongue. "One day Sitting Bull pay debt."

The next morning Toby Walker found his right eye was still troublesome, so he sought out an eye specialist, who made a thorough examination.

"Young man, it is not as bad as it might have been," was the verdict. "You're suffering from a form of corneal opacity. A compressed condition of the optic membranes, but don't worry. You'll be able to see reasonably well. Come and see me again to-morrow. In the meantime, go easy with those eyes."

"Will they get better?"

"The sight won't be as good as it was, especially the right eye," stated the specialist. "Though in time you may be completely cured. It will never be very bad—just a little out of focus. What business are you in?"

"I'm Toby Walker."

"That doesn't answer my question."

"I can see you're not a patron of the theatre, doc," laughed Toby. "I'm an actor."

"Well, you'll be able to go on with your work all right. It's lucky you're not a bookkeeper." The specialist little knew what Toby's sight meant. "You're lucky to be able to see at all."

"I'll say I'm lucky!" Toby spoke and laughed harshly.

Annie is Wounded

TOPY WALKER went back to the show, and taking a gun sneaked away to a practice-ground. He found that objects were blurred and he had several misses. There was only one thing to be done—he must tell

Colonel Cody that he was no longer capable of going through with his act.

The chief people in the show were residing as a special treat at an hotel, and there Toby sought out the colonel. The latter was nowhere about, but as Walker wished to see him urgently a servant went in search of Buffalo Bill.

Whilst he was hanging about in the lobby old Lem Jordan and Sheriff Higgs showed up. They had made a special trip to town to see their heroine shooting against Toby Walker.

"Well, Mr. Walker, I reckon you ain't findin' it so easy to win these days!" mocked old Lem.

"You're right. I am sure you'll see her at her best to-night."

"And how about you, Mr. Walker?" "Annie's a show all by herself," Toby admitted. "She doesn't need me at all. Maybe having a match gives the public a thrill, but—"

"You ain't getting cold feet, are you?" Lem Jordan said with an obvious sneer.

Unfortunately, Annie chanced to come into the lobby and overhear—she saw the angry flush that mantled Walker's cheeks.

"You mustn't mind my old friends, Toby." She laid a hand on his arm. "They're up here from down home to see me do my act. I want to put up a real good show for their benefit. We aren't going to disappoint them, are we?"

"Well, Annie, I— A heavy foot-fall made Toby glance round. There in the doorway stood Colonel Cody.

"Well, Walker, what's on your mind?"

"I—I'm sorry I bothered you, colonel. I guess what I wanted to say—has just sort of slipped my memory." Walker could not face the colonel's angry glance. "I'm sorry," he added, and hastened from the lobby.

Thus in order not to disappoint

Annie's friends Toby Walker decided to shoot and do his best. Perhaps it was folly and stubborn pride, but mostly it was because Annie wanted to put up a good show.

His shooting was very bad that night, and several times Jeff Hogarth gave the colonel a significant glance. Annie won easily, and though she smiled when the result was declared she was not happy. Why had Toby shot so terribly?

The applause was so deafening that the announcer bellowed forth that there would be an encore and would any gentleman in the audience like to have Miss Oakley shoot a cigarette from his mouth at thirty paces? One is not surprised to learn that there were no volunteers. Three times the announcer bellowed, but all in vain. The crowd shifted uncomfortably in their seats. Then Toby Walker stepped forward and told the announcer he would do it.

"Ladies and gentlemen," the announcer cried through his megaphone. "Proving chivalry is not dead Mr. Toby Walker will show his faith in the marksmanship of his fair opponent."

What a cheer when Annie shot the lighted cigarette from Toby's mouth. The girl was so grateful for his bravery and for helping her out of a difficult position that she decided she must do something in return. She whispered in the announcer's ear.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the courage of the fair sex is a match to that of the male. The little lady will now permit Mr. Toby Walker to shoot a twenty-five cent-piece from her hand at the same distance—thirty paces."

Toby Walker rushed up to the announcer.

"Since when did you take over my routines?" he demanded angrily.

"Why, I only thought—"



"Take him away!" ground out Buffalo Bill. "Out of my sight with the scum!"

"You're paid to jabber, not to think. My contract don't call for carrying out your half-wit brainstorms."

The announcer thought that here was the chance to get even with the man no one liked.

"I'm sorry, friends, but Mr Walker seems indisposed to accept the challenge."

Instantly there came whistles and hoots from the crowd.

"He's scared he'll miss!" "He's yellow!" "The great coward!" "Can't take a licking!" "Lost his nerve!" and other pithy remarks.

Jeff Hogarth rushed up to Walker.

"What's the matter with you? Trying to start a stampede?"

"You're chicken-livered!" someone yelled.

"He could do it easy!" taunted another voice. "Just trying to queer Miss Oakley's act."

Toby Walker swung round with eyes flashing and fists clenched.

"He's got a yellow streak down his back a yard wide!" a man yelled, and shook a large fist.

"I'll show them I'm not a coward," raged Toby and grabbed up a gun. He acted on the impulse of the moment.

Out in the arena stood Annie Oakley. The girl champion was puzzled by Toby's behaviour, but so glad he was going through with the trick. She wondered if this were part of his campaign for people to think they hated each other.

Toby strained his eyes to see her hand and the coin. He lowered the gun and blinked his eyes—a growl of disapproval came from the crowd. Quickly he jerked up the gun and tried again. Ah, now he could see her fingers, but the coin seemed to be jumping about, he prayed that luck might favour him, and pulled the trigger.

Hundreds saw the girl wince and then saw blood on her fingers and wrist. They jumped to their feet yelling hoarsely as they realised that Toby Walker had hit Annie Oakley.

"Walker!" shouted Colonel Cody.

"I ought to kill you right here!"

Jeff Hogarth rushed to the girl's side.

"Take it easy, honey. We'll have a doctor here for you in a few seconds."

She bit her lips.

"I'm all right, Jeff."

"Bring on the next act!" thundered Colonel Cody. He turned on the once rifle champion.

"Walker, I'm giving you ten minutes to pack up and get off the grounds."

"Honest, colonel, I tried—"

"Cut out the lies and get out of here!" the colonel raved. "You're through with this outfit."

"That suits me fine," Toby Walker blazed back. His temper was easily aroused. "But first I'm gonna see Annie."

Toby would have rushed forward, but at a signal from Cody eager men seized the ex-champion by the arms.

"She don't want no part of you!" Cody pointed. "Take him away—out of my sight with the scum."

"This is my fault," Jeff was saying to Annie. "I should have thrown him out a long time ago."

"He didn't mean to do it," sobbed the distressed, unhappy Annie. "I know he didn't."

"Oh, yes, he did. He deliberately hit you in the shooting-hand."

"He wouldn't try to hurt anybody," she retorted. "You don't understand him." She tried to get past Jeff. "I've got to see him."

"You can't, dear. You must see the doctor," counselled Jeff. "If we don't get Walker out of this they'll lynch him."

June 20th, 1936.

The crowd were trying to climb out of the seats to get into the arena, but Cody was not having any rioting in his show. He yelled for his men to get Walker out of the place and to hurry. Curtains swung back and a whole bunch of screaming Redskins charged into the arena—the crowd's attention was distracted.

Later that evening a little crowd were collected in Annie's room at the hotel. They watched the doctor fixing bandages to Annie's hand. They were waiting for his verdict.

The doctor straightened his back.

"Don't alarm yourself, Colonel Cody and gentlemen. There are no tendrons severed. Miss Oakley will be all right, but she must not use this hand for two or three weeks."

When everyone had gone save the colonel and Jeff the girl gazed at them piteously.

"Please stop fussing over me, and tell me where Toby is."

"Honey, you mustn't have any more truck with that rascal," cried Colonel Cody.

"He didn't mean to do it," she stormed. "You don't understand him. None of you do. You never gave him a chance from the first day you saw him. He's better than the whole bunch of you put together." She burst into tears.

Cody winked at Hogarth, and spoke soothingly as if to a child.

"Don't you worry, little missy. We're going to have you as right as rain in a few days. Good-night, Annie."

"Try and sleep, dear," counselled Jeff. "You've got to believe in the people who really love you, and the sooner you forget about him the better. Try and sleep. Good-night."

Toby Walker gained access to the hotel and tried to see Annie, but Jeff Hogarth and several men barred his way. He had done enough evil. If he valued his life he would get out of town, or else they would not answer for the consequences.

"Annie's happiness is all that matters to me and to everybody in this show except you," Jeff Hogarth told the unfortunate Toby Walker. "You have nothing to offer, save a selfish swelled head and a future that's behind you."

Toby Walker had been struggling to get free, but now he seemed to go limp.

"Maybe you're right. Guess I'd better clear out."

Later that night Annie was startled from her melancholy brooding by vigorous rapping on the door and the voice of Colonel Cody. Listlessly she called for him to enter. Jeff was with him and both men were wildly excited.

"Kid, we've got great news, and you're gonna be the first to hear it," yelled Colonel Cody. "Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show with the one and only Annie Oakley is breaking camp for a tour of Europe. We're going to hold a party downstairs. Could you come for a little while?"

Annie did not smile but looked at them with tragic, lonely gaze.

"Would you mind very much if I didn't come to your party?"

The two men looked at her, then looked at each other, and they knew the reason for her sadness. With mumbled words of apology they closed her door and left her to her thoughts.

Europe

THE Wild West Show was a great success in Europe. The ruling heads of all countries came to see Buffalo Bill's show, and most of them insisted that the shooting Annie Oak-

ley be presented to them. Thus Annie met people like the Czar and Czarina, Crown Prince Wilhelm of Germany, and many members of the English Royal family. Wherever she went she was given a marvellous time.

Toby Walker's name was never mentioned, and Jeff Hogarth thought that Annie had banished the swell-head from her memory. He learned otherwise when he proposed to her.

"I love you all, Colonel Cody, Mr Buntline, Buck, Jim, Sam and especially a man named Jeff Hogarth. You're first on the list, Jeff," Annie told him quietly. "You're my greatest friend, Jeff. I always want you to remain my friend. I would not make you a good wife. I shall never marry."

Jeff Hogarth saw two tears trickling down her cheeks and knew then that Toby Walker had not been banished.

One of the greatest deeds ever attempted by Annie Oakley was the shooting of a cigarette from the mouth of the Crown Prince of Germany. Her hand never faltered.

The weeks became months and everybody was glad that in two weeks' time the show would be on its way back to New York. Everyone was home-sick. Jeff Hogarth spent much of his time trying to keep Annie cheerful, because she did not seem her usual, cheerful self.

"Cheer up, Annie, we'll soon be home."

Annie looked at him and did not smile.

"I'm leaving the show when we get to New York."

"Annie!"

"I'm not happy, Jeff."

"It's still Toby, isn't it?" He read the answer in her eyes. "I guess it's human nature to fight for anything we love, isn't it, Annie?"

"I guess so, but we don't always win." Her smile was sad.

"No, we don't always win," Jeff answered, and from his pocket took out a cutting. "Here's something I should have given you a long time ago."

The headlines of the "New York Clipper" confronted her startled gaze.

"REPORT ANNIE OAKLEY SHOOTING WAS ACCIDENTAL"

"Doctor divulges Toby Walker was nearly blinded in saving Sitting Bull from assassins. Walker still missing."

Swiftly she read through the paragraph and Hogarth watched her in misery.

"I know what you must be thinking of me," he whispered when she had finished.

"I'm only thinking one thing, Jeff," was her answer. "We've got to find him."

"We will!" Jeff vowed in his gratitude for being forgiven.

Sitting Bull Pays His Deb:

DOWN in the Bowery of New York was a shooting gallery, and a notice proclaimed that "Rifle lessons were given by a former world's champion."

It was Toby Walker. He leaned back in his chair and stared at a picture of Annie Oakley that he had cut out and pasted on the wall. All the while the barker of the shooting gallery shouted to an almost-empty street.

"Say, Charlie," a leering, half-witted lout leaned on the rifle counter, "if de champ is so good how come he don't never do no shooting?"

The barker scowled and hissed his answer.

"It's de lamps—de lamps." He touched his eyes.

(Continued on page 27)

Beyond the stratosphere to a new world where science marches hand in hand with savagery. Follow the adventures of a young American on the strange planet of Mongo, realm of monsters and domain of the War-Lord Ming. An unforgettable serial of thrills and suspense, starring Buster Crabbe and Jean Rogers



Read This First

A strange planet, hitherto unknown, has shifted from its orbit and loomed into the view of the peoples of the Earth. It is the planet Mongo, and its overlord is Ming, a sinister figure who has probed the secrets of Nature.

Dr. Zarkov, an American scientist, sets out in a rocket ship to penetrate the stratosphere. He is accompanied by Flash Gordon, son of an astronomer, and by Dale Arden, Flash's sweetheart, but they reach the new planet only to be seized by Ming.

Flash and Dale escape with the aid of Aura, Ming's daughter, who is attracted by Flash. They are also assisted by Thun, a prince whose father rules a territory on Mongo which has not yet been subdued by Ming. Dale and Thun, however, are captured and carried off by winged men in the pay of King Vultan, who dominates an amazing sky-city poised thousands of feet above the surface of the planet.

Meanwhile, Zarkov finds an ally in Parin, rightful heir to the throne that Ming occupies. They locate Flash and Aura, and in Zarkov's rocket ship they make for King Vultan's sky-city in the hope of rescuing Dale Arden and Thun.

They are taken prisoners, and because he incites Vultan's slaves to mutiny Flash is condemned to electrocution.

Now Read On

In the Laboratory

AS Dale cried out, Vultan turned his attention from the limp form of Flash Gordon, strapped to the metal frame through which the ever-

EPISODE 7:—

"Shattering Doom"

increasing current of electricity was being passed. And seeing her start forward with a look of anguish on her lovely face he promptly seized her by the wrist.

"Spare him!" Dale screamed. "Spare him, I implore you!"

"So you do care for the Earth man, eh?" Vultan rumbled. "You were only pretending when you told me that he meant nothing to you."

Distracted as she was, Dale remembered Aura's words of counsel, recalling how Ming's daughter had impressed upon her the conviction that Vultan would surely kill Flash if he felt that the latter held too high a place in her affections.

"Your Majesty, I'm not in love with him," she lied tremulously: "but he's a human being, and I can't bear to see him tortured."

Vultan smiled again.

"In that case, my pretty one, you need not watch," he declared in a hearty tone. "You have my permission to retire."

As he spoke the words he beckoned to one of his guards and told the man to conduct Dale back to the audience chamber.

The soldier took Dale by the arm and drew her towards the doorway. Hesitating, she tried to speak, to beg Vultan to relieve his victim, but her brain became numb as she realized that Flash was motionless now. The current

was still passing through the frame to which he was suspended, but he was no longer writhing under its cruel effects. He had sagged in his thongs, and it seemed as if the end had come—it seemed as if Flash Gordon were no more.

A sob escaped Dale, and then the scene swam before her eyes. She swayed heavily against the soldier who had caught hold of her, and was in a semi-conscious condition as she was led from the room.

Vultan watched her departure, and was still staring in the direction of the doorway when the voice of Aura broke in upon his thoughts.

"Your Majesty, I demand the release of the Earth man! I am the one who cares for him, and I demand his release. I know he has defied you, but what purpose will be served by killing him? You need slaves for your atom furnaces, don't you? Well, then, he's of more value to you alive than dead."

Vultan slid his cunning eyes upon her and observed how pale and strained she looked. There was an expression of amusement on his own face, though at the same time it was clear that her argument had not fallen on deaf ears.

"Is it possible that the daughter of the Emperor Ming has lost her heart to Gordon?" he asked with a grin.

"I admit it, Vultan," Aura rejoined, a faint flush stealing into her cheeks.

The ruler of the sky-city chuckled. Then his ugly, bloated features underwent a change, and in curt accents he addressed the man at the switchboard.

"Turn off the current!" he ordered.

The man at the switchboard let go of the lever he had been handling, and the drone of the dynamos ceased abruptly. Next, Vultan commanded the rest of his guards to cut Flash down, and while they were engaged in this task he turned to Aura again.

"It is not for your sake that I spare him," he said. "But you were right when you pointed out that he was of more use to me alive than dead. He'll go back to the furnaces, and this time I'll see that he makes no trouble there."

Aura did not answer him—hurried past him and elbowed her way through the guards who had released Flash.

The American was a dead weight in their arms, and it was with an anxious movement that Ming's daughter laid a hand on his heart.

"He is alive, Vultan," she announced presently. "No thanks to you."

"Take him to Doctor Zarkov in the laboratory," Vultan grunted. "There is a machine there that will revive him quickly, and my men will show the doctor how it operates. Meanwhile, I go to see how my beautiful Earth girl is faring."

Flash was carried out of the room by the guards, and Aura followed them to Vultan's laboratory, where she found Zarkov engrossed in some complicated scientific experiment. The doctor looked round as they entered, however, and at sight of Flash the colour drained from his face.

"What happened?" he exclaimed in alarm.

It was one of the guards who explained the situation to him, and then the young American was borne across to a kind of stretcher which was supported on a steel trestle, and which closely resembled an operating-table.

Flash having been laid on this, an appliance known as an electro-stimulator was brought into play, and after the lapse of some ten or fifteen minutes the figure on the stretcher began to show signs of life.

"He's coming round," said Zarkov hopefully.

Flash opened his eyes a few seconds afterwards and looked about him in a dazed fashion, whereupon Zarkov and Aura proceeded to talk to him reassuringly, but he was still in a confused state of mind when a messenger came into the laboratory and touched the doctor on the shoulder.

"His Majesty requires your presence in the audience chamber," the newcomer told Zarkov.

The doctor turned submissively and accompanied the messenger from the room, and a little while after he had gone Flash managed to rouse himself from the stretcher and set his feet on the floor.

"Are you all right, Flash?" Aura asked him in concern.

"Sure," he said. "I'm—I'm all right now. But tell me, where's Dale? What happened to her?"

Aura frowned slightly.

"Dale?" she retorted. "Why do you ask for her? That heartless creature. She does not care what becomes of you, so long as she is safe. Even now she is making up to Vultan in the audience room, currying favour with him."

Thus spoke Aura, jealous of Flash's interest in the other girl, but if she imagined she could poison his mind against Dale she was mistaken.

"I don't believe you," he declared. "For some reason you dislike Dale, don't you? You can't deny it. You've been pretty decent so far as I'm concerned, but for Dale you wouldn't raise a helping hand."

"Perhaps you are right," Ming's daughter replied. "But has Dale Arden

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ever helped you? I was the one who saved you just now, Flash. If I hadn't interceded for you, Vultan would have killed you."

Flash looked at her steadily for a moment. Then he bit his lip.

"You've saved my life more than once, Aura, and I'm grateful to you," he said. "What's more, I hope that we'll always be friends—"

"Just—friends?" she interrupted.

If he had never suspected her infatuation for him before, those two words made it known to him now, and at first he was tongue-tied. But presently he found his voice.

"Aura," he told her simply, "I belong to the Earth. Some day I hope to return to my own planet—and when I do—Dale Arden goes with me."

There was nothing more to say, and, even if there had been, the discussion could not have been prolonged. For at that instant Flash was tapped on the arm by one of the Hawk Men who had been standing nearby.

"Come," the soldier growled, "you seem sound enough again, and we've heard enough of this talk. You're to be taken back to the atom furnaces."

Flash turned his eyes upon the man, and for the space of several seconds he regarded him steadfastly. Then all at once he whipped his bunched knuckles into action and felled the soldier with a smashing right to the jaw.

"Nobody's taking me back to that hell-pit!" he ground out.

There was an outcry, and the other guards who were present closed in on the American. But with flying fists he scattered them to right and left, sending two of them asprawl as he bounded for the door.

Charging out of the laboratory, he dashed along the corridor that led from the workshop to the audience chamber, and as he gained the threshold of that room he was met by a sentry who was posted there.

In a realm where the ray-gun and other scientific instruments of death were all too common it seemed odd that out-of-date weapons of war should also be encountered. Yet many of the Vultan's followers were armed with pikes, and the sentinel at the doorway of the audience chamber was thus equipped.

At sight of Flash the guard tried to bar his path by threatening him with the spearhead, but like a panther the American leapt on him and wrested the pike from his grasp. Then he struck him down with the shaft, and next moment he was stepping over the sentry's body and bursting into the throne-room.

Vultan was there, standing at the foot of the dais with Zarkov, Dale Arden and the messenger who had fetched the doctor from the laboratory; but, before any of them was aware of his presence Flash was beside them.

Vultan's courier attempted to grapple with the intruder, only to be laid flat on his back by a swinging blow of the pike. Then, while Dale and Zarkov looked on tensely, Flash swung round on the amazed Vultan himself.

The burly monarch recoiled, but the American followed him, spearhead levelled at the big man's chest.

"Now, my fine, fat king," he blazed, "unless you release my friends immediately I'll run this weapon through your hulking body!"

Vultan looked scared, but his courage was restored as he saw a group of his minions loom up in the doorway of the room. Foremost among them were the guards whom Flash had scattered in the laboratory, and they had given chase, raising the alarm and collecting reinforcements on the way to the audience chamber.

Dale saw them, too, and uttered a warning cry.

"Flash! Look out!"

Her fiancé wheeled, and at sight of his foes he flung his spear at them, wounding one of the men in the leg. Then he sprang on to the dais, and stood there in warlike attitude, awaiting an onset.

One of the guards snatched up the pike that he had thrown, and hurled it with all his might. In the nick of time Flash jerked himself aside, and the missile stuck quivering in the back of the great throne. An instant later the band of soldiers was sweeping across the room in a body.

Flash met the first of them with an upper-cut that rocked the fellow to the heels, then caught him up in his muscular arms and pitched him into the thick of his comrades. Several of them were bowled over, and in the resulting confusion the American jumped from the dais and laid hold of a heavy stool that had been knocked over during the guards' rush towards the throne.

Dale and Zarkov were watching with bated breath. Close beside them, Vultan was bellowing at his men to fall upon Flash and overpower him, and to the accompaniment of their royal master's oaths the soldiery recovered themselves and surged to the attack again.

Flash swung the stool with crushing force, smashing it down on the helmeted heads of his antagonists again and again. One man then another was brought grovelling to the knees, but with a titanic blow the stool broke in the American's hand, and then those of the enemy who were still standing closed in on him like a pack of wolves.

He fought them with his bare fists, and there was not one of them but felt the weight of his punches. Yet the odds against him were too great, and at last he was pinioned and rendered helpless.

Vultan began to move about the room, arousing with lusty kicks those of his minions who had been knocked to the floor. Then he stamped across to the spot where Flash was struggling in the grip of the men who had finally made him prisoner.

"To the furnace chamber with him!" Vultan roared.

Flash was dragged away, Zarkov gently but firmly restraining Dale when she attempted to intervene, and as the captive disappeared from view Vultan turned to speak to the elderly scientist.

"Zarkov," he said, "I was giving you certain instructions regarding that very rascal when he burst in upon us. You understood them, I suppose?"

"Yes, your Majesty," the doctor muttered.

"Very well, then. See that they are carried out."

Zarkov turned, with the air of a man who disliked the task that had been thrust on him, but who had no choice in the matter, and, accompanied by the messenger who had summoned him to the throne-room, he walked slowly back to the laboratory.

Here he procured some copper wire, after which he was conducted by Vultan's courier to the dreaded furnace-chamber—that sweltering vault where enslaved wretches toiled day and night to generate the amazing power which held the sky-city in suspension above the clouds.

Flash was already there, and had been put to work tending the furnaces together with Thun, Barin and seven or eight other unfortunates. Near at hand stood the brutal guards who saw to it that there was no shirking on the part of the captives, and more Hawk Men were at their posts beside the many instruments that the room contained.

At a little distance from the furnaces was the low wall of lead that afforded a shelter for such of the slaves as were resting. These Zarkov and Vultan's courier passed by, and, after a brief consultation with an officer who appeared to be in charge of the whole room, they crossed to a switchboard that was bolted to a strong pillar.

To this switchboard Zarkov attached the copper wire he had brought from the laboratory, and then, in company with the officer and the courier, he moved over to the furnaces where Flash and his comrades were toiling.

The heat there was terrific, and as he watched the prisoners hurling fuel into the flaming vents, Zarkov could have groaned aloud in pity for them, knowing as he did that the fuel they were shoveling was pitch-blende containing deposits of radium.

Radium, a substance invaluable to medicine when used judiciously, but possessing deadly properties that could rot away men's lives if they were exposed to it for any length of time.

Radium, which had been put to a new use here—providing the atomic, gravity-resisting forces that supported Vultan's city in the sky—and taking toll of the slaves who handled it.

Zarkov's heavy-hearted reflections were interrupted by the officer who was in charge of the furnace-room. The latter had stepped forward to touch Flash on the shoulder, and with a bitter glance at him the American drew back.

There was a clanking of chains as he moved, for he had been fettered.

Zarkov looked at Flash sympathetically, and then, pursing his lips, stooped to fasten the loose end of the copper wire to one of the links in the prisoner's shackles.

"What's this for, doctor?" Flash murmured, realising only too well that Zarkov had no liking for the task on which he was engaged.

It was the officer in charge of the room, and not Zarkov, who answered him.

"This is his Majesty's way of dealing with an unruly slave," the officer snapped. "That wire has been attached to a high-voltage circuit, and if you should give us any more trouble, my friend, a switch will be thrown and you will be instantly electrocuted. Bear that in mind."

He watched Zarkov fixing the wire, and satisfied himself that all was in order. Then, after dismissing the scientist and Vultan's courier, he ordered Flash back to work.

For a moment the young American stood still, the muscles of his cheeks flexing ominously. But the Hawk Men directed a no less ominous glance at the switchboard to which the copper wire was attached, and with gritted teeth Flash returned to the furnace he had been tending.

The Coming of Ming

SEVERAL days had passed, and they had been spent variously by each individual member of the little party which had fallen into King Vultan's hands.

Dale had managed to avoid Vultan's attentions by making out that she was ill, and, confined to the quarters that had been set aside for her, she had spent the time in a state of constant dread and fear.

Aura in the meanwhile had lost no opportunity of reminding Vultan that her father would come to her rescue as soon as he could assemble his fleet of rocket ships. But the threat had produced little effect on the monarch of the sky-city, whose mind was chiefly taken up with Zarkov's efforts to find a substitute for the dwindling supply of radium.

As for Flash, Barin and Thun, they had been kept working night and day to the crack of whips, with brief interludes during which their particular shift was allowed to rest.

They had seen one man die from the effects of tending the furnaces, and there were others who looked as if they must soon take the same road. And the three friends wondered how long it would be before they, too, fell victims to the fatal influence of the radium fuel.

Then one morning King Vultan summoned Zarkov to the audience chamber and, as the scientist appeared, the monarch of the sky-city eyed him quizzingly.

"Well, doctor," he said in his loud, guttural voice, "I want a report on the work you did yesterday. How are your experiments going? Have you found that substitute yet?"

There was a curious, secretive expression on Zarkov's face, but he spoke in a tone of protest.

"You must give me time, your Majesty," he expostulated. "The question of a substitute for the power that supports your city is not one that can be solved in a moment. Indeed, it may never be solved. We may be striving after the impossible."

"Impossible?" Vultan rumbled. "Leave that word out of it. It's a word I don't like."

Zarkov shrugged his shoulders, and there was a spell of silence. Then Vultan spoke again thoughtfully:

"No, doctor," he growled, "I think the theories of my own experts are not far off the mark, but there's something

lacking. They just haven't struck the right chord. One vital element is missing, and I am hoping that you can discover that element and succeed where others have failed."

He paused, and:

"I suppose," he ventured, "that you are working along the lines adopted by my experts? You received all the data amassed by them in their researches?"

"Yes, your Majesty," Zarkov replied, "and those data have been of great help to me. Like you, I am earnestly hoping that I can build up on them and achieve our aim."

Vultan nodded slowly, and was about to make some comment when there was a sudden outcry in the corridors of the palace. Then all at once came the patter of footsteps, and Aura hurried into the throne-room with a look of intense excitement on her regal features.

"King Vultan!" she exclaimed, confronting the monarch of the sky-city. "King Vultan, your day is done! A number of my father's rocket ships have been sighted, and are bearing down on your city!"

Vultan's ponderous features betrayed no sign of alarm, but there was consternation on the faces of some of his vassals who blundered into the audience chamber at that moment.

"Your Majesty!" one of them panted. "The rocket ships of the Emperor Ming! Shall we man the turrets and bring them down with the destroying rays?"

"No," Vultan rejoined coolly, "let them make a landing. They will not dare to attack us from the air while Ming's daughter is a hostage in our



In the nick of time Flash jerked himself aside, and the missile struck quivering in the back of the great throne.

hands, and once they make a descent we shall have them at a disadvantage."

He proceeded to lay his plans accordingly, and then he instructed one of his minions to fetch Dale Arden from her quarters; and it was as the girl was brought before him that Ming's fleet of rocket ships was seen swooping towards the great forecourt of the palace.

No opposition was offered to the warriors who emerged from them. Indeed, scarcely a Hawk Man was visible, and even in Vultan's audience chamber there was no indication that any hostile preparations had been set afoot. The king of the sky-city had actually dismissed his personal bodyguards, and was alone in the room with Aura, Dale and Zarkov.

They waited in silence, Aura wondering what Vultan's intentions might be, for when he had given his chief henchmen their orders he had spoken in an undertone, and she had been unable to catch what he had said.

Presently the sound of footfalls reached the ears of the party in the audience chamber, and a few seconds later a man in armour appeared on the threshold, a man whom Aura immediately recognised as her father's lieutenant, Torch.

Very stiffly, and with a good deal of formality, Torch saluted Vultan and spoke in a loud, clear voice.

"His Imperial Majesty," he announced, "Ming, Emperor of the Universe!"

There was a pause, and then the familiar figure of Aura's father entered the room, clad in a brilliant gown, over which he wore a cloak trimmed with white fur. His lean face was impassive, and as he looked at those who had been awaiting him, only the gleam in his eyes gave any hint of his feelings.

Aura stepped towards him, her lips slightly parted. But he bestowed on her a mere cursory glance, and before she could speak he moved past her to accost Vultan.

A detachment of armed men followed him into the apartment. There was a mere handful of them, from which Vultan gathered that the majority of the emperor's troops had been left in the courtyard, and while the monarch of the sky-city was deliberating upon this circumstance, Ming broke the silence which had succeeded Torch's announcement.

"I presume my visit is not entirely unexpected, Vultan," he observed ironically.

The king of the Hawk Men regarded him with a smug expression on his bloated countenance.

"No, not entirely unexpected, mighty potentate," he rejoined. "But if we had been informed of the exact time of your arrival a banquet would have been prepared."

Ming's eyes were riveted upon Vultan, and the light in them seemed to match the glitter of the jewelled rings that adorned his fingers.

"I do not dine with unruly subordinates," he said slowly. "I came not for pleasure, Vultan—but to punish."

"Subordinates, Ming?" Vultan echoed scoffingly. "Did I hear you call me a subordinate? By thunder, you have too high an opinion of yourself."

"I think I am in a position to convince you that you are mistaken," the emperor declared. "But to come to the point, Vultan; I demand a full apology for your behaviour. You have displeased me and defied me by holding my daughter a prisoner, and by refusing to surrender the bride of my choice—Dale Arden there."

Vultan grinned at him.

"Well," he said, "and what if I have defied your imperial Majesty?"

The last three words were pronounced June 20th, 1938.

in a tone of insolent mockery that brought a faint flush of colour to Ming's fleshless cheeks.

"You heard me demand an apology," he rapped out. "What is more, I warn you that unless Barin, Thun and the Earth man, Gordon, are delivered up to me—together with Dale Arden and my daughter—"

It was at this point that Vultan interrupted him.

"One moment," he said gruffly. "Before your Majesty makes any idle threats, you had better consider your own situation."

"What?" Ming exclaimed in a voice of rage. "You dare to threaten your emperor?"

For answer Vultan clapped his hands, and almost instantly a pair of tall doors on the right of the room were flung open. At the same time a band of Hawk Men strode into view, equipped with ray-guns, which they levelled at Ming and his party.

"Perhaps we had better talk things over," Vultan remarked with a chuckle. "But let me remind your Majesty that if there is to be any trouble, you may not live to see the end of it."

There was a silence, a silence that was fraught with tension, and it was as if all who stood in that room had been turned to stone. Then Zarkov made a movement, one which escaped the attention of everyone else in the audience chamber, since nobody had any eyes for him.

Zarkov had a plan in mind. It was a plan which he had evolved that very morning, after he had stumbled upon a momentous discovery as a result of his experiments in the sky-city's laboratory.

A little while ago he had told Vultan that he had yet to find a substitute for the radium fuel which supported his realm among the clouds. He had lied, for, working along the same lines as Vultan's own experts, he had succeeded where they had failed—had traced the missing element which had so far eluded them.

And he had realised that by means of this vital discovery he might obtain freedom and safe conduct for his friends if he played his cards in the right manner.

He had resolved to bide his time, but it seemed to him now that there was not a second to be lost. There was no telling what turn the quarrel between Ming and Vultan might take, and if Ming should triumph, the doctor's plan might come to nothing. Yes, he must act without delay.

Quietly he edged towards the main doorway of the audience chamber, and, unobserved, he managed to back out of the apartment. Then he turned and hurried along the corridor that led to the furnace-room.

About a minute afterwards he was descending the flight of steps at the end of the corridor, and, pausing before the massive door at the foot of those steps, he took out a watch and studied the hands.

He had made it his business to find out the times of the day during which Flash Gordon's particular shift was at work. A glance at his watch told him that Flash and his comrades of the same relay ought to be resting at present, but would be summoned to go on duty again very soon.

Cautiously Zarkov opened the door at which he had arrived, and he was immediately aware of the heat and the clamour in the room beyond. Peering through, he saw Vultan's minions at their accustomed places, either beside the instrument boards or in the neighbourhood of the glowing furnaces.

Closer to the furnaces were the slaves who were engaged upon the task of throwing fuel into the vents.

Flash, Barin and Thun were not amongst these. As Zarkov had calculated, they and the other members of their shift were resting behind the shelter of the low wall of lead, where weary slaves were allowed brief respite from their labours and from the heat.

No one saw Zarkov steal into the furnace-room and close the door behind him. No one saw him creep across to the lead wall and seek out Flash Gordon. Even Flash was unaware of his presence until he felt a hand touch his shoulder, and raised his bowed head to discover the doctor by his side.

"Zarkov!" the younger man ejaculated huskily.

The scientist lifted a finger to his lips in a gesture that enjoined silence, and at the same time he looked about him anxiously, fearing that Flash may have attracted attention by his involuntary exclamation. But only Thun and Barin had heard—Thun and Barin, who were seated near by.

Flash stared at Zarkov questioningly. So did his two companions and fellow-sufferers. Then the doctor spoke in a guarded voice.

"Flash," he whispered, "for the last few days I have been striving to find a substitute for the radium fuel here, and I want you to be the first to know that I have succeeded."

His friend did not seem to comprehend him at first; then suddenly he clutched Zarkov by the arm.

"Doctor," he gasped, "you mean—you mean there won't be any more slaving and toiling at these furnaces? You mean—Vultan will release us?"

Zarkov bit his lip.

"That's something we can't depend on," he said, "and therefore I haven't told Vultan anything yet. But you're right in so far that there won't be any need to man the furnaces in the future. At this very moment there's a device in the laboratory which will provide the forces necessary to hold this city in a state of suspension—a device that was constructed in the main by Vultan's own experts, but perfected by myself."

"Go on," Flash breathed.

Zarkov proceeded to give him some idea of the principle of the astounding machine in the laboratory. Then he told of Ming's arrival on the scene, and finished up by outlining the plan he had in mind.

"I want you to understand that much depends on you, Flash," he said. "It will be up to you to wreck the gear in this chamber here, so that Vultan's city will be faced with complete destruction—unless he accepts our terms. And he'll accept all right, when he knows that I alone can save him."

"What exactly do you want me to do?" the other demanded.

"I'll show you," Zarkov replied. "First give me the shovel that's lying beside you."

The shovel was placed in his hands, and the doctor then unfastened the copper wire that was attached to Flash Gordon's shackles. This wire he transferred to the shovel, binding it to the steel socket in which the wooden haft of the implement was fixed.

"Now," Zarkov continued, "you can stage a revolt without fear of being electrocuted, for when the lever on the switchboard is thrown, the current will go straight to the metal portion of the shovel instead of to the links in your chains."

"And as long as I keep hold of the wooden handle I'll be okay," Flash

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"WE'RE ONLY HUMAN"

(Continued from page 12)

an electric-light bulb which was lying on it fell to the floor and burst with a loud report. He was convinced, then, that someone was in the room and had fired at him, and his tortured nerves went all to pieces.

"Shoot, you rat!" he shrieked, and the gun he held blazed again and again, shattering vases and the glass of pictures on the walls. "You dirty rat, why don't you shoot?"

The trigger of his gun clicked on an empty chamber because he had fired all six cartridges, and he was standing by the overturned table, gibbering as though he had gone completely off his head, when Sally opened the front door and saw him.

"Mac!" she cried in dismay. "Mac, what's happened?"

"I can't stand it, I tell you!" he whimpered. "I can't stand it! This bein' in the dark, not knowin' who may be aimin' a gun at you—who might be lyin' in wait for you, and—"

"Don't go on so, sarge, please!" she pleaded. "There's nothing to be scared of!"

He laughed hysterically.

"Who's scared!" he screeched. "I ain't scared! I've never been scared in my life! It's just this—this not knowin'—not knowin' who may be standing right alongside of you—who may be waitin' in the next room."

"Sure," said Sally, taking hold of his arm. "I know you're not scared, Mac, but come and sit down."

She led him back to his chair, and he sank down in it, trembling all over.

"There," she soothed. "Why, in a couple of days the bandage will be off, and everything will be all right."

"Yeah, in a couple o' days," he said wretchedly. "In a couple o' days."

The Way of a Girl

IT was in the evening of the day on which the bandage was removed that William Anderson and his wife called at the "Star" office and insisted on seeing George Dayton Morgan, the news editor. Not a word had been heard of Grandma Anderson since she had been kidnapped by Berger's gang, and her son was convinced that the newspaper was to blame.

Sally was present at the interview.

"I know just how you feel, Mrs. Anderson," Morgan said, "but it isn't up to me, or to Miss Rogers here. Every other sheet in town is doing just about what we're doing with the story. You can't blame us."

"If you'd only stop it," quavered William Anderson, "dey'd bring my mother back."

"But don't you understand?" said Morgan. "We don't make the news, we simply report it. We get our information from the police department."

A telephone bell rang, and Sally picked up one of the instruments on the news editor's desk.

"It's for you," she said.

Morgan took the telephone from her.

"Yeah?" he barked. "What? The La Plant warehouse, Twenty-Sixth and Ninth? The watchman, eh? They got one of them? Okay."

He slammed down the instrument, scribbled on a pad, and held out the slip of paper he tore from it.

"Here," he said to Sally, "take

O'Brien and get down there!" He jabbed at the speaking-key of a dictograph. "Get me Curley! Be with you in just a minute, Mrs. Anderson. Oh, Curley? What are we carrying on the Anderson kidnaping case to-morrow? Well, never mind—send me the galleys. Yeah!"

He saw that Sally was putting on her hat without any great haste.

"Well, get going!" he rapped at her.

"What d'you think we're running here, a weekly?"

"A sweat-shop, if you ask me," Sally retorted.

"Nobody did ask you!"

With a toss of her head Sally went off to collect Matt O'Brien, and they travelled together in a taxi-cab to a big and dingy building on the corner of Twenty-Sixth Street and Ninth Avenue, O'Brien carrying his camera and a flashlight, Sally with a Press pass pinned to her hat.

The warehouse was in darkness, except for the thin rays of electric torches held by police officers who had invaded the premises. Sally and O'Brien crossed a yard and ventured in at a big doorway.

"Anything over there?" called a voice.

"Nothing over here," replied another voice.

A plain-clothes man just inside the doorway shouted irascibly:

"How about those lights?"

"Nothing doing," replied an invisible officer. "They cut the wires!"

Sally stepped up to the plain-clothes man.

"Give me a break, will you, officer?" she said. "I'm from the 'Star.'"

"Better make it snappy," he replied with a nod. "The inspector will be here any minute."

On the concrete floor, less than a yard away, a man was lying on his back and breathing in a fashion that suggested he had only a very few minutes left of life. She went down on her knees beside him, and O'Brien crouched beside her.

"Tell me how it happened, won't you?" she said gently. "Won't you tell me?"

A pair of glassy brown eyes stared up at her.

"Why, I know you!" she exclaimed.

"You're Ricci—one of Berger's men, aren't you? Who shot you?"

The brown eyes continued to stare, but Tony Ricci did not speak.

"Why waste time asking him riddles?" growled O'Brien. "The watchman shot him, of course!"

Sally shook her head; bent lower.

"Who shot you, Ricci?" she asked.

"It was one of your own mob gave it to you in the back—Berger, wasn't it?" Ricci's bloodless lips moved at last.

"He did—this—to me."

"Of course he did," said Sally, and it seemed as though Ricci took her word for it in his extremity.

"All right—if I'm—gonna kick off—let the cops—get him."

"Where is he?"

O'Brien did not hear the answer, but Sally heard it because she put her left ear close to the mouth of the dying man to catch mumbled words.

In less than five minutes she was in a telephone-box, speaking to Mac, and O'Brien was behind her. Mac was in the living-room of the flat in East Ninety-Ninth Street. His eyes were perfectly all right, and the wound in his forehead was practically healed, but his nerves were in none too good a shape.

"The department?" cried Sally scornfully. "Are you crazy? I said I've got a tip on where the Berger mob are holding Anderson's mother. If you call

the department now, every sheet in town will have it!"

"But you don't expect me to do it single-handed, do you?" Mac objected.

"Listen," she retorted, "you've been talking about where you're going to do to Berger when you got the chance. Well, here is your chance. What's the matter with you, Mac?"

"Nothing wrong," he answered, "but what do you think they've got a department for?"

"But, Mac," she protested, "it's my tip, and I want a two-hour break on it. I thought this would be a big chance for you!"

Matt O'Brien thrust his head over her shoulder to peer into the mouthpiece:

"Say, what's the matter, sarge? You ain't scared, are you?"

"Is it bein' scared not to want to get shot full of holes?" bawled Mac. "I know what I'm doin'!"

"All right," said Sally scathingly, "you know what you're doing, and I know what I'm going to do!"

"Listen, will you? I'll be up at Anderson's house in a squad car as soon as I can."

"Well, if there's a squad with you," threatened Sally, "you won't find me!"

From the telephone-box she and O'Brien went out into Twenty-Sixth Street, and in Ninth Avenue they caught a train on the Elevated Railway which carried them up into the Bronx.

There was no sign of Mac when they reached Tatum Place, and it proved none too pleasant an ordeal to wait for him in the lounge-hall of the Andersons' house, for the Swede could hardly contain himself after he had heard Sally's story. Endlessly he paced back and forth between the front door and the stairs till at last Matt O'Brien cried out at him:

"Will you light somewhere? You're giving me the jitters!"

"Then why don't you take me to my mother?" Anderson stopped to glare at him. "You know where she is!"

"Listen, will you?" returned O'Brien impatiently. "Haven't we told you McCaffrey's on his way here?"

"McCaffrey, McCaffrey! He's made enough trouble! I don't need McCaffrey—it's my mother I want! Don't you understand? I'm not afraid!"

"Nobody said you were," returned the photographer.

"Then come on! We've got to go!"

Anderson flung out a hand at Sally. "She knows where my mother is. Come on!"

He bounded across to the door and opened it—only to be pushed back by Mac, who had been about to ring the bell.

"Here, wait a minute!" said Mac.

"What's the hurry?"

"She knows where my mother is!"

Anderson shouted. "Don't you understand?"

"Sure, I understand," was the reply, "but take it easy. I'll 'phone the department and have the place surrounded, then we can play the whole thing safe."

"Nothing doing!" declared Sally.

"What d'you want to get this guy all het up for?" Mac demanded, swinging round on her.

"We've got to go!" bellowed Anderson. "I don't care how many dere are, I'll kill dem all! We've got to go!"

"We're going to go," said Sally with determination, and she moved towards the open door.

"Will you stop foolin' around?" Mac shouted at her. "I'm 'phoning the department right now. Where's the place?"

"You find it," Sally retorted. "Come on!"

She went out with Anderson and O'Brien, leaving Mae behind with Mrs. Anderson. But Mac, after a momentary hesitation, ran after them.

"You're all crazy!" he cried. "You haven't got a chance against that whole mob! Get in my car!"

Sally, without a word, got in the back of the car, and O'Brien scrambled in after her. Anderson sat in the front, and Mac took the wheel and started the engine.

"Step on it, Mac!" urged O'Brien, and Sally shouted directions.

The Final Encounter

UP through Tremont the car sped noisily through quiet roads, and houses had become few and far between when Sally called out:

"Swing to the right at the next turn!"

Anderson, who had worked himself into a state of frenzy, burst into speech again.

"If dey've hurt my mother I'll kill dem!" he bellowed. "I tell you I'll kill dem!"

"You'll kill them?" scoffed Mac. "Why, you poor runt, they'll slap you down like—"

"Are you driving, or making a speech?" inquired O'Brien derisively.

Cross roads were reached and the car turned into the one on the right, and presently was running beneath trees.

"This must be the wooded stretch he meant," said O'Brien to Sally.

"Yes," she agreed, and leaned forward to instruct Mac to stop at the next bend.

The wood was left behind, and the car climbed a hill past a long rail fence to the gateway of a drive. Mac braked just beyond the gateway, and switched off the lights, and they all descended and entered the drive on foot. Trees fringed the gravelled way, and there was no moon.

"It's as black as the inside of your hat!" complained Mac, after they had gone a dozen yards.

"What d'you want, a spotlight?" jibed O'Brien.

Another dozen yards, and then the dark bulk of a house became visible some distance ahead.

"Look, that might be it!" O'Brien said.

"It is," decided Sally. "All right, you wanted Berger, Mac—he's in there!"

"I tell you you're all crazy," Mac expostulated. "You don't know whether there are five, fifty, or a hundred of them in there!"

"There's only one way to find out," retorted Sally. "Get going, sarge!"

They came to the last of the trees and looked across an unkept lawn at the house. It had seemed in darkness before, but now they could see little chinks of light which suggested that the windows were shuttered.

"S-s-s-h!" hissed Anderson. "Listen!"

A shutter swung back and a window was opened. The sound of a gramophone mingled with the sound of voices.

"They're in there!" said Anderson. "What are we waiting for?"

"Keep quiet!" admonished O'Brien.

"I tell you you're all wrong," growled Mac. "We ought to send for—"

"Send for nobody!" cried Anderson. "I'm going!"

He started off across the grass, cutting off a sweep of the drive, and Mac shouted incantiously:

"Come back here, you fool!"

"Shut up!" snapped O'Brien.

"He's committing suicide," declared Mac hoarsely. "They'll kill him, sure!"

The words were barely out of his June 20th, 1936.

mouth when two shots rang out and Anderson staggered a few steps and pitched forward off the grass on to the drive. A third shot ploughed up the gravel close by his head, but he crawled on hands and knees towards a wide porch.

"Where's McCaffrey?" shouted a voice from behind the shutters of one of the upstairs windows—the voice of Berger—and that challenge, combined with the desperate courage of an unarmed man, stung Mac into action. Out came his gun, and he raced across the grass in spite of a rain of bullets that sent Sally and O'Brien scurrying to shelter behind tree-trunks.

Once only Mac stumbled on his way to the porch, but that was over a rabbit-hole. He reached the porch and found Anderson lying awkwardly on the top step, a certain target for more bullets if he remained there.

He dragged him up and half-carried him to comparative safety in a corner of the porch, then kicked at the front door and jumped aside as bullets riddled its glass panels.

For a few minutes he remained flat with the wall of the house, knowing that some of the enemy must be either in the hall or on the stairs, then down he went on hands and knees, edged his way to the door, and reached a hand in at a broken panel to pull back the latch.

A bullet grazed his knuckles, but with his shoulder he pushed the door slightly open. The hall was in darkness. He crept back to the wall and stood up.

"Here I come, Berger!" he shouted.

"Come on!" rasped that crook, who was leaning over the banisters at the top of the stairs. "I'm waiting!"

With a sudden dash Mac was inside the hall and blazing away with his gun. A shirt-sleeved ruffian in a doorway collapsed with a groan, but a man on the half-landing fired at Mac, and Mac fell.

More jets of flame, more loud reports, and then the man on the half-landing reached over the rail to peer down into the darkness. Mac, who had flung himself flat to mislead the enemy, took aim at him and fired.

The banisters gave way beneath a sudden weight and the man pitched headlong into the hall amid a shower of woodwork.

From the top of the staircase Berger fired once, and then there was silence. Slowly Mac got to his feet, and still more slowly he moved round the walls to the stairs and mounted them, pausing on every tread.

He reached the landing and the doorway of an unlighted room. Berger had retreated to the room with the open window, and lights blazed in there. Grandma Anderson, bound and gagged, was in an armchair. Berger had grown a moustache as black as his hair.

"Where are you, Berger?" Mac shouted.

"I'll give you three guesses!" the escaped convict shouted back.

"Why don't you come out and show yourself, loud-mouth?"

"Come and get me!"

Mac leaned against the architrave of the door with his gun ready, while in the other room Berger waited for him. Long minutes passed, and then Berger shouted again.

"What's the matter, flatfoot? Ain't you comin' in?"

Mac did not reply. He was reasonably certain by now that there were no other members of the gang in the house, and he knew that silence on his part would be bad for Berger's nerves. Five minutes elapsed, then:

"What'd you want?" taunted Berger.

"Another thirty days?"

Still Mac was silent; but he was not inactive. Swiftly he opened his gun and took out two cartridges, though he had reloaded down in the hall.

"What are you waiting for, tough guy?" shouted Berger. "You wanted me—well, here I am!"

Mac closed the magazine of his gun and pulled the trigger twice on empty chambers. Berger, who was listening for the slightest sound behind the other door, heard the two clicks with infinite satisfaction. He tugged the door open and strode forth to shoot down his enemy.

But the instant he appeared Mac pulled the trigger of his gun again, this time upon a live cartridge, and his aim was true. Berger fell flat on his face with a bullet in his heart.

Mac stooped and rolled him over, then put away his gun and walked into the lighted room.

"Hallo, grandma, how are you?" he said, and he unfastened the gag and removed her bonds.

The terrified old lady seemed to be incapable of speech; but an agitated voice came from the stairs, up which Anderson was crawling.

"McCaffrey! McCaffrey! McCaffrey!"

Police sirens shrieked in the distance as Mac put an arm round Grandma Anderson and led her out to the landing. Matt O'Brien, because Sally had insisted, had driven off to the nearest house and telephoned to headquarters.

"Take it easy now," Mac said to William Anderson. "Here's your mother, and she's all right. They didn't hurt her."

Anderson scrambled joyously up on to the landing, and his mother sat down on the floor beside him.

"Mr. McCaffrey, you got my mother," said Anderson. "I don't know how to thank you."

"Forget it," growled Mac. "You got her!"

• • • • •

The police arrived, but by that time Mac had switched on the lights in the hall. Sally and O'Brien followed a white-haired captain into the house.

"You all right, Mac?" asked the captain.

"Yeah, I'm all right," replied Mac.

"How many were there?"

"Three. Two here—and Berger's upstairs."

"Nice work, sarge," said O'Brien.

On the way back to the city Sally sat beside Mac in the front of the car.

"Gee!" she said proudly. "You'll be the biggest thing in town, Mac! It's terrific. Just wait till the papers hit the street!"

"Yeah?" said Mac. "Well, I was scared yellow."

"Yellow nothing!" she cried joyously.

"This is the first time since I've known you that you've sounded like a human being!"

"So you have to be yellow to be a human being, eh?" he inquired wryly.

"No, Mac," she corrected, "you have to be human to be human. I knew what was wrong with you all along. You'd never been hurt! That was why you didn't know what being scared was like. I—I could almost kiss the guy that gave you that wound in your forehead!"

Mac stopped the car under a lamp and grinned at her.

"You couldn't, maybe, kiss the guy that got it, could you?" he asked.

"I think maybe I could," she replied with a smile.

And she did.

(By permission of Radio Pictures, Ltd., starring Preston Foster, with Jane Wyatt and James Gleason.)

"FLASH GORDON"

(Continued from page 24)

interposed. "All right, doctor, what next?"

Zarkov leaned nearer to him.

"As I inferred," he said, "you are to make trouble with the guards. Then, when the switch is thrown, fling your electrified shovel into the nearest furnace. As you do that, however, you must leap for this wall, behind which you will be safe."

"Why, what will happen when I pitch the shovel into the furnace?"

"There will be an explosion that will shatter the furnaces," was the reply. "Then, in the space of a few minutes, as soon as the gravity-resisting rays have lost their power, this whole city will show signs of collapse. That will be the moment when I shall offer Vultan the salvation of his realm in return for our freedom."

It seemed a desperate project, yet Zarkov was certain that it would accomplish its purpose, and when at length he prepared to take his leave, Flash was fully as confident as the older man.

He watched Zarkov return secretly to the door and let himself out of the furnace-room. Then he turned to Thun and Barin, who had listened attentively to all that the doctor had said.

"Pass on the word to the rest of the slaves," Flash muttered. "They've got to be prepared, for I don't want any of the poor devils to suffer when those stoke-holes are hurst wide open."

Barin and Thun did his bidding, and an air of tension and subdued excitement was spreading amidst the wretched throng when a number of the guards turned the corner of the lead wall and summoned the men of Flash's shift.

"Next relay!" they shouted stridently, following up their words with brutal cuts from the long whips they were carrying. "On your feet, you lazy curs! Next relay!"

Flash and his comrades of the same group struggled from their haunches and blundered round the wall to the furnaces, where they relieved the slaves who had already been toiling there, and soon the members of the new shift were hard at work.

A minute or two elapsed, and then Barin spoke to Flash as the pair of them were easting fuel into the furnace vents.

"Vultan's men haven't seen the wire," he whispered, "but I wouldn't delay too long if—"

He never finished the sentence, ending on a sharp cry of pain as a whip slashed through the air and raised a weal upon his back.

"No chattering!" one of the guards snarled. "You're here for work, not talk!"

Flash wheeled, incensed by the look of anguish that he had seen on his companion's face, and as he clapped eyes on the man who had struck Barin, he swung his shovel above his head.

"You've used that whip for the last time, Hawk Man!" he blurted, and next second he was flinging himself at the inhuman bully.

The guard tried to throw up his hand to defend himself, but the shovel descended with a force that broke his arm, then crashed down on his helmet and spread-eagled him on the floor.

There was a chorus of angry shouts, and several of the other guards blundered towards Flash, only to recoil

before a storm of blows that laid two more of them low. Then, all at once, a voice became audible above the clamour, the voice of the officer in charge of the room.

"Keep back from him! Keep back from the Earth man! I'll handle him once and for all!"

Flash turned in the direction whence that voice had come, and he saw the officer at the switchboard that was bolted to the pillar. Already the fatal lever was in the superintendent's grasp, and there was a malevolent expression on the man's face.

"We need slaves!" the officer called out harshly. "But not the Earth man's kind. He's more trouble than he's worth."

He pulled the switch hard down, and expected to see Flash Gordon fall lifeless in his tracks. Instead, he saw him standing there unharmed, a tall, strapping figure with head held high and with a fixed, mirthless grin.

And then, staring at the copper wire, he saw that it was bound to the socket of the American's shovel, and not to the links of his fetters.

It was even as the officer became aware of this circumstance that Flash yelled a warning to his comrades in bondage.

"Run for the wall, men!" he roared. "Get to cover!"

There was a stampede as Thun, Barin and the rest of the working-party dashed for the safety of the lead wall, to swarm across it in a trice and fling themselves down beside the slaves who were already cowering there.

In the moment that the last two of them disappeared, Flash spun towards the furnaces and hurled the electrified shovel into the nearest vent. Then, catlike, he bounded for the parapet behind which his fellow-captives were mustered in full force.

The shovel had plunged into the nearest stoke-hole, and the current which it carried with it via the copper wire—that current wrought the disaster that Zarkov had prophesied. For in the very instant that Flash gained the lead wall there was a terrific, ear-splitting report, and the whole room was swept by a sheet of flame.

(To be continued in another exciting episode next week. By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Buster Crabbe and Jean Rogers)

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"WE'RE ONLY HUMAN"—*Detective-Sergeant Peter McCaffrey*, Preston Foster; *Sally Rogers*, Jane Wyatt; *Danny Walsh*, James Gleason; *John Martin*, Arthur Hohl; *Matt O'Brien*, John Arledge; *Mrs. Walsh*, Jane Darwell; *Inspector Curran*, Moroni Olsen; *William "Lefty" Berger*, Mischa Auer; *Tony Ricci*, Harold Huber; *William Anderson*, Christian Rub; *Mrs. Anderson*, Rafaela Ottiano; *Tommy Anderson*, Delmar Watson; *Grandma Anderson*, Effie Ellsler; *George Dayton Morgan*, Charles Wilson; *Detective-Sergeant Casey*, James Donlin.

"ANNIE OAKLEY"—*Annie Oakley*, Barbara Stanwyck; *Toby Walker*, Preston Foster; *Jeff Hogarth*, Melvyn Douglas; *Buffalo Bill (Colonel Cody)*, Moroni Olsen; *McIvor*, Andy Clyde; *Mrs. Oakley*, Margaret Armstrong; *Wesley Oakley*, Delmar Watson; *Susan Oakley*, Adeline Craig; *Lem Jordan*, Otto Hoffman; *Sitting Bull*, Chief Thunderbird; *Rain-in-the-Face*, Philip Ar-Men-Ta; *Ned Bunline*, Dick Elliott.

"ANNIE OAKLEY"

(Continued from page 20)

Two small boys were there—all kids love a shooting gallery. Suddenly one of them saw the cutting that Toby had pasted on the wall.

"Hullee gee, Annie Oakley!" he gasped.

"Gosh!" came from his companion. "And Buffalo Bill Show's coming here next Monday."

"Mister," cried the first boy. "Do you know Annie Oakley?"

Toby Walker smiled a twisted grin. "Sure, son, I knew her way back when—"

"Sure, and he knew 'em all," mocked the lout. "Annie Oakley, Sarah Bernhardt, the king of England, the Sultan of Siam, the—" The lout broke off and ran because the expression on Toby Walker's face was far from friendly.

But when the gallery was closing down Toby glanced again at the cutting and read about the visit of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. Up till then he had vowed he would not go, but it would be wonderful to see Annie Oakley again. Yes, no matter how much the sight of her would affect him, he must go!

Toby Walker found his way to the show and picked out a pay-box where the man in charge was a stranger to him. There he paid for a seat in one of the back rows—the best he could get, for the place was packed.

The announcer appeared: "Introducing a group of Sioux Indians; next Crow Indians—Cherokees—Cheyenne—Blackfeet—and last Navajo." Yelling gaudy figures on horseback dashed round the arena, and found their allotted places. "Cowboys from Wyoming and Montana Mexicans from old Mexico—Russian Cossacks from the Steppes—the South American Gauchos and a troupe of United States Cavalry." The various bands rushed into the arena to take their places for the opening scene. "And now introducing Colonel W. F. Cody—Buffalo Bill!"

Toby had to smile as the familiar figure took his place at the head of the various bands of horsemen. He grinned again when a bulky figure appeared on a white horse and waved a tomahawk it was *Sitting Bull* in full war paint. *Sitting Bull* climbed his horse up some stairs to a terrace overlooking the arena—it was his job to pose there as motionless as possible whilst the Redskins were doing their famous attack on a wagon train.

But Toby became very alert when a figure in blue appeared and rode across the arena to the sound of deafening cheers.

"Ladies and gentlemen," it was the mighty voice of Cody. "It is my pleasure personally to introduce that little lady who has played before all the crowned heads of Europe. The greatest shooting star the world has ever seen—Annie Oakley!"

Toby Walker was unable on account of his eyes to see Annie properly, so he borrowed a pair of glasses. She looked more beautiful than ever. He wondered vaguely why Annie kept turning in the saddle and peering at the crowds. Once she looked in his direction and instinctively he ducked down—she could not recognise him at that distance.

The announcer got busy.

"We present that world-famous thrilling spectacle—the Indian attack
June 20th, 1936.

on the Deadwood Stage. Featuring the one and only Sitting Bull." The Indian chief let out a war whoop and raised his tomahawk.

But whilst his graves were tearing round and round the Deadwood coach, Sitting Bull was not paying very much attention, for he had seen a man in the crowd that looked like Toby Walker. He shaded his eyes, and then someone moved so that he could see clearly. It was Toby Walker.

Toby Walker saw Sitting Bull leave his terrace and guide his horse down the stairway to the arena. He wondered why the Great Chief should race his animal across the arena in his direction. Sitting Bull sprang from his horse and clambered over the barrier.

"Toby!" he yelled.

Toby Walker dived underneath the back canvas, for he knew that the Indian had seen him. But Sitting Bull was not to be denied. Muttering and waving his tomahawk, he forced his way through tier upon tier of surprised spectators, and so fierce did he look that all hastened to get out of his way. Several women screamed, but Sitting Bull just showed his teeth.

The one-time champion crawled under the tent and ran, but when he looked back he saw a befeathered figure emerging. Toby took to his heels.

Sitting Bull was now on the trail and not to be shaken off. He guessed that Toby would try to elude him so he stalked after him bent double. He hid behind bushes and tents, but gradually gained, and did it so well that when Toby reached a lighted thoroughfare he thought he had eluded pursuit. His run became a walk. Taking cover in doorsteps, behind lamp-posts and corners came Sitting Bull.

Thus Sitting Bull saw Toby Walker enter the cheap rifle range, and he grinned. With his tomahawk he blazed a wooden post to mark the place. Now he must go back and tell Annie; he must hasten lest Toby fly away.

Sitting Bull saw a hansom-cab and decided that here was a means of returning quickly to the show. He waved his tomahawk at the driver to signify he required a lift. The driver mistook the gesture and thought his scalp was in danger; he climbed down from his box and, yelling for the police, took to his heels.

The Indian could not bother to understand the ways of some white people. He climbed up to the box-seat, and next moment the hansom was tearing down the street at a pace it had never travelled before.

Colonel Cody stared proudly round at the cheering crowds and at his many performers. The evening had been one of his greatest triumphs. Vaguely he wondered why Sitting Bull had disappeared among the crowd. Almost the stage was set for the last spectacle. Lines of riders from all countries of the world would charge down in lines, to halt and give him the salute before riding from the arena. The colonel blinked his eyes.

The first line of horsemen were charging towards him, but they were being led by an ancient hansom-cab. On the box-seat sat Sitting Bull.

The crowd roared at the unexpected incident. It was a combination of the past and the present, and they thought it was a comedy stunt introduced by the colonel. They were overcome with mirth. Not so the colonel. He scowled and turned to Jeff Hogarth, who was mounted on a big brown horse. Annie, mounted on a piebald mare, and holding a flag of the United States, was amazed.

Sitting Bull swung his chariot out of the line and tore across to Annie.

"Annie, I found Toby!" he cried.

"Chief, where is he?"

"Come quick—I will take you." With his tomahawk he indicate the hansom-cab.

Colonel Cody and Jeff Hogarth were amazed when they saw Annie jump down from her horse and climb into the passenger seat of the hansom. She swung open the folding flaps and then Sitting Bull applied his whip, and as the riders of all nations charged from the arena the Indian brought up the rear in a manner that brought thousands cheering to their feet.

Straight through the horsemen of all nations Sitting Bull drove the old horse. Out through the gates past the startled attendants on to the high road. The old horse went at a gallop towards the Boverly of New York.

Annie suddenly realised that she had brought her gun with her in the excitement of the moment.

The rifle range was deserted save for the barker, the half-witted lout and the same two gutter children.

"Gee, Toby, did you honestly know Annie Oakley?" one of the boys asked in an awed voice.

Toby laughed softly.

"Did I know her?"

"Huh!" sneered the lout. "Did he know her!"

Toby scowled, then ignored the poor wretch.

"Six shots for a dime," he began to call out. "Step up and try your luck. Try your luck, lads."

The lads shook their heads sadly.

"But, Toby, we ain't got no dime," said the boldest.

His smile was kindly.

"All right, here you are." He loaded a gun. "You kids can have six shots a piece, but hurry up before the boss gets back. Let's see you hit something for a change."

The targets began to move and the first boy fired his six shots and didn't get one hit. Then the second boy began to shoot, and with a grin Toby stared at the clean targets.

There was a long row of clay pipes on a bracket. Bang—bang—bang. Three of the pipes were smashed to pieces. Bang—bang—bang—bang—bang—bang—six of the pipes vanished. Toby, the kids and the lout stared as if they were dreaming. A ringing laugh made all jerk round.

On the other side of the road was a hansom-cab and on the box-seat a grinning Indian brave, but no one bothered to look at Sitting Bull. It was the little lady in the dark buckskin suit and breeches, with a wide sombrero on her brown curls.

"Annie!" Toby shouted.

"Toby!" came her joyful answer.

"Gosh!" cried the lout and the kids.

"It's her!"

Toby Walker clasped his dear one close to his heart, and then over her shoulder he laughed at the lout and the kids.

"Did I know Annie Oakley?" he shouted.

(By permission of Radio Pictures, presenting Barbara Stanwyck as Annie Oakley, Preston Foster as Toby Walker, Melvyn Douglas as Jeff Hogarth and Moroni Olsen as Buffalo Bill.)

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An English officer is sent to Switzerland to trace a spy who is forming a link between Germany and Turkey. A strange being, "The General," and a beautiful girl are sent by the Government to help him destroy this secret agent. A story full of thrills, starring Madeleine Carroll, Peter Lorre, Robert Young and John Gielgud



The Living Dead

EDGAR BRODIE, the brilliant young novelist, was dead. He had joined the ranks, obtained a commission for distinguished conduct in action, and then came home on leave—only to die of a chill in his bed.

All this one could have read in the paper the day after his death. Now, strange as it may sound, Edgar Brodie read the account of his own death soon after landing in England. Here is the real insight into the Edgar Brodie mystery.

Edgar Brodie went to Havre to take ship back to England on a week's leave. On going aboard he was conducted to a special cabin, handed a letter and locked in a cabin. The letter was brief and stated that Lieutenant Edgar Brodie must not attempt to leave the cabin during the short trip. A full explanation would be given to him on landing.

At Dover he was met by two red-taped officers, who informed Brodie that he must go to the War Office at once. A special car was waiting to drive him to London. Naturally, he asked for an explanation of this strange action. He was given a newspaper and conducted to the car, the saloon door of which was at once locked.

There was a small light in the car, and by the flame Brodie saw that a paragraph had been marked with blue pencil. With bulging eyes he read the account of his own death.

He was not likely to forget that drive back to town, because the Germans would chose that night for an air-raid. Eventually, after many hours, the enclosed car crossed Westminster Bridge. Brodie was glad to reach the security of the War Office, as the raid was now

almost overhead. What with the sound of exploding bombs and the crash of guns, it was like an inferno. He was conducted to a room, where he found waiting for him a distinguished general.

The general did not waste time but got at once to the point.

"You have read the obituary notice of your death, and being an author, probably think it is very badly done," the general smiled. "I trust that we got all the names of your books right."

"Every one, and in the right order," answered Brodie.

"You wrote a number of clever detective stories in which spies and international agents have played a part," continued the general. "And we decided that you were just the man for a very difficult job. We know that you have no important living relatives, so that it was easy for you to come home on leave and die of a chill. I am sorry we could not think of anything more original than a chill."

"You have killed me because you wish me to undertake a dangerous mission under another name?" questioned Brodie.

"Yes!" The general smiled in his pleasant way. "Your face is fairly well known. When we do get a new man it wouldn't do for him to be recognised on the job as Edgar Brodie. In Switzerland you'll be Mr. Richard Ashenden, a neutral gentleman of independent means."

"Switzerland? Haven't you an agent there?"

"Plenty, but the one who was conducting this particular matter is no longer on the case." The general drummed on his desk with his fingers. "He was unfortunately found in one of

the lakes with a bullet through his forehead. You're taking his place."

"I'm going to have a pleasant leave, sir."

"Carry out this commission and you can have all the leave you require. We have chosen you because we think you are brave and that you have brains. There's a German agent in Geneva—one of the best men they've got—waiting for orders to slip off to Arabia. He is a sort of link between Germany and Turkey. If he goes he may upset some very big plans of ours—plans, which if they succeed, may knock the Turk right out of the War. It is your job to stop him getting through."

"When do I start?"

"It is now midnight, and you leave at nine in the morning. Everything in the matter of luggage has been provided for you. You will sleep here to-night. You'll receive assistance, of course."

"I'm relieved to hear that," Brodie grinned.

The general leaned forward.

"This agent must be found. We have no idea what he is like or where he is staying. We don't even know his name. It's up to you to locate him."

"And the population of Geneva is about a hundred and seventy thousand," the young officer said with grim humour.

"Slightly more," the general answered. "That makes it easier for you—you won't be so conspicuous yourself. The Swiss police are getting a bit peevish about the way their country has been turned into an international spy centre. If they catch you playing your hand too openly, you may find

yourself in prison for the rest of the war."

"Supposing I do locate this German needle in a Swiss haystack, how am I going to prevent him going to Turkey?" asked the man who was now Ashenden. "I can't denounce him to the police, can I? I should only be giving myself away."

"I mentioned before that you would receive assistance." The general handed over a packet of papers. "Here is your passport and some papers dealing with the life of Ashenden—actually there was an Ashenden, who died in France. You should read these before you retire for the night. Also glance at this secret code-book, which you must learn to memorise."

"Thank you, sir," Ashenden took the packet. "When do I meet my assistant?"

"He is a Mexican—we call him the Hairless Mexican."

"Why?"

"Because he has a peculiar moon-shaped face, large eyes and very thick curly hair." The general laughed. "Some people say it is a wig. You had better address him as 'general.' He isn't a general, and, as a matter of fact, I fancy the Mexican police might be pretty glad to get hold of him—but he'll appreciate being called a general. He is very susceptible to flattery. But for all his strange looks and mannerisms you'll find him invaluable and indispensable."

"What can he do that I can't do myself?"

The general gave Ashenden a quick glance.

"Let me remind you of something. Whatever happens, this man at Geneva has got to be prevented from going east."

"Even if he has to go west instead?"

"Exactly. What's the life of one man in a war like this? You have

served on the Western Front and should know."

Ashenden frowned.

"But killing a person in cold blood is different."

"Fortunately the Hairless Mexican won't think so. You can safely leave the disposal of the German agent to him."

"Supposing I make a mess of this job?" Ashenden questioned. "Suppose Mr. Richard Ashenden slips up somewhere. What then?"

"That's simple, Edgar Brodie, the novelist will stay dead," the general answered sharply. "Except for the Mexican, you will be practically on your own. If you fall into the hands of the Swiss, or the Germans get you, we shall know about it, but we shall not do anything to help you. It is impossible for one country to try and protect a spy or an agent to any extent. Now I am sure you would like to meet your assistant." He opened the door and called "General," but there came no response. He shut the door. "The general will be down in the cellars."

"Because of the air-raid?"

"Oh, no," the real general chuckled softly. "He is not afraid of danger. He has probably gone to the cellar because it happens that for some reason he considers my secretary is quite an attractive woman. He imagines he is in love with her. He brings her absurd bunches of flowers and shouts Spanish love-songs at her. He quite frightens her, but he is really very gentle to women, but—" He paused. "Not so soft where enemies are concerned. Let us explore the cellar, Mr. Ashenden."

In the cellars of Whitehall Ashenden met the Hairless Mexican. The general's secretary was a rather plain, thin girl, and the attentions of the Mexican worried her. She had an idea he might draw a knife and cut her throat if she didn't marry him. The

Mexican was waving his arms about in an elegant appeal when the general and Ashenden appeared.

"Thank goodness you've turned up, sir," cried the girl. "He has been most difficult to-night."

"You get to bed, Mary, the raid's over now," laughed the general.

The Mexican kissed his hand and then grinned from ear to ear. Ashenden thought he had never seen such a strange little man.

"You are Senor Ashenden." The Hairless Mexican bowed deeply. "I am honoured, senor, to work for you."

"You two are working in a cause that means much to England," the general said with emphasis. "You, Ashenden, will start in the morning, but your assistant will start later and go by a different route. You will meet in Switzerland at a certain hotel. The packet I gave you, Ashenden, contains your orders. And remember, gentlemen, this agent must never get to Turkey."

"The senor find him." The Mexican grinned from ear to ear. "And then I do the rest." He gave a significant gesture of a throat being cut. "I think we have very good times in Switzerland."

Madame Ashenden

ASHENDEN made an uneventful journey to Switzerland and made his way to the hotel, where he knew that special agents of the Government had engaged a suite for him. At the reception counter of the hotel he filled in a number of forms, and was informed that 234 and 235 were on the second floor, sitting-room and bed-room.

"Thanks," murmured Ashenden, and then, with the Englishman's inherent love of cleanliness: "Is there a private bath?"

"Certainly, monsieur," answered the clerk. "Madame Ashenden has insisted on a private bath."



They made their way to the bell-tower and peered down.



The man pushed the piece of paper into a box.

"Who?"

"Madame, your wife, monsieur—she has arrived yesterday. Were you not expecting her so soon?"

Ashenden pulled himself together and grinned.

"No—not quite so soon. It is a pleasant surprise for me."

Very much puzzled, Ashenden hastened upstairs and found Number 234. He slipped his hand into his pocket and took out a gun. This Mrs. Ashenden might be an enemy spy who had got wise to his game, and he could not afford to take chances. He slipped the gun into his pocket after seeing that it was loaded. He decided to walk in casually and if necessary fire through his jacket pocket if held up. Very quietly he opened the door and slid into the room.

Before him was the back of a large armchair, and he could just see the top of a man's head. From the bath-room came the sound of a woman singing softly and the splash of water.

"Isn't it time you were through with that bath?" The words came from the man in the chair.

"I'm almost finished."

"Good news. What'll we do to-morrow?"

"Why 'we'?"

"Oh, darling, aren't you coming out with me? Didn't you promise?"

"Why don't you leave me alone, wretch?" came from the bath-room. "I'm a respectable married woman, and I've only known you twenty-four hours."

"In forty-eight you'll know me twice as well." The figure rose up out of the chair, and Ashenden saw that the speaker was young and good-looking. "And by the end of the week—" Ashenden had been seen. "You looking for anybody around here?"

"Only my wife."

"And by the end of the week, what?" came the woman's query.

"A divorce—it looks like," chuckled

the handsome young man. "You're Mr. Ashenden?"

"Guilty." Ashenden was on the alert.

Suddenly the woman appeared and Ashenden saw her. She was slim, very fair and most attractive. She was wearing a white dressing-gown, and was wiping her chin with a towel. She gave a start at seeing Ashenden, and then rushed across the room with arms held open.

"Darling!" she cried. "I'm so glad you got here at last."

Next moment her arms were round his neck and she had kissed him.

"Angel!" He managed to hug her. "They told me downstairs you'd arrived. How wonderful you're looking. I hope you haven't been too lonely?" He gave the young man a significant glance.

"Oh, no," the woman laughed, "this gentleman and I got acquainted in the lounge. Mr. Robert Marvin, meet my husband."

The two men shook hands.

"And now I guess it's time the triangle retired from the family circle." Marvin saluted them with a friendly wave of his hand. "Exit me, completely baffled."

The young man departed and Ashenden glanced at the woman, whom he realised could not be more than twenty-four or five.

"I wasn't expecting you until this evening."

"So I gathered."

"Jealous?" she teased.

"Jealous?" He snorted with righteous indignation. "My good girl, there's no need to act a part now. Kindly tell me who you are, and what your name is, and why you are passing yourself off as my wife."

"My name is Elsa Carrington. R. sent for me and told me I was to come out here—to join my husband, Mr. Richard Ashenden."

"So that old blacknurd R. has unloaded a wife on me." Ashenden

heartily cursed that interfering general in Whitehall. "You have papers to prove this?"

She produced a passport and insisted that he show his. Then she gave him a code letter from the general in Whitehall. R. informed Ashenden that he had made him a married man to round off his new character, and that his wife came of good fighting stock. She had taken on the job because she was anxious to serve her country in any way and did not mind danger.

Satisfied, Ashenden suggested that she go back into the bed-room and put on some clothes. She called him when she had donned most of her clothing, and he talked to her whilst she proceeded to attend to the care of her face. He told her of the object of his visit to Geneva, and that he expected to hear very soon from his assistant, who was a Mexican.

There came a knock at the door and into the room walked the "general." Mrs. Ashenden did not seem pleased.

"That man spent all yesterday following me around the hotel," she said indignantly, "and making eyes at me."

The general was not at all pleased when he found that the Government had fixed up Ashenden with a beautiful wife and sent no beautiful woman for him.

"Ashenden was a married man," explained the Englishman. "This girl is part of my disguise—a sort of extra camouflage."

"Verree clever—verree ingenioso," muttered the Mexican, and suddenly grinned. "Then maybe the senorita dine with mo this evening at the Casino?"

"General, we're here on important business," Ashenden spoke severely. "There's to be no love-making or funny business of any kind while we're on this job. If we take risks we're sunk. The Swiss police aren't fools. Do you want to spend the rest of the War in a Swiss prison? We've got to get busy. I have instructions from R. to

go to a little church up the Lagenthal Valley. There's a German agent there—an organist—who's playing the old game—working for both sides. He's ready to talk if we pay him enough." "Am I coming, too?" asked Elsa. "You stay and hold the fort." Ashenden commanded. "There may be a 'phone call from Zurich."

In a narrow street in the town was a little sweet-shop, and a little old man entered and bought some chocolate. The proprietor winked an eye and handed him a large packet. The old man went outside and in a quiet alley opened the packet and threw the chocolate away. The silver paper he held up to the light, and he read there a message in secret code.

It would have been a nasty shock to Mr. and Mrs. Ashenden and the general if they could have deciphered that message:

"INFORM BERLIN EDGAR BRODIE, DECEASED NOVELIST, ARRIVED GENEVA TO-DAY AS RICHARD ASHENDEN."

A Button in a Dead Hand

ON the following morning Ashenden, who had spent an uncomfortable night on a divan in the sitting-room, and the general set out from the hotel for the Lagenthal Valley. The great white-capped Alps towered majestically above them. They did not hurry because they did not wish in any way to rouse suspicion. They rested for a while at an inn and drank beer. Naturally, the general did his best to get off with madame's charming daughter, and with difficulty Ashenden got him once more on the tramp towards the distant church.

At last they reached the church. There was not a soul in sight as they opened a rusty gate and made their way to the entrance. They could hear the drone of the organ. They glanced round to see if they were observed before passing into the church.

One sustained chord was being played on the organ.

"Carramba!" whispered the Mexican.

"There will be two men—the man who is blowing the organ and the player, yes, no?"

"Not likely—everything is electric here," Ashenden whispered back. "We'll light three candles at that side altar; he'll see us through his mirror."

The sustained chord continued.

They stared towards the bent figure at the organ. The same drowning sound made the two men glance at each other. For five minutes the men stood before the altar. The sustained chord continued.

"Vainous, I stand this no more!" hissed the general, and drew out a particularly wicked-looking knife. "Let us go looking for ourselves."

They tiptoed across the church over the stone flags towards the organist. They saw the man's bowed shoulders. Why did he play the same chord the whole time? Ashenden coughed, and the man did not look round. The general moved forward and made towards the left side of the organist. Ashenden moved to the right. Both men were ready should the organist be playing tricks with them. The Mexican touched the organist on the shoulder and the latter's hand left the keys. There was a deathly silence. The Mexican and Ashenden saw the figure of the organist topple from its seat and crash to the ground.

Round the neck of the organist was a steel wire.

"Strangled!" gasped Ashenden.

The Mexican nodded.

"Someone very much did not want us to speak with him." He dropped beside the dead man and forced open a clenched fist. "Look!" From the dead man's hand rolled a button of the leather ball type.

"The owner of that must be the man who killed him," Ashenden whispered, and then turned. "Shush, someone is coming!"

They made their way to the bell-tower, and peering down saw a man whom they guessed must be a sort of sexton tidying up the place, and heard his yell when coming upon the body of the organist. The sexton decided that

the huge bell should be tolled, and Ashenden and the general were nearly deafened by the din. Through slats in the roof they saw the villagers hastening towards the church.

"It looks as if we shall have to stay here for hours," Ashenden yelled in the general's ear.

It was lucky for them that the villagers did not think to search the belfry, and hours later they escaped. They got back to Geneva, and Ashenden was not pleased to find a curt note from Elsa saying that she was tired of waiting for him and had gone to the casino with Marvin.

So Ashenden and the general put on dinner jackets and went across to the casino. The Englishman felt a twinge of jealousy as he saw Elsa. Her evening dress was a marvellous affair of white brocade, and her hair was set in the latest fashion. She was enjoying herself with Marvin, whom Ashenden presumed was some care-free American over in Switzerland for a holiday or to get as near to the war as possible so that he could be a hero back in the States. She saw Ashenden and hastened over to him.

Elsa kissed him on the cheek.

"Darling, I got rather bored, so I came along here with Mr. Marvin—you don't mind, darling, do you?"

"I'm glad you've turned up to take this dull wife of yours off my hands," chortled the irrepressible, always laughing young American.

Marvin strolled away to make a bet on the tables.

"How did you get on? Any results?" Elsa asked.

Ashenden produced the button.

"The sum total of the day's work." He lowered his voice. "Someone strangled the organist; we were too late. Smile, Elsa, smile. Marvin's coming back."

There was a slight scene in the casino because a thin, gaunt Englishman by the name of Caypor came into the casino with his German wife and a small dachshund. Dogs were against the rules. It was the general who drew Ashenden's attention to the fact



The general took out a flask of brandy and drank greedily, whilst Marvin watched him avidly.

that a button of the leather ball type was missing from Caypor's coat. They glanced significantly at each other when they heard him telling someone that he was a keen mountaineer and that that afternoon he had been in the Lagenthal Valley.

Caypor and his wife were staying in the same hotel, and the general found out that the Englishman was planning to leave very soon for some unknown destination.

Caypor always seemed to be whispering to his German wife and Ashenden was certain that here was the secret agent and the man who had murdered the organist. Somehow he managed to scrape acquaintance with Caypor on the excuse that he was crazy about mountaineering.

It was a hateful task to Ashenden, but Caypor was an enemy to England and moreover the link between Germany and Turkey. With the help of the general he persuaded Caypor to act as guide on a mountaineering trip. Half-way up Ashenden became so sick that he could not continue and staggered across to a nearby observatory where the astronomer in charge permitted him to use the telescope. On the opposite mountain side he could see two dots—they were approaching a perilous ledge. Only one dot was there a few minutes later.

Some hours later a white-faced Ashenden and quite complacent general were on their way back to Geneva.

"How did the police inquiry turn out?"

"Perfectamente. Un accident," the general grinned. "Very—very sad, but could not be avoided. The poor gentlemen!"

Elsa was not so gay when those two men returned from their fell mission. She was realising what this adventure that was to be full of danger and thrill was sordid and terrifying. She did not blame Ashenden for doing what was his duty, and she was glad when he told her that he had been unable to go through with it, and that it was the Mexican who had sent Caypor hurtling to his doom.

A telegram was brought to Ashenden at lunch the next day.

"It's from R. I'll have to decode it," he told Elsa, and begged to be excused.

Elsa sat there and stared at the general with horror and revulsion. How could he sit there looking at some comic French paper and laugh? Then Ashenden came back and she saw at once that something was wrong. The general noticed, for he put down his paper. Ashenden spread out the decoded message.

"Englishman not your man. Look elsewhere. Impress urgency. Hurry."

"Oh, how terrible!" Elsa sobbed; and then with failing hope she turned to Ashenden. "But the button—"

It was the Mexican who answered, and he laughed a trifle shakily.

"It seems these buttons is not so uncommon as you and I think. The wrong man. Now we have to find the right—and all for the same money."

"I can't go on with this!" Ashenden cried. "I couldn't risk murdering another innocent man."

Duty Must Come First

ELSA CARRINGTON and Edgar Brodie were in love with each other. They decided that they could not go on with this masquerade of Mr. and Mrs. Ashenden, that they would inform R. that they were resigning, return to England, Elsa to take up nursing and Edgar to go back June 27th, 1936.

to the Western Front. They would marry, and Fate would decide if Edgar should pass through the perils of the war unscathed.

The decision to resign they reached two days after the death of Caypor. They were not feeling quite so terrible about the Englishman's death. Caypor should have been fighting for England and not skulking in Switzerland, and thus they tried to ease their conscience. They told Marvin that they would shortly be returning to America—their passports were those of American citizens. That bright young man had said that he would be leaving the pleasant surroundings of Geneva, and told them that he was a journalist seeking copy. He did not know where his paper planned to send him—probably Greece.

Elsa and her bogus husband were busy writing the letter of resignation to R. when there came a tapping at their door. It was the Mexican.

"Hallo, general," greeted Ashenden. "Where have you been? They told me last night when I inquired where you were that you had gone out. I've been wanting to see you. Elsa and I have just made a decision. We're going home to-morrow." He held up the letter. "I've resigned."

The Mexican general did not smile. He stared at them curiously, and they found their gaze shifting before the man's strange look.

"Your pardon with me, but I do not understand this thing." He spoke softly. "In the time of war this word resign I think it does not exist. Always, of course, there is the running away, but resign on the front of enemy, it is impossible. Suppose whole army say this thing?"

"I wouldn't say it if I were in the front line," argued Ashenden. "That sort of fighting is clean."

"And when Senor R. does not accept this resigning—of course he does not—then what you do, please?"

"We'll be on the way before he can stop us," Ashenden cried. "R.'ll easily find a couple better than us. It isn't even as if we were doing any good."

"We can do very big goods." The Mexican spoke with obvious significance.

"What do you mean?" Ashenden demanded.

"This is why I am coming to you this minute. There is the new clues, the most big thing yet; it will lead direct to the man. The real man; this time there is no making mistakes." His eyes were appealing. "You think I enjoy climb mountain to kill man for nothings. You think I have no heart. Give me, please, the break. Promise if I make this time sure you stay here and see me through. Duty, senor, should come first."

"Pah, duty!" scoffed Ashenden, but he fidgeted uncomfortably. "What is this clue?"

"You come with me and I tell you. You make for me good advice."

"All right," Ashenden stood up. "I'll listen to this clue, and give you good advice, but I'm through. I'll be back in a few minutes, Elsa."

The Mexican took Ashenden along the corridor in the direction of his room. Outside he stopped and looked round to see if he could be overheard.

"Last night I go to the cafés, not feel so good, and someone she smile at me. I buy her drink and we much talk," the general whispered. "We make a little discussion about money matters. She tells me about her boy friend—her fiancé. This boy friend he work in

factory, here in Geneva, where they are making the chocolates."

"But I don't see how—" began Ashenden.

"Shush, you listen." The Mexican clutched his arm. "This boy friend is dispatching clerk on the top floor. But he make the big money—make four times the big money as make other dispatching clerk. This chocolate factory—it is more than chocolate factory—it is—how do I say—the German post-office."

"A clearing-house for information?" questioned Ashenden.

"Yes, but very, very secrets. The manager of this factory, he don't know nothing. Only one or two of the work-peoples in secrets."

"The boy friend is one?"

"Certain sure," the Mexican grinned. "Yesterday a message come through—a message for somebody waiting here for it. Boy friend tell girl friend, she tell me. She say he know the man. And for small sum she get him talk."

"Why should she do that?"

"Little fool want get married. For five thousand francs he tell us who this man be." The general pointed to his door. "I bring Lilli here to see you, senor. You talk nice, senor, and hold the money near her nose. The greedy little peeg she make boy friend talk for the money."

"I'd better have a talk with her," Ashenden decided. "I can give her a thousand on account and the rest later."

In the bed-room was a pretty girl. Covetous little eyes stared at the two men eagerly. Ashenden assured her that he would pay her young man five thousand francs if she would bring him to the hotel.

"He cannot come here, Mein Herr." Lilli shook her head. "It is too dangerous. The police. Always they look for spies."

"She's right, senor," the general had to admit, and then he grinned. "Better not he come to me. I go to him."

"Where?" asked Ashenden.

"At the factory," answered Lilli.

"She is right," the Mexican decided. "In the crowd we have more safe. I get the permit for visit factory. It is famous place. Then I meet into this brave boy friend, her Pete, by accidents. You give him the money and he tell me plenty. I go order car."

Within half an hour the general and Ashenden were on the way to the chocolate factory. They had obtained the necessary permit.

"Pete know the name of man fer whom we look so much and the route he take to East." The general showed a small note. "Lilli she give me this to make contractings with Pete."

"I hope we're not embarking on a wild-goose chase," Ashenden frowned uneasily. "Sounds too easy to me."

The Real Spy

MARVIN was sprawled on his bed in his luxurious room. He was busy writing a humorous farewell message to Elsa. There was a knock at his door, and the funny little old man who had bought the chocolate shuffled into the room.

"Sie sind beide weg im Auto."

"Sprechen sie lieber kein deutsch." Marvin sat up in bed. "It is safer to speak English. Where did they ask the chauffeur to take them?"

"To the chocolate factory."

Marvin whistled. "Will you walk into my parlour said the spider to the fly. Well, it's their funeral."

(Continued on page 25)

It was renegade treachery that had caused Colonel Delmont's death. That was why his son rode the vengeance trail and braved a hundred perils to track down the veteran cavalryman's slayers. A swift-moving epic of the old Frontier days, starring John Wayne and Ann Rutherford



The Expedition

IT was late autumn of the year 1830, and the brown and russet tints of the leaves had changed the aspect of the Wyoming forests. There was a certain crispness in the air, too, refreshing after the torrid heat of summer, but heralding the approach of winter's rigours.

That year there had been a good deal of trouble up and down the frontier, what with the forays of hostile Redskins and the activities of renegade white men who preyed on immigrant wagon-trains bound for distant Oregon. At the Wyoming settlement of Fort Laramie, civilisation's last outpost on the fringe of the Indian country, the cavalry detachment which maintained law and order among the Rockies had been kept pretty busy on account of alarms and excursions.

With the autumn there had come a lull, however, and it seemed as if Uncle Sam's troopers had finally subdued the warrior braves and the murderous bandits who had made the colonisation of the Far West so hazardous a venture.

Therefore it could not have been said that the ravages of Redskins and renegades were responsible for the conference of sober-faced military men which took place at the fort during the close of that particular month of September.

General Ferguson, in command at Laramie, was the central figure at that conference, and with but two exceptions the other men present were officers serving under him—the exception being

Clem Harris, a trader of some repute, and Lafe Bentin, a scout who knew the Indian country as he did the palm of his hand.

"Gentlemen," General Ferguson was saying earnestly, "the news has just reached us that the last wagon-train which passed through here on the way to Oregon has met with disaster at the Snake River Crossing. In short, the direct route to Oregon, known as the Union Pass trail, has witnessed yet another tragedy."

There was a pause, and then Ferguson went on speaking.

"As you know," he stated, "the difficult Union Pass trail has been the cause of many, many calamities—not brought about so much by marauding Indians or freebooters as by the arduous nature of the country itself. Pioneers drowning in floods, dying of starvation on barren prairies, perishing of thirst in blazing deserts. Yes, gentlemen, heavy toll has been taken of those brave spirits who have tried to reach the great North-West, and so a new trail to Oregon must be found."

There was a silence, during which the general turned his keen grey eyes on Clem Harris, the trader.

"In these circumstances," he continued, "I am inclined to look favourably on a suggestion which our friend here has put up. Perhaps you will be good enough to repeat that suggestion to my officers, Mr. Harris."

The trader cleared his throat. He was a thick-set man of ruddy complexion, very heavy about the shoulders,

and with a bulldog jaw that seemed to indicate determination.

"Mr. Benton, my scout, tells me that there is a pass to the south that would enable Americans to enter Oregon through California," he declared.

"Yes, siree," Lafe Benton struck in with emphasis, toying with his wide-brimmed Stetson as he spoke. "I kin guide yuh to it, and from California upwards to Oregon it's an easy route."

"Aren't you forgetting," said one of General Ferguson's subordinates, "that California is not yet United States territory, but belongs to Mexico?"

"That's true enough, sir," rejoined Harris. "But the Californians would not object to us travelling peacefully through their land. My proposal is that a troop of cavalry escorts me via this southern pass to the boundary line of Mexican territory, where I can fend for myself and work my day up to Oregon to transact business there.

"The dangers of this southern route," he added in an explanatory tone, "are confined to the country between here and the California line. Now the soldiers who travelled with me would not only afford me protection, but could later fortify the trail against Redskins for the benefit of the wagon-trains which would use this route after we had blazed it, as it were."

The suggestion put up by Harris began to look more promising to the assemblage of officers. At first the idea had seemed a little wild to them, but they could see now why their commander had given it consideration.

"And this southern trail which you

mention, Mr. Harris," someone inquired, "it definitely presents less difficulty than the Union Pass route?"

"Ask Mr. Benton," said Harris. "He claims to know every inch of it."

Lafo Benton drew the back of his hand across his mouth. He was a big, loose-limbed fellow, whose face was burned to a deep tan.

"It sure is a clear-cut trail," he announced, "and any man that used it would have a pleasure trip compared to what he'd have to go through on the Union Pass route. The only trouble is Injuns, the tribes down that way not havin' been put in their place like the ones up hereabouts."

General Ferguson addressed the company again.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I am going to accept Mr. Harris' proposal; but in view of the dangers which may be encountered from hostile Redskins I shall have to depend on one of you to volunteer as leader of the expedition."

The words were no sooner uttered than a young man holding the rank of captain stepped forward. Over six feet tall, and built in proportion, he was a strikingly handsome specimen of his race, with light-brown hair, resolute features, and eyes that possessed a devil-may-care expression.

"I'd like the assignment, sir," he remarked.

General Ferguson looked at him appreciatively, but shook his head.

"I'm sorry, Captain Delmont," he murmured, handing the younger man a dispatch that was lying on his desk. "But I am reserving your services for a mission which this document will explain. Therefore I must call upon someone else."

"Perhaps the general will permit me to volunteer."

The speaker was a man of some fifty years, a veteran of the army, yet still a fine, soldierly figure, and bearing a certain family resemblance to the youthful cavalryman whose offer had just been rejected. He was, in fact, Captain Delmont's father.

"Thank you, Colonel Delmont," General Ferguson said. "You can consider yourself in charge of the expedition, and I'd like you to arrange for an early departure. That will be all, gentlemen."

Thus dismissed, the officers filed out through the door of the general's quarters, the Delmonts being the last to depart.

"Sorry you weren't assigned, John," father said to son, as they were crossing the threshold. "I believe you're disappointed, at that."

"Aw, that's all right, dad," Captain John Delmont answered cheerfully. "It's in the family, anyway."

They passed out of the room, and now Ferguson was left alone with Harris and Benton.

"By-the-by, Mr. Harris," the general asked, "what will you require in the way of equipment?"

"Why, I'd say plenty of rifles, ammunition and food supplies," the trader replied heartily. "And a field-gun, general. Yep, a field-gun would be pretty useful."

"I'll see to it," the cavalry commander assured him, and a few seconds later the trader and his scout were also quitting the room.

Once out of earshot of the sentry who was posted at the door of Ferguson's quarters, Benton spoke to Harris in an undertone. He was grinning—a crafty and malevolent grin that might have

caused the general some uneasiness had he been able to see it.

"It went over better than I expected," said Benton.

Harris nodded. There was an unpleasant glitter in his eyes.

"I've been planning this for a long time, Lafe," he muttered. "By thunder, there's no tellin' where we might finish up when we hit California. We've picked a spot where we can build a stronghold that will stand off an army. We'll have a field-gun—the only piece o' cannon that country has ever seen. And we'll make ourselves masters of the whole section there."

"Yeah?" the scout chuckled. "Well, you take the land. Me an' the boys will be satisfied with the loot."

"And there'll be plenty of it," quoth Harris. "Now you know what to do, Lafe. Get Markey—tell him that everything's okay and that he's to round up the boys an' meet the column at Soda Springs. Tell him to pull off the job just as we planned it."

Benton gave him a sly wink that held a wealth of meaning, and then took himself off. Harris remained at the fort, and a little while later might have been seen mingling with a knot of officers, who fell into conversation with him at once.

They liked Harris, had always liked him, finding him good company. He had an engaging way with him, and, taken at his face value, he seemed a downright and hearty sort of person. Little did they know that this trader of good repute was in reality the head of a powerful band of outlaws, and that under his veneer of good fellowship the true nature of the man was revoltingly cruel and cunning and ruthless.

Left to Die

THE journey from Laramie, in Wyoming, to Soda Springs, situated in the territory now known as Utah, was one that took many days, and a full fortnight had elapsed since the conference at the fort when a considerable gang of desperadoes mustered there.

They were the men in the pay of Harris and were led by Markey, an ill-favoured ruffian who acted as the bogus trader's lieutenant.

Their camping-ground was among the rocks that were scattered in profusion around Soda Springs, and here they awaited the approach of the expedition commanded by Colonel Delmont; here they whiled away the time for twenty-four hours, taking it in turns to keep a look-out towards the north-east, and in their waking moments discussing the project that Harris had in mind.

It was at the end of twenty-four hours, and a new day had dawned chillingly with a hint of snow in the air, when the Delmont column was sighted on the trail, Harris and Benton riding a little to the fore.

News of the expedition's approach had no sooner been conveyed to him that Markey prepared for an ambushade, planting a handful of his men within gunshot range of the Springs.

"You fellows know your job," he said to these renegades. "As soon as the blue-coats dismount and come ahead, get your horses and beat it. Meantime, the rest of us will be in hiding away to the left there, and we'll bear down on the wagons at the right moment. The whole thing oughta be easy."

"Tom," he added, turning to a lynx-eyed rogue known as Richards, "you'll stay put when we make our dash, an' you'll pick up Harris with a spare horse. Is that clear?"

Richards nodded briskly, and the main body of the crooks then cantered off to the position that they were to occupy, parting with those who were to engage in the task of drawing off the soldiers.

A quarter of an hour later the Delmont column pulled slowly into the immediate neighbourhood of Soda Springs. It was a column that consisted of a field-gun and ammunition limber, a number of wagons laden to the canvas with stores and equipment, and a troop of blue-uniformed cavalrymen for escort.

As it came within range a shot split the quiet of the lonely, rock-bound hills that overlooked the Springs. It was fired by one of the small party of men who had been detailed by Markey to decoy the soldiery, and it was immediately followed by a desultory volley from the same source.

The leaden slugs whistled amongst the troopers of the column, and so unexpected was the fusillade that for an instant or two the military detachment was thrown into confusion. At the outset, indeed, Harris and Benton alone seemed to keep their heads—as well they might, since they knew that they had nothing to fear.

"Get down off your horses and take cover!" yelled Harris.

He was obeyed, for the order was not countermanded by Colonel Delmont. Why should it have been? Delmont himself realised that it was the only course to take, and set an example by swinging himself out of the saddle and drawing his revolver.

The men of his detachment dropped to the ground. Then the drivers of the wagons and the artillerymen on the gun limber followed suit, and next second a heavy fire was being opened upon the cluster of boulders from which the outburst of shooting had come.

As for Harris and Benton, they had made it their business to single out a bugler who was attached to the troop, and, after there had been a brief exchange of shots with the concealed desperadoes, the trader and his ally slipped across to that soldier.

"Sound the charge!" Harris rapped out.

The bugler hesitated, but Harris seemed to imply that the command had originally come from Colonel Delmont, and in another moment the brassy notes of the trumpet were resounding above the blatter of military carbines.

Quick to respond, the cavalrymen leapt to their feet and dashed forward through the rocks, cheering as they ran. At the same time Harris and Benton detected movements away ahead, movements which told them that the handful of renegades who had blazed at the troopers were making off.

Scout and trader hung back as the soldiers pressed onward, and then, unnoticed, they turned aside and raced hot-foot between the scattered boulders to a copiece about a hundred yards to the west.

Before they reached that copiece a formidable band of horsemen spurred out of it and swept down the line of wagons which had been left unattended by Delmont and his troop.

Skulking among the rocks with Benton, Harris watched Markey and the gang stampeaded the wagon-teams expertly, and heard a fresh uproar of shooting as the betrayed soldiery became aware of what was taking place in their rear. But, inveigled into that fatal and useless charge by one whom they had trusted, Colonel Delmont and his men were already a fair distance from the Springs, and without suffer

ing a single casualty the renegades escaped with their booty—a whole column of prairie schooners packed with stores and munitions of war, to say nothing of a field-gun of the latest pattern and a hundred cavalry mounts fully accoutred.

"Good work, Markey," Harris soliloquised under his breath, and then in company with Benton he hurried on until he reached the coppie from which the foray had been launched.

Here he found Tom Richards awaiting him with a couples of ponies, and he made haste to climb astride one of the animals.

"All right, Tom, let's go," he grunted to Richards. "Barton, you go back and report to Delmont. As long as you're the one to break the bad news to him, he'll believe your story. But remember, nobody must reach the fort with word of the raid until I have time to get well out of the country."

"Don't worry about that," the scout rejoined. "Colonel Delmont and his troop are as good as lost right now. And you and me and all the rest of the boys will meet later—in California."

With a nod Harris wheeled and galloped off in a westerly direction, Richards accompanying him. As for Benton, he sneaked back under cover of the rocks until he was within sight of the cavalry detachment which had been so cunningly tricked.

The soldiers had returned to the Springs, and were standing around with the air of men who were baffled and helpless. Colonel Delmont and a couple of junior officers were in earnest conversation beside a solitary wagon which had been overlooked by Markey and his cronies.

Such was the scene that Benton now beheld, and after permitting himself a covert smile he stepped boldly from amidst the rocks and advanced towards the colonel.

"Did yuh get any of those rats who opened fire on us, sir?" he asked.

"No," Delmont breathed. "They ran to their horses and sheered off as we charged. They were only decoys, Benton, for while our backs were turned some more of the scoundrels bore down on the wagons and got away with everything—everything except this prairie schooner here, which contains nothing but our tents and a small quantity of provisions."

"How much grub is there in that wagon?" Benton queried.

"Enough to keep us alive for a week or two on short rations," was the reply. "After that we're finished."

"Finished is right," Benton muttered with well-feigned gloom. "There ain't no game in this tract of country, and we're hun'reds of miles from anywhere."

Colonel Delmont was silent for a space, and then, looking about him:

"What happened to Harris?" he demanded.

"I was goin' to tell you about that," Benton said with a frown. "It sure looks like he had something to do with the whole thing, sir. I saw him strike off, and, followin' him up, was just in time to spot him ridin' away with one o' them renegades."

The colonel's brow darkened as this evidence of the trader's villainy was made known to him, and, standing there, he cursed the day that Harris had talked General Ferguson into accepting his proposal to blaze a new trail. It was clear enough to him now that the man had only been working for his own ends, seeking to gain profit and plunder from the U.S. Government.

"Benton," he said huskily, "we can't turn back, and it's equally in vain to go forward. We would die on the march for want of supplies."

"There's a horse harnessed to that wagon there, sir," Benton stated. "I could make the fort alone on it.

travellin' light—and could be back here with a relief party afore the heavy snow starts."

It was a suggestion to which the colonel readily agreed, and, the horse being taken out of the shafts of the wagon, Benton swung himself astride the animal's back. He was then provided with some food, sufficient to last him on his long journey to Fort Laramie, and as he was preparing to set out Delmont moved close to him.

"Remember, Benton," he said slowly, "the lives of my men are in your hands."

"I understand, sir," the scout answered, and a moment later he was clapping his heels to the flanks of his mount.

The soldiers who had pinned their faith on him watched him galloping in the direction whence they had come, watched him until a fold in the landscape hid him from their view. It was only then, had they but known it, that Lafe Benton changed his course, swinging aside from the north-east trail and affecting a detour that enabled him to skirt Soda Springs and head for the west—and California.

Special Assignment

SOME weeks later, on the old Union Pass trail that led to Laramie and then wound away across a thousand miles of the toughest territory in the West, a wagon-train of immigrants might have been seen in the throes of a combat with Nature.

The wagon-train in question was fording a tributary of the Platte River, but the torrent, swollen with recent falls of sleet and snow, was rendering the passage a difficult and even desperate venture.

Despite this, the crossing was made without a hitch until the last prairie schooner was fifty yards from the west bank, when the vehicle suddenly cap-



"I'm sorry, Captain Delmont," the general murmured, handing the younger man a dispatch that was lying on his desk. "But I am reserving your services for a mission which this document will explain."

sized and plunged its occupants into the water.

The occupants were a woman and a small girl of some seven or eight years, and as the flood swallowed them an outcry arose from those of the immigrants who had already gained dry ground.

Even as those shouts of alarm went up three horsemen charged into the water in a determined and spontaneous attempt to rescue the woman and the girl. They were not connected in any way with the wagon-train. They were soldiers who had chanced to arrive at the ford while the column of pioneers had been engaged in traversing it, and one of them was none other than young Captain Delmont, bound for Laramie after executing a mission in the south-east.

It was for the young girl that John Delmont made, leaving his two comrades to succour the woman, and, though a few moments of tense anxiety ensued, the gallant blue-coats finally succeeded in bringing the imperilled couple ashore.

John was the first to reach the bank, and amid the acclamations of the onlookers there he handed a drenched and weeping child to an elderly, white-faced man who was waiting with open arms.

"I—I don't know how to thank you, sir," this man said to him in a voice that trembled with emotion. "My name is Ridgley, and I'm leader of this train. This is my little daughter Sis. She was riding up on a spare wagon with her Aunt Minnie there."

John glanced at the drooping form of "Aunt Minnie," who was being carried out of the river by his comrades, two staunch troopers who were known as Red Conway and Tim O'Rourke. They seemed to be at loggerheads over her, Red and Tim, as if each were anxious to claim the credit for rescuing her, and John could not help smiling, for he knew that these two fellows under his command considered themselves first-class "lady-killers."

Aunt Minnie, in the meanwhile, was plainly in a fainting condition, and it was not until she had been placed on dry land that she revived. And then, as she lifted her head, Red Conway and Tim O'Rourke saw her features fair and square for the first time.

They released her with one accord. For the face that they beheld was not what they had expected. It was the plain, unbeauteous face of a typical spinster, middle-aged, but possessed of kittenish ways that became apparent as she recovered her wits.

"Oh!" she squealed. "Oh, I've been saved—and by a soldier! Oh, tell me, which of you was the brave man who rescued me?"

She looked as if she were about to favour her deliverer with a kiss, whichever one should prove to be the deserving party, and involuntarily the two troopers recoiled.

Red, long and lean and carrot-headed, made haste to point at Tim. The latter, short and plump, was equally quick to indicate his laiky comrade.

"Ho did!" they exclaimed in one voice.

Their captain, John Delmont, was watching their discomfiture, and was covering his mouth with his hand to hide a grin when old man Ridgley spoke to him again.

"May I present my other daughter, sir?" the leader of the wagon-train said. "I reckon she'd like to thank you for what you did as well, an', maybe she can do it better than me."

John turned to discover a girl of nineteen or twenty standing beside

Ridgley, a girl whose loveliness took his breath away; a small, dainty brunette, trim of figure, with a creamy complexion and a pair of large, smiling eyes.

He was scarcely aware of the words of gratitude that she addressed to him—only he knew that they came mighty prettily from her lips. Then her voice trailed off on a note of inquiry, and he realised that she was waiting for him to tell her his name.

"John," he found himself saying. "Captain John Delmont."

"My name is Ann," she murmured, and blushing lowered her glance as he continued to gaze at her in admiration.

John soon learned that the Ridgley wagon-train was bound for Oregon, and, in consequence, he proposed that he and his two subordinates should ride with it as far as Laramie. It was a suggestion that was welcomed by Ann and her father, as well as by little Sis, who was on the way to recovering from her ordeal and already seemed to be developing a sort of hero-worship for the tall officer who had saved her from the river.

During the next three days, therefore, John Delmont had ample opportunity of making the better acquaintance of the Ridgleys, and, if Red Conway and Tim O'Rourke were hard put to it to avoid the skittish attentions of Minnie, their captain at least found the time passing quickly enough in the company of Ann.

It was round about ten o'clock on a chill, dreary morning that the column of immigrants sighted Fort Laramie, and, as they intended to push right ahead until weather conditions should force them to camp for the winter months, John was compelled to take a regretful farewell of them there and then.

"Well, captain," old man Ridgley said as he shook hands with him, "I want to thank you again for what you and your men did at the crossing of the Platte."

"That's all right, Mr. Ridgley," John told him heartily. "I'm glad to have met you, for making a friend in this country means a lot to anyone. You never know when we might run across each other again. I only hope we do."

His parting with Ann was somewhat different. Though he had only known her a few days he felt that he would never forget her, and it gave him a queer pang when he reflected that he was perhaps bidding her "goodbye," never to see her any more. He could have wished with all his heart that he were not a soldier, but a pioneer bound for Oregon, and he had a pretty shrewd idea that she was wishing the same.

Part they must, however, and a short time afterwards Captain John Delmont was reporting to General Ferguson in the latter's quarters at the fort.

The general congratulated him on the success of the mission that he had conducted in the east, and added that he considered John and Troopers Conway and O'Rourke were entitled to a long furlough.

"Thank you, sir," the younger man replied, and then, after a slight pause: "Have you heard anything of my father?" he asked.

General Ferguson shook his head slowly, frowning as he did so.

"Not a word," he said, "and I confess to being worried, my boy, for we've been a long time without news of the colonel and his command. But at this time of the year I'm afraid that no search party could get through the mountains."

John bit his lip. The lack of tidings from his father had troubled him sorely, and he was desperately anxious to learn if all was well with him.

"I'd like to try it, sir," he announced,

and at that the general rose from his chair.

"I wouldn't ask any man to go," he stated, laying a hand on the captain's shoulder. "But I'll gladly give you my permission, and, as I believe Conway and O'Rourke to be very much attached to you, they are at liberty to travel with you if they so desire."

This John would not hear of, preferring to undertake the hazardous journey alone without risk to the lives of other men. But on the day that he prepared for departure he was accosted by Red and Tim.

Like their officer, they had discarded their uniforms and were dressed in buckskin. They had also obtained horses and a couple of pack-mules.

"Where do you think you're going?" John demanded.

"Well, it's like this, you see, cap'n," began Tim, acting as spokesman, "Red and me got a furlough from the old man, and we—we—"

"We're gonna spend it kikin' around the mountains," Red struck in hurriedly.

John looked at the two of them. He was not deceived by their words.

"Boys," he said, "it's fine of you to want to go along with me, but I can't let you."

"But you can't stop us," O'Rourke blurted, whereupon Red caught him by the arm.

"Now wait a minute, Tim—wait a minute. Obey Cap'n Delmont's orders. Ef he wants to go alone, that's his privilege."

"But," the carrot-headed trooper went on significantly, "any time he feels like company, all he'll have ter do is whistle, an' we'll be right behind him."

John heaved a sigh that seemed to spell defeat. He could see quite plainly that no amount of argument on his part would prevent these faithful comrades from following him.

"All right, boys," he said in a resigned tone, "you win."

Thus Captain Delmont set out upon his journey with the companionship of two cheerful worthies to help him on his way, and in the days that followed they might have been seen riding in a south-westerly direction over the prairie flats, with the bitter winds of early winter playing against their faces.

It was fair enough going so long as they were on the plains. The real test came when they reached the mountain country, where the passes were blocked by snow-drifts, and where they were compelled to take the edge of ice-bound precipices that threatened doom to men and beasts if a false step were made.

From snatches of conversation that Harris and Benton had let fall at the fort during the month of September, John had some idea of the trail that they had intended to follow, and from his experiences on that journey he was prepared to admit that it was a trail superior to the Union Pass route in many respects.

He could see quite well that in the summer months it would present very much fewer difficulties than those to be encountered farther north.

Yet with the mountains in the grip of winter it was a death-trap, a trail of a thousand perils, where a man might meet his end in the teeth of fierce blizzards, or under the impact of crushing avalanches, or at the foot of some abyss into which a fatal slip had plunged him.

For weeks John Delmont and his two comrades matched their strength and their endurance against raw nature in those pitiless mountain realms, braving the fury of the elements, surviving the

manifold dangers that beset them, pressing onward between late dawn and early dusk, camping at nights in such sheltered places as they could find.

Many times they lost their way, and then days would be spent in wandering around, till John could pick up some landmark which he remembered from Benton's description of the south trail.

But at last they came into a country of rock-strewn foothills, and forty-eight hours later they reached Soda Springs.

It was a locality that had undergone a complete change of aspect since the day when Colonel Delmont and his troop had been abandoned there. No longer was the barren ground visible, but was hidden by a mantle of snow several feet in depth, the very boulders being submerged in the drifts.

Bleak was the scene, and John and his companions might well have passed on if Red Conway had not suddenly perceived a tent-pole protruding from the thick, icy carpet that had buried the earth.

In another thirty seconds captain and troopers were digging out that tent whose pole had been discerned, and under the stiff canvas they found the poor remains of two men who had belonged to Colonel Delmont's ill-fated expedition, two men whose tragic appearance told of death by cold and starvation.

Later still, beneath a tent not far away, the searchers discovered the frozen and lifeless body of the colonel himself, and out of respect for their young officer's feelings Red and Tim went back to the horses, leaving the captain alone with his grief.

An hour afterwards John Delmont joined them. There was anguish in his looks, but somewhere in his eyes there was a strange and awful glint that seemed to speak of an emotion darker and more violent than sorrow.

He was holding in his hands a small notebook, which Red and Tim presently realised to be his father's diary.

"They were jumped by renegades," John said in a low, tense voice. "Lost their winter's rations—lost everything. And Harris was seen riding away with one of the desperadoes after the attack."

"Harris!" breathed Red Conway. "The dirty coyote! What else does the diary say, cap'n?"

"There's just one more entry," was the answer. "'I am sending Benton back for help.'"

Red and Tim exchanged glances.

"Benton never reached the fort," Tim muttered. "The point is, did he try?"

"I—don't—know." John uttered the words heavily.

"Anything may have happened to him. But if he didn't try to make Laramie, he must have known that

dad and his troop would get snowed in here, and would freeze and starve to death."

There was a long silence, which Tim was the first to break.

"What's our next move, cap'n?" he asked gently.

"It's no use going back the way we came," John said. "We'll cut across to the Union Pass trail, and see if we can pick up news of Benton."

Towards California

FIVE days later John and his comrades reached the Union Pass trail, and after a tough journey of many hours through the narrow gulches of an outcrop of the Rocky Mountain chain they came in sight of a broad, sheltered valley.

In that valley they beheld a big corral of wagons, and ere they approached much nearer they realised that they were bearing down on Ridgley's column of immigrants, who must have wintered in this particular locality.

In another few minutes John and his two followers were presenting themselves to the leader of the train and his daughters, Ann and Sis, and it was a meeting that afforded pleasure to all concerned.

"Well, well," old man Ridgley declared, as he wrung John by the hand, "of all people I never expected to see you here."

"How've you been getting along, Mr. Ridgley?" the young officer asked him.

"Pretty fair," was the reply. "But we're sure gettin' impatient over the delay. We're waitin' for the winter snows to melt on Union Pass."

"We've come from the pass," Red Conway put in. "Snow's lub-deep there, Mister Ridgley. You could never make it with yer outfit."

The elderly pioneer looked solemn at this.

"That's bad news," he muttered, "bad news. We can't stay here much longer—we've jist gotta push on and strike country where there's game. Our grub's runnin' pretty low, you see."

A silence ensued, a silence during which John Delmont fell to thinking. Supposing he offered to seek out Benton's route to Oregon via California and lead the wagon-train onward! He would be doing Ridgley and his immigrants a service, and at the same time he might run across the man for whom he was looking. After all, he could not be sure that Benton had struck across to the Union Pass route.

"Mr. Ridgley," he said suddenly, "I don't suppose you've met up with a long, raw-boned fellow between Laramie and this valley, have you? Benton was his name, and he was a scout."

Ridgley answered that he and his party had encountered no strangers of any description, either white men or red.

"All right, then," John announced, "I'll tell you something. There's supposed to be a trail to the south, which, taking it from start to finish, is a heap easier than the Union Pass road. We've traced it as far as a place called Soda Springs, and from there I've only got the haziest notion of it. But my friends and I would be glad to push ahead of you and seek it out, sending up smoke signals from time to time to guide you."

Ridgley appeared interested, and John went on to tell him of his own movements during the past few weeks. When he had finished his story the older man fingered his chin thoughtfully.

"But to get back to Soda Springs we'd still have to make our way through Union Pass, wouldn't we?" he murmured. "That's how you came here at last."

"Yes," John acknowledged. "That was our quickest route. I think, how-



Locked in mortal combat, the three of them fought like furies, Benton inspired by a dread of the gallows.

ever, that there's another course we could have taken—a little longer, but more suitable for wagons. We'll start looking for it as soon as we've had a meal, if you like."

He and Red and Tim had provisions of their own, and were prepared to fend for themselves. But Ridgley insisted that they should enjoy a repast cooked by womanly hands, of which there was no lack in his train of pioneers, so that a short time afterwards the three soldiers were sitting down to a feast near one of the wagons.

It was about eleven in the morning when the captain and his two subordinates set forth in quest of a route that would take the wagon-train safely through the mountains, and during the days that followed they devoted themselves to this task steadfastly, with a fervour that was inspired by the knowledge that the column's food supply was running fairly short.

Often they were balked, fetching up into blind canyons or gullies which the snow rendered impassable for heavy vehicles such as prairie schooners. But perseverance was rewarded, and day by day they struggled onward through the lonesome fastnesses, frequently lighting fires with damp timber that sent clouds of smoke into the heavens and beckoned the Ridgley column.

They were usually a good many miles in advance of the immigrants, and always waited until they had made fair headway before kindling their signal-beacons. By means of these signals the wagon-train was able to keep track of the three soldiers, and at last Soda Springs was reached.

The worst of the journey was over, yet there was a long road ahead, and one that had to be scouted from sunrise to sunset. But John and his comrades did their work well, and with the warmth of a new season melting the snows and brightening the vast landscapes of the West the travellers found themselves nearing the Californian border.

They were by this time in a country that abounded with game, and all anxiety over the question of supplies had long since vanished. Meanwhile, John, Tim, and Red were still riding in advance of the column during the day time and reconnoitring the ground, waiting for their friends to come up with them whenever the dusk began to fall, camping with them for the night and then pressing forward again the first thing in the morning.

For his own part John experienced a keen satisfaction that mounted as the days wore on. He was not only helping the Ridgley wagon-train, he was blazing a trail that would prove a boon and a blessing to any other immigrants who came after them. And as for the hostile tribes of Redskins to whom Benton had referred, not a single brave had crossed the column's path.

From the satisfaction that John Delmont so obviously betrayed it might have been imagined that he had forgotten his father's killers. But Red Conway and Tim O'Rourke knew that this was not so.

There were times when they noticed a far-away look in his grey eyes, and they were well aware that he had merely shelved his personal feelings. He had hoped that he might come across some trace of Harris and his gang on this route to California, and if this hope did not look like being fulfilled he still cherished the expectation that some day he would get wind of them and strike.

Then one day there occurred an incident that brought his father's death sharply to the forefront of his mind.

He was some miles ahead of the Ridgley wagon-train with Red and Tim, and they had come upon a shallow reach of the lazy Humboldt River, beyond which lay the territory of California, then in Mexican hands.

"Ridgley and his people can cross over here," John said, "and for you and me, boys, I guess it's the end of the trail. We can at least congratulate ourselves on having traced and mapped out a new route to Oregon, which my dad would have done before us if he hadn't been—"

He did not finish the sentence, and there was a long silence. Then Red spoke up.

"Better fix a smoke-signal to guide the column here, hadn't we, cap'n?" he suggested. "How about buildin' a fire on that bluff a little way downstream?"

John nodded, and the three of them rode towards the cliff that Red had indicated. Here they gathered some brushwood and lit a beacon, knowing that the clouds of vapour from it would soon be seen from afar by Ridgley and his band of hardy pioneers.

It was not only the immigrants who descried the dark clouds that rose from that beacon, however. For the smoke was seen by two horsemen who were much nearer at hand, two men who were passing through a tract of chaparral a short distance to the north, two men who were none other than Tom Richards and Lafe Benton.

"Hey, look!" jerked Benton, pointing out the smoke of the beacon and watching it with the practised eye of a scout. "A signal, and no Injun signal at that. Them clouds is risin' straight and clear. The Injuns blanket 'em, and make 'em talk, as yuh might say."

Richards gave him a sharp glance. "You don't suppose it might be the cavalry on our trail?" he queried uneasily.

For answer Benton motioned to him to dismount, swinging himself to the ground as he did so, and soon the pair of them had tethered their horses and were sneaking in the direction of the bluff.

They climbed a rock-strewn slope to the plateau above, and from the shelter of a cluster of boulders they saw the burning beacon and the figures of John, Tim and Red, who were in the saddles of their ponies and had taken up a position on the very edge of the cliff where it beetled over the quiet, flowing river.

"They ain't cavalrymen, anyways," whispered Tom Richards, noting the civilian attire that the three riders were wearing.

"That's where you're wrong," hissed Benton, drawing his revolver. "That young feller in the middle is Colonel Delmont's son. Come on, let 'em have it!"

The words were punctuated by the hollow of his gun, and a shot whipped John Delmont's Stetson from his head. Next second Tom Richard's iron was belching flame, and the report of it was accompanied almost immediately by another blast from the weapon in Benton's fist.

The sudden volley of leaden slugs had taken the three soldiers by surprise, and though the hurried aim of the would-be assassins left them unscathed, they would certainly have met their doom by a second fusillade but for John's presence of mind.

He had the wit to throw himself from his horse, at the same time clutching Tim and Red to drag them with him, and in headlong fashion the three of them plunged down to the river below, striking the water with a great splash.

They rose to the surface again, Red and Tim spluttering and looking at John in bewilderment as he dragged them out of sight beneath the overhanging bluff.

There he told them to keep quiet, and they waited, up to their necks in water. Meanwhile, Benton and Richards were crossing the plateau above, but they had been a little way off when they had opened fire, and a quarter of a minute must have elapsed before they reached the edge of the cliff.

The rogues looked down to see the hats of their supposed victims floating on the surface of the river. Of the men who had worn those hats there was not a sign, and little dreaming that every word he uttered was heard by John and the two troopers, Tom Richards vouchsafed a gruff comment.

"We got 'em all right, Benton," he said. "Let's pick up their horses and pull outa here."

Benton nodded, and the pair of them secured the mounts from which John Delmont and his comrades had fallen. Then they made their way back to the chaparral where they had left their own ponies, and not long afterwards they crossed the Humboldt River via the ford farther upstream.

John, Red and Tim had worked round to a shelving strip of sand and were lying amongst a belt of tall reeds by then. From this vantage point they watched Benton and Richards gain the Californian bank and ride off at smart pace.

"If only we could give 'em a taste o' lead!" groaned Tim. "But after that duckin' we took our shootin' irons are about as deadly as three water-pistols."

"Yeah, an' what's more we can't foller them skunks," Red bit out, "sein' as how they've swiped our hosses."

John said nothing. He at least knew that Benton was a traitor now—aye, and knew that he must look for the man in Mexican territory. And following the departing gangsters with his eyes, he reflected that he and Red Conway and Tim O'Rourke would be passing into California with the Ridgley wagon-train after all.

Away on the other side of the river Benton and Richards were heading for a range of hills that were visible in the distance, and about an hour and a half later they could have been seen approaching the mouth of a narrow, boxed-in canyon.

The mouth of that ravine was guarded by a massive stockade of tree-logs that had been hewn down and planed. There was a big gate in the stockade, which was opened by a couple of sentinels and then promptly closed again as Benton and his accomplice rode through.

Within the stockade was a group of crude dwellings, nesting under the right-hand wall of the canyon, and standing prominently upon a terrace half-way up the rocky ascent was the field-gun that had belonged to Colonel Delmont's command.

In front of the cabins below the piece of artillery a crowd of men were assembled, many of them clad in military uniforms, and amongst them were Clem Harris and Markey, who were sharing out the spoils of a recent raid, but who postponed this task as Lafe Benton and Tom Richards showed up.

"Hallo, fellers," said Harris, "where'd you get those spare mustangs?"

Benton proceeded to explain, and when he had finished his narrative there was a silence. Then Richards spoke.

"We bumped off young Delmont an' the guys that was with him, boss," he growled. "But do you suppose they were signallin' to a bunch of cavalry from that bluff?"

"What if they were?" Harris retorted suddenly. "The U.S. authorities can't touch us in Mexican territory. They daren't violate international laws by sendin' troops across the line."

This seemed to satisfy those of his men who had shown signs of disquiet, and Harris went on in a confident tone.

"We've got no cause to worry, boys," he announced. "We're sittin' pretty. What did I tell you when I first put up this proposition? Was I right, or wasn't I?"

"You were doggone right, boss," Markey struck in. "The loot we've already grabbed is proof o' that. Half a dozen big haciendas frisked of money, jewels and plate, and hardly a man among us that's lost a drop o' blood doin' it."

"Yeah, an' the Dons think the U.S. cavalry are responsible," laughed Harris, looking round at the blue tunics which a considerable number of his followers were wearing. "Boys, I reckon it was a great idea to rig you out in them spare uniforms we found in Colonel Delmont's wagons."

The Vigilantes

THE Ridgley wagon-train had reached the Humboldt, and after learning of the attempted assassination of John and his two comrades, Ann's father had elected to lead his column across the river and camp for the night in Californian territory.

The following morning, an hour or two after sunrise, the aroma of cooking was rising into the air from the bivouac fires of the immigrants, and it was as breakfast was being eaten that a party of horsemen have into sight.

They were Spaniards, and as John and Ridgley and several other men of the column moved out of the encampment to accost them the riders drew their ponies to a standstill.

"No nearer, Gringo Americans!" one of them called in broken English, flourishing a pistol as he spoke. "No nearer, or we shoot."

John and his companions halted in an uncertain fashion, and after a brief silence the tall cavalry officer called out inquiringly:

"What's the meaning of this, senor?" he demanded. "Who may you be?"

"I am Pedro Forrenza, leader of Californian vigilantes," was the curt reply. "We learned that a wagon-train of Americans had pitched camp here, and we are warning you to turn back to your own country, or there will be trouble."

"But we come in peace," John protested, whereupon Pedro Forrenza uttered a word in his own tongue that sounded very much like an oath.

"Peace!" he scoffed. "There is no peace from Americans! Not when they come here to rob us and to kill us! Not when they send soldiers to plunder us and slay us!"

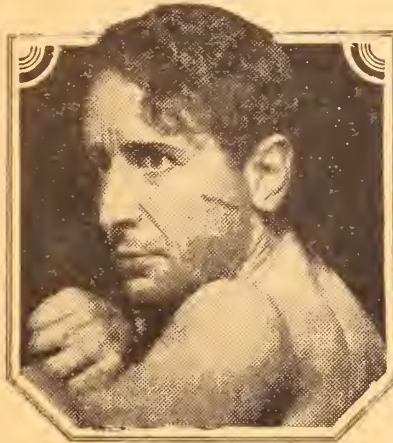
John Delmont looked at him in amazement, unable to believe his ears.

"Soldiers?" he exclaimed. "My Government has sent no soldiers to California."

There ensued a lengthy argument, which was conducted with considerable heat by the leader of the Spaniards, a black-haired, swarthy little man of fierce manners. But at length John prevailed upon him to take him to the nearest town, where, according to Forrenza, the commandant of the district was in residence—one Don Miguel de Cordoba.

Singling out Red to accompany him, and bidding Ridgley hold the wagon-

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VICTOR JORY

IN

"ESCAPE FROM DEVIL'S ISLAND"

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train at the camp, John borrowed a couple of saddle-horses from one of the immigrants and departed with the Californians, determined to get at the root of their hostility towards the American nation.

Half an hour later he was still little the wiser, for to all his questions Pedro Forrenza remarked that he would hear the full facts from the lips of Don Miguel himself. But suddenly, as they were approaching a range of low foothills, another band of horsemen debouched unexpectedly from a wooded valley ahead.

They were tricked out in the uniform of U.S. cavalrymen, and for the instant John was taken aback. Then all at once he recognised the figure of Benton riding a short distance in advance of them, and in that same moment there was an outburst of gunfire from the Spaniards and the bogus troopers alike.

The encounter had taken both parties by surprise, and in that respect therefore the advantage lay with neither. But Benton's men were superior in numbers, and, seeing this, John Delmont quickly took command of the situation.

There was an arroyo nearby, a dry river-bed that afforded cover, and with a shrewdness to which he owed his military training the captain realised that from this vantage-point the Spaniards could fight their foes on more level terms.

Yelling to Forrenza and his partisans to follow him, he charged down into the arroyo with Red Conway close behind him, and some quality in his voice must

have moved the Dons to imitate the example shown them, for they came streaming after the young captain and his subordinate like so many sheep.

Then, in blind response to the Yankee officer's instructions, they flung themselves from their mounts and lined the bank of dry river-bed, opening up a hot fire upon the advancing desperadoes.

The combat was short and sharp, for, exposed to an enfilade that they could not return with any serious effect, Benton and his disguised bandits were speedily thrown into confusion, and scarce sixty seconds elapsed before they were turning tail and galloping off in the direction whence they had come, several of them swaying uncertainly in the saddle.

From the rim of the arroyo John watched their flight, and was gazing after them when he became aware of Pedro Forrenza plucking at his sleeve.

The man's dark eyes were alight with enthusiasm. The antagonism and suspicion with which he had formerly regarded the American cavalry officer were no longer apparent in his manner.

"Senor, this is the first time we have routed those villains," Forrenza cried, "and it is to you that we are indebted for that. You have helped us against your own people—"

"My own people?" John interrupted grimly. "I don't look on those scum as my fellow-countrymen, Forrenza. I think I understand the whole position now, and I'll be mighty glad to have a little talk with your commandant, for I believe I can convince him that you Californians have been under a misapprehension."

He turned and stared in the direction of Benton and his accomplices again. These were now disappearing into the wooded valley at full gallop, and indeed they did not slacken their pace until they were far into the hills and bearing down on the stronghold which they and the rest of the Harris gang had made for themselves.

Once inside the stockade Benton lost no time in reporting to his chief, and Harris heard him out in a truculent silence.

"So you didn't get Delmont on that bluff, after all, eh?" he muttered, when the scout had finished. "And now he's in tow with the Californians."

He turned to Richards, who was standing close by, and he spoke to him sharply.

"Tom," he said. "I don't like the looks o' this. You've played spy for us afore, so rig yourself out as a greaser and hit the breeze for town. See what you can find out."

A few minutes afterwards, attired in Mexican clothes that had been filched from some hacienda, Tom Richards dashed out of the fort on horseback and spurred through the hills until he picked up a trail that led to a small Spanish township known as San Fernando.

Arrived there, he made straight for the house of the commandant, outside which a group of horses stood tethered, and on mingling with a crowd of inquisitive bystanders who were gathered around the open doorway of the dwelling he was able to see what was going on within.

John Delmont and Red Conway were face to face with the commandant Don Miguel, Forrenza's vigilantes being assembled around them, and Don Miguel was talking in an impassioned tone.

"Senor," he was saying to John, "we Californians have been neglected by the Mexican Government. They seem to have too many affairs on their hands to answer our pleas and send troops to us. That is why we have been compelled to arm ourselves and form a band of vigi-

lantes, some of whom you see here—and I tell you now that we shall fight to the death against these gringo marauders."

"And I am willing to help you, Don Miguel," John Delmont announced, "if in return you will permit my friends to travel through California to Oregon in peace."

"What!" the Don exclaimed. "You, who claim to be an officer of the United States cavalry—you would aid us against your own soldiers?"

"They're not soldiers," John told him. "They're renegades in stolen uniforms. Listen, Don Miguel, I'm as anxious to wipe them out as you are, and I can guarantee that every man of the Ridgley wagon-train will ride against them if you will join forces with us."

Forrenza stepped forward at that, and addressed the commandant respectfully.

"I think this man is a friend, senior," he declared, indicating the young American. "Have I not said that he enabled us to put some of our foes to flight a little while ago?"

This statement seemed to decide Don Miguel, and, turning, he informed John that he was willing to combine with the immigrants in an effort to crush the Harris gang.

"We shall send out word that every vigilante is to report here immediately," he added, "and, when your friends have joined us, we shall attack in full force."

"Then you know where those marauders are to be located?" John asked.

"Yes," came the response. "Their lair is in the hills. We have attempted an onset before, but were driven off. You see, Senior Capitan, they are strong in numbers and have a strong position. Moreover, they possess an artillery piece, which played great havoc amongst us."

John swung round upon Red Conway. "Go back to the wagon-train and round up every man there," he ordered. "And tell 'em I said to come a-running."

Red hurriedly took his leave, and thirty seconds later he was riding out of San Fernando with the wind whipping against his lean, leathery face. At a speed which taxed his pony to the utmost he clattered over the trail that led to the Humboldt River, and was completely unaware, as he galloped along the ribbon of road, that a lone horseman was following him at an equally rapid pace.

The lone horseman was Tom Richards, and, once out of sight and sound of the town, the gangster drew rein and plucked a rifle from a gun-bucket that hung against his mustang's flank.

Taking careful aim, he tensed himself for the kick of the weapon and pulled the trigger. There was a spurt of fire and a racking blast, and a split second afterwards he saw his victim throw up his hands and dive from the saddle.

Richards thrust his rifle back into its sheath and swung aside from the trail to spur direct towards the hills, vanishing presently over a low ridge matted with scrub.

If he had been less anxious to report back to Harris, however, and had delayed long enough to ride a few hundred yards down the trail and examine Red Conway, he would have discovered that his marksmanship had not been so effective as he had imagined. For although there was blood on Red's scalp, the bullet from Richards' gun had merely creased him, and in five minutes the tough soldier was on his feet again.

His horse was chewing mesquite nearby, and, staggering across to the animal, Red pulled himself on to its back and rode forward once more, looking pretty sorry for himself, but none the less determined to carry out the "Cap'n's" instructions.

June 27th, 1936.

Mass Attack

GAINING the improvised fort where Harris and the gang were installed, Tom Richards fidgeted impatiently while the big gate was unfastened by the men who were standing sentry behind it. Then he passed through and brought his horse to a standstill in front of his commandant, who was awaiting him with a look of expectation on his heavy countenance.

"Well, what did you find out?" Harris wanted to know.

"Young Delmont is in San Fernando," Richards answered, "and he's gonna move against us with the Californias. He ain't got no cavalry with him, but he sent a messenger to round up a bunch of Yankee immigrants camped on the Humboldt River. I stopped that messenger."

The gang-leader's eyes had narrowed while he had been listening.

"Good work, Tom," he said. "But we've gotta get rid of Delmont, too. I reckon we're entitled to feel pretty sure of ourselves—only, I'd like it better if I knew a trained soldier wasn't leadin' the attack. Listen, Tom, wassupin' you go right back an' tell the captain that the man you shot is up here—hurt."

He went on to explain a plan that had occurred to him, and, when the scheme had been outlined, Richards glanced at him dubiously.

"D'you think Delmont will fall for it?" he grunted.

"It's worth tryin'," Harris rejoined. Half an hour later Tom Richards was in San Fernando again, and this time he hastened to Don Miguel's quarters like one who had important tidings to divulge, thrusting his way into the commandant's presence and confronting John Delmont.

"Senior, your messenger to the wagon-train—he get hurt!"

Richards spoke in an assumed accent that was a perfect imitation of a Spaniard's whose knowledge of English was uncertain.

"Red—hurt?" John exclaimed.

"Where is he?"

"Yankee scum, they take him to their fort. You come alone, I show you the way."

"Alone? Why do you want me to come alone?"

Richards leaned forward and spoke in an earnest tone.

"Because they hold your friend hostage, and if you make onset they keel him," he said. "But I know a secret way into their stronghold which one man might use. Mebbe you reach your friend and smuggle him out—then come back and raise forces to attack. Si?"

John had not recognised Richards as the man who had been concerned with Benton in the attempted assassination on the bluff. Yet there was something about the fellow's eager friendliness that struck him as false, and after a moment the captain drew aside with Forrenza and Don Miguel.

"This may be a trap," he murmured. "As soon as all your men are mustered here, come after me. And in case anything has really happened to my friend, send another messenger to the Ridgley wagon-train and tell the immigrants to join you before the fort. The man you send can act as their guide."

Forrenza and Don Miguel assuring him that his instructions would be obeyed to the letter, John consented to accompany Richards from San Fernando, and could not help noticing the glint of anticipation in the counterfeit Spaniard's eyes as he mounted his horse outside the commandant's house.

About that same time, if John had only known it, preparations for a mur-

derous attempt on his life were afoot at Harris' stronghold, the gang-leader consulting with Markey over that momentous question.

It was finally arranged that Benton and one or two other sharpshooters should post themselves at the stockade and await the coming of Richards and the captain, drilling the latter on sight.

"Tom will bring Delmont round into the mouth of the canyon sudden-like," Harris explained to the marksmen. "The way I fixed things, they'll come into view by those rocks out there. The minute they do, give it to young Delmont—afore he has time to realise that he's right in front of the fort, see?"

There was a chorus of assent, and then Harris spoke again.

"Remember, Tom is in Mexican clothes," he said. "Don't get the wrong man."

"No fear o' that," laughed Benton, and he and his accomplices went to their places at the stockade.

They were still on the watch there when, three-quarters of an hour after receiving their instructions, they saw a couple of horsemen come trotting round the cluster of rocks that Harris had pointed out.

They were Tom Richards and John, and the instant he beheld them Life Benton gave vent to a terse exclamation.

"The one in buckskin!" he rapped out, and hard on the words his rifle belched death.

Three more shots rang out as his comrades in crime drew trigger, and each one of those shots sealed a man's doom. For, while the horseman in the attire of a Spanish-Californian turned back into the shelter of the boulders, the rider in buckskin rose high in his stirrups and then pitched lifelessly to the dust with two bullets in his heart and two more in his brain.

But the man who had fallen was not John Delmont. He was Tom Richards, who had been held up by John and forced to change clothes with him before they had left San Fernando a mile behind them!

And now John Delmont was safely under cover of the rocks, thanking his lucky stars that he had hit upon so happy an inspiration, or his worst fears would have been realised and himself laid low in a gory, stricken heap.

From the rocks he peered cautiously forth and took quick stock of the Harris stronghold, and as he did so he saw clearly that, although it looked well-nigh impregnable, a man with the necessary courage and sureness of foot might work his way up and round to one or the other of the canyon's rims.

And then, with the same skill and nerve, he might descend the steep, craggy slopes until he was on the very bed of the ravine.

Thus reflecting, the young cavalry officer wheeled round, and in the very instant that he turned he saw a cloud of horsemen sweeping across the plain behind him.

They were the vigilantes and the pioneers of the wagon train, bearing down on the locality sooner than he had expected, and at the head of them he descried the figures of Ridley, Forrenza, Tim O'Rourke and Red Conway, the last with his brow swathed in bandages.

John pulled up sharply at sight of them, and once again his attention veered to the fort. A moment later he was dismounting from his horse, and, stripping off the Mexican jacket he was wearing, he donned a sparo buckskin tunic that was packed behind his saddle.

This he did for fear his own friends

(Continued on page 27)

A daring young reporter sets out to discover the identity of the once notorious Jimmy Valentine, but through his investigations he lands an even more notorious crook and his gangsters in prison. A thrilling drama, starring Roger Pryor and Charlotte Henry

The RETURN OF JIMMY VALENTINE



Big-Money Contest

"Aw, say," protested Pinky McGinnis, squatted among the wastepaper-baskets, "what's the big idea? Didn't you say, Gary, that you were going to train me for a newspaper reporter?"

Gary Howard, star reporter of "The Record," leaned back in his chair and fitted another paper-clip to his catapult. Again, after taking careful aim, he let fly at the hat on his pal's head—ping! "Got it!" announced Gary.

He adjusted his shirt-sleeves and set his own slouch hat at a more jaunty angle. But there was no one to applaud. His colleagues in the reporters'-room were rapping out their stuff on the office typewriters at machine-gun speed. Only Gary and his chum, Mac, who had recently joined the staff, were relaxing.

"Well, I'll allow you were on the target that time," grunted Mac, examining his headgear. "Reckon you're William Tell, maybe. Training me to be your sidekicker—the sap who stands by with the apples on his dome? Now listen! I joined this rag because you promised to learn me the newspaper business."

Gary nodded. "Sure! Take it easy," he said. "I'll make a reporter out of you, Mac. You'll come around with me, and if you make good, maybe I'll get the chief to promote you to the Society column."

A grin spread over Mac's broad face. "Society column?" he echoed. "Gee! D'you mean I'll be able to meet all the class dames in Chicago? Sure, I'll buy me a new suit." "Don't rush to it, buddy," Gary advised. "There's another job you've

got to help on first. When I got you on to the pay-roll of this news-sheet it was because you told me that you used to hang around with Tony Scapelli's gang. Scapelli's the worst crime boss around town, and the cops can't get a line on him. Now we've got to get the low-down on Tony Scapelli."

Mac pulled a wry face. "Forget this guy, Gary," he pleaded. "The only thing you and me are likely to get on that game is a couple of lead slugs and a slap-up funeral apiece. I don't want to see none of those gangsters again. Now maybe, if you turned me loose among those Society dames—"

"Hey, Gary!" A brusque voice rose above the clatter of typewriters, and caused the conversation to come to an abrupt end. "The Record's" advertising manager, Johnson, was beckoning from the door of the chief editor's office.

Gary rose and winked at his pal. "Maybe the chief wants to give me a raise," he remarked.

Kelly, the editor of "The Record," sat at a broad desk of the inner office. Duplicate telephones were near at hand, and a disorder of papers was spread over the desk. His expression and attitude did not suggest that he had sent for his subordinate to break any joyful news. Kelly, in fact, was running his fingers through his silver grey hair and gnawing savagely at his unlighted cheroot. On Gary's entrance he looked up with a frown from an account-book which displayed the recent circulation figures.

"Huh!" he grunted. "That was a swell yarn you put over on yesterday's murder."

He spoke grudgingly, but Gary cheered up at once. Unlike some of his seniors on the staff, he was a born optimist.

"Well, I guess it was a pretty swell kind of crime, chief," he returned. "Do I get a bonus?"

In the brief pause the air of the inner office seemed to chill off several degrees.

"Bonus?" echoed Kelly. "You can think yourself darn lucky if you don't get your pay cut in half."

Gary seated himself on the edge of the desk. He looked from the editor to the advertising manager. Each wore a frozen expression, and Gary realised that his remark about the bonus had been particularly ill-timed.

"What's biting you, chief?" he inquired. "Have we gone bankrupt?"

It was the advertising man, Johnson, who responded.

"Not yet," he said, "but we will if the landslide doesn't stop. We've just dropped another thirty thousand dollar advertising account."

Gary whistled. "That's tough!" he muttered. "I heard one of the guys in the reporters'-room saying that the advertising accounts had been falling off. Which has gone this time?"

"The Dentone Tooth-paste ads," grunted Johnson. "That firm is using all their spare cash for advertising on the radio. They're hitching up their puffs with the Jimmy Valentine crime playlets they're plugging over the air."

Gary helped himself to a number of the chief's paper-clips. They would come in handy as ammunition for his catapult.

"Can't say I blame the Dentone people," he commented. "You've got

to remember that Jimmy Valentine is a real man, though he's kind of faded out of any unlawful rackets. Gosh, what a fellow he was in the old days! He was the smartest safe-cracker in the country—and there was the old Robin Hood touch about him, too. He never used a gun, nor even would sliam a cop. They say he was sure a great-hearted guy who was ever ready to pass over some of the booty to any under-dog in need."

Johnson: grunted impatiently.

"Those radio folks know how to trade on Jimmy Valentine's reputation, anyhow," he admitted. "They've been writing up some of his life story in the form of plays and broadcasting 'em all over the States."

"And how!" enthused Gary. "When ever the Jimmy Valentine stuff is on the air, I switch on to listen-in. I don't wonder the Dentone people prefer to link their ads with that dope, rather than dish out their dough for the cut-and-dried ads tuckered away on the inside pages of this news-sheet."

The editor, who had been tapping his teeth with a blue pencil, sat up stiffly.

"Something's got to be done," he announced. "We've got to find some kind of link to induce the Dentone people to buy space again in 'The Record,' but we can't do the kind of stuff they can over the radio. We don't want any story like 'Who Put the Poison in the Tooth-paste?' to try and attract 'em. Now you're a smart guy, Gary—sometimes. Maybe I could put you in the way of earning a bonus."

"Aah! How come, chief?"

"We want an idea," Kelly replied. "We're groping around for a good stunt to get back that Dentone account and some of the other advertisers who've quit 'The Record' lately. Johnson and I don't seem to catch on to anything at the moment. What's your suggestion?"

A far-away, thoughtful look came into Gary's eyes. Mechanically his hand wandered to his pocket, and he took out his catapult and slowly fitted a paper-clip in the elastic. He began to focus on the chief's hat hanging on the peg, but remembered himself in time and hastily restored the weapon.

"How d'you like this for a stunt?" he exclaimed suddenly. "Let's handle Jimmy Valentine ourselves. Start a campaign. Where is the real Jimmy Valentine? Announce that 'The Record' offers five thousand bucks to the man, woman, or child who finds Jimmy Valentine and reports here at the office."

The editor flung his unlighted cheroot in the wastepaper-basket, and the advertising manager sniffed loudly.

"What a brain!" Johnson said sarcastically. "Just another newspaper contest—and we thought you were bright!"

"Wait a minute," interposed Gary. "These radio people are just putting over playlets about Jimmy Valentine, which are fiction written up for the studio. Now supposing, for the sake of the reward, some guy actually lights on the ex-crackman himself? Why, we could sign up Valentine for a series of feature articles, and could sell some of the stuff to the radio people at our own price. You bet, too, that the Dentone representative would come rushing around to buy advertising space in the paper next to our revelations of the famous crackman's private life, revealed for the first time. Why, it would be the biggest scoop since Perry climbed the North Pole!"

"Humph! There may be something in it, after all," muttered Kelly. "Five thousand dollars should prove a good inducement for folks to keep their eyes open for Valentine."

June 27th, 1936.

"So I should say," smiled Gary. "Why, for five thousand bucks I'd go out and find Santa Claus himself, and round-up all his reindeer, too!"

For the first time a twinkle came into Kelly's eyes.

"Right!" he said. "Never mind trying to trace Tony Scapelli, like you've been doing lately. We'll put over this competition, and it's more important for us to get this stuff about Jimmy Valentine. You and Mac can get outside for twelve days—that's the limit—and you can find Valentine and let us have any stories about him you can rake out in the meantime. If you succeed, Gary, there'll be a thousand-dollar bonus for you."

While the editor and advertising manager discussed the details of the forthcoming contest, Gary left the inner office and returned to the reporters' room.

"Hey, Mac," he said, thumping Pinky McGinnis on the back, "we've got a new stunt on. Do you happen to have a picture of Valentine?"

Mac scratched his head. "Why, sure," he said. "There's one along at my digs in Twenty-seventh Street. He's an old fellow with a pointed beard, and he's got a kind of bright, golden ring around the top of his head."

"You dumb-bell!" grinned Gary. "That's St. Valentine. I'm not talking about the picture on your calendar at home. I want to get a photo of Jimmy Valentine, the crackman who used to open bank safes like they were sardine-boxes. Let's turn up the files. The accounts about him must have been in the papers just before the War."

A search through the old newspaper files soon revealed an account of a robbery at the First National Bank. It further stated in print that the police were looking for Jimmy Valentine, Augie Miller, and other crooks.

"Augie Miller?" exclaimed Mac.

"Yeah, he was a pal of Jimmy's."

"Did you know him, Mac?"

"Sure," nodded Mac. "Him and me were taken prisoners together during the War."

"Didn't know that," remarked Gary with interest. "Where were you both taken?"

"To Sing Sing Prison," returned Mac.

Gary thumped him playfully over the head.

"Cut out that kind of crack," he warned. "Augie Miller used to be a pal of Jimmy Valentine's. Maybe we could get a line on Valentine himself through him. Do you happen to know where Miller can be found?"

"He's got a pool saloon down-town," Mac replied. "But see here, Gary, I don't want to go getting mixed up with any of these old-time pals."

"We're going to see Augie Miller," decided Gary. "Let's go!"

The Trail to Riverside

GARY HOWARD, accompanied by Pinky McGinnis, set forth on his quest in high heart. He, the star reporter of "The Record," had many a time rooted out valuable information which had gained a scoop for his newspaper. His skill as a news-hound, however, was not shared by Mac, much though that ex-crook hoped to eliminate his feats one day. The main value of Mac to Gary was the former's knowledge of criminal rackets and criminals. For in crime lay some of the most dramatic news, from a newspaper's point of view.

Finding Augie Miller was easy, but getting him to talk was harder than cracking a bank safe. Crime was a chapter which had closed in Miller's life,

and he was unwilling to turn back the pages.

There were no customers in the pool saloon at that hour, and Gary refused to be beaten. Finally, he extracted the reason why Miller preferred to remain dumb about Jimmy Valentine and the past. He had been a close friend of Caesar Scapelli, father of Tony Scapelli, the most feared gangster in the States.

"You'd better lay off this Jimmy Valentine," Miller warned, "or you may be bringing a nest o' hornets around your ears. I can't help you any. Old Caesar Scapelli was more mixed up with him than ever I was."

"I'll look up Caesar Scapelli," snapped Gary.

"Oh, yeah?" sneered Miller. "Well, you'd better take a shovel. He's six foot deep in the ground under a prison wall. He went to the 'hot seat.'"

"Electrocuted?"

Miller nodded.

"Before they switched on the current," he remarked, "this Caesar Scapelli claimed that Jimmy Valentine had framed him so that he took the rap in his stead."

"Aw, that was a lie!" exclaimed Mac. "No one will ever get me to believe that Jimmy Valentine double-crossed a pal."

"Believe it or not," retorted Miller, "but that's what Caesar Scapelli gave out. Anyway, Tony Scapelli believes it—believes that Jimmy Valentine sent his old man to the hot seat. So if I were you guys, I'd keep my nose out o' things. It wouldn't surprise me that Tony has got his gunmen out, helping in this search for Valentine—and all he wants out of it is revenge."

No nearer to finding the ex-crook than they were before, Gary and Mac entered the car and drove southward out of town. The needle of the speedometer flickered round the dial; the road seemed to slash under the wheels like a broad grey ribbon being unwound at terrific pace. The telegraph poles flickered back in pairs—and Pinky McGinnis screwed up his eyes.

"Why don't you go out to Salt Lake Flats to do this, bud?" he spluttered.

"You go off down there to Utah to break the world's record. I'll stay around Chicago and read about it in the newspapers."

"We're in a hurry, Mac," Gary announced rather needlessly. "An idea's hit me."

His pal clutched the side of the car.

"Oooh! That bunch of trees nearly hit the old flivver! Where are you heading for?"

"The state penitentiary."

"That so?" gasped Mac. "I thought you were heading for a cemetery."

"My idea is this," remarked Gary, swinging the car round a bend on two wheels. "That guy Jimmy Valentine served a sentence many years ago in the state prison. Now if we go to the pen we'll see Colonel Ed. Keeley, the warden, who looked after him. From the warden we might get a line of Valentine's whereabouts. Pity you didn't think of that when we left the office. We ought to have got to the pen sooner."

"Strikes me," groaned Mac, again watching the flying procession of telegraph posts, "that we're gettin' there soon all right!"

The grey walls and gaunt buildings of the state penitentiary loomed out of the plain ahead. At the main gates Gary showed his Press badge and asked to see Warden Keeley. He and Mac, however, had a long wait in an ante-room before they were ushered through the prison yard and various corridors to the warden's private office.

No one was better liked or more ro-

spected in the state than Colonel Keeley. He was just, sincere, and capable, and had a vast experience of prison routine and of criminals themselves. Many a man who had been "sent down" for a stretch and believed that the whole world was against him, learned gradually to regain his self-respect through the warden's help and sympathy.

He liked Gary personally, but distrusted journalists generally. Always he was on his guard, and when Gary cleverly pumped him with the object of finding out if he still kept in touch with Jimmy Valentine, he quickly got on the defensive.

"See here, Gary," he said quietly, "I don't know whose bright brain thought of this stunt for 'The Record,' but you'll not get anything from me except this: It's twenty years since Jimmy Valentine served a term in the pen. Since those distant days, I've watched him fight his way back honestly to an honourable position in society. To-day he's the head of a happy family—a respected and prosperous man. You don't want to ruin him just for the sake of a cheap publicity stunt?"

Gary shrugged his shoulders.

"It sounds, warden," he remarked, "like you keep in pretty close touch with that old-timer."

The warden turned a disapproving eye on Mac, who was eating salted peanuts by the simple expedient of upturning a paper bag over his mouth.

"I'll admit, Gary," he said, "that I saw him a short while ago."

Gary looked shrewdly at him.

"Fine! How d'you find Baltimore otherwise?"

Colonel Keeley smiled.

"You don't trap me into talking," he said. "It wasn't in Baltimore where I saw him, and I'm not saying where it was either. I pride myself that I'm Valentine's friend. You news-hounds wouldn't understand that."

"Aw, don't think too bad of us, colonel," pleaded Gary. "My paper

isn't out to do him any harm. We'll make him a rich man."

The warden rose, thus indicating that the interview was over.

"You can take it from me, Gary Howard," he stated, "that Valentine is comfortably off, and doesn't want to get richer by any yelping publicity stunt of your news-sheet. For his family's sake, he just wants to live a quiet life with the dead past buried for ever. Good-day!"

There was nothing to do but to make an exit with as good grace as possible. They had drawn a blank, except that the popular belief was confirmed that the notorious ex-crook was still alive.

A lady approached along the corridor, and Gary was about to step aside to make room for her to pass when his face lighted in a smile. He recognised her as the warden's wife.

"Mrs. Keeley!" he murmured. "This is an unexpected pleasure. You're looking splendid. Just shows what a little trip will do."

"Why," smiled Mrs. Keeley, "did the warden tell you we'd been away?"

"He mentioned that a short time ago he went to see an old friend of his. Chicago, wasn't it?"

"No," returned Mrs. Keeley; "it was to Riverside, Indiana."

Gary strove to hide the triumph he felt.

"That's a detail the warden forgot to mention," he purred. "Gosh, I'm sure glad to have met you!"

Within five minutes he was at the wheel of the car, with Mac at his side, roaring full out for the border between the States of Illinois and Indiana.

"We're getting warm, Mac," he whooped. "I'm almost certain that the warden has been keeping in touch with Jimmy Valentine around Riverside way. We'll put up at the Traymore Hotel, and set about unearthing that guy. Don't forget that old Kelly promised me a thousand bucks, and you're in on it."

None of the hustle of Chicago was

reflected in the pleasant Indiana town thirty miles over the border. The pine-clad hills and clear-water rivers made peaceful surroundings for the large town, which numbered many retired people in the population.

To this pleasant spot came Gary Howard and his sidekicker, Pinky McGinnis, the dust of Chicago still on their clothes and their veins still throbbing with the vital hustle of that great city. To Gary's mind, Riverside was just a small town that could do with a kick out of its pleasant lethargy—and he, star reporter of "The Record," was the smart guy to give it that kick!

He and Mac booked their rooms at the Traymore and began investigations, but nothing transpired for a couple of days to give them any hope that they were getting "warmer" on their hunt.

But there was no doubt that the "Where is Jimmy Valentine?" contest had caught on. The radio had kept people everywhere reminded of the crook whose amazing safe-cracking exploits were still discussed with admiration, even by the best modern cracksmen. "The Record" reminded readers that the most ingenious combination locks in the land had not resisted Valentine's sensitive fingers.

The offered reward of 5,000 dollars set amateur sleuths everywhere making inquiries about the ex-crook who had disappeared from all his former haunts. Thousands of new readers bought the newspaper to get the particulars of the competition, and to keep informed of the latest developments in the country-wide hunt for Jimmy Valentine.

From Chicago Editor Kelly demanded copy from Gary to tickle the palate of his growing public. And Gary turned in peppy accounts of how he and Mac had visited the pen which long ago was Valentine's home, and had picked up clues that had set them racing over the Indiana border.

Other newspaper editors pricked their ears. "The Record's" contest had made Valentine front page news again. A mob



"Huh!" he grunted. "That was a swell yarn you put over on yesterday's murder!"

of reporters descended on Riverside, booked at the Traymore, and tried hard to snatch news crumbs which fell from Gary's table.

Then, on the evening of the second day, while Gary and Mae were having a brush-up in their room before going down to dinner, the clerk 'phoned up to say that there were two lady visitors who "wished to see Mr. Howard."

"Two!" smirked Mac, patting down his quiff of hair. "I reckon I'd better stay right beside you."

"Please yourself," Gary smiled. "But don't take that bag of peanuts down with you."

A page-boy in the hotel foyer indicated the visitors, and both Gary and Mac felt a quickened interest. One was a fair girl of outstanding beauty, dressed becomingly in a smart pearl-grey costume and wearing a silver-fox fur round her slim shoulders. Her companion was dark, with frizzy hair and full red lips that mado Mac forget about the peanuts for which he was fumbling in his pocket.

"Good-evening!" Gary said. "You sent up a message for me?"

The fair girl looked appraisingly at him.

"So you're Mr. Gary Howard," she murmured; "The Record's" star reporter? My name is Madeline Davis—Midge to my friends. This is my friend, Kitty Dale. I've read you're searching Riverside for Jimmy Valentine."

"With a toothcomb," Gary smiled. "But this fellow Pinky McGinnis and I have got to snatch some cats and get back on the job. You won't mind me saying, Miss Davis, that time is valuable to us. Now how can I help you?"

"You see, Mr. Howard," the girl said, "we've called on behalf of the Riverside Orphans' Home."

Gary drew himself up.

"Sorry," he said firmly. "I'm not adopting any orphans to-day, thank you."

"Don't go, please! You see, Mr. Howard, we want to win that five-thousand-dollar prize to hand over to the Orphans' Fund. We'd appreciate it awfully if you could help us."

"Sorry," repeated Gary. "There are a few thousand folks who want our help to win that five thousand bucks."

The girl laid a hand on his arm.

"Wait," she pleaded. "You also want to find Jimmy Valentine, and perhaps I can help you to a clue. I know a man right here in Riverside who knew Jimmy Valentine well."

"That so? Who is he?"

"Perhaps you don't believe me," said Midge. "Well, there's a dance at the Country Club to-night, and he'll be there. If you'll come along I'll point him out."

"Thanks for the invite," said Gary. "Guess it doesn't sound too hopeful to me. I'm much too busy."

"Too busy even to be polite, Mr. Howard," retorted Midge, her eyes flashing with annoyance. "Perhaps being a reporter accounts for that. Come on, Kitty!"

"Aw, Kitty!" exclaimed Mac, stepping forward. "Hold hard a minute. Don't you happen to know any guy who's going to be at the dance to-night? Sure, I'll hike along and—"

The dark girl cast back a rather helpless glance at him as her fair-haired friend ushered her quickly through the hotel's revolving doors into the street.

"Hang!" muttered Gary. "Maybe I'm a juggins, but there's been to many folks telling me that they know somebody who knows Jimmy Valentine June 27th, 1936.

or his wife's uncle's aunt, that I didn't stop to think. I guess, Mac, I'll go along to that Country Club after all."

The Avenger on the Trail!

TEN minutes after Gary had set off alone for the Country Club a powerful car purred to a halt in the hotel garage. Three men alighted and entered the Traymore, followed by a porter loaded with their suitcases.

The smallest of the trio stepped briskly to the clerk's desk. His movements were almost feline in their ease, and held a suggestion of wiry muscles and great strength. A slouch hat was set at a jaunty angle on his black curly hair, and his dark eyes shrewdly surveyed the guests in the hotel foyer before he addressed the reception clerk. His two square-jawed companions stood aside, as if not wishing to make themselves too conspicuous.

"I want a suite of rooms for myself and friends," announced the newcomer. "We'd like to be on the same floor as Mr. Howard of 'The Record'—next to him, if possible."

"You're reporter friends of his, I suppose?" the clerk smiled. "We've got a number of newspapermen staying here now. You can have Suite 425—that's right next to him."

"Bully!"

The visitor signed his name as Jonathan Organ in the register, and his friends as Theodore Smith and Marcus Bean. Then he inquired:

"Is Mr. Howard in his room, by any chance?"

"No, sir. He's at the Country Club. Shall I tell him to 'phone your suite when he returns?"

"On no account," said the dark haired man. "You see, we're friendly rivals. We want to surprise him."

A page-boy ushered the trio into the lift and escorted them to the suite next to Gary Howard's.

When the door of the living-room was closed they stood looking round with approval. From a room on the left came the sound of a voice singing flatly.

"Hear that, boys?" smiled the small man. "That's Pinky McGinnis. Many's the time I've heard him sing flat notes. Guess he'd sing flatter still if he knew that Tony Scapelli was here!"

He referred to himself by his real name, and his two companions chuckled their appreciation. Louie Costello and Nick Lueas were the most relentless gunmen of his gang, and had been chosen specially for the work to be done in Riverside. In the whole gang there was only one who was quicker on the draw and more deadly in aim than themselves—the dark, curly-haired Tony Scapelli himself!

"These walls are kinda thin, boss," remarked Louie. "We ought to be able to hear what goes on next door. Howard's a smart guy. He's got red-hot clues, if you can believe all he writes in 'The Record.' I've a hunch, Tony, you'll soon get your answer to the question 'Where's Valentine?'"

Tony Scapelli swung round, his black eyes smouldering.

"Get this!" he snarled. "We're not down here on any holiday. Get it out of your minds that there's any joke in this business. That Chicago news-sheet wants to find Valentine. So do I. But it's not to give him a fat contract to write up his life story."

"We understand that, boss," Nick nodded.

"When I find Valentine," said Scapelli grimly. "I'll write 'the end' to his life story—with this."

He tapped his hip-pocket, where a 13-shot automatic pistol rested flatly.

"You can rely on us," Louie said. "We'll tail Howard every minute of the day for you. But you know, Tony, I was never sure that Valentine double-crossed your old man."

"Well, I know he did," rasped Scapelli, neatly slinging his hat to a peg. "I talked to my old man in the death-house the day before—before he died. I've got his word for it. He said 'Kid, some day you're gonna grow up, and some day you're gonna find Valentine. Kill him like a rat!' That's what I promised my old man to do, and when Valentine's found, I'm gonna plug him full of hot lead. Now get into that electrician's rig-out of yours, Nick, ready to fix a wire to Howard's room, so we can listen-in to every call he makes or receives."

"Okay, boss"

The three crooks were prepared to play a waiting game. But they had not long to wait before Pinky McGinnis left the next suite and went down by the elevator. Garbed in overalls and a peaked cap, in case anyone of the hotel staff should see him, Nick entered the next room by a skeleton key and put in half an hour of useful work. By the time he had finished there was a hidden wire that tapped Gary's 'phone and extended into the living room of the suite booked by Tony Scapelli, gangster and killer.

There was no need to stay upstairs for the time being, for Gary's suite was empty. So Tony and his two henchmen went down to the foyer.

Suddenly a smile lighted Tony Scapelli's swarthy face. Standing by a potted palm was a broad-shouldered man who had "house detective" written all over his face and body.

"Gosh! If it ain't Ed Callahan!" the gangster grinned. "He was the nut who had the dick's job once at that Thirteenth Street hotel in Detroit."

He and the other two gunmen walked up to the detective, and Scapelli politely asked for a light for his cigar. Callahan responded with equal politeness, lit the gangster's cigar for him, and chatted for some minutes with the three men.

"Excuse me, gentlemen," he murmured; "I've got a bit of work on here. See that kid? He's a new page-boy, and I reckon he's crooked. We don't want no crooks around a respectable hotel."

"Sure, I should say not," agreed Scapelli.

"I'd bet a level dollar," confided Callahan, "that that kid who's just come out of the office has pinched some stamps. See the way he's got that right fist of his closed? You want to be observant on a job of my kind, gentlemen."

Stepping forward, Callahan tapped the page-boy on the shoulder and in a casual way told him to open his right hand. The boy, who knew that the husky had watched him before, gave a slight wink and opened his fist. Out flew a bluebottle, which buzzed into Callahan's face and so startled him that he fell back against the potted palm. With a laugh, the page-boy darted into the elevator.

"Say, you want to watch that kid," chuckled Tony Scapelli. "He's started young trying to outwit dicks."

The three gangsters settled down on a settee where they could see the revolving outer doors without being conspicuous themselves.

Puffing his cheeks, Callahan turned away. The boy had made him lose face with the new arrivals, and he felt



"Shut your trap," rasped Scapelli, "and open the safe!"

mighty sore until he suddenly recognised Pinky McGinnis walking towards the clerk's desk.

"Hallo, Mae!" he exclaimed. "Didn't know you were staying here." Mac drew away into an alcove, followed by the burly hotel detective.

"Phew!" he breathed. "You kinda startled me, Ed. When did they last turn you loose from the pen?"

"Sh'ish!" warned Callahan. "That's all past history. I'm running straight now, Mac—got a job here as detective."

A grin spread over Mac's broad face. "Can you beat that!" he chuckled. "Well, they say 'set a crook to catch a crook.'"

"That's enough, Pinky McGinnis," growled Callahan. "I tell you I'm running straight. But this is a respectable hotel. We have gents here of the class of those three I've just been talking to, and I know you to be a wrong 'un. You were once in the same pen with me."

"Aw, you've got me wrong, Ed," Mac pleaded. "I've gone straight, too."

The burly detective looked suspiciously at him.

"That'll take a bit of believing," he retorted. "You've gone straight! I like that! You, a guy who would lose a football game while playing for his own prison side!"

"See here, Ed. I never sold that game!"

"Well, you fumbled the ball and let 'em through to score," accused Callahan. "To think that a lot of short-term lags should beat us!"

He went off and Mac settled himself down in an armchair to wait for Gary. It was after midnight when he came in and found Mae asleep in the chair. He went across and shook his assistant into wakefulness.

"Let's get up to the room, Mae" whispered Gary. "I've seen that girl called Midge, and I've found out

something. She's the daughter of Mr. Davis, the banker."

"Aw, never mind the girl," said Mac, rubbing his wrist. "Where's Jimmy Valentine?"

"Buddy, we shan't be long in finding him!" Gary told him exuberantly. "I've found out this, too. The chauffeur employed by Mr. Davis is none other than 'Red' Dolan, who was Jimmy Valentine's greatest pal in the old days. I'll bet he knows where Valentine is hiding. Anyhow, we're going to follow up that clue."

The two pals went up to their room for a night's sleep. Neither saw the three men who quietly entered the suite next to theirs.

The Gunmen Step In!

UNAWARE that his next-door neighbour in the hotel was Tony Scapelli, Gary Howard walked briskly down to the reception clerk's desk on the following morning. No idea was in his mind that Scapelli, whom he had previously tried to find on behalf of his newspaper, was within five hundred miles. Even less did he guess that all his conversation with Mac had been overheard by an enemy, owing to a small hole having been made in the wall between the rooms. And he was equally unaware that one of the killer's henchmen was shadowing him.

The clerk handed out one letter, and Gary avoided a number of rival reporters who tried to pump him for copy to send to their papers. Finding a quiet corner of the lounge, he opened the letter which was typed even to the signature—a signature that made him sit up sharply. The name was "Jimmy Valentine!"

It was a letter begging him to give up the hunt, urging that the ex-convict had found a quiet retreat and that publicity would only bring trouble on innocent people.

Gary shrugged his shoulders and put the letter in his pocket. He was

drawing pay from "The Record," and his duty was to find Jimmy Valentine and try to get his life-story. That was the job which his editor had set him, the job he believed he must see through, whatever the cost.

Thanks to his pretty visitor, Midge Davis, he had obtained a useful clue. The chauffeur at the Davis home was none other than Red Dolan, who, it was said, was Jimmy Valentine's best friend in the bad old days. What more likely than that Red was keeping in touch with his greatest pal?

Having an invitation from Midge, he engaged a taxi and drove out to the Davis' home in the best residential quarter of Riverside. There he was received warmly by Midge, who gaily introduced him to her mother and father.

"I'm pleased to meet you, Mr. Howard," Mr. Davis said cordially. "I'm afraid I don't know much about newspaper offices."

"Nor I about banks, Mr. Davis," smiled Gary, "except that a bank once folded up with all my dad's money in it, and—well, that's kinda clouded my viewpoint."

They laughed, but looked serious when Gary asked if he might have a word with the chauffeur.

"I'm sorry," Mr. Davis said, "but he's gone away."

"It's frightful luck," Midge said. "It wouldn't surprise me, Gary, that Red Dolan is really Jimmy Valentine himself. Dad and mother laugh at me, but a crook's liable to use any old name for his own purposes."

"The whole things seems fantastic to me," said Mr. Davis. "Personally, I think it's a pity, Midge, that you've taken any interest whatever in this newspaper competition. It's just a publicity stunt, and it can't do any good to anyone."

"But supposing I won the money?" Midge exclaimed, clasping his hand. "I'd turn every cent of it over to the

orphans' homo. Wouldn't it do some good then?"

"Frankly," her father said, "I don't like the idea at all. The way I figure it, my dear, is that it's a cruel thing to rake up a man's past that is long dead and buried."

There was an awkward pause, broken by Gary, who mentioned that there was some copy he had to send to his newspaper.

"Does there happen to be a typewriter here?" he inquired.

"There's one in the study," Midge said. "We'll leave you for a time to get on with any work, but you must be ready for lunch."

"I'll sure be ready for that," Gary laughed.

Left to himself in the study, Gary set to work. He stayed to lunch, and waited till the evening in the hope that something might be heard of the missing chauffeur. At last, in the dusk, he returned to the Traymore Hotel, Midge having promised to get in touch with him if anything else of interest turned up.

He dined with Mac, and afterwards left his colleague talking with Callahan, the house detective, in the foyer. He had not been in the living-room of his suite for ten minutes when there was a knock on the door, and he stared in surprise when he found that his visitor was Midge.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "Why didn't you get yourself announced, and I'd have come downstairs?"

The girl stood with her back against the door.

"Because," she said, "I had to see you as quickly as possible. Red Dolan is back. He drove me over here in the car. But he's not Jimmy Valentine, as I thought."

"Sit down," Gary said. "So you've found that out, Midge? Well, so have I. I know the real Jimmy Valentine. He typed me a note, and I've discovered who owns the typewriter it was done on."

"Our typewriter at home?" exclaimed Midge, ignoring the proffered chair. "You came in our home, and, by a trick, you got the use of that typewriter. It was my father's."

Gary spoke in a low tone.

"Yes," he said; "I know."

"So Jimmy Valentine has been found?" Midge said bitterly. "He is my own father!"

"Yes."

The girl walked to within a hand's touch of him.

"I knew before I came here," she said quietly. "Dad himself told me. Oh, how I wish he had told me before! My own father is the man you've had all this hue-and-cry about. He has been running straight for years. It was for the sake of mother and me that he wished to remain quietly in retirement. Gary, you must let him alone. He's paid heavily for past mistakes. I beg of you not to rake up the past in your newspaper. For his own sake, if not for ours, forget him—forget that you have ever found Jimmy Valentine!"

Her eyes were bright with tears, and she spoke quickly and breathlessly from the emotion which swayed her.

Gary took her by the shoulders. "Look here, Midge," he said. "my story has nothing but praise for your dad. People will have more respect for him than ever."

"You think so? And what respect do you think I'll have for you?"

"I don't blame you," Gary said. "I'm sorry the way things have turned out. But my boss sent me to find
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Valentine, not to fall in love with his daughter."

Midge laughed unmusically. Then, suddenly, both spun round as the door opened.

"Scapelli!" Gary gasped.

The gunman and his two henchmen walked into the room. The door was kicked shut behind him. The black muzzle of a six-gun peered out of Tony Scapelli's jacket pocket, a grim threat of the sudden death which the killer had meted out to many in his time.

"So you've found Valentine?" Scapelli smiled. "We've been camped next door and listening-in. Well, I want to make the personal acquaintance of Jimmy Valentine. He was a pal of my father's. I guess, between us, we've got to fix up a meeting with him."

"What's the big idea, Scapelli?" Gary demanded. "Five thousand bucks is only chicken-feed to you. You don't want the prize-money for finding Valentine."

"I don't," said Tony Scapelli grimly. "But you've got to 'phone through to this girl's father. We've heard you say that he's Valentine. He'll pay you off well to keep that story out of the papers. There'll be big money for you and big money for us, too, because this meeting has got to be down at his bank."

"Gary," exclaimed Midge, "don't do it!"

Taking her arm, Gary drew her gently aside. His eyes were riveted on that coal-black muzzle that winked death at him from Scapelli's pocket.

"Grab that 'phone!" Scapelli ordered. There was a drawn look about Gary's lips as his hand lifted off the receiver. He heard the girl's contemptuous sigh, but took no further heed of her. Whatever Midge thought of him, he must obey the gangster and hope for a future chance of turning the tables.

At the pistol point he got through to the Davis' home and gave the message to the banker himself.

"Is that you, Mr. Davis? This is Gary Howard speaking—er—about Jimmy Valentine. If you want to keep a certain story out of the newspaper to-morrow morning, you'll meet me at your bank in thirty minutes."

Blackmail! That was what Mr. Davis, alias Jimmy Valentine, imagined was at the root of this suggested meeting. He agreed to the rendezvous at the side door of the bank, and rang off abruptly.

"Good!" snapped Tony Scapelli, after Gary had hung up. "You'll stay here, Miss Davis, in charge of one of my friends. No harm will come to you if you behave like a sensible girl. I won't answer for consequences to you or your dad if you make any sort of a fuss. Come on, Howard! You've got to come with me and Louie."

The three went down to the hotel foyer. They were precisely five minutes too late to see Pinky McGinnis and Callahan get in a car with Red Dolan and go speeding off in the direction of Chicago. They remained in ignorance that Red Dolan, in the attempt to save his friend's name, had himself confessed to being Jimmy Valentine. So Mac and Callahan had hurried him off to the newspaper office to collect the reward.

The World's Best Cracksmen

A LARGE saloon car drew up in the heavy shadows of the side-street that bordered Riverside's largest bank. Out of it stepped Gary Howard, to greet Mr. Davis, the manager, who came from an arched doorway.

"Well, my young friend," the banker remarked, "I have kept the rendezvous."

His hat was drawn down over his

forehead to screen his face from an electric light at the corner of the street. Only when he looked up did he see that two other men were preparing to get out of the car at Gary's heels. He gave a start of surprise, and then stood stiffly, as if frozen to the sidewalk, when the first of Gary's two companions spoke quietly.

"You don't remember me, Valentine. My name is Louie—Louie Costello. This is Tony Scapelli."

"You knew my old man, Valentine," sneered Scapelli, stepping forward. "He told me a whole heap about you. Now get inside that bank, or you're dead mutton!"

With a hopeless gesture, Midge's father went to the side door of the bank and opened it.

"So this is who you've brought here, Howard?" he said with withering contempt. "Where is my daughter?"

"Back at the hotel," Gary answered, "with one of Tony's men called Nick. She's okay."

The two gangsters followed him and the ex-cracksmen banker into the bank and shut the door.

"Yeah, your gel's all right, Valentine," rasped Tony Scapelli. "If you want her to stay that way, you've gotta do what I tell you. We've got a story about you that you don't want printed. Well, you're going to buy it."

The men faced one another in the bank, where one or two electric lights gave illumination.

"What's your price?" Mr. Davis demanded.

"Open the safe," Scapelli said. Cold perspiration broke out on the ex-cracksmen's forehead. He had won back an honourable name. He was the custodian of this bank, with a fortune of other people's money in the great safe.

"You—you can't expect that of me," he muttered. "I—I couldn't even open it if I wanted to. The cashier is the only one who knows the combination."

Scapelli urged him towards the great safe by a gesture of the gun.

"Get that safe open!" he snarled. "Quit stalling! Else something mighty unpleasant is going to happen to that kid of yours."

"Open it!" Gary panted. "They say that Jimmy Valentine could open any safe that was ever made, without knowing the combination."

Again Mr. Davis threw a withering glance in his direction.

"So this is why you played up to my daughter," he muttered; "to blackmail me and to betray your own newspaper!"

"Shut your trap," rasped Scapelli, "and open the safe!"

The banker appeared a beaten man. He stooped by the safe and fumbled over the combination. In vain Gary looked round, seeking some way out of this situation without bringing instant death to himself and to Midge's father.

"It's no good," Mr. Davis said, rising. "I can't feel the tumblers like I used to."

Keeping the gun pointed at him, Scapelli spoke to his henchman.

"Givo him that sandpaper you brought, Louie. My old man told me how you used to use this, Valentine."

With a sigh, Valentine accepted the sandpaper and lightly rubbed it over his finger-tips, with the object of making them more sensitive. Again he turned to the safe, and began to read off the numbers of the combination, while Louie wrote them down.

The gangsters became more engrossed in the numbers slowly announced by the ex-cracksmen, whose expert fingers had

(Continued on page 27)

Beyond the stratosphere to a new world where science marches hand in hand with savagery. Follow the adventures of a young American on the strange planet of Mongo, realm of monsters and domain of the War-Lord Ming. An unforgettable serial of thrills and suspense, starring Buster Crabbe and Jean Rogers



Read This First

A strange planet, hitherto unknown, has shifted from its orbit and loomed into the view of the peoples of the Earth. It is the planet Mongo, and its overlord is Ming, a sinister figure who had probed the secrets of Nature.

Dr. Zarkov, an American scientist, sets out in a rocket ship to penetrate the stratosphere. He is accompanied by Flash Gordon, son of an astronomer, and by Dale Arden, Flash's sweetheart, but they reach the new planet only to be seized by Ming.

Flash and Dale escape with the aid of Aura, Ming's daughter, who is attracted by Flash. They are also assisted by Thun, a prince whose father rules a territory on Mongo which has not yet been subdued by Ming. Dale and Thun, however, are captured and carried off by winged men in the pay of King Vultan, who dominates an amazing sky-city poised thousands of feet above the surface of the planet.

Meanwhile, Zarkov finds an ally in Barin, rightful heir to the throne that Ming occupies. They locate Flash and Aura, and in Zarkov's rocket-ship they make for King Vultan's sky-city in the hope of rescuing Dale Arden and Thun.

They are captured by Vultan, and together with Thun, Flash and Barin are condemned to a life of slavery at the radium furnaces which support the sky-city. But just as Ming arrives at the palace and confronts Vultan, Flash and his comrades destroy the furnaces with the co-operation of Zarkov.

Now read on

EPISODE 8:—

"Tournament of Death"

City of Doom

IN the very instant that the explosion took place Flash Gordon cleared the lead wall, and as he dropped amongst the slaves who were crouching behind the shelter of the parapet he heard fragments of the furnace-casings go whistling over his head.

The great room was filled with the echoes of the blast, and as those reverberations slowly died away the silence that ensued was uncanny. Then all at once bedlam broke loose as the prisoners swarmed from their pen to see their guards lying prostrate about the floor of the wrecked chamber, some of them apparently lifeless, others stirring feebly.

Yelling with triumph, the majority of the slaves made for the doors of the chamber in a body, and though Flash tried to arrest the stampede his efforts were in vain. He only succeeded in restraining Thun and Barin, and in company with them watched the mob swarming out of the room.

"Fools!" the young American ground out. "Crazy fools! My plan was to stick together and arm ourselves, then seize the palace. We'd have been able to help Zarkov pull off his coup without a hitch if we'd done that. As it is, those dumb idiots will scatter in all directions, and be slaughtered like

sheep as soon as Vultan's troops recover from the first alarm and face up to the situation."

"Then all is lost, Flash?" Thun panted.

The younger man clenched his teeth. "Maybe not," he rejoined. "Maybe Zarkov can win through, if the three of us stand fast with him. Listen, Barin, you head for the laboratory and tell the doctor that the atom furnaces have been destroyed. Thun and I will make for the throne-room and hold Ming and Vultan powerless—if we can!"

Pausing only to equip themselves with swords, which they drew from the sheaths of three stricken guards who lay nearby, Flash and his comrades dashed out of the furnace chamber and raced up the steps that led to the corridor above.

Once in that corridor they separated, Barin hurrying in the direction of the laboratory, Flash and Thun making straight for King Vultan's audience room with determined mien.

"The next few minutes will decide the fate of everyone in this city, Thun!" Flash said thickly. "According to Zarkov, it will remain in space for a little while even though the atom furnaces have been shattered. Then as the rays that support it gradually fade out the whole fabric of Vultan's metropolis will begin to crumble, and will hurtle to disaster on the plains of Mongo."

Thun made no response other than a nod of his leonine head, and they pressed onward at top speed, meeting June 27th, 1936.

with no one until they were within a short distance of the throne-room.

There was not a slave in sight. The mob of liberated bondsmen had vanished and not a trace of them remained, though from afar there came a vague commotion which suggested to Thun and Flash that some of them had fallen foul of the soldiery who garrisoned the palace.

And then suddenly even as the American and his friend turned a bend in the corridor they came face to face with three of Vultan's retainers who had doubtless been dispatched from the throne-room to investigate the explosion in the furnace chamber.

The three Hawk Men were armed, but the unlooked-for appearance of Flash and Thun took them by surprise, and they scarce had time to defend themselves before their stalwart foes were upon them, attacking with the sword.

There was a rasp and a clangour of steel, a medley of exclamations and a tumult of blows delivered at full force, a scuffling of feet as Vultan's vassals were borne back by the fury of an irresistible onset.

One Hawk Man went down under a sweeping cut of the blade in Flash's hand, and another fell to Thun. The third, trying to lunge at Thun ere the latter could put himself on his guard again, was balked by Flash as the American struck up his sword, and a moment later was sinking to the floor with the blood streaming from a deep gash in his leg.

The affray had lasted thirty seconds. In another thirty two vengeful figures were bursting across the threshold of King Vultan's audience chamber.

They were the figures of Flash Gordon and Prince Thun, and they took in the scene at a glance. There stood Ming's lieutenant, Torch, and a group of the emperor's soldiery. Nearer at hand was a small party of Vultan's minions armed with ray-guns. Ming and Vultan himself were on the dais in front of the throne, together with Dale Arden and Aura.

A little while ago they had made a tableau suggestive of hostility, but Ming and Vultan and their respective hirlings had forgotten their rivalry in a common anxiety, an anxiety that had leapt to every countenance when the explosion in the furnace-room had reached their ears.

Such was the scene into which Flash and Thun bullocked their way in so unexpected a manner that the American had rushed to the dais, and his ally had pounced on one of Vultan's men and seized a ray-gun before any of the occupants of the apartment could make a move.

With a ray-gun in his possession Thun covered the soldiery who were present, Ming's retainers and the Hawk Men alike. Meanwhile, Flash had gained the dais, and at point of sword he threatened Vultan and the emperor. "Let either of you move and I'll run this through you!" he blazed.

There was no question of resistance, for the American was in deadly earnest, and both those potentates of Mongo knew that one reckless act might seal their doom. Indeed, Flash Gordon was so incensed by the sufferings he had undergone at the hands of each of them that it seemed for a moment as if he were sorely tempted to do them some hurt here and now, whether they chose to defy him or not.

Thus it appeared to Dale Arden, at least, and though she had no reason to intercede for Vultan or Ming, the very thought of bloodshed turned her sick.

June 27th, 1936.

That was why she caught her sweetheart's arm involuntarily.

"Flash!" she cried. "Don't! Don't kill them, Flash!"

Her champion looked round at her, and it was a movement that cost him dear, for in allowing his attention to be diverted he gave his enemies their chance, a chance that the burly Vultan was quick to seize.

The King of the Hawk Men suddenly closed with Flash, clutching him from behind, holding him in a vice-like grip. With a shout the American tried to wrench himself free, but as a result of the scuffle Thun wheeled towards the dais, and on the instant the vassals of Ming and Vultan swarmed upon him.

He was overwhelmed and disarmed by force of numbers, and immediately he had been rendered powerless half a dozen of the soldiery rushed to the aid of Vultan. In the space of a few seconds Flash had also been made prisoner, despite the fierceness with which he fought, and despite Dale's efforts to help him and undo the harm for which she had been innocently responsible.

The tables were turned with a vengeance, and Flash and Thun having been secured, Vultan looked ominously from one to the other. Then he slid his eyes upon Ming.

"Perhaps your Majesty will consent to shelve our quarrel for the time being," he said. "For I think the two of us may be of the same mind in regard to these troublesome rascals."

Ming's face was a study in malevolence.

"The ray-guns of your men will make short work of them," he announced harshly. "I propose that they be executed without delay."

Vultan signified his agreement with a nod, and addressed a curt word of command to his minions, whereupon Flash and Thun were pinned against the wall. Then while Ming's retainers drew aside the Hawk Men who were present took up a position in the middle of the room, each of them with a lethal weapon trained upon the unfortunate captives.

"Now," growled Vultan, raising his arm, "prepare to fire. When I let my hand fall you will blast the lives from the bodies of our two meddling interlopers!"

He had scarcely finished speaking when Dale Arden was before him, her lovely features distraught with anguish, her eyes filled with an expression of abject appeal.

"No, no, you must not!" she sobbed. "Spare them! If there's any pity in your heart, spare them! But for me, Flash might have struck you down just now. Remember that, Vultan. Remember that!"

The King of the Hawk Men leered down at her.

"I'm not forgetting it, my pretty one," he told her. "Neither am I forgetting that I might have died by the hand of your precious Flash. No, my fair guest from the Earth, Gordon and Thun have condemned themselves, and nothing you can say will save them."

Dale reeled in a stricken fashion. She saw herself as the one who had brought her fiancé and his friend to this pass. But for her womanish aversion to the sight of bloodshed, but for her thoughtless interference Flash and Thun might still have been in command of the situation.

And had she but known it, Flash could never have slain Vultan or Ming in cold blood, no matter what justification he might have had in doing so.

A mist seemed to gather before Dale,

a mist through which she could only see Vultan's grinning countenance. Then all at once she heard the voice of Aura, remonstrating with the Emperor Ming.

"Father," the princess was saying violently, "you and Vultan cannot do this! I won't allow it—I won't allow it!"

"Hold your peace, daughter," came the angry reply. "Do not try my patience too far or it may be that I shall forget that you are my own flesh and blood. Vultan, let us have done with this execution."

The King of the Hawk Men inclined his big head, and then still with upraised arm he turned towards the firing party.

The First Tremors

WHILE Flash and Thun had been making for the throne-room where they were finally to come face to face with death, Prince Barin had been hastening in the direction of Vultan's laboratory as fast as his legs would carry him.

As he rushed into that strange workshop he found Dr. Zarkov standing before an instrument board at the far side of the apartment, examining with intent gaze a dial on which a needle was quivering spasmodically.

"Zarkov," Barin ejaculated, as he hurried across to the scientist, "the atom furnaces have been blown up."

The doctor looked at him and smiled.

"Yes, I know," he remarked complacently. "This gauge reveals the strength of the beams which support the city in the sky, and the needle is falling steadily. It will soon be time for me to act."

"The moment is already at hand, Zarkov!" Barin panted. "Flash and Thun have gone to the audience chamber to confront Vultan and Ming. You must co-operate with us at once." Zarkov had started, and now his face changed colour.

"Flash and Thun—in the audience chamber?" he faltered. "That was a foolish move. Why didn't they come here, instead of running unnecessary risks?"

He took one glance at a ponderous machine that stood nearby, a machine equipped with many switches and dials. It was the appliance on which he had been working for the past few days, and which he had been striving to perfect in order to gain a hold upon Vultan.

"There is the machine that will save us all, Barin," he said grimly. "I alone know how to operate it, and therefore we hold the key to the situation. But in the meantime Flash and Thun must be our first concern. Come!"

Together they departed from the laboratory, and travelling at the double they made their way through the palace corridors until they reached the threshold of the throne-room, where the pair of them came to an abrupt standstill.

They saw Flash and Thun bracing themselves to meet destruction. They saw the firing-party of Hawk Men with ray-guns levelled at the two prisoners menacingly. They saw the onlookers, silent but for Dale Arden, who was sobbing hysterically, and they saw Vultan, with hand on the point of falling to his side in a fatal gesture.

"Stop!" cried Zarkov, and his voice rang clear and loud through that apartment of doom.

All heads were turned in his direction, and with Barin at his heels he stumbled across to the dais and confronted Vultan.

"Your Majesty," he rapped out, "are you aware that the atom furnaces have been destroyed by your slaves? Are you aware that the rays which hold your city above the clouds are failing?"

The King of the Hawk Men glared at him, but a hint of uneasiness dawned in his eyes, and it was a look that crept likewise into the scrutiny which Ming was directing at Zarkov. For both Vultan and the self-styled Emperor of the Universe remembered the explosion that had come to their ears from afar.

"Your sky-city is doomed," Dr. Zarkov went on deliberately. "It will not be long before it goes hurtling to the plains of Mongo, destroying you and your people. There is not even time for the population to be warned, and to evacuate it."

"Wait! You and such of your Hawk Men as are present here may save yourselves, Vultan—by making your escape through the windows and taking to your wings. I grant you that. But your people will be caught unawares and overwhelmed by crumbling masses of masonry, and even if you live, Vultan, you will be a king in name only—a king without a realm, and with only a handful of followers."

Vultan's bloated features had gradually become pale. As for Ming, he was like a ghost, for he realised that if Zarkov were speaking the truth he was among those who were foredoomed—he, the Emperor of the Universe, who was no Hawk Man with the precious gift of wings to carry him instantly from this death-trap.

"Zarkov!" Vultan found his voice, and spoke to the doctor huskily. "Zarkov, you may be trying to fool me, but if you are not—if you are not, then I'll warrant Gordon and Thun and Prince Barin there are the ones who have brought this calamity upon my city!"

"Yes," the scientist acknowledged, "and you may rightly imagine that I

myself may have had something to do with it. But I can save your city, Vultan—and save it I will, in return for the lives and liberty of my friends."

He paused, and regarded the burly monarch steadfastly.

"Let all of us go free," he said, "and your kingdom survives. Refuse my offer—and it falls—even though I and my companions perish with it."

"How can you save the city?"

"Didn't you set me to the task of perfecting an invention that your experts had launched but failed to complete, Vultan? An invention that would take the place of the process that has been in use? Well, I have accomplished the task."

Zarkov uttered the last sentence in a triumphant vein, and then, moving a step nearer, he laid an admonishing hand on Vultan's arm.

"You had better make your choice quickly," he advised. "Are you to remain a king, or are you to become a creature dependent upon charity for your existence? You have but to give me your oath that my friends and I shall go free. And while we are on the subject of that oath, Vultan, I have noticed during the time I have been here that you are a strict devotee of the god Taos, whom the nations of Mongo worship. If you accept my bargain, it must be on his name that you swear to abide by it."

Vultan was moistening his lips now.

"This may be some trick," he muttered. "How do I know that the city is really in danger? I—"

And then he stopped, for at that very instant a vital tremor passed through the room in which they were standing, a tremor that shook roof and walls and floor, a tremor that was repeated until thin streams of plaster had begun to fall from above.

"There's your answer, Vultan!" Zarkov jerked. "Quick, there's not a second to lose! Give me your word,

Vultan! Give me your word, if you'd save your kingdom! Swear by all that you believe to be holy!"

Alarm was written upon every face as Zarkov spoke those words, and there was no longer any doubt in the minds of his listeners that the realm of the Hawk Men was in peril of collapse.

"I swear!" King Vultan gasped. "I swear, Zarkov—on the name of the god Taos! I swear that you, Gordon, Barin, Thun, the Earth girl—all of you—will go free if you save my city!"

The doctor wheeled and sped across the room, and was blindly followed by the others, even by Flash and Thun, to whom Vultan and Ming paid not the slightest heed now. In a body the whole party swarmed out into the corridor and rushed after Zarkov towards the laboratory, with the flagstones quivering under their feet as they ran and the walls and the ceilings raining dust upon them.

From distant points in that wondrous metropolis of the skies—from the outer limits of the city, to be more exact—there came the dim thunder of tumbling stones. Vultan's realm was breaking up on the extreme fringes, where the rays had apparently first shown signs of weakening.

It was a terrifying sound that was accompanied by a remote commotion of voices as panic spread like wildfire through a stricken populace.

Zarkov and his party ran on, and soon they were in the laboratory, the doctor springing to the machine that he had pointed out to Prince Barin a little while before. And, crowding around him, the onlookers watched him touch the switches of that machine with sure, confident hands.

There was a humming of dynamos, and lights gleamed behind the semi-transparent dials of the apparatus. Quickly the drone of electricity swelled louder, and as it rose in pitch so the floor of the laboratory seemed to become steady, the walls and ceilings to cease their trembling.



The King of the Hawk Men suddenly closed with Flash, clutching him from behind, holding him in a vice-like grip. June 27th, 1936.

Vultan staggered to the windows of the room and looked out across a courtyard that was dotted with the figures of Ming's troops, who were standing in fearful attitudes about their rocket ships as if uncertain how to act. Beyond the wall of the courtyard the King of the Hawk Men could see the roofs and spires of his city, which had been tottering as if on the verge of destruction a few seconds previously, but which was now riding safely in space.

Vultan turned to Zarkov.

"You have kept your word, doctor," he said hoarsely.

"And now you must keep yours," the scientist replied. "My friends go free!"

"No! I forbid it!"

The voice was Ming's, and as Zarkov and Vultan looked at him quickly they saw that his eyes were glittering like diamonds.

"You forget, Ming, that I have sworn by Taos," Vultan observed, "and such a promise is not to be lightly broken."

The emperor advanced a pace nearer to him.

"My friend," he said, "you and I have been at loggerheads, but it seems foolish that we should turn your realm to a shambles by pitting our soldiers against one another. You remind me that you have given a promise. Let me remind you that it was given under pressure."

"But a promise is a promise," Vultan retorted, "and when the spirit of Taos has been summoned as a witness to it—"

"Very well," Ming interrupted impatiently. "You have given a promise, and so far as you are concerned these people go free. But I took no oath, Vultan, and therefore it is no affair of yours if I take charge of them, is it?"

Vultan's glance narrowed at that. The rebellious spirit shown by Flash, Barin and Thun was still rankling in his mind, and in reality he was reluctant to see them escape unpunished. Consequently Ming's proposal did not strike him as unfavourable, providing him as it did with a loophole.

"There is something in what you say, your Majesty," he drawled.

A cry of rage broke from Zarkov's lips as he heard Vultan's words, and suddenly he wheeled towards the machine that had saved the city.

"You can't get away with this!" he shouted. "I can still bring destruction upon us all—"

But Ming had divined his intention, and with a sharp word of command he directed his personal bodyguards to stop the doctor, an order that was promptly carried out by two or three of them. Then he instructed the rest of his minions to seize Flash and Barin and Thun, and although this was not accomplished without a desperate mêlée the American and his comrades were at length overpowered.

"King Vultan," Ming then inquired, facing round on the monarch of the sky-city and addressing him blandly. "Have I your permission to deal with my captives in your palace?"

Vultan grinned at him.

"Why not?" he rejoined. "I have washed my hands of them. They are free—to be dealt with as you think fit."

"Then my first request is that they shall be placed in separate dungeons," said the emperor, "for the time being."

King Vultan shrugged his shoulders to imply the business was no concern of his, whereupon Ming beckoned to the captain of his bodyguard.

"Torch," he announced, "see that the prisoners are taken to King Vultan's dungeons. Also, conduct my daughter and the Earth girl to the throne-room, where I shall join them in due course."

Flash, Zarkov, Barin and Thun were June 27th, 1936.

removed, the four of them struggling violently in the arms of their guards. Then Aura and Dale were led forcibly from the laboratory, the former pale with resentment, the latter almost distracted by this fresh change in the fortunes of her sweetheart and his companions.

Left alone in the presence of Vultan and his group of Hawk Men, Ming was silent for a minute or two. But finally he looked at the burly king of the sky-city and smiled a thin-lipped smile.

"We are friends again, Vultan?" he said.

"If you'll let bygones be bygones," the other replied. "At least we've no cause to quarrel now—not even over the Earth girl, for I gave her up along with the others."

"I have Zarkov to thank for that," Ming commented with a chuckle. "And you to thank for giving me the use of your palace, Vultan. But perhaps I can provide you with a little sport by way of return. Doubtless you are wondering what I am going to do with my captives, eh?"

The bigger man nodded.

"I confess I'm interested," he admitted bluffly.

"Well, Zarkov is to live," said Ming. "I rate him too valuable to die. As for the others—Gordon, Barin and Thun—I have a little plan in mind that should prove amusing, very amusing."

The Duel

LESS than half an hour after he had been lodged within a dungeon on one of the lower floors of Vultan's palace, Flash Gordon received as a visitor no less a personage than the Emperor Ming.

The sinister potentate entered the cell with Torch and several of his bodyguards, who took up defensive attitudes about their royal master as they saw the look that Flash bestowed on him.

Protected by his vassals, Ming eyed the prisoner calmly enough.

"Gordon," he remarked, "I am going to give you a chance. A chance to live and to marry the bride of your choice."

Flash stared across the dungeon at the Emperor, wondering what process of thought was going on behind that domed forehead. The man's countenance was utterly impassive.

"I have seen you with a blade in your hand," Ming went on. "Very well, then, you shall figure in a tournament of death. I have a swordsman at my disposal who is reckoned to be passing skilful, and you shall fight him. I may add that it will be a fight to a finish, and that it has got to end with one of you lying lifeless at the other's feet. No quarter must be shown."

Flash gritted his teeth and made no response for a little while. Then he spoke in a curt tone.

"All right," he said. "The idea of killing a man is not to my fancy, Ming, but the death of one of your hired assassins shouldn't lie too heavily on my conscience. That is, if I should happen to come out the victor."

The emperor smiled.

"It remains to be seen," he observed. "But in case you should survive, Gordon, it is only right that you should know you will have a second opponent to deal with on the same terms. Slay him, and you will then be given your liberty—and your bride."

"I see," Flash muttered grimly. "To win Dale Arden and my freedom I have to wade through blood. Not a pleasant reflection, Ming."

"There is but one condition that I make," the emperor continued, ignoring the American's comment. "You must fight in a mask."

"Why?" Flash demanded.

"It is not for you to question me," Ming retorted. "Are you willing to undertake the combat?"

"Yes," the younger man ground out, "I'm willing and ready."

At that Torch signed to a couple of the guards, and one of them stepped forward to help Flash don a tunic of mail. The other man placed a black hood over the young American's head, a cowl that possessed two slits for his eyes, and when this had been done a sword was placed in his hand and he was led from the cell.

He was taken to a large room, and on arrival there he found a considerable number of people assembled in the apartment, Vultan and some of his Hawk Men being prominent amongst them, as well as Dale Arden, the Princess Aura and Zarkov.

Flash picked out the familiar faces at a glance, and then his eyes fell upon a stalwart figure standing between two of Ming's retainers at the far side of the room. Like Flash himself, this man was grasping a sword, and like Flash he was wearing a hood that concealed his features.

"Let the duel commence," came the voice of the Emperor Ming.

The men who stood beside Flash Gordon's opponent moved aside, and at the same time the tall American was thrust in the direction of that other figure in the cowl.

Step by step the duellists advanced into the centre of the apartment with outstretched blades, and then, as steel touched steel, they began to circle warily, each taking the measure of his foe.

It was the unknown sword-man who made the first lunge, a lunge that followed swiftly upon a clever feint that almost deceived Flash. But the American sprang back and escaped his antagonist's sword-point by an ace, quickly putting himself on his guard again.

He realised there and then that Ming had not overrated the skill of his champion. That swift passage of arms had told Flash that the man, whoever he might be, was a master in the art of fencing, and he was thankful that he himself had counted the sport amongst his recreations at Columbia University.

They came together again, as warily as before, and a second time the unknown swordsman tried to spit Flash. But the American foiled him with a rapid parry and drove with the point in return, only to be balked by the dexterity with which his enemy recovered a defensive posture.

Both were playing a cautious game, but gradually the pace of the duel quickened till it became thrust and parry, thrust and parry, with the tempers of the men rising as the contest grew fiercer and more desperate. Blade rasped on blade, or struck sparks one from the other; the shifting feet of the two adversaries scuffled ceaselessly upon the floor as they manoeuvred hither and thither.

The fight continued, unrelaxing in its vigour, the issue impossible to foretell. As yet neither man had shown any marked superiority, and if on occasion one seemed to press on more hotly than the other he was soon back on the defensive, retreating before an assault as furious as that which he had just launched himself.

And then, as the fateful minutes wore on, a change became apparent in the progress of the combat, a change that was soon obvious to the most inexperienced observer present. One of the swordsmen was tiring, was beginning to

(Continued on page 28)

"SECRET AGENT"

(Continued from page 6)

"I will tell Gustave at the factory to be on the look-out," said the old man. "And I will have the police telephoned anonymously as soon as they arrive."

"And get them arrested?" Marvin nodded his approval. "The police may not fall for it."

"They'll fall for it all right. They are tired of Switzerland being used as an international spy centre."

"Supposing Ashenden does find out who I am?"

The bearded old man permitted himself a smile.

"It won't matter if he does. You'll be on your way to Arabia, and he'll be inside a Swiss prison."

Marvin rang a bell and a valet appeared.

"How long have I got?"

"About twenty minutes, sir."

"Well, good-bye," Marvin turned to his ally. "I'll mail you a cheque from New York on delivery of the goods."

The bearded old man shuffled to the door.

"I always deliver the goods, sir."

Ten minutes later Marvin was at the reception office paying his bill. He was about to hand over the letter for Elsa to the clerk when there was a touch on his arm. He jerked round to find Elsa at his side. He noted at once that she wore a grey travelling coat and skirt, and that behind her was a page-boy with a large suitcase.

"You're leaving now?" Elsa said. He noticed that the girl looked very pale and distressed.

"Sure. This is the end," He managed a smile. "This letter was for you. I've had a hurry call back home, and if I don't check out now, it's good-bye to seeing the rest of Europe this trip. My paper says I've got to get a jerk into things."

"Where are you going?"

Marvin gave her a glance from narrowed eyes.

"Greece first, I guess." He glanced at his watch.

"Take me with you."

"Here, say that again!"

"I mean it!" Elsa cried. "I'm leaving here, anyhow." She pointed to the suitcase.

"But how about your husband?" he demanded. "You don't say you're through with him—leaving him?"

"Yes, through with him—finished!" She spoke passionately. "May I come? He won't mind—he has other amusements. Don't ask me to explain any more. I promise not to get in your way, or interfere in anything you want to do. Just get me away from this place."

Marvin gazed at her speculatively, and a queer smile twitched his lips. She was very beautiful, and in Arabia she would be so completely at his mercy.

"Very well, I'll take you," he cried. "Let's go!"

The Chocolate Factory

ON showing their permits at the factory a guide in white overalls proceeded to take them round and do his best to stuff them full of various kinds of chocolates. The roar of machinery made the guide below information about the various gadgets. Ashenden and the Mexican nodded politely, but all the while they were looking round for Lilli's boy friend. Lilli had told them Pete's department and described him—also Pete would be on the watch.

It was while they were in the packing department that the general noticed a man watching them closely. The general pretended not to notice, and saw the man write something on a piece of paper. Boxes of chocolates were passing on an endless band, and as the general came nearer the man pushed the piece of paper into a box. The general decided that he should read that note.

The general in a nonchalant manner strolled towards the packer, and saw the man give him a furtive glance. Now he was sure he should read that note. He strolled after the endless band. It would not do to run. The box was some distance ahead. He almost caught up when the band vanished into a hole in the wall—it meant that the box had been carried to another floor. Up some spiral stairs hastened the general, and there he found the band again.

Ashenden, guessing that something was wrong, persuaded the guide to go in the same direction.

The band carried the box along past benches full of busy workers, and it was impossible for him to snatch the note. The box vanished through a hole in the wall, and the general, bending down, saw the box in a kind of sorting-room. Then he saw hands take the note from the box and begin to read it.

The message in the note was brief:

"Two English spies here. 'Phone police anonymously."

Rather worried, the general joined Ashenden, who looked at him inquiringly. The general shrugged his shoulders. Some few minutes later a portly gentleman appeared, and the guide said it was the manager. The manager stated that he would personally show them round—they were a little surprised. But the general guessed the reason for the manager's effusiveness when he chanced to look out of a window. A police car with four or five police in it had come to a standstill in the yard below.

Someone had betrayed them to the police as spies. The general knew that the note had been a warning or order for someone to fetch the police. He glanced round quickly, and saw that Ashenden was listening to the manager.

His quick wit showed him a slender chance. He picked up a chocolate from a tray and at once choked. It was a violent fit of choking, and the manager and Ashenden thought the general was going blue in the face.

"Water—water!" gasped the general.

The manager hastened away, and that gave the general his chance.

"Trouble—get quick out!" he hissed. "Police!"

The manager brought water, which the general gulped and then grinned his thanks. Ashenden glanced round and saw the fire-alarm. The general was still spluttering so that Ashenden was not observed by the manager or the guide, and he succeeded in edging across the room to the alarm. The general turned and guessed Ashenden's purpose—he began to cough very loudly. Ashenden broke the glass with his coat and pressed the alarm signal. He heard sirens sounding all over the factory.

The white-coated factory workers had instructions that on the alarm signal they must leave their work at once and get out of the factory. Other workers had instructions to man the fire-engine, whilst foremen saw that there was no panic.

Thus the police on charging into the factory were met by a solid mass of white-coated workers, through whom it was impossible to pass.

The manager had not observed Ashenden's trick and had rushed away.

The general pointed to an emergency exit. They were making for it when a white-coated figure appeared in the deserted room, and they were prepared for a fight when the man shouted "Lilli!" They waited for him.

"I am Pete," he panted out. "Lilli, my friend. She come see me, say you pay me well, that you bring the money."

Ashenden gave the man a searching glance, and was satisfied it was Pete. He dived his hand into his pocket and brought out a number of notes. Five of a thousand francs each he handed to Pete. That young man's eyes glittered avidly. In turn he handed them a piece of crumpled paper, on which words were written in German.

Ashenden gasped as he translated their meaning: "Baron Stecker. Travel Damascus through Nish. Call himself Robert Marvin."

"Under noses all the time!" snarled the general.

"We must get out of here and 'phone Elsa," Ashenden cried, all his ideas of resignation forgotten. "I must tell her to try and hold him."

Sounds of voices made them turn.

"That'll be the police," the general muttered.

"Ach!" cried Pete. "They find me out!"

"I save you," the general cried, and suddenly whipped up a crashing blow to the other's jaw. Pete sagged limply on to a mixing machine and lay still.

Ashenden made for the emergency door and held it open for his partner. Together they rushed down some stairs three at a time. The police and officials followed them a few minutes later. They reached the yard in safety. Here were crowds of workers all jabbering excitedly because no one knew why the alarm had gone. Casually the two English agents walked through the crowd towards the gates. They were close to the gates when they heard shouts of "spies!" behind them. Now was the time to run. They charged past the gates before anyone could stop them, and thanked their lucky stars that they had told their driver to wait.

They bundled into the car. When clear of the factory and safe from pursuit Ashenden got out of the car to put through a phone call to the hotel. He hastened back to the car.

"Too late!"

"He go?" asked the general.

"Yes—and Elsa, too." Ashenden suddenly snapped his fingers. "I've got it—she's on to it. Found out who he was and gone with him. We've got to catch up." He sank back against the ancient leather. "Seems Elsa was three jumps ahead of us all the time."

At the post office they sent a special code message to R.

When the general received their message he called two of his staff officers and they went to stand before a huge map of Europe.

"Ashenden is on the right man's track at last," General R. said, and pointed. "This German agent has left the hotel for the station and will follow this route to Damascus. He might get away from Ashenden, and we can't afford to take chances. Won't be easy once across that boundary, so I think we must enlist the aid of the Flying Corps. So if Marvin does elude Ashenden he won't be very much better off."

The Train of Doom

ASHENDEN and the general found the midday train had gone, but by car and other trains they set out after the other's special. Through Switzerland they raced and half over Europe until they caught up at Nish in Serbia. They had done the last hundred

miles by car. They arrived at the station to find the train due to leave in a few minutes.

The place was packed with refugees of all standards of life. They had some difficulty in getting to the platform, but there luck was with them for they saw Elsa standing by a bookstall. Ashenden hurried forward, and she was so intent on a book that she did not hear him till he touched her shoulder.

"Having a good trip?"

She turned, and the look of happy astonishment slowly faded.

"I'm not coming back to Geneva."

"Geneva?" He laughed. "There's no need. My dear, why must you take such risks? Why couldn't you have told me what you were going to do?"

Elsa saw the grinning Mexican, and she shuddered.

"What's he doing here? What have you brought him for?"

"Buenos tardes, senora." The general bowed. "Permit I make the compliments. How you are the great actress. So frighten—so timid for the blood-shedding—and all the time you steal the whole show."

"What's he talking about?" There was a note of hysteria in Elsa's voice. She looked appealingly at Ashenden.

"Look here, what's wrong? Didn't you expect us to follow you?"

"I came here to get away from you," was her whispered answer.

"But Dios Mios!" cried the amazed general. "You have not come here with this Von Stecker?"

"With whom?"

"This Baron von Stecker—the man for who we all the time look."

"I never heard of him," Elsa answered. "I came with Marvin." She knew she must try to make some explanation to Ashenden.

"I had no one else, you see. I knew you would not resign, and as I could not go on with this butchery I asked Marvin to take me with him to Athens—"

"Where?" Ashenden spoke sharply. "He meant Constantinople. Where is Marvin now?"

"In the station. He has gone to make sure of the luggage while they change the engine. But why do you ask? Why do you look so strange? And what did you mean by Con—"

"At this station one can get into a waiting train that is bound for Constantinople," Ashenden told her. "The general and I think he has left the Athens train and bluffed you. Marvin is the Baron von Stecker, my dear Elsa."

At first she would not believe it. Marvin had been so good and so kind that it must be impossible. She knew he was in the Athens train. They went to the compartment, but Marvin was not there. They went to the train bound for Constantinople and they saw their man.

"You see, Elsa, we were right," Ashenden took the girl's arm. "You must stay here till I come back. There's a British Red Cross unit somewhere in the town. Go to them."

There came a warning whistle from the train.

"I'm coming with you," Elsa decided, and as there was no time for argument they clambered aboard the train.

They were fortunate to find an empty first-class compartment.

"We mustn't waste time," Ashenden whispered to his confederate. "We shall be out of neutral territory soon, in Turkey, and then the boot will be on the other leg."

Elsa barred the door.

"You aren't going to kill him!"

"For heaven's sake don't try to stop us!" Ashenden's nerves were on edge.

"It's got to be done, and to be done June 27th, 1936.

at once. We'll be in enemy territory in a few minutes. We're almost at the frontier now. I've got to do my duty."

"But I can't let you murder a man in cold blood!" she cried. "Why—" She broke off as there came the clanking of brakes.

It was the frontier. The platform of the station was packed with Bulgarian and Turkish troops. At an order from their officers they swarmed into the train. A number of soldiers clambered to the roof of the train and machine-guns were handed up to them.

Elsa did not know what to do. She could not let Ashenden and the general kill Marvin, and yet she could not betray them. In her uncertainty she stood by the open door and stared down the corridor as if expecting to find some answer to her problem. Her eyes dilated, for she saw Marvin coming towards her.

"Elsa! Why are you on this train?"

Ashenden and the general drew up their legs and huddled on the seats close to the drawn blinds.

"Because I'm going to Constantinople."

"Why?" Marvin demanded harshly. He glanced over her head into the carriage. "Are you alone?"

"Yes."

Marvin was satisfied by her answer, but he was not satisfied with the fact she was on the train. "Follow me!"

When they had gone Ashenden and the Mexican gave a gasp of relief. Ashenden had feared Elsa might betray them. The train after much clanking got under way again, and then the two men quietly left their carriage and went in search of Baron von Stecker.

The Smash

ELSA had no alternative but to accompany Marvin to his reserved compartment, where he closed the door and made her sit down facing him. He took out a gun.

"I hate to do this, but I've got to protect myself. What are you doing on this train?"

"I've told you."

"That won't wash," he said with a nasty smile. "You're here on business—old man R.'s business. You're in the spy racket, too."

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Lay off!" He gave a sneering laugh. "I can place you now. The lovely, neglected wife, and I like a sap fell for it. I was actually sorry for you. But I'm sorer now!" His laugh made her blood run cold. "Do you realise where you are. In my territory—enemy country!"

She was too frightened to speak.

"And where are your two friends?"

he sneered. "On the train somewhere?"

"How could they get into this train?"

"That's their headache, not mine. But if they have, they're dead men."

Marvin rose. "I'll have the train searched, and—"

He broke off to move his head sideways. He was listening. It sounded like the drone of aeroplanes. Crash, crash! Explosions! Aircraft were bombing the train. The machine-guns on the roof of the train began to spit out leaden missiles.

The door slid back, and into the compartment stepped Ashenden and the Mexican. The Mexican pulled down the blinds. Ashenden kept Marvin covered with his revolver.

"Drop that gun!"

Marvin tossed the gun on to the seat and smiled blandly.

"Well, gentlemen, what is your pleasure?"

"My friend, you are giving us long time big troubles. It too bad you not

tell us in Geneva," muttered the general, who had produced a nasty-looking knife. "Save us all this wild-geese chases."

"I had other business to attend to first."

"In Lagenthal Church, for instance!" cried Ashenden.

Marvin shrugged his shoulders.

"Unfortunately. The seamy side of war."

The general came a step nearer.

"And now it is for you the turn."

"And when does the shooting start?" The German had courage.

"Too noisy, my friend." The general fingered his knife. "Ashenden, please take this ladies outside only a memento —I call you quick baek."

It was more than the distraught Elsa could bear. She snatched up Marvin's gun and pointed it at the Mexican.

Elsa glared with an insane light in her beautiful eyes at Ashenden.

"I'd sooner see you both dead than let you go through with this."

"Elsa," Ashenden tried to speak calmly. "You realise that if this man goes through it is the end of us in the East."

"What's that to me?"

"It's one life against the life of thousands!"

"What do I care?" Her voice broke hysterically. "I won't let you kill him —I won't let you kill him!"

All this while the machine-guns had been blazing away at the vague outlines of the aeroplanes, which were so difficult to see in the dusk. The bombs were pitching dangerously close to the line, and as Elsa swore that Marvin should not die one machine scored a direct hit on the track right in the path of the express.

The engine plunged into a crater formed by the bomb. The coaches were telescoped and piled on top of each other in dreadful confusion at the bottom of a steep embankment. The wreckage at once caught fire.

Elsa remembered nothing until she woke to hear her name being called. She found herself pinned down by a smashed door. Ashenden, blood streaming from a cut in his forehead, got her own. On all sides people were screaming and groaning.

Elsa looked wildly round at the tragedy. The coaches were beginning to blaze. It was terrible. So this was war! Now it was before her in all its grim reality. Her eyes dilated as she beheld the general again. So he had escaped? Then she saw Marvin. Only his head and shoulders protruded from the wreckage. There was a terrible wound on the head, and the eyes seemed glazed.

"He is dying," Ashenden whispered. "It is the best way out. Fate has been kind to us."

From his pocket the general took out a flask of brandy and drank greedily, whilst Marvin watched him avidly. Compassion seized the bloodthirsty Mexican, and he placed the brandy within reach. He would give the German the chance of a quick way out. He touched Marvin, and the German looked at him. The general placed the revolver by the side of the brandy before he turned away—

History tells us of Allenby's smashing victory against the Turks, but way back in England Mr. and Mrs. Ashenden could never read about the war in the East without thinking of the terrible fate of Baron von Stecker.

(This story is based on the film "Secret Agent," and is by kind permission of the Gaumont-British Film Company, starring Peter Lorre as the general, Madeleine Carroll as Elsa, Robert Young as Marvin and John Gielgud as Ashenden.)

"THE OREGON TRAIL"

(Continued from page 14)

should catch a glimpse of him and mistake him for Richards. If they thought he was Richards, they would naturally drill him on sight, for Red's presence among the immigrants must have shown the vigilantes that the story told by the bogus Spaniard at Don Miguel's house had been false.

With determination in every line of his countenance John now began to work his way round to the right-hand side of the canyon, taking advantage of every scrap of cover. It was a long, hard climb, and before he had completed it a desultory outburst of gun-play had shattered the quiet of the hills.

It was accompanied by a tumultuous outcry, and then the shooting rapidly developed into a continuous, rolling fire, and the sounds of battle swelled louder and still louder.

The attacking force of Californians and Yankee immigrants had stormed into the gangsters' view. The fight was on.

By this time John was near the summit of a high plateau to the right of the canyon. A few more strides and he gained that summit—sped across to the edge of the ravine, and looked down to command a survey of all that was in progress below.

Behind the stockade, the desperadoes were assembled in great numbers and were pouring murderous fusillades into the attackers. The hot lead raked vigilantes and pioneers in a ceaseless hail, bringing down men and beasts, breaking up the onset. It was apparent to John at a glance that, for all their headstrong bravery, his friends had little prospect of winning the day, and were more likely to be shot to pieces in front of the formidable barrier which they were trying to rush.

All at once there was a terrific detonation immediately beneath the spot where John stood, and, peering over the rim of the canyon, he espied the field gun that was planted on the terrace half-way down.

It had hurled a shell that burst in the midst of the attacking horsemen, and a dozen of them were blasted into eternity. A few more death-dealing missiles from that piece of cannon, and the conflict would surely be at an end.

Clenching his teeth, John started to descend the crags. There were two men in charge of the gun below him—Harris and Markey—and they had charged the breach with a second shell when the young cavalry officer dropped upon them like a bolt from the blue.

Markey ho struck in the back, bundling him forward over the brink of the terrace, so that he fell crashing to the roofs of the dwellings underneath and tumbled, finally, to the ground. Then the captain spun round towards Harris, pouncing on the gang-leader as the man was tugging a revolver from his holster.

With all his strength he drove his bunched knuckles to the point of the renegade's jaw, and Harris went the way of his lieutenant. Next moment John had leapt to the artillery piece, and, lowering the barrel, he fired straight at the stockade gate.

The shell exploded at the base of the timber barrier, ripped the massive gate to smithereens, and tore a gap in the ranks of the villainous defenders; and,

quick to profit by the damage done to the stronghold, Forrenza's vigilantes and their American allies surged forward with loud cheers.

From aloft John Delmont saw the Californians and the immigrants running amok with vengeance in their hearts. From aloft he saw Red Conway and Tim O'Rourke spring from their mounts to grapple with the familiar figure of Benton—saw Tim go down before a smashing punch and leave Red to cope with the ruffian, who seemed possessed of a desperate madman's strength.

Swiftly John scrambled down through the rocks, and fifteen seconds later he was lending Red a hand against the powerful scout. Locked in mortal combat, the three of them fought like furies, Benton inspired by a dread of the gallows. But at last the rogue was borne to the ground and overpowered, and, as he ceased to resist them, John and Red realised that victory had attended their friends on all sides.

A week had elapsed, and the Californians had dealt out stern justice to those of the renegades who had survived the battle at the fort. They had also expressed their gratitude to Ridgley and his party by giving the immigrants full permission to pass across their lands.

Thus, upon a certain spring morning, the wagon train began to move from the banks of the Humboldt River and resume its journey to Oregon. But there was one member of the Ridgley family who did not travel with it, and that one was Ann—for she had accepted a proposal of marriage from Captain John Delmont and was to return with him to Laramie in the company of Tim and Red.

"I can't help feeling like a deserter, John," she said, as they were watching the column of prairie-schooners pull out. "But dad insisted that I should go the road that my heart wanted to take me, and that road was your road, dear."

(By permission of British Lion Film Corporation, Ltd., starring John Wayne and Ann Rutherford.)

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"SECRET AGENT"—Elsa Carrington, Madeleine Carroll; *The General*, Peter Lorre; *Robert Marvin*, Robert Young; *Richard Ashenden*, John Gielgud; *Caypor*, Percy Marmont; *Mrs. Caypor*, Florence Kahn; *Lilli*, Lilli Palmer.

"THE OREGON TRAIL"—*Captain Delmont*, John Wayne; *Anne*, Ann Rutherford; *Colonel Delmont*, Joe Girard; *Tom Richards*, Yakima Canutt; *Red*, Frank Rice; *Ridgley*, E. H. Calvert; *Harris*, Ben Hendricks; *Tim*, Harry Harvey; *Minnie*, Fern Emmett; *Benton*, Jack Rutherford; *Sis*, Marian Farrell; *Markey*, Roland Ray; *Forrenza*, Gino Carraro; *General Ferguson*, Ed Lo Saint; *Don Miguel*, Octavio Girard.

"THE RETURN OF JIMMY VALENTINE"—*Gary Howard*, Roger Pryor; *"Midge" Davis*, Charlotte Henry; *Jimmy Davis*, Robert Warwick; *Mac (Pinky McGinnis)*, James Burtis; *Ed Callahan*, James Kennedy; *Tony Scapelli*, J. Carroll Naish; *"Red" Dolan*, Wado Boteler; *Angie Miller*, Dewey Robinson; *Warden Keeley*, W. P. Carlton; *Kitty Dale*, Jeanie Roberts; *Louie Costello*, George Lloyd; *Nick Lucas*, Charles Wilson.

"THE RETURN OF JIMMY VALENTINE"

(Continued from page 20)

lost none of their cunning. A stealthy backward step by Gary passed unnoticed by them. His alert eyes had seen the alarm switches on a desk a few feet away; but could he get to them before the gunmen realised his object? Again he stepped backward.

"Hey! Stay where you are!" exploded Scapelli. "Keep him covered, Louie. Got all the numbers? Good!"

"He gave a triumphant chuckle. "Call yourself a newshound?" he jeered, addressing Gary again. "Sure, I've been playing you for a rap the whole time! What d'you think I brought you down here for? For an alibi—jest that. 'Valentine robs his own bank to bribe crooked reporter.' What a story for the news-sheets tomorrow! No one will know that I've taken a hand at all. I'll say it'll be a scoop story for someone. But not you, Gary Howard! You won't be alive to write it!"

Gary stood pale-faced before the desk, then one of his hands suddenly struck against a switch—

Trrrrrrrring!

Bells rang noisily in the bank, and an electric shock ran up Scapelli's arm which was touching the steel safe.

Crack! Louie's gun spat flame and lead. The bullet smacked thickly into a wall, missing Gary's head by inches.

Instantly Gary lashed out with his boot and kicked Louie's gun from his grasp. "Look after Scapelli!" he yelled.

Mr. Davis was doing that already! By a dexterous wrench he sent the gang-leader's gun spinning from his grip. His left came round in a sizzling hook that connected full with the avenger's jaw. Scapelli crumpled in a heap.

Within two minutes a dozen armed policemen poured into the bank. The handcuffs were snapped on the wrists of Tony Scapelli and Louie Costello. A squad raced off to rescue Midge and effect the capture of Nick Lucas.

The attempted safe robbery at Riverside was Gary's scoop story for "The Record" on the following morning. But it took second place to Mac's first stint in journalism—"The Return of Jimmy Valentine." For Red Dolan, to save the Davis family from scandal, asserted that Jimmy Valentine was just another alias of his own! Nor did the Scapelli gang contradict the statement. They knew that Dolan was the only man who could bear witness to some of their worst crimes. So they kept close as clams, and reckoned themselves lucky to get off with fifteen years in "the pen."

On account of the scoop story of the bank robbery and Gary's personal part in the capture of the gang, Kelly, the chief editor, came over handsomely with a thousand-dollar bonus.

"Gee! That'll help some!" smiled Gary on receipt of it. "I'll soon be spending it on a honeymoon, chief."

"That so?" grunted Kelly. "Maybe you'll give me a knock-down to the future Mrs. Howard some time? What's her name?"

"Seeing you're a pal of mine," grinned Gary, "you can call her 'Midge.'"

(By permission of the British Lion Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Roger Pryor and Charlotte Henry.)

June 27th, 1936.

"FLASH GORDON"

(Continued from page 24)

give way before his antagonist in a manner that showed he was losing grip of himself.

It was not Flash who was weakening, but Ming's champion, and the young American was as quick to realise that fact as anyone in the room. He himself had begun to feel the first signs of physical strain, but the instant he knew that his foe was in a still worse plight he was inspired by a vision of triumph and fought the more hardily.

Relentlessly Flash assailed his opponent, and fatigue and desperation seemed to sap the fellow of all his cunning as a swordsman—till suddenly the blade was whipped clean out of his hand.

The weapon clattered to the floor. With a muffled cry its owner jumped away; tripped and fell; scrambled up again to discover that his cowl had shifted upon his head and that he could not see; tore off the covering so that he might at least attempt to close with Flash and defend himself with his bare hands.

And then—and then Flash Gordon staggered back, amazed and confounded. For the face that he now beheld was the face of a man whom he had called "friend."

"Barin! Prince Barin!" he shouted, and the name was echoed in startled accents by Dale Arden, Zarkov, and Aura.

"Prince Barin!"

It was now the turn of Flash to remove his hood, and at sight of the American's countenance Barin stood in a thunderstruck silence. Then at last he found his voice, a voice that trembled with emotion.

"Flash!" he panted. "Flash, I didn't know it was you! Ming came to me in my cell—promised me my freedom and the hand of his daughter if I should fight and conquer his two best swordsmen."

He paused and looked at Aura, who had started at his words.

"Yes, Aura," he said to her. "Your father promised me your hand. He has not been so blind as you—knows how much I have always cared for you."

There was a pause, during which the princess turned away, and then Flash whipped round towards Ming, where he stood surrounded by his retainers.

"I get it!" he blazed. "If I'd killed Barin you'd have matched me with Thun, and whichever one of us had lived would have had the blood of his friends on his hands! That's how you'd have taken out your spite on us, you foul snake! By setting us to kill one another, and then showing the survivor the dead bodies of his friends! A pretty way of ridding yourself of two of your enemies, and leaving the third to suffer the torture of conscience for the rest of his life!"

Ming smiled at him, displeased as he was by the discovery of his cruel plan.

"At least one of you would have lived," he observed. "As it is, all three of you will die now. Torch, fetch Thun from the dungeons."

His henchman departed with one or two of the guards, the rest of whom proceeded to close in on Flash and Barin. But Barin was quick to recover his sword, and, each with a good three feet of steel in his grasp, neither he nor Flash were to be taken without a fight.

By the time that Thun was brought from the dungeons Flash and Barin had been subdued by weight of numbers, and then, with the prisoners ranged side by side in the grip of their captors, King Vultan strolled across to Ming.

"Well, your Imperial Majesty," he said, "you have failed in your first scheme, but no doubt you have another merry idea in mind, or you would have let your men put an end to Gordon and Prince Barin just now."

"Your guess is right, my friend," Ming replied. "They shall die in single combat with a certain pet of yours—first Gordon, and then Barin, and lastly Thun."

Vultan looked at him keenly. "A pet of mine?" he echoed in a rumbling tone. "You mean—Urso?"

"No," Ming scoffed. "One much more formidable than Urso. I mean the ape-creature which I have seen in your private arena during former visits to your palace. You have no objection, Vultan, have you?"

The burly king of the Hawk Men had begun to finger his fat chin.

"No," he said. "No, you may do as you please. But—I like to see a rascal have a chance, and none of those three will have any chance against the ape."

Ming smiled his bleak, sinister smile. "They shall have their chance," he murmured. "Each of them will be given a dagger before he is sent into the arena. Meanwhile, Vultan, perhaps you will be good enough to have one of your men show Torch the mechanism that raises the door of your pet's lair."

With a shrug Vultan signed to a member of his household, and Torch was escorted from the room. As he disappeared on his villainous mission, his master glanced at the guards who were holding Flash Gordon.

"Into the arena with him!" he ordered. "And remember the dagger."

In response to Ming's command, the soldiers who were clutching Flash proceeded to force him towards the left-hand wall of the apartment, and for the first time the American noticed that this contained a row of open windows. There was also a narrow door in that wall, and, struggling, he was hustled across to it and thrown down a flight of steps on to which it opened.

He fell to the floor of a room that was built on a much lower level than the one where he and Barin had fought their duel, and as he picked himself up he heard something clatter on the stairs.

Slowly, mechanically, Flash lifted the knife that had been flung to him, and then he turned to take stock of the chamber into which he had been launched so unceremoniously—a spacious, octagonal chamber, with walls that were bare and sombre except where that row of windows overlooked it from the upper apartment.

As he raised his glance Flash saw that those windows were now lined with the faces of Ming and Vultan and their separate vassals, all of them stamped with an expression of mockery. But he saw, too, the faces of Dale Arden, of Zarkov, of Barin and Thun and Aura—gazing down at him with horror and anxiety.

It was on Dale that his eyes came finally to rest, and as he caught sight of the tears that were on her cheeks he tried to call out to her reassuringly; was still trying to frame words of hope and courage when she uttered a piercing shriek that went to his heart.

"Flash!" she screamed. "Behind you!"

He sprang around, in time to gain an impression of a hideous brute that came shambling through an opening in the far wall, a creature that was like some monstrous ape, but possessed of a cruel tusk above its snout.

A secret panel had admitted it to the arena, and as it moved out of the gloom of its den it seemed to blink uncertainly. Then it caught sight of Flash Gordon, and with a snarl it charged at him!

(To be continued. By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Buster Crabbe and Jean Rogers.)

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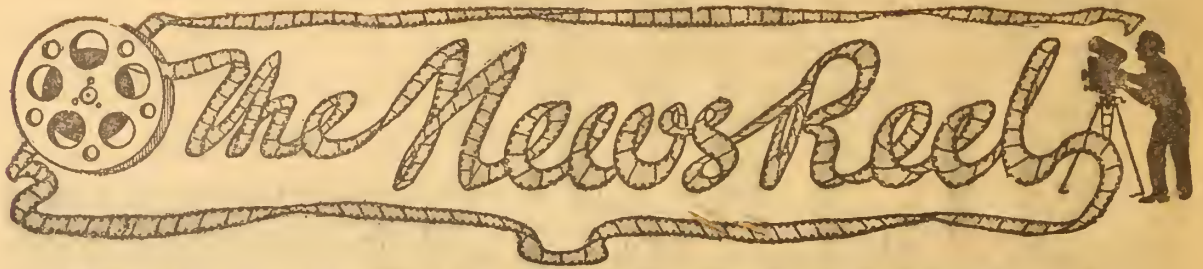


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STEEL MILL



The News Reel

All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 218, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Handy With 'Em

Jack Lambert, who has an important rôle in "House Broken," a new Paramount British production just completed at Elstree, believes in keeping fit. A keen amateur boxer, Mr. Lambert for three years held the light-heavyweight championship of the Territorial Army and was also amateur light-heavyweight champion of the West of Scotland.

Other of Mr. Lambert's hobbies are golf and swimming.

"In my opinion," says Mr. Lambert, "young men can achieve film success only by looking after their health and physique, and I believe there is definitely a place for young people on the screen. Personally, I enjoy acting with other young players such as Mary Lawson, Emid Stamp-Taylor, and Louis Borell, who appear with me in 'House Broken.'"

Mr. Lambert, who served in the Navy during the War, has the breezy manner usually associated with the Senior Service.

Star Hears Own Voice from 12,000 Miles Away

Barbara Stanwyck had the unique experience of hearing her own voice from "down under" the other side of the earth, 12,000 miles away from Hollywood.

It happened this way: J. Roy Hunt, the cameraman on Radio's feature screen production, "The Bride Walks Out," in which Miss Stanwyck is starred, is an amateur radio fan, and has constructed one of the most powerful short wave sending and receiving sets in America.

Miss Stanwyck became interested in the set, and Hunt invited her to his home to demonstrate it to her. They talked to persons in South America and Hawaii, and finally tuned-in on a Radio Picture distributor in Sydney, Australia.

He told Miss Stanwyck that her screen success, "Annie Oakley," was playing at his theatre, and asked her to wait until he got the theatre on the telephone. The film was being shown on the screen at the time, so the sound was relayed over the phone to the radio set and broadcast from far-away Australia to Miss Stanwyck in Hollywood.

One Man's Luck . . .

The set was a lumber camp mess hall at the Samuel Goldwyn studios, where the Edna Ferber story "Come and Get It" is being filmed. It was the first day of shooting.

The scene called for Walter Brennan (remember "Old Atrocity" in "Barbary Coast"?) to leap into Edward Arnold's arms and wrap his legs around the Arnold torso in a demonstration of joy at meeting an old friend once again.

Director Howard Hawks said "Cameras!" Brennan, playing the part of a Swede, yelled "Yumpin' Yimminy!" duly "yumped" at the bulky Arnold and did his leg-wrapping act as August 29th, 1936.

NEXT WEEK'S LONG COMPLETE FILM THRILLERS!



JAMES CAGNEY

—IN—

"FRISCO KID"

When Bat Morgan is robbed and shanghaied in a water-front dive, but manages to escape, he sets out to fight the underworld of San Francisco at its own game and by his wits and wiles eventually becomes king of the notorious Barbary Coast—only to fall foul of the Vigilantes, who sentence him to death. A vivid drama of the "flaming 'fifties."

"THE HOUSE WITH A THOUSAND CANDLES"

A young diplomat is sent to Geneva with a secret dispatch, but on the way is doped and robbed of the message. In the House of a Thousand Candles he becomes involved with a master spy. A gripping yarn, starring Phillips Holmes.

Also

Another big episode of the mighty serial:

"THE PHANTOM RIDER"

Starring Buck Jones.

required by the script. But the lines he spoke were his own.

"Jumping polecats," cried Brennan, "my ankle's broken! What's that on your hip?"

"Sorry," apologised Arnold, fishing a horseshoe from his hip-pocket. "I always carry this with me for luck on the first day."

Risking the Film Star's Neck

The dictionary defines an actor as "a doer; a theatrical performer; a player." The definition would be complete if the dictionary had added the following: "One who takes chances, risks; takes internal and external hurts."

For one scene in Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's "Suicide Club," Montgomery had to practise tight-rope walking for

two weeks and then took the chance of falling twelve feet to the floor—which he almost did a number of times.

Louis Hayward's case covers the "internal hurt" part of the added definition. For a sequence in the same picture he ate more than three dozen cream-tarts. Sid Silvers created a record in "Broadway Melody of 1936," when he consumed forty-eight doughnuts, half of which he had to dip into coffee.

Jean Harlow's experience in "Riff-Raff," when she had to plunge into a water viaduct and come out ten feet from the opening; Wallace Beery's case in "O'Shaughnessy's Boy," when he put his head between the fangs of a tiger; and Jean Parker's adventures in the wilds, where she braved dangers for months with a full-grown buck and puma for scenes in "Sequoia," would all come under this amended definition of an actor or actress.

Actor Frank Morgan also did his share of suffering for a scene in "Suicide Club." Although it will last only a minute or two in the final release of the picture, he had to spend an entire day in an 1880 tin bath—filled at various times with hot, cold, and lukewarm water.

Extra!

Garbo has bought a new motor-car!

For ten years the studio gatemen have been familiar with the Swedish star's car—a battered, black, faded sedan—and they have always passed it through the gate with a nod to her chauffeur.

A shiny, black, seven-passenger, new limousine with a spick-and-span uniformed chauffeur whizzed into the studio gate. The gateman had never seen the car or chauffeur before. One of the officers jumped to the running-board to stop the strange car. The chauffeur rolled his eyes towards the rear.

The car was permitted to pass, while the officer scratched his puzzled head. Garbo had used her old car and the same chauffeur for ten years, with a new set of tyres and a wind-screen wiper as the only additions in that time.

This first visit was to confer with Adrian on her costumes and with Irving G. Thalberg on production plans for "Camille," in which she will have Robert Taylor as her Armand.

Meanwhile, who is driving one of the most famous cars in the world—the antiquated Garbo chariot that he or she probably acquired from some second-hand dealer?

Miracle Man

Meet Paul Widliska, the Edison of Hollywood's prop-making shops. At the Samuel Goldwyn studios he is regarded as an inventive wizard. When the director wants anything from a mechanised cow to a cockroach or snow or rain to descend from the studio roof, he gives Paul less time than he needs

(Continued on page 25)

As a result of shock on top of overwork, Tony Halliday, a brilliant young surgeon, loses his memory. After a period of aimless wandering he obtains a job in a steel mill, where accidents are suspiciously frequent, and with the aid of a girl discovers a plot to wreck the plant—and regains his lost identity. Starring Ralph Bellamy



An Unexpected Patient

THE trim nurse at the desk in the hallway of the Mitchell Memorial Hospital looked up from the telephone into which she had been speaking as Tony Halliday came towards her from the direction of a theatre in which he had been performing an operation.

He was a brilliant young surgeon, but at the moment he looked a very tired young man. His step was alert enough, but his clean-shaven face was drawn, and the shadows under his keen blue eyes were accentuated by the white overalls in which he was enveloped.

"Dr. Halliday," said the nurse, "Miss Andrews is on the phone for you."

"Thanks," said he, "I'll take it in my office."

He passed on along a wide corridor to the room that was his by virtue of his position as chief of staff at the hospital, and he sat on the edge of a desk in it to take the call that was switched through to him.

"Hallo!" he said. "Oh, hallo, sweet! Have I still got a fiancée?"

"An awfully long-suffering one," replied the girl on the other end of the line—a beautiful girl named Carol Andrews, who was lying on a chesterfield in the drawing-room of her Long Island home. "Your patients do pick the most inconsiderate moments for their relapses!"

Tony grinned wryly into the instrument he held. He imagined her to be speaking from a fashionable restaurant in Fifth Avenue, where he should have joined her for lunch a full hour before.

"I'll make it as quickly as I can, dear," he promised.

"It's too late now," she informed him with a note of petulance in her voice. "Ralph brought me home. He hap-

pened to be there, and I was just mad enough with you for not turning up to have a really wonderful time."

A little laugh sounded in his ear.

"Sorry, darling," she said penitently, "that was beastly of me! It wasn't any fun at all, without you."

Tony passed his right hand over his aching brow and his wavy brown hair.

"Just about one more week, dear," he said, "and we'll start making up for all this."

"I'll believe that," she returned, "when we're half-way to Europe. I can't picture you taking time off to marry any girl, much less take her on a honeymoon."

"But I'm not marrying any girl," he countered, emphasising the "any"; "I'm marrying somebody very special! Now, listen, sweet. Wagner's to start taking over my patients first thing in the morning. What do you say to luncheon and a trip to the Marriage Licence Bureau with me about one tomorrow?"

She waved her free hand in the air. "That sounds practically perfect," she declared with enthusiasm. "Remember it's a date!"

"As if I could forget!" said Tony fervently.

In addition to his onerous duties at the hospital, Tony had a private practice, and from two o'clock till four o'clock every day—except Sundays—he was supposed to be available for consultations in his suite of rooms on the third floor of a white-walled building in West Fifty-eighth Street.

As it was long past two o'clock when he put down the telephone and shed his overalls, and as he had an appointment for two-thirty with Dr. George Wagner,

he set out for those rooms without troubling about food.

Wagner, an elderly man in tweeds, was waiting for him when he arrived, chatting with an efficient nurse who was also secretary and receptionist; and Tony marched him into his consulting-room, where he opened his books and went into details for the benefit of the friend and fellow-surgeon who was to act as his deputy.

"That's about all, I guess, George," he said at last, dropping wearily into an armchair that many of his patients had occupied. "Don't let Mrs. Boyce-Whittington drive you nuts. She doesn't want a doctor; she wants an audience."

"I'm glad you're pulling out of this for three months, Tony," said Wagner, who had been eyeing him shrewdly. "A man can't keep up the pace you've been going. You've been nearer to a complete collapse than you may realise."

"Nonsense," protested Tony. "I'm as fit as ever I was."

"Except that you never get any sleep, scarcely take time off the job to eat, and your nerves are all shot to pieces."

"Wait till you've heard about the Boyce-Whittington kidneys for three months, and you'll find yourself just one jump ahead of a complete collapse."

Wagner shrugged his broad shoulders.

"Well, you're marrying the right girl, anyway," he said. "Carol isn't the sort of person to put up with that sort of routine. She'll make you live like a human being."

"I'm glad we agree on one point, at least," said Tony.

"What's that?"

"That I'm marrying the right girl."

Wagner rose and picked up his hat.

"Well, I'll have to run along," he said.

"See you later at the hospital," returned Tony.

Ten minutes after Wagner had left the building, a youngster was knocked down by a car at the corner of Ninth Avenue as he was darting across the thoroughfare in front of his mother, an Italian woman.

A policeman picked him up, and, with the distracted mother beside him and a crowd following, carried the unconscious little fellow along the pavement of West Fifty-eighth Street. In the doorway of the white-walled building he encountered the proprietor of a drug store that adjoined it.

"Are you a doctor?" he asked.

"No," replied the druggist, standing hurriedly aside. "Right upstairs, officer—third floor."

A man who had witnessed the accident squeezed through the crowd into the hall.

"Here's his cap," he said.

The Italian woman took the cap and tottered up the stairs after the policeman, uttering lamentations in her own language, and the third floor was reached just as Tony walked out from his room and spoke to his nurse-secretary.

"You can reach me at the hospital at four," he said, "and if any patient lets out a peep in the meanwhile, try knock-out drops!"

The door of the reception-room swung wide and the policeman entered, carrying the injured child.

"Where's the doctor?" he cried. "Oh, there you are! An accident, doc—looks bad."

"My hambino!" wailed the Italian woman, wringing her hands. "Oh, madre mia, my bambino!"

Tony opened the door of his surgery.

"In there," he said to the policeman, and to the nurse: "Take charge."

The woman was stopped from following her offspring and was induced to sit down. Behind the closed door of the surgery Tony undressed the little black-haired sufferer and examined him, while the policeman stood looking on with notebook and pencil ready.

"Crushed chest," Tony informed him. "Broken ribs pressing against the right lung."

The policeman wrote in his book and put it away, then accompanied Tony into the reception-room, where the Italian woman immediately sprang to her feet, crying hysterically:

"Oh, my boy, he's not going to die? Oh, please save my bambino, signor!"

"We're going to try," said Tony gently, "but we must operate. Do you understand?"

"Si, si, I understand. Oh, madre mia, save my boy! Oh, please!"

"You sit over there and try not to worry," urged Tony, and the policeman led the weeping woman to a couch.

"I'll need you," Tony said to the nurse. "Get Dr. Wagner's nurse to come over and look after her. Can you stick around till she gets here, officer? It's only a couple of blocks away."

"I'll stick," nodded the policeman. "Now, come on, mother, you sit down and don't worry."

A Fatal Clot

A MOTOR-AMBULANCE drew up outside the front steps of the Mitchell Memorial Hospital in West Hundred-and-Twentieth Street, and the white-coated driver and the interne beside him jumped down from the driving-seat to open the rear doors and take out a stretcher upon which a girl was lying.

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John Ira Mitchell, multi-millionaire, who had endowed the hospital and given it his name, had raced the ambulance in his own powerful saloon because the girl on the stretcher was his daughter, and he was standing on the steps in a fine state of nerves.

"Take care!" he shouted. "She's in pain! Don't joggle that stretcher!"

"We're moving as gently as possible, Mr. Mitchell," the interne protested, as he and the driver mounted the steps with the stretcher between them.

In the hallway the gates of a lift were open and a trolley was waiting. The stretcher was placed on the trolley, the trolley was run into the lift, and the cage ascended. The white-haired superintendent of the hospital came hurrying towards Mitchell.

"Dr. Wagner's on his way up now," he said. "As soon as they've taken a blood count—"

"Wagner?" fumed Mitchell. "Where's Halliday?"

"He's tied up in his office. An emergency case."

"Emergency be hanged! My daughter's critically ill!"

"But he's operating, Mr. Mitchell."

"Tell him to get another doctor on it. His place is here! I'll tell him myself!"

He stalked across to the desk at which the trim nurse was seated, and on one of the telephones that stood there dialed a number. Wagner's nurse, a middle-aged and spectacled woman, had arrived at Tony's rooms some little time before, and it was she who answered the call.

"Dr. Halliday is operating on a child hurt in a street accident," she said rather stiffly. "I've already explained that to the superintendent."

"You tell him it's John Mitchell's child that needs him here," snapped the millionaire.

The name made a difference.

"Just a moment," said the nurse, and she ventured into the surgery.

The Italian woman looked at her piteously as she emerged from it, and for her she had good news.

"He's going to be all right," she said, and returned to the telephone. "I'm sorry, but Dr. Halliday can't leave his patient. In about an hour, I'm afraid."

"An hour?" howled Mitchell. "That's a fine message for him to send me at a time like this!"

He slammed down the instrument just as Dr. Wagner came to him across the hallway.

"Did you get Dr. Halliday?" Wagner inquired.

"They told me he'd be held up for an hour or so!" was the angry response.

"I wouldn't advise waiting for him, Mr. Mitchell."

The surgeon's voice was grave, and Mitchell became alarmed.

"Is she that bad?" he gasped.

"An immediate operation is indicated. The two house doctors attending her are of the same opinion."

Mitchell gnawed his finger-nails.

"I won't have it!" he exploded. "Do everything you can to make her easy, but wait for Halliday. I endow this hospital, and Halliday's made chief of staff. My money pays his salary, and he lets my daughter lie here suffering—maybe dying—while he takes care of some stranger's brat!"

"I'm afraid there's nothing else he could do, under the circumstances, Mr. Mitchell," defended Wagner. "The ethics of the—"

"Don't talk to me about ethics!" stormed the millionaire. "Do something!"

The superintendent crossed the hallway from his office.

"I've telephoned the police department," he said, "to have an escort ready immediately he leaves his office. The traffic will be held up for him."

"Good," said Mitchell.

Less than an hour later Tony walked out from his surgery, putting on his coat, and the Italian woman flew to him.

"Oh, signor," she cried, "my boy—he's gonna live?"

"He'll pull through all right," Tony assured her, and without listening to her excited babble of gratitude, he rushed out to the stairs.

Down in the street a police-car was waiting for him with an escort of speed-cops on their motor-cycles. Tony put on his hat in the car as it swept up Broadway, and the hospital was reached without a moment's delay anywhere. Mitchell was on the top of the steps, mopping his brow with a handkerchief.

"So you've come at last!" he cried, and followed Tony into the cage of a lift. "Halliday, if anything happens to my daughter as a result of this delay—"

"Sorry, Mr. Mitchell."

The matron was waiting in the corridor on the second floor as they stepped out from the lift.

"Is the patient ready?" asked Tony.

"Quite ready," she replied.

Tony disappeared into an operating theatre, and the matron induced the frantic father to enter a waiting-room where he paced round and round a table, the prey to wild misgivings. After what seemed to him an eternity of anguish, Tony appeared in the doorway, clad from head to foot in white.

"Tell me!" implored Mitchell in a voice that cracked.

"She's doing nicely," said Tony, and caught him as he swayed. "Here, here, here! That's no way to act! She's going to be all right."

"It—it's just the terrific strain," muttered Mitchell, tears streaming down his face as he sank into the chair to which he was piloted. "Her suffering—like—this!"

"Don't think any more about it," urged Tony. "Now you try and get some rest yourself."

The millionaire lay back in the chair, limp and exhausted.

"Thank heaven you weren't too late!" he mumbled.

One of the house surgeons put his head into the room.

"Dr. Halliday!" he called, and Tony swung round.

"What is it?"

"Embolus."

The word was unknown to Mitchell, but it was a dread word to Tony, who knew that a clot had ended the life he had tried to save. John Ira Mitchell saw the expression on his face and asked a question without uttering it.

"We did everything humanly possible," said Tony.

"Everything hut come when you were desperately needed!" bellowed the millionaire, bounding up from the chair completely beside himself. "There might have been a chance to save her if you'd come sooner! It was her life against that of some charity brat—and you let my child die!"

The Final Blow

THERE was a meeting of the management committee in the board-room of the hospital next morning—a meeting which had been convoked some days before, but which took on a different complexion in view of a letter received from John Ira Mitchell.

The house doctors were present, and

also the visiting surgeons. The superintendent presided; the secretary sat on his left and Tony on his right. The attorney who acted for the hospital in an advisory capacity occupied a chair at the bottom of the long table, and it was he who broached the matter which had become the most important one on the agenda.

"The autopsy," he said, "bears out the report of the attending physician that the death of Miss Mitchell was due to thrombosis resulting from an embolus, or clot, that reached the brain. One of those things, gentlemen, which can happen any day and cannot be controlled."

"What's unfortunate, in this instance," commented a doctor, "is that it had to be John Mitchell's child, suffering from acute appendicitis."

"But his charge of negligence was totally unfounded!" declared Wagner with some heat.

"Mitchell's contention," said the superintendent, with a glance for Tony, "is that the charity case should have been turned over to another surgeon."

"In the midst of an operation?" challenged Wagner.

The superintendent took off his spectacles to polish them with a handkerchief.

"Naturally, gentlemen," he said, "I'm not suggesting that Dr. Halliday should have made any distinction between the two parties."

"I'd have filed charges against him myself if he had!" cried Wagner indignantly.

The secretary looked up from a mass of papers in front of him.

"This isn't getting us anywhere, gentlemen," he demurred. "This meeting was called, primarily, because we are facing a sixty-thousand-dollar deficit!"

"And in the past," said a doctor, "we've always been able to look to Mitchell when funds gave out."

Tony, who hitherto had listened in silence, decided that it was time for him to speak.

"Gentlemen," he said quietly. "I think I've grasped the full significance of these proceedings. We're in a bad spot, financially, and my resignation would help to ease the situation."

"Well," admitted the superintendent hesitatingly, "it—it would certainly clear the air for me." He looked round the table. "Not that any of us disagrees with your handling of the case, you understand," he added.

Tony stood up. His face was white and strained, but it was evident that he had reached a decision.

"Very well, gentlemen," he said, "you have my resignation as chief of staff. I don't feel that I can do my best work in a place where my decision is going to be questioned in matters of this kind."

"Don't be a fool, Tony!" expostulated Wagner. "Just because a man endows a hospital, and helps it out with occasional subscriptions, doesn't give him the right to dictate in matters of life and death!"

"Save it, George," said Tony. "My mind's made up."

He walked away from the table to the door, and Wagner was so disgusted at the attitude of the others that he cried out at them:

"You're acting like a bunch of old women!"

From the hospital Tony went straight to the home of Carol Andrews. He had seen her the night before and had told her about the death of John Mitchell's little daughter, and now he banked on her sympathy and understanding concerning his resignation.

He heard her playing the piano as he handed his hat and coat to the butler in

the hall, and he hurried to her in the drawing-room.

"Hallo, Carol!" she greeted him as he entered.

"Hallo, Carol!" He walked over and sat down beside her on the long stool.

She kissed him, and noticed how haggard he was.

"You look tired!" she exclaimed.

"Why, you look as though you'd seen a ghost!"

"Why not?" said he. "I've just come from my own wake!"

"What happened?"

"In the midst of the proceedings the corpse came up for air—and got it! There was a meeting this morning, you know."

"They—they didn't—"

"No," he interrupted, "I beat them to it and resigned. It was rather a bad session. Mitchell, poor devil, was very unfair in his charges. I can't blame him."

"Poor Tony, you must be feeling sunk!" said she. "All your plans and hopes centred around that hospital, didn't they?"

"Not all of them," he corrected, and put his arm round her and kissed her again. "I've still got more good luck than any one guy deserves. Carol, when we get back from Europe I'm going to do what I've always wanted to do—work with Hohler at the City Clinic."

She raised her brows at him.

"That won't offer much of a future will it?" she asked.

"I'm afraid, darling," he confessed, "we'll only just about get along for a while."

"But what about your private practice?"

"Well, you see most of my private patients came to me through Mitchell, and without him behind me it may be rather hard sledding. But I've wanted to give up all that for a long time. The Children's Clinic—that's where I belong."

She stood up, biting her lip.

"You don't seem to be taking me into your plans at all!" she complained.

"Oh, how can you say that, sweetheart?" he protested, looking up at her in dismay.

"You really haven't taken me into your plans for some time, Tony," she went on, "and I've resented it."

She moved away from him, but he caught hold of her hand and pulled her back.

"What do you mean?" he asked hoarsely.

"This deal you've just got from the hospital," she said bitterly. "You've been asking for it for a long time, with that stubborn code of yours—those silly ideas about charity patients, and your duty to them. You might at least give those who can pay an even break. After all, Mitchell was your benefactor. He put you where you are to-day. Tony, don't you think he might feel differently, later on, about having you back at the hospital?"

Tony looked horrified at the suggestion behind that question.

"You couldn't ask me to do a thing like that!" he exclaimed.

"I could if you loved me."

He let go of her hand and rose to his feet.

"Carol," he said, staring at her, "suddenly I don't seem to know you any more."

"I'm sorry, Tony." Her face was averted. "You're rather a stranger yourself these days. The man I became engaged to had a brilliant future."

"I see," he gritted, and as she walked away from him he followed her and swung her round. "What are you trying to tell me?"

"Simply that I couldn't love a failure," she replied slowly. "I'm just not cut out for it. If you're looking for some loyal, thrifty, self-sacrificing little helpmate, Tony, I'm afraid you've put your money on the wrong girl."

His eyes were tortured and his face was whiter than ever.



"An accident, doc," said the policeman; and the Italian woman cried imploringly: "Oh, please save my bambino, signor!"

"Yes," he said in a very low voice. "I'm afraid I have." And with that he went out from the room and closed the door behind him.

What became of him for two whole days after he had left the house nobody ever knew. He did not go near the expensive Park Avenue flat in which he lived, nor did he visit the rooms in which he conducted his private practice. But a little before noon on the third day he walked into the hospital and made straight for the office that had been his.

Wagner was at the desk when he entered, and immediately sprang up and led him over to an armchair.

"You've had us worried," he said gruffly. "Where have you been the last forty-eight hours?"

Tony put a hand to his brow as though trying to remember.

"Just taking a walk," he said vaguely. Wagner eyed him with concern. His shoes were not dusty; his face was smoothly shaven, though it looked considerably thinner; but his eyes were those of a haunted man.

"Look here, Tony," said Wagner gravely, "what's come over you? You look like anything but a man who's about to be married!"

"Married?" Tony echoed with a laugh that jarred. "Oh, that's all off!"

"Oh, so that's it?" Wagner reached down to grip a limp hand. "I'm sorry, old man—I didn't know. Well, that just about makes a grand slam of tough luck, doesn't it?"

"Huh?" Tony shook off the hand. "Oh, I'm all right. Forget it!"

But Wagner shook his head. "Now listen to me, Tony," he said urgently. "What you need is a complete change of scenery, and the sooner the better. Why not just hop a boat to Europe?"

"Europe?" The word awakened bitter memories, and Tony repeated it as though it were the name of a poison.

"Well, then, anywhere," suggested Wagner hastily. "Say the South Seas."

"That's where all the failures go, isn't it?"

"Snap out of it, Tony!" "That's what I'm trying to do, but it's going to take me a day or two to get my bearings. I'm a dub!" He rammed his hat on his head and stood up. "You're right about everything, George. I'm going home to pack. Lucky I've got you to look after things for me."

He went out from the room, but in the hallway everything seemed suddenly to become unreal to him. He swayed a little on his feet, pushed his hat on the back of his head, and, holding his throbbing temples, stared vacantly at the nurse behind the desk.

"Are you ill, doctor?" she asked.

"I'm all right," he replied.

He looked anything but all right, and his manner was strange.

"Are you leaving for the day?" she inquired.

"Yes," he nodded. "I've got to get back to the hospital."

"Hospital?"

"There's a sixty-thousand-dollar deficit."

He went out to the steps like one in a daze, and as soon as he had disappeared she ran to the room he had just left.

"Dr. Wagner!" she cried.

"Yes?" Wagner looked up from the chair in which he had seated himself.

"Did Dr. Halliday seem all right to you?"

"Why?"

"He made the most peculiar remark to me—something about a sixty thousand deficit at the hospital—said he'd have to get there, just as if he didn't know

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where he was. It seemed to me as though he were out of his head!"

Tony Becomes "John Davis"

TONY wandered aimlessly along the pavement of West Hundred-and-Twentieth Street and came to Fifth Avenue by Mount Morris Park. He stepped off the kerb without any regard whatever for the stream of traffic flowing in each direction, and he was very nearly knocked down by a car that was braked in haste.

Another car ran into the one that had stopped so abruptly; a policeman on point duty blew his whistle, stopping all the traffic, and yelled and beckoned to Tony.

"Hi, you!" Tony turned and stared, and the policeman swept over to him.

"Say, where d'you think you're at?" he rasped.

"I—I'm sorry, officer," said Tony dully.

"Well, go on then!"

Tony reached the opposite pavement and the traffic was waved on again. He stood gazing vacantly about him till a disengaged taxicab crawled along the kerb to him.

"Taxi?" shouted the driver. "Taxi, mister?"

Tony blinked, but made no response. He stared at the driver as though trying to recognise him. He heard the grinding of brakes, he saw the man descend, and he felt a hand on his arm.

"Cab?" He surrendered himself to the driver, who opened a door and helped him into a seat.

"Where to?" asked the driver.

"What?" said Tony.

"Where do you want to go?"

"Why, I—I don't seem to remember," muttered the unintentional fare. "I—I mean to say—er—just drive around."

The door was slammed, the driver resumed his seat at the wheel, and the taxicab joined the down-town stream of traffic.

Exactly what happened after that was a blank to Tony until several days later, when under a hedge in a field he came upon two tramps sitting round a fire they had made. An appetising odour reached his nostrils from an old tin can suspended over the fire, and he sauntered towards the tramps with his hands in his pockets.

His face was grimy and unshaven, his lounge suit was smothered in dust, and he looked ill.

"Hungry, bo?" inquired one of the tramps, stirring the contents of the can with a stick.

"I—I haven't eaten for days," said Tony.

"Where you from?" asked the other tramp.

"Why, I—I—" Tony's knees gave way, and he fell sideways on to the turf, but managed with an effort to sit up. The scrubby-faced fellow who was superintending the cooking operations removed the can from the fire and presented it to him in company with a spoon that was none too clean.

"Dip in," he said sympathetically.

That day a detective from police headquarters, in New York City, called on George Wagner at the Mitchell Memorial Hospital, and with him was the driver of the taxicab. Tony's strange disappearance had alarmed his friend and deputy, who had enlisted the aid of the police to find him; but only the driver had been found.

The detective exhibited a considerable sum of money in notes which had been taken from the driver, and the driver told his own story.

"So—so I drove him around town for a couple of hours," he said, "and sud-

denly he gets sore and decides he wants to get away from New York. That—that was why he stopped my cab. So I took him out through New Jersey right through into Pennsylvania."

"A long journey," commented the detective sarcastically.

"Yeah, it was," agreed the taxi-driver. "and I can tell you I got worried, thinkin' the guy was nuts, or maybe he didn't have enough dough to pay. So I stops the cab and talks to him about that. But he ups and flashes a big wad of lettuce at me, and he says, 'Keep goin'!' So I keeps goin', and finally dumps him out near Easton."

"You mean you made him get out?" suggested Wagner.

"Yeah," the driver admitted. "I had to be gettin' back home, my wife expectin' a baby."

"And he paid you off with a roll like this?" scoffed the detective, flourishing the notes in his face.

"So help me!" declared the driver vehemently, "he give me the whole roll and says 'Keep the change!'"

"What did he do then?" asked Wagner.

"Well, he started walkin' towards the railroad tracks, and that's the last I see of him."

"A likely sort o' yarn!" sneered the detective; but Wagner said:

"I'm afraid it is. He's a sick man—I ought never to have let him go that morning. We've got to find him!"

The taxi-driver was permitted to depart with the money Tony had given him; the New York police communicated with the police of Pennsylvania, but to no purpose. Tony seemed, to those who sought him, to have vanished off the face of the earth.

As a matter of fact, he had wandered by easy stages from Easton towards the industrial city of Scranton, obtaining odd jobs here and there in return for food, and sleeping at night in sheds and open fields.

Not very far from a big steel works that dominated the landscape, a plump housewife took pity on him when he begged at her door and set him to chopping wood in the yard for a meal. He toiled for several hours with an axe, in shirt and trousers, his mind a blank up to the moment he had encountered the two tramps, and he had not nearly completed his task when the woman went out to him with a tray.

"Here's something for you to eat," she said.

Tony threw down the axe to take the tray from her. He set it down on the stump of a tree, and she watched him while he drank tea and devoured doughnuts.

"I hear they're taking on men over at the Crocker Mill," she remarked.

"Mill?" He stared at her, wondering what sort of mill she meant, and she pointed to the steel works from which a smudge of slate-grey smoke rose into the sky and jets of flame appeared at intervals.

"I should think a big, strapping fellow like you would like to work steady," she said.

Tony nodded, and while he was chopping the rest of the wood he thought over her words. A regular job—that was what he needed.

Next morning, with other men, he went in at the gates of the Crocker Steel Works, crossed a vast yard in which the office buildings were situated, and took his place in a queue outside a shed-like structure. One by one the men in front of him reached an open window, inside which a burly agent was perched on a stool at a bench littered with papers, and some of the men were

given employment and some were rejected.

Tony's turn came, and the agent viewed him critically.

"You don't look like a steel man," he said gruffly but not unpleasantly.

"I want work," said Tony, "any kind of work."

"A greener, 'ch? What's your name?"

"I—I don't—" Tony was on the point of confessing that he did not know his own name when he caught sight of a calendar on the wall of the agent's office, and on the spur of the moment adopted the name upon it. "Davis," he said. "John Davis."

"John Davis," repeated the agent, and he wrote the name in a book and handed Tony a metal disc bearing a number. "Report to the scrap yard."

"Where is that?" asked Tony.

Instead of answering, the agent hailed a passing clerk, who came to the window.

"Jinmy," he said, "take this guy down to the scrap yard foreman. He's short a hand."

Tony followed his guide out of one yard into another, past blast furnaces fed by men stripped to the waist, past rolling-mills where steam-hammers thudded juice out of metal, and stepped over narrow-gauge rails into an untidy region where a huge lifting-magnet was transferring scrap-iron from railway trucks to a pile already mountainous.

The foreman of the scrap yard, a full-faced, unpleasant-looking fellow, in a leather jacket and gloves, strode forward.

"Mac sent him over," said the clerk.

"Yeah?" The foreman surveyed Tony from head to foot and spat contemptuously on the ground. "Thanks for nothing!"

Off went the clerk with a grin, and Tony bore a second scrutiny.

"Those your working clothes?" demanded the foreman.

Tony nodded. His lounge suit had become shabby in the course of his wanderings, but it was far too good for rough work among rusty iron.

"All right," said the foreman grimly. "Come along—I'll show you how to wrastle scrap-iron!"

A Surprise for Dr. Miller

THE superintendent of the Crocker Steel Works, an elderly man with greying hair, whose name was Ernest Koenig, leaned back in his chair and looked across the desk in his private office at the troubled face of a shock-headed melter who stood before him. His goggles pushed up over his forehead.

Joe Kosovic was a fine steel man and an experienced one; a giant of a fellow who spoke English badly because he was a Slav by birth, but who was highly intelligent.

"Number six," he said, tugging at his flowing moustache as though to help himself with the language he had never completely mastered. "she was just gettin' ready for tap out a heat, boss, when the seal break. I run and fix, but hot steel, he come out too fast!"

"This is the third serious accident to your crew in two weeks, Kosovic," said the superintendent sternly. "You know you're responsible."

"I check everything," protested Joe. "I don't know how go wrong!"

Koenig turned to a broad-faced and curly headed man in dark clothes, who was standing with his hands on his hips in the middle of the room with a sneer on his lips.

"Well, Brant," he said, "you're



"What's the matter with your hands?" roared the foreman, and Tony in a dazed sort of fashion, replied: "I—I might injure them."

safety agent. What have you got to say?"

"Take my word for it, E. K.," Brant replied, "there's negligence at the bottom of every one of these accidents."

Joe Kosovic's blue eyes flamed at him. He had never liked the man whose duty it was to play the part of detective around the plant and to see that all safety measures were enforced.

"Listen, Meester Koenig," he pleaded with outstretched hands, "feefteen years I work dis mill. First brake shed, den furnace helper, now melters boss. Long time never any accident."

"Yes, yes, I know all that," said the superintendent.

"You ought to," quoth Brant maliciously. "He gave you the same song and dance last week when that crane dropped a ladle!"

Koenig liked that remark almost as little as Joe did. He frowned at the speaker and folded his arms.

"Joe," he said, "I'm going to give you one more chance. Go back to your job and turn out steel like you used to."

Joe was elated.

"Thank you, Meester Koenig," he said and moved swiftly towards the door. "Thank you. I show you dis time. You betcha!"

"You don't find steel men like that every day," remarked the superintendent, after the melter boss had gone. "That fellow was born in an open hearth."

"Yeah," drawled Brant, and went out from the office to roam the plant.

Tony, by this time, had discarded coat and waistcoat and was at work under a gantry in the scrap yard, attaching the hooks of a travelling-crane to charging-boxes filled with scrap, which were then lifted on to a train of steel tubs bound for the furnaces.

His hands became smothered with red rust from the iron and black grease

from the chain, and after a while he neglected his task to gaze at them ruefully.

"Hi, you, wake up there!" bellowed the foreman.

The chain of the crane came swinging within a few feet of Tony's face, and he caught hold of the hooks and attached them in haste to a charging-box. But one of the hooks was not properly fastened, and as the box ascended one end of it dropped and struck against the side of the tub. A shower of scrap descended noisily, and the foreman stalked round the train of tubs to the offender.

"What the blazes are you doin'?" he roared.

Tony, in a dazed sort of fashion, held out his hands.

"I can't—" he began, staring at them. "It—it's my hands."

"What's the matter with your hands?"

"I—I might injure them."

Brant arrived on the scene in time to hear that, and he laughed ironically.

"Have a heart, Ed," he said. "Can't you see? The guy's just had a manicure!"

That was fuel to the foreman's wrath. "Get out of here!" he thundered.

"Go to the shanty and get your slip! You're fired!"

Tony turned away, put on his waistcoat and picked up his coat. He seemed bewildered, and he started off in the wrong direction.

"This way, stupid!" cried Brant, and caught hold of his arm and pointed across the yard.

Tony wandered away towards the front yard, carrying his coat.

"A cream-puff in a steel mill!" said Brant contemptuously.

In the furnace building, Joe Kosovic was back at work superintending a gang of men who were tapping out a

heat of steel. A great ladle, brimming with molten metal swung across on its crane towards the waiting moulds, and helmeted workers guided it with long rods.

Joe gave a signal to the man on the crane, who pulled a lever, and the ladle tilted. Down poured a melted mass, but as it struck the sand of the first mould there was an explosion, a blinding flash, and semi-fluid steel and sparks jetted in all directions.

The melters jumped back, many of them screaming with pain, and amidst that spray of death, those who escaped injury rushed to the doors.

A siren screeched across the yards; men came running with stretchers towards the furnace building, and, as the molten metal ceased to spatter, those who had been burned were carried out on the stretchers towards the hospital in the second yard from the gates.

Tony was crossing that yard, and excited men were streaming into it from all parts of the vast plant, when he looked round and saw the bearers of the stretchers.

"Gangway, there! Gangway!" shouted a voice, and he was thrust aside near the entrance to the hospital by those who had gathered round it.

The familiar sight of the stretchers, combined with the equally familiar and sickly sweet odour of chloroform which was wafted out to him from the doorway, seemed to stir in Tony's brain something that had been dormant.

"Let me through, please!" he cried, forcing his way to the steps. "I can help here!"

He entered the wide hallway just as the last of the stretchers was being conveyed into a ward. He brushed ahead of it into the ward, and to the astonishment of a white-robed orderly, who was helping to transfer the injured men from the stretchers to beds, he flung down his coat and waistcoat and made for a wash-basin in which he began to scrub his hands.

"What is it?" he asked sharply over his shoulder.

"Slag burns," the orderly replied, staring blankly at him.

"Get me a hypo of morphine!"

The orderly's eyes widened at that tone of authority.

"Dr. Miller is on his way—" he began.

"Do as I say!" rapped Tony. "And some tannic acid and a roll of bandage."

Without another word of protest the orderly began to collect the specified articles and to deposit them on a dressing-trolley.

Half an hour later, Joshua Miller, the portly official doctor to the Crocker Steel Works, bustled into the ward to gape in astonishment at bandaged men in beds, and at a perfect stranger who was bending over Joe Kosovic, the most badly burned of them all. Miller readjusted his horn-rimmed spectacles as though he could hardly believe the evidence of his own eyes.

"What's happened here?" he exclaimed.

Tony looked up. He had bound Joe's head and chest and had nearly finished binding Joe's right hand.

"Third degree burns," he said quietly, knowing instinctively that the elderly white-haired man who addressed him was a doctor. "I've put on tannic applications."

Dr. Miller went from bed to bed, examining the patients, and Tony was resuming his waistcoat by the time he sat down on Joe Kosovic's bed and felt that giant's pulse.

August 29th, 1936.

"And a very good job, too," he approved. "You know a thing or two about medicine, young fellow. What went wrong this time, Joe?"

Joe was too sleepy from the effect of morphine to reply.

"You'll be all right," said the doctor, and he rose and went to Tony. "I haven't seen you around here before!"

Tony had picked up his hat and coat, but a strange thing had happened to him. He knew his own identity, now, but he had no idea what had happened to him since his mind went blank. A feeling of weakness assailed him, and he dropped on to a chair and held his aching head with his left hand, staring up into the pleasant face of the doctor.

"Would you mind telling me where I am?" he faltered.

"What's that?" Miller was obviously astounded.

"I got into a taxi a while ago, and I don't seem to have any recollection of getting out of it."

That was still more puzzling. Miller surveyed the hollow-eyed young man with some concern.

"Are you sure you weren't hurt, too?" he asked.

"Hurt?" Tony shook his head—and wished that he hadn't. "Oh, I'm all right. I just can't seem to remember how I got here."

"You must have been working in the mill when the accident happened."

"Must I? For some reason or other I feel terribly tired. Is it always this noisy around here?"

Dr. Miller nodded.

"Twenty-four hours a day," he said.

"You're in the Crocker Steel Works, near Scranton. They never shut down."

"Scranton?" echoed Tony. "Scranton, Pennsylvania?"

Again the doctor nodded.

"Where did you think you were?" he asked.

"I thought I was in New York."

Miller went straight to a cabinet, and from bottles on its shelves mixed a draught in a tumbler.

"Here, drink this," he said. "You're either suffering from amnesia, or the hang-over of the century."

Tony swallowed the draught, after he had sniffed at it and recognised its tonic constituents. The doctor watched him indulgently.

"What I want to know," he said with a smile, "is whether you can put on surgical dressings like that when you're sober?"

"Why?" asked Tony.

"I could use someone like you around here. How long have you been practising medicine?"

Tony decided, in the circumstances, that it would be unwise to reveal his newly remembered identity.

"Well," he said slowly, "I had a smattering of it at school."

"I see," mused Miller. "Well, a little experience of the sort you'd get around this mill, and you might develop into a first-rate doctor."

"Thanks," said Tony. "I'll take the job."

"Too Many Accidents"

AS John Davis, a rejected worker from the scrap yard, Tony became assistant to Dr. Joshua Miller that same day, and by the time Joe Kosovic was fit enough to resume his duties had become quite friendly with the melter boss.

Miller, meanwhile, had increased his admiration for the skill the young man displayed in dealing with accidents that were all too frequent. He asked no questions about his protégé's past, but was content that loss of memory and an

act of Providence should have provided him with a helper upon whom he could rely in almost any sort of emergency.

Tony, an entirely different being from the unkempt wanderer who had sought employment in the Crocker Steel Works a fortnight before, took up his abode in a boarding-house about a mile away from the mill. He found the work congenial enough, and, still bitter about the way Carol Andrews had treated him, was content—at all events for the time being—to throw in his lot with the steel workers.

Joe Kosovic was still wearing a patch of cotton-wool over the right side of his forehead when he invaded the superintendent's office one morning in his working clothes.

"Hallo, Meester Koenig!" he said brightly.

"Hallo, Joe!" Koenig looked him up and down. "Ready to go back on the job again, eh?"

"You betcha!" boomed the giant. "By gollies, I happy lak anyting to go back to work."

"I've got bad news for you."

"Bad news? What's der matter, Meester Koenig?"

"There's been one accident too many on your shift," was the reply.

"But I tell you all about what go wrong when you come to me in der hospital."

"That didn't put things right, Joe! No, I thought you were a steel man, but I guess I was wrong."

Joe became thoroughly upset.

"But, Meester—Meester Koenig!" he gulped. "I—I—"

"No use!" The superintendent waved a hand. "I've got to send you back to the pick and shovel gang."

"Meester!" cried Joe in a horrified voice.

"I'm sorry."

That evening, in the dusk, Tony walked out from the gates of the steel works only a few minutes after Joe, and in the roadway caught up with him.

"Well, Joe," he said, "and how did the first day back on the job go?"

"Ach!" growled the giant disgustedly.

"Why, what's the matter?"

"It just make me sick, doctor! Joe Kosovic, best steel man any place, have to push wheelbarrow same like old woman!"

Tony fell into step with him. The boarding-house for which he himself was bound was situated some little way beyond the frame house in which the melter lived.

"It's tough, Joe," he said sympathetically, "but you ought to take it easy for a while, you know."

"Me?" Joe smote his massive chest with his fist. "Any time Joe Kosovic have to take it easy, I dink dey carry him out feet first!"

He talked of the accidents that had led to his degradation.

"I tell you," he said, "nine year I work open hearth and dree four accidents. Now plenty of trouble all der time. By golly, I no understand!"

Joe's house was reached—one of a long row of houses, all very much alike, with unfenced gardens back and front—and a girl came running out to them, bareheaded, dressed in a gaily patterned frock.

"Dad," she exclaimed, "what's wrong?"

"Plenty!" complained Joe. "Today I go back work in yard like a greener, pushing a wheelbarrow! Too many accidents!"

"But that's not fair!" she cried. "You weren't to blame!"

"Sure no fair," he agreed heavily. "Someding funny go on by mill, I tell you!"

"Don't worry about it, dad," she urged, reaching up to put her hands on his shoulders. "The old mill isn't worth it. Besides, you need a rest."

"That's right," confirmed Tony. She turned to look at the stranger, and she liked his smile.

"Oh, Gerta," said Joe, "I want you should meet Doc Davis! Very good friend of mine."

Tony and the girl shook hands. She stood no higher than his chin, but he judged her to be about twenty, and a young woman with a mind of her own. "She American," Joe informed him proudly, "born in dis country. Speak very good English—just like her father."

He gurgled at that little joke and sniffed at the open doorway.

"Chicken paprika for supper, eh?" he boomed. "What you say, doe? You come inside with us and have a good meal, not like in boarding-house."

"Thanks very much," murmured Tony, "but I'm afraid I—I'd better be getting along."

"The doctor's afraid of my cooking, dad," laughed Gerta.

"Well," surrendered Tony, "after that I have no option."

He went with them into the house, and he thoroughly enjoyed the meal he shared with them. Joe was a widower, but his daughter was an excellent housewife. In the light of a shaded lamp he glanced across the table at her several times, and he found himself comparing her with Carol Andrews. She was quite as beautiful as that luxury-loving girl, but in an altogether different fashion. She was fairer, slighter, and her eyes were blue.

She became conscious of his gaze, and she smiled at him.

"It was very nice of you," she said, "to take such good care of dad in hospital."

"I'm depending on you to finish the job," he returned. "And make him stop worrying, too!"

Joe, who had been frowning over his plate, suddenly exclaimed

"By gollies, I got it! Somebody by mill feex it so dat furnace break."

"Not another word about the mill to-night!" commanded Gerta. "You eat your dinner!"

"All der time she boss me just like dat," Joe confided to his guest with a chuckle. "Just like she boss der little children she teach in der mill-town school. What you t'ink of my Gerta, eh? Ever seen a more pretty girl?"

"Oh, dad!" cried Gerta, covered with blushes.

"If I have," said Tony emphatically, "I don't remember where."

He became a fairly frequent visitor to the house after that evening, just at first on Joe's invitation, but afterwards entirely of his own accord.

Meanwhile, more accidents occurred at the mills, and the workers became restive. Tony, sauntering across the scrapyard one morning, came upon Joe pushing his wheelbarrow, and Joe stopped to speak, but the foreman pounced on him.

"What's the matter?" he rasped. "Don't you like the work?"

"Sure," replied Joe meekly.

"Well, go ahead!"

The foreman had no word for Tony, but Brant followed him from the yard at a distance. Outside a blast furnace he saw a man mounting a ladder to a covered platform to feed pig-iron and scrap into a huge bucket-like convertor, and he was watching him when a rung at the top of the ladder appeared to give way, and the workman, grabbing frantically at thin air, pitched headlong to the ground.

Tony was one of the first to reach

the fallen man, and he was kneeling beside him when a siren shrieked and stretcher-bearers came hastening to the spot. No bones were broken, but the man was suffering from concussion. He was conveyed to the hospital, and there Tony dealt with him, wondering how on earth a rung of a steel ladder could have snapped under a comparatively light weight.

During the lunch hour that day he came upon a crowd of workers in the yard between the rolling mills and the blast furnaces, listening to a thin-faced man who was addressing them from the top of a truck.

More than half of the men who toiled in the heat of the mills were Slavs, and Tony could not understand a word the speaker uttered, though his vehemence was manifest enough.

He heard the voice of Brant beside him, and swung round.

"How are you, doc?" inquired the safety agent, with just a suggestion of a sneer in his deep, unpleasant voice. "How do you like the steel mills by now?"

Tony did not reply to that question. He jerked his head in the direction of the crowd, and he said:

"What's all the excitement?"

"Oh," Brant replied with a shrug, "some superstitious workman trying to start trouble!"

"What about?"

Brant shouted to one of the listening men:

"Hi, what's he talkin' about?"

The man, obviously a foreigner, walked over.

"He say workmen better quit," he explained. "Too many accidents. This mill bad luck."

"Bad luck" is all bunk!" snapped Brant, and waved the man away.

"Their own dumb carelessness!"

"In every case?" challenged Tony.

"Why, sure. I'm safety and personnel agent—I investigate all these

accidents. But you can't talk to these lunk-heads, they don't savvy English." "Poor devils," quoth Tony, and looked across at the speaker on the truck, who seemed to be eloquent enough in his own language and to be holding the attention of those who understood him. "Why can't the mill make stricter safety rules?"

That question seemed to irritate Brant.

"Say, now, just what would you suggest?" he drawled, projecting his under-lip.

"I don't know," said Tony. "You might begin by investigating all the workmen."

"Well, now, that ain't such a bad idea!" Brant grinned mockingly. "I think myself we ought to investigate every greener that never saw the inside of a steel mill before. Find out just where they came from, eh?"

He walked off with a toss of his head, and Tony looked rather blankly after him.

The Runaway

ON a very sunny Sunday, about a fortnight afterwards, Tony and

Gerta left the smoke and dinginess of the mill-town behind them and climbed into the hills, Tony carrying a luncheon-basket which Gerta had packed. The country round about Scranton is of great natural beauty, and under the trees by a mountain stream where they picnicked even the belching chimney-stacks in the valley far below looked picturesque.

It was a memorable day for both of them. They fed on cold chicken and ham, and they broke the wish-bone with becoming solemnity.

"I've got it!" said Gerta.

Tony sprawled on the turf with his hands beneath his head.

"What did you wish for?" he inquired. "A Paris gown, or a handsome millionaire with a yacht?"



"What is it?" Tony asked sharply over his shoulder. "Slag burns," the orderly replied, staring blankly at him.

She looked across the landscape and then down at him.

"I wished," said she, "that every day could be a Sunday."

"That's funny," he laughed. "So did I!"

"But you weren't entitled to a wish," she reminded him.

"I wished just that, all the same."

Late in the afternoon they repacked the basket, but they lingered in the delectable spot they had chosen till the sun sank towards the mountains in the west and a red glow was over everything.

"Did you ever see such a beautiful sunset?" breathed Gerta, her back against a gnarled trunk, her face all lit up.

"No," said Tony. "It's made to order, just to top off this picnic. On a day like this even the Crocker Mills look less like an inferno than usual."

"They're always beautiful and thrilling," she declared.

"Spoken like a true daughter of the mills!"

"Yes," she sighed, "but since all this trouble began, and they've been so unfair to dad, there are days when I hate it all. Sometimes I'd like to get ever so far away from this town."

"There are times," said Tony, with a sigh to match hers, "when you feel that way about other places, too."

She studied his thoughtful face for a while.

"Was she very beautiful?" she asked suddenly.

"Who?"

Tony looked up at her, surprised at the accuracy with which she had read what was in his mind.

"The girl who made you feel that way about other places," she replied.

"I don't know," he said. "It's hard to remember."

"I'm sorry. I shouldn't have asked that."

"Oh, that's all right!" He summoned a smile. "I meant it's hard to remember whether any other woman is beautiful—when I'm with you."

"You don't have to say that just because you like my cooking," she said, leaning over him and wagging a finger in his face.

"You're lovely, Gerta!" He removed his hands from under his head to fling them round her neck, and he pulled her face down to his and kissed her on the lips. "It's been a wonderful day," he said. "I'll never forget it!"

"Neither will I!" she assured him happily.

Darkness was gathering in the valley when they reached it and came to the first of the houses of the mill-town. They turned a corner, and Gerta pounced on a small boy who was about to pass them. He was no more than nine or ten years old, and he was carrying a bundle.

"Why, Danny," she cried, catching hold of him, "where do you think you're going at this hour, and all alone?"

"You let me go!" stormed the youngster, trying to break away from her. "I'm in a hurry!"

"Wait a minute, Danny," she insisted. "Where are you going?"

"I'm gonna go away," shrilled the hoy, "and nobody's gonna stop me! You let go o' my arm!"

Tony intervened. Danny had begun to kick, and that was not to be tolerated.

"Here, that's enough of that, young man!" he reprimanded sternly, and he held the struggling child in a grip that could not be resisted. "Who is this tough customer?"

"He's one of my first-graders," Gerta stated. "You were going to run away August 29th, 1936."

again, weren't you, Danny? What'll your father say?"

"I don't care what he says!" retorted the boy. "He wouldn't take me to the picture show, and I ain't coming back ever!"

"Oh, yes, you are!" said Gerta firmly. "You're going home right now!"

"Why, you were headed for Canada, young man," said Tony. "It's cold up there—and you'd be pretty darned hungry this time to-morrow night."

"Oh, I get plenty o' stuff to eat!" piped Danny, and he produced a stick of liquorice from a pocket and began to bite at it.

Tony laughed, and so did Gerta.

"Well, it's home for you, young fellow," said Tony masterfully, "liquorice and all." He turned to Gerta. "Where does he live?"

"Near Slovak Hall," she replied. "It's quite a way from here."

"Want me to carry you?" asked Tony.

"What d'you think I am?" cried Danny indignantly. "A baby?"

"All right, then," laughed Tony, "let me see you walk. Come on—march!"

Yielding to superior force, the boy began to mark time on the pavement like a soldier, then strutted forward between his captors. But Tony was carrying him in his arms, and Gerta was carrying the basket long before they came to a wooden house with a porch and a meagre little front garden a mile and a half away from the spot where the runaway had been encountered.

"This is the house," said Gerta.

Danny was fast asleep, but Gerta's knock on the door of the house roused him. To Tony's surprise, the man who opened the door was Brant, and Brant scowled at him as he descended the steps from the porch.

"I told that kid of mine not to go to a movie to-night," he snapped.

"You had a nerve to take him!"

"He hasn't been to any movies," said Tony. "We picked him up on the far side of the town, headed for the great open spaces."

Brant viewed his yawning offspring and the bundle Tony also held.

"He wasn't running away again?" he said questioningly to Gerta.

"No," Tony replied for her. "Just lost his way, I guess." He deposited Danny on the porch. "There you are," he said. "A good night's sleep will make a new man out of you, Danny."

Danny grinned and held out a hand for the bundle.

"It's lucky Miss Kosovie knew where he lived," said Tony. "Well, good-night, Brant!"

Brant looked thoroughly ashamed of his outburst.

"I'm sure I'm much obliged to you both," he said, and sat down on the steps and lifted his small son on to his knees. "Good-night—and thanks again."

Tony went off with Gerta, and the safety agent ruffled the small boy's hair in quite an affectionate manner.

"Listen, Danny," he said, "you mustn't do this sort of thing, you know. We'll go to the movies to-morrow night. You and I have got to stick together, eh? We haven't got any mother to look after us, have we?"

"No," said Danny, "if we had I bet she'd take me to the movies. What did she go and die for?"

"Never mind about that," said Brant. "I'll take you to the movies to-morrow night."

Danny Plays a Game

NEXT morning, in the office of the superintendent of the Crocker Steel Works, there was a meeting of the

directors which Brant attended. An insurance company had given notice that it would not settle any more claims in respect of accidents which had become far too numerous to be genuine.

"If the company persists in this attitude," lamented the superintendent, "it'll close the mill. We can't operate under common law—we should lose every case—and without the protection of State compensation limits one or two lawsuits would finish us."

"Yeah, that's right," agreed Brant. "Provided there isn't a general walk-out first," growled one of the directors. "The men are getting panicky."

"We've never had a run of accidents like this in the history of the mill," complained another director.

"I'm beginning to wonder if they are accidents," said the superintendent. "They look more as though they've been deliberately planned—the work of someone trying to gum things up around here!"

"You mean someone among our own workmen?" asked Ebenezer Crocker, the white-haired president of the firm.

"It would have to be."

"Oh, bunk!" exploded Brant. "This mill means bread and butter to the men. Who'd want to wreck it?"

"Well," said Koenig, "someone taking orders from the Irvington Steel outfit, for instance. They've been trying to buy these works for a year, but we've declined all their offers."

Ebenezer Crocker looked horrified at the inference the members of the board were left to draw from that statement.

"You don't suppose they'd go so far as to—" he began.

"Irvington Steel," interrupted one of the directors, "would go to any length to wreck us, or get us in a hole so that we'd have to sell out cheap!"

The superintendent nodded agreement.

"Brant," he said, "it's your job to find out who's doing it."

"All right, E. K.," responded Brant. "I'll be on my toes. But you people are letting your imagination run away with you."

"Imagination, eh?" bridled Koenig. "We had five accidents last week alone!"

Brant did not take his small son to the cinema that night. Instead, he made a pretence of working at a table in the sitting-room of his house until ten o'clock, when a tap at the window sent him to the back door. Three men were waiting outside, all of them steel workers, all foreigners, and one of them was the thin-faced agitator who had urged a crowd of employees to quit their jobs.

Brant admitted them, after satisfying himself that there was nobody else about, and he conducted them to the sitting-room, and provided them with chairs and drinks. He produced a wad of notes which he shared among them.

"How's that for easy money, eh?" he said. "Now here's the set-up for to-morrow night—the rolling-mills. They'll be closing down for a roll change—and no slip-ups this time!" He turned to the thin-faced man. "Slevsky, you're on the night shift, it's up to you. The crane that lifts the hot billets from the racks."

Slevsky nodded.

"And listen," Brant went on, "there's a nice little bonus from Irvington for each of you just as soon as the Crocker Steel Works are out of business. They won't continue to make steel if they can't get workmen's insurance."

The door that opened into the lobby was not quite shut. It swung wide, and Danny burst into the room in his night-clothes.

"Aw, gee," he cried complainingly, "you said you couldn't take me to the pictures because you had to work, and

Out shot Tony's left in a swift uppercut to Brant's jaw, filling his mouth with blood from a bitten tongue.



you ain't working—you're just talking!"

Brant stalked angrily over to him. "I told you to stay out of here!" he barked. "Now go back to bed! Go on! Go on!"

On the following afternoon, Gerta walked out from the main entrance of the little mill-town school with a girl who taught the infants.

"Well, good-bye, Anna," she said on the pavement beyond the gate of the playground.

"You'll be at the dance to-night, won't you?" said the other.

"I guess so," Gerta replied. "Dad looks forward to these dances so. He wouldn't miss one for anything."

"He wouldn't, eh? How about that new young man of yours?"

Gerta flushed.

"Who do you mean?" she asked.

"Dr. Davis?"

"Who else?" laughed Anna. "Everyone knows you're dizzy in the head about him!"

"Anna, how can you say such a thing?"

"Ha, ha!" mocked Anna. "See you to-night, then—and mind you bring him, too!"

They parted company, and Gerta was walking along by the fence of the playground in the direction of her own home when a brick came flying over it and fell at her feet.

Immediately she went back to the gate and entered the playground. A number of boys were in it, clustered round a sort of see-saw arrangement consisting of a plank of wood on a log, beside which lay a heap of bricks and brickbats.

"Who threw that brick over the fence?" she asked sternly.

"I did," confessed Danny Brant, almost with pride.

"Don't you know you could kill someone that way?"

"We were just playing a game," said Danny.

"What kind of a game?"

"Steel mill."

"Well, you don't have to go dropping bricks on people, do you?"

"Sure you do," Danny replied.

"That's the way you play it. You see, here's the crane in the rolling mill, and these bricks are melted steel. They weigh tons and tons. Then you do something that fixes the crane wrong, and the bricks fall on somebody, and they can't get insurance. See?"

Gerta looked at the contrivance, and she looked at Danny.

"Tell me all that again," she said tensely.

"Aw, gee, you wouldn't understand," he demurred with juvenile superiority.

"You can't explain anything like that to women!"

She gripped him by the shoulder.

"Danny, where did you learn to play a game like that?" she demanded.

"Who taught you?"

A stubborn expression swept over the youngster's face, and he shook his head.

"I won't tell you!" he defied her.

She made the children restore the plank to a wood-sled, and she forbade them to play any such game again.

Then, considerably disturbed by the incident she made straight for the boarding-house where Tony lived.

Several men were lounging on its wide porch, and she asked one of them if he could tell her where she could find Dr. Davis.

"I t'ink him inside," replied the man, who was a Slav. "I go call him."

He disappeared into the house and presently returned with Tony, who was delighted as well as surprised to see her.

"Hallo, there!" he cried, and descended the steps.

"Hallo, Tony!" she returned in a worried manner. "I want to see you about something very important. I—cr—"

which was hideous. There was one comfortable armchair in the room, and he led her over to it.

"Thank you," she said. "I want to tell you about Danny Brant. I caught him playing a new game in the school ground this afternoon. He had rigged things up to represent the rolling mill, and when I scolded him for dropping bricks over the fence with it, he said that was the right way to play steel mill—you fixed it so the crane would break and drop things on people, then they couldn't get insurance."

"Danny, eh?" Tony rubbed his chin and frowned at a threadbare carpet.

"Doesn't seem possible that Brant could be involved in this!"

"I can't believe it, either," said Gerta, "but I thought you should know. I wouldn't dare tell dad—he's so bitter about his job."

"Well," decided Tony, "there isn't much we can do until we're sure."

"I hate to think of what the mill-workers will do if they find out," she said.

"They'd go crazy," he declared.

"They'd start killing right and left. There's one thing I can do, and I'll do it right away. I'll get them to take double precautions at the rolling mills, and if anything happens in the next few days we'll know that Brant is at the bottom of it all."

He patted her reassuringly on the arm and took his hat from a peg.

"I'll see you at the dance to-night," he said. "Don't worry your pretty head too much about what may be nothing after all."

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An Interrupted Dance

THE Slovak Hall was a brick building of considerable size provided by the Crocker Steel Works as a place of recreation for their employees, and from September to May a dance was held there every Tuesday night.

The main room was gay with paper chains, streamers, and balloons, and

couples were already dancing on the polished floor, when Joe Kosovic arrived, dressed in a tweed suit for the occasion and suffering the discomfort of a stiff collar. He found his daughter sitting out the dance on a chair against the wall, and he bore down on her bristling with indignation.

"Gerta," he said, "dat Doc Davis, he no come, huh?"

"He said he'll be here," she replied mildly; but Joe was not satisfied with that.

"What's der matter wid dat fellow?" he growled. "I got most pretty girl any place!"

Several of the other girls, thus disparaged, showed their annoyance in their glances.

"Please, dad!" implored Gerta; but Joe was not easily to be silenced.

"I t'ink you like heem pretty well, eh?" he boomed.

"S-s-s-sh!" she hissed, and just then Brant came up.

"How about a dance, Gerta?" he suggested, offering his arm.

Gerta had no desire whatever to dance with a man she half suspected of being responsible for all the trouble at the steel works, but she did not want to make her aversion too apparent.

"Aw, come on!" he said.

She stood up, and she had started to waltz with him when Tony entered the hall, looked round it, and waved a greeting. She stopped short and released herself from Brant, and Tony made his way to her.

"I thought you'd come," she said gladly.

"I've just got back from the hospital," said Tony, his eyes on Brant. "There's been another accident."

The waltz, at that moment, came to an end. The dancers heard the dread word "accident," and gathered round.

"What was it?" asked Gerta.

"An electric crane broke while it was lifting a heavy load," Tony replied, still watching Brant. "It fell and caught one of the workmen. I'm not even sure we can save him."

"That's awful," said Brant. "Where did it happen?"

Tony stepped a foot or so nearer to him, and his face was set.

"Don't you know?" he challenged.

"Say, what d'you mean by that crack?" Brant blazed at him. "Nobody could be as dumb as you've been around this town, and if you don't watch your step you're gonna get in plenty of trouble!"

"You mean something might fall on me?" suggested Tony.

"Why, you—" Brant clenched his fists as though to strike, but Gerta slipped hastily between the two men.

"You keep outa this!" Brant shouted at her, and she was thrust aside with such violence that she stumbled against a bystander who prevented her from falling. Out shot Tony's left in a swift upper-cut to Brant's jaw, filling his mouth with blood from a bitten tongue, and down went the agent with a crash.

He was up again in an instant, and he rushed furiously at the man who had laid him low. Joe Kosovic pulled his daughter away; the others hurriedly made room for the fight that was inevitable.

Tony stopped Brant's rush with a straight left that sent him reeling against a table. The safety agent was not popular with the steelworkers, and in any case they would not have dreamed of stopping a scrap. They shouted encouragement to Tony, who needed none; they jeered at Brant as he rose and struck out with both fists.

In spite of his weight and strength, the crook proved no match for his lithe August 29th, 1936.

opponent. Now and again he got in a blow under Tony's guard, but he himself suffered severely. His mouth became torn against his teeth, blood streamed from his battered face, and finally, amid derisive yells from the male onlookers, he received a jolt to the point of the jaw that lifted him off his feet and sent him backwards against a wall, whence he slid to the floor.

He sat there dazed for a while; then rose in baffled rage, but kept well away from Tony.

"Now listen, you guys," he bellowed, "this is your fight, not mine. I tell you that's the fellow who's the cause of all your accidents! How long have you had trouble at the mill? Ever since he's been there!"

The last statement was more or less true, and Slavonic feeling was turned suddenly against Tony. A number of the steelworkers advanced menacingly towards him.

"Now get this, all of you!" he said, facing them. "I'm trying to help you. Somebody is behind all this trouble, and you'll find out who it is at the right time."

He turned towards the door, but a powerful Czech who was one of Brant's accomplices barred his way.

"Jus' a minute!" he roared.

"There's an injured man over at the mill hospital," said Tony. "I've got to get back there to take care of him."

"You talk wit' us first!" cried the fellow, and he grabbed hold of Tony's collar. But Joe Kosovic bounded forward, swung the Czech round, and knocked him flat on his back.

"Are you all crazy?" he cried. "Der doctor here, he's friend of mine. He friend of every man here. Any man wants to fight him got to fight me, Joe Kosovic, first!"

He started to take off his coat. "Come on!" he challenged wrathfully. "I take on ten men, all at same time!"

In all probability he could have justified that boast, for he was the biggest man in the hall and a veritable Hercules for strength. But he was not given the opportunity.

"No, no!" cried the steelworkers; and Joe's rage melted away in a grin. Back went his coat, and the grin was bestowed upon Tony.

"All right, doc," he said, "I t'ink you can go back to hospital now, eh?"

"Thanks, Joe!" Tony murmured gratefully, and he walked out from the hall. But Gerta flew after him, stopped him on the steps.

"I'm afraid to let you go," she faltered.

"Don't worry about me," he said reassuringly. "The District Attorney should be on his way here by now."

She went back into the hall to find her father in full control.

"Play music!" he was shouting from the middle of the polished floor. "Come on, everybody, dance! Dance while you are young!"

The band struck up a lively fox-trot, and the floor became crowded with dancing couples. Brant sneaked out at a side door and hurried off to his house. He climbed the stairs to Danny's bedroom after he had washed his face, and he wakened the youngster, who sat up blinking.

"Listen, Danny," he said anxiously, "listen to me. Did you talk to anyone about what you heard last night?"

"Huh?" Danny rubbed his eyes with his knuckles and stared at his father.

"When you heard us talking about the mill—did you tell anyone about it?"

"No, pop, I didn't. Honest!"

"Are you sure?"

Danny nodded emphatically.

"Yes, sure, pop. My teacher wanted to know, but I wouldn't tell her."

Brant gulped.

"You mean Gerta?" he demanded sharply.

"Uhuh."

For several long minutes Brant sat on the edge of the bed, his lips compressed, his brain active. Then slowly he rose and looked down at the boy.

"Listen to me, Danny," he said. "I'm going out for a while. When I come back we're leaving here. You get up and dress yourself and wait for me. You understand?"

"Where you goin' pop?" asked the boy. "Can I go with you?"

"No," snapped Brant. "You stay here and keep quiet. You'll probably land us all in gaol yet!"

He strode out from the room, and Danny heard his heavy footsteps on the stairs and he heard the front door slam. He slid out of bed, ran to a window and raised the sash. His father was almost running up the road.

"Wait for me, pop!" he shouted, with his head out of the window. "Wait for me! I don't want to go to gaol!"

"I'm Halliday!"

SLEVSKY lived in a little one-story wooden shack half a mile nearer the steel works than the boarding-house where Tony resided. He was having his supper when Brant rapped at the front door, and he went to it with his mouth full.

"Come in," he said, viewing his visitor in manifest surprise, and led the way into an untidy room and rescated himself at a table upon which a sheet of newspaper served as a cloth. "Have some coffee?"

Brant shook his head and sat down in a chair.

"Slevsky," he said, "I've come to tell you that the last job's got to be done to-night. They're closing in on us!"

Slevsky drank from a cup, eyeing the agitated safety agent over the rim of it. "Der south furnace, eh?" he suggested.

"Yeah," said Brant, "and there mustn't be any slip-up. You'll find the acetylene cylinder leaning against the fence in the backyard where we burned up that scrap. Watch your chance, and slip it in one of those charging cars that's on its way to the furnace."

Slevsky muttered something in his own language which Brant did not understand.

"In five minutes the Crocker Steel Works will be scattered all over Pennsylvania—and we can clear out. Right?"

Slevsky shook his head and put down the cup.

"Not me!" he growled.

"Say, what d'you mean?" exclaimed Brant. "You promised to do one more job!"

"Not to blow up der whole of der furnace building and everyone in it!" Brant jumped up from the chair.

"You don't get your split, and I don't get mine," he said, banging his fist on the table, "until the job's finished!"

"Up to now," retorted Slevsky, "we take all of der risk and you get most of der money. You finish der dirty work!"

"Say, what are you trying to do?" howled Brant. "Walk out on me, you dirty ape?"

Slevsky sat bolt upright, and his hand went to a belt where he kept a knife. Brant had made a mistake in calling the Slav names, and he knew it. He went out from the room and out from the shack without another word, and he made his way swiftly towards the steel

(Continued on page 26)

Guardian of the Golden Gate, San Francisco stands to-day as a queen of seaports, but perhaps she dreams of the city she was—splendid, sensuous, vulgar and magnificent. This thrilling drama of the Barbary Coast starts on December 31st, 1905, and ends on April 18th, 1906, the day when San Francisco perished by earthquake and fire. Starring Clark Gable, Jeanette MacDonald and Spencer Tracy



A City of Corruption

IT was December 31st, 1905, and San Francisco had gone mad. The streets were thronged with people shouting, singing, and rejoicing. Many of the big wine merchants were handing out their cheapest brands of wine in bucketfuls to the clamouring mob; fat restaurant proprietors flung wide their doors; saloon-keepers invited all and sundry to drink at their expense; the tramcars proclaimed that those who chose could ride free of charge; and like mad people the crowd sobbed, laughed and sang for very joy.

Striding along a crowded street came a tall, weather-tanned, handsome man. He wore dress clothes, an opera hat was on the side of his head, and a black silk cloak, lined with white, was over his shoulders. He rested on his ebony stick, near the big square, to stare round with a hard, mocking yet amused gaze. To him they were just puppets in the game of life.

Blackie Norton had been born and bred on the Barbary Coast, and by sheer strength of will, determination, and hard work had made himself a power. At the age of thirty he owned the Paradise Club, the biggest gambling joint and place of amusement in San Francisco. He believed in himself but not in God.

Though Blackie traded on the corrupt vices of the people his gambling tables were straight, his drink was not doped fire water, and every man and woman in his service worshipped and feared him. In these crowded streets people

were continually shouting his name and shaking his hand. In the city itself, away from that section known as the Barbary Coast, he was known by all and sundry.

"Fire! Fire!" came the shout as the clanging of bells was heard.

Blackie's face hardened when a somewhat ancient fire-engine dashed past and one of the men yelled that the fire was down on the Barbary Coast. He clambered on the next horse-drawn fire-truck that had to pull up because of the crowd, and was conveyed to the scene.

It was not his place, but his eyes gazed anxiously upwards at two white figures that screamed frantically from a second-story window. He went up to the officer in charge of one engine and shouted that the only way to save them was the sheet. The wooden building was ablaze and there was no escape through those leaping tongues of flame.

Someone shouted that it was the two children of the proprietor of this cheap lodging-house that were trapped.

The firemen got out their sheet and took up a position beneath the window. "Jump!" yelled the crowd.

The two children hesitated. A red light appeared behind them, and the crowd knew the flames had burst through the floor. The girl jumped first and was safely caught, and that inspired her young brother to take the leap.

Blackie grinned when he heard that both were safe and that there was no one else trapped in the blaze. He

pushed his way through the crowd to go to his own palace of fun. He almost knocked down a young woman who was carrying a heavy Gladstone bag and walking along with head bowed. He mumbled his apologies and went on his way.

That triumphant, mocking grin came to that handsome face when the lights of the Paradise showed up. By the noise the place must be crowded. The people of San Francisco regarded the Paradise as the grandest of the many places of amusement. It catered for all classes.

Blackie entered his vast saloon and saw that everyone was gay; he entered the gambling-rooms and found them crowded with well-dressed men and women, and was on his way to his own private box, that overlooked the stage at the north end of the main saloon, when a round-faced, almond-eyed man slid quietly to his side.

"The world and his wife are here to-night, Blackie."

"You've said it, Babe." Blackie gave his manager an approving slap on the back. "Good work."

"I hear there has been a fire on the Coast."

"Yeah, one of those rickety wooden joints," answered his boss. "Those places are a disgrace. Two kids daru near got trapped."

"Blackie, a young woman looked in. Says she can sing and dance—mostly sing," smiled Babe. "Mary Blake's a swell-looker. Got style about her. Care to look her over?"

"Sure, send her along."

Blackie Norton went to his box and watched some of the acts. His girls were the best-lookers in the city, and could they dance? He chuckled as someone threw an egg at Mat, his comedy dancer. Mat was a fine fellow,

but a rotten comedian, and it was only that peculiar generous streak in Blackie's nature that stopped him from firing the Irishman. A sound made him turn, and he saw the girl.

Blackie didn't know it, but it was the girl with the Gladstone bag that he had nearly knocked down in the crowd. "You sing?"

Great frightened eyes stared from a pretty face at him. Speechless the girl nodded. The biggest orchestra of its kind in the city began to play a popular waltz.

"Sing that?" Blackie snapped out.

The girl gave a gasp, smiled nervously, moistened her lips, and made a wheezing, half-formed note. She swallowed and began again. Blackie looked up. The girl had a richness to her tone that was pleasing, though she had a way of faltering that was irritating.

After a while he gestured for the girl to stop singing, and with anxious eyes she watched him as he got up to tower over her, for Blackie Norton was a big man. He reached out and pinched her arm, and she recoiled.

"Um. A bit skinny," he muttered. "Take off that hat." She obeyed, and he nodded. "Yeah, hair's all right. Very well, you can sign on at seventy-five a week."

"You're engaging me?"

"Sure!" grinned Blackie, and then his eyes opened wide, for the girl had slithered to the floor in a dead faint.

Blackie was not a doctor, but he knew when a person was starving. He carried Mary to his grand rooms over the Paradise, and soon Mary was enjoying the first square meal in weeks. He learnt that she had been lodging in the house that had caught fire. Except for the clothes she wore, and the contents of the hand-bag, she had lost everything.

"Why did you come to 'Frisco?"

"My father was a clergyman and he died some years ago," Mary answered simply, and wondered why Blackie's lips twitched. "I could not succeed with my singing in New York, so mother helped me with the fare to this city."

Daughter of a parson, mother in New York. He did not believe it for a moment. He asked her the price of the fare, and was surprised to get a correct answer. Blackie frowned because this clear-skinned girl seemed somehow different. The expression in her eyes puzzled him, and when he heard her lock the door of the study that he had placed at her disposal he knew it had been fear. A shrug of his shoulders and the proprietor of the Paradise dismissed her from his thoughts.

Next morning, if one had looked into the gymnasium that Blackie had built for rehearsals and for his staff to keep physically fit, there could have been witnessed a gruelling fight. Blackie Norton, dancing round and trying to slam a wiry, sandy-haired man with muscles that stood out like whipcord.

"Blackie, this is the first scrap you've had with me in weeks," the sandy-haired boxer said with a broad grin. "And you don't seem so good to me. Suppose you drank too much last night, seeing in the New Year."

"One of these days I'm going to give you such a poke in the eye!" wheezed Blackie, and rained blows on the other.

But the sandy-haired fellow was a boxer, and he side-stepped all these fierce blows.

"You're out of condition, my lad. Stale. You're puffing like a walrus."

August 29th, 1936.

"You're all in yourself," panted Blackie. "You couldn't knock me flat if you tried."

The sandy-haired fellow became a whirlwind. Bonk! Slam! Wallop! Blackie Norton found himself reclining on the canvas nursing an aching jaw. He looked up at the victor and grinned.

"For twenty years I've been allowing you to slam me around. I can't think why I do it."

"And I can never understand why I should get so much pleasure in knocking you down, though maybe I'd prefer to knock a little sense into you. Well, I've got my service, so I'll be changing."

Blackie Norton, garbed in a silk dressing-gown, was climbing out of the ring when the door of the gymnasium opened and four of the most important members of the Barbary Coast appeared.

"Hallo, boys, you're up early. Happy New Year!"

"Blackie, it would be a happy New Year if we thought there were going to be no more shows like last night. You heard that Dutch Herman's place was burnt out, and the houses on either side are almost destroyed. You heard about it?" The speaker was a big, clean-shaven man.

"I saw it—two kids had to jump for their lives," answered Norton. "Seems to have got under your hide, Kelly."

"It's got under mine and the rest of us!" shouted Kelly. "All those places are dry and rotten. They're death-traps in a fire and the sanitary arrangements are a disgrace—they should be pulled down. Did you take a look at the fire-engine, Blackie?"

"Looked like a hearse to me."

"That's all it's fit for!" shouted an elderly man. "They're old, out of date, and inefficient. One of them lost a wheel and another had a hose full of holes. The fire-escapes were too short, and by the mercy of Providence there was no loss of life. But there has been, Blackie, and we want someone to fight our case. Have these old houses rebuilt and get some new fire-engines. Blackie, we want you to stand for supervisor for the Barbary Coast."

It was a very great honour that these people had offered to Blackie Norton, but that young man was not going to let them see he was elated at the prospect. He discussed the matter in a half-hearted, casual manner.

A clergyman appeared. It was the sandy-haired boxer. Father Jim Mullin at once joined in the conversation.

"Blackie, you're an evil-doer in my eyes, but I reckon they might do worse and get you as supervisor. You couldn't be worse at it than you are with your boxing."

"Gentlemen, after the praise from Father Mullin and his entreaties to stand for this position, I feel I should think it over. Gentlemen"—Blackie pushed open the door—"let us adjourn this discussion to the saloon."

The deputation grinned their approval. They knew that Blackie would stand for supervisor, and that with luck they would celebrate the nomination with champagne.

Jack Burley

LATER that day, Norton chanced to come into the Paradise and hear someone singing. Ah, that would be his new girl. He listened, and decided that it was pretty good.

The old music-master known as the "Professor," who now had charge of the Paradise band, beamed at Blackie

Norton and said excitedly that Miss Blake had a lovely voice.

"Sounds all right to me, but I don't want any of those mournful dirges," the owner said in his crisp, harsh manner. "I want something with some go in it. I've got a swell wardrobe, and when you're through with that practice come and see me."

"Yes, Mr. Norton," Mary whispered. "What sort of a dress do you want me to wear, because—"

Blackie chuckled. "Don't fret yourself. It's so long it don't even show your ankles."

That night Mary Blake, wearing a delightful dress of the Victorian period and a high-brimmed bonnet, sang for the first time to a 'Frisco audience. And she was terribly nervous, but the encouraging nods of the Professor helped her, and after a while she managed to smile. The Professor got a signal from Blackie—the song wasn't lively enough. Mary then began to sing "San Francisco," and Blackie's eyes lit up. It was one of the very latest musical productions, and he had thought the music and scales too hard for any of his singers. It sounded grand from Mary Blake. The Paradise roared its approval.

"Babe," Blackie told his manager. "Go and give that girl a two-year contract—she's worth it."

A week after Blackie's nomination the Paradise received two visitors. The bullet-jawed, hard-eyed man with the shrewd, twinkling eyes was Jack Burley. The little man with him with the immense forehead, bald head and hooked nose was a famous composer. The time was ten at night, and Mary Blake was due to make her appearance in a few minutes.

Blackie gave Burley a sharp glance as the two men were shown into his box.

"Hallo, Burley, don't often see you this way."

"Just dropped in." Burley spoke in short, crisp tones. "Norton, I'd like you to meet Signor Baldini."

The men all shook hands, and Norton asked for the waiter to bring them a bottle of the best champagne. He knew there were reasons for this visit by Burley, and had a strong idea that if he had to guess he would not be far wrong. But he gave no hint that this visit was other than a friendly call.

"I hear you're standing as supervisor," Burley muttered after a while.

Norton grinned—one guess had been right.

"Sure—sure."

"Like to take some advice?"

"Sure—sure."

"I shouldn't, if I were you," Burley's jaw was more protruding than usual, though he was smiling and his eyes twinkling. "That's the advice of a friend."

"Burley, there are many things that want straightening up down on the Coast," answered Blackie. "House property is the chief one. Tumble-down places all jammed together in filthy, narrow, gas-lit streets. We had a fire the other night and it's a miracle a whole street wasn't wiped out. And talking of fires brings me to a second point. The fire system in this grand city is antiquated."

"You know I've got property on the Coast?"

"I know, and I reckon most of it should be pulled down." Norton stared fixedly back at Burley. "All you think about is making money down on the Coast to pour into that comic Opera House of yours on Park Avenue."

Burley turned away, then looked suddenly at Norton with narrowed eyes.

"All the more reason for warning you to lay off standing for supervisor." He relaxed in his chair. "I got influence in this city—I can pull strings."

"Have another glass of wine," drawled Norton. "And thanks for the advice." He pointed towards the stage. "Reckon you'll enjoy this next act. Mary Blake, a new singer."

The curtain went up and Mary appeared. Signor Baldini turned eagerly to the stage, and so did Burley. Another of Norton's guesses had been correct. They had heard of the new singing star of the Paradise.

Mary sang a lilting tune with a rollicking chorus. The crowds applauding vigorously and fairly bellowed the chorus. They yelled for more. Blackie Norton tried hard to hide his triumphant grin. Strange what a feeling of pride he had in hearing his patrons clapping the star that he had found. The Professor glanced round and Blackie signalled for an encore.

The satisfied smirk on Blackie's face turned to a bewildered frown. This was funny sort of music. No pep in it. All violin and piano. Then Mary began to sing. It was a language that bewildered him at first, then he sat up with a jerk—Mary was singing in French.

He was about to signal to the Professor to stop this nonsense when he noticed the rapt attention on Signor Baldini's face. Great guns, did they like this sort of stuff? He glanced at the vast assembly. Everyone seemed to be staring at the stage with his mouth open. Again Blackie raised his hand, and then hesitated. Once or twice Mary glanced nervously across at the box. The applause at the end was deafening.

"Sniperb!" babbled Signor Baldini, clapping like a madman. "Not for years have I heard such a voice. Mr. Norton, the girl has a glorious voice. Her top notes are divine."

"What an opera star!" growled Burley. "She'd be a sensation in 'Faust.'" He fished out a card from his waistcoat pocket. "Waiter!" he called out, and a servant came to the side of the box. "Give that to Miss Blake, please, and say that Signor Baldini and myself would be charmed if she could honour us with her company in this box as soon as she is free."

The waiter glanced at Blackie, who gave an indifferent nod. Actually Blackie was boiling with anger at Burley's cool effrontery.

A few minutes later there was a faint knock at the door, and Norton called out "Come in!" It was Mary Blake, and she still wore the picturesque dress that the owner of the Paradise had bought for her at a big figure. With curled lips Blackie noted the hero-worship in Mary's eyes when she was introduced to Signor Baldini. Never had she imagined that it would be her fortune to meet so famous a singer. She was effusive with Burley and told him that San Francisco must be grateful for the wonderful productions at the Tivoli.

"Blackie"—Burley turned and stared at the other man in his domineering, aggressive way—"Miss Blake is just the singer that Signor Baldini has been wanting. We are putting on a number of operas in a few weeks' time, and I want Miss Blake to be the star." He turned to the girl. "If that is agreeable to you, Miss Blake?"

"I should love to sing in Signor Baldini's operatic programme," said Mary, her eyes sparkling with joy.

Blackie Norton did not say anything very much, but sat back and listened whilst the two men and the girl started to discuss these operas and the parts she should play.



Blackie Norton was dancing round the ring, trying to hit a wiry, sandy-haired man with muscles that stood out like whipcord.

"You wish to leave the Paradise?" interposed Blackie.

Mary Blake glanced at him in alarm because there was a harshness in his voice.

"It is a chance I have wanted all my life," she answered. "I have sung in the chorus many times in New York, but never have I had the opportunity to play a part. I'm thrilled."

"And you wish to leave the Paradise?" he repeated.

"Well—er—if you don't mind," stammered Mary.

"Look here, Norton, Miss Blake has a voice that only one person in a million has, and you can't wait her to stay down in a place like—in surroundings like this."

"Why don't you say what you mean, Burley?" sneered Norton. "You want to take her away from the foul atmosphere of the Paradise to the heavenly aroma of the Tivoli. What my feelings on the matter are don't appear to count."

"You can't keep her here, Norton," rasped Burley.

"Oh, can't I?" Blackie smiled. "Well, I happen to possess a two-year contract."

"I'll buy it off you. Two, three, four thousand dollars—name your price."

Norton stood up.

"You could offer me a million and my answer would still be 'Nothing doing.'"

"I can be a good friend but a bad enemy," Burley's eyes narrowed.

"So you've hinted before." Norton glanced significantly towards the door.

"I hate to detain you gentlemen."

"I'm sorry, Miss Blake," Burley held out his hand to the girl. "I'm afraid I can do nothing. Our hands are tied."

The girl smiled pathetically, bit her lip and suddenly ran out of the door. Blackie grinned and held open the door.

"Signor Baldini, guess we'll be get-

ting back to that dinner engagement." Burley's eyes glowered at the man he had always hated. "Maybe I'll get the chance to pay you back for this one day, Blackie."

Won and Lost

MARY BLAKE was fascinated by the power and charm of Blackie Norton, and yet she feared him because a man who ran a place like the Paradise must be ruthless. Yet it was hard to explain why the artistes and the staff of the Paradise worshipped this man. Mat, who was the comedy act, was always growling and complaining, and yet one had but to say one word against Blackie to see what he thought of his master. The grandest man on the Barbary Coast. The girls who sang and danced would have given anything for the attentions he bestowed on the new girl, and Mary Blake realised that because of this she was not very popular.

From Father Mullin she learnt something of the true character of the man. She saw a lot of the priest, because Blackie, for some strange whim, had insisted that the girl sing in the choir on service days and on Sundays.

"Blackie and I were horn and bred on the Coast," Father Mullin told her. "As we grew up we became inseparable chums. There was a gang, and Blackie was the leader. He never knew the word 'fear,' and it would take too long to tell of our exploits. Time passed, and we got work on the waterfront, but I saved my money whilst Blackie spent his. I was anxious to better myself, and I managed to save enough to go to college. San Francisco was and is a corrupt city, and it was my ambition to try in my small way to help the city of which I was so proud. I took Holy Orders and came back to find Blackie running a gambling joint. Making money out of other poor fools' folly,

and yet, Miss Blake, that gambling was always on the level.

"Blackie has pampered and battered on the weaknesses of the unwise and the rich, and thinks that if he didn't make money this way, someone else would, and as his gambling, his saloon, the drinks he supplies, his entertainments are always on the level, he reckons he's doing San Francisco a good turn. Nothing unseemly in his shows, no person allowed to get drunk, and no slave wages for his people. He doesn't believe in religion, and yet he gave this mission hall its glorious organ. He would want to knock my head off if he knew I had told you. He bought and paid for this hall, but not a soul knows that but you and I. A mixture of good and evil is Blackie Norton, and if only he could be brought to the right side of the street he would make a grand man."

Burley came to the Paradise to make another bid for Mary Blake, and Norton had the girl come to his office. There he told the girl frankly that if she wanted to leave him he would tear up the contract to please her. Mary was surprised and asked if he wanted her to go to the opera, and his answer was an emphatic "No!" Mary smiled happily, and, to Burley's amazement, said she would remain at the Paradise.

Unfortunately Blackie Norton was to win and lose Mary Blake. Her story that her father had been in the Church he did not believe. He believed that all men and women were liars. He told her that if ever she wanted to go to the opera house she was free to go. He was so kind and considerate to her that she knew she was falling in love with him. One day she promised to marry him.

It was then that Blackie made his big mistake. Overjoyed at his good fortune, he ordered that everyone at the Paradise should have champagne with him. He told everyone his good fortune and proclaimed that Mary should become the Queen of the Barbary Coast. He would laden her with jewels and give her fine clothes. But Mary wanted just to be a wife, not a queen. Pomp and splendour were not for her, and, in her misery, she went to Father Mullin. He condemned the actions of Blackie, and that night Mary Blake left the Paradise to see Jack Burley. She left a simple note stating she realised they could never be happy together, and that Blackie was too much wedded to his Paradise Club. She wanted to be a wife, not a display board.

For days Blackie Norton raged, and it was inadvisable for anyone to go near him. News came to him that Burley was opening with "Faust," with Mary Blake as one of the stars. Blackie took out Mary's contract and an ugly expression appeared on his handsome face.

It amused his cynical humour to buy up a great number of seats for the opening night and to dress up a great number of his people in fine clothes. They were to go to the opera house and behave themselves unless he gave the order for them to do otherwise. He secured a box, and, attired in faultless evening attire, went there, accompanied by the Babe and a burly, untidy man who chewed popcorn.

Naturally Jack Burley was warned of the presence of his enemy, and one can imagine his concern when he heard that Norton was accompanied by a sheriff's deputy. Just after the curtain had gone up Burley came to the box and asked Norton to step outside. In his blurt way Burley asked what he was doing at the theatre and why the sheriff's man.

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"You seem to have forgotten that two-year contract, Burley," sneered Blackie. "I have a writ that entitles me to take Mary Blake off your stage whenever I think fit." He grinned. "I may do it to-night. Who knows?"

"You'd ruin her career for your own selfish ends?"

"No one walks out on Blackie Norton and gets away with it."

"I'll get an injunction from Davis."

Norton smiled.

"Davis is away on a fishing trip. I lent him my own yacht for a few days. Burley, I've got this fixed, and you can't do a thing. Maybe I'll sit through the first act."

Blackie Norton went back to his box and winked at the Babe.

"You should have seen Burley's face," he chuckled. "I thought I would never stop laughing."

But Norton stopped his chatter when Mary came on the stage. Never had he seen her look so beautiful. She sang and her voice enthralled him. He tried to break the spell of her singing to look at the audience. They were spell-bound by the liquid notes that flowed so freely from this lovely girl. Even the hard-boiled folk of the Barbary Coast seemed under the spell of her singing.

"Sings kinda pretty, don't she?" whispered Babe. "Seems kinda shameful to spoil her act."

Norton scowled at his henchman and moved uncomfortably.

"Shall I go and serve the writ?" muttered the sheriff's man. "High time that dumb dame was stopped doing that squawking act."

"I'll tell you when," snapped Norton.

All the while Jack Burley sat in his box sweating with fear that any minute Norton would act and stop the greatest success the Tivoli had ever known.

In the last act Babe nudged his boss and gave a significant gesture. The sheriff's man had slipped out of the box. He was tired of waiting and he was going to serve that writ. Norton got round to the back as the man was trying to get past two scene-shifters on to the stage. Norton settled the matter in the way he knew best. He clouted the sheriff's deputy under the jaw with a punch that knocked the big man out for half an hour. There and then Blackie tore up the writ.

They met in her dressing-room, and Blackie's heart beat fast at the glad expression on Mary's face.

"I felt I had to try and make good, Blackie. You do forgive me?"

"Say, who am I to hold out against these three thousand mugs who went goofy over you? Say, I never caught this opera racket up till now. It was a fine show. Do you know I was proud of you to-night, Mary?"

When Father Mullin came round to congratulate the girl on her success he had to do a double act.

"You've got the best of everything, Blackie." Mullin gave the friend of his youth a hearty handshake. "May you both be very happy."

But Jack Burley did not offer his congratulations when he came to the dressing-room. His face was a thundercloud at the news. In his domineering way he had decided that Mary Blake was not only going to be the star of the opera, but his bride. He made a number of sneering remarks about dragging Mary into the gutter, but ceased when Blackie squared up to him with clenched fists. It was Mary who stepped between the two angry men.

She loved Blackie Norton, and it was her rightful place to be by his side. She thanked Burley for his kindness to her, and said that after they were mar-

ried she would persuade her husband to let her sing again at the opera house.

But Blackie Norton had not learnt his lesson, and he was too sure of himself. He should have married Mary the very next day, but he told her it must be postponed till after his election as supervisor. In the meantime he would bill her as "The Colorado Nightingale" and draw all San Francisco to the Paradise to hear her sing.

On the opening night Blackie was in his office and helping a rather pale Mary don a long black cloak, when Father Mullin was shown in.

"What's wrong?" Blackie knew that scowling expression on the priest's face was not friendly.

"Are you out of your mind?" demanded Mullin. He pulled open Mary's cloak. "Fancy showing Mary to that mob outside in that sort of garb. Your wife to be and wearing tights." "I'm making her the Queen of the Coast."

"You're not going to exploit this girl," cried the priest.

"I love him, Father," Mary cried.

"It isn't love to let him drag you down to his level," was the angry retort. He turned on Blackie. "You can't take a woman in marriage and then sell her to your public."

Blackie Norton, for the first time in years, did a thing that as soon as it was done he regretted bitterly. He struck Mullin in the mouth with his clenched fist.

The priest sagged back against the door and blood streamed slowly from a cut lip, but his eyes never wavered from Blackie's face.

"She's not going out there."

"Get out there!" Blackie swung round on Mary. She faced him fearlessly. "Do you hear me?"

"You brute! You inhuman beast!" she cried, a trifle hysterically.

That maddened Blackie so much that his face went a mottled red. "You leave with him and you're never coming back!"

Father Mullin opened the door. Mary Blake went with him. Blackie Norton was alone.

A minute later there was a pounding on the door and Mat burst into the room.

"Hey, Blackie! Hey, Blackie!" he shouted. "It's Burley—he's giving the joint the works."

Jack Burley had availed himself of the Johnston anti-gambling law, which the grafters of San Francisco had so far discreetly winked at, in order to be revenged on Blackie Norton.

With a twisted smile Blackie Norton watched the police smash up his gambling tables. He laughed. What did anything matter now?

The Chicken Ball

MARY BLAKE looked upon Jack Burley with awe and respect. Any man who spent most of his money on promoting opera must be a good man. To her simple, generous soul it never occurred to her that the money had been obtained from prohibitive rents on the Barbary Coast and various other forms of graft.

It was Mrs. Burley who persuaded Mary to make her home with them and to marry her son. She admitted that she had lived all her life in San Francisco and that she started her business career as a washerwoman. She had married Burley, a good solid man, and they had one son.

"They call this the wickedest city in the world," said old Mrs. Burley. "And it's a bitter shame, for deep down underneath all our evil and sin we've got

right here in San Francisco the finest set of humans that was ever rounded up in one spot. They had to have wild adventure in their hearts to set out for here in the first place, and that's why they're so full of untamed devilry now. But we can't go on like this. Sinful and blasphemous. That's why I want my boy to marry a good woman like yourself, Mary Blake."

Mrs. Burley did not know that at that moment her hero of a son was engaged in planning further drastic action against Blackie Norton. Burley had Mary once more within his grasp, and he was out to smash his rival so that there was no chance of losing Mary again.

On the night before the Chicken Ball the police again raided the Paradise. This time Burley had dug up some old law against drinking, and he had all the judges of San Francisco in his pay. What matter if he did lose thousands of dollars rent from the Barbary Coast and joints such as the Paradise as long as he secured Mary Blake as his wife?

Blackie Norton knew that this would mean a five thousand dollar fine and perhaps a year in gaol. What did it matter? Then Blackie remembered the Chicken Ball. He spoke to the captain who had made the raid.

"I'd like to help you, Blackie," admitted the captain. "You know the boys and I don't like doing this, but we gotta obey orders. You had a grand chance of winning that ten thousand dollars at the Chicken Ball, and I'm going to help you. You want to rustle up bail and get your entertainers out. Okay by me, but you must be at the station by six in the morning."

But Jack Burley had thought of everything. The whole of the entertainers and the staff of the Paradise had been arrested without the option of bail. Then, on top of everything, Blackie got a message that the men who wanted him to stand as supervisor had backed out—they had been warned that their business would suffer in the same way.

Jack Burley was at the Chicken Ball, and Mary was with him. The two other guests at the table were Judge Corrigan and his wife. Burley's chin

stuck out arrogantly as he glanced round at the crowded theatre. Soon he would be the biggest man in San Francisco, and in a very few days Mary would be his wife. It was just when success was within his grasp that two things intervened to bring his castle tumbling to the ground like a pack of cards. The first was a woman, and the second an earthquake.

Della Bailey was one of the hostesses of the Paradise. She had been a singer and a dancer, but she was not so young, and, out of the kindness of his heart, Blackie Norton had pensioned her off. Only occasionally did she go to the Paradise, and then mostly as a guest. She was at the Chicken Ball, and seeing Mary sitting there in all her finery made the older woman's eyes blaze. She picked up a chair and sat down at the Burley table.

"Hallo, Della!" Mary smiled a little uneasily. "I'm glad to see you again." "You won't be for long." Della spoke clearly and plainly. "I just dropped over to tell you what I think of you. I haven't seen you since you walked out on the best man in San Francisco to marry the town's Number One rodent."

"I think you'd better go, Della," snarled Burley.

"Oh, no, I've got a few things to say first! Now, in case you folks don't know, I'll tell you that this snake here has just had a padlock put on the Paradise and thrown all of Blackie Norton's performers in quod. That's what Blackie got for picking this phoney up out of the gutter and giving her a chance." Her blazing eyes turned on Burley. "Sit still and hear me out, you rat! Don't think I want to breathe the air near you any longer than I have to. Blackie was fighting to get decent conditions on the Coast, but you smashed him. You, who live on the Barbary Coast and who own most of it. The dirtiest double-crosser that ever breathed!" Della stood up and looked at the white-faced Mary. "I reckon you two are just admirably suited. You're cheap. You're marrying him for his money. Well, I hope you and your crook husband have a life of

purgatory!" She laughed sneeringly. "I knew your Jack Burley rather well once. You ask him."

"Is Blackie in prison?" asked Mary. "No, but he will be mighty soon," sneered Della. "He's given me jewels and money, and I'm to use that to keep those that stood by him at the Paradise from poverty. That's the guy you treated like dirt and gave the air for a skunk like Burley. Good-evening!"

Mary Blake stared after Della as if she could not realise all that she had heard. Her elusions in Jack Burley were shattered. San Francisco was certainly a place of corruption.

"I'll get a warrant for that woman's arrest!" rasped Burley. "She can't lie about me, defame my character, and —"

"I know she did not lie!"

Mary faced him.

The curtain went up on the first act. Mary watched the stage, but she saw nothing of the show. Act after act followed to receive its share of applause.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the last entry of the evening was supposed to have been from Mr. Blackie Norton's Paradise, but as it is now forty-three in the morning and the performers have failed to arrive, we'll close the show without them," announced the chairman of the ball. "We will select the winners—"

"Mr. Duane!" Mary had stood up. "I'm representing the Paradise for Mr. Norton."

"Mary, I forbid you to go up there!" Burley was on his feet.

Before the withering look of scorn Burley stepped back, and Mary walked towards the stage. The crowd craned their necks and many whispered excitedly at this unexpected incident.

Mr. Duane helped her up the steps to the stage.

"Play 'San Francisco,'" Mary instructed the orchestra leader.

The crowd applauded and then was silent.

"San Francisco, open your Golden Gate

You let no stranger wait
Who's knockin'—who's knockin'



"I should love to sing in Signor Baldini's operatic programme," said Mary, her eyes sparkling with joy.

Outside your door.
San Francisco, here comes your
wandering one,
And I'm sayin', and I'm sayin'
That I'm gonna wander no more!
Other places—other places
Only make me love you best
Tell me—tell me
You're the heart of the Golden
West!"

Mary sang superbly, and it brought the place to its feet. They yelled the chorus in delirious abandon. She had to sing every verse, and they insisted upon singing the chorus four or five times.

Della, when Mary had gone on the stage, had hastened outside to see if she could find Blackie. He had been to the ball and gone away to see if he could raise any money; he had promised to return for Della. The woman met him outside and told him a big surprise awaited him. Thus Blackie Norton was present to hear Mary sing the last verse and to hear the thunderous applause.

By the handclapping of the crowd, so was the competition judged. When Mary stepped forward the people yelled themselves hoarse.

Two attendants appeared with a large silver cup, which Mr. Duane took from them.

"The appearance of Miss Blake for the Paradise was as much a surprise to me as it was to you. However, I congratulate you upon your choice, and present the award to Miss Blake for Mr. Blackie Norton, with my congratulations."

Mary had just taken the cup when a voice bellowed:

"Wait a minute!" And Blackie himself pushed through the crowd. He climbed on to the stage, and his face was contorted with fury. "There's a mistake here, Mr. Duane. I never told this woman she could appear for me." He snatched the cup away from the frightened girl. "I don't need this kind of dough."

He flung the cup on the stage.

Mary held out her hands piteously to Blackie Norton, but he paid no heed. He jumped down from the stage and forced his way through the crowd towards the exit.

Burley saw that he might still win, and hastened to the stage with Mary's cloak.

"Shall I take you home, dear?" he urged.

The chairman, to prevent an awkward scene, signalled to the orchestra leader to play something. The time was ten minutes past five. The band burst into a rollicking melody as Burley began to guide the half-fainting Mary towards the exit.

Suddenly the whole place seemed to rock and sway. It was five-thirteen—San Francisco's doom was at hand!

Buried Alive

THE whole building seemed to quiver and shake as if giant hands had gripped the walls and were trying to shake them down. Glasses rolled from tables and smashed on the floor. The orchestra stopped, and everyone stared round with aghast faces.

"What was that?" whispered Mary.

Before Burley could answer the rumbling started again, but with increased violence. A huge chandelier with many lighted candles began to sway backwards and forwards. Suddenly it fell, and one poor wretch was pinned beneath the debris. As several started forward to his rescue there came a terrible rendering sound, and one of the walls cracked open, bricks and dust showering down. The floor

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began to sway and lift as if controlled by some gigantic wave. People were flung off their feet. Women screamed in fear and stark terror. A balcony on which were several hundred people seemed to concertina, collapsed with a roar, and the masses hurled down amidst broken masonry, beams, girders, and bricks. Many were buried alive.

It was an earthquake.

Burley swept up Mary in his arms. At all costs they must get out of this place before it crashed down on their heads.

Blind panic seized everyone, and men and women fought and screamed in their efforts to get to the exit.

Blackie Norton had reached the main street when the earthquake started. The tremor was so violent that he was flung into the gutter. As he staggered to his feet the whole of the street seemed to open. Yawning chasms appeared everywhere. A man disappeared with a scream of terror. Something crashed down into the street—part of a heavy stone balcony.

Earth tremors had been felt before, and Blackie knew that this was an earthquake. Instinct told him that it had only just started. Mary was in that building. As people came swarming out he tried to fight his way back. People punched and clawed at him.

All the while the earth was quivering and shaking, and above the sound of falling walls was a terrible rumbling that seemed to come from the bowels of the earth.

At last a battered and bruised Blackie was back in the great hall. Over the heads of the surging people he sighted Mary in Burley's arms. She saw him.

"Blackie!" she screamed.

He tried to get to her, but was swept back by a mad rush of fear-demented people. He was swept back into the street. Vigorously he smashed people from his path and tried to force his way back. A sudden, terrible roaring sound, and someone yelled hoarsely: "The roof! The roof!" Tons of masonry, glass, beams, girders, and a domed pinnacle poured down, sweeping everything in their path, tearing away floors as if they were made of straw, crashing down on those people still in the building. Not one escaped alive. Only the four walls remained of the vast hall, which but a few minutes before had been one of the city's show places.

A fresh tremor shook the doomed city. The four walls crashed inwards. The glass-protected entrance collapsed, and it was in the debris of an ornate, wooden archway that Blackie was trapped. Part of a door fell on top of him, so that the woodwork protected his body to some extent from the rain of bricks.

Winded, almost unconscious, stifled with dust, he lay there sprawled out, unable to move.

In those early hours of the morning demon terror gripped the mighty city of San Francisco. Walls of buildings collapsed, sides of houses were ripped away, lamp-posts collapsed in the streets, great chasms appeared everywhere, churches made of stone crumpled up, water mains burst, and telegraph-poles crashed down, adding to the confusion.

Very slowly his senses returned to Blackie Norton. He endeavoured to move, and found that his shoulders were free, but his legs pinned. With his hands he strove to push the bricks and debris away from him. The dust made him splutter and choke. The effort made his head ache and throb. He squirmed and writhed, and was able to move his legs a little. He managed to get his hands down his sides and move

some more bricks. He could now move his body, but his feet seemed caught; he managed to get a grip on the door, and literally pulled himself forward. Bricks fell down on his head, but he paid no heed. Cool air came down to him, and he felt that freedom was not far distant. He clambered out of the hole and stood there swaying. His dress clothes were torn, his white shirt was foul with dirt, his trousers were ripped and torn, and blood had clotted on his face from head wounds.

Blackie shook himself and staggered out into the street. The place seemed deserted. There was a faint light. All around sounded sudden crashes, and he knew toppling walls were still falling. Then he heard distant screams and shouts of terror. There seemed for a moment a lull in the earthquake, but even as he thought this there came another violent tremor, and, hearing a cracking noise, looked up in time to see a whole side of a house bulging outwards. He ran, and just got clear in time.

Another lull, and Blackie came back to the spot where he had been buried alive and escaped so miraculously. He looked grimly at the pile of debris that had been once the famous Lyric Hall, where but a short while ago Mary had been singing. What had happened to Mary? A cry made him whip round, and next moment he was dragging away some woodwork. From beneath he dragged forth one of the waiters. The man had also been saved by a door, and was little the worse for his terrifying experience.

"Thanks—thanks, Mr. Norton!" the man gasped.

"You think you can walk?"

"Yeah, I can make it."

Norton pointed.

"Then get away from here to an open space while there's time. One moment"—as the man stumbled away. "Do you know if Mary Blake got out all right?"

"I didn't see her," was the answer.

Here and there lay still, lifeless bodies, and Norton shuddered at the sight. Two more men and a badly hurt woman he dragged from the wreckage. He found a distracted husband trying to drag his wife from beneath a pile of bricks.

"Connie's still alive. I can hear her breathing," the fellow shouted hoarsely.

Another man came tearing up to them.

"Here it comes again. You'll get killed! Come on, get out of here!"

The earth shook, more chasms opened in the streets, and more buildings came crashing down. A huge block of stone missed Blackie by inches, and he clutched at the half-demented husband. Poor Connie had to be left to her fate.

When that tremor had passed, back came Blackie Norton. He found the man on his bended knees, and praying.

"I have been a sinner! Oh, Lord, forgive me!"

"Have you seen Mary Blake?"

"Leave me alone!" the man screamed.

Baffled, Blackie continued his search. He found a girl standing staring at the ruins of a place that had once been her home.

"Have you seen Mary Blake? Or Jack Burley?"

She stared at him with eyes that seemed lifeless and pointed with a listless hand.

Beneath a huge beam he found Jack Burley. His enemy was dead. But where was Mary? Then he peered down, and saw in that dim light that Burley was clutching something. It was part of Mary's dress. Under some

bricks he found part of her evening cloak. She must be buried under the wreckage of this wall.

Like a madman he began to fling bricks right and left. Some men appeared, and he shouted to them to help him, but they paid no heed.

The earthquake had its final tremor, and the chasms in the street gaped wider so that cars and traps and debris fell into these cracks that were hundreds of feet deep. But still Blackie Norton tore at that pile of bricks.

Live wires came crashing down into the streets and ignited a broken gas-main. In a flash there was an explosion and flames were running madly in all directions. There were sudden explosions as the flames spread. The buildings and houses that were so full of timber seemed to catch alight at once.

The fire that followed the earthquake was far more terrible.

The Fire

WITH drooping shoulders and blackened visage Blackie Norton walked amidst the ruins of San Francisco. Here and there were blazing houses, but he stared at them dully and listlessly.

Two fire-engines clanked by, the horses' feet pounding on the road in a mad gallop. A salvagc cart followed in their wake. Blackie came upon them later grouped round a fire-hydrant.

"My house is on fire!" a man was shouting. "Four blocks down on Folson Street!"

"Can't you do something?" asked Blackie.

"It's no use, brother," muttered one of the firemen. "The water-main's broken. There's no water to fight the fire."

Blackie made his way to the Grenoble Hotel and there he found a bellboy

helping a crippled woman and an old man down the stairs.

"Mary Blake lived here."

"She lived here, but she hasn't been since the 'quake," was the answered. "We're getting everyone out of here. The fire's creeping this way."

With dulled indifference Blackie saw a man and a woman rush down the stairs with two children in their arms. The children were screaming in their panic.

"Let's get out of here!" yelled the man frantically.

Blackie left the hotel to resume a search that he feared was futile. From a terrace he was able to look down on the city. It seemed to be blazing from east to west. It was a weird and terrible spectacle. He stared down into the street and saw droves of people scurrying towards the hills, carrying all that they could save. He went down towards the fire, and shuddered at sight of a man hanging from a beam. On his chest was the dire warning—"Shot for Looting."

In a street he found a man arguing with a party of Marines.

"Why can't you do something about saving the rest of my building instead of destroying it?"

"I can't help it, mister, that's in the path of the fire," answered an officer.

"That's my building you're going to dynamite. I've worked half my life for it."

"We're doing it to save other buildings. We haven't any water," was the reply. "It's the only way we have of stopping the fire. We're dynamiting from here all the way to Nob Hill."

The officer turned. "All right, men, let her go."

A Marine pressed down a plunger. There was a mighty explosion two hundred yards away and a huge building collapsed with a roar.

Nob Hill. That was where aristocrats like Burley had lived. Perhaps Mary was with Mrs. Burley. She had not been under that pile of bricks and masonry. He had torn his hands to shreds to prove that. In gardens blackened with ashes he came upon a dazed old woman who was being helped along by a man who was obviously one of her servants.

"Mrs. Burley, have you seen Mary Blake?"

"She was with my son," Mrs. Burley said in quavering accents. She looked at him fixetly. "He's dead, isn't he? Well, it's heaven's will."

Blackie bowed his head before such resignation.

An officer rushed up. "You'll have to move on, Mrs. Burley—we're dynamiting."

Blackie stood there and stared at the beautiful house that Burley senior had built and which had only been shaken by the quake.

"Are the wires all set?" shouted a voice.

"All set!" was the response.

"Fire!"

The Burley mansion seemed to split in twain. The walls were blown out, and then the roof collapsed in a cloud of black smoke. There were rumblings and crashings, and when the dust and smoke drifted away there remained but an unseemly and unsightly pile of broken brick.

"My son was born there," sobbed Mrs. Burley, and yet had time to appreciate the grief of this big man. "Never mind, Blackie Norton. It's heaven's help we both need now. Good-bye."

Under beetling brows Blackie stared after the bent figure. Heaven's help—what drivel!

When he attempted to go back to the Lyric Hall an armed Marine stopped him with fixed bayonet. No one could



"It's no use, brother," muttered one of the firemen. "The water-main's broken. There's no water to fight the fire!"

go that way. Blackie saw the streets and broken houses blown to pieces.

"Mary! Mary! My darling!" a voice shouted, and hopefully Blackie turned.

It was some other Mary, and his hands sank limply to his sides. He asked a Marine if he had seen a red-headed girl in a white evening dress.

A shake of the head.
"Heaven help you to find her, brother."

Heaven made him think of Father Mullin, and he found that the mission-hall no longer existed. A soldier informed him that Mullin was alive and doing rescue work at some stables near the Green Park. He came to the stables and found a Red Cross nurse, who passed him inside.

Everywhere were rough beds full of groaning, badly hurt men, women and children.

"How are you, Blackie?" A weak voice called.

There on a rough stretcher lay Mat. His head was all bandaged and he was trying to grin. An elderly nurse was at his side.

"Hallo, Mat, how are you?"

"I'll pull through; I'll be all right."

Blackie looked at the nurse, who gently shook her head.

"Hey, Blackie," spoke the dying man. "I hear that Mary went on for you at the Chicken Ball. I guess we were wrong about her—she's a great kid."

"You're right, Mat."

Blackie glanced at the nurse.

"Don't leave him."

From bed to bed went Blackie Norton, but he did not find Mary Blake. He was on the point of leaving when he heard a voice that he recognised and

turned to see Father Mullin trying to soothe a frightened child. On tiptoe he edged closer, and a nurse whispered that the child was all right but badly burned.

Father Mullin looked up and saw him.

"Hallo, Blackie."

"Hallo, Tim."

Father Mullin got up from the bed and came towards Blackie. It was the first time the two men had met since the quarrel. The priest held out his hand, and Blackie gripped it eagerly.

"That map of yours needs some attention."

"No, no, no, I'm all right." Blackie hesitated because he dreaded to ask the question. With a stutter he stammered forth: "You haven't seen Mary, have you?"

"So you haven't found her yet?" Mullin gave a twisted grin. "You can't want her for Paradise—that's gone."

"I wasn't thinking of the Paradise, Tim. What's happened to-day has changed my whole outlook." Blackie put his hand to his aching head. "I met poor old Mrs. Burley. She knew her son was dead. 'It's heaven's help we need.' She said that to me. I know I do need heaven's help."

The gaze of Father Mullin was searching. He gripped Blackie's arm.

"Come with me."

"Where are you taking me?"

Father Mullin smiled.

"Mug, I'm gonna take you to Mary."

Blackie Norton could scarce believe his ears. He stared at Father Mullin like a man bereft of his senses.

He must not hope for too much.

"Is—is she all right?"

Mullin nodded.

"Yes, she's all right." He beckoned. "Come with me, friend."

"The Fire's Out!"

BLACKIE NORTON stumbled out of the stables that had been turned into a relief hospital, and followed Father Mullin.

They came to a grassy hill that was covered with tents, carriages, and rough shelters. There were thousands of refugees here. Soldiers and Marines were maintaining order and discipline.

"You folks will have to be vaccinated," a soldier was telling a batch of new arrivals. "It's for your own good. You must go to the hospital tent."

A sign from the Father passed them through, and they went up the hill. Then Blackie heard a voice singing, and the words carried clearly on the still air. It was the hour after dawn.

"Nearer my God to Thee—Nearer to Thee—E'en tho' it be a Cross—that raiseth me."

Blackie Norton's head turned as if he wished to hear more clearly. Surely that was a voice he knew? With eager stride he hastened after the priest.

Father Mullin stopped, and Norton saw a small group of women clustered round a tent. In their midst was Mary, whilst on the ground two women bent anxiously over two small figures. Blackie could see that the figures were two children. The singing ceased, and then one of the women gave a cry of anguish. She was led away weeping, and someone covered one of the children.

"This poor mite will live," someone whispered.

(Continued on page 27)

WALT DISNEY

THE FAMOUS MICKEY MOUSE ORIGINATOR



Who was the secret leader of the desperadoes who were terrorising the Valley of the Pecos? That was the riddle which a young Texas Ranger was detailed to solve. Ride with him to the tune of hammering hoofs and blazing guns, and follow his gripping adventures in this mighty serial drama of action and romance



Phantom Rider

Starring

BUCK JONES

EPISODE 4—

"THE PHANTOM RIDES"

Read This First

Buck Grant, a settler in the Pecos Valley, is in reality a Ranger investigating stories of terrorism by a gang of outlaws whose leader's identity he hopes to discover.

Judge Holmes, of Maverick, is the only man who knows Buck is a Ranger. He is likewise the only man who knows that Buck is the Phantom Rider, a cloaked horseman who is defeating the activities of the outlaws at every turn.

One morning, however, masked gangsters butcher Shorty, another Ranger who is on his way into the Valley. Dying, Shorty tells Buck to go to the Hidden Valley Ranch, and later Buck learns this is the property of a man named Grayson.

He meets Grayson's beautiful daughter, Mary, who has returned from the East and brought with her a friend, Helen Moore.

Meanwhile, a Ranger known as Spooky has entered Maverick, and Buck instructs him to obtain work at the Hidden Valley outfit. That same night Buck casually drops in at that ranch himself, and is introduced to Harvey Delancy, a neighbouring cattleman who is on friendly terms with the Graysons.

Later, Mary's father is killed, and Buck is charged with the crime. He convinces Mary of his innocence and hands her a wallet which belonged to her father and which contains the map of a hidden gold mine.

Three outlaws attempt to take the wallet from her. She is fleeing from them in a wagon when Buck comes to her aid, but the vehicle plunges into a river, carrying the girl and the Ranger with it.

Now Read On

The Outlaws Snared

SWALLOWED by the flood-waters of the Pecos, Buck and Mary sank far down, but at last they felt themselves rising again, and after what seemed a cruel eternity their heads broke the surface.

Gasping, Buck looked about him, and as he saw Mary nearby he struck out for her and lent her a supporting arm. Then all at once he noticed the ponies that had carried the wagon over the bluff.

There was no sign of the buggy itself. No doubt it was resting now on the bed of the river. But the animals which had been harnessed to it had apparently broken the traces, and at the moment they were making for the opposite shore.

Scarcely had Buck observed them than he became aware that the two sturdy "plugs" were not the only horses in the water, for closer at hand were two others—his own brone Silver, and the mustang that had belonged to the gangster known as Mort.

It dawned on him immediately that these creatures, galloping in the wake of the buggy, had automatically followed it over the cliff, and in view of the powerful surge of the river it was fortunate for the Ranger and his companion that they had done so.

"Quick, Miss Mary!" Buck jerked out. "Grab that outlaw's pony!"

The animal in question was passing within reach as he shouted the words, and the girl clutched a trailing stirrup-leather as it swam by. A moment later Buck was swerving towards Silver, and he managed to grip the brone by the tail, hanging on for dear life as the mount forged its way across the river in the direction of the far bank.

The outlaw's mustang to which Mary had attached herself was pursuing the same course, and ere long both horses gained dry land, whereupon they were released by the man and the girl who had clung to them so desperately.

Joining Mary, Buck helped her up the bank, and then, leaning against the bole of a dead tree, the pair of them turned to scan the bluff from which they had plunged a little while before.

Dirk and Blackie were silhouetted there against the sky-line, each seated tensely in his saddle, and the luckless Mort was with them, fuming over the loss of his horse and nursing his unshaven jaw, which was swollen by the blow that Buck had dealt him some five minutes previously.

"We certainly put one over on those three hombres," Buck Grant said to Mary. "You've still got that wallet, haven't you?"

"Yes, right here," she answered, tapping a fob-pocket in her skirt.

"Okay, let's get out of here!" Buck declared. "You take that outlaw's brone. I'll see you safely to your ranch."

Silver and the pony that belonged to Mort had halted a few yards from the bank, and, climbing astride the animals, the Ranger and his companion rode off at a good speed, for they knew full well that there was a ford higher upstream—a ford which they would have had to cross if they had not been hurled into the river, and one which Dirk and Blackie could negotiate if they chose to take up the pursuit.

And, indeed, Dirk and Blackie had no intention of abandoning their efforts to secure the chart that was in Mary Grayson's possession.

Watching the flight of Buck and the girl from the bluff on the other side of

the water, Dirk spoke in an ugly tone of voice.

"I ain't riskin' my neck by jumpin' off this cliff," he snarled. "The only thing we can do is to head for Buffalo Crossing and pick up the Hidden Valley trail where it leads due north o' the river."

"That crossin' is a mile upstream," Blackie protested. "By the time we make it, Grant and the girl will have a long start on us and we'll never overtake 'em."

Mort interposed a comment.

"I wouldn't be so sure o' that," he growled. "That horse o' mine is a sulker when anybody but me is ridin' him, an' the Grayson girl will find out that he won't keep up a gallop for long with her in the saddle. You fellers better git goin'. Remember the boss wants that wallet. I'll hoof it back to the hide-out."

Without further discussion Dirk and Blackie swung round to spur along the rim of the bluffs, and they were about three-quarters of a mile from the point where they had left Mort, when the ground began to level out. A minute later they were descending a shelving bank to splash rapidly through the shallows of a ford which linked the south section of the Hidden Valley trail with its northern counterpart.

Reaching the other side of the Pecos, the two outlaws gored the flanks of their mustangs with spur-rows and drove the anguished beasts at full stretch along the road, and it was as they were pounding over a low ridge that they espied Buck and Mary ahead of them.

The girl and her protector were a considerable distance away, and the instant they became aware that they were being pursued they urged their horses forward at a quickened pace. But presently Dirk and Blackie realised that the claim Mort had made in regard to his bronc was by no means false, for it soon became apparent that the creature was not answering to the sharp touch of Mary's heels.

Buck realised this, too, and, looking back, saw that the outlaws were gaining fast. Holding Silver in check, he dropped behind Mary to cover her for fear there were any shooting, and he was still taking the dust of her pony's hoofs when the trail penetrated a belt of woodland.

Man and girl entered the forest, and, as the trees concealed them from the view of the pursuers, Buck pressed alongside his companion again.

"You'll have to make Hidden Valley Ranch alone, Miss Mary!" he rapped out.

"What do you mean?" she panted.

"I'm going to fix those two fellers so they won't play tag with you any more on this particular trip," he rejoined grinning. "Don't worry, I can handle 'em. Keep goin', and don't stop till you get home."

He swerved off into a thicket of brushwood and left her to gallop onward, a bend in the road carrying her out of sight in the space of a few seconds. Then, while the laggardly thud of her horse's feet gradually died away, he held himself in readiness for the approach of Dirk and Blackie.

He had not long to wait. Entering the wood, they came racing along the rail in headlong style, and in the shelter of the thicket Buck coolly detached a lariat from his saddle-peg. Then, even as the gangsters were sweeping past him, he spun the lasso above his head and sent the noose snaking through the air.

It dropped neatly over the two hard-

riding desperadoes, and they were caught in the tightening snare of it. Another instant and the rawhide rope sprang taut, and, whipped out of their saddles, Dirk and Blackie hit the earth with a shock that knocked the breath out of their bodies.

With a supreme nonchalance Buck cantered out of the brushwood and slackened the noose of his lariat with a deft hitch, allowing the crooks to roll free. But long before they had recovered themselves, and long before they rose slowly and abjectly to their feet, he was idly training the barrel of his six-gun upon the two of them.

"Take a tip from me and separate yourselves from your gats," he drawled. "But mind you get rid of 'em quick, without tryin' to use 'em."

The outlaws were glowering at him now, and at first they hesitated to obey his command, but a significant gesture of his six-gun convinced them that discretion was the better part of valour, and sullenly enough they took out their forty-fives and threw them on the ground.

"Well, that's fine," said Buck. "And next you're gonna separate yourselves from your duds."

Dirk and Blackie gaped at him for a brief interval, and then hot resentment showed on their villainous features.

"Come on, you heard me!" Buck ordered curtly. "Let me have your duds. Get in that thicket where I've just come from and throw 'em out to me. D'you hear what I say, or do I have to make myself plain by pumpin' a few slugs around your feet?"

The threat stampeded the rogues into the brushwood, where Buck watched them keenly as they proceeded to discard their clothing. Then one after another in swift succession shirts and belts and breeches were tossed out to the ranger.

He caught each garment adroitly as it came, and flung the apparel high into the branches of a tree nearby, where the clothing dangled well out of reach; and finally, when his victims had stripped to their underwear, he picked up their shooting-irons and threw the weapons far into the heart of the forest.

"So-long, fellers," he called at last, and riding away, drove their loitering ponies from the scene as he went.

Fifteen seconds after he had departed Blackie and Dirk crept ignominiously from the thicket in their pants and vests. There was no one to see them, but if they had been in the main street of Maverick City they could not have looked more distressed or more infuriated.

"Curse him!" Blackie ground out. "I'd rather he'd turned us over to the sheriff than left us like this."

"Turnin' us over to the sheriff was one thing he couldn't do!" Dirk blazed. "Not with a murder charge hangin' over his own head. Yeah, an' that ain't the only thing that's hangin' him. Before I'm through I'll make Grant eat lead for playin' this trick on us!"

Blackie looked up into the branches of the nearest tree.

"Come on," he said sourly. "We gotta get our clo'es."

It took them a quarter of an hour to recover their garments and their self-respect, and the feat was not accomplished without a good many failures and a good deal of barking of shins and skinning of hands. But at long last they secured their clothing and dressed themselves, and after a further delay they managed to find their guns.

Gloomily they tramped out of the forest then, and they must have walked a couple of miles before they saw their horses, which Buck had abandoned in

the vicinity of Buffalo Crossing. By that time, of course, it was futile to think of resuming their pursuit of Mary Grayson, and railing bitterly against the man who had frustrated them they hauled themselves into the saddles of their broncs and made for their lair in the hills.

Low Meredith

HALF an hour after she had parted company with Buck, Mary Grayson rode up to the veranda of the Hidden Valley ranch-house, and as she arrived there she found Helen Moore in conversation with two of the hands.

One of the cowboys was Spooky, the other was the puncher known as Lew Meredith, and the first-named was amusing Helen with some anecdotes of life on the range when the girl from the East became aware of her friend's approach.

"Why, Mary," she exclaimed, observing the newcomer's bedraggled appearance, "what happened? Where's the buckboard?"

Mary proceeded to give an account of the adventure that had befallen her, and when she had finished her story she turned to Spooky and Meredith.

"Are any of the boys about?" she asked them.

"No, ma'am," Spooky rejoined. "They're off lookin' for some strays." Mary had now dismounted from the pony that had carried her to the ranch, and she handed the little cowboy its bridle.

"Well, never mind," she said. "I'll see them when they get back. But listen, Spooky, I want you to take special care of this horse in the meantime. Put it in the corral. It belongs to one of the outlaws who chased me, and it may be valuable evidence."

Spooky took charge of the bronc and led the creature away. As for Lew Meredith, he remained with the girls, and was still lingering beside them when Helen spoke to her friend earnestly.

"You know, Mary," she declared, "I don't think it's safe for you to be carryin' that wallet around with you. Why don't you take it to Maverick and deposit it in the bank there?"

The other girl pursed her lips, and then nodded slowly.

"Maybe you're right," she agreed. "I'll hand it over to the bank manager the next time I'm in town."

Lew Meredith offered a suggestion. His manner was that of one who was anxious to be helpful, though there was a queer glint in his narrow eyes.

"If there's anything important in that wallet, Miss Mary," he volunteered, "maybe I could tote it into Maverick for you right away. My horse is all ready saddled."

"No thanks, Lew," Mary rejoined. "I'm afraid I couldn't trust that wallet to anyone, for it's my responsibility, and mine alone. Don't worry, I'll put it in father's safe for the time being, and it will be all right there—"

She paused, and then as if on an after-thought:

"I'll tell you what you could do, though," she went on. "You could ride to Maverick and send the sheriff out here. I'd like him to see that outlaw's horse as soon as possible."

Lew Meredith saluted her briskly and strode off to the bunkhouse, where his pony was tethered to a hitch-rail, and as he was mounting the bronc he saw Spooky coming away from a small corral not far away.

In accordance with Mary's instructions, Spooky had penned the animal which had brought her home, and now he was returning to the ranch-house to report that he had carried out her wishes.

Lew watched him until the coast was clear, and then rode quietly over to the little corral, which was hidden from the view of anyone at the Grayson residence by an intervening grove of trees.

Reaching his objective, Lew Meredith opened the gate and fetched the captive bronc out of the enclosure, after which he closed the corral again and proceeded to spur in the direction of a tangled mass of chaparral thickets, leading the other horse by the rein.

"Come on, Woozy," he said grimly. "We ain't gonna have you turnin' State's evidence against us."

He passed into the thickets, and by the time he had won his way on to open ground he was a considerable distance from the Hidden Valley outfit. And then, pressing onward at top speed, he headed due south across the range with the outlaw's pony galloping by his side.

It was not the town of Maverick that was Lew Meredith's destination, but a lonely cabin tucked away in the hills, and on arrival there he fastened his own bronc and the other mustang to a rack outside the dwelling. Then he entered the building and passed into a room whose curtained windows admitted only a faint glimmer of daylight.

In the shadowy interior of that room a band of men were gathered, and Dirk, Mort and Blackie were among them—together with Gabe and Roscoe, the two desperados who had been responsible for the killing of old man Grayson. It was towards an indistinct figure seated at the far side of the apartment that Lew Meredith turned, however; the figure of the gang's mysterious leader.

"I've brung Mort's horse, boss," the Hidden Valley cowboy announced. "The Grayson gal was gonna hold it as evidence, and she thinks I'm on my way to bring out the sheriff to have a look at it."

The unknown leader of the outlaws gave vent to a grunt of satisfaction.

"Good work, Lew," he muttered. "I reckon you're about the only man I can depend on in this whole bunch. I've just been tellin' them what a fine lot they are—frightened by the Phantom and bulldozed by that nester Grant."

His hirelings moved uncomfortably in their chairs, and Roscoe spoke up in a tone of protest.

"Me and Gabe got rid of Grayson for you, didn't we?" he expostulated. "And you said that with him outa the way you could buy or scare his daughter off the Hidden Valley Ranch, boss."

"Yes," the head of the gang retorted, "but you missed the thing I needed most—the chart to Grayson's gold-diggin's. Our business is to grab that chart, for, apart from anything else, we'll never be able to oust Mary Grayson from the Hidden Valley Ranch if she gets possession of her father's mine."

"But why make such a play against the Grayson outfit, boss?" Dirk cut in. "If we clean up all the other ranches an' homesteads in this section we may not need Hidden Valley."

"That's where you're wrong," his chief answered fiercely. "Hidden Valley Ranch is the keystone for the new railroad that's comin' in here—the logical site for their machine-shops."

He was silent for a spell, and then returned to the subject of the chart he was so anxious to secure.

"Now maybe you fellers can understand just why I want Hidden Valley," he grated. "Yeah, you can understand all right, hut none o' you can tell me whether that wallet is in the hands of Mary Grayson or Buck Grant—or whether it's at the bottom of the Pecos river."

"I can tell you where it is, boss," Lew Meredith interposed quietly.

The figure of the gang-leader swung towards him.

"Yeah?" he jerked. "Then where is it?"

"In the safe at the ranch," was the answer. "And, with all the experience he's had, I figure Dirk here can open that ole iron box like it was a can of sardines."

The head of the outlaw band glanced at Dirk, and then focused his attention on Meredith again, and, though the gloom concealed the expression his dim-sen features, his first words made it clear that the tidings which he had just received had put him in a better frame of mind.

"Lew," he stated, "you're beginnin' to rate pretty high with me. So that wallet's in the safe, is it? All right, Dirk will have a chance to prove how smart is he at crackin' a crib."

"Better pull the job to-night, boss," Lew said. "The Grayson gal intends to take the wallet to the bank in Maverick the first time she's in town."

"You hear that, Dirk?" the gang-leader rapped out. "To-night you'll ride with the boys, and leave 'em somewhere near the Hidden Valley Ranch, so as they'll be handy in case o' trouble. Then you'll sneak into the house alone and do your stuff. If you have to run for it after you've got the wallet, the gang will cover your escape."

"Meantime, Lew," he added to Meredith, "you'd better do as Mary Grayson told you and take the sheriff out to Hidden Valley to see that horse which ain't there any longer. And watch out that nobody at the ranch suspects you're in with us. I'd hate to lose a man that's as useful to me as you are."

Lew assured him that he would give no one any cause to doubt his integrity as a ranch-hand, and a little while later

he left the outlaw hide-out and made off through the hills at a rapid pace, never drawing rein until he gained the town of Maverick and the office of Sheriff Mark.

Here he repeated the story that Mary had told when she had shown up at the Hidden Valley outfit, and before long the sheriff was accompanying him northward to the girl's home, which they reached about sundown.

Mary was waiting for the representative of the law, and came down from the veranda as he and Lew Meredith halted in front of the house.

"Evenin', Miss Mary," Sheriff Mark greeted. "I'm shore glad you made your escape from them there outlaws that Meredith has been tellin' me about, though I can't help mentionin' that you wouldn't have been attacked if you'd turned over that wallet to me."

"If you hadn't talked so much about that wallet, sheriff," Mary replied cuttingly, "nobody would ever have known that I was carrying it."

Maverick's guardian of the peace was somewhat discomfited by this remark, but he soon recovered himself.

"Well, I mean to have the pocket-book now," he said. "The papers in it constitute material evidence in a major crime."

"Oh, Sheriff Mark, don't try to use such big words," the girl rejoined impatiently. "The wallet's in the safe, and I intend to keep it there until tomorrow, when I shall ride into town and deposit it at the bank."

"Now, Miss Mary, listen to me," the sheriff began, but he was interrupted just then by Spooky, who came hurrying up with a startled look on his weather-beaten face.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am," the little cowboy said, "but that outlaw horse you wanted the sheriff to see—it's gone."



With a swift gesture Dirk plucked his six-gun from its holster and spun round towards the threshold.

"Gone?" Mary echoed. "What do you mean?"

"Well, it broke outa the corral without leavin' a forwardin' address," Spooky answered ruefully.

It was a piece of news which bewildered and distressed the girl, and which caused Lew Meredith to smile a covert smile that none of the others noticed. As for the sheriff, he frowned disgustedly and then took up the subject of the wallet again, but when he finally departed, that pocket-book was still reposing in the ranch-house safe, and he was forced to consider that his journey to Hidden Valley had been a pure waste of time.

Soon after the sheriff had gone, Spooky wandered off to the bunkhouse, and it was as he was lounging in the vicinity of this building that he suddenly heard a low whistle which drew his attention to a deep thicket nearby.

Peering in that direction, he was able to detect a familiar figure amidst the vegetation, and, recognising Buck Grant, he looked hurriedly about him and then gave a reassuring sign that brought the big fellow out of his hiding-place.

Buck advanced into the open, leading his bronc Silver by the rein, and he joined Spooky at a hitch-rail beside which the little Ranger was standing.

"Nobody around?" Buck queried.

"The boys are out lookin' for strays," Spooky answered, "and they ain't got back yet. A ranch-hand by the name of Lew Meredith is the only one here, but I left him over at the house with Mary Grayson. We'd better talk fast, though, in case he strolls over this way and sees us together."

"All right," his comrade said. "What do you know, anyhow?"

"Mary Grayson has put the wallet in her father's safe," Spooky informed him. "To-morrow she aims to lodge it at the bank in town."

Buck nodded approvingly.

"Fine," he stated. "That wallet will be safer in the bank than anywhere."

"Yeah, but it won't be in the bank till to-morrow," was Spooky's reply. "An' a lot can happen in a single night."

Buck's eyes narrowed shrewdly, and he gripped the hitch-rail by which he and his partner had taken up their positions.

"Don't worry about to-night," he said. "I'll be on the watch."

"As Buck Grant, the nester?" his friend queried.

"No, as the Phantom Rider," the big fellow announced. "I've got the white cloak and the silk scarf hidden under old Silver's saddle."

A few seconds later he was retracing his steps into the brushwood with his pony, keeping the empty bunkhouse between him and the main building of the Hidden Valley outfit.

Under Cover of Night

DARKNESS had descended upon the Grayson Ranch, and from the neighbourhood of the bunkhouse came the strains of music as the boys who had returned from their quest for strays crooned old-time melodies of the cow-camps.

There was something sweet and sad about the songs that they were singing, for they had chosen out of their repertoire such ballads as were in keeping with the recent bereavement that Mary Grayson had suffered. And indeed, as she sat on the steps of her home with Helen Moore, Mary found it strangely soothing to listen to the music that came floating through the night air to her ears.

August 29th, 1936.

Little did Mary Grayson know it, but she and Helen were not the only ones who were listening approvingly to the voices of the ranch-hands. For, out in the brushwood not more than a couple of hundred yards away, the mysterious figure of a cloaked and masked horseman was also enjoying the lilting choruses that the punchers were rendering in the bunkhouse.

It was the figure of Buck Grant, alias the Phantom Rider, but, although he was diverted by the impromptu entertainment that the Hidden Valley cow-boys were providing, he had not forgotten the purpose which had been in his mind when he had concealed himself in the thickets.

He was there to keep watch and ward over the ranch-house, lest the presence of the wallet that had belonged to old Grayson should tempt those outlaws who were so eager to obtain it; and, as proof of Buck's vigilance, he was quick to notice the plodding of hoofs that suddenly marked the approach of a man on horseback.

From the shelter of the brushwood Buck saw the newcomer a minute or so afterwards, and recognised him in spite of the gloom.

This was no desperado creeping up on the ranch, at any rate. The man was Harvey Delaney, prosperous cattleman, and he was headed straight for the porch steps on which Mary and Helen were seated.

Buck watched him dismount in front of the girls and join them, and in a little while he noticed the three of them stroll off in the direction of the bunkhouse, the better to hear the songs that were being sung there. And it was soon after Delaney and his fair companions had paused in the vicinity of the men's quarters that the big Ranger's keen ears again detected the sound of horses' footsteps.

It was a sound which no one at the ranch could possibly have heard, but it was audible enough to Buck, and presently he realised that a troop of men had halted in the brushwood not very far from him, for he became aware of a steady murmur of voices.

Leaving his pony tethered and hoping that the animal would remain silent, Buck stole through the thickets until he perceived a group of shadowy forms mustered in a small glade. Then he distinguished the voice of the man whom he knew as Dirk.

"All right, fellers," Dirk was saying. "You wait here and keep under cover. But if I ain't back in fifteen minutes, you know what to do."

There was a growl of assent, and, turning, Dirk crept away on foot, taking a course that would bring him to the back of the Hidden Valley ranch-house; and as he saw him sneak off through the vegetation, Buck noiselessly effected a wide detour to skirt the clearing in which the rogue had separated from his accomplices.

With extreme caution the Ranger worked towards the fringe of the brush, and as he reached the open ground he espied the figure of Dirk ahead of him.

The man had already gained the ranch-house and was letting himself in by the back door. He disappeared, and Buck at once proceeded to traverse the expanse of open ground at the double, crouching as he ran.

He, too, reached the back door of the ranch-house, and glanced across the threshold into a trim kitchen. This was empty, and, entering it, the disguised Ranger tiptoed through to a sumptuous hall in which a light was burning brightly.

The hall was also empty, but Buck

heard faint movements that seemed to come from beyond the half-open door of a room on the right, the jingle of a spur, and a curious clicking sound that was undoubtedly caused by the "tumblers" of a combination-lock falling into place.

Buck stepped to the half-open door and slowly drew it wider. Yet careful as he was, the hinges creaked, and Dirk took the alarm immediately.

He was stooping at a safe in the room Buck had approached, and his skilful fingers and his attuned ear had solved the secret of the receptacle's locking device. He had actually opened the door of the safe when the creak of hinges behind him warned him that he was not alone and brought him to his feet.

With a swift gesture Dirk plucked his six-gun from its holster and spun round towards the threshold, took a step forward, then paused tensely. Almost in that same instant his interrupter showed himself, and in a flash Dirk beheld the white-robed, masked figure of the mysterious rider of Justice who was known to the outlaws of Benson County as the Phantom.

A hoarse exclamation escaped the gangster, and simultaneously his revolver belched flame and lead. But his aim was hurried, and the bullet missed by a hair's-breadth, the hot whiff of it scorching Buck's temple.

A split second later the Ranger's gun roared a blustering challenge and a slug clipped the lobe of Dirk's ear. It was enough for the thief, and he bounded to the left, out of sight of the doorway. Then with the fear of death upon him, he dived clean through an unpraised window, tumbled to the ground, picked himself up and raced like a hare for the brushwood.

As for Buck, he charged into the room as Dirk was quitting it, and at a glance he saw the open safe. Another moment and he was beside it, and on looking into it he described the wallet which had belonged to old man Grayson.

Buck decided there and then to take charge of it and make certain that it was deposited out of reach of the crooks who were after it. Snatching it up, he thrust it into his pocket, and was wheeling from the safe when he heard a commotion at the front of the ranch-house.

"You two girls keep back!" came the voice of Harvey Delaney. "Keep back. I tell you, or you may get hurt! I'll handle this!"

Buck had no mind to be identified as the Phantom, and unhesitatingly he sprang to the window through which Dirk had made his exit. Scrambling through it, he dropped over the sill and took to his heels, sprinting over the ground that the fleeing outlaw had already covered.

He was running as hard as his legs would carry him when Delaney burst into the room where the safe stood—Delaney, with Mary and Helen close behind him, for the girls had ignored the neighbouring raucher's appeals to remain outside.

As she entered the room Mary saw at once that the safe was open, and, stumbling across to it, she rummaged amongst its contents. Then she whipped round and cried out in a dismayed tone:

"The wallet! It's been stolen!"

Helen Moore flung an arm in the direction of the aperture through which Buck had escaped, and Dirk before him.

"The window!" she gasped, and suddenly she and Mary and Harvey Delaney were rushing over to it.

They espied a white-robed figure heading for the brushwood thickets, and Delaney gave vent to a smothered oath.

"The Phantom Rider!" he jerked out, and with the words he lifted a forty-five that was in his fist and blazed at Buck's receding form.

The bullet went wide, and as the cattleman was taking aim a second time a crowd of the boys from the bunk-house stampeded into the room, loudly demanding to know what the trouble was.

"The Phantom Rider!" Delancy shouted in response. "He's stolen something from Miss Mary's safe!"

He glanced along the barrel of his six-shooter again, but ere he could draw trigger Mary caught him by the wrist.

"Wait!" she panted. "Wait! They say that the Phantom is on the side of the law!"

"But, Mary, he can't be!" Delancy protested. "He's just robbed—"

"No, maybe he hasn't," the girl broke in. "Look, there's someone away in front of him. Perhaps that's the thief, and the Phantom is chasing him."

Her intervention possibly saved Buck from falling a victim to Harvey Delancy's gun. As it was, the Ranger gained the cover of the thickets about a quarter of a minute behind Dirk, who was still going at top speed and who now threshed his way towards the glade where he had left his confederates.

Dirk met the other gangsters unexpectedly, for they had moved from the clearing and were advancing to investigate the shooting they had heard.

"Dirk!" one of them ejaculated, and the fugitive recognised the voice of Blackie. "Dirk, what happened? Did yuh get the wallet?"

"No!" was the hoarse reply. "I cracked the crib, but the Phantom Rider jumped me!"

"The Phantom Rider!" another of the crooks blurted.

"Yeah, he's after me!" Dirk rasped. "Maybe he got the wallet. Anyway, he's gonna run right into our hands."

But Dirk was wrong, for even as he made that prophecy he heard a stamping of hoofs away to the right, and a moment afterwards there came the sound of someone galloping off through the thickets.

"There's your Phantom!" yelled Blackie. "Gonna run right into our hands, was he? I reckon not; but we'll get him all the same. Come on, men! Come on."

Dirk threw himself astride the saddle and promptly joined in the pursuit that was launched by his comrades. Kicking at the flanks of their ponies, the whole gang streamed through the brush in headlong fashion, with the leafy twigs of the high shrubs slashing against beasts and riders.

They could hear their quarry bursting away through the vegetation somewhere before them, and they took the same course in their wild hue and cry, till at last they swept forth on to the slope of a ridge and caught sight of the Phantom up above them.

His white brone was struggling towards the summit of the acclivity, and the outlaws raised a clamour that was punctuated by a stentorian command from Dirk.

"Give him lead, boys!" he shouted. "Don't let him cross that ridge! There's a five-mile stretch o' brush on the other side of it, and if he reaches that we've as good as lost him!"

The crooks drew their guns, and with their mounts scrambling up the slope they directed a murderous fusillade at the cloaked figure of their foe. Wickedly the jets of flame stabbed the gloom, and the blattering roar of the six-shooters echoed and re-echoed through the night as they sent their death-dealing missiles winging on their way. But it was as if the Phantom bore a charmed life, for although the bullets must have sung around him as thickly as hail his brone continued to carry him towards the crest of the ridge.

Higher and higher Silver climbed, slithering on the steep ascent, panting with his exertions, but gamely responding to the words of encouragement that his master was breathing in his alert ears. Then, turning in the saddle, Buck blazed a shot or two at the band of ruffians who were swarming up in his tracks, and despite the fact that he aimed more or less at random, one of his slugs snatched away the sombrero of a man named Keeler.

Another bullet struck splinters from a boulder in front of Dirk's mustang, and the animal swerving in fright, its rider was thrown heavily. But the fellow picked himself up, swung himself into the saddle again and cursed his accomplices as he saw that they had checked.

"You all right, Dirk?" sang out Blackie. "Of course I am," was the snarling rejoinder. "Keep after the Phantom! Keep firin' at him! Don't let him cross the ridge!"

Even as Dirk spoke those words Buck Grant was within a few yards of the slope's summit, and in a final gallant effort Silver bore him to the skyline. And now the big ranger saw the ground running stiffly away from him to an immense tract of underwood intersected by a labyrinthine

(Continued on page 27)



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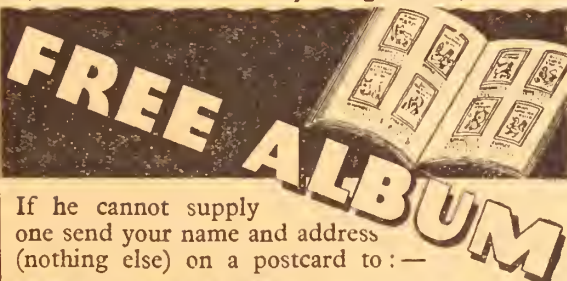
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August 29th, 1936.

"DANGEROUS INTRIGUE"

(Continued from page 12)

works. Since Slevsky would not help him, he must do the thing himself.

Danny, meanwhile, had dressed in a panic and had left the house to run after his father. He saw no sign of him anywhere, and he became convinced that he had gone to the steel works, so kept on in that direction.

He came to the gates, breathless and frightened, and he dived in at them. It was a dark night, and there was no moon, but the jets of flame from the blast furnaces lit up the yards in an uncanny fashion that enabled him to find his way.

He came to the sidings, where trucks of scrap were being shunted from the railway lines into the scrapyards, and on the other side of the rails he saw a man he took to be his father.

"Hi, pop!" he shrilled, and rushed forward.

The man was a watchman, and he turned in time to see the youngster catch one of his feet in some points and fall. Heavily laden trucks were clattering towards the points.

"Hi, look out!" yelled the watchman; but he yelled in vain.

The trucks passed the points and banged into other trucks on the siding; and two shunters and the watchman scurried round to a little, crumpled figure beside the track.

Tony was seated at a desk in the outer room of the hospital when Dr. Miller emerged from the ward in which he had been attending to the injured workman.

"I've got everything well in hand," said the white-haired doctor. "Why don't you run along—go back to the dance?"

Tony looked up with a shrug. "I wasn't such a social success at the dance," he replied, "and I want to look through these accident reports. The District Attorney may want to go over them."

"Hm!" grunted Miller; and then, in at the doorway, came the watchman Danny had mistaken for his father, and the watchman was carrying Danny in his arms.

"Where shall I put him?" he asked. Tony sprang up, and one glance at the pallid face of the unconscious child was enough.

"It's Danny!" he exclaimed. "Brant's child!"

"Bring him in here," said Miller; and Danny was conveyed into the operating theatre, while a couple of miles away in Slovak Hall Gerta obtained her cloak from a dressing-room and threaded her way among the dancers to the door.

Joe Kosovic was out on the steps, smoking a pipe, and he stared at her.

"What are you doing out here, Gerta?" he asked, taking hold of her arm. "Come inside and dance."

"No, dad," she protested with a little shiver. "I just know that something's happened at the hospital."

"Aw, stop worrying!" he urged. "I can't!" she declared. "Oh, dad, I think we ought to go over there!"

"All right," he surrendered. "No happiness till you find out what you all wrong, eh?"

They set off together for the steel works.

Brant, all unaware of the accident which had befallen his small son, had reached the scrapyards without being seen; but the acetylene cylinder for

which he sought was no longer leaning against the fence where he had left it, and he groped about in the flame-pierced gloom, trying to find it without revealing his presence to the men over on the sidings.

Danny, by this time, had been undressed and was lying on an operating-table in a state of merciful oblivion.

"We'd better get the boy's father here," said Dr. Miller gravely, after he and Tony had ascertained the extent of Danny's injuries. "I don't want the responsibility of what we have to do."

"Amputate?" asked Tony.

"We must," was the reply.

"No!" said Tony quite definitely. "No, not that! You can't do it, doctor! You can't leave him a cripple—helpless—with no chance in life!"

Miller frowned at him.

"But the boy's legs are crushed," he said. "The tendons are torn. There's nothing else we can do."

Gerta and her father had entered the hallway of the hospital. The door of the operating theatre was ajar, and they heard the voices of the two men inside it. Gerta crept across to the door, peered round it, and returned agitatedly to her father.

"It's Danny," she said in a low voice. "He's hurt!"

"Bad?" asked Joe.

"I'm afraid so."

In the theatre, Tony had dared to disagree with Miller concerning the need of amputating Danny's legs, and Miller had become quite annoyed at his obstinacy.

"That'll do, Davis!" he said stiffly. "I know what I'm talking about!"

"So do I," said Tony. "An intravenous infusion of saline, along with inhalation of carbon-dioxide, to combat the shock, and those tendons can be carefully repaired."

"An operation," retorted Miller, "that only a few surgeons could perform—Bergner, Rand, Halliday, or—"

"I'm Halliday," said Tony. "Let's get on with it!"

The Only Way

BRANT had found the cylinder of acetylene at last. He hoisted it to his shoulder and carried it stealthily across the yard to a string of tubs that were moving slowly towards the south furnace, loaded with charging-boxes full of scrap iron.

In amongst the scrap of one of the boxes he thrust the cylinder and walked beside the tub to cover it over with rusty bits of iron. The charging boxes, after mounting a slope, would be tilted into the furnaces as the tubs passed their yawning mouths, and Brant was satisfied. In a little over five minutes there would be an explosion that would destroy all the blast furnaces and probably most of the Crocker Steel Works.

He was hurrying towards the gates and safety when he encountered the watchman, who cried out at sight of him:

"Brant, your boy Danny's hurt!"

"Danny?" Brant stopped short. "What happened to him?"

"Knocked down by a truck," was the reply. "I just took him to the hospital."

Brant, white as a sheet, raced across to the hospital, stared wildly at Gerta and her father as he entered it, and burst into the theatre where Tony was operating.

"We've got to get him out of here!" he cried hoarsely.

Tony did not even look up from his task; but Dr. Miller looked up, and he said:

"He can't be moved."

"There's goin' to be an explosion!" Brant howled.

Tony took no notice; he was performing an operation that needed all his attention, all his skill. But he heard.

"Are you out of your mind, Brant?" rapped Miller.

"You gotta listen to me, I tell you —"

"Your boy can't be moved! He has only a bare chance as it is!"

"He's got a chance?"

Brant's face was almost as white as that of the boy on the table, and a cold sweat was on his forehead.

"He has," said Miller.

Out from the theatre rushed Brant, and out from the hospital.

"Joe," said Miller from the doorway of the theatre, "run over and turn in the alarm."

Across the yards Brant tore like a madman. He reached the slope up which the steel tubs were bobbing on their way to the furnaces, and with the shriek of the warning siren in his ears he overtook the tubs and searched in frantic haste for the charging-box into which he had plunged the cylinder of acetylene.

Tub after tub, box after box, he examined. Blood flowed from torn hands, the sweat of fear dripped from his face. He raced upwards past the moving train to a tub that had almost reached the mouth of a furnace. The heat up there on the platform that carried the rails was intense; it singed his hair and his eyebrows, it made him gasp for breath. But he found the cylinder, and with all his might he tugged at it.

It came forth in his hands just as the scrap went hurtling down into the furnace, but he lost his balance in the act of recovering it, and, staggering backwards, fell over the edge of the platform to the concrete floor thirty feet below.

The explosion that followed completely destroyed two furnaces and shook all the buildings in the plant, shattering windows and causing plaster to fall even from the inner walls of the hospital. But the siren had sounded in time to warn the steel workers, and only Brant was killed—blown to bits like the furnaces and buried under a lava of molten metal.

The lights failed in the operating theatre; but Dr. Miller knew where there was an oil-lamp, and Gerta held the lamp while he and Tony dealt with the rest of Danny's tendons.

By the time Danny was well enough to sit up in bed, the furnaces had been rebuilt, Slevsky and Brant's other accomplice had been sent to prison, and Joe Kosovic was once more melter boss at the steel works.

Danny had been adopted by Joe, and at the earliest possible moment had been removed from the hospital to his home and provided with a bed-room of his own. He was propped up against the pillows one afternoon when Dr. George Wagner arrived from New York in a high-powered limousine to see Tony, whose identity had been revealed to the world at large by the newspapers.

Gerta left the two doctors together in the sitting-room and went up to Danny's room, but at the window she looked down at the limousine that she was very much afraid was going to whisk Tony away out of her life.

"Are you crying?" asked Danny suddenly.

"Of course not," she replied from the window.

"Well, what's the matter with your eyes, then?"

The amusing adventures of a prize fighter and his manager trying to get along in high society. A story with a punch, starring Lee Tracy and Roscoe Karns



"TWO-FISTED"

The Man Who Missed the Train

ON the station platform waiting for the train, Chick Moran, boxer, sat on his suitcase calmly eating peanuts out of a bag and looking as if he hadn't a care in the world. By his side stood his manager, Hap Hurley, and from the expression on his face as he talked, you might have imagined that his one desire in life was murder—slow, gloating, deliberate, torturing murder—with Chick Moran as the subject.

Actually the pair were old friends, and it had been that which had induced Hurley to become manager for Chick. Chick, he thought, showed some promise as a boxer and might possibly do big things one day; though it was only later that he had come to the realisation of the fact that "showing promise" was as far as Chick Moran ever got or was ever likely to get.

He paused for breath—and possibly for a fresh supply of adjectives. For there were very few known ones that he had omitted in his peroration.

"And all you do"—the tones of his voice would have made an Arctic night feel like the hot-room of a Turkish bath—"is to go on eating peanuts. Peanuts!"

"But they're good for trainin', Hap," urged Chick as he dug farther into the bag. "They're full of vita—vita—vita-graphs."

The manager's eyes sought the heavens while he fought vainly for suitable words.

"If I had a machine-gun here it wouldn't be them things you'd be full of."

"Don't be sore, Hap," pleaded the other. "I don't quite know what happened in that fight last night. That guy was sort of too quick for me, and—"

"Too quick for you? If a snail came charging down on you, you couldn't get out of its way. Well, if you lose to-night I'm through—through, d'you get it?"

"I shan't lose to-night, Chick. I've got that fight in my pocket. We'll clean up the money all right and—"

"Oh, forget it," replied the other wearily. "I know the words and chorus of that tune by heart. Here comes the train. Come on!"

Without even bothering to look round he walked slowly up the platform. As he climbed up into the car and the train started to move forward he spoke to his partner again.

"And just get this straight, Chick. If you—"

But that was as far as he got as he turned round. All he could do was to gasp. For there was no Chick Moran on his heels as he had believed, and it only needed one quick glance as the train gathered speed to see his man rushing along the platform, clutching a large new bag of peanuts in one hand, while with the other he waved and gesticulated in a vain endeavour to stop the train.

"Now if that isn't rotten bad luck!"

Chick Moran pulled up watching the train disappearing round the bend. He picked up his ticket which Hurley had flung at him while he had yelled to him to catch the next train, and walked slowly back along the platform. The hands of the station clock pointed to 5.15, and the stationmaster was busy with chalk on the board that directed travellers.

"Just missed that train, worse luck," said Chick cheerfully. "When's the next?"

"Five-thirty-five," said the other laconically.

"Fine!" murmured Chick. "Just twenty minutes to wait."

The stationmaster favoured him with one brief glance.

"To-morrow afternoon," he said as he turned away.

The taxi-driver outside the station gazed stolidly in front of him entirely unmoved by Chick's impassioned appeal.

"Twenty-five dollars," he said for the

third time. "And I want the money now."

"But I tell you I haven't got it on me. My manager's waitin' for me the other end, and he'll pay you—I swear he will."

The other regarded him blandly. He was a large man of aggressive build and trident appearance.

"He won't," he said stolidly, "because I shan't be there."

"But I've got to get there before this evening," pleaded the desperate Chick, "and there isn't a train until to-morrow. How am I to get there?"

"Nice day for a walk," rejoined the other. "I'm told that the roads are swell."

Chick made a last vain, desperate effort. With all the persuasive powers he possessed he drew a word picture of the fight in which he had to take part, the consummate ease with which he was going to win, and the fifty dollars that were accruing to him when he had done so.

The taximan listened and nodded. Then he picked up an outside in spanners that lay beside him on the seat and fingered it thoughtfully.

"If the money ain't there," he said, "I'm bashin' you over the head with this. And when I bashes I don't 'arf ba-h, let me tell you. Still want me to drive you?"

Chick shivered involuntarily. The expression on the other's face suggested that if he had to carry out his threat he, Chick, would have no further interest in boxing for the remainder of his life. But he thought of Hurley at the other end, and that decided him.

"You won't want that, I can promise you," he said, trying his best to force a reassuring smile. "The money will be waitin' for you at the other end—it will, indeed, if you'll only take me."

"Get in," said the other laconically.

A Break in the Clouds

OUTSIDE the big boxing-hall Hap Hurley paced up and down on the pavement, muttering strange oaths under his breath as he kept on glancing at his watch. For the latter was showing it to be close on the hour of ten o'clock. And Hap Hurley knew only too well that five brief minutes stood between him and utter ruin.

He turned as he heard a footstep behind him. It was the manager of the hall, and his face was by no means pleasant to look upon.

"Where's your man, Hurley?"

The latter shrugged his shoulders.

"Ask me an easier one," he retorted.

"He should be here any minute."

The other closed his watch with a snap.

"It's ten o'clock," he said meaningly.

"Your man isn't here. I want fifty dollars' forfeit money according to our agreement. If you take my tip—"

"I don't want any, thanks!" snapped the other as he drew a wad of notes from his pocket, the last remaining money he had in the world. "When I want you to teach me my business I'll call and see you."

The manager of the hall turned away, but Hurley stood staring down the street. At the moment he realised the utter futility of mere words for the expression of one's thoughts.

For nearly half an hour he stood there. He was through with Chick Moran once and for all, but he had no intention of walking quietly out on him without a word. Chick Moran had let him down once more, and he chuckled grimly as he clenched his fists and thought of what he was going to do.

And then suddenly a taxi hove in sight, a taxi that, like some badly mauled animal, limped helplessly along on three good wheels and a busted tyre. And Chick's head was out of the window urging the driver on to further efforts.

With another mirthless chuckle, Hurley strode forward to meet his friend.

He stood listening grimly, waiting for Chick to stop talking. For the latter was going into a long explanation of how there had been no train until the following day, and rather than let him down he had been compelled to hire a taxi and drive all the way. And it had been only owing to an unfortunate series of burst tyres that they had between them failed to reach the hall in time.

"So you see it wasn't my fault, Hap," he finished. "It was just sheer bad luck."

"And it was mighty good of this chap to bring me along, wasn't it, Hap?" he added hurriedly, for the taxi-driver had dismounted, and Chick saw to his alarm that he was casting thoughtful eyes on the big spanner.

"Mighty good," replied Hurley.

"It's cost twenty-seven dollars on the clock," went on Chick a little anxiously.

"Is that so? Then I should pay him and get rid of him."

The other blinked.

"But—but—I haven't got any money. I told him you'd pay him."

Hurley glared at him in the ominous silence that followed. Chick was taking his suitcase through the window, but the taxi-driver was holding up the spanner, and there was an ominous look in his eyes.

"Do I get paid?" he demanded. "Or do I—"

"Oh, you'll get paid all right!" exclaimed Chick quickly. "My friend—"

But he stopped short at that. A man in evening dress had suddenly appeared, lurching along the pavement.

"Taxi!" he exclaimed. "I want you, taxi!"

March 14th, 1935.

He approached the trio with the friendliness of the hopelessly drunk.

"Don't want—to butt in—but—want a taxi. If I can drop you anywhere—"

Hurley took immediate charge of the situation. He saw a gift straight from Heaven, and he intended to use it.

"That's all right, old son!" he said jovially. "The driver's just going to change the wheel. He won't be a moment."

He turned to the taxi-driver, who was still fingering the spanner as if longing to use it.

"Be quick and change that wheel," he said with a fine air of authority.

"My friends are waitin'."

The newcomer laid his hand gratefully on Hurley's shoulder.

"Good—hic—fellow, you are," he said. "You and your pal—hic—are coming in to grub with me."

Hurley winked at Moran. He had an idea that the clouds were inclined to break at last. But Moran's face worried him. He was looking like a man facing a miracle.

"Take that asinine look off your face," he said under his breath. "I'll run this show."

"Where to, gov'nor?" asked the taxi-driver.

"Home."

"And where may that be?"

Moran and Hurley had got into the taxi. The man in evening dress gazed at the driver more in sorrow than in anger.

"You—hic—called yourself a—taxi-driver—and you don't know where I live? Just you drive—hic—straight ahead—and I'll stop you where I want to go."

He lurched into the cab and they started, but they had barely gone twenty yards down the street before he shouted for the driver to stop outside a big house with wrought-iron gates.

"This is my house," he said as he staggered out. "And you ought to have known it without my having—to—tell you. How much?"

"There's thirty dollars on the clock, gov'nor, but—"

The other broke in quickly. Moran and Hurley were holding their breaths.

"Darn cheap, too, I call it," he said thickly, as he handed the man a fifty-dollar bill. "And you can—keep the—change."

But Hurley sprang forward here. He had not the smallest objection to seeing the stranger pay for Moran's taxi ride, but it hurt him distinctly to see the taxi-driver get away with a twenty-dollar tip.

"Here, I say—" he began; but the other interrupted him with a finely dignified air as he held up his hand.

"You're not—going to pay," he said. "It can't—be done. It's—its my taxi."

He lurched up to the gates, but Hurley and Moran just stood watching him in perplexity. They saw a huge house in front of them, and it crossed both their minds that to go in there with their drunken companion was merely inviting further trouble.

"We can't go in with him, Hap," whispered Moran. "They'll throw us out, and—"

But diversion came here, for even while they were talking two rough, furtive-looking figures had slipped from behind an adjacent tree while the man in dress clothes was fumbling with the gate, and were creeping stealthily up behind him.

"Here, we can't stand for this," said Hurley. "Come on, Chick!"

It was a curious scene. The man in dress clothes was the only unconcerned one in the party. He leaned against the gate with a fatuous smile on his face as

if he was watching a play that had been staged solely for his benefit.

But it didn't last long. Moran and Hurley, unhampered by rules and restrictions, launched themselves at their task with a will. And the two toughs were only too glad to beat a very hurried retreat.

"Jolly fine show, that!" exclaimed the man in dress clothes with drunken approval. "And now you're coming right in—to—grub with me. No, I won't—hic—listen to any arguments. In you—hic—come!"

The New Butler and Footman

IN the spacious pantry of the house Hurley and Moran sat at the table an hour later, having just finished the finest meal that either of them had known for months.

Sitting on the sofa with his head in his hands, but by this time comparatively sober, sat their host, Clint Blackburn.

He straightened himself up with an effort and surveyed them with a rueful smile on his face.

"Just tell me exactly who you chaps are and what's happened," he said.

"I've got a hazy recollection of meeting you outside. There was a fight of some sort, wasn't there? I seem to remember it."

There certainly had been. Hurley told him all about it.

"Then you insisted on us comin' in here, sir, and so we did. And you've given us a darned fine meal, and we're very grateful for it, too. He's a boxer"—pointing to Moran—"and I'm his manager, but we've had a bit of a tough break and—"

He proceeded to relate to Clint a slightly altered version of their recent misfortunes while the other listened with obvious interest.

"I wish you could take me in hand and make a boxer of me," he said. "I wasn't too bad when I left college, but at the moment—"

He paused, shrugged his shoulders despairingly. Hurley signed to his companion to let him do the talking.

"We could train you all right," he said, "and maybe make a job of it, too. But you'll have to cut the drink right out."

"And if I swear to do that," exclaimed the other eagerly, "will you two stay here and train me? I'll pay you well for it."

Moran's eyes bulged with delight, but it was Hurley who answered, calmly and coolly as if he were accustomed to handle such offers every day of his life—and to refuse most of them.

"Well, sir," he said, "I think my friend and I might consider it."

Clint sprang to his feet.

"Then it's a deal!" he exclaimed. "And we'll soon—"

But the words faded from his lips, for Hurley and Moran had risen to their feet, and their eyes were on the open door. In it stood a very beautiful girl in a silk wrap who was gazing at them with a puzzled expression in her eyes. But as Clint turned sharply her eyes moved to him, and now reproach was in them.

"Oh, Clint! Again?" she queried sorrowfully.

She turned to Hurley and Moran, who were shuffling awkwardly on their feet.

"I suppose you two men have brought him home?" she said quietly. "It was very kind of you. I thank you."

There was quiet dismissal in her voice, and once more they moved uneasily. Both had a feeling that they had had a glimpse of paradise, but that it was going to be no more than a glimpse.

Clint Blackburn, however, broke in quickly:

"They've done more than bring me home, sis," he said. "I'm going on the wagon from now onwards, and they're both going to stay here and help me. They're in the boxing world, and they're going to train me to get really fit. Now come and let me explain things to you, sis. You hang on here, you two. I'll be back in a jiffy."

Moran looked anxiously at his companion as brother and sister left the room.

"D'you think it's goin' to be all right, Hap?" he asked anxiously.

"Not if you butt in," retorted the other, who was still smarting under the memories of the earlier part of the evening.

Outside in the hall brother and sister talked together, the latter explaining the situation, while the former listened with a smile touching her lips. She was very fond of her brother in spite of all his failings, and she was willing to listen to any proposition that might save him from his weakness. In addition to which she knew that she would welcome two extra men in the house. Her gambler husband, with whom she had now refused to live, was constantly calling and making scenes; all the servants were giving notice except her maid, and she was in constant terror that her husband would kidnap her boy whom she adored. He had already threatened to do it, and she knew he would not hesitate about it out of sheer spite.

"If they will help to steady you up, dear," she said at length, "I'll be only too glad for them to stay here. They both looked to me to be decent sort of fellows."

"Well, we could give 'em a trial, sis, and see how they go."

But they both swung round as a fair-haired young girl in a dressing-gown came flying down the stairs.

"Madam," she exclaimed breathlessly, "Master Jimmy's not in his room. His bed is empty, and—"

Panic in a second, then, as on Clint's

advice, all three rushed for the pantry to enlist the services of the two new men. But they all three pulled up with a jerk on the threshold. For there, sitting on the table in his pyjamas, his curly head all tousled and his big eyes shining with childish interest, sat a small boy. And on each side of him sat Chick Moran and Hap Hurley, far too busy and far too interested even to notice the trio who had appeared in the doorway.

Sue Parker took her child in her arms. Her face was wreathed in smiles as Jimmy told her excitedly how the two men were going to teach him how to box. Moran was making sheep's eyes at Marie, who was smiling and blushing; Hurley was apologising for the fright they had unwittingly caused.

Then Sue Parker, who had seemed to deliberate, addressed her brother.

"Clint," she said, "I've got an idea. Why shouldn't we make these two men our new butler and footman, as well as your trainers?"

"By Jove, that's a brain-wave, sis. What d'you say, you two?"

But Hurley's face showed quite plainly what he was prepared to say to the brain-wave. He looked as pleased as a Scotsman who has been inadvertently landed with a bad half-crown.

"Afraid you can count me out, ma'am," he said with disgusted emphasis. "I can fight, but I'm not butling for anyone."

"But, Hurley," urged Blackburn, "a butler holds a very important position in a house."

"He's welcome to it, sir," replied the other. "But I ain't."

"He wears splendid clothes, too," chimed in Sue, "and orders all the other servants about as he pleases—"

"What's that?" interrupted Hurley.

She repeated the inducement. Hurley, for the first time seemed to be considering the proposition.

"What about him?" he asked suspiciously, pointing to Moran.

"He's the footman and takes his orders

from you," she smiled. "And both of you train my brother and act as body-guard for this boy of mine in case anyone tries to kidnap him."

"And he takes his orders from me?" queried Hurley with a new light suddenly appearing in his eyes.

"He does," she answered, while a worried look flitted to Moran's face.

"Right, I'm butler from now onwards," replied Hurley as he pushed out his chest.

He drew himself up and turned to Moran.

"Now you," he said, "wash up them dishes at once, and do it quick!"

A Brush with Parker

HAP HURLEY stalked gravely across the hall to the front door, giving an extra hitch to his morning coat as he did so. He had been three days in his new butling capacity and was beginning to like it. And the fact that he could now order the luckless Chick about as and when he pleased was giving life a new zest. For though he still had a sneaking affection for his friend he held it his duty to give him a lesson for past delinquencies.

He threw open the door. Before him stood a well-dressed man with a sullen, suspicious face that aroused Hap's immediate dislike, and as the other made to enter he interposed his own body.

"One moment, please," he said. "Who d'you want to see?"

The new-comer glared at him like an infuriated bull.

"D'you know who I am?" he demanded angrily. "My name's Parker."

He was evidently expecting the new butler to wilt, but the new butler, to his amazement, merely regarded him as something that was littering the doorstep. He wasn't to know that the new butler had been told quite a lot about him, mostly to his detriment; nor that the new butler looked upon Sue Parker as something for whom he would readily lay down his life.



"Do I get paid?" he demanded, "or do I—"

"Oh, so you're Parker, are you? Well, who d'you want to see?"

Parker literally fought for breath and words. He would almost have flung himself at Hurley, so furious was he, only there was that in the butler's eyes which suggested to him that he might not come off too well in the encounter.

"How dare you talk to me like this?" he stormed. "Let me pass at once or it will be the worse for you. I want to see Mrs. Parker."

But Hurley didn't move.

"And supposin' that by some chance Mrs. Parker wants to see you," he replied, "which I reckon is extremely unlikely—you shall."

With which he coolly slammed the door in his visitor's face and walked away in search of his mistress.

But he came back in a few moments. "The mistress will see you," he said, and stalked across to the drawing-room with Parker fuming at his heels.

He stood waiting inside the room as Parker flung out a furious question at his wife.

"Who is this man, and what d'you mean by having such a fellow here?" he demanded.

"I engage my own servants and you don't," she replied calmly.

She turned to Hurley, who was standing quietly at the side.

"You can leave us now, Hurley," she said with a smile. "I shall be quite all right."

"Quite sure, ma'am?"

"Quite, Hurley, thank you."

"I shan't be far away if you want me, ma'am," he replied as he left the room.

A quarter of an hour later, hearing angry voices in the hall, he came quickly on the scene. There he found Moran and Parker in heated discussion. Near them stood Marie, flushed and obviously scared.

Moran addressed Hurley eagerly.

"Let me slosh him one, Hap," he pleaded. "I caught him tryin' to kiss Marie, and I was just goin' to—"

But Hurley stayed him with a dignified gesture of his hand. His position as butler demanded that this scene should be handled in a proper manner.

"Get me this gentleman's hat, Moran," he said.

"But, Hap—"

"Get me his hat, I said."

"If you think I'm leaving," stormed Parker as Moran appeared with the required hat. "you're jolly well mistaken."

It was an impressive scene. Moran stood there holding the hat, with that in his eyes which suggested that if it wasn't taken quickly other measures might follow rapidly. On the other side stood Hurley with the expression on his face that a master assumes when he is compelled to chastise an obstreperous boy.

"I should go if I were you, Parker," he murmured blandly.

"But if you don't want to," said Moran, "we should just love to throw you out."

"And we most certainly will," chanted Hurley.

With a furious oath Parker snatched the hat from Hurley's hand. He was uncomfortably aware of the fact that both men meant what they said.

"I'll be even with you two, and don't forget it," he snarled as he strode across the hall.

"And don't slam the door, please, Parker," said Hurley smoothly, "because the mistress doesn't like it."

A Fight Has Been Arranged

THERE was a dinner-party at the Parker mansion a week later, and among the guests was a wealthy old man of the name of Masou, who

recognised Chick Moran the moment he saw him. He had seen him fight and knew his exact value—neither did he rate it highly.

But he saw a chance of having some fun, and he jumped to it, as he always did. During the course of the evening, he approached Clint Blackburn and led the discussion gently to Moran.

"I've seen that man of yours fight," he said, "and he's quite useful. I wonder how he'd go with my chauffeur. He rather fancyes himself with the gloves. What about making an exhibition match in this drawing-room for next week? I'll risk some money on my chap for a bit of sport, if you like to back yours."

"Well, I'll have to ask my chap if he'll fight, first of all," smiled Blackburn. "Half a minute."

He came back soon afterwards.

"He's on," he replied.

Mason walked away, chuckling to himself. Only he was aware of the fact that his chauffeur was one Pinky Duff, famous ex-heavyweight champion. It struck him that it would be really amusing to watch some of the onlookers, and more particularly Moran when the fight was taking place. He wouldn't make big bets on his man himself, because that wouldn't look too good when the joke was discovered. But it wouldn't be at all a bad idea to pass the word round to one or two of his friends. If they chose to make bets on his information that would be nothing to do with him.

He met Parker the following day in the golf-club bar, and the latter immediately hailed him.

"Here, Mason," he exclaimed, "who's this chap you're putting up next week to fight the new footman at my house?"

Mason grinned.

"Your house?" he queried. "I thought—"

"Well, my wife's house if you like. It's all the same. I particularly want to know."

He did, too. The moment the news had come to him his anger had flamed up anew. It had been the footman and the butler who had treated him so unceremoniously on his last visit to the house, and he was anxious to get level with them.

"If you want to make some money," said Mason cryptically "you'll back my man."

"Who is he?"

Mason whispered in his ear, and a look of amazement came to the other's face.

"Straight?" he queried.

"Sure," replied Mason.

At that moment Clint Blackburn walked into the room, and going up to the bar, ordered a drink. Then he turned to the room.

"Drinks are on me," he said jovially.

"I've just dono the fourteenth hole in one."

His eyes at that moment came to rest on Parker, and they narrowed fractionally.

"Of course, I am not included in the invitation?" said Parker with a slight sneer.

"I said everyone," replied Blackburn coldly.

"I hear you're giving an exhibition of boxing at my wife's house," went on the other. "Am I lucky enough to be invited?"

"You can come if you choose—and if you behave yourself."

"Thanks so much," drawled Parker. "Anxious to back your man?"

He waited anxiously for the reply. He had been leading Blackburn up to it, and he saw him colour up now.

"Certainly," replied Blackburn coldly.

"What d'you want?"

"Say five thousand dollars," replied the other. "I'm not betting big."

Blackburn's eyes narrowed. He saw that he had walked deliberately into the trap. But in front of the rest of the room he realised that it would be impossible to withdraw.

"That's a bet," he said quietly as he turned away to the bar.

He never intended to have more than one drink when he came in, but he was to find that escape was impossible. And the one drink quickly became two, and the two mounted up to a dozen or so. And by that time he had forgotten his promises to Hurley, his sister, and had drifted into the stage in which Hurley and Moran had found him on that memorable night near his house. And by that time Parker had become quite a good chap and he had increased his bet with him to ten thousand dollars.

And it was while he was repeating it and swearing eternal friendship with Parker that Hurley came into the room in search for him.

"Hallo, Hap, old fellow," exclaimed Blackburn in tipsy joviality. "Come and have l'il drink. You know Parker—hic—don't you? Jolly good chap, Parker. Just bet me—ten thousand dollars—'gainst Moran—darn fool!"

As he staggered up from his chair, Hurley's eyes went round the room. He saw in a glance that except for Parker and the man behind the bar it was empty. And as Blackburn advanced, grinning fatuously at him, his fist went out and Blackburn sagged to the floor and lay still.

Hurley addressed Parker.

"And your dose will come later, Parker," he said meaningly.

He picked up the unconscious Blackburn as if he had been a child, and walked with him out of the bar.

The Fight

CHICK MORAN was his usual cocksuro self an hour before the fight was due to take place, but his eyes positively bulged when Hap interrupted him in the middle of his recital as to what he was going to do to Mason's chauffeur.

"Pinky Duff?" he gasped incredulously. "Why, Hap, you're jokin'!"

"I'm not. I'm speaking the plain truth," snapped the other, "and that isn't the worst of it, either. Clint Blackburn has bet ten thousand dollars on you."

"Bet ten thousand dollars on me to beat Pinky Duff?" almost screamed Chick. "Why, he's crazy—he's crazy!"

"He was crazy drunk if that's what you mean," retorted the other contemptuously. "But it was that guy Parker who made him do it. We'd better get the fight called off, Chick. I can easily do it."

But Chick ignored the suggestion.

"Isn't Parker the guy I found tryin' to kiss Marie?" he asked.

"That's the chap—the dirty crook." Chick Moran swelled his chest out and patted it.

"Oh, it is, is it?" he replied. "Then the fight's goin' on, Hap Hurley."

His companion stared at him incredulously.

"D'you really mean it, Chick?" he queried.

"I sure do big boy. And if that guy Parker thinks he's going to get Clint's money it will be over my dead body. And now I'm goin' to get ready to knock the stuffin' out of Pinky Duff."

All the same, as he sat in his corner later on with Hap giving him final instructions while the referee introduced the combatants, he began to regret his boasting. He had an uncomfortable

(Continued on page 27)

She wiped her eyes and walked over to the bed.

"I've just been peeling onions for your dinner," she said.

"Oh!" Danny was not by any means convinced. "Why is Dr. Davis going away?"

"Because his name isn't Dr. Davis," she told him. "It's Dr. Halliday."

"What did that man come to see him about?"

"I don't know, Danny."

"You can hear through the crack of the door if you go down and listen good."

"I don't think that would be very polite," she said reprovingly. "Do you?"

Tony and Wagner were smoking cigarettes in the sitting-room.

"I saw Carol just before I left," said Wagner. "I think she—well, she seems to feel differently now about you."

"Does she?" said Tony, blowing a smoke-ring and poking his finger through it.

"Yes. So does New York, as a matter of fact. You're going to find yourself something of a celebrity when you get back."

Tony deserted the easy-chair in which he had been sitting.

"I don't think I'm going back, George," he said quietly, and that made Wagner stare.

"Surely you're joking!" he exclaimed. "You can't bury yourself in a place like this! Think of your work—your plans—the children's clinic."

"Strange as it may seem," said Tony, "they have children in this town, and there should be a clinic for them."

"But you've got too much to give the world, Tony!" Wagner expostulated. "Your future's all before you, man!"

"My future's right here, George," corrected Tony with a smile, "in a bedroom upstairs. If you'll wait a minute I'll put the matter up to her."

He went out from the room, and he called Gerta down to him in the little hall. Five long minutes passed, and then Wagner opened the door.

Tony was standing at the foot of the stairs, and Gerta was in his arms.

(By permission of Columbia Pictures Corporation, Ltd., starring Ralph Bellamy.)



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"SAN FRANCISCO"
(Continued from page 20)

Mary began to sing one of the psalms that Father Mullin had taught her, and gradually the volume increased as those women followed in Mary's wake. Father Mullin sang and Blackie found words coming to his lips—he was singing a religious song.

Father Mullin sank on his knees. "My friends, let us pray."

Blackie Norton knelt, and Mary Blake, seeing him, came and knelt by his side.

When Father Mullin stood up, then did Mary help Blackie to his feet. For moments they stared at each other, and then she was in his arms. Father Mullin gave a satisfied little nod. Though the earthquake and fire had done terrific havoc the city had been purged. Perhaps a new and better race of people would rebuild the city. There would be very few Blackie Nortons.

Shouting made everyone glance round, and a small boy panted up to the little group.

"The fire's out!"

"The fire's out!" cried everyone, and there was a surge forward to see if the glad news was true.

From the hillside people stared down at the blackened ruins. Black, dismal and terrible was the spectacle, but only here and there showed black clouds of drifting smoke where the fire still smouldered.

"We'll build a new San Francisco!" a voice cried.

"A new San Francisco!" went up the cry, and ragged cheers swept through the masses.

"Hallelujah!" a woman cried.

Mary, her arm locked tight in Blackie Norton's, began to sing, and the whole hillside took up the refrain:

"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord—

He has trampled out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored.

He has loosed the fateful lightning of his terrific swift sword.

His truth is marching on.

He has sounded forth the trumpet That shall never call retreat.

He is sitting out the soul of men Before His Judgment seat.

Oh, be swift my soul to answer And be jubilant my feet.

Our God is marching on.

Glory, Glory, Hallelujah—"

In a mass the people began to stream down the hill towards the ruins of San Francisco, and in the front ranks marched two men, who were linked together by a girl's arms—Father Mullins, Blackie Norton, and Mary. And as they marched forward, their expressions radiant with new hope, it seemed as if the blackened ruins faded slowly, and in their place sprang up great white buildings that seemed to tower towards the skies.

It was the vision of San Francisco as she is to-day. The guardian of the Golden Gate—a queen among seaports—industrious, mature, and respectable.

(By permission of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures, Ltd., starring Clark Gable as Blackie Norton, Jeanette MacDonald as Mary Blake, and Spencer Tracy as Father Mullin.)

"THE PHANTOM RIDER"
(Continued from page 25)

maze of paths where he might easily throw his enemies off the scent.

There it lay below him, an inviting panorama of dusky thickets that spelled safety. A breakneck dash down the sharp gradient and he would be well under cover when the outlaws won the top of the ridge.

But in the moment that Buck had reached the crown of the hill he had been silhouetted clearly against the starlit heavens—a distinct target for the guns of Dirk and his confederates—and the pack of desperadoes were not slow to take advantage of that circumstance.

A smashing volley rang out, and the bullets zipped viciously about the cloaked figure on the hilltop; and suddenly it was as if someone had caught him a sharp blow on the side of the head; suddenly he pitched forward over his horse's neck.

The lurch of his body took the animal out of its stride as it was going over the peak of the ridge. It missed its footing and fell, and next second man and beast were rolling madly down the far side of the hill to crash into the deep thickets at the base of the incline.

On the north slope of the ridge a cheer went up from the throats of the exultant gangsters.

"Got him!" Dirk whooped. "Got him, fellers! And now to find out who he is!"

The outlaws spurred at the flanks of their ponies with the howls of their spurs, and the brones struggled towards the crest of the hill with loose stones and rubble sliding from under their iron-shod feet. A few seconds later they gained the summit of the promontory, and there Dirk and his comrades drew rein for a moment.

They looked down the long steep slope that fell away to the brushwood thickets below and they at once beheld the figure of their hated foe. He had parted company with his horse, and both were plunging in headlong fashion through the tough scrub that matted the hillside. A trail of dust rose in their wake, and to the watching gangsters it seemed that neither man nor beast could escape serious injury in the form of broken limbs, so violent and rapid was their descent.

"There goes the Phantom Rider!" Dirk commented with a leer. "There goes the hombre that figured he could spoil our play. The Phantom Rider, eh? Well, I reckon he'll ride no more."

From the crest of the ridge the band of outlaws saw their fallen enemy and his horse roll into the thickets at the foot of the slope. Then Dirk spoke again.

"All right, boys," he said. "Let's get down there. We're gonna make sure of him!"

(To be continued in another grand episode next week. By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Buck Jones.)

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The News Reels

(Continued from page 2)

to fulfil the order, and then sits back impatiently awaiting results.

Paul's latest gadget is a super wind-machine, which has brought joy to the sound recorder's heart. Without creaks or squeaks, which are the bane of the sound department, the machine causes the wind to sigh softly amid the white pines in "Come and Get It," and to howl with fury in an 80-mile-an-hour gale over the decks of a replica of the Queen Mary, in a sequence in "Dodsworth."

Give Paul enough wood, sand, cement, and odds and ends, and he will show you the end of the world and make you believe you are seeing it.

Power in Hollywood

The amount of electricity required to keep an electric iron hot for more than two centuries—209 years, to be exact—just about sufficed for lighting and power on the sound stage of "To Mary—With Love." According to the studio accountant, the electricity used in making this particular film would meet the demands of all the vacuum-cleaners, radios, toasters, reading-lamps, door-bells, flat-irons and refrigerators in 1,100 homes for a full month.

Judging from "To Mary—With Love," the electrical industry on the West Coast has a good customer in the motion-picture industry. Every time they trained cameras and microphones on a close-up of Myrna Loy, who appears opposite Warner Baxter in the picture, it cost about £12. For rôles requiring less make-up the bill was slightly less. Accordingly, the accountant found that women players consume more electricity in the process of filming than men.

Although "To Mary—With Love" was not unusually costly in this respect, requiring a mere 1,832,832 kilowatt-hours, it did make use of some special lighting and camera effects in the filming of sequences from the actual fight between Jack Dempsey and Gene Tunney in Philadelphia in 1926, and the reception to Colonel Charles Lindbergh upon his return from Paris in 1927. The pictorial records of these events were fused with the main action of the story, through a process known to technicians as "rear projection."

In the old days, before sound came to the screen, only lighting figured in the electricity consumption. But, to-day, sound-recording and photo-electric cells and motors for mobile apparatus has increased that consumption many times over. Electricity operates cameras, runs the sound-recording plant, illuminates tents, make-up tables, interiors and even some exteriors—to help the sun along—and feeds soldering-irons, water-pumps, heaters, wind-machines, stoves, and refrigerators.

Snoops—Screen Star

Elstree's latest film find, Snoops, was taken along to the London Pavilion recently to see himself on the screen for the first time. He attended the preview

of "Two's Company," the B. & D. Soskin comedy in which he plays an important rôle in support of the stars, Ned Sparks and Gordon Harker.

Judging by his reactions, he was not very impressed by his performance in the picture, for he spent most of the time curled up in his mistress' lap. To avoid confusion, it should be explained that Snoops is a very tiny Papillon dog. The only time he showed any enthusiasm was when he heard his image barking on the screen. Then he sat up, looked around and growled ominously at his neighbours. But the effort was too much, and he relapsed into a deep, untroubled sleep.

Like many another star, Snoops was discovered by accident. His mistress, Miss Marjorie Wells, is a telephone operator at the British and Dominions Elstree studios, and it is to her that Snoops owes his big chance. An important scene in the film shows Ned Sparks smuggling a dog through the Customs by putting it in his coat pocket. The puzzle was to find a dog small enough.

The obvious thing to do, of course, was to telephone kennels and pet stores. The production manager spent the morning doing this, but without result. The doggy establishments were very sorry, but pocket models were out of stock; how about a nice Alsatian? This might have gone on for days, but fortunately Miss Wells succumbed to the temptation of indulging in a little eavesdropping (even the best operators do it, you know) and discovered what the bother was all about. Naturally, she drew attention to her own midget pet, with the result that Snoops was cast for the part.

Leo the Lionised

Leo Carillo, who is playing a supporting rôle to Nino Martini in the Pickford-Lasky production, "The World is Mine," paid a visit to the Papago Indian school while on location at Tucson, Arizona.

Imagine his surprise when he asked an eight-year-old his name and drew the reply:

"Little Leo Carrilo, sir!"

The actor's pride took a tumble, however, when he made inquiries, and was told that all youngsters in the village had dropped their Indian names in

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"DANGEROUS INTRIGUE."—

Tony Halliday, Ralph Bellamy; Gerta Kosovic, Gloria Shea; Carol Andrews, Joan Perry; Brant, Fred Kohler; Joe Kosovic, Frederick Vogeding; Dr. Joshua Miller, Edward Le Saint; Danny Brant, George Billings; Dr. George Wagner, Boyd Irwin, Senr.; Taxi-Driver, Gene Morgan; John Ira Mitchell, Stanley Andrews.

"SAN FRANCISCO."—Blackie

Norton, Clark Gable; Mary Blake, Jeanette MacDonald; Father Jim Mullin, Spencer Tracy; Jack Burley, Jack Holt; Mrs. Burley, Jessie Ralph; Mat, Ted Healy; Trizie, Shirley Ross; Della Bailey, Margaret Irving; Babe, Harold Huber; Professor, Al Shean; Signor Baldini, William Ricciardi.

favour of their favourite film stars. The result being that the village now boasts of three "Little Marlene Dietrichs," two "Little Greta Garbos," five "Little Eddie Cantors," three "Little James Cagneys," five "Little Buck Jones," eight "Little Clark Gables," and six "Little Leo Carrilos."

Shooting the Stars with Real Bullets is this Man's Job

Bob Landers is a Hollywood "prop" man with a unique hobby—shooting at the stars with real bullets and making them like it.

His main job is rounding up the thousand and one things needed on sets for the filming of pictures. But when realism in scenes requiring fire-arms is demanded, Landers drops his prop work, oils up one of his numerous rifles, shotguns or pistols, and goes into action.

He's having the busiest period of his career during the filming of the Walter Wanger Paramount production, "Fatal Lady," in which there are several murders before a mystery killer's identity is discovered.

On the screen, of course, a member of the cast is supposed to fire the shots, but when they're filming the scenes, Landers is the marksman.

He stood out of camera range twenty feet from Mary Ellis and put a bullet in the wall an inch from her head. He shot a glass out of John Halliday's hand, and put a bullet through Walter Pidgeon's hat—with the actor under it.

The most dangerous feat, from Norman Foster's standpoint, was shattering a mirror while the actor was shaving in front of it. Foster had to have a few pieces of glass picked out of his face, and he says he wouldn't care to repeat the stunt, even though he has every confidence in Landers as a sharpshooter.

A few years ago Landers, then prop man for Mary Pickford, shot dishes out of her hands for scenes in "Secrets."

Marksmanship has been a lifetime hobby with Landers, who was a machine-gunner during the War.

Goldwyn Picks a Scot

David Niven, Samuel Goldwyn's young discovery and the reported fiancé of Merle Oberon, has been cast for an important rôle in Samuel Goldwyn's next production, "Dodsworth," in which Walter Huston and Ruth Chatterton are co-starred.

Niven has had an adventurous life. Born in Scotland, the son of the late Lady Comyn-Platt, he was trained for the Army and became a lieutenant in the Highland Light Infantry. Promotion was slow and excitement scarce, so he resigned and made his way to Canada to become a lumberjack. Trees offered a certain stubborn resistance to his hewing, and so he turned to fishing.

From then on there was no holding him. In turn he became journalist, delivery boy for a Chinese laundry, commercial traveller, gun-runner in Cuba, horse-race promoter. Then he made his way to Hollywood: A chance meeting with Samuel Goldwyn at a party started him on a screen career. His most important part, so far, was as Miriam Hopkins' caddish brother-in-law in "Splendour."

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Out of Date

A CAR pulled up before the offices of the biggest cloth mill west of Boston. A sleek man ran round to open the door, and with great concern helped an elderly man to alight. The latter did not seem pleased with the attention and pushed the man away. He removed his soft hat and rubbed his few remaining locks as he stared from angry grey eyes at a poster that proclaimed that Woolex was the greatest discovery in weaving of this century.

"Harrison, stop fussing round me like an old hen!" He pointed to the big poster. "It's about time I came back if that thing means what I think it does. Come on, Harrison, we've got work to do."

On the arm of his valet Julius Trent walked towards the main offices of the mighty mill that he had founded over thirty years ago. For the first time in his life Trent had taken a holiday and gone for a cruise round the world. Frankly, he had hated every moment of it, but his doctor had told him that he was on the verge of a breakdown through overworking. Reluctantly he had been compelled to go on this cruise with his wife and his twenty-year-old daughter Betty. Worst of all, the doctor forbade any attempt at business or he would not be responsible for his patient's length of life.

Unfortunately there is such a thing as a radio, and programmes of music and entertainment are provided by various companies and businesses as an advertisement. Thus did Julius Trent learn that the Trent Weaving Company were producing an amazing cloth known

as Woolex, and he informed his family that doctor's orders or not he was going home.

Julius Trent had been away from his mill five months to the day, and he was still far from a fit man. The colour in his face was more the flush of anger than of good health.

Another shock waited him inside. Herman Andrews, who had been only a deputy manager, was ensconced in his old room. It was not the same room. There were pictures on the walls, great pile carpets, divans, huge chairs and a desk that must have cost a fortune. Andrews, a big, florid man, who oozed confidence and self-satisfaction, was pleased to welcome Julius Trent back at the mill.

"About time I did come back," snapped old Trent. "Somebody seems bent on ruining the business."

"You're mistaken, Trent," Andrews shook his head in a patronising way. "Since you've been away I've improved your business over thirty per cent. I wish you could have heard our broadcast last night."

"I've heard several of 'em—that's why I'm back. Are you responsible for Woolex, Andrews?"

"I take full responsibility for Woolex," answered Andrews, and pressed a button three times. "Woolex is not my invention, and I will now introduce you to Mr. Rosewater, our stylist and director of fashions. Mr. Rosewater came to me with a sample of a material, and realising its possibilities we conducted a number of experiments, and the result was Woolex. Ah, here is Mr. Rosewater."

Julius Trent took one look at the small man in the elegant tail coat.

Heavens, the man used scent! The minute moustache and the hair that was permanently waved made the old millowner writhe.

"Mr. Trent, you're old-fashioned and don't like new ideas," Andrews stated after the introduction. "You've got to get used to the fact that Trent Mills are going to make Woolex. All the ready-to-wear manufacturers want it and we're going to produce it."

"The Trent Mills, Mr. Andrews, is going to make an announcement," thundered old Julius. "There'll be no more Woolex sold until the president of this company is satisfied that he's giving the public full value for its money."

"Mr. Trent, I hate to say this to you, but you've fallen behind in the parade." Andrews smirked at Rosewater. "You're out of step, decadent, old-fashioned. This is the day of big business. Woolex means a new deal to the Trent mills, and don't forget the banks control this business, and I've been put here to put new life into this business."

Old Trent was nearly purple in the face with rage.

"So you think the banks control my business, do you? Let me remind you that I'm still the largest single stockholder in this business. I've got stockholders who've been with me since I started. They'll stand back of me. I'm going to call a meeting right away. We'll settle this Woolex question right now, and settle it in a hurry. And when I come back here I want you back in your old office, Mr. Andrews." He glowered at the burly, middle-aged director. "Maybe the president of this company should have an office. Don't

you agree?" Julius Trent snatched up his hat and stormed to the door, where he paused to look hard at Mr. Rosewater. "I'd like it fumigated."

The meeting was arranged for two days later at three o'clock in the afternoon. Charles Caldwell, who was legal adviser and friend to Julius Trent, took on the task of talking to all stockholders on the behalf of the president. He obtained proxies from all of them with the exception of Henry Perkins, who held a big batch of shares.

"Perkins isn't with the Andrews crowd, either," Caldwell informed Trent, on the way to the meeting. "He'll be present this afternoon, and will vote after he has heard the views of both sides. It's up to you to swing him."

Julius Trent from the president's chair looked balefully at the people grouped round the huge table. For an hour he had listened to nothing but talk about the properties of Woolex. A great number of these stockholders were strangers to him, and it was obvious that they were much impressed by what Andrews had to say about Woolex. It angered Trent to see that Perkins was listening eagerly. He had a rush of blood to the head when the perfumed Mr. Rosewater appeared with a number of rolls of cloth. Andrews almost put his arm round the director of fashions.

"This, gentlemen, is our pussy-willow weave, our biggest number. Kaufberger and Rochester report that the demand from the Philippine Islands alone for suits of this material has kept their shops working day and night. Since the introduction of Woolex, indications show that our volume will increase one hundred per cent. Our profits, two hundred." Andrews glanced round. "I think that proves conclusively that our present policy is the only desirable one."

Julius Trent looked solemnly at the assembly.

"Gentlemen," he spoke almost with contempt, "you've heard a lot of talk about profits, and while I know that profits are important there is one thing that is more important—reputation. Gentlemen, we're not selling cloth to fools, but to hard-boiled manufacturers who want their money's worth. You wish to replace my blue serge with Woolex robin's egg blue; my honest tweed with powderpuff texture; my herringbone with pussy-willow weave." He laughed angrily and bitterly. "Maybe in time you'll replace me with Mr. Rosewater."

Instantly a sharp-featured man jumped to his feet.

"Gentlemen, Mr. Trent has brought up a pertinent point. Representing the Traders' Exchange I am authorised to speak for them. We are of the opinion that in view of the fact that Mr. Trent is opposed to Woolex that he should step down from the presidency and that Welford Andrews should succeed him."

Julius Trent had been bluffed, and to his way of thinking double-crossed. How they must have laughed when he insisted upon holding this meeting. They had been scheming to get him out of the business and he had played into their hands. One look round told him that except for Caldwell every person was against him. Some, like Perkins, against him because they thought Woolex meant big money, and the rest because Andrews and his bunch had made it worth their while.

"I suggest that we vote on the motion by raising our hands. All those in favour of Mr. Andrews will signify by raising their hands," spoke the traders' representative, and smirked as shareholders raised their hands. "Gentlemen, Mr. Welford Andrews will succeed Julius Trent as president of Trent Mills."

"But you can't decide the presidency this way!" stormed Caldwell.

"It is for the best." Perkins stood

up. "Julius Trent is a sick man and has naturally fallen behind in the parade. I propose that Mr. Trent be an ex-officio member of the board of directors, and—"

Julius Trent rapped on the table.

"That's big-hearted of you, Perkins. Considering I persuaded you in the first place to take up shares in my mills and thus made a small fortune for you I am overwhelmed by your kindness. Gentlemen, I don't wish to remain on the board of directors, and condone the production of Woolex, which I think and know is a very poor, indifferent production."

"You will enjoy the vast share of the profits that will be yours as the largest shareholder in this business," sneered the triumphant Andrews. "You can now live at your ease and receive four times as much as when you were working. Personally, Mr. Trent, I think you are very fortunate."

"I think you will be very fortunate if you can talk in this way in six months' time," Julius Trent thundered back, the veins standing out on his neck in his anger. "You're weaving for yourselves a Woolex rope that's going to hang the lot of you."

Julius Trent collapsed when he got home, and Mrs. Trent sent for the specialist who had recommended the sea voyage. The good lady whispered that her husband had had a stormy directors' meeting.

"There's nothing the matter with me," Julius told the specialist. "You're trying to make a sick man out of me, when I ought to be up fighting. Those boobs can't run my mills without me."

"They'll have to," the specialist said, with his fingers on the patient's pulse. "Unless you follow my instructions I will not be responsible for the consequences in three months' time."

A week later Julius Trent, his wife and daughter, were on their way to a mansion in the hills overlooking Pasadena in the glorious state of sunny

"Gentlemen," he said, "we're not selling cloth to fools, but to hard-boiled manufacturers who want their money's worth."



California. It caused Julius extreme satisfaction that there was a cloudburst the hour the express drew into the station. That cloudburst lasted for four days.

Bondage

IT was three months later. Julius Trent looked gloomily out of the window at the rain-sodden grounds. They had had enough rain to fill an ocean, but the rain was not the only reason for his gloom. In his hand he held a cheque for a substantial sum—profits from Woolex.

"A retired man's paradise," muttered Trent to himself. "The only thing out here that's heavier than the rain is the taxes."

Julius was a very unhappy man. All his life he had been actively engaged in making a fortune. He had never had much time for holidays—work was everything to him. Now he was a retired man. Old, decrepit and finished. Banished to sunny California, where he had to spend the whole day yawning over a paper or being driven round in a car only on fine days. If he sat in the garden he had to be wrapped up in shawls and rugs.

Mrs. Trent was happy, because never before had she had her husband so much to herself. Knowing how her husband hated being cooped indoors she sought him out.

"Betty come in yet?" he asked.

"I guess she's out with that Don Andrews again."

Julius turned on her.

"Why does she have to go with that fellow? His father gets him a job in the washing-room at the mills, and the idea was that he should go through every branch so that ultimately he could become a director. Two months and his father puts him on the board of directors and gives him a vacation so the poor fellow should not have a breakdown through overwork. Don promptly comes down here and spends all his time with Betty."

"I think she's fond of him."

"Well, I'm not!" Julius retorted. "I think he's a lazy, ignorant, spoiled collegio pup."

"Julius, he is the son of Welford Andrews, the president. Moreover, he is a director at twenty-four. He's forging ahead in the business world. He'd make a nice husband for Betty. No bad habits."

"Mother, how can you say that. He's got the worst habit in the world. Woolex! He even wears it."

"You must not be prejudiced against the young man," argued Mrs. Trent. "At any rate, Betty must decide for herself."

The clouds dispersed and the sun appeared, so that Julius was able to escape into the garden. It was too hot in the sun and he decided he would like to get into the shade. He tried to lift the heavy garden seat but it was too much for him. Suddenly a little wizened old man appeared, muttered an apology, lifted the seat with ease, and carried it to the shade of a big tree.

"You mustn't try and lift heavy chairs," stated little Mr. Douglas, who was a gardener. "You might hurt yourself."

Julius Trent allowed himself to be conducted to the new position and have Douglas enfold him in rugs.

"You're pretty old to go around lifting heavy objects."

"Old!" Julius snorted. "I'm not old. How old are you?"

September 12th, 1936

"I'll be seventy-two on Washington's birthday," answered the gardener.

"I'll be sixty-two on Lincoln's birthday. And you're calling me old." Julius Trent looked at the gardener with respect. "You don't look all that age, and how do you manage to lift garden seats and go around acting like a weight-lifter?"

"You're retired."

"What's that got to do with it?"

"A retired man is much older than an active man," the gardener chuckled. "A retired man must be older. If he's not, they make him older. He mustn't do this, he mustn't do that—mustn't take a drink, mustn't smoke, wrap up warm—all those things."

Julius stared at this prophet.

"By golly, you're right!"

"Bet you've got a weak heart."

"My doctor tells me I have."

"Bet you never knew you had a weak heart till you retired?"

"Right again." Julius patted the place next to him on the garden chair.

"Take a seat and tell me more. I want to find out your secret of health and strength."

The gardener did the talking and Trent the listening, and every few minutes the rich man would give a nod and a grin to show that he understood. Douglas had had a small store, and worked so hard that at the age of sixty he had been able to retire with sufficient to live on in comparative comfort for the rest of his life.

"Suddenly I realised I was just sitting round waiting for the undertaker," cackled the queer little gardener. "So I took a job gardening, just to make the wait a little longer."

Julius Trent was immensely impressed by all the gardener told him. His doctor had forbade smoking and he adored his pipe. The gardener persuaded him to borrow his spare pipe and try a few whiffs. Julius felt quite happy, but not so happy when the gardener produced a paper from his pocket and pointed to a headline: "Retired Pasadena Millionaire Drops Dead."

"You know what I would do if I were a retired rich man like yourself." Julius gave his master a shrewd glance. "I'd get me a little business and run it just like a kid with a toy, and I'd fool the doctors and live for ever." He turned over the paper. "This page is full of advertisements of businesses for sale or new concerns requiring capital and directors. Read them through."

"I haven't got my glasses."

"Then I'll read 'em. I don't need glasses."

Clearly and crisply the gardener read down some of the advertisements, and Julius listened intently.

Some while later Julius Trent crept into the house like a conspirator and hastened to his study. From his pocket he took out the pipe and placed it in a drawer. He wrote "Teamster's Delight" on a piece of paper and placed that beside the pipe—that was the name of the tobacco. Then he ran his finger down the adverts till he came to the one that had interested him most.

"Purple Checker Club Cleaner. Profitable."

There was fire in Julius' eyes as he wrote his letter of inquiry in the medium of the newspaper. The old gardener was right. If he wanted to live for ever he had got to kick over the traces. Julius laughed. He felt like a truant schoolboy.

The Checker Club

THE next morning was fine, and Julius announced that he wanted to go into town to get some odds and ends. He refused to use their own car and rang up for a taxi. The conspirator was driven to the Checker Club.

The Checker Club was a drying-and-cleaning establishment, and was painted like a chess or checker board. Aldrich, the sharp-faced owner, was in the back office trying to do business with a tall, broad-shouldered, handsome young man.

"Now that you've been over the books you know it's a money maker," Aldrich said with a smirk of satisfaction. "There is nothing poorer about these profits, so you know you're on a winner. Why, for six thousand, you'd be stealing the place."

"But I only have three thousand."

"Then, Mr. Mitchell, you're wasting my time."

"Would you sell a half interest?"

"No. Got to have all my money. Need it for another proposition."

A timid knock and the timid, pale-faced, large-eyed blonde young woman who was in charge of the shop, pushed her head round the door.

"Mr. Aldrich, there's two gentlemen outside. Oh, well, they're not exactly gentlemen—they want to see you."

"Perhaps it is somebody wanting to buy the place," Aldrich murmured. "Excuse me a minute."

Aldrich's eyes narrowed as he saw the two big men who lounged against the counter.

"Well, gentlemen, what can I do for you?" His smile was forced.

The man with the high cheek bones grinned in an unpleasant manner.

"You can pay up your dues in the Cleaners and Dyers Association. For six months you've been stalling and the boss is tired of it. You owe two grand. Now, kick in, or we'll kick you out."

Aldrich squirmed before the angry gaze of these two men, but he managed a smile.

"Gentlemen, I'm expecting to sell a half-interest to-day. If I do I'll pay."

"Okay, we'll give you a couple of days." The man leaned over the counter. "And that's the time limit—understand?"

Aldrich hastened back to his office. "I've been thinking this thing over."

He hoped the young man would not notice his shaking hands. "I'll let you have a half-interest for three thousand."

"Swell, then we're partners?"

"Partners is right. Only I've got to leave town for a little while. Think you can run the business while I'm away?"

"Well, I'm a graduate chemist. I know something about dyes and cleaning compounds."

"Fine. What about money?"

Mitchell winked.

"I can get that money right away—from my savings account."

Aldrich held out his hand.

"Then it's a deal!"

As Julius Trent entered the shop a young man dashed out and nearly knocked him over. The old man rapped on the counter and from a back room appeared the round-eyed shop attendant.

"I understand this place is for sale. Where's the boss?"

"Nice old man," squawked a voice.

"Don't mind Archibald, sir," the girl laughed.

"Archibald—who's Archibald?"

The girl pointed to a cage and a green parrot.

"He's always saying things. I wouldn't pay any attention to him. He ain't got any manners. I've been here three years and I find the best policy is to ignore him completely."

Julius glared at the parrot

"Ought to be stuffed."

"Silly old man!" retorted Archibald Aldrich was busy taking papers and articles from a safe when his assistant, Daisy, entered to whisper that there was an old boy outside and that she had a hunch he was a certain buyer. Aldrich hastily replaced his papers and sat down at his desk.

"I understand you want to sell?"

"Right! And I don't know where you'd find a better investment."

"If it's so good why do you want to sell out?"

"I've got to leave town."

"Would you mind me looking at your books to see how much money you're making?"

Aldrich handed the books over to Julius, who examined them with an expert eye.

"What's your lowest price?"

"Three thousand for a half-interest," Aldrich answered. "I've just sold a half-interest to a young fellow. You probably saw him go out."

Julius remembered the young man in a hurry, and nodded.

"Has he had any experience?"

"He's an expert and a chemist. Three thousand is dirt cheap."

"I'll give you twenty-five hundred."

"My price is three thousand."

"My price is twenty-five hundred!"

rasped Julius Trent.

"Sold!" cried Aldrich. "Who'll I make the bill of sale out to?"

For a moment Julius was stumped, then he thought of the wise old gardener and gave the name Tom Douglas. He signed the name and then produced a bulging wallet, from which he extracted two thousand five hundred dollars, and had just been handed a receipt when the young man who had nearly knocked him down hurried into the office.

"You're back quick," cried Aldrich.

"There's your three thousand dollars, Mr. Aldrich," Mitchell handed over his notes. In his eagerness he paid no attention to the amused millionaire.

"Young man, you paid too much," said Julius. "I got my half for twenty-five hundred."

"Why, what do you mean?" Mitchell stared at him in surprise.

"Shake hands with your new partner." The old man held out his hand. "I think I ought to be made treasurer of this company, just to keep you from tossing your money away foolishly. Aldrich wants to get out of town, so I persuaded him to sell."

When the young man realised the situation he gripped the older man's hand in a grip that made Julius wince. "My name is Mitchell, partner. Ken Mitchell."

"My name is—er—Douglas, partner. Tom Douglas."

Julius Trent decided that never before had he been so impressed with a first appearance. There was a frank, straightforward way about this boy that appealed to him. Ken Mitchell decided that his new partner was a nice old man who had probably retired and wanted a sleeping interest in some business.

Aldrich left town that night, and he did not send the two thousand to Morelli, of the Cleaners and Dyers Association.



"Do you know anybody that'd want to toss a pineapple into your place?" asked Officer Kerrigan.

Pineapples and Mud

JULIUS TRENT had an interest in life. He felt his brain that had lain dormant for weeks functioning once more. It gave him new strength to have to plan and scheme. He had to scheme where his wife was concerned. He let them imagine that the Checker Club was a place where men gathered to play checkers. His wife approved as she thought sitting before a board was not too much exertion for the invalid.

"I don't mind you going to this club, but you must promise to take your medicine with you," stated his wife.

The only fly in Julius' ointment was Don Andrews. That young man was always calling for Betty and taking her out in his racing car to parties.

"Why don't he go back to the factory and go to work?" he grumbled to his wife. "Instead of acting like he was retired—like me?" He grunted angrily. "I don't like my daughter running around with that nincompoop."

"He is nothing of the sort," argued his wife. "He's asked Betty to marry him, and I hope she says 'yes.'"

"Guess I'll go to the club—I can't bear being round if he's here," retorted Julius.

Julius was pleased to find on arrival at the cleaning establishment that Ken Mitchell had already been there several hours. Ken had been busy with a paint-brush and had done some startling work on the small motor-van that went with the shop. He had almost finished putting on a startling checker pattern.

They were in the shop, going through accounts, when the phone rang. Daisy had been given the morning off.

"I'll answer it," said Julius. "Maybe it's a customer."

"Hallo," said a deep voice "Is

that Purple Checker Club Cleaners? Is Mr. Aldrich there?"

"No, Aldrich isn't here any longer," answered Julius. "He sold out!"

"Don't give me that stuff," came the voice. "Put Aldrich on."

"I tell you Aldrich isn't here. Me and my partner own this business."

"All right, chump. You asked for it," came the voice. "I'm gonna make you a present of a nice ripe pineapple."

"Pineapple? I don't want any pineapples," shouted Trent. "Hallo! Hallo!" He hung up. "Fellow rang off. Must have been a wrong number. Some guy wanted to send us some fruit."

Mitchell looked up from studying accounts.

"I think that old flivver will come in useful. You know if we call for and deliver we can double our business."

"A good idea."

"Right. Oh, and another thing. I've perfected a new cleaning fluid that's a knock-out. It's non-inflammable, too. Come round to the work-room and I'll show you how it works."

Julius Trent gave the work-room an approving glance. He had seen this room but a few hours before, and in that short while Mitchell had converted it into an up-to-date laboratory. There were bottles and test-tubes and all kinds of complicated apparatus. In the centre of the room was a large vat. Mitchell explained that he had kept a lot of this stuff at his digs and had fixed it up here.

"I worked most of the night."

"Heey, you're a pretty smart youngster," cried Trent. "Maybe I should have paid that extra five hundred. Show me this cleaning fluid."

Julius Trent watched Mitchell take

out some liquid from the vat and apply it to an oily coat sleeve. It cleaned like magic. He tried it on a mark on his own coat that his wife could not remove, and it came away at once. Julius rubbed his hands.

"Now I'm going out to finish that painting job," Mitchell rolled up his sleeves. "I want to get it done by midday so that I can go out this afternoon and cadge some orders."

Chance took a part in the game. Mitchell took out the Checker Club van and spent some while driving round the streets as a form of advertisement. He secured two small commissions from restaurants and was about to pull into the kerb to try another place when Betty Trent came out of a hairdressing establishment. He had to swerve in close on account of another car, and the gutter was full of muddy water.

"Swish!" A cascade of filth was flung from the skidding wheels and deposited with a splash on Betty's white tennis dress. Mitchell noticed the damage and backed the van. The girl glared at him.

"Didn't you do a good enough job or did you have to come back here to finish it?" she cried as a few more spots flew on to her dress.

"I'm terribly sorry."

"You ought to be. You've ruined my dress."

He smiled.

"I don't think it's ruined. I can fix that easily. You see, I own a cleaning shop."

"I suppose you go around splashing mud on people just to round up some business?"

"I'll do this job for nothing." He was very earnest. "Look! You jump in and I'll have your dress like new and you back here inside of fifteen minutes."

So convincing was the young man's manner that Betty was persuaded into getting into the seat beside the driver. Ken talked brightly about his new business venture, and the girl had to admit to herself that Ken Mitchell possessed personality and charm.

Julius Trent was in the shop with Daisy when the van pulled up and the two young people alighted. Julius took one look and dived under the counter. He remained there until Betty had been shown into a changing booth by Daisy.

"Why, Mr. Douglas," exclaimed Ken as his head appeared above the counter, "what on earth are you doing down there?"

"I'm picking up pins," Trent said in a hoarse whisper. "Why have you brought that girl in here?"

"Accidentally I splashed some mud on her dress," Ken explained. "I'm going to clean it for her."

"That reminds me," Julius looked at his watch. "I must go and see the barber—need a shave."

"Didn't look as if he needed a shave to me," muttered Ken, smiling at Daisy. "My partner seems in a bit of a fluster. Must be rather too exciting, coming a new business."

Betty was amazed when she saw her dress. She donned it quickly and came out into the light, where she could see it better. Not a mark anywhere.

"Well, Mr. Mitchell, you certainly kept your word. I'd no idea it would clean like this."

"I used that new cleaning fluid I told you about," Ken grinned at her. "If you're ready I'll take you wherever you want to go."

"I'm playing tennis. I'm meeting

my partner near the Central Bank. Could you take me there?"

"That's part of our service." His eyes twinkled merrily. "And I love my work."

Donald Andrews was not very pleased when Betty got out of a van, and he disliked the way Betty was chatting to the handsome young driver. He would have to speak to her about this sort of behaviour.

"I'm sorry I'm late, but you see this man just cleaned my dress," Betty explained. "It was a sort of experiment with a new cleaner. If it had failed I'd probably be here in a barrel." She smiled at Ken. "Well, good-bye, and thanks for everything."

"Might I call round some time?" His eyes were full of appeal. "I should like to prove to you that my cleaning fluid can be used on all kinds of cloth and linen, even silks. How about Wednesday?"

"Wednesday? Let me think." The furrow on her smooth forehead vanished. "Why, Wednesday's fine. Come over some Wednesday—next summer. Come on, Don."

Ken Mitchell watched the powerful sports car drive away. True, he had received a slight rebuff, but the girl had smiled as the car roared away from the kerb. Her name had been inside the tennis frock, and tactful questioning on the way to the appointment with Don Andrews had enabled him to find out where she lived.

Trent was back in the shop when Mitchell came in whistling.

"You seem cheerful."

"Business is good. I've got a swell partner. And I've just met the greatest girl in the world."

"Who is she?"

"She's a combination of Cleopatra, Helen of Troy and Joan of Arc. She was the one I brought into this shop—the one I splashed mud on."

Julius Trent blinked his eyes.

"And do you know anything else about this girl. What about her family?"

"I'm not going to marry her family."

Julius nearly dropped a bottle of paste.

"You gonna marry this girl?"

"Sure."

"Does this—er—goddess know you're gonna marry her?"

"Not yet," laughed Ken. "She's the one and only for me, and some way I'll get to know her."

Julius felt like a schoolboy as he put a hand in front of his mouth to hide his smiles. He announced that it was time they shut down for the day. Daisy was told she could go, and then the two partners went into the back office for a quiet chat on the day's progress.

Along the street came a powerful open car and there were four men.

"Slow down in front of two-thirty-one," said the unshaven rascal next to the driver.

As the car passed the three men raised their hands and three small objects sailed through the air towards the windows of the Purple Checker Club. The crash of glass and then three blinding explosions. The car went down the street like a flash of lightning.

The Meaning of "Pineapple"

JULIUS TRENT had just locked up the books when the place was rocked by the sound of the explosions. The door of the office was burst open and choking white fumes poured into the room.

The two partners with the instinct

of self-protection flung themselves flat. The smoke cleared, and then Mitchell rushed out of the room with Julius close behind him. They stared solemnly at smashed windows, wrecked machinery and broken counter.

"I wonder who did that?" muttered Mitchell.

"I don't know," answered his partner. "But it's a lucky thing we weren't in here."

"Bombs caused this," Mitchell shouted angrily. "I'm going to call the police."

A squad were quickly down at 231 Powell Street, and having forced their way through the gaping crowds, entered the shop.

Officer Kerrigan listened to Mitchell's account of three explosions, and rushing out to find the place wrecked.

"Do you know anybody that'd want to toss a pineapple into your place?" he asked.

"Why, no, I can't imagine why anybody'd want to do that to us," truthfully answered Ken.

"Pineapple!" cried Julius. "Officer, did you say pineapple?"

"Yeah," Kerrigan's smile was hard. "That's what they call those little souvenirs they throw through windows."

"So that's a pineapple?" Trent fingered his chin. "Say, a fellow called up here and asked for Mr. Aldrich. That's the man that used to own this place, and when I told him Aldrich wasn't here he called me a chump, and said he was gonna deliver a nice ripe pineapple."

"That's funny." The officer looked sharply at the two partners. "Say, have you two paid up in the cleaning and dyeing racket?"

"Racket?" queried Ken.

"We're not in any racket."

Julius was indignant.

The officer grinned.

"Well, racket is what we call it, but Chick Morelli calls it the Cleaners and Dyers Benevolent Association."

"Who is this Chick Morelli?"

Julius nodded his head as light began to dawn.

"He runs the dyeing and cleaning racket on this side of town, and if you don't kick in with your monthly dues, you just ain't in business. We know it, and we don't know it; you know how it is. It's too hard to prove. And every time we make a pinch the cleaners are afraid to testify, and nobody'll prosecute."

"Maybe we should move to some other part of town."

"That won't do any good. Dutch Schmidt runs the same kind of racket on the north side."

Julius pondered the matter for a moment.

"Where can I find this Chick Morelli?"

"He's got an office in the Lexington Building."

"What are you going to do?" Mitchell asked his partner when the police had gone.

"I don't know yet, but I got a little idea," Julius Trent was smiling, but there was a hard tone to his voice. He chuckled softly. "I get ideas sometimes. Maybe this Chick Morelli ain't gonna like me so much very soon."

Fear

LITTLE damage had been done to the machinery, and as the partners had decided that the whole of the shop needed reconstruction it did not matter about the destruction; moreover, as the place was insured the expense would not come out of their pockets.

Julius Trent got decorators and builders working day and night, and when the job was nicely started decided that it would be a wise move to go and see this Chick Morelli.

At the Lexington Building he was conducted to the eighth floor and taken to a suite of rooms. In the outer office a number of villainous-looking men were sprawled around the place, smoking and playing cards. There was a red-headed typist who smoked as she worked. She yawned whilst she listened to him, but she acted quickly enough when Trent informed her he was a director of the Purple Cheeker Club. A minute later he was shown into a large room, which was more like a saloon bar than an office.

There was a huge desk, behind which sat a bald-headed Italian with sears on both cheeks. Diamonds sparkled on his fingers. Three men sprawled in chairs and all were smoking fat cigars, whilst nearby were bottles and glasses.

"Come in, Mr. Douglas," invited a man who looked like an ex-prize-fighter. He shut the door and leaned against it. Julius looked solemnly at the man behind the desk.

"Are you Mr. Morelli?"

"Yeah," Morelli took the cigar out of his mouth and pointed to a chair. "Sit down. Take a load off your feet."

"Thanks."
"Got something on your mind?"

"Yes," Trent answered. "You see, me and my partner bought the Purple Cheeker Club Cleaners. We're new in this business, and I thought maybe you could tell me what's the matter with us."

"You ain't in good standing with the association," Morelli said with a twisted grin. "You know you gotta kick in to the association. United we stand—divided we go out of business. It's like that. You owe me two grand."

"Two grand?"
Julius was startled.

"Yeah. Two thousand bucks."

"Two thousand dollars. Why, we've only been in business a week."

Morelli shrugged his shoulders.

"I know, but that guy Aldrich forgot to tell you about being behind in his dues. You gotta kick in."

"And what happens if I don't kick in?"

Morelli leaned forward.

"I ain't saying what's gonna happen. But I've heard of guys being stubborn and getting acid thrown all over their cleaning. And when that happens, the damage bills are something fierce. If I was you, mister, I'd get that dough, and quick."

"Well, two thousand is a lot of money," muttered Julius in dismal accents. "Could you give me a little time to raise it?"

"Sure, I'll give you lots of time to raise it," answered the crook grafter. "I'll drop around for the dough on the first of the month."

"The first of the month. Why, that's only two weeks away."

"That's right. I told you I'd give lots of time," Morelli's eyes narrowed. "And have that dough ready. Get me?"

"Yes, I get you," Trent stood up. "And it looks like you got me."

Morelli and his men roared with laughter.

Julius Trent walked back to the business in a very thoughtful frame of mind.

Ken Mitchell was standing back admiring the new colour scheme when the shop door bell tinkled, and in walked Betty with a whole heap of clothing.

"Here are some more clothes for you to experiment with," She looked round. "Say, what's happened here?"

Ken took the clothing.
"We're remodelling our store, but we're working whilst repairs—I mean, alterations—are going on. I can get these done by to-morrow night. I could deliver them myself—to-morrow is a Wednesday. You said Wednesday was a good day."

The girl laughed. She was not displeased.

"Bring them round by all means. About eight. I may or may not be there, but if there is anything that wants doing I'll leave instructions. The name is Betty Trent, 426, Lakeview Drive."

"Nice old man!" suddenly exclaimed the parrot.

"Does he mean you?" asked Betty.

"No. He means my partner."

Mitchell laughed. "He is a nice old

man. I'll be round at eight to-morrow night, Miss Trent."

Julius came in some few minutes later, and happened to glance at the counter.

"She was here again," Ken saw the direction of his partner's glance. "She brought those things in to be cleaned."

"Oh, yes, I know! You mean this Cleopatra—Joan-of-Arc—Helen-of-Troy dame of yours." Trent fingered one suit. "This suit was cleaned only two days ago."

"How do you know?"
Julius chuckled. "He had sent it himself to the cleaners."

"By the ticket on the coat collar." He changed the subject adroitly. "No luck about Morelli. He says we gotta pay him two thousand dollars."

Mitchell was horrified.
"Two thousand dollars? Where in the world are we gonna get all that money?"

"We ain't!" Julius rasped. "These racketeers like Morelli—they're wolves—wolves who prey on honest business men like us. They irk me. And when a fellow irks me, I'm dangerous. I'm a pretty good irker myself!"

A week later Julius Trent might have been seen in the shop of a small cleaner—he had been in all parts of the town in the last few days.

"Now, see here, Mr. Thompson, I'm calling on all the cleaners on account of this outrage. This fellow Morelli's got everybody buffalod. Why, he even tried to blow up my place with pineapples. You saw the account, no doubt, in the papers. Now, if all we cleaners would get together, we could fix this guy so's he wouldn't be doing these things."

"Oh, no, not me!" the little cleaner shook his head. "It's too dangerous! I'd rather pay up and stay in business!"

"Oh, you, too! Every place I go this fellow Morelli's got 'em scared to death. You'd think he was king or something. Twenty places I've been to to-day, and in every place I get the same answer." His gaze rested on a coat on the counter and his fingers felt the material. At once his mind went to another subject. "Do you fellows have any trouble cleaning this Woolex?"

"Plenty."

"So do we. To tell you the truth, we won't touch it any more. It's no good. Whenever a fellow comes in to us with Woolex to clean, we hand him one of these cards." Julius produced a piece of stiff cardboard. "You see, the cards tell just why Woolex won't clean. In that way he won't get sore when you turn it down."

The little cleaner was much impressed. "That's a good idea."

"Keep the card," Julius placed it on the counter. "You may want to have some printed yourself."

Julius had planted similar cards in all the other establishments he had visited. He would have chuckled if he had known that Trent Mills were feeling the draught already. Because of the synthetic quality of Woolex dry cleaners were refusing to handle it, and cancelled orders were coming in with every mail. Welford Andrews was not finding the president of the Trent Mills as pleasant as he had imagined.

NEXT WEEK'S SMASH HITS!



VICTOR JORY and GEORGE BANCROFT

—IN—

"HELL-SHIP MORGAN"

When Captain Ira Morgan helped down-and-out Jim Allen he made a friend, and when he helped a desperate girl named Mary Taylor he found a wife. But he took Mary to sea with him and Jim—and there grim drama developed to a climax in the midst of a terrific storm.

"SUZY"

A husband of a few hours is shot by a woman of mystery and the wife, fearing accusation of the crime, flees to France. War breaks out and she marries a flying ace, but back from the dead comes her first husband, who is now an English air pilot, and so does the mystery woman. A thrilling spy drama, starring Jean Harlow, Franchot Tone and Cary Grant.

Also

Another grand episode of the fighting serial:

"THE PHANTOM RIDER"

Starring Buck Jones.

The First of the Month

JULIUS TRENT looked up from his grapefruit and stared at the large calendar on the mantelpiece. The first of the month! He wondered if his little idea was going to be a success.

The door opened, and in bustled his wife.

"Up early again!" she cried. "My, but you must have stamina!"

"Never mind about my stamina. You get me some more coffee." He pushed over his cup and gave her a keen glance. "What are you doing up so early?"

"I thought I'd better get up early if I wanted to see you. You're always at your Checker Club. Julius, I want to talk to you about Betty."

He avoided her gaze. "What about Betty?"

"Well, she's been out every evening all this week, and I think you ought to speak to her."

"With that Donald Andrews again? I'll speak to her to-night."

"No, not Don Andrews. Another boy. He calls for her in a delivery truck, of all things."

Trent spluttered over his coffee.

"Do you mean to say that our daughter is running around with a lorry-driver?"

"Well, it's not quite as bad as that," admitted Mrs. Trent. "It's a sort of combination delivery truck and sedan for some dry-cleaning establishment. The—er—Purple Checker Club Cleaners and Dyers. Such a curious name, isn't it?"

"Yes, and most convenient!" Julius laughed, and then assumed a scowl as he saw his wife's surprised expression. "What kind of a looking fellow is this driver?"

"Well, he's rather nice looking, and that's why I'm worried."

"Do you think Betty likes him?"

"Julius Trent!" She was indignant. "Does a girl go out every night with somebody she doesn't like?"

"No, I guess not." He made a great fuss with the paper. "I'll speak to her about it."

"This morning?"

"No, not this morning. I haven't time. This is the first of the month. Got something very important to do. Got a big tournament on at the club and I've got to be there, that's all." He kissed his wife. "I'll speak to her to-night."

"All right, but don't forget," insisted Mrs. Trent. "And wrap up warm. The weather's treacherous."

"Rats can be treacherous!" muttered Julius, and departed leaving his wife wondering whether he was a little touched in the head.

Julius Trent went out to the waiting car, and drove to the Purple Checker Club.

"Nice old man!" shrilled the parrot.

"Good-morning, Tom!" Mitchell appeared. "It's a grand morning, isn't it?"

"I don't see anything grand about it."

"I do. It's the happiest day of my life." Ken slapped the older man on the back. "She promised to marry me last night."

"You mean that Cleopatra-Joan-of-Are-Helen-of-Troy woman has promised to marry you?"

"Yes, sir! And am I happy?" Ken rubbed his hands together in his joy. "Tom, wait till you meet her. You'll love her!"

A muscle twitched in the older man's face.

"Maybe I will, but business is business. Have you forgotten what date it is?"

"No, it's the first. It's the day we pay off to Morelli or else."

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"And you're happy. Have you got two thousand dollars?"

"Nope. Have you?"

Julius scowled.

"What! Me pay two thousand dollars to a fellow like Morelli! Never!"

"That's the spirit!" Mitchell moved towards the 'phone. "Then we call in the police department and we ask to have a detail assigned to guard the place. After all, we're tax-payers."

"But we're not paying taxes to guys like Morelli. Only—" Julius broke off to chuckle softly.

"Only what?" Ken was puzzled.

"Only I've got a little idea in the back of my head," Julius answered.

"Maybe we won't have to call in the police. Now, I've got to go out for a little while. If that fellow Morelli comes here, you be sure and tell him to be back here at four o'clock. Now, remember, at four o'clock."

"Then you don't want me to call the police?"

"No."

"All right, I'll do as you wish, though it doesn't seem wise. What are you planning to do?"

"Don't ask questions." Julius laid a finger against his nose. "I'm not sure myself yet. But I've a little idea about this fellow Morelli's reception. Don't forget—four o'clock."

Julius took a car to the headquarters of Dutch Schmidt, and after some argument was finally admitted into the presence of this great man, who had a room and bodyguards similar to Morelli. Schmidt was a huge, muscular giant.

"Mr. Schmidt, I thought I'd try to make arrangements with you to open up a dry-cleaning place on the north side."

"Not a chance, buddy," was the decisive answer. "Too many joints operating on this side of town now. It's getting so there's a dry-cleaning joint for every two people."

"But we got a good dry-cleaning store."

Schmidt's face darkened.

"Say, are you trying to tell me the joints I look after ain't good joints?"

"Oh, no, no!" Julius hastened to smooth down the ruffled racketeer. "I didn't mean that. But you see, we've got a new cleaning fluid. My partner, he's a smart young man. He's got an education, and this new fluid cleans clothes like you never saw 'em cleaned before. He's got a patent on it. It's wonderful."

Schmidt yawned.

"Mr. Schmidt, have you got another suit of clothes?"

That made Schmidt and his two hirlings roar with laughter.

"Have I got another suit of clothes?" Schmidt shouted. "Oh, that's a good one!"

The racketeer got up and went across to a huge wardrobe or compactum. Sliding doors rolled back.

"Come here, mug!" he called out to Julius. "Take a look at that. One hundred and twenty-eight suits—not one of 'em with two pants. And you're asking me—have I got another suit!"

Julius Trent was suitably impressed.

"You've certainly got them!" he admitted, then he turned eagerly: "Mr. Schmidt, before you tell me I can't open up a store on the North side, let me prove something to you, will you? Let me take a half-dozen of your suits and clean 'em for you. I want you to see for yourself what this new cleaning fluid will do. It won't cost you a cent."

"Okay! That's fair enough." Schmidt studied the suits. "That bunch could do with a clean." He hauled out a number of suits on hangers, and tossed them over Trent's shoulder. "There you are, and don't let anything happen to them," he growled.

"I wouldn't let anything happen to them. I'll clean them up swell for you," Julius said. "Thank you very much, Mr. Schmidt."

Julius Trent told the taxi to go fast back to Powell Street. He leapt out with the suits in his arms.

"Well, how about the idea?" demanded Ken, appearing from the office.

"My boy, I think it's gonna work."

Julius dumped the suits on the counter. "Daisy." He pointed to the racks. "Get all those clothes in the back room."

"But why?" asked the girl, her eyes wide open.

"Don't ask questions—I'll explain later. Help her, Ken."

Ken wondered if his partner had gone completely mad as he helped Daisy with the clothes. The job done, Julius then proceeded to hang up in a prominent place the property of Dutch Schmidt—twelve suits of all colours.

"Just spread 'em out and make the most of 'em," Julius said to Ken. "Do that while I 'phone."

"But where did these come from?" questioned Ken.

"You'll get the answers later," snapped Julius, and dialed a number. "Hallo, is that Mr. Morelli? Well, this is Tom Douglas of the Purple Checker Club Cleaners."

"Hallo, Douglas!" drawled the Italian. "I see you didn't forget it was the first of the month. You're a smart guy!"

"You're doggone right I'm a smart guy!" Julius raised his voice. "You now listen to me, Morelli. I don't owe you any two thousand dollars, and I'm not gonna pay you any two thousand dollars. And another thing—you know what I think of you? You're a no good gangster. A cheap crook. A dirty, double-crossing grafter and a blackmailer! Pah!"

Julius hung up with a satisfied grin.

"Are you crazy?" gasped Ken Mitchell.

"Morelli is at the moment foaming at the mouth," Trent was grinning. "He is shouting at his boys that they'll go down and show old man Douglas where he gets off. They won't use pineapples this time, but liquid fruit. Now don't start to ask any more questions, Tom, as I've got another call to make. You may think this call even crazier."

The Trap

JULIUS dialed a number.

"Hallo, is that Mr. Schmidt? Well, this is Tom Douglas of the Purple Checker Club Cleaners. Yes, it's about those suits of yours."

"What about my suits?" came the voice of Schmidt. "If you've damaged those suits I'll break—"

"I ain't touched 'em yet, Mr. Schmidt," interrupted Julius. "But I'm scared about 'em. You see, there's a tough guy by the name of Morelli, and he just called me up, and he's mad because I took your suits to be cleaned, and he's coming right over to my place to throw acid over them. And, dear me, you should have heard the things he said about you, Mr. Schmidt!"

"What sorta names?"

"A dirty Dutchman was one. Oh, yes, and he called you a stool pigeon and a gaolbird."

"Oh, he did, did he?" It was a bellow of wrath. "Listen, Douglas, I'll be right over."

Douglas looked at the clock as he hung up.

"That worked beautifully. It will take Schmidt about five minutes to round up the toughest of his gang and come down here. As he is nearest he should arrive first, and that would suit me best. Curious that I should plan

(Continued on page 27)

To save his little son associating with a gang of desperate criminals, Jim Oakley breaks out of prison, but when he learns that his boy is mistaken by rich people for their kidnapped son, he makes a great and noble sacrifice so that the youngster will have every opportunity in a good home. A thrilling drama, starring Ralph Ince



"A Big Boy Now!"

A MID all the fun of the fair in the playing fields at the back of Chatham, a thick-set man of about forty was leading a small, curly-haired boy of eight. They had just come off the merry-go-round, and the boy's bright little face was flushed with excitement.

"It was fine, Uncle Duke, wasn't it?" he cried.

"Enjoying yourself, Mickie?"

"Rather! Let's go on again!"

"We ought to get back home," the man paused at one of the side-shows. "Let's have our pictures taken. Daisy will like that—something to show her, eh?"

They entered the booth. The photographer was already busy with a customer, a tweed-suited youth with a sulky face. He greeted the newcomers: "Having my mug done for Daisy. I'm jest coming."

"Mickie's going to have his picture taken," answered the man called Duke. "I've got an idea. You finished, Louis?"

The photographer put in, with a toothy smile:

"Just ready, sir! We don't waste time here. A lovely likeness, too." He handed a shiny little square of cardboard to Louis. "Does you credit, don't it?"

Louis said, without much enthusiasm: "Not bad. How much?"

"A shilling, sir. You can have two more copies for sixpence."

Louis shook his head.

"One's enough." He passed over the money and gave the photograph to Duke. "Come on, Mickie, sit on this

chair and look as if you liked it. I'll hold your cap."

The boy seated himself in front of the camera. The shirt-sleeved photographer got ready. Duke, behind the camera, held up Louis' picture.

"Keep your eyes on this, Mickie."

The photographer held out a small stuffed canary in his left hand, while his right hand took a grip on the bulb which would release the camera shutter. He pinched the stuffed canary, and it squeaked out a little trill. The boy smiled, and the picture was snapped.

"Beautiful!" cried the toothy artist. "I'll come back for it," stated Duke heavily. "Here's eighteenpence. Do me three copies."

They went out of the show, Louis leading Mickie now.

"Gee, isn't there a crowd here!" he complained. He whispered to Duke: "I saw Harry jest now—staring into one of them peep-show things."

Duke shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't want anything to do with him."

"He says Jim's in Chatham Gaol," Louis whispered again.

"Harry'll be with him pretty soon, I guess." Duke stopped at another side-show.

"Like to have your arm tattooed, Mickie, same as the sailors?"

"Will it hurt?" asked the boy.

"Just a little pricking. We'll have it done in blue—heart shape."

Louis passed the boy over.

"I'll get along, Duke. Daisy's all by herself."

The "tattoo" gentleman, an old Turk, was free. He agreed to do the boy's arm in indigo for two-and-six.

"Make fine heart with arrow," he offered.

"Never mind the arrow," Duke decided. "Just a heart on his right arm—inside, below the elbow. Pull up your sleeve, Mickie—here's the place."

The tattooing was rather painful, but Duke gave the boy some toffee to suck. Presently all was done, and they went back for the photographs.

"Now we'll get home for tea," said Duke. "We've spent quite enough. We'll go riding on the horses to-morrow if the fair's still here."

"It's staying a week, Uncle Duke," Mickie announced. "My arm is feeling so funny!"

"Forget it," Duke told him. "You're a big boy now."

"Money for Jam!"

A YELLOW-HAIRED young woman was seated at a table in the lounge of the Harbour Bar, a little, shack-like public-house near the dock gates. Near her, leaning against the counter, was Louis. Duke, entering with Mickie, sent the boy upstairs to wash his hands, then seated himself opposite the girl.

"I want you to look at these," he said, putting the photographs on the table.

The girl took them listlessly.

"Three copies?" she questioned. "Come into money?"

"I hope to," Duke answered. "Pass me that newspaper."

She gave him the "Daily Gazette" which she had been reading. Duke opened it at a page where bold headlines announced:

"Millionaire Kendall and wife cruise—
September 12th, 1934"

ing to England in search of long ago kidnapped baby."

Duke flattened out the paper.

"Put them side by side," he ordered. "Here, let me show you." There was a picture of a baby about eighteen months old beneath the heading, and, next to it, a drawing entitled: "Artist's idea of what the Kendall boy might look like now at eight years of age."

Duke placed Mickie's photograph next to this picture. The resemblance was striking. Louis left his lounging attitude to peer over the heads of Duke and the girl.

"Well?" questioned Duke.

Louis went back to the bar. The girl shook her yellow curls.

"The Kendall kid had a birth-mark on its arm. Besides, it's dead. The kidnapers let it fall off the ladder."

"How do you know?" Duke demanded, gathering up the three photos of Mickie and putting them into his breast pocket. "Nobody knows," he answered his question. He gestured towards the girl, who was steadily regarding him. "Twenty thousand pounds is worth trying for, Daisy."

"Mickie's Jim's kid," she said. "There's no doubt about it. Jim married me—when his wife died—to have someone to look after Mickie. That's all Jim cares about—that boy."

"Jim's in prison. Got ten years," put in Louis, speaking in his sulky tones. "Manslaughter. Lucky to get off at all."

Daisy again shook her yellow curls.

"There's the birth-mark. Better let it be, Duke."

Mickie's shrill voice was heard from the gallery above the parlour bar.

"Aunt Daisy, I've washed my hands! Come up here—I want to show you my tattoo! An old Turk did it for half-a-crown. It's a heart—and it doesn't hurt a bit now!"

"Let's go get tea," spoke Duke. "I'm famished. Okay, Mickie, we're coming." He glanced towards the lounging Louis. "All you have to do is to say nothing, you two. I'll carry this thing through."

"Jim will stop you, somehow," Daisy grumbled. "He's sure to. We never have any luck."

"Over six thousand apiece for you," said Duke. "And the boy made for life. And Jim safe in prison. It's money for jam! Come on up to the kid."

They had scarcely finished their tea when the barman was heard calling from below:

"Duke, there's someone to see you!"

Duke and Louis were just going down to the bar lounge when the door was thrust open and a pale young fellow came staggering into the parlour. He almost fell against Duke.

"The police," he gasped. "They're after me!"

Louis caught hold of him, whilst Duke stiffened up angrily.

"This isn't a hide-out, Harry. This is a straight house."

"Put me somewhere!" panted the youth. "Just for an hour! They didn't see me run in here. Lend me a couple of quid, Duke, and I'll get across to France."

Duke pushed him away, while Daisy caught Mickie.

"Now, then, you go to bed!" she cried.

The boy was staring, all eyes.

"What's he done?" he whispered. "Been ringing door bells and running away?"

Daisy laughed.

"That's it. You go to bed."

Louis put in:

"It's no go, Harry. We got to run square."

September 12th, 1936

"Don't let me down!" pleaded the fugitive. "It was an old buffer who swanked out his wallet and—and dropped it—"

"And you picked it up?" growled Duke. "Not for me, Harry, thanks! You get out, or I'll hand you over myself."

The young man straightened his hat and braced himself.

"Okay, you two holy Joes! Turned pious, eh? I'll remember this, see if I don't!"

He turned to the door, opened for him by Louis, and went shakily down the stairs. Duke lit a cigarette.

"Young fool," he commented. "Lucky I didn't let him in on the job. See if they've got him, Louis."

Louis nodded and followed down to the bar, then through it to the dock-side road. Duke stayed chatting to the bar-tender.

Louis came back.

"Collins picked him up," he told them. "Harry's safe for a two-year stretch."

Duke tossed away his cigarette.

"There we are, then—just you and me and Daisy. I'll get in tow with the Kendalls as soon as their yacht comes to anchor."

"Maybe they won't touch here," Louis was saying when Duke cut him short.

"They will. I sent a cable to New York."

Breakaway

IN Chatham Gaol the prisoners were working in the shoe factory. A biggish man, with leather apron over his prison clothes, was standing by a bench examining the finished shoes and tossing them to the floor. A pallid young man was counting them into a sack held in his left hand. A sharp-faced convict was working at a stitching machine near-by, making a tremendous clattering.

The pale young fellow straightened up, and, under cover of the stitching machine's ceaseless racket, signalled with his lips to the examining prisoner, who at once turned to the machinist.

A glance passed between them. The stitcher quietened down his machine. The young man dropped a boot on to the floor and both he and the examiner stooped for it.

"Daisy's got Mickie," came the quick whisper as the pair stood up, "down at the Harbour Bar. Louis is with them."

"What's that rat doing with Daisy?"

"Making up to her. Duke's got some new scheme on—wants 'em both to help. I bust in on them—took 'em a bit by surprise. Daisy sent the boy to bed."

The machinist scraped the floor with his feet.

"Cave!" he warned them.

A warder came tramping by, glancing sharply at the two at the end of the bench.

"No talking!" he snapped, gripping the examiner's arm.

The machine resumed its deafening clatter. The convicts worked away in sulky obedience. Later on, when they were going into the exercise yard, the machinist found a chance to again caution the big examiner.

"Watch out, Jim, or you'll get sent to Princetown. It's rotten there."

They passed into the circular yard to begin an hour's monotonous tramp, tramp round the marked-out paths. Jim got a chance to tell the pale-faced pick-pocket:

"Thanks, Harry, I'll get the boy somehow. He's all I have to live for."

"No talking, Oakley!" roared the warder, pouncing on them. He glared

at Jim. "I've cautioned you once before. All go in!"

Jim answered:

"I won't! I haven't had my hour."

The warder blew his whistle. Three other warders came running up. There was a deafening uproar in which all convicts took part. Jim's action had caused them all to lose a precious breath of fresh air. Jim was over-powered by the warders and dragged away from the shouting mob and hurried to the prison governor, who listened frowningly to the charge against him.

"Inciting other prisoners?" The governor drew an order-book towards him. "You will be transferred to Dartmoor, James Oakley, to-night. You'll serve out your sentence in Princetown Gaol."

In the train, in plain-clothes, but handcuffed to a warder, Oakley sat facing the engine. Silent, morose, watching and waiting for his chance. He had it all planned out.

The second warder sat facing him, reading a paper.

When the train was running over the track across the desolate Devon moors, Oakley asked the senior warder:

"I want the lavatory, officer, please."

The warder handcuffed to him rose. The two men shuffled along the corridor of the swaying train. As they passed from one coach to the next, Oakley was watching for an open window. He presently found one. At once he pulled up his arm with a swift jerk, causing the man manacled to him to utter a cry of pain. Oakley felt for the handle of the door with his free hand, plucked the door open, and flung himself head-long out of the train on to the bank, dragging the warder with him. They rolled over and over together down the steep bank.

The train ran on a mile before the senior warder came along the train to look for the prisoner and his mate. He saw the open door, and knew at once what had happened. He pulled the communication cord and stopped the train.

Then commenced an excited search for the men. It seemed impossible that Oakley could get away, handcuffed to the other man. But luck had been with him—a little workman's hut beside the line had given him a chance to hide as he stumbled along the track, carrying the insensible warder. In the hut was a grindstone. He managed to grind away the short chain that held the handcuffs together. When the search-party came along they found the warder lying prone beside the track, alone.

"Don't Tell Me Anything!"

A PLUMP, good-natured-looking woman of middle years was picking her way across the dark beach to where a grey-black old tramp tug was berthed by a small jetty. She was climbing the steps to the pier when a hand was put out from beneath her to clutch at and hold her ankle.

She made no effort to free herself, but swung the hurricane-lamp she was carrying so that its fitful beams fell upon the man below the steps. He peered up at her, his dead white face showing in a kind of imploring grin.

"It's you, Jim Oakley," stated the woman passively.

"It's me, Aunt Emphy," he admitted, letting go. "Can I come aboard the Firefly?"

"I can't stop you, can I?" she answered.

He crept out of hiding and followed her up to the jetty, then padded softly after her as she swung the lamp. They came to the gangway, crossed it, then

moved along the deck of the tug to the cabin hatchway.

"You go first," said Aunt Euphy, "while I hold the light."

Oakley descended the ladder. Aunt Euphy came down with heavy deliberation. She was carrying parcels as well as the lamp.

"So you've come back?" she questioned.

"You may call it so," he answered, eyeing her as she hung the lamp on a hook in the wall of the cabin. "I've got to take Mickie away."

"He's with Daisy and Louis at the 'Harbour Bar,'" she told him. She regarded him with steady eyes. "You look all in, Jim. What's the matter?"

"Can you lend me a file?" he muttered. "When I get this off my wrist—he held up his right hand—"I can talk a bit easier."

She nodded her head. "I see." She moved across to some built-in drawers, opened one, rummaged about in it, and presently brought out a three-cornered iron file. "Don't tell me anything, Jim—I don't want to know."

Oakley made a gesture of thanks. "You always were a good 'un, Euphy," he muttered.

He took the file and climbed up the ladder out of the cabin.

Aunt Euphy opened her parcels and calmly began to prepare supper.

She didn't want to know. She liked Jim—she had liked Mickie's mother, dead these last three years.

Oakley returned to the cabin. He handed her the file, showing her his now freed wrist.

"I'd like a clean up, Euphy, and an old suit of clothes. I've broken gaol."

"Stop it!" she cried. "I won't listen. Get your wash and come to supper."

"You mean I can hide here?" he asked. "Is it safe?"

"I want a deck hand—a strong lad. Like the job?"

"Won't your men tell on me?" Oakley hesitated.

"They do what I tell 'em," she stated. "Sit you down, Jim—you're safe as houses here. Eat and be thankful."

"I am thankful, Aunt Euphy. With all my heart." Oakley's gruff tones softened. "I had to get away. I couldn't let Mickie stay along with that rat Louis."

"Duke's in charge at the moment," she told him. "He's a big tom cat—able to deal with rats." Aunt Euphy helped Oakley to a plateful of meat, then put a bottle of beer beside him:

"What are your plans, Jim?"

"To get Mickie away from that crew," he answered savagely. "My son isn't going to be brought up by crooks." He met her gaze. "I know what you're thinking—that a convict father isn't likely to be much better. But Mickie won't ever know—I'm going to start afresh. Going to change my name and get in a shipyard somewhere abroad." He paused to ask: "You'll help me get across to France?"

"With the boy?"

"That's the idea. I'm going to get him."

"How?"

"I'll find a way. I'll get a peep at the 'Harbour Bar' to-night. I can climb the roofs, now that my hands are free."

Inspector Collins Gets on the Track

MICKIE, in his little attic, was wakened out of first slumbers by the sound of the skylight being lifted. He turned over in his bed, staring up into the moonlit square of sky now being revealed. He saw a shadowy figure climbing into the room and sat up sharply.

"It's me, Mickie," came a quiet voice. "Don't call out—don't let anybody know. It's a secret."

The boy whispered, awestruck.

"Is it you, dad? Really you?"

Oakley was beside the bed. Next instant the boy was in his arms.

"Oh, Mickie—Mickie! My little brave boy!"

They hugged each other in silence, the boy's arms tight round his father's neck.

"Where you been, dad, all this time?" he whispered presently.

"Voyaging," answered Oakley. "I put into port on purpose to see you." He caught his breath. "You're all I got, Mickie—all."

"You won't go away again?" the boy pleaded. "Aunt Daisy's all right—so's Uncle Duke. But I love you best."

"I'm taking you with me," Oakley murmured. "To-morrow, or next day. I've got a lovely ship—just the sort you like. She's laying alongside a little jetty." He checked himself. "Hush—what's that?"

"Somebody come in," Mickie listened with keen ears. "Strangers—hear 'em talking to Uncle Duke?"

"I'll have to go." Oakley released the boy. "Don't let on I've been here. It's a dead secret betwixt you and me, Mickie." He moved away to the window, silent as a shadow—lifted the sash and slid out on to the tiles. The moon, hidden behind scurrying clouds, helped him to get away unseen, but his foot slipped once and kicked down a loose tile with a little crash into the yard below.

In the parlour on the first floor two plain clothes policemen were busy with Duke and Louis. One of them was searching Duke's pockets while that worthy, hands up, calmly smoked his cigarette. Louis was lounging in his shirt sleeves in a chair by the supper table regarding with amused eyes the second man's grip on his shoulders.

Duke, cigarette dangling between thick lips, asked his man:

"Satisfied, Inspector Collins?"

Collins, broad and grumpy, answered:

"No—far from it! You've Oakley hidden here somewhere."

"Search the house," said Duke. "May I put down my hands?"



"So you *did* send for the police!" growled Duke, as the two detectives walked into the cabin.

Collins stood away, frowningly.

"I'll search every hole and corner! It stands to reason Oakley will make for here—where his boy is. He don't trust you any more than I do."

"Got a warrant, I presume?" Duke queried. "It's usual—when you come bursting into a man's private house."

"I've got a warrant, Duke." Inspector Collins answered crisply. "Here it is." He showed a blue paper taken from his breast pocket. "Where's the boy?"

"Asleep in bed," Daisy told him. "Come up and look."

"You go, Banks," Collins ordered. "I'll have a little chat with the barman downstairs." A sharp little noise sounded from the yard. "Hallo, what's that?"

He ran to the window, jerked it open, and leaned out. The moon was bright again, throwing silvery patches here and there on the shabby little garden with its stunted bushes. A cat suddenly yowled and spat at some other male feline hidden in the shadows. Collins closed the window.

"All right, Banks—only cats. Creep upstairs with Mrs. Oakley and see if the kid's in his bed. Don't wake him."

Ten minutes later the policemen were ready to go. Banks had reported Mickie fast asleep; the barman hadn't been able to tell them anything.

"Because there's nothing to tell, inspector," said Duke in his slow un-ruffled voice. "Oakley isn't here. If I even get a glimpse of him, I'll ring you."

They called again in the morning, as soon as they had watched Duke and Louis off the premises. Daisy greeted them with a sneer:

"Come to bully me now?"

"We want a talk with the boy," said Collins. "Oakley has been tracked to within ten miles of here. He may have got at Mickie for a minute or two."

"Bullying kids is about your weight, inspector," said Daisy. "All right, come on up! I'll see you don't frighten him."

Mickie was in his room, ready dressed for school.

"Here's two nice, kind gentlemen come to see you," Daisy announced. Collins put out a hand.

"Well, Mickie—how are you?"

"All right, sir—thank you."

"Seen your dad, lately?"

"No, sir."

"He was asking about you," said Collins. "Only the other day."

Mickie asked:

"Was he, sir? When?"

"I told him you were growing up a lot, Mickie."

The boy felt Daisy's hands on his shoulders. Banks was watching them both with cold, keen eyes.

Collins let go Mickie's fingers.

"Haven't you a message for your dad?" he inquired.

"I'll be seeing him soon, sir."

"How d'you know that?" Collins demanded quickly.

"He promised us when he went away that he'd soon be home."

"All right, old son—we musn't make you late for school. Good-bye."

Again he shook hands; then nodded to Banks.

"We'll get along. Good-bye, Mrs. Oakley."

The Kendalls Arrive

JUST outside the port, the beautiful white yacht Trident was steady at its moorings. In the saloon were three people—a tall, cleanly shaved American; a grey-headed be-spectacled older man, and a palely handsome woman. The oldish man was saying:

"Don't go ashore, Irene. There's a chill wind—and a day's rest aboard is what you need."

September 12th, 1936

She turned to the other man.

"Shall I lie down, Paul?"

Her husband said tenderly:

"Yes, dear, do. Walter's right—the wind is cold."

She assented listlessly.

"I do feel tired. Yes, I'll lie down."

Her husband opened the door for her to pass into her sleeping quarters. He watched her go, sighing to herself. When he turned to the older man, he nodded his head as if answering some inner question.

"She'll never be right until she forgets," he said. "If ever she can forget."

"Time will show," the other tried to comfort him. "She has no idea why we have put in here?"

"Not a word has passed my lips," Paul Kendall answered. "If this fellow is only one more speculator on our unhappiness—"

"He is," came the quick decision. "Jackie is dead. I hate to say it, Paul, but I'm your doctor and a doctor has to tell the truth. I would advise you not to see the man."

One of the crew was at the door.

"There's a gentleman come aboard, name of Duke. He says he has an appointment."

Duke, heavy and quiet, had followed to the cabin. He glanced from one to the other:

"Mr. Paul Kendall?" he inquired.

Kendall answered:

"That is my name. This is my medical adviser, Dr. Walter Merian. You can speak before him."

Duke stepped into the cabin and closed the door.

"I take it I'm dealing with gentlemen who won't tell the police?" he asked. "Not that I've anything to fear; I'm just a go-between."

"Only Dr. Merian and I have seen your letters," Kendall answered.

"Well, sir, you'll have to act quickly if you want your boy—"

"If I want him!" cried Kendall passionately. "If you can bring him back to us—you can have anything you ask!"

Duke had been eyeing Merian and sensed that the doctor was against him. So he played his trump cards, the cutting from the Sunday newspaper with the artist's picture of what young John Kendall might now look like—and the photograph of Mickie. He drew them from an overcoat pocket and placed them on the table.

"See for yourselves," he said.

Kendall studied the boy's photograph with misty eyes. It meant his wife's happiness and perhaps her life—that their son should be found. He straightened up.

"It may be John."

"It is," declared Duke. "The fellow who kidnapped your baby is a sailor—that's how he got away without a trace. He brought the baby to England, meaning to claim the ransom. But he's a violent man and quarrelled with a sailor over something—and killed him in a fight. So he got caught and put away. Manslaughter." Duke gestured towards the newspaper cutting. "I saw that picture and I knew at once that Jim Oakley was a liar when he claimed to be father to young Mickie. So I got into touch with him, Mr. Kendall. I'm not married, but I can guess what your feelings are."

Merian put in:

"You know where this boy is?"

"I do. And I can get him. There's Daisy Oakley to deal with and a young fellow who's related to her. Oakley was given ten years, but he's broken gaol."

"I must see the boy," said Kendall. "If he is my son"—he checked himself

at a warning sign from Merian—"if he's my son, I shall not fail to know him."

Duke lifted his bowler hat and wiped his forehead. Then put on his hat again.

"This is ticklish work, gentlemen, for me. If Oakley should get to know—my time on earth would be over! I can bring the boy to you to-night."

His greedy eyes fixed on Kendall as he lighted a cigarette.

"The money will be ready," came Kendall's promise. "It is here now. All in bank notes." He went to a safe built in the cabin wall and drew out a small attache case. This he opened and placed before Duke on the table.

The sight of the neat bundles of notes was almost too much for the conspirator. He took up a couple of bundles, but Kendall's fingers closed round his wrist. "I must see the boy and be dead sure," he said.

"I was only going to count them," Duke muttered, dropping the notes.

Duke stood away from temptation. "After dark to-night," he told Kendall, "I'll bring the boy and collect the cash. Then we'll get away—before Oakley gets us. France or Italy."

He gave Merian a curt nod, lifted his hat to Kendall, then moved to the door, opened it, and went without a backward glance.

"A crook," said Merian. "If ever I saw one!"

"Puss! Puss!"

CLOUDS obscured the moon and there was a hint of rain in the air. Oakley, on leaving the tug cabin, spoke gruffly to Aunt Enphy:

"You're sailing to-night?"

"Eleven—or just after. I want to catch the ebb tide."

"And it'll be safe for me to bring Mickie?"

"Safe as I can make it, Jim. But I don't know anything about you—or your plans. I don't want to—I've kept clear of the police all my days."

The man paused on the ladder, looking down at her.

"I'll never be able to thank you, Enphy. You're a great pal."

Aunt Enphy, busy at her work, only grunted. "Back at eleven, or you'll be left!"

Oakley slid off the ship and along the jetty like a shadow. By devious ways he brought himself to the Harbour Bar, climbing the wall at the back. Then he sealed up the stack pipe like a big monkey, and drew himself on to the roof. Some kind of a rumpus was going on in the bar below—he could hear shouts and thuds and groans, then presently a police whistle shrilling. He lay flat on the tiles under the deeper gloom of the chimneys, listening and wondering.

A policeman came running—only one—which puzzled him. Voices were carried up to him in a lot of talk, indistinguishable. Then things quietened; the policeman was heard to go—the barman calling a grumpy "good-night" after him. At ten o'clock the bar was closed and the little public-house became dead quiet.

Oakley moved from his cramped position and drew along to the skylight of Mickie's attic. He softly drew it up and slid under it into the dark room. He called, whisperingly:

"Mickie! Mickie, old lad—it's me, Daddy. Only me!"

Silence reigned in the pitch darkness. Oakley tiptoed to the bed and put out a hand. The bedclothes hadn't been turned down, no one was there.

Oakley's heart stood still a moment as terror gripped him. Something very wrong had happened. He re-

(Continued on page 26)

Through the daring of a young Englishman and a French girl an Arab rising is broken and peace restored to the desert. A saga of the French Foreign Legion, starring Ronald Colman, Claudette Colbert and Victor McLaglen



“UNDER TWO FLAGS”

Cigarette

THE 5th Battalion of the French Foreign Legion was stationed in the barracks of Abeshe. To the legionnaires this dirty little Arabic town was an oasis in their dreary lives; and what made it that was Cigarette's café. Cigarette, a pretty, impulsive French girl, ruled the place with a rod of iron, and ran it for her father.

The Legion adored her. Her sharp tongue slashed them when they were drunk, but when they were sick or wounded she was the first to bring them free wine and words of cheer.

Of all the legionnaires, Major Doyle was her favourite, and she was his. Major Doyle was an Irishman who had worked his way up through the ranks. Big and blunt and brusque, he embodied the discipline and the tradition of the Legion, and in his rough and plain-spoken manner he loved Cigarette. He pleaded often with her to marry him, but she laughed and said she would when he was a colonel.

Life for the 5th Battalion went on very much as usual until word came through that the 17th Company, coming into Abeshe to relieve some of the men, had been ambushed some fifteen miles from the town, had almost been wiped out by Arabs in a fierce skirmish.

Major Doyle, with a squadron of Chasseurs, galloped madly to their rescue, and when they arrived at a cluster of rocks found a pitifully small group of men fighting doggedly to keep the yelling horde of Arabs at bay. The men were under the command of Corporal Victor, an Englishman, who had taken charge when all the officers had been killed, and his meritorious service won the admiration of Major Doyle when all the facts had been explained to him.

The first night in Abeshe, Victor, accompanied by a few members of his old company, entered Cigarette's café.

Cigarette looked at him, and her face softened. He wore his clothes in the careless manner of a legionnaire, but his face, his eyes, the way he carried himself—all marked him as a man different from the others.

When he and his friends had seated themselves at a table, Cigarette strolled over to him with a bottle of wine.

“Corporal Victor,” she said sweetly, “I welcome you to my café and give you this bottle of wine.”

“Thank you, mademoiselle,” he answered without interest, “but may we have four glasses, please? We have brought our own wine—a bottle of old cognac.”

He stood the bottle in the centre of the table, and the four legionnaires solemnly stood and saluted it, while Cigarette gasped in amazement at this casual attitude.

“But,” she protested, “I am Cigarette!”

Victor smiled and said: “Again—how do you do, but may we have those four glasses, please?”

Cigarette exploded. Soldiers made a fuss over her, but not this one, so she berated Victor. Then her attitude changed, and she flung her arms round his neck and sat herself on his lap and cried to the legionnaires:

“He's too good to sing with us—”

But Victor sang, and did not seem to mind the arm round his neck. Then suddenly, in the midst of a rousing chorus, he opened his legs wide and she fell to the floor. The room roared with laughter as Cigarette jumped to her feet, her eyes blazing furiously.

“And now, mademoiselle,” Victor

laughed, “if you will forgive me, I'll go to a café where drinking is the sole entertainment.”

Cigarette's anger rose to hysterical heights when Victor and his friends had gone. She swore she would have the major take away his corporal's stripes.

The next day, however, she saw him again. The corporal's stripes were gone, and in their place were sergeant's stripes. Cigarette went to Major Doyle and screamed and raged at the added insult. The major was helpless and embarrassed, tried to quieten her, but his efforts brought no results.

Somebody at the door called “Attention!” and Victor and Rake stiffened and turned on their heels. Victor's eyes widened, then he blinked in stark amazement, as a man would do if he saw a ghost.

But it was no ghost he saw—it was a girl. An English girl whose beauty seemed like the part of a beautiful dream. She was being shown over the barracks by Major Doyle, who was still a little worried over his hectic interview with Cigarette.

He was explaining to the girl about the life and barracks of the legionnaires, and she stopped and spoke to one of the men. Victor remembered suddenly that there was an English Commissioner in Abeshe. Perhaps this was his daughter.

Then he was conscious that the girl was near him, and heard the major explaining that he had just been made a sergeant for the way he had acted when the 17th Company had been surrounded by Arabs.

“How do you do?” she said when the major had finished his recital.

Victor relaxed and smiled. The girl looked down at a small piece of wood he had carved into the shape of a horse.

"Oh, it looks a thoroughbred, sergeant!" she exclaimed.

"What's this?" the major blurted out. "A lot he sees of thoroughbreds round here!"

There was a tense moment of embarrassment, broken by the major who walked over and spoke to one of the legionnaires at the other end of the room.

"He's rather like a hull in a china shop," murmured the girl in a low voice. "I'm so sorry——"

"Please don't bother," Victor answered. "A legionnaire must expect such things. I'm glad you like my horse."

The major came back and tried to buy the horse for the girl, but she refused, saying that the sergeant wouldn't want to part with it. Then they went out of the room, and the soldiers relaxed.

That night at the little hotel in the Arab town a reception was held in honour of Lord Seraph, the British Commissioner and his niece, Lady Venetia Cunningham.

Venetia, the girl that Victor had seen in the barrack-room that afternoon, stood in the patio garden talking to Captain Menzies.

Suddenly she stiffened, and a startled look came into her eyes, for coming towards her was Victor, and then she smiled amusedly.

Victor saluted the captain, and said: "Important dispatches have just arrived, sir. Colonel Ferol wishes to see you."

Captain Menzies excused himself, and, left alone, Victor smiled at the girl.

"Need I apologise?" he said softly. "Was there any such message?" "Oh, yes," replied Victor, "but I didn't bring them. I had to bring you something, and when I heard about the dispatches, I decided to report them to Captain Menzies."

"That is dangerous for you." "Twice dangerous," Victor said, with a laugh. "A firing squad on one side—your eyes on the other."

"You're a daring man, sergeant," the girl murmured.

"I had to come to bring you this," he said, and handed her the carved horse. "You were kind enough to admire it. I couldn't sell it, but I can give it."

"Thank you," she said, taking the little piece of wood. "I shall love it—not only for itself, but because you risked so much to bring it. Do you know, this is the first exciting thing that has happened to me in this monotonous country."

"You do not know Africa—the Africa beyond this hotel——"

She looked at him searchingly for a long moment.

"Will you show it to me—to-night?" she whispered.

Victor asked no more questions, but lifted Venetia over the patio fence, and in a moment they had disappeared down a dark street. They saw Africa that night—and they saw another thing. It was in both their eyes. The absurd futility of love did not occur to them in those precious mad moments.

But when the time came for Venetia to return, they looked at each other, and the stark realisation of their position came to them with brutal reality. Victor was a humble legionnaire. She had not asked why he was there, but Legion to hurry their past.

"Don't," she pleaded. "Don't say good-bye—let me go back alone."

Victor nodded, and she disappeared into the night—alone.

While Victor stood with Venetia in that dark street, Cigarette was in her café, waiting for him. He had promised September 12th, 1936

to come that night. The promise had been made in the desert earlier that day. Her anger against him had fled, and she had kissed him and told him that she loved him.

He had teased her about it, but Cigarette's young heart did not understand that he was teasing her. So she waited for him, but he did not come; instead, Major Doyle went to her room where she was sobbing on the bed and demanded that she marry him. She told him, in between her sobs, that she loved Victor and could never marry Major Doyle. Doyle strode out of the room, his face hard and his eyes flashing.

"A Soldier of France——"
THEN, suddenly over all came war and the shadow of Sidi-Ben-Youssif, the most powerful of the Arab chieftains. He had organised the tribes in one final effort to drive the French from Northern Africa. Major Doyle and his battalion were ordered to Ain Sefra to stop the juncture of the tribes.

In the barracks where the men were preparing to leave, Rake, Victor's friend, rushed up to Victor.

"Victor," he cried, "I—I have seen Lord Seraph. He's at the hotel with the British party. That lady who came to the barracks with Major Doyle, she—she's his niece!"

"Rake," Victor cried in alarm, "pack for me! I'll meet you on the parade ground. That wood carving of 'Forest King'—she has it, and I've got to get it back."

He hurried off to the hotel and slipped into her room by the back stairs. A hurried search of the room failed to reveal the hiding-place of the carving, and he was about to search the dressing-table drawers when the door opened and Venetia stepped in the room.

"What——" she began; but he cut her short.

"I've come to say good-bye," he said. "We've been ordered to Ain Sefra and—and I want that little carving back."

She took no notice of that last remark, but flung herself into his arms and kissed him passionately. He tried to put her from him and ask again for the carving, but a knock sounded on the door and her uncle's voice asking to come in.

"Come back to me," she whispered brokenly. "You won't always be a legionnaire."

A bugle sounded in the distance, calling the battalion together, and her uncle knocked again loudly on the door.

"Come back to me, please!" Venetia pleaded as Victor slipped out of the room the way he had come.

As he ran out of the hotel entrance and glanced back to where Venetia stood on the balcony, Cigarette crouched by the pillar and jealous hatred flamed in her eyes.

Major Doyle and the battalion went to Ain Sefra, but a change had come over the major. He wore the epaulettes of a colonel now, but his promotion brought no joy to his face. He was thinking of Cigarette and the man she loved.

His attitude to Victor had turned to cold hatred. This hatred found expression when the battalion arrived at Ain Sefra. Victor was sent out on a detail that meant his certain death—but he came back alive. He was sent on another, and when he came back was sent on yet a third, one that no man could hope to get out of alive.

He knew that Colonel Doyle was sending him to his death, but he did not know why. Every man in the battalion knew that the colonel hated Victor and Victor would never return to Abeshe, and this information was taken back to Cigarette by the wounded legionnaires.

In her hotel Venetia learned the true story of Victor. Her uncle, Lord Seraph, saw the wooden carving of the horse. He picked it up and looked at it in wonderment for a moment,

(Continued on page 28)



"You'll get the extra time," Victor interrupted,

A young cavalry captain is falsely accused of stealing horses, but with the aid of two staunch friends he proves his innocence and rounds up a gang of renegades. A stirring yarn of the old West, starring Gene Autry



"The SINGING VAGABOND"



Captured by Outlaws

A LONE rider was etched against the setting sun as he sat his bronc on the brink of the ravine. He looked to be a carved statue, even his horse was immobile, still as the gun that rested on the pommel.

Suddenly a quiver of movement galvanised the horseman. A sound far off had caught his super-sensitive ears. His head jerked sideways, but his well-trained mount remained stock-still. It was true—wheels were approaching! Wheels coming in from the desert! That meant travellers—more, it implied lonely travellers, for the watcher well knew that the regular wagon train had passed two days before. Here was loot for this man and his renegade band who were hidden at the moment far down in the valley behind him.

With narrowed eyes the outlaw gazed towards where the desolate hills shelved to a cleft almost a mile off. Through that pass the wagons would come and then go along the grassy floor of the ravine immediately beneath him. It was their only route. Here, trapped in a hollow, with hills rising on each side, the travellers would be easy prey.

The outpost soon saw the first team of horses appear over the brow of the pass, a covered wagon swaying behind. He set the pair of glasses, that swung on a strap from his neck, to his eyes and focused them. One, two, three, four wagons. And no guard! None of the cursed scuts from Fort Henry rode jauntily beside the little cavalcade. Instead, the field glasses showed that peering from each of the wagons were women. Apart from the drivers, there didn't seem to be an armed man among them!

The sentry's spurs gouged the sides of his horse, the reins tightened, and in an instant he was headed down the steep slope, racing over the tumble of mesquite and rock, one arm flying, his broad Stetson flapping in the wind made by his reckless progress. Within five minutes he had snatched his horse to its haunches in the middle of a score of men who grouped expectantly round him.

"Wagons, four of 'em, just through the pass. No guards. And 's fur as I cud see only a bunch of girls fur us to wrangle. They'll sure carry bables."

Even as he spoke, hands reached for bridles.

"What say, boys?" called out the chief, but there was no need for the question. With grunts and nods the outlaws, who were known throughout the length of these Western wilds as the Renegades, leapt to their saddles. Hoofs clattered madly up the steep ascent towards the ridge, plunged over and hurtled down to where the wagons were now passing.

A volley announced the riders' presence—and made abundantly clear their intentions!

The cavalcade broke into pandemonium. Drivers lashed their animals, infuriating them. The horses reared and snorted, then stretched forward under the urge of the whips. Squeals of alarm broke from underneath the canvas coverings, and frightened eyes peered from under poke bonnets, while delicate hands clutched the iron stays as the vehicles were thrown into rolling frenzy.

"They said in town it was dangerous, coming without escort," one girl

muttered through chattering teeth. "What will happen if—oh, look!"

Her finger pointed through the back of her wagon to the one behind. A horse had been shot through the head; it pitched forward its iron hoofs kicking in a last convulsion into the withers of its neighbour that had been dragged to its knees by the tautened traces. In a moment all the six animals comprising the team were a chaotic mass, half of them hurt, all of them struggling, traces snapping, the driver shouting, and through it all the cries of girls, the crack of six-guns, the splintering of coachwork.

Back of this squirming tangle, a wagon swung out of line. The driver tugged at the reins until it had cleared the wreckage; then managed somehow to release one hand and snatch up a carbine propped against his seat. He swung it towards the encircling horsemen.

"The cursed Renegades," he snarled: fired and growled his pleasure to see one of the attackers tumble headlong from his saddle and roll over and over in the dust.

But the broncs of the Renegades were faster than the harness horses. Firing, not so much to hurt as to frighten—since their enemies were a bunch of beautiful and helpless girls—the outlaws, laughing and shouting, closed in. The train was soon surrounded, and restive horses were being held while revolvers covered drivers and passengers.

"Git out, all o' ya," came the chief's brusque command.

Resistance was futile. Hands reached out and gripped slim wrists, a pull and one of the girls was in rough arms. The others were swept out in

similar manner to the accompaniment of piercing screams. These girls from the towns knew the character of the men of the mountains and abandoned hope of escape. One of them, known as Honey, glanced fearfully round at darkening landscape. The timbered slopes seemed to crowd down ominously over the scene; she struggled in the grasp of a powerful fellow who had switched his rifle round to his back in order to lift her to the ground.

"You beast!" she spat at him, but the only answer she got was to have her chin tilted upwards as her captor laughed into her eyes.

"Purty lips to talk thataways to a man," he elided uncouthly. "I must teach 'em to be kinder like."

The girls were corralled in a human blockade of outlaws.

"Well, boys," said the boss with heavy jocularly. "what'll we do with the loot? It's a tidy bunch." His eyes rested appreciatively on one of the girls, a dainty sight he thought her in her striped gown and bonnet, slim and pretty, none the less attractive because of the look of horror in her shrinking eyes. "I'll look after you, me dear," he had said.

Everyone grew tense. Down the trail sounds broke into the scene. The hillsides began to echo the flying feet of horses pushed to their extremity.

"The scouts!" It was a yell from the leader. "On yer hosses!"

It was the way of the West in the 'sixties to fight from the saddle. The outlaws' brones—for they were hardly broken, many of them—were fleet, and the men could handle them adroitly. Almost before the command was ripped out all were in the saddle and had turned, not towards the fastnesses of the heights, but to face the new foe.

On they came, the men of the United States Army from Fort Henry, whose toilsome job it was to watch over travellers through this Bad Man's Land. They had learned of the foolish theatrical manager who, having missed the big wagon train, had decided to make San Francisco on his own in order to keep an engagement with his beauty chorus. The scouts knew the Renegades were out, and, headed by Captain Tex, had ridden madly in the wake of the unguarded wagons.

They were bearing down now—only just in time.

"At 'em, boys. No quarter," Captain Tex had said hardly above level voice. Every man there knew his job, knew his leader: would carry out the one and follow the other as far as Hell's gates and through. Low over their horses' necks they leaned, hands steady on the reins, no quiver of fear to shake the trueness of their aim as soon as they were within shooting range.

A score of guns barked. "Got 'im!" muttered Frog. "That bucco jumped so high he had time to say his prayers before he lauded." He was the wag of the company—and none the less efficient and loyal because of that.

No one laughed. Grim work was on hand. Captain Tex, as he emptied his revolver and plunged on, had a shiver of alarm—not because of the guns still snarling about him or thought of the hand-to-hand tussle that was imminent; it was because his eye had caught sight of a horseless wagon that had slowly commenced to move of its own volition down the slope. He knew this gorge well; where the ground fell away yonder beside the trail, it dipped at an ever-increasing angle to the brink of a precipice. Over that edge was

a sheer drop on to rocks. The wagon was slowly rolling that way. And in it he could see several of the girls!

"Doggone it," he growled between clenched teeth, "how'll I stop that?"

Nothing could be done at the moment; he was in the midst of the outlaws, fighting desperately. On, hit the ground with his face, another toppled, stunned by a blow from the butt-end of his pistol, and then, with a calculating glance as if to assure himself his men could more than hold their own, he was away—away like the wind on Champion, the fastest horse in all California, in the dusty wake of the un-horsed wagon which by now was hurtling drunkenly down the incline towards the precipice.

Humbled Pride

IT looked as though gravity was going to beat the best that Champion could do, but the gallant horse, maddened by unaccustomed spurring, stretched out to the last ounce of his strength, crept inch by inch nearer to the runaway lumbering vehicle that threatened every moment to turn turtle.

"Wish it would," Tex thought fleetingly. "Better that than the precipice." But the wagon flung onwards, ever faster, with the captain straining in its wake.

He yelled after it. Grasping the stays of the cover, faces peered out at him, the fear of death in wild eyes that were made for lighter use.

"I'll get you," he shouted, hardly daring to hope he might. But he was nearly up to the tailboard that flung itself every way, following the gyrations of the vehicle. Suddenly, those inside saw him stand in his saddle, held their breath as he made a flying leap from his horse to grab a stanchion and hang, half on, half off the bucking-board. Then he was up on his feet, had grabbed the nearest of the show girls and, quick as thought, had flung both himself and her out into the air. The girl shut her eyes, awaiting the impact, thinking her last moment had come, but Tex's brain was running smoothly and as they fell he twisted her into the upper position and himself took the shock of the earth. Over and over they rolled; then leaving her he was up again, and, never touching stirrup, had vaulted into the saddle of Champion, who, as though he knew what was expected of him, had come to his master's side, heavily breathing and almost spent. Spurs and knees urged him again into the chase—a mad, seemingly hopeless pursuit of the racing, rolling wagon.

No time now to get aboard; the precipice was looming near, a score of yards away.

"Jump!" he cried to the two remaining girls within.

Side by side at furious pace the wagon and the rider sped towards death. One girl leapt; Tex caught her and with barest let-up in the hurricane speed of Champion, slid her to the ground. Leaving her bowling, he held out his arms for the remaining girl. She in turn leapt—and thus Lettie Morgan, principal show girl, came violently into the arms of Captain Tex.

Right on the brink of the ravine Champion came to a standstill, his forefeet dug into the loose earth, and Tex took in deep breaths to recover, hardly aware of the fragile slip of womanhood lying against his breast. Fainted, he supposed. Good!

But Lettie was very much alive. She had made no cry during the few minutes she was held in the grasp of

this man who had snatched her from certain death. Once she looked up as they stood there. She saw the edge of the precipice, saw the heavy wagon go over, for an instant noticed how it crashed against a jutting rock before it disappeared out of sight. Its shattering progress was announced to her reeling senses by the rip and grind of breaking timber and the screech of tearing canvas and that final bump as it landed at length, little more than splinters, far beyond their vision at the bottom of the precipice.

It was too early for her to speak, hardly to think of the disaster from which this man had snatched her. She lay quiet in his hold as he turned Champion and raced back to the scene of the fray.

The fight was over, the brigands put to flight. Lettie shuddered at the signs of the recent battle that were all around her—horses lying dead upon their sides, three men for ever mute, one still squirming from side to side in final agony. It was hard to pity them, fresh as she was from their clutches, saved so miraculously by this handsome leader of the scouts. She stood regarding him for a moment while he gave instructions to his men. Heedless of his absorption in his job she walked across and touched his arm. He turned abruptly.

"I haven't had a chance to thank you," she said, "for saving my life." Her eyes shone up into his.

The response was not what she expected.

"Why should you bunch of females expect the United States Army to drop everything and ride to save you from your foolishness?"

The words whipped Lettie's pride. Her eyes blazed.

"I didn't ask you to save me," she flamed.

"We've enough to do without a bundle of stupid women crossing the border unprotected. Don't you understand the risk?"

"I know when I meet a bully!" Tex shrugged. Women meant nothing to him, his job everything. He tilted his Stetson over his eyes and moved off among his men. Very soon he gave the order to ride.

"Let each man take one of these women in front of him and get back to the fort," he ordered. "As for you," he said, turning to Lettie, "you ride with me." His tone was brusque, the voice of a man who expected to be obeyed. It riled Lettie.

"I'd rather walk," she stormed.

"Right," said Tex, "walk!" He watched the men mount, saw the girls swung up to the saddles; then with no more ado he turned Champion's head back to the fort. The others followed. And as they went they broke into the song they always sang when out on the march:

"We are the Singing Vagabonds." With no more regard to Lettie, the troop moved off. Tex led. He sang with the rest. Out of a corner of his eye he noticed that slim beauty who had flung her defiance at him—Lettie—walked beside his horse. Her head was held high, her mouth tight. She strode proudly—like a queen.

A mile and she was stumbling; no one took any notice of her. She fell behind the eavalcade, tripped to her knees, scrambled up and ran on. Her mind visualised herself left alone, with the troop gone ahead. Darkness was near. Still Tex sang with his men—and rode with his eyes staring ahead.

At length a small voice came up to him.

"I'm sorry, Captain Tex. May I ride with you?" Lettie could go no farther on the urge of her pride, her strength had failed her.

"Sure; didn't I ask you?" He smiled, he reached down, he seized one wrist of hers and swung her easily beside him. The troop had not halted in its stride, had not faltered in its song.

"We are the Singing Vagabonds."
They rode on to Fort Henry.

The Impostor

AS to Tex, so to all the members of the Show Girls Company, Lettie Morgan was sailing under false colours. She was not really the leading lady. Events had made her assume that rôle.

The night the company had set out on this hazardous trip to San Francisco, Lettie had been seated in a box at the theatre where a minstrel troupe had been performing. She was in love with one of the company, a handsome ne'er-do-well, named Larry, who had been quick to realise the value of the girl's infatuation. Was she not Lettie Morgan, heiress of the late millionaire? He encouraged her girlish affection and she was so obsessed by his impassioned avowals that neither her aunt nor the austere Judge Lane (who had proposed for her hand), both of whom were with her in the box, could dissuade her from going to Larry's dressing-room. Romance called to her. She was ready to renounce her high position and seek a life with Larry away from the restrictions with which her punctilious aunt hedged her about.

But the lovers had hardly embraced when into the shabby dressing-room walked the aunt, unannounced. Judge Lane was with her.

The lady spoke abruptly.

"Lettie," she said. "I've tried to keep this from you. I loved you, you have been everything to me, having no daughter of my own. But the time has come to tell you the truth and I think this is the moment to impart it. You have considered yourself a great heiress. You are not. Your father left nothing. For all the years since he died you have lived on my bounty."

It was a shock, but Lettie was loyal to her word to Larry.

"What does money matter?" she cried scathingly. "Do you think Larry and I care?"

"That is for the gentleman to say—and you," snapped the aunt, and walked from the room.

Lettie turned impulsively to her lover. "As if we care!" she repeated contemptuously.

Larry fumbled with his words. "You see, my dear," he said weakly, "I've nothing to—er—offer you."

"But you'll make good. You were just wonderful to-night. Oh, but we'll be all right. And do you think I mind if we have to struggle?"

"It may be a long while before—before—" He stumbled to a stop, confused, hesitant. The truth that the money did count with him was written in his eyes. She stared at him aghast for one long moment; then she had grasped the humiliating fact. Her imagined wealth, not she herself, had captivated him. She shrank away in her disillusionment, and only the Morgan pride kept her head high as she made for the door.

"So my aunt was right," she scoffed at him. "A fortune hunter!"

"See here, sweetheart—" he began, thinking that surely there must be some mistake. But she shot out a silencing hand.

"Good-bye!" she said imperiously though she felt at the moment that her heart would break. Haughtily she passed through the door, heeding nothing of his forward rush to intercept her, went from the theatre out into the night, clad only in her evening gown, her hair flying in the wind. One thing she knew; she could not return to the box where her aunt awaited her. She rushed into the streets. And as she emerged hurriedly on to the sidewalk she bumped into an elderly woman carrying so many parcels that it seemed she must be

moving with all her belongings. She was. She was about to join the company of Show Girls bound for San Francisco.

"Let me help you," said Lettie, and gathering up some fallen packages struggled along with the woman towards where a buggy was drawn up beside a hotel.

The manager was worried, not so much about the absence of the elderly lady of the troupe, but owing to the fact that the new leading lady (whom he had not yet met) had not arrived on schedule.

"Ah, here she is," he cried, seeing the woman running up in company with Lettie. "We've been waiting for you," he said a bit sternly. "Get in."

Lettie was nonplussed. But here was a party of good people, and suddenly she remembered she was an orphan, poor and with nowhere to go unless she returned to accept the charity of her stern aunt. She got into the vehicle, ready to take whatever the future had in store for her.

One accomplishment Lettie had to help her carry through her imposture as leading lady of these Show Girls. She could sing. So she was not afraid when Colonel Seward, in command of the Henry Post, suggested almost as soon as the rescued company were safely inside that they should stage their show for the benefit of his staff.

"Some of my own men might assist," he smiled. "We amuse ourselves here between the work."

It was a great show. The girls were lovely and were not chary with their smiles. The scouts joined in—and Letty found herself singing with Captain Tex. He had a wonderfully sympathetic voice and they harmonised well in a haunting number called "The Honeymoon Trail,"



The ugly weapon buried itself in the ground a foot away from Frog's face

which seemed rightly to belong to the night and the lone lands in which they were. A pleasant interlude after the dangers and thrills of the fight with the renegades.

Their number concluded, Tex led her into an ante-room, and as they sat he sang again the refrain—with a meaning that was obvious enough. He had never been in love with a woman before, but the grace and white charm of Lettie had obsessed him.

"Why shouldn't we—you and I—follow that honeymoon trail, Lettie?" he begged.

It broke the spell to the cultured girl from the town.

"I am not interested in your song," she said curtly, rising.

"You don't—care?"

"Only to go," she replied, and stamped from the room to seek her own quarters.

Tex went out on to the porch. It was a fine night and for a few minutes he stood thinking of this girl he had come to love. From the door he had a clear view into the corral where the horses were. Suddenly he started. In the dim light he saw a figure no more substantial than a ghost loom against the gate, lift the latch and dart away again—inside. Whinnings followed, and then—

"Gee, what's wrong?" he muttered, the girl forgotten, only the impending danger in his mind. For out from the gate came first one horse and, before he could grasp just what was happening, a dozen, a score, fifty horses were stampeding out into the night away from the corral, off to the open plain. The clatter of hoofs drowned his involuntary cry. The Post mustn't lose their horses; it was like being cut off from the world, impotent to carry on the work!

Tex bounded from the door, rushed to where Champion still stood in his own stable. Within a minute he had thrown the saddle over the high withers and had leapt on to his back. With no time to rouse the others, who were still enjoying the noisy performance in the big mess-room, he swung his horse into the trail the stampede had taken.

It was the wildest ride he had ever taken, even including his chase to-day after the runaway wagon. He dug his spurs into Champion, urged him on with soft words and threats, even lashed him with the reins. He must overtake the runaways. What had caused them to bolt?

For a mile he raced, flying like the wind—and Champion was the fastest horse in all the State. The fifty ahead sensed pursuit and stretched their necks, striding free with no human on their backs, rushing headlong for the wilds. Standing in his long stirrups, never touching his saddle, his head bent low forward, Tex urged his horse on. Champion laid down to it, his belly level with the ground, his hoofs beating a rhythmic tattoo on the hard ground. A grunt of satisfaction escaped Tex as he drew level with the last of the runaways, but he must get ahead in order to turn them in their impetuous flight. Gradually he passed first one then another, like a winner in a race coming up from the neck. On and on, over the uneven surface, jumping a patch of mesquite, plunging through the long sedge grass, nearer and nearer, yard by yard, towards the head of the bunch of wild and screaming animals, he rode, reins loose, his body one with his horse.

He did not hear the pound of other hoofs behind him, for his whole attention was on the job in hand.

"Whoop, whoop!" he yelled, pantingly, seeking to turn the leaders. He was abreast of them now, twirled Champion at them, heading them off.

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The leaders swerved snorted, whinnied, flung up on their hind legs and then settled again on their new course.

But Tex had them in hand. He gave Champion a final urge, circled across the noses of two who held the lead, brushed them, pushed them even at that mad pace and swung them back towards the way they had come.

Now he became aware of his following. Good; here was assistance! At the fort, someone had raised the alarm which he had had no time to do. Thank heaven the horses were saved!

He turned to watch the uninformed men circling round the mill of restive frightened animals. There were a dozen riders and Tex set about assisting to string out the panting horses and drive them back, but he was interrupted. Two of his colleagues, grin of feature, ranged themselves on either side of him and one shot out a hand to grab his shoulder.

"What's up?" demanded Tex, not comprehending.

"I arrest you, Captain Tex Antry," was the startling response.

"Arrest me?" cried Tex aghast.

"What the heck for?"

"Treason! It has been reported to Colonel Seward that you drove out the horses."

"But they stampeded. Someone had opened the gate of the corral. I followed. Who dares to say I drove them out? And for what purpose?"

"I only do my duty. You must answer to the colonel. Ride."

Tex was furious and snapped out angry questions, trying to get the hang of it, but his captors refused to speak all the long way back, as they rode behind the dead-beat horses to the fort. He was taken straight into the colonel's presence and it was no help to Tex to find the interview was not to be private. All his colleagues—his own scouts—were there, and all the members of the Show Girl company, a silent crowd who threw queer glances towards him as he stood between his captors, held by each arm. Lettie was there, too, queerly distraught but offering no glance that meant encouragement.

There was no beating about the bush with Colonel Seward. He had always liked Tex, knew his worth as an officer, fearless and with a lightning brain in an emergency, but to him the first tenet of his code was discipline.

"Why did you try to steal the horses?" he rapped out.

"I was trying to rescue them. They stampeded, sir."

A cynical grin spread over the face of one man present. It was a tall officer of the fort whose swarthy complexion and heavy jaw showed there was Indian blood in his veins. He overtopped everyone else, and Tex saw the leer of triumph about the cruel lips as he stroked his chin with talon-like fingers. Utah Joe, as he was known, was watching the proceedings with an evil relish.

"The captain," he said softly, "is in league with the Indians. Only yesterday I overheard him speaking to one of his feathered friends and the talk was of horses. Can he deny that? He knows I was present—accidentally."

"It may be," put in the colonel, "that a man of this company needs to speak with the Indians now and then. What is important is that the prisoner was seen behind the horses driving them out." He turned to Lettie, and to Tex's amazement asked her to speak.

"What did you do, my dear, after your song with the prisoner?"

"I went to my room, Colonel, and stood looking out into the moonlight."

"Did you see the prisoner?"

Lottie nodded. She squared her deli-

cate shoulders and, steeled herself to speak the words she knew would condemn this man. She told herself it was what he deserved having dared to make love to her. Uncouth he was, calling her a fool.

"You have told us you saw him riding. Was he in front of the horses trying to stop them or behind them—driving them?"

"He was behind them."

Utah Joe smirked; he had always hated Tex, loathed his popularity. He would be in charge of the scouts if—anything happened to the captain.

"I told you, Colonel—" he began, but the old soldier silenced him with a glance and turned to Tex.

"You will be held for court martial," he announced shortly. "Take him away."

Tex was silent. He did not look at the girl who had denounced him, but walked stiffly from the room between his gaolers. They took him to a cell whose iron bars afforded a view across the barrack square. He sat gazing into the night, his thoughts busy. Had Lettie been mistaken or had she deliberately lied to obtain his conviction? Did she hate him so much? Why?

Only later did it cross his mind how deadly a position he was in.

He knew the sentence for all traitors was death.

"You Will be Shot at Dawn"

FROM his prison window two days later Tex saw a train of wagons enter the square. An aristocratic woman was helped descend by a man obviously from the town since he wore a black-tailed coat with breeches and boots. His very civat bespoke wealth and fashion, and his lawyer-like face looked grave beneath his wide-brimmed black felt hat. Tex was right in his surmise that these visitors were people of importance, for the colonel came hastening out and shook hands effusively with the handsome stranger. Then Lettie was sent for; and there was a greeting of affection on the woman's side while something in the man's regard of the girl sent a stab of jealousy through Tex.

The party, without a glance at the prison bars they passed, disappeared inside the colonel's quarters.

"Well," the colonel was saying, "to think that this charming girl who sang for us is a daughter of Millionaire Morgan. How came it?"

Lettie explained how she had run away and had seized the fortunate chance of being mistaken for the principal of the Show Girls. And then Aunt Hortense made her confession. The tale she had told in that dressing-room had been but a fabrication.

"You are an heiress, my dear, but it was obvious to me and to the judge here that the man Larry was merely after your money. And didn't I prove it to you?"

"Oh, yes," admitted the girl. "That is all over and done with. Men can be beasts."

"Not all men, Lettie," said the aunt softly. "Think what the judge has done. The moment we missed you and discovered what had happened he organized this expedition to find you. You might have been captured by bandits and—oh, it is unthinkable!"

"We were," said Lettie grimly. "And but for—"

"Yes?" urged the judge.

"I was saved by—by the scouts of the colonel here," she explained. And so the story came out.

"And you tell me the leader of these good fellows is a traitor," ejaculated the judge. "Seems incredible."

"It is incredible," burst out the girl and clung to the big man's arm. "Can't you help him, judge?" she pleaded.

"I'll see what can be done," said Lane. "Perhaps I have some influence. At all events I would do anything possible—to please you." There was no mistaking the meaning of his level glance upon her. "There is nothing I should love better," the man put in, "than to take you back to Washington as my wife. Will you marry me, Lettie?"

"If—if you help Captain Tex," she agreed.

"I promise at least to get the charge against him—reduced," he assured her.

But the scheming judge did not keep his word. Aunt Hortense whispered to him that Lettie had fallen in love with Tex.

He grasped her inference. Let Tex die!

He was to stay behind the wagons in order to make his "plea" to the members of the court martial, arranging to ride after the train on horseback. He let Lettie go with the hope that at least Tex would be saved the ultimate penalty of the traitor. And before she ascended the departing wagon she felt the least she could do was to comfort him with the knowledge of the judge's promise. She walked across to his prison window.

"Good-bye!" she said softly. "I'm sorry—for everything."

"Good-bye, Lettie! I did not know that you were a Morgan, or I should never have dared."

"Don't!" she pleaded. "As if that mattered. But I have done what I could. The judge has promised to speak for you."

"I shall never forget you as long as I live. I may say that, mayn't I? Though that won't be for long. Good-bye!"

She left him and went to the wagon. The train moved off, and Judge Lane returned to meet the men who sat in judgment on Tex of the Scouts.

Had Lettie been present to hear his oration before the military tribunal she would have shrunk for ever from the man she had promised to marry. He walked up and down the small office and talked. He told the company, in front of which Tex stood handcuffed awaiting the verdict which meant life or death to him, that he had been asked by Congress to make an unofficial inspection of the various military forts along the Californian border.

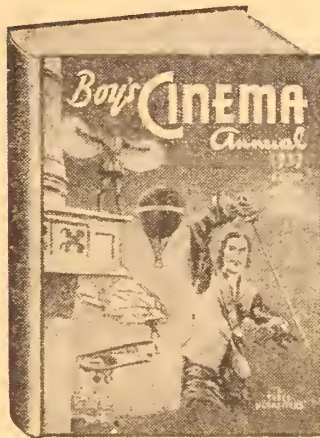
"Surely, gentlemen," said he suavely, "you would be unwilling that I should take back a report that those in command of Fort Henry feared to do their duty when a traitor stood before them."

It was tantamount to telling them he expected a verdict against the prisoner of guilty!

The grave men round the table in their immaculate uniforms listened to the evidence. They read Lettie's statement; they heard Utah Joe's assertion of Tex's connivance with the Indians, another man was found who declared that he had seen Tex open the corral gate and let the horses out. The inference was that Tex was selling the animals to the Indians, who were for ever raiding the farms, murdering the inhabitants, and holding up peaceable travellers across the border.

The officers were handed little pieces of paper on which to write their decisions. The colonel collected them, glanced through them without a trace of feeling betraying what he thought. Then he stood up, and Tex stiffened himself to hear the result.

"The unanimous verdict of this court of the United States Army is that you are guilty of traitorous conduct. The



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sentence is death. You will be shot at dawn."

Tex had spoken no word throughout. He turned on his heel, and, with head erect, walked between his gaolers back to the cell—the condemned cell now.

Smoke Signals to the Indians

THE train with Lettie, her aunt, and the "Show Girl" Company had gone; Judge Lane had ridden hot-foot after them as soon as he had spoken his perfidious oration. Utah Joe, exultant, rode in charge of the military escort that was to conduct the party through the bad lands.

Meanwhile, night had fallen, and two guards, with long bayonets fixed to their carbines, paced slowly before the door of Tex's cell.

Silence fell over Fort Henry which seemed emphasised by the white moon casting long shadows from the brooding hills.

That silence was not broken as a figure crept with cat-like stealthiness under the veranda where the guards kept their watch amid a darkness that was like a pool of ink in the white night.

A panther-like leap: a hand pressed viciously over one gaoler's mouth. The tiny noise of the butt-end of a revolver coming in contact with the base of a man's skull; the whisper of a stifled gasp. No sound of the falling body. Frog, friend of Tex, was too practised a hand for that. The guard fell limp into his arms, and was gently set upon the ground, then softly dragged behind a pillar. Meanwhile, Buffalo and the Idaho Kid, two other stalwarts of the scouts, who had left the company for this desperate venture, had dealt in similarly business-like manner with the other guard.

Frog was lifted on to the roof of the wooden building. For a few breathless minutes, while his comrades kept observation, he peered at the rough boards. With a slight ripping sound one gave. Then it was simple.

Inside Tex was on the qui vive, alert at the first suggestion of outside movement. When the raised board revealed the padding-like face of Frog, a thrill ran through him. His men believed in him, were ready to risk their lives for him. He knew what desperate chance this was they were taking; if discovered, they, too, would face the firing squad at daybreak.

"Tex!" It was but a whisper. "Awake?"

"Betcha, Frog."

The hole widened. Tex leapt upwards to be caught in the powerful hands of Frog. In a minute the prisoner was out on the roof, in another he was down beside Buffalo and the Kid, and like black ghosts gliding into nothingness, had disappeared along the length of the building and had won clear into the open. A dash and they were among the trees, where four horses stood ready saddled. With a sigh of relief Tex once again found the loved body of Champion stir between his legs, and the four moved quietly off.

"Where away?" asked Frog.

He had no schemes: the one objective had been to release the chief. It was for him to decide what should be done. If he chose to take to the mountains and turn outlaw they would have been with him; obviously none of them could return to the fort. It would be returning to death.

"After the wagon train," said Tex, without a moment's hesitation.

Something called him, warned him. At all events he felt he must once again set his eyes on Lettie, though they would have to be hidden witnesses.

Utah Joe had set camp in a rocky September 12th, 1936

hollow in the hills. Fifty men and women lay within the circle of the wagons. Fires shot sparks into the night, and, as was the custom of those days, the company swayed rhythmically to the song in which they all joined.

"To-morrow we shall be at Tuxedo Pass," a man remarked.

Utah Joe heard him.

"We go by Death Canyon," he said. The other roused himself.

"But that is the worst Indian country," came his surprised ex-postulation. "Captain Tex said so."

Utah Joe scowled.

"I know what is best for us," he snapped.

Judge Lane had overheard.

"I think we can follow Joe better than a traitor," he said.

The camp settled down to sleep. They lay as they were in their clothes under blankets. The night was warm. Silence, save for the heavy breathing of tired men and girls.

An hour passed—two. Then there was a movement at one end of the sleeping ranks. A man slowly pushed aside his blanket and crept from underneath. For a full minute he crouched, watching to see if anyone moved. All was quiet. The figure straightened himself—a tall man, unmistakable as Utah Joe. He slunk round the edge of the camp and disappeared among the wagons.

But one man had seen him—one of the scouts who held no love for him. He, in turn, threw aside his blanket and grasped a revolver. But he didn't use it; instead, he wakened his nearest neighbour.

"Utah Joe has left camp—sneaked out," he whispered.

The other was just in time to see the ghostly figure caught by a flicker of firelight. He nudged another companion. They saw the big leader of the train vanish into the woods.

"After him," said one, and they crawled from their improvised beds and crept out on the trail. They did not know what to suspect, but they were members of the United States Army, and their job was to see this train through to safety. To ensure that was to suspect anything that savoured of secret moves, and where was the reason for Utah Joe to go stealing into the darkness in the middle of the night?

Even at that it never entered their minds as a probability that the tall half-Indian was planning to sell the whole outfit to the Redskins.

Not until they had tracked him for over two miles. The sleuthing was simple enough; when once Utah Joe was clear of the camp he ceased even to glance over his shoulder, but hurried on, following a path that led deep into the woods and then came out into the mesquite-covered hillside. Here he paused; it was obviously a rendezvous, for he glanced impatiently from one side to another so that the three almost held their breath as they lay where they had ducked behind some rocks, afraid the slightest sound might betray them.

Then silently as a moving shadow another form was suddenly beside big Joe. An Indian! Jove, but they were uneasy in the way they moved. One moment Joe was alone, the next—

"It's White Eagle."

The whisper came on a long breath of surprise, hardly controlled.

"The white man's word is not to be trusted."

The Indian chief, dignified, with up-raised head and level eye under a waving sheath of feathers, spoke contemptuously.

"You are wrong, chief! I have done all that was planned. To-morrow the train makes for Death Canyon. There

the horses and the ammunition are yours to take."

The Indian grunted in disbelief.

"Your word failed us before. We waited. The horses, it is true, were released, but it was a trick; they were returned to the fort."

Again the quick exchange of understanding glances between the eaves-dropping soldiers.

"That was not my fault," said Joe viciously. "A man I can trust let them out of the corral, but that ~~scout~~ Tex happened to see, and rode after them." His eyes glittered wickedly. "But his cursed interference is over for keeps. He will be shot at dawn."

That clinched it. In the minds of the listeners anger strove with exultation. They could prove Tex innocent—if they could get back in time to save him.

"The dirty coyote," one growled, and shot an inquiring look at his comrades.

"Ready?" it asked.

Both nodded.

"C'mon!"

Together they sprang. Shots rang out, Joe and White Eagle swung round to meet the unexpected attack, the Indian thinking that here once more was treachery. Still he had no alternative but to fight, and in an instant his knife was out, flashing in the moon. But the soldiers were on him, two of them made him their immediate objective. A bullet struck home. White Eagle stumbled silently; a hand struck even as he reeled, and the Redskin fell prone, squirming, but still without a cry.

Meanwhile, Utah Joe had fared better. With a vicious blow he had landed on the jaw of the remaining scout, felled him, and, with a snarl, had taken White Eagle's horse and was off, riding like the wind. Unmounted, the soldiers could not pursue. Moreover, they had to get their story to the camp.

Meanwhile, Utah Joe dismounted a couple of miles from the scene of the mêlée. Hastily he undid the horse's girth, and from beneath the saddle drew the rug. Making a fire of dry twigs, he laid the rug over it, holding in the smoke, then released it so that it ascended in a solid cloud. Thrice he did this—it was a signal to the tribe with whom he was trading the horses in camp and the valuables of its passengers, not to mention a quantity of ammunition it carried.

There was now no going back for Utah Joe. No longer could he hide behind his position at the fort and plot with the Indians. His treachery was known. His only hope now was to join forces with the Redskins.

Miles across the valley the tribe saw the signals and set out with all haste—a gallant if ruthless band of warriors, anxious for their captures, ready to kill man, woman, or child, following their uncouth but rigid code to fight the white man and take from him, their natural enemy, all they could get.

And half a day's ride away, on the other side of the camp, Tex, Frog, the Kid, and Buffalo were urging their mounts to their limit.

Back in camp the soldiers' news caused consternation. Hurriedly horses were hitched up, passengers took their seats, and the train moved off. The drivers cracked their long whips, the horses reared, and were put into gallop. The vehicles rocked along the rough track—not towards Death Canyon, but on the usual route for the border. At every turn an attack by Indians was expected.

The Indians were in league with the Renegades, and a Redskin messenger raced for the camp in the mountains.

The two bands joined forces and rode hard to intercept the wagons making for the desert. They espied them racing along a slope upwards towards a pass where hills hedged them in on either side. With fearsome yells the combined brigands, red and white, swooped down in an encircling movement, firing as they neared the occupants of the wagons. The "Show Girls" once again peered frightfully from beneath canvas coverings to see wild horsemen sweeping down on them, shooting as they came. But this time the soldiers were there to defend them, and at first sight of the enemy the escort covered the wagons as well as they could, presenting a living barrier between foe and prey.

The soldiers, however, never had a chance. They were outnumbered by a score, and, in addition, were restricted in their movements by reason of the fact they had to cover the women and the wagons. The wagons raced harder and harder, but the Indians and the Renegades were easily the faster.

"Stop!" yelled the scout who had put himself in charge. "We'll face them here."

He had chosen an open sward outside the reach of ambush.

Their attackers, at least, would have to fight in the open; no chance of shooting them down from behind the safety of rocks or woods.

"And look to that ammunition wagon," he added. "Loose the horses. Guard it to the death!"

A hundred rifles were spouting. Man after man went tumbling to bite the ground, lay stretched, either in death or writhing from wounds that were mortal. Overturned vehicles and piles of packages were utilised by the defenders as shields and butts from which to shoot. But still the brigands relentlessly closed in.

It was an orgy of slaughter. Horses squealed as shots or arrows struck them, and they fell in their traces, bringing others down to stamp and struggle. One or two of the wagons still containing members of the party were shot at by the Indians. They used arrows which carried burning feathers. The canvas tops burst into flames; out of these sprang men and women, shrieking and helpless, some only to meet the worse fate of shot or arrow.

The Indians and the Renegades were getting the upper hand. Girls were helping reload rifles covering behind the overturned baggage while the soldiers put up a last resistance.

"Don't let them take us," pleaded one girl. "Kill us first."

No man could answer, but the savage burst of firing showed the tenseness of their feelings.

Regardless of loss, the enemy was advancing in a rush. Half a dozen made for the ammunition wagon. It was typical of the desperate measures a man of the Army would go to when one scout gave the thing a push and started it rolling down the slope. Better to destroy it and himself, than that the Indians got it. He scrambled on to the cross-piece that ran from axle to axle beneath the wagon floor and lying prone sought to guide his cumbersome charge towards a ravine.

Other of the vehicles were dragged off by the frightened animals. One contained Lettie and the judge and bumped so violently it seemed it must overturn. Lettie, with a memory of what Tex had once accomplished, dragged herself from the judge's hold and leapt. She lauded without hurt save for bruises and lorn clothes. But the judge had not the courage to jump; he held on fearfully—not seeing the tree that loomed ahead!

(Continued on page 25)

Who was the secret leader of the desperadoes who were terrorising the Valley of the Pecos? That was the riddle which a young Texas Ranger was detailed to solve. Ride with him to the tune of hammering hoofs and blazing guns, and follow his gripping adventures in this mighty serial drama of action and romance



Phantom Rider

Starring

BUCK JONES

EPISODE 6—
"Shot Down"

Read This First

Buck Grant, a settler in the Pecos Valley, is in reality a Ranger investigating stories of terrorism by a gang of outlaws whose leader's identity he hopes to discover.

Judge Holmes, of Maverick, is the only man who knows Buck is a Ranger. He is likewise the only man who knows that Buck is the Phantom Rider, a cloaked horseman who is defeating the activities of the outlaws at every turn.

One morning, however, masked gangsters butcher Shorty, another Ranger who is on his way into the Valley. Dying, Shorty tells Buck to go to the Hidden Valley Ranch, and later Buck learns this is the property of a man named Grayson.

He meets Grayson's beautiful daughter, Mary, who has returned from the East and brought with her a friend, Helen Moore.

Meanwhile, a Ranger known as Spooky has entered Maverick, and Buck instructs him to obtain work at the Hidden Valley outfit. That same night Buck casually drops in at that ranch himself, and is introduced to Harvey Delucy, a neighbouring cattleman who is on friendly terms with the Graysons.

Later, Mary's father is killed, and Buck is charged with the crime. He convinces Mary of his innocence and hands her a wallet which belonged to her father and which contains the map of a hidden gold mine.

Outlaws attempt to steal the wallet, but thanks to Buck they fail. Then, after clearing his name of the Grayson murder, the Ranger falls into the enemy's hands.

Now Read On

A Brush With the Posse

WITH a final, terrific effort Buck managed somehow to regain his feet while his antagonists were striving to bind him, and once more he laid about him with his fists, scattering the gangsters momentarily.

But he was one against many, and it was not long before the rogues had him down again, piling into him tooth and nail until he was too dazed to show further fight.

This time they gave him no chance to recover, but secured his wrists behind his back ere he could collect his faculties. Then three or four of the outlaws hauled him up off the ground, and Dirk spoke to them tersely.

"Put him on his horse and keep him covered," he snarled. "Keeler, you take charge of him, and see he don't make no false moves."

Buck was hoisted into the saddle of his pony, and the crooks also mounted their broncs. Then, Keeler leading the prisoner's steed by the rein, the whole band turned to ride through the wood.

"We'll head off the sheriff's posse," Dirk said, "and see if we can give Mort, Gabe an' Roscoe a chance to make their getaway. After that we'll strike back for the hide-out."

Thus spoke Dirk, and he had little doubt that by springing an ambush he and his comrades could provide their less fortunate associates with an opportunity of effecting an escape. But he did not know that he and his party were seen by a lone horseman as they pushed clear of the forest and began to spur along the edge of the trees.

The lone horseman was Spooky, and he had cut adrift from the sheriff's posse in order to gallop back and have a word with his fellow-Ranger. And

now, as he saw Buck in the hands of the gangsters, he pulled his horse to a standstill in the heart of a thick coppie.

From the shelter of that coppie he watched the crooks and their captive moving swiftly in a north-easterly direction, and no sooner had they disappeared than he wheeled around and dashed away at top speed, urging his bronc over the prairie levels to the tune of pounding hoofs, and making for the trail where he had separated from the posse.

Fifteen minutes later he saw Sheriff Mark and his band in front of him. They were travelling at a mere canter along the winding Maverick road, and consequently Spooky had no difficulty in overtaking them.

"Hey, hold everything!" the little cowboy gasped as he came abreast of the sheriff and Judge Holmes.

The sheriff called a halt, and looked at Spooky sharply.

"What's wrong, friend," he demanded.

"I just saw a bunch of cut-throats with that nester Buck Grant," came the reply. "They had him tied, and was leadin' him along the edge o' the timber."

Judge Holmes laid hold of Mark's arm.

"You'll have to split your posse an' I get Grant out of trouble," he declared.

"But I've gotta take these here prisoners into town," Sheriff Mark objected, with a glance at Roscoe, Gabe and Mort. "Let that nester get himself outa trouble, judge."

"Is that how you repay the man who helped you to land these three outlaws?" Judge Holmes snapped. "No, sheriff, you're going to help Buck

Grant. It's to your advantage to do so, anyhow. The skunks who jumped him probably belong to the same outfit as these fellows here, and now is your chance to grab the whole bunch at once."

The sheriff had coloured up in a somewhat shamefaced manner.

"Yeah, I didn't think o' that," he muttered, and then, turning to Spooky: "Which way did you say Grant and them hembres was ridin'?"

"Along the edge of the timber," Spooky repeated, "and in the direction of Twin Forks. They was travellin' plenty fast. It seemed to me like they might be aimin' to stage an ambuscade there and take their pals away from yuh, so I reckon you're showin' good sense in electing to operate against 'em. If I were you I'd cut across to the other trail and take 'em by surprise—turn the tables on 'em, see?"

The pompous sheriff was not grateful for the suggestion, though privately he realised the value of it.

"I don't need advice, feller," he said. "I figure I know my job—"

"Nevertheless Spooky's idea is a good one," Judge Holmes interrupted impatiently. "Come on, sheriff, detail a couple of your men to take care of your prisoners, and the rest of us will hit the breeze for the other road as hard as we can."

Under the judge's admonishment Sheriff Mark bestirred himself, and having singled out two of his posse to act as escort for Gabe, Roscoe and Mort, he and the remainder of the band set out for the trail on which Spooky had last seen Buck and his captors.

With the judge, Spooky and the sheriff taking the lead and setting the pace, it was not long before the troop of would-be rescuers picked up the road that skirted the woods, and they had followed this for a distance of some two or three miles when they sighted Twin Forks. And there, at the point where the forest trail joined the main highway to Maverick, they espied Dirk and his accomplices seeking cover behind a cluster of big rocks, with Buck a helpless captive in their midst.

The gangsters were unaware of the posse's approach, and if Judge Holmes or Spooky had been in command, the rogues could have been quietly encircled and taken by surprise. But the muddle-headed Sheriff Mark gave vent to a loud yawn as he clapped eyes on the outlaws, and calling on his men to follow him, he pushed straight on at a gallop.

Dirk and his comrades swung around at the first alarm. It was a shock to them, of course, to find themselves suddenly threatened by an attack from an unexpected quarter, when they had so fondly imagined that they would be the aggressors, and for a brief interval they were thrown into a panic. But they speedily recovered themselves, and the posse was still a couple of hundred yards from them when Dirk roared a command.

"Beat it, men!" he shouted to his associates. "Keeler, don't let go of Grant!"

The crooks scattered, jabbing at the flanks of their ponies with their spurrows. Keeler, with a hand on Silver's bridle, made tracks for a ridge to the south—gained that ridge, and putting his horse at it, won his way to the summit with Buck at his side.

From the top of the hill the gangster looked back and saw the posse breaking up to pursue his confederates. Then he realised that he himself had not been overlooked, for Judge Holmes

and Spooky were headed in his direction.

"Seems like things haven't worked out according to plan, don't it?" Buck commented dryly.

Keeler shot an ugly glance at him, and then with a tug on the bridle of the Ranger's pony he started to ride along the crest of the ridge. But he had not gone more than a hundred yards when Buck served him a trick that neatly checked him in his flight.

The big Ranger's hands were fied behind his back, but his feet were free, and all at once he disengaged his left boot from the stirrup and kicked his captor's brone smartly but without viciousness, on the flank.

The horse was pounding along the very edge of the hillside, and the blow caused it to swerve. In another instant it had lost its footing and was plunging down the steep slope, carrying its master with it.

Keeler almost dragged Buck and Silver after him, but he lost his grip on the rein of the big fellow's pony, and though the latter cavorted wildly for a few seconds, the stalwart representative of the Law managed to keep his seat. Then, as Silver became calmer and halted of his own accord on the brow of the slope, Buck turned to see how his late captor was faring.

Keeler had parted company with his horse, and man and beast were rolling in headlong fashion towards the bottom of the declivity. From above Buck watched them tumbling through the scrub that matted the hillside, and saw the clouds of dust that rose from the tough vegetation as the luckless outlaw and his mount careered on their way. Then at last the animal and its rider brought up at the foot of the slope, and, not without relief, the Ranger observed the mustang struggle to its legs.

It seemed little the worse for its fall, and Buck, a true lover of animals, was glad to think that it had escaped injury. As for Keeler, he lay quite still for about half a minute, but eventually picked himself up and grabbed for his gun with an angry gesture.

He could see Buck on the summit of the ridge, and apparently he had a mind to revenge himself. But ere he could take aim the Ranger was joined by Spooky and Judge Holmes, and Keeler made haste to scramble astride his pony and charge off into a tract of brushwood, his departure being accelerated by a bullet or two from the revolvers of Buck's friends.

Keeler vanished, and up on the hill-top, Holmes and Spooky drew closer to the so-called nester.

"How'd you get rid of that fellow, Buck?" the judge asked.

"By a well-timed kick," was the reply. "But say, you might cut the cords around my wrists, and at the same time I'd be obliged if you'd tell me how the sheriff and his posse happened to come to my aid?"

"Through Spooky," Holmes answered. "He saw you with the outlaws."

He was taking out a knife as he spoke, and he lost no time in severing the Ranger's bonds. Then the three men rode down to the belt of thickets amid which Keeler had disappeared, but they saw no sign of that worthy, and pushing forth into open country again, they had been riding for about three-quarters of an hour when they espied Sheriff Mark and his party trotting towards them.

Buck and his two friends drew rein in the path of the oncoming horsemen,

and noticed the dismal expression on the sheriff's face when the latter paused before them.

"They got clear away," Mark grunted lugubriously. "I thought we had that bunch o' desperadoes, too. Can't figure out how they managed to give us the slip."

"I think I know," Spooky murmured in a whimsical tone. "They was probably smarter than you, Sheriff."

Mark looked at him resentfully.

"Don't be funny," he bit out, and then lapsed into a moody silence.

It was a silence that was broken at length by Buck.

"Well, thanks for comin' to my help, anyway," he said to the sheriff in a slightly ironical tone. "You know, your presence always makes a fellow feel easier."

Maverick's guardian of the peace was gratified by this statement, and completely missed the good-humoured sarcasm that was behind it. Then Buck turned to Spooky and Holmes.

"Judge," he remarked, "I think I'll drift over to the Hidden Valley Ranch, and maybe you'd like to trail along with me. Spooky, I suggest you stay with the posse in case those outlaws get organised again and try to make another attempt to rescue their pals. I'll tell Miss Grayson you're helping the law."

"Okay, Grant," rejoined Spooky, addressing the big fellow as if he were a mere acquaintance, and a little while later Buck and Judge Holmes were cantering off across the range with Hidden Valley as their destination.

The Three Prisoners

IT was with considerable despondency that Mort, Roscoe and Gabe had watched Sheriff Mark and his posse leave the Maverick trail to go to the rescue of Buck and attempt the wholesale capture of the men who had been terrorising the county.

Their despondency was a mood that had settled upon them from the moment when they had been taken into custody—Mort at Bear Cave, Roscoe and Gabe at the Grant cabin. Yet, not long after they found themselves alone with only two deputies for an escort, the wretchedness of their spirits was succeeded by a feeling of tremulous hope.

Gabe it was who first realised that a bold and daring move against the officers in charge of them might well prove successful, especially if he and his fellow-prisoners were to act in concert.

The difficulty was to convey his design to Mort and Roscoe, who were staring straight ahead and glowering into space. Neither of them would look at Gabe nor at each other—which was little to be wondered at, since none of the three of them had shown much loyalty to his comrades when the subject of the Grayson murder had been broached.

At last, however, Gabe succeeded in catching the attention of the other two gangsters and flashing them a surreptitious, but meaning glance that told them something of his purpose and warned them to hold themselves in readiness.

True, the prisoners were unarmed, and the deputies who were in charge of them were riding with their six-guns in their fists. But the three outlaws were not bound or manacled—even Mort having been relieved of his thongs so that he could sit his horse and handle the reins. And in this manner captives and escort were riding down the trail when all at once

Gabe swung close to one of the officers, struck up his arm and landed a savage blow that caught the fellow on the jaw.

The man plunged from the saddle and hit the ground with a thump that knocked the breath out of his body. Next instant the other deputy raised a sharp cry and made as if to cover Gabe, but Mort and Roscoe were quick to act, and, pressing in on the remaining agent of the law, they lashed out at him viciously and hurled him to the dust.

"All right, boys," Gabe yelled. "Let's go!"

He set his comrades an example by wheeling away from the trail and spurring towards the south, and Roscoe and Mort lost no time in following suit. Then, with their horses' hoofs sounding a rapid tattoo, they dipped down into the dry bed of an arroyo and pressed forward along the ragged hollow until it had brought them close to a mass of brushwood thickets.

Meanwhile, the two deputies had regained their feet, and, as they saw the fugitives scrambling out of the arroyo some little distance away, they blazed at the rascally trio with their guns.

One of the crooks was hit. The officers were not certain whether it was Mort, Gabe or Roscoe, but whatever the identity of the victim he was observed to jerk himself upright in the saddle and then sway drunkenly from side to side. At one moment, indeed, it looked as if he must fall, but he managed to keep astride his brone, and the animal bore him into the thickets, following the other two horsemen.

The gangsters disappeared, and for several minutes the deputies whom they had outwitted were unable to take up the chase, their ponies having cantered on along the trail. When they had secured their mounts, however, they set out in pursuit at break-neck pace and crashed into the brushwood thickets with fine, if futile, determination.

The crooks had obtained too great a start, and there was no trace of them. In vain the officers reconnoitred the locality in the hope of picking up their tracks. Even the man whom they had so obviously wounded had vanished utterly, and at long last they were compelled to give up their search and return to the Maverick road.

They pushed ahead towards Twin Forks, and it was when they were about half a mile from this junction that they saw the posse which included Spooky and Sheriff Mark.

"Hey, where's your prisoners?" the latter demanded, as the two deputies came up.

"They—they got away, Sheriff," he was told. "Suddenly jumped us and high-tailed it for the hills. But I—I think we winged one of 'em."

Maverick's chief guardian of the peace was glowering at his subordinates fiercely.

"Winged one of 'em!" he cried out. "Is that the best yuh could do? Why, with your six-shooters in your mitts you should never 've given them hombres a chance to start anything. I can't see how it happened."

"I think I know how, sheriff," Spooky interposed with a great air of sagacity.

"Yeah?" said Mark, eyeing him.

"How?"

"They was probably smarter than your deputies, that's all, sheriff," the little fellow commented, whereupon Mark ground his teeth together and turned his back on him impatiently.

Five minutes afterwards Sheriff Mark and his posse were filing down the trail in a somewhat sorry procession, none of the officers having any cause to congratulate

himself on the part he had played in the morning's work. As for Spooky, he separated from that posse after deciding that no purpose was to be served by going into town, and, intent on informing Buck of the latest set-back, he pointed his horse's head towards the north and "burned the wind" for Hidden Valley.

A visitor had called at the well-equipped ranch-house that Mary Grayson had inherited from her murdered father—a visitor who was always welcome, though during the last twenty-four hours he had differed pretty sharply with the girl on the subject of Buck Grant.

The visitor was Harvey Delaney, neighbouring cattleman, and, seated in the lounge, with his handsome, but ruthless, face thrust forward earnestly, he was discussing with Mary and Helen Moore the incidents that had occurred the previous night.

"But what makes you so positive that Buck Grant is working with the Phantom Rider?" Mary Grayson was asking him in an argumentative tone.

Harvey Delaney fidgeted in his chair. "I didn't say I was positive, Mary," he expostulated. "But I sure would like to know where Grant was last night, when the Phantom came here."

There was a pause, and then a comment was volunteered by Helen, Mary's friend from the East.

"Supposing Buck Grant is in league with the Phantom Rider," she remarked. "That doesn't make him any the less trustworthy, does it? After all, they say that the Phantom is on the side of law and order."

Delaney looked at her thoughtfully for a moment, then shrugged his wide shoulders.

"It all depends whether you believe that the Phantom really is a square-shooter," he grunted. "Personally, I'm not convinced that he is—"

But Delaney never finished his speech, for at that juncture there was a tap on the door of the lounge, and as the occupants of the room glanced round they saw a maid appear on the threshold, a maid who was followed by a tall, powerfully-built young man whom they recognised immediately.

"Mr. Grant to see you—all, Miss Grayson," the maidservant announced.

Mary jerked herself to her feet, and, staring past her employee, spoke to the caller in faltering accents.

"Mr. Grant," she said, "you shouldn't have come here—not with that murder charge hanging over you—"

And then her voice trailed off, for suddenly Buck was joined in the doorway by Judge Holmes, a strange companion indeed for a man who was supposed to be a fugitive from the law.

Buck and Judge came into the room, the younger man directing a sidelong, smiling glance at Holmes.

"I'm not worth a penny to anybody, am I, Judge?" he drawled.

"As far as a reward is concerned, no," his friend replied. "You see, Mary, with the assistance of Grant here we arrested and got a confession from the two men who killed your father."

Buck could have sworn that he saw an expression of intense relief cross the faces of Mary and Helen, and at the same time he noticed Harvey Delaney give a violent start. Then Judge Holmes went on speaking.

"The two men concerned are now on

their way to gaol in Maverick," he stated, "along with a third desperado known as Mort."

"And Mr. Grant's innocence has been established," Mary cried. "Oh, I'm so glad! Both Helen and I were certain that he had nothing to do with my father's death."

It was gratifying to Buck to hear her talk in that strain, and he was telling himself that he must surely rank pretty high in her estimation when Delaney approached him and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Good work, Grant," the tall rancher said. "I reckon I'd like to be one of the first to congratulate you. Er—who were the men that owned up to the crime?"

"Two fellers by the name of Gabe and Roscoe," Buck informed him.

Harvey Delaney drew his brows together and fingered his clean-shaven chin.

"Gabe and Roscoe," he reiterated. "I've never heard of 'em. They must be a couple of outlaws from out of this section."

"They're two of the gang that are doing their best to terrorise this section and grab all the land in it," Buck rejoined. "But, say, Delaney, am I right in suggesting that until this minute you were certain that I was responsible for what happened to Miss Grayson's father?"

Helen and Mary looked at the neighbouring rancher quickly, expecting him to make some sheepish admittance, and next moment they were staggered by the answer that he gave.

"Why, no," he said with consummate coolness. "I was pretty sure you weren't guilty. But tell us about the arrest, Grant. I want to hear the whole story in detail. How did you get on the track of these two men named Gabe and Roscoe?"

Buck cleared his throat.

"Well, there isn't much to tell," he began. "But first it might interest you folks to know that the sheriff ran across a feller who had seemingly been hog-tied by the Phantom Rider."

"The Phantom Rider!" Mary and Helen ejaculated in one breath.

"Yeah," Buck repeated, "the Phantom Rider. Now this fellow that the sheriff discovered is the one that the judge referred to as Mort. I don't suppose any of you happen to know him, do you?"

The girls shook their heads, and Delaney made a negative response.

"I don't know him by his monicker, Grant," he said. "It's an odd sort of name, too—one I wouldn't be likely to forget if I'd heard it. Mort, eh? In French it means death."

"Yes, that's something I learned at school, too, Delaney," Buck observed. "And I might mention that this fellow came pretty near to living up to his name. But as I was telling you—"

He did not complete his narrative, however, for just then there was another knock at the door of the lounge, and a second afterwards Spooky entered the room, his clothes thick with the dust of a long, hard ride.

"Yes, Spooky?" Mary Grayson queried. "What do you want?"

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"I've got some news for the judge an' Mr. Grant, ma'am," the little cowboy explained, whereupon Holmes and Buck glanced at him sharply.

"What is it?" the judge asked. "Those outlaws that you captured." Spooky said. "They busted loose and got clear away."

Buck's face fell, and so did that of Judge Holmes.

"Busted loose?" the younger man echoed. "What do you mean?"

"You heard me," Spooky grunted with a disgusted air. "The men that was left in charge of them killers couldn't hold 'em. The crooks gave them the slip."

Rendezvous of Death

FOR something like a minute there was a silence in the lounge of the Grayson ranch, and then Judge Holmes spoke.

"I hope you girls will excuse me," he said to Mary and Helen, "but this is bad news indeed, and I think I'll get right back to town and have a talk with that wrong-headed fool who happens to be the sheriff of Maverick."

"I'll ride with you part of the way, judge," Delaney volunteered. "I've got some business to attend to at my ranch, and I'll trail along with you as far as Willow Crick."

Bidding the others good-bye, the two men departed from the Hidden Valley ranch, and shortly after they had gone Spooky went off to the bunkhouse, leaving Buck alone with Mary and her friend from the East.

It was now high noon, and the big Ranger lingered in conversation with the girls until one-thirty, when he suddenly noticed the time and announced that he had better be on his way. Mary, however, insisted upon him staying to lunch, and pressed the invitation so hospitably that he could not very well refuse.

In fact, he was prevailed upon to remain for tea also, and the dusk was gathering on the eastern skyline when he actually prepared to bring his visit to an end and spoke of returning to his cabin.

"Mr. Grant," Mary said then, "I'm worried about you. You know, by tangleing with these outlaws you've made bad enemies, for it's obvious from what they did to my poor father that they're men who would stop at nothing. I—I wish you'd let me send some of the boys along with you, just to see you safely home."

Buck grinned at her.

"It's mighty nice of you to concern yourself about me, Miss Mary," he declared, "but I'd feel too darned self-important with a bodyguard. I'll tell you what you can do, though—if it will set your mind at rest. You can get that fellow Spooky to ride over to Dry Creek with me. I was talkin' to him to-day, and I kinda figure we might have something in common. He seems a decent little cuss."

Thus spoke the big Ranger, giving no indication that he and the diminutive cowboy were in reality old friends and members of an organisation that had already done a great deal towards stamping out crime in the State of Texas. And, Spooky having been sent for, the two comrades were soon riding southwards at a canter through the gloaming.

En route to Buck's cabin on Dry Creek they talked of the mission on which they were engaged, and discussed their plans for the future. Then, when they reached the big fellow's homestead, they tied their ponies to

the hitch-rail, and dismounting, strolled across to the porch.

It was as Buck was about to thrust open the door that he saw a note pinned there, and with a frown he detached it and unfolded it. A moment later he was striding into the dwelling with Spooky at his heels, and after lighting a lamp he scanned the missive that he was holding in his hand, a queer look dawning in his eyes as he read its contents.

"What is it, Buck?" Spooky demanded. "What's it say?"

Without a word the other tendered him the note, and the smaller man found himself studying a message which had been printed in pencil and which ran as follows:

"If you want information about them escaped killers, be at the Longhorn Saloon in Maverick at ten o'clock to-night.—A FRIEND."

Spooky laid the note on the table and eyed Buck grimly.

"A friend, eh?" he commented.

"Yeah," Buck said, "and if I leave now I've just about got time to make the saloon by ten."

He strode past the little Ranger, and hurried out of the cabin and unhitched Silver's rein from the hitch-rail. Then he swung himself lithely into the saddle, and with his bronc's hoofs thudding upon the grassy surface of the range, he galloped through the night in an easterly direction.

In another sixty seconds he had picked up the Maverick trail, and, with his knees pressed close against Silver's flanks, he rode at a good speed along the banks of the winding Pecos River.

The moon came out not long afterwards, swimming from behind a drifting belt of clouds and glistening upon the water. By its light Buck pushed onward rapidly, his features set and keen, and so at last he came within sight of the town of Maverick.

The main street was almost deserted, but, midway along it, a blaze of illumination spread across the thoroughfare from the windows of the Longhorn Saloon. It was towards this building that Buck repaired, and, on drawing abreast of it, he pulled Silver to a halt, disengaged his feet from the stirrups and slid to the ground.

He now walked up the steps of the porch and strolled, casually enough, through the doorway of the bar-room. Instantly the din and clatter of the place seemed to envelop him, the boisterous gaiety which prevailed there jarring upon his ears. For, as usual, the saloon was packed, and, amidst the discord of many voices raised in conversation, a bunch of cowboys whom Buck recognised as belonging to the Grayson ranch were rendering the chorus of a familiar song.

Buck elbowed his way in the direction of the bar. His demeanour was careless, yet his eyes were taking in all that there was to see, searching the whole room for some sign of a foe.

He detected no one who bore a resemblance to any of the outlaws with whom he had matched his wits so frequently of late. Apart from the Hidden Valley cowboys, who were naturally drawing attention to themselves as songsters, he saw no one with whom he was at all closely acquainted.

Buck moved forward to the bar, where he ordered a "soft" drink from the man behind the counter. Then, having emptied his glass, he looked at a clock on the wall and noticed that it was five minutes to ten.

Buck glanced at the customers who

were nearest to him. They were respectable citizens of whom he had some slight knowledge, and he felt that he had nothing to fear from them. Therefore he turned his back to the bar, and, under the pretext of listening to the singing of the Grayson cowboys, he assumed a posture whereby he was able to command a view of the entire room.

The minutes dragged by, and the hands of the clock on the wall crept round to the hour. In a little while that clock began to strike, its chimes passing almost unnoticed in the clamour that filled the room.

The last chime had died away, and, with it, the last chorus on the lips of the Hidden Valley boys had been brought to a close, when suddenly a slightly built man sidled into the saloon from the street.

Buck clapped eyes on him at once, but recognised him as Lew Meredith, another of the Grayson ranch-hands, and was about to look away from him again when he noticed the man cast a meaning glance towards the right.

There was something so significant in the glance that Buck attempted to follow it. He was unsuccessful, however, for it had been directed at someone whom the big Ranger could not see. Then, even as he turned his attention on Lew Meredith once more, he observed a further mysterious signal which came from that worthy—a slight nod of the head.

Next instant Meredith was carrying his hand to his hip.

Buck detected the movement, and, though he had never anticipated an attack from one of the Grayson cowboys, he plucked his forty-five from its holster with a rapid gesture. Yet, quick as he was, Lew Meredith's "iron" was already in his fist, and it belched destruction at a lamp which hung from the ceiling of the bar-room.

The blast of the revolver rang out above the roistering voices that filled the saloon, and the bullet, shattering the lamp, plunged the premises into darkness, a darkness that was stabbed a split second later by another shot.

A leaden slug grazed Buck's arm and smashed into the back of the bar. He heard the men on either side of him stampe to right and left—heard the panic-stricken yells which broke from them, and which were taken up by the rest of the mob in the saloon, so that uproar and confusion spread like wildfire.

Then, with the crowd swarming to the farthest corners to steer clear of trouble, and with his eyes accustoming themselves to the gloom, Buck saw the form of Lew Meredith silhouetted in the doorway.

The Ranger blazed at him, and hard on the bellow of his gun came a sharp cry of pain. Staggering, Meredith dropped his six-shooter and reeled forth on to the veranda, where he missed his footing on the steps of the porch and pitched headlong into the street.

Buck started across the saloon, intent on running out to secure his would-be assassin, lest the fellow managed to pick himself up and make his escape. But, as he was in the very act of striding towards the threshold, a pair of curtains that masked the doorway of a back room were drawn aside.

It was a room where someone had taken shelter when the gunplay had begun, someone who now raised a murderous hand and fired at the dimly seen figure of the big Ranger!

(To be continued. By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Buck Jones.)

"THE SINGING VAGABOND"

(Continued from page 20)

The horses, mad beyond any sense of direction, were headed straight for this obstruction and the wagon, swinging almost broadside on as at the last moment the horses sought to swerve, came smack against the thick trunk. It broke to splinters, and in the centre of the wreckage lay a broken human figure; Judge Lane's selfish schemes were for ever ended.

The victors were cheering, grabbing valuables and preparing a final round-up of those that had not been captured, when from over the rise came a ringing yell:

"We're coming; hold out!"

"It's the Chief! Tex! Tex!"

The Kid, Frog and Buffalo in the wake of Champion were slithering down to join the fight. Whether the inspiration of Tex's presence put fresh heart into the defenders or fright into the assailants, or whether the latter thought these three riders were but the precursors of new reinforcements, the fact was that the Indians and Renegades broke—swayed in doubt long enough for the defenders to form up with Tex at their head. Impetuously they charged, firing, and, when near enough, laying about them with rifle butt, fist and knife. The enemy staggered under this onset and some, anxious to get away with the few jewels and other possessions they had seized, turned and fled. That started a rout. In a few minutes every mounted man was scuttling towards the heights.

But not all had horses. Utah Joe was among them. Frog saw him and, mad with anger at what this lanky coyote had done to Tex, jumped wildly for his neck. He was no match for Joe, whose defeat only lent additional strength to his powerful frame. He flung the scout from him. Frog went headlong on his back and Joe had pulled a knife from his belt to hurl at the defenceless man when, just in time, an arm swept him aside so that the point of the ugly weapon buried itself in the earth a foot to one side of Frog's face. Joe swung round.

Tex stood before him.

There was grim intention in the captain's eyes. Both knew it was the moment for a final settlement, a fight to a finish. Tex had always suspected the great man from Utah, now that he had definitely ranged himself on the side of the Indians he was proved a traitor. On top of his own grievance Tex fought for the honour of the regiment.

They came to grips. Feet kicking up the ground, they struggled and Utah Joe laughed exultantly. He knew he was the bigger man, a full head the taller, fifty pounds the heavier. He used his weight to bear down on Tex, and pressed his great talon-like fingers into his rival's throat. They went down together, fast embraced, but the smaller man hadn't ridden the ranges as a cowboy without learning how to take care of himself. By a trick of wrestling he threw his bigger adversary over his shoulder. The latter was lithe, however, and on his feet with a bound. Tex came at him low as if to tackle as would a Rugby player, then shot upwards a fist with all his power behind it. Like a bronze kick it met the other's chin full on the point. The big man measured his length on the ground—and did not rise again, for Frog was up by now and sat down on him until two officers ran and bound him.

Meanwhile, as Tex was to find out soon, other prisoners had been taken. One, a Renegade, offered to make a statement if his life were spared.

"What have you to say that matters?" he was asked.

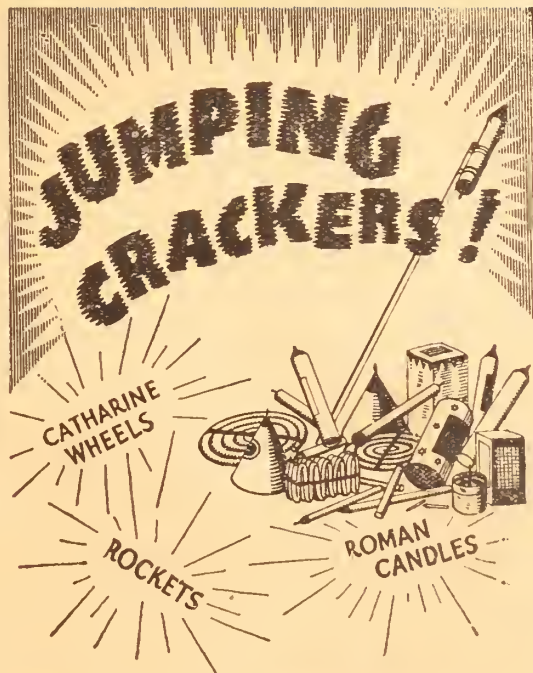
"A hell of a lot I can spill," he boasted. "That skunk thar," he twitched his head towards where Utah Joe sprawled on the ground in defeat, "it was 'im planned the stampede of the 'osses from the fort. I know, 'cause it was me 'ot he let in to open the corral gate. That guy, Captain Tex, collared 'em or they would have been taken by the Indians who was awaitin'."

They told Tex. He glanced across to where Lettie was standing by her thoroughly exhausted aunt.

"We'll go back," he said. "There's things to be explained. I'm cleared."

She looked with shining eyes into his—and his lightened with a knowledge that stirred him as no fight could. He took her to one of the wagons that had not been damaged. Forgotten his men, forgotten all responsibilities for clearing up and reshaping the caravan, he helped Lettie to the driver's seat and himself took the reins.

All he was aware of was that he was handling the ribbons with one hand. Lettie's fragile fingers had slipped into the other.



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September 12th, 1936

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"GAOL BREAK"

(Continued from page 12)

remembered that in all the noises arising from that mysterious row in the bar, not one had shown him the voices of Daisy or Duke.

"They've taken Mickie away," he told himself. "Why? Where? Has he told them I've been here—that I was coming for him?"

He moved across the little room to the steps leading down under the gabled roof to the door on the landing. He opened the door with scrupulous care then peered down over the balusters. A dim light burned in the parlour—all was stealthily quiet.

With infinite care he crossed the parlour, feeling his way with outstretched hands. His foot caught against a stool and he stumbled full length on the carpeted floor with a sudden crash. At once movement was heard in the bar below.

Someone came up the stairs from the bar, calling:

"Puss! Puss! What are you up to, you little thief." The door was opened, and around the edge of it the barman thrust his bullet head. Oakley sprang up and banged the door-edge across the man's neck, throwing his whole weight against the door.

The barman, caught in a vice, his ears nearly flattened, tried vainly to jerk free, but Oakley put a great hand over his right eye.

"If you call out I'll grind your head off!" he muttered. "I'm desperate! Where have they taken Mickie? Speak up!" He pressed the sharp edge of the door against the gasping barman.

"Who—who is it? Lemme go—you're killing me!"

"Not so loud," warned Oakley. "Never mind who it is. Where's the kid?"

"Duke's got him. It's you, Jim Oakley—might have guessed it! You're smashing in my skull—oh—ooh!"

"I'll kill you if you don't answer quick," growled Oakley. "What's Duke doing with him?"

"Gimme a chance, Jim." Oakley drew off a little of the pressure. "Gosh—that's better! I'll tell you straight. You needn't get so mad. They're taking the boy to some millionaire feller whose boy was kidnapped."

"What for?" Oakley demanded. "What's their game?"

"Going to pass off Mickie as the millionaire's kid—found after all these years. There's a big reward. I staged a dust-up to-night in the bar to draw the police here—so's they could get away without being watched too close. They're all in it—Daisy and Louis and Duke. He's the prime mover."

Oakley jerked open the door and grabbed the speaker as he fell inside. He flung himself on the almost breathless man, and whipping out a cord from his seaman's pocket, he deftly bound his victim, legs and hands. Kneeling on his chest, he kept him from crying out for help.

"Now, before I gag you," he whispered hoarsely, "tell me where they've gone."

"It's a swell yacht moored in the tideway. A big white boat—the Trident. Feller's name is Kendall—you needn't gag me, Jim. I won't call out. I'd like to see Duke done brown—he's treated me shabby. Only giving
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me a hundred out of the thousands he's going to get."

Oakley took no heed. He gagged the barman with his own dirty handkerchief; then left him on the floor. He went down the stairs to the untidy bar, and, opening a window, climbed out through it into the night.

"You'll Let Me Say Good-bye to the Boy?"

DUKE'S ear slithered to a stop just short of the river pier. He jumped out, calling to Mickie:

"Come along with me! I'm going to take you to your dad!"

The boy followed at once, clutching at Duke's hand. Duke whispered to Daisy and Louis:

"You sit tight and wait for me. We'll drive to Dover and get the night boat." He moved off up the narrow lane and disappeared in the darkness, Mickie clinging trustingly to his hand.

On board the yacht, Duke was presenting Mickie to Paul Kendall and Dr. Merian.

"This is the boy," he stated. He turned to Mickie. "Say how do to the gentlemen."

"How do you do?" spoke Mickie, staring about him at the splendour of the cabin. "Is this my daddy's ship? The one he promised me?"

Kendall was trembling despite his outward calm. If this was his son—how everlastingly grateful he would be! He urgently wanted to take the boy in his arms and bring him to Irene, a joy of pure heavenly happiness for them both. He stared so hard at Mickie that the little fellow began to be frightened. He ran close to Duke.

"I—I want my daddy!" he whispered. Kendall found his voice.

"Leave him with me a minute, will you? I want to be quite sure."

Duke, eternal cigarette betwixt his lips, nodded.

"I'll be outside on the deck," he agreed. Dr. Merian opened the door for him, his old face gravely concerned.

As soon as they were alone Kendall caught up Mickie and held him close.

"Are you my boy—are you? I think you are!"

Mickie smiled to hide his fears. "Is this daddy's ship?" he repeated.

"Yes. Let me put you in this chair. Now let me turn up your sleeve. Why, what's this?" Kendall had bared the tattoo mark on Mickie's right arm.

"That's a heart," said Mickie with pride. "An old Turk did it."

Merian studied them both silently. Kendall turned to him, asking almost chokingly:

"Don't you think it's our son?"

Merian couldn't dash his friend's hopes. And even he was beginning to believe. Kendall strode to the door to call Duke to him.

"This tattooing on the boy's arm?" Duke whispered behind his hand.

"To cover up a birth mark. It was too terrible a risk for Oakley—to leave that dead sure clue on the child."

Kendall nodded. "Yes, that sounds reasonable." He made up his mind in a rush of emotion.

"I believe him to be my boy. I believe it with all my soul." He felt nothing but gratitude for Duke. "Come and take the money!"

Duke was only too glad. His fat face creased into smiles. He said, with smug satisfaction:

"I'd almost like to say—keep the dollars, Mr. Kendall. So far as I'm concerned, I would. But I'm only a go-between."

They were checking it together when

in walked Collins and Banks. Duke, counting a bundle of notes, stopped dead.

"So you did send for the police?"

"No," Kendall was saying, when Collins shook his head.

"We don't want you, Duke—not yet. Oakley's aboard this vessel—you've brought the boy to him." He turned to Merian. "You the owner of the ship?"

"I'm Dr. Merian. That gentleman is Mr. Kendall."

The American's heart was so overjoyed at recovering his son that he didn't care how much Duke might be a crook. He answered:

"Mr. Duke and I are settling a business deal. He has helped me to find my child."

Collins glanced knowingly towards Banks.

"That's it, eh?"

"That is it," said Kendall, while Merian shook his grey head.

At the far end of the saloon was a port light, in the circular darkness of which Banks' quick eyes had caught a furtive movement. Mickie was staring up into the round, mirror-like glass.

"I can see eyes!" he called. "Eyes!"

Collins and his fellow detective slipped out and ran round the decks. They came upon Oakley peering through the port light. Heavy hands were clapped on Oakley's shoulders.

"It's all up, Jim," stated Collins definitely.

The convict turned to them, his face a greenish white in the gloom. He made no effort to shake them off.

"I heard everything—you'll let me say good-bye to the boy?"

"Word of honour, Jim?" asked the inspector.

"Word of honour, sir." The three of them moved together to the saloon where Oakley met Duke at the door, attachment hugged close. The two men regarded each other steadily; then Duke, in would-be hearty fashion, greeted the convict:

"Why, Jim, who'd have thought of seeing you here?"

Oakley muttered loud:

"It's all right, Duke—quite all right. Give my respects to Daisy and Louis. Maybe the money will help you all to go straight."

Duke checked a hasty reply. He went along the deck to where his shore boat was waiting. Collins told Kendall and Merian:

"This man is Jim Oakley, an escaped convict. He wants to speak with the boy. He's promised to say no more than good-bye to him."

Mickie ran forward.

"Oh, daddy, daddy—you've come at last!"

Oakley stooped to him, huskily whispering:

"I'm not your daddy, old lad. Only jest a kind of—kind of feller who's tried to be your father. A feller who's loved you a lot." He choked a little, then went on: "That's your daddy—". He gestured towards Kendall. "He's going to do you proud, Mickie—much better than I could ever hope to do. This is the ship I told you about—"

Irene Kendall was at the inner door, her hand to her heart, her smile of welcome to Mickie a sure reward to the convict so bravely renouncing his rights. Oakley smiled, too—a smile that made his rough, ugly face good to look upon.

"And that's your mother, Mickie. Go to her, old lad. Aye—that's right!" Mickie was in Irene's arms, letting her embrace him with all her long-pent mother love. Oakley straightened.

"I'm ready, inspector."

(By permission of First National Pictures, Ltd., starring Ralph Ince.)

"MODERN MADNESS"

(Continued from page 8)

this little show-down for four o'clock and it should work out almost to the minute."

"I still don't get the hang of this," cried Ken.

"Schmidt and Morelli love each other like poison, and have been rivals for years. Those are Schmidt's suits, and Morelli is coming here to throw acid over them. He don't know they're Schmidt's suits, but Schmidt will think that Morelli knows. What will Schmidt do?" Julius made a gesture with his hand. "Then we shall see a glorious battle."

Schmidt walked in well within the five minutes, and he was accompanied by four of his toughest rascals.

"Where's Morelli?"

"He isn't here yet," answered Julius. "Now, I've got a little idea. Suppose you take your men and hide in my office so you can give him a fine reception when he does get here."

There was only Julius and the parrot in the shop when Morelli and his men walked in.

"What you want?" Julius put a good quaver into his voice.

"Out of my way, fool!" shouted Morelli. "I'll teach you to call me a no good gangster." From his pocket he took out a large bottle and whipped out the cork. "Watch this burn 'em up!"

His men laughed as Morelli splashed the acid on the suits.

"That'll learn you to call me a double-crossing grafter and a black-mailer!" Morelli shouted. "The next time—"

"What he said about you just now goes for me!" drawled a voice.

Morelli and his men whipped round to find themselves face to face with Dutch Schmidt and his gang. Every man was holding a gun. They dived for their own. Julius Trent dived behind the counter.

There was a roar of blazing guns.

All the hate that had accumulated for months and months was released in this gang fight. Their one thought was to kill. It was a showdown—a fight to a finish.

Ken Mitchell jumped out of a back window directly the firing started, and, seeing a pedestrian, yelled to the man to get the police here, as soon as possible. He rushed back to find the battle still in progress, though the firing was not so frequent. Two of Morelli's men were dead and one badly wounded, whilst Schmidt was wounded and had one of his gang dead.

The two factions were shooting it out from behind any kind of cover that they could find. Poor Julius found himself crowded out from behind the counter, and in trying to get into a cupboard when he winced—a bullet had caught him in the shoulder. He clutched his shoulder and watched the battle with eager gaze.

Morelli unwisely ventured to show his head, and Schmidt drilled him through the temple. Schmidt thought the battle was over, and crawled forth to gloat over his enemy. A gun cracked, and he sprawled in a heap.

When the police arrived the battle was at an end. Every man of the two gangs was dead or badly wounded.

"Looks like we're too late," cried a sergeant. "It seems to be all over."

From the cupboard Julius Trent

swayed out and clutched at the counter. Into the smoke-filled shop rushed Ken and Daisy, to catch the wounded man in their arms.

"Officer, quick!" screamed Daisy. "Mr. Douglas has been shot."

The police carried Julius into the office, and Ken knew enough about surgery and medicine to make a rough dressing. All the while Julius smiled bravely.

"Don't worry, Ken. I'll be all right."

"Officer," Ken cried, "we've got to get a doctor right away."

"Sergeant!" The officer turned. "Order an ambulance. We'll get him to hospital." The sergeant darted from the room. "Are you able to make a statement, Mr. Douglas?"

"Sure, I can," Julius grinned. "I just had a little idea."

On the way to the hospital Julius used his influence and managed to persuade the officer, who had nothing but respect for his cleverness, that he wished to go to his home. The officer consulted with the police-surgeon and the request was granted.

A New Lease of Life

JULIUS TRENT lay in bed. He was propped up with pillows and looked amazingly well. On the counterpane were a number of daily newspapers.

"Momsey, it looks like I'm famous." He picked up a paper. "I showed them tough guys where to get off."

"I know, Julius, but you might have been killed."

"Not me, momsey. Them tough guys were a cinch for me. The minute they started that terrorism racket, I made up my mind to give 'em the business. I'm no chump. It's a hard guy I am."

There was a ring at the front door,

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"**MODERN MADNESS**"—*Julius Trent, Guy Kibbee; Ken Mitchell, Warren Hull; Betty Trent, Alma Lloyd; Don Andrews, Dick Foran; Daisy, Marie Wilson; Charlie Caldwell, Henry O'Neill; Harrison, Ohm Howland; Mrs. Trent, Virginia Brissac; Rosewater, André Beranger; Douglas, Edward McWade; Aldrich, Robert Emmett Keane; Welford Andrews, William Davidson; Dutch Schmidt, William Pawley; Morelli, George Lloyd.*

"**GAOL BREAK**"—*Jim Oakley, Ralph Ince; Mickie, Pat Fitzpatrick; Duke, Raymond Lovell; Louis, Roy Findlay; Aunt Euphy, Elliott Mason; Dr. Merion, Basil Gill; Daisy, Lorna Hubbard; Paul Kendall, Desmond Roberts; Detective Collins, Vincent Holman; Harry, Jim Regan.*

"**UNDER TWO FLAGS**"—*Sergeant Victor, Ronald Colman; Cigarette, Claudette Colbert; Major Doyle, Victor McLaglen; Lady Venetia Cunningham, Rosalind Russell; Captain Menzies, Nigel Bruce; Lieutenant Pelaine, C. Henry Gordon; Rake, Herbert Mundin; Lord Seraph, Lumsden Hare; Sidi-Ben-Youssiff, Onslow Stevens.*

"**THE SINGING VAGABOND**"—*Captain Tex, Gene Autry; Frog, Smiley Burnette; Lettie Morgan, Ann Rutherford; Honey, Barbara Pepper; Colonel Seward, Frank la Rne; Judge Lane, Niles Welch; Aunt Hortense, Grace Goodall; Utah Joe, Allan Sears; Buffalo, Bob Burns; White Eagle, Chief Big Tree.*

and there stood Ken Mitchell. It was Betty who let him in and placed a warning finger to her lips.

"I think the time has come."

"Time? For what?"

"To ask dad if it's all right for us to get married."

"Good! But why do we have to be so mysterious about it?" asked Ken.

"Shhhh! Come on." Betty grabbed hold of his hand, and, like conspirators, they tiptoed upstairs.

"You know, Julius," Mrs. Trent was saying, "if I'd even suspected about this cleaning business—"

"Kind of slipped one past you there, momsey," chuckled Julius. "Hallo, that sounds like Betty."

Julius glimpsed someone behind his daughter and at once buried his face behind a newspaper.

"Hallo, mother!" Betty said. "You know Ken Mitchell, don't you?"

"How do you do, young man?" Mrs. Trent said a little primly.

"Put your paper down, dad," cried Betty. "I want you to meet Mr. Mitchell."

Julius put down his paper.

"Why, Tom!" gasped a surprised young man.

"Hallo, partner!" chuckled Julius.

"Tom, what are you doing here?"

"Now, don't get excited," Julius chuckled. "You see, I belong here. Haven't you read the papers? I'm the father of those three women of yours—Cleopatra, Joan of Arc and Helen of Troy. It's all very simple. I got tired of doing nothing, so I went in with you as your partner. And now it looks like you're going to be one of the family."

They were all laughing and talking happily when Harrison appeared.

"I'm terribly sorry, sir, but Mr. Caldwell is below and insists upon coming up to see you."

"How are you, Mrs. Trent?" Caldwell came briskly into the bedroom. "Well, Julius, you old son-of-a-gun. I read all about you in the papers when I got off the train. How are you?"

"Never better in my life," answered Julius. "One of those gangsters clipped me in the shoulder, but it's nothing—nothing at all. I'm a pretty tough bird, Charlie."

"I know you are," Caldwell grinned. "That's why I'm out here. You'll be pleased to hear the board of directors tossed Andrews out on his ear and they want you back as president. They know now that Woolex was a big mistake. Think you can handle it?"

"Handle it! Of course I can handle it!" roared the invalid. "Maybe we can have a real research department with my partner running it. He's a fine chemist."

"But, Julius, what will your doctor say?" wailed Mrs. Trent.

"My doctor, nothing," he scoffed. "Let me tell you something, mother. I haven't touched a bit of that medicine in weeks. There's enough over there at the Checker Club to start a drug store." He beckoned Ken to come nearer. "Oh, by the way, Charlie. I want you to meet my partner, Ken Mitchell."

Julius relaxed and smiled contentedly.

"Charlie, do you know the first thing I'm gonna do when I get back to that factory?"

"No, Julius, what?"

"Fire Rosewater." Julius rubbed his hands together. "I'll give him robin's egg blue, powder-puff texture and pussy-willow weave!"

(By permission of Warner Brothers Pictures, Ltd., starring Guy Kibbee as Julius Trent.)

September 12th, 1936

"UNDER TWO FLAGS"

(Continued from page 14)

"That," he gasped, "is a figure of 'Forest King,' Tony Brett's horse. He gave it to me, and it is in my stables, now. You remember the Tony Brett scandal. His younger brother committed a crime, and Tony took the blame and disappeared, going to Russia where, we learnt, he was killed. Last summer his younger brother died after an accident, but before the end he confessed."

Venetia looked at him, her face pale but her eyes flashing with hope.

"The man that gave me that horse is a legionnaire," she said. "An English gentleman. Sergeant Victor must be Tony Brett!"

"Impossible!" her uncle cried. "Tony Brett is dead—but wait—where is this Sergeant Victor? I'd know Tony anywhere."

"He went with Colonel Doyle's battalion," she whispered.

But there was nothing her uncle could do to get Tony Brett back now. The wounded men were coming in rapidly by this time. Venetia, torn with a ghastly fear, rushed down to where the camel ambulances were being unloaded.

Cigarette was there, scanning the faces of each wounded legionnaire for the same reason. She saw Venetia, and she said bitterly:

"If you are looking for Sergeant Victor, you need not look any more. He's not coming back!"

Venetia grabbed her by the arm and demanded what she meant. Cigarette told her.

"You love him, too?" Venetia asked weakly.

"Yes, I love him, and he would have been mine if you had not come!"

"You say you love him," said Venetia, "and you can save him by talking to Colonel Doyle. If you love him, how can you let him die?"

On the hills of Ghardia dawn broke in a cold mist, and in the shadow of the mist seven legionnaires, gaunt and haggard, their clothes in tatters, lay behind a stone wall. They were all that was left of the detail of twenty men sent out by Colonel Doyle under Sergeant Victor.

In the sand, on the hills, and in the deep ravines, four thousand Arabs waited for the break of day before completing the carnage of the remaining men of the detail. Ghastly and brutal would be this last charge.

Victor moved among the men, trying to give words of encouragement. The day before he had sent a message to Colonel Doyle:

"This time the bad penny won't turn up."

The colonel had received it in silence; he admired the courage of his sergeant; he had liked him as a man, and still liked him, in spite of Cigarette—

One of Victor's men, lying behind the shattered wall, called out:

"Look! The Arabs are coming!" Through the mist horsemen appeared, but they were not Arabs. It was Colonel Doyle, leading the relief column. The Arabs also saw the column and disappeared behind the hills, waiting to mow it down from ambush.

Victor saw the death-trap, but there was no way to warn the colonel, and they had to lay and watch the Arabs swoop down on the column and cut it to pieces. Colonel Doyle fought like a tiger until a bullet took him in the shoulder and he went down. Lieutenant Petain helped him up, and, gathering the seventeen remaining members of the column round them, the colonel and lieutenant led the retreat to where Victor crouched behind the broken wall.

All day the battle went on, the legionnaires defending their position doggedly, and as night came on the Arabs drew away and the rattle of machine-guns and rifles ceased.

Victor donned the cloak and head-dress of a dead Arab and silently wormed his way to a hill and saw that their position was surrounded.

When he got back he reported to Colonel Doyle.

"Good work, Victor!" he said, all his former jealousy wiped out. "But why did you try to steal my girl?"

"So that's why you wanted me dead!" Victor laughed. "There was a girl, but not Cigarette. But what difference does it make now, we'll soon be dead?"

"If we could only hold out until noon to-morrow," said Doyle, "there is a large relief column on its way—"

"You'll get the extra time," interrupted Victor. "That is—if you give me permission?"

Doyle nodded.

"All right, go ahead," he muttered. Victor slid over the wall and was lost in the darkness. Two hours later he was ushered into the tent of Sidi-Ben-Youssiff. Victor threw off his robe and stood in his tattered uniform.

Sidi-Ben-Youssiff blinked in amazement, and then said:

"This is amazing, Brett—old Oxford classmates meeting here like this—enemies. May I offer you a drink?"

Victor nodded, took the drink. He was playing for time and told Youssiff that he was a fool, that the British Army was helping the French, and that they were even then marching on his camp. Sidi-Ben-Youssiff fell for the bait and sent spies to find out. He informed Victor that if he was right he would live; if he wasn't—well, he'd have to die.

Sergeant Victor was wrong. He knew he was when he went to Sidi-Ben-Youssiff, but his ruse had given Colonel Doyle the time that meant life to them.

Out on the desert, Cigarette, who had ridden hard after Colonel Doyle, had seen the battle from afar off, and, turning, had ridden her horse as hard as he would go back towards Abeshe. Then the horse grew weary, and so she had led the exhausted animal.

She made a pathetic figure as she

stumbled along—so small and helpless in that vast expanse of sand. Then, faintly to her ears came the sound of horses' hoofs. She topped a sand dune, and there, in the distance, was the relief column of Chasseurs. She shouted and waved her arms wildly until the column stopped, and she staggered up to the colonel.

Back in his tent, Sidi-Ben-Youssiff confronted Victor.

"You lied to me," he said, "and that means, I am afraid, your death."

Victor shrugged his shoulders.

"I am amazed that you fell for the trick at all."

Sidi-Ben-Youssiff scowled, then he smiled.

"Remember the old Soccer game?" he said. "Well, we are about to have a game now, with horses. But there will be a little difference, because I am afraid, my dear Brett, that you will be the ball!"

As the Arabs grabbed Victor the sound of horses' hoofs and shouting came from outside the tent. It was the Chasseurs, and at their head rode Cigarette—knee to knee with the colonel.

The battle was brief, and as the Arabs routed and defeated, galloped away from the scene, Victor rushed over to where Cigarette lay and gathered her in his arms.

"Cigarette!" he cried.

She opened her eyes and smiled weakly up at him.

"I have seen so many men die," she murmured brokenly, "so I know what this is. But there is something I must say. She said—your English lady—if I loved you—I would—save you—tell her—I tried!"

"I will tell her, my dear," Victor whispered.

Cigarette nestled closer in his arms, and he bent down and kissed her. She smiled faintly and closed her eyes.

The remnants of the 5th Battalion, were assembled on the parade ground at Abeshe. A coffin sat on a caisson in front of them, and on it lay Cigarette's kepi. Two flags, the French and the British, waved over her as a French field-marshal stepped forward.

"We are assembled here to do honour to a soldier of France," he said, "killed in action against the enemy. In life she was a devoted friend and companion to the Foreign Legion, and by her latest heroic action she saved the remnants of the 5th Battalion. On behalf of the Government of France, I hereby confer on Mademoiselle Cigarette the Medaille Militaire."

Under an awning stood the late Sergeant Victor, now released from his service, and Venetia. As the last notes of the bugle died away he glanced at the girl. Tears were in her eyes, and as their glance met they saw the future—and a promise of happiness made possible by Cigarette.

(Adapted from the 20th Century-Fox picture, from the screen play by W. P. Lipscomb and Walter Ferris; starring Ronald Colman, Claudette Colbert and Victor McLaglen.)

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The End of a Mutiny

AT the window of his own private office John Cabot looked out across San Pedro Bay with troubled eyes. The lights of the harbour were shining bravely enough, but beyond them sky and sea merged into utter blackness—a blackness out of which "white horses" rode turbulently shorewards.

The signs were ominous, and the thoughts of the grey-haired proprietor of the Cabot Cannery were so far away that he did not hear a clerk enter the room.

"Here's the seven o'clock weather report, Mr. Cabot," said the clerk.

"Huh?" Cabot swung round with a start and saw the slip of paper in the speaker's hand. "Oh! Any change?"

"No, sir," was the reply. "Storm warnings as far south as Panama."

"Umph! That means trouble!"

"Yes, sir." The clerk paused, then added: "And we need fifty tons of tuna to fill the orders on hand. Maybe we'd better start cancelling?"

"We'll cancel nothing," returned Cabot sharply. "Morgan promised to be here by Saturday, and he's never broken his word. It'll take more than a tropical storm to keep him away!"

Another clerk entered the room, and he also had a slip of paper in his hand.

"Wireless, sir," he said, "from Captain Morgan."

John Cabot adjusted a pair of pince-nez and took the message.

"Clearing Mazatlan to-day," he read aloud. "Headed north through storm. Arrive San Pedro Saturday."

There was a large map of Mexico and Central America on one of the walls, and he walked over to it.

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"Let me see," he said. "Mazatlan." From the Mexican city and port of that name he moved a finger out to a spot in the Pacific Ocean and rested it there. "He ought to be about here."

His reckoning was not at fault. The tuna fishing vessel, Southern Cross, was at that moment battling with a fierce storm in almost the very spot he had indicated. For several hours past mountainous waves had tried in vain to engulf her, and her decks were awash.

To the members of the crew who were in the fo'c'sle it seemed impossible that an overloaded ship could fight through such a storm, but most of them stood in awe of Captain Ira Morgan, whose reputation had earned for him the title of "Hell-Ship Morgan," and several of them were gloomily endeavouring to play cards on a table that would not keep still when Giovanni Covanci stumbled down the ladder-way in streaming oilskins and sou'-wester.

Covanci was an Italian; an ugly fellow with a scarred face and a moustache that emphasised the thick lips of a cruel mouth. He was an experienced seaman and a powerful fellow, but he was a coward at heart and he was afraid.

"We can't make it!" he shouted. "We ain't got a chance. The sooner we do something about it the better!"

The men at the table looked at him, and one of them—Joe Cotton by name and a giant in stature—inquired pointedly:

"The sooner we do what?"

"Something—anything!" cried Covanci. "We didn't sign on as no shark bait!"

"Maybe," jeered Joe, "you think the old man'll put into one of them Mexican ports?"

"He will if we make him," Covanci retorted.

"Make him?" Joe laughed mirthlessly and clutched at the table as the ship gave a sudden roll. "Nobody makes Hell-Ship Morgan do nothing!"

"Then get ready to die!" shrieked Covanci. "I say we ain't gonna live out the storm! My parrot he is dead—the ship's mascot! Nobody can reach port with a dead mascot!"

That statement carried more weight with the superstitious sailors than anything he had said before. They looked at one another in dismay.

"He's right, mates!" exclaimed a man who had been trying to get some sort of rest in a bunk that kept doing its best to eject him.

"There's sharks followin' us, too!" growled another hand.

"Sure they're followin' us!" raged the Italian. "They smell food—human food! If we don't make Morgan put into port we'll die here like rats! Are you comin' with me?"

"I'm with you, Covanci," decided Joe Cotton; and that settled matters so far as the rest were concerned. They put on their oilskins and sou'-westers and they climbed up out of the fo'c'sle through a flood of water that cascaded down the ladder-way directly the iron door at the top was opened.

Several times they were nearly washed overboard on their way to the captain's cabin, but they reached it at last. In spite of their mutinous spirit, however, at the door they stopped short and eyed one another with some uncertainty—and Joe Cotton knocked.

Inside the cabin Hell-Ship Morgan was sitting at a table with a magnifying-glass in one hand and a pearl attached

to a string in the other. He was a taller man than Joe, and a broader one; a man born to command. His clean-shaven face suggested strength of purpose, just as his massive frame suggested physical strength, but at the moment he was floating over the pearl.

On the wooden walls of the cabin hung all manner of things he had collected during his many years at sea—curved cutlasses from the Malay States, war clubs from the jungles of South America, broadswords from China, and rare Chinese tapestries; but the pearl he treasured most of all.

"Come in!" he barked, and put down the magnifying-glass and pocketed the pearl.

The door was opened, and eight dripping men followed one another into his presence.

"What are you doing on this deck?" he rapped at them.

Covanci quailed, but felt it incumbent upon him to speak for the others.

"We just wanted to see you about —" he began lamely.

"Get out!"

The harsh command silenced the Italian, but Joe Cotton was made of sterner stuff. He stepped forward beligerently.

"We want to tell you—"

"When I want fo'e'sle company," roared Morgan, "I'll visit you! Get below where you belong!"

In at the open door burst James Dale, engineer of the Southern Cross, a thick-set and phlegmatic Scot not easily disturbed by storms at sea, but now considerably disturbed.

"Cap'n!" he cried. "Cap'n Morgan!"

"What is it, Dale?" demanded Morgan, waving the others aside.

"We've sprung a leak! Water's rising in the bilges!"

"D'you hear that?" Morgan rose from his chair, and his brown eyes blazed. "Get below on your pumps!"

Covanci, more alarmed than ever, cried out:

"We're through taking orders 'from you, Captain Morgan!"

"You're what?" Morgan strode over to the Italian and gripped him fiercely by the shoulder.

"We're overloaded by twenty ton!" screeched his captive.

"This ship's got a curse on her!" declared Joe Cotton.

"She's goin' to the bottom, and we ain't goin' with her!" bellowed another frightened hand.

Morgan let go of Covanci and turned to Dale.

"Stand by your engines," he said curtly. "I'll take care of these men."

"Aye, aye, sir!" Dale went out from the cabin to struggle back to the engine-room, and Morgan faced the mutinous eight.

"I'll give you five seconds to go below!" he informed them.

"We ain't going!" defied Joe Cotton.

"Five seconds I said!"

"Save your breath, Cap'n Morgan!" bellowed Joe. "Either you put into port, or—"

A massive fist snashed into his mouth, another caught him sideways on the jaw, and he went down on his back as senseless as a log of wood. Covanci gulped and backed hurriedly away lest his turn should be next.

"Two of you take Joe to his bunk," directed Morgan menacingly. "The rest of you get below on the pumps, or I'll put the whip to your backs!"

"We—we just thought we—" stammered Covanci.

"I do the thinking on this ship!" thundered Morgan. "You signed on to take orders, and you'll take 'em till we stiek our nose back in San Pedro! I promised John Cabot tuna by Saturday, and he'll get 'em if I have to plug the leaks of this tub with your skins! Now get out, all of you! Get below!"

Without another word of protest two of the men picked up the inanimate form of Joe Cotton, and the other five shuffled out after those who bore him. The projected mutiny was at an end.

The storm was still raging, but the pumps were working, when Captain Ira Morgan went out from his cabin, not

many minutes later. Climbing the companion-ladder to the upper deck, he ascended to the bridge and entered the wheel-house.

Several times on the way he was swept nearly off his feet by huge waves that broke over the vessel, but he was not even scant of breath as he forced the door of the wheelhouse shut behind him and approached the helmsman.

"What's she turning over?" he inquired.

"About twelve hundred, sir," replied the man at the wheel, none too happily.

"Why don't you keep her on her course?"

"She's a little hard to handle."

"Give me that wheel!" snapped Morgan.

Snug Harbour

THREE days afterwards the Southern Cross chugged across San Pedro Bay, out of a calm sea, making for Pier 5. The sun was shining in a clear sky, but gulls were screeching over the ship because of her cargo of fish.

Pier 5 was the property of John Cabot, and the cannery was at the shoreward end of it. Many of his employees were waiting on the pier to deal with the tuna, or tunny fish, as soon as the vessel had berthed, and Cabot himself went out from his office to welcome Morgan home.

Slowly the vessel drew alongside the pier and was made fast, and then John Cabot hailed the captain who had been shouting instructions from the bridge.

"Hallo, there, you old sea dog!" he cried.

Morgan looked down and waved a hand.

"Mr. Cabot, come aboard!" he boomed.

Without waiting for a gang-plank to be placed in position for him Cabot scrambled over the side and mounted to the bridge.

"I'm glad to see you," said Morgan, "I'm mighty glad to see you, too."

"Give him to me," said Morgan, and caught hold of the lapel of the stranger's coat.



declared his employer fervently. "You know, that storm had no worried."

"Just a blow," said Morgan with a characteristic shrug. "We came through with a hundred and twenty tons."

"A hundred and—" Cabot broke off to clap him elatedly on the back. "Oh, say, that's splendid! Splendid!" Joe Cotton called up from the deck below:

"Ready to unload, sir?"

"Yeah," Morgan returned. "Open the hatches and let's get going, Joe."

"Aye, aye, sir."

The hatches were opened and from the tanks beneath them the tunny fish were hoisted in baskets—by means of cranes—and emptied into an inclined water-trough on the pier, along which they were swept right into the factory, where men on either side of the trough dealt with them before they reached the canning machinery.

John Cabot watched the operations which were so familiar to him.

"A hundred and twenty!" he breathed, and turned again to his captain. "You know, Morgan, that's a record."

"If we had a bigger ship," said Morgan, "we'd bring in twice as many."

"I believe you would at that, you old dog!" declared Cabot heartily. "Any trouble aboard?"

Ira Morgan grinned.

"Not a murmur," he replied. "Sweet and smooth as a shark's tooth—nothing to do but kill time."

"Yeah, I can imagine," said Cabot.

Morgan looked across at a basket that seemed to be none too securely held by the hooks of a crane.

"Be careful with that load!" he bellowed.

The basket reached the hands of the men by the water-trough in safety, and disappointed seagulls screeched their annoyance.

"Lively, boys!" urged Morgan. "I've got a date with some folks in the Snug Harbour to-night."

"How about coming over to the office and having a little talk before you go to the Snug Harbour?" suggested Cabot.

"Sure," Morgan nodded, and when the long task of unloading was finished he made his way to the private office on the first floor of the big building, where he made his report and smoked a pipe while Cabot smoked a cigar and beamed at him.

"I know it's none of my business, Morgan," the grey-haired man said rather diffidently, after other matters had been discussed, "but—well, I think a lot of you for some reason or other." "Go on," laughed Morgan, "get it off your chest!"

"Well, I seem to say the same thing after every trip. I guess I ought to keep my mouth shut."

"Nobody's got a better right to talk than you, Mr. Cabot," demurred Morgan. "I'm the one to keep his mouth shut after what happened on the Panamanian."

"Now don't dig into the past," rebuked Cabot. "That's dead. It's the future I'm interested in."

Absent-mindedly Morgan spun a terrestrial globe which was close beside the chair in which he was seated. He knew quite well what his employer was trying to say and had no great desire to hear it.

"To-day we're alive," he stated, more or less defensively; "to-morrow, maybe, we're inside the belly of a shark."

Cabot looked at him gravely and shook his head.

"You know, Morgan, I never can

understand you," he said. "Working hard, playing hard, trying to convince yourself that nothing else really matters."

"Nothing else does matter," was the emphatic rejoinder.

"Are you sure of that?"

"What do you mean?"

"Don't you ever want what other men have? The chance to settle down, friends, a home?"

Morgan's hand was withdrawn abruptly from the terrestrial globe and he sat rather stiffly upright.

"You're forgetting," he growled. "I had an idea of setting up a home once, and once was enough."

"And just because things didn't work out right that time," said Cabot, "you're determined never to give another woman a chance to hurt you as she did."

"Women!" Unutterable scorn was implied by that one word.

"They're not all like that," protested John Cabot.

"I'm not so sure," retorted Morgan in a tone that suggested he was perfectly sure. "You know what I came home and found—married behind my back!"

"Yes," Cabot agreed, "and I also know that you threw away a great career on account of it, and that's where you made your big mistake. Why, you could be where you belong to-day if you hadn't let your foolish pride give you the wrong slant."

Morgan's pipe had gone out. He put it in his pocket and stood up.

"It's no use, Mr. Cabot," he said gruffly. "You're a great guy—the best friend I ever had—but you can't make me over. I belong with that sea scum you were talking about—Covanci, Joe, and the hunch at the Snug Harbour. And whether I like it or not, they—they're my kind now. I'll see you to-morrow."

The Snug Harbour was a waterfront saloon run by a retired mate named Edward Hawkins. Swing doors gave access to it from Quay Street, but just inside was a sort of deck whence six broad steps led down into the main room.

Tables and chairs were dotted about the floor of this room, and at the far end of it there was a bar. The walls were half panelled and decorated with pictures of ships and plaster casts of fish, with here and there a lifebuoy, presumably to make the scuffling patrons of the place feel thoroughly at home.

When Morgan pushed open one of the swing doors and reached the top of the steps that evening, sailors and girls of his acquaintance were dancing between the tables to the music of a gramophone, while others sat and smoked, or leaned against the bar.

For a few moments he surveyed the familiar scene with appreciative eyes, then put his hands to his mouth and shouted:

"Ahoy, mates!"

Most of the dancers stopped short and waved to him, but bald-headed Hawkins hurried over to the steps from the bar.

"It it ain't Cap'n Morgan, back safe and sound!" he exclaimed, and ascended to grip hands with the valued customer.

"Looks like you've got a full house to-night," commented Morgan.

"That's right," agreed the proprietor. "Come on down and have a drink."

Morgan walked down the steps, and immediately four girls ran towards him.

"Captain Morgan, did you bring me back my Panama hat?" cried one of them.

"You didn't think I'd forget, did you, Helen?" he laughed.

"No," she assured him, and kissed him for the hat that was to come.

An Italian girl nestled up against his broad chest, but he held her at arm's length and surveyed her critically.

"Carlotta," he said, "you've gotten thin."

"Oh, Captain Morgan, you do not t'ink I'm skeeny?" she asked with a pout.

"No," said he, "but I think you need a drink."

"Oh, Captain Morgan," clamoured the third girl, "did you bring my perfume?"

"I've got it, Renee," he nodded. "And I've got that tortoiseshell for you, too, Nell."

With his arms round the four clustered girls he turned to the grinning Hawkins.

"All right," he said, "set 'em up for everybody. First drink's on me!"

Hawkins motioned to the waiters who were about the room to join the two assistants behind the bar.

"Get out the best we've got!" he shouted. "Come on, everybody, come on!"

Tables were deserted and there was a general movement towards the bar; but one man remained in his seat as though he had not heard the invitation, and he paid no heed to the noisy toasts that followed the rapid serving of drinks.

He was at a table near the steps and was drooping over it, a picture of utter dejection. He was a youngish man, with a mop of wavy black hair and brooding brown eyes, and his air of lassitude suggested that he was more in need of food than of the beer in a glass mug that stood neglected near his elbow.

A Helping Hand

WHILE drinks were being consumed at Morgan's expense, that redoubtable sailor home from the sea fastened upon a rather foolish-looking deck-hand as a butt for his particular brand of humour.

The deck-hand was in coloured shirt and trousers, and below the belt that supported the trousers a pocket yawned conveniently for Morgan's purpose as he waved a mug of beer and told a wholly incredible tale many of the others had heard before.

"A tiger shark, that's what it was," he stated dramatically. "I'd gone up into the rigging to look for sardines, our bait bein' low, when a big swell sent the boat rocking, and I could feel myself falling. I hit the water, and a shark wasn't twenty feet away."

The deck-hand stared.

"Did you have a knife?" inquired Ed Hawkins with well-assumed innocence and a covert wink.

"Not a sign of one," declared Morgan. "And before I'd taken two strokes the shark was between me and the boat."

He paused for effect, and the mug of beer he held was lowered several inches.

"I stopped swimming and waited," he went on slowly. "I knew I couldn't get away, and I knew he had me. He turned over on his back to strike. I could see the teeth coming closer and closer."

The mug of beer moved closer and closer to the yawning pocket.

"I could see the inside of his mouth."

The deck-hand drew a long breath.

"What did he do?" he gasped.

"He ate me up!"

The contents of the mug slopped into the pocket, and in the gust of laughter

that followed the deck-hand realised that he had been led on to his own undoing. He clutched at the leg of his trousers with a horrified expression on his face.

"You're all right, buddy," gurgled Morgan. "You're all right."
 "Yeah," complained his victim, "but I'm all wet."

The practical joke pleased the on-lookers, but Morgan was always prepared to pay for his fun.

"Don't worry about that," he said cheerfully. "I'm going to buy you a new suit. I'm going to buy you and the entire house a drink, too. Come on, everybody, come on. Everybody up to the bar. The drinks are on me. Come on, waiters. Everybody up. Nobody's to be left out o' this!"

Used glasses were replenished, fresh glasses were filled, and in the midst of the hubbub Morgan looked round the room. The lone figure at the table near the steps had become conspicuous because everybody else was crowding round the bar.

"Who's that?" he demanded, jerking a thumb. "Sort of unsociable, eh?"

"Yeah, sorta," confirmed Hawkins; and then while all the others watched, Morgan stalked over to the table and shook with vigour a pair of drooping shoulders.

"Leave me alone!" snarled their owner.

"Come on, snap out of it!" urged Morgan. "Look at the fun you're missing."

"Leave me alone, I said!" The black-haired young man raised his head to glare at his would-be benefactor: "If you don't understand that, I'll make it clearer. I'm not interested in your company."

Morgan resented that rebuff, and his face showed it.

"You're kind of short on manners, aren't you?" he rapped.

"Well," retorted the young man, "did I ask you to come over here?"

"Come on and have a drink."

"No. I'm all right here, and I'm particular who I drink with. Besides, I don't like your face."

Morgan leaned over the table with clenched fists.

"What's the matter with it?" he challenged.

"There ought to be a lump on it," replied the unsociable one, lurching to his feet. "Right there!"

Out shot his fist, a straight left to the point of Morgan's jaw; but the blow was parried with ease and a heavier one administered that caught the stranger between the eyes and sent him crashing to the floor, in company with the chair upon which he had been sitting.

Two of the waiters hurried over from the bar with Hawkins.

"The nerve of the guy!" exploded Morgan.

"He's nobody," said Hawkins. "Don't worry about him. All right, boys, take care of him. Come and have a drink, cap'n—I'm buyin' this time."

Morgan went back to the bar with the proprietor, but the man was still lying on the floor in spite of a jug of water that was flung in his face, and the incident disturbed the captain.

"He didn't like my face," he explained to the others.

"Forget it, cap," urged the girl he had called Renee. "We're still celebrating, ain't we?"

"Sure," he responded. "Sure we are." He accepted a mug of beer that was offered to him and raised it.

"Here's to the grouch!"

Drinks were served to everybody, but Morgan kept looking across the room. He saw the two waiters raise the fallen man between them and move towards the steps.

"How bad's he hurt, Fred?" he called out.

"Oh, he's all right," was the reply.

"He just ain't had nothin' to eat for a couple o' days, that's all."

"Come on, Morgan," said the

neglected Renee. "Forget about that guy, will you?"

But Morgan gnawed his under-lip, regretting what he had done.

"Takes a lot o' nerve to try and smack a guy when you haven't had anything to eat," he growled, and with sudden resolution strode back across the room.

"Wait a minute, Fred!" he commanded, and as the two waiters stopped short with the man they were half-carrying between them, he looked into a pair of dark brown eyes that were staring stupidly at him.

"Give him to me," he said, and caught hold of the lapel of the stranger's coat.

"Hawkins told us to throw him out," protested Fred, but Morgan had reached a decision that was not to be set aside.

"Did you hear what I said?" he snapped. "Give him to me!"

The semi-conscious man was surrendered to him, and without any great effort he slung the limp form over his shoulder. Voices called to him from the bar, but without even a backward glance for the crowd with whom he had intended to enjoy himself he mounted the steps with his burden and pushed his way out at the swing doors.

Half an hour later the stranger was trying feebly to sit up in a bunk on board the Southern Cross when Morgan walked in at the door of the cabin with a cup of hot coffee in his hand.

"Feeling better?" he inquired.

"If it isn't asking too much," returned the occupant of the bunk, holding his head between his hands, "you might tell me where I am."

"Aboard the Southern Cross," replied Morgan. "Captain's cabin. Captain's bunk."

There was more intelligence in the brown eyes now, but the unshaven face was drawn and pallid.

"Captain who?" asked their owner. "Morgan."



Morgan was out of the cab in an instant, and in the light of the head-lamps he knelt and picked up the girl.
 September 19th, 1936.

The brown eyes widened.

"Hell-Ship Morgan?"

"That's right," nodded Morgan.

"What's your name?"

"Jim Allen."

Morgan sat down on the edge of the bunk and proffered the cup.

"How about downing a little coffee?"

"Wait a minute. The last thing I remember—"

"I smacked you between the eyes."

"Hmm." The grunt was hostile.

"I didn't know you hadn't been eating regular."

Jim Allen accepted the cup, but did not drink from it. He stared blankly at his befriender.

"First you knock me out," he said, "and then you take care of me. Why?"

"Somebody had—" Morgan found explanation difficult and evaded the point. "Drink your coffee—it'll do you good."

"Thanks." Jim Allen sipped, found the coffee good, and continued to sip. Morgan fished out a pipe, filled it, and began to smoke.

"Sorry I got nasty," apologised Jim after a while.

"That's all right," Morgan said with a wave of his pipe. "Everybody's entitled to get nasty once in a while. Only it's bad business to try it on an empty stomach."

Jim Allen made a grimace.

"Well, if I waited till my belly got filled," he began, "I—well—"

"As bad as that?"

"Just about."

"A woman?"

Jim Allen nearly choked on a mouthful of coffee he was in the act of swallowing.

"Mind reader, aren't you?" he gulped.

"Not hard to figure that out," returned Morgan bitterly. "There's usually a woman behind a man when he hits the rocks."

"Uh-uh." Jim Allen drank more coffee and gazed thoughtfully round the cabin. "You know," he said presently, "I used to see scows like this when I was a kid in San Francisco."

"Yeah?" drawled Morgan.

"Yeah. Tuna boat?"

Morgan nodded.

"Maybe you'll laugh, but I was just three weeks away from my first officer's papers once."

"Couldn't pass the examination?"

"Naw." Jim Allen shook his head—and winced. "Didn't make it."

"D'you think you could learn to handle a pole?"

"Probably enough to get by."

"Live in the fo'c'sle, forty dollars a month and grub? What do you say?"

Jim Allen sat bolt upright and handed back the empty cup.

"I say wait a minute," he stated suspiciously. "Why should you offer me a job?"

"What difference does it make?" countered Morgan, depositing the cup on a locker. "Maybe I've got a hunch you're worth chucking a line to."

Jim considered that answer and found it to his liking. He smiled at the man who had knocked him out, and he offered his hand.

"When do we sail?" he asked.

A Successful Voyage

ON a breezy but very bright morning, ten days afterwards, the Southern Cross was ready to sail again to the shark-infested tuna fishing grounds off the Mexican coast. Stores had been taken aboard and the members of the crew were strapping along the pier when John Cabot shook hands with Ira Morgan at the door of his office on the first floor of the cannery.

"Good luck," said Cabot warmly.

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Giovanni Covanci approached the gang-plank humming an Italian song, his dunnage-bag over his shoulder, his spirits apparently at their best, and a sailor who had caught up with him eyed him in astonishment.

"Thought you weren't goin' to sign on again, Covanci?" he challenged.

"Well, he pays the best wages, don't he?" retorted the Italian.

"And steps the hardest on his crew," commented the sailor.

"Some day he won't!"

With that cryptic remark the Italian made for the deck and descended to the fo'c'sle. Others followed, and Morgan arrived.

James Dale was waiting for him amidsthips and greeted him with a salute.

"Morning, Dale," said Morgan.

"Ready to turn 'em over?"

"Ready, sir," responded Dale, and went off to the engine-room.

Morgan ascended to the bridge and issued instructions. The anchors were weighed, the lines were cast off, and the ship moved away from the pier and across the bay towards the open sea, its single funnel jetting steam and smoke, its siren claiming a clear passage.

Jim Allen, with a cigarette between his lips, leaned over the rail of the upper deck watching the white wake astern. He was clad in shirt and trousers, and he looked a different being altogether from the human wreck who had suffered from Ira Morgan's fist in the Snug Harbour.

Good food had banished the haggard expression from his face, and his eyes were clear. There was no longer any suggestion of weakness about him: indeed, he made a fine figure of a man as he lounged there, seemingly at peace with the world and master of himself.

Morgan saw him from the bridge and descended the ladder-way in quite a temper.

"What are you doin' on this deck?" he rasped.

Jim turned and stared, then summoned a grin.

"I thought it didn't matter on a tuna boat," he said calmly.

"You're a member of the crew, Allen," thundered Morgan, "and you belong below. Understand?"

"No," said Jim defiantly, "I don't."

"Then you'd better learn! This deck belongs to the captain, the mate, the helmsman, and the engineer. Get below!"

"But I thought—" began Jim.

"Stop thinking! Ask the cook for suitable clothing, and find yourself a bunk in the fo'c'sle!"

Jim Allen blinked. This was not the way for a friend to treat a friend.

"Say, look here, Morgan—" he expostulated.

"Captain Morgan," snapped Morgan.

"Have it your own way," returned Jim with a shrug, "but you asked me to sail on this scow."

"You signed as a member of the crew," Morgan reminded him. "What passed between us has nothing to do with our positions now. I'm master aboard, and you'll take orders. Is that clear?"

"Aye, aye, captain," said Jim meekly, and he went off down the companion-way with no idea that Morgan was grinning broadly at his discomfiture.

The Southern Cross carried a mainmast to accommodate a crow's nest, and off the Gulf of Tehuantepec, some days later, the look-out on duty up aloft shouted excitedly:

"Bait ahead!"

Morgan instructed the engineer to slow down and the helmsman to keep to star-

board, then discarded his coat and rounded up the whole crew.

"Turn out, you swabs!" he cried. "We've sighted bait! Get the net ready!"

A boat was lowered and a net was paid out to it. Covanci, in the boat, superintended operations, and gulls screeched greedily overhead.

A hatch was opened on board the ship, and after an interval the net was dragged in, and thousands of pilchards littered the deck.

"Looks like a good haul," said Morgan contentedly as the fish were poled through the hatch into the bait-tank down below.

Jim was swabbing the upper-deck next morning, when Morgan came up from his cabin on his way to the bridge.

"Morning, cap'n," said Jim smilingly.

"You've put on weight," said Morgan.

"Yeah," said Jim. "Must be the cook's fault."

"You glad you shipped?"

"No complaints, cap'n."

Morgan patted him on the back.

"Good," he said, and went on up the ladder.

That morning the man on duty in the crow's nest sang out the one word "Tuna!" and the vessel was stopped, and all hands turned out in haste. The hatch over the bait-tank was opened, and on either side of the ship men plied huge rods baited with pilchards.

Tuna—or tunny—belong to the mackerel family, of which they are the largest representatives, some of them reaching a length of ten feet and a weight of over a thousand pounds. They are excellent as food, and they are caught with rod and line.

The Southern Cross, being a tuna boat, was constructed specially for that sort of fishing, with built-out runways, upon which the men could use the rods, and water-troughs upon the deck into which the tuna could be flung.

From bow and stern, men flung pilchards into the water to encourage the sighted shoal to their undoing, and then as the sea became literally alive with them, the anglers cast their lines.

Jim proved himself to be quite adept at the game. Fish after fish he hooked, and with one foot against a rail for leverage, hauled each one forth, clean over his shoulder, to be dealt with at the water-trough.

Most of the tuna caught that day were of average size and weight, but some of them were too large and too heavy for one man to handle alone, and then help was speedily forthcoming.

All along each side of the ship the glistening shapes whizzed through the air, while gulls flapped their wings and tried in vain to snatch a meal.

With sweat streaming from their faces the men cast and caught and cast again, and the sun rose high in the heavens and the heat became intense.

Morgan walked along the deck, watching the efforts of his men and shouting:

"Lively, boys, lively! You can't count 'em until they're in the hatch! That's it—bring 'em aboard!"

It was not a record catch, that day, but it was a highly satisfactory one; and there followed another to match it within twenty-four hours.

Jim worked as sturdily as anyone, and Morgan did not fail to notice the fact. The man he had helped had proved entirely worthy of help.

On the homeward voyage, the evening before the Southern Cross was expected to reach harbour, Jim knocked at the door of the cabin and entered to find Morgan at his desk with a magnifying glass in his hand, gloating over the pearl

he treasured more than any other of his possessions.

"You sent for me, cap'n?" he asked respectfully.

"Yeah." Morgan thrust the pearl into a pocket and put down the magnifying glass. "Come and sit down—and you can lay off that 'captain' stuff for a while. You've proved yourself a pretty good sailor."

Jim grinned and bowed, but did not take a seat.

"Well, that's a lot to say, coming from you, Morgan," he drawled. "To what do I owe this sudden honour?"

Morgan stood up. "I want to know something," he said pleasantly.

"Such as?" prompted Jim.

"Such as how you're feeling now."

"You were right about the sea air blowing the cobwebs away."

"Changed your mind, have you?"

"About a lot of things," Jim nodded. "Just as you said, there's always another woman around the corner. I'm following in your foot-steps from now on."

"I thought you'd get some sense," chuckled Morgan. "Now I've got something to tell you. Remember the first time we talked, and I told you I knew another guy headed the same way you were, only somebody pulled him up short?"

"I remember," said Jim.

"I was giving you history, Jim—about myself."

"I figured that one out," was the unexpected reply; and Morgan was not altogether sure that he liked it.

"You mean you even thought I was soft enough—"

he began. "You may fool a lot of 'em, Morgan," laughed Jim, "but I got the inside slant on you when you dragged me down here from the Snug Harbour and took care of me and put me back on my feet again."

"I was only—"

"To the rest of the world you may be a tough, two-fisted master of a hard-bitten crew, but to me you're just what polite society calls 'an old softie.' Understand?"

Morgan grabbed hold of Jim's shirt-collar with his left hand and clenched a formidable fist.

"I've got a notion to smash you right in the jaw," he said.

"Sure," decided Jim. "And now that we've got that settled, and find we agree about important things, there ought to be a lot of smooth water for us ahead. How about it?"

"Yeah." The fist was jabbed playfully against Jim's chest. "You mean we could sort of team up together when we hit shore?"

"Hit shore is right. Say, we'd be a tidal wave!"

"Prevailing winds, a full hatch, and a quick run home," said Morgan. "Do we drink to that?"

"Especially to the quick run home."

Morgan took a bottle of whisky and two glasses from a locker, and the glasses were filled. Jim raised the one that was handed to him.

"Partner," he said.

"Partner," said Morgan, and they drank to a firm friendship.

A Girl in Despair

AFTER the Southern Cross had moored at the pier in San Pedro Bay and its cargo of tuna had been unloaded, Morgan and Jim walked together towards the cannery, Morgan with his coat slung over his shoulder, Jim with his tucked under his arm.

A clerk from the office met them, and Morgan said to him:

"Hallo, George! I expected Mr. Cabot down."



"Don't you lie to me!" shouted Morgan furiously, pinning the Italian down by both arms and crouching over him. "You sneaked into my cabin!"

"He's at home, ill," said the clerk.

"Anything serious?"

"I don't think so, but he'd like you to go to his house to-night."

"I'll be there," Morgan promised.

"In the meantime we've got a date with some folks in the Snug Harbour."

He and Jim proceeded to that waterfront resort, and for several hours they enjoyed themselves thoroughly in the mixed company they found there. If Hawkins and the girls were at all surprised to see the redoubtable captain and the former down-and-out such boon companions they did not comment on the matter.

Jim worked the "shark" joke on a suitable victim—whose pocket was filled with beer—then ordered drinks for everybody.

"You'd better count me out," said Morgan, who had looked at his watch.

"Oh, are you quittin' us?" asked Jim disappointedly.

"I've got a date with Mr. Cabot," Morgan reminded him.

"Maybe I ought to go with you," suggested Jim.

"No, enjoy yourself. I'll take care of it."

Morgan went off, and Jim said to Carlotta, who was standing beside him at the bar:

"Great guy!"

"Says who?" asked the fickle Italian girl.

"Says everybody, when they talk to me!" he informed her.

At the top of Quay Street, Morgan chartered a taxi-cab to take him to John Cabot's house, which was situated at some distance from the harbour. It was rather a dark night and a long walk was not to his liking, especially as he wanted to get back to the saloon as quickly as possible.

The cab had progressed a couple of miles, or so, when the driver turned to inquire over his shoulder:

"What's that address again, mister?"

"A hundred and thirteen West Trinity Street," replied Morgan, and suddenly caught sight of a girl in the act of stepping off the kerb to cross the wide thoroughfare. "Look out!"

The driver swung his wheel and braked, but the girl screamed and fell.

Morgan was out of the cab in an instant, and in the light of the head-lamps he knelt and picked her up. She was clad in a little dark costume with a white blouse, and her face was nearly as white as the blouse. Her hat had fallen from her head, and her golden hair brushed against his right hand as he slipped it under her shoulders. Her eyes were closed.

"She stepped right out in front of me!" cried the driver in self-defence, scrambling down from his seat.

"Never mind about that," snapped Morgan. "We've got to get her to a hospital! Here, take her hat and hand-bag!"

The driver stooped to retrieve a very small felt hat and rather a shabby hand-bag while Morgan carried the girl to the cab, deposited her gently on a seat, and dropped down beside her.

"Step on it to the nearest hospital!" he shouted as the driver resumed his seat at the wheel.

The engine was re-started, the cab swung round a corner.

"Faster!" bellowed Morgan. "You're not going to a funeral!"

The driver did his best, but the vehicle was an out-of-date one and incapable of any very great speed. Morgan leaned forward in a fever of impatience—and suddenly his eyes widened. Between the two windows in front of him there was a narrow mirror, and in that mirror he had seen the girl open her eyes and smile.

"Never mind, driver!" he cried out. "Take your time! The lady isn't hurt as bad as I thought she was—in fact, she isn't hurt at all!"

The wondering driver slowed the over-strained engine; the cab ceased to rock and rattle. Morgan turned to the girl.

"You can quit acting, sister," he said with sarcasm. "I happened to see you in the mirror."

She sat up in her corner and began to tidy her hair with her hands.

"I might have known I couldn't get away with it?" she lamented.

"What made you try?" he said.

"Oh, it looked a good idea at the time!"

"You thought I'd feel sorry and pay off—is that it?"

"Yes," she replied wearily, "I guess that's it."

"What's your name?"

"What's the difference?"

"Just curiosity."

She looked at him in the light of a street lamp that was passed and she said slowly:

"Mary Taylor."

He had looked at her in that same light and he had noticed that she was very beautiful, though there were dark shadows under her eyes and a droop about her mouth. He felt sorry for her in a way, yet despised the trick she had played upon him.

"I suppose your mother is sick, and this is a gag to get money for medicine," he said dryly.

"I haven't any mother," said she.

"Maybe you're tryin' to help your brother through school?"

"No."

"Don't tell me," he drawled, putting his arm on the cushion behind her head, "that this frame-up was just to get dough for yourself."

"I'm afraid you're right, sailor," she sighed. "That's just about the size of it."

"Where do you live?"

"Right now I haven't any address." She bit her lip and added miserably: "You can drop me anywhere."

Morgan leaned forward again.

"Hi, driver, can you find Pier Five?"

"Sure," replied the man at the wheel, "but you wanted to go to—"

"Shove off to Pier Five!"

The pier was reached, the driver was paid, and the girl was helped aboard the Southern Cross and conducted to Morgan's own cabin. She was a little slip of a thing compared with him, but she seemed to be completely self-possessed, and she gazed about the cabin with interest.

"You must have been in a lot of ports ordinary fishing vessels never touch," she remarked.

"That's right," he confirmed, and he flung off his coat and perched on the edge of his desk, watching her with amused eyes as she wandered round the cabin examining his trophies. Miniature idols, hundreds of years old, engaged her attention, and then she came to one of the Chinese tapestries and fingered it appreciatively.

"A Lei Choi San tapestry," she said, "and it's real!"

Her knowledge astonished him.

"How do you know?" he inquired.

"It's the pattern of the Third Dynasty. You couldn't mistake that weave!"

He rubbed his chin, staring at her. It seemed to him that his hastily formed idea of her needed readjustment.

"Finny you should know about that," he grunted. "Not many people do."

"I was born in China," she said, leaning against the tapestry. "My father followed the sea, too."

"Oh?"

"He was master of the Argos, a freighter."

Morgan remembered the Argos. At one time, before a woman had upset his life by marrying another man, he had skippered a boat of her size engaged in the China trade.

"Went down last fall, didn't she?" he said.

"Yes," said Mary Taylor, with a little catch in her voice. "In a typhoon off Formosa Strait."

"And you?"

"I was in school, here in California. My mother died when I was a little girl, but dad used to come and see me every trip. You see, I was all he had, and—" She broke off with a mirthless little laugh, and there were tears in her blue-grey eyes. "Why, here I am, telling you all about myself, and I don't even know your name!"

"Morgan," he replied gruffly. "Captain Morgan."

It was evident that she was not acquainted with his name—or his reputation as a tyrant.

"Do you always help people this way?" she asked.

"As a matter of fact, I don't," he replied, "only—well, I—er—I sort of figured you needed somebody to look after you, and—"

"You appointed Captain Morgan; is that it?"

"Not exactly."

"Oh! You thought I was a waterfront girl?"

"Doesn't matter what I thought," growled Morgan. "I guess you're different. Your father was a seafaring man. Anyway, it's getting late."

He walked over to her and she smiled at him.

"Guess you need somewhere to sleep," he said.

"I hadn't anywhere last night," she confessed, "but it didn't rain."

"Umph! We'll talk things over tomorrow."

He went to the door of his sleeping quarters and opened it.

"I'm sorry there's no key," he said, "but the bolt works on the inside."

With a little nod of thanks she moved past him and looked down at the bunk in which Jim Allen had once spent several nights. Then she closed the door and shot the bolt.

"Here's to Mary!"

THE sun was up, and an invigorating breeze was blowing across the bay from the Pacific Ocean when Jim Allen stepped aboard next morning. He saw Morgan on the upper deck, leaning against the rail with some ship's papers in his hands, and, none too steadily, he climbed the ladder-way to him.

"What a night!" he exclaimed.

"You don't look like you missed much," remarked Morgan.

"No!" Jim held his throbbing temples and grinned reminiscently. "Say, how did you make out with Cabot?"

"Missed him last night," Morgan replied evasively. "Supposed to see him this morning."

The negro cook was approaching from the direction of the galley with a loaded tray in his hands, and Jim looked down at him.

"There's Pittsburg with breakfast," he said, trying to moisten his dry lips with a tongue that was still drier, "and how I do need coffee!"

"Jim," said Morgan hurriedly, "mind if you have your coffee below?"

"No, of course not," Jim replied, "only I thought that ranking officer

stuff only went at sea. My error, cap'n!"

"Don't be a fool! I've got some figures to go over, that's all it is. You get your coffee and some sleep, and then you'd better get busy with your studying. Remember, your mate's examination comes up in three weeks."

"Okay," nodded Jim. "I'll work all day. But how about to-night? Do we spread our sails again?"

"Huh?" Morgan seemed a trifle preoccupied. "Oh, sure—sure we do."

The negro passed them to the cabin, and Jim descended to the main deck. Morgan moved along the rail and saw that instead of proceeding to the fo'c'sle, he had perched himself on the side with his back to the rigging of the mainmast.

There he remained, with the breeze in his face, and when the cook returned with an empty tray, he stopped him.

"Hi, Pittsburg," he said, "bring me some coffee here on deck. I need all the air I can get."

"Yassuh, right away, Mis'r Allen," responded the negro.

"Hurry!"

"Yassuh. I'se hurryin' as fast as I can."

Morgan looked down again with a frown, then went to his cabin and knocked at the door.

"Come in!" called a feminine voice; and he entered to find Mary Taylor eating the breakfast he had ordered for her. She was in his own chair at his own table, and she seemed to be thoroughly at home there.

"Good-morning," he greeted.

"Good-morning," said she, sipping hot coffee.

"Sleep well?"

"I always sleep well."

"I'm sorry you didn't have your luggage."

"Oh, that didn't matter!" she assured him. "I've done without it for three nights now. I couldn't pay the rent, so I couldn't take it away."

He dropped into an easy-chair and watched her appreciatively as she ate. There was colour in her face now, and she made a very attractive picture.

"Looks like I was right last night," he remarked after a while, "about your being different. You were willing to go to any length when you stepped in front of that cab, I guess, but you've got all the courage of a seafaring man's daughter again to-day."

"Last night," she replied, "I was cold and hungry, and nothing mattered. But you've changed everything. I've got a grip on myself now."

"Hum!" Morgan became busy with the papers in his hand and a pen he took from his pocket till a knock disturbed them. "Come in!" he shouted, and the sable-faced cook looked round the door.

"Oh," said Morgan, "have you finished with your breakfast?"

"Yes," replied Mary.

"You can take it away, Pittsburg."

The negro gathered the breakfast things together on his tray and departed with them. Jim was still on his perch, an empty cup in his hand and a cigarette between his lips, when footsteps on the ladder-way caused him to look round.

"Oh, Pittsburg, here!" he called, and held out the cup.

Pittsburg advanced and added the cup to the collection on the tray—and Jim noticed the collection.

"Looks like the captain had a pretty good appetite this morning," he commented.

"The cap'n ain't had nuthin' yet," stated the cook.

"Those plates look awfully empty to me!"

"Aw, shucks," gurgled Pittsburg, "the cap'n's lady ate off'n them, Mis'r Jim."

"The captain's lady?" Jim echoed in astonishment.

"You ain't hard o' hearin', is you, Mis'r Jim?"

In the cabin, Morgan said to Mary Taylor:

"How about getting yourself a job?"

"The trouble is to find one," she replied, "but somehow I must."

"I'm going to see Mr. Cabot this morning. Maybe he'll have something for you."

"Thanks, Captain Morgan," she said gratefully. "But why are you doing all this for me?"

"Can't a man help a girl without having to explain?" he growled, and went over to his desk and sat down at it with the papers.

There came a loud rap at the door, and Jim walked in without any invitation. His eyes went straight to the girl.

"Good-morning, captain," he said facetiously. "I see you're still busy with those figures you were talking about."

Morgan sprang up, but not in time to prevent the intruder from dumping himself on a stool at the table.

"Oh, Miss Taylor," he began rather reluctantly, "this is—"

"Jim Allen," Jim completed for him, "and do I go for papa's judgment?"

Mary liked the breezy manner of the good-looking young man, but Morgan did not.

"Mary and I were just going ashore," he said, putting on his coat. "We—"

"Not another word, captain—not another word!" interrupted Jim with mock solemnity. "I'm the soul of discretion." He beamed at Mary. "It's a charming little place we have here, isn't it?"

"Yes, very," she replied. "Are you a member of the crew?"

Jim winced at that very quiet rebuff, but otherwise bore it well.

"Just at present," he admitted. "But

in a few weeks I'll have a 'mister' tacked on me."

"You won't, unless you get busy with your studies," rapped Morgan. "Mates are supposed to know something!"

"Only when they're at sea, captain," mocked Jim.

"Get your hat, Mary!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" Mary rose and put on her hat, then picked up her handbag.

"The captain and I," said Jim, "are doing a little entertaining this evening. Mary, and if you're not going to be busy—"

"She is!" Morgan broke in curtly.

"Come on, Mary!"

He put an arm round her shoulder and led her towards the door.

"Good-bye, Mary," said Jim, waving his hand. "Come back soon, Mary."

"Good-bye," said she, without looking round.

John Cabot, who had been suffering from a chill, was better that morning, and in his office. He listened with interest to Morgan's story of his encounter with Mary, and he arranged immediately for her to have a job in the cannery.

From the office Morgan went with his beautiful protégée to a modest apartment-house in Wilmington Street, and there arrears of rent were paid up and Mary regained possession of the little third-floor flat she had left in despair.

Morgan accompanied Jim to the Snug Harbour in the evening, but he was not in the mood for the sort of entertainment the place provided, and he sat gloomily at the table near the foot of the steps while Jim danced with Carlotta and other girls.

"I'll see you later, baby," Jim said at last to one of his partners and went over to the table.

Morgan was in the act of smashing half a cigarette into an ashtray.

"What's the matter, cap?" rallied Jim. "You don't seem to be enjoying yourself."

"I think I'll be shoving off," returned Morgan, and pushed back his chair. "I've got a business appointment."

"Say, wait a minute," Jim caught

hold of his arm. "What kind of business?"

"Lay off, will you?"

"Sure, I know," laughed Jim. "Mary's a good girl—you've been telling me that all day."

"You don't understand," Morgan snapped impatiently. "She isn't like these girls here."

"All dames are alike," declared Jim. "And you told me that, too!"

"I said a lot of things before I met her."

"Will you stop being a fool? You wised me up, and now you're leading with your chin! You've had one experience—do you want to pile up on the same reef?"

"Maybe you'd better stay clear," gritted Morgan.

Jim shrugged at that.

"Well, you're heading for a shipwreck," he said. "No woman's worth it—remember telling me that?"

"I remember."

"All right, then, why not stop—"

"I wonder if you'd mind getting me a drink? That private bottle they keep for me."

That sounded a little better, from Jim's point of view, and he hurried off down the long room and squeezed through the crowd at the bar.

"Give me a drink for Captain Morgan out of his own bottle," he said, "and make it snappy."

A glass was filled and handed to him, and with it he sped back to the table. But Morgan's chair was empty, and there was no sign of him anywhere.

He shouted to the proprietor, who was talking to a customer on the other side of the steps, and the proprietor walked over to him.

"Where did Morgan go, Hawkins?" he asked.

"Home, I guess," was the reply. "What's the matter with him? He's never acted like this before."

"Aw," said Jim disgustedly, "he's fallen for a dame!"

"Quit stringing me! Morgan's too wise for that!"

"Well," shrugged Jim, "that's just



"It's almost certain death to send a man over in this storm," Jim expostulated.

what's happened. I tried to warn him, but he wouldn't listen to me."

"Why be upset about it?" said Hawkins, spreading his hands. "It won't be permanent."

"No? Well, I've got a hunch this one's too smart to let him off easy. She's sold him the idea that she's not like the others."

"Maybe he isn't."

Jim, still bitter concerning his own experience, had no faith in that possibility. The fickleness of a girl had driven him to drink and the gutter, and but for Morgan he might have sunk even lower than the gutter.

"Haven't you got any sense?" he snorted. "They're all alike, and I'm not going to let him take another bump."

"How are you going to prevent it?" inquired Hawkins.

Jim held up the drink he had obtained for Morgan.

"Here's to Mary!" he said scornfully; and he drained the glass.

The Way of a Man

JIM saw Mary several times before the Southern Cross sailed again to the fishing grounds, and he made himself very nice to her on each occasion; but it was after the next voyage that he really set about rescuing Morgan from her clutches—as he himself would have expressed it.

On two evenings in succession she found him waiting for her outside the employees' entrance of the factory when she emerged from it.

"What, you here again?" she exclaimed, when he sailed up to her on the second evening.

"Getting to be a habit," he said, "like telling you how pretty you are."

"Silly!"

"Anyway, I haven't been here very often. Morgan generally waits for you since you've been working at the cannery."

She gave him a friendly smile.

"Shall we walk, or take a street car?"

"Let's walk," he suggested. "Takes longer!"

The apartment-house in Wilmington Street was reached, and he climbed the stairs with her to the third floor and followed her into the sitting-room of her flat.

"This is the first time I've managed to crash in here," he remarked, and he put his cap on a sideboard and sat down on a couch.

"I'm sorry you can't stay," said she rather pointedly, "but I've got to cook dinner now."

"That's all right," he returned blithely. "I'll help."

"No, seriously, Jim," she protested. "Listen to me—you've got to go before—"

"Remember what I told you yesterday?"

"No."

He rose and walked over to her. She had just taken off her hat and was shaking her golden hair loose.

"About your lips being made for kisses."

"Was it you who said that?"

"Don't bear down on me, sister. Once I'm crossed I accept no responsibility."

"You're going right now," she stated icily.

"Without a kiss?"

"Without a kiss."

He took her in his arms, but she averted her face.

"I could be satisfied with just one," he told her.

"Here's your cap, mister." She

snatched up the cap and held it out to him.

"Thanks." He released her as though to accept the cap, but caught her face between his hands instead and kissed her on the lips.

"Stop it!" she cried.

He kissed her again, and she slapped his cheek with all her might and broke away from him.

"What's the matter?" he jeered.

"Afraid of Morgan? You needn't be!"

"Jim," she said, looking at him with troubled eyes, "you're spoiling something. You were Morgan's friend. I liked you."

"You're going to like me a lot better," he declared, and would have grabbed her again, but she put the table between them.

"Get out!" she stormed.

"Eh?" Jim stared at her, and was surprised to see tears in her eyes.

"Get out!" she repeated. "But before you go there's something I want to say to you. The night I met Morgan I was reckless, and he knew it; but instead of trying to take advantage—as you would have done—he took me in and treated me decently, and I'm never going to forget it. Not for you, nor a hundred like you! Now get out of here!"

He rained the cap on his head and he went slowly to the door. But as he opened the door he looked back at her.

"I guess I made a mistake," he said contritely. "I'm sorry, Mary."

Five minutes after he had gone there was a knock at the door and she was afraid that his repentance had been short-lived.

She put the door on the chain before she opened it, determined not to let him in; but it was Morgan in the passage outside, his arms full of paper-bags and packages.

"What's the matter?" he exclaimed. "Afraid somebody's goin' to try to break in?"

"I didn't know it was you," she replied with a little sigh of relief, and she freed the door from the chain and opened it wide. "Come in."

Morgan entered with his numerous purchases.

"Here I am," he complained, "thinking maybe I'll get an invitation to stay, and I can't get in!"

"What in the world have you got in all those packages?" she asked.

"Steak, onions, potatoes—oh, a lot of things!" He deposited the collection on the table with care and took off his cap, beaming at her.

"What do you think people will say to your coming up here and bringing all those things?"

"They'll probably say I'm hungry."

"I'm afraid they're saying more than that. I—I guess I shouldn't have let you help me."

He looked down at the packages and the paper-bags and then he looked at her. She had turned her back on him to hide her tears, and her head was bowed. With sudden resolution he went over to her.

"Mary," he said huskily, "maybe this isn't the right time to talk about it, but I—I guess you know I love you—have loved you ever since that first night. Remember when I took you to my ship?"

"Yes, I remember," she replied.

"I've thought a lot about it. The way you looked—so helpless, yet still kind of proud. Then, the next day, we landed you a job."

"You landed it," she corrected.

"And right away you made good. I was mighty pleased about that, after recommending you." He drew a long

breath. "But I guess too many people have seen me meeting you after work. Anyway, as long as people are talking, why not give them something real to talk about? I could take better care of you if we were together. What do you say?"

Mary, without looking at him, replied slowly:

"I could hardly say 'No' to anything you asked."

"The ship sails next Sunday. We could be married just before she leaves."

"Married!" She turned and tried to smile at him. She was tremendously grateful to him for all that he had done for her, but she was not in love with him.

"Yes," said Morgan, holding out his hands. "And then a honeymoon at sea—the wind in our faces—"

"On Sunday," she nodded. "All right."

They were married on board the Southern Cross, in the presence of the crew, by a parson who wished them good luck after the ceremony was over. John Cabot gave Mary away; Jim acted as best man because Morgan had insisted.

"I want to be the first to congratulate you," said Cabot warmly.

"Thank you," said Mary.

"Both," said Cabot.

"Good luck, cap!" chorused the members of the crew; but Jim did not even claim the kiss to which he was entitled.

"Thank you, boys, thank you," said Morgan, and he produced from his pocket the pearl he treasured, dangling it on its string. "Mary, I've got a present for you. It's the Callao pearl—the first one I've ever given away."

Mary took the pearl and held it out in the palm of her hand.

"Oh, it's beautiful!" she cried.

"You like it, eh?" said Morgan, and he fastened the string round her neck.

The crew, all dressed up for the occasion, gave three resounding cheers, and then Jim stepped forward. Jealousy was in his heart, but a smile was on his lips.

"I want to wish you both all the happiness in the world," he said. "You're pretty lucky, captain."

"I'm not the only lucky one here today," chuckled Morgan. "Boys, Mr. Allen got his papers yesterday morning. You're lookin' at the new first mate of the Southern Cross."

There was a cheer for Jim, and then the parson hurried off because he had to conduct a service in church within an hour.

"On deck, men," said Morgan briskly.

"We're stepping off in ten minutes."

The members of the crew departed to shed their best clothes and take up their duties, and Morgan escorted John Cabot ashore. Jim was left alone in the cabin with Mary, who went to a port-hole and looked out through it at her husband, walking along the pier beside his employer.

"I've been wanting to tell you," said Jim, crossing over to her, "that I made the biggest mistake of my life that day in your flat."

She gave him a glance over her shoulder, and she knew that he was sincere.

"Let's pretend it didn't happen," she suggested.

"I can't do that," he returned with a regretful shake of his head, "and I want you to know I'm ashamed of what I did."

"You just lost your head," she said gently. "Sometimes people do that—and make mistakes. Listen to me, Jim. You know how I met Morgan, and what he did for me. If I can give him some

measure of happiness, then that's the smallest payment I can make on that account."

Jim nodded. The wistful expression on her face, combined with her words, told him that she did not love the man she had just married.

"I want you to understand that," she added solemnly. "Do you?"

"I understand," he assured her.

"Wish me luck, will you, Jim?" She offered her hand.

"You know I do, Mary."

For one long moment he held the hand in his, then let go of it and went abruptly out from the cabin.

Covanci States His Terms

IT was on September 27th that the honeymoon at sea began, and in the early days of the trip Mary was not unhappy. The weather was good all the way down the Californian coast, and Ira Morgan was very attentive to his beautiful bride.

But life on board a tuna boat has many limitations. The fish-tanks occupy nearly all the space not taken up by the captain's quarters, the mate's cabin, the engine-room, the fo'c's'le, and the runways—and Mary began to find the cramped life irksome.

Eight days elapsed before bait was sighted, and by that time the wheel-house had become more attractive to her than the cabin; especially when Jim was at the wheel. His airy manner contrasted strongly with the uglier side of her husband, as displayed in his dealings with the crew, and though just at first the actual fishing for tuna interested her, she very soon wearied of the reek and the slimy mess that accompanied it.

The vessel was off the coast of Chile, eighteen days out from San Pedro, when one evening Morgan looked up at her from his desk, where he had just made an entry in the log-book. The barometer was falling and the fish-tanks were nearly full.

"I'm figuring on heading for home in a few days," he said. "We've got enough fish on board to last the canneries for weeks."

"Yes," she sighed, "I know."

He put down his pen and frowned. She was leaning against the Chinese tapestry with her hands behind her head and what appeared to him to be a discontented expression on her face.

"You don't seem very enthusiastic," he grunted. "Anything worrying you, Mary?"

"Of course not," she replied, summoning a watery smile. "I—I guess I'm just a little tired of fish."

"I don't blame you," he said, slumping round in his chair. "When we get back we'll fix up a nice little home. All I want to do is to make you happy."

"You've already done that."

"Sure?"

"Sure," she declared.

Jim knocked at the cabin door and entered.

"Bad weather ahead, sir," he reported.

"Barometer still falling?" asked Morgan.

"Yes, sir. I wirelessly Panama. There's a storm headed our way."

"Any trouble below?"

"I haven't seen any, sir."

"Keep your eye on 'em."

"Yes, sir."

Jim went out again without a word for Mary, and she felt hurt.

"What's the matter?" inquired Morgan, as she moved away from the tapestry and put her hands to her face.

"Oh, nothing!" she shivered. "Gives me the creeps when I think of a storm, and sharks following us."

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"Don't let that worry you," he urged, walking over to her and holding her arms. "Sharks always follow a loaded fishing boat. They smell blood."

"Oh, don't please!" she cried, and broke away from him.

"I'm sorry," he said.

"It's foolish of me," she confessed.

"I'm probably a little nervous. I think I'll get some air."

She went out, and for a while she leaned over the rail of the upper deck. But heavy clouds were banking in the sky, and the sea looked grey and sullen. She turned away and ascended to the wheel-house.

Jim was at the wheel, but he did not seem to notice her till she stood beside him.

"Hallo, Mary!" he said then. "Standing the trip all right?"

"No, I'm not!" she replied emphatically. "And I'm glad we're turning back!" She laughed bitterly. "You probably expected me to say that."

He shook his head, quite sympathetically.

"You're upset," he said. "A long trip on a boat like this is tough on a girl."

"Cooped up every day and night on a fishing boat!" she shrieked. "That's just what a girl dreams of!" She pointed through one of the windows. "Do you see that black water out there? How many times do you think I've stood by the rail, wondering if I dare—"

"Mary," Jim broke in hoarsely, "you shouldn't have come up here!"

"I had to!"

"I'm on duty." "You've been avoiding me," she accused. "You've kept out of my path as if I—"

"Look how plain you can see Tablis Light from here," he said. "Pretty, isn't it?"

"Jim," she persisted wildly, "we can't put this off any longer!"

"Mary," he returned, "there are a lot of dangerous reefs out there."

"You needn't warn me!" she cried. "I've got to talk! You know I love you, don't you, Jim? You've known it ever since we've been on this boat! I made a mistake in marrying him, but can't we do something about it? We have a right to happiness!"

"We haven't any right," said Jim sadly. "I love you, Mary—I guess I'll go on loving you always—but something tells me that's where it's got to end."

"Oh, it mustn't!" She flung her arms round his neck. "It can't!"

"It must!" he insisted, and let go of the wheel to free himself from her embrace. "There's only one thing to do if we've really found ourselves—try to forget. We both owe him too much. Mary, to hurt him."

She wiped her eyes with a tiny handkerchief and became calmer, gaining strength from his strength.

"I guess you're right," she said brokenly at last, and went out to the ladder-way.

But Covanci, from the deck below, had seen her with her arms round Jim's neck, and he was waiting for her at the bottom of the ladder, a half-smoked cigarette in his hand and a look of cunning on his swarthy face.

"Good-evening, Mrs. Morgan," he said.

"Good-evening," she returned with a start. "You're Covanci, aren't you?"

"Yes." He blew a cloud of smoke almost in her face. "Nice night out, isn't it?"

"Yes," she agreed faintly, half-scared by his manner.

"Nice night for the man at the helm."

She knew then that she had been seen, and she would have escaped up the ladder, but he seized her by the wrist and arm.

"I wouldn't hurry, if I was you, Mrs. Morgan," he said grimly. "I wasn't goin' to talk-a to you to-night, but as long as you came down—"

"Get out of my way!" she stormed.

"Just as you say," he purred, still holding her wrist; "only I'll be seein' the skipper, and I sorta figured you might want-a to hear which I shall have to say to him."

"What do you mean?" she gasped.

He let go of her wrist and hunched his shoulders.

"You and Meester Allen might say I've been spying, but sailin' under Cap'n Morgan sort o' makes it my duty to see that he knows what's goin' on around here."

"Do you think he'd believe you?" she asked in a voice that was intended to be scornful but was not by any means under control.

"Maybe not," said Covanci, "but he might. Eet is a chance. I'll go and see."

"No, Covanci, no!" she cried in a panic. "You mustn't do that! It would hurt him."

Covanci leered at her.

"I ain't askin' nothin' for myself," he said. "I am thinkin' about the rest of the crew."

"What do you want?"

"Well," he drawled, "that pearl the cap'n gave you, for instance."

She stared at him aghast.

"You—you don't expect me to give you that?" she faltered.

"I'll be here on deck for another two hours before I turn in," he replied significantly.

The Broken Mast

FOR a little over three hours the Southern Cross held on her way in a sinister calm through a darkness that seemed almost suffocating; and then the storm broke. A furious wind lashed the sea into great foaming waves, rain sheeted down, and the vessel tossed and dipped and rocked and quivered.

Morgan made his way to the wheelhouse, and with water streaming from his oilskins and his sou'-wester went to the man who had relieved Jim.

"The glass still falling?" he demanded.

"Aye, sir," was the shouted reply.

"Change your course three points west."

The helmsman swung the wheel and held it with difficulty, and then Jim burst in upon them, seant of breath and holding on to the door after he had closed it.

"Trouble in the fo'e'sle," he reported.

"What kind of trouble?" rapped Morgan.

"Covanci," Jim replied. "He's been drinking."

"You stay here, and if the glass falls any lower call me."

"Aye, aye, sir."

Morgan went out, descended the ladder-way, and worked his way along the side to the fo'e'sle. There were eight men down there, most of them had just finished their watch but were still in their oilskins. Covanci was drinking from a bottle of whisky which he had more than half emptied, and was making himself a nuisance.

"Hi, lay off that liquor!" admonished Joe Cotton. "If Morgan catches you it'll be just too bad."

"Morgan!" shouted the Italian tipsily. "Hell-ship Morgan. I know what I'm doin'. I'm not afraid of Morgan!"

Water showered down into the fo'e'sle as the door at the top of the ladder was opened and Morgan descended the rungs. He grabbed Covanci by the shoulder and swung him round.

"Give me that hottle!" he roared.

Covanci had tried hastily to conceal the whisky bottle under his oilskins, but the hand that held it there was jerked forth, the hottle was wrenched from it and was smashed to pieces upon the floor.

"Now get into your bunk and stay there," commanded Morgan, "or I'll put you in irons!"

"You put me in irons?" defied Covanci. "Not this time you won't!"

Morgan's right fist smashed into his jaw, and as he fell a heave of the ship brought the floor up against the back of his head. He sprawled beside a bunk, completely knocked out, and for a moment mutiny flamed in the eyes of his companions.

But Morgan was not afraid of them. "Up on deck, all of you!" he thundered. "Lash down everything that's loose—we're not in the worst of the storm yet!"

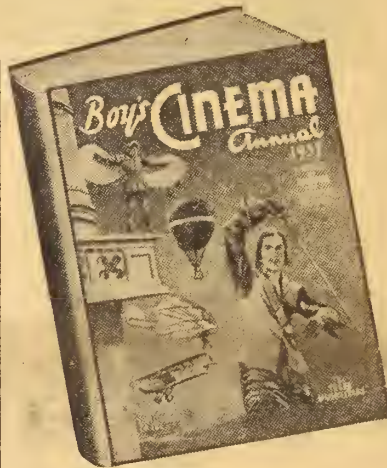
Sullenly the men obeyed, and then he caught up a bucket of water and dashed its contents into Covanci's face.

"Get up, there!" he rasped, dropping the bucket as the Italian opened his eyes.

Covanci staggered up against the side of the bunk, but as he did so the Callao pearl dropped from his left hand and Morgan pounced on it.

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"I—I didn't steal it!" stammered the Italian.

"Don't you lie to me!" shouted Morgan furiously, pinning him down by both arms and crouching over him. "You sneaked into my cabin!"

"No, no, I didn't!" screeched Covanci. "I'm not lyin'—I swear it! Your wife, she gave it to me. She did, cap'n! On my mother's soul she did. Listen to me!"

"You talk—and talk fast!"

"I made her do it. I saw her in the wheelhouse with Meester Allen. He had her in his arms—"

"You're lying!"

"No, no!" cried the Italian frantically, as the hands that gripped his arms shifted to his throat. "I spik-a-da truth! You leesten—I—I tell you all about it!"

The men who had gone on deck at Morgan's command were clinging to the side amidships instead of carrying out his instructions. Jim saw them from the wheelhouse and went down to them, determined to nip in the bud any trouble that was brewing.

"Break up here!" he bellowed at them above the noise of wind and rain. "Get out that live-bait tank! Want it to roll overboard?"

The men moved off towards the stern, and Jim returned to the wheelhouse.

"Steve," he said to the helmsman, "get aft and help the men on the bait-tanks."

"Aye, aye, sir."

The wheel was surrendered and the man went out into the storm. But the door had been closed for no more than five minutes when it was opened again, and Mary stumbled in, enveloped in oilskins, wild-eyed with fear.

"Jim! Jim!" she cried, and tottered towards him.

"Mary," he said reprovingly, "you should be in the cabin."

"I can't stay there!" she whimpered, clinging to his arm. "I've got to talk to you about Covanci. He's got the pearl!"

"Stolen it?" Jim asked.

"No, he didn't steal it. I—I gave it to him."

Jim stared at her incredulously.

"You gave it to him?" he exclaimed.

"I had to," she sobbed. "He—he saw us in here and threatened to tell Morgan. I—I— Oh, I was afraid!"

"Steady, Mary," urged Jim. "Steady, girl!"

"Oh, Jim, I'm frightened!" she shivered. "I don't know what to do!"

The door on the other side of the wheelhouse was opened and Morgan burst in upon them, his eyes ablaze.

"Covanci wasn't lying after all!" he said, stalking over to them and thrusting his face nearly into Mary's. "He did see you! Saw you in Allen's arms, like he said!"

"Morgan!" protested Jim.

"You keep out of this!" Morgan raged at him.

"Ira, you've got to listen to me," pleaded Mary. "Covanci did see me with Jim. He may have heard me tell him I love him. I do love him. I've fought against it. I've tried to cut it out of my heart, but I can't—I can't! I married you, but I've loved him all the time!"

"You're lying!" Morgan snapped at her. "You're lying to save him!"

"I'm not!" she cried desperately. "I love him!"

Morgan backed away from her as though she had struck him, and in that dramatic moment a deck-hand flung back one of the doors.

"The fore-stay guy-line's parted, sir!" he reported.

(Continued on page 27)

A husband of a few hours is shot by a woman of mystery, and the wife, fearing accusation of the crime, flees to France. War breaks out and she marries a flying ace, but back from the dead comes her first husband, who is now an English air pilot, and so does the mystery woman. A thrilling spy drama, starring Jean Harlow, Franchot Tone and Cary Grant



The Young Inventor

THE great charm about Suzy was her glorious fair hair. She was pretty and had a good figure, but it was the hair that made her such an arresting picture.

As she went about the small flat tidying and straightening she smiled contentedly. She was a very lucky little schemer, though her friend Maisie thought she could have done better than marry a young factory mechanic.

Suzy had left the orphanage in Pennsylvania with a determination to get on in life. She did not aim to become anyone great, but to attain security and peace, and in marrying Terence Moore she felt she had attained her object.

They had met through Terry doing his best to kill her. Suzy had obtained work in the States with a third-rate touring company as a chorus girl. At the end of the tour some of the girls were asked to go to England to appear in an American revue in London. Suzy and her friend Maisie went. The show ran for some weeks and then flopped, and the two girls had not enough money to get back to the States. Maisie heard of a job in a French café and accepted it, but Suzy would not go with her. She was going to stay in England and make good or else pick out a duke, an earl, a lord, or someone with money to marry. And she was down to her last shilling, and stumbling across a road in a thick fog when a powerful Rolls-Royce knocked her down. That was how she came to meet Terence Moore and his friend Knobby MacPherson.

On account of the car she had mistaken Terry for a lord, but the day the two men took her to the Derby she learnt her mistake, because this time their car was a dreadful old flivver. Frankly, Terry told her he was a mechanic in a factory and that Knobby was odd-job man. The Rolls belonged to the boss of the factory.

At the races Terry wanted to back a horse called Ragamuffin at two to one, and he gave Suzy Trent a stake of a five-pound note as if it were five-pence. He was in a rash mood. But Suzy had not liked the name and had also been rash—she put the money on Golden Fleece. Miracles sometimes happen, because the horse won at twenty-to-one.

By accident Suzy found a bankbook when they celebrated winning a hundred pounds at Terry's digs. Against June 16th, 1914 she found that his credit was four hundred pounds and some odd shillings. He was not a duke or an earl, but he was a nice young man. Suzy decided that she liked him and that she could easily love him; she would make him a good wife.

"Four hundred pounds is two thousand dollars," Suzy had argued with herself. "Why, one could eat for years and years and years on that."

Should she go to her friend Maisie in Paris or marry Terry? She had decided it was much pleasanter to marry Terry, with whom she was already more than a little in love. She used her wiles and Terry proposed, and then Suzy had felt that she was a little beast. Frankly, she told him that she had angled for him.

"I think you're the finest man in the world and it is a great temptation to say yes, but I can't go through with it. I do like you an awful lot. I planned to marry you because it's hard to struggle alone in a strange city, fighting to keep alive. You deserve better than that, Terry."

But Terry had swept her into his arms and said he was willing to take the risk. Some day she would care for him, and so she had married him. And she was glad, because every day she grew to like Terry more and more, so that she was almost convinced that she loved him.

Many nights Terry was away. He was working on a stabiliser for aeroplanes, and the only chance he had of completing his experiments was to sneak into the factory after it was closed down and do some quiet work with the lathes and drills. One night he decided to take Suzy with him to the factory.

"You've brought me luck ever since I met you," he told her. "My invention is almost complete. With you there—just you and me in that silent plant, I'm sure I'll be able to solve one or two problems that are still holding me up. You will be my inspiration. With the four hundred pounds I have saved I can place my invention and we'll be rich for life."

Terry spoke eagerly, and his grey eyes were flashing. He was a slim, wiry young Irishman, shrewd of tongue and sharp of eye, and clever with his hands.

They drove to the factory, and that was the beginning of the great adventure.

The Mysterious German Factory

TERENCE MOORE was engrossed in making some steel pins and Suzy was equally engrossed in watching him, so much so that neither heard a door below open or heavy footsteps mounting the wooden stairs.

"Who iss dere?" It was a woman's voice calling in guttural tones. "It's Mrs. Schmidt, the boss," hissed Terry. "Hide in that office of mine. It has glass windows, so keep your head down. I'll get rid of her in a minute."

Terry was busy at the machine when the bulky form of Mrs. Schmidt appeared at the top of the stairs.

"So, it iss you!" the woman shouted. "Coming into my factory after hours, wasting my lights and my power and my machinery on your own silliness."

"But I didn't think you'd mind, Mrs. Schmidt," said Terry in his most disarming manner. "And it was my own time, and I thought—"

"You thought!" the German woman interrupted him harshly. "Now I tink, and vat I tink, I say. Dat iss—you get out, and stay out. Dis very minute. You're sacked!"

"Very well, Mrs. Schmidt, if that is the way you feel about it," Terry gave a resigned grin. "I'll just pack this contraption—"

"You will not—not now. To-morrow you come for it, get any pay coming to you, and dat's the end!" She pointed. "And go out de front way—not the back."

The woman went into her office and closed the door. At once Terry darted across to his own room.

"Suzy," he whispered, "you go downstairs by the front way and wait for me by my old car. I've got a hunch there's something funny going on here. I have always thought Mrs. Schmidt was a rum bird. I'm going to stay and see what she's up to. Hurry, Suzy. I can look after myself."

When Suzy had gone Terry switched off the lights and shut the door with a bang, then he waited in the shadows. Why he was prying like this he was not sure, but it was more than idle curiosity. Almost immediately he heard footsteps coming up the back stairs. Mrs. Schmidt opened her door, and in the faint light he could see a man wearing a chauffeur's uniform and a beautifully dressed woman. They went into Mrs. Schmidt's office and the door closed.

Terry crept quietly towards the door, stood on a chair, and peered in through a transom. He saw Mrs. Schmidt hand some letters to her visitors, then the woman glanced up and saw him. The strangers did not turn, he only saw their backs, but Mrs. Schmidt came towards the door and opened it. To his surprise she beamed at him.

"Why, you neffer tell me you know German?" she asked. He decided that it was wise to make no answer, but just to grin knowingly. "Vell, anyway, this is a lucky night for us—just got a big order," the woman continued. "It vill make us a fortune."

"How lucky for me?" mocked Terry. "Now you've fired me."

"Acht, you silly boy. You take me and my temper too seriously. Come back to-morrow. For a long time I tink Terry should have more money. Long time I think you fine mechanic. Maybe I make you the manager."

Terry was all grins when he rejoined Suzy by the car.

"I caught a glimpse of the man and his lady friend," she told him. "My, but she was beautiful, and all dressed up in furs like a duchess. What on September 19th, 1936.

earth was she sneaking into the factory for?"

"I can't make it out," said Terry. "You see, they were talking in German, and I don't know a word of it. At any rate, old Ma Schmidt saw me and was all smiles. She's promised me more money and hints she may make me manager. So who cares who her friends were."

Mrs. Schmidt answered the anxious looks of her visitors when she returned to the office by a determined shake of the head. Then she wrote on a card, and without a word handed it to them. They nodded silently.

"Terence Moore, 36 Isling Street," was written on the card.

The young couple drove back to Terry's apartments, and the young mechanic was in the best of spirits.

But Suzy was worried.

"I wish I knew what they had been talking about. Those papers and all that talk in German. They might have been spies."

"Snap out of it," chided her husband. "Probably the old hag is double-crossing her partners. Anyhow, these aren't war times, so what's the use of spies or secret agents? Dismiss it, sweetheart. I think the old dame is square, though quick-tempered." He took out some notes. "This is the wedding present I've been meaning to give you. Actually, it's your share of the winnings on the Derby, and I want you to buy yourself some new clothes. One thing more before I get the kiss I'm expecting." He took a small box from his pocket. "My father gave this to my mother soon after they were married, and now I give it to you."

"Darling!" cried Suzy, and flung her arms round his neck.

She froze in his arms, because the door behind Terry had opened slowly and silently. The woman she had seen at the factory stood there, and in her hand was an automatic. Terry had felt his wife stiffen in his arms, and as he released her to find out the reason the woman raised her arm, took deliberate aim at Terry and fired twice.

Terry slumped to the floor. The woman tossed the pistol towards him and darted out of the room. Suzy tried to scream to give the alarm, but her voice would not come. She sank down on the floor beside Terry's limp body. Suddenly her hand came in contact with something cold. It was the pistol. In fascinated horror she picked it up and stared at it.

There was a scream. Suzy turned towards the open door. A woman lodger with wild eyes stood there, staring. She was pointing at the body. "You've killed him!" she accused.

Screaming in terror and acting like one possessed the woman dashed down the corridor, and Suzy could hear her yelling:

"Help! Help! Murder! Murder! Moore has been shot dead by his wife. Police! Police! Murder! Murder!"

Suzy dropped the pistol and jumped to her feet. Blind panic seized her. She darted to the door, and then recoiled as she heard gruff voices. Already a patrolling policeman was on the scene. She rushed back into the room, shut and bolted the door. She knelt beside Terry and felt his pulse frantically. He was dead! What should she do? They would accuse her of the crime. Police whistles shrilled, and that made her panic even worse. She thought suddenly of the back stairs.

The terrified girl snatched up her hat, coat and purse and flew to the door that led on to emergency stairs

in case of fire. She crept quietly cut as heavy hands pounded on the outer door. She gained the street without being seen, managed to walk casually to a corner, and then in blind panic rushed down a dark alley. She ran for almost a mile before exhaustion brought her to a pause.

Was it all just a horrible nightmare? Would she wake up and find Terry comforting her? She found herself in a park and sat down to rest on a bench—she knew it was not a dream. She wished she had stayed beside Terry and faced the police. It was too late to go back now. Running away would be such damning evidence against her. Suddenly she thought of Maisie. In France she would be safe, but she required money for the crossing. She jumped to her feet—she had thought of the money Terry had given her a few moments before he had been killed.

Most of the night she walked in the shadows, and in the morning took a train to Dover. No one challenged her as she walked on to a Channel boat. Only a few more hours and she would be safe with Maisie.

She had bought a morning paper. Was it morbid curiosity or fear that prompted her to turn the pages in search of a news item concerning a young man shot, a hue and cry for the girl who was suspected of the killing and had escaped? She could find nothing about Terence Moore. The papers were far too occupied with startling news—news that was going to throw the world in the throes of a terrible war:

"Austrian Archduke Assassinated at Sarajevo."

An Air Raid Helps Romance

ALMOST exhausted, Suzy reached Paris, and a facon took her to Maisie's lodgings. What a relief to find the door opened by Maisie! Suzy collapsed in her friend's arms.

It was several days before Maisie could get a coherent account of what had happened.

"Maisie, I was a dirty yellow cur to run away. I should go back. I can't be a coward for ever. Terry wouldn't have run away and left me. He was brave and fine, and—"

"Crazy about him, aren't you?"

Suzy's voice broke.

"That's the worst of it. I liked him, but I didn't love him. I failed him in every way."

Maisie argued that there was nothing to be gained and a great deal to lose if Suzy returned to London. There was a war on and probably the authorities in England were far too busy to bother about some unknown mechanic.

"When you're rested you can come and help me at the café," Maisie suggested. "Your blonde hair will go over fine with the soldiers. This war is filling our place every night, and officers and soldiers spend their money freely. We can save, and when we've got enough we'll go back to God's own country, and never leave it again."

By tacit agreement they never spoke of Terry. The girls were at the café long hours, and for that Suzy was grateful. The excitement and bustle of war helped her to forget and shut out the past. Suzy, in her white and somewhat daring muslin evening dress was a great success among the revellers at the café. She danced charmingly, and her voice was very pleasant. She smiled at her many admirers, but she was not really in-

terested in any of them—until one night.

It was the indifference, not the interest, of a group of young French airmen, that piqued her. They sat at their table drinking and talking whilst she was trying to sing. Suzy stepped down from the platform and wended her way among the tables, and as she moved she sang, until finally she claimed the attention of those young officers.

Pop Gaspard's was well known, and they had been there many times in days of peace. Never had they seen so charming a girl, and she was invited to drink champagne with them. One of the officers was tall, handsome, with the merriest eyes, and could speak English perfectly.

"I wonder what brought me here to-night?" He kissed her hand. "It was fate. From now on I'll be here every night of my leave. Permit me to introduce myself. I am Andre Charville, of Paris—when I'm not up in the air."

"I'm Suzy Trent, of New York—when I'm not dancing in a Paris café."

They were dancing together in perfect rhythm when there was a loud explosion, and in a moment the café was in an uproar.

"To the cellar!" someone shouted. "The air raids have started."

For a second time in her life Suzy knew abject fear. It was Andre who picked her up in his arms and carried her down to the cellar. As she lay there, huddled under the shelter of a great wine cask, she saw him helping others to safety, assuring frightened men and women that there was nothing to fear, and being the only one to smile at the terrible danger. It was Andre who drew wine from the casks and passed it round, and it was his voice that started the singing.

Every night after that he came to the café, and then came the moment that Suzy dreaded. Maisie had paid money for two berths back to America, but there was a long waiting list. Their chance to get back to God's country came two days before the end of Andre's leave.

Suzy did not want to go. Andre was her hero. He had shown her round Paris and taken her up the river to St. Cloud. It was so hard to go, because all the while Andre was pleading for her to stay. Actually, he saw her into the train for Havre, and yet

when she came to the quay she found Andre—he had flown from Paris.

"I can't let you go, dear. I've known it all along. Will you stay and be my wife?"

Maisie sailed alone.

They were married that day, and spent a few blissful days together in a quaint Normandy village. He had put through two long-distance calls—the first a demand for an extension of leave, the second a somewhat difficult explanation to his father. Andre was so bright and gay on that honeymoon that Suzy had no misgivings until the cab stopped before the splendid old mansion in the Fauberg St. Germain. As Suzy stepped out of the car Andre swept her up in his arms and tossed her over his shoulder. He was going to carry his bride over the threshold. "Put me down!" cried Suzy, as the butler opened the door. But before she was on her feet Baron de Charville was coming down the long stairway.

"Father"—Andre grinned merrily as he steadied Suzy with his arm—"this is my wife."

A cold shiver went through the girl as she saw the white-haired, dignified old aristocrat who bowed to her so coldly.

"Albert, show Madame de Charville to her room," said the baron. "My son, I will be grateful for a few words with you alone."

"I know you want to read me a lecture," cried Andre, when they were in his father's study. "But first I want to say one thing. You grandfather married out of his class, and she brought into the family enough vitality to keep the family alive during the Napoleonic wars."

"You have a great deal of her vitality," the baron said with an ironical smile. "But I would remind you that she was not a cabaret girl.

She was lower than the De Charvilles in rank, but not to such a degree. Andre, you have always been a headstrong, impetuous person, and this would not be the first escapade of this sort from which I have extracted you. For the moment you are possessed of the grand passion, she is the one and only, and so forth. This is your home and I am a lenient man to my only son. In war time the unusual excitement brings about many strange things that would not happen in normal life. Should you, at some later period, change your views perhaps we can persuade madame not to be unreasonable. If we understand each other, shall we let the matter rest?"

"You're wonderful, father. A grand tactician and the greatest man in the world."

"Nonsense, my boy. I am just a very foolish old man." From a desk he picked up an envelope. "Here is a wire for you that may need immediate attention."

"I have to go back at once," said Andre when he had read the message. "I'll run up now and say good-bye to Suzy."

The parting was much harder to Suzy than it was to Andre.

In the lonely weeks that followed the baron found the girl was like a daughter to him. She was not a bit like his idea of a cabaret girl. She spent all her time with him, and read him all the news that came in Andre's letters. These were so seldom and so short that often Suzy invented letters because the old baron's whole life was wrapped up in his son.

They had quite a celebration the day they received a message that Andre had shot down his twenty-fourth plane and had earned another medal "For conspicuous gallantry and enterprise above and beyond the call of duty."



Mrs. Schmidt handed some letters to her visitors

"To our Andre—yours and mine, Suzy!" The old baron had raised his glass to her. That was the beginning of a real affection between them.

Andre obtained special leave to come to Paris, and Suzy saw him for such a short while. He had urgent business at the War Office. He would have gone off to the front without saying good-bye to Suzy if it had not been for the baron.

Andre had rung up from a café.

"When did the War Office move to a café?" The baron's voice had been a little grim over the phone. "I'll bring Suzy to the train. I've grown very fond of my daughter-in-law. You will be kind to her."

Andre informed two beautiful girls who wished to come to the station to kiss him a fond farewell that the kiss must be reserved for some other time as he must say good-bye alone to his wife. Poor simple Suzy thought he had come straight from the War Office. She clung to him, and tears streamed down her cheeks when the leave train steamed slowly out of the station. Baron de Charville, who knew his son so well, shook his head sadly.

Suzy would not have been so happy if she could have seen the handsome woman in the rich furs that was waiting to meet the train at the other end. Madame de Chabris was very beautiful, chic and conscious of her power over men. Andre might have imagined that his fatal fascination had gained for him the attention of madame, but for once Andre was very much the victim of a foolish infatuation.

An infatuation that was soon to bring him close to a terrible disgrace. A disgrace from which he was to be saved by the foolish little cabaret girl and a man who was to come back from the dead.

Andre is Wounded

TERENCE MOORE had not died. He had hovered between life and death, and when the police had fetched an ambulance Terry had recovered sufficiently to make a statement. That was the reason why no one tried to arrest Suzy as a murderess. An inspector informed Terry that they would do their best to find Mrs. Moore, though he was of the opinion that the young wife, when she realised there was no evidence against her, would get over her sear and come back to her husband. The police had a strong idea why the young man had been shot when they heard he had been employed by Mrs. Schmidt. The fat German woman was arrested and interned, but the police caught no one else.

Terence Moore hoped for weeks and weeks that Suzy would come back to him. At last he realised she was never coming back, and life for him was hardly worth living. By the irony of fate his stabiliser had proved of greater value than he had hoped for in his most cherished dreams. Money and honour were his. He had been given a commission in the Air Force, and it was not long after the commencement of the Great War that a high official sent for him.

"To you will go part of the credit for winning the war, when at last it is won. This gadget of yours has revolutionised flying."

Having seen his stabiliser perfected and adapted by the Air Force, Terry desired now that he be allowed to go to France, where by reckless daring he might meet the death he desired. Life meant nothing to him without Suzy. But the War Office had other plans about Lieutenant Terence Moore. His

application to go on active service was refused.

Twelve months after the commencement of the war Captain Terence Moore stood to attention before his colonel.

"Do you think I've got nothing better to do than read chits from you?" rasped the colonel. "For weeks you have been bombarding me with applications for a transfer. I believe I have turned you down nine times, and every time I have had you up here and explained why the authorities won't dream of allowing you to go on active service. Let there be an end to it, because I can assure you, captain, that you can go on applying until doomsday and it won't make any difference. You are needed right here in England."

"Very well, sir," Terry clicked his heels. "Anything else, sir?"

"Yes. You are to take seven of the new ships to the Fourteenth French Squadron. They have been losing aircraft with uncanny regularity. There may be foul play involved. Whatever the cause we are sending them these new machines. And the special model you will deliver to Captain Charville, whom I think you have met."

"Several times. He is the best flyer I have seen."

"He has a reputation for being reckless," said the colonel, speaking now as man to man, for everyone liked Terence Moore. "I've heard rumours that he is a great success with the ladies."

"He is continental in his charm and behaviour," grinned Terry. "He is attractive to women, I suppose, and lionised by everyone. But he is brave and gallant. I admire him very much."

"Anyway, his private life is no concern of yours and mine." The colonel turned to some documents. "Perhaps I should not have mentioned it. Now see that the planes are ready and delivered within three days. You will stay to test them, of course. And if it is any satisfaction to you, who seem determined to risk your precious neck, test pilots have been known to break theirs."

"The seven ships will be ready by morning, sir," Terence clicked his heels and saluted. "Directly you give the word I will be prepared to start the flight."

At dawn, Terence Moore was away with his flight, and without seeing any sign of Bosch planes made an uneventful Channel crossing.

Meanwhile, in the Paris home of Baron de Charville, Suzy had the care and attention of an invalid. The baron was not very strong and a bad cold turned to pneumonia. The doctor vowed afterwards that but for the careful nursing and attention of Suzy the baron would not have survived. Baron Charville would not let her write to Andre of his illness. According to him the illness was nothing serious and it was not right that Andre should be worried by home affairs. Suzy agreed that Andre should have no worries, and she decided also that the baron should have none as well. Any fear of anxiety that she felt herself, any loneliness or heartache she kept bravely to herself.

It was about the time that Terry was preparing to take off for his flight to France that Suzy sat reading a letter aloud.

"He says he's fine, but working hard. He has not been in a moment's danger. And he says I'm to tell you he thinks of you often and always with pride because he is your son."

Suzy hoped it sounded sincere, because the majority of these letters were just blank pieces of paper. She had just finished reading one of these imaginary

scripts when the butler entered with a telegram on a silver tray.

The girl went as white as death. If it were bad news best to get it over with quickly. She almost snatched the telegram. The baron watched her with dread concern.

Her laugh was the hysterical outburst of intense relief.

"Captain Andre Charville wounded in action," she read out. "Condition not serious."

At once Baron Charville got in touch with the War Office. He had a lot of influence and he was able to arrange for a pass for Suzy to go out to see her husband in hospital. A young officer met her at the station.

"Captain Charville said 'You'll recognise her easily,'" the officer told her. "No matter how many women get off the train, just go up to the prettiest. That will be my wife."

The words brought a glow to Suzy's face. Forgotten were the long, weary days when there had been no letters from Andre. In her heart was only happiness. The officer took her straight to the hospital. Curious that at that very hour Captain Terence Moore should have landed with his flight at the nearby base aerodrome.

Andre had not been badly wounded. He beamed at Suzy and kissed her fondly, but he had the grace to look ashamed when she told him about the letters. He admitted that he was a selfish, worthless rascal in such a frank manner that Suzy had to forgive him. Andre had that peculiar charm that earned forgiveness.

"I may not have written very much, but I have read all the letters written by you and father to me," he admitted with a boyish grin. "He tells me how wonderful you are. You have found a place in his heart."

In arranging some parcels on the table—presents from herself and the baron—a vase of flowers was upset. She ran out of the room to get water and another vase.

Andre stared after her with a perplexed frown. If his father had become so attached to Suzy it would not be so simple for him to get a divorce. Suzy was sweet, but compared with the dark-haired beauty of— A vigorous knocking on the door broke in on his thoughts. He shouted irritably "Come in," but his face underwent a change as he saw a British officer standing there: "Terry Moore! And I am glad to see you—and not just because you're bringing me your wonderful planes, either."

"They thought at the Field you'd sleep better if you knew your pet machine was here, but"—Terry pointed to a fur on the table and a lady's bag—"I guess I'll be off now I've reported. I'm afraid I'm intruding."

"Of course you're not, you old idiot," shouted Andre. "It was only my wife. She came down from Paris when she heard I was wounded."

"Did you say 'wife'?" grinned Terry.

"Yes, and it's genuine," Andre said with a rueful grin. "I'm not joking, old boy. She's just gone out to get a vase and she'll be back any second. Since our marriage she has been living in Paris with my father."

"You amaze me."

"She's the finest, squarest girl in the world." For once Andre was serious. "You know that I like the ladies, so be careful what you say, as I don't want her hurt by any careless joke she might overhear."

"Of course not," Terry laid a reassuring hand on his friend's shoulder. "Now that I know that you are in

earnest I will be most careful, though I must say I'm surprised."

The door opened and Suzy came in with a vase full of flowers.

"Come in, dear," Andre called out as he hesitated at sight of a strange man in the room. Terry was standing so he only saw his side face. "I want you to meet my good friend, Captain Moore." As Terry wheeled round to acknowledge the introduction, Andre added: "Terry, my wife, Madame Charville."

Suzy stared at the man she had left for dead. Her face went ashen and the vase crashed to the floor.

"What is it, dear?" Andre demanded. "You look as if you'd seen a ghost."

"Probably madame sees in me a resemblance to someone she used to know," Terry spoke with a twisted grin.

"I did see something of that kind," Suzy forced herself to say. "A man I thought was dead, but—"

"You sit down and take it easy," interrupted Andre, "Corridors of hospitals are gruesome places. They don't affect hard-hitten soldiers. Terry, pour her out a stiff glass of cognac. Let Terry look after you, dear. Unfortunately, I can't at the moment."

Terry poured out a drink, and though he had recovered partly from the shock of seeing Suzy his hands were trembling. He handed her the glass and his eyes were hard.

Suzy's Eyes are Opened

THE next ten minutes were the most agonising that Suzy had ever known. Hard to listen and smile whilst Andre paid her pretty compliments, while Terry stood there grinning ironically and contemptuously. She could not blame Terence for thinking the very worst of her. That she had married another man when her first husband was living was not the point that worried her most at the moment. It was her cowardly action in running away from a man who had been so good to her—callously deserting him

in his hour of need. She knew that Terry must despise her for her action.

Fortunately, the patient did not seem disposed towards a lengthy interview. With a charming smile Andre explained that by the rules and regulations of this hospital he must not talk too much or have visitors for any lengthy period. But it was unfortunate that he should insist upon Terry seeing Suzy to her hotel.

It did not surprise Suzy that Terry should have little to say in the car ride, and she was not altogether surprised when he announced that he would escort her to her room.

"Not quite the thing for an officer to see a lady to her room," Terry said with an ironical grin. "But as she is still his wife I don't see why anybody should object."

In her room she faced him determinedly.

"Terry, you deserve to think the very worst of me. You feel nothing but contempt for me, and I can't blame you, but I do want you to know that I thought you were dead. I lost my nerve. When that woman screamed that I had killed you and I heard police-whistles going in the street and their heavy footfalls on the stairs I could think of nothing but flight. It looked like a frame-up. I ran and ran and ran."

"I'll say you ran," sneered Terry. "You didn't care what happened to me. Expect you were glad I had been bumped off by German spies."

"Oh, Terry, please let me try to explain!" Suzy pleaded. "Just a few minutes before that woman shot you we had been talking and you gave me that money from the Derby winnings. It seemed my one chance of escape. I could think only of getting to France and my friend Maisie. On the Channel boat I tried to find something in the paper about the affair, but there was no mention of it. For some foolish reason that made me all the more panicky. I got to Maisie and collapsed.

When I recovered I wanted to go back and give myself up to the police, but Maisie said I wouldn't have a chance—that I would be going to prison and would do no good by my action. I was a coward, Terry. Please try to forgive me."

"And then what happened?" he asked. "I'd like to know how you married into the aristocracy."

Frankly, she told him of meeting with Captain Andre Charville and the air raids, how he had swept her off her feet and married her. He listened unmoved whilst she told of a brief honeymoon and Andre being recalled to the front.

"I had a good idea where you had gone," Terry told her when she had finished. "But I was in hospital, and even if I had been able I wouldn't have gone after you. You used me as a stepping-stone, with your eager eye open for the better chance. Even if I hadn't been killed you would have left me at the first chance of somebody with more money and a better position. Well, what do you propose to do about it?"

"I'm going to tell Andre."

He raised his eyebrows in doubt.

"That would mess up all your fine schemes, my lady. At the moment you have two husbands, and one you've struck off the list. If you tell Andre you'll strike both of them off the list, and then what will you do?"

"I married Andre because I loved him and because I thought you were dead."

"Did you tell Andre you had been married before?"

"No. I loved Andre, and I feared to lose him. Also, I did not want to stir up the past. What good would it do to tell Andre—?"

"He might not have married you, especially if he thought you were suspected of killing a man." Terry laughed bitterly. "You haven't the courage to tell him."

"I'll tell him now," she flamed. "This very hour."



"Captain Moore," said the French officer, "we thought of trying out the new machines. What is your opinion?"

She rushed out of the room with his ironical laughter ringing in her ears. It was raining, but she paid no heed. She reached the hospital, and naturally the orderly did not stop Madame Charville from going up to her husband's room. Outside his room she hesitated, then quietly she opened the door.

A beautiful woman was bending over his bed and kissing him. As in a dream she heard Andre calling the woman by endearing names. Quietly she closed the door.

Terry was lounging in a room smoking a cigarette when the door opened and Suzy came slowly into the room. The girl was soaking wet and her shoulders were bowed.

"So you didn't tell him," he accused. "You hadn't the nerve!"

"Andre was not alone," she said in dulled tones.

Terry gave her a searching glance and then frowned. Though he felt enraged against Suzy he was not blind to the fact that the girl was suffering. Apparently she was crazy about Andre like so many other poor dames. Also, it would seem that she had not been wise to the philandering nature of Charville. He guessed that it must have been the beautiful Madame de Chabris, whom Suzy had found with Andre. He curled his lips. It served her right.

"I am going back to Paris." Suzy roused herself. "Andre's father is ill. A scandal would kill him, especially if he knew his son had married someone whose husband was still living. It might get to his ears that Andre was also involved. It may seem strange to you, but Baron Charville looks upon me as a daughter, and I love him dearly. And I'm not thinking of his money or position when I say that. Will you do nothing, Terry, until the baron is out of all danger?"

"Why should I interfere? I don't wish to rob you of a good bargain," Terry answered. "Perhaps I may stop a bullet and then your problem will be solved. Andre is the finest flyer in France and my friend, so why should I intervene? I have no animosity against him. Who knows of our brief marriage? The clergyman, Knobby and an inspector or two from Scotland Yard." He laughed. "That makes you look scared—talking of Scotland Yard. Naturally they were interested, and at first I wanted them to search for you, until I realised how worthless you were. The police were too busy with other affairs and were glad to drop the case. They think you are dead. Maybe I can get the ceremony wiped off the record—it makes no difference to me. Many things may happen to me before I die, but one thing will not." He walked to the door and his eyes seemed to bore into her soul. "I will never marry again."

"I'm sorry, Terry. Shall I never see you again?"

"I must stay until Andre is on his feet and in the air," he told her. "There are certain things about the special plane I have brought over for him from England that I must explain. Those are orders. But if we use our wits we need not meet again—ever."

"Then I'll go back to Paris. Andre's father misses me." Suzy gazed at him beseechingly. "You see, he doesn't know I'm a coward, living under false pretences."

That night Suzy returned to Paris, and she managed to smile when she told the baron that his son was making good progress and would be about again in a few days. Her reason for returning so soon was to tell him the good news and allay his fears.

Face to Face

CAPTAIN TERENCE MOORE was destined to stay in France longer than he had imagined. Andre Charville was ordered to take ten days' sick leave before attempting any more flying, and Terry had to remain until Andre returned from Nice. There was plenty to do testing the new machines and helping to overhaul some of the other craft.

From Captain Barsanges, the officer in charge, Terry heard a great deal of the activities of this flying base. He did not like the way a great number of machines had crashed from mechanical defaults. It gave the impression of treachery. The captain confessed that on several occasions the Germans had been waiting for them when the squadron had attempted to cross the line on a bombing raid. Andre Charville had several times been attacked by three or four machines, but had got away. The captain was confident that Andre would work wonders with the new machine, which was so much swifter than anything the squadron had flown before.

On the day after Andre returned from his rest and was flying his new plane for the first time Captain Barsanges introduced Terry to Madame de Chabris. That twisted grin twitched Terry's lips as he stared at the beautiful woman who had ousted Suzy from Andre's affections.

Madame gave him an intent look, followed by a ravishing smile.

"Pardon me, Captain Moore, but have we ever met before?"

"I regret that I haven't had the pleasure."

"Curious, because your face seems familiar. You have never been to Russia?"

"Never, madame. It must be my double, because I am certain we have never met before." His eyes twinkled merrily. "I could not have forgotten where and when, I assure you, if I had had the pleasure of meeting you."

Madame laughed.

"You pay a pretty compliment, captain. I must have made a mistake. I'm always thinking I've seen someone before, and since the war I've become worse than ever. Uniforms do have a tendency to bring out similarities, instead of differences in human beings. But now that we have met won't you come to see me? This evening a few friends will be at my chateau where I'm living, and I hope you will be among them."

Terry assured her that he would be delighted. Madame went off to high ground where she could get an unrestricted view.

"A most fascinating woman," Terry said to the French officer. "Who is she, captain?"

"A remarkable woman," answered Captain Barsanges. "A great help to us in keeping up the morale of officers and men. You'd have met before this, but she has been away. She has a place in Nice and there Captain Charville went to recuperate. They are great friends. The chateau has open doors to the officers of this squadron, and she is constantly organising concerts and parties for the men. She is a great favourite with all of us." The captain pointed. "See how anxiously she scans the skies; she is very concerned about Andre."

Terry Moore rather fancied himself as an airman, but he had to admit that his skill was poor compared with that of Andre Charville. Amazing what Andre could do with the new machine. It was a thrill to watch the silver grey machine twisting and turning in

the air. Every conceivable trick Andre tried, and Terry glanced at Madame de Chabris—he guessed that a great deal of this showmanship was for her benefit.

Finally Andre made a perfect landing, and seeing Terry rushed across to ring his hands heartily.

"Never have I been in such a dream of a ship," Andre cried. "I should say she's faster than anything the Germans have got, and I'm just longing for the chance to try the craft out over the lines."

He turned to smile at madame, who had walked across to meet him.

"Oh, Andre, why will you take such risks?" she cried, and her expression was one of deep concern. "I was so worried."

As Terry walked away he wondered what chance Suzy would have against such a glorious woman as Madame de Chabris.

That night Terry Moore went to the chateau, and it proved a right royal entertainment. Every officer from miles around that could be spared from duty was at the party and champagne flowed like water. Andre showed his admiration quite frankly, but she showed the flying ace no special attention. She was, as a good hostess should be, equally interested in all her guests.

Two days later Captain Barsanges met his officers in the private room of their favourite estaminet. Terry was present as an adviser. He smoked his pipe and wished he could get the chance of a raid over the enemy lines.

"Gentlemen," stated the captain, "I have asked you to meet me here because this is a very convivial spot, and is just as good a place as headquarters to discuss our plans." He laughed. "In fact, if we met at headquarters someone might get wise that activities were being planned. Gentlemen, we intend to cross the lines and to bomb a certain spot which we now know is a large ammunition dump, but the place is well guarded. We have got to get there by devious routes and means, and here is the scheme."

The officers crowded round. Terry sucked at his pipe and paid little attention. Vaguely he heard the details.

"Captain Moore, we thought of trying out the new machines. What is your opinion?"

"You are a flight of nine, and six of your old machines are in pretty good condition," Terry answered. "I've given them the once over and they're not likely to break up. You don't want all your eggs in one basket."

"Terry is right," spoke Andre. "And if he says those other machines won't break up, then you can be sure they won't. What time do you want me to take off, captain?"

The scheme that Captain Barsanges proposed was that Andre Charville should endeavour to lure the Bosch away from a certain sector of the line. Openly he would fly over No Man's Land, and naturally every German airman would be out to bring down the man who had destroyed so many of their machines. Captain Barsanges was certain that by now spies would have reported the arrival of the new wonder machine, and the silver grey would be spotted at once. Andre would draw the enemy away so that the main flight could get across the lines without meeting any serious opposition, could get to their objective, destroy the ammunition dump and be on their way back before the Germans realised they had been tricked. Andre must not endanger the new machine too much and keep his enemies at a safe distance, and should be back at the base just after dawn, which would be about six.

After the meeting broke up Andre hurried away. Terry decided to follow to his hotel to have a final talk about the new machine, and a vague feeling of disquiet came to the English officer when a servant informed him that Captain Charville had gone out and might not be back that night. Terry had a strong idea that Andre had gone to see Madame de Chabris.

The Mystery Woman Revealed

BARON CHARVILLE gazed shrewdly at Suzy and remarked that she looked tired. He accepted her explanation that she had found the journey a strain, and hoped in his heart of hearts that his scamp of a son was not reason for her dejected demeanour. The baron knew his son only too well. But Suzy managed to smile and to talk of all that she had seen.

"You look ever so much better," Suzy told the old man. "But I hear from Albert that you've been reading a lot since I've been away, and that's against doctor's orders. To-night I shall read to you."

"Not for long, my dear," countered the baron. "You need some beauty sleep."

Suzy began to read extracts from the papers about the war and for something lighter picked up an illustrated magazine. The baron was always interested in the affairs of Society. She read out the outlines and described dresses and uniforms. Suddenly she gasped, and he saw her go very white.

"What is it, my dear?"

"Just some pictures of the front—they shouldn't print such things." She gave a shaky laugh. "I'm sorry to be so nervous. I think I will take your advice and go to bed." She had pulled the magazine on to her knee, and as she talked she tore out a page, sewing it into a ball. "Don't you stay up long."

The baron saw the screwed up ball.

"Is that the page you don't like?"

"Yes, but that's not the reason I tore it out," she lied. "Someone has spilt some wine on the page. Good-night."

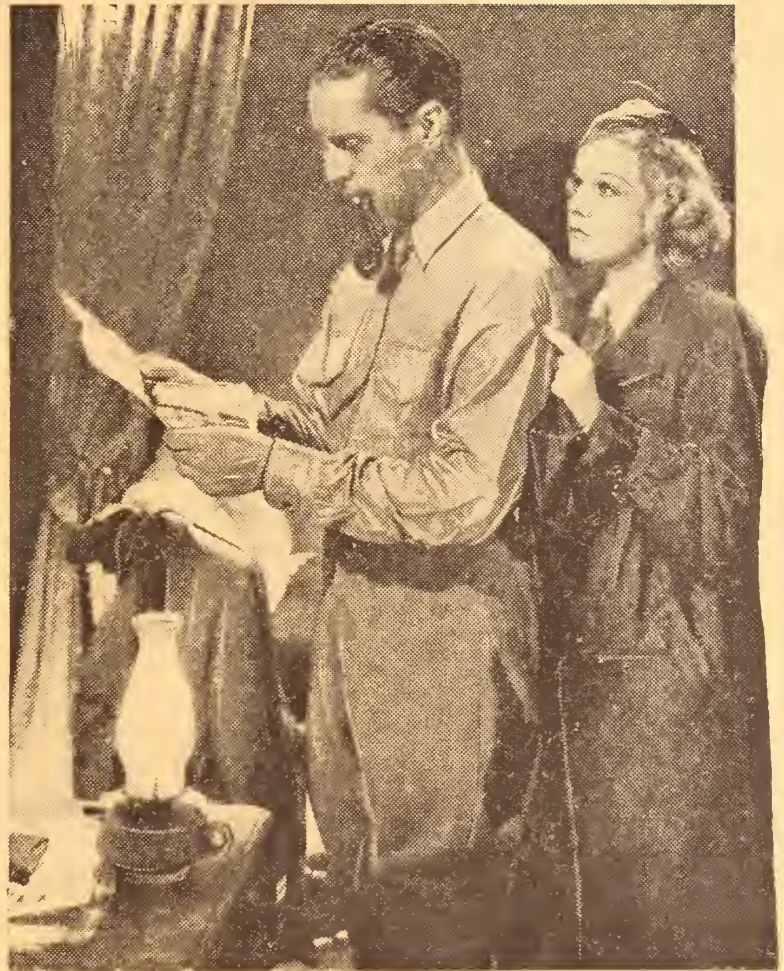
Suzy got to her room and breathed a sigh of relief. She did not want the baron to know that the magazine had not contained pictures of war atrocities. That she had been upset by a picture of a man and a woman. She unrolled the screwed-up ball and smoothed it out carefully.

Captain Andre Charville, the famous air ace, and Madame de Chabris. The woman who had taken her place in Andre's affections. Suddenly she looked more closely at the picture. The face of this charmer seemed familiar. Suddenly her mind went to that room back in London before the war, the door opening slowly, the woman standing there with a loaded gun—the woman she had seen at Mrs. Schmidt's factory. She held the picture close to the light, and she knew then that this was the woman who had shot Terence Moore.

Suzy rang for Albert, the butler. Told him in a hoarse whisper that she had to be away for the night, perhaps most of the following day, and that the baron must not know. She could not explain, but it was of the utmost importance. If the baron should discover she was gone the butler must tell his master that she had received a telephone call from a girl she had known in New York.

"But, if possible, Albert, let your master think I am resting," she counselled. "Now, will you please order me a car as I must leave immediately."

A few hours later she was at the hotel near the flying field. Captain Charville was not in they told her. She asked then



"She is the woman who shot you!" cried Suzy, and Terence peered more closely at the picture.

for Terry, and learnt that the English officer had come in a few minutes previous. She ran up the stairs and burst into his room.

"Thank God you're here," panted Suzy. "Don't waste a minute asking questions. I have only an hour or so before I must go back. Look at this, Terry—look!"

Terence stared at Suzy in amazement. He had been trying all the evening to banish the image of this girl from his mind, and failed. Now she burst into his rooms like a whirlwind. Almost mechanically he took the crumpled page from the illustrated magazine. He read the caption: "Madame de Chabris and the famous ace Captain Andre Charville, at Nice."

"I'm sorry, Suzy, if this picture agitates you," he said with a mocking grin "But—"

"I know what you're going to say," fiercely she interrupted him. "This is not a jealous tantrum. You don't know who that woman is, nor does Andre. We must find him at once—warn him."

"What are you raving about, Suzy? What is the matter with Madame de Chabris. She is the most popular—"

"She is the woman who shot you!" cried Suzy. "I saw her plainly twice—at the factory and at your rooms. Do you think I could ever forget—or be mistaken?"

Terence peered more closely at the picture.

"But this is absurd. Why, she is the most hospitable woman in the district"

She arranges concerts for the men, entertains the officers at her chateau, and is liked by all."

"I know that is the woman who shot you. I would swear it in a court of law. She is a spy."

He shot a startled glance at her.

"By Jove, they have lost a lot of 'planes round here, and—" He paused, remembering her greeting of him. Had she met him in Russia? "I believe you're right, Suzy," he cried suddenly. "I met her and she thought she recognised me. Asked if we had met—she was testing me. Come, we'll go to her chateau. I'm quite sure Andre will be there. Or no—we'll go to the Intelligence Officer first—he would have the record of all people in the district."

"We can't, Terry—not until we find Andre," Suzy protested. "He may be in actual danger now. And there's another thing. We can't have him dragged into this mess. It would ruin his career. Worse than that, it would kill his father. It is up to us to protect that dear old man from any possible sorrow or disgrace."

"I see your head is working better than mine." The smile that Terry gave the girl was genuine. "You're a queer lass, Suzy, and I think that perhaps I've misjudged you." He picked up the coat he had discarded and hurriedly donned it. "Come on—let's go!"

They said little as they drove at a terrific speed away from the village out on to a country road. When they reached the chateau they found it in

darkness, except for a light at one upper window.

As they crept quietly up the path Terry spoke in a low, changed voice.

"It's not necessary for me to tell you to keep your courage. Heaven only knows what we may be letting ourselves in for, but I know whatever it is, you will face it. I want you to know that I think you the bravest person, without any exception, I have ever met. I'm terribly sorry I said all those unkind things to you."

Her hand slid into his.

"You're the grandest man I've ever met," she whispered.

They rang the bell, and there was a long wait before they heard footsteps and saw a light.

An Enemy Spy

VERY cautiously the door was opened. The shock-headed butler peered at them suspiciously.

"Pardon me," murmured the servant. "But it is very late, and madame gave strict instructions—"

"She is expecting us," Terry pushed past the servant into the big hall. "She knew we were coming to bring her a most important message; perhaps she meant to admit me herself. I can see by the light that she is still waiting for us."

The butler hesitated as if uncertain what to do next.

"We need not be announced," Terry gave Suzy a beckoning gesture.

Holding Suzy firmly by the arm Terry urged the girl up a long flight of stairs. From below the butler watched them suspiciously.

At the top of the stairs they saw a door from underneath which a light shone. Terry knocked and then flung open the door.

Madame de Chabris was helping Andre into his coat. She was garbed in a somewhat daring gown, whilst on a table there was the remnant of a supper. Numerous champagne bottles showed that it had been quite a feast.

"Suzy!" gasped Andre in amazement. Realising he had been discovered in an awkward situation he tried to carry off the affair with ironical humour. "I don't understand this unceremonious entrance, but now you are here permit me to introduce you. Madame de Chabris, may I present my wife? You already know Captain Moore."

"And I, too, know Madame de Chabris," said Suzy calmly. "She may not recall me—we met under rather peculiar circumstances."

Madame was watching them with hard, angry gaze. Her smile was a mockery.

"I am delighted to have you with us, even though your arrival was a trifle out of the ordinary," Madame smiled as if vastly amused.

"Pardon me, madame." Andre's eyes were alight with anger. "But as I am responsible for this intrusion, I demand that my wife and Captain Moore apologise for their outrageous behaviour."

"Andre, we will explain it to you later," spoke Terry. "It is imperative that you come with us at once."

"Since when did you take to issuing orders to me?" asked Andre. "As for my wife—even a jealous woman—"

"Andre," Suzy interrupted him firmly. "This isn't jealousy. I am not angry. We hoped you would go with us quickly and quietly. As you will not I must tell you that Madame de Chabris is an enemy spy!"

Madame de Chabris burst out laughing.

"This is better than a play or a murder mystery."

"Suzy, have you lost your mind?"

September 19th, 1936.

stormed Andre. "How dare you make such an accusation. And you, Terry, what do you mean by this outrageous conduct?"

"You can't laugh this off." Suzy stared fixedly at Madame de Chabris. "I have seen you twice before and on the same night. It was when you were operating in London just before the war."

"Mistaken identity evidently," Madame smiled, though her face had paled. "Captain Moore, you remember how I told you I'm always thinking I've seen someone before. You are evidently like me in that respect, Madame Charville. I haven't been in England since I was a schoolgirl."

Andre gave her a sharp look. It was a bad slip she had made; he remembered her telling him she had been walking along the Embankment when she had heard newsboys shouting about the assassination at Sarajevo. There was an expression on Madame's face that he did not understand.

"I saw you shoot Terry," Suzy continued, "because you thought he knew your plans. You really needn't have done that, for he doesn't understand German. And for that, I saw you down at Schmidt's factory."

"This is too fantastic," Madame de Chabris' voice was shrill. "And it grows more so with every word you say. Not only have I not been in London for years, as I told you, but until this minute I never heard of Mrs. Schmidt's factory."

"Why—did—you—say—Mrs. Schmidt?" demanded Suzy, pointing an accusing finger. "You are a German spy!"

Andre stared at Madame de Chabris and in the woman's rage-distorted face he read the truth.

"A spy!" Andre cried with horror.

The door opened and there stood the butler.

"I am here, Madame." The man had a revolver in his hand. "Together we will handle this little affair. You gentlemen will keep very still."

Terry turned towards the 'phone and instantly the gun covered him. "I wouldn't if I were you." The butler gave a twisted smile. "It would only be a waste of time as I have cut all the wires." He looked at the woman and nodded towards the door. "Hurry, Diane, the car is ready. Our bags are in it and a hamper of food. The windows and doors are all barred, as this one will be after we have left. We have time enough to get away—but only enough."

Madame de Chabris moved swiftly to the door, where she paused to smile mockingly at Andre Charville.

"You have amused me, captain, with your childish prattle," she laughed lightly. "I hand you back to the tender mercies of your wife. You may be a great airman, Andre, but you have the brains of a babe."

Andre, fearless and reckless, suddenly hurled himself forward. Without hesitation or scruple the butler fired. Andre spun round and dropped in a heap.

Madame de Chabris gave a suppressed cry of fear and fled through the open door. For a moment the butler stared down at his victim, before backing away. Swiftly the German was gone, the door slammed, and the key was turned in the lock.

A Chance in a Thousand

SUZY flung herself down beside the still figure. Terry rushed for the windows, and found to his relief that they opened. He found himself on a balcony, and as he stood there trying to plan what to do next he heard the motor of a car. A moment later the car ap-

peared from the courtyard, the butler was at the wheel with Madame at his side. Terry noted their direction before hastening back into the room.

Andre was unconscious. Suzy found some water and tried to force-it between the lips, whilst Terry searched for the wound. His eyes narrowed when his hands came away stained with blood—he knew enough about the human body to know that this wound was in a very dangerous place.

Andre's eyes opened. He stared at them dully, and then recognition came into his eyes. He tried desperately to speak, but only faint wheezing sounds came from his lips.

"Don't try to talk," Terry advised. "All you need is a little rest and you'll be all right."

"Look at the time!" they heard the hoarse whisper.

Terry understood.

"You're supposed to take off at four—is that it?" The wounded man nodded. "Don't worry about that. I'll take care of it. There's plenty of time."

Andre sank back and closed his eyes. Suzy stared anxiously at Terry. "What can we do?"

"The 'phone's dead, so I can't ring the dressing-station," muttered Terry. "And we don't want to broadcast the fact that Andre was shot at Madame de Chabris' chateau. Moreover, we daren't try to get him to our car because I think his wound is too serious. Still, we can't leave him like this. You stay here and I'll go to the nearest inn. I'll try to get the squadron doctor, and—"

"No use—too late!" came a husky whisper, and they saw that Andre's eyes were open. "Waste of time—I'm finished. Terry, the take off is at four—there's still time."

Terry seemed to understand the pleading in the dying man's eyes. "I'll see you through," Terry grinned, and glanced round. Andre had been about to put on his flying coat when they had so abruptly burst into the room. It was lying on a table with a helmet. Terry got to his feet and picked it up from the table, and turning saw the dying man smiling.

"What are you going to do, Terry?" asked Suzy.

"I must make the flight," he told her. "You must stay here and tend him as best you can."

"Thanks," came in a whisper from Andre, and he gave his same lumpy grin. "You always were a pal, Terry. Glad you knew Suzy in London. Look after her for me, old man. Sweetest girl I've ever known—too good for me." A spasm of pain twitched his face. "Better this way. Forgive me, Suzy."

"Oh, Andre, I—!" Suzy cried and then broke off with a gasp as she saw the head go lumpy against a cushion.

Terry shook his head after making a quick examination.

"He's dead, Suzy."

The girl steeled herself to be brave. "Terry, we could not save Andre from death, but we can save him from the scandal of such a death. He has earned the right to a hero's death. You say you can make the flight—couldn't you pretend to be Andre, and—"

"It's a thousand to one chance," cried Terry. "But worth trying. I'll get down to the field and try to make the plane without being recognised. Wait here till I come back and don't be surprised if I crash outside the chateau. Try to get Andre down into the courtyard. If it is within human possibility I will be back. If I'm not back by mid-morning, then you'll just have to do whatever you can."

(Continued on page 28)

Who was the secret leader of the desperadoes who were terrorising the Valley of the Pecos? That was the riddle which a young Texas Ranger was detailed to solve. Ride with him to the tune of hammering hoofs and blazing guns, and follow his gripping adventures in this mighty serial drama of action and romance



Phantom Rider

Starring

BUCK JONES

EPISODE 7—

"The Night Attack"

READ THIS FIRST

Buck Grant, a settler in the Pecos Valley, is in reality a Ranger investigating stories of terrorism by a gang of outlaws whose leader's identity he hopes to discover.

Judge Holmes, of Maverick, is the only man who knows Buck is a Ranger. He is likewise the only man who knows that Buck is the Phantom Rider, a cloaked horseman who is defeating the activities of the outlaws at every turn.

One morning, however, masked gangsters butcher Shorty, another Ranger who is on his way to the Valley. Dying, Shorty tells Buck to go to the Hidden Valley Ranch, and later Buck learns this is the property of a man named Grayson.

He meets Grayson's beautiful daughter, Mary, who has returned from the East and brought with her a friend, Helen Moore.

Meanwhile, a Ranger known as Spooky, has entered Maverick, and Buck instructs him to obtain work at the Hidden Valley outfit. That same night Buck casually drops in at that ranch himself, and is introduced to Harvey Delaney, a neighbouring cattleman who is on friendly terms with the Graysons.

Mary's father is killed the next day, and leaves her a wallet containing the map of a hidden gold mine. The outlaws try to secure this wallet, but are frustrated by Buck. Then one night, at a saloon in Maverick, an attempt is made on the Ranger's life.

Now Read On

A Close Call

AS the smashing report rang out behind him Buck felt the hot breath of a bullet scorch the lobe of his ear, and with swift presence of

mind he threw himself flat, and lay motionless as if he had been hit.

The unknown assassin was apparently deceived, for no second shot was fired, and a tense silence closed down on the saloon as the echoes of the gun-blast died away. Then all at once voices were raised, and, amidst an ever-increasing babel, the people who had scattered for cover began to swarm into the middle of the bar-room again.

Someone fetched another lamp, and by its light the crowd milled around Buck while he was picking himself up.

"Are yuh all right, feller? What started the fight, anyway? Who was it took a shot at yuh? You ain't hurt, are yuh?"

These were but a few of the questions which were volleyed at the big fellow by the anxious citizens, and he was doing his best to answer them when Judge Holmes showed up.

"What was the trouble, Buck?" the judge demanded. "How did it all begin?"

"Lew Meredith was the one that started it," Buck replied. "He shot out the light and then tried to get me. I winged him instead, and he fell out into the street. Then someone blazed at me from behind—someone who was in too much of a hurry to be a good marksman. I think he must've fired at me from that back room over there."

A number of the bystanders surged towards the apartment Buck had indicated, and, sure enough, the reek of powder met their nostrils as they entered it. Out of the unknown killer who had discharged the shot there was no sign.

Meanwhile, some of the Hidden Valley cowboys had gone out into the street, and very soon they were marching Lew Meredith in to explain his conduct.

His right hand had been smashed by

the slug from Buck's forty-five, and he was grimacing with pain. No one showed any sympathy for him, however—least of all the stalwart ranger.

"What's the idea, tryin' to drill me?" Buck demanded grimly. "And who was your pal that took a potshot at me from the curtained doorway of the back room?"

Lew Meredith seemed to hesitate for a moment, and then he blurted out a protest.

"You got me wrong, Grant," he jerked. "I didn't draw on you. You just mentioned somebody that tried to get you from behind. Well, I saw the feller—saw him takin' aim at you. That's why I busted the lamp, to save you, Grant. Then I blazed at the curtains over that doorway. I wasn't tryin' to drill you—honest I wasn't!"

"Did you recognise the man you saw in the back room?" his interrogator wanted to know.

"N-no, Grant, I didn't," Meredith answered. "He—he was a stranger to me."

Buck pursed his lips. Not one word of Lew Meredith's glib story did he believe, and he was tempted to give the lie to the whole statement there and then. But suddenly he resolved to make a pretence of accepting the puncher's explanation, and he was about to address the man in an apologetic tone when he became aware that Harvey Delaney was moving to his side.

"It looks like you made a mistake, Grant," the cattleman said. "Meredith's account of what happened is plausible enough, anyway."

"Yeah, I think you're right," Buck murmured, "and I'm mighty sorry I acted so hasty. But, after all, when you see a man pull a gun, it's kinda natural to jump to conclusions."

It was at this juncture that the sheriff and Deputy Craig put in an appearance, having heard the shooting in their quarters along the street, and Buck had to describe all that had occurred. Then, while Maverick's guardians of the peace were engaged in questioning Lew Meredith, the big Ranger edged aside with Judge Holmes.

"Meredith was lying," Buck whispered. "When I let out that someone had tried to plug me from behind, he was smart enough to think up a good story. But that second shot of his didn't go anywhere near the curtained doorway. It was meant for me all right."

Judge Holmes looked at him uneertainly.

"Lew Meredith is one of Mary Grayson's top hands," he murmured. "He's always been trusted up at Hidden Valley."

"Yeah?" Buck rejoined. "Well, I'm willing to lay odds that he's in with the outlaws who are terrorising this section."

"Then why don't you cross-examine him a little more thoroughly?"

The younger man shook his head.

"No," he told Holmes in an undertone, "it's better to let him think that I've been taken in by his explanation. So long as he's a free man and imagines that he has nothing to fear, he's liable to lead us to the gang's hide-out—or even to their leader. We've got to have him watched, that's all."

Turning, he glanced in Meredith's direction and observed that the sheriff and Deputy Craig had left the Hidden Valley cowboy after helping him to bind up his bloodstained hand. Then all at once Buck noticed that Harvey Delaney was sidling close to Lew.

Delaney engaged Lew Meredith in conversation, and presently Buck saw him slip some money into the latter's uninjured fist. It was a gesture that caused the handsome Ranger to start, and, frowning, he spoke to Holmes out of the corner of his mouth.

"Say, you were talkin' to Delaney just before the shooting started, judge," he breathed. "Can you tell me what he did or where he went?"

Holmes looked at him curiously.

"Why, no, I can't, Buck," he said. "We sort of got separated in the general confusion—and it was dark, of course. But what makes you ask?"

"I was just wonderin' if Delaney might have slipped into that back room," the younger man replied in slow and deliberate accents.

"Buck!" the judge whispered hoarsely. "You aren't suggesting it was Harvey Delaney who tried to bump you off!"

The Ranger glanced around to make certain that no one could overhear his discussion with Holmes.

"You never can tell," he muttered. "I remember you once saying yourself that nobody was above suspicion."

"But Delaney is one of the most prominent ranchers in this county," the judge expostulated. "To be exact, he ranks as the fourth biggest landowner—next to myself, a man named Hudson, and young Mary Grayson. You can't suspect a fellow like that of being connected with outlaws."

"I just saw him hand Lew Meredith a roll of dollar bills," Buck vouchsafed. "Doesn't that strike you as being pretty queer?"

Judge Holmes did not agree. For the life of him he could not bring himself to doubt the cattleman's integrity.

"You don't know Delaney, Buck," he said. "He's generous to a fault—always helping somebody out of a difficulty. I could name a score of nesters and small ranchers to whom he's lent money."

The Ranger was silent for a moment,

and stood fingering his rugged jaw. Then he gave a shrug of his broad shoulders.

"Well, maybe he's okay," he mused. "But Lew Meredith isn't—I'll swear to that. And first thing to-morrow morning I'm gonna head for Hidden Valley and tell Mary Grayson to watch out for him."

At the Grayson Ranch

TRUE to his words, Buck Grant left for Hidden Valley after breakfast the following day, and it was as he was approaching Mary's outfit that he saw Spooky standing near the corral.

He joined the little Ranger who had obtained employment at the Grayson outfit as a cowpuncher, and, looking around cautiously, addressed him in a guarded tone.

"Did Lew Meredith get back here last night, Spooky?" he inquired.

"Yeah," his comrade answered. "Leastways, he got back, though I wouldn't say 'all right.' Somebody had shot him in the hand, and from the way the boys were talkin' I understood it was you as had done it. What happened, Buck?"

The big fellow proceeded to retail all that had occurred at the saloon the night before, and when he had finished his narrative Spooky knitted his brows.

"So you reckon Lew is in with the outlaws, huh?" he grinned. "That means I'm gonna keep an eye on him, pardner."

"You bet you will, Spooky," Buck declared. "And now I'm goin' over to the ranch-house to tip off Miss Mary."

He parted with the other Ranger and cantered across to the well-appointed home that Mary had inherited from her father, and as he emerged from a grove of trees in front of it he saw the girl and her friend Helen Moore sitting on the veranda.

They were not alone, for Lew Meredith was with them, and appeared to be telling them why his right hand was swathed in bandages.

Buck rode up to the house and dismounted from his pony. A moment later he was saluting the two girls and nodding to Meredith, who returned his mute greeting in an uneasy fashion.

"Oh, good-morning, Mr. Grant!" said Mary. "Lew here has just been describing your narrow escape in Maverick last night. You've no idea how thankful I am that you didn't come to any harm, but it shows that I was right when I told you that your life was in danger."

Buck had to admit that her warning had been no idle one, and then, after some further conversation, the girl suddenly produced a letter which she had received by the morning mail.

"Oh, by the way," she mentioned, "you might be interested in this. It's from the railroad company, and it states that their representative, a Mr. Blake, will arrive in Maverick to-day by stage-coach. Apparently he's coming out to Hidden Valley in the hope of negotiating a deal with me and buying this ranch. I'd like to know what you think about it, Mr. Grant."

Buck's features became set, and he found himself wishing that she had not talked so openly in the presence of Lew Meredith. But without comment he took the letter which she passed to him, and remained silent until he had run his eyes over its contents.

"H'm!" he murmured, returning the epistle to her at last. "I'd kind of hate to see you pull out of this country, Miss Grayson."

"Why?" she asked in surprise. "The letter hints that the railroad company will give me a good price for the ranch."

"I know," Buck said. "But it looks like I'm gonna lose a friend on account of it. I was beginning to enjoy calling in at Hidden Valley."

Mary smiled, and then, after a pause, Buck went on speaking:

"Just the same," he observed, "this letter has told me a whole lot. Do you know what I think? I think that those outlaws who have been preyin' on this section must have got advance information regarding the railroad's plans. They must have found out that a line was going to be run through Benson County, and that's why they've been trying to drive out the settlers."

It was while he was volunteering this statement that he noticed Lew Meredith draw away, as if disinterested in the discussion, and when the cowboy was out of earshot Buck leaned closer to Mary and addressed her quickly.

"It's a pity you brought up the subject of this letter from the railroad company in front of that fellow, Miss Grayson," he said. "I don't trust him."

"Lew?" Mary faltered, exchanging a glance with Helen. "Why, I don't understand. He's one of the best men on my ranch." Besides, he tried to save your life last night."

"That's what he told you," Buck answered significantly, "but I'm not so sure."

He then gave his own account of the incident that had taken place in the Maverick saloon, and the two girls listened to his story in a bewildered silence—a silence which Mary was the first to break.

"You—you mean that you suspect Lew of being a member of the gang that has been operating against the settlers?" she gasped, when Buck had related all.

"I'm positive of it," was the reply. "Nobody could convince me that he didn't try to drill me last night."

Mary's lovely face had paled.

"This is terrible!" she exclaimed. "Would you—would you suggest that I discharge him?"

"No," Buck said hastily. "I wouldn't do that. If you give him enough rope he may convict himself and the rest of the gang as well. But just remember what I've told you, and don't talk too much when he's around."

"As it is," he added thoughtfully, "I wouldn't be surprised if he was on his way right now to tell those outlaws about the railroad company's letter."

It was a shrewd guess, for Lew Meredith had gone off to saddle his horse, and at that very moment he was riding into the brushwood thickets on the blind side of the bunkhouse.

He left the outfit surreptitiously, but he was very far mistaken in imagining that his departure went unnoticed, for only a few seconds after the vegetation had swallowed him another horseman took up the same trail.

The horseman in question was the redoubtable Spooky, and with the skill of one who was well practised in the art of playing the shadower, Spooky dogged the treacherous cowboy through the thickets until a sweep of open prairie was reached.

Across that grassy plain Lew Meredith rode at a smart pace, and now his tracker had to exercise all the cunning he possessed in order to keep him in sight without letting him suspect that he was being followed—a difficult task considering that there was very little cover available.

Spooky did his best, yet his best was not good enough. Before quarry and pursuer had gone much farther Lew managed to turn his head, and, though the diminutive Ranger was a couple of hundred yards behind him, and though the latter made haste to swerve into a

deep arroyo, the outlaw caught a glimpse of him ere he could conceal himself.

Involuntarily, Lew Meredith checked, and then, quickly grasping the situation, he pushed forward once more as if he had noticed nothing. Nor did he look back again till he came to a tract of forest-land that lay between him and the hills.

Passing into the midst of the trees, he halted and wheeled around to peer in the direction whence he had come, and from the shelter of the wood he saw Spooky advancing over the prairie at a steady trot.

Convinced that the little fellow was on his trail, Meredith dropped a hand to his hip and tugged out his forty-five, and it was even as he was pulling the gun from its holster that he heard movements nearby, movements that caused him to glance over his shoulder with a violent start.

He at once perceived a couple of men approaching him through the eternal dusk of the forest, and, alarmed at first, he was reassured an instant later as he recognised them, for they were none other than Gabe and Roscoe, members of that same gang which employed him as a spy.

"Hallo, there, Lew!" exclaimed Gabe. "Anything wrong?"

"Plenty!" Meredith answered huskily. "I was headin' for the hide-out when I found out somebody was followin' me. They calls him Spooky—a little runt that joined the Grayson outfit a few days ago.

Gabe and Roscoe looked at each other sharply, and then, after a moment's silence, Lew Meredith spoke again.

"I don't know what his game is," he muttered, "but maybe he's connected in some way with the Phantom Rider. He's too darned interested in my movements for my likin', anyhow, and I vote we grab him an' make him talk."

It was a suggestion that met with the approval of the other two gangsters, and they followed Lew's example as the

cowboy sought adequate shelter behind a clump of tall shrubs on the edge of the wood, where they awaited the arrival of Spooky with drawn revolvers.

By this time the little Ranger was nearing the forest, and he had almost gained the fringe of the trees when suddenly his foes spurred out of their covert and took him completely by surprise.

With a smothered oath Spooky attempted to go for his gun, but, finding himself covered by the "irons" of the three outlaws, he restrained the impulse and slowly raised his arms. Then, pressing close to him, Lew Meredith relieved him of his six-shooter with a rapid gesture and addressed him curtly.

"What's the idea of playin' hide-and-peek with me, feller?" he ground out.

Spooky looked at him steadfastly for a space, and then favoured him with a twisted smile.

"Kinda jumpin' to conclusions, ain't you?" he drawled.

"Yeah?" Lew rasped. "Well, maybe I've got another hunch. Maybe I've got a hunch you're workin' for somebody."

"Sure. Mary Grayson."

"No, not Mary Grayson, but the Phantom," Lew Meredith said tersely. "Better come clean, feller, and tell us what you know."

"Yeah, better talk," Gabe struck in with ominous mien. "Who is the Phantom?"

Spooky was still smiling that twisted smile.

"Why don't you ask him?" he remarked.

Gabe uttered a blistering oath, and spoke to Lew and Roscoe out of the corner of his thin-lipped mouth.

"This guy thinks he's tough," he rasped, "but there's ways of loosenin' a man's tongue. Supposin' we try some of the old Indian tortures on him—"

"Wait a minute, Gabe," Lew interrupted. "We've got no time for that

now. We'll take him to the hide-out and let the boss go to work on him at his leisure. Yuh see, first I've gotta pass on some information I picked up at the Grayson ranch. It seems there's a man called Blake comin' to Maverick by to-day's stage, and I've an idea the boss will want you fellers to make sure he don't reach town."

"Why?" demanded Roscoe. "Who is this man Blake?"

The question was not answered just then, for, even as Roscoe put it to Lew, the quiet of the range was split by the blast of a gunshot, and almost simultaneously a bullet whistled between the gangsters and smacked into the trunk of a tree hard by.

The crooks swung round in alarm, and immediately beheld the figure of a horseman galloping across the open prairie towards them. It was a figure which they must have observed before if they had not been so engrossed in their prisoner, and it was one whose appearance struck terror and dismay into their blackguardly hearts.

For although the oncoming rider was alone, he was a man who had more than once proved a match for any four of the outlaws.

"The Phantom!" yelled Gabe.

The Phantom it was, his long white cloak streaming from his athletic form as he leaned forward in the saddle of his fleet-limbed bronc—the Phantom, with a smoking six-gun in his fist and the light of battle in his eyes.

True, he was too far away for the gangsters to see the look in his eyes, but the forty-five was plain enough to their view, and as a second slug helched from it and snatched Gabe's hat from his head, that worthy wheeled for the trees and clapped spurs to the flanks of his pony.

Lew and Roscoe lost no time in following suit. Abandoning Spooky in their panic, they dashed into the wood and vanished amidst its shadows, and



"What's this I hear about an attempted hold-up, Grant?" the sheriff demanded.

the drumming of their horses' hoofs had died away when the Phantom swept abreast of their late captive.

"Hallo, Buck!" the little fellow jerked. "Where'd you spring from?" Buck answered him through the folds of the kerchief that he wore in his rôle of Phantom Rider.

"I left the Grayson ranch because I had an idea Meredith might be on his way to the outlaw lair," he stated, "and I thought there was maybe just a chance that you hadn't noticed him sneak off. I struck south at random, knowin' the gang's hide-out is somewhere in the hills, and hopin' I might pick up Meredith's trail. Back in the brush I rigged myself out as the Phantom, figurin' I'd be safer in these clothes. Then I reached this strip of prairie and spotted you on the edge of the wood."

"Yeah, and you sure got me out of a fix," Spooky declared. "But say, if we're gonna find that outlaw hide-out, we'd better start chasin' Lew and his two pals."

Buck was of the same mind, and the pair of them rode into the heart of the forest, yet for all that they accomplished they might have saved themselves the trouble, for the fugitives had totally disappeared, and though the Rangers searched the locality for an hour, they failed to obtain any clue as to the direction which the crooks had taken.

"Well, it looks like we're wasting our time, Buck," Spooky vouchsafed at length.

The big fellow nodded briefly.

"You're right, pardner," he agreed. "Huh, I wish I knew what that gang's next play will be."

"I dunno," Spooky muttered. "But Lew mentioned somebody called Blake. He was on his way to tell his boss about him, and seemed to hint at a hold-up. I've an idea the boss will want you fellers to make sure Blake don't reach town," he says. "They was his very words, so far as I can recall."

Buck appeared to stiffen, and next instant he was gripping his comrade by the wrist.

"Spooky," he rapped out, "that's just what I wanted to know. Blake is a railroad agent, and he's coming into this territory to buy up land for his company. Those outlaws are out to stop him because their aim is to grab every acre in this county and then hold out against the railroad for a high price. So they're liable to stick up the stage, are they?"

"What are you gonna do, Buck?" Spooky faltered. "By now the whole gang is probably on the move."

Buck had started to peel off the rig that he wore as the Phantom, and soon he was stuffing the clothing under his saddle.

"We're going back to Hidden Valley," he said, "and I'll tell Mary Grayson that I suspect an attempt will be made to kill or capture this fellow Blake. I guess she'll be willing enough to let me form a posse with the men who are working for her."

A little while later the two Rangers might have been seen speeding northward across the prairie, and less than half an hour afterwards Buck was reporting to Mary and urging her to let him lead her employees against the outlaws.

She fell in with his proposal readily enough, and, the boys having been summoned, they mounted their brones with alacrity on learning that they were to shield the Maverick stage-coach from a possible attack. Then, with the whole personnel of the Hidden Valley ranch behind him, Buck Grant set out for the south-east trail.

Spooky was a member of the troop, of September 19th, 1936.

course, and, riding stirrup to stirrup with Buck, he whispered an anxious query as they were galloping over the mesquite at the head of the Grayson punchers.

"Can you trust this bunch of cow-pokes?" he asked huskily. "Lew Meredith may not 've been the only spy among 'em."

"I'll take that chance," Buck retorted. "But from the way they acted when they heard they were gonna tackle those outlaws I'll stake my life that they're square-shooters."

After Dark

WITH the dust billowing in clouds behind the thundering feet of their ponies, Buck Grant and the men from Hidden Valley swept across the grazing lands of Benson County, and they had covered a distance of some ten or eleven miles when they heard a sound which there was no mistaking.

It was the sound of gunplay, and it came from beyond a ridge three hundred yards ahead of them. A couple of minutes later they were on the summit of that promontory, and from its crest they looked down upon the south-east trail and beheld a spectacle that caused them to reach for their six-shooters.

The first object which their gaze encountered was the stage-coach, travelling over the road at break-neck speed with the driver wielding whip and reins like a madman, and the armed guard huddled beside him in an attitude that told he had been severely wounded.

And galloping in pursuit of the coach was a band of hard-riding desperadoes whose forty-fives spat flame through the haze of dust that partially obscured the scene.

Buck let out a yell, and next moment he and his followers were swooping down the slope of the hillside, bent on intercepting the gangsters by swinging on to the trail between them and the stage.

The ground trembled under the hoofs of the brones that were carrying the Hidden Valley cowboys, and the steady drumming of the iron-shod feet was punctuated by the sudden detonations of the revolvers that the ranch-hands had plucked from their holsters. In another instant the outlaws down on the Maverick road were drawing rein, and then, realising that they were up against a force of determined men, they turned tail and fled in cowardly fashion.

Buck and his companions surged onward and took up pursuit of them, harassing them with volleys of lead till they scattered into a vast tract of chaparral thickets. Then, anxious to return to the stage and escort it safely into town, the big Ranger and his party gave up the chase and cantered back along the trail.

The driver of the coach had brought the vehicle to a halt, and thankfully accepted the offer of a bodyguard. Thus, when the stage rolled into Maverick some time afterwards, it was attended by a resolute band of horsemen.

Several of these took charge of the driver's wounded comrade and bore him off to a doctor. The others, Buck amongst them, dismounted alongside the coach, the door of which was now thrown open by a small, plump, elderly man in tailored clothes.

He was the only passenger, and Buck eyed him keenly.

"You must be Blake, the railroad agent," he observed.

"Y-yes," the little man stuttered, mopping his brow with a handkerchief.

"Blake's the n-name. My, what a country to send me to! I—I—"

He did not finish the sentence, for at this juncture the Sheriff of Maverick put in an appearance.

"What's this I hear about an attempted hold-up, Grant?" he demanded.

Buck gave him a brief and none too illuminating account of the affair, and was in the middle of his story when Blake caught sight of a man who had emerged from an office at the other side of the street. The man in question was none other than Judge Holmes, who, in his capacity as an administrator of the law, owned premises in the town as well as his outlying cattle-ranch.

Blake was apparently acquainted with the judge, for he immediately hurried across to him, and by the time that Buck had finished talking to the sheriff, the railroad agent had entered Holmes' office and was ensconced with him there.

Buck made his way to that office a little while later, and, on crossing the threshold, he found that Harvey Delaney was present in the room with Blake and the judge.

"Here's Grant now, judge," Delaney remarked, as Buck showed up.

Holmes rose and greeted the young Ranger with a considerable warmth of tone. Then he formally introduced him to Blake, whom he declared he had known for a good many years.

"Mr. Blake tells me, Buck," the judge continued, "that he's come here to negotiate a deal with Mary Grayson."

"Yes," Buck rejoined. "Mary mentioned it to me, and I might tell you that was why an attempt was made to hold up the stage-coach. Those outlaws were after Blake."

He gave his reasons for holding that opinion, but was careful to avoid any reference to the Phantom, and, when he had finished speaking, there was a spell of silence which was only broken when Blake raised his voice.

"From the sound of things," the railroad agent quavered, "I fancy it would be advisable if I saw Miss Grayson and clinched this deal with her as soon as possible."

"And you shall, Blake, you shall," Judge Holmes announced. "Mr. Delaney here is going out to Hidden Valley this evening, and I'm trailing along with him, for I want to set Miss Grayson's mind at rest regarding a certain wallet that I'm carrying around on her behalf. So, if you like, you can have our company out to the ranch."

"I'd advise you to join up with the Grayson cowboys as well, judge," Buck interposed. "They can easily stay in town until you're ready to leave."

It was a suggestion that met with Holmes' approval, and he nodded his grey head.

"A good idea, Buck," he agreed. "How about yourself? Will you be taking the Hidden Valley trail to-night?"

The younger man made a negative movement.

"No, judge," he stated, "you won't find Buck Grant on the Hidden Valley trail to-night."

Buck meant those words, but, secretly reflecting, he decided that he would not be very far away from the Grayson ranch—in the guise of the Phantom. For he intended to keep watch and hold himself in readiness for any desperate coup that might be staged by the outlaws of Benson County.

The shadows of evening were gathering upon the hills when a lone horseman drew rein outside a remote dwelling

that was hidden away in a corner of a gloomy canyon.

The horseman was Dirk, lieutenant of the mysterious gang-leader who commanded those rustlers with whom Buck Grant had tangled so frequently of late.

Dismounting outside the cabin, Dirk tethered his brone to the hitch-rail and entered the outlaw rendezvous to discover his confederates assembled in a back room.

"Hallo!" greeted Lew Meredith, who was among those present. "Where's the boss? I thought you was gonna meet him."

"I did meet him," Dirk rejoined crisply, "and I told him about the brush you had with that hombre named Spooky. He agreed that in consequence of it you couldn't go back to your job at the Grayson ranch. And, by the way, it was the boss who tried to shoot Grant from the back room at the saloon last night."

Lew nodded slowly.

"I kinda guessed that," he observed, and then, after a moment's silence: "What else did the boss have to say?"

"He gave me orders to round up you fellers and make for Hidden Valley," came the reply. "It appears that Blake, the railroad man, is goin' out to see Mary Grayson to-night and clinch a deal with her. We've gotta stop that deal."

"And that ain't all," he added. "The wallet containing the chart to the Grayson gold diggings will be there as well, and it's up to us to grab it."

"How?" somebody asked.

"I'll make that clear later," Dirk answered. "Meantime, it's boot and saddle for every man-jack of us. Come on, we'd better get started."

He strode out of the cabin again, and, rising to their feet, the other rogues trooped after him. A few seconds later the whole band of crooks had mounted their ponies, and soon they were pushing northward through the hills at a rapid pace.

The gloom of night thickened as they pressed on in the direction of Hidden Valley, and, when they at length drew near to the tract of brushwood that lay immediately to the south of the Grayson outfit, the darkness that had settled over the range was almost opaque.

In spite of this, however, they were seen by a rider who was approaching from the east, a lone horseman who wore a white cloak and whose features were masked by a kerchief. He was Buck Grant, alias the Phantom, and, though he despised the outlaws, he himself was concealed from their view by a copse of trees in which he abruptly drew rein.

Unaware that they had been sighted by one whom they had reason to dread, the crooks galloped on into the brushwood and wound their way through it until they gained the north fringe of the thickets, whence they were able to survey the Grayson ranch.

There were lights in the long, low building where the cow-boys in Mary's employ were quartered, and the faint strumming of a guitar reached the ears of the gangsters. There was also a light in one of the windows of the pretentious ranch-house, and, though this was some little distance away, Dirk and his companions distinguished movements beyond the net curtains of the room in question.

"It looks like Black may be here already," growled Dirk. "Gabe, you and Keeler sneak over to the house. Pick off that railroad agent and blast out the light. Then make a quick dash into the room and snatch up all the papers you can lay your hands on."

"That's a pretty tough assignment, ain't it?" muttered Keeler.

"It won't be if you handle it the right way," Dirk retorted. "The element o' surprise will be in your favour, and you can pull off the whole job inside a minute. Once you've got what you're after, you can high-tail it back to the thickets here."

"What about them cow-pokes in the bunkhouse?" Gabe demanded.

Dirk answered him in a reassuring tone.

"Don't worry about them," he stated. "We'll be ready to cover your escape, and if those punchers show themselves we'll let 'em have it with our forty-fives. Now get busy, the two of you, and do as I told you."

Doggedly, but none too enthusiastically, Gabe and Keeler dismounted from their brones and moved out of the shelter of the brushwood thickets. Then, giving the bunkhouse a pretty wide berth, they slunk across the open ground towards the main dwelling which was their objective, and before long they were close to the wall of the building.

With extreme caution they stole up to the window that they had marked from the edge of the chaparral. It was open, and the murmur of voices was audible to them, and as they raised their heads warily above the sill they found themselves looking into a comfortably furnished lounge occupied by five people, two girls and three men.

The two girls were Mary Grayson and Helen Moore—the men Judge Holmes, Harvey Delaney and Blake, the railroad

(Continued on page 28)

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September 19th, 1936.

"SUZY"

(Continued from page 20)

A grip of her hands, a smile of determination, and Terry dashed out on to the balcony. He wrenched down a curtain and fixed it to a balcony rail. Suzy watched him slide to the ground.

It did not surprise Terry to find that their car had been put out of action and he was wondering of the chances of getting a lift when a gleam caught his eyes. Propped against a wall was a powerful motor-eye—Andre's own machine—and it was untouched.

Revenge

TERRY knew he must time everything carefully. He must arrive at his destination on time, but with not a moment to spare. The gods seemed to be helping him, because he found a pair of goggles tied to the handle-bars. The motor-eye also bore Andre's insignia, so that Terry reckoned he should be able to get through without being detected.

The machines were all out on the flying field, with mechanics standing by. The silver grey was easily detectable in the semi-darkness. Near the hangars Terry detected a group of officers—probably hanging around to see Andre take off. He drove up to the silver-grey, hopped off the machine, which was at once taken charge of by a mechanic. He did not speak. He only waved to a mechanic as he climbed into the cockpit. He raised his hand in signal. Mechanics quickly removed the blocks from under the wheels, and the engine roared to life.

He had taken off!

Terry circled the flying field to get the wind, and once in position, went off at high speed. He headed for the enemy lines.

It was an hour before dawn, but the darkness had gone. For some miles he flew low to avoid observation from balloons. He glanced downwards and whistled sharply. A long strip of road lay below him, and it was deserted except for one car, travelling at terrific speed. He swooped down, and then a hard smile showed on his strong face. It was Madame and the butler, making a desperate effort to get to some secret hiding-place near the front lines, where they would probably send by some means a warning of the bombing raid and the news that Andre Charville was dead. Terry zoomed high again to avoid rousing suspicion. Ahead lay more open country, and at the end a slight incline. He released the safety catch on his two guns and swooped down again. His expression hardened as he saw the woman look up and evidently shout something to her companion, for the car's speed increased. Terry brought his machine down so low that he was no more than a hundred feet from the road and about twice that distance behind the car. His two guns woke to life, and little spurts of dust on the road showed the strike of the bullets. He zoomed upwards again and looked down at the car, which was now being driven madly by the man who had killed Andre. Once more Terry swooped, and this time his aim was deadly. The bogus butler stiffened, stood upright, and then crashed across the wheel. Madame pushed him away and gripped the wheel. The car careered from one side of the road to the other. Suddenly there came a burst of flame, and

Terry knew his bullets had penetrated the petrol-tank.

The blazing car rushed down the incline, lurched across the road, hit a ditch and rolled over. It was a blazing wreck, and Terry knew that Madame de Chabris and her accomplice were beyond all human aid.

Terry glanced at his watch as he zoomed over the trees. In a few minutes the other planes would be roaring off from the flying field. He rose to about six thousand feet and let his engine out—he must be well in front of those that came after him. A glance down not very long after showed him a shell-wrecked village, and beyond, land pock-marked with holes—No Man's Land. Then, far off, but coming towards him, he glimpsed a number of machines. It was the German squadron.

Terry had never been in action, but he knew perfectly what he meant to do, and he did it. Each movement of the control, each firing of the guns was as his will directed, and always he remembered that if Andre's name were to be saved the machine must not be brought down.

For the honour of defeating so renowned a flyer the Germans did not attack in mass, but preferred to let a picked airman match his skill against Andre Charville. The extra speed was a great help to Terry, and the machine was so easy to control that the German machines seemed clumsy. Combined with this, Terry flew the machine in a manner that was brilliant and skilful, and it had also caution in place of recklessness. He did not take needless risks. Two German machines crashed in flames and one drifted earthwards with a badly wounded pilot.

A glance at his watch told him that the other machines must now be nearing the line. The silver grey streaked away with five machines in pursuit. Often he turned on the enemy and attacked like a vicious hornet. One more machine he brought down before flying back over the lines.

In the office at the flying field the phone rang and Captain Barsanges took the call.

"This is headquarters at Souilly. Our number seven observer just confirmed reports that Captain Charville has brought down three enemy planes, two in flames, close by Batheville. Followed by five machines, Captain Charville turned towards Mouvain. He may be wounded—the enemy had him at close quarters. Report just come in that one more German machine down and that Captain Charville got safely back across the lines. When he arrives at the field, express our thanks and congratulations."

Captain Barsanges passed on the news to those officers who had not taken part in the fight.

"A great day," cried the captain. "I have the report that the other machines completely wrecked the ammunition dump and were not even attacked. They should be back very soon. Let us go outside and look for Andre."

Off towards the horizon there was a tiny speck. It was a plane.

"It's Charville!" shouted the captain.

"He's come back!"

The silver grey swooped down towards the flying field, went into a nose dive, flattened out very close to some tree-tops, and then seemed to climb sluggishly.

"There is something wrong," shouted one of the officers. "Andre would have stayed to the bitter end whilst there was still a Bosh within range. He looks as if he were going to crash."

"Follow him!" shouted Captain Barsanges, as the machine vanished behind some trees.

There had been nothing wrong with the plane. Terry had deliberately wobbled the stick. It was not easy to give the impression that he would crash at any moment and be sure that he would not fall. But for Andre's sake he must not fail.

Suzy heard the whirr of an approaching plane. She ran out into the garden to see if it could be Terry coming back at last. It was. But the prayer of thanksgiving was clogged in her throat as she realised the machine was going to crash. The silver grey machine almost hit a wall, righted itself, skimmed over some fruit trees, and then seemed to rush towards the chateau. She shut her eyes as the plane roared towards her.

There came a sickening, rending crash, and she opened her eyes to see a crumpled thing that had once been the silver grey, pride of an English factory. She tumbled forward, crying out Terry's name.

"I'm all right," came his voice from the twisted cockpit.

With difficulty he crawled from the wreckage, because one arm had been smashed up in the crash.

"Are you wounded, Terry?"

"It is nothing," he said brusquely and leaning on her for support. "Come. We've something to do, and we haven't much time—something we must do for Andre."

He was taking off his coat—Andre's coat—as he staggered towards the chateau. They put it on the dead man. Together they managed to carry the body out into the garden. They laid it among the wreckage of the plane.

A Hero's Funeral

ON the flying field was the wreck of the silver grey plane, and in the smashed cockpit lay a coffin containing the body of Captain Andre Charville. The flags of the Allies covered the coffin, whilst the front of the machine was bedecked with wreaths. One wreath had been dropped from the air—from the Germans as a sign of appreciation for a great airman.

In front of the wreck were the officers and men of the squadron, and on the extreme left two people stood by themselves. It was Suzy and Terry. Captain Barsanges approached them.

"The knowledge that his son died a hero's death must comfort his beloved father," he said to Suzy. "I cannot find words for the tribute I would wish I could pay him. But it is indeed that I should. No one could pay Captain Charville the tribute he has paid himself. His last hour was his greatest. During all the meaningless horrors of war we can cling to the memory of the selfless courage of men like Andre Charville. It is such courage, and such courage only, that purifies war. Madame de Charville, all France will mourn with you. And the three colours of France will be brighter because he was her son."

Suzy was unable to speak. Her head thrown back, her eyes shining with tears she could not shed, were her only answer. She looked at Terry, who had done this great deed for her sake and the sake of Andre Charville, and through a mist of tears she tried to tell him that Captain Terence Moore was the greatest man in the world.

Terry offered her his arm. Together they walked away.

(By permission of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures, Ltd., starring Jean Harlow as Suzy, Franchot Tone as Terry, and Cary Grant as Andre.)

"HELL-SHIP MORGAN"

(Continued from page 12)

Morgan waved him away.

"Get to your cabin," he said curtly to Mary, and took hold of the wheel. "Round up the crew, Allen, and report for'ard to me on deck."

"Aye, sir."

Jim went out, and from the upper deck he bellowed to the crew. Mary gave one anguished glance at her husband, then somehow struggled back to the cabin.

Jim, down on the main deck, sent a man to relieve Morgan, then superintended the efforts of the crew to make the main-stay fast. Mountainous waves were swamping all about them; water was everywhere. The stay could not be held, let alone made fast, and over and over again the men were flung about the deck, clinging for dear life to any fixture upon which they could lay hands.

Morgan instructed the man who took his place at the wheel to keep the ship headed due west, told the engineer not to slacken speed, and stumbled down to the group who had once more got hold of the stay.

"Tie it before we lose a man!" he yelled. "Lively, lively! Hold it this time!"

"Make it fast!" shouted Jim. "Heave!"

The stay was made fast, and the men pulled and sprawled and rose to pull again. But the unsupported mast had cracked, and suddenly it split asunder, no more than half a man's height from the deck.

"Lay aft all hands!" vociferated Morgan; and then with a crash the mast went overboard, smashing part of the rail, and taking with it the staging from amidships.

The vessel rose out of a valley of water and crested a wave, but the floating mast was attached to it by the chains and cross-pieces of the rigging, and it banged against the hull.

"Pete, Joe," bellowed Morgan, "grab a fire-axe and crowbar over the side and cut loose those stages holding that boom!"

Some of the men went off and returned with lanterns, in the light of which they viewed the broken mast and all the wreckage attached to it; but not one of them was prepared to dive into a shark-infested sea of such wildness.

"Fire-axe and crowbar, I said!" thundered Morgan. "If that rigging gets foul of our propeller we're through!"

Jim leaned against the side of his rig.

"It's almost certain death to send a man over in this storm!" he expostulated.

"Yeah?" Morgan roared at him. "Well, maybe you'd better go over, Mr. Allen! It'll take a little more courage than stealing a man's wife—and there's a chance you won't come back!"

Jim turned and looked at him in mute reproach.

"What's the matter?" jeered Morgan. "Lost your nerve?"

Off came Jim's oilskins and his hat, and he grabbed at an axe a man had brought at last and at a rope Joe Cotton offered him.

"Hold on to that!" he cried. "I'll cut the mass loose, then you can haul me back aboard."

He fastened his end of the rope round his chest, under his armpits, and he heaved himself over the side into the

turbulent sea. In the light of the lanterns held for him he reached the wreckage and hacked away at it, but the waves flung him off again and again, and often he disappeared completely beneath a welter of water.

Mary, once more on the upper deck, held on to the rail and looked down with tortured eyes. It seemed to her that the storm was abating a little, but she feared for his life. She heard the shouts of the men:

"What's holding that gear? Must be fouled below! Starboard shroud's fouled on the keel for'ard! If he can clear his end, we can haul her aboard! He's in trouble!"

Jim was indeed in trouble; a great wave had engulfed him, and as it swept over the ship and he got his breath again, he found that his **hips** were caught between the mast and some of the rigging, and he could not extricate himself.

"He's a-foul o' that gear!" cried a voice.

Morgan stared down, and for a while his jealous rage was banished. Jim was in danger of being crushed to death at his instigation! He discarded his oilskins, and with a rope round his chest cried out:

"As soon as I free Allen, haul him aboard!"

Over the side he went, headlong into a swamping wave, and then they saw him swimming vigorously towards the mast. Several times he vanished from sight, but he reached Jim at last, and after several vain attempts managed to free him.

"He's made it!" cried Joe Cotton. "Heave away! Heave away!"

Jim was hauled aboard, uninjured, though only half-conscious; but Morgan had taken the axe from him and with it was trying to complete the severing of the gear.

A shout went up as the broken mast floated clear; but even as Morgan let go of the axe and turned to swim towards the ship a great wave lifted the mast upon its crest and drove it violently against the swimmer's back.

"Fair Weather Ahead"

THE storm passed with the night and dawn broke over a quiet sea, but Morgan lay in his bunk helpless and in pain.

"Mary," he said in a weak voice, "you there?"

She was sitting in a chair beside the bunk, where she had been for hours, and she reached out a hand to the one that moved restlessly upon the blankets.

"I'll always be here," she replied.

"I heard somebody say my back—"

"You must rest now," she insisted gently. "Try not to move."

Jim entered the cabin, and Morgan knew his footsteps.

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"HELL-SHIP MORGAN."—*Captain Ira Morgan*, George Baneroff; *Mary Taylor*, Ann Sothorn; *Jim Allen*, Victor Jory; *Giovanni Covanci*, George Regas; *John Cabot*, Howard Hickman; *James Dale*, Ralph Byrd; *Ed Hawkins*, Rollo Lloyd; *Pittsburg*, Snowflake.

"SUZY"—*Suzy*, Jean Harlow; *Terry Moore*, Franchot Tone; *Andre Charville*, Cary Grant; *Baron Charville*, Lewis Stone; *Madame Chabris*, Benita Hume; *Captain Barsanges*, Reginald Masou; *Maisie*, Inez Courtney; *Mrs. Schmidt*, Greta Meyer; *Knobby*, David Clyde.

"I'll rest, dear," he said. "Leave me alone for a while. Look after her, Jim."

Jim helped Mary to her feet in silence; words would have choked him, just then. He knew the agony Morgan must be in, and there was no doctor on board. He reached down and clasped the hand that she had released, and Morgan smiled wanly at him.

"Mary," he said, "before you go will you hand me the log, please?"

She went off to his desk and returned with the log-book and his fountain-pen, and she opened the book on the blankets for him and put the pen in his hand.

"Thanks," he said. "Now get some air, both of you."

They went out from the cabin into brilliant sunshine, and after they had gone Morgan managed to make an entry in the log-book by propping it against his left arm.

The effort brought beads of perspiration to his brow and he let the book drop back and himself lay motionless for several minutes. Then abruptly he reached both hands above his head to the curtains of the bunk and pulled on them till he had raised himself sufficiently to topple over on to the floor.

A quarter of an hour elapsed, and Mary said to Jim at the rail of the bridge:

"I think I'll go back to him now. He may need me."

She went down the ladder and she reached the cabin. To her surprise the door was open, and to her horror the bunk was empty.

"Jim!" she screamed. "Jim!"

Jim raced down to her. The empty bunk told its own tale: Morgan must have crawled out on to the deck and forced himself overboard.

They searched the deck, but there was no sign of him, and Jim, remembering that last request for the log-book, went back with Mary to the cabin to see whether he had written anything in it.

He found the entry, and Mary read it over his shoulder till her eyes were blinded with tears. It ran, none too legibly:

"Back broken—helpless—can't remain that way. Smooth water running—fair weather ahead."

(By permission of Columbia Pictures Corporation, Ltd., starring George Bancroft and Victor Jory, with Ann Sothorn.)

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"THE PHANTOM RIDER"

(Continued from page 25)

agent. They were gathered around a table on which a lamp was standing, and in the full glare of that lamp Mary was leaning over an important-looking document which she was apparently about to sign.

Gabe and Keeler exchanged a significant glance as they perceived this document, for they had no doubt that it was a deed of transfer making over the Hidden Valley property to the railroad company. Then they noticed something else—a pocket-book that was lying on the table close to Mary Grayson's elbow.

"The wallet," Gabe whispered to Keeler.

Keeler nodded, and, with an ominous expression on his swarthy features, he shifted his hand to his hip and drew his six-gun from its holster. Gabe imitated his example, and as he did so he heard Mary Grayson speak.

"You know," she said hesitantly, addressing Blake and fumbling with a pen that she was holding in her fingers, "I—I hate to part with this old place. I may be absurdly sentimental, but it's going to be a wrench—leaving the house where I was born."

"I should think the price offered by the railroad company would console you for any regrets you may have, Miss Grayson," Blake remarked with a smile.

"That's right, Mary," Harvey Delaney put in. "You can't afford to pass up this chance of selling out at so high a figure."

"The girl pursed her lips, and then, beriding over the document on the table again, she prepared to attach her signature to the deed.

Neither she nor her companions saw the two men who were posted outside the window, but in the very instant that Mary was setting pen to paper the outlaw known as Keeler drew the trigger of his forty-five, and the quiet of that room was suddenly shattered by the roar of the weapon as a shot burst from its muzzle.

It was a shot that smashed the light to fragments and plunged the lounge into darkness, and it was followed by a choking cry from Blake. Next moment Gabe and Keeler were turning towards the front door of the ranch-house, but ere they could reach the porch they were arrested by a clatter of hoofs, and, wheeling, they beheld a white-robed figure bearing down on them at top speed.

"The Phantom!" yelled Keeler.

As he shouted the words he blazed at the oncoming horseman with his six-gun, and, Gabe's revolver echoing the report a split second later, the cloaked rider was seen to throw up his arms and fall.

(To be continued. By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Buck Jones.)



All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 218, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Lionel Barrymore's Big Fight

Lionel Barrymore, once knocked out by John L. Sullivan, famous heavy-weight, is still a fighter.

In "The Gorgeous Hussy" he was to stage a terrific fist fight with Wade Boteler. As the time approached for the battle, studio friends several times approached Barrymore.

"Hadn't you better rehearse it?" he was asked. Barrymore put them off or evaded the question. "All in good time," he remarked.

Finally came the fight.

Barrymore put up as grand a fight as had ever been staged, to the delight of Clarence Brown, the director, who was in on the secret from the first.

For years Barrymore has been an expert boxer.

Famous Tablecloth Aids Research

Oddest item among the books, paintings, and other articles being used in research for Cecil B. DeMille's Paramount picture, "The Plainsman," is a tablecloth.

Several years ago DeMille engaged in an argument with Will James, famous cowboy artist, about the arm movements of a rider on a bucking bronco. DeMille and James were sitting in the Brown Derby Restaurant in Hollywood, and James, in the course of the talk, made sketches of cowboys on the tablecloth.

When the session ended DeMille bought the tablecloth. It was turned over to Dwight Franklin, DeMille's designer, and the James sketches will be used for reference in designing costumes for Gary Cooper and other members of the cast.

Movie Within a Movie

One reel of a Western film that will never be completed plays a rôle all its own in "The Last Outlaw," Radio's new picture, featuring Harry Carey, Henry B. Walthall, Margaret Callahan, and Hoot Gibson.

In the course of the plot Harry Carey, an outlaw just released after twenty-five years in prison, visits his first movie along with the other three principals. For the "movie" in question a special reel was filmed by Director Christy Cabanne, with Fred Scott playing the rôle of its Western cowboy-hero, and this, in turn, was projected in a full-sized film theatre built at the studio while the camera picked up both the picture on the screen and the reactions of the audience.

British Brothers in Hollywood

The most amazing family of brothers in Hollywood are English—the Westmore Brothers, who were born at

Tunbridge Wells, and appear to have made the American make-up trade their own.

The fame of Percy, Ernest, Wally, and Monte Westmore's family extends as far back as the seventeenth century, when the then king of England presented a crest to Richard Westmore, of Middletown, as a token of esteem for his wig-making.

The Westmore family since then has held to the tradition of wig-making and make-up through each generation, until to-day there is hardly a star in Hollywood whose beauty has not been greatly enhanced by one of them.

Wally is in complete charge at Paramount, while his brothers are in charge at other major Hollywood studios.

These boys have six cousins in England, and four of them are now en route to Hollywood to assist and to learn the make-up business. The four cousins from England are also called Percy, Ernest, Wally, and Monte, and in order to avoid complications the eight Westmores will be known as Percy I, Percy II, Wally I and II, and so on.

The combination of these eight will make the family tradition as strong as the rock of Gibraltar and will be the largest and most successful make-up clan in the history of the screen.

A Rain Bath for the Stars

Motion-picture technicians have not yet found a way to keep people from getting wet in scenes depicting rainstorms.

But the construction of huge sound stages such as the Will Rogers Memorial Stage at Twentieth Century-Fox studios has enabled studios to provide fairly comfortable rainstorms!

It was during the filming of "To Mary—With Love," in which Myrna Loy and Warner Baxter co-star, that Director John Cromwell provided the carefully adjusted showers. The scene depicted the two stars and nearly a thousand extras witnessing a reproduction of the Dempsey-Tunney fight in Philadelphia.

Now that fight was fought in the pouring rain. So Director Cummings was forced to order a thorough drenching for those involved in the scene.

John Cromwell the director ordered that the water spurting from the "rain jets" over the heads of the two stars and the crowd of extras be heated to comfortable bath temperature, and that the entire sound stage temperature be raised to eighty degrees.

As a result, the entire throng submitted to a drenching rain without the appearance of a single sneeze as an aftermath.

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The Watcher

THE driver of the taxicab parked on the rank in East Eighty-Sixth Street was fast asleep, his arms on the wheel, his face on his arms, when Don Gregg left a doorway in which he had been lurking and ran across to him. It was five o'clock in the morning and the sun was rising redly over the East River, but the driver had been plying for hire all night and he was tired.

Don Gregg looked none too fresh himself. He was young, clean-shaven, and in a lean sort of way almost handsome, but his face was drawn and his grey eyes were heavy-lidded and bloodshot. The collar of his dark overcoat was turned up about his ears and the brim of his slouch hat was pulled down as though to hide his eyes.

Not very far along the street two cars were moving away from the canopied entrance of a tall apartment-house, and Don awakened the driver in haste.

"Follow that car!" he said harshly. The driver blinked in the direction indicated by a pointing finger.

"Why?" he challenged.

"This is why!"

Don plunged his hand into a pocket of his overcoat, whereupon the man sat up, half expecting to be shown a detective's badge. But it was a five-dollar note that was flourished in his face.

"Okay, boss," he said, and Don scrambled into the cab and the self-starter roused a cold engine into activity.

There was not much traffic about in that particular region of New York City so early in the morning, and the September 26th, 1936.

two ears were trailed without difficulty round a corner into Madison Avenue and down that wide thoroughfare into East Fifty-Seventh Street.

Outside the double and cross-divided doors of a livery stable just beyond Park Avenue the leading car came to a standstill with a screeching of brakes and the other one stopped close behind it. Don Gregg instructed the driver of the taxicab to pull up at the corner and there descended and handed over the five-dollar note.

He made for a doorway, and the driver saw him peering out from it as he drove off. From the leading car a girl in riding-coat and jhodpurs was being helped down by a youngish man in evening clothes, and Don's attention was concentrated upon her.

Violet Feverel was her name, and but for a petulant droop about her mouth she would have been beautiful. Two other girls were in the car, and one of them leaned out to say:

"Sorry you're deserting, Violet. It was a grand party."

"Glad you could come," responded Violet Feverel, and turned to the man in evening clothes. "Thanks for dropping me, Tony."

"We don't want to drop you," he declared emphatically. "Why don't you come on to Harlem with us?"

"No, thanks." She smiled slightly.

"I'm in the cavalry this morning. Have you got a cigarette?"

Tony groped in his pockets, but the last of his cigarettes had been smoked. She went back to the open door of the car.

"Have you got a cigarette in there?" she asked.

There were two men in the car as well as the two girls, but they hadn't a cigarette between them.

"Try Eddie," suggested one of the men.

Eddie Fry, a curly-headed young fellow with a muffer round his neck, was in the driving-seat of the car behind and a girl with pale red hair and large dark hazel eyes was sitting beside him. In the back were two other girls. He saw Violet Feverel walking towards him, and he said hastily to his companion:

"Babs, you'd better hide down there so Violet won't see you."

"But, Eddie," she said nervously, "do you think it's all right?"

"Sure it's all right," he returned. "Go on—get down!"

She slid from the seat and crouched down on the floor of the car just as her sister Violet reached the window. The girls in the back seat were laughing, and Eddie told them to shut up.

"Got any cigarettes, Eddie?" asked Violet.

"Sure," he replied, and held out a case, screening the girl on the floor as well as he could.

"And a light?"

He had to unfasten his overcoat to get at a lighter which he ignited and offered. She lit the cigarette, and in doing so looked down past him and saw the huddled figure of her sister. Immediately she flew round the car to the other door, opened it, and dragged the girl out.

"Well, chiseller!" she cried furiously.

"What do you mean by that?" asked the girl, white of face and trying to

free herself from the hand that gripped her arm.

"You know what I mean!" Eddie scrambled out from behind the wheel and rushed round to them.

"Oh, leave her alone!" he stormed. "What have you got to be sore about?" "Not a thing, Mr. Fry," Violet Feverel retorted scathingly. "And my own sister, too!"

"We were going to tell you," began Barbara, "but—"

"But it was more fun sneaking around behind my back, wasn't it?" raged Violet.

The upper part of one of the double doors of the livery stable swung back and the manager of the place looked out, thrusting his elbows on the lower part of the door. Heads were thrust out of the windows of the two cars, and from his hiding-place Don Gregg watched and listened.

"I wouldn't talk about sneaking around people's backs," cried Eddie Fry. "You seem to be doing pretty well with that stable boy of yours!"

Violet Feverel smacked his face and stalked away towards the stable, and he would have followed her but Barbara stopped him.

"Let's take a walk until you cool down, Eddie," she pleaded. "One of the others can drive."

Tony got back into the front car with a grimace.

"Violet's on the rampage," he said. "Let's get out of here."

The two cars were being started, and Eddie and Barbara were walking off together, when Violet reached the stable and the manager opened for her the part of the door upon which he had been leaning.

He was tall, young, and obviously conceited.

"You certainly have a fast right hand," he said as she stepped into a brick-paved yard between well-kept stalls. "I was going to help you, but—"

"But you found out I could take care of myself," she snapped. "It's a good thing for you to remember."

There was an office on the left of the yard, but she passed it with her chin in the air and he kept pace with her.

"Was there anything special meant by that crack?" he asked, twisting the ends of his little moustache.

"Have my horse saddled."

The expression on his face showed that he resented her tone.

"Highpockets is saddling him now," he returned curtly.

The grinning face of a negro stable-boy appeared at the bars of one of the stalls, and then a red stallion was led out into the yard.

"Good-mornin', Miss Fev'rel," boomed the negro.

"Give me a leg up, Highpockets," said she.

He stared at her in a puzzled fashion and at the manager who usually helped her into the saddle. But the manager nodded and held the stallion's head, so he obeyed.

"I'm ridin' alone this morning," she stated icily as she took up the reins, "and that's the way I'm doing everything so far as you're concerned."

"But, Violet," protested the manager, "why all this—"

"You know why," she broke in, "so don't let's go into that again."

She rode out from the yard into the street and turned in the direction of Central Park. Highpockets went to close the lower part of the door after her, but the manager waved him aside.

"If anybody wants me," he said, "tell them I've gone to breakfast."

"Yassuh, Mis'r Wells," nodded the black, and Latigo Wells walked out past him and also turned to the right.

The lower part of the door was closed and bolted, and the negro looked thoughtfully over it.

"This sho's gwine to be a bad mornin'," he soliloquised with gloom. "Sun come up red, everybody's actin' more like snappin' turtles than white folks, and I'se hungry. Yassuh."

He slammed the upper part of the door and was about to bolt that, too, when Don Gregg came running over from his lurking place.

"Hi!" he shouted. "I want to rent a horse!"

Highpockets reopened the upper part of the door and viewed the stranger.

"Boss gone to breakfast," he said with a shake of his woolly head. "Won't be back till after a while."

"I don't want the boss," retorted Don. "I want to rent a horse."

"Yeah, but you gotta see the boss before you gits a horse. We don't rent hosses to strangers."

The upper part of the door was slammed, but it creaked open again a few seconds later, and Highpockets was surprised to see the young man who wanted a horse help himself to a tradesman's cycle that was resting against the kerb outside a shop across the street and ride away on it.

The Red Stallion

VIOLET FEVEREL cantered into Central Park by its southern entrance in Fifth Avenue and beyond the pond turned into a bridleway with bushes and trees. The early morning air was crisp and a breeze



"Yeah, I guess you're right," decided Piper. "No witnesses, eh?"

stirred her golden hair as she set the horse to a gallop.

She had ridden nearly as far as the lake when suddenly the red stallion reared up on his hind legs and she was pitched out of the saddle on to the turf close beside a bush.

The fall jarred every bone in her body, but she was not otherwise injured, and she sat up to see the spirited animal disappearing round a bend. Slowly she rose to her feet and readjusted her hat, and she was about to start off in pursuit when a sound in the bush caused her to look round.

Her blue eyes widened with horror and she uttered a piercing scream. Then something struck her on the head, and down she went, flat on her back, with outspread arms.

Central Park is well policed, but ten minutes elapsed before a patrolman came upon her body and blew his whistle. Other officers came running to the scene, a few curious pedestrians gathered round, and from the nearest telephone-box a burly sergeant rang up the precinct station in East Sixty-Seventh Street.

Almost simultaneously with an ambulance from Bellevue Hospital a car arrived from headquarters, and Dr. Charles Bloom, the medical examiner, adjusted his pince-nez and knelt to ascertain the cause of death.

"It was an accident all right," he said after a while, and got to his feet. "I wonder what's keeping the inspector?"

Another squad car drove up close to the ambulance and from it Detective-Inspector Oscar Piper descended, a sharp-featured man with steely blue eyes, a tight-lipped mouth, and a wisp of a moustache.

"Oh, here he is!" exclaimed the doctor, and a plain-clothes man named Burke hurried towards the car to greet the newcomer.

"Hallo, Burke," said Piper, mainly out of the corner of his mouth. "Gotta miss my breakfast again this morning?"

"Not to-day, inspector," replied the detective. "She was thrown, and it looks like the horse kicked her."

Piper joined the group round the dead body of Violet Feverel.

"Hallo, doc," he said. "What've we got?"

"Well," replied the medical examiner, "it looks like an accident. Apparently the horse threw her and trampled her. The hoofprint is clear."

Piper went down on one knee to look at a wound in the back of the girl's head—and at her hat, which lay beside her left hand. The hat was crushed and bore the imprint of a horseshoe.

"Yeah, I guess you're right," decided Piper. "No witnesses, eh?"

Burke, to whom the question was addressed, replied in the negative, and Piper rose and looked to left and right.

"Where's the horse?" he asked.

"Must've run away."

Concealed from view by the bushes, a tallish and middle-aged woman was leading the red stallion along the bridle-path and carrying a little black and white rough-haired terrier in one arm. Her face was full and plain, her nose was long, and her jaw suggested a tenacity of purpose.

"I guess that's all," said Piper. "You can make out the death certificate doc. I don't see why I always have to miss my breakfast for these accidents."

"I had an uncle once," said a feminine voice close behind him, "who thought the world war was an accident."

He swung round with a start, and September 26th, 1936.

he saw the woman with the horse and the dog.

"It would be you!" he exploded, while all the others stared. "It's getting so, Hildegard, that a person can't be killed within the city limits without you showing up. Where'd you get this horse?"

"Mister Jones and I were out taking an early walk," she replied, "and we found it, so we thought we'd look for the rider."

He took the bridle from her and she set Mister Jones, the terrier, down upon his four feet.

"Well, it's all right, see!" snapped Piper. "It's nothing but an accident."

Miss Hildegard Withers viewed the body on the ground with quick blue eyes and emitted a characteristic sniff. "I don't think so," said she.

"Oh," scoffed Piper, "got a theory, I suppose? Going to try and tell me she committed suicide? Hi, doc, you know Miss Withers!"

The lanky medical examiner walked over to them.

"How'd you do?" he said. "We met during that schoolhouse case—the one the Press called 'Murder on the Blackboard.' You helped us a lot on that case."

"Thank you, doctor," responded Miss Withers meekly. "And I may help you on this one, too."

"Aw, Hildegard," wailed Piper, "don't start gumming things up."

"All right, Oscar." She flipped a hand at him. "You run along to breakfast, but I'm going to find out how this blood got on the horse by accident."

"Blood?" Piper gaped in astonishment at a little patch of crimson on the neck of the red stallion which she pointed out to him. "What'd you make of this, doc?" he exclaimed.

Dr. Bloom looked closely at the little patch.

"Why, I don't know," he confessed. "There doesn't seem to be any wound."

"Aw," growled Piper, "probably just scratched himself on one of these bushes."

"But there's no scratch," said Hildegard Withers.

The doctor instructed two internes from Bellevue Hospital to remove the body of the dead girl, and turned to a policeman from the squad car.

"Durkin," he said, "get me my kit. I'm going to do some probing."

Miss Withers had no desire to witness the probing of a spirited horse's neck for a bullet that might not be there, and she drifted away.

She saw Violet Feverel transferred from the ground to a stretcher, covered over with a sheet, and borne off to the ambulance, and then she kicked against something half-buried in the turf and stooped to unearth a well-used briar pipe.

She rose with the pipe in her hand, glanced round to make sure that nobody had noticed what she was doing, and opened a handbag which had been tucked under her arm. The pipe was stowed in the handbag, and she was looking thoughtfully from the spot where she had found it to a bush only a few feet away when two very obvious grooms came walking along the bridle-path.

"What's going on here?" asked one of them with a nod of his head towards the ambulance.

"Accident," replied the other laconically.

"You ought to be on the police force," said Miss Withers. "Oh, by the by, do you know where that horse belongs?"

The two grooms became aware of the

red stallion and of the men clustered round it.

"Why, yes," replied the one who had received a very doubtful compliment; "that's Siwash from the Thwaite Stables, East Fifty-Seventh Street."

"Thanks," she murmured.

The two grooms passed on, and she was looking about the trampled ground when Piper shouted to her:

"Hi, Hildegard, come here! Look what we've found!"

She went back to him, and he displayed, in the palm of his hand, a little bullet.

"A BB shot!" he exclaimed. "Somebody must have plugged that horse with an air rifle!"

"By accident," said she dryly; but Piper appeared not to hear that comment.

"You know, I knew there was more in this than met the eye!" he declared.

Dr. Charles Bloom joined them, wiping his pince-nez with a huge handkerchief.

"In view of this, inspector," he said, "I think I'd better make an autopsy."

"Yeah, that's right," approved Piper. "Go ahead, doc. The girl may have been dead before the horse kicked her."

The doctor went off to the car that had brought him, and he was climbing into it when two plain-clothes men appeared round a bush carrying, between them, a damaged bicycle, from the bent front wheel of which a tyre was hanging limply.

"Hi, boys, what have you got there?" demanded Piper.

"Offhand," sniffed Miss Withers, "I'd say it's a bicycle."

The machine was set down in front of them.

"Don't handle it, chump!" Piper rapped at a man who had caught hold of the handlebars. "I want to have it dusted for finger-prints. Use your handkerchief!"

He turned exultingly to Hildegard Withers.

"Now we're getting somewhere!" Miss Withers had nothing to say to that. She called to her terrier, and she caught hold of his lead. Piper spoke to one of the plain-clothes men.

"Sims," he said, "get on the 'phone and call all stables in the neighbourhood and see if you can find out which one that nag came from."

"It's from the Thwaite Stables in East Fifty-Seventh Street," Miss Withers stated quietly.

"Huh?" In his astonishment Piper nearly fell over the lead and felt tempted to kick the dog. His men were repressing grins with difficulty.

"Well, why don't you get busy?" he roared at Sims. "Get on that horse! Here, you take this ankle-chewing mutt, too!"

Miss Withers, with a pained expression on her face, held out the lead.

"Yes, Mr. Sims," she said, "take him to my apartment—and you might feed him. I'm going to be with the inspector all day."

Piper promptly strode away towards the squad car, but she ran after him.

"Thwaite Stables on East Fifty-Seventh," he said to the driver, but as he opened the rear door Miss Withers collided with him against the running-board.

"Where'd you think you're going?" he snapped. "What are you following me for?"

"I don't know, Oscar," she returned demurely. "I guess it's because you bring out the mother in me."

"Oh, go ahead!" he growled.

At the Stables

IN response to a loud banging on the double and divided doors of the stable in East Fifty-Seventh Street, one upper portion was opened and the face of Highpockets looked out.

"Ah can't rent no hosses to no strangers," the negro informed Detective-Inspector Oscar Piper and the female beside him.

"All right, all right!" returned Piper sharply. "Never mind that." He held out his badge. "Come on, open up!"

Highpockets gulped, and his eyes bulged nearly out of his head.

"Oh, Lawsy, de poleese!" he gasped. "Yassuh, yassuh, openin' up right away, suh!"

Both doors were opened, top and bottom, and at that moment a plain-clothes man arrived on the back of the red stallion. Sims had gone off with Mister Jones to Hildegarde's flat in West Seventy-Seventh Street, deputing to a colleague the task of riding the horse back to the stable where it belonged.

"All right, Grady," said Piper, "bring him in."

Highpockets gaped.

"What you all bringin' back Miss Fev'el's hoss for?" he asked wonderingly, as Grady dismounted and led the horse into the yard.

"Feverel, eh?" Piper whirled round on him. "Sounds like a phoney name to me. Where does she live?"

"Ah don't know," declared the negro, taking the bridle of the stallion. "She don' live here."

"Well," said Piper wryly to Miss Withers, "we've cleared that up. She doesn't live here. Okay, Grady, but you'd better stick around."

Grady nodded, and drifted out in the street.

"Who's in charge here?" demanded Piper.

"Mistah Wells is the manager," replied the black, "but he's out to breakfast."

"Out to breakfast, eh?" Piper's eyes glistened. "How long's he been gone? About three-quarters of an hour, maybe?"

"No, not that long." Highpockets shook his head with vigour. "About an hour or two—maybe."

Piper looked helplessly at Miss Withers, whose face expressed nothing in particular.

"Okay, Hildegarde," he said. "You're witness! Where's the office?"

"Right over to your left, suh." Highpockets pointed to a closed door, and led the horse away. Miss Withers followed him at a distance, and Piper opened the indicated door and entered a very plainly-furnished office.

A desk in it engaged his attention, and he proceeded to open one drawer after another.

Siwash, the red stallion, was led into its stall and unsaddled, and Highpockets, all unaware that Miss Withers was watching him, took a rabbit's foot from a pocket of his trousers and rubbed it on his rather shapeless nose. "Rabbit foot," he said sepulchrally. "I knowed dis day was gonna be unlucky for somebody."

"You did, eh?" Miss Withers entered the stall, startling him nearly out of his wits, and he pocketed the rabbit's foot in haste. "Now look here, son—"

"Ah knows nuthin'!" he cried. "Oh, I'll take your word for that!" said she. "Suppose you tell me your name?"

"Highpockets, ma'am."

The name sounded incredible, but she accepted it with a shrug.

"Well, have it your own way. How long have you worked around here?"



"Thank you, doctor," responded Miss Withers meekly. "And I may help you on this case, too."

"About three month, ma'am—not countin' the week I was in gaol."

"What were you doing in gaol?"

The negro rolled his eyes and replied: "Shootin' dice."

"No, I mean, what did they put you in gaol for?"

"Shootin' dice."

She laughed a little, and after that Highpockets answered quite readily other questions she put to him.

In the office Piper had found a book in which accounts with regular customers were kept, and he was examining it at the desk when Latigo Wells stepped in at the door and stopped short to scowl at him.

"Well, good-morning," the manager barked. "What can I do for you?"

Piper put down the book.

"You the manager here?" he inquired curtly.

"Yes, Wells is the name."

"Did you know Violet Feverel?"

Latigo Wells looked startled.

"Why, yes," he admitted, dropping his tone of resentment. "She—"

"Just come back from your breakfast, haven't you?"

"Say, what is all this?" demanded Wells. "Who are you, anyway?"

"Inspector Piper, Homicide Squad." Piper displayed his credentials. "Come on, answer the question!"

"Yes, I've just got back from breakfast."

"Where'd you eat?"

"Fifty-Ninth and Madison."

"How long have you known Miss Feverel?"

The manager perched himself on the edge of the desk and appeared to be searching his memory.

"Quite some time," he said.

"Know her socially—away from the stables?"

"Yes, sort of. I've had a date with her occasionally."

"Ever have any trouble with her?"

Wells looked away from the keen blue eyes that were boring into his

dark-brown ones, but he answered emphatically enough:

"Certainly not. We were the best of friends."

"Oh!" interpreted Piper. "Liked her a lot, eh? Matter of fact, you were a little bit in love with her, weren't you?"

"I wouldn't say that. She was— Say, I don't see why you're asking me all these questions."

"You don't, eh? Well, Violet Feverel's been killed under very strange circumstances." He stepped nearer to the young man. "Murdered!"

"Murdered?" The manager paled.

"While you were out at breakfast," said Piper significantly.

"While I—" Wells bounced off the desk, trembling visibly. "What are you trying to do?" he screeched. "Hang it on me?"

"Take it easy, take it easy," urged Piper, and caught hold of his arm. "Come on, sit down. I'm not hanging anything on you—I'm just trying to find out all I can."

Wells sank on to a chair, and with fumbling hands took out a cigarette; but the cigarette remained unlighted.

"Now, come on, be a good fellow," said Piper. "Tell me all you know. Did she have any enemies to your knowledge?"

"No," was the hesitating reply, "I don't think so. Er—wait a minute—this might be something. She had an argument with a guy outside the stable this morning, and she slapped his face."

"Slapped a guy's face? Now we're getting somewhere!"

Miss Withers, by this time, had extracted what she considered to be some useful information from Highpockets. She rewarded him with a five-dollar note, and she said:

"You're a fine fellow, Highpockets, and I know I can trust you to keep quiet about all you've told me. Understand?"

"Yes, ma'am, Miss Withers," tho

negro assured her. "When Ah keeps quiet, Ah keeps quiet all over."

Miss Withers made her way to the office and looked in at the open door.

"Oh, Hildegarde," boomed Piper, "I want you to meet Mr. Wells, the manager here."

She crossed the threshold and she tilted her head at the young man in the chair.

"How d'you do, Mr. Wells?" she purred, and then: "Is this the murderer?"

"Mr. Wells," snapped Piper disgustedly, "has just given me some very valuable information."

"Well, isn't that nice? Then he's probably told you he had a row with Miss Feveler this morning?"

"No," said Piper, staring blankly at her, "he didn't say anything about that."

Wells jumped up from the chair in consternation.

"Hi, wait a minute!" he cried. "I can explain!"

"You can explain down at headquarters," retorted Piper, and he bellowed for Brady.

Latigo Wells was taken away in custody, and Piper beamed at Miss Withers.

"You know, I thought that guy was holding something back," he said shamelessly. "Nice work, Hildegarde."

"Umph!" sniffed Miss Withers. "Nice work if you can get it!"

In the Dead Girl's Flat

FROM the Thwaite Stables the inspector and his unofficial colleague travelled in the squad car to the tall apartment-house in East Eighty-Sixth Street; and there, after a brief conversation with the clerk in the glass-partitioned office on the ground floor, ascended to the fifth-floor flat in which Violet Feveler had given a party the night before.

"How long has Miss Feveler lived here?" Piper inquired as the clerk unlocked the front door with a duplicate key.

"About eight months," was the reply. "Anything else, inspector?"

"Yeah," drawled Piper. "In case she gets any 'phone calls while we're here, switch 'em through to me—and don't be listening on the wire."

"Of course not, sir," said the clerk.

From the carpeted corridor Piper and Miss Withers stepped directly into a large and well-furnished sitting-room which was in rather a state of disorder.

"Well, what's been going on here?" exclaimed the inspector, staring at littered music on the floor near a grand piano, scattered cushions, and pictures askew on the walls.

"Get out of here!" shrilled a voice. Piper immediately pushed his companion down into an easy-chair, and standing in front of her, whipped out a gun.

"Come out of there!" he rasped.

"Get out of here!" shrilled the voice again. "Get out of here!"

Miss Withers suddenly began to laugh, and as she laughed she pointed towards the piano. Underneath it was a green parrot in a cage, and Piper put away the gun with a snort of disgust.

"A parrot!" he exploded. "How d'you like that?"

"You certainly had it scared," said she.

They wandered about the room, and Piper reached the mantelpiece, where he picked up a large framed photograph.

"Hi, look!" he called out. "Here's a picture of her with that guy Wells! September 26th, 1936.

They must have been pretty friendly, at that!"

Miss Withers looked, then pounced on another framed photograph—one of Violet Feveler with Eddie Fry.

"Here's another young man," she said. "I wonder who he is? Oh, listen!"

The sound of a key in the lock of the front door had reached her alert ears. Piper heard it, too, and together they dived across the room to a luxurious chesterfield and crouched down behind it.

Eddie and Barbara entered the room, and Eddie closed the door behind him.

"Just toss some things into a suitcase, Babs," he said. "We'll have to hurry if we want to get away."

"I'll hurry, dear," she promised, and ran across to a bed-room and disappeared into it.

Eddie went over to an ornamental desk near one of the windows, and Piper and Miss Withers watched him over the back of the chesterfield as he opened a drawer and took out what looked like a packet of letters.

"All right," said Piper, rising to his feet, "I'll take those!"

Eddie swung round and stared wide-eyed at the two who moved towards him.

"What is this?" he gasped. "Come on, come on," said Piper, holding out his hand. "Come across with those letters."

"You know it isn't nice," rebuked Miss Withers, "reading other people's mail."

"Who are you?" faltered Eddie.

"Inspector Piper, Homeie Squad." Piper snatched away the letters, and Barbara emerged from the bed-room in a state of alarm.

"It's about Miss Feveler," said Miss Withers.

"Violet?" Barbara tottered forward.

"It's something happened? She's dead, isn't she?"

"How did you know that?" demanded Piper harshly.

"Why, I—I can see it in your faces. Oh-h!" She burst into tears, and Miss Withers straightaway put an arm round her heaving shoulders.

"I'll take care of her," she said, and led the weeping girl back into the bed-room and closed the door.

"Young man," said Piper sternly, "what's your name?"

"Edward Fry," replied Eddie.

"Where were you two going in such a hurry just now?"

"We were going to get married."

"Oh!" Incredulously the inspector eyed the good-looking but rather agitated young fellow. "Is that why you said 'We'll have to work fast if we want to get away'?"

Eddie nodded.

"We didn't want Violet to know about it till afterwards," he explained.

In the bed-room Barbara had flung herself on a bed and was sobbing into a pillow, but she managed to answer the questions with which Miss Withers gently plied her.

"You were going to marry him," said the spinster, "and you've only known him a month?"

"Not quite a month."

"You're rather impetuous, aren't you?"

Barbara looked up and nodded.

"How long have you been living here with Violet?"

"About five months. I wasn't very welcome, and I'd have been terribly unhappy if it hadn't been for Eddie."

"Looks like you're in love with him," commented Miss Withers.

"Yes, I am."

Piper, standing on the hearthrug in

the sitting-room, frowned at the photograph of Violet Feveler and Eddie that stood on the mantelpiece.

"So you didn't want her to find out about your marriage to her sister," he said. "Might have made trouble, eh?"

"She always made trouble for everybody," Eddie declared.

"Did you ever have any trouble with her?"

"Why, no."

"Why did she slap your face this morning?"

Eddie flinched, but made no reply.

"Thought I didn't know about that, eh? So you didn't go to Harlem with the rest of the party?"

"No, we took a walk."

"Oh, you took a walk?"

"Yes." Eddie sat down in a chair. "Then we had breakfast."

"So you had breakfast?" Piper seemed quite annoyed to hear it.

"Well, it looks like everybody had breakfast this morning but me! Where'd you walk? In the park?"

"No," said Eddie, "we just walked and talked, and then we decided to elope."

Miss Withers had finished with that particular subject in the bed-room.

"Tell me, Barbara," she said in a friendly way, "is there anybody who had any reason for hating your sister?"

Barbara nodded, and then wished that she hadn't.

"Oh, it couldn't be!" she exclaimed.

"Who is it?" insisted Miss Withers.

"Don—but Don couldn't have done it! She divorced him, but he couldn't have—"

"Don who?"

"Don Gregg."

"Umph! Don Gregg, ex-husband!"

Miss Withers rose from the bed on which she had been sitting beside the girl. "You stay right here, Barbara."

She went out into the sitting-room, and Barbara immediately got up and went to a dressing-table, where she opened a drawer and took out a little diary bearing the dead girl's name in gilt letters upon its cover.

From another drawer she took out a box, and she put the diary in the box, then opened a hand-bag which was lying on the table and transferred from it to the box a little automatic of blue steel.

Miss Withers, meanwhile, had whispered to Piper, and Piper suddenly flamed at Eddie:

"Say, why didn't you tell me about Gregg?"

"Gregg?" Eddie looked round from a window to which he had discreetly retreated. Miss Withers sat down on the chesterfield.

"Yes, Don Gregg," snapped Piper. "Violet Feveler's ex-husband. What do you know about him?"

"Nothing—nothing much," said Eddie with marked reluctance. "She got rid of him about six months ago."

"Was he in love with her?"

"Naturally, Oscar," purred Miss Withers, "if he married her."

"Pah!" snorted Piper, and he repeated his question.

"I suppose so," said Eddie with a shrug. "She took everything he had, and jammed him up on his alimony."

"Oh, she did? Why didn't you tell us about this before?"

Eddie replied that he didn't think that it was important.

"Oh, you didn't think it was important."

Piper scratched his chin.

"An ex-husband," he mused, "alimony—trouble. Uhuh! He loved her—and she's dead! Hildegarde, this

may be what the French call a crime of passion."

The bed-room door opened and Barbara reappeared. She had removed most of the traces of her tears, but she still looked badly upset.

"What do you know about Don Gregg?" Piper barked at her.

"Don?" she faltered. "Oh, I'm sure he's innocent."

"Oh, you're sure he's innocent, eh?"

"I know he is," stated Eddie definitely, and Piper swung round on him.

"How do you know?"

"Because," was the unexpected reply, "when he didn't pay his alimony, Violet had him thrown into gaol."

"What?" bellowed Piper.

"And he's still there."

"So the murderer was in gaol at the time of the murder," remarked Miss Withers. "Well, if this was a crime of passion, Oscar, it was pretty darned platonic!"

"All right, all right, all right," growled the discomfited sleuth. "Hold it!"

The bell of the front door rang and Barbara would have answered its summons, but Piper stopped her and motioned to Miss Withers and to Eddie to go into the bed-room.

The bell rang again while they were obeying, and an excited voice rang out:

"Miss Feverel! Miss Feverel! Miss Feverel!"

Piper walked over to the door and crooked a finger at Barbara, and he was hidden by the door when she opened it. On the mat in the corridor outside stood a man who looked like a butler—a man with stooping shoulders, a thin, clean-shaven face, and a queer-shaped jaw. He was holding his hat in his hand.

"What is it?" asked Barbara.

"Please tell Miss Violet," said the man tremulously, "that her father in-

law wants to see her right away. Tell her to hurry, or it may be too late."

Piper swept out from behind the door.

"Why will it be too late?" he questioned sharply.

The man's jaw dropped and he blinked at the detective.

"Excuse me," he mumbled. "I—I didn't know—"

"What didn't you know?"

"That Miss Feverel had guests."

"Come in!" Piper snapped, and as the man stepped into the sitting-room he shut the door. "Who are you?"

"Abraham Thomas," was the nervous reply. "I'm working for Mr. Patrick Gregg—Miss Feverel's father-in-law. If you'll just tell Miss Feverel—"

"My sister is dead," blurted Barbara.

"She was killed this morning."

"Killed?" echoed the butler, seemingly aghast. "Why—why it can't be!"

"She was murdered," said Piper.

"But nobody would want to murder her!" exclaimed Thomas. "It's old Mr. Gregg they're after!"

Miss Withers stepped briskly out from the bed-room.

"What makes you say that?" she asked.

The butler gaped at her.

"Well," he said in a quavering voice, "yesterday somebody poisoned old Rex, his dog, and Mr. Gregg is afraid he'll be next."

"Where does Mr. Gregg live?"

"Long Island, ma'am. I've got to be getting back there now."

"Just a minute," commanded Miss Withers. "We'll go with you."

She looked at Piper for confirmation, and he frowned.

"Might not be a bad idea," he conceded, "but I don't see what a dead dog on Long Island's got to do with a girl killed in Central Park."

"The dog belonged to her father-in-

law," said Miss Withers tartly, "and he's afraid of his life. Now, you don't want another murder on your hands, do you?"

"Okay," surrendered Piper, "but I still think it's a snipe hunt."

"Excuse me," said Thomas diffidently, "but are you the police?"

"He's on to you, Oscar," laughed Miss Withers. "Better give yourself up!"

"All right, go ahead!" Piper picked up his hat and put it on his head, then turned to Barbara. "I'm not through with you two yet," he said menacingly. "Take my advice and don't try to leave town."

The House on Long Island

DOWN at the curb in East Eighty-Sixth Street an old-fashioned limousine was standing close behind the squad car, a uniformed chauffeur at its wheel. The squad car was dismissed, and Piper and Miss Withers climbed into the limousine after the butler had seated himself beside the chauffeur.

A journey of some thirty-five miles followed, and then from a country road the limousine turned into a winding drive and came to a standstill in front of a house which Miss Withers decided was hideous.

It was large and gabled, but it was built in the worst possible style of the previous century, with wings that did not match, porches heavily porticoed, and a turret that made the whole place look lopsided.

The butler was the first to descend, and he preceded Piper and Miss Withers up the steps to the double front doors and rang the bell.

"Well, this is a nice cheery place," said the spinster. "It's just dying to be haunted."

"Yeah," drawled Piper, "and about all we'll find in there is moth-balls."



Having snapped one of the steel bracelets round Don's wrist, he gripped Miss Withers fiercely by the arm and snapped the other one round hers.

Thomas pressed the bell-button again, but without effect.

"Well, what's the matter?" complained Piper, trying to peer through the stained glass of a leaded panel. "Why don't somebody open up?"

He beat a tattoo with a knocker, but still there was no response from within.

"Ever do any housebreaking?" he said to Miss Withers.

"I house-broke a Pekinese once," she replied.

Abruptly one of the doors was opened, and a queer-looking fellow stared out at them. He might have been almost any age between twenty and thirty, and his right shoulder was hunched and his head seemed permanently bent towards it.

"Joey," said the butler, "show the lady and gentleman into the back parlour."

They entered a gloomy hall, Joey limping ahead of them, and at the foot of some stairs Thomas said to Piper:

"I'll tell Mr. Gregg you're here, sir."

He ascended the stairs, but the cripple moved past them and opened a door.

"You can wait in here," he said in a voice which sounded as though it had never finished breaking, and Miss Withers and the detective stepped into a room overcrowded with heavy furniture and full of gloom.

"This place would be great for an undertakers' convention," remarked Miss Withers with a sniff; and then the voice of Thomas rang out from above the stairs:

"Joey! Joey, come up here quick!"

The cripple limped swiftly away, but Piper followed him, and Miss Withers followed Piper.

"What's the trouble up there?" shouted the inspector as he sped upwards; but he received no reply, and he reached a wide hallway on the first floor to find the butler rattling the handle of an oaken door and shouting:

"Mr. Gregg!"

"What's wrong?" demanded Piper.

"He doesn't answer—and the door's locked from the inside."

"We'll soon fix that," said Piper. "Get out of the way."

The butler and the cripple moved aside and the detective put his shoulder to the door in such a fashion that the lock gave way.

He burst into a bed-room as gloomy as the room below, and quite as heavily furnished, and he reached a massive wooden bed which might at one time have had posts and a canopy—and leaned down over an old man who lay upon it, his scanty white hair upon a pillow, his hands spread out on the coverlet.

"He's breathing!" exclaimed Piper. "Open a window! Get the doctor!"

The cripple went to a window and opened it; the butler ran out from the room. Miss Withers stood beside the detective, studying the thin and lined face of the old man. Joey limped out past them, and then Piper said:

"Well, I don't think there's anything we can do till the doctor comes. Looks like a stroke to me."

"Yes," returned Miss Withers, but without conviction. "Look, he has a big bump behind the left ear. How do you suppose that happened?"

"Oh, probably fell and hit his head when he had the attack."

"And then climbed back into bed?"

"Yeah," said Piper, and scratched his chin while she straightened the bedclothes.

Thomas reappeared while she was tucking in a sheet.

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"Dr. Peters is on his way over," he said. "He lives just down the road. Poor Mr. Gregg— Oh, I'll do that, ma'am."

He finished tucking in the sheet and he straightened the tumbled coverlet.

"He has a bad heart," he said. "The doctor told him that any excitement was likely to prove fatal. He had a slight attack not long ago."

"What caused the excitement that time?" inquired Piper.

"Horse racing, sir. Mr. Gregg has been a horseman all his life."

Somewhere in the house a bell rang.

"Oh, if you'll excuse me, that must be the doctor," said the butler, and hurried off again.

Miss Withers promptly went to some clothes which were lying on a sofa across the room and proceeded to go through the pockets of a pair of grey trousers.

"Are you sure you've never been married?" chaffed Piper, watching her with amusement.

"If you're trying to be funny," she retorted severely, "there's a time and place for everything." She held out a slip of paper she had discovered.

"Here, look at this!"

He took the slip. On it was written:

"Received from Pat Gregg nine hundred dollars for back alimony due. VIOLET FEVEREL."

"I knew Don Gregg was the one—" he began.

"S-s-s-h!" hissed Miss Withers, and the slip of paper was out of sight when Thomas ushered into the room a short and rather tubby man with a pronounced nose and a clipped moustache.

"Dr. Peters," the butler said introductively; but the doctor, with the barest of nods, leant over his patient, turned back the lid of one of the closed eyes, and held a skinny wrist.

"Hot water and some towels, please," he said.

"What is it, doc?" asked Piper, after Thomas had gone. "A stroke?"

"Umm," grunted the doctor "I warned him."

"About what?" ventured Miss Withers.

"He has a very bad heart." With none too friendly grey eyes Dr. Peters surveyed his questioners. "Thomas told me that you are the police," he said. "and that Miss Feverel is dead."

"Murdered," corrected Piper. "I'm not surprised. She was an evil woman."

"She certainly wasn't the most popular girl in her class," remarked Miss Withers.

Thomas reappeared with a jug of hot water and some towels, and the doctor frowned at her.

"Oh, don't mind me," she said casually. "I'll just look around."

She went out and shut the bed-room door behind her, and she glanced about the wide hallway out of which several doors opened, but it was a second flight of stairs that interested her and she flitted noiselessly up them.

On the floor above she entered a room directly over the bed-room and saw that it was fitted up as a sort of study. There was a big flat-topped desk in the middle of it, facing a window, and on the desk stood a mounted telescope of considerable size.

"Heavens, the man's an astronomer!" she exclaimed, and sat down in a chair behind the desk and applied an eye to the telescope.

There were many trees in the extensive grounds at the back of the house, but no trees were visible through

the telescope. Instead, she found that she had a perfectly good view of the Belmont Park race track, and of two stable-boys riding horses upon it.

"My error," she murmured, "not stars—horses!"

With her gloved hands she went through the drawers of the desk, looked at all the papers on top of the desk, and under the blotting-pad found a scrap on which had been written:

"Bet \$100 on Wallaby at 15 to 1."

She folded the piece of paper, slipped it into her glove, and went out from the room; and she reached the floor below just as Dr. Peters and Piper emerged from the bed-room.

"The doc say he'll pull through all right," said Piper.

"He'll recover all right," confirmed the doctor; "but I can't understand it. Somehow the hand of death must have slipped."

"Doctor," said Miss Withers, "could Patrick Gregg have gone into town, killed his daughter-in-law, and then come back here?"

"Impossible!" returned the doctor with ill-concealed scorn. "His heart couldn't have stood the excitement. Excuse me."

He made his way to the stairs and descended them, preceded by the butler.

"What a question!" jeered Piper. "Could Patrick Gregg have killed his daughter-in-law! Why, this alimony receipt proves that Don Gregg was out of gaol."

"I don't care what you say," she retorted with a sniff, "there's something phoney going on here."

The Forged Order

DETECTIVE-INSPECTOR PIPER went down the stairs, but the indignant spinster re-entered the bed-room and stood beside the bed looking down at the old man in it.

"Faker!" she said suddenly and loudly, and Patrick Gregg opened his eyes.

"What's that?" he asked in a feeble voice, staring up at her.

"I said 'faker,'" she replied, and calmly perched herself on the edge of the bed. "When you pretend to be asleep why don't you breathe naturally? When did you come to?"

"While the doctor was here," he said slowly. "He told me you were police, and about Violet."

"Must have been quite a shock," she suggested.

"Pleasant shock," he returned. "She was no good. Horse kick her?"

Miss Withers shook her head and informed him that the girl was murdered.

"Murdered?" said he in surprise. "When did it happen?"

"Early this morning. Why?"

"I was just wondering."

Miss Withers rose.

"Were you alone when you had this attack?" she asked.

"What's that? Oh, I suppose so. I can't remember. But I had a funny dream." He raised a hand and waved the forefinger back and forth. "I dreamed I was a pendulum in a clock."

He licked his lips and closed his eyes again, and she put the hand back under the bedclothes.

"Well, pleasant dreams," she said.

She descended to the hall, and there she heard the voice of Piper in the back parlour and made for the open doorway.

The inspector was squatting on an ottoman, his hands in his pockets, and he was speaking to Thomas:

"Come on now, just between you and me, the late Mrs. Don Gregg—otherwise Violet Feverel—was a very popular around here, was she?"

"No, sir," agreed the butler, "she was not. If I may say so, she was a trouble-maker, and Mr. Pat Gregg disapproved of her violently. So did Mr. Don, after a while."

"He did, eh?" Piper bounded to his feet and stood over the butler. "Why did you lie to me?"

"Sir?"

"Why did you tell me that Don Gregg was still in gaol when you knew he was released two weeks ago?"

"Well, but he wasn't released, sir." Piper produced the receipt Miss Withers had found.

"Here's the alimony receipt," he said fiercely. "It's paid!"

"Yes," said the butler, "but, you see, sir, Mr. Gregg paid only the alimony due at the time Master Don was arrested, not the amount that had accrued while he was locked up."

"Are you trying to tell me," howled Piper, "that Don Gregg was kept in gaol after this nine hundred dollars was paid?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I'm a speckled ape."

"This is no time for a confession, Oscar," rebuked Miss Withers from the doorway.

"I don't believe it!" snorted the detective. "Don Gregg is the guy. The dame was a rat, and he knocked her off. I'm going to check on your story, mister. Where's the 'phone?"

"Just outside in the hall, sir."

Piper went out to a telephone on a table in the hall, and Miss Withers stopped the butler as he was about to pass her.

"Oh, tell me, Thomas," she said, "what kind of a pipe do you smoke?"

"A corneob, ma'am," the butler replied, without evincing any surprise at the question. "I paid twenty cents

for it, and I've smoked it for twenty years."

"Really?" she murmured, and walked along to the inspector, who had rung up the gaol in Thirty-Seventh Street to which divorced husbands are committed when they fail to keep up their payments of alimony to their former wives.

"Listen," he was shouting. "Have you got a guy down there named Don Gregg? You what? Oh, you did, eh? Who's this talking? Oh, Warden Mahoney! Oh, Warden Sylvester Mahoney. Well, listen, Mr. Warden Sylvester Mahoney, I want you at my office in half an hour, and bring all the records of the case with you. Yeah!"

He slammed down the instrument, and turned to grin triumphantly at Miss Withers.

"Don Gregg was sprung out of the alimony gaol last night a few hours before the murder," he stated.

"Who let him out?" she asked.

"I don't know, but I'm going to find out."

He retrieved his hat from the back parlour.

"In gaol, huh?" he said. "Looks like I hit a bullseye!"

He strode towards the double front door, and Miss Withers kept pace with him.

"It hurts me, Oscar," she confessed as he pulled back the latch, "but I think you've got something."

"Stick around," he boasted, "and you'll see an arrest in twenty-four hours."

One of the doors was opened, and Thomas hurried forward to see the unwelcome visitors off the premises.

A full hour elapsed before Piper reached his own room at police headquarters in Centre Street, and Warden Sylvester Mahoney had been waiting in it for some time. He was a big man and a bulky one, with a florid face and a neck that bulged over his collar

—a man of importance, in his own estimation.

Piper took the folder he presented, lit a cigar, and studied a document.

"So this is the court order that sprung Master Don Gregg, eh?" he suddenly burst out, and stabbed the document with a finger. "I suppose you've noticed, Mr. Sylvester Mahoney, that the seal is phoney and that the order is a forgery?"

The warden gulped and gripped at the hat on his knees. His flabby face seemed to sag.

"Dear me, dear me," he murmured; "but, inspector, how was I to know?"

"How were you to know?" roared Piper. "How were you to know any thing? D'you know what city this is? D'you know what the date is?"

"I—I think," stammered the warden, "it's the seventh."

"You think it's the seventh, eh? Well, it ain't!" Piper consulted a calendar-pad. "It's the ninth!"

"My mistake."

Piper walked round the desk and flung himself into his chair behind it.

"Here was a guy who might have been a murderer," he raged, "and you sprung him out of gaol!"

"He couldn't have murdered anybody while he was in gaol, could he?" said the warden hopefully.

"No," returned Piper, "and if you'd kept him in gaol, I wouldn't be hunting for him now."

"Well, it—it's all very confusing. But, you see, inspector, one of the boys had a birthday, and a friend of his sent him some—well, some bottles for a little celebration."

That practically was a confession that the warden had imbibed the night before, and that as a consequence he had not been any too careful.

"Birthday!" repeated Piper. "Whose birthday?"

It appeared that Don Gregg had had



She was far too scared to answer, and she shrank back against the wall as he leaned menacingly over the side of the dressing-table.

the birthday, and this was added fuel to the inspector's wrath.

"Get out!" he bellowed. "Get out, Mr. Sylvester Mahoney, because I'm looking for myself for murder!"

The warden was only too glad to escape, and he almost ran from the building. Piper shouted at the top of his voice for a detective-sergeant named Kane, and after an interval a short and very tubby person put his head in at the door—a head from which a well-worn slouch hat had not been removed.

"Did you call, inspector?" inquired the owner of the face and the hat.

"Did I call?" snapped Piper. "What did you think I was doing—singing? Send out a general alarm for Donald Gregg."

"Yes, sir," responded Kane. "What do we want him for?"

"For the murder of Violet Feverel," was the reply.

A Shock for Miss Withers

BARBARA—whose surname was Foley, just as her sister's had been before she had adopted the name of Feverel for stage purposes—was alone in the flat on the fifth floor of the apartment-house in East Eighty-Sixth Street when she heard a sound as of someone trying to open the front door. Instantly she rushed into the bed-room and returned from it with the automatic in her hand.

A key grated in the lock, the door swung wide, and Don Gregg entered the sitting-room, but stopped short and held up his hands at sight of the girl and the gun.

"Don't shoot!" he pleaded hoarsely. "I'm Don Gregg. Who are you?"

"Oh!" The gun drooped in Barbara's hand. "I'm Barbara," she said in rather a shaky voice. "Violet's sister. I—I thought you were in gaol."

"I was," said Don, closing the door. "I got out last night."

"Last night?" she gasped. "Oh!"

"What's the matter?" He followed her as she sped to the little desk on which a telephone reposed. "What are you going to do?"

She pointed the gun at him again. "Stay where you are!" she shrielled. "I'm going to call the police!"

Outside the canopied entrance of the building Miss Withers descended from a taxicab and handed the driver the exact fare registered on the clock, much to his disgust. She was crossing the pavement when a newsboy thrust a special edition of the "Chronicle" upon her, and she paid for that, too, because she had caught sight of enormous headlines:

INSPECTOR PIPER PREDICTS ARREST IN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS OF FEVEREL MURDER SUSPECT.

She looked at a picture of Don on the front page beneath the headlines, and she made a grimace at a picture of Detective-Inspector Oscar Piper which was close beside it, then folded the paper and marched firmly into the building and entered a lift.

Up on the fifth floor Don Gregg had persuaded Barbara not to telephone the police, and had listened in apparent astonishment to her statement that his former wife had been murdered early that morning.

"I came here to see Violet," he told her. "I didn't know she was dead."

The doorbell rang, and they looked at one another in dismay.

"Don't answer it," whispered Don. "Maybe they'll go away."

But it was Miss Withers at the door, and she had no intention of going away.

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She continued to press the bell-button till at last Barbara bundled Don Gregg into the bed-room and opened the door.

"Hallo!" said Miss Withers, brushing past her and stopping beside a little table near the chesterfield. "I hope I'm not disturbing you. I just dropped in to ask a few more questions about your sister."

"But I've told you everything I know," protested Barbara, trying not to appear flustered. "Really, I have."

There was a briar pipe on the table, and Miss Withers had not failed to notice it.

"Do you smoke?" she asked abruptly. "Yes, a little bit."

Miss Withers picked up the pipe and found that it was warm.

"But not a pipe, I hope?"

"Oh, that—er—that belongs to—"

"To the man hiding in the other room," Miss Withers completed for her, and raised her voice. "Come out, young man."

Don Gregg came out from the bed-room. The collar of his overcoat was still turned up about his neck, but his hat was on the back of his head, and his gray eyes were defiant.

"This is Miss Withers from the police," said Barbara.

"And you're Don Gregg," said Miss Withers, walking over to him with the newspaper in her hand. "Don't you think it's kind of silly for you to come here?"

"I came to see Violet," he stated, removing his hat. "I didn't know she was dead."

"Don't lie to me!"

"I'm not lying to you!" he retorted. "What did you do after you got out of gaol last night?"

He went over to the table on which he had replaced the pipe, and he thrust the pipe in his overcoat pocket.

"Why," he said slowly, "I went to a Turkish bath."

"Then what did you do?"

"Well, I slept there, and this morning I came here."

She looked at him steadily for several seconds.

"All right," she said then, "if that's the truth come down to headquarters and tell your story to the police."

"And get thrown back in gaol?" he scoffed. "I should say not!"

Barbara ran to him, caught hold of his arm.

"I think you'd better go, Don," she said.

"If you're innocent," said Miss Withers, "you have nothing to worry about. And, besides, I have a great deal of influence with Inspector Piper."

"All right," growled Don, and he restored his hat to his head and went out from the flat with her.

There was a uniformed attendant at the entrance to the building and Miss Withers asked him to get a taxi. Detective-Sergeant Kane was lurking on the pavement with a colleague considerably taller than himself, but he did not know Miss Withers, and Miss Withers did not know him.

"Are you sure it's going to be all right?" asked Don nervously while the attendant was trying to find a taxicab.

"Now don't you worry," Miss Withers returned reassuringly. "Leave everything to me."

They moved towards the kerb, but Kane suddenly swooped.

"Well, where d'you think you're goin'?" he demanded harshly.

"And what do you think you're doing?" Miss Withers retorted.

"I'm arresting both of you in the name of the law!"

"But you can't!" she cried indignantly as he flashed his badge. "I'm a friend of the inspector's. I'll show you."

She opened her handbag and fumbled in it, intensely annoyed because a crowd was gathering round them. But Kane peered into the bag.

"Here, watcha got?" he cried, and plunged his own podgy hand into the bag and brought forth a small but very serviceable six-shooter. "A rod, eh? Well, you never can tell."

"I was looking for my courtesy badge," she said as laughter rang out behind her.

"What badge?"

"The one the inspector gave me."

"Lemme see it."

"Just a minute." Miss Withers searched, but searched in vain. "I must have left it at home," she said blankly.

"Oh, sure!" jibed the detective. "On the bureau. Right beside the permit for this!"

He pocketed the gun and produced a pair of handcuffs, and having snapped one of the steel bracelets round Don's wrist he gripped her fiercely by the arm and snapped the other one round hers.

"Call the wagon, Jim," he directed gruffly.

A patrol wagon arrived while the crowd grew in numbers, and the manacled pair were ordered to get into it.

"But you can't do this to me!" stormed the spinster.

"Oh, I can't, eh?" Kane bundled her up into the wagon while his colleague dealt with Don. "Well, it's done, ain't it?"

To the accompaniment of more laughter from the onlookers he followed his prisoners into the vehicle, and the doors were closed and fastened.

Some half-hour later the self-important little detective swaggered into Piper's office at headquarters with an expansive smile on his fat face, and Piper looked up at him from his desk.

"Well, what's on your mind?" snapped the inspector.

"It's Gregg," replied Kane boastfully. "I nabbed him right outside the apartment-house—him and a dame."

"Nice work," approved Piper. "Bring 'em in."

Kane went to the door, which he had left open, and shouted into the ante-room.

"Come on, you!"

Handcuffed together, Don Gregg and Miss Withers walked past him into the office, and the expression on Piper's face as he viewed the female prisoner was a study in mixed emotions.

"Hildegarde!" he exclaimed.

Miss Withers held up her right hand, and with it Don's left hand, and the inspector laughed again at sight of the handcuffs.

"Kane," he gurgled, "you ought to be promoted for this!"

"You're as funny as a cry for help!" cried Miss Withers with a sniff.

"All right, Kane," chuckled Piper, "take the cuffs off."

"I was afraid," said the spinster as the discomfited little detective obeyed, "that we were going to have to get married. Oscar, I told Mr. Gregg that you'd just ask him a few questions and let him go."

All trace of amusement faded from Piper's lean features.

"Oh," he said with sarcasm, "so I'm just going to ask him a couple of questions and let him go?"

"Uhuh," she nodded. "I think you will when you hear the answers."

"So he's got an alibi, eh?"

"The only evidence you have," she retorted, "is a BB shot in a horse. You can't hold him on that."

"I can't, eh? I'm going to ask him some questions that'll knock his hat off!"

Miss Withers smiled at Don.

"Better hold on to your hat, Mr. Gregg," she said.

"Sit down, Gregg," commanded Piper. "Sit down, Hildegarde."

Don seated himself in a chair, but Miss Withers sailed towards the door.

"No, thank you," she said on her way out. "I'm afraid you might start questioning me."

"Deduction!"

KANE was distraised, and Piper deserted his chair to sit on the end of the desk within a few inches of the young man he believed to be a murderer.

"Gregg," he said bullyingly, "we know you were released last night on a forged order. How did you do it?"

"On a forged order?" asked Don.

"Aw, come on, Gregg! We know the whole thing. We know that you were sprung from gaol on a phoney writ and killed the woman who had you locked up. Now you might as well come clean."

Don drew a long breath.

"Well, I got out of gaol, yes," he admitted, "but I—well, I spent the night in a Turkish bath."

"Yeah?" Piper glared at him incredulously. "What was the name of the baths?"

"The Central Baths."

A bell-button on the desk was jabbed, and Kane re-entered.

"Oh, Kane," said Piper, "find out who the attendant was at the Central Baths last night. Get him over here right away."

"Yes, sir," said Kane.

"And don't bring back Hildegarde Withers!"

"Oh, no, sir!"

During the period of waiting that followed, Don felt in one pocket after another, and Piper watched him.

"What's the matter?" he rapped. "Lose something?"

"Yes," said Don, "my pipe. It's gone. Somebody's picked my pockets!"

"Now who could have picked your pockets at Police Headquarters?" jeered the inspector.

Miss Withers, of course, was the guilty person. She went from Centre Street into Broadway, and there invaded a high-class tobacconist's establishment.

"Can you tell by examining a pipe what kind of a man might have smoked it?" she asked anxiously of an elderly and bald-headed man who leaned over a glass-topped counter as she approached it.

"It's quite possible, madam," was the reply. "Pipes are always like the men who smoke them."

Miss Withers differed from other women; inside her astrakhan-trimmed jacket there was a pocket almost as capacious as a poacher's. From this pocket she produced two briar pipes—the one she had found in Central Park and the one she had managed to filch from Don's overcoat. She laid them on the counter, and she said:

"Well, I'd like to find out all about the man who smoked these. It's very important."

The tobacconist picked up Don's pipe and examined it with care, particularly the mouthpiece.

"This is a very ordinary pipe," he said, putting it down again, and he picked

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Another episode of the fighting serial:

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up the other. "Ah, but this—this is interesting! It tells me quite a lot about the man who smoked it."

A pair of spectacles were readjusted upon an aquiline nose, and the mouth-piece of the pipe was turned this way and that.

"Such a man," declared the tobacconist, "would be of middle-age, probably a professor, or a chemist—and he has false teeth."

Miss Withers repossessed herself of the pipes, thanked her informant, and departed.

Meanwhile, Detective-Sergeant Kane had returned to headquarters with an enormous fellow from the Central Baths who had been whisked away from his duties in trousers and vest. He was a trifle over six feet in height and he weighed at least eighteen stone.

Piper viewed this mountainous person in some astonishment.

"So you're the rubber over at the Central Baths, eh?" he queried.

"Yes, sir, I am," replied the giant complacently. "And a pretty good one, too."

"All right." Piper gestured to Don, who rose to his feet. "Take a look at this man. Was he over at your baths last night?"

The attendant regarded Don from head to foot with a pair of critical brown eyes, but shook his head.

"I wouldn't know, sir," he said. "I couldn't tell."

"What d'you mean you couldn't tell?" rapped Piper.

"Well, a suit of clothes is just a suit of clothes to me, sir. I don't see 'em in any clothes."

"Oh," said Piper, "I get you. Strip yourself to the waist, Gregg!"

Don obeyed quite readily, and a smile of recognition spread over the giant's face.

"I can tell you now, sir," he boomed. "He was at the baths last night. In fact, I rubbed him myself."

"You rubbed him yourself?" Piper was obviously disappointed. "You sure?"

The attendant was positive.

"All right," growled Piper, "you can go."

Off went the witness, and Kane went, too. Piper relit a cigar that had expired in his mouth and turned none too happily to Don.

"So far your story's okay," he said. "I'm not going to hold you, but don't try to leave town."

Don, having resumed his garments, decided to go to his father's house on Long Island where he had lived before his unhappy marriage and after his divorce. But as soon as Patrick Gregg heard of his arrival from the butler he sent for him, and a none-too-pleasant scene occurred in the depressing bedroom.

The sick man, considerably better by this time, accused him of having murdered Violet Feverel.

"Why do you say that?" Don demanded heatedly. "I tell you I'm in the clear. I've got an alibi!"

"You're involved in a murder," shouted his father, sitting up in bed and pointing an accusing finger at him, "and I hope the truth comes out, even if you are my son!"

"That's a fine attitude for you—"

The butler burst into the room with upraised hands.

"Master Don," he expostulated, "you mustn't excite your father. The doctor said he'd have another attack if he wasn't kept quiet."

"Get out and stay out!" Patrick Gregg roared at his son. "I want no part of you!"

Don smothered his rage and went out to the stairs, and Thomas followed him. They descended together to the hall, and on the way Thomas said, regretfully:

"I'm sorry, Master Don."

"You'd have thought I could go to my own father," complained Don. "Oh, well, he never had much love for me, anyway—and I'm not so sure that I've much love for him, either."

The bell of the telephone began to ring as they reached the foot of the stairs.

"I'll get that," Don said, and he went to the table in the hall and picked up the instrument. "Hallo! Yes, this is Don Gregg speaking."

Eddie Fry was on the other end of the line, speaking from the flat in East Eighty-Sixth Street.

"I'm a friend of Miss Foley's," he stated. "She wants to see you as soon as possible. It's very important."

Don looked at his watch and found that it was just after eleven o'clock. "Tell her I'll be there around noon," he said.

Thomas was standing by the newel-post as he put down the telephone.

"Get my ear," he directed, and after the butler had disappeared he went slowly up the stairs.

Miss Withers, having had a very early breakfast that morning, had an unusually early lunch before she returned to Headquarters in quest of Oscar Piper. The inspector was munching sandwiches when she invaded his room and seated herself in a fairly comfortable chair near the desk.

"Oscar," she said impressively, "Don Gregg didn't do it."

The inspector, in his shirt sleeves and with his waistcoat unfastened, swallowed the last morsel of the last sandwich but one and scowled at her.

"Don't be a sap," he snorted. "Of course he did it!"

"How are you going to prove it?" she challenged.

"Well—"

"Exactly!" she cut in. "Oscar, the man who killed Violet FEVEREL was middle-aged. He was a thoughtful man—possibly a chemist, or a professor—and he has false teeth."

Piper bounded to his feet. "What's his name?" he asked excitedly.

"I haven't the least idea."
"Then where'd you get all the dope?"
"Deduction, Oscar."

"Aw!" He forgot all about the remaining sandwich in his disgust, and he lit a cigar.

"How can you find out if a man has false teeth?" inquired the cause of his distraction.

"That's easy," he growled. "Get him mad enough to bite you!"

Dr. Charles Bloom, the medical examiner, looked into the room with a sheet of paper in his hand.

"Oh, come on in, doc," said Piper. "What you got—the autopsy report?"

"Yes," Bloom advanced to the desk and handed him the sheet of paper. "But there's nothing new. The girl had been killed by a blow on the head, that's certain."

"Okay," Piper did not even trouble to look at the report. "Oh, by the way, Miss Withers wants to know how she can find out if somebody has false teeth."

"H'm." The medical examiner pursed his thin lips. "That's quite a problem. Well, you can offer him an apple. If he bites, the teeth are his own. If not—not."

He went out, closing the door behind him, and Piper grinned at Miss Withers.

"Now all we need's an apple," he said dryly.

More Revelations

IT was only a few minutes later that Schultz, the handwriting expert at headquarters, entered the room. He was a little man with a veritable mane of white hair, and he had a whole sheaf of papers in his hand.

These he proceeded to spread out on the inspector's desk, and they proved to be enlargements of different letters and words from the receipt for the alimony and the court order which had secured Don's release from gaol. He was demonstrating the difference between some of the specimens, and the similarity between others, when Piper impatiently interrupted him.

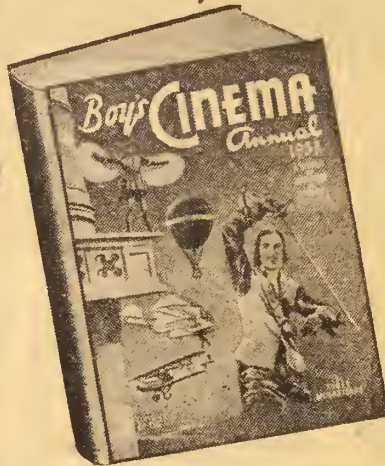
"Look," he said, "all I want to find out is, did Gregg forge that court order?"

"A forged court order?" exclaimed Miss Withers in astonishment.

"Yeah. Your friend Gregg got out of gaol on a forged order. I forgot to tell you about it, you were so sure he was okay."

"Huh!" she sniffed. "I still am!"
September 26th, 1936.

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"Oh, you are? Well, come on, Schultz, did Gregg forge that order?"
"No," said the little handwriting expert quite definitely, "he didn't."

Piper's disappointment was manifest. Miss Withers, smiling triumphantly, took the scrap of paper she had found under the blotting-pad in Patrick Gregg's study and opened it out.

"Mr. Schultz," she said, "do you think this might be the handwriting we're looking for?"

Schultz studied the writing, and Piper leaned over the desk.

"What's that?" he demanded.

"That's a specimen of Patrick Gregg's handwriting," Miss Withers informed him tartly. "I forgot to tell you about it, you were so sure he was okay."

"Pat Gregg?" Piper could hardly believe his ears. "Well, how d'you like that? Here—here's an old man who had a stroke—"

"How about it, Mr. Schultz?" Miss Withers interposed.

"Well, I can't be sure from a casual examination," was the guarded answer. "I'll have to chart the handwriting."

"Go ahead and chart it," rapped Piper.

Schultz gathered up all the papers and retreated.

"Pat Gregg!" exploded Piper. "Next thing you'll be telling me—"

A telephone bell interrupted him, and he snatched up the instrument. Highpockets was on the other end of the line, speaking from a call-box, but he was too excited to be articulate, and Piper, gathering that the stable-boy wanted to speak to Miss Withers, handed the instrument to her.

"Who is it?" she asked.

"I don't know," said the inspector, "but he's hissing like a snake!"

At the sound of her voice the negro became a little calmer, and a lot more coherent. Her brows went up as she listened.

"Yes, yes," she said, "you stay there, Highpockets. I'll be right over."

She handed the telephone back to Piper and rose and picked up her hand-bag.

"Come on," she said urgently, "we've got something!"

"What?" asked Piper.

"I'll tell you on the way over."

In a squad car they travelled uptown to East Fifty-Seventh Street, and Kane accompanied them. Highpockets ran out from the Thwaite Stables as the car drew up near the wide-open doors, and, waving his arms about as though he himself were fighting, he bellowed at Miss Withers as she descended:

"Dey bin scrappin' with each other! I mos' scared to death. Better go in dere and do somethin' Dey bin fightin'—"

Piper and Kane dived into the brick-paved yard, but Miss Withers remained with the shouting and gesticulating negro.

"Now listen, Highpockets," she said, when he had calmed down a little. "I've got a ten-dollar bill in this bag. You just quiet yourself and begin at the beginning."

Highpockets' eyes ceased to roll, and avarice shone in them.

"Yes, ma'am," he said in his natural voice. "I'm awful calm, now. I'll tell you."

In the yard, outside the stall of the stallion, an altercation between Latigo Wells, recently released from custody, and Don Gregg ceased abruptly as the two detectives arrived. Eddie Fry was there, and Barbara was with him.

"What's going on here?" blazed Piper, and Don immediately pointed an accusing finger at Wells.

(Continued on page 25)

While the world trembled at a deadly menace and nations struggled for its possession, a G-man triumphs over a ring of spies. A dramatic story, starring Bill Boyd



More Than the Call of Duty

READ this! The commissioner in charge of the secret investigation department held out a sheet of official paper to his assistant.

"Good heavens!" gasped the other. "Lynch murdered! How did this happen, chief?"

"He hadn't a chance." The commissioner held up another sheet of paper. "I have here a full report, which came in a few moments after that note. They found a car had crashed on a winding mountain road, and they found Lynch's body in the wreckage, and he had been shot in the back. Lynch was working on the Sanderson case."

"Sanderson—that's the man who has a formula for some new explosive, isn't it?"

"Yes, and evidently a pretty good one, because I've a hunch that a certain gang are after it. We've been trying to locate Sanderson because our people might like to buy the formula. I reckon Lynch was on to something when he was bumped off."

"What's the next move?"

"Only one man can handle this case—Bob Woods."

"But he's due for a vacation, chief," cried the assistant. "First he has taken in six years."

"Jack Lynch was his buddy."

The assistant turned as he heard the sound of heavy laughter.

"I'll bet that's Bob. Like to see him?" The chief nodded.

Bob Woods was a thick-set, muscular man. A frank, open face and a ready smile. He removed a straw hat as he came into the commissioner's room.

"Can't think why I bought this darned thing," he remarked in the easy manner that made him so popular. "Had to celebrate my holiday some way, I

suppose." He stared at the two officials. "Say, don't you two look bright and cheerful. I believe it's because I'm going away on a holiday."

"I wanted to see you, Bob, because there is something here that you're the only man could handle properly."

"I knew it—I knew it!" Bob gave a gesture of despair. "I knew something would stop me going on that fishing holiday with Jack Lynch. Tell me the worst, chief."

The commissioner's only answer was to hand across the desk the note that he had already shown to his assistant.

There was no expression on Bob Woods' face as he read the short message, but he sank into a chair as if he were tired, and sat there staring dully into space. The other two men glanced at each other, but wisely made no remark. After a while Bob roused himself, glanced again at the note, and then handed it back to the commissioner.

"So they got Jack?" Bob spoke slowly, and his eyes were hard. "I can start on this case, chief, at once. Have you any dope?"

Solemnly Bob listened whilst the commissioner told of an international spy ring, whose American operatives were attempting to buy from its inventor, Sanderson, the formula for a deadly explosive. That the authorities had not thought a great deal of Sanderson's discoveries until finding out the interest taken by outside agents. Sanderson's whereabouts were, at the moment, unknown. Sanderson was rather a crank, and though well known to scientists for his discoveries, had always remained very much in the background. Lynch had been instructed to look into the case, and had evidently made discoveries that had caused this spy ring to murder him in cold blood.

"You have worked with Lynch on

many cases and know his methods," stated the chief. "We can show you where the accident took place, but we can't tell you very much else. Wilson had been giving some sort of assistance to Lynch—and Wilson, you can get in touch with at this tobacco store. Wilson should know all that there is about this case, and it's up to you, Woods, to pick up the threads."

That morning Bob Woods left New York for California.

The door of the laboratory opened and a dark, foreign-looking man entered. The ferrety, shifty-eyed individual standing by some bubbling retorts looked at him narrowly.

"What luck?" he questioned.

"Nothing on the body," was the reply. He held up a pipe. "But I have found something here." He pulled the pipe apart, and from the pipe-stem drew out a piece of paper. "A sort of wedge to keep the holder fixed into the pipe. You will notice that it is not stained with nicotine, and cannot have been here when the pipe was smoked. It is quite blank."

"Try the acid test."

That test brought no result.

"How about the light?" came the next suggestion.

The foreigner scowled when that had no result. He peered into the pipe and fished out a knife. He scraped out the bowl on to a piece of paper, and asked for some luke-warm water. The contents of the bowl he tipped into the glass, and noted the deposit was melting. He dipped the paper in the liquid and placed in on a blotting-pad. Nothing happened, so he held the paper near to a small flame. He smiled and beckoned the other man. Wording had appeared.

"Have located Sanderson. Explosive seems very powerful and deadly. Record, head of spy ring, trying to obtain formula.—LYNCH."

Jule Record smiled.

"It was as well that Lynch was removed. Now you see what a menace he would have been to our plans."

The Gramophone Records

ON arrival at San Francisco, Bob Woods went straight to the tobacconist and bought some cigarettes, for which he offered a two-dollar bill.

"Don't see many of these."

The man looked closely at Bob.

"You'll find it's genuine."

The owner of the shop was satisfied from this special answer—a password—that Bob Woods was a Federal Agent.

"What can I do for you?"

"Where can I find Wilson?"

"Through the telephone booth," was the answer. "Rap three times on the wall."

The back of the telephone booth swung back, and Woods walked into a room. He nodded to the little man with the comical smile, and glanced thoughtfully at a man who was seated before a large radio set.

"This is Andrews," said the little man, who was Wilson. "I thought we might pick up something on the air."

Bob tossed his hat on to a table, and sat down in a rickety chair.

"What can you tell me about the case?"

"Very little," Wilson hesitated. "We're terribly sorry about Lynch. He was a grand fellow, and we're sure he was on to something, or else this wouldn't have happened. He set off on the morning he was killed, and he was very excited. Reckoned he would be able to clear up the Sanderson case in a few hours and then meet you for a vacation."

"Jack always liked to play a lone

hand." Bob Woods shook his head sadly. "I gather, Wilson, that you can tell me nothing more than I know already—that Lynch, hot on the scent, was trailed—was bumped off by persons unknown."

Wilson gave a faint nod.

"Anything from the air?"

"Nothing, though this message has come through three times." Andrews handed over a sheet of paper. "Looks like a code message. May be of no importance."

On the paper was written:

"V S S K G."

Bob frowned over it, and finally placed it in his pocket.

"Where was Lynch staying?"

"Some quiet apartments in Cedarville," answered Wilson. "Got a flatlet on the fifth floor. I've been through all his papers, but I didn't find a thing."

"We'll go take a look. You stay here, Andrews, and see if you can pick up anything else—we'll be back in an hour."

It was dusk when they reached Cedarville and the quiet block of flats where Lynch had resided. There was an amazed look on Wilson's face when the door of the flat would not open. The two men put their weight against the door and burst in.

Bob had drawn out a gun, and the first thing he noticed was the billowing curtains. He darted to the window.

Outside was a fire-escape, and, almost at the bottom he could see the scurrying figure of a woman.

"Wilson," Bob snapped out. "Come here." The other peered from the window. "See that woman—see that car she jumped into—tail it and then come back here."

"Okay, boss!" Wilson rushed out of the room.

Bob was thoughtful as he stared round Lynch's room. On the floor were a number of papers, and he guessed that the woman had been searching his friend's desk. He walked across, and at once his quick eyes noticed something

sticking out of the centre drawer. It was a strap from a lady's handbag and it was wedged so tight that he had quite a task opening the drawer.

The woman must have been seated at this desk with the drawer open, and she had been so startled by hearing people at the door that she had hurriedly closed the drawer and in some way jammed her handbag. Unable to move it, she had wrenched the bag free and scurried down the escape.

A glance through the papers in the desk told him little, for they were mostly routine matters. Against the wall was a gramophone. Now Lynch and Woods had made an arrangement between themselves whereby they could leave a record of recent activities by an ingenious, secret method. Bob Woods also had a gramophone, and by means of records they had kept in touch with one another.

Bob looked through the pile of records, and he tried out several, but they were all dance tunes or light opera. Then Bob held the records near to the light and a slight smile appeared on his lips. On the desk were a number of pipes, and he scraped the bowl of one in the same way that Record had done, and placed the residue in a glass of hot water, which he had obtained from a wash-basin. He was dabbing one of the records when Wilson returned, very much out of breath.

"It was a girl," he exclaimed. "A good-looker. I tailed the car to the Santa Barbara Hotel, but she gave me the slip in the lounge. She's in the hotel some place, and I've left two of the boys watching the various exits."

"Good work," Bob grunted, and walked across to the gramophone. "Keep quiet and listen to this."

Wilson looked at Woods in amazement as the Federal Agent placed the record on the machine. It was a popular waltz. Suddenly the music ceased, and there came the sound of a voice from the gramophone.

"Lynch!" gasped Wilson.

"Shut up!" snapped Woods.

"After many weeks of searching have at last got a line on the Sanderson case." Lynch's voice even made Woods shudder. "On June 19th I contacted Sanderson. Appears to have formula for a deadly explosive which will revolutionise modern warfare. June 20th—Sanderson inclined to be secretive and not disposed to tell me his hide-out. Has a secret laboratory. Apparently his formula is almost complete, and in a secret laboratory is working night and day. Very suspicious of all inquiries. June 22nd.—Again contacted Sanderson, who has promised to meet me at his laboratory. So far only had conversation from call booth. Learnt big organisation after Sanderson's discovery and offering big price. Only my threat that the sale of formula may cause the outbreak of a terrible war has stopped him selling. Have discovered that



"What luck?" questioned the foreign-looking man.

Quietly the curtains were pushed to one side, and Bob Woods stood there and watched her.



Recard is the ringleader of this organization. Recard is working to obtain formula, which he plans to sell for a fortune to some foreign country. Recard is wanted in many countries for spying and other offences. June 24th.—Have seen Sanderson but not at his laboratory. Have satisfied him that I am working for the Government. Sanderson desperately in need of money. Have decided to take a car trip to Silver Falls and discuss problem with Bob Woods. Sanderson wants some sort of note from the White House." After that followed some music. "Just before leaving to meet Woods found out that Recard is expecting to meet an accomplice. Vilma Santos is the woman, and imagine she has come from some part of Asia with money to help Recard buy the formula." The record ended with music, and Bob switched off.

"Vilma Santos." He took out the paper from his pocket. "V S 8 K G—Vilma Santos arriving at eight on King George. Wilson, the King George docks at eight in the morning, and if I guess rightly the woman will be on board. We're meeting the liner, Wilson."

The Steward

NATURALLY the badge that proved they were Federal Agents assisted Woods and Wilson at the docks. An embarkation officer allowed them to take up a position near the main gangway, and behind some merchandise. They were able to watch without looking too much like watchdogs—the officials had orders to scrutinise everybody's ticket. A signal was arranged should they observe any irregularity.

Bob Woods began to finger his chin in perplexity when the stream of passengers began to lessen. They knew that so far no one had passed the officers with the name of Vilma Santos, nor had they observed anyone acting suspiciously. Bob had almost decided to go on to the King George and have a search made of the cabins, when he laid

a hand on Wilson's arm. A solitary figure had appeared at the top of the gangway.

Wilson stared at his superior in surprise, for it was only a steward.

The steward was carrying a heavy suitcase and walked very carefully. A very smooth-faced, almost feminine type of young man, who seemed a little nervous. The officer examined the steward's pass and nodded that it was all right to proceed.

Bob came to the officer's side.

"Who was that?"

"If anyone is suspicious that's the person," said the officer. "But that is a man."

"Ever seen a man walk that way?" Woods pointed. "Ever seen a steward with powder on his cheeks? I hope not."

"I've got it!" gasped Wilson. "The steward's a woman!"

"You're improving," laughed Woods. "Come on!"

Outside the docks a long, powerful car was waiting. Now the steward began to hurry. The back door was opened by a sleek, dark-skinned man, and the bag tossed inside, then the door beside the driver was opened and the steward jumped in—the car went off with a roar. When the car pulled up outside the Santa Barbara the taxi containing Woods and Wilson was close behind.

The steward entered the hotel and the car drove away. Woods was just in time to see their quarry enter a lift.

"Find out the room number," whispered the agent. "The lift has stopped at the sixth. Better take the stairs."

"And me with drooped arches," bemoaned Wilson.

Bob Woods studied the people sitting in the lounge, and his keen eyes detected a girl who was dressed very much in the same sort of clothes as the person seen escaping from Lynch's flat. She was reading a magazine, and yet she was constantly looking up from her reading. There was plenty of room on the settee, so Bob Woods took a place beside her.

A quick glance she gave him before before going back to her reading.

Her left hand was resting on a handbag, and she took it away to smooth an unruly brown curl, giving Bob the chance to have a good look at the bag. That twisted smile came to his lips as he noticed one end of the strap was torn and the other end missing. Quietly he took out the strap, and, holding it hidden, made a comparison—no doubt that this was the strap of the handbag.

Wilson, in the meantime, had found out that the steward had gone into Room 210. He proceeded to make himself comfortable in the corridor and wait till the woman—if it were a woman—reappeared.

The Treacherous Recard

JULE RECARD admitted the steward to his room, and after locking the door, would have taken his visitor in his arms. The latter dropped the suitcase and stayed him with outstretched hand.

"My darling, what is it?" Recard said in injured tones.

The steward removed the peaked cap and out tumbled a mass of black curls. The woman shook them into place, but her eyes never once wavered from the man's face.

"I understand that you've got someone else into the game. A woman. Who is she?"

"You're not jealous, are you, dear?"

"Oh, no!" The woman's eyes flashed. "I'm delighted about it. I can't leave you for a day without you prove unfaithful to me. I risk my life and my freedom for you and come back to find you carrying on with another woman."

Recard pointed to the bag.

"You have the money?"

"Yes, but—"

"My dear, I can explain." He smiled at her and held out his arms. "You must not be so suspicious. I must have people to help me. This

woman is of use to me." His eyes narrowed. "What did Mullins tell you?"

"Only what I could worm out of him," blazed the woman. "He mentioned that your plans were all in readiness, and by chance mentioned that a woman had helped in the negotiations with Sanderson."

"It's quite right, my dear," he smiled. "Sanderson's a most difficult person to contact, and only through her help have I been able to fix up almost complete arrangements. She is taking me to see Sanderson in the morning. Vilma, you have my word that this woman means nothing to me. It is only you I love."

The woman seemed slightly mollified. "Don't give me cause for suspicion, Jule, because if I find you have lied to me I am likely to get a little angry. One word from me and I could burst this scheme of yours wide open."

With difficulty Recard controlled the impulse to put his hands round her throat and throttle her.

"My dear, there is no one else." He rubbed his hands together. "Within a few days the secret formula will be in my possession. Then we can go down to Mexico, where I will hand the formula to special emissaries, and we shall be richer by a quarter of a million dollars. My angel, you haven't kissed me yet."

The woman submitted to his caress, but all the while she was wondering what was behind that inscrutable smile.

"All my plans are practically complete," explained Recard. "Now you have arrived with these bonds and securities, which can be converted into cash at a moment's notice, the prize is within our grasp. It would be as well if you went to our house."

"Whilst you stay here?" she asked quickly.

"My dear, do not be so suspicious." He was patient. "I am staying here under an assumed name, and it would not be wise to have my wife with me. If you go to the house with Mullins you can help me most. We must give these Federal Agents no chance of trailing us."

"But I don't see why your wife—"

"Vilma, please let me conduct this in my way. That house has been left long enough. Besides, I may require you to help me in the laboratory testing out old Sanderson's formula." He pointed to the bed-room. "Some people may have seen you enter here as a man. I have your clothes in my room. It would be best if you change and go back to the house."

Wilson was half-asleep when he woke to the fact that a very beautiful woman was standing by the lift. She gave him a slight smile. Poor Wilson had no idea this was the steward. The lift doors opened and madam disappeared, leaving Wilson goggling foolishly.

The woman downstairs had seen the steward enter, and knew whom she was, and was waiting for the reappearance of the other to go up to see Recard.

Bob Woods edged a little nearer to her.

"Looks as if we might have a war in Europe," he remarked.

The girl frowned at his impertinence in addressing her.

Bob was unperturbed. "War is a terrible thing with these new engines of war. What with new gases and deadly explosives."

"I'm not interested."
"You should be," Bob grinned. "America might be involved. Airships might come over dropping bombs. There's a bit here about a new ex-

plosive discovered by some old crank named Sanderson."

The girl gave a slight start, then, without answering, turned her back.

"It says here that the explosive is more deadly and powerful than anything yet discovered." Bob rustled the paper. "Sanderson is reputed to be out for the highest bidder. Awful if that explosive got into the wrong hands, don't you agree with me?"

The girl hesitated as if she would call one of the bellboys, but there was something in his eyes that made her pause. A sort of knowing look. Who was this man?

"I've never heard of Sanderson."

"Oh, yes you have!" Bob chuckled. "You're trying to secure the Sanderson formula."

"What do you mean by that?"

"What I said, young lady. You're after the Sanderson formula. Well, so am I." He winked. "And maybe the syndicate for whom I'm working can pay better than the bunch for whom you're working. No good trying to bluff me. A lot of people know about the Sanderson explosive, and you'd be surprised if you knew the people for whom I'm working. Stand in with me and I'll guarantee you a small fortune."

"You must be quite mad."

"Lady, don't try to keep up that game." Bob shook his head. "We've got our agents and we know who are working against us. What do you say to working in with me on a fifty-fifty basis?"

Bob Woods was hoping to get some useful information from this girl. Usually money would open most mouths, and in his pocket was a big wad of notes. Not that Bob intended to part with them, but they might prove a good bait.

Suddenly over Bob's shoulder the girl sighted Vilma Santos. This man had been following Vilma, because she had seen the two men enter the hotel close on the steward's heels. Round her neck was a heavy bead bracelet. A cry of alarm and the girl clutched at her dress—she had cunningly broken the necklace. The heavy beads rolled on to the floor, and, unsuspecting, Bob went down on his knees. Some of the beads had gone under a couch.

Bob straightened his back and gave a rueful grin. An old trick, and it had caught him—the girl had vanished. But his sharp eyes saw something else. A beautiful woman getting into a taxi. His knowledge of disguises told him that the woman was Vilma Santos. He got to his feet, and as he hastened towards the swing doors Wilson came running down the stairs.

"No sign of that steward," said Wilson. "All I saw was a darned good-looking dame. She smiled at me, Bob. If I hadn't been busy I might—"

Bob clutched his arm.

"Is that her going off in that taxi?"

"Yeah. That's her."

"That is the steward, you dumb egg!" rasped Bob.

"You don't say." Wilson's eyes nearly popped out of his head. "Who would have thought it?"

"Go book a room in this hotel for two," ordered Bob. "And try to get the room next to 210, and don't tell everybody your business. Look like a travelling salesman. I'll be back."

Bob tailed the taxi for some distance. Vilma alighted and began to look at shops. Up drove a car, and Vilma entered it and was driven away. At traffic lights Bob got held up and cursed heartily at losing his quarry. He returned to the hotel, and was glad to find that Wilson had secured Room 209. He found Wilson sprawled on the bed fast asleep.

"You're a fine assistant."

"Sorry, Bob, but I've done so much running about I'm worn out," apologised Wilson. "Besides, what could I have done?"

"Found out what's happening in the next room."

Actually, the girl was in Recard's room, and was sitting on a settee with his arms round her.

"Thank goodness I got rid of Vilma," Recard smiled at her boldly. "Her jealousy nearly drives me crazy. After this deal is through I finish with her. There is someone else who means a lot to me. You say that Sanderson will see me. When we get that formula we can ask any price. I'll divorce Vilma and you and I can live in wealth and comfort for the rest of our lives."

"There will be no more bloodshed, Jule?"

"Accidents happen sometimes."

"Like Jack Lynch?"

"He would have spoilt our plans." Recard shrugged his shoulders. "What is one Federal Agent more or less? That reminds me of something important. You say you were disturbed in Lynch's rooms, but you had not found anything. I want you to go back there again and look for some gramophone records."

"Gramophone records?" questioned the girl.

"I have found out that Lynch was often experimenting with records, and, according to his landlady, talking to himself. Maybe some of those records may prove interesting. I must not leave a scrap of evidence against us."

"What Lynch found out might ruin your plans?"

"He knew too much, so that was why he had to go."

"You are very ruthless, Jule." Her eyes watched him intently, but she freed herself as he would have drawn her closer. "If I'm going to get these records I must go now."

When the girl left Recard's room she did not know the door of 209 was slightly ajar.

"I'm going to follow the girl," Bob Woods told Wilson. "Whilst I'm away bide your chance, and when Recard goes out of his room, slip in and fix dictaphones. Don't fail me, Wilson."

"It's as good as done."

Bob Woods was able to follow the girl easily, and when she headed for Cedarville he had a good idea of her destination.

Twenty-four Hours

THE girl had the key that she had been given by Recard, who had got it from the body of Lynch.

Swiftly she closed the door and switched on the light. She went to the gramophone and took out the records. She did not notice a faint movement of the curtains of the window that led to the fire-escape.

Very methodically she went through all the records, and it was not till almost the end that she came to the record of Lynch's own making. She clung to the gramophone cabinet as if she felt faint. Quietly the curtains were pushed to one side, and Bob Woods stood there and watched her.

"Found what you wanted, sister?"

She spun round with a gasp of dismay.

"You!"

"A clever gag with those beads." Bob was watching her every move. "Suppose you thought you had thrown me off the trail, but it takes a lot to get rid of me. Just keep your hand away from the pocket of your coat. I hate to use a gun on a woman, but in necessity one has to be quite callous."

"I have no gun," she answered him.

"A pity you didn't accept my offer to work with me." He lit a cigarette. "What do you know of the death of Jack Lynch?"

The girl shot him a startled glance. "I don't believe what you told me about working for another syndicate is true. Who are you?"

Bob Woods showed her his badge. "You're a Federal Agent!" "I am!" His voice hardened. "And now you'd better talk, sister. I want to know what you know about Jack Lynch."

Again she avoided the question. "You think I'm working for Recard, don't you? Would it surprise you to know I hate him?"

Bob Woods came closer so he could see her better. This girl was not only good-looking, but she did not look like a wrong 'un. Her face might be set in hard lines, but the gaze from the blue eyes never wavered from his. He did not know what to make of her, though he had to admit she was uncommonly attractive, and felt sure that if she were to smile she would be most appealing. He squared his shoulders—if he were not careful he would be getting sentimental.

His voice became gruff.

"I'm listening."
"I hate Recard more than any person in the world." As she spoke those blue eyes never faltered. "What I'm doing may seem very suspicious, but I have a reason. Recard is a crook and a dastardly scoundrel, and it is my aim to bring him to justice. If you persist in interfering you will ruin all my schemes."

"Who are you?"

"My Christian name is Helen, my surname is my affair," she said fiercely. "But I swear that I'm not trying to aid and abet Recard, but luring a rascal into a trap. Give me twenty-four hours and I can succeed in my plans. Interfere and Recard is more than likely to get away with Sanderson's secret formula, and if that should get into unscrupulous hands you know what that would mean. Sanderson has discovered an explosive that is four times as destructive as anything ever discovered before. Please trust me."

By rights Woods ought to have arrested this mystery girl, but she seemed so in earnest that he hesitated. From his pocket he produced the strap of her handbag.

"I disturbed you the other day, and when I saw your handbag in the lobby

of the hotel I knew you were the young woman who got away down that fire-escape. What did you want then and now from Lynch's apartment?"

"For many months your department has wanted to lay hands on Recard and men like him," was her reply.

"But there are many scoundrels who know how to evade the law. You might arrest Recard for the murder of Lynch, but you would have difficulty in pinning the crime on to him. You would have to let him go free. I'm out to get Recard so that he will not go free, but if I'm to obtain the evidence that is necessary I must have a free hand."

"I asked you before what you know of Lynch's death."

"I know Recard was responsible, but I have no proof, though he has boasted of men he has killed. Give me twenty-four hours and Recard shall not escape."

"Very well—twenty-four hours," Bob Woods decided. "I've never done anything like this in all the ten years I've worked for the department, and if my chief knew he would say I was crazy, but somehow you've succeeded in convincing me that you're on the level. I will hold up on my investigations. My name is Bob Woods, and you can get in touch with me at the Santa Barbara Hotel. I'm risking my job in letting you do this, and risking the chance of letting a scoundrel slip through my fingers, but you must have some magnetic will that makes me act this way."

The girl held out her hand.

"I won't fail you."

Bob gripped it.

"You have a grudge against Recard. Care to tell me?"

"At the end of the twenty-four hours you shall know why I hate him so. No person can hate him as much as I do."

"Jack Lynch was my friend." Bob walked towards the window. "If you fail I swear I will not rest till I have

avenged his death. Why you should have a prior claim I cannot imagine, but a girl like you would not be taking all this risk unless your reasons were very great. Therefore, Helen, for twenty-four hours you have a free hand. I will leave by the escape."

It was not very long after that the girl left the block of flats. A taxi took her to the outskirts of the city. She told the driver to wait at some cross-roads, whilst she walked briskly down the quietest of the roads to a house surrounded by a high hedge. The house was in a bad state of repair and looked deserted. The girl had a key, and with a glance round to see she was not followed, let herself into a deserted hall.

She knocked at a door and entered when there was no answer. A bed was in one corner, and there were a few sticks of furniture. She looked round and satisfied the person she sought was not there, went back into the hall and up some stairs. She did not walk on tiptoe, but if well used to this old mansion, and was not afraid of being heard. After going down a number of corridors she came to some big doors, which she unlocked with another key.

A sort of lounge with stairs leading downwards into darkness. She touched a switch and a light appeared below. Eagerly she hastened down the stairs. There was an earthy, peculiar smell. She rapped at a door, and when there came no answer, placed her hands against the door. She knew the secret of that door which had no handle, because it swung back. The room beyond was a laboratory. Everywhere were benches loaded with queer retorts and vessels. Something spluttered in a pan, under which flickered a blue flame. On one side were great steel doors. The smell of chemicals was very strong. On a bench was a keyboard, and she pressed a button, and immediately a red light appeared over the steel doors.

"You asked for this, flat-foot, and you deserve all that's coming to you!" cried Helen.



A moment later there came a rumbling and one of the doors rolled back, and thick smoke rolled sluggishly into the laboratory. Out of this murk appeared a masked and goggled figure. The door rolled back, shutting out the foul fumes. The mask and goggles were removed to reveal an old man with sharp, shrewd eyes. The very long nose and the almost bald head gave Sanderson the appearance of an owl.

"You quite startled me, my dear. I was not expecting anybody. Nothing wrong, I hope?"

"No, professor. I called to say that Recard has the money and we can sell him the formula some time tomorrow."

"I wrote to the authorities and they did not even bother to send anyone even to investigate." The professor looked worried. "I wonder if I'm right in letting this formula fall into foreign hands? You are sure this man represents the League of Nations?"

"Your formula will not fall into the hands of anyone who will throw the world into another terrible war," the girl cried. "You can rely on that. Where is the formula?"

"It is complete." Sanderson pointed. "It is in that safe over in the corner."

"Good!" Helen looked at the steel doors. "Are you any farther advanced with the new gas you are trying to make?"

"I have succeeded beyond my wildest dreams." The professor walked across to some levers. "I am able to fill those chambers with any sort of gases and be able to extract the most deadly fumes by means of touching these levers. All that remains is just waste material."

"Could a person live in it after you have released the fumes?"

"No; not even with this apparatus," answered the professor. "I could live for a little while, but soon I should suffocate. It would be a slow and very unpleasant death. Tell me, my dear, when will Recard come here to buy the formula?"

"Tomorrow night, so there is no need for you to work any more to-day. You must rest yourself." Her eyes seemed to stare at those steel doors as if they fascinated her. "I can take you back into town with me."

There was a curious glint in those blue eyes as the girl assisted the old professor into the waiting car. Her zero hour was at hand.

Silenced

BOB WOODS called himself all kinds of an idiot because he had been influenced by a pretty face. He had promised to do nothing for twenty-four hours because this girl hinted that she had a prior claim. What did he know about the mysterious Helen? He was greatly attracted by her, but women, with their smiles and beguiling ways, had bluffed far cleverer men than himself. He decided to go back to the hotel and talk the matter over with Wilson.

Of course, Wilson would call him a sap, especially as the nit-wit had been tricked by Vilma Santos. Bob decided that he would use his discretion about discussing the matter with Wilson; he wondered if his assistant had succeeded in fixing a dictaphone.

It did not surprise Bob to find Wilson sprawled on the bed. Always sleeping. But he saw the earphones and knew that Wilson had succeeded in planting dictaphones.

"What luck, old timer?" he asked as he washed his hands.

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There came no answer.

"Wake up, you old scoundrel," Bob called. "You can't sleep all the day."

Bob dried his hands and went over to the bed. This sleeping habit of Wilson's was getting beyond a joke. Important information might have come through, and Wilson not taking it.

"Wake up!" shouted Bob, and gave Wilson a shove.

To his surprise, Wilson rolled off the bed and lay there sprawled out. Puzzled, he stared down, and suddenly noted the pallor of his assistant's cheeks. With a sharp intake of breath he went down on his knees and shook Wilson roughly. A touch on the cheek and he drew back his hand with sudden dread.

It was now that he observed that the wires from the headpieces seemed to be round Wilson's throat. With hands that shook he turned over the body and knew that his companion was dead. He had been throttled to death. With difficulty he freed the wires and tried artificial respiration, but Wilson did not respond.

There was a grim, hard look on Bob's face as he got up and followed the wire to the wall. It was cut, but he found a place where a hole had been drilled near the door. Quietly he went out into the passage and noted a similar hole on the door of 210. He had a shrewd idea of all that had occurred. Wilson had planted his dictaphone, and either the wires, the holes in the door, or the instrument had been seen by Recard. Recard had entered 209 and killed Wilson.

Bob tried the door of 210 and found it open. It did not surprise him to find the room empty—the occupant had gone and taken all his luggage. From a picture hung part of a dictaphone, and a fierce grin came to Bob's face as he saw it—Recard had guessed he would enter 210, and had left it as a sign of mocking defiance.

No good wasting time here—something had to be done. He thought suddenly of the girl. She must have been in on this killing. If only he could find her! He went back to his room to stare down at the body of Wilson. First Lynch and now Wilson—their deaths had got to be avenged.

Suddenly he dropped on his knees because he had noticed something protruding from the hand of the dead man. Just the edge of a piece of paper. He forced open the fingers and drew forth a crumpled ball. It seemed to be blank, but the agents often used an invisible ink. He smoothed out the paper, and from a drawer took out a flat instrument which he plugged into the wall. At once a powerful light ray appeared, and on placing the paper over it, he was able to see a message:

"Recard seeing Sanderson to-night. Some dame, not Vilma Santos, has made contact for Recard with Sanderson. Recard plans to quit hotel. Has a hide-out at the Haven, in Yellowstone Park Avenue."

The girl had double-crossed him. She must have been wise all the time. Directly he had left her in Lynch's flat she had probably rung Recard. How they must have laughed!

Captured

ON leaving the hotel Recard had gone to a small restaurant to meet the girl, and he was inclined to be sharp because she kept him waiting. She stated that she had tried every record, but there was only music on all of them. She had ransacked the place

and found nothing that could incriminate Recard.

They left the restaurant and went to the house in Yellowstone Park Avenue, and as they entered by the front door the bushes close at hand parted and Bob Woods peered forth. The agent was an expert at opening windows and soon found a means of egress into the house. Hidden behind a curtain, he was witness of a scene between Recard and his wife.

"Why have you brought this creature here?" demanded the jealous Vilma Santos.

"Vilma, will you hold your tongue?" Recard shouted.

"How dare you speak to me like that?" the woman countered. "Why is she here?"

"Because I can't contact Sanderson without her," Recard exclaimed. "She is his representative. It's not my fault that Sanderson does his business through a girl. But without her I can't buy the formula. Now do you understand?"

"I don't trust her," muttered Vilma. "It wouldn't surprise me if she was a Federal Agent."

"What right have you to say that?" demanded the girl. "I work for Sanderson, and I draw a commission on the deal. The higher the price the higher my commission. We tried the Government and they wouldn't even bother to send a representative. I've got no love for them, so it's absurd to make out I'm a Federal Agent."

"Vilma, I can't have my plans spoilt by disputes and suspicions," Recard argued. "Everything is set. Helen is taking me—"

"So you use her Christian name?"

"And why not?" Recard almost foamed at the mouth. "We have been negotiating and arguing over the price for the formula for days and weeks, so why shouldn't I? My dear, you carry your suspicions too far. One day I may lose my temper."

"And then what would you do?" His face contorted, but it ended in a smile.

"I should regain my temper and tell you not to be foolish." He held up his hand. "No more argument, please. Everything is arranged. I am going in a few minutes to see Professor Sanderson, and if the complete formula is handed to me I shall then conduct this lady to the house of a banker, where I will hand over the price named."

All this while Mullins, who was Recard's radio operator and right-hand man, had listened with an evil grin on his unhealthy features. He knew very well that Recard aimed to walk out on Vilma at the first opportunity, and if she made any trouble it would be just too bad for her. Recard aimed to get the formula, the girl and not pay Sanderson a cent. Once the formula was in his possession Recard could snap his fingers at Sanderson. The girl would have to obey orders or else be framed, but as Recard imagined Helen to be in love with him he had no fears about her.

"You'll come back here?" asked Vilma.

"No. I have fixed a meeting-place with Mullins," instructed Recard. "I want Mullins to help you in destroying all evidence in this house. The wireless must be smashed. Directly it is dark you will leave, and I propose to meet you at midnight. Then we will travel south."

"Who are 'we'?"

"You and I, my dear, with Mullins as the discreet chauffeur," Recard said

(Continued on page 23)

Who was the secret leader of the desperadoes who were terrorising the Valley of the Pecos? That was the riddle which a young Texas Ranger was detailed to solve. Ride with him to the tune of hammering hoofs and blazing guns, and follow his gripping adventures in this mighty serial drama of action and romance



EPISODE 8—

"The Indian Attack"

READ THIS FIRST

Buck Grant, a settler in the Pecos Valley, is in reality a Ranger investigating stories of terrorism by a gang of outlaws whose leader's identity he hopes to discover.

Judge Holmes, of Maverick, is the only man who knows Buck is a Ranger. He is likewise the only man who knows that Buck is the Phantom Rider, a cloaked horseman who is defeating the activities of the outlaws at every turn.

One morning, however, masked gangsters butcher Shorty, another Ranger who is on his way to the Valley. Doing, Shorty tells Buck to go to the Hidden Valley Ranch, and later Buck learns this is the property of a man named Grayson.

He meets Grayson's beautiful daughter, Mary, who has returned from the East and brought with her a friend, Helen Moore.

Meanwhile, a Ranger known as Spooky has entered Maverick, and Buck instructs him to obtain work at the Hidden Valley outfit. That same night Buck casually drops in at that ranch himself, and is introduced to Harvey Delancy, a neighbouring cattleman who is on friendly terms with the Graysons.

Old Grayson is murdered the next day, and leaves Mary a wallet containing the map of a secret gold mine. Later, a railroad agent makes Mary an offer for her land, and she is on the point of signing away the property when an outlaw bullet smashed a lamp and caused the agent to sink to the floor.

Immediately afterwards the Phantom appears on the scene, but falls from his horse as two more shots ring out at close quarters.

Now Read On

The Wallet Disappears

"GOT him!"

The words were spoken simultaneously by the gangsters known as Gabe and Keeler, but they speedily discovered that they were mistaken, for in tumbling from his horse the Phantom had merely sought to deceive them, and now, from the cover of a clump of shrubs, their supposed victim opened fire on them with an accuracy that threw them into a panic.

The first shot blistered Keeler's cheek, and his second cut a hole in the sleeve of Gabe's shirt. In another moment the two outlaws were veering away from the ranch-house porch and sprinting in the direction of the thickets where they had parted with Dirk and the rest of the gang.

Crouching amidst the shrubbery into which he had plunged, the Phantom accelerated the departure of the fugitives with two more slugs that kicked up the dust at their heels. Then he saw the Grayson punchers come swarming from the bunkhouse, to be met with a volley from Dirk and his men.

The ranch-hands were forced to retreat into their quarters again, and thus Gabe and Keeler were enabled to rejoin the remainder of the outlaw band. Meanwhile, over at the principal building of the Grayson outfit, Mary had appeared at the front door with Helen Moore, Judge Holmes and Harvey Delancy, and from his covert in the shrubbery the Phantom obtained a clear view of them as they peered across at the thickets on the south side of the property.

The Phantom himself was not visible to the eyes of Mary and her companions. Nor did he attempt to show himself, but, striking off through the bushes, worked round to the rear of

the ranch-house and slipped into the dwelling by a back door.

A few seconds afterwards he was in the lounge where Mary had been on the point of signing the railroad company's agreement when Keeler's six-gun had interrupted negotiations.

The lounge was in darkness, but, accustomed to the gloom, the Phantom perceived the body of a man lying on the floor, and recognised Blake. The latter had obviously been struck down by the same bullet that had smashed the lamp.

The Phantom knelt beside the railroad agent, and gave vent to an exclamation of relief as he discovered that the man was still alive, though unconscious and severely wounded. Then he turned towards the table, and spying the wallet that contained the chart of the Grayson gold mine, he snatched this up with a rapid gesture and thrust it into his pocket.

A moment later Buck Grant, alias the Phantom, was hurrying out of the room again, but as he emerged found that he was seen by a scared housemaid who was descending from her bed-room with a naphtha lamp clutched in one trembling hand.

The maid uttered a shriek, and the sound lent added speed to Buck's exit. He was clear of the house in the twinkling of an eye, and dodging forth through the kitchen doorway, he spied his bronc Silver some forty or fifty yards from the building.

The animal was standing near a barn, to which it had trotted when its master had flung himself from the saddle, and Buck dashed towards the creature. As he ran he heard the frightened maid shrieking at the top of her voice inside the ranch-house, and guessed that her cries would bring

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Mary back into the dwelling from the front door.

His guess was right. Followed by Delaney, Helen Moore and Judge Holmes, Mary came rushing into the hall and seized the hysterical housemaid by the arm.

"What's wrong, Lizzie?" she demanded. "What are you screaming for?"

"A ghost!" was the shrill response. "I've just seen a ghost! All in white, he was—from head to foot!"

"The Phantom!" barked Delaney. "Which way did he go? Mary, tell this fool of a girl to pull herself together!"

"A ghost!" Lizzie repeated wildly. "I've just seen him! He went out through the back door!"

Harvey Delaney made for the kitchen, and Holmes accompanied him. As they stumbled out of the house they obtained an impression of a robed figure mounting a silver-grey brone in the vicinity of the barn, and Delaney promptly tugged out a six-gun.

He was prevented from using it by Holmes.

"Hold on, Harvey," the older man protested. "The Phantom is a friend."

"You think so?" Delaney snapped. "Then how do you account for him shooting out the light in the lounge just now?"

"He didn't do that," the judge retorted. "It was one of those two fellows we spotted from the front door—the men who were heading for the thickets."

"And the Phantom was in cahoots with them," Harvey Delaney ground out. "I'd gamble on that, judge. Let go of my arm and give me a chance to pick him off."

But Holmes would not release him willingly, and by the time that the big cattleman had wrenched free, the Phantom had spurred off across the range, vanishing beyond a fold in the landscape, and it was in a disgruntled fashion that he jammed his forty-five back into its holster and returned to the hall with the judge.

They found Mary and Helen doing their best to pacify the abject Lizzie. At the same time they heard a smattering of gunplay coming from the direction of the bunkhouse, where the Grayson cowboys were answering the fire that had been opened up on them from the brushwood thickets, but the shooting was dying down as Delaney addressed the girl who had inherited the Hidden Valley ranch.

"It was the Phantom all right, Mary," he declared, "and, though Holmes won't agree with me, I think he's a wrong 'un."

"How can you say that, Harvey?" the girl exclaimed in a harassed tone. "Anybody who has ever had any dealings with him will tell you that he's on the side of law and order."

"He may appear to be," Delaney grunted. "But if he's an honest man why does he have to go around hiding his identity by a mask and a cloak? No, Mary, he's not a friend, and I'll stake my last cent that he was behind those men who surprised us from the lounge—the men who shattered the light and drilled Blake!"

Mary cried out at that.

"Blake!" she ejaculated. "I—I'd forgotten him! Yes—he cried out, didn't he? He must have been hit!"

She took the naphtha lamp from the quaking grasp of her maid, and together with Helen, Delaney and Holmes she tottered into the lounge.

There lay the railroad agent, and with a look of concern on her pretty

face Mary dropped to her knees beside him. She was joined in this attitude by Harvey Delaney and the judge, who lost no time in examining the wounded man.

"I think he'll be all right," Holmes said at length, "but he's pretty badly hurt, and we'd better send for a doctor."

It was at this moment that there was a tramping of feet on the porch, and immediately afterwards Mary's foreman entered the house with some of the boys, Spooky being amongst them. "What happened, ma'am?" the foreman queried huskily. "We heard shots, and when we came outa the bunkhouse we was met by a volley that drove us back inside. Then we started to blaze at the thickets, and whoever the hombres were that had opened up on us, they cleared off pretty soon."

"It was some kind of an attack by outlaws, Steve," Mary answered. "I don't know what their game was, but they got Mr. Blake here, and you'd better take him upstairs to one of the spare rooms. Spooky, you and Bob give Steve a hand. Slim, you ride to town and fetch the doctor. The rest of you go back to your quarters, but be ready for trouble, in case those outlaws show up again."

Her instructions were obeyed, and it was while Blake was being carried up to bed that Harvey Delaney spoke once more.

"Is anything missing from this room, Mary?" he asked grimly.

The girl looked at him quickly, and then her eyes travelled towards the table at which she and her companions had been gathered when Keeler's gunshot had blasted out the light and struck down the railroad agent.

The deed which she had been about to sign was still there. The pen that she had been in the act of wielding was lying beside it, just as she had dropped it when the lamp had been extinguished.

"No," she began. "I—"

And then she stopped, for suddenly she remembered the pocket-book that contained the chart of her father's gold mine.

"The wallet!" she gasped. "I left it on the table, and it's gone!"

"I thought so," Harvey Delaney breathed. "And the Phantom was the man who took it, for your maid saw him coming out of this room. Now maybe you'll believe that he's a crook and that he was in league with those two men who made off into the brush."

Mary stared at the table in silence, her face pale, an expression of uncertainty in her eyes.

"I—I can't understand it," she faltered. "It—it just doesn't make sense. Judge Holmes, you told me that the wallet was given to you by the Phantom with a request that you would keep it safely for me until I wanted it."

"That's right, Mary," Holmes answered. "At least, it was sent to me with a covering note that purported to be from the Phantom."

"And yet the Phantom came here to-night and stole it," the girl said. "What kind of game is he playing?"

The judge looked at her helplessly, with the air of a man completely bewildered, though he had a shrewd notion of the truth.

"I have no explanation to offer, Mary," he murmured, "but somehow I can't bring myself to accept Delaney's theory that the Phantom was operating with the men who shot Blake and who scuttled off into the brushwood, where they apparently had a bunch of accomplices waiting for them."

"If you ask me," Helen Moore interposed, "the Phantom scared off those men whom we saw, judge. I wonder if they'll come back with their confederates and start some more trouble?"

Had she but known it, there was small fear of that, for the outlaws were at present riding in a south-easterly direction in the hope of picking up the trail of the Phantom, whose flight from the ranch-house they had witnessed.

They were not successful in their purpose, however, and after wasting a full hour in reconnoitring the country between Hidden Valley and the Pecos River they set out for their lair in the heart of the mountains.

Some time later they might have been seen drawing rein at the lonely cabin which was their hide-out, and as they dismounted from their ponies Dirk spoke in a lugubrious voice.

"I wonder if the boss has got here yet," he said. "I ain't looking forward to meetin' him—without that wallet he sent us to get."

His comrades exchanged uneasy glances with him, and then the whole gang filed into the cabin. As they crossed the threshold they found a lamp burning at a low glimmer in the front room, and by the thievish light of it saw an indistinct figure standing in one of the farthest corners.

It was the figure of the man who was their chief, and Dirk proceeded to address him sheepishly, but had not been talking for long when the gang leader cut in on him in harsh accents.

"Never mind the alibis, Dirk," he spured. "You slipped up on the job, and all of you are to blame as much as Gabe and Keeler. You let the Phantom put one over on you—that's the long and short of it."

"We did the best we could, boss," Dirk expostulated, "and the boys will bear me out when I tell you that we hunted high an' low for that Phantom after we saw him ride away from the Grayson ranch. I'm tellin' you, boss, we did our level best."

The leader of the gang ripped out an oath.

"Your level best!" he blazed. "That's always your lame excuse. Well, it looks to me like I'll have to get some new men to help you make good."

"New men?" Dirk echoed. "Where you gonna get 'em?"

"That's my business," was the curt rejoinder. "But get them I will. Meantime, you'd better lie low until you hear from me again."

With those words he thrust his way through the pack of ruffians and slammed out of the cabin. Then, striding round to a lean-to that was attached to the dwelling, he led forth a sorrel pony and swung himself astride the animal.

A moment afterwards he was spurring savagely from the ravine in which the gang's hide-out was situated, and once clear of the canyon, he struck due north through the hills.

Delaney Sets a Trap

THE following morning Spooky slipped away from the Hidden Valley outfit and rode over to Dry Creek, where Buck Grant's homestead was located, and it was as the little Ranger was reining up outside the shack that his six-foot comrade appeared on the threshold.

"Hallo, Buck," Spooky greeted him cheerfully. "How's tricks?"

"Fine and dandy," the big fellow answered. "It's kinda lucky I showed up at the Grayson ranch last night. I

reckon those outlaws would have got the wallet if I hadn't been on hand."

His partner nodded.

"You're right," he agreed. "But what do you intend to do with that wallet now? Turn it over to Judge Holmes again?"

"No," Buck replied. "I've been thinking things over, and I believe it will be safer with me than with anybody else."

"It might be even safer with me," observed Spooky, "especially if the outlaws happen to discover that you were the Phantom."

Buck looked at him quickly, and seemed to ponder the other Ranger's suggestion. Then he produced the wallet and passed it up to Spooky.

"Not a bad idea, pal," he declared. "You'd be the last person in the world that anyone would suspect. Okay, you take care of it—for a while, at any rate."

Spooky placed the wallet in his hip pocket, and then, after a brief silence, he volunteered another comment.

"We oughta put Mary Grayson wise, somehow," he murmured. "I don't mean we should tell her that I'm holdin' the wallet, but we could let her know that it's in safe-keepin'. Suppose you write a note to her, settin' her mind at rest."

Once again Buck showed approval, and when Spooky left the cabin some time later he was the bearer of a message that his comrade had printed in pencil; a message which he carried back to the Hidden Valley ranch, and which he handed to Mary Grayson a few minutes after his arrival there.

He found her in the lounge, and, delivering the note, which was enclosed in an envelope, he told her a trumped-up story of how he had come across it. "I was over at the barn just now and saw this pinned to the door," he

stated. "It's addressed to you, Miss Mary."

The girl took the missive and ripped open the envelope, and, watching her, Spooky noted the expression of tense interest that dawned on her lovely features as she read the epistle. Then, all at once she rose from the couch on which she had been sitting, and, hastening out into the hall, she called Helen Moore by name.

The latter soon presented herself in the lounge, and Mary was in the act of divulging the contents of the note she had received when Lizzie, the housemaid, came into the room and announced Judge Holmes and Harvey Delaney.

Within a few seconds the judge and the neighbouring cattleman were entering the apartment in which Mary, Helen and Spooky were standing.

"Good-morning, Mary," Holmes began in his fatherly way. "I thought I'd drop in on you and see how things were, and it seems Harvey here was of the same mind. We met on the trail."

"I'm glad you came, judge," Mary said, "for I have news for you. Spooky found a note pinned on the barn door. It's from the Phantom, and must have been left by him last night, I suppose."

Both Holmes and Delaney immediately showed signs of curiosity, and listened attentively as the girl provided them with the gist of the message.

"The Phantom says that I've no need to worry," she told them. "He's going to take care of the wallet for me, and assures me that it will be quite safe with him."

Delaney frowned at that.

"And you mean to say, Mary," he exclaimed, "that you're willing to take it for granted that the wallet will be safe with him? Why, you're crazy! What's his idea in doing so?"

"This note makes his motive perfectly clear," Mary retorted. "His aim is to

prevent the outlaws from getting it, of course."

Harvey Delaney seemed far from satisfied. His strong, keen face wore a look of impatience.

"If you ask me," he said, "the Phantom wrote that message as a bluff, in order to prevent you from taking any steps to recover the chart of your father's mine. No doubt, while you're sitting quietly at home and making no effort to get the wallet, he'll jump that hidden claim and enrich himself by it."

"Harvey," Mary rejoined, "I don't know who the Phantom is, but I feel certain you're doing him an injustice. He's acted too honourably in the past to turn around and rob me of any part of my inheritance."

"In any case," she added, "what steps could I take to recover that wallet, even if I questioned his honesty? Why should he take the trouble to write a note setting my mind at rest if he means to steal my father's gold mine? I've no means of bringing the law on him, when I haven't the vaguest idea who he is."

Delaney moved a step nearer to her, and when he spoke to her again it was in a voice that was low and significant.

"But supposing you suspected his identity," he said, "and supposing you were to lay a trap that would put your suspicions to the crucial test?"

The girl stared at him in a puzzled fashion. So did Helen Moore, Judge Holmes and Spooky.

"What do you mean, Harvey?" Mary demanded. "Do you suspect someone of being the Phantom Rider?"

Delaney answered her tersely.

"Yes," he rapped out. "I think Buck Grant and the Phantom Rider are one and the same man!"

Holmes and Spooky exchanged a swift glance, and then, looking at Mary and Helen, they saw the amazement that was written on the faces of the two girls.



"It's close on time," the cattleman said. "Now to see if the Phantom Rider shows up."

"Grant and the Phantom both appeared in this country about the same time," Delaney went on in an emphatic tone, "and to my mind, Grant's behaviour hasn't been straightforward. Anyway, I'd like a chance to prove my theory."

Hotly resenting the insinuation that Buck was a questionable character, Mary speedily made it clear that the young "nester" from Dry Creek occupied a high place in her esteem.

Delaney, however, was stubbornly intractable, and was arguing with the girl in a dogged manner when Judge Holmes broke in on the discussion.

"You say you'd like a chance to prove your theory, Harvey," he remarked. "Have you any plan in mind?"

"Yes, I have," the other man replied. "If a message was sent to Grant telling him that an attack was expected here—and if the Phantom showed up in response to such a message—that would establish my suspicious pretty conclusively, wouldn't it?"

"I'll be no party to a scheme like that," Mary interposed angrily, but the judge laid a hand on her arm.

"Harvey Delaney may be right, Mary," he told her. "I've heard the same theory expressed by other folks, and, though I very much doubt it myself, I think we might put it to the test. Spooky here could carry the message, and drop it in at Grant's cabin."

He looked at the little fellow meaningfully as he spoke, and received an understanding glance in return. Then Delaney proceeded to scrawl a somewhat mysterious note which stated that an outlaw raid would be launched on the Grayson ranch at three o'clock that afternoon.

"Leave this at Grant's homestead," he said at length, tendering Spooky the missive, "but don't let him see you if you can help it."

Spooky nodded, and went outside to his horse, but, as he was preparing to mount, Judge Holmes followed him out of the ranch-house and addressed him in an undertone.

"I thought it might be as well to fall in with Delaney's suggestion, Spooky," he whispered. "You can put Buck wise, and he can kill, once and for all, this rumour that he is the Phantom."

"He'll kill it all right, judge," the little fellow murmured, and an instant later he was clapping his heels to the flanks of his pony.

Holmes stood watching him for a minute or two as he galloped across the range, and then he retraced his steps into the ranch-house and joined Delaney and the girls again, walking into the lounge just as Mary was making a caustic remark to her neighbour.

"Well, Harvey," she was saying, "since you've chosen to use my house as a bait to prove your suspicions, I suppose I'll have to invite you to stay to lunch."

Delaney grinned at her. "Either that, or I'll break into the larder," he declared. "I'm going to be pretty hungry long before three o'clock, the time scheduled for the imaginary attack."

Judge Holmes scolded him on that score, and so Mary and Helen had company for the midday meal: a meal over which they lingered so long that the hands of the clock in the dining-room were pointing to the time of two-thirty when they eventually rose from the table.

With half an hour to wait, the two men and the two girls drifted back into the lounge, and here Delaney took the liberty of throwing the windows wide open. Then he assumed a position

whence he was able to command a view of the country to the south.

Mary, Helen and Judge Holmes moved over to the windows as well, and they remained there while the minutes dragged by, till it seemed as if they had been gazing across the range for an eternity. But at last Delaney took out his watch, and, after glancing at it, uttered a grunt of anticipation.

"It's close on time," the cattleman said. "Now to see if the Phantom Rider shows up."

Scarcely were the words spoken when the figure of a horseman burst out of the brushwood thickets some distance from the ranch and began to career along the fringe of them. He was a horseman who forked the saddle of a white mustang, and who wore a voluminous cloak and a kerchief that concealed his features, and at sight of him Delaney gave vent to a triumphant cry.

"Friends," he ejaculated, "the Phantom! And right on the dot! Now do you deny that he and Grant are one and the same?"

Judge Holmes remained silent. As for Helen and Mary, they appeared to be denied the power of speech, and were still staring mutely in the direction of the thickets when the voice of Lizzie, the housemaid, became audible.

"Mr. Grant to see you, Miss Mary."

The quartet at the window spun round, and saw Lizzie draw aside from the threshold of the lounge to admit Buck, who was immediately aware of the astonished expression on Harvey Delaney's countenance.

Thunderstruck, crestfallen, Delaney gaped at the big fellow from Dry Creek, and then looked through the windows again to catch a final glimpse of the robed figure on the white horse as the latter re-entered the thickets. A moment afterwards the tall cattleman was listening to Buck's drawling tones.

"Looks like somebody has been playin' a joke on me," Buck observed. "I expected the ranch to be surrounded by outlaws. Can anyone explain this note to me?"

"You'd better ask Mr. Delaney," Mary answered, shooting a glance at the discomfited rancher who was her neighbour. "It was his idea."

Harvey Delaney eyed Buck sheepishly, and noticed that he was fingering the missive that Spooky had been instructed to deliver.

"Forget it, Grant," the cattleman said. "It was just a little misunderstanding, but it's all straightened out now."

He turned and picked up his hat, and then, making some reference to a certain business appointment that he had at his ranch, he made his way towards the door.

Helen and Mary accompanied him as far as the porch, both of them being anxious to show that they were not "bad friends" with him on account of what had happened, and it was during the brief absence of the two girls that Holmes spoke in an aside to Buck.

"Who was the bogus Phantom Rider we just saw on the edge of the brush?" he asked. "Spooky?"

"Sure," Buck declared. "As soon as he gave me the low-down I told him he'd better take my place."

"And where did he pick up the white bronc? That wasn't your horse, Silver."

"No," Buck said with a smile. "That's where the laugh comes in. Spooky lifted it from the north pasture of the Delaney ranch. He'll be on his way back there with it now."

Holmes chuckled softly, but managed to subdue his mirth when Helen and Mary reappeared in the lounge, and

a little while later announced that he must return to town.

Departing, he left Buck with the two girls, and soon after the judge had gone Helen Moore went upstairs to attend to Blake, the railroad agent, who was still lying in the room to which he had been carried the previous night.

Buck, therefore, found himself alone with Mary, and was engaged in conversation with her when Spooky showed up at the outfit. Then, with the afternoon wearing on, the stalwart nester from Dry Creek suggested to his hostess that a gallop across the range would not come amiss.

It was a proposal to which Mary readily assented, and before long the two of them were riding off through Hidden Valley, little dreaming that ere they saw the Grayson ranch again they were to figure in an unexpected adventure.

Redskin Allies

ABOUT the time that Buck and Mary set out to enjoy a gallop across the range, a crowd of men might have been seen outside a remote cabin in the hills.

The men in question were the outlaws who had been terrorising Beuson County, and the cabin was their hide-away and rendezvous. It was here that Dirk had put in an appearance after a brief interview with the mysterious leader of the gang, and from the saddle of his horse he was now repeating his chief's orders to the other members of the band.

"The boss wants us to run off a bunch of Mary Grayson's cattle," he declared. "They're located on the prairie west of Sandstone Bluff, and there's three punchers in charge of 'em."

"Sandstone Bluff?" echoed Keeler. "That's pretty close to the ranch, ain't it? We're liable to have the whole outfit down on us before we get far away with the herd."

"No," Dirk retorted. "The boss has decided on his new men. They'll cover our raid and hold up the main body of the Grayson cowboys if the alarm is given."

The other rustlers looked at one another, and then the ruffian known as Gabe voiced a query.

"Who are the new men?" he demanded.

"Red Eagle and his renegades, from the reservation. Yep—Indians. The boss has sent word to them to meet us near their camp."

"Can we bank on them?" another of the outlaws growled.

"Sure," answered Dirk. "Red Eagle's father is friendly to white folks—realises there ain't no sense in bein' anything else. But Red Eagle and some of the young braves are allus ready for trouble, especially if there's any dough in it. Come on, you fellows had better mount up. We've a lotta ridin' to do."

The rest of the gangsters were soon astride their ponies, and at the head of the outlaw band Dirk then led the way through the hills, striking deeper into the barren fastnesses of the mountain country until an hour later he espied another group of horsemen approaching from the opposite direction.

They were Indians of a degenerate breed, rigged out incongruously in garments that were a compromise between the picturesque attire of their forefathers and the clothing of civilisation. They were armed, too, with revolvers of the latest pattern, traded to them secretly by whites who had ignored the regulations of the Government.

Civilisation had done little to improve

(Continued on page 23)

"FEDERAL AGENT"

(Continued from page 18)

in a soft, quiet tone of voice. "It will be a second honeymoon."

"I would like a few words with you, Jule," insisted Vilma. "It will be as well if we go to the laboratory. We can talk and then you can help me destroy everything. Mullins had better come with us."

"Will you please wait here?" Recard smiled at the girl as he followed his wife.

The girl gasped when the curtains parted and there stood Bob Woods.

"You promised me twenty-four hours."

"You tricked me," Bob countered. "It was all lies that you told me. Swearing to hate Recard, when all the time you're planning to go off with him. It's plain you aim to rob Sanderson of his formula, and then vamoose south with Recard with not only the formula, but the money."

"Not so loud—they'll hear you." The girl had gone very white. "I swear I hate Recard. Your coming here is likely to ruin everything. Why didn't you trust me?"

"Because I got back to the Santa Barbara to find my friend dead—throttled."

"You mean they killed Wilson?" the girl gasped. "I did not know. After leaving Lynch's room I met Recard by appointment—I did not even tell him of the gramophone record. I know nothing of your assistant's death. You must believe me, because I have Recard almost in my power. Do not ruin everything now."

"I've had enough of this," rasped Woods. "I've got you all in this dump and I reckon I can pin enough on all of you. I'm going to ring the police and get a flying squad here."

"Don't touch that 'phone!" begged the girl. "It's connected with Recard's laboratory."

But Bob Woods had taken the receiver from its hook. He raised the 'phone as if about to call a number and all he heard was an insistent buzzing. He hung up and stared at the girl.

"I wish I could believe you."

"They're coming down the stairs," whispered the girl. "You're trapped! Your only chance is to play up to me." She laid a finger on her lips, and then raised her voice. "Thought yourself clever, trailing us here. Well, you've been a bit too clever. I've tricked you into warning my friends."

"Keep still!" came the voice of Recard from behind heavy curtains. "One move and you're a dead man. Better raise your hands."

Slowly Bob raised his hands. The curtains were flung back, and Recard, Mullins and Vilma came into the room.

"Well done, Helen," approved Recard. "And now, Mr. Agent, have you anything to say before I shoot?"

"You don't think I should have walked into this dump without protecting myself," sneered Woods. "I've got other men besides Wilson trailing me."

"Better kill him," hissed Vilma.

"Search him," ordered Recard to Mullins.

Mullins frisked Woods and removed a gun, whilst Recard kept the Federal Agent covered.

"What are you going to do with him?" demanded Vilma Santos.

"We do not want to leave anything

in this house that might be used against us," softly spoke Recard. "Mullins, get some rope and lash our friend to that chair." He turned to the woman. "As arranged, you and Mullins will finish the work of destruction, you will then take this interfering fool of a policeman out to the saloon car—I am using the open tourer. Mullins knows what to do with this man when San Francisco has been left many miles behind. I can leave this to you, Mullins."

"It'll be a pleasure, boss."

"You had better keep a close eye on him," Recard went on. "He must not escape. Vilma, you had better get back to the laboratory. I will go now to see Sanderson."

"Yes, we mustn't waste any more time." It was Helen, and she looked intently at the bound man. "You asked for this, flat-foot, and you deserve all that's coming to you." In her hand she had secreted a knife, and she walked across to the chair. She laughed harshly. "I hope you have a pleasant ride. I'm almost sorry I shan't be with you, but I've got a date with Sanderson. As you're not long for this world I'll tell you his hide-out. It is near the Junction crossroads, and Sanderson lives in the old deserted Blue Mill." Her laugh was shrill.

Recard laughed. Little did he know that as the girl stood by the chair of the bound man her hand slid down towards his hands that were bound behind the chair-back.

The girl laughed again and moved away from the chair to stand beside Recard.

"We mustn't keep Sanderson waiting," she hinted.

Bob Woods was alone with Mullins, who sat on a chair with a gun on his knee, and leered at the man he was soon going to kill, whilst upstairs came the sounds of crashing glass—Vilma was smashing up the laboratory and the radio. All the while the Federal Agent was saying at the bonds that secured his wrists.

Fortune favoured him, because Vilma Santos came to the top of the stairs and shouted to Mullins to come and help her. The task was more than she could manage.

When Mullins came back he stared at the chair aghast—it was empty. He had scarce got over his surprise when the gun was wrenched from his hands and powerful fingers were locked round his throat.

Mullins managed to break free, and then a mighty fist landed to the point of the jaw. He went down like a felled ox.

Vilma Santos heard the scuffling and came running down the stairs. Her eyes widened at sight of a battered Mullins sprawled at the foot of the stairs. One wrist was circled by a handcuff. Bob showed no mercy, and seized her before she could escape.

She screamed and tried to bite and claw, but his hands were like steel. There was a click, and then Bob stood back to survey his work. There was a handcuff on both their wrists, and the chain went between the stout iron banisters.

"You two can stay there till I come back for you," he mocked. "I might add, madam, that I'm doing you a service. Recard intended to walk out on you for that other dame, and never intended

to meet you at midnight. Mullins would have met Recard and the girl later, but you wouldn't have been with them. I trust your darling Jule had not planned the same end for you as he had for me. Now I must leave you two for a while. I hope you have a nice friendly talk whilst I'm gone."

As Bob tore through the night he prayed he would reach the Blue Mill in time.

Helen in Her True Colours

ON arrival at the Blue Mill Helen admitted Recard to the old house.

The crook kept his hand near his hip, as if suspicious of a trap.

"This place seems deserted."

"It suited the professor," explained the girl. "Somebody was killed here, and as a result they can never let the place. The professor got it very cheap, and I don't suppose anyone knows he comes here as this road is seldom used—it leads to a disused quarry. Apart from this room"—she opened a door—"the whole house is bare, except for the cellars. Professor Sanderson is evidently down in the cellars, where he has done all his experiments."

Assured that all was well, Recard allowed the girl to lead him through the old place. She knocked at the doors of the laboratory, and when there was no answer, entered. She disappeared into the blackness and a light was switched on.

Recard looked round. This was evidently the place where Sanderson carried out his experiments.

"Where is the professor?"

"Like all professors very bad on appointments," Helen answered. "I told him that you would be here about nine. He's bound to be here at any moment. At any rate, while we're waiting you can have a look at the formula. The old fool trusts me with all his keys."

From the safe she took out a thick roll of parchment and handed it to Recard.

"With your knowledge of chemistry you should be able to understand this. Anything you don't fathom the professor will tell you when he arrives. There is a bench over there."

Recard unfolded the roll of parchment and smoothed it out on the bench. He was so eager that he did not observe the fierce light that blazed in the girl's eyes.

After a while Recard looked round.

"I can't make much of this," he said.

"You're sure it is the formula?"

"No, that isn't the formula." The girl's hand came from behind her back and it held a gun. "I've got you at last, Recard!"

"What do you mean?"

"You're at my mercy."

"So you are a double-crossing Federal Agent?"

"No, I'm Helen Lynch!" she cried.

"The sister of Jack Lynch, the man you murdered by shooting in the back."

Recard gaped at her as if he could not believe what he had heard.

"My brother told me a lot about the Sanderson case, and it was I who managed to find this hide-out of the professor's," Helen told him. "When you murdered my brother I swore to get even, and got the professor to act as a go-between." She gave a short, bitter

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laugh. "I learnt something of the secrets of this laboratory and what is behind those steel doors."

Recard looked at the doors and they seemed to fill his evil soul with terror.

"What do you want of me?"

"I'm going to hand out to you the fate you deserve." Still keeping him covered she moved across the laboratory. "When I press on this lever these doors swing back; when they close it is a slow death by suffocation for anyone that is imprisoned."

"You mean——"

"That like a rat you can die," Helen shouted. "You showed my brother no mercy and now it's your turn. You killed Wilson Well, you can think of my brother, Wilson, and others that you have murdered as slowly you begin to suffocate."

"You'll go to the chair for this."

"That wouldn't worry me, but they may never find out. This shall be the perfect crime. I've told Professor Sanderson that it is to-morrow you buy the formula. You came here a day before and it is obvious that you have tried to steal the formula. Somehow you enter the gas chamber and stumbling against a lever close the doors, trapping yourself. You fail to escape and die miserably."

"Think of the money you are going to lose." Recard's eyes took in the whole place for some means of attacking this girl. "Besides, I didn't kill your brother."

"You gave the orders."

"I gave orders for Lynch to be stopped. Lynch would not stop and in the gun fight was——"

"Shot in the back," Helen interrupted. "Lies won't save you, Recard. You'll tell me in a moment you didn't tell that skunk Mullins to murder that Federal Agent. It may interest you to know that whilst I was talking I slipped him a knife, and if I know anything of him Mullins and your wife will be his prisoners."

"So you've been double-crossing me all the time?" He made a step forward as if he would leap at her.

The gun never wavered.

"Another step, Recard, and this gun goes off. I know how to handle a gun and I can't miss."

Recard hesitated. If he tried a rush she would fire and fire to kill. If he were not to die a horrible death he must find some way immediately. If he could think of nothing, then he would hurl himself at her on the chance that she was taken by surprise. He was standing near the long laboratory bench, and he wondered if there was time to grab one of these glass vessels and hurl it at her—he dismissed the idea as hopeless. It was then that he noticed at the end of the bench the light switch.

"You can't kill me like this without giving me a chance." He began to talk to gain time. He held out his hands pleadingly, and managed to edge along the floor. Helen did not suspect because though she saw him move slightly it did not bring him any nearer to her. "I got a right to live," he shouted. "Lynch had shot many of my men, and it he had stopped when ordered he would have been alive to-day."

"Did you give that chance to Wilson?"

"I told one of my men to put him to sleep," lied Recard. "And the fool strangled him. Was that my fault?"

"You're gaining nothing, Recard." Helen began to press on the lever. "Either be shot down or get behind these doors."

His hand slid forward and next moment the laboratory was in darkness.

Recard bent double as Helen fired. The bullet passed over him, and before she could fire again he had flung himself forward to scize her by the wrist. The gun exploded harmlessly again, and then Helen gave a cry of agony as Recard brutally twisted her arm, forcing her to let go of the weapon.

A Fight to a Finish

BOB WOODS found the cross roads, but it was some little while before he came to the Blue Mill.

It was a gloomy old place. He tried the front door and found it locked. Actually, Recard had shot the bolt when Helen had not been watching. Easy for Bob to have broken down the door, but the noise would have warned Recard.

A tour of the house revealed wooden planks laid over some sort of coal chute. They removed easily enough, and a flash of his torch revealed a door into the house.

The sound of two shots and a woman's scream startled him. Helen was in danger. Quickly he dropped down and ran to the door, which was bolted, but his weight soon burst it open. He guessed he would not have been heard because of the noise coming from somewhere close at hand. He heard Helen scream again. With the aid of his torch he picked his way down a gloomy, dirty passage until he came to high doors. He placed his ear to the keyhole.

"I've got you now, my pretty." It was the voice of Recard. "No one ever double-crosses me and gets away with it. You want me to suffocate to death, and so, pretty lady, I guess you can sample some of your own medicine."

Very quietly Bob turned the handle and breathed a sigh of relief that the door was not locked. Moreover, the hinges did not squeak, and he was able to creep into the laboratory like a shadow. A moon cast a fitful shadow and Bob could vaguely glimpse two people struggling on the floor.

"One move and I'll throttle you like I did Wilson," snarled Recard. "Now you're going to tell me how to work these cursed doors—tell me the way to kill you."

Groping fingers found the switch and the laboratory was flooded with light. Bob Woods hurled himself forward at Recard's back.

Though Recard was winded he fought desperately. His clawing hands tried to get at the pistol, but Bob managed to kick it into a corner. Helen crawled away and watched the fight with agonised eyes. It never occurred to her to try to get the gun—she was too absorbed in the fight.

The two men were on their feet, and how her heart leapt as Woods got in a terrific punch to Recard's jaw. Recard went down, but he was game. Out went a leg as the Federal Agent rushed and down sprawled his enemy. Now it was his turn to rush, but Bob Woods doubled his feet under him and shot them out like pistons into the other's chest.

A table covered with bottles and paraphernalia crashed over, and the two men rolled amongst the broken glass. They staggered up, and faced each other before attempting to attack. Suddenly Recard darted to a table and swung up a huge glass jar. The Agent dodged and the jar smashed to pieces against the wall. Locked in each other's arms they rolled over the floor, with each trying to get uppermost. A punch below the belt caused Bob to relax his grip and Recard wriggled free. He grabbed up a chair with the full intention of smashing it down on his victim.

"Look out, Bob!" screamed Helen. Bob Woods twisted sideways and the chair crashed on the floor, but when

Recard swung up the chair for another blow a fist with the force of a mighty battering ram behind it caught Recard and hurled him back. The crook staggered into the long bench that was loaded with test-tubes, retorts, bottles, jars and beakers. The whole lot went over with a sickening crash, and Helen thought that the fight was over, but desperation often lends a man strength. Recard staggered to his feet, his face streaming with blood, and screaming curses rushed forward.

"Take that, you rat!" shouted Bob, and his right landed with a thud to the point of the jaw.

Recard was hurled back to crash once more into the debris. Fear and rage seemed to drive the man mad, and though his hands were cut and bleeding he began to pick up broken bottles to throw at Bob, who had hard work dodging the missiles. Then the crook found an iron bar and tried to smash Bob over the head.

Strong hands wrenched the weapon away and Bob crashed a right and left to the jaw. This time Recard crashed against a cupboard that was loaded with bottles. They smashed and instantly white fumes burst forth.

"It's gas!" screamed Helen. "It's deadly!"

Bob would have rushed forward to try to help the wretched Recard, but Helen grabbed his arm.

"One whiff of that and you haven't a chance." Her voice was shrill with fear. "Come away before it is too late."

The blows that Recard had showered on her and the mental strain were too much for her, and Bob was just in time to catch her in his arms. Some more of the bottles exploded and there was an ominous sizzling noise. A flicker of flame showed in the dense fumes, which were moving towards him like a cloud.

Bob Woods decided that the best thing was to get out of the Blue Mill, and quickly.

But that was far from a simple matter. There was a sharp report and in a flash the choking fumes surrounded them. They coughed and spluttered. They tripped over a smashed table and sprawled on the floor, and when Woods got to his feet his outstretched hands could not find the girl.

"Where are you?" he gasped out.

A faint cry was his answer.

Stooping, he groped about the floor till he found her. The gases were making him faint and dizzy, but somehow he managed to pick up the half-fainting girl in his arms. Now he had no idea which was the way out of the laboratory till another sharp explosion gave him a rough idea of his bearings. What a relief to find himself out in a passage. Now he could use his torch.

A glance back showed that the laboratory was in flames, and he did not know how soon it would be before the explosives would go up like a volcano. At last he reached the chute, and he was in such an exhausted condition that he had to rest to get back his strength. Luckily, the air revived the girl, so that she was able with his assistance to clamber upwards. A moment later they were in the garden. They raced to the car, and scarce had they reached it when the Blue Mill rocked under a violent explosion.

"Best thing we can do is to get a call through to the fire squad," decided Bob. "That place will be ablaze in two shakes. Way goes old Sanderson's formula."

(Continued on page 27)

"MURDER ON A BRIDLE PATH"

(Continued from page 12)

"He's the one that did it!" he cried. "I tell you he killed her!"

"Aw, you're crazy!" roared the stable manager. "You're trying to hang it on to me."

"Quiet!" thundered Piper. "What are you three doing here?"

Barbara was the first to speak.

"Go on, Eddie," she said, "you'd better tell him."

"All right," Eddie stepped forward. "You see, Violet gave this fellow Wells nine hundred dollars."

"What!" howled Piper.

"We found an entry in her diary," Eddie held out the little book Barbara had taken from a drawer of the dressing-table in the bed-room of the flat. He pointed to an entry which Piper read aloud:

"Gave Latigo nine hundred dollars to put on Wallaby."

Why didn't you tell me about this before?"

"Well," Eddie replied, "we didn't think it was important."

"Oh, again you didn't think it was important!" raged the inspector, and whirled round on Wells. "Well, Mr. Latigo Wells, it looks like you've got some explaining to do. She gave you the money, and when she couldn't get it back you killed her."

Miss Withers sailed along the yard, and he shouted to her above the trembling manager's protests:

"I think we've got him, Hildegarde."

"Wait a minute," said she importantly. "I want to tell you something."

He stepped aside with her, and a whispered conversation ensued, during which Eddie and Barbara looked at one another and at Don.

Finally Piper stalked over to Don.

"Oh, Gregg," he said in an ominously quiet voice, "where did you go when you left the Turkish baths?"

"Why, I had my breakfast there," was the reply, "and then I went to the flat."

"What are you lying for? You tried to rent a horse to follow Violet Feverel. Why did you want to follow her?"

A telephone bell shrilled in the office, and Wells made a movement which was instantly stayed by the inspector.

"I'll take it," said Miss Withers. "I'll tell them you're in conference, Mr. Wells."

She sped off down the yard, and Piper faced Don again.

"You may as well spill it, Gregg," he gritted. "A wrecked bicycle was found near the spot where the girl was killed."

"So what?" challenged Don.

"That bicycle was stolen from across the street, and you were seen doing it. A little piece of cloth was caught in the sprocket wheel—dark cloth!" Piper picked up the skirt of Don's overcoat and found a little tear in it—a tear on which all eyes became focused.

"Say, wait a minute—" Don began hoarsely.

But Piper would not listen.

"When you couldn't rent a horse," he accused sternly, "you stole a bicycle, and you just happened to ride in the park where Violet Feverel was murdered."

"I did follow her," admitted Don frantically. "But I never saw her. I ran into a tree—"

Miss Withers came running up, a trifle scant of breath.

"It was Mr. Schultz, the handwriting expert," she panted.

"What did he want?" snapped Piper.

"He says," replied Miss Withers, "that the forged court order was in Pat Gregg's handwriting."

Piper emitted an ejaculation that sounded uncommonly like an oath.

"Well, how'd you like that?" he howled. "So your father forged the court order, eh, Gregg? Well, maybe you'll talk now, and maybe your father'll talk. Kane, get another car from headquarters and take 'em out to the Gregg home, all of 'em."

"Yes, sir," said Kane dutifully, and he made use of the telephone in the office.

The Knotted Sheet

DAYLIGHT had faded into dusk when the squad car containing Detective-Inspector Piper and Miss Withers drew up outside the front steps of the ugly house on Long Island, and in the gloom the place bore a more sinister aspect than ever.

The two descended from the car and ascended to the porch, but a repeated ringing of the bell and pounding of the knocker failed to elicit any response from within.

"Nobody home!" growled Piper.

"If I lived in a place like this," commented Miss Withers, "I wouldn't stay home, either."

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"Well, a locked house never stopped me yet," Piper boasted. "If there's anyone in there at all, I'm going to sneak up on them."

He went off to look for an unfastened window, and presently Miss Withers tried the handle of the door, and found that the door would open.

She stepped rather timorously into the hall, which was in darkness, and she had groped her way to the stairs when she heard a crash in the back parlour. Piper had found one of its windows unfastened and had raised the sash and climbed in over the sill; but he had blundered against a table which overturned, and as he fell to the floor with it he had caught his hand in the shade of a reading-lamp, which had been sent flying.

He was rising to his feet and flinging the lampshade from him when Miss Withers reached the doorway of the room and cried out in a voice she herself did not recognise:

"Stand still, I've got you covered!"

Piper stood perfectly still, and then she found the switch and flooded the room with light.

"Relax, Hildegarde, relax," rebuked Piper, not without relief, and in some embarrassment she dropped the hand she had been pointing as though it were a gun.

In the hall he switched on more lights. "The place seems kind of empty," he remarked. "I wonder where everybody is."

"I don't know," she said; "but old man Gregg's home, that's a cinch. Come on."

They climbed the stairs together. "How did you get in, anyway?" asked Piper.

"The door wasn't locked," she replied, and it was his turn to feel foolish.

The door of Patrick Gregg's bedroom was wide open when they reached it, but the bed was empty.

"He's gone!" exclaimed Piper blankly.

"Right again, Osear," said Miss Withers.

"Do you suppose somebody could have tipped him off we were coming?" "It's possible," she conceded, "but I have an idea where he might be."

She led the way up the second flight of stairs and she pointed mutely to the closed door of the room in which she had looked through a telescope.

Piper opened the door and she reached round it to switch on the lights. Patrick Gregg was in the chair behind the desk in his dressing-gown, his face flat upon its leatherette surface, one arm close to his head, the other stretched out towards an inkstand as though it had fallen away from the telescope.

Piper felt for a pulse which had long since ceased to beat, and Miss Withers explained about the telescope.

"Umph!" grunted the inspector. "Looking at the races this afternoon, that's what did it. The doctor said he couldn't stand any excitement." He snapped thumb and finger in annoyance. "He would have to pop off at a time like this."

"I'm not so sure he popped off," said Miss Withers, and that caused him to examine the body more closely. Presently he went down on his knees, and he found red marks round the old man's bare ankles.

"Looks as though they've been tied," he said, and rose thoughtfully. "You know, Hildegarde, he might have been murdered at that. But how did he—"

"I think I know," she interrupted. "Come on!"

They descended to the bed-room, and there she pointed out some sand upon

the carpet, near the bed, which she had noticed that morning.

"If he had been sandbagged," she said, "it wouldn't show more than a lump on his head, would it? And look!"

She pulled out the bottom of a sheet, the corner of which was knotted.

"It was like that this morning," she said.

"Knotted!" exclaimed Piper. "And his ankles are chafed! That might mean that somebody—"

He broke off to look up at the ceiling. There were heavy beams across it, and in one of the beams there was a big hook—almost directly over the bed.

"Look!" he cried, and stood up on the bed to examine the hook. It had been pulled out of shape as though by a weight almost too much for it.

"Something's been tied around here!" he proclaimed excitedly.

Miss Withers stared from the knotted sheet to the hook.

"Osear," she said suddenly, "he dreamt he was swinging like a pendulum—he told me so! Somebody tried to kill him this morning! He was hit on the back of the head with a sandbag and hung up there by his heels!"

"Uhuh!" Piper got down from the bed. "That would make the blood run into his head so it would look like he had a stroke."

"Whoever did it," decided Miss Withers, "tried it this morning, but something happened, so they came back this afternoon."

"Yeah," objected Piper, "but if he was killed here how did his body get up in that turret room?"

"Must have been carried there," she replied, "so that it would look as if the excitement of the races killed him."

"You've got it!"

A sound down in the hall as of a door being closed sent them out on to the landing, and over the banisters Piper caught sight of Thomas, who had stared at the squad car in the drive before he entered the house.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" shouted the inspector, and swept down the stairs. "Where've you been?"

Thomas stopped short, holding his bowler hat between his hands.

"Is anything wrong, sir?" he asked.

"Never mind that," snapped Piper.

"Where've you been?"

"Mr. Gregg said I might go to the races, sir, at Belmont Park," the butler replied.

"Oh, he did, eh? What time did you leave the house?"

"Why, it—it was shortly after lunch, sir. Pardon me, but are you alone in the house?"

"Why?" demanded Piper sharply.

"Mr. Gregg's up in his room, isn't he?"

"Yes, sir, of course." The butler appeared to be worried. "I was wondering where Joey was."

"Joey?"

"That's the cripple boy who works here," explained Miss Withers, who had followed the inspector down. "He opened the door this morning."

"Oh, yeah," Piper remembered.

"Was he here when you left?"

"Yes, sir, he was," Thomas replied.

"I'm his father, you know. The boy is not well, but there's no harm in him. Mr. Gregg will tell you—"

"Mr. Gregg won't tell me anything!" rasped Piper. "He's dead!"

"Dead?" The butler looked flabbergasted. "Why—why I—I left him all right this afternoon. Poor Master Don, he'll be broken up over this. He'll regret the quarrel."

"What quarrel?" Piper almost shouted.

"Oh, nothing, sir—nothing."

"Come on, what quarrel? What was it about?"

Thomas bit his lip and stared at Miss Withers, who was regarding him intently.

"It—it was— Well, Mr. Gregg thought Master Don had killed Miss Violet," he mumbled.

"He did, eh? What made him think that?"

"I can't imagine, sir."

"Listen, the—" The strident note of a motor horn out in the drive caused the inspector to break off abruptly. "Wait a minute!" he commanded. "I'll attend to that—and you stay right here!"

He went to the front door, opened it, and strode out on to the porch.

"By the way, Thomas," said Miss Withers in a friendly sort of fashion, "who won the big handicap?"

"Wallaby, ma'am," replied the butler.

"Did you have a bet on him?"

"I would have liked to, ma'am."

"Anyone who did have a bet on him won a lot of money, didn't they?"

"Yes," replied Thomas, "a lot of money."

Despite the inspector's instructions he walked slowly up the stairs, and she did not try to stop him. But after he had disappeared round the bend at the half-landing she, too, slowly ascended.

Caught!

THE car which had arrived in the drive was the one Kane had obtained from headquarters, and it contained Don Gregg, Barbara, Eddie Fry, and Latigo Wells—to say nothing of several plain-clothes men.

On Piper's instructions the four were marched into the hall, Kane bringing up the rear, and there Eddie Fry looked at Don and said:

"Gregg, I think we ought to tell him everything."

"I do, too," declared Barbara.

"Well, somebody'd better tell me something!" snarled Piper. "What is it?"

Eddie held out a very small piece of paper.

"It's a page that Don tore out of Violet's diary," he said. "She hated old man Gregg. She says on it that she'd like to kill him."

Piper snatched at the paper, read what was written on it, and held it behind his back.

"But somebody killed her first, eh?" he said caustically. "Maybe it was the same person that had a quarrel with your father this morning, Gregg!"

"I don't see—" Don began angrily.

"Oh, you don't see, eh?" roared Piper. "Where were you this afternoon before I saw you at the stables?"

"I spent the afternoon with these people," Don indicated Eddie and Barbara, and Eddie nodded confirmation.

"You were pretty sore at your father, weren't you?" said Piper. "Were you sore enough to kill him?"

"Kill him?" gasped Don

"We found your father upstairs, dead!"

By the time Miss Withers had reached the hallway of the first floor Thomas had disappeared. She was looking about her when a shuffling sound on the upper stairs caused her to turn about, and she saw the cripple limping downwards.

She met him at the bottom of the

flight, and he started slightly as she faced him.

"Where have you been, Joey?" she inquired.

"Upstairs, ma'am," he replied.

"What were you doing up there?"

"That's where I live—me and my father."

She raised her brows a trifle, but forbore to ask any more questions.

"All right, Joey," she said, and watched him as he limped away to the landing and went down the lower stairs.

In the hall Piper was blazing at Don Gregg when the cripple endeavoured to slip past him.

"Hi, you!" bellowed the detective.

"Where're you going?"

"To the stables, sir," was the reply.

"Well, forget about the stables! Stick around here!"

Joey's rather wild eyes were rebellious, but he leaned against the wall, not daring to disobey the police.

Miss Withers heard the harsh command, then crept up the second flight of stairs. Beyond the room in which Patrick Gregg was sprawled dead across his desk there were five more stairs, and at the top of them a door. She opened the door and slipped into a bedroom obviously under the roof of the turret.

The ceiling sloped down on either side of it, as she discovered after she had switched on a light, and it was very meagrely furnished. Near the window there was a double bed, and near the door there was a dressing-table of stained deal. In the wall which had no slope there was a cupboard, and she opened its door.

On the floor inside lay a long and narrow bag from which sand had leaked, and in a corner an air rifle was propped against the wall.

She backed out from the cupboard and went to the dressing-table, and she did not notice that the door of the room, which she had closed, was now open a couple of inches.

On the dressing-table, beside a candlestick, there was a cardboard box. She opened the box and from it poured some BB shots into the palm of her gloved hand and studied them.

She was putting the shots back into the box when the door swung wide, and she turned to see the butler standing there with a most malignant expression on his thin face.

"Thomas!" she gasped.

"Did you call, ma'am?"

She was far too scared to answer, and she shrank against the wall as he closed the door and leaned menacingly over the side of the dressing-table.

"You know, don't you?" he said, the light of madness in his staring eyes.

"You know everything?"

With one claw-like hand outstretched, he moved round the dressing-table, and from behind it and the wall snatched up an object that made her shudder—a garden hoe with a horseshoe wired to its blade. She was in deadly fear of her own life, but she found her voice.

"So that's how you killed Violet Feverel?" she said, almost in a whisper.

"Yes," he returned, raising the strange weapon, "but you'll never tell a soul, because you'll never get out of this room alive!"

Down in the hall, Piper had accused Don Gregg of having had a violent quarrel with his father in the morning.

"What was it about?" he demanded.

"Nothing important," stated Don.

"That isn't what Thomas told me."

"Thomas?" the young man echoed in surprise.

"Yeah, he told me all about it."

Don became furious at what he

considered to be a piece of treachery.

"Well, did he tell you he was the one that got me out of gaol?" he stormed.

"Oh," drawled Piper, "so it was Thomas?"

He scratched first his chin and then the back of his neck.

"Well, now, that's funny," he mused.

There was nothing funny to Miss Withers about Thomas' revelations, up in the room under the roof of the turret. She listened because she had to listen, but her heart was pounding against her ribs.

"My son was crippled," the butler stated fiercely, "by one of that old man's horses. I saved and saved for years and years so that he could be cured, and then I gave nine hundred dollars to old man Gregg to bet on Wallaby because that would have made it enough. But he stole it. He gave it to Violet Feverel for Don's alimony!"

His voice rose to a shriek.

"I went to her, after he had told me, but she laughed at me. I got 'em both—Violet Feverel in the park, and old man Gregg in his bed!"

Maniacal laughter filled the room.

"I carried him up to his study so that he could see the horses for ever and ever and ever!"

Raising the hoe above his head by its handle, he struck suddenly, but Miss Withers ducked in time to evade the blow and flew out past him on to the landing.

"Oscar!" she screamed at the top of her voice. "Oscar!"

Thomas rushed out at her, aiming another blow at her head, but again she evaded the horrible weapon, and she stumbled down the stairs with the madman after her. On the floor below he reached over the banisters to hurl the thing at her, but the banisters gave way and he pitched headlong downwards, screeching horribly, and fell in a crumpled heap almost at Piper's feet.

On the following afternoon Miss Withers leaned forward in a chair at the end of the inspector's desk in his office at headquarters. Eddie Fry and Barbara had got married that morning, and were on their way to Canada for their honeymoon, but there was still something on the spinster's mind.

"There's one remaining point I'd like cleared up," she said.

"What?" asked Piper.

She took a briar pipe from her hand-bag and pushed it across the desk to him.

"The owner of that pipe has false teeth, but Thomas' teeth were his own

—such as they were—discoloured and decayed for anyone to see. Yet I found that pipe in the park near the body!"

"So you think the murderer must be still at large, after all?" suggested Piper with playful sarcasm.

"Oscar," she chided, "I'm not all that funny!"

Dr. Charles Bloom walked into the room, and Piper held up the pipe.

"Hallo, doc," he said. "Ever see that before?"

The medical examiner took the pipe, and one glance at it was enough.

"Why, yes," he exclaimed, "it's mine! I've been looking for it ever since yesterday morning. Thanks!"

"Wait a minute, doc," chuckled Piper. "You've got some questions to answer. Miss Withers suspects that you don't eat apples. You'd better have a good answer!"

The doctor turned with quite an annoyed expression on his face to the funder of the pipe.

"The answer, Miss Withers," he said stiffly, "is apple-sauce!"

He went straight out, his head in the air, and Piper roared with laughter.

"Trying to pin a murder on the medical examiner!" he gurgled.

Miss Withers promptly whisked a cigar from a box on the desk and jabbed it into his open mouth.

(By permission of Radio Pictures, Ltd., starring James Gleason and Helen Broderick.)

"FEDERAL AGENT"

(Continued from page 24)

"The formula is at a bank—it is quite safe," gasped Helen.

"Well, why did you take Recard to the Blue Mill?" Bob demanded.

"Because I wanted to kill him," answered the girl. "Because he killed my brother, Jack."

"So you're Helen Lynch!" burred Bob. "I knew there was something about your face that was familiar—it was the eyes. Mighty good thing, young lady, I showed up, and Recard got the better of you. You can't go handing out justice that way, though that skunk deserved all that came to him."

After Vilma and Mullins had been handed over to the police and Bob had had a talk with Professor Sanderson on the right person to see in regard to the formula there seemed nothing more to do but go and watch the Blue Mill blazing merrily.

"Helen!" Bob had his arm through hers. "You're alone in the world now, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"Are you in a job?"

"I was, but I resigned after Jack died."

"Well, I've got a month's vacation that's starting right now," Bob cried. "I'm going to write my report to-night and post it in the morning, and I'm going to assure head office that for a month I'm going to be missing. I'm going on my honeymoon."

"Who with?" Helen tried to free her arm.

"With you, stupid," Bob grinned. "And I'm marrying you directly after breakfast before you have a chance to change your mind."

(By permission of the British Lion Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Bill Boyd as Bob Woods and Irene Ware as Helen.)
September 26th, 1936.

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"MURDER ON A BRIDLE

PATH."—*Detective-Inspector Oscar*

Piper, James Gleason; Miss Hilde-

garde Withers, Helen Broderick; Violet

Feverel, Sheila Terry; Donald Gregg,

Leslie Fenton; Barbara Foley, Louise

Latimer; Eddie Fry, Owen Davies,

Jnr.; Abe Thomas, Christian Rub;

Joey Thomas, John Arledge; Latigo

Wells, John Carroll; Highpockets,

Willie Best; Dr. Charles Bloom,

Gustav von Seyffertitz; Patrick Gregg,

John Miltern; Detective-Sergeant Kane,

James Donlan; Warden Sylvester

Mahoney, Spencer Charters; Turkish

Bath Attendant, Dewy Robinson;

Schultz, Maurice Case; Dr. Peters,

Frank Reichner.

"FEDERAL AGENT."—*Bob*

Woods, Bill Boyd; Mullins, Charles

A. Browne; Helen, Irene Ware;

Wilson, George Cooper; Vilma Santos,

Lenita Lane; Jule Ricard, Don

Alvarado.

"THE PHANTOM RIDER"

(Continued from page 22)

these Indians—had merely sapped such qualities as their race had formerly possessed, and added new vices to their old ones so that they were ripe for any mischief—and typical of the harm thus wrought amongst a once-proud people was the young brave who commanded this particular party.

He was Red Eagle, a lean, swarthy native with shifty eyes and a face that was ravaged by the effects of whisky. Indeed, his breath stank of the raw spirit as he drew rein before Dirk and lifted a hand in salute.

"I come with my friends here in answer to message," he said. "We slip away from Indian village, and take care that my father, the old chief, does not see us. Him no' like make trouble. Old people all the same—they no' like trouble."

"But you don't mind trouble so long as the pay is good, huh?" Dirk commented with a leer. "Okay, Red Eagle, you'll get plenty of dough if you do as I tell you. Now listen."

He began to make the situation clear to the wayward son of the old Indian chief, and, when the renegades had learned the part that they were to play, they and their allies took the trail that led to Sandstone Bluff.

They rode at a brisk pace, and before the sun had gone down beyond the western peaks of the Guadalupe mountains, they were in sight of their destination—a sweep-of-prairie sloping away from the bluff, and dotted with steers which were peacefully grazing.

Three cowboys were guarding the scattered herd, and Dirk and his cronies did not anticipate much trouble from these. A single volley and the punchers would probably ride for their lives. So the outlaws imagined, at any rate.

"Come on, men," Dirk rapped out, and with a jab of his spurs he sent his horse bounding from a strip of forest through which the rustlers had made their way.

The scoundrelly whites whom he commanded were quick to follow his example, and, meanwhile, in accordance with the pre-arranged plan, the pack of renegade Indians moved northward to the edge of the wood under Red Eagle's leadership—there to take up a position and beat off any of the Grayson hands who might come from the direction of the ranch.

Before the renegades had reached the northern fringe of the timber, shots were ringing out across the expanse of prairie on which the Hidden Valley beeves were feeding. They threw the herd into confusion. But, contrary to expectations, they did not put to flight the three punchers who were in charge of the steers, for these promptly drew their forty-fives and answered the challenge of the gangsters' fusillade.

It was at this very moment that a man and a girl hove into view on the

brow of a low ridge to the north-west, and with the blasts of the revolvers resounding in their ears the two of them pulled up abruptly.

The man and the girl were Buck Grant and Mary Grayson, homeward bound from their gallop across the range, and as they beheld Dirk and his associates bearing down on the stampeding drove of cattle they looked at each other quickly.

"Rustlers!" Buck ejaculated. "And operating in broad daylight! They've got their nerve!"

"I'll say they have," Mary cried. "The ranch is only just beyond Sandstone Bluff there, and my cowboys are bound to hear the shooting."

Buck gripped her by the arm.

"Maybe not," he said. "You head for the outfit and send 'em out here. This is no place for you, anyway."

"What are you going to do?" the girl demanded.

"Give those three herdsmen of yours a little support," was the reply. "I reckon they'll need it. Go on now, you get going."

Mary was loath to leave him, believing that he and the three punchers down on the prairie were likely to meet their death at the hands of the outlaws. But he prevailed upon her to ride for the ranch and give the alarm, and as she began to spur in the direction of her home he galloped to the aid of the men who were facing the onset of the charging outlaws.

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Before Buck had covered a hundred yards of ground, however, he looked back to see if Mary were still making for the ranch that lay beyond the bluff, and, as he turned his head, he at once became aware that she was in danger.

Two renegade Indians were careering in pursuit of her—ruffians who seemed to spring from nowhere; or so it appeared to Buck, who knew nothing of the party which was lurking in the wood.

They had been ordered by Red Eagle to seize Mary, and they were gaining on her rapidly. Consequently, Buck wheeled around and abandoned his former intention of going to the assistance of the three cowboys in charge of the herd, riding to the rescue of the girl instead.

Never before had he taxed his brone, Silver, as he did now, and, leaning forward in the saddle, uttering words of encouragement in the pony's ears, he urged the gallant creature over the mesquite at breakneck speed to take up the chase of the renegades who were out to secure Mary Grayson.

He had not gone far when he realised that he himself had been marked down for pursuit—by two more renegade Indians who suddenly debouched from that wood where, if Buck had only known it, the band of braves under Red Eagle's command were lying in concealment.

Menaced as he was by these unexpected foes, the big Ranger concentrated his attention on the pair of rogues who were striving to overtake Mary, and, though they were making up on her, their horses were no match for Silver. Therefore, Buck was soon abreast of the hindmost of the girl's pursuers, and with a powerful back-handed blow he knocked the fellow clean off his mustang's back.

With a hoarse cry the Redskin plunged to the dust, and the shout that broke from his lips as he fell caused his accomplice to look round sharply. In another instant the latter was tugging out a six-gun, and, still riding at top pace, he tried to drill Buck through the body at point-blank range.

Luckily the white man was within reach of him ere it was possible for him to draw trigger, and, catching him by the wrist with one hand and gripping him by the throat with the other, he succeeded in unhorsing him—though at the cost of parting company with his own brone.

Both men crashed to earth, and the gun flew from the renegade's hand. Then, rolling asunder, they picked themselves up and launched a simultaneous attack, the Redskin leaping at his antagonist pantherishly, but meeting an Anglo-Saxon uppercut that grassed him in the twinkling of an eye.

But, in the meantime, the second pair of Indians who had dashed from the cover of the wood were coming up fast, and with savage yells they sprang from their ponies and closed with Buck, to be joined within a few seconds by the brave whom the Ranger had first assailed.

Some distance away, Mary Grayson brought her horse to a standstill and looked back to see her protector battling furiously with his enemies—saw the dust rising from their feet in clouds as they staggered from side to side in their life-and-death struggle. Then, all at once, Buck seemed to wrench himself free with a tremendous effort, and, swinging his fists, he scattered the three renegades who had been grappling with him.

At that same instant, however, Mary detected a movement on the part of the Indian who had gone down from Buck's uppercut a minute before, and a thrill of horror coursed through her as she saw him scramble to his feet and pluck out a wicked-looking knife whose blade glinted sinisterly in the rays of the setting sun.

"Buck!" Mary screamed, and then covered her face with her hands as the murderous Redskin pounced on the white man from behind.

(To be continued in another smashing episode next week. By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Buck Jones.)

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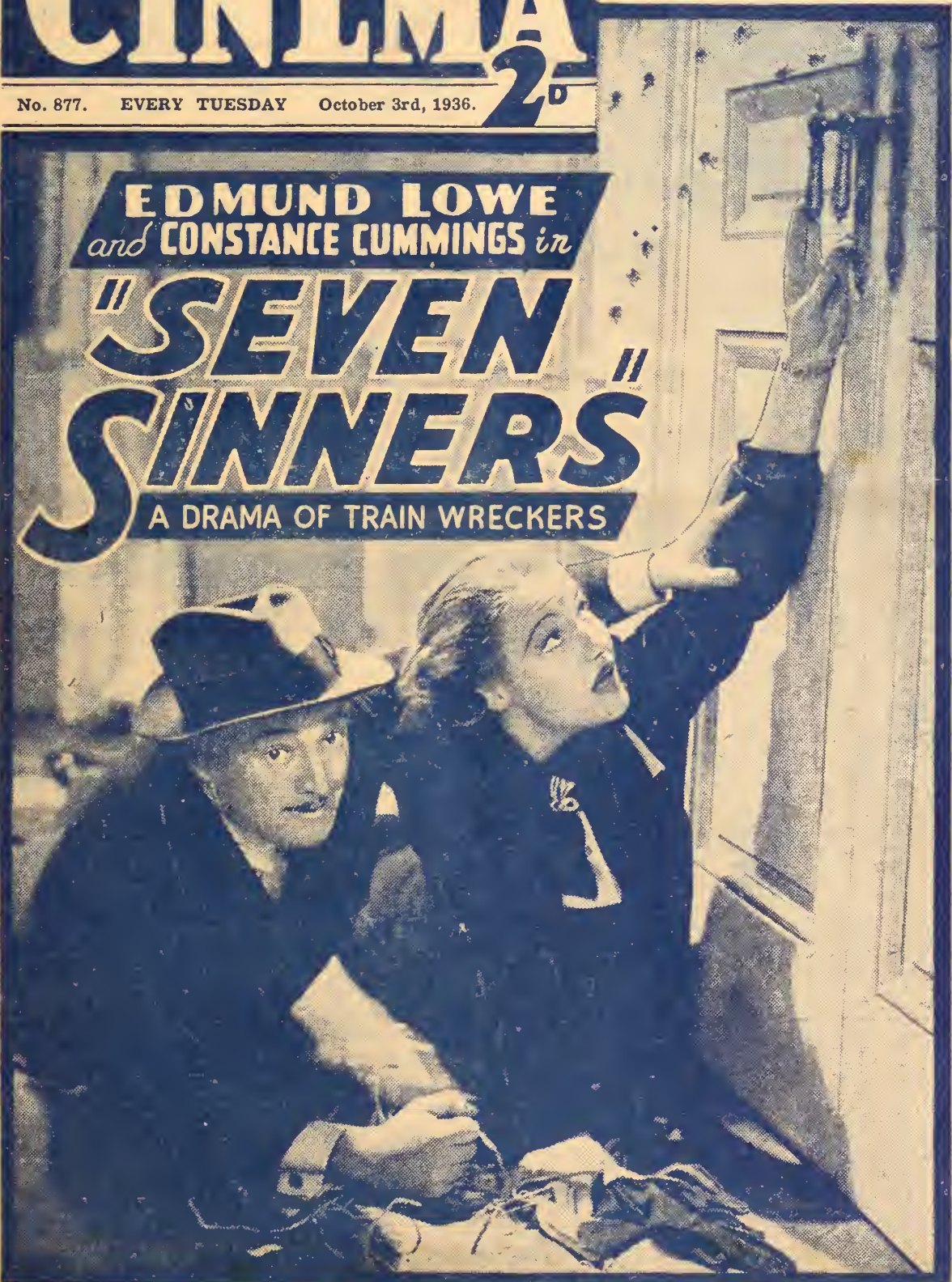
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The Body that Disappeared

JOHN HARWOOD staggered up the stairs of his hotel. He was a little sick of Nice and its everlasting gaieties. That night there had been a big Carnival Ball, and trying to get the festive spirit, he had mingled with the crowds in the guise of Mephistopheles. The American knew no one in Nice, and as a result had drowned his sorrows in more wine than was good for him. He wished the dickens that Felton would turn up so they could leave Nice and be on their way to England and eventually Scotland.

Harwood was the European agent of a big American detective agency, and he had gone to Nice for a holiday. Whilst there he had received instructions that his services were required for the unravelling of a jewel theft in Scotland, and that he was to wait there for Felton, the representative of an insurance company. The necklace lost by Lady Morland, who was an American, was of great value, and the insurance company insisted upon sending a representative. As a result Harwood had to hang around Nice.

On reaching his room he had some difficulty in fitting the key into the lock, but managed it at last. He staggered inside and then pulled up in surprise at sight of a weird thing sprawled across a table.

Harwood laughed. He remembered quite clearly where he had seen this person before. It was the man who occupied the next room. Harwood had got his devil's tail jammed in his own door, and had left the doorkey in his suit. The man next door, wearing the guise of a monk with a monstrosity of a cardboard head mask, had opened the

door with his own key. Harwood chuckled again because they had had several drinks together until the surging crowds had parted them. Apparently, the monk had come to Harwood's room for a drink, and had fallen into a tipsy sleep.

"I'll mix you a corpse reviver," cried Harwood.

There came no answer from the unexpected guest. "Must make it pretty strong," Harwood muttered. "Seems to be out." After a certain amount of trouble he mixed a very strong drink and swayed across the room. "Drink this, old boy." He slapped the man on the shoulder. "Do you a power of good."

There came no response, so Harwood slapped the man a trifle harder, and to his surprise the sleeping man rolled off his chair on to the floor. The grotesque head came off and he found himself staring at a bearded, elderly man, whose cheeks were the colour of chalk. The detective went down on his knees, and the alcoholic fumes were dispelled in a flash when he found the man dead—strangled!

Down to the reception bureau hastened Harwood.

"Look here, my name's Harwood and—"

That was as far as Harwood got, because a hand was laid on his shoulder and he found himself staring at a remarkably attractive girl, who was in travelling clothes with a rug over one arm. She smiled at him.

"I've been looking for you—I'm Felton."

"Good heavens, I thought Felton was a man." Then he saw the manager coming out of his office and remem-

bered. "M'sieur, a word with you," he called. The fat manager bowed, beamed and hastened forward. "There's a dead man in my room. I think he's been murdered!"

The pretty girl gasped and the manager muttered "Mon Dieu!" whilst a reception-clerk, who thought the American gentleman was joking, tittered.

At any rate, Harwood finally convinced everyone that there was a strangled man in his room, and a rush was made upstairs. The detective clutched at a chair when he found his room empty—the body had gone!

Naturally, everyone thought John Harwood was suffering from delusions or strong drink. The manager was quite cross, and Harwood was not pleased with the mocking laughter of Miss Caryl Fenton.

"I tell you I saw a man sprawled in that chair," he told her when the irate manager and his staff had departed, "and that when I slapped him he fell on the floor—dead—strangled. I know I've had quite enough to drink, but I don't care if I live to be a hundred I shall always swear I saw a dead body lying just there." He pointed dramatically.

"May I remind you that you had orders to leave Nice immediately I arrived," said the girl. "And that tonight we've got to be on our way across Europe towards England. Have you forgotten all about Lady Morland's necklace?"

"No, I have not."

"We must leave by the midnight Continental Express." Miss Fenton addressed him as if he were a child. "Kindly come out of your trance and

start packing, because the train leaves in exactly half an hour. You can sleep this off in the train."

It was a reluctant and bewildered John Harwood that boarded the Continental Express. He was now in that state when he was almost sure he had seen a body, but just the slightest bit doubtful that it might have been the result of too many drinks.

The Train Smash

HARWOOD had been ready to leave at a moment's notice and had bought tickets. Naturally, he had got a double sleeper, thinking Fenton was a man, and as a result of the train being full had to repose on luggage in a corridor, whilst his companion slumbered in the luxurious sleeper. Harwood decided that life was very hard, especially as the train rattled and bumped in a manner that made sleep almost impossible.

At last Harwood managed to doze off, and it seemed that he had scarce closed his eyes when he had a rude awakening. First his head hit a wall, then his body seemed to come off the floor to crash against the roof, then he was twisted like a ball and hurled violently to the floor. Vaguely Harwood wondered whether this was some dread nightmare. The sound of splintering wood, breaking glass, terrific crashings and agonised screaming made him realise at last the train was off the lines.

Next sensation was sinking and having a vague conception of the whole coach crumpling up, then his head hit something and everything went black.

When Harwood opened his eyes he was in a place that was not heaven. Everything was red and leaping. His vision cleared and he realised these were flames. The express had crashed at sixty miles an hour and the coach was a blazing wreck. He did not know that his face was blackened, his forehead streaming blood from flying glass, and that his clothes were in tatters,

but he did know he was alive, and if he wished to survive he must get out quick. It was as he moved towards a broken window that he saw the body.

Half protruding from a wrecked seat was the body of a bearded man. It was the dead man that he had seen in his room. Suddenly leaping flames began to roar and crackle close to the body. Fascinated, Harwood crawled forward. The man had been dead some time. The shrewd eyes of the detective were quick to note the dangling sleeve and stiff, blood-stained shirt cuff. There was writing on the cuff—an address. Harwood ripped off the cuff, and as the flames blazed up darted for the window.

Harwood got clear in the nick of time. The coach became a blazing mass. He rolled down a slight slope and was helped to his feet by someone. Vaguely he heard that the express had been deliberately derailed and that it was feared many had perished. He could find out nothing about Miss Fenton, though a rescue worker informed him that a number of the passengers had been conducted to a near-by convent. He was so badly battered and bruised that it was an effort to limp the quarter of a mile to the convent.

A nun admitted him and led him to the cloisters. Here temporary beds had been fitted up for the wounded and hurt. Nowhere was there any sign of the girl, until a Sister in white robes told him in broken English that an American young lady was in the library.

It was Fenton and he was intensely relieved. The girl gave a cry of joy at sight of him. She had feared he had been killed or burnt. She had not been hurt, but had been knocked silly, and had woken up in this convent. Harwood shook her hand warmly, and did not notice the clean-shaven, elderly man seated at a table.

Harwood suddenly remembered about his discovery.

"Listen, Miss Fenton," he cried.

"You know what I told you about seeing a body in my room and how you thought I was crazy because I couldn't produce the corpse. Well, I saw the same man on the express."

"What!" The girl was shocked. "And believe me, this is no hallucination," Harwood grinned triumphantly. "It was the same man, and he had been dead some while. The body vanished from my room and was dumped on the express, and, in my humble opinion, the train was derailed because someone wanted to cover the murder. The express was wrecked so the world should think this man was killed in the smash. If only I could get in touch with the police I'd—"

The girl shook his arm and pointed. Startled, Hopwood glanced round and saw the man at the table. The latter smiled and bowed.

"Permit me to introduce myself, m'sieur," he said. "I'm Paul Turbe, Assistant Prefect of the Paris Police. By the irony of fate I was holiday-making in the district, and naturally I have taken charge. I could not fail to hear some of your remarks about a dead body. Perhaps shock, concussion, or—"

"Nothing," Harwood interrupted with a quick sweep of his hand. "I had that same sort of gag tried on me at Nice and I nearly swallowed it. M'sieu Turbe, I am certain the express was wrecked to hide a murder."

With a slightly mocking smile the Assistant Prefect listened to Harwood's tale, and it was obvious to the detective that the great man thought him demented or suffering from the accident.

"You think I'm crackers," shouted the exasperated Harwood. "Well, I'm so crazy I'm willing to wager a grand—that's a thousand dollars—that the man was murdered and that I'll find the murderer. Will you take the bet? But first let me tell you who I am. I'm Harwood of Pinkerton's."



The detective went down on his knees and he knew in a flash that the man was dead—strangled!

October 3rd, 1936.

"Why look a gift horse in the mouth?" laughed Turbe, with a smile of sympathy for the girl. "Certainly I take your bet."

"Okay!" snapped Harwood. "Now I believe in a straight fight and no trickery. Always start square with your opponent. I'm going to show you eluc number one." He fished out the blood-stained cuff. "That I tore from the sleeve of the body before the flames got busy."

The Limping Man

CARYL FENTON began to believe there was something in Harwood's story, and she consented to go with him to Paris to the address that had been on the cuff, but she made the detective promise that if they found nothing there they were to continue their journey at once.

"We'll both get fired if we don't get to Scotland and settle this necklace case of Lady Morland," the girl complained.

"Send her a wire," suggested Harwood. "Delayed by train smash—fog in Channel—trouble with passports—anything. I reckon I'm on to something. I've found out the dead man's name was Karl Wagner—his badly burnt body was found and identified. Also, I'm all out to show Mister Paul Turbe that we're not the fools he appears to think. When we get to Paris we go straight to that address on the cuff. I imagine Wagner wrote the address, because he has a bad memory. Axel Hoyt may be the next stepping-stone."

They found that the address in Paris was in a fashionable quarter though quiet. A sleek manservant admitted them, and stated with a how that Axel Hoyt resided there and asked the nature of their business. Harwood answered vaguely that it concerned a personal friend of his master. They were admitted to a large room. At a piano sat a rather curious little man. He was playing and sweeping back his hair in the manner of a genius. He did not cease playing, but with a nod indicated chairs.

The opera selection finished, Axel Hoyt rose to his feet. He was garbed in a black frock coat and his face seemed unnaturally white—keen, dark eyes stared at the visitors. When he walked towards them he limped.

"I have just arrived in Paris," stated Harwood. "And I thought it best to come and see you as I have some bad news about a friend of yours." Hoyt raised his eyebrows. "We were train acquaintances, but there was an unfortunate railway accident and your friend was killed. His name was Karl Wagner."

Harwood thought Hoyt gave a slight start.

"So Karl is dead." Hoyt spoke softly. "I am very sorry to hear that. How did you get my address, m'sieu?"

"It was written on a piece of paper," lied Harwood. "It was found when they searched the body. I happened to be coming to Paris with my wife." He dare not look at Caryl. "And I thought the only thing I could do was to let you know."

"I thank you." Hoyt gave a little bow. "Very kind. I did know Wagner, but it was only a business acquaintanceship. I am sorry to hear about this train smash. Thank you for coming to see me. I knew Wagner not very well, so I feel you have come on rather a fruitless errand, but, all the same, I appreciate the kindness."

Harwood had been glancing round the room. He saw a number of photo-

graphs of a raccourse, and as they rose to leave Harwood managed to get a closer view.

"I see you know Buenos Aires raccourse," he remarked. "Nice place."

"I have never been there," Hoyt spoke shortly. "I rent these apartments, and I have not moved the pictures. Good-day, m'sieu! Good-day, madame!"

"I'll wager those pictures of Buenos Aires were his own," whispered Harwood, as they went down the stairs. "He did not want to admit he had been there. Moreover, he was unmoved by the death of Wagner, and said he was sorry to hear about the train smash. I spotted several newspapers that had been flung into a waste-paper basket, and as their front pages talk of nothing else but the disaster, he was bound to have seen about it. Why did he act as if it were news to him?"

"Will you explain why it was necessary to refer to me as your wife?" Caryl demanded.

"I thought you wouldn't mind," Harwood grinned. "I didn't want Hoyt to get suspicious. Caryl, I'm going to break into this place to-night and have a look round."

"You can leave me out," firmly stated the girl. "I've no desire to spend the rest of my life behind bars."

Yet so persuasive was Harwood's tongue that Caryl accompanied him that night when they entered the house by picking the lock of the front door. Harwood explained that he had taken lessons from a crook, whose life he had saved. The house was composed of several flats and Hoyt was on the top floor. They went up the stairs, and with a finger against his lips, the detective signalled for extreme caution. After experimenting with a number of keys and some wire instrument, Harwood managed to open the front door of the flat and they tiptoed inside.

By means of a torch they found their way to the big lounge. The flat seemed extremely quiet and seemed to possess a musty smell. Harwood listened against several doors and could hear no sound. It was two in the morning—awkward if Hoyt were out and returned to find someone busy ransacking the flat. But the beam of light from the torch showed them that Hoyt was not likely to return—the lounge was bare. Harwood flashed the light round—not a stick of furniture.

"They've gone!" came Caryl's hoarse whisper.

"I must have scared the rats," Harwood muttered. "I'll switch on the lights."

The man and girl stared round at the bare, untidy room; dust, bits of shavings, some sacking and a broken plate were all they saw. But a few hours before this room had been crammed with furniture and a grand piano. They had certainly got busy after receiving that visit from Harwood. "Hallo, there's something they couldn't take." Harwood pointed to a clock let into the wall. "I might as well take a look at it."

They were standing there admiring the clock when Harwood decided to open the glass door that encased it—something floated to the floor. The door latch was broken and this piece of paper had been used as a wedge.

"Hallo, look at this." The detective unfolded it and held it out so the girl could see. "An invitation to a Guildhall banquet. Our friend Hoyt must have been a big noise to have been invited."

"Look at the date." Caryl pointed. "It's seven years ago."

Harwood put the invitation into a waistcoat pocket. "Hoyt has been here a good many years, the condition of this piece of paper proves that, and yet he runs because I talk about his friend Wagner—that's how the story reads to me."

Harwood walked to the window and flung up the bottom half. Caryl came to his side to lean on the ledge and stare over Paris.

"Somewhere in this city Hoyt is hiding and—"

The detective ducked because something whined past his ear to smash into the wall behind with a dull thud. Before Caryl could ask what was happening, she was seized by strong fingers and flung to the floor.

"Someone shooting at us," hissed Harwood. "Thank heaven whoever it was scored a miss."

Crack! Crack! The hidden gunner got busy when Harwood tried to peep over the window ledge.

"Don't be a fool," screamed Caryl. "Let's get out of here!"

"Humiliating as it may seem, but I see no other way but to crawl." The detective laughed. "That window-sill is pretty low, so keep as flat as you can. Let's crawl!"

They reached the door, and then came the task of reaching up a band to the door-handle. Caryl was nearest the door, and she managed to reach up to the handle. Scarce had she opened the door than two bullets splintered the woodwork. She did not cry out, and Harwood gave the girl an approving glance. Very slowly they opened the door and wriggled through. With a sigh of relief they got to their feet.

"I think we will leave here before our friends decide to pay us a personal visit." Harwood took her arm. "We will depart at dawn from this unfriendly city and be on our way to England."

"And from there on to Scotland?" asked Caryl.

"No, my dear, not yet. We are going to see the Guildhall," chuckled Harwood. "The fog in the Channel is going to prevent us from having the pleasure of dear Lady Morland's company for another day or two."

The Trail Broadens

THEY crossed the Channel in brilliant sunshine, and Harwood hoped fervently that Lady Morland did not read the weather reports. They had slept on the train and on the boat, so that they did not feel too exhausted when they reached London. Besides, Harwood on a trail was a mass of energy, and it had an inspiring effect on Caryl Fenton. Not till the afternoon did they manage to get into the Guildhall.

A guide showed them round, and in a droning voice rattled off a long monologue upon the history of the Guildhall and of the many events that had happened beneath its marvellous roof. There were forty or fifty people, mostly Americans, being shown round, and Caryl marvelled at the absurd questions asked by some people. A nudge in the ribs made her glance at the detective.

"According to this guide book we shall shortly be shown into the banquet hall, and round the walls are huge photographs of the dinners that have taken place here. I want a good look at those pictures." Harwood indicated the crowd. "Just memorise some of those daft questions that are being asked, because I may want you to delay the guide as long as possible by those pictures. How many people sat down to dine? Did they have roast turkey on the menu—what did the Lord

Mayor wear? Who sat on his right, and why? You should do this fine."

"Thanks for the compliment," Caryl said a trifle crisply.

"And don't shoot your questions till I tip you off," he added. "It's that 1929 picture I want to see most."

Harwood succeeded, through the clever work of Caryl, in getting a good look at the picture of the 1929 Lord Mayor's banquet through a magnifying glass, and his eyes opened wide when he located Hoyt almost at once. Unfortunately the light near the picture was not very good. When the party were shown into a library, Caryl went all hot and cold because Harwood was not with them. What was that crazy idiot up to now?

The guide was now getting to the end of his tale, and come to the part that made him speak with fervour. He might not get a pension, and would be very grateful for any trifling reward the visitors might care to make him—a doctor had warned him that so much talking was straining his vocal cords.

A hoarse cough caused many to fumble in their pockets. And the callous Caryl would ask questions at a moment like this. She smiled contentedly when Harwood appeared from nowhere, but she did not fail to observe the bulge in his coat. They had booked rooms in a large hotel, and in the privacy of his room they had leisure to study the picture of the 1929 banquet which Harwood had stolen from the Guildhall by cutting it out of its frame.

"See, there is Hoyt!" Harwood was peering through the glass. "No mistaking him. See that bearded man quite close to him—that, my sweet, is Wagner. Now it seems to me that there are three others in whom we must take an interest. One is the woman between Hoyt and Wagner, and the other two are the men opposite."

"Why?"

"They look like a group," was his explanation. "I get the impression they were not aware the picture was going to be taken and were discussing some matter. The five seem to be interested in the one of their party doing the talking—that being the guy of whom we can only see the back of his head. The only outstanding feature there is the hand with the cigar."

"The hand is by the ear, and I should say he appreciates a cigar. It is a sort of attitude adopted by a man who wishes to swank about being able to afford expensive cigars. A characteristic gesture, but not very helpful to us. On his left is a woman, who has edged her chair away and is turning to people farther up the table, and so I rule her out of the party. On his right is a man, and as he has turned his head we get a part of the face. I'm going to have special enlargements made."

"What do you propose to do after that?" asked Caryl. "We've got to go to Scotland some time."

Harwood scratched his head with a pencil.

"I have an idea." Caryl pointed to the woman between Hoyt and Wagner. "I know a woman who dresses Society for Court functions, and she is quite discreet. The gown worn by the woman is very distinctive and cost a lot of money. My friend might be able to tell me who designed it, and that might lead us to the establishment which sold the dress."

Caryl's idea proved fruitful. Her friend had a marvellous memory for fashionable designs. She had herself brought out a model like this, and had been incensed because another firm had dared to copy the design.

The firm was still in existence. Off went the sleuths and interviewed a madame, who surrendered to that

"Clue number one," snapped Harwood. "That cuff I tore from the body before the flames got busy."



charming Harwood smile and informed them that the lady was still a client of hers, and that her name was Miss Elizabeth Wentworth and the address: Wentworth Hall, Buckley, Hampshire.

Harwood and Caryl caught the six o'clock train from Waterloo, and their destination was Buckley. They went to the local inn, as Harwood said that innkeepers always knew everything about the locals. They ordered a drink, and Caryl was about to ask Harwood when he proposed to start asking questions, when he took her by the arm and led her to a dart board.

The first two darts stuck in the board, but the third he cast in another direction. It pierced a poster, and Caryl gave a little gasp. The poster proclaimed that that evening, at the mission hall, a whist drive was being held to raise funds for the "Pilgrims of Peace." The vicar would preside. Miss Elizabeth Wentworth, the secretary of the organisation, had her name at the bottom of the poster, and it was through her name that Harwood had flung the dart.

The Whist Drive

HARWOOD drained his glass of beer and announced that he proposed to compete in the whist drive.

Caryl drained her half-pint and spluttered that she was the worst card-player in the world.

"Impossible!" cried Harwood. "At any rate, we'll go to the slaughter together."

"But you'll find the losing lady goes down and the losing man moves up," laughed Caryl. "And what do you propose to do at the whist drive?"

"Take a look at Lizzy and see what I think of her," chuckled the detective. "I shall connive some way to get to the same table, whereupon I intend to whisper something about Hoyt and see what effect it has on her."

They arrived at the mission hall, and the whist drive was preceded by a short service. Harwood nudged Caryl. "See the platform," he said in a

stage whisper. "See the woman with the smart clothes and the fox fur—that's Miss Lizzy Wentworth. Also take a good look at the man on the right of the vicar." He glanced across at a poster on the wall. "That, I imagine, is Sir Charles Webber, the President of the 'Pilgrims of Peace'; and when he turns his head you will notice the likeness to the man opposite Hoyt at the banquet."

"You're right," came her excited whisper.

"Of course we may be on a blind trail, and they may be quite innocent; but I have a hunch they're all mixed up in this game. At any rate, I may be able to tell you more after I have played whist with Miss Wentworth." He gave a quiet chuckle. "I bet old Turbe gets a surprise this evening. He should have got by air mail my clue number two, which is the picture of the Guildhall banquet, and, just to help the poor fellow, I put a tick against Hoyt, Wagner, and Miss Wentworth. I could make good use of that thousand dollars."

"In what way?"

"I might get married," blandly answered Harwood.

"You'd want more than a thousand bucks to persuade any girl to marry you!" scoffed Caryl. "Hallo, what's that bell for?"

"A few words from the dear vicar," whispered Harwood. "And a nod or so from the patrons on the platform."

As far as the two sleuths could gather, the purpose of the "Pilgrims of Peace" was to prevent war at all cost, and funds were required to send a missionary ship that would go round the world trying to persuade belligerent nations to vote at the next League of Nations' conference for world peace. The cause seemed good but quite hopeless to Harwood's idea, but everyone present seemed most enthusiastic. Sir Charles Webber strutted to the front of the platform and said, with chest well stuck out, that he was delighted to see these good people here. Miss Elizabeth Wentworth, in a tired, drawl—

ing voice, spoke of the cause, and mentioned a number of distinguished names—people interested in the cause. She smiled and added that any contribution would be welcome. The vicar announced that his curate would be pleased to receive any cheques or contributions at the platform. From the background a thin-faced man with a very pious expression shuffled forward and said a few words in a rather high-pitched voice.

Harwood looked at Caryl.

"Ever seen him before?"

"He does seem familiar somehow," Caryl wrinkled her delightful nose. "He looks very religious."

"Crooks often do," muttered the detective. "You try and think of someone who walks with a limp. Hallo, there goes the bell. Seconds out of the ring. Here's to the first round."

Caryl found the whist drive a most trying affair. She was soon separated from Harwood, who seemed to lose every hand. Actually, the 'tec was an expert card manipulator, and twice in his eagerness to get moved in the direction of Miss Wentworth, he dealt one of his opponents a hand that contained thirteen hearts—they were trumps. Of course, it was his luck that Miss Wentworth should start at Table 18 and Harwood at 6. It was not till almost the end of the evening that he saw his prey move to Table 15—they were opponents at the same table.

There was still a lot of skirmishing going on at other tables, so the four at No. 15 waited till the clamour died down. Harwood was busy with the cards. He smiled at Miss Wentworth.

"You don't remember me, Miss Wentworth?"

She gave him a puzzled glance.

"I'm sorry, but—"

"It was at the Guildhall banquet seven years ago." His eyes watched her closely. "I was at the next table."

The beautiful Miss Wentworth gave him a very close scrutiny.

"I feel sure you've made a mistake." She spoke in slightly bored tones. "I did attend a banquet, but I don't remember when it was."

"One nine two nine," promptly replied Harwood. "I remember it so well because you were sitting next to a man I knew quite well. Nice man, Axel Hoyt." Now the woman could not check her unmistakable start, but Harwood went on as if he had seen nothing. "I've been abroad for years, but the other day I happened to be in Paris. What a surprise I got to see Hoyt again. I didn't speak to him, but—"

"You are quite mistaken," Miss Wentworth spoke coldly. "Axel Hoyt died three years ago. Would you stop shuffling the cards—you're holding up the game."

Harwood dealt and talked. "I would have sworn it was Hoyt."

"Hoyt is buried in Buckley," the woman said in a cold, rebuking tone of voice. "You can see his grave there if you don't believe me."

Harwood apologised humbly for his mistake and gave so little attention to the game that he trumped his partner's act. What the elderly spinster called the detective is nobody's business—even the vicar was shocked.

When the whist drive was over Miss Wentworth went over to speak with Sir Charles Webber, and they had not been chatting many moments when the curate limped over to them. Harwood, who was sampling a most appalling cup of cocoa, happened to glance across, and it did not surprise him to find three pairs of eyes studying him closely.

"Sweetheart, the plot thickens." He

spoke out of the corner of his mouth.

"I'm not your sweetheart," snapped Caryl. "What's the next move, Bonehead?"

"We stay the night at the village inn, before breakfast we visit the churchyard to see if a certain lady is telling the truth, and after that a visit to the registry of births and deaths, where I expect to do a lot of expert lying to obtain the information I require."

"And I suppose I have to assist, big boy?" She laughed mockingly. "One more day's delay. If we don't both get sacked it will be a miracle."

Harwood's parcel had reached Paul Turbe in Paris. The Assistant Prefect studied the photograph and smiled at the detective's note that this was Clue No. 2, and that as the mystery was almost solved, it would be a good idea if he saw that there were sufficient funds to pay out a cheque for a thousand dollars. Turbe looked at the cardboard cylinder in which the picture had been sent, and it was plain to see that it had been posted at Buckley.

A Second Death

SURE enough they found Hoyt's grave, and Harwood told Caryl that the Buckley Registry office might supply the next link. The girl gazed at the American with incredulous eyes as he talked to the kindly little registrar. They had been married a year and they wanted to call their first child after his wife's uncle, Axel Hoyt. They were faced with a difficulty, as they wanted to use Hoyt's middle name, which was Aloysius, and they were not sure of the spelling. There was much argument in his wife's family over the matter, and as far as Harwood could see, the death certificate was the only means of deciding the matter. How he got the tale over Caryl can never understand, but he succeeded and discovered that Dr. Evans, who lived locally, had attended the supposed death.

It was a bad blow on arrival at Evans' house to learn from his housekeeper that the doctor had received an urgent summons by telegram to a patient in a neighbouring town. The good woman mentioned that he had caught the 9.45, and politely closed the door.

"The train has just left," remarked Harwood, looking at his wrist watch. "But if we hop across the road to that garage we may succeed in hiring a car that will get us there almost as soon. If we can make the station before Evans we'll be in luck."

"Why?"

"My dear Caryl, you ask too many awkward questions," Harwood grinned. "What I shall say to Evans when I locate him I shall try to figure out during the car trip. First let us obtain a car. Come on!"

They succeeded in hiring a powerful open two-seater of a somewhat ancient type. It rattled and shook, and when doing sixty threatened to break up. They had secured a map from the garage, which Caryl spread out on her knees.

"According to this map," the girl said, after they had gone a considerable distance. "We are now within four miles of Ramley, and very shortly we cross the railway line. Then there seems to be a mile beside the railway, and then, for some comic reason, the road again crosses the track."

They reached a level-crossing as the man in charge was about to shut the gates, but their violent honking kept them open. As they flashed past the man shouted something about deserv-

ing to get killed. A minute or so later, hearing a train, they glanced back.

"That's the 9.45," cried Harwood, "Our man's on that train."

"It's a straight stretch and the train's catching up," shouted Caryl. "We can't beat it to the next crossing."

"We can try!" Grimly Harwood bent over the wheel.

It was a hard race, in which Harwood had to admit himself beaten. The train had gained the lead.

"Look!" shouted Caryl, as they came into a straight stretch. "Look at that lorry!"

Even as they watched, a lorry crashed through the gates and stopped right across the line. They saw a man get out and run for dear life. Appalled, they glanced back. A screeching of brakes denoted that the engine driver was applying his brakes, but the speed was too great.

The engine hit the lorry with a crash. The level-crossing was at an embankment and the engine left the line, swiped off part of a signal-box and crashed down an embankment, carrying the three coaches and guard's van with it. There came the sounds of terrific smashings as the coaches were telescoped.

An hour later, Caryl and Harwood were at the Three Feathers Inn, which was situated a quarter of a mile from the scene of the disaster and about a mile from Ramley. The local train had not been carrying many passengers, but the engine-driver and four passengers were dead, with five passengers gravely injured. Harwood was sunk in gloom because Dr. Evans had been in the first coach and was one of the dead.

The Squire of Ramley, who was the Chief Constable of the district, a sergeant, and two policemen had arrived at the inn, and Harwood had made a frank statement of what he had seen.

"It was a deliberate train wreck!" he cried. "That lorry was timed to crash through those gates in order to derail the train. I am a detective, and there was a Dr. Evans on that train with whom I wanted to talk; someone wrecked the train to prevent me speaking to him."

"Rather a sweeping statement!" cried the Chief Constable. "These sort of things don't happen in England."

"Well, it happened to-day!" rasped Harwood. "Do you remember the Continental Express from Nice to Paris that was derailed a few days ago? I see you read about it. As part of the rail had been removed, it is known the train was wrecked for some sinister purpose. Well, I think the same man or gang engineered this disaster."

"I think you're quite right," said a voice that made Harwood and the girl turn round eagerly.

It was Paul Turbe, the Assistant Prefect of Paris.

"What are you doing here?"

"So far, I have been one move behind you, Harwood." Turbe gave a grim smile. "And, frankly, I think that now I have drawn level. I confess I thought your tale about the Continental being deliberately wrecked a lot of nonsense, but I soon found out you were right. I started investigations on my own account, and I must say your picture of the Guildhall banquet was of great value. I was at Burley late last night, but I went to Ramley Station to meet Evans—the wrecker was one move ahead of me."

Harwood introduced the Chief Constable to the Assistant Prefect and the sergeant. The Chief Constable was astounded to hear that it was a case of train wrecking.

"A fiendish murder!" the Constable cried. "Scotland Yard must know of this!"

Paul Turbe beckoned to Harwood to come to one side.

"I have gone over the ground with a fine toothcomb, and frankly I think it is only a matter of hours before I get my man," Turbe smiled. "And your thousand dollars. Now you have played fair by me in giving me two very valuable clues, so I think it right that I should give you a helping hand. On that cuff that you took from the body of Wagner there was not only that address in Paris, but part of a cuff-link." From his pocket he produced the link. "You will observe the rather peculiar palm-leaf design." He fumbled again. "There was nothing on the body of Dr. Evans that was of any assistance, but his cuff-link might interest you. Please note that it is identically the same as that found on Wagner. I made a lot out of these cuff-links—they should help you."

When Turbe had gone Harwood thought for a few minutes, then he hastened to have a few words with the landlord. He returned to Caryl.

"I've just asked the landlord to get through to Buenos Aires Police Department for me. I'm going to have a talk to my friend Mulligan." He laughed. "The whole village is agog because I happen to be phoning someone thousands of miles from here."

"Have you solved the cuff-link clue?" asked Caryl.

"No," he admitted, and frowned. "But these palm-leaves are strangely familiar. I know I've seen them recently, and—" Suddenly he dived his hand into his pocket and pulled out a crumpled handbill. "By gosh, I've got it! Look, Caryl!"

It was the handbill of the whist drive promoted by the Pilgrims of Peace. Their emblem was identically the same—a crossed palm-branch.

By some miracle the landlord got the telephone call to Buenos Aires through

under an hour, and from Mulligan the detective got information that seemed to explain almost everything.

"Mulligan knew all about Hoyt, whom he is sure is not dead," Harwood told Caryl. "Hoyt made South America pretty warm for him by his gun-running and smuggling. There is a small war going on there at the moment, and they have been tipped off that a bunch of international crooks—of whom Hoyt is one—are thought to be scheming to get arms into the country. This missionary campaign is just a fake to cover their latest gun-running activity. One old dame, with whom I played cards with at the drive, told me of the wonderful work done by the mission, and she told me that they had headquarters in London, where they exhibited in a museum all the terrible weapons of war that the Pilgrims were fighting against. Sweetheart, the old car is taking us to London."

"And what shall I tell Lady Morland?" she inquired sweetly.

"I think you'd better have suspected appendicitis," decided Harwood. "That should stall her."

The Pilgrims of Peace

THEY journeyed to London without incident, and soon discovered the headquarters and museum of the Pilgrims of Peace. Harwood gave Caryl a significant glance when they observed the awning outside the building and the plush carpet. From posters outside the detective learnt that the mission ship, John Murdoch, was at Bordeaux, and would be sailing on the Crusade within the next few days.

"I suppose all this business here is to pull wool over the eyes of the police and to fleece the public for more funds," Harwood said with a sneer. "Let's take a look at their museum."

The place was crowded with people, and everywhere the two went they heard people talking in praise of the noble work that was being done by the Pilgrims. There were a great number

of exhibits in glass cases: Bombs, rifle-grenades, aerial torpedoes, trench-mortar shells, smoke shells, gas shells, a howitzer, a field-gun, many types of machine-guns, rifles from all over the world, revolvers, swords and daggers. There were pictures of mine-craters in the No Man's Land of the Great War, and a great number of gruesome war scenes. Besides the war, they showed scenes of the carnage in Abyssinia and Spain.

"Sort of Chamber of Horrors," hissed Harwood. "And don't some of these goody-goody folk wallow in it. Ah, refreshment!" A big man with a scarred face and tray of glasses approached and tendered them a cocktail. "I bet this is pretty poisonous." He glanced after the man. "That fellow seemed to be very interested in us."

"Well, you would walk into this hornet's nest. How peaceful Scotland must be."

"Nonsense!" scoffed the detective. "You're revelling in the excitement. There's a platform over there—let's go and hear what rubbish they're talking."

They mingled with the crowd, and Harwood grinned when he observed on the platform Miss Elizabeth Wentworth, Sir Charles Webber, and Hoyt. The last-named was wearing the garb of a priest. Sir Charles announced that it was wonderful to have this send-off from so many well-wishers.

It would be the work of the mission to bear the palm branch of peace to every country. Loud cheering. With a wave of his hand he indicated the people on the platform. Within a very few minutes they would be leaving here to catch a boat train at Victoria, and it might be many months before they would be fortunate enough to see England again.

Their mission would not be an easy one, and he trusted that the adherents at home would work to keep the cause going and to help with funds, if an appeal for money should be necessary. More cheering. This was followed by



Harwood swung up a big chair and the toughs covered down, not desiring to get hit.

a prayer and a psalm; whereupon Sir Charles indicated that it was time for all good people to go home, as they had their train to catch.

People began to leave, but Harwood hung around because he did not want to miss anything. A queer kind of fellow came up to the detective and began to recite some poem about the John Murdoch, and, when he tried to push the fellow to one side, another apparently half-witted youth appeared and began to talk a lot of nonsense.

"Will you kindly stand to one side?" growled Harwood, and blinked to find three large men that were between him and the exit. Moreover, Caryl had been separated from him, and he could not see her anywhere. The waiter who had served the cocktails appeared with two more men dressed as servants. They crowded round Harwood, and all talked loudly. The detective knew that they were trying to keep him a prisoner; he was in a nasty jam.

Behind him was a table, and on it a few cocktails that had not been finished. "I'll take a drink before I go!" Harwood cried, and made for the table. Still jabbering, the men surged after him.

The reciter was in the lead, and Harwood stared at the fellow's pointed chin speculatively. **Ponk!** His left lifted the surprised fellow clean off his feet. That stopped the jabbering. With angry shouts the men rushed at Harwood, who floored a couple before leaping over the table.

From behind a case appeared Caryl Fenton. She had realized that an attempt was being made to separate them. She had gone with the crowd, and then doubted back when no one was watching. How could she help John to fight all those horrible men?

Harwood was strong, and he swung up a big chair as it it were a stick. The toughs cowered down, not desiring to get hit. Crouching, they began to edge nearer their victim. It was then that the wildly despairing gaze of the girl saw the glass case containing a number of Mills' bombs and the notice that these bombs were alive. **Crash!** With her handbag she had smashed the glass.

"I'll blow you all to bits if you move an inch!" she screamed.

Harwood hurled the chair at the men and bounded to her side to take the bomb from her hand.

"Folk, I have now removed the pin!" he shouted. "I believe three seconds is the time that this pretty toy takes before it explodes." All the while his fingers were pushing the pin back. Now he swung back his arm. "One—two—catch!" He flung it.

Those toughs had not waited. In a mob they scuttled like scared rabbits towards the back of the hall.

"Come on, sweetheart!" Harwood caught the girl's hand. "We've got a train to catch."

They arrived at Victoria with three minutes to spare. Harwood pushed everyone away from the booking-office and secured his tickets. A wild rush towards the train, for the guard had blown his whistle. A first-class carriage door swung open, and as the train began to move Harwood bundled the girl inside. They sank panting into seats.

There was one other passenger, who

seemed engrossed in his paper. A rustle and the paper was lowered.

"I thought you were going to miss the train!" laughed Paul Turbe.

The Tunnel

PAUL TURBE laughed at their surprise.

"I told you, Harwood, I was gaining on you." He laughed heartily. "I might almost say I was a move ahead. Smart work to solve that link clue. I presume you've found out the real work of the Pilgrims of Peace?"

"I have." Harwood mopped his brow. "They did their best to detain us at their museum, but we managed to escape."

"I thought you might have trouble, but I felt certain you would make this train." The Assistant Prefect pulled back the sliding door. "If you put your head outside, you will observe two men at either end of the corridor." Harwood followed the suggestion and saw the men. "Those are detectives from Scotland Yard."

"What are you planning?" Harwood asked as he sank back into his seat.

"To rope in the whole gang." Turbe puffed at his cigar. "This train is a special for the Pilgrims of Peace, so that the whole of the gun-runners are

with us. Only this coach is empty—I had it put on for the benefit of Scotland Yard, Mr. Harwood of Pinkertons, and for myself. Mr. Harwood, I am willing to wave aside the bet that we made, because I think we should work together. There is a big reward for the arrest of these people, and we can share that reward."

"As we seem about all square, at the moment, I'm game," answered Harwood. "Though I think I have a lot of information about which you know very little, but as you no doubt have warrants for the arrest of these Pilgrims, I think it would be best for me to accept your offer."

Paul Turbe listened with a thoughtful air to Harwood's story, and added bits of information that he himself thought helped to link up the whole mystery. He commended Caryl on her bravery.

"Sir Charles, Miss Wentworth, and Hoyt are now in the dining-car." Turbo looked thoughtfully at his cigar. "Why not arrest them on the train? Supposing I go to my table that is near them, and you go and confront them. I can hear everything, and the Scotland Yard men will be handy should trouble arise. When you think the moment has come for the arrest, light a cigarette and I'll leave the car to give the detectives their orders."

The scheme was discussed and approved. Paul Turbe lit a fresh cigar and went along to the dining-car. A few minutes later Caryl and Harwood followed. At a table sat the three conspirators and what a shock they had when Harwood smiled at them. Calmly he pulled up a chair for Caryl and then took the vacant chair next to Miss Wentworth.

"A very pleasant evening," Harwood beamed at them. "I trust you Pilgrims are all in the best of health?"

"What the dickens do you mean by this intrusion?" rasped Sir Charles Webber. The woman and the priest eyed the detective covertly.

"The game is up," answered Harwood. "The Pilgrims of Peace are finished. You're gun-runners." He saw their startled glances. "Now, don't get nasty and try any of that rough stuff you tried to hand out at your headquarters, because this time I have protection."

"You must be out of your mind!" stuttered Sir Charles.

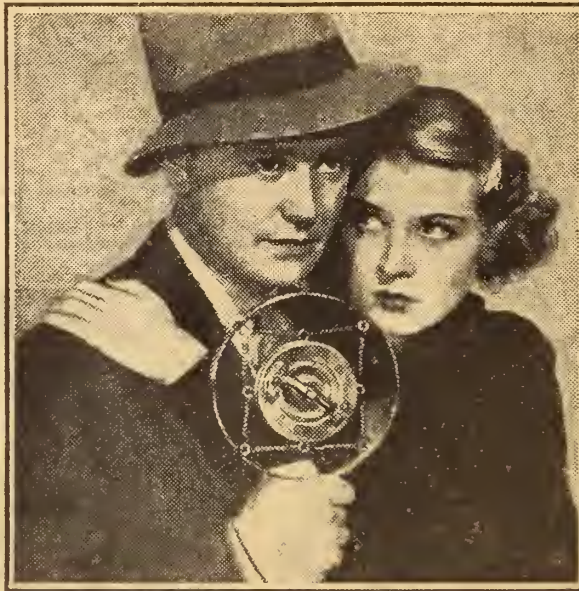
"Wagner was in with you all at one time, but either he knew too much or was difficult, and so you bumped him off," Harwood told them. "Unfortunately you killed him in my room at an hotel in Nice. The body then vanished, and the Nice-Paris express was wrecked—the body appeared in the wreckage."

"In fact, the train had been wrecked to hide the murder. Being a detective I was annoyed, and decided to find out what it was all about, and the trail led me to Paris to the house of M'sieu Axel Hoyt. There I heard a lot of lies, and when I made my next call I found Hoyt had flown."

"Someone then tried to shoot this lady here and myself, but we disappointed this somewhat poor gunman. To cut the story short, my trail led me to Miss Wentworth and you, Sir Charles. Miss Wentworth informed me Hoyt was dead, and there he was standing on the platform."

(Continued on page 26)

NEXT WEEK'S LONG COMPLETE FILM STORIES



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Playtime Over

IN the offices of Thomas & Thomas, solicitors, on the thirty-sixth floor of the Empire Building in New York City, Lawrence Thomas, senior, was awaiting the arrival of Lawrence Thomas, junior. It was already ten o'clock, and a fine summer's morning—but Thomas senior was in a fine winter's temper. He rang his desk bell impatiently for the third time since his arrival.

"My son here yet?" he demanded of the tall lady who answered the summons.

"Just coming in, sir," she told him.

"He won't be a minute."

"What's he doing?"

"Washing his hands, sir. He drove here, and, while putting away his car in the garage—"

"All right, all right! No more excuses! Send him to me at once, washed or unwashed!"

Three minutes later "Larry" Thomas appeared. He was tall, good-looking, and a trifle pale. He hadn't been to bed all night, and had quickly slipped out of evening dress whilst the lady secretary had been keeping his irate father in conversation. He came along breezily to the old man's desk.

"Morning, dad! Lovely morning, what?"

"Haven't had time to notice," growled Thomas, senior, glancing up from his letters. At once he perceived that Larry, despite the lounge suit, was still wearing a white dress tie and wing collar. "Going to a funeral?"

"No, dad."

Old Thomas thumped his desk. "Yes, you are! You're attending your own! From this moment the firm of Thomas & Thomas comes to an end. It reverts to its original style of Lawrence Thomas—me! You're fired!"

"But, dad, you can't do that—"

"I've done it! I've stood your slack ways quite long enough. You don't realise what work is. But you're going

to. I've fixed you up at Harrison's, as Deputy District Attorney."

"Gee, dad, I'm not suited for sleuthing!"

"You'll have to show your mettle, Larry. No more bottle parties and girl-hunting. Take this letter; put on another tie and collar and your hat, and go straight along to Harrison. He's expecting you."

Larry saw that the old lad meant it.

"Okay, dad. And if I make good—"

"Learn discipline, responsibility and punctuality, and—you'll come back here. Good-morning!"

Larry was interviewing Lawyer Thomas Harrison, District Attorney, half an hour later. A fine, upstanding old gentleman with a fierce grey moustache and beetling eyebrows. He stood up when Larry entered, fluttering Thomas senior's letter in his large, capable hand.

"Don't sit, Larry—I'm busy, and you're going to be busy. Assistant District Attorney means you'll do most of the work. Now then, we're in a jam. Can't bring anything off. Every time we make a raid on some suspected place everything's clear."

"Leakage, sir."

"And maybe the leakage is in this office." Harrison's moustache bristled with indignation. "But where? Who? All my staff seem above suspicion." He pressed the bell-button on his desk. "I'm putting you in charge of the investigation department." An office-boy appeared at the door. "Ask Mr. Hill to come here."

A shortish, well-groomed, sleek man entered a few moments later. Full-faced, small moustache, light blue eyes.

"Oh, Arthur, this is Lawrence Thomas, junior! Larry—meet Mr. Arthur Hill." Harrison presented the two young men.

He put down old Thomas' letter.

"Arthur, I'm giving you full charge of this office. Larry will relieve you of investigation—"

Hill broke in:

"But I've got that all properly wired!"

"You can show Larry the scheme you have in mind. Something has got to be done—we're the laughing stock of all the newspapers."

Hill's face was a study.

"I was counting on—" He broke off.

"Of course, it's up to you, Mr. Harrison."

"I want you here, Arthur," his chief told him. "You're the experienced man. The Parole Board have had another request for the release of Fred Cole. The application was meant to fail, I think. But it shows activity in the wrong quarters. Take Thomas along to your room and get busy, both of you."

The rest of the day was spent in Hill's sanctum, where Larry was shown the routine work and given lists of places and persons under suspicion of the police. Hill showed him a Press-cutting album of prosecutions.

"We don't seem to have scored many convictions," Larry offered.

"These crine guys have cutw lawyers to defend them," Hill answered.

"They don't mind what they pay a smart counsel. Arnold Crane's one of their pets—he can talk a jury into believing black's white."

"I'd like to know him," Larry grinned. "Useful sort of fellow."

At the Dover Club

THAT night Larry called in at the news-room of New York's brightest evening paper. A girl with fair, curly hair and demure eyes was tapping a typewriter at the end desk.

"Hallo!" she greeted. "Can't stop to chatter!"

"Hallo yourself," Larry took off his hat, to lounge against a filing-cabinet. "How's Kitten?"

"She's Kit—in office hours."

"Kit, will you go places with me to-night? To the Dover Club?"

"I went places with you last night, Larry. And I don't like the Dover. It's a notorious place."

"I'm going to be notorious," grinned Larry. "Listen. I'm Assistant District Attorney to old Tom Harrison."

"Gosh!" Kit stopped typing. "Did your dad do this to you?"

"He did. But it's not news, as yet." He asked again: "One last fling, Kit? Come to the Dover with me?"

"Call for me at eleven," she agreed. "But we won't stay late."

Eleven-thirty that evening found them in evening dress handing in hats and coats to Annette, the "check" girl at the bureau of the Dover Club.

"It's Mr. Lawrence Thomas, isn't it?" she asked.

Larry laughed.

"Seen my picture in the College Magazine, eh?"

Annette smiled gently.

"Maybe."

Kit didn't like this.

"Let's go, Larry," she whispered.

But a half-tipsy fellow in a light coat and a felt hat had followed them up. Ho buttonholed Larry as he turned.

"Hallo, hallo! What bringsh Mishter Larry here?"

"Mister Larry's feet," came the quick answer.

"Introduce me, Kit," gurgled the fellow.

"This is Al Wilson, radio announcer," Kit stated, not too cheerfully. "He does the Society gossip column for us."

Wilson ambled off. A pleasant-looking aristocratic man of about fifty came along to the hat-and-coat counter, smiling at Annette. His hand brushed against Larry's shoulder as he took off his hat.

"Sorry!" he cried, at once turning to the young man.

"That's all right," Larry answered.

"It was quite my fault," persisted the pleasant gentleman.

Kit pulled at Larry's arm.

"Come on!"

When they had seated themselves in a darkish corner of the brightly-lit and noisy little club, Kit told Larry:

"That was Arnold Crane, the crook lawyer. I believe he runs this place."

"Crane, eh?" Larry glanced about the dance floor and tables, but the pleasant gentleman had vanished. "I'm told it's Joe Ross who bosses this show."

"Crane puts up the money," Kit shrugged pretty shoulders. "I don't like it here. Let's go somewhere else."

Larry pressed her fingers under cover of the table.

"Don't worry, sister, big brother will take care of you."

He gave orders to the bowing waiter.

Arnold Crane had gone to his private room, where he seated himself at his desk. He read some notes left on his pad, nodding to himself. Then he took up the 'phone and dialed to the office, listened awhile, and put the instrument back. Joe Ross was engaged, for the moment.

Joe was trying to calm down a handsome and very angry young woman. She was glaring at Joe.

"You'll get Fred out of gaol, Joe Ross, or I spill the beans! Get that into your thick skull. I'll show up this joint and its faked roulette outfit! Fred's my man and he's not going to

serve seven years for something one of you fellows did. Maybe you!"

"See here, Mollie," Ross tried to coax her. "I've been personally to the Parole Board. They won't listen."

"Get Crane to go. He's got to go, see? I'm nigh crazy—I'm desperate!" She suddenly flourished a pistol at him.

As Ross shrank back, she flung the gun noisily on his desk.

"You're not worth powder and shot! I won't waste a minute more with you fellows here. I'll go to the D. A."

She flounced out of the room, slamming the door violently behind her, then hurried across the dance floor, glancing at Larry and Kit, as she passed by their table, with unseeing eyes. She flung herself down on the seat by the telephone call-box.

Ross went round by a back way to Crane's room, to answer Crane's call in person.

Ross told Crane about Mollie, his ugly face full of gloom.

"She swears she'll squeal."

"I'll handle her," Crane answered easily. He lit up a cigar. "I've a spot of news for you, Joe. Arthur has been taken off his job."

"You mean we can't count on Hill any more?"

"I never did count on him," said Crane, puffing rings of blue smoke upwards. "I don't count on anybody, not even you, Joe." He laughed softly and pleasantly.

"Playboy Larry Thomas has got Hill's job. We don't need to worry." He held up a warning hand. "Shut down a moment, someone's at the 'phone." He picked up the instrument on the table, listening-in to the caller in the box outside.

Kit went to the call-box after the dance. She had remembered a mistake in her article for the morning's issue of her paper.

"I'll get the night editor to correct it," she told Larry.

"You only think of your old newspaper, Kit."

He came lazily sauntering after her. He saw her pluck open the door of the box.

Her quick cry brought him at a rush to her side. The huddled body of Mollie Cole had fallen softly outwards at Kit's feet. A crowd gathered round about them. Joe Ross came running out of the private room with Crane at his heels.

"What's the matter?" called Ross, thrusting a way through the horrified crowd. One of the dancers was kneeling by the crumpled-up body. He slowly straightened it, then rose up.

"I'm a doctor—this woman has been shot through the heart. She died on the instant. Does anyone know her?"

"She was in the telephone box," gasped Kit, her face ashy. "She fell out when I opened the door. There was no shooting."

"You heard no report," the young doctor argued, "because of the noise of the band. And there are such things as silencers. Best call the police, Mr. Ross."

Larry asserted himself. "I'm Deputy D. A. Lawrence Thomas—no one must leave the hall," he ordered. "See that all exits are covered."

Arnold Crane took Ross by the arm. "He's right. Suleide, poor thing. I wonder who she is? Put screens round her, Joe. I'm sure we all deeply sympathise with you in this terribly sad affair."

His quiet, unruffled manner had its effect. The dancers went back to their tables; screens were placed around the body; the police came in and carried it away on a covered stretcher. No one had identified Mollie Cole.

Who is She?

NEXT morning, when Larry went into the D.A.'s office, he found old Harrison in a discontented mood.

"Can't congratulate you on the start you've made, Thomas," came his greeting. "What on earth took you to the Dover last night? It is certainly not the place for anyone working in this office."

"Sorry, sir. I didn't think—"

"You've got to think, if you're going to make a success here," Harrison caught him up. "A night club—a notorious night club, and the new Assistant District Attorney dancing there after midnight. Who was the girl with you?"

He flourished the morning paper at Larry, with its flaring headlines.

"New D. A. involved in the Dover mystery."

"Involved," grumbled Harrison, not waiting for any reply from Larry. "Involved! See what you've done for yourself?"

"I was there with Miss Kit Cathcart. She's on the papers—but I'll swear she didn't put in that stuff."

"How d'you know she didn't? But put all that aside—you've got to clear yourself. Here's a mystery woman shot in a call-box, and nothing to show how, or by whom."

Said Larry:

"It seemed to be just suicide."

"Shot through the heart under the left shoulder-blade. No one could hold a gun that way." Harrison tossed aside the paper. "I'll give you a change, Thomas, to clear up this case and bring the culprit to justice. If you succeed—well and good. If not, I've no use for you."

Larry went along to Hill's room. There was plenty of sympathy in Hill.

"Rough luck, Thomas!" Hill laid a friendly hand on Larry's arm. "I know what the old man thinks, he's been letting off steam on me. Of course, you oughtn't to be seen at such places as the Dover—but how were you to know?"

A new note of determination showed in Larry's usually careless voice.

"Having got myself in this mess, I'll get myself out."

"What can you do?" Hill asked, shrugging his shoulders.

"Get a search warrant. Comb through that place with a fine comb," Larry answered. "You can give me the necessary order. I'll ring up the police while you get it ready."

"Okay," Hill agreed. "There's a second line in your room."

Larry left Hill busy at his desk writing out an "order for search." He went straight along to his room, but found the 'phone blocked when he tried to ring. Presently he got through.

Half an hour later, Larry and six plain-clothes police were at the Dover. The place looked tawdry enough in the cold daylight. Ross was in his room, studying the morning's paper. He glanced up as Larry entered with the search warrant.

"Wanting me?" he asked.

"I'm from the District Attorney's office," said Larry. "I'm going to look over these premises."

"What for?"

"There was a woman murdered here last night."

Ross took up a cigar, twiddling it between his fat fingers as he studied Larry.

"I remember you now—it's Mr. Thomas." A soapy smile creased the large face as Ross gestured towards the open newspaper. "That kind of thing's most annoying. Look all you

like—it's just too bad that girl should pick on us to kill herself."

"She was shot in the back," said Larry.

Ross shook his head.

"Suicide."

"Did you find a gun?"

"Yes." Ross went to the safe behind him, opened it and took out something wrapped about with a not too clean handkerchief. "One of our charwomen found this when brushing out the call-box. It had slipped under a loose board. The poor girl dropped it, of course."

The police sergeant with Larry took the "exhibit," carefully unwrapping the handkerchief. He sprinkled some chemical powder over the butt of the little gun, and finger-prints showed up.

"We'll check these down at the mortuary," said Larry. "Coming with us, Ross?"

"I'll wait here for you."

When they left the shady little club an hour later, Larry went along to the mortuary, where photographs of the dead woman were being taken. She had not been recognised, nor did her finger-prints help to clear up the mystery of her identity, beyond showing the same as those on the gun.

Caught Out

TWO weeks went by. Larry's every attempt to solve the riddle met with failure. The coroner's verdict was an open one.

"If we could only find out who she was," Larry told Hill gloomily. "That's the puzzle—that's where we've got to begin. It's so queer that no one should know her. That gun was no help—one of a thousand others exactly like it. The number on it shows that it was bought at Chicago. And—that's all."

Hill wasn't very cheerful this morning; nor helpful.

"I've got toothache," he growled. "Caught cold or something. And the news don't make you laugh. There's a tough guy broke prison yesterday. Convict named Cole."

"I saw it," Larry told him. "Know anything of him?"

"He's on the files," Hill answered. "Excuse me, Thomas, I got to have something for my tooth."

Larry was poring over the files when Kit came rushing into his room, unannounced.

"Oh, Larry!" she cried. "Just look!"

She dropped a gaily covered cinema magazine on top of his papers. In three-colour process a blonde girl's face smiled at them. Larry stared at the fixed smile; the heavily-shaded eyes; the plucked eyebrows; the marcelled hair; the too marvellous teeth.

"Yes?" he queried, at a loss to understand his little friend's excitement.

"Don't you see? Don't you get it?"

Kit grabbed up his pencil and began to shade in the peroxide hair with thick, quick strokes. Deftly she added a line here and there, while Larry watched her with ever-growing interest. Suddenly, the likeness flashed at him.

"Gosh, Kit, it's the girl!"

"Of course it is! I saw this old magazine at a dime store and spotted her at once. It's years and years old, but there's your girl—Mollie LeStrange. I read up about her in the office 'Who's Who on the Films.' She married a man named Cole. Fred Cole, rather a bad egg—"

"Cole? Why, Kit, that's the convict who got away from Sing-Sing last night!" Larry was as excited now as Kit. "And see here." He lifted the magazine off the office files. "Cole was sent up for seven years for attempted murder. Joe Ross was chief witness against him."

Larry stood up to grab Kit in his arms.

"If you aren't the world's sweet-heart, Kit!"

She wriggled free.

"The world's too big for little me!"

"I'm going straight to the Dover. Cole will sure make a bec line for Ross," Larry decided.

"Larry, be careful," Kit warned him.

"That's a bad place."

"I'll be all right," he answered in his light-hearted way.

"I've found out something. Kit—all the honours mustn't go to you. That pistol Ross so conveniently found in the 'phone call-box doesn't fit the bullet the doctor's dug out of poor Mollie."

"I knew it was murder," Kit declared. "But how?"

Larry had got his hat.

"That's the puzzle. But I've an idea—and if I get a chance this morning of a quiet look round at the Dover—"

He checked himself, teasing her.

"Well, I'll give you a ring."

Kit told him, cheekily.

"I wouldn't say 'No' to a ring from you, big boy!"

Larry went down town to the little club. He found the Dover in the hands of the cleaners.

"No one's here," the chief charlady volunteered. "Will you leave a message?"

"I'll wait."

Larry walked across to the call-box, opened the swing door and went inside. While pretending to put through a call, a nickel piece in his hand, his eyes were taking in every detail of the box. A framed notice on the wall stated:

"Local calls five cents."

It was all quite usual, and there was a loose board in the flooring. He stepped out quietly, someone was moving in the room behind the box. Ross had evidently come back—or had he been there all the time?

Larry thrust open the door marked "Private," and strode into the room.

Hill was pacing the floor, his back turned, his shoulders humped. He called as he turned:

"Gosh, Joe, where have you been?"

He saw Larry, and all speech died on his suddenly dry lips. A sickly grin writhed them.

Larry's face grew hard as flint.

"No wonder I couldn't get anywhere!"

"I don't understand—" Hill began, shrinking back. "I—I only looked in here to ask Ross—"

"To tell Ross, you dirty double-crosser!" Larry jumped at him. "Tell him all that's going on at the office. I'll shake the truth out of you!"

He caught Hill by the collar, but the fellow, cornered, struck out with his left at Larry's chin. The blow sent him staggering backward, but he was at Hill in a flash. A regular dog fight followed; Hill, thick-set and desperate, aimed at laying Larry out by any means, fair or foul. They clinched, upsetting the table with a crash; then, on the floor, they hammered away ruthlessly at each other. A heavy paper-weight, which had fallen from the table, was grabbed up by Hill and raised to give Larry a smashing blow on the temple, but the youngster gripped the murderous wrist with fingers like a vice.

For a tense minute they held each



Larry unthinkingly picked up the revolver as the door was thrust open by Wilson.

other; Hill seeking to batter the life out of Larry—Larry slowly gaining on that upraised arm. With a sudden twist, Larry reversed the position, and, as the paper-weight dropped from nerveless fingers, he had Hill by both wrists.

The struggle continued but a few moments more. Jerked to his feet, Hill was forced backward over the steel arm of the desk chair and held powerless.

"Let—go!" he gasped brokenly.

Sweat was pouring down his face, his breath was coming and going in gusty sighs. His eyes were half-closed, his cheeks were a pasty, yellowish white.

Larry pulled him into the chair and stuck him there like some grotesque doll. Hill looked as if he was going under.

"It's—it's my heart," wheezed Hill. "Let—me—be—"

Larry crossed to the filter by the window and drew a glass of water, watching Hill warily.

There was no need—the man was done. He couldn't hold the glass to his blue lips when Larry brought it to him.

"Listen, you cur, you'll give me evidence against the crew who run this place—definite, positive evidence, or I'll hand you over to the police," Larry told him fiercely.

"I—understand, Thomas."

Hill slumped forward as he spoke, falling on his knees. Larry jerked him back into the chair.

"I'll give you twenty-four hours to tell all you know."

Hill didn't even hear the threat—his heart was thumping too noisily in his breast.

Silence reigned in the usually noisy little club. The women, white-faced, cleared up their mops and pails and sidled out.

Hill, painfully recovering his wind, managed to get up and pull the chair to the desk. He gazed hopelessly at the disordered room as he sank into the chair.

Crane and Ross let themselves into the Club, and at once scented something to be wrong. They crossed sharply to Ross' room, but all seemed in order there. They came back to the dance floor, then a moan from Hill took them, at a run, to the room behind the telephone call-box.

Hill was laboriously trying to straighten the place. He staggered into Crane's arm with the ink-splashed table which had been overturned. Crane called to Ross to take the table, then half-carried Hill to the desk chair. "Tell us all about it," Crane ordered.

"Thomas—he's been here. Caught me."

Ross lifted heavy-lidded eyes to Crane's.

"I knew it."

"Caught you—and you squealed?" the lawyer demanded.

Hill shook his tousled head. His hands fingered his torn collar and tie.

"Didn't say a word. He hit me. He knows I'm in it."

Ross muttered:

"Best out and run."

Crane's generally smiling mouth was set in a snarl.

Both men regarded Hill as though he was some crawling thing to be disposed of quickly. Presently Crane spoke, his smile reappearing.

"Where's Thomas now?"

"Gone back to Harrison. But he'll wait. He said he'd give me a day to come clean and bring him evidence," Hill told them shakily.

Crane's smile deepened.

"And you'll give him evidence, Arthur. You'll meet him to-night at the Wonder Hotel down town. You're

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staying there, see? Hiding from us. You'll book a room and you'll lie low all day. Thomas'll be fool enough to keep things up his sleeve, so's to make a big splash at the end. Phone him now. I'll tell you what to say."

Hill gazed up at the smooth face with half-glazed eyes. He guessed that Ross was fingering a gun in the pocket of his loose lounge suit. Crane took up a sheet of notepaper, writing hastily on it. Ross came close to the wretched gobetween, grunting:

"Do as he tells you."

Hill lifted the receiver on the desk off its base, then dialed with a nervous forefinger. He got the D.A.'s office.

"Put me through to Mr. Thomas, please," he steadied himself to say. "It's Arthur Hill this end."

The three waited for Larry's voice to sound crisply in the instrument. Hill took up the notes Crane had scribbled for him.

"That you, Thomas? Hill speaking. I'm all alone here—you know where—and I've got evidence enough to fix the whole bunch. I'll have to hide away till to-night. Meet me at the Wonder Hotel in Forty-Second Street, West, ten o'clock. Ask for Room 214. Two hundred and fourteen, fifth floor."

Larry's voice crackled:

"I'll be there!"

"You might keep quiet, Thomas, till you've seen me," Hill was being prompted now by Crane's faint whisperings. "I got drawn into this—got into debt. Thanks, much—I'll have to ring off. There's someone coming in."

The receiver was clamped down on its stand.

"What's he say?" Crane asked.

"He'll hold up till I meet him," Hill quavered.

"That's fine! And we'll be there, too. And, likely, there'll be a little accident." Crane was quite himself again, pleasantly easy. "Things happen so unexpectedly, Arthur. Pull yourself together; Joe will get you a new collar and let you out the back way. Get yourself lunch and a drink, and toddle off to the Wonder. It's a nice little show—they don't ask a lot of tom-fool questions."

A Frame-up

LARRY, after a busy afternoon on the lines of inquiry which had now opened out to him, called at the Wonder Hotel a little before ten o'clock. Just as he was entering the lounge a hand was laid on his arm. He turned sharply—to see Al Wilson grinning in his mane way.

"Just going to have one?" Wilson hiccupped. "Don't mind if I join you?"

"I've an appointment. Sorry."

Larry didn't wait for further argument, but went straight in, letting the swing doors almost nip off Wilson's sharp nose. The Society reporter waited a moment or two.

"Guess I'll see what he's up to."

He thrust open the doors and pushed in. With a nod to the house-porter, he slithered up the stairs in Larry's wake.

Larry's long legs took him up the shallow stairs three at a time. He reached the fifth floor and the bedrooms, beginning at two hundred. He strode along to No. 214.

He rapped sharply on the panel. There was no reply, so he rapped again, then opened the door.

The room was in darkness, save for the light filtering in, under half-drawn blinds from the street below. Larry felt for and found the switch, and snapped it down. He saw Hill lying out full length in front of the fireplace.

He was facing the gas fire, very still and silent.

"Tooth bad?" Larry called to him, as he closed the door.

No answer. Larry came closer—a sudden doubt assailed him. He knelt by the prostrate man, and, putting a hand on his shoulder, slowly turned him over.

Hill, his eyes half-closed, his face cold and set, was dead.

There was a pistol lying by his side. Larry, unthinkingly, picked it up and had it in his hand as the door was thrust open by Wilson. The two exchanged lengthy stares. Then Wilson, fingers on the door handle, spoke.

"Shot him, hey? I heard you were fighting this morning."

"I didn't shoot him," Larry sharply answered. "I've just found him."

"You didn't give him a chance!" Wilson stammered. "I'll be going before you have a smack at me!"

He hopped out of the door, and Larry heard him turn the key with a click that brought his danger home to him. He had been framed—the murder of Hill would be fastened on him. And, he had just put his finger-prints on the pistol.

He dropped it as though it were red hot. He had to act quickly. He rose from his knees and went to the window. Not a hope; five floors up and in front of the house. He ran to the door, and was jerking at it when it gave to him, Wilson, with two uniformed police, entered the room, Larry falling back before them.

"I charge this man, Lawrence Thomas, with murder," cried Wilson, pointing a crooked finger. "That's Arthur Hill of the D.A.'s office. They were enemies from the outset—had a fight this morning at the Dover Club."

"Wait a minute, mister," spoke the leader of the two policemen. "Let's get this down." He produced notebook and pencil. "What's your name and address?"

"I'm Al Wilson, radio announcer and journalist. Everybody knows me!" Wilson swelled out his chest, enjoying himself immensely. "You'll hear me tonight telling the world—"

Larry's fist crashed between his eyes, knocking the boaster flat. The police jumped at him, but he had them un-awares. He tripped one with a suddenly thrust out foot and threw the other over Wilson's prostrate body. Then he made a dash for the passage, raced along it and vaulted the stairs in leaps of a flight, one hand on the banisters. He had reached the second floor before the policemen's whistles shrilled out ear-piercing warnings.

Larry ran to a window at the end of the corridor, flung it up, and saw that it gave on the outside emergency stairs. He slithered down these and reached the dark yard at the rear of the hotel. He ran along this and climbed the side gate, then, dropping into the street, walked casually to where he had left his car, got in, slammed the door, and started up. With the whistles dimming his ears, he drove off, making at once for the main thoroughfare.

As he guessed, the police were already calling all cars. He had to work quickly and surely. A hold-up at the Wonder Hotel would have smashed his plans for netting the man who had murdered Mollie Cole and their tool, Arthur Hill.

He threaded his way through the traffic, hoping that the police would not yet know his car or its number. At a public call-box in a side street not far from the newspaper office where Kit was waiting for him, he drew into the kerb and risked a call.

"Meet me outside the Dover—get a taxi. Hurry!"

Her answer came crisply.

(Continued on page 27)

The spectacular story of untamed mountain folk battling the approach of civilization and fighting their age-old feuds. Starring Sylvia Sidney, Henry Fonda and Fred MacMurray

"THE TRAIL of the LONESOME PINE"



The Deadly Feud

IN a rough old shack in a remote region of the Rocky Mountains Judd Tolliver sat puffing gloomily at his pipe. Melissa, his wife, as she busied herself at the wash-tub, a sad-faced, elderly woman with tragedy lying behind her eyes, was talking—bitterness, infinite hopeless bitterness in her tired voice.

"And so it goes on, Judd—always has gone on, ever since we was married—always will go on, too, because that's all you live for. Killin' them Falins! You've raised Dave to it—you've raised June to it. And you'll raise Buddy to it, and nothin' I can say will ever alter it. Where's the good of it—where's the sense of it? What's June done to inherit this business of killin'? What's Buddy done to be raised for nothin' in life 'cept to kill Falins? Oh, I'm sick and tired of it all."

With a gesture of utter weariness she turned away, and her husband shifted his pipe a little uneasily in his mouth. A frown had come to his rugged face. "Tain't none of my makin', Melissa," he said slowly.

She swung round on him almost fiercely.

"Haven't all the Tollivers said the same for years and more years?" she demanded. "Yet which of you has ever tried to put an end to it all? Never a one of you! Ask Buck Falin, ask any of his boys, and they'll all tell you that it ain't none of *their* makin', either! But it don't stop any of you goin' on with it."

She flung out an arm to a far corner of the room where a young man lay on a bed, his dark eyes fixed steadily

and almost relentlessly on her as she talked.

"Dave this time," she went on with rising bitterness in her voice, "and no fault of anyone's that he ain't lyin' dead before our eyes. And all that's in his mind, and in your mind, too, Judd Tolliver, is for him to get on his feet again so that he can lie up on the hills and kill one of them Falins. And then they'll never rest until they've had both you and Dave, and so it will go on until there ain't none of us left."

"They shot at Dave," answered the old man slowly and stubbornly, "and they'll answer to me for it."

"We shall all answer to you for it," she retorted. "You'll none of you ever be content till they've wiped out the whole lot of us. I'm sick and tired of all this killin', killin', killin'!"

For over a hundred years the deadly feud had raged between the Tollivers and Falins, dying down occasionally for a year or two, blazing up again suddenly like a fire newly roused out of life by a stray puff of wind. For a feud once begun and carried on is never likely to end. Those rough, stubborn, prejudiced old mountaineers held it to be unworthy of their heritage to put out the sudden hand of friendship and forgiveness to the enemies of their ancestors. Blind, unreasoning loyalty to their kith and kin demanded blood, and only blood to wipe out the stain of blood; a life called for another life. That new generations arising had no personal grievances of their own against the opposing side mattered not at all. They were taught from their earliest youth the legacy of hate that had come down to them willy-nilly. And it was required of them that they should follow

it blindly and ruthlessly, bequeathing it in turn to their children when they passed on.

At the moment there were five Tollivers. There was old Judd Tolliver and his wife Melissa, Dave, their adopted son, but hating the Falins as fiercely and as ruthlessly as if he had been born a Tolliver; June, a slender, pretty, untamed, wild (thing of eighteen, engaged to be married to Dave in accordance with her father's expressed wishes, and perfectly content to be so, since outside the Falins, she had practically never met another young man in her life; and Buddy, her little brother aged four, whom she worshipped with all the love of her simple, wild young nature.

Of the Falins there were only four—but they held it to be a fine advantage over the Tollivers that whereas the latter could only number two grown men among them, they, the Falins, had four.

And Buck Falin and his three stalwart sons were as ruthless as any four men could be.

June came running into the Tolliver shack on the following day wiping the water from her face and hair, and with her wet clothes clinging around her.

"Fallen into the lake," she explained hurriedly in answer to her mother's and father's surprised look. "There's a stranger on his way up here, dad. He's askin' for you—says it's business."

She disappeared into her own little room, eager to change her clothes. For the stranger was young and good-looking, and had laughed at her when he had seen her tumble into the lake. And though the laugh had not been really unkind—he had tried to help her

out, but she had indignantly refused—she was anxious, girl-like, to show to better advantage when he called.

Judd Tolliver looked up, frowning when the stranger came into the shack. He saw a tall, good-looking young man in the late twenties, a man easily dressed and easily mannered, with a quiet voice, steady grey eyes, and the jaw of a fighting man. Though there was nothing aggressive about him when he addressed the old man. He seemed to be anxious to be conciliatory.

Judd Tolliver, however, was suspicious. He was suspicious of everyone strange who came into the shack. They might possibly be on the side of the Falins, and until he had made quite sure that they weren't, he was taking no chances with them.

"My name's Jack Hale," said the stranger briefly.

"Well, what do you want?" demanded the old man.

Hale, ignoring the abrupt rudeness of the question, proceeded to explain. He was an engineer, representing a syndicate who were running a railway through the country for the development of coal mines. They had got the necessary permission from the Government, and all that, he, Hale, wanted was to negotiate with Judd Tolliver for the right to cut through his land with the railway. He added that he was prepared to pay in cash for the right, and the amount would be five thousand dollars and a percentage on the coal that might be extracted from the ground.

But here June, who had come in quietly to overhear the last part, excitedly broke in.

"Five thousand dollars! Why, dad, that's a fortune!" she exclaimed.

But old Judd Tolliver waved her aside impatiently. It was a fortune to him, but in his slow, suspicious way he had no intention of jumping at it.

"Well, I reckon I'll consider it," he replied slowly. "But I'll have to talk it over with my boy, and at the moment he ain't in no condition to talk anythin' over with anyone."

Hale followed his eyes to where Dave Tolliver lay on his bed, and a frown came to his face. It struck him very forcibly that from the appearance of the sick man it was going to be a long time before he would be in a condition to talk business of any sort.

"What's the trouble?" he demanded. "Got shot in the arm—and it ain't healin' proper-like."

Hale strode across to the bed. He had originally trained for a medical career and had good knowledge on the subject.

"Let me have a look at it," he said sharply. And then, as he saw resentment smouldering in the other's dark eyes, he added quietly but authoritatively "Do as I tell you, please. You needn't be afraid. I was trained to be a doctor before I took up engineering work."

But he gave a quick exclamation of dismay and anger as he glanced at the young man's arm.

"Have you had a doctor to this?"

"We haven't," replied old Tolliver almost as if he resented the absurdity of the question. "There ain't no doctors in these parts."

"But good heavens, man, this arm is gangrenous! This lad of yours will die unless something's done immediately."

A quick, frightened exclamation from Mrs. Tolliver and a gasp of dismay from June were smothered by Judd's voice as he cut in stolidly:

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"We're doin' all that can be done and I reckon that's all there is to it," he began when Hale cut him short. "Then I'll have to operate myself," he exclaimed sharply. "Here"—he swung round on June—"heat me some water, quick, and see that it's boiling. And get me some strips of clean linen, and—"

"You shan't touch him!" old Tolliver broke in fiercely. "We've never had a doctor and we ain't goin' to start it now. The old remedies have cured us up to now and I guess they'll do it again. We didn't ask you to come buttin' in and we don't want you. Now get out!"

Silence, desperate, tense silence for the moment. The old man's eyes were blazing; Mrs. Tolliver's were tragic, pleading. June was gazing, obedient from long years of submission. Dave Tolliver seemed utterly indifferent to the issue.

Hale's jaw, however, had tightened. He was handling a difficult situation and he knew it; knew, too, that a false move on his part at that moment, pregnant with danger, would result in irrevocable failure.

He laid his hand on the old man's shoulder, and when he spoke there was that in his voice which charged the little shack with authority.

"Mr. Tolliver," he said quietly, "I reckon this lad's life is pretty dear to you, and I can save it if you'll let me. You can trust me; I know what I'm doing. He's a young man, same as I am, and he's got to live! Let me carry on and he shall live!"

Silence once more. Old Tolliver's face was working. His wife was crying quietly. Then the old man looked up.

"You mean he'll die if you don't—do things?"

"He will—but I can save him if you'll let me."

"Carry on then," said the old man laconically.

It was a strange scene and for many years it lived with Jack Hale. He had no anaesthetics to deaden the terrible pain that he knew he was going to inflict by the use of the knife; but it heartened him when Dave Tolliver told him laconically that he'd "stick it whatever it was."

With old Tolliver and his wife standing by the head of the bed, with June standing nearby, something like rebellious tumult in her face, and with an old woman in the corner nursing a baby, he began the delicate task of cutting away the poisoned flesh.

He straightened himself up at length. He had cut away all that he had dared to cut, he had bathed and cleaned the terrible wound, dressed it as best he could, and bound it up. That he had hurt his patient terribly in the doing of it he knew only too well; but his patient had borne it bravely, incredibly bravely, and his eyes were showing faint gratitude.

"With any luck he'll do now," said Hale as he wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

In less than a week Hale's prediction stood fully justified. Dave Tolliver was on the road to recovery, his father, as had the Falins also, had signed the contract giving the railway the necessary permission, and Hale and his men were hard at work.

Drawn Into the Feu

THE railway went ahead fast from that moment; but other things less visible were going ahead also. For June, who had been attracted by Jack Hale from the start, was getting

more and more attracted by him every day. And as her little brother Buddy had formed a very strong liking for Hale—which the latter was not slow to reciprocate—June seldom allowed a day to pass without bringing the child down to the railway. Actually, Hale was not a little worried about these visits. He in his turn had been attracted by the girl, but he had soon learned that she was Dave's girl, and there, he told himself, the matter ended.

He handled the situation as only such quiet, reserved men do, and one morning, when June walked into his little office where he was hard at work, he greeted her with a frown as he turned back to his desk.

"Good-morning," said the girl with the smile of one who is sure she is welcome.

"Good-morning," replied Hale curtly without turning round.

"You don't seem very pleased to see me."

"Well, I'm very busy."

"You always are—when I come down here."

There was a pause, during which Hale wrote furiously. He had noticed the teasing, coquettish note in the girl's voice and he was rebelling against it. He longed to throw aside his work and talk to her, but he knew only too well that if he yielded once he would go on yielding again and again. So his answer came brusquely enough.

"At the moment I'm very busy."

"That means I'm not wanted?"

He merely shrugged his shoulders. He knew he couldn't look her in the eyes and tell her so.

Her anger rose then, swift, primitive. "I think you're very rude," she said.

He swung round at that, frowning up in a flash.

"And I think you're very foolish," he retorted.

"Why?" she asked.

He hesitated a moment. It was impossible to tell her what he wanted to tell her, that because she was promised to another man it was unwise for her to be coming continually to his office. So instead he hedged, hardly caring what he said.

"Well, because there's hundreds of better ways of spendin' your time. If you're goin' to marry Dave you ought to be learnin' things."

Her eyebrows went up.

"What things?" she asked simply.

There was no escape now and he knew it and made up his mind to go through with it.

"Hundreds of things. You're making money now and your life's going to change. You'll want to know things when you're married, June, and you ought to be spending your time learning them, the same as other girls do, instead of loafing around."

"What don't I know that other girls do, and why shouldn't I loaf around, as you call it, if I choose to?" she asked rebelliously.

Once again he fell back on generalities.

"Well, if I were you I should want to learn things and get educated. Other girls do. You told me yourself you couldn't read or write, and that's a mighty poor thing for any girl to say, specially if she's goin' to get married."

"Will you teach me?"

"Of course not," he retorted sharply. "I haven't the time—you ought to be able to see that—and besides, I've got my work to do. And I've got to get on with it now, what's more, otherwise I'll be all behind."

Turning his back on her, he sat down once more at his desk, closing the

discussion, and she went out and walked slowly back to the shack in a flaming temper. For she knew only too well the truth of all that he had said, and the truth hurt. But other things hurt, too, and she began on them the moment she entered the shack.

Her father and mother listened in silence while she told them that it was high time that she had some sort of education. But she failed to tell them from where the idea had come to her. Rather did her conversation suggest that it was Dave who had started it.

But old Judd Tolliver came down flat-footed when she had finished. He declared harshly that it was all nonsense. The Tollivers had been content all these generations without education; what did she want to start now for? And on June retorting that she didn't know and didn't care, but she was going whether he liked it or not, he got up grimly from his chair with a laconic "Oh, is that so, my girl?" and reached for the broad leather strap that had hitherto been used to settle all the arguments of his children in their recalcitrant moments.

But here his wife flung herself in between them, while June stood white-faced but still stubborn.

"Judd, you can't do it—you can't do it!" she panted.

"Can't I? You watch me. If a child of mine disobeys me—"

"I don't want to disobey you, dad," said June. "I've never disobeyed you in my life, and you know it. But I'm a woman now, just an ignorant woman what knows nothin'. And it ain't fair to keep me ignorant all my life. Look at mother here, what chance has she ever had since she married you? Slavin' from mornin' till night, seein' nothin', knowin' nothin'. And it ain't fair that I should have the same now we've got money."

"It's true, Judd, and you know it," said Mrs. Tolliver gently and sorrowfully. "Not that I'm grumblin' 'cos you've been a good man to me. But we've got money now, Judd, and surely it be only right to give the kids better chances than we've had ourselves?"

Old Tolliver relented then—he had to. And that afternoon June left for Gap-

town. But it was not the mail coach that took her, but Hale, whom she artfully waylaid. For she knew that he was driving into Gaptown that afternoon, and she stopped him—somewhat to his dismay—and asked him for a lift. And he, because he couldn't very well refuse, gave her the required lift. And that was how the trouble really began and Hale got drawn into the Tolliver-Falin feud all unwittingly.

It was the following day, and Dave Tolliver, who had been away in the mountains, came back and asked for June.

"Why, she gone off to Gaptown to get eddicated, Dave," replied the old man, looking slightly puzzled. "I reckoned you knew all about it from what she said."

For a moment or two the young man stared blankly at him. But swift anger, blind anger was surging up in his heart, for already rumours had been reaching him of June's constant visits to the railway—though he had been trying his best to dismiss them as idle talk.

"I've never said nothin' to her about it," he answered slowly. "I don't want June no different from what she is."

There was a long and dreadful silence. But the thoughts of both men had gone in the same direction. For old Tolliver, too, had heard whispered rumours.

"I wonder who can have advised her to this?" he said presently and with a troubled face.

"If you don't know I can tell you," rejoined his son angrily. "It's Hale and no one else. I've been hearin' for quite a while that June's been spendin' a mighty lot of time down at the construction camp. And now I'm beginnin' to see why."

The old man's look of anxiety deepened.

"It don't seem to me to sort of fit in somehow," he began, but his son cut him short as he reached for his gun.

"We'll soon find out if it does," he answered grimly.

He went down to the construction camp with black murder in his heart and his loaded gun in his hand. When Thurber, the manager of the works,

told him that Hale was not there he threatened him with his gun—he was in the mood to shoot anyone on sight—but the panic-stricken assurance of the badly scared Thurber that Hale was indeed not there but had gone into Gaptown the previous day soon convinced him that he was speaking the truth. But his anger was boiling more than ever as he left the camp and started to make his way in the direction of Gaptown. For now all he could see was a deliberately planned elopement between June and Hale.

But as he strode along through the pine trees rude interruption came in the shape of a bullet that came whizzing past his head, making him drop swiftly in his tracks. For that bullet told him that long before he ever found Jack Hale he had another enemy with whom to settle. It told him that the Falins were out once more on the blood-feud and if he failed to get this particular Falin, then the latter would undoubtedly get him.

It was no unusual scene that those age-old mountains saw that afternoon. It was a scene that they had witnessed many and many a time before—two desperate men stalking each other with swift death staring each of them in the face. It was a scene of two men, with murder in their hearts, slipping from tree to tree, from boulder to boulder with the swiftness and silence of panthers, firing every now and then and dropping as quickly from sight—yet ever narrowing the circle as they drew nearer and nearer, each waiting like panthers for the last desperate spring of all with death for one or both of them at the end of it.

Suddenly in the silence two shots rang out in quick succession, close to each other, echoing and re-echoing over the hills, and then with scarcely a second's interval two figures seemed to spring out of the rocks from nowhere, two figures that launched themselves simultaneously at each other.

Over and over they rolled on the rough ground, each striving for the mastery, tearing at each other like wild cats, while the air was heavy with the sound of blows and curses. And nearer, ever nearer, they drew to the edge of



Jack Hale began the delicate task of cutting away the poisoned flesh. . . .

the mountain on which they had been fighting.

And then, suddenly, with a tremendous effort Dave Tolliver wrenched himself free and was on his feet. But Falin had gained his feet, too, and with a snarl hurled himself at his opponent. But even as he did so the younger man swerved, and his fist, with all its owner's weight behind it, crashed in on Falin's jaw. As he staggered back he stumbled as he did so, slipped, lost his footing, and grabbing desperately at the ground, disappeared over the edge.

Dave Tolliver stood still, panting furiously. "That's one of 'em settled," he ejaculated as he turned and walked away.

The moment that Hale came face to face with him in Gaptown on the following day, he knew from Dave Tolliver's face that there was big trouble ahead, and cursed himself for allowing himself to get mixed up in it. But he faced him steadily enough.

"What have you done with June?" was the younger man's first question.

That told Hale all there was to know. He read hate and murder in Dave's eyes, and a sense of utter weariness at the futility of it all surged over him. But he knew it had to be met and was determined to do his best.

"Look here, Dave," he exclaimed, "I know exactly what's in your mind, but you're wrong—dead wrong."

The other's voice was ice-cold when he answered:

"You've tricked June into runnin' away with you!"

"Oh, you're a mile out! If only you're listen to me—"

"I wouldn't believe a single word you said."

"Righto, then have it this way." And in a flash Hale lashed out, catching the other on the jaw, and the fight was on. But as they fought there was this difference between the two men. Dave was fighting to kill, but Hale was not. Even in his anger he held himself in check. For June's sake he was determined to do little more than defend himself.

And then all of a sudden dramatic interruption stepped in. For Hale had hit out at Dave and had sent him staggering back against the empty shack by the side of which they were fighting, and was waiting for a new onslaught which never came. For all in a flash came a hatehat, hurled with terrific force, which only missed Dave Tolliver by inches, and buried itself deep in the woodwork. And as Hale swung round with an oath he saw three men running towards them and knew in a flash that it was the Falins!

But he laughed from sheer joy. For now he saw the solution of the problem. For he noticed in a second that the three rapidly advancing men were gunless. And in a second he was by Dave's side.

"This is where we join forces, Dave," he said. "Come on, lad, we'll beat 'em to it."

He fought differently now, fought with the venom he had lacked when he had been fighting Dave. But he could very soon see which way the fight was likely to go, and managed here and there to pant out instructions to Dave—little short breathless sentences, but each charged with meaning and truth.

"You've got—to get—away—from this. They mean—to kill—you—but they—won't kill—me. Slip out—and get—June! She'll explain—up in the town—I'll hold 'em."

Perhaps then it filtered into Dave Tolliver's bemused brain that he had

been wrong, had done Hale an injustice. Perhaps June was the magnet. Under no other circumstances would he have left Hale alone.

But Hale managed his part well, and it was not until Dave had completely disappeared that the Falins discovered the trick that Hale had managed to play on them.

Hale leaned against the shack struggling for breath, and Buck Falin addressed him.

"I reckon you'll be sorry for this, Hale," he said with deadly meaning in his voice. "You've butted into our private quarrel and we're not forgettin' it."

The Falins Keep Their Word

THE months had rolled by. June was still away, having gone under Hale's advice to his sister in Louisville, from where she was writing to her family, telling them of her progress. But there was no more enmity between Hale and Dave. And Hale knew full well that both Judd Tolliver and his adopted son were his sworn friends, even though they never said so. He had ranged himself on their side against their enemies, and they would never forget it.

But he had lost a lot of heart in his work now. June to him was irrevocably gone. In the fullness of time she would come back and marry Dave. Though he told himself that it would be better so. He, Hale, had only butted in by accident. Dave had always been her man, and she was irrevocably Dave's girl. Probably by now she had forgotten him altogether.

But he had other troubles even more serious than this. For not only was the feud between the Tollivers and the Falins even more bitter than before, but he was very seriously mixed up in it, too. Mysterious outrages were constantly happening at the railway construction camp. One day a big fire occurred which destroyed any amount of material. No one could say exactly who had done it; but Hale knew that it was the Falins, though he gritted his teeth and swore by all his gods that a whole army of Falins shouldn't stop him from completing the work he had set out to do.

Old Judd Tolliver had come down to Hale's little office one day, and the two were talking together when the telephone-bell rang. And to Hale's amazement he heard June's voice at the other end. Though there was hardly a tremor in his own voice when he answered:

"Hallo, June, is that you? How are you? Here, hang on a second. Here's your father and he'd like to speak to you."

He swung round on old Tolliver. "Here's June on the 'phone. Come and talk to her."

He stood watching the scene with amusement in his eyes. Judd Tolliver was holding the receiver as if it had been some species of deadly snake, though excitement and amazement were in his eyes. For it was the first time in his life that he had ever used a telephone.

And then all of a sudden from outside, not half a mile away, came a terrific explosion, rattling the windows of the office and dying away into dreadful silence.

In a flash Hale was out of the office, and old Tolliver, who had dropped the receiver with a clatter, was rushing after him. And as they ran a scared, white-faced man came running towards them.

"They've blown up the bridge! I

saw your buddy on it, Mr. Tolliver, only a few minutes ago!"

Two hundred miles away, June, through the telephone, heard the terrific roar of the explosion, and her heart missed a beat at the sudden silence which succeeded it.

"Dad, dad," she screamed, "what is it—what is it?"

For minutes that seemed like hours she waited, scarcely daring to breathe, in an agony of apprehension. She got through to the exchange, but all they could tell her was that the line was still connected, that possibly they had been called away and would come back. So she told them that she would hold on—and more agonised minutes drifted slowly away.

And then all of a sudden she heard the murmur of voices, and once more her heart began to pound anew.

The sight of what was taking place was mercifully hidden from her. She could not see that dread procession that filed into the little office where the telephone receiver still swung on its hook, unnoticed, unheeded by all. She could not see Jack Hale as he strode in, his face stern and set—could not see him lay Buddy's little mangled body down, cover it gently up, lay his hand on old Tolliver's bowed shoulders, mute sympathy in his eyes and in the gesture.

But she could hear her father's voice as it floated out to her, clear and distinct, with such awful horror in it as she had never heard—the voice of a man in a dream.

"Dead? My Buddy dead? Killed by them Falins—"

And for the first time in her life she slid to the floor in a dead faint.

The End of It All

IT was a week later; the worst days

Hale had ever known in his life. Little Buddy had been laid to rest, but all the life seemed to have gone out of the Tolliver household. Mrs. Tolliver only sobbed and wept, raved and stormed in turns. In turns she blamed her husband, blamed her adopted son. And they listened in silence, realising the uselessness of words.

And then, one day, when Hale had come down to see them, June suddenly walked in, and it begun all over again. For June had accused them all of lethargy—had declared that they were doing nothing. And had at the finish flung fiercely round on Dave.

"Dave," she exclaimed, "why don't you act as a Tolliver should act? Why are you sittin' here doin' nothin'?"

He shrugged his shoulders helplessly. But here Mrs. Tolliver broke in.

"You don't know what you're sayin', June. Where's all these killin's leadin' us to? What's the use of goin' on with 'em? Someone's got to stop it."

But the girl flamed up furiously. "Then it can be up to the Falins and not us!" she flung back. "They've killed my Buddy, and all you do is to go up to the sheriff and ask him"—the bitterness in her voice was beyond all words—"ask him to interfere! Why ain't we interferin'? Why ain't you takin' a hand, Dave Tolliver? You've asked me to marry you—right, and so I will if you'll act like a Tolliver!"

In a second he was up from his chair, reaching for his gun, but even as he did so Hale sprang up and caught at his arm.

"You leave me alone," flashed out the younger man ominously, "or it will be the worse for you."

But Hale still held him tightly, and

(Continued on page 26)

A young man becomes involved in the intrigues of a sinister association. A dynamic story, with action, mystery, suspense and humour. A fast-moving, swash-buckling romantic type of story that fits Robert Montgomery like a glove



A Pig in a Poke!

THIS April morning, Colonel Geraldine, enquirey to the Crown Prince of Karovia, was searching the royal palace for his young master. The king was in full council—the ambassador of the neighbouring kingdom of Irania was present with important proposals.

Geraldine at last found Princee Florizel in the kitchens, in the midst of a loudly applauding crowd who were watching him trying to walk a slaek wire fastened from one end of the room to the other.

"Good gracious, your Highness!" cried Geraldine, shocked beyond measure. "What are you doing?"

"Bringing the carnival in—since I'm not allowed to go out to it," Florizel answered. "Don't worry me, or I'll fall!"

He appeared a handsome young man as he balanced himself precariously. He was tall, dark, faintly moustached—and he wore his dark grey flannels and white shirt with royal distinction. All the same, he fell off the wire into Geraldine's promptly outstretched arms.

"Enough of this!" cried the irate colonel, rushing the wriggling young man upstairs to his bed-room. "Get dressed at once!" he dared to command. "The king is tired of waiting for you. You've got to marry the Princess Brenda."

"That little wretch?" gasped Florizel. "I say, Geraldine, that's a bit thick!"

"You tell his Majesty so." Geraldine forced the young man into his regimentals and hurried him away. Florizel entered the council somewhat short of breath, but looking every inch a prince. He saluted his father, bowed to the

Iranian Ambassador and the counsellors present, took his seat and sat very erect. "Proceed, Excellency," ordered the king.

The Iranian Ambassador, standing in his place, coughed a little.

"You must understand, sir, that our Court is quite willing that her Royal Highness should accept your Majesty's gracious proposal. It will cement old friendships and ensure the safety of both kingdoms. But"—here the old fellow coughed again—"but the Princess Brenda is somewhat difficult. She hasn't seen his Royal Highness the Princee for many years, and—and to give you her own words, sir—she says she won't buy a pig in a poke."

"I quite agree," said Florizel. "Silence!" cried his father. "I will settle this affair. The princess shall be afforded an opportunity of seeing you—and you will behave as unlike a pig as possible. Gentlemen, the council is at an end. Good-morning to you all."

Left alone with his son, the king told him:

"Florizel, my son, revolution is in the air. We have very little money in our coffers. A lovely young partner, with millions to bring into our impoverished country, means that trade will recover and our people be happy once more."

"But Brenda!" sighed Florizel. "A girl with plaits and eyes like beads."

"Some beads are beautiful," said the king. "Call Geraldine in."

When the colonel had duly saluted, the king gave his final orders.

"You will go to England, Florizel, to learn manners. Geraldine will go with you. When you return, you will marry Brenda."

"Your Majesty," said Geraldine

quickly, "I shall be delighted. I have long desired to bring your Majesty one of England's famous Christmas puddings."

"They're even worse than Brenda," said Florizel.

"Attention, both of you!" the king commanded. "Five years ago a revolution nearly succeeded. A thorough-paced rascal—a doctor of philosophy named Noel—stirred our people to madness. We managed to crush the revolt, but Noel escaped. He may be alive and still plotting against us. Geraldine, we must have this marriage—and I shall hold you responsible for it."

That same evening Florizel and his enquirey were aboard a packet-boat bound from Antwerp to the port of Dover.

They travelled under the assumed names of Theophilus Godall and Major Hammersmith. The journey was very dull—until they were almost at the end of it. Then a steward came along the decks of the steamship to Florizel.

"Mr. Godall, a lady has asked me to give you this letter."

"Don't take it," whispered Geraldine. "It's a trap of some sort."

But Florizel had opened the letter. He read it through.

"I will come immediately."

He rose from his chair, tossed the note to Geraldine, and proceeded to state cabin number 3. Here he found a raven-haired and agitated young woman standing by the door.

"You are Mr. Godall?" she asked swiftly. As he bowed, she went on in a shaking voice. "I am in great peril, sir. I am bearing a most important document. There are those abroad who have tracked me and who will endeavour to steal this." She held out a

long, heavily sealed letter. "Will you take it and keep it until I leave the ship? If you will do me this great kindness—and I know you will, because you are a gentleman—you can hand it back to me as I come down the gangway. Once on English shores, I shall be safe."

"I will do it for you, madam, with pleasure." Florizel had taken in the pale beauty of the girl's face. She was very handsome—and vaguely familiar. He believed he had seen her somewhere in Karovia.

Almost as he spoke, a dark, heavily built man burst into the cabin. He stepped past the prince and confronted the girl.

"Give me that letter!" he demanded. "Stand away, you!"

He thrust out an arm to keep Florizel at bay. But the latter caught the fellow by the collar and flung him aside.

"Your quarrel is now with me," the prince cried fiercely. "I will guard this letter with my life!"

The dark man glared at him. "I warn you, Mr. Godall!" he croaked. "You observe I know your name. I solemnly warn you!"

He strode from the cabin just as Geraldine came excitedly running in to rescue his royal charge.

The Young Man with the Cream Tarts
THE next evening "Mr. Godall" and "Major Hammersmith" were dining at a little restaurant in Soho. They were discussing the mysterious lady.

Said Geraldine with conviction: "She is a spy sent to kill you or get you into some dire trouble. She didn't come off the ship—you still have the letter—and I suggest that you destroy it at once."

"My dear fellow, I can't do that." The prince took the sealed envelope out of his pocket. "It is a sacred commission."

"Fiddlesticks!" Geraldine snatched up the letter and tore it open. A perfectly blank sheet of folded foolscap was revealed.

"It's lucky I'm here to look after you," said Geraldine.

Florizel was vexedly studying the blank paper when a great noise and much laughter from the tables by the door caused both of them to stare in that direction.

A young man, followed by two commissionaires, had entered the restaurant. Each commissionaire carried a large silver dish of cream tarts. The young man begged the company at each table, as he came to it, to taste these tarts, protesting that they were the most delicious in the whole world. Sometimes his offer was accepted; sometimes harshly refused. In these latter cases the young man ate the rejected tart himself.

Presently he came to Florizel. "Sir," said he, "will you honour me?" He offered the prince a tart. "I can vouch for the quality of these confections, having eaten two dozen and three of them already."

"Don't touch it!" cried Geraldine. "I will eat one," said Florizel, "on condition that you sit down and join us at supper."

The young man hesitated. "I must either eat or give away the rest of these tarts." He suddenly laughed. "There are but seven left. I will liquidate the last five if your friend and you will eat one a-piece."

Geraldine was beginning a protest when Florizel took a tart and devoured it in a couple of bites. The young man

started on the five he had promised to eat: Geraldine, with many misgivings, ate the last one. The young man dismissed the commissionaires, tossing them his purse.

"There," he cried, "all is finished! I am penniless, and I have ended a most foolish career by a crowning act of folly. I will sit to your table, gentlemen, and will take wine with you. I confess to being somewhat surfeited with food."

He dropped into the chair next to Florizel, who filled his glass with champagne.

"Here's your health, sir," said the prince. "My name is Theophilus Godall; my friend is Major Alfred Hammersmith. We are, like yourself, men of broken fortunes, making a night of it on the last few pounds we have managed to save from the wreck of our estates."

"How?" the young fellow exclaimed. "Are you ruined, like me? Are you"—he lowered his voice and glanced around—"are you going to avoid the consequences of your folly by the one easy path?"

Geraldine, taking his cue from Florizel, answered boldly: "Yes, sir—we are."

"You are determined to end life to-night? Good!" The young man swigged off his champagne. "Then we are well met, we three. Come with me, Mr. Godall, and you, Major Hammersmith—to the Suicide Club!"

The three companions went together in a four-wheeled cab through the dark streets of Soho, almost deserted at this time of night. Another cab followed them secretly.

They came to the entrance of a narrow court, where the young man stopped the cab. The second cab passed by quickly, stopped farther on, when two people alighted to watch the prince.

"You must please pay the fare," the young man stated. "I have not one farthing of money."

Colonel Geraldine paid the jarvey and they alighted. The young man led the way up the court until they came to a narrow doorway.

"Wait for me here," he whispered. "I must arrange things with the president before you enter. My name, by the way, is George Barnley. Make a note of it—you will read about me in to-morrow's issue of 'The Times.'"

When they were alone, Geraldine spoke earnestly to the prince.

"Of all your follies, your Highness, this is the wildest and most dangerous."

"Are you afraid?" Florizel whispered back.

The colonel drew himself erect. "A Geraldine is never afraid. But Major Hammersmith remembers that he is responsible for you."

"I absolve you from that responsibility," Florizel told him.

Mr. Barnley had returned. He beckoned to them.

"The president will see you. Be frank in your replies to his questions."

They went along a gas-lit corridor to a small room. Mr. Barnley, with a ghastly grin, went out of this room by a door on the far side. A murmur of voices reached them when the door was opened—the sounds of melancholy music. Again Geraldine begged the prince to come away.

"I have set my heart on solving this puzzle," Florizel told him.

The inner door opened, and again they heard the wailing music. A tall, thin man entered, sallow-checked, sunken-eyed, and dressed in old-fashioned evening clothes, with a double tie of

white satin about his linen collar. His shirt was frilled down the front, and his bald dome of a head was fringed with long, greying hairs which dangled over his shoulders. He bowed slightly to them.

"You wish to speak with me?" he asked.

"We desire to join your Suicide Club," said Geraldine.

"What is that?" came the smiling answer. "Some little joke of yours, gentlemen? This is a private dwelling-house in which I reside."

"Sir," spoke Florizel in his impetuous way, "we are here upon the invitation of Mr. George Barnley. You are either going to admit us, or you will bitterly repent having allowed us to come so far as this room."

The president laughed.

"That is the way to talk," he approved. "This is, to you, a frolic for April Fool's Day, but I like you, and I will admit you." He took a small Bible from his pocket and placed it in Florizel's hands. "Repeat after me, if you please."

The oath was a very binding one. It was a sacred pledge never to reveal or even hint at the mysteries of the club. Geraldine liked the adventure less than ever, but took the oath after Florizel had done so. They followed the president into the club lounge.

It was an ordinary club-room with easy-chairs and a comfortable fire burning in the grate. Two waiters moved about among the members, bringing them refreshment. The company was chiefly that of oldish men, but there were others like young Mr. Barnley also present.

A sad-faced youth was at the piano; two of the men were playing chess in a corner; Barnley was standing by the fire. The president whispered to Florizel:

"The entrance fee and first year's subscription is one hundred pounds each, if you please."

Florizel nodded to Geraldine.

"Please write a cheque for two hundred pounds, Hammersmith, payable to bearer. I will settle afterwards with you."

The money was paid over. They signed their names. The president smiled as he looked over their shoulders.

"All bear assumed names here," he sighed. "It is odd that so few have courage to end their lives in the full glare. Why are you wishing to die, Mr. Godall?" he asked.

"I have no more money."

"That is reason enough," said the president. "Now, sir"—he addressed Geraldine—"what is your reason? You evidently have money."

Florizel answered while the colonel was hesitating:

"My poor friend was cashiered last week for cheating at cards."

"Excellent!" approved the president, while Geraldine went scarlet with vexation. "Take your seats, gentlemen. Order champagne—it is usual; and the hour is at hand when we commence our play."

They seated themselves near to an old fellow on a couch who had been glancing at them.

"You are newcomers?" he asked. "Friends of young Barnley—a mad fellow! I am Dr. Malthus. I have been a member for two years."

"Two years?" said Geraldine, much relieved. "But I thought—"

"Quite so," Malthus checked him. "But I have been extraordinarily unlucky. Everybody gets the ace of spades but me. But I love the thrill—and I

shall get it one night. You may not know the procedure—allow me to explain. No one really likes committing suicide. It is sometimes—er—painful; sometimes incomplete. Well, here, the president arranges it all. Another, quite nicely, does the killing for you."

"But that is murder!" gasped Geraldine.

At this moment the president's voice was heard:

"Gentlemen, the deal! Please follow me into the card-room."

They walked, in twos and threes, past folding doors which had been thrown open, into a long, narrow room, the centre of which was occupied by a green-clothed table. The company settled down in chairs around it. The president took a pack of cards from a side table.

There was a vacant chair opposite Florizel's, and, just as the president was about to deal the cards, a girl in black entered. She took the vacant chair, her dark eyes fixed and unseeing.

It was the mysterious lady of the sealed envelope.

"Attention, please!" came the president's cold voice. He began to deal out the cards, walking behind each chair to lay a card in front of the player. "The ace of clubs represents the officer for the night—the ace of spades stands for the lucky one who is to leave this vale of tears."

Florizel was dealt the nine of clubs; Geraldine received the three of spades. The fatal cards did not appear until the second round. Then the girl turned over her card to show everyone that the ace of clubs had fallen to her.

A tense minute later Mr. Barnley received the ace of spades.

"Please to return to the lounge," said the president. "All except Miss Vandeleur and Mr. Barnley."

Florizel tried to speak to her, but she only regarded him with a stony stare. Dr. Malthus caught at his arm.

"Help me back to my chair," he breathed thickly. "I feel absolutely shattered. I must really give up playing."

The next morning, while breakfasting at their hotel, Geraldine read out from "The Times" to the horrified Florizel:

"We much regret to announce that Mr. George Barnley, well known in London sporting society, met with a fatal accident last night whilst returning from the theatre to his rooms in Savile Row. A large coping stone fell on his head from the roof of a house near by as he was passing beneath, and instantly killed him."

Miss Vandeleur is Again Lucky

DESPITE Colonel Geraldine's arguments, Florizel persisted in returning to the Suicide Club the following night.

The president told them:

"I expected you."

The deal, this time, was soon over. Florizel received the ace of spades in the first round and Miss Vandeleur the ace of clubs.

"Strange fortune," smiled the president. "Our new lady member, twice running, has had the luck to officiate."

When the others had withdrawn, he told Florizel:

"You will please accompany Miss Vandeleur in the closed carriage which waits at the end of the passage. She will arrange your death most charmingly."

There was no chance of a word with Geraldine. Florizel, always polite, entered the carriage with the mysterious lady. She made no reply to any of his questions as they drove out of Soho towards Regent's Park.

She told the driver to halt and wait

when they approached the Zoo. She then addressed Florizel:

"Get out, please. We are going to see the lions. You will enter the last cage, and—and, afterwards, I shall go home."

But when they were in the lions' house her nerves failed her. She had begun to open the door of one of the cages with a key taken from her bag, when suddenly she burst into tears.

"My dear lady," cried the prince, "what is the matter? Are you ill?"

"Noel shouldn't have expected it of me," she sobbed. "I can't do it! Let us go."

"You killed Barnley," the prince wondered. "Why not me?"

"I didn't kill him. I talked to him like a sister and—sent him to his people in Scotland. I paid his fare. Anyone can put a death notice in a newspaper."

The prince considered this for a few moments, then he spoke very seriously: "You mentioned the name of Noel just now. I have heard of a Dr. Noel."

"He is the president of the club," Miss Vandeleur dried her tears. "Where is our cabman?"

They were at the gates of the Zoo. There was no sign of the carriage.

"Why did you join the Suicide Club, Miss Vandeleur?" Florizel asked.

"Because I am being forced into a hateful marriage. I ran away—after telling my people I would not buy a pig in a poke!"

"Dear me!" said the prince. "You must be little Brenda grown up."

"I followed you," she confessed. "I wanted to know what kind of a man you had become—if you were a man of courage. You were a most odious little boy."

A shot rang out and a bullet whistled past them through the night air. The prince caught at his companion's hand



Noel flung up his arms as he overbalanced. . . .

and raced her into the roadway. They ran along the Albert Road, stopping at the entrance to a small inn. The prince hammered at the door and they were admitted in rather breathless condition. Safe in the little hostelry, Brenda said:

"That was Noel. He hates you. It was to save your life that I went into the club. I bribed him to deal me the ace of clubs. I knew he'd give you the ace of spades."

Further knockings at the door brought them to silence.

Florizel rose.

"Put out the lamp," he told her, "and stand clear! This must be someone come to finish where you have failed."

A man, be-cloaked and in a great hurry, rushed in when Florizel opened the door. At once Florizel closed with him and threw him heavily.

"Leggo!" gasped a well-known voice. "It's only me!"

It was Geraldine. The prince raised him up.

"My dear fellow, a thousand pardons."

The colonel grunted:

"There's another madman outside, firing off a pistol at everything he sees!"

Trapped!

THE three breakfasted together next morning at the little inn.

Geraldine was being very polite to the princess when the waiter knocked over his coffee cup. Brenda jumped up hastily from the table.

"You clumsy idiot!" shouted the colonel.

"I'm terribly sorry," the waiter apologized. "My nerves, sir—all to pieces. Egg and bacon, sir?"

"No!" thundered Geraldine.

"It's my little dog, sir," went on the old man in tears. "He killed a parrot, sir, that flew in from the Zoo. And he's to be tried for murder."

Florizel put down his newspaper.

"Try a dog for murder?"

"Yes, sir. It's one of the new laws, sir. I'm—I'm heartbroken, gentlemen." He raised terrified eyes towards Brenda, standing by the window. "I love my little dog. He's all I have in the world."

"I will go with you to this strange court," said Florizel. "I will save your dog."

"Thank you indeed, sir. Will you come now? It's a lot to ask you—"

Florizel was already at the door.

"I will put on my coat at once."

The old man went to a side table and took up a small round parcel. He brought it to Geraldine.

"Your Christmas pudding, sir. The cook had one left over. I managed to get it for you—ten and sixpence, sir."

Brenda went quickly to Florizel, when he came back with hat and coat:

"Don't go!" she murmured. "I am afraid for you."

"We are in England," Florizel reminded her. "Come, Hammersmith."

The colonel snatched up his round parcel.

"Excuse us, princess," he bowed. "We will return in a few minutes."

They went to a tall house up a side street. The old waiter knocked at the door and they were admitted by a man in livery.

He escorted them to folding-doors on the left of the passage. These were thrown open and Florizel and Geraldine stepped into a large bare room.

Before them was a long table at which several people were sitting, all facing the door. The judge rose to his

feet as the folding doors were sharply clapped together by two men. He spoke very pleasantly:

"Good-morning, Mr. Godall. Good-morning, Major Hammersmith. Most kind of you to come."

It was the president of the Suicide Club!

"What do you want of us, sir?" Florizel inquired, sternly regarding that venerable face with its burningly dark eyes.

"My dear prince, I am Dr. Noel," came the ready answer. "Your father threw me into prison, with the order that I was to be hanged on the following morning. Hanged—because I had dared to offend him and his autocratic rule! Kings are superfluous in these days. The people must rule. It is strangely fortunate for me to catch both you and the colonel at one cast of the line. News of your arrival was brought me by one of our spies—but I knew we must employ cunning to properly get you. Hence the cream tarts and Mr. Barnley. Hence the Suicide Club and its amusing ritual. It has brought us two hundred pounds, you will recollect." He chuckled a little. "The jury will give you a hearing—and hang you immediately afterwards. Behold the gallows!" He dangled a slip-knotted rope hanging from a ceiling hook behind him.

Geraldine glanced towards the men by the door.

"Staud away!" he cried, raising the small round parcel which contained his Christmas pudding. "I suspected some plot. I will throw this bomb—and you shall all perish with us!"

He backed against the inner wall. Florizel, walking stick tightly gripped, moved close to him. The pudding was upraised—the president and the jury sprang towards the windows, their faces ashen with terror. But one of the men at the door began to creep in on Geraldine.

Florizel, without turning his head, had seen the fellow. He waited until he was almost at Geraldine's back; then Florizel's gloved fist shot out, catching him at a blow. Geraldine, with a yell of rage, threw the pudding at the president. It struck him between the eyes.

Pandemonium followed. Florizel fought with cool desperation, overthrowing first one and then another of the mob. Geraldine performed prodigies of valour.

The president wiped away the sticky contents of the burst parcel from his livid face.

Florizel reached the folding doors and jerked them open.

"Come, Geraldine!" he called, as he dashed along the corridor. He pulled open the front door and rushed into the street.

A policeman was standing by the railings of a house near by. The policeman was talking to the cook in the area below and came away with reluctance. Meantime the front door had slammed to.

"My friend is in there," Florizel told the officer in a breath. "He is surrounded by anarchists! I call upon you to help me save him!"

The policeman blew his whistle. He then approached the door and knocked upon it. It opened at his touch—the passage was empty. Florizel ran in with the policeman—the folding doors were wide. There was no sign of anyone. Everything had gone, table, chairs and the slip-knotted rope!

Florizel, after a vain search of the empty house, returned to the inn. A note was waiting for him. It was from

Brenda, telling him that she had been compelled to return with her escort to Iramia.

While he stood in the porch considering her note, a furtive youth came up to him.

"Are you Mister Godall?" he asked. Florizel nodded. "I'm sent to tell you Major Hammersmith is in great danger, sir. If you would save his life, you must come to this address at ten o'clock this evening."

He thrust a card into Florizel's hand. "You're to come in by the garden gate. And you're to come alone."

Retribution

IN face of his oath, Florizel could not call in the police. A better plan came to his mind; he would ask for help from a few trusty officers and gentlemen attached to the Karovian Embassy in St. James's Square. He began collecting them at dusk, calling for them in a hansom cab which he drove himself in order to secure secrecy.

He brought them in pairs to a furnished house in St. John's Wood which he had hired for the occasion, and entertained them with lavish hospitality. He explained the position.

"I must go alone to meet this fellow Noel," he told them. "It is another trap, of course; but as the garden of this place backs on to the garden of the house where I am supposed to be rescuing Geraldine, it will be only necessary for you gentlemen to climb a wall and come to us, with your pistols and my rapiers, at ten minutes after ten. I shall ask you to see that Dr. Noel has fair play."

At ten o'clock precisely Florizel presented himself at the garden gate of the other house. The furtive youth opened the door when he rang the bell.

"This way, sir." He directed the prince under the dark trees towards the back of the mansion. Three men suddenly sprang out from the shadows. One held a lantern, which he flashed on Florizel; the others covered him with their revolvers.

"You will not need your walking-stick," spoke the leader, snatching it away from Florizel. "Follow us and do not attempt to call for help. If you do not—he grimly flourished his gun—"you will be shot down like a dog!"

They entered the house from the back. Noel and his myrmidons were gathered into the large stone-floored kitchen. Geraldine, his hands tied behind his back, was being held by two of the fellows.

"You shouldn't have come!" he called heartbrokenly. "My life is worth nothing!"

"It is very dear to me," Florizel answered. He saw Noel advancing towards him, smiling in his hateful way. "You will release my friend!" he commanded.

"We will release you both, Prince Florizel," said Noel. "By means of the rope you have once avoided. We shall hang you together—it will be a fitting end to a couple of tyrants who have too long opposed the people. A deep grave has been dug outside—it will hold you both most comfortably."

At this moment the rescue party, headed by Major O'Rook and Captain Rich of the Embassy, burst into the room. O'Rook shouted:

"Hands up, all of you! The game is finished!"

The surprise was complete. The murderous gang put up their hands. Geraldine was released, and, with clenched fists, faced Dr. Noel.

(Continued on page 23)

Who was the secret leader of the desperadoes who were terrorising the Valley of the Pecos? That was the riddle which a young Texas Ranger was detailed to solve. Ride with him to the tune of hammering hoofs and blazing guns, and follow his gripping adventures in this mighty serial drama of action and romance



Phantom Rider

Starring

BUCK JONES

EPISODE 2

"Human Targets"

READ THIS FIRST

Buck Grant, a settler in the Pecos Valley, is in reality a Ranger investigating stories of terrorism by a gang of outlaws whose leader's identity he hopes to discover.

Judge Holmes, of Maverick, is the only man who knows Buck is a Ranger. He is likewise the only man who knows that Buck is the Phantom Rider, a cloaked horseman who is defeating the activities of the outlaws at every turn.

One morning, however, masked gangsters butcher Shorty, another Ranger who is on his way to the Valley. Dying, Shorty tells Buck to go to the Hidden Valley Ranch, and later Buck learns this is the property of a man named Grayson.

He meets Grayson's beautiful daughter, Mary, who has returned from the East and brought with her a friend, Helen Moore.

Meanwhile, a Ranger known as Spooky has entered Maverick, and Buck instructs him to obtain work at the Hidden Valley outfit. That same night Buck casually drops in at that ranch himself, and is introduced to Harvey Delancy, a neighbouring cattleman who is on friendly terms with the Graysons.

Old Grayson is murdered the next day, and leaves Mary a wallet containing the map of a secret gold mine. Later, a railway agent offers a high price for the Grayson land, but is wounded by a gangster's bullet before the deal can go through. Then, operating in league with renegade Indians, the outlaws raid Mary's cattle.

They are seen by Buck and Mary, who ride for help but are set upon by Redskins. In the scuffle one of the renegades tries to knife the white man.

Now Read On

The Herd Lost

MARY'S scream had warned Buck, and he turned in the nick of time to meet the onslaught of the Indian who had sneaked up on him from the rear.

The renegade's dagger was upraised for a death-stab, but ere the blow could fall Buck drove his fist into the assassin's jaw with an impact that hurled the fellow to the dust. Then he yelled a command to Mary, bidding her ride onward for the Hidden Valley Ranch and bring help without delay.

Farther down the trail the girl uncovered her face as she heard the big nester's stentorian tones and saw with relief that he had balked the attempt on his life. And next instant, even as Buck was sailing into the other Redskins, whom he had scattered a few seconds previously, Mary Grayson pulled her horse round and spurred in the direction of home.

About a minute later she was passing Sandstone Bluff, and once she had skirted the bold promontory she came in sight of her ranch, towards which she galloped at the top of her pony's speed.

Some of the boys emerged from the bunkhouse as she drew rein abreast of that building's doorway, and her foreman Steve was among them. It was he who called out in alarm as he saw the expression on Mary's countenance.

"Anything wrong, Miss Grayson?" he queried sharply.

"Plenty!" Mary answered. "Outlaws are running off that herd of cattle beyond the Bluff. They've got some renegade Indians working with them, too, and Buck Grant has tangled with four of them. Quick, there's not a moment to lose!"

Her foreman soon had the rest of the hands assembled, and once they had

saddled their broncs the cowboys lost no time in swinging themselves astride their mounts and pounding along the trail, with Mary Grayson in their midst and Steve sharing the lead with the thick-set figure of Spooky. Indeed, it was not long before Spooky was at the head of the party, urging his mustang across the verdant range like a man possessed.

His anxiety to reach the scene of the raid might well have set the others wondering, but they could never have guessed that he and Buck Grant were close friends—any more than they could have guessed that they were both members of that gallant organisation known as the Texas Rangers.

Rounding Sandstone Bluff, the rescuers suddenly beheld Buck and his antagonists a couple of hundred yards away from them. The white man was still laying about him with his bunched knuckles, but the Indians were game enough, and were doing their utmost to close with him when they became aware of the band of riders who were sweeping into view.

One glimpse of the newcomer was enough for the Redskins, and on a common impulse the four of them took to their heels, leaving Buck Grant where he stood and throwing themselves on to the backs of their horses. Then they made straight for the wood where the main body of the renegades was ensconced, and they were fleeing wildly in that direction when Buck was joined by Mary Grayson and the boys from the Hidden Valley outfit.

"Are you hurt, Buck?" Mary gasped. "Just my feelings, that's all," the big fellow answered cheerfully enough. "But come on! That herd of yours on the other side of the wood needs lookin' after."

His bronc Silver was near by, and a running jump carried him into the faithful creature's saddle. Another moment and he was leading a stampede towards the strip of forest, which the fugitive Indians had now reached.

The wood lay directly between Buck and the herd, for by this time Dirk and his pack of outlaw accomplices had run the cattle southwards from their pasture. It was the big Ranger's purpose, therefore, to cut clean through the forest with Mary Grayson's employees in an effort to intercept the rustlers. But he did not bargain for the volley of rifle and revolver-fire that burst all at once from the edge of the tall timber.

It was a murderous challenge that caused Buck and his companions to pull up sharply and dive for such cover as was available, and Buck made it his business to take care of Mary and hustle her behind a cluster of rocks. Then he opened fire on the wood, and the guns of the Hidden Valley boys were echoing the blasts of his forty-five when the Grayson foreman crawled across to him.

"Them Redskins must have had some pals lyn' doggo in the timber," Steve said to Buck and Mary. "I'll guarantee they're Red Eagle's bunch of cronies, though it's gonna be hard to prove it unless we can round 'em up."

"Who's Red Eagle?" Buck demanded. "Son of an old chief up in the reservation," was the laconic reply. "The old feller's all right, but the son and some of the younger bloods are a hot-headed lot. They're bad medicine, take it from me, and it's strong liquor that makes 'em so."

Buck ground his teeth together. "I get it," he said. "Those rustlers who jumped the cattle are usin' the renegades to cover their escape. If we're gonna save the herd we'll have to shoot our way through that wood."

"Yeah?" Steve grunted. "Well, I'm figurin' it will be a tough job. Them renegades are in a strong position, and judgin' by the flashes of their guns they ain't weak in numbers."

The foreman's pessimistic words were confirmed. The sun was going down behind the western hills as he spoke them, and the moon and the stars were out before Red Eagle and his band finally retired, in face of a gradual advance on the part of the white men.

The Indians had maintained a resistance as effective as it was stubborn, and, with their work well done, they were galloping off through the wood when Buck and his companions gained the fringe of the trees at last.

For Mary Grayson's party it was an empty victory indeed, but as they heard the receding hoof-beats of their unseen enemies' mustangs they hurriedly secured their own mounts and charged in pursuit. Yet on penetrating the forest and pushing out on to the plain beyond, they saw that the renegades were far ahead of them—a dim cloud of horsemen vanishing into the fastnesses of the mountain country.

Then something else caught the attention of the baffled white men. It was the spectacle of two cowboys bending over a stricken comrade on the otherwise empty pasture where Mary's cattle had been grazing prior to the raid.

They were the punchers who had been in charge of the herd, and, riding over to them with Buck and the rest of the men, Mary spoke in an urgent tone.

"Who is it that's hurt?" she asked anxiously.

"It's Lefty, Miss Mary," one of the herdsman told her. "He's in a pretty bad way. Tim here has got a slug in the shoulder, too. We did our best, but them rustlers was too many for us, I

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guess. I wish you could've shown up sooner. The cattle would have been saved, then."

"We were held up by a bunch of renegades," Buck put in. "Which direction did those rustlers take?"

"They drove the cattle south," came the answer. "Looked as if they were heading for Dead Man's Pass. They'll be there by now."

Mary exchanged a despairing glance with her foreman.

"Dead Man's Pass," she said heavily. "That's the last of my herd."

"You're right, Miss Mary," Steve muttered. "Your father allus said that a cow through Dead Man's Pass was a gone critter. Once a rustler gets a drove beyond that point there's no chance of finding your stock any more."

"We can try, can't we?" It was Buck's voice again. "Come on. Let's give it a whirl, anyway. A couple of you take Tim and Lefty into town and have the doctor look them over. The rest of us will make for the pass."

The encouraging strain in which he spoke was infectious, yet in their hearts those who accompanied him southward to Dead Man's Pass felt that their quest was a vain one. Nor were their convictions ill-founded, for, although they searched the hills until they were saddle-weary, they discovered no trace of the missing cattle.

There was a hint of dawn in the sky when the party at length returned to Hidden Valley, and, as he prepared to bid Mary good-bye in front of the ranch-house porch, Buck could not help noticing how drawn and pale her features were.

"You're all in, Mary," he said to her. "Better go to bed and get some sleep."

"I'm not tired, Buck," she murmured. "Just depressed. I was going to sell those cattle to-morrow and realise some money on them. Now I'm flat broke—no money for supplies, no money to pay the men their wages."

"Aren't you forgetting the offer the railroad company made you for your land?" Buck told her reassuringly.

"But that deal will take time," she pointed out, "especially with Blake, the railroad representative, lying up there in one of my guest rooms and hovering between life and death. No, it's ready cash I need. I only wish I knew where that gold mine of dad's was located. A few nuggets out of it and I could pay my way."

Buck eyed her whimsically.

"Why don't you get the chart of the mine from the Phantom?" he suggested. "You say he's taking care of it for you."

"Well, I surmise he is," Mary answered. "But, not knowing who he is or where to locate him, how can I possibly get word to him that I need that map?"

Buck managed to check the smile that came to his lips.

"Maybe he'll find out for himself," he said. "He seems to be the kind of hombre who has ways and means of pickin' up information."

And shortly after making this cryptic and unenlightening observation, Buck Grant took his leave and set out for his homestead on Dry Creek.

The Phantom's Message

THE following evening Harvey Delaney dropped in at the Hidden Valley outfit to see Mary Grayson, and he had not been there long before the girl was telling him of the predicament that she was in.

Delaney listened to her story sympathetically, and when she had finished talking he leaned towards her and addressed her in an earnest tone.

"You're sure in a spot, Mary," he said to her, "but I'd like you to know that you can count on me for anything you need. Of course, I can't offer you the price for your ranch that the railroad company has mentioned. Nevertheless, if you're willing to take ready cash—"

"Oh, no, Harvey," the girl interrupted. "It's very kind of you, but it would hardly be fair to go back on the deal that I was arranging with Mr. Blake when he was shot down. I practically gave him my word that I'd do business with his company."

Delaney looked at her shrewdly.

"Then maybe I could make you a loan," he volunteered. "I'll let you have what money you need, and you can pay me back when you sell your property to the railroad."

"No thanks, Harvey," Mary rejoined. "I couldn't think of imposing on you to that extent. I'm afraid you misunderstand me when I started to speak about my troubles. I wasn't hinting that you should help me out."

"I know that, Mary," the neighbouring cattleman said gently, "and I'm not surprised that your scruples won't permit you to borrow off me. But it would be a salve to your conscience if we made a business arrangement of the whole thing, wouldn't it?"

"How do you mean?"

"Well, call it a mortgage if you like," Delaney explained. "I'll lend you a sum of money at an agreed rate of interest repayable within thirty days—

your ranch to stand as security in the event of default. Of course, I don't need any security so far as you're concerned, Mary. We've been friends too long for that. But if we draw up an agreement and conduct this matter as a business proposition, then you won't have to look upon it as an act of charity—which is your only objection to my offer, I take it."

Both Delaney and Mary were unaware of the fact, but an attentive ear was pressed close to the keyhole on the other side of the door behind which they were talking. It was the ear of Lizzie, Mary Grayson's housekeeper, an honest enough young woman, but a born eavesdropper and an inveterate gossip.

Lizzie had heard all, and she continued to listen-in to their discussion until Mary and Delaney moved away from the door, and their voices became an indistinct murmur. Then she went out on to the ranch-house veranda, and, catching sight of a cowboy who was loitering near the porch, she hastened to transmit her news.

The cowboy in question was none other than Spooky, and Lizzie beamed at him smugly.

"Everything's going to be all right now," she declared, in the knowing accents of one who enjoyed imparting information.

Spooky stared at her in a puzzled fashion.

"Everything's going to be all right now?" he reiterated. "What do you mean?"

"I just heard Miss Mary and Harvey Delaney talkin' in the lounge," the housekeeper replied. "Poor thing, Miss Mary was all het-up on account of havin' no ready cash, an' that nice Mr. Delaney allowed as he'd lend her as much money as she wanted—on the security of her ranch."

Spooky gave a slight start, but, recovering himself, affected to be as pleased as Lizzie evidently was. At the first opportunity he slipped away, however, and a minute after he had left the housekeeper he was riding in the direction of Dry Creek, determined to

acquaint Buck with the tidings that he had received.

Buck was not alone in his cabin. He had received a visitor in the person of Judge Holmes, and the pair of them were deep in conversation when Spooky broke in upon them.

"Hcy, Buck," the little fellow exclaimed without preamble, "there's something you oughta know. Delaney's at Hidden Valley offerin' Mary Grayson a loan on the security of her ranch. I ain't got nothin' against Delaney, but I don't like the sound of a proposition that has a mortgage mixed up in it."

Buck stood up, and so did Judge Holmes. But whereas the expression on the younger man's countenance was tense and grim, that on the features of the judge was mildly impassive.

"Why now, Spooky, you're not being very fair to Delaney," Holmes protested. "He's been a friend to the Graysons all along, and I call this a real neighbourly gesture. Buck's just been telling me what the loss of that herd meant to Mary, and naturally Harvey Delaney would want to help her out. He's got plenty of money to do it, too."

"Yep, and plenty of mortgages on other ranches as well, according to all accounts," Buck cut in.

"Why, surely you don't suspect him of having any ulterior motive?" the judge queried.

"I suspect anybody who's trying to get a foothold in this country," was Buck's retort, "especially with the railroad aiming to lay a line clean through it. The man who holds territory here can stick out for a fortune when the railroad company wants to buy. And just because Delaney has been friendly with the Graysons all along, that won't make his mortgage any the less binding. He wouldn't be the first hombre to forget friendship when there was a stack of dough in sight."

Judge Holmes pursed his lips. "That's true," he reflected, "and a mortgage would certainly give him power over Mary. Yet it might be kind of difficult for you or me to tell her that, Buck. She thinks a good deal of Delaney."

The stalwart Ranger gave him a side-long, thoughtful glance.

"There's someone else whose opinion she values pretty highly, judge," he commented. "I mean the Phantom Rider. She doesn't know he's Buck Grant, but from the way she's talked it's clear she has a lot of faith in him."

"I get it, Buck," Spooky interposed. "You're gonna ride as the Phantom again, an' give her a piece of advice."

"Spooky, you're almost too intelligent to live," Buck said with a grin.

"But, by the way, have you got that chart I asked you to take care of? I want it, for to-morrow I'm ridin' north to locate the secret mine. If I can lay my hands on any gold that may be there, Mary Grayson's immediate troubles will be over."

The map of the mine was produced, and Buck thrust it into his pocket. Then he rigged himself out in the garb that he wore as the Phantom, and, Spooky having saddled Silver in the meantime, the big fellow was soon galloping along the trail that led to the Hidden Valley outfit.

He prayed that he would not be too late to prevent Mary from coming to any definite arrangement with Harvey Delaney, and when he at length reached the vicinity of the Grayson ranch-house he lost no time in dismounting from his horse and advancing towards the building on foot, leaving Silver tethered in a coppice that was within a stone's throw of the veranda.

Everything seemed in his favour. No one was about, and the only light in the ground floor of the ranch-house came from a room which he knew to be the lounge; and as he reached the open window of that lounge he peered cautiously over the sill and saw Delaney and Mary seated at a table there.

Delaney was reading the contents of a document which he had apparently drawn up, and Buck heard his voice clearly.

"Thirty days from the above date," the man was quoting, "I, Mary Grayson, promise to repay Harvey Delaney the sum of ten thousand dollars, and hereby pledge the Hidden Valley ranch as security for payment of same."

He paused, and then:

"Well, Mary," he continued, "that's the agreement, and I'm glad I've finally persuaded you to shelve your scruples in regard to borrowing money from me. For I don't think I need mention that you haven't a better friend in Benson County."

"I'm very grateful to you, Harvey," the girl said, "for I really am up against it."

"All right, then," Delaney announced. "Put your signature to this, Mary, and I'll let you have my cheque for the ten thousand."

Mary picked up a pen, and the neighbouring rancher thrust the document towards her. Another moment and the transaction would have been carried out, but even as the girl was on the point of attaching her name to that deed she heard something fall with a light thud behind her chair.

She started, looked round quickly, and caught sight of a crumpled fragment of paper lying on the floor. It was wrapped around a stone, and in the very instant that she snatched it up it dawned on her that it must have been thrown through the window.

"What is it, Mary?"

Delaney spoke the words, but without answering him the girl stumbled across to the window, and as she looked out into the night she discerned a familiar figure running in the direction of a coppice—the figure of a man in a white cloak—the figure of the mystery rider whom she knew as the Phantom.

With a sharp intake of the breath, Mary drew back from the window, and, unfolding the missive that she had picked up, she scanned it rapidly, and read as follows:

"Don't accept a loan from anyone, not even Harvey Delaney.—THE PHANTOM RIDER."

"Mary, what is it? What's that note you picked up? Let me see it."

Delaney's voice aroused her. She found him standing by her side, but it was obvious he had not discerned the Phantom. His eyes were riveted on the scrap of paper which she was holding, and which she now made haste to conceal.

"I can't show it to you, Harvey," she gasped.

"But why?"

She did not explain—scarcely knew what to say. She only knew that she was prepared to follow the Phantom's counsel, blindly. Delaney was her friend, but the Phantom had proved himself an even greater friend, and even though his identity was unknown to her she felt that it was impossible to question his judgment. Indeed, the very mystery that surrounded him seemed to lend force to this message from him.

At last she found her tongue. "Harvey," she stammered out, "I— I can't accept that loan."

"What do you mean, Mary?"

"It's something I can't discuss, Harvey—"

And then she stopped, for at that moment Lizzie burst into the room, her eyes goggling, her face drained of every vestige of colour.



"You've heard of the Phantom Rider, ain't you?" the white man queried.

"Miss Mary!" the housekeeper screeched in alarm. "Miss Mary, I just saw that ghost man from the window of my room! Him they calls the Phantom! I saw him—plain as daylight—ridin' away into the brush!"

Mary stole a furtive and uncertain glance at Harvey Delaney. His countenance seemed to have grown suddenly rock-like in its hardness, and there was a glitter of resentment in his eyes; and, seeing the look on his features, Mary experienced a feeling of awkwardness, for she knew that it must appear as if she did not trust him.

Yet, much as she hated the idea of him taking offence, she could not bring herself to reconsider her impulsive decision and go against the Phantom's advice.

The Northern Trail

IT was early morning, and Dirk and his fellow-rustlers were assembled in the remote cabin that was their hide-out.

With them was their leader, courting, as usual, the deepest shadows of a room whose windows were thickly curtained, and in the semi-darkness he and his hirelings were holding a conference upon their ambition to acquire Hidden Valley and the rest of the territory through which the railroad company was to lay its line.

"Well, anyway, boss," Dirk was saying, "you've got to give us credit for a clean job the other night. We lifted that Grayson herd, and we've already turned the cattle over to Lopez, the buyer from Mexico."

"Which means them steers are safely over the border," put in Keeler, another of the gang.

"Yes," agreed the dim-seen leader of the band, "and the loss of her herd leaves Mary Grayson with no resources except the gold diggings her father discovered."

He paused, and then drummed his fingers on the surface of a scored table at which he and his men were seated.

"The Phantom has the only means of locating that mine," he went on truculently. "If we only knew where to look for it, we might trap him there—yeah, and net a fortune into the bargain."

"We know that mine is somewhere north of Music Mountain, boss," stated Dirk. "I'm goin' up that way myself this mornin' to meet Red Eagle and his renegades, and pay 'em the dough you promised 'em for helpin' us. I fixed up to see them near Navajo Canyon. Wonder if there's any chance o' me runnin' across the Phantom while I'm around there."

It was a possibility that seemed to impress the gang-leader, for he leaned forward quickly in his chair.

"You never know, Dirk," he said. "Listen, take Gabe and Keeler and Roscoe with you. If you do happen to

spot the Phantom, stick to his trail. He may lead you to the mine. And if he does, let him have it in the back as soon as you're certain you've reached the diggings."

Ten minutes later Dirk was riding from the hide-out with the three men who had been detailed to accompany him, and it was at a smart trot that they pushed through the hills, their objective being Navajo Canyon, away to the north.

If the gangsters had but known it, they were not the only ones who had business in that locality on this particular morning, for about the time that they set forth on their journey, Mary Grayson was preparing to leave Hidden Valley ranch and make tracks in the same direction.

In fact, at the very moment when Dirk and his comrades departed from their headquarters, Mary was bidding good-bye to her friend Helen Moore in front of the ranch-house porch.

"But who is this man Hudson that you want to see?" Helen asked, as the other girl climbed astride a pony that had been saddled for her.

"A man who was a close friend of my father's," Mary replied. "He owns a ranch to the north of a place called Navajo Canyon. I was looking through some correspondence in dad's desk last night, and it seems to me that Hudson may have been in his confidence—and perhaps know something about that hidden mine."

Having explained the reason for her decision to travel north, Mary left her friend and took the trail that led towards Music Mountain, and some two or three hours later she might have been seen skirting the slopes of that barren elevation. Then she pressed onward into a sombre gorge—the ravine known as Navajo Canyon—and it was as she emerged from this, after covering the length of it, that something slithered through the dust immediately ahead of her bronc.

It was a rattlesnake that had dragged itself from some rocks near by, and it speedily vanished into a mass of chaparral thickets on the other side of the trail. But its momentary appearance startled Mary's horse, and, cavorting in its alarm, the pony threw its rider heavily to the ground.

The shock of the fall drove the breath from Mary's body, but, recovering herself, she glanced quickly and fearfully in the direction of the thickets. There was no sign of the rattlesnake, however, and she realised with a feeling of thankfulness that the serpent had probably been as scared by the encounter as her horse.

She then became conscious that her right ankle was paining her. Her foot must have been twisted in the stirrup when she had fallen, and as she made an

effort to rise it gave way beneath her the instant she laid her weight on it. With an exclamation she sank down again, and was nursing the injury tenderly when she heard a shout and looked round to see a horseman approaching her from the canyon.

"Buck!" she ejaculated. "What are you doing here?"

"I've been scouting around to see if I could find any trace of that mine for you," he answered in a tone of concern. "But what happened, Mary? Are you hurt?"

She told him how she had been thrown, and, dismounting from his bronc, he examined her ankle and noticed that it was swollen. Then he indicated a dilapidated cabin which stood about three hundred yards beyond the mouth of Navajo Canyon.

"I'd better get you over to that shack and do a little doctoring," he said. "Looks to me like you've got a bad sprain there."

He secured her horse and lifted her into the saddle, then swung himself on to Silver's back and led the other pony to the cabin he had espied; and on reaching this he carried her inside and placed her on a chair.

The chair was thick with dust. So was every other article of furniture in the dwelling, which had obviously been untenanted for a considerable time.

"Nice lay-out," Buck commented ironically. "Say, you get your riding-hoot and stocking off, while I see if I can find some water."

He went out of the cabin, and was just in time to see Silver cantering off with Mary's horse through a tract of brushwood not far from the shack, whereupon he promptly sprinted after the two broncs and caught up with them as they were slaking their thirst at a stream on the other side of the thickets.

He allowed the animals to drink their fill, and then tethered them to the limb of a tree close by. Next he dipped his sombrero into the stream, and, leaving the ponies where they were, carried the hat back to the cabin.

Mary had removed her boot and her stocking, and, using his sombrero as a basin, he bathed her injured ankle and afterwards bound it tightly with a handkerchief.

A confusion of sounds caused Buck to rush to one of the grimy windows. Three horsemen were galloping towards the dwelling.

They were renegade Indians, their long hair flying in the breeze, their voices raised in a chorus of shrill whoops that were accompanied by the blasts of fire-arms which they were flourishing in their hands.

"Redskins!" Buck jerked. "And heading straight for this shack!"

"Who are they firing at?" Mary gasped.

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"Nobody," the big Ranger answered. "They're just getting rid of some high spirits, I guess. If you ask me, they're tanked up."

"Tanked up?" Mary echoed.

"Yeah—drunk," Buck said to her. "By thunder, I'd like to know where they get their liquor from! These Indians are supposed to be civilised. They wear white men's clothes, they ape white men's ways, and they're taught some sort of schooling. But when it comes to taking whisky they revert to type, and there's no telling what mischief they're liable to get up to. It might be wise to keep out of their way. Look, that pantry over there."

He motioned to a cupboard at the far side of the room. A poster had been nailed to the door of it, a faded reward notice bearing the picture of some forgotten bandit and offering a reward for the latter's capture, dead or alive. But Buck paid little heed to that bill as he assisted Mary across to the pantry and entered it with her.

She had snatched up her stocking and her riding-boot, and she donned them in the gloom of the cupboard as she and Buck stood there behind the door, which they had pulled shut. Meanwhile they could hear the renegades approaching rapidly, and soon they realised that the Indians were drawing rein outside the cabin and dismounting.

"Lucky I left our horses out of sight," Buck whispered to Mary in the darkness of the pantry. "Unless those drink-crazed fools blunder off through the thickets in search of water, they'll never guess that anybody else is around."

The three Redskins lurched into the dwelling, talking loudly in their native tongue and brandishing their guns. They had ceased their display of random shooting, however, and in their hiding-place Buck and Mary heard the clatter of the weapons as they were laid heavily on a table—two revolvers and a magazine rifle.

Buck had some slight knowledge of the dialect in which they were conversing, and from their slovenly speech he gathered that they were expecting someone to meet them at the shack.

He also learned that one of the renegades was known as Red Eagle, a fact which convinced him that these were three of the party who had covered the escape of the rustlers when Mary's herd had been "lifted."

Each of the Redskins had produced a flask of rye whisky, and they were imbibing the strong spirit freely. Indeed, they had drained them dry when the pounding of hoofs at length caught their attention, signalling the arrival of another group of horsemen.

Then they heard a white man's voice, a voice which was familiar to Buck, and one which he immediately recognised as the voice of the ruffian known to him as Dirk.

"Hallo, there, Red Eagle!"

Dirk spoke the greeting as he came into the shack with Gahe, Keeler and Roscoe at his heels, and the Indians rose unsteadily, whereupon the four rustlers were quick to divine from their bleared eyes that they had been drinking.

Dirk frowned slightly and looked at Red Eagle, a tall, lean Indian with a face that was both crafty and insolent.

"Fire-water, huh?" the white man said.

"Sure," the Indian rejoined. "Fire-water—plenty good."

"Yeah?" growled Dirk. "Well, better go easy on it—you an' your friends. I know the boss supplies you with it, but he don't expect you to soak yourselves in it."

Red Eagle eyed him mockingly, and then, after a brief silence, Dirk addressed him again.

"Listen," he said, "we're here to slip you some dough for what you did the other night. But afore we pay you off I want to mention another job that we'd like you to tackle."

"So?" Red Eagle grunted. "What you want me do, huh?"

Behind the closed door of the pantry, Buck and Mary were listening with bated breath, and Dirk's next words caused them to stiffen involuntarily.

"You've heard of the Phantom Rider, ain't you?" the white man queried. "And you know the sort of rig-out he wears, don't you?"

"Sure," was the Indian's laconic reply.

"All right," Dirk went on. "We've got a hunch he may be somewhere in the hills north of here, lookin' for a lost gold-mine, and it's occurred to me that you might get your hand together and spread out in the hope of spottin' him."

Red Eagle's sloe-black eyes seemed to narrow.

"So?" he remarked again. "And if we do spot him?"

"Trail him till he finds the mine," Dirk answered. "Then feed him lead. But get this, Red Eagle—you'll have to sober up, for right now you couldn't hit a barn door with a load o' buckshot."

It was an observation that kindled an expression of resentment on the Indian's features.

"You dare say that to me, Dirk?" he mouthed thickly,

(Continued on page 28)

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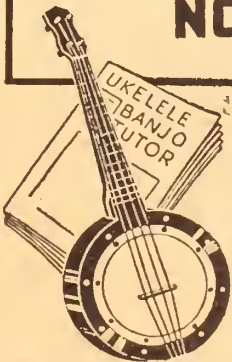
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"SEVEN SINNERS"

(Continued from page 8)

He beamed at the priest.

"Those clothes suit you, but if you're thinking of trying any more disguises, you cure your limp—it betrayed you. I found out that a Dr. Evans had signed the death certificate, and when I went to see the doctor he had been lured away. He was killed at Ramley in that train smash. The man who derailed the Nice express this time shoved a lorry across the permanent way. That's two crimes you people are responsible for."

The three conspirators glanced at each other in fear.

"A ring on Evans' hand made me suspicious about the Pilgrims of Peace." He looked at the priest. "I got a call through to Buenos Aires, and though you told me, Hoyt, you had never been there, the police of South America knew you. They're expecting you—all of you—on the John Murdoch."

He took out a slip of paper.

"I happen to have an agent on that ship, and this cable states that your destination is South America, and that the John Murdoch is stuffed full of guns, bombs, and machine-guns. You'd get a pretty stiff sentence for gun-running, but for murder—"

"We've never murdered anyone," Sir Charles whimpered. Harwood could see the man shaking. "This is the first I've heard about Evans. He was my best friend, and—"

"Keep your mouth shut, you fool!" snarled Hoyt.

"You'd better talk soon or you'll be for the high jump," mocked the detective, and leaned forward. "Maybe I can help you. You see, I don't think you had a hand in these murders. I don't think any of you have the nerve to send a train crashing off the lines and needlessly killing people, but your ringleader would. Tell me his name, and—"

He took out a cigarette and lit it. "And I might do my best for you."

"He's bluffing!" cried Hoyt. "Hold your tongues!"

"I assure you that I—" Harwood happened to look up and noticed that in a mirror he could see the rest of the dining-car. His voice died away because he could see a man's back—a man that held a cigar quite close to his ear—the man who had sat next to Sir Charles Webber at the Guildhall banquet. Even as he watched, the man got leisurely to his feet and strolled out of the compartment.

Harwood glanced at Caryl.

"I now know who is the ringleader of this bunch. A very ruthless man, who would not hesitate to double-cross any person that stood in his path." He studied three frightened faces. "Are you going to talk or are you too seared of him? Nothing can happen to you in an express travelling at eighty miles an hour, and—"

"But, John"—Caryl touched his arm—"we're not travelling all that fast. The train is stopping."

"So we are—curious." Harwood was puzzled. "Sounds as if we were coasting along." He rushed to a window and tried to peer forth into the darkness. "We're not doing more than twenty miles an hour."

Harwood suddenly thought of the man whom he knew to be the train-wrecker. Might the man not attempt a third crime? In this train were the only people who could betray the mur-

derer's secret. The sound in the train changed to a dull rumbling.

"We're in a tunnel!" he shouted.

"They saw him race up the saloon car and fling open a door. Next moment Harwood was back in the saloon, and they saw by his face that something was radically wrong.

"The coach has been uncoupled," he cried. "It looks as if we're going to stop in a tunnel."

"He's tricked us!" screamed Sir Charles Webber. "I warned you not to trust him."

"Come on!" Harwood beckoned to Caryl. "We've got to get out of here."

The detective and Caryl, followed by the others, dashed down the saloon. The coach groaned to a stop with a shudder. On flinging open the door, at first they saw only blackness.

"That white patch," Hoyt pointed. "That's the mouth of the tunnel. It's gone black. What's that I can hear?"

"Good heavens," gasped Harwood, "it's a train!"

In that moment Harwood saw everything. He realised now why the ring that had been found on Dr. Evans had been given to him. It was to lure him to this coach, which the wrecker had uncoupled knowing it would come to a stop in this tunnel.

The roar of the train grew louder. With screams of fear Elizabeth Wentworth dashed back into the saloon, followed by Webber and Hoyt. Harwood could see the flames from the smoke-stack of the oncoming engine.

"We've got one chance," Harwood yelled, and gripped the girl's arm. "A refuge in the tunnel for line repairers." They leaped down on to the track.

Paul Turbe sauntered into a Gaumont-British news theatre and selected a comfortable stall. They were showing pictures of the terrible smash that had occurred in a tunnel when a coach had been uncoupled. Everyone had been killed, according to the report.

The Assistant Prefect smiled as he watched the gruesome scenes. He decided he would like a cigar. He bit off the end and placed the Corona in his mouth. He fumbled for a match.

"Excuse me," said a hoarse voice behind him, and a lighter flickered into flame.

"Thanks," murmured Paul Turbe, and, turning round, stared into the face of John Harwood.

Paul Turbe drew a gun and tried to make a get-away, but there were too many men watching that news theatre and inside that news theatre; men who were after Turbe—real Scotland Yard men. Only one man died in the gun fight, and that man was Paul Turbe.

The Buckley registrar was astounded when Harwood and Caryl walked into his office. He beamed at them.

"You've come to register your child?"

"No, sir," chuckled Harwood. "You see, we've just had a telegram from a Lady Morland in Scotland. You wouldn't know her, but she's found her necklace, got caught in some dress or other. Of course, that doesn't mean anything to you, but it means a lot to us, because now we won't get fired, and as we've just collected quite a nice reward for assisting in killing a most unpleasant scoundrel, we thought we'd celebrate by getting married."

(By permission of Gaumont-British Distributors, Ltd., starring Edmund Lowe as Harwood and Constance Cummings as Caryl Fenton.)

"THE TRAIL OF THE LONESOME PINE"

(Continued from page 16)

when he spoke his voice was steel-like.

"This is my show, Dave," he replied, "not yours! There's been enough killing in this family and there's going to be no more. I loved little Buddy as a brother just as you did, Dave; but I brought all this trouble on you, and it was I who was responsible for Buddy's death."

He looked round sternly as he picked up his gun from the table.

"Let no one attempt to stop me," he said. "I'm goin' over to the Falins, and if they don't wipe me out I'm wiping them out."

But even as the door closed on him June was rushing after him, though her mother caught her and held her.

"Let me go—let me go!" panted the girl. "He'll be killed—he'll be killed!"

In a flash she had thrown herself into her father's arms and was pouring out her words in an incoherent stream.

"Oh, let me go—go after him—stop him! They'll kill him, and—and I love him! Oh, I can't help it, but I've always loved him, and if they kill him I'll die."

Just for a moment there was a deathly silence. Over his daughter's head old Tolliver's eyes met Dave's. The latter had gone a little white, but his jaw had come out. Without another word he walked across to the door. But there was no gun in his hand as he went out.

Hale, striding along in the direction of the Falins, swung round as he heard footsteps behind him.

"This is my job, Dave," he said curtly. "I don't want you here."

Dave's answer was to slam out his fist with all the force behind it he could muster, catching Hale on the point of the jaw and sending him sagging limply to the ground.

Just for a second he stood looking down on the inert body, strangely sorrowfully. Then he picked up his gun, tossed it among the bushes and with his hands in his pockets set out at a smart pace for the Falin's shack.

Buck Falin and his sons sat in their shack, the old man with his head resting in his hands. And once more he gave vent to his feelings as he had done many times before during the last few days.

"We've always fought against men, we Falins. And now we've killed a kid—a pretty little innocent kid. And they'll label me in these parts as the man who kills kids."

Wade Falin spoke suddenly as he lounged against the window.

"Holy smoke! Here's Dave Tolliver without his gun!"

In a flash he had snatched up his gun, but his father leaped at him and whirled it out of his hand.

"Stop that!" he commanded and held up his hand for silence.

They all looked on, wondering—heard the footsteps getting nearer, heard a knock on the door.

"Who's there?" demanded the old man.

"Dave Tolliver."

"What d'you want?"

"To talk with you—and I've got no gun."

It was a strange scene. Dave stood erect, his hands at his sides. Buck

Falin faced him, his sons behind him

And then Dave spoke.
"I came to tell you, Mr. Falin, that we're through. You've licked us and we know it. Can't we stop all this killin' now for ever?"

The old man gazed incredulously at him for a space.

"Are you—speakin' truth?" he demanded at length.

"I mean every word I've said. We want to finish with the feud."

The old man's eyes bored him intently. But they went down the next minute.

"I just don't know what to say," he answered. "There ain't no words of mine, worse luck, that can bring your poor little Buddy back, but I'll be sorry for it all the days of my life, Dave Tolliver, and I'd like you to know it. I've never killed a kid yet—and I want you to believe that I never meant to."

"Thank you, Mr. Falin."
"Will you—will you shake hands, Dave Tolliver?"

He put out a hand, and the next moment the younger man had gripped it tightly.

The old man stood silent while the door closed. Wade Falin broke the silence and there was a laugh in his voice. For he had picked up his gun and was watching Dave as he strode away.

"Gosh, dad, that was real cunning. Why, I thought you meant to let him get away first of all. As it is—"

His gun went to his shoulder, and was a quick report, he saw Dave stagger and fall. But the next minute another shot rang out, and Wade Falin sagged to the floor and lay very still. And his father, with the smoking gun in his hand and his eyes blazing with wild fury spoke:

"The rat—the dirty rat!" he exclaimed furiously. "Fetch Dave Tolliver in, all of you. If he dies, I'll kill the rest of you!"

It was old Falin himself who carried Dave into the Tolliver shack and laid him down. It was old Falin himself who faced Judd Tolliver as a brave prisoner faces the firing party.

"I've got to tell you, Judd Tolliver," he began, but in a moment his voice faded away. For Dave's eyes had opened and he was signing them all to listen, as to their amazement his hand went out and gripped Buck Falin's.

"Let me—do—the tellin'," he murmured faintly. "The feud's—over. We've shaken hands—you've got to, too, dad. Comin' away I fell on my gun."

Buck Falin's head went down, and Dave's faint voice murmured on as he smiled at June in the shelter of Hale's encircling arm.

"It's all right now. You two'll—be able—to get married—and—"

As Buck Falin put out his hand and Judd Tolliver gripped it Dave's smile deepened.

"Well," he murmured. "Now I don't care—what—"

His voice trailed away, his head drooped to the pillow. But the two old men both stood gripping hands tightly. Death had taken yet one more victim; but both knew that it was the last that the feud would ever claim. The feud between the Tollivers and the Falins was at an end.

(By permission of Paramount Pictures, Ltd., starring Sylvia Sidney, Henry Fonda and Fred MacMurray.)

"THE DRAGNET"

(Continued from page 12)

"Okay. I'll be there. It's a trick box all right."

Larry slammed down the receiver. He ran his car a little way down the street, then left it parked outside a house. He must trust to his legs now.

Meanwhile, at the Dover Club, things were happening. Ross, returned from his pilgrimage to the Wonder Hotel, had moved about the club in his usual manner, feeling rather sick inwardly, but, outwardly, all oily courtesy to his patrons.

As Ross had passed by a solitary diner in correct evening clothes, this gentleman had risen softly and had come behind him, right hand in the pocket of a brand new dress jacket. Something like a short stick stuck out the pocket.

"Keep walking, Joe. Keep smiling. I've got you covered, and I'll hole you through and through if you won't! It's Fred, all right, don't worry. Keep walking—straight to your office, Joe."

Ross, with the gentleman in correct clothes close behind him, had "walked," more or less naturally, across the floor back to his office.

"Which of you killed Mollie?"

"I didn't, Fred. I swear it!"

"Didn't you, Joe? Just too bad!"

Fred Cole, hatchet-faced, pale and dead, with determination, was caressing the trigger of his pistol.

"It—it was Crane," Ross muttered thickly. "Shot her—before—before—I could stop him."

"You're a liar, Joe."

"It's the straight truth."

Cole played with the pistol lovingly.

"Get him here, Joe. Telephone for him," came the quiet order.

Ross took up the instrument and dialed a number, his fat hand shaking

Crane said he would be over in ten minutes.

Only the tick-tock of the clock on the mantel behind the perspiring Ross disturbed the silence until somewhere about ten-thirty, when the office door gently opened to admit a sergeant of police and two policemen. The sergeant, levelling a pistol at Cole, spoke sharply:

"Gaine's up, Fred! Drop that gun!"
As Cole sulkily obeyed, Ross put up his hands.

"Glad you've come, officer. He'd got me in a jam."

Cole, white as chalk, muttered:

"He killed my wife. Shot her dead in the 'phone call-box outside."

The sergeant signed to the two policemen who closed in on Cole, and, without any fuss, put handcuffs on his wrists.

"Stop Him!"

ANNETTE, the check girl, was off duty for a few minutes and somebody else was on the door when Larry and Kit walked in.

"Cards, please," came the challenge.

"This is a members' only night."

Larry stepped up to the man, poking a gun under his ribs. Kit closed the outer door and dropped the bolt.

"Keep quiet," said Larry in level tones. "The police are in possession. Tell me about that call-box and save your dirty skin."

"There's a box drawer that pulls out, guv'nor—so's the guv'nor can see who's telephoning," whined the man.

"And the guv'nor is?"

"Crane, sir. He's the real guy here."

Larry and Kit entered Ross' room just as the police were marching out with the gaol-breaker Cole.

The telephone tinkled on the desk where Ross was lighting a cigarette. The sergeant snatched up the instrument, the rest all suddenly silent.

"Mr. Lawrence Thomas?" The sergeant put down the 'phone as he turned to Larry.

"Yes."

"You're wanted on a charge of murder at the Wonder Hotel."

"That's the man who helped to kill Arthur Hill." Larry jumped at Ross, clutching him round the throat. They glared at each other. "Spit it out, Ross!" Larry ordered.

Ross made no attempt to struggle. His beady eyes met Larry's in sullen defiance as he snarled:

"I know you killed him, and I'll give evidence to that effect. I saw you go in."

"So you were there?" Larry released the fellow. "Note that, officer!"

Kit, clinging to Larry's arm, drew him away. The policemen escorting Cole paused, waiting for orders.

A trampling of hasty feet heralded the arrival of a flying squad of police sent in search of Larry. They were in charge of an inspector, who at once took over. He addressed Larry:

"Take it quietly, Thomas. You've put yourself wrong by resisting the police in execution of their duty. Anything you say will be taken down."

"I ask nothing better," Larry told him. "I've found papers hidden in Hill's desk which told me what I wanted to know. He was on the payroll here—there's proof beyond all question. He knew too much, and so they killed him, trying to plant it on to me. I had to get back here. I knew Cole was coming for revenge and I didn't want him to forestall justice."

Cole, manacled and seething with passion, spoke out:

"I'd have had 'em both if you fellers hadn't pushed in. I'll get 'em yet."

"Silence, you!" shouted the inspector.

"Go on, Thomas, I'm taking notes."

October 3rd, 1936.

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"SEVEN SINNERS."—John Harwood, Edmund Lowe; Caryl Fenton, Constance Cummings; Paul Turbe, Thomy Bourdelle; Axel Hoyt, Henry Oscar; Sir Charles Webber, Felix Aylmer; Elizabeth Wentworth, Joyce Kennedy; Registrar, O. B. Clarence; Chief Constable, Mark Lester; Wagner, Allan Jeayes.

"THE DRAGNET."—Larry Thomas jun., Rod la Rocque; Kit Cathcart, Marion Nixon; Mollie Cole, Betty Compson; Joe Ross, Jack Adair; Arnold Crane, John Dilton; Arthur Hull, Edward Keane; Al Wilson, Donald Kerr; Thomas Harrison, Joseph W. Girard; Fred Cole, John Santry; Lawrence Thomas sen. Ed la Saint.

"THE TRAIL OF THE LONESOME PINE."—June Tolliver, Sylvia Sidney; Dave Tolliver, Henry Fonda; Jack Hale, Fred MacMurray; Thurber, Nigel Bruce; Judd Tolliver, Fred Stone; Melissa Tolliver, Beulah Bondi; Buddy Tolliver, Spanky MacFarland; Buck Falin, Robert Barrat; The Sheriff, Samuel S. Hinds; Wade Falin, Henry Kleinbach.

"THE SUICIDE CLUB."—Prince Florizel, Robert Montgomery; Princess Brenda, Rosalind Russell; Colonel Geraldine, Frank Morgan; President of Club, Reginald Owen; George Barnley, Louis Hayward; King, E. E. Clive; Major O'Rock, Tom Moore; Captain Rich, Leland Hodgson.

At this moment Crane walked in, clean and spry and cool as always.

"What's this, inspector? People in the hall are beginning to fear a raid."

The inspector tapped his notebook with his pencil.

"Go on, Thomas."

Larry handed him the pistol from his pocket.

"Found in Hill's desk. You'll find it fits the bullet that killed Mollie Cole. It hasn't been fired since. Hill was to get rid of it, but didn't get a chance. It's Crane's gun—you'll be able to check up on that. He shot Mollie Cole through the wall here."

"Through the wall?" the inspector asked.

Crane merely smiled.

"Yes." Larry advanced to the wall between the phone box outside and the room itself. Here was a small knob in the beading of the panels. Larry took hold of the knob and drew out a hidden drawer. At once a gap in the wall appeared, and the interior of the call-box was visible to all. On the back of the drawer was lettered:

"Local calls 5 cents."

"Fits into the frame," Larry explained. "You'd never guess it from the box. Crane put the bullet into Mollie's back while Ross rang off the phone from this desk."

"A pretty story," sneered Crane. "I'm glad you're writing it down. What interest could I have in killing the woman?"

"You killed her all right!" Cole hissed. "Same as you had me put away. We knew too much. And now you've done in that fool Hill. I'll tell you everything, inspector—how the wheel's faked—how the dice are loaded—how Crane has lined his pockets, the trick. How we've all been his dupes, first to last. Even Joe Ross—"

The inspector suddenly dived at Crane, who had his hand to his mouth.

"Stop him!"

A brief, violent struggle followed, then Crane was handcuffed between two of the police. He was still smiling.

Larry and Kit were allowed to go. As they climbed into Kit's car, she gave the wheel seat to him.

"I'm going back to dad to-morrow," Larry told her. "Partners once more. What about you coming in, too; in the firm of Thomas & Thomas?"

Kit rested her head on his shoulder. "Suits me," she whispered.

(By permission of Pathe Pictures, Ltd., starring Rod la Rocque and Marion Nixon.)

"THE SUICIDE CLUB"

(Continued from page 20)

"You will answer to me, you scoundrel!" he cried.

O'Rook had handed a pair of rapiers. The prince offered the hilts of them to Noel.

"Choose, if you please. I challenge you to a duel to the death. These gentlemen will keep the ring for us."

"I ask nothing better," answered Noel. "My quarrel, after all, is with you, Prince Florizel, as the representative of a tyrannical monarchy."

A ring was formed and they fought with ferocity, Noel showing himself a swordsman of no mean ability. Twice he was nearly disarmed by Florizel, and twice saved himself, to press the prince with new and surprising vigour.

At last Florizel forced him into the garden. The crowd—Noel's men and O'Rook's—followed to keep silent watch. Noel pressed the attack, and, for a few tense minutes, held Florizel at bay. Then, step by step, the prince forced his opponent backward until he was standing, all unaware, on the brink of the pit he had dug for his victims. Here Noel fenced with great desperation and actually succeeded in wounding Florizel in the left arm.

The prince suddenly broke through Noel's guard and struck his rapier sharply out of his hand. Noel, up his arms as he overbalanced and fell backwards with a crash into the open grave!

When his men came hurrying to lift him out, they found that he had broken a leg in the fall.

Florizel handed his rapier to O'Rook. "Honour is satisfied," he stated. "See that he is taken to a hospital at once."

He turned to go. From somewhere out of the crowd came Brenda, hatless and frantic in her haste. She flung her arms about Florizel.

"My prince!" she cried in rapture. "I adore you!"

"Darling girl," whispered Florizel. "Calm yourself. We are not alone."

Six weeks later, the Princess Brenda was married with great pomp and ceremony in the lovely old cathedral of Irania to his Highness, the Crown Prince of Karovia!

(By permission of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures, Ltd., starring Robert Montgomery and Rosalind Russell.)

"THE PHANTOM RIDER"

(Continued from page 25)

swaying a little on his feet. "Me, best shot in all this country? Huh, I outshoot you, anyhow!"

The white man's upper lip curled in a sneer.

"Don't make me laugh," he scoffed. "I'll bet you five bucks against your mustang that you can't outshoot me."

Quick to accept the challenge, Red Eagle snatched his forty-five from the table and rammed it into his holster with an uncertain gesture. Then he commanded Dirk to select a target, and, looking about him in a somewhat amused fashion, the rustler suddenly pointed across the room.

"There you are," he said. "We'll aim for that guy's nose. That's the target. We draw and shoot, and the first bullet that hits the mark is the winner. Keeler here can give the word to fire."

Within their hiding-place, Buck and Mary wondered what Dirk meant by "that guy's nose." They did not know that his extended hand was indicating the photograph on the bill which was pinned to the door of the small pantry where they had concealed themselves!

"Good!" they heard Red Eagle say. "Me think you lose five dollar, Dirk."

There was a pause, during which the marksmen looked towards Keeler for the signal; Dirk steady and confident to the point of contempt, Red Eagle no less confident, but far from steady.

"Go!" Keeler ejaculated all at once, grinning as he pronounced the word, and on the instant Dirk and the Indian plucked their irons from their holsters and pumped lead at the door of the cupboard, the bellow of the guns resounding deafeningly through the shack!

(Another smashing episode next week. By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Buck Jones.)

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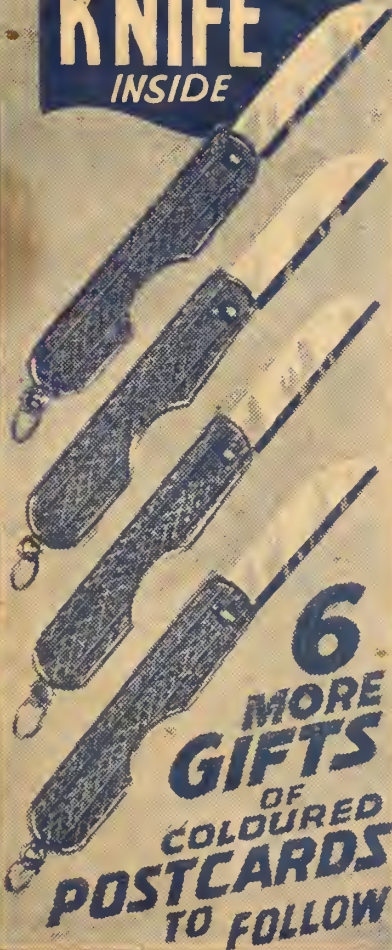
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EPISODE 1—

“The God Horse of Sujan”



The Adventures OF REX AND RINTY

[The Spoilers

FEW portions of the world's surface are more remote from the influences of civilisation than the tropical island of Sujan, a land whose interior lies masked under the eternal fastnesses of the jungle, a land whose festering swamps and deep thickets form the abode of savage beasts, a land which is the domain of a strange native people whose origin is wrapped in mystery.

It was to this island that three white men had come, and, though they were not by any means the first of their race to set foot on Sujan, yet they were of a very different breed from those of their nationality who had at one time or another preceded them, and who had been for the most part scientists and explorers.

These three men were Americans, and, disembarking from a ship that had cast anchor in a natural harbour on the Sujan coast, they had entered the interior on horseback and made their way to a certain village where the human population of the island was concentrated.

They answered to the names of Mitchell, Wheeler, and Martin, and it was by these names that they had introduced themselves to Tanaga, high priest of Sujan, chief devotee of the singular religious faith that ruled the lives of the natives, and a personality whose spoken word was law from one end of the island to the other.

The main building in the village of the Sujanese was the temple of worship. Ornate in its architecture, it was a building that commanded interest and attention by its mystically imposing aspect, for the inhabitants of the island

were no mere barbarians, but a people with an ancient culture of their own—friendly to strangers, too, though quick to take offence at any slight, and capable of meting out stern treatment to those who abused their hospitality.

Within the sombre confines of that mosque, and before an altar adorned by a plaque which represented a prancing stallion, the three Americans had obtained an audience with Tanaga, the high priest, a tall, dignified man who was still in the prime of life and whose lean figure was clothed in loose, skirted garments. And now Tanaga was listening to what the white men had to say, listening carefully and attentively as they spoke to him in English of the mission which had brought them there.

The voices of the three Americans were couched in the accents of the West, and a fellow-countryman might have placed them as Californians, while the subject of their discourse might have indicated to him that they were closely acquainted with ranch life. Tanaga, however, was not sufficiently familiar with the English tongue to recognise the variety of its dialects, though he had acquired a good working knowledge of it from other men who had visited his domain.

He was well enough versed in the language to understand very soon the reason for the Americans' presence in Sujan, at any rate, and when they had finished talking he shook his head to signify that they had come upon a useless errand.

“But, your Excellency,” one of the Yankees protested then, “the fame of your horses has travelled even as far as America, and as agents of a dealer there we've journeyed all this way

specially to buy some of them from you.”

The speaker was Mitchell, big and hulking, with a pair of gimlet eyes set in a weather-beaten face. He seemed puzzled by the high priest's attitude. Neither he nor his companions—nor the rancher in California for whom they were acting—was aware that Sujanese ritual forbade such a transaction as the one they had contemplated.

They had learned that no finer horses were to be obtained anywhere in the world than those which were bred on this remote island. But if they had delved more deeply into the book of exploration from which they had gleaned this fact, they would also have read the following paragraph:

“Deep in the interior, guarded well by the jungle and its roving beasts, nestles the sacred temple of Sujan. Here for countless ages a devout people have flocked to the worship of a chosen god horse, cherishing him as sincerely as did the Assyrians the bull, or the Egyptians the cat—”

Mitchell and his associates knew nothing of this. Nor were they enlightened when Tanaga, the high priest, addressed them quietly in his curious, low-toned voice.

“In Sujan we do not sell our horses,” he said.

The Americans were not content to accept that simple statement, which had been delivered in English, but with an outlandish inflexion.

“We're in a position to pay well,” urged Wheeler, dark-moustached and swarthy.

“All the money in the world could



Wheeler and Mitchell slipped out of the stables to find their accomplice in the act of throttling his victim.

not tempt us to part with a single steed," Tanaga replied. "You see, my friends, for centuries the horse has been held sacred by my people."

The Americans stared at him for a moment, and then Martin spoke. He was a shifty-looking fellow with a thin-tipped mouth.

"You mean you worship horses?" he asked incredulously.

"They are all sacred to us," Tanaga rejoined, "though we worship but one—the black Arabian stallion."

"A black Arabian?" Martin ejaculated.

The high priest looked at him steadily.

"You doubt me," he said. "I can hardly blame you. There is no horse in the world like him—this horse whom we call Rex, and who is the proud descendant of a noble breed. Come, you shall see for yourselves, for unless I am mistaken the guards will be bringing him back now. They have been exercising him."

He conducted them to a window of the temple, and suddenly he pointed through it. Then, as they followed the direction of his extended arm, they saw a troop of warriors cantering across a sweep of plain that was like a great clearing in the jungle.

The warriors were mounted upon fine, mettlesome ponies, and, shrewd judges of horseflesh as they were, the white men were visibly impressed by those animals. But next moment they had concentrated their gaze upon a riderless stallion which was being coaxed across the savannah by the troop of Sujanese.

It was Rex, the Arab steed that Tanaga had mentioned, and never had the Americans set eyes on so magnificent a beast. Lithe, powerful, and spirited, that horse would have been coveted by any breeder who had been privileged to see him, for a man had only to take stock of him for the space of

a minute or two to gain an inkling of his qualities and to realise that here was a creature which could not be surpassed.

"Why, he's like a king," breathed Mitchell.

"He is a king," Tanaga declared in a fervent and earnest tone. "He is the living symbol of that spirit which we worship—the spirit of the god horse of Sujan."

From the temple window the high priest and the three Americans watched Rex as he was shepherded to a building situated some little distance from the village. It was a building which Tanaga described as the Sacred Stables, and, the god horse having been lodged safely within it, the troop of warriors who had performed the duty of exercising him were soon riding at a trot towards their quarters in the settlement.

The high priest and the three white men turned away from the window then, and for an interval none of them spoke. There was a queer, thoughtful expression on the face of Mitchell, however, and presently he broke the silence, putting a question that sounded careless enough, though it was one that caused Wheeler and Martin to glance at him swiftly.

"Is it customary to leave the god horse unguarded in those stables like that?" he asked Tanaga.

The high priest shook his head.

"The god horse Rex is under vigilance night and day," he observed. "If you were to go into that building now you would find a sentry posted near his stall. Besides, the god horse is not easy to handle. He is submissive only to those with whom he is familiar."

There was a pause, and then once again Mitchell tried tentatively to strike some bargain with Tanaga. But he was wasting his time, and at length the high priest dismissed the subject.

"Let us talk no more of your vain mission," he said. "Rather let us talk

of life in the country from which you have come. I am always interested to meet people from other lands, and, indeed, I shall be honoured if you will remain here as my guests for a little while."

This hospitable offer was not accepted. "I am sorry, your Excellency," Mitchell answered, "but I reckon we'll have to return to the ship."

"Then may I provide you with an escort through the jungle?" Tanaga suggested.

"That won't be necessary," came the reply. "It's no great distance to the coast."

A few minutes later the Americans took their leave, and, swinging themselves astride their horses, they rode southward into the jungle. Yet they had not gone very far when Mitchell drew rein.

"Boys," he said to Martin and Wheeler, "we've got to get that black Arabian stallion, and if there's only one guard at the Sacred Stables it ought to be easy."

Wheeler nodded, but Martin fidgeted uncomfortably in his saddle.

"It might be dangerous to cross these Sujanese," he muttered. "Is any horse worth the risk?"

"That god horse is," Mitchell grunted. "Say, he'll make a fortune for Crawford. Think of it—a black Arabian! Think of the draw he'd be! Why, if Crawford sold him outright he'd collect plenty of dough. Not that I'd advise him to sell, for that stallion would be worth holdin'—if only for breeding purposes."

Martin frowned. "If we bungle the job," he said, "it's liable to cost us our lives."

"There won't be any slip-ups," retorted Mitchell. "We're gonna get that stallion, and we're gonna take him back to the States. Say, what kind of reception d'you think we'd get from Crawford if we came back empty-handed, anyway?"

There was no further argument, and Mitchell proceeded to outline the plan by which he intended to seize the god horse of Sujan. Meanwhile, the sun was going down in the west, and the eternal gloom of the jungle was deepening before the approach of evening, yet it was not until the black darkness of night had fallen that the three white men finally turned on their tracks.

Reaching the clearing in which the village was situated, they made a wide detour and approached the Sacred Stables from the rear. Then, dismounting from their ponies and tethering them to the limb of a gnarled tree, they sneaked round to the front of the building that was their objective.

All was quiet. From the village, some distance away, there came faint indications of life and movement, but in the neighbourhood of the stables a brooding stillness seemed to reign.

"Martin," whispered the American who was known as Mitchell, "you stay out here and tip us off if you see anybody comin' from the village. Wheeler and I will handle the guard inside."

Martin took up a position near the entrance of the stables, and the other two men moved forward to the threshold of the building. As they did so they must have betrayed their approach in some way, for the inquiring voice of the sentinel reached their ears from within.

"Is that you, Pasha?" he called, evidently expecting someone of that name.

He had spoken in the native tongue, and the Americans did not understand his words. Nor did they pause to speculate on the meaning of those

words but stepped quickly through the doorway to perceive the Sujanese guard standing a few yards to the right.

He was posted outside a stall occupied by the god horse Rex, and at sight of the intruders he stiffened involuntarily. Yet before he could utter a sound or raise a hand to defend himself the Yankees were upon him, and a blow from the butt of a revolver laid him senseless on the floor.

Scarcely had he fallen than the black Arabian in the stall gave vent to an ominous snort, and next instant he was rearing up on his hind-legs and pawing viciously at the stout gate which was between him and the guard's assailants.

Mitchell and Wheeler turned and looked at the plunging animal, and saw that his ears were lying back against his head, while his eyes held a glint that was both menacing and fearsome.

"Huh," Mitchell commented, "seems like the god horse musta been fond of the sentry and don't approve of the way we've treated him. We'll have to watch out for them hoofs, Wheeler. Look, get those ropes that are hangin' up on that peg over there. We'll use a couple of them as lariats. Make it snappy now!"

Wheeler started for the ropes, and, selecting two of them, he had tied a noose in each when Martin suddenly appeared on the scene.

"There's a native headed this way," he reported breathlessly. "If he finds out what we're up to he'll give the alarm. One look through that doorway there and he'll be off like the wind to get help."

"Yeah, and if he hears the racket that this god horse is kickin' up he'll be suspicious before he gets near the doorway," jerked Wheeler.

Mitchell gripped Martin by the arm at once, and at the same time spurned the body of the unconscious guard whom he and Wheeler had attacked.

"Quick!" he ordered. "Throw on some of this guy's clothes and step out to meet the native that's comin' from the village. That should allay his suspicions until he's close enough for you to deal with him. How far away was he when you spotted him? Have you got time to fix yourself up?"

"Just about," said Martin, and in another moment he was hurriedly stripping the prostrate sentry of his outer garments.

A little while later the disguised American emerged from the stables, and as he came out of the doorway he saw the individual who had been approaching from the village.

The native had checked, and was listening to the racket that the god horse was setting up. He seemed, indeed, to be on the point of turning back to the settlement, but on perceiving Martin he hurried forward, evidently mistaking him for the guard.

Not until he was face to face with the American did he discover the deception, and the truth dawned on him too late. For, springing to action even as the native whipped round to run for it, Martin caught him from behind and encircled his neck with a cord.

Wheeler and Mitchell slipped out of the stables to find their accomplice in the act of throttling his victim, and they looked on with bated breath until the native slumped to the ground and lay still. Then Mitchell spoke in husky accents.

"Nice work, Martin," he said. "Now wait here till we get that horse out."

Martin remained on the watch, and soon he was able to tell from the sounds which reached his ears that Mitchell and Wheeler were matching their cunning against the ugly temper of the Arab stallion; and thirty seconds later the horse was issuing from the stables with his head snared by a couple of lariats.

Martin's confederates were holding on to those ropes, and Wheeler let go of his as the stallion almost caught him with a flying back-kick from his hoofs. Martin dived for the lariat, however, and, somehow, he and Mitchell succeeded in working the captive horse round to the spot where they had left their own ponies.

Tanaga had been right. The god horse Rex was resentful of the attentions of strangers, and it was only after a hard tussle that Mitchell and Martin were able to climb into their saddles and make off with their prize, over-

coming his resistance by hauling on the ropes.

In fact, there was a skirmish before they were fairly under way, and it was one that proved disastrous for Wheeler, who had followed up anxiously and scrambled astride his mount in hot haste.

Unluckily enough for Wheeler, his pony became alarmed by the wild antics of the god horse, and, cavorting with fright, he hurled his rider from his back. And, as he was catapulting through space, Wheeler struck his head against the low bough from which he and his comrades had just unhitched their reins.

When the man hit the ground he was "out," and Mitchell and Martin did not stop to pick him up. With Rex straining against the lariats, they had enough on their hands—moreover, their one desire was to put distance between themselves and the Sujanese village without delay—and consequently they abandoned their accomplice to his fate.

A few minutes afterwards there was no sign of the two horse thieves. They had disappeared with their prize in the direction whence they had come, leaving behind them the two huddled bodies of the natives they had attacked and the insensible confederate whom they had deserted so callously.

Of those three prostrate men, the first to recover was the individual who had been half-strangled by Martin, and on opening his eyes he gazed dully at the stars for a time, like one more dead than alive. Then all at once he seemed to recall what had happened to him, and, struggling to his feet, he tottered to the entrance of the Sacred Stables.

There he saw the figure of the guard who had been stunned, and from that prone figure his glance travelled to the empty stall which had been occupied by Rex. Then, swinging round with a cry on his lips, he made tracks for the native village and did not stop until he had reached the temple.

To the high priest Tanaga he gave his startling news, and soon there was a sounding of trumpets in the settlement and a riding of armed warriors, who swept into the jungle and took the trail that led to the bay where the

Rinty fell atop of him, and the dog's gleaming teeth were at the man's throat in another instant.



white men's ship was known to be anchored.

After that there was a comparative silence in the village, a silence broken only by the grim mutterings of a fanatical people as they awaited the return of the pursuers. But a full hour elapsed before these put in an appearance, and a groan went up as it was seen that the god horse, Rex, was not in their midst.

Drawing rein before the temple, the warriors dismounted and entered the place of worship to confront Tanaga, at whose feet they flung a wild-eyed wretch who was attired as a Sujanes, but who was not of that race.

"Excellency," one of the warriors reported in the native tongue, "we reached the coast only to see the foreigner's ship sailing out of the bay. But on our way back we came upon this son of a dog in the jungle, and he, at least, will answer for the outrage that has been committed to-night."

Tanaga looked down at Wheeler, for the grovelling creature who had been cast before him was none other than he, and a bleak, stony expression crossed the high priest's face as he contemplated the white man.

"Yes," he muttered, "this cur must pay the penalty. Yet that will not compensate us for the loss of the sacred god horse."

For a moment his eyes seemed to register the painful emotions from which he was suffering. Then they became hard again, and they were glittering like diamonds when he addressed Wheeler in English.

"You and your friends," he said, "you have committed the greatest crime that Sujan knows. And the punishment for that crime, white man, is death!"

Wheeler gave vent to a hoarse exclamation. His distorted features were the colour of chalk.

"Listen, I'm innocent!" he lied. "I—I tried to stop them. That's the reason they struck me down and left me. When I came round I rode after them, hoping I could catch up with them and persuade them to turn Rex loose. Then I ran into your men, and they told me I was too late—and they wouldn't believe me when I explained to them I'd been an unwilling party to the whole business."

"I do not believe you, either, white man," Tanaga rejoined deliberately. "The evidence of the two men who were rendered senseless by you and your friends—it hardly bears out your story."

"I know," Wheeler panted, "but Martin and Mitchell forced me to work hand-in-glove with them—an' finally turned on me when I plucked up the courage to try to argue with 'em. Listen, Excellency, if only you'll spare my life I'll bring the god horse back to you. I give you my oath that I will. Let me make my way to America, and I swear I'll return with that horse."

Tanaga's lip curled contemptuously.

"You expect me to take your word?" he asked.

"Then send somebody with me!" Wheeler implored. "I won't fail you. I'll do anything to bring back your god horse, if only to get even with Mitchell and Martin. Can't you see that?"

Tanaga eyed him narrowly, and seemed to consider the proposal that he had made. The return of the god horse, Rex—this the high priest desired above all things—and Wheeler was the only link with the scoundrels who had stolen the animal.

Tanaga glanced suddenly at a native who was standing nearby. It was the

native whom Martin had very nearly throttled to death.

"Pasha," the high priest said, "when a foreign ship calls at Sujan again, you will sail in it with this white man. It will be your duty to see that he keeps his word, and to warn him that if he betrays my trust we shall track him down—whatever steps he may take to escape our vengeance."

Crawford

A WEATHER-BEATEN cargo-boat from distant parts had crawled into the docks at San Francisco, and, as she was steered into her berth at the quayside, the figures of Mitchell and Martin might have been seen at her rail.

"I was just thinkin' of Wheeler," Martin said, while the ship was being moored. "It was kinda tough on him, leavin' him back there with all them natives."

"That was his hard luck," Mitchell retorted. "I reckon you and me was both in too much of a hurry to bother about a man that was fool enough to get thrown from his horse. But, say, I don't see any sign of Crawford. I cabled him to be here with a trailer, and I made it clear that we'd got a horse in a million for him."

Even as he spoke the words a powerful car swung on to the quay, drawing behind it a great horse-box, and at sight of the man who was driving the automobile Martin uttered an ejaculation.

"There's Crawford now!"

The man in the car was a big, broad-shouldered fellow of some thirty-five years, with a domineering countenance and a pair of shrewd eyes—eyes that revealed an astute appreciation of horseflesh when the kicking, struggling form of Rex was disembarked from the ship a few minutes later and manoeuvred into the trailer.

With the god horse safely imprisoned, there ensued a long journey through the streets of San Francisco and out beyond the eastern suburbs towards the distant foothills of the Sierras. It was open country here, with an occasional ranch-house to break the monotony of it, and as he drove over the empty, dusty roads with Mitchell and Martin at his side, Crawford talked almost incessantly of the stallion in the trailer.

It was clear that he had been impressed by the animal, and that he considered his agents' trip to far Sujan had not been wasted. Nor was he greatly concerned over the fate of Wheeler, when Mitchell explained how that worthy had been left behind.

"A bad break for the guy," was his only comment, "but it can't be helped. Now that horse—I can see him bringing in any amount of big dough. Say, the mere fact that he was held sacred by some crowd of natives—that in itself puts a price on him. Imagine what an attraction he'd be in a circus, for instance."

"I thought of that myself," put in Martin. "Not a bad idea, boss."

"But only an idea as yet," mused Crawford. "First off, I'm gonna train him. Might use him in a few polo games over at the Bruce Riding Academy."

"It will be quite a job setting the saddle on him," Mitchell observed.

Crawford smiled grimly.

"I never saw a horse yet that I couldn't handle," he stated.

He drove on, and another mile or two had been covered when a bend in the road brought the three men in sight of a well-appointed ranch-house. It was Crawford's own outfit, and, pulling up near a corral behind the main building, the rancher alighted from his auto-

mobile and walked round to the back of the trailer.

He was followed by Mitchell and Martin, and they were unfastening the tail-door of the horse-box when another of Crawford's employees showed up, a sallow-faced individual, who gave vent to a low whistle at his first glimpse of Rex.

"Say, he's a beauty, ain't he?"

"Some horse, Jones, eh?" Mitchell answered with pride. "Pretty ornery as regards his temper, though."

His words were borne out as Rex backed clear of the trailer and proceeded to resist all efforts to pen him in the adjacent corral. It seemed, in fact, that the very lives of the men who were attempting to drive him into the enclosure were in danger, and, narrowly escaping a blow from a flying hoof, Crawford reached for a whip that was resting against the fence.

"Tough, eh?" he snarled. "Well, he may have been a king in Sujan, but I'll soon show him who's boss around here."

"Careful, now!" Martin warned. "He's faster than chain lightning."

Crawford paid no heed, and lashed at Rex with the whip. But he had cause to regret that brutal act, for, infuriated by the unaccustomed sting of the leather thong, the god horse reared himself up on his hind legs and struck at him with his forefeet.

Far from being cowed by the whip, the unprobed depths of the stallion's savage instincts were aroused with a vengeance, and Crawford had to seek the nearest shelter to escape the animal's retribution. Then, safe from those deadly hoofs, but white to the lips with fear and chagrin, he saw Rex make a dash from the ranch and head blindly for the hills.

Mitchell, Jones, and Martin hurried anxiously to their employer's side, and the first-named spoke in a querulous tone.

"I told yuh he was a killer, boss!" he panted.

"Yeah!" Jones gasped. "An' look—he's gettin' away."

Crawford ripped out an oath.

"Well, don't stand there staring at him!" he bellowed. "Grab three horses and get after him! Bring that black Arabian back here—understand?"

A command from Crawford was something that none of his men ever dared to treat lightly, yet this order which he gave now was one that Mitchell, Jones, and Martin could not carry out. For, although they lost no time in setting out in pursuit, there was never a hope of their catching up with the fugitive stallion, and an hour later they returned gloomily to the ranch, having lost all track of Rex in the heart of the hills.

There was an ugly expression on Crawford's heavy countenance as he listened to their tale of failure.

"All right," he ground out at length. "It looks like we'll have to comb the range for him. Jones, get some of the boys and scatter through the mountain country. See if you can pick up any trace of that god horse. Mitchell, you and Martin can stay here and help look after the ranch. Meantime, I'm going over to the Bruce Riding Academy to play in a polo game there."

He paused, then directed a baleful glance at Jones.

"And don't forget," he said harshly. "I want that stallion in my corral!"

At the Field

THE Bruce Riding Academy was situated not far from the outskirts of the city, and was a popular resort of well-to-do ranchers

(Continued on page 27)

Trouble follows when Dizzy Davis, an experienced but irresponsible airman, joins Federal Air Lines as a pilot, and, as a result of one of his selfish actions, a flying chum crashes to death in a fog. After he has learned that his licence will not be renewed, Dizzy makes amends—in his own fashion. A grand drama of the air, starring James Cagney and Pat O'Brien



Payson Bails Out

VAINLY the operator in the long-windowed control-room of Federal Air Lines at Newark, New Jersey, was trying to get into touch by wireless with Eddie Payson, who was flying the mail from Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.

"Federal Air Lines, Newark, calling Payson in 'plane three," he said over and over again into the microphone on his desk. "Federal Air Lines, Newark, calling Payson in 'plane three. Payson, why don't you answer Newark?"

There were several desks in the big room, and at one of them the transportation agent was seated, a man little older than the operator and at the moment more worried than he cared to appear.

"Sure your radio set's okay, Buzz?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir." The operator's real name was Arthur Collins, but he was known, descriptively, as "Buzz" on account of his job.

"Keep at it!"

Buzz kept at it, chewing gum all the time to prevent his throat from going dry; but there was no response from the loudspeaker that stood behind the microphone.

A dark-haired young man in spectacles entered the room with a sheet of paper in his hand. He was Leslie Bogan, and his chief concern was with the meteorological conditions on all the air routes of the company.

"Oh, Les," the transportation agent called out to him, "what's the weather at Harrisburg?"

"The weather at Harrisburg," was the reply, "is fair. Broken clouds at fifteen

hundred feet, visibility twenty miles. What's wrong?"

"Payson doesn't answer."

Leslie Bogan handed over the sheet of paper.

"You can't blame that on the weather," he remarked.

"There's nothing to blame on anyone yet," growled the transportation agent.

A telephone-bell rang, and Leslie went to an instrument on the desk of the absent division superintendent, while the transportation agent stood up and scowled at a relief map on the wall, and Buzz continued to call Payson in 'plane three.

"Oh, go ahead, say something!" exploded the chewer of gum, tired of repeating himself so often. "Call me names! Newark calling Eddie Payson!"

Leslie put down the telephone he had been using and turned to the transportation agent.

"Harrisburg reports their radio range was inoperative for ten minutes," he stated, "but it's on again strong and clear."

"I don't know why he can't find the beam!" raged the transportation agent.

"It'll at least keep him in the airway!"

"It will if he finds it!" quoth Buzz disgustedly, and spoke into the microphone again: "Newark calling Eddie Payson in 'plane three. Payson acknowledge this message. Report your position and altitude to Newark at once. Payson, why don't you answer Newark?"

Eddie Payson did not answer because he had lost his head in the clouds and was too terror-stricken to use his wireless telephone. Opening the window of the 'plane he was driving, he flung forth

the mailbag attached to a flare, then heaved himself out of the machine.

Headlong he fell for several hundred feet into darkness, and then his parachute opened and he floated towards the earth he could not see—the earth of Pennsylvania, not the earth of New Jersey.

Another quarter of an hour passed, and Buzz still spoke futilely into the microphone in the control-room at Newark, the transportation agent on one side of him and Leslie Bogan on the other.

"You're positive you're transmitting?" demanded the transportation agent.

Buzz promptly flicked a key on a sloping board beside the microphone and said:

"Newark calling Texas Clarke in 'plane two. Radio test. Go ahead!"

A deep voice issued from the loud-speaker almost immediately.

"Tex Clarke in 'plane two," it stated cheerfully. "Newark coming in okay. Clear as a bell, baby."

"Okay, Texas!"

"If Eddie were all right," said Leslie Bogan, "he'd have made his half-hour report by now."

"Call the division superintendent," directed the transportation agent gruffly.

The division superintendent was Jake Lee, a red-headed and blue-eyed son of Erin, who at that moment was playing backgammon with his wife, Mary, in the sitting-room of a cosy flat three miles away from the airport. Jake was just about to make his throw when the telephone-bell rang and his wife rose.

"Hold those dice, Jake," she said, October 31st, 1936.

"I want to watch you roll. Lee's residence."

"Oh, you don't trust me, ch?" Jake shook the dice-box and rolled the dice on to the tablecloth. "Well, I've thrown a six and an ace. That practically puts you out of business!"

The telephone was thrust into his hand and he held it to his ear.

"Hallo!" he said. "Jake Lee speaking."

"We can't contact Eddie Payson," Buzz informed him. "He left Harrisburg on schedule. He had to climb into the clouds, flying blind."

"Well," said Jake, "is he on his course?"

"No," Buzz replied; "his last report is that he'd lost the beam."

Jake frowned at the backgammon board.

"Well, call Payson every five minutes," he instructed. "Phone the caretaker at each emergency field between Harrisburg and Newark, notify all the pilots in the air by radio, and all the eastern ground stations by teletype—and I'll be right over."

"What's wrong?" asked Mary anxiously, as he put down the instrument and reached for the cap that went with the uniform he wore.

"Oh, Eddie Payson," he answered in a worried fashion. "He's bringin' in the mail from Pittsburg and he doesn't answer his radio. I've always been afraid of that kid. I'll see you later, honey."

He kissed her and went off to the airport; and Buzz was still calling Payson when he burst into the control-room.

"Any further word?" he asked, advancing to the operator's desk.

"No, sir," replied the transportation agent. "Nothing!"

"It's tougher waitin' here for news than it is flyin' the runs yourself. How long after he left Harrisburg did you last hear from him?"

"Eight minutes." Jake went over to the map and pointed a finger at it.

"He should be right here," he said, indicating a spot between the city of Reading and the city of Newark. "It's a rough country, but there are plenty of houses. He's either crashed, bailed out, or his radio's gone sick. He oughta—"

A voice from the loudspeaker interrupted him:

"Tex Clarke, in 'plane two, Newark."

"Go ahead, Texas," said Buzz into his microphone.

"Tex Clarke in 'plane two. Hang out a lantern, or a coupla o' candles! I'm comin' in!"

"Okay, Texas!" returned Buzz. "Field clear. Wind south three. Come on in!"

Nearly half the staff had gathered in the control-room. Jake turned to a short and thickset man of middle age with hardly a hair on his head.

"Baldy, meet Tex!" he commanded.

Baldy went off to the flying-field, and Jake was rapping out at the others who had no business to be present when the bell of the telephone on his desk rang.

He pounced on the instrument.

"Federal Air Lines," he said. "Oh, well, this—is Jake, Eddie. Are you all right? Well, kid, that's a relief! How's the mail?"

Eddie Payson was on the other end of the line, speaking from a wall-telephone in a little railway-station.

"The mail's okay," he replied. "There's an eastbound train out of here in forty-five minutes."

"Put the mail on it," said Jake crisply, "and we'll send the crash truck for you and the wreck. Where are you? Oh, okay, Eddie!"

October 31st, 1936.

He put down the telephone and turned to the others.

"Payson bailed out near Wanamaker."

"Wanamaker?" exclaimed a tall man in overalls whose surname was Wilson, and who was known as "Doc" because repairs were his chief concern. "Wanamaker's in Indiana!"

"Aw, he must've been on a Cook's tour to get that far off the airway!" growled Jake. "Pick him up at Robbin's farm, two miles east o' the town, and take seven bucks with you to pay for that 'phone call. And get that crash truck rolling!"

Doc Wilson made himself scarce, and Leslie Bogan reappeared from his own den with a weather chart which he spread out on Jake's desk.

"Better take a look at this, Jake," he said. "There's bad news ahead. That low-pressure area around Cincinnati is moving north-west."

"Yeah," said Jake, studying the chart. "She ought to hit here late on Thursday."

"That's right," agreed Leslie. "My forecast gives us clear weather tomorrow, with increasing cold, and then heavy fogs followed by high winds, sleet and ice."

Out on the lighted flying-field the machine piloted by Texas Clarke landed perfectly, and Tex himself climbed down from it. Almost simultaneously one of the double front doors of the control-room swung open and Mary Lee slipped unobtrusively in at it and seated herself on a chair.

Jake heard the machine and caught sight of his wife.

"Warn the ticket office," he said, "that all passenger schedules may be cancelled on short notice. We're not going to take any chances on them. Mail pilots can punch the dirt if it gets unflyable. Notify Bellefonte, Cleveland, Columbus and Chicago."

He rose and went over to the beautiful occupant of the chair.

"What are you doing here?"

"Well," replied Mary in the incoherent of voices, "you can't play backgammon alone, and solitaire's not much fun since I met you."

"Yeah, yeah, that's right," he agreed. "I kinda like two-handed games myself."

The airman who had just landed walked into the room, a wide-faced and amiable-looking fellow, enveloped in his heavy flying kit.

"Texas Clarke reports his return to Newark," he said.

Behind him came a short and slender woman who was his wife and who had met him on the field. Greetings were exchanged, and then Tex shed his parachute pack, and his wife—a decided blonde named Louise—helped him out of his leather coat.

"I heard Payson's jamboree over the radio," he remarked as he removed his helmet and goggles. "Sure interfered with Amos and Andy. What happened?"

"Oh, he got lost in the clouds and hit the silk," replied Jake. "He's all right."

"Huh!" grunted Tex. "He oughta be tickled, he's all in one piece!"

"I wish you were all in one piece!" said his wife.

A boy entered with a message in Morse, ripped from a tape-machine, and Jake studied it.

"Oh, here's good news!" he exclaimed. "Listen! 'The prodigal returns. Dizzy Davis coming home!'"

"Dizzy comin' back here?" Tex looked astonished.

"Why didn't you tell me, Jake?" asked Mary.

"Oh, I was savin' it!"

Tex's wife seemed by no mean pleased at the news.

"Dizzy Davis!" she cried. "I thought he was still in Denver. Is he coming back here?"

"Yeah," said Jake. "He's ferryin' an overhauled job from Chicago. This afternoon he had a forced landing—this side of Cleveland."

"Was he hurt?" asked Mary.

"No!" interjected Tex's wife tartly. "No, he wasn't hurt! Not with my luck. Tex, come on!"

Tex deposited his discarded garments in the pilots' room and reappeared.

"Well, where we goin'?" he inquired.

"We're going home!" she informed him. "I want to get one last farewell look at it before Dizzy gets here. Come on. You know, I could be hanged for what I could do to Dizzy Davis!"

She marched him off, and Jake said laughingly to Mary:

"I may be wrong, but something tells me she doesn't like Dizzy. I'm glad you like him, honey, because it's certainly tough on a fellow when a pal and his wife don't mix."

Mary was tempted to bite her lip, but refrained.

"I'll never be tough on you, Jake," she said.

"No kiddin'?"

"No kidding," she assured him.

He picked up his cap and put it on his head.

"Buzz," he said to the operator. "I'll be at the Browning plant till three-thirty to-morrow. If you want me, 'phone me."

"Speak of the Devil!"

IT was just after four o'clock on the following afternoon, when Jake arrived at the airport in his own two-seater, entered the main building, and approached the double doors of the control-room.

A man in striped overalls and a woollen jacket was standing aimlessly by the rails just inside the doors, a rag in one hand and a tin of metal polish in the other. His face was lined, though he was not even middle-aged, and there was a vacant look about his blue eyes.

"How are ya, Mike?" Jake said to him.

"Hallo!" Mike Owens, at one time an excellent pilot but now a human wreck, stared stupidly and shuffled towards the door which had just swung back into position.

"You'd better shine that plate before you go."

The plate Jake indicated was an ornamental one, fastened to three brass rods across the glass panel of the doors and bearing the inscription "Federal Air Lines." Mike looked at it and nodded.

"Oh, sure," he said with a little laugh. "I forgot what I came for. Doc sent me over here four times. I— I'll make it look real pretty, Jake."

He applied some of the polish to the rag and began to rub the plate.

"You're doin' a swell job, fellow," Jake declared in a voice unusually gentle for him. "Don't worry too much about it."

He passed on into the room and found a visitor waiting for him beside his desk; Al Stone, the general manager of Federal Air Lines from the New York office of the company, a man of considerable bulk and height, and not a little self-importance.

"Sorry to keep you waiting," said Jake. "I went over to the Browning Company. They've just got a new transport. There's all the dope."

He presented a folder, containing details which Al Stone proceeded to

study, and called across to Buzz to let him have the latest weather report.

"Well, what do you think of it?" he asked, after he had glanced at the sheet Buzz took over to him.

"Cruising speed two-twenty," remarked Stone. "That sounds high!"

"Well, I checked with the test pilot. He says it'll do better than two-twenty."

Al Stone tossed the folder on to the desk.

"You know, the old man likes that Adams Bomber," he said. "But I'm not thinking about that right now."

"No?" Jake raised his rather heavy brows. "Well, what's on your mind? Spill it."

"It's about Dizzy Davis. He's not even here yet, and he's up to his old tricks already. That forced landing yesterday was a fake!"

"How d'you know?" challenged Jake.

"Report from Cleveland by telephone. When the mechanics reached the 'plane they found nothing wrong, except the left magneto block had been pulled loose."

"Pulled loose?"

"He did it himself, of course. They say he drove back to the 'plane with a lousy load of cuties, thanked the boys, kissed the girls good-bye, and got into the air twenty-four hours late!"

"That's your story!" said Jake, with an air of incredulity. "Why don't you wait and hear what Dizzy has to say?"

"Oh, he'll spin a good yarn!" growled the general manager. "He always does. I'm telling you, Jake, Dizzy's a menace and a liability."

"And the best cock-eyed pilot on this air line, or any other!" declared Jake warmly.

"Maybe, but here we are in the newspapers, again—Mail 'plane forced down!"

"He wasn't carryin' the mail. He was ferryin' an overhaul job east."

"D'you expect the newspapers to print that?" scoffed Stone. "Our record's good, Jake. We want to keep it that way. Now there's some excuse for Payson, but there's none at all for Dizzy. He's never been reliable. I don't see why you want him here!"

Jake dumped himself on a corner of the desk and waved a hand.

"Well, sit down a minute and relax," he said grudgingly. "I'm gonna make a speech."

Al Stone sat, though he did not relax. "All right, shoot!" he grunted.

"Who made the first night hop over the Alleghenies? Dizzy Davis—in a crummy old D.H. at that—and there weren't any beacons or lighted emergency fields then, either! Who kept yellin' his head off for radio until you mugs finally decided to spend some money on it? Who went down to Texas and got the dope on blind flyin' from Bill Ocker, and came back and flew over the Hump with fog on the ground on both sides of it? Davis!"

Jake picked up a paper-knife shaped like a dagger and stabbed the air with it.

"If he hadn't done that," he went on almost fiercely, "we'd still be sittin' on our tails, and then when there's a cloud in the sky the birds don't sing! Before that it was standard practice for an aviator to stick his head out o' the window and say: 'Ah, it's rainin'!' and then climb back into bed again! I know—I was one of 'em!"

Abruptly a voice rang out from the loudspeaker on Buzz's desk—a voice familiar in Jake's ears:

"Dizzy Davis, in Twenty-two, calling Newark. Dizzy Davies, in Twenty-two, calling Newark!"

"Go ahead, Davis!" said Buzz into

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his microphone, and prepared to make notes on a pad.

"Position over Sharon. Altitude two thousand. Temperature fifty-eight. Visibility unlimited. Ceiling, three thousand feet. Scattered clouds."

"Okay," said Buzz; and then the voice burst into song:

"Oh, how I miss you, dear old pal of mine—" How's Jake? Say, tell him I—"

"Regulation Number Three," interrupted Buzz severely. "Pilots will refrain from all personal conversation while in flight."

"Okay, Toots!" responded the voice airily. "I can read!"

Jake grinned at Al Stone. "Speak of the devil!" said he.

"Devil is right," growled Stone, and took out a cigarette-case.

"Aw, let me tell you something! Hi, gimme one o' those, will ya?"

The case was held in his direction, and he took a cigarette and lit it.

"Dizzy and Tex Clarke and I," he said, "are the only old-timers left in this division. We were all in the War together. I'll never forget. Dizzy was the kid of the outfit, and I taught him how to fly—and three weeks later he was teachin' me!"

"That's pure sentiment, Jake," protested Stone. "I'm not interested in

past history. We're running a business. If the war-time pilots don't fit to-day's standards, they're through!"

"Those ate the men who made your airways."

"I can't help that. Compare Davis with the type of youngster we're getting to-day. They're college men, educated to the job, technically expert. They never pull anything wild, and they can fly, too!"

Jake stood up and gritted his teeth. "Al, get this!" he said stiffly. "I hire and fire the pilots on this division, and as long as I've got the job Dizzy Davis is gonna have one!"

"Okay, Jake." Stone rose and rammed his black soft-felt hat on his head. "But the next slip Dizzy makes out he goes, even if you have to go with him!"

"Thanks," said Jake.

Dizzy Arrives

A LITTLE while after Al Stone had taken his departure in a huff, the voice of another pilot issued from the loudspeaker, announcing that Lawson, in 'Plane Six, was coming in to land. Another machine was already roaring over the field, and Buzz glanced at it through the panes of the long windows.

"Wait a minute," he directed. "A student in first solo heading in. Better take another turn around the field."

Jake looked out at the machine which was coming to earth.

"Who's flyin' that training job, Buzz?" he inquired.

"Tommy," was the reply. "You're crazy! There's only one in it!"

"Sure," said Buzz. "First solo."

"Well, can you beat that kid?"

Doc Wilson walked into the room to announce that the Government inspectors would be arriving in an hour's time for the regular quarterly check.

"Did you thank 'em for the advance notice?" asked Jake dryly.

"We don't need no notice," said Doc. "We're ready."

"That's what you think."

Out on the flying-field the descending machine came to rest upon the concrete, and a number of people ran over to it, including a stewardess, Tex Clarke, and a couple of other pilots.

From the cockpit a girl scrambled down amongst them—a slender girl, even in her flying clothes; brown-haired, green-eyed, and full of life and spirits.

"Nice work, Tommy!" boomed Tex. "Congratulations!"

The others uttered words of praise, and the green eyes became very bright and their owner's face flushed with elation.

"Oh, gosh!" she exclaimed. "I feel like an angel!"

"Well, you sure look the part," Tex declared.

"Was I all right?"

"Oh, perfect," he assured her, "except that last landing! You came in a little too fast."

Jake had emerged from the control-room, and she rushed across to him.

"Hi, Jake!" she cried. "Jake, I've flown alone for the first time! I've soloed!"

In her excitement she flung her arms round his neck, and he held the arms as though shocked.

"Hi, you're gettin' familiar with the boss, aren't you?" he rebuked.

"Oh, Jake, don't be so dignified!" she pouted. "Aren't you proud of me?"

"Sure I'm proud of you," he returned, "but listen, don't try to be the snappiest solo bird on the field—try to be the oldest. Your grandchildren will appreciate it."

"Don't worry," she laughed. "I won't go haywire on you."

She tried to hug him again, but he hurriedly released himself.

"Take it easy," he urged. "There's the boy friend!"

Tay Lawson, a young pilot, was crossing the field from the machine in which he had just landed. She rushed to him, crying:

"Tay! Tay! Tay, I made it! I made it!"

Tay Lawson congratulated her.

"I knew you'd do it," he declared. "Were you scared?"

"Scared?" Tommy, who derived her nickname from her surname Thomas, drew a very long breath. "I'll say I was!"

"I remember the first time I soloed —" Tay began; but Jake heard and cut in upon the reminiscence.

"You're not gonna go back that far, are you?" he jeered.

In at the gates of the airport came a motor-truck, driven by Baldy, which contained the wreckage of the machine Eddie Payson had abandoned to its fate the night before. Jake walked across to it with Doc Wilson, and one comprehensive glance at what had been a mail plane was sufficient.

"Well," he said to Doc with a grimace, "it looks like you can strike that from the list of registered aircraft!"

Doc had done that already, and said so. Jake turned to Baldy, who had jumped down from behind the wheel of the truck.

"Where's Eddie Payson?" he asked. "He dropped off by the office," was the reply; and Jake went back to the control-room.

Buzz was chewing gum and receiving a weather report from Chicago; Payson was standing by Jake's desk in the uniform of the air line and fiddling nervously with his cap.

"All right, Eddie," said Jake, dropping into his own chair behind the desk, "sit down."

"Thanks," stammered the pilot, "but I—I—"

The paper-knife was jerked in the direction of a chair, and Eddie sat.

"Come on, what's the story?"

"Well, I was flying blind on the north leg of the Harrisburg beam. Couldn't see anything but my instrument board—not even the wing tips. Then they turned the beam off."

"It was only off for ten minutes," rapped Jake.

"I know, but I couldn't pick it up again."

"You've got a map, a pencil and paper, a clock, and a compass. You ought to be able to take care of your course."

"I tried that but with fog all around me, I—"

"No, Eddie!" Jake pointed the paper-knife. "This is purely a case of pilot and cockpit trouble. You got jittery, flying blind. You wandered away from the beam, and you got lost. You were afraid to fly under the fog for fear of hittin' the mountains. Then you got panicky and bailed out ten miles north of the airway, with a fifteen hundred foot clear ceiling below the clouds! Is that right?"

"I guess that's right," Eddie admitted miserably. "But all the time some little voice inside me kept saying, 'You're just guessing, Eddie. You don't know where you are!'"

"Yeah," nodded Jake. "Yeah, that sky's a pretty lousesome place when it gets fogged over. But a pilot's supposed to use his head and forget that voice!"

"I'm not afraid, Jake!" blurted the

pilot. "Really, I'm not. I tried to bring the mail through."

But Jake shook his head.

"Whenever the weather licks the pilot," he said, "instead of him lickin' the weather, he's finished! The first time makes the second time easier, and the first thing he knows he's in trouble when the weather is perfect."

Tears became very near to Eddie's eyes.

"Jake," he said pleadingly, "all my life I've been working to be a pilot. Model planes—school—college. Give me another chance, will you?"

Jake dropped the paper-knife and walked round the desk.

"Eddie," he said, "ever since the first day we hired you as a rookie all the pilots that've flown with you had to make a report on you. Now you've seen the forms that we use, and there's a line that reads, 'Reaction to emergencies.' That line could just as well read 'nerve' or 'courage,' or anything you want to call it. Now your reports have all been good, except for that one line, and then, most of the times, question marks."

He paused a moment, sorry for the young man who had failed, then added:

"Last night you answered those question marks. It cost us a forty thousand dollar aeroplane. They've got your final cheque in the office."

"Well, I—I guess there's nothing more to say," faltered Eddie. "You've been mighty square about it, Jake. So long."

He stumbled from the room, and Doc Wilson, who had entered it a little while before, said gruffly:

"Tough break for the kid."

"Oh, there's times when I'd gladly give up this swivel-chair job!" growled Jake. "Haven't you got somethin' else to do besides stand there and moan?"

The voice of Dizzy Davis rang out from the loudspeaker.

"Go ahead, Davis," said Buzz.

"Boys, I'm almost home," announced Dizzy. "I can smell Jersey City."

"Okay, Twenty-two!"

"Don't be so business-like, Buzz," reproved Dizzy. "I'm tryin' to tell ya I'm landing at Newark. Never mind the fatted calf. Make it lobster thermidor at Mamma Gini's."

"Okay, Twenty-two!"

The drone of a plane in the sky became audible and increased in volume. Jake looked up through the window behind his desk, and Doc and Leslie Bogan joined him. Even Buzz deserted his wireless.

Dizzy was approaching the airport at a considerable height, and as they watched they saw his machine turn completely over and swoop towards the field upside down.

Jake muttered something under his breath, while out on the field pilots and mechanics stared aghast. But over went the machine again, and down it came to a perfect three-point landing.

Dizzy Davis pushed his goggles up over his helmet and grinned at those who gathered round the machine, then opened the roof of the cockpit and descended to the ground, an impish-looking fellow with a freckled face decorated with a tiny moustache and illuminated by a pair of very bright brown eyes.

"How are ya, Dizzy, you old rooster?" boomed Tex, and staggered back from an embrace that nearly sent him sprawling.

Jake hurried out from the control-room with Leslie Bogan and Doc Wilson.

"Sweet home!" he cried.

"Welcome!" Dizzy rushed at him.

lost his balance, and sat down on his parachute pack with a thud.

"Well, home again," he said, looking about him, "and what do I see? A pair of strange feet—large and very flat feet!"

The owner of the feet happened to be one of the Government inspectors from Washington, a tall man and a dignified one who did not even smile, but who said ominously

"And they belong to Joe Allen, Department of Commerce inspector."

Dizzy scrambled to his feet.

"Oh, hallo," he said, "how are you, Mr. Allen? I'm pleased to meet you. My name's Davis."

"Yes, I know," returned the inspector. "That was a very fancy landing of yours. The next one like it will cost you a suspension."

"Uhuh!" Dizzy grinned. "There's not goin' to be any next one."

"I'm not kidding. If you want to fly around here, you'd better watch your step!"

The grin persisted.

"Well, I've never had much fun doin' that, Mr. Allen," said Dizzy, "but I'll try."

"Let me see your pilot's licence."

"Pilot's licence?" Dizzy unfastened his heavy leather coat and groped in the pockets of his tunic. "There we are!" He handed over his licence. "You'll notice I've made application for renewal."

The inspector examined the card and the slip of paper inside it.

"I see you've applied for a waiver for physical defect," he said. "What is it?"

"Skippy pump," replied Dizzy. "Six years old. Oh—er—told me, how is Washington on us old cripples these days?"

"Tough!" The inspector wrote on the licence with a fountain-pen and handed it back. "They're holding up licences they used to renew without batting an eye."

"Oh!" Dizzy looked at the licence and put it in his pocket. "You write a lovely hand, Joseph. I suppose you're gonna turn me in?"

The inspector shook his head.

"I've got my job to do," he said, "but I'm no stool-pigeon. You get away with that fancy landing this time."

"Thank you," said Dizzy, and the inspector turned to Jake.

"Get my notice about inspecting?" he inquired.

Jake assured him that everything was ready for him, and he walked off in the direction of the hangars.

"You're as lucky as ever, you lug!"

Jake said to Dizzy.

"Baldy," said Dizzy with a magnificent gesture, "my luggage!"

Baldy went to the machine, whence he removed a suitcase and a bag. Dizzy, with Jake on one side of him and Tex on the other, moved towards the control-room.

"You know, Dizzy," said Jake, "that Bureau of Commerce is gettin' awfully tough lately. I wouldn't tangle with that Joe Allen if I were you."

"Don't worry about Joe Allen," returned Dizzy cheerfully, "we'll take care of him. How's Mary?"

"Oh, she's fine! She's comin' over to pick us up pretty soon."

"That's swell! And how's your matrimony, Tex? Did she send me her love?"

"Sure!" lied Tex.

"Yeah, I'll bet she did! In a hand-crocheted bottle of arsenic! Come on, I wanta see Buzz! I haven't seen him in years!"

The Fate of a Pilot

IN the pilots' room Dizzy discarded his flying clothes, and in the control-room he and Buzz were exchanging greetings when Tommy walked in at the door and Tex pounced on her.

"Hi, kid, you wanna meet a real pilot?" he asked.

"Around here?" she laughed. "I'd be delighted!"

"Come on!" Tex led her over to Dizzy and effected an introduction, and Dizzy viewed her with appreciation.

He had a distinct weakness for the so-called weak sex, and he liked the look of her.

"Well, Tex," he said, "I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. How are ya? I'm Dizzy Davis."

"Yes, I know," returned Tommy with complete self-possession. "Tex happened to mention it when he introduced us."

"Yeah, yeah." Dizzy looked at her uniform and the cap on her head. "Aviator?"

"Just soloed," she replied. "Tex is teaching me to fly."

"Yep," confirmed Tex. "I'm her daddy."

"Gee! Well, good-bye, daddy!"

Tex took the hint and drifted away. Tommy said:

"Your landing was a honey! Wish I could fly like that?"

"Well, how about lettin' me give you a lesson or two?"

"Oh, would you?" she breathed.

"I can't think of anything I'd rather do."

"Keep your fingers crossed," said Jake from his desk. "He'll give you the well-known Davis run-around!"

"I've heard of that," said Tommy, and she crossed her fingers almost under Dizzy's nose, then walked away.

"Say, what d'you want to throw

that monkey-wrench for?" demanded Dizzy.

"Anything for a pal," returned Jake with calm.

Tay Lawson stepped in from the field.

"Number Eleven's inspected," he reported. "Express mail and passenger manifests checked. Ready to take off. Any special instructions?"

"Yes," replied Jake. "Keep your eye on the weather—the map's gonna change fast in the next couple o' days. Oh, I want you two fellows to meet each other. Pilot Lawson—Dizzy Davis."

"Hallo!" said Dizzy casually.

"Hallo!" said Tay. "Welcome back to Newark."

"Lawson's my right-hand man," Jake explained. "In charge of all test work, overhaul, and motor replacements."

"You must be good, fella," remarked Dizzy, "to have all that responsibility."

"Sure," said Jake. "He keeps his mind on his job! He's developing that new de-icer. It prevents the ice from forming on the wings. Go over it with him, will you—when you have time?"

"How about to-morrow?" suggested Tay.

"Huh?" Dizzy was looking at Tommy, who had re-entered the room.

"To-morrow? Oh—er—let's see—to-morrow. Say, Tommy, what are we doin' to-morrow?"

"We?" Tommy raised her brows; Tay's were frowning.

"Yeah, I mean—er—what are you doin' to-morrow?"

"Ask me the day after to-morrow!" Tommy slipped her arm through Tay's and went out with him on to the field.

"I never thought I'd live to see the day," rejoiced Jake.

"Dizzy Davis knocked clean out by a girl!" derided Tex.

Dizzy made a face at them both. "You under-estimate me, boys," he said. "That was just round one. We'll give her that one."

Jake suddenly became official.

"You'll fly the noon mail west to-morrow," he stated, "come back the next day, have two days off, and then the regular schedule."

Dizzy flung out both hands.

"Here we go," he proclaimed, "right back on the old merry-go-round! Dizzy Davis, the flyin' postman!"

"Yeah," said Jake, "and now listen, you lug—what's the dope on that forced landing yesterday?"

Dizzy stared.

"Is this official?" he asked.

"Well, no, not if you don't want it to be."

"Okay. Well, here it is. I'm ballin' the jack at about a thousand feet when a swell chateau passes under my left wing. Biggest place you ever saw. Beautiful lawns and gravelled drive-ways, and a big swimming pool. Well, in the pool are four beautiful dames."

"Four?"

"Yeah, four. And then the unexpected happened. A magneto block got loose!"

"Yeah, a magneto block got loose," snorted Jake. "And Al Stone knows all about it!"

"Who told him?" asked Dizzy blankly.

"I don't know. He got the report from Cleveland and guessed the rest. He wanted to fire you."

"Fire me!" Dizzy emitted a scornful noise. "Since when can he fire anybody?"

"He runs the air line."

"He may be boss," retorted Dizzy. "but he doesn't run the line. I'd quit



"Well, what do you think of it?" Jake asked, after he had glanced at the sheet Buzz took over to him.

before I'd let a guy like that fire me!" "Yeah? Well, look out he doesn't call your bluff." Jake dismissed the subject with a flip of his hand. "Now that you're here, where are you goin' to stay?"

Dizzy replied that Tex had asked him to stay at his place, but Tex did not confirm the statement.

"I—I guess I'd better call Lou," he said lamely.

"Yeah," said Dizzy. "Ask her what she's gonna have for dinner."

Tex rang up his wife, but her attitude was such that it was just as well Dizzy and Jake could not hear her end of the conversation.

"Dizzy," mourned Tex, after he had hung up, "Lou says her mother's comin' on from Cleveland. I'm sorry."

"I bet you are!" quoth Dizzy. "Aw, that's all right, forget it. I'll get a little place of my own, and you can come and live with me."

One of the double front doors was opened and Mike Owens knelt at it with his polishing materials.

"There's Mike!" exclaimed Dizzy, and ran over to the kneeling man.

"Mike, I'm glad to see you. I haven't said eyes on you in years. The only guy in the outfit crazier than I was. Mike, you look—"

Mike rose to his feet, staring vacantly. "You—you want something?"

"Don't you remember me?" asked Dizzy in astonishment. "I'm Dizzy—Dizzy Davis."

"Dizzy Davis?" Mike repeated the name as though it were strange to him.

"Fifty-ninth Squadron, Kelly Field."

"Kelly Field?" A glimmer of intelligence appeared in Mike's blue eyes.

"Oh, yeah, I remember you. You were a pilot."

"I still am," said Dizzy.

Mike proceeded to polish the plate on the door.

"You—you've been away," he said dully.

"Yes, Mike; I was out West for a while."

"I thought I hadn't seen you around. Drop in at the house some time. I got some mighty good gin."

"All right, Mike, I will," Dizzy looked back at Jake and Tex, but they made no comment.

"Jake thinks if the front door don't look right people won't come in," said Mike, and presently shuffled off; whereupon Dizzy cried out in a horrified voice:

"Jake, you can't do that to him! Mike's a pilot!"

"Mike was a pilot," corrected Jake.

"Well, what happened to him?"

"Smacked a tree in a fog. I thought you'd have heard about it."

"Broke practically every bone in his body," added Tex.

"Oh," lamented Dizzy, "I certainly said the bright thing to him right off the bat!"

"Mike doesn't know what it's all about," Tex reassured him.

"Well, can't something be done for him? Holy smoke! Mike Owens polishing brass door-knobs!"

"Yeah, and he doesn't do that very well," said Jake. "He's had the best attention in the country, but nothing more can be done. He's got a wife and a couple o' kids. We can't let him starve. Tex has been lookin' after his family."

"Yeah, with your help," said Tex.

Dizzy went back to them, and from each pocket of his breeches he pulled out notes which he thrust upon Tex.

"Here you are," he said. "And if you need any more, just holler."

October 31st, 1936.

"Oh, Dizzy," Tex protested, "they don't need all o' this!"

"Forget it," said Dizzy, stalking up and down. "It's enough to make a man sick inside. Why don't those nits in New York do something about a pension for him?"

"It takes money to start a pension," said Jake. "We're trying to work something out."

"Oh, it takes money to start a pension, eh?" howled Dizzy. "It's enough to drive a guy off his nut, all this red tape! Tex, come on, I—I need a drink. How about you, Jake?"

"Me, too," replied Jake. "I'll phone Mary. We'll have dinner over at Mamma Gini's. We'll all meet there."

He dialed a number on the telephone on his desk, and Dizzy suggested that Tex should ask Lou to join them.

"I—I don't think she'd come," said Tex, who knew quite well that she wouldn't.

"Well, you can come for a couple o' drinks, anyway."

Jake made arrangements with Mary, and he was putting down the telephone when Tommy crossed the room, dressed in a dark frock with a white collar, and disappeared through a doorway.

"There goes my dinner partner!" announced Dizzy. "Second round coming up! How's the betting?"

"Tommy all the way," declared Jake; and Tex offered ten dollars to five against Dizzy's chance of success.

"All right," said the incorrigible one. "If I lose, you all eat on me."

He followed Tommy into an adjoining room, where she was making notes in a book at a bench.

"Hallo, Tommy!" he said! "I—I—I've come to apologise."

"For what?" she inquired, and put away the book.

"Oh, for acting like a chump," he replied, walking over to her. "You put me in my place, but I know I deserved it."

"I didn't expect this," said she in manifest surprise. "I—I—er—oh, forget it!"

"Oh, no, no, I—I don't want to pass it off that way." Dizzy dared to put a hand on her wrist, but she looked down at the hand and he removed it in haste. "I know I got off on the wrong foot," he went on humbly, "but I—I—er—I'd like to begin all over again, and show you what the right is like."

"And how are you going to do that?" she asked.

"Well—er—we're all going over to Mamma Gini's for something to eat. Will you join us?"

She hesitated.

"You know, Dizzy," she said suspiciously, "this is probably just another good line of yours."

"I promise to behave myself," said Dizzy. "And you've got to eat some place, haven't you?"

She took her coat from a chair and put it over her arm, and she put on her hat.

"Still suspicious?" asked Dizzy.

"Yes," she replied, "but hungry."

Buzz was busy at the microphone when they walked out together into the control-room, but the faces of Jake and Tex fully expressed their feelings.

"A Grand Reunion"

MAMMA GINI'S was a very popular restaurant in Broad Street, Newark, and Madame Gini, in addition to being an Italian woman of massive proportions, with a moon of a face and a double chin, was quite a character. She herself waited

upon the five who invaded her establishment in a party, and the five enjoyed an excellent meal—and excellent Chianti.

Dizzy danced with Tommy to the music of a little mandoline band, while the others remained at their table.

"It's a grand reunion," said Jake.

"Well," agreed Tex, refilling a glass he had emptied several times, "only I wonder what Lou's gonna say when I get home."

"Aw, you've got to kick it around sometimes," said Jake. "Look at Dizzy—he's havin' a great time." He turned to his wife. "How are you doin', honey?"

"Well," she replied fondly, "you're here, aren't you?"

"If I'm not," said he, "I'm gonna get awful sore when I find it out!"

"That kind o' talk makes me feel good," declared Tex. "How long you two been married now?"

"Two years," Mary replied.

"Umph! Lou and I've been married five." Tex sipped his wine and was afraid he had been indiscreet. "Aw, now don't get me wrong," he went on.

"Lou's a good sport, only she just doesn't like Dizzy. Says he gets me into bad habits."

"I can't give you an argument about that," laughed Jake.

"Lou can and does!"

"Don't worry," said Mary, "I'll square Lou for you."

"Yeah," growled Tex, "but you can't square her until to-morrow—I gotta see her to-night!"

The music of a fox-trot had ceased, and Dizzy had stopped with Tommy by a curtained archway. His "skippy pump" had resented the exertion of the dance, and he was a trifle breathless.

"What's the matter," asked Tommy, "can't you take it?"

"Certainly I can take it," he replied indignantly. "How old do you think I am? I'm only thirty-four."

"That's an awful lot when you're nineteen," said she.

"Yes," he agreed, "but when you're thirty-four, nineteen is no age at all. Say, do you realise that when you're only thirty-four I'll be only forty-nine?"

"What of it?"

"Well, if you think that when I'm forty-nine I'm goin' to dance with an old hag of thirty-four, you're crazy!"

"Do you realise," she retorted, "that when I'm forty-nine you'll be sixty-four?"

"Well, look here," he chaffed, "when you're forty-nine you'll be floating around in a wheel-chair. I'll be out dancing!"

"Yes? With whom?"

"How do I know? She isn't born yet."

There was no doubt that Dizzy had a way with him. He was different from any man she had ever met before, and she liked him. Impulsively she put a hand on his shoulder, and she said:

"You know, Dizzy, I'm glad I came."

"Now, wait a minute, wait a minute!" he exclaimed, removing the hand. "You can't do that to me! You've got to realise that anything you do has consequences. You do that again, and you'll be kissed!"

Tommy crossed two fingers and began to count.

"What's the idea?" asked Dizzy.

"Mother told me when I was tempted to do something to count ten," she replied. "Can you wait?"

"Wait?" he echoed. "I'll help you. Start all over again. A-one!"

"A-two!" laughed Tommy; and between them they had counted up to nine when Jake came up behind them.

"How about dancing this one with your boss?" he said, and whisked Tommy away.

Dizzy sauntered back to the table and sat down beside Mary. Tex had adjourned to the bar.

"You'd better watch that husband of yours," he said. "Look at him dancing around with that young girl over there—the old reprobate!"

"I don't worry about him," said Mary. "Well, stranger, how does it seem to be back east?"

"Oh, wonderful, stranger, wonderful!" Dizzy waved a hand. "Nothing out there but mountains and cows."

"Uhuh!" Mary leaned nearer. "Listen, Dizzy, I don't want to preach, but Tommy's young. She's only nineteen."

"Yeah, I know that," said Dizzy. "What of it?"

"Nothing. Only when you're nineteen it's so easy to fall for a handsome aviator and get your heart broken into tiny pieces."

"Aw, that never happens!"

"It does sometimes," she said gravely. "I remember reading about a case like that."

Dizzy looked at her—and looked away again.

"Well—er—well, that girl you were reading about turned out all right, didn't she?" he asked, fingering the stem of an empty glass.

"She turned out all right," nodded Mary. "She was lucky. She met a fine fellow, right after that, and married him."

"I was very glad to hear that," declared Dizzy in all sincerity. "Very glad."

"She's had two of the happiest years in her life." Mary glanced across at Jake, dancing with Tommy. "You see, Dizzy, Jake didn't ask me about anything that had happened before. If he had, I'd have told him—without mentioning any names. It wouldn't make things any better to break up a friendship like yours and Jake's, would it?"

"Oh, no, no, it certainly wouldn't," Dizzy agreed.

Jake came dancing up to the table with Tommy, and Tex ambled back from the bar hugging a full flask of Chianti.

"Now, Tex, what are you going to do with that bottle?" asked Mary, who was of the opinion that he had already consumed quite enough wine.

"As soon as it's empty," replied Tex. "I'm gonna take it home and make a lamp out of it."

"Well, we're going," announced Jake. "You'd better get some shut-eye, too, fella."

Dizzy, thus addressed, declared that he and Tommy were staying a while. Tex sat down and filled a glass; Jake and Mary said good-night and went off in the direction of the cloak-rooms, and Dizzy was urging Tex not to make his wife any more sore than she was already when Mamma Gini sailed up to the table in all her amplitude.

"Phone for Mr. Tex," she stated.

"Me?" Tex blinked and drained the glass he had filled. "A lady?"

"Your wife!"

The telephone was attached to a wall at the far end of the long room, beyond the bar. Tex rose reluctantly, and as he was none too steady on his feet, Dizzy went with him to the instrument.

The receiver was dangling on its cord, and Tex applied it to his left ear.

"Hallo, Lou!" he said into the transmitter. "Yes, this is— Yeah, I'm here! Eh? Aw, now listen, Lou. I

ain't hardly had a drop! Eh?" He tried to adopt a fiercer tone. "You listen to me, Lou! I'm gonna—" An expression of dismay that was almost comic spread over his face. "Oh, all right—all right, Lou. Yeah, yeah, Lou, I'm comin' right home. Good-bye, Lou."

The receiver was restored to its prongs.

"That couldn't have been Lou," commented Dizzy. "She hardly said anything!"

"Yes, she did," growled Tex. "She said come home now or never!"

"Well, that simplifies everything, doesn't it?" said Dizzy with a grin. "Now you don't have to go home at all!"

Mamma Gini arrived in full sail, beaming all over her fat face.

"Mr. Dizzy," she said, "the young lady who was with you to-night, she told me to tell you 'good-night' for her."

"Good-night?" Dizzy stared. "Why, where'd she go?"

"She went home with Mr. and Mrs. Lee," was the reply.

Fog!

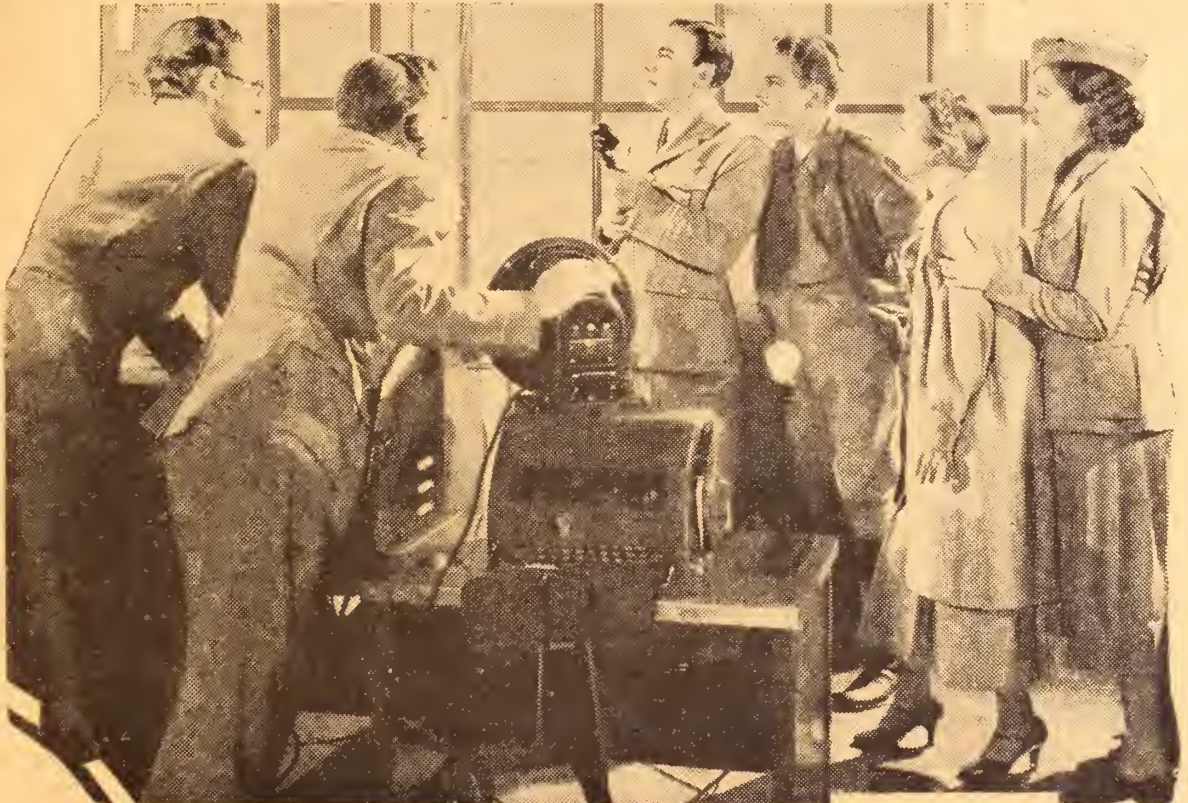
TOMMY was in the control-room at the airport, next morning, when

Dizzy entered it. She was in flying-clothes and looked just as attractive in them as she had done in a frock. Dizzy, having greeted her, presented her with a counting frame of beads on wires, such as is used in kindergarten schools.

"For me?" she asked in astonishment.

"For you," he replied impishly. "Chinese children have learned to count from those things for centuries, so it ought to get you all the way up to ten."

"I'll start working on it right away," she laughed.



"Then he—he didn't hear!" sobbed Lou. "He can't land in this fog without his radio! What are you going to do?"

"Good idea." He straightened her tie for her. "Now tell me something. Why did you run out on me like that last night?"

"Don't you know?"

"I haven't the remotest idea," he declared. "The only thing I know is that I was never so humiliated in all my life. I went home—to an hotel—and I cried all night. I knew it wasn't anything I could have said or done, so naturally I just came to the conclusion that—" He made an excellent pretence of crying. "Well, that you—you misunderstood me."

"No, I'll tell you what it was," said she. "You see, you began to look so attractive— Well, you know the way those soft lights flatter you when you're thirty-five—"

"Thirty-four," he corrected sternly.

"All right, thirty-four—don't be so sensitive! Anyway, you began to look so attractive to me that my heart kept going pit-a-pat, and I finally got hold of myself, and I said: 'Tommy, this is all right, but how does he look in the morning?' And now that it's morning—"

"I look a hundred and two!"

"No!"

"All right, then we start all over again. How about a flying lesson this afternoon?"

"Flying?" Her green eyes sparkled. "Any time you say! Oh, but you take the Cleveland mail out in an hour!"

Dizzy had forgotten that circumstance. "Oh, don't—don't worry about that," he said. "I can get Tex to take my run."

"Jake will never stand for that," she informed him. "He says the planes go on schedule, and so do the pilots."

"Well, you forget about it, see? I'll take care of the rest."

"I'll be here," she promised, "but you'll never get away with it."

But Dizzy did get away with it. Some little time later he went into the pilots' room as though to prepare for his flight, but knowing well that Tex was in there, and in the act of putting on his leather overalls suddenly sank to the floor, gasping.

"Say, what's the matter?" asked Tex in high concern. "Is it that dud ticker o' yours?"

"Yeah," murmured Dizzy faintly, and permitted himself to be helped into a chair.

"You're gettin' old," said Tex. "You can't take it."

Dizzy almost forgot the part he was playing on hearing that statement.

"Wait a minute!" he exclaimed.

"Too many people around here are sayin' I'm gettin' old!" He remembered himself and clutched at his chum, emitting a groan.

"I—I better get a doctor!" stuttered Tex in alarm.

"No, don't get a doctor!" gasped Dizzy. "I've gotta make that Cleveland run. That mail's gotta go out."

Tex immediately offered to take the run for him, which was just what he desired, of course; but he protested that Lou would get sore.

"That's all right," said Tex bleakly. "After last night I'm afraid to go home, anyway."

Dizzy clutched at his heart and groaned again. He seemed to be labouring for breath.

"Oh—thanks—Tex," he murmured.

"Thanks—so—much. Oh-h-h!"

"I'll go to Cleveland," said Tex determinedly. "You take it easy."

Dizzy stumbled to his feet and blundered out from the room, and on schedule time Tex took off in the mail plane for Cleveland. Not very long

after his departure, Dizzy was well enough to take Tommy up into the air and to give her quite a sensational lesson in flying.

The afternoon wore on to evening and fog began to settle down upon the airport. Leslie Bogan leaned over Buzz's desk as a report came in via the loud-speaker from Cleveland:

"Nine p.m. Ceiling zero. Visibility zero. Dense fog. Temperature thirty. Dew-point thirty. Wind west two. Barometer twenty-nine eighty. Cleveland to Chicago, trip four, cancelled."

"Looks bad," commented Leslie Bogan, and just then Jake walked in from the field.

"Fog's so thick you can cut it in chunks," he said, and pointed out through the windows. "Look at those seagulls! They've been in this flyin' racket so long they've got sense—they're walking on the ground!"

The loud-speaker on Buzz's desk came to life again.

"Tex Clarke, in 'Plane Nine, callin' Newark."

"Go ahead, Texas," directed Buzz.

"Tex Clarke to Newark. Eastbound. Can't see my hand on instruments. East leg of Bellefonte range. Compass one-o-one. Altitude ten thousand. Temperature forty-six. Give Newark weather."

"Ceiling here zero," stated Buzz.

"What's the top of the clouds, Texas?"

"I don't know. Went up fifteen thousand. Started takin' on ice, so came down again. I'll go up and feel for it if you say so."

"Tell him never mind," said Jake, and gazed moodily out at the fog which was becoming thicker every moment. "That stuff'll turn to sleet before morning. We can't take a chance with passengers. Buzz, notify all stations, division superintendents, nothing but the mail leaves Newark till the weather clears."

"Yes, sir," responded Buzz, and proceeded to call up all the Federal Line stations. "Newark closed in," he stated. "Bellefonte closed in. Newark to Bellefonte, zero-zero. Cancel all passenger traffic east of Cleveland. Train all passengers. Caution all mail pilots."

"Tex sure bumped into a sweet trip this time," commented Leslie Bogan.

"Yeah," agreed Jake. "Well, Dizzy oughta be glad he's on the sick list."

Dizzy, at that moment, was perched on a stool at the bar in Mamma Gini's restaurant, and Tommy was perched on another stool beside him.

"By the way," said Dizzy, "don't you ever try any of those things that I did this afternoon until you can land the ship on a dime from any position with a dead motor. Got it?"

"I promise," said Tommy. "But, oh, I loved it! What is it, Dizzy, that makes flying what it is? Is it thrills, or—"

"I think it's because when you're up there you're absolutely on your own," expounded Dizzy. "The world is down there under your wings. Nobody can touch you. There isn't anything anybody can do— Aw, I don't know what it is! One thing I do know, I'd rather be a mail pilot than a king!"

"Tell me, Dizzy, do you ever get worried when it's foggy like this?"

"Always," he replied quite frankly. "Whenever I get in a jam, and I'm lucky enough to figure a way out and get my feet on the ground again, I always say the birds can have it!"

He looked round at a window, and not even a lamp in Broad Street was visible. His conscience troubled him, and he said

"I'd no idea Tex was gonna run into this kind of weather when he took my

run. I'd rather be up there myself. Let's run over to the office and see how he's makin' out, eh?"

A fog-horn was sounding dimly across the flying-field when they reached the airport, and Jake was looking distinctly worried when they entered the control-room. He was studying a weather chart.

"How does it look?" asked Dizzy.

"How d'you think it looks?" growled Jake. "The weather won't clear till that high cloud over Omaha moves east and shoves the dirt out to sea. Oh, Tommy, all passenger flights are cancelled. See the boys in the hangars get their food, will you?"

Tommy went off, and a few minutes later an unexpected and none-too-welcome visitor walked into the room, greeted Jake effusively, and offered him and Dizzy cigars. He was Fred Adams, of the Adams Aircraft Construction Company—tall, bushy-browed, and wearing a bowler hat at an angle.

The cigars were declined.

"Say, I've got some stuff you'll like!" declared their would-be donor. "I ran into some rare old Bourbon whisky. I'll send a few bottles over to the flat. Enough for you, too, Dizzy."

"Lovely!" quoth Dizzy. "What do we have to do to repay these kindnesses?"

"Not a thing!" laughed the visitor. "Of course, if you happen to fly that Adams Bomber and like it, just say so."

"And if we don't like it," suggested Dizzy, "we give the whisky back?"

Fred Stone protested that he was not trying to buy anybody. He had read about Payson's crash, and thought Jake might be in the market for some new equipment.

"You know we're converting that Adams twin-engine bomber into a passenger ship," he said. "Looks beautiful on the drawing-board."

"Yeah," said Jake, "but they don't fly on drawing-boards, and we're not doing any bombing nowadays—we're hauling mail, express, and passengers. You're wasting your time and cigars, Fred. I saw that Browning transport the other day, and it's the finest plane in the world. Lands at fifty-five with the wing-flaps down!"

"That's impossible!"

"It is not! Took off with one motor and a full load. Can the Adams Bomber do that?"

"It cannot!" said Dizzy.

"You boys seem to be prejudiced against our stuff," complained Adams. "We've got a good, fast, safe, and comfortable aeroplane. Please don't make a decision until you've flown our ship."

"No, we'll give you a fair trial," promised Jake.

"Well, that's all I can ask." Fred Adams buttoned the heavy overcoat he was wearing. "Oh, and, say, Jake, our connections in Washington are getting better and better. We might be able to do you some good down there. Well, no hard feelings."

"Not while the Bourbon lasts," said Dizzy; and their visitor went off, chuckling.

"I like that Fred Adams," remarked Dizzy, helping himself to one of Jake's cigarettes. "He's about as subtle as a push in the mouth! He's gonna do things for us down in Washington!"

"Yeah," said Jake. "Oh, Diz, did you find an apartment?"

Dizzy nodded.

"I got a little place down the street," he replied. "It's just about big enough to throw my hat."

"What did the doctor say about that heart o' yours?"

"The doc? Oh, yeah, yeah—isn't it funny that Mamma Gini's food should do that to me?"

"You wanta take care o' yourself," admonished Jake. "Why don't you go on a diet? You're not as young as you used to be, my lad!"

"All right, pop," jeered Dizzy.

Mike Remembers

JAKE went out to the hangars, a few minutes later, but before doing so told Buzz to call Tex again. The voice that issued from the loudspeaker was not as distinct as it had been.

"Report your position and altitude," said Buzz.

"No change," was the rather muffled response. "Still flying blind on Newark range. Altitude eight thousand. Visibility zero. What ceiling at Newark now?"

"Ceiling here is still zero," replied Buzz. "Dense fog. Check your radio. Transmission is blurred. Call you back in a few minutes."

"Okay, Newark," said the muffled voice, and Buzz stood up.

"I'll check that ground lead," he decided.

Tommy had re-entered the room in time to hear what was said about the transmission, and after Buzz had gone out, she asked anxiously:

"What do you do when you're flying blind and your radio doesn't work?"

"Well," replied Dizzy, "you just sit there and sweat, and look for a hole where you can see the ground. If you find it, down you come."

"And if you don't?"

"Oh, well, it's a pilot's job to bring the ship down, but if things get too tough you just go over the side."

"Gosh, I'd be scared stiff!"

"Show me any pilot that isn't!"

"You know, Dizzy, I've never met anyone quite like you before. You're sort of goofy and tough and sweet, all at the same time."

Dizzy grinned, and suddenly put an arm round her and kissed her.

"Oh, Dizzy, don't!" she cried. But he was kissing her again when the door from the field swung wide and Tay Lawson strode into the room.

Tommy immediately ran off; but Tay advanced upon Dizzy in a fury.

"What are you trying to do?" he roared.

"What's that to you?" retorted Dizzy.

Tay's answer was a blow intended for Dizzy's jaw, but the blow was warded off, and the two were squaring up for battle when Jake appeared in the doorway.

"Cut it out!" he bellowed. "Cut it out!"

They dropped their fists and he stepped between them.

"What's the matter with you two?" he demanded sternly. "The next time this happens I'll fire both of you! The least you can do is to settle your private fights outside!"

"I'm sorry, Jake," muttered Tay. "I lost my temper."

"All right, I'm sorry, too," said Dizzy. "Come on, kid, let's shake and forget it."

He offered his hand, but Tay ignored it.

"I'll see you later!" he growled.

"That'll do, Lawson!" rebuked Jake, and reluctantly the airman shook hands with Dizzy and disappeared into the pilots' room.

"It didn't amount to anything, Jake," declared Dizzy. "I was standin' over there, foolin' around with Tommy, and he came in and got sore. It didn't mean a thing!"



Dizzy dumped Tay Lawson in a chair and proceeded to gag him with his own handkerchief.

"That's just the trouble," complained Jake. "Nothing means anything to you, but she means a lot to him! Why don't you grow up?"

Further discussion of the matter was prevented by the return of Buzz, who had found the ground lead to be in order. He sat down at his desk and called Tex again; but there was no response from the loudspeaker.

"Call him again!" barked Jake. "And stop ebewin' that gum!"

"Yes, sir," Buzz discarded the gum, but he could not get any answer from Tex.

"His radio must be dead," decided Dizzy. "He'd have told us if anything else was wrong."

"Phone Martin's Creek Emergency Field and see if they've heard anything," directed Jake. "He's due in fourteen minutes."

Buzz did so.

"Passed over Martin's Creek a few minutes ago, flying high," he reported.

"Well, that's a relief," sighed Dizzy.

"Notify all stations by teletype Number Nine not reporting," said Jake, and put his head into Leslie Bogan's room.

"Les, gimme that weather report."

Dizzy followed him to his desk.

"Say, Jake," he blurted remorsefully, "you know, don't you, that I didn't swap runs with Tex just to hand him a hard one?"

"Oh, sure, I know that. What is it, Mike?"

Mike Owens had wandered in at the double doors. He hobbled over to them.

"Is—is Tex in the air—in this?" he asked quaveringly.

"Yeah, he's on his way home. Mike," Jake replied.

"On his way home?" Mike put his hand to his mouth. "I was comin' home on a night like this," he said in an hysterical fashion, "and I couldn't see the ground, the trees, the houses, or anything! And then—then I hit! I stopped like a train hittin' a wall!" His voice rose to a shriek. "Then I hurt all over!"

"Cut it, Mike—cut it!" urged Jake; but Mike had suddenly remembered.

"And my chest!" he screamed. "I couldn't breathe, I tell ya!"

"Take it easy, Mike!" Dizzy shouted at him, his own nerves all ragged.

"Take it easy!"

"Yeah, take it easy, that's right! You ought to be smart and stop flyin', Dizzy! What good does it do you? Make you brave? No, you're afraid! You know you're afraid! You're always afraid! You're afraid some day you'll hit! It's true! It's true, I'm tellin' ya!"

"Stop it, Mike!" thundered Jake.

"Stop it!"

The voice of Buzz, still calling Tex, was the only sound in the room for a moment; then Mike picked up the polishing rag he had dropped and the vacant look returned to his eyes.

"I'm all right now," he murmured.

"I—I was just kinda fogged over."

"Yeah, you're all right now," soothed Jake. "Run along home."

"Yeah," said Mike. "I guess I better go home. The wife might be worryin'—she—she thinks I'm still flyin'."

He stumbled away with his cleaning materials, and it was a relief to them

to see him go. Dizzy looked out into the fog, and he said:

"You know, Jake, Tex'll never get down in this without a radio, unless he finds a hole."

"Find a hole in that mud?" scoffed Jake. "It's solid overcast, at least fifteen thousand feet thick!" He snatched up a wireless telephone. "Here, plug this into the outside transmitter circuit and check it."

Dizzy went out with the instrument, and while he was gone Tex's voice from the loudspeaker startled both Buzz and Jake.

"Tex Clarke, in Number Nine, still on instruments," it stated, not very clearly. "West leg of Newark range. Altitude four thousand. Give ceiling at Newark."

Buzz replied that the fog was still on the ground, ceiling zero, but it became evident that Tex could not hear.

"Newark, answer Nine!" said his voice.

"I did answer, Tex," said Buzz. "What's the matter with you? Get on the job!"

Buzz looked at Jake. "He's not receiving," he said. "Sounds like his sending set's gone bad, too!"

Crashed!

DIZZY returned with the wireless telephone and reported that the outside set was working.

"Well, there's nothing to do but wait, I guess," remarked Jake. "We'll be hearing his motor in a couple o' seconds, anyhow."

Several minutes passed, and then Tex's voice was heard again.

"Go ahead, Texas," said Buzz.

"Wake up down there!" raged the voice. "I'm still flyin' blind, west leg north range. Think I'm gettin' close to field."

"Field light, Buzz," said Jake; and the field lights were switched on, and Baldy was instructed to get the flares ready. Two long minutes passed, and then Tex's voice was heard again:

"Newark answer Nine. I've got to set my altimeter. I can't make a landing unless you gimme the dope. Hi, Newark, answer Nine! When I get to the ground I'm gonna wrap this radio round Baldy's neck! The beam's fading out. Newark, answer Nine! I can't land unless you gimme the dope. I can't—"

The voice faded into nothingness. "Sounds like his sending set's quit on him!" exclaimed Jake.

"I wish I were up there instead of him," growled Dizzy. Tommy came running in from the field.

"I heard a 'plane up there!" she cried excitedly.

"Quiet, quiet!" commanded Jake. "Quiet, everybody!"

In dead silence they listened, but it was not till the windows had been opened that they heard the beat of twin engines.

"It sounds awfully high, Jake," said Dizzy.

"Yeah," agreed Jake. "Come on, Dizz, we'll get on that outside set!"

They went out into the fog, and Jake spoke into the wireless telephone while Dizzy held a headphone to one ear. Tommy and Leslie Boden leaned out of a window. The hum of the mail 'plane was fairly distinct.

"This is Jake, Texas," said Jake. "You're approaching the field, west of the office. You sound much too high. You must be a thousand feet. You should be losing altitude very fast. Answer by radio, or jazz your motor if you hear me."

October 31st, 1926.

"He's not getting a thing, Jake!" lamented Dizzy.

The flares were ablaze; the beam was doing its best to pierce the fog.

"Shut off those lights in there!" Jake snapped at Baldy, and the control-room was plunged into darkness, and everybody streamed out into the field.

"You're miles too high!" Jake shouted into the telephone he held. "Circle back and make a new approach. You've gotta come in lower. You must—"

"He's going on!" exclaimed Dizzy.

The beat of the engines died away in the invisible distance, and they all went back into the control-room, where the lights were switched on again.

"Doc," said Jake, "have that ambulance and crash truck stand by. Dizz, notify the State police. Buzz, have all radio stations stand by. Keep all those beams open. If his radio happens to click he might work any of them!"

A period of intense activity followed; and then Dizzy, from a telephone on a land line, received a message.

"State police report a ship over Passaic!" he cried.

"Send it out!" shouted Jake.

Buzz spoke into his microphone, but in vain.

"Oh, can't somebody do something?" whimpered Tommy.

"If you want to stay here keep quiet!" Jake snapped at her.

Messages came in from Albany and from Plainfield, and at Plainfield the ceiling was a hundred feet; but all efforts to tell Tex that were unavailing. Long Island reported that the fog was on the ground there, but the information was valueless. Buzz, on Jake's instructions, radioed to Tex to climb for altitude and go over the side; and he was repeating the message for the twentieth time when Lou Clarke pushed her way in at the double doors, bare-headed and wild-eyed.

"Jake, what is it?" she shrieked.

"What's wrong?"

"Oh, it's all right, Lou!" said Jake, none too convincingly. "Don't worry, Tex'll get down all right."

"Stop lying, Jake!" She flew to one of the windows at the sound of wheels, and she saw the ambulance and the crash truck go by in the murk. "Oh!"

Tommy ran to her, held her arms, and Dizzy and Jake joined her by the window, Jake with a strip of teletype in his hand.

"You've got to tell me, Jake!" she cried. "You told him to bail out, and you know Tex—he'd never do that without orders from you!"

"His radio's dead," said Jake, after a little dreadful silence.

"Then he—he didn't hear!" she sobbed. "He can't land in this fog without his radio. Well, what are you going to do, Jake? You've got to do something!"

"Let's go home," pleaded Tommy.

"No, no!" cried the distracted woman.

"No, I've been there, sitting over the radio! Oh, not just to-night, but one night after another—all alone! Wondering whether Tex'll come home or not!"

"I know, darling," said Tommy sympathetically, "but come along."

Lou shook off her hands and turned with streaming eyes to Jake.

"Oh, I've been through it so often!" she wept. "Sitting there, goin' crazy, waiting for the telephone to ring. Oh, what are you gonna do? Can't you do something? You just stand there, and—"

"We'll get Tex down all right," interrupted Dizzy, and he caught hold of her arm; but she beat his hand away.

"Don't come near me!" she stormed

at him. "If it weren't for you it would never have happened! You ought to be up there! You got Tex to take your place, and I know why. So you could have a date with Tommy. The great Dizzy Davis out for another girl!"

Jake swung round on Dizzy as Tommy managed to lead the weeping woman away.

"Is that why you switched your run?" he demanded curtly.

"Yeah," confessed Dizzy.

"Oh!" The sound of a machine in the sky blotted out everything else. "Listen! Shut off that teletype!" Jake shouted. "He's picked up the field lights!"

Lou was sobbing in a chair, and Tommy was bending over her. From the loudspeaker came Tex's voice, faint and jerky:

"Tex Clarke to Newark. Buzz, listen to me. I think I see the field. Tell Jake I'm headin' in!"

Buzz spoke back, but to no purpose. Once more the lights in the room were switched off, and they all crowded round a window which was open, Jake with the wireless telephone in his hand.

"Tex," he said into the transmitter, "you're comin' into the field, headin' straight for number one hangar. Keep her straight, and settle her in slow."

Tex's voice spoke into the darkness of the room:

"Tex Clarke callin' Newark. Why don't you answer? Answer me, Newark!"

Lou held a handkerchief over her mouth so that she shouldn't scream.

"He's not gettin' a thing, Jake!" lamented Dizzy.

"I know," gritted Jake; "but I can keep on tryin'! You're headed for the hangars, Tex, right over—"

The noise of the aeroplane's engines had developed to a roar.

"He's gonna get killed!" screeched Lou. "He's gonna get killed!"

"Quiet, Lou!" rapped Jake. "You sound too low, Texas! You're still outside the field! You're headed for the hangars! Lift it, Tex—lift it!"

Those last words had barely passed his lips when Tex's 'plane crashed, out in the field, and Lou gave a blood-curdling scream of horror. Then, as it seemed to those who stared out through the window, a streak of flame stabbed through the fog—and there followed a tearing, rending sound as the wreck smashed into the hangars.

"Last Flight"

IT was after midnight when Jake returned with Tay Lawson from the hospital to which Tex had been conveyed. Doc Wilson and Baldy were in the control-room, as well as Buzz and Leslie Bogau.

"Well, gang," said Jake cheerfully, "get a load of good news! Tex got off the table in great shape. He was conscious for a couple o' seconds, looked up with that old familiar smile of his, and slipped back into the ether."

They were all delighted to hear it.

"How's his leg?" asked Doc Wilson anxiously.

"Goin' to be all right."

"What did they do to him, Tay?" inquired Baldy.

"They gave him a blood transfusion from Dizzy," was the reply.

"Oh," said Doc Wilson, "he'll pull through all right, then!"

"Tay," said Jake from his desk, "you'd better get some rest. You may have to take out the night mail."

"I don't need any rest," declared the airman.

(Continued on page 24)

A daring champion of the speedway and ace attraction of the circus is lured into the police force as a motor-cycle cop. He becomes involved in many adventures. A thrilling drama, starring Jack Holt



The Chasm of Fire

TWO young State policemen and a girl were strolling among the crowds at the circus carnival. As the girl often glanced at and spoke more often to the tall policeman, it was obvious which one interested her most. The other young policeman was round-faced and freckled, and keenly interested in everything.

"If you want us to see Donovan do his stunt you've got to keep moving," laughed the tall policeman.

"Crash is the star act of this show," was the reply. "They ring bells and sound sirens when he's due to begin his act."

The three young people paid for admission into a special arena, and paused to listen to a barker.

"We are going to entertain you with the greatest attraction of modern times. On the top of the ramp I want to introduce to you—Crash Donovan—world famous dare-devil and master of the motor-cycle." They stared upwards at a white-garbed figure astride a motor-cycle. "He is about to perform the most difficult and original feat in the history of dare-devil riding. A death-defying leap across a chasm of flame." Now they looked at a blazing ring of fire.

"I suppose he has to ride down that chute?" The girl pointed. "Then the chute bends upward and it must hurl him into the air and through the ring of flame. Must be a pretty dull way to make a living."

"Yes—the same thing over and over again."

"Like a highway patrolman."

The tall young man shook his head. "But there's a big difference—the crowd—that's what men like Donovan live for."

"Are you ready, Crash?" sang out the barker. A hand was raised in answer. "Let 'er go!"

At a terrific speed the dare-devil went down the chute, roared up the slope, took off into space, passed through the flames, and made a spectacular landing on some special kind of skid-proof flooring.

The freckle-faced cop insisted upon his two companions being introduced to his hero, and, after much shouting, Crash Donovan strolled in their direction. The most conspicuous thing about Crash was the protruding jaw. The eyes were bright, twinkling, and humorous, whilst the smile was mocking. A man of some thirty years and more—a person who had more than usual confidence in himself and his abilities.

"So you're still fooling 'em, eh?" cried his admirer.

Crash grinned. "You coppers can't have all the soft jobs, Alabam."

The tall policeman frowned. Alabam was the nickname the boys had given Alec Thomas, and he resented this man's familiarity.

"Say, I brought you some more public!" Alabam cried. "This is Doris Tennyson and this is my riding-partner, Johnnie Allen."

Crash smiled in his patronising way at the girl and then held out his hand to her companion.

"Allen!" He bent forward for a closer view. "Any relation to Sam Allen?"

"My oldest brother!" Johnnie exclaimed. "You know him?"

"Do I know him?" Crash gave a rasping laugh. "Say, he and I soldiered together in one of those comic wars out in the Balkans. Reckoned fighting was better than being one of

the great unemployed. Great guy your brother. Where is the big mug now?"

"A war caught up with him in China," Johnnie answered. "He died of wounds out there."

Crash shook his head. "I didn't know that. Sorry."

"We got our machines outside this arena," Alabam explained. "They're fitted with radio and we may get a call."

As luck would have it there came a call almost the moment they reached their machines.

"Calling motor-cycle fifty-eight—calling motor-cycle number fifty-eight!"

"That's me!" cried Alabam. "Something important coming up!"

The grin of expectancy faded slowly from Alabam's face as he listened to his orders:

"Go to corner of State road number eleven and county road number two—woman driver blocking traffic—husband objecting from back seat—arrest woman—ambulance following to pick up husband."

When Alabam had mouched discontentedly away, Crash Donovan turned to Johnnie. "So you're Sam's brother?" he cried. "Reckon that calls for a drink. Come on."

They seated themselves on stools at a refreshment counter.

"Three beers," ordered Crash. "Sorry, Crash, I'm in uniform."

The dare-devil laughed and turned to the attendant.

"Harry, make it three lemonades, and, if you laugh I'll punch your fat face."

The girl glanced at Johnnie and the look was expressive. Crash Donovan might be a wonder stunt merchant, but otherwise she did not think very much of him. Johnnie, who was more than

ordinarily proud of his uniform, had little time for circus folk, and maybe the smile on his good-looking face was a trifle contemptuous.

Crash smiled at the girl.

"Are you the mascot of the outfit?"

"She has what one might call an impersonal interest in us," Johnnie hastened to explain. "Her father's the Chief of the Highway Patrol."

"You ride well enough to be in it yourself, Mr. Donovan," hinted the girl.

"Thank you, Miss Tennyson." He roared with laughter. "I can't see myself in one of those monkey suits."

"Why not try it?" tartly cried Doris.

"I've been everything," Crash told her. "Cowpuncher, parachute jumper, soldier of fortune, but I always go back to the carnival. There's nothing like it."

"You've never been in the patrol, Mr. Donovan."

"Well, Miss Tennyson, maybe when I get old enough I'll try it."

"Who asked you to try it?" snapped Johnnie.

Crash beamed good-humouredly.

"You sound just like your poor brother Sam. Why, if I wore a uniform like that I'd be dodging myself half the time."

"Well, when you've got enough applause, keep it in mind," coldly spoke Doris as she finished her drink. "You may get tired of the carnival."

"Listen—once a carnie—always a carnie."

"Well, come on, Doris." Johnnie took the girl's arm. "We've got to go. Watch yourself, Crash."

"If I don't, nobody else will."

"Except your—public," scornfully answered Doris. "Good-bye."

"Give me a beer," muttered Crash Donovan, watching the two young people move away. "You know, Harry, if there's anything wrong in being a carnie, that's it."

"What?" demanded Harry.

Crash's smile was a trifle bitter.

"It's hallo and good-bye!"

A Frame-up

SOME nights later the captain sent for Allen and Thomas.

"Highway Ninety-nine," came the order. "Watch for glaring headlights."

"All right, captain." Johnnie Allen saluted. "I'm riding extra motor number five. Thomas is riding his usual machine, number fifty-eight."

They passed out through the control-room and Alabama grinned at the radio officer. "Let's hear your cheerful little voice once in a while, Foghorn." He had to duck to avoid a heavy book.

The two young fellows went out to their machines, where a mechanic reported that everything, including the radio, was in working order. The two machines roared to life. Side by side they were soon patrolling Highway Ninety-nine.

Now on that highway was a roadhouse known as the Colonial Club, and seated at a table with a number of men and girls was Crash Donovan. The second item of the cabaret programme had concluded, when Crash, who was a well-known patron of the roadhouse, jumped to his feet and raised his hand for silence.

"Ladies and gentlemen—the surprise of the evening—introducing Miss Marjorie Day, star of the Little Egypt Carnival." He held out his hand, and a smiling brunette got up and, after a bow to Crash, walked towards the centre of the floor.

At a table on the other side of the dance floor sat four men, and there was a considerable amount of beer on the table. They waved their hands to Mar-

jorie Day, who gave them a frigid look of disapproval.

The girl's song was one of the latest medleys and her rendering was delightful. There was quite a crowd present and the applause was deafening. Miss Day obliged with an encore and then went back to Crash Donovan's table.

The dark man with the scarred face in the party of four leaned forward.

"Come on!" His voice was a whisper. "It's time to start things. Put on your act, Spike."

Spike was a big, fair-haired fellow, who had been doing a lot of shouting and singing. Obviously a bruiser. He got to his feet and went staggering across the floor towards Crash Donovan's table.

Marjorie Day was about to sit down when Spike caught hold of her arm.

"Come here, honey, I want you to meet some friends of mine."

"Leave go of my arm!" fiercely cried the girl.

Crash, who had been chatting to another girl, looked round, and in a moment was on his feet.

"Here, wait a minute!" His jaw stuck forward aggressively. "This lady is my guest. You get back to your friends."

"Friends wanna meet her," leered Spike, still holding the girl. "You sit down before I hurt you."

Crash clenched his fists, and Spike, without warning, lashed out with his free hand, catching the dare-devil a nasty blow between the eyes. Crash swayed back, and then—wink!—a right hand landed on the point of the bruiser's chin, and he went flat on his back as if he had been pole-axed.

That was the signal for the three other men to rush across the room to the rescue of their friend, and that was the start of a glorious free fight. Other men present, for some reason, seemed to side with the toughs, and, naturally, many backed up Crash. Tables were flung over, women screamed, and the roadhouse rang to the sound of blows and curses. The Italian proprietor rushed to the 'phone and called the police.

A car with brilliant headlights had just flashed past the two patrol-men when their radio woke to life. "C.H.P. calling motor number five and fifty-eight," droned the voice. "Five and fifty-eight—go to Colonial Club on Highway Ninety-nine—a riot."

"Get that car that just went by," ordered Johnnie. "Meet me at the Colonial Club."

At seventy miles an hour Johnnie tore back along the road he had come, and he covered the five miles in about the same number of minutes. He leaned his machine against a tree and dashed into the main restaurant. Was it a riot? It seemed as if fifty people were engaged in fighting each other and smashing up the place.

Spike and Crash were in the centre of the fight. Spike had recovered and was all out to get the man who had floored him. The sight of the policeman instilled fear into quite a number of the fighters, but it didn't stop Crash and Spike. These two were wading into each other. Crash had got his man pinned down on a settee, when Johnnie dragged the two men apart.

"Hey, Donovan, what's going on?"

"Oh, just having a little fun!" muttered Crash, with blood trickling down one side of his cheek.

"What started it?" demanded the law.

"He did!" snarled Spike.

"You lying hound!" shouted Crash. "Haven't you had enough?"

Crash would have rushed at Spike if Johnnie had not seized the dare-devil

by the shoulder, swung him round, caught his arm in some kind of a grip, and then sent the older man hurtling to the floor.

Crash Donovan lay where he had fallen.

"Where'd you learn that one, Johnnie?"

"That's what the highway patrol call the civiliser," rasped Johnnie, who thought Donovan was the guilty party. "Come on, Crash."

"Come on?" Crash got slowly to his feet. "What do you mean—come on?"

"I'm arresting you for causing a riot!" cried Johnnie. "Now you know what I mean." He fished out handcuffs. "Are you coming quietly, or

"Quietly." Crash's grin was a trifle crooked.

A car had drawn up outside the road house, and three men got out. The leader was a tall, big-boned man.

"The boys will have things pretty well torn up in there by now," he said to the driver. "Keep your motor running, Jerry. Come on!"

The three men drew out guns and moved cat-like towards the restaurant, and they came in one door as Johnnie went out of another with his prisoner. The manager was trying to soothe his patrons when something nudged him in the ribs, and he knew it was a gun.

"In your office!" hissed the gang leader.

But the manager had a bodyguard, and they saw the action of the gangsters.

Johnnie had got his prisoner outside.

"I'll deputise a car to take you in!" Johnnie rapped out.

"You don't seem to like me," grinned Crash. "I didn't start this, but have it your own way. That big mug—"

"You can tell that to—" Johnnie whipped round at the sound of shots. Three men rushed out of a door and made for a car. They had forced the manager to hand over the takings, but had had to shoot his bodyguard to effect a getaway. "You stay here!" Johnnie shouted, and fearlessly raced towards the gangsters.

The gangsters saw the policeman and opened fire. Johnnie whipped out a gun, but before he could fire a shot he spun round and dropped in a heap. The gangsters piled into the car and roared away.

Crash Donovan knelt beside the groaning officer.

"Get you bad, son?"

"Worse than that," muttered Johnnie. "They got away."

"Not yet they haven't!" cried Crash, and, without further argument, snatched Johnnie's peaked cap from his head and picked up the fallen gun. A moment later he was on Johnnie's motor-cycle and roaring down Highway Ninety-nine.

The gangsters were complimenting themselves on their getaway when they heard the roar of the pursuing machine. A cursed policeman; and directly Crash got near enough they began firing through the back window. But Crash kept swerving his machine from one side of the road to the other so that it was not an easy target.

The car cornered at fifty with a screeching of tyres, but Crash came round at over sixty, and was on the car before the gangsters were expecting him. His gun roared as he aimed at the tyres. Bang! A tyre had burst. The car shot across the road, flinging the gangsters against each other, hit a high kerb, bounced across to the other side, another tyre burst, the car spun round broadside and turned over.

Four bruised and aching ruffians crawled out of the wreckage to find a

grim-faced man standing there covering them with a gun.

"Come on—all of you! Get moving! Stick your hands high!" he ordered.

One man tried to draw his gun on Crash and a gun cracked. The rascal screamed and nursed a smashed wrist.

"So you want to play, eh?" sneered Crash. "Come on—higher—reach—"

A screeching of tyres and another police patrol.

Alabam saw a patrol officer holding up four desperate-looking fellows, and he noticed blood oozing from one man's arm. Then his eyes opened as he noted that the patrol officer certainly wore a helmet, but the rest of his attire was out of keeping.

"What goes on here?"

"Hallo, Noisy!" laughed Crash.

"Say, this is great fun!"

"Great jumping horseflesh—you!" gasped Alabam.

"Yes. I'm deputising for Johnnie."

Crash never took his eyes off the crooks. "A little trouble back at the Colonial Club."

"You don't mean—he's—"

"Don't worry. Johnnie's tough. Got him in the shoulder. One of these thugs drilled him."

Alabam whipped out handcuffs, and was busy manaculating the men together when they heard the scream of a police siren. A police car drew up, and Crash had to smile because it was bristling with police and machine-guns. Johnnie, his arm bandaged, was one of the first out of the car.

"Nice work, Crash!" There was a hoarseness in his voice. It was a mixture of admiration and emotion.

"Guess I had you wrong."

"Forget it!" Crash stuffed Johnnie's gun back into its holster.

"Does this give you a new slant on the patrol?" Johnnie asked with a wry grin.

Crash nodded.

"It does have its moments. Say, how much do they pay you roadhogs?"

"One-seventy a month."

"Every month?"

"Yes."

Crash Donovan whistled.

"I could use a little of that dough myself."

"Alabam," Johnnie called out. "What do you think? Crash is thinking about joining the patrol."

"You aren't serious?" Alabam had seen the crooks bundled into the police car, and his part of the night's affray was ended. "What's the idea, Crash?"

Crash Donovan laughed in his hearty, mocking manner.

"Well, I got a hunch I'll make a better-looking cop than some I know."

In the morning Crash Donovan went with Alabam to see Chief Tennyson.

"You helped to round up a very desperate gang whom we've been after for months." The chief held out his hand. "It'll be a pleasure to have you on the strength. I will have your application put through the right channels immediately."

The Hardening Process

JOHNNIE, in mufti, his arm in a sling, was sitting on a seat in a park, but not alone. Close to him was Doris Tennyson.

"You must be getting back to hospital."

"No hurry," laughed Johnnie. "Now my arm's almost healed I'll be back to work in three or four days."

"That's what you said a week ago. You've got to take care of yourself, Johnnie."

"You're worse than Crash Donovan," protested the wounded hero. "He comes into the hospital every day, and if

I move as much as a finger he wants to put me in a strait jacket."

"I like Crash very much now," the girl admitted. "He told me quite a lot the other day about your brother Sam saving his life out in the Balkans. Crash is pretty busy these days. He told me yesterday that every time he took another examination he got a headache."

"Well, he passed them all with flying colours."

"Thanks to Officer Allen's tutelage," proudly whispered Doris.

"By the way, when is your father going back to take charge of the training school?" questioned Johnnie.

"To-morrow." Doris looked gloomy.

"And I've got to go with him."

"I'm glad."

"You want to get rid of me?"

Johnnie chuckled.

"You don't know all the regulations, Doris. You see there's one that says that all members of the patrol must go back to training headquarters once in every twelve months, and I think I could be persuaded to apply for this course."

"You mean you have applied," corrected Doris with a happy smile.

The next morning, in an orderly-room, the sergeant was calling out the names of all recruits who had been detailed to undertake the course. Naturally Donovan's name had to be called twice before he came panting into the room carrying a bulky suitcase.

"Where's Michael Donovan?"

"Here."

"Sir," corrected the sergeant.

"Sir," Crash said with a grin.

"Thanks for letting us know," the sergeant grinned back. "Take off your hat and sit down."

Crash sat down next to Alabam, who was also going on the course.

"Well, well, if it isn't the dare-devil demon of the carnival!" jeered Alabam.

"How'd you get in here? You know you have to pass a Civil Service exam-

ination. I didn't ever know you could read and write."

"But the guy next to me could," chuckled Crash.

The sergeant rapped on his desk to enjoin silence. "I've just got six weeks to make patrolmen out of you recruits, and from the looks of some of you, it's going to be a man-sized job." He gave a glowering look that was supposed to instil dread and respect. "Bring your bags and follow me."

Crash Donovan was delighted to find that his room mate was Johnnie Allen, and he had scarcely unpacked when an orderly appeared to say that all recruits and those taking the course were to go at once to the main lecture hall. Here Chief Tennyson had a few words to say:

"In addition to your first duty, which is regulation of motor vehicles, you have other responsibilities which you must understand. You must protect the lives and property of the people of this state, even at the risk of your own. You must be ready to instruct them in the things that make for safety on our highways. You must learn courtesy—patience—efficiency at all times. You will be put through what we call the hardening process."

"What's that?" Crash hissed in Johnnie's ear.

"All that the word 'hardening' implies," Johnnie winked. "You gotta be tough to take it."

Crash had to agree after one day of the hardening process that you wanted the hide of a rhinoceros and the constitution of an ox. Gymnastics, physical drill, boxing, all-in wrestling, route marches, rifle practice and motor-cycle drill.

Alabam and Johnnie were detailed off to assist with the instruction, and the former was detailed to conduct the revolver class. He demonstrated to the best of his ability how to draw a gun and aim at various targets. If the recruit got six bullets on to the target he passed them through the first test.



Crash had got his man pinned-down on a settee.



"That was a fluke," decided Alabam.

"See if you can hit the middle of the black," he said to Crash.

Crash smiled as if he were being talked to by a child, then he raised the gun. Crack! It was a bull's-eye.

"That was a fluke," decided Alabam.

Crash fired five shots in quick succession. Alabam gasped because the bull had been almost cut out.

The dare-devil stunt man learned fast. He had not been there many days when the sergeant gave them a demonstration of the "civiliser," the hold that Johnnie had used that night at the roadhouse. The sergeant made every recruit take a full punch at him with left or right, and then he would sway his body, move his hands quickly, and the recruit would score a bad miss and then find himself flat on his back. But when the sergeant ordered Crash to try a poke at him with his left, something went wrong, because the sergeant failed to grip Crash and was himself laid out on the turf, much to his annoyance and the amusement of the recruits.

Doris Tennyson had two frequent visitors. Johnnie used to frown a little because Crash seemed always to bring better flowers than he did, but he did not worry very much, because Doris and himself were unofficially engaged. Crash did not know that, and he thought he had just as good a chance as his rival.

Crash proved one of the most proficient pupils to learn during motorcycle-drill. He was certainly one of the most daring. One had only to ask Crash to charge a stationary car, crash the machine, and then jump from the saddle over the car, and he would attempt it.

One afternoon Crash called on Doris and Johnnie was not there. Doris uttered an exclamation of delight at the gift of violets, but she did look a little surprised when she was kissed. Being a modern young miss and liking Crash, she smiled back, but he did not miss

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the slight reproving gleam in the blue eyes.

"I like you," said Doris.

"That's fine."

"And I'm awfully glad you're going to be Johnnie's riding partner," she added, her eyes never wavering from his. "Will you do something for me?"

"Sure." He was puzzled.

"Will you look after Johnnie and see that nothing ever happens to him?"

Crash Donovan had got his answer. But he was a man, and one can forgive him if his smile was a little forced.

"So you like him that much?"

"Yes, please."

"Okay."

"Thanks, Crash." This time Doris herself did the kissing.

"Well, I guess I'd better go home," Crash said with a twisted smile, "and see he's tucked into bed."

And though Doris knew that Crash liked her very much, she did not know that the big man loved her as he had never loved a girl in all his life. But she did know that if Crash had promised to look after Johnnie, he would do it.

Crash was one of the first to get his badge as a highway cop. On the last day of the class Chief Tennyson called upon Donovan to give an exhibition of trick riding, and the thousands present had to admit that it was one of the most thrilling, death-defying spectacles they had ever witnessed.

At the end there was a grand drive past, and it concluded with the staff and recruits giving a song:

"Hail to the Highway Patrol.

The boys who ride for the gold and blue!

Hail to the fellows who strive

To make the highway safe for you!

And give a cheer for our chief and our State;

To serve them well, that will be our goal.

Every hour, through storm and darkness,
You can depend on the Highway Patrol."

The patrolmen were given a long week-end's vacation and then they had to report for duty.

Road Duty

JOHNNIE ALLEN and Crash Donovan took the road together. Alabam Thomas almost wept over the severing of his partnership with Johnnie, but he had to obey orders. The chief had found out that he was a licensed radio operator, and appointed him with an increase of pay, to take over a new portable outfit. Alabam would rather have had less pay and stayed with Johnnie. Sitting in a trailer all day and listening to messages and sending out orders was dull work.

Crash found that a patrolman's life was full of variety. Some days little would happen, but on others every sort of trouble would crop up and the radio would be busy all the while. Arrest of a charabane driver who had knocked down a little girl; a five-mile chase after a speed merchant; a robbery at a small store; a bad smash at cross-roads; and then a fight with car thieves.

Risks or the bullets of gangsters did not matter one iota to Crash Donovan, but he did not like it when one evening another patrolman lost his nerve. This officer had been the first on the scene at a particularly nasty smash in which a woman and child had been killed through the crazy driving of a tipsy wagon-driver. Some evenings there were instructional classes, and it would happen that all officers were present on the night of the accident for a lecture on map-reading. In the middle of the lecture the radio announced an accident in which three people had been smashed to pieces in a head-on collision. The patrolman got to his feet as white as a sheet and collapsed in a faint.

"I'm afraid that's the finish for poor old Dave," whispered Johnnie, who was sitting next to Crash.

"That happen often?"

"When their nerves blow—they never ride again. Well, it's all in the day's work. Guess the lecture will be off now. Any plans, Crash?"

"I'm gonna get out of this uniform and get a good stiff drink."

"I got a better idea, and it isn't all mine," laughed Johnnie. "You're coming round to have supper with Doris and myself."

Arm in arm they went to have an excellent supper with the girl—whom the two thought to be the sweetest cook and the grandest girl in the world.

That night the two were on night duty from midnight, and about eleven-thirty they bade Doris good-night and hastened back to headquarters. Punctual to the second they went on patrol duty, and had not been gone a quarter of an hour when they received a radio warning.

"Attention all police units—attention all police units. Watch for gang of dangerous smugglers headed south from Long Beach on route one-O-one. Driving grey sedan, licence number two S—'S' like in sugar—three-four-six."

They had their orders what to do on such a call, namely, to go to any cross-roads that they thought might be the route taken by the wanted car, stay there for a while and wait for any further orders.

The two patrolmen hid their machines in some bushes, and after a while a car dashed over the cross-roads at a tremendous speed.

"It's grey and it's a sedan," Johnnie said significantly.

Alabam is Wounded

There were four men in the grey sedan, and the young fellow with the sallow skin and dark eyes, who sat in the front seat spoke angrily to the driver.

"What's the idea of going over a halt sign like that? You want to get us picked up?"

"Ain't no one round these parts, Tony."

The leader poked his head out of the window.

"I'm not so sure. I can see two lights some way back. Step on it."

A few minutes later Tony glanced back and saw that the lights were appreciably closer. Their clearly they heard the police sirens.

"We gotta shake 'em off," Tony shouted at the driver. "If you hadn't been such a fool this wouldn't have happened. Let her out."

"The tyres ain't too good," whined the man at the wheel.

"If you don't step on it it'll be just too bad," threatened the leader. "So you turn out a car with dud tyres when—"

"But I never thought the cops would get wise to us."

"You couldn't think if you tried," rasped Tony, and pushed his head out of the window. "We seem to be keeping our distance, but we've got to go faster if we're going to lose 'em." The next time he looked back his language was lurid. "They're gaining on us fast."

Ahead lay some dangerous corners, and the two patrolmen felt certain they would catch up with the quarry, but just before the danger the big car shot off the road down a track, bumped on to some open land, tore through a wheat

field, and smashed through a hedge on to another arterial road.

The going was bad enough for a car, but for a motor-cycle it was almost an impossibility.

"These mugs know their maps," yelled Crash, adroitly keeping his machine in a cart-rut.

"We'll get 'em!" Johnnie sang back.

When they got back to the main highway the crook car was but a speck in the distance.

"Now we'll show 'em something," Crash muttered.

The two machines tore along the wide arterial highway at eighty miles an hour, and the screeching of their sirens carried a long way.

A police car drawing a radio trailer heard the distant screech, and the officer in charge pulled up so suddenly that Alabam, who was almost asleep over a jig-saw puzzle, spilt all the pieces on the floor.

"What you make of that?" the patrol officer questioned.

"Sounds like trouble," answered his companion. "Look!" Over the crest of the hill had appeared a car with brilliant headlights. "That's the car the boys must be trailing. See that light cutting the trees—that's our boys close behind, tailing 'em."

"We'd better have a look," decided the officer. "Swing the car across the road and with our torches signal them to stop."

The crooks, realising they were being overtaken, were striving desperately to maintain a high speed on the slender chance that they might reach some woods, where they could try another short cut down an old lane. Suddenly the driver shouted that he could see flashing lights ahead, and the powerful headlamps picked out a car and trailer almost right across the road.

"We ain't stopping for nothing," yelled Tony.

The two patrol officers with the radio outfit opened fire when the car refused to stop. The crooks replied with revolvers, rifles and a small machine-gun.

Alabam got busy with his radio. He must inform headquarters of what was going on. Suddenly he squirmed and writhed and eluded at his side. The crooks, as their grey sedan lurched past, had fired blindly, and several bullets passed through the radio trailer. Poor Alabam had stopped one in the ribs.

The crooks were past. Johnnie and Crash screeched their machines to a stop when they saw the radio patrol. Johnnie shouted a few words about "Grey sedan" before diving into the trailer.

"Alabam," he yelled, "two S—as in sugar—three-four-six. Put that number on the air."

Johnnie jumped back to his machine. Once more the two motor-cyclists roared in pursuit.

With great difficulty Alabam tuned in on his radio and moved his pain-racked body nearer to the small microphone.

"Attention all points—emergency! Occupants grey sedan—two sugar three-four-six, U.S. one-O-unc. Felony—shot patrolman mobile unit. Have to hurry, dangerous.—Thomas."

Alabam rolled from his seat, and the two officers discussing the affray heard the crash as he hit the floor.

"Alabam!" one shouted. "What's up?"

There came no answer.

The two officers grabbed open the door and saw Alabam sprawled on the floor with a pool of blood rapidly forming on the boards. Gently they lifted him. Alabam opened his eyes and managed a grin.

"I'm okay, Bill. Take over—will you?" he whispered, and slumped in their arms.



"Take that chair away and put the cop in the window," ground out Tony.

Run to Earth

THE crooks had gained a good lead when Crash and Johnnie had pulled up by the mobile outfit, but it was not long before the powerful motor-cycles were close on their tail again.

"Mike," Tony, the leader, shouted to his driver, "get off the main highway. It'll slow 'em down."

"A mile ahead there's the very place," Mike answered. "A sandy track with little grip. I can hug the banking and get through, and the cops when they keep to the main track'll be thrown."

The trick worked because Johnnie, in the lead, charged recklessly after the grey sedan when it left the road. Naturally, he thought he could follow where the car went. His front wheels went deep into soft sand, he skidded sideways and was flung out of the saddle.

Crash managed to keep his balance, and, as he swerved past, Johnnie raised himself on one elbow: "Go on!" he yelled.

Crash Donovan was back on the main road and tearing after the sedan before Johnnie had got to his feet and picked up his machine. He straightened the handlebars and was glad to find no damage had been done to his engine. He followed the car trail out on to the highway.

The grey sedan gained so much by this manoeuvre that when Crash reached the main road the car was out of sight. He could tell by the wheel marks the direction taken, and, after roaring along the road, at last came to a straight stretch, and his heart leapt as he came again within sight of his quarry.

He came to a bend, and suddenly braked his machine to a stop, and turned back. A car had gone off the road and through a low hedge. So they were trying that trick again. He dodged about among pine-trees, and finally came back to the highway. He cursed himself because, if he had not been so smart and seen that smashed hedge, he might be close on them at this very moment. That was if the crooks had come back to the highway; if he had remained on the road they might have continued their cross-country ride to another main highway. It was flat and woody, and not an impossible feat.

Feeling thoroughly enraged, Crash fairly roared his machine, and had gone five miles when he came to another long, straight stretch. No sign of the cursed car, so back went Crash, and had scarce gone a few hundred yards when he saw a track and wheel marks.

Tearing a handkerchief in half, he put it in the centre of the track so that it looked like a pointing arrow—Johnnie would see and understand.

Though this track twisted and turned it was firm, and it seemed to Crash that it was well used. His light picked out ear tracks that were recent. After a while he dimmed his lamps and proceeded a trifle more slowly. Not a sound could he hear of the grey sedan, and it would ruin everything if he drove straight into an ambush. The crooks had made a getaway, but he had a hunch that down this track he would come to some sort of hide-out.

About four miles ahead of Crash the grey sedan was pulled up before a dilapidated old shack.

"Come on, you men, get those boxes out of there quick!" shouted Tony.

"What's the hurry, boss?" cried one of the gang. "We lost 'em miles back."

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"Maybe we lost 'em and maybe we didn't!" snarled Tony. "Come on—snap into it. Get some of the men from inside to help." The boxes were very heavy, and it took the combined efforts of two men to lift one of them. At last all the smuggled goods were out of the car. "Mike," rapped out Tony, "get the bus under cover as quick as you can."

"Okay!" Mike started the engine and sped away towards some dense bushes.

And Crash Donovan, wondering whether he was on the wrong trail, after all, heard the sound of the self-starter and the roaring of the engine. A moment later he sighted the house and saw the figure of a man scuttling through the bushes.

Tony, from the house, had seen the lamp flickering among the trees, and was not surprised when Mike dashed in to say that a cop had spotted him.

"So you weren't so darned clever!" the leader snarled and whipped round, "Barricade the doors and cover the windows."

They saw the policeman and opened fire. Crash made for a large tree surrounded by shrubs, flung himself from his machine and from behind the tree fired at the windows.

A roar of a motor and out of the darkness came a headlight—it was Johnnie. The two police officers opened fire.

"We ain't got much chance of getting those rats out," opined Crash. "Reckon there must be seven or eight of 'em from the flashes, so it would be suicide to rush the place, but now we've corralled 'em we don't want 'em to make a getaway. I saw a telephone pole about a mile back."

Johnnie nodded. "I get the idea. Can you get back to it and tap a wire. I'll hold them here."

"Sure!" Crash quickly agreed, and laid his hand on the other's shoulder. "Keep your head down, Johnnie boy. I won't be long." A leap into the saddle and he had flashed away among the trees. Tony saw the machine and guessed one of the patrols had gone for help.

Crash Donovan came to the telephone pole and shinned up it like a monkey. He had brought from the saddle-bag of his machine a small instrument, and the two wires he adjusted to the telephone wires.

"Hallo! Hallo! Emergency—State Patrol Headquarters!" he cried into the miniature telephone.

At last he heard a voice saying that he was being put through; then came headquarters.

"Donovan speaking."

"Where are you?"

"Pine Ridge. Have located smugglers. Send help."

"Right."

"We'll take care of 'em, but hurry!" was Crash's final message before disconnecting.

It was not long before a general call was being sent forth: "Calling all police units. Calling all ears. Criminals spotted on Pine Ridge—"

Chief Tennyson turned out every available man, and, within five minutes of getting the news that Crash Donovan and Johnnie Allen were holding the smugglers at bay in a cabin on Pine Ridge, a dozen cars loaded with police and two dozen of the cycle patrol were roaring through the night in the cause of justice.

Crash Donovan roared back towards the shack, and was surprised not to hear any sound of firing. Allen's

machine was there, but there was no sign of Johnnie. Crash flashed a torch on the ground and recoiled at the sight of blood.

A flash of light ahead made him peer through the bushes.

The door of the shack had opened, and then his heart missed another beat, because he could see the uniformed figure of Johnnie. Even at that distance Crash was able to see that the young officer was wounded, either in the right shoulder or arm. Two crooks were driving Johnnie into the shack at the point of the gun.

The shack door closed with a slam.

A Human Target

TONY, the leader of this band of smugglers, was no ordinary gangster. He had received a good education, but had envied those college graduates who had ears and money. It had started with a small gambling school in his room, and, finding how easy one could make money this way, had looked round for other means of fleeing the foolish. He had been found out taking bets on races and expelled. The result was that Tony had turned to a life of robbery and crime. Though only twenty-five he was the leader of a gang, and it was his boast that, so far, he had eluded the long arm of the law.

But Tony, as he crouched by one of the windows, knew the arm of the law was very close. He had seen one of the patrol officers disappear, and knew that he had gone for help. Probably it would take an hour before a strong body of police could get here, and all Tony and his men could do would be to die or surrender. Tony gave a bitter grin—surrender to serve twenty years or more in a prison, where you would become a poor, broken wreck.

Surely there was something that could be done? If they got the car and tried to make a getaway the cursed policeman would be on their trail. But supposing they killed him? That would mean the chair. Supposing they captured him and made him a prisoner? Tony grinned, because now he thought he could see a possible way of escape.

"Mike," he rapped out. "You and the boys keep up heavy fire at that tree, behind which the cop is skulking. 'cos I'm going out."

"You ain't doing a run-out—"

Tony's gun covered the man.

"One more crack like that and you'll taste a dose of lead." His eyes blazed. "I've risked my life for you seem more than once. I'm not yellow, if you rats are. We're cornered, and maybe I could sneak away, but I'm not a quitter." He laughed. "Don't think it's because of you spineless skunks that I'm sticking. I'm thinking of all that junk that's worth thousands, and I'm not quitting that. If you want to get out of this jam, you do as I say, and the first that questions my orders—"

"I'm sorry, chief," whined Mike. "But if you're going out we ain't got a chance."

"I'm going out to get that cop," sneered Tony. "Keep your fire on that tree to distract his attention. I'll get him on the flank, and be prepared to watch out for my return." He rubbed his lean hands together. "I may have a prisoner."

Quietly Tony stole out of one of the back doors. There was a bluff behind the shack. Tony knew that a few stones or rocks rolled down the slope would smash the place to pieces. It was sure the police would think of that.

Very quietly he left the shack, and on hands and knees crawled towards the trees. It was a simple matter to reach cover without being seen by the patrolman, but not so easy to get close enough

to shoot. Dry sticks would snap under one's feet, but the explosion of the guns helped Tony, and at last he was able to stand upright to peer round the bole of a tree.

Not ten yards away crouched Johnnie Allen, who from behind his tree was firing at the shack. Slowly and deliberately Tony raised his revolver and, taking careful aim, fired.

The gun dropped from Johnnie's right hand as the bullet smashed into his shoulder, but with fearless contempt of danger, and impervious to pain, he tried to recover his gun with his sound left hand.

"Leave it alone!" snarled Tony. "Unless you want to die!"

Johnnie Allen straightened, and he gazed angrily at the gangster. That he was wounded did not mean much, but it hurt Johnnie's dignity that he had been tricked by a crook. Useless and futile to disobey this order.

Tony picked up the revolver and stowed it away in his pocket, then with his own gun he pointed towards the shack.

"Now get going—make it quick. Hurry!"

Johnnie had no course but to obey. The shack door was flung open and out came two of the gang. Crash Donovan was in time to see Johnnie forced into the shack.

It gave Tony great joy to lock his prisoner's wrists with the officer's own handcuffs. They pushed him roughly on to a bench.

"What do we do next?" demanded Mike.

"Get the car!" rasped Tony. "The coast is now clear for a getaway before these cursed cops get back."

"Do we give him the works?"

"And get a stretch for murder?" Tony gave his man a contemptuous look. "But he'll make a fine hostage. Get the car."

Mike ran out. Crash! Crash! The driver came tearing back.

"The cops are back, chief!" he gasped.

Tony rushed to the window, and it seemed that the forest was alive with flickering lights.

"They've cut off the back road!" Tony's expression was fendish as he glowered at Johnnie. "I'll wipe the grin off your face. Take that chair away and put him at that window."

The crooks dragged Johnnie to his feet.

"Take it easy, will you?" cried Johnnie.

"Can't take it, eh?" sneered Tony, and pointed to the window. "I'm going to make you a block for that window. It'll be just too bad for you if some of your friends should fire at the windows."

"You murdering skunk!" sneered Johnnie contemptuously. "Getting me plugged won't help you any—except to the chair. You're corralled and haven't a chance. In fact your only chance is to surrender. If any cops are killed in this gun fight the whole of you will die, but if you surrender you may get off with a sentence."

The other crooks looked at their leader, but Tony knew that surrender would not save his skin, and his only possible chance was to try to fight his way out of here.

"Do as I ordered!" he rapped out to the men. "If the cops turn any spot lights on this place they'll see him, and we can use him as a shield. We aren't beaten yet."

A Chasm of Flame

CRASH DONOVAN was wondering what to do when Chief Tennyson appeared with a large body of

police. He hastened to the tree, behind which Crash was taking cover.

"What's the set-up?"

"They're inside."

"Well, we'll have to blast them out," decided the chief, after studying the place carefully. "Too much open ground to try a rush, and I'm not losing good men on trying it. A few grenades will soon get these rats out into the open." He turned to an officer.

"Got those grenades?"

"Yes, sir. Fifty of them."

"All right," the chief nodded. "Throw them in."

"But, chief," Crash laid his hand on his superior's arm, "you can't do that—Johnnie's in there!"

"Then Johnnie'll have to duck."

"Not much chance of ducking!" cried Crash. "Those grenades will blow that shack to blazes."

The chief's face hardened.

"Tough situations like this arise in our job, Crash, and we've just got to do our duty. These men have got to be killed or captured. We've just got to get 'em, and we can't quit just because one of us happens to be their prisoner. And, believe me, Crash, Johnnie will understand."

"Well, I don't altogether agree," Crash said in his fierce, argumentative

manner. "I agree this scum have to be killed or captured, but not without some effort being made to save Johnnie Allen. Moreover, chief—duty or not—you'd have to answer to your daughter if you made no attempt to rescue Johnnie. They're corralled in that shack, so what's the hurry?"

"That bunch will probably murder Allen out of revenge," the chief replied. "I've got the majority of my men on this job, and many districts have been denuded of their patrols, and so I want this job cleared up before daybreak. I know this type of criminal, Crash, and one reason why I suggested grenades was because I did think it gave Johnnie a slight chance. They won't expect grenades, and it'll take 'em by surprise. They may have him a prisoner in one of the rooms."

"Take a look at that window," Crash pointed as powerful lights were turned on the shack. "See that human form—that's Johnnie. The skunks are firing from behind him. If you use grenades they'll shoot Johnnie in the back. I've got an idea, chief."

"What is it?"

"See that hill?"

"You mean that high ground behind the shack?"

(Continued on page 28)

"GO AFTER PAIN'S"
 Earthquakes—Big & Little Terrors—Flying Eagles
 Schneider Planes—Racketeers—Bengal Bursters
 Humming Spiders—Hydra-Headed Comets

PAIN'S
FIREWORKS

"CEILING ZERO"

(Continued from page 16)

A telephone-bell rang, and he picked up the instrument on his desk. Dizzy was on the other end of the line, in the waiting-room of the St. Anne's Hospital, and the news he had to impart was not by any means reassuring.

"All right, Dizz," said Jake, and he put down the telephone and addressed the others. "Well—er—his heart's not so good. They won't know anything for a couple of hours. You may just as well get goin' and do whatever you have to do."

Lou was in the waiting-room at the hospital, and Dizzy went to her after he had hung up.

"I know it sounds stupid to say I'm sorry, Lou," he murmured, "but I am, really."

"I know you're sorry," she gulped. "Your kind always is when it's too late. I've no desire to hurt you, Dizzy—that won't help Tex—but I've got this to say to you, you're no good. You're no good, and you never have been!"

Dizzy went back to the airport thoroughly upset, and he told Jake he had a hunch Tex wouldn't recover.

"Well, stop thinking that way!" snapped Jake. "Anyway, it wasn't your fault that he crashed. When Tex took the run the show was all his."

"I'd give anything if I hadn't faked sick and sent him up there," said Dizzy miserably.

"Look here," said Jake. "there's a bottle in the locker—you'd better knock on it. You look as though you need it!"

Dizzy thanked him, helped himself to a stiff whisky, and went off with it into the pilots' room.

Joe Allen entered as Dizzy went out. The inspector had finished his interrupted inspection, and he said:

"You've got a clean bill, Jake."

"Well, I'm glad something's right around here!" Jake growled.

"Where's Davis?" asked the inspector.

"He's inside," Jake pointed to the pilots' room. "He's all broken up about Tex."

"And I've got another jolt to hand him," said Joe Allen regretfully. "Washington won't renew his pilot's licence."

"Why, they can't do that!" cried Jake. "He can't fly without a ticket!"

"That's just it! They don't want Davis to fly! I'm sorry, Jake, and I'd rather you tell him about it."

"D'you think that'd be easy for me?" "No," admitted the official; "but it might make it easier for Dizzy."

"Make what easier?" demanded a voice, and Dizzy walked out from the pilots' room. "Well, come on, tell me—tell me! What is it? Tex?"

"No, it's not Tex," said Jake, and bit his lip. "It's your licence. They're not going to renew it."

"Why?"

Jake looked at Joe Allen, and Joe Allen took from his pocket a message he had received by wire from Washington.

"Here's what they say." He read aloud: "The record of Pilot Davis, licence number three-seven-six, shows repeated violations of regulations as indicated by complaints filed at this office. You are hereby directed to lift the licence of this pilot and forward same to this office immediately."

"But it's all so unfair," raged Jake, "cancelling a man's licence without October 31st, 1936.

giving him a chance to state his own case."

"They make the decisions," said the inspector. "All I can do is carry them out. I'll—er—I'll have to have that ticket, Davis."

Dizzy dropped heavily into the chair Jake had deserted, and he took his licence from his breast-pocket.

"Sixteen years," he said, opening the little case and removing the precious slip of paper from it.

Joe Allen held out his hand for the slip, but Dizzy tore it to pieces and flung the pieces on the floor.

"Sorry," said the inspector—and walked straight out from the room, leaving Dizzy staring at the empty case.

"If only I could figure a way to get that licence back," said Jake, after a while. "Listen, if I did get it back, would you promise to stick to the rules and keep out of trouble?"

"What d'you want me to do—take up knitting?" growled Dizzy. "All right, I'll promise. But how're you gonna get it back?"

"Fred Adams wasn't kidding when he said he had a big drag in Washington," Jake replied. "He has a drag—a real one. He could get that licence approved in five minutes."

"And what d'you suppose he'd want for that?" scoffed Dizzy. "Do you think I'm gonna let you buy a lot o' second-rate stuff just to get my licence back? And what would you do after you bought it? You'd resign!"

"Well," growled Jake, "I'm gettin' tired o' fightin' Al Stone."

"After all the years you've spent tryin' to get somewhere! I'm not gonna let you take the rap for me!"

"I'm still running this air line!" "Well, then, run it right! Yeah, and cut out this silly sentimentality. Let the old-timers go. I wouldn't be missed, and neither would Tex. Flyers aren't pilots any more, they're engineers. This is a college man's game. Our work is done. Pioneering's over."

"Pioneering is not over. The de-icers are pioneering!"

The telephone-bell rang, and Jake answered the call.

"Federal Air Lines. Jake Lee speaking." His jaw dropped, and his voice changed. "Oh, no, it can't be!" He gripped Dizzy's shoulder with his free hand, and Dizzy knew—and bowed his head. "Okay! Okay!"

Buzz looked round, and Jake nodded slowly as he put down the telephone.

"You'd better tell the gang," he said hoarsely. "I'm goin' over to see Lou. Will you take over the duty, Dizz?"

"Yeah, Jake, I'd like to," Dizzy responded.

There was a board on the wall across the room on which metal tags hung from hooks—tags bearing the names of the pilots of the Federal Air Line. Jake took from it the tag that belonged to Texas Clarke and hung it on another board labelled "Last Flight."

Dizzy watched him in silence; Buzz went out to break the news to the others.

"You'd better cancel the night mail," said Jake, picking up his cap. "No use having any more trouble. Tell Lawson it's off."

"All right, Jake," said Dizzy.

Dizzy Makes Amends

AT eleven minutes past one the Cleveland operator reported, over the loudspeaker, that fog had changed to heavy sleet in his district; but Dizzy had not issued any orders, and out in the foggy flying field the mail plane for Cleveland was being tuned up for flight.

Tay Lawson stepped into the control-room, all ready to start, and found Dizzy alone in it, slumped in Jake's chair.

"I—I'm sorry about Tex, Davis," he said. "I know how you feel. Is Jake at the hospital?"

"Yeah," Dizzy replied. "He's over there with Lou."

"Did he leave any orders about the mail going out?"

Dizzy hesitated, then lied.

"Nope," he said.

"Well, I've got to get going."

Dizzy stood up.

"Ever been over the hill in weather as nasty as this?" he inquired.

"Few pilots have," Tay replied. "But Jake's been waiting months for weather like this to get the dope on those new de-icers."

"Well—er—listen, Lawson, tell me—how do those new de-icers work?"

Tay looked at his wrist-watch. "I'm sorry," he said, "but I haven't got time now."

"Oh, yes, you have!" retorted Dizzy sharply. "Those are orders! I'm in charge here! How do they work?"

"All right, I'll show you!" Tay went to a table and returned with a small model of an aeroplane to which a rubber tube was attached. "The de-icers are rubber, cemented along the leading edge of the wings. They divided into four compartments, running parallel along here, connected by tubes that control here, in the cockpit, and worked by a pulsator in the motor. The action is alternate—like this!"

He squeezed the bulb of the rubber tube, and all along the edges of the wings little rubber flaps rose and fell.

"That cracks and loosens the ice," he explained, "and it's carried away in the slip-string. Tunnel tests show that, so there's nothing left to do now, but fly under actual icing conditions."

He put the model back in its place and began to button his leather coat.

"Are you really in love with Tommy?" asked Dizzy abruptly.

"What's it to do with you if I am?" challenged Tay angrily. "Now, look here, Davis, I—"

"Aw, come on, kid, let's cut out this squabbling," interrupted Dizzy. "I like Tommy—I think she's a great kid. Take good care of her. I wish both of you all the luck in the world."

Tay gaped at him in surprise. "That's darn nice of you, Davis," he said, and turned to go.

"Lawson!"

Tay turned about, and he was totally unprepared for the blow that caught him on the point of the jaw. He went down like a log, completely knocked out, and Dizzy caught hold of him by the sleeve of his coat and dragged him along the floor into the pilots' room, where he dumped him in a chair and proceeded to gag him with his own handkerchief.

Sleet was beginning to beat down the fog that enveloped the flying field, and Dizzy was taking off into a wall of wet darkness, when Al Stone arrived at the airport in his car and burst into the control-room.

"Where's Jake Lee?" he demanded. "He's gone over to the hospital, Mr. Stone," Buzz replied.

"Is that the night mail going out?" "Yes, sir. Right on schedule."

"Oh! So Jake decided the weather was good enough?"

"I really don't know, sir. He doesn't discuss those things with me," said Buzz.

Dizzy was flying blind through sleet that became thicker every moment, and ice was beginning to form on his wings, when Jake returned from the hospital to find Al Stone striding up and down the control-room. He greeted the general manager in surprise, and Stone said grimly:

"I came over here at this time o' night because I didn't like your attitude

on the 'phone this evening. Of course, I know you're tired and upset, but after all you've got to pay some attention to the opinion of the New York office!"

"I didn't know it had any!" retorted Jake.
 "Well, it has. And if we're gonna work together, you've gotta listen more reasonably. All your trouble comes from Dizzy Davis. I've warned you about him before, and you've talked me out of it. Now I'm gonna have it my way!"

"All right," said Jake wearily. "You can have it your way, but without me. Dizzy is through with Federal Air Lines, and so am I." He drew a long breath and added: "So is Texas Clarke."

"What are you talkin' about?" Al Stone dropped his bullying manner in dismay.

"Tex is dead. He died a little while ago!"
 "Well, that's too bad. I—I'm sorry to hear that." The general manager turned and stared out into the obscured field beyond the windows. "But that doesn't mean you have to leave, does it?"

"Aw, we can't get along, Al," said Jake. "I'd be happier some place else, and so would Dizzy. Incidentally, my last official act will be to recommend that you buy the Adams Bomber."

"Adams Bomber?" Stone swung round. "I thought you were stuck on a Browning Transport?"

"I was," said Jake.
 "Well—"

A voice from the loudspeaker silenced him and caused Jake to start.

"Dizzy Davis, in Six. to Newark," it said. "West leg of Newark range. Visibility zero. Temperature thirty. I'm beginning to take on ice. Building up on the leading edges. Gonna try the de-icers—see if they break it up. Will call you in a few minutes—give you the results."

"When did he take off?" rasped Jake.
 "Okay, Davies!" Buzz said into his microphone; and then, in answer to Jake's question: "He took the night mail."

"Took the night mail?" exploded Jake. "Why, he'll be covered with ice before he goes thirty miles!"

Doc Lawson walked in from the field, his overalls dripping with melted sleet, and Jake stalked over to him.

"Didn't you know the night mail was to be held?" he shouted.

"No, sir," was the reply. "Dizzy said he was taking Lawson's place."

"Well, he had no business takin' Lawson's place. And Lawson had no authority to switch with him!"

"I thought you were running this airport," interposed Al Stone with sarcasm.

"Well, why don't you let me run it, then?" Jake roared at him. "Buzz, tell him to turn back at once!"

Buzz called Dizzy and gave him the order, but Dizzy's voice replied quite jauntily:

"It looks worse behind than it does ahead. I'm goin' on!"

"Tell him he can't go on!" raged Jake. "I'm orderin' him back to Newark!"

Buzz did so—in official language—but Dizzy responded: "All right, Buzz, all right. Tell Jake to come to the mike."

Jake grabbed up a wireless telephone, and into it he said with fierce emotion:

"Listen, Dizz. You know you can't fly through that stuff. Turn back before you get into trouble!"

"Will you stop crabbing and lend an ear?" demanded the voice of Dizzy. "This is important. This is the dope on the de-icers. Stop barking, and take down some notes on what I'm gonna tell you!"

"Take it down, Buzz," said Jake, with a gesture of helplessness, and Buzz picked up a pencil and pulled a pad towards him.

"The pressure's got to be doubled," Dizzy's voice proceeded quite calmly, although ice was forming thick and fast upon his wings, and only a little of it was being jerked off the edges. "The rear tube has got to be moved back at least—oh, at least eight inches, so the ice won't form behind it. Then it'll work like a million bucks!"

There was a long pause which those who listened found agonising, then:

"Right now, the tubes are frozen fast. And listen, you've gotta put 'em on that? Got it? That's all I can tell you now, Jakey boy."

Jake spoke harshly into the wireless telephone.

"Listen, Dizz, I'm orderin' you back to Newark! No arguin', and no grand-standin'! Get over the field as soon as possible!"

Dizzy made no response to that command, but a loud banging was heard which seemed to come from the pilots' room.

"Open that door, Doc!" shouted Jake. "Go on, get her open!"

(Continued overleaf)

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Dizzy had locked the door of the pilots' room, but the key was in the outside hole of the lock. Doc Wilson turned it, opened the door, and backed away in bewilderment as Tay Lawson tottered out with his hands bound behind his back and a handkerchief tied round his mouth and knotted behind his neck.

Jake hastened to unfasten the handkerchief: Doc Wilson freed Tay's wrists.

"Oh, I might have figured this!" Jake cried, and ran back to the wireless telephone. "Newark calling Davis in Six! Newark calling Davis in Six!" "Yeah, Jake?" Dizzy's voice was quite strong and clear from the loud-speaker, and there was no suggestion of fear in it. "It's getting very heavy now, Jake—ice all over. I've got the throttle wide open, but she's mushin' along at eighty-five and losin' altitude fast. Great weather for this test, boy!"

"Listen, Dizzy, this is Jake!" Jake howled frantically into the mouthpiece of the telephone he held. "Leave the ship! Use your parachute! Don't wait till she spins! Go over the side! Bail out! Hit the silk, d'you hear me?"

"No ear do, baby," said Dizzy's voice, and then Doc Wilson made a belated confession.

"Jake, when Dizzy got into the ship," he said, "he didn't wear his 'chute."

"What?" yelled Jake.

"His 'chute's inside," said Tay. "I saw it there!"

Jake knew, then, that the whole thing had been done deliberately.

"Dizzy, nurse her down!" he implored. "Land her on her wings so the crack-up will be easy! Do something! Do anything!"

Mary entered the control-room, worried because her husband had not come home; but she stopped short by the rail inside the double doors as Dizzy's voice rang out from the loudspeaker:

"I'm down to fifteen hundred feet on the beam. The ice looks a foot thick on the leading edge. It's getting very wishy now, and it—it won't respond to the controls. Oh! Oh, here I go, baby—just startin' to spin! Don't look for the crash to-night! Give my love to everybody, and don't be mad at me. I wish I could—"

In the uncanny silence that followed Mary began to sob. They all knew that somewhere Dizzy had spun downwards to his death. For long minutes they all stood staring at one another, then slowly Jake put down the telephone and turned to his wife.

"Run along, dear," he said. "I'll be home soon."

She stumbled out at the doors, and Al Stone drew a very long breath and asked:

"How do you feel about this, Jake? Are you gonna stay?"

"Well," said Jake, closing his eyes and opening them again with a sigh, "there's no use my going now. I've watched this line grow from nothing—I've watched men die to develop it, friends of mine. Yeah, I'm gonna stay. But how I run this line, and how pilots fly is my business. You go back to New York and dig your spurs into your desk. Lawson, did you hear what Dizzy said about those de-icers?"

"No, sir," replied Tay.

"Well, get the dope from Buzz. That's your next job—and, remember, a swell guy made it easy for you!"

(By permission of Warner Brothers Pictures, Ltd., starring James Cagney and Pat O'Brien. Don't forget the marvelous coloured post card of James Cagney that is being given away FREE next week.)

October 31st, 1936.

"CRASH DONOVAN"

(Continued from page 23)

"Yes." Crash's voice had a determined ring. "A man could ride down it and be on them before they knew it."

"Only a miracle man."

"I'd like to try it. I've done more difficult stunts than that at the circus."

The chief shook his head doubtfully. "Why, they'd see you before you got near the house."

"Set fire to the brush. They won't see through the smoke. They'll just think we're trying to smoke 'em out."

"So your scheme is to fire the brush and ride through the flames and smoke towards the house." The chief looked admiringly at Crash. "And you dismount near a window, and—"

"Dismount nothing!" laughed Crash, contemptuous of danger. "I've crashed many a machine through a glass window. I'm going to get to that bluff and the flames should show me a window that looks easy. It's worth trying, Chief."

"All right, Crash, it's up to you." He turned to the grenade officer. "Better hand out a few grenades for use if this scheme fails. Get the brush fired as soon as Crash gives you the signal. When you see him coming down the hill, give 'em a burst of fire, and then rush 'em on all sides."

The officer at once detailed police to get into position on the hill, whilst two other men assisted Crash in getting his machine to a good place on the bluff. Crash found a place which looked to have a reasonable run-down without many trees or bushes. He had examined the ground and except for brush seemed to have few obstacles. A faint moon showed him a large window. The officer appeared to announce that everything was set.

"Then fire the brush," Crash decided. "I shan't start till there is a good blaze."

The crooks were busy firing from behind Johnnie's body and from the windows, when Mike rushed up to Tony and reported that all the hillside was blazing. The leader gazed at the flames, and shrugged his shoulders. It was a smoke screen.

"Boys, it may help us." Tony suddenly saw a chance. "Outside the back door there is a small stream with steep banks. When the flames and smoke are all round the police will try a rush, and we slip past them."

The brush burned rapidly and furiously. It was dry and it was fanned by a stiff breeze. Smoke and flames swept down on the house below. Crash Donovan tensed himself for the most daring ride of his life. Now was the moment.

The police hidden on the hill heard the roar of his machine above the crackle of the flames. They saw a cycle and rider tearing down the bluff at a mad pace and they saw it dive through the flames. They opened fire on the house and then charged.

Grimly Crash gripped his handbars. Often the machine had both wheels off the ground, but his balance was so perfect that bumps, holes and undergrowth seemed to make no difference. The flames were a red inferno, but his speed was so great that it carried him through them before they could do any harm.

He switched on his headlight, and it showed him a small strip of lawn, a sunken stream, and then a porch with

French windows. The stream would have unscathed most riders, but Crash seemed to give a jerk with the handlebars and the machine sailed over a ten-foot gap as if flying. A step had to be jumped and then the machine hurtled through the French windows.

Instinctively Crash applied the brakes, and the machine skidded on the rough wood.

Tony and his crooks turned at sound of that tremendous smash, and their eyes opened wide to see that it was a rider on a machine who had come hurtling through the windows.

Crash was on his feet and out from his holsters came two guns.

The police burst in to find Crash holding up a number of covered wretches.

Crash pouched his guns and hastened across to Johnnie, and began to cut his bonds.

"You okay?"

"Sure," chuckled Johnnie. "But what kept you so long?"

Chief Tennyson came up and grinned his approval.

"Good work, Crash."

"Thanks, Chief."

"You, too, Johnnie." He gave the lad, who loved his daughter, a friendly nod.

The discomfited crooks were led away in handcuffs.

Always be Tops

THE bullet was lodged in the shoulder and Johnnie had to undergo an operation before it could be extracted. It was touch and go whether the arm would be saved, but a sound constitution pulled him through. Three weeks after the affray the doctor announced that he could leave the University Hospital.

It was Crash Donovan who packed his belongings, and fussed around him. Alabam, whose shoulder was still bound up and had to stay in hospital for another month, hovered around. Then Doris appeared. Johnnie was going to spend a month's sick leave at the Chief's house.

"I don't know what to say." She looked at Crash. "But, well, you know how grateful I am, don't you?"

"Don't try to say it." Crash bent his head and Doris kissed him. "Ah, that's better."

And Johnnie grinned approvingly, but when the two young people had gone Crash became very taciturn.

"You know, Crash—love's kind of a wonderful thing." Alabam had been doing all the talking, so he had not observed his companion's pre-occupation.

"Alabam—a man's a sucker to play a game he's not tops."

"Meaning what?"

"Love." Alabam became gloomy.

"Yes, that's one game I always lose at."

"Pretty tough losing at anything." Crash straightened his shoulders. "But there's one place I don't lose—one place that I'm champion."

A month later one might have heard a barker at a big circus proclaiming to a huge crowd that "Crash Donovan, world famous daredevil, and master of the motorcycle, would now attempt his death-defying leap through a chasm of fire."

"Once a carnie, always a carnie." Crash had said, but that wasn't why he had left the police force.

(By permission of Universal Pictures, Ltd., starring Jack Holt as Crash Donovan.)

"THE ADVENTURES OF REX AND RINTY"

(Continued from page 8)

and townsmen alike who had developed an interest in polo.

Perhaps the keenest player amongst the academy's list of patrons was Frank Bradley, a handsome young fellow in the twenties, with the physique of an athlete and the clean-cut features of a typical Anglo-Saxon. And early in the afternoon of that day on which Rex had taken to the hills, Frank Bradley might have been seen at the edge of the polo ground talking to Mr. Bruce, owner of the establishment, and the latter's attractive daughter, Dorothy.

They were discussing the prospects of a game which had been arranged for that afternoon, and it was while they were on this subject that a man known as Jensen hove into sight.

He was a stable-hand and something of a character, and, on perceiving him, Frank Bradley nodded genially. Then, suddenly noticing a dog which was trotting at Jensen's side, the young polo enthusiast spoke in an appraising tone. "Say, that's a nice pal you've got with you," he remarked. "Where did you buy him, Jensen?"

The stable-hand grinned, and stooped to caress his four-footed companion, a magnificent police dog with upright ears that spelled alertness and a pair of soft brown eyes which told of an affectionate nature, though there was something in them to suggest that it might go hard with anyone whom he had cause to dislike.

"I didn't buy this dog, Mr. Bradley," said Jensen. "He's a stray. Wandered in here a couple days ago, and I've been feedin' him ever since. He seemed to take a likin' to me right from the start. I call him Rinty, and I think he's gettin' to know his name already. Believe me, he has a lot more sense than some human beings I know."

The stable-hand passed on with his new-found friend, and Frank Bradley forgot the dog which had been introduced to him as Rinty. Yet in less than half an hour the wolfhound was again brought to his notice—this time during the polo match that had been scheduled to take place.

The fixture had been organised by Frank and Crawford, who had each raised a team for the event, and it was while the first chukker was in full swing that a canine form streaked unexpectedly on to the field of play and raced straight for the ball.

Crawford was galloping for that ball to strike at it with his mallet and send it towards the Bradley goal, but Rinty beat him to it, and provided a few minutes' diversion by having round the pitch with it.

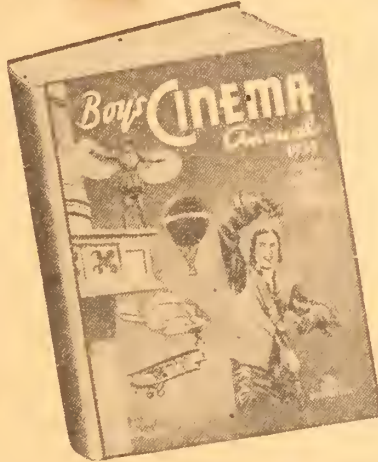
It was an incident that thoroughly amused the majority of the players on both sides, Frank included. But it did not amuse Crawford, whose face wore an ugly expression as he rode across to Jensen, after the latter had succeeded in calling Rinty to the touch-line and forcing the dog to drop the ball from his mouth.

"What's that cursed wolfhound doing here?" the raucher blazed.

"I'm—I'm sorry, Mr. Crawford, sir," the stable-hand faltered. "I—I was watchin' the game with him, an' never dreamed he'd rush on to the field like that. It won't—won't happen again, sir."

Crawford eyed man and dog savagely. "You bet it won't," he rasped. "Do you realise that cur probably robbed

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me of a score? Now get him out of here before I break his skull with this mallet!"

Taking Rinty along with him, Jensen made himself scarce and the game was restarted. But, though it was played at high pressure, there was never any doubt as to which was the superior team, and Crawford and his colleagues came off that field a well-beaten side.

From the pitch Crawford strode in the direction of the car park, to reach which he had to go round by the stables, and it was as he was turning a corner that the dog known as Rinty scampered into view and dashed between his legs.

Immediately after it came Jensen, who had been romping with the wolfhound, and it must have been the stable-hand's unlucky day, for he bumped full-tilt into the big rancher.

Now Crawford was in a particularly unpleasant mood. In the first place he was still brooding over the loss of the good horse Rex. Secondly, he was a bad sportsman and was ranking under the defeat that had been inflicted on his team—a defeat for which Frank Bradley had been largely responsible as Number 3 man on the other side.

"Confound you!" shouted Crawford, gripping Jensen by the collar. "Why don't you look where you're going?"

He accompanied the words with a blow of his fist, and it was a blow that was seen by Rinty. In another moment the dog was hurling himself upon the rancher to defend the stable-hand who had won his friendship, and as the animal leapt to the attack those soft brown eyes of his were no longer mild in their expression, but burning with a primitive fury.

Snarling, with fangs bared for action, he must have inflicted severe injuries on Crawford if Jensen had not recovered himself and intervened. As it was, the rancher experienced nothing more serious than a pretty bad fright, which was succeeded by an outburst of rage when he saw that Jensen had obtained a secure hold on Rinty and was quietening him down.

"Listen!" he bit out. "Get rid of that wolfhound, Jensen! D'you hear me? Get rid of it! For if I ever set eyes on it around here again I'll have the brute shot!"

Crawford was not in the habit of making idle threats, and, knowing that full well, Jensen drove Rinty away from the neighbourhood of the Bruce Academy some five minutes later. It well-nigh broke his heart to do it, especially as the dog was reluctant to go, but the stable-hand was determined to send him forth homeless again rather than see him butchered, and thus his four-footed friend became a stray once more.

Out into the open country wandered Rinty, for experience had told him that cities were not always kind to a waif, and late in the afternoon of that same day he was drifting at random through the quiet hills.

The sun was beginning to set when, entering a narrow canyon, Rinty spotted a dark, yawning cavern in the right-hand wall of the ravine. It was the tunnel of an abandoned mine, but the dog knew nothing of the gold-reefs which had once been discovered in this section of country and which had long since "petered out." He only knew that strange sounds were issuing from that cavern, and, with his curiosity aroused, he trotted inquisitively in the direction of it.

He passed into the tunnel, and had moved twenty or thirty yards along it when he saw a black stallion plunging and rearing ahead of him, a stallion which had apparently roamed into the

mine and snared himself in some coils of rope lying on the floor of the gallery.

The stallion was Rex, god horse of Sujan, and in his efforts to free himself he had only entangled his forefeet more securely in the rope, which was fastened to one of the timber props that supported the roof of the mine.

Rinty drew closer and for the space of several seconds he watched the stallion's frenzied, but useless, attempts to regain his liberty. Then, as the horse desisted for a brief interval, the wolfhound padded still nearer to him, and sniffed at the hemp coils which had imprisoned his front legs.

Presently, Rinty began to see if his sharp canine teeth could make any impression on the snare, but he had to give up, for soon the stallion resumed his desperate struggles, and in order to avoid a kick from his hoofs the dog was forced to scuttle out of reach.

From a safe distance he again watched the antics of the black Arabian. After a moment or two, however, he suddenly turned and ran out of the mine, then sped from the canyon and as if by instinct dashed along the trail by which he had come.

It was a trail that would eventually bring him back to the Bruce Academy, and perhaps it was natural that Rinty should make for that establishment, where he had seen so many creatures similar to the trapped stallion in the mine. Yet before the dog had travelled a couple of miles he heard someone call him by the name that Jensen had given him, and, halting, he observed a girl approaching him on horseback from a cleft in the hills.

The girl was Dorothy Bruce, blonde, blue-eyed and pretty as a picture, and she had been enjoying a canter through the mountain country when she had caught sight of the wolfhound.

"Why, Rinty!" she exclaimed, pulling up within a few paces of the dog. "What are you doing here?"

Every line of Rinty's splendid body seemed to betray agitation. Wheeling, he darted back along the trail for a short distance—stopped—returned—then set off again; and by the time he had repeated this performance two or three times it had dawned on Dorothy Bruce that he was trying to persuade her to follow him.

The moment this conviction had taken a grip on her mind she gave her pony the spur and rode after the dog, who promptly raced for the mine as hard as he could go. But, though it was Rinty's intention to lead her to the scene of a dumb animal's plight, fate decreed otherwise, for a jack-rabbit's scrape in the path of Dorothy's horse caused the girl to stumble, and in an instant the girl was thrown heavily to the trail.

She lay where she had fallen, and, unaware of the accident she had sustained, Rinty held on at top pace until

he reached the canyon in which the mine was situated. Then, even as he swung into the ravine, he saw four men ahead of him.

They were strangers to Rinty, but, if the dog had been acquainted with any of Crawford's employees, he would have recognised them as Jones, Mitchell, Martin and a fellow known as Anderson.

They were riding towards the cavern in which Rex was trapped, and Jones was talking in an animated voice.

"Here's where I spotted that black Arabian," he was saying to his comrades. "He went into that abandoned mine, like I told you, but I was scared to tackle him alone. Maybe he's still there, an' even if he ain't there's always a chance he'll come back."

"He's there all right," jerked Mitchell all at once. "Listen!"

The four men drew rein, and, pausing, they distinctly heard the stallion whinnying—heard, too, the stamping of hoofs somewhere within the dark interior of the mine. They did not know, however, that their prize was trapped in that gloomy cavern, and after unlatching their lariats and dismounting from their broncs they sneaked up to the tunnel-entrance with exaggerated caution.

"Hold it, boys," said Jones, as they gained the mouth of the cave. "We'd

better not go in there. You know what that devil is. Our best plan is to get him in the open so we can throw our ropes on him. How about smokin' him out?"

It was a suggestion that met with approval, and a mass of dry thicket near the main entrance was set alight, the wind carrying the smoke of the conflagration directly into the cavern.

Meanwhile, Rinty had been watching the activities of the four men, and now he seemed to realise that they were up to some mischief, for suddenly he dashed straight across to them and started to bark at them loudly.

"Get outa here!" snapped Mitchell, aiming a kick at the dog.

He could not have adopted a worse method of dealing with Rinty, for with his spirit aroused the wolfhound sprang at him, and buffeting him solidly in the chest, knocked him flying to the ground.

Rinty fell atop of him, and the dog's gleaming teeth were at the man's throat in another instant. Only by clutching the thick fur around the wolfhound's neck did Mitchell save himself from deadly injury, and as it was he was badly bitten about the wrists before Jones came to his rescue and clubbed the senses out of the dog with the butt of a gun.

Paunting, Mitchell rose to his feet and spurred the huddled body of his attacker viciously. Then he turned towards the entrance of the cave with Jones and the other two men.

Smoke was pouring into the tunnel, and out of the darkness of the interior there came the sound of Rex whinnying and stamping frantically.

"That stallion can sure take punishment," Martin gasped. "But he's bound to make a rush for the open soon. Be ready to lasso him, fellers."

Even as the words were spoken there was a sharp splintering of wood, and to the dismay of Crawford's hirelings it was followed by a thunder of falling earth and rock. Inside the mine, the desperate struggles of the god horse Rex had torn down the prop to which he was fastened, and a section of the roof had caved in disastrously!

(To be continued in another dramatic episode next week. By permission of Associated British Film Distributors, Ltd., starring Kane Richmond, Norma Taylor and Rex and Rinty.)

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"THE ADVENTURES OF REX AND RINTY."—Frank Bradley, Kane Richmond; Dorothy Bruce, Norma Taylor; Rex, King of Wild Horses; Rinty, the Wonder Dog; Jensen, Smiley Burnett; Wheeler, Wheeler Oakman; Crawford, Harry Woods; Mitchell, Al Bridge; Jones, Edmund Cobb; Martin, Charles Chesebro; McDonald, Jack Rockwell; Pasha, Pedro Regas; Bruce, Allan Cavan; Foster, Tracy Layne; Tanaga, Mischa Auer; Kinso, Victor Potel; Debor, Hooper Atebley; Jerry Morton, Ralph Byrd.

"CEILING ZERO."—Dizzy Davis, James Cagney; Jake Lee, Pat O'Brien; Tommy, Thomas, June Travis; Texas Clarke, Stuart Erwin; Al Stone, Barton MacLane; Tay Lawson, Henry Wadsworth; Mary Lee, Martha Tibbetts; Lou Clarke, Isabel Jewell; Joe Allen, Craig Reynolds; Eddie Payson, Carlyle Moore Jun.; Fred Adams, Addison Richards; Mike Owens, Gary Owen; Doc Wilson, Edward Gargan; Leslie Bogan, Robert Light; Buzz, James Bush.

"CRASH DONOVAN."—Crash Donovan, Jack Holt; Johnnie Allen, John King; Doris Tennyson, Nan Gray; Alabam, Eddie Acuff; Captain Tennyson, Hugh Buckler; Tony, William Tannen; Mike, Al Hill; Smokey, James Donlan.



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The wild-animal trainer had no fear of Satan, the fiercest man-eating tiger in captivity, but the creature hated its master and longed to tear the big man to pieces with rendering claws and fangs. A thrilling drama of the circus, starring Barton MacLane



Satan Escapes

THE "Hinsdale-Clark Combined Circus and Wild-animal Show" was packed with spectators. All were tensely watching Cliff Ballenger's animal act.

Cliff Ballenger was an aggressive, dynamic man of forty, radiating self-confidence and mastery over the beasts. He wore a khaki uniform and a pith helmet to give the impression of being a big-game hunter.

A small, elderly man was his assistant. Carl Homan always had a dread that something would go wrong, and he watched with bated breath as Cliff made a huge lion obey his commands. The part that the assistant feared most of all was the act with Satan, the man-eating tiger. A venomous, snarling eat that glared hatred at his master. Amidst thunders of applause the act came to an end, and after bowing to the audience Cliff and his assistant went out of the arena.

"Nice going, Cliff!" cried Carl. "You had them cats eating out of your hand."

"And why not?" shouted Cliff true-ly. "I've got 'em where I want 'em."

The two men paused as the ringmaster loudly announced: "Joe Larson, world's greatest aerialist, with the De Largos, aristocrats of the flying trapeze, in their death-defying act."

Cliff pointed to the figure perched on a trapeze.

"Get a load of that crazy lug, Joe Larson," he muttered admiringly. "That takes nerve. They couldn't hire me to risk my neck like that."

As they came out of the big tent to go to their quarters they had to pass the cage that housed Satan, the wildest tiger in captivity. The creature was

quietly, disdainfully peering through the bars, but at sight of the animal trainer Satan sprang to his feet, bared his fangs and roared terribly.

Cliff roared with laughter, grabbed up a pole and made a pass at the tiger, who thrust a paw through the bars, scratching and roaring.

"That pussy sure loves you, Cliff."

The anger of the tiger seemed to infuriate Cliff, who gave the animal a violent dig with the pole.

"Think you can bluff Cliff Ballenger?" he bellowed. "Think you're a man-eater. Well, you're nothing but an alley eat to me."

"Why don't you lay off that killer?"

"They say nobody in show business can work Satan," Cliff gave a sardonic grin. "Well, I'll work him, and he'll like it."

Carl shuddered.

"I hope you're right."

The tiger flung himself vainly against the bars as the two men turned their backs and walked away.

In the sleeping quarters Cliff began to drag off his uniform.

"Why don't you change your mind and come into town with me and Joe?"

Carl smiled and shook his head.

"No, thanks—think I'll hit the hay."

"We've had a good week. Why not come with us—we're going places."

"Can't afford it, Cliff."

Cliff clapped a hand on the smaller man's shoulder.

"It won't cost you a dime." His voice was gruff.

"Nope—when I play I pay—and I got something better to do with my few bucks."

"That daughter, eh?" Cliff gave his assistant a knowing glance. "How's she getting along?"

"Better—left the hospital yesterday."

Carl took out a letter. "She is on her way to Los Angeles by now. The sun'll fix her up—she's gonna keep house for me when we get to winter quarters. Had this letter this morning—she sent her picture."

"Say," Cliff Ballenger's eyes opened wide. "She's a good-looker. She don't look much like her old man."

"No—she favours her mother." Carl's smile was sad.

"Hey, Cliff! Snap into it—I'm thirsty!" a voice cried. It was Joe Larson. He was a good-looking, husky young fellow. "Never known anybody like you two for jabbering."

"Better wrap up warm." Old Carl loved to mother the man he admired. "Looks like a storm."

"Water outside won't do us any harm," chuckled Cliff.

It was blowing a gale when the two men set out for the centre of the town. They were going to make it a night out, and within the hour both men were very merry. They had found hectic company at a saloon, and they were attempting to finish up the stock. Meantime the gale had increased to a hurricane, and several of the tents where the circus was pitched had collapsed.

The storm increased in fury and drove the animals into a wild panic. A huge pole that supported the main tent snapped and crashed down on the tiger's cage.

The bars were stove in and Satan managed to escape. It was Carl who saw the big cat leap a hedge and disappear down a street. The little man clutched at his heart as he heard a wild scream of fear.

Carl ran towards the town to try to find Cliff. At last he came to the saloon where the two men were making

merry. Joe was at the bar, and swaying drunkenly.

"Hollo, Carl, have a drink?"

"Where's Cliff?"

"What's up?"

"The tiger's loose! Uptown!"

That sobered Joe Larson like a pail of water. He pushed the people away and grabbed Carl's arm. Sprawled across a table was Cliff Ballenger.

"Satan's broken out!" Carl cried.

But Cliff only grunted, and fell out of his chair to the floor. They got him back, they shook him and yelled at him, but the big head just waggled about and the eyes gave a glassy stare.

"He's out!" cried Joe.

A man rushed into the saloon, shouting that a tiger was loose in town, had mauled a young fellow and had gone to ground in the basement of a butcher's shop.

"Cliff—Cliff—it's the tiger—wake up!" bellowed Joe; but Cliff only groaned.

Carl touched Joe on the arm.

"Okay, I'll take care of it!"

Joe did not realize for a moment what the little man meant, then he realised that Carl was carrying a long whip. He shook the drunken man with desperate frenzy.

"Cliff—Carl's gone after that tiger—he'll be killed!"

Cliff Ballenger's eyes opened.

"The tiger's loose!" Joe yelled.

"Carl's gone after him."

The light of intelligence came back to the big man's face, and he swayed to his feet.

"Satan loose," he muttered thickly, "where?"

"Uptown—and Carl's gone after him."

"Carl!" cried Cliff. "Why, that cat'll tear him to pieces!" He flung the table away. "C'mon!"

Swaying drunkenly, Cliff Ballenger reached the door, but the cool air and the rain seemed to sober him at once, and, guided by a man who knew where the butcher's shop was situated, he began to run.

There was quite a crowd outside the butcher's shop. Hinsdale, who owned the circus, was there and so were the police—the latter armed with guns and very scared. An ambulance clanked its way to the scene and took away a man who had been clawed by the beast.

"That tiger's a menace!" cried Hinsdale, who was a kindly man. "I want that tiger killed."

"You can't do that, sir!" shouted old Carl. "Cliff'll never forgive you if you kill that cat."

"Who's running this circus," flared the owner, "me or Cliff?"

"Let me try to get him!" pleaded Carl. "I'll take a gun—you can set the gillie cage at the door. I got a whip, and when the tiger—"

"Carl!" It was a bellow, and Cliff Ballenger hurled himself through the crowd.

"Say, it's about time—" began Hinsdale.

"Don't bother me!" Cliff pushed the owner to one side. "Gimme that." He snatched the whip from Carl.

"But, Cliff—you're drunk," Carl had the courage to say.

"Drunk or sober, I'm the only man alive that can handle that cat," Cliff muttered fiercely. He saw Joe snatch a gun from an attendant and grinned.

"Good for you, Joe. But be careful, I want that cat alive, see?"

"Okay!" grumbled Joe, who would have died rather than admit he was scared. "Let's go!"

A trap cover was raised to reveal steps down. Without hesitation, Cliff Ballenger went down the steps into the cellar. Joe followed.

The butcher's underground store was littered with boxes and odds and ends. For some while they could not see Satan, who had seen them all right, and was lurking in hiding.

"Look out!" Cliff shouted a warning as the tiger made a spring from behind a packing-case at Joe's back. The whip slashed across the creature's face and broke the spring. Joe was glad to get behind the animal trainer.

"Get back, there!" raged Cliff. "Back, Satan!" Unmercifully he began to ply the whip with all the strength of his mighty arm.

Time and again Satan tried to charge, but the whip and the man's gleaming eyes daunted the beast.

"Don't shoot!" Cliff shouted over his shoulder. "I got this kitten licked!"

The tiger roared and then slunk away, snarling furiously. Cliff drove Satan towards some stairs, and with tail between his legs the wild cat retreated before his master. A cut of the whip made Satan scream with pain, and turn, but that whip checked him. A moment later he was safe in the gillie cage.

"Man-eater, eh?" roared Cliff. "Untamable. Haw, haw, haw!"

"Good work, Cliff!" Hinsdale cried, when the two men appeared. "But I'm through with Satan—he's for sale!"

Cliff Ballenger shoved his big face within about two inches of the owner's florid features. "You sell that cat and I quit!"

"What?" gasped Hinsdale.

Joe Larson took the owner's arm.

"You wouldn't take Junior's kitten away from him, would you?"

Hinsdale had to laugh.

"Guess both you guys are nuts. But if this ever happens again, Cliff, I'll have that beast destroyed!"

Cliff Ballenger linked up with Joe.

"I'm as dry as the desert after all that." He was wet enough outwardly. "Let's celebrate—c'mon."

They went back to the saloon, and very soon Cliff was if anything in a worse state than he was before. They stayed there until they were forcibly ejected in the small hours of the morning. Arm-in-arm, singing raucously, they staggered back to the circus.

Satan's Chance

THE cool air had a sobering effect on the star performers of the circus, but they were still in a very merry mood when they got back to their quarters. They were so happy they had to sing and tell everybody the good news, but unfortunately the world, especially those asleep at the circus, was not a bit pleased.

"Pipe down!" raged one angry man.

"We're trying to sleep!" yelled another.

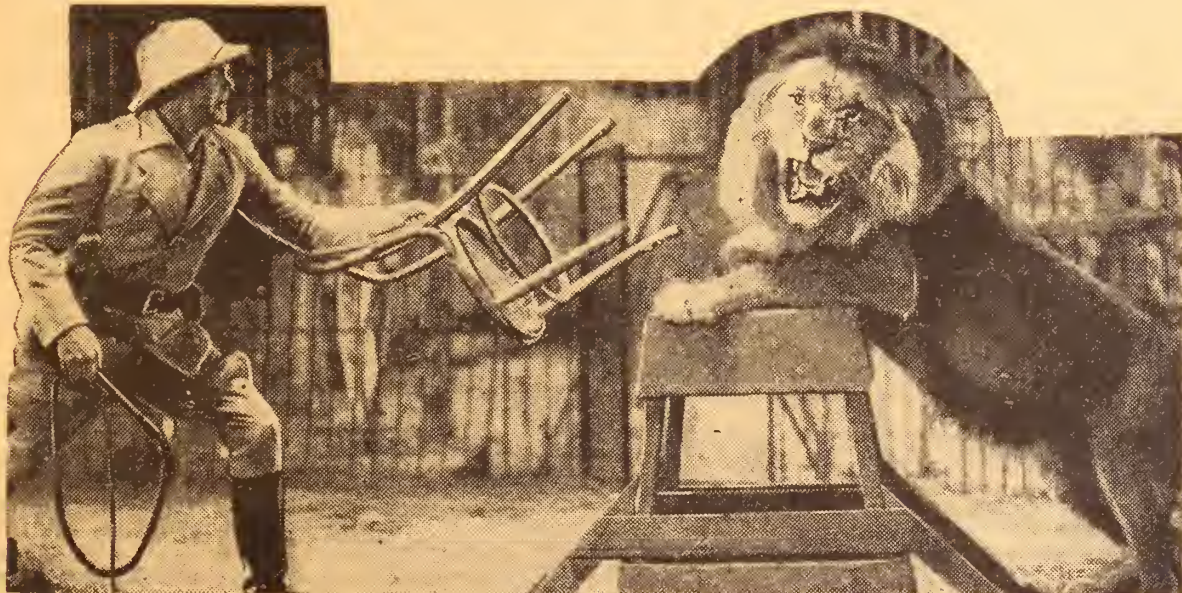
Whereupon the two regarded each other and made husky sounds, which were supposed to be indications for each to be silent. Their shushing was almost as loud as their singing. At last they reached the caravan that Cliff shared with Carl Homan.

"G'night!" muttered Joe.

The two men solemnly shook hands, then Joe entered one caravan and Cliff the next. After much fumbling the big man found the light and switched it on.

"Hey, Carl, you asleep?" he cried hoarsely.

"Who could sleep with you barging all over the place?" came the weary voice of his assistant. "Thank goodness this don't happen more than once a week."



Cliff Ballenger made the huge lion obey his commands.

Carl climbed down from his bunk, and propped led to help the animal-trainer off with his coat.

"Good old Carl!" Cliff lurched. "What'd I do without you?"

"Listen, Cliff, you got a matinee—it's now four in the morning—you're a mug—"

"Gimme two hours' sleep," fiercely interrupted Cliff, "and I'll be fresh as a daisy."

"That's what you think." Carl shook his head. "But I've been in the racket a long time—longer than you have—I've seen plenty of guys crack up."

The other laughed contemptuously.

"Well, you'll never see me crack up."

"Listen, Cliff," Carl argued. "The cats are smarter than you think—they know when a guy's got the jitters. You can't fool 'em."

"I don't have to fool 'em!" Cliff scowled. "They know who's boss, hooze or no hooze. I done all right to-night, didn't I?"

"Yeah—you done fine—but in a cage it's different."

"What's different about it?" argued Cliff in his belligerent, stubborn manner.

"Let's not argue—go to bed, Cliff!"

"You think I'm afraid to go in a cage with him?"

"Oh, go to bed!" Carl cried wearily.

"Not till I've shown you something," Cliff pushed the little man away, and from the wall grabbed down his whip.

"And that darned eat."

Carl Homan shouted to Cliff not to be a fool, but the big fellow had gone. Quickly Carl put on his pants and hastened out of the caravan.

Cliff reached the big tent, switched on the lights and staggered towards the arena. Satan was housed in a small cage that had a chute leading to the iron-barred arena. The tiger snarled and roared at sight of him, and Cliff slashed at the creature with his whip. He drove the tiger into the chute down into the arena.

"Blasted cat, I'll show you!" raged Cliff, who seemed beside himself with rage. "So you're different in a cage, eh? Well, we'll see." He started to open the door of the arena.

"Cliff!" Carl rushed up and seized his arm.

"Wassa matter?"

"You can't go in there!"

It was like a red rag to a bull. He would show Carl he wasn't scared. A wrench and the door was open, and next moment Cliff Ballenger was in the arena.

"Get back there, tom-cat!" He cracked the whip savagely. "Lucky you know who's boss here."

Carl Homan watched in an agony of suspense as Ballenger drove the tiger round the ring, but Cliff would not finish. He was still in a drunken rage, and he was going to show Carl Homan he could scare this cat so that it cringed in fear. Carl's pleas for him to stop it and come out of the cage only incensed Cliff all the more.

The cat, finally cornered and utterly desperate, finally sprang from the corner at his enemy. Cliff, surprised, took a backward step, slipped and fell. The cat overjumped him, whistled like a flash, and as Cliff staggered to his feet leaped again. As man and beast rolled to the ground Carl Homan stared in horror. Fearlessly he picked up a chair and opened the arena door.

The tiger was raking Cliff with his claws, as Carl crashed the chair down on the great cat.

Satan whirled away from the drunken Ballenger and sprang at his new aggressor, and Carl backed away keeping the chair up. The tiger had been enraged to the point of madness and

sprang suddenly, hurling Carl and the chair to the floor.

The bloody Cliff got unsteadily to his feet. He was still clutching his whip, but he was bemused. A shrill scream of agony startled him, and he spun round to see the tiger on top of Carl, mauling and clawing.

In a fury Cliff leaped forward and lashed out with his whip, but Satan had tasted blood and would not leave his victim. Cliff flung away his whip, and with his bare hands grappled the tiger, desperately wrestling the cat away from Carl.

Over and over on the floor rolled Cliff and the tiger, but the man had fingers of steel.

By this time the whole circus was awake. Hinsdale, Joe Larson, and a number of the artists appeared on the scene. It was Hinsdale and Larson who entered the arena and dragged out the limp figure of Carl Homan. Then attendants with prongs and poles rushed in to get the tiger away from Cliff.

An ambulance took the two men to hospital. Both men were swathed in bandages, but though Cliff was conscious there seemed no movement from the figure on the other stretcher.

"Carl!" hoarsely whispered Cliff.

"Shhh!"

The ambulance orderly shook his head.

"Is he all right?" Cliff asked.

"No."

Stunned, Cliff stared at the bandaged figure of his assistant, and as he watched Carl's lips began to move.

"Laura—my child—"

The bandaged hands went out in a pleading sort of gesture, then flopped. The head rolled limply.

"He's dead," whispered the orderly.

"And I killed him!" sobbed Cliff. "I killed him!"

"Take it easy."

The orderly pushed him back.

All the way to the hospital Cliff Ballenger lay on his back. Of his own wounds he had no interest. Whether he lived or died meant nothing to him.

"I killed him!" he muttered, and lapsed into merciful oblivion.

She Stole to Live

CLIFF BALLENGER hobbled down the corridor of the hospital with the aid of crutches. His face showed the marks of the scars made by Satan's claws, and his right leg had had to be amputated above the knee, but in spite of all this Cliff looked cheerful. He knocked on the door of the superintendent's room and was told to enter.

"Well, Mr. Ballenger, so you're leaving us?" smiled the kindly superintendent.

"That's right. Just thought I'd drop in to thank you people for the swell care you gave me."

"You had a close call, but I think you're going to be all right." He picked up a buff envelope. "By the way, this telegram has just come for you."

"Thanks." Cliff opened it, and then grinned in a shame-faced manner. "Would you mind reading it for me? I don't read so good."

He had never been taught to read or write. He had been brought up in the slums, deserted by his parents at an early age, and become a circus run-around at twelve.

The superintendent took the telegram.

"Los Angeles, March 25th.

"Cliff Ballenger, General Hospital, White Plains, Ohio.

Congratulations on your recovery.

Hope you will rejoin us winter quarters. We open April 2nd. Will work some-

thing out for you. Entire show joins me in wishing you good luck.

"BILL HINSDALE."

"That's my boss." Cliff blinked his eyes. Grand to get a message like this. He pointed to his leg. "I suppose a guy with one gammy leg could sweep out cages."

"Oh, I'm sure they'll find a better job for you than that, Mr. Ballenger!"

"Well, right now I got something more important to worry about—Carl Homan's kid. She's dropped out-a sight, and so I'm hopping out to Los Angeles to make a personal search." He held out his large hand. "Thanks for all you've done."

"Good luck." The superintendent tried not to wince under that mighty grip. "I hope you find her."

It took Cliff a three-day search before he traced her.

In a prison cell sat a good-looking young woman whose face was filled with brooding bitterness. A clanking of keys, and she looked up wearily to see the matron. The door opened.

"A visitor to see you."

Cliff Ballenger hobbled into the cell, and the door was closed.

"A friend of your father's," called the matron. "You can have ten minutes."

"Miss Homan—Laura?"

"Yes."

Cliff looked down.

"I'm—I was a friend of your father's." He glanced at her now. "Maybe he's spoken of me—Cliff Ballenger."

"Oh, yes, Mr. Ballenger!" A slight spark of interest showed in the dull, lifeless expression of her pale face.

"I sure had a tough job finding you."

Her smile was twisted.

"I don't wonder. How did you—"

"I went to the cops," he admitted. "They told me. You've had a tough time, kid. What happened?"

She sat down on a hard bench and made a place for him at her side.

"Well, the day I arrived in Los Angeles I got the telegram about father—it sort of knocked the props from under me. I'd been sick, and I didn't have any money. Mr. Hinsdale sent me father's things and a month's salary, but I couldn't work yet, and when I could I couldn't find a job. Then the money gave out."

"You should have let us know."

"I didn't know any of you, and the show was on tour. I did try hard about that job, but I had no decent clothes."

Her voice became faint. "Soon I was starving, and one day I took some—"

She looked at him in misery. "You see, I'm just a common thief."

"Forget it—you were in a spot,"

A mocking laugh.

"And now I'm in a worse one." She looked at the small cell window. "I've got thirty days more here—a gaolbird."

"Listen, thirty days ain't for ever." He patted her hands. "There's afterwards—your dad's insurance money will get you started."

"He didn't carry any insurance."

"Of course he did." He tried to make his voice hearty. "I was his insurance company. Every time he had a few bucks extra he'd turn it over to me to keep for you in case anything ever happened—it was that kind of an insurance."

Her eyes were misty.

"Mr. Ballenger, you're lying. You're trying to be kind. I appreciate it, but I can't let you do it. I don't mean anything to you."

"Carl meant a lot to me," Cliff told her, "and if he hadn't tried to pull that cat off me he'd be here to-day instead of me. I guess if anybody in this world has got a right to do some-

thing for Carl Homan's kid, it's me. You've got to have some dough when you get outa here. You need sunshine and fresh air, and I'm gonna see you get it. It's little enough to do for a guy that saved my life—and lost his own. It's—” He tilted up her chin so she could look at him through tear-filled eyes. “Please, don't you see it's the only way I can sort of square things? I'm to blame for what happened to Carl.”

“I'm sure he wouldn't have blamed you, and—I don't want charity, Mr. Ballenger.”

“What do you mean, charity?” Cliff changed to his old, truculent manner. “You've got a few breaks coming. I've got plenty of money, Laura, and you're gonna have some of it.”

“I guess I'll have to take it.” She looked wondrously beautiful to Cliff when she smiled. “Coming from you—it won't be so hard.”

“Say, I'm glad you said that.” He grinned like a delighted child. “It sorta makes me feel good.”

“How do you think it makes me feel—the girl dabbed at her eyes—“to have someone—a friend?”

“Everything is going to be jake,” he assured her. “You've had a rotten deal, and I—well, I ain't had any piecies these last three months since that cat clawed me. In a way you might say we was kinda in the same boat, but it's gonna be different from now on. Now here's the angle. The show's here—in winter quarters. I haven't even been near it yet, on account of wanting to find you first. But they got a job waiting for me, and I'm gonna take it, and get ready to go out with 'em next month. I'll come to see you every visitors' day, bring you things, so you keep your spirit up, because when you get outa here it's gonna be a new deal all round.”

“Sorry—time's up.”

It was the matron.

Laura helped him to his feet.

“Okay, good-bye, Laura!” He laughed happily. “I'll be seeing you.”

“Good-bye, Cliff.” She gripped his hand. “I've got something to look forward to now.”

Cliff winked and waved his hand, and hobbled away.

Satan's Master

SOME days later Cliff Ballenger went to certain railway sidings where the circus train had been shunted. During the winter the circus folk lived in the train or in tents, training and working for the summer season. Cliff smiled as he saw the huge board proclaiming: “WINTER QUARTERS, CLARK AND HINSDALE COMBINED SHOWS.”

It was like coming back to home. Cliff stood there and watched acrobats doing their jumps, jugglers manipulating clubs, clowns fooling around, and a girl doing bare-back riding. He hobbled into a huge tent, and, staring upwards, watched Joe Larson and the De Largos trying out a new trapeze act.

Cliff no longer used crutches. He had a peg-leg fitted to his stump, and with the aid of a cane he could move quite fast. When the act was finished he applauded lustily.

“Hey, Joe!”

“Cliff!” It was Joe's glad cry. “Be right with you.”

“Howdy, kid?”

chuckled Cliff, when the slim figure in tights had reached the earth.

“Cliff, you old son-of-a-gun!” Joe flung an arm around his old friend. “It's sure swell to see you.”

“It's swell to be back.”

Joe stood away and studied him.

“You look great.”

“How do you like my new leg?” Cliff raised his peg. “Just got it.”

“Why, you're as good as new.”

“Sure I am,” grinned Cliff. “I'm itching for another shot at those cats. Think I could work 'em with one pin?”

Joe's hesitation was but momentary.

“Say, you could put those cats over the jumps in a wheel chair. C'mon, let's go and roust Bill out.”

“Just the guy I wanna see,” answered Cliff.

Hinsdale was in his office, and when Cliff and Joe entered motioned them to seats. On the floor lay a squirming figure.

“But I'm only asking five more bucks, Bill,” said the figure.

“A new clown,” whispered Joe in Cliff's ear.

“Not another dime!” cried Hinsdale.

“But I got a new gag—it's worth double. I box with myself,” replied the clown.

Cliff and Joe had to laugh as the clown proceeded to tie himself in knots and punch or kick himself in the jaw with his feet. The man did his act so realistically that he was quite dizzy when he did manage to stagger to his feet.

“Okay. You get your raise,” laughed Hinsdale, and as the clown went out all smiles turned to Ballenger.

“Hallo, Cliff! This sure is a great surprise. How are you?”

“Good as new.”

Cliff gripped the outstretched hand. “Well, it's grand seeing you again.”

Hinsdale smiled his welcome. “What are your plans, Cliff?”

“Why, I'm coming back with the

snow, of course,” Cliff answered in his gruff way.

“Sure. I can figure out something.”

“You don't need to do much figuring. I wanna work the cats again.”

“Work the cats?” Hinsdale was astonished. He shook his head. “Cliff, don't make it tough for me. Don't ask me that.”

“That's just what I am asking you, Bill,” retorted Cliff. “You know I was the best animal man in the show business.”

“Sure, Cliff—you was.”

“And I still am! Oh, I know what you're thinking—that I wouldn't have the nerve after what Satan did.”

A vigorous shake of the head by Hinsdale. “I know you've got the nerve. It ain't that; it's—well, a guy can't do a cat routine with a wooden leg.”

“Here's one guy that can!” Cliff shouted.

“Sure he can.” It was Joe. “Why the peg-leg makes the act. Think of the exploitation. Cliff Ballenger—the one-legged animal trainer. It'll be a sensation.”

“Sure, Joe's right.” Cliff pointed to his leg. “This ain't any handicap to me. I can get around as quick as I ever could—see?” It was painful to watch the big man's stumbling movements. Cliff grinned rather shamefaced. “I ain't completely used to it, but in a day or two—”

“It's no good, Cliff,” interrupted Hinsdale. “The cats'd be too quick for you.”

“No, they wouldn't!” It was a vehement denial. “Listen, Bill, I've only just got this leg—I'll get used to it. I got to have that job.”

“I'll give you another job.”

“Another job won't do. I got to come back—all the way.” Cliff came close to his old chief. “Listen, Bill! It ain't for myself I'm asking—it's for somebody else; Carl's kid. She's up against it—in gaol.” The two looked astounded. “Yeah, thought that would surprise you. Yes, and I put her there. I was the cause of Carl's death. It left her stranded, high and dry, and she had to steal.”

Carl crashed the chair down on the great cat.





"Takes more than a fire to lick me!" boasted Cliff.

"We never knew," cried Joe.

"Cliff, we'll lend her a hand," added Hinsdale.

"No, you keep outa this—both of you!" Fiercely Cliff looked at his two friends. "It's my job, and I owe it to her. It's an obligation, and I got to shoulder it. And you've got to gimme a chance to do it."

"If you went in that cage with that peg, the cats'd tear you apart."

"Bill, I ain't ever asked many favours, but I'm asking one now," pleaded Cliff hoarsely. "I want my job back. Gimme a chance to show you I still got them cats buffaloed. Because I have. The cat never lived that could get my goat. Gimme a whip—they'll work all right. And if they don't—well, you can put me to sweeping out cages, and I won't kick. What do you say? Do I get a chance?"

"You got to do it, Bill," urged Joe.

A moment's hesitation.

"Okay, Cliff, you get your chance, and if you flop I'm to hear no more of it."

"But if I pull it off?"

"You get your old job back."

Cliff squared his shoulders, and, glancing round, saw a whip on the wall. He took it down.

"Let's get going. Come on!"

Cliff, whip in hand, fairly swaggering, stumped along between Joe and Hinsdale, who was carrying a rifle. Soon they came abreast of Satan's cage.

"Hallo, Snarler!" leered Cliff.

The animal recognised the voice of the man he hated, and in a flash was on his feet. With a roar Satan hurled himself against the bars, and, in spite of himself, Cliff flinched. But the big man knew that the eyes of Hinsdale and Joe were on him, and straightened his shoulders.

"Get back there!" he roared, and crashed the whip in Satan's face. "Your turn is coming, big boy."

The three men moved down towards the big rehearsal cage, whilst Satan

snarled and flung himself against the bars of his cage.

A few sharp orders from Hinsdale and attendants brought the lions into the chutes leading into the big cage. The lions roared. Cliff gripped the whip-handle tensely.

"Okay," Cliff looked at Hinsdale.

"I'm all set."

"Cliff, are you sure you can do it?"

"Never surer in my life."

Outside the cage Hinsdale, gun ready, and Joe with a revolver, watched Cliff Ballenger open the grilled door and enter the cage. Other circus men began to crowd round.

The nine lions one after another rushed into the cage. Cliff stumped forward and cracked his whip. The lions roared their menace and turned towards him. Cliff did not hesitate, but faced them fearlessly. With expert skill his whip cracked, hurting but not harming. The lions saw those blazing eyes and backed away; they were recognising Cliff's mastery, and they began to work. Hinsdale and Joe breathed sighs of relief.

Cliff, with remarkable agility, put the lions through their paces, and Hinsdale had to admit that he had never seen the big man work the animals so well.

But Hinsdale was anxious again when Satan was loosed down the chute after the lions had been taken back to their cages. Satan sprang straight at Cliff Ballenger, but it did not seem to daunt the animal trainer, who moved to one side and lashed out with his whip. Cliff held a chair in his left hand as an extra guard. Satan sprang again, but not so fiercely, and received a flicking whip across the eyes. Snarling and spitting, the great cat rushed round the cage, trying to get an opportunity to get past that whip.

Finally, exhausted, Satan slunk into a corner, but Cliff Ballenger went after the cat.

"Come outa that, you furry rat!" he roared. "Get going!"

Cliff actually managed to make Satan, after a lot of whip-cracking, jump on to one of the stands.

"Okay, Cliff," Hinsdale called out.

"You get that job."

"Yeah, but I'll show—"

"You'll come out," raged Hinsdale.

"You can do all the showing when you got a bit more skill with that peg-leg. I ain't taking chances with a guy that's going to top the bill."

Cliff grinned at Hinsdale and Joe, and then with cunning skill drove Satan towards the chute. The tiger scurried back to his cage, spitting and snarling, but with his tail between his legs.

A Matrimonial Tangle

WHEN Laura was released from prison, Cliff Ballenger was there in the waiting-room. He took her bag and extended his hand in greeting.

"Hallo, Cliff." Her eyes showed her gratitude.

"Hallo, kid." He studied her. "You look a little peaked, but I guess a week or two of sunshine will soon fix that up. Well, come on."

"Where are we going?" she asked as the prison gates shut behind them.

"I got a little surprise for you," Cliff winked. "Now, don't ask any questions."

Cliff hailed a car, and soon they were being driven out of town. On the outskirts the car pulled up in a quiet lane, and Cliff paid off the fare. Then, taking her arm, he led her down the lane till they reached a neat, small cottage. There was a little yard, and there was grass and some flowers. He let go of her arm to point to the cottage.

"Well, how do you like it?"

"Fine!" She was puzzled.

"Of course, it ain't much." He opened the gate. "It ain't got any curtains, and the furniture ain't all it should be. It sure needs a woman's touch, and it'll be grand. Come on in." Laura thought the cottage was delightful.

"Convenient," Cliff told her. "Right near our winter quarters. You can turn this joint into a real home I can come over most days and see you."

It was some while before Laura could realise this cottage was her very own.

"Cliff, you've been grand to me." Tears streamed unashamed down her cheeks. "I don't think I could have stood this last month if it hadn't been for you."

"Aw, forget it!" he cried. "That's all done with, kid. Just act as if it never happened."

"I can't forget it, and I'm so grateful." Laura's voice broke with emotion. "I can never repay you for all you've done for me. You've given me something to live for."

Cliff Ballenger went away walking on air, because of the gratitude of this girl. To him Laura was the most wonderful girl he had ever met. Ever since the time he had seen the girl in prison he had been in love with her, and it was obvious that she liked him. She could repay him by marrying him. Cliff would not dream of suggesting such a thing, but in his frequent visits he did drop an odd hint or two about his feeling towards her.

One day he plucked up courage and asked her if she could marry an ugly looking guy with only one leg.

Frankly she confessed that she was not in love with him, though she thought him the finest man she had ever met. Did he still want to marry her?

"I'll make you learn to love me." Cliff drew her close.

"I'll try, Cliff—I'll try."
 "What more could a guy ask?" cried Cliff. "Say, we had better go along to the City Hall at once."
 "City Hall?"
 "Sure, we got to file our intention."
 "Intention?"
 "Our intention to get married," chuckled Cliff. "It's the law in California—we can't get hitched for three days. That means Thursday will be our wedding-day."

Cliff Ballenger had been very secretive about Laura Homan. The girl was pale, thin and in a highly nervous state. She was not strong enough to meet anybody, and besides, Cliff wanted the circus folk to see the girl looking her best. Moreover, it was wise to let time pass so that no mention be made of the girl having gone to prison. But after rushing Laura off to the City Hall before she had a chance to change her mind Cliff decided that he could break the news to Joe and Hinsdale.

Joe Larson was incensed when he heard the news, and finding out the address of the cottage, took it upon himself to pay a personal visit when he knew Cliff was busy with a rehearsal. It was a shock for Joe to find Carl's daughter was such a good-looker.

"I'm Joe Larson," he explained. "Maybe Cliff's mentioned my name to you?"

"You're his best friend. Won't you come inside?"

So Joe Larson entered the cottage and wondered at its neat and good taste. He explained that as he was Cliff's best friend he had come to see her because he had heard they were going to get married. Hadn't Cliff done enough for her without her wanting to marry him?

"You think I'm marrying him for his money?"

"Yes, I do," Joe told her frankly. "Cliff's a great guy. He's been darned white to you. Came back to the show to work the cats just to get dough to help you out. It ain't just the dough." Joe hesitated. "It's—well, after all, you've been in stir—you're marked."

"Yes, I'm marked." Her laughter was bitter. "But so is Cliff. That tiger marked him, and it isn't easy for a man like that to find a girl. I admit I'm not in love with him, and I told him so."

"You did?" gasped Joe. "Then just what is your idea in hooking Cliff?"

"I'm marrying Cliff because he wants me to—because anything he wants that I can give is his. You can't imagine what he has done for me. I was sunk when he came along, and he made me want to live. There's nothing I wouldn't do for a man like that, and the only thing I can do is try to make him happy. Does that answer you?"

Joe looked crestfallen.

"I guess it does."

"You're satisfied?"

"Yes."

Her eyes flashed.

"Then get out!"

"Wait a minute, kid." Joe had something of Cliff's truculence. "I'm sorry I spoke out a turn. But—well—that guy means a lot to me. They don't make many like Cliff."

"You don't have to tell me that."

Her voice was gentler.

"I'm glad you're going to marry him." Joe held out his hand. "I know now he'll be in good hands. He's a lucky guy."

"You really mean that?"

"All the way. I think you're grand, Laura."

"Thanks." She gripped his hand.

"Then we're friends."

"You bet," cried Joe heartily. "We

understand each other. Mum's the word about my coming to see you."

On the next day Cliff went with Joe to an artificial-limb store to have the final fitting of the latest and most elaborate type of cork leg. When Cliff stood up and looked down at his trousered leg he gave a great grin of delight.

"Say—that's swell. Why, nobody'd hardly know."

"Does it feel comfortable?" asked the assistant.

"So good that I don't know which is my gammy leg," beamed Cliff. "Sorry I had to rush you so much on this job, but I'm getting married to-morrow."

All the circus came to the wedding, and afterwards Cliff gave a big party at a roadhouse not far from the circus' winter quarters.

It was an ordeal for Laura. She was the centre of all eyes. She had to submit to the boisterous embrace of her husband, who would insist upon most of the circus, including the giant, kissing her. Joe was best man, and when he kissed her a strange thrill went through Laura, and they stared at each other as if they were finding out something for the first time. Cliff was not a man given to continual drinking, but he enjoyed a binge. A good "blind-o" was good fun once a month, and as Cliff had missed several months through his injuries, he made up for it that day. Joe Larson and Laura took Cliff home in a taxi, and between them they carried the big man into the cottage. They dumped him like a sack of coals on the bed, and stared down at the inanimate figure.

"You take it easy," Joe tried to push her away. "I'll take care of him. He doesn't get this way very often. It's just that he's feeling especially happy to-night."

"I'm not blaming Cliff. I want him to be happy." Unexpectedly, she buried her face in her hands. "Oh, Joe, I can't stand it."

"Laura."

"I thought I could, but I just can't."

"He'll be okay to-morrow."

She looked at him through tears. "There'll be to-morrow and the days after. Oh, Joe, I can't go through with it. I hoped I could love him—I want to—but I can't. What shall I do, Joe?"

"Laura, it's too late now." Joe laid a comforting hand on her shoulder. "I know you married Cliff to try and pay him back for all the kindness he had shown you, and I can understand that to-night has been a bit of a shock for a sensitive girl like you. But you mustn't forget that we've all got our faults, and Cliff is a swell guy at heart. We gotta do our best for him. Try, Laura."

"Yes, Joe, I'll try," sobbed the girl.

Joe gave her shoulder a reassuring squeeze and then moved on tiptoe to the door.

"Let him sleep it off. He'll be okay in the morning. Good-night."

"Good-night!" Laura whispered sadly, and there was a yearning look in the brown eyes.

Cliff woke in the morning feeling pretty shaky and very apologetic. He apologised so much that Laura got tired of saying that she did not mind him getting a little merry once in a while.

He had a cold bath and announced that he felt as fit as a fiddle. That day was the last day of winter quarters. Hinsdale had sent round a notice that directly after the night rehearsal the show would break camp, and that the circus train would leave promptly at midnight. Everybody to be aboard by eleven forty-five.

No wives were allowed on the tour, which was going to last six months. The Clark-Hinsdale show was not only touring America, but going to Europe. Wives would have been a nuisance and an expense. Cliff would not have taken Laura if wives had been allowed, because she was still far from fit.



"Get him out," rapped out Cliff, "while I keep Satan off!"

Laura hated to admit the fact, but it was a great relief to think that she would not see her husband for six months.

"Best of luck, Cliff," she said at the station. "You won't forget to write, will you?"

"Write?" Cliff spoke sharply, then remembering himself, gave a great grin. "Oh, sure I'll write."

Laura had no idea that her husband could not read or write. She had to smile and look happy when he kissed her effusively.

Over her head Cliff suddenly spotted a slim figure.

"Hey, Joe!" he called. "Come here!"

Joe Larson did not look at Laura as he pushed his way through the crowd.

"Say, you weren't leaving without saying good-bye to Laura?"

"Why—no—I—of course not," stammered Joe. "Good-bye."

"Good-bye, Joe." They shook hands and their eyes met in a lingering glance.

"All aboard!" came the warning shout.

"Well, so long, honey," bellowed Cliff. "We'll be back in October, and we wanna see you strong enough to wrestle an elephant—eh, Joe?"

"You bet," cried Joe, forcing a smile.

Laura waved her handkerchief as the train moved slowly from the station. Her husband and the man she knew she loved waved back.

Through the Flames

ALMOST six months later the circus train was heading for Los Angeles. It was a hot night, and two men sat in their shirtsleeves at a small table in their own private compartment. Cliff and Joe had bunked together all the trip.

Cliff was sprawled back, staring out at the moonlit scenery as it flitted past, whilst Joe leaned over the table, busy with pen and paper.

"And in all we had a pretty good season," Cliff dictated. He gave a throaty chuckle. "And here's the part I like." Joe looked up. "Just say: 'And Laura darling, I got good news for you. We make just one more two-day show, and then we head for home. I'm sure dying to see you, and hold you in my arms—'" He paused, and when Joe glanced at him. "That sound too mushy?"

"I don't see why. She's your wife."

"Sure." Cliff gave a decisive nod. "Expect us Saturday afternoon—we'll be looking for your face." Guess that'll be all, Joe. Just finish it with 'Love and kisses, your Cliff.'"

"Okay."

"Oh, and add to that," Cliff suddenly cried: "P.S. Joe sends his love, too."

Joe hesitated before he added the postscript.

The circus had their own siding station, which was specially reserved for them during the winter months, and on the Saturday afternoon Clark and Hinsdale's combined shows pulled in on time. A crowd of people, mostly women and children, the wives, families and sweethearts of the circus folk, shouted their welcome as the circus train steamed into the platform. The front cars carried the animals and the circus equipment.

Laura was there to meet the train. She looked the picture of health. She was simply but becomingly dressed.

The train jolted to a stop, and instantly there was a wild rush forward by the women. On the steps of one car

stood two men, Joe in front, with Cliff peering over his shoulder.

"There she is!" Cliff pointed. "Laura!"

As Cliff drew his wife close to him and kissed her clumsily he kept one hand behind his back.

"Honey, you sure look swell." Cliff pushed her away to look at her. Then from behind his back he produced a small cage. "C'mere, Oscar. Meet your mamma. Laura, this is Oscar." Laura stared at a tiny tiger cub that spat and snarled. "Take him—he's a coming-home present."

"He is kind of cute," Laura murmured doubtfully.

"So are you, honey. You look a million dollars. Don't she, Joe?"

The two young people solemnly eyed each other, trying to read what each was thinking.

"She sure looks great," mumbled Joe.

"Hallo, Joe." Laura shook his hand. "You don't look so bad yourself."

Cliff suddenly linked arms with Laura and Joe.

"Come on, let's get outa this mush and get home. You, too, Joe—we're gonna celebrate."

Joe tried in vain to free himself from that mighty grip.

"I got a date in 'Frisco," he spluttered.

"That can wait." Cliff brushed the excuse to one side. "Don't argue—you're staying with us. At least, for the week-end. We won't take no for an answer, will we, Laura?"

"We'd love to have you, Joe." "Well, if I won't be in the way," Joe felt like some poor, trapped creature.

"Listen to him," bellowed Cliff. "In the way! Haw, haw! In the way indeed! Come on!" He began to propel them forward.

Joe had hoped that in the six months he could have banished Laura from his mind, but he found that he loved her more than ever, and it did not help matters to find that Laura felt just the same about himself. Cliff was so happy and proud of his wife; they both liked him so much that they had to suppress their own emotions. Joe tried very hard to find excuses to go and live somewhere else, but Cliff got so huffy and offended that Joe gave up the struggle.

One night Joe could not stand it any longer. The unhappiness that he saw in Laura's eyes was more than he could endure.

"I can't stay on here for ever, Cliff," Joe said over a glass of brandy. "I'm not outstaying my welcome for anyone, and besides, I'm thinking of heading East."

"East? What for?" growled Cliff.

"I'm thinking of hooking up with Brown Brothers next season."

"You're leaving this show?" Cliff could not believe his ears.

"Yeah." Joe could not look at Cliff. "Eight years in one outfit's a long hitch."

"Say, what is this?" Cliff stared closely at his friend. "I bet a woman's at the bottom of it."

"Women don't mean a thing to me," Joe answered, with an apologetic glance at the white-faced Laura. "You know that."

"What's the trouble then? You've been my side-kick for eight years."

"You won't be lonely—you got Laura." Joe shrugged his shoulders. "I got that wanderlust feeling on me. Maybe I'll just take one season with Brown Brothers, and that'll make me want to get back here."

Cliff argued and argued, but Joe was

very stubborn, and they were still at it when a sound made them look up. It was the distant wail of fire-engines. Laura ran to the window.

"I can see flames!" she cried. Cliff was on his feet and at the window.

"It's our winter quarters!" he gasped out. "Joe, we gotta make it quick!"

The fire was blazing furiously when the two panting men arrived on the scene. Uniformed firemen were directing streams of water on the burning animal-shed. The circus crew were working frantically to get the animals out. Several cages of lions, elephants, leopards, and monkeys had already been pulled out of the burning building. There was a pandemonium of noise. The police were keeping back the fast-gathering crowd. Bill Hinsdale, smoke-begrimed, appeared with a number of men—another cage of lions saved.

"Did you get 'em all out?" demanded Cliff.

"All but a couple of leopards and the big tiger!" panted Hinsdale.

"Satan?"

"Yeah. 'Fraid they're goners. Like a blow-torch in there."

"We got to get that tiger out!" Cliff turned to some of the men. "Hey, you—and you—you, too—come on!"

"Don't be foolish, Cliff," warned Hinsdale.

Cliff made no answer, but piloted his men towards the flaming building. Joe ran up and caught his arm.

"Don't be a sap, Cliff. It's an inferno in there."

"Think I'm going to let a fire lick that cat?—That's my job!" Cliff rasped out. "C'mon!"

Cliff Ballenger dashed into the flames. The men hesitated to follow, but Joe plunged after the animal trainer. And Laura, who had followed the two men to the scene of the fire was in time to see him vanish in the flames.

"Joe!" she screamed.

In the blazing building the tiger's cage was surrounded by leaping flames. Satan, mad with fright, was pounding against the bars. Cliff, three of the volunteers, and Joe made their way to the cage. They gripped the woodwork that blistered their hands and pushed. The cage started to move on its wheels. The flames seemed to sweep down as if angry at anyone trying to rob them of their prey.

Through the smoke and fire the five men propelled the cage towards the door. The roars of the frightened animal blended with the increasing tumult of the fire. The men gasped and choked. The rafters of the building fell all around them. Joe was straining with all his might against one side of the cage when a heavy rafter fell on his shoulders and knocked him away from the cage. Neither Cliff nor the other men noticed.

What a shout went up when out of the smoke and flame came the cage with its blackened heroes. Men rushed forward to relieve them of their task, but Cliff would not leave the cage until it was out of range of the flames. He leant against the bars dazedly wiping his forehead.

Laura and Hinsdale hurried to his side.

"Are you all right?" asked the owner.

"Yeah, takes more than a fire to lick me!" bragged Cliff.

The girl looked round wildly. "Where's Joe?"

"Joe! Ain't he here?" Cliff cried.

"He was with us!" gasped one of the helpers. "But he ain't now. Maybe he didn't make it."

(Continued on page 28)

Having acquired the controlling interest in the Eureka Discovery Corporation for five hundred dollars, and sold half of it to a detective for two hundred dollars, Bob Harvey sets off with his new partner to find the buried treasure of San Capello—with very strange consequences. A first-rate yarn of high adventure, starring Richard Arlen and Cecilia Parker

"The MINE with the IRON DOOR"



Pitkin Makes an Offer

THE offices of the Eureka Discovery Corporation consisted of two rooms on the fifteenth floor of a skyscraper at the lower end of Broadway, not very far from famous Wall Street, and they adjoined one another, possessing a communicating door between them and separate doors opening on to a wide corridor.

At a desk in the room which bore the word "Private" on the ground-glass panel of its outer door, James Horace Pitkin was signing share certificates purchased by glib members of the general public.

He was president of the corporation which he himself had created, and a full-bodied president at that, tipping the scale at thirteen stone eight and filling the chair of carved oak and cane in which he was seated. His greying hair was brushed well back from a more or less noble brow, and his thick neck bulged over the edge of his collar.

The fountain-pen in his hand splashed ink upon one of the certificates, and he had just screwed up the printed sheet of paper and flung it into a wastepaper basket when Bob Harvey walked in upon him from the other room, which formed the general office.

Bob was young, good-looking, and determined. He had waved aside Pitkin's attractive girl secretary, who would have intercepted him, to enter unannounced.

"Hallo, Mr. Pitkin," he said briskly, closing the communicating door behind him with a bang.

Pitkin looked up from the pile of share certificates as yet unsigned, put

down the refractory fountain-pen, and summoned a feeble smile.

"Ah, good-morning," he returned with an utter lack of heartiness.

"Sorry to keep pestering you," said Bob, walking over to the desk and presenting a legal-looking document, "but I've got to collect the balance due on your car."

"Isn't that paid yet?" exclaimed Pitkin with a wholly unconvincing air of surprise, and he took the document and frowned at it. "Seems perfectly correct."

He wrote on a slip of paper which he tore from a scribbling-pad, and he handed the slip to Bob in company with the document.

"There," he said, "you just leave that with Miss Dailey on your way out."

Bob pocketed the document, but rejected the slip.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Pitkin," he said with a grimace, "but I've been doing that for the past three months."

"Three months?" The president of the Eureka Discovery Corporation affected intense surprise. "Is it that long?"

"Yeah," Bob replied unhappily, "and it looks like the company's going to stick me with the non-payments."

"Oh, my boy, of course we couldn't have that! I—I'm really sorry for this delay, but, of course, launching a company such as this one has taken all my available funds. You can understand that."

"Yeah, sure," began Bob dismally, "but—"

The bell of a telephone on the desk

interrupted him stridently, and Pitkin reached across to the instrument.

"Oh, pardon me!" he said, and then: "Hallo! What? Who? Oh, go ahead!"

An expression of alarm, which was in no way assumed, spread over his very full face as he listened to what a man in a telephone-box had to say to him.

"Well, well, that's very distressing," he gulped. "Are you sure it's serious?"

"I'll say it's serious," was the emphatic reply. "He claims that you're using the money for yourself instead of the company. I think they're wise that the whole thing is a fake. Anyway, they're sending a dick up after you!"

"Oh!" Pitkin's flabby cheeks lost their habitual colour. "Well, then, maybe I'd better leave at once. Thank you—thank you very much. I—I really appreciate your calling me up. Yes, I'll take the first train."

He put down the telephone and mopped his brow with a handkerchief.

"Bad news?" inquired Bob.

"Yes, very." Pitkin looked at him in a strained fashion. "My wife. She—she's been taken suddenly ill in Memphis. That was a long-distance call from the hospital."

"Gee!" exclaimed Bob sympathetically. "I'm sorry to hear that!"

"It's very awkward, coming at a time like this." Pitkin put away the handkerchief and stood up. "Of course I—I'll have to go right on there at once. I'm afraid I'll have to give the car back to the company."

"Oh, I wouldn't like to see you lose what you've already paid on it, Mr.

Pitkin," said Bob. "Maybe I could get you an extension."

"Thank you, Harvey. That's very kind of you, and I appreciate it. Say, how would you like to make a lot of money?"

"Who, me?"

Pitkin nodded.

"Would you be interested in searching for a buried treasure?"

"Eh?" Bob blinked. "I should say not!"

"Well, real estate, maybe?"

"No, I—I don't know anything about that."

It seemed to Bob that the bad news must have upset Pitkin's mental balance, as well as his nerves, and he turned to go. But Pitkin swept round the desk and caught hold of his arm.

"Wait a minute!" he said, almost imploringly. "My wife's got to have a very expensive operation, and I must dispose of my holdings in this company in order to pay for it. Here! Come over here a minute!"

He led Bob to a framed map of Arizona, which occupied a prominent position on one of the walls of the room.

"Do you see that?" he asked, pointing to a portion of the map round which a red line had been drawn. "This Corporation owns all of that land—five thousand acres of it! Now I'm willing to sell the controlling interest at a very nominal figure. Why don't you pick it up?"

"Who, me?" gasped Bob.

"Yes, you! Think of what you're getting, my boy! Do you know anything about Arizona?"

"No, I don't."

"Ah, but you should, you should! It's the garden spot of the Union! Now come here, my boy!"

Bob was whisked away from the map to the desk and pushed down into the chair of carved oak and cane behind the desk.

"Let me give you a little fatherly advice," said Pitkin impressively. "Harvey, the basis of all wealth is real estate. Every successful man in this country has started out by owning land. You can't lose on that, Harvey—and I need the money. Some day you'll thank me!"

"Yeah," protested Bob, "but even if I wanted to invest I couldn't. All I've got to my name is five hundred bucks!"

Pitkin sighed, but was desperate.

"Harvey," he said, "under no other circumstances would I part with such valuable property for so foolish a sum, but I need the money—I must get to my wife!"

Dempsey Becomes Excited

HALF-WAY along the broad corridor in which the offices of the Eureka Discovery Corporation were situated the gate of a lift was opened, and a man in a dark suit and a bowler hat stepped forth from the cage and looked about him.

He was an inch taller than James Horace Pitkin, and considerably more than a stone heavier, but he was less bulky. His face was clean-shaven and ugly; his lips were thick, and his nose was widespread and not a good shape. He might have been a prize-fighter or a low comedian, but he happened to be neither, although his name was Dempsey.

He reached the door of Pitkin's private office, hesitated there for a few moments, then plunged into the room that adjoined it.

"Is Mr. Pitkin in?" he demanded gruffly of the very attractive secretary who looked up at him from her desk.

"Whom shall I say is calling?" she asked, half-rising from her chair.

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"Hi, don't try nothin' o' that!" he rapped at her, and from his coat-pocket produced a metal shield at which she stared with horrified eyes. "Where is he?"

"That's his office," she replied, and pointed to the communicating door.

The metal shield was thrust back into the pocket from which it had been removed so dramatically, and Howard Dempsey burst into the other room.

Bob was sitting in the chair of carved oak and cane, smoking a cigarette and trying to realise exactly what had happened in the last few minutes. There was nobody else in the room, and Dempsey advanced towards him, stabbing the air with a finger.

"Hi, are you the head of this layout?" he barked.

Bob dropped the end of his cigarette in an ash-tray before he answered, then:

"Yeah," he said slowly. "Yeah, I guess I am. What can I do for you?"

"You can take a walk with me down to the District Attorney's office!"

"The District Attorney's office?" Bob stared blankly at his visitor. "What for?"

"For selling phoney stock!" snapped Dempsey. "Get your hat!"

Bob's hat was on the desk, but he did not touch it.

"Wait a minute!" he expostulated. "I—I didn't sell any stock—I just bought some!"

Dempsey strode round to him.

"Who are you tryin' to kid, Pitkin?" he jeered.

"My name isn't Pitkin," protested Bob. "It's Harvey."

"Harvey?" The detective repeated the name incredulously. "Well, what're you doin' in this office, then?"

"I just bought Pitkin out."

"You bought Pitkin out?"

"Yeah."

Pitkin who had left his office by way of the door that opened on to the corridor and fled down fifteen flights of stairs while the cage of the lift was ascending with Dempsey, was at that moment cashing Bob's cheque for five hundred dollars in a Broadway bank. Dempsey, confronted with the counterfoil of the cheque and a transfer of the controlling interest in the Eureka Discovery Corporation to Robert Harvey, became convinced that a clever crook had taken advantage of yet another victim.

He permitted Bob to conduct him to the map on the wall.

"I don't know why I did it," confessed the purchaser, "but it's land, and how can I lose? There it is! Five thousand acres of virgin soil in sun-drenched Arizona! Say, you know, it's pretty cheap at that!"

"You're loony!" quoth Dempsey with a pitying chuckle. "What's it good for?"

"Eh?" Bob hadn't thought about that. "I'll find out."

He went back to the desk, and by means of a dictaphone which stood upon it he summoned Miss Dailey, who entered with a notebook in one hand and a pencil in the other, a puzzled expression upon her beautiful face as she looked in vain for the man who owed her several weeks' salary.

"Oh, Miss Dailey," said Bob, holding out his hand, "shake with your new boss."

"New boss?" Miss Dailey was obviously bewildered.

"Yeah, I just bought Pitkin out."

"You bought Mr. Pitkin out?"

"Uhuh."

"Well, where is he?"

"He's gone home to be with his sick wife."

"Sick wife?" Miss Dailey seemed to be more bewildered than ever. "Why, I didn't know Mr. Pitkin was married!"

Dempsey gave vent to a derisive laugh, and Bob abandoned the sick wife, ceasing to believe in her existence. He pointed to the map.

"Can you tell us what that Arizona property is good for?" he asked.

"What do you mean by 'good for'?" Miss Dailey challenged.

"What kind of a game was Pitkin running?"

She frowned severely at him.

"Well, I don't know what you're talking about," she said, "but Mr. Pitkin believed that the mine with the iron door was located on that property, and he was raising funds to find it."

"The mine with the iron door?" echoed Bob. "What kind of a racket is that?"

Dempsey had picked up an illustrated pamphlet which was lying on the desk and had sat down in the chair to study it.

"Listen here," he said. "The mine with the iron door! To the average man this means nothing, but to the smart investor it means the treasure of San Capello, more than a king's ransom."

Miss Dailey smiled; Bob leaned over the back of the chair, staring down at pictures of the property he had partly acquired, while the detective epitomised the rest of the printed matter in the pamphlet:

"Millions in gold—buried by the monks of the old Spanish mission. This is not a legend, it's authentic. Records prove it. For three hundred years the treasure has lain buried in the mountains of Arizona. The Eureka Discovery Corporation will find it."

Bob turned to the girl beside him.

"You mean to say that people bought stock in a phoney proposition like that?" he exclaimed disgustedly.

"There's nothing phoney about the mine!" she retorted. "Why, I bought ninety dollars' worth of stock myself!"

"I'm sorry, Miss Dailey," said Bob, "but you may just as well kiss your ninety bucks good-bye."

"You mean the search for the mine is off?" she asked blankly.

"So far as I'm concerned it is," he declared. "And I've lost five hundred bucks!"

Howard Dempsey rose up with the illustrated pamphlet in his hands and a strange expression on his face.

"Say, I wonder how much dough them monks planted down there, anyway?" he said in an awed voice.

"Don't tell me you're going for that hooey!" scoffed Bob.

"Well, I don't know," mused the detective. "It just goes to show you. Here's a guy like Pitkin, taking a load of money from suckers, but if I'd been him I'd have taken a chance and gone down there and looked for it myself. Just think if he'd found it!"

Bob laughed with scorn.

"I'll tell you what I'll do with you," he said. "I'll sell you the whole thing for five hundred bucks, and you go look for it!"

"Why don't you do it?" suggested Miss Dailey.

"Yeah, why don't I do it?" Bob reached for his hat and rammed it on his head. "Why don't I?"

"Aw, wait a minute!" growled Dempsey. "There might be something to it! If I had five hundred bucks I believe I might buy you out!"

"Yeah?" derided Bob. "Who's loony now?"

"Well," challenged Dempsey, "it

ain't any worse than lookin' for oil, is it?"

"Mr. Pitkin did a lot of research work concerning the treasure," stated Miss Dailey. "Why, we have letters from Professor Turner, of Stanford University, and he's an authority on early American missions."

"Gee," breathed Dempsey, "I wish I had five hundred bucks!"

"How much have you got?" asked Bob.

"Oh, I gotta couple o' hundred," was the reply.

"All right—I'll sell you a half-interest for two hundred dollars."

"Eh?" Dempsey looked up from a document Miss Dailey had handed him from a drawer on the desk. "You will? Good!" He scanned a paragraph or two of the document and his brown eyes widened. "Gee, millions in gold!"

"What?" cried Bob, bounding over to him. "Let me have a look at that!"

He possessed himself of the document and studied it, while Miss Dailey opened the door of a safe.

"You know, people do find a lot of things," said the excited detective. "Look at all that stuff they dug up in Egypt! And I know a guy who was digging a well, one time, and he dug up a pot of gold! So, you see, it ain't so crazy at that!"

"Mr. Pitkin bought the property from an old Spanish family," said Miss Dailey, and she returned from the safe with an imposing-looking deed written on parchment and decorated with seals.

"See?" exulted Dempsey. "They got records and everything! Hi, I gotta hunch! Let's go down there together and try to find it!"

But Bob was not altogether satisfied, in spite of the secretary's faith and the evidence she produced.

"If there was anything to it, why did Pitkin run out on it?" he wanted to know.

"Aw, did you ever see a crook that done anything right?" Dempsey retorted. "Besides, it wouldn't cost much. I'll give you the two hundred bucks for the half-interest, and that'll pretty nearly cover our expenses."

Bob was tempted. After all, he had acquired the controlling interest in the corporation and it would be an adventure. But he knew nothing of the detective who wanted to be his partner.

"Are you on the level?" he asked dubiously.

"Sure!" boomed Dempsey with undisguised eagerness. "I'm a good sport."

A Change of Raiment

TEN days later a long train drew up beside a railway platform that seemed to be miles from anywhere in particular, and Bob and Dempsey stepped down from it, Bob carrying a suitcase and Dempsey a bag. They had burned their boats, or in other words, had given up their respective jobs to search for buried treasure.

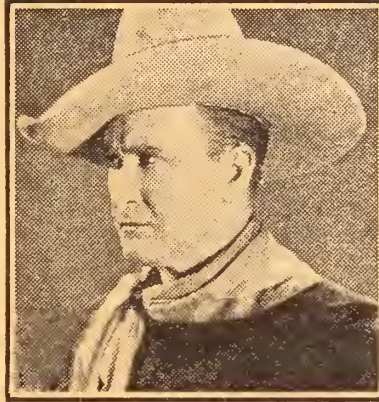
A long board supported on two posts proclaimed the station to be that of Ralston, Arizona, but there was no sign of a house in the landscape. Bob raised his head and sniffed appreciatively as the train steamed off and left them behind.

"Smell that air, will you?" he said. "Makes you feel like living, doesn't it?"

"Yeah," said Dempsey, frowning at the waste of sandy scrub on either side of the track. "But where's the town?"

Away in the distance, towards the west, trees were visible. From the

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station a dusty road stretched towards the trees.

"Over there, I guess," Bob replied. "There was no one about to guide them, so they trudged off along the road. The sun blazed down upon them, and they were glad to reach the trees;

but even after the trees had been reached there was still a full mile to go to the little town of Ralston.

They took it in turns to carry the suitcase and the bag, and Dempsey was carrying them when a typical Western main street of frame-buildings and boardwalks loomed up ahead.

"You better keep it dark what we're down here for," he said warningly. "If you don't, we're gonna have a mob trailing after us. And don't say a word about the mine with the iron door!"

A blacksmith's shop was reached and passed, and suddenly Bob burst out laughing.

"What's the matter?" demanded his companion.

Bob pointed mutely to a sign on the window of a shop: "Iron Door Radio Shoppe. Gifts."

"Aw, that's nothing!" growled Dempsey. But adjoining the radio "shoppe" was an "Iron Door Delicatessen," and on the other side of the street was a store with a balcony over its entrance and a board on the front of the balcony upon which was painted in large letters: "The Treasure Hunters' Supply Company. Expeditions outfitted. Embalming and Undertaking."

Dempsey blinked at that sign; the suggestion seemed to be that the treasure hunters died.

"Maybe it is a little over-advertised," he growled, "but if that mine's down here we're gonna find it!"

"Yeah," said Bob, and added in quite a scornful voice: "Genius!"

A little farther along the street they came to a garage outside which a moon-faced old fellow was lolling in a wooden armchair with a pipe in his mouth. He was in his shirtsleeves, his waistcoat was unfastened, and a broad-brimmed hat shielded his eyes from the sun.

"Howdy?" said he, removing the pipe from his mouth.

"Howdy?" returned Bob. "Can we rent a car here?"

"Sure." The proprietor of the garage stood up. "How long d'you want it?"

"Well," said Bob, "that all depends." He took from a pocket the pamphlet issued by the Eureka Discovery Corporation and exhibited the map which occupied its two centre pages. "Do you know where this property is?"

One glance at the map was sufficient for the garage man.

"Yeah," he replied. "That's down in Monk's Canyon."

"Well, that's where I want to go," said Bob.

"Yeah, me, too," chimed in Dempsey. "Then you won't want no car!"

"Why not?" asked Bob in surprise. "How far is it?"

"About twenty-five miles."

"What do you mean, we won't need a car?" demanded Dempsey, who was already tired of walking. "How are we gonna get there?"

"Walk," was the reply, and the garage man looked down at two pairs of shoes wholly unsuitable for the wilds of sun-drenched Arizona. "Huh!"

The grunt was caused, doubtless, by Dempsey's comic expression of dismay, coupled with disapproval of the city clothes the two would-be customers were wearing.

"Well, that's the only way you can get there," declared the man, puffing at his pipe. "There ain't no road that a car can get over. You'll just have to get yourselves a couple o' pack burros and a campin' outfit, and hoof it. You're lookin' for the mine with the iron door, ain't cha?"

Dempsey gaped at him.

"Who told you?" he gasped.

"Well, what else would a couple tenderfeet be wantin' to go out to Monk's Canyon for?"

Bob felt inclined to laugh, though it was no laughing matter.

"Say, is there any truth in that story?" he asked.

A slow grin spread over the wide countenance of the garage man.

"Well," he drawled, "a lot of people think there is. I go out there, now an' then, and kinda take a look myself."

"Are you serious?" Bob was astounded.

"To walk twenty-five miles," said the garage man emphatically, "a fella's got to be serious."

"Did you ever find any trace of it?" asked Dempsey with considerable anxiety.

"No." The garage man shook his head. "But that ain't no sign it ain't there. Say, d'you wanna buy a map?"

"What good is a map?" growled Bob.

"That won't tell us where it is."

"No, but it'll tell you where it ain't!"

The garage man disappeared into a little wooden office and returned with a map which Bob bought for twenty-five cents although he didn't want it. Useful advice was thrown in free of charge, however, and the two partners then repaired to the balconied establishment of the Treasure Hunters' Supply Company.

From that establishment Bob emerged without any great delay comfortably attired in a loose shirt with pockets, riding breeches, a grey sombrero, and high boots. Dempsey, who had gone all cowboy in his ideas of suitable raiment, was still picking and choosing, so Bob went off to acquire two pack-donkeys of the type known as "burros."

He returned with them to the Treasure Hunters' Supply Company's premises and was loading them with part of the burden they were to carry when Dempsey came out on to the veranda under the balcony looking like a cowboy out of a comic opera.

High-heeled boots were on his feet, a ten-gallon hat was on his head, a decorated belt was round his waist—if it could be called a waist—and not even Solomon, in all his glory, had ever been arrayed in such a shirt as he had chosen. It was covered with spots—spots of all sorts and sizes and all sorts of colours—and it was a shirt which no one had dreamed of buying till he had clapped eyes on it.

With the spotted shirt went a spotted neckerchief, and the only thing that Dempsey lacked in all his gorgeous outfit were chaps. His trousers were unadorned, and almost sombre by comparison with the shirt.

"Well, how am I doing?" he asked proudly, executing a pirouette upon the boards of the veranda.

"Great!" declared Bob; and Dempsey became aware of the two donkeys.

"Say, where did you get them two bureaus?" he inquired.

"Around the corner at the Mine with the Iron Door Stables," Bob replied. "That one's Rose, and this is Rebecca. Rebecca is yours."

Rebecca was white and the more attractive of the two animals in appearance, but when Dempsey endeavoured to pat her head she made a nasty noise at him.

"How are you?" said Dempsey.

The nasty noise was repeated, and the placid grey Rose glanced round to see what it was all about—and joined in the chorus.

"Say, I don't think me and Rebecca's gonna get along," complained Dempsey.

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"Can she help it if she's got a sense of humour?" laughed Bob.

Dempsey picked up some packages containing oddments suitable for camping.

"Aw, well," he said, "we'll see it her sense of humour holds up under all this junk!"

A Tiring Journey

THE way to Monk's Canyon, according to the map in the pamphlet and the map acquired from the garage man, stretched uphill to the south-east of Ralston. For some little way the two partners plodded along in the dust of a very rough road with their two burros, a sandy waste, littered with scrub on either side of them. Then the road became a mere track, ascending steeply to rocky regions.

Upwards they progressed slowly, under a very hot sun, and trees became scarce and boulders of shale and sandstone numerous. All around them were mountains, scarred by dry gullies, pierced by the beds of dried-up streams, and here and there a stretch of sunken desert became visible, and here and there a pine wood; but there was no comfort among the rocks, and very little shade, and Dempsey found his newly acquired garments quite as irksome as the double-breasted suit and bowler hat he had discarded, and the high boots none too easy on his feet.

"Say, how far d'you think we've come?" he asked dismally, as Bob stopped his donkey and sat down on a rock.

"About ten miles," decided Bob.

"You mean to say we've got fifteen miles more o' this?" Dempsey took off his cow-hat and mopped his streaming brow with a bandanna almost more gaily coloured than his shirt. "Oh, and my feet are killing me already!"

"You must have made a swell cop!" jeered Bob.

Dempsey ignored that insult, surveyed with gloom the unfriendly expanse of scenery in which not a single chimney smoked nor any human being moved, and had it in his mind to abandon the quest of untold wealth then and there.

"Say, d'you know what I was thinking?" he said, licking his dry lips and taking off one of his boots. "If there's a lot o' people come up here to look for this mine and they never find it—"

"That makes it all the better for us," Bob completed for him.

"Huh?" Dempsey looked startled.

"The more people who've come up here to look for the mine and haven't found it," expounded Bob, "the better off we are. Look, we'll figure it out in mathematics. Let 'x' equal the number of people who have searched for it in vain—"

"What are you talking about?"

"I'm trying to figure it out in algebra."

"Aw, well you needn't mind about that. It's gonna be tough enough as it is, without any algebra."

They went on again after a while, following the narrow and winding trail that led up towards the sky-line, and sometimes, where the way was very steep among the rocks, the loaded donkeys stopped short and had to be coaxed, or tugged, into fresh activity.

"Come on, sweetheart, put some fire in it!" Bob urged on one such occasion, spanking the grey Rose with the flat of his hand. "You can make it if I can! That's a good girl! Watch me, and you'll be a mountain climber. Come on!"

Rose yielded to his blandishments, but Rebecca was more fractious and Dempsey's methods were rougher. Just

below a sort of tableland of bush-strewn sand the animal tried to turn about instead of climbing bare rock, and Dempsey used a stick upon her.

"Get up there, you rat!" he shouted.

Rebecca defied him in spite of the stick, and he tried to pull her up over the rock, but she jerked her head so violently that he lost his balance and sat down with a thud. Bob looked back and laughed, and Dempsey rose up in anger.

"All right, stay there!" he howled at the donkey, and turned his back on her and climbed up to Bob; whereupon Rebecca uttered complaining noises at being left behind and scrambled up after him.

The going was easier on the butte, and from it there was a slight descent to a great stretch of high grassland. In the distance were trees and a stream. Dempsey could hardly believe his eyes.

"Hi, Bob, is that water over there?" he cried. "Or is it another one o' them marriages?"

Bob did not trouble to correct his mispronunciation of the word "mirages."

"That's water all right," he replied.

"Oh, wait till I dunk my dogs in that drink!" Dempsey caught hold of Rebecca's bridle. "Come on, baby, come on!"

The river was reached, and with a whoop of joy he squatted on its bank and plunged his feet into the water, boots and all. The two burros drank and munched herbage. Time passed, and then Bob—who had bared his own feet to batho them—relaced his boots and stood up.

"How do you feel?" he inquired.

Dempsey gurgled and splashed.

"Say, this is a great country!" he declared.

"Well, don't get too comfortable," said Bob.

"No?"

"No! See that peak over there?"

Dempsey looked in the direction indicated by a pointing finger and nodded. The peak looked very high and a long way off.

"Well, we've got to get to that by nightfall!"

"Aw, no we don't!" objected Dempsey. "This is where I was going! This is the best place I've struck yet!"

"Don't tell me you're going to weaken now," chided Bob. "Think of Rockefeller—think of Henry Ford! D'you suppose they'd give up at a time like this?"

"They would if their feet were as sore as mine," said Dempsey; but he rose and went back to Rebecca, and the journey was resumed.

It continued all through the hot afternoon, along the bank of the river, but the peak still seemed remote when the sun sank down behind the mountains and the light faded. By that time they had come to a little patch of stunted oaks, and the grass near the oaks was very green.

"Say, how about campin' right here?" suggested Dempsey. "Look, nice and roomy with plenty o' running water—and, you know, that treasure could be right here as well as any place else."

Bob stopped his burro and surveyed the spot, then began to sniff.

"What's the matter?" Dempsey asked. "You got a cold?"

"I smell ham!" said Bob.

"Ham?" Dempsey sniffed prodigiously. "Say, that is ham, isn't it? Yeah, it is ham!"

They moved on past the oaks, and they stared in astonishment at the first human habitation they had seen since

the town of Ralston had been left behind. It was a cabin, built mainly of wood, with a thatched roof, and there was a wide porch in front of it.

"Boy, ain't bad, eh?" said Dempsey, sniffing again.

"Looks like home to me," said Bob.

"D'you think we'll be welcome?"

"We'll soon find out!"

Bob stepped on to the porch and knocked at the front door with his fist, and presently the door was opened by an old fellow who blinked at him and at Dempsey through the lenses of steel-rimmed spectacles. Close beside him stood another man, thin of body and thin and lined of face, and it was he who was the first to speak.

"Good-evening," he said rather stiffly.

"Good-evening," said Bob.

The appetising odour of frying ham was stronger than ever. Dempsey stared into what was evidently a living-room, meagrely furnished, and saw a table set for a meal.

"Come in, folks, come in," welcomed the opener of the door, pulling down his spectacles to view the visitors over the top of the steel rims.

Rebecca tried to follow Dempsey into the room, but was driven away.

"My name's Harvey," said Bob.

"Robert Harvey."

"My name's Thad Hill," returned the old fellow, and shook hands. "How are you, Mr. Harvey? This is Dr. Burton."

The thin-faced man, with his mane of grey hair, received Bob's greeting in silence. Dempsey beamed at him when he was introduced, but all he got for the beam was a stiff little bow.

Through an open doorway at the side of the room a girl in a check frock appeared, her face flushed from bending over a stove.

"The supper's read—" she began, and broke off at the sight of the two strangers.

"Oh, this is my granddaughter,

Marta," said Thad Hill. "Marta, this is Mr. Harvey, and this is Mr. Dempsey."

Marta smiled at Bob, who immediately decided that she was the most beautiful girl he had ever seen. Her hair was a little darker than gold, her eyes were hazel and very bright. Dr. Burton stepped back as she wiped a hand on the pinafore tied over her frock and offered it to Bob and Dempsey in turn.

"Have you folks eaten?" inquired her grandfather hospitably.

Bob hesitated, but Dempsey was far too hungry to have any scruples.

"We have not," he said emphatically. "Then pull up some chairs and sit right down!"

"I'm afraid we're intruding," Bob demurred, addressing the girl.

"Oh, not at all!" she responded, almost eagerly. "I mean we're glad to have you."

Dr. Burton tugged at his clipped moustache and frowned.

"I'll get some plates," she added, and disappeared into the kitchen while Dempsey carried a very rough chair to the table for his own occupation, and Thad Hill placed one in position for Bob.

The four became seated, and Marta smoothed her bobbed hair in front of a little mirror on the wall of the kitchen before she returned with the extra plates.

The fried ham was served in conjunction with vegetables, and she was shedding her pinafore when Dr. Burton looked across the table at Bob and asked:

"Are you gentlemen tourists, or are you on business?"

"We're looking for the Eureka property," Bob replied.

"Why, you're on it right now!" exclaimed Thad Hill.

"We are?" Dempsey sat bolt upright.

"Your feet will be glad to hear that," laughed Bob.

Dr. Burton's Philosophy

THE meal was a thoroughly enjoyable one, especially to the two weary travellers. Marta sat beside Bob, and he appreciated her proximity even more than the fried ham; but Dempsey had a second helping.

"This mountain air sure gives you an appetite," said he.

After the table had been cleared Marta sat down at it again with a sewing-basket and a coat of her grandfather's which was in need of repair. Dr. Burton dropped into an armchair by the fireplace, and Thad took the only other armchair in the room and filled a pipe.

"Well, now that you've located your property, Mr. Harvey," said Burton slowly, "what do you intend to do with it?"

Bob drifted over to the fireplace, which was in a corner, and leaned his back against its curved shelf of stone.

"I haven't decided," he replied, folding his arms. "I had a chance to pick it up at a very good bargain, so Mr. Dempsey and I came down to look it over."

"Well, what do you know about that?" exclaimed Thad Hill, puffing a cloud of smoke from his pipe. "We've been livin' on your property!"

Marta looked round, and Bob promptly grinned.

"That's perfectly all right," he declared, mainly for her benefit. "I didn't come down here to be a landlord."

"Well, that's fine," said Thad in manifest relief. "But what about the gold I've been gettin' out o' the creek? That's yours, too, ain't it?"

"Gold?" Dempsey slewed round in his chair at the table. "How much did you get?"

"Not very much," replied the old fellow with a shrug. "Just about enough to eat on."



Bob pointed to the sign on the window. "Aw, that's nothing!" growled Dempsey.

"That's all anybody should be allowed to have," stated Dr. Burton in a very definite and almost dogmatic sort of way, and he looked up at Bob. "I have an idea you gentlemen really came here to find the mine with the iron door."

"Of course," confessed Bob. "So you've heard the story, doctor? Is there any truth in it?"

"None," was the emphatic reply. "I've been over every square inch of these mountains in the last fifteen years. I'm an archæologist."

Dempsey stared blankly at him.

"Well, what's your religion got to do with it?" he asked.

Marta was tempted to laugh, but refrained.

"David means he collects Indian relics," she explained.

"Oh!" said Dempsey.

"You don't seem to have much faith in the story, doctor," commented Bob.

"About as much as I have in Aladdin and his lamp!" Burton retorted. "The country round here has been gone over by hundreds of deluded treasure-seekers. Many companies have been formed to find the mine, and people have been gullible enough to invest money in them."

"Yeah," endorsed Dempsey, "and you're lookin' at one o' them gullible guys right now!"

"Too bad you folks came all this way on a wild-goose chase," sympathised Thad, and Bob smiled rather wryly across at Marta.

"How do you feel about it, Miss Hill?" he inquired.

"It's a lovely story," she replied, "and I don't like to give up believing in it."

"The confidence of youth, Mr. Harvey," said the doctor with a wave of his hand. "I thought I'd convinced you otherwise, Marta. For my part, I've often wondered why so many people scramble for gold. Why shouldn't one be satisfied if his daily needs are met?"

He waved his hand again.

"Take the three of us here in these mountains," he went on. "I've no desire for more of the world's goods than I possess, Thad pans enough gold to live without worry, Marta looks after us both. To my mind, ours is an ideal existence."

"That's one way of looking at it, doctor," conceded Bob; but Dempsey exploded:

"Well, if I gotta worry I can think o' nothin' nicer to worry about than a million bucks!"

Dr. David Burton looked at his watch.

"I see my philosophy is wasted," he said regretfully, and stood up. "If you'll excuse me, it's past my bedtime."

"Then you don't think we have a chance, doctor?" asked Bob.

"Unfortunately, no!"

Thad Hill rose slowly from his armchair.

"Sorry, Mr. Harvey," he said, "that we can't put you and Mr. Dempsey up."

"I'm afraid we've imposed on you long enough as it is," returned Bob. "We have a tent, and I'm sure we'll get along all right."

The doctor offered his hand.

"Are you very disappointed, Mr. Harvey?" he asked.

Bob shrugged his shoulders; Dempsey said with gloom:

"Looks like we counted them golden geese before they was hatched!"

"That," said Burton, taking his hat

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from a peg on the wall, "seems to be a habit of humanity, Mr. Dempsey."

He went out into the night, and he was striding off along the bank of the river when Bob and his partner left the cabin.

They made their camp on the site that had seemed so suitable for the purpose, lighting a fire under the stars to keep wild creatures away. Their tent proved capacious enough, but Dempsey complained about the blankets.

"They wouldn't even cover a midget," he growled.

They were glad to lie down, but sleep did not come readily, and they talked across the tent to one another after Dempsey had extinguished the lantern he had fastened to the pole.

"How did those people strike you?" asked Bob.

"Oh, they were nice and friendly, all right!" returned Dempsey. "You gotta say that about them. But I'm not so sure o' that doctor."

"He seemed to resent our presence here, didn't he?"

"Yeah, and he didn't try to hide it, neither! Say, we own this property here, don't we? Well, we could be charging rent to these people."

"Yeah," said Bob, "we could do that—if we wanted to." He changed the subject. "Say, that girl was pretty, wasn't she?"

"You did notice that, didn't ya?" There was silence for a little while, broken only by the far-off cry of a coyote, and then Bob emitted a chuckle.

"What are you laughin' at?" Dempsey sat up to ask.

"Why," replied Bob, "can you imagine a couple of guys in their right minds up here looking for hidden treasure?"

Dempsey stretched himself at full length again and wrestled with the inadequate blanket.

"Yeah," he drawled. "Looks like I'm gonna get stuck for two hundred bucks, too!"

"God's Pinnacle"

CAMP life seemed quite a novelty for the first few days, and it certainly was healthy. Bob and

Dempsey spent a lot of time wandering about the plateau and climbing the mountains in quest of the mine with the iron door, but all their efforts proved unavailing. Dempsey became disheartened, and after about a week of exploring decided to pan for gold in the river with Thad Hill.

He found that less fatiguing, and after half an hour of it he said to Thad:

"You know I wish I'd started this when I first came here. At least you've got a chance to find something. How 'n I doin', Thad?"

Thad, who had instructed him in the art of panning, watched him as he knelt on the edge of the bank, scooped up some of the bed-soil, and tilted the water away.

"You're gettin' the knack pretty quick for a beginner," he encouraged. "Find anything?"

"Naw, just a swell lot o' gravel," grunted Dempsey, and he flung the contents of his pan back into the river and reached down to scoop up some more. "You know there don't seem to be no action here. How much gold do you get out, anyway?"

"Well, it kinda runs in streaks," the old fellow replied, squatting on his haunches with his own pan between his knees. "Sometimes I have a right

good day—as much as ten dollars. Then it sorta peters out, and I don't find anything for a couple weeks. And then, all of a sudden like, it'll pick up again and run pretty good for a spell."

"Well," decided Dempsey, "this must be one of them lean weeks!"

The panning operations continued uneventfully for quite a while, and then the beginner cried out excitedly:

"Hi, come here! Look!"

"Found something?"

Thad put down his own pan of sheet-iron to peer into the one Dempsey was holding, and there amongst the sand he saw a silver watch.

"Wonder where that came from!" he exclaimed.

"I dunno," said Dempsey. "Somebody musta dropped it." He fished the watch out from the pan. "It's stopped."

"Too bad," said Thad. "It musta been a pretty good watch once."

"Yeah. It looks a little like mine. Lemme see."

He thrust finger and thumb into the pocket of his waistcoat where he kept his watch, and Thad burst out laughing at the comical look of utter dismay which spread over his face. The pocket was empty; the watch had fallen from it at some time when its owner was reaching down to the water!

"Guess I'd better go and dry it on your stove," Dempsey said disgustedly, and he was walking towards the cabin when he encountered Dr. David Burton, who had just emerged from it.

"Where's Harvey?" asked the doctor rather sharply.

"Oh, I ain't seen him in nearly an hour!" Dempsey replied.

"Where did he go?"

"Takin' a walk."

Burton's deep-set eyes narrowed.

"Where's Marta?" he demanded.

"I ain't seen her in nearly an hour, neither."

"Where did she go?"

"Takin' a walk."

"Did they go together?"

Dempsey resented the doctor's tone, but replied in his own way to the question.

"Well," he said, "they were sorta walkin' in the same direction."

As a matter of fact, Bob and Marta were very close together at that moment, resting side by side upon a granite boulder to which they had climbed high above a pine-wood.

"David calls this 'God's Pinnacle,'" Marta informed Bob. "You can see everything from here."

Bob surveyed the majestic landscape, then filled his pipe and lit it.

"Well," he said, "I can't see anything that Dempsey and I haven't been over during the past week." He pointed with the stem of the pipe. "Unless it's the top of that mountain over there."

"Poor Mr. Dempsey," said she, "he seems so discouraged, doesn't he?"

Bob nodded.

"There are only two things that keep Dempsey from going home to-morrow," he told her, "and both of them are his feet! You can't blame him at that. So far, all we've seen are places where people have looked for the treasure and never found it." He puffed at his pipe and smiled at her. "Peaceful here, isn't it?"

"This is my favourite spot," she declared. "David and I often come here to read."

"Do you? Dr. Burton's a strange sort of man, isn't he?"

"Yes, a little," she agreed. "But he's been wonderful. He helped

grandpa build our cabin and showed him where to pan for gold in the creek."

"How did you happen to locate here?" asked Bob curiously.

"Well, grandpa prospected all through the country, and then we met David, and he persuaded grandpa to settle here near him."

While they were talking together on the boulder, Thad Hill went back to the cabin to get his midday meal. Dempsey had dried his watch, but had failed to make it tick, and had gone off with it. Burton was striding up and down the living-room, and he rapped out at the old fellow for letting his granddaughter go off with Bob so frequently.

"I think you're takin' this too serious, David," Thad protested mildly. "Marta's gotta marry some day, and we gotta look at this thing sensible like. Young Harvey seems to me to be a nice fella. If Marta got to care for him, I don't see there's anything we can do about it."

"Why did he have to come here, anyway?" raged Burton.

"Well, it's his property, ain't it?" "What if it is?" The doctor's brown eyes blazed. "Does that give him the right to destroy everything I've tried to build up? Marta was happy, wasn't she? She was satisfied."

"You're makin' a mountain out of a molehill," said Thad. "Why, she's only known him a week."

But the doctor was in a strange mood and seemed almost beside himself.

"This was our little world, all our own!" he cried. "We built it up with our own hands, and he destroys everything by his stupid search for gold! Well, he'll never find it!"

"I know that," nodded Thad. "And the chances are he'll be goin' away pretty soon."

Burton calmed down considerably.

"I'm sorry," he said in his usual quiet voice. "I didn't mean to let myself go. But you know how I feel about Marta."

"Of course I do, David. She's just like your own child."

Burton scowled at a picture on the wall over a little desk.

"Yes," he said, and strode out from the cabin.

Up on the boulder the doctor had named "God's Pinnacle," Bob had told Marta quite a lot about himself because she seemed interested.

"And now you're about ready to give up, aren't you?" she said.

"Well, it seems kind of foolish looking for this mine a thousand people have never found," he returned defensively.

"But you've only been here a little over a week," she reminded him, "and there are a lot of places you haven't seen. The night after you arrived you promised me you wouldn't let David discourage you."

"That's right," he admitted, "I did. How would you like to play for a little while?"

"I think it would be fun."

"All right, when do we start?"

"Right away."

"I'll take a look under that rock."

He slid down from the boulder and turned over a little lump of rock almost at their feet.

"Don't be silly!" she admonished.

"Silly? It might be any place!" But there was nothing under the little rock except more rock. "No, it's not there!" he exclaimed, for all the world as though he had really expected it to be.

"Of course not," she laughed. "It wants a lot more finding than that."

The Arrow and the Eye

DR. DAVID BURTON lived in a cabin he had built for himself not very far from the one he had helped to build for Thad Hill and his granddaughter. It was situated in a hollow, with its back to a wall of rock, and inside its front door steps descended to a long and narrow living-room.

Bob knocked on the door soon after he had returned with Marta that evening, and the voice of Burton called out to him to enter.

He opened the door and descended the four steps to a floor of concrete on which Indian rugs were spread. The walls were of white adobe, and there were bookshelves upon them, and books upon the table from which the doctor had risen.

"Good-evening!" said Bob pleasantly. "Dempsey told me, when I got back to camp, that you were looking for me."

"I was," confirmed Burton. "Sit down, won't you?"

Bob dropped into a chair near the table, and Burton reseated himself, pushing aside a microscope he evidently had been using.

"You're a very patient young man, aren't you?" he said, leaning forward. "More so than the average man who comes here."

Bob smiled and crossed his long legs. "I'm very much afraid, doctor," he returned, "that you're going to have to put up with us a little while longer."

"So you are really convinced that the story of the mine is not a myth, are you?"

"I don't know," Bob confessed. "I must admit that when I first heard the story I thought it was a fairy tale, but since I've been here on the ground it's sort of got under my skin."

"You seem to be enjoying yourself."



"The more people who've come up here to look for the mine and haven't found it," expounded Bob, "the better off we are."

"Oh, I'm having a great time! But poor old Dempsey's discouraged—he's quite sure there's no treasure."

"You're not staying here because of any treasure!" said Burton with sudden sternness.

"I beg your pardon?"

"I'll come right to the point. What may be a pleasant interlude to you may prove to be serious to someone else. I'm talking about Marta."

"What about her?" challenged Bob

"I'd advise you, young man, to pack up and leave us in peace!"

It sounded very much like a threat, and Bob burned with resentment. But he said, quietly, enough, as he got to his feet:

"I'll think that over. Good-night."

Bob and Dempsey had supper with Thad and his granddaughter that evening, and the atmosphere was all the pleasanter for the absence of the doctor; but Bob was not his usual cheerful self. Burton's last words had disturbed him.

It was arranged over the supper table that he and Marta should go looking for the treasure next morning, and Marta was preparing food to take with them when he called for her. Thad and Dempsey were out on the bank of the river, panning for gold.

Bob had almost a second breakfast in the cabin, and during one of her numerous journeys between the kitchen and the living-room Marta showed him a little flat cross of copper upon one side of which an eye, an arrow, and a sun were engraved.

She told him that Dr. Burton had given it to her, and he studied it with interest.

"When did he give it to you?" he asked.

"When first we came here," she replied.

"Evidently he didn't attach much importance to it."

"I don't think that," she demurred. "It's part of his Indian collection."

"The figures are Indian all right," said Bob, "but the cross is strictly Spanish."

"I never thought of that."

"The eye, the arrow, and the sun."

She left him with the cross to make some coffee, and he was still studying it when she returned.

"What'll you do if you really find the mine?" she asked.

"I'm wondering what I'll do if I don't," said he.

"You won't be any worse off than you were before."

"Won't I?"

"I mean you can still sell automobiles."

"Yes," he agreed, "I can do that. You know, when I first came down here from New York it was a sort of a lark, but now I've been here on the ground"

"You've got the gold fever," she suggested. "Is that it?"

"That's right." He handed her back the cross. "I wonder what Carrie Dailey would think if we found it?"

"Who's Carrie Dailey?" she asked quickly.

"Oh, she was the secretary in Pitkin's office!" he replied.

"Oh!"

"She invested everything she had in the Eureka Corporation. Ninety dollars. You know, I don't really care very much about the gold myself. I always managed to get along somehow."

"That's how I feel about it," said Marta. "It's not so terrible being poor."

"No?" Bob looked up at her. "You're the first one I've ever heard say so."

"What I mean," she explained, "is

that if you've never had anything you don't miss it."

"That may be right," said he, "but if I'd never come down here, I—I'd

"What?" she asked; and then a hissing noise from the kitchen sent her flying out to the stove.

The coffee was boiling over.

There were two horses in a stable at the back of the cabin, presents from Dr. Burton, and very docile creatures. They rode away on them across the grassy plateau and the scrub beyond it, and in a fertile canyon they came to the ruins of a monastery.

Marta, who made an excellent guide, informed Bob that the broken walls and arches had been part of the Mission of San Capello. They were of stone hewn from the mountains, but there was no vestige of any roof left anywhere.

They picnicked on the grass-grown floor of what might at one time have been a refectory, and Bob remarked:

"I can't ever remember eating a sandwich in a monastery before!"

"Have another?" suggested Marta.

The two horses were nibbling quite contentedly. Bob had another sandwich, and then he and Marta wandered about among the extensive ruins.

"You know, I'm getting a great kick out of this," he confided.

"I'm glad," said she. "You were so quiet at supper last night that I began to think you had changed your mind about staying."

"I should say not!" he declared fervently. "I was just thinking about something else."

She did not ask him what the "something else" was, but as they went out under an archway into the canyon, she said:

"This must be quite a change from New York."

"That's what I like about it," he assured her.

"But I don't suppose you'd care to stay here indefinitely, would you?"

"Well, of course, that—that would depend."

They came to the foot of some rocks which formed part of the wall of the canyon, and Bob looked up at one more prominent than the rest.

"That's Arrow Rock," said Marta.

The rock had a bluntly pointed top, and was obviously of granite.

"The fellow who named that certainly had a vivid imagination," said Bob.

"It doesn't look much like an arrow to me."

"The arrow's on the top of it," said Marta.

They climbed adjacent rocks, and from them clambered on to the rock itself and reached its summit.

"There it is!" Marta pointed.

"David said the Indians carved it."

Cut deeply into the granite was a perfectly good representation of an arrow, the barb pointing upwards.

"Dr. Burton knows a lot about this country, doesn't he?" growled Bob.

"Yes, he does," she confirmed.

"Those Indians were pretty good carvers. Let's see where it points."

He put his eye to the shaft of the arrow and looked upwards along its length.

"Do you see anything?" asked Marta.

"Yeah, a lot of blue sky," he replied disappointedly. "Shall we go?"

They started to climb down again, but Marta suddenly stopped.

"Come to think of it," she exclaimed, "that arrow is just like the one on my cross!"

"You don't think there's any con-

nection between the arrow and the cross, do you?" asked Bob.

"I don't know."

"Let's go back and give it another once-over—just for fun, eh?"

They went back to the arrow, and Bob gazed at it thoughtfully.

"I wonder if that old carver was smart and turned it the wrong way on purpose," he mused, and then he clambered up to the very top of the rock to apply an eye to the barb of the arrow.

"What do you see now?" inquired Marta cagerly.

Bob descended to her, and instead of answering her question pointed across the canyon to a very high rock.

"What's that big crag over there?" he asked.

"I don't know," she replied. "It's just a crag."

"Have you ever been up there?"

"No—why?"

"Well, that's the way the shaft of the arrow points. It's worth taking a look at, don't you think?"

They crossed the canyon on the horses they had left in the ruins, and they rode up a rocky slope as far as it was possible to ride, then proceeded on foot amongst clustered boulders.

But the way was steep and slippery, and Marta was cumbered by her skirts, so Bob went back to the horses and returned with a lariat, fastened one end of it round her waist, and clumbed ahead of her, so that she could hold on to the rope and be sure of not slipping backwards.

"At least, we're getting a little higher," he said, after he had helped to haul her up on to a ledge.

The crag was above them, its side like a wall and presenting no foothold whatever.

"I wonder how the monks got up there?" said Marta.

"I'm beginning to believe they didn't," said Bob.

"How do you expect to get up there?" said Marta.

Bob contemplated a fissure in the crag and rubbed his chin.

"Wait a minute, and I'll show you."

He unfastened the rope from her waist and made a noose which he passed round a little loose piece of rock and drew tight. Then he picked up the piece of rock and tried to throw it over the fissure. "It's an old Swiss custom," he said. "Look out, below!"

The missile failed to reach the fissure, and came rolling down to their feet. But a second attempt was more successful; the little piece of rock went over the crag, the rope went down the fissure, and Bob tugged at the rope and found it secure.

"Will it hold?" asked Marta in a half-scared fashion.

"I hope so," replied Bob, and started to pull himself up the face of the crag while she looked on in fear and trembling.

For the greater part of the ascent he was almost at right angles to the rock; but the rope held, and he reached the top and straddled it.

She gave a little gasp of relief and called out to him:

"Bob, what's up there?"

"A swell view!" he called back.

"Anything else?"

"Nothing! Just me!"

"Well, come on down!"

"Wait till I see if I can find another arrow. Yeah, yeah, there is something here!"

"What is it?" she cried excitedly.

"A hole in the rock—just like an eye! I'll take a look!"

He wriggled himself round on the very top of the crag and stooped to

look through the hole he had likened to an eye.

"What do you see?" Marta called out.

"God's Pinnacle," he replied.

Away on the scrub beyond the ruins of the Mission of San Capello, Dr. David Burton stopped the horse upon which he had ridden from his cabin in the hollow near the river and applied a pair of powerful binoculars to his eyes.

He saw Bob, straddling the crag against the skyline, and he saw Marta below him among the boulders. His lean face was distorted with rage as he put away the binoculars and turned his horse about.

A Shock for Thad Hill

TWO hours later Bob and Marta reached the front door of the doctor's cabin and Bob banged a fist upon it. Burton, who had been pacing his living-room in a fury, admitted them with a bow.

"David," cried Marta excitedly. "I think we've found a clue to the mine. We were at the monastery, and Bob got the idea of connecting Arrow Rock with the arrow on my cross. Then he thought of looking the wrong way on the arrow—and where do you think it pointed?"

"Where?" asked Burton coldly.

"To Jupiter's Crag, across the canyon. And on the top of the crag was an eyehole, and when Bob looked through it he saw God's Pinnacle!"

"Humph!" grunted the doctor. "I followed that theory myself, but it never led anywhere."

"We haven't been up to God's Pinnacle yet," said Bob. "but at least it would be interesting to take a look."

"We came to borrow your binoculars," said Marta. "You don't mind, do you?"

"Of course not," replied the doctor in a voice he tried to render cordial. "Go ahead."

Marta snatched up the binoculars from the table where he had placed them and caught at Bob's arm.

"Come on!" she cried. "Let's hurry!"

They went out into the afternoon sunlight, and as the door was latched behind them Barton gave vent to his feelings by snatching up a valued Indian bowl and hurling it to the floor.

Bob and Marta hastened to the boulder where they had talked the day before, and through the binoculars they studied the landscape in turn; but they saw nothing more than rugged beauty all about them, drenched with sunlight, and they were badly disappointed.

In the tent that night Bob described the adventures of the day to Dempsey while the disgruntled seeker after alluvial gold was trying to make himself comfortable beneath the blanket that was too small for him.

"Aw," quoth Dempsey scornfully. "I still say it's the bunk. An eye, an arrow, and the sun. It don't make sense!"

"There must be some connection," insisted Bob. "It was on the cross that Dr. Burton gave Marta, and first I found the arrow, and then the eyehole in the rock. But the thing that had us fooled, when we got to God's Pinnacle, was the sun."

"Wasn't there no sun when you got there?" asked Dempsey with derision.

"It was covered all over with sun," replied Bob. "That was what had us stumped."

"Yeah," drawled Dempsey. "I tell you the whole thing's phony, Bob."



"Oh, Bob," she cried, clinging to him, "he—he was going to keep me here with the gold!"

I got it all doped out. Now, listen; this Dr. Burton's cracked, ain't he? The mine with the iron door has got 'em all hopped up. That cross is phony—the doc planted all this stuff around here. I've known a lot o' loony guys in my time, but, believe me, Bob, this Burton is tops!"

Marta had just retired to her bedroom, which was at the back of the cabin and opened out of the living-room. She was combing her hair in front of the mirror of her dressing-table when Burton peered into the room round a curtain over an open window and saw the cross he had given her lying on the dressing-table within reach of his hand.

Crouching back against the outer wall, so that she could not see him if she turned, he thrust his hand in over the sill and secured the cross. Then, slipping it into his pocket, he went round to the front of the cabin and knocked at the door.

A few minutes later Thad shouted at the door of Marta's room:

"Oh, Marta! David's here, and he wants to see you!"

Marta put down the brush and comb she was using and went out into the living-room, and she stared in surprise at Burton, for he was standing by the table with folded arms and his eyes were fierce.

"Why, David, what's the matter?" she exclaimed.

He gripped her right arm with both hands, and he said masterfully:

"Marta, I don't want you to have anything more to do with Harvey!"

"Why?" she asked wonderingly.

"You're not going to see him! Do you understand?" His double grip on her arm tightened, and his voice became harsh. "You're going to tell him to go away from here!"

"You're hurting my arm!" cried Marta.

"Are you going to do as I say?" he rasped.

Thad stepped forward in high concern.

"Hold on a minute, David!" he pleaded.

"You keep out of this!" roared Burton, whirling round on him. "I warned you of what was going to happen. Do you understand, Marta?"

"No, I don't understand," she replied, almost in tears. "Why should I ask him to go away?"

"Because you're in love with him!"

"Is that so wrong?"

"Why, it's only natural," declared her grandfather.

"Keep quiet, you old fool!" Burton flamed at him. "How could you have lived without me? You both came here starving. I gave you food and a cabin, and blankets to keep you warm. I found a place where you could scrape up a little of the gold you loved so much!"

"That ain't no thanks to you!" bridled Thad. "The gold was there for anybody. Year in and year out I've worked down in that creek."

"You've worked? A fine lot of gold you'd have found if it hadn't been for me. There's never been any gold in there, except what I put there for you to find!"

"You?" gasped Thad, and Marta looked horrified.

"That's what I said!" snarled Burton. "I put it there at night—just enough to keep you going—and the next day you found it!"

"Where did you get it?" asked Marta.

"I—I bought it," he replied, and his voice was shrill and unnatural. "You can buy gold, you know, and throw it away, just like bones to a dog." He turned again to Thad. "You think you worked for it? Well, go ahead and look for it now. Look for it now!"

He snatched up his hat, rammed it on his head, and went out from the cabin and slammed the door behind him.

The Iron Door

EARLY the next morning Bob and Dempsey climbed up to God's Pinnacle, Dempsey complaining loudly long before the boulder was reached, though the day was too young to be very hot.

"Hi, I thought you said this wasn't far?" he shouted, labouring upwards behind his more energetic companion. "You got a great idea o' distance!"

The boulder was reached, but he scanned the wonderful view without any enthusiasm whatever.

"Is this what you brought me up here to see?" he demanded.

"This is the spot the eye points to," said Bob. "Now what we've got to do is to figure what it has to do with the other sign. What does the sun mean to you?"

"Oh, a place to lay down in," replied the unimaginative one.

"The arrow, the eye, the sun." Bob gazed thoughtfully in every direction.

"Yeah," snorted Dempsey, "and when you put 'em all together they spell 'hooey.' Hi, where ya goin'?"

Bob had started to climb some rocks higher than the boulder.

"I'll be right back," he said over his shoulder, and reached a shelf of rock upon which a length of decaying pole lay. He examined the pole and saw that one end of it had been broken off as though from a hole in which the rest of it had stood, and he searched about the rock for the rest of the pole.

There was no actual hole, but he found the rest of the pole in what had been a hole, and he tried to wriggle it loose. Dempsey looked up and saw him hard at work.

"Hi, what're you doin'?" he shouted. "Diggin' for a bone?"

"Come up here!" Bob shouted back. Pulling and blowing, Dempsey struggled up the rocks and joined him on the shelf.

"Aw, you've certainly got a grudge against my feet," he grumbled. "This is sure a great country!"

Bob had managed to pull up the end of the pole he had worked loose. It was about two feet long.

"What's this?" he asked, rising to his feet and holding it out.

"Wood," replied Dempsey.

"You're supposed to be a smart detective. What was it before?"

"A tree."

Bob flung down the piece of wood and pointed to the cavity it had occupied.

"What was in that hole?" he asked.

Dempsey picked up the rest of the pole and thrust the end of it into the hole.

November 7th, 1936.

"A telegraph pole," he said. "Now ask me another one!"

Bob looked from the pole across the intervening country to the crag he had sealed the afternoon before, and taking a line from the crag looked down to the plateau. He found himself staring at a window of Dr. Burton's cabin which seemed to be ablaze because the sun was shining on the glass.

"Aw, it doesn't make any sense!" he growled.

The doctor was in the living-room of his cabin, bending over an open book upon the table with the light of insanity in his eyes. It was a book of verses, and he read aloud, over and over again, the first line of one particular poem:

"Yet each man kills the thing he loves! Each man kills the thing he loves."

Finally, as though he had reached a decision, he put on his hat and went out into the sunlight.

Thad Hill had had no appetite for breakfast that morning, and even his beloved pipe failed to soothe him as he sat smoking it in a chair on the porch. Marta found him there, looking a picture of dejection, and she suggested that he should take a little walk.

"Walkin' ain't goin' to help me a bit, Marta," he said sadly. "I can't even go and pan in the creek any more. Every day I figured that to-morrow, maybe, I'd strike it rich."

"We'll go somewhere else," she said; but he shook his head at her.

"Twenty years ago I coulda done that, but when you get to be my age you can't start all over again. No, Marta, I just ain't got the heart."

"Don't worry, dear," she urged, and coaxed him back into the living-room, where she was trying to induce him to eat some of his neglected breakfast when Dr. Burton walked in upon them.

Thad scowled at him, and Marta did not even utter a greeting, but stood defensively beside her grandfather. The doctor, however, seemed to be in quite a chastened mood.

"I've come to say I'm sorry about last night," he began. "I shouldn't have said the things I did."

"It's a little late to be sorry, ain't it?" growled Thad.

"Yes," admitted the doctor, "but it's silly to let a misunderstanding come between old friends. Please forget about last night."

"That was a low-down trick you played on us. How do you think Marta and I feel, livin' on you all these years?"

"I didn't want to play a trick on you," Burton declared with feeling. "I wanted you both to stay here. It was my way of trying to make you happy."

"I believe that, David," said Marta.

"I knew you would." He took her hand and held it gently in his own. "I'd like to talk to you, Marta, if you'll walk a little way with me."

"Why, certainly, David." She went with him to the door. "I'll be right back, grandpa."

While these two were walking together along the bank of the river towards the doctor's cabin, Bob and Dempsey were descending from God's Pinnacle, and Dempsey was speaking his mind.

"You can go on makin' a fool of yourself," he said, "and you can talk till you're blue in the face, but my mind is made up. I'm no glutton—I know when I've had enough."

"Wait a minute, you big sap!" exploded Bob. "You're the guy that talked me into coming out here, aren't you?"

"Yeah," confirmed Dempsey. "And

I'm the guy that'll talk you into going back, too! This thing's a bust, just like I told you, and I'm gonna pack my things and get out of here!"

"What would you do if you did go back home?" inquired Bob pointedly.

"Aw, say, there's a lot o' things that I could do I never thought of before," was the confident reply, "and one of 'em will be to get that guy Pitkin!"

"Pitkin?"

"Yeah," raged the footsore detective. "If it hadn't been for him I wouldn't be down here now!"

"Temper, temper, Mr. Dempsey!" reproved Bob. "D'you know what Horace Greeley said?"

"No."

"He said, 'Go West, young man, go West!'"

"Oh, he did, eh?" Dempsey was not aware that Greeley was a famous American journalist and statesman who died in 1872. "Well, I'll get that guy, too!"

Long before they had reached the plateau, Burton and his beautiful companion had reached the cabin in the hollow and stopped outside its front door.

"Are you sure you love this young man?" asked the doctor.

"Yes," Marta replied emphatically. "quite sure."

"I can't imagine living here without you!"

She did not want to discuss that subject, and she did not want to leave her grandfather too long.

"I must go back now, David," she said.

"Oh, come in for a moment, won't you?" he pleaded. "You're not afraid of me, are you?"

She was half-afraid of him, after his outbreak of the night before, but she assured him to the contrary, and she went into the cabin with him.

The book of verses was still open on the table, and he smiled as she turned the pages while he put his hat away.

"I'm afraid I've been a great disappointment to you," she said, noticing the sadness of his smile, but he walked over to her and offered his hand.

"After all," he said, "why shouldn't you be in love with this young man? You're both young, and should have many years of happiness before you."

"David," she murmured gratefully, "you're sweet."

"Oh, no!" He shook his head.

"I've been stupid, Marta. I thought I could keep you untouched by the world, away from everything and everybody. I should have known I was wrong."

She closed the book of verses and rested a hand upon its cover.

"David, you'll like Bob when you really know him," she said.

"Yes, of course I will." He walked towards a door facing the window upon which the sun had shone, but turned abruptly away from it again. "Marta, I lied when I said I'd bought the gold I threw in the creek. That gold was part of the treasure of San Capello."

She stared at him in amazement.

"The treasure?" she cried. "But, David, I don't understand! Where did you—"

"I found it fifteen years ago," he interrupted, "and the cross that I gave you was the key to its whereabouts."

"Then Bob was right!" she exclaimed.

"Yes," he replied solemnly. "Bob was right, and I was angry, so I took your cross last night."

He produced the cross from his pocket and exhibited it on the palm of his hand.

(Continued on page 25)

Never was there a more enduring comradeship than that which was formed between the king of wild horses and the outcast wonder dog. Together they braved a thousand perils, unswerving in their loyalty to each other. Follow their amazing adventures in this gripping serial drama, starring Kane Richmond, Norma Taylor and Rex and Rinty



EPISODE 2—

“Sport of Kings”



The Adventures OF REX AND RINTY

READ THIS FIRST

Rex, a black Arabian stallion, is worshipped by a strange race of people on the remote tropical isle of Sujan.

To Sujan come three white men who are agents of a Californian rancher named Crawford. They steal Rex, realising the fortune he can make for their employer, but one of them is captured by the Sujanese. This man, Wheeler, only earns his life and liberty by promising to recover the god horse, and travels to America in company with a native known as Pasha.

Meanwhile Rex is delivered to Crawford, but breaks free and takes to the hills. Later that day the rancher plays in a polo game at the Bruce Riding Academy, but his team loses to a side led by Frank Bradley, a popular young sportsman, and after the game Crawford vents some of his spite on a stray police dog that has roamed into the district.

The dog, Rinty, wanders off into the mountains, and there discovers Rex trapped in an abandoned mine. Meeting Dorothy Bruce, daughter of the riding academy's owner, Rinty tries to lead her to the mine, but she falls from her horse and is stunned.

In the meantime, some of Crawford's men have traced the stallion, and unaware that he is a prisoner, they attempt to smoke him out into the open. Rinty attacks them, but is struck senseless, and at that same moment the roof of the mine caves in as Rex, in his struggles, brings down a timber support!

Now Read On

A False Conclusion

B LANK dismay was written on the faces of Crawford's men as they saw the mine gallery caving in before their eyes.

The very entrance of the tunnel was affected by the collapse, rocks and dirt tumbling at the feet of the ranch employees while they stood listening to the thunder of the slide. Then, as the tumult died away, the four men reeled into the mouth of the cavern and brought up short before a mass of debris that blocked its interior from floor to ceiling.

"I guess that's the end of the black stallion, Mitchell!" Anderson said huskily.

In the deathly silence that now prevailed, the ranch-hand's voice sounded hollow and sepulchral.

"Yeah," breathed Mitchell. "Trapped under a mountain of earth! A fortune in horseflesh buried alive!"

"Maybe he still is alive," Martin exclaimed querulously. "We'd better make sure, anyway."

The idea was rejected by his comrades, Jones being the foremost in declaiming it.

"Don't be crazy, Martin," the latter scoffed. "The stallion's a goner all right. Yeah, and it would take a steam shovel to reach his body. Come on, we'd better get back to the outfit an' report to Crawford. And Mitchell, you'll have to have them wrists o' yours attended to. That wolfhound's teeth have ripped 'em a-plenty."

The four men turned and walked out into the open again, where Mitchell spurned the prostrate body of Rinty in passing. Then, striding through the

smoke that still hovered about the scene, the ranch-hands made for their broncos, and soon they were riding off at a gallop.

They had scarcely disappeared when Rinty began to show signs of returning consciousness, and a few minutes later he managed to regain his feet, after which he moved somewhat shakily towards the mine entrance.

It was as the dog was standing there that he heard a voice hailing him from the far end of the canyon, and, pricking up his ears, he turned to see Dorothy Bruce, tottering in his direction.

The girl joined him at the mouth of the cavern, and knelt down beside him.

"What is it, boy?" she asked gently. "Why did you want me to follow you?"

Rinty looked at her with his soft brown eyes, then faced the pile of debris that blocked the tunnel and gave vent to a piteous whine; and suddenly, from somewhere inside the mine, the wolfhound's plaintive voice was answered by the neighing of a horse.

Dorothy Bruce straightened up with a jerk, and for a moment she stood staring at the mountain of rubble that had filled the cavern. Then all at once she remembered that there was another entrance to this mine, and calling upon Rinty to accompany her, she hurried out of the canyon.

Mitchell and his associates had been unaware that there was any alternative means of gaining the interior of the abandoned workings, and Dorothy herself would probably have been ignorant of the fact if a relative of hers had not been connected with the mine when it had been a paying proposition. It so happened, however, that this relative

had once shown her over the claim, and now the girl was able to put her knowledge to good account.

Leaving the canyon, she made her way round to a rock-strewn hillside, and Rinty was close on her heels when she eventually stepped into the gloom of a cave that pierced the slope. Then, with the aid of matches which the girl possessed, they hastened deep into the core of the mountain until at last they perceived the figure of a struggling horse ahead of them.

The animal was Rex, and he was lying on the floor of the tunnel at the base of a heap of stones and earth. By amazing good luck, he had escaped the brunt of the collapse which had taken place, and which had been confined to that portion of the roof between him and the canyon entrance of the mine.

Yet, though he had escaped serious injury, his neck was pinned under the broken prop which he had brought down, and as the end of this was wedged amongst the debris it took Dorothy some time to lever it upwards.

Rex scrambled from the ground then. There was a wound on his head—nothing very severe, but no doubt it had laid him out for a spell. He seemed perfectly all right now, however, and as Dorothy and Rinty began to retrace their steps along the cavern, he followed slowly after them.

Indeed, he continued to follow them when they came out into the open. It was for all the world as if he appreciated that they were friends and wished to remain with them, and when at length Dorothy picked up the trail which led to the academy she could not help smiling at the manner in which the black stallion plodded after her, while Rinty trotted alongside her like a shadow.

In this fashion the three of them must have covered a considerable distance when a horseman appeared unexpectedly round a bend in the road, and as the girl recognised Frank Bradley she uttered a cry of welcome.

Two or three seconds later Frank was drawing rein before her.

"What happened, Dorothy?" he asked quickly. "Your riderless horse came back to the academy, and I realised something must be wrong. Then Jensen told me that you'd mentioned you were going out to Bear Creek, and I hit the trail to see if I could find you."

Dorothy proceeded to relate all that had occurred, and when she had finished her story Frank looked at Rex with keen admiration.

"Gee, he's a beauty, too, isn't he?" he said, moving forward and stroking the stallion's muzzle.

Rex remained passive under his touch. It was strange how mild his disposition could be with some men, whereas with others he was as savage as any outlaw brone. It was as if some instinct told him which human beings were to be trusted, and which were not.

"What are you going to do with him, Dorothy?" Frank asked.

"Well, he seems intent on following me," the girl replied, "so I figured on keeping him at the academy until his owner claims him—whoever the owner may be."

"A good idea," Frank commented. "Here, come on up beside me."

He lent her a hand and helped her up into his saddle. Then he looked down at Rinty.

"By the way, Dorothy," he said "Jensen was telling me that Crawford had threatened to shoot that dog if he

caught him around the academy any more."

"Shoot Rinty?" the girl exclaimed with mingled horror and indignation. "I'd like to see him try it!"

"That's exactly what I told Jensen," Frank remarked grinning. "All right, Rinty, you're trailing along with us, too."

With a dig of his heels the wealthy young sportsman sent his pony forward along the road, and Rex did not have to be coaxed into accompanying the other animal. Nor did Rinty for that matter, and with Frank's mount carrying double and the god horse of Suján cantering abreast, the high-spirited wolfhound brought up the rear at a scampering run.

They reached the riding academy an hour afterwards, and here Rinty was made to understand that he could regard this establishment as his home, after all. For Jensen quickly provided him with a platter that was brimful of meat and biscuits, and fondled him joyously while he was eating the meal.

In the meantime, Rex had been led to a vacant stable, and it was while the stallion was being given a feed of oats that Dorothy's father appeared on the scene.

He, too, was informed of the circumstances in which Dorothy had found the noble-looking creature, and, as Frank had done before him, he scrutinised the horse with an appreciative eye.

"He's certainly a magnificent specimen," Bruce declared. "I've never seen a finer. You know, if he weren't coal-black I'd say he was a full-blooded Arabian."

"I wish we could keep him, dad," Dorothy murmured.

Her father shrugged his shoulders.

"At least, we can give him a home until we locate his owner," he observed. "I wonder who he does belong to, anyway? And I wonder how he came to stray into that abandoned mine where you found him?"

"I don't know," Dorothy rejoined, "but it looked as if someone had been trying to smoke him out. For the brush had been set on fire, and there were men's footprints around the mouth of the tunnel—where it had caved in. I wish Rinty could talk. He might be able to tell us something about the whole business."

There was a silence, and then Frank Bradley spoke again.

"You know something?" he announced. "That stallion seems gentle enough, but somehow I've got an idea he's never been broken to a saddle."

"I wonder," Dorothy's father mused.

"Well, if my hunch is right I'd sure like to have the training of him," Frank said. "What a polo horse he'd make."

Bruce favoured him with a smile.

"Maybe you'll get the chance of training him," he stated, "if nobody lays any claim to him. He couldn't be in better hands. No one knows more about horses than you do, Frank, and no one I've ever seen has a better way with them."

"Coming from an old hand like you, Mr. Bruce," the younger man answered genially, "that's praise calculated to turn a fellow's head."

They moved away from the stall in which Rex had been lodged, and in which he seemed quite content to remain, and a little later they were again speculating on the ownership of the stallion.

They did not know that the horse had been stolen and transported from a far tropical island that was the abode of a curious race of people. Only Crawford and his hirelings could have

told them that—Crawford, who at this very moment was driving his high-powered automobile along the rough track which led to his distant ranch.

It was as Crawford drew up outside his house that Mitchell came across from the corral, followed by Jones, Martin and Anderson. And before long the rancher was listening to an account of the disaster which had supposedly overtaken Rex.

"You—you mean the god horse was killed?" Crawford jerked, as soon as he had heard the story. "Couldn't you have saved him?"

"We didn't have a chance, boss," said Jones. "Besides, we was mighty anxious about gettin' Mitchell to the nearest town and lettin' a doctor look him over."

For the first time Crawford noticed that Mitchell's wrists were heavily bandaged.

"What happened to you, then?" he demanded.

"Some big wolf dog nearly killed me while we was tryin' to smoke out that stallion, boss," Mitchell explained.

Crawford thought of the stray he had encountered at the Bruce Academy, and wondered if it were the same wolfhound as that which had attacked his employee. Then his mind veered round to the god horse of Suján, and a look of distress crossed his heavy features—not the distress which a lover of animals might have experienced, but the distress of a man who felt that a fortune had been lost by the death of that splendid creature.

"I'd have given every polo pony I own," he said, "to have had that black Arabian in my stable."

Wheeler Again

A WEEK had elapsed, a week during which pressure of business had kept Crawford from the Bruce Riding Academy, or he might have discovered that the god horse Rex was very much alive and in process of being trained by Frank Bradley.

For, as no inquiries had been made regarding the stallion, Frank had eagerly taken on the task of introducing him to a saddle and generally preparing him for a career as a polo pony.

It was a task that had presented many difficulties, for Rex had shown a tremendous amount of stubbornness at first. However, Frank had persevered—and without attempting to break his spirit, but rather by dint of great patience and unflinching kindness, the young sportsman had finally overcome the horse's obstinacy.

And now, at the end of a week, Rex was not only perfectly willing to carry him on his back, but was answering to the rein as if he had been used to a master all his life. Also, he had become accustomed to galloping around a polo field and vying with other thoroughbreds in the pursuit of a white ball. For Frank had got the length of giving him frequent "work-outs" in practice matches during the afternoons.

It was after one of these work-outs that Frank was joined by Dorothy Bruce, who had been looking on from the touchline.

"Well," the girl said, "you seem to be able to handle him now all right."

"Yes," Frank told her, "he's coming along swell. I think I'll give him his first real chance to-morrow."

Dorothy's eyes lit up.

"You mean—you're going to use him in the game against Crawford's team?"

"Yes, I haven't seen Crawford for a week, but I presume the fixture's still on. He suggested it himself, after that

last match. Seemed mighty anxious to have an early chance of turning the tables on my team, in fact. Anyway, I'll 'phone him up this evening, and if the game takes place I'll give the stallion a break in the first chukker."

The girl turned to watch Rex for a moment as he was being led away by Jensen, the stable-hand.

"It's marvellous, the way you've trained that horse in such a short time, Frank," she murmured presently. "Gee, you'd take it pretty hard if someone showed up now and claimed him, wouldn't you?"

Frank toyed thoughtfully with the polo mallet that he was carrying.

"If his real owner showed up I'd have to surrender the stallion, of course," he said. "But the ownership would have to be proved right up to the hilt before I'd let him go. Bill of sale, pedigree, and all the rest of it."

Neither Frank nor Dorothy realised it, but a man was hovering within earshot of them, and that man was Mitchell, who had quite recovered from the injuries Rinty had inflicted on him and who had dropped in casually at the Bruce Field while on his way to Crawford's ranch from the city.

He had seen the practice match, and to his utter amazement had recognised Rex; and now, after hearing the conversation that had passed between Frank Bradley and Dorothy, he turned sharply on his heel and made for the car park, where he had left a sedan in which he had been travelling.

Some time later Mitchell could have been seen driving up to the Crawford ranch-house in a cloud of dust, and on bringing the automobile to a halt and entering the well-appointed residence he located his employer in the lounge.

Quickly he related what he had seen and overheard, and his story left Crawford agape.

"Are you sure it was the god horse of Sujan, Mitchell?" the rancher demanded incredulously.

"I couldn't mistake that stallion," the other replied. "Don't ask me how he got outa that mine, boss—I only know that he's at the Bruce Academy. Yeah, and I know that you're gonna have a hard time claimin' him. Bradley says he won't give him up without a bona fide bill of sale."

Crawford gritted his teeth.

"After you fellers bringing that horse all the way from Sujan," he said, "I don't mean to let Bradley or anyone else take him away from me. We'll get Rex back, Mitchell—without a bill of sale. Yep, and once he's safe in my stables here, no one will ever be able to prove he doesn't belong to me. Now listen—"

He stopped abruptly, and all at once Mitchell saw that his glance had travelled towards the doorway—saw, too, that his eyes had widened extraordinarily and that his face had blanched, as if he had suddenly found himself looking upon a ghost.

Mitchell turned, and next instant he was wearing the same stricken expression as that which had dawned on the features of his employer. For there on the threshold stood a man who had been given up for dead, a man whose silent arrival was as uncanny as a visitation from the world beyond the grave.

"Wheeler!" Mitchell gasped.

There was a pause, and then the newcomer moved fairly into the room.

"Kinda surprised to see me, ain't you?" he sneered, looking from one to the other of the two men whom he had surprised.

His voice had the effect of convincing them that he was of human flesh and blood, and Crawford managed to speak, though with an obvious effort.

"Why, Mitchell told me you were dead!"

"Yeah," blurted Mitchell, "we thought you were dead, Wheeler. We thought them natives would be certain to finish you."

Wheeler eyed him grimly.

"That didn't prevent you from leavin' me to their tender mercies, did it?" he ground out.

"But we hadn't any choice," Mitchell protested. "Martin and I wouldn't have deserted you willingly, Wheeler. You know that. The fact was we were both plenty scared, and we thought we heard somebody givin' the alarm."

Wheeler's lip curled slightly. Then, after a brief silence, he spoke again.

"Well, the natives didn't kill me," he stated. "I managed to fool them and make my get-away from the island. My next port o' call was Zembla, where I hopped a transoceanic plane for the States. And here I am, Crawford—so what about my cut for helping to get that god horse?"

The rancher pursed his lips.

"That stallion got away from us," he grunted. "We're aiming to grab him to-morrow during a polo game at the Bruce Field."

"Meaning what?" Wheeler asked with a frown.

"Meaning that as soon as I get the horso you and Mitchell and Martin will collect your dough," answered Crawford. "But you've got to throw in with us on this job, Wheeler—that's understood, I guess."

A look of cunning appeared on Wheeler's features.

"Any plan in mind?" he queried.

"Yeah," said Crawford. "I've got a kind of a hunch. Sit down and let's discuss it."

For the next ten minutes there was a low-toned drone of conversation in the lounge of the ranch-house, and at the end of that time Crawford's scheme had been arranged in every detail. Then, making a somewhat vague excuse, Wheeler took his leave, and from the ranch-house walked westwards along the road until he came to a grove of trees.

Amongst those trees stood an open car. It was a car which the man had hired on landing in America, and in it a swarthy individual of foreign appearance was seated, an individual who was none other than Pasha.

"Well?" the Sujanese asked as Wheeler joined him.



The pair of them were dragging Jensen to the far end of the stable.

"The god horse wasn't there," Wheeler muttered. "He's at a place known as the Bruce Ridin' Academy, and Crawford aims to get him back to-morrow."

Pasha looked at him keenly. "What did you say to this man Crawford?" he demanded in his queer, halting English.

"I told him that I'd managed to escape from Sujan," came the reply. "My story was correct in most of its details, but I didn't tell him that I'd struck a bargain with Tanaga, the high priest of your race. Nor did I tell him that you were with me, Pasha. He musn't know that, because I've pretended to join up with him again."

The native directed an ominous glance at him.

"Wheeler," he said, "I warn you once more that you had better not try any tricks. If Tanaga should cease to hear from me, he will send someone here to take my place and hound you to your doom."

Wheeler gestured impatiently. "Now listen," he expostulated. "What have I to gain by double-crossin' you and Tanaga? Didn't Tanaga promise me that if I brought the stallion back to Sujan I'd be richly rewarded in gold an' jewels? Yeah, and all that Crawford would pay me is a mangy coupla hundred dollars. So, naturally, I ain't gonna let you down, am I? Naturally, I'm gonna play straight with the highest bidder, ain't I?"

Pasha eyed him steadfastly for a moment, and then he inclined his head.

"Good!" he murmured. "I only wished to make sure that you understood the position fully, Wheeler."

Behind the Scenes

IT was Saturday afternoon, and a crowd of enthusiastic spectators was watching the first chukker of the game between Frank Bradley's team and a side raised by Crawford.

The match was being played at top pace, and every man in both teams seemed to be inspired by a tremendous keenness. Clods of earth were being thrown up by the thundering hoofs of their ponies as they galloped hither and thither, and the crack of mallet against ball resounded across the field at intervals of every two or three seconds.

The interest of the onlookers, however, was largely concentrated upon the rival skippers, Crawford and Frank Bradley. For again and again these two figured prominently in the play, matching their skill with the mallet and their talents as horsemen one against the other.

The mounts which carried them seemed to have a perfect understanding with their riders. Indeed, it was as if men and beasts were acting to the impulse of the same mind, so swiftly was a movement of the rein or a touch of the heel obeyed. Yet, in those sharp duels which took place between Frank and Crawford, it was generally the younger man who came off with the honours.

Playing at position No. 3, which is the most important berth in any polo team, Frank was giving an exhibition that could not have been surpassed. Up with his two forwards in attack or helping No. 4 to defend the goal just as the run of the game required, he had the spectators on their toes time after time with the sheer brilliance of his tactics.

Roek-like in defence, dangerously thrustful whenever he dashed up-field to attempt a score, he dominated that first chukker from the start to finish, and earned the acclaim of the crowd. At the same time he was well aware that the

impressive performance which he was giving was due in no small measure to the stallion he was riding.

He had been pretty certain before the game had begun that the black would acquit himself well. But the animal was exceeding all expectations, and it was small wonder that Crawford was beaten so frequently in his efforts to obtain a shot at goal. Frank Bradley's superiority as a player was not entirely responsible for that—a fair proportion of the credit was merited by Rex.

As for Crawford, he had realised from the first moment of setting eyes on the stallion that Mitchell's information had not been false. It was the god horse of Sujan all right, and the sight of Frank Bradley on it had aroused in him a savage anger, an anger which had been fanned during those occasions when the younger man had outshone him.

He had never liked Frank Bradley. Prior to Frank joining the Bruce Riding Academy and taking up polo, the name of Crawford had been mentioned in tones of awe by followers of the game. But now it was Bradley who was the favourite with the crowd, and Crawford was almost a back number.

And to-day, seeing Frank astride the god horse, Rex, Crawford's antagonism was heightened considerably, even though he knew that the stallion would not be long in the younger man's possession if all went well.

With such ugly reflections passing through his mind, it was scarcely surprising that Crawford resorted to unsavoury measures during the closing stages of the chukker. A thoroughly bad sportsman at heart, the man had never shown any scruples regarding the methods he adopted when an opponent proved too clever for him.

The spectators were quick to notice the streak of viciousness that revealed itself in his play, and none observed it more quickly than Bruce, the head of the academy, who was occupying a grand-stand seat in the directors' box.

Dorothy was beside him, and he spoke to her in a grim undertone.

"Crawford's at it again," he said. "I don't like those rough tactics he's so fond of using. There! Did you see him then—trying to crowd young Bradley off the ball? That's what I call dangerous play. It's liable to cause a bad accident."

The girl compressed her lips. "I know, dad," she agreed. "And Crawford's always the same when he's up against Frank. I haven't any time for that man. He's a good player on his day, but he just hates to be on the losing side."

She continued to watch the game—a trifle anxiously, for Crawford was making a nerve-racking spectacle of it now, and she could not help uttering a sigh of relief when that first chukker ended without any serious spill taking place.

Down on the field, Frank Bradley centered to the side-line and dismounted from Rex, surrendering him to the care of Jensen. Then, even as the wealthy young sportsman was in the act of climbing astride a fresh pony, he heard the familiar voice of Crawford behind him.

"A goal up in the first chukker," the rancher grunted, referring to a score that Frank had made. "You're kind of lucky to-day, aren't you, Bradley?"

Frank grinned at him. He was completely unperturbed by the ominous tactics that Crawford had been employing.

"Anybody would be lucky with a horse like that stallion," he commented. Swinging himself into the saddle of the horse that was his second string, he

spurred close to Rex and caressed the black Arabian's sleek muzzle while Crawford looked on venomously.

"Yes," Frank said to the magnificent creature that had carried him through the opening chukker, "anybody would be lucky with a horse like you—wouldn't they, old boy?"

Rex whinnied gently, and with a smile Frank turned to address Jensen.

"Make sure that you give him a good rub down," he declared. "He's certainly earned it."

"I'll give him a good rub down all right, Mr. Bradley, sir," the stable-hand answered, and a moment later Frank was riding back on to the pitch for the next chukker.

The other three members of his team centered out to their positions as well, and Crawford and his colleagues also took the field. At the touchline Jensen paused to watch the commencement of the second period. Then, as the game was resumed, he marched Rex off in the direction of the stables.

No one else was visible in the neighbourhood of the stables as Jensen led the god horse into his stall, for everyone was interested in the match that was in progress. But Jensen had scarcely disappeared when three men slunk round a corner into view.

They were Wheeler, Jones, and Mitchell, the last-named carrying three ropes that had been gathered into coils, and with wary tread they began to move along the front of the stables.

"That guy Jensen took the black Arabian into the end stall," Mitchell whispered to his accomplices. "When we get there, you fellows can handle him while I keep watch outside. Is that clear?"

The others nodded, and the three men crept on. Then, just as they were passing a stall which they imagined to be empty, they heard a menacing growl and looked in to see a grey wolfhound glaring up at them from behind the lower half of a double door.

The dog had been eating some food that was heaped on a platter, but had raised his alert head at the sound of footsteps, and now, on perceiving the animal, Jones and Mitchell recognised him immediately as the wolfhound which had attacked them at the entrance to the abandoned mine.

Rinty recognised them, too, and his growl quickened to a threatening, hostile bark. Another instant and he would have been leaping over the transom in an irresistible onslaught, but remembering the damage that had been done to his wrists Mitchell acted with the promptness of a badly frightened man.

Giving vent to a hoarse ejaculation, he clutched the top half of the stable door and slammed it shut. Then, fastening it, he exchanged a scared glance with Jones.

"That same cursed dog!" he panted. "Yeah, an' listen to the racket he's kickin' up!" Jones bit out. "It's liable to make Jensen suspicious. We'd better hurry up an' get this job over."

Within the locked stable Rinty was hurling himself bodily at the door and barking furiously, and, gritting their teeth as they realised that the din would most probably spoil their plans, Mitchell and Jones hastened forward with Wheeler close behind them.

They reached the stall into which Jensen had taken Rex, and as they peered into it cautiously they saw the stable-hand standing beside the black Arabian. He had a chamois rag in his fist, and was wiping away the perspiration that lathered the horse's sleek but powerful form, and, while engrossed upon this task, he was quietly humming the refrain of a popular melody.

The barking of Rinty was still audible to Mitchell, Jones, and Wheeler, but the stable-hand apparently did not hear it, or, if he did, he certainly paid no heed to it.

Mitchell looked at Wheeler and Jones in a satisfied manner, and then he made a sign, whereupon his confederates drew out a couple of heavy revolvers and grasped them by the barrels, club-fashion.

Next moment they had pushed open the door of the stall, and even as it was swinging back on its hinges they pounced on the unsuspecting Jensen and struck him down.

The stable-hand was taken completely unawares. He had no time even to look round and catch as much as a glimpse of his assailants before Jones' gun-butt descended upon his skull, and as he was going down he received a second blow—from Wheeler this time.

Falling, Jensen lay in the straw that matted the floor of the stable. Yet he was still partially conscious, and with a groan on his lips he was feebly attempting to rise when Jones hit him again.

The sickening impact of that third blow was too much for the stable-hand, and his mind became a blank. He was quite limp when Jones and Wheeler pulled him to his feet and wrapped his arms around their necks, supporting him between them.

"All right, get him over in that corner," jerked Wheeler.

Mitchell had remained just outside the stable door and was glancing to and fro, ready to give the alarm if anyone approached. But the coast was clear, and after a second or two he peered into the stall to follow the movements of his confederates.

The pair of them were dragging Jensen to the far end of the stable, and they dumped him down beside the manger. Then they returned to the door at which Mitchell was standing, being careful to steer clear of Rex, for the stallion had become restive.

"Quick, the ropes!" said Jones.

Mitchell handed over a couple of lariats, one to Jones and one to Wheeler, and soon Rex's head was snared by the nooses of those lariats. And though the horse began to resist immediately it felt the rawhide thongs tightening upon it, it was hauled out into the open after a brief struggle.

Mitchell now threw his own lasso over it, and joined his accomplices in the tussle, which was sharp and fierce while it lasted. But the three men contrived to manoeuvre Rex round the stable to a hitch-rail where three other horses were standing.

The horses in question belonged to the thieves, and Jones and Wheeler mounted theirs, then closed in on the captive stallion and sandwiched the plunging animal.

"Can you handle him?" gasped Mitchell, still on foot.

Jones and Wheeler were shortening their grip on their lassoes.

"Yeah," the former said tersely. "We can handle him all right. Slip your lariat, Mitchell, an' stand clear. We're practically on our way."

Deftly Mitchell disengaged his rope and coiled it on his arm.

"Okay, boys!" he stated, moving aside. "I'll stick around and tip off Crawford that the job's done."

"And will he be pleased!" Jones chuckled. "Come on, Wheeler. See you later at the ranch, Mitchell."

Pressing against Rex's flanks, the two horsemen rode off with him and took the east trail. As for Mitchell, he stood and watched them until a dip in the road had hidden them from sight, and then, hanging his lasso on his brone's saddle-peg, he sauntered casually round to the front of the stables again.

In one of the stalls he could hear Rinty barking vociferously, but as he walked on in the direction of the polo field the sound grew faint, and in its place there arose to the ears of Mitchell the confused tumult of the crowd which was watching the game between Crawford's team and the side led by Frank Bradley.

There was a lull in that tumult even as Mitchell was approaching the pitch, however, and on arrival at the touchline he saw Crawford appealing for the match to be held up. It was an appeal which was immediately allowed when it was discovered that the rancher had broken his mallet in an encounter with Frank a moment before, and as he cantered to the side of the field to obtain a fresh stick Mitchell succeeded in drawing close to him.

Crawford observed him at once, and, while a new mallet was being fetched, he leaned down from the saddle and addressed his hireling in an undertone.

"Any news for me?" he grunted.

"Yeah," Mitchell answered out of the corner of his mouth. "Jones and Wheeler are on the way to the ranch with the black Arabian, boss."

Crawford's eyes gleamed with satisfaction, and then he bent still closer to the other man.

"Did you have any trouble at all?" he asked.

Mitchell shook his head and smiled a twisted smile.

"Nope," was his reply. "Leastways, none to speak of. Jensen the stable-hand never saw us. We sneaked up on him and knocked him cold afore he could even turn around, boss."

A look of keen approval crossed the rancher's face, and he laid a hand on his employee's shoulder.

"Nico work," he said. "All right, I'll see you after the match."

Thirty seconds later Crawford was

back in midfield and play was in progress again, and, seeking the best vantage point that was available, Mitchell settled down to follow the remainder of the second chukker.

The score was still in the Bradley team's favour, and it was not long before Mitchell formed the opinion that Crawford's side had little chance of drawing level, for even though Frank was no longer on Rex he was as great a menace as ever to his opponents.

Nor was it long before Mitchell realised that Crawford was out to beat Frank Bradley by fair means or foul. He was obviously making a mark of the younger fellow, and was bearing down on him with dangerous foolhardiness every time he was anywhere near the ball.

Mitchell fingered his chin thoughtfully. He himself was no prude, to quibble at dirty play. But he reckoned Crawford might show a little more cleverness in his methods. Funny how Crawford seemed to lose his self-control on occasion—a man who was pretty smart in the usual way, too. He just hated anyone to get the better of him, whether it was in sport or in business.

Well, Frank Bradley could certainly make rings around him at polo, Mitchell reflected. Nobody could deny that.

"That guy Crawford is deliberately following Bradley!" Mitchell heard an irate bystander exclaim. "Look at him! He's trying to bullock him down whenever Bradley seems like making a score."

There was an angry murmur of agreement from several other spectators.

"He's playing the man, not the ball!" one of them snapped. "That's not polo—not as the average sportsman knows it, anyhow. Crawford ought to be ruled out of the game!"

"You're dead right," a third on-looker declared. "He's a menace, and if he goes on like this there's liable to be a nasty spill."

Even as those words were spoken Frank Bradley and Crawford were racing for the ball, which had just been driven in the direction of the losing team's goal. They were galloping neck and neck at the moment, but in the course of that swift dash down the centre of the field Frank seemed to pull slightly ahead, and he was lifting his mallet to send in a shot when his opponent swerved into him.

It was a heavy charge, and both horses reeled from the shock. Next second Frank's pony was crashing to earth, and a gasp of horror went up from the crowd as the animal was seen to roll over the prostrate figure of its rider.

(To be continued. By permission of Associated British Film Distributors, Ltd., starring Kane Richmond, Norma Taylor and Rex and Rinty.)

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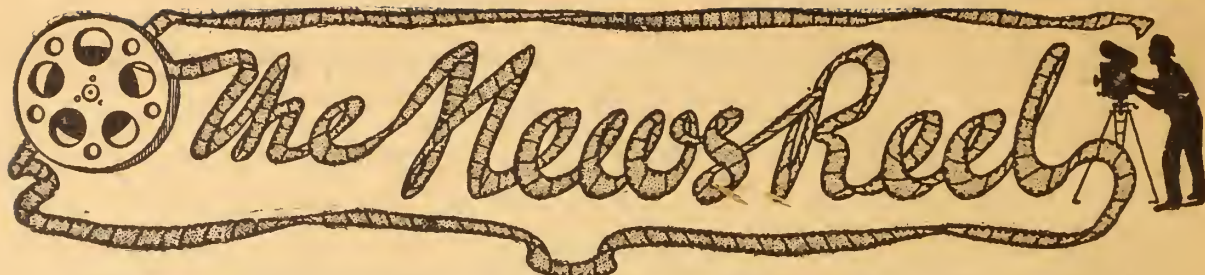
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All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 218, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Beery's Broad-jumping Frogs Give Hollywood New Sport

Hollywood film folk have taken up the sport of frog-racing and broad-jumping. The new fad was introduced by Wallace Beery, who captured six giant frogs, ranging from one foot to two feet in length, in the lake of the C. C. Moore estate in Santa Cruz, where scenes for "Old Hutch" were being filmed.

Spencer Tracy, Robert Montgomery, James Stewart, and Director J. Walter Ruben are searching all Southern California in the hope of finding frogs that can beat Beery's best broad-jumper. To date, Stewart and Ruben have the largest "racing" stable of all, with ten frogs apiece.

The Frog Handicap was to be held at once, but several of the owners have asked for added time to get their "steeds" in condition.

Walk on Hands to Keep Waist

Hollywood's stars have told the world about a hundred and one ways to keep in physical condition and retain slim waist-lines, but it remained for Henry Fonda to spring a new one, which he claims is best of all.

He walks on his hands ten minutes a day!

Fonda learned the trick several years ago when a student at the University of Minnesota.

"You don't have to be an acrobat to do it," says the Walter Wanger Paramount star, who has everybody in the unit filming "Spendthrift" trying his system.

Hand-walking is like learning to ride a bicycle, declares Fonda. You take a few tumbles until you acquire the knack of it—and then it's simple.

His tip to beginners' is to start on a lawn or a thick rug and bar spectators.

They Seek Him Here

At the rate of more than one hundred a day, two thousand children have been interviewed by David O. Selznick in the search for child actors to portray the leading rôles in "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer." So far only four aspirants have merited screen tests.

While Selznick and William Wellman, the director, conduct studio interviews, other Selznick International executives are touring all parts of California, visiting swimming pools, playgrounds, beaches, parks, and similar spots where children are found. Even the newsboys delivering papers in the studio have been given interviews. But still the hunt goes on.

Selznick is taking great pains to ensure that Mark Twain's admirers should have no cause for complaint on the grounds of authenticity. A camera unit has just returned by plane to Hollywood from a 1,863-mile tour along the banks of the Mississippi, where scenes described in the book were filmed.

"Old Hutch" Company Transforms Rented Farm

Wallace Beery can have the job of foreman on any ranch in Santa Cruz November 7th, 1936.

County, and not because he's a motion-picture star!

When the owners of the Bartlett Ranch in Isabel Grove, situated in Northern California, rented the estate to the "Old Hutch" company, they didn't expect the Hollywood city folk to prove such expert farmers.

Returning from a vacation, the owners found a great change in their ranch. Many acres of fallow field had been ploughed and sown, fences had been set up, and the whole film location acreage had taken on the appearance of a model farm.

Director J. Walter Ruben explained that the script for the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture called for Beery to make a complete change in the farm, including the ploughing and sowing.

To the ranchers' amazement that film folk could farm so expertly, Beery explained that he owned and supervised two farms of his own in San Fernando Valley.

Business as Usual

Here's another of those unusual circumstances that make history at motion-picture studios.

For several of the most important scenes for Paramount's "Johnny Gets His Gun," a practical machine shop was required. One was found in Los Angeles and moved to the studio.

It took four days to transport it, set it up, and get it into perfect working order. The machinery, which included a four-ton lathe, is the property of Harry Reynolds, who leased it to the studio because his business was slack.

No sooner had he parted with it than orders began pouring into his office. One was from his best customer, an aeroplane factory, which demanded the immediate delivery of a number of parts.

Reynolds was temporarily stuck, but solved his problem by making arrangements to turn out the parts at the studio at night after the company, including Ralph Bellamy, Katherine Locke, little David Holt, and Andy Clyde, had quit work for the day.

Chimp Needs Make-up

"Jiggs," chimpanzee who has worked with a score of stars and featured players during his four years on the screen, has had an attack of temperament since going to work with Dorothy Lamour, Ray Milland, and Sir Guy Standing in Paramount's "Girl of the Jungle," now on location at Brent's Crag, in the Santa Monica mountains.

He refuses to work unless properly made-up.

Jiggs, who knows and reacts to all motion-picture terminology, such as "camera," "cut," and "wrap 'em up"—the latter meaning to finish work for the day—insists on the following make-up before going into a scene with Miss Lamour:

Lamp black to darken his coat.
Mineral oil to make it shiny.

Brown make-up on his face to lighten it up and make him stand out among other monkeys working in the production.

Enraged Indians Make Trouble on Location

A dramatic story of facing a horde of enraged Indians, worked up to a near-frenzy by the beating of an improvised war-drum, was told by a handful of relieved Hollywood movie men on their return from the Montana location for Cecil B. DeMille's picture, "The Plainsman," the other day.

It was, they say, the last day of filming. The rest of the Hollywood troupe including the stars, Gary Cooper and Jean Arthur, had been sent home the day before. Shooting was finished; the big quartermaster's tent where the props were housed on the banks of the Tongue River was being torn down, and the 1,000 Cheyenne braves who worked in the picture were gathered to receive their final pay.

An argument arose between the chiefs and Eugene Hornbostel, business manager for the location company. Voices were raised. Epithets were shouted in the Cheyenne tongue. Spears were brandished and fists raised. Hornbostel tells that he felt a curiously hot rage rising in his own breast. Then Harry Woodward, a transportation man, pulled him aside.

"Listen," said Woodward. "Hear that?"

"Hear what?" And then Hornbostel was conscious of the rhythmic beating of a drum, hollow and relentless, in the near distance.

"Look!" said the man at his side.

Hornbostel saw pointed out to him an Indian, dressed in the war paint and feathered bonnet he had worn in the movie scene, beating steadily on the top of a gasoline drum. The sound, almost inaudible in the hubbub at the prop tent, had been working subtly at the nerves of everyone within hearing distance.

Hornbostel picked up a revolver and twirled it on his thumb over a table piled with notes totalling more than 3,000 dollars.

"Get out of here, all of you!" he told the Indians. "I'll give your pay to Dusty Buffalo, president of your council, and you can get it from him. Clear out!"

In the meantime Woodward had chased the drumming Indian from his improvised tom-tom—chased him all the way across the river.

On hearing Hornbostel's ultimatum, not an Indian at the prop tent moved. Then, as he gripped the butt of the revolver in his hand and levelled the barrel at them, they began to drift away. In fifteen minutes they had gone and the handful of tense white men surrounding Hornbostel began to breathe easier.

As they tell the story now, they believed themselves in one of the tightest spots of their lives.

“THE MINE WITH THE IRON DOOR”

(Continued from page 18)

“You took it, David?” she gasped, staring at him. “But why?”

“I wanted to keep the gold shut away from the world for the harm it might do.” He shrugged his shoulders with an air of resignation. “But that was wrong, so, Marta, I’m going to give you the treasure of San Capello. Come, I’ll show you!”

He opened the door of what appeared to be a clothes cupboard, and from a shelf in it he slipped a six-shooter into his pocket, then went back to her with an electric torch in his left hand.

“I built this house to conceal the entrance to the mine,” he said, leading her into the cupboard. “I was very foolish then.”

“You mean it’s here?”

“You shall see.”

He pulled aside some coats and overcoats suspended on hangers, and opened a rough door they had concealed. Beyond it was a room hardly any larger than the cupboard, and on the other side of it another door. He motioned to her to precede him, then closed the cupboard door and opened the inner one.

The light of the torch shone upon uneven steps of rock that led downwards between walls of rock, and he helped her down the steps into an atmosphere that seemed stale and unpleasant.

More than fifty steps were descended, and then the rays of the torch lit up a great door of iron set in the solid rock before them, its rusty surface quaintly covered with a lattice-work of bars.

“The Iron Door!” cried Marta.

“Yes,” said Burton.

“Oh, Bob will be so happy!”

“Yes, Bob will be happy.” Burton inserted a key in the lock of the door and turned it, then tugged at the handle below the lock and the heavy door opened. “Come, Marta!”

Saved!

THAD HILL was sitting on the porch of his cabin, snoking his pipe, when Bob and Dempsey returned from their climb. Dempsey went on to the camp with the avowed intention of packing his things, but Bob stepped up on to the porch.

“Where’s Marta?” he inquired.

“She left a while ago with David,” Thad replied.

“Will she be back soon?”

“Well, she oughta be—they’ve been gone some time now. Sit down, boy.”

There was a second chair on the porch, and Bob was not sorry to sink down on it after his exertions. He took out his own pipe and filled it, and Thad presently explained to him why he was idling away the morning.

“And do you really believe Dr. Burton threw that gold in the stream?” asked Bob.

“Well,” said Thad, “I never did find much there at a time. Just kinda dribs and drabs, like it mighta been ladled out.”

“Do you suppose that—?”

“What?”

Bob was afraid it was rather a wild idea that had entered his head, born of the blazing sunlight he had seen on the panes of one of the windows of Burton’s cabin, and decided not to mention it.

“Oh, nothing,” he said. “I was just wondering.”

He sat turning the idea over in his mind for several minutes, then rose abruptly to his feet.

“I think I’ll have a little talk with Dr. Burton,” he decided.

“Uhuh,” nodded Thad. “And bring Marta back with you.”

Marta, at that moment, had passed beyond the iron door into what seemed to be a great subterranean cavern rather than a mine, and she shivered a little as she waited in the darkness while the doctor closed the door.

“Spooky, isn’t it?” she murmured.

“Don’t be afraid,” said he.

“I’m not,” she assured him. “I’m just excited. I—I can’t believe it, David. It’s just like a dream!”

“We must have plenty of light,” he said. “Don’t move!”

She remained perfectly still while he struck matches and lit a number of candles, some of which stood upon ledges of rock and some upon great wooden chests and boxes.

The size of the cavern surprised her; as it became illuminated the presence of the treasure became manifest. Chests and boxes and caskets were littered all over the vast floor, and some of them were open, and their contents glittered.

“Wonderful!” she breathed.

“We must have plenty of light,” Burton said again. “You can’t see the gold in the dark.”

He lit more candles, till at least a dozen were flaring, and then Marta looked down into one of the open chests and cried:

“Oh, look, David!”

“Pick it up,” said Burton, “it can’t hurt you.”

She picked up a nugget of pure gold—one of a thousand nuggets in the chest—and she was gazing at it with rapture when he stooped over another chest and began to toss nuggets and ancient Spanish gold coins in all directions. She dropped the nugget and covered her back against a tall box, alarmed by the strange expression on his face.

“What frightened you, Marta?” he asked, walking towards the other side of the box.

“You—you look so strange in that light, David,” she faltered.

He ruffled his grey hair with his hands and leaned an arm on the box, facing her. A candle flared between them, and there was madness in his eyes.

“There it is!” he said in a voice that rose almost to a screech. “Gold! Gold that everyone wants so much! There! The cause of greed, treachery,

hate, murder! Gold! Take it—touch it! It’s yours! But you can’t eat it! You can’t drink it! You can’t breathe it! You must learn about this gold—I must teach you!”

He raised his hands.

“This gold—all this gold that you see here—isn’t worth one little ray of sunshine—one clean breath of air—one glimpse of the blue sky!”

Bob was hammering on the front door of the cabin, but the noise did not penetrate to that remote and underground place. Marta gazed fearfully at the man whose eyes were boring into her own, and she was filled with fear of him.

“I never harmed you, David,” she said shakily. “You’ve always told me you love me.”

“Each man kills the thing he loves,” Burton quoted in a way that made her blood run cold, “by each let this be heard. Some do it with a bitter look, some with a gentle word. The coward does it with a kiss, the brave man with a sword—” He broke off and moved round the box to her.

“Each man kills the thing he loves!” Bob had entered the cabin, calling Burton’s name, but he found the living-room deserted, and on the table lay the cross. He picked it up, wondering how it got there, and he looked at the

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symbols engraved upon it, then mounted the steps again and stood in the front doorway, looking up to the pole he had left in the hole in the ledge of rock above God's Pinnacle.

He looked at the window upon which the sun had shone, and he went to it and peered through its panes. In a direct line from the pole, through the window, stood the door of the cupboard.

Re-entering the cabin, he made straight for the cupboard and dived into it. He pulled aside the coats and overcoats, just as Burton had done, and he found the door they had concealed.

He found the inner door and opened it, and in the light of matches which he struck, he saw the steps and descended them to the door of iron.

Burton had caught hold of Marta, and she was struggling to free herself from his grip.

"Let me go, David!" she screamed. "Let me go! Let me go!"

Bob heard and was alarmed.

"Marta!" he shouted, and tried to open the iron door.

"Let me go! Let me go! Let me go!" shrieked Marta, fighting frantically to get away from the madman who held her; and then Bob banged on the iron door, and Burton let go of her to snatch out his gun.

The gun was levelled at her, but she flew to the door and tugged back the bolt that held it.

"Look out, Bob!" she shrieked. "He's insane!"

The door swung wide, and the gun in Burton's hand blazed again and again. But Bob had heard Marta's warning and was down on his hands and knees, so that the bullets whizzed harmlessly over his head.

He heard the trigger click on an empty chamber of the gun, and then he was up in a flash, and hurled himself bodily upon the man who had tried to kill him.

They crashed down together upon the uneven floor of rock, but Bob was uppermost and suffered no hurt, whereas Burton struck the back of his head against a spike of granite that tore a jagged wound and knocked him out.

Bob wrenched the gun from the hand that held it, tossed it on to a nearby chest and got to his knees. Burton's eyes were closed.

"Marta, are you all right?" Bob called out anxiously.

Marta ran to him from the iron door, behind which she had crouched as it was opened, and he sprang up and took her in his arms.

"Oh, Bob," she cried, clinging to him, "he—he was going to keep me here with the gold!"

A Wonderful Occasion

A FORTNIGHT after that eventful morning a crowd of considerable size congregated outside the Ralston City Hall, and a band played. Inside the hall, Bob and Marta were being married with much pomp and ceremony which had been thrust upon them against their wishes. The whole town was making holiday.

Flags and banners were waving in the streets; flags decorated the porch of the City Hall, and reporters and newspaper photographers had arrived from all over the country.

"Here they come!" cried a voice.

Bob emerged from the City Hall with his bride on his arm, and the judge who had married them was close behind them. The crowd cheered; the reporters and the Press photographers surged to the steps.

"Have a heart, Mr. Harvey!" shouted

the first of the reporters to reach Bob's side. "Give us a break, will you? My paper expects me to get a story, and the 'Ralston City News' certainly deserves first chance. Can you tell us how you uncovered the mine?"

Cameras clicked; and other newspaper men gathered round, clamouring for information.

"Now wait a minute, gentlemen," pleaded Bob. "I've already told you everything I know."

"Well, what about Dr. Burton?" demanded the representative of the "Ralston City News." "Is he going to come in for some of the fortune? Where is he?"

"Dr. Burton," Bob replied, "is in a private sanatorium, recovering from a nervous breakdown. We hope he'll be well very soon."

He forced his way down the steps with Marta, making for an open car that was waiting to convey them to the City of Phoenix. Thad Hill followed them.

The car was reached, and Thad scrambled up beside the driver. But Marta was photographed several times upon the running-board before she was permitted to take her seat in the hack, and a reporter from Tucson grabbed hold of Bob.

"What are you going to do with all that gold, Mr. Harvey?" he inquired.

"Take it to the Mint," Bob replied with a grin.

"How're you gonna get it there?"

"My partner, Mr. Dempsey, will take care of that," said Bob. "Oh, here he comes now!"

Along the street, from the general direction of Monk's Canyon, came a string of armoured cars, escorted by motor-cycle policemen. Inside the armoured cars was the treasure of San Capello, and the crowd knew it and shouted. Howard Dempsey jumped down from beside the uniformed driver of the leading car and scrambled into the open tourer, beaming all over his fat face.

"How am I doin'?" he boomed.

He was wearing his lounge suit and bowler hat, in conjunction with a brand-new dove-grey waistcoat, and two white roses were in his buttonhole.

"Neat, but gaudy," said Bob.

The armoured cars were all lined up, waiting for the touring car to lead the way to the capital of the sun-drenched State of Arizona.

"Well, we're all set, aren't we?" Bob shouted. "You all right, grandpa?"

"I'm fine," Thad replied over his shoulder, and the driver was about to start the engine when the local postmaster came squeezing his way to the side of the car with quite a pile of telegrams in his hand.

"Oh, Mr. Harvey!" he cried.

"Right here," said Bob.

"A bunch o' wires for you, sir."

Dempsey rewarded the postmaster and took the telegrams. Marta helped to open them, as well as Bob, and nearly all of them proved to be from delighted shareholders in the Eureka Discovery Corporation.

Bob read one of them aloud:

"Proud to be your secretary. On behalf of myself and the other shareholders, I offer my heartiest congratulations. How much will I make on my ninety dollars?—CARRIE DAILEY."

"Step on it, driver!" urged Bob; and amid the plaudits of the crowd the touring car moved on along the street, the armoured cars followed, and the police escort brought up the rear.

(By permission of Columbia Pictures Corporation, Ltd., starring Richard Arlen and Cecilia Parker.)

"BENGAL TIGER"

(Continued from page 8)

Without wasting time on words Cliff darted towards the blazing building, and firemen, seeing his intention, rushed forward to try to stop him, but he swept them to one side.

Valiantly he fought his way through the flames.

"Joe! Where are you?" he shouted hoarsely. He might not have found Joe if he had not stumbled. Looking down, a flame showed him a huge rafter across a still figure. Cliff flung the rafter to one side and lifted Joe Larson to his feet. Coughing violently the big man threw Joe across his shoulders. He staggered back through the flames with his burden.

Blazing beams and rafters missed them by inches. What a cheer went up when Cliff lunged out of the smoke and fire, carrying Joe. He stumbled and fell. Firemen rushed forward and dragged the two badly burnt men away from the flames.

Laura flung herself down beside Joe Larson.

Cliff Ballenger staggered to his feet.

"Cliff, are you hurt?" demanded Hinsdale.

"I'm all right." Cliff managed a smile. "Joe's the guy that needs help." Then he glowered round. "What are you guys standing round gaping at me for? Come on, get Joe to my house and call a doctor."

Joe Larson's eyes flickered open, they looked at Laura, and then the acrobatic star lapsed into unconsciousness.

Joe Larson was carried to Cliff's house, undressed and got into bed. The doctor arrived and at once got busy. Though blood trickled down Cliff's face he would not tend to his own hurts.

At last the doctor got up.

"He's pretty well banged about, but he'll pull through," he reported. "He has a badly smashed shoulder and very deep burns. He must have absolute quiet and constant attention."

"He'll get it," Cliff said at once. "He'll have everything he needs here. Just leave instructions about what's to be done."

"All right." The doctor saw Cliff sway. "Now I want to have a look at you."

"Say, there's nothing wrong with me, doc—just toasted a little."

"Please, Cliff," begged Laura. "Let the doctor look at you. I'll sit here with Joe."

"Okay!"

The doctor went out of the room, and Cliff was about to close the door when he heard a faint whisper: "Laura!" Cliff turned and saw that Laura was bending over the bed.

"I'm here, Joe."

"Take good care of him!" Cliff called out and closed the door.

"Laura—Laura darling!" muttered Joe feverishly.

"Hush, Joe!" Laura gave an apprehensive glance at the closed door. Very gently she began to caress Joe's forehead with her soft fingers. The patient relaxed and began to breathe evenly.

Thrown to the Tiger

IT was a tough fight saving Joe Larson, and Laura was with the sick man most of the day and the night. She would not let Cliff get in another nurse. At last the doctor reported Joe out of danger, though he

must not get out of bed for at least a week.

Cliff Ballenger was moody these days. The big fellow seemed to sense that something was wrong, and yet did not know what it was. Actually he was jealous of the tremendous fuss that Laura was making over Joe, and yet the next moment blaming himself for daring to be jealous of his friend.

Satan had reverted to type after the fire, and was so dangerous that Hinsdale almost thought about selling the beast. Cliff Ballenger decided that by making the tiger work he might banish the jealousy that was eating at his soul. Day after day he tried to subdue the snarling creature.

"Why don't you forget it, Cliff?" Hinsdale said one evening. "That cat's no good. He won't work."

"He'll work!" Cliff gritted out between clenched teeth. "I'll break him if I have to kill him."

One night Joe Larson, almost recovered, except for a bandaged head, and arm in a sling, paced his bed-room smoking furiously. He turned quickly as there came a light tap on his door and Laura appeared in a dressing-gown. Joe crushed out his cigarette.

"I thought you were asleep."
"I couldn't sleep!" She clutched at his shoulders. "Joe, it's driving me crazy. Cliff's out there again—trying to break that tiger—night and day he's at it. It's—it's not human. He's getting worse, Joe. It's become an obsession with him—he's getting to be like they are—like the animals—brutal—terrible!"

"Laura, you musn't feel that way about him."

"I can't help it, Joe. I've tried—you knew that." She stared at him beseechingly. "Take me away from here, Joe!"

"Laura, it would kill him if you left him." Joe needed all his strength to speak so calmly. "Think what he's done for both of us. He not only saved my life—"

"Don't you think I realise what he's done?" Piercely Laura interrupted.

"He took me out of a cell—gave me everything he had to give, but I don't—I can't love him, Joe."

Joe pushed her gently away.
"There's only one thing to do." He spoke with resolution. "I'm clearing out of here—to-night!"

"And leave me here?" sobbed Laura.
"Yes."

"That'll be grand for me."

"Do you think it'll be easy for me?" He spoke angrily. "Wherever I go I'll see you with him." He looked intently down at her. "But, Laura, you've got your duty to do by Cliff. You've got to stick."

"You're right, Joe." She gave a resigned sigh. "I'll stick." Tears trickled down her cheeks, but she managed a little smile. "I'll help you pack."

That night Cliff Ballenger, by sheer daring and harsh ruthlessness, forced the tiger to obey his will. He lashed the whip and shouted threats until Satan at last obeyed his commands. He rushed out of the cage to tell Laura and Joe the news—he had licked the cat at last.

Joe's bag was packed.
"Keep your chin up, kid." Joe tried to speak casually. He held out his hand. "So-long, Laura!"

She took his hand and tried to smile bravely.

"So-long!"
Then they stared at each other, unable to keep up the gallant pretence.

"Oh, Joe, we can't say good-bye like

(Continued overleaf)

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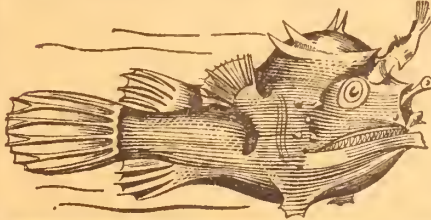


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that!" cried the girl, and held out her arms. "Joe!"

He held her close for a long moment. A sound made them break apart and stare towards the door. There stood Cliff Ballenger. Slowly they saw incredulity give way to murderous rage.

"You dirty, double-crossing—"

Cliff strode forward, his fists clenched and his jaw stuck out aggressively.

"Now wait a minute, Cliff—" began Joe.

"What for?" raged Ballenger, and, mad with jealous rage, he felled Joe with a murderous hook.

"Cliff!" screamed Laura.

The animal trainer pushed his wife violently away, leaned down, picked up Larson, and slung the limp body across his shoulders.

"Cliff, are you crazy? What are you going to do?"

"Shut up!" he blazed at her, and charged out of the room with his unconscious burden.

Cliff Ballenger ran all the way to the circus. Revengo made him oblivious of the wickedness of his action, and an evil genius had whispered a revenge that should satisfy any man.

The practice cage was empty, and so was the great rehearsal tent, except for its cages of animals. Cliff flung open the door and dumped Larson on the sawdust, then slammed the door. He stumped away to Satan's cage, which had the chute to the practice cage connected. The tiger snarled at him, and that made Cliff laugh hoarsely. He opened the door of the chute.

"Okay, Satan—we'll let you settle this!"

With a long pole he prodded the sleepy tiger into activity, and grinned as Satan went down the chute into the practice cage.

Laura, wild and distraught, rushed up to her husband.

"Cliff!" She gripped his arm. "You've got to listen to me. It was my fault. Joe was leaving." She shook him with hysterical strength. "Do you hear—leaving? Because he wouldn't double-cross you. I begged him to take me away, but he wouldn't—even though he loves me—because he loves you, too, Cliff."

"You're lying!"

"What you saw was good-bye. He had his bag packed—I helped him pack

it. I—" Suddenly she saw through the bars the prone figure of Joe Larson and creeping slowly towards the body the smister form of Satan. "Cliff, you've got to save him!" screamed Laura. "I love him! Do you understand? I love him!"

Frantic, she rushed to the cage door and tried to tear it open. That seemed to bring Cliff to his senses, for he rushed up to her and dragged her away. He wrenched open the door, and, with the pole as his only weapon, entered the cage.

"Get back there, Satan!" he rapped out.

The tiger backed away from the body, snarling a defiance. Cliff poked the pole at the tiger, and, reaching down, got a grip of Larson's collar. Satan clawed at the pole. Laura, terror-stricken, clung to the bars of the cage.

Slowly Cliff backed towards the door, dragging Larson and keeping the tiger off with the pole. Laura opened the cage door and waited. Satan made a leap, but the pole jarred against his teeth. Spitting and snarling, the tiger crouched, sensing that something was different—the brute man had not got his whip.

Cliff jerked Larson, who was now half-conscious, to his feet, and with his left arm round the aerial star shuffled him towards the open door. Laura used her strong arms to help support Joe.

"Get him out!" rapped out Cliff, "while I keep Satan off!"

Satan stalked forward, preparing for another leap. Cliff released his grip of Larson, and, exerting all her strength, Laura drew the half-conscious man out

of the cage. As Ballenger turned to see if everything was all right, the tiger leapt, and, taken momentarily by surprise, the big man reeled away from the open door.

Laura's scream brought Hinsdale and several of the men. The owner was armed with a gun. He slammed the door shut, and then raised his weapon. The tiger had got Ballenger pinned to the floor, but the big man managed to fling Satan from him and staggered to his feet. Before Hinsdale could fire the tiger leapt again, and the animal trainer was flung backwards. Hinsdale fired, but the shot seemed to have no effect on Satan, who clawed savagely at the man he hated. Hinsdale fired again and again, and at last the tiger sank limply across the body of his victim.

With agonised eyes Laura and Joe, who had recovered his senses on being dragged out of the cage, watched the unequal struggle. What relief when Satan was at last fatally injured! Hinsdale would let no one go into the cage until he was quite sure the cat was dead. Then they dragged the tiger away and gently carried Cliff Ballenger out of the cage. He was terribly injured.

After a while the dying man's eyes opened, and, seeing Laura and Joe, he smiled.

"We sure got all messed up, didn't we?" he muttered. "But the cat settled everything, and I guess he settled it all right." He looked at Joe, and when he spoke his voice was feeble. "You'll take good care of her, fella?"

Not trusting himself to speak, Joe nodded and put his hand over one of Cliff's. Laura laid her hand on Cliff's forehead.

A happy smile appeared on the drawn features.

"Then I guess—that—just—about—takes care—of—everything."

Ballenger's eyes closed, and his head sank back.

It was Hinsdale who put a comforting arm round the sobbing Laura, whilst Joe stared, heartbroken, at the face of his dead friend.

(By permission of Warner Brothers, Ltd., featuring Barton MacLane as Ballenger, June Travis as Laura, and Warren Hull as Joe Larson.)

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—Bob Harvey, Richard Arden; Marta Hill, Cecilia Parker; Dr. David Burton, Henry B. Walthall; Howard Dempsey, Stanley Fields; Thad Hill, Spencer Charters; James Horace Pitkin, Charles Wilson; Carrie Dailey, Barbara Bedford; The Garage Man, Horace Murphy.

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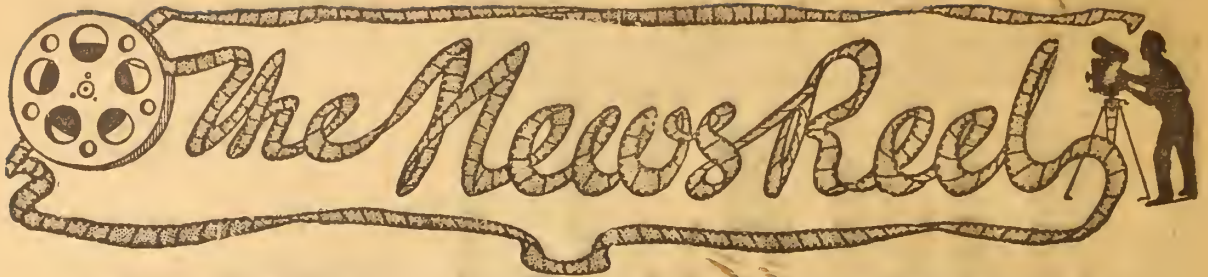
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The News Reels

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Fields' Murder Story

Not even his long illness has been able to keep W. C. Fields totally on the shelf. Still in bed at Las Encinas Sanatorium, Pasadena, the Paramount comedian is writing a book—and a hospital murder story at that!

The idea came to him actually as he lay under an oxygen tent at Riverside Hospital before his transfer to Las Encinas some weeks ago, he says. Later he developed it, and recently began dictating the story to his secretary, Miss Mickey Michaelson, as he began his convalescence from pneumonia.

So far he hasn't thought of a definite title for it, but for need of a good working name just calls it "Murder in the Hospital, or Keep Those Horses Out of the Sun Parlour." Despite this, however, it isn't a burlesque, although Miss Michaelson says it contains plenty of the typical Fieldsian humour.

His physicians don't allow him to dictate more than an hour a day. But reports are that he has been gaining steadily and chafing continually against his prolonged confinement. He has even done some work on the script of his next Paramount picture, "Bag of Tricks," and the doctors expect him to be able to return to the studio in about three months, provided his improvement continues.

"Prop" Man's Headache

"Forty-eight vultures, 12 machine-guns, 100 crickets, one horse, one dead dog, one monkey, one Mandarin dinner, Dubonnet cocktail, blood, live fish, Jacob's ladder, tiger meat, field-telegraph instrument—"

That will give you a rough idea why being a movie prop man is no picnic. It's just part of the list of things Harry Caplan had to get for "The General Died at Dawn," with Gary Cooper and Madeleine Carroll in the leading rôles.

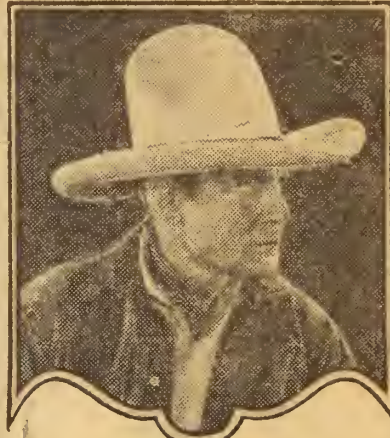
In addition, Caplan had to work in conjunction with the art and set-dressing departments in furnishing an extensive Chinese street scene that had to be authentic in every detail.

Acting as technical adviser on this job was Count Andre Tolstoy, great grand-nephew of the writer, veteran of the White Russian counter rebellion of 1919, and ex-machine-gun instructor for the troops of the Chinese war lord, Chang Tze Lin. And final results were checked by General Ting Hsiu Tu, official representative of the Chinese Government.

The vultures and the crickets gave Caplan the severest headaches. The big scavenger birds must be captured alive, and because of a State law forbidding this in California, arrangements were made to obtain them in Texas. They were released over a location set at Chatsworth, Los Angeles county, and their picture taken.

Caplan and two associates spent a whole afternoon in a local hayfield rounding up the 100 crickets. Cricket fighting being a popular form of gambling in China, they are used in a sporting event among soldiers of General November 14th, 1936.

NEXT WEEK'S BIG FILM DRAMAS!



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IN

"BOSS RIDER OF GUN CREEK"

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Another long episode of "THE ADVENTURES OF REX AND RINTY"

Starring Kane Richmond, Norma Taylor and Rex and Rinty.

Yang (Aktim Tamiroff) in a scene aboard a river junk.

Survival of the Fittest

Life may be just a bowl of cherries to the songwriter, but to the screen actor it's enough to give a fellow the pip. Take, for example, the case of the players in the Pickford-Lasky production, "The Gay Desperado," in which Nino Martini, the operatic tenor, is starring.

In one scene Martini was given the privilege of using a boot on Leo Carrillo—which seemed too bad for Carrillo. But somehow Martini's spurs became entangled and the singer spent the next three days in hospital. The same afternoon Carrillo fractured a finger when he took a sock at a pugilist extra, hired because he could take it.

Later during production, Ida Lupino, the leading lady, played a light-hearted love scene with Martini and was carried

off to have three stitches put in her forehead. Anxious to join in the fun, Director Rouben Mamoulian put his foot beneath a horse's hoof and had it badly crushed. The horse has now been taken off Mamoulian's casting list.

He Sticks to Sticks

Most directors use chalk lines to show their artistes where they must stand or move during a scene, but Albert Parker is different. He uses sticks.

Parker has been using sticks since the days he directed Valentino and Douglas Fairbanks, and offers the very sensible explanation that whereas artistes have to look for a chalk line, they can feel a stick with their feet to check their positions.

Parker is very fond of sticks, and will have as many as ten to fifteen put down for one take, so "Props" is always sure that, on a Parker picture, he is bound to spend a good deal of his time on his hands and knees nailing sticks to the floor.

Albert Parker is making "Strange Experiment" at the Fox Film Studios, Wembley, at present, and the other day he was shooting a scene which demanded that the artistes should be here, there and everywhere, consequently Mr. Parker was using more than the average number of sticks.

Props got up off his knees, having just hammered down another couple, and looking sulkily at the director, murmured—

"Ten more sticks and you'll have a 'parque' floor!"

Hired Luxury

Making films is not the only profitable business carried on in Hollywood. For example, a certain Joe Wilharber makes thousands of pounds a year merely by supplying the film people with second-hand cars.

Recently, Samuel Goldwyn needed a very expensive car of not-too-recent design for his new production, "Love Under Fire," in which the star, Merle Oberon, is supposed to ride down a London street. Wilharber supplied the car. It was a stately Delage, purchased in Paris some years ago by Mary Pickford for £4,800. For years it was the wheeled wonder of Hollywood—now it is being hired out at £15 a day.

For Goldwyn's "Dodsworth" it was necessary to get automobiles of various foreign manufacture. One which figures prominently in the picture is a beautiful Isotta Fraschini which Rudolph Valentino purchased soon after he achieved his greatest fame. Another car seen in the film, a Fiat limousine, was once owned by Alexander Korda.

Not only does Wilharber do business with film companies, but on nights when there is an important première nearly every car is rented. Small-part players and extras, eager to make an impression, hire these foreign cars, and often the crêmes to go with them, and drive in regal style to the theatre, hoping to catch the attention of a producer or director.

(Continued on page 26)

On returning to his home town after a long absence, Tim O'Neil finds that his brother, sheriff of Red Rock, has been shot dead. At the inquest he declares his intention of tracking down the murderer—and from that moment his own life is in danger till the mystery is solved. A Western drama of blazing guns.

TIM M'COY

in



By Whose Hand ?

GREY-HAIRED Jed Harmon was standing in the road, close to the garden fence of his ranch-house, when his son Chad drove the wagonette out from the yard, and Myra, his daughter, was standing bareheaded beside him.

There was a dead body in the wagonette, under a blanket—the body of Jerry O'Neil, sheriff of Red Rock, who had been shot through the heart that morning.

"Better drop a line to his brother Tim, sis," said Chad, dropping the reins and looking across at the girl. "You can probably break the news to him a little easier than anyone else."

"But I don't know where Tim is," she lamented. "I haven't heard from him in nearly a month."

Chad compressed his lips. He was a handsome young fellow, but a badly troubled one.

"Well, maybe we can find out from someone in town," he said, and shifted his gaze to the drooping figure of his father. "Ready, dad?"

The rancher shook his head.

"I didn't figure on going in with you, son," he said heavily.

"Well, there'll be an inquest, more'n likely, and a heap o' questions to answer."

"I reckon you can tell 'em all they need to know."

Chad sprang down from the wagonette.

"So you're not going in?" he challenged. "Well, you'd better get your hat and coat on, Myra."

Myra nodded, went in at the gate, and ran up the garden path to the

house, a slim and shapely figure in a dark-blue skirt and a white blouse.

"What d'you want her to go along for?" growled Jed Harmon.

"So she can bring the team back," replied Chad. "I'm pulling out! I'm through with this ranch and everything on it!"

"Through with the ranch?" exclaimed his father, staring at him. "What do you mean, son?"

"I can't ride straight on your range, dad, knowing what I know," was the bitter response.

"I—I don't think I quite understand you, Chad," stammered the rancher in a manner which suggested that he understood only too well; and Chad burst out at him:

"Oh, what's the use of pretending? I ain't a kid any longer—I know what's goin' on, and I— Oh, dad, what's come over you lately?"

"Ain't you kinda steppin' over the traces, son?"

"Why shouldn't I?" Chad retorted. "There hasn't been an honest puncher on this ranch in months! Brand-blotting and cattle rustling! I reckon I could stand for that, 'cause I know Kramer's forcing it on you! But when it comes to cold-blooded killing—"

"Stop!" cried his father in an anguished voice. "Are you accusing me of murder?"

"I ain't accusing anyone of anything," snapped Chad. "All I know is Sheriff O'Neil was our friend, and so is his brother. I can't stand by, holdin' my tongue, and knowin' that you—"

"Hold your tongue till I tell you to talk, or—"

The sound of horses' hoofs caused the rancher to break off abruptly and to stare along the tree-fringed road in the opposite direction from the town. A buckboard was approaching, two horses attached to its shaft, three horses trailing behind. Holding the reins in the driving-seat was a man whom Jed Harmon recognised, even at that distance.

"Tim O'Neil!" he exclaimed. "Quick, son, we can't let him find his brother like this! Get started! Get started!"

He rushed his son towards the wagonette and helped him up into it, and the wagonette was careering along the road that led to Red Rock when Myra emerged from the house with a white felt hat on her head and a little coat that went with her skirt over her blouse.

She reached the gate just as the buckboard arrived, and its driver stopped the horses and swept off his ten-gallon sombrero. He was a splendid specimen of young manhood, some years older than Chad, clean-shaven, fair-haired and loose-limbed. His eyes were blue and very keen; but he was too excited at the moment to realise that anything was wrong.

"Hallo, Myra!" he cried. "How are you, Mr. Harmon? Oh, it's good to be back among home folks again after trading horses with Injuns all the way from Laramie to Fort Worth!"

He jumped lightly to the ground, and as Myra stepped out at the gate, lifted her up in the air and set her down again, and then took off a glove to shake hands with her father.

"How's Chad?" he asked. "Chad's all right," Jed Harmon replied, "same as always."

"And my big brother Jerry—have you seen him lately?"

"Why, yes." The rancher endeavored to control his voice. "That is, I—"

But Tim had turned again to the beautiful girl and caught hold of her arms.

"Oh, it's good to see you, Myra!" he rejoiced.

Her brown eyes fell before his gaze and it seemed to him that she shivered slightly.

"You don't seem particularly pleased to see me!" he exclaimed in surprise. "What's the matter?"

"I'm always glad to see you, Tim," she declared. "Always."

"Well, you'd better be," said he, "cause you're gonna see a lot o' me around here in future!"

"What do you mean?"

"Didn't Jerry tell you? About a month ago he wrote me— Oh, wait till I put up these horses—they're makin' an awful fuss. Then I'll tell you all about it."

He released her to go back to the buckboard, but she stopped him.

"I don't think I'll have time to listen now, Tim," she said in a strained fashion.

"Why?" he inquired.

"Myra's fixin' to drive into town," her father interposed.

"Well, that's great," said Tim. "I'll drive you in, and I'll bring you back. Come on!"

He picked her up and deposited her on the driving-seat of the vehicle, then hoisted himself beside her and took the reins.

"Shall I shove your horses in the corral?" asked Jed Harmon.

"Yes, if you will," Tim returned, then grinned at Myra and changed his mind. "Oh, wait! Maybe you'd better let 'em drag behind—it'll give me an excuse for driving slower!"

He gave a little tug at the reins, and the horses harnessed to the buckboard set off along the road, the other three following behind as their halters dragged them into reluctant movement.

Jed Harmon looked over the fence that edged the yard and saw two riders enter the corral from the open range beyond it. He hurried down the yard to intercept them.

"Hallo!" he hailed.

They were two of his men, but they were not employed by him of his own desire. One of them, Ned Lynch by name, was a lean-jawed and shifty-eyed fellow, conspicuous for his plaid shirt; the other was Mike Rankin, a slightly shorter man than his companion, but thicker set and swarthy, with a moustache as black as his hair.

"Hallo, boss," said Lynch.

"Where've you two fellows been?" demanded Harmon.

"Over by the South Fork," Lynch replied. "Fence was down."

"I suppose you know the sheriff was here this morning?"

Again it was Lynch who replied.

"Yeah," he said, "he was here when me and Mike rode away. Why?"

"Sheriff O'Neil was killed this morning! Shot off his horse!"

"You don't mean it!" Lynch appeared to be surprised. "D'you hear that, Rankin? The sheriff's been killed."

"Who could have done it?" said Rankin.

"I was about to ask you that question!" snapped Harmon.

Rankin scowled, and Lynch stepped in front of him.

"I don't like the way you said that, Harmon," he snarled. "You start any

such hints around, and we'll refer the matter to the Cattlemen's Association. You wouldn't want them to look too close to some o' your brands, would you, boss? They might think you had reasons to want the sheriff out o' the way!"

The Inquest

THE horses attached to the buckboard climbed a hill at their own pace, in the winding road that led to Red Rock, and Tim turned to Myra. "Well, honey," he said, "my wandering days are over. Jerry's bought the Martin ranch, and we're gonna—"

"Wait, Tim," she broke in, "there's something I've got to tell you."

"Oh, your story'll keep," said he with a wave of his free hand, "but if I don't tell mine I'm gonna bust! Now, as I started out to say, Jerry's bought the old Martin ranch, and I'm gonna run it. That means no more travellin' around trading horses—no more sitting on corral fences swapping stories—"

"Oh, Tim, please don't!" she pleaded.

"I know," he chuckled. "You think I won't be able to settle down. But I will—I'll fool you! Of course, I dessey in the spring o' the year it's gonna be kinda hard. My feet'll start itchin' when the grass gets green and I'll want to wander again."

He drew on the reins to negotiate a sharp bend.

"Oh, but it'll be worth it," he declared. "After I got new curtains on the windows, a new stove, and the place all fixed up, I'm thinkin' of gettin' married—if you're willing."

There were sudden tears in Myra's brown eyes and she averted her face lest he should see them.

"The whole thing was Jerry's idea to start with," he went on, after waiting a moment for her to make some response. "Jerry's been more than a brother to me. He's been father, mother—well, just like a friend. I'd like to have him come and live with us after we're married."

It was more than she could bear, and she cried miserably:

"Oh, Tim, please don't!"

"I'm sorry," he said, glancing round at her, "I didn't realise you felt that way about Jerry."

"Oh, it isn't that, Tim," she faltered.

"We—we're on our way to an inquest."

"Inquest?" He slewed round on the seat. "You don't mean—Jerry?"

The answer was in her eyes, but she nodded her head as well, and for a few minutes he sat almost stunned. Then, suddenly, he snatched up the whip and lashed at the horses.

The body of Jerry O'Neil had been conveyed to the undertaker's shop in Red Rock's main street and an inquest was in progress in the assembly room of the Cattlemen's Association when Tim drove into the town. A number of men, congregated upon the porch of the big frame building, recognised him as the buckboard came swaying round the corner of Mountain Street, but he took no notice of anyone in his distress.

Straight to the door of the building he drove, and there, stopping the horses, sprang down on to the boardwalk and gave a hand to Myra. The crowd made room for them and they mounted the steps and squeezed into a room already filled to overflowing.

All the chairs were occupied, and in twelve of them, set sideways near a table at the top of the room, a jury composed of ranchers and cow-hands were listening to the evidence of a white-haired doctor of venerable appearance who occupied a seat on a platform beside the table of the self-appointed coroner.

That coroner was Martin Kramer, chairman of the Cattlemen's Protective Association, and one of the biggest ranchers in the district, a masterful man by nature, clean-shaven, middle-aged, and not without a certain dignity when he chose to assume it.

Just now he was filling his rôle of coroner with becoming solemnity, enforcing silence from time to time with the gavel used by the judge of the county when that official visited the town to try wrongdoers in the adjacent courthouse.

"Is it your opinion, Dr. Lindsay," he inquired, "that Sheriff O'Neil came to his death by a gunshot wound?"

"A forty-one calibre rifle fired at a distance," stated the doctor. "The bullet mushroomed against the breast-bone and passed directly through the heart. I should say that death was almost instantaneous."

Kramer looked across at the twelve assorted men who formed the jury and asked if there were any questions they wished to put to the witness. The foreman shook his head, after consulting his colleagues, and the doctor was dismissed.

As he made his way down the room Kramer became aware of Tim, near the door with Myra, and he said loudly:

"If you'll step forward, Mr. O'Neil, I'm sure one of these gentlemen will be pleased to make room for you."

"Thanks," said Tim, and he piloted Myra through the crowd and along a gangway between the rows of chairs to the very front of the improvised court, where two men rose to make room for them in seats facing the platform.

"Would you like me to review our findings thus far?" inquired Kramer.

"It won't be necessary," Tim replied.

"There will be only one more witness—Chad Harmon."

Chad stood up, just behind Myra, with an expression of grim determination on his face.

"Will you take the stand?" said Kramer.

"I'll take the stand," Chad returned. "not because you say so, but because Tim has a right to know the facts."

"That is the purpose of this hearing."

Chad walked over to the platform and seated himself on the chair beside the table, and all faces were turned in his direction.

No oath was administered. Kramer stopped a scuffling of feet and a murmur of voices by banging on the table with the borrowed gavel and addressed the witness.

"You brought the sheriff's body into town?"

"I did," agreed Chad.

"And it was you who found him on the scene of the shooting?"

"I was with him when he was shot!"

"Would you mind telling us exactly—"

"Would you mind keeping your questions to yourself and letting me tell what happened in my own way?" Chad shouted at him.

"If you prefer," Kramer's eyes betrayed his annoyance, but his voice was smooth enough.

"I do prefer!" Chad looked straight across at Tim. "Your brother," he said, "came out to our place this morning, Tim, and he wanted dad to ride out on the range with him. Dad wasn't feeling well, so I went instead."

Tim leaned forward in his chair with his hands on his knees, listening intently.

"About three or four miles from the house we dropped down into a little gulch. The trail up the other side was

narrow, and Jerry rode on ahead. When he reached the top I heard a shot, and I saw him sort of stiffenin' in the saddle, and— Oh, I—I don't want to go on, Tim. It was awful!"

"Go ahead, Chad," encouraged Tim. "It's got to be told."

Chad bit his lip, clenched his hands, and went on again:

"I saw him sorta stiffen, and one hand jerked up to his breast. The other went for his gun, but he never got it out. Then—then something inside him seemed to give way and he tumbled out of the saddle."

"Go on, Chad," said Tim. "What then?"

"I spurred up the slope, and I saw two men ride into the brush at a run, a couple o' hundred yards ahead. I fired after them and started to chase 'em, but I couldn't leave Jerry, so I turned back, and—and—well, I—I reckon that's about all there is to tell."

"Did Jerry say what he was looking for out on your range?"

"No," said Chad slowly, "he didn't."

"Have you any idea of your own what he was after?"

"I couldn't be sure, but I—"

"Mr. O'Neil," interrupted Kramer, with a rap of the gavel, "it is not in order for a witness to state other than the true facts."

A middle-aged rancher named Saunders rose up from his chair in the silence that followed, and he flung out a hand at Chad.

"Are you sure your father wasn't feeling good this morning?" he demanded harshly.

"That's what he said," Chad replied.

"Are you sure he didn't leave the ranch?"

"I don't know what he did after I left the ranch-house."

"Well," drawled Saunders, "are you sure you rode with the sheriff yourself?"

"Certainly I rode with the—" Chad broke off, furious at the suggestion underlying the question. "Say, what

are you driving at, Saunders?" he roared.

"You say two men ambushed O'Neil. How do we know it wasn't you and your father?"

Myra sprang indignantly to her feet, holding her hat.

"I can prove that's not true!" she cried. "I was there when Chad and the sheriff left the house, and I was there when they brought him back!"

"Then why don't he name the men that killed Jerry O'Neil?" challenged the rancher. "He says he saw 'em!"

Chad bounded up from the witness-chair.

"They were half-hid in the brush," he shouted, "but if you want to know who I think it was—"

"Careful, Harmon!" thundered Kramer. "You're not permitted to state an opinion you can't verify!"

"Why can't I?" Chad blazed at him. "This ain't a court o' law!"

"In the absence of the sheriff," Kramer retorted, "the Cattlemen's Protective Association represents the law."

"The Cattlemen's Protective Association!" scoffed Chad. "A gang of gunmen gathered from every pest-hole along the border to—"

"Yes!" Kramer smote the table with his fists and rose. "Yes, gunmen that I brought in to stamp out rustling in this district!"

"That's what you say!" Chad snapped at him. "You collect big fees from cattlemen to protect them, and those that can't afford to pay lose their cattle! Well, I think I know who get-them!"

He addressed the assembly at large. "If you want to know who killed Sheriff O'Neil, ask the Cattlemen's Association!"

A burly and bushy-browed fellow who was one of Kramer's importations leapt to his feet on Myra's left.

"That's enough out of you!" he rasped. "I belong to the association!"

"Yes," retorted Chad, "and you're one of the men I had in mind, Connors!"

Connors reached for his gun, and

Chad reached for his; but Tim was up like lightning and his left fist smashed into Connor's wide jaw, knocking him down against the edge of the platform, and his own gun was in his hand as he snatched up the one dropped by the man he had knocked out.

"Don't shoot, Chad!" he cried, and then as some of the others gathered round the fallen crook he backed away to the side of the room so that everybody in it was more or less covered by the two weapons he held.

"This meeting," he said seathingly, "is a fine example of the law and order it's supposed to uphold!"

"It was orderly enough till young Harmon got started," retorted the foreman of the jury.

"I don't care who's to blame," rapped Tim. "I haven't any quarrel with anyone in this room—not yet. But if Chad can prove the things he says, I'm apt to declared open season on a lot of you!"

He spoke over his shoulder to Kramer:

"If you have to make any notes on this meeting, just say 'Death caused by parties unknown—temporarily unknown.' As far as I'm concerned it can be adjourned."

"We can't adjourn yet," protested Kramer. "We've got to elect a temporary sheriff."

"You can appoint all the sheriffs you like," retorted Tim, "but as far as my brother is concerned I'm a kind of an alias 'John Law,' and I don't want anyone mixin' in until he's invited! Chad, take Myra to the door and wait there, just in case someone doesn't like my back!"

Chad stepped down from the platform, and Myra went with him to the door. There he turned about, with his gun in his hand, and in a dead silence Tim walked along past the rows of chairs to him.

"Give this to Connors, when he comes to," he said, and tossed the six-shooter he had appropriated to one of the bystanders.



"I thought I said I didn't want anyone meddlin' in my affairs until he was invited," said Tim sharply
November 14th, 1936.

The Letter from Sioux City

ON the boardwalk outside the building he had left so dramatically, Tim looked across at the undertaker's premises and put away his gun.

"Chad," he said, "will you take my horses to the town corral for me?"

"Glad to," Chad responded quite readily.

"Meet me at the sheriff's office afterwards."

"I was aimin' to do that."

Myra knew that Tim was going to take a last look at his dead brother, and she started after him as he began to cross the street; but Chad caught hold of her arm.

"You'd better drive the wagonetto back to the ranch, sis," he said. "I've left it outside the hotel. Dad isn't expecting me, anyway."

She gazed at him with troubled eyes, but she went off in the direction of the Bonanza Hotel without a word, hoping that Tim would dissuade him from leaving home.

In the assembly room tension had relaxed. Connors, who had regained consciousness, stumbled back to his chair and sat down on it, nursing his aching jaw. Martin Kramer rapped on the table with the gavel.

"The death of Sheriff O'Neil," he said, "leaves us with no guardian of the peace, except the agents of the Cattlemen's Protective Association. Will such agents as are present please stand up?"

Nearly a dozen men, in different parts of the room, got to their feet. There was nothing inspiring about the appearance of any one of them.

"As you know," said Kramer, "these men were brought into the district to stamp out rustling. They are not actual officers, but they are sworn defenders of the law—tried, trusted, and true. I propose that one of these men be appointed to act as sheriff until such time as one can be appointed by law."

Samders, who liked the look of the "sworn defenders" not at all, raised a protest.

"T'aint legal, is it?"

"It may be a little irregular," admitted Kramer, "but it's better than having no guardian of the peace."

One of his hirelings raised a hand.

"I move that Matt Ludlow be appointed as temporary sheriff," he said loudly.

"I'll second that motion," boomed another man.

"Matt Ludlow, step up here," directed Kramer; and a round-faced man slouched over to the platform and stood on the edge of it with his cow-hat in his hand. He had a snub nose, a long upper lip, beady brown eyes, a mop of untidy black hair, and he looked in need of a shave.

"It is moved and seconded," said Kramer, "that Matt Ludlow be appointed temporary sheriff. All those in favour will signify in the usual manner."

Quite a number of hands were raised.

"Those against," said Kramer.

No hands were shown, and Matt Ludlow beamed all over his ugly face as Kramer pronounced solemnly:

"It is so ordered."

Tim, in a back room of the undertaker's premises, looked long and sadly at the body of his brother, then went to a chair upon which a bloodstained waistcoat had been hung. Pinned to the waistcoat, near a hole in the cloth made by the fatal bullet, was the metal badge of Jerry O'Neil's sheriffdom. Tim unfastened it and put it in his pocket, determined that no unworthy successor should ever wear it.

While he was still at the undertaker's, November 14th, 1936.

Matt Ludlow went up the street with two other men and entered the sheriff's office, in haste to invest himself with authority.

Against the wall, opposite the front door, stood a roll-top desk, surmounted by an old-fashioned copying-press. The desk was open, and Ludlow seated himself in a swivel-chair at it and proceeded to look in pigeon-holes and drawers for a German-silver star with which to decorate himself.

His companions, two of the "agents" appointed by the Cattlemen's Association, scattered reward bills and letters about the floor in an endeavour to assist him, and finally a star with the word "Deputy" engraved upon it was discovered.

"I oughta have something better than a deputy's badge," growled Ludlow, "but I guess that'll have to do."

NEXT WEEK'S FREE GIFT!



This Coloured Postcard of VICTOR McLAGEN.

He attached it to his waistcoat, and he was contemplating it with a certain amount of pride, when one of his helpers—a man named Peters—held out a sheet of paper, exclaiming:

"Look what I found! I reckon this explains a lot o' things, don't it?"

Ludlow snatched the sheet of paper from his hand and read the letter which was typewritten upon it.

"Say," he began, "it's a good thing we found this before—"

He broke off abruptly because Tim had walked in at the door, and he tried to hide the letter by dropping the hand that held it behind an arm of the chair.

"I thought I said I didn't want anyone meddlin' in my affairs until he was invited," said Tim sharply.

"Your affairs?" blustered Ludlow. "Why, I've been appointed sheriff!"

Tim did not seem to be at all impressed.

"You can take possession," he said, "after I've finished lookin' things over. There may be something in that desk that'll give me an idea who killed my brother."

"More than likely there is," conceded Ludlow, "and if we find it we'll be glad to turn it right over to you."

"If there's anything there," Tim retorted, "I can find it without any help."

Ludlow screwed up the letter he was holding and rose from the chair.

"Well, I'm sorry if you don't trust me," he said gruffly, "but if you feel that way about it we'll get out until you've looked things over."

He started towards the door, motioning to the other two, but Tim barred the way.

"Before you leave," he said, "I'd like to have a look at that letter you've got in your hand."

"That?" Ludlow exhibited the screwed-up sheet of paper. "That's just an ad. for some liver pills."

"I said I wanted to see it!"

Ludlow adopted a rueful air.

"I've been tryin' to be friendly with you, O'Neil," he said, "but you just won't have it so. There's nothing in this thing that concerns you, but I'm gonna take it, now, just on general principles!"

"You'll give me that letter," thundered Tim, "or make the fastest draw ever seen in Red Rock!"

Ludlow reached for his gun, but even as he drew it it was shot out of his hand, and he dropped the letter to clutch at a wrist that had been grazed by a bullet. The other two changed their minds about reaching for their guns, and Chad burst in from the street.

"Pick up that letter, Chad, will you?" said Tim.

Chad picked up the letter, opened it out, and began to read it. Tim picked up the newly appointed sheriff's gun and thrust it back into its owner's holster.

"Now get out," he commanded. "Come back in an hour or so, and I'll turn this place over to you."

Without a word the crestfallen Ludlow went out with his two companions, and then:

"What's in that letter, Chad?" asked Tim.

Chad screwed the sheet of paper into a ball and tossed it into a waste-paper basket.

"It's nothing," he declared hoarsely. "Just a circular of some sort."

Tim looked at him for more than a second, then stooped over the basket and retrieved the letter.

"Don't read it, Tim!" implored Chad.

"Why?" Tim looked at him again.

"It'll only make trouble for some innocent folks."

"If they're innocent," said Tim, "they have nothing to fear from me." And he began to straighten out the sheet of paper.

"Don't read it I tell you!" cried Chad agitatedly. "It'll start a war, and you and me'll be on opposite sides!"

"I'd be sorry to have anything like that happen," said Tim; but he continued to straighten the sheet of paper, and Chad suddenly rushed out from the office and slammed the door behind him.

Tim's eyes narrowed, but the letter was readable now, and he read it. The printed heading was: "Sioux City Stockyards, Sioux City, Iowa." The letter was addressed to Sheriff O'Neil, Red Rock, Arizona, and it ran:

"The last shipment of cattle from Jed Harmon contained a surprising number of brands that have been altered, at least twenty per cent. Thinking that you might want to investigate this matter, I am passing the information on to you."

He folded the crumpled sheet across and across, tucked it in the breast-pocket of his shirt, and went slowly to the door.

By this time the ranchers, cow-hands, and members of the general public who had attended the inquest had left the headquarters of the Cattleman's Protective Association; but Martin Kramer was still at the table on the platform of the assembly room, and Ludlow and his two companions had found him there and poured into his ears the story of Tim's interference.

"I tell you," raged Ludlow, "that letter is gonna send O'Neil direct to Harmon for a show-down."

"Yeah," said Peters, "we gotta go down and stop that old fool before he does any talkin'!"

"That would be easy," remarked Kramer, "if he wasn't so valuable to us alive. We need his brand in our business."

"Why worry about Harmon?" growled Ludlow, putting his hand significantly on the butt of his gun. "O'Neil's the fellow we gotta stop before he gets started!"

But Kramer shook his head.

"I don't mind gun-play," he said, "but a wise man never starts up until he has to. We'll handle this thing peaceful, if we can. If we can't, it'll be just too bad for both of 'em!"

Tim Finds Some Keys

MYRA had driven the wagonette back to the ranch-house and had left it in the yard with Rankin and Lynch for the horses to be put away, and she was in the sunny living-room with her father when Chad came galloping in at the gateway on a borrowed horse.

She ran out on to the porch to meet him, and Rankin and Lynch sneaked along the side wall of the adobe building as they heard her cry out:

"What's happened, Chad?"

Chad left the horse in the yard and reached the steps of the porch.

"I want to talk to dad alone," he said brusquely as he mounted them; but she went with him into the living-room, considerably disturbed by his manner, and she asked in alarm:

"What is it, dad?"

"I don't rightly know myself, honey," replied her father in a voice that by no means reassured her, and then Chad caught hold of her arm and swept her towards the door of her own bed-room.

"Listen, I'll tell you all about it later, Myra," he said, "but not now."

He pushed her into the bed-room and closed the door; but she stooped to listen at the keyhole as he went back to his father, and she heard the conversation that followed. Rankin and Lynch heard some of it, too, for a window in the side wall was open and they crouched below its sill.

"When I left the ranch, this morning," said Chad, putting a hand on his father's shoulder, "I told you I wasn't coming back, dad—but I just had to! Tim's found out about the rustling, and he's probably on his way out by now!"

Jed Harmon sighed.

"It was bound to happen, sooner or later," he muttered.

"You've got to saddle up and start ridin'! I'll hold Tim somehow."

But Jed Harmon sank wearily into his favourite armchair.

"No, son," he said definitely, "I'm through with runnin' away from things. I've tried it—it won't work."

"There's no other way out!" insisted Chad.

"Oh, yes, there is! Tim's got a right to know who killed his brother, and I'm goin' to tell everything I know."

That was enough for Rankin and Lynch. They went off to get their horses, and they rode away on them

across the ranch to a hill above the coach road.

"Dad," protested Chad, "if you put Tim on Kramer's trail your life won't be worth a rickel."

"Better that," returned his father, "than livin' as I have in the past two years, afraid of my own shadow, ashamed to look people in the face, and doin' the things you reminded me of this morning."

"Oh, I didn't mean what I said, dad!"

"Yes, you did, son, and I'm glad of it. It woke me up to a lot of things—and that's why I'm gonna stand my ground."

Myra went out from the bed-room. Her father had buried his face in his hands, and Chad was standing by the fireplace with an arm on the shelf, staring down into the empty hearth. She slipped out past them to the porch, and a few minutes later was riding off along the road to intercept Tim.

Behind some bushes on the hill Rankin and Lynch dismounted, but Lynch became ill-at-ease as his swarthy companion knelt in the grass with a short-barrelled rifle in his hand.

"We're liable to get ourselves in a mess of trouble," he complained, "doin' this without orders."

"We'll get ourselves in more trouble," retorted Rankin, "if we let O'Neil get to Harmon."

"Well, maybe so, but I tell you I think—"

"Shut up!" rasped Rankin. "Here he comes now!"

Tim was riding his own white horse,

which he had left in his brother's charge during his absence on the trading expedition and had saddled in the stables behind the town goal. Rankin had sighted him between the trees that fringed the road, and he took aim with the rifle; but just as Tim came into full view at the bottom of the hill Myra came galloping towards him from the ranch-house, and the would-be murderer held his fire.

Tim stopped his horse as Myra reached him, and the one she was riding reared up at the suddenness with which it was turned.

"I know why you're going to the ranch, Tim," she cried, "and you mustn't do it!"

Tim eyed her sharply.

"Did your father send you down here to turn me back?" he asked.

She shook her head.

"Dad's ready to tell you everything he knows," she said, "but you mustn't ask him."

"I've got to find out who killed my brother," gritted Tim. "You know that!"

"Dad had nothing to do with Jerry's death," she declared. "Oh, Tim, you've got to believe me!"

"I do believe you," he returned, "but your father knows certain things I've got to find out."

"If you make him talk they'll kill both of you, just as they did Jerry!"

"Who d'you mean by 'they'?"

"Tim, that's what I don't dare to tell you."

"Then I'll have to ask your father." He made as though to ride on, but



The key fitted, and the padlock was removed. "Looks as though Mr. Rankin was one of 'em!" Tim said, with grim satisfaction.

she whipped out a six-gun from the pocket of her skirt and held it very close to his heart.

"Wait!" she shrieked. "You're not going on, Tim!"

He looked at the gun and he looked at her very strained face.

"Even if I thought you meant that," he said, "I'd still have to ride on."

He rode on, and she did not fire. But Rankin, up among the bushes on the top of the hill, then seized his opportunity. His rifle cracked, and Tim pitched sideways from the saddle and sprawled in the dust.

Myra slid down from her horse in horror and flew to him.

"Tim, are you hurt bad?" she asked, bending over him.

"I'm not hit at all," he replied. "Get back!"

She retreated to the shelter of a massive tree-trunk only a few feet away, and Tim took out his gun without appearing to move a limb.

"Friends o' yours?" he asked decisively.

"You know they're not!" she stormed.

He crawled over to her, got one knee behind the tree-trunk, and looked up the hill.

"It might be smarter to make them think they got me," he said.

He detected a movement in the bushes, and then he saw the figures of two horsemen riding away over the brow of the hill, too remote to be identifiable.

"Well, now that you know I'm not hurt," he said, "you can go back to hating me again."

"No." She shook her head. "No, Tim, I thought I could hate you, but I guess I can't."

He put away his gun and stood up, and he helped her to her feet.

"That's the way it ought to be, Myra," he said, holding her hands and smiling at her. "That's what it's goin' to be—always!"

Her hat had fallen from her head and was hanging over her shoulders on its band; the afternoon sunlight was in her light-brown hair. He kissed her fondly, and then he glanced at the two horses munching grass at the side of the road.

"Let's go up and see if they left any trail worth following," he suggested; and together they climbed the hill.

Between two bushes Tim picked up a spent cartridge, which he stowed away in his pocket, and a few minutes later he called Myra over to him.

"Look!" he said. "One of those fellows must have snagged his key-ring on the branches as he rode out!"

There were two keys on the ring that hung from a spiky branch of a screw-pod mesquite, and one of them obviously fitted a padlock.

"Ever seen those before?" he asked. Myra was quite certain that she hadn't.

"Well," he said, taking the ring from the branch and putting it in his pocket with the spent cartridge, "let's get our horses and be on our way."

In the Bunkhouse

CHAD was still in the living-room with his father when Tim rode into the yard with Myra, but it was not till he heard the sound of footsteps upon the gravel path leading to the porch that he looked out of the window.

"Dad, it's Tim!" he exclaimed, and went over to the bowed figure in the armchair. "Listen, there's still time. I'll hold him till you get away."

But Jed Harmon was not to be persuaded.

November 14th, 1936.

"I told you I'm through running" he said doggedly.

At the foot of the steps leading up to the porch Tim stopped Myra.

"I think maybe you'd better not go in," he said. "It might be easier on your father if I talked to him alone."

She nodded submissively and wandered down to the garden gate while he ascended to the porch and entered the living-room.

"I suppose Chad told you why I was comin' out?" he said to the rancher from just inside the door.

"I've been waitin' you," was the comparatively calm reply, and Tim took the crumpled and folded sheet of paper from the pocket of his shirt.

"Thought this letter might throw some light on my brother's death" he said, holding it out.

"I reckon you're right," returned Harmon, with no more than a glance for the letter. "I know what it says."

"Is there any truth in it?"

"Yes. A lot of the cattle I've been selling lately is stolen stock."

Tim raised his brows; Chad cried out:

"But he didn't steal 'em, Tim! I did it!"

Jed Harmon reached out a hand and gripped Chad's arm.

"You're a mighty poor liar, Chad," he said with emotion, "but a mighty fine son!" He turned to Tim. "He didn't steal 'em, and neither did I, but I've done something almost as bad. I've been lettin' my brand be used to market stolen cattle."

"Is that what brought my brother out on to your range?" asked Tim. "To examine your brand?"

"He didn't say so, but I figured it was."

"And he was killed before he could do it?"

"Yes." Jed Harmon stood up. "But I swear to you, Tim, I had nothing whatever to do with it."

"I know that," said Tim. "If ever you shot a man, it'd be out in the open, not from behind a rock."

"Thanks," Harmon murmured appreciatively, and he dropped back into the chair.

"But I figured you could put me on the trail of the man who did kill Jerry."

"Yes, I can do that."

"But they'll get you if you talk, dad!" cried Chad.

"More'n likely they will," agreed his father. "They're a mighty hard crowd, but that can't be helped. I've stood for cattle rustlin' and I've let 'em use my brand because I couldn't help myself; but when it comes to protectin' a murderer I draw the line. The man who killed your brother, Tim, was—"

The door swung wide and Kramer strode into the room with Ludlow, Peters, and another man close behind him, in time to prevent a name being mentioned.

"We came up kinda quiet like," said Kramer, "to avoid gun-play if possible."

Tim whirled round on him.

"What made you think there might be gun-play?" he demanded.

"Well," Kramer replied, "Ludlow says you haven't got much respect for the law."

"Ludlow?" Tim shifted his gaze to the rascally looking sheriff. "What does he know about respect for the law?"

"I am the law," retorted Ludlow angrily, "and I'm arresting Jed Harmon on suspicion of cattle rustlin'!"

"On whose authority?"

It was Kramer who answered the question.

"The Cattlemen's Association," he stated. "I took action as soon as I heard about that letter from the stock-yards."

Chad stepped in front of his father with clenched fists.

"Why don't you tell the truth, Kramer?" he roared. "You're doin' it because you're afraid my father may—"

"Easy, Chad," interrupted Tim. "It's no use startin' anything now."

"But you don't understand!" raged the boy. "If they take dad—"

"Maybe we'd better take the boy along, too, and keep him out of trouble," barked Ludlow.

"That won't be necessary," Tim said sternly. "I'll answer for him—and I'm holding you responsible for Mr. Harmon's safety, too!"

"The law can be relied on to protect its prisoners," said Kramer.

"The law!" Tim flipped a scornful hand. "Why, what has—"

He checked himself and addressed Ludlow: "You're no more the law than I am," he said, "but as long as you're posing as sheriff, you'd better act like one!"

He turned to the seated rancher.

"I guess you'll have to go along with them, Mr. Harmon," he said regretfully. "We'll do what we can, though."

Harmon rose, and Ludlow promptly took hold of his arm.

"Come along!" he growled. "We're just wastin' time here! Come on!"

He marched his prisoner out at the door, and Kramer and the other two followed. Myra was on the porch as they went down the steps, and she rushed into the living-room in a panic.

"What's happened?" she cried.

"Where are they taking daddy?"

"They're takin' him away to keep him from talkin'," Tim replied, and Chad snatched up his black cow-hat, declaring that he was going with them to see that nothing happened.

"Wait!" commanded Tim. "Let Myra go—I need you here!"

"What good can she do?" howled Chad.

"They won't dare hurt him as long as anyone's watching. Go on, Myra!"

Myra ran off to mount the horse she had ridden before, and at the open window Tim watched her canter out from the yard after her father's captors.

"I told you that letter would mean war!" Chad exploded.

"Yes," said Tim, turning away from the window, "but we're not on opposite sides. We're working together, now, and we've got to work fast."

He fished out the ring of keys.

"Did you ever see these before?" he asked.

Chad took the ring, but it was the broken cord attached to the ring, rather than the keys, that engaged his attention. There was a red thread in the cord.

"Seems to me somebody on the ranch wears a cord like that," he said, handing back the ring. "Why?"

"Show me where ho bunks"

Chad led the way out from the house and round the side of it into the yard and then along this to a bunkhouse adjoining the corral. Rankin and Lynch were on their horses in the homo pasture, not very far away, and they recognised the loose-limbed figure of Tim, with his black shirt and white hat.

"I thought you got him?" exclaimed Lynch.

"So did I!" returned Rankin blankly.

Tim and Chad entered the bunkhouse, and Tim proceeded to try the larger of the two keys in the padlocks of boxes

and trunks belonging to members of Jed Harmon's outfit.

"Well, that doesn't fit," he remarked glumly after a fifth attempt, and straightened his back.

He had peered under all the lower bunks, working systematically from the door towards the end of the long room. A tin trunk on the floor beyond the bunks caught his eye and he pointed to it.

"Who does that belong to?" he asked. "Belongs to a puncher named Rankin," replied Chad. "What's it all about, Tim?"

"A couple o' fellows ambushed me comin' out of town this afternoon."

Tim went down on one knee in front of the trunk, and Chad stooped beside him while the key was tried in its padlock.

The key fitted, and as the padlock was removed Tim added with grim satisfaction:

"Looks as though Mr. Rankin was one of 'em!"

He raised the lid of the trunk, turned over a quantity of clothing, most of which was distinctly odorous of cattle, and found a half-filled box of cartridges. He compared one of the cartridges with the spent cartridge he had found in the grass among the bushes on the hill, and they tallied.

"Is Rankin an Association man?" he inquired.

"Well," hesitated Chad, "I—I couldn't say for sure."

"If he is," said Tim, dropping the live cartridge back into the box and closing the lid of the trunk, "one of these keys oughta fit Kramer's office at the assembly room. Let's rido into town and find out."

Rankin and Lynch had dismantled in the yard and had crept to the door of

the bunkhouse. They dived in over the step, and Lynch shouted fiercely:

"You ain't goin' nowhere, and you ain't gonna find out nothin'!"

Chad looked round, saw that the two had guns in their hands, and raised his own hands above his head. Tim got slowly to his feet, taking full stock of the pair.

"You two men," continued Lynch in a nasal drawl, "are gonna have a quarrel and kill each other. What started the fight we can't imagine. All we know is we heard shootin', and when we got in here your guns were hot and both of you was dead!"

Tim had half-raised his hands, his face a blank; but Chad was scared.

"You can't get away with a frame-up like this, Lynch!" he cried.

"Oh, yes, we can," Lynch retorted evilly, "because we'll be the only witnesses!"

He took deliberate aim at Chad, and Rankin advanced towards Tim. But Tim's right arm swept downwards more quickly than the eye could see, and his own six-gun was out and blazing before either of them could jerk a trigger.

Rankin sagged forward and collapsed with a bullet in his chest, and Lynch dropped his weapon, clutched at a wounded arm, and fell sideways.

Unexpected Prisoners!

IN the town gaol, at the back of the sheriff's office, Jed Harmon was locked in a cell divided from other cells by bars of iron, and Ludlow locked the door. Peters and the other "agent" looked on with grinning faces; Kramer took a cigar from his pocket, bit off the end and spat it in the floor, then struck a match.

"I brought you in, Harmon," he said as he lit the cigar and puffed at it,

"because you seem inclined to talk too much."

He dropped the flaming match on the floor, stamped on it and stepped nearer to the bars.

"Now you can't hurt us," he went on, "because you can't prove anything. But you can help us, and I'm willing to make a bargain."

He contemplated the glowing end of the cigar, blew a cloud of smoke, and spoke again.

"When Tim O'Neil comes in," he said, "I want you to steer him as far away from us as possible—and I'll hush up everything I've got on you."

Jed Harmon held two of the bars and looked defiantly out at him between two others.

"I'm through takin' orders, Kramer," he declared hoarsely, "and I'm not goin' to protect the men who killed Tim's brother."

"Then you'll probably swing for it yourself!"

"I had nothin' to do with it, and you know it!"

"Sure," purred Kramer, "but the evidence is all against you. He was killed on your ranch, examining your crooked brands. Why, I might even find two men to swear they saw you do it."

"It won't work, Kramer!" gritted the rancher. "You may hang me, but you won't fool Tim. He'll stick to the trail, and sooner or later he'll get the men he's after."

"You think so," Kramer waved the cigar. "But I've got two men watchin' him. I know what he's doing every minute!"

The voice of Tim rang out from the doorway of the office, startling him even more than the others, and belying his boast.



"Don't you worry, dad," Chad said to his father, who was looking down between the bars at Rankin.

November 14th, 1936.

"I brought you a couple o' your gunners for repairs," stated the voice quite cheerfully.

Five assorted pairs of eyes stared at him. He was carrying the limp body of Mike Rankin over his shoulder, and behind him stumbled Ned Lynch, holding his wounded arm, closely followed by Chad with a six-shooter in his hand.

"What happened?" gasped Kramer.

"They took a shot at me when I was goin' out to the ranch, and missed," replied Tim.

"That's a lie!" bellowed Lynch. "We caught him breakin' into Rankin's trunk!"

"That was afterwards." Tim advanced to a cell on the right of the one in which Jed Harmon had been locked. Its door was open, and he went in and dumped the unconscious form of Rankin on a bunk, whereupon Chad drove Lynch in, too.

"Don't you worry, dad," he said to his father, who was looking down between the bars at Rankin.

He backed out from the cell with his gun, and Tim followed and slammed the door, then faced Kramer.

"One o' those two dropped these keys when they ambushed me," he said, taking the ring of keys from his pocket. "This one fits Rankin's trunk—and I expect the other one will just fit the lock of your office, Kramer. If it does, it's just goin' to be too bad for you."

Kramer rolled his cigar to the side of his mouth and thrust his hands in his trouser-pockets.

"Not me," he returned calmly. "I'm through with them. I'll have no murderers in my association."

"You've reformed a little too late," sneered Tim. "Wait for me at the door, will you, Chad?"

Chad retreated to the door and stood there in case anyone should attempt to draw a gun, and Tim strode back to the cell in which Lynch was still holding his wounded arm.

"I'll be back with witnesses to hear what you've got to say," he rapped.

"You won't get anything outa me!" snarled Lynch.

"And you'll probably get twenty years for attempted murder." Tim joined Chad at the door, but looked back at Ludlow.

"Well, they're your prisoners now, Mr. Sheriff," he said significantly, "but I want 'em here when I get back—and they'd better be alive!"

He went out with Chad, leaving a very disoriented group behind.

"Somebody'd better get a doctor," wailed Lynch. "We're all shot up here!"

"Well, ain't that too bad?" jeered Kramer.

"Get a doctor, I tell you! I think Rankin's dyin'!"

"So much the better," retorted Kramer heartlessly. "You can blame everything on him when O'Neil comes back."

"O'Neil ain't comin' back," said Ludlow furiously. "Come on, Peters! Come on, Seitz!"

"Wait!" snapped Kramer. "You idiots have got us in deep enough with your guns as it is!"

"But I tell you we got—"

"Shut up! You'll never blast your way out o' this thing with six-guns. You keep out of it—I'll handle it myself."

"I hope I live to get out o' this cage with a gun in my hand," whispered Lynch; and Ludlow turned to Peters with a grimace.

"Oh, go and get him a doctor before he starts cryin'," he said disgustedly.

Tim and Chad crossed the street to the headquarters of the Cattlemen's Pro-

ductive Association. Kramer's office was at the back of the assembly room, and three of his men were inside it, playing cards at a table. The outer door was open, but Tim did not hesitate. He took out the ring of keys and tried the smaller one in the lock of the door. It turned easily.

"We were right," he said to Chad. "It fits!"

The three card-players streamed out from the office to see what was going on, but Tim and Chad walked briskly up the street towards the Bonanza Hotel. Kramer emerged from the sheriff's office with Peters, who hurried away to Dr. Lindsay's house, in Mountain Street, while Kramer walked over to the three men.

"Say," one of them cried out as he approached, "O'Neil's got a key to this joint!"

"I know it," returned Kramer curtly. Chad glanced back and saw the group on the boardwalk.

"Kramer's men must have heard you try that key, Tim," he said nervously.

"I wanted them to," Tim coolly returned.

"They're liable to start something!"

"Let them. If they start something, it'll give us a chance to finish it. Meanwhile we're goin' up to Jerry's room to see what we can find there."

Jerry, a bachelor, had lived at the hotel. In spite of its hne-sounding name it was only a ramshackle building of wood, with a veranda along its front, and an outside staircase in an alleyway at its side for the benefit of residents who did not wish to go through a shabby lounge to the main stairs.

Tim turned into the alleyway, but at the foot of the ladder-like staircase Chad stopped him.

"It's no use, Tim," he said hoarsely, "I can't back you up. We're still on opposite sides."

"Opposite sides?" echoed Tim. "Don't be silly, your father's fight is my fight."

"No, it isn't," declared Chad unhappily. "I can't explain, Tim, and I can't ask you to quit, on account of Jerry. But if you win, it'll be the finish of dad."

Tim looked at him for a long moment, but forbore to ask any questions, sensing some other trouble beyond his knowledge. Chad turned away, and Tim ascended the stairs to a little platform at the top of them, where he opened a door and entered a long passage, the floor of which was covered with oilcloth and an occasional mat.

At the second door on the left of the passage he stopped and took a key from his pocket, and with the key he unlocked the door of a plainly furnished bed-sitting room which he entered.

Closing the door behind him, he walked over to a table in the middle of the room and sat down at it. There was an oil lamp on the table, and near it writing materials which his brother had used quite a lot. He pulled a scribbling pad towards him, and was trying the nib of a pen, when there came a rap at the door.

"Come in!" he called loudly.

The handle of the door was turned, the door itself was opened slowly, and Kramer sidled into the room.

"I came to have a little talk with you, Tim," he said, putting his hands in his pockets and closing the door with his shoulders. "I figure you're gettin' pretty close to the man behind your brother's death."

"I don't think I could get much closer to him," returned Tim pointedly.

"I hope you won't even try." The crook stepped nearer to the table. "It won't bring Jerry back, and it will send Jed Harmon to the gallows."

"Jed Harmon had nothing to do with Jerry's death!"

"No, but the man who did have has got something on him. If you get too close to him, he'll tell."

"Tell what?" challenged Tim.

"Well, it seems Jed's wanted, back on the Pecos, for a killing. I don't believe he's guilty, but the law does, and if they take him back he'll swing for it. That's why he had to let his brand be used to sell stolen cattle. He had to— to save his life."

Tim bit his lip. So that was the thing Chad could not explain—the thing that put him on opposite sides. He looked squarely at Kramer, and he said:

"I should think Harmon would be glad to have me put a man like that out of the way for him!"

"Well, if it was that easy," Kramer returned in a quiet and completely self-possessed manner, "Chad would have done it long ago. But it isn't. He's too smart. He's got his story written, signed and witnessed, where the law can find it if anything ever happens to him."

Tim tapped his hand upon the scribbling-pad.

"I'm glad you told me this, Kramer," he said after a while. "Alters things a bit. Naturally, I wouldn't want to do something that would hang Myra's father."

"I thought you'd be glad to have me tell you," said Kramer, "so that you could back out before you got in too deep."

He went out from the room and closed the door behind him, and for the better part of ten minutes Tim remained in the chair at the table, deep in thought. Then he went down to the dining-room of the hotel to get a badly needed meal because he had decided that there was nothing else he could do till after dark.

Gaol-break!

DR. LINDSAY was out on a case when Peters called at his home, and it was not till an hour afterwards that he entered the town gaol and attended to the two prisoners in their cell.

They were both lying on the bunk, side by side, when he put a hypodermic syringe back into his little black bag, closed the bag, and went out with it into the sheriff's office.

"Well," he said, "I've given them something to ease their pain. They'll probably sleep until morning."

"That won't make me mad," said Ludlow, with a grin.

The doctor departed, and Ludlow settled back in the chair at the desk, cocked his feet up on the blotting-pad and lit a cigar. He had half-smoked the cigar when Tim looked in at him through a barred window from the yard that led to the stables. There was a door beside the window, and it was not locked.

It was quite dark in the street, except for an oil lamp here and there and such light as streamed from windows, and the yard was a place of shadows.

The door between the office and the gaol was closed; the light in the office came from a hanging lamp over the desk. Abruptly, Tim took out his gun and fired through the window at the lamp.

His aim was true. The flame was extinguished, and fragments of the shattered glass chimney showered down upon the startled sheriff, who scrambled to his feet and stumbled across the room in the sudden darkness.

He reached the side door, fumbled for the latch, and rushed out into the yard with his gun in his hand.

He fired at a shadow that seemed deeper than the rest of the shadows out there—and whirled about in dismay as



"This one fits Rankin's trunk," said Tim, "and I expect the other one will just fit the lock of your office, Kramer."

the door was slammed and halted. Tim had been waiting against the wall by the door, expecting to happen exactly what had happened, and he had slipped into the office.

Having fastened the side door, he made his way to the front door and bolted that, too, while Ludlow hammered and bellowed.

"Hi, open that door, d'you hear me? You let me in there, now. Open that door! Come on, open that door! Open the door, I tell you, or I'll blow the lock off!"

Tim acted swiftly. He was far better acquainted with the office and the gaol than the man who had been appointed sheriff only that day, and he made straight for the cell in which Jed Harmon was a prisoner, opened it, and tugged the elderly rancher forth.

Ludlow, reluctant to carry out his threat and shoot at the lock of the side door, scuttled out from the yard into the street and tried to open the front door. Tim bundled his bewildered captive out at the side door into the yard and along to the stables, and presently Ludlow returned to the side door, found it ajar, and dashed into the office.

Tim had been waiting for that, the key of the side door in his hand. Back he flew, and the door was locked on the outside.

Ludlow, whose intelligence was limited, immediately began to beat his fists upon its panels, instead of going to the front door.

"Hi, let me outa here!" he vociferated. "Open this door! I'm the sheriff here! You can't lock me in here this way!"

Tim, back in the stables, swept Jed Harmon over to a horse he himself had saddled.

"There's a gun there," he said crisply. "Use it!"

"I can't do it, Tim!" protested the rancher. "I'm through rummin'."

"You're not rummin'," retorted Tim. "but we're gonna make Kramer think you are. I'll explain later. Mount up, and ride out shooting!"

Reluctantly, but without further protest, Harmon swung himself up on to the back of the horse. Tim mounted his own white horse, and they rode out from the hotel, shooting at the starlit sky as they went.

The sound of the shots penetrated to Kramer's office, where the crook was conferring with some of his men, and Peters bounded up from the chair in which he was sitting.

"Gaol-break!" he cried excitedly. "Looks like somebody's sprung Harmon outa gaol!"

"Go get 'em, dead or alive!" shouted Kramer.

He and the five men who were with him rushed out from the headquarters of the Cattlemen's Protective Association, but the street appeared to be deserted. Tim and Jed Harmon had dismounted in the alleyway at the side of the Bonanza Hotel.

Ranchers and cowpunchers emerged from a saloon down the street to free their horses from a hitching-rail and ride about the town in search of the disturbers of the peace. Kramer and his men, having crossed the street, heard the frantic cries of Ludlow and gathered round the sheriff's office.

"Well, that gets rid of them," said Tim contentedly. "Now we'll go into the hotel."

"What are we goin' to do?" asked the flustered rancher.

"You're gonna help me find Jerry's murderer," was the reply. "And it won't take you back to the Pecos, either!"

"Pecos?" gulped Harmon. "What do you know about that?"

"I'll tell you later—there's no time now!"

The horses were left under the outside staircase, and they climbed the stairs to the platform, where Tim opened the door and led the way to the second room on the right of the passage.

Ludlow, meanwhile, had found an empty cell, blundered to the front door of the office, and tugged back the bolt. He opened the door—and nearly bowled Peters over as he rushed out at it. Kramer seized hold of his arm, and he tried to free himself.

"Hi, wait a minute!" he yelled. "Where'd they go? Where are they? Where'd they go?"

"What happened?" rasped Kramer.

"They got away with Harmon!"

"Who was it?"

"I don't know," lamented Ludlow.

"I never even saw 'em!"

"Who were you shooting at?"

"I wasn't shootin'!" The unhappy sheriff wrenched his arm free. "Oh, I wasn't shootin' at anybody! First they locked me out, and I couldn't get in; then they locked me in, and I couldn't get out. How could I shoot at anybody?"

"Well, somebody was shooting!" raged Kramer.

He turned to his companions.

"Take a look around the back and see if anybody's been hurt," he ordered.

The five dived into the yard, but they returned to report that there was nobody in it, or in the stables.

"It was a trick!" snorted Kramer.

"They weren't shootin' at anybody—they just wanted to attract attention!"

"What for?" asked the sheriff blankly.

"So we'd follow 'em. Then they'd double back and hide Harmon in town!"

"Now where could they hide anybody here?" growled Ludlow, staring up and down the ill-lit street.

Kramer rubbed his chin.

"Chad and his sister are at Dr. Lindsay's," he said. "You search there. I'll try the motel."

The Confession

IN the bed-sitting-room which had been his brother's, Tim pulled down the blinds over the windows, and after he had struck a match and lit the lamp he motioned to Jed Harmon to seat himself at the table.

"Now I want you to write a confession," he said, pointing to the writing materials and the scribbling-pad, "all about your part in Kramer's rustling. Tell everything."

The rancher picked up a pen.

"About the trouble in the Pecos, too?" he asked bleakly.

"No," Tim decided. "Just bear down on Kramer. Tell how he threatened you—forced you to let him use your brand—everything leading up to Jerry's death."

Harmon seemed to have no liking for the task.

"If you don't get that confession written before they find out where you are," said Tim, "it'll be too late to do any good."

He went to the door. The key was in the lock on the outside of it, but he transferred it to the inside.

"Now you'd better lock this door behind me," he advised. "I'm going down to put the horses away before somebody finds them and starts investigating."

He went out, closing the door behind him, and Harmon rose and turned the key.

Back at the table, with the pen in his hand, he glanced about the room, and noticed that there were two other doors in it. He opened one of them and looked into a cupboard containing clothes that Jerry O'Neil would never need again; but the other was bolted, and evidently communicated with the adjoining room. He returned to the table and began to write.

The confession was nearly completed, and the top sheet of the scribbling-pad was more than half-filled when Kramer entered the passage from the staircase and turned the handle of the door.

Jed Harmon looked up, but the handle had ceased to move, and as the sound was not repeated he came to the conclusion that his ears had deceived him, and went on writing.

But Kramer was still outside the door.

He waited there for a few moments, then pushed the end of a mat under it, knelt on the part of the mat that was still in the passage, and took a match from his waistcoat pocket.

With the aid of the match he managed to push the key out of the lock so that it fell on to the mat, and then he pulled the mat back into the passage and picked up the key.

Jed Harmon was reading through what he had written when the key was inserted in the lock on the outside of the door, and again he looked up; and this time he listened for the sound of footsteps.

No such sound reached his ears, however, and he was starting a fresh paragraph when Kramer turned first the key and then the handle. He opened the door slowly, and it did not creak on its hinges. With a six-shooter in his hand he slipped into the room with the stealth of a cat, and Harmon was unaware of his presence till he was beside him at the table.

The barrel of the gun was thrust almost into the rancher's face, and he sat up with a gasp.

Kramer, leaning over him, read the confession which had just been signed, November 14th, 1926.

then backed to the door and closed and locked it.

"A very interesting document," he said with an evil smile. "Hand over what you've written."

"You'll never take it from me alive!" cried the rancher, planting both hands on the pad.

"I'm afraid you've outlived your usefulness to me, Harmon," said Kramer.

Tim had put the two horses away in the hotel stables and had just re-ascended the stairs. He entered the passage, and he rapped on the door.

"Open up, Mr. Harmon!" he called out. "It's Tim!"

Harmon, at the table, gritted his teeth.

"Looks like it's up with both of us," he said.

"No," corrected Kramer. "Only one of us."

Tim, rapping at the door again, heard an anguished voice.

"Don't, Kramer!" it cried. "Don't shoot!"

A six-gun barked, and Tim was trying to force open the locked door when Ludlow burst into the passage from the staircase with a number of men, including Chad.

"You're under arrest for gaol-break!" shouted Ludlow.

"Don't be a fool!" snapped Tim.

"Help me break this door in! Kramer's killed Harmon in there!"

Chad thrust the sheriff out of the way and put his shoulder to the door beside Tim. It flew open after the third attempt, the box of the lock forced from the jam, and they all streamed into the room.

Jed Harmon was lying on the floor on his side, near the chair from which, obviously, he had fallen.

"Dad! Dad!" Chad cried, flinging himself down on his knees; but his father was unconscious.

"Where's Kramer?" demanded Ludlow sceptically.

"Did someone speak my name?" Kramer started them all by walking into the room from the passage.

"What's all the shooting? Why, it's Harmon! Who shot him?"

"That's a pretty good bluff, Kramer," roared Tim, "but it won't work! You shot him yourself, and made your getaway through that door!"

He pointed to the door between the two rooms, and Chad sprang to his feet and darted over to it.

"You're wrong Tim," he said. "This door's bolted on this side!"

A man who did not belong to Kramer's gang opened the door of the cupboard, but there was nobody in there among the clothes. Tim went to the two windows in turn, but they were both shut, and the catches were fastened. Kramer said:

"Looks like plain suicide to me. Doors, windows, all bolted on the inside!"

Ludlow had drifted to the table and had found half a sheet of paper on it near the scribbling-pad.

"Why, it is suicide!" he exclaimed.

"He left a note!"

The half-sheet of paper was passed from hand to hand. On it was written:

"My part in the cattle rustling has made me so miserable the last two years that I am taking this means as the only decent way out.

"JED HARMON."

The whole thing seemed clear enough to most of those present, but one of the men stooped over the prone figure of the rancher to make sure that the wound in his chest could have been self-inflicted.

"Hi, sheriff," he cried, "this man's still alive!"

"Alive?" echoed Kramer, by no means pleased to bear it, but contriving to conceal his dismay.

"Yes."

Kramer seized upon the opportunity to disarm even Tim's suspicions.

"Come on," he said urgently. "Let's get him over to Doc Lindsay's."

Chad and two of the others raised the wounded rancher between them and carried him out to the stairs. Kramer and his men followed; but Tim ran out into the passage with the half-sheet of paper in his hand and called Ludlow back.

"Just a minute, sheriff," he said. "That was no suicide in there, and I can prove it!"

"Aw, you're just wasting your time, O'Neil!" growled Ludlow. "There couldn't have been anybody with Harmon when he was shot."

"Then what became of the other half of this paper?" demanded Tim. "Somebody took it out of the room!"

Ludlow frowned at the piece of paper, but it had been cut with a knife, and had no rough edge. Murphy, the proprietor of the hotel, had closed the door on to the outside staircase, and he heard and stared at Tim.

"How do we know there was a full sheet to begin with?" challenged Ludlow.

"I can prove it," declared Tim, "but we'll skip that. Come back in here and I'll prove it wasn't suicide."

He caught hold of the sheriff's arm and pulled him back into the room. The hotel proprietor followed of his own accord, filled with curiosity.

There was a six-gun on the floor, between the chair and the table, where it might very well have fallen from the rancher's hand. Tim picked it up and held it out.

"This is the gun that shot Harmon, isn't it?" he said.

"Yeah, I reckon it is," admitted Ludlow.

"Where did it come from? Harmon didn't have a gun—he left it on his saddle! That's the killer's own gun, planted here to make it look like a suicide!"

"Well, it'll take more than your word to prove that!"

"All right." Tim leaned against the table with the gun in one hand and the half-sheet of paper in the other. "If my word doesn't count, let me ask you something you can answer yourself. Was that light burning when we came into the room?"

Ludlow stared at the lamp and scratched his chin.

"Yeah, I reckon it was," he said slowly.

"Either of you ever seen a gun fired alongside an oil-lamp?"

"I reckon we all have," said the proprietor of the hotel.

"What happens?"

"Well, the explosion puts the light out. It always does."

"Right!" Tim pointed to the lamp with the barrel of the gun. "When the shot was fired that light went out. Who lit it again? It couldn't have been Harmon!"

Ludlow blinked at the lamp and turned down the wick a little because the flame was too high.

"Well, there aro exceptions to all rules," he said.

"Yes," agreed Tim, "but they don't all happen at the same time. I'll tell you what I think happened. You see, I know why Harmon was here, because I brought him up here myself to write the truth about an outlaw. That out-

(Continued on page 26)

The beautiful, but trouble-making star of the show is found stabbed, and the knife that was used belongs to one of the dancers. She is arrested and charged with the crime, but her husband vows to find the real criminal—with startling results. Starring Douglas Fairbanks jun. and Dolores del Rio



The tantrums of a Star

A BEAUTIFUL woman, who could not hide by the most perfect make-up the ravages of time, leaned back in her chair and yawned. Yvette Delange, the star, did not like rehearsals.

The brisk, dapper little man with the bright eyes and hands that gestured so frequently was Morel, the producer.

Sitting next to Yvette, he studied the chorus-girls that were going through their act under the direction of Pierre, the stage manager.

Hovering behind the chair of the two most important people in "La Nouvelle Revue," which was to open in three weeks at this theatre, the Alhambra of Paris, was a bent, elderly man in shabby blue clothes. Alphonse had once been a very famous character actor. Morel employed him as an assistant more out of sentiment than anything else.

"Must I sit through all this?" inquired Yvette with another yawn.

"My darling," soothed Morel, "I want you to watch the audition of a young couple, Gaby and Tony. They do a novelty Apache dance, and I'm hoping you will like them, as we lack a good dance team in this revue. Alphonse." He turned to the old actor. "Tell Pierre that will do for the moment, and then inform Gaby and Tony that we are ready."

Yvette gazed languidly at the young couple who came on the stage. She noted that Gaby was dark and of obvious Spanish origin—she supposed that someone might consider this olive-skinned creature good-looking. The young man was more in Yvette's line. He was tall, broad-shouldered, handsome and most attractive when he smiled, showing gleaming white teeth.

The Apache dance was very realistic, and the end made Yvette gasp. The couple quarrel, and Gaby on being flung to the floor drew a long knife from her girdle. Tony had moved away as if tired of his partner—the knife was flung and stuck quivering in his back. Several of the chorus-girls screamed when Tony sank to the floor.

Everyone gave a sigh of relief when Tony got to his feet and laughed.

"You like them?" Morel turned to Yvette.

"Quite interesting."

"They're just what we need," enthused Morel. "They're young and attractive."

"He is," softly whispered the star.

"That knife finale will be a big success," stated Morel. "He wears a steel waistcoat with a scabbard arrangement in the side, and Gaby being an expert knife-thrower can flick the knife into the slot ninety-nine times out of a hundred. What do you think? Engage them?"

"I think so," agreed Yvette. "Do you want me any longer?"

When Yvette had gone to her dressing-room Morel told Pierre to rehearse the girls in their dance number for the second act and then to break for lunch. Morel informed Gaby and Tony that Yvette liked their act and that they would be included in the revue—Tony then went to Morel's office to sign the contract.

Some little while later Tony, Gaby and Alphonse went to have a drink at the small refreshment bar that was superintended by Dubec, the concierge. A fair-haired member of the chorus was perched on a stool; she smiled hopefully at the new-comers as she was very thirsty but very hard up.

"I'm Ninette Duvall!" she greeted them with a frank smile. "I thought your dance was ripping."

Naturally, that called for drinks, and Ninette's eyes sparkled when champagne cocktails were ordered. Alphonse drank his and shuffled away—Yvette Delange wanted to see him. He returned a few minutes later.

"Misa Delange's compliments, and she would like to see you in her dressing-room."

"Right!" Tony finished his drink, and took his wife's arm. "Come on, darling!"

Alphonse coughed.

"She omitted to mention that she desired to see you both." He gave the young man a significant glance.

"I won't be more than an hour," Tony laughed as if it were a joke. "Which is her room?"

Alphonse escorted Tony, leaving the two women together.

"Our star takes a great personal interest in new members of the company," Ninette said over her glass to Gaby, "if they happen to be young, handsome and male, so be warned."

"I'm not jealous, and I'm not frightened for Tony," Gaby shook her head. "She'll waste her time."

But Yvette was a persistent woman. Most men succumbed to her beauty, and it annoyed her immensely that Tony was not so easy to win. Her hints that he could take her out to supper were not accepted, and when Yvette learned that Gaby Ramarios was really Mrs. Gaby Seymour she still did not desist in her smiles and arch glances. The days passed and she was always inviting him to her room to take champagne or ask his advice, but when he told her kindly that there was only one woman in his

life—in other words, his wife—her eyes flashed angrily.

Gaby was a mixture of Spanish, Mexican and South American. She did not like Yvette Delange, and her dark eyes looked contemptuously at the star. The two women barely spoke. At the final dress rehearsal Yvette behaved in a disgraceful manner. She talked to Morel whilst Tony and Gaby were doing their Apache dance, made loud and obvious comments.

"What's the matter with her? I think they're horrible!" Yvette said so that all the company could hear.

Then the woman was silent for about a minute.

"Bertha! Bertha!" she shrieked. "Fetch me a handkerchief and some cigarettes. Morel"—she turned to the patient producer. "I don't like those drums, they'll irritate people."

Tony asked if they might start their number again.

"I think they're terrible. Paris will laugh at them."

"My angel, you were enthusiastic when you first saw them," reasoned Morel.

"We had seen so many bad acts anything seemed good," she sneered. "That woman can't even keep her balance. People will walk out on us if that act goes on."

It was too much for high-spirited Gaby. In spite of Tony's protests, she told the star just what she thought of her.

"All the last shows you've been in have been failures. Why? Because you're over forty and trying to pretend to be twenty. You can't act, you can't dance, you can't sing. The public is tired of you and so is everybody else."

What a scene! What a row! It ended with Yvette shouting that either the Seymours left or she did. Morel dismissed the rehearsal until eleven o'clock the next morning. His next task was the invariable one of pouring oil on the ruffled waters. He was a fair and a just man. Yvette could sing and she could act when she put her whole soul into her work, but often she couldn't be bothered. The Seymours were good, and he wanted them in the revue. He started with Tony.

"Yvette refuses to open to-morrow night if you are in the show." He raised his hand against interruption. "I sympathise with Gaby and I understand Yvette. I wish all of you to remain in my show. It is impossible to reason with an angry woman—you might as well reason with the Eiffel Tower. I want you to see her and express some regret."

"She started the trouble. It was her fault. Why—"

"Tony, she is the star and you are just a good act," soothed Morel. "I'm asking you to do this because I know you will be a great success. I have put five thousand francs into this show. Then think of all these poor little chorus girls. If this show fails they will all starve. Now let me go and tell her you will go and have a drink at her flat. You will mumble an apology and leave as soon as you can."

"Why can't I see her now?"

"Because she is probably in a rage and throwing things about," Morel explained. "I shall probably have something thrown at my head when I go to speak with her. I know what she is like. You can be flattering and gallant without being unfaithful to your wife. Tact, my boy, is necessary, and Yvette can be so sweet."

Then Gaby heard about it and had the dickens of a row with her husband. Her jealous nature was aroused. If he were going to her flat then he must

be crazy or falling for this peroxide blonde.

"Darling, don't act this way." He tried to keep his temper. "Don't you understand? If we're kicked out of the show, we don't eat. They'll say we're no good. We'll never get another chance like this. Morel is on our side. He's counting on us, he thinks we're grand. Do be reasonable."

"I hate a man that crawls to a woman."

That fired Tony.

"I've had enough of this. I'm not going to throw everything overboard that we've saved and worked for for years—because you're jealous over nothing. I'm going out to let you cool off. I shall go to her flat and I shall be as nice to her as I can." He went out and slammed the dressing-room door.

Tony was so enraged that he did not look where he was going and bumped into a man out in a deserted corridor.

"Sorry."

"Excuse me." It was a stranger. A man who looked ill and down on his luck. "Do you know where Yvette Delange's dressing-room is?"

"It's right across the other side of the stage," Tony pointed. "You'll find her name on the door."

Tony thought the man's smile was peculiar, almost thought of asking the nature of his business, then he thought of his own troubles and hastened from the theatre.

Out of the Past

YVETTE was before her mirror, and she was studying her complexion.

Morel had told her that Tony was very angry about his wife's behaviour and would like to apologise for what had happened. The star had been soothed and had agreed to see Tony at her flat. She was now putting the finishing touches to her make-up before leaving the theatre.

Suddenly the door opened, and Yvette was just about to rage at the person who had dared to enter without knocking, when in her mirror she saw the man's face.

She spun round, and now her eyes were wide and staring.

"You!"

"Who went to—" He saw the elderly woman, who was the dresser, and gave a significant gesture with his head.

"Bertha, you can go now." Yvette spoke quickly. "I won't want you any more. Don't argue, but go."

The man stood there in his shabby grey overcoat and smirked his satisfaction. He clucked softly as the door closed.

"Hallo, sweetheart," he mocked.

"So you're out already." Her eyes were hard now.

"Already!" He shrugged his shoulders. "Five years I've been away—what a charming reception."

"What do you want here?"

"Money, my love."

"I can let you have a little."

"I want twenty thousand francs."

Yvette jumped to her feet.

"That's impossible."

"If you haven't got it pick up the telephone and ask your manager to bring it here," the man answered.

Yvette hesitated, then picked up the phone.

"His office doesn't answer."

His smile was mocking.

"Don't try to bluff me. Get on to the concierge and tell him to find the manager."

Yvette shrugged her shoulders and rang Dubec; she instructed him to find

Morel and tell the manager that she required at once twenty thousand francs. Five minutes later there was a knock at the star's door.

"Don't come in—I'm not dressed."

"What unexpected modesty," answered Morel. "Dubec tells me you want twenty thousand francs."

"Yes, yes." The door opened and a bare arm appeared. "Did you bring it?"

"Yes, but it's a lot of money."

"Give it to me!" The tone was imperious.

"I should like a receipt."

"I will give it you in the morning." Her fingers clawed for the money, and after a slight hesitation Morel passed the wad of notes to her. The door closed immediately. Knowing the whims of Yvette, it was a waste of time to argue, so Morel went away.

The eyes of the released gaolbird glittered at sight of all the money. Yvette went across the room to a wardrobe, and he wondered what was her purpose.

"Give me that money."

When Yvette turned she was holding a small revolver, and he knew why she had gone to the wardrobe. His eyes narrowed and his hands clenched.

"Keep your distance!" Yvette was cool now. "I want to talk to you."

"I haven't time to talk." He edged nearer.

"I said keep your distance!" Her smile was mocking and hard. "You know I am quite capable of shooting you. I might like an excuse to put a bullet into you, so if you value your life don't try anything foolish. If you think you're coming back here to spoil things for me you're mistaken."

"Give me that money!" the man snarled at her.

Yvette shook her head, and glancing down at the money she held in her left hand, flicked several of the notes so that they fluttered to the floor, the rest she tossed carelessly on to her dressing-table. The man stared down at the fallen money, then stopped and picked it up.

"I see you understand me," mocked Yvette when he straightened. "You realise that is all you're going to get."

"It's not enough."

"It's all you get." The star came a step nearer, and her tone was menacing. "If you come pestering me again you'll walk into trouble."

"Your bluff doesn't scare me." The man smiled unpleasantly. "You've got the whip-hand this time, but I'll be coming back."

"You always were a boaster," she derided. "Now get out."

The man would have gone by the door through which he had entered.

Yvette stayed him with a gesture of the hand.

"I trust no one saw you come in—a tramp. It will be as well that none see you leave." She backed to the wall and turned a handle. A cunningly concealed door that looked like the panelling opened. "This will take you into a side street. Hurry!"

"A charming reception." The man bowed. "I trust next time you may be more friendly." At the door he looked at her and then across at the money on the dressing-table. "I shall be seeing you again in the very near future. Au revoir, beloved."

Yvette closed the door after him with an angry slam.

Yvette looked at the money. Her mind was turning over a scheme to keep this money for herself. Could she tell Morel that she had been blackmailed into parting with twenty thousand

frances? If it were charged up to the theatre it might deprive the shareholders of some of their interest. Now what was the best story to tell Morel? A knock made her slide a hand over the money. Before she could call out "Come in" the dressing-room door opened and Gaby Seymour, who was still dressed in the clothes she wore for her Apache act, entered the room. The star was startled, because Gaby's eyes were staring at her—nake's eyes, thought Yvette—then she saw Gaby's hand was resting on the knife that was tucked into her girdle.

Murder

TWO men lounged against the concierge's small bar. It was dark and gloomy and chilly. Old Alphonse had the moth-eaten astrakhan collar of his coat buttoned close round his neck. He had been on his way out of the theatre when the small bar had tempted him to stop for a brandy. After the scene to-night he felt a brandy was necessary. After a while he had been joined by a tall, sullen-faced individual in a blue uniform. They had several drinks together.

"After a dress rehearsal one relaxes," old Alphonse muttered. "It takes me back to 1888, when I was with the Divine Bernhardt at—"

Louis, chauffeur to Yvette, knowing that if Alphonse once started reminiscing it would be hard to stop him, placed his hand on the old actor's shoulder.

"You told me once before," Louis turned his head. "What's she doing in there? I'm fed up hanging around all this time."

"Composing herself, doubtless, after the little disturbance we had to-night," Alphonse replied. "Now, Sarah you must know—"

"I bet she started the row—she does nothing else. I reckon a drink wouldn't do us any harm." Louis glanced round. "Where's Dubec?"

"He's gone on his rounds." Alphonse came a little closer. "I was about to tell you of something which occurred when I was with the Divine Sarah. I was, as you know, her leading man—"

"Yes." Louis resigned himself to hear a story that he had heard quite ten times before. "Make it brief, old boy."

"We were playing 'Camille,' if I remember—" That was as far as the story got.

"Help! Help! Murder! Help!" came the hoarse voice of a man from the other side of the stage.

"That is Dubec's voice," muttered Louis.

Then the concierge came running and stumbling towards them. Louis steadied the man, who looked as white as a sheet and scarce able to stand.

"Who has been murdered?" he asked.

"Delange!" came in a hoarse whisper from the shuddering Dubec.

"Yvette!" shrieked Alphonse. "Impossible!"

"She's dead—murdered," Dubec cried. "I opened the door of her room—I saw her lying there."

Dubec had an electric lantern. Louis snatched this away from the wailing concierge and hurried across the stage, followed by Alphonse. Dubec ceased wailing and ran after them. The chauffeur opened the dressing-room door and flashed the light. Stretched on the floor lay Yvette Delange.

"Look! Look!" Louis grabbed at Alphonse's arm. "The knife!"

Alphonse went to the switch and flooded the room with light. He knelt beside the still figure, with Louis and

Dubec peering over his shoulder. One touch of the wrist told the actor that the star was dead.

Suddenly Alphonse pointed at the knife that was buried deep in Yvette's chest. "Why, that's the knife Gaby Seymour uses in her number."

"We'd better call the police," fearfully muttered the chauffeur.

"The police?" The concierge looked dully at Louis.

"Louis is right, Dubec, the police must be informed at once," Alphonse decided. "Get police headquarters and tell them that Yvette Delange is dead under mysterious conditions, and will they come to the theatre immediately."

Arrested

TONY went to Yvette's flat, and it was a relief to find that the star had not yet arrived. The maid, Marie, said that madame had phoned that she was expecting M'sieu Seymour and would he please wait? So Tony waited in no very pleasing humour.

Yvette's interest was just what they wanted to get them higher up the ladder, but everything was spoiled because of Gaby's jealousy. Still, Gaby could not be blamed, because Yvette did not play the game. What should he say to the woman when she turned up? If Yvette expected him to flirt with her she was very much mistaken. He must be tactful and diplomatic. He wished she would hurry as he wanted to get back to his lodgings to pacify Gaby—that wouldn't be easy.

Tony waited some while, and then told the maid he could wait no longer. He found a stray taxi and was driven to his lodgings. He did not enter the place right away, but rushed off to a nearby market to see if he could find some flowers as a peace offering. With a bouquet of roses Tony tiptoed up the stairs and very stealthily opened the door.

Gaby was not there.

Tony became at once nearly mad with anxiety. What had happened to the poor girl? She had gone back to her mother—impossible, as her nearest relation was two hundred miles away. She had left him! That explanation did not fit, because Tony knew that if Gaby had decided to walk out she would have written a farewell message. But there was nothing, and no sign that she had been home since the rehearsal, as all her clothes were here. Tony was puzzling what he should do when he heard slow, dragging foot-steps on the stairs, and rushed to the door.

It was Gaby. She looked at him with large, unhappy eyes. Her whole demeanour was dejected and weary.

"Darling, I have been so frightened. Where have you been?"

"I don't know—walking."

Then she held out her arms to Tony, and with an eager cry he drew her close. He babbled about being a cad and fool, that he would never leave her again, and between his babbling, kissed her.

"No longer will I be the big business man," Tony assured her. "It was only because of Morel that I went to sea her."

And when Gaby had heard all his story she begged him to forgive her. She cried over the roses.

"Oh, Tony, I have been very foolish—you will never forgive me?"

"What have you done, my precious?"

"I was so consumed with jealous rage that I—I spoke to Yvette," Gaby confessed. "I think I was a little rude to her. Tony, I don't want to go back to the theatre. I don't want to see her again—ever!"

"We won't." He patted her shoulder. "We'll find another job." He laughed happily. "You leave it to me."

Gaby had no idea how far she had walked except that it had been along



"Why, that's the knife Gaby Seymour uses in her number," Alphonse muttered incredulously.

the banks of the Seine. She was very tired and very hungry. Tony insisted upon making her some breakfast. He had scarce put the kettle on the gas-ring when heavy footsteps were heard mounting the stairs. It was a surprise when there came a brisk knocking at their door. Two men stood outside.

"Is Gabrielle Seymour here?"

"Who are you?" Tony asked.

"Police Department." The two men walked into the room, for the spokesman had seen Gaby standing by an arm-chair. "You are Gabrielle Seymour?"

"Yes."

"I must ask you to come along with me," said the detective.

"What are you talking about?" demanded Tony. "What do you want with my wife?"

"Yvette Delange was murdered early this morning."

"Murdered!" Gaby recoiled in horror.

Tony looked startled for a moment. "What's that got to do with my wife?"

"The Sûreté would like to hear what she has to say about it," the detective replied, and looked at the girl. "Get your hat and coat, please."

"You can't do that," began Tony, and flung his arms round Gaby. "Produce your warrant."

"We will arrest you as well if you cause any trouble," rasped the second detective as he grabbed Tony by the arms and dragged him away from Gaby. "You may accompany your wife to the Sûreté, and if your wife's explanation is satisfactory she will be set free, but do not try to interfere with the law."

A Friend in Need

A THICK-SET young Englishman was busy at a typewriter. The big offices were almost deserted, save for those poor people who were on the night staff of Paris' leading journal. Guy Henry was preparing his story, and he thumped the typewriter, as he was not in the best of tempers.

The previous day he had been to interview the Seymours to try to get for them a good write-up and perhaps mention on the front page. All the copy he had obtained was Gaby's opinion of the star in the revue. Tony was apparently in the clutches of Yvette, and Gaby wanted to claw her eyes out. Guy Henry was an old school friend of Tony's, and had been at the wedding. He wanted to find out what they had been doing in the last two years, as the Seymours had gone on tour with a small company. Failing to secure very much information, Henry decided to use his own personal knowledge of the Seymours and to employ his own inventive faculties in regard to their tour. He was hard at work, when a brother reporter came into the office and strolled across.

"Not like you to be here at this hour—got something hot?"

"I'm getting out a boost for a couple of friends of mine."

"Bet there's a girl in it, and she's pretty."

Guy Henry laughed.

"Well, you should know her by reputation. A dancer named Gabrielle Seymour."

"What?"

The other's shout of incredulous amazement startled Henry.

"What's the matter?"

"Guy Henry, I take off my hat to you," was the answer. "It's amazing. You old sleuth. It only happened an hour ago, and you're writing the story." He picked up some photos. "And you've got pictures of her."

"What are you driving at?"

"Of course, you don't know that

Yvette Delange was found murdered," mocked the newspaperman. He

stabbed a finger at a photograph of Gabrielle. "And with this girl's dagger stuck into her."

"Good heavens!" Guy Henry jumped to his feet. He ripped the page out of the machine, picked up the photographs, and grabbed his coat.

"Where?"

"At the theatre."

Guy Henry struggled into his coat, and without another word rushed out of the office. He had got to be in on this story, and he had got to find Tony. As he had heard what Gaby thought of Yvette he felt certain that the Spanish temperament must have got the better of Tony's wife. They would have arrested her. That meant that it would be best to go to the Sûreté.

Sure enough, Tony was at the Sûreté, and it was as well that Guy turned up, because Tony was in a frenzy. How dare they arrest his wife? They had accused her of murder. It was infamous. Guy calmed the distraught young man and took him into a quiet corner. Shouting and yelling would do more harm than good. In Guy's opinion the only sane thing to do was to go and have legal advice. Eugene Roget was one of the finest counsels of the day and a personal friend. They must go and see Roget at once.

"He is the best lawyer in France," Guy assured his friend. "He will know what is the best thing to do."

Eugene Roget was dressing when the two young men called, and he interviewed them in his dressing-gown. Tony took an instant liking to this handsome, strong-featured man. Roget had a way of looking a person in the eye.

"I understand from Guy that you are in some sort of trouble," Roget said, after they were all seated in his study. "Tell me about it."

"My name is Tony Seymour. My wife has been arrested for murder. Arrested because the murder was committed with a dagger belonging to my wife, and—"

"Ono moment." Roget stayed him with a gesture. "You seem to be starting your story in the middle. I want to have it from the start, and don't miss anything, however trifling it may seem to you."

In silence Roget listened to Tony Seymour's story.

"Yvette Delange was not my idea of a good actress," he commented. "I don't think she was very much liked back-stage. Can you suggest anybody else who may have done it?"

Tony shook his head despairingly. "Delango must have had many enemies," interposed Guy.

"That isn't very helpful," said the famous counsel. "Frankly, the case does not look too good. Your wife goes to Delange's dressing-room after a quarrel with you and has the dickens of a quarrel with the star. She leaves and wanders through the streets of Paris, finally returning home to be reconciled to her husband. The police arrive, and madame is arrested. There is so much that implicates your wife and so little to indicate someone else having committed the crime."

"I know who did it!" suddenly cried Tony. "I must have been mad not to have thought of it before. As I left the theatre last night, or, rather, this morning, I met a sinister-looking man who was hanging about the stage door. He asked me to show him where Yvette Delange's dressing-room was."

"Did anyone else see the man?"

"I don't know; there was nobody about."

"Pretty thin, I'm afraid," Roget

frowned. "Would you recognise this man if you saw him again?"

"Yes, I had a good look at him. He was about Guy's height, medium build, fair hair and moustache, and wearing a raincoat."

Roget tapped his desk with a pencil and they waited for his decision.

"I believe your story, though it sounds fantastic," he announced with a slight smile. "I will dress and go to see your wife. Guy, I suggest you take our friend to the Criminal Identification Department. I will give you a card that will be of assistance."

At the Criminal Identification Department the two men were conducted to a room with many shelves, sections, and files, and were informed that the photographs and descriptions of all criminals were filed here. It was a titanic task that Tony attempted, and his friend was not able to assist him in the search.

"I didn't know there were so many crooks in the world," gasped Tony when they were politely shown the door that evening.

Tony was back again early next morning, and Guy was half-asleep when awakened by a cry from Tony.

"I've got it. This is our man."

Guy looked over his shoulder.

"Are you sure?"

"Positive."

They called an official, who went off to another room and returned with a large cardboard slip.

"Henry Capelle," he read out. "Theft, Paris, 1914. Renoir gang. Convicted for blackmail 1931." The official looked at Tony. "Out of all these thousands of photographs you've looked through you must pick this one."

"That's the man I saw. I'd know him in a million."

"Henry Capelle was released from La Sante on April 8th."

"Well, that proves it," eagerly cried Tony. "The murder was committed on April 27th."

"This man left Paris on April 11th."

"He must have come back."

The official gave a decisive shake of his head.

"If he'd come back it would have been on this record sheet. This man was not in Paris on April 27th."

No amount of argument would convince the official that there was the slightest possibility of Capelle being in Paris. If the record said Capelle left on the 11th, that finished the matter; but he did allow Tony to have a copy of the photograph.

"The police can be very stubborn if they like," Guy Henry said as they left the building. "According to all their calculations, Capelle should not be in Paris, and they will not admit the possibility of him slipping through their fingers back into Paris. They won't do anything more about it."

"Then we must." Tony gripped his friend's arm. "As a newspaperman you should be able to pull some strings in the underworld."

"All right," Guy answered. "If he's in Paris we'll find him."

That evening they set out on their search, and Tony was taken into some dreadful underground cafés and clubs, but there was no sign of the man they wanted. At midnight Guy paused outside an evil-looking estaminet.

"I kept Marou up my sleeve," he whispered. "He's been useful to me more than once, and I've returned the compliment by saying nice things on his behalf to the police and paying through the nose for his rotten champagne. He's a blackguard—one of the worst in Paris



"We will arrest you as well if you cause any trouble," rasped the detective.

—cut anybody's throat for a price, but he amuses me."

The name of Guy Henry worked magic with the barman, who said he would find out.

Guy whispered in his friend's ear:

"I'll wager he hasn't been out of this place for the last ten years. His life wouldn't be worth a cent if he went out into the streets; he has bodyguards all over this place. Ah, here comes the barman!"

They were taken downstairs into the cellars, along dark, smelly passages to a stout, wooden door. Three raps and they were admitted. They saw a mountain of a man, who was greasy, unshaven, and in his shirt sleeves. He was seated at a round table with a large glass of beer in front of him. Close to his side sat a very thin individual, who wore his hat and peered at the two visitors covertly.

"My dear friend," Marou held out his hand. "What a pleasure. Sit down!"

"This is a friend of mine," Guy indicated Tony. "We want your help."

He glanced inquiringly at the thin individual.

"You know I'm at your service," Marou grinned. "You've met the Weasel, haven't you? He's my private secretary. What can I do for you?"

Tony held up the picture.

"Do you know this man?" he asked eagerly.

"Never saw him," Marou answered, and gave it to his secretary.

"No, I don't seem to remember—"

The Weasel gave Guy Henry a meaningful glance.

Guy Henry grinned and produced some money.

"Perhaps this will refresh your memory."

But as the Weasel reached out for the money the fat hand of Marou was there first and took the notes. Marou gave his assistant a glowering look.

"Go on, remember!" he snarled.

"It looks like Henry Capelle." The

Weasel studied the picture closely. "But I don't know where he is. But I know where he was yesterday—I saw him."

"Where did you see him?" growled Marou.

"He was at Madame Didier's last night." The Weasel looked at the two visitors. "Madame does not ask her guests their private addresses, so she won't be able to help you."

"You will give madame my compliments"—Marou banged on the table—"and tell the old rat to talk all she knows." He grinned at Guy. "Maybe the Weasel won't find out much from the old hen, but give him time and he'll find Henry Capelle. Of course—"

He paused significantly.

"Find Henry Capelle and you can name your price!" recklessly cried Tony Seymour.

The two crooks of the underworld rubbed their hands in anticipation of their reward.

The Trial

TONY SEYMOUR was reading the Paris edition of the "New York Herald Tribune" for September 4th, 1936.

"Gaby Seymour Trial. Knife may prove Murder Guilty finding. No loophole seen for dancer. Gaby Seymour, charged with the murder of Yvette Delange, leading lady at the Alhambra Theatre, on the night of April 27th, faces her jurors again to-day. The verdict which may send her to the guillotine or give her her freedom is expected within twenty-four hours."

Tony flung down the paper and stared miserably at his two companions—Guy and the friendly little chorus-girl, Ninette. All looked tired and exhausted. They had searched, and so had the Weasel, but no sign had they found of Henry Capelle.

"It's hopeless!" cried Ninette. "He must have left Paris."

"I'll not give up!" said Tony. "He's got to be found."

At that moment his wife was being addressed by the President at the Palace of Justice.

"Gabrielle Seymour, before beginning your examination, it is my duty to remind you that you are being tried under the penal code of France. I must warn you to study attentively all the questions that may be put to you by the Public Prosecutor, by Mr. Roget, who is conducting your defence, and by myself. Your replies may greatly influence the jury, therefore you must answer distinctly and truthfully."

Gaby was dressed in black, and her face was very white, but she faced the President bravely.

"Yes, sir," she replied clearly.

The Public Prosecutor stood up.

"I feel I should warn the jury that no more appealing prisoner has ever stood at the Bar of Justice, and remind them that she is an actress, trained to simulate emotions that she does not feel."

Roget was on his feet at once.

"Mr. President, I ask that the Public Prosecutor withdraw those remarks, which are calculated to prejudice the jury against my client. It is true that she is talented and beautiful, but those qualities do not necessarily prove her either a liar or a criminal."

The President turned to the jury.

"I will ask the jury to disregard the suggestion of the Public Prosecutor." He stared intently at Gabrielle Seymour. "On April 10th last you and your husband were engaged to present a dance at the revue at the Alhambra. Is it true that your costume for this number included a dagger?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is it equally true that during your dance you had to use this dagger frequently, finally throwing it at your partner with great accuracy?"

"Yes, sir."

"During a rehearsal you resented

some action of the victim of this tragedy and quarrelled with her violently."

Roget stood up.

"We will prove by six reliable and impartial witnesses that this quarrel was begun, not by the accused, but by the victim."

"If the jury wish to consider that fact a point in favour of the accused," the President replied, "they are privileged to do so."

The Public Prosecutor spoke next.

"We will also prove that the accused was intensely jealous of her husband and resentful of the dead woman's attitude towards him."

Roget did not make any protest, so the President motioned the Public Prosecutor to sit down.

"Shortly after your quarrel with Yvette Delage she was found dead in her dressing-room," stated the President. "She was murdered with the dagger that belonged to you. This weapon had been thrust into the victim with the same accuracy you employ in your dance. Although mortally wounded, she tried to defend herself. She fired at her assailant. The bullet has been found embedded in the paucelling. That assassin, Gabrielle Seymour, was you!"

"It wasn't me, I tell you!" Gaby cried hysterically. "It wasn't—it wasn't me."

"Then will you tell me why you armed yourself with a dagger before going to the dressing-room?"

"It was part of my costume. I didn't notice it."

"Yet in the course of the quarrel you threatened her with it."

"I didn't threaten her!" protested Gaby. "Only with words. I didn't realise I had the dagger until she asked me to put it down, then I threw it on the table, but had no thought of using it."

"Then why did the victim arm herself with the revolver?"

"I saw no revolver."

"Not at any time during the quarrel?"

"No."

The President pondered for a moment.

"You have admitted that you used threatening language to the victim. What were the words?"

"I don't remember what I said."

"I must beg of you to try and remember."

Gaby stared helplessly round the crowded court before turning to the President. "I insulted her—I don't know what I said. I was so miserable. She turned her back on me, and I went out."

"Jean Dubec, the stage doorkeeper of the theatre, has declared that he saw you leave ten minutes before the discovery of the crime. The crime was discovered at five minutes past four. Therefore, you must have left the theatre at five minutes to four."

"That isn't possible," answered Gaby. "I left long before that. I remember now. I saw the time later from the Pont de la Concorde. It was only four o'clock, then; I couldn't have walked the two miles from the theatre in five minutes."

"What were you doing at the Pont de la Concorde at four o'clock?"

"I was hopeless—I didn't know what to do. I didn't want to go back to an empty room. I wandered in the streets, along the Seine—I even thought of throwing myself into the water. The striking of the clock seemed to bring me to my senses."

"You then returned to your lodgings," spoke the unemotional voice of the President, "where you were arrested at half-past five. What did you do in the interval?"

November 14th, 1936.

"I must have walked in the streets."

"Did you meet or speak to anyone?"

"No one."

The President then signified to Eugene Roget that it was his turn to question for the defence. The counsel called the name of a famous doctor, who described his views on the case.

"The medical officer has just described with clarity and precision the way in which the victim was struck down at a distance of about seven feet," Roget said at the conclusion. "The weapon was thrown with such force that it caused almost instantaneous death. I will ask the doctor to look at my client, and to tell the court whether, in his opinion, the accused would have the physical strength to throw the weapon with the force he has described."

The doctor hesitated.

"I do not think so."

Prosecuting counsel was immediately on his feet.

"However, doctor, you do not contend that it would be impossible, after long training, for anyone, even a woman, to throw the weapon with the force you speak of?"

The doctor studied the prisoner.

"Perhaps it is possible, especially as the accused was an expert knife-thrower."

The next witness was Adolphe Morel, who stated that he was an impresario and forty-three years of age. He swore to speak the truth and nothing but the truth.

"Mr. Morel," asked the President, "in your testimony at the inquest you stated that, on the morning of the crime, the victim asked you for twenty thousand francs?" Morel nodded his agreement. "Mr. Morel, can you tell us at the exact time the money changed hands?"

"I think it was about three o'clock."

"Mr. Morel," Roget questioned, "am I correct in assuming that in your theatre the requirements of a dress rehearsal had brought together a very mixed crowd of people, some of whom may have been of questionable honesty?"

"It is possible."

"Did anyone see you take the twenty thousand francs to the dressing-room?"

Morel thought.

"I don't think so," he decided. "Almost everyone had left."

"Except Gabrielle Seymour," interrupted the Public Prosecutor. "Mr. Morel, when you came to the victim's dressing-room at three o'clock, did you meet anyone?"

"I didn't go into the room. I passed the money round the door."

"Was that because the victim was not fully clothed?" asked the President.

"Perhaps, but such modesty would hardly have been characteristic of her," Morel replied with a slight smile. "I was faintly surprised at the time."

"Then you are satisfied that no one could have seen you hand the money to the victim?" demanded Roget.

"Not unless someone else was in the room besides Yvette Delange."

"Then you get the impression that she wasn't alone?" Quickly Roget seized on this point.

"Well, it is very possible," Morel admitted.

The Public Prosecutor next called Gabrielle Seymour to the stand.

"You were the next person to enter that room. Did you see anyone except the victim?"

"No," answered the accused.

"When you went into the room you saw no large sum of money?"

"I didn't notice anything."

"The sum of twenty thousand francs

has never been found," the President informed the jury.

"Neither, Mr. President, have we established the mysterious reason for which the victim demanded so large a sum of money at such a late hour," countered Roget. "Neither have we established the fact that she was alone. May it please the court to recall the stage doorkeeper. I would like to ask him a question."

"Recall Jean Dubec," ordered the President.

The concierge shuffled forward and stood there twisting his cap nervously.

"Now, Mr. Dubec, when the victim telephoned you to find Mr. Morel, what time was it?"

"It was—yes—it must have been about half-past three."

"It could not have been half-past three!" The interruption came from Morel, who was still near the witness stand.

"Why?" asked Roget.

"Because I left the theatre at ten minutes past three."

"What do you say, Mr. Dubec?"

"Well, it might have been earlier," mumbled Dubec. "I know it was just after the prisoner left my bar, and she had been there a long time drinking, and was very excited."

Gaby wondered why the concierge disliked her so much.

Roget also wondered.

"We know all that—you have already told us," he said harshly. "You have shown unnecessary hostility towards the prisoner, and on a question of supreme importance you are in disagreement with a witness whose honesty and sincerity are above question."

"But not more so than the witness you are accusing!" angrily protested the Public Prosecutor. "He also is on oath, and I will not permit his word to be doubted."

The President rapped on his desk.

"Accused, have you anything to add to the testimony of the witness?"

"No," whispered Gaby.

"Gentlemen of the jury." The President stood up. "Public Prosecutor. Counsel for the defence. You may retire."

So ended the first day of the trial.

Anthony is Ejected from Court

ON the next day the first witness was Alphonse de la Riviere.

"Your name, age, and profession" cried the President.

"My name is not unknown to the students of the drama—it is Alphonse de la Riviere," stated the old actor. "Once leading man to the divine Sarah Bernhardt, and once described by our most famous critics as—"

"Your age?"

"I was born at Bordeaux on August 3rd, 1868. My first appearance—"

"Raise your hand."

"Was at the age of twelve."

"Alphonse de la Riviere!" The President spoke sharply.

The actor came back to earth.

"Sir?"

"You swear to speak without hatred and without fear? To speak the truth and nothing but the truth?"

Alphonse swore. The questions put to him did not throw any light on the case.

He tried several times to speak of Sarah Bernhardt, but was stopped on every occasion and finally sent back to his seat.

Anthony Seymour was the next person called.

The President studied the young man closely:

"Your name, age, and profession?"

"Anthony Seymour. Twenty-nine. Dancer."

"I cannot take your oath as you are married to the accused," announced the President. "The jury must regard your statements as merely information. Have you anything to tell the jury?"

"I don't know what happened," Tony turned to the jury. "I can only tell you that my wife is innocent. She did not commit the crime. It's impossible."

A sharp rap from the President. "Please limit your testimony to facts which directly concern the crime."

"I beg your pardon," Tony bowed at the reproof. He faced the jury once more. "On the night of the crime my wife and I quarrelled. It was my fault—entirely my fault. If I had listened to her we would have left the theatre together and she would not stand unjustly accused. As I left the theatre on the night of the murder I saw a man lurking near the stage door."

"Yes, yes, you told us all that at the inquest," impatiently spoke the President. "But the police records show this man was not in France at the time of the murder."

"He was not only in France," argued Tony, "but in Paris on that night."

The Public Prosecutor smiled unpleasantly.

"I take it the defence is prepared to produce him as a witness."

"We haven't been able to find him yet," Roget had to admit.

"But the fact that the twenty thousand francs are missing means that that man got the money. Why was he hiding? Why did he go to Yvette Delange's room? When did he leave?"

The President rapped vigorously.

"You are not here to ask questions, but to answer them. If this man has not been found, it is probably because he does not exist."

That infuriated Tony.

"But he does exist!" he shouted. "The police have made no attempt to help me find him—a dozen times during the past few weeks I have asked for

help. They've promised, but done nothing—absolutely nothing!"

"I will not allow the police to be criticised in this court," stated the President. "Kindly present the facts without becoming hysterical."

"My wife is on trial for her life," cried Tony, "and you tell me I am becoming hysterical. I have given you facts. You dismiss them. It is a fact that that man is in Paris. It is a fact that his presence in this court will prove the innocence of my wife. It is a fact that my wife is incapable of killing anyone."

"All this is getting us nowhere!" sneered the Public Prosecutor.

Tony turned on him.

"It's getting us nowhere because you don't want to hear the truth. You have built up a case against an innocent woman and you don't want it torn to pieces."

"I shall order you to be removed!" thundered the President. "This is a court of justice!"

"Justice!" Tony laughed harshly. "All through this building I see the word 'justice' written. If it is justice to condemn an innocent woman, then all my life I have misunderstood that word!"

"Silence!" the President cried, and gave an imperious signal.

At once three hefty gendarmes lined up on either side of Tony Seymour, and struggling in their grasp he was forced from the stand.

"The session is adjourned until 8.30 to-night," came the order.

The Message

THE court reassembled at 8.30. Roget looked harassed. It was not often that he lost a case. He had urged Gaby to change her plea to one of self-defence. With the bullet-hole in the wall and the gun in Delange's hand they would never convict her. But

Gaby refused to plead guilty to a crime she had not committed.

When the court were all in their places the President ordered the Public Prosecutor to proceed.

The man was smirking in expectant triumph:

"Mr. President, gentlemen of the jury, I am here not to condemn out of hand someone who might be innocent, but someone who has been given a fair trial; someone who has had the advantage of a clever lawyer, eloquent on her behalf. But, with all his eloquence, I submit that her guilt has been fairly proved."

Tony sat there in agony of mind. Someone dug him in the ribs, and it was some while before he could drag his attention away from that pitiful picture in the box.

It was Gny Henry, who was holding out a dirty piece of paper.

"Just got this message from Marou. We've got to go at once."

Gaby Seymour saw her husband leave his seat and hasten from the court. Had he deserted her? Roget saw the two men leave, and new hope entered his soul. He decided to make a long speech in favour of the accused to gain time.

At Marou's estaminet they found the fat man behind the bar.

"Go and sit down." He spoke out of the corner of his mouth. "When the Weasel goes upstairs, follow him."

The Weasel got up from a table and lurched towards some stairs. The two men edged their way after him. On the stairs the Weasel was waiting for them.

"He came and asked Marou to hide him," hissed the Weasel. "He's upstairs, but I've got his gun. I think it's Capelle. Follow me."

They entered a bed-room, and there sprawled on a bed was a dirty figure.

"That's him! That's the man I saw that night!" cried Tony.



Tony held up the picture. "Do you know this man?" he asked eagerly.

The man opened his eyes and blinked at them.

"What do you want?" he demanded suspiciously.

"You're the man who asked me the way to Yvette Delange's room!" accused Tony.

"I don't know anything about it!" The man fumbled in his hip-pocket. "Get out!"

Tony pounced on the man and plucked him off the bed as if he had been a feather. He shook the wretch till the man's teeth rattled.

"You're coming with us!" Tony shouted. "Whether you want to or not!"

The New Witness

THE Public Prosecutor was enjoying himself. He swelled out his chest. "This girl killed; she killed in a cowardly fashion; and she fled away under cover of darkness. The weapon was thrown with such force—penetrated so deeply that it brought about instantaneous death—the unhappy victim died as though struck by lightning. Having killed, this girl stole—robbed the woman she had so cruelly murdered. Gentlemen of the jury, soon you will hear a clever lawyer. No doubt he will speak to you of frenzy, passion, blindness, jealousy. Perhaps he will enlarge upon that nightmare known as 'miscarriage of justice.' You must not let his eloquence sway you. You will, I feel sure, close your hearts to a false compassion, for you know that the woman Seymour is an actress.

"Her protestations of innocence, her tears, her lies, are a pretence. She has made no attempt to furnish herself with an alibi. Oh, no, she is content with childish denials." He paused to laugh. When he continued it was in imitation of her voice: "I have not killed—it wasn't me—I'm innocent!" He laughed again. "Lies! All lies!"

Roget knew that the jury would give a verdict of "Guilty," no matter how eloquent he could be.

"She has endeavoured to surround herself with mystery," continued the Public Prosecutor. "Gentlemen of the jury, you will not fall into this trap. You will remember the evidence and you will find this woman guilty of a foul crime. In replying 'yes' to the questions that will be asked of you, justice will triumph, truth will come to light. All pity, all mercy would be fatal. There is a dangerous and growing tendency in these days for the individual to take justice into his own hands. For this reason I shall expect from you a verdict of 'Guilty'; a just verdict; a verdict which, by its example, will surely be the saviour of many human lives." He sat down.

It was going to be his greatest triumph.

"Counsel for the defence," called the President.

Eugene Roget stood up and he was smiling. In his hand was a slip of paper that he had just received—it was a tonic.

"Mr. President, before beginning my plea for the defence, I must beg the court to listen to the evidence of a new witness."

"This is unprecedented!" The Public Prosecutor bounced to his feet. "The hearing of the witnesses is concluded."

"The verdict has not been given, and the evidence of this witness may prove of capital importance to the accused," Roget looked at his rival. "Permit me to remind you of your own words. You have just declared that 'Justice will triumph—' Truth will come to light.' Perhaps you spoke more truth than you know—the mysterious man about whom November 14th, 1936.

so much has been heard since the beginning of this trial has been found." He turned eagerly. "Mr. President, I beg you to exercise the discretionary power of this court."

"Let the witness come in."

Everyone stared at the unkempt, dejected creature that shambled down the centre of the court, with two gendarmes on either side and Henry and young Seymour close behind.

"Your name, age, and profession."

The man smirked at the President.

"Henry Carros—thirty-eight."
"Henry Carros!" Roget exclaimed in surprise. "Is it true that you served a sentence for blackmail under the name of Henry Capelle?"

"Yes."

"Then you left France under the name of Henry Capelle," stated Roget, "and returned under the name of Henry Carros?"

"Yes. That is my right name."

"Thank you, Mr. President." The counsel of the defence turned to his superior. "You will forgive the interruption?"

The President nodded, then gave the man in the stand a keen glance.

"As you have not been summoned I cannot take your oath. Now what do you know about the murder of Yvette Delange?"

"I don't know anything."

"Where were you on the night of April 27th?"

"I was at home."

"That's not true!" Tony was on his feet and pointing. "That's the man I saw at the theatre on the night of the crime!"

"I must have silence or I will clear the court!" cried the President. He eyed the witness. "Were you at home?"

"I was at home," answered Carros. "Then I went to the theatre. But I had nothing to do with the crime."

The President leaned forward.

"You admit you were in the theatre on the 27th. What were you doing there?"

"I went to see Yvette Delange."

"Why?"

"Why not?" The answer was defiant.

"She was my wife!"

"Your wife!" The President was staggered.

There was a rustle in court as everyone craned forward to try to get a view of this amazing new witness.

Carros seemed to enjoy the startled excitement and grinned.

"Yes, sir. We were married twelve years ago. When she started to be a success she wanted to get rid of me. She said I stood in the way of her career. Well, that was all right with me. That night I went to ask her for money. But I didn't kill her."

"If you are innocent, why have you not come forward before?"

A twisted grin.

"I've had a bit of trouble with the law, and I thought discretion the better part of chivalry."

"I see." The President smiled.

"You claim that you went to ask your wife for money. Did she give you any?"

"Yes, five thousand francs."

That caused a sensation, and it was some while before silence could be obtained.

"The manager of the theatre has stated that he gave her twenty thousand francs."

"He did," was the amazing answer.

"But she only gave me five."

"And kept fifteen?"

"Yes, she left them on her dressing-table."

Roget stood up to indicate that he

wished to question the man, and the President signified his agreement.

"What time did you get to the theatre?"

"It must have been about three o'clock."

"Did you see the stage door-keeper when you came in?"

"No, he wasn't in his room."

"Mr. President, I should like the stage doorkeeper to verify that."

"Recall Jean Dubec," ordered the President.

"Now, Mr. Dubec," Roget glanced keenly at the concierge. "This man states that when he came into the theatre about three, on the night of the crime, you were not in your room. Is he speaking the truth?"

"I might have been taking a drink to one of the dressing-rooms," Dubec's eyes seemed to be flickering nervously.

"You might have been taking a drink to one of the dressing-rooms," Roget repeated. "Do you always leave the stage door unattended while you take drinks round to the artistes? Surely that is a very risky thing to do? Do you realise that you could be charged with complicity in this crime?"

"I don't know what you mean," stammered Dubec. "You ask so many questions."

"Well, I am trying to make myself clear. Let me ask you another question. You say you didn't see this man go in—well, did you see him come out?"

Dubec hesitated.

"Yes," was his answer.

"You saw me go out?" It was Carros who spoke.

"I saw you from my room," Dubec answered. "Perhaps you didn't see me, but I saw you when you went out."

"You're a liar—you didn't see me!" shouted Carros. "My wife didn't want me to meet anyone. So she sent me out through the front of the theatre."

"What have you got to say to that, Dubec?" demanded the President.

"Perhaps I was wrong."

"If you were not in your room where were you?"

"I don't remember. Perhaps I was on my rounds."

"It was while you were on your rounds that you discovered the crime?"

"Yes, sir," Dubec nodded. "And when I got to Yvette Delange's dressing-room I noticed that the door was half-open and the light on. I didn't hear any noise, so I said to myself: 'She must have gone and left the light on.' So I knocked at the door and went in. It was then that I saw her stretched out with the knife. I rushed out and—"

"Yes, yes, you told us all that in your evidence," the President interrupted.

"Mr. President," Eugene Roget dared to interrupt as well. "Dubec, you say that the light was on when you rushed out of the dressing-room?"

"Yes."

The concierge spoke slowly, as if fearful of his answer.

"How is it, then, that the light was off when Alphonse de la Riviere and the victim's chauffeur went in?"

Dubec looked startled.

"What do you mean?"

"Alphonse de la Riviere and Louis Dax have stated that when they went into the victim's room it was in darkness," Roget stated. "Another question: It has been established that before the victim was struck down she had time to fire a shot at her assailant. Did you hear that shot?"

"No, I didn't hear anything."

"That is very funny," Roget spoke slowly. "You cannot have been very

(Continued on page 25)

Never was there a more enduring comradeship than that which was formed between the king of wild horses and the outcast wonder dog. Together they braved a thousand perils, unswerving in their loyalty to each other. Follow their amazing adventures in this gripping serial drama, starring Kane Richmond, Norma Taylor and Rex and Rinty



EPISODE 3—
"Fangs of Flame"



The Adventures OF REX AND RINTY

READ THIS FIRST

Rex, a black Arabian stallion, is worshipped by a strange race of people on the remote tropical isle of Sujan.

To Sujan come three white men who are agents of a Californian rancher named Crawford. They steal Rex, realizing the fortune he can make for their employer, but one of them is captured by the Sujanese. This man, Wheeler, only earns his life and liberty by promising to recover the god horse, and travels to America in company with a native known as Pasha.

Meanwhile Rex is delivered to Crawford, but breaks free and takes to the hills, where he seeks refuge in an abandoned mine. Later that day the rancher plays in a polo game at the Bruce Riding Academy, but his team loses to a side led by Frank Bradley, a popular young sportsman, and after the game Crawford vents some of his spite on a stray police dog that has roamed into the district and is being cared for by a man named Jensen, who is a groom employed in the stables.

It is this dog, Rinty, which later comes across Rex, and which brings the god horse into contact with Frank Bradley and Dorothy Bruce, the daughter of the riding academy's owner.

Frank trains Rex, but, during a polo game, the god horse is taken from his stall by Crawford's agents, among whom is Wheeler, who has appeared on the scene again.

Meanwhile, at a critical stage in the polo game, Crawford fouls Frank, and brings horse and rider crashing to the ground.

Now Read On

On the Trail

CRAWFORD'S horse had fallen, too, but both mounts were soon on their feet again, and then, as Frank Bradley was seen to struggle up from the ground, a murmur of relief arose from the anxious spectators who had been watching the game.

The other players on the field were now gathering round Frank, but he waved them away cheerfully when they inquired if he was hurt.

"Who—me?" he said. "No, I'm all right. I got my feet out of the stirrups in time, and just let my horse roll over me. A bit shaken up, that's all. But what about Crawford?"

The rancher was still huddled on the turf, and, despite the fact that the man's tactics had been contemptible, Frank was the first to reach his side and lend him a hand.

"Are you okay, old man?" he asked, as he helped Crawford up.

The captain of the rival team made a grimace and fingered his left knee gingerly.

"Think I've wrenched my leg," he breathed, and then, in a gruff tone: "I'm sorry about the spill. Just couldn't hold my pony back."

"Oh, that's all right!" Frank assured him. "But how do you feel? Do you think you can carry on?"

"I'd better not risk it, I guess," Crawford muttered, whereupon Frank insisted on helping him off the field.

They were met at the touchline by Mitchell, the foreman of Crawford's ranch, and the latter took charge of the injured man and led him in the direction of the car park.

"Where's your horse, Mitchell?"

asked Crawford, as they were entering a powerful automobile.

"Back of the stables," was the reply. "I'll pick him up later. Better get you home first. Huh, seems like you came off worst in that little collision you arranged, boss."

"Shut up!" snapped Crawford irritably, and with a shrug Mitchell settled himself behind the steering-wheel and thumbed the self-starter.

He drove off with his employer, and, passing within earshot of the stables, heard the imprisoned Rinty barking furiously. Then he swung on to the road leading to the Crawford ranch and thrust his foot well down on the accelerator pedal.

Meanwhile, back at the stables, Rinty was still raising a din that must have attracted attention if any of the academy's staff had been in a position to hear it. But everyone except the unconscious Jensen was down at the polo field, and the dog's voice did not carry that far. Nor was the wolfhound successful in his efforts to burst open the door of the stall, and it was not until he turned his attention on a window at the back of the compartment that he was able to gain his freedom.

That window was open, and, though it was set high in the wall, Rinty managed to reach the sill with his paws at the third attempt. A moment later he had scrambled through and dropped to the ground.

He then dashed round to the front of the stables, and suddenly he began to sniff excitedly, as if he had picked up a scent. Next he made straight for the stall where Rex had been lodged, and, obviously following a trail, glided

across the threshold to discover the prone form of Jensen.

Jensen was still insensible, and might not have recovered his wits for a considerable time if Rinty had not begun to lick his pallid cheek affectionately. As it was, the touch of the dog's tongue seemed to bring him round, and in a little while he slowly raised himself from the floor.

With a groan Jensen lifted a hand to his head. Then, looking about him dazedly, he realised all at once that Rex was missing, and a sharp exclamation broke from his lips as he remembered how he had been struck down.

He tottered out of the stall, and as he did so Rinty streaked after him and sped in the direction of the road, whereupon Jensen paused to watch the dog until it had disappeared from view.

The moment Rinty had vanished, the stable-hand made for the polo ground, and he reached the touchline to find Frank Bradley in conversation with Dorothy Bruce.

"Mr. Bradley!" Jensen gasped, breaking in on their discussion. "Mr. Bradley, sir, they've taken the black stallion!"

Frank whipped round and stared at him in bewilderment.

"Taken the black stallion?" he echoed. "Who?"

"I don't know, sir. I didn't see 'em. But somebody laid me out while I was groomin' him, and when I came round the horse had gone. I think Rinty's picked up a trail, though. He made for the road and headed west."

Frank and Dorothy exchanged startled glances. Then the young sportsman turned to Jensen again.

"Saddle me a fresh horse!" he jerked. "I'm going after Rinty to see if he can track down the thieves. Hurry, now!"

It was not long before Frank Bradley was galloping down the road that led westwards from the Bruce Academy, and to the tune of pounding hoofs he swept over the highway at breakneck speed. Yet, fast as he travelled, he had covered a distance of more than two miles before he saw the figure of Rinty ahead of him.

The wolfhound had reached a fork where a short cut branched off through the hills, and as Frank arrived at the spot he realised that the dog had lost the scent temporarily, for the creature was circling round in a puzzled fashion, his nose close to the ground.

Frank drew rein and spoke encouragingly to Rinty, who spared him only a glance and then resumed his quest with determination. But for several minutes the wolfhound seemed at a loss, and when at length he set off along the short cut his behaviour suggested that he was not sure, even now, whether he was on the right track or not.

So far as Frank was concerned, however, there was nothing to do but follow the animal, and, hoping that Rinty had not failed him, he clapped his heels to the flanks of his pony and rode in pursuit of the dog.

Wheeler Shows His Hand

RINTY might have been in doubt, and Frank even more so, but the short cut through the hills was the trail that their quarry had taken, and about the time that the wealthy young sportsman and his canine guide turned on to that by-way, Jones and Wheeler might have been discovered in the heart of a wood some miles farther on.

The trail that they were following was unsuited to motor-traffic, and therefore it was infrequently used. That was one good reason why it had been arranged that they should travel by this route,

and they were riding now with Rex sandwiched between them, both men keeping a tight grip on the ropes which had been thrown over the stallion's neck.

For the god horse of Sujan was still in a restive mood, though there seemed little prospect of the magnificent creature escaping from its captors.

"Well, so far so good," Jones said presently. "I wonder if that guy Jensen has given the alarm at the academy yet."

Wheeler did not volunteer a response. He seemed strangely thoughtful, and kept glancing to right and left in a surreptitious manner, as if he expected to see someone amidst the trees that flanked the forest trail.

"Even if Bradley has found out that Rex is missin', I guess we've got nothin' to worry about," Jones went on complacently. "He wouldn't know which way we've gone, and, although he's bound to learn one day that Rex is in Crawford's stable, he won't be able to do anything about it, for he can't claim to be the owner of the horse."

Wheeler, in the meantime, had continued to scan the trees on either side of the rough track, and it was as his companion finished speaking that he detected a movement in some thickets on the right.

Almost immediately he brought his horse to a standstill, compelling Jones to do the same.

"Listen," Wheeler said then. "this black Arabian isn't going to Crawford's ranch."

The other man stared at him. "What are you talkin' about?" he demanded.

Wheeler laughed softly. There was a cunning expression on his sallow features.

"Do you think I'm fool enough to let Crawford have this horse," he queried, "when I can make a fortune takin' him back to Sujan where he belongs?"

Jones started at that, and a look of comprehension dawned in his narrow eyes. It was a look that was succeeded by one of menace as he lowered his hand to his hip.

"You can't get away with this, Wheeler!" he grated.

"No?" came the level-toned rejoinder. "Who's gonna stop me?"

"I am!" snapped Jones, and with the words he attempted to pluck out a six-gun.

Before he could do so a figure rose from the thickets that were growing close to the trail. It was the figure of Pasha, and there was a blowpipe between his teeth, a blowpipe that sent a dart straight to the wrist of Crawford's hireling.

A faint cry escaped Jones as the tiny missile pierced his skin, and with a startling suddenness every muscle in his body was paralysed. Then his mind became a blank, and, uttering a groan, he pitched from the saddle and fell to the dust in an inert heap.

From the thickets stepped Pasha, and, ignoring Jones, he hastened towards Rex, who had begun to plunge and cavort wildly.

"Halika! Halika!" the islander exclaimed in the native tongue, and at the same time made an obeisance, as one who bows his head in worship.

It was a startling revelation to Wheeler, but at the sight of Pasha and at the sound of that word of greeting in the Sujanese dialect the god horse was instantly pacified, and stood there submissively as the swarthy islander moved forward and caressed its sleek muzzle.

For a space Wheeler looked on in

awe, and then he directed his attention on the prone form of Jones.

"Have you—have you—killed him, Pasha?" he asked huskily.

"Killed him? No, my friend. The dart was only smeared with a drug which produces insensibility the moment it enters the blood-stream. The man will be unconscious for a little while, that is all."

"How long, Pasha?"

The native shrugged. "It is impossible to tell," he answered. "With some men it is only a question of a minute or two—with others, an hour."

"Then we'd better get outa here quick!" said Wheeler. "Have you got the car and trailer handy?"

"Yes, on another road beyond the wood—just as we arranged. But we cannot risk taking the god horse to the docks in broad daylight. He has too many enemies in this country. I have been thinking things over, Wheeler, and we should be well advised to make the journey to the city after nightfall."

The white man frowned pensively, and was silent for a while. Then he snapped finger and thumb as if an inspiration had occurred to him.

"I've got it!" he ejaculated. "There's an old, deserted barn a couple of miles down the road where you've parked the trailer. We can hide Rex there till it's dark, and—"

He was interrupted by Pasha, as the latter indicated the prostrate figure of Jones.

"He moved just then," the native said. "He is coming round."

The Sujanese paused only to take charge of the revolver that had fallen from the hand of Crawford's hireling when he had been struck by the dart. A moment later he was climbing up behind Wheeler and grasping one of the ropes that encircled Rex's neck, and without further delay the native and his ally swung off to the right, the god horse trotting after them obediently.

They had scarcely disappeared when Jones struggled to his feet, and, withdrawing the dart from his wrist, he stared hazily through the trees that had swallowed Pasha and Wheeler.

Obviously in a confused state of mind, Jones made no attempt to shadow them. But, for that matter, he did not consider it necessary to do so, for, dazed as he was, he had heard Wheeler mention the deserted barn, and, so far as he knew, there was only one such building anywhere near this area.

Bracing himself Jones regained the saddle of his pony and set off along the woodland track, bent on making for the Crawford ranch and reporting to his employer there, and as the tattoo of his bronc's hoofs died away in the distance a brooding quiet settled upon the locality where Pasha and Wheeler had carried out their coup.

It was a silence that remained unbroken till Rinty arrived at the spot with Frank Bradley riding at a canter close behind him.

The wolfhound had become sure of himself once more, but, on reaching the point where the brief altercation between Jones and Wheeler had occurred, he again showed signs of uncertainty, and it was only after a good deal of hesitation that he finally turned off into the trees.

Frank spurred after him, and in another quarter of an hour they were moving clear of the forest on to a wide but uneven trail which was known as the Green Valley road.

Here Rinty lost the scent completely, and, standing in the middle of the trail, he looked up at Frank Bradley with an expression in his eyes that was almost

human in its appeal. But, even if Rinty was baffled now, he had by no means failed the young man who had placed so much faith in the dog's instincts.

For there in the thick dust of the road were the tyre-marks of a vehicle that had been turned round and driven in an easterly direction.

Frank dismounted to examine them, and it was soon plain to him that more than one vehicle had been responsible for them.

"A car and a trailer, maybe," he said aloud. "Rinty, we'll follow these tyre-marks and find out where they lead to."

The Deserted Barn

JUST two miles down the road that skirted the forest, Wheeler and Pasha drew up beside a ramshackle building that had once been used for storing grain.

The two men were seated in a powerful automobile, and attached to this was an open trailer, through the laths of which a pair of horses could be seen, one of them being Rex and the other being the pony owned by Wheeler.

"All right, Pasha," said the American who was behind the steering-column of the auto. "You slide out an' open up the barn doors. I'll back in."

The native emerged from the car and did Wheeler's bidding. Then he acted as guide while the white man reversed the horse-box and the automobile into the barn, which accommodated both vehicles with plenty of room to spare.

"Fine," declared Wheeler, switching off the engine and descending to the straw-laden floor. "Now get them doors closed, Pasha—"

The Sujanese laid a hand on his arm. "Wait," he murmured. "I am going to borrow your horse and ride to the nearest town. I must telephone to San Francisco and make arrangements for our transportation to Sujan."

"You mean," the other faltered, "you mean you're gonna leave me alone with Rex?"

"Have no fear," the other replied.

"The god horse will not harm you. In the first place, he could never get out of that trailer. In the second place, he knows now that you and I are friends."

Wheeler was somewhat reassured, and indeed, when the American opened the gate of the trailer and helped Pasha to bring out the spare pony, Rex remained perfectly calm and betrayed no signs of hostility towards him.

A few seconds later Pasha was riding from the barn, and after fastening the gate of the trailer again, the white man strolled forth to watch the native until he had disappeared round a bend in the road. Then he went back into the dilapidated building and shut the doors.

Alone with the god horse, Wheeler glanced through the slats of the trailer and studied the animal appraisingly for a few minutes. Presently, however, he moved away and sat down on the running-board of the car, and he had been reclining there for some little time when he thought he heard movements outside the barn.

He stood up abruptly, well aware that Pasha could not have got back from his mission already, and it was with a suspicious gleam in his eyes that he drew a revolver from his pocket and advanced to the twin doors of the building.

He pushed those doors asunder, and immediately set eyes on a horseman whom he recognised as Frank Bradley. Next second he was levelling his gun to cover the young fellow, but even as he raised the weapon a lithe figure bounded at him and struck him fairly and squarely in the chest.

It was the figure of Rinty, who had been trotting alongside Frank's pony, and Wheeler staggered back from the impact of the wolfhound's body. Then before the man could recover himself, Frank Bradley had leaped from the saddle and was coming for him in flying style.

The wealthy sportsman swung a punch

at him, and it connected with Wheeler's jaw, hurling him to the floor of the barn. Another instant and Frank was atop of him, pinning down the hand that held the revolver.

The forty-five was wrested from Wheeler's grasp, and a further blow to the point of the chin left him limp and unresisting. Nor did he regain his faculties until it was too late to continue the scuffle, for by the time that he opened his eyes his arms had been tied behind his back with some rope that Frank had discovered in the barn.

Discomfited, Wheeler was now dvagged to his feet, and without ceremony Frank marched him out of the building to a coppice some little distance away. It was situated to the rear of the barn, and here the prisoner was made fast to the stem of a tree with the remainder of the rope that the young polo player had found.

"That ought to hold you for a while," Frank stated grimly. "Meantime, I'll leave you to reflect on the folly of trying to get away with something that doesn't belong to you."

Wheeler glared at him.

"How do you know that the stallion don't belong to me?" he panted. "Or, leastways, to somebody that I'm actin' for?"

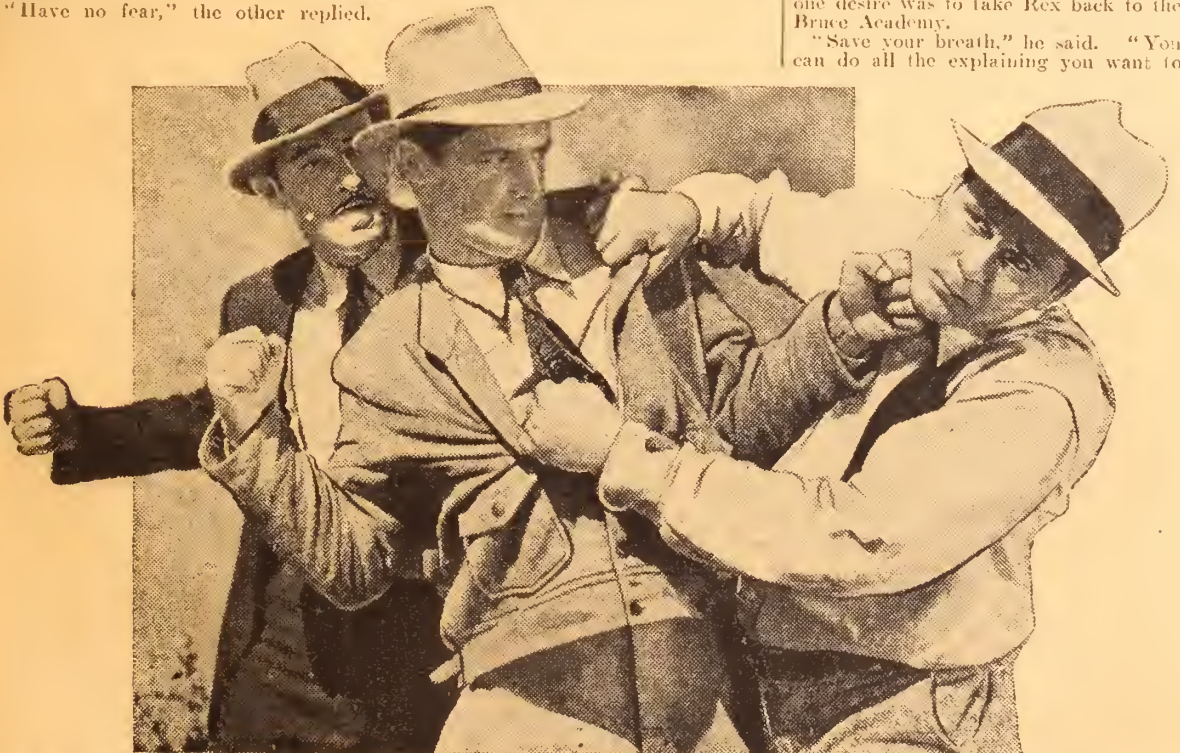
"How do I know?" the younger man retorted. "Would you go to the trouble of stealing him if you had any genuine claim on him? Listen, you rat, I don't pretend to hold any claim on him myself, but until someone shows up and satisfies me that he's the rightful owner—until then, that horse is in my charge."

The prisoner bit his lip and then attempted to make the situation clear.

"Now listen," he began, "if I'd thought you were willin' to give him up to the rightful owners I'd have come to you an' laid my cards on the table. Wait—gimme a chance to explain—"

But Frank was turning away. His one desire was to take Rex back to the Bruce Academy.

"Save your breath," he said. "You can do all the explaining you want to



It was a hard fight while it lasted, but Frank was a match for the two men who were at grips with him. November 14th, 1926.

when I send the county sheriff out to pick you up."

Wheeler swore at him and made a desperate effort to break the things that held him to the tree, but checked as he heard an ominous growl. It came from Rinty, for the dog had followed the two men from the barn and was now at Frank's side.

Frank looked at the wolfhound, then stooped to pat him.

"You stay here and look after this guy, old son," he declared. "See that he doesn't try to get away, huh?"

Rinty seemed to understand. At any rate, he squatted down and laid his chin on his forefeet, staring up at Wheeler in a way that struck the man as peculiarly significant and unnerving.

As for Frank, he retraced his steps to the barn and entered it by the front doors again. Then he walked up to the trailer and peered through the laths at Rex, who was standing inside the horse-box patiently.

"All right, boy," Frank said. "You and I are going back home."

News for Crawford

THE car that had brought Mitchell and Crawford from the Bruce

Academy was drawn up in front of the unscrupulous rancher's home. It had been there for some time now, and its owner was waiting impatiently on the veranda of the house with his chief henchman.

"I can't understand it, Mitchell," Crawford was saying. "They left the academy before us, and they took the short cut. They should've been here by this time."

"Yeah," the other granted. "I hope nothin' has happened to them, boss!"

Crawford bit his nails and scowled uneasily—was still scowling when the man known as Martin was seen approaching.

"Hey!" the rancher called to him. "Seen anything of Jones and Wheeler yet?"

"No, boss," was the reply. "It sure looks to me like something's gone wrong. I—"

He stopped speaking, for at that moment the drumming of hoofs reached the ears of the three men, and as they turned their heads they saw a lone rider come galloping round a bend in the road.

"There's Jones now!" Mitchell exclaimed.

"Yeah, it's Jones all right," Martin said tersely. "But where's Wheeler? An' where's the black stallion?"

Crawford spoke through clenched teeth.

"We'll soon find out," he rasped in a voice like a file. "Come on!"

The three of them hurried to meet Jones, and thirty seconds later the horseman was pulling up in front of them; and from the expression on the newcomer's face it was at once clear to Crawford that something was certainly wrong.

"What's up?" the rancher demanded.

Jones swung himself out of the saddle. "Wheeler's double-crossin' you, boss," he said. "He aims to take that horse back to Sujan. He only threw in with you so he could get his hands on him, and he's pulled a fast one."

Crawford was staring at Jones incredulously.

"What the blazes are you tryin' to tell me?" he queried sharply. "Why should Wheeler want to take that stallion back to Sujan?"

"On account of a reward that's been offered for the god horse by the islanders. That's the way I figure it,

November 14th, 1936.

anyhow. Wheeler said he'd be a fool to let you have the stallion when he could make a fortune by handin' him over to the Sujanese."

A look of realisation crossed the rancher's heavy features, and his eyes seemed to smoulder with savagery. Then all at once he drew back his clenched fist and stepped towards Jones threateningly.

"And you let him get away with that?" he snarled. "Why, you blamed fool—"

His employee had recoiled.

"Hold on, boss!" he panted. "I did my best to stop him. I almost had him lined up on the end o' my gun when this dart knocked me cold!"

He thrust a hand into his pocket and gingerly produced the needle-like object that had rendered him unconscious. It was an object upon which the other three men gazed with awe—particularly Mitchell and Martin, for although their stay in Sujan had been a short one, they had seen similar missiles to this while they had been there.

"It's—it's a dart from a Sujanese blow-gun," Mitchell stammered. "Crawford, the natives have come for their god horse. We'll all be killed."

Jones glanced at Mitchell quickly.

"Maybe you're right," he breathed. "The hombre that fired this dart at me was a foreign-lookin' guy. Boss, we'd better watch our step."

He had turned towards Crawford again as he spoke the last anxious words, but the rancher's face was as hard as granite.

"I don't care if the whole island comes over," he ground out. "That black stallion is worth a fortune, and I don't mean to lose him. Which road did Wheeler and this native take?"

Jones cleared his throat.

"I—I heard 'em talkin'—just as I was comin' to my sense, boss. I was—sorta hazy—but I remember Wheeler sayin' something about keepin' the Arabian till nightfall in an abandoned barn about two miles down a road where they had a car an' trailer waitin'."

"What road?" Crawford jerked.

"Well, that coyote Wheeler musta meant the Green Valley trail. Couldn't've been referrin' to any other, boss. And there's a deserted barn there all right. I know that."

Crawford jerked his thumb in the direction of his automobile.

"Get in that car and drive out to that barn," he ordered. "Take Mitchell and Martin with you. Better tell Anderson he's needed, too. You'll find him around somewhere. Go on, look lively."

Jones hurried off to locate Anderson, an individual who was employed at the ranch in the capacity of a general handyman, and he reappeared with him a minute or two afterwards, having explained to him briefly the object of their mission.

Jones and Anderson climbed into the front of Crawford's car. Martin and Mitchell were already occupying the back of it. As for Crawford himself, he was standing beside the vehicle with an ugly expression on his countenance.

"Remember," he said, as Jones was settling down behind the steering-column, "I want that black stallion. Yeah, and I want Wheeler, too. Bring him back with you, for I aim to show him that he can't double-cross me."

His men nodded grimly, and in another moment Jones had started up the ear and was taking it out on to the road, where he crammed his foot hard down on the accelerator and pushed it over the highway at top speed.

A mile farther on Jones swung off down a side turning. It was the Green Valley trail, and though it was a bad road for driving, he was clocking sixty miles an hour most of the way, and did not ease up appreciably until he sighted a lonely building which he recognised as his destination.

"That's the barn I had in mind," he told his accomplices, "and unless I've missed my guess that's where we'll find the black Arabian!"

He switched off the engine and allowed the car to roll to a standstill. Then he and the other three men scrambled out. Mitchell, Anderson and Martin each producing a forty-five and satisfying themselves that the guns were fully loaded.

"Where's your iron, Jones?" asked Mitchell. "You're liable to need it. No tellin' what we might run into."

"I lost it when that native laid me out with his cursed dart," Jones muttered. "If there's a fight, you fellows will have to do the shootin'. Come on, let's sneak up on that barn."

The car had halted at a distance of about two hundred yards from the ranshaakle building, and now Crawford's hireling proceeded to cover the ground warily. But, if they had only known it, their caution was futile, for their arrival in the vicinity had already been noted by an inmate of the barn.

The inmate of the barn was Frank Bradley, and he had been on the point of unfastening the gate of the trailer to release the black stallion when he had espied the newcomers through the open doors of the building.

The fact that they were armed was sufficient in itself to convince him that they were up to no good, and their mode of approach corroborated this. At the same time Frank quickly realised that although the barn doors were open he himself was invisible to the advancing gunmen on account of the gloom that prevailed within the barn.

He made haste to fasten the gate of the trailer again, and then, remembering the six-shooter that he had wrested from Wheeler, he slipped across to where it was lying and snatched it up from amidst the straw that littered the floor.

In another moment Frank had taken up a position in the darkest corner of the barn, and he stood there in a tense attitude, waiting for those four men to enter.

The seconds dragged by, and to Frank an eternity seemed to elapse, a silent eternity during which no sound was audible in the barn except his own quick breathing and the occasional scrape of a hoof as Rex pawed at the floor-boards of the trailer. Then at last the figures of the gunmen appeared on the threshold.

They moved in through the doorway, running their eyes over the vehicles that had been parked in the barn, and glancing to and fro suspiciously. But they failed to discern the watcher who was lurking in the shadows.

"Ain't nobody here?" Jones murmured. "I wonder what's happened to Wheeler an' his pal?"

"We'll scout around for them later," Mitchell rejoined. "Meantime, we'll take a look in that trailer there."

The four men advanced to the horse-box and stared through the gaps between its laths.

"That's Rex all right," said Jones. "What do you think of him, Anderson? A beauty, ain't he?"

"He sure is," was Anderson's reply. "A fortune in horseflesh. Boy, I—"

But the sentence was never finished,

(Continued on page 27)

"ACCUSED"

(Continued from page 20)

far from the spot when the crime was committed and the pistol fired."

"I'm a little deaf."

"Oh, you're a little deaf!" Paul Roget smiled. "Never mind, that is an unimportant detail." He faced the President. "I crave your permission to reconstruct the crime."

The Knife-thrower

EUGENE ROGET'S voice rang through the court-room. "I know now who is the guilty party, and in one moment I am going to denounce him to you. I will tell you of a dramatic scene which had no witnesses. A scene prompted by greed, which ended in tragedy. Let me take you back to the theatre on the night of the crime, with its long, deserted corridors, full of dark corners. The victim has left her brilliantly lighted room, the fifteen thousand francs, carelessly thrown on her dressing-table. Standing in the doorway is a man, his eyes fixed on the money. It fascinates him. Thinking himself alone, he creeps into the room, seizes the money, and is about to make off with it when he hears a noise. Yvette Delange is coming back. What shall he do? He will be caught. There is a small ante-room, and he darts in there. He seizes the dagger which the accused has left on a table. He grabs it just before the victim enters."

On a table were laid the various exhibitions attached to the crime, and, naturally, the chief one was the knife. Eugene Roget picked up the knife and Delange's gun. The President, the jury, the court held their breath.

"Unconscious of her danger, she is about to enter the dressing-room; the lights go out. Hold this, will you?"

He tossed the knife towards Dubec, who caught it adroitly and stood there staring as if mesmerised at the lawyer.

Eugene Roget's voice became hoarse with emotion:

"In the sudden darkness she can see nothing, hear nothing but the pounding of her own terrified heart. One minute passes, another minute—minutes that seem like hours. She hears a sound—something brushes against her in the dark. 'Who's there?' she cries. No answer. Then she remembers the gun in her dressing-gown pocket. Instinct tells her that someone—someone armed, perhaps—is lurking in the darkness." From his pocket he produced the gun. "And from a distance of about seven feet, in the direction from which she heard the noise, she fires."

As he spoke he raised the gun and pointed it straight at Dubec. There came the roar of the report, but as the gun spoke the mesmerised figure of Dubec jerked into activity.

In the nick of time Roget ducked his head. The knife quivered in stout, wooden panelling.

Slowly the madness died from Dubec's staring eyes. He realised what he had done.

"I had to do it—it was self-defence!" he screamed.

"Mr. President," Roget spoke when silence had been obtained with great difficulty. "I apologise for this melodrama, but I was sure that it would prove successful. You will notice that I stood so that if Dubec threw the knife it would hit no one but myself. Fortunately, I was just quick enough. Before I did this reconstruction of the crime I got my assistant to load Delange's gun with blank. It may interest you to know that for many years Dubec was on the variety stage in a knife-throwing act. Dubec murdered Yvette Delange. He will plead self-defence. You have just seen the whole crime, Mr. President, and a clearer case of murder I have seldom seen. I have stated my case."

The President threatened to clear the court if he did not have order. Everyone was trying to rush forward to shake Gabrielle Seymour by the hand or kiss her. Everyone seemed to be kissing Gaby save Tony, who was completely shut off by a wall of people.

At last the court cleared. Dubec was led away, and Henri Carros informed that it would be as well if he accepted the hospitality of the Sûreté for a few days, when they would make sure that he did not leave Paris. Gaby's name was cleared, and thus the trial came to its end.

Once more everyone tried to kiss Gabrielle and to ring Eugene Roget's hand because of his brilliant defence. The President wisely retired to his room. At last Tony got to his wife's side.

They looked at each other shyly.

"I suppose you couldn't spare me a kiss, could you?" he asked humbly.

"Oh, my dearest!" cried Gabrielle, and flung herself into his arms.

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"REVENGE RIDER"

(Continued from page 12)

law was Kramer. How he got in this room, I don't know, but he was here, because I heard Harmon shout: 'Don't, Kramer! Don't shoot!'

That was news to Ludlow, and he could think of nothing to say.

"When the shot was fired," Tim went on, "that light went out. Kramer relit it so that he could see what Harmon had written about him. He left half the page because it read like a suicide note. Pretty smart. But he made one mistake—he forgot to blow out the light!"

"Well, that's all very good," conceded Ludlow, "but how did he get out of here and leave the doors locked on the inside?"

"I think I can answer that, too," said Tim. "If my guess is right, you'll find the key isn't turned in that lock," he pointed to the communicating door. "Try it, Murphy."

The proprietor of the hotel went over to the door. The bolt was shot, but the key in the lock had not been turned.

"Sure, that's right," announced Murphy.

Tim put down the paper and the gun. "Anybody got a piece of string?" he asked, walking over to the door and pulling back the bolt.

Both men groped in their pockets, but Tim opened the door, and, on the floor, just inside the adjoining room, he saw a length of string.

"Wait a minute!" he exclaimed. "Here's the same string Kramer used!"

He picked it up and showed it to them, then set the knob of the bolt straight with the slot and passed the string over it, holding both ends.

"Watch what happens when I pull that string," he said, and he went into the room. The ends of the string still in his hand, and closed the door.

Ludlow and the proprietor watched with fascinated eyes as the doubled string pulled the bolt along in the slot till it was shot; then Tim let go of one end of the string and pulled on the other till it all disappeared round the edge of the door.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" exclaimed Murphy.

Ludlow ran out as though to escape, but Tim stepped out from the adjoining room into the passage in time to prevent him from getting away.

"Oh, Ludlow, don't rush off!" he said grimly. "You've got a job ahead of you. As sheriff of this town, I guess it's up to you to arrest Kramer!"

Paid in Full

KRAMER had gone no farther than the headquarters of the Cattle-men's Protective Association with the bearers of Jed Harmon, and he was in his office, burning a number of papers in the fireplace, when Peters, Connors, and two other men entered it at a side door. Having helped the sheriff to search the doctor's house, they had looked all over the town for Tim and Jed Harmon, and they had not heard the shooting at the hotel. Kramer did not appear particularly pleased to see them.

"No use lookin' for them two in the dark, boss," said Peters. "We ain't had no luck, and I guess we'd better wait for daylight."

"They're both in town," snapped Kramer. "Both of 'em!"

"In town?" echoed a man named Vance.

"Yes." Kramer moved away from the fireplace. "Harmon got shot in a mix-up, and O'Neil knows all there is to know."

"Yeah?" Connors looked as concerned as he felt. "Then we'd better start leavin' while we're altogether. Now this fella O'Neil—"

"Is just one man, and we're five!" Kramer rapped at him.

"Yeah, I know," said Connors dismally, "but it don't take many men like O'Neil to make a dozen!"

"Then you'll stay right here and back my play! I'm gonna find this fellow O'Neil, and when I—"

The door from the assembly-room went back with a crash against the wall, and Tim stepped into the office with Ludlow.

"You don't have to look far, Kramer," he said sternly. "The sheriff you appointed is here to arrest you for murder!"

Kramer glared at the man he had invested with authority. The other four were not quite sure whether to reach for their guns or not.

"It ain't my idea," faltered Ludlow. "It's his."

"Then why don't you come and do it?" challenged Kramer.

"Well, I don't really want to," Ludlow mumbled, moving forward with marked reluctance, "but he said I had to face you or face him, and—"

"That's far enough, Ludlow!" Kramer bellowed at him. "You come any closer, I'll open fire!"

"Well," decided the frightened wretch, "I guess I'll have to shoot it out with him."

He turned about, his hand upon the butt of his gun, and in the same split fraction of a second Kramer and his hirelings went to draw. But Tim's gun was out first, and spat fire, and Ludlow fell heavily against him with a bullet between his ribs.

Kramer fired, but the sheriff was a

The battle seemed interminable, but actually lasted no more than half a minute. Then men surged into the room from the street, and after a while somebody ran off to fetch Dr. Lindsay.

Hardly any one of those who crowded into the smoke-laden room regretted the downfall of Kramer and the gunmen he had brought into the district; practically all of them sympathised with Tim, because his brother had been foully murdered.

The doctor arrived, and Chad and Myra were with him; but Myra was sent back to the house, and most of the crowd were driven forth, while Lindsay dealt with the wounded.

Ludlow was dead, and his body was carried away to the undertaker's. The others received attention in turn.

"Any hope, doc?" inquired Tim, as Lindsay knelt beside Kramer, dressing his wound.

"There's a chance for some of 'em," was the reply, "but I was at the gaol a while ago, and Rankin's dead."

Tim saw Kramer's eyes open, and judged that he had heard.

"It was Rankin got Jerry, wasn't it, Kramer?" he said, dropping down on one knee.

"How—did—you know?" asked the crook feebly.

"Jerry was shot with a forty-one," Tim replied. "Rankin's got the only forty-one carbine in the county."

Kramer tried to raise his head, but dropped it again.

"You're pretty smart, O'Neil," he said with a valiant effort at a sneer. "but the joke's on Harmon. He wasn't wanted on the Peecos—they caught the killer, and he confessed."

Dr. Lindsay was a very quiet-mannered man, but Myra and Chad had told him a lot, and he loathed and despised the man whose wound he had just dressed.

"The joke's on you, Kramer," he said almost in the voice of a judge pronouncing sentence on a murderer. "Harmon's hit bad, but he's not going to die. You are!"

Three weeks afterwards, Tim and Myra walked out from the Harmon ranch-house man and wife. The white-haired parson from Red Roek had married them in the living-room, and Jed Harmon—in a wheel-chair—had given the bride away, while Chad had acted as best man.

As bride and groom descended the steps from the porch and walked arm-in-arm towards the yard, Jed wheeled himself out over the front step to watch them. Chad leaned against the rail beside the steps and waved a hand, and the parson stood on the mat inside the door with a frown of marked disapproval.

In the yard a buckboard was standing, two horses attached to its shaft, five other horses tethered to the back of the vehicle. Tim kissed his bride and helped her up into the driving-seat, then climbed beside her and flourished the whip.

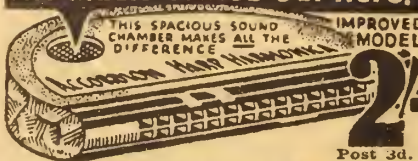
Instead of settling down at the Martin ranch, which his brother had bought, Tim had persuaded Myra to go off on a trading jaunt with him.

"A very unusual way to spend a honeymoon, I should say," remarked the parson; but Jed Harmon looked round at him with a chuckle.

"What's wrong with swapping a few horses while messing around the country I'd like to know?" he said. "They'll take up ranching, right enough, when they get back!"

(By permission of Columbia Pictures Corporation, Ltd., starring Tim McCoy.)

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November 14th, 1936.

shield for Tim, who took aim over his shoulder, and Kramer crashed down on his face and lay still. Almost simultaneously the other four jerked the triggers of their guns, and the body of Ludlow became riddled with bullets; but Tim wasted no shots.

While the room became dense with acrid smoke he picked off one crook after another till all four were on the floor.

"THE ADVENTURES OF REX AND RINTY"

(Continued from page 24)

for it was at this instant that Frank chose to reveal himself, stepping out of the shadows with Wheeler's revolver held steadily in front of him.

"Drop your hardware, you fellows, and reach for the roof!" he jerked.

The surprised ranch-hands wheeled around, and confusion and astonishment were written on their faces as they beheld the young polo player.

"Bradley!" Mitchell gasped.

Frank nodded deliberately. "Bradley's the name," he observed. "Come on, throw away those guns and don't try any tricks—if you want to stay healthy."

Three six-shooters thudded into the straw that covered the floor of the barn, and four pairs of arms were raised on high. Frank looked and sounded as if he were in deadly earnest, and Crawford's agents valued their skins.

"Now we can talk," their captor went on. "Why are you after that stallion in there? What do you know about him?"

The four ranch-hands eyed him sourly, none of them volunteering any response at first. Then suddenly Jones moved forward.

"Listen," he said. "I'll tell you why we're here, mister."

His accomplices had darted sharp, angry glances at him, but a moment later they realised his purpose, for under the pretext of making a clean breast of everything Jones had drawn within striking distance of Frank, and with an unexpected gesture he brought down his hands and clutched the younger man by the wrist.

"All right, boys, I've got him!" he yelled, tearing Frank's gun aside.

His boast was a shade premature, for the stalwart polo player hit him with his left, landing a punch that set the fellow's head ringing. But Mitchell, Anderson and Martin were prompt to go to their comrade's aid, and next moment Frank was involved in a desperate scuffle.

He lost possession of the revolver, but lashed out with his bare knuckles, and he was giving a good account of himself when Jones sloped behind him and brought him to his knees with a cowardly blow on the base of the skull.

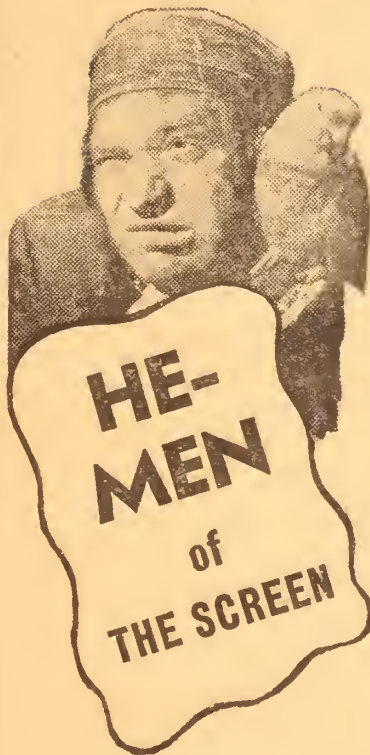
It was a blow that was followed by a savage and concerted onslaught by the other three rogues, and, kicked and beaten, Frank was huddled amidst the straw in a semi-conscious condition by the time they had spent their fury on him. Then the brutal ranch-hands collected their six-guns, Jones arming himself with the one that had fallen from Frank's grasp.

"I reckon we've taught Bradley a lesson," growled Anderson. "What are we gonna do—leave him here?"

"No," said Mitchell. "We'd better take him along with us and hold him till we've made a report to the boss. Jones, you an' Martin help me get him to the car. Anderson, you can drive that roadster and the trailer."

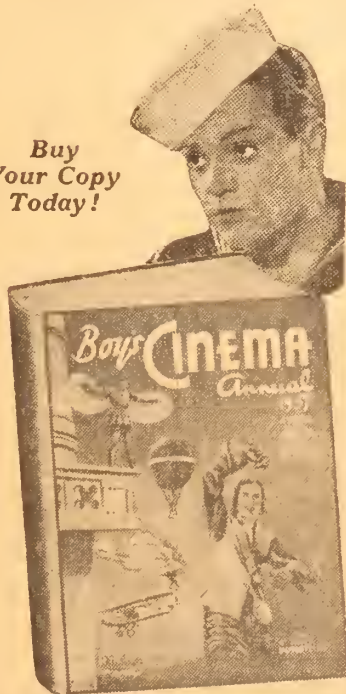
Thrusting their revolvers into their pockets, Mitchell and Jones and Martin pulled Frank to his feet and propelled him from the barn. As for Anderson, he clumbed into the automobile to which the horse-box was attached, and after switching on the engine he thumbed the self-starter.

Nothing happened, however. The battery seemed "dead," and, cursing, Anderson searched for the crank-handle,



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He found it, and made his way to the front of the roadster, where he attempted to start the engine by swinging it. But he was unsuccessful, and, during a pause in his efforts he took out a cigarette and struck a match.

It was as he was lighting the cigarette that he heard a movement behind him, and as he turned he saw a sleek form padding across the threshold of the barn, the form of a dog which he immediately recognised as the wolfhound that had attacked Mitchell a week or so before.

At sight of the dog Anderson dropped the match that he had lit and took a running kick at the animal.

The kick missed its mark as Rinty backed away from it, and in another instant Anderson was on the defensive, with the wolfhound springing at him like a mad thing. Then the man tripped and fell, and there ensued a primitive battle that was fought to the accompaniment of clashing teeth, and of mingled cries and snarls.

It was fought, too, in an atmosphere of thickening smoke, for the burning match that Anderson had thrown to the floor had ignited the dry straw, and as he and his canine antagonist rolled hither and thither the gleam of flames played sinisterly in their eyes.

Meanwhile, Frank Bradley and his captors were on their way to the automobile in which Crawford's henchlings had driven from the ranch. But their progress towards the vehicle had been slow, for the young sportsman had recovered somewhat, and was beginning to give his foes a good deal of trouble.

They were still a short distance from their objective when Martin happened to look back, and a hoarse exclamation broke from him as he saw smoke issuing from the doorway of the barn.

"Hey, fellers!" he blurted. "Something's wrong!"

The others turned their heads, and they also perceived the smoke that was coming out of the building. Then, even as the three ranch-hands were wondering what Anderson had been up to, Frank Bradley took advantage of the diversion and wrenched himself out of their clutches.

Martin tried to seized him again, but was sent to the dust by an upper cut that took him under the chin with shattering force. Before he had hit the ground, however, Mitchell and Jones were upon the young sportsman and were striving to overwhelm him.

It was a hard fight while it lasted, but Frank was a match for the two men who were at grips with him. A knock-out punch to the jaw spread-eagled the rogue known as Jones, and thirty seconds later Mitchell went down from a short-arm blow to the solar plexus; and as the last of his adversaries collapsed Frank Bradley made for the burning barn.

There were two hundred yards between him and the building, and he covered the distance in record time. Yet when he reached the threshold of the barn he could see nothing for the dense clouds of smoke that filled the interior—could only guess what was afoot by the sounds that greeted his ears.

The whimmying of a horse and the stamping of hoofs told him that Rex was making frantic efforts to escape from the trailer. At the same time he was aware of a commotion in which human cries and animal snarls seemed to be intermingled. Then all at once there came the blast of a shot, followed by a piteous yell of pain in the unmistakable tones of a dog.

(To be continued in another long episode next week. By permission of Associated British Film Distributors, Ltd., starring Kane Richmond, Norma Taylor and Rex and Rinty.)

November 14th, 1936.



(Continued from page 2)

West Socks William

The day when the screen featured a hero socking his lady fair to show his love is over! That was the day that gave birth to "Public Enemy," in which Jimmy Cagney introduced this type of tenderness.

To-day the fashion has changed. The lady socks the man!

And take it from Warren William, she can sock. Mae West unleashes a right cross to the jaw in Paramount's "Go West, Young Man" that almost sent him West.

In the picture William is the personal representative of Mae, who has the rôle of a temperamental film star on a personal appearance tour. His job is to keep her away from romantic mix-ups, but his interference provokes a sock in the jaw. No rehearsal was necessary. Mae, a fight fan herself, punched—and William went down.

"I can throw a pretty fair left hook, too," Mae added as an afterthought. But William didn't wait for a demonstration.

Swim as You Work

Good swimming technique was one of the requisites for the labour crew at work on "Lloyds of London" at 20th Century-Fox.

Four crews of five men to a crew were equipped with swimming trunks, blankets, and constant supplies of hot coffee and put to work filming scenes with Freddie Bartholomew, Douglas Scott, Montague Love, Arthur Holl and other members of the cast.

The huge tank on the 20th Century-Fox lot was turned into a portion of a Norfolk harbour in the 18th century. Two sloops of that period, half discernible through the artificial fog, rode at anchor while the actors did a good part of their action in rowing-boats and by swimming in hurried retreat.

In order to record this action, the camera was mounted on a raft on which Director Henry King worked with the camera crew. So that the raft could follow the actors in motion, five swimmers at a time were required to move the raft.

Due to the coldness of the water, no workman was allowed in it more than fifteen minutes at one time during the course of an hour. Four crews were thus kept busy all of the time.

Only those who could swim noiselessly and without splash were drafted into this chilly service.

Roman Galleys Float Again

Roman galleys will again sail the waters of San Pedro Channel.

The fleet of triremes, constructed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in 1928 for the production "Ben Hur," is again being made ship-shape, and will soon take the water for sequences in the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer two-reel musical comedy, "No Place Like Home," which Reginald Lo Borg is directing and Jack Chertok is producing.

The galleys, now moored at a shipyard in San Pedro, California, will be completely repainted and now standing and running rigging fitted to masts and spars.

Tarzan Chimpanzee Becomes Proud Father

While the entire "Tarzan Escapes" company of 150 waited most of the night with bated breath, and a veterinary, hastily summoned, worked with feverish anxiety, the stork arrived, signalling the first "blessed event" in the making of the new Tarzan jungle thriller.

Skippy, the trained chimpanzee, playing Johnny Weissmuller's friend and companion, would distribute cigars if he knew enough. He is now a proud father. Mamie, another chimpanzee, is the mother. The baby weighs five pounds.

The little chimpanzee is nearly white, but will darken in colour in a few weeks, according to George Emerson, animal man on the picture. It is kept cuddled in cotton batting, and won't be used in the picture. Baby chimps can't be worked for several months, as they are very delicate.

"A chimpanzee," explains Emerson, "has only one lung, so when it catches cold, it's usually a case of good-bye."

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"REVENGE RIDER."—Tim O'Neil, Tim McCoy; Chad Harmon, Robert Allen; Myra Harmon, Billie Seward; Martin Kramer, Edward Earle; Jed Harmon, Frank Sheridan; Matt Luddon, Jack Clifford; Dr. Lindsay, George Pearce; Ned Lynch, Allan Sears; Mike Rankin, Harry Semels.

"ACCUSED."—Tony Seymour, Douglas Fairbanks jun.; Gaby Seymour, Dolores del Rio; Yvette Delange, Florence Desmond; Eugene Roget, Basil Sydney; Ninette Duval, Googie Withers; President of Court, John Roberts; Prosecuting Counsel, Cecil Humphreys; Morel, Esme Percy; Alphonse de la Riviere, Edward Rigby; Dube, George Moore Marriott; Guy Henry, Cyril Raymond; Henry Capelle, Roland Culver.

Scottish Veteran in Hollywood

Hollywood, where things are seldom what they seem, the other day came forth with a real, life-blood hero in the person of 76-years-old James "Scotty" Robertson.

A fighting man since the age of 15, when he joined the "Boys' Brigade" in Edinburgh, "Scotty" has been "soldiering" since 1860.

Veteran of the bombardment of Alexandria in 1882 and a dozen other skirmishes, including action in Majuba Hill, Khartoum, the Sudan, Argia Heights, the South African War of 1900, and against the Afghans and Derivishes, "Scotty" received more than 30 wounds, smashed shoulders, broken legs, arms, fingers, and toes, as well as deep head wounds, during his scrapping career.

He now has a small part in Cecil B. DeMille's new Paramount film, which stars Gary Cooper and Jean Arthur.

Among mementoes presented him for bravery is a shell box from Queen Victoria. Together with his many medals, he proudly exhibited the gift to a member of the cast of "The Plainsman."

Filming Witchcraft Scenes

Some sort of a record for detailed research has been set by Frank Lloyd, Glasgow-born Paramount producer-director, who, with his staff, has directed more than 75 books in preparing his now historical romance, "Maid of Salem," which stars Claudette Colbert and Fred MacMurray.

In addition to the books, dozens of different sources, such as museums and libraries, were called upon to supply data for costumes, living habits, and other items. The British Museum was one of them.

The books were collected by Lance Baxter, technical director of the Lloyd production, and range from the Bible to bound volumes of the "National Geographic Magazine." Many of the books are original editions, and some are the only ones of their kind in existence.

The Lloyd staff had not only to make a complete study of the life of Puritans, but in addition the famous outbreak of witchcraft in Salem round about 1692 was studied to the last available detail. "Maid of Salem" is the first picture dealing with the witchcraft hysteria as it actually occurred.

Much of the picture will be filmed on location near Santa Cruz, California, where old Salem Village has been faithfully recreated from maps and drawings, supplied by the Essex Museum in Salem. Salem Town, which grew into the modern Salem, is being built at Paramount ranch, near Hollywood, for other scenes.

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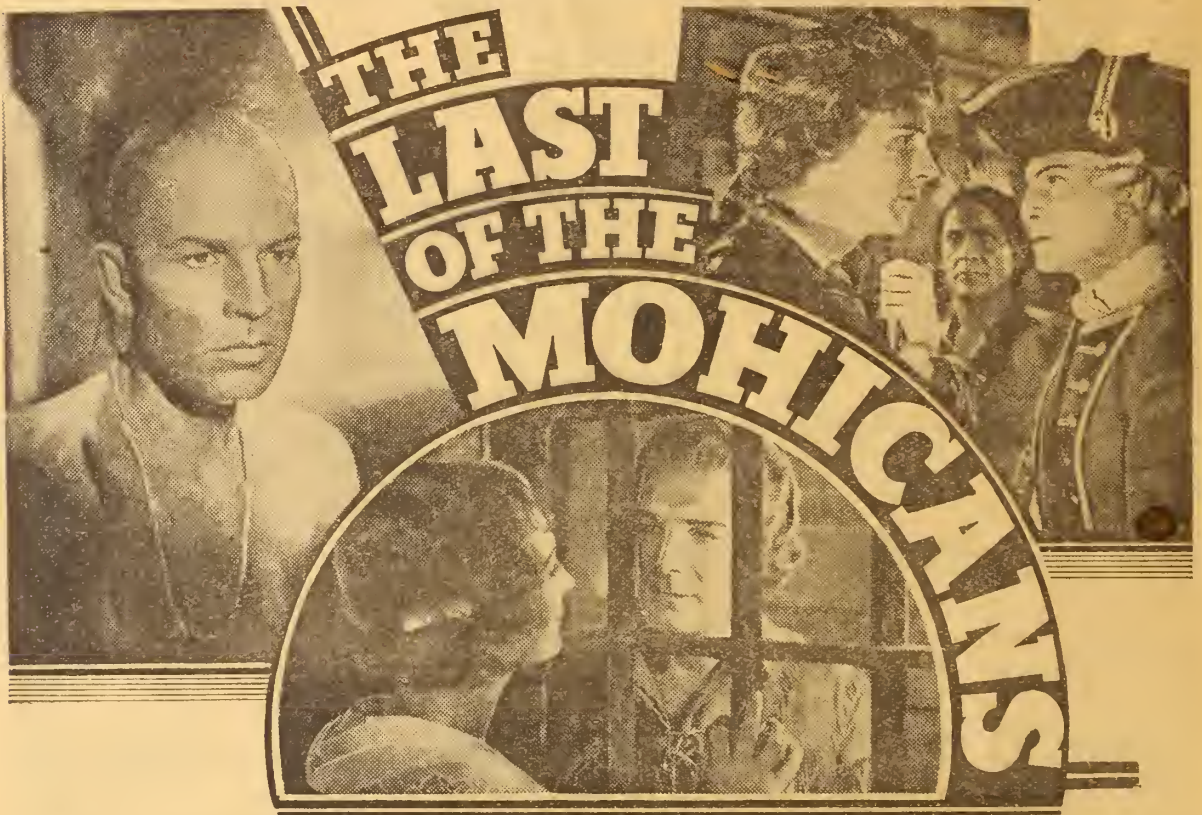


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Pitt's Famous Prophecy

IT was in the year 1757, and the Seven Years War, which was fought in three continents, was raging. George II, of the House of Hanover, ruled the British throne and the famous Pitt was his Prime Minister. The latter was in favour of a vigorous prosecution of the war in North America, and suggested an advance against General Montcalm and his Huron allies. It was Pitt's idea that the troops stationed at Albany under the command of Colonel Munro should make the attack and that reinforcements be sent from England.

The pompous Newcastle was all against the scheme.

"Give this wilderness back to the Indians," Newcastle contemptuously told his king. "This war will be decided in Europe. Concentrate our forces there for a general attack on the main French Army!"

George II was impressed until Pitt stepped forward.

"Your Majesty," he cried, "his Grace would win you a battle—I would win you an Empire!"

That epigram decided the issue. The jubilant Pitt at once rushed with the glad tidings to the Duke of Marlborough, Britain's great military genius.

"We've won, my lord."

"Good!" answered the duke. "The scoop of war, Andromeda, is standing by to take Major Heyward to the Americas. He should be there in six weeks. I will send for the major at once."

November 28th, 1936.

In a few moments the tall, powerful, and elegantly garbed officer entered the duke's presence.

"Here is an urgent dispatch. On your arrival in New York, proceed at once to Colonel Munro. Also you will remain there as second-in-command. This dispatch means war, Major Heyward."

"I am glad, my lord."

"You may find it difficult to adapt yourself to the new country."

The major drew himself up proudly. "The British Army has always adapted a new country to England, sir."

The merry eyes of the duke twinkled. "Maybe—my respects to Colonel Munro—and you won't forget his two charming daughters."

Heyward grinned.

"No, sir."

In Albany, New York, frontier outpost of the British Colony, Colonel Munro's charming daughters, Alice and Cora, were being entertained by a wealthy Dutch patroon in one of the most magnificent houses in the territory. Outside the house were groups of British and Colonial soldiers. Lax discipline prevailed throughout the town. There was no dream of war or danger. Topsy soldiers drank, gambled, and caroused.

The clatter of horses' hoofs resounded, and a four-wheel coach came dashing madly down the post-road, scattering the gambling soldiers, who cursed angrily, right and left. Some of the Colonials laughed good-humouredly. From the coach alighted Major Hey-

ward, who was followed by Jenkins, his orderly. The major frowned as he stared at the ill-dressed, drunken soldiers and the Colonials in their suits of skin. He marched up to one who was contentedly puffing at his pipe.

"You there! Direct me to Colonel Munro!"

Without removing his pipe the Colonial jerked a thumb in the direction of the patroon's mansion. The major snorted indignantly and then set off for the house, but his orderly, staggering under the weight of much baggage, was indignant.

"Are you in the habit of addressing an officer with a pipe in your mouth?"

The Colonial eyed Jenkins coolly and removed his pipe.

"No-o-o-o," he muttered. "Sometimes I chew snuff."

Jenkins turned away indignantly and began to collect together more baggage. The Colonial good-naturedly approached and lent a hand. He cocked an eye at the vast pile of equipage.

"Your officer travels light, don't he?" he said with heavy sarcasm.

But the irony was wasted on Jenkins. "Oh," he said, "the major don't mind roughing it."

Within the patroon's mansion the dance was in full progress. British officers in full regimentals, white-wigged and scarlet-coated, outshone the sober attire of the Colonial youths, captured the prettiest girls, and moved with more assurance through the stately measures of the minuet. The prettiest of the girls were Colonel Munro's daughters

Cora was fair, slight, and as dainty as a fairy, whilst Alice was dark, tall, sturdy of limb and bright of eye.

With indulgent eyes the elders watched the young dancers from a gallery. The patron's fat wife beat time to the music with a podgy finger. The patron, a corpulent Dutchman, in velvet knee-breeches and large horn-rimmed spectacles, beamed at the big-faced, square-jawed officer standing by his side.

"This is the first time," he remarked, "that I have seen your daughter so gay, so carefree, colonel."

Colonel Munro nodded.

"Yes, mynheer. The child had a sad experience—the lad she was to marry—lost at sea in a naval engagement. It has been my hope that this trip to America might help her forget."

He turned as a servant appeared and announced Major Heyward.

The colonel held out his hand as the handsome young officer strode forward.

"Duncan Heyward!" he cried jubilantly. "What wind blows you to America? Have you tricked Marlborough into granting you a furlough, after all?"

Heyward shook his head and held out a sealed parchment.

"Important dispatches, sir."

The colonel broke the seals and read the communications.

"Ah, action at last. Time we were on the move. My men need a brush with the French—they're getting stale here with too much easy living." He looked keenly at the major. "I suppose you know what this says?"

But Heyward's eyes had been roaming the room in search of someone who was dearly beloved to him. He gave an embarrassed laugh.

"Yes—you're looking very well yourself, sir."

Munro chuckled.

"Oh, I understand. Very well,

Duncan, go and find Alice. But report back to me in half an hour." He glanced at the happy throng. "I'm afraid I shall have to spoil a merry evening."

Alice was out in the garden conversing with a handsome young captain in the Regulars. She saw Heyward before he saw her, and in a gay voice called out:

"Looking for someone, Major Heyward?"

Heyward's face lit up and with hands outstretched he came towards her. The young captain realised he was not wanted and retired.

"Jove," cried Heyward, "I've looked forward to this!" He would have taken her in his arms, but she held him off and eyed him with a critical smile.

"You haven't changed a bit, Duncan."

"Can you blame me? You've no right to look so beautiful."

Alice was not ill-pleased with the compliment, and she tucked her arm in his. "As gallant as ever," she observed with a merry smile.

"And you're just as cruel." The major looked gloomy. "You know, I'd hoped that you might have changed your mind about me."

Sadly the girl shook her head.

"I haven't, Duncan. I'm sorry."

From the ball-room came loud cheering, and Alice gave her escort an inquiring glance.

"I brought dispatches from England," he told her.

They entered the ball-room in time to hear the booming voice of the colonel:

"We march to-morrow!"

Too soon Heyward had to leave Alice and seek out his superior officer. Remembering his duty and being a keen soldier, he expressed his indignation at the lack of discipline among the Colonials.

The colonel gave a gloomy nod of his head.

"The fact of the matter is that they aren't technically under our command," he explained. "They're civilian troops, organised to protect only this territory."

"Then they aren't soldiers at all?"

"No, but they're excellent fighting men." The colonel rubbed his big chin thoughtfully. "They may show no disposition to join our soldiers on the march to Fort William Henry."

Munro was concerned. His orders were to advance upon Fort William Henry and to engage General Montcalm until reinforced by General Webb. The War Office had not taken into account that fully half of his command were Colonials.

"I'll talk to the men," Munro made his decision and turned to Heyward. "Have them assembled, sir."

Alice's First Meeting with Hawkeye

THE drums sounded. The men gathered in the huge square.

From a platform Colonel Munro addressed the soldiers and Colonials. The soldiers cheered, but there was muttering and whispers from the Colonials. Colonel Munro beckoned Heyward to his side and whispered in his ear.

Major Heyward raised his hand for silence. He was confident in his own ability to win the support of the Colonials.

"Men," His powerful voice rang out. "Your colonel has asked me to say a few words. Having just arrived from London, I can assure you that his Majesty King George is eager for your support. I'm sure that, as loyal subjects of the Crown, you will be glad to render this valuable service to his Majesty."

But the appeal did not move the Colonials. They were more ready to



"Make them stop that!" came Heyward's peremptory order

listen to Hawkeye, the renowned Colonial scout, who moved among them warning them against leaving their homes. With Hawkeye were his Indian friends, Chingachgook and Uncas, father and son and the last of the one-powerful tribe, the Mohicans.

Hawkeye was a good name for the scout. He was tall, wiry, sharp-featured, and with blue eyes that could glitter like steel and yet soften. He wore the clothes of a trapper, with the skin of a beaver as his headwear, and his long fingers clasped the barrel of a gun. He did not move among the Colonials whispering his warning, but openly and fearlessly.

"While you are cooped up in Fort William Henry, the Indians will burn your homes—butcher your families!" was his warning.

Colonel Munro realised that Hawkeye was swaying the Colonials against him and decided to take a hand in the matter.

"I've just learned that the French are advancing on Fort William Henry," he cried. "You know what that means. If they break through, what will prevent the Indians then from looting and pillaging every settlement this side of Lake George?"

It was a most convincing argument. Winthrop, who was the appointed leader of the Colonials, conferred with some of his officers, and then stepped forward to address Colonel Munro.

"I believe the men will enlist, sir, on one condition—if the Hurons break through, you let them return to protect their homes."

"Agreed!" cried Colonel Munro instantly.

One of the Colonials turned to Hawkeye inquiringly:

"What do you say to that, Hawkeye?"

"I've had my say," said the scout, and, accompanied by his grim, expressionless friends, moved away.

Alice had been allowed by her father to stand near the platform. The girl was very patriotic, and she had watched Hawkeye with growing distaste.

"Who was that impudent rascal?" she asked of her father.

"A fellow they call Hawkeye," was his answer. "A scout, and a good one, too. Seems to have a great deal of influence. Why?"

"Nothing." Alice's eyes gleamed. "Only I'm surprised that a traitor like that is left unhung."

On getting back to the barracks Colonel Munro spoke to an Indian scout, a smooth, evil-looking fellow, who received his instructions and departed in gloomy silence.

"Sullen beggar," commented Heyward, staring after the tall, muscular Indian.

"Name's Magua," Munro smiled. "Best spy I have. He's a Delaware. Had to give him a taste of the cat once—made a man of him."

A hard grin appeared on the major's face.

"Only way to treat savages," was his verdict.

Hawkeye and his Mohican friends were lounging under the trees. He had spoken little since the decision had been made by the Colonials that they would march with the Regulars to Fort William Henry, but the two Indians knew that Hawkeye was doing much thinking and that he was undecided about his own actions. But Hawkeye made a decision quick enough when he sighted the bronzed figure of Magua passing the sentries at headquarters.

"Magua!" he exclaimed. "I wonder what that weasel is doing here?"

November 28th, 1936.

"Him scout," said Chingachgook. "Him say him Delaware."

Hawkeye frowned.

"I bet a rifle against a powder horn that he's a Huron!" The two Indians exchanged glances of alarm. The scout saw their expression and nodded as if their concern settled the issue. "I think we'd better warn Munro; he's not very smart about trapping weasels. Come!"

At the colonel's headquarters Cora and Alice were busy packing for their long journey. There had been a certain amount of argument with their father, but when they stated that they refused to stay in Albany he gave in, as he usually did. The main door was open, and Hawkeye and the two Indians stood there for nearly a minute before Cora looked up and gave a little cry of startled alarm. Alice glanced round and, seeing Hawkeye, her expression became severe.

"What do you want?"

"I want to talk to the colonel," coolly answered Hawkeye.

"Colonel Munro is not here."

"It's sort of important, ma'am."

Alice was indignant at his sharp tone, and bridled at once. She decided that the more she saw of this man the more she detested him.

"I'm quite sure the colonel would not be interested in anything you might have to say," she said coldly.

"He'd be an awful fool, then," Hawkeye retorted. "I came here to be of service."

"You! Of service!" Alice laughed scornfully. "If you want to be of service, then why aren't you in uniform?"

Hawkeye just grinned as if amused.

"Maybe I have too much sense to wear a red coat in the woods."

All this while Uncas had been staring with obvious fascination at Cora, and the timid girl shrank before the Indian's compelling gaze. Chingachgook observed his son's interest, and his usually impassive features showed strong disapproval.

The incident ended with Alice rushing to the door, imperiously motioning the three men away and slamming it in their faces. Hawkeye shrugged his shoulders and made no further attempt to warn Colonel Munro; but he would certainly have done something if he had been present when the troops left Albany. As the main trail was through dense forest land, where there was just a chance of attack from French or Indians, it was suggested by Magua that he should take the girls by a short trail that he alone knew. Major Heyward should accompany the girls. Colonel Munro thought the idea excellent, and so did Heyward.

It was soon after dawn when the drums beat and the trumpets sounded. The army lined up for the march. The Colonial irregulars with colours flying were in the lead, behind followed a long line of transport wagons and camp followers, with the British regulars in the rearguard. As the army marched out of Albany to the sound of cheering it little knew of the hardships that lay ahead.

Magua's Treachery

AFTER travelling some ten miles Heyward's party, with the two girls and the Indian guide, turned off at a trail leading north from the main road. Their first day's journey seemed uneventful enough—in fact, it seemed to the girls a wonderful picnic. But they might not have been so cheerful if they could have seen and understood the actions of Magua. Whenever they broke camp the guide stayed behind to put out the fire. He

held a blanket over the embers so that when he drew the blanket aside a huge billow of white smoke shot skywards. Had Heyward been blessed with knowledge of the Indians he might have been alarmed at the sound of a wolf call that rang out many times from the distance. He had no idea that the woods were alive with silent, swift-moving figures—Hurons in full war paint.

But the major did not expect treachery, and when Magua suggested that the party halt beside a pool to water the horses he made no objection.

Scarce had the girls and Heyward seated themselves beneath a great tree than the underbrush parted and four savage Hurons rushed towards them. Cora gave a scream of fear and clung to Alice, whilst Heyward leapt to his feet and pulled out a pistol, but Magua knocked his hand aside.

"No—these my people."

"Well, what do they want?" demanded Heyward, eyeing the four savages that circled them with anger and suspicion. Even the arrogant officer could see their attitude was not friendly.

"Want Paleface squaws." Magua grinned evilly.

Heyward faced the Indian.

"If this is treachery, Indian, I'll—" Again he levelled his pistol, but immediately strong arms grabbed him from behind. Magua's strong fingers wrested away the pistol and stepped back.

"Magua great warrior." Boastfully he tapped his massive chest. He whipped aside his blanket to reveal half-healed welts on his back. "White Chief Munro flog Magua like a dog. Now Magua wipe out scars. Squaws live, you die—slow death." The malicious joy in the steely blue eyes would have terrified most men. Heyward glared his defiance and struggled vainly.

The Indians seized the terrified girls and began to drag them towards the trees. Suddenly there was the report of a gun and one of the girl's captors spun round and slumped to the ground in a heap. Immediately afterwards there came another report, and this time the Huron who was holding Alice fell writhing to the ground. From the trees came a triumphant war whoop.

"Mohicans!" yelled Magua, and with his two unwounded companions vanished among the trees. There came the report of a gun again, and one of the Hurons crashed to the ground, but he got to his feet and at a staggering gait continued his flight.

Heyward tore across to one of the fallen Hurons and grabbed up the Redskin's musket, but the treacherous Magua was out of sight. Now, however, two more Indians, scalping knives in hand, emerged from the underbush. Heyward pointed the gun in their direction, but Cora grabbed his arm.

"Don't shoot!" she cried. "Can't you see they're different from the others?"

"I don't trust any of them," Heyward cried, and brushed her to one side. Once more he sighted the musket.

From behind him came a calm and mocking voice.

"If your aim is as bad as your judgment, major, I don't imagine there's much danger of your hitting 'em."

Alice stared in amazement at the smiling Hawkeye, who leaned on his gun and surveyed them with a certain amount of contempt. Heyward was first of all very surprised, but his

reaction was one of anger. The scout's whole attitude infuriated him.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded.

"Among other things, trying to save you from being burned at the stake—if you aren't too green to burn."

A cry from Alice caused Hawkeye to smile cynically. The girl was pointing at the Mohicans, who were busy collecting the scalps of their fallen foes.

"Make them stop that," came Heyward's peremptory order as he clutched Hawkeye's arm.

"It's too late to put them back," Hawkeye answered. "And scalps to the Indians are like your medals."

Again from the distance sounded the wolf cry, but this time there were ears to interpret.

"What is it?" Cora cried nervously. "Wolves?"

Hawkeye grinned and nodded. "On two legs and headed this way—follow me."

"But our horses?" shouted Heyward, making no attempt to follow. "We will ride them."

"You won't! I had them killed."

Heyward was nearly speechless. "Killed, you fool! What for?"

"Think yourself lucky that I was fool enough to suspect treachery from Magua, who posed to Colonel Munro as a Delaware, that the same fool was able to dog your trail and be here when the Hurons attacked you. But for a fool you would be now on your way to be burnt in a most unpleasant manner. The same fool destroyed the horses because Indians can hear a horse for miles in the woods."

Again the wolf cry rang out, and this time very much closer. It was answered with another wolf cry in another direction. Chingachgook impatiently jerked Heyward's elbow and circled his scalp with his forefinger in a manner that made the girls shudder.

Hawkeye took hold of the girls by their arms.

"Quick now!" His voice was no longer a drawl, but brisk, like someone issuing a command. "We must get away from here if we want to sleep with our hair on our heads."

The Flight

SCARCE had Hawkeye led them into the densest part of the forest than Magua and twenty Hurons appeared in the clearing. Eagerly they searched about for the trail of their quarry, muttering ominously when they saw that their fellow Indians had been scalped. Finally they found the horse tracks, but they muttered curses when they found only the carcasses of the slaughtered animals. The Hurons were not to be thrown off the scent, and finally Magua picked up the proper trail.

In the meantime, Hawkeye was driving his party relentlessly. The girls hampered any swift progress, as their long dresses kept catching in the bushes and brambles. Their arms and legs were flailed. Now and again Hawkeye made unaccountable pauses—snatching Alice's scarf to drop it far off the trail, forcing them to wade for hundreds of yards along the bed of a stream.

At last sheer exhaustion caused Cora to sink to the ground, and Hawkeye was forced to call a brief halt. With a muttered request to Heyward to stay by the girls, the scout and the two Mohicans vanished among the trees.

Alice had protested at Hawkeye snatching her scarf and she had flashed her eyes when he had forced them into the water, but when Heyward, who was smarting under the way he had been tricked by Magua, began to grumble that the scout was exaggerating the danger, she began to defend him.

"He doesn't impress me as a man given to exaggeration," she told

Heyward. "We should all be dead or worse than dead but for his timely appearance."

"Your attitude towards him seems to have changed," sneered Heyward. "Only this morning you talked about him as a traitor."

"My attitude has changed—I think I was wrong," Alice admitted frankly. "After all, Duncan, when you consider that he dislikes us, it's rather generous of him to devote so much time to our rescue."

"If it is a rescue," Heyward said darkly.

The bushes parted and Uncas had returned.

"Huron no find trail yet," he muttered, and moved towards the tree, against which the exhausted Cora was reposing. He gathered some moss and made a cushion for her head. Cora, alarmed when he first approached, now smiled her thanks and lay down wearily.

"You sleep now," Uncas whispered. Impossible to mistake the reverence and adoration in the young Indian's eyes. Cora stared at him curiously.

"You're not a bit what I thought an Indian would be like. You're gentle for a warrior."

Uncas smiled for the first time. "Chief's daughter rest," he urged "Uncas watch."

While Cora slept Chingachgook and Hawkeye were busy concealing the trail and planning out how best to escape. They came to the river-bank, and here they found a half-dozen or so Huron canoes. A lone Huron was on guard. Chingachgook poised his tomahawk and flung it with all his strength at the sentry. The tomahawk caught the man in the shoulder and he toppled to the ground. Hawkeye and Chingachgook rushed forward, leaping into a couple of canoes—the Indian taking the larger one. The impetus of their leap



"Put those men in irons!" shouted Major Heyward.

carried the canoes out into the stream. They began to paddle furiously upstream.

Cora was still sleeping when they returned. She was awakened, and the two girls rushed to the river-bank where the canoes were beached.

Heyward felt that he was playing a very minor part in this rescue and chose to become suspicious again.

"Where do you intend to take us?" he asked brusquely.

Hawkeye read the other's mind and grinned.

"Major, I am not asking you to trust me or to go along with me, but I am taking the ladies. If you'd rather wait for the Hurons, why, that's your affair."

Heyward glared, but stepped almost meekly into the large canoe. Hawkeye ordered Cora, Chingachgook and Uncas to go with him. He gestured for Alice to step into the smaller canoe. As the two canoes moved away from the bank a shot rang out. The wounded sentry had managed to crawl to his musket, and with a final convulsive movement had pulled the trigger, thus warning the other Hurons.

The sound of the shot caused Hawkeye and the others to paddle furiously. There was need for haste, for Magua and the rest of the band came to the river-bank to find two of their canoes missing. They clambered aboard the remainder and drove the canoes through the water at terrific speed. Hawkeye, astern of the smaller canoe, saw his pursuers, and ceased paddling. He waited until they were within range and then calmly fired. The Huron steering the leading canoe toppled into the water. There was momentary confusion among the pursuers. Heyward, seeing what Hawkeye had done, took up a musket and fired—his bullet struck a Huron on the shoulder.

"No good," Uncas called out. "Shoot through the head like Hawkeye."

The pursuers opened fire. Hawkeye's second shot found its mark, and another Huron marksman toppled overboard. Then he began to paddle swiftly and came alongside the bigger canoe.

"Take the right fork," Hawkeye yelled to Uncas. "Meet me at the falls—I'll lead them off."

The bullets were splashing about them as the two canoes took to the paddles. At the fork of the swift-flowing stream they separated, Uncas taking the right, but Hawkeye lingering long enough to be sighted by his pursuers. As he had hoped, the Hurons followed him.

Hawkeye was drawing away when a bullet fired by Magua struck the canoe just at the waterline. Despite all Alice's efforts with her cupped hands the canoe began to fill. Paddling desperately, the scout reached a bend in the river and was out of sight. Hastily he drove towards the shore.

"As soon as we touch leap and fling yourself flat in the nearest cover," he ordered.

Alice did as she was ordered as soon as the water-logged canoe grounded. Then Hawkeye leapt out after her, and dragging the canoe after him, disappeared into the dense foliage.

Lying flat, they watched the river. Alice heaved a sigh of relief when the Huron canoes flashed past.

"A hit close that!" she panted with a forced smile.

"We're not out of it yet." Hawkeye spoke grimly. He frowned as if deep in thought. "I know of a shelter ahead where we can lie hidden until sundown."

But this refuge was denied them.

Alice gave a gasp of horror when they reached the settlement—it was nothing but blackened ashes, and stretched out on the burnt ground were a number of charred bodies.

"What happened?" Alice asked, and buried her face in her hands to shut out the terrible spectacle.

"They had their hair cut by the Huron barbers," Hawkeye spoke with a twisted grin.

"How can you speak so unfeelingly?" Alice was shocked.

"Unfeeling?" Hawkeye gave a harsh laugh. "I blazed the trail that brought them here. This is how my parents died—fire and scalping knife!"

"I'm sorry," Alice touched his arm.

"This won't be all," Hawkeye told her. "With the men at Fort William Henry no settlement is safe."

Alice for the first time understood the reluctance of the Colonials to leave "I wish father could see this," she said, gazing at the scene of desolation.

"That won't make any difference," Hawkeye answered. "He has his own duty to perform."

Meanwhile, the larger canoe had been beached near a cave along the river-bank, and here the party took refuge. Hawkeye's face was white and drawn.

"That fool," he muttered venomously. "Separating our party like this."

Chingachgook heard and grunted.

"Two party alive—good. One party dead—no good." Suddenly the Indian put his head to the ground and appeared to be listening.

"Why are you doing that?"

Chingachgook looked up.

"Beaver downstream. Indian sentry.

When canoe come beaver flap tail."

Cora, seated near Uncas, was worrying over the absence of her sister, and it was Uncas who reassured her that Hawkeye would find a way. She allowed herself to be comforted and pointed to a tortoise-shaped mark on his chest.

"That means Mohican chief," Uncas explained.

"Are you taking us to your people?"

Uncas became sad.

"My people all gone. Killed in Huron wars."

"You're alone." Cora was full of sympathy. Her smile was sad. "So am I. My warrior died at sea."

Uncas became even more mournful. He offered the girl a chunk of pemican from the pouch slung over his shoulder.

Chingachgook scowled.

"Mohican chiefs no wait on squaws," he cried fiercely.

The sound of canoe paddles now was audible even to Heyward. Hawkeye beached the canoe, which he had repaired, and helped Alice to jump ashore. The two parties were united. Cora jumped up and flung herself into Alice's arms.

"Thank heaven you're safe."

Heyward looked at Hawkeye with baffled fury. This wretched fellow, probably the son of some lowly settler, was besting him at every turn. It irked him to be beholden to Hawkeye for his life and for the safety of Alice and Cora. Hawkeye's eyes never wavered, and with a muttered word of thanks Heyward moved away to speak to Alice. It was no comfort to hear Alice singing the praises of Hawkeye.

Fort William Henry

AT Fort William Henry, Colonel Munro awaited the arrival of his daughters. He paced the ramparts in his anxiety, repeatedly asking the sentries if they had seen any signs of Major Heyward's party. He did not suspect treachery, but feared that the guide had either lost the trail

or that they had fallen in with a party of French. Their own march to the fort had been uneventful.

Late one afternoon he was questioning a sentry when the man suddenly shot out a finger.

"Look! There's a flicker in the woods—like a torch light, sir."

Munro turned eagerly to his aide.

"Hurry!" he snapped out. "Send a detail to guide them in."

The words were scarce spoken when the whole woods seemed to burst into flames, dozens of bright points at regular intervals.

"The French," cried the colonel.

"Sound the alarm!"

By forced marches Montcalm had reached the fort ahead of time. The garrison was surrounded.

Colonel Munro was in despair as he watched the soldiers tumbling out of their quarters. What chance had Alice and Cora of getting through to the fort now? He had not much time to dwell upon his own personal anguish. British and Colonial troops were pouring from the inner stockade, muskets in hand, to man the outer breastworks. The heavy guns were swung into position, with gun crews standing by with ammunition. There began some desultory firing, but this ceased when the officers realised the French were out of range.

The fort was little more than a long stockade, surrounded by earthworks built around heavy timbers, with a wide moat running around three sides. The unprotected side faced a wide lake, swampy on all sides and looked upon as impassable. The importance of the fort as an outpost was indicated by the fact that General Montcalm—the same that later fell before Quebec—headed the invading army. Accompanying him were his Huron allies, of whom Magua's band were a part. The French were superior not only in numbers, but in artillery and ammunition. The only hope of the beleaguered forces lay in holding out long enough for relief to arrive.

Montcalm was discussing this possibility with his officers as he rode along his lines. As they passed a group of Hurons, one of the Indians suddenly raised his rifle and fired at a log floating on the surface of the lake.

The French general reproved the man in his gentle style.

"Pardon, my friend. We brought you here to shoot Redcoats—not floating logs."

The Huron moistened his finger and held it up against the wind.

"Log float against wind," he cried.

General Montcalm was startled, and realised the man was right. Other Hurons began to fire, and the bullets splashed round the log.

The Hurons were right. Behind the long and tangled undergrowth were concealed Hawkeye, his Indian friends and their charges, the girls supporting themselves by clinging to the branches, whilst the men paddled frantically with their free hands and their feet. The bullets were coming dangerously close. The swimmers redoubled their efforts, and gradually they drew nearer the fort. Montcalm had instructed the Hurons and some of his own soldiers to make use of the banks. With several of his officers he followed, so interested was the general in the log that floated against the wind.

Hawkeye realised the desperate situation.

"We'll have to run for it," he called out. "We're in shallow water."

As they rushed up the shore, bending half double, they presented a not very difficult target. The girls were im-

ped by their skirts, and though the men could have saved themselves they stayed to lend a helping hand.

Monteahn saw and suddenly threw up his hand.

"Stop firing!" he ordered. "They're women."

The Hurons stared at him in amazement, but obeyed the order long enough to give Hawkeye and the others time to reach the ramparts in safety. The gates were flung open to receive them, and hastily clauged shut. Alice and Cora flung themselves into their father's arms.

"My darlings," he cried hoarsely. "You're safe, safe at last!" He stared over their heads at Heyward. "I'm very grateful I'll never forget this."

"Don't think me, sir," Heyward answered with a glance at Hawkeye. "The credit belongs to this scout, sir."

Munro at once recognised the man who had warned the Colonials against going to Fort William Henry.

"I hadn't suspected you as an ally," he said with a friendly smile.

"I'm not," Hawkeye replied stiffly. "My only reason for helping the major was because of the ladies."

"At any rate"—Munro held out his hand—"accept my heartfelt thanks—my daughters mean a great deal to me."

Then it was Alice's turn to thank the scout, and her eyes were very bright as she laid a hand almost timidly on his arm.

"Will you come to the colonel's quarters?" she asked. "I should like to thank you, too."

Heyward was instantly very jealous, and rudely pushed in between them.

"I'll attend to that, my dear." He eyed Hawkeye angrily. "And reward him personally."

"Any reward I've got coming from you I can do without," Hawkeye's eyes narrowed, then without another word he turned on his heel and strode after Chingachgook and Uncas.

The Selge

FROM the treacherous spy, Magua, the French general learned that the English were two thousand strong and that their train had consisted of ten wagons. Montealm guessed that the besieged must be running short of food and ammunition, and gave the order for his heavy guns to open the attack soon after midnight.

That night, within the fort, Uncas and Cora stood talking on the ramparts. The English girl was greatly attracted to the gentle Uncas.

"I wonder if we'll ever meet again?"

"Some trails cross many times," Uncas answered solemnly.

"Some trails cross only once."

"I shall never forget you, Uncas."

"As many dawns as are mine," Uncas spoke solemnly, "so many shall my prayers be to the Great Spirit for the one with moon in her hair."

Not very far away, in a cannon embrasure stood Hawkeye and Chingachgook. The old Mohican stared moodily across at the young people, clearly silhouetted by the moon.

"Fair hair make heart of Uncas weak like water."

"Don't blame them, Sagamore."

The Indian eyed the scout curiously. "Hawkeye's heart like water, too."

When Chingachgook had gone Hawkeye leaned against the parapet, staring dreamily into the distance towards the lights of the French camp. A light footstep made him turn sharply.

"Alice!"

The girl gave him a reproving glance. "I asked you to come and see me," she said. "You didn't. Why?"

"I'm not much of a hand at saying good-bye."

"You're leaving?"

"Yes."

"But you can't." Alice was dismayed. "You'll never get through."

"I think I'll manage it." Hawkeye turned away as if the sight of her were more than he could endure. "I wasn't born to live in a stockade."

"Neither was I," whispered Alice, and drew close to him.

Inexplicably Hawkeye found himself holding the girl close in his arms. A heavy burst of firing brought them both to their senses.

"The French guns," Alice cried, and glanced at him eagerly. "Hawkeye, why don't you stay? Badly we have need of scouts."

Hawkeye nodded thoughtfully.

"Sounds like the French are changing my mind."

Alice laughed delightedly.

"I hope Montealm is decorated for this."

For ten days the bombardment continued without ceasing. Yet the starved garrison, outmanned, held out against the superior forces, and the

British flag still fluttered over the battered ramparts. Munro would have been confident of holding out for months had it not been for the grumbling of the Colonials.

Why had the promised relief army, under General Webb, failed to arrive? They were not concerned so much with their own fate as fear for the settlements—for their homes, their wives and children. The Hurons could overrun the country whilst they were bottled up in the fort. They were sullen and on the verge of mutiny because nothing was being done by the British armies.

Major Heyward received a deputation and assured them that General Webb had started on the march with the fort as his destination.

"Suppose he doesn't get here?" one Colonial asked.

"Then we have three choices," spoke Heyward firmly. "Starving to death, fighting to the last man, or striking our colours—I promise you it won't be the last."

The muttering and murmuring that followed caused Heyward to hasten to Colonel Munro's headquarters. A hasty council of officers was called. Heyward suggested that if a messenger be sent to link up with General Webb it would appease the Colonials. An Indian might slip through the surrounding army where a white man would have no chance of succeeding. It was decided to send Uncas.

Uncas slipped through the gate and broke into a run in an effort to cover the ground separating the fort from the swamp. A French picket opened fire, but Uncas ran on unscathed. An Indian marksman, with bow and arrow, was more successful. Uncas fell to the ground with an arrow shaft quivering in his shoulder.

Without counting the danger, Heyward dashed out of the gate. Hawkeye



Magua seized the struggling Cora in a fierce grip.

was about to follow, but Colonel Munro pulled him back.

"Keep him covered, you fool!" the colonel yelled.

It was as well that Munro gave these orders, otherwise two good men would have perished. The Indian marksman drew his bow for another shaft—Hawkeye's bullet struck the wretch between the eyes.

By now the whole French camp was alarmed, and soon French and Indian warriors were rushing out towards the wounded Uncas. But Heyward got there first, slung Uncas over his powerful shoulders, and headed back for the fort. Protected by the deadly shooting of Hawkeye, that drove the enemy to cover, Heyward reached the fort in safety.

Hawkeye held out his hand. "He is my friend," he said. "I'm—I'm grateful."

It was Heyward's chance to have ended an enmity, but his retort made it all the more bitter.

Ignoring the proffered hand, he spoke harshly.

"You needn't be. I didn't go to rescue him—but to keep a valuable dispatch from falling into enemy hands."

Traitor or Loyalist ?

UNCAS' wound was not so serious as expected. It was the force of the blow that had brought the Indian down. He hardly winced when Chingachgook, brushing the surgeon to one side, grasped the arrow shaft with both hands and forced the barb through. Uncas was taken to the fort hospital, where Cora insisted upon nursing him. She was sitting by his bed when Hawkeye entered with Chingachgook.

"Is he all right?" Hawkeye inquired. "No," muttered Chingachgook in his own language. "Got squaw fever."

Hawkeye had to laugh, but his smile faded when he noticed on a table the arrow taken from the wound.

"Ottawa arrow!" he cried, and exchanged a swift glance with Chingachgook. The Ottawa were a large tribe and notoriously cruel in their treatment of white prisoners.

As a result of that arrow Hawkeye and Chingachgook the next night went out on a reconnoitre on their own. As they sneaked towards the French lines they came upon two Indian pickets. Hawkeye's hands throttled one to silence, whilst Chingachgook's tomahawk settled the other poor wretch. Stealthily they crept towards the French lines.

Around a huge camp-fire Magua was addressing his fellow Hurons. His paint-daubed features were contorted with fury as he shouted out fiery words.

"Must we stay," he demanded, "and watch big guns firing at Yengeese fort? Our brothers, the Ottawa, are leaving—they will gather many scalps in Yengeese village. I do not speak with crooked tongue. There is no honour for Hurons if others gather Paleface scalps. We must make our tomahawks red with the blood of our enemies. I have spoken."

The tom-toms thumped. The Hurons broke into a savage war dance, and shook their spears and tomahawks.

Hawkeye and Chingachgook waited to hear no more, but sped back as swiftly as possible to Fort William Henry, where they sought out at once Munro's headquarters. The council of officers was summoned, but Heyward derided Hawkeye's story as exaggerated.

Hawkeye, in his anger, pounded on the colonel's desk with his clenched fist.

November 28th, 1936.

"I tell you we saw them—heard them. Magua's working them into a frenzy." He turned appealing to Winthrop, leader of the Colonial irregulars. "If they and the Ottawa raid the settlements it will be the bloodiest massacre the frontier has ever known." He spun round to face Munro again. "And the blood, colonel, will not be all on their hands."

"But my good fellow," Munro answered. "You forget that Montcalm is in command of them, and I assure you that he's a soldier and a gentleman, not a butcher."

"And I assure you," Hawkeye retorted, "that he hasn't the power to stop them."

But Colonel Munro was stubborn. It was in vain that Hawkeye reminded him of his promise to release the Colonials for the protection of their homes and families.

"My promise still holds, gentlemen," the colonel cried. "But I must have more definite proof than this man's word."

Winthrop was indignant.

"His word has been good enough on the frontier a long time before you came, colonel," he said coldly.

When the Colonials heard the news their rebellion became outright. A number of the single men agreed to stay with the British, but those with families decided to abandon the fort at once. Hawkeye, fully aware of the consequences of violating military law, aided them in their departure, showing them the trail through the swamp by which he had reached the lake. He elected to stay behind, and naturally Chingachgook and Uncas stayed with him.

The last Colonial had slipped over the parapet and was well on his way to the swamp when a British picket observed their shadows and rushed off to inform Major Heyward. That British officer rushed to the parapet in high rage and gave orders for the soldiers to fire at the deserters.

Without hesitation Hawkeye and the Mohicans emerged from their concealment and grabbed the muskets of the soldiers. The fight was brief, but it enabled the Colonials to escape. Hawkeye, Chingachgook and the still bandaged Uncas were overpowered.

"Put those men in irons," Heyward shouted, and laughed harshly as he saw the blood-streaked face of Hawkeye.

The three men were committed to the dungeons to await trial and sentence for their insubordination.

Somehow Alice managed to wheedle permission out of the sentry to see Hawkeye.

"Why did you do it?"

"You saw the settlement after an Indian raid," he reminded her.

"But they trusted you."

"The Colonials trusted your father," was his answer.

Alice was torn between two loyalties. "I don't know the right and wrong of it," she sobbed, "but I know they'll hang you as a traitor."

Hawkeye was nothing daunted, and grinned in his mocking, contemptuous way.

"Knowing the redecoats, I bet they don't tie the knot right."

But Alice refused to allow such levity. She came close to the small grille.

"Oh, Hawkeye, why didn't you leave with the others?"

His expression softened.

"I guess I'm in love with you."

Alice appealed in vain to Heyward and her father for mercy. The crime was mutiny, and mutiny must be punished by hanging. That was army

regulations. The fact that Hawkeye had performed what he thought was his duty, that he had remained behind to face the consequences, those weighed nothing against the letter of the law.

"That's the army and that's justice," Heyward said with a smirk of satisfaction.

His words roused Alice to fury, and the two men stared at the white-faced girl in amazement as she accused them of being murderers.

"Justice!" she cried scornfully. "If that's your idea of justice, then the sooner French guns blow the British Army out of America, the better it will be for the Colonies."

Heyward was horrified.

"Alice, you don't know what you're saying!"

"Yes I do!" she retorted. "For the first time in my life I'm speaking from my heart and not out of a book of regulations. And if it's sedition, I'm proud of it."

From the distance came the roll of drums. Colonel Munro hastened to the window. In front of the earthworks stood a French officer, white flag in hand, seeking a parley.

The Massacre

THE parley was arranged. From the French lines came Montcalm himself, attended by a group of officers, and stopped half-way from the fort. A similar group, headed by Munro and Heyward, advanced from the fort to meet them. From the distance the Hurons watched the proceedings with sullen suspicion.

Montcalm was the first to speak.

"Colonel Munro, I have known you as a gallant antagonist. I have long realised that even outnumbered as you are, it would merely be a waste of breath to invite you to surrender."

"You are correct in your assumption, sir," came Colonel Munro's grim reply. Montcalm smiled.

"As a soldier I know that an officer of your proven courage does not surrender until his cause is proved without a doubt hopeless."

Munro and Heyward exchanged glances. There was something ominous about the French general's words. They were not to be kept long in suspense.

"Colonel," stated Montcalm, "my scouts intercepted this dispatch intended for you. Pray read it."

Colonel Munro began to read, and Heyward saw the strong face twitch—saw him bow his head. Silently he handed the message to Heyward.

The dispatch read:

"Colonel Munro, Fort William Henry. No reinforcements available—impossible to send provisions without escort—advise surrender of fort."

The signature was "Webb."

"It's a trick," protested Heyward.

Munro shook his head.

"It's Webb's signature," he said with a gloomy shake of his head.

"You have no alternative," Montcalm's voice was gentle. "Your own general advises surrender."

The quick-tempered Heyward answered and addressed his remarks to his superior officer.

"I know the temper of our men, Colonel Munro. Rather than spend the rest of the war in a French prison, they'll fight to the end."

The speech revived Munro, who flung up his head.

"You have heard your answer, Monsieur le Marquis," he saluted.

"Wait," Montcalm stayed him with a gesture of his hand. "I beg you not

to sign the death warrant of your men until you have heard my terms. The fort must be destroyed. Your men must give up their arms and return to England. For the rest, ask what you will."

Munro stared at the French general incredulously.

"The honours of war?"

"Granted."

"My colours?"

The general bowed. "Carry them to England and show them to your king."

Tears came into the colonel's eyes at this unexpected generosity on the part of his gallant opponent.

"I accept your terms, sir," he answered at once. "The fort is yours."

By eventide the French and Hurons were in possession of the fort. The English, stripped of their arms, but still proudly bearing their colours, prepared to line up in military formation for their departure. Within the houses in the stockade the women were packing their few possessions.

But the Hurons had broken into the rum stores, and their whoops, their threatening gestures, their hostile attitudes, caused some alarm. Montcalm, preparing to strike camp, had only sent a handful of officers and men to take over the fort, so that the Hurons greatly outnumbered the French.

Hawkeye and his Mohican friends, still imprisoned in their cell, watching the scene through the grated windows, realised what the Hurons were shouting and their attitude towards the vanquished defenders. Chingachgook drew his finger round the top of his head in a scalping gesture, and Hawkeye nodded.

An Ottawa chieftain wandered past the prison, and Hawkeye decided hastily on a plan. In the Ottawa tongue he called out:

"Come here, great chief."

Suspecting nothing the Indian approached to stare at the prisoners. Suddenly Hawkeye's arms shot through the grilled window, grasping the Indian by the windpipe. Uncas reached through and seized the knife and tomahawk. The Ottawa chieftain slumped to the ground, strangled into unconsciousness by Hawkeye's powerful grip. With the aid of the tomahawk the prisoners attacked the bars, but before they could escape the massacre had commenced.

Magua had worked his warriors into a fury. Scores of drink-crazed Indians were wandering round the stockade, brandishing their knives and making threatening gestures at the unarmed British. Magua's voice rang out so that all could hear.

"The French tell us there is peace!" he raved. "They tell us to put away our hatchets. But your squaws will laugh with scorn if you return without honour. There are plenty Paleface scalps. We go get them!"

He raised his tomahawk and gave a wild whoop of malignant fury. The Hurons whooped their approval, and in mad haste charged upon their defenceless prey. That was the beginning of the massacre.

Gallantly but vainly several unarmed British officers sought to bar the way of the infuriated Redskins. They were cut down with tomahawks. The Indians swept on towards the houses inside the stockade. They would butcher the women and children first, but some of the younger women they would carry off as prisoners. Men that tried to fight them with their hands were cut down and scalped.

When the Indians broke into the barracks and attacked the women like a



With his knife Uncas blazed a notch in a tree.

pack of bloodthirsty wolves, one poor woman sought safety in flight, but she was pounced upon by a giant Huron, who seized her by the hair and began dragging her across the ground. Her shrieks brought French soldiers to the rescue. A general mêlée ensued, the drink-maddened Indians making no distinction between Paleface friend or foe. The French were outnumbered—an urgent message was sent to Montcalm that the Indians were massacring the British.

Cora and Alice had barred the door of their room, and Alice had armed herself with a heavy horse-pistol. Colonel Munro, with two officers—armed with swords—were rushing to the rescue of the girls when Magua appeared. The treacherous Huron smiled exultantly and fired. The gallant colonel fell, mortally wounded. Others in the band shot down the two officers. Magua and several of his Hurons hurled themselves against the barred door. It gave way, and as the Indians poured in Alice fired, and the foremost dropped. One of the band wrenched the gun from her hands, and Magua seized the struggling Cora in a fierce grip.

Heyward had been cornered, but by desperate fighting he had killed or wounded the Indians attacking him. He reached the scene in time to see the girls being carried off by the Hurons. Recklessly he set out in pursuit. The Hurons sealed the barricade and vanished with their prey into the woods—they had seen French troops rushing towards the fort, and Magua had an idea that it might not be wise to stay.

It took Hawkeye and his companions some time to get out of their prison. Not long before, Hawkeye had killed a Huron and secured a pistol. Chingachgook and Uncas also armed themselves. The three did much to prevent all the women being massacred by their fearless fighting.

Eventually they fought their way to

the room which had housed Cora and Alice. They read the signs of a struggle, and rushed out as General Montcalm made his belated arrival. The French general managed to put a stop to the massacre which had now become general. The ground was strewn with dead bodies. Many of the Indians sought cover in the woods, but some in their drunken frenzy tried to attack the French and were shot.

Near the barracks Montcalm came upon the body of the dying Colonel Munro. He knelt to the ground and begged forgiveness. With a feeble effort Munro held out his hand.

Hawkeye and his Mohicans soon found out that Magua and a band of Hurons had carried off Cora and Alice. Stealthily and swiftly they set out in pursuit. They came upon an officer wandering aimlessly in the forest. The once-faultless uniform was in rags and tatters. It was Heyward, and armed only with his sword he turned at bay as if to attack them, but he lowered his sword-point at a gesture from Hawkeye.

"You are seeking Cora and Alice?"

"They were carried off by Magua and his cursed Hurons," answered Heyward. "I lost the trail in these woods."

"We are seeking them also." For once Hawkeye's words were spoken softly. "Only an Indian or one skilled in Indian lore could follow the trail."

Heyward ungraciously consented to join the party.

"However," he said defiantly to Hawkeye, "I want you to understand that I still consider you a mutineer, and if we're ever under British jurisdiction again, I shall enjoy pressing charges against you."

"Very well, major," mocked Hawkeye, and his eyes glinted. "But don't forget that I am in command of this party, and you will obey the orders I shall give. Come, there is no time to waste."

In single file, with Hawkeye leading and Heyward in the rear, the little party hastened along the trail of the fleeing Hurons.

After a while Hawkeye called a halt. Chingachgook placed his ear near the ground.

"Huron village plenty close," the Indian stated.

"It is best for us to split up into two parties," Hawkeye decided. "Four are too large a party, and the Hurons are sure to have scouts on the watch. Chingachgook and I will bear to the west; you, major, will go with Uncas. Do as he does, because the Hurons must have no suspicion."

After a few more words of conference the party split up, and soon Uncas was leading Heyward along the bed of a narrow stream. At last Uncas left the stream, and Heyward saw the Indian begin to examine the ground. With his knife he blazed a notch in a tree.

"What's that for?" whispered Heyward.

"Magua and Paleface squaws come this way," answered Uncas.

"Oughtn't we to go back and find Hawkeye and tell him?"

The Indian shook his head.

"Hawkeye soon find he take wrong trail. Come this way and see blaze. Know right trail. They follow."

After a while Uncas announced that the Huron village was very close. He asked Heyward to lay hidden and wait for the appearance of Hawkeye and Chingachgook. He would go on and find out all he could of the Huron village and what had happened to the prisoners.

Uncas and Magua

CORA and Alice, captives of the Huron village, were surrounded by Indian warriors, met to decide their fate. Magua claimed Cora as his squaw. Though the girls did not understand the words, it was easy to understand by Magua's gestures, and Cora clung to her taller sister.

"But what of this one?" the Sachem, the wrinkled head man, asked, pointing at Alice.

"This one like warrior,"* Magua answered. "She kill Huron brave—she die in our fire."

Magua approached Cora and laid his hand on the shrinking girl's shoulder. As a scout for Munro he had learned the English tongue readily enough, and his words were clear, though spoken in a harsh whisper. He stared at the girl exultantly.

"I treat you well. You are daughter of little chief. I make you squaw of big chief."

"Why does such a big chief run from his enemies?" Cora answered scornfully. Magua patted her arm.

"Good spirit—chief's squaw." He turned to face the Sachem and again made his demand: "This one my squaw."

"My son." The wrinkled eyes were shrewd. "She is unwilling."

"But I have taken this woman!" shouted the hot-headed, impetuous Huron. "It is for me to say."

But the Sachem had other views and shook his head.

"The Manitou has given us a law. It is for the law to say. She has a right to choose between you and fire."

Magua's face was contorted with fury when Cora said she would rather be burnt than be the squaw of a filthy murderer.

"Until the sun rises Magua wait for answer!" Magua cried, and stalked away.

The girls were dragged back to the November 25th, 1936.

bark-and-grass tepee where they were being kept prisoners. They had to run the gauntlet of a number of snarling old crows who clawed at their faces and spat at them. The girls clung closely to each other.

"Cora—they offer you life," Alice said when they were at last alone in the tepee.

"Don't shame me by even suggesting it," Cora answered determinedly. "Death would be far sweeter."

A gasping cry suddenly came from Cora, and she pointed a shaking hand at the rear wall. A knife appeared, cutting a slit in the bark. The slit widened and a head appeared. It was Uncas. He placed a finger to his lips to warn them to be silent.

As suddenly his head was withdrawn. His sharp ears had heard someone approaching. Magua loomed in the doorway. Alice gave her sister a meaningful glance, and then moved to the side of the Huron.

"Come outside." Alice clasped his arm. "I must talk to you."

The squaws outside, at sight of the white girl, began to screech, hurl curses, and shake their fists menacingly. Alice laughed mockingly, goading them on,

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only too pleased to create as much noise and diversion as possible. But as she would not answer Magua's question about her reason for speaking with him alone, he became suspicious of her behaviour. He brushed her aside and was about to enter the tepee when Alice gripped his arm.

"Not yet," she cried. "Be patient! I have spoken to her. She will marry you! She will be your squaw! But now, let her rest."

Magua flung her away and dashed into the tepee. It was empty!

His shouts aroused the village. Two braves accompanied him in his pursuit of Uncas and Cora. A close watch was set on Alice.

Uncas was swift of foot. Unencumbered they could never have overtaken him, but Cora was weary and travelled with difficulty over the mountainous trail. They were climbing a narrow path when Magua sighted them. Several shots whined over their heads. The only weapon possessed by Uncas was a tomahawk. At the top of the cliff the trail broadened out on to a ledge, with a drop of many hundreds of feet into a raging torrent. Cora sank exhausted to the ground.

"Leave me!" the girl gasped. "Uncas, save yourself. They won't harm me."

Uncas shook his head.

"Uncas never leave one with moon in her hair," was his answer.

As the first of the Hurons reached the ledge Uncas was on him like a whirlwind. The Huron dropped with a smashed skull. Magua saw his comrade fall and his teeth showed in a vicious snarl. His arm drew back and, as Uncas turned to meet him, Magua's tomahawk struck him full in the side. Writhing on the ground Uncas sought to raise himself on one elbow. But Magua, with a brutal kick, forced the almost lifeless body to the edge of the ledge. Another kick and Uncas went hurtling through the air to the rapids below.

Magua gazed triumphantly upon Cora and reached out to seize her. She, facing him, her eyes courageous, backed slowly until she was poised on the very edge. He laughed exultantly, thinking that now she was his, and stepped forward, but the girl turned swiftly and, as his arms went out to grip her, flung herself impetuously over the edge. Magua recoiled—the Paleface woman had killed herself rather than be his squaw.

Her body struck rocks near the bank and she was killed instantly. Uncas, who had fallen into deep water, had managed to reach the bank. Painfully, Uncas crawled towards her until his outstretched hand was able to touch one of hers—and then his body, too, was still.

Magua and the remaining Huron peered over the cliff, grimly surveying their handiwork. A shot rang out and the Huron slumped down on the ledge, twitched spasmodically and was still. Magua jumped back to safety.

Hawkeye's deadly rifle had fired the shot. Now he began to reload, watching Magua, but Chingachgook shook his head. Hawkeye understood—Magua belonged to Uncas' father. The Mohican strode out of cover, cupped his hands and shouted:

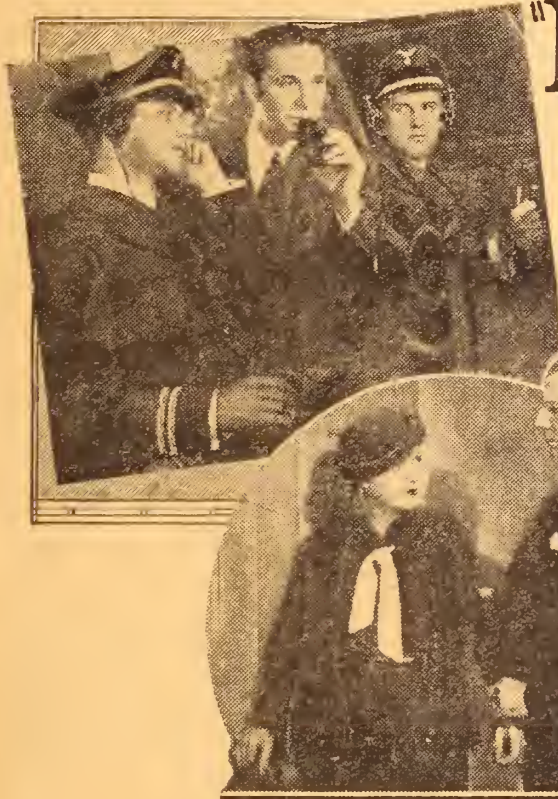
"Magua! Come down!"

Chingachgook stood there with hands folded across his massive chest. Magua accepted the challenge and, tomahawk in hand, began to clamber down the cliff. Armed only with tomahawks the two Indians fought a battle to the death, whilst Hawkeye and Heyward

(Continued on page 94)

A city in the path of disaster. Somewhere in that city, a gang of desperate mail-robbers seeking to escape with their loot, while a determined employee of the Government strives to track them down. A powerful drama of a Service that knows no barriers, starring Ricardo Cortez, Patricia Ellis, Bela Lugosi and Michael Loring

"POSTAL INSPECTOR"



Hazardous Landing

"NEITHER snow, nor rain, nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds."

Those words, the slogan of the U.S. Mail Department, were running through the mind of Bill Davis as he hunched himself lower in one of the bucket seats aboard a passenger plane that was bound for Millstown.

He was on his way home from Washington, where he and certain other prominent officials of the Postal Service had been commended by the president for the skill and efficiency with which they had handled a gigantic task, the task of transferring the gold reserves of the United States to certain inland cities in accordance with a recent Government edict.

Bill Davis, chief postal inspector for the industrial city of Millstown, was not the only passenger aboard this cabin plane which was flying across Uncle Sam's northern territories. There were about ten other travellers beside himself, the majority of them in a state of high suspense, for the weather conditions were of the vilest sort.

Fog, the greatest enemy of aviation, had spread thickly over the countryside, shrouding the plains and the forests under its evil pall, choking the valleys, hiding the grim and treacherous mountain peaks, making the journey a nightmare of anxiety.

There was no telling what might happen under such conditions. There was always the sinister chance of an accident that might spell death for the divers collection of mortals who had

trusted their lives to this winged craft of the skies.

Apart from its human freight, the plane was carrying mail. That was probably why the slogan of the Postal Service was figuring in Bill Davis' thoughts as he stared out through the nearest windows at the dense wreaths of mist which were surging past.

At the same time he was dwelling upon the weakness some individuals showed during a crisis. He himself was a fatalist, and had long since reflected that if he were to meet his end to-night, no amount of feverish concern on his part would change the course of his destiny. On the other hand, the people occupying the seats behind him were making fools of themselves: asking the stewardess all manner of stupid questions that advertised their fear; indicating by look and by word and by gesture that they were on the verge of panic.

Aside from Bill himself, there seemed to be only two other passengers in the plane who were not white to the lips. One was a blonde, clear-eyed and attractive girl who was sitting abreast of him on the other side of the gangway, and who appeared to be perfectly calm and self-possessed. The second person, obviously this girl's maid, was not nearly so calm and self-possessed, but was prevented by nature from revealing any trace of pallor—being an enormous negress whom her young employer had addressed as "Deborah."

Meanwhile, towards the rear of the ship, an infant child in the arms of a nurse was wailing disconsolately, and the sound was adding to the general agitation of the passengers. It even began to play on Bill's nerves to some

extent, and it was partly to escape from it for a moment, partly to seek information, that he suddenly rose to his feet and walked forward to the door of the control cabin.

He opened that door and stepped through into the compartment where the pilot and the wireless operator were installed, and, being personally acquainted with both of them, he addressed them in a familiar tone.

"Well, boys," he said cheerfully, "how are we doing?"

"We should be over the Millstown aerodrome in about two minutes," the wireless operator replied.

Bill expressed satisfaction, and then spoke to the pilot.

"Think you'll be able to land all right?" he queried. "Or will you have to go on and try some other field where the soup isn't so thick?"

"We'll make it all right," said the pilot. "We've just been in touch with the aerodrome, and they're going to direct us by radio. There's nothing to it. Anyway, I've ordered 'em to have a plate of ham and eggs ready for me, and no crack-up is going to stop me from keeping my date with that grub."

Bill laughed, and was about to turn back into the passenger cabin when the wireless operator jerked his thumb in that direction.

"How's things in there?" he asked. "Most of 'em are plenty scared," Bill replied. "There's a youngster in there crying, too, and that doesn't help any."

He left the two airmen, and, closing the door of the forward compartment behind him, resumed his seat in the larger cabin. As he did so, the girl with the coloured maidservant leaned across to him.

"Is everything all right?" she inquired.

"Sure," Bill told her. "The people down at the field are going to guide us in by radio. I wish we could do something to keep that child quiet back there, though. She's making everyone jumpy—except you, that is."

The girl smiled at this tribute to her calmness. She was deciding inwardly that she rather liked this young man to whom she was talking. There was something very pleasing about his clean-cut face and the odd mixture of grimness and humour in his expression. He was handsome, too, in his tall, lithe way—almost commanding.

"You don't seem very jumpy yourself," she commented. "As for that baby girl back there, I might know what to do about her if I were in a theatre."

"A theatre?" Bill echoed in a puzzled fashion.

"Yes; I'm Connie Larrimore."

The name seemed to convey nothing to him, and she smiled.

"I see you've never heard of me," she remarked. "Well, I'm not really very important, I suppose—outside of the theatre."

"Forgive my ignorance, Miss Larrimore," he said. "The name does seem kind of familiar, but I'm kept so busy that I seldom get to a show. Er—what do you do on the stage?"

"I sing," Connie Larrimore answered. "That's what I meant when I said I might be able to keep that baby girl quiet."

Bill looked at her quickly, and then all at once he snapped his fingers as if an inspiration had occurred to him.

"Great!" he ejaculated. "Go ahead and sing. You may be able to soothe some of these scared grown-ups, too."

"You mean—sing right here?"

"Why not, Miss Larrimore? It will probably ease things up a bit."

The girl seemed to hesitate at first, and then, realising that there was a good deal of shrewdness in Bill's suggestion, she began to give a rendering of a popular melody which seemed eminently suited to the occasion.

"Here we are together, flying high. We're up in heaven, you and I . . ."

Such were the opening words of the ballad, and she sang them with an easy fluency and a silveriness of tone that nevertheless filled the cabin and arrested the attention of every person there. And, watching her as she smilingly entertained the company with her voice, Bill was not the only one who was held in thrall by the sweetness of that harmony.

The other passengers forgot their alarm, inspired by the courage of this girl and intrigued by the tuneful notes that rose from her lips. Gradually their attention became riveted upon her to the exclusion of everything else, and even that squawling child at the far end of the cabin was subdued into silence before long, as if appeased by that lullaby of the heavens.

Sure enough, Bill's proposal had been a brain-wave, and while the plane was being manoeuvred down through the fog in accordance with instructions wirelessed from the landing field, there was not the slightest sign of uneasiness among the inmates of the ship.

Connie Larrimore continued to sing until the craft had grounded safely in front of the aerodrome buildings, and it was only when the wheels bumped down on terra firma that her listeners were reminded of their situation. Then, with the plane rolling to a standstill and all danger at an end, a spontaneous

burst of applause was accorded to the stage star.

A few seconds later the passengers were alighting from the machine, and after thanking her personally for what she had done, Bill Davis escorted Connie and her maid through the fog to the edge of the landing field.

Here the girl was greeted by a swarm of reporters from the Millstown newspapers, and as the other passengers from the plane recounted how she had quietened everyone by her singing, the Pressmen crowded around her with even keener interest.

"Hully gee, that makes you a heroine, Miss Larrimore!"

"The great, the gorgeous, the glamorous Connie Larrimore, doing her act 'way up in the sky to avert a near-panic! What a story! What a story!"

Laughingly Connie protested that she had been as frightened as anyone aboard the ship, and she was still endeavouring to make light of the whole affair when a tall, gaunt, foreign-looking man elbowed his way towards her through the crowd of reporters.

Bill Davis recognised him immediately as one Benez, owner of a fashionable Millstown night club known as the Golden Eagle, and the postal inspector frowned at sight of him, for although Benez was respected in some quarters, Bill had heard whispers that he was not altogether a desirable character. There was some talk of him having been mixed up in the liquor racket during those wild days when Prohibition had been in force.

Benez, at the moment, looked highly gratified about something or other, and from the first words which he addressed to Connie it was obvious why he was in so elated a mood.

"Miss Larrimore," he declared, speaking in almost faultless English, but pronouncing his words in a slightly sibilant manner, "Miss Larrimore, I have just heard about this incident in the plane. What wonderful publicity! Magnificent publicity!"

He turned to the assembled Pressmen.

"Was it not a splendid example of courage on Miss Larrimore's part, gentlemen?" he said. "Yes, indeed—the little lady who is honouring our city by bringing us the silver voice that has captivated Broadway, she should certainly figure prominently on the front pages of your papers now! And don't forget, gentlemen, she is under contract to me, and will be singing every night at the Golden Eagle until further notice!"

As he heard this flowery and insidious speech, Bill Davis turned away in disgust, feeling not a little sorry for the girl who had to stand by and listen to it. Then he made his way in the direction of the aerodrome café, and was headed for the inviting snack-bar there when he ran full tilt into a young fellow who was three or four years his junior.

It was his brother Charlie, who held a pretty responsible position in the Federal Reserve Bank at Millstown—an alert-looking, genial youngster whom Bill had sponsored ever since he had left college.

"Why, hallo, Charlie," Bill greeted. "What are you doing here?"

"Just thought I'd slip down and meet my important brother," was the cheerful reply. "Come on, Bill, the cats are on me."

He took his elder brother by the arm and marched him into the café, and presently the pair of them were sitting up at the snack-bar, where Bill proceeded to give an account of his sojourn

in Washington while they drank coffee and consumed a meal.

It was as Bill was discussing his visit to the capital that the rest of the passengers from the plane filed into the restaurant, and the last to enter was the lovely theatrical star whose acquaintance the postal inspector had made.

"Why, there's Connie Larrimore!" Charlie exclaimed at sight of her.

Bill glanced at him sharply.

"What do you know about Connie Larrimore?" he asked. "You've never been to New York, and that's where she belongs."

"New York my eye," said Charlie. "She may belong there now, but she was born and reared in little old Millstown. Don't you remember, Bill? She was at college with me, and she and I used to see a whole lot of each other."

"So that's why the name sounded familiar to me," Bill mused, and then turned his head to watch Connie as she settled herself on a stool at the far end of the bar.

He noticed that Benez was still with her, and above the general hum of conversation he heard the man announce that he would drive her maid to the Grand Hotel with her luggage and then return to the aerodrome for her.

"I understand she's going to sing at that fellow's night club," Bill said to Charlie. "Too bad."

"Why, what's the matter with the Golden Eagle?" his brother countered.

Bill shrugged.

"Oh, the place is all right," he granted. "But that man Benez—"

He made a grimace, and then Charlie kicked his ankle. For Benez had left Connie and was passing close to them—was looking sharply at Bill, too, as if he had caught what had been said.

"I think he overheard you," Charlie stated, when the night-club proprietor had gone by.

"I should worry about that," Bill retorted. "But say, aren't you going over to talk to your old sweetheart? Or do you think she's too famous to remember you now?"

Charlie grinned at him, and then, motioning him to follow, he made his way to where Connie Larrimore was sitting and addressed her smilingly.

Next moment she and Charlie were shaking each other by the hand, and before long the two of them were laughing over old reminiscences of their early youth—and even of their childhood, for it seemed they had been friends when they were mere toddlers.

Then all at once Charlie recollected Bill and made haste to introduce him as his brother.

"So that's who you are!" Connie ejaculated. "Charlie Davis' brother? Why, I remember you now. You were a very awesome person in our eyes, being a few years older than we were."

"Believe me, he's still held in awe by some folks, Connie," Charlie put in jovially. "He's an inspector, you know."

"Police?" the girl asked, looking at Bill.

"No," the elder brother rejoined.

"Post Office."

"Post Office!" A merry twinkle appeared in Connie Larrimore's eyes. "Gee, we all used to play a game called post office when we were kids—"

A Night at the Golden Eagle

THOSE two words, "post office," may have reminded Connie Larrimore of a childhood game, but they constituted a serious enough business so far as Bill Davis was concerned, and a business which would have aston-

ished the general public if they could have gained an insight into his department.

There were doubtless many people who imagined that the duties of a postal inspector merely consisted of superintending the collection, sorting and delivery of the mails. But Bill's job was far more complicated than that.

There was plenty of routine attached to it, but though Bill Davis and his colleagues in the upper branches of the service were never lauded like the police or the Department of Justice or other such guardians of the public welfare, yet they were men who safeguarded the interests of the nation, working quietly but effectively behind the scenes.

Witness, for instance, an interview that took place in Bill's private sanctum a few days after he arrived back in Millstown.

Bill's office was situated on the first floor of the mammoth building which formed the headquarters of the city's postal service, and an elderly man by the name of Ritter had been shown into the room, a man who looked the very picture of misery and distress.

"Inspector Davis," the old fellow was saying now, "I've—I've lost all my money. I've been to lawyers, I've been to the police, but they tell me they can't do anything because I've no proof to support my statement that I was swindled. Then somebody mentioned that the Post Office Department might be able to help me."

Bill leaned his elbows on his desk and cupped his chin in his hands.

"How did you lose your money, Mr. Ritter?" he asked.

The old man bit his lip. He seemed almost on the verge of tears.

"My wife and I," he explained, "we worked for forty year an' saved twenty thousand dollars. Then one day a man told me about a gold-mine, and he persuaded me to invest all my money in it. But it was all a fake, and now we haven't a cent."

Bill shook his head sympathetically. How often he came up against this sort of thing—innocent, trusting people who were preyed upon by smooth-tongued rogues.

"Did you have any correspondence with this man?" he inquired. "I mean, did you receive anything through the mails from him, Mr. Ritter?"

"No, sir," was the answer. "He always came to my house."

The young postal inspector frowned.

"That's too bad," he murmured. "It puts the case out of my reach. I'd like to help you, Mr. Ritter, but I don't see how it's possible. You see, we only handle things that come through the mails."

There was a pause, during which the victim of the gold-mining swindle looked utterly downcast. Then Bill went on speaking.

"Mr. Ritter," he said, "there are a lot of crooks in this world, and frauds are being perpetrated every day. Some of them are not so considerable as this one from which you have suffered. Many of them consist of commercial articles which are offered to the public for a few dollars, even a few cents. The price doesn't matter. If these articles don't do what they're claimed to do, they're frauds."

Old Ritter nodded dully.

"Yes, petty frauds," he agreed in a heavy tone, "and, whatever the cost, the people who are taken in by them are fools. I understand. But I was a great fool, for it wasn't a few dollars or a few cents with me. It was my life's savings."

"Whether the fraud happens to be petty or otherwise, Mr. Ritter, these crooks make a mistake when they allow the mails to be used in connection with their business. For a single letter from them, or a remittance sent through the post by their victims—that immediately makes Uncle Sam a party to the transaction, and it's their that we can step in and prosecute them. But, as I say, we can do nothing if the mails haven't been used by either party."

Ritter looked at him in a quick, hopeful manner.

"Oh, but, Mr. Davis, I used the mail!" he blurted. "I sent my cheque for twenty thousand dollars to this man through the mail."

Bill's handsome face brightened at that, and he leaned forward eagerly.

"Did you register it?" he queried.

"Oh, yes, inspector! I have the registration receipt right here."

He fumbled in his pocket and produced a wallet from which he took a slip of paper. This he handed to Bill, and, after scrutinising it, the latter stood up briskly.

"Fine, Mr. Ritter," he declared. "Now we have something to work with."

Mind you, I wouldn't bank too much on getting your money back if I were you, but if the man who swindled you is still in the country he'll be prosecuted all right. Now will you come with me and let my secretary have all the details of the affair? Then I'll go into the matter thoroughly and get in touch with you as soon as I have any definite news for you."

"Yes, Inspector Davis. But—don't you really think there's much chance of me recovering my savings?"

"Well, you never know, of course," said Bill. "I sincerely trust you will, anyhow, Mr. Ritter, but it remains to be seen."

A quarter of an hour later old man Ritter was leaving the post office building with a flicker of hope in his eyes. As for Bill, he returned to his desk, and apart from a midday break for lunch, he was kept busy there until evening.

That night he had a supper engagement with his brother Charlie, who had been seeing a great deal of Connie Larrimore since she had arrived in town, and who had persuaded Bill to go along with him to the Golden Eagle and enjoy her act.

The Golden Eagle night club was the haunt of Millstown's wealthier residents, and it was as bright and up-to-date as any of its Broadway counterparts in New York. And here, while they dined expensively, Bill and Charlie listened to Connie as she sang to the rhythm of a soft-toned band.

She was vigorously applauded by the patrons of the restaurant when she had finished, and then, her act over, she walked across to the table at which Bill and Charlie were sitting.

She was soon talking to them animatedly, and, watching her during that conversation, Bill could not help thinking that she and Charlie still seemed to have a great deal in common. Well, he reflected, if anything came of



"How did those bandits find out what was in this van?" Bill murmured. "That's what beats me."

their renewed friendship it might turn out to be a good match. She was a nice girl, this Connie Larrimore—even if she did happen to be working for a man like Benez just now.

"You know," Bill said to her presently, "you must get a lot of fun out of your singing. You sound as if you enjoy it as much as the people who are listening to you."

"Well, I do enjoy singing," she confessed. "But, all the same, there are times when I think I'd like to give up the stage and settle down in Millstown. I'm not so crazy about New York."

"The old town has its advantages, eh?" Charlie interposed smilingly, and then, suddenly spying a girl who was passing amongst the tables with a tray of cigarettes, he lifted his hand and beckoned her over.

He bought a packet of cigarettes, and, as change for the money he tendered, he received a banknote that had seen many years of hard wear.

"Hallo, here's an ancient one," he said, showing it to his brother.

"Just about ripe for your collection," Bill commented. "You know, Connie, Charlie's in charge of all the money that's taken out of circulation at the Federal Reserve Bank. As soon as any notes come in that look as if they're falling apart, they're quietly sentenced to death."

Connie glanced at Charlie whimsically.

"And that one—is sentenced to death?" she asked, indicating the banknote which had been handed to him by

"Then everything is to your satisfaction," he snapped. "Everything—except me!"

Without waiting for a response he turned on his heel and strode off across the restaurant, making his way to a private office which adjoined the foyer. As he entered this, he found two men there; one of them a middle-aged individual who was known as Evans, and who was Benez's manager; the other a big, hulking fellow of about thirty, Roach by name, and tough by reputation—eminently useful on these occasions when a strong arm was necessary, for even in a fashionable night club like the Golden Eagle one sometimes had trouble with unruly patrons.

"Roach," Benez said viciously, "get Connie Larrimore away from the Davises. She's at their table, and I don't like either of them. The elder one doesn't approve of me for some reason, and his brother Charlie has been seeing too much of Connie ever since she came here. It's bad for business. She even cancelled a lunch party that I arranged the other day—a party to which I had invited a number of Press-

said. "Roach, is there a copy of yesterday's 'Daily Courier' handy?"

Roach moved over to a side-table and rummaged through a collection of newspapers that littered it. After a few seconds he produced a "Courier" that had been issued the previous day, and in silence he passed it across to his employer.

Slowly Benez turned the pages of the newspaper, which was a national daily that was widely read over a large section of the United States. Then, as he located the column which had been referred to, and as he scrutinised an item of news which figured in it prominently, his sallow face seemed to become several shades paler.

"Listen to this!" he jerked: "Night Club Owner Mysteriously Slain. Fred Cummings, forty-year-old owner of the Jack o' Lantern Night Club, was found dead in his office from a bullet wound early this morning. Alfred Carter, known to have financed many night clubs, was questioned by the police, but later released."

Roach and Evans exchanged glances. "Carter!" the manager reiterated. "The big shot beer baron that had the booze racket tied up in New York when the Volstead Act was in force. So that racketeer's had Cummings wiped out? Huh, and the police released him after questioning. Well, that's not surprising. You can bet your life that Carter would have an alibi for himself and every member of his gang."

"But what's all this gotta do with you, boss?" Roach interposed, looking at Benez.

ANOTHER FREE GIFT NEXT WEEK!

the cigarette girl, who had now moved off.

"No," Charlie rejoined. "I'll pay for the supper with it, and give it a last fling before the graveyard. It'll come back to me at the bank in a day or two, I guess."

Connie nodded, and then:

"Tell me," she said laughingly, "do you bury these old fellows with full military honours?"

"They don't bury them," Charlie answered in the same jocular vein. "They go back to Washington. About three million dollars of them are going back next week."

"And you take them personally to Washington and turn them in?"

Charlie shook his head.

"Oh, no. I only escort them to the post office. From then on they're Bill's headache. He sees that they're dispatched by mail-van. You know the Post Office Department is the best safeguard in the world. Isn't it, Bill?"

Before Bill could make any reply a tall figure approached the table. It was the figure of Benez, and he interrupted the conversation in his suave, too-courteous way, addressing himself particularly to the postal inspector.

"Is everything all right?" he inquired.

"Perfectly," Bill assured him, eyeing him steadfastly.

"The food?"

"Excellent," said Bill.

There was a slight sneer playing around the foreigner's lips, and suddenly an unpleasant glitter revealed itself in his eyes.



A Splendid Coloured Postcard Portrait of JEAN HARLOW

The foreigner raised a hand to his throat.

"Carter financed me," he said luskily. "I owe him fifty thousand dollars on this place, and I'm two months behind. This telegram is a delicate way of reminding me. But I—I haven't the money. As you know, we weren't doing too well here until we signed up Connie Larrimore."

"So what?" Evans protested. "If you can't pay Carter—you can't."

Benez pointed to the newspaper.

"Cummings paid," he faltered, and for a long time there was a silence, a silence which Roach was the first to break.

"What was that you were sayin' about the Larrimore girl before this telegram arrived, boss?" he reminded Benez.

"The Larrimore girl?" the night-club owner echoed vaguely. "Oh, yes, she is with the Davises. Er—get her away from them. Tell her I want to see her."

Roach departed, and some time later Connie presented herself in Benez's office, nodding pleasantly to the foreigner and to his manager, who had remained in the room.

"You wanted to have a talk with me, Mr. Benez?"

"Yes, Miss Larrimore," Benez answered. "Listen, you have brought good business to my restaurant, and I am very pleased. But—this young fellow Davis—the one you call Charlie, I mean. I wish you wouldn't spend so much time with him. There are im-

men. And I learned afterwards that she was out with this bank fellow."

Roach grinned at him.

"Sure you're lookin' at it from the business angle, Benez?" he queried. "I mean, you ain't gettin' soft on the girl, are you?"

"Don't be a fool. I'm old enough to be her father."

Evans tapped the night-club proprietor on the arm.

"Well, anyway, forget the Davises for the moment," he said. "Here's something that may be more important than them."

He handed Benez a telegram which had apparently arrived a few minutes before. It was addressed to the owner of the Golden Eagle, and it read as follows:

"See yesterday's 'Daily Courier,' page ten, column two.

"UNSIGNED."

Benez frowned as he spelled out the message, and then he looked at his associates.

"This sounds like Greek to me," he

portant guests here to-night, who would appreciate it if you paid a little attention to them, Miss Larrimore."

Connie was still smiling, but a resolute look had come into her lovely eyes.

"That wasn't in my contract," she remarked. "Besides, Charlie Davis is an old friend of mine. I'm very fond of him."

"Miss Larrimore," Benez appealed, "why waste your time on a clerk?"

Connie was not so much annoyed as amused, and, with that conversation at the supper-table fresh in her mind, she glanced at the foreigner archly.

"Never judge the pearl by the oyster, Mr. Benez," she said in a jesting tone. "Why, Charlie Davis has three million dollars."

"What?" Benez was startled.

"Where could he get such an amount?" "Of course," Connie went on laughingly, innocently, "it's a little old, but it's three million nevertheless."

"Do you mind telling me what you are talking about, Miss Larrimore?"

The girl flashed one of her gay smiles upon him.

"Well, I'm only fooling," she admitted. "The fact is, Charlie's shipping three million dollars in worn-out bills to Washington next week. So—quite seriously, Mr. Benez—you shouldn't sneer at him for being a clerk. He must be fairly important to handle a job like that."

Benez made an impatient gesture.

"Oh, Miss Larrimore, you make fun of me," he said. "But really now, will you help me a little by being pleasant to my patrons?"

"Of course I will," Connie told him. "I'll be pleasant to them all, so long as it doesn't prevent me from being especially pleasant to Charlie Davis."

With that she left Benez and Evans and returned to the restaurant, smiling to herself over the interview, and never dreaming what grim and sinister consequences were to arise from it.

News from the North

THERE had been heavy rains that week, and such individuals as were connected with the Weather Bureau had viewed them with concern, a concern that was shared before long by the population of that State in which Millstown was one of the principal cities.

For heavy rains meant swollen rivers and overtaxed dams. Heavy rains meant the risk of inundation over an area that had always been susceptible to the satanic prankishness of the elements.

Before the week was out, bulletins from the northern part of the State were telling their tale of crumbling river banks, of violent floods that had surged through valleys and gorges, swamping great tracts of countryside, destroying villages and small towns, bringing ruin and death to many homes and families.

And the danger looked like spreading still farther afield. Gainsborough, Little Falls, Yarborough and Red Bluff—townships not very far removed from the big city—were all in the path of the flood-waters, according to report.

One grey bleak morning at the office, a few days after the first ominous news of impending disaster had been circulated, Bill Davis received a message from Postmaster Long at Yarborough.

It was a message that roused him to action, and he promptly summoned a colleague known as Pottle, who was older than he, but who ranked as Bill's second-in-command.

"Long's just been on the 'phone," Bill announced. "The flood's hit Yarborough—taken out the bridge and cut off the town."

"It has?" Pottle's earnest face became several degrees more solemn. "H'm, I hope it doesn't get down here to Millstown."

"You never can tell," said Bill. "But,

Pottle, I want you to take over my work here. Long seems unable to cope with the situation, and I'm going up to Yarborough to see what I can do. I'll travel by 'plane. According to Long, the airport above the town isn't under water—yet."

Two hours later Bill Davis was in the sub-office at Yarborough with Postmaster Long, superintending the removal of all cash and mail and effects from the single-storied premises, the floor of which was eighteen inches below flood-level.

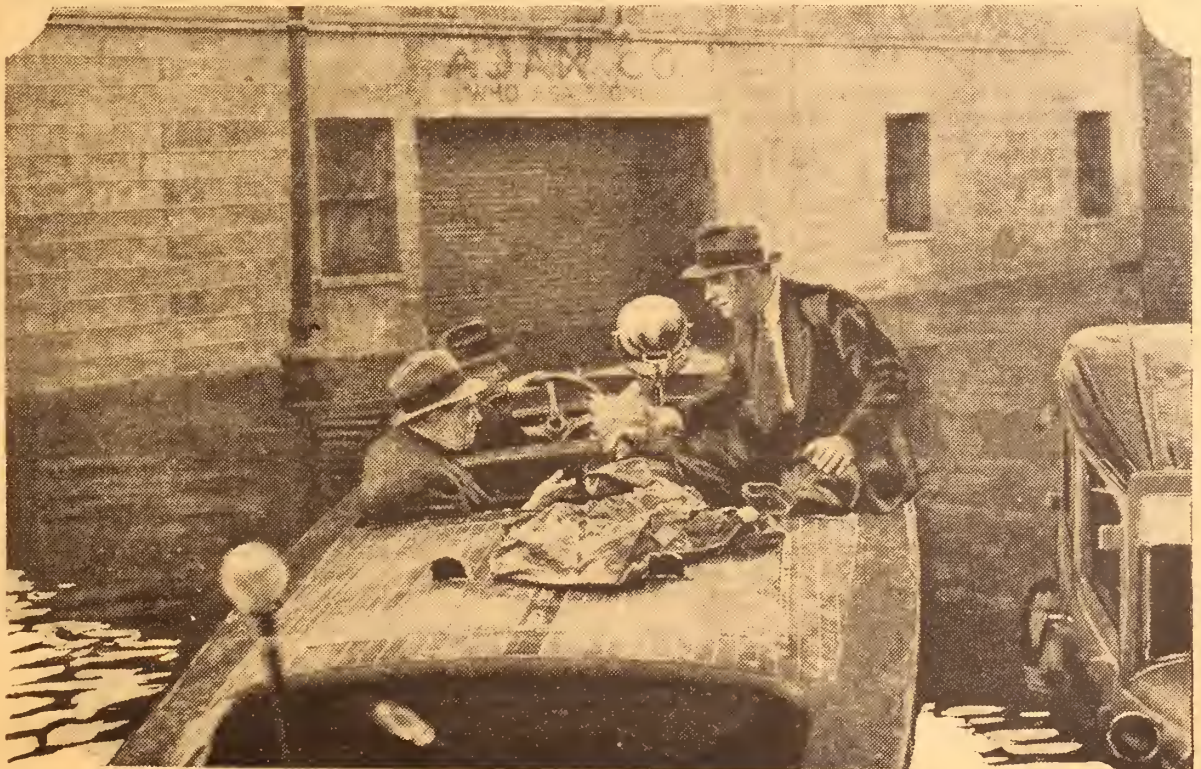
"See that empty building over there?" Bill was saying as he stood talking to Long in a pair of stout waders.

The elderly postmaster peered across a street that was awash, and down which all manner of wreckage was floating swiftly.

"Yes, inspector, I see it." "Well, we'll open up a temporary post office on the second story of it. And if the rising water gets up that far, you can move still higher on to the next floor. The mail must go through, Long, and the post office will keep open, flood or no flood."

For the rest of that day and until the following morning Bill was in Yarborough helping Long and his staff to adjust themselves to their new situation. Then he took a boat to the airport, and from there caught a 'plane that was bound for Millstown.

On the way south he looked down on a panorama of desolation, a landscape obliterated under river waters that had burst their banks. Here and there forlorn belts of trees rose above the swirling flood, but more often than not the only objects visible were timber roofs which had been torn from their fastening and which were travelling onward to the urge of wild currents—or rescue-boats crowded with homeless victims of the torrent.



"Thanks, Mr. Ritter," Bill said. "If these mail-robbers are caught there's going to be a reward, and I'll see that you get your share."

The plane winged its way clear of the flood area at last, but it needed no prophetic eye to see that the unleashed waters had not wreaked their full havoc. The deluge was moving relentlessly south. Hamlets and villages which Bill now beheld, as yet untouched, were certainly doomed to suffer destruction ere long. Even the fate of Millstown itself was in doubt. The lower-lying quarters of that great, sprawling city would be jeopardised, at any rate, if the flood did not abate.

Back in his office at Millstown, Bill held a consultation with Pottle, and volunteered the opinion that the city was bound to be affected.

"Meantime," he said, after they had discussed the prospect, "how have things been going while I've been away?"

"Everything's okay at present, Bill," was the reply. "Regular services are being maintained, and the railroads are still carrying the mail north on schedule."

"They won't be much longer," the younger man declared. "The floodwaters up there are rising. We'd better be prepared for emergencies, Pottle. Our first step is to call in all auxiliary carriers. Also, I want you to send some of the men down to the river and get all the small boats they can. And say, you might get the War Department on the wire. Ask them to assign four 'planes to this office in case they're required for moving the mail."

Pottle hurried off to carry out his instructions, and had been gone only a few minutes when a visitor was shown into Bill's private sanctum—a visitor who proved to be one Dr. Doyle, medical officer of health for the surrounding area.

"Inspector," Doyle said, "this sudden rise of floodwaters has put us in a dangerous position. I understand that there's a prospect of Millstown itself being cut off."

"It's my conviction, doctor," Bill rejoined, "that Millstown is certain to be cut off sooner or later."

Doyle pursed his lips.

"I've ordered medical supplies so that we'll be able to cope with any crisis that may occur," he observed, "but if the torrent engulfs this section the trains may not be able to get through."

Bill thrust out his strong jaw. There was a determined expression in his eyes.

"Doctor," he stated emphatically, "if the situation becomes so bad that the trains can't get through, we'll use aeroplanes. If we can't do it with aeroplanes we'll do it with boats. Anyhow, don't you worry about your supplies, for the post office will see that they reach you all right. The mails are going to remain open whatever happens."

Doyle left that office with the air of a man whose mind had been set at rest, and Bill then settled down to work—work that was interrupted by frequent messages informing him of the ruthless progress of the flood. Indeed, by nightfall—when the young inspector was still at his desk—it was all too plain that his prophecy was to materialise.

The torrent was moving down on Millstown, steadily and surely. It was only a question of hours before it reached the city and enveloped it in its wide-spread toils.

While Bill was thus preoccupied with making ready for the inevitable emergency, and while the entire staff at the general post office was being marshalled for the impending struggle against heavy odds, the teeming populace of Millstown was leading an existence that

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was more or less normal despite a slight atmosphere of tension that was noticeable in some quarters.

As yet, all was well with the city, and there was a chance that the flood would subside. At least, many were nursing that hope.

Among those who looked on the bright side were Charlie Davis and Connie Larrimore. But then, driving home in Charlie's car from an evening "spin" through the open country to the south, both of them were too taken up with each other to worry about the morrow.

It was only when they were bowling through the streets of Millstown en route for the Golden Eagle that they were reminded of the peril that threatened the city.

Charlie had switched on a radio that was fitted to his automobile, and "hot" music by a well-known dance band was coming over the air. Then all at once the programme was interrupted by the voice of an announcer.

"Attention, everyone, please," the voice said. "We break in to broadcast an important message. The authorities are requesting aid for emergency flood conditions. All police and firemen are to report to their stations immediately. Members of the National Guard will assemble at their armouries as soon as possible."

Connie looked at her escort quickly. "You're a National Guard, aren't you, Charlie?"

He nodded. Like many young Americans, he had enlisted in that military organisation and had devoted a good deal of his spare time to it, showing such keenness that he had risen in the space of a year or two to the commissioned ranks.

"The situation must be getting pretty serious when they call us out," he murmured. "I'll rush you to Benez's restaurant and then get back to my company's headquarters as fast as I can."

"No, no, you go there right away," she said. "I can take a taxi."

"Better still," Charlie suggested after a moment's thought, "I'll let you have my car after I drop off at the Armoury, and you can drive yourself to Benez's place. I can pick up the auto there any time I need it."

Connie agreed to this arrangement, and when Charlie alighted outside his headquarters she slipped behind the steering-wheel. Then with a cheerful wave of the hand she proceeded in the direction of the night club where she was due to entertain Benez's patrons, and some time later she might have been seen steering the car into a yard adjoining the restaurant.

It was a yard that was overlooked by the windows of the night-club proprietor's office, and Roach was standing beside the curtains of those windows when Connie appeared in the yard outside.

Roach saw her emerge from the car, but did not pay much heed to her at first. Then suddenly he turned towards Benez and Evans, who were also in the office and who were engrossed in earnest conversation.

"Say," Roach exclaimed, "here's the Larrimore girl, and she's got young Davis' car—leastways, it's a dead ringer for the one that we've seen him use."

"What of it?" Benez muttered gloomily.

"Well, it looks like a lucky break to me," his employee rejoined. "We can borrow it to pull off this job that Evans has suggested. It would be safer to use that sedan—rather than your own, boss."

Benez chewed his nails. He was obviously in a state of anxiety and indecision.

"I don't like the scheme at all," he faltered. "It's—it's dangerous. I'd rather 'phone Carter in New York and plead for a little time."

"You're wasting a 'phone call and you know it," Evans cut in. "You've had another message from Carter—more definite than the first—and in plain words he told you that you had twenty-four hours to pay that fifty grand. And, believe me, when Carter says twenty-four hours he means twenty-four hours."

With a nervous gesture Benez ran his fingers round the inside of his collar.

"But regarding this mail job, how should I know Connie Larrimore gave me the right information that night?" he demanded huskily. "She was only kidding."

"She may have been kidding," Evans countered, "but she had the right dope. Roach and I took the trouble to check up on it. Three million dollars in worn-out banknotes—but currency, nevertheless—and all neatly packed up for us to grab."

"But the risk, Evans—the risk," the night-club owner breathed.

"For three million bucks it's worth a try," Roach interposed. "Besides, what's gonna happen if you don't square Carter? His mob will track you down, Benez, wherever you go. Man, this mail job is a cinch. With that much dough you can pay off Carter, then split three ways with Evans and me—and we'll all be on easy street."

Evans tapped Benez on the shoulder. Both he and Roach were flushed with greed.

"We've got two chances at it," he said. "The money leaves the bank for the post office at three. And with the whole town liable to be disorganised on account of this flood menace, everything might well be in our favour."

Benez took a pace or two across the room. Then he returned to where Roach and Evans were standing, and mopped his brow with a handkerchief that was already sodden.

"You're right," he jerked in an unsteady tone. "It's worth the risk."

Mail Robbery

IT was during the following day that the floodwaters hit Millstown, swirling into its suburbs, inundating the lower-lying districts to a depth of several feet and moving ever southward to submerge the country on all sides, thus marooning the city.

By the middle of the afternoon Millstown was shut off from the rest of the world as regards over-land communication, and such was the state of affairs when word reached Bill Davis in his office that a daring hold-up had been carried out shortly after three o'clock.

It had taken place in an upper locality of the city, where the streets were comparatively free from water even now, and a mail van had been concerned in the affair—a mail van which had left the post office on the stroke of three in an attempt to reach the airport before the flood invaded the town.

The mail van in question had contained the three million dollars' worth of tattered banknotes which had been sent from the Federal Reserve Bank to the post office, and which had thence been dispatched on the first stage of the journey to Washington.

Within a quarter of an hour of receiving the news that the van had

It was in vain that the girl struggled. Eyes riveted on the door, awaiting the arrival of her companion, the two crooks saw to it that she gave no warning.



been held up, Bill Davis and his colleague Pottle were at the scene of the outrage.

A crowd of people were there, and a number of police officers were among them. The mail truck itself had apparently been forced to the sidewalk and had overturned, and the driver was huddled beside it with a bullet-wound in his chest—was clearly at the point of death as he lay propped against the knee of a uniformed representative of the Law.

Bill and Pottle bent over the stricken man, and the former spoke to him gently.

"Were you able to see who did it?" he asked.

"I—didn't recognise 'em," was the feeble reply. "But there was—there was three of 'em. They drove up alongside me in—in a car."

Bill leaned closer to him

"What kind of a car?"

"A—a grey sedan."

The man's head fell back weakly, and Bill looked up at Pottle.

"How did those bandits find out what was in this van?" he murmured.

"That's what beats me. Pottle, you go to the Federal Reserve Bank and make a few inquiries there. I'll see you later at the office."

Pottle departed, and when next Bill saw him it was in his private sanetium at the postal department's headquarters.

"Well, I went to the bank," Pottle said slowly, "and there were only three people who knew that the money was being dispatched. They were Freeman, head of the shipping section—Ralph Massey, a clerk—and—your brother Charlie."

Bill was silent for a moment, and then he drew his brows together in a frown.

"There couldn't have been any leak here at the post office," he grunted. "You and I were the only ones. Pottle—"

He stopped speaking, for at that point one of his subordinates entered the room and announced a visitor in the person of a "Mr. Ritter."

"You remember, Inspector Davis. The man who was swindled out of twenty thousand dollars in that gold mining set-up."

"Oh, yes. Well, tell him that I'm afraid the man who took his money has absconded out of the country. I'm sorry—"

"But I don't think it's about his money that Mr. Ritter's called, sir. It's about a mail bag that he picked up a little while ago."

Bill started and immediately ordered his subordinate to show Ritter in at once, and as the old fellow entered the office the postal inspector saw that he was carrying a sack under his arm.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Davis," Ritter began. "I—I thought this might interest you, because it looks like a mail bag to me—and I—I just heard on the radio that there had been a hold-up and a truck driver killed—"

"Where did you get that bag?" Bill struck in tersely.

"In a car that was caught by the flood, inspector. It's outside my grocery shop down on the south side of the town. I didn't see the men who got out of it, but I found this mail sack in the back of it."

Several police launches had been placed at the disposal of the postal authorities, and the nearest one was housed in a sub-office on the edge of one of the districts which had been flooded. This craft Bill requisitioned, and in company with Ritter and Pottle, he cruised through the water-logged thoroughfares of the lower part of the town until he reached the street in which his informant's shop was situated.

Outside that store was a grey sedan, submerged well above the axles, and as Bill climbed on to the gunwale of the launch to examine the auto, the first object that he saw on glancing inside it was a tiny mascot that was attached to the ignition key.

The mascot was in the shape of a white elephant, and the face of Bill Davis seemed to tighten as he removed

it from the ignition key. For who should know better than he that his brother Charlie drove a grey sedan with such a lucky charm tied to the dashboard?

"There's a pair of waders here," Pottle was saying. "Shall I put them on and see if I can unhook the licence plates off that car? We can at least identify the owner then."

Bill turned slowly round.

"I don't need any licence plates," he answered in a heavy tone, and suddenly Pottle guessed his meaning as he remembered the make and colour of the automobile that the inspector's younger brother used.

There was a silence, and then Ritter spoke. The old man had been fidgeting uncomfortably for the past few minutes. "Inspector," he said tremulously, "I—want to tell you something. Look—twenty thousand dollars. It—it was in the mail bag I picked up. The bandits must have left it behind in their hurry."

He had produced a thick sheaf of banknotes, and Bill took them from him. Then he regarded old man Ritter understandingly. It was easy to guess how he had been tempted to keep this money which the thieves had overlooked, and how in the end his conscience had forced him to give it up.

"Twenty thousand dollars," Bill murmured. "That's just about what was stolen from you, wasn't it?"

Ritter nodded in a meek fashion, and the younger man leaned towards him.

"Thanks, Mr. Ritter," he said. "If these mail-robbers are caught there's going to be a reward, and I'll see that you get your share. It will recompense you for your own loss, I can tell you that much."

"If the mail-robbers are caught," Pottle broke in sceptically. "They were certainly balked by the flood, Bill, but it's on the cards that they've got away in a boat."

His colleague shook his head, however.

"Where would they find one?" he countered. "Every available boat was commandeered for the emergency services late last night, and has been in the hands of the authorities ever since."

"No, Pottle," he added, "those guys are still in this town—marooned here, because the railroad and the airport and every form of transport is out of commission, excepting water traffic. Those guys are still in this town—under cover somewhere—and we've got to find them."

Thirty minutes later Bill Davis was in his office again, but though he was no longer in the company of Pottle and Ritter, he was by no means alone. For his brother Charlie and Conno Larrimore were with him, and he was questioning the pair of them rigorously.

He had picked up Charlie as the latter had been leaving by a National Guard motor-boat for a camp which had been established on some high ground west of the town. Here a great number of homeless people were being looked after—people from the outlying countryside whose dwellings had been wrecked.

And Connie had been with Charlie, having volunteered her services as a relief worker in the field kitchen that had been organized at the camp.

Now, however, relief work and National Guard duty were far removed from the minds of the two young people who stood before Bill Davis.

"We've told you how my car got mixed up in this mail robbery," Charlie was saying. "I lent it to Connie last night, and she parked it in a yard beside the Golden Eagle. And it must have been stolen from that yard by the men who planned the hold-up."

Bill looked at Charlie for a few seconds, and then glanced at Connie scornfully.

"Stolen!" he reiterated. "I expected something more original from you!"

"Look here, Bill," Charlie, a trim, smart figure in his military uniform, exclaimed indignantly. "Connie doesn't know anything about this robbery."

"But you did know that three million dollars were going to leave the post office for Washington!" Bill rapped out, ignoring his brother's outburst and still addressing the girl. "Don't deny it, for I was there when Charlie told you about it at the Golden Eagle. Did you mention it to anybody else?"

Connie stared at him in confusion.

"Why, I—I'd forgotten all about that," she stammered. "I certainly don't remember saying anything—"

"You must have told someone!" Bill grated. "Who was it?"

Charlie interposed himself between the girl and his brother. His good-looking young face was white with anger. "Look here, Bill, you don't have to talk to her like that!" he cried. "You're acting like a stupid cop!"

"Keep quiet!" Bill flung at him. "I'll handle this!"

Charlie clenched his fists, and for an instant it seemed as if the two brothers might come to blows. But all at once Connie gave vent to an ejaculation.

"Wait a minute!" she gasped. "I did mention that money to someone. I mentioned it to Benez. I remember now. But I was only kidding."

Bill had brushed Charlie aside and was looking at her with a queer light in his eyes.

"Kidding!" he said hoarsely. "Three million dollars stolen, all but twenty thousand that was overlooked! A post-office employee murdered! And you call that kidding!"

November 28th, 1936.

"A post-office employee murdered!" Connie echoed, aghast. "Oh, no!"

Bill Davis gritted his teeth.

"So Benez pulled the job, did he?"

he said in a low voice.

"But he couldn't have," the girl protested. "He didn't take any notice of what I told him. Benez isn't a thief."

"Stop being naive!" Bill ground out. "You're not fooling me. You're in this—up to the neck. Where is Benez now?"

It was the girl's turn to experience the sense of indignation that Charlie had already felt on her behalf.

"Listen," she announced furiously, "I'm in a position to tell you that Benez isn't at the Golden Eagle, because the place has been deserted ever since mid-day. But more than that I can't tell you, because I don't know any more about this mail robbery than you do!"

She paused, breathless, and somehow Bill realised that she was speaking the truth, and that if Benez were indeed responsible for the crime which had been committed, Conno Larrimore had been an innocent party to it—merely guilty of letting slip a piece of vital information, which had seemed far from vital at the time.

Then Charlie moved forward again.

"Well, Bill," he said thickly, "what are you going to do? Hold us both as suspects—or what?"

"You'd both better get over to that relief camp where you were bound for when I picked you up," the elder brother retorted. "If I want you, I'll know where to find you."

Charlie and Connie left the office, and some time after their departure Bill went through to Pottle's room and held a brief consultation with him, telling him everything but announcing his intention of withholding the story from the police until he had made an investigation himself.

"You're taking a chance, Bill," Pottle muttered, shaking his head dubiously. "You may get into trouble for not reporting this right away."

"I can't help that," was the answer. "Those two kids are in a jam, and I've got to get them out of it if it's humanly possible. My idea is to go down to the Golden Eagle in the hope of picking up a clue. Should that fail, then I'll have no alternative but to give my information to the proper authorities."

Pottle was only too ready to accompany Bill on his mission, and soon the pair of them were again cruising through streets that had been swept by the flood. Nor was it long before they had reached the Golden Eagle and forced their way into Benez's private quarters, the floor of which was under a few inches of water.

They now proceeded to ransack the foreigner's desk and filing cabinet, and it was Pottle who suddenly came upon a document that seemed worth consideration.

"Here, look at this, Bill," he said. "A tax receipt for an apartment-house on the other side of town."

Bill glanced at the paper and frowned.

"Benez doesn't live there," he mused.

"That's a pretty shabby district, Pottle."

"He may not live there," the other rejoined. "But this receipt makes it clear that he's the landlord of an apartment-house in that quarter, and he may have hit on it as a hiding-place. It's worth looking into, Bill."

The younger man was silent for a space. Then he nodded grimly.

"Maybe you're right," he stated. "Come on, we'll try it, anyway. Make a note of that address, Pottle."

Hide-out

IN the gathering dusk, while Bill and Pottle were scuffling the Golden Eagle, a National Guard motor-boat might have been seen chugging through the flooded streets on the southwest side of the town.

It was the boat by which Charlie Davis and Conno Larrimore intended to make for the relief camp, but as they were wending their way towards Millstown's outskirts through one of the meaner neighbourhoods of the city, the girl caught her companion by the arm all at once.

"Charlie, just a minute!" she said. "I've suddenly remembered something."

"What?" he asked, dismally enough. "Benez owns some property in this locality," she told him. "When he wrote to me in New York and offered me a contract to sing in his night club, his letter carried a private address. Wait, I think I have that very letter here in my bag."

She opened her handbag, and sure enough the missive was tucked in one of the pockets of it, a missive that bore a printed heading which had been crossed out but which was still legible.

"No. 33a, Feltham Apartments, Lincoln Drive."

Charlie Davis scanned the address, and then looked at Connie swiftly.

"We're going there right now," he jerked. "If Benez knows anything about that hold-up, we'll make him talk."

He tapped a Service revolver that he was carrying on his hip, and a moment later he was turning the wheel of the motor-boat and swinging the vessel off the course that he had hitherto been holding.

In another ten minutes the craft was gliding into Lincoln Drive, and on locating the Feltham apartment-house the young bank clerk drew up alongside the porch, the top steps of which were still above water.

"All right," Connie said. "You wait here. I won't be long."

Charlie clutched her as she was on the point of scrambling from the boat.

"Wait a minute," he ejaculated. "You're not going up there alone."

"Don't be silly. Nothing's going to happen. Why, Benez might not even be here."

"But what if he is, Connie? No, I'm going up there with you."

The girl made a gesture of appeal. "Charlie, you're acting as though I were going into a lion's den. After all, we've no proof that Benez had anything to do with that mail robbery, and I'm inclined to doubt it myself. But if he did have a hand in it, I'm the one to worm the truth out of him."

"How?"

"By telling him that I'm suspected, and by appealing to him for help."

Charlie fidgeted uneasily.

"I don't like the idea of you going in alone," he persisted.

"Now be reasonable, dear," Connie urged. "It's the only way to find out if Benez is on the level or otherwise. If you came in with me it would spoil everything. He wouldn't talk with you around."

Charlie was compelled to admit that there was a great deal in which she had

(Continued on page 26)

Never was there a more enduring comradeship than that which was formed between the king of wild horses and the outcast wonder dog. Together they braved a thousand perils, unswerving in their loyalty to each other. Follow their amazing adventures in this gripping serial drama, starring Kane Richmond, Norma Taylor and Rex and Rinty



EPISODE 5—

“Lost in the Woods”

The Adventures OF REX AND RINTY

READ THIS FIRST

Rex, a black Arabian stallion, is worshipped by a strange race of people on the remote tropical isle of Sujan.

To Sujan come three white men who are agents of a Californian rancher named Crawford. They steal Rex, realising the fortune he can make for their employer, but one of them is captured by the Sujanese. This man, Wheeler, only earns his life and liberty by promising to recover the god horse, and travels to America in company with a native known as Pasha.

Meanwhile Rex is delivered to Crawford, but breaks free and takes to the hills. Later that day the rancher plays in a polo game at the Bruce Riding Academy, but his team loses to a side led by Frank Bradley, a popular young sportsman, and after the game Crawford vents some of his spite on a stray police dog that has roamed into the district.

It is this dog, Rinty, which later comes across Rex, and which brings the god horse into contact with Frank Bradley and Dorothy Bruce, the daughter of the riding academy's owner.

Frank takes Rex in hand, training him into the best polo pony in his string, but he is stolen by Crawford's agents, who afterwards lose him to Wheeler and Pasha.

These attempt to convey Rex to the coast in a closed motor-truck, but are intercepted and taken prisoners by Crawford's men. Then Frank and Rinty show up, and during the fierce fight the truck runs out of control down a long gradient, carrying Rex and Rinty with it.

Now Read On

A Vain Search

AT ever-increasing pace the runaway truck swept down the Red Ridge Trail, and by a miracle it kept to the road. But at the foot of the slope the highway took a sharp turn to the left, running through a cutting that was flanked by tall embankments, and it was on this bend that the van came to grief.

With battering-ram force it dashed into the right-hand wall of earth that hemmed in the road, and, its bonnet diving into the mould, it came to a jarring standstill.

The shock threw Rinty against the dashboard, and bruised him badly. But otherwise the dog was unhurt, and, scrambling to his feet, he had soon leapt from the truck. Then he scuttled to the other side of the highway, where he stood with his tail between his legs and ears a-droop, frightened almost out of his wits by the severe jolt he had received.

He was not the only creature who had been scared by the van's collision with the embankment, for the god horse, Rex, was even more alarmed than Rinty, and, standing by the roadside, the wolfhound heard him battering at the doors of his prison with his powerful hind legs.

Suddenly those doors flew open before the onslaught of the stallion's hoofs, and in another moment the horse was bounding from the interior of the truck; and as he jumped to the trail he swung around and bolted round the bend.

Rinty followed him, blindly enough, some instinct prompting him to flee with Rex from the scene of that fright which they had both sustained, and

thus it was under the spur of their mutual panic that the two animals chased off along the highway, which they quitted on swerving out of the cutting.

Meanwhile, up on the brow of the declivity down which the truck had rolled, Frank Bradley was battling furiously with Mitchell and Anderson, and he managed to account for the first named by slugging him in the jaw with a fist that was as hard as a rock. Then he concentrated on Anderson, who had rushed to Mitchell's aid on falling from the motor-van, and in the space of two or three minutes that rogue was also huddled on the ground in an inert attitude.

The gangsters lay motionless, neither of them showing any inclination to renew the fight, and it was as he wheeled contemptuously from their prostrate bodies that Frank Bradley realised the truck was no longer standing nearby.

With an involuntary exclamation he turned his head, and then he saw the vehicle at the foot of the hill, piled up against the embankment that flanked the outer edge of the bend there, and a look of intense anxiety crossed his handsome face as he beheld the truck.

Filled with concern, he turned towards his horse and flung himself into the saddle, and an instant later he was galloping down the slope at top speed.

He drew rein within a yard of the motor-van, and discovered at a glance that the tail doors were ajar and the interior empty. Then he noticed tracks in the dust of the road—the tracks left by a horse and dog which had departed from the locality in full flight—and

with a dig of the heels he sent his own pony round the bend in the highway.

He followed the imprints in the dust until he reached the spot where Rex and Rinty had left the road and struck off across the tough mesquite grass, where none but an old Indian scout could have gained any inkling of the course they had taken. Nor were the stallion and the wolfhound visible to the eye, for the plain across which they had raced was bounded by dense thickets that were only a quarter of a mile distant, and therefore Frank was compelled to ride at random and embark upon a quest which was doomed to failure from the start.

As for Mitchell and Anderson, they had struggled to their feet within a few seconds of Frank's abandoning them, and from the crown of the hill they had watched him make for the broken-down truck.

They were still watching him now as he spurred across the moonlit plain, since from their position at the top of the ridge they were able to command an extensive view of the surrounding country.

The view was not so extensive, however, that they could detect any sign of Rex and Rinty, and in a truer silence they gazed after the receding form of young Frank Bradley as he headed for the thickets.

They saw him enter the heart of that wide belt of vegetation, and for a considerable time he was lost to their view. But at length he reappeared, and they were quick to note that he and his horse were still alone. Clearly, his search for Rex had been fruitless.

"Well," growled Anderson, "it looks like that black Arabian has beat it into the blue, an' I doubt if any of us will ever lay hands on him again."

"Maybe not," breathed Mitchell, nursing his swollen jaw, "and ain't Crawford gonna be sore!"

Anderson nodded bleakly.

"I'll say he's gonna be sore—especially as Jones will get to the ranch ahead of us and tell him that everything's okay. Which reminds me, Mitchell, we've got a long walk in front of us."

"I know it," was the sulky reply. "Come on, let's get started."

They left the road and proceeded to tramp across country, taking the same course upon which Jones had set out with Wheeler and Pasha some time previously, and they had been walking for about a quarter of an hour when Anderson voiced a gloomy comment.

"Well, there's one thing, Mitch," he said. "We ain't got the god horse, but we helped to get Wheeler and that guy Pasha, an' that may be some sort of a consolation to the boss. I guess he'll sure give them the works for all the trouble they've caused us."

Had Anderson but known it then, even such poor consolation was to be denied. For at that moment, several miles away, Wheeler was working up a plan whereby he and Pasha might escape from their unwelcome escort.

Mounted on the ponies that had belonged to Mitchell and Anderson, the two prisoners were riding a little ahead of Jones, and though the latter was keeping a close eye on them and covering them with his revolver, Wheeler managed to exchange a surreptitious glance with Pasha and give the native some indication that he had a scheme in mind.

Thirty seconds after he had exchanged that significant glance with his companion, Wheeler suddenly looked round

sharply and stared past Jones into empty space.

"Who's that comin' up behind us?" he jerked.

Actually there was not a soul in view, but Jones was deceived by those startling words, and he twisted his head to follow the direction in which the other man was gazing, and on the instant Wheeler swung his horse towards the armed gangster and clutched the fellow by the wrist.

Jones ripped out a curse and tried to wrench his hand free so that he could level his forty-five at the prisoner again. But now Pasha came up on the other side of him and seized the barrel of the weapon, tearing the gun from its owner's fingers and then bringing down the butt with crushing force upon the man's skull.

A groan broke from the victim's lips, and he swayed drunkenly in the saddle. Next moment he was struck a second blow, and this time he plunged from his brone to fall in a heap to the ground.

"Nice work, Pasha!" Wheeler rapped out. "All right, leave him where he is. We'll take his pony and turn it loose when we think fit. It'll do that homhre good to walk home. Yeah, and I wouldn't like to be in his shoes when he gets there."

"But the god horse," Pasha said. "What of him? We must recover the stallion, Wheeler. I have sworn never to return to Sujan unless I bring him with me—"

"I know, I know," the white man cut in impatiently. "But we've gotta lie low and bide our time. Don't worry, we'll take that stallion back to Sujan all right sooner or later."

They rode off across the range, taking the spare brone with them and leaving his master stretched out on the turf—a posture that the unconscious Jones still retained long after they had disappeared. In point of fact, the stricken gangster lay there without movement until two plodding figures came across his body about an hour later and devoted themselves to the difficult task of reviving him.

The newcomers succeeded in bringing him round at last, and as he opened his eyes dazedly Jones found himself looking into the faces of Mitchell and Anderson.

"What happened?" Mitchell barked at him. "Where's Pasha and Wheeler?"

Jones gaped at him in a stupid fashion. Then he remembered how he had been tricked by one of his prisoners and clubbed into oblivion by the other.

"They—they pulled a fast one on me," he moaned, pressing a hand to his aching skull. "and they—got away. That dirty rat Pasha, he sure enough crowned me—"

But all at once he paused and eyed his comrades with sudden apprehension.

"Say, what are you fellers doin' here, anyway?" he blurted. "Where's the truck? Where's the god horse?"

Mitchell bit his lip, and, helping Jones to rise, took him by one arm while Anderson laid hold of the other.

"Come on, Jones," said Mitchell heavily. "We'd better make tracks for the ranch."

"But the god horse," Jones persisted. "I left him with yuh, didn't I? Where is he?"

"That's what we'd like to know," Anderson put in. "He got away, just like Wheeler and Pasla got away. Come on, we've all got bad news for the boss, I reckon."

Lost

A NEW day had dawned, and the rising sun, striking through the tangled leafage that partially screened a lonely forest track, had awakened a small boy who had been lying with his back propped against the bole of a tree.

The forest was an immense area of tall timber that covered a section of the Californian countryside. The boy was one Jimmy Hammond, better known as Junior Hammond, the son of a millionaire who owned an estate some forty miles east of San Francisco; and the previous afternoon, while riding in the woods, young Junior had been unfortunate enough to fall from his pony when the animal had slid at the form of a dead rattlesnake lying in his path.

The horse had galloped off in a panic, leaving Junior to pick himself up and blunder through the forest on foot. He had soon lost his way, however, and, with night coming on, he had at last sunk down exhausted.

He roused himself now to greet the morning with a heavy heart, and to experience once again the terrors known only to a youngster who sees no prospect of finding the road home. He was suffering from thirst and hunger, too, and it was with tears in his eyes that he stumbled from his resting-place and began to wander as aimlessly as he had done on the previous afternoon.

The quiet woods were intersected by a maze of narrow trails which were covered with leaf-mould and which were seldom traversed by human footsteps. Through these labyrinthine paths Junior Hammond proceeded to roam disconsolately, seeking a route that would lead him out of the timber, but failing to perceive any break in the forest, and the sun was ascending to its zenith in the sky when all at once he heard sounds ahead of him.

A moment later a horse came plodding into view, and for a brief space Junior Hammond thought he was the pony that had thrown him the day before. But he quickly realised that he stood several hands higher than the mount from which he had become separated; even his young mind grasped the fact that this creature which was approaching him was far superior to any other he had ever seen.

Then he perceived that the horse was not alone, but was accompanied by a grey wolfhound that was trotting by his side.

The dog was Rinty and the horse Rex, and they were far from the scene of their adventure with the runaway truck. But, of course, Junior Hammond knew nothing of their story, and the look of joy that came into his eyes at sight of them was the expression of a lad who would have welcomed any living creature that seemed to indicate a link with civilisation.

He started forward to meet Rex and Rinty, whereupon the god horse paused. But Rinty padded on and sniffed curiously at the boy—then accepted a friendly caress of the youngster's hand.

"Hallo, old fellow!" Junior Hammond said tremulously. "Where did you come from?"

Rinty licked the boy's cheek with a swift movement of his tongue as Junior stooped lower, and after patting him a few times, the lad moved along the path to where Rex was standing.

He walked up to the stallion fearlessly, ignorant as he was that Rex had an uncertain temper where strangers were concerned. Yet it was as if some sixth sense told the god horse that he

need fear no harm from this small boy, and he remained passive as Junior Hammond stroked his sleek muzzle.

And then an idea occurred to Junior, an idea that caused him to lay hold of a crude rope bridle which was the only riding-gear that the stallion possessed.

"Say, maybe you would take me out of these woods," he said.

The lad slipped round to Rex's flank and tried to pull himself up on to the horse's back. At the third attempt he succeeded, and the stallion showed no signs of protest as he took the slight burden of Junior's weight—even responded to the prod of the boy's heels when Junior urged him forward.

The god horse moved down the trail at a walking pace, and Rinty scampered ahead, barking loudly and apparently in high spirits. As for Junior Hammond, he sat perched on Rex's hack and allowed both the animals to go whither they pleased, reflecting that they must have strayed from some kind of a home and might take him back there—perhaps to a farmhouse, or a ranch.

But Rex and Rinty were not bound for any dwelling. They had been searching for water when Junior had met them, and within half an hour of his encountering them they brought him to the banks of a river that wound through the depths of the forest.

Junior was grateful enough for this small mercy, and while Rex and Rinty slaked their thirst he imitated their example. Then, having remounted, it suddenly dawned on the boy that he would do well to follow this river downstream. It would lead him out of the woods eventually, at any rate.

With this thought in mind he took hold of the rope bridle and turned Rex's head in the required direction, and it was with perfect willingness that the powerful stallion began to trot along the water's edge, Rinty bounding after him.

Towards noon, Junior Hammond and his two companions emerged from the widespread realms of the forest, and, once again in open country, the boy was able to recover his bearings and make tracks for his father's estate.

This he reached about three o'clock, riding through an imposing gateway on to a broad gravel drive which led to a stately house, and it was from one of the windows of that house that a distracted father saw his missing son cantering up the carriage-way on a strange horse, with a grey wolfhound bringing up the rear.

Hammond senior was hastening thankfully from the house a few seconds afterwards, followed by a small crowd of people consisting of servants, hired detectives and newspaper men. And a minute or two later he was hearing from Junior's lips a story that was to be headlined soon enough in the Press, a story that was to produce a dramatic sequel, had Jimmy Hammond's audience but known it.

been restored to his fond parent, Frank Bradley might have been seen in conversation with Dorothy Bruce at the academy owned by the girl's father.

"I guess we might as well give up all hope of seeing Rex again," Frank was saying dismally.

"Yes, and Rinty, too," Dorothy murmured. "Poor old Jensen, the stable-hand! He's really cut up about Rinty, and, to tell you the truth, I don't know which affects me most either—the loss of Rex, or the loss of that beautiful dog. I'd grown so fond of them both."

Frank nodded.

"Me, too," he observed. "But you know, I had an idea that Rinty might ultimately lead Rex back to the academy here. After all, it's been his home for the last week or so."

"I suppose both Rex and Rinty got so scared that they didn't stop running until they'd completely lost themselves," Dorothy suggested. "I wonder where they are now?"

Frank shrugged his shoulders in a despondent fashion and shook his head slowly.

"Goodness knows," he said. "I went out early this morning and reconnoitred the country around Red Ridge again, but there wasn't a trace of them. I'd like to think that someone would come across them and take care of them—or perhaps make some effort to find out where they'd wandered from."

"Yes," Dorothy began, and then paused as she saw a familiar figure hurrying towards them in a state of obvious excitement.

"Hallo," she exclaimed, "here comes Jensen, and he looks as if he's got something on his mind."

The fat stable-hand reached them a moment later, and as he stopped before them breathlessly they noticed that he was clutching a newspaper in his hand.

"Miss Dorothy!" he panted. "Mr.

Bradley, sir! I've just got back from town with a copy of the 'Tribune,' and look! Look what it says on the front page!"

He thrust the newspaper towards them, and, taking it, they glanced at the page he had mentioned.

There, spread over three columns, they saw the story of Junior Hammond's adventure in the Californian woods, a story which had been embellished by an enterprising reporter so that the outstanding feature of it was the part played by the two stray animals which had befriended the boy.

"MILLIONAIRE'S SON RESTORED TO HIS FATHER."

"STALLION AND POLICE DOG RESCUE HAMMOND HEIR."

"DUMB ANIMALS SAVE CHILD FROM DEATH BY THIRST."

Thus ran the headlines, and under them were pictures of Junior Hammond and his father, taken that afternoon with the horse and the wolfhound which had figured in the affair.

"Why, that's Rex and Rinty!" Dorothy Bruce ejaculated.

"I know, ma'am," Jensen blurted. "An' it seems they're at Mr. Hammond's estate. All you've gotta do is to see him and convince him that they belong here."

Frank suddenly laid a hand on Dorothy's sleeve.

"Jensen's right," he said tersely. "We've got to head for the Hammond estate, and we'll have to move fast. Crawford may see this report, and if he does you can bet he'll make straight for Hammond's home and claim Rex. He might even be on his way there now."

A look of anxiety appeared in the girl's eyes, and she turned in the direction of the car park.

"Come on," she declared, "we'll leave immediately. We can be there in my roadster within a couple of hours."

"Beggin' your pardon, Miss Dorothy," Jensen interposed. "But



Anderson gave vent to a hoarse cry. In that same instant Frank clutched him with one hand and with the other snapped his bunched knuckles to the point of the gangster's jaw.

News of the Missing

SOME time after the lost Junior Hammond had

you'd be quicker to go across country on horseback. The Hammond estate lies over near San José, an' it's a long way round by road."

Dorothy nodded, realising that the stable-hand's information was correct. "Yes, of course," she said. "Very well, Jensen, saddle a couple of ponies for Mr. Bradley and myself. Hurry now."

Jensen dashed off with what speed he could muster, and ere long he returned leading a pair of sleek horses, one of them a stallion that could have passed for Rex at a distance.

Frank swung himself astride the black, and Dorothy took the other pony, a spirited sorrel. Then they clapped spurs to the flanks of their mounts, and in another moment they were galloping at top pace from the academy, with the Hammond estate near San José for their objective.

It was an hour's ride to the millionaire's home, and in order to reach it they had to travel through some pretty wild country, including a neck of those same woods where Junior Hammond had met Rex and Rinty. But at length Frank Bradley and his fair companion arrived at their destination, and after giving a manservant the reason for their visit they were conducted across the grounds to a sweep of lawn where Mr. Hammond and his small son were seated in two cane chairs.

Frank introduced himself and presented Dorothy. Then he proceeded to tell Hammond exactly why they were there, and, after hearing his narrative, the millionaire nodded pleasantly.

"Well, young man," he said to Frank, "I'm exceedingly glad to meet the owner of those two fine creatures, and to have the opportunity of expressing my gratitude personally. I'm quite sure that if it had not been for your horse and your dog I would never have seen my little boy again."

Frank glanced at Dorothy uncomfortably, and then looked at the millionaire again.

"Mr. Hammond," he remarked, "I'm afraid I haven't made myself thoroughly clear. I'm not the owner of Rex and Rinty, for they're what you might call two waifs and strays. But at least I've been taking care of them for the past week or two, and I'd like to go on taking care of them until their rightful owners show up."

"You see," he added, "I don't want them to fall into the wrong hands. This man Crawford, whom I've mentioned, for instance, he's particularly anxious to obtain possession of the stallion, though I'm positive he has no claim on him."

Hammond fingered his chin thoughtfully and eyed Frank and Dorothy in silence for a spell. Then he signed to them to follow him, and led them towards his private stables, where quarters had been found for Rex and Rinty.

The moment the horse and the wolfhound saw Hammond's visitors they made it abundantly clear that they were acquainted with them. For, while Rinty leaped up at them to paw them joyously, Rex whinnied contentedly and gave every indication of pleasure as they fondled his silken muzzle.

"Well," said Hammond, noting the behaviour of the animals, "that convinces me that you are their friends, anyhow, and I've no hesitation in surrendering them to you. But before you go, Mr. Bradley, would you and Miss Bruce honour me by having dinner with me?"

Frank and Dorothy thanked him, but

excused themselves, being anxious to return to the academy without delay. Then, to the obvious disappointment of Junior Hammond, Rex and Rinty were given up to the visitors, the boy only being consoled when Frank assured him that he could come and see them at the Bruce Academy any time he wished.

A minute or two afterwards the young polo player and his companion were cantering from the estate, with Rex trotting between them and Rinty bounding along nearby. And in this fashion Frank and Dorothy set out for home, pushing steadily eastward until they picked up a rough track that ran through the hills.

They had not been following this track for long when all at once Dorothy drew rein abruptly and pointed ahead, and, staring in the direction indicated, Frank descried four horsemen riding towards them.

"Frank!" the girl exclaimed, "Those men look familiar to me. Is Crawford with them?"

The ace of the Bruce polo field gave vent to an imprecation.

"No," he jerked, "Crawford's not amongst them, but those fellows work for him. I know them only too well. That's Mitchell in front, and the others are called Jones, Anderson and Martin. Looks like we didn't fetch Rex any too soon, Dorothy. These men from the Crawford ranch are on their way to the Hammond estate, or I'm a Dutchman."

Dorothy gripped him by the arm.

"They've seen us, Frank!" she gasped.

She was right. It was all too plain that the gangsters had perceived them, for they had quickened pace and were galloping forward at full whip.

"This way!" shouted Frank, turning off down a side track that led to the right.

The track wound through a belt of tall thickets, and into the heart of these thickets the young fellow spurred, keeping a tight hold on Rex's bridle. As for Dorothy, she lost no time in riding after him, and Rinty took the same course, but they had gone no more than a couple of hundred yards when Frank pulled up with a sharp tug on his pony's rein.

"Dorothy," he rapped out, "Rex seems pretty fagged. I guess he's been doing a lot of travelling since last night. He sure is holding back, anyway, and Crawford's men are liable to catch up with us."

"What are you going to do, then, Frank?"

"Trick them," was the answer. "We'll turn my horse loose with Rinty. He'll pass for Rex, and there's every chance of those rats following him. Then we'll double back on to the other trail and make straight for the academy."

He dismounted quickly, and unhitching the girth-strap that was around his pony's belly, he removed the saddle from his back and slapped him smartly across the hind quarters.

"Go on!" he panted. "Get out of here, old fellow. Go on, now!"

The horse obeyed him, stressed as his command was by the prompting of his hand. Down the side track the animal sped, and then Frank called to Rinty.

"You, too, boy!" he ordered. "After him! That should help to fool Crawford's men. Go on, after him!"

Just as he had driven off his mount, so he managed to urge Rinty in pursuit of the horse, after which he turned to Dorothy and motioned to the depths of the vegetation.

"Now to hide," he said. "Go on,

Dorothy, push right into the middle of the thickets."

The girl forced her pony into the brushwood, and Frank accompanied her, pulling Rex with him. A few seconds later he and the girl were lost in the foliage, and they waited there in silence, holding the heads of the two horses to prevent them from uttering any sound that might betray them.

They had not been under cover long when the pounding of hoofs struck upon their ears, and in another moment Mitchell and his confederates were careering past their place of concealment.

Frank and Dorothy waited until the men had gone by, and then the stalwart young sportsman made haste to saddle Rex and climb astride him; and, almost before the hoof-beats of their enemies' mustangs had died away, the polo player and the girl were returning to the trail on which they had first espied the crooks.

Once on that trail they struck out for the east at the best speed which the somewhat wearied Rex could attain, and they had covered a distance of a quarter of a mile when Frank spoke to Dorothy in a hopeful tone.

"I wonder how long it will be before Crawford's men discover they're on a false scent?" he grunted. "If only we can get a good start they'll never catch up with us before we reach the academy."

He did not know it, but at that very instant Mitchell and his associates were on the far side of the brushwood thickets, and having cleared the vegetation, were riveting their eyes on Rinty and the stallion that resembled Rex.

"There they go!" Jones cried out, pointing to the fleeing animals. "But say, what's happened to Bradley and that Bruce girl?"

"Never mind them," Anderson rasped. "They've lost their nerve, I reckon, and turned the god horse adrift. Come on, that's Rex all right, for the wolfhound's with him."

The gangsters spurred on, galloping after the fugitive stallion and the dog which was accompanying it, and though they gained upon the two animals rapidly, it was not until they were within thirty or forty yards of them that they realised they had been fooled.

"Hey!" bellowed Mitchell. "That's not the black Arabian!"

He reined in, and the others did the same, peering suspiciously and malevolently at the stallion they had been chasing.

"You're right, Mitch!" Jones snarled all at once. "Bradley has out-smarted us. He's switched horses, and right now I'll bet he's ridin' the black Arabian to the academy on the upper trail."

Martin came out with a blistering oath.

"Yeah?" he barked. "Well, if you cut across by Navajo Draw we've still got a chance of headin' them off before they ever get to the academy. Come on, Mitchell—come on, you fellers!"

The men swung their broncs hard round, and, skirting the brushwood, they raced over the prairie levels until they reached Navajo Draw. Then, sweeping on through this, they left it behind them and set their mounts at a stiff slope, and five minutes later they were in sight of the upper trail, where it crossed a barren plateau.

"There's Bradley an' the Bruce dame now!"

The words were spoken by Mitchell, and as he flung out his arm the other men saw their quarry riding through

some rocks a little way ahead of them. The crooks took up the pursuit, goring the flanks of their ponies with their spur-rowels. But already Frank and Dorothy had become aware of them, and man and girl pressed onward fiercely in an effort to keep their distance.

It was a forlorn effort, as Frank realised only too well on looking back just before they turned a bend in the road. For he was quick to note that the rogues were coming up fast—the four of them strung out in single file, with Mitchell in the lead, and Jones, Martin and Anderson following him in that order.

Immediately after he had rounded that bend in the trail, however, a plan of action occurred to Frank, and he rapidly outlined it to Dorothy as they rode neck-and-neck.

"Listen," he told her, "I'm going to duck into the rocks, but I want you to keep right on. Crawford's men won't miss me, for the road curves like a snake, and so long as they can only see your dust they'll never guess that you're alone."

"But what do you aim to do?" the girl panted.

"Take those guys from the rear one at a time," Frank answered. "Dorothy, you remember the year I went to South America with the U.S. polo team? Well, I lived down there on an Argentine ranch for a spell, and I learned a trick that's going to stand me in good stead now."

Dorothy failed to understand his meaning, but there was no time for lengthy explanations, and, entreating her to push forward without him, he swerved off into the boulders that lined the roadside and slid from Rex's back.

Obedient to his instructions, Dorothy rode on at unabated speed and disappeared along the trail; and by the time she had vanished Frank had unhitched a lariat that was slung on his saddle-peg and had cut a length from the rawhide rope.

He then selected a couple of fair-sized stones, many of which were lying around, and he bound these securely to the ends of the rawhide strip, thus making an improvised bola such as he had seen used by South American cowboys of Indian stock.

He had scarcely completed his preparations when Mitchell came charging round the bend, flailing his bone ruthlessly and driving it hard with the spur.

Hidden amongst the rocks, Frank let him go past, and also remained inactive when Jones and Martin hove into sight. But the instant that Anderson appeared, the ace of the Bruce polo field adopted a tense attitude.

Mitchell, Jones and Martin had dashed round another curve farther along the trail. Anderson was pounding after them when something sang through the air, something that whizzed straight and true for him.

It was the bola that Frank had improvised, and he had made his throw with a skill that might have drawn praise from an expert of the Argentine pampas, for the weighted rope snared Anderson cleanly and wrapped itself round his body like a whiplash, pinioning his arms.

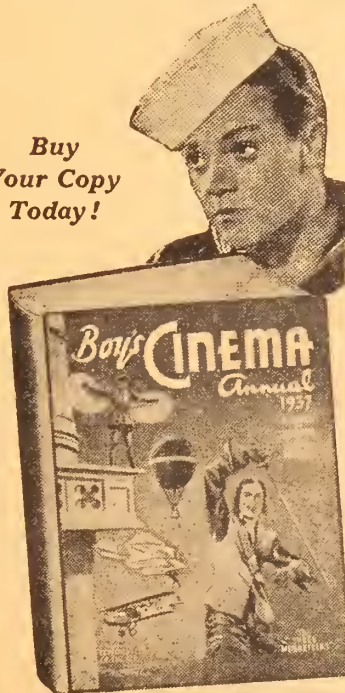
Taken utterly by surprise, the man lost his seat and plunged from his mustang, crashing to the dusty trail and rolling for several yards before he brought up in the shadow of a huge boulder.

Breathless and shaken as he was, he managed somehow to disentangle himself from the bola and struggle to his feet. But even as he rose he saw Frank sprinting towards him, and before he



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could reach for his hip the younger man was upon him.

Anderson gave vent to a hoarse cry. In that same instant Frank clutched him with one hand and with the other snapped his bunched knuckles to the point of the gangster's jaw.

The punch travelled no more than six inches, but it landed like the kick of a mule, and the impact scattered Anderson's wits. Down he slumped, to sink in a heap on the roadway as Frank let go of him, and he was still lying there in an inert condition when the polo player darted back into the boulders to secure Rex.

Frank's object now was to catch up with Martin, and in anticipation of this he had recovered the bola with which he had unhorsed Anderson. At the same time he knew that he could not hope to overtake Martin by keeping to the trail, with Rex in such a poor condition. But, since the road wound so tortuously here, it might be possible to achieve his purpose if he forged a direct course amongst the scattered boulders.

It was an idea that might have occurred to Crawford's men themselves if they had been alert enough in mind. But, as it was, Frank's was the only brain that conceived it, and he wasted no time in putting it into practice.

About a minute later he reached a wide bend in the road just as Mitchell was swinging round it, and once again, in the shelter of the rocks, Frank allowed that worthy to pass unchallenged. Likewise did he permit Jones to flash by, but as Martin showed up he prepared himself for action.

It was many months since Frank Bradley had idly practised the throwing of a bola under the tuition of the South American ranches at whose home he had stayed. But he proved now that he had not forgotten the art, and that his adroit handling of Anderson had been no mere fluke.

For, just as Anderson had been snared and unhorsed, so the rogue known as Martin also met his downfall by the improvised bola.

It caught him with that same whiplash effect, and before he could utter so much as a cry he tumbled out of his saddle and dived to the ground, finishing up with his head in a patch of scrub alongside the trail.

Frank started out at him from the rocks, and at that same instant saw him struggle up, saw him cast off the improvised bola savagely. He was also alive to the fact that Mitchell and Jones were still in view, for the road here ran straight as an arrow for two or three hundred yards until it turned off along the edge of a steep declivity.

But he had to take the risk of Mitchell and Jones turning their heads and catching sight of him. For it was obvious that Martin would attract their attention unless he was silenced as effectively as Anderson had been.

It was as Frank was running towards Martin that the latter perceived him, and the man instantly dropped his hand to his hip, but the gun that he expected to find there was missing. It must have been jerked from its holster when the crook had fallen from his horse, and it was nowhere to be seen now though a search in the scrub may have located it.

Martin had no time to make that search, for Frank was almost upon him, so he chose the alternative of wheeling round and attempting to hail his accomplices.

Before he could raise a cry, however, Frank leaped on him and knocked him senseless with a punch that carried all his weight behind it.

(Continued on page 27)
November 28th, 1926.

"THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS"

(Continued from page 19)

watched but made no move to interfere.

The Indians parried and struck with their tomahawks with the skill of fencers. Suddenly they came to grips and rolled over and over on the ground. Though nigh on half a century in years Chingachgook possessed muscles of steel and at last was on top, holding Magua's armed hand helpless to the ground with his left, while in his right the tomahawk was poised aloft.

Magua's free hand tried to stay the blow. For a moment the two enemies glared their hatred at each other, and then Chingachgook wrenched his hand free and brought his tomahawk down with fearful force on Magua's skull.

Heyward Strikes

SILHOUETTED in the mist against the sky, near the edge of a huge lake, were two cairns containing the bodies of the unfortunate Uncas and Cora, united in death as they never could have been in life. Hawkeye and Heyward stood with bowed heads while Chingachgook spoke over the bier of his son.

"Great Spirit," cried Chingachgook, "a warrior goes to you, swift and straight and unseen as an arrow shot into the sun. Welcome him and let him take his place at the council fire of my tribe which burns for ever on the endless plains of the Happy Hunting Ground, for he is Uncas, my son. Bid them patience and bid death speed, for they are all there but one—I, Chingachgook—last of the Mohicans."

As solemnly, Heyward recited all he could remember of the Church of England burial service for Cora. The last rites observed, Hawkeye and Heyward held a consultation on the best method of saving Alice.

The chances seemed hopeless, for the guards would be more watchful than ever. To attack the Huron village was out of the question. Hawkeye could think of only one plan.

"If the Hurons had a prisoner they prized more highly than Alice," he said slowly, "they would make an exchange."

Heyward understood at once.

"I'll go."

Hawkeye shook his head.

"I said a prisoner they valued more highly. In this war they've had British officers by the bushel. But they've waited a long time to burn me."

Heyward was incensed, but this time he concealed his irritation because a plan was forming in his mind.

"Do these Hurons know you?" he asked.

"Only by costume," Hawkeye touched himself. "It's kind of distinctive. Magua knew, but he is dead."

Heyward smiled and waited his chance. It came sooner than he had expected. Hawkeye suggested that Chingachgook should watch out for signs of Huron scouts, and the two men were left alone. Heyward waited until the scout turned his back, then, wrenching out his pistol, hit Hawkeye a sharp blow over the head with the butt-end. The scout fell to the ground and lay still.

The officer bent over the still form, and was relieved to find that Hawkeye's heart was still beating. Then, with a grim smile, he began to unfasten Hawkeye's clothes. He stripped

Hawkeye and took off his own tattered finery. Swiftly he dressed Hawkeye in his own uniform, before putting on the suit of skin and the helmet of fur. Picking up the long-barrelled musket, Heyward disappeared into the trees in the direction of the Huron village.

A few minutes later Hawkeye sat up and rubbed his head, then stared in amazement at his attire.

Which was the Dreaded Hawkeye?

IN the centre of the Huron village a stake had been erected—it was for Alice. The women were busy piling brushwood around the foot of the stake. Hundreds of torches lit up the scene as Heyward approached the village. Fearlessly he strode forward, holding up his hand in a sign of peace. The Hurons gave way and stared at him as he walked calmly up to the stake.

"I am Hawkeye," he said. "The blood brother of the Mohicans. My rifle has slain many of your warriors." The warriors muttered angrily, though they did not understand all that he said, but the withered old Sachem knew the English tongue, and peered at him from rheumy eyes.

"What does the Yengeese want?" he asked.

"You have Paleface woman prisoner here. What are you going to do with her?"

"She dies in our fire."

"There is no honour in burning a woman"—Heyward had gained a knowledge through Hawkeye of how to speak with Indians—"but there is honour for the Hurons if a warrior burns." He touched his chest. "A warrior as great as Hawkeye."

When the Sachem told the Hurons they were incredulous. They would not believe that so redoubtable a warrior as Hawkeye would go to the stake in place of a squaw. The Sachem asked if they were willing to let the squaw go and to burn Hawkeye in his place. Their screams of fiendish agreement brought Alice to the flap of her tepee.

"Hawkeye's word is good." The Sachem nodded his head. "The Hurons promise to let squaw go."

At a signal two warriors seized Heyward and swiftly bound him to the stake. Alice was led from the tepee, and she cried out when she saw him.

"Duncan!"

"I am Hawkeye!" Heyward flashed her a warning glance.

"Now that's interesting," a voice drawled out of the shadows. "And maybe I'm the major. I never thought they'd make me into a Redcoat."

Hawkeye stepped forward into the light, and the Hurons eyed the newcomer in amazement. The Sachem strode up to him.

"Who are you?"

"I am Hawkeye."

The Sachem stared in bewilderment at the two men who were so alike in build.

"Do you want proof?" demanded Hawkeye. "If so, bring us a rifle."

The Sachem rubbed his wrinkled chin, then his cunning brain caught the drift of Hawkeye's plan. Hawkeye was one of their most deadly enemies, and many had perished through his marvellous shooting. Yes, a gun would certainly prove which was Hawkeye. He spoke a few words, Heyward was freed, and Hawkeye's long-barrelled musket was produced.

"Pick your target, major," mocked Hawkeye.

Heyward considered himself a good shot. He must beat this boasting braggart. He was determined to make the great sacrifice.

"The gourd by the door," suggested Heyward.

"That?" Hawkeye laughed scornfully. "Why, I could spit in it." He looked round, then spoke in the Huron tongue to one of the warriors. "Put a clay jug on that stake."

The distance was so great that in the torchlight the jug was hardly visible. Heyward frowned angrily.

"You mean to try and hit that—by torchlight?"

The Sachem cackled shrilly.

"Hawkeye can hit it," he cried.

Heyward steeled himself, lifted the rifle and took careful aim. The bullet shattered the jug, leaving only a small fragment on the stake. The Hurons cried that surely this must be Hawkeye.

But the real Hawkeye only smiled, grasped the gun and let the barrel drop carelessly into his palm. The piece was fired as if by impact—the fragment of jug disappeared.

The Huron whooped their approval, their animosity for the moment forgotten. The Sachem came and stood in front of Heyward.

"You creep into village and tell lie like singing bird. Take squaw and go. When sun come over hills, my braves go look for you."

Alice was led forward and the bonds around her wrists removed. She stepped up to Hawkeye with a little cry of anguish, but he spoke softly and urgently.

"You have until sunrise before they start after you. Chingachgook's watching. He'll find you and take you to safety. He's not to come back for me. My orders, major. Do you understand? You have to think only of Miss Munro."

Alice flung her arms around Hawkeye and began to kiss him with the passion of despair. The guards pulled her away.

"Go!" the Sachem ordered.

Heyward stared at Hawkeye, and his heart was sad, for he knew now that this scout was the bravest man he had ever met. Heyward and Alice left the Indian village and trudged silently through the dark forest. Alice was weeping.

"Father—Cora—Uncas—and now Hawkeye—the greatest spirit of them all."

Heyward nodded a gloomy assent and gripped Hawkeye's rifle as the bushes rustled. It was Chingachgook, who for once seemed quite excited.

"What is it?" Heyward asked in alarm.

"Many come. Yengeese."

Heyward gave a cry of joy.

"Lead me to them quickly!" he ordered. "Providence has intervened in the nick of time. We will save Hawkeye."

They plunged through the underbrush after the swift-moving Chingachgook. Soon they heard the sounds of many marching feet.

A Terrible Ordeal

HAWKEYE, bound to the stake, viewed quietly the preparations for his torture. The crones piled brushwood round him till it was up to his knees. The Indians began to dance round to the sound of the tom-toms until all was in readiness. Then the Sachem gave an order and the Indian warriors squatted in rows around him, watching his face keenly for signs of fear. Screams of fiendish glee came from the women as an old hag brought in a burning brand and set fire to the brushwood. The brushwood was dry as tinder, and soon smoke began to curl around Hawkeye's body.

The tom-toms deadened the noises of the forest. The Hurons never expected an attack, and as it was not often one saw a warrior burn, every man was round that blazing stake. Therefore Chingachgook was able to lead the soldiers to the Huron village without anybody hearing their approach.

The flames were licking Hawkeye's face. The sweat poured down his tanned cheeks as he forced himself not to scream out in agony.

A volley rang out. Several Hurons plunged forward and lay still. The others jumped to their feet and rushed for their arms. The women and children scattered, screaming, adding to the confusion. The surprise was so sudden that the Hurons were unable to form any sort of defence. Guns blazed at them from all directions, and the blazing fire made them easy targets. They were mown down in dozens.

Chingachgook was the first to reach the stake, with Heyward close at his heels. They kicked away the burning brands, then Chingachgook slashed away the bonds with his knife. Hawkeye reeled forward unsteadily and was caught in Heyward's arms.

"Thanks, major," he muttered hoarsely. "It was getting a little warm."

Heyward's grin belied his words. "I was always sure you were born to hang," he cried, and held out his hand in friendship.

The Court-martial

HAWKEYE'S rescuers were part of an advance guard under General Abercrombie. Regulations were regulations, and having saved Hawkeye from torture, they took him back to Albany to be tried by court-martial. Alice was terribly worried, though Heyward assured her that there was a very good chance that Hawkeye would not hang.

Strangely enough, at the court-martial Hawkeye had an able defender in Major Heyward, who was presumably pressing the charges.

The officers of the court sat back in their chairs and stared at the prisoner. Their expression was admiring, because many of them knew of the bravery and sacrifice of this scout. Whether Hawkeye pleaded "Guilty" or otherwise, they were determined not to hang him. They had other ideas about his fate.

"He did instigate the men leaving the fort," stated Major Heyward. "But let me recall to you that had he not, those men would never have met your force to save them from an Ottawa ambush, and you, General Abercrombie, might not be here to pass judgment on him. Also it has been proven that the Hurons and Ottawas did intend to have a general massacre among the settlements. He could have gone with those Colonials, but he chose to stay and face the results of his insubordination. Also, it is true that on that occasion he struck an officer. I am that officer, so you may believe me when I say that if he is guilty of insubordination, I am guilty of exceeding my command by goading him to it."

General Abercrombie and the other officers smiled. The general rapped on the long table for silence.

"May I ask, major, if you stand before this court as his accuser, or his defender?"

"Neither, general—I am merely telling the whole truth."

"Since you are so familiar with the case," continued the general, "I would welcome a recommendation."

"I would recommend that he be

attached to the British Army as a scout," Heyward cried, and smiled across at the erect Hawkeye.

The general laughed.

"An excellent suggestion, Major Heyward, and one that had occurred to this court. Not only is it our wish that you should join the British Army"—the general stood up and held out his hand—"but that you should take over the command of the scouts."

Hawkeye gripped the outstretched hand.

"I will be pleased to accept the ruling of this court, sir."

The time had come for parting. Major Heyward was to return to England to report to the king and Pitt that the Colonials were entirely on the side of the British and that a big force under Abercrombie was starting on the march against the French, and had every confidence of victory.

And Alice? Heyward had offered to escort her back to England. Quite simply she had told him that her place was in America. Was it because of Hawkeye that she stayed?

"I love him, Duncan," were her

simple words. "But whether he needs me or not I feel that there is work for me to do here. I feel that my father—and Cora—would like me to remain. Good-bye, Duncan."

"Good-bye, Alice," Heyward said as he bade her farewell. "It is with regret that I go, but your decision is just what I expected. Good luck!"

And what of Hawkeye? His way led into the wilderness, to paths as yet untrod by the Paleface. He was a pathfinder—a pioneer. And his life was not one to be shared by a delicate English girl, used to the ways of the civilised world. He squared his shoulders and told her that it must be good-bye.

"You will return to England and forget."

"I will not return to England, and, even if I did, I should never forget you." Her eyes were bright. "Once you said you loved me."

"I do—I always shall," he told her.

"You have your duty to perform. You are a soldier now. I am a soldier's daughter. I shall be waiting for you here in Albany when you return. You will return to me."

"When we have

crushed the French I will return to Albany as swift as an arrow." Hawkeye laughed happily, for he had hated the idea of parting from Alice for ever. Now he had two incentives—England and Alice.

On a glorious sunny morning the drums rolled and the bugles sounded, and once again the British Army mustered for parade. It was a larger, better-equipped force, with plenty of guns and a large wagon train. General Abercrombie reviewed his army, and on a raised platform was Alice.

An officer roared a command: "Forward! On to Canada!"

The whole army swung into line with the Colonial irregulars in the lead, with Hawkeye and Chingachgook leading them. Hawkeye's shoulders were squared and he marched like a man with a purpose—a purpose to help conquer Canada for the English and then return to claim the love of Alice Munro.

(The film story of this James Fenimore Cooper classic is by permission of United Artists Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Randolph Scott as Hawkeye, Binnie Barnes as Alice, and Henry Wilcoxon as Major Heyward.)

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"POSTAL INSPECTOR"

(Continued from page 18)

said, and at last he consented to her plan.

"All right," he breathed. "But if you don't show up again in five minutes I'm coming in after you."

She climbed out of the motor-boat, and, entering the Feltham apartment-house, proceeded to mount a flight of stairs after directing a cursory glance at the doors which led off the hall. But it was not until she had ascended to the third floor that she came upon the flat that was numbered 33a.

She moved close to the door of the flat in question, and as she laid her ear against the panels she heard the murmur of voices; and though it was impossible for her to catch what was being said, she could have sworn that one of those voices was Benez's.

She was right. For Benez was on the other side of the door with Roach and Evans.

"So this is where you hid out when you first came to Millstown," Evans had just observed.

"Yes," Benez answered. "The Schultz mob were after me then, and I stayed here under cover till I heard that the gang had been wiped out in a gun-battle with the police. Then I negotiated that loan with Carter in New York, and came back to Millstown to open the Golden Eagle. But I had a sentimental attachment for this apartment-house, so I bought the place and kept number 33a vacant. I always had an idea that I might need a hide-out again sometime."

Evans drew in his breath.

"Lucky you had that idea," he commented. "It sure looked as if we were in a tough spot when we got caught in that flood."

"We're still in a tough spot," said Benez. "We managed to wade here and dry off our clothes. But we can't wade out of town, especially with the water up to the second story in some of the streets."

"Why worry?" put in Roach. "Nobody knows that we were the guys who pulled off that mail job."

His employer looked at him bitterly. "But the police have a way of finding out these things," he retorted. "I tell you I won't feel safe until we're across the State line with that three million dollars."

"And the only way of gettin' out of Millstown and across the State line is by boat," Evans growled. "That's what we need, Benez. A boat—and a fast boat at that. But how to lay our hands—"

He checked abruptly, for it was at this instant that there was a knock on the door, and on a sudden the three crooks were looking at one another in alarm. Then, while Roach and Evans dropped their hands to their hips significantly, Benez moved across to answer the summons.

He opened the door in a guarded fashion, and as he saw Connie his features registered an expression of mingled relief and surprise—an expression that was likewise reflected on the faces of his two accomplices as they withdrew their hands from the vicinity of their hip-pockets.

"Why, Miss Larrimore!" Benez exclaimed.

"I've been looking all over town for you," Connie said breathlessly. "Why didn't you let me know where you were?"

Benez admitted her, but closed the door somewhat hurriedly when she had entered. Meanwhile, in a cursory glance round the room, Connie had noticed three travelling bags that stood in a corner. She took care to pay no particular heed to them, however, for the eyes of Roach and Evans were upon her.

Was it possible that those bags contained the money that had been stolen from the mail truck? Was it possible that Bill Davis' suspicions were correct after all?

"Miss Larrimore, what is it you want to see me about?" Benez queried, interrupting her thoughts.

"Oh, I'm in an awful jam," she began, "and so are you, if you only knew it. It's about that mail robbery."

Benez exchanged a quick glance with his associates.

"Mail robbery?" he echoed in a tone of well-feigned bewilderment.

"Then you don't know anything about it!" Connie said. "Oh, that's what I thought, Mr. Benez. But will you come with me and tell Postal Inspector Davis so?"

"My dear, what are you talking about? What have I got to do with this matter?"

The girl made haste to explain.

"Well, the car that was used in the robbery was one that I had borrowed, you see. And Inspector Davis knows that I told you about those banknotes being shipped. You remember? So he thinks that we were working together, you and I. He thinks you organised the robbery, Mr. Benez."

"Ridiculous!" the foreigner scoffed.

"Of course it's ridiculous," Connie agreed. "But we've got to convince the inspector that we're innocent. Will you come with me?"

The man's impulse was to hedge, of course, but all at once a crafty gleam appeared in his eyes and he took a step nearer to the girl.

"Well," he murmured, "I'm pretty busy right now. But if you had a good fast boat, so I could get back here quickly—"

"Why, yes, Mr. Benez," Connie replied. "There's a boat downstairs—a National Guard speedboat."

Roach moved to the window, threw up the sash and stared down into the flooded street.

"Yeah, the dame's right, Benez," he said over his shoulder. "The boat's down there, and it's got young Charlie Davis in it."

"Young Davis, eh?" The foreigner's lids narrowed. "Tell him to come up here, Roach."

His confederate did his bidding, attracting Charlie's attention with a hail.

"Hey, Davis—Miss Larrimore wants you," he called, whereupon Connie started forward with a look of misgiving on her pretty face.

"What do you mean, Roach?" she demanded. "I didn't say I wanted to see Charlie. Benez, what's the idea of bringing Charlie Davis up here?"

The night-club owner had gripped her by the wrist. Roach was turning from the window and smiling a cryptic smile. Evans was also hovering near, with a devilish grin on his lips.

"I think the boat may be a little too crowded with you and young Davis in it, Miss Larrimore," Benez remarked.

For a moment Connie gazed at him

in silence, and then she found her voice. "Benez!" she gasped. "You did do it!"

She tried to wrench free, and, failing to break his grasp, attempted to raise an alarm that would be heard all over the building. But before she could utter a sound Roach had leapt to his employer's aid and clapped a hand over the girl's mouth.

"Evans," the big fellow grated. "Davis is on his way up. Leave the door ajar and stand alongside it. Get him as he comes in."

"That's it, Evans," Benez assented. "Get him as he comes in."

Evans unfastened the door and took a position close to it, with his back against the wall and an automatic pistol in his hand. As for Benez and Roach, they kept a tight hold on Connie, making certain that she could neither move nor cry out.

It was in vain that the girl struggled. Eyes riveted on the door, awaiting the arrival of her companion, the two crooks saw to it that she gave no warning.

Thirty seconds elapsed, and then Charlie Davis crossed the threshold—to receive the full force of a stunning blow as Evans clubbed him with the butt of his gun. An instant later the young bank clerk was sprawled senseless on the floor, and, spurning his prostrate body, Roach and Benez dragged Connie towards a pantry at the far side of the room, locking her in there after they gagged and bound her.

This done, the three bandits lost no time in quitting their hide-out, snatching up those leather bags which Connie had noticed on first entering the flat; and ere long the scoundrels were installed in the speedboat that fate had placed in their possession.

Roach at the wheel, they stormed down the flooded street with the throttle wide open, and the note of the motor-boat's engine was fading away into the quiet of the night when another launch entered Lincoln Drive and glided to a halt outside the Feltham apartment-house.

It was the police launch occupied by Bill and Pottle, and the two representatives of the postal department were soon reconnoitring the building. But it was not until they gained the third floor that their attention was drawn to No. 33a by the sound of someone kicking against the panels of a door inside that particular flat.

They entered to discover the prone form of Charlie, and while Bill proceeded to revive the young fellow, Pottle traced the sounds which had brought them there, and which now seemed to be coming from a pantry in the far wall.

A few seconds later Connie Larrimore had been released and was telling her story, and by the time she had finished speaking Charlie Davis was on his feet again.

"So Benez and his confederates have got away in your boat, eh?" Bill said. "Well, we came into the drive from the north, and they didn't pass us. That means they must have headed south. Come on!"

They hurried downstairs and piled into the launch that was moored at the porch. Then they set out in pursuit, and as the craft swept forward along the water-logged thoroughfare Bill tuned-in to police headquarters on the radio with which the boat was equipped.

"Calling WLPD—calling WLPD! Hallo! Police department? This is Davis of the Post Office. We have located the mail-truck bandits. Headed

south from Lincoln Drive. Notify your patrols in this area."

The launch raced on, and, with Pottle steering, Bill brought into play a searchlight that was a fitment of the sleek and powerful vessel. And less than five minutes afterwards the beam of that searchlight picked up the National Guard boat in which Benez and his accomplices were attempting to escape.

The craft that contained Bill and his party had a turn of speed which the fugitives' boat could not match, and it was soon clear to the bandits that they must be overtaken. Thus it was with the desperation of hard-pressed men that Benez and Evans opened fire on the pursuers, but even as the first shots blazed from their guns they heard the wail of a police siren, and in another moment they were cut off by a launch that came swerving out of a side-turning ahead of them.

There were four uniformed officers in it, and, caught between two hostile parties, the crooks pulled close to a block of single-storied timber buildings on the left.

They swarmed on to the flat roofs of these buildings and raced forward, hoping against hope that they could make their getaway across them. But they had not gone far when they were balked by a gap where the flood had undermined one of the structures and brought it crashing down earlier in the day.

Meanwhile the police boat had turned, and, travelling on a parallel course, it brought up on the other side of the street, opposite the spot where the bandits had been checked.

A vicious gun-duel now ensued—the officers of the law firing upwards from the water-logged thoroughfare, Benez and his associates pumping lead at them from the roof-top on which they were crouching—and the blasts of revolvers and automatics were echoing through the night when Bill Davis' launch moved alongside the police boat.

Charlie, quite recovered by this time, had drawn his service .45, and it was adding to the tumult when his brother Bill suddenly thrust Pottle out of the steering position and took the helm.

He had noticed that the roof on which the crooks had halted was perched precariously on one or two wooden pillars, all that remained of a building that had partially collapsed, and it had occurred to him that if one of those supports were knocked asunder the vantage-point of the gangsters might be completely wrecked.

"Sit tight!" he shouted to Charlie, Pottle and Connie, and then, switching open the throttle, he drove the speedboat straight for the corner-post.

The bandits realised his purpose too late. Before they could concentrate their fire on the launch it had passed beneath the scope of their view, and, smashing into the pillar for which Bill had aimed, it swerved off even as the beam of timber was split by the impact.

There was a rending crack, and the roof tipped crazily, plunging three desperate gunmen and their spoil into fourteen feet of water; and sixty seconds later those same three gunmen were glad enough to be hauled limply into the speedboats as sorry captives, each being relieved of a dripping leather bag as he was dragged aboard.

Some days later a young man and a girl were listening to a radio broadcast in a cosy apartment which overlooked one of the principal streets in Millstown.

The young man was Charlie Davis,

and the girl was Connie Larrimore, late of the stage, for she had retired from the theatrical profession and was looking forward to the job of keeping house for a promising employee of the Federal Reserve Bank.

And the radio broadcast, after dealing with the steady decline of the floodwaters that had swept the State, was now commenting upon the fact that Benez, Evans and Roach were on their way to the penitentiary to serve life sentences in that institution.

It was just after this item of news had been retailed that a large coloured woman entered the room in which Charlie and Connie were seated. She was Deborah, the former stage star's maid, and she was grinning broadly.

"A 'phone call, Miss Larrimore," she announced. "From Washington. Ah guess it must be Mistah Bill. You-all said he'd gone to de Capitol agin to be pussanally commended by de President fo' his services, didn't you?"

Connie was already on her feet, and she hurried out into the hall to pick up the receiver of the telephone.

"Hallo!" she called. "Is that you, Bill? Oh, gee, we were hoping you'd be back to-night. Charlie and I are going to have a little celebration. But you'll be here to-morrow, won't you? We're depending on you to be the best man at our wedding, you know."

From distant Washington came Bill's enthusiastic reply.

"I'll be there," he declared. "Nothing will stop me. And say, Connie."

"Yes, brother-in-law to be?"

"Tell Charlie," said Bill, "that I think he's the luckiest guy in the world."

Connie replaced the telephone-receiver with a smile, and then made her way back to the lounge where Charlie was seated.

"It was Bill all right," she remarked. "He's still in Washington, so he won't be back to-night. But he's promised to be in in time for the wedding to-morrow."

"Then he'll be here," her fiance answered emphatically. "The Post Office never fails. You ought to know that by now, Connie."

She nodded gaily and sat down beside him, nestling close to his shoulder.

"Oh, by the way, Charlie," she mentioned presently. "Bill asked me to give you a message. He said I was to tell you that you are the luckiest fellow in the world."

"He did?" murmured Charlie, slipping his arm around her. "Well, I guess he's just about right, isn't he?"

Connie gave him a sidelong glance. "Maybe," she rejoined. "But I think I'm pretty lucky myself, Charlie!"

(A Universal Picture, by permission of London General Film Distributors, Ltd., starring Ricardo Cortez, Patricia Ellis, Bela Lugosi and Michael Loring.)

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS"
—Hawkeye, Randolph Scott; Alice Munro, Binnie Barnes; Cora Munro, Heather Angel; Major Duncan Heyward, Henry Wilcoxon; Colonel Munro, Hugh Buckler; Magua, Bruce Cabot; Chingachgook, Robert Barrat; Uncas, Phillip Reed; Winthrop, Willard Robertson; Jenkins, Will Stanton.

"POSTAL INSPECTOR"—Bill Davis, Ricardo Cortez; Connie Larrimore, Patricia Ellis; Benez, Bela Lugosi; Charlie Davis, Michael Loring; Pottle, Wallis Clark; Deborah, Hattie McDaniels.

"THE ADVENTURES OF REX AND RINTY"

(Continued from page 23)

But, unluckily for Frank Bradley, Jones chanced to look back at that moment—saw Martin stretched out on the trail with his assailant bending over him—and promptly swung round a sharp corner to hail Mitchell, who was still in the lead.

"Hey, Mitch! Mitch, come back here!"

Mitchell pulled up, glanced round with a frown on his truculent features, and then turned to join his comrade on the bend.

"What's up?" he demanded.

"That hombre Bradley!" Jones hit out. "He's behind us."

"Behind us? What do you mean?"

Jones gave an impatient exclamation. "What I say," he retorted. "He's on the other side o' this bend. I just saw him snag Martin, and I reckon he's snagged Anderson, too, for there was no sign o' him."

"Did Bradley have that black stallion with him?"

"I think so," was the reply. "I saw somethin' movin' amongst the rocks. Smart guy, eh? Sends the Bruce girl ahead and then attacks us from the rear."

Mitchell scowled.

"Maybe not so smart!" he grated. "For this is where we snag him, pardner! Quick, get to cover. We'll stop him as he comes round the bend."

There was little cover at this point, for no rocks bordered the trail here. On one side of the road a sheer embankment rose to a height of fifty feet, with a few miserable saplings growing at its base. On the other the ground fell away in a long declivity matted with scrub.

"Down the slope," Mitchell went on. "You take the horses, Jones, and keep well outa sight. Here, gimme my lariat first."

He had dismounted, and, receiving the lasso, he slung the noose of it deftly across the trail and encircled one of the young saplings. Then he pulled on the lariat so that the sapling was bent to the ground and the rope lay taut athwart the roadway, almost unnoticeable.

Grasping the end of the lasso firmly, Mitchell sid over the brow of the slope and lay crouching there with his head just below the level of the trail. Meanwhile Jones had taken the horses still farther down to a forlorn coppice on the hillside.

A moment after he had settled himself in position, Mitchell heard the thudding of hoofs, and presently Frank and Rex were coming round the bend, for there was no opportunity of cutting off a corner here.

Raising himself, Mitchell saw horse and rider, and immediately let the taut rope slip through his hands—then clutched it again as the sapling on the other side of the trail took up the play.

The lariat had jerked to a height of eighteen inches, and Rex fouled it. Next instant the stallion was falling heavily, and, hurtling from his back, Frank hit the side of the road and went careering down the slope where Mitchell and Jones had been lying in wait.

(To be continued in another thrilling episode next week. By permission of Associated British Film Distributors, Ltd., starring Kane Richmond, Norma Taylor and Rex and Rinty.)

November 28th, 1936.



The News Reels

All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 218, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Mob Outside DeMille Offices

A demonstration of eagerness on the part of several hundred extras to appear in Cecil B. DeMille's film, "The Plainsman," has resulted in the erection of a three-foot barbed-wire barrier at the Paramount studios. The wire was placed on top of the twelve-foot gate to the DeMille offices.

The gate afforded a daily mob scene for a week, since DeMille issued a call for "pioneer types" for "The Plainsman," in which Gary Cooper and Jean Arthur star. Hundreds of extras, old and young, bowshiskered and shaven, reported, most of them in costume.

DeMille soon selected the two hundred and fifty players he sought when he issued the call, but others kept on arriving.

Mixed with the Western types were turbaned Arabs, Hindus, Filipinos, Egyptians wearing fozzes, Hawaiians carrying instruments, Mexicans, Chinese, and Japanese. Many brought "trained" animals and birds, and parked outside the gate all day, hopeful of a chance to exhibit their pets' tricks to DeMille.

The strange feature of this curious congregation outside his office was that there was no reduction in the number of Biblical and Oriental types who appeared day after day, despite his announcement that the picture he was making was strictly a saga of the Western plains.

Paramount studio officials are prepared to provide DeMille with a moat, guards with swords and halberds, or machine-guns and tear gas bombs, and any other protection he needs if the demonstrations continue.

Hollywood's Little Men

Hollywood boasts of many strange institutions, but surely none stranger than the "Society of Little Men," a group of tiny people who make a living by "doubling" for child stars.

The members are not small enough to join a midget act, not large enough to be taken seriously in ordinary commercial or professional life.

"But," says Henry "Buddy" Stone, thirty-six years old, four feet ten inches tall, six stone six pounds in weight, and spokesman for the group, "Hollywood has provided a haven for us pint-size gentlemen.

"You see, child stars and feature players must have 'doubles' and 'stunt men' when they are called upon to do something dangerous. That's where we come in. Then, too, there is a law which prohibits children from working after ten o'clock at night. So when a studio finds it necessary to shoot late at night, that's where we come in again."

It is a combination of these circumstances that has given Stone and his fellows their latest picture assignment with Merle Oberon in Samuel Goldwyn's "Beloved Enemy." The script demanded that a number of children must fall from a fence. Stone and his group really do it, and because H. C. Potter, the director, likes to shoot his night scenes actually at night, the little men were in great demand throughout production.

"Growing," Stone points out, "is the great handicap. Only it's not our growing, it's the growth of the youngsters we double for. I stumped for Jackie Cooper in many of his pictures. In the past six months Jackie

has grown so much he'd make two of me, so that's the end of that."

Occasionally Stone and his fellows can double for grown feminine players. He claims to have done some of his best work as Janet Gaynor and Rochelle Hudson—but in "long shots," of course.

So the next time you see your favourite feminine star fall from a horse, calm yourself with the thought that it is probably only little Buddy Stone.

"Go-getter" Harold

Harold Lloyd is nothing if not on the spot! The Paramount comedian has already applied for tickets for self and family for the 1940 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

He has been told that the order for seats will be duly honoured towards the end of 1939.

The Japanese, incidentally, are ardent supporters of Lloyd, who is now preparing to start on a new Paramount comedy. They call him Mik Ludo.

Music for "King Solomon's Mines"

The magnificent voice of Paul Robeson, internationally famous concert singer, screen, and stage star, will be heard in several songs in "King Solomon's Mines," the new Gaumont-British picture in which he plays the part of Unbopa, coloured Pretender to the throne of Kukuana.

Recording has already started on the three songs which Robeson will sing in the picture. These are "Kukuana Song," "Song of the Mountains," and "Trek Song."

All were composed by Miss Spoliansky, writer of the musical scores for many films starring Jan Kiepura and other singers.

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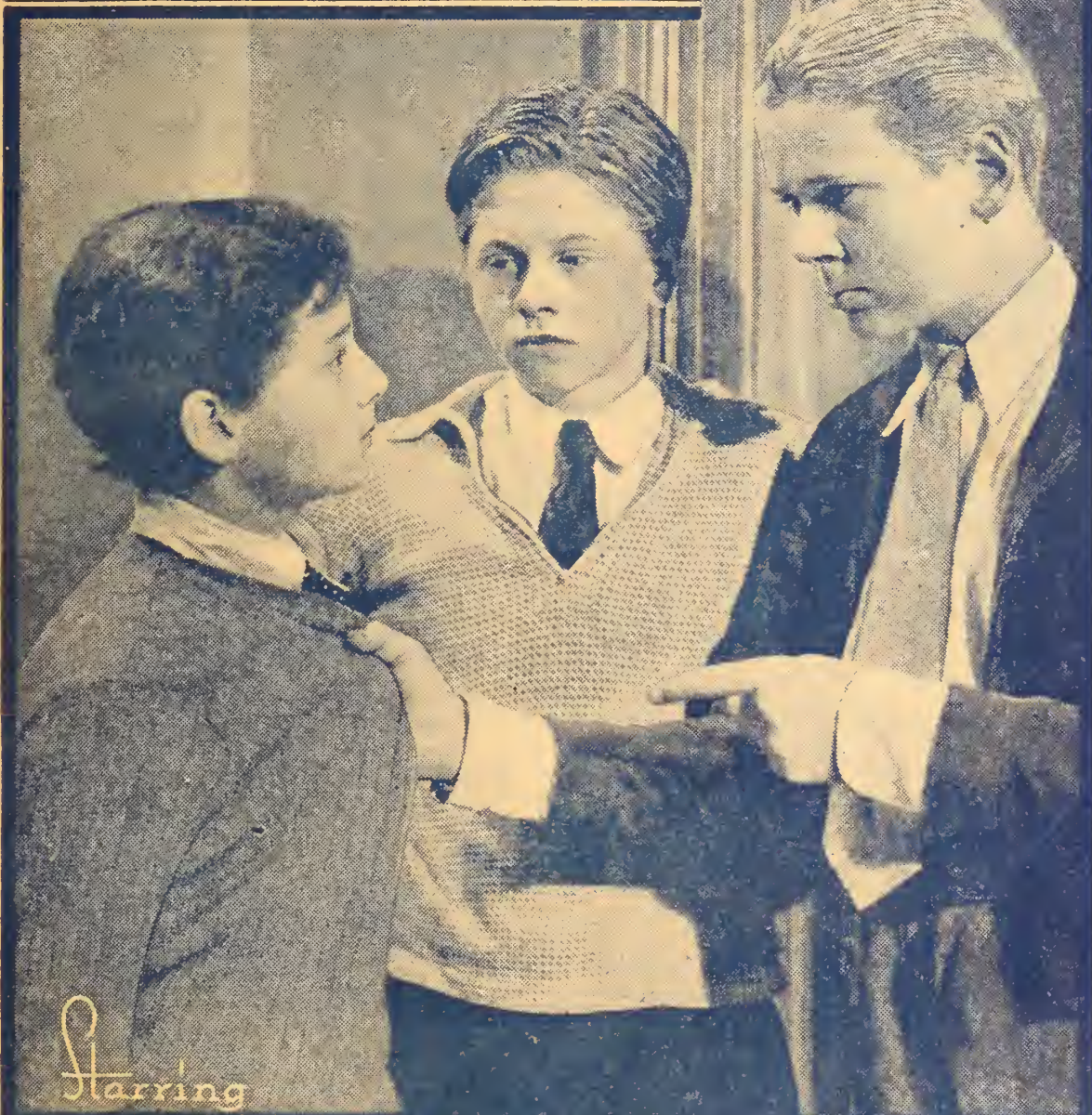
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"THE DEVIL TAKES THE COUNT"



The Two Guardians

A LIMOUSINE drew up in front of a block of flats in a part of New York that could not have been termed fashionable. Children, ragged or badly clothed, gathered round to stare at the beautiful car. A woman, still handsome, got out of the car, and she drew her furs closer round her as if the atmosphere was chilly.

After her came a little lad. He was very clean and neatly dressed in an Etou suit.

"I shall only be a few minutes," the woman said to her chauffeur.

A frown appeared as she saw the way her son was looking towards the building and noted his eagerness to be on his way. They passed through swing doors into a cold stone corridor. Fancy having to climb stairs to the floors above—what a place! It infuriated her that her son was scampering up the stairs with an eagerness that made her heart ache with self-pity.

For six months she had done everything to banish from Claude's mind the memory of his father, and had failed miserably.

Jay and Hilda Pierce had quarrelled within a few months of their marriage, but the coming of a son had patched up their differences for a time. Eventually the boy was the issue that separated them. Jay had his ideas about his son, and Hilda had hers, and they were miles apart. She wanted his hair long, wearing velvet suits and acting as the best little boy ever born, but Jay wanted his son to grow up a man. Quarrels broke out afresh, and so there came a separation.

Mrs. Pierce was a very rich woman, but wealth had meant little to her

husband. He was an artist, an architect, and a designer, and, in spite of his wife's money, had never given up working. Usually their quarrels had ended in the woman taunting her husband with the small success that had come his way.

A court of law had decided that they should have the custody of the child for six months at a time, but should either parent be considered unfit or unable to look after the child, then the custody would be reconsidered by the court. Hilda Pierce had thought that her husband would be unable to support the boy, and it enraged her shallow nature that he was making a small but reliable income. And provided he could provide his son with a roof over his head and proper food, Mrs. Pierce could litigate till she was blue in the face. Every six months she endeavoured to win the boy, and her earlier attempts to turn the boy against his father had taught her the folly of such conduct, for the only result was to make Claude adore his father all the more and turn against her. For five years this had been going on, and now another six months had passed.

Claude was going from the luxury of a beautiful home to live in a pigsty, and what maddened the woman so much was that she knew if Claude had been given his choice of luxury and every comfort with his mother or semi-poverty in Shumland with his father he would have chosen the latter.

They reached the fifth floor, and Claude turned to his mother.

"Do you think dad's at home?" he asked.

"I expect so, dear."

"If I whistle I wonder if he'll know it's me?" asked Claude. "I'll try."

He whistled not very well a few bars of a song that his father had taught him. Instantly there came the screeching of a chair, and then the door was flung open.

A tall, clean-shaven, handsome man stood there and held out his arms.

"Dad!" Claude shouted, and flung himself forward.

The two hugged each other, whilst the woman in the costly furs stood there and watched the scene with a bitter smile.

"I'm sorry, Hilda," Jay Pierce gave an apologetic smile. "Seeing the boy made me forget my manners. Do come inside."

"You need not bother to apologise," she said disdainfully as she swept by him into the room.

The big, well-lighted room seemed full of drawing-boards, easels, pictures, brushes, and paint-pots. This was no atmosphere for a carefully nurtured child. She walked to the windows and stared angrily at a sea of chimney-pots—smoke, squalor, and dirt. The homes of the poorer, working classes, and her son would rather be in this untidy, uncomfortable room than in the mansion that was his rightful home.

Claude left his father to come to the window.

"I love this view!" he cried, and suddenly turned eagerly. "Dad, do you hear that? A fire-engine. There's a fire somewhere. Oh, yes, there it is! See?" He pointed. "See all that smoke rising. Oh, isn't it thrilling!"

Never did Claude see things from the windows of his other home that he found thrilling. Mrs. Pierce glanced at

some of the pictures on the wall. If only Jay had let her back up his painting he would have gone far, but he would prefer to be independent.

"Son, I've had your room done up," Jay told his son. "It's much the same except that I've put in a book-shelf."

"Are there any books?" came the eager question.

"Go and see—I'd like to talk with your mother," laughed the father.

They faced each other when the door had closed behind the boy.

"Hilda, I'm glad to say that I'm doing a bit better with my work." He shrugged his shoulders. "Not carrying a fortune, by any means, but—"

"Enough to keep the wolf from the door!" She spoke a trifle sharply. "Every time we meet you suggest starting all over again, so this time I'll save you wasting your breath. Your terms consist of a tenement in the slums and a very small cottage in the country, and—"

"Yours consist of a mansion in town and a shooting-box in the Sierra Nevadas, servants by the score, a yacht, several cars, and a life of indolent idleness." He shook his head. "Not for me, my dear." He glanced at the closed door. "I'm afraid you'd like to bring Claude up that way, but not if I can help it."

"Be careful what you do, or I'll lodge an appeal against that fool decision of the court!"

"I shouldn't waste your time or your money." His smile was cynical. "You think money buys everything. Well, it doesn't. And, talking of money, when did you last buy Claude a haircut?"

"Don't you touch his hair. It makes him look—"

"Like a poet," snapped the father. "One word more from you and I'll have that hair so short he'll look like a Hun."

When Mrs. Pierce had gone after a tearful parting—on her part—with her son, the father suggested that directly

the coast was clear he thought they might go out and see how the fire was getting along. A suggestion that met with instant approval.

"By the way, son," remarked Pierce, as they walked briskly along the street. "Regulations in this district demand that every boy goes to school. You've been used to a tutor, and—"

"I'd like to go to school, dad," interrupted the boy. "I didn't like my tutor very much, though he was very, very clever. I believe he was a brilliant scholar, and I tried to like him because mother seemed to think he was so wonderful. I must say he did teach me a lot of French and Latin, but—"

"But why didn't you like him?"

"He used scent."

"Your mother would like him," muttered Jay Pierce. "Well, the district school won't have any scented masters or mistresses. There's no class distinction, Claude, in this school, and that's why you're having a haircut on the way back from the fire."

"I'm so glad," Claude cried. "I don't like it as long as this, really. When do I start school, dad?"

"Next Monday, son."

"That will be wonderful. I've always wanted to play with grown-up boys, but I seem to have been so much on boats that I never seemed to meet any boys."

"These lads will be a tough bunch," The father gazed a little anxiously at his son. "They're all pretty genuine at heart, but a bit rough. They call a spade a spade."

"Oh, I see!" Claude pondered that for a moment in his serious way. "What else could they call a spade?"

Jay Pierce laughed.

"You'll learn what I mean soon enough." He pointed. "Ah, there's the fire! See, they're running up an escape."

Father and son forgot everything in the excitement of watching the fire. Fortunately, no one was hurt, but they

saw some thrilling rescues by the fire-escape.

Gig's Ordeal

TWO boys sat on the stone steps of the cheap and rather sordid lodging-house. Both wore old striped jerseys, patched trousers that were too large, heavy boots and caps on the back of their heads.

The freckled youngster sat there with his chin on his hands. His small, plain face seemed vicious and sullen, and the dark eyes seemed to be brooding. The lad with the broad shoulders, the mass of fair hair and the strong, though stubborn, chin, kept glancing at his companion. He was obviously worried by his friend's silence.

"How about taking a walk, Gig?" he said in a husky voice.

There came no answer.

"Snap out of it, pal." He touched the bowed shoulder. Eyes, steeped in misery and despair, turned to him. "How about a walk, Gig? You gotta snap out of acting this way."

"Okay, Buck," Gig answered.

Side by side the two boys moved down the dirty, ill-lit street. Both were sturdy youngsters, but Buck was nearly a head taller. They walked in silence till they came to the old wharf by the canal. They stared solemnly at the sluggish water.

"I feel like jumping in," muttered Gig.

"That ain't no way to talk," argued Buck, with a fierce scowl. "I say you gotta snap out of it. What did that lawyer tell yer ma?"

"That he'd done all he could. Ma just wasted her money." Gig's face twisted into a scowl. "Gee, if I'd been in pop's place I'd have done the same. A guy bumps off a couple of sewer rats, and they run him for murder. If I had a gun I'd shoot that judge stone dead."

"Snap out of it, can't ya?" cried Buck. "That ain't no way to talk."



Claude stepped forward. "I beg your pardon, sir," he interrupted. "It was I who threw the football."

"Maybe you think the judge was right?"

"Gig, that ain't sense. Your pop's a swell guy, but we got laws. Cops can kill them seum, but ordinary folks mustn't. They know Joe Salvin and Digger Dan were bad eggs, and chiselled your old man out of his dough, but the law don't permit your pop to go settle his score with a gat. I ain't saying I wouldna done the same as your pop. A lot of guys would have liked to have dono what your pop done, but shooting wants nerve. He settled the score, but the cops say it's agin the law to kill seum like Joe and Digger, and that your pop has gotta pay the price. Gee, it's tough, pal."

A clock boomed the hour of eight. "Ten more hours to live," muttered Gig, and then burying his face in his hands began to sob.

Never in his life had Buck seen Gig cry and Gig had never seen him let out a squawk, but the bigger boy reckoned that Gig was up against something that gave him the right to cry. Bendy Stevens, Gig's father, was going to be executed at seven in the morning for killing two men. True, Joe and Digger were crooks, but Bendy had a crime record. Buck had liked and feared Gig's father. A kindly man at times, but terrible in his rages. Poverty and the scarcity of work had driven Bendy to work for a dog track race gang. The father had gone to prison several times for doping dogs and horses. Then one evening a dog had been doped to allow an outsider to win. Bendy Stevens had done the doping and had tipped off Joe and Digger to put money for him on the outsider. They refused to cough up the money and threatened to squeal, so Bendy had waited for them and shot them up. It was the law that the killer should die. Buck stuck out his jaw rebelliously—the law was all wrong. All laws were wrong.

Gig stifled his sobs, and mouched off along the wharf, with Buck trailing along behind him. After a while Gig moved away from the canal.

"Where ye going, pal?" asked Buck. "Guess I gotta get back. Can't leave ma to face it alone."

"How's she taking it, Gig?"

"Pretty bad. Pop weren't too good when he was full of hooch," cried Gig. "But she's always stood by him, even the time when he struck her. Gee, there ain't many dames as well as ma. She takes it better than I do. She's cooked the grub and gone to her work at the laundry, and she's smiled at me—only me's heard her crying at nights."

They reached the lodging-house. Buck looked covertly at his friend, who was standing there with bowed head.

"Snap out of it," Buck cried in a hoarse whisper. "Don't wanna let your ma see you this way. Keep yer chin up, pal."

Without a word Gig Stevens went slowly up the stone steps, whilst his pal, Buck Murphy, watched with anguished eyes. The door closed. With hands sunk deep in his pocket Buck slouched off to the cheap tenement, in the next street, where he lived with his mother and father. He vowed that he and Gig would get even with the law some way for sending Bendy Stevens to the chair. The thought of the chair made Buck shiver and stuff his hands deeper into his pockets.

Quietly Gig Stevens let himself into the apartments where he had spent most of his young life. Everything seemed quiet. Then the boy winced as he heard a choked sob coming from his mother's room. Very quietly he opened the door, and went across to the bed,

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where a woman, fully dressed, lay with her face buried in a pillow.

The New Boy

THE bell ceased clanging and the boys filed off to their various classrooms. A young, capable mistress sat at a desk and watched her class take their places at their desks. The average age of her pupils was thirteen, though there were backward boys of fifteen—Buck and Gig were in that category.

When all appeared to be seated she called the roll, and when Gig Stevens' name was called Buck stood up.

"Gig ain't coming to-day, teacher."

Thirty eyes focused themselves on Buck, and he looked down at his desk. They knew well enough why Gig had not shown up that day.

The young teacher nodded.

"Thank you, Murphy," she said, with a friendly smile. "I expect he'll be in to-morrow." She continued reading the roll.

Buck sat down and stared solidly at the vacant desk. He wondered, unhappily, how his buddy was feeling.

The door opened and the young mistress saw with surprise that it was the principal of the school. The bald-headed, dapper little man gave the class a somewhat suspicious scrutiny before going forward.

"Miss Noble, I have a new pupil for you," he stated. "He is only twelve, but seems to be quite advanced. Will you require a new desk, Miss Noble?"

"I can manage this morning, sir," stated the mistress. "One pupil is sick."

"Very good, miss, I'll send him to report to you." The principal smirked, scowled at the boys and went out.

The subject that morning was history, and Miss Noble had scarce told her class to turn to a certain page when there came a timid tap, and Claude Pierce entered the class-room.

There was a suppressed titter that made the mistress rap sharply on her desk. Claude wondered if they could be laughing at him.

Claude wore serge knickers, a neat reefed jacket, an Eton collar and a tie. His hair was shorter, but neatly combed, and he looked conspicuously clean. Under his arm were a number of books. He smiled nervously at the teacher, and walked up to the desk.

"The headmaster told me to report to this room. I'm a new boy."

"I was told to expect you. What is your name?"

"Claude Pierce."

As the mistress bent over her desk to enter the new pupil's name in the register something whizzed past Claude's nose. He had no idea where it came from. He looked at the class, but every face was serious, but directly he turned his head a hard pea caught him a stinging blow on the cheek.

"What's the matter?" The teacher, hearing a faint noise, looked up and saw the new pupil holding his cheek.

"What's the matter with your face?"

"Oh, nothing, teacher, thank you." Miss Noble pointed towards the window.

"Gig Stevens is not here to-day, so you can sit at his desk. We are taking history, and the page in your book is fifty-nine. You can sit down, Pierce."

The desks were very close together, and a boy seated next to the vacant seat leaned across and placed something on the seat. Buck grinned his approval.

Slowly Claude made his way to the desk. He had never been in a big school like this, and it was all rather wonderful. He hoped he would make lots of friends. He wondered why all

the boys were watching him so furtively. He sat down.

His yelp of pain as he shot up made the teacher glance round.

"Anything wrong, Pierce?" she asked.

The boys eyed the newcomer balefully. If he were a squealer heaven help him.

"No, teacher," Claude said in his clear, high-pitched voice.

"Then why did you make that noise?"

"I think I pinched myself on the seat," explained Claude. "You see, I've never sat at a desk before."

This remark caused all the pupils to laugh, and Miss Noble had to rap furiously on her desk before she could obtain silence. She was not quite satisfied with Claude's explanation.

"Very well—sit down." Another rap on the desk. "Are your history books all open at page fifty-nine? Now, quiet, please, whilst I read the first paragraph."

Claude opened his history book and—wonk—a pea hit him on the nose. A moment later another landed hard to the back of his head and, looking round, he caught sight of a big boy hiding a eatapult. When Claude stood up, the class gasped—he was going to sneak! The teacher looked inquiringly in his direction.

"Page fifty-nine is not in this book that the headmaster gave me," blandly stated Claude. "Someone has torn it out—I don't know why!"

"In Gig's desk you should find a history book," answered teacher.

Claude found a very dirty-looking book, and all down the margin were comic faces drawn in pencil.

The lesson proceeded, but had not gone far when the door opened and another boy appeared. It was Gig Stevens. The lad's face was chalky white, but the eyes seemed to blaze fiercely. He just stood there and gazed defiantly at the teacher, as if daring her to rebuke him for being late.

"We are doing the French Revolution, page sixty in your history book," stated Miss Noble. "You will have to share your seat with a new boy for this morning. Go to your desk as quietly as possible."

Every head turned slowly and followed Gig Stevens as he moved to his desk. Fancy him coming to school on the day they had killed his father. How dreadful Gig looked.

For the moment the excitement of the new boy had been overshadowed by the sudden appearance of the son of a killer. When Gig got to his desk they wondered what would happen. Gig would hate having a "cissy" new boy at his desk.

Sullenly and defiantly Gig glanced at Buck, who gave a slight grin of welcome. Gig had scarce heard the teacher's words. His brain was numbed from the misery he had suffered, but now he remembered, as he saw the small youth sitting at his desk.

Claude gazed up at Gig and moved over to give him plenty of room. Gig sat down and, gripping the desk, slid along the seat with a sharpness born of long practice. Claude was whisked off the seat to land with a bump on the floor. Gig slid back to his side of the desk.

"What are you doing on the floor, Pierce?" The teacher walked across the room. Every boy studied his book.

Claude smiled disarmingly as he got to his feet.

"I fell off the end of the seat," he explained. "They're rather short, and I didn't realise that I was so near the edge."

"Gig Stevens!" The teacher's tone was sharp. "You will see that Pierce does not fall off again by keeping strictly to your side of the desk."

The eyes of Gig Stevens flickered upwards at the teacher and then round at Claude. Suddenly he saw the history book.

"Here, that's my book!" He grabbed for it. "Where did you get it?"

"Out of your desk," answered Claude. "You see, my book had a page missing and—"

"Pierce, that will be enough." The teacher was now standing before the desk. "Stevens, a little less noise, please. You will share that history book with Pierce. I told him to take it from your desk. If I have any more noise or interruptions the whole class will be deprived of their ten minutes' break."

Buck Murphy gave an ominous glance at the small figure seated beside his pal. He decided that this namby-pamby youngster was a pest, and should be destroyed. He wagered this dolled-up "cissy" was a coward, and he knew the way to find out.

When Miss Noble dismissed her class the boys crowded out of the room, and Murphy got close behind young Pierce; he got busy with a piece of chalk. It amazed young Claude why several of the boys came up to him in the playground, during the interval, kicked him unexpectedly and then walked away laughing. He was glad the break was only a short one. He overheard some boys talking about Gig Stevens, and his eyes widened as he heard what had happened that morning to Gig's father, but it was a big thrill to know he was sitting next to a gangster's son.

The boys trooped back to class, and Claude tried to make friends by offering Gig a choice of his pencils. The savage look that he got made the younger boy edge away.

Gig's Aunt Rose

AT last school was over for the morning. Claude tried to talk with several of the boys, but they either laughed in his face or else

kicked him in the pants when least expecting it. He was careful to keep near to the railings as he hastened home; already Claude was learning wisdom. His father found the trouble at once and made him remove his coat. The boy's eyes widened at sight of large chalk letters: "KICK ME."

"You mustn't mind that," laughed his father. "All schoolboys have a sense of humour."

"I think the boys were a little upset," stated Claude, seating himself gingerly on a chair. "One of their fathers is going to be electrified up the river."

"Electrified? Up the river?" Jay Pierce questioned sharply.

"Yes. It's what they do to you when you shoot someone in a gang war, without an alibi," solemnly answered Claude. "It's Gig Stevens' father."

"Oh, I see. Is Gig Stevens one of the boys you like?"

"Oh, yes, sir. He's captain of the football team. You'd like him, I'm sure. The boys spoke very highly of his father. What's a frame-up, sir?"

"Well, you might call that 'kick me' sign on your back a frame-up," Jay Pierce laughed. "Of course your mother has had you in England most of the time, so you aren't used to some of our underworld terms. Now, let's get back to football. Will Gig Stevens play you in his team or give you a try. You played some football in England."

"I had some coaching in Soccer," Claude frowned thoughtfully. "But this American game is very different, even the ball is different. I'd have to get one and handle it before I'd be any good over here."

That evening Jay Pierce left his son busy with his studies and went to the nearest shop, where he purchased a regulation ball. The attendant tried to sell him a smaller ball suitable for juvenile schools, but the father knew his son would be terribly hurt to have a kid's ball.

It was grand having his son back to cheer up his lonely life, and in very jubilation of spirits Jay tossed the ball into the air and caught it. How it reminded him of inter-collegiate games. His way lay past the Stevens' apartment house, and he was still playing with the ball.

A large car drew into the kerb and a girl got out, and at that precise moment Jay fumbled the catch and shot the ball straight into her arms. Luckily she saw it coming, and managed to hold it.

"Well played!" cried Pierce.

"Excuse me, but aren't you a little bit too old to be in the team?" mocked the girl with the laughing brown eyes.

"Oh, I'm only the coach," chuckled Pierce, catching the ball as she tossed it to him. "My star half-back is doing his home work. This is a surprise for him."

"You're the sort of coach that spoils his team," the girl said as she hastened up the stone steps. "Good-bye."

The man thought a lot of the girl's sweet face as he walked along the street. Little did he know that it was Gig Stevens' Aunt Rose whom he had met.

Rose Wilson had called to console her elder sister, whom she had not seen for over a year, though she had met Gig once or twice. That young fellow thought his Aunt Rose a grand dame and a swell-looker.

Jennie had gone to work at a laundry, and stayed there even when she got married; Rose had won a prize for singing and dancing at a local cinema, and been offered a job in the beauty chorus of a touring company. Jennie considered the stage as the most disgraceful place and regarded her sister as an outcast. By means of clever singing and dancing Rose had got to Broadway, where she became acquainted with Barkell, the famous producer. Jennie said she wanted nothing to do with a sister who had a flat in Park Avenue.



"Come on, you big bully!" cried Claude.

Now, after all these months, Rose had come to comfort her sister, but Jennie Stevens stated fiercely that she didn't want any help, and that she wouldn't touch a penny of her money.

It was a sad Rose who came down the stone stairs and entered the beautiful car, which glided away. Buck Murphy and his parents were calling to console the bereaved wife, and they gaped after the car. Old man Murphy was a thick-set, florid man, and easily angered.

"Pah!" he snorted. "And to think I fought in the war to make the world safe for them plutocrats."

"That was Gig's Aunt Rose!" cried Buck. "She looked like she was howling."

Mrs. Murphy folded her arms across her ample chest. "A lot she's got to howl about," she said with a loud sniff.

Solemnly the little party trooped upstairs, not so much to console poor Jennie Stevens as to hear all the gory details.

"I Threw the Football"

THE following day found Gig Stevens in a measure recovered from the harrowing tragedy. His father had become a hero. Many a time that same father had treated his wife and only son very badly, and, in his heart of hearts, Gig knew that time would easily soften the blow.

Wars, battles, sea engagements, fights in the air, and gang fights were meat and drink in young Gig's life. He would have loved to have been a second Dick Turpin. Unfortunately he and Buck had grown up to fear the law rather than to respect it. Those two boys were considered by the other ruffians of that school as being "on the level," but they weren't above a little quiet thieving, though they didn't look upon removing spare wheels from cars and taking car accessories as stealing, but as "slick" business.

On this morning they were stealing a ride on the back of a truck—an easy method of getting to school, and cheap, provided not caught by a cop.

"Did you read what my old man said?" shouted Gig.

"No, I didn't," Buck had to admit.

"They humped off a guy what had done a lot of killings and then squealed on his pals to save his neck. My old man said: 'Wipe down that chair, a rat just got through sitting in it.'" Florence eyes turned towards his friend.

"I'll say that was tough. You know how long he was in the chair?" Buck shook his head. "Nine minutes. They gave him four jolts of more than two thousand volts. That's more electricity than it takes to run a street car. Gee, it makes one feel fine—"

"You'll feel something else if you don't scram!" bellowed an angry voice. They did not wait for the man to repeat the threat.

Claude arrived at the school looking very neat and tidy with the football under his arm. The boys in the yard nudged each other. They were eyeing the boy enviously when Buck and Gig showed up.

"The new kid's gotta ball," someone hissed in Buck's ear.

Buck and Gig sauntered across the yard, but someone had just the same idea as these two bright lads. Claude was glancing rather nervously round when a fist punched the ball so hard that it was shot clean out of Claude's grasp. It was the signal for a grand rush. The ball was seized by one fellow, but he kept it for about two seconds. Then the ball came to Buck Murphy.

"Coming over, Gig?" he shouted, and drew back his arm for a throw.

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Buck threw it all right, but someone tackled him at the psychological moment, and the ball, instead of going to Gig, went clean through a class-room window.

All the boys darted away, leaving three—Buck, who was rooted to the spot from horror and amazement; Gig, still waiting to catch the ball and also dumb-founded; and poor Claude, eager to get back his ball.

The principal appeared like magic, and it was too late to escape.

"Just a minute, you three!" he shouted. "Up to my office—right away."

Buck and Gig gazed at Claude as if he were some insect before marching off to the principal's room with Claude trailing behind. Outside the three paused, and Buck stuck out his chin.

"You didn't see me throw a football!" he rasped out. "Understand?"

"Well, naturally, I—" began Claude.

"You know what we do to squealers around here?" cried Buck. Claude shook his head. "We stuff them into a sack and drop 'em in the river."

"You do?" Claude seemed surprised.

"Isn't that rather drastic?" They blinked at this new kid. He was a "cissy," but the queerest one they had ever met. Solemnly they trooped into the principal's presence.

"Murphy, did you throw that football?"

"I don't know who threw it."

"Stevens?"

"I don't know."

"Pierce, this is your football, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you throw it?" the principal demanded.

"No, sir."

"Do you know who threw it?"

"I really can't say, sir," Claude said quietly. "I'm sorry."

The principal rapped with a cane on his desk.

"I cannot overlook deliberate lying and connivance to a falsehood!" he shouted. "Therefore, unless I know who threw that ball you will all stand punishment. I am surprised and disappointed—"

Claude stepped forward.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he interrupted. "It was I who threw the football."

"You did?" The principal seemed amazed.

"Yes, sir. I should have admitted it in the first place."

But the principal was not satisfied with Claude's explanation. It was almost impossible for a new boy to break a window on the second day of joining a school, and, moreover, the youngster did not look the type to go breaking windows. Also he had had more trouble with Buck and Gig than with any two other boys in the school. Solemnly he gave the ball to Claude.

"Very well. You're excused. Don't do it again."

Claude was a little surprised at being let off so lightly. He wondered why the headmaster was keeping Murphy and Stevens behind. He closed the door and hastened away, lest he be called back.

"Who threw that football?" the principal demanded, when Claude was gone.

"Answer me!"

They made no reply.

"Stevens?"

"I don't know."

"I'm not going to punish you for breaking a pane of glass. I'm going to punish you for refusing stubbornly and unreasonably to tell the truth." The

principal wagged the cane. "Stevens, hold out your hand."

Gig winced as the master gave him three hard swipes.

"You may go."

Gig departed, leaving Murphy. Actually the principal suspected Murphy of the crime. The door closed.

"Put your hand out, Murphy."

Buck put out his hand, then whipped it away as the master gave a vicious swipe and missed badly.

"Oh, Mr. Crusenberry, don't hit me!" yelled the cunning Buck. "Please don't kill me—don't kill me!" Dexterously he missed another vicious swipe. "Oh, please, Mr. Crusenberry!" His voice became shrill. "Let me go—you're killing me—don't kill me—"

"Shhh—shhh—shhh!" The principal became alarmed, because Buck's voice must be carrying all over the college, and, if it were reported to the guardians, might cause a bother. "What do you think your fellow-students will think of you making a cowardly uproar like this? Answer me!"

Buck smiled cunningly.

"They're gonna think it's awful funny, a big guy like you hitting a kid like me."

The principal's hand with the cane trembled, but he knew this young rascal was too clever for him.

"Report to your teacher—and remain after school until you feel like telling the truth about that football."

Buck Murphy did not waste time getting to the door, where he had the impudence to make a rude face at the master before hurriedly getting to safety. Down in the quadrangle he found an anxious Gig Stevens waiting for him.

"He sure kept you a long time. Did you squeal?"

Buck turned up his top lip in a contemptuous grin.

"I didn't squeal—what you take me for?"

The two boys walked past the iron gates and out into the narrow street. Loitering there was Master Claude Pierce, who was throwing his ball against the wall and catching it as if he had not a care in the world, though actually he was wondering whether the two senior boys of his class would not be pally after he had lied to save them. He decided on a bold move.

"Oh, hallo, fellows—want to play?" he called out and tossed the ball to Buck, who caught it.

Buck, holding the ball securely, strode up to Claude, who stood his ground even though Buck's face was set in a ferocious grin.

"So you broke the window, huh?" sneered Buck. "Trying to go on record as a wise guy?"

"Why, no—you see—"

"Listen Mister Wise Guy, if it should happen that you're walking on the same side of the street as we are, you'd better get on the other side quick—otherwise you'll get your ears boxed. Come on, Gig." Buck turned to his friend. "Guess we'll have a game by ourselves. Pass"

Claude stood there and saw the two boys running down the street passing the ball to each other. His ball. The small chin stuck out sharply and the hands were clenched. Resolutely he set out for home, where he informed his father that he would like to be taught the noble art of fisticuffs. His father wanted to know why he was so keen to take up boxing.

"Well, there's a couple of fellows I'm afraid I'll have to lick," was the answer.

"I beg your pardon, but you're the concierge here, are you not?" demanded Claude.



One of the Gang

FOR three days Claude kept very much to himself. The teacher had provided him with a desk, so that he did not have to share with Gig. Several times he saw the boys playing with his football, and his dark eyes became angry but determined. He worked hard on his boxing over a week-end, and on the Monday set out for school full of fire and determination. It was in the lunch interval that he had the show-down.

Claude walked out into the street and there was Buck, Gig and a number of boys playing with the football. Claude placed his books very deliberately on a window ledge and waited his chance. Buck hurled the ball towards Gig, and Claude streaked out and intercepted the pass. He tucked it under his arm.

Buck stalked up to him. "Gimme that ball!" "It's my ball," stoutly affirmed Claude. "I'm very willing to let you fellows play with it if I'm in the game as well."

Buck bent down and thrust his snub nose within an inch of Claude's nose.

"What did I tell you would happen if you were on the same side of the street as me?"

"You can't make a rule like that. This is a free country."

"Pretty smart, ain't ye?" cried Buck, and turned. "Bugs, box this smarty's ears, he's too small for me."

"Oh, no, I'm not," Claude cried, and handed the ball to a gaping youth. He squared up. "Come on, you big bully!"

Buck gazed incredulously at the small figure. What a nerve! But he grunted when Claude punched him in the ribs. Buck came out of his trance and proceeded to place a large hand on Claude's forehead, and the more Claude tried to get free the harder became the grip. Claude lashed out with his arms, but he could not reach Buck, who had arched his body.

"Go on!" mocked Buck. "What are you waving at?"

In spite of being held at arm's length Claude strove to hit Buck, but with no better success. All the other boys gathered round and yelled encouragement. A policeman heard the noise and came round the corner to see what all the noise was about.

The taunting jeers maddened Claude and he wriggled free, charged forward, and Buck, losing his balance, crashed to the ground. Buck could not stand for that, and getting up he got hold of Claude's nose and tweaked it hard. Claude backed away, rubbed his aching nose and then rushed in with head down and arms swinging. One blow caught Buck in the stomach and the big boy retaliated with a nasty jab to the eye. Claude was hurled back, but was about to charge recklessly into the fight in a do or die effort when someone saw Muldoon, the policeman. There was a yell of "cops," and Claude found himself in a deserted street.

Claude stared up at the tall police officer and smiled.

"Good-morning, officer," he said coolly.

"Were you kids fighting?" demanded Muldoon.

"Fighting!" exclaimed Claude, blinking an eye that seemed to be closing. "It was just a friendly argument." He picked up his cap from the ground and dusted it.

"Then why did all them other scamps vamoose so quick?"

"They have a certain respect for the arm of the law," Claude smiled. "They might have thought you were going to pin something on them."

The police officer went off chuckling. Claude collected his books and walked down the street. Behind an old cart crouched Buck, Gig and a freckled youth who was Bugs.

"What was you saying to Muldoon?" demanded Buck.

"Nothing!" haughtily replied Claude. "I'd like my football, please."

Buck looked at Claude's eye.

"Did he ask you who gave you that shiner?"

"I told him nothing. What do you think I am—a squealer?"

That took Buck aback, and he licked his lips as if this small, upright young fellow was beyond his comprehension. He looked at Gig, who seemed rather dazed, and then at Bugs, who had hold of the football.

"Go on," Buck snarled at Bugs. "Give him his ball."

Claude took the ball and beamed happily. Though triumphant, he made that smile just politely friendly.

Buck looked at him under furrowed brows.

"Come on, if you're coming," he muttered. "And that goes for you as well."

Wondering what Buck meant, Claude solemnly followed the three other boys. No comment was made, though Gig and Bugs looked curiously at the smaller boy. They entered a sort of scrap yard. Bits of old cars, old wheels, worn tyres, and rusty iron of all shapes. Beyond was a small shed, containing a forge and a bench and a lot more rubbish. They passed through this curious building out of a back door into another waste heap. Near a fence was a queer, ramshackle construction made from old tarpaulins and crate boxes.

It was the gang headquarters. They all trooped inside. Two other boys sprawled on the floor. An ancient oil lamp fitfully glimmered.

"Hi, ya, Buck?"

Buck nodded and sat down on a crate. Gig touched his pal on the shoulder and pointed to Claude, who was standing in the doorway.

"What did you bring him along for?"

"Shucks, what's the difference," Buck suddenly glowered round. "He's in. Any arguments?"

No one had the nerve to protest, because Buck was a head taller than

most of them. Solemnly they raised their hands as a sign that the motion passed.

Buck pointed to a chair, which had seen better days. "You're elected. Sit down, Dope."

Claude sat down in the chair and, of course, the bottom gave way and he went through.

"I'm sorry, fellows," apologised Claude. "I'm afraid I've broken the chair."

With great difficulty Claude was freed and he looked round nervously. He saw a chair.

"Bust that!" threatened Bugs, "and I'll bust you one in the—"

"Shut up, Bugs!" snapped Buck.

"Bugs?" Claude drew his brows together. "That's an odd name, isn't it?"

"No—he eats bugs, that's all," explained Buck.

"Oh, do you?" Claude looked at Bugs with awe and respect. "What do they taste like?"

"Just kinda bitter." Bugs grinned, for Claude was showing respect for his prowess. "I ate a bee once."

"Yeah, and you got stung," sneered Gig.

Buck touched Claude on the shoulder and pointed to a biggish boy.

"This is Six Toes. Better show him."

Claude's eyes goggled to see a boy who had six toes on both feet.

"Only about eight people in the world have feet like mine," boasted the owner. "I'm learning to write and draw with 'em, then my ma's gonna put me in a circus—guess I'll make a big draw. I can write pretty good, but she's getting mad 'cause I can't learn to spell."

"Shivvie said he'd give us half a buck for every tyre we got," announced Gig.

By listening, Claude learnt that Shivvie was the man who owned this rubbish heap and the shed.

"We can make a buck a day easy," decided Buck.

Gig became all thoughtful, and began muttering vaguely. At last he turned to his chief.

"Not every day. Eighty bucks—guess that'll take a hundred and sixty days."

"Eighty bucks!" gasped Buck. "What you want all that dough for?"

"I was looking at a tombstone for my old man. I saw one and the guy told me it was eighty bucks," Gig sighed. "It was a swell stone."

"Why don't you ask your Aunt Rose for the dough?" hinted Buck.

"She didn't like my old man."

Buck turned up his lips.

"You don't have to tell her what it's for. She's always trying to give you things. It's easy. Where does she live?"

"On Park Avenue. I've never been up there."

"Come on." Buck jumped up.

"Let's go up right now and ask her for the eighty."

When Buck and Gig departed they were followed by Claude. In the street Gig swung round angrily.

"Where do you think you're going?"

"I was just wondering if you fellows were going up town by subway," Claude answered.

"No, we're taking a taxi," sneered Buck.

"I've thirty cents." Claude produced this wealth. "We could take the subway."

Buck looked at the money, then at Gig.

"Gee, I reckon we've got time for an ice cream soda."

So the three boys spent the money on soda and instructed Claude in the art of "hitching" a ride up town on the back of a truck. Some time later they

found themselves in Park Avenue, and before a great building, where Gig's Aunt Rose resided. They made to enter the building, but a gorgeous person in uniform appeared and barred their way.

"You kids keep outa here."

"We're going in to see my Aunt Rose!" shouted Gig.

"You may want to see President Roosevelt, but you ain't coming in here," the doorman laughed sneeringly. "Your Aunt Rose—oh, yeah!"

"You can't make a rule like that."

Buck remembered what Claude had said to him. "This is a free country."

The remark seemed to infuriate the doorman because he threatened them with violence if they didn't scam.

They moved away and the man turned his back. The three boys streaked past and his hands clenching at them caught only the air. In the vast hall they sighted a clerk at a reception office.

They arrived there a split second before the doorman.

"You boys can't come in here," the clerk cried in haughty tones.

"Hey, wait a minute," cried Gig.

"Rose Hawley lives here, don't she?"

"Why, yes, but—"

"Well, she's my aunt and she told me to come up and see her, see!"

"A lot of lies," panted out the doorman. "Come on, get out of here!" He gripped Gig and Buck by the coat-collar.

"Let me go, you big flatfoot." Buck struggled to break free.

"Wait a minute, my man!" spoke a clear, sharp voice. It was Claude. The doorman gazed at him doubtfully. Claude then turned to the clerk. "I beg your pardon, but you're the concierge here, are you not?"

Now the clerk goggled at him.

"Huh?" was all he could say.

Claude gestured towards his friends.

"This is Gig Stevens. And if you'll just kindly announce him to his aunt, Miss Hawley, I should be greatly obliged."

The clerk just obeyed. This small youth with his clear treble and compelling dark eyes had will power. The doorman relaxed his grip on Buck and Gig. A minute later the doorman was pressing the button of an elevator.

"You close the doors and—"

"I am fully conversant with lifts," coldly stated Claude. "Kindly close the doors."

With respect Buck and Gig gazed at this youth, who was so cool and calm, even though he did use words they did not understand. They saw him walk up to a lot of knobs and without hesitating press one of them. The elevator shot upwards to the eighteenth floor, where Claude pulled back the sliding grille and motioned the other two to step out. They followed him like lambs down the corridor.

Rose was delighted to see the boys. She was rehearsing a song she was to sing that night, and they listened spellbound. She told them of the time she was in a variety act and did cart-wheels. For Claude's benefit she did several. Then Maria, her black maid, brought in iced drinks, and it was a merry party which was brought to an end by the maid announcing that Mr. Barkell wanted to see her at the theatre at once.

It was then that Gig summed up courage and asked her if she could loan him eighty dollars.

"Eighty dollars!" cried Rose. "That is a touch. What do you want all that money for?"

Poor Gig shuffled his feet.

"Well—I—well—I just gotta have eighty dollars. It's on the level."

"I know it is," said Rose. "But you must tell me what you want the money for—it is a large sum."

Then Mr. Barkell rang up again and said he was sending a car—it was urgent. Aunt Rose flew into the next room to change her dress.

"You come to see me one afternoon next week and we'll talk it over," were her parting words. "Now I must rush."

Claude went home and told his father all about being allowed to join the gang, his friendship with Gig and Buck, and the visit to Aunt Rose, but he said nothing at first about the reason of their visit. Finally, he reminded his father that he had been promised a bicycle, and that instead of the bicycle—

"Listen," interrupted his father, "we're going to have to put off that bicycle for a time. Some plans have come back for changes, and we don't get paid till they're accepted. We haven't many dollars knocking around spare."

"You mean, dad, we're rather hard up?" questioned Claude.

"I'm afraid so."

"You mean we're poor like Gig and Buck?"

His father nodded.

"I'm afraid so, son," he said.

"Are we so poor that I might wear a pair of corduroy pants?" hinted Claude. "I look rather rich in these clothes, and I feel I'd be liked better by the boys if I wore a jersey and pants."

So Claude got his pants, but he did not get the eighty dollars. The money worried Claude in the happy days that followed, because he knew how set Gig was on getting a tombstone for his father.

Three Young Robbers

IN the succeeding days Claude went often to the gang hide-out, but Buck and Gig were seldom there. The two boys always seemed to have some business that took them away directly school hours were finished. They were quite friendly to Claude when he did see them, but they did not reveal the reason of their actions, and the younger boy knew they were up to something.

One day he saw them busy near a car, and when the owner appeared, Claude was surprised to see them vanish down an alley. The car drove away and Claude was amazed when a spare wheel fell off the back. He questioned Buck and found out that every spare tyre that they took to their friend Shivvie they received half a dollar.

Gig suggested that as they were not doing very well it would be a good idea if they speeded up trade and used Claude as a look-out. Claude did not wish to displease the two bigger boys by refusing, but he did not like taking these tyres, even if the money was for Gig's gravestone for his father. He made a slight protest.

"You're yellow!" sneered Buck.

Claude protested and thus became the look-out, but they had little luck because every time they found a car with an easy spare wheel there were always policemen about, and but for Claude's shrill whistling might easily have been caught. Finally, they abandoned work for the day.

"Fellows, I don't like being a look-out," Claude had the courage to state. "Besides, you'll never get eighty dollars this way."

"So what you got, smart guy, that's better?" demanded Gig.

"Why—why that's quite simple. You want to steal from the rich, like Mr. Raffles!"

"Raffles—what mob did he run with?" asked Buck.

"He didn't have to have a mob—he was a lone wolf," Claude explained. "My idea is to take things that boys like us can dispose of without suspicion."

"Like what?" asked Buck.

"Like toys and things. Shall we go down to the hide-out and make our plans?"

Gig looked at Buck, and the latter nodded.

"We've got nothing to lose. Let's go."

That night Claude's father had to go into town on business, so Claude was free. He arranged to meet Gig and Buck at the hide-out at seven o'clock. All they required was a sack and a torch. It was Claude's idea that they break into some place, which looked deserted. He led them up-town and into a select but quiet neighbourhood. There were a number of places that looked likely, but Claude was not satisfied. He gave a deep "Ah!" when they came to the gates of a big house. These were padlocked.

"It's all boarded up—the people are away," he hissed. "This is the crib, fellows. Now, you men, help me over this wall and then I'll help you over."

They found themselves in a dark, gloomy garden. Buck and Gig kept on jumping nervously as the bushes rustled—they would not have admitted that they were scared. Claude made them hide in some bushes whilst he went exploring. He returned to say that all was well. They climbed some steps in an area to a back door, and here Claude insisted upon extreme caution. Not a sound.

"The door's locked," whispered Gig. "Do we break it down?"

Claude produced a knife and some wire.

"Leave this to me, fellows," he ordered. "You mount guard whilst I work on the lock."

A sound made Buck and Gig swing round. Their eyes opened wide, because the back door stood open. Claude beckoned them and they tiptoed over the threshold. A nasty feeling ran down their spines when the door was closed.

"We can get twenty years for breaking into a house," Buck said with chattering teeth.

"When you steal, you have to take chances," Claude announced. "Say, you men aren't afraid, are you?"

"Who, me?" rasped Buck. "Let's go!"

"Yeah!" added Gig. "Let's go!"

Several times they fell over things and waited trembling to hear someone call out. They found their way to a large domed-shaped hall. Everything was covered in white sheets, and Gig thought one high-backed chair was a ghost.

"Shhh!" Claude hissed. "Tiptoe!"

"What are we going upstairs for?" Gig asked in hollow tones.

"People always keep their valuables upstairs," Claude answered, and led the way. His torch cut a white beam in the blackness.

"Are you cold, too, Buck?" asked Gig, hearing his pal breathing on his hands.

Buck had to admit that he was shivering, but not with fright.

Claude found a play room, and Buck and Gig gazed with envious eyes at the piles of toys and amusements in the room. There was a large steam-engine, a miniature dynamo that worked sets of machinery, a sled, some skis, boxes of marvellous soldiers, roller-skates and a number of air-guns.

"We've got no time to lose, men," Claude was businesslike. "Only take

what we can carry. We may have to make two trips."

Now Officer Muldoon was suspicious of Gig and Buck, and had a strong idea that they were responsible for a number of petty thefts. This belief had arisen when he had seen a spare wheel bounce off a car when those two had been lurking near the car. By evil fortune he observed the three boys leaving a pawnshop, and he decided to find out what they had been doing in the shop. When he heard they had disposed of some very valuable toys Officer Muldoon at once got busy.

The boys saw a stone-cutter, and for his eighty dollars Gig got a fine stone with an angel on it. The man promised to have it delivered to the Lawnrest Cemetery as soon as the names of James Edward Stevens had been engraved on it.

That evening Gig hastened home to tell his mother that he had bought a tombstone, and he was disgusted to find that Paul Krump was there. Krump was a fat little man and owned some sort of business. He had been an admirer of Jennie Stevens for years, and wanted her to change her name. Mrs. Stevens was seriously considering the matter when Gig burst into the room.

Gig tried to get a chance to talk with his mother, but eventually in disgust went to his room. He was moping over a book when there came a ring at the bell. Two men were outside, and they asked to see Mrs. Stevens.

"You're to bring your boy down to the Hall of Justice to-morrow morning at ten o'clock," one man informed her. "The charge is a burglary suspect. Him and two other boys."

When the door had closed his mother turned on him.

"Oh, Gig, what have you done?" she wailed. "Am I going to have to go through with you what I did with your father?"

"You ain't caring much about my

father!" flamed Gig, with an angry glare at peaceful little Krump.

"Just a moment, my boy—"

"I ain't your boy!" shouted Gig, and shut himself in his bed-room.

There was a terrible scene in the Murphy house when the plain-clothes man issued the order for Buck to appear on the following morning. Old man Murphy tried to thrash the truth out of his son, but though the blows with the leather belt hurt Buck he would not say a word. It was Mrs. Murphy who stopped her husband from half-killing the lad.

Jay Pierce looked inquiringly at his son when the police had gone.

"I can't tell you a thing—really I can't," Claude told his father.

"Why not?"

"Well, dad, you wouldn't want me to be a squealer, would you? You see I'm one of the gang now. You see we have a code, and—"

"What about our code?" interrupted Jay Pierce. "Are we supposed to have secrets from each other?"

"Dad, I—truly, you just don't understand, that's all."

"Claude, come here," his father commanded, and the boy obeyed. "Look straight at me. There's one thing I want to know. Examine yourself inside—in your heart. Have you done anything dishonourable—anything to be ashamed of?"

"No, sir."

Jay Pierce gave a sigh of relief.

"Right!" He patted his son's shoulder. "Then whatever it is we'll see it through, huh?"

The Hall of Justice

OFFICER MULDOON did his work thoroughly, and found out enough to convince him that the three boys were thieves.

The culprits, their parents and those concerned in the case took up two benches. The parents still had no idea



The doctor appeared and took one look at the limp form in Buck's arms. "Bring him inside at once," he cried. "Your friend looks pretty bad!"

what their boys had been doing. Rose received a tearful message from Jennie, and hastened down to the court. She recognised Claude's father at once. The nice man, who had thrown a football at her.

"Do you know what all this is about?" Jay Pierce whispered in Rose Hawley's ear. "None of us here know a thing, and the boys won't talk."

"No, I don't," Rose whispered back. "I've seen Gig, but he's gone stubbornly foolish on me. So your star half-back has done the same?"

They had to be silent whilst the judge, a clean-shaven, sharp-featured man of middle age, delivered sentence on a boy mixed up with a race-course gang of toughs.

"Joseph Wilson!" thundered the judge. "I usually pronounce sentence in chambers, but your case is so flagrantly full of misdemeanours, broken promises, open defiance to the law, that I feel the whole court should listen less any others be tempted to follow in your footsteps. For two years you have lied to the probation officers, who have tried to help you; you've lied to me, but what's worse you've lied to your mother. Stolen and lied and succeeded in making her very miserable. Therefore, it's my unpleasant duty to sentence you on this date to four years in the State Reformatory."

Buck swallowed, Gig gave a little gasp, and Claude gave his father a nervous glance. The judge announced that the next case would be heard in chambers.

"Robert Murphy, James Stevens, Claude Pierce!" boomed forth the voice of the clerk. "Their parents, witnesses and officers in the case, step this way, please."

"Hope they send us all to the same place!" Buck gave a feeble imitation of a defiant grin at Gig. The latter just looked miserable.

In the judge's chambers they were placed by the clerk in various benches and told to maintain silence. A door opened and the same judge appeared. The first person he called was the pawnbroker.

"Your Honour, you could have knocked me over with a feather when Officer Muldoon questioned me about the toys," concluded the old Hebrew. "You agree I was very generous on the deal, your Honour. They couldn't have got that price from any other establishment, and—"

"That will be all, Mr. Maltz."

"Can I go now?" the old rascal whined.

"No!" the judge barked out the command. "Be seated, please." He studied a report on the case closely, and all watched him anxiously. He looked up at last. "I see by this report that none of you boys will help us or yourselves by saying a word in this matter." His grey eyes were very compelling when he looked at Buck Murphy. "Is that right, Robert?"

"That's right."

"Robert, look at me when you're talking."

"Yes, sir, that's right." Buck held up his head defiantly.

"James, can't you help us?" questioned the judge.

"No, sir," muttered Gig.

The judge looked at Claude.

"What about you, Claude? Wouldn't you like to say something?"

"No, your Honour!"

The judge turned again to his report.

"I see that none of the parents recognised these toys, or that pocket-money was ever given in sufficient amounts to allow for such purchases. Is that correct, Mr. Murphy?"

December 26th, 1936.

"It is!" rasped that irate father. "I wouldn't spoil my son with such truck, your Honour. And if you'll let me have those kids for three minutes I'll show you how to get this thing out of them."

"Maybe, Mr. Murphy; but there are better methods than that," the judge said quietly. "Those methods often get a confession, but not necessarily the truth. We have no actual complaint against these boys. We only suspect, from the evidence, that their parents are guilty of improper supervision." He looked meaningfully at Murphy senior, who wriggled uncomfortably. "Mr. Pierce, your affidavit concerning the toys is the same?"

"Yes, your Honour."

"Mrs. Stevens, you also—"

Rose stood up.

"Your Honour, I'm Rose Hawley, Gig's aunt, his mother's sister. She couldn't be here to-day, so she called me up and asked me to take her place. You see, she works from ten until five at the University Laundry on Fourteenth Street."

"I understand." The judge nodded kindly, and then proceeded to question each of the grown-ups about the life each child spent. The three boys were friends, and they certainly came from different walks in life. He learnt very little from the grown-ups, and finally made the three come up close to his desk.

NEXT WEEK'S BIG HITS!



LEW AYRES

IN

"SHAKEDOWN"

Because her father appears to be opposed to her marriage to Bob Sanderson, an impecunious young engineer, Edith Stuart agrees to a crooked secretary's suggestion that she should be kidnapped—as a hoax—so that Bob can play the hero. But she walks right into a trap—and murder follows. A first-rate thriller.

"SKULL AND CROWN"

The tale of a dog that fought with slashing fangs to help his master wreak vengeance on a murderous band of outlaws. Starring Regis Toomey.

Also

Another splendid episode of
"THE ADVENTURES OF REX AND RINTY"

Starring Kane Richmond, Norma Taylor and Rex and Rinty.

"Now, look here, the best fun I get is making friends with the boys who come here to talk with me, and I mean friendships that last," he told them. "But sometimes friendships go through a lot of trouble. My hunch is that you and Gig know the real story behind these toys, and that Claude just found himself tagging along. Is that so?" Buck and Gig just stared back at him defiantly.

"Oh, no, sir!" Claude spoke. "We're all in this together."

"I was not addressing you, Claude," reproved the judge, and gazed intently at the two bigger boys. "Since you two both refuse to tell the simple truth I couldn't very well put you on probation, could I?"

"What are you gonna do to us?" demanded Buck.

The judge gave a despairing shrug of his shoulders.

"Well, you were out there and heard where I had to send Joe Wilson. If you refuse to tell the truth it'll only prove to me that you're starting on the road to the same place. I know it looks a merry old road while you're on it—you outsmart a lot of people—and you're big shots and have a lot of fun—you won't squeal. Then suddenly you land inside, and then all the fun's gone. No getting out to play after school, because there's school all the time up there. No going home to see your folks. Now, isn't it best to talk this over?"

"I got nothing to say, I tell ya!" shouted Buck defiantly.

"Me, neither!" cried Gig.

"I'm sorry for that attitude," said the judge. "In that case I have only one alternative, and it will be my painful duty—"

"If you please, your Honour!" piped a small voice. "It's nothing to do with Buck and Gig—I planned the whole robbery, sir!"

"Robbery, Claude?" the judge questioned sharply.

"Yes, sir!" Claude spoke clearly.

"You see, Gig needed eighty dollars, and—well, I didn't think it was right for us to steal tyres when I knew a perfectly good house we could rob all at once."

The judge blinked.

"What house did you rob?"

"Why, my own house, sir."

"Your own house?"

"Yes, sir. Well—my mother's—26, East 68th Street, sir. She's away in Florida. But she left me the keys." Claude gave his two friends a nervous glance, and he did not like their open-mouthed expressions. "Those are my toys, sir. I—I haven't told Gig and Buck until now, sir."

"Why haven't you told them?"

"Well, there was the eighty dollars needed, and I suppose I just wanted to be Raffles, that's all." He stared fearlessly at the judge. "But Raffles in the right way."

"I see." The judge fingered his chin, then looked over Claude's head. "Mr. Pierce, this is all quite possible?"

"More than probable, your Honour."

The judge turned to one of the culprits.

"Gig, do you mind telling me what you did with the eighty dollars?"

"I don't mind telling anybody." Gig scowled at Claude. "And I don't care how I was fooled into getting it, either. I bought a tombstone with it for my old man. And they can't take it away from him, 'cause it's bought and paid for."

Thus the clever judge got the whole truth out of the boys, and finally he passed sentence on Buck and Gig.

"Both you two fellows knew you were stealing something that didn't belong to you. You can't do those sort of

(Continued on page 25)

A hoard of loot hidden somewhere in America's famous National Park, and Death stalking the paths of the men who were seeking it. A gripping tale of the Wyoming Hills, starring Henry Hunter and Judith Barrett

"YELLOWSTONE"



Foster's Secret

THERE was a record crowd staying at the Old Faithful Camp, situated in the heart of the vast reservation known as Yellowstone Park. For the tourist season was in full swing, and citizens from all over the States had become aware that few corners of the globe were more attractive than this area which had been purchased by the nation and opened to the public as a holiday resort.

Old Faithful Camp was the site of an hotel built on the lines of a mammoth shooting lodge, and referred to as the Inn. Here you could live at a reasonable cost and enjoy the society of a motley throng of residents, or, if you liked a certain amount of privacy, you could rent one of the trim, well-furnished cabins which clustered around the main building like the huts of an army cantonment.

But wherever you lodged, whether at the Inn or in one of the cabins, you commanded a view from your windows of some of the finest scenery that the United States could boast—a landscape that held you breathless with wonder as you gazed on the natural beauty of the Wyoming mountains, or the dark belts of forest, or the barren plateaux dotted with those hot springs which men call geysers, and which sometimes hurled columns of steam high into the air when subterranean forces awoke them into furious activity.

"A veritable paradise"—thus was the Yellowstone Park described in the pamphlets that advertised it as a resort, and the phrase was well merited. You might be there to hunt game, to toy with rod and line, to ride or to motor or to mountaineer, to study plant life or rock formations; whatever your hobby, you would not be disappointed.

But what was the hobby of James Foster, fifty-year-old holiday-maker, who looked as if the cares of the world rested on his shoulders, and who had rented one of those trim, well-furnished cabins for himself and his daughter Ruth?

A slight, grey-haired and pale-faced individual, Foster had been heard to mention that his chief object in coming to Yellowstone was a desire to sample the fishing in its rivers. Yet, although he had been at the camp for a week or two, he had not been seen indulging in this sport that he professed to favour.

He still talked of fishing, however, on such occasions as anyone engaged him in conversation. He was discussing it now, on the evening of the fourteenth day of his stay—discussing it with a stalwart young man who had called in at his cabin.

The young man in question was Dick Sherwood, and he was a member of the Forest Ranger Service, a body of Government employees whose job it was to police the Yellowstone Park and see that tourists did not violate any of the regulations.

"Yes," Foster was saying to Dick Sherwood, "I've been told that the best fishing in the reservation is to be had on the northern reaches of the river, and I'm tempted to make a start to-night and spend the whole of to-morrow up there."

"I can sure recommend the fishing up that way, Mr. Foster," Dick Sherwood informed him, "and if you take my advice you'll pitch camp below Sioux Bluff. Er—would you be taking your daughter with you?"

The older man could not forbear from smiling.

"No, Sherwood," he said. "Would

you mind looking after her for me while you're off duty?"

"Would I mind, sir!" the Ranger declared with unconcealed enthusiasm. "It would be a pleasure."

Again James Foster smiled.

"H'm, she is mighty pretty, isn't she?" he murmured, a faint twinkle appearing in his otherwise sombre eyes. "She tells me that you're taking her to the alfresco entertainment that the hotel management has arranged for to-night."

"That's right, sir," Dick Sherwood answered, with a grin.

There was a silence, and then James Foster spoke again.

"You'll take good care of Ruth, Sherwood, won't you?" he said. "You know, she means a great deal to me."

"I can understand that, sir. And she thinks the world of you, too. Why, the first time I met her—the day you arrived here—she was talking about you in no time. I could see that you rated pretty high with her, Mr. Foster."

It was almost as if a look of pain crossed the older man's features.

"Yes," he mused. "Poor Ruth, she must have missed me cruelly. You see, Sherwood, her mother died when she was a child, and I had to leave her in the care of an aunt for—for eighteen years. And all that time I never saw her once, for the nature of my business took me to the other side of the world, where I was constantly travelling from one country to another.

"This is the first holiday my daughter and I have ever had together, Sherwood," he added. "Two weeks ago, I set eyes on her for the first time in eighteen years—the girl from whom I had been separated when she was a mere baby, and who is now grown to woman-

hood. It—it was a moment I shall never forget, Sherwood—that moment when we were brought together again."

Dick could well realise the emotions that must have been roused in this man and his daughter after so long a separation, but before he could volunteer any comment a door swung open on its hinges and a radiantly beautiful girl emerged from one of the cabin's bedrooms.

She was the girl whom they had been discussing, and it was not to be wondered at that Dick Sherwood had noticed her on the day of her arrival and had resolved to make her acquaintance at the earliest possible moment.

"Well, Mr. Ranger," she announced gaily, "I'm ready to be taken into custody."

"Okay," Dick rejoined, offering her his arm, "and let me tell you, I never had a better-looking prisoner."

James Foster smiled at his daughter and her handsome escort, and then he spoke to the girl quietly.

"By the way, Ruth," he mentioned, "I think I'll set out on that fishing-trip in the north all right. So don't worry if you find me gone when you get back to-night. I'll return to the camp by to-morrow evening at the latest."

The girl nodded, and a moment afterwards she and Dick Sherwood were making their way from the cabin, Foster seeing them to the front door and watching them as they hurried in the direction of the Inn.

For the space of several seconds he followed them with his eyes, and then, drawing in a long breath, he turned to re-enter the cabin. But even as he was on the point of closing the door a figure stepped into the porch, the figure of a youngish, clean-shaven man who had apparently been waiting in the shadows until Ruth and Dick Sherwood were out of sight.

"Just a minute, Mr. Foster."

Foster pulled the door wide open again, and recognised his visitor as an individual who was staying at the Inn and who had casually introduced himself as Marty Ryan a few days previously. For although some of the holiday-makers had private cabins, all took their meals in the restaurant of the main building, and this man Ryan had been allocated to a table near the one reserved for the Fosters.

"I'd like to talk to you, Mr. Foster," Marty Ryan went on, as the older man looked at him inquiringly.

Foster moved aside for him to enter, and, closing the door, indicated a chair. Then, as Ryan seated himself, his host again directed a quizzical glance at him.

Ryan leaned forward, and suddenly Foster became aware that a change had taken place in the fellow's manner. His face, in repose, not unpleasing except for a certain shiftiness of the eyes, was rendered distasteful all at once by an expression of evil cunning.

"I think it's about time I had a showdown with you, Anderson," he said.

James Foster started, and for a moment a look of ghastly apprehension revealed itself on his features. Then with a visible effort he recovered himself.

"I don't think I understand, Mr. Ryan," he murmured. "Who told you my name was Anderson?"

"You needn't try to bluff," Ryan observed. "Listen, friend, in the days before this territory was made into a national reservation it was a pretty tough country, and some eighteen years ago there was a certain gang of Western bandits who got away with a lot of dough."

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Foster's hands were twitching slightly, in plain agitation.

"That gang was rounded up," Ryan continued, "but not before one of them had planted the swag—a hundred thousand dollars that was never recovered. And the man who planted that money—the only man who knows where it is to-day—that man was you, James Anderson."

Foster spoke with difficulty. "Who—who are you, Ryan?" he faltered. "Who put you up to this?"

"The name's Jenkins, Anderson," came the deliberate reply. "Marty Jenkins, alias Ryan. The son of Tracy Jenkins, who was a member of the same gang that you belonged to—who went to San Quentin Prison with you—and who died soon after his release a year ago."

He paused, regarding Foster narrowly.

"My old man told me everything before he passed out," he continued. "That's why I picked up your trail when you came out of San Quentin just over two weeks ago. That's why I'm here, for I knew you'd figure on digging up the loot you hid away, and I want the cut that my old man was entitled to."

James Foster ran his fingers round the inside of his collar.

"Is that all you've got to say to me?" he breathed.

"Isn't it enough?" Marty Ryan queried grimly. "Or do I have to mention your daughter? Yes, Anderson, I know the whole story. I know how your daughter was brought up in the name of Foster and led to believe that you had some sort of a job that kept you jumping from place to place on the other side of the world. I wonder how she'd feel if somebody told her that you'd been a lot nearer home all these years—in San Quentin penitentiary."

Foster's shoulders seemed to droop. "All right," he muttered. "You're in on the deal. I'll split with you."

"When? I don't like to be kept waiting—Anderson."

"You may have to wait," Foster jerked. "I've waited eighteen years. I'm heading for the cache to-night, but it's possible I'll have to give up. There's a man named Hardigan living at the hotel—"

"Hardigan," Ryan interposed. "Sure, I know him. He checked in the same day as I arrived. A big, grizzly haired guy—interested in hunting, I think he said. What's he got to do with you, anyway?"

James Foster moistened his lips.

"He was careless enough to leave his wallet in a chair at the Inn the other day," he said. "Must have slipped out of his pocket, I guess. I took a look at that wallet, because I didn't like the way he's been trying to get me in conversation ever since he arrived. And I found out that he's a private detective, operating for the insurance company that had to make good the hundred thousand dollars which were stolen eighteen years ago."

Marty Ryan frowned, and stroked his chin thoughtfully. Then he gave Foster a sidelong glance.

"Did you give him back his wallet?" he asked.

"Of course not. I left it on the chair. Later he came back for it himself, and I don't think he suspects that I know who he is. But he's watching me—you can depend on that—and that's why I've got to be careful."

Ryan nodded, rising to his feet as he did so.

"There's just one more question I'd like to put to you, Anderson," he stated.

"Are any other members of the old

gang alive? My father only talked of you."

"One man may be alive," Foster answered. "Bald Jack, we called him. That's the only name we knew him by. He got off with a lighter sentence than any of us, and I don't know what happened to him after he was released."

He was silent for a moment, and then he spoke again:

"There's one thing I'd like to ask you, Ryan," he said shakily. "Be careful about using that name 'Anderson.' I left it behind me when I came out of San Quentin last month."

"Okay!" the other responded in a cool tone. "You won't hear it from me again, unless you try to double-cross me. I'll be seein' you—Mr. Foster."

The Earth Gives Up Its Dead

FROM the Foster cabin Marty Ryan strolled in the direction of the Inn, and as he approached it he heard the strains of music and saw a considerable mob of tourists congregated in front of the building.

A big camp-fire had been lit out in the open there, and flapjacks, bacon sandwiches and cans of steaming coffee were being handed around. Meanwhile an orchestra, tricked out in the garb of hill-billies, was playing ballads of the old West, and genuine veterans of the Wyoming mountains and prairies were dancing to the music from time to time, or else reciting tales of the days when there had been no National Park at Yellowstone, and fends and forays between Palefaces and Redmen or outlaws and sheriffs had been common occurrences.

Among the onlookers Marty Ryan espied Dick Sherwood and Ruth Foster, but he did not approach them. Nor did he attempt to join the throng of tourists who had assembled in front of the Inn. His way took him round to the stables where horses were to be hired at moderate price, and here he instructed a groom to saddle him a pony.

It was while Ryan was waiting for the animal to be led forth that a small, thick-set man of mature years accosted him, a mild-looking old fellow with a shock of black hair, who was also staying at the Inn and who had sometimes bored Ryan by engaging him in long-winded discussions on plant life.

"Ha, my boy," this individual said now, "why aren't you at the open-air concert?"

"Open-air concert?" Ryan echoed contemptuously. "No, it doesn't appeal to me, Professor Ross. On a moonlit evening like this I prefer to go riding."

"I don't blame you," Professor Ross declared. "I'm afraid the concert doesn't appeal to me, either. For my part, I mean to take a canter south and study some of the flora and fauna by this same glorious moonlight to which you have just referred. As you know, I am deeply interested in botany—"

By this time a horse had been fetched for Ryan, and he interrupted the professor in a somewhat impatient tone.

"Quite," he said. "A very engrossing subject, I'm sure. Er—good-night, professor!"

He swung himself into the saddle, and a moment later he was riding off. As for the elderly botanist, he gazed after him pensively for a few seconds, and then he, too, requested one of the establishment's grooms to let him have a pony.

Within a minute or two of Ryan's departure Professor Ross was also leaving the neighbourhood of the Inn, and, travelling at a canter, he passed round the fringe of the crowd which was attending the alfresco concert.

As he trotted by, he might have been

seen exchanging a nod here and there with people whose acquaintance he had made during his stay, and one of those to whom he inclined his head was Dick Sherwood, Forest Ranger.

Dick saluted him, turned to watch him amusedly as the old fellow cantered onward across the range and then grinned at Ruth Foster.

"Funny little old guy, that," he commented.

"Yes, who is he?" Ruth asked. "I don't think I've noticed him before. Has he been at the camp long?"

"About a fortnight," Dick told her. "But I'm not surprised you haven't spotted him. I understand he's generally late for meals, and when he's not out looking for queer plants he sticks fairly close to his room in the Inn. His name's Professor Ross, and he's a botanist. A bit eccentric, if you ask me."

He turned his attention upon the concert that was in progress, and before long he and Ruth had forgotten Professor Ross. Indeed, they gave no further thought to him that night, for the entertainment provided by the hotel was thoroughly diverting.

It was midnight before the camp-fire concert was brought to a close, and the throng was beginning to break up when a group of men came hurrying from a building some little distance away, a building which was the headquarters of the Ranger detachment to which Dick Sherwood belonged.

The men were headed by one Captain Radell, Dick's commanding officer, and the latter seemed in a state of high excitement, the cause of which was soon made apparent.

"Listen, everybody!" Radell called out. "We've just received a message from a tribe of Indians up in the north corner of the reservation, and they say that Old Bess has been showing signs of life. If any of you want to see her blow up, you'd better get started right away!"

His news created a tremendous stir, and in the space of thirty seconds the locality of the Old Faithful Inn was transformed into a scene reminiscent of gold-rush days, with people rushing to stable and garages in order to hire ponies or start up cars.

Ruth Foster was one of the few who did not show any signs of activity.

"What does it mean?" she asked Dick Sherwood in a bewildered tone. "Who is Old Bess?"

"The biggest geyser in the territory!" the young Ranger answered. "It's ten years since she spouted, and it's a sight not to be missed. Let me get you a horse, Ruth, and we'll ride over. You'll lose your beauty sleep, but you won't regret it, believe me."

She agreed to the proposal, and ere long she and Dick were astride a couple of fleet mustangs, on which they set out for the north; and, joining the

stream of humanity that was headed in that direction, they spurred onward through the night until the dawn was breaking in the eastern sky.

The stars had vanished from the heavens, and it was broad daylight when they reached their destination, to find a considerable number of people already assembled around a pit from which boiling water was welling up spasmodically.

Captain Radell and some of his men were there, holding the crowd in check and making sure that no one approached too close to the geyser, and, after forcing his way through the mob of spectators and gaining a privileged vantage-point for Ruth, Dick Sherwood lent his comrades a hand in the task of keeping the spectators at a safe distance.

Meanwhile fresh groups of onlookers were continually appearing on the scene, and there must have been several hundreds of sightseers present when suddenly there came the deep rumble of a subterranean explosion, which was followed by intense activity on the part of Old Bess.

Hurled on high by the forces of Nature, an immense column of water shot towards the heavens, loud-hissing, swathed in steam, so that the crowd retreated rapidly out of harm's way, and then stood ranked with uplifted and attentive faces.

The whole neighbourhood became enveloped in a warm, clammy mist. From hidden sources far below the ground, the geyser sent its enormous jet of boiling spring-water aloft into the still morning air, and men and women watched in breathless wonder for the space of half an hour, until the "tantrums" of Old Bess began to die down.

Slowly the liquid column subsided, and the clouds of steam evaporated, borne aside on the wings of a faint breeze that had arisen. Slowly the geyser blew itself out till the hole in the ground

was a mere bubbling well. And then all at once, as the last shreds of mist were swept away, a gasp went up from the assemblage that had witnessed the phenomenon.

Something was lying near the edge of that pit, a figure which had not been there when the geyser had first started to erupt, a figure which must have been thrown out of the crater to remain unseen and unsuspected while the outbreak had been at its height.

"It's a man!" someone shrieked, and the cry was taken up on all sides in accents of horror and amazement.

A man it was, lifeless, disfigured. Yet those who pressed towards him had no difficulty in recognising him. One glance revealed his identity—and at the same time disclosed the fact that it was not the geyser which had caused his death.

The man was James Foster, and there was a bullet-wound in his temple.

Dick Sherwood was among those who had been the first to reach the body, and as he saw who the man was he turned with an exclamation towards the spot where he had left Ruth, for his impulse was to prevent her from looking upon her father's huddled form.

But he was too late. The girl was by his side, staring aghast, swaying on her feet, and he was just in time to catch her in his arms as she pitched forward in a dead swoon.

Who Killed James Foster?

TWENTY-FOUR hours had elapsed since the discovery of James

Foster's murdered body, and four men and a girl were gathered in Captain Radell's office at the Ranger's headquarters.

The four men were Captain Radell himself, Dick Sherwood, Marty Ryan—and Hardigan, private detective. The girl was Ruth Foster, and she was sob-



"You!" Dick said tersely. "How did you get here?"

bing bitterly, for in a somewhat blunt and unsympathetic manner Hardigan had just informed her that she was the daughter of a man who had served eighteen years in a State penitentiary.

Now, however, Hardigan was addressing himself to Marty Ryan.

"Young man," Hardigan was saying, "as you probably know, the coroner has now ascertained that James Anderson—or Foster, as he called himself—was shot dead an hour or two before his body was found. It has also been established that he left Old Faithful in the early part of the evening."

Ryan looked at Hardigan nervously. There was something frightening about the detective. A commanding personality, with heavy features and a bulldog jaw, he had a pair of eyes that seemed to bore through and through you, and the brusqueness of his voice was that of a man who did not spare the feelings of anyone whom he had occasion to question.

"What has all this to do with me?" Ryan muttered. "Why have I been sent for?"

"I'm coming to that," Hardigan announced. "When we examined Foster's cabin yesterday, we found that the place had been ransacked. We also found a handkerchief bearing the initials 'M. R.', and you happen to be the only person at Old Faithful Camp whose name tallies with those initials."

Ryan turned angrily to Captain Radell.

"What is this man trying to suggest?" he blurted.

"Better not excite yourself, Mr. Ryan," the captain rejoined quietly. "Mr. Hardigan is co-operating with me in this case. As he has explained, his services were engaged by the insurance company which made good the loss of that hundred thousand dollars stolen eighteen years ago. Naturally the company would like to recover that money, and Mr. Hardigan is working on this mystery from that angle. At the same time, he is just as eager as I am to bring Foster's murderer to justice."

Marty Ryan spoke in a shaky tone. "Listen," he lied, "I don't know anything about a hundred thousand bucks, and I never had any idea that Foster wasn't what he professed to be. As for my handkerchief being found in his cabin—well, on the evening he left the camp I happened to be passing by and he asked me in for a drink. I must have dropped my handkerchief while I was there."

"Are you sure that you weren't in league with Foster?" Hardigan struck in. "Are you sure that you didn't go back to his cabin and ransack it—after you learned he was dead?"

"What would I do that for?" "To see if you could obtain a clue as to the whereabouts of the hundred thousand dollars," Hardigan retorted.

Ryan glared at him fiercely. "I tell you I knew nothing about that hidden loot!" he cried.

The private detective looked at him in silence for a while, and then he drew back a pace.

"All right, you may go, Ryan," he stated. "But don't try to leave the reservation. All roads leading from it are being patrolled, and no one will be allowed out until this business has been cleared up."

Marty Ryan made his way from the office sullenly enough, and when he had gone Hardigan turned to Ruth.

"Miss Foster," he observed, "when I told you about your father being an ex-convict, you appeared to be deeply shocked. But I'm not at all satisfied
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that you weren't fully aware of his record, and I want a straight answer to a straight question. Do you know where that money is?"

Dick Sherwood intervened. There was a set expression on his clean-cut face, and it was obvious that he was out of patience with the detective.

"Look here, Hardigan," he snapped, "I suggest that you have some consideration for Miss Foster's feelings. I—"

"You have a personal interest in the young lady," the older man interrupted sardonically. "I quite understand, for I've noticed she's been in your company a good deal during her stay here. But I think Captain Radell will agree with me when I suggest that sentiment must not enter into an affair of this kind. In short, I must be allowed to interrogate Miss Foster without being obstructed by you."

Dick clenched his fists, but he knew that Hardigan had every right to cross-examine Ruth, since Captain Radell had given him carte blanche to pursue an investigation.

"I fully realise the position, Mr. Hardigan," he said. "On the other hand, your methods—"

"Sherwood!" It was Radell who broke in on Dick now. "Sherwood, it is not for you to criticise Mr. Hardigan's methods. I propose that you make yourself useful by riding out to Old Bess again and reconnoitring the ground there for clues. That's an order."

Not without reluctance Dick took himself off, and Hardigan then concentrated his attention on Ruth once more. But although he tried to extract information from her, his persistent queries were met by impassioned denials, and, whatever impression the detective might have formed, Captain Radell was left in no doubt that the girl had been completely ignorant of her father's past.

Ruth was permitted to return to her cabin at last, and there she gave way to a fresh outburst of grief, sinking into a chair by the window of her bed-room and weeping as if her heart would break. And it was while the tears were still streaming from her eyes that she saw a man cantering by on horseback, a man whom she instantly recognised as Marty Ryan.

Her sobs died away, and, moving closer to the window, she watched him as he rode off across the range; and all at once she found herself wondering if there had been any link between him and her father.

She peered in the direction that Ryan was taking, and watched him until he had vanished beyond a fold in the landscape. Then, even as she was about to turn from the window, she perceived another figure ride past as if bent on the same course.

It was the figure of Professor Ross, the eccentric botanist whom Dick Sherwood had pointed out to her on the night of the alfresco concert, and there was something about the determined look on his face that convinced Ruth he was spurring in pursuit of Marty Ryan.

Startling as it was, this conviction seemed to be borne out as Ross disappeared over the low ridge at the exact spot where Ryan had crossed it, and, making up her mind to investigate the departure of these two men, Ruth left her cabin and hurried round to the stables.

She soon obtained a horse, and a minute or two later she was galloping to the summit of the ridge beyond which Ryan and the professor had passed.

Here she drew rein abruptly, shelter-

ing in a coppice that concealed her from view. For away ahead of her she descried Ryan, craning round in his saddle as if to satisfy himself that he was not being trailed, and nearer at hand she observed Professor Ross, hiding behind a cluster of great boulders where he had gone to cover in order to avoid the young man's roving eyes.

The coppice screened Ruth effectively—and Ross, if visible enough to her, was not discernible to Ryan, who therefore pressed on in the belief that he was alone.

The moment he had vanished from sight again, Professor Ross worked clear of the rocks and galloped after him, and, utterly certain now that the botanist was tracking Ryan, Ruth Foster likewise took up the chase.

There were frequent stoppages, whenever Ryan chanced to pause and look behind him, and so far as the trackers were concerned, there was a perpetual anxiety to be within easy reach of cover. But fortune favoured both Ross and the girl who was stealthily bringing up the rear, and without incident they reached the vicinity of the geyser known as Old Bess.

This was not Ryan's destination, however. He passed it by and disappeared in the direction of the river that cleaves across the north corner of Yellowstone. A little while later Ross had followed him out of sight, and Ruth, in her turn, drew near the fatal geyser where her father's body had been discovered the previous morning.

It was as she was swinging aside to avoid it that she heard someone call her name, and, wheeling with a start, she saw Dick Sherwood spur from a mass of thickets a little to the right.

"Why, Ruth," he ejaculated, pulling up alongside her, "what are you doing here?"

As briefly as possible she told him how she had set out to trail Ryan and the professor, and when she had finished her story he drew his brows together in a frown.

"It certainly looks like Ryan knows something," Dick agreed. "though I can't figure out why the professor should be on his track. Come on, we'll find out what the game is, anyhow. Which way did they go?"

Ruth pointed northward, and the two of them rode in that direction, coming within view of the river a short time afterwards; and even as they were approaching its bank the girl caught her companion by the arm.

"Dick!" she gasped. "Look!" She had stretched out her arm to indicate a tumbling cascade some little distance up-stream, and, staring towards those falls, Dick Sherwood beheld a pony standing near them—Ryan's pony, he judged, for there was no sign of that worthy.

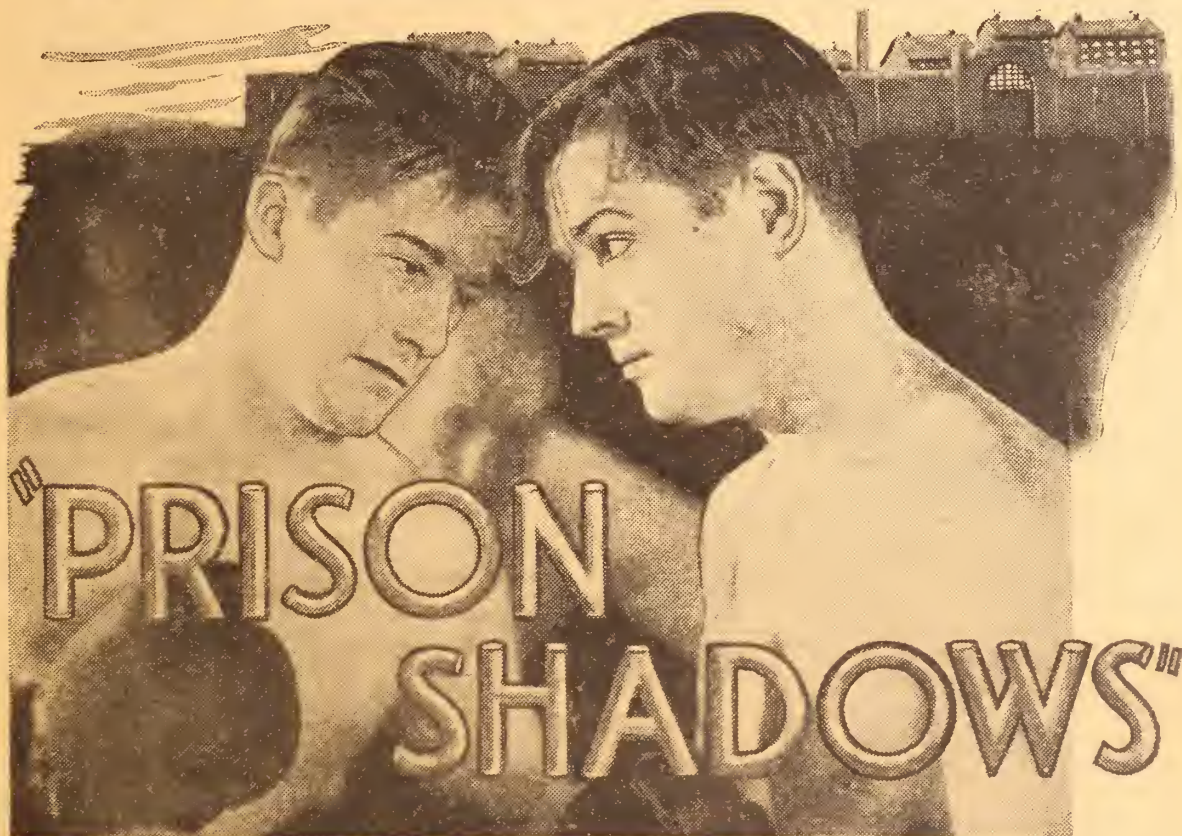
No, Ryan was nowhere to be seen. But Professor Ross was still visible, and the watchers saw him canter up to that riderless horse, saw him slide from the saddle of his own mount and then march straight into the drenching cataract, plodding knee-deep in swirling waters until he passed under the torrent of the falls and vanished from sight.

The Cavern of Doom

WHEN Ross forced his way through that deluge he scarcely knew what to expect, but, soaked to the skin, he suddenly found himself stumbling into a great cave hung with stalactites, pitted with craters that gave off alkaline fumes and charged with an

(Continued on page 23)

A drama of the prize ring and the underworld. A devoted girl and a faithful dog were his best allies, but he did not know until the fateful hour that revealed he had been tricked by a beautiful woman and a band of crooks. Starring Eddie Nugent



Doughnuts Once More

ROUND about the ring under the girdered roof was an unusual crowd of spectators. They were all men, and all were uniformed in grey loose clothes.

They were much the same as any other boxing enthusiasts in their clamorous support of their especial fancy: hoarse shouts and groans signified their approval or disgust, as the fight hetwixt two upstanding young fellows proceeded.

Well matched were these boys, and both boxing with skill and admirable fair play. A little too much of the latter, perhaps, was shown by the younger of the two, a presentable youth with dark hair, straightforward eyes and a hefty punch. His second, a hard-headed fellow, was yelling from a ring corner:

"Give him your right, Gene! Oh, hoy—give him your right!"

The bout was finishing. The boxers sparred for an extra effort. The youth called Gene smashed his left into his opponent's jaw and knocked him cold, but the bell rang for the end of the fight before he could be counted out.

The referee held up his hand whilst the boxers were in their corners, being tended by their seconds.

"The bout goes to Harris," he announced.

The roars that followed—the cheers and counter cheers—were cut into by the shrilling of a whistle. The entire company rose to their feet to stand to attention.

It could be seen, then, that all except the warders were convicts.

Gene Harris and his second formed up in the file to march out of the prison

gymnasium. They went solemnly back to the caged cell they shared. Gene flung himself face down on the hard bench and his companion took the bottle of liniment handed in by the warder, who stood by waiting for its return.

The bottle uncorked, the bullet-headed second took a swig at it from force of habit. Next instant he was spitting wildly.

"Outward application, Moran," said the warder. "Get busy!"

"Can't forget old habits, Dave," ehuekled the prostrate Gene. "Rub my shoulders."

Dave Moran poured the liniment on his friend's back and commenced to massage. "Pity you've forgot your kicks, Gene," he grumbled. "You oughter knocked him out with your right."

"I'm afraid, Dave," Gene confessed. "I don't want to kill a second time."

Moran finished his rubbing in silence, then passed back the bottle. When they were alone, he whispered low:

"You didn't kill Sweeney."
"Court says I did. Hence my being here—two years' detention for manslaughter."

"It's a mystery to me," Dave grumbled. "I've never known a heavy-weight pass out because of one solitary punch on the jaw. You certainly hit him, Gene—I'll allow that. But for 'Rough-house' Sweeney to go all limp and croak, soon as they got him out of the ring—" He shook his head. "It don't look right to me."

The warder had returned.

"Governor wants you hoy," he stated. "Don't wish to annoy you, but I guess you're to be paroled."

"Gee—both of us?" Moran gasped. "You were only an accessory," the warder reminded him. "And your time's up next month, anyway."

An hour later Gene was outside the prison in his much-ereased lounge suit. Dave was to follow in a few hours.

George Miller, sports promoter, had been accepted as parole for the pair of them. They were to work with him "on their honour" for the term of their respective sentences. Gene was full of gratitude—he longed to get to Miller and shake him by the hand.

He stood there outside the great gates, glancing right and left. He had a kind of hope that someone might be there to meet him. A someone whose cool, golden beauty had been always in his thoughts since first he had met her.

A wire-haired, terribly excited little brown-and-white terrier came charging at him, filling the air with joyous barks. Gene caught up the little animal in his arms.

"Why, Babe—you come to meet me! Well, now—isn't that fine!"

The little dog covered his face with wet kisses, but Gene didn't try to stop her. It was such a splendid welcome; such unselfish, whole-hearted affection.

But Babe couldn't have come alone. Gene looked afield and saw a girl in an open car.

"That's Claire, bless her!" he muttered to the dog, putting her down. "Let's go, Babe—and say thanks for bringing me."

But the girl in the car was as dark-haired as himself. She gave him a radiant smile as he came to her.

"Hallo, Mister Gene Harris!"

"Hallo, Miss Mary Grant—did you bring Babe?"

"Well, of course. Miller told me you were coming out this afternoon, and so I got the car and fetched Babe along." She studied his face. "Did you expect anyone else?"

"Half expected," he admitted. "I thought, maybe, that Claire—" He checked himself. "But it's great seeing you. Let's go places."

"Tea," she suggested. "I know a place where the doughnuts are wonderful."

"Doughnuts?" Gene's eyes lit up. "Plenty of jam in 'em?"

"Sure. Jump in—Babe's taken her seat already." The little terrier was in the back seat, sitting there demurely. Babe liked doughnuts, too.

The young fellow climbed in the car beside the girl at the wheel. He said in deeply grateful tones:

"It's great of Miller to go bail for me. I must get around and thank him."

"Tea first," the girl decided. The car started away as she asked in a casual way: "Claire write you much while you've been inside?"

"Not a lot," he owned. "She isn't good at letter writing. But I reckon she hasn't forgotten me."

Mary Grant made no reply. She accelerated the car and presently they entered the great city. They stopped at a little bakery off Broadway. Here they parked the car and went into the shop parlour. At Gene's command they were supplied with a liberal meal of tea and doughnuts. Gene shook out his check-patterned serviette, peering over it at his companion.

"You sure are a sweet girl, Mary. These doughnuts look the goods to me."

"Don't waste time talking," she teased. "Eat and be happy."

"When I'm married," said Gene, helping her to one of the sugar-covered brown cakes, "I'll have doughnuts every meal."

"I don't think Claire likes them all that much," Mary hinted. She added: "You think a lot of her, Gene, don't you?"

He nodded, his mouth full of pastry. He turned to feed the little dog from his plate. He didn't see the hurt look in his companion's brown eyes.

"Killer" Harris

IN an expensively furnished office on the ninth floor of a tall building on Forty-third Street, a rather theatrical-looking man of about thirty-five was seated at his desk and sipping from a glass of cold tea with a slice of lemon floating on the top of it. "You know, Claire," he addressed the tall blonde girl at the other side of the desk, "this English habit of five o'clock tea is getting a hold of me."

"It's the fashion," came the drawled answer. "Every little café has its five o'clock now. I guess your Miss Grant's imbibing somewhere."

"She has gone to meet Harris." Grey questioning eyes studied the girl's big dolly-blue ones. "You and Gene were sort of engaged, weren't you?"

"Sort of," she answered. "What about it?"

"Oh, nothing! Have some more tea?"

"Not me. I'm not fashionable that way." She gave him a dazzling smile. "You needn't be jealous, George. I've forgotten Gene."

"You're going to be Mrs. Miller, huh?"

"I won't say all that." She got up to walk round to him and put an arm about his neck. "But I like you a lot, Mr. Miller."

December 26th, 1936.

"Thank you for those kind words!" Miller kissed the hand so near his face. "I've got an idea about Harris. I'm going to stage him for a big fight soon as he's fit—with Dynamite Murphy."

The girl considered this, her brows puckered.

"How much?"

"A purse of ten thousand."

"That's not so hot," she decided.

"Make it twenty. And I'll bet you another twenty Gene knocks him out in three rounds."

"Gene's been in prison six months," Miller warned her. "I wouldn't—"

A knock came at the door, and Mary Grant entered. She pulled up short on perceiving Miller's visitor.

"I didn't mean to disturb you—" she was beginning when Claire smiled at her in a cat-like way.

"I'm just going," she said. "Bye, Mr. Miller—see you again some day."

She nodded to Mary and sailed out of the office almost into the arms of young Harris.

"Why, Gene—this is fine!" she cried. She allowed him to kiss her, then disengaged herself. "You look all the better for your rest."

"I feel very fit," he laughed. "Especially now I've seen you. I was hoping you'd be at the gates."

"I was too nervous," she said. "I'm an awful duffer that way. Here's Dave, too—" She crossed the outer office to shake hands effusively with Gene's friend. "How's Mr. Moran?" she asked.

"Okay," Dave answered shortly. "Miller inside, Miss Thomas?"

"He is. Miss Grant's with him taking letters."

Gene was patting his dog. "Here's old Babe," he said. "Sitting up and taking notice. Gee, Claire—it's grand being with you again! Got my letters?"

"I did. I meant to write." Claire made him a little helpless face. "But I'm a rotten correspondent. I inquired after you every day. I heard they'd allowed you to box with—with the other prisoners. Pretty tough some of 'em, what?"

Dave had been fidgeting by the clerk's empty desk. "Ain't you going to see Miller?" he prompted Gene.

Mary came out of the inner office. "Gene," she called. "Go on in."

Her pretty eyes were troubled. "Mr. Miller wants to talk to you."

Gene went into Miller's room, almost running.

"Mr. Miller, I want to show how much—how deeply I feel your kindness in going parole for me." He gripped the other's outstretched hand. "I'll never forget it—never!"

"That's all right. Sit down." The two men regarded each other steadily. "You look pretty fit. I'll fix a fight for you, maybe at Christmas."

"Soon as you like. I've been boxing every day where I was. I can't begin the game again too soon. But I'm going to be dead careful."

"Sure," Miller helped himself to a cigar. "We've got to make up for lost time, Gene. We've got to earn big money, quick. I'll match you against Dynamite for twenty thousand, loser taking five."

"That won't be me," Gene declared. "We got to get a record gate at Madison Gardens. Listen; I'm going to rechristen you. Killer Harris—how's that?"

Gene shook his head vigorously. "I don't like it."

Miller bit off the end of his cigar and spat it across the room.

"That's the name you'll work under if you stay with me. Publicity's my business and fighting's yours."

"But I want to forget all that kind of thing. I'll keep the sore place open. I know I killed Sweeney—seeing's believing. But how beats me."

"That right of yours." Miller lit his cigar. "It's your great feature." He puffed at his cigar. "Well, Gene, I've got to tell you take it or leave it. And leaving means going back to gaol."

The young fellow's smiles had faded. To be known as a killer—when that was never in his mind. He loved a fight for a fight's sake—clean, good sport in which you gave and you took and the best man won. And then you shook hands with each other.

"I'd rather go back, Mr. Miller."

"Don't be a fool." Miller rang his bell. When Mary came in, he asked: "Miss Thomas gone?"

"She's playing with the little dog."

"Ask her to step inside."

When Claire entered, Miller spoke in crisp tones:

"I've been telling Gene that we must make a smashing hit with his next fight. I want him to be billed as Killer Harris. He says he'd sooner go back to clink."

"Why, Gene, what's the matter with you?" cried the girl. "Not afraid of that swab Murphy?"

"Why can't I be billed like I always was? Gene Harris?"

"Cuts no ice," Miller stated.

"Mr. Miller's right, Gene." Miller dismissed them with a wave of his cigar.

"Take him out, Claire, and teach him sense. I'll give him till to-morrow morning."

"This Man is Dead!"

IT was the night of the fight. Killer Harris, one hundred and eighty pounds, versus Dynamite Murphy, one hundred and ninety pounds. The Irishman was thus ten pounds heavier than Gene and had a punch like the kick of a couple of mules.

But neither Gene nor Dave were alarmed. Dynamite goes off on percussion, and blows up once only. Gene meant to see that Dynamite got his percussion all right—but Gene intended to keep clear of that one big explosion!

Murphy was to be seconded by Bert McNamee, an overgrown pug of older days. A hulking, dour fellow who knew his job through and through. Bert was confident his man would win. He had coached Murphy artfully, teaching him every trick and feint these is.

"You only got to keep away from Gene's right," Bert muttered in Murphy's ear as the big Irishman lay face down on the high, narrow trestle table in his dressing-room. Bert had been massaging those huge shoulders and back. "Gene's soft—he's afraid because of that business with Sweeney. He won't swing his right only as a last resort. Meantime, you hammer his face in, see?"

"I sure will!"

"I'm going to rub you down with spirit—to harden your ribs. Lie flat—that's it." Bert went over his patient with big, skilful hands. "You'll play with him, see? And you'll get in one of your swingers to his jaw. Make his teeth rattle in his head. Now take a deep breath—this towel I'm going to lay on your back's lot."

The Irishman gavo a grunt.

"I'll say it is!"

"Let it lie there a minute. I've got my winter's rent on you, Murphy. So's the boss—if all I hear is right."

Gene was undergoing like ministrations in his dressing-room. Dave was massaging and exhorting him.

"Play as pretty as you like, but don't forget the old right-hand punch. It's

your speciality, Gene. It's unexpected—and it's lively to look at!"

"And feel, I guess," Gene answered, sitting up. "No, Dave, I'm going to be a dove just fluttering its wings. I'll win all right, don't you fret. I can do with fifteen thousand."

"What's left of it after Miller's had his rake-off," Dave grumbled. "It never seems right to me promoters should take what they do. They get the profits on the house—and what's the idea of saying you'll give a purse of twenty grand if you're going to grab most of it back?"

"I'll be glad of what's left, anyway." Gene stood up, his fine, athletic frame a picture of strength and youth. "Claire and I can't get married while I'm on parole. But we can start saving up against the minute my parole's over. Can't we, Babe?"

He stooped to pat the little terrier, who promptly rolled over on her back, stiff and still save for a tiny wag of her stumpy tail.

"Dead dog, eh?" Gene chuckled. "Died for your country, eh, old dear?" His face suddenly clouded. "Get up, Babe," he went on. "I don't like you doing that trick just now."

Dave scoffed.

"Aw, don't be so silly, Gene! And don't forget your right!"

All ring bouts are much the same. The good boxer is the fellow who never forgets his defence and doesn't try out for too many chances of a quick decision. Best to take stock of your man in the first few rounds and see what he's up to before launching in with any fancy work of your own. Gene was a sound fighter—a general at the game who commanded his forces with skill and caution. He had seen too many knockouts courted and caught by reckless boxers. And the business of a heavyweight is to wait and see, whilst not waiting too long.

The big place was packed out—every seat sold and standing room only. Miller's publicity had proved a winner—all the patrons of the ring had been captured by the allure of seeing Killer Harris do his stuff. Niggers from Harlem rolled their eyes and chuckled throatily in the cheap seats, or where they sweated in the "standing only."

Dave was at the ring corner watching every move in each round. There was little in-fighting; the referee had only to separate the men once in three rounds. Murphy was heavy and not too quick; he had got infected a little with the memory that Gene had killed Roughhouse Sweeney with that terrible right punch of his.

But Gene wasn't using it. In fact, he was rather allowing Murphy to make the running. Dave kept whispering hoarsely, gesticulating the while:

"Right hand, boy! Swing him one—jest one!"

A deafening chorus accompanied the fight. Shouts, groans, cat-calls, and cheers when either one or the other of the big men in the ring got home with a clever blow. Three rounds were fought with points slightly in favour of Dynamite Murphy. Dave was becoming frantic—Miller and Claire, sitting side by side, exchanged questioning glances every now and then.

Mary, in the front, just behind Gene's corner, looked very anxious. A kind of dread hung over her. There was a bad feeling in the air; a tenseness which she couldn't break through.

If Gene should get beaten—well, that would be the end of him. Miller would call in his bond for Gene's good behaviour, and Gene would go back to gaol to serve out his sentence. And

Claire Thomas would go back on her word to marry him when free.

Mary glanced at the blonde. Hard as polished flint and as smoothly brilliant. Maybe a good thing for Gene if she did give him the go-by.

But Gene was crazy for her. Mary knew that deep in her heart, and she sighed again and again.

The gong sounded for the fourth round. Gene was attacking now. He had measured his opponent and knew what to do. Murphy ran in with one of his dynamite punches. Gene countered, stepped back, and, at long last, swung his right. It was a straight punch, and caught Murphy full on the breast, knocking him backwards.

The referee began to count as Murphy sprawled there amid the groans of the crowd. One, two, three, four—Then the Irishman was up again, looking groggy, but still full of fight. The round was near its end when Murphy, punching hard at Gene, was seen to overbalance and fall flat on his face.

He was counted out. The match and purse went to Gene, who was acclaimed the victor amid hoarse cheers and shrill yells of delight from his backers. Claire gave Miller a sideways wink.

"Seems to me I'm going to pick up the dibs, George."

"I laid most of it off, honey," Miller winked back. "Old George isn't all the mutt you take him for."

She nestled her hand in his.

"Good old George!" she murmured. Murphy's dour second, Bert McNamee, was bending over the still prostrate form of Murphy. Bert's big, gloomy face was gloomier still as he called out something to the referee which was lost in the confusion of noise around the ring.

Dave came across to him. Bert mouthed:

"Help me carry him out. He's fainted."

The Irishman, a dead weight in their arms, was carried to his dressing-room. They laid Murphy on the massaging bench on his back. His eyes were

closed; his face a deep blue. There was no rise or fall of his great chest.

"Get the doctor!" Miller ordered, his lips suddenly dry as dust.

A police surgeon was fetched. He was followed by a plain-clothes inspector and a constable in uniform. Murphy was gone over, sounded. The surgeon listened through his stethoscope while silence reigned in the room.

The surgeon straightened himself, putting away his instrument. He told them, in four pregnant words:

"This man is dead!"

Babe Finds Out

AT the night court to which Gene and his second were taken there was no formal charge made against him. The matter was simply reported to the magistrate, who listened gravely.

"You killed Sweeney in a fight, didn't you?"

"Yes, captain—so they said," Gene answered. He was badly shaken. He had liked Murphy and knew that he was married to a decent girl. But I swear I never hit either Sweeney or Murphy hard enough." He turned his strained young face to Miller. "You saw the fight—you know that I didn't let myself go. I was too afraid. I purposely held back."

Miller nodded.

"I thought you were going to lose," he agreed. "The fellow's heart must have been weak."

The magistrate put in:

"Medical examination will tell us whether that was so. It's a bad business, Harris—you must keep a touch with the station."

"I can go?" Gene asked shakily.

"Leave your address with the officer and stay home," came the order. "I warn you not to attempt anything likely to injure yourself still further."

They went back to the Gardens, where other bouts were just finishing. Claire was all sympathy for Gene. She had won a tidy sum and could afford to be

Gene stooped to touch the little dog and a whimper of joy sounded.



at her very best. She asked him to take her along home in his new sports car.

"I'll be only too glad. It's sweet of you, Claire, to be so—so sweet—" He scarcely knew what he was saying. All the time his thoughts were dining into him: "You've killed Murphy. You've killed a decent fellow who never did you wrong. He was married. He had a wife and two little kiddies. You've killed him!"

Useless to shout to himself: "I didn't! I didn't!" His eyes were dull; the bruises he sustained in the fight were all one huge, aching thought:

"Murphy's dead. You hit him with your right. You're a murderer!"

He turned with a sick smile towards Mary.

"You and Dave—you might take Babe along to my place. Tell the landlady I'll be home pretty soon."

Mary took his limp hand in hers.

"All right, Gene. Don't worry."

He tried to thank her. Claire took his arm in hers and led him away. Dave's ugly face was working queerly.

"Something's wrong somewhere," he grunted. "Gene never hit him at all."

"They said a weak heart," Mary offered.

"Yeah, they said so," Dave shrugged heavy shoulders. "But Murphy was as fit as a fiddle. I knew him. Let's go, Mary."

They went out of the Gardens and had walked along Eighth Avenue some distance under the cool night. Suddenly Mary remembered.

"Oh, Dave—we've forgotten Babe!" she exclaimed.

"Gee, Mary!" Dave turned about. "My head's all gone woolly. Let's skip back sharp. I didn't see the little dog in Gene's room."

"She must have followed into Murphy's room. I recollect now seeing her sniffing about. Maybe she's got locked in."

They hurried back to the Gardens. The big place was in darkness, except at the back where the porter lodged. They managed to make him hear at last, and he opened the door.

"Harris' little dog?" he questioned. "No, I ain't seen her. Maybe she ran out after him when he left with Miss Thomas?"

"We better look round," said Dave. "Gee, I hope she's here! If she ran out onto Eighth Avenue in all the traffic—"

He left the thought unfinished. Mary and he went hurrying after the night porter to the dressing-rooms.

Babe, left alone in Murphy's room and unable to get out, had been pursuing her sniffing inquiries. At last, at a badly shut dressing cabinet, she had found the edge of a towel hastily flung down at the bottom of the cabinet. Here was the smell she had been tracking.

With infinite patience she pulled and tugged at the towel until it had been drawn out of its hiding-place. Babe carried it to the middle of the room and nuzzled it with canine curiosity. A queer smell—a new smell. A rather fascinating smell. A sleepy smell; she laid down on the towel, then presently rolled over on her side.

Mary heard a faint, piteous crying—a dog in pain. A little dog lost and alone and very ill. With a smothered gasp of fear she led the way into Murphy's room. On the floor lay Babe, stretched out on the towel, her brown eyes glazing, little whines of fear sounding in her parched throat.

Mary knelt by the little terrier.

"We must get a vet! Quickly, Dave—she must have eaten something!"

December 26th, 1936.

"Take her to a doctor, miss," the night porter suggested.

Dave said, gruffly:

"I'll get Gene."

Gene was sitting in Claire's parlour. She had got supper ready for him—his favourite doughnuts and hot, sweet coffee. But Gene wasn't eating or drinking. He sat there like one in a trance. There was a constant humming inside his head: "You've killed again. A second time. A decent fellow. Married—two little kiddies."

The telephone cut in on Claire's gay chatter:

"Eat something, Gene! Don't sit there like an image." She answered the call: "It's for you—it's Moran. He says come quick to somewhere—here, you take the line."

Gene listened to Dave's urgent words. "I'll be there in five minutes!" He turned to Claire, "It's Babe—my little dog. She's eaten something. Dave says—" Gene choked suddenly. "Says she's dying!"

Poisoned!

THEY were in Murphy's room. Gene stooped to touch the little dog. A whimper of joy sounded, lost in a cry of pain. He took Babe into his arms.

"Where's the best doctor in this city?" he asked.

"Round the corner, sir," the porter told him. "It's the third house down Fiftieth Street. Ring the night bell twice."

Dave, Mary, and Gene were in the little operating-room at the surgery. The doctor had just covered up Babe's small, lifeless body.

"Poisoned," he told Gene as he rubbed his fingers dry on antiseptic wool flakes.

Gene couldn't speak. Blow upon blow. A faithful, loving little heart as still as poor Murphy's. Still for ever.

Dave said: "I brought away the towel she was lying on, doc."

The doctor took the towel from him and smelled at it.

"Leave this with me," he ordered.

At Claire's flat there was another visitor—big Bert McNamee. He was feasting on Gene's discarded doughnuts and washing down the indigestible doughy cakes with sealding coffee and milk. Claire was watching him with amused eyes.

"It's a pleasure getting supper for you, Bert!"

He nodded, mouth full of doughnut.

"I've cleared nigh on thirty grand," the blonde went on. "What say to hopping it?"

"Whaffor?" McNamee looked surprised. "Thirty thousand ain't so hot these times."

The telephone bell whirred. Again Claire took the call. She listened frowningly, saying "Oh!"—and "Ah!"—and finally:

"Isn't that just too bad, Gene. I'm sure sorry."

She put back the receiver, facing her visitor.

"The dog's dead—it found a towel and got playing with it. The towel was in Murphy's room."

McNamee started to his great feet.

"Gosh, I must have left it! I'll go get it—"

"Too late. They've taken it away."

She eyed him ragingly. "Of all the chumps!"

Bert's paniely alarm gave way to a confident laugh.

"They won't find anything. The stuff evaporates. Bust that dog!"

Claire said:

"You shouldn't have put it on so strong. I told you it was very dangerous. We only needed to get Murphy knocked out. That's twice you've mucked things up."

The big pro gave her an appealing glance.

"We had to win, didn't we? I'd do anything for you, Claire."

"Don't do for me quite so hard." She began to calm down; the deadly drug evaporated and there wouldn't be a trace. But "Killer" Harris couldn't be played for a mug all the time. "I've an idea," she said more easily. "Next fight you'll act second for Gene. I'll tell Miller to fix it so Moran takes the opposite chair. And as Gene will start at short odds, we'll back the other fellow and make half a million dollars."

McNamee grinned admiringly.

"You're sure the little wife, Claire! Half a million! A quarter's enough for me."

"That's what you say now." She came across to give him some more coffee. "I've a mind to poison you, you great lump." She gave him a kiss instead. "I've done with Miller—after the next fight. We'll go to Monte Carlo and have a snack at enjoying ourselves in peace."

"It's Not Evidence"

NEXT day in the magistrate's room at the court-house the coroner was instructing those present:

"Autopsy of the organs reveals no trace of weak heart or drugs. Murphy's death is a mystery. The bruising of his body is quite superficial—it wasn't your much-boomed right that killed him, Harris."

"I was sure of it," said Gene.

Dave whispered:

"Tell 'em about Babe and the towel."

The coroner listened.

"Let's have that towel."

"The vet examined it," Gene handed the towel to the magistrate. "He says there has been something on it, but it was so volatile it doesn't exist now."

"Let me have it," the coroner repeated. "I'm a bit of an expert in poisons. Let me have the dog, too."

"Oh, I can't! I can't!" cried Gene. "I—I loved that little dog!"

The coroner put a hand on his shoulder.

"I can't hurt it now, Harris. There's dirty work somewhere here. It's your duty to help justice. In fairness to others beside yourself."

"But—"

"I give an order for the dog's body to be examined," the magistrate settled it. "You can go, Harris. But you mustn't move from your diggings—and you must report here every morning."

In the busy streets again, Mary led Gene to where she had parked her car. Dave and the girl got in with him, Mary at the wheel. They drove to Forty Third Street and found Miller engaged with Claire Thomas.

The promoter seemed pleased to see Gene, and shook hands with him in his usual theatrical style.

"Gene, I've a proposition," he said. "Miss Thomas put the idea in my head. Murphy was a married man and leaves a young widow and children. How say dividing my purse—ten thousand for you, ten for her? I'll throw in my percentage—there was a grand house last night."

"I'd like Mrs. Murphy to take all of the purse," Gene said. "And that's little enough. I feel awful about it."

"Oh, cheer up! No fault of yours—Murphy had something wrong with his heart. You never know with these

Irishmen; they seem all solid—yet often they're men of wood painted to look like iron. Murphy might have died any minute, anywhere. You really mean you'd like his widow to pouch the lot?"

"Please, Mr. Miller."
"It's great of you, Harris. And—well, it's great publicity, too. You let Claire take care of you—I want Mary here. We're busy nowadays—good-bye."

Dave tried to get in a word with Gene, but, under the glamour of Claire's smiles, Gene was lost to all else. Dave went off by himself. He called on the veterinary doctor in Fiftieth Street and had a long talk with him, coming away with puzzled eyes.

He went to the magistrate's court and had an interview with the captain there and the police surgeon.

"It's not evidence," said the captain, after Dave had said his say.

"Both these men were poisoned—same as the dog," Dave argued.

"But how? By whom?" The captain of police shook his head. "No traces of poison in Murphy's stomach. In the dog's—yes. But what was the motive?"

"So's Gene could win," said Dave. "They could have doped Murphy and Sweeney," the surgeon reminded him.

"I guess that's what they meant to do," Dave declared. "But, not being doctors, they overdid it."

"Poison absorbed through open pores of the skin?" questioned the captain. "It's a bit fancy, what?" He added: "But, listen, Moran—if you get a line on anything, come to us."

"I sure will," Dave answered grimly.

A Change Over

SOME week or so later, Miller was fixing up a fight for Gene with Kayo Reilly—a lumping fellow who had just beaten Hiram Black, the negro from New Orleans. Claire suggested that Dave might second him.

"McNamee can take Gene," she urged. "It'll make a change for everybody."

Miller considered the idea.

"I'm not so sure Moran will care to

leave Harris. He's been his second all through."

"It will look better," Claire argued. "Nobody can think any harm for Reilly, with bull-dog Moran acting for him. There won't be any accidents."

"Harris will knock Reilly into the middle of next week," Miller boasted.

Claire shrugged pretty shoulders. "Maybe. What odds will you lay?"

"What you like?"

"I'll take you ten grand to one," smiled Claire.

Miller entered the bet in his pocket-book.

"Been quarrelling with Gene?"

"I'm through with him," Claire answered flippantly. "You're my big boy friend, George."

They had forgotten the partly open door. Mary, sitting at her desk just outside Miller's room, had heard every word. She sat there tense and suddenly afraid. Dave to second Reilly—and McNamee, the big brute, to stand for Gene. What did it mean?

Mischief, Mary decided. She was busy with her typewriter when Claire came out, beautifully attired and too full of herself to take notice of anybody.

As soon as she left the office, Mary went to Dave's lodgings.

"Isn't it too bad, Dave," she told him all in a rush. "Miller's fixing you for Reilly in the fight?"

"Me for Kayo?" Dave shook his head. "I have another guess, baby. I've always been in Gene's corner."

"Bert McNamee is to take Gene. I tell you it's all settled."

"Is that so?" Dave put on his hat. "Let's go see Gene."

"He's out with Claire."
Dave took her arm.

"He oughter be out with you, Mary. Gene's daft over some things." The girl made no reply. "Don't mind me, Mary—I'm an old fool. But you don't hate Gene, huh?"

She confessed in a shaky voice: "Gene knows I don't."

Moran gently propelled her towards the door.

"I gotter see a feller I know. I'll

walk along with you part of the way. No use my calling on Miller, I guess?"

"None. When he's said a thing, it's settled. You know that."

Dave walked with her to the corner. "I gotter get a bus here. Take care of yourself, dear—don't mind about me or Gene. Just keep steady like, not worrying too much."

When she had gone, Dave tootled off to his friend the police surgeon. They talked together in whispers, although alone in the surgery. That walls have ears is an old saying and, often, a true one.

Dave also talked in whispers with Gene that night.

McNamee was a good trainer. He took Gene in hand and kept him in hand. Plenty of practice, plenty of exercise, plenty of getting to bed at ten o'clock every night. Plain diet; water—or fruit drinks. No smoking.

No doughnuts!

Gene had to admit that McNamee knew his job. On the night of the fight with Reilly both men were as fit as fiddles. Dave had been conscientious, too.

"Kayo's in the pink," he came to tell Gene in his dressing-room. "You'll have to watch your step," he whispered. "Bert shown you anything, accidental like?"

Gene gestured towards the clothes cabinet.

"In there—top shelf. He didn't dream I'd spotted him," he added loudly. "You heard I'm off with Claire?"

Dave, taking his cue, answered: "Is that so? Well, well—all my condolences." He tiptoed across to the cabinet.

"Bert's fetching in some boiling water." Gene went on. "He'll be back in a minute or two."

Dave's quick eyes had guided his quicker fingers to an innocent-looking little medicine bottle on the shelf in the cabinet. He substituted a similar bottle—deftly sliding the stolen one into his pocket.

Then he tiptoed back to Gene, whispering urgently:

"I'd hate to lose this fight, Dave,"



"Claire Thomas and Bert McNamee," said the Captain crisply, "you're arrested on a charge of conspiracy to murder!"

said Gene, just as McNamee entered with a kettle of steaming water. Bert grinned at Dave:

"He ain't going to lose. No, sir!"

Dave answered gruffly:

"All the same, I'm backing Reilly to give him the old fade out."

"Lay you hundred to ten Harris wins," Bert offered, shrugging.

"I'll take you," snapped Dave. "So long—see you both later."

Biter—Bitten!

THEY were in the ring being presented to the audience by the announcer, a bull-throated man in evening-dress.

"Ladies and gentlemen! We now have a fight to a finish between the two most famous heavyweights in the world! Killer Harris, one hundred and eighty pounds—"

Gene stood up in his corner to acknowledge the cheers. He seemed slow and a bit overtrained to experienced eyes. But he smiled in his old carefree way.

"And Kayo Reilly, one hundred and seventy-nine pounds!"

Reilly stood up. He shook a great fist in the air in answer to the roaring cheers of his backers. Dave, just behind him, nodded right and left to the crowd.

Miller, sitting with Claire, murmured:

"Like to double your bet?"

She smiled.

"I'll hate taking your money, George! But double it is. Gene's sore about my giving him the bird. He'll fight all wild. Reilly will win."

"Seconds out of the ring!" came the warning. The men advanced and shook hands. The gong sounded and the fight began.

Mary, watching them, wouldn't own to herself that Gene was not so quick as usual. She imagined him to be playing with Reilly and, when the latter fought Gene all over the ring, she only nodded to herself, in answer to the shouts and yells of the vast audience, as if saying: "You wait a minute!"

In the second round, Gene seemed all his old self—and a bit more. Points went to him and the great building shook with cheers. In the third bout, Reilly did a come back and floored Gene, just as the bell sounded, with a quick blow over the heart.

McNamee helped Gene to stagger to his corner.

"What are you doin'?" he growled. "You opened yourself wide to him! No more of that—keep in close and paste him one between the eyes with that old right of yours."

Gene nodded. He was perspiring freely, his chest rising and falling as his breath whistled in his throat.

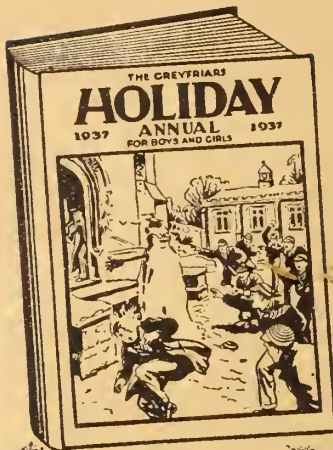
The fourth round was a farce. Gene's punch had deserted him. He couldn't get a real one in on Reilly's tough hide. They fought all round the ring. Gene on the defence. Then Reilly clinched and the referee had to separate them, warning Reilly sharply. Gene got in a left hook which made his opponent more wary. Then again they were in-fighting and both were warned.

As they broke away, Gene slipped. Reilly's instant swinging punch on the chest knocked him flat. Amid yells, groans and hisses, Gene, despite a desperate attempt to get to his feet, was again saved by the gong.

To Mary's horror he didn't get up. McNamee and Dave ran to him, while the referee knelt by his side. Shouting and wild confusion covered the end—Killer Harris was carried out of the ring and borne to his room.

The referee held up his hand and waited for a chance to be heard.

"The fight is stopped. No decision." December 26th, 1936.



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Yells and cat-calls drowned his voice. Everybody was talking and gesticulating at once. But in Gene's room there was silence—the uproar without sounding like a far-off sea.

The divisional police surgeon was leaning over Gene. The little bespectacled man put away his stethoscope almost at once. He drew a sheet over Gene's body, hiding him from the horrified eyes of those who had crowded into the room. "It's all over," came the verdict.

A strangled scream broke from Mary's ashen lips. Dave ran to catch her as she fell. McNamee stared at the covered-up body on the bed, his face wooden. Claire Thomas clung to Miller's arm.

"How awful! Poor Gene!" she whispered in a faint voice.

Dave carried Mary out of the room. Those who had pushed a way in, when Gene had been brought there, melted out. Miller removed Claire's hand from his sleeve.

"I must tell them," he said, forgetting all his gestures. "This is a terrible business."

The doctor packed up his bag. Claire, repulsed by Miller, came to McNamee. They were last to leave the room.

The blonde spoke urgently:

"Got the towel?"

"Yeah," McNamee answered. "We best get away. I didn't mean to croak him. That darned stuff's too hot."

They glanced backwards from the threshold towards the sheeted body on the high, narrow bed, their eyes drawn to it by a horrible fascination. A stifled shriek broke from the blonde.

The corpse had thrown back the sheet and was sitting up.

"You didn't use it, Bert," came Gene's cool voice. "Dave exchanged the bottle!"

At the spoken signal arranged by Dave the police jumped out of hiding. Two were in the dress cabinets in the room; the captain and his lieutenant entered by the door, followed by Dave and Mary. The captain spoke crisply:

"Claire Thomas and Bert McNamee: you're arrested on a charge of conspiracy to murder!"

Handcuffs were slipped on their wrists. Claire, cool to the last, merely smiled as she answered:

"You'll have to prove it, big boy!"

Miller talked straight to Gene one morning in his office:

"You've had a near call. I was all of a fool, too. How about you taking a skip round Niagara City for a month or so?"

"Dave can't get away."

"I'm not thinking of Moran." Miller stopped Gene's arguments. "I had Miss Grant in mind."

"But Mary don't care for me that way, Mr. Miller."

"Ask her," came the answer. "She's outside at her desk. I'm shutting down this office for a month, anyway." He rang his desk bell and Mary came to the inner office with pad and pencil.

"Gene wants to tell you something," said Miller, reaching for his hat. "I got to go out."

Gene and Mary were alone. The girl asked:

"What is it, Gene?"

"Will you come to Niagara Falls with me, Mary?" Gene's eyes were twinkling. "And go places as my wife? I know a shop there where the doughnuts are marvellous!"

Pad and pencil were on the floor, forgotten altogether, when Dave Moran came slyly peeping in a little later!

(By permission of Pathé Pictures, Ltd., starring Eddie Nugent.)

Never was there a more enduring comradeship than that which was formed between the king of wild horses and the outcast wonder dog. Together they braved a thousand perils, unswerving in their loyalty to each other. Follow their amazing adventures in this gripping serial drama, starring Kane Richmond, Norma Taylor and Rex and Rinty



EPISODE 9—
"The Stranger's
Recall"

The Adventures OF REX AND RINTY

READ THIS FIRST

Rex, a black Arabian stallion, is worshipped by a strange race of people on the remote tropical island of Sujan.

To Sujan come three white men who are agents of a Californian rancher named Crawford. They steal Rex, realising the fortune he can make for their employer, but one of them is captured by the Sujanese. This man, Wheeler, only earns his life and liberty by promising to recover the god horse, and travels to America in company with a native known as Pasha.

Meanwhile, Rex is delivered to Crawford, but breaks free and takes to the hills. Later that day the rancher plays in a polo game at the Bruce Riding Academy, but his team loses to a side led by Frank Bradley, a popular young sportsman, and after the game Crawford vents some of his spite on a stray police dog that has roamed into the district.

It is this dog, Rinty, which later comes across Rex and which brings the god horse into contact with Frank Bradley and Dorothy Bruce.

Frank trains Rex, but later the god horse is secured by Wheeler and Pasha. Meanwhile, Crawford has become involved in a fatal quarrel with one of his own men, and takes to the hills to avoid the penalty of his crime.

Frank locates the missing stallion at an abandoned mine to which Pasha and Wheeler have taken the animal. Rinty is with the young polo ace, but, leaving the dog outside, he tackles the Sujanese and his ally alone.

In the resultant fight Wheeler fires point-blank at Frank with a six-gun.

(Now Read On)

Frank Learns the Truth

AN instant before Wheeler pulled the trigger Frank Bradley ducked low, and, the leaden slug zipping within an inch of his skull, he bullocked headlong into the gunman's midriff.

Wheeler went down, but Frank was carried on by his own impetus and he brought up against the wall of the mine gallery, his temple coming into violent contact with the rock so that he pitched to the floor and lay in a dazed condition.

As for Wheeler, he was soon on his feet once more. Yet even as he rose he heard the loud, angry bark of a dog, and next moment he saw the form of Rinty bounding into the cavern.

From his vantage point outside the mine the wolf-hound had witnessed the scuffle which had taken place, and now he was hurling himself to Frank's rescue with bared fangs—in an onset that brought a cry of alarm to Wheeler's lips and caused the man to level the revolver which he was still grasping in his fist.

Luckily for Rinty the gun jammed, and in another second the dog was at the armed ruffian's throat, but with a desperate clutch Wheeler buried one hand in the thick fur around the animal's neck, and with the other hand he changed his grip on the forty-five and wielded it like a club, hitting his canine antagonist savagely.

Rinty dropped like a log under the first cruel blow, and with an outburst of rage Wheeler lifted his boot to kick the huddled body of the wolfhound.

It was a kick that never landed, for suddenly the man's attention was diverted by the startling behaviour of the god horse Rex, whose primitive and

lawless instincts had been aroused. And, if the stallion had shown signs of restiveness during the attack on Frank, the devil in him was fairly let loose by the treatment that had been meted out to Rinty, the dog for whom he had conceived so strong an affection.

Hitherto he had been held in check by the fact that Pasha had supported Wheeler. But now Pasha was lying on the ground where Frank had thrown him at the commencement of the fracas, and Rex promptly made for Wheeler in a way which sent that roguo skipping backwards in sheer terror.

Propped on one elbow, Pasha was the only eye-witness of the drama that ensued, and with awestricken gaze he saw Rex charging at Wheeler, to rear up on his hind-legs and lash out at the man with iron-shod hoofs.

Wheeler sprang out of range of those flashing forefeet, and had to spring again as the big stallion came after him. Meanwhile, Pasha was calling out to Rex in the native tongue, but for once the enraged creature did not heed him, and the Sujanese was wellnigh despairing of Wheeler's life when, all-at once, he realised the white man was trying to blaze at the horse with that revolver which he possessed.

True, the gun had jammed, but Wheeler was tugging at the trigger frantically, and there seemed every likelihood of the weapon functioning once more, to send a death-bolt through the brain of the black Arabian.

Pasha's entire outlook changed, and his concern for Wheeler's safety became a much sharper anxiety for the safety of the god horse. Then, with a swift gesture, he plucked out the blowpipe that
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he had used so effectively on two former occasions.

There was a dart already in the tube, one of those darts smeared with the native drug which could produce unconsciousness almost instantaneously, and Pasha directed it straight at Wheeler's wrist.

The missile pierced the white man's flesh and, stiffening, he dropped the forty-five that he had been brandishing and collapsed in a heap on the floor of the cavern, lying there at the mercy of Rex's hoofs. Nor could he have escaped the vengeance of those hoofs if Pasha had not gathered himself up and rushed at the stallion to seize the rope-bridle attached to the animal's head.

Hauling on that bridle and shouting to Rex insistently he managed to drag the god horse away from its intended victim, and it was while he was engaged in this task of pacifying the creature that Frank Bradley struggled to his feet.

The young sportsman had collected his wits in time to see how Pasha had disposed of Wheeler and cut short an ugly situation, and he had also noticed that the gun which had fallen from Wheeler's fingers had slid across the floor of the mine gallery so that it was now actually within his own reach.

Frank retrieved the six-shooter and covered Pasha, who had his back to him. But even as he stood watching the native, he could not help being struck by the strange power that the foreigner seemed to wield over Rex, could not help marvelling at the manner in which the fellow smoothed the stallion's ruffled temper.

"You seem to have a way with that horse, my friend," he remarked, when the black Arabian was at last completely under control.

Pasha whipped round, and his face fell as he perceived that Frank had the "drop" on him. Then, after a brief silence, he looked at the younger man appealingly.

"Truly I have a way with the god horse Rex," he said. "It comes of knowing him for many years."

"But you don't own him," declared Frank, speaking with an emphasis that nevertheless held the faintest trace of uncertainty. "You can't make me believe that—not after the methods you've used to try and obtain possession of him."

"The god horse has no owner, white man," Pasha replied. "Nor does he know any master, as you in your country understand the word. But I have a right to take him from you, and as to the methods I have used—well, I have adopted them because I felt that no other methods would serve."

He hesitated a moment, and then in a low and earnest voice he began to tell Frank the story of Rex, the god horse whom the people of Suján worshipped so profoundly; and, fantastic as the narrative sounded, yet there was a sincerity in Pasha's tone that impressed the listener with the growing conviction that the man was speaking the truth.

When the native had finished, Frank had only one dubious comment to make. "You certainly picked an unfortunate partner in Wheeler," he mused. "This fellow is a bad egg."

"But there was no choice in the matter," Pasha countered. "When the god horse was stolen from the sacred stables in Suján, this man was our only hope of tracing him."

"Yes, I suppose you're right," Frank had to admit.

He was silent for a space, and then all at once he lowered the gun with which he had been covering the foreigner.

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"Pasha," he said, "I'm inclined to believe your story, but I'd like to check up on it as far as possible—by making a few inquiries regarding the island of Suján. And if I find out that they really do worship horses there, then I'll take your word for it that Rex belongs to your people and is sacred to them."

"Where will you obtain any information concerning Suján? No one, excepting Crawford and his men, seems to have heard of it, in this great country of yours."

"Don't worry," Frank rejoined, "I'll find out all I want to know from the Travel Bureaux. And when I'm satisfied that you're on the level, Pasha, I'll help you to get Rex to the coast and ship him to your island. All I ask of you is to trust me—come back to the Bruce Academy and stay there for the time being—and make a clean break with Wheeler."

"Whatever you say," the native answered. "Whatever you say."

With that Frank turned to Rinty, who was beginning to show signs of life, and a cursory examination told him that the dog was not seriously injured. Indeed, Rinty was actually on his feet again when a movement on the part of Wheeler caught the attention of Frank and Pasha.

Frank quickly fumbled with the six-gun that he had secured, and, restoring it to working order, he was training it on Wheeler when the latter raised himself into a sitting posture and stared up at him dully.

From Frank's menacing figure the gangster's narrow eyes travelled to Pasha, and as he saw the native standing calmly at the young sportsman's side his shifty countenance registered a look of mingled comprehension and anger.

"What's this?" he snarled. "The double-cross?"

"Call it what you like, Wheeler," Frank struck in. "But Pasha has told me everything, and I've advised him to cut adrift from you."

The crook's mouth tightened, and he flashed an evil glance at the Sujanese.

"Why, you can't get away with this!" he bit out. "You can't throw me over! I've got a reward comin' to me for the return o' that god horse, and you can't cheat me out of it, you dirty nigger!"

With a fierce cry Pasha threw himself on the man and gripped him by the throat.

"Call me that name and I will choke the life from your miserable body!" he grated.

His fingers clenched upon Wheeler's windpipe, and the white man gave vent to a hoarse cry of fear. Then, mastering his wrath, Pasha drew back from him and spoke in a voice that was well modulated, though none the less incisive.

"I have every right to break with you, Wheeler," he said. "If I had not stopped you a little while ago you would have killed the god horse."

"He was tryin' to kill me, wasn't he?" the gangster blurted. "He was tryin' to kill me!"

"Perhaps it is a pity that I did not let him," the Sujanese retorted, and then, turning to Frank, he proposed that they should leave Wheeler to his own resources and depart.

Crawford's Men

FRANK was only too eager to start back for the Bruce Academy, and, after warning Wheeler that he would be well advised to remove himself from this part of the country, he accompanied Pasha as the native led Rex from the mine with Rinty padding in the stallion's footsteps.

Outside the cavern Pasha mounted one

of the horses that were standing there. Then he indicated Wheeler's bronc, suggesting that Frank should commandeer it, but the young polo player shook his head.

"No," he told the Sujanese, "my own pony is over there in the grove. We'll pick him up—come on."

They left Wheeler's bronc, and a minute or two later Frank secured the animal that he had borrowed from the Bruce Academy; and, having climbed into the saddle, he and Pasha set out across-country at a smart trot, the foreigner holding Rex in close attendance.

Pasha was apparently still thinking of Wheeler, for after a minute or two he addressed Frank thoughtfully.

"That man is a rogue," he said. "I have known that all along, but a bargain was struck with him—"

"Don't let that bother your conscience," Frank interrupted. "If I'm any judge of character, Wheeler would have double-crossed you without hesitation if it had suited his purpose."

"I think you are right," the native agreed. "In any case, he has no reason to harbour a grudge. Already I have advanced him a good deal of money for such services as he rendered me by putting me on the track of the god horse."

"Then you've certainly no cause to feel that you've done him an injustice," declared Frank. "But, forgetting Wheeler for the moment, my idea is that you stay over at the Bruce Academy till I've made a few inquiries and arranged transportation for you and Rex—that is, if I'm satisfied that your story is true."

Pasha looked at him gravely. "Will I be welcome at this academy which you speak of?" he asked.

"Miss Bruce and her father will be glad to make you comfortable, on my recommendation," Frank assured him. "Meantime, we'll groom that white paint off Rex—when we get him to the academy, I mean. It was a good idea to disguise him, but it won't be necessary now. I'll see that proper protection is afforded."

They rode on, but they had not travelled far, and were on the point of entering a belt of thickets, when all at once there was a movement in the vegetation and three horsemen suddenly started out at them.

They were Jones, Martin and Anderson, and so unexpectedly had they appeared that Frank found himself lined up under the sights of their guns before he could attempt to reach for his own forty-five.

"Take it easy, Bradley," Jones growled. "Huh, thought you'd given us the slip, didn't you? But fortunately Anderson here is mighty smart at followin' a trail, and he picked up yours all right when we back-tracked after losin' sight of you."

"Yeah, and we spotted you headin' this way again just as we got to the edge o' the bush," Anderson interposed. "So you've made the acquaintance of Pasha, eh? H'm, mighty nice lookin' horse you've got there, too."

He nodded towards Rex in a cursory fashion, and Frank held his breath. As for Pasha, he also became tense, wondering if these men would see through the disguise. But an impatient remark by Jones tended to reassure the Sujanese and the wealthy young American who was now prepared to befriend him.

"A nice horse all right," said Jones, "but not the one we're after. Come on, Bradley, where's the black Arabian?"

"You mean Rex?" Frank inquired coolly. "How should I know?"

"You know all right," Martin broke in viciously. "Either you know, or else

Pasha does. Which of you is gonna talk?"

Neither Frank nor his companion offered any response, and Crawford's men glowered at them menacingly for a few seconds. Then Jones spoke up.

"Say," he announced to Martin and Anderson, "we're pretty close to that abandoned mine on Red Ridge. Pasha had the god horse hidden there one time. Do you suppose he might have cached it there again?"

Anderson and Martin exchanged glances, and then, after looking craftily at the prisoners, the first-named turned to Jones again.

"Maybe you're right," he said. "This guy Pasha very likely figured that we'd never think of lookin' there a second time."

"Well, we'll ride over to the mine, anyway," Jones stated. "Andy, you stay here and keep an eye on these two hombres. Martin, you follow me."

He kicked his heels into his mustang's flanks and started at a gallop for the ridge, Martin spurring after him, and, while his comrades rode off, Anderson focused his attention on Frank and Pasha.

He kept his gun trained on them, eyeing them guardedly as he did so, and for a spell there was silence, a silence which he brought to a close as his accomplices disappeared beyond a distant fold in the landscape.

"I didn't expect to find Pasha in tow with you, Bradley," Anderson observed. "What's the idea. Have you come to some arrangement with him about the god horse?"

"I don't know what you're talking about," said Frank.

Anderson's lip curled in a sneer. "Ah, don't give me that stuff," he retorted contemptuously. "But say, what about Wheeler? You ain't made pals with him as well, have you, Bradley?"

Frank did not deign to answer him, and, conversation languishing, the crook slid a glance upon Rex once more, still oblivious of the fact that he was looking at the very animal which Crawford coveted so greedily.

"Huh, that sure is a good-lookin' horse," he grunted. "Where did you pick him up?"

Again Frank made no reply, and, urging his own bronc closer to the white stallion, Anderson proceeded to scrutinize it with interest, at the same time keeping an eye on his prisoners.

Frank and Pasha watched him breathlessly, and, their gaze riveted on him, they suddenly saw him start, saw him peer at the stallion and stretch out a hand to touch its coat, running his fingers against the grain so that the hair was turned back to show him the deception which had been carried out.

Next instant, Anderson switched his eyes full on the faces of Frank and Pasha in a look of understanding.

"Paint!" he blurted. "Why, of all the cunning—"

He never finished the sentence, for, realising that Anderson had stumbled upon the truth, Frank Bradley took a chance and swung his left fist down on the barrel of the gangster's forty-five.

The blow knocked the weapon aside, and a split second later Frank whipped his right into action and drove his packed knuckles with sledge-hammer force against Anderson's jaw.

The man plunged from the saddle, the six-shooter flying from his grasp, and Frank swung himself quickly to the ground and pounced on the rogue to make sure of him. In another thirty seconds the younger man was rising to his feet again, having battered his foe

into a state of complete insensibility, and without further delay he remounted his pony and called out to Pasha.

"Come on," he shouted, "we may as well get out of here before those other rats show up!"

The Sujanese made haste to follow the young American's example as the latter sent his horse bounding towards the thickets, and next moment the two men were striking off along a trail that was flanked by masses of brushwood, Rex careering in their wake on the end of the crude bridle that Pasha was holding.

Rinty brought up the rear, his tail whisking from side to side as if he had enjoyed the discomfiture of Anderson, and before long there was no sign of the fugitives, the drumming of hoofs being the only indication of the route that they were taking.

It was a sound that gradually died away, and, when Anderson recovered consciousness some time later to find his bronc standing over him with lowered head, the deep quiet of the range was disturbed only by the chirping of birds in the thickets nearby.

Slowly the gangster picked himself up, helping himself to rise by pulling on the drooping reins of his horse, and he was swaying dazedly on his feet when a hail reached his ears.

The cry was uttered by Jones, and, turning his head, Anderson saw that worthy bearing down on him in company with Martin and Wheeler.

The newcomers reached the spot where Anderson had been unhorsed, and Jones leapt to the ground. Martin, on the other hand, remained in the saddle, and Anderson noticed vaguely that he was covering Wheeler, who looked sullen and disconsolate.

"What happened to you, Anderson?" Jones barked.

"That hombre Bradley—he beat me up. I—I—"

"I can see he beat you up all right," Jones cut in, regarding his bruised face without sympathy. "You fool, what did you let him an' Pasha get away for? The god horse wasn't up at the mine.

We only found Wheeler there, and—"

He in turn was interrupted by Anderson.

"I know the god horse wasn't up at the mine," he panted. "He was right here all the time. The white stallion—that was Rex—painted! I spotted it soon after you left, but Bradley laid me out."

Jones and Martin stared at him incredulously.

"The white stallion?" the former echoed. "Rex—painted? What the heck are you talkin' about?"

"He's right," Wheeler volunteered. "Pasha and me, we thought of that trick—figured we could get the animal to the coast in spite of you if we disguised his coat, figured you'd never take him for Rex even if we happened to run foul of you. Then Bradley showed up, and Pasha gave me the air—decided to throw in with that cursed meddler."

Jones had turned towards him, and he still seemed dumbfounded by the disclosure of the ruse that had been practised. Then at last he found his voice.

"Do you know what Bradley an' Pasha planned to do with the god horse?" he demanded.

"Yeah, they were gonna take him to the Bruce Academy, where Bradley aims to hold him until he's checked up on Pasha. Then, if Bradley feels satisfied that Pasha's on the level, he'll arrange for the transport of the stallion."

Jones pursed his lips, and then glanced sardoniously once more at Anderson, who was in the act of retrieving the six-gun that Frank had knocked from his hand.

"How long is it since Bradley and Pasha got away from you?" he asked in a curt tone.

"I don't know," Anderson mumbled. "But it wasn't long after you left me."

Jones gave vent to an oath.

"And we were away the best part of half an hour," he grated. "We ain't got a chance of catchin' up with them now before they reach the academy."

"You're right, Jones," Martin agreed dismally. "Only thing we can

With a fierce cry Pasha threw himself upon the man and gripped him by the throat.



do is to ride over to Injun Gap and report to the boss."

Jones nodded, and then looked at Wheeler.

"Yeah, and you're comin' with us," he muttered. "I reckon Crawford might like to show you how much he appreciates the trouble you've given us."

There was a menacing quality in the words that sent a tremor of dread through Wheeler, but with Martin's revolver trained on him resistance or flight was alike impossible, and, glooming over the prospect that was ahead of him, he accompanied the other three men as they set out for the hide-away where Crawford had installed himself.

For two hours they rode, Jones and Anderson in advance, Martin keeping a close watch on Wheeler, and at the end of that time they sighted a remote cabin nestled in the heart of the hills. And here a halt was called, captive and captors dismounting and walking up to the door of the shack.

Wheeler was thrust roughly across the threshold to find himself in the presence of Crawford, who looked at him through narrowed lids and then directed a glance at the men who entered behind him.

"What's this?" the rancher demanded of his hirelings. "What's the idea of bringing Wheeler here?"

"Just a little present for you, boss," said Jones. "You see, in spite of that last warning you gave him, he's been tryin' to cross us up again—and it's partly his fault that we were fooled by some white paint."

Crawford was clearly perplexed by this speech, and he drew down his brows in an impatient scowl.

"Quit talking in conundrums!" he snapped. "What's on your mind, Jones? And what happened to Anderson? He looks like he's run into trouble."

"He did," Jones commented, and then launched into a detailed account of all that had taken place.

Crawford heard him out in silence, but the changing expressions on his countenance betrayed his feelings more eloquently than words could have done, and when the full facts had been made plain to him he took a step closer to Wheeler.

"So you and your friend Pasha have split, eh?" he said. "He's turned you down in favour of Bradley, eh? Well, that doesn't make me like you any better, Wheeler. You're still poison to me."

His hand moved significantly to his hip.

"Yeah, 'poison' is the term I used," he murmured, "and, seeing I've got one man's death to my credit, I'm tempted to make an end of you as well."

"One man's death?" Wheeler faltered. "What do you mean, Crawford?"

"Oh, you don't know about Mitchell, huh? Well, he got kind of hard to handle, and I had to rub him out. But he didn't cause me half as much trouble as you've done—"

"Crawford, don't shoot!" Wheeler cried out in terror. "No, no, don't shoot! Listen, I know I've crossed you up—but only because I was sore. We used to be on the same side o' the fence, Crawford, and I'll tie up with you again if you'll let me. I'll help you get that god horse, boss—honest I will. I'll do anything you say!"

The rancher eyed him steadfastly for a space, and then to Wheeler's unutterable relief his hand left the region of his hip.

"I wonder?" Crawford mused. "You might be useful, Wheeler."

"But don't run away with the idea that I'm trusting you," he added quickly.

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"Don't even be too sure that I've changed my mind about bumpin' you off. I'm postponing sentence, as they say in a court of law—that's all."

Wheeler mopped his brow, and Crawford turned to Martin and Anderson.

"You two will stay here with Wheeler and me," he said, "and it will be your job to keep this bird under observation."

Anderson and Martin nodded grimly, and their employer glanced at Jones.

"I've got another job for you," he stated. "I want you to go back to the ranch. As you know, Foster and McDonald and Watt Mason are there, selling out the stock for me. I want you to tell 'em to get over to the Bruce Academy, taking the car and trailer with them."

"You mean—"

"I mean that it's up to them now to grab that black stallion for me," Crawford jerked. "They'll have to figure out a way themselves. But there's one thing in their favour. None of them is known around the academy, and, with the car and trailer hidden somewhere handy, they can show up at the Bruce outfit without raising any suspicions."

The Pool of Death

TWO men stood waiting on the road that led to the Bruce Academy, two men who were loitering beside an open car to which a cumbersome horse-box was attached.

The men in question were Foster and Watt Mason, and they had been keeping vigil there for some little time. But they had not much longer to wait, for presently they espied a familiar figure trudging towards them.

It was the figure of McDonald, and as he came up to them they glanced at him inquiringly.

"Well?" Foster asked him. "What did you find out?"

"Plenty," was the reply. "I drifted into the academy like we arranged, and pretended to be interested in takin' up polo. Jensen, the stable-hand, showed me around, and I actually got a squint at the god horse."

"Yeah?" breathed Mason.

McDonald nodded briskly.

"Jones told us he'd been painted, but they've groomed the stuff off him. There was a dark-skinned guy in the stall with him, and he turned out to be the hombre they call Pasha. Jensen talked to him a while, and from their conversation it seems that Bradley is satisfied Pasha is on the level, and drove into San Francisco this mornin' to fix up arrangements for transportin' the Sujanese and the god horse back home."

"He did?" exclaimed Foster. "And has he returned to the academy yet?"

"No, but he's expected to show up within the hour, and that means we've got to act fast. It's a cinch, fellers, I've been figurin' it out on the way from the academy. You drive up with the car and trailer and say you represent the Acme Shipping Corporation. Tell Pasha that you've come for him and Rex and will drive 'em to the docks, where Mr. Bradley will be waitin'."

The faces of Mason and Foster registered their approval of this scheme.

"The Acme Shipping Corporation, eh?" Foster murmured.

"Yeah, don't forget that name," said McDonald. "That's the company that Bradley was gonna call on, accordin' to Jensen. Now listen, I won't be with you, because it would look mighty queer if I was to show up in tow with you. But I'll be waitin' right here, and you can pick me up—and when you do, we'll ditch Pasha and head for Indian Gap."

"We get you, Mac," declared Foster, and then, climbing into the car with Watt Mason, he started up the motor

and proceeded to drive along the road in the direction of the Bruce Riding School.

Five minutes later they turned a bend in the trail and saw the academy ahead of them, and before long the automobile and the horse-box which was attached to it were swinging through the main entrance of the establishment.

Foster drew up in a yard that was flanked by stables, and he and Mason alighted from their tourer. Then, glancing about them, they perceived two men standing outside one of the stalls, one being an individual in breeches, garters and open-necked shirt, the other a swarthy fellow in a suit of white duck and a turban.

They were Jensen and Pasha, and, exchanging a significant look, Crawford's hirelings walked across to them.

"We're from the Acme Shipping Corporation," announced Foster, as he and Mason halted in front of the stable-hand and the native of Sujan.

Jensen started, and laid a hand on Pasha's sleeve.

"The Acme Shippin' Corporation!" he ejaculated. "Say, these fellers must have been sent by Mr. Bradley."

"That's right," Foster interposed. "A Mr. Bradley called at the company's offices in San Francisco, and on his instructions the transport manager sent us to collect a stallion that's to be shipped to Sujan. We've also gotta see somebody by the name of Pasha."

Jensen indicated his companion.

"This is Pasha," he stated, and at that the native moved forward a step.

"But I don't understand," he said. "I thought Mr. Bradley was to come back here."

Watt Mason made haste to trump up an explanation.

"Yeah, I believe that was the idea," he informed the Sujanese. "But Mr. Bradley changed his mind. He figured he'd like to see you and the horse safely on board ship at the docks, so he's gonna wait there for you. We'll have to hurry if we're to get there on time, though. It's a long road, and the ship won't wait."

Thoroughly satisfied now that this arrangement was of Frank's choosing, Pasha opened the door of the stall in which Rex had been lodged, and without any difficulty he led the creature forth and walked him across to the car and trailer, Mason and Foster hurrying ahead to let down the tail-door of the horse-box.

The stallion was coaxed into the vehicle, and the tail-door was quickly fastened. Then, accompanied by Pasha, Crawford's two hirelings made their way round to the automobile.

Foster took up a position behind the steering-wheel, and motioned Pasha into the seat beside him while Mason climbed into the back of the car. In the meantime Jensen had summoned Dorothy Bruce, and the girl and the stable-hand approached to bid the Sujanese "good bye" and "bon voyage."

Foster and Mason concealed their impatience as best they could while these farewells were in progress. Actually they were feverishly anxious to be on their way, and were wishing that they could have left Pasha with instructions to travel to San Francisco by rail and thus be quit of him. But they had guessed that the islander would never consent to be separated from the god horse.

At last, however, Pasha was ready for the road.

"To you," he said to Dorothy in parting, "I offer you my deep gratitude for making my brief stay here so pleasant, and I beg of you to convey my thanks to your father. He has been most kind,

and I should have liked to tell him so myself—only I know that he has been called away on business, and unfortunately I cannot await his return."

"He'll understand, Pasha," Dorothy rejoined. "Your mission here is fulfilled, and your native land recalls you. Good-bye, and good luck!"

With Pasha saluting the girl and Jensen gravely, Foster engaged the gear-lever thankfully enough, and a few seconds later the car and the trailer were turning out on to the road.

From the yard of the academy, Dorothy Bruce and the stable-hand watched the car and the horse-box roll off along the highway, and they were still watching the two vehicles when suddenly they swerved off the main San Francisco road and disappeared down a right-hand fork—to take the route on which McDonald was waiting.

"Hallo," Dorothy ejaculated, "why have they gone that way?"

"Maybe it's a short cut to town," Jensen remarked, but the girl knitted her brows.

"It's one I don't know, then," she began, only to stop short as a smart-looking roadster swung into view round a curve in the main highway.

It was a car that was coming from the direction of San Francisco, and Frank Bradley was at the wheel of it with Rinty perched on the seat beside him, and in less than thirty seconds the wealthy young sportsman was pulling up beside the bewildered Dorothy and her father's employe.

"Hallo, there!" Frank greeted them cheerfully. "Guess I got back in record time. But where's Pasha? Everything's fixed, and he and Rex are sailing to-morrow—"

Dorothy found her voice, and, stumbling close to the roadster, she clutched her admirer by the arm.

"Frank," she gasped, "Pasha's gone! Two men called here with a car and a trailer. They said they'd been sent on your instructions. Pasha left with them—and Rex!"

"Pasha—left with them!" Frank's countenance had paled, and there was a look of concern in his eyes. "Dorothy, I didn't send anyone here. It's a trick—a trick! Which way did these men go?"

The girl pointed shakily along the road by which he had approached.

"That way! But they switched off down the right fork just before you showed up. You can overtake them before they get very far. The trailer will hold up their speed."

Frank waited to hear no more. Nor did he give Dorothy and Jensen the chance to scramble into his roadster. With engine roaring he swung hard round and blazed in the direction that Crawford's men had taken, and he was already in top gear when he skidded on to the trail that branched away to the right.

Crouching behind the steering-column, he thrust his foot hard down on the accelerator and forced the speedometer up to the seventy mark, and he had been driving for no more than a couple of minutes when he saw a haze of dust ahead of him.

It was rising from the tyres of a car and trailer, and soon Frank was careering abreast to see the unsuspecting Pasha in the company of Foster and Watt Mason, both of whom were strangers to the young polo player, though he had no doubt that they were agents of Crawford.

"Pasha," he shouted, braking to the speed of the touring car, "those men are crooks!"

The Sujanese had turned his head

and a look of astonishment had appeared on his swarthy features at sight of Frank. But at the latter's warning yell his astonishment changed to alarm, and with a hoarse cry he made a dive for the tourer's hand-brake.

Foster struck him across the face to prevent him from interfering with the controls, and at the same time Mason lunged forward from the back seat and clutched the hapless foreigner around the neck. Then the gangster in the driving-seat attempted to outstrip Frank Bradley's automobile by opening the throttle full out.

He did not succeed, for Frank had him beaten in acceleration, and, drawing into the lead almost immediately, steered across Foster's path to carry out the desperate plan of forcing the scoundrel off the road.

Foster had to wrench hard on the wheel to avoid a collision with the big two-scater, and, if he had been a more competent motorist, he might have pulled up on the range-grass alongside the trail. But he lost control, and in missing Frank's car he crashed into a telegraph pole with an impact that brought disaster.

The pole snapped and came hurtling down amid a tangle of broken wires. The tourer lurched wildly and overturned on the roadside, spilling out its occupants, and almost simultaneously the horse-box that contained Rex broke from its fastenings and went bowling across the rough ground on the right until it came to a standstill some little distance away.

Meanwhile Frank had brought his own car to a halt, and, Rinty leaping out after him, he dashed back to the wrecked tourer.

He had not anticipated such an eventuality when he had tried to force the crooks off the road, and anxiety was written on his face as he bent down beside Pasha, who was lying motionless. Then he became aware that Foster and Mason were picking themselves up, and he was just in time to defend himself against the sudden rush that they made at him.

Foster he checked with a hard jolt to the chin, and, staggering away, the man was attacked by Rinty before he could recover from the blow. But Mason closed with Frank, and was battling savagely with him when the sound of hurrying footsteps heralded the arrival of McDonald, who had been waiting down the road and who had witnessed the smash.

McDonald rushed to Mason's aid, and in another moment Frank was tripped and borne to the ground. But he carried his antagonists with him, and as they rolled in the dust the three struggling combatants realised dimly that the fumes of petrol were gathering in their nostrils.

It was petrol that was pouring out of the wrecked tourer's fuel tank by the gallon, for the filler-cap of that tank had sprung from its nozzle at the instant of the impact. But Frank and his foes were ignorant of the fact that the petrol would soon endanger their lives. They did not know that it was spreading slowly but surely towards a couple of broken telegraph wires, which had made contact on the road and which were spluttering in fierce electrical fire.

Frank and his enemies fought on, little dreaming that in the space of a few seconds they would be wiped out by a shattering explosion!

(To be continued in another long episode next week. By permission of Associated British Film Distributors, Ltd., starring Kane Richmond, Norma Taylor, and Rex and Rinty.)

"THE DEVIL takes the COUNT"

(Continued from page 10)

things, and just to remind you how important it is to go straight I'm going to put you both on probation for six months." The judge smiled at them as a friend. "And I want that to mean simply this, and only this: You're to come to the probation officer once a month and say to him: 'I'm doing great, and I'm never going to get into trouble again.' You understand?"

The two boys nodded.

The judge then dismissed the elder folks as he wished to have a private talk with the three boys. He told them that the Devil was always lurking around corners looking for foolish boys.

"The Devil is a weak sister," the judge concluded. "That surprises you. You see the Devil was an angel once, and an angel has to be tough to do his job. And the Devil couldn't be tough enough so they threw him out—and he's been hiding down here ever since. Always looking for weaklings and cissys. You boys must be tough, so the Devil hasn't got a chance. Keep to the strict letter of the law and you have him beaten. That's all, lads." He held out his hand. "Good luck to you!"

But though the judge was smiling, he was not quite happy about the expressions on the faces of Buck and Gig. The big boys were sore at being tricked by the smaller lad, but he didn't know how sore.

It was not till the next day that Buck and Gig managed to get Claude alone, and their faces were fierce.

"So you wanna be a Raffles!" sneered Buck. "Now, listen—get this into your dome, Dope. From now on you're out of the gang, see? We don't even know you're dead. You can go play by yourself. And if you come snooping round us we'll black both your eyes—"

"And break all your ribs," added Gig. "Get going, Mister Cissy Raffles."

The Fateful Friday

Buck and Gig were not pleased with life. The more they thought over the whole affair, the more discontented they became. They were the big noises at the school, and they had been made to look like a couple of suckers by a kid, but they couldn't punch Claude's head because it was his toys that had bought that tombstone. Everyone seemed to stare at them and ask what it felt like snooping into an empty house. Buck's parents were constantly reminding the boy of his folly, whilst Gig had a big grudge—his mother was thinking of marrying Paul Krumpp. The boys were due to report on the last Saturday of the month, and on the Friday evening there was a meeting of the gang.

"We ain't gonna report," Gig told the gang. "We're getting outa here. No guy is gonna hang around my hoise and call me 'his boy.' We're quitting to-night after supper."

"Where are you going?" asked Six Toes.

"Out west, first," decided Buck. "Maybe we'll get across the border into Canada."

It was from Six Toes that Claude learned that Buck and Gig were planning to run away that night. Gig had told Six Toes that he would pay a final visit to the cemetery where his father was buried, and, after that, shake the dust of the city from his feet for ever.

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A little difficult, as it had been raining for days and looked like continuing. Claude went home very thoughtfully. He sneezed several times, and once had a sharp fit of coughing.

Claude arrived home to find that Rose Hawley had called. She had settled up with the pawnbroker and brought back all his toys. The boy thanked her politely for her kindness, but he seemed distraught and preoccupied. Jay Pierce could not understand his son showing such little appreciation, but he thought he had found out the reason when Claude sneezed violently.

Protesting violently, Claude was packed off to bed, while Jay Pierce showed Rose some of his work and told her that he had found someone eager to buy his lithographs.

"I intend to get Claude a bicycle out of these ill-gotten gains," laughingly he told Rose Hawley. "He thinks you're a grand person."

"I like him very much, too."

Jay frowned thoughtfully.

"I hope he can re-establish himself with Gig and Buck."

"Aren't you worried about him mixing with those two little demons?"

"I'm selfish about that friendship," he told her. "I think both those two demons are genuine lads. That trio can give a lot to each other. Claude should be in bed by now; let's go and have a word with him."

"Dad"—Claude sat up as soon as his father and Miss Hawley entered his bedroom—"what would happen if the boys didn't report to the probation officers?"

"Why, they'd find 'em and make 'em report," answered his father. "Now, you keep those covers over you." He laid a hand on the boy's forehead. "You look a bit feverish to me. Your mother would raise the deuce with me if she thought I wasn't keeping you fit."

"Dad, do I have to go back with mother?"

"Of course, son—at the end of six months."

"Why can't I stay here with you?"

The father solemnly shook his head.

"Because your mother loves you and wants you with her the same as I do. You love your mother, don't you?"

"Oh, yes," came the answer at once.

"But we're always in Europe or on boats—I never get a chance to know boys like Buck and Gig and Six Toes. Dad, what would happen if they ran away?"

"Who?"

"Buck and Gig."

Rose looked at Pierce senior.

"Say, you know I wouldn't put it past them," she whispered.

"Son, what's all this about?" the father asked sharply.

"Oh, nothing—nothing." Claude lay back. "I was just wondering what would happen if they did."

"The judge told them—the reform school. Probably for two years at least," said Jay Pierce. "Have you had your supper?" The girl shook her head and smiled invitingly.

Claude saw her smile.

"Dad," he called out, "why don't you and Miss Hawley go round to that restaurant we like? I'm all right here."

"That's a jolly good idea," Jay Pierce turned eagerly to the girl. "Shall we?" The answer was in her smiling eyes.

So Rose prepared some broth for Claude to have whilst they were gone, and they expected him to be sound asleep when they returned. Claude sipped a little of the broth and listened

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impatiently to the two grown-ups talking in the next room. Then came a cheery shout to sleep tight and the door closed behind them. Claude waited till their footsteps died away, and then he wriggled out of bed.

Strange Men

THE rain was descending in torrents. Two figures stood looking down at a grave. Stuck in a bottle were a few flowers.

"Gee, it's kinda little, ain't it?" "It's bigger than some of 'em," argued Buck.

They turned because they thought they had heard someone sneeze, and then forgot it in their interest in the tombstone.

"R.I.P.," Gig pointed. "I wonder what that means?"

"That means 'Rest in Peace,'" said a faint, lmsky voice.

They glowered at the intruder as if he were some evil spirit.

"Listen, Gig and Buck," cried Claude huskily. "I know what you're going to do, but truly, fellows, you musn't run away. They'll find you wherever you go, and they'll put you in a reform school."

"Let's get outa here," cried Gig. They pushed past him and made for the cemetery gates, but he stumbled after them. They heard him and swung round with fists clenched.

"Listen, I don't blame you for being angry with me." His voice was very hoarse. "But you can't solve your problems by running away; you've got to face them."

"Go on and beat it," Gig gave Claude a violent push. The smaller boy lost his balance and went sprawling into a muddy pool. They turned their backs on him and hastened away.

With an effort Claude staggered to his feet and ran after them. They had reached a main road that bordered a huge park before he caught them up.

"Listen, Buck and Gig, if you run away, people will think it's because you are afraid, and you aren't afraid, are you?"

"Dry up, will you?" Gig snarled.

A car whizzed past and Buck made a gesture which is known as "thumbing a lift," but the car did not stop. Gig began to thumb cars, and so did Claude. Many passed, but at last the headlights of a large car picked them out. Buck shouted that the driver was slowing.

It was a big car. Claude saw there was a thick-set man at the wheel. A door opened, and he saw that a dark, swarthy, smiling man was grinning at them, whilst an elderly woman was in the far corner.

"Come on, you kids, hurry up! Here, you get in front." He jabbed a finger at Buck. "You two in with me. Hurry!"

Claude found himself next to the woman, whom he saw wore a bonnet and had white hair. Somehow she reminded him of the wolf who dressed up to snare Little Red Riding Hood.

"Thank you, ma'am," Claude murmured.

The old hag grinned and mumbled something.

"Where you kids going?" asked the big man, who was driving, to Buck Murphy.

"Taking a little trip." Buck gazed quickly at this big man. He did not like his huge grin very much, nor the smile of the sleek, foreign-looking man.

This seemed to amuse the man, for he turned and shouted to the sleek foreigner who had invited the boys in the car:

"We're only too glad to give these three kids a lift, ain't we, Willie?"

"Sure," came the answer. "Especially on a night like this, Joe."

"He ain't with us, though," Gig pointed at Claude.

"That's right," added Buck. "We can get along without him—that is, if you're crowded."

"The more the merrier," laughed Willie. "We'll take you kids where you like, and— Hey, look out!"

Out of the darkness came flashes of light. To his surprise, Claude found arms round him, and next moment he was in the old hag's lap, with his head pressed against her shoulder. He thought it curious that the old lady's breath smelt strongly of alcohol—also he had heard of the "bearded lady."

"Now, you kids, keep your faces shut!" Joe snarled at Buck and then glared at Gig. "You grin and look cheerful, or else— You understand?"

"We don't want to get blamed for you kids running away," Willie said with a smile. "Leave this to me, boys."

The car began to slow and then the headlights picked out two policemen. When the car stopped they came alongside.

"You didn't happen to see anything of four fellows turning up this way in a green roadster, did you?" asked one officer.

"No; everything's been passing us pretty fast," softly answered Willie. "We've been travelling slow, as maw"—he indicated the old lady—"makes us drive very carefully when she has the kids with her."

The police waved the car on its way. Claude was pushed somewhat roughly back on to the seat.

"What did those officers stop us for?" he asked politely.

"Maybe they were looking for somebody," casually answered Willie. "Joe."

"Yeah, what is it?" answered the driver.

"We're going to get something to eat," Willie ordered, and grinned at Gig and Claude. "You want something to eat, don't you?"

"I dunno," mumbled Gig, who sensed that there was something wrong about these men and this car ride.

"We'll see you through—they'll never find you," chuckled Willie. "You kids stick with us—we'll get along nice together."

Some half-hour later the car slowed. "There's a joint right ahead!" sang out the driver.

Claude Bluffs the Crooks

THE three boys did not quite like the way the men led them into the small roadside eating-house by the arms. It was almost as if they were prisoners. These men were mighty like the sort of toughs Gig's father had been up against. Buck and Gig were not sure what to make of them; Claude, being wiser, had formed his opinions.

The place was quite deserted, but in a moment a smiling foreigner appeared. "Good-evening, madame. Good-evening, gentlemen."

"We're in a hurry," growled out Willie. "We want some food, quick."

"Yeah, one big plate all around of good, old-fashioned, Italian spaghetti," shouted Joe.

"Pardon," said the proprietor. "I am not an Italian—I am French."

"I don't care what you are." Joe banged the counter. "We want some spaghetti."

"But, m'sieu', we have no Italian

spaghetti; but we have French flapjacks."

"Six flapjacks, and jump to it!" he ordered.

"But I want—" began Joe.

"Pipe down," coldly spoke the leader, and looked closely at the proprietor. "You all alone in this dump?"

"Sure, I'm alone," answered the proprietor. "My wife she sleep upstairs."

Willie nodded, and then his queer, rather malevolent gaze took note of Claude and noted the difference.

"What's your name, kid?"

"Claude—Claude Pierce." The boy sneezed. "Guess I've got a cold."

"Claude Pierce, eh. Your family got any money, Claude?"

"Oh, no, sir. My father's quite poor."

"Aw, go on! My old lady says your old lady's got over a million bucks," said young Murphy, and somehow wished he had not spoken when he saw the avid gleam in Willie's eyes.

"Then what brings you out here to-night?" asked Willie in silky tones.

"Does your ma know?"

"My father and mother live apart," Claude explained. "I wish that man would hurry; I am hungry."

Willie smiled broadly.

The proprietor appeared with six steaming French flapjacks, and everyone drew their stools closer to the counter. Willie touched Claude on the arm.

"You like to come, kid?"

"I think I'd like to go very much," Claude turned to the proprietor. "May I have a different kind of sauce on this?"

The proprietor did not understand what sort of sauce Claude required, and explained that at times his English was not very good, as he had not been very long in the country.

"N'avez pas peur, mais eoutez bien. Ces hommes sont des vauriens," Claude said, and smiled as he pointed at his flapjack. "Ils essaient de nous enlever. Appelez du secours si vous pouvez?"

"What's he saying to you?" Willie demanded of the proprietor.

"It's the sauce," the proprietor cried. "I do not quite understand."

"My French is a bit rusty, I imagine." Claude gave a little smile. "It's a special kind of meat sauce I require. Appelez quelqu'un. Je vous prie de me croire. Nous sommes en danger. Dans une sauce mauvaise. Can you understand that?"

"Mais oui, Je comprends maintenant," replied the proprietor. "I will go look, see what I have."

"Kid," drawled Willie, his eyes narrowing, "don't talk any more of that French around me; it ain't polite. Understand?"

"Certainly not, if you don't wish me to," Claude agreed.

It was then that Buck noticed that the old lady was wearing a wig, and he nudged Gig. The latter's eyes opened wide. Buck began to wish he had said nothing about Claude's mother being rich.

"Guess we should be on the move," muttered Willie. "Say, that danged froggy never brought your sauce." His eyes became hard, and in a flash he was round the counter and out into the small kitchen. He was back in the outer room in a second. "He's gone and—"

He got no further, because clearly there sounded the siren of a police car.

The crooks darted to the door, and after that all was confusion. A shot rang out and Joe crashed full length on the floor, and as the crooks fired blindly into the night a murderous fire was trained on them. The old lady

dropped with a scream of pain, and off rolled her wig. With a snarl Willie turned to shoot the kid he knew had tricked them, but those three boys had dived behind the counter and had crawled through the kitchen to the back door.

They climbed an embankment and were only just across when a train roared past.

"Gee, that was a near squeeze," gasped Buck. "I wonder how the cops knew they were there."

"I told the proprietor they were crooks and trying to kidnap us," was Claude's simple explanation. "We were in danger and he was to call for help. I wasn't ordering a sauce, I was warning the man." He sneezed. "Luckily he—" Violent coughing and sneezing stopped Claude, but at last he spluttered out: "Understood and fetched the police."

"We'd better get away from here before they start looking for us," hinted Gig. "What we gonna do, Buck?"

"Guess we'd better go home," was the answer. "Guess maybe there was something in what the Dope said about running away."

After walking some distance they found that Claude was lagging behind and swaying dizzily. Claude collapsed in a heap and lay still.

They took it in turns to carry Claude, and in the small hours of the morning they came in sight of a tiny village. The sun rose as if in mockery of their sorry plight. A sleepy labourer pointed out the house of the doctor.

The doctor appeared and took one look at the limp form in Buck's arms.

"Bring him inside at once," he cried. "Your friend looks pretty bad."

An hour later Claude was in hospital. It was pneumonia, but his life was not in serious danger.

That Saturday Buck and Gig went and reported to the probation officer, and they saw the judge, and told him all about Claude's bravery and what he had done for them.

A Tough Fight

MRS. PIERCE heard about her son being in hospital, and came rushing down with her lawyer. Her son must not stay in a nasty cheap hospital; he must have specialists and every attention. She was told to go away as

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"THE DEVIL TAKES THE COUNT."—*Claude Pierce*, Freddie Bartholomew; *Buck Murphy*, Jackie Cooper; *Gig Stevens*, Mickey Rooney; *Jay Pierce*, Ian Hunter; *Rose Hawley*, Peggy Conklin; *Hilda Pierce*, Katharine Alexander; *Mr. Murphy*, Gene Lockhart; *Mrs. Murphy*, Kathleen Lockhart; *Mrs. Stevens*, Dorothy Peterson; *Judge Holmes*, Jonathan Hale; *Principal*, Etienne Girardot; *"Bugs"*, Sherwood Bailey; *"Six Toes"*, Buster Slavin; *Paul Krump*, Grant Mitchell; *Willie*, Harold Huber; *Joe*, Stanley Fields; *"Grandma"*, Frank Puglia.

"YELLOWSTONE."—*Dick Sherwood*, Henry Hunter; *Ruth Foster*, Judith Barrett; *James Foster*, Ralph Morgan; *Hardigan*, Alan Hale; *Marty Ryan*, Monroe Owsley; *Professor Ross*, Rollo Lloyd.

"PRISON SHADOWS."—*Gene Harris*, Eddie Nugent; *Claire Thomas*, Lucille Lund; *Mary Grant*, Joan Barclay; *George Miller*, Forrest Taylor; *Dave Morgan*, Syd Saylor; *Bert McNamee*, Monte Blue.

Claude was having every care that was possible. She turned on Jay and raved at him for not looking after her boy.

"It might be very serious if he's moved," Jay told her.

Hilda Pierce rushed out of the ward, but she returned a few minutes later. She was accompanied by her lawyer and her chauffeur. The lawyer managed to get the nurse out of the private ward on some pretext, and that enabled Hilda Pierce to get into the room without being seen.

The poor, foolish woman nearly fainted when she got the unconscious form of her son to the expensive private hospital. The specialist told her that what she had done was almost equal to murder.

But Jay Pierce did not upbraid her when he came to the hospital with Rose and the two boys. The latter offered their blood for a transfusion if it were needed. Late that evening Claude seemed to grow weaker, and the doctor said the patient seemed to have something on his mind—he kept on muttering about Buck and Gig. The doctor said if they could relieve Claude of some worry there might be a chance.

"H'ya, Dope?" Buck whispered, as he and Gig stood beside the sick-bed. "What'll we say, Mr. Pierce?" He appealed to the father.

"Something he'd like," was the answer. "Talk loudly, so he can hear."

"H'ya, Dope?" shouted Buck. "We think you're swell."

Weary eyes opened and Claude stared solemnly at them. They could see the difficulty he had in breathing.

"We reported to the probation officer," shouted Gig. "He's a great guy."

"The judge is coming to see you," Buck took up the tale. "They've closed up Shivvies' tyre shop—you should have heard him holler. The fellows at the hide-out were asking about you."

"Yeah, Bugs and Six Toes," cried Gig. "They're coming up to see you some time. We're going to have a lot of fun from now on, me and you and Buck."

A happy smile appeared on Claude's face and he was smiling as he sank into a curing slumber.

"He heard us, Mister Pierce," cried Buck. Neither of the boys knew that tears were streaming down their cheeks.

Some weeks later Buck and Gig stood before a smiling judge, who shook both heads by the hand.

"I've struck you boys off probation," he told them. "You don't have to report any more. And I don't want to hear from you again until you're pitching for the Giants or running for Congress. Give my respects to young Claude."

Down below three people were waiting for them—Rose Hawley, Jay Pierce and young Claude. There were five bicycles. They were off for a picnic in the country. Jay Pierce had bought the bicycles with part of the reward for the capture of Willie and his gang of crooks.

How happy Claude was that sunny afternoon as he pedalled down the street in between his two cronies, Buck Murphy and Gig Stevens. Behind pedalled Jay Pierce and Rose Hawley. They were happy because Hilda had renounced all claim to Claude and had gone to Reno to get a divorce. No wonder that little party of five were happy that day. The Devil certainly had taken the count.

(By permission of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Film Co., Ltd., starring Freddie Bartholomew as Claude, Jackie Cooper as Buck, and Mickey Rooney as Gig.)

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"YELLOWSTONE"

(Continued from page 14)

atmosphere that was Arctic in its character.

Then, shivering in the icy cold, he saw Ryan in the depths of the cavern, bent over mailbags that had been frozen in the course of the years.

Already Marty Ryan had succeeded in opening one of them, to reveal the coin and notes with which it was stuffed, and now he was in the act of forcing a second bag to disgorge its contents. But ere he could break the fastenings, Professor Ross drew a gun from a holster under his armpit, and next instant he was addressing the young man coolly.

"So it was you who killed Jim Anderson, eh?"

Ryan spun round with a startled cry and gaped at Ross in astonishment, confounded by the presence of this old fellow who had been wont to bore him with long-winded discourses on botany, but who looked anything but a mild and eccentric student of plant-life now.

"Thanks for finding the loot for me, anyway, Jenkins," the professor continued. "Yep, I know your right name. I've known it all along, and I've been watching you, for I guessed that you'd save me the trouble of dealing with Anderson."

"Who—who are you?" Ryan stammered.

With his free hand Ross clutched at his shock of raven hair and plucked it off to reveal a domed head which was completely devoid of any natural thatch.

"Bald Jack's the name," he said softly. "The only living member of the gang that filched those mailbags. And you can take it from me, Ryan-Jenkins, that I don't intend to split the dough with you. Nor am I going to give you the chance of rubbing me out like you did Anderson."

"I didn't kill Anderson!" Ryan panted.

"Then where did you go the night of the alfresco concert? I tried to follow you, but lost your trail."

"I only went ridin'," Ryan jerked. "I had no cause to kill Foster, or Anderson, as you call him. I'd made an agreement with him. I'll admit I ransacked his cabin, but that was after I heard he'd been murdered by somebody. I wanted to see if he'd left any clue to the money's whereabouts—and I found that clue, written in a diary that was among his private papers."

Bald Jack's eyes narrowed, and then he lifted the gun that he was grasping.

"Well, you found the money for me, kid," he said, "and this is the payoff!"

He pulled the trigger, and there was a racketing smash that drowned Marty Ryan's anguished death-cry. But even as the younger man thudded to the

floor, a dense cloud of fumes surged from a crater near which Bald Jack was standing—fumes that enveloped the killer like some unearthly visitation, and then, dispersing slowly, left him rooted there as if he had been turned to stone.

Rigid-stiff, with Marty Ryan lying some yards from him, Bald Jack Ross was fixed in that attitude when Dick Sherwood and Ruth Foster entered the cavern a few seconds later, and it did not take the Ranger long to guess what had happened.

"Dead!" the young Government employee breathed. "Both dead! Ross plugged Ryan, and then he must have got caught in an eruption of ammonia gas!"

"Ammonia gas!"

"Yes, can't you smell it, Ruth? This cave's full of it, and that's why the place is so darn cold. The fumes come out of these craters that you see all around, and sometimes they gush out with deadly effect. If you get caught in them you're liable to be frozen stiff, and that's what must have happened to Ross—his wet clothes accelerating the effect. I know, for I've been in caves like this before. Ross was frozen to death, Ruth—almost instantaneously!"

At that moment he heard footsteps in the water-logged entrance of the cavern, and with a swift gesture he plucked his Service revolver from its holster. Next second, however, he gave vent to an exclamation of surprise, for the man who stepped into his view was none other than Hardigan.

"You!" Dick said tersely. "How did you get here?"

"By following Miss Foster," the private detective replied. "I wasn't satisfied that she was telling me the truth. I thought she might know something about those missing mailbags that I now see over there."

Dick had lowered his gun and was thrusting it back into its sheath.

"You were wrong, Hardigan," he stated. "Miss Foster knew nothing about the mailbags. She was trailing Ryan and Ross when I fell in with her."

"Yeah, I guessed that eventually," Hardigan remarked, and then, as he glanced at the frozen body of Ross, a startled expression dawned on the detective's countenance.

"Say, I know that face now," he rapped out. "I couldn't place him at the inn. The wig fooled me, I guess. But I know him now. He's Bald Jack, the last of the gang that stole this dough eighteen years ago."

He paused and slid his eyes upon the mailbags, and from them his gaze travelled to Dick and Ruth in a look that was singularly crafty. But the quality of that look was not divined by the girl and the young Ranger until Hardigan spoke what was in his mind.

"Anderson, Ryan and Bald Jack—all dead. And now you are the only ones who stand between me and a hundred thousand dollars."

Dick Sherwood and Ruth Foster became tense, and recoiled as Hardigan levelled the six-gun that was in his fist. "What do you mean?" Dick ground out.

"I mean that the insurance company can go to blazes!" Hardigan said. "They offered me a reward if I could find the loot, but I'm after more than their reward. I'm taking that hundred thousand, and I don't want any witnesses."

Dick was empty-handed, for he had replaced his forty-five in its holster. Helpless, with Ruth cowering at his side, he stared at the treacherous sleuth incredulously.

"I'm sorry," Hardigan went on in grim tones. "You're a couple of nice kids, but nobody's going to squeal on me. Anderson—or Foster if you like—he was different. I—"

A sharp cry broke from Ruth, a cry that was inspired by the detective's reference to her father.

"It was you! It was you who killed him!"

"Yeah," answered Hardigan, "you might as well know it before you go yourself. I trailed your father that night he left the camp, but he spotted me near Old Bess. I had a show-down with him then—tried to make a fifty-fifty deal with him—but he jumped me, and in the fight I shot him dead—"

The sentence was never finished, for at that instant there was a fresh outburst of fumes from the crater which had sealed Bald Jack's doom, and suddenly Hardigan was swallowed by that deadly cloud, vanishing before the eyes of his intended victims as they themselves leaped backwards.

When the dense, gaseous mist evaporated, Dick Sherwood and Ruth Foster knew that they had nothing more to fear from Hardigan. For, like the rogue who had been known as Bald Jack, he was lifeless as a statue, petrified by one of Nature's strangest and most terrible caprices. Hardigan, traitor to his calling, had breathed his last.

It was evening, and by the light of a mellow moon Dick Sherwood and Ruth Foster were riding through the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

"Dick," Ruth was saying, "you know what my father was, and yet—you want me to marry you."

"Yes," he told her. "It makes no difference to me that your father was on the wrong side of the law, dear. You mean everything to me, and nothing else counts. And what's more, you're going to marry me."

He edged his horse nearer to the pony that was carrying her, and, his arm about her waist, they rode onward through the moonlight.

(A Universal Picture, by permission of General Film Distributors, Ltd., starring Henry Hunter and Judith Barrett.)

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EPISODE 1—

"Beneath the Ocean Floor"

Professor Norton is Interviewed

IN Boston, perhaps the most intellectual city in the States, Professor John Norton had been engaged for years on practical inventions in connection with both sea and land. He had just perfected a new type of submarine, driven on the principle of a huge rocket, or series of rockets, which, by continuous explosions through valvular tubes in the stern of the vessel, drove it at tremendous speed on or under water at any depth he wished. He planned to explore the beds of the great oceans, beginning with that one nearest to him—the great Atlantic.

He was also interested in the problem of earthquakes—those most terrible of all catastrophic visitations to which this earth is liable, owing to the intense heat of the everlasting fires raging beneath its crust. His variations of the well-known seismograph, which records the undulations, direction and duration of any earthquake, however remote from the instrument, was a remarkable affair. It was able to anticipate the calamity—and so, whilst unable to prevent it, the professor could issue a warning by which people might make ready to leave the threatened area. That many of them would not profit by such warnings was the most distressing part of the professor's waking life—he knew the earthquake was coming and could not bear to be disbelieved by the poor wretches so shortly to pay the penalty of their laughter at his warnings.

Of late, he had evolved the extraordinary theory that some earthquakes were due to a malign human agency. This theory had provoked even louder laughter. The editor of the "Boston Herald" sent along his star reporter,

Diana Compton, to get a story from this crazy inventor—to furnish a bright and amusing column for the next Sunday's issue.

She was a lively girl, easy to look at, and gifted with quick intelligence and a racy style of reporting. She chose a morning when a whisper came to her that old Norton was going to sail from the harbour in his rocket submarine on a test voyage.

The professor was in his laboratory with his young motherless son Billy. He greeted Diana in his usual excited way.

"Oh, I'm afraid I've no time for an interview! I'm leaving here almost at once."

"I won't keep you, professor. Just a few notes."

"Notes? Oh, well—here's the divining machine." He gestured towards a weird instrument composed of spiral glass tubes and brass rods and what appeared to be small wireless valves. "Any change in the earth's internal fires—I mean, when they are leaping up towards any part of the crust where that crust is thinning, is instantly registered by this variant of the usual seismograph. My machine tells what is likely to happen. Possibly it won't happen—probably it will."

He seated himself at a table in front of the machine, peering up at her bright eyes through his round-rimmed, large pince-nez. "My back is to it, now—my hands are on the table. No trickery. Miss—what's your name, please?"

"Diana Compton."

"Of course! Diana—dear me. I have your card here. Billy, put a chair for Diana—bless me, where is that boy?"

"He went out as I came in," Diana smiled, notebook in hand.

"Gone out?" The professor made a clicking sound under his iron-grey moustache. "Tiresome fellow—rushed off to the naval college, I expect. He's crazy on wrestling—and his especial hero, Lieutenant Crash Corrigan, is giving a display. Well, now, what was I saying?"

"No trickery, professor," Diana prompted.

"Ah, rather not! Just keep your eyes on that instrument behind me. Every ten minutes comes a signal." A sudden fierce crackling sound in the seismograph startled the girl. "There it is again." Blue lights flickered in the glass spirals. "You see—there it is! Every ten minutes, since eight o'clock this morning. Nothing but a human agency could do that. Somebody deliberately helping the fires below the earth, helping forward a disaster."

"But how?" Diana asked. "And why?"

"How and why? That's for us to find out. Some sinister power—perhaps on the earth, perhaps below it. Probably on the ocean bed."

"A gigantic electric whale?"

Norton shook his thinning grey locks. "Not a whale, definitely. Not anything so—so unable to reason. Every ten minutes, to the tick of the clock I take it a bad earthquake is being planned for—let me see—" He turned in his chair to stare at the machine. "Somewhere on the Pacific coast—Seattle or San Francisco? Or maybe in Japan? I'll set the indicator."

He rose up to bend over the machine.

"You can't plan earthquakes, professor," Diana argued.

He answered her:

"I believe that, below the Atlantic lies a huge submerged kingdom, Atlantis, maybe. Well—someone there."

"But Atlantis was drowned thousands of years ago—if ever there was such a continent."

"My dear young lady, there was such a continent. A vast and prosperous land lying between Africa and the Azores. A pagan land. The next earthquake will occur in the West Indies. It will take place to-night, our time. Now, if your editor cared to flash a wireless message to Martinique—"

"They wouldn't believe it," Diana told him.

"Any more than you do," Norton turned a grave face towards her. "I guess you're right. But it's very sad—very dreadful to think that you and I know beforehand of an awful catastrophe and can find no one to take heed."

"Atlantis?" mused Diana, impressed despite herself. "And fish people with intelligence and a kind of civilisation living there?"

"I didn't say fish people," Norton corrected her. "I said Pagans. People without any religion—except that of Might being Right. Well, if you and your editor won't warn them—" He came away from the machine. "You'd like to see my rocket boat?"

"I'd love to."

"Come back at two o'clock. Joe!" he called. "Joe, where are you?"

A rather wild-looking young man appeared from an inner room. He stared at Diana as if about to speak, then contented himself with a vacant grin as he turned to the professor.

"Joe, show this lady some of my inventions. And, afterwards, find my sons. Tell him I want him."

"Gone to fetch Lutenant Crash," Joe told him moodily. "You wanted the lutenant, didn't you?"

"Did I? Oh, yes, of course. Well, good-bye, Miss—er—"

"Diana," she prompted.

"Come back at two sharp, Diana. Good-bye."

Billy Norton and His Hero

YOUNG BILLY NORTON, fourteen and full of mischief, had seized the opportunity of rushing down to the Naval Barracks to see his friend and hero, Lieutenant Crash Corrigan. The sentry on the gates challenged him.

"I've got a message for Lieutenant Corrigan," Billy explained.

"Pass in. He's down at the gymnasium."

At the gym door Billy was again challenged.

"What d'you want, young Norton?"

"Dad told me to tell Crash that he's going out this afternoon in the Rocket."

"The lutenant's busy just now. I'll let him know."

"But I've got to see him myself. It's important."

"Busy. I tell you."

Sounds of heavy breathing and loud bumpings, mingled with bursts of applause, came wafting to Billy's quick ears from within the gym.

"Can't I just peep in?" he coaxed.

"You hop it! Here's the admiral and his party."

Billy went away disconsolately. The admiral and his aides passed him with scarcely a glance. He turned to watch them enter the gym. When all were safely inside and the white-capped sentry had his back to him, Billy made a dash for the rear of the high glass-roofed building and scuttled up the ladder fire escape to one of the gables where he guessed a fanlight might be open.

His guess was good, the morning being very warm. He clambered over the edge of the fanlight and got on to a little window-cleaning platform high up amid the girders. He peered down into the gym and saw that the wrestling mats and a staked ring were

fixed in the centre of the wide, decked floor. About the ring were the admiral and some officers, watching a couple of young giants within the staked enclosure solemnly shaking hands with each other.

They were stripped to the waists of their "slips." They wore short socks and canvas shoes. Seen from above, they looked curiously fore-shortened. Their immense shoulders glistened whitely below their dark, cropped heads. Billy crouched down on to the little narrow platform to get a clear view of them.

Somebody blew a whistle. The two broke away and walked warily round each other. Suddenly one of them leapt in and gripped the other in his mighty arms. For a bare second the grip held—then the attacker made a deft movement, got the attacker by the ankles, and, with a jerk, shot him clean over his head, right across the ring. He fell with a bump on the mat, and the other at once pounced on him.

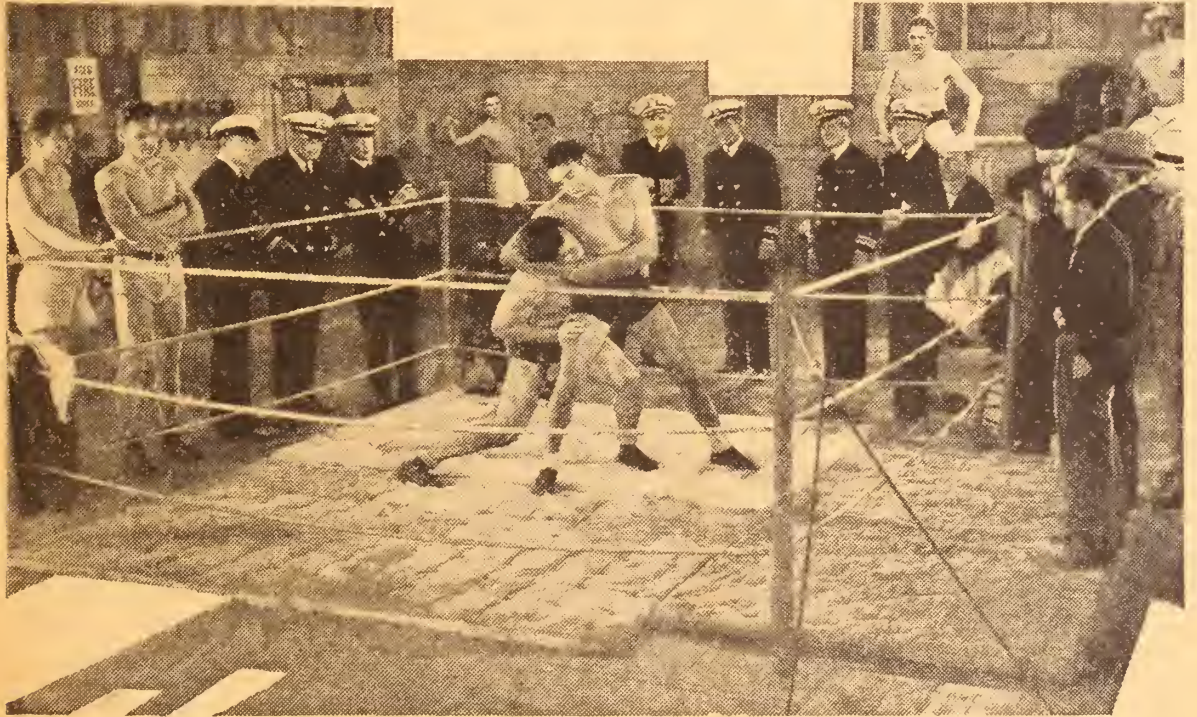
"Get his shoulder down. Crash!" squealed Billy from his perch. "Hold him! Get his shoulder down!"

His voice was drowned in the shouts from the ringside onlookers. All were yelling advice—some to Corrigan and others to his opponent, who had now got Corrigan once again in his mighty embrace. They wrestled with zest—quick tumbles and clever recoveries at every tick of the clock. They knew all the tricks, every feint—they were splendidly matched.

Billy became frantic. "Hold him, Crash! Get his shoulder to it! Oh, boy—hold him! Down him—oh, great work!"

Crash had just pitched the other on to his head with a marvellous body spin in which his opponent had been caught up, and held high above Corrigan's head.

Cheers rang out. Billy, in his tense excitement, overbalanced himself and went over the edge of the planks. He grabbed at the fore-edge of one of them and held on, his fingers clawing



Suddenly one of the wrestlers leapt in and gripped the other in his mighty arms.

frantically for a firm hold. A gasping cry went out of him, and Corrigan, looking upward, saw him. Without a word, Corrigan vaulted out of the ring and, seizing the padded hoop of a trapeze rope, swung himself up to the cross-ties which helped to support the high, glassed roof.

He reached the girders and gripped at one of them with his free hand; got a clutch, let go the hoop of the trapeze and swung himself on to the tie. While those below watched with hated breath, he walked swiftly along the narrow steel edge and reached the hanging boy, who was now almost spent.

"Leggo, Billy—I'll catch you," Corrigan whispered.

And the boy, with complete faith in his friend, let himself fall straight into Corrigan's arms—to be deftly caught and held on that precarious balance.

Those below were dead silent. The other wrestler placed himself quickly below Corrigan to break his fall, if fall he must. But the young giant had nerves of iron and stood on the narrow girder without the slightest fear of disaster. He held the boy like a balancing pole as he dropped astride the girder and reached out a hand for the trapeze rope, which one of them below instantly swung upward towards him. The rope caught, Corrigan swarmed down it with Billy safely held under one of his great arms.

"Well now!" cried Corrigan, putting the dazed and shaken boy on his feet, "what was the big idea?"

"I—I wanted to—to see you, Crash," Billy spluttered. He glanced fearfully towards the staring admiral. "Sorry, sir—I didn't mean to interrupt."

"I guess you didn't," the great man answered grimly. "Who is he, Corrigan?"

"Professor Norton's son, sir. He's a good boy—a great pal of mine."

"Norton's boy, eh?" The admiral's frowns relaxed. "Like father, like son, what?"

Corrigan smiled, his pleasant face lighting up. "They're a good team, sir, both of them."

The admiral signalled to his aides. "Come on, gentlemen—let's get along with the morning's duty. Send the boy home, Corrigan, and tell the professor I'll be obliged if he'll keep his earthquakes under strict control while manoeuvres are on."

Joe Gets Nerves

CORRIGAN went to the Norton house in Bunker Square just before two o'clock. He found the professor at his desk, explaining a new kind of sextant to Diana.

Said Corrigan: "Did Billy give you the message from H.Q.—to keep earthquakes under control, sir?"

Norton stared at him. "He certainly said something of the sort. But I can't do that."

"It was only a joke, sir," Corrigan had to explain. "Are you sailing at two?"

"Three o'clock. The tide will be then at the ebb. Oh, this is Miss Diana Somebody—from the 'Herald.' Diana, meet Lieutenant Crash Corrigan."

The girl glanced at Corrigan, half smiling. But he only bowed. Girls weren't much in his line. His clear-cut features and strong chin, his big square frame, made a lasting impression on Diana. She saw a hero in him, just as Billy did.

That young man entered the laboratory.

"Dad, are you going to take me this afternoon?"

January 23rd, 1937.

"Certainly not," his father checked him. "Perhaps another time, when we know more about the capabilities of the Rocket. We shall be back to-night. This afternoon is merely a test."

"But, dad, you promised—"

"Nothing of the sort. I'm not taking anybody. Merely Joe and the two sailors."

The door of the adjoining room was opened a little way. Joe's wild face appeared.

"How deep you going?" he asked.

"About ten thousand feet."

"The ship won't stand the pressure. Crumple up like a paper bag," Joe stated sulkily.

"Oh, nonsense." The professor waved him away. "Billy, where's that image the diver brought me? Oh, yes, I see." He turned to a shelf, and very carefully lifted down a bronze statuette of a sitting woman. "Look at this, Diana—thousands of years old. A beautiful piece of work, worthy of Phidias, the great Greek sculptor. This was found in comparatively shallow water after the great storm of last month."

"Sure it wasn't bought for you at some comic art show by a practical joker?" Corrigan queried.

"My dear Crash, who nowadays could fashion such a superb thing?" the professor retorted. "Besides, bronze—why it's worth a hundred dollars as metal alone. What is it, Joe?"

The assistant's face had appeared again at the door crack.

"I guess I won't go s'afternoon. You take Salty and Briny."

"They can't drive the engine—you know that. What's the matter with you? We shall take the two sailors, in any case."

"She'll act like a busted balloon. Pricked—squa-hed! She'll go flat into nothing—and us with her."

"Can I drive the submarine?" Corrigan asked. "I understand Diesel engines."

"It isn't a Diesel—it's my own invention," Norton snapped. "Dear me, Joe—how you worry! The Rocket is absolutely safe."

"Then you can take me, dad," Billy burst in. "I'll sit quiet and not ask questions—promise faithful!"

Diana saw that Norton was getting flurried. She tried to smooth things out.

"Let's hear some more about the earthquakes. The machine is starting again."

The seismograph was giving forth faint crackles. The professor's attention was at once directed to it. He put down the statuette and studied the indicator.

"Ah, this is from mid-Atlantic!" he cried. "The Azores area. A disturbance below the ocean—most odd. Almost like a signal." He turned to Corrigan. "You fellows will get news of an earthquake at Madeira at seven o'clock this evening. I placed it in the West Indies first of all, but it will be much farther away."

"I'd like to see the submarine, professor," said Diana.

"Eh? Certainly. You, too, Corrigan? I'll get ready—you two walk down to the docks. Billy—where is that boy?"

Billy had vanished. Joe was heard singing tunelessly to himself in the next room. Norton nodded to his guests.

"See you later."

Corrigan had winked at Diana when the professor had been predicting his earthquake.

"Salty" and "Briny," the two sailors who made up the crew of the Rocket, with Joe as engineer, were engaged in

a little back-chat in the main cabin of the submarine. Salty considered that swabbing the floor was not his job.

"Then whose is it?" Briny demanded.

"Not mine."

"It certainly isn't my dooty," said Briny. "I'm first mate."

"And I'm steward. Stewards don't have to swab floors."

Briny flung the mop at his chum. Salty stepped backward and fell over the pail of soapy water. Joe yelled at them both:

"Clear up that mess! Guv'nor's coming aboard!"

The two sailors had brought their cockatoo with them, a scarlet and grey old bird who was always full of noise. It now echoed Joe in an eldritch scream:

"Clear up that mess—the ship's on fire!"

"Shut up!" Joe snapped at it. "Or I'll wring your neck!"

Briny was hurt. "Why, Joe—don't get huffy! Poll's okay—she's like me, she don't ever mean anything. We'll get this done in a minute."

The professor came along the dock with Corrigan and Diana. They descended into the cabin.

"What's all this?" Norton fumed. "Have we sprung a leak?"

Polly, perched on the top bar of a chair, screeched:

"Man the lifeboats—we'll all be drowned!"

Joe went into the engine-room and shut the iron door with a slam. Diana, who had glimpsed his dour face, asked: "Is Joe all right?"

Norton was busy with the two sailors and didn't hear. Corrigan was intensely interested in the many knobs and levers on the switchboard. Diana heard Joe lumping about in the engine-room. Salty and Briny went up the ladder.

The professor shouted after them:

"Close the tower!"

He spoke through a tube to Joe.

"Go ahead—steer carefully through the harbour traffic."

A periscope arrangement reflected the surface of the slack water around them. They began to move more and more quickly. When they were clear of the slipway and in the open sea Norton ordered:

"Submerge!"

He sat down to face Corrigan.

"What's that you say? No air? Plenty of air here, you needn't be afraid! We're going down to three thousand feet as soon as we are in deep water. No smell of oil on the Rocket—no discomfort. D'you hear the compressed foul air escaping?"

"A sort of hissing noise?" asked Diana.

Norton nodded.

"It helps drive the ship. I'd like to explain it all to you. Sit down, Corrigan—don't fidget about. Yes, that's priming powder—dangerous. Everything's labelled here, but there's no danger here except to inexperienced hands."

Corrigan looked too big for the tiny cabin. Diana felt twinges of discomfort when she remembered Joe's queer expression. This feeling was heightened when the engineer suddenly opened the iron door of his room to ask in a croaking voice:

"When do we turn?"

"Turn?" echoed Norton. "We've only just started! Put her full power ahead and send her down."

"She won't stand much more." Joe's voice was a moan. "She'll crumple up."

He popped back into his den, again slamming the door. The professor took no notice, but began to explain the many differences between the Rocket and the usual submarine.

Time passed. Norton glanced at the gauge—every now and again.

"Nearly three thousand feet!" he exclaimed. "And no sense of oppression. We might be at home."

As he spoke they felt a jerk—then a sudden feeling as if they were in a rapidly descending elevator. Norton moved to the door of the engine-room.

"Not so fast, Joe!" he called. Then: "He's locked himself in!" he cried. "What ever is the matter with him?"

Corrigan moved to the door to pull at it. He shouted:

"Open the door, Joe!"

A crazy laugh sounded. Again came that rather sickening sensation of descent.

"He'll smash us on the ocean bed!" Norton exclaimed furiously. "Joe, open this door at once!"

No effort of Corrigan's could move the tight-fitting sheet of steel.

"Here's a blow-pipe." The professor handed an oxy-acetylene lamp to Corrigan. "Burn out the lock. He's mad!"

They switched on the oxygen to the blow-pipe and a white-hot incandescence leaped out of its muzzle. Corrigan applied the flame to the door-lock, and almost at once the steel began to fuse and melt.

The blow-pipe was doing its work when quite suddenly it went out.

"He's cut off the gas!" The professor was aghast. He hammered at the door, yelling frantically. "Joe, don't be a fool! Open the door!"

Oxygen, highly compressed, came on again—the blue-white flames leaped out of the muzzle of the blow-pipe. The lock melted away.

As Corrigan forced the door, a shrill call came from inside the engine-room: "Dad! Dad!"

"Billy!" The professor was beside himself. "Why, what—how—"

Corrigan was holding back the half-demented Joe. Billy had stowed away in the chart locker—his father dashed in to help the boy out of his hiding. Diana put out her hands to take the young rascal.

"He turned off the gas, dad!" cried Billy. "But I turned it on again."

A Lost Continent

JOE sat with his head held in his hands, muttering to himself.

Billy worked the controls of the submarine under his father's direction. The boy was really as good an engineer as Joe and brought a sharp intelligence to his work. Corrigan and Diana sat in the main cabin within earshot of the professor.

"We are ten thousand feet below the surface," he called to them. "We are on the ocean floor. If we could but see through these walls of steel, what wonders we might behold!"

"Atlantis?" queried Corrigan, half smiling.

"Atlantis," Norton repeated impressively. "Or the ruins of it. A mighty continent drowned beneath a flood. Noah's flood, maybe. I often think about that—" He checked himself. "The seismograph is signalling. An earthquake—nay, a seaquake—is preparing itself. I shall try my counteracting ray."

He stepped into the main cabin to the strange machine which Diana had first seen in his laboratory. A new gadget had been added to it—a little finely balanced lever which Norton now gently depressed. Corrigan and Diana watched him attentively.

Nothing happened so far as they could make out. But a tense minute later the submarine ceased to move.

Joe looked up.

"We've struck a rock! We'll fill up—we'll be drowned like rats in a cage!"

"Shut up, Joe!" Norton rapped out. "Keep silent, all of you." He studied the seismograph.

"I'm certain that some human agency is at work against us. Some agency with a terrible intelligence and power behind it. Ah—we're moving again!"

"The steering-wheel was dragged out of my hands, dad!" called Billy. "I can't hold it. It's going just how it likes!"

"We are being drawn along as if by a magnet," Norton stared at them in turn. "Corrigan, I don't like this. I have a queer sensation of being looked at by some being we can't see."

They all felt the strange, irresistible motion. It was as if it had fixed a cable to the nose of the submarine and was now hauling it along the sea bottom. Then they felt the little wonder ship rise.

"I can't do a thing, dad," Billy called again. "The controls are working themselves."

It was a horrible feeling, this, of complete helplessness. They could only sit there and wait. The two sailors came out of their compartment.

"The old parrot's going on something frightful, sir," Salty told the professor. "Throwing fits—and making a kinder wheezing noise like he was dying."

"Don't bother me with your nonsense!" Norton snapped at him. "Get back to your work."

"No work to do, sir. Nothing answers. When we oils the engines they go slower instead of faster."

"We didn't ought to have come," put in Briny. "To-day being Friday. It's unlucky."

"The lights are going out," groaned Joe in hollow tones. "Power has failed. We'll die in the dark!"

"We aren't dead yet," Corrigan reminded him.

The lights went out; then flared on again. Then flickered up and down.



Corrigan held the half-demented Joe while the professor helped Billy out of his hiding-place.

"Somebody's monkeying with our dynamos," came Briny's voice. "Lummy, if I could only ketch 'em!"

A swift forward motion became evident. The Rocket was being drawn along on an even keel. This continued while they waited in heart-searing suspense. Then all motion ceased and they felt themselves rising straight upward as directly as if they were in a lift.

"Sorter makes your tummy feel it was dropping out," whispered Salty. "I'll be throwing fits in a minute!"

The submarine gave a little bounce. Then all was still again. Norton, studying the periscope in the fliffling light of the lamps, gazed incredulously.

"We're back on the surface!"

They heard Briny shouting:

"Tower's out of water, sir! Shall I run up and open it?"

"It's unbelievable," said Norton in hushed tones. "Yes, the coming tower is certainly above the surface. Go up, Joe, and open the tower."

"And let the sea in?" Joe growled. "Not me!"

Corrigan thrust past him and ascended the ladder of the tower. He unbolted and pushed up the lid. He called down to them:

"We're in a river somewhere. There's no sky."

They all came scrambling out of the cabin up the ladder to the little flat-surfaced deck. The Rocket was floating slowly and lazily down the middle of a dark-watered, brackish river, whose banks were lined with dwarfed forest trees which overshadowed its sandy banks.

"Amazing!" The professor spoke with awe. "We are actually in an unknown country—" His voice trailed away as he stared through his pince-nez at the strange trees.

"No sky overhead," Corrigan repeated. "Just a huge dome of what looks like dark glass. It's as if we were in an enormous diving bell." He paused in perplexity. "No sun—and yet there's light."

"That's clouds, sir," said Salty. "No glass could stand the pressure of the sea what's above it. But clouds, now—well, they're wet, ain't they? So it don't make any difference."

Diana had to smile—these two sailors amused her.

"Going to fetch Polly?" she asked Briny. "A little fresh air will do her good."

"Lummy, I was forgetting all about her!" He darted back into the submarine, closely followed by his chum.

"Let's go ashore," Billy suggested. "Maybe there's people."

The professor had recovered himself. "It is Atlantis," he declared. "Yes, beyond all doubt. Strange that, when I find my theories proved correct, I should begin to doubt. We will go ashore and see what sort of civilisation remains in a continent lost for so many thousands of years."

"You're a tough old bird!" suddenly screeched Polly, appearing on Salty's shoulder as he climbed out of the coming tower. "Man the lifeboats—the ship's on fire!"

The Robots

THE professor collected a small mahogany box from his special locker which was marked "Priming Powder. Danger! Handle with Care." This little box he tucked under his arm.

"Now we can go ashore," he decided. "Lead the way, Corrigan. I will come last."

January 23rd, 1937.

"Can we bring the parrot?" asked Salty.

"Yes. But don't let her talk or shriek."

They poled the Rocket near the southern bank, then disembarked—the professor shutting down the conning tower. He crossed the collapsible gangway, then folded it back on to the submarine. They watched him carrying his little box to the bole of a tree.

"We can hide it here," he said. "It is the switchboard which controls the submarine. I shall now submerge it. Watch me carefully, all of you. We do not know what dangers are around us. I have a strong suspicion that we are being overseen in all we do."

They stood round him whilst, crouching on the ground, he pressed down a switch on the outside of the box. Immediately the Rocket put off from the shore to the middle of the river, and, with gurgling bubbles, sank out of sight.

"You reverse the switch to bring it up," Norton told them. "Quite simple. Now we will hide the switchboard." He did so beneath the mossy undergrowth at the base of the tree. "Note where it is, Corrigan—but don't mark this tree. Memorise it. Salty and Briny can stay here with the parrot. We will go inland a little way and take our bearings."

They came out of the forest which fringed the river and clambered upward over rough, uneven ground which became more rocky and difficult with every few yards. They climbed in silence, strange forebodings keeping them wary and quiet.

At last they reached a cleft almost at the summit of the rocky, desolate hill. Norton, peering forward, put up a warning hand.

"Look!" he whispered. "A walled city!"

Through a gap in the next range of hills they espied a strange, Eastern-looking little town, high-walled about, except where two huge wooden gates were closed under an archway. There was no sign of life.

Billy climbed on to a flat rock to get a better view.

Suddenly a clattering of hoofs from behind them caused all to turn sharply. Tearing down the hills farther along the range, they saw a party of black-robed men on huge horses scouring into the river valley. They were armed with swords and spears, which they flourished wildly as they galloped.

"Looking for us," the professor muttered. "I knew we were being watched! We had better hide from them."

"What about Salty and Briny?" queried Corrigan.

"They must look after themselves. These horsemen will dismount if they are going in under the trees."

Joe was scuttling away as hard as he could.

"Come back!" cried Billy. "Stay with us, Joe!"

His shrill voice carried through the strangely still air. The horsemen heard, and, with fierce suddenness, drew rein. Corrigan saw them staring upward, trying to find them. A barked command came to their ears; the party below drew in about their leader.

The professor turned to Corrigan.

"What do you advise?" he asked.

"Frankly I don't like the look of them," Crash returned. "Ah, they have seen us! Follow me all!"

He ran into the gap, towards the walled city. A loud shouting was raised by the Blackrobes—they and their

horses came pounding over the boulder-strewn earth in instant pursuit. Corrigan's quick eyes noted a ledge in the gap up to which an active man might spring. He did so, gaining the ledge easily; then, with down-stretched hand, he rapidly hauled up Diana, Billy, and the professor.

"Where's Joc?" Corrigan stared downward. The foolish young engineer was running down the gap towards the far-off city.

"Hope he has enough sense to hide himself." Corrigan seized Diana's hand. "Follow me!"

The ledge sloped inward to a crevice Hewitt the huge, piled-together boulders. One by one they squeezed through and came to a roughish kind of plateau, the sides of which seemed too precipitous to be climbed up. They crouched there, hearing the horsemen thunder along the gap they had just left.

"We had better get back to the Rocket."

Corrigan had taken over command. The professor seemed bewildered and frightened. Again he said:

"They can see us, Crash. I'm sure we are being watched."

"They can't," Corrigan declared positively. "Now then, let's see if we can drop over the cliffs and get back to the Rocket."

He went forward, while the others stood together, breathlessly watching him. He beckoned to them.

"There's a circular hole down there," he whispered. "It looks to me as if it were an entrance. It's concealed from below with creepers and trees—you can only glimpse it from here where we are higher up. See it?"

They all peered down. Billy spotted the hole first, and exclaimed:

"Gee, Crash, what a lark! Let's go!"

"It may be a trap."

Norton shook his grey head. He had put away his pince-nez, and looked very worried.

"We can't stay here," Corrigan argued. "Gosh, what's that?" A whining scream had torn the air. Almost as he spoke a strange kind of air-torpedo came hurtling through the sky downwards at them. It struck the cliffs to their left, exploding with a deafening report. Huge masses of rock came crashing down; then dense, stifling smoke enveloped them. "That's settled it," Corrigan called. "Your Atlanteans definitely aren't friendly, professor!"

"I'm utterly bewildered," Norton owned. "This land beneath the ocean; this clouded dome above us; this strange, dry light which comes from no sun. Plenty of air, but no wind. I shall have to read a paper to the learned societies about all this when we get back."

"When we get back," Diana put in with a wry smile.

A second projectile came at them, this time wide of its mark. It smashed into the cliffs as it exploded with devastating uproar. Loose rocks and shingle came down from the heights in a kind of avalanche.

Corrigan was already over the edge of the cliff, hanging by his hands. He dropped to his feet, calling up to his companions:

"One at a time! I'll catch you!"

But Billy didn't wait. If Crash wasn't afraid of the drop, he wasn't. But his pluck earned him a bad tumble.

Diana leapt into Corrigan's outstretched arms, light as a feather. The professor came down rather awkwardly, but Corrigan just caught him. They began to make their way over a rock-

(Continued on page 27.)

Ordered to arrest the girl whom he hoped one day to marry, Sheridan of the Mounted faced the cruellest dilemma that ever a man experienced. A tense drama of the Canadian forests, starring Francis X. Bushman jun. and Lois Wilde



"GET THAT GIRL"

The Open Safe

IT was eight o'clock in the evening, and in the city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the "rush" hour was long past.

The home-going crowds of workers had given up their daily tasks and migrated to the suburbs. The roar of traffic had whittled itself down to an intermittent play of clear-cut sounds that only accentuated the evening stillness—such as the occasional note of a motor-horn or the rattle of an infrequent street car.

In the business centre the majority of the premises had been abandoned to a meagre population of caretakers, and where there had been bustle and activity an hour or two before, there was now an air of desertion, sombre as the dusk that had spread across the sky.

High up in a certain building that overlooked Michigan Avenue, however, a light gleamed out like an unwinking eye. It was a light that came from the office of the Colvin Investment Company, a brokerage firm that had been in existence for several months.

The solitary occupant of that office was a girl of twenty-one. She was small and trim, with attractive features, a peach-like complexion, eyes of a soft blue colouring and ash-blonde hair; and if you had been connected in any way with the Colvin Investment Company you would have known that she was Caryl Foray, secretary to the president of that firm.

For the rest, she was of Canadian birth and upbringing, and half French and half English by parentage. She had been raised somewhere in the backwoods, but, spurred on by an urge to see the world, she had taken up a cor-

respondence course in bookkeeping and clerical work, and had been overjoyed when she had answered an advertisement in an American paper and obtained this position in Milwaukee, on the U.S. side of the border.

That had been several months ago. But, seeing her now, no one could have imagined that she was happy in her job, for the expression on her lovely face was one of sharp anxiety coupled with a sort of nervous determination.

She had donned her hat and coat, but she had not yet made any move to leave the office. She was standing before a large safe, and, with her ear laid close to it, she was deliberately turning the dial of the combination lock, a procedure which continued to engross her until the door of the receptacle swung open.

Caryl Foray reached into the safe then and searched swiftly amongst its contents, leaving untouched a few hundred dollars in cash, but clutching eagerly at a sheaf of important-looking documents that presently caught her eye.

These documents she carried to a nearby desk, where she snatched up a blank sheet of paper and wrote a few hurried lines. Then, after drying the missive on a blotting-pad, she thrust it into an envelope together with the sheaf of documents that she had taken from the safe.

Having sealed the envelope, she scribbled an address on it in ink. Next she made use of the blotter again, and finally she produced a stamp from her handbag.

It was as she was affixing the stamp to the envelope that she heard footfalls outside the room, and a moment later

a man pushed open the door and stepped across the threshold.

He was Enos Colvin, president of the Investment Company and Caryl's employer, a well-built individual in the late thirties, immaculately dressed and handsome enough in his appearance, though his sallow face sometimes betrayed a certain shiftness of demeanour and his dark eyes a vague impression of cunning.

"Why, Miss Foray," he exclaimed now, obviously surprised at finding his secretary in the office, "I thought you had gone home."

The girl answered him in a well-modulated tone, though he could not help noticing that there was a trace of excitement underlying her calm exterior.

"I was just leaving, Mr. Colvin," she said. "I had some work to finish up."

"I see," he murmured, glancing at the envelope which she was holding and wondering if it had any connection with the excitement which he seemed to divine in her manner. "Well, don't let me detain you. You've had a long day, I guess."

"Yes, Mr. Colvin," she replied. "Er—good-night, sir."

"Good-night, Miss Foray."

He watched her curiously as she made her way from the room, and even when she had gone he stood staring at the door that had closed behind her. Then, after a minute or two, he turned with a shrug and moved towards his safe.

It was only when he approached close to it that he discovered it was open, and on the instant a look of apprehension crossed his features. Next moment he was rummaging amongst the papers it contained, to recoil at last with a baffled air that rapidly changed to fury.

For the space of several seconds he remained motionless, his brows drawn together in a scowl of meditation. It was clear to him, of course, that the Foray girl had been at the safe. That was why she had been detained so late at the office. Doubtless she had been ransacking his desk for some clue to the key numbers of the combination lock—had found that clue—had opened the safe and obtained what she was after—and had either forgotten to close the safe again or had been taken unawares by his arrival on the scene.

Yes, there on his desk was a small scrap of paper bearing the key numbers to the safe's locking device.

With an oath Colvin wheeled towards the windows, and as he glared down into the street away below, he saw Caryl Foray hurrying past a sedan car that was drawn up at the kerb—his own car, in which he had driven back to the office after making certain arrangements that were not unconnected with the documents missing from his safe.

Angrily he watched her as she hastened along the side-walk, and then he saw her stop at a pillar-box and post that envelope which he had observed in her hand.

A scowl gathered on his forehead again. That envelope probably contained the documents she had removed from the safe. If so, where were those documents bound for?

What did it matter? There was no chance of recovering them now, anyway.

Bitting his lip, he returned to his desk and sank into the swivel-chair there—started to drum his fingers agitatedly on the blotting-pad that lay before him.

"Little thief," he ground out, yet it was significant that he made no attempt to communicate with the police.

And then, even as he sat there, his glance came to rest on the blotter which his fingers were tapping, and he realised that the pad was almost clean, except for some imprints that had been recently made on it.

A sudden thought occurred to him, and with a quick gesture he took out a pocket mirror that he was carrying in his waistcoat. Then, picking up the blotting-pad, he held the mirror in such a position that it reflected and reversed the impressions which had been left on the sheet of absorbent paper.

Those impressions were at once rendered legible to him, and he was not only enabled to read what Caryl Foray had written in her letter, but also succeeded in spelling out the address that she had scrawled on the envelope.

It was an address in Canada, on the other side of the border, and Enos Colvin lost no time in making a note of it. Then he clutched his hat and tumbled to the door, slamming out of the office like a man bent on some grim purpose.

Just five minutes later, Enos Colvin was diving rapidly through the streets of Milwaukee, headed in a northerly direction—for the border.

Sergeant Sheridan

A FAINT breeze was playing among the tall tree-stems of the forest belt through which the trail from Bord du Lac runs westward. It was spring, and the air was light as champagne, intoxicating in its sparkling freshness.

A lone rider drank deeply of that pure, wholesome air. He was attired in the smart uniform of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, which had established a post at the settlement of Bord du Lac in the early days of the pioneers, and he

was a typical specimen of that fine breed of men who patrol the remote territories known as the Canadian backwoods.

Bradley Sheridan was his name, and the stripes attached to the sleeves of his tunic proclaimed him as a sergeant. He was, in fact, the senior officer at Bord du Lac, and it was his duty to see that law and order were maintained over a prescribed area, being answerable for that area to one Inspector Bradshaw, who was stationed farther to the south and who controlled a whole series of scattered posts from his headquarters.

At the moment Sergeant Brad Sheridan was travelling in the opposite direction to Bord du Lac, and he was actually a number of miles from the post when he struck into a clearing occupied by a trim, low-built cabin of logs with a well-swept porch and veranda.

It was the cabin of an old French-Canadian, Jean Foray by name, and he was a particular friend of Brad, who now dismounted in front of the dwelling and stepped up to the front door.

He knocked, and a voice calling to him to enter, he walked into a plain but comfortably furnished room, the walls of timber, like the exterior of the building, but the fireplace consisting of smooth stones that had been cemented together.

An old man and a magnificent-looking wolfhound were in that room, and, facing the open doorway, they saw the stalwart figure of the Mountie framed in the gap—six feet two of handsome manhood with smiling, weather-beaten countenance, bold grey eyes and light brown hair.

Small and slight by comparison with the police officer, old Jean Foray stood up to welcome him, and at the same time the wolfhound padded towards the Mountie with frisking tail.

"Hallo, there, Rinty!" Brad Sheridan exclaimed, bending down and extending his gloved hand to take one of the animal's paws. "And how are you, boy? Been a good dog since I saw you last?"

The motion of the wolfhound's tail seemed to quicken, and, laughing, Brad straightened up to greet the owner of the dog.

"Morning, Jean," he said. "How's tricks?"

"Oh, so-so, mon ami, so-so!" the old fellow rejoined. "But I am ver' happy to see you, sergeant. It has been quite a time since you drop' in on me—one, two, three weeks, yes? H'm—Rinty, he, too, is glad to see you."

Brad moved over to the table by which Jean had been sitting.

"I've been pretty busy lately," he observed, "otherwise I'd have looked you up before. But I had a fairly clear day to-day, and I figured I'd ride over for a friendly chat. And by the way, Jean, I have a letter for you. It arrived at the settlement this morning, and I thought I'd bring it along. I—er—think it's from Caryl. It's post-marked 'Milwaukee,' and it looks like her writing."

Old Jean glanced at him slyly. "Mebbe that is why you com' here to see me, hein?" he suggested with a smile. "Mebbo you like to hear what news there is from Caryl, hein?"

"Aw, no, Jean," Brad expostulated. "You know I like to call in on you and Rinty every once in a while."

"Sure," the aged French-Canadian chuckled. "Sure, but I theenk you still want to hear about my niece."

He paused, and then, in a more serious vein:

"Ah, mon brave," he went on, "I am afraid we both missed her when she

went away. Of course, she wanted to see a leetle of the world, and then, after her mother died, she felt she had to get away from these parts for a leetle while. But she will com' back for good one of these days, and then mebbe you marry her—as I know you want to."

"You're right, Jean," Brad confessed. "About wanting to marry Caryl, I mean. But aren't you going to open her letter?"

He had produced a foolscap envelope which was unusually bulky, and was holding it out to the older man, but the latter motioned to him to open the missive himself.

"You read it to me, sergeant," he said. "I have mislaid my glasses, and without them these old eyes of mine are not much good."

The Mountie proceeded to oblige him, and, ripping open the envelope, he withdrew its contents, which proved to be a sheaf of papers fastened by a rubber band and accompanied by a brief note.

The sheaf of papers Brad laid aside, paying little attention to them. The note he read aloud for the benefit of the aged backwoodsman.

"Dear Uncle Jean," he quoted, "please keep these papers for me in a safe place. They are very valuable. I will tell you all about it when I come up for my spring vacation in a couple of weeks' time.—Love, CARYL."

He placed the letter on the table and looked at Jean Foray whimsically.

"That's all," he said, whereupon the old fellow seemed disappointed.

"That is all, sergeant? H'm, I expect more than that. Ah, it is always the same with girls to-day. Always in the hurry. Never mind, it will be good to see her in two weeks' time, and meanwhile I shall keep these papers for her as she asks."

He picked up the sheaf of documents that had been enclosed with Caryl's letter, and was turning them over in his withered hands when his attention was attracted to Rinty.

The dog was sniffing excitedly at the envelope which Brad had opened a minute or two before, and which had fallen from the table to the rug, and all at once he began to whine.

"He knows it's from Caryl, Jean," Brad Sheridan commented.

The older man nodded.

"You are right, sergeant," he declared. "That dog, he pick up a scent as quick as I snap my fingers—so! Sure, he can tell that Caryl has touch' that envelope. Eh bien, he, too, will welcome her in two weeks' time!"

He stooped to caress the dog, and then, seating himself in his chair again, he began to talk to Brad of his niece's intended visit, a subject so engrossing to both of them that it was high noon before the Mountie realised that he ought to be on his way back to Bord du Lac.

The big sergeant took his leave a few minutes later, and soon after he had departed old Jean Foray remembered the request that Caryl had pointed. He thereupon carried the sheaf of valuable papers across to the fireplace, and then, raising one hand, he dislodged one of the stones from that fireplace and revealed a cunning hiding-place which he himself used for the small store of savings that he had managed to acquire during his lifetime of hard work.

Into this cache he thrust the papers, and after pressing the loose stone back into position he glanced down at Rinty, who had moved across the room with him and watched him with interest.

"Those papers, they will be safe there,

Rinty, hein?" the French-Canadian said.

He returned to his chair by the table, and, dropping into it, stretched himself out comfortably while the wolfhound curled himself on the rug near by; and before long man and dog were sunk in a drowse, dreaming, perhaps, of that girl to whom they were both devoted and who was now far to the south beyond the Canadian border.

An hour slipped by, and the chime of a clock on the mantelpiece was echoing about the room, when suddenly Rinty started up out of his doze and began to bark, the sound awakening his master almost immediately.

Jean Foray opened his eyes and looked at the dog in a perplexed fashion. Then he heard a step on the veranda, and a moment later there was a knock on the door.

"Come in!" the old French-Canadian called out.

The door opened, and a man appeared on the threshold, a well-built man of about thirty-eight. A stranger to Jean Foray, he was dressed after the fashion of a woodsman, in breeches, field-boots, open-necked shirt and woollen jacket, but there was something about him that smacked of the cities.

Old Foray stood up to greet him courteously. Rinty, however, showed a remarkable and an unusual hostility, baring his teeth at the visitor and challenging his advance in a way that caused the man to eye him with alarm.

It was as if the dog sensed that the newcomer was there on no innocent mission, and it would have been well for Jean Foray if he had paid more heed to the animal's queer resentment of the caller's presence. He was merely puzzled by Rinty's behaviour, however, for although the wolfhound had always been shy of strangers he had never before displayed so violent an antagonism to anyone.

Then the man on the threshold spoke, eyeing Rinty askance as he did so.

"Your dog doesn't seem to like me," he said thickly. "Could you get him out of the way for a while? I'd like to talk to you."

"Sure, m'sieu, sure. Rinty, outside weeth you. Come, wait outside!"

The old fellow caught hold of the wolfhound and hustled him smilingly but none the less firmly through the doorway, the stranger keeping well out of the dog's reach until he had been disposed of. Then, Rinty having been banished from the cabin and the door closed against him, Jean Foray turned to his visitor and motioned to a chair.

"Well, m'sieu, and what can I do for you?"

"Your name is Jean Foray, isn't it?" the other asked.

"Oui, that is my name."

"And you have a niece who is called Caryl Foray?"

The aged French-Canadian nodded his white head, and a look of fondness came into his eyes.

"Oui, oui!" he said quickly. "Caryl is my niece. You know her, m'sieu?"

The stranger was sitting in the chair to which he had been ushered, and, leaning forward, he stared up at the older man in an intent fashion.

"I'm Enos Colvin," he stated grimly. "Your niece works for me. And I want those papers she sent to you!"

Jean Foray started, and then an expression of resolution dawned on his lean features. The menacing note in the caller's voice had not been to his liking. Besides, Caryl in her letter had said distinctly that he was to keep those papers for her. In view of that, it was not his place to give them up to anyone—not even to her employer, if this man was her employer.

NEXT WEEK'S LONG COMPLETE FILM THRILLERS!



EDWARD G. ROBINSON

IN

"BULLETS OR BALLOTS"

Degraded from the New York flying squad and afterwards dismissed the force altogether, Johnny Blake throws in his lot with Al Kruger, a powerful racketeer. While acting as a crook, however, he is intent upon discovering the identity of the men "higher up" from whom even Kruger takes his orders. A blazing drama.

"THE MAGNIFICENT BRUTE"

Big Steve Williams was a laughing, blustering giant. At the Aurora Steel Company he finds he is up against his old enemy, Bill Morgan. The latter was the strong man till Steve showed up and by a clever double-cross crushed his rival, but a brave woman and her small son inspired the giant to fight back. Starring Victor McLaglen.

"NAVY BORN"

Three fight-lieutenants of the United States Navy adopt the son of an officer who perished in a motor accident, and they aim to bring up their charge with a love for the sea. But the mother's family have other ideas and try their hardest to get the baby away from the Navy. Starring William Gargan.

Also

The second episode of the amazing new serial of weird adventure:

"UNDERSEA KINGDOM"

Starring Ray Corrigan and Lois Wilde.

"Papers?" Jean murmured. "I have no papers."

"Don't lie to me!" Enos Colvin bit out. "Give me those bonds!"

"Bonds? I know nothing about bonds, m'sieu," the old man answered, and this was at least the truth, for he had scarcely even glanced at the documents in question.

Colvin stood up, glaring at the French-Canadian. Then all at once his eyes fell upon Caryl's letter, lying unfolded on the table, and as he scanned it he reached inside his jacket and whipped out a six-gun.

"This letter proves you know plenty!" he grated. "Now you give me those bonds if you know what's good for you. Come on, hand them over or I'll—"

He never finished the sentence, for with a hoarse cry Jean Foray lunged towards him and clutched at the revolver to thrust it aside, and next moment the two men were involved in a fierce scuffle

that carried them headlong towards the far side of the room.

The very impetuosity of old Foray's attack sent Colvin reeling at first, but he was quick to recover himself and gain the upper hand, as well he might when his adversary was a man almost twice his age. In the space of a few seconds the frail, veteran backwoodsman was being dragged across the floor, clinging with desperate tenacity to the American's wrist and the threatening barrel of that forty-five, while the infuriated Colvin struggled to break his hold.

Twenty years ago, Jean Foray would have made short work of a man of Enos Colvin's calibre. But he was over seventy now, and he could not hope to master him. He was fighting a losing battle, and it said much for the wiriness of his aged frame that he was able to retain his grip on the revolver as long as he did.

Cursing, the American tugged viciously at the gun in his efforts to wrench it away from the old fellow and get the drop on him, and he was still striving to achieve that purpose when a spasmodic movement of his trigger-finger discharged the weapon.

There was a racketing blast that seemed to fill the room with sound, and through a smother of blue fumes Colvin saw Jean Foray slump to the floorboards, felt the old man's hands slide nervelessly from his wrist and from the barrel of the forty-five. Even then, however, the American did not realise what had happened.

"Now will you tell me where those bonds are?" he stormed.

There was no answer. Jean Foray lay crumpled at his feet, his eyes wide open in a death-stare, a spreading patch of blood staining his shirt just over the heart.

Colvin looked down at him stupidly for a brief space, awed by what he had done, telling himself that he had never come here with the intention of killing, telling himself that he had only brought the gun in order to combat any stubbornness which he might encounter. Then a fit of rage took possession of him, and he spurned the dead man's body.

"You old fool!" he panted. "You brought this on yourself!"

Even as he uttered those words he became aware of a clamour at an open window in the opposite wall, and as he launched a glance in that direction he clapped eyes on the dog Rinty.

The wolfhound must have heard the scuffle, and had run round the cabin seeking admittance; had leapt at the sill of that open window and, after successive attempts to negotiate it, was now in the act of scrambling through with fangs bared for vengeance.

The mellow brown eyes of the dog had taken on a quality that was demonic, menacing, and there was primitive rage in the sight of those lips writhing back from the gleaming teeth, in the sound of the snarls that rose from his throat.

Colvin brought up the revolver with an ugly jerk and fired at the wolfhound, and the smash of the report was followed by an anguished howl that might have roused pity in any man but the scoundrel who had caused Jean Foray's death. Next instant Rinty was tumbling back from the window-sill, and as the reverberations of the gunshot died away an empty silence descended upon the cabin in the clearing.

In that silence Enos Colvin turned to scan the room in which he was standing, and then, first of all concentrating upon a small bureau, he began to make a search for the bonds that Caryl Foray had taken from his safe.

During the course of the next hour the American ransacked the whole dwelling

from end to end. Nor did he neglect to run his hands through the clothing of the man whom he had slain. But not a trace of the missing papers did he find, for the cache in the stonework of the fireplace escaped his questing fingers completely, and at last he was forced to admit defeat.

Frustrated and enraged, he finally stamped out of the cabin, and with a black scowl on his sallow features, he set off into the woods, threading his way through the trees until he picked up a rough, broken trail.

It was not the trail that led to Bord du Lac, but a road that ran due south, and a short distance along it was the car in which he had driven from Milwaukee.

He climbed into the vehicle, and sat motionless behind the wheel for a little while, moodily reflecting upon the outcome of this trip he had made into the Canadian wilds.

Where were those bonds? He did not know, but they had cost an aged settler his life—and he, Colvin, had committed a crime which would render him liable to the extreme penalty of the law if ever his guilt were discovered.

It was lucky for him that he had automatically covered up his tracks pretty well. No one could check up on his movements—no one would be able to connect him with the tragedy which had occurred. He had broken his journey on the way from Milwaukee, but only to spend a night at a lonely shooting lodge he rented on the U.S. side of the line, and here he had changed out of his city clothes and armed himself with the forty-five, also filling up the tank of his car from a store of gasoline that he kept there.

Pursing his lips, Colvin started up the engine of his automobile and drove away, and soon the hum of the sedan's motor had faded into the prevailing quiet that reigned over the vicinity of old Jean Foray's cabin.

In that cabin a veteran backwoodsman lay dead, and outside one of the windows was the huddled form of the dog that had been his only companion. But, though unconscious, the wolfhound was still breathing, and some time after Colvin's departure the animal roused himself painfully and proceeded to drag himself round to the front porch of the dwelling.

Ernest Colvin had left the door open, and slowly, pitifully, the dog Rinty struggled up the steps and across the threshold, thence crawling towards the body of his master. And as he reached that lifeless figure he licked the pallid cheek forlornly.

For a minute or two the wolfhound could not seem to grasp that the old man was no more, but when at length the fact penetrated to his canine mind he broke into a tremulous whimper. Then, as painfully as he had entered the shack, he dragged himself forth again and wormed his way across the clearing, toiling in the direction of the trail that led to Bord du Lac.

Extradition Warrant

SERGEANT BRAD SHERIDAN was seated at his desk in the office attached to the quarters which he and his comrades occupied at the settlement. It was late afternoon, and he was poring over a batch of correspondence that he had received from Inspector Bradshaw.

He was still engaged in a scrutiny of that correspondence when his attention was distracted by a sharp cry outside the building. Then he heard one of his men calling to him, and recognised the voice as that of a trooper known as Constable O'Brien.

Brad rose from his chair and hurried from the office, and as he emerged from January 23rd, 1937.

it he came face to face with his subordinate, a keen, soldierly looking individual of about his own age.

"Sergeant," O'Brien exclaimed, pointing off to the right, "isn't that Jean Foray's dog?"

Brad glanced in the direction that the constable had indicated, and as he did so he caught sight of Rinty hauling himself feebly towards the post.

"Jean Foray's dog!" he reiterated in a tone of concern. "Yeah, it's Jean's dog all right, and something's happened to him!"

Next moment he was running across to the injured wolfhound, and as he knelt down and gathered the animal into his arms he saw that his fur was matted with blood.

"Rinty!" the sergeant cried. "Rinty, old boy, what have you been doing to yourself?"

The dog uttered a low whine, and, bending closer to him, Brad examined the wound more closely. Then he lifted the animal from the ground and stood up, turning to O'Brien with a set look on his handsome countenance.

"He's been shot!" he rapped out.

"Shot!" the constable echoed. "Who'd be skunk enough to shoot a dog like Rinty?"

"Wouldn't I like to know!" Brad rejoined grimly. "Come on, let's see what we can do for him. Get some hot water and bandages, O'Brien, will you?"

He carried the injured wolfhound back to his office, and presently O'Brien appeared there in company with another trooper who answered to the name of Gary.

"Here's a basin of hot water and the first-aid kit, sergeant," O'Brien announced, "and Gary here has raked out a basket that Rinty can have for a bed."

The dog was placed in the basket, which Constable Gary had padded with a rug, and Brad set to work on the animal's wound, doctoring it skilfully so that within a few minutes the creature had been made as comfortable as possible. Then, his task finished, the big sergeant reached for his hat.

"Keep an eye on Rinty, O'Brien," he said. "Better give him some food if he'll take it. I'm going to old Jean's cabin to tell him his dog's hurt."

He strode out of the office and made for a hitch-rail to which he had tethered his horse some time before, and ere long he was galloping at top speed along the road that linked the Foray cabin with the settlement.

The sun was dipping down behind the tree-tops when he reached the clearing in which the old French-Canadian's home was situated, and, swinging himself out of the saddle, the Mountie advanced to the steps of the porch and cupped his hands about his mouth.

"Hey, Jean!" he called. "Jean!"

There was no response, and, seeing that the front door stood open on its hinges, Brad hurried up the steps and walked across the threshold.

"Jean!" he repeated, and then came to a dead standstill as his awe-stricken gaze fell upon the crumpled body that lay on the floor in front of him.

The colour draining from his features, Brad Sheridan stumbled forward and sank down beside the old man, and one glance was enough to tell him that the veteran settler was dead. Then, with horror in his eyes, the Mountie turned to take stock of the room, which showed signs of the fatal struggle that had been enacted and the wild, impatient search that had been carried out after death had brought the scuffle to a close.

Still numbed by the shock of the discovery he had made, Brad began to examine the cabin's interior mechanically, but he found only one object that

could be regarded as a possible clue—an ornamental coat-button which might have been torn from its threads during the fight, and which certainly did not tally with any of the buttons on Jean Foray's clothing.

Pocketing the article, Brad looked at the huddled figure on the floor again, and then, with an expression of mingled grief and resolution on his clean-cut face, he staggered from the dwelling and proceeded to reconnoitre the immediate neighbourhood.

He was hoping to obtain some further clue relating to the tragedy that had occurred, but it was not until he had extended his quest to the south trail beyond the clearing that he came upon anything of significance.

In the dust of that trail he observed the tracks of an automobile's tyres—tyres of a distinctive and unfamiliar tread, the like of which Brad could not remember having seen before, although he laid no claim to being particularly well versed in the patterns used by the various manufacturers.

For a long time he stood there, studying those tracks so as to impress the appearance of them on his mind, and then he returned to the cabin and climbed astride his horse.

An hour afterwards he was back at the post, and in the office there he held a consultation with O'Brien, describing the result of his visit to the Foray homestead and giving it as his opinion that the man who had shot old Jean was the man who had winged Rinty.

"The point is—who was that man?" he added slowly. "As far as I know, Jean had no enemies, and surely no chance thief would go to the length of murder for the few paltry dollars he was likely to find in a backwoodsman's cabin."

There was a silence, and then, with an effort, he roused himself from his brooding thoughts.

"Well, O'Brien," he said, "you and Gary had better drive out in a hack-board and bring in the poor old fellow's body. Meanwhile, I'll have to send off a report to Inspector Bradshaw and wire Caryl Foray in Milwaukee."

Forty-eight hours later, with the case receiving the earnest attention of the authorities, Jean Foray's niece walked into Brad Sheridan's office at Bord du Lac and sought the comfort of his enfolding arms, giving way to a flood of tears that she only checked when Constable O'Brien presented himself in the room.

"Excuse me, sergeant," the trooper apologised, holding out a telegram, "but this just arrived from headquarters."

"All right, constable," Brad answered huskily. "I'll attend to it later."

He turned his attention on Caryl again, and found that she was looking at Rinty, who was lying nearby in his basket, and although the dog was still suffering from the effects of his wound his tail was beating against the wicker sides of his crib to indicate his pleasure over the girl's presence.

"Oh, what a beast he must have been to shoot you, too, Rinty!" Caryl said in a pent-up tone.

She stooped to caress the wolfhound fondly, and then gazed up at Brad with tear-dimmed eyes.

"Poor Uncle Jean," she faltered. "He was all I had left. Do you—do you know who killed him?"

"No, not yet, honey," the sergeant breathed. "But I'll find out who it was, or die in the attempt!"

Caryl straightened and laid a hand on the big Mountie's sleeve.

"When I go back to Milwaukee," she said, "I'll take Rinty with me."

But first of all I must ride out to Uncle Jean's cabin. I'll hire a horse at the livery stable in the settlement."

Disappointed as he was at her hint of an early return to the States, Brad could nevertheless understand that she did not wish to remain in the vicinity of Bord du Lac, where she would be a prey to bitter memories.

"All right, Caryl," he murmured. "I'll ride over to the cabin with you, shall I?"

"No, Brad dear," she told him, "I'd rather go alone—if you don't mind."

He acquiesced without protest, and when she had left the office he lapsed into a gloomy conversation with O'Brien, discussing the girl's tragic bereavement to the exclusion of all else until the constable suddenly reminded him of the dispatch from headquarters.

The telegram was lying on the desk, and, picking it up, Brad ripped open the envelope and withdrew the missive. Then, as he read its contents, a look of dismay and incredulity appeared on his features.

"Why, this is impossible!" he ejaculated.

"What's up, sergeant?" O'Brien queried. "What does it say?"

Brad swung round towards him.

"It's an order from Bradshaw instructing me to arrest Caryl Foray," he blurted.

"Caryl Foray?"

"Yes, an extradition warrant has been issued for her return to the States on a charge of embezzlement!"

O'Brien's jaw had dropped, and he was staring at the sergeant blankly. For he knew what this unexpected development must mean to Brad, knew that he was in love with Caryl and that the idea of taking her into custody must go desperately against the grain.

"What—what are you going to do, sergeant?" the constable stammered.

Brad could not speak for a moment, but the look on his face betrayed his emotions. betrayed the vital struggle that was proceeding within him as his own personal sentiments battled against his duty to the service. Then all at once he found his voice.

"I'm going to see Caryl about this," he said hoarsely, and an instant later he was brushing past his comrade to stumble from the room.

In another quarter of a minute O'Brien heard him galloping off in a westerly direction, and the drumming of his horse's hoofs was dying away into the distance when Constable Gary entered the office.

"What's wrong with the sergeant, Jim?" he asked O'Brien. "He came out of here just now lookin' like a ghost."

"Yeah," was the reply. "He's got reason to look like a ghost. He had a wire from Inspector Bradshaw orderin' him to arrest the girl he hopes to marry. She's charged with embezzlement."

Gary's eyes widened. "You mean—Caryl Foray? Gosh, Jim, d'you think he'll bring her in?"

"What else can he do?" Jim O'Brien retorted. "If he doesn't bring her in he'll be in hot water himself. Say, you'd better write out a message and send it to headquarters telling Bradshaw that his instructions are being carried out."

Thus spoke O'Brien, assuming that Brad Sheridan would take the course that his oath to the service demanded of him. But at that moment Brad Sheridan was spurring through the woods with mixed feelings in his breast, and he was still in the throes of a dilemma when he finally sighted the Foray cabin and espied a horse tethered to the veranda there.

He drew rein in front of the porch, and, leaping to the ground, blundered up the steps and into the dwelling to find Caryl standing in the front room.

"Why, Brad," the girl exclaimed, perceiving by his manner that all was not well, "what's brought you out here? What's the matter?"

By way of response he showed her the dispatch that he had received from headquarters, and when she had read it he looked at her strainedly.

"Of course, there's been some mistake," he said. "You're no embezzler, Caryl. I know that. Why, you wouldn't steal from anybody."

The girl faced him candidly, a resolute expression in her eyes.

"Brad," she announced, "up to a point the charge against me is true. No, wait—don't interrupt—let me explain. I took those securities from the company's safe, but only to save the investors to whom they rightfully belonged."

"Caryl, I don't understand."

She drew a little nearer to him.

"I had cause to suspect that Enos Colvin, my employer, was planning to misappropriate certain bonds and leave for Europe, thereby robbing the people who had trusted him. I couldn't go to

the police, because I had no definite proof, so I decided to take the securities and put them out of his reach."

She paused, and then went on in a low but distracted tone.

"I sent them to Uncle Jean with instructions to keep them for me. Then I notified the stockholders regarding my suspicions, and told them everything would be all right. Oh, maybe I didn't go about things the right way, but then I was pressed for time. The night I took the bonds I felt certain that Enos Colvin was practically ready to make a get-away. During the afternoon I'd heard him telephoning to arrange for a berth on the New York train which left Milwaukee at midnight—"

It was at this point that Brad cut in on her.

"Say, wait a minute," he jerked. "I was here when your uncle received those bonds. In fact, I brought them out to him from Bord du Lac. Leastways, I imagine it was the bonds I delivered, though, come to think of it, neither of us paid much attention to them. Anyhow, there was a letter from you that mentioned they were valuable."

"Yes," Caryl rejoined. "That's right. Those papers were the securities I'm talking about. Then perhaps you know where Uncle Jean put them, Brad."

The sergeant shook his head.

"No, I don't, honey," he answered. "They were still on the table when I left."

"In that case, they've been stolen," Caryl groaned. "Those bonds were negotiable, Brad, and the man who killed Uncle Jean must have realised that he could cash in on them, whoever he was. Oh, Brad, they must have been stolen, for I've searched everywhere and there isn't a trace of them."

"Maybe Jean had a secret cache of some description," Brad volunteered,



Cursing, the American tugged viciously at the gun in his efforts to wrench it away from the old fellow and get the drop on him.

but the suggestion failed to raise Caryl's hopes.

"If he did," she said, "he never told me anything about it. No, Brad, the securities have gone, and I'm in a jam. The stockholders will think I stole them, and that I tried to play for time by libelling Colvin. And Colvin himself—he's turned prosecutor. He must have guessed that I had something to do with the disappearance of the bonds, for it's obvious that he's instituted these proceedings against me."

Brad's eyes were half-closed, and he was thinking hard.

"Could it have been this man Colvin," he breathed, "who came here and shot Jean?"

"But that's impossible, Brad," Caryl argued. "True, he was away from Milwaukee for a few days, but according to this dispatch he's back there now. And if he'd got the bonds he wouldn't have returned, would he? He'd have gone right ahead with his original plan of leaving for Europe. Besides, he didn't even know I had an uncle."

Once more she paused, and then she shrugged her shoulders helplessly and discolorately.

"Well," she said, "I—I guess I'm your prisoner, Brad dear. That's all there is to it."

"No," he muttered—"no. Not mine, honey. I can't take you in—I can't do it. I'll send O'Brien out for you, and should you decide to face the music it will be his job to take you into custody. If you decide otherwise—"

He did not finish the sentence, but, gathering her in his arms, held her close to him for a moment. Then he drew back, and, turning sharply, walked with uncertain steps from the cabin.

Reduced to the Ranks

ATALL, lean individual with a stern countenance and the air of a disciplinarian, Inspector Bradshaw was pacing the floor of Sergeant Sheridan's office in an impatient and irritable fashion.

Occasionally he glanced disinterestedly at the bandaged form of Rinty, who was still occupying the basket that had been placed in the room. But more frequently his eyes travelled to Brad Sheridan, who was standing nearby and who looked the picture of unhappiness.

"Inexcusable," the inspector said at length, halting in front of Brad. "Inexcusable, Sergeant Sheridan. As a man, I commend the frankness with which you have described the reasons for your conduct. But as an officer of the force, I deplore that conduct. Your plain duty was to get that girl and apprehend her, regardless of what she may mean to you. And I'm not at all sure that I'll overlook this breach of the regulations, even if O'Brien—"

He stopped short, for at that juncture there was a clatter of hoofs outside the post, and a few seconds later Jim O'Brien stepped into the office and saluted the inspector smartly.

"Well?" Bradshaw asked. "Where's your prisoner?"

"She wasn't there, inspector," the constable replied with an uncomfortable glance in Brad's direction. "I found this note pinned to the door. It's for Sergeant Sheridan."

With an angry imprecation the senior officer motioned him towards Brad, and the message was handed to the latter, who scanned it gloomily.

"Well, Sheridan?" the inspector demanded as Brad remained silent after perusing it. "Do you mind letting us know what it says?"

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The younger man read it aloud.

"'Forgive me, Brad,'" he quoted. "'I'm not staying to face the music. I may give myself up later, if I finally decide that it is the best course to take. In any case, I am innocent, and I want to figure out the best way to prove it.'"

"'CARYL.'"

He laid aside the note and eyed his superior officer steadfastly.

"That's all, sir," he said. "But I'd like to add that I believe in her innocence."

The inspector gave vent to an angry exclamation.

"Your opinion has no bearing on the case," he snapped. "The point is, you have failed in your duty, and your affection for the girl in question is no excuse. Personal feelings should not influence an officer of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Sheridan, and this prisoner should have been brought back to the post and placed under lock and key without delay."

"I know, sir," Brad murmured. "I'm—sorry."

"Regrets do not uphold the tradition of the service," was the terse rejoinder, "and I have no option but to reduce you to the ranks, Sheridan, until such time as you can vindicate yourself. Indeed, it is only your splendid record in the past that prevents me from recommending your dismissal. Or would you prefer to resign?"

Brad had gone white. It was clear the loss of his stripes had come as a blow to him, though it was one that he had expected. At the same time he was not prepared to withdraw from the force.

"Until the murderer of Jean Foray is brought to justice, sir," he told the inspector, "I do not care to resign."

"Very well, Sheridan. Er—Constable O'Brien, you will act as officer in command of this post till further orders."

O'Brien saluted the inspector again, though he could not refrain from directing a look of sympathy at Brad, who was now engaged in removing the chevrons from the sleeves of his tunic.

Having detached the chevrons, Brad placed them on the table, and after a brief silence the inspector addressed Constable O'Brien again.

"On the strength of the answer I received to my dispatch," he said, "I wired Mr. Colvin, who brought the charge against the Foray girl, and told him that she had been taken into custody. I also sent a wire to the Milwaukee Police Department, notifying them that the prisoner would be handed over to them at the Border."

He paused, biting his lip, and then went on in an embittered tone.

"Now Colvin and the Milwaukee Police will have to be advised that the Royal Canadian Mounted have failed, and I think you may as well attend to the matter from this office."

"Very good, sir," O'Brien replied. "I'll communicate with the Milwaukee Police Department at once. As to Mr. Colvin, sir, I shall have to have his address."

The inspector produced a letter from a pocket in his tunic.

"I had a note from him only this morning," he said, "urging me somewhat unnecessarily to do all I could to apprehend the Foray girl. Here, take it. You will find his address on it."

He leaned forward to give O'Brien the missive, and in doing so his hand passed close to the basket which Rinty occupied; and on a sudden a change came over the wolfhound, a change that took

the three men in the room by complete surprise.

Lifting his head with a start, the dog bared his teeth unexpectedly and made a furious snatch which was apparently intended for Bradshaw's fingers, the inspector jerking away from him only in the nick of time.

"Here, whose savage beast is this?" the officer rasped. "What's he doing here, anyway?"

It was O'Brien who answered him.

"He belongs to Caryl Foray, sir," he informed Bradshaw. "He was wounded, we think, by the man who shot her uncle."

"Yes? Well, take him out and destroy him."

Brad Sheridan started forward at that, a look of distress on his handsome face.

"Sir, I don't think he meant any harm," he protested. "I'm sure it was an accident. You probably scared him for the moment by coming so close—"

"Nonsense!" the inspector interrupted. "He deliberately snapped at my hand!"

"If you ask me, sir," O'Brien put in, "I'd say 'twas the letter he snapped at."

Bradshaw came out with an expletive.

"Rubbish, O'Brien! The dog is dangerous. Sheridan, take him out and destroy him at once. That's an order."

"But, sir—"

"You heard what I said, Sheridan. In any case, he appears to be badly wounded, and death would probably spare him a good deal of suffering. Now let's have no more argument."

The finality in his tone told Brad and O'Brien that it was useless to raise any further expostulations, and with his teeth hard-clenched the former lifted Rinty out of the basket and bore him from the room, looking like a man who had been commanded to execute his dearest friend.

As for the inspector, he remained for a minute or two with O'Brien, discussing the telegrams that were to be dispatched to Colvin and the Milwaukee Police Department, and then at length he made his way from the office.

O'Brien accompanied him to where a couple of troopers from headquarters were waiting—two men who had expected to act as escort for the inspector and Caryl Foray.

"Well, O'Brien," the commanding officer said, "I want you to institute a search for that girl, and I'll see that all other patrols are ordered to keep a lookout for her. If you should pick her up, you'll let me know immediately."

With that he turned towards his horse, and he was climbing into the saddle when he heard the smash of a shot somewhere in the brushwood behind the police post.

It was the blast of Brad Sheridan's gun, and, if the inspector's countenance was a mask of impassivity, Constable O'Brien could not help wincing as he thought of the drastic fate that had been meted out to the dog Rinty.

The Bonds

LITTLE did O'Brien and the inspector know it, but the shot from Brad Sheridan's gun had flashed harmlessly into space, the weapon having been levelled at the sky as the stalwart Mountie had pulled the trigger.

For the second time in the lapse of a few hours Brad had disobeyed his superior's orders, and at the very moment when the inspector and his escort were turning to ride from the post the ex-sergeant was lifting Rinty in his powerful arms and wheeling round in the direction of the forest.

"I'd as soon kill a human being as you, old boy," Brad said to the dog. "But you're in disgrace the same as me,

and I reckon you'll have to hide out for a spell."

Setting out at a brisk pace, he carried Rinty into the woods, and he had covered a distance of something like three quarters of a mile when he arrived at a solitary shack which belonged to a half-breed Indian trapper answering to the name of Joe.

The half-breed was a close friend of Brad, and one whom the Mountie knew he could trust. Therefore, the big fellow had no hesitation in looking in on the man, and, after explaining the difficulty in which he had been placed, he asked him if he could board Rinty at his cabin.

"I'll see that you're not out of pocket, Joe," he added. "You can have a dollar a week for your trouble, and I'll bring grub for him every day."

A thick-set man with the bronzed complexion and the sloe eyes of his forefathers, Indian Joe nodded his assent.

"Me take care of Rinty like he was papoose," he declared. "And I bet you no one see him while he is here."

"That's the ticket, Joe," Brad rejoined. "I knew you wouldn't fail me."

Thus Rinty was left in good hands, and during the days that followed Brad made a point of visiting the trapper's cabin at regular intervals, always bringing with him some tit-bits in the way of food.

Then one morning, about a week later, O'Brien accosted Brad in the office at the post as the former sergeant was preparing to set out on his daily rounds.

"Say, what have you got there, pardner?" O'Brien inquired, glancing at a package which his comrade was thrusting into his pocket.

"Oh, just some sandwiches," was the reply. "I might get hungry on patrol."

O'Brien eyed him quizzically.

"You seem to be quite fond of snacks

just lately," he commented. "By the way, how's Rinty coming along?"

Brad gave a start, and then looked at the other man in a sheepish fashion.

"So you know, huh?" he murmured.

"Well, I happened to be passing Indian Joe's shack a couple of days ago," Jim O'Brien answered, "and I heard a dog barking. Then I remembered this sudden fancy you'd developed for taking along a snack with you whenever you went out on patrol, and I put two and two together. But don't worry, Brad. As far as I'm concerned, Rinty was shot according to the inspector's instructions."

The bigger fellow clasped him by the hand.

"Thanks, Jim," he said. "I—I just couldn't plug him. Besides, I think Rinty may hold the key to the solution of Jean Foray's murder. This last week I've been turning things over in my mind, and I have a theory—a theory that was suggested to me by you, Jim."

"By me?" echoed O'Brien.

"Yes. You remember when Rinty snapped at Bradshaw you put forward the opinion that it was Colvin's letter he had gone for, and not the inspector's hand at all?"

"Sure, that's right. It did look like that to me. But I don't see—"

"Jim," Brad interrupted, "Rinty has the keenest scent of any dog I know. And to my mind he snapped at that letter because he connected it with something unpleasant that had happened to him."

O'Brien stared at him open-mouthed, realising now the significance of his comrade's statements.

"You mean—Colvin may have had something to do with old Jean's murder, Brad?" he stammered. "But that isn't possible. How could a man away down in the States be mixed up in a crime that took place near Bord du Lac?"

Brad took a step closer to him and spoke to him in an earnest tone.

"Jim," he said, "I told you Caryl's story after I came back that morning without arresting her. But maybe I forgot to mention that Enos Colvin had been away from Milwaukee for a few days—round about the time of the killing. Not that Caryl suspected him of the murder. She assured me that Colvin didn't even know she had an uncle. Nevertheless, he may have found that out in some way—may even have discovered that Caryl had posted the bonds to Jean."

O'Brien pursed his lips.

"I get you, Brad," he muttered. "If Caryl was right about Colvin trying to rob the stockholders, he'd naturally sneak up here in the hope of recovering the securities."

"But he didn't recover them, Jim, otherwise he wouldn't have gone back to Milwaukee and started proceedings against Caryl. Which means that the securities are probably hidden somewhere in Jean's cabin."

"H'm," O'Brien reflected. "there's a good deal of supposition about your theory, Brad. But what do you intend to do, anyway?"

"I'm going out to Jean's cabin to make a further search," was the answer. "Meantime, I'd like you to send a wire to headquarters, stating that in connection with the Foray murder we'd appreciate any information regarding the movements of Enos Colvin on the fifteenth of April, the date of the crime. Bradshaw may be able to check up on him through the U.S. authorities."

O'Brien agreed to dispatch a telegram at once, and then on an afterthought Brad asked him if he would mind handing over the letter from Colvin which had been left at the office by the inspector.

That letter having been tendered, Brad



"Poor Uncle Jean," she faltered. "Do you—do you know who killed him?"

set off on horseback from the post. But instead of making his way direct to the cabin of the late Jean Foray he headed for Indian Joe's shack, where he was welcomed by the kind trapper and the faithful Rinty, now almost recovered from his wound.

"How are you, old fellow?" said Brad, bending down to caress the wolfhound. "Pretty good, huh?"

"Pretty good is right," Indian Joe put in. "Him nearly as good as new."

Brad nodded appreciatively. "You've looked after him well," he told the man, "and I won't forget you for it. You know, Joe, I've got an idea that this dog may put a gallows' rope around the man who killed his master."

"So?" the trapper murmured.

Without another word Brad took a letter from his pocket, a letter that had been written to him from a friend in the north, and leaning forward he held it close to the wolfhound's nose.

Rinty sniffed at it, but showed no particular interest.

"That doesn't seem to mean much to him, does it?" Brad remarked. "But what about this one?"

He produced Colvin's letter, and went through the same performance with it, and as soon as he caught the scent of the missive Rinty backed away with his teeth bared in a snarl.

"That is funny," said Indian Joe, who had been watching curiously. "Why he no' like that one?"

"That's just what I mean to find out, Joe," Brad stated. "Rinty, old boy, you and I are going to drop in at old Jean's cabin together, and we'll make a start just as soon as you've had a bite to eat."

He brought out the sandwiches that he had fetched, and the dog consumed them with healthy appetite. Then, telling Joe that he would return with Rinty in due course, Brad opened the door and let the wolfhound scamper forth into the sunlight.

The Mountie followed the animal across the threshold, and a few seconds later he had swung himself astride his horse and was cantering in a westerly direction through the woods, Rinty trotting joyously alongside him.

Within an hour they were in the vicinity of the late Jean Foray's homestead, and as they drew nearer to it Rinty's tail drooped noticeably. They were still some fifty paces from the dwelling, however, when the drumming of hoofs arrested Brad's attention.

"Rinty," he said, "someone's coming this way, and you'd better duck out of sight. I don't want everybody around Bord du Lac to know that you're still alive, or it might get to Bradshaw's ears. Go on now, beat it."

The dog seemed loath to leave him, but he managed to hustle him into the shelter of some bushes nearby, and a moment or two later he had good reason to feel thankful that he had done so, for all at once a couple of horsemen spurred into view; and with a start Brad recognised the foremost rider as Inspector Bradshaw.

The inspector was accompanied by O'Brien, and presently the two men were drawing rein beside the former sergeant.

"I want to have a word with you, Sheridan," the inspector announced. "I happened to look in at Bord du Lac this morning, and O'Brien mentioned that he'd just sent off a telegram to me—at your suggestion."

"That's right, sir," Brad told him respectfully.

"A telegram requesting information in connection with Enos Colvin's movements on April fifteenth," the inspector continued. "Now I ask you, Sheridan, January 23rd, 1937.

how could Colvin be implicated in the Foray murder? I know he is interested in these missing securities, but he wouldn't have to kill a man in order to get them back. Confound it, they belonged to him."

Brad shook his head.

"They were taken from the safe," he acknowledged, "but they didn't belong to him, sir. They belonged to his clients, and, according to Caryl Foray, he was planning to make a getaway with the bonds."

"According to Caryl Foray!" his superior officer retorted derisively.

"Well, sir," Brad replied in a quiet tone, "I'd like to run down every possible clue, if it's all the same to you."

The inspector eyed him thoughtfully for a few seconds, and then shrugged his shoulders.

"Very well," he said. "You can proceed along your own lines of investigation, and I'll see if I can obtain any information in regard to Colvin. But I'm afraid that you're barking up the wrong tree, nevertheless."

With that he wheeled around, and, accompanied by O'Brien, he rode off down the trail that led back to the post; and when the two of them had disappeared from view Brad summoned Rinty from the shrubs amidst which the dog had gone to cover.

"It's all right, boy," the Mountie declared, as the wolfhound came out into the open. "The coast's clear again."

He moved on towards old Jean's cabin, calling upon Rinty to follow him, and a little while afterwards man and dog were standing in the room where the aged French-Canadian had died.

As on a previous occasion, Brad began to search the dwelling carefully, hoping to find some fresh evidence apart from the coat-button that he had picked up on the day the crime had been committed. But his quest was fruitless, for he made no new discovery, and at length he turned to the wolfhound which had entered the homestead with him.

"Well, Rinty, I've done my best," he said, "and now it's up to you. Gee, if only you could talk—for I know you could tell me plenty."

He paused, and then reached for a letter that was lying on the table. It was the very letter that had been enclosed with the securities Caryl had posted to her uncle, and, taking it between his thumb and forefinger, Brad held it close to Rinty's nose.

"Now, if you could talk, old son," he mused, "you might be able to describe all that happened here after Jean took charge of those bonds. Still, seeing that conversation isn't one of your talents, we'd better concentrate on your other qualities. So how about it, boy? Go to it and see if your sharp nose can find any clue that I've overlooked."

Thus spoke Brad—while Rinty, sniffing at Caryl's letter, gazed up at him intelligently. Then the police-officer attempted to impress on the dog that he wanted him to play the sleuth, and, whether the wolfhound understood or not, the fact remained that he suddenly turned tail and trotted away from the table.

Watching him, Brad saw him pad across to the fireplace, and an instant later the animal was raising himself on his hind legs to scrape at the stonework there.

With a frown the trooper walked over to the hearth, and even as he reached Rinty's side the creature dislodged a stone that fell clattering to the floor and revealed old Jean's secret cache.

"Hallo!" Brad exclaimed tersely. "What's this?"

He thrust his hand into the cavity that the dog had laid bare, and the first object that he withdrew was a small canvas bag containing a hundred dollars in coin, the life's savings of the aged backwoodsman who had been murdered. Then he withdrew a batch of papers held together by a rubber band, and one glance at them told him they were the documents Caryl had sent.

"The missing securities," he breathed.

For a spell he stood staring at them, and was only aroused from his thoughts by a snarl that was uttered by Rinty, whereupon he looked down to see that the dog was baring his teeth at the packet of negotiable bonds.

"Okay, Rinty," Brad said in a tone of comprehension. "I get it. You can smell the scent of Colvin on these papers, too, huh? Well, he handled them all right, I guess—before Caryl took them from his office safe and put them in the mail."

He paused, and then swung round in the direction of the door.

"So much for the securities," he grunted. "Their recovery may help to prove that Caryl was on the level, anyway. Come on, Rinty, we'll take them back to the post."

A premature darkness was gathering in the sky as Brad and the dog left the cabin. It was a darkness that heralded an approaching storm, which broke when they were still a mile or two from Bord du Lac, and a howling gale was sweeping sheets of rain across the north woods as the Mountie pulled up outside Indian Joe's shack.

Here he turned Rinty over to the care of the trapper again, after which he proceeded to the post, and on entering the office there he found Inspector Bradshaw in the room with Constable O'Brien.

The inspector had decided to delay his departure for headquarters when he had seen the storm gathering, and now he looked at Brad inquiringly.

"Anything to report, Sheridan?" he asked. "You seem excited."

"I've got the bonds, sir," the ex-sergeant answered. "Rin—I mean, I found a cache in the fireplace—and—well, here they are."

He laid the securities in front of the inspector, who examined them cursorily and then glanced up with satisfaction.

"Good, Sheridan," Bradshaw said. "O'Brien, you'd better send a couple of telegrams right away—one to the Police Department in Milwaukee, and one to Enos Colvin—notifying them that the missing bonds are at this office."

Jim O'Brien hurried from the room, and when he had gone the inspector fixed his attention on Brad once more.

"Colvin will probably come up for these securities personally," he remarked. "I think I'll remain here at Bord du Lac and hand them over to him myself."

"Yes, sir," Brad murmured. "And by the way, sir, I guess things won't look so black against Caryl Foray now, will they?"

The older man knitted his brows.

"I don't know about that," he said, "I don't see that the recovery of the bonds proves she didn't intend to dispose of them for her own profit. Anyhow, you may be interested to know that Caryl Foray is now in the hands of the Milwaukee police."

"She is?" Brad jerked.

"Yes. A message to that effect was wired through to this office from headquarters less than half an hour ago. She apparently gave herself up, still maintaining that she had acted in the interests of Colvin's clients."

There was a silence a silence that was only broken when Constable O'Brien put in an appearance again.

"I sent off the telegram to Colvin, sir," the trooper reported, "but the one to the Milwaukee Police Department will have to be held over."

"Held over? What do you mean?"

"The storm, sir. They must be having it worse than us down South. The line suddenly went dead, and the operator figures that all the wires between us and the Border are probably down."

Inspector Bradshaw compressed his lips.

"That's awkward," he said. "Over a territory like this it will probably take days to repair the damage. As regards the Police Department at Milwaukee, however, I daresay Colvin will let them know about the securities."

Northward Bound

IT was evening in Milwaukee, and about the time that the workers of the city were pouring out on to the sidewalks, a police car entered the thoroughfare known as Michigan Avenue and drew up outside the building in which the offices of the Colvin Investment Company were situated.

A man and a girl alighted from that automobile. The girl, small and chic, was Caryl Foray. The man, a shrewd-looking individual of medium height and build, was Captain Edwards of the Milwaukee Police Department.

"Well, Miss Foray," Edwards was saying, "if we find our man here the Law is going to be indebted to you for the apprehension of a dangerous crook, if nothing else. In any case, I don't think there's much chance of your being convicted of embezzlement now—though it's a pity those bonds were lost."

"You mean—if they were recovered I'd be absolutely cleared?" Caryl asked as they crossed the pavement and entered the building outside which the car had been brought to a standstill.

Edwards nodded, and then, in the elevator that carried them towards one of the upper floors of the premises, the girl spoke to her companion again.

"You still haven't told me how you managed to check up on my story, captain," she observed. "Naturally, I felt that you would be able to check up on it, otherwise I don't think I'd have had the courage to give myself up. But I'd like to know the methods you adopted."

"Well, we checked up on Colvin," Edwards rejoined. "That's about the hang of it. And we not only found that he'd been making arrangements to sell the bonds in New York and take the first boat to Europe, but we also discovered that he'd been convicted of a similar offence in San Francisco four years ago."

The lift stopped at the thirteenth floor, which was their destination, and emerging from it they hastened along a corridor till they reached a door in-

scribed with the legend "Colvin Investment Company."

Caryl opened that door, and she and the captain entered the office in which Enos Colvin had employed her as secretary. But the instant they crossed the threshold they realised that the crooked financier had departed—and departed in haste, it seemed, for the floor was littered with papers, and the whole room presented a spectacle suggesting that he had ransacked the place to gather up any important documents which he did not care to leave behind.

"Looks like the bird has flown the coop," Edwards ground out.

"Maybe he suspected that you were making inquiries about him," Caryl suggested.

The police captain did not answer her at once, but stooped to pick up a telegram that had caught his eye. Then, after scanning the missive, he read it aloud to Caryl.

"Listen to this," he said. "Stolen securities recovered. Holding them for your instructions. Canadian Mounted Police Post, Bord du Lac' Now, why the dickens didn't they notify me as well?"

The girl laid a hand on his arm.

"Colvin's left for Bord du Lac. He's gone up there to get those bonds. I know he has. Listen, I'll phone his garage and see if his car's still there."

She made for the telephone, and put through a call, dialing the number of a garage which she knew that the financier patronised; and within a few seconds she heard a man's voice.

"Is Mr. Colvin's car there?" she queried.

"No," came the reply. "He left a few hours ago."

"Did he say where he was going?" Caryl wanted to know.

"He didn't, ma'm. But he settled up his account here, and mentioned he was leaving town."

Caryl replaced the receiver and turned to Captain Edwards.

"Left some hours ago," she announced laconically. "He's probably over the Border by now."

"I doubt it. The Border's a long way off from here. At any rate, he won't get away with those securities. I'll wire Bord du Lac and request them to hold him for extradition—and I'll use his 'phone to do it."

He picked up the receiver with the intention of telephoning a message which could be dispatched immediately by the postal authorities, but after a brief conversation he hung up and turned to Caryl.

"There's been a heavy storm in the North," he said. "Hundreds of wires are down all over the Border country. They say it's impossible to get through either by telegraph or by phone, and communication may be disorganised for days."

"Then what are we going to do?" the girl demanded anxiously. "We've got to prevent Colvin from obtaining those bonds."

Edwards started for the door.

"There's only one thing to do," he jerked. "He's got a long start, but a lot can happen in the space of a few hundred miles. We're going after him."

The Tell-tale Jacket

TRUE to his word, Inspector Bradshaw had remained at Bord du

Lac in anticipation of a visit from Colvin, but the wire that had been dispatched to the financier was two and a half days' old when a car pulled up near the Mounted Police Post and a man in breeches, sports shirt and field-boots emerged from it.

The man was Enos Colvin, and he accosted Trooper O'Brien, who was loitering near by.

"I believe you have some securities for me here," the American said. "My



"You shot Jean Foray!" Brad accused. "Come on, talk! You shot Jean Foray, Colvin, didn't you?"

name is Colvin, of the Colvin Investment Company, Milwaukee."

"Oh, yes, Mr. Colvin," O'Brien replied, looking at him curiously. "Inspector Bradshaw is expecting you. You'll find him in the office."

He pointed off to the right, and Colvin strode in the direction indicated. A moment later he was tapping at the office door, and on receiving a summons to enter, he stepped into the room to confront two men there, one being Bradshaw and the other Constable Gary.

The crooked financier addressed himself to the elder of the two police officers.

"I was told I'd find Inspector Bradshaw here," he stated. "I am Enos Colvin."

Bradshaw stood up at once. "At your service, Mr. Colvin," he said. "You've come for those securities, of course."

The American inclined his head, and an expression of greed and anticipation dawned in his eyes as he watched the inspector open a drawer in the desk at which he had been seated.

From that drawer Bradshaw took out the bonds, but he did not pass them over to Colvin at once.

"You know," the inspector remarked, "it was very peculiar how we found these. They were hidden in a secret cache in Jean Foray's cabin—"

"Yes," Colvin interrupted, "but never mind the details. I'm exceedingly glad you located them, but I'm anxious to—er—to get back to Milwaukee. As a matter of fact, I'd have been here hours ago, but my car broke down on the way."

He held out his hand for the sheaf of securities, but still Bradshaw did not tender them.

"I'm sorry to take up your time with formalities, Mr. Colvin," he said. "But these bonds appear to be worth several hundred thousand dollars, and naturally, I have to take precautions. Er—you have proof of your identity, of course."

The American had no difficulty in convincing the inspector beyond all doubt that he was the president of the Colvin Investment Company, for he was able to produce ample evidence to that effect. Then, having received the securities, he proceeded to stuff them into his hip-pocket.

Bradshaw eyed him whimsically. "Don't you want to look over those bonds to make sure that they're all there?" he suggested.

"Oh, no," Colvin answered with a smile. "I'm sure they're all here, for I imagine I can trust the Mounted. anyhow, I'll have to check them when I get back to my—er—my office."

He paused, and then, extending his hand:

"Well, I'll have to be moving along, inspector," he said. "Thanks a lot for what you've done, and—"

"Just a minute, Mr. Colvin," Bradshaw interposed. "I'm afraid I must make out a report, and you'll have to sign a receipt. I regret having to delay you in this manner, but it's a question of rules and regulations, you know."

Enos Colvin did his best to conceal his impatience, though it was all too clear that he was anxious to be off.

"I understand," he muttered, and sat down in a chair as the inspector reached for pen and paper.

It was while the inspector was writing out his report and drafting a receipt which would require Colvin's signature that the clapping of hoofs proclaimed the arrival of a horseman at the post—a horseman who was none other than

Constable Brad Sheridan, just coming in from patrol.

Pulling up at the hitch-rail, Brad dismounted from his horse and tethered the animal. Then he strolled across to where Constable O'Brien was interestedly examining Enos Colvin's automobile.

"Hallo, Brad!" Jim O'Brien greeted. "Anything to report?"

"Nope!" was the reply. "Most of the wires are still down, to the south of here. Huh, to look at the weather now you'd never think there could be a storm like that twister we had. It's like summer, isn't it?"

"Sure is," O'Brien rejoined. "Plumb hot, if you ask me."

He hesitated, and then, after glancing around surreptitiously, he leaned closer to Brad.

"Are you still exercising Rinty by taking him out on patrol with you?" he asked.

"Yes," the bigger fellow told him. "He's been with me all morning. Right now he's over there in the thickets. I left him there with orders not to move, and he'll stay where he is all right. I'll smuggle him over to Indian Joe's shack later."

He glanced at the car which O'Brien had been studying when he had approached.

"Say, who does this belong to, Jim?" he inquired. "Smart-lookin' outfit, isn't it?"

"Yeah," the other Mountie answered. "It's Enos Colvin's car."

Brad started, and gave a swift glance at his companion.

"Colvin's!" he reiterated. "So he's finally got here?"

O'Brien nodded, and all at once Brad moved round to the front of the car and bent down to examine its tyres. Then he straightened up slowly.

"Jim," he said, speaking through clenched teeth, "the tread on these tyres corresponds with the tracks I saw on the south trail near Jean Foray's cabin—the day the old fellow was murdered."

"They do?"

O'Brien was impressed for the moment, but soon cast doubts on the importance of Brad's discovery.

"H'm, looks kind of suspicious, I admit," he granted, "but after all it's no proof. I don't suppose Colvin's is the only car that's shod with tyres of that description."

Brad had joined him at the side of the automobile again.

"Maybe not, Jim," he declared. "But the fact remains—"

And then he stopped, for suddenly his eyes had come to rest on a woollen jacket that was lying on the front seat of the vehicle—a jacket which Colvin had apparently discarded on account of the unusual warmth in the air.

It was a jacket that was equipped with ornamental buttons of a distinctive pattern, and, giving vent to an exclamation, Brad reached into the car and snatched it up. Then he withdrew from a pocket in his tunic the button that he had discovered in Jean Foray's home-stead, on the evening when he had found the old French-Canadian's dead body lying in the front room.

He compared it with the buttons on Colvin's jacket, and it tallied. Moreover, one of the buttons was missing from the woollen garment.

"Maybe the tread of the tyres doesn't prove anything, Jim," Brad told O'Brien grimly. "But here's something that does."

He was unaware of the fact, but at that very instant the door of the nearby office had opened and Enos Colvin had appeared on the threshold, having duly signed the receipt that Inspector Bradshaw had drafted out.

"Well, thanks again, inspector," Colvin drawled, looking back into the room. "I'm sorry I have to hurry off like this, but I've a long road in front of me."

"That's all right, Mr. Colvin!" came Bradshaw's answer. "But if you ever happen to be in these parts again, look me up, won't you?"

The American nodded, and then turned to withdraw from the office, and it was as he swung round that he saw Brad Sheridan and Jim O'Brien standing beside his car some little distance away, the former still holding the woollen jacket in his hands.

Enos Colvin drew down his brows, and across his fallow face there passed an expression of mingled annoyance and perplexity. But, since he had no idea as to the reason why his coat should be subjected to a scrutiny, it was annoyance that chiefly marred his countenance as he pushed open the door of the office again and summoned Bradshaw to the threshold.

"Inspector," he snapped, "will you kindly tell me the meaning of this?"

Followed by Constable Gary, Bradshaw moved over to the doorway, and with an angry gesture Colvin pointed to the two Mounties by his automobile.

"What's wrong, Mr. Colvin?" the inspector queried.

"That's what I'd like to know," the American retorted. "The jacket those fellows are looking at—it happens to be mine."

Leaving Colvin in the doorway, the inspector and Constable Gary walked across to Brad and O'Brien, and on reaching them the senior officer spoke with some austerity.

"What are you doing, Sheridan?" he demanded.

Brad wheeled, and answered him in a strong, clear voice that carried to the ears of the man in the office porch.

"Putting a rope around the neck of Jean Foray's murderer, sir!" he said.

"The tyre-tracks of this car correspond with those I saw near the cabin on the evening of the crime. And this button that I found near Jean's body also tallies with the buttons on this coat. I—"

He broke off, for at that moment the drone of an engine was heard, and ten seconds later a big, powerful auto swept into view; and as it pulled up alongside Colvin's sedan Caryl Foray scrambled out of it in company with Captain Edwards.

"Brad!" the girl cried. "Oh, Brad, are we in time? This is Captain Edwards of the Milwaukee police, and he has a warrant for Colvin's arrest on a charge of attempted embezzlement."

"Embezzlement!" Brad grated. "That's only a secondary charge. We've pinned your uncle's murder on him!"

Even as he spoke those words a shout arose from Constable O'Brien, and, whipping round, the group beside the two cars saw Enos Colvin astride Brad's horse—saw him dig his heels savagely into his flanks, sending him straight for the woods that surrounded the settlement.

The scoundrel had heard the denunciations that had been launched against him and had snatched at his only possible chance of escape, swinging clear of the road to make for the heart of the forest. Nor was there much doubt that he would have effected a getaway, for no automobile could have followed him along the route that he had in mind, and Brad's mount had been the only one which was ready saddled.

Moreover, the equality had taken the officers of the Law so completely by surprise that Colvin might have been well within the shelter of the trees ere

(Continued on page 27)

In the local bar, Captain Cutlet told an admiring audience of his sea adventures, but one day his bluff was called and for the first time he went to sea in command of a cargo ship, which was to be scuttled by the mate. A mutiny of fun, starring Will Hay



"WINDBAG the SAILOR"

Tall Stories

"TEN days out we ran into the worst storm I've ever known." The speaker sniffed and paused. "And, believe me, I've been in some storms in my time. That ship seemed to stand on her head. The waves were terrific, and the ship would roll down one of 'em almost like dropping into a mighty valley. When you got to the bottom it was like the sides of the valley closing in on you. Sometimes those waves didn't break, and the ship was tossed out like a cork, but other times tons of water crashed down on our decks and stove in the planks."

"And you lived to tell the tale?"

"Yes, I certainly did." Captain Ben Cutlet peered over the top of his pince-nez at the little group in the four-ale bar of the Crown and Anchor Inn at Falport. The fishermen of this little Cornish town often dropped in for a drink and 'yarn, and, though they were a ruffe doubtful of Captain Ben's tales of the sea, it helped to pass the time. "If my throat wasn't so dry"—Captain Ben sniffed as he inspected his empty glass—"I could go on swapping tales all night."

"Another round, Jerry!" sang out someone, and a queer old boy, very bent and wizened, with only one tooth in his head, bobbed up from behind the bar and grinned inanely. Jeremiah Harbottle may have looked a bit queer, but he wasn't half so daft as he looked.

The drinks were brought and handed round. Old Jerry scratched his head.

"Well, ain't that strange? One drink over—who could that be for?"

"You've swung that trick twice already this evening," sniffed Captain Ben. "Don't you try it when it comes to my turn."

"When!"

Someone coughed sarcastically.

Jeremiah went off, cackling triumphantly, and was about to consume his ill-gotten drink when into the bar parlour swept a big, broad-shouldered, grey-haired woman, Jerry's wife, Ben's sister, and the master of the Crown and Anchor. Jeremiah Harbottle took one look at her grim face, placed the drink down hurriedly and departed behind the counter.

Captain Ben Cutlet smirked at her, and she did not smile back.

"Did anyone smash a glass?" she asked.

"No, ma'am!" cried one of the fishermen. "It weren't us."

"I heard it." Mrs. Harbottle folded her arms. "I'll go and talk to Albert."

She retired from the parlour amidst sighs of relief. Her husband swigged the drink in case she should come back.

"Well, here's mud in yer eye!" Captain Ben raised his glass and winked at its contents. "Yes, boys, that was the very worst storm I was ever in. All the rivets came out, and we looked like foundering. According to the charts we were a hundred miles south of Valparaiso—"

"Santa Cruz!"

Captain Ben Cutlet turned sharply and glared at old Harbottle.

"Valparaiso!"

"Santa Cruz!" persisted Jeremiah.

"We were lying off Valparaiso."

"Panama," drawled a lazy voice, and a very large, round-faced boy appeared. He was leisurely wiping a glass.

"Don't you butt in, Albert!" rasped Ben. "It was Valparaiso."

"It was Panama!" cried Albert. "At any rate, it was Panama the last time you told this yarn."

Captain Ben Cutlet eyed the boy disapprovingly, coughed, drained his glass, inspected its emptiness, and looked all round hopefully. Suddenly his eye lighted on the clock, and he started.

"Albert's as bad as Jerry," he cried with a sly grin. "I've been in so many blame storms that at times I kinda get confused myself. But I know this happened at Valparaiso." He stared belligerently at the pot-boy. "It was a typhoon what we struck at Panama."

"But I thought typhoons—"

"You ain't here to think!" cried Cutlet. He cleared his throat with much noise. "Wonder if I've got time to tell you about the Nancy Lee. What a tragedy! What a queen among ships!" He coughed and picked up his glass. "Hoarse work talking."

"It's your turn, Jim." Old Jerry had bobbed back into the picture. "Same again, boys?"

"And make it snappy."

Ben shuddered as he gazed at the clock.

The drinks were produced, and, needless to say, Jerry had again drawn a half-pint too many. The reluctant Jim, the stander of the round, was toasted, and the assembly gazed expectantly at Captain Cutlet. Every inch a seaman. Served before the mast since he was a kid, worked his way up till he got a master's ticket. His seaman's reofer

jacket, his serge trousers, his striped jersey, and his peaked cap suited the captain to perfection, though the pince-nez somehow didn't seem to fit the picture. Perhaps bad sight had caused the captain to take a spell ashore.

"The Mary Anne was—"

"The Nancy Lee," corrected Albert without a smile.

"The Nancy Lee was built afore the War, and—"

"You said she was a queen among ships, and if she were built before the War she must be an old tub," argued a fisherman.

"Ships what was built afore the War was made of the finest timber," shouted Ben Cutlet. "After the War ships was made of any old junk. A mint of money was spent on fitting her out, and if it hadn't been for them pesky pirates she would be afloat to-day."

"Chinese pirates," said Albert.

"Who's telling this story—you or me?" shouted Ben. "Those Chinese pirates attacked us in a large junk—"

"Junk—junk—nothing but junk."

"Albert, did you speak?"

"No, I was just thinking aloud."

"You keep quiet." Ben sipped his drink. "That junk had four decks, and every one of 'em was alive with pirates. We hadn't a chance, though we put up a good fight." He shook his head. "Brave men are often fools. Because we killed a couple of dirty Chinks, their leader, whose name was Chung Ho, the famous pirate, was so mad that he had the cap'n tortured and the mate thrown overboard to the sharks."

"Weren't you captain?"

"I got my mate's ticket as a result of what happened that day." Ben gave an emphatic nod. "By the time those pirates had finished with us there was only six of us living, and we were forced to navigate our own ship. At night we anchored, and the pirates strapped us to the mast."

"Why?" asked a bullet-headed half-wit.

"To keep the mast from falling down. Four days we were in this plight when we comes to the mouth of a wide river. For days we had been in sight of land, and this river curled amidst wild and desolate mountains. Not a soul in sight, but along the banks ran crowds of wild animals, snarling and roaring. They smelt blood. Our blood ran cold when we heard we were going to be put ashore the next day. It was my turn at the wheel, and I drove that ship straight for a jagged rock that was sticking up in the middle of the river. That rock cut through the plates like cheese. My five shipmates was strapped to the mast, whilst I did my turn at the wheel, and I cut them free with my knife."

"How did you get a knife, Ben?"

"I stole it and hid it in my clothing." Ben was ready with his answers. "The ship sank like a stone; before she slid to the bottom we made that rock, and saw the water boiling with sharks. It was a dreadful sight to behold, and I shall see it if I live to be a hundred. The dhow what was following behind—"

"The junk!"

Ben withered Albert with a glance.

"The junk was behind because we were towing it. The Chinks were half-asleep, and before they could hoist sail they ran into the bank. It was a fair treat to see those animals trying to get at them, and—"

Mrs. Jeremiah Harbottle sailed back into the bar.

"Look at the clock!" she pointed. "Ten minutes past closing-time. Do you want to get my house a bad name?"

January 23rd, 1927.

The fishermen scoffed their drinks and departed quickly, because the landlady had a sharp tongue. Jerry and Albert retired to wash glasses, whilst Captain Ben settled down before the fire.

"Why not tidy up the place?" snapped his sister. "You do nothing but sit around all day and loaf. Fine brother you are. Been here six months and still out of work. When Henry was alive he used to say you was the laziest—"

"Have a heart, Emma!" begged Ben. "This pub was nigh empty when first I come home from foreign parts, and look how I've made trade look up. In getting the Crown and Anchor a fine name in the district."

"A bad name, you good-for-nothing!" She tossed a letter on the table. "That's just come. Maybe it's that legacy you keep expecting."

Captain Ben Cutlet adjusted his glasses, opened the envelope, and took out the contents.

"Emma." He glanced round. "Here's someone who appreciates me. I said I was getting the Crown and Anchor known. Well, here's a lady what's heard all about me and my adventures at sea."

"Does she offer you a job?"

"She waits me to come and see her, as she reckons the world should know of the terrors and dangers through which I have passed."

"Stuff and nonsense!" snorted Mrs. Harbottle. "Who's the letter from?"

"Olivia Potter-Porter," answered Ben. "Seemed to have heard that name."

"Miss Potter-Porter lives up at the big house," said Emma. "A very wealthy woman, they do say. Owns a steamship company, or something. Go and see her, Ben Cutlet, and get her to give you a job. If she won't give you a ship, see if she'll let you do a bit of gardening."

"Gardening, Emma?"

"It's about all you're fit for." Emma Harbottle slapped a jug down on the counter. "And if she'd take you on the staff there would be one person who wouldn't weep." She wagged a fat hand at Ben. "I've had almost enough of you, Captain Ben Cutlet. And if you think you're anchored to the Crown for the rest of your life you're very much mistaken."

"Oh dear!" sniffed the captain as his sister strode out of the bar parlour. "I hope she isn't serious."

The Rob Roy Without a Captain

MISS OLIVIA POTTER-PORTER was a tall, pleasant, kindly woman, inclined to talk rather a lot and to imagine herself a very capable, intelligent person. She made a great fuss of the captain and listened eagerly to some of his stories—and she believed them. Believed him even when he got confused with Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn, and stated how he was wrecked off the northern coast of Australia and nearly eaten alive by Zulus.

After tea she told the captain that for centuries her family had been associated with the sea, and that her grandfather's sea chest had been bequeathed her. Ben sniffed and looked vague when she opened the chest and produced a sextant, and got out of explaining it by saying that that type was not used these days, and hurriedly changed the subject to telescopes.

"My father owned a shipping line, and I'm part-owner now," she told him. "I've sold half my interest to a Mr. Yates—you must meet him one day. I expect, Captain Cutlet, you may have wondered why I wrote to you. Well, being so interested in the sea, I am a

sort of patron to Falport's troop of Sea Scouts. They have a meeting to-morrow, and the mayor will be present. Captain Cutlet, I wish you would tell the dear boys some of your wonderful and thrilling experiences."

"Well—er—I—"

"I won't take 'no' for an answer," purred Miss Potter-Porter.

She was so fulsome in her praises of his heroism that finally Captain Cutlet agreed—after refreshment composed of very old liqueur whisky. He would be delighted.

Mr Yates sat in the office of the shipping line which was owned by Miss Potter-Porter and controlled by himself. A middle-aged man whose eyes were dark and shrewd. He was studying a report.

The Rob Roy was ten days late, and all this stuff about head winds and storms was all nonsense. His 'phone went, and a clerk informed him that Captain Shaddiek and the mate, Marriott, of the Rob Roy, were outside. He growled for them to be shown into his office at once.

"Well, Captain Shaddiek, late as usual," was his greeting, spoken viciously. "What excuse have you this time?"

The bearded captain eyed the owner quite frankly.

"Bad weather and a bad ship," he answered.

"I don't quite get you, Captain Shaddiek. Are you suggesting that anything is wrong with the Rob Roy?"

"You've said it," answered the captain. "I've had to nurse that ship to port. In the first bad storm she'll break up and go to pieces. She won't pass the Board of Trade survey in her present condition. She's due for survey on the twenty-third, according to Lloyd's regulations, and they'll condemn her."

"The Rob Roy is in splendid condition," raged Yates. "Just some more of your excuses for being late and missing some valuable cargo."

"I don't lie, Mr. Yates," coolly answered the captain. "There isn't a decent bearing in her engines—she's a coffin ship. Ask Mr. Marriott if you don't believe me."

The big unshaven man in the shabby clothes twisted his cap between dirty fingers.

"Well, I won't go so far as to say she's in the best of condition," he muttered. "I think she's sea-worthy."

"I have a cargo that must sail on the twentieth for the West Indies," said Yates. "Those are your orders, Captain Shaddiek."

"Not mine they're not." The captain shook his head. "I'm not taking the Rob Roy out as she is, not with bad weather expected this month. I'd take her out if the Board pass her on the twenty-third, but I got a wife and kids to think of, and the Rob Roy leaks like a barrel."

Yates became very angry, and so did the captain, and it ended by the owner saying that the captain was no longer on the pay-roll of the company. The captain said he wasn't changing his master's certificate to run a ship that ought to be condemned, and departed, but the mate remained.

"Marriott"—Yates looked keenly at the mate—"you and I have worked together before. I want your real opinion of the Rob Roy."

"Wouldn't pass the Board, even if they was all blindfolded," was the answer. "She's had her day, and the first bad weather will see her break up. What's more, Mr. Yates, she would cost a lot of money to refit—more than

she's worth. But I'll take her out, sir, if you'll give me the chance. I've got me master's ticket."

"Well, it's a big responsibility—with your record, Marriott." Yates gave the man a keen glance. "But I'll discuss it with my partner. I'm expecting her this morning, so hang around."

Not many minutes after Marriott had gone out of the room Miss Potter-Porter was announced. With carefully selected words Yates explained that Captain Shaddick was no longer with the company. The captain had stated that he was too old for the job and wished to retire. Most awkward, as it was essential the Rob Roy should sail on the twentieth for the West Indies.

"The first mate's just asked for the captain's job," added Yates. "What do you think about it?"

"It's a bit of a risk, George."
"We might do worse. Marriott's been with us a long time—good captains are hard to find."

Miss Potter-Porter had a brain-wave. "I know a good captain," she cried. "Captain Ben Cutlet."

"Never heard of him," cried Yates. "He's a famous sea captain—he's had years of experience," enthused Olivia.

"Captain Cutlet is giving a talk to my Sea Scouts to-morrow—come up and meet him before we make a decision."

"All right," agreed Yates. "I'll leave it till to-morrow."

On the platform stood Captain Ben Cutlet, whilst seated behind were Miss Potter-Porter, dressed as a scout-mistress, the mayor, the band leader, and several important members of the council.

Captain Ben wore his best reefer jacket. He was going to tell these boys of the Seagull Patrol stories that would make their hair stand on end. The only fly in the ointment was young Albert. He would be a Sea Scout—a

boy who had a habit of asking awkward questions.

"It was in the winter of ninety-four. I was in command of the Mother Machree. We were bowling along in a high wind—in fact, the wind was so high that the bottom sails weren't getting any wind at all, which caused the ship to be pushed over on her beam ends. So I gave orders to the crew to hoist the mainsails to the top of the mast, but, much to our annoyance, we found the braces had come undone and the sails were falling down—"

Among the audience were Yates and Marriott. Yates looked at the mate, who was gaping at the platform with his mouth open.

"What's he talking about?"
"Blowed if I know, sir."

"There we were—helpless in the China Sea—and bearing down on us was a large Chinese junk—full of pirates. It wasn't even a medium-sized junk—it was a very large junk. It was fully four hundred feet long, had four decks and five masts—" Captain Ben Cutlet paused for breath.

"I think this fellow's a bluff," whispered Yates in the mate's ear. "He's talking a lot of drivel."

Marriott nodded his agreement. "If you want my opinion, sir, he's never been to sea at all."

"Is that so?" Yates gave a grim chuckle. "Come outside, Marriott, I've just thought of something."

They turned at the doorway and glanced at each other understandingly. Young Albert had asked Captain Cutlet to demonstrate how to make the knot known as a "short sheep shank"—it was obvious that the captain did not know anything about knots, except a "granny."

"He'll bluff his way with that audience, though I expect some of the scouts may be very suspicious." Yates laughed as he leaned across a table in an

outer room of the scouts' hall. "But he'll be just the man to take out the Rob Roy."

"But that cuts me out," cried Marriott. "And that mug don't—"

"Not so loud," cautioned Yates. "Listen—if anything happens to a ship the captain takes full responsibility, doesn't he? He has to answer all the questions. You wouldn't want that to happen to you, would you?"

"What do you mean?"

"Listen, and I'll tell you how you can clean up a nice sum of money." Yates looked round. "This is what I want you to do. First of all—" his voice died down to the merest whisper.

"It sounds okay to me," hoarsely cried Marriott, when Yates had unfolded his scheme.

"All we've got to do is to get him signed on."

Marriott fingered his scrubby chin. "That's where you're going to be up against it—if that old windbag is as big a liar as I think he is he wouldn't dare sign on."

"You're right." Yates sat back, and then a smile appeared. "I think I know a way to fix the captain."

One evening, two days later, Marriott appeared outside the Crown and Anchor. He looked at the time. Yates should be along with Miss Potter-Porter in about five minutes. He pushed open the swing doors and lurched into the parlour.

Captain Ben Cutlet was in full swing. He had had several drinks which he had put "down the hatch" and was enthralled everybody with a grand tale of smuggling.

Marriott ordered some ale and then went across to listen to Ben. Old Harbottle and Albert saw the start the big man gave when he saw Ben's face, and so did some of the audience



"That junk had four decks and every deck was alive with pirates!" proclaimed Captain Ben.

Marriott put down his beer and slapped Ben on the shoulder.

"Well, if it isn't my old ship-mate, Captain Cutlet!"

"Eh?" gasped Ben.

"Don't you remember me—I'm Jim Marriott."

Ben Cutlet opened his mouth, blinked his eyes and then shook his head. "Jim Marriott—never heard the name."

"But I was your first mate on the Mother Machree," cried Marriott. "You ain't forgotten when we were chased by them pirates? You haven't forgotten that Chinese junk?"

"Oh—er—that junk!"

"There's a captain for you," Marriott appealed to the audience. "We were heading for Shanghai and bearing right down on us was a Chinese junk full of pirates armed to the teeth. What a junk, too—four decks and five masts."

Captain Ben Cutlet gave the big man a nervous glance.

"You've never told us that one, Ben," cackled an old boy.

"Haven't I?" Ben grinned sheepishly.

"It's only just come back to me."

"I could tell you tales about this fellow you'd never believe," cried Marriott in ringing tones.

At that precise moment Yates escorted Miss Olivia Potter-Porter into the bar parlour.

"Those were the good old days, weren't they, captain," Marriott gave Ben a resounding clap on the back. "Doesn't it make you long to be back at sea—to stand on your own bridge again with the wind blowing through your hair and the lives of every soul on board in the hollow of your hand?"

"Yes, yes, it does—it certainly does," Ben Cutlet was so swept off his feet by these stirring words that he was guilty of making a rash remark. "For two pins I'd pack up and go back to sea tomorrow."

"I'm very glad to hear you say that," it was Miss Potter-Porter.

"What?" The captain was aghast at the unexpected sight of the scout-mistress in the bar parlour.

"I'm glad you would like to go back to sea because that's just what I've come to see you about," Olivia indicated her dapper escort. "This is Mr. Yates, the managing director of the Green Star Line."

As in a dream, Captain Ben Cutlet heard Yates offering him the command of one of the company's ships. It was some while before he could collect his wits.

"It's a wonderful offer and—er—I appreciate it. If only I had myself to think of—I'd jump at it," Ben sniffed and peered over his pince-nez. "But if I went to sea again who'd look after the old Crown and Anchor?"

"We would!" boomed the heavy tones of Mrs. Harbottle.

Captain Ben Cutlet then told a harrowing tale of losing his instruments, charts and master's certificate when his ship, the Rose Marie, was holed by an iceberg.

Yates had to admit that it was a little awkward, and winked at Marriott.

"Begging your pardon, sir, but if I can be of any help to Captain Cutlet, I can vouch for him." His arm went round the captain's neck. "I've sailed under him on seven different voyages, haven't I, captain?"

"Er—er—um—was it that many?" stammered the confused captain.

"Aye, and I mind the Rose Marie," Marriott stared almost aggressively at Miss Potter-Porter. "The seas were thick that year with icebergs. Captain Cutlet was the last to leave his ship, lady."

"Well, George, that should be satisfactory," Miss Olivia turned to her partner. "What do you think?"

"Good enough for me," Yates stopped forward. "Captain Cutlet, I herewith appoint you to command the Rob Roy. You sail Thursday."

"But I—er—I—" Ben's words were drowned in the cheering.

It was old Harbottle who took advantage of the situation.

"Drinks all round on Captain Ben!" he piped.

What could Captain Ben Cutlet say or do? Nothing. Except grin sheepishly and wonder how he could avoid sailing on the Thursday and save his face.

"All Visitors Ashore"

MRS. HARBOTTLE was taking no chances about losing her unwelcome lodger, and with the assistance of her husband and Albert was packing up the belongings of Captain Ben Cutlet.

"I don't suppose he wants to take this with him," cried Mrs. Harbottle, and held out a photograph she had found. "Look!"

Jerry Harbottle and Albert saw a picture of Ben posed majestically on the deck of a canal barge with his hand on the tiller.

"If they saw that he wouldn't be captain of the Rob Roy very long," cackled old Harbottle.

"And that means we'd lose a good chance of getting rid of him," cried Mrs. Harbottle.

"Getting rid of who?" said a voice outside the door, and Mrs. Harbottle was just in time to pass the incriminating picture to Albert.

"You!" Mrs. Harbottle glowered at her brother.

"Who is?" sniffed Ben.

"We are!" it was old Jerry Harbottle.

"You are not."

"I say we are," Old Jerry's one tooth gleamed vindictively. "You're as good as gone now."

"He's right," Mrs. Harbottle swept past. "Thank heavens this is the last night you sleep under my roof."

"She's going to get a big surprise," cried Captain Cutlet, closing the door after her. "Because I'm not going."

"What!" shouted Harbottle and Albert.

"I'm not sailing."

"You've got to—you can't get out of it," cried Albert.

"Oh, yes I can. You've got to help me."

"Not me," Albert answered.

"Nor me," said Harbottle.

Captain Ben Cutlet held out his hands appealingly. "Are you going to stand by and see me make a fool of myself?"

"Why not?" viciously cried Albert. "We're used to it."

"You've got to go," shouted old Harbottle. "If you don't go all the village will know you're a fake."

"But, Jeremiah," hoarsely cried Ben. "You know I've never been to sea—what on earth could I do on a big ship like that? If I own up it isn't going to do the Crown and Anchor any good. You've got to help me."

"What d'you want us to do?" surlily asked Albert.

"I'll tell you," Ben was all smiles. "I go on board and just as we are about to sail you dash on to the bridge with a telegram. It's from my aunt in Glasgow to say she is dying."

"Is she?" asked Albert.

"No, I haven't got an aunt."

"Well, how can she send a telegram to say she's dying?"

"It's part of the scheme," Ben glared irately at Albert, whom he half

suspected of pulling his leg. "I open the telegram and say, 'Stop—hold everything—I can't sail.'"

"Why not?" asked Harbottle.

"Because my aunt in Glasgow is dying and I've got to go to her."

"But you haven't got an aunt in Glasgow!" shouted Albert.

"I know I haven't," shouted Ben.

"The telegram's a fake. Because if my aunt is dying in Glasgow and wants to see me I can't sail, can I?"

"No," Albert understood at last.

"All you've got to do is to bring the telegram," Ben looked anxiously at the pot-boy. "You'll do that for me, won't you?"

"No, can't be done," Albert shook his fat head. "I've got to be with the Sea Scouts to see you off." He stabbed a thumb at the opened-mouthed Jeremiah Harbottle. "Let him do it."

"I'll do it, Ben," said old Harbottle.

"Right," Ben mopped his brow with relief. "Listen. I shall be up on the bridge, and when you hear me shout 'all visitors ashore' you dash up and hand me the telegram. Think you can do it?"

"Yes."

"Then let's try it," Ben moved to the chest of drawers. "Now, I'm on the bridge." He walked to the window and back, then shouted: "All visitors ashore!"

Jeremiah Harbottle ran forward.

"Telegram for you, sir."

Ben took an imaginary envelope and opened it.

"Good heavens," he cried. "It's from my aunt in Glasgow."

"Yes," lisped old Harbottle. "She's dead."

After a lot of rehearsing Harbottle at last understood what he was expected to do, and Ben Cutlet retired to bed to dream peacefully. Everything was settled and he was saved.

On the next day Captain Ben Cutlet was driven down the wooden pile pier to where a somewhat weather-beaten cargo vessel was anchored. Most of Falport were there to see Captain Cutlet take over his new command. He bowed to all and felt quite sorry that his glory could only be short-lived. He saw old Harbottle in the crowd, and gave a slight nod as the old boy half-opened his hand to show a pink envelope.

Yates was there to welcome him.

"Glad to see you, Captain Cutlet," He held out his hand. "The Rob Roy's all ready for you to take over the command. I've got picked men for your crew."

When Ben Cutlet saw the hard-boiled, unshaven, powerful and ugly men of the crew he felt very glad he was not going to sea. It was another nasty shock to find that Marriott was the first mate. It was an ordeal taking Miss Olivia Potter-Porter over the ship and trying to avoid answering her many questions. On the bridge Ben became so agitated when she asked him to explain how the engine-room telegraph worked that he clutched the siren-lanyard in his agitation.

Twice the whistle sounded, making Captain Ben Cutlet shiver at the shrill derision of the sound. He let go of the cord hurriedly. Up to the bridge came Yates. Close behind was the mate.

"Well, good-bye, captain, good luck."

"You're not going yet, are you?" stammered Ben.

"You gave the signal for all visitors ashore, didn't you?" cried the first mate.

"Did I?" gasped Ben, and then grinned. "How remarkable." He leaned over the side of the bridge. "All visitors ashore!" he bellowed.

"Good-bye, captain, and a pleasant voyage," cried Miss Potter-Porter.

"Same to you—er—er—thank you." He grinned foolishly, and seeing no sign of old Harbottle, yelled loudly, "All visitors ashore!"

But in spite of all his shouting Jeremiah Harbottle did not appear, and at last the mate, looking somewhat bewildered and suspicious, hastened forward to report that all visitors had been ashore some minutes. They were casting off.

"We're ready to sail."
"I'm not ready." Ben was in a panic. "Tell 'em to cast on again."
"But steam's up and the tide's right—shall I give the signal or will you?" gruffly shouted Marriott.

"We don't sail until I say so," yelled Ben Cutlet, and rushed to the side. "All visitors ashore!"

Marriott tapped him on the shoulder. "Don't you see we're drifting—will you give orders to cast off the stern ropes or shall I?"

"When I want them cast off I'll tell you!" shouted Ben, glancing this way and that. "Je—rry!" he yelled frantically.

"But we're turning right round—give orders to cast off," sang out the mate.

"Not until I'm ready."
"Very well." The mate gave Ben a violent push. "If you won't—I will."

Ben staggered back, and clutching for support put his hand on the engine-room telegraph, the ship gave a slight lurch and Ben swayed still clutching the telegraph. He pulled it over to "FULL STEAM AHEAD."

The people of Falport had a thrill that day because the town lost part of the quay. Ben's order at once tightened the rope, which was very strong, and the quay being early Victorian its woodwork collapsed. A watchman's hut and a nice slice of pier fell down. The Rob Roy put out to sea towing part of the pier with it.

Stowaways

CAPTAIN BEN CUTLET was on the bridge. He did not know much about it, as the Rob Roy was good at pitching and rolling, and the inside of the redoubtable captain was not behaving at all well. To say that the captain looked green was to put it mildly.

"Red light on the starboard bow, sir," sang out the look-out man.

"Well, stop the ship and wait till it turns to green," muttered Captain Ben.

Marriott, clad in oilskins and sou'wester, came up on to the bridge, and grinned at sight of his captain.

"Well, captain, how does it feel to be back at sea again? I bet this is stirring up old memories."

"It's stirring up a lot of things."
"Would you like me to take over now, skipper?"

"Would I—not 'arf!" Ben cried eagerly. "That is if you're quite sure you can manage without me till—er—tomorrow—er—sometime."

"That's all right, skipper," Marriott grinned, and clutched the swaying captain. "You go and turn in." He turned. "Hey! Hulbert!" A man came quickly to the bridge. "Take the captain to his cabin."

Captain Ben Cutlet was carried to his cabin across Hulbert's shoulder and dumped none too gently on the floor. He lay there for a few minutes, and then with a great effort got to his feet. He observed two curtained bunks, and decided to rest and let his head clear, when maybe he could think how to get off this ship. He swayed towards the bunk, clutched at the side, and then staggered back as a head appeared—a head with only one tooth.

"Telegram from Glasgow," cackled old Jeremiah.

"You! What are you doing here?" gasped Ben.

The old boy grinned and held out the telegram.

"Go on—open it!"
"What's the good of opening it now?" raved Ben.

"Well, you never know," said Jerry. "She might be better."

"You know I haven't an aunt, you old fool!" Ben shook with impotent rage. "Now, thanks to you, I'm six hours out to sea with a ship on my hands—I don't know where I am or where I'm going, and I feel as sick as a dog. And it's all your fault, you old—"

"Aw—shut up!" And the head of Albert appeared from the top bunk.

"What are you doing here?" Albert grinned.

"I'm a stowaway."
"And so am I!" cackled Jeremiah.

"How dare you stow away on my ship?" cried Ben. "And in my cabin, and in my bunk! You get off this ship at once!"

"We will not!" cried Albert.

Ben swayed and sat down hard on the cabin floor. Albert and Jeremiah hooted with mirth.

"I'll have you thrown off!" spluttered the captain. "Just you wait till I call the mate."

"If you call the mate I'll show him this." Albert produced a picture postcard. "It's a picture of you on the bridge of your last ship—some barge!"

"You ain't got a captain's ticket!" chimed in Jeremiah. "And the penalty for a captain taking command of a ship on the high seas without a ticket is at least six months—without option." He cackled shrilly. "You leave us alone and we won't give you away."

"A couple of crooks!" spluttered Ben. "So you didn't hand in that telegram on purpose."

"You've guessed it, clever!" jeered Albert. "We're going to see the world—at your expense. Good night!" He drew his curtains.

"Here, where do I sleep?" demanded Ben, when he had recovered from Albert's statement.

"On the floor," cackled old Jeremiah, and drew his own curtain.

At daybreak Captain Ben Cutlet woke up with a stiff neck through reposing on the floor, and he was in the midst of telling Jeremiah and Albert that he wished to flay them alive when a black steward arrived with some breakfast. Food brought Albert out into the open, and in the end the mate heard about the stowaways. Knowing what they would say to the mate, the skipper assured the mate that they were friends of his.

"Hated to be parted from me," Ben smiled nervously at the irate mate. "So

Ben swayed and sat down hard on the cabin floor, while Albert and Jeremiah hooted with mirth.



they came aboard. We'd better put back and land them."

"Out of the question, sir!" cried the mate. "Now they're here they'll have to stay. We're short-handed, so they can do some work."

"It had better be easy work," Albert hissed in a whisper, as they were ordered by the mate to go on deck.

Captain Ben Cutlet sank limply into a chair when they had gone. The excitement of the last few hours had made him forget all about being seasick. Maybe he was getting his sea-legs. He stood up, and at once his head seemed to be going round and round. A rat-tat at his door by hard knuckles.

"Eight bells have gone, sir. Your watch, sir."

"My watch?" Ben fumbled in his pocket and took out an ancient time-piece. "What about it?"

"It's your watch on the bridge, sir," patiently came the voice of the seaman. "The second mate will relieve you at noon."

"Oh, I see!" Ben answered. "I'll be along in five minutes."

The keen, sharp air did much to revive the captain, though it was unpleasant to scan the seas and see nothing on the horizon.

"Where—er—is the ship heading?" Ben asked the helmsman.

"Sou'west by south." The helmsman pointed to the binnacle. "There's the course, sir."

Captain Cutlet took a hasty glance at the binnacle, and to him it was worse than a jigsaw puzzle. Seeing a telescope, Ben picked it up and sniffed at the chilly picture.

"Not much traffic about this morning," he grinned at the helmsman nervously, and the grin faded before the look in the man's eyes. "Not many boats about, are there?" he added hastily.

"No, sir," muttered the helmsman, eyeing the captain as if he were an escaped lunatic.

"I think I—er—will take a turn at steering," stated Captain Ben, and relieved the helmsman of the wheel.

Down in the hold Marriott was talking to the crew.

"This mug ain't ever been to sea before," the mate told them. "He thinks we're on our way to Norway."

"What's he doing on this ship?" asked a sailor.

"I told you boys there was some easy money if you signed on for this trip, didn't I?" retorted Marriott. "Well, I'll tell you all about it later. In the meantime treat him as a captain, but take your orders from me. Best get back on deck."

The ship's course was that of a snake. "Edmunds!" Marriott grabbed one of the sailors. "Run up and take the wheel before he turns her turtle."

Mutiny

THE days passed, and seldom was land in sight. Captain Ben Cutlet strutted about the bridge and tried to imagine that all was well. Actually he was scared of the mate and his rascally crew. And so the ship rounded Cape Horn and worked up into the South Pacific.

In the mate's cabin was the second mate and the bo'sun. All wore very few clothes as it was sweltering hot.

"According to the noon position to-day that's where we are," Marriott placed a dirty thumb on an even dirtier map. "By dawn to-morrow we should be in the right place." He moved his thumb. "There! Bo'sun, get the men together in the fo'c'sle—I want to talk to them. And be sure the captain and his stow-aways don't get wind of it."

Albert was surlily peeling potatoes when Captain Cutlet came down from the bridge and came along the deck. He paused by Albert, and spoke out of the corner of his mouth.

"I want to see you in my cabin right away."

Farther on old Harbottle was making a poor effort at washing the decks. Captain Cutlet hissed the same order.

Some minutes later the three were in the captain's cabin. Ben closed the door and peered at them over his pince-nez.

"How far is it to Norway?" he whispered mysteriously.

"From where?" asked Jeremiah.

"From England, of course."

Jeremiah did not know, and Albert gave it as his opinion that the distance would be about three hundred miles. Why did Ben want to know?

"Why?" The pince-nez nearly fell off his nose in his excitement. "You say it's three hundred miles. Do you realise

we've been at sea for nine weeks, and we haven't seen any land, let alone Norway?"

"Perhaps we passed it in the night," suggested Harbottle.

"Don't be more foolish than you look!" snapped Ben. "Norway's up north somewhere. Don't you think it's a bit too hot for Norway? I don't think we're anywhere near it."

"Well, you're running the ship!" cried Albert. "You ought to know where we are."

Ben gave a knowing sniff.

"That's what's worrying me—I think there's something funny going on. I don't reckon we're going to Norway at all."

"Why don't you ask the mate?" suggested Albert.

"I don't want to do that 'cos he might think I don't know where I am," argued Ben. "I want you two to help me get my bearings. You understand latitude and longitude, Albert, don't you?"

Albert did not, though he should have done as a Sea Scout. There was a globe in the cabin, and they tried to work out how many miles the ship had travelled, and when the answer came to eighty-two thousand Ben decided they must be wrong somewhere, as they had been round the world twice and should now be off Dover.

"Jerry," Ben said with his usual sniff, "I think you'd better go and pump the mate."

In the fo'c'sle Marriott, with the second mate and the bo'sun on either side, was addressing the crew.

"Listen, fellows, this is the set-up!" cried the mate. "Mr. Yates has got so much insurance on this old tub that it's worth more to him at the bottom of the sea than it is on top. Now this is what I want you to do. Listen carefully."

The mate explained his plans.

"We'll put the two starboard boats out of commission and get away in the port boats," he concluded. "Gunn, you take care of the starboard boats. Cowan, you put grub and water in the port boats—"

No one heard the cabin door open. Jeremiah Harbottle entered the fo'c'sle and wondered how to set about pumping the mate.

"At dawn we send the S.O.S. open up the sea-cocks, scuttle the ship, and down she goes."

A grey-haired, fierce little man stepped forward.

"You mean to tell me we leave the captain and the two stowaways on board?" he asked.

"Sure," answered the mate. "You don't think we're going to take anybody back with us to give us away?"

"That's a bit thick, isn't it? I don't mind standing in with the rest on the other, but I wash my hands of that part of it."

"All right, MacPhail, we'll fix 'em somchow. Dump 'em some place." The mate had no intention of doing any such thing. "Now, Gunn and Cowan, you get started."

The mate turned in time to see Jeremiah Harbottle stealthily edging towards the door.

They pounced on him.

"Let me go!" yelled Jeremiah. "I'll tell the captain about this. Help, help!"

But they did not let Jeremiah go. They took him up on deck and strapped him to the foremast. Albert from behind a ventilator watched the scene with dread. Then Captain Ben Cutlet appeared and demanded the reason for Harbottle being strapped to the mast. Two men seized the captain.

"This is—why, this is mutiny!" gasped Ben.

"That's right—mutiny!" leered a sailor.

Ben saw the mate approaching.

"Mr. Marriott, I want these men put in irons!" he shouted.

"What for?" grinned the mate.

"They've mutinied."



In turn the heavy iron bars of the three landed on his large head.

"Fancy that now!" Marriott laughed harshly. "All right, boys, tie him up and muzzle him—he talks too much."

Albert saw Ben strapped to the mast by the crew. Both prisoners were gagged.

"Where's the kid?" demanded Marriott.

And though Albert did a lot of dodging and took a lot of catching, he was secured at last and dragged towards the mast.

"Tie him up."

"Don't tie me up with those old fools!" shouted Albert, gazing with big round eyes at the mate. "I want to be on your side—I want to be a mutineer, too!"

The sailors roared with laughter.

"I know how it's done!" Albert cried, when the laughter had abated. "I've seen it on the pictures, and they always take the cabin-boy with them—it's supposed to be lucky."

round and then untied the gag from the captain's mouth.

"So you've turned mutineer!" Ben croaked—he was beyond sniffing.

"Sssh!" Albert glanced round fearfully. "I was only pretending."

"Why did you let me stay tied up all night?"

"I couldn't get away." Albert drew out a knife and began sawing at Cutlet's bonds. "We've got to get busy. They're opening the sea-cocks pretty soon."

"What for?" gasped Ben.

"They're going to settle the ship and leave you to sink with it." Albert was now busy on the ropes that bound old Harbottle.

"Oh, are they—we'll soon see about that!" Righteous indignation made Captain Cutlet forget his fear. "Where is everybody?"

"They are all in the fo'c'sle except the mate and the engineer," answered Albert.

"Good—come on!" cried Ben.

Albert and Jeremiah stalked after Ben and wondered what he was going to do. On tiptoe he went down to the fo'c'sle, and they saw him slide a hand round the door. Cutlet grinned as he held up the key—very quietly he locked the door on the outside.

"That settles him!" cackled Jeremiah. "We'll show 'em who's running this ship."

"Well, we won't be able to run it for long if it's sinking," wisely sniffed Captain Cutlet. "We'd better go off before they bust that door open." He turned. Shouting and hammering could be heard. "They seem to have found out they're locked in. We'd better get a boat lowered."

Near the lifeboat was the brace and bit used by Gunn for boring holes in the boats. How it got there and why did not dawn on Ben Cutlet.

"Jerry." He handed over the brace and bit. "You go and bore holes in all the other three boats whilst Albert and I lower this one."

"Hadn't we better take some food and water?" suggested Albert.

"Yes." Ben scowled impatiently. "We may need it—hurry!"

So Albert went off to collect some food whilst Cutlet got in a tangle with the ropes and old Harbottle bored holes in the other boats. Albert found a sack in the cookhouse and put in as much food as he could find, some ship's biscuits he hid under his scout jacket, and he also popped in the cook's portable wireless set. Albert had coveted that

"Boys," muttered Ben, edging away from the spear. "What they're saying don't sound like Norwegian to me!"



All sailors are superstitious, and now they looked at each other in perplexity. The nigger cook was worse than any of them.

"Listen, boss!" cried the darkie. "Les' don't take no chances wif ole man luck—maybe de kid's right."

Marriott grinned and nodded.

"All right, boys, let the kid alone. He can't do any harm." He cupped his hands. "Black! Keep the same course. Ring for full speed ahead."

The Raft

THE grey light of dawn. Captain Cutlet was awake and sagged limply in his bonds which had loosened during the night. Poor old Harbottle was snoring from sheer exhaustion. From below came the sound of a concertina and drunken singing.

Across the deck came a doubled-up figure. It was Albert. The boy looked

"That settles them—now for my friend Marriott," whispered Captain Cutlet. "Are there any marling-spikes around?"

Marriott was with MacPhail. The engineer had opened the sea-cocks, and the water was spouting into the hold. It would be half an hour before the ship would sink. If Marriott had any trouble with the Scottish engineer he was going to see that there was an accident. If MacPhail went overboard the sharks would do the rest.

"I'll get the men on deck," Marriott climbed out of the hold. "Better stay here, Mac, and just watch those sea-cocks."

But when Marriott came out of the engine-room he did not know that Ben Cutlet and the two stowaways were lying in wait for him. Ping, pang, pong—in turn the heavy iron bars of the three landed on his large head. The mate collapsed in a heap.

set, and he reckoned it might keep them amused in the boat. Most of the food dropped out of a hole in the sack, but as the wireless set weighed a lot he did not notice.

They lowered the boat somehow or other. Ben was in the boat when it hit the water, and at once the sea spouted through the holes. He spluttered and floundered about. Amazing how quickly the boat filled. Surprising how fear can lend one strength. Ben Cutlet swarmed up the rope dangling from the davits like a monkey.

Crashing and renderings showed that the fo'c'sle door was going. The mate started to recover his senses—they tapped him on the head and settled that problem. It was Ben who found the ship's raft and said it was their only chance. They hurled the clumsy raft overboard. They were about to clamber over the side when MacPhail appeared

and found the prone figure of Marriott on the deck. The engineer looked up and saw the three horrified faces at the rails and understood the situation in a flash.

They were thinking of raising their hands—all mutineers should carry guns—when to their surprise the engineer grinned encouragingly and waved to them to get off the boat. They did not waste time in asking for explanations.

As MacPhail helped the stunned Marriott to his feet the fo'c'sle door burst open and the scared crew came pouring up on deck.

Captain Cutlet was not good at sliding down ropes, and also did not look where he was going—he slid straight into the sea with a loud splash. Albert and Jeremiah dragged him on to the raft. With their oars they pushed the cumbersome craft away from the Rob Roy.

Marriott pushed MacPhail away and staggered to the rails. He looked down at the raft.

"Quick!" he yelled to the crew. "Bring them back—lower a boat."

"Go on, lower the boats," jeered Ben, damp but triumphant. "See what happens to them—they're full of holes."

"We'll drown like rats," Marriott saw MacPhail. "Shut off the sea-cocks till we repair the boats."

One of the mutineers produced a gun, but Marriott grabbed his arm. He leaned over the rails and cupped his hands.

"Good luck, skipper!" he yelled. "You've only got three thousand miles to paddle that thing—send me a post card from Norway."

"You cowardly dogs!" Ben shouted back. "You'll pay for this mutiny. Mutiny on the high seas. I'll live to see you hanged at the yard-arm." He shook his fists. "I'll get you, wherever you are, and don't forget this, I've got the might of the whole British Navy behind me."

The crew began to pelt the slowly drifting raft with anything they could lay hands on. It was a cabbage, hurled by the cook, that flopped the heroic Captain Ben Cutlet back into the sea. Albert and Jeremiah dragged him to safety. Slowly the raft drifted out of range of the jeers and laughter of the mutinous crew of the Rob Roy.

Among Savages

THE raft was the only thing upon the sea, or so it seemed to Captain Cutlet and his companions in distress. They had erected an oar, to which was tied a shirt as a signal, which they hoped might be seen by passing shipping, but as they were far off a trade course there was little chance of being sighted. Albert and Harbottle sat rowing half-heartedly, whilst Captain Cutlet was a prey to his thoughts.

"Isn't it about time we knocked off for lunch?" asked Albert.

"Is it that late?" Captain Cutlet studied a large watch. "Bless my soul, we must have been on this raft six hours or more. All right, empty out that grub and let's see what we've got."

"What did you bring that thing for?" Ben asked at sight of the wireless set.

"I thought we might send out an SOS on it."

"We can't send out an SOS on it—it's only a receiving set."

"Well, maybe you can receive an SOS," persisted Albert.

"What's the good of that?" snapped Ben. "We've got enough troubles of our own without receiving other people's—come on, let's see the grub."

What a shock when Albert found the

hole, and he realised all the food had dropped through. All they had on the raft was a stone jar of water and the wireless set. When Ben had finished telling Albert what kind of an imbecile he was, it was almost dark. Reluctantly Albert produced the biscuits, and there was much squabbling over the division. There were twelve biscuits, but by some calculation of Albert's he secured six.

"One biscuit each now and no more," ordered Captain Cutlet. "We may be on this raft for days, so they've got to last. So has the water."

The sea was calm, and exhausted from their labours, they slept. How hopefully they scanned the horizon when the sun rose. Not a sign of a ship. The sun was blazing hot and there wasn't a cloud in the sky. The day passed wearily, and it was a relief to feel a cool evening breeze.

Captain Cutlet decided to keep his diary, which he determined to put in the water-bottle as a farewell message when the water had all gone.

"Still no sign of Norway," he wrote. "Water-jug half empty—not a bite to eat."

Six days and nights passed, and they were still alive. Albert looked as if he had lost a stone in weight, Ben had a beard, and old Harbottle was so thin he looked like a skeleton.

They sighted some seagulls, and Albert was of the opinion that land could not be far away. They rowed feverishly, but as no land appeared they gave up the attempt as hopeless, especially as they rowed in circles. It was Albert who thought the wireless might cheer them up, and switched it on to some station.

"This programme comes to you by courtesy of the Balaher Bi-carbonate of Soda Company," blared the radio. "Mrs. Smeeton will give you the third of her weekly cooking talks 'Appetising Meals for Hungry Husbands.' To-day we are going to cook a meal which should tickle the most jaded palate. The first dish consists of rich cream of tomato soup. This should be followed by a nice fried sole covered with melted butter—"

The three castaways held their stomachs and moaned.

"We now come to the main dish. Roast duck, stuffed with sweet chestnuts, and baked potatoes in a dish, garnished. Place in a slow oven and let it remain until it assumes that appetising shade of golden brown, and baste from time to time with the rich brown gravy from the dish. Serve steaming hot with apple sauce and fresh green peas. For the next course we have a choice of three dishes—apple dumplings, hot mince pies, or plum pudding. One can follow this with biscuits and cheese, coffee, fruit and nuts—"

It was more than Captain Cutlet could stand, and with a cry of rage he picked up the wireless and flung it into the sea. As it drifted away, they heard burblings about how to make "Pine-apple Fritters." If Albert had tuned in to another station they would have heard some interesting news. The Valencia reported picking up an SOS message from the Rob Roy in the South Seas, going to their assistance and finding no trace of ship or survivors.

Overcome by the talk by Mrs. Smeeton, the unfortunates flopped on the raft and gave themselves up to despair, and when night came they slept.

Captain Ben Cutlet was dreaming about roast duck when his dreams were

disturbed by strange stabbing pains round the ribs. They became so acute that he at last opened his eyes. The sight that met his eyes made him sit up.

The raft was on a beach and all round were weirdly garbed savages. It was a spear that had been tickling the captain's ribs.

The New God

CAPTAIN CUTLET pinched himself to see if he were dreaming, but found it was no such luck. Evidently the raft had been washed up on a coast inhabited by cannibals. There was a nasty old man jumping about and jabbering, and Ben did not like all the skulls that were fastened to the man's waist. Two horns projected from the headdress of this Polynesian witch doctor.

The warrior with the spear tickled Ben with the weapon, and the captain's yell woke up Harbottle and Albert.

The natives became more excited, and about thirty villainous-looking blacks began shouting, dancing and brandishing their spears.

"Boys," muttered Ben, edging away from the spear, "what they're saying don't sound like Norwegian to me."

The fact that Ben Cutlet had spoken seemed to excite the savages to great anger, and they raised their spears. Ben quite expected his last hour had come.

"Gentlemen," he cried. "Please don't get so excited. I'll explain everything. My name is—er—Cutlet—Captain Ben Cutlet. We've been thrown off our ship, which was scuppered or scuttled or sank. We've been floating around for days—"

The savages became tired of Ben and suddenly the raft was hoisted on to their shoulders. The three adventurers were nearly thrown off. The savages moved up the beach.

"What's happening?" Albert gasped out. "Where are they taking us?"

"I don't know," muttered Ben gloomily. "But I don't think it's where we want to go."

Suddenly and unexpectedly there came the sound of a long-drawn zooming, as of a number of aeroplanes doing a power dive. The noise became louder and louder. The natives stopped and gazed round in terror. The noise of the aeroplanes ended in an explosion like three bombs dropping one after another. At the third explosion the natives dropped the raft and scampered for the cliffs, yelling with terror. They flung themselves behind rocks and lay there shivering with fear.

Ben was the first off the raft, but he could not see any aeroplanes in the sky. The sound came again and seemed to come from the waves breaking on the beach, and as they stood there gaping there came the sound of a voice:

"You are listening to the broadcast of the Aldershot Tattoo. It really is a magnificent sight. It must be a record crowd—"

"The radio!" gasped Ben Cutlet, and darted down the beach in time to grab the wireless set before it was sucked back into the sea. It was the same despised set that Ben had flung overboard.

From behind the rocks came the heads of the natives, peering in superstitious terror.

"That danged thing again," muttered Jeremiah Harbottle, and grabbed up a large rock from the beach.

Ben freed a hand and made him drop the rock.

"Don't do that," he cried excitedly. "This is going to save our bacon."

Solemnly Ben walked to the raft and placed the wireless set down, then he switched it off. At once the natives came from cover and advanced with their spears menacingly raised. Ben switched on the set and gave the dial a turn. A terrific blare of military trumpets was the result—the natives dropped their spears and tore back to cover.

"Listen," Ben spoke in a stage whisper. "Do as I tell you and we may be all right. Get down on your knees and bow to the radio."

"What good's that going to do us?" querulously questioned old Jeremiah.

"Never mind," rasped Ben with an angry sniff. "Do as you're told."

They got down and started salaaming to the radio, then Ben turned and beckoned the natives. After a while they came timidly towards them. The witch doctor started to wave his arms about, and Ben quietened him with another blare of trumpets.

"How long have we got to keep this up?" asked Albert.

"It's not doing my rheumatics any good," grumbled Jeremiah.

"Shut up," said Ben out of the corner of his mouth.

The natives watched the strange white men bowing to the radio set and were filled with awe. Fearfully they edged nearer to see this god that made noises that could be so soft and yet so harsh if roused to anger. One imagines that their curiosity overcame their fear.

Out of the corner of his eye Ben watched the natives, and though the spears gave him qualms and a desire for flight, he went on bowing and raising his hands above his head as if in prayer. Albert and Jeremiah imitated Ben's antics. After a while the natives went down on their knees and began to bow in respect.

When Ben thought the natives had had enough he stood up and raised his arms towards the sun, and when he looked down at the grovelling natives he smiled. The natives gasped their relief, because they felt that the strange god's wrath had been appeased. Ben then placed his ear to the radio and made several unearthly screeches before squatting cross-legged on the raft. He signalled to Jeremiah and Albert to follow his example. The natives watched the white men anxiously. Imperiously Ben touched himself and pointed towards the cliff. The natives were bewildered, but when Ben jabbed a finger at the wireless set they understood that the god was giving his orders. At last they got what Ben wanted them to do—to convey the god to the chief.

On a large throne sat the native chief. His headwear was more extensive than his clothing. The throne was covered with tiger skins. All round him were warriors armed with spears and shields, and behind the men peeped the shy faces of the Polynesian women.

Through the trees and into the clearing came the natives bearing on their shoulders the raft. Ben squatted close to the wireless as if he were a head priest. Whilst behind, Albert and Jeremiah sat with their heads bowed. Albert had secured some bananas somehow, and was chewing away in spite of his head being bowed; Jeremiah was sneaking surreptitiously at a coconut.

Before the throne the natives set down the raft. Ben touched the set and there came a harsh sound that put terror into the chief and his subjects. At an imperious gesture from Ben they flung themselves on their knees and began touching the ground with their foreheads. Ben picked up the wireless

in his arms and walked slowly from the raft towards the throne. The witch doctor gave a howl and fled, but the chief, being a brave man, had the courage to remain.

"Moturkix lokumbi muala paganaka talafa malima!" cried the chief.

"What did he say?" asked old Jeremiah.

"I think he said 'Hallo,' " answered Ben, and beamed at the chief.

"Where from? How come?" asked the chief.

"Gee—he speaks English!" gasped the fat Albert.

"Old chap, where you learn English?"

Ben asked, and calmly sat down on the small throne which had been the property of the witch doctor. He signalled for the chief to be seated. That warlike individual was so impressed that he sat down.

"My father—him meet good missionary—missionary him good meat."

The three stared at each other, and Ben's nostrils twitched as if he could smell cooking.

"Me Chief Tanawanawaka—who you?" A brown finger pointed imperiously at Captain Cutlet.

"Who—me?" Ben hesitated, and turned the controls. "I'm—"

"You are listening to Radio Luxembourg!" wheezed the radio.

"Me big Chief Radio Luxembourg," cried Ben Cutlet, and pointed to Jeremiah.

"Him old Chief Weather Forecast." Last he indicated Albert.

"Him, little Chief Fat Stock Prices."

"What him—Voice-in-box?" questioned the chief, and moved forward as if to touch it. Ben turned on the volume control. A terrific blast came from out of the radio, and the chief leapt back as if he had been stung. The warriors and their women moaned and bowed their heads, as if the wrath of this new god was more than they could face.

"Voice-in-box belong to me." Ben touched his chest. "No touch him—him taboo."

The chief bowed and began to give orders. Ben sighed his relief as girls appeared with coconut shells filled with some sort of liquid. Other girls brought bananas and fruit—Albert began to smile again.

"It looks like we're going to be all right," cackled old Jeremiah.

"Yes," grinned Ben. "Just as long as the batteries hold out. After that, if we don't do something, we're likely to be eaten. They won't find much on you, you old wire-worm."

The chief gave Ben and his companions one of his best huts and expressed a wish that they might stay a very long time. He looked enviously at Voice-in-box, as if he coveted this wonderful magic.

The Triumphant Return

MARRIOTT had decided to go on with the scuttling though several of the crew were now opposed to the idea. They regarded the whole venture as being risky. The escape of Captain Cutlet and the two stowaways was a definite sign that the scuttling was doomed to failure, and that all they would get were long terms of imprisonment. But Marriott overruled their objections. Captain Cutlet and his companions were bound to be swept off the raft, or perish of thirst, so that the authorities could never learn the story of the sinking of the Rob Roy.

The SOS was sent out and the sea-cocks opened directly one of the boats had been repaired. Marriott and his ruffians then set out to row towards the coast. They had plenty of water and supplies, but they were all gone by

the time land was sighted. They landed on a beach, and from the cliff-top one of the men reported a village distant about a mile. The mate decided that if they marched up in a body they would have no trouble with the natives.

Cutlet and his companions were fed on the fat of the land. It became a habit of the chief to consult Captain Cutlet on all matters of importance, and Ben, looking wise, would then do a lot of pantomime acting in front of the radio, turn the dial and make strange sounds, and finally hand out Voice-in-box's verdict.

It was Cutlet who told the chief that he must not go to war with his neighbours. In less than a week Ben was almost the ruler of this Polynesian village. What was going to happen when the batteries gave out worried him, and he was wondering whether he could train Albert or Jeremiah to do some sort of ventriloquial act. He used Voice-in-box as little as possible.

As their clothes were in rags, the three whites were given skirts of grass. Old Jeremiah said he was glad his Emma could not see him now, especially with all these pretty, half-naked Polynesian girls running around and making eyes at him.

One afternoon Ben was enjoying forty winks when he was startled by a bellowing sound outside his hut. He sat up and sniffed. The noise was made by the large horn that the chief had erected outside the hut and was blown on those occasions when the chief urgently required the help of Voice-in-box.

Marriott and his men sighted a number of pretty native girls. Foolishly the men chased the girls, who fled back to the village to report to the chief that a mob of white men was approaching the village. The chief gave his orders. As a result, the village seemed empty except for a few scared women and children when Marriott stalked in as if he owned the place.

Seated on his throne, the chief waited the coming of the white men. Instinct told him these were very bad men.

"How are you, Sambo?" cried Marriott. "Nice little place you've got here." He pointed to a couple of frightened girls huddled at the chief's feet. "Any more like that around?"

"Maui-facata puapua bagomono wai a lua kanako," bellowed the chief indignantly, and at once warriors, armed to the teeth, appeared from the various grass huts.

Before Marriott or the crew could draw a gun they had about thirty spears within several inches of their chests. Then the spear-points drove the white men to their knees. The chief then decreed that Voice-in-box should decide their fate.

Captain Ben Cutlet emerged, yawning, but he was wide awake when he saw those sprawling white men.

"Well, look what Santa Claus has sent me," he muttered, and walked across to the vacant throne next to the chief. "Good-morning, Mr. Marriott," he shouted in a loud voice. "Welcome to Norway!"

Marriott and the crew gaped at him. "Good meat—plenty meat!" cried the chief, who was a cannibal at heart.

"What does he mean?" quavered Marriott.

"Well, it looks as if you're in the soup," sniffed Ben.

"You wouldn't let him do anything

to your old shipmates, would you, captain?"

Ben coughed and smiled.

"Well—er—I have a faint recollection that my old shipmates scuttled my ship."

"You can't hold that against us, captain," Marriott cried, almost shaking with fear. "I was acting under orders from Yates. Yates wanted to get the insurance, and he only engaged you as captain because you don't know anything about the sea."

"Who doesn't?" Ben gave an angry sniff, then grinned. "Well, I got here before you, didn't I?"

"Pooma—Pooma Mamagalo," impatiently cried the chief, and immediately the warriors began to prod their victims.

"Hey, wait a minute!" Ben imperiously held up his hand. He pointed at the grovelling men. "Ask Voice-in-box."

"Good! Bring Voice-in-box here," answered the chief.

Ben shook his head.

"Voice-in-box no speak strangers," He moved towards his hut. "You me go."

In the hut Ben prostrated himself before the radio set, which was decorated with flowers. Ben switched on at a point where there was a terrific oscillation. He increased the volume control so it sounded as if someone was being murdered.

"Voice-in-box very angry."

The chief grinned and patted his stomach.

"Me hungry, too."

"No, no; not hungry—angry," said Ben, and moved the dials.

"Football scores: Arsenal ten, Chelsea one; Sheffield Wednesday two, Everton three; Sunderland six, Leeds United two. Second Division: Fulham three, West Ham two; Aston Villa three—"

"What Voice-in-box say?" demanded the chief.

"He say, 'Very serious matter,' began Ben. "No good eat." He blinked because something was tugging at his grass skirts. He looked round. "What is it?"

"Look out the window," hissed Albert.

The chief was prostrate before Voice-in-box, so that Ben was able to get to his feet and peer through the open window. There was a ship lying off the island. It was the Rob Roy.

A gleam came into Ben's eyes as he went back to kneel beside the chief.

"Voice-in-box say bad men belong him—stay here no good for you. He send big ship. Me take bad men away."

"Me say no! Bad men stay here!" The chief was very decided.

Ben dramatically pointed to the window.

"Look! Voice-in-box send ship! Must go!" Ben touched the radio and it screeched. "Yes, must go pretty darn quick. Savvy?"

The chief was not too keen about it, but brightened when Ben said that Voice-in-box so liked the chief and his Polynesian island that he wished to stay here for the rest of his days.

Marriott and the crew were placed

under a safe guard. Ben had MacPhail brought to him, and after a hurried conference the two men rowed out to the Rob Roy, which was gently drifting. They managed to get an anchor lowered, and when Ben returned to the shore he was alone. Some time later, native canoes assisted Ben in getting his prisoners out to the ship. A windlass rattled and down came a hook and chain. The prisoners were hoisted aboard and dumped like sacks in the hold.

The rascally mate was the last to appear, and, at a signal from Ben, was left dangling in the air above the open hold.

MacPhail appeared.

"Pumped all the water out," he reported. "Steam's up and we're ready to sail."

"Good work, Mac," grinned Ben. "You won't lose by this."

"I thought you said you opened those sea-cocks!" raved Marriott.

"Aye!" MacPhail chuckled. "They must ha' got clogged up."

"You dirty, double-crossing haggis-eater!" yelled Marriott, and said no more as Ben gave a nod. With a thud the mate was deposited into the hold.

The natives assisted in fixing the hatches. When that was complete, Ben, with much ceremony, passed over Voice-in-box. He rather enjoyed being kissed by several Polynesian girls, but had to speak severely to Jeremiah Harbottle for suggesting taking some of them back to England.

Ben walked to the bridge, rang for "Full speed ahead," and in sheer joy rang for "All visitors ashore." As the Rob Roy steamed away, Albert came on to the bridge and said that the chief was shaking the radio set and dancing about.

"Maybe Voice-in-box dead," Ben said, with an expressive sniff.

During the voyage Ben learnt how to steer, and he had hard work keeping Albert and Harbottle away from the wheel. MacPhail got the most contrite of the crew to serve as helmsman, two more were allowed to stoke the engines and promised a light sentence.

One more adventure befell Captain Cutlet. Jeremiah, who was taking a watch on the bridge, hastened down to the captain's cabin to come up and see the firework display. Ben said it was probably Blackpool or the Crystal Palace.

"See that star," Ben pointed it out to Jeremiah. "Steer straight for that and ring for 'Half speed.'"

"I like going fast," argued Jeremiah.

"I'll stop the ship altogether if you don't behave yourself," Ben threatened. "And no messing about with the wheel."

Jeremiah thought he would like to have a look at the fireworks, so he chose a star that seemed to help head the ship towards the display. A slight fog made visibility difficult. Then a rocket shot skywards and seemed to burst right over the Rob Roy. Old Jeremiah decided he had better make the most of this display, so he rang for "Dead slow." Just as well, because five minutes later something white loomed out of the mist. Jeremiah just clung to the wheel and gaped. There was a reading crash.

Captain Cutlet and Albert rushed on to the deck and on to the bridge. They helped a dazed Jeremiah to

his feet. Then Ben blazed because there was a long white shape alongside.

"We've hit another ship!" gasped Ben. "Now we'll catch it. I oughtn't to have let that fool take the wheel. They're lowering a boat. Oh my, what do we do now?"

But to Cutlet's surprise they did not "catch it." It turned out that a large steam yacht had run aground, and that when the tide turned the ship would have probably broken her back. The Rob Roy had given her a blow that had slid her off the sandbank, and that, except for a few scratches, she was not damaged.

"I don't know how you did it," said the yacht's captain. "But I've never seen a piece of seamanship like that before."

Then the elderly owner stepped forward.

"I shall see that there is a suitable reward for you and your crew."

"Well, as a matter of fact, I haven't got a crew," answered Ben. "I had to lock them all up—a spot of mutiny."

"Mutiny?" gasped the owner.

"Yes, I am sailing the ship practically single-handed."

"In that case"—the captain of the yacht looked at the owner—"I'd better transfer some of my crew to you."

"Thanks very much," Ben grinned. "You might let me have someone to navigate the ship. You see, I haven't been to bed for a week."

"I bet you can do with some sleep now," said the yacht-owner.

"I bet I sleep all the way home," prophesied the hero.

The papers were full of the captain of a tramp steamer saving a millionaire's yacht. A thrilling rescue in the Pacific. And when the Rob Roy headed for Falport, most of Cornwall was there to welcome the hero. Yates might have been if the police had not arrested him. When the man who had planned the scuttling of the Rob Roy asked for an explanation the police sergeant said he did not know, but whatever it was the result would probably be three years or more.

A helmsman from the millionaire's yacht was at the wheel as the Rob Roy under reduced speed slowly steamed towards the harbour entrance. It gave Ben quite a thrill to see the crowd and to hear the Sea Scouts playing a martial air somewhat out of tune.

"Quite a crowd to welcome you, sir," cried the helmsman.

"Oh, is there?" Ben gave a modest sniff and laid his hand on the wheel. "I'd better take over then—this—er—is a very tricky channel."

Miss Potter-Porter and the crowd cheered, but they ran when the Rob Roy headed straight for the pier. At the last minute, with the help of the helmsman, the wheel was wrenched over, and the Rob Roy only removed that portion of the pier that had been rebuilt. Obviously the Rob Roy disapproved of this portion of the pier. But who cared about piers on this great day?

They handed Ben a purse of money, the Freedom of Falport and a half-share in the Crown and Anchor. Albert was made a patrol-leader in the Sea Scouts, and Jeremiah was treated with marked respect by Emma Harbottle for the rest of his days. Captain Ben Cutlet has announced that the Rob Roy was his first and last sea voyage.

(By permission of Gaumont-British Picture Corporation and Gainsborough Pictures, starring Will Hay as Captain Ben Cutlet.)

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January 23rd, 1937.

"UNDERSEA KINGDOM"

(Continued from page 6)

strewn path, working downwards towards the river.

"The bombs can't get us here," Corrigan decided. "We're out of their trajectory."

"I'm wondering about Joe," Diana spoke in a low voice. "I wish he had stayed with us."

A shout from behind them made all turn. Joe had found a way round and was racing down the hillside. He yelled out some kind of warning—they turned again to see and hear a stream-lined white tank lumbering up the slope. It was armed with small, pointed guns, and fired a volley at them, which luckily flew high.

"Down!" cried Corrigan. "On your hands and knees!"

They crouched, waiting for a second volley. But the tank pulled up across their path. It stopped with a jerk, its chromium plates gleaming in the queer, artificial daylight. Side doors opened, four of the strangest creatures imaginable emerged, two from either side. They were like tin canisters on spiral spring legs, the spirals covered with grey asbestos. Three looped pipes came from the upper part of their tin bodies and went back into the lid. A flat letter-box arrangement in front made a kind of face; their arms were spirals, again covered with asbestos. They stood quite still for a few moments, then their claw hands raised what looked like metal banjos with four rods apiece instead of shafts, these rods wired about with gleaming rings at their bases.

They presented these awkwardly at the cowering four. Joe, arrested in his flight, stood staring at them, erect and an easy mark.

Ere Corrigan could call to him, the Robots fired simultaneously. Forked lightning shot out from the rods which, directed at Joe, instantly consumed him to ashes. He was there one instant and gone the next; not a trace of him remaining save the fire-scorched spot on which he had been standing and staring.

"They've got atom guns!" gasped Norton. "Those people have harnessed the atom!"

The Robots, with clumsy, mechanical gestures, stepped forward in pairs, seeking a line of fire by which to annihilate the professor's horrified party. Corrigan seized a huge boulder and flung it at the advancing pair. It caught the machine-man full on the front of his metal body and knocked him sideways into his companion. The two behind marched into the fallen front pair, and for a few frantic moments all danger from them was arrested.

Corrigan led the way towards the hole he had seen from the heights. A wild scramble followed, during which they were aware that the Robots were lining up again in their fascinating, horrible fashion. But, even as their lightning flashed forth from their strange guns, their prey reached the cup-like shape.

"Down!" Corrigan commanded, and the four of them slid and slithered through the concealing forest growth over the edge of the cup into the strange hole, tumbling breathlessly into its deadly darkness.

(To be continued in another breath-taking episode next week. By permission of the British Lion Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Ray Corrigan and Lois Wilde.)

"GET THAT GIRL"

(Continued from page 16)

they could have opened fire on him with their revolvers.

Yet the crooked financier was not destined to elude justice. For even as he was approaching the edge of the woods a sleek grey object started out at him from some thickets.

It was the figure of Rinty, and the dog had recognised in that galloping fugitive the man who had slain his master. And now, with teeth bared yengefully, the wolfhound sprang snarling into the path of the horse that Enos Colvin had commandeered.

Started by Rinty's sudden appearance, the horse reared affrightedly, and in a second the rogue on his back was plunging from the saddle, to hit the ground with a shock that drove the breath from his body.

Before he could rise again, Rinty was upon him, and the scuffle that ensued was one that beggared description—a primitive battle betwixt man and beast, with Colvin striving to save himself from the dog's gleaming fangs and shrieking wildly for aid as he did so.

It would have gone hard with the American had he been left to the mercy of the dog that had frustrated his escape. But Caryl Foray and her companions were running towards the scene of the combat, and they managed to interrupt the struggle and prevent Rinty from doing any serious damage.

While the inspector chased Enos Colvin with his gun, Brad Sheridan caught hold of the wolfhound and dragged him from his victim.

He succeeded in pacifying the dog, and then he bent down towards the man on the ground, who was cowering there in terror.

"You shot Jean Foray!" Brad accused. "Come on, talk! You shot Jean Foray, didn't you?"

A pitiable, cringing figure, the embzzler looked at him abjectly.

"All right," he panted, "all right—I'll come clean. I did shoot Jean Foray. I did shoot him. But it was in self-defence. He drew a gun on me—"

"You're a liar, Colvin!" Brad cut in.

"Caryl's uncle never had a gun."

The American fell silent, and, at a

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"UNDERSEA KINGDOM."—*Crash Corrigan*, Ray Corrigan; *Diana Compton*, Lois Wilde; *Unga Khan*, Monte Blue; *Sharad*, William Farnum; *Ditmar*, Booth Howard; *Professor John Norton*, C. Montague Shaw; *Billy Norton*, Leo Van Atta; *Briny*, Smiley Burnette; *Sally*, Frankie Marvin; *Hakur*, Lon Chaney jun.; *Lieutenant Andrews*, Jack Mulhall; *Martos*, Ralph Holmes; *Gaspom*, Raymond Hatton.

"GET THAT GIRL."—*Brad Sheridan*, Francis X. Bushman jun.; *Caryl Foray*, Lois Wilde; *Jean Foray*, Joseph Swickard; *Captain Bradshaw*, Earle Dwire; *Enos Colvin*, Robert Walker; *Constable O'Brien*, George Chescbro; *Constable Gary*, Jack Hendricks; *Captain Edwards*, Steve Clark; *Rinty*, Rin-Tin-Tin jun.

"WINDBAG THE SAILOR."—*Captain Ben Cutlet*, Will Hay; *Jeremiah Harbottle*, Moore Marriott; *Albert*, Graham Moffatt; *Olivia Potter Porter*, Norma Varden; *Yates*, Kenneth Warrington; *Marriott*, Dennis Wyndham; *Emna Harbottle*, Amy Vaness.

sign from Inspector Bradshaw, Gary and O'Brien pulled him to his feet.

Colvin was led away, and Inspector Bradshaw turned to Captain Edwards.

"I'm afraid you've come up here on a fruitless errand, my friend," he stated. "I'll have to hold your man, as he's wanted here on a more serious charge than the one you can bring against him."

"I quite understand that, inspector," Edwards rejoined, "and I might add that I'll be perfectly satisfied with the result of my errand—if those missing securities are handed over to me for safe return to their rightful owners."

Inspector Bradshaw nodded. "They're in Colvin's possession at the moment," he said, "but I'll turn them over to you in my office. First of all, however, I'd like to congratulate Constable Sheridan here."

He swung round to face the man whom he had reduced to the ranks, but the big fellow shook his head.

"No, sir," he observed with a smile. "It's Rinty who deserves the bouquets this time."

He motioned to the wolfhound, and the inspector looked at him keenly.

"H'm," he remarked, "it seems you disobeyed my orders regarding that dog, Sheridan. Still, I can't say I'm sorry that you did, for I'm afraid I made a mistake in my estimation of him. It was the letter that he snapped at, after all, eh?"

"Absolutely, sir," Brad began, but before he could say more Caryl was beside him.

"Brad," she cried, "the inspector addressed you as Constable Sheridan just now. What happened? Where are your chevrons? Oh, Brad, it was on account of me that you lost them."

The inspector touched her on the arm, and at the same time produced the stripes from a pocket in his tunic.

"Perhaps you'd like to stitch them on again, Miss Foray," he suggested. "Here they are. And you may tell the sergeant—you may tell him, Miss Foray, that he's a credit to the Service."

He pressed the chevrons into her hand, and then glanced at Captain Edwards.

"Shall we go back to the post and get those securities now?" he proposed significantly. "I've an idea that Miss Foray and Sergeant Sheridan may have something to say to each other—in private."

Captain Edwards seemed bewildered for the moment. Then a look of understanding dawned in his eyes.

"Oh," he said. "Oh, sure—sure! Er—well—good-bye, Miss Foray!"

He moved off with Inspector Bradshaw, and as the two men made tracks for the settlement Brad Sheridan drew Caryl towards him.

"Honey," he murmured, "I know you hanker after city life, and I know Bord du Lac isn't likely to have happy memories for you. But maybe one day you'll have a different outlook, and I'll be waiting, dear—"

She gazed up at him, and suddenly nestled closer.

"You don't have to wait, Brad," she whispered. "I don't hanker after city life any more—and as for Bord du Lac—why, I guess I'd be happy anywhere, so long as you were around."

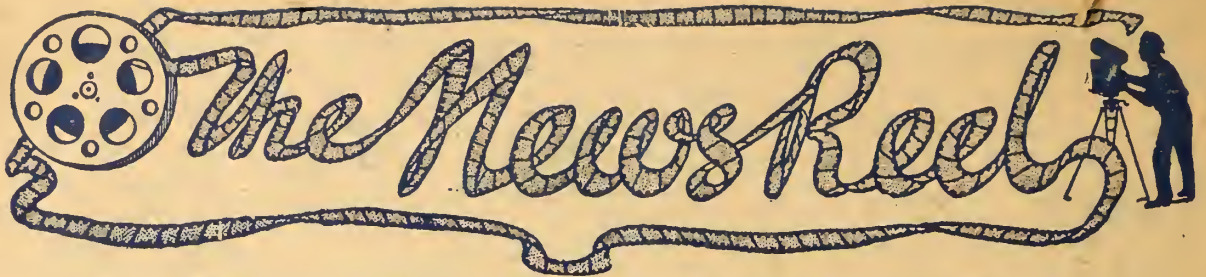
"Caryl you mean that?"

She nodded smilingly, and he was enfolding her tightly in his arms when he saw Rinty standing nearby, looking at them with his head on one side.

"Why, you old son of a gun," he called to the dog laughingly, "don't you know that gentlemen never spy on affairs that don't concern them?"

(By permission of Pathé Pictures, Ltd., starring Francis X. Bushman jun. and Lois Wilde.)

January 23rd, 1927.



The News Reel

All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 218, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Time Off for Fire-fighting

Loretta Young, Tyrone Power and Don Ameche recently turned fire-fighters.

Tay Garnett, directing the young stars in "Love Is News," at 20th Century-Fox, was informed that his home at Laurel Canyon was threatened by a blaze in the district. In vaults at his home were stored several cans of extremely valuable film—part of the fruits of his recent round-the-world cruise.

Shooting was called to a halt while the three stars rushed to Laurel Canyon with Garnett and helped in efforts to get the fire under control.

The cans of film, which could not be replaced, and completed scripts of two films were saved, there were no casualties and the company returned to work.

Successful Disguise

Jerome Cowan, New York actor who has just been signed by Samuel Goldwyn, owes his contract to a moustache.

Cowan recently went to Hollywood at Goldwyn's invitation to play an important rôle in "Beloved Enemy," with Merle Oberon and Brian Aherne. Upon its completion, Cowan signed to appear in two Broadway plays, and was preparing to depart.

But during his wait until "Beloved Enemy" was previewed, Cowan grew a moustache. Passing Goldwyn in the studio one day, he smiled a friendly greeting.

"That chap is wonderful," said Goldwyn. "He has the quality of a Bill Powell."

He was amazed to find that it was merely Cowan with a moustache, so amazed, that he offered the actor a long term contract provided he retains the fungus.

Now Cowan is trying to estimate the commercial possibilities of a beard.

Preston Foster Goes Irish

Everyone has experienced the tendency to adopt a dialect when mixing continuously with people speaking this dialect. When, in addition to mixing with them, it is your job to pick it up as accurately as possible, it is not easily dropped when no longer needed.

This is just what Preston Foster found when he stepped straight from the principal part on Radio's "The Plough and the Stars," into a part of "We Who Are About to Die."

In the Sean O'Casey play of the Irish Rebellion he was playing with six members of the Abbey Players from Dublin. From them he picked up the Irish brogue, which he used to good purpose in his part.

Then he stepped right into the part of a New York detective, and found his voice had become a mixture of Dublin rhetoric, underworld guttural and Yankee twang.

Buying the Milk

One of the oddest orders ever received by a milk company was given by 20th Century-Fox recently when eight tons of skimmed milk were purchased for the ice-skating rink for "The Girl in a Million," the ice-skating musical extravaganza which will introduce the beautiful Sonja Henie to the screen.

Test shots of the rink gave the illusion that the ballet of 84 boys and girls were skating with Sonja on a hardwood floor and not an ice rink. The freezing pipes running through the transparent ice looked like narrow floor planking.

Tests were conducted, first with white paint and then with table cream, but they were not satisfactory. Skimmed milk froze readily, gave a better illusion of ice in the picture than pure ice did, and it hid all the freezing pipes.

So the ring of 12,000 square feet was thawed out and several inches of the

clear water were drained off and the skimmed milk poured in and frozen.

Whalen "Swings" a Hefty Punch

Until Michael Whalen was cast for the leading male rôle in the 20th Century-Fox picture, "Peach Edition," now in production, he knew nothing about boxing.

Fidel la Barba, former world flyweight champion, trained Whalen to use his fists for three weeks—and to good effect.

Pat Flaherty, one time amateur heavyweight champion, appears in a scene in which Whalen swings a strong left at him. The script, of course, calls for Flaherty to dodge, but he forgot to do so, and Whalen's left struck home, spinning Flaherty into the ropes and leaving him with a swollen jaw.

"Whalen should take time off for a ring career," Flaherty said.

He played baseball for twelve years for the Boston Red Sox, New York Giants, and other leading teams.

One of the Screen's Unsung "Heroes"

What is a "grip"? This is a question which comparatively few people outside a film studio could answer correctly. Nevertheless, he is a most important person and one of the unsung "heroes" of motion-picture production.

The "grip" is a jack-of-all-trades, a handy man who does anything that is asked of him. His rather odd name is derived from the familiar cry of the old-time gang bosses: "Here, get a grip on this!"

Despite his humble position, the "grip" is one of the biggest time and money savers in the industry. During a film's production he is always ready to answer anybody's call, and armed with his saw, his hammer and a few nails, he performs feats that would make the average musician blush with shame.



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No. 917. EVERY TUESDAY July 10th, 1937.

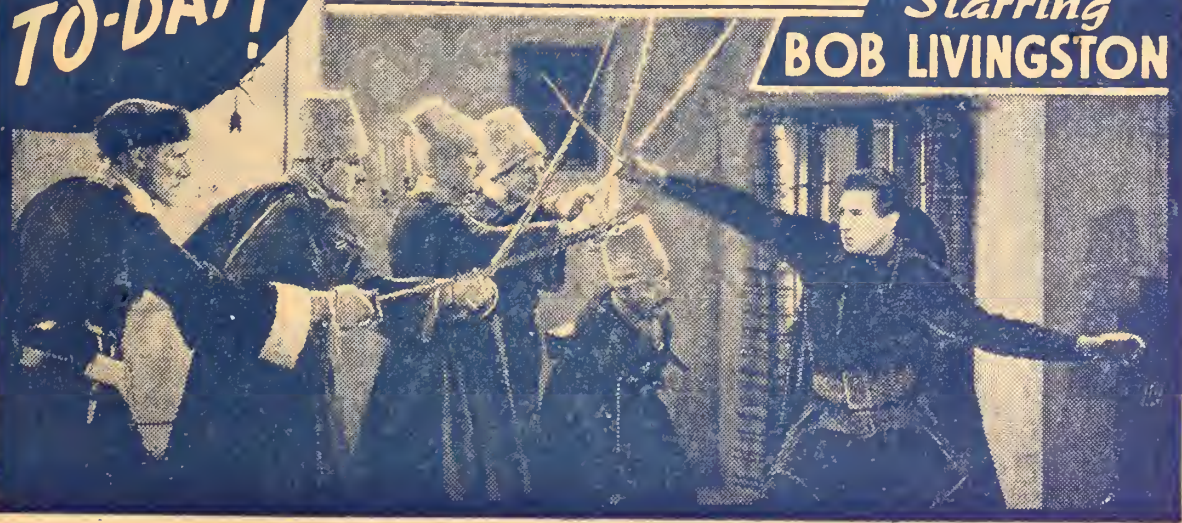
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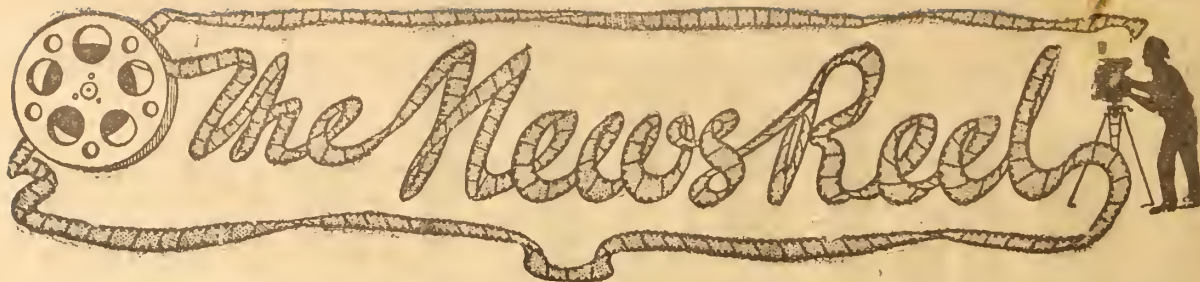


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Starring
BOB LIVINGSTON





The News Reel

All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 199, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Building an Ice-rink for Sonja's Next

A score of welders, pipe-fitters and refrigerating experts have been working three shifts daily on Stage 15 at 20th Century-Fox, where the studio is constructing one of the largest indoor ice-rinks in existence. It will be 200 feet long by 125 wide and 2 feet thick.

Incredible figures accompany the building of this rink. Some 28,000 feet of iron pipe (the same piping which cooled the great concrete slabs forming the bulwarks of Boulder Dam) are the nerve centres of this gigantic rink, which will be the principal locale for scenes of Sonja Henie's forthcoming film, "Thin Ice."

On this slab of ice Miss Henie will perform five skating sequences—a practice number, a swan dance, a Russian ballet number, a Viennese waltz and a fox-trot. In at least one of these scenes she will be partnered by Tyrone Power, her co-star in the picture.

The rink is approximately twice the size of the one used in her first motion-picture, "One in a Million," and more suited to her purposes. The first rink gave trouble for the cameras until the studio technicians toned down the icy glare with milk.

The new rink will be pure white in the first sequences, through a patented process, and in the swan dance number will be pure black—two innovations which should lend added beauty to Miss Henie's performances.

Two changes of sets will surround the rink. The first will be a representation of a mountain lake, to match the two weeks of exterior shooting at Mount Ranier, already photographed. The last set will depict an hotel in the Alps.

Mikeman's Minor Problem

The usual custom of flooding a set with light during the filming of a picture has been reversed by Director George Seitz for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's "The Thirteenth Chair."

The mystery picture, which is an adaptation of the famous play by Bayard Veiller, has two important sequences which were photographed in almost pitch darkness. The only light on the set filtered in through a window from a street lamp.

As a result, the thirteen people seated about the table where a seance was being conducted by Dame May Whitty, famous English actress, were scarcely distinguishable. The cameraman had quite a bit of trouble arranging his lens to catch the outlines of each person in the room. It was absolutely necessary that each of the actors be clearly defined, yet there could be no light to spoil the impression of a real seance.

But the "mikeman" had an even greater difficulty to surmount. The mikeman operates a sensitive microphone on the end of a portable boom to pick up the dialogue of the actors. As each actor speaks in turn, the mikeman swings the microphone to a point near the actor, but just out of camera range.

July 10th, 1937.

NEXT WEEK'S SMASH HITS



PAT O'BRIEN

IN

"THE GREAT O'MALLEY"

As a police officer, James Aloysius O'Malley is too fond of the rule-book, enforcing ordinances nobody else remembers, and over a trivial offence he causes John Phillips to lose a job and commit a crime. Relegated to a school crossing by his disgusted captain, O'Malley becomes quite a changed character—but trouble follows when Phillips is released from gaol. A powerfully human story.

"WINDS OF THE WASTELAND"

Two Pony Express riders find that the telegraph has done them out of their jobs, so they buy a coach route from a crook—and they find that Crescent City is a ruin with only two inhabitants. Read how these two fight to put the town back on the map, in spite of the crook and his gang. A gripping Western yarn, starring John Wayne.

Also

Another episode of the fighting serial:

"THE MOUNTIES ARE COMING"

Starring Bob Livingston.

In the seance sequences of "The Thirteenth Chair," the mikeman was forced to memorise all the lines of the actors as well as their exact positions about the table. Then, in the intense darkness, as the scene was being filmed and recorded, he had to swing his microphone to exactly the right spot as each actor spoke his lines. These scenes ran over three minutes each, and during those periods each of the thirteen players spoke at least one line. The mikeman was kept busy.

Madge Evans and Elissa Landi both stated that they almost forgot their

lines because they expected any moment to be struck by the boom. Henry Daniell and Thomas Beck both insisted that they could hear the rush of air past their ears.

Other members of the cast of "The Thirteenth Chair" include Ralph Forbes, Lewis Stone, Matthew Boulton, Janet Beecher, Holmes Herbert and Charles Trowbridge.

They Couldn't Take It!

Fifteen schoolchildren film extras whooped for joy the other day when they took up their positions on a refreshment-bar set erected in the Samuel Goldwyn studios for scenes in "Stella Dallas." The director, King Vidor, carefully gave them their instructions. All they had to do was to sit and drink ice-cream sodas and make plenty of noise.

"Easy," they scoffed. But after the ninth drink one of them dropped out, and the rest weren't feeling so noisy, either. The next day fourteen originals and one substitute reported at the studios for further punishment. Survivors and substitute carried on gallantly, but just before midday a deputation was sent to Vidor announcing a hunger strike. Vidor saw the point, relented, and allowed them soda without ice-cream.

Jane Learns Rope-spinning

The man who taught Will Rogers to twirl a rope, Shorty Miller, is now giving Jane Withers lessons in the art for her rôle in "Wild and Woolly," her new 20th Century-Fox picture.

Miller, who is one of America's best-known rodeo performers, and holder of more than one hundred trophies for his skill in trick roping, taught Rogers at the time the latter was preparing to make his debut in the Follies.

Although the famous humorist was well known as a monologist at the time, he felt he needed something to do to keep his hands occupied while telling his stories. He hit upon the rope-twirling idea and engaged Miller to teach him the foundations of this cowboy art. Fascinated by it, Rogers developed into a real artist with the lariat under Miller's tutelage.

"Jane grasped the tricks of the trade more rapidly than anyone I have ever taught," Miller stated after several days of coaching the little star.

Locomotive of 1871 in a Picture of 1937

The Paramount studio has acquired a museum piece, a locomotive of 1871, from the Virginia and Truckee Railway. The ancient steam engine is in perfect running order, and following a series of "road" tests it was given a certificate of "good health" by the Railway Commission.

It will be seen in Paramount's big musical romance, "High, Wide and Handsome," starring Irene Dunne with Randolph Scott. The story deals with the war between railroads and Pennsylvania farmers in their struggle for the control of the oil industry.

(Continued on page 28)

It was not for vengeance alone that the masked rider struck at Jason Burr's sinister organisation. He was out to smash a tyrant's ambition to build an empire beyond the Rockies. A thrill-packed serial of the early West, when California was a pawn on the chess-board of a scheming nation, starring Bob Livingston



Don Loring

IT was spring in California, the spring of the year 1844, when that sun-steeped and glamorous territory was still under the Mexican flag—a land renowned for its rich orchards and verdant pastures, but not yet for the gold that veined the mountains of its north-eastern frontier.

In all that vast province there was no fairer prospect than the Sonoma Valley, and it was here that the hacienda of Senor Loring was situated.

The Loring hacienda was the home of a wealthy cattle baron in whom the graciousness of the Spaniard was coupled with the more rugged qualities of the Anglo-Saxon. For, as in the case of many proud Castilian families living in the path of American immigration, the Lorings could claim kinship with both races.

Indeed, it was their association with the United States which had prompted that government to communicate with the Lorings and request a certain favour of them. In short, Senor Loring had been asked if he would permit his elder son to act as guide to an expedition which was destined for the little-known wilds of Oregon, away to the north and within the boundaries of the U.S.

Senor Loring had acceded to the request, and now his elder son was preparing to take his leave of home and kindred.

Donald by name, the young man in question favoured the American side of his family rather than the Spanish. True, his hair was dark, but he was clear of skin and his eyes were grey, and, in contrast to the average Latin, he was of singularly stalwart build, being well over six feet in height and turning the scales at a hundred and ninety pounds.

EPISODE 1—
"The Eagle Strikes!"

Standing in the shadow of the hacienda's colonnaded portico, Don Loring embraced his father affectionately. Then he turned to clasp the extended hand of his brother Robert, a slim youth of nineteen.

These two were the only near relatives that Don possessed, but there was another man present, a man in the cassock of a priest, with the face of a saint and a gentleness of demeanour that had earned him the affection of rich and poor alike.

He was Father Jose, from the chapel in the nearby town of San Antonio, and he had hastened over to the Loring hacienda to bid the elder son of the house farewell.

"May your expedition meet with every success," the padre murmured, and then, smiling at the young man's father: "You must be proud that your son has been chosen to guide Captain Fremont into the great North-West, senor," he added.

"Proud indeed, Father," Senor Loring replied. "But, then, who is better fitted for such a task than my son? He has roamed far and wide, and he is familiar with the Oregon country."

He paused, then glanced down all at once at a ring which adorned the third finger of his left hand. It was a heavy gold ring with a crest that bore an inscription in Latin.

"My son," he said to Don, indicating the ring as he spoke, "I need hardly ask that you for ever respect the motto of your family: 'Faithfulness—and bravery.'"

Don Loring inclined his head. His handsome, clean-cut features wore an expression of profound earnestness.

"Faithfulness—and bravery," he repeated.

There was a silence, which was terminated suddenly by a beating of hoofs on a trail that lay somewhat to the east. It was a trail that marked the boundary-line between U.S. and Mexican territory, and round a bend in the road a cavalcade of horsemen had appeared, the majority of the troop being in uniform, though two individuals who were riding near the head of the column were dressed in the buckskin outfits to which Yankee frontiersmen were so partial.

"Here's Captain Fremont and his men now!" exclaimed Don.

An unenlightened onlooker might have imagined from the aspect of the newcomers that the Fremont expedition was warlike in character. But, on the contrary, the venture on which it was about to set forth was merely a peaceable survey.

Nor was it unusual, at that stage in the development of the United States, for a body of cavalymen to engage upon such a mission. In those days the job of exploring the far-flung western realms of the Union was an important feature of army routine.

To be sure, there was always the prospect of trouble with hostile Redskins in those remote tracts. However, that possibility did not seem to occupy any place in Don Loring's thoughts as he made haste to secure a pony that was standing near by, and led the animal across to the trail with his father, his brother and the aged padre in close attendance.

They joined the cavalcade that had trotted into view, and an officer who

was in charge of the detachment saluted them courteously. He was Captain Fremont, of the U.S. Dragoons, a fine, soldierly individual in the thirties.

Greetings were exchanged, and Fremont, who had come to know the Loring's pretty well during the past week or two, was in the act of thanking Don's father for the many kindnesses the latter had shown him, when suddenly his attention was diverted by the unruly behaviour of a horse close by.

The horse was ridden by one of the two buckskin-clad frontiersmen who were attached to the column, and, cream-white in colour, it was a truly magnificent specimen. But it was clear that it had not been thoroughly broken in, and it was equally clear that its owner, a big, hulking fellow who sat his saddle awkwardly, was not sufficiently expert to handle so spirited a brone.

The restive pony cavorting around in circles, the man on its back shouted to the other frontiersman, who was of small but wiry build.

"Hey, Whipsaw," he wailed, "how about you takin' a turn on this hoss?"

Whipsaw was evidently not in favour of the suggestion.

"I told yuh not to buy him in the first place, Salvation," he retorted. "I told yuh he was an ornery critter. No wonder the hombre that sold him to yuh was so anxious to git rid o' him."

The words were hardly uttered when the brone took it into its head to start buck-jumping, and in an instant the man known as Salvation was soaring through the air, to land with a resounding thump by the edge of the trail. Then, amid the laughter of the spectators, the pony cantered off across the range, and was already some little distance away when Don Loring asked Captain Fremont if he might recover the animal.

The captain, nodding in response, Don galloped in pursuit of the runaway, and on overtaking it he elected to transfer himself from his own horse to the other brone, whereupon the stubborn creature indicated that it was as resentful of Don's contact as it had been of Salvation's.

But as a rider Don Loring was a very different proposition from the frontiersman, and although that pony did its utmost to throw him the young fellow remained firmly planted in the saddle. And within five minutes the horse had recognised him as a master, so that, quiescent in defeat, it finally allowed itself to be walked back to the trail.

Collecting his own brone on the way, Don rejoined the cavalcade and looked smilingly at the burly Salvation, who had picked himself up by this time.

"The horse only needed breaking in," Don commented. "He won't give you any more trouble."

Salvation nursed his bruised body. "I'll say he won't give me no more trouble," he declared feelingly. "I'm much obliged to yuh, amigo, but I'd rather walk to Oregon than take another chance astride that critter."

"Well, in that case," Don proposed, "how about you and I trading ponies? I can recommend mine for docility."

Salvation and Whipsaw exchanged a glance.

"It's a good idea," Whipsaw opined. "A good idea!" announced Salvation. "It's a perfect idea. Okay, Don Loring, it's a deal."

Don therefore kept the white brone and turned his own mount over to the frontiersman, and a minute or two later the column was on the move, Don and Captain Fremont waving cheerfully to Senor Loring, Robert and Father Jose as the two of them spurred forward at the head of the troop.

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From a rise of the ground a quarter of a mile farther on, Don Loring turned in the saddle to take a last view of the home where he had been born and bred, and as he gazed back he saw his father, his brother and the padre walking slowly towards the hacienda.

A moment afterwards the stately ranch-house and the three men who were approaching it were lost to view, as Don crossed the rim of the upland with Fremont by his side and the other members of the expedition cantering behind in military formation.

It would be weeks, Don reflected, ere he would set eyes on the Loring hacienda again, and although he had left it many times in the past with a light heart, and although he had agreed to act as Fremont's guide eagerly enough, yet somehow he was conscious of a vague pang.

It was a sensation that he quickly suppressed, and he had forgotten it in the space of a few seconds. But on his return to Sonoma Valley a month or two hence, he was to remember that short-lived feeling of regret and to wonder whether it had been a premonition of disaster.

A Tyrant's Dream

MEN called him General Jason Burr, though it was debatable whether he held any rightful claim to military title. Certainly his name had never figured on the army list of the United States, of which he had formerly been a citizen, but it was possible that he may have attained high rank as a mercenary in the service of some third-rate foreign power.

The fact remained that Burr used the prefix "General" whenever he had occasion to put his signature to any document. And indeed, the home that he had purchased for himself in the Sonoma Valley, up near Ortega Pass, was more like a grim stronghold than a private residence—a stronghold of Spanish design, with a spacious courtyard enclosed on three sides by high, impregnable walls, and on the fourth side by a block of tall buildings dominated by a watch-tower.

About the time that Don Loring took his leave of the Sonoma Valley, Jason Burr might have been located in a sumptuous study on the first floor of his remarkable establishment. It was a study whose windows overlooked the pleasant waters of the Yuba river and commanded an extensive view of mountains and forest, but Burr was not interested in the beauties of Nature. He was interested in a collection of small nuggets that were scattered on his desk.

There were three other people in the room with him—two men and a girl. One of the men, an elderly person of nervous demeanour, was an American mining engineer known as Colton. The second, heavily built and coarse-grained, was a trusted henchman in the pay of Burr, answering to the name of Talbot and holding a position as foreman over a powerful gang of roughnecks whom the general had banded together.

The girl, who was about nineteen or twenty, was also an American. She was Colton's daughter Doris, and tall and slender, with a winsome loveliness characteristic of a young woman who had spent much of her time in the open air. She seemed strangely out of place in the company of such individuals as Talbot and Jason Burr.

She was watching Burr narrowly, watching his face as he inspected those nuggets that lay on his desk. It was a gross and ugly face, as gross and ugly as his thickest body. It was the face of a man whose character was ruthless—

it was the face of a tyrant, its broad, blunt features giving the impression that they had been carved out of granite.

There was a glitter in the eyes of Jason Burr. It had been inspired by his scrutiny of the nuggets before him, for those nuggets were of the purest gold—gold taken out of the sierras that hemmed in the valley—gold which had been discovered in the mountains by Burr and his associates, and which had been secretly mined.

"Yes, it's high grade all right," said Burr, looking up at Colton all at once. "But the trouble is, you don't produce enough of it. What do you suppose I hired you for?"

His voice was deep and gruff, in keeping with his bullish appearance, and his words wrought a pitiable effect on Colton, who leaned forward with an expression of acute anxiety on his countenance.

"General Burr," the mining engineer faltered querulously, "you know yourself that I'm working with primitive equipment. True, if I had more men—"

Jason Burr interrupted him, and glanced sharply at Talbot.

"That's your job," he said, "getting miners for Colton here. What about it?"

"Me and the boys have been quietly roundin' up peons all along, general," Talbot answered. "But if too many disappear, somebody's liable to get wind of what we're doin'."

Burr made an impatient gesture, and was about to offer some retort when Doris Colton struck in on him.

Unlike her father, she was in no way submissive to Jason Burr. Her manner towards the general, in fact, was openly hostile and contemptuous.

"You have no right to this gold," she cried. "It's on land that belongs to Senor Loring!"

"Doris!" the girl's father appealed, as if fearful that her rebellious spirit would bring unpleasant consequences.

His daughter ignored him. So did Jason Burr, who had flashed a sinister glance upon the girl.

"What do I care whose property this gold has come from?" he bit out. "Gold is only a means to an end, and I have need of it."

"Listen, Jason Burr," Doris Colton said to him heatedly, "when you first inveigled my father and me into coming here, this country was a land of peace. Now look what you've done to it, you and your men! You have murdered innocent people—you have pressed them into slavery! Why, my father and I are no better than prisoners ourselves, if it comes to that."

Burr inclined his massive head grimly.

"You are prisoners, Miss Colton," he observed in a significant tone, "and prisoners you'll remain, just as long as I happen to need your father's mining skill."

It was at this moment that a commotion reached his ears from the direction of the courtyard, and, terminating his discussion with Doris Colton, he instructed Talbot to find out what was going on below.

Talbot departed, to return a few minutes later.

"Count Raspinoff to see you, General Burr," he announced.

A look of satisfaction dawned on Jason Burr's malevolent features, and with a peremptory movement of his hand he signed to the Coltons to withdraw, whereupon the elderly mining engineer took his daughter by the arm and led her persuasively from the room.

They had scarcely disappeared when the man known as Raspinoff was shown into the study. He proved to be a tall, bearded individual who carried himself with an air of authority.

Talbot making himself scarce and closing the door behind him, Burr rose to greet the newcomer heartily.

"Ah, your Excellency," he said, "I've been looking forward to this meeting for some time."

Raspinoff ignored Burr's proffered hand somewhat pointedly. He was a man whose striking countenance was marred by a pair of cunning eyes and an expression which suggested he might have a good deal in common with the American. But, as a member of the Russian aristocracy and the ambassadorial representative of his country in the province of California, he considered himself a person of quality.

And Burr was too obviously sprung from a lower social order. Even the pretentious nature of his surroundings, even the elegant clothes that he wore, could not disguise his boorish manners.

Without a word Count Raspinoff presented his credentials in the form of a document that bore the Imperial Russian seal. Then, with unconcealed hauteur, he looked at Burr inquiringly.

"Your message to my government stated that you had something of great importance to discuss," he remarked.

Burr nodded. He was alive to the cynical note of condescension in Raspinoff's tone, but he overlooked it because he required the man's aid.

"Your Excellency," he began, "we both know that certain countries would like to own California—your country, for instance, and the United States. We also know that the people of California are not altogether satisfied with their Mexican status, feeling, as they do, that the Mexican Government is sadly neglecting them."

He paused, and then went on speaking in a sly and crafty voice.

"The population of California is being swelled by immigrants," he continued. "Many come from the United States. A certain proportion are from your country. The great bulk of the people in Fort Russe, I understand, are of Cossack origin."

"Well?" queried Raspinoff.

"Naturally," Burr proceeded, "these new settlers from the United States and Russia have no loyalty to Mexico. But, apart from them, the very Spanish-speaking elements are discontented. In short, California is just about ripe for cutting adrift from the Mexican flag."

"And how does all this affect my government?"

Jason Burr drew a step nearer to the count.

"I hold an official appointment here under the Mexican Republic, although I was previously a U.S. citizen," Burr explained. "I could forget my oath of allegiance to that republic, and, with the backing of Imperial Russia, I could establish a colonial empire west of the Rocky Mountains."

"I see," Raspinoff murmured, "and what do you personally expect to gain?"

Jason Burr squared his heavy shoulders, and a look of ambition revealed itself in his villainous eyes.

"Dictatorship," he answered. "Dictatorship, under the protection of the Russian banner."

Count Raspinoff waved his hand negatively.

"I fully realise that California is a desirable territory," he said, "but under no circumstances would my country consider laying claim to it. Annexation would mean war with Mexico, and you may be sure that the United States would rise in arms against Russia as well. They would not take kindly to the existence of a Russian dependency on their frontier."

"I know my project might lead to war," Burr rejoined deliberately, "but Russia might think it well worth the risk—for a prize so great, for a land rich in gold. Yes, gold, your Excellency—gold mined from the sierras."

He indicated the nuggets that he had been examining prior to Raspinoff's arrival, and the count stared in awe at this evidence of unimagined wealth.

"Gold in California?" he exclaimed.

"Is this really true? But no, it can't be; otherwise the United States would have gone to greater lengths in their

attempts to separate this province from Mexico."

Jason Burr smiled a crooked smile. "You don't understand, count," he said. "Outside of me and my men, and now yourself, no one knows that gold has been discovered here."

Raspinoff was silent for a spell. He had regarded Burr with disdain. He had been scornful of his wild-sounding plan. But with gold in this country, would not the Russian Government be only too ready to lend an ear to this man's proposal, a dictatorship paying homage to none but the Czar?

"There is just one point you seem to have forgotten," he mused. "There are no troops here in California, but there is a detachment of U.S. cavalry just across the frontier, and at the first sign of any coup they would probably receive instructions to ride against you and nip this plan of yours in the bud."

Jason Burr grinned at him. "That detachment isn't strong enough to make me turn a hair. In any case, it left for Oregon to map out trails in that territory. So you can take it from me that by the time either the Mexican Government or the U.S. Government realised what was happening here my dictatorship would be firmly established."

Beckoning to the count, he led him across to a wall on which a huge map of California and its environs was suspended.

"Supposing we forget the Mexican Government," he continued. "Their name stinks throughout the province, and, in their present weak and vacillating condition, they wouldn't cause us much trouble anyway. That leaves us to reckon with the U.S., who could only send troops against us via the Ortega Pass. All right, here's the Ortega Pass—and right here is General Jason Burr. Give him men and munitions, and he'll hold that pass against the whole of Uncle Sam's army."

Raspinoff's eyes contracted thoughtfully.

"Yes," he muttered, "there are distinct possibilities in your plan. But I'm afraid your proposal that you should be furnished with Russian troops is out



The padre stooped beside the trap-door as the Eagle pushed it open, and he took from Don's hand the mask which the younger man made haste to peel off.

of the question. The Imperial Government would never consent to that."

"Not if they were made to realise that I stand ready to deliver them a very wealthy colony?"

Raspinoff shook his head, and then fingered his bearded chin.

"I cannot conceive them providing you with regular Russian troops, Burr. Yet an alternative has occurred to me. I could negotiate secretly with my Government, and, if they approved, I could arrange to furnish you with ex-soldiers from the Russian settlement at Fort Russe. From what I can see, they would probably be sufficient for your needs."

"How about guns and ammunition?" Burr asked eagerly.

"I could arrange that also—on condition that I profited by the deal. My estates in Russia are in none too healthy a condition—and, confidentially, I could use some of this gold which you say you have discovered."

Jason Burr leered at him. It amused him to hear this haughty aristocrat angling for a bribe, and sacrificing his pride in the process.

"I understand, Excellency," he rejoined. "At the moment, the output of gold isn't what I'd like it to be. But pretty soon I hope to recruit more labour, and when our hidden mine is being worked at full pressure I'll take you over it. Then you'll see for yourself that you can command any price you care to name—for your valuable assistance in this matter."

Reign of Terror

FOR some time past the Sonoma Valley had been agitated by the deeds of armed ruffians who had swept down on isolated hamlets and carried off groups of able-bodied peons, poor half-breed labourers who had been snatched from their homes and herded across the range to an unknown destination.

But, following Jason Burr's interview with Raspinoff, the activities of those raiders increased alarmingly. Not only hamlets, but villages and even small towns were assailed, and peasants and citizens were dragged out of their dwellings in ever-growing numbers.

Some resisted with violence, only to be shot down as an example to their fellows. A veritable reign of terror was instituted—inexplicable to the population of the valley, for none knew of Jason Burr's discovery of gold, and none knew that the wretches who were seized and spirited away were embarking upon a life of slavery in a secret mine.

A month after that intensive campaign had been launched, Senor Loring and his son Robert called on Father Jose and learned that San Antonio itself had been the scene of a visitation a few hours before their arrival there. And as the padre described how anguished men had been torn from their loved ones, and how he himself had been threatened with death when he had tried to interfere, the Lorings felt the blood run hot in their veins.

"Whoever these scoundrels are," the senor ground out, "the people of this valley must unite against them. Again and again I have advocated a Vigilante committee, and the time has come when such a step has got to be taken, otherwise no man will be safe."

Thus spoke Senor Loring, and a little while later, when he and his son Robert left San Antonio to ride homeward across their range, the question of forming a committee of defense occupied a prominent place in their conversation.

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They were still discussing the subject when, crossing a knoll in the distance, they suddenly espied three men cantering from a belt of chaparral about a quarter of a mile away, and at sight of them old Loring and his son altered their course to intercept them.

The three men were Count Raspinoff, Jason Burr and a fellow named Barson who was in the general's pay, and they were returning from a visit to the secret mine on the north-eastern fringe of the Loring property.

Senor Loring and Robert knew nothing of that mine. They only knew that Burr and his companions had no right to be riding over their range, and, resentful of the trespass of a man whom he had always disliked instinctively, old Loring accosted the general with an air of unmistakable annoyance.

"What are you doing on my land, Senor Burr?" he demanded, as he and Robert drew rein before the trio.

Burr regarded him coolly.

"Oh, just looking it over with the idea of making you an offer for it," he drawled.

"You know that not an acre of my rancho is for sale," old Loring retorted. "I have told you that more than once, and I shall be pleased if you will stay away from my property."

A baleful glint appeared momentarily in Jason Burr's eyes. He had reason to consider Loring as an obstacle in his path—not only because the senor's refusal to sell his land compelled the general to exercise a great many irksome precautions relating to the mine, but because Loring had given so much support to the idea of establishing a company of Vigilantes.

When Burr spoke, however, his tone revealed no hint of his innermost thoughts.

"I'm sorry you feel that way, Senor Loring," he murmured.

The rancher gave him a cold glance, and then, without another word, he turned to resume his homeward journey with Robert, and father and son had their backs to the three trespassers when Burr darted a meaning look at the man known as Barson.

It was a look which the general's hireling was quick to comprehend, and, inclining his head, he reached for his hip and drew out a revolver. Next instant the silence of the range was shattered by the blasts of two shots fired in swift succession, and before the cool breeze from the mountains had wafted away the blue gun-smoke, Senor Loring and his younger son lay stretched on the ground.

Barson moved forward to examine the bodies, and, reflecting on an afterthought that he might as well relieve them of any valuables, he rifled their pockets and ended his act of pilferage by taking the ring that Senor Loring had worn on the third finger of his left hand.

Meanwhile Count Raspinoff was looking on with raised eyebrows, but he offered no comment until Barson rejoined him and the general. Then the Russian addressed Burr thoughtfully.

"I see you have all the qualities of a dictator," he remarked with some dryness.

Jason Burr grinned, but said nothing, and a few seconds afterwards he and his companions were spurring from the scene; and they were no longer in view when the inert figures of Barson's victims were discovered by an Indian who had been in the Lorings' employ.

The Indian was a faithful servitor known as "Dark Feather," and no later than that same night he departed for the north to seek out Don Loring in

the wilds of Oregon and a quaint him with the tragic tidings of his father's and his brother's murder.

Dark Feather himself was familiar with the Oregon country, and, aware of the route Don had planned to take, he anticipated little difficulty in locating the Fremont expedition. Yet it was not until many days had elapsed that the Indian reappeared in the neighbourhood of San Antonio with Don Loring.

Those inseparable frontiersmen, Whipsaw and Salvation, arrived there as well, for when Captain Fremont had regretfully but unhesitatingly accepted Don's resignation from the expedition they had begged the cavalry officer to release them from their duties as well.

It was in Don's nature to make friends readily, but he had never won greater esteem than that with which Salvation and Whipsaw had come to regard him during their travels in Oregon. That was why they had been so eager to accompany him back to California, and on the evening of their return to the young fellow's birthplace they followed him like a couple of devoted bloodhounds when he elected to call on Father Jose at the mission in town.

Within the precincts of the chapel Don held a long consultation with the padre, and in the course of it the priest volunteered the opinion that the murder of Don's father and brother had been connected with the activities of the raiders who had been carrying off so many peons.

"As one of the leading men in the community of this valley," he said, "your father made no secret of the fact that he intended to organise armed resistance against these lawless ruffians. I am convinced that is why he and your brother were killed, my son."

Don Loring clenched his hands. Grief and rage were struggling for the mastery on his sunburned features.

"Padre mio," he told the priest brokenly, "I shall not rest until their deaths have been avenged."

"Think not of vengeance, my son," Father Jose answered slowly, "but rather of justice. And let me give you counsel, my son. All the forces of evil seem to be at work in our land, but no one knows who is really responsible, and therefore you must be very careful."

Don Loring was silent for a space. Then he directed a queer glance at the padre.

"Good Father," he said, "in the cause of vengeance or justice—call it what you will—I am going to fight fire with fire. And if at first I do not know the man who is behind these forces of evil, he and his satellites will alike be ignorant of my identity. But they will learn to dread my shadow, padre mio, for when I strike it will be with the swiftness of an eagle."

With the swiftness of an eagle. It was a phrase that was to take on a particular meaning in the days and weeks that ensued, for during that time a masked horseman garbed in black riding-kit made his advent in the Sonoma Valley—a horseman calling himself the Eagle and seemingly wedded to the purpose of frustrating the activities of the terrorists.

Few were aware that he was Don Loring. Few, indeed, could claim acquaintance with Don Loring, even in San Antonio, for because of his roving disposition in the past he was almost a stranger in his homeland.

But as the mysterious Eagle he became a personality whose deeds were the talk of the whole valley, since news of his prowess was spread far and wide



"The Eagle!" Burr shouted. "A thousand dollars in gold for the man who captures the Eagle!"

by groups of peons whom he rescued while they were being driven across the range as helpless captives.

Again and again parties of kidnappers were unexpectedly held up by him at the revolver's point and forced to release their convoys of humanity. Then, having come to know many of the slavers by sight, the Eagle began to intensify his campaign against them.

Wherever he encountered them, individual members of the gang were thrashed by him. And when he had beaten them into unconsciousness he would tie them to their ponies and attach some defiant missive to them, usually pinned to their shirts by an eagle's feather. He knew that sooner or later their horses would carry them home, and that the messages would be read by the unidentified leader of the organisation—with a chagrin which Don could only imagine.

Nor did Don's imagination play him false. If it had been possible for him to see that leader scanning one of his notes he would have enjoyed the expression of impotent fury on the man's countenance.

The fury of Jason Burr reached its peak, however, when he learned that a carriage driven by one of his hirelings had been stopped and examined by the Eagle, and had been relieved of a shipment of gold taken from the secret mine.

Don did not know that the gold had been obtained within the boundaries of his own property. For that matter, he was surprised to stumble upon a shipment of gold in California at all. But he commandeered it with alacrity, and handed it over to Father Jose for charitable purposes that same day.

Twenty-four hours later the Eagle was striking anew, this time at a party of three gangsters in charge of a dozen peons who had been taken from a village known as Corilia. Yet scarcely had Don intercepted the peasants'

captors and disarmed them than a formidable body of horsemen suddenly hove into view.

Don was quick to realise that the slave convoy had been used as a decoy, and he was equally prompt in showing a clean pair of heels to the band of riders who had been craftily following up that convoy in the hope that he would stop it and fall into a trap. But swiftly as he rode the troop of rogues clung to his trail determinedly, and they were only two or three hundred yards behind him when he at length gained the outskirts of San Antonio.

His objective was a ruined wing of the mission hall where Father Jose preached, and, parting company with his horse in the neighbourhood of that wing, he ducked into the ruins and shifted a fallen block of stone that concealed a hole in the ground.

Lowering himself into the aperture, Don eased the block of stone into place again. Then he stumbled through the gloom of a subterranean passage with which the padre had made him familiar, for the priest was naturally among those whom the Eagle had taken into his confidence.

The passage was linked with the main transept of the chapel, and ten seconds later the fugitive was thrusting up a trapdoor in the floor of the place of worship to find himself in the presence of Father Jose.

The padre stooped beside the trapdoor as the Eagle pushed it open, and he took from Don's hand the mask which the younger man made haste to peel off.

"They're after me, Father," Don said, smiling calmly. "But we'll fool them all right, never fear."

Climbing out of the underground passage he dropped the trapdoor into position and hurried over to a chest that was set against the wall. From this he removed a suit of grey clothes

such as a townsman of moderate means might wear, and he lost no time in donning them, over the black rig which he used in his rôle as the Eagle.

Meanwhile, he could hear his foes scouring through the debris of the ruined wing, but discovering no trace of their quarry there, they finally swarmed round to the front of the chapel and dismounted from their broncs to tramp into the building with a whirring of spurs.

By then Father Jose had disposed of the tell-tale mask that Don had relinquished, and Don himself was seated at an organ which he was apparently on the point of playing.

"We're lookin' for the Eagle," one of the intruders rapped out. "Where is he, sky-pilot? We trailed him this far."

The speaker was Barson, and although Don had never seen him before, yet he knew him almost at once as a man who had been concerned in the slaying of his father and brother. For there on Barson's hand was the ring that bore the Loring crest, with its motto of faithfulness and bravery.

It was as much as Don could do to restrain himself, but he kept a tight rein on his emotions and remained silent while the priest denied all knowledge of the Eagle. Barson, however, was not prepared to accept the priest's word that there was no one in the chapel but himself and the young man who was at the organ, and the outlaw instructed his comrades to search the entire mission.

The search was, of course, unavailing, and, thoroughly disgruntled, Barson and his associates eventually made their way from the building, with the padre accompanying them as far as the street and chiding them for having so rudely invaded the sanctuary of a holy place.

His reproaches fell upon deaf ears. Barson, in fact, suddenly turned on him, July 10th, 1937.

and from the interior of the church Don heard the ruffian's snarling voice. "Listen, sky-pilot, I reckon you know more about the Eagle than you'd care to admit. I reckon you an' that organist o' yours managed to smuggle lun outa reach afore we showed up. And in case I'm right, here's something that'll make you sorry you ever lent the coyote a helpin' hand."

There followed the sound of a whip's throng flailing through the air, and, starting to his feet, Don ran out of the chapel. But, fortunately for him perhaps, the crooks had mounted and were spurting away when he stumbled forth into the street.

Father Jose was lying on the ground, his body smarting from the weals inflicted by the two or three strokes that Barson had dealt him, and there was a black look on Don Loring's countenance as he raised the priest and helped him back into the mission.

It was a look that boded ill for the man known as Barson, though in very truth Barson had already been singled out for doom in the moment when Don had seen his father's ring on the black-guard's grimy hand.

In the Enemy's Stronghold

THAT same afternoon Barson was detailed to pin up a series of notices in various prominent positions in the neighbourhood of San Antonio, and it was an assignment that he carried out alone.

The notices indicated that General Burr wished to interview the man who called himself the Eagle, since he regarded the latter as a public benefactor and was anxious to support him in his campaign against lawlessness.

The contents of those bills were cunningly worded, and Burr had high hopes that the Eagle would be deceived by them. So had Barson, and having enthusiastically disposed of several of the notices, he was in the act of nailing the last one to a roadside tree about two miles from San Antonio when he was startled by a voice immediately behind him.

"That's a beautiful ring you're wearing, senor."

Barson swung round in his saddle to find himself confronted by a masked, black-clad figure who was covering him with a Colt. It was the figure of the Eagle, and the gangster realised that the mysterious rider must have crept up on him through some thickets nearby.

Barson glanced down at the ring to which the other had referred. Then, after a brief silence, the Eagle spoke again, indicating as he did so the notice which the outlaw had pinned up.

"General Burr," Don remarked. "Is he the same man whom people know as Jason Burr?"

"Yeah," Barson answered. "The most powerful hombre in the whole of California. You should be glad he wants to see yuh. He can do a lot for anybody that he's interested in."

Don appeared to consider the notice for a space.

"Very well," he said at length, "I'm ready to go to him. Will you take me to him?"

Barson replied in the affirmative with a little too much alacrity, and with a certain slyness playing in his eyes. Nor was that crafty gleam lost on Don Loring, although for that matter he had never had any intention of exposing himself to treachery.

He knew Barson's character, had sampled it at the mission where he had pretended to be a meek and innocent organ player. And it was now obvious

to him that Jason Burr must be the true leader of the organisation to which this thug belonged.

Nevertheless, Don allowed Barson to think that he had been duped by the general's offer, and though keeping a close watch on the gangster, he appeared to accompany him willingly enough across the range.

They rode side by side at a steady trot, Don mounted on the white pony that had formerly belonged to Salvation, and they had covered a distance of a good many miles when the younger man suddenly drew rein.

"We're pretty close to Burr's place, now, aren't we?" he asked.

"Yeah," Barson rejoined. "It lies just beyond the ridge there."

"Good enough," Don said. "You will now change clothes with me, my friend. You see, I have a little more sense than you gave me credit for." He was still handling the gun with which he had covered Barson at the outset, and at the first sign of defiance he threatened the rogue with it. Then, giving him the choice of obeying his instructions or dying like a dog, he compelled the man to dismount and strip to his underwear.

A minute or two later they had exchanged clothes, and when Barson had rigged himself out in the garb of the Eagle, Don addressed him significantly.

"You will now ride over the ridge and make straight for Burr's hacienda," he stated. "I want to know what kind of a welcome the Eagle might expect there. And remember, keep going forward, for my revolver will be trained on you."

Barson was white to the lips. He tried to expostulate, and his whole manner told Don that he anticipated disaster. But the last of the Loring was in no mood to show mercy to the scoundrel who had murdered his father and brother.

Barson was forced onward. He crossed the ridge and came within view of the stronghold by the Yuba river. Then his approaching figure, clad in the unmistakable attire of the Eagle, was sighted by a look-out, and in a moment the gateway and the walls of Jason Burr's forbidding residence had become alive with armed men.

A volley rang out, and Barson's lifeless body pitched to the dust, riddled with bullets. And as the crook's inert form rolled over the ground Don Loring veered off to return in the direction of San Antonio, picturing as he rode the expressions that would dawn on the faces of Barson's killers when they hurried out to discover that they had butchered one of their own cronies.

It was no inexcusable vindictiveness that had caused Don to send Barson to his death. The man had met a fate which he had richly deserved, and well might Don permit himself a feeling of satisfaction now. Justice had been done, and, without soiling his own hands, he had seen his father and his brother avenged.

More, he had learned the identity of the arch-rogue who was responsible for the misery that had been inflicted on the people of the Sonoma Valley; and in the course of the following week Don Loring concentrated his activities in the immediate vicinity of Burr's headquarters.

He gleaned a good deal of information by keeping a secret watch on the stronghold. He discovered, for instance, that a man and a girl were being held there as virtual prisoners, and from subsequent inquiries in San Antonio he heard that Burr was supposed to be entertaining an

American mining engineer named Colton, together with the latter's daughter.

Likewise in San Antonio he gained secondhand knowledge of the interior of Burr's residence from a master carpenter who had recently been engaged in carrying out repairs there.

Then one morning Don proceeded to put into execution a scheme that he had in mind.

It was a plan which necessitated some slight assistance from Salvation and Whipsaw, who were completely in Don's confidence, and who had frequently expressed a desire to aid him, although hitherto he had refused to let them undertake any risks on his behalf.

Their help even now was of a minor character. They rode with him until they were almost in sight of Burr's stronghold. Then Don climbed down off his horse and transferred himself to the saddle of a flea-bitten mule that they had fetched along with them.

"Now tie me up just as I told you," he said to Whipsaw and Salvation. "And don't forget to fix that note to my clothes."

The clothes which he was wearing, incidentally, were those which he had donned as the supposed organist of Father Jose's chapel; and the note to which he had made reference was one purporting to be from the Eagle, advising Burr that he, the Eagle, would pay him a visit ere long.

In silence Whipsaw and Salvation carried out Don's instructions. Then the last-named volunteered a comment.

"You know you're takin' an awful chance," he muttered. "The rat that murdered your father an' your brother has been knocked off. Ain't you satisfied?"

"No," Don answered. "There's more behind this than I thought. But don't worry—I know what I'm doing. Leave my horse in the thickets by the river. I'll pick him up there when I want him."

With that he kicked his heels into the flanks of the mule astride which he now sat, and not long afterwards he might have been seen approaching the main gateway of Jason Burr's stronghold, where he was promptly seized by two or three men posted on guard at the entrance.

He was escorted through to the courtyard, and Burr himself happening to emerge from his quarters at that moment, the note affixed to Don's clothes was soon in the general's possession.

He read it through while one of his hirelings was untying Don. Then he looked at the young fellow through narrowed lids.

"How does it happen that the Eagle has selected you to deliver this message?" he demanded.

"I—I don't know, senor," Don faltered with an assumed nervousness of tone. "I'm a poor musician—the organist at the chapel in San Antonio—"

He was interrupted just then by a drumming of hoofs, and all at once he was amazed to see a squadron of men in the picturesque uniform of Russian Cossacks entering the gateway—men armed to the teeth, and led by a hatchet-faced individual who made straight for Burr and saluted him smartly.

"You are the general, I presume," the Muscovite announced in very fair English. "I am Boris Petroff, reporting to you with volunteers from Fort Russe in accordance with the orders of Count Raspinoff."

Jason Burr nodded.

(Continued in page 27)

Because she happens to be present when a murder is committed by a notorious crook, Polly Dunlop is afraid for her own life and flees from New York. She is befriended by a young reporter, but the crook's hirelings eventually track her down—with sensational consequences. A thriller distinctly out of the ordinary, starring Mary Astor and Charles Quigley



LADY FROM NOWHERE

The Man in Nine-sixteen

AT her own little table, in a corner of the busy barber's shop adjoining the lobby of the Courtland Hotel, Fifth Avenue, auburn-haired Polly Dunlop was putting away the tools of her trade, believing that she had completed the last manicure for the day, when a telephone-bell rang and Mabel Donner, second manicurist on the hotel staff, sped to an adjacent wall instrument.

"Barber's shop," she said into the transmitter, and then: "Nine-sixteen? Yes, sir. No, I'm sorry, she's just going off duty. Oh, all right, I'll tell her. Thank you."

Polly rose from her table, tucked her manicure-case under her arm, and walked over to the colleague who was also a chum.

"Nine-sixteen wants a manicure?" she inquired.

Mabel Donner nodded, hanging up the receiver.

"He says if you don't mind working overtime."

"Mind?" Polly laughed. "He's the one that gave me that ten-dollar tip the other day! If I'm not mistaken, the man in nine-sixteen has that certain indefinable something called a solid bank account. See you at the flat, Mabel."

"I'll keep your dinner warm."

Nine hundred and sixteen was the number of a small suite, comprising sitting-room, bed-room and bath-room, on the eighteenth floor of the hotel, and, according to the register, the present occupant of the suite was Alfred Brewster. Such, however, was not the occupant's real name, but only one of many names he had used in the

course of a very chequered career. In police records he figured as Al Lustig, a racketeer and a crook.

He was a very tall man and a powerfully built one, somewhere in the early thirties; a red-headed giant who might have been fairly good-looking but for the fact that his evil ways had left their mark upon his clean-shaven face.

He had just changed into evening clothes when he telephoned down to the barber's shop, and with him in the sitting-room was a bulbous-eyed member of his gang, Mike Dugan, who looked something like a pugilist but was alleged to be a valet.

Mike Dugan was scared, and, in his own way, he confessed it to Al Lustig. "You know, boss, I'm worried," he said.

"What have you got to worry with?" jeered his employer, ripping undone a dress-bow he had failed to tie properly.

"Well, maybe I ain't got a trigger brain like you got," said Mike, "but I know Fletcher, and I know he ain't gonna take this slap lying down."

"I'm letting Fletcher off easy," returned Lustig with an impatient flip of his left hand. "He's helped himself to plenty off of me."

"Yeah. I know, but you got to be careful, because as long as Fletcher's on the loose he's gonna make trouble."

"Let me do the worrying! Relax, Mike, and give me a hand with this bow."

The bow was being adjusted when there came a knock at the door.

"Come in!" shouted Lustig, and Polly Dunlop stepped into the room with her manicure-case, a vision of beauty even in the white uniform-

overall she had to wear for her work.

"Oh, excuse me," she murmured. "That's all right," said Lustig. "My valet, here, was just leaving."

He whisked up a soft felt hat from a chair and thrust it upon Mike's head. "You've got the night off, Mike," he said. "Go take a nice long trolley ride some place."

The alleged valet went off like a lamb, and Lustig helped himself to a glass of wine at a sideboard.

"Thanks for coming up," he said, turning to Polly.

"Didn't I give you a manicure only a few days ago?" she asked, opening her case on a little low table.

"Yes," he replied, "that's why I asked them to send you again."

"Been biting your nails?"

"No, not exactly," he laughed.

"Just didn't want to eat alone. I thought you might have dinner with me."

As a manicurist she very often received invitations which did not appeal to her, and she had her own way of dealing with them.

"Oh, I'm sorry," she said, "but I have a date. I'm going to the fight to-night with my uncle. He's just got in from Syracuse, and—"

"Now, wait a minute!" Lustig interrupted, not in the least bit deceived. "You don't really want to go to any fights, and I'm the kind of guy who'd do anything to keep from eating alone."

"Well, there's a nice crowd in the coffee-room downstairs," she informed him.

"I don't like crowds. In fact, I'm particular who I have dinner with."

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"I'm very flattered." She moved towards a telephone on the sideboard. "If we're having dinner, what about food?"

"Tell 'em to send up a waiter," he replied expansively. "Order anything you want."

The telephone was removed from its plunger and a girl at a switchboard down in the lobby answered the call.

"Oh, hallo, Maisie!" said Polly. "This is Polly. If I'm not out of here by eight o'clock, send for me."

Lustig seemed to be amused rather than offended.

"Now just give the Marines a ring," he suggested, "and we'll be all set."

"That's right," Polly said to the girl at the switchboard. "Now give me room service, dear."

Room service was connected, and Polly looked over her shoulder at her very determined host.

"What would you like?" she asked.

"Oh, a steak, I guess," he decided.

"This is nine-sixteen," she said into the telephone. "Two steak dinners. No, no potatoes—just the spinach, and salad, and coffee. That's right, thank you."

She replaced the telephone.

"How was that?" she asked smilingly.

"The spinach has me worried."

"Wait until you see it! I can get a better meal with a telephone than mother ever could with a stove!"

The door from the corridor was opened, and a thin and ugly man slipped almost furtively into the room. His cheeks were sunken, his lips were thick, and the expression in his eyes caused Polly's heart to miss a beat.

"Hallo, Al!" he said, closing the door.

"Hallo, Fletcher!" drawled Lustig. "Nice of you to drop in this way."

"Don't kid me." The intruder stalked across the carpet. "They told me you were out of town."

"If I'm in the way, or anything," faltered Polly, "I can—"

"Mr. Fletcher and I have a little business to talk over, if you don't mind," said Lustig, and he jerked a thumb in the direction of the door that had just been closed.

But Fletcher immediately barred the way.

"Oh, no, Lustig," he rapped, "your friend stays here! I'm taking no chances on her telling the boys I paid you a call. I'm not going to let you get away with anything. I know all about you and your rackets, Lustig!"

Polly heard that name with horror; she had seen it in the papers in connection with all sorts of crimes.

"Don't you think you're trying to cover an awful lot of ground?" sneered its owner.

"No," Fletcher retorted, "and I'm offering you a good business proposition. For ten thousand dollars I can go far away and keep my mouth shut."

"I know a better way of keeping your mouth shut," said Lustig.

"But you won't have a chance to use it!" Fletcher dived over to the sideboard and grabbed up the telephone.

"Put that down!"

"Not unless you see this thing my way," defied Fletcher. "The D.A. will have a dozen men here in ten minutes, and then we can all sit down and talk."

"All right, you win this round, You'll get your ten grand. But show your face around this town again, and I'll help to carry the coffin!"

Fletcher put down the telephone. With a complete change of expression he went back to Lustig.

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"You know I'll keep my word, Al," he said. "All I want is the cash, and you'll never see me again."

"I've got the money right here." Lustig tapped the left side of his dinner jacket.

"I knew you and I could get together," exulted Fletcher. "I'm going to take a little trip, maybe to the coast."

Lustig reached a hand into his jacket, but it was not money that he produced from a pocket there; it was an ugly automatic.

"When you get there," he drawled, "write me a little post card and tell me how you're doing."

Polly screamed and flew into the bedroom with the sound of a shot in her ears. She saw Fletcher fall dead as she turned to slam the door, and she rushed to another one that gave access to the corridor.

Her one idea was to escape, and though she was trembling all over, fear gave her strength. She reached the stairs and stumbled down them, floor after floor, till she found herself in the basement, then made her way past the kitchens to stone steps that led up to the employees' entrance. Mounting the steps, she rushed out past a staring timekeeper into a wide alleyway, through which she went more slowly to the street.

Up in the room she had left behind, Al Lustig looked down at the man he had killed for several seconds before he put the automatic back in his pocket. Then, with a shrug of broad shoulders, he darted into the bedroom. The door into the corridor was wide open, and he knew that the girl must have escaped that way. He kicked the door shut and went into the bathroom, and in the bath-room he opened a window.

Outside was a fire-escape, a ladder-way of steel attached to the wall of the hotel, and, without the slightest hesitation, he climbed over the sill on to it and began to descend.

Polly Runs Away

POLLY and Mabel Donner lived together in a little three-roomed flat in East Eighteenth Street; and Mabel had reached home, and was about to prepare the evening meal for herself and her chum, when a frantic banging at the front door sent her running to it from the kitchen.

Polly staggered past her into the living-room, bare-headed, and almost as white as the overall she was wearing. She looked as though she had seen several ghosts.

"Why, Polly, what's wrong?" Mabel exclaimed.

"Oh, something terrible has happened!" was the breathless reply. "D'you know who it was in nine-sixteen?"

"Yes, a man named Brewster."

"No, that's not his real name. He's Al Lustig!"

"Lustig? What, the crook?"

"Yes, and he's just killed a man! Some fellow came in, and there was an argument, and Lustig shot him!"

"Who was it?" Mabel closed the door. "Who did he shoot?"

"Oh, his name was Fletcher, or something. I'd better call the police, hadn't I?"

"Are you crazy? D'you know what it means to be the only witness against a guy like Lustig? You're going to pack up and get out of town as fast as you can!"

"But, Mabel, I didn't have anything to do with it!" Polly protested.

Mabel swept her off into the bedroom.

"If you stick around," he said, "the police will make you testify, and Lustig won't waste a second getting rid of you. He'd have to, to save himself from the electric chair!"

Polly took off the overall that covered her own plaid frock.

"But where can I go?" she asked bleakly.

"Any place. The quicker the better." Mabel got out a suitcase, opened it on the bed, and proceeded to collect her chum's wearing apparel from a wardrobe and a dressing-chest.

"Oh, I left my hat and coat at the shop!" exclaimed Polly.

"Wear mine."

Polly put on a hat that was thrust upon her, and then a dark coat. The suitcase was packed and fastened, and she remembered that she had left her handbag at the shop.

"I haven't any money!" she cried.

"I have!" Mabel got her purse and opened it. "There's fifteen dollars here—take it. Write me and I'll send you some more. Oh, honey, get off somewhere out of town quick! And for the love of Mike don't talk to anybody!"

"Mabel, you're an angel!" Polly declared gratefully. But Mabel bundled her off to the front door.

"Good-bye, honey," she said. "Good luck!"

The Grand Central Station was not very far from the flat, and Polly was in a train travelling across the State of Connecticut when Mike Dugan returned to the Courtland Hotel—and walked right into the arms of the police.

He was taken down to headquarters, and there the Commissioner of Police dealt with him in person after several plain-clothes men had failed to obtain any useful information from him.

"Why did Lustig kill Fletcher, Mike?" the Commissioner asked in quite a friendly way.

"Aw, Commissioner, you got Al all wrong," declared the thick-lipped henchman. "Why, he and Ed Fletcher were just like brothers."

"Like Cain and Abel," suggested the Commissioner with sarcasm.

"Yeah, that's right," agreed the innocent.

"Where were you when Fletcher was shot?"

"Who, me? Why, I was on a West-side trolley."

"What were you doing on a trolley-car?"

"Just sitting, riding around and enjoying myself, Commissioner."

"Of all the phoney alibis!" fumed the Commissioner.

"No, that's on the level," expostulated Mike. "Why, the conductor will remember me, because we had an argument. He thought I tried to gyp him out of a nickel, and you know I wouldn't do a thing like that."

The Commissioner knew nothing of the kind, but he judged it likely that there had been an argument with a conductor and that the alibi was a sound one.

"Where's Lustig now?" he demanded, gripping Mike by the shoulder.

"Oh, I ain't seen him," was the glib but unconvincing reply. "I think he's out o' town on business, 'cause one o' the boys was telling me—"

"Where's the girl—the manicurist?"

"The girl?" Mike's face was a blank. "I don't know nothing about no girl."

The Commissioner turned with an air of disgust to a uniformed policeman at the door.

"All right, all right; get rid of him!" he said.

Mike was marched out from the

room and set at liberty, but two plain-clothes men remained with the Commissioner, who dropped into a chair at a desk.

"Well, boys," he said with gloom, "we're starting from scratch. That gorilla, Mike Dugan, knows more about Lustig than he's willing to tell, but it's more than just getting the man who killed Fletcher. We won't be able to convict Lustig, or even hold him, unless we find that manicurist, Polly Dunlop. Lustig's always had an alibi. He's chiselled out of every rap we've ever pinned on him. But this time, if we get the girl, we've got him! She must have been an eye-witness, and her testimony will send him to the chair. We've got to find that girl!"

In one of his numerous hideaways, a flat in a mean street over in Jersey City, Al Lustig uttered those last six words about an hour after the Commissioner had uttered them. He was sitting at a table, in a room not at all badly furnished, and three members of the gang he ruled were with him. Mike was one of them.

"We've got to find that girl!" declared the crook emphatically. "So far, she's playing dead, but we can't take any chances. If she decides to talk, and the cops pick her up like they did Mike, here, it's my finish. We've got to find her first!"

He turned to two of the men, who were standing on his left.

"I want you, Frankie," he said, "and you, Nick, to cover the hotel she worked at. Talk to the bell-boys and the people in the barber's shop—somebody there might give you a lead."

He looked across at Mike, who was sprawling in an easy-chair.

"I want you to find out where she lives and get a line on her. See if she's got any sweethearts or relatives out of town she might write to. Maybe she's hopped to a relative somewhere."

He waved his hand towards the door.

"Now step on it, boys, and remem-

ber they've got two strikes on me as long as that dame's alive! Now get going!"

Polly had taken a ticket to Hartford, the capital of Connecticut, not because she knew anything about that city, but because the next train out from the Grand Central Station was bound for it. The first stop was at New Rochelle, and there a middle-aged woman entered the carriage in which Polly was seated near a window and sat down beside her with an evening paper in her hand.

Polly turned her head away and appeared to be interested in a fleeting landscape, enveloped in darkness. The woman read for a while, but suddenly exclaimed:

"My, isn't it the limit the way that girl's run away!"

Polly looked round in alarm.

"What girl?" she asked faintly.

"That one." The paper was held towards her and a gloved finger pointed. "Dorothy Barnes. The idea! A rich girl like that running away from school all because of some silly love affair, and worrying her people half to death. Don't you think she ought to have better sense?"

Polly repressed a sigh of relief and glanced at the paper.

"Yes," she murmured.

"Don't it beat all, the way young people carry on nowadays? The police have had plenty of time to find her—I suppose she's married that prince of hers. I'll guarantee he only wants her for her money."

"Yes," Polly started to rise. "Now if you'll excuse me I think I'll—"

She broke off abruptly, and her brown eyes widened. A young man whose hands she had manicured that evening, and who was one of her numerous unwanted admirers, had entered the carriage from an adjoining one and was advancing towards the conductor.

"How are you there, brother?" boomed the young man. "How long before we get into Norwalk?"

"About an hour," the conductor replied.

"What time is it now?"

The conductor consulted his watch and replied that it was eight-twenty.

"Thanks, pal." The young man dropped into a seat quite close to the stool on which the conductor was perched, and Polly sat down again.

"I thought you were leaving?" said the middle-aged woman.

"Well—er—I thought I'd like to hear more about the Barnes girl," said Polly, and saw that the paper had been turned inside out. "Is that the story?"

"Yes," nodded the woman, "it's continued from page one. Here, read it for yourself."

Polly thanked her, took the paper, and appeared to become immersed in the story of Dorothy Barnes, who had run away from college to marry a foreign prince, to the intense annoyance of a millionaire father who was offering a reward to anyone who found her before she had taken the fatal step.

The young man who had asked about Norwalk took out a watch and wound it. He said to the conductor in a voice loud enough for everyone in the carriage to hear:

"You know, I never can remember to wind this thing. It's a swell watch, too. The company gave it to me last year for my sales record."

Polly did not look round, but she was badly disturbed. She felt certain that if she remained on the train the young man would catch sight of her before Norwalk was reached.

Five long minutes elapsed, and then the train steamed into a station and came to a full stop. The conductor rose from his stool.

"Clearview Junction," he shouted for the benefit of the passengers. "Ten minutes."

The young man stood up.

"Well, I guess a little hamburger would kind of hit the spot," he proclaimed. "How about you, brother? Going to feed the inner man?"



Lustig reached a hand into his jacket, but it was not money that he produced from a pocket there—it was an ugly automatic.

An elderly male passenger thus addressed shook his head.

"No, thanks," he said.

"You know opportunity only knocks once. Make hay while the train stops, that's my motto."

The young man went off to the door and disappeared; the middle-aged woman beside Polly followed him. Presumably they had both gone off to the refreshment-room. Polly gave them a couple of minutes to reach it, then took down her suitcase from the rack above her head and left the train.

A Friend in Need

CLEARVIEW JUNCTION had been built not so much for the convenience of people who lived in Clearview as for the convenience of the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad Company. All manner of lines converged upon it, but the unimportant little town was nowhere near it.

Polly discovered this fact after she had surrendered her ticket and walked but from the station. She found herself in a dark lane, fringed with trees, and with not a lamp to light the way in either direction.

She went back into the station and asked an aged porter the nearest way to the nearest town.

"You just turn to the left, missie," was the reply, "and keep on till you get to it. Clearview is its name, but it's a tidy step, especially in them sort o' shoes you're wearin'. Maybe if you was to use the 'phone in the bookin'-office old Ike Merrivale might come and collect you with his cab."

"I'll walk," decided Polly.

There was a faint suggestion of a moon behind the clouds that covered the sky, and the darkness of the lane did not seem so intense after she had covered half a mile. But the suitcase became heavier, and high heels were not suited to ruts and pot-holes.

She was trudging wearily along the lane that seemed to have no turning and no end when the headlights of a car behind her caused her to stop and to turn. An open two-seater caught up with her, and at its wheel was a bareheaded young man, who immediately braked and waved a hand.

"I've got a lot of room in here," he said invitingly.

"No, thank you." With her head in the air she walked on past the car. But the car caught up with her almost immediately.

"I'm going into Clearview," the young man informed her. "I'll give you a lift."

"Thanks again," she returned stiffly. "I can walk."

Once more she preceded the car for a little way, but it caught up again and was slowed down to keep her company.

"You certainly can," said the persistent young man. "It's only eight miles. Of course, the one snag is that there aren't any signs on these roads, and this lane opens out into another one directly."

"I'll find my way," said Polly.

"All right," he nodded. "Make sure you take the left-hand turn when you hit Barrett's swamp. It looks kind of ghostly and haunted."

She looked across at him.

"You're not trying to scare me, are you?"

"Oh, no." He shook his head. "It's not really haunted. There's nothing to get scared about—except snakes."

"Snakes?" she gasped.

"Yes."

"Oh!"

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That was the end of her resistance. She was terrified of snakes, knew nothing about their nocturnal habits, and had noticed that he was attractively good-looking. She liked his smile as he opened the door of the two-seater for her, and she liked his mop of very dark and very wavy hair.

He jumped down to relieve her of the suitcase, which he stowed in the dicky, and he helped her up into a seat which seemed to her to be singularly comfortable.

"Are you going to stay in Clearview for a while?" he inquired as he drove on along the lane.

"I don't know," she replied slowly.

"I—I came up here for my health."

"Well, you'll like it here. Great climate—nice and dry."

"That's just what I need."

"You'll like the people, too. Know any of 'em?"

"Not a soul," she confessed.

"Then how did you happen to pick out Clearview?"

"Well," she hesitated, "I—I didn't pick it out exactly. All the doctor told me was that I was to get out of the city, and that he thought the country up here might help."

The end of the lane had been reached. He swung the two-seater to the left into a wider thoroughfare, and at that moment the clouds parted and the moon shone down upon them.

"You're not kidding me," he said.

"No doctor sent you up to Clearview. You see, I happen to be a reporter. It's even money I know all about you."

That gave her a jolt, but she tried not to show her dismay.

"You're a reporter?"

"Yes," he replied. "'Clearview Clarion.' I'm the whole staff. I've talked to dozens of girls like you. Even wrote a story about 'em."

"Dozens like me?" She didn't like that. "I'm unique."

"Maybe. But not a week passes that some girl down on her luck doesn't go through Clearview, working her way to the city in search of a job. Isn't that what you're doing?"

She decided to let him think so.

"Well, you can't blame a girl for trying to keep a secret," she said evasively.

"Oh, it's nothing to be ashamed of," he assured her. "We're all just looking for a chance to make good, aren't we?"

"That's it."

"It's the same with you as it is with me. Being chief cook and bottle-washer on a four-page weekly isn't much. But then there's the 'New York Express.'"

"Oh, you work for the 'Express,' too?"

"Well, not steady," he admitted.

"You see, there's not enough news happens around here. But one of these days a big story will walk into Clearview, and when it does I'll be able to go to the 'Express' and hold 'em up for a regular job."

They were descending a hill into a hollow that looked all misty in the moonlight. Barrett's swamp, she presumed.

"Well, I hope your chance comes, and that you get your big job real soon," she said.

"Thanks. Here comes hoping for both of us."

The two-seater whizzed down into the mist, swung round a corner on two wheels, and began to climb again upon a real road.

"Say, would you like to stay in Clearview for a while if you could make a living?" he inquired.

"I like everything you've told me about it so far."

"I might be able to get you a job."

"Really?"

"Yes, I think I can fix it. Do you mind being a waitress?"

She shook her head.

"It's not that I mind," she said. "But I've never waited on tables before."

"Oh, I didn't say anything about waiting on tables—I said being a waitress. No tables in Alec's diner. He's looking for a girl, because the one he had got married last week. I'll talk to Alec about it, if you like."

"It would be awfully nice of you to take all that trouble over a stranger."

"Aw, that's nothing," he responded.

"You can arrange about a room at the Union Hotel, and then I'll have a talk with Alec. He's a Greek, you know, but he's a good chap."

Polly liked what she saw of Clearview that night, and she liked the old-fashioned Union Hotel, which stood on a corner of Market Square. She booked a top-floor room, without board, for a ridiculously small sum, and she had only just made herself at home in it when the young man of the two-seater called for her.

His name, she had learned, was Earl Daniels, and he had proved a very good friend in need, for he wanted to take her straight round to the Greek of whom he had spoken.

She went with him across the square into Main Street, and they mounted wooden steps outside a quaint little restaurant labelled "Alec's Diner."

There were no tables in the place, but there was a long counter at which several customers were perched on stools. Behind the counter hovered an elderly man with very black brows, very bright eyes, and a bald pate from each side of which tufts of black hair sprouted.

He was the bulky proprietor of the establishment, Alexander Scorzo, and he viewed Polly with obvious approval, then motioned to her companion to conduct her to a room at the far end of the counter.

There she was interviewed, gave the name of Mary Jones, and was engaged on the spot without any mention whatever of references, her duties to commence next morning.

Having worked as a manicurist in a fashionable New York hotel for several years, Polly found it easy enough to serve behind a counter. She found favour with the customers, all of them males and many of them quaint characters, and her employer expressed himself to Earl as being more than satisfied with her.

Earl dropped in quite frequently for a cup of coffee and a chat during the next four days, and friendship ripened between him and Polly.

On the Friday evening he had just climbed on to his favourite stool when an old farmer walked up to him with an air of importance.

"Oh, say, Earl, I got a piece for that there paper o' yours," he announced.

"You have?" Earl stewed round on the stool. "Well, what happened?"

"A sow and three sucking pigs broke out o' my pig-pen this afternoon. We're still lookin' for 'em."

"Thanks for the scoop," laughed Earl. "That ought to make page one."

"Oh, that's all right." The imparter of news went out from the restaurant, doubtless to renew his search for the wandering sow and its offspring.

"Escape from pen stirs countryside," Earl said dryly to Polly, as though quoting a headline.

"Will you get out an extra," she

inquired, "or do you think it will hold until next week's edition?"

Earl waggled an admonitory finger at her.

"Say, those runaway hogs and the strawberry festival to-morrow night are my big stories for the week." He opened out a newspaper he had taken from his pocket. "Ah well," he sighed. "I guess we can't all have murders and robberies like the 'New York Express.'"

"Well, that's one thing to be thankful for." Polly glanced left and right, saw that no customer was in immediate need of service, and proceeded to wipe the glass-covered top of the counter. "Is there anything exciting in the paper to-day?" she presently inquired.

"Well," said Earl, "the police haven't caught up with that fellow Lustig yet."

"Really?" She wished they had, but disliked the subject. "Anything else?"

"There's an article about that Barnes girl who's still missing. Now there's a young lady I'd like to run into. She'd make a great story."

"She's probably very nice," said Polly.

"As far as she herself is concerned," he retorted, "I'd like to take a hair-brush to her."

"Why?" asked Polly.

"Because she stands for everything that's wrong. Her father's given her all a girl could want, but now because he doesn't see fit to buy her a title or let her marry that prince she ups and runs out on him."

"Well, she knows what she wants and goes after it," said Polly, warm in defence of a member of her own sex. "I admire her."

"Admire her?" snorted Earl. "How can you admire a spoiled, selfish, money-drunk little debutante?"

"Because she's got a mind of her own."

"Mind?" Earl brought his fist down upon the counter in such a fashion that the cup of coffee with which Polly had just presented him almost danced upon the edge of it. "All she's got is a couple o' millions."

Polly took away the cup and saucer, emptied spilled coffee from the saucer into a sink and refilled the cup from a tall urn. Earl grinned sheepishly.

"This is getting to be a real family fight," he remarked. "We're almost breaking up the chinaware."

"And of all things over Dorothy Barnes' millions," said Polly, setting the replenished cup before him in its saucer. "Which reminds me that I got paid to-day."

"Well, I'm glad to hear Alec is paying you something."

Alec had just walked up to their end of the counter.

"Sure," said he in his curiously clipped English, "I always pay with plenty cash, and the waitress got to sling the hash." He struck an attitude, fancying himself as a poet in a language that was none too familiar to him. "How's that?"

"I should have warned you about this before you took the job," Earl said to Polly, with a grimace.

"Well, it's your own fault," retorted Alec. "You teach me the English, I make the poem. Me, I got brains!"

"I suppose you'll be blowing your salary on an ermine wrap?" Earl suggested facetiously to Polly.

"No, that comes next week," she laughed. "This one goes to pay a debt I owe in New York. Will you mail it for me?"

"Sure." Earl pocketed a sealed and stamped envelope she took from a shelf and handed to him. "How would you like to go to a good old-fashioned strawberry festival to-morrow night?"

"Oh, I—" She looked doubtfully at her employer's broad back, but he immediately turned to say:

"Anything Earl wants. There is workings every day, sometimes peoples gotta play. It's a good idea."

"Fine," said Earl. "Is it a date?"

"Yes," said Polly.

"I'll call for you at seven-thirty."

"That'll be splendid. Don't forget to mail my letter."

"Glad you reminded me." Earl drank his coffee and paid for it. "I'll mail it right away."

On the Trail

IN the living-room of the little three-roomed flat in East Eighteenth Street, New York City, Mabel Donner was ironing a gaily patterned frock on the following Sunday morning when there arose a persistent banging at the door.

She put down the electric iron she was using.

"All right, I'm coming," she called out as she crossed the room. "Or do you want to play knock-knock?"

She opened the door and with indignant eyes regarded the unattractive features of Mike Dugan, an utter stranger to her.

"Good-morning," he said cheerfully.

"What's good about it?" she snapped.

"I don't want to see any more reporters, and I don't like cops! Go away!"

Instead of obeying, Mike squeezed past her into the room.

"Aw, now wait a minute," he said. "I ask you, is that nice? I come up here to give you a hundred dollars and you start insulting me."

"A hundred dollars?" Mabel stared at him.

"Sure, I got it right here."

"Mister, I'd manure an elephant for a hundred dollars! Who do I have to kill?"

"You don't have to kill anyone," he laughed. "I work for Kramer, over on Sixth Avenue, the bookie. He was over to the hotel you work at about a week or ten days ago, and he made a five dollar bet with your room-mate. Ah, what's her name?"

"You mean Polly Dunlop?"

"Yeah."

"She never bet on anything in her life."

Mike shrugged his shoulders and produced a hundred dollars in notes.

"Well, she bet on Flyaway," he stated, "and Kramer has to pay her out at twenty to one, and here's the dough."

Mabel held out a hand.

"She can certainly use that," she said.

The notes were withheld.

"Ah, but I have to give it to her personal," said Mike. "She has to sign the slip. Where is she?"

"Well, she's out of town for a little while. But it's all right—you can give it to me. I'm her best friend."

"We can't do it like that," scoffed Mike. "You give me her address, and it'll be mailed to her. You see, the boss has a rep to keep up. Honest John Kramer always pays off, but we can't go running around paying out money to people we don't know. Come on, are you gonna give me that address, girl? Hi, what's the matter with you?"

An ominous odour had sent Mabel scurrying across to the ironing-board.

She had omitted to switch off the current, and the electric iron was doing its worst.

"My dress!" she cried in dismay, snatching up the iron. "It's ruined; My best print dress, and I've only worn it a couple of times. Oh, gee, I would be Scotch and try to save a nickel! Four dollars, ninety-five cents lost."

Mike viewed the damaged dress without any sympathy whatever.

"Yeah, and you've lost your girl friend a hundred bucks," he said, "if you don't come across with that address."

"But I don't know her address!" Mabel shouted at him.

"Well, that's her tough luck, picking 'em right and not getting paid for it." Mike drifted towards the door, and on a table near the door he caught sight of an envelope which had been through the post.

Mabel had switched off the current, put down the iron, and picked up the badly scorched frock. The envelope vanished into a pocket and the door was opened.

"I could get it to her," Mabel turned to say. "Couldn't you stretch a point?"

"Honest John Kramer stretches no points, sister," Mike responded over his shoulder. "I'll be seeing you."

"You mug!" she shouted after him as he went out.

Mike made straight for Al Lustig's hideaway in Jersey City and handed him the envelope. The two men known as Frankie and Nick were present, and they listened with amusement to the story Mike had to tell; but Lustig took some notes from the envelope and threw the envelope on a table.

"Fifteen dollars," he said disgustedly. "That's all there is—and no letter."

"Probably she tore the letter up," suggested Frankie, a thickest but undersized man whose surname was Haines—according to police records.

Nick Morton had picked up the envelope.

"This is from Clearview, Al," he said, as though he had made an important discovery. "That's the postmark on it."

"I saw that," growled Lustig; "and how much good does it do us? Her Aunt Johanna might be living in Clearview. I can't risk touring the country on a lead like this."

"I can go up and take a look around," said Nick.

"You don't know the girl. Mike, do you remember her?"

"Sure, boss," replied Mike instantly. "She was too much of a good-looker to forget."

"Never mind her looks. Take a run up to Clearview. Hop the first train, and call me if you find her."

"Okay."

Mike went off, smoking a cigar, and he arrived at Clearview Junction late in the afternoon.

The idea of walking nine miles or more to the little town did not appeal to him at all, and he got the clerk in the booking-office to telephone for a car.

The car that arrived, after a considerable interval, was an ancient one; its driver was by no means young. During a very noisy journey Mike asked questions in vain, and outside the Union Hotel he was set down and paid the fare.

Dusk was gathering in the Market Square as he looked about him. He went up to an elderly man sitting on a wooden bench under a tree.

"How do, professor?" he said.

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"I'm trying to find a girl that got here about a week ago. Do you know anybody like that?"

"I don't know anything about a girl, son," replied the man. "I'm the veterinarian from Adamsville. Come down to see a cow myself."

Mike wandered off across the roadway, and by a stone memorial in the middle of the square he spoke to a bearded man who was smoking a pipe and wore a metal badge upon his waistcoat. He was the local constable, and he proceeded to describe all the youngish women who had arrived in the town during the past week.

Mike listened with growing impatience to quite a lengthy list.

"Then there was Mrs. Harper's sister," said the constable reflectively. "Good-looking she was, too. But she went back to Bridgeport yesterday."

"Oh, she went back to Bridgeport?" Mike clamped his teeth upon the end of a half-consumed cigar and wished himself back in New York.

"Yeah." The constable removed his pipe from his mouth and scratched the back of his neck. "That's all I can think of now, except that they got a new waitress down there to Alec's Diner. Come to think of it, she's just about the age you was saying, too."

"A new waitress?" Mike's flagging spirits rose. "Hi, where's this diner at?"

"Turn the corner and right down there." The constable pointed with the stem of his pipe. "Say, are you any relation to this girl?"

"No, I'm just a friend of hers. I got some good news for her."

In Main Street Mike found the restaurant without any difficulty. He found also an alleyway at the side of it and an open window in the alleyway. He looked in at the window and he saw Polly behind the counter.

She was serving the old farmer who had lost his sow and three sucking pigs the previous Friday, and the farmer was informing her that he had found them.

"And bless me if they don't look like they've took on more weight," he added.

"Oh, that's fine," said Polly, and at that moment saw Mike's ugly face at the open window and recognised it.

She moved hastily past her employer to Earl, who was on his favourite stool, and she whispered urgently to him:

"Earl, meet me out the back. Don't ask questions. It's important."

She made in haste for the room at the far end of the counter, snatched her coat from a peg, and went out at the back door just as Mike entered the restaurant.

Alec advanced to the stranger as the stranger climbed upon a stool.

"Hallo," he said, "what do you want?"

"Scramble me up a cup of coffee," said Mike.

Earl had passed him out on the steps and then had sped along the alleyway. He met Polly at the back door.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "I've got to get out of here!" she replied agitatedly.

"Why, what's all the excitement?" "That man in there—he mustn't see me. I've got to get out of this town right away."

"Oh! Well, I could run you out to my grandfather's farm. Nobody would find you there."

"Good!" she breathed. "Let's go at once."

"My car's parked at the corner. We can cut through this way into Union Street."

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A Place of Refuge

THE two-seater was reached while Mike was drinking his coffee, and in a very few minutes' time it was speeding out from the town in a westerly direction. Polly settled back in her seat with a sigh of relief.

"You see, he knows who I am," she said.

"A lot of people know me," said Earl, "but I don't run away from them."

"Yes, but he came up here to take me back to town."

"Why?" Earl slowed to a sharp bend. "What's this all about?"

"The trouble is I haven't told you the truth."

"About yourself?"

She nodded, and then the bend was negotiated and the two-seater moved smoothly upon a flat stretch of road with trees and fields on either side of it. Dusk had merged into darkness, and a number of stars were twinkling in the sky.

"I couldn't stay where I was," said Polly unhappily. "I couldn't let the police—" She broke off, biting her lip because she was afraid to tell him the truth; and then suddenly she blurted: "Earl, I—I'm Dorothy Barnes."

"The heiress?" He looked swiftly round at her and his voice was curt. "The one that ran off to marry that prince?"

"Yes, but that—that isn't right. I—I—I didn't want to marry any prince."

"That's what it said in the papers."

"It was wrong. My father wanted the marriage. That's why I ran away. Really, he twisted the story round. You believe me, don't you?"

"What a story!" cried Earl. "Front-page headlines as big as your hand! The 'Express' would get out an extra."

She hadn't thought of the way he would look at it as a reporter, and she gasped in dismay:

"You're not going to send it in, are you?"

"It's funny the way things break, isn't it?" he said. "I've been waiting for a big story for years, and here comes one bigger than I ever hoped for, and I can't use it. Oh, well, there'll be other stories come along some day."

"Earl," she began gratefully, "I wouldn't ask you to do this, except that—"

"Oh, that's all right," he broke in. "The only thing we have to worry about now is Gramp. He'll probably kick up a fuss, but we'll handle him."

A mile or so farther on the road was deserted for a winding lane, and in the lane the two-seater was stopped outside the gate of a farmyard. At the side of the yard was quite a large garden, fronting a house built partly of brick and partly of wood.

"Well, here we are!" announced Earl.

"It's nice and quiet around here," she remarked appreciatively.

"Yes," said he, "while Gramp and Zeke aren't around. Zeke Hopper is the hired man, though you'd never know it from the amount of work he does. Gramp's been firing him for the last eighteen years. They're always arguing about something."

The house was in darkness.

"It doesn't look as though there's anybody at home," said Polly.

"They're probably out fishing," he returned.

"At night?"

"Oh, you can't go by what they do!" He jumped down from his side of the

car and helped her down from hers, and they went through the garden to the porch of the house. The front door was on the latch, and in the light of a match he led the way across a lounge-hall into a living-room furnished more for comfort than for appearance.

"Gee, this is nice and homey!" she exclaimed, after he had lit a hanging lamp over a table.

"Glad you like it," said he.

"But what about my things? They're at the hotel."

"Oh, I'll get them for you."

Two elderly men had entered the farmyard from a field at the back of it and were advancing towards the house. Both were carrying fishing-rods and creels, but the creels were empty—and that was a source of annoyance to the shorter of the pair, who was Jeff Daniels, Earl's grandfather.

The other man, considerably taller and considerably leaner than his companion, was Zeke Hopper, and they both wore steel-rimmed spectacles.

"This time you are fired!" Jeff Daniels snapped at the hired man, stopping short at the back porch.

"You can't fire me," retorted Zeke. "I'm a-quittin'. Why, you ain't got sense enough to—"

"It's just plain crazy, that's what!" howled his employer. "I've never heard tell of such a thing. Keepin' me out there after dark. I bet I caught my death o' cold!"

"Always caught 'em that way down to Frog Hollow," declared Zeke.

"Colds?" barked Jeff.

"No, fish, you darn fool! Good big 'uns, too!"

The back door was opened, and Earl looked down at them from the porch.

"Well, about time you two got home," he said. "What are you scrapping about now?"

"This darn fool keeping me out there tryin' to catch fish with glow-worms!" raged his grandfather.

"Always caught 'em that way down to Frog Hollow," maintained Zeke.

"It stands to reason," fumed Jeff, "when you put a glow-worm in the water the light goes out."

"It don't do no such thing!" Zeke retorted.

They ascended the steps of the porch to Earl, and they entered the living-room; but at sight of Polly standing there by the table the two old fellows stopped short in astonishment.

"Who's the lady?" demanded Jeff.

Earl put a hand on Polly's shoulder and he said:

"This, is my grandfather, Jeff Daniels."

"Never mind who I am," barked Jeff. "Who's the lady?"

"All right to tell him?" asked Earl.

"Oh, I suppose so," murmured Polly.

"She's Dorothy Barnes."

"You know," explained Polly, "the Society girl who ran away from school because her father wanted her to marry some foreigner. Well, I—I wouldn't; that's why I ran away."

Jeff screwed up his eyes at her. Zeke burst out:

"Why, they was tellin' about it over the rady this mornin'! So you're the Barnes girl?"

Polly nodded.

"I brought her out to stay here," said Earl. "Miss Barnes can't marry a man she doesn't love, especially a foreigner."

"Foreigner, eh?" said Jeff. "Never had much use for foreigners. How long d'you want to stay?"

Polly tried to think of a suitable answer.

"Oh, about two weeks," she decided.

"I'll be twenty-one then."

"What's that got to do with it?"
 "Why, then I inherit four million dollars from my grandmother. That's on my mother's side. And then I can do anything I like."

Jeff Daniels did not seem to be very favourably impressed, either by the four millions—which were entirely imaginary—or by her beauty—which was very real.

"Oh, I won't be any trouble to you," she added pleadingly.

"Of course you won't!" said Earl. "You've got to let her stay, Gramp! You can't put her out when she's in a fix like this!"

Jeff looked over the top of his spectacles at beauty in distress.

"You'll probably get us into a lot of trouble with your rich kin-folks," he said dubiously.

"Oh, no," Polly assured him, "my folks won't bother you."

Zeke Hopper broke the awkward little silence that followed.

"Well, 'tain't none o' my business," he began, "but if I was doin' this—"

"But ye ain't!" Jeff whirled round on him. "You're just the kind of a man that would turn a girl out into the night when she's in a fix! Ain't you got any feelin's? Can't you show some hospitality?"

He turned to Polly again.

"Now don't expect anything fancy," he said.

Polly murmured her thanks, but Jeff told her to thank his grandson.

"I'll show you the spare room," said Earl, and he took her arm and led her off to the lounge-hall and up the staircase in it.

Zeke scowled at his employer.

"I declare, Jeff Daniels, if you ain't gettin' soft in the head!" he complained. "Takin' in a perfect stranger—and a woman, too!"

"It was Earl's idea, wasn't it?" challenged Jeff. "You know how he is when he gets set on something."

"Huh! From the way he was actin' I calculate he's kind o' set on her."

"You think so?"

"She's got a powerful lot o' money."

"I shouldn't like to see him get mixed up with a rich city girl," growled Jeff. "Only lead him on and then disappoint him. If I thought that boy was really—"

"S-s-sh!"

Earl and Polly were descending the stairs. Zeke began to stir some paste in an earthenware bowl he took from a dresser, and Jeff put away the fishing-rods and creels.

"I'm sure I'll be quite comfortable," Polly said as she entered the room. "It's awfully kind of you."

Earl announced that he must be getting back to Clearview and departed. Polly watched Zeke's manipulation of a spoon.

"That looks good," she remarked.

"Breakfast," said Jeff. "Cakes. Buckwheat."

"Can I help?"

"No, thanks," said Zeke coldly. "I do all the work."

"I'll go to bed, then," decided Polly. "Good-night."

The Telegram

EARL drove straight to the Union Hotel in Clearview, gathered Polly's things together in her room with the aid of a chambermaid, and went back to the farm with them tidily packed in her suitcase.

He left the suitcase with his grandfather, Polly being in bed, and returned to the little town. His intention was to see the manager of the hotel, but in the first instance he dropped in at Alce's Diner to find out what had happened there.

Mike Dugan was at the counter, talking to the Greek.

"Why don't you be a good guy and stop fronting for her?" he was saying as Earl entered. "Where is she?"

"I tell you the only thing I know is the Union Hotel," Alce replied with marked impatience.

"I've been over there four times and nobody's seen her! Come on, now!"

"Mister, you make me crazy!" Alce exploded. "I'm gonna throw you right out on your face!"

Earl walked up to the counter.

"If you're looking for that waitress of yours," he said, "I saw her get on the bus about an hour ago."

"A bus?" Mike exclaimed eagerly. "What bus?"

"Why, the one that goes to Boston," Earl replied.

"Well, how can I get there? Can I hire a car or something?"

"You could take a taxi over to New Haven," Earl informed him, "and catch the midnight train at Springfield. You'll probably meet the bus there the first thing in the morning."

"Oh, thanks, pal," Mike gave Alce's bald head a pat with his hand and went off in haste.

"Give me a cup of coffee," said Earl.

Alce did so, but he was nearly bursting with indignation.

"She don't even say good-bye," he complained. "Women's mind change took quick! The way she act make me sick! How's that?"

"Perfect," said Earl.

In the circumstances he decided not to see the manager of the hotel, but he bribed the chambermaid to secrecy before he set off once more for the farm, this time to seek his own bed.

Next day he was busy gleanng news for the "Clearview Clarion," but he had arranged, over breakfast, to take Polly out on the lake in the evening, and he was home before eight o'clock.

They strolled together across the fields at the back of the farmhouse to the magnificent stretch of water in which Jeff and Zeke had fished with glow-worms the night before, but the canoe he had intended to use proved to have a hole in it, so Polly sat on the bank of the lake, under a tree, while he dealt with the hole.

"Ready to launch," he said finally.

"It's awfully nice here," she murmured dreamily. "I've never looked at the moon through a tree before. The leaves break it up in little pieces like chunks of silver."

"Wait till you see the moon from across the lake," said he.

"Do we really have to go? I love it here! It's funny, because I've always wanted something different than I had—wanted to be somewhere else—and now I wouldn't even paddle across the lake for the moon."

"I don't get it," said Earl, dropping down beside her. "Everything I've ever dreamed of having I want twice as much on a night like this. Don't you really want to go for a canoe ride?"

"No," she said quite definitely, and they stayed on the bank and talked.

Time passed, and in the living-room of the farmhouse Jeff Daniels was darning one of his own socks when Zeke



Jeff Daniels entered with a tray containing eight assorted glasses, and he beamed at the supposed prince.

descended from the regions above wearing a trapper's fur cap upon his head and a belt round his waist. Over his shoulder he carried a rifle, and he looked a comie figure.

"What're you sittin' there for, worryin' about Earl and that young woman?" he demanded. "Come on to the meetin'!"

"I'm staying right here," declared Jeff.

"Why, this is the first meetin' of the Clearview Minute Men you've missed in five years!"

"Minute Men, eh?" Jeff eyed the hired man with scorn. "If you go out in that rig the dogs will run you into a tree for a 'coon!"

"Well, you fellows elected me sergeant-at-arms, and I got to have some kind of a uniform!"

"You certainly look like a fool in that get-up."

Zeke tossed his head.

"You're only sore because they didn't elect you!" he snorted. "Come on, we're late."

"I ain't going!"

"Well, I'm stayin', too!" Zeke laid the rifle on the table and picked up an apple.

"Here they come!" exclaimed Jeff.

Earl and Polly were mounting the steps of the back porch, and the door was open. As Earl was going back to town he said good-night to Polly on the top of the steps, then went straight off to his two-seater.

"Did you have a nice walk, Miss Barnes?" inquired Zeke as Polly stepped into the living-room.

"Yes," she replied. "We went down to the lake. The moon was simply gorgeous."

Jeff looked up at her over the top of his spectacles, and the atmosphere seemed to her to be distinctly chilly.

"Well, I'll go to bed," she decided. "Good-night."

She went out to the stairs, closing the door behind her, and Zeke said in a horrified voice to his employer:

"Did you see that? He wasn't a-kissin' her—she was a-kissin' him!"

"I know it!" returned Jeff grimly. "My eyes are as good as yours. Well, I guess that just about settles it!"

"What'cha goin' to do about it?" challenged Zeke. "Betcha don't do nothin'!"

"I won't, eh?" Jeff rose and went to an ancient little bureau, and he returned from it with a pad and a pencil which he banged down upon the table. "I'm goin' to send a telegram to her father to come right here and fetch her."

"Telegram?" echoed Zeke in amazement.

"Yes, collect. Sit down and write what I tell you."

Zeke seated himself at the table and picked up the pencil. Jeff sat down in his easy-chair and began to dictate.

"J. G. Barnes, New York City, New York."

"What about the address?" asked Zeke. "Don't you need a number to it?"

"The telegraph people will find him—everybody knows who he is. Go ahead. Your daughter is staying here with us. Please come and fetch her.—Yours truly, Jeff Daniels, Lakeside Farm, Clearview, Connecticut."

"There's more'n ten words there," said Zeke.

"So there is. Well, you better take out 'yours,' 'staying' and 'please.'"

"Takin' out 'please' makes it kind of impolite, don't you think?"

"So it does," Jeff scratched his head—and then Zeke laughed.

"Say, what are you worryin' about?"

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he chuckled. "We're sendin' it collect."

"That's right." Jeff got up and walked about the room. "Well, you might as well add this into it: 'If you don't come up right soon we won't be responsible for what happens. We folks up here got our pride, and we don't hold with you city folks coming up here and upsetting things. And what's more I've stood for just about—'"

"Hi, you're goin' too fast!" howled Zeke.

"Aw, that's always the way! When I get a chance to do a little oratory you can't keep up!"

On the following morning Nick Morton and Frankie Haines visited Al Lustig in his Jersey City retreat, but only to report non-success.

"Mike was right," Frankie declared. "That dame Mabel has no more idea where the girl is than we have."

"You keep tailing her," barked Lustig. "And you stick in that barber's shop, Nick!"

Nick looked pained.

"Aw, can't I lay off, boss?" he asked plaintively. "I've been having so many treatments and tonics in that barber's shop you could smell me a mile away! And that isn't all! He stretched out a pair of perfectly manicured hands. "Look at these—and they call me the Gorilla!"

A telephone-bell rang, and Frankie answered its summons.

"It's Mike!" he exclaimed. "Yeah, this is Frankie. What? You found the girl?"

"Gimme that 'phone!" Lustig snatched away the instrument. "Hallo, Mike! This is Lustig. What? Well, of all the slug-nutty idiots in this world! Boston, huh! Get back to Clearview and wait until you hear from me!"

He banged down the telephone and turned to his two henchmen.

"Mike got caught in a fast shuffle," he said savagely. "Took a phoney steer and lost the girl!"

"So now we're right back to where we started from!" lamented Frankie.

"And why?" raged Lustig. "Because I've been leaving it up to you clucks to get me out of this jam. Mike goes chasing a foul ball, and you two guys have been falling for that dame Mabel's animal act. Well, she's gonna stop playing dumb! She knows her girl friend was in Clearview, and she knows where she is now. You've been using the wrong technique. From now on I'm going to give our friend Mabel my personal attention!"

That evening, when Mabel returned from the Courtland Hotel to the flat in East Eighteenth Street, she opened the door upon a scene of disorder and saw three men in the living-room, all of whom she recognised.

She emitted a cry of dismay, but Frankie Haines immediately slammed the door, and Nick Morton gripped her by the arm.

"Keep quiet!" he snarled.

"Take your hands off me!" she stormed.

"Let her go," said Lustig.

Nick let go of her, and she walked across a litter of papers, cushions and sheet music to a table on which she had left the breakfast things that morning.

"You gentlemen seem to have missed this!" she shrieked, and she hurled a cup and saucer across the room.

"Good for a laugh, eh?" rasped Lustig. "Well, you're through playing us for laughs, see?"

"Can I help it if you strike me as funny?" she retorted.

He smacked her in the face with the back of his hand.

"We've stopped kidding you, Mabel," he said. "We don't want to hurt you—we don't even want to hurt your girl friend Polly. But we want to make sure she's safe. Now, where is she?"

"I don't know, you dirty crook!" raged Mabel. "And if I did I wouldn't tell you!"

"You didn't know she was in Clearview, did you? She didn't write you from there?"

"No, she didn't. And if she did, what business is it of yours?"

"Let's take her out of here, Al," suggested Frankie.

"You guys could take me to China for all the good it'd do you!" she shouted; and then Lustig had her by one arm and Frankie had her by the other, and they bundled her out from the flat.

She tried to scream for help, but Lustig's hand was clapped over her mouth, and Nick jabbed the barrel of a gun against her back.

Down in East Eighteenth Street a closed car was waiting at the kerb.

Bad News!

MIKE DUGAN was kicking his heels on the veranda of the

Union Hotel on the following afternoon, when a long, dark saloon came sweeping across the square and drew up below the steps. He rushed down to it and opened a door, and Al Lustig got out on to the pavement.

"Hallo, boss!" said Mike. "Gee, I thought you'd never get here!"

"Never mind that!" snapped Lustig. "What have you got?"

"Well, I—I got the bridal suite."

Nick, who was at the wheel of the car, laughed loudly. Frankie, beside him, made a grimace.

"I'm talking about the girl," said Lustig. "Have you found out anything?"

Mike replied that nobody seemed to know where she had gone.

"How about the guy that gave you the fake lead?"

"Well, I haven't been able to check on him yet."

"He must know something, or he wouldn't have gone to all that trouble to throw you a bone! We'll find him if we have to take this town apart. Come on, boys, may as well get something to eat."

Earl, at that moment, was in a field with Polly at some little distance from the farmhouse, and he was digging potatoes.

"I guess I'll always be a rube at heart," he said. "I love working out here when I get the chance. It's the peasant in me."

She was gathering up the potatoes as he dug them and putting them into a sack. A coloured handkerchief was knotted round her auburn hair, and her face was flushed.

"I like it here," she said. "Ever so much!"

"I kind of like having you here." He walked over to her. "Do you understand? What I'm trying to say is that I've fallen in love with you."

"That's what I've been hoping you'd say."

"You have?" He took her in his arms and kissed her.

"Earl!" she protested. "Out here in broad daylight?"

"There's no one to see us!" A soft nose rubbed against his shoulder—the nose of the horse they had brought with them to carry the potatoes. "Oh, I'd forgotten Ned! He seems to think it's time we started back."

"It is," said she.

They had left the field, and they

were walking along the lane towards the farmhouse when he stopped abruptly and said:

"Maybe that shouldn't have happened back there."

"Why not, Earl?" she inquired, gazing at him in surprise.

"Well, I don't amount to anything—just one in a million, waiting for a break. Even when it comes it won't be much—nothing compared with what you're used to!"

"Oh, don't let's talk about it," she urged.

"But we must," he insisted. "It's not an easy decision for you to make, giving up all you have for what I have to offer. And that's the only way it'd work out. We wouldn't be happy otherwise."

"Oh, it'll all arrange itself somehow."

"It never will unless we take care of it. It's up to us. Let's both go down and have a talk with your father."

"It's not that simple, Earl." She was wishing she had told him the truth at the beginning. "We've found something much too wonderful to throw away, but—but there are other people."

"Well, let's go and see your—"

He broke off because a shock-headed youth on a buckboard had nearly caught up with them—a youth who collected New Haven papers from the junction and delivered some of them on his way to a newsagent in the town.

"Hi, Oscar!" he shouted.

A copy of a special edition of the "New Haven Evening News" was flung at his feet as the buckboard passed, and he picked it up.

"Speak of the devil!" he exclaimed.

"Let me see," said Polly.

"Look at that!" Earl pointed to a headline on the front page. "He's increased the reward. Say, if you went back to-night and walked in on your father, wouldn't he be surprised?"

But Polly had caught sight of

another headline that horrified her: "Manicurist found slain." She took the paper from him, and somehow she found her voice.

"Earl, I'm not going back!" she said tremulously. "I can't involve you or anybody else in this!"

"Involve?" he echoed in astonishment. "But it's so simple. All you have to do is talk to your father."

"I can't. And I can't give you any reason. Let me go, Earl!"

She broke away from a hand that would have held her, and she flew along the lane to the house.

Up in the spare bed-room she read the story she had not dared to read in Earl's presence. There was not much of it. It ran:

"The bullet-riddled body of a woman identified as Mabel Donner, of Manhattan, was discovered early to-day in a ditch near Reidville by Matt Bennett, produce farmer, who immediately notified State police. Miss Donner was employed as a manicurist at a New York hotel. She is believed to be the victim of a gang."

Polly dropped the newspaper on the floor and flung herself upon the bed, sobbing bitterly.

Al Lustig and his companions were sitting on the veranda of the Union Hotel when the shock-headed youth delivered copies of the newspaper there, and Mike secured a copy.

He read the front page story with eyes that bulged nearly out of his head.

"Sure is news to me about Mabel!" he exclaimed, tossing the paper to Lustig. "I thought she—"

"Nobody's interested in what you thought!" retorted Lustig. "We couldn't let her talk—that's all!"

A few minutes later Mike caught sight of a two-seater coming towards the hotel across Market Square.

"Hi, look!" he cried, flinging out a

hand. "There's the guy that sent me off to Boston!"

"Get him!" snapped Lustig. "Bring him here!"

Mike rushed down the steps, and at the corner of Main Street he caught up with Earl as that young man stopped the two-seater.

"Say, you're just the guy I'm looking for!" he shouted.

"Well, that's fine," returned Earl, "because you're just the man I want to see. We can quit kidding each other. I know you're after Dorothy Barnes."

"Dorothy Barnes?" Mike gaped at him in bewilderment.

"Yes," Earl joined him on the sidewalk. "I want you to do something for me. You tell the man you're working for that he should get in touch with me—Earl Daniels, 'Clearview Clarion.'"

"Got that?"

"Yeah," said Mike, "but wait a minute. He's here right now—he's over at the Union Hotel."

"J. G. Barnes is in town?"

"Oh, I don't mean J. G. Barnes."

"So it's Prince D'Aglio? He's here? Well, come on—I don't want to talk to you. He's the man I want to see!"

Mike could not make head or tail of it, but he went back to the veranda of the hotel, and Earl went with him.

"I've been looking forward to this, Prince D'Aglio," Earl said as Lustig rose to meet him. "I've been wanting to look at the man who'd let a thing like this go on. Dorothy Barnes ran away because of a quarrel over you, and she's been chased from pillar to post, driven half crazy. And what have you done about it?"

Nick and Frankie exchanged wondering glances, but Al Lustig was equal to almost any occasion.

"I've gone to a lot of trouble looking for her," he replied.

"Why don't you get Mr. Barnes to call off his bloodhounds?" raged Earl. "She'd come back to you then if she cared two cents for you!"



"They're offerin' five thousand dollars for him," cried Zeke, pointing his rifle at Lustig.

"But she does," said the supposed prince, "just like it says in the paper. She loves me."

"Well, I happen to think she's in love with me," Earl retorted. "So let's put the question up to her."

"You mean you'll take me to her?"

"Why not? I want to get this thing settled once and for all. If she wants to go with you, I bow out. And if she wants to stay, she stays, no matter what you or anybody else can say or do!"

"That'll be fine," purred Lustig. "Just lead me to her."

J. G. Barnes Arrives

JEFF DANIELS had captured a white chicken in the farmyard and had picked up a chopper by the wood-pile with the intention of decapitating the bird so that it could be eaten that evening. Zeke had wandered out to watch the operation and was squatting on a trestle.

"I can't understand how a man like this here Mr. Barnes could have made all his money," he remarked, "being so unpunctual. It's nigh on four o'clock. 'Pears to me like if he cared two hoots for his daughter he'd have been here 'fore now!"

"What're talking about?" scoffed Jeff. "He might have had trouble with his automobile. Don't it say in the papers how her folks are near crazy worrying about her? Didn't he offer two thousand dollars in the paper to-day?"

"What? Hi, look what you're doin'!"

Jeff had raised the chopper, but the white chicken had escaped from the block on which he had been holding it.

"Hi, catch that chicken!" he howled, and there followed a chase all over the farmyard.

Up in her bed-room, Polly had packed her suitcase, written a note, and put on a hat. She slipped the note under a porcelain lamp that stood on a table, and she was moving towards the door when Al Lustig's dark saloon drew up outside the gate behind Earl's two-seater, and he and Earl and Mike walked up the garden path together, Nick and Frankie bringing up the rear.

"Nice quiet place you've got here," observed Lustig. "Not many neighbours."

"Nearest one's about three miles," said Earl.

Polly had reached the bottom of the stairs when they entered the lounge-hall, Mabel's coat over her arm and a suitcase in her hand. She stopped short with a gasp at sight of Lustig.

"I told you she'd be surprised," said Earl.

"She'll get over it," said Lustig evenly, and stepped forward. "Why have you been running away from me, Dorothy? I've been looking everywhere for you these past two weeks."

Polly stared at him, but she made no response whatever.

"You see the little lady's embarrassed," he said to Earl, and caught hold of her arm. "Let's go off by ourselves and have a nice long talk."

But Earl caught hold of Lustig's arm.

"We agreed to do this openly while we're all together," he objected.

"If the prince wants to talk to the little lady," drawled Frankie, "why don't you let him?"

"Because he doesn't have to!" Earl retorted. "I brought Prince D'Aglio out here only because I wanted to get at the truth once and for all. Dorothy, are you really running away from him because of your father, or are the papers right? Do you want to marry him?"

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"You brought him here to find that out?" gasped Polly.

"It was the only sure way to get everything settled. We're here, now, both of us. All you have to do is to make up your mind."

Lustig turned fiercely upon him.

"Listen, Daniels, if you want to get blunt—"

"Oh, no, please don't!" cried Polly.

"Let me talk to him alone, Earl."

"All right, if you say so," growled Earl; and Lustig led the girl away to the far end of the lounge-hall.

"How much have you told that rube?" he demanded in a low but menacing voice.

"Not a thing," she replied. "He believes I'm Dorothy Barnes. You heard him."

"You mean that whole routine is on the level?" he asked incredulously.

"Why, he wouldn't have brought you here if it weren't, would he?"

"I don't know. If I remember right, you're pretty good at framing fast alibis."

"You mustn't hurt him," pleaded Polly. "It won't do you any good to show your hand. If you leave now they won't find out who we are until—well, until it doesn't make any difference."

He looked at her searchingly for a moment, then nodded.

"Okay!" he said. "Keep up the act, and we'll get out of here."

"Oh, I will!" she faltered. "I promise!"

"But if this guy Earl makes one phoney move I'll count him in the party—and we'll finish the job right here in this house!"

He strode back to Earl.

"We're leaving," he said curtly.

"Leaving?" Earl looked blankly at Polly. "What is this?"

"I'm leaving, and she's going with me—that's all!" snapped Lustig.

"But I don't understand."

"What is there to understand, or to explain?" said Polly in what seemed to him an utterly heartless fashion. "I had to stay somewhere, and this was as good a place as any. Now he's come for me, and I'm going! You didn't think I was serious about settling down in a place like this, did you?"

"But I did," he said bitterly.

"That's the mind of a yokel, I guess."

"Take her bag, Mike," directed Lustig. "We'll find a Justice of the Peace and get married on our way to town."

Jeff Daniels and Zeke Hopper had entered the kitchen by way of the back door, and Mike was in the act of picking up the suitcase when Jeff rushed out into the lounge-hall.

"Here, hold on, hold on!" he shouted. "Hold your horses! Wait a minute, wait a minute! Who's gonna get married?"

"Miss Barnes and Prince D'Aglio," said his grandson most unhappily.

"Oh, is that the prince?" Jeff frowned at Lustig over the top of his spectacles, and Zeke screwed up his face.

"This is Mr. Daniels and Zeke Hopper," said Polly.

"How d'you do?" said Jeff, with every appearance of cordiality. "So you two are gonna get married, eh? Well—well, congratulations. You're gonna make the same colour hair!"

Polly found the situation almost intolerable.

"Hadn't we better get going?" she suggested.

"No, sree!" cried Jeff indignantly. "I won't hear of it! This is an occasion that'll stand a mite of celebration."

"Gramp," protested Earl, "they want to be on their way."

"Oh, there's plenty o' time!" Jeff turned to the hired man. "Go on and get some o' that apple cider in from the barn."

"Now, listen," said Lustig impatiently, "we haven't got time."

"Can't stop five minutes?" scoffed Jeff. "Sure you can! Ain't you princes got no bringing up? Go ahead, Earl, take 'em all into the parlour. And you, Zeke, go to the smoke-house and bring in some o' that elderberry wine."

"All the way out there?" grumbled Zeke. "We got some good ten-year-old grape wine down in the cellar."

Lustig motioned to his companions and followed Earl into the best room with Polly, where he and she became seated in adjacent chairs. Earl left them there because he had no desire to take part in any celebration, and he went off into the kitchen. His grandfather had bundled Zeke out on to the back porch, still arguing about the needlessness of going all the way to the smoke-house.

"Will you shut up, Zeke?" said Jeff. "We gotta keep 'em all here, ain't we? If the girl is gone when the father comes we don't get our money! Barnes offered the reward, not the prince. You get that elderberry wine—and take your time about it!"

Five minutes passed, and in the parlour Mike stalked about the carpet.

"How long do we have to stick around with these jug-heads?" he asked bleakly.

"May as well keep kidding 'em," said Lustig. "We'll have a fast one and then beat it."

Jeff Daniels entered with a tray containing eight assorted glasses, and he beamed at the supposed prince.

"Well, I shouldn't wonder if you folks wouldn't find Niagara Falls a right nice place for a honeymoon," he said. "You oughta be able to get excursion rates up there this time o' year."

"The guy you sent out for that elderberry wine," remarked Frankie from the other side of the room, "oughta be one of those Minute Men!"

"He is," chuckled Jeff. "He's sergeant-at-arms, and a great shot, too, Zeke is. I don't expect you city folks know much about guns."

"Guns?" echoed Frankie, with a glance for Nick. "We do all right."

Out in the lane a costly sedan had stopped behind Al Lustig's saloon, and the sound of a motor-horn reached the ears of those who were in the parlour.

"I'll bet that's one o' them tourists wants water for his radiator," said Jeff, and he put the tray on a table. "Well, just keep yourselves comfy, folks—I'll be right back."

He went out on to the front porch just in time to meet a tall, elderly, and very bulky man, wearing smoked glasses, who was ascending the steps.

"I'm Mr. Barnes," said the stranger. Jeff's mouth opened wide in company with his eyes.

"Not the—" he began excitedly.

"J. G. Barnes."

"Oh! Nice weather we're having."

"Yes, yes," said the millionaire impatiently, "but where's Dorothy?"

"In the parlour," said Jeff. "Come on!"

They entered the parlour, but the parlour was deserted. The voice of J. G. Barnes had penetrated to it, and a french window was wide open.

"Why, they were here!" exclaimed Jeff. "They must have gone into the kitchen!"

He led the way to the kitchen, and

(Continued on page 25)

The old railroad was in the hands of the receiver, for a motor-transport company, by modern methods and a great deal of underhand scheming, had taken away most of its trade. Finally, the railroad's fate rests on a race with the transport company. A gripping tale, starring Grant Withers and Dorothy Appleby



A Railroad in Jeopardy

THE driver and fireman leaned over the side of the cab of their engine and stared at the nearby road, along which a huge truck was clattering at a speed slightly faster than the goods train. The words "ARM-STRONG A.T.C. TRUCKING CORP." were easily distinguishable as they were painted in bright red on the side of the lorry.

"Hauling the freight that would've kept us out of bankruptcy," muttered Gus, the fireman, angrily.

The driver nodded his agreement.

"They've sure put the skids on the Moon Valley Railroad. Them and"—he paused to spit his disgust—"that new receiver."

"I'd like to get my hands on Mr. Doyle for just about five minutes."

"I'm afraid you'd have to stand in line for that, Gus."

"Well, maybe you can grin about it, this ain't your last run."

"I'm sorry, boy," Tom, the driver, laid a hand on the other's shoulder. "You got anything put by?"

"How could I—with a wife and baby to support."

"If I went to Jed Carson, maybe I could talk him into keeping you on. I started with him when this line was just a pup, so I reckon he'll listen to me."

"Thanks, Tom!" cried the fireman. "You're a pal."

The main offices of the Moon Valley Short Line were at Eden, and the skeleton staff went about their duties with gloomy faces. In a large office sat a white-haired old man, whose forehead was creased with lines of anger and

worry as he perused over the note that had come by that morning's post.

"Kay! Kay!" he shouted fiercely. "I want you."

"Coming, grandfather!" came the answer in a clear, girlish voice, and the door opened to admit Kay Carson, who was an attractive and slim young brunette.

"Take a letter," snapped Jed Carson. "To Mr. Lawrence Doyle, receiver Moon Valley Short Line, Moon two-one-seven, Great Lakes Buildings, Chicago, Illinois."

"What is it this time?" sharply asked the girl. "More dismissals?"

"Yes." The pretty face was suffused with the red flush of anger.

"It's a pity someone can't dismiss Mr. Doyle with a well-aimed sledgehammer—I'd like to apply for the job personally."

"My dear sir," the old man began to dictate. "In reply to yours of the seventeenth allow me to point out that I have reduced my personnel to vanishing point—possibly you are going to run the railroad with robots. Of course, I have only devoted a paltry fifty years to railroading which can't be compared with four years in a law school. However, I have managed to struggle along without the aid of some egotistical, half-baked nineonpooop who thinks he can sit at a desk two thousand miles away and tell me how to run my business. Moreover—"

"Your blood pressure, dear," warned the girl, who knew how excited the old man could get.

"What did you stop me for?" belloved the old man. "Just as I was getting steam up."

Grandfather was unable to finish his letter because a nervous little man appeared and said in a hoarse whisper that Tom and Gus were outside. Old Jed sent his granddaughter out of the room on some pretext and told Trotter to bring the two men in. He sat in his chair, but would not look at Tom, as the driver began to ask that Gus be kept on because of his wife and child.

"I guess you don't realise it, Tom, but I don't run this railway any more," Jed said at last. "I'm just an office-boy. I can't keep Gus on, Tom, and what's worse I can't keep you on—your train's been cancelled."

"Thanks for trying, Jed," Tom murmured when he had got over the shock. "I wish I could tell you how it makes me feel—seeing you lose everything you worked for."

"Who says I've lost everything?" raved the old man. "I've fought competition in this before and I won, didn't I? It's going to take a lot more than a bull-headed receiver and those painted circus wagons to put me on the rocks, and don't forget it!"

In nearby offices of a luxurious nature a smooth-faced, smartly dressed man of thirty-five sat at a huge desk that had many telephones. He twirled his small black moustache and smoothed his greasy hair as if very pleased with himself. A door opened and a thickset, hard-eyed man entered.

"We'll need six new trucks, Mr. Armstrong, to handle the business that's piling in."

"Get along with what you have for the time being, Glover," ordered the president of the trucking company. "I expect to have control of the railroad within thirty days."

"Well, that'll give us a monopoly on the freight business," answered his manager. "What about this new receiver?"

Armstrong smiled.

"I think we'll find him quite friendly toward our interests. You see, I'm responsible for the appointment of Mr. Lawrence Doyle."

Close to the railroad depot was a small hotel run by a woman. There were only two railwaymen in the place when the swing doors opened to admit a tall young man. She smiled a welcome, and he took a stool at the bar. He asked if she had accommodation, and she told him that he could have his choice of two elegant rooms, and he took the one upstairs. He signed the book, and went upstairs to view the room and was very satisfied.

"Someone's honking the horn of my car a little impatiently," the young man said in a pleasant voice. "Guess I'd better go and see what's the matter."

He found a very charming and irate young woman, who pointed at the cars against the kerb. Kay Carson's car was jammed in the centre.

"They ought to give tickets to people who park like this." She stabbed her hand at a large white two-seater. "Look at this idiot—does he think my car's equipped with wings?"

"I don't suppose the young man thought at all," he answered, and, grinning broadly, moved his car so that she could get out.

Kay gave him a withering look, and, getting into her car, drove away. The young man stared after her admiringly, and then became aware of an old man who had been an interested spectator.

"Which is the way to the railroad depot, pop?" he asked.

"Follow her, and you can't miss it," the old man chuckled, and went on his way.

Kay Carson was furious when she found that the young man of the parking incident was following her, and she tried to shake him off by turning down a side road, but his car was speedy, and he was soon on her trail again. She flung out of her car at the depot, and stalked into the company offices. To her amazement she was followed.

"Don't you think this has gone far enough?" Her eyes flashed. "Run along, little boy, I work here."

"So do I," was the quiet and amused retort. "The name's Doyle."

"Not Lawrence Doyle?" she questioned.

"At your service."

Kay looked him up and down as if he were some kind of unpleasant worm. "I'll tell my grandfather you're here."

Doyle grinned at Trotter, who was eyeing him in a scared sort of way, and the young receiver grinned even more when he heard an irate voice:

"You mean to say he has the all-fired nerve to stick his face in here?"

"Grandfather, please remember your blood pressure," came the persuasive tones of the girl.

The next moment the dividing door was flung open and old Jed Carson stood there. His hair was on end and his eyes were glaring.

"Permit me to introduce myself—"

"I don't need any introduction to you!" shouted Jed. "One look at those glittering eyes, that selfish mouth and adding-machine heart—"

"Grandfather," anxiously the girl took his arm.

"This reception touches me deeply." Doyle was still smiling.

"Nothing could touch you deeply. Mr. Doyle," Jed Carson snapped out. "You're responsible for a tragic situa-

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tion in this town. The people are facing starvation, and you seem to find it amusing."

The smile vanished.

"I don't find it amusing," quietly answered Doyle. "Nor do I consider myself responsible for the situation."

"Are you insinuating that I am, you impudent young whippersnapper?"

"Certainly," Doyle stared straight at the angry old president. "If you'd used your head and adopted a more drastic policy the last few years you wouldn't need me now."

"Need you. Why, you insufferable—"

"Grandfather!"

"Shut up!" Jed shook off her hand.

"I've run this railroad—"

"Right into bankruptcy," interrupted Lawrence Doyle. "I'm sorry, Mr. Carson, but we've got to face facts. I'm the doctor now, and if I consider that surgery's necessary to save the patient's life I'll operate."

"Surgery! Bah! Butchery! Very well, but remember, I'm going to stay right in this office and see that you don't steal one penny more than I can help—I know you receivers." He stepped back into his office. "And this door is the dividing line. Don't you dare to cross this threshold!"

Jed Carson crashed the door shut so violently that the glass window shattered. Jed glared through the aperture and then dragged down a blind. The girl gave Doyle a look of contempt and disdain and went into her grandfather's room.

"I hope you won't think too harshly of our esteemed president," nervously murmured Trotter. "I'm afraid he's a little upset. Permit me to introduce myself. I am Phineas K. Trotter, claims agent for the Moon Valley Short Line."

"Glad to know you, Trotter." Doyle held out a large hand, and gave the little man's hand a hearty grip. "Say, that last work-out has given me an appetite. Where do you eat around here?"

"At Mrs. Casey's Dinner Bucket, right close to the yards."

"Lead me to it," said Doyle.

In the short walk he learned that Trotter and Mrs. Casey were engaged, and Mrs. Casey was a wonderful woman, but she had rather a hasty temper. Doyle found she was another firework, but for all that he liked the look of her homely features.

"Bad cess to Mr. Lawrence Doyle," she cried, before they had scarce sat down on stools at the counter. "May all his children be stolen from the cradle, the crawling reptile. After his ruination of my business just let him have the nerve to step up here and ask for the rent."

"Maggie! Maggie!" wailed Trotter, making feeble signs for her to cease.

"Have you heard of the latest exploits of Mr. Lawrence Doyle?" Mrs. Casey was worked up. "Another train crew he's murdered wid one stroke of his cowardly pen, and five more foine men turned out to worry and freeze this winter. And what does he care, sitting up there in his foine steam-heated office. I wish his radiator would burst and blow him to perdition entirety."

"Always joking is Maggie," bleated Trotter.

"Joking is it I am?" snorted Maggie.

"What's the matter wid ye now? Have you got St. Vitus' dance?"

"Maggie, will you please let Mr. Doyle have some of your Irish stew?" Trotter stammered.

Maggie Casey now turned her fiery gaze on Lawrence Doyle.

"Mr. Doyle is it? Well, now that ye know what I think of ye I suppose you'll be throwing me out, too. It's two months I am overdue on the rent, so go ahead."

The young receiver chuckled.

"Not on a fine day like this, Mrs. Casey," he told her. "I'm going to wait two or three months and then I'm going to throw you out in a blizzard, when the snowdrifts are very deep. Your stew smells good, Mrs. Casey."

"You can't blame her for taking the viewpoint of the men," whispered Trotter as Maggie went across to a blazing fire. "She doesn't realise that this road needed a receiver."

Mrs. Casey had sharp ears, for she whipped round.

"What this road needs ain't a receiver," she cried. "But more tonnage."

An Uphill Fight

THE words of Mrs. Casey's had given Lawrence Doyle an idea, and on the morrow he decided to drive round the district and talk to some of the farmers. When he had been appointed receiver to the Moon Valley Short Line he had thought that all he would have to do would be to wind up the company, but he had not been very long in Eden before his ideas had changed. Old Jed Carson was a fine fighter and so was his granddaughter, and so seemed all the people associated with the railroad, and it was obvious that old methods, inferior rolling stock and general slackness had allowed dangerous rivals to steal the ground from under their feet. He was aroused from his thoughts by a hail, and saw a girl standing in the road waving her arms. It was Kay Carson, and she did not look very pleased to find that it was Larry Doyle that she had stopped. She had a puncture and the spare tyre was flat, and as it was four miles from town she had to accept a lift.

"Aren't you going back to town?" Kay was forced to ask when Larry took a right-hand turn at the cross-roads.

"I want to look up some of the farmers," he explained. "A man named Beasley was a regular customer of the line for years, and he dropped out about six months ago. Do you know him?"

"Certainly I know him," said the girl. "That's his farm ahead. Want to talk to him?"

"If you please."

Beasley himself came out to greet them, and after a few minutes' talk about conditions and the weather Larry brought the talk round to business, then Beasley stated why he gave his goods to Armstrong.

"But even if Armstrong's rates are lower, in the long run you're going to make a bigger profit shipping by freight," argued Larry. "By that I mean the condition of your produce when it reaches the market. In hot, dry trucks it's bound to wilt, but in iced, air-conditioned refrigerator cars it's gonna reach the market in A1 condition."

When Larry drove away he had an order for a shipment of lettuce, and Kay was beginning to wonder if this strong-jawed young Irishman was the interfering fool they had thought. They stopped at the next farm owned by Jones, and this time Larry stated that though the trucking company were cheaper he hoped very soon that the railroad would be quoting the same rates. Jones was stubborn, so Kay did some arguing.

"Mr. Jones, don't you owe the railroad something?"

"Not a penny."

"How about gratitude and loyalty?" said Kay. "Have you ever considered what the railroad's done for you? It brought your father out here, sold him this land at a very small down payment. Taught him to turn a barren desert into a farm. The railroad hasn't outlived its usefulness. All we need is the support of important men like yourself, Mr. Jones. If we had your account naturally others would follow. The farmers all rely on your good judgment."

They drove away, having secured a shipment of tomatoes.

"Nice team work, partner," admiringly cried Larry. "We're finding out what we've got to meet in the way of competition. We'll give Armstrong and his trucks a run for their money."

Jed Carson had a few things to say when he saw his granddaughter get out of Doyle's car.

"What do you mean traipsing round with that crook?" he demanded.

Jed Carson snorted when he heard that she had had to accept a lift because of a puncture, and more snorting when she reported that Doyle had been around getting business for the railroad. They had got back two old customers, Jones and Beasley.

"I'll have something to say to those two when I see 'em," muttered Jed. "And I still think Doyle's a road wrecker. This must be some trick."

When Glover heard that Jones and Beasley had gone back to the railroad he asked a man named Stymie to step into the room. Stymie was a tough and typical gangster.

"We've lost a couple of good customers, and they've got to be taught a lesson," stated Glover. "Their names are Jones and Beasley, and you'll find their names on some box-cars down at the valley siding. You will see that

something happens to those box-cars."

One box-car was on a grade, and it was a simple matter for Stymie to release the brakes. Naturally, he perpetrated this sporting action in the middle of the night. The box-car went hurtling off the line and was smashed to pieces. For the other car Stymie had a more original method.

The next morning Glover had a visitor.

"My name's Doyle, receiver for the railroad. Are you Armstrong?"

"He isn't in," answered the crook manager. "My name's Glover. Glad to know you, Mr. Doyle. Won't you have a chair, Mr. Doyle?"

"Listen, Glover, one of our refrigerator cars was wrecked last night and a shipment of lettuce was sprayed with gasoline."

"That's the first I've heard of it," Glover answered, but there was a slight smile hovering round his thin lips. "That's too bad, isn't it?"

"Yes, both the shippers happen to be your former customers."

"You don't think we had anything to do with it?"

"I know you did, but I can't prove it."

"Then if I were you, Mr. Doyle, I wouldn't do too much talking," sneered Glover.

Next moment Glover started back in his seat in alarm, because the big Irishman was towering over him.

"I won't confine myself to talk. Get this. The next time anything happens to our shipments you're going to wake up and find half a dozen of those shiny trucks of yours ready for the scrap heap. Two can play that sort of game. That's all!"

Not many minutes later Armstrong appeared.

"Hallo, chief. Say, are you sure this new receiver understands about playing ball with us? He's been cutting into our business, and—"

"That isn't all he's cutting," Armstrong spoke viciously, and threw a blue paper on to the desk. "Look at those new rulings. He's obtained an okay from the Interstate Commerce Commission to meet our rates."

"This will hit us pretty hard," muttered Glover. "We've held the farmers in line only because our rates were lower. What do you make of it?"

"I think those Chicago attorneys picked me a very bright boy," Armstrong snarled. "I'll go across and offer him some inducements."

Larry walked into the office and had to listen for some moments to the ravings of Jed Carson. He got a little tired after a while, and told the old man that the wrecking of the box-cars was not his fault. The president snorted and retired back into his room.

"Trotter, tell Tom Wilson I want to see him right away."

Larry was busy over some papers when the outer door opened, and, glancing up, he found himself gazing at a visitor. There was an assured manner about this man that Larry did not like.

"My name's Armstrong."

"I've just come from your office."

"I'm sorry I missed you."

"I've been looking forward to having a talk with you," Larry answered quietly. "You and I have to come to some sort of understanding."

"Exactly, Doyle, that's what I had in mind when I had you appointed."

"Really?" This was a surprise to Larry.

"Yes, you owe your job to me," smoothly spoke Armstrong. "And I trust—"

The blind was jerked up and old Jed glowered through the hole in the smashed window. "I knew it! You conniving, two-faced double-crosser!" he bellowed. "You rat, so you'd hatch your dastardly plots in my office, would you? Well, I'll not stay here and listen to 'em!"



"We've lost a couple of good customers," said Glover. "And they've got to be taught a lesson!"

"Mr. Carson," began Larry, but the old man just slammed out of the room. The Irishman looked at the grinning transport president.

"Armstrong, I had no idea that you picked me, but I'm taking this job seriously. I'm going to build this road up, not break it."

"You're licked before you start," sneered Armstrong. "The whole town's against you, Doyle—even Carson. Why not be smart and co-operate with me? Make yourself an additional twenty thousand above your receiver's fees."

"That's very tempting—you certainly must want this road pretty badly." Larry glanced at the door as he heard a knock. "Come in."

"You sent for me, Mr. Doyle?" asked Tom Wilson.

"Yes, Tom, you're just in time." Larry looked at his visitor. "Now that our rates are even, Armstrong, I'm out to beat your time." He turned to the driver. "If I turn you loose with a cannonball freight could you cut off two hours on the run to Paradise?"

"I think I could do even better than that, Mr. Doyle."

"You'll get everything you care to ask for in the way of equipment. You will make the run Saturday."

"Saturday. Is that all, Mr. Doyle?"

"That's all."

"Just exactly what do you expect to gain by this?" Armstrong asked when they were alone.

"Mainly a crack at the Farmers' Co-operative Contract that you've been getting fat on. I'm going to run you out of business, Armstrong. You're not a legitimate trucking outfit—you're a racketeer. Now get out of here."

"You're making a bad mistake, fellow. I'll have a new receiver here in ten days."

"And you'll be thrown out of this office," Larry grinned as Trotter came into the office. "The very man for the job. Trotter, throw him out."

Trotter shook with fright, but Armstrong went because he did not like the steely glint in Doyle's eyes.

Speeding to Doom

THE papers had quite a lot to say about the Moon Valley Short Line's effort to regain its lost tonnage. Tom Wilson was at the throttle and would attempt to establish a four-hour schedule between Eden and Paradise, cutting three hours off the old run. If successful the railroad would have a decided advantage in bidding for the Farmers' Co-operative Contract, the richest transportation plum in the State.

The yards at Eden hummed with activity as engines and equipment were overhauled for the run, and on Saturday morning Larry had a final word with the driver. Old Jed Carson, behind his broken window, listened to every word.

"Don't take any chances, Tom," warned Larry. "We're not out to prove how fast a daredevil can yank tonnage over this line."

"I understand, sir. You want a fast schedule set up, but one we can make every day, rain or shine?"

"Exactly." Larry held out his hand. "Good luck, Tom."

When Larry left his office to go down to the track to witness the start he bumped into Kay in one of the corridors.

"Larry, there's something I've been wanting to tell you. That here's one Carson who appreciates what you've done. I'm awfully ashamed of the things I said about you."

July 10th, 1937.

"Forget it!" He slipped his hand through her arm and smiled at her fondly. "Maybe there's something I want to tell you, but—" There came three short and fierce whistle blasts. "That's the train. We'll have to run."

A small crowd saw Tom Wilson and Jake Harvey, his fireman, off from Eden on its test run. The engine and the freight cars had been cleaned up and overhauled, so the goods train made a grand picture.

Larry had given all the staff that could be spared the rest of the day off, and as they were all foregathering at Mrs. Casey, he decided to have all the reports of the run sent there from the various signal boxes.

"So the receiver's an honest man," Mrs. Casey said to Trotter. "It's a great wrong we've been doing the boy. I might have known it all along—there never was a blackguard by the name of Doyle."

And when Larry came into her eating-house she looked at him pleadingly.

"Mr. Doyle, I hope you'll forgive me for what I said the other day—I was a bit hasty like."

"What was it, Maggie?" chuckled Larry. "I've forgotten."

The good woman grinned happily.

"The minute I clapped eyes on you I knew you for the fine, upstanding, honest young fella that ye are."

"Now it's my head you'll be turning with your blarney," countered Larry.

Jed Carson was too proud to admit he had made a mistake in Larry Doyle and go to Mrs. Casey's, but he had to hear about the progress of the freight special, so he went and listened-in at one of the signal boxes. He became as excited as the signalman, especially when Tom Wilson did the run of ten miles to Red Butte in eleven minutes.

Naturally, there was tremendous excitement at Mrs. Casey's and the place was packed. The men may be excused for being a little dubious of Larry Doyle, but the fact that Kay Carson and Mrs. Casey seemed to like him was in his favour.

As Tom Wilson began to eat up the miles and gain time rapidly for the making of an improved schedule the men began to cheer, because they realised that trade would come back again to the Moon Valley Short Line, and there was only heard one pessimist, who kept on muttering that the speed was too fast for old equipment. The freight special passed through Whiteoaks, Pasito, Granite, Sherman, and at last reached Summit.

"More than half-way and just over two hours. Over fifty miles an hour and uphill. He'll be coasting downhill from now on," cried a man.

"Tom reckons he'll do the run in four hours," Kay whispered.

"And what an argument for the co-operative contract," chuckled Larry. "He's making that run too fast," muttered that lone but persistent moaner.

Larry would not have been so cheerful if he had known that Armstrong had given Stymie certain instructions.

The 'phone rang at Mrs. Casey's and Trotter took the call. The little man went as white as a sheet.

"They've piled up!" he gasped out. "Outside of Blackrock Tunnel. Tom and the fireman killed."

Larry did not loose his head, but rushed out of the eating house, at once and ordered the breakdown gang to get out to the tunnel with the wrecker.

That night the men began to gather together in groups, and it was Gus, whom Tom Wilson had done his best to

befriend, who was stirring up trouble now.

"He's a murderer!" he shouted, his eyes blazing. "He killed old Tom as sure as if he'd shot him. He lays off crews of track men, and then he orders that speed with old equipment."

In the morning the Eden newspaper's front page was all devoted to the train smash, and there was one statement that goaded Gus to fury.

"He thinks he can pull wool over our eyes with this!" Gus cried to the men. "A thousand dollars reward will be paid for the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for the wrecking of freight train X19 at Blackrock Tunnel, and it's signed 'Lawrence Doyle, receiver.' He's the man responsible for dozens of railway men being out of work, he's responsible for this accident. Are we going to let him get away with it?"

The wild words of one man inflamed the listeners so that they lost sight of reason. A mob went pouring down Main Street towards the company offices. The sheriff heard about it.

"The mob's gone crazy," he shouted to his deputies. "We'll have to get Doyle outa town quick."

Kay saw the mob and tore through the streets in her car. Larry was working when she rushed into the office.

"Larry, they're after you!" she panted out. "My car's downstairs! Take it, quick!"

Larry Doyle took the news calmly. He had heard the mutterings on the previous day, but it made him glad that this girl had taken a risk in coming here to warn him. He walked to a window and pulled aside the curtain. Already men were swarming through the depot gates.

"Phew, what a mob!"

"This is no time for bravery," Kay screamed at him. "Every man and woman out there hates you."

"I'm not brave." He shook his head. "I'm scared stiff. Besides, we Doyles are notoriously poor runners, but thanks for warning me."

The sheriff and some of his deputies got to the depot first and they gripped their shot-guns. The crowd milled forward, shouting and yelling that they wanted Doyle. Then little Trotter lined up beside the sheriff and glared at the mob—he was a hundred per cent for Doyle.

Larry flung open the doors and walked out on to the veranda. The mob hesitated as if daunted by such courage.

"Before you men do anything"—Larry spoke in ringing tones—"you'd better make sure you've got the right man!"

"We've got the right man all right!" shouted Gus. "You're not fooling us! If you'd kept on full section crews there wouldn't have been a loose rail!"

"There wasn't a loose rail."

"Liar! Murderer!" yelled Gus, and then the crowd began to yell and sway forward.

"Get back, you fools!" bellowed the sheriff. "Stop it, I tell you, or I'll have to shoot!"

It was the sudden and unexpected appearance of Jed Carson that quietened the mob. Their beloved president raised his hands and there was instant quiet.

"I've got something to say about this as well as you," Carson cried. "Now listen, men." He paused and glanced at Larry, standing very stiff and straight. Kay was by the young Irishman's side and trying to smile to hide her fear. "I'll tell you the truth about this man." Jed faced the crowd again. "In all the years we've worked together, have you ever known me to fail you?"

There were yells of "No!"

"Have I ever made you a promise that I didn't keep?"

The cries of dissent were deafening.

"Have I ever lied to you?"

There were stentorian yells of denial.

"Well, then, when I tell you something I know to be true, you'll believe me, won't you?"

"We sure will!" came the cry of the crowd.

"Well, there wasn't a loose rail," Jed cried. "Now listen. I didn't trust this man, so I checked up on him myself. And, men, he took every precaution that either you or I could have taken and Tom told me himself that he asked him to be careful. The road-master will tell you that he ordered an official investigation of every inch of track from here to Paradise." He held out his hand in token of friendship to Larry.

Larry, after a hearty handshake, raised his hands for silence.

"Listen, men, somebody's out to wreck this road," he shouted. "A carload of tomatoes doesn't smash itself. Gasoline doesn't spray itself over a shipment of lettuce. The wreck that killed those two men last night tied up this entire road, and who gets the freight that we lose?"

Glover had heard that there was unrest among the men, and he had joined with the mob and encouraged their fiery tempers. Larry had spotted him, and his last remarks were directed at the crook.

Glover pushed forward.

"Take that back or prove it!"

"I can't prove anything yet, Glover," said Doyle. "But get this, I'm putting on armed guards, and the next time you or your men set foot on railroad property you'll regret it."

"This platform's railroad property, isn't it?" jeered Glover.

"Yes."

Glover considered he was being smart when he stepped on to the veranda, but he regretted it, because a fist like a piston shot out and hurled him backwards.

The crowd applauded, and Glover got many a punch and kick as he ran the gauntlet of the railroad men.

Trapped

ARMSTRONG gazed contemptuously at his bruised and battered manager.

"So you flopped. With this muffing we may lose the Farmers' Co-operative Contract."

"So I muffed it, huh?" shouted Glover. "I told you we ought to get rid of that Doyle bird."

"The farmers are meeting to-morrow, and that tonnage contract will be a w a r d e d," said Armstrong. "If the railroad gets it, it's curtains for us. It's up to you and Stymie to see that Doyle don't get there, but there must be no shooting. We can't afford any publicity."

Kay and Larry were clearing up a few things at the office, when the phone went and Kay took it.

"It's for you, Larry."

"This is one of the new specials guarding the yards." It was Stymie making the call. "I wanna report a door open on a loaded refrigerator car, P.F.E. five one four, track six, and it looks like someone's been around."

"I'll look into it right away." Larry hung up, then looked at the girl. "Trace that call for me, Kay, will you, please?"

"Hallo, hallo! Operator, where'd that call come from, please? Yard-master's office. Thank you!"

Larry handed her some notes.

"Could you type that up for me? It's about the contract. I'll sign it when I come back. Then you run along home."

Larry touched his pocket and felt to see if his gun were there, then he took a torch from a drawer and went down to the depot sidings. He soon found the open refrigerator door and glanced round, but did not see the figure of Stymie crouching beneath the bogies.

Larry flashed his torch inside and then climbed up for a better investigation. Instantly Stymie crawled out of hiding and tiptoed forward. A swift rush and he had flung the door shut before Larry was able to get there. Stymie laughed as he locked the door. Doyle could yell himself hoarse, but no one would be likely to hear him. He would be frozen stiff before anyone found him, and naturally it would look like an accident.

A shrill whistle made the crook turn and he saw an engine and some trucks moving down the siding. He scuttled away to watch, and how he roared to himself when a linesman linked up the freight cars and he saw the refrigerator car, with much clutter and noise, drawn

out of the depot yard and away for some distant destination.

It was freezing cold in the car, and after making a number of attempts to break open the doors Larry drew his coat closer to himself.

Jed Carson came to the office the next morning and found a worried and distracted Kay.

"I can't find Larry," she told her grandfather. "He went to see about some freight car with a door open and told me to go home after I'd finished. No one seems to know where he is."

"Well, you've picked a fine time to lose him," snapped old Carson.

"Something must have happened to him," the girl cried anxiously. "Everything that Larry's been working for depends on that contract to-day."

"The damned fool!" snorted Jed. "Well, if he's not here he can't get it, but we can. Come on, Kay."

It seemed hours to the prisoner as the refrigerator car jolted along the track. It was so cold that Larry was frightened he would be numbed into slumber. It was in the small hours of the morning that the goods train stopped in a siding, and Larry heard a noise above him. What could that be? Then he knew. It was a brakeman walking along on top of the cars and seeing that everything was all right. The prisoner took out his gun and aimed it in as safe a direction as he could. That brakeman got a shock when a bullet passed through the roof about three yards behind him. At first he did not know what it was. He glanced round, and two more bullets zoomed through the roof, and then the man knew that someone must be imprisoned in the refrigerator car. The brake man gave a signal to the driver that something was amiss.

The Co-operative meeting was for 2.30. There was a certain amount of discussion first, and then the chairman sent a mes-



Larry found the open refrigerator door and glanced round, but he did not see the figure of Stymie crouching under the next car.

senger to bring in the applicants for the contract. Armstrong stepped into the room, and handed over his bid for the contract.

"I wonder what's detaining Doyle?" cried the chairman.

"Possibly he realises he can't meet this bid," Armstrong murmured with a cynical sneer.

"I hope Doyle's trains keep better time than he does," cried one of the committee.

"Sorry to be late, gentlemen," murmured a voice, and Jed Carson stepped into the room, followed by his daughter.

"Here's our bid, Mr. Knox." Kay handed over the document that she had typed for Larry and which he had intended to sign.

"This offers to meet the Armstrong bid," murmured the chairman. "But it's signed by Mr. Carson."

"Well, what difference does that make?" demanded Jed.

"Because your road's in receivership, Mr. Carson," Armstrong stated with a triumphant smile. "Its only legal representative is the receiver."

"Is that so?" Jed was roused at once. "Well, let me tell you something. I've signed papers for this road ever since it was—"

"Never mind, darling, never mind—" Kay stopped the old man.

"Seeing as how Mr. Doyle don't think enough of us to show up, I move we give the contract to Armstrong," cried one of the fruit growers, who had been studying the two offers. "The rates are the same."

"The rates may be the same, but our time's faster," argued Kay.

"Our new freight schedule is four hours from here to Paradise. Can you beat that?" stated Jed, truculently glowering at Armstrong.

The racketeer smiled serenely.

"Faster than any train you've got— for money, marbles or chalk. The roof's off for that wager."

"Why not make it for the Co-op contract?" demanded Kay eagerly.

"If a qualified representative of the road were here I'd take up that proposition." Armstrong answered, but the smile went from his face as Larry Doyle stepped into the room.

"I'll call that proposition, Armstrong."

"Where in blazes have you been?" Jed wanted to know.

"I'll tell you later," Larry soothed the old president, and addressed the chairman. "I'm sorry to be so late, but unfortunate circumstances delayed me. The railroad rates are the same as the Trucking Company, but we're hours quicker. Armstrong does not seem to agree with me, and he seems willing to back his trucks against the railroad, and if possible, gentlemen, I should like to take up this bet."

The chairman glanced round for a decision.

"Very well," he said after a show of hands. "We'll award the contract to the bidder making the fastest run next Saturday, starting at 2 p.m."

"But this is ridiculous," shouted Armstrong. "The railroad hasn't a chance."

"Don't be too sure, Armstrong." Larry stuck out his jaw aggressively. "You can't put the whole railroad in a refrigerator car."

Armstrong curled his lip in an ugly glance, and hurried from the meeting without answering.

Larry told the whole story to the sheriff.

"Did you get a look at the man?"

"Sure I did," Larry nodded. "He looked inside for a moment, and I picked him out with my torch, just before he July 10th, 1937.

slammed the door. It was Glover's man, Stymie."

"We'll be on the look out for that bright bird," the sheriff vowed. "Think they'll try anything more, Larry?"

"They won't dare," answered Larry confidently.

But Armstrong was a desperate man and his cunning brain had thought out a method that would successfully stop the train from ever completing the run.

The Empty Water-tank

MAGGIE CASEY often had some of the Armstrong Trucking drivers into her eating-house, and they made her so mad when they said that the race was as good as won. She would bet them any money they liked.

"You haven't got another decent engine in the company," one driver sneered. "These other old crocks can't do more than thirty miles an hour."

"There's three of the B Class that can do fifty and more," Maggie flashed back. "And it may surprise you to know that when the Lincoln went off the track by Blackrock Tunnel she wasn't so much damaged as you think. If ye would be after seeing a foine sight jest see her when she pulls outa here on Saturday."

"It's all right to bet the rent money," called out a voice from the counter. It was Larry.

Maggie smiled at him proudly, and accepted another bet of a level fifty bucks.

At a quarter to two the town was almost deserted, for every man, woman and child was at the railway depot.

A howl of rage went up when a messenger came down from the Armstrong Company to say that the trucks had started, but Larry Doyle would not let his freight train start till the stroke of two.

"But where's grandfather?" Kay asked Larry anxiously. "He'd have a fit if he missed seeing you off, the poor old darling."

"Not so much of the old," shouted a voice, and they turned round to see grandfather leaning over the cab of the engine. "Look here, young lady, when you're my age you'll be much older than I am."

Larry laughed, then glanced at his watch. "Almost time."

"Larry, I'm frightened." The girl clung to his arm.

"Well, don't be. They won't do anything to us this time," Larry pointed to a truck that bristled with armed men. "Look at those boys, and they're all armed."

"But if they wrecked a train once, they might—"

"That's just one thing they won't dare try again."

"I suppose you're right, darling." Kay flung her arms round his neck.

"The best of luck, darling."

In the guardsvan were Trotter, Mrs. Casey and Kay. Maggie was armed with an umbrella should any of the varmints try any of their tricks.

The report of a pistol, a shrill blast from the locomotive, and then the freight train began to move. The men and women and children screamed themselves hoarse as the train moved gracefully away down the track.

Soon the train was moving at a steady thirty. The speed increased to forty and then to fifty.

"Faster—faster!" Jed Carson yelled at the driver. "Give her more steam, boys."

But Stymie had been busy, and before dawn he had sneaked away from the town in a fast car. His destination was a distant halt where there was a water

tank. He sneered contemptuously when he found that no one had been placed on guard, and very soon he had completed his evil work.

The freight train was now thundering along the track at over sixty miles an hour, and Jed Carson was leaning over the side of the cab and shading his eyes. Very soon they would come in sight of the road, which ran by the side of the track for several miles.

"It won't be long now before we pass them varmints," Maggie shouted at Kay. "Look at the speed we're going."

Little Trotter blinked nervously and hoped the train would not go off the line.

"We certainly are travelling," agreed Kay. "Look how we are flashing past the trees."

Old Jed had constituted himself the person in charge of the engine.

"Give me steam, Ben," he shouted to Ben Hudson, the driver.

"Any more steam and we'll run out of water before we hit Brown's tank," said Ben.

"If we can hold her at this we'll catch 'em," commented Larry, who was helping as a spare fireman.

"Catch 'em!" Jed gave a snort. "We want to pass 'em! By gosh, there they are."

They crowded to the side of the cab, and ahead on the dusty road could be discerned three moving objects that glittered in the sun.

Gradually the train began to gain. Ben opened the throttle and the great engine seemed to leap forward.

"We're gaining on 'em!" yelled Jed.

The distant lessened and lessened, and at last the train and the trucks were level. Old Jed waved his hand tauntingly at the Armstrong drivers as the freight train began to pass. The old man yelled with joy because just ahead the road crossed the railroad, and the trucks put on all speed in an effort to beat the train to the crossing. They had to stop to avoid a crash, and the train got a good lead before the trucks were able to resume the race.

"Brown's tank ahead," yelled Ben, as he began to slow. "Get ready to take on water."

The engine pulled up by the huge water tank. An engineer reached out with a long pole and pulled down the tank spout.

"Ben," he shouted. "She's bone dry!"

They stared at the tank and the engineer in consternation.

Jed Carson pointed a shaking hand towards the distant road. "There go the trucks."

"Start refilling the tank right away," ordered Larry.

"We can't," answered the engineer. "Look at this!"

Larry found himself gazing at a smashed valve.

"They've smashed the valve," stated the engineer.

"The vandals!" cried Jed Carson, who had seized a gun. "How much water in the tank?"

"About knee deep," came the report.

"And there they go with the contracts," mumbled Jed Carson savagely. "If I could get my hands on—" He broke off, because he had seen a man hiding in some bushes. He gripped his gun and crouched like a stalker after his prey.

None saw Jed Carson leave the tank and go down the track, and it was only Jed that saw a man—it was Stymie—open a door of a truck and jump quickly inside. Jed gripped the gun more eagerly.

(Continued on page 26)

"LADY FROM NOWHERE"

(Continued from page 18)

Earl started up from a chair in which he had been brooding over the fickleness of Polly. But there was nobody else in there.

"This gentleman wired me my daughter was here," said Barnes. "My name is Barnes."

"Where's that lady, Earl?" asked Jeff.

Earl heard a sound as of a car being backed up, and he went to an open window and looked out from it into the lane.

"The lovers have flown the coop," he said sourly. "There they go!"

Zeke burst into the kitchen from the back porch on which he had dumped an earthenware jar.

"They just went down the lane!" he cried. "I seed 'em! Oh, are you Mr. Barnes?"

"Yes," replied that very annoyed millionaire. "J. G. Barnes. Get out of the way!"

But Zeke clung to him.

"Beg your pardon," he said, "but I want to ask you about the reward."

"You'll get the reward when you hand over my daughter, and not before!" roared the distracted father. "Now let me out of here!"

"Mr. Barnes," began Jeff, following him through the lounge-hall to the front door, "I just wanted to tell you—"

"Don't tell me anything! Call the police! Tell them to get my daughter!"

J. G. Barnes, in spite of his bulk, jumped the steps and sped down the path to the gate, and out at the gate into the waiting sedan.

"Follow that car!" he blared at the uniformed chauffeur behind the wheel.

Captured!

IN the lounge-hall of the farmhouse Jeff and Zeke blinked at one another in consternation.

"Did you hear what he said?" howled Jeff. "Police! If they get hold of her we won't get the reward! We got to take this in our own hands. Go on, Zeke, roust out them Minute Men!"

"Gramp," said Zeke, "they're roused!" And he snatched the receiver from a wall telephone under the stairs.

Minute Men were originally a product of the American War of Independence, and they are a kind of militia, following their own occupations, but undertaking to turn out for service at a moment's notice. Zeke commanded, as sergeant-at-arms, the exclusive attention of the girl at the local exchange.

"The Minute Men are mobilising," he told her, "and I want to talk to 'em all. No, no, no; one at a time! Gimme Rufe Wallace first."

Jeff got a pad and pencil from the living-room and sat down beside his hired man to make notes, while away in the distance J. G. Barnes urged his chauffeur to greater effort because Lustig's dark saloon had disappeared round a bend.

"Listen, Rufe," said Zeke urgently, when the captain of the Minute Men had been obtained for him, "drop whatever you're doin' and get the fellows out on the road in that 'Q' formation we've been practising. We're gonna catch the Barnes girl. What?" He

turned dismally to Jeff. "Rufe says it ain't fittin' for the Minute Men to chase anything but a public enemy," he lamented. "He won't go!"

"We'll get him," said Jeff confidently. "Offer him ten dollars."

But Rufe knew all about the reward offered by J. G. Barnes, and he demanded a hundred dollars.

"Chiseller!" snorted Jeff. "Give it to him! Still leaves us nineteen hundred."

Zeke said into the telephone:

"All right, Rufe, you horse-trader, we'll pay it. Get out on that road!"

The saloon, by this time, was seven miles away, travelling through a pleasant landscape of meadows and trees and grassy hills upon a road that was distinctly rough. Polly, seated between Lustig and Nick, felt that she needed something to steady her nerves, and she asked for a cigarette.

"It's a bad habit, girlie," said Nick, proffering his own case, "but maybe you won't have it for long!"

Rufe Wallace, encouraged by the prospect of receiving a hundred dollars, was doing some telephoning on his own account, and the Minute Men were springing into action, one after another, north, south, east and west. Abner Wood, for instance, had herded his cows and was driving them across some pasture-land towards a very narrow bridge.

But Zeke was having trouble with some of the others.

"Al Faneher wants fifty dollars and our spotted cow," he turned to inform Jeff.

"You mean my spotted Jersey cow?" gulped Jeff. "Ask him to take the bull."

The bull was offered, but the cow was insisted upon.

"Give it to him," said Jeff recklessly.

The telephoning continued, the notes on Jeff's pad accumulated.

"That blocks everything within twenty miles," he announced gleefully, "excepting Breakneck Road. Call out the Fire Department for that. They'll block it!"

"The Fire Department will go for nothing," Zeke presently announced.

"Now, there's honest men," said Jeff.

"But they want to know if they should wear their uniforms."

"Well, they got to wear something."

Zeke informed the captain of the Fire Department that the "boys" could wear what they liked, and then went off to get his rifle. Jeff rushed into the kitchen.

"The Minute Men are mobilising," he said to Earl. "Are you coming?"

"No," Earl replied. "I've been waiting to use the 'phone."

"Come on, Gramp!" called Zeke. "I got your gun!"

Jeff was still carrying the pad and the pencil. He joined Zeke in the lounge-hall, and they scurried off to Earl's two-seater and went off in it, Zeke at the wheel.

The dark saloon had just descended a hill at tremendous speed, but Mike, who was driving, had to slow down at the bottom of the hill, for there the road twisted abruptly to the right and narrowed to a bridge. In the middle of the road, round the corner, Abner Wood was standing with his legs wide and his arms outflung.

Mike braked in haste, and Lustig thrust his head out of a window.

"What's the matter?" he shouted.

"Stop there, you darn fool!" Abner roared back at him. "Can't you see my cows?"

Lustig certainly could see his cows, completely blocking the bridge from end to end, and on his instructions Mike backed and turned the saloon and set off to find another road.

The sedan in which J. G. Barnes was pursuing the saloon had been left behind, but it shot past the saloon a quarter of a mile up the hill, and it had to go to the bottom to turn. The saloon laboured upwards.

Earl, meanwhile, had put through a call to the "New York Express," the reporter in him having triumphed over the disappointed lover. After a very brief period of waiting he got through to the news editor of the paper and told him that Dorothy Barnes was in the neighbourhood, escaping with her Prince D'Aglio, and that old man Barnes was chasing after them.

"My good young man," retorted the news editor, "you're crazy! Dorothy Barnes and Prince D'Aglio sailed just an hour ago for Europe on the Normandie. Take my advice and forget about princes and fairy tales, but there's a rumour that Al Lustig, the killer, is up in your neck of the woods, and he's after some girl up there. Now, if you could get me a lead on him, that'd be a story."

"Al Lustig?" gasped Earl. "Why, it must be him, not the prince. Okay, I'll call you back."

He hung up the receiver and he tore out from the house. But his two-seater had gone, and there was not another vehicle in sight except an ancient buggy in the yard and a motor-tractor in a shed. He decided to use the tractor.

At the top of the hill which it so recently had descended, the dark saloon was turned to the left down another hill; but Rufe Wallace had taken charge of that way out of the district, and at the foot of it one of his men was standing with him beside a cart piled high with coops containing chickens.

"Here they come!" Rufe exclaimed as he caught sight of two cars descending the hill, one a considerable distance behind the other. "Two of 'em! Pull her across the road, Joe!"

Joe pulled the cart across the road broadside on to the approaching saloon, and he and Rufe climbed a bank. The saloon drew nearer, and there was no room for it to pass.

"Don't lift your foot, Mike!" bellowed Lustig, who was beginning to think that these obstructions could not be accidental.

"Okay," gritted Mike.

There followed a terrific crash, the cart collapsed, the coops fell in all directions, breaking open as they fell, and scores of chickens rose up into the air.

The saloon swept on, hardly damaged at all, but Rufe had provided another barrier a hundred yards or so farther along the narrow road—a barrier in the shape of a heavy wagon, springless, and piled high with hay.

"Keep going!" snarled Lustig.

But Mike jammed on the brakes instead.

"Hit that, and the only way we're going is back!" he growled.

At almost the same moment a motor fire-engine came roaring along the road out of a side turning beyond the hay-wagon and was brought to a standstill. Its siren shrieked, and then from it the men of the fire department descended in all the glory of their uniforms, their helmets glittering in the sunlight.

The siren acted as a signal to all the other Minute Men who had taken other roads, and immediately all manner of vehicles began to converge upon what

was in fact the tail of the "Q" they had formed.

It was the owner of the hay-wagon who opened the back door of the saloon, and he had a pitchfork in his hand.

"Speed her up, Prince!" he said commandingly.

Behind him crowded other men, most of them armed with rifles, and Lustig and his three henchmen knew better than to try to draw their guns.

"You crazy loon, do I look like a prince?" demanded Lustig. "Does she look like a millionaire's daughter?"

"Can't say if you do, or if you don't," returned the farmer impartially. "Never associated with princes or such. But you're gonna wait until Zeke gets here. Give 'em the signal, boys—the two and the three."

The siren of the fire-engine shrieked again and again across the landscape, and Zeke heard the signal just as he was about to turn down the hill that led to the cow-packed bridge.

"That's 'em!" cried Jeff. "They're down Breakneck Road, by the sound of it!"

The two-seater shot off down the other hill, at the bottom of which Lustig was being detained.

"If you insist on keeping us here," raged the crook, "I'll take this to court!"

"I've heard that before, Prince," said the owner of the hay-wagon placidly; and then the sedan pulled up behind the saloon and J. G. Barnes jumped down from it amongst the Minute Men. "I'm J. G. Barnes," he said.

"You Barnes?" Rufe Wallace stepped forward. "Well, we got your daughter!"

"Get out of my way!" Barnes forced a passage for himself to the saloon, and Lustig immediately got out from it to meet him.

"Where's my daughter, sir?" snapped the millionaire.

"Mr. Barnes," responded Lustig, "you've arrived just in time! These farmers have made a terrible mistake—they think she's your daughter!"

Barnes gave one swift glance at Polly, who was still sitting in the saloon, and then he whirled round on the crowd of armed men.

"Why, this is preposterous!" he exploded. "I've never seen this man, or that woman, in my life before!"

"You mean she ain't your daughter?" asked Rufe Wallace in amazement.

"I mean this is all rubbish!"

"D'you think we oughta let 'em go?" Rufe Wallace inquired of the captain of the fire department.

"Sure," decided that official. "It's all that fool Zeke's doing! He got us into this!"

"We oughta ride him outa town on a rail," said a farmer; and then the two-seater arrived and Zeke and Jeff were seen to be getting out from it.

"Did you catch 'em?" Zeke panted, as he came running over with his rifle in his hands.

"Yeah, we caught 'em," returned an irate farmer, "but it ain't them!"

"Talk sense, Ed!" rebuked Jeff.

"You're tellin' us to talk sense?" howled Rufe. "I want my money!"

Other voices clamoured for payment. "Listen," Zeke broke in desperately, "this fellow said he was the prince, and she over there said she was the Barnes girl!"

Lustig emitted a scornful laugh. "If you keep listening to these G-men," he jeered, "they'll tell you I'm Dillinger."

"And let me advise you," roared J. G. Barnes, "that obstructing a public highway is a civil offence. Now you fellows clear this road at once!"

July 10th, 1937.

"I can't understand," complained Zeke.

"I can," said Jeff miserably. "We lose two thousand two hundred and fifty dollars and a Jersey cow!"

Down the hill across the grass came a motor-tractor at a speed which suggested it was out of control, and Earl was driving it.

"Here comes our boy friend," said Lustig, scrambling back into the saloon. "Let's cut our way out of here!"

The thing he suggested was practically impossible, and in any case he spoke too late. The tractor broke through a rail fence and smashed into the left front wing of the saloon with such violence that Earl was flung clean over the bonnet.

"Don't let him get away!" he yelled frantically as he picked himself up. "He's Lustig the killer!"

Lustig got out at the other door of the saloon with a wild idea of escaping on foot; but Earl was over the bonnet again before he could start running, and they went down together with a thud and rolled in the dust, clawing at one another's throats.

They rose together, fighting furiously, but the battle was of brief duration. Earl sprawled on the ground from a left hook that caught him on the side of the jaw, and Lustig was immediately grabbed by some of the Minute Men and held prisoner.

His three companions were hauled out from their seats, and Polly stood on the running-board.

"They're offerin' five thousand dollars for him!" cried Zeke, pointing his rifle at Lustig; and Jeff immediately began to work out a sum on his pad.

"That gives us a profit!" he exulted. "Two hundred and fifty—"

"Are you Lustig?" demanded Zeke. Lustig did not reply, and Jeff completed his sum, but got the total wrong.

"That gives us a profit of two thousand seven hundred dollars to the good," he said joyfully. "You are our prisoners! Carry on, men!"

Polly jumped down from the running-board and squeezed her way through the crowd to Earl.

"Are you hurt?" she asked anxiously.

"I've been looking for you," he said with a shake of his dishevelled head. "Come on, I've got a story to get out!"

In the lounge-hall of the farmhouse, nearly an hour later, he told the story over the telephone to the news editor of the "New York Express."

"And they're in the county gaol right this time," he wound up. "The two men officially credited with the capture are Jeff Daniels and Zeke Hopper. Yes, that's right—and that's the whole story. What?"

He turned to Polly, who was close beside him, with excitement shining in his eyes.

"They want me to go to New York," he said rather breathlessly. "Write an eye-witness' account—take a steady job! What d'you think o' that?"

"I think it's great!" declared Polly with enthusiasm.

"Okay!" he said into the telephone. "I'll be leaving right away!"

Jeff and Zeke looked into the lounge-hall from the front porch a moment after he had hung up the receiver, and they saw Polly in his arms.

"He's kissin' her now!" said Zeke.

"So he is," said Jeff. "Well, let 'em carry on."

(By permission of Columbia Pictures Corporation, Ltd., starring Mary Astor and Charles Quigley.)

"PARADISE EXPRESS"

(Continued from page 24)

"We can't let the trucking company win." Larry's brains were working fast. "I've got an idea. Back to the cab, everyone. Ben, start her rolling."

"Without water?" gasped the driver. "We'll blow up the boiler," cried the engineer.

"I'll take that responsibility," snapped Larry. "Start the engine. All you trainmen get on the roof of that first refrigerator car. Trotter, you get up with the men and help."

"What we gonna use for water?" Ben asked.

"There's frozen water in that refrigerator car," answered the receiver. "The boys are going to open up the hatch of that car, smash up the ice with crowbars and then pass it back to the tender. It will soon melt in the boiler. Boys, get going!"

No one missed Jed Carson as the train gathered speed.

A Desperate Finish

THE driver gave a sigh of relief as he looked at the gauges on the boiler. It had been touch and go because they had been almost out of water. Already the boiler was half full, and the boys were forming a chain passing the ice along the roof. Naturally, he could not go very fast or the men would all be swept away.

"Pass that ice along as quickly as you can," ordered Larry.

Old Trotter had never worked on the roof of a moving train and he was scared stiff, but he stuck to it. If Maggie did not marry him after this heroism—well, he would be surprised. Several times he almost fell off the roof, but somehow he stuck it.

It was Stymie who had hidden in the refrigerator car. He had stayed to gloat over his evil work. He would hide in the train, and get a good laugh as it crawled along the track. Besides, he wanted to see that they did not get any water.

Jed Carson saw Stymie enter the car, and his lined face creased into a grin. Very quietly he opened the door of the truck and clumbed in, but he kept his gun ready. Stymie crouched in a corner, and feared to draw his gun lest the report be heard. If he were caught on this train he looked like being torn to pieces. He picked up a crowbar that he had found. He would brain whoever it was and make a get-away.

"Drop that!" snapped Jed, who had the eyes of a cat where darkness was concerned. "One move from you and I'll fill you full of lead. Now chuck your gun over here."

Sullenly the crook obeyed.

"Now take off your coat!"

"What for?"

"Do as I say," snarled old Jedson, like an angry tiger. "If you don't take it off in five seconds—"

Stymie obeyed.

"Have a heart." The wretch began to shiver. "This is a refrigerator car—I'll freeze."

"It'll do you a lot of good. You're too hot-blooded, anyway," cackled Jed, who was enjoying himself, especially now the train was going fast. "Now take off your shirt."

Jed Carson wrapped most of Stymie's attire round himself. "I'm all for warmth, young man," Jed cackled at

the shivering crook. "You can walk up and down, but by heck if you try any funny stuff I'll let daylight into you."

The pressure gauge was at ninety and the train was roaring down the track. Safely it passed the spot where Tom Wilson and the fireman lost their lives, and at last there came the down grade. Anxiously they scanned the brief glimpses of the road for sight of the trucks, but considerable time had been lost. The breaking up of the ice and getting it to the tender had meant a reduced speed.

At the end of the race there was a crowd twice the size of the one at Eden. Armstrong and Glover were there, and they were smiling as they listened to the reports that came in by phone. The trucks were still well ahead.

"I guess you'd better give me that contract now, sheriff, and save time," triumphantly cried the gloating Armstrong.

"The race ain't over yet." The sheriff had no liking for this man.

Not until five miles from the end of the race did they glimpse the trucks.

"They have to take a hill and a bad bend," Larry yelled to the driver. "The railroad cuts through the hill, so we've got a good chance. Ben, let her have every bit of steam you've got."

The last mile had the road and railway running side by side, but the road crossed the railroad. Once again the trucks tried to get to the crossing first.

"Smash 'em to blazes if they don't pull up," yelled the engineer excitedly. "Show the dirty chisellers no mercy!"

The truck-drivers had no desire to be smashed to pulp, and they braked. The road into the town was good, and they trod on their accelerators in a desperate effort to save the race.

But the train was slightly ahead, and though the driver had to brake hard to avoid smashing through into the buffers beyond it made no difference. The Moon Valley Short Line finished up a good train-length to the good.

"Nice work, boys, nice work," commented Larry, as he jumped down from the cab.

The noise of the cheering was deafening. Armstrong and Glover looked at Larry with baffled fury. The chairman of the Farmers' Co-operative handed Larry the prize.

"Thanks for this contract, Mr. Knox," he said simply. "And thanks for helping to put every man back to work."

Kay came running along the track, and she smiled proudly at Larry, then she began to peer round. She pushed through and touched Larry on the arm.

"Where's grandfather?"

"Didn't he get in the guard's van with you?" asked Larry. "Why, I thought the old man—"

A sudden yell made everyone glance round, and they saw a strange spectacle. A figure all muffled in garments and clutching a gun had jumped down and was pointing the gun and yelling at someone to come out. A half-naked, shivering creature appeared and rolled out of the car.

"Get up—go on!" yelled grandfather.

Armstrong and Glover glanced apprehensively at each other when they saw the quaking wretch was Stymie. Triumphantly the old boy herded his man towards the group.

"Grandfather, where have you been?"

"Where'd you think—the Tropics?"

Jed laughed fiercely, and then pointed the gun at Stymie. "Sheriff, arrest this man!" He pointed the gun at Armstrong and Glover. "And those two men as well."

"This is ridiculous!" shouted Armstrong.

"Oh, is it?" chuckled Jed, and handed over a piece of paper. "You just wait till you read the confession your man Stymie signed."

Glover capitulated at once.

"I didn't have anything to do with wrecking that freight!" he screamed as men gripped him by the shoulder. "I swear I didn't!" He pointed to Armstrong. "It was his idea. He told Stymie to do it."

Armstrong saw that he was cornered and suddenly crashed his fist into the nearest man. It gave Glover a chance to break free, and the two men raced blindly down the track in a hopeless endeavour to escape. But they were soon captured and marched away by the sheriff to the gaol.

"I'll take along the confession, Jed," stated the sheriff, and then laughed heartily because the confession was written on the back of an unpaid grocery bill. "You should have this framed when I give it to you back, 'cause I reckon you won't be getting any more of 'em."

At last the crowd dribbled away to the nearest saloons to celebrate. Maggie even allowed Trotter to take her arm. Old Jed Carson winked and nudged the sheriff as Larry went off with his arm round Kay.

"I'm going to let him marry her," he whispered. "And the day of the wedding I'll make him vice-president of the Moon Valley Short Line," he laughed, and winked. "Too good a man to lose."

(By permission of the British Lion Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Grant Withers as Larry Doyle and Dorothy Appleby as Kay Carson.)

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"THE MOUNTIES ARE COMING."

—Don Loring, Bob Livingston; Doris Colton Kay Hughes; Salvation, Guinn "Big Boy" Williams; Whipsaw, Raymond Hutton; Burr, Fred Kohler; Raspinaff, Robert Warwick; Father Jose, William Farnum; Petroff, Bob Kortman; Talbot, John Merton; Captain Fremont, Ray Corrigan; Colton, Lloyd Ingraham; Anderson, William Desmond; Barson, Yakima Canutt; Peters, Tracy Layne; Ivan Bud Hope; Pedro, Steve Clemente; Harris, Bud Osborne; Robert Loring, John O'Brien; Senor Loring, Henry Hall; Dark Feather, Philip Armenta; Kramer, Stanley Blystone.

"LADY FROM NOWHERE."

—Polly Dunlop, Mary Astor; Earl Daniels, Charles Quigley; James Gordon Barnes, Thurston Hall; Zeke Hopper, Victor Kilian; Jeff Daniels, Spencer Charters; Al Lustig, Norman Willis; Mike Dugan, Gene Morgan; Mabel Donner, Rita la Roy; Frankie Haines, Matty Fain; Nick Morton, John Tyrell.

"PARADISE EXPRESS."

—Larry Doyle, Grant Withers; Kay Carson, Dorothy Appleby; Trotter, Arthur Hoyt; Maggie Casey, Maud Eburne; Jed Carson, Harry Davenport; Armstrong, Donald Kirke; Glover, Arthur Loft; Tom Wilson, Lew Kelly; Stymie, Anthony Pawley; Gus, John Holland.

"THE MOUNTIES ARE COMING"

(Continued from page 8)

"I was expecting you," he said. "Tell me, are these all trained soldiers you have with you?"

"To a man," was the reply. "All of them have seen service in the Czar's army."

Burr seemed well satisfied, and was about to make some remark when he remembered the existence of Don.

"Here," he growled, beckoning to two of his hirelings, "put this fellow under lock and key. I want to question him, but I haven't time now."

Don was marched away, and a minute or two later was bundled into a dark and noisome room that apparently served as a dungeon. No sooner had he been left alone, however, than he began to peel off his grey suit, to disclose a black riding-kit identical to that in which Barson had died.

He then produced a mask, and, adjusting it so that it disguised his features, he unwrapped a phable whip which had been wound about his waist and which he invariably carried in his rôle of mystery rider.

He now stood revealed as the Eagle, and it remained for him to escape from his cell.

The door did not look too stout, but Don did not choose to force it. Instead he turned his attention on the roof of his prison, which was in a singularly dilapidated condition, the plaster having fallen away from the rafters in many places.

Don raised the long whip that was in his possession. He had brought it for a special purpose, but it served another use now, for he was able to snare one of the roof beams with its thong and pull himself upward. Then, climbing through a gap in the ceiling, he found himself in a disused corridor above the dungeon.

A back-stair linked this corridor with an upper floor, and he mounted the steps and let himself quietly into a room at the top of them. But that room was not empty, for it was occupied by an elderly man and a young and beautiful girl—the Coltons.

Father and daughter recoiled at sight of the masked interloper, and then the girl spoke in a hushed voice:

"You—you are the Eagle!" she faltered.

"Yes," Don answered. "But I know that you are no friends of Jason Burr. Where is he?"

"I—saw him go to the library on the ground floor," Doris Colton told him. "He came in from the courtyard a few seconds ago. What are you going to do?"

Don's eyes were hard.

"Teach him a lesson, that's all. The library, eh? Good! I think I can find my way there."

Thanks to the information he had obtained regarding the stronghold during the past week, he had little difficulty in locating the apartment to which Burr had retired after the arrival of the Cossacks, and as he stole into that room he saw the man standing there with his back to him, poring over a volume that dealt with the subject of mining.

"Keep still, Jason Burr," Don warned, covering him with a revolver. "Your first move will be your last."

The general dropped the book that he was holding, and his ugly mouth fell agape as he turned his head to see the black-clad figure who faced him with a

whip in one hand and a gun in the other.

"Yes, I am the Eagle," Don remarked, drawing back a pace and contriving to lock the door that he had closed behind him. "You don't seem to have expected me, in spite of the message I sent you by that fool organ-player."

Jason Burr found his voice.

"Listen," he said hoarsely. "I know I've tried to get you, but it strikes me that I can use a smart man like you. Yes, and I can make you one of the richest men in this province if you're so minded. I have unlimited gold, and the backing of one of the greatest countries in the world, and with the conquest of California as my goal—"

Don interrupted him. He was beginning to see Burr's gigantic project now—the motive behind the reign of terror he had instituted. But he was not impressed by the man's suggestion that he should throw in with him. Burr was frightened by the gun in Don's fist, and was trying to make terms, which he would break only too readily at the first opportunity.

"Does your campaign include the whipping of innocent priests?" the masked intruder asked deliberately.

"Yes, if they stand in my way."

"Then here is my answer," Don ground out. "Take off your coat!"

He had to repeat the command and stress it with a movement of the revolver before Burr would obey. Then, with fear and malevolence in his eyes, the general slid his glance to the whip that Don was grasping.

"You hit me with that and I'll make you regret it as long as you live!" he said through clenched teeth.

The only response was a slashing stroke of the thong, the first of a series of blows that drove Burr screaming to his knees. But even though the black-guard grovelled abjectly Don continued to flog him—until the man's clothing was ripped in a dozen places and the flesh beneath scored with innumerable weals—and until his loud-lunged shrieks brought a party of his gangsters to the door.

Only then did Don cease to belabour him, and, his own safety at stake, he scrambled through a window that opened on to a small patio separated from the main courtyard by an archway.

Thirty seconds later Burr's men had smashed their way into the library, and, struggling to his feet, babbling incoherently, the general blundered from the room with them.

They stumbled out into the sunlight, and were met by Petroff and several of the recently arrived Cossacks.

"The Eagle!" Burr shouted. "A thousand dollars in gold for the man who captures the Eagle!"

Petroff and the other Russians were staring at the general in bewilderment, amazed by his dishevelled appearance and by the marks of the punishment he had received. For the moment, indeed, they seemed too dumbfounded to make any move, and their inactivity seemed to incense Burr the more.

"The Eagle, I tell you!" he screamed. "Get him, Petroff! Summon your troops! He's somewhere in the hacienda. He can't have escaped, for there are sentries at every exit."

He finally succeeded in rousing the Cossack hetman, who dashed off across the courtyard to round up his compatriots in full force. At the same time Burr swung round on those of his hirelings who had broken into the library, and ordered them to scatter and search every nook and cranny of the stronghold.

Attracted by the bellowing voice of their leader, other members of Burr's gang were issuing from their quarters by now, and ere long Petroff reappeared with a mob of Cossacks at his heels. But as yet there was no sign of Don. He had vanished completely, although Jason Burr was certain that he was still within the fortified hacienda, and continued to rave and shout like one demented.

Meanwhile armed men were assembling at all points, and, news of the mystery intruder's presence spreading like wildfire, a roar suddenly went up as a dark figure was espied on the watch-tower that dominated the stronghold.

It was the figure of the Eagle, and, knowing that the gates of the fortress were too well guarded to permit of his escape, he had ascended to the summit of the tower and was now making his way round its parapet to gain that side of it which overlooked the deep waters of the Yuba River.

"Get him, you fools!" Jason Burr howled to his swarming partisans, gangsters and Cossacks alike. "Open fire on him, curse you!"

A carbine was discharged by one of the Russians. Then a blattering salvo arose on every hand, and all at once that lone figure high up on the summit of the watch-tower was seen to reel—to lose his foothold—and to plunge into empty space!

(To be continued in another thrilling episode next week. By permission of the British Lion Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Bob Livingston.)



(Continued from page 2)

Curious Accident to Ann Southern

A curious accident, yet one that can easily happen—and probably frequently has done—occurred and kept Ann Southern out of the cast of the Radio picture, "There Goes My Girl" for seven days. Playing a scene with Geno Raymond, Miss Southern was supposed to duck behind a couch to avoid being seen by her fellow-player. The actress ducked so swiftly, however, that her chin struck the arm of the couch with such force that her teeth bit through her lower lip. Four stitches were put in the wound, but fortunately, no scar followed.

The picture, "There Goes My Girl," which is a story of newspaper reporters whose love for each other battles with their anxiety to succeed as reporters, is to be presented in this country shortly.

American Who Likes Cricket

Noel Madison, playing a gangster chief in Jessie Matthews' "Gangway," now being produced at Pinewood, is an American citizen who knows nothing about baseball but a lot about cricket; doesn't understand American football, but closely follows the fortunes of Soccer teams playing in the English League.

The explanation is that Madison was brought to England just before the War by his famous actor father, Maurice Moscovitch, and was educated here.

Eventually he returned to America to go on the stage, and in three plays respectively appeared as an English undergraduate, a Cockney crook and a Cockney sailor!

Something had to be done about what his countrymen called his "English accent," so when he went to Hollywood to play in pictures he got Jimmy Cagney to coach him in the native idiom and slang.

He has since appeared in numerous gangster rôles, each an incisive, menacing and polished portrait of lawlessness.

Altogether Madison has played in some 70 films, notable pictures being "Manhattan Melodrama," "G-Men" and "Manhattan Madness."

Madison has a son, aged nine, who is at school in Sussex, and largely for this reason hopes to remain in England for some time.

Next to cricket and Soccer his interests lie in collecting first editions, old engravings and mezzos-tints, and acting as treasurer of the Screen Actors' Guild, of which he is a founder-member.

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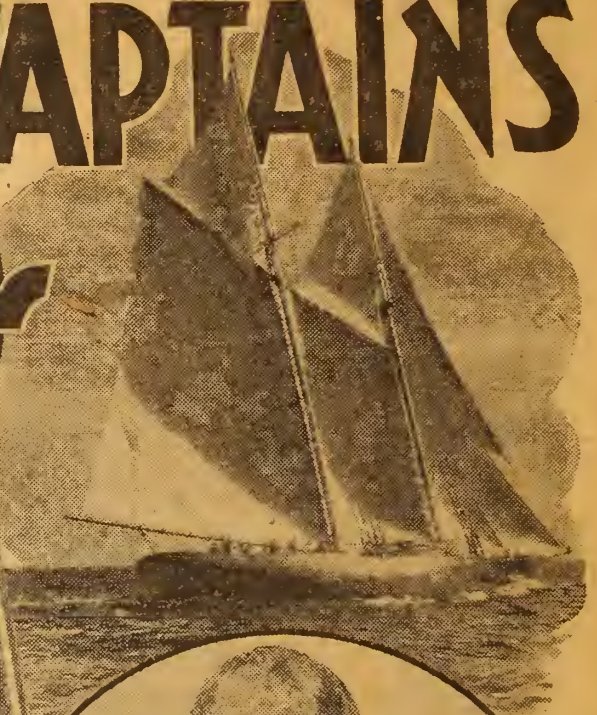


A SAGA
OF THE
SEAS

CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS

Starring SPENCER TRACY and
FREDDIE BARTHOLOMEW

"CAPTAINS



July 24th, 1937.

A rich man's spoiled son falls overboard from a liner and is picked up by a Portuguese fisherman. As a member of the fishing fleet, he has to work hard, and gradually the influence of these rough, but honest folk begins to have its effect on the lad. A stirring drama of the sea, starring Freddie Bartholomew, Spencer Tracy, and Lionel Barrymore

COURAGEOUS



The Rich Man's Spoiled Son

HARVEY CHEYNE was the only son of a very wealthy and very busy man. The father owned so many companies and interests that he devoted all his time to business—since his wife had died work helped him to forget his sorrow. That the boy had a lot of pocket-money, was sent to the best of schools, and had every wish granted was what the father imagined to be sufficient in parental duty.

When Harvey came home for the holidays he could do just as he pleased. If he wanted to ask six boys for the holidays it was all right; he could have his breakfast in bed; if he fancied some expensive toy he could order it. The servants referred to the ten-year-old son of the house as a "spoiled brat," and they weren't far wrong.

Mr. Cheyne was immensely proud of his son, and he told everybody that his son was editor of the school magazine. He did not realize that Harvey had obtained that rank because the printing press had been donated to the school by himself. Now, Harvey had a tremendous admiration for his father, and he tried to copy his father's methods, but the boy's ideas of how big business men made their money were a trifle warped through reading the wrong kind of books.

The boys did not dislike Harvey, but they wished he would not swank so much. He had so much pocket-money, and his father was so generous to the school, that Harvey's head missed the cuffing that might have done so much good.

Tyler was a young master at the school, and he objected to Harvey trying to bribe the boys to make him a member of the Buffaloes, the lodge of the school. Tyler, who was not very wealthy, found an envelope containing fifty dollars in his study, and was furious when he found that Harvey had put it there so that Tyler would be his friend.

As a result, Harvey Cheyne was placed in Coventry for forty-eight hours by Dr. Finley, the headmaster.

Nobody would speak to the boy, and that made the rich man's son very rebellious. They would not let him help with the editing of the school magazine, and he tried hard to make them talk so that he could report on them. Harvey was so rude to one big boy that the latter lost his temper and knocked him down.

The boys left him, nursing a swollen cheek and wiping a blood trickle from a cut lip. Harvey got up and found that a bottle of printing ink had been spilled and some had gone on his clothes. The dark eyes in the pale face lit up. He wiped ink all over his clothes and on his face and sneaked out of the school without being seen.

A taxi took him to his father's office. The driver had refused at first, but ten dollars is a lot of money.

Harvey staggered in with his face all twisted. He had disarranged his clothing and dabbed ink in his curly hair, and he looked a sight. He limped, and when questioned by his amazed father and the family doctor, at first pretended he would not tell. Finally Harvey informed them it was printing ink, and he had got his leg hurt trying to escape.

"What do you mean, trying to escape?" questioned the father.

"Cause they had me a prisoner at the school and nobody could talk to me," solemnly answered the boy. "I guess they were scared I would talk."

"Who was scared?"

"Tyler and all of them. Tyler's a master. He kept me out of the Buffaloes and he took a bribe."

The boy told such a tale that the father decided on action. He instructed his secretary to get in touch with Dr. Finley and ask the headmaster to call round that night and see him and to bring Mr. Tyler as well.

That night from kindly Dr. Finley the rich man awoke to the fact that his wonderful son was not all that a father might desire.

"You have placed extraordinary sums of money at his disposal," explained the Head. "Too large for a small boy. Your accusation that your son has been bullied and made a prisoner is not the truth. He was put into Coventry on the complaint of Mr. Tyler by myself, and he deserved it. If your son came home covered in ink and complaining of injuries, then they were self-inflicted." He then explained the boy's attempt to bribe the young master. "He seems to think he's a specially privileged character," concluded Dr. Finley. "His attempt to resist the normal, healthy discipline of being put into Coventry brought no

further discipline from us, but it did bring him a solid bash on the nose from one of his fellow pupils. It was a blow, I'm sorry to say, that any one of the other hundred and twenty boys in the school would have been glad to deliver."

It was Tyler who soothed the worried father.

"Harvey, Mr. Cheyne, is great material. He's simply been mis-directed, that's all. He has a mind and brain keener than any boy in the school. Perhaps it's not my place to say this, Mr. Cheyne, but it's simply because you and he have never had any relationship. To him you're just a machine pouring out money, a machine he's trying to imitate."

"Thank you, Mr. Tyler, it seems to me that you're right." Cheyne turned to the headmaster. "I give you permission to deal with Harvey as drastically as his future conduct deserves."

"I'm afraid we'll have to leave that in your hands for a while, Mr. Cheyne. For the rest of the spring term, at least, Harvey will have to be rusticated," the Head said decisively. "That means temporarily sent down. I'm sorry, Mr. Cheyne."

"I'm sure that when Harvey comes back in the autumn"—Tyler tried to soften the bad news—"he'll be a boy we'll all be proud of."

So Cheyne was forced to put aside his business for a while and consider the problem of his son. As he had to go to England on business on one of his own ships he decided to take the boy with him. Perhaps he would be able to learn the rôle of a father.

Harvey was delighted not to be going back to school, and to be going abroad with his father on the Queen Anne. But the boy noticed a change in his parent. A certain sternness of manner, and there was no longer such a liberal supply of pocket-money.



On board, Harvey was again left a great deal to himself, and he had to swank to other boys about the liner being owned by his father and how he could go on the bridge if he wanted.

One afternoon the ship ran into a fog, and on that occasion Master Harvey was feeling rather queer, because he had been consuming too many ice-cream sodas. He wanted to be sick, but his pride made him fight against such a babyish weakness. He went up on deck and hoped no one would see him.

The ship rolled unexpectedly, and Harvey, who was feeling very ill and giddy, fell overboard. No one heard the splash on board the ship or his faint cries for help.

Beginning of a New Life

A FISHING dory wallowed in the waves, with a big fellow keeping it moving quite fast by the oar he used so expertly over the stern. A dark, smiling, queer sort of fellow with a great woollen helmet over his tousled brown hair. He stared at a vague shape in the fog.

"Uh, you try run Manuel down. You big killer whale with smoke spout, you try swaller Manuel like he little smelt, huh?" He laughed, and forgetting the fact that the liner had nearly run him down, began to sing: "On the Isle of Fishamingo lived a chief called Bingo-Bingo—" He broke off to glance round. Knowing all the noises of the sea, he detected at once a sound that was unfamiliar.

"Help! Help!" came a very faint cry.

Manuel pulled a limp, scarcely conscious body out of the water.

"Fifteen years I been fishing, and first time I ever catch fish like you," he said, and began to squeeze and punnel the boy to get the water out of his stomach.

July 24th, 1937.

Satisfied that the boy was all right, Manuel picked up a conch shell and made a queer echoing noise that carried far. A hail came out of the fog and Manuel started rowing. A shadow became the shape of a fishing schooner with the queer name of "We're Here" blazoned on her stern.

"I got a new kind of fish," Manuel shouted as he came alongside. "He got no tail and he's got pants on his dorsal fin. I think maybe he about ten year old."

"Well, well, if it ain't a boy," exclaimed Captain Disko.

The hands of the fishing schooner wanted to know how this boy had got into the sea, and Manuel told them that he must have fallen off the liner that had passed so close to him in the fog. The kindly captain said that unless the kid wanted to get his death of cold he must be put to bed.

It was a shock for Harvey Cheyne when he woke feeling weak and sick to find himself in a place that smelt of fish. He managed to turn, and found himself in a bunk which looked like a cook-house. A black fellow was busy at a stove, and, hearing the boy move, brought him some gruel. Harvey



(Top) Harvey informed them that he had got his leg hurt trying to escape.

(Bottom) Harvey wanted to be sick, but his pride made him fight against such a babyish weakness.

managed to sit up and swallow some of the liquid, which tasted terrible.

"Howse you feeling, boy?" asked the cook, who was known as "Doc."

"I—fell, didn't I?" said the boy. "Did you pull me out of the water?"

"Nooo. Manuel, he fished you aboard."

"Is this a fishing boat?" the boy asked. "Something smells terribly bad."

"Ain't nothing smells bad around here," cried Doc. "The fish, them's nice clean, salt fish. Seventy crates already done salted down in the fore-hold."

When Harvey found that he was alone on this ship, and that the liner had gone on, he insisted on going on deck to speak to the captain. He looked a queer figure in Manuel's long, thick blue shirt and the shoes the cook lent him.

The captain listened with his head on one side to Harvey's demand that the ship go at once to Europe, so he could join his father. The boy was furious when the captain answered that the schooner was from Gloucester, Massachusetts, and had just arrived off the Grand Banks and would not be returning till the autumn. When they were through with fishing they'd take him. Harvey cried that his father was rich, but Captain Disko said he could not take a chance of losing a lot of money for a boy. The fish must come first.

A solemn, round-eyed youngster stood by the captain and looked at Harvey with contempt. It was Dan, the captain's son. He laughed when Harvey said that Frank Burton Cheyne, his



(Top) "Well, well, if it ain't a boy!" exclaimed Captain Disko.

(Bottom) "Is this a fishing boat?" Harvey asked. "Something smells terribly bad."

father, owned the boat off which he had fallen. The captain ordered his son to take Harvey below and fix him up with some clothes.

Harvey complained that the clothes made him itch, but Dan only laughed. A shout from above, and Dan said he must get on deck and help unload the dories of their fish. No one paid any attention to the boy when he climbed up the stairs and saw fish of all shapes and sizes being hurled aboard.

"Ah, there my new kind of fish," said a kindly voice. "How you feel, little fish?"

It was Manuel.

Harvey tried to talk to the captain, but Disko was too busy giving orders about the cleaning and stowing of the fish, though he did shout over his shoulder that it would be three months before they got back with full holds to Gloucester. Later the captain found time to talk to the boy.

"All of us here share in the fishing," he explained. "And heading back to Gloucester now, we'd maybe lose all next winter's daily bread for us and our folks. You wouldn't want that, now, would you?"

"Are you crazy?" rudely shouted Harvey. "I told you my father had more money than nearly anybody. Why—"

The grizzled face of the captain hardened at the tone.

"Gangway, boy!" he rasped out, and pushed Harvey to one side. "I'm not gambling good fishing agin a yarn given out by an upset boy." He turned and the anger had gone. "But I'm a fair-minded man, and while you're aboard I'll pay you wages. Three dollars a month."

Harvey had to help Dan wash fish. He refused at first, but they would not give him anything to eat till he did. It was Manuel, who told him not to be



hands came to tolerate the boy good-naturedly. Harvey soon got his sea-legs, and did not talk so much about having the captain and crew thrown into prison.

Manuel told the boy quite a lot about his father, and how he was one of a family of eighteen. How his father used to play this instrument and sing about the wind and the storm. Harvey learnt that Captain Disko was the most popular captain in the whole fleet, and that his deadliest rival was the Jennie Cushman, owned by Walt Cushman. They were heading for a spot where there would be some wonderful cod to be caught by lines or netted. He found out how many men were aboard, and what knots they did to the hour. Uncle Salters, the helmsman, who was always arguing with the captain, was a fine man; in fact, they were all fine men. He learnt that when the lead went overboard and it was found that the bottom was "blue pebbles," then they, were near good fishing.

Strange how the man and boy were attracted to each other. Manuel fussed over young Harvey like a father, but he did not stand for any nonsense. Manuel always fished with a hand-line, and one day he had a wager with Long Jack that he would catch more fish his way than Long Jack could with his trawl-net. Harvey was allowed as a great treat to go in the dory with Manuel to row and to fish, and the boy clapped his hands when much strong language came from the other dory.

"What low-livered squid done this?" Long Jack yelled out. How angry Manuel was when he learnt that Harvey

a foolish little fish, that helped the boy to give in and do this work that made him feel sick.

The men got tired of hearing the boy complaining and making threats about having them all thrown into gaol as kidnapers. Some would have liked to have thrown him overboard, as they were superstitious about bad luck. Taking a passenger meant ill-fortune.

"I'd like to wallop him with a rope's end," opined one man.

"I made him a member of the crew," stated the captain.

"But I hold he's still a passenger long's he ain't done no work," cried a thin, hard-eyed Canadian known as Long Jack.

"Manuel make him work," answered the captain. "Already he has done a little work—give Manuel time."

One night whilst Manuel was taking his watch Harvey came to him and offered him ten thousand dollars if he would take one of the dories and row him to New York. Manuel laughed uproariously at the idea. Then he produced a strange-looking musical instrument and began to sing as he strummed. The sulking Harvey found the music very soothing. Manuel was a poor Portuguese fisherman, but there was something strangely fascinating about the man.

At last Harvey resigned himself to the inevitable. Besides, he was taking an interest in all that went on. He learnt how to clean fish, and he surprised Manuel with his knowledge of names of the various parts of the ship. The July 24th, 1937.



(Top) Harvey was allowed as a great treat to go in the dory with Manuel to row and to fish.

(Bottom) "You touch that kid, I tear you apart, see?" very quietly spoke Manuel.

had sneaked up on deck and knotted up his trawl. The Portuguese gave Harvey one look of scorn and threw the fish that he had caught overboard, then he rowed back to the schooner. The bet had been a fine safety-razor that Manuel owned against a fifty-cent piece. Manuel handed over his razor, but that was not the end of the matter. Long Jack, on account of the trawl being tangled, got a hook in his arm, and his threats against the person who had done it were murderous.

Manuel would not have said a word about the boy's trick, but Long Jack openly accused Manuel. Then the shame-faced Harvey did one of the first decent actions of his life—he confessed.

"You sneaking little rat!" snarled the Canadian, his face contorted with fury. "I'll beat—"

"You touch that kid, I tear you apart, see?" Very quietly spoke Manuel, and before the deadly menace in the other's eyes Long Jack lowered his own.

"Manuel, keep that kid away from me," was all Long Jack said.

Later, a boy with tears in his eyes came and humbly begged Manuel to forgive him, and the Portuguese, after reading him a long lecture, gave him an apple. The incident was forgotten, but often Harvey winced before the menace in the eyes of Long Jack.

On Virgin Rock the cod-fishing was marvellous, and here were several dozen boats. All fishing and cleaning and stowing night and day. It was a great triumph for the captain who got first back to Gloucester with full holds.

Harvey was allowed to go fishing with Manuel once more, and now he was happier than he had ever been in his life. In the few short weeks that had passed he had forgotten about school, his father, and the life of ease that he had led. He became fairly friendly with Dan. At last the We're Here had her holds full, and Captain Disko went round the other ships to take back their mail and to have a quiet chortle over their discomfiture. And when the captain got back he found the Jennie Cushman had sailed. It was the custom to ring a bell when the holds were full, but Walt Cushman was a sly rascal.

"Get that anchor in!" yelled Disko, coming alongside. "Up with the port-sail. I'll beat that sneaking sand-shark!"

Too Much Canvas

THERE was tremendous excitement aboard the We're Here, and young Harvey got entangled in some fishing gear and never said a word till the schooner was under full canvas about the hook caught in his arm. He did not wince when Manuel pulled through that hook, and for once the look in the eye of Long Jack was not quite so hard.

"He's got a good lead on us, captain," said old Salters.

"He's got his topsails set already, running like a scared sardine," rasped Disko. "I'll climb over his stern rail or sail the bottom out of us!"

"It's awful heavy going, Disko," sang out Salters some time later, when the We're Here was heeling over under every inch of canvas. "If a big wave hits us we'll—"

"Don't you worry about this lady," cackled Captain Disko. "She can take care of herself."

When Walt Cushman realised that his rival was slowly but surely gaining, he decided to take a short cut across the Franklin Shoals, and as the We're Here had a bigger draft, he did not think he would be followed. But Disko knew every inch of that reef, and he took

his ship through water where the depth was only three and a half fathoms.

"We're going to pass them soon, aren't we?" Harvey asked Manuel.

"That Disko he pass anything," laughed the Portuguese. "He half porpoise, I think."

Manuel told Harvey what he would do with all the money he would get. He would go to the church store and buy a little gold candlestick he saw there last time. He would take it to the church and light candles for his father's birthday, which was on the third of August. Then the two of them would have a very good time ashore.

"When you ashore you talk to your father on telephone, huh?" asked Manuel. "You tell him you live and happy, huh?"

Harvey was silent for a while, and then he said with tears in his eyes that he did not want to go back to his father, but wanted to stay in Gloucester with Manuel and go out with the fishing fleet.

"But how about your father, little fish?"

"Maybe I could see him between trips—if he wanted to see me."

"What you mean—if he want to see you?"

"Well, he's got his business and everything. He'd be all right," was the answer. "I want to be with you."

Two days later the We're Here passed the Jennie Cushman. But Captain Disko was carrying every inch of canvas.

"Them topsails'll carry away if we keep this up," muttered Long Jack.

The breeze freshened, and Long Jack spoke a warning to the captain, who glanced back and saw that his rival was but a speck on the horizon.

"Well, since you're such a nervous galoot, and we got old Walt lieked to a frazzle, I'll mind what you say," Disko raised his voice. "Go aloft with Jack, Manuel; stand by to trim the topsails."

The two men were close to the mast-head when a rope that had been fraying unnoticed broke, a pulley hook then snapped, another rope broke under the strain, and then there came a report like a pistol-shot and a great crack appeared in the mast. A long, rendering crash, and then the main mast snapped off like a rotten carrot.

Long Jack was able to slide down a rope to safety, but Manuel, who had reached the masthead, was swept overboard in a tangle of ropes, sails and cables.

There was tangled wreckage on the deck, and a lot more in the sea, Manuel was clinging to a rope close to the broken mast.

"Get a dory overside!" yelled Disko. "Are you all right, Manuel?"

"E escusado ajudades me," muttered Manuel. "Este e o ñen fin. Mas nao digas ao pe' geno."

"What does he mean?" the captain asked the cook, who understood the language.

Doc's face was a picture of horror.

"It's no use helping me," he said," he whispered. "This is my end. Tell the captain, but do not tell the kid."

"Ask him what's wrong," said the captain.

Doc spoke, and with a smile Manuel spoke, though he must have been in terrible agony.

"He says he's as good as dead," Doc's thick lips were quivering. "He's stove in—all the bottom half of him gone. He don't want the kid to know. No good putting dory overside."

"You're not hurt, Manuel, are you?" gasped out Harvey.

"I all' right, little fish," Manuel laughed.

"He's caught in the back stay," Long Jack spoke in the captain's ear. "The drift's tightening. You'll have to cut him loose, or it'll take him in half."

Manuel must have understood, for he called out:

"Cut me away, Disko. You hear me?"

"Get me an axe," muttered the captain.

Thus perished a hero of the sea. The We're Here limped into harbour. Everyone on board had done their best to give solace to the heartbroken and desolate boy. Young Dan did, all he could to help Harvey with his grief. All had loved Manuel.

When the We're Here docked Harvey collected nine dollars as pay, and no was given Manuel's razor by Long Jack, who no longer bore the boy any enmity. Captain Disko told the boy that they were proud of him, and that if he wanted to come out with him again he'd be pleased to sign him on. A message had come through to say that Cheyne senior was hurrying to Gloucester, and Captain Disko thought Harvey had better see what plans his father might have. The old captain blinked his eyes to cover his emotion.

Harvey asked Dan who would get Manuel's quaint musical instrument.

"His next of kin should have it, but he ain't got any. Pop thought maybe you'd like to have it."

With his money Harvey went to the church store, and he bought the little candlestick, and he took it to the church. He prayed that he might grow to be as fine a man as Manuel Fidello.

Captain Disko had a talk to the father when he came to the former's comfortable bungalow. In simple words he told of the friendship of Manuel and Harvey, and how the boy had changed.

"They were real dory mates, Mr. Cheyne. You set your course a little too late, and Manuel sailed it for you. But that don't say you can't sail it after him."

The father went to the church and saw his son praying. Later the father lost his son again. His suggestion about going to their ranch for the big rodeos had roused no interest in Harvey. This time the father found the boy on his knees in the dory that had belonged to Manuel. The father was able after a while to persuade his son to go back to the hotel. On the following day father and son stood side by side near the harbour, and close to a monument dedicated to "THEY THAT GO DOWN TO THE SEA IN SHIPS." Several people had died during the last voyage of the fishing fleet, and as every name was called out relatives and friends threw wreaths and flowers into the sea. When the name of Manuel Fidello was called, Captain Disko and Harvey threw their wreaths, and old Disko allowed himself a little smile as the boy slid his hand for comfort into his father's. Cheyne was steering the right course.

And when father and son left Gloucester, bound for the ranch, the colour had come back to Harvey's cheeks. The boy talked of the wonderful things that he had seen and done, and now and again he would break off to peer through the back window of the car at the trailer. On that trailer was Manuel's dory.

(By permission of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Film Co., Ltd., starring Freddie Bartholomew as Harvey, Spencer Tracy as Manuel, and Lionel Barrymore as Captain Disko.)

Chip Douglas was a carefree young cowboy until his father was murdered by a rustler, then he turned into a hard-riding, hard-shooting avenger. A stirring yarn of the Bad Lands, starring Dick Foran



Bitter Creek

IN the little New Mexico town of Bitter Creek business was proceeding as usual on this fine summer's morn—that is to say, the ranchers were in from the farms for a gossip, and all were doing their shopping in their carefree and leisurely manner.

A few buggies joggled along the dusty roadway; saddle horses were hitched to the bar outside "Cattle" Kate's, where that buxom and quick-tongued lady was serving customers in her saloon, famous for miles for home-brewed and fiery rye whisky.

It was just a pleasant peaceful weekday—with nothing much to worry about.

Then down the street came the sound of high, melodious voices raised in harmony above the clatter of hoofs.

Kate Legrand in her new check dress and turn-down broad white collar came out briskly from her saloon to stand, arms akimbo, on the porch.

"It's the Circle Bar Boys," she exclaimed to those in the street who had turned their heads. "And now we'll have excitement!"

Shorty, the bar-keeper, had followed his employer. He looked very knowing as he winked a twinkling eye:

"Reckon that's what you want, Kate."

"I don't get it from you," she retorted. "Except when chasing you round to see you get your work done!"

"Kate," said Shorty, "I'm your leading man. You know it. And I can sing, too."

"Sing inside, then," snapped Kate. "And get ready for those boys."

A troop of cowboys came galloping up the little street, headed by three young

fellows singing lustily as they reared their mounts and fired their guns in the air. The crowd scattered; shopkeepers ran out to hastily put up shutters. Dogs barked, windows slammed down, folk scuttled into side streets—Bitter Creek went hastily into cover! Only Kate remained, smiling to herself as the cowboys drew up with a final fusillade and burst of song before her saloon. She gave the centre youth of the three leaders an appraising stare as he raised his hat with a wide sweep.

"If it isn't Chip Douglas," she said as if communing with herself. "Now, isn't that surprising!"

The tall, good-looking young man with red hair and frank blue eyes dismounted from his grey mare and came forward to read a notice pasted up on the door. He motioned to Kate to stand clear.

"Look at this, boys!" he cried. "If sheriff didn't expect us!"

The cowboys dismounted and came crowding round him, their forty-fives still smoking from wasted cartridges. Chip Douglas read out loudly and solemnly:

"Bitter Creek Township. Lord and Order Amendment. Take notice that any disturbance or gun firing in the streets is forbidden and will be strictly dealt with on and from this day, June tenth, eighteen hundred and seventy. Signed by General Lewis Wallace and to be administered by Henry S. Spence, Sheriff."

Douglas turned to the boys: "Take notice, Dave Massey. And you, Bandy Malarkey. You have been warned!" His two chums grinned. "It's nothing to laugh about. It's the order of Henry S. Spence."

"Aw, shucks, Chip!" spoke Massey,

a bare-headed, tousle-haired, freckled young man. "I've been deaf, both ears, to Henry ever since I grew up."

Hook-nosed Malarkey, bandy-legged sure enough, aimed a vicious shot at Sheriff Spence's name on the notice, scoring a bullseye on the "S." The bullet sped through the thin boarding, and those within the saloon bar made a dash behind the counter.

Kate put up a hand.

"That's not the talk I want," she stated firmly. "The sheriff's doing what the general told him. And General Lew Wallace is all of a man. Stop 'em, Chip, and come inside. Your dad's around this morning."

But Malarkey's shot had inspired the rest of the wild youngsters. A dozen bullets followed his and the notice was shot to rags. The excitement inside the saloon was certainly intense!

"Come on in, you silly boys," Kate repeated. "Don't make me cross—or I'll have to spank you!"

Laughing and joking, the Circle Bar cowboys came trooping into the saloon. The other customers peeped up from behind the bar; Shorty's round head being the most wary. Douglas called to them:

"Sorry, folks—don't let us disturb you. We're only having a little trip round town."

He came across to the bar to face a grim-looking oldish man who studied him with narrowed eyes as he laid cold fingers on Chip's hand resting on the bar counter.

"Why, dad!"

"I'm ashamed of you," spoke the other, his mouth closing in a thin line. "You've no manners, nor sense."

"Only fun, dad," Chip smiled. "We don't mean any harm."

"Fun?" echoed old Douglas. "I call it tomfoolery. It's part of Slade Hemberry's plan to upset Bitter Creek."

"You got Slade wrong, dad," said Chip. "You think Henaberry's out to boss the valley. But he isn't. I get along fine with him and most of the fellows at Circle Bar."

"You couldn't work with me, I'll own," spoke old Douglas, still grim. "No, your father wasn't good enough. Not that I want you. I can manage my ranch for many years yet, I reckon." He turned away. "But you'll come to repent it, son—going with that crooked bunch of guys. I've done with you."

He strode out of the saloon, leaving Chip staring.

The youngster suddenly ran out after his father, already swinging into his buggy. "Dad, here—wait a minute!"

But old Douglas didn't even give him a glance. He shook up his horse and the buggy joltingly rattled away up the street. Chip went back into the bar to be confronted by Cattle Kate.

"Your dad's real mad with you, Chip," she allowed.

"He sure is," the youngster agreed. Then his light-hearted nature reasserted itself. "He'll come round in a day or two. He didn't like me leaving him for Henaberry's. But dad isn't so easy to work with. Kate. Where's Dave?"

"Inside with Shorty." Kate put a detaining hand on the boy's arm. "Chip, I'm worried. I got my girl coming in from college to-morrow and she's grown up a lot. She's nineteen."

"You got a girl of nineteen?" exclaimed Chip. "Why, Kate—you're not old enough!"

"Stop that nonsense!" But Kate was pleased. "You soft soap all the women, Chip. Yes, Louise is nigh on twenty and, though she's my girl, I'll allow she's pretty as a picture."

"Kate, that's grand news. Nothing to worry about that I can see."

"She's always thought I kept an hotel, Chip. See what I mean?"

Chip gave Kate full attention.

"I sort of get you," he half agreed. "You mean you don't want us boys shooting off guns just because we're high spirited?"

"Not only that," Kate said, her pleasant face puckered with her doubts. "But this bar—an hotel, Chip?" She shook her slightly greying head. "No, sir—it's just a drinking parlour, and Louise won't think so much of her mother any more."

Chip led her along to where Bandy Malarkey was sitting at a small table with some of the other Circle Bar cowboys. Chip put a hand on the tankard in front of Bandy.

"Listen, you," he declaimed. "Drink up your last pot of home-brewed. Kate's going to turn this room into a caffay. Little tables with cloths on 'em and a vase with a bunch of wild flowers. And chairs to sit on instead of stools. And tea and coffee to be

served with bread and butter—not crabs and big hunks of cheese."

Bandy thought his chum had gone suddenly crazy.

"Why, Chip—what's the big idea?" he gasped.

"Kate's little girl Louise is coming to stay," said Chip. "And she's just down from college. And she's educated—she don't hold with beer tankards and hunks of cheese cut with your jack-knives. And Louise don't like shooting off of gats and fellers making a row they call singing."

"For pity's sake, Chip," cried Bandy, "what does she like?"

Chip grinned. "I'm hoping she'll like me," he chuckled. "And, if so—maybe I'll become sheriff when old Henry gives up."

Kate gave an approving nod.

"And maybe you will," she declared. "And you boys might heed what Chip says. Louise is my gal and I'd like her to think well of us all."

"Sounds like a funeral to me," Malarkey sighed gustily. "But provided you don't try us too hard, Kate—okay."

At the "Caffay"

NEXT day Chip rode into Bitter Creek to meet the mail coach.

But he was too early, and it came rattling up to Kate's saloon whilst he was up-town trying to find his father, who generally came into the little town to bank his money on Fridays.

So Louise only had her mother to welcome her when she stepped out of the ramshackle stage-coach.

She was a pleasant height, trim in figure; her blue eyes made an Irish contrast to her dark brown hair, which she wore neatly coiled and ringleted on one side of her pretty face. Her simple grey bodice and skirt and the tartan ribbon tie-on for her bonnet suited her charmingly, and Kate's heart grew big

as she came bustling forward to take her girl by the hand.

Louise walked into the spring-cleaned saloon with her mother and gave a quick glance round the room, with its small tables and vases of flowers and the new chairs. Some customers were sitting at the tables looking very respectable, if not too cheery. Teapots and milk-jugs were before them, with sugar done up in white papers, and there were plates of bread-and-butter and home-made cakes which the customers were studying with grave faces.

At Kate's entry with Louise all stood up, doffing their hats.

Shorty came forward with a large, extended hand.

"Welcome home, missy," he cried, his face all smiles. "This here's your mother's caffay, all done reg'lar and according to order. We're steady folks in Bitter Creek—not like some of them Western towns where order ain't—!" He got lost for the right word. "Ain't ordered, as you might say."

Kate gave him a warning look.

"This is Shorty, Louise," she stated. "He does his best as my steward and—!" She also was out of the right word. "And general nuisance! These are the boys from the ranches and their gals—and townsfolk. And— and this is my gal Louise, from college."

Kate spoke with pride as Louise dropped them all a pretty curtsy.

"And this young man here is Dave Massey," Kate went on. "He's a good boy, in spite of his freckles. And a dandy daucer—we're going to have a dance to-night to celebrate your coming."

Dave grinned as he shook the girl's hand.

"Your ma's okay, Miss Louise. And I sure hope you'll honour me in the quadrilles. I guess I won't step on your feet too much."



Henaberry was speaking to the new sheriff when Tascosa came creeping up behind Chip with a knife in his hand.

Malarkey came next and greeted Louise in his dour fashion.

"I ain't so hot at dancing," he told her. "But if you come riding with us, we'll do fine. There's plenty going on around here—we ain't so quiet!"

He went back to his table, where another of the cowboys was grimacing at the tea in his cup. Malarkey stopped him from spitting it out of his mouth on the floor.

All was going along very nicely indeed. Kate was saying "Yes, we don't forget this is an hotel," when in strode Chip Douglas. He had missed his father and was rather worried—but a big smile came over his face when he clapped eyes on Louise. He stepped up to her.

"So here's little Lou," he beamed at her. "Well, now, she does you proud, Kate. I'm Douglas, from the Circle Bar." He took the girl's hand in his great fist and pulled her to him, giving her a hearty kiss on each cheek.

Louise struggled free and handed him a sound slap on the face, her blue eyes flashing with anger. Chip stared at her in amazement, while Kate put in quickly:

"Don't mind her, Chip—she don't understand our ways yet."

Chip rubbed his smarting cheek.

"She ought to be spanked," he said. "And I'm going to do it!"

There followed a brief struggle in which Louise more than held her own. Chip got another slap and Kate pulled her girl behind her.

"Now, then, Chip, you leave that kind of thing to me." Kate was vexed with both of them. "I'm her ma—and we don't want any rough play."

The boys were laughing and Chip was a bit out of countenance.

Louise was very angry.

"You're an ill-mannered, badly brought-up young man!" she snapped at him. "And you had better get out of here before we have you thrown out!"

Chip shook his head.

"There isn't anyone could do it, Lou."

"And don't call me Lou! I'm Miss Legrand!"

Chip nodded.

"Okay."

He went with Kate to a table to help her. She said:

"Sit down, Chip. Don't get eross."

He was just pulling out a chair when a boy came bursting into the saloon.

"Pete Johnson's cattle has been rustled!" he called. "Done last night! Pete's all out with a shot-gun! Come on, you oughta help him!"

At once there was a big commotion. Kate ran back to Louise and almost pushed her into the bar parlour, whilst the cowboys and ranchmen rose up shouting and all talking at once. Everyone got busy—except three older men who sat silent at the table amid all the hurry and scurry. Chip rushed a squad of Circle Bar boys out to their horses and dashed off with the boys in a great clattering, to go to assist the Johnson ranchers.

A darkly, good-looking man, most noticeable of the three at the quiet table, fingered his small moustache. One of the others leaned forward.

"Ain't we doing anything, Tascosa?" he muttered.

Tascosa, foreman at Henaberry's Circle Bar ranch, shook his head.

"Let them boys run around shooting and cussing," he answered. "Looks good for the Circle Bar, don't it?"

The others exchanged knowing glances. All three drank their tea with relish—Tascosa had poured a stiff dose July 24th, 1937.

of whisky into the teapot out of a secret flask whilst Kate hadn't been looking.

Old Douglas Goes Riding

THAT night the younger members of the Circle Bar were dancing in Kate's saloon. The chairs and tables had been cleared away and Kate had got in the best of the town band. All was going merrily, despite the fact that Pete Johnson's cattle were still to seek. All the hunting around and scouting had not solved the mystery of their overnight disappearance.

Pete swore that the cowboys themselves knew something of his loss and there had been rough words betwixt him and Chip Douglas. But Chip had presently forgiven the old man and had continued scouting for the cattle long after the rest of them had given up.

So Chip came in late to the dance—to see Louise dancing away in the arms of Dave Massey.

Shorty, sitting next to Kate and thoroughly enjoying himself, winked at Chip.

"Cut out, ain't you? Dave's doin' all the running." Shorty glanced sideways at Kate. "I'm an easy dancer, too. What say havin' a turn, Kate?"

"Just for once, maybe," the buxom widow agreed. But before she could join in the foxtrot with Shorty, Chip asked:

"Could you loan me a pin, Kate?"

"I got one somewhere." Kate found a goodish-sized pin under the collar of her blouse. Chip took it from her and walked into the dancers. He thrust his way up to the grinning Dave, who half turned his head.

"Hallo, Chip—can't you get a partner?" he chuckled.

Chip suddenly stuck the pin into Dave's pants. A sharp squeal broke from the youngster, and he had to let go of Louise to clap a hand to the affected part. Chip immediately grabbed Louise and swung off into the dance with her, heedless of Dave's:

"Here, hi, vou! Wait a minute!"

Louise tried to break away.

"Let go!" she stammered. "I won't dance with you. Let me, I say!"

But Chip wouldn't let go, and she had to dance or get in everyone's way. She moved like a mechanical doll in his arms, glaring at him all the time.

When the dance was over he took her back to Kate. But Louise wouldn't speak. Kate had had too much of a "turn" with Shorty and was out of breath.

"I'm sorry, Lou," Chip said at last.

"That's the first sign of decent manners you've shown," she snapped at him. "Keep on being sorry—and keep out!"

"She don't love me, Kate," said Chip. "Isn't that too bad?"

"It's your own fault," Kate answered. "You've behaved badly." She gave the young man a straight look. "Chip, have you made it up with your dad?"

"I couldn't find him this morning."

"Didn't you ride in to his ranch to-day?" Kate asked reprovingly.

"I sort of didn't like to," Chip confessed. "Dad's riled with me. 'Bye, Lou.' The girl had gone off with Dave into a barn dance. She turned up her little nose at Chip, who called after her:

"Who's got bad manners now, eh?"

Kate wasn't satisfied.

"You ought to be with your father, Chip, instead of up at Henaberry's. 'Tisn't natural for a son to be at a rival ranch."

"Henaberry doesn't work against anyone, Kate. He's a square deal. He treats me as if I were a man."

Kate gave him another straight look.

"That's what I take you for, Chip. A man. So you'll just run along to your pap's to-morrow early and make friends. I got an idea he'll need friends pretty soon."

"What d'you mean, Kate?" Chip asked in a puzzled way.

"Pete Johnson's cattle being rustled is a beginning, Chip. I overheard a feller saying so here this morning. One who ought to know. It was Mason—your Mister Henaberry's secundo. He was talking with Tascosa and Kirby."

Chip laughed.

"They were only talking, Kate. Nothing in it—I get along fine with them. Circle Bar don't need to rustle cattle." He checked himself. "Pete Johnson was saying something of the kind, too—but, of course, he's off his head just now—letting his cattle go straying."

"I don't reckon they've strayed, Chip," Kate persisted. "Now ask a dance pretty of Louise—and maybe she'll give you one."

But Lou wouldn't. She was half afraid of Chip. And she was pleased when she saw her refusal seemed to hurt him.

Next morning Chip rode into his father's ranch. The old man greeted him with:

"Out of a job?"

"Henaberry's given me a day off." Chip answered. "So I thought I'd come along and see if I could help any. I heard you're running your stock into market."

"I an," said Douglas senior dourly. "I'm selling out before the trouble begins."

"There won't be trouble, dad. Pete Johnson let his cattle stray, that's all. There aren't any rustlers around in Santa Fé district."

"Oh, no?" sneered old Douglas. "I ain't got two eyes, then. No, thanks, son—I can move my own beasts. I got plenty help."

"I'd like to join in—" Chip was beginning, but his father went back into the ranch without another word.

Chip was hurt this time. He had great affection for his dad, but he was too high-spirited to put up with continual kicking-off. And old Douglas was proud of Chip, but he was vexed that Chip should have gone to a rival ranch. For Henaberry was all a rival.

Douglas suspected the smooth-faced, plump trader, who was always so hail-fellow-well-met, of something more than rivalry. Old man Douglas suspected that Henaberry and his foreman, Tascosa, could find Pete Johnson's cattle in a minute—if they wanted to.

Chip rided off on his grey mare, feeling sore. Well, dad didn't want him. Didn't like him—and had no use for him. And Kate's girl had shown him a frozen face that morning, too. Things weren't so good.

Old Douglas was clearing his cattle that evening, and driving them towards the market town with a few hands helping him. A fine herd of steers and the old man was mentally patting himself on the back for having reared them and having got a good offer for them at the right moment.

Then, when a couple of miles short of the market town, a shot rang out through the dusk, and his foreman gave a choking cry as he fell sideways off his mount. Next thing, out of the dusk came a band of masked riders shouting and whooping. Old Douglas shouted furiously:

"Who fired that shot?" And rode straight at them, a hand feeling for his gun.

But the bandits gave no chances. One of them fired almost point-blank at the

old fellow and got him through the left lung. He fell forward, then back, and with a groan came to the ground.

His secundo fled for his life, a fusillade adding panic to a mad dash for safety. He made for Kate's so soon as he got into Bitter Creek, panting and sweating. As he had hoped, Chip was there.

"Your dad," gasped the man. "He's been shot down in the valley. Rustlers—masked—they got him, Chip, and they got the foreman!"

Chip was in the saddle almost as the man told him.

"Come with me!" he yelled. "Show me the place." They dashed off in a welter of dust, sudden dread at Chip's heart. The old man had been right—rustlers and killers were abroad. Law and order had departed from Bitter Creek—Chip should have called up the sheriff. But he knew that old Henry S. Spence would never have turned out this time of night.

The foreman was lying where he had fallen, moaning feebly and wanting them to go after the cattle.

For some moments they searched vainly for old Douglas. He had crawled into cover.

Presently they found him, exhausted and at his last few breaths. He had bled inwardly, and Chip, as he knelt beside his father, knew that there could be no hope. The boy helped old Douglas to raise his grey head.

Father and son regarded each other in silence, a queer mist before Chip's eyes.

"Who did it, dad?" he managed to ask at last.

Old Douglas was almost past speech. He managed to whisper:

"I—I love you, Chip. Don't—ever think—different."

The New Sheriff

GENERAL LEW WALLACE, governor of New Mexico in the seventies, and well remembered to this day, not only as a brave soldier, but also as the author of that world's classic story, "Ben Hur," was in his private office at his home in Santa Fe. A messenger had brought him news of the tragedies at Bitter Creek; added to now by the burning of the Johnson ranch-house and corrals, the pillaging of other small ranches, and the wholesale robbery of cattle going on all along the valley since the night that Pete Johnson had lost his herd.

The general glanced up from the papers telling him of these things.

"A land beyond the law," he sighed. Then he asked: "What's the sheriff doing?"

"He's resigned, sir," spoke the messenger. "He's got cold feet. And so's most of 'em in the valley. Nobody knows who it is, see? These fellers wear masks and come out at nights—killers all, not holding a man's life worth a snap of their dirty fingers."

"We must have someone to take office. I don't want to call in the Federal Army." The general took up a letter from the mass of sworn occupants. "Here's something from a Mrs. Kate Legrand of the Bitter Creek Hotel. She says there's a young man named Douglas, son of one of the murdered men. She writes suggesting his name as sheriff."

"Chip Douglas, sir?" The messenger was plainly surprised. "Well, he's certainly a fine young feller—" He remembered Kate's last words when she had handed him the letter. "Yes, sir—that's certainly a fine feller. We'll be glad to have him as sheriff."

"Go back and tell him he's appointed." The general was a man of

quick decisions. "I will make out the certificate of authority. Of course, the appointment will have to be confirmed at a public meeting of the people."

The messenger, accompanied by Major Adair, the general's orderly, rode all night. They arrived at Bitter Creek in the small hours of the morning. Cattle Kate got up to open the door to them.

The "authority" was handed to her to read over.

"I'll call him," said Kate. "He's staying here just now."

She went upstairs and roused Chip. He came down to the barc saloon, and Kate told him he was temporarily appointed sheriff, in the place of Henry S. Spence, retired.

"But I can't do that," objected Chip. "I'm at the Circle Bar."

"You can leave the Circle Bar," said Kate.

Chip shook his head. "Kate, this is just a crazy notion of yours. I couldn't do it—the boys would believe I'd gone back on them."

A bed-room door opened. Louise came out in her dressing-gown. She addressed herself to Major Adair.

NEXT WEEK'S SMASH HITS!



JAMES DUNN

"MYSTERIOUS CROSSING"

What Addison Francis Murphy, a roving newspaper man, saw dimly in the dark on a train-ferry crossing the Mississippi was quite sufficient to set him off upon the trail of a front-page story; but he had to deal with a cold-blooded killer, and it was into dangerous adventure that he plunged in his own light-hearted fashion. A high-speed mystery story.

"BREEZING HOME"

A trainer is obliged to turn a famous racehorse over to a notorious bookmaker in payment of a debt. As he cannot race the horse himself, the crook transfers the ownership to a pretty singer, but when the girl refuses to run the horse to orders he succeeds in getting the horse injured and the girl warned off. With the help of a gallant horse and the friendship of the trainer the girl fights back. A grand story of the race-track, starring William Gargan and Wendy Barrie.

Also

Another long episode of the fighting serial:

"THE MOUNTIES ARE COMING"

Starring Bob Livingston.

"Tell Governor Wallace that Mr. Douglas is yellow, will you?" She spoke in a clear, cold voice. "Mr. Douglas is a great hand at bullying women—but he's afraid of men."

She stepped back into her bed-room and slammed the door.

Chip said, through gritted teeth:

"I'll accept that authority, major. Don't take any heed of that girl. Tell the general my respectful thanks for the honour he's done me. Tell him I'll see things through—and administer the law!"

A public meeting was called at Cattle Kate's next morning. All the "nesters" and ranchers and shopkeepers of the valley were present. Kate opened the proceedings.

"Folks," she began, "I've been asked to act as chairman, but I haven't anything to say beyond asking Chip Douglas to tell you what's happened."

Chip came forward and stood up very straight.

"The governor of this State has sent an authority appointing me to act as sheriff, subject to election by you." He regarded them steadily. "I want to tell you I'm ready to act and that I'll do my utmost to serve you faithfully. This is a bit of a surprise, folks. I guess—but you got to have a sheriff some way, and—here I am!"

There were murmurs and some shuffling of feet. A harsh laugh sounded from somewhere at the back of the motley company, but this was checked when a thicket man in the front rose to his feet.

"I propose we accept young Douglas," he called. "You all know me, Slade Henaberry, of the biggest ranch in the valley."

He glared right and left, and, although there was still some shuffling of feet, no one spoke.

After an awkward pause, Kate put in her word.

"I second Mr. Henaberry. All those in favour?"

A good show of hands in Chip's favour followed.

"On the contrary!" shouted Henaberry truculently. "None? Right—I declare Chip Douglas duly elected."

A voice from the back muttered:

"Oughta have a poll. Secret ballot."

But no one supported this, and Chip stood up again.

"Thank you, Slade and Kate. And thanks all round. I'll shoot straight. Bitter Creek isn't going to be a land beyond the law from this moment henceforward."

Out in the streets amongst the crowd, now all very talkative, Chip was approached by the dark foreman of the Circle Bar.

"Sorter got to chair you round the town, Douglas," he stated. "Up you get."

Chip eyed him.

"Not for me, Tascosa," he said. "I'm not fooling any more."

"Yellow, eh?" sneered the other.

"I don't take that from you, Tascosa," Chip told him briefly. "Not from you or any other man."

Tascosa, disregarding Henaberry's frowns, made a rush at Chip.

"Up you get!" he shouted. "I'm gonna show our new baby sheriff round the town!"

Chip tried to hold him off, but Tascosa was in a rage. The pair of them scuffled, at first good-humouredly; by Chip. Tascosa got nasty and hit out.

Chip jumped back and then jumped into a fight. A swinging left lifted the foreman of the Circle Bar clean off his feet and sent him sprawling in the dust.

He was up in a flash to charge at

Chip like a bull. This time he got in a nasty cut at the youngster's face, replied to by a crashing smash from Chip which again sent the foreman rolling in the dust. The crowd, always eager for a fight, began to form a ring, but Henaberry stepped in.

"That's enough," he ordered. "Quit fooling, you two!"

The crowd exchanged glances. Kate called "Drinks are on the house. Get inside, all of you!"

A voice cried:

"Tea, Kate?"

"What you like," she answered snappily. And in a minute the street had cleared and Shorty was serving home-brewed as fast as he could.

Tascosa got up and stayed, darkly glowering, by the hitching-rail where Chip's grey was tethered.

Henaberry was speaking to the new sheriff when Tascosa came creeping up behind Chip.

"Look out!" yelled the overnight messenger jerking out a forty-five. Tascosa had drawn a knife and was preparing to stick it into Chip's back. But Henaberry was quicker than any of them, and grabbed his foreman's wrist in a grip of iron.

"Didn't I say quit fooling?" he growled. "Give me that knife."

Tascosa, his mouth set in an ugly grin, gave up the weapon. Henaberry turned towards the major.

"Tell the general we ain't so bad," he said in his cool voice. "Okay, Douglas—you're sheriff, and we're gonna respect you."

Kate drew Chip into the private doorway that the others had gone.

"Get a wash—and don't be too long," she said, leading him to her own room.

While he was washing his hands, Louise looked in.

"Want a towel?" she asked.

"Got one," Chip answered.

She lingered by the door.

"I—I think you were very brave," she allowed. "I'm sorry I spoke that way to you last night."

Chip dried his hands and came to her. "Sorry I was rude the other day," he said.

They looked at each other solemnly for a moment or two. Then Louise put up her face to be kissed.

Rustlers

LATER that day, Chip rode over to the "Circle Bar" to get his things clear up there. The ranch seemed deserted, but he reckoned that the hands were out in the fields. All was quiet, too, in the ranch-house, but an open window on the back porch offered Chip a means of getting in. He was just there when he heard voices—Henaberry's and Tascosa's.

"I tell you it'll pay to have him there," came Henaberry's slow tones. "You know it, but you're so bad tempered—" A pause, then he went on: "We'll settle now for the first hold-up. The pool's a thousand dollars."

"You got more," Tascosa growled. "But I'll take the thousand."

"Your cut is just one hundred," Henaberry answered. "And here's the money."

Tascosa's answer came short and sharp:

"I ran the whole thing—with just Mason and Kirby. The thousand's ours—and I'm not standing for a cent less. Tip it up, Slade, or—"

Chip crept nearer the window. The precious pair were at grips. They struggled in grim silence; then it seemed that Tascosa had got at his gun—

Chip threw open the window with a crash. He vaulted over the sill into July 24th, 1937.

the parlour and caught at Tascosa's right hand. The gunman had got Henaberry against the wall, holding him back with his left hand whilst covering him point-blank. Chip, from behind, knocked the gun out of Tascosa's grasp.

Next instant the two of them were at him. The treacherous Henaberry got a left arm in a bear-like hug around Chip's neck from the back, whilst Tascosa held Chip's wrists in his gloved hands. It was no time for pretty work—Chip lifted and thrust a knee into the pit of Tascosa's stomach, winding him. Then he tore away Henaberry's throttling clutch and got home a swinging right on that fat chin.

The rancher went down like a felled ox.

Tascosa, his dark face livid, came at Chip. They closed and went backwards together over the table, sending money, plates, knives and forks smashing on the floor. They rolled over and over, Tascosa trying to reach the gun lying by the door, Chip determined that he shouldn't reach it.

They were hugging each other too tightly for any chance of a knock-out such as Chip had administered to Henaberry, still half-dazed in the corner, and Tascosa was a strong, ruthless man, willing to strangle his opponent with his gloved fingers, if he could get a grip. But the fact of his gauntlets was against him—he couldn't fasten his thumb deep enough in Chip's throat.

They spoke no words. At last luck favoured the youngster. Tascosa's knee slipped from under him—it had been bruised in the morning's fight at Bitter Creek—and Chip got on top.

He sprang away from Tascosa and snatched up the gun. He covered the fellow.

"Stay where you are—on your back! Don't move, or I'll have to shoot." He gave a glance towards Henaberry's corner. The fat man had sneaked away with the spilled dollar bills whilst the fight had been going on!

Chip smiled thinly. "You can settle with Slade," he said. "But I'll keep your Colt, Tascosa, and don't forget I'm sheriff."

He backed to the open window and vaulted out of the room. He walked quietly to the hitching-rail and mounted his grey mare. Much as he had expected, a bullet whizzed past him as he cantered away. Henaberry, no doubt, had sped that shot.

"I'll have to deal hard with these fellows," Chip told himself. "I hope Davo and Bandy aren't in the swim with them."

This was a disquieting thought. He had trusted his chums; hadn't they ridden all day with him in search of Johnson's rustled cattle? Could they be bluffing him—having him for a sucker?

He cantered along to his father's ranch, now his.

It had been cleared out. Not a beast left in the corrals. Not a hand in the ranch. All and everything gone.

That night came news that Johnson had been shot outside his ruined and empty ranch. Chip led a party of the town patrol, but was too late to help. And presently fires were seen at other small ranches—and the same bad story was told of masked men and lost cattle all along the valley.

Yet Chip couldn't bring himself to think he had heard aright that morning at Henaberry's. It had seemed to him that Henaberry and Tascosa, his lieutenant, had been quarrelling over money derived from the sale of Pete Johnson's rustled cattle. But it might have been something else

And if the Circle Bar was finding these masked men—what about Dave and Bandy and other good companions he had played and joked with for so long? It didn't hang together. It didn't seem possible.

Early next day Dave Massey came riding into Bitter Creek. He asked for Chip, and seemed so clean and straightforward in his freckled boyishness that you just couldn't think him anything but a decent, likeable lad. He told Chip that Tascosa had been fired by Henaberry over some quarrel and had gone away with Mason and Kirby.

"Where to?" asked Chip.

Dave thought they had gone along up the San Luis pass towards the border.

"I'd like a word with Tascosa before he quits the valley," said Chip. "I'll take along a couple of old Spence's men. They aren't much use, but they'll bear witness."

"I'll be getting back," Dave told him. "I only rode in to tell you Henaberry's squared up with Tascosa. A rat—if ever I saw one."

"I Killed Your Father—"

CHIP had to scout alone when he and the two old fellows neared San Luis. These ancient officers of the law were like the retired Henry S. Spence himself—not over anxious to take risks.

So Chip rode up the pass straight into the trap that Tascosa had prepared for him.

Rounding a bend, he ran slap into a company of Circle Bar hands, headed by Tascosa—with Slade Henaberry in the background.

"Well, now!" cried Tascosa. "Isn't this fine! Here's the sheriff come to visit us. We certainly ought to show him our very best respects. Get him, boys, and—tie him up to yon tree!"

There was a brief struggle, when Chip had been pulled down from his grey, but numbers were too many for him. He had to submit to being tightly corded to a forked tree. Tascosa helped tie him up; then, when Chip was secure:

"I could pick you off at ten paces," he stated. "A bullet for each eye—in case the first one couldn't find you had any brains. Or I could shoot you here and there as the fancy took me." His eyes narrowed into slits. "But that isn't in my mind. I got to get properly even with you, see? So this being a lonely spot, I'm going to let Sheriff Douglas stay here and die inch by inch of thirst and hunger, with the buzzards pecking at him and the sun scorching him blind."

Chip gave him look for look.

"I wouldn't risk it, Tascosa, if I were you. I might get away."

"You might," the foreman answered venomously. "But you won't. Kirby's going to stay here with his gun ready. If you move, you're as dead as your dad. And I'll tell you something, Mister Sheriff—I killed your old man."

Henaberry called:

"Quit talking. Let's go."

The men got to their horses. Kirby took his post a few yards from Chip, who had spied Bandy Malarkey and Davo amongst the gang. He felt sick at heart.

Bandy managed to brush past him, saying:

"Bye, Chip! Sorry, and all that." Davo looked flushed and sulky. He said nothing as he rode off with the rest. Chip had grabbed the jack-knife which Bandy had slipped into his hand as he passed.

Kirby sat down and filled his pipe. Silence reigned after the clattering of hoofs up the pass had died away.

(Continued on page 27)

Jim refuses to give up a holiday to look for some valuable jewels, until a young couple seek refuge at his shack from a pair of crooks. The jewels are found, but quickly vanish with a man in the struggle for their possession. Don't miss the detective's unique method of bringing the criminal to justice. Starring Guy Kibbee and Tom Brown.



The Frost Emeralds

JIM HANVEY stared fixedly at the bacon and beans sizzling in a saucepan over the fire. His methods of cooking were somewhat primitive, for he had a way of cooking everything together and chancing his luck that the results did not upset his digestive organs.

This morning he was in a bad temper. For months and months he had been hard at work. Time after time he had promised that directly a case was concluded he would take a vacation, and every time something had turned up to keep him away from his small farm, where his greatest relaxation was to wander round in awful old corduroys and shoot rabbits in the woods.

Jim Hanvey was round-faced, somewhat pop-eyed, corpulent, and his large mouth was just made for smiling. He did not smoke, but had a fad of chewing long straws. The latter reminded him of the country and helped him to concentrate. Jim was a detective, and though he did not look in the least like one he was mighty good at his job. The police had a great contempt for all private inquiry agents, but they admitted grudgingly that Hanvey sometimes picked up the scent quicker than themselves. Of course, it was sheer luck, but sufficient to say if Hanvey entered a case the police gave him every assistance and watched him very closely, because they knew that sooner or later he would get on the track of the criminal or his associates.

The detective was in a bad temper this morning because he had concluded a difficult case successfully, and sneaked

out of town before anything else developed to keep him from his well-earned holiday, and he had been in the country exactly four days when a large car had driven up to the small shack and three men had alighted. The tall, heavy man whose hair was grey was Lambert, the president of a very big insurance company. The thickset, strong-jawed, grin and harsh-featured man was the head of the investigating department of the insurance company. The other member of the party was Brackett, confidential secretary to the vice-president. They had informed him that the Frost emeralds, which were insured with the Continental Insurance Company for a hundred thousand dollars, had vanished. They thought them stolen. Mrs. Frost had insisted that Hanvey take the case, as the lady considered him so much cleverer than the police. Very politely Jim had informed them that he was going to have a holiday and that there was nothing doing. They had offered a thousand dollars, and he said they could offer three thousand, and it would make no difference.

For three days Jim had forgotten all about crime and detecting, and now these rubes had to turn up to disturb his peace. He gave the bacon a vicious poke with a fork. Suppose they did offer three thousand, what would he do? It was a lot of money. No, he wouldn't take it. He turned over the beans and then turned his head. Two people had come into the sitting-room, and were whispering. Jim had an instinct that was uncanny. Though his door was shut he was certain that the two people were young, and that they were in some sort of trouble.

Calmly Jim saw the bacon and beans cooked to a turn, spooned the contents on to a plate and then entered his lounge parlour. He found a girl and a boy. Both were good-looking youngsters. Jim decided that they were spoiled and pampered members of society. Both had just left college and were eloping or doing something equally foolish.

"Our—our car broke down at the cross-roads," stammered the young man. "We saw your cottage in the distance and walked here."

Jim Hanvey studied their feet. "I'm mighty sure you didn't," he commented. "It's awful muddy between here and the cross-roads, and you two ain't got a speck of mud on your shoes."

The boy looked at the girl, who stepped forward in a resolute sort of way.

"Mr. Hanvey, I guess you've seen through us," she admitted. "We've brought you one of the biggest cases you've ever had. We heard you were on holiday, and—"

"Heard I wasn't going to be disturbed," Hanvey chuckled. "Well, I've got enough bacon and beans and coffee, so you'd best tell me what this is all about."

Jim heard a story that made him want to spank these two young people. The boy's name was Don Terry, and he had a big opinion of himself as a writer, but except for occasional insertions in the newspapers he could not get his work recognised. The girl was going to marry him. Jim flicked an eyelid when he heard her name was Joan Frost. The boy talked a lot about
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a wonderful book he was writing, and eventually the detective demanded to know what the big case might be.

"Oh, I forgot for the moment!" the boy grinned rather foolishly. "It's about some emeralds that belong to Joan's mother."

"The Frost emeralds!" exclaimed Hanvey. "Why are you so interested in them?"

It was then that Jim got a shock. "Why, I stole 'em," admitted the boy, and the girl smiled at the young fellow as if she were proud of the fact.

Piece by piece Jim Hanvey got the story out of them, and the more he heard the angrier he got. The boy had boasted to two men that he could write detective fiction, and had had a bet with these two men that he was as good a cracksmen as Raffles. This had happened at Joan's coming-out party, and everybody was very merry. The boy had swanked that he would crack a safe and show these men, so he cracked the Frost safe. He had failed to begin with, because safes are not easy to open, and he couldn't use dynamite, so Joan had assisted to save his honour and win the hundred bucks—Joan knew the combination of the safe.

The boy took the jewels and went off to his club to see the two men and show them that he was a cracksmen, and that was all he remembered, for the next thing he knew it was morning, he was lying on his own bed fully dressed and the emeralds were gone.

"And you're going to find them for us, Mr. Hanvey," announced Joan. "I'll pay you a fee of fifty dollars." She said the amount as if it were a fortune. Hanvey nearly choked. "You'll take it, won't you?" The girl gave him an anxious glance. "Perhaps we could pay you seventy-five if you got them back at once."

Jim pushed back his chair. "I'm on holiday, and I'm sorry. If you'll excuse me I'll go and make myself some more coffee."

They followed him out into the small kitchen.

"If you don't take the case I'm sunk," pleaded Don Terry. "They'll put the police on it and everything'll come out. Those two fellows knew I planned to take the emeralds, and I—I'll go to gaol."

"Well, gaol's the most peaceful sort of place to do your writing," Hanvey said with dry humour.

"But my father and mother will see that Don gets a long sentence—perhaps life," lamented Joan. "You've just got to take this case."

"I wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot pole!" snapped the old boy. "You thought you could come down here and buy me into getting you two out of a stupid scrape. You go back and face the music."

Jim looked so fierce that the two young people left him, and he heard them whispering in his parlour. He felt rather mean that he had been so hard on them, but why should he help foolish kids that went around cracking safes? They must face the consequences of their own folly—besides, he wanted to go rabbit shooting. He stared at the coffee-pot. Maybe they were not such bad kids—spoiled, of course, but they did seem fond of each other. As he reached out to pick up the coffee-pot he turned his head, for someone else had entered his parlour.

"You don't think you were skipping town with those emeralds without us following, do you?" a harsh voice grated out.

"What emeralds?" Joan said, and then her voice became shrill. "You leave him alone!"

Jim Hanvey quietly opened the door.

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One man was holding Terry by the jacket and the girl was struggling with the other.

"I tell you I haven't got them!" Terry yelled. "Let go of me!"

"Yeah, let go of him," drawled Jim.

It was amazing how those two men whipped round with their hands on their hip-pockets. The round-faced, plump, dark-skinned gangster grinned and shuffled his feet, whilst the tall, scowling rascal with the scarred right cheek stared suspiciously at his companion.

"Hallo, Romo," drawled Jim Hanvey. "Fancy seeing you around."

"Who's this old haysced?" cried the tall fellow.

"He's all right," said Romo. "Saved me from doing a rap three years ago."

"Thought I reformed you, Romo"

"You did. I ain't a pickpocket no more," Romo admitted. "High-class jewellery, that's my line now. Smith here's my buddy."

"Well, if you're looking for those Frost jewels, they're not on these two kids," sharply spoke Jim Hanvey.

"Don't let 'im kid you," rasped Smith, whipping out his gun. "Maybe grandpa's carrying 'em around himself?"

"You're fixing to get yourself massacred," calmly said the detective.

"We farmers around here ain't got no truck with gangsters. I saw you two from my kitchen, and I shouldn't have walked in like this if I were expecting trouble. I got a hound dog, and Bud's mighty cute. He's high-tailing down the road to Twitchells."

"Why for?" demanded the big crook, pocketing his gun.

"Just to tell the Twitchells to get busy." Jim took out a straw and chewed it complacently. "This place'll be swarming with Vigilantes and shot-guns in three minutes. One time they made it in two."

Romo backed towards the door.

"If Hanvey says these brats ain't got the emeralds, I guess they ain't."

"Yeah, but what'll the boss say?" demanded Smith.

"There ain't no point in staying," cried Romo, and a moment later the two crooks were hastening down the track through the pines to their car.

"I don't know how to thank you," Joan said gratefully.

Jim Hanvey took off his old shooting jacket.

"We're going to town," he announced sharply. "You can keep your thanks till later. The only decent thing about you two is that you seem to love each other."

"Why are you helping us?" demanded Terry.

"I'd help a mangy cat if two gunmen like Romo and Smith was on its tail," fiercely spoke Hanvey. "You're in deep trouble now. Terry, you get on my 'phone there and tell those fellas you bet with to be at your place in town when we get there. Jump to it, my lad—we ain't got any time to waste."

The Emeralds Cause a Killing

IT was Jim Hanvey's theory that the two men who had made the wager with young Terry were crooks, and that one of them would be the boss to whom Romo and Smith had referred. Mr. Elwood, of the New York Stock Exchange, and Mr. Dunn, banker, stated that they had taken up the boy's challenge because they were a little tired of his bragging.

Hanvey told them frankly that he had suspected them of being instrumental in getting Romo and Smith to jump on Terry whilst on his way to the club, but this theory seemed to be

blown sky-high when the landlady at Terry's rooms appeared and said there was a cab-driver to see him about something very important. The boy looked ashamed when the woman added that this cab-driver had brought him home the previous evening. The detective asked that the driver be shown up.

"What do you want to come here worrying us for?" querulously cried Terry. "Didn't I pay you?"

The man grinned.

"I picked him up out of the gutter the other night," he stated. "I've driven him home a good many times, but the other night I was travelling along empty and saw him staggering along the side-walk. When I got to him he had fallen into the gutter. I put him in my car, taxied him home, then took a dollar and ten cents out of his pocket for a fare."

"Well—er—thanks," Terry muttered sheepishly.

"But that's not all," stated the driver. "I picked up the back cushion in my back seat this morning, and—Mr. Terry, did you lose something?" From his pocket he took out a glittering pendant. "This?"

Some minutes later the taxi-driver was taking Hanvey and the two youngsters to Joan's home.

"I wouldn't trust either Elwood or Dunn as far as I could see 'em," Hanvey told them frankly, and chuckled as he saw their looks of surprise. "I was watching their expressions and their eyes. They encouraged you, Terry, to get pickled the other night, and I am sure that they commissioned Romo and Smith to lay in wait for you. Unfortunately for them you decided to sleep in the gutter, and a kindly taxi-driver brought you home. I noted how Dunn's eyes glittered and his mouth watered at sight of them emeralds, so that's why I'm in such a blamed hurry to get 'em back to your home, Joan, before half the crooks in New York are on our tail."

"What are you going to do?" asked Joan.

"Try to find some way to get them emeralds inside your mother's safe without anybody knowing anything about it," said Hanvey. "It ain't no good to walk in and hand back the necklace to your mother, because the story that goes with 'em ain't likely to make her desire Terry here as a son-in-law."

"I reckon I've been a young fool."

"That's about the first wise thing I've heard you say," grumbled Hanvey. "Now, Joan, just give me a plan of your house and see if I can't figure out something."

Jim Hanvey was correct in suspecting Dunn. Directly they were outside Terry's rooms Dunn got a message through to Romo and Smith, so that these two worthies were not far behind Hanvey when the latter set out for the Frost home. They found out quick enough where Hanvey had gone. It was decided that Romo should try and get into the Frost house, collar the gems and beat it to the car, which Smith would have ready with engine running.

Hanvey and his charges arrived at the big mansion, and Joan opened the door with her latchkey. The detective had sent the two youngsters into the house, Joan to open the safe, Don to put the gems back, whilst he kept guard outside the house. He muttered under his breath when a huge car drove up and a fair-haired, smartly dressed woman got out. By pictures in the paper he knew this was Mrs. Frost. She was accompanied by two men—the tall, pleasant man was her husband,

and the other was Davis of the insurance company.

"What are you doing here, Jim?" demanded Davis.

"Well, I reconsidered, and I thought I'd come down and look the ground over and take the case," was all Jim could think to say.

"Great!" exclaimed Davis. "I'll report to the office that it's in your hands from now on."

Mrs. Frost insisted that though it was late he must come into the house. She was one of those voluble women and never gave anyone a chance to get a word in edgeways. Most trying for Hanvey, when he was trying to scheme how to warn those foolish youngsters.

"My emeralds were taken out of the library," burbled Mrs. Frost. "It's this way—I must show you. The daring of the thieves. I—"

Jim Hanvey stopped the flew by pushing a vase—accidentally, of course—off a table. Mrs. Frost was like her name as she surveyed the ruin of a vase, which, she stated, was two thousand years old. Jim didn't care, because he knew the youngsters would have heard the crash. He hoped that they would be able to get out of the library in time, but that hope was doomed to disappointment. The two young people were sitting on a couch and trying to look unconcerned.

"Joan, I disapprove of you sitting out with that young man," cried Mrs. Frost when she had recovered from her surprise. "How dare—"

Her husband coughed to remind his wife that they were not alone.

"Oh, this is my daughter, Mr. Hanvey." Mrs. Frost gave an acid smile. "This young person is Don Terry."

"Terry—Terry—I had a cousin by that name," Jim Hanvey grinned broadly. "One of the luckiest guys I know. How's your luck been, son?"

"Awful." Don Terry looked at

Hanvey, and the latter knew that the emeralds had not been put back in the safe.

"Mr. Hanvey, they say you're awful quick at detecting," gushed Mrs. Frost. "Tell me, who do you think is the thief and where are my emeralds?"

"Adelaide," protested Mr. Frost, "give him time."

"I've a hunch this case is gonna be mighty simple," Hanvey replied. "I've got a theory already. I hope you'll have your emeralds, Mrs. Frost, by breakfast. Maybe we might talk this over in the other room. There's a fire there, and heat helps me to think." He managed to wink at Terry. "I'm all set for action."

"Who're you trying to kid, Jim?" asked Davis, as the party filed out of the library.

"Got to put on a show," whispered Hanvey. "But I know what I'm talking about. Now, you be on hand the first thing in the morning to open up the safe—they'll be there."

"So you know where the emeralds are?" Davis muttered. "Guess I'll go and ring Lambert."

Naturally, Joan had to come out of the library with Don, but significant gestures by Jim Hanvey were understood. The detective began to ask Mrs. Frost a number of questions about the time the jewels were missed, who were in the house, and who were at the dinner party the Frosts gave that night. Joan edged up to Don and whispered that Hanvey wanted him to slip back to the library when no one was looking. She slipped a piece of paper into his hand—it was the combination of the safe. The detective saw the boy slip away unnoticed and began to feel a little easier.

"I think a drink would be a good idea," suggested Mr. Frost. "I'll ring for Ellis and have him fix up something for us."

As Mr. Frost put his hand on the

bell-push there came the sound of shots in quick succession. Jim Hanvey was the first to act. The shooting was in the library, and he wondered what could have happened. He burst into the library and switched on the light.

On the floor lay a man and standing over the prone figure was young Terry. Near the left hand of the man lay a gun.

Don Terry's face was piteous as he turned to Hanvey.

"I didn't do it, honest, I didn't. The lights went out and there was a voice and then a shot."

"Don't talk now," warned Hanvey, and hearing sounds, glanced round. The others had plucked up courage and followed him. He gripped the youngster. "You've got to get out here," he hissed. "Fourteen East Eighth Street. Hit me, and get going through that window."

"But don't you believe me, Mr. Hanvey?"

"Maybe, but thousands wouldn't." He began to shake Terry violently. "You young crook!" he shouted. "Call the police, someone!" Then in a lower voice: "Hit me and get!"

Don Terry lashed out with his fist, and Hanvey crashed backwards to land on his back. The boy scrambled through the window.

"Don't let him get away," screamed Mrs. Frost. "Oh—oh—oh—oh—"

She had seen the body on the floor. Hanvey was grateful that she fainted.

Hanvey had a call put through to the police to come over at once, as Ellis, the butler, had been shot and killed. The detective took a look out of the open window that backed on to a small garden. He heard a car rev up and the crash of a gear. He wondered if it could have anything to do with the shooting, and his fertile brain thought at once of Romo and Smith. And he was right. Romo, gasping



"I tell you I haven't got the emeralds!" Terry yelled. "Let me go!"

and panting, had leapt into the car and told Smith to get going.

Riley, the police officer who patrolled that beat, arrived before the car from headquarters. He clambered out of the library window to see if he could find any clues in the garden. He discovered nothing, but Hanvey, who followed more leisurely on account of his size, found that a wall plant was badly smashed at one place and that there were marks on the stones, but what made the detective gasp was the gold watch that he saw. On getting back to the library he was told that the police car had arrived. A grizzled, harsh-featured officer scowled at sight of Hanvey.

"Hanvey, how are you tied up in this?" demanded Inspector Garrett.

"I just dropped into it like I have in other cases," answered Hanvey. "I've been out there looking for the guy that shot Ellis."

"It's obvious that only one person could have killed the butler," shouted Mr. Frost. "It was Don Terry."

"Father!" protested Joan. "He's your man." Mr. Frost was worked up into a fine rage. "A penniless, no-good tramp. I wouldn't let him marry my daughter or allow him to live on her money. What does he do? He resorts to this sort of thing—robbery and murder. He took the emeralds, and—"

"Stop it!" Joan was like a young tigress roused to fury. She glared at her mother and father. Mrs. Frost had recovered, but looked like doing another faint at any moment. "You two have done everything to take him away from me. I've laughed at your silly attempts. But when you try to send him to gaol, maybe to the electric chair, you're going too far. I won't stay in the same house with you—no other night!"

"My baby—my baby!" wailed Mrs. Frost, and had her second fainting fit. "Stop her—get her back!" cried Mr. Frost, busy supporting his wife.

"I came here to get a murderer, not a runaway girl," Inspector Garrett rasped out angrily.

Jim Hanvey sidled alongside the inspector.

"Remember, Mr. Garrett, *cherchez la femme*." He winked. "That girl loves Terry, and she'll lead you to him should you be interested."

"Mac, take one of the boys and follow the girl," ordered Garrett, and gave a grudging look of approval to Hanvey. "Say, you do get an idea once in a while—thanks!"

Jim Hanvey was smiling when he left the Frost house. He had sent the police on a wild-goose chase.

In Hiding

THE detective strolled down a quiet street until he came to a large wooden gate with a faded board bearing the words "PETE'S LIVERY STABLE." Hanvey took a quick look round, and, satisfied he was not being followed, went inside. Out of the shadows darted a figure.

"What happened, Hanvey?" demanded Terry. "Where are the police? Come on, man, tell me what happened." "Not so fast, young man," Hanvey answered. "You talk first."

"Well, I don't know what happened except—well—I opened the safe and somebody stuck a gun in my back and took the necklace. Then I heard Ellis say, 'Who's there?' Then came a shot and the sound of a fall close to my feet. Then the lights went on—you know the rest. Tell me, does Joan believe I did it?"

"She told her folk what she thought of 'em and then she nipped and ran July 24th, 1937.

away." Hanvey sat down on a bale. "The police followed her, thinking she would lead them to you, but all she's doing is decoying them away from you."

"I'm not gonna have her involved in this. I'll give myself up."

"That will settle your hash," mocked Hanvey. "You're so hog-tied with circumstantial evidence now, it'd take an electric chair to untangle you. You've got to stay here. Pete, the fellow that owns this place, is an old friend of mine—being buying my hay for thirty years. This is a perfect hide-out. No one will ever find you—"

"Yoo hoo!" sang out a voice. "It's Joan!" yelled Terry, and charged for the door.

When Jim Hanvey learnt that the girl had followed him because she was certain that Terry had been acting on the detective's orders he said a few cuss words. He was trying to think what to do when the sound of a police siren caused the two young people to clutch at one another and for him to do some more muttering.

But there was a hay chute that few knew about, and by sliding down this to an exit in another street Hanvey was able to get away with his two charges. They were scurrying down the street when an ancient hansom cab loomed up and Hanvey gave a cry of joy. It was Pete himself. They all piled into the old cab.

"Pete is about the only guy in this city with a hansom," Jim told his charges. "And believe me he can make that animal between the shafts get going. Pete's famous for his cab, and people fall over themselves to get a ride. His stable would have been a grand place to hide, but now it must be swarming with cops. Where in heck can I take you?"

Hanvey took out the watch that he had picked up near the garden wall and Terry gave an exclamation of surprise. It was his watch.

"When do you recollect having it last?"

"I was looking at it when those two fellows jumped on me at your farm."

"Romo!" Jim laughed. "A watch just sticks to his fingers naturally. Praise be—that's our man. He followed you to the Frost house. Well, that explains plenty." He pouched the watch. "I'll keep this evidence for the moment. Now to settle a hiding-place. Ah, I have it." He stood up, and old Pete opened the little trap-door in the roof. In a low voice the detective gave an address.

They entered some ten minutes later some apartments in a quiet street, and went upstairs. On a landing Hanvey faced the two young people.

"If you want me to get you two out of this jam you've got to do all that I say, and no arguments. Maybe I'll make something of you two before I'm through." He pointed to number eleven. "I'm going to have a talk with the lady who lives here. Don't you two go away."

It was five minutes before Hanvey returned and beckoned them. They stared in wonderment at a pale-faced, homely creature, who was either ill or in grief.

"Come on, get your duds off," said Hanvey. "This lady here ain't got no heart for house-keeping just now. She could use a hired girl."

Joan was thinking of uttering strong protests when the woman gave her a funny little curtsy. "You're Miss Joan. Fancy you coming way down here just to help me." She smiled at the young man. "I understand you're Mister Terry. You two are going to be

married. Tom has often talked about you two."

"Tom?" questioned Joan. "Who's Tom?"

The woman seemed to wince, and bit her lip as if to check herself from breaking down. "Oh, I forgot," she whispered faintly. "You always called him Ellis, didn't you?"

"You're Mrs. Ellis?" gasped Terry. "But don't you know I'm suspected of—"

"Oh, you didn't do it." Mrs. Ellis shook her head. "Mr. Hanvey told me, and I'm sure he's right. I've known of Mr. Hanvey a good many years—he helped one of Tom's earlier employers in a big fraud case. So you can stay here; you're safe here."

"Thanks!" The two young people spoke in a hoarse whisper.

"Mrs. Ellis says the police've come and gone, so you can rest easy here for a spell."

"Why couldn't we have taken that watch down to headquarters—it proves that Romo was at the Frosts?" demanded Terry.

"That watch proves it only to us," answered Hanvey. "To the police that clue's a homing-pigeon—it comes right back to you. I'll take care of Romo and find out who he's working for. I'm the detective. You're supposed to be a writer, ain'teha?"

"Sure, there's my book."

"Well, you're going to forget all those highfalutin ideas about that five volume book and you're gonna write yourself an honest-to-goodness newspaper story. It's gotta be good enough to catch the murderer of this woman's husband, and good enough to save your own life. I'll help you write this article to the 'Globe' whilst Joan helps Mrs. Ellis with the dishes."

The next afternoon Jim Hanvey walked into the editorial office of the night editor of the "Globe," and plunked down some copy.

"Who are you? And what are you doing in here?"

Hanvey grinned at the editor. "I told 'em it was important. It's also important that your final edition comes out exactly at nine-thirty."

"Exactly at nine-thirty?" the editor shouted angrily. "Who are you?"

"I'm the man that's bringing you Don Terry's column on odds and ends," said Hanvey, and was gone.

The editor turned back to his work, having decided he had been listening to a madman. Suddenly he realised what the name Don Terry meant, and he looked at the copy. He read a few lines and then yelled for his chief sub. The latter stated it was too late to put this copy in the late final, whereupon the editor said that this copy was so good and so startling that the "Globe" would put out an extra edition.

Jim Hanvey knew a man in the police department who owed his promotion to him, and he was able to supply the address of Romo and Smith. Jim called at this address and left a note. Those two worthies read it and were so alarmed that Smith rang up Mr. Dunn.

"Mr. Dunn, why have you sent us this note?" Smith said over the 'phone. "It says 'Come to my office immediately. I got the tip you were spotted at the Frosts' last night,' and it's signed 'The Boss.'"

"I don't write notes, and I don't sign myself 'The Boss,'" snarled Dunn. "This is some sort of a trap."

A cry came from Romo, who was at the window. "I've just spotted that 'tee fella Hanvey and he's watching from a doorway across the street."

"We've spotted Hanvey watching this place. Guess he framed this note so

we'd come chasing down to your place so he could follow us," Smith explained. "Guess we'll have to stay here."

"Oh, no, you're not," Dunn laughed unpleasantly. "Hanvey knows too much already. Come on down to my office as if you don't suspect, and let him follow you. We'll take care of him."

Smith hung up. "Pal, we gotta job of work. I'll get quite a kick out of killing this Hick Hanvey."

Hanvey's Bluff Nearly Fails

WHEN Romo and Smith left their lodgings they were followed by Jim Hanvey, and the two gunmen lured him down a very quiet street to a warehouse.

Hanvey entered the warehouse and looked round the place. It seemed dank and deserted. There was an open door leading down into a cellar, and he hesitated on the top step. He took a step or two down, then paused. Instinct that had saved his life before warned him to be careful. He noticed a small round bale and this he pushed down the stairs. It rolled from step to step with a dull thump, not unlike that of human foot-falls. Two guns roared.

Romo and Smith switched on torches and expected to see a corpse.

"T'aint fitting to shoot a man that's bringing you a first-class watch," drawled Hanvey. "Here, Romo, catch!"

Smith gaped and Romo just had enough presence of mind to catch the watch. He flashed his torch on it.

"Where'd you get this?" Romo demanded.

"What else did you find out?" growled Smith, fingering his gun and hesitating to fire.

"If I was speaking to your boss I might get real talkative," calmly stated Hanvey.

"Better take him to the boss," whispered Romo in his friend's ear. "He musta found this at the Frost house. He seems so gosh-darned sure of himself that I reckon he's got us enclosed."

They took Hanvey through a number of underground passages into another warehouse, where there was a telephone. Mr. Dunn soon made his appearance.

"I'm willing to trade you a thirty-hour start on the police for a signed confession," Hanvey looked at Dunn, as if not at all surprised to find he was the boss. "And Mrs. Frost's fancy necklaee."

"You can fool those two stooges," Hanvey, but not me," snarled Dunn, with a contemptuous leer. "You can't hang anything on us with this watch. As the boys didn't shoot you I'll show 'em a better way."

A trapdoor in the floor was lifted up and Hanvey, craning forward, could hear the swish of water. He was over one of the sewers.

"What's the time on that watch?" Hanvey seemed in no way alarmed.

"Nine twenty-five," Dunn answered. "Why?"

"In exactly five minutes the final edition of the 'Globe' is

going to be out. Three hundred thousand people will be reading it then."

"Reading what?" "All about you." Hanvey laughed at Dunn and then looked at the two gunmen. "And all about you two killing Ellis. You will read how your boss put you up to do the shooting. Now you can shoot me, or drown me, but what about the other three hundred thousand people?"

Dunn looked keenly at Hanvey. "We'll wait and take a look at this final edition. Get him ready, boys, so that if it's a stall you'll know what to do."

They bound Hanvey's arms and fastened heavy weights to his legs and deposited him in a chair close to the open trap. One push and he was gone. At 9.30 Romo went up for the final edition, and returned in triumph to say that he could find nothing. Dunn took a good look, and Hanvey felt a chill of fear go up his spine.

"There's nothing in this paper, Hanvey," cried Dunn. "You were lying."

"Then that can't be the final edition," desperately Hanvey argued.

"Don't waste time with him," shouted Dunn. "Give him a push, and get it finished."

"I tell you you're making a mistake," cried Hanvey, as the two gunmen laid hands on the chair. "They've got you three down for the Ellis murder. Kill me and they'll get you for that as well."

Romo and Smith glanced questioningly at Dunn.

"Hanvey, we'd be fools not to do this," Dunn said at last. "You know too much, and—"

Dunn broke off because faintly the cry of a newsboy carried down to the dismal and chilly warehouse:

"Extra—Extra—Special Edition of the 'Globe.'"

"Get that paper!" Dunn rasped out. Romo returned in a wild rush a few seconds later.

"He's right, boss." He was whimper-

ing with fear. "Terry names us as the Ellis killers. You're in it. Mr. Elwood's in it."

Dunn snatched the paper, and his eyes dilated as he saw the glaring headlines on the front page with the names of Romo, Smith and himself.

It was a very clever letter that Terry had written with the help of Jim Hanvey. He mentioned people who could have done the killing. Romo and Smith were his chief suspects, with Dunn as their chief.

"I stand accused," Terry had written. "To every one of you I am a man to be shot down at sight. I am innocent, though the first of my accusers is the father of the girl I love. W. B. Elwood knew the stones would be returned. If Romo and Smith and Dunn are not the guilty party, then why not Elwood? Davis, the insurance company's investigator, left the house not many minutes before the crime—has he got an alibi for those fatal minutes? Getting the emeralds as well as the hundred thousand dollars insurance would have been good business for Mr. Frost. Why should he not be suspected?"

There was a lot more, in fact, Don Terry had brought every person that was in any way connected with the crime into his story.

"What're you going to do, Mr. Dunn?" Romo demanded.

"I'm going to headquarters to see Inspector Garrett, and establish my alibi." Dunn was no longer the same assured crook. "I've got to prove I spent a very pleasant evening at my club."

"But how about us?" wailed Smith. "We ain't got no alibi."

"Mr. Hanvey put you on the spot, let him get you off," suggested Dunn. "I leave him in your hands."

"Now I started to talk about a trade," Hanvey said as the two gunmen began



Finally, the desired statement was approved by the detective.

to unfasten his bonds. "Give me the emeralds and—"

"We ain't got no emeralds, and we didn't kill nobody," interrupted Smith. "You've got us into a tough spot, and we didn't do a thing."

"You can tell that to the police, but you can't pull the wool over the eyes of James Wilford Hanvey."

"We can't tell the cops," shouted Smith. "Because we were up there last night trying to hi-jack Terry."

"But we never got near him," lamented Romo. "And we're going to take you up to the Frost house to prove it."

They took Hanvey out of the warehouse. He was not sorry to go. As they rode in a taxi the detective pointed out the people in the streets eagerly scanning the evening paper. How he chuckled when the taxi-driver asked them if they had heard of the Terry statement in the "Globe," and in his opinion it was a cinch that Romo and Smith bumped off Ellis!

Romo and Smith intimated to Hanvey that they would pose as his assistants. He would see Mr. or Mrs. Frost and make a statement that they had nothing to do with the shooting. If he refused then it would be just too bad. But their little plan was doomed to failure. Inspector Garrett was furious because every second his 'phone was ringing or suspects were trying to establish alibis. He went down with a squad car to the Frost house to make some inquiries into the amazing statements made by Terry. Now Hanvey had insisted that first of all he must make some investigations, and then he would endeavour to prove that Romo and Smith had no hand in the shooting. Frost was not at home, but Mrs. Frost was eager to answer questions. Then the gmmen heard the police siren and they hurried Hanvey away, much to Mrs. Frost's surprise.

Some time later, Mrs. Ellis opened the door of her apartments and started back in alarm as Romo and Smith marched into the room.

Joan and Terry appeared. "You murderers!" shouted Terry, and flung himself forward.

Jim Hanvey watched the scrimmage with a certain amount of amusement. He closed the outer door, and when he thought the gunmen were getting a little too rough he intervened.

"That'll be enough, Don," he called out. "I can handle these two thugs."

Mrs. Ellis picked up a poker. "What are they doing here?" She waved the weapon threateningly. "I'm not afraid of them. They can't do anything more to me."

"It wasn't them, Mrs. Ellis," Hanvey took the poker away. "They didn't kill your husband—"

"And he's gonna prove it," raved Smith, and whipped out a gun. "Or else someone will get killed."

"Providing that gun don't go off I might do something about it," Hanvey pulled up a chair to the table. "When we were up at the Frosts we had a look round so that you two mugs should look like my assistants, and I chanced to explore a small closet, and I found quite a stack of papers." He produced a wad of paper from his pocket. "These two were on top. I was about to question Mrs. Frost when our friends showed up and spoiled everything."

"Them newspapers don't mean a thing," cried Romo.

"Oh, yes they do. Someone had shoved them on the floor," coolly answered Hanvey. "Maybe it was the murderer. They were slid off in the last twenty-four hours, because the paper on top of the pile now don't July 24th, 1937.

carry any dust. There are heel marks on the papers, and these leather heels tell me quite a lot."

"What?" demanded Smith.

"Don't keep on bellowing so much."

Hanvey scowled at the tall gunman. "The more you shout the less chance I have of saving your miserable skin. Terry, take a pencil and make some notes. Ten and a half shoes, indicating a height of five foot eleven—soles worn on the outside, meaning a quite heavy man." He looked at the small party clustered round him. "And I've a fairly good notion who went into that closet, took those emeralds and killed Mr. Ellis. But there's only one way to trap him."

"Well, come on, we're listening," said Smith.

"Bait. The thirty thousand dollars the insurance company's offering for that necklace."

"But, Mr. Hanvey, he wouldn't dare to try and get that money now. There's a murder charge—"

"Yes, but that's hanging on you, Terry," the detective told the boy. "As long as the police suspect Don Terry, the real criminal can operate without showing his hand. Supposing you were in gaol, Don, the real criminal could go after that thirty thousand without tipping to the police they had juggled the wrong man."

"What do you want me to do, Mr. Hanvey?" Terry asked in quiet, resigned tones.

"Force this rascal to show his hand." Hanvey pushed some paper across the table. "We'll write to the 'Globe' that you're giving yourself up at the Central Street Police Station tomorrow."

Joan was all against the scheme, but Hanvey had a persuasive tongue, and finally the desired statement, approved by the detective, was forwarded to the editor of the "Globe."

The next morning, when Hanvey was certain that the "Globe" had been read by its three hundred thousand readers he put through a call from Mrs. Ellis' apartments to the insurance company. He was informed that Mr. Lambert was in conference with Mr. Davis.

"This concerns both of them," growled Hanvey. "Put me through." A pause. "This is Hanvey speaking."

That was as far as the detective got, for loud, angry sounds came out of the 'phone.

"I know you look like losing thirty thousand dollars, but you won't if you listen to me," Hanvey managed to speak at last. "You want to know where I am—well, if you'll listen I'll tell you where I am and what I want you to do. I'm sure Mr. Davis will agree to my plan of getting back the emeralds. Some time before midnight the thief is gonna get in touch with you. I am confident of that, but you'll have to take my word for it. I want you to tell him that I'm handling the case for the company, and tell him he can reach me at No. 20 Stratton Street. Send a messenger down to me with the thirty thousand dollars at once."

Hanvey stood back from the 'phone. "They're arguing," he whispered to his small audience. Then he waved them to be quiet. "Davis agrees. Brackett is coming down with the money at once. Thanks. Good-bye."

Within an hour Brackett handed the money to Hanvey, and when Romo and Smith saw the pile of notes their mouths watered, and their eyes bulged as they saw Hanvey take out a small bottle from his pocket and then with a brush begin to dab the notes.

It was dark when Mrs. Ellis appeared with a note that had been pushed under the door.

"INSURANCE COMPANY SAYS YOU'LL HANDLE. BE IN 'PHONE-BOOTH CORNER DRUGSTORE 10.45. ACT ALONE OR YOU DIE."

Just after ten Jim Hanvey prepared to leave, and the crooks offered to act as convoy.

"I've gotta act alone," the detective told them.

"Thirty thousand dollars can take you a long way," cried Smith. "How do we know you're not walking out on us?"

"For the first time in your lives, you two're gonna trust someone," Hanvey then turned to Terry. "Keep that appointment, son. I won't fail you."

But when Hanvey had gone the two gunmen looked at each other.

"That dough could take us a long way," hissed Smith. "I'm gonna follow that guy if you don't!"

"Oh, no you don't," viciously retorted Romo. "I'm gonna see that he don't get hurt, by you nor nobody else."

They slipped out before Joan or Terry could stop them. They stalked their quarry warily.

Hands Up!

JIM HANVEY was standing near the telephone booth when he heard the bell ring. He took off the receiver.

"Hanvey speaking."

"Come to No. 13 Mart Place, Apartment one. Make sure no one follows you. If you are followed you will be killed," a voice spoke in hollow tones.

The detective found the place and had no idea that Romo and Smith were trailing him. Those two worthies were not enjoying themselves, because they had a strong idea a police officer had recognised them, and if so, the whole force would soon be on their tail. No. 13 was an ordinary sort of building and the door was open. Hanvey entered and found himself confronting four doors, but one was open. He entered, and the door closed softly after him.

"Where's the money?" said the same hollow voice, and from behind a curtain came a hand holding a revolver.

Hanvey took the money out of the envelope and held it out. Another hand appeared and the money was seized. The money vanished behind the curtain.

"Hey, mister, where are the emeralds?"

"You've broken your bargain," spoke the hollow voice. "Two men followed you down here. I had the police take care of them. I have hidden the emeralds in the room. You can find them for yourself—if you can." A mocking laugh and then the sound of a key turning in the lock.

Hanvey found there were three doors and all were locked. He cursed Romo and Smith for following him. A faint hissing sound made him glance round in surprise. This room was a bit stuffy and it had no windows. The hissing grew louder. He bent down, and then started up quickly—gas! Soon his senses began to reel and he began to stagger round the room. He swayed and knocked into a vase, which broke. The emeralds lay on the floor beside the unconscious figure of Jim Hanvey!

The crowds at the police station were dense. Thousands of people had come to see Don Terry give himself up. Inspector Garrett was infuriated about all the publicity that Terry was getting.

At the station all those whom Terry had accused as possible criminals were present. Garrett was of the opinion that it was a bluff and that the boy

(Continued on page 28)

Known as the cleverest criminal lawyer in the State, Barry Brandon is appointed District Attorney, and he prosecutes many of his former clients ruthlessly, until the girl he loves is put "on the spot." A dramatic story, starring Lee Tracy and Margot Grahame



Guilty and—not Guilty

IN the court-room of General Sessions at Los Angeles a confident gentleman was seated in the witness-stand giving evidence against a prisoner who had been charged with theft. By his side, leaning casually against the left balustrade of the stand, was a young lawyer, cleanly shaved, neat and almost finicky in his carefully cut clothes—a white carnation in his coat lapel and a friendly, genial look on his clever face as he cross-examined the gentleman in the chair.

"And you identify the prisoner as the thief by his voice?"

"Yes."

"And by the way he swings his arms as he walks or runs? Very good." The young lawyer smiled. "And when he ran his hat fell off?"

"It did."

The lawyer lounged across the well of the court to where exhibits were placed on a table. He took up a hat and regarded it almost with affection as he turned to the jury.

"People's exhibit A," he told them. "One black Fedora hat—slightly the worse for wear." He turned to the witness. "This, you say, fell off his head when he ran?" He put it on the defendant's head a moment. "Not a very good fit!"

The jury allowed themselves to laugh. The prosecuting attorney jumped to his feet.

"I suggest that Mr. Brandon let the witness talk!"

"Sorry," said the defending counsel. "Well, this hat fell off the prisoner's head and you picked it up and examined it carefully. And you are prepared to swear that it belongs to the prisoner?"

"I am," the witness answered.

"You are positive because of the initials in the hat." Brandon glanced into the exhibit. "You are quite positive because of the initials J. B. on the lining—John Brittain?"

The witness gave him a steady stare. "That clinched it!"

"Do you know the penalty for perjury?" came the lawyer's next question, but before the witness could reply, the prosecuting attorney again sprang up.

"This is irrelevant and immaterial!" he cried, facing the judge. "The court is being treated to one of Mr. Brandon's conjuring tricks. He's going to get a rabbit out of the hat!"

Brandon caught him up.

"CRIMINAL LAWYER"

"A rabbit? No—a clean acquittal! There are no initials in this hat."

The witness' face was a study as the jury began to exchange significant nods. Brandon turned to the judge, handing him the exhibit with a little bow, as he said:

"And so, your Honour, the matter is ended. The people have based a case for conviction upon non-existent initials in a hat through which the prosecution has been talking!"

The judge glanced into the hat. He nodded to the jury who had risen. The foreman spoke:

"No case, your Honour. Mr. Brittain is acquitted."

As Brandon left the court many admiring glances were bestowed on him by those of both sexes. He was always so suspiciously gentle to a hostile witness. So ready to pounce—and then to turn away anger by a little joke.

Back in his rooms, Brandon was met in the hall by his Japanese servant.

"Miss Walker here, sir," he said. "She say she wait for you."

Brandon grimaced.

"And I have a jury case to read up!" He strode into the parlour to meet a brown-eyed, golden-haired girl who stood up from where she had been lolling in his easiest chair. "Betty, this is a surprise."

"Oh, yes?" she smiled. "Never mind your old cases. You've got to take me to the Larkin Club to-night. You promised."

"Did I?" He regarded her slight, shapely form, her pleading brown eyes. "Oh, well, okay! Mitsu," he called to the Japanese boy, "put out my things—I'm dining out."

"I'll call back for you." Betty Walker came close to him. "Daddy was very pleased with you to-day. He says you'll go far—getting people out of scrapes when they're guilty all the time! Bye, Barry—like me a little?"

"I like you a lot," Brandon told her. "But don't you believe all your father says about me."

Later that evening a very mixed crowd was gathered at Gene Larkin's night club, dancing, gambling and drinking.

Larkin, a good-looking, well-dressed fellow whose only fault seemed to lie in his somewhat tight-drawn, thin-lipped mouth, moved about among his guests, keeping keen eyes on everything without appearing to be anything more than just another of the many pleasure-seekers. He noted with a faintly approving smile that Barry Brandon was at the American bar chatting with a small knot of men whom Larkin knew to be rich and careless of money.

In one of the smaller rooms much

quieter customers were sitting and standing round a roulette table, all eyes watching the jumpy antics of a small white ball in the spinning bowl-shaped wheel.

Larkin sauntered along the bar-room to Brandon, now alone on his high stool at the bar, rather moodily pulling at a cigar.

He asked, just above a whisper:

"Did you take care of the Martin matter, Barry?"

"Martin is in the County Gaol."

Larkin lighted a cigar. Then he said, very softly:

"I told you to get a writ."

"I don't like Martin," said Brandon stubbornly. "And so—he's in gaol."

Larkin took a drink from the barman, asking him:

"Plain tonic?" The man nodded and went along to serve other customers. Larkin spoke again:

"Barry, listen—I like Bill Martin and I want him on the street. What do you think I pay you money for?"

The young lawyer slid off the high stool.

"I've often wondered," he said coolly. "Good-night, Gene."

But Larkin wasn't to be shaken off. He followed Brandon into the roulette-room, where Betty Walker was watching the spinning-wheel, but not playing. She turned to Brandon with the plea:

"Oh, Barry—come and get rabbits out of this blamed thing! I can't pull even one of their whiskers!"

Before Brandon could answer, gruff voices were heard in the outer room; then a sharp order, loud and crisp above the murmuring din:

"Ladies and gentlemen, you are all under arrest! No one to leave the building!"

Betty uttered one of her little excited cries.

"Oh, just fancy—a raid! How perfectly thrilling!"

Larkin nudged Brandon with his elbow.

"Stick around, Barry—I'll need you at the night court."

Brandon took Betty's arm.

"Don't talk," he ordered. "Come with me—I'll get you out of this."

In the night court, Brandon found Larkin's guests formed up in a kind of bunch on the left-hand benches. Larkin himself was quite at ease, supremely confident that his pocket lawyer would get him, and the rest, out of trouble with one of his "tricks." The presiding judge was a straight-faced woman of about forty who answered Brandon's salute, as he approached the bench, with a half smile.

"Another gambling raid?" she inquired.

The prosecuting attorney answered:

"Yes, your Honour—another breach of the peace."

The judge glanced towards Brandon: "You representing the defendants?"

"Your Honour—yes." He gestured towards Larkin's crowd. "These ladies and gentlemen are accused of being found on premises under suspicion of the police. I shall plead guilty for the lot of them!"

Larkin stared, unable to believe his ears. And while he stared, the judge gave her ruling:

"In the case of the people versus defendants arrested in a gambling club, the said defendants are each and every one fined fifty dollars, with the alternative of thirty days in the county gaol."

Larkin came out of his trance. He advanced towards the Bench.

"Your Honour, don't worry. I'll pay the fines." He turned to Brandon. "Your joke—mine next time."

The late guests at the Larkin Club fled out, many of them glaring at Brandon for having let them down.

He was about to follow Larkin to the exit when his attention was taken by the next case. A plainly dressed, brown-haired girl was being piloted by the prosecuting attorney to the prisoner's stand at the end of the Bench. She seemed so out of luck that Brandon stood where he was. The bailiff read out from the charge sheet:

"The people versus Madge Carter, charged with picking pockets."

The judge asked in a kindly voice:

"Are you represented by counsel?"

The girl replied stammeringly:

"No, sir. No, my lady. Your Honour, I mean."

The bailiff called:

"Witness, please! Jack Doremus, take the stand."

A broken-nosed bully, with "tough" written all over him, slouched up to the witness chair and dropped into it. The district attorney addressed him:

"Now, Mr. Doremus, please tell the court, in your own words, exactly what happened."

"Well, your Honour, I'm walking down the street just minding my own business," Doremus answered in a sing-song voice. "And saying to myself it's a fine night and not thinking anything wrong with no one, when this dame comes walking by me and sorter stumbles against me and then rushes off. And, when I comes to feel my pockets, my wallet's gone. So then I understands that I've been touched for it and I buzz after her and—I get her."

Brandon drew near to him.

"And you got her? What then?"

The judge asked him:

"Are you acting in this case, too, Mr. Brandon?"

"I am. And I'm pleading not guilty." Brandon studied Doremus with keen eyes. "Let's hear the rest of it."

"Well, I got her and I ses, 'Sister, that wasn't the right thing to do. Where's my wallet?' And she ses, 'What wallet?' So then I sees plain—"

"Never mind what you saw," Brandon checked him. He glanced towards the prosecuting attorney. "Can I have the witness?"

"You already have him," the other lawyer shrugged, adding: "I may tell the court that no wallet has been found on the accused."

Brandon pointed a finger at Doremus' scowling face. "Isn't it a fact that you're known as Fingey Doremus and that you framed a charge against an-

other young woman of stealing your purse only two months ago?"

Doremus glared at him.

"I did. And I got a verdict!"

"Isn't it a fact that the Higher Court quashed the verdict and gave back the young woman her freedom?"

The prosecutor interposed:

"How could he know about the Higher Courts?"

"It's a proper question," Brandon snapped. "And it can be answered in only one way. The records will show that, while there is nothing against my client, there is plenty—and more than plenty—against the witness. Your Honour should see that this city is made safe for our women folk—this poor girl is on her way home when the ruffian in the witness stand accosts her and attempts to put a false charge on her, so that he can extort money. 'Give me money, or I'll say you picked my pocket!' Why, I can hear him threatening her!"

Brandon's finger was still pointing, his eyes boring into Doremus' thick skull. "You never had a wallet—you haven't a cent on you! An importuning black-mailing beggar—that's what you are!"

Doremus croaked out:

"It ain't so! I swear I did have a wallet!"

"Answer me, weren't you trying to frighten this girl into giving you money? Yes or no?"

"I—I—" Doremus jumped up. "Oh, let me go! There ain't no justice here!"

The judge rapped her desk with her gavel.

"Case dismissed. Arrest the witness for perjury."

Brandon offered his arm to the girl in the dock.

"Allow me. My car is at the door."

She put her trembling hand on his arm.

"It's kind of you," she murmured. "You've saved me. But I don't know you."

"What's that matter?" Brandon smiled at her. "You come on out of here. A night court's no harvest home."

She told him, on their way, that she had been working late at a department store, and that her folk lived down south. That she had been engaged to a clerk in a bank, but he had been killed in a motor-bicycle accident. Then she had come to Los Angeles.

"To go on the films?" Brandon broke in, giving her a sideways glance as he steered the car.

"To get a job," she answered seriously. "So's to help myself and the folks at home. This is my lodging—thank you again and again."

"Call round at my office to-morrow at midday," Brandon told her. "Maybe I can find you something better than selling over a counter. Here's my card."

Next morning Brandon had just got rid of a lady who wanted a "cheap" divorce, when Betty Walker barged into his office unannounced. He regarded her without a smile.

"You shouldn't come hurtling into my den this way, Miss Walker."

"Why not—it's almost quitting time. There's nothing much for you to hang around for?"

Brandon stated:

"I'm not going places with you today."

She studied the set mouth and cool eyes.

"You seem to mean it," she allowed. "Can I use your phone?"

He handed her the receiver and she briskly dialed a number. Brandon went on with his work. Betty's voice broke in on his reading:

"Hallo, that you, Toni? Betty this end—I'm free for to-night. Yes, sure

I'll go with you to the Clendenning party. I've just broke a date so's to go with you, Toni. No, you needn't pick me up—I'll come along to you. 'Bye-bye, beautiful!"

She put down the receiver.

"D'you know who that was?" she asked snappily.

"Couldn't even give a guess," Brandon answered.

"It was Toni Bandini—the newest crooning sensation. Haven't you heard him on the radio?"

"I get enough noise in court," said Brandon. Whereupon Betty breezed out of his office in a huff.

A Stepping-stone

IN the Larkin Welfare Club things were very quiet. Gene Larkin was going slow, marking time until the club was out of the police searchlights.

Brandon looked in, to find Larkin drinking butter-milk at the bar at five o'clock in the afternoon.

"Water wagon?" inquired Brandon.

"Yeah! I'm saving up to make good that fine you put me into the other night," Larkin added. "What's yours?"

"Brandy smash." Brandon seated himself on a high stool. "I've just heard they're going to make District Attorney Hopkins into a senator."

Larkin nodded.

"That's so." He eyed his companion. "And there'll be a vacancy. And they'll offer Lawyer Barry Brandon the job of D.A."

"Me?" Barry was genuinely surprised. "I'm a defending lawyer—not a prosecutor."

"When you take the job," said Larkin, who had finished off his milk. "we'll all be riding in the gravy train here."

"When!"

Larkin repeated the word "When—and it won't be too long!" He got up, lit a cigarette, still studying Brandon's suddenly set face. What he saw there evidently satisfied him: he strolled away to pass out through the swing doors into the late afternoon.

Almost at once a shot was heard from the street and the dancers on the tea-floor stopped in alarm. Larkin came staggering back into the club, his face a chalky white, his arm hanging loosely, his body swaying.

Some of the dancers rushed to catch him as Brandon came at a run from the bar. He took hold of Larkin's hanging right arm.

"What is it, Gene? What happened?" he asked.

Larkin's eyes challenged those gathered anxiously around him.

"Nothing. Just nothing. Get on with—with the dancing. Tell that fool conductor to—to go on playing. Get me to a hospital—the Polyclinic—"

"I'll get you there." Brandon's arm went about the nearly fainting man. "Lean on me, Gene—my ear's outside."

Brandon took up Madge Carter's references and duly appointed her as his secretary. He found her comfortable apartments with the caretaker in the flats where he lived.

He had now so much defence work in hand that he was more than glad of Madge Carter's quietly efficient assistance. He found her a great relief from all the Betty Walkers' of his acquaintance—with their empty talk and continuous pleasure seeking.

Madge asked her employer some two weeks later, at past seven o'clock:

"Haven't you finished yet?"

"Almost." He gave her a grateful glance. "You're a good scout. You never complain. Like to end up your

day's good work by coming with me for a duty call on Gene Larkin?"

Madge would have liked to answer, "Anywhere with you." But she only said, "Of course," in her usual cheery way. Brandon was a puzzle to her, as he was to many others. One minute all smiles—and the next, moody and disposed to snap.

In the private ward at the hospital, Larkin was being interviewed by Inspector Burke and a stenographer—with the medical officer in attendance. The stenographer was saying:

"I didn't catch your last question, inspector."

"Let it go," said Burke. "I'll ask another."

The man sitting up in the bed grinned his thin-lipped smile. "Ask a million, you'll get the same answer."

"Aw, come on, Larkin—we know who shot you. It was Bird-Dog Finn. He walked into H.Q. this morning to ask if we were looking for him. We were."

"Were you?" asked Larkin, in an uninterested voice.

The inspector shut up his note book. "Okay—fight your own battles, if it suits you. But, listen—don't go travelling outside the lav!"

Burke and his typist were in the corridor with the doctor when Brandon came along with Madge.

In the ward, Brandon presented Madge:

"Gene, this is Madge Carter, my secretary."

Larkin's cool eyes studied her. "I've seen you somewhere," he said. "All the same—glad to meet you again. You'll excuse us, Miss Carter—I want to talk to Barry."

She moved away to the window, vaguely uneasy. She remembered Larkin at the night court and the way Brandon had put him and the rest of the chib in the cart.

Larkin whispered to the lawyer as he sat beside the bed.

"I want you to put Bird-Dog Finn on the street. Burke's holding him."

"So you can square the deal yourself?" Brandon inquired. "I wouldn't, Gene."

"Don't be dumb," the other whispered. Then, more loudly. "Barry, that D.A. job's yours."

"I couldn't take it," Brandon frowned. "You know that."

"I don't talk, Barry," Larkin countered. "You take it—it's all set. You'll hear from Bill Walker. I've fixed an appointment for you directly after you leave here. Walker phoned the hospital—knowing you were calling in."

Brandon rose.

"I don't like it," he declared. But he was thinking hard. District Attorney—a stepping-stone to something big, if he played his cards well.

But he'd have to be up against Gene, if he were D.A. An awkward position—he would have to walk warily. He turned to the girl:

"Let's go, Madge. And you might do that spring clean for me to-night with Mitsu—if you really want to. I've got to be at Mr. Walker's office."

Witness to a Crime

THE first big case that came to Brandon when he had become District Attorney was the Nora James murder trial—that of a handsome young woman who was accused of the murder of her husband, a man of more than double her age.

The case against her was not too strong, but Brandon, by the trick of producing in court the bed on which the old man had been killed, with its blood-stained sheets, contrived to force an admission out of the hard-featured woman that her story of burglars was untrue, and that she alone had killed him with a window-sash weight in a violent quarrel.

Afterwards, in his chambers, Brandon was being congratulated by old Walker and Betty, who had been sitting in court with Toni Bandini in the hope of making Brandon jealous.

Madge was there, saying: "I'd be terrified to be in the witness-stand with you pounding the truth out of me!"

"All you'd need to do is to say: 'I refuse to reply,'" Brandon told her.

Betty Walker shook him by the hand. "You're wonderful, Barry—simply wonderful!" She turned to Madge.

"Isn't he, Miss Carter?"

"Very," Madge replied.

Betty stood away to give her father a chance. Old Walker smiled under his moustache at Brandon.

"Pretty good work, what? You'd like a drink?"

"I could certainly use one," Brandon agreed. "Thanks, friends all, but I don't feel so wonderful. I don't like having to do things of this sort."

When alone with his secretary, Brandon spoke something of his thoughts.

"What kind of a world do we live in, Madge? Why must there be murderers

—and men to prosecute murderers? And others to hang them? What happened to-day? I was a better actor than that poor wretch of a woman—that was all. I hate myself for having sent her down for life. And yet you can't let people go about killing each other." He put an arm around her. "Madge, you've helped me a lot—you deserve to share the glory, if it is glory. We'll go out to-night, some place where it's gay. I want to get this dreadful business out of my mind."

It was inevitable that Brandon should get into the black books of Larkin. As District Attorney, Brandon had to shut down Larkin's roulette-tables and stop much of the gambling. Larkin wanted to bribe him, but Barry told him plainly:

"Don't be silly, Gene. I warned you if I took the D.A. job I'd shoot straight."

"You and I have been friends a long time, Barry."

"You always had your money's worth," Brandon retorted.

"I know you're aiming at becoming governor of this State," Larkin went on. "Well, okay by me, if we work together. If not—watch your step!"

Brandon told Mitsu not to admit Larkin any more to his flat. Then, tired and annoyed, arranged over the phone to go out with Madge.

"I bring you cocktail, sir," said Mitsu. "In which much soothings!"

Betty Walker rang up just as he was starting out to ask him to call in at their place for a few minutes. She told him Bandini was going to sing.

"Oh!" Brandon's tone was expressive. But Betty, at the other end of the line, wouldn't let go. "Dad wants to see you. Something about an appointment he knows of. There's a vacancy for something or other big. You must come—even if it's only for half an hour."

So Barry went down to Madge's apartments to explain.

"I'll call back for you," he promised.

"I won't be long." He held her hand.

"I like you, Madge—and you like me. That's so?"

She nodded her brown head, hiding her eyes from him. He kissed her forehead; then, laughing at himself, let go her hand.

"Getting sentimental. Sign of old age. I'll be back by ten o'clock."

"You have lied, Madge Carter," Brandon thundered, "to save me, not Gene Larkin!"



There was a big reception on at the Walker home. And Mitsu's cocktail had not soothed Barry any more than the interview with Gene Larkin. Old Walker had some news.

"Hopkins is coming along," he said. "He's a big success in the Senate, and can pull strings. The post of governor is likely to become vacant." Old Walker put a hand before his mouth, speaking behind his fingers. "Hush, little bird—don't talk too loud! Get me, Barry?"

So Barry stopped to dinner. And the dinner was a good one, with plenty of champagne. Barry got rather excited, one way and another, and kept putting off his plan to 'phone Madge.

They all came trooping into the big drawing-room after dinner to hear Baudini sing. Barry had to stay and listen. Then there followed a hazy talk with Senator Hopkins—a vastly important fellow now—in Walker's private room.

"The governorship is in your pocket, Brandon," Hopkins told Barry. "You've only to stand fast and watch out."

"You know, I'm s'posed to be having dinner with Madge."

"It's rather late for that, Barry. It's nigh on twelve o'clock."

"Twelve?" Brandon swayed a little. "Why, that's just too bad of me! I got to—o—call her up."

"She's in bed long ago. Come and meet people, Barry. You must—I insist on it. Influential people." She put her soft, round arm through his. "I've always been your best friend, Barry. I can help—and dad can help. I know what's in the air."

"About—about what Hopkins told me?"

She gave his arm a squeeze. "Didn't I tell him that you were the right one of all the likely candidates?" she whispered. "You and me, Barry—governor and his lady. Oh, you're making me propose to you!"

Brandon got home at two o'clock—to find Madge waiting in the hall of the flats. He greeted her with a stupid grin.

"Barry, you've been drinking!" "Betty's proposed to me, see?" His voice rose shrill as he chuckled inanely. "So there you are! Jest had to—"

He became aware of the deeply hant look in her eyes.

"Didn't think you'd take it thish way, Madge," he hiccupped, suddenly solemn.

She turned away from him, and, without another word, entered her flat.

Ten minutes later Madge came forth with her bag packed. She had made up her mind. She would go back home. But first she must get a bed for to-night.

The Welfare Club? Yes, that would be still open.

She was shown into the waiting-room by the bar-tender, who went to his master.

"Dame called Madge Carter to see you, boss."

Larkin was just going up to his rooms. The club was closing down for the night. He signed for Madge to be sent in.

"Remember me, Mr. Larkin?" she asked.

"Sure. You're Brandon's secretary. Sit down. What is it?"

"I thought perhaps you'd cash a small cheque for me and let me stay here till the morning. I'm going home by the eight-ten."

"What's wrong?"

"Barry is going to marry Miss Walker," she told him simply.

Larkin nodded.

"I understand." He held out his

July 24th, 1937.

hand for the cheque, took it, glanced at it, and got out his wallet. He gave Madge the amount in five-dollar bills. "No need to thank me. And I'll put you on to a quiet hotel for the night."

Madge rose from her chair. "I'm very grateful to you—" she was beginning when the bar-tender came in hurriedly. He whispered to Larkin:

"Bird-Dog Finn jest gone by—heading west."

He slipped a gun into Larkin's hand. Larkin smiled crookedly as he rose up.

"I'll take you along to that hotel, Miss Carter," he said.

They went out into the night together, Madge uneasy and alarmed. She had heard and she had seen. Larkin moved along the dark, almost deserted street with quick strides. She saw a furtive figure in front of her suddenly start to run, then came a flash and a stifled report. The figure in front of them collapsed on the pavement with choking, horrible cries.

Larkin, a little way ahead of her, turned about coolly.

"We'd best go back—something's happened."

He caught her hand in his and drew her along to the club.

Towards a New Life

IT was the last day of the trial of Gene Larkin for the murder of John Joseph, alias Bird-Dog Finn. The only evidence that District Attorney Brandon could call was that of the bar-tender, who stubbornly persisted that Finn had been hanging around the Welfare Club on the night of his death, determined to get in another shot at Larkin.

"Finn was up against the defendant," Brandon asked. "Can you say why?"

"Yeah. Finn and Bill Martin was friends—a couple of crooks together," came the answer. "And when Bill Martin come out of gaol—he got run over by a car."

"And Finn believed that Larkin was responsible for the accident?" Brandon stressed the last word.

Larkin, sitting next to him in the well of the court, gave him a black look.

Brandon was fiddling with his pencil, staring at the witness. After a few moments' thought he nodded to the defending counsel.

"Your witness, Mr. Gray."

Larkin's new pocket lawyer smiled. "I've finished with him. I am asking the single eye-witness to take the stand. I call Miss Madge Carter."

Brandon rose sharply to stare at the white-faced girl as she entered the court, and, without once looking at him, took her seat on the stand. He had tried vainly to find her since that disastrous night at the Walker reception—and this sudden reappearance in this sordid case took him completely by surprise. Meanwhile, Gray was having her sworn in.

"Miss Carter," he began when she had taken the oath, "please tell the jury where you were at three o'clock on the morning of October Fourth?"

"I was outside the Welfare Club in Seventh Avenue," came her answer, her eyes fixed steadily on Gray's. "Mr. Larkin came out of the Club with me. He walked quickly—I was just behind him. After he had gone a little way, a man came out of a doorway and— and shot at him."

"And then?"

"I saw Mr. Larkin being crowded against the building. Then Mr. Larkin pulled out a gun from his pocket and shot the man down in self-defence."

Gray turned to Brandon.

"Your witness."

Brandon seated himself beside Madge.

"Look at me, please. What were you doing at Gene Larkin's club at three in the morning?"

"I called in there because—"

"Because?"

She replied, giving him look for look: "I had left my lodgings very suddenly. And so I went to Mr. Larkin's club."

Brandon asked, in gentler tones:

"And your story of this shooting is your best recollection of the incident?"

"Yes."

Brandon rose and turned away from those blue eyes he had read on the instant. He addressed the judge:

"That is all, your Honour. The State rests."

Larkin, at the table with his solicitor, laughed sneeringly. Brandon whipped about.

"That laugh's going to cost you your neck! If your Honour please, I desire to question the witness a little further."

"Take the chair again, Miss Carter," the judge directed.

Brandon regard her steadily.

"Miss Carter, you were formerly an employee in the District Attorney's office. You left your job hurriedly. As a matter of fact, you hid yourself away. Where?"

"I lived with friends."

"You regard Gene Larkin as a friend?"

She hesitated. Then answered: "Not exactly a friend."

Brandon nodded.

"I begin to understand. Well, now, you say a man come out of a doorway near the Welfare Club and took a shot at the defendant?"

"Yes."

"As you stood there you noted that the two men were facing each other?"

"Er—yes!"

"Your honour"—Brandon turned to the judge—"I could stop right now. This girl has told a story so plainly false that out of her own mouth she has convicted Gene Larkin. The witness has testified that Finn and Larkin were facing each other. But Finn was shot through the back."

There was a buzz of talk in the court, instantly checked by the usher. The jury exchanged glances.

"I am going to find out why this girl has perjured herself," Brandon went on.

"Isn't it a fact that you have been hiding at the Welfare Club since you left my office?"

"Not hiding," Madge answered piteously. "I had a job there."

"You were virtually a prisoner," Brandon commented. "I see. Isn't it a fact that Larkin threatened you?"

She cried out emphatically:

"No! No!"

"Isn't it a fact that Larkin threatened the life of the District Attorney?" he snapped out. "Ah, I see you can't deny that! If told you, if you didn't lie for him, that my body would likely be found in a ditch one morning? That, if you didn't lie, he would certainly ruin me politically?"

Madge sat there, pale and shaken, unable to speak.

"You have lied, Madge Carter!" Brandon thundered. "To save me, not Gene Larkin!"

She faltered.

"Perhaps—a little—"

"Take the witness," Brandon told Gray curtly.

But the defending counsel shook his head.

"There will be no examination by me. The defendant himself will take the stand."

Larkin rose up, grinning evilly.

"And the defendant will tell you plenty!" he cried.

(Continued on page 27)

It was not for vengeance alone that the masked rider struck at Jason Burr's sinister organisation. He was out to smash a tyrant's ambition to build an empire beyond the Rockies. A thrill-packed serial of the early West, when California was a pawn on the chess-board of a scheming nation, starring Bob Livingston



The MOUNTIES ARE COMING

Read This First

The year is 1844 and the scene California, then a province of Mexico. But gold had been discovered by a powerful despot known as General Jason Burr, who conceives the idea of establishing a dictatorship with the aid of Imperial Russia.

The Russian ambassador, Count Raspinoff, exerts his influence to supply Burr with ex-soldier colonists from the Tsar's army. These, together with the men already under Burr's command, form the nucleus of a force whereby the would-be dictator plans to seize control of the country.

Gold is the mainstay of Burr's ambitions, and he has opened a secret mine which is worked by captive labour. But the land on which it is situated is the property of a family named Loring, and the Lorings proving troublesome, the father and the youngest son are murdered.

Burr, however, has reckoned without Don Loring, the elder son of the family, who returns from U.S. territory for the purpose of exacting vengeance.

Under the alias of the Eagle, Don harasses Jason Burr with the aid of two Yankee frontiersmen known as Salvation and Whipsaw, and a priest named Father Jose. Then, gaining the interior of Burr's headquarters, he finds the plotter is holding as captives Doris Colton and her father, a mining engineer.

He also discovers Burr's plan to seize California, and, forming a Vigilance Committee, tries to secure a supply of ammunition the man has bought. But the Vigilantes are betrayed and cornered in a warehouse by Cossacks in Burr's pay.

Nevertheless, Don reaches the ammunition shed and prepares to blow it

EPISODE 3— "Condemned by Cossacks"

sky-high. He has scarcely fired the train of powder, however, when a Cossack discovers him and locks him in the doomed building!

Now Read On

To Save California

WITH no means of undoing what he had begun, and with the powder-magazine on the very point of going sky-high, Don Loring was in as desperate a plight as ever he had known. But, fortunately for him, the shed possessed a window in its rear wall, and as he realised that there was no hope of escaping via the locked door he made a dash for that window.

He dived head-first through it, and then, running as hard as he could, he raced across an expanse of open ground at the back of the ammunition shed.

There was a bellowing roar that smote the air like a terrific clap of thunder, and the ammunition shed disappeared in a blaze of fire that illuminated the whole township of Santa Rosalie.

Don flung himself down and felt the hot blast of the concussion sweep over him. Then, while he lay there with the echoes of the explosion ringing in his ears, fragments of stone and timber came showering about his prone form.

Behind him, where the shed had stood, a thick pall of smoke was spreading far and wide. He could see nothing of Petroff and his band of Cossacks, but a confusion of shouts told him that the majority, if not all, of them had managed to get clear

before the powder-magazine had gone up.

Don now turned towards the warehouse where his friends had been cornered, and he soon realised that the Vigilantes had espied him, for, led by Salvation and Whipsaw, they suddenly swarmed into view and came streaming in his direction.

As they joined him Don spoke to them tersely.

"All right," he jerked out, "let's hit the trail before the Russians recover from their disorder."

The Vigilantes' horses had been left on the edge of a copple not far away, and Don and his companions made tracks for them—were in the act of scrambling astride the broncs when a man whom some of them recognised hove into sight.

He was the individual known as Peters, and it dawned on those who were acquainted with him that he had not kept the appointment which their youthful leader had made for that night. Little did they dream, however, that he was a spy in Jason Burr's pay and that after betraying their plans he had sneaked into Santa Rosalie to watch what transpired.

Nor did they dream that he was secretly cursing the turn that eventually had taken, and had only attached himself to the party now to learn what their next move would be.

Questioned as to his belated arrival, he gave an explanation that satisfied the other Vigilantes, and presently the whole company were galloping away from Santa Rosalie, whose streets were by now thronged with frightened citizens.

To the tune of clattering hoofs the night riders spurred across the range, and they had covered a distance of

two or three miles when they reached a boulder-strewn canyada which immediately struck Don as being an advantageous hide-out.

"This looks a likely spot to hold our meetings in future," he said, drawing rein. "Supposing we make it our headquarters?"

The other men were in favour of the suggestion, and after detailing Whipsaw to go back through the rocks and keep an eye on the open terrain which they had just crossed Don turned to address the Vigilantes again.

"Friends," he stated, "to-night we've struck a blow against tyranny, but our work has only just begun.

"I want to impress on you that Jason Burr is no mean antagonist," he continued. "He has numerous resources, and he's adding to his power by conscripting an army. Therefore, we must stick together like brothers, and I've prepared an oath of allegiance which I hope you're all ready to sign."

He had written it in English, since the bulk of his followers were Yankees, and now he read the contents of the paper aloud.

"We, the undersigned," he quoted, "swear loyalty to the Vigilance Committee of the Sohomia Valley, whose aim is to protect California from the despotism of Jason Burr and the designs of Imperial Russia. And in support of this cause we pledge our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honour."

His listeners murmured their approval, and, pen and ink being produced, the Vigilantes began to scrawl their signatures, but before the list could be completed the proceedings were interrupted by a hail from Whipsaw.

"The Cossacks!" the diminutive look-out called.

The Vigilantes showed signs of apprehension, knowing as they did that Petroff's troop outnumbered them, but in a moment Don was reassuring them.

"Don't worry," he said. "I'll lead them off on a false scent. Salvation, you get the rest of the signatures and then bring the paper to me in San Antonio."

Thrusting into the frontiersman's hand the document which contained the oath of allegiance, Don wheeled abruptly and rode through the boulders until he reached the point where Whipsaw had stationed himself, and then he saw a cloud of horsemen advancing from the direction in which Santa Rosalie lay.

They were Petroff and his command, and having rallied from the confusion into which they had been thrown by the explosion of the powder-magazine, they had set out to scour the range in quest of the Vigilantes.

Blind chance had brought them within view of the hide-out selected by Don and his companions, yet they were not destined to investigate the canyada. For, outlining his plan to Whipsaw and ordering the latter to stay under cover, Don charged out into the open and disclosed himself to the Russians.

They recognised him as the Eagle by the white brogue he was riding and the dark clothes that he wore, and with a medley of cries they swerved to pursue him: as he galloped away in an easterly direction.

Yet they could give Don no points in riding, and neither were their ponies a match for the fugitive's in speed and endurance, so that the man whom they knew as the Eagle had no difficulty in keeping well ahead of them.

Working back to the Santa Rosalie road, he passed to the east of that July 24th, 1937.

town and then headed straight for San Antonio, which he reached as the day was breaking; and it was in the dawn's early light that he swung round by the ruined wing of Father Jose's chapel and let himself into the secret underground tunnel which was linked with the more recently-constructed portion of the building.

A few seconds later Don Loring was climbing up through a trapdoor to find himself in the presence of the padre, who was preparing for his daily ministrations in spite of the earliness of the hour, and without loss of time the newcomer attired himself in the clothes that he wore as the supposed organist of the mission.

When Petroff and his men stamped into the chapel a little while afterwards they discovered Father Jose quietly reading and Don seated at the organ.

The Cossack hetman scowled at them suspiciously. Not for an instant did he dream that the meek-looking organ-player was the quarry he was seeking, but he had a shrewd idea that he and the aged priest who was with him might know more about the Eagle than they cared to admit, and he ordered his subordinates to search the mission.

The search was unavailing, and a quarter of an hour later Petroff and his men were departing truculently. But when they had gone Father Jose looked at Don in an anxious fashion.

"My son," he counselled, "you should have a care. You take grave risks in this game of hide-and-seek that you are playing with Jason Burr's minions."

"Grave risks, indeed, padre mio," Don answered calmly. "But they will not be taken in vain—if I am able to avenge the murder of my father and my brother, and help to save California from a tyrant's rule."

The Traitor

WHILE Don Loring had been engaged in decoying Burr's mercenaries from the neighbourhood of the Vigilantes' hide-out, Salvation had been busy collecting the remaining signatures for the written oath of allegiance that the young leader of the organisation had composed.

Within ten minutes of Don leaving the canyada the last member of the committee had appended his name, and a short time later the band of men dispersed with the object of returning to their scattered homes.

A number of them made their way out of the ravine via the boulder-strewn gap where Whipsaw was still posted, and, satisfied that the coast was clear, they rode off across the range. Some, on the other hand, betook themselves to the farther end of the gorge, Peters being among these.

But, unlike his companions, Peters did not strike for his homestead, which was situated away to the north. Instead, he hung back, and then, dismounting from his horse, cautiously retraced his steps to the spot where the oath of allegiance had been signed.

Salvation had lingered there, and when Peters returned thither he saw the frontiersman standing with his back to him, poring over the document that bore the names of the Vigilantes.

Drawing his gun and gripping it by the barrel, Jason Burr's agent crept up on Salvation until he was within striking distance. Then, while his victim's attention was still focused on the paper that he was holding, the traitor brought down the butt of his revolver in a crushing blow that laid the big fellow senseless on the ground.

In another moment Peters had taken possession of the document bearing the Vigilantes' signatures, and, hastening from the canyada again, he climbed astride his bronc and galloped northward.

He was no longer in sight of the committee's future meeting-place when Whipsaw came plodding through the rocks to rejoin Salvation, whom he found in the act of rising into a sitting posture.

"Everybody gone?" Whipsaw inquired.

Salvation blinked up at him, and winced under the spasmodic stabs of pain that were darting through his head.

"Yeah," he said dazedly. "Yeah." "Then what are you a-sittin' there for?" demanded Whipsaw. "What's up with yuh?"

Salvation was trying hard to collect his wits.

"I dunno," he muttered. "Some-thin' seemed to hit me. I was lookin' over the oath of allegiance at the time—"

He stopped speaking all at once, and with an expression of intelligence dawning on his craggy face, he began to cast about him for the document to which he had referred. Then suddenly he scrambled to his feet.

"It's gone!" he blurted. "The paper with the names of all the Vigilantes! Whoever took that crack at me the paper was what he was after! Whipsaw, we getta get to San Toni an' tell the Eagle what's happened."

They mounted their ponies, and, riding hard, they reached San Antonio about half an hour after Don's arrival there, and on locating him in the mission they quickly informed him of the document's disappearance.

Don received the news with an air of concern.

"This means that there's a traitor in the Vigilantes," he announced grimly. "Yes, and that's why Petroff and his Cossacks were waiting for us in Santa Rosalie last night. Boys, we've got to learn who the informer is."

Salvation laid a hand on Don's sleeve. "I've got an idea," he said. "If I disguised myself as a pedlar an' gathered some knick-knacks together, I believe I could ride right into Burr's headquarters, an' by keepin' my ears and eyes open I might be able to find out who it is that's double-crossin' us."

Don was not altogether in favour of the frontiersman risking his life in such a venture, but Salvation persuaded him to let him undertake the project, and, the young fellow at length consenting, the details of the plan were discussed.

Some time later, in the garb of a pedlar, and with his face and hands stained to the colour of a half-breed's, Salvation was setting out from San Antonio on a cart laden with wares and drawn by a sorry-looking mule; and before another hour had elapsed he was approaching Burr's stronghold up near Ortega Pass.

He was seen by a sentry posted at the main gate of the fortified hacienda, and the latter called out to the gangster known as Harris, who was one of Burr's principal henchmen and who was loitering near at hand with a dark-skinned mestizo named Pedro.

"Say, Harris," the sentinel observed, "there's a guy headed this way that looks like a Mexican pedlar. Do you want to let him in?"

"Yeah, why not?" was the reply. "We might as well see what he's got ter sell."

"General Burr does not like strangers inside the wall," interposed the mestizo, but Harris grinned complacently.

"What the general don't know won't hurt him, Pedro," he commented. "He left for the mine with Petroff and the Cossacks as soon as they got back from Santa Rosalie, an' I don't suppose he'll be back for another hour. Anyway, we oughta be able to buy a little junk if we want to."

Salvation was consequently admitted to the courtyard of Burr's stronghold, and he had scarcely drawn his mule to a halt there when Harris and Pedro commenced to rummage through the wares that he had brought with him.

They were soon joined by other members of Burr's gang, and, grinning broadly, the rogues snatched up such articles as took their fancy without making any effort to pay for them. And, although Salvation was in no way dismayed by the brazen theft of his wares, he had to keep up appearances by wailing plaintive protests in the Spanish tongue.

They were protests that were somewhat muffled by the folds of a Mexican serape with which he contrived to keep his face partially hidden, for, if the traitor in the Vigilance Committee were here at the hacienda, Salvation had no desire to be recognised and denounced by him.

Meanwhile, Salvation's alert eyes were questing hither and thither shrewdly, and all at once he descried the figure of a young and lovely girl crossing the courtyard.

He knew that she must be Doris Colton, of whom Don had spoken.

Don had told him to contact this girl if possible, and, in the hope that he might succeed in doing so, had included amongst Salvation's merchandise a wooden cage that contained three or four pigeons—carrier-pigeons which were the property of Father Jose.

"Ah, senorita," the disguised frontiersman exclaimed, accosting Doris, "you buy something from me, yes?" "Not to-day, thank you," came the smiling response.

Doris Colton started to move on. With a quick glance over his shoulder Salvation saw that Burr's rough-necks were still engrossed in the articles that were piled on his cart.

He caught hold of the girl's arm and spoke to her in an undertone.

"Listen, I'm a friend of the Eagle. You've mentioned you to me—described you to me—and I know you're for him."

Doris started, but Salvation went on talking before she could utter a word.

"The Eagle has formed a Vigilance Committee, but there's a traitor in our organisation. I've reason ter believe that he's either in this stronghold now, or was here earlier this mornin'. Do you happen to know who he is?"

The girl found her voice. "No," she whispered, "but I'll try to find out."

Continuing to restrain her, Salvation turned towards his cart and lifted out the basket of pigeons, in which none of Burr's men had shown any interest.

"Ah, here is yeree fine gift for you, senorita," he said loudly. "They weel make beautiful pets. Si, I geev' them to you, in return for your sweet smile."

He leaned nearer to her, and added in his normal manner of speech:

"Take them, ma'in. An' if you do find out who the traitor is, tie a message to one o' these here birds. It'll fly straight to the Eagle."

She flashed him a look of comprehension, and, accepting the wooden cage that he had handed her, thanked him with a pretty graciousness and walked away. Then, as she disappeared from view, Salvation wheeled towards Burr's

hirelings again and resumed his expostulations in a mixture of fluent Spanish and broken English.

He was still whining his protests, and meeting with jeers in response, when two men emerged from the main building of the stronghold and started to move across in his direction.

One was Talbot, Burr's chief aid. But it was the other who claimed Salvation's interest, and at sight of the fellow he knew that Doris Colton's assistance in learning the identity of the traitor was no longer necessary. For Talbot's companion was familiar to him as a member of Don's Vigilance Committee—the homesteader known as Peters.

"All right, all right," Salvation heard Talbot announce irritably. "You'll see Burr as soon as he gets back. He went up to the mine with the Cossacks. Yeah, an' he was plenty riled when Petroff told him about the loss o' that ammunition, too."

Burr's lieutenant had reached Salvation's cart by this time, and like the other gangsters he became intrigued by the contents of the vehicle. As for Peters, he moved aside and began to walk up and down impatiently—was still perambulating in this manner when he found himself confronted by the bogus pedlar.

"Stay where you are, Peters, an' take it easy," Salvation whispered. "There's a gun hidden under the folds of this serape, an' it's pointing right at your midriff."

The traitor had stiffened involuntarily, but he had enough good sense to offer no resistance and to keep silent, for it was plain to him that this supposed Mexican pedlar was in deadly earnest. Then Salvation spoke again.

"Unless I'm mistaken," he said,



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"you've got that paper bearin' the names of the Vigilantes. An' if you want to stay healthy, Peters, you'd better hand it over."

The other man hesitated, and slid a glance in the direction of Burr's hirelings. But an ominous movement under the folds of the serape which hung over Salvation's shoulder was sufficient to convince him that the surrender of the document was advisable.

Sullenly he produced the oath of allegiance and Salvation took possession of it, thrusting it into his pocket. Yet he had hardly disposed of the paper when there was a shout from the sentinel posted at the main gateway.

"General Burr an' the Cossacks!" he sang out. "They've got back sooner than we expected."

The men who had gathered around Salvation's cart showed signs of confusion, and Harris raised his voice.

"Get that pedlar outa here!" he snapped.

Salvation remained cool and collected. "Peters," he breathed, "you'll do as I tell you, an' even though it means signin' my own death-warrant I'll plug you if you try any tricks."

Then, adopting a Spanish accent and addressing the traitor in a more audible tone:

"Si, senior," he added pleasantly, "I will be veree glad to geev' you a lift back to San Antonio."

He nodded towards the cart, from which Burr's gangsters were retreating, and Peters stumbled towards it anxiously.

"All right," Salvation muttered, "get up on the seat and keep your mouth shut."

Peters obeyed, and, never taking his eyes off him for an instant, Salvation climbed up beside him. A moment later the frontiersman had picked up the reins with one hand, and, covering his prisoner with the gun which he held in the other, he drove towards the gateway.

He hoped to depart without question, but unluckily for him Burr and the Cossacks showed up in the entrance of the patio before he could make his exit, and the general drew rein as he set eyes on Salvation's companion.

"Hallo, Peters," he grunted, "where are you going?"

With stealth and surreptitiousness Salvation contrived to press the muzzle of his revolver against the treacherous homesteader's ribs. In consequence the man remained mute, but his silence had the effect of arousing Burr's ire.

"Did you hear me?" he rapped out. "Where are you going? Speak up, will you?"

Still Salvation's prisoner made no reply, and then all at once Jason Burr saw something that gave him a clue to the situation. The folds of the serape, or blanket, that was slung over Salvation's shoulder had fallen aside a little, to disclose the barrel of the gun he was clutching.

"That Mexican!" the general roared suddenly. "He's a spy! Grab him!"

Realising that his deception had been discovered, the frontiersman made an attempt to whip his mule into a gallop, but in a trice the animal had been seized, and Salvation himself was gripped by two or three of the Cossacks.

Struggling, he was dragged from the cart and disarmed, and, his serape and his sombrero falling to the ground in the scuffle, Peters promptly recognised him.

"Yeah, he's a spy all right, general," he told Burr fiercely. "He's one o' the Eagle's right-hand men!"

With the words he jumped down from the cart and made haste to retrieve the July 24th, 1937.

Vigilance Committee's oath of allegiance from Salvation, who was now powerless in the grasp of the Russians who had thrown themselves on him.

"Take a look at this, General Burr," Peters went on. "I don't know all the Vigilantes by name, but this paper contains their signatures. I managed to get hold of it an' bring it here—and this fellow seemingly bluffed his way into the fort to recover it."

He passed the document over to Burr, who scowled as he read it. Then after a few seconds the general directed an ugly glance at Salvation.

"Very interesting," he stated. "This will enable me to track down the Vigilantes man by man and wipe them out on their own door-steps. In other words, my friend, the Vigilantes have sealed their doom. As for you, it will be my pleasure to witness your execution in the public square of Santa Rosalie, where your death will be an example to all who may feel inclined to rebel against my control."

He nodded to Petroff grimly.

"Tie him up and plant him in the saddle of a horse," he commanded. "We're taking him to Santa Rosalie right now."

A few minutes later Burr and the Cossacks were riding from the stronghold with the condemned man in their midst. But as they cantered from the fortified hacienda they little dreamed that a message acquainting the Eagle with their intentions was already in the course of preparation.

It was a message penned by Doris Colton, who had seen and heard everything that had taken place in the courtyard when Salvation had been arrested, and after writing her note of warning she hurried to a sideboard in the room which she occupied as an enforced guest.

In that sideboard she had lodged the cage of pigeons which Salvation had presented to her, and, removing one of the birds, she attached the message to it and carried the feathered courier to the open window of her apartment. Then she released the pigeon, and, as it winged its way into the void, she offered up a fervent prayer that its flight would help to avert a cold-blooded murder.

The Firing Squad

GATHERED in the Mission at San Antonio, Don Loring and Whipsaw and Father Jose were anxiously awaiting the return of Salvation, and it seemed to all of them that an eternity had elapsed when Don finally gave expression to his agitated thoughts.

"We ought to have seen something of Salvation by now," he said uneasily. "I impressed on him that he wasn't to stay too long at Burr's stronghold."

"Have patience, my son," Father Jose comforted.

"Yeah, don't get all het-up," Whipsaw put in, endeavouring to sound reassuring although it really he was as apprehensive as Don. "Nothing's happened to that ole alligator. He knows how to look after hisself, take it from me."

The little frontiersman's assumed heartiness failed to put Don's mind at rest, however.

"I'm worried about Salvation," the young fellow muttered. "I only wish I hadn't let him—"

He stopped, interrupted by a flutter of wings in a nearby window of the chapel, and as he turned he saw that a pigeon had come to rest on the ledge, a pigeon with a tightly folded scrap of paper tied to one of its legs.

With an exclamation Don strode to the window, and, capturing the bird, he unfasted the note which was attached

to it. A moment later he was reading Doris Colton's message—reading it with a look on his handsome countenance that told his companions all was not well.

When he had finished scanning the note he thrust it into Whipsaw's hand.

"Summon the Vigilantes!" he ordered. "Bring them to Santa Rosalie by the east road! It will take time, but I may have need of them. Meanwhile, I'm going on alone!"

He was dressed in the clothes that he wore as the pseudo-organist of the chapel, but he had soon peeled them off to disclose the tell-tale garb of the Eagle.

Shortly afterwards, while Whipsaw was spurring on his way to round-up the Vigilantes, the black-clad figure of the Eagle might have been seen streaking across the range in the direction of Santa Rosalie, and when at length he drew near that town he could not help being impressed by the deserted aspect of its outskirts.

Steering clear of the main street, he entered Santa Rosalie via a maze of alleys that brought him close to the central square. But before he was actually in sight of that plaza he dismounted from his horse and dropped the reins to the ground, knowing that the faithful and well-trained animal would not stir from the spot. Then, grasping the long whip that he invariably carried in his rôle of the Eagle, he climbed to the roof of a building that faced the square.

The whip by means of which he could snare any projecting beam or cornice was of considerable aid to him in his ascent. It enabled him to gain his objective without difficulty, and once on the roof-top he glided across to the far parapet and looked down into the plaza.

He knew then why the environs of Santa Rosalie had been deserted. The whole population, predominantly Spanish or Indian, had been forced to assemble in the square, and were gazing nervously at a file of armed Cossacks who were partially hidden from Don's view by an awning which offered some protection from the fierce rays of the sun.

In the shade of that awning, the men of the Cossack firing squad were riveting their attention on a figure who had been planted against the blank wall of a building opposite. It was the figure of Salvation, his eyes blindfolded, his hands tied behind his back, but his whole attitude suggesting an indomitable courage in the face of imminent death.

Don gritted his teeth as he saw his heroic comrade standing there. Then he directed his glance at a group of horsemen who had taken up a position to the left of the firing squad.

These were in full view of Don, and they consisted of Petroff, the remainder of the Cossack squadron—and General Jason Burr. And Burr, a little apart from his Russian mercenaries, was addressing the citizens of Santa Rosalie in a loud voice that carried to every corner of the square.

"I hereby proclaim martial law in this territory," Don Loring heard him announce, "and I call upon you to witness the execution of one who has dared to defy my authority."

He paused, and held up a document that he had been fingering. It was the paper on which the Vigilance Committee's oath of allegiance had been drawn up.

(To be continued in another grand episode next week. By permission of British Lion Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Bob Livingston.)

"CRIMINAL LAWYER"

(Continued from page 22)

"Just a minute, I'm not quite through." Brandon spoke now without raising his voice. "Sit there, Miss Carter, a bit longer. Your Honour has heard this witness admit that the defendant forced her to perjure herself by making threats against me. When the defendant takes the stand he will tell the truth for once. And the truth will be that, before I became District Attorney, I represented the defendant in private practice, and that, as his counsel, I was a jury fixer and a briber."

He turned to the jury.

"Here is one jury I haven't fixed nor bribed, and it's going to convict Gene Larkin of the cowardly crime of shooting a man in the back. I will tell the court that I have reached my present position by a ladder of crime. I have protected racketeers. I have seen Justice thwarted. I have flouted the will of the people by conniving with law-breakers."

He checked himself a moment, pale now as Madge. The court was dead silent, with all eyes upon him. Larkin made a gesture for him to stop; the false smile fading out, leaving the face a mask of fear. But Brandon went on:

"I am a man unfit to hold office of any sort. I have taken tainted money. I have gone far, and was going even farther, seeking to be governor of this State. This girl on the witness-stand was trying to save Larkin, because she wished to save me. I am so poor a fellow that I wouldn't have questioned her evidence, but would have let it go if Larkin hadn't laughed. Laughed at you, your Honour, and at the court. And at Justice—and the people! So I had to get the truth out of her. And I have got truth into myself. I am a free man—free of all lies that held me. Free of all the things that have tied me, like a slave, to what I have been."

Brandon put out his hand towards Madge. She rose up and came to him, taking his hand in hers. A wonderful look was upon her pale face, transfiguring it. They stood, hand in hand.

"Your Honour, many times I have walked out of court-rooms—often insolently. I walk out of this room humbly. May it please your Honour and the court, the record of this trial now contains a confession of my culpability, and my last official act as District Attorney, when I return to the office, will be to turn that confession over to the grand jury of the State."

As they walked out together, the murmurings died down. People regarded them with strange eyes—some hostile, some pitying, some amazed—others with a curious mixture of all three emotions.

In the street, Brandon held open the door of his car for Madge to enter. But she shook her head. He whispered, with all his old dominance:

"Get in! Do you think I'm going to lose you again? I'm free, I tell you—free. Betty is going to marry Bandini, a decent lad—a wry smile crossed his lips—"a good fellow, even if he is a crooner! Come with me, dear—stand by me. Help me—I'm nothing without your help."

They drove away together. Towards a new life.

(By permission of Radio Pictures, Ltd., starring Lee Tracy and Margot Grahame.)

"LAND BEYOND THE LAW"

(Continued from page 12)

Kirby eyed the grey mare grazing by the trees which bordered the pass.

"Sheriff," Kirby called over his shoulder, "I like your hoss. She'll do me a treat. I wish you'd oblige me by moving a little. Then I can shoot you clean and quick and get the hoss and foller the boys."

He half-turned to Chip as he spoke—to see Chip slinging through the cords with Bandy's knife. Up went Kirby's forty-five, to be trained dead on to Chip's breast.

"Many thanks, sheriff," he drawled. "This sure is considerate of you—"

His finger was on the trigger when a bullet from behind a boulder took him full in the back. With a grunt of utter surprise, Kirby fell forward as the bullet from his gun flew wide of its mark.

Dave Massey came out from behind the boulder.

"Bandy's coming," he muttered. "We got to beat it back to Bitter Creek."

Chip's heart felt light. His chums were true. He freed himself and whistled for his grey. She came trotting to him.

The three rode off down the pass at a gallop. Suddenly Chip drew in.

"I'd like to settle with Tascosa," he told the others. "He killed my father. You two ride in and raise a posse from the town. Then come along towards San Luis."

"But he's got the whole outfit," Dave began.

THIS WEEK'S CASTS**"CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS."**

Harvey Cheyne, Freddie Bartholomew; *Manuel*, Spencer Tracy; *Captain Disko*, Lionel Barrymore; *Mr. Cheyne*, Melvyn Douglas; *Uncle Salters*, Charley Grapewin; *Dan*, Mickey Rooney; *Long Jack*, John Carradine; *Cushman*, Oscar O'Shea; *Dr. Finley*, Walter Kingsford; *Mr. Tyler*, Donald Briggs; *Doc*, Sam McDaniels.

"LAND BEYOND THE LAW."

—*Chip Douglas*, Dick Foran; *Louise*, Linda Perry; *Dave Massey*, Wayne Morris; *Cattle Kate*, Irene Franklin; *General Lew Wallace*, Joseph King; *Major Adair*, Gordon Hart; *Slade Henaberry*, Cy Kendall; *Shorty*, Frank Orth; *Bandy*, Glenn Strange; *Yascosa*, Harry Woods; *Sheriff Spence*, Milton Kibbee; *Douglas sen.*, Tom Brewer.

"JIM HANVEY—DETECTIVE."

—*Jim Hanvey*, Guy Kibbee; *Don Terry*, Tom Brown; *Joan Frost*, Lucie Kaye; *Mrs. Frost*, Catharine Donnet; *Rono*, Edward S. Brophy; *Smith*, Edward Gargan; *Mrs. Ellis*, Helen Jerome Eddy; *Dunn*, Theodore von Eltz; *Elwood*, Kenneth Thomson; *Frost*, Howard Hickman; *Lambert*, Oscar Apfel; *Davis*, Wade Boteler.

"CRIMINAL LAWYER."

—*Barry Brandon*, Lee Tracy; *Madge Carter*, Margot Grahame; *Larkin*, Eduardo Ciannelli; *Tony Bandini*, Erik Rhodes; *Betty Walker*, Betty Lawford; *William Walker*, Frank M. Thomas; *District-Attorney Hopkins*, William Stack.

Chip checked him.

"Except you and Bandy. They'll all go along with Slade, I reckon. It's pretty clear who are the rustlers now."

Dave turned an anxious, freckled face towards him.

"Chip, I swear neither I, nor old Bandy, know a word about the rustling. Nor of the trap you walked into. Even now, I can't think it of Slade. He's always treated us right."

"Part of the game," Chip spoke grimly. "You go on, buddies. I trust you to get the townsfolk roused. I'm going to square the deal with Tascosa."

They saw that their chum was determined. They put their mounts to a gallop as Chip headed back to find the man who killed his father.

All Square

ALL signs of the Circle Bar punchers had gone from the San Luis pass.

Chip clattered along the rough track on his grey, staring right and left at the high mountains through which the track had been beaten out in many years by the feet of horsemen and cattle. He came through the pass into rugged country with nothing but sand and rocks to meet his keen gaze.

He turned back, puzzled and angry with himself. He had evidently overlooked some turn or twist in the pass where Henaberry had a hide-out.

He cantered back. About half-way through the pass, in its widest part, the quick ears of his mare pricked up. Chip drew rein behind a great pile of rocks. Coming up the track he heard voices; then the echoing report of a gun. He watched and waited—it was the townsfolk, headed by Bandy and Dave.

Almost as he made sure of them, Henaberry's men came out from a defile just behind him. He was seen at once, and a hail of bullets spattered the rock face above him. He jerked the grey into flight down the hill, then doubled at a bend, shouting to Dave to follow up.

A running fight commenced in this widespread part of the pass. Shots rang out, and two of the townsfolk were tumbled off their horses. It was open war now; Henaberry had no need to mask his men or his intentions. He was out to rule the valley as dictator.

But the Bitter Creek posse were equally determined to be ruled according to law and order. They had elected Chip Douglas as sheriff, and, even if that had been a mistake, they were going to stand by him. They rode into battle with the outlaws and put up a fight which surprised Henaberry as much as it surprised themselves.

Pete Johnson's death, the wanton burning of his ranch and the shooting of old Douglas were things to be put right.

Henaberry turned tail, calling off his men. He yelled orders to Tascosa, who disregarded them. Tascosa had got the thousand dollars out of Slade by threats, and he had spotted Chip. Therefore Kirby had failed. And Mason, the other of the masked three who had conducted the raids, was following Henaberry.

Tascosa thought to himself—a thousand in hand's worth a lot when you don't have to cut it up with two others.

So the dark-skinned traitor and double-crosser spurred straight up the pass towards the border.

Chip went after him, his teeth set, hard together. They were soon alone, far away from the rest. Tascosa kept half-turning to snap off random shots at the grey, and suddenly the great horse reared and fell over on its side, throwing its rider heavily. Tascosa jerked his mount to a halt and came back to

finish with his pursuer and get everything worth taking from him.

Chip lay sprawled on his side in between some rocks, his hat showing just over them. The mare was cropping grass a few yards away. Tascosa dismounted and came creeping up, gun in hand, his eyes greedy for revenge.

A shot rang out, and the aimed forty-five flew from his hand. Chip leapt up from behind the rocks, and Tascosa saw death in the gun levelled at him. He dropped on his knees, putting up his hands, the fingers of his right hand shattered within the gauntlet that covered blood and broken bones.

"Tascosa," said Chip, his gun almost touching the other's belt, "you can choose trial by jury at Bitter Creek, or judgment by me at this moment. But before you decide, you'll say where the cattle are hidden."

That dark face had lost all its common good looks. It was grey and lined with fear. The lips drew back in a snarl.

"Slade's got 'em down in a secret valley. He ran the whole show. I'm through with him."

"Now answer me," Chip's voice was hard. "Trial by jury—or my judgment?"

Tascosa's lips writhed again.

"Guess I'll go to Bitter Creek. I got my story—I was acting under orders. Henaberry's—" He crouched there, a thing of lies and evil thoughts. "Slade's the one you want. You needn't shoot. I'll go—just to get my hand fixed up."

Chip walked him to where Dave and Bandy were searching for them.

Tascosa was roped up. Dave told Chip:

"Henaberry's surrendered with all hands. Says it was this fellow's idea to round up the cattle." Dave gestured towards Tascosa, roped on a horse in front of them. "And Kate told me if I didn't bring you back safe and sound she'd give me no rest. So I best get up behind you on your old grey."

Louise and Kate came out to meet them when the townsmen returned in triumph with the recovered cattle and their prisoners. Presently Louise had a chance to speak with Chip.

"Don't happen to want a sort of secretary and clerk in your office?" she asked off-handedly.

"You know of anyone?" Chip countered. He didn't wait for her answer. "So do I," he grinned. "And she's engaged—for the term of natural life!"

Louise didn't smile. She regarded him in that queerly defiant way he liked in her so much. "I'll ask her," she said. "Maybe she'll say yes."

"She'd better," said Chip. "I'm the sheriff!"

(By permission of Warner Brothers, Ltd., starring Dick Foran and Linda Perry.)

"JIM HANVEY—DETECTIVE"

(Continued from page 18)

would not show up. The editor of the "Globe" was there and feeling shaky, because he had visions of all kinds of libel suits if Terry did not appear.

Then Don Terry appeared in old Pete's cab, and Joan was with him. What an uproar outside the station, with Pressmen and cameramen all busy! Garrett and two officers got Terry into the station and the inspector announced pompously that Terry was under arrest.

Don Terry stared round the room. All the people that he had accused were here and not one friendly face—or so it seemed to him. Only Joan.

"Now, Terry, you can lay off journalism," cried Garrett. "You've accused everyone in this room, but you killed Tom Ellis. What have you to say?"

Before he could answer the door opened and into the room walked Jim Hanvey.

"Keep that cigar away from me," he shouted at the agitated editor of the "Globe," "or I'll explode like a gas balloon."

"Where have you been?" Terry asked. "You look ill."

"Did you get the emeralds?" demanded Lambert.

"Yes, but I nearly died doing it." Hanvey managed a grin. "If anyone had swallowed all the gas I've had they'd look ill. If it hadn't been for a couple of no-good scoundrels who'd rather see me shot than suffocated I wouldn't be here now."

"Say, what are you talking about?" Garrett demanded. "Where are the emeralds?"

From his pocket Hanvey produced the necklace.

"Here they are." He tossed them over to Lambert. "Just take a look and see if they are the real ones. I promised that when I had them emeralds I'd have the murderer.

The man who killed Ellis knew those emeralds was gonna be put back—that man got into the Frost house—he waited in that closet until Don Terry was alone at the safe—that man killed Ellis to make his get-away. Terry's story of how he came to take the jewels and that he was putting 'em back and not taking 'em out is true. The man that killed Ellis is in this room."

"Who is he?" Garrett cried.

"I'm going to give him a chance to tell that himself. They say confession

is good for the soul." Hanvey glanced round. "Is the killer going to talk or do I get busy?" Still there was a stunned silence. "All right. Let's try it my way."

The station door was flung back and into the room jumped Romo and Smith.

"Everybody reach!" threatened Romo.

And when everybody's hands went up in the air Jim Hanvey nodded to Smith. "Okay, the lights."

The lights went out, but the room was not dark, because two hands were ghastly white, like ghost hands.

"Them lighted hands is the murderer," Hanvey cried. "Get him, boys!"

The lights went on, and it was Davis that Romo and Smith had covered with their guns.

"You pretended to go and 'phone, but you eepit into that closet," Hanvey accused. "You knew those jewels were gonna be put back. And you got caught because I had those bills treated with swamp fire—that's a solution of phosphorus. Search him, boys!"

Romo and Smith did it vigorously, and they found a belt stuffed full of money, which they handed reluctantly to Garrett, who by now was not quite certain whether this was a police station or an act in a comedy. But the money and the hands were sufficient evidence for the inspector, who ordered his men to take the cursing Davis off to the cells.

Hanvey hinted to Lambert that as he was prepared to pay thirty thousand for the return of the emeralds, and had got them back without paying a cent, he might consider giving some of the money to Mrs. Ellis. Lambert had been doubtful of Davis for some time, and he was so grateful for all that Hanvey had done that he announced that the whole of the money should go to Mrs. Ellis, and that he would like to hand a reward to Romo and Smith for their good work. And being Hanvey, who refused to take a cent, went off arm-in-arm with Romo and Smith, he had the pleasure of Mr. and Mrs. Frost fussing at young Terry.

"Say, Hanvey, we reckon we'd rather work for you than Dunn," suggested Romo. "What do ye say?"

"Yeah, I reckon I could do with some reforming," said Smith.

"I bet you've still got Terry's watch," chuckled Hanvey. "You boys can take me out to dinner and maybe I'll think it over. Guess you two would make a grand body-guard."

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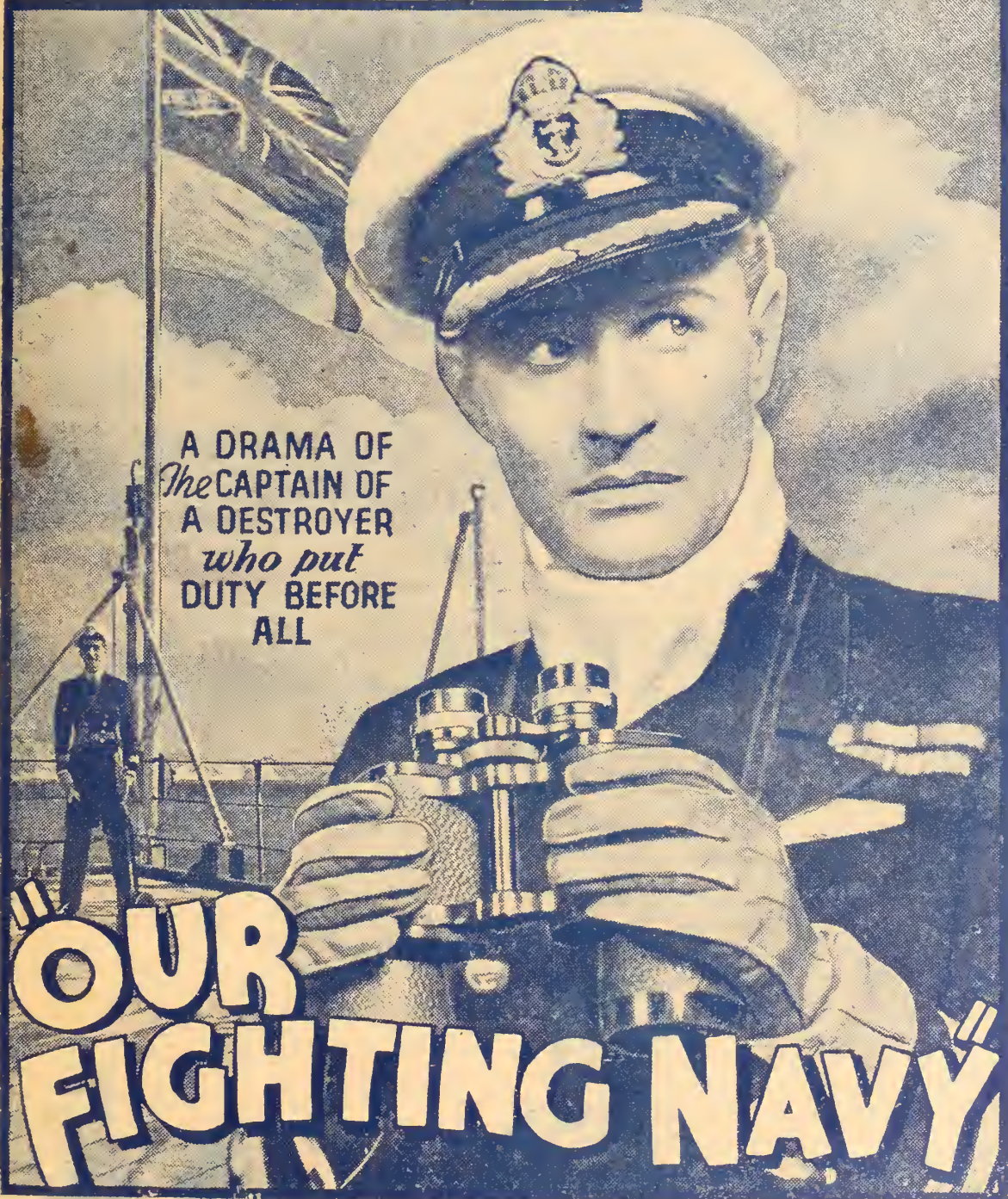
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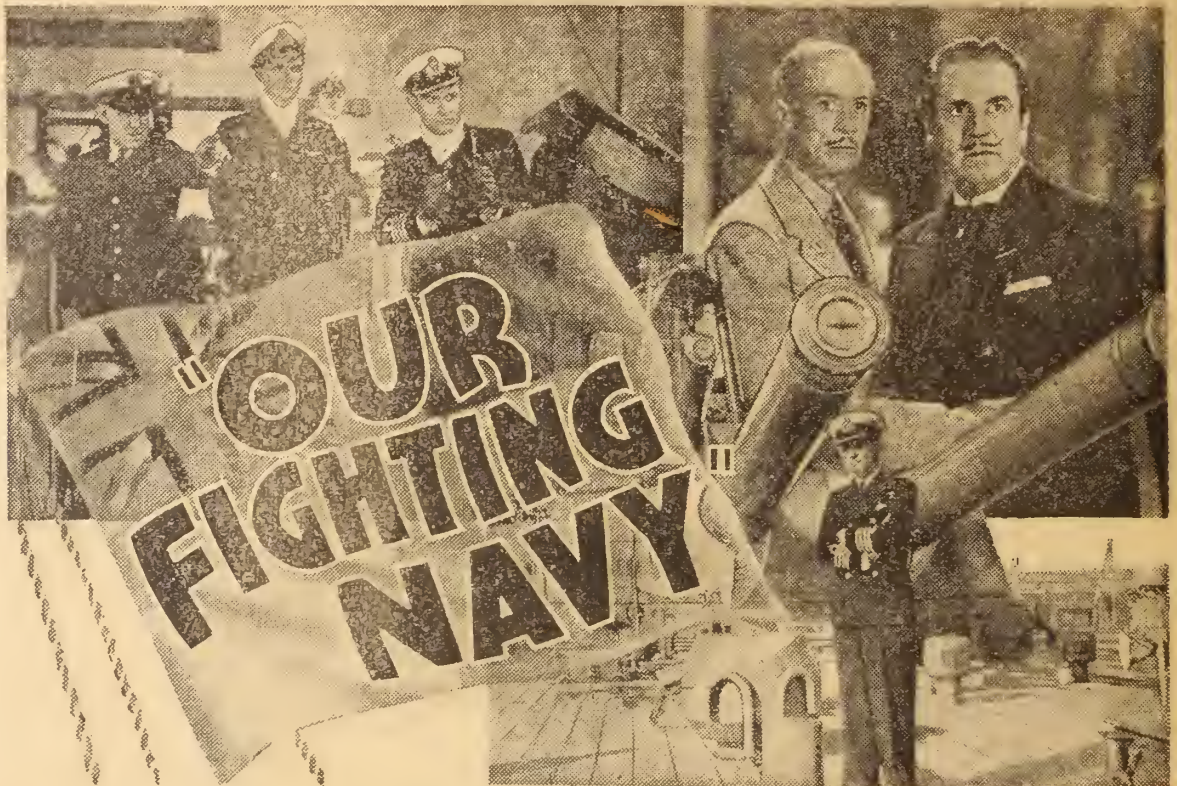
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Trouble Brewing

A YEOMAN rapped sharply on the cabin door of the captain of H.M.S. Audacious.

"Hallo."

"Signal from the flagship, sir."

"Is it important?" asked Captain Markham.

"Yes, sir," stated the yeoman. "The Audacious is to proceed to La Santa and place herself under orders of Commander-in-Chief, Western Islands."

In the interior ward-room a number of officers were gathered round the piano and practising the sea shanty that they were going to sing at the next ship's concert. A bright-eyed young lieutenant entered.

"Enter the wild Canadian boy," grinned the officer at the piano. "I guess you'd better join our chorus party."

"You won't get much chance to rehearse in the next few weeks," replied the lieutenant.

"What is it, youngster?" questioned the grey-haired engineer commander. "Get it off your chest."

"It's nothing important really," modestly answered Bill Armstrong. "Just that we're off to the Western Islands."

"Who said so?" an officer demanded. "Signals just came from flagship—confidential, of course. I'm the only one who knows anything about it."

The engineer commander chuckled, and then glanced across at Armstrong. "How did the captain take the glad news?"

"I believe he was quite pleased," answered the lieutenant.

When the youngster had gone one of the officers asked the engineer commander what he meant by his question regarding the captain.

"I remember there was a girl, quite August 21st, 1937.

a flapper, daughter of a consul," the commander whispered. "Captain Markham's a confirmed bachelor, but that consul's daughter I think touched his heart strings."

Young Bill Armstrong was glad to be going to the Western Islands, because it was a part of the world he had never seen. His servant Stevens was not quite so eager.

"I went there once, sir. All I remember is that they charged us one and a tanner for a bottle of beer," was his complaint.

Bill Armstrong grinned happily because Pamela Brent, whom he met in Canada, was living with her father at La Santa.

Captain Markham had not forgotten the flapper daughter of the consul and wondered if the girl had forgotten him. He was a square-jawed, thickset man with a firm chin and frank blue eyes. He gave orders for the Audacious to change her course.

Some weeks later the Audacious anchored off La Santa.

On a terrace of a big house a young girl was peering through glasses at the destroyer.

"You seem very interested in the Audacious, my dear," remarked grey-haired Lady Carlton, with whom Pamela Brent was staying. "Someone you know on board?"

"Yes, I know Captain Markham," the girl answered. "I met him the last time he was here."

"You must have been very young then."

"Yes, I was, and there's a boy I met in Canada, too—Bill Armstrong. He's a lieutenant."

A pinnacle ploughed through the waves from the largest of the cruisers that rode at anchor in the bay. The admiral was on board. The sailors and

Marines were at their stations to welcome the admiral, who shook hands warmly with the captain.

"Glad to see you on the station again."

"I'm pleased to be under your command once more, sir."

"Your ship's looking very nice, Markham." The admiral suddenly lowered his voice. "May I go into your cabin?"

"Stand at ease—stand easy!" came the command as the admiral went down a companionway to the captain's cabin.

"I shall be grateful for a few days to paint ship, sir," stated Captain Markham. "I want to be a credit to your squadron."

"I should very much like to put you out of routine, but as it is I'm afraid I shall have to keep you at short notice for steam. You are the only crew available for an emergency."

"You having trouble?"

"Nothing serious, but there has been a certain amount of friction with the Customs authorities at Bianco, and Brent, the consul, has enabled asking for a ship," the admiral remarked; and suddenly he reached forward and picked up a photograph frame. "Hallo, this is Brent's daughter, Pamela, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir, I knew her when I was here before."

"Charming girl. She's staying with us." The admiral put back the picture. "And that reminds me. My wife is giving a farewell party for her this afternoon."

"Miss Brent leaving, sir?" The captain spoke sharply.

"Yes, going south in the Black Prince to-morrow. You'll come along and say hail and farewell?"

"I'd like to very much, sir."

"Good!" The admiral moved to-

wards the cabin door. "It'll give us time for a chat."

Not long after the admiral had left a message was received from shore inviting as many of the officers as could be spared, and among those granted leave was young Bill Armstrong. Captain Markham was welcomed by Pamela Brent shyly, and they were carrying on rather a stilted conversation when the admiral whisked Markham off to his study to discuss the present trouble. Needless to say, Bill Armstrong pounced on Pamela and they went off to the beautiful swimming-pool. Pamela turned and gazed a trifle discontentedly towards the house. She could have smacked the dear admiral.

But the admiral was far too busy to bother about Pamela in explaining to Markham the situation. On the wall was a huge map.

"This station covers the whole of the north and south sea wall. Swiftsure's here, the Invincible here, Intrepid here, and Ajax is in the dock being refitted. Now, how the deuce am I to show the flag at Bianco? Believe me, Markham, Government economy is all very well, but it can be carried too far. Everything seems so peaceful round here that there seems no need to worry, but they're queer people and they erupt like a volcano. Now this morning I was talking to Mrs. Vargas—a very clever woman who has just returned from Bianco, and has her finger on the pulse of things. She tells me that the editor of the 'Journal de Naranja' has got hold of some damaging facts about De Costa and the Minister of Marine and Customs—graft and so forth. The editor is going to publish a series of articles exposing him. Now that's the sort of thing that might lead to a political crisis."

"Indeed, sir," politely murmured Markham, who could hear the sound of gay laughter and much splashing. He wondered if Pamela had been glad to see him again.

"That's why I want the Audacious to stand by, Markham, in case of trouble. I do not trust De Costa."

Two Attempts on the President's Life

IN a cool alcove of a house in Bianco four men in uniform waited for the arrival of their president. Swing doors opened and a servant announced that his Excellency, the president, would be with them in a matter of seconds.

Actually it was about five minutes before a great, red-faced, smiling bull of a man appeared. He wore a somewhat soiled drill suit with a red band round his ample middle, a gaudy striped tie and a felt hat. He grinned from ear to ear at his bowing ministers.

"My apologies, signors, but I know that you will forgive me when I tell you I have been discussing important questions of policy"—he paused—"with my chef." This caused much laughter. The great man then turned to a dapper little man who was wearing a uniform not unlike a de luxe stationmaster. "And how is my trusted Minister of the Marines and the Customs?"

"As ever at your service, Excellency," replied De Costa.

"And my Chief of Police?" the president addressed a portly little man, who was littered with gold braid, but rather spoiled the effect by a pith helmet. "I trust the prison is not full?"

After more laughter, because it was best to be amused by the wit of the president, De Costa indicated the big, bearded man in the uniform of an admiral.

"May I present to your Excellency Captain Castellano, who commands your guardship, the El Mirante."

"A magnificent ship, my capitan—a ship worthy of its commander," cried the president.

De Costa beckoned and a tall officer

wearing a cloak over his scarlet uniform stepped forward and saluted.

"May I present the gunnery officer—Lieutenant Enriqueo."

The president beamed on the young man.

"Yours are the fifteen-inch guns, I believe, lieutenant?"

"Yes, Excellency."

"Then I shall be well protected, eh? All that I now require is protecting from the people of Bianco."

"I assure you, your Excellency, our people have for you the greatest loyalty and affection," cried De Costa.

"I was but joking." The big bulk of the president shook with laughter.

"I come to this delightful resort of yours for one liddle holiday, but I am afraid the citizens they want to make me work."

"There is one ceremony we hoped you would undertake, Excellency." De Costa was the spokesman of the meeting. "Would you consent to lay a wreath on the statute of Stefano Rosa?"

"Ah, that is different. Need I say I shall be honoured," the president answered, and glanced round as a servant appeared. "What is it, Manuel?"

"The British consul has arrived, your Excellency."

"Si, si," the president nodded and smiled at De Costa. "I believe you have been seeing much of him of late?"

"A duty rather than a pleasure, your Excellency."

"You don't like my friend Signor Brent?"

"He is always complaining about nothing."

"Signor Brent sent me a letter, and I have asked him here to lunch," the president answered. "We will talk things over. Ah, but I must not keep the consul waiting." He beamed at the bearded sailor. "I will give myself the pleasure, my capitan, of a visit to your ship, and you, lieutenant, will



"You must come along with us as a witness," Enriqueo told Pamela Brent.

show me your big guns. Adios, signors."

"Your Excellency will understand that Mr. Brent's version of the dispute with the British importers is not that of the Ministry of Marine and Custom."

"Naturally, my dear De Costa, but you need not worry," answered the president, and went off to meet the consul.

Brent was a tall, gaunt man with an austere, highly intelligent face and a kindly smile, but not till the splendid lunch was at an end and the two men were enjoying a glass of brandy did the Englishman mention that there was a matter that he wished to discuss.

"I know," the president chuckled. "You mean your little trouble with the Minister of the Customs?"

"It is more than a little trouble, your Excellency. The British traders have been complaining bitterly, sir, and frankly, I think they have cause for complaint."

"Then we must see what we can do about it," decided the president. "Great Britain has always been the very good friend of Naranja."

At the Ministry of Marine and Customs, Do Costa sat at a big table that was littered with papers. He was smoking a small cigar and by his elbow was a glass of beer. An unshaven-looking rascal stood before him. Lounging in a chair, reading a paper, a dark-haired girl sprawled.

"You understand your orders," De Costa rapped out, and the man nodded. "Do not forget that a mistake at this stage is liable to prove unhealthy. That will be all."

"My aim will be true, senor," the man answered.

A minute or so later Lieutenant Don Enriqueo entered the room.

"And what has the gunnery office of the El Mirante to report?" asked De Costa.

"Everything's ready as far as we're concerned, signor."

"Excellent, but first we must arrange the future of our benevolent president," De Costa smiled strangely. "Juanita."

The girl threw aside her paper and got to her feet. She was dark-skinned like a gypsy.

"Tell me when do I throw it?" she asked fiercely.

"When the president is laying the wreath on the statue of Steffano Rosa."

It was arranged that after lunching with the consul the president would lay the wreath. Brent, feeling that he should be present, hastened to the consulate to don his uniform. The president insisted that the consul drive with him to the memorial. Steffano Rosa, 1868-1933, was the man who had done a great deal for the little state of Naranja, and had been its finest president.

A wreath was handed to the president, who walked up to the memorial. De Costa, a number of soldiers and a good many people were at the ceremony.

"To the undying memory of that great citizen, Steffano Rosa," cried the president.

Juanita whipped a knife from the top of her stocking. De Costa and Enriqueo held their breaths, but as the girl flung the knife the president bent forward to place the wreath. It missed him by inches.

The chief of the police yelled to his men and Enriqueo made signs to some of his own hirelings, and there was a general scurrying with many men try-

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ing to lay their hands on the terrified Juanita.

"I will keep this knife and put it with my collection," the president said with a cheerful smile at the horrified consul. "Poor girl. Maybe she will have better luck next time."

De Costa paced his office angrily, and he swung round when a breathless Enriqueo burst into the room.

"Supposing she talks too much?"

"She daren't."

"I don't know so much," snarled De Costa. "Why did you let them arrest her?"

"They were too quick for us."

"If you had done your part Juanita would have been alive."

Loud voices and the sound of heavy feet.

"She is, and betraying us!" yelled Enriqueo. "It's the police!"

When the police burst into the room only De Costa was there.

"Signor De Costa, I arrest you in the name of the Republic."

"May I inquire on what charge?"

"Treason."

From beneath his cloak De Costa produced a round object which he hurled and there was a deafening explosion. Three policemen were killed.

De Costa had vanished when the police searched the building.

De Costa had joined the lieutenant in a dark and gloomy alley.

"Get on board the El Mirante at once," De Costa ordered. "When she's in your hands send up a rocket."

"You'll come on board then?"

"As soon as I can. Hurry!"

Don Enriqueo returned to the ship and went to the armoury, after giving a signal to one of the officers of the watch. Very soon sailors were cautiously making their way to the armoury. They were handed out guns.

Finally they were led by Enriqueo in the murder of the officers and those few men loyal to the cause of the president. The poor wretches were mostly murdered whilst they were asleep.

The president had insisted that Brent come back to his villa for dinner. He had laughed over the attempt on his life and the fact that De Costa was a traitor.

"I think your Excellency underestimates the seriousness of the situation," said the consul.

"You are worried for the safety of the British residents?" the president smiled. "I will be personally responsible for their safety."

"Pardon me, sir, that is definitely my responsibility," sharply spoke the Consul. "These business men with their wives and families, thousands of miles from their own country, naturally turn to me in a crisis like this. Already a great deal of their property has been damaged by unruly mobs."

"I will see that they are compensated."

"And what if it goes beyond damaged property?" Brent stated in his determined way. "Compensation demanded for the loss of British lives is apt to be very heavy."

"Oh, no, no, signor, that sounds like one big threat."

"Oh, no, I'm sorry if I spoke warmly. I assure you that no threat was intended. But I am very worried."

"My friend, you leave everything to me." The president picked up a bottle of brandy. "We drink to peace and prosperity. I think you will like this liqueur."

The ugly rascal that was in De Costa's pay was lurking in the garden and in his hand was a gun.

"Your taste in wine, your Excellency, is superb." Brent sipped the brandy.

"I trust that you may be right about peace and prosperity, but I fear—"

"Oh, my friend, you do not have these political melodramas in your country, eh?" interrupted the president, wishing to change the subject. "When is your charming daughter returning? Bianco is not the same place when Miss Brent is away."

The consul sighed.

"She left La Santa this morning, I am sorry to say."

"Sorry that your daughter is returning to Bianco?"

"Oh, no, I am sorry she is returning with conditions as they are."

"Oh, no, Signor Brent, this is a civilised country." The president smiled broadly at the consul as if the latter was making a great deal out of little. "To your daughter's speedy and safe return!" He raised his large brandy glass.

Crack! The gunman sent by De Costa had been waiting for a chance to shoot through the open window at the president, and every time he had hesitated because he did not wish to miss. Then he had seen a guard approaching, and knew that if he did not fire at once it would be too late. He fired, and it was the brandy glass that he smashed.

"Good heavens!" gasped Brent. "Are you hurt?"

"No, but the glass is broke and the brandy spilled." The president glanced round. "Poor, foolish one! It would seem that he has escaped. I am glad because I should have had to have hanged him." He frowned as servants peered nervously round the door. "Another glass. Make it quick, please."

Markham is Sent to Bianco

THE admiral looked at the message that an officer had handed him.

He studied it, then read it aloud: "Civil disturbance growing, our people have been threatened." The admiral glanced at the officer. "Where's the rest of this?"

"The message broke off there, sir."

"Can you get through to Bianco?"

"No, sir, the lines are dead." The admiral picked up the telephone and dialed a number. "That you, Flag Lieutenant? Make a signal to Audacious to raise steam for full speed, and for the captain to come and see me." The admiral hung up and stared again at the unfinished message. "This looks serious."

When Markham got hack from his summons to the admiral he sought out his first officer.

"I have seen the commander-in-chief. How soon can you get away?"

"By eight bells, sir."

"Good, I want to see you in my cabin. Tell the engineer and the gunnery officer I want to see them as well. It looks like a revolution in Bianco." The captain looked grim. "The populace seem to be in danger."

Directly the destroyer was sighted off Bianco the consul ordered his pinnace. He was on his way out to the destroyer before she dropped anchor. He was greeted by Markham.

"Glad to see you, sir."

"You've no idea how glad I am to see you." The consul gave a rueful grin.

"What is the situation like?" the captain asked when the two men were alone.

"So far they have made two attempts on the life of the president—their battleship El Mirante is in revolt and they have executed all the loyal officers."

"My word, this is serious." Markham had had no idea things were as grave as this. "Why, they could blow

the place to pieces in five minutes. Who is behind all this?"

"The late Minister of Marine—a fellow by the name of De Costa. He is on board the El Mirante now. They tried to arrest him, but by means of a bomb he got away. I imagine he was hidden somewhere in the town until he got the signal that the El Mirante was in the power of his officers. Two red Verey lights went up from the battleship, and I imagine that that was the signal that told De Costa that the ship was now in the hands of the rebels. De Costa at once hastened from the town to the El Mirante."

"You are certain of these facts, sir?"

"One of the loyal officers was wounded, but managed to jump overboard," the consul answered. "He swam ashore. I do wish Pamela was not coming back to this place."

"Yes, so do I." The captain paced his cabin. "When is the Black Prince due?"

"In about an hour."

"It doesn't seem wise for her to anchor in this harbour. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll send a message for her to anchor outside, then I'll send a boat over to take Pam off."

The consul smiled his gratitude.

"It would be a great relief if you would," he said.

Markham sent for the yeoman of the signals, and gave the necessary orders for a boat to be got ready. He would send an officer.

"Thanks very much." The consul got up from his chair. "I'll have my car at the wharf to meet them."

"What sort of fellow is the president?" Markham asked as he held open the door.

"A very decent sort of chap really," answered the consul. "Not only fearless, but in many ways like a child. Strange combination of optimist and fatalist."

"Doesn't sound helpful. Can he get any support from the capital?"

"I've urged him to send for a detachment of troops, but I have doubts if any of his soldiers are loyal. For the rest there is only a tiny destroyer that would be about as much use against El Mirante as a pop-gun. The situation is very grave, Markham."

Captain Markham escorted his visitor up on to the deck, and there both men instinctively turned to gaze towards the El Mirante which was anchored about a mile off shore.

"What do you think De Costa plans to do?"

"I don't know quite," was the consul's reply. "I expect he will send some sort of ultimatum to the president."

Lieutenant Bill Armstrong was detailed to go over to the Black Prince and collect Pamela as he was an old friend of the consul's daughter. He was instructed to escort the girl to the consulate and then come straight back to the Audacious.

The situation was just as grave as the consul had imagined. De Costa was a man without scruple. Even as Markham was giving orders for a boat to collect Pamela Brent he was making his plans.

Lieutenant Enriqueo lolled in a chair sucking at a cigarette.

"There is still our respective president to deal with," remarked De Costa, twisting his minute moustache.

"A shell dropped into his villa from one of my guns would settle him."

"That would be crude and un-economic," De Costa gave a sneering laugh. "I'm afraid, my dear Enriqueo,



The consul stared intently at the rebel officer. "The president will leave here when he chooses and not before!" he stated in firm tones.

you never see beyond the muzzle of one of your guns—but the president is not without financial resources."

"Oh!" Enriqueo grinned knowingly. "If we could persuade him to make a substantial contribution to our cause we might consider—" De Costa paused.

"You mean you'd let him go free?"

"I did not say so."

Enriqueo chuckled and rubbed his big hands together. He hoped De Costa would let him kill the president.

De Costa wrote swiftly, and then sealed his letter.

"I want you to go ashore with an armed party and deliver this to the president," De Costa smiled triumphantly. "It is my ultimatum. When we have the money, my dear Enriqueo, I will hand him over to your tender mercies."

Prisoners of De Costa

TO Bill Armstrong it was a grand adventure having to look after Pamela. Of course, there would be no trouble, but he hoped that the scare would last so that the Audacious were kept at Bianco. Pamela asked if the boat might not go over to the Audacious before taking her ashore. Naturally, Bill asked why, and Pam explained a little lamely that she thought it would be nice if she could have thanked the captain for his kindness.

"The captain's a confirmed bachelor," Bill had laughed heartily. "I should get it in the neck for not carrying out orders."

The boat drew in at the quayside and the two young people climbed up some slimy stone steps.

"Wait here, I won't be long," Armstrong told the seaman in charge of the boat's party. He took hold of the girl. "I don't see the car anywhere—do you?"

"It's not here," Pamela answered. "Let's go and meet it."

Bill Armstrong grinned his consent and they walked along the quay chatting, when the officer became aware that everything was not quite right.

"I say, Pam, do you notice anything funny about these people, or is it just my imagination? They all seem to be scuttling about as if scared out of their lives."

"It's quite clear that there is some sort of bother going on," agreed the girl. "I've seen it like this before, but it usually blows over in twenty-four hours."

"I hope you're right," Bill looked round. "But a lot of these birds carry nasty-looking knives, and there seem a lot of men—I presume by their uniforms that they're soldiers—have guns."

"They love display, but I don't expect they ever use them," laughed Pam. "Hallo, there comes our car."

The car came along the street at a fair pace, and Pam was just thinking of signalling it to stop when a soldier rushed out of a side-way. A revolver cracked twice, the chauffeur slumped across the wheel, and the car crashed into a stone pillar.

Scarce had the car crashed before Bill Armstrong was rushing across the road with Pam following. The killer darted for the side-street, but the boy was too quick. He did a flying leap and hurled the man to the ground.

They were struggling furiously when Lieutenant Enriqueo and some of his rebel sailors and soldiers came charging down the street. They grabbed hold of Armstrong and dragged him away.

"What is all this?" Enriqueo spoke in broken English.

It was Pam who answered:

"He fired at our chauffeur."

"Your chauffeur, eh?" Enriqueo's eyes narrowed.

"Yes, the British consul's chauffeur," indignantly shouted the young officer.

"He was a spy—an enemy of the people."

"I don't know what you're talking about," Bill argued aggressively and pointed to the fallen man. "This rat tried to murder him."

"You attacked our man," Enricquo's eyes narrowed. "Hold him prisoner."

"Take your hands off me!" Bill struggled vainly.

"It's no use, Bill," interposed Pam wisely. "When my father hears of this—"

"That'll be later," sneered Enricquo, and at a signal two sailors lined up on each side of the girl. "You must come along with us as a witness."

They were taken down ill-smelling streets to a great building that had been the office of the Marine and Customs, and they were thrust into a wired-in enclosure.

"Well, here we are," growled Bill furiously. "I wish I could lay my hands on that swine who put us here."

"We won't be here long," said Pam. "Father is certain to send out a search party for us."

Her father was at that moment having a talk with the president, who was smiling as if nothing were amiss. Markham had come ashore to assist Brent at this conference with the president.

"Tell me, signor, what is it you want to do?"

"The captain would like your permission, sir, for a small landing party from the Audacious."

"A small landing party. Why?"

"To protect the British consulate, your Excellency."

"Certainly, captain, but why a small landing party?" The president's eyes twinkled. "Why not land all your brave men and clear up Bianco?"

"That, sir," answered Markham, "would be going beyond what is permitted. We cannot interfere with your political affairs."

"Bah, this is not politics," the president argued. "This is what you would call a dog fight, and it is necessary that you shoot the mad dog."

Markham shook his head.

"Yes, but not with our guns."

"I understand that De Costa is on board the El Mirante," stated the consul.

"Si—look!" The president produced a paper. "I have a letter here from him to say that if I'm not on board the El Mirante by midnight he will take me by force—me, the president!"

Brent took the paper.

"This looks serious, sir."

"It is one big bluff," scoffed the president. "But I do not go on board the El Mirante at midnight—I stay here."

"If there is likely to be any fighting, sir, I must have time to evacuate the British residents," Markham said severely.

"Rest assured, captain, it will not be necessary. Land as many of your brave men as you wish—you have my full permission."

Markham hastened back to his ship, whilst the consul went to the consulate expecting to meet his daughter there.

The captain of the Audacious speedily had a landing party of Marines and sailors. He impressed on Adams, the officer in charge, that the man had no concern in the politics in Bianco. Their job was to assist the consul in providing protection for the British Nationals. Also on reaching the consulate he was to order Armstrong to return to the ship immediately.

The consul was stopped several times on his way back by anxious residents

who wanted to know what was going on. He gave instructions for them to be ready to go on board the Audacious at a moment's notice. He got back to the consulate a few minutes after the landing-party had arrived.

"Are you quite comfortable here?" he asked Adams.

"Yes, sir, thank you."

"If there is anything you want, please let me know," Brent said, and hurried away to seek out his daughter. The consul was surprised that she had not been in the main reception hall. He tried his study, and she was not there. He went back into the hall and gazed towards the stairs.

"Pam! Pam!" he cried hoarsely.

"Are you there? Pam! Pam!"

His secretary, a dapper little man, appeared.

"Miss Brent isn't here, sir."

"Not here?" Brent gasped out.

"But the Black Prince has arrived and sailed again."

"Yes, sir, we were feeling anxious," the secretary answered.

"But Captain Markham promised to send Miss Brent here in charge of an officer." The consul hastened to the big dining-room that had been given to the landing-party. "Signalman," he called, and a sailor stepped smartly forward, "make a signal to your captain from Mr. Brent—just say, 'Where is Pam?'"

"Aye, aye, sir!"

When Markham got the message he knitted his brows together in bewilderment.

"Does this mean that Miss Brent hasn't arrived at the consulate?"

"I can't understand it, sir," answered second officer Walton, who had brought the message. "Armstrong's boat is still in shore, sir."

"Send a message to the consul that Lieutenant Armstrong was sent from here to meet her, and that he has not returned on board," Markham instructed. "Armstrong should have been back some while ago, and I think that after getting that message off, Walton, it would be as well if someone went ashore to make inquiries."

"Shall I go, sir?"

"Yes, do. Jump in my boat and go right away."

The reply sent by Markham made the consul even more anxious and worried. He consulted with Adams.

"Armstrong's a pretty reliable fellow," Adams stated gravely. "It beats me what can have happened to him. Shall I take a party of men, sir, and see if I can find out anything in the town?"

"I wish you would, lieutenant."

"I'll go at once, sir. It's not likely that they would touch Armstrong; he's in uniform."

Brent paced restlessly up and down his study. Where could Pamela have gone? Surely she had not gone sight-seeing? No, that was impossible. There was considerable rioting going on in the town, and perhaps Armstrong had taken her into some house for shelter. The harassed father was not satisfied with that explanation.

Hardcastle, a trader, was admitted to his study, and the latter did nothing to relieve the consul of his gloomy thoughts.

"I warned you some days ago that there was trouble brewing," stated the trader. "And every word I said has come true."

"What is it now?"

"You'll have to move our folk out of the lower town—it's terrible down there. Rioting and looting."

"Get them into the consulate as quickly as you can," the consul de-

cidated. "I will have them transferred later to the Audacious."

"Thanks, Brent," Hardcastle paused at the door. "I must say this is a nice state of affairs for that bonny daughter of yours to come back to. Where is the lassie?"

"I don't know," muttered the unhappy consul. "She came ashore from the Black Prince and hasn't got here yet."

"You don't mean Miss Brent's lost in Bianco?" gasped Hardcastle. "And you sit there—"

"How do I know where she is?" the consul shouted. He was usually so quiet of voice. "I can't leave here. I can only pray that the search-party finds her."

When Adams returned he reported much disturbance in the town. He could find no trace of the consul's daughter or the officer who had escorted her from the Black Prince.

The President Complicates Matters

THE president was practising with his revolver—just in case he might need it—when a servant appeared.

"A message has come from Colonel Cortez, your Excellency, that the lower town is in the hands of the rebels."

"What's that?" The president was startled.

"The messenger was fired at but managed to get through."

"This means the British residents are in danger, Louis." The president thought for a moment. "Louis, my hat and cloak."

"Your Excellency is not going to leave the villa?"

"I must, Louis. All the time I tell the consul there is no danger. You will tell Juan to meet me with the car round at the back, near the pagoda. Try to get a message through to Colonel Cortez to meet me at the consulate." The president stuck out his chest proudly. "I, the president, will warn my friend, Signor Brent!"

By keeping his cloak muffled close round him the president succeeded in reaching the consulate.

"I am sorry, my friend, I am so very sorry," he said with an apologetic smile. "I told you that your people would be safe, and I made a great big mistake. I see you have many people here."

"We are evacuating them as quickly as possible," answered the consul, who looked drawn and haggard. "Many are already on the way to the Audacious."

"My friend, if you don't mind, I should like very much to speak to your people you have here and tell them that the president is sorry and regrets their treatment."

"I am sure they would find that very consoling," Brent said with a touch of bitter irony.

"I go out and speak to your people now, and then I return to my villa."

Scarce had the president spoken when there came the sound of shots. He smiled a little foolishly, but pulled up as there came the unmistakable and sinister sound of a machine-gun.

"You can hardly do that now, sir," the consul told him. "Perhaps you had better remain here for a while until things are quieter."

The president hesitated. The firing broke out afresh and closer. "Perhaps I had better stay with you for just one little while to see if my friend Colonel Cortez comes to join me."

Captain Markham arrived at the consulate after seeing the first batch of refugees made comfortable on the Audacious.

"Still no news of Pam?"

"Nothing at all." The consul buried his face in his hands. "The suspense is killing me." He looked up eagerly. "How about the officer—"

"Armstrong did not show up," Markham answered. "I know that they landed and started to walk because the car was late. Armstrong did not return. If any harm comes to Pam I'll never forgive myself for not sending an armed escort. I can only hope that Lieutenant Walton and the search-party find them. The officer will report here."

Walton turned up at the consulate not many moments later.

"I haven't found any trace of Miss Brent or Armstrong, sir," he reported to his captain. "But I found the consul's car. It was in a side-street near the landing-stage. It was badly smashed up and it looks as if the wreckage had been dumped there. The chauffeur's body was huddled over the wheel—he had been shot, sir."

"Good heavens!" both Markham and the consul gasped out.

"I tried to question the people, sir," added Walton. "But I couldn't find out anything. Either they can't say or they won't."

"Anything to show whether my daughter was in the car?" asked the consul hoarsely.

"The car was going towards the landing-stage, in my opinion, sir. There's a smashed pillar in the nearby main street, which would be about a quarter of a mile from the landing-stage."

"Thanks, Walton." The captain turned to the consul. "Finding the car wasn't there to meet them, they apparently decided to walk, and vanished into thin air." He turned to his officer. "Do everything possible. If you find any trace of them, report here to the consul; if not, return to the ship."

"What do you think can have happened to them, Markham?" asked the anxious consul.

"I expect they have taken refuge in some place," decided Markham. "The mob wouldn't dare lay hands on an English officer."

The consul's secretary entered and announced that an officer from the El Mirante wished to speak with the consul.

"I thought they'd murdered all their officers," exclaimed Markham.

"The loyal ones, yes," the consul answered. "I think we'll see this man together." He waited till his secretary had gone. "This is a deuced awkward situation, Markham." He pointed to the large wide-brimmed hat on his desk. "That belongs to the president—he is here."

"That does complicate matters," agreed Markham.

Lieutenant Enriqueo swaggered into the room and stood at his ease before the consul's desk. Markham eyed the gunnery officer with anger and disapproval.

"You have in your house the late president of Bianco."

"The late president?"

Enriqueo grinned insolently.

"Yes. I have orders he is to accompany me on board the El Mirante."

The consul stared intently at the rebel officer.

"The president will leave here when he chooses and not before," he stated in firm tones.

"He must accompany me now!" cried Enriqueo truculently.

"May I remind you that you are in a British consulate?"

"And you refuse to let him go?"

"I do!"

"Very well, if in six hours he is still here, you must take the consequences."

"And what do you mean by that?" sharply asked Markham.

"You will find out soon enough if he is not on board, that is all," Enriqueo grinned insolently. "You will find out. Adios, signors!"

The consul and the captain of the Audacious stared blankly at each other after their unwelcome visitor had left.

"Why in heaven's name did the president come here at this time?"

"He meant well." The consul shrugged his shoulders despairingly.

"Do we throw him to the wolves or not?"

"How can we?"

"Precisely!" the consul agreed.

Captain Markham prepared to leave. "I'll go on board the El Mirante and have a talk with De Costa," he decided. "In the meantime, the president stays here. I'm afraid I can't take any more refugees. If you have any news of Pam you will signal the ship."

"Of course!" the consul answered. "I know you will do anything to stop De Costa trying to carry out any reprisals."

De Costa's Terms

CAPTAIN MARKHAM went out in his pinnace to the El Mirante, and as he walked up the gangway to the deck a slight, ironical smile twitched his strong mouth as he noticed rebel sailors and soldiers longing about on the decks, leaning on their guns with no sort of discipline prevailing.

Dusk was settling over the blue waters of the bay, and the lights of Bianco twinkled from the shore.

A sentry with fixed bayonet barred the captain's passage and glared suspiciously at him. The man called out something that Markham did not understand and a voice answered smoothly:

"I will see the captain of the Audacious."

De Costa was seated in the state cabin that had once belonged to Captain Castellano, who had been murdered at his instigation. He pointed to a chair.

"You wish to see me?"

"I wish to talk to you," coldly responded Markham as he sat down. "I have very little to say. I understand that you have presented an ultimatum to the British consul."

De Costa reached for a silver cigar-box and held it out to Markham, who ignored the gesture. The rebel leader smiled as if amused, poured himself a



"I am here to warn you that any attempt to use force against the consulate will be prevented by all means in my power!" said Captain Markham.

glass of wine, looked at it and then at the captain.

"Very reluctantly," he said softly.

"I am here to warn you that any attempt to use force against the consulate will be prevented by all means in my power."

"Let's be logical." De Costa smiled more openly. "My ship is very large, yours is very small. My guns are fifteen-inch, yours only six."

"My warning stands." Markham rose. "If any harm comes to the consulate you will bitterly regret it."

"Possibly, captain, possibly." De Costa lit his cigar and puffed out the smoke with an air of satisfaction. "But in that case my young guests will also regret it."

"Guests?"

"Yes. A charming young English lady and one of your officers."

"So you have dared to detain Miss Brent and an officer of mine?"

"Your lieutenant attempted to kill one of my men," laughed De Costa. "The young lady is a witness. They were arrested and then brought aboard this ship."

"I demand the immediate release of these British subjects!" thundered Markham.

"By all means—as soon as the president is aboard this ship."

"I am not here to bargain with you."

"They are in no danger as my guests." De Costa flicked away the ash from the cigar. "Thought, of course, it would be most unfortunate if they were killed by one of your guns."

"You dirty swine! I'll—"

De Costa jumped up, his eyes blazing.

"Signor!"

Markham's momentary rage had gone. He looked at the rebel coldly and walked to the cabin door.

"You have had your warning."

De Costa laughed tauntingly. Markham went out on to the deck and was glad to breathe the fresh air. The pinnace took him back to the Audacious.

The rebel summoned Lieutenant Enrique to his cabin.

"The captain of the British cruiser has just been to see me. I informed him that the president must come on board at once."

"And what did he say?"

"He gave me a warning we can disregard." De Costa unrolled some parchment. "Here are the plans. At dawn we attack the British consulate."

"How about the British cruiser?"

"We can afford to disregard that. She is entirely cut off from reinforcements. Naturally—if for any reason they do—but I don't think they would fire on our guests." De Costa was amused at his lieutenant's laughter. "I see you agree with me. Here is a map of the whole position. The El Mirante is here, the British Consulate there, and the cruiser here."

"I will go and check the gun turrets," Enrique told his chief. "Maybe the officers need a little training. All shall be ready for the dawn attack."

In a dark and gloomy cabin that was being used as a store-room Pamela Brent and Bill Armstrong were seated on some sacks. They had had very little to eat since they had been arrested and they had smoked all their cigarettes.

"I'm sorry I let you in for this, Pam."

"It isn't your fault," the girl said wearily. "But if only Captain Mark-

ham had come to meet me this wouldn't have happened."

"I don't see what difference he could have made," grumbled Bill. "Besides, he's got to look after his ship."

"His ship—always his ship," irritably answered the girl. "He thinks of nothing else." She shivered. "What part of the ship is this?"

"Looks like an upper deck store-room to me."

"We seem fated to be always sitting around like this, side by side," Pam said gloomily.

"It's all right with me," grinned Bill, and put his arm round her.

"Don't, Bill."

"Sorry. Have you known him long?"

Pam looked at the youngster in surprise.

"Who?"

"Captain Markham. You like him, don't you?"

"Yes, Bill. I'm sorry, Bill." She gave a heavy sigh. "He doesn't care in the least for me."

"And I'm crazy about you." Bill got up. "You girls puzzle me."

Sounds outside made him turn. "Hallo, what's going on?"

He walked quietly over to a porthole and pulled back the curtain. He was staring into a turret. "Why do you suppose they're fooling around with a gun at this hour of the night?"

"Why do they do anything?" cried Pam. "Why did they bring us here?"

Bill had a good idea that there must be some very good reason, and it was something that he did not care to think too much about.

"I'm glad they didn't separate us, anyway." He tried to seem cheerful. He drew back the curtain. "I hope they're not planning to open fire on the Audacious."

"They'd more likely want to blow Bianco to bits," snapped the girl, little knowing how near to the truth she was.

Markham's Dilemma

CAPTAIN MARKHAM on reaching the Audacious at once called a meeting of his senior officers and told them all that had happened.

"That's the situation," he concluded. "And if they do open fire on the consulate, somehow or other we've got to stop them."

"Torpedoes, sir, that's the only way," cried the torpedo lieutenant.

"That's just what we can't do," answered his superior officer. "It's very important that we're not the aggressor."

"Sounds a difficult problem, sir," remarked the first officer.

"Darned difficult," nodded Markham. "In the meantime we must make preparations for anything this perishing fool might do. You, chief, raise steam for full speed."

"Aye, aye, sir!" responded the chief engineer, picking up his hat.

"Get the war heads on the torpedoes."

"Aye, aye, sir!" cried the torpedo lieutenant, as he got to his feet.

"See there's plenty of shells at the guns."

"Yes, sir!" cried the gunnery lieutenant. "H.E., sir?"

"Yes, I think that would be best."

He dismissed the lieutenant with a nod and turned to his first officer. "I shall want the cable ready for slipping."

"Very good, sir," answered Forbes.

"Pretty position, eh, Forbes?" The captain fingered his smooth jaw. "A ship five times the size of us threatening to smash the consulate. If I open fire first I shall be the aggressor; if I don't they may blow us to pieces. Need-

less to say, whatever I do now, I shall be in the wrong. And just to make things easier Miss Brent and Armstrong are in the ship I may have to attack."

"Pretty tough, sir," agreed the first officer. "I wonder what solution the war college would offer?"

"I wonder?" Markham gave a rueful grin. "If only we were in the North Sea a convenient fog would solve our difficulties for us."

"Yes, that would settle De Costa."

"By Gad! I've got it! We'll have a fog!" Markham shouted. "A smoke screen between El Mirante and the land. Yes, that's the idea. All right, action station!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" cried Forbes, and went to the double.

The bugle sounded the call, and soon the men were piling out of their hammocks and running in various directions to action stations.

Markham went round his ship. He told the men that they might be involved in an action with the El Mirante, as the rebel battleship was threatening to blow up the British consulate. As there was no likelihood of any action taking place before dawn, all men that could be spared were allowed to go back to their hammocks.

Shortly after midnight the chief engineer reported that the main engines were all ready, the gunnery lieutenant reported that he was ready to open fire, and the torpedo lieutenant that he was ready for action.

Markham then sought out Forbes.

"I can't take the refugees into action. You'd better get them into the boats—as few boats as possible. If there is any action it'll be about here. Tell the boats to keep well away. There is a bay three miles along the coast known as Sarrento. They can lie hidden there, but I do not advise landing. Put one officer in charge. Tell the refugees to make little noise when they leave the ship and not to talk when they get away. Not that it makes much difference, but it is just as well not to warn De Costa of activity on board."

"Aye, aye, sir!"

The refugees with much grumbling were got into three boats and vanished into the darkness. Markham had action stations called an hour before dawn.

Gradually the darkness lifted and it was a grey light. The El Mirante showed as a black smudge. Rapidly the light grew stronger, and Markham watched the El Mirante through his glasses.

There was activity on board the rebel ship, and the captain noticed in particular that the guns were being moved as if they were being sighted. The line of fire was shorewards.

"What's their range on the consulate?"

"About two thousand yards, sir," answered Forbes. "Hallo, the front turrets have opened fire."

There was a belch of smoke and the rumble of an explosion. Markham scanned Bianco anxiously and saw two bursts of flame on the cliffs that towered over Bianco. A pall of black smoke and the rumble of the explosions.

"Slip the cable," shouted Markham. "Full speed ahead both engines."

As Light as a Feather

THERE was little sleep for Brent that night. He had received a message from Markham that Pamela and Armstrong were prisoners on board the El Mirante. It was a consolation to know that his daughter was alive, but one could not tell what a murdering little fiend like De Costa might do.

Nobody else in the consulate slept,

and about four in the morning the president, who had been spending all his time assuring the refugees that there was nothing to fear, sought out the consul.

"You're sad, my friend." He stared at the pallid, haggard face of the Englishman.

"I am very worried."

"You do not eat, that is very bad," the president shook his head, and from his pocket took out a small tin. "Try a lozenge. Extract of beef—very nourishing, my friend."

"No, thank you," cried the consul impatiently.

"If you do not eat, you lose courage," argued the president. "If you lose courage you lose everything."

The president grinned and put a lozenge into his mouth, but his smile vanished as he heard sounds of rifle fire and machine-gunning.

"Colonel Cortez is making a bold fight," he muttered.

"Your people seem to have gone mad," cried the consul.

"If you would only let me I would go out and talk to them," cried the president.

"You can't do that, sir," cried Brent.

De Costa frowned as he saw the shells burst and shouted to Enriqueco to decrease the range by three hundred yards. This time the shells hit houses in front of the consulate. That he might be butchering some of his own supporters did not even enter De Costa's head. The little rebel was drunk with power. He thought himself mightier than the British nation. He would fire until the consulate ran up the white flag, and perhaps he would still go on firing; but he would smash ruthlessly anyone who stood in the way of De Costa, the future President of Maranja.

"Increase range — one hundred yards," Enriqueco snarled at his gunners.

This time one shell pitched in the street near the consulate, blew in the side of a house and smashed one of the consulate walls. The next shells did little damage, though one crashed through the roof and failed to explode.

A little girl, terrified by the noise, came running into the hall, and it was the president who took the child on his knee.

"My little bambino, you don't want to cry," he grinned at her, and then at

sorry," he whispered. "You were right. 'Death she as light as one leetle feather. Duty is as heavy—'" The president never finished the quotation.

The Smoke Screen

CAPTAIN MARKHAM watched the effects of the shelling and saw that the shells were pitching dangerously close to the consulate.

"Tell the engineer to make smoke," he ordered. "And order the gunnery lieutenant to stand by."

De Costa leaned over the rail of the bridge and watched the bursting shells create destruction in the town of Bianco. There was an ugly scowl on his forehead because Enriqueco had failed to destroy the British consulate. Shells cost a lot of money, and far too many were being used. He turned his head to see what H.M.S. Audacious was doing, and observed the cruiser steaming towards the shore. Surely this puny little ship of war did not intend to attack the mighty El Mirante? Suddenly from the funnels began to belch clouds of thick black smoke.

De Costa chuckled.

"So the British cruiser is trying to



The Audacious registered a direct hit on a forward conning-tower of the rebel ship.

"If you show yourself outside they would shoot you."

The president gave a shrug of his shoulders.

"Well, what is the difference—death is one little thing."

"'Death is as light as a feather. Duty is as heavy as a mountain,'" quoted the consul.

"What is that you say, my friend?"

"Oh, just a quotation, your Excellency!"

"'Death, she is as light as one leetle feather,'" the president smiled. "I like that—that is good."

It was not many minutes later that De Costa, from the bridge of the El Mirante, gave orders to Enriqueco to train his guns on the British consulate and gave the order to fire the front turrets.

The shells exploded two or three hundred yards beyond the consulate and did little damage, though it caused considerable panic among the refugees.

The small landing party showed no sign of perturbation, though all of them knew only too well that it was only a matter of time before one of the shells scored a direct hit on the consulate.

Brent. "I will look after her, my friend, if you wish to see to your peoples."

The president juggled the four-year-old on his knee and kept her attention away from the noise of the explosions, though the big man had difficulty in suppressing a start as the sounds grew closer. He showed the child how a nigger would eat a water-melon and so buried his teeth in the luscious fruit that he made his ears wet. The child laughed as the president consumed great mouthfuls of melon.

A shell hit the roof and exploded with a roar. Bits of shrapnel whined through the air, and involuntarily the child hid herself against the president's chest. The big man's face was contorted with pain, but he made no sound.

The mother of the child appeared and snatched up her child. Her shrill cry of alarm brought the consul.

A piece of stray shrapnel had hit the president, and a refugee, who was acting as doctor to the casualties, shook his head.

The president did not seem to mind dying, and he smiled quite contentedly at the consul.

"No, no, my friend, you must not feel

shield the British consulate with smoke?" He watched the smoke grow denser and denser. "Two can play at this clever business," he decided, and summoned the gunnery lieutenant. "Get ready your big guns. I'm going to fire on the cruiser. Also tell an officer to bring those two English people on deck."

Bill Armstrong had been startled when the battleship had opened fire. He told Pamela that he reckoned the rebels must be firing on Bianco, and the girl had tried to keep up a brave front. What was happening to her father and the people of Bianco? Their prison was full of the smell of powder, and the whole place seemed to quiver when the 15-inch guns fired. It was a surprise to them when the door of the store-room was unlocked and an officer bade them in broken English to follow him on deck.

"A little change of air will do us good," Bill grinned as cheerfully as he could. "We'll be able to see what's going on."

The officer took them on to the deck.

"You stay there!" he ordered.

"Why have they brought us here?" Pamela asked.

"I don't know." Bill noted the two seamen with bayonets fixed. The men were watching them closely. It would be unwise to disobey the officer's order.

Bill Armstrong tried to figure out what was happening. The roar of the guns and the smoke made it no easy task. The smoke cleared, and first of all the young officer scanned the shore and saw clouds of smoke rising where the shells had landed, but the Union Jack still fluttered over the consulate. He took a step forward, and now he spotted the Audacious. The cruiser was passing between the battleship and the shore, and great clouds of smoke were hellowing from her. Captain Markham was making a smoke screen so that the gunners on the El Mirante would not be able to see their target. A glance upwards showed the guns were swinging.

"They seem to be training their guns on the Audacious," he shouted at Pamela.

But Markham, on the Audacious, had seen the guns trained towards his ship and hoped that the speed at which the cruiser was moving would make the target difficult. If their shooting was no better than their effort to hit the consulate then there was every chance of getting past unscathed. Once past, with the smoke screen as a cover, the cruiser would have a decided advantage.

The guns of the El Mirante belched forth their 15-inch shells straight at the Audacious, but the gunners had not taken any account of the fact that the target was moving swiftly through the water. Every shell burst in the wake of the cruiser, and that made De Costa rave and swear. They were to reload and fire again.

It was an unpleasant moment for Markham when an officer reported a girl on the upper deck of the insurgent battleship. He peered through his spyglass and recognised Pamela and young Armstrong. His own guns had opened fire on the battleship, and it had given him keen satisfaction in registering a direct hit on a forward coming-tower. "Tell them to cease fire," Markham ordered, and then to the navigator. "Get round behind the smoke."

As the Audacious swung shorewards a shell from the El Mirante landed amidships, and there was the roar of a mighty explosion.

"What's the damage?" Markham asked when Forbes came on to the bridge.

"Casualty to No. 3 gun," Forbes reported. "The gun platform's been damaged. I'm having it shored up."

De Costa had done a lot more cursing when the Audacious had disappeared behind her own smoke screen. The smoke was rising and drifting, and might easily obliterate Bianco from the view of the battleship. He yelled an order that Enriquego was to train his guns once more on the consulate.

The big guns roared, and Markham saw vivid red flashes near the consulate, and observed flames shooting up from some building that had been set alight. He had got to stop this madman somehow.

"There's nothing else for it," he muttered under his breath. "The torpedoes."

Markham sang out an order, and the torpedo lieutenant reported that he was all ready.

"What about those two on board the El Mirante?" ventured the second officer.

"Do you think I've forgotten them?" Markham almost lost his temper. Then he became his calm self again. "There are many more than two in the consulate. We must protect the greater

number. We will drive back through the smoke. Instruct Walton to fire both torpedoes as soon as sights come on. Tell the gunnery lieutenant to stand by."

De Costa was just about to order Enriquego to decrease his range by fifty yards when out of the smoke screen came the bow of the cruiser and making straight towards the battleship. A slight feeling of panic seized the rebel, and he shouted hoarsely for the big guns to be trained once more on the cruiser.

Fortunately for the cruiser the gunners under Enriquego were slow and not very efficient, and the Audacious had come through the screen before Enriquego was ready to fire. Little did those wretches on board the battleship know that two deadly torpedoes had been sent on their way. The El Mirante was doomed.

As De Costa yelled to Enriquego to fire so was the Audacious changing her course—darting back towards the shelter of the smoke screen. One shell from the El Mirante landed dangerously close to the stern and another carried away part of the funnel, but that was the only damage.

And as Enriquego swung his guns to blow the Audacious to pieces the first torpedo caught the El Mirante close to the stern. There was a terrific explosion. A great column of water and black smoke shot into the air. A huge hole had been torn in the side of the battleship.

The second torpedo struck almost amidships, with deadly effect. The sea poured in and at once the great ship began to founder.

Everything was panic and confusion. Officers and men were rushing screaming in all directions. Fighting and struggling with each other in their panic. Another huge explosion, and it was the sea bursting the boilers. The battleship seemed to shudder.

Pamela and Bill had been flung to the deck by the explosion of the second torpedo.

"Now's our chance." Bill Armstrong was quick to see a hope of escape. "Come on, follow me. Straight across, Pam, and in."

They darted down some stairs from the upper deck. A rebel sailor rushed at them with his bayonet, but Bill jumped to one side, and stepping in landed a hefty punch to the rascal's dirty face. The fellow dropped.

"Come on, Pam!" shouted Bill running across the deck and getting ready to jump over.

The girl flung herself overboard, and Bill followed her a split second later. They swam vigorously. Several of the rebels ran out from one of the turrets and began to fire at the swimmers. Their fire was wild and erratic.

The two tremendous explosions occurred as the Audacious was slipping back into her smoke screen, and Markham at once changed course. One glance showed him that the torpedoes had torn out the vitals of the El Mirante, and that she was doomed. Already she was low in the water at the stern, and had a distinct list with her bows high.

"They're firing at someone in the water, sir," reported Forbes.

"Can you see who it is?"

Forbes peered through the spy glass. "Yes, there's a girl," he cried. "And Armstrong's near her, sir."

Markham could have shouted with joy and relief, but instead he said gruffly: "Send a boat and pick them up."

There was no foolish modesty about Pamela. She found her dress hampered her, so she tore it off. Several of the

bullets had come unpleasantly close. Bill sang out to her to keep going, and that if once they got near the smoke screen they would be safe. Out of the blue appeared the boat sent by Markham, and the two young people were dragged on board. A coat was flung round the shivering Pamela.

The firing from the El Mirante had ceased because the list was so great that it was almost impossible to cling to the decks. It was obvious that the ship could not last many minutes, and now there was a mad rush by those still surviving to get away before the ship sucked them under.

Attempts were made to launch the boats, but there was such a wild scramble to get into them that they were capsized.

"Miss Brent and Lieutenant Armstrong are in the boat, sir," an officer reported to Markham.

"Good," rapped out Markham. "Have all remaining boats sent out to pick up survivors. Better hurry as the El Mirante can't last long. Warn boats not to get sucked in by the undertow."

"Aye, aye, sir!"

By now the rebel sailors were leaping in desperation from the battleship and swimming as hard as they could. Some poor wretches were unable to swim, and soon sank. The boats of the Audacious ventured as near as they dared and picked up many survivors.

Markham went over to a signalman: "Make signals to the consulate," came his crisp order. "Pamela safe."

From the bridge Markham watched the El Mirante as she sank deeper in the water till her stern was awash. He noticed with satisfaction that there were very few heads bobbing in the water, and that most of the boats were rowing towards the Audacious.

Suddenly the El Mirante seemed to shudder, her bow came high out of the water, there came the sound of a ship being torn apart, as her back broke. The stern vanished completely, and for a few minutes the bow seemed to be standing on end, then it sank lower and lower, to eventually disappear.

Before Markham went below he heard with grim satisfaction that one of the survivors was De Costa.

"He'll pay the penalty of his sins," grimly stated the captain.

Pamela was found some clothes that had been left behind by the refugees, and rather quaintly garbed she was brought to the captain's cabin.

Emotion for once overcame this sober son of the sea.

"Thank God you're safe, Pam! I've been through hell!" he told her. "There were you two on deck and De Costa thinking I would not open fire, so that he could blow Bianco and the consulate to blazes at his leisure."

"I admire you for doing your duty." Pamela smiled at him.

"I must compliment young Armstrong on the way he looked after you," hurriedly spoke Markham. "I've sent for him."

The girl's happy expression vanished and she stared moodily at the carpet.

A knock, and Bill Armstrong appeared.

"All right, Armstrong?"

"Fine, thank you, sir."

"Feel equal to another job of work?"

"Yes, sir."

"When you're ready I want you to escort Miss Brent back to the consulate," Markham smiled. "You should manage to get there all right this time. Good luck, Armstrong." He shook the young officer's hand. "The boat will be ready in a few minutes. That's all."

(Continued on page 25)

After Eddie Lang has borrowed fifty dollars in order to take his wife and two little children for a holiday, he finds himself in the merciless clutches of a gang of loan sharks, suffers violence in their hands, and in desperation tells his story to the District Attorney—only to be shot down on the steps of the Hall of Justice. A powerful story with a smashing climax, starring Chester Morris and Helen Mack



AS Eddie Lang, billing clerk on the staff of R. H. Morse, Incorporated, walked round a corner out of Broadway into West Twenty-ninth Street, the pavement felt hot beneath his feet, and several times he mopped his streaming face with a handkerchief.

New York was sweltering in a mid-summer heat-wave. Day after day the sun shone down upon the city from a sky that was like brass, and night after night its weary victims found sleep impossible in rooms that had become almost like ovens.

But Eddie was young and healthy, and he was hungry in spite of the fact that the shade temperature had reached ninety degrees an hour before noon.

Outside the modest restaurant in which he lunched regularly with colleagues from the office two perspiring men had paused to comment on the state of the weather.

"Phew!" exploded one of them, puffing hot air from his lungs into the hot air all about him. "Boy, is this a scorcher?"

"It sure is," agreed the other.

"And the papers say it's going to be worse to-morrow!"

"A guy just dropped dead down the street."

Eddie knew one of the men slightly, but he had neither time nor inclination to join in so fruitless a discussion. He squeezed past them into the hot and odorous restaurant, and on his way to a table on the right waved to a flax-haired girl behind a long counter on the left.

"Hallo, Goldie," he said cheerfully. "how's the queen of the beanery?"

"Fine and dandy," she replied, though her appearance belied her words.

Norman Davis, clerk in the foreign-order department of R. H. Morse, Incorporated, was already in his usual place at the table, and Bert Foster, ledger clerk, arrived while Eddie was pulling out a chair for himself. A waitress in a white overall which covered as few garments as possible arrived languidly with a bill of fare. Her hair was straight and limp, her features were heavy, and Eddie had a name for her.

"Hallo, Garbo!" he said facetiously.

"I'll have the special," decided Foster, "and bring the Java in right away."

"Make it two," said Davis, lighting a cigarette.

Eddie glanced at the list of dishes.

"I'd like a nice thick steak, smothered with mushrooms and asparagus," he said. "That's what I'd like. But you can bring me the special."

The waitress departed and the three smoked.

"B. G. sure was on the warpath this morning all right," remarked Foster.

"I'll say so, the old crab," confirmed Davis.

"Aw," said Eddie, "maybe the heat got him. If it's ninety in the shade I'll bet it's a hundred and ten under that hard-boiled collar of his!"

"B. G." was Bernard George Wilson, office manager and a martinet.

"Well, it certainly is warm," conceded Foster, "but you're one of the lucky ones. You've got your vacation coming up next week."

Eddie, thus addressed, made a grimace.

"That's right," he said, "but the place I'm in is hotter than the office. Mary takes the kids to the park every day, but it doesn't do any good—they don't get the sleep they should in that hot-box. The heat sure pulls them down."

"Oh, not going away, eh?" inquired Davis.

"On my pay, and with two kids?" returned Eddie. "What do you think?"

A tall young man, wearing a sports jacket and flannel trousers in conjunction with a straw hat, sauntered up to the table wiping the back of his neck. His nose was long and his lips were thick, but he had an affable manner and the three knew him as a regular patron of the restaurant.

"Well, boys, how's tricks?" he greeted.

"Hallo, Al!" said Foster. "Hot enough for you?"

"It'll do until some hot weather comes along." Al Anslie jerked a thumb and winked. "Say, has Eddie pulled any good ones lately?"

"What d'you mean, 'lately'?" demanded Davis. "When did he pull a good one?"

"I'm not appreciated," complained Eddie, "but you'll all be pretty sad when I'm gone."

"That's what you think," jeered Foster.

Al Anslie went off chuckling.

"Great fellow, that Al," commented Davis.

"Yeah," said Eddie, and added: "I see him around all the time. What does he do?"

"Oh, I don't know," shrugged

Foster. "He works around here somewhere."

Three cups of coffee were served by the girl with the limp hair and consumed by the three employees of R. H. Morse, Incorporated. Eddie groped in a pocket.

"Remember I told you I took some pictures of the kids last Sunday?" he asked. "Well, they came out fine. Wait till you see Judy in the wife's hat!"

Several snapshot photographs were produced with paternal pride, and one of them was offered for inspection.

"A little bit out of focus," admitted the photographer, "but, gee, they're swell! Is that a cute picture of the kid?"

Foster looked at Davis and Davis looked at Foster, but neither of them looked at the snapshot.

"What's biting you?" asked the fond father.

"Say, listen, Eddie," returned Foster reprovingly, "you've taken pictures of those kids of yours every fifteen minutes since they were born, and I've seen 'em all!"

"Bill biting his toes," scoffed Davis, "Judy eating her spinach. Bill biting his spinach, Judy eating her toes."

"Okay," growled Eddie, "skip it." And he thrust the despised snapshots back into his pocket and shouted across the restaurant to the waitress: "Say, where's that chow?"

"Aw, Norman, now we've hurt Eddie's feelings," laughed Foster; and Davis held a hand across the table.

"Listen, sap," he said, "can't you take it? We were kidding."

"Sure," chimed in Foster. "What's the matter with you, Eddie? Honest, I wish me and the wife had a couple."

"Yeah?" Eddie wasn't at all sure that he was in earnest.

"Well, one, anyway. Let's have a look!"

Once more the snapshots were produced, and they were being examined with exaggerated interest when the waitress arrived with the three specials.

"Say, she sure is cute all right," proclaimed Davis, studying the picture of a chubby little fair-haired girl in a hat that made her look remarkably sophisticated.

"She certainly is a doll," said the waitress over his shoulder. "How old is she, Mr. Lang?"

"Why, she's only six," replied Eddie, beaming all over his clean-shaven face, "but smart as a whip."

"She must take after her mother," said Davis maliciously. "Yes, she's cute all right."

After they had devoured their food the three played dominoes for a while, and then they returned to the office. The intense heat did not encourage exertion, and Eddie's thoughts strayed frequently to the delightful possibilities of his approaching holiday—if only he had money enough to take his wife and two children away from the sultry city.

The making out of bills became sheer tedium, and over the afternoon cup of tea which was brought to his desk at four o'clock he studied the holiday advertisements in the "New York Chronicle."

Round two of those advertisements he made red-ink frames because they fired his imagination, and both concerned lake-side camps away up in the hills, and both promised all manner of sports and good food at moderate rates.

He was sighing over the one that was headed "Vacation Paradise" when a clerk from the counting-house thumped

him in the back and demanded fifty cents.

"Eh?" said Eddie, coming back to earth with a jar.

"Fifty cents—four bits. Viola Gray, over in the sales department, is getting married."

"Oh, Viola?" Eddie groped for the desired sum of money. "Sure, she's a swell kid, Viola. Here you are! Funny you asking me for dough, though—I was just wondering how I could promote some for myself. You know, I get my vacation next week, and I'd sure like to take the wife and kids out of this heat."

"Why don't you try B. G.?" suggested the clerk.

"Wilson?" Eddie screwed up his face and shook his head.

"What have you got to lose? He knows the bonus is coming through in a couple o' weeks, and he ain't a bad guy—as office managers go."

Eddie considered the suggestion from the angle of the annual bonus, which would become due the week after his holiday, and a few minutes later he summoned sufficient courage to beard the martinet in his den at the other end of the big general office.

The manager was at his desk, hard at work but suffering considerably from the oppressive heat, a pen in one hand and a handkerchief in the other. He was a man of nearly fifty, but without a trace of grey in his brown hair.

"What's on your mind, Lang?" he asked, and his voice was sharp and by no means encouraging.

"Well, Mr. Wilson," said Eddie hesitatingly, "I—I've got my vacation coming up next week, and I thought, with this heat-wave, I'd kind of like to take my wife and kids to— You see, that place we've got doesn't cool off much, even at night, and I thought that— Mr. Wilson, could I borrow fifty dollars?"

The manager picked up a sheet of paper, looked at it, and put it down again. The silence became almost intolerable.

"Lang," Wilson said abruptly, "you've been with us how long?"

"Six years, sir."

"I've kept an eye on you and your work, and it's been quite satisfactory."

"Thank you, sir," Eddie beamed.

"But we have made it a rule not to lend money to employees."

The beam faded.

"Well, I know, Mr. Wilson, but—

but I thought, since we get the yearly bonus in a couple of weeks— Well, I thought—"

"In view of your record of loyal and efficient service," Wilson interrupted, "I would gladly make an exception in your case, but that would be establishing a precedent—and we can't do that, can we?"

"No," admitted Eddie unhappily.

"No, I guess we can't. Well, thanks just the same, Mr. Wilson."

With all his hopes shattered, he went out from the room and back to his own desk.

The Loan Shark Racket

EDDIE lived with his wife, Mary, and their two offspring in a little four-roomed flat up in the Bronx, and the flat seemed airless and stiflingly hot when he reached it that evening, though all the windows were wide open.

Even in his shirt-sleeves he perspired over a meal in the kitchen, and afterwards he rigged up a sort of fan over the crib in which his four-months-old son, Bill, was too hot to sleep. The fan consisted of a curtain on a rod, actuated by a string.

"This ought to keep snub-nose cool," he said when he had finished the contrivance. "Wish somebody'd do that for me. Hi, look, it works!"

Mary looked with smiling approval as the curtain moved backwards and forwards over the crib and little Bill settled down to slumber. She was a beautiful girl of twenty-five, and her husband was her hero.

"Why, you're wasting your time at Morse's!" she declared. "Gee, he is a cute-looking little baby, isn't he? You know, Eddie, when I look at him like this, and I remember how cross I get sometimes when he cries, I feel awful."

"You get cross!" scoffed Eddie. "That's a laugh!"

The crib was in their own bed-room: Judy occupied a tiny room next to it. She had been put to bed, but she was not by any means asleep.

"Daddy!" she called out. "Daddy! I want daddy!"

Eddie handed the string over to Mary. "She wants her daddy," he said. "Keep the old man cool, will you?"

So Mary pulled the string that worked the fan while Eddie went off to soothe his little daughter, and she was still pulling it when he returned.

"Aw, give me that, honey," he said. "It's too hot to go to bed yet—let's sit outside a while."

There was a landing of a fire-escape outside the french window of the bedroom. They sat together on one of the iron steps that led to the floor above, and Eddie did not forget to pull the string.

"It's a little cooler out here, isn't it?" sighed Mary.

Eddie fondled her dark-brown hair with his free hand.

"Aren't you glad we took the pent-house, Mrs. Lang?" he asked whimsically.

"Oh, yes, indeed," she replied in the same strain. "Twenty thousand a year, but what's twenty thousand?"

"Between friends, eh?" he laughed. "You want to know something?"

"What?"

"I guess you're the best friend I've got, man or woman. Leaving out loving you the way I do—why, I like you!"

"I like you, too, Eddie."

"Married seven years and still struck on each other!" He gave the dark-brown hair a tug. "Fine thing!"

"You bet it's a fine thing," said she; and then the baby began to whimper.

"What's the matter, Bill?" he called out, and pulled the string more frequently till the whimpering ceased.

"It's just the heat," said Mary. "Oh, it's been fierce to-day."

"You're telling me?" Eddie looked round at walls that were far too close, then up at the stars. "How much would it cost, darling, for the four of us to go away somewhere?"

"Oh, fifty, anyhow," she replied. "But what's the sense, Eddie? You know we only just get by."

"I get my office bonus."

"Not for two weeks."

Eddie visualised Pine Lake, and the camp there that was advertised as a vacation paradise.

"I bet I could teach Judy to swim in three days," he said.

"Listen, mister," rebuked Mary, "you'd better go to bed before you begin lighting cigarettes with ten-dollar bills!"

She rose from the iron step, whereupon he rose beside her—and took her into his arms.

"Seven years ago was nothing!" he declared.

"What do you mean, nothing?" she demurred. "It was wonderful!"

"Uhh! But it's taken me seven years to find out what a swell girl I've got, and I'm still learning!"

"Oh, Eddie, you darn fool!" she laughed.

The next day, as predicted, was hotter than ever. Even the special at the little restaurant in West Twenty-ninth Street seemed unappetising to Eddie, and he left half of it on the plate.

Al Anslie walked with him as far as the doorway of the Centre Building, in Broadway, where the offices of R. H. Morse, Incorporated, were situated.

"So you'd like to take the wife and kids out to the great open spaces, eh?" said Al.

"And how!" said Eddie emphatically. "It burns me up! Here I've got seventy-five berries coming to me in a couple of weeks, but my week's vacation comes first, so there's my wife and two swell kids broiling in that two-by-four place of ours, and I can't raise fifty bucks!"

"Sure you can!" Al astonished him by stating quite confidently.

"Yeah? How?"

"Oh, there are ways."

"Name me one!"

"Okay. I know a company that'll loan you fifty bucks, just like that." A finger and thumb were snapped expressively.

"Aw, you're kidding." Eddie mopped his face with a handkerchief. "On what?"

"On a steady job upstairs."

"Yeah?" Eddie was still incredulous.

"How long has this been going on?"

"Listen," said Al impressively, "lots of people borrow money from this company. You know Seaver, who works in your office?"

"Bill Seaver? Sure."

"Well, I told him about the joint, and he got sixty bucks without any trouble at all. Tell you what you do. D'you know the Welch Building?"

Eddie knew the Welch Building, in Madison Avenue, quite well. It was an office building of considerable height and bulk with an arcade of lock-up shops on its ground floor.

"Sure," he said; and Al handed him a slip of paste-board.

"You give this card to the man at the cigar counter to-morrow," he instructed, "and you'll get fifty bucks."

There was nothing on the card except Al Anslie's name, but somehow Eddie was convinced.

"Gee, that's white of you, Al," he murmured gratefully.

"Skip it, boy," said Al with a flip of his hand. "I'm glad I ran across you."

"I'm mighty glad I ran across you," Eddie fervently assured him.

Work did not seem nearly so tedious that afternoon as it had done in the morning, but he did quite a lot of day-dreaming over bills and manifests.

At half-past five Al Anslie entered the premises of the Aloha Social Club, in Second Avenue, and passed through a long billiards-room to a flight of stairs. At the top of the stairs he turned to the left along a corridor, rapped on a door, and stepped into a room furnished as an office.

There were two desks in the room, and at one of them a middle-aged man in spectacles was making entries in a loose-leaf ledger, while at the other a powerfully built fellow with a straw hat on the

back of his head and a cigar in his mouth was making notes, on a pad, of details supplied by a crafty-looking younger man who faced him across the desk.

Lounging about the room were several other men, most of them smoking cigarettes.

"Margaret Jones, housewife, ninety West Third," reported the crafty-looking one, consulting a little notebook he held in one hand. "She only wants twenty now, but she'll be back for a century in ten days, or I'm crazy."

"You're crazy all right," drawled the man with the pad, whose name was Edwin Austin, but who was known as "Fats." "Okay."

Al Anslie approached the desk.

"Where have you been?" demanded Fats harshly. "After this, get around at four."

"Aw, take it easy, Fats," protested Al. "I've been busy. I did six to-day." He added with pride: "That makes fourteen this week."

"Well, ain't that nice?" sneered Fats. "All right, let's get started."

"Okay." Al took out a sheet of paper on which he had scribbled notes. "Thirty bucks. Patrick O'Halloran, motorman. Gets paid at the Centre Street car depot. Lives at eighteen Park Street, Floral Heights. That's a house, not a flat. Wife and four kids. Getting thirty-five."

Fats jotted down the details on his pad. The middle-aged man at the other desk made an entry in his loose-leaf ledger. His name was Nelson.

"Cigar counter, Welch Building, to-morrow," he said. "Check."

"Check," said Al, and proceeded to give details concerning four other people who desired to borrow money.

A rat-faced fellow in a striped suit leaned upon the end of the desk, listening. He affected a white hat of soft felt, and doubtless for that reason was known to his associates as "Whitehat."

Al came to the last name on his list.

"Fifty bucks, Edward Lang," he said. "Billing clerk with the Morse Corporation, three-eighth Centre Building. Lives at two-four-five Everett Place, apartment five D. Wife and two kids. Has worked for Morse's six years, getting twenty-seven dollars fifty."

"Check," said the spectacled Nelson. "Cigar counter, Welch Building, to-morrow."

Al drifted away to the men who had already made their reports. Fats looked up at Whitehat.

"He's the last, eh?" he inquired.

"Yeah," was the reply.

"Right. Let me have the figures on the week, Nelson. The big boss wants them up at the house to-night."

Fifty Dollars

THE "big boss," Fats had mentioned lived luxuriously in a pent-house on the roof of a tall apartment-house in Park Avenue. He was a dark-skinned man of Italian parentage, named Richard Farra, dapper, and in his Latin fashion, handsome. A wisp of a moustache decorated his rather full face, and he looked anything but a crook; but he had no conscience whatever.

At eight o'clock that night, when Nelson called at the pent-house with the desired figures, he was ushered by a Japanese butler into a drawing-room where two other men were seated with Farra in exceedingly comfortable chairs, and between Farra's knees a Siamese cat occupied a cushion on a stool.

The two men were racketeers who had been associated with their host in the days of boot-legging; one of them a huge fellow, named Mike Reardon, the other a younger and far slenderer man known as "Bunny."

Nelson became seated at a little table provided for him, and the Japanese butler dispensed drinks. Farra glanced at the figures on a sheet of paper presented to him and tossed the sheet back to the man who acted as his accountant.

"Well, I can't be bothered giving you a sales talk," he said to his two visitors in quite good English, but with a distinctly foreign accent. "Why should I? It's a simple proposition. This loan shark racket is getting too big for me, and I've got to have a couple of right guys to take over the Heights and the Harbour."

Reardon removed from thick lips an expensive cigar at which he had been puffing.

"Who's gonna run the policy game if I go in with you?" he asked.

"Who cares?" shrugged Farra.

"Listen, have you got any idea what my weekly take is up in Floral Heights alone?"

"I got a lot of ideas about everything," was the imperturbable reply. "I use that kind o' dough to buy cigars with."

NEXT WEEK'S BIG FILM DRAMA



SPENCER TRACY and FRANCHOT TONE

—IN—

"THEY GAVE HIM A GUN"

Two young men joined the Army at their country's call, became friends and played their part as heroes, but war has its aftermath and one of them, knowing now how to use a gun, became a gangster. A thrilling tale of human conflict.

"THE UNKNOWN RANGER"

Detailed to track down a band of horse-thieves, Bob Allen, a Texas Ranger, rides into Westville posing as a wandering cowpuncher, rescues a small boy from the hoofs of runaway horses, and obtains a job with the boy's father. He discovers that the rustling is done with the aid of a wild horse, but it is not till after many adventures that he gets his man. A fine Western, starring Bob Allen.

Also

Another grand episode of the serial:

"THE MOUNTIES ARE COMING"

Starring Bob Livingston.

"Twenty thousand dollars a week net to me personally, my friend!"

Farra laughed.

"Twenty thousand dollars a week? Oh, oh, that's your idea of dough, eh? Listen, boy, in every office building, in every dairy lunch place, in every post office, outside of every hospital, on the sidewalks down-town, wherever three or more suckers are, I've got a steerer. For every six blocks from the docks to the Heights I've got a collection office."

He paused to light a fresh cigar.

"Take to-day," he went on. "Not a good day, not a bad day—below ninety grand. Yesterday, eighty-eight. Tomorrow, maybe, a hundred and twenty. And it's a cinch of a proposition—one dollar interest for every five advanced."

"A month, eh?" suggested Bunny.

"No, not a month, eh?" mimicked Farra. "A week! Huh! One for five every seven days, and the sap still owes the five."

Reardon sat bolt upright.

"Let's get this straight," he said. "You loan, say, fifty dollars, and every week you get ten. That's interest, nothing to do with the fifty?"

"You catch on right away, don't you, sweetheart?" purred Farra.

"Yes, but people who need fifty bucks that bad," objected Bunny, "must find it mighty difficult to pay ten every week. That makes five hundred and twenty bucks a year on a fifty-dollar loan! Do they pay?"

"Certainly they pay," said Farra complacently. "We insist on it."

"I often think it's very tough on them," ventured Nelson, and his employer turned to scowl at him.

"Hi, in stir you had to mind your manners, didn't you?" he reproved. "Well, I've never been in gaol yet, so I do as I like without asking your advice."

Nelson flinched as though he had been struck and bowed his head.

"Suppose one of these guys gets tired of being bled?" said Reardon, rolling his cigar from one end of his mouth to the other.

"So what?" Farra spread his hands.

"And squawks to the law!"

"Yeah," chimed in Bunny, "what about that?"

"But they don't squawk," said Farra, quite calmly. "They're scared."

"But if they should squawk?" insisted Reardon.

Farra humped his broad shoulders again.

"Then one or two more of my collectors, maybe twice a year, gets pinched. We spring 'em when we can, and anyhow they don't squawk—they don't know anything except their own end of the job. Then we beat the ears off the wise guy who is gonna identify 'em. Once in a while one of the boys gets six months for assault, or usury, and that's too bad, eh?"

He waved his cigar as though dismissing so trivial a point.

"Now, listen, gentlemen," he said, "if you want to keep foolin' around with the poultry racket and this policy game it's okay by me. I need you, but not much, and I'm fed-up lookin' at your silly faces and answering your dopey questions. Now let's wind this thing up. Do you want to be in, or not?"

"Well, you can count me in," decided Reardon.

"Me, too, Farra," said Bunny.

On his way to the office, next morning, Eddie turned into Madison Avenue and proceeded along that thoroughfare to the Welch Building. The so-called "cigar counter" was actually a tobacconist's shop just inside the arcade, and

the tobacconist was dealing with another customer when Eddie looked in at the doorway—a man in the uniform of a street-car driver who seemed nervous.

"Have you—I was to ask you about an envelope a party was to leave here for me," Eddie heard him say.

"What name?" asked the tobacconist, a tough and unpleasant-looking person.

"O'Halloran—Patrick," was the reply.

A printed form was placed on the counter and a fountain-pen was proffered.

"Sign here."

O'Halloran signed his name without even reading what was, in effect, a promissory note, and he was handed an envelope.

"You pay your interest here Fridays," said the tobacconist.

"Okay," nodded the driver. "Sure. Thanks."

He went off delightedly and the tobacconist eyed Eddie.

"What's yours?" he inquired.

"Oh, my name is Lang—Edward Lang. I was told that—"

"Check." A fresh form was laid on the counter. "Now you sign here, see? And every Saturday you pay here ten dollars."

Unlike the street-car driver, Eddie read the printed form. It was dated, in ink, August the 22nd, 1936, and it ran:

"For value received I promise to pay to the order of bearer, on demand, the sum of fifty dollars and no cents in lawful money of the United States."

"Hi, look," said Eddie, "this is worded kind of funny. It doesn't say anything about interest!"

The tobacconist did not look.

"I just act for the company, buddy, see?" he responded. "They only use my stand as a convenience. That guy who just went out signed okay. If you don't want the dough it's no skin off me, but make up your mind."

Eddie did not like the man's tone, and he did not like the form; but he wanted the money.

"Oh, well," he said, after a little hesitation, "it don't make any difference to me, seein' that I'm going to pay it all off in two weeks, anyway."

He signed the form, received an envelope, and hurried off to the office through streets that were already simmering with heat. But the heat did not seem nearly so oppressive to him that day; he had fifty extra dollars in his pocket, and the holiday at Pine Lake, Clarke County, was assured.

When he reached home in the evening, Mary had a little shopping to do, so he went with her, and they took the children as well. Snub-nosed little Bill gurgled in his pram, and Judy became excited when her father bought a sun-hat for her and put it on her head.

"Eddie, you shouldn't," protested Mary.

"Looks cute in it, doesn't she?" said Eddie.

"Yes, but she doesn't need it."

Eddie tweaked Judy's ear.

"That's what she thinks," he chuckled, "but we know better, don't we?"

Several other purchases he made, and Mary became more and more puzzled. But on the homeward way he explained matters.

"I can't hold out any longer, honey," he said. "We're pulling out for Pine Lake on Sunday morning. On the level!"

"Oh, Eddie!" she breathed delightedly. "But you didn't get your bonus ahead of time, did you?"

"No." He shook his head.

"Then how in the world—"

"Simple as one, two, three. There's

an outfit that loans money to anybody with a steady job—anyone that's good for it."

"But what interest do they charge?" she asked anxiously.

"Oh, plenty, I guess—probably six per cent, or even ten. I didn't inquire, because it doesn't matter, honey. The week I go back to the office I get my bonus, and seventy-five dollars will cover the loan like a tent and plenty over."

"Oh, Eddie, I think you're wonderful!" she declared with enthusiasm. "I'd have just wanted and wanted and let it go at that, but you went out and got the money. Who told you about this loan company?"

"A guy I know, Al Anslie, works somewhere in the building. Oh, there are ways of getting things if you just know the angles."

"It seems like a dream!" Mary patted Judy on her sun-hat. "Do you know we're going to the country, and for a whole week, Judy?"

Farra Buys a Coat

THE holiday at Pine Lake proved a sheer delight from beginning to end. Up in the hilly region, where the vast lake is situated, the heat that afflicted New York City was tempered by cool breezes, and the camp itself fully justified its advertised description as a "vacation paradise."

But a nasty jar awaited Eddie's return to harness. On the Monday morning when he entered the general office of R. H. Morse, Incorporated, he found quite a number of his colleagues clustered round a notice-board on the wall, and their gloomy faces indicated all too clearly that they had found something unpleasant there.

"What's up?" inquired Eddie; and an indignant girl read aloud the notice which was fastened to the board:

"The management announces with regret that adverse conditions and unexpected reverses force it to omit the customary employes' dividend this year."

Eddie's consternation was beyond expression, but the others had plenty to say and the noise they made in saying it brought Bernard George Wilson out from his office with an angry face.

"Back to your desks, all of you!" he shouted. "The world hasn't come to an end! Back to your desks!"

All the discontented members of the staff drifted away to their duties with the exception of Eddie, and Eddie found his voice.

"You sure can keep a secret, Mr. Wilson," he said bitterly.

"What do you mean?" rapped the manager.

"Remember when I tried to horrow fifty dollars from you, and I said I'd get my bonus in a couple of weeks? You knew, then, that there wasn't going to be any bonus!"

"I wasn't at liberty to disens it at the time," returned Wilson stiffly.

"But let me remind you, Lang, that I prevented you from horrowing that money and getting into debt."

"Yeah," began Eddie miserably, "but I—"

"Back to your desk!"

"Yes, sir."

On the following Saturday afternoon Eddie paid a visit to the tobacconist in the arcade of the Welch building. He placed a two-dollar note on the counter and he said rather plaintively:

"Listen, I was expecting a bonus this week, see?"

"Don't give me a sob story, brother," snapped the tobacconist. "They only use my stand as a convenience."

The two-dollar note was flicked off

the counter on to the floor, but Eddie picked it up and re-offered it.

"Now wait a minute, will you?" he said urgently. "Let me finish. Tell the loan company from me I can't pay ten a week. I'll give 'em two, see? That's the best I can do, and they can take it and like it."

"They won't like it, wise guy," warned the tobacconist curtly.

"Well, that's too bad," retorted Eddie; "but tell 'em that. Two dollars from Edward Lang from now on until I get that fifty paid up."

He left the note on the counter and went out to catch a subway train to the Bronx. But he was ill at ease. He had said nothing all the week to Mary about the notice on the office wall, and he knew well enough that there was an ominous threat behind the tobacconist's warning.

It was with a gloomy face and a complete lack of appetite that he sat down to a meal, and Mary asked him what was the matter.

"Oh, nothing, honey," he replied. "This is good soup."

"Might as well tell me."

He pushed back his chair, and little Judy immediately climbed on to his knees.

"We didn't get the bonus," he blurted.

"Oh, Eddie!" Mary exclaimed in dismay. "Oh, and that money you borrowed!"

"Yes, I know," he growled. "And they want me to pay ten a week."

"Ten dollars? Oh, honey, we couldn't!"

Judy drew attention to the fact that she had eaten all her beans, and clamoured for the "horseback ride" she had been promised, so for a while Eddie jiggled her up and down upon his knees.

"Two dollars is the most we can pay," said Mary.

"Will the budget stand two?" asked Eddie.

"Yes, if we cut down on food a little."

"I'm awfully sorry, honey."

"It wasn't your fault," she declared stoutly. "We'll get by."

"You're a great little woman," he said fervently; and then because his mind was considerably relieved he entered wholeheartedly into the "horseback ride" Judy so much enjoyed.

On the following Saturday when he visited the tobacconist's little shop, two men were standing by the counter. One of them was Whitehat, the other was a bruiser employed by the "company," named Scully, but Eddie did not know either of them.

"Yeah?" said the tobacconist.

"I'm Lang," said Eddie, "and I've come to pay the interest on that loan."

"Oh, yeah," nodded the tobacconist. "Edward Lang."

Eddie took out the pay envelope which contained his week's salary, and he was in the act of extracting a two-dollar note from it when it was snatched from his hand by Whitehat. The other man, who had a scarred face, seized hold of Eddie's arm and twisted it.

"Say, what is this, a stick-up?" howled Eddie. "You can't do that!"

"Take it easy," said Whitehat menacingly, and he emptied all his money out of the envelope. "Ten for this week and eight for last." He appropriated eighteen dollars and held out the rest. "Here's your change, buddy."

"But I told him last week I can't pay ten!" Eddie shouted.

"Keep it quiet," rasped Whitehat.

"Keep it quiet? Give me back that dough! I can't go home with nine bucks fifty. I've got a wife and two kids to feed."

"You borrowed fifty dollars, didn't you?" demanded the man with the scarred face.

"Yeah, but I thought—"

"Well, what you thought don't cut any ice," snarled Whitehat. "You borrowed fifty, and you know the rates."

"Yeah," admitted Eddie more quietly, "but ten a week! All I'm asking you to do is—"

The nine dollars fifty cents were rained into his coat pocket.

"Well, so-long, buddy," said Whitehat. "I'll see you next week."

He turned towards the door, and the man with the scarred face followed.

"Say, listen, you can't—" Eddie began hotly.

"Shut up!" the man with the scarred face whirled round, and with a sweep of his arm sent Eddie floundering against the counter.

Out at the kerb in Madison Avenue a long dark saloon was standing. The two men got into it, and by the time Eddie reached the pavement it had joined the up-town stream of traffic.

That evening the elegant drawing-room of Richard Farra's pent-house on the roof of the apartment house in Park Avenue became crowded at seven o'clock, by nearly thirty men employed by him in the loan shark racket he ran, and he addressed them collectively.

"I hear a lot about this being a big week," he said scornfully. "Big week my foot! We ain't had a big week yet—we're only just getting started. When this thing gets really rolling we'll have a big week all right."

"But listen, boss—" began one of his principal assistants.

"Shut up!" Farra stabbed the smoke-laden air with the cigar in his hand. "Ain't none of you got brains

enough to know what you're in on? Think this over—not one sucker in ten ever pays a loan off. They have to sweat to keep up with the interest, let alone the principal. But you've got to keep the steerers on their toes, and if any of you mugs get picked up for drunk driving, assault, or carrying a gun and he's got a list of suckers on him, I'll let the police go over him, and he'll be sorry.

"When the police have done with him, my boys will go over and grease him good, and I mean good. Understand? You're not to beat up the suckers if you don't have to. Put it to them right and they'll pay. They're paying quicker and squawking less all the time the word gets round that it's smarter to come through quick and quiet."

He waved the cigar in dismissal.

"All right, now get out of here," he said.

Slowly the spacious drawing-room emptied, and then he walked into a smaller room that adjoined it and rang a bell.

"Také," he said to the Japanese butler who appeared with silent swiftness, "get in there and open up all the windows. That place stinks."

Five minutes later the butler re-entered the smaller room to find his master drinking a whisky-and-soda.

"The man with the coat, Mr. Farra," he announced in curiously clipped English.

A tubby little man with a big cardboard box under his arm sidled into the room, and Farra frowned at him.

"What's the idea, you dope?" he rapped. "I told you nine o'clock this morning."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Farra." The man, who was a furrier, opened the cardboard box upon a chesterfield and took out an elaborate fur coat, obviously intended for feminine wear, and wholly unsuitable for use in a heat-wave that was gradually declining. "I was



His arms were gripped in a fashion that threatened to break the bones in them, and he was forced backwards to the edge of the trench.

putting in the figured-silk lining you wanted—all hand-sewn. Let me show you."

He held up the coat almost lovingly.

"It's a beautiful garment," he said. "If the lady doesn't like it," said Farra, "I'll shove it down your throat.

"Two grand, eh?"

"Yes, sir," nodded the furrier. "Two thousand dollars, and that's a special price I make for you, Mr. Farra."

"Special price?" scoffed the racketeer. "Don't kid me. I know all about this fur business, it's a racket."

While Farra was paying two thousand dollars for the fur coat, Eddie, in his own bed-room, was examining an overcoat which he proposed to take to a pawnbroker's.

"It's kind of worn round the edges," he said ruefully to Mary, "but they might give me a couple of bucks on it to carry us through the week."

Mary whisked a tweed coat, trimmed with cheap fur, from the wardrobe cupboard in front of which they were standing.

"Here, take mine," she said. "It won't be getting cold for a long time."

"No, honey," he protested.

"Don't be silly, take it!"

"Okay." He took the coat, but dropped it with his own upon the carpet and wandered over to the french window, biting his lip. "You know, I've a good mind to go to the police," he growled.

"What good would that do?" asked Mary. "You borrowed the money, and they'd only tell you that you had no business borrowing from an outfit like that."

She flung herself on the bed, and to his consternation she burst into tears.

"Oh, Eddie, what are we going to do?" she sobbed.

He turned away from the window and bent over her.

"Don't do that, darling," he pleaded. "Please don't cry. Gee, I feel terrible. It's all my fault. I got us into this."

She looked up at him with wet eyes. "No, I'm in it just as much as you are," she said. "You told me about it, and I thought it was wonderful."

"You sure picked a lemon when you picked me."

"Oh, Eddie!" She flung her arms round his neck. "I love you."

"They won't get away with it next week," he gritted. "I'm wise now. They'll get two bucks, and that's all they'll get."

A Visit to the Police

ON the Monday morning at the office Eddie had a word with Bill Seaver, who informed him that he had already paid in interest alone more than the amount originally advanced to him.

"What are you going to do?" asked Eddie.

"I'm going to tell them they can whistle for any more," Seaver declared.

"I wish I'd talked to you before they hooked me," lamented Eddie. "If they think they're going to get ten bucks a week out of me they're crazy."

"Most of the people they deal with are saps. If you stand up to them like I'm going to they won't get tough. They know they're illegal."

Saturday came, and when Eddie left the office he posted all his salary to Mary except two dollars. From the post-office in Broadway he went to the tobacconist's shop in the Welch Building, and he planked the two-dollar note on the counter with an air of defiance.

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"That's all you can pay, eh?" challenged the tobacconist.

"Never mind if it's all I can pay," Eddie retorted. "It's all I'm going to pay."

"Okay, Mr. Lang," drawled the tobacconist, "it's up to you."

In the arcade Whitehat and another man were waiting, and they closed in on Eddie as he emerged from the shop, one on either side of him.

"Hi, what are you trying to do?" he stormed, trying to free himself from their grip. "Let go of me!"

"Easy, buddy," rapped Whitehat, "we just want to have a little talk with you."

The long dark saloon was standing at the kerb, and its rear door was opened by the man with the scarred face as Eddie was rushed towards it. He was bundled inside, and the other two followed. At the wheel was another member of the gang, and the engine was running. The car shot off up Madison Avenue.

"Say, what's the idea?" raged Eddie, grabbing at the handle of the door. "Let me out of here!"

"You don't want to get out while the car is going, buddy," jeered Whitehat. "You're liable to get hurt."

Eddie was jerked into a seat between two of the men, and one of them flourished in his face the printed form he had signed.

"Now listen, Lang," he said harshly, "we're only asking for what you signed this note to pay."

Eddie looked at the note, and he saw that above his signature these words had been added in ink:

"With interest at the rate of twenty per cent weekly."

"There was nothing in it about interest when I signed," he cried. "Twenty dollars interest weekly on a loan of fifty dollars. Why, that's robbery!"

"You signed the note, didn't you?" demanded Whitehat. "This is your name, isn't it?"

"Well, suppose it is. I didn't get my bonus, and I can't pay you ten bucks a week. I can only give you two, and you can't collect more."

"That's your story," scoffed the man with the scarred face. "You borrowed fifty bucks, sucker."

"Yeah, and I'll pay it back two dollars a week."

"Ten."

"Two," persisted Eddie hotly, "and if you try any more strong-arm stuff on me I'll turn you over to the cops."

They laughed derisively, and Whitehat said to the man at the wheel:

"Harry, stop by the Gates Street Station. Mr. Lang wants a policeman."

The saloon swept on up-town.

"You know, this is funny," Whitehat said with a chuckle that jarred on Eddie's nerves. "Your friend Seaver suggested the same thing."

"Yeah," chimed in the man who had displayed the altered note, "that's what Seaver said, but Seaver didn't go to the law, did you, Seaver?"

He reached over to the seat beside the driver and he jerked up from it the inanimate form of Bill Seaver, who had been huddled there out of sight. His mouth was open and streaming with blood, his eyes were closed and the flesh all round them was discoloured, and there was an ugly gash in his left cheek.

Eddie stared at his unconscious colleague with horror.

"Mr. Lang," said Whitehat in the smoothest of voices, "you'd better pay. You don't want nothin' to happen to

you, or one o' those kids of yours, do you?"

Eddie was permitted to leave the saloon outside the police station in Gates Street and the saloon passed on along the street quite slowly. But Eddie did not enter the police station. Instead, he made his way to the nearest subway station and caught a train home.

Bill Seaver was at the office on Monday morning looking considerably the worse for wear, and Eddie talked to him about going to the police. But Bill Seaver seemed to have had all the fight knocked out of him and was frightened to do anything of the sort.

Eddie, however, was made of sterner stuff, and on his way home that evening he came to a decision which led him next morning to the police station of the fortieth precinct, in Ryer Avenue, where he told the desk sergeant the whole story.

"You don't know the name of any of these men?" asked the sergeant.

"No, sir," Eddie shook his head. "They just had 'for value received I promise to pay,' and that stuff about interest they wrote in after."

The sergeant gnawed the end of a pen with which he had made a few notes.

"The Welch Building is not in this precinct," he said. "That's downtown."

"Yes, sir, I know," nodded Eddie. "But I live in this precinct."

"That doesn't apply. What you have to do is to go to the station house down there in the fourteenth precinct.

They'll give you a couple of plain-clothes men who'll go with you on Saturday when you make this payment. Then they can pick up the cigar-store man and maybe these parties you claim rode you around in the car. The fourteenth precinct, that's in West Thirtieth Street."

Eddie thanked him.

"Gee," he said with a sigh of relief, "it sure is a load off my mind. The last couple o' weeks I've been kinda going nuts. But I can't go there now—I'll be late for work."

"Well, you'd better go round in your lunch-time," suggested the sergeant. "They'll give you all the protection you want down there."

Eddie worked that morning with a lighter heart than he had known since the day of his return from his holiday. He decided to have his lunch before he went to the police station, and he perched on a stool at the counter of the restaurant to save time.

Al Anslie found him there, devouring nothing more substantial than a roll and butter with a cup of coffee, and he climbed on to an adjoining stool.

"Haven't seen you for weeks," he said. "How have you been keeping yourself, old kid? Say, did you get fixed up with that dough all right?"

"I certainly got the fifty," said Eddie.

"Well, that's great. Have a bit of pastry; it's good."

Eddie shook his head, but a piece of pastry was ordered.

"Put it on my bill, George," Al Anslie said to the man behind the counter.

"Say, Al," Eddie ventured after a while, "how much do you know about that outfit that makes the loans?"

"Nothing," was the reply. "Why? Aren't they on the up and up?"

"Know what interest they charge?"

"Pretty steep, I guess. How much—ten per cent?"

"A thousand per cent. a year!" Al Anslie looked astounded.

"No kidding?"

"On the level," Eddie assured him.

"Ten dollars a week interest on a fifty-dollar loan!"

"Can they get away with that stuff?"

"If you don't pay they beat you up."

"Gee," exploded Al, "if I'd had any idea they were a bunch of crooks like that, why I—I— Gee, that certainly puts me in a bad spot, telling a friend of mine! Look, Eddie, you don't think I had any idea I was getting you into a mess like that?"

"Oh, I'm sure you didn't know what the outfit was like."

"Are you letting them get away with that ten-a-week stuff?"

"Not me!" gritted Eddie. "I've been to the police."

Al looked quite startled.

"Oh, you have, eh?" he exclaimed. "What did they say when you told 'em?"

"Well," explained Eddie, "I went to the station house up in our district, see, and the sergeant said I'd better go over to West Thirtieth, because that's the right precinct."

"Well, you're going, aren't you?"

Eddie looked at his watch.

"I'll have to leave it till after work, now," he said. "There isn't time enough."

"Well, I've certainly got to hand it to you for nerve. A lot of guys would be scared to go to the law."

"Oh, I was scared plenty," confessed Eddie.

Al insisted upon paying for the meagre luncheon. He said good-bye to Eddie at the door of the restaurant and then he dived into a telephone-box, close to it, and rang up the Aloha Social Club. He asked for Fats, the powerfully built fellow whose real name was Edwin Austin, and he conversed with him at some length.

Dismissed!

TOWARDS four o'clock in the afternoon, the clerk at the inquiry desk in the general office of R. H. Morse, Incorporated, called across to Eddie that he was wanted on the telephone, and Eddie went over to him, wonderingly, and took the instrument.

"Lang speaking," he said.

The voice that responded was strange to him, but it was the voice of Fats.

"This is your loan company talking, Mr. Lang," it said.

"Yeah?" snapped Eddie. "What can I do for you?"

"You can't do anything for us, Mr. Lang," was the significant reply.

"We're doing all right. But you can do something for your wife and kids, and if you don't want anything to happen to them don't go to the West Thirtieth Street Police Station like your friend the sergeant told you to do."

"I—I don't know what you're talking about," stammered Eddie.

"Okay, Mr. Lang, suit yourself. Go to West Thirtieth, but after you've been take another little walk down to the Emergency Hospital. You're liable to find someone you know down there!"

The line became dead, and Eddie replaced the telephone with a very shaky hand. An hour later he entered the manager's office with a sheet of paper in his hand.

"You asked for Tylor and Brown's July statement, Mr. Wilson," he said.

"Here it is. They still owe fourteen hundred dollars."

"All right." Wilson did not look up from a letter he was reading. "Put it down."

Eddie placed the statement on the desk, then coughed a little.

"There's something I want to ask you, Mr. Wilson," he said.

The letter was signed, and Wilson sat

back in his chair with a frown on his face.

"Which reminds me, Lang," he said grimly, "that I've been meaning to speak to you. Your work's going downhill lately. Too much day-dreaming, I fancy."

"Oh, I'm sorry about that, sir."

Eddie swallowed what seemed to be a lump in his throat. "I—I'll try to watch it. What I—er—wanted to ask you was, could I have an advance on my salary?"

"Again?" barked Wilson. "Out of the question!"

"Oh, but this is an emergency, Mr. Wilson."

"You asked for an advance before your vacation, didn't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"I think you and your wife should have a frank talk about finances—work out an ironclad budget and never depart from it. You know, sometimes it's difficult for a woman to understand that there is just so much coming in and no more."

Eddie could not bear to hear Mary blamed so unjustly.

"But this isn't my wife's fault, Mr. Wilson," he said, with a warmth that caused the manager to blink. "There's nothing extravagant about her—or stupid, either!"

"I'm sorry, Lang, but there's nothing further the office can do." Wilson waved a hand in the direction of the door. "And I'd prefer that you didn't ask me again," he added.

Eddie was still hard at work at his desk, that evening, when the other clerks went off. He had got into arrears with the bills and manifests, since his holiday, as a result of worrying about the loan, and he was determined to catch up with those arrears.

Wilson, one of the last to leave the office, glanced across at him with approval on his way out; it seemed to the manager that his words had not been wasted.

At half-past seven, just before the cleaners were due to invade the rooms on that floor, Eddie put away books and papers, and reached up to a peg for his

hat. It was then that temptation suddenly assailed him. He looked across at the desk of the clerk who had charge of the petty cash, and found himself walking over to it almost involuntarily.

The desk was unlocked and so was the cash-box inside it. He took ten dollars from the box and slipped them into his pocket; and then, with a horrible feeling of guilt, he switched off the lights and hurried away to catch a train.

Mary was crooning snub-nosed little Bill to sleep in his crib when he got home and tiptoed into the bed-room.

"Hallo, honey," she said, looking up from the crib, "what kept you?"

"I've been working," he replied.

The baby slumbered, and they crept away into the sitting-room.

"I've got a surprise," announced Mary. "Mrs. Barstow, downstairs, said she'd take care of the kids to-night."

Eddie, far from being pleased, became alarmed.

"Why should she take care of the kids?" he demanded. "What is this?"

"Eddie, don't snap at me like that!" she exclaimed, staring at him. "I was going to tell you. There's a band concert at the park to-night, and I thought—"

"You go along, honey," interrupted Eddie, afraid of what might happen if the children were left in the flat.

"Oh, no, I wouldn't do that!" she demurred, and sat beside him on the chesterfield. "What's the matter, sweetheart?"

"Nothing," said Eddie wearily, "nothing's the matter, darling. Just because I don't want to go to a band concert you needn't think something's the matter. Just tired, that's all."

So neither of them went to the band concert in the park. They went to bed early, instead. But Eddie could not sleep, although the night was comparatively cool; and he set off for the office in the morning tired-eyed and nervy.

He was so nervy that when one of the girl clerks sailed over to him with an open box of chocolates in her hand and tapped him on the back he jumped as though he had been shot.



Suddenly the light of an electric torch blazed in Eddie's face, and he raised his left arm defensively, clutching his right fist.

"What's the idea of sneaking up behind me and poking me when I'm working?" he rapped at her. "What do you want?"

"Well, you don't have to be so crabby about it," bridled the girl. "Stella's boy friend gave me a box of candy, last night, and I came over to see if you'd like some—sour puss!"

She went off with her head in the air to another clerk at another desk, and for more than ten minutes Eddie sat biting his lip and waging a battle with his conscience. Then, abruptly, he rose and went straight to the manager's room and burst into it in a fashion that caused its occupant to gape at him.

"Mr. Wilson," he blurted, "I stole some money from the firm!"

"You've what?" howled the manager.

"I stole some money from the company."

"How much? When?"

"Ten dollars from the petty-cash account." Eddie dropped a ten-dollar note on the blotting-pad. "It's been driving me crazy! It was last night."

For nearly a minute there was silence in the room; a painful silence, during which Wilson gnawed a finger-nail and scowled at an offensive inkpot.

"I'm sorry you did that, Lang," he said, and there was a real note of regret in his voice. "You've been with the company a long time. Why did you do it?"

"I had to have it," Eddie replied hoarsely.

"Why?"

"To pay back a loan. Are you going to prosecute, sir?"

"No." Wilson shook his head. "That wouldn't serve any good purpose."

"Thanks."

"You wouldn't have come in here and told me if you hadn't regretted it. But I'll have to let you go."

Eddie moistened his lips with his tongue.

"Yes, sir."

"I'm sorry about it, Lang. I—oh, well, I'm not going to preach to you—you know what you've done! I would have trusted you before anybody else here. You can tell them outside that you're leaving because we're cutting down the staff. Good-bye, Lang."

"Good-bye, Mr. Wilson."

Eddie went back to his desk with a heart of lead, did what had to be done in the matter of putting away books and papers, said good-bye to his colleagues, and went home.

He told Mary everything.

"So now you know, Mary," he said miserably when he had finished, "and if you haven't any use for me after what I've done I don't blame you."

"Oh, Eddie, don't say that!" she cried, and flung her arms round his neck. "You've gone through this whole thing all alone! You could have told me, dear."

"Yes, I could have told you," he growled. "I was a coward."

"No, not a coward," she corrected. "You don't know how to be a coward. Oh, if we could only get away from here! Eddie, let's move!"

"How?"

"Well, the rent's up on Saturday, and I've got eleven dollars saved from the housekeeping money. I've been keeping it for—well, for a time when—when we just had to have it—you know, in ease you took sick."

She let go of him and crossed the sitting-room to an easy-chair, and she pulled up the cushion and thrust a hand down into the lining of the chair, a hiding-place from which she produced eleven dollars in an envelope.

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"If you'd had that," she said, "you needn't—"

"Don't!" he pleaded.

"Oh, I'm sorry, Eddie!" She gave him a kiss, and she gave him the eleven dollars. "If we could get out of here they could never find you. We could start new. You could get a job, and you're good at your work."

"How did a mug like me ever find a swell girl like you?" he said humbly.

A Brutal Attack

ON a sunny but pleasantly cool day, about three weeks after Eddie had left the firm of R. H. Morse, Incorporated, Richard Farra walked out from the Aloha Social Club in company with Bunny and one of the men who had bundled Eddie into the car in Madison Avenue—a man dubbed "Fancyface."

A black sedan was standing at the kerb, and a golden-haired girl was looking out from it, a petulant expression on her pretty but hard-featured face. She was expensively dressed, and she was wearing the fur coat Farra had bought for two thousand dollars in the middle of a heat-wave.

"Well, for crying out loud!" she exclaimed as Farra and his companions crossed the pavement. "You sure took your time!"

"I'm sorry, sweetheart." Farra turned to the tall lean Bunny. "Now remember what I said about letting too many get away from you. It's becoming so that we lose about fifty of them a week. Why?"

"Well," complained Bunny, "they move."

"Oh, they move?" drawled Farra. "That's sure smart of them, eh? That takes brains! Well, listen, brain-trust, I've given you some angles on getting the new addresses, and I want 'em got—understand?"

"Okay, Farra," nodded Bunny.

A streamlined car with a cream-coloured body and black wings had just drawn up some way in front of the sedan. It was very obviously brand new, and it bore red number plates. The blonde girl leaned out of the window and pointed excitedly to it.

"Look, Ricky, look!" she cried. "That's a kind of cute car!"

Farra bestowed an appraising glance upon the vehicle.

"You like that car, eh?" he inquired.

"Sure," she replied emphatically. "I'd look good in a cream-coloured car. It would match my hair!"

Farra grinned and pointed a finger for the benefit of the rather good-looking fellow he called Fancyface.

"Get that guy with the cream-coloured car," he directed.

Fancyface dashed along the pavement.

"Is this for sale?" he shouted to the man at the wheel of the streamlined car.

"Sure," was the reply. "You interested?"

"Boss wants to see it. Back up a bit, will you?"

The man at the wheel was a dealer on his way back to his own premises from those of a prospective client. He complied with alacrity, and the golden-haired girl descended to gaze with Farra at the strikingly handsome vehicle.

"You still like the colour, sweetheart, eh?" asked Farra indulgently.

"Love it!" she answered; and then the dealer stood beside them.

"You like this particular car, sir?" he inquired. "We have a number of other beautiful body designs this year, eight cylinder 'V'-type motor, guaranteed to do ninety miles an hour—"

"Shut up, will you, pal?" interrupted Farra. "I know the routine. The lady thinks this car is cute, and she's pretty cute herself. What she wants she gets mostly. Okay, I'll take it!"

"Right now, sir?" The dealer was astonished.

"Yeah, not to-morrow, or next week," Farra informed him. "To-day, this car. How much for cash?"

"Two thousand seven hundred—with tax."

"With tax?" snorted Farra. "Say, what's the matter with this country? They'll tax me out of business one of these days! Okay, Fancyface, get my bags and put 'em in this car."

The motor dealer gulped.

"But the registration and plates, sir?" he protested.

"Well, I'll use these plates this weekend. Don't worry, you'll get 'em back again."

The car was paid for and Bunny was instructed to attend to the minor details of the impulsive purchase. Farra took the wheel and the golden-haired girl seated herself beside him.

"Hi, boss, what d'you want me to do with the other car?" asked Fancyface, after he had transferred the luggage. "Drive it around to your place?"

"No," Farra replied with a wave of his hand. "I tell you what I want you to do with the other car, sweetheart. I'm gonna give it to you."

"Give it to me?" gasped the henchman.

"Yes. I think you'd look good in that car—it kinda matches your hair!"

An extraordinary man, Richard Farra, full of sudden whims and extravagances, but entirely merciless with the victims of the loan-shark racket he ran. He had told his lieutenants of various means of tracking down defaulters, and one of the defaulters was Eddie, who had obtained a job through the United States Works Progress Administration—usually known as the "W.P.A."—and had moved with his family from Everett Place to a wooden cabin in a whole colony of cabins up in Yonkers, where a lot of road work was in progress.

Eddie said to Mary, as he was setting out for a day of hard manual labour the morning after Farra had acquired the cream-coloured car:

"Well, I'd better be going, or Uncle Sam will fire me. We're laying some pipes over on North Tenth Street, and if anyone should ask you, Mrs. Lang, old W.P.A. is certainly getting its money's worth out of me!"

He was wearing corduroys and a shirt open at the neck, and his hands had become calloused, but he was in fine condition.

"I like this place, Eddie," said Mary.

"And the garden," put in little Judy, to whom a garden was a novelty.

"Oh, sure!" nodded Eddie, "this place is all right, and anyway we've shaken off those—"

"Now you promised!" warned Mary.

"Right," said Eddie; and he went off to work quite happily.

But that morning Fats went to the New York headquarters of the Works Progress Administration, and to the elderly clerk in charge of the files he told a feasible story inspired by Farra.

"Well, there you are, sir," said the clerk, conducting his visitor to a row of tall filing-cabinets. "These are the relief rolls from September the fifteenth to date. These files are open to the public."

"Thanks a lot," said Fats. "You see, we can't close these estates until we locate the heirs."

Mary squeezed between the two detectives with a bag full of groceries in one arm. Her right hand went to her throat, and she screamed.



"Are the inheritances large?" asked the clerk.

"No, a couple of hundred dollars, mostly," Fats glibly replied, "some smaller. But I guess any of these people would be glad of a little legacy like that."

"They certainly would," avowed the clerk, "and I hope you find some of them. Well, take your time with the files."

Fats took his time with the files, and on some of the cards in some of the drawers he found the names of borrowers who had disappeared—and their new addresses. One of the cards bore Eddie's name.

That evening, just as it was growing dusk, Eddie climbed up out of a trench in North Tenth Street, Yonkers, and stooped to tie a shoe-lace before following his fellow-workers to the time-keeper's shed nearly half a mile away.

He had not noticed a black sedan that had crept along the newly made road some time before; but Whitehat and Fancyface had been watching him from the sedan, and they were on him as he straightened his back.

His arms were gripped in a fashion that threatened to break the bones in them, and he was forced backwards to the edge of the trench and sent crashing to the bottom of it.

The back of his head came into violent contact with one of the pipes he had been helping to lay, and he was already unconscious when the two scrambled down to him; but they kicked and punched him till his body was a mass of bruises.

It was after nine o'clock, and the road was in darkness, when a night watchman, who was lighting red lamps along the side of the trench, heard groans from the bottom of it. He descended with his lantern, and he found Eddie.

An hour later Eddie was sitting up in bed in a ward of the Emergency Hospital, Yonkers, with a bandage round his head, talking to a big and full-faced plain-clothes man named Martin. His body was aching all over, but his head was clear in spite of pain.

"So we moved from Everett Place last month," he said. "and I thought I'd lost them, see? Hi, listen, I wonder if they 'phoned my wife? This is her birthday! I asked the nurse to 'phone her and tell her I might have to work late. Gee, I hope—"

"All right, buddy, now don't worry," interrupted Martin. "We 'phoned your wife all right. Let's get on with the story. You never saw these men again until to-day?"

"No." Eddie settled down again. "I was just going home from work when the two of them—they were in a car, too, that time when they showed me Bill Seaver—they came up behind me and—Gee, my head!"

"All right, Lang." The plain-clothes man put away a notebook and rose from the chair beside the bed. "Now you get yourself some rest and when we've got your statement typed you read it. If it's okay, you'll sign it, eh?"

"Sure I'll sign it," declared Eddie. "But will you find out for certain whether somebody 'phoned my wife? She'll be worried sick if I don't come home."

"I'll do that."

Martin went out from the ward, and a colleague who had not uttered a word went with him. But the colleague was Martin's senior, and it was he who telephoned from the office to police headquarters in New York City.

"Let me talk to Captain Hall, please," he said. "Oh, captain, this is Gregg."

Captain Hall, a massive man with greying brown hair and a pair of very shrewd blue eyes, was at his desk in his own room.

"What's on your mind, Gregg?" he asked in a voice that was both deep and pleasant.

"I'm calling from the Emergency Hospital, Yonkers," the plain-clothes man responded. "This assault case you sent Martin and me up here for—Edward Lang, the W.P.A. worker who was picked up on Tenth Street. Well, it's a lean-shark beating."

"I see." Captain Hall made a

grimace. "The usual story, I suppose—he doesn't remember anything?"

"On the contrary," rejoiced Gregg, "he's just made a statement giving names, place, and times. I think for once we've got a guy with nerve enough to talk!"

"That's fine," boomed the captain. "I'll call up the District Attorney at his house."

With an air of satisfaction that equalled—if indeed it did not exceed—the satisfaction of his subordinate, Captain Hall rang up the District Attorney, a stocky little man with rather an Irish type of face, a mop of untidy brown hair, and a pair of brown eyes that gave life to the rest of his rather impassive face.

Morgan Curtis was his name, and he listened with suppressed excitement to what the captain had to tell him.

"Keep him at the hospital till I get there," he said. "I'll be along just as quickly as I can."

The Line-up

WHILE Martin and Gregg waited at Eddie's bedside for the arrival of the District Attorney, Martin gave voice to his anxiety.

"You're sure you won't go back on this statement when the D.A. gets here?" he inquired, waving a type-written sheet of paper.

"What d'you mean by go back on it?" challenged Eddie. "Why should I do that? It's the truth! Sav, listen, I may look kind of silly in this trick nightgown and this bandage, but I know what I'm doing, and I know what can happen."

"All right, buddy, I'm sold," said Martin with a very broad grin. "Just so long as you know what you're doing."

The District Attorney arrived, read the statement, and asked many questions of Eddie—who was up and dressed by then, and feeling a lot more like himself.

"About this Al Anslie," he said. "Didn't it ever occur to you that Al was a steerer—that he was working for these racketeers?"

"No, sir," confessed Eddie, and for the first time considered that possibility. "Al had a job, I understood, but, come to think of it, I never knew where. Oh, and I—I spilled everything to him. What a sap!"

"You're no sap," Curtis assured him. "All the banks and all the legitimate loan agencies have been trying to stamp out this racket. My office has been investigating the loan sharks for two years. I've personally interviewed five hundred victims—and you are the first man who has ever had the nerve to come through with a definite statement."

"Well, I don't know anything about that, sir," said Eddie, "but I've been scared plenty. I'm still scared."

"Well, you've agreed to make these identifications I've suggested—and that takes courage."

Eddie reached out to a glass of water standing on a table beside him and took a long drink.

"This is the way I look at it, sir," he said then. "Suppose we move again. Suppose I backed down and ran away. They'd find me. And every time my wife was ten minutes late coming home from anywhere I'd get cold inside. I'd be watching the kids all the time. After what happened to me today, why, I—I'd be always looking over my shoulder. Where's the sense of going on like that?"

"Suppose I give you the money to pay off your debt?"

The two plain-clothes men who were in the room looked at one another in dismay; but Eddie instantly shook his head—and winced because it hurt.

"No," he said definitely. "In a way, I'd be lining up with them by paying off and keeping quiet. No, I'll go through with it, sir. I want to do everything I can to put them out of business."

"Mr. Lang," said Curtis, "will you do me a favour?"

"Sure," replied Eddie.

"I've been around for a long time. I've been a criminal lawyer and a politician. I don't rate my fellow-citizens very high—there are some days when I'd give you the whole human race for a dime—yes, and give you nine cents change. If you don't mind, I'd like to shake your hand."

Eddie gripped the hand that was held out to him. He thought the District Attorney was a fine fellow; but he didn't like the District Attorney's next remark, which was:

"You're going to be our star boarder down at the gaol until Friday."

"The gaol?" he echoed in a horrified voice.

"They'll see that you're comfortable. I want you where we can find you when we need you."

"Oh, but Mr. Curtis, do I have to go? You see, I—I've got a family at home."

"We're taking care of them."

"Yes, but I think I ought to be there, too." He nearly mentioned the fact that it was Mary's birthday, but thought that might sound a poor argument. "I'll be at your office on Friday all right, but I—I think I ought to go home."

"All right, just as you say," returned Curtis. "So-long, Eddie."

Eddie went home in a squad car, and Martin and Gregg went with him. There were only three rooms in the little cabin, and the detectives proposed to occupy one of them, so they shifted the bed into the kitchen. Eddie wanted to help, but Mary made him go and sit down.

"Sorry there isn't an extra bed for you," she said to the plain-clothes men

after the rearrangement had been completed.

"That's all right, Mrs. Lang," Gregg informed her cheerfully. "We've got a couple o' chairs in there—and Marty has a detective magazine. He likes to read about detectives in stories, then he looks in the glass, and does he feel embarrassed?"

"Come on," snorted Martin, "get out of here! Good-night."

"Good-night, fellows," said Eddie, "and thanks a lot."

Mary said good-night, and the two retired to the bedless bed-room. Mary immediately went over to her husband, who was sitting at the kitchen table close to an open window.

"Let me look at you, Eddie," she said anxiously. "I haven't seen you alone. Was it awful, honey? Did they hurt you very badly?"

"Well, it wasn't so good," he returned wryly, "but I'm okay now. Thanks for sending along my clothes—I had to make 'em take the handage off so I could wear the hat! Is Judy all right? I kinda thought she might wake up with all this noise."

"You hoped she would!" accused Mary.

"Aren't you going to take Bill up?"

Mary shook her head. Judy and little Bill were fast asleep in the third room, Judy in a bed, Bill in his crib.

"You know Bill always sleeps right through the night, Eddie," she said, studying his worried face. "Why are you so anxious to have the kids wake up?"

"Well, you see, I didn't talk to them to-night," he replied lamely, "and I like 'em."

She was not deceived. "Even with those two men in the next room," she said, "you're still afraid something's going to happen."

"What could hap—" He rose abruptly and thrust his head out at the open window because he had heard footsteps in the tiny garden.

"What is it?" she asked in alarm.

"What's the matter?" she asked of the answering, Eddie made for the back door and went out into the darkness, stumbling along a path he could not see.

Suddenly the light of an electric torch blazed in his face, and he raised his left arm defensively, clenching his right fist. But it was only the night-watchman from the newly made road who was holding the torch, and the night-watchman had deserted his job to inquire after Eddie.

"Well, I'm not much better for seeing you!" exclaimed the overwrought young man. "I thought it was one of those crooks!"

That night Captain Hall issued instructions to all the plain-clothes men under him, and next day there was considerable police activity in the city. The tobacconist in the arcade of the Welch Building was one of the first to be arrested, but Fats was caught very soon afterwards.

Al Anslie was playing snooker in the Aloha Social Club when its premises were invaded by half a dozen officers, but the detective who caught hold of his arm did not address him as Anslie. He said grimly:

"Come on, Johnson!"

"What's this, Lefty?" demanded Al indignantly. "You ain't got nothing on me!"

"D'you want the bracelets on?" inquired his captor.

"No, I'll go quiet," growled Al. "but I ain't done nothing. Say, are you guys gonna bound me till I'm eighty just because I did time five years back?"

"Shut up, sweetheart, will you?" snapped the detective. "Come on, we've got a date with the D.A."

Throughout that day every man with a record who could be found was taken down to headquarters and detained, and next morning nearly fifty men were marched out from the cells in which they had spent the night.

Fats turned on one of the guards in a fury.

"If you think some tin-horn flatfoot can pick me up on a vagrancy charge, hold me overnight, and give me no chance to talk to my lawyer—" he began.

"You were given a chance to use the 'phone, brother," interrupted the guard.

"A fine chance!" roared Fats. "The 'phone wouldn't work!"

"Can I help it if your friends don't want to talk to you?" jibed the guard. "Right face, forward march!"

The day was Friday, and Eddie was with Morgan Curtis in a big bleak room at police headquarters, sitting in comparative darkness with a long and narrow platform some twenty feet away in front of them. The arrested men were about to be subjected to an identity parade, or "line-up."

"Now, you won't see all of them," said Curtis, "that's too much to hope for. I've picked up most of those who have police records—got 'em for vagrancy, carrying weapons, failure to report to the parole board, reckless driving, illegal parking, and anything else we could think of, but I can't hold them beyond to-day. Take your time and make sure, because I'm counting on you."

"I couldn't forget one of them," declared Eddie.

Curtis pointed to the narrow platform, floodlighted from above and below by powerful arc lamps. Behind it was a white background, measured off with vertical and horizontal lines, and at each end of it were steps.

"They'll stand under those floodlights," he explained. "You'll be able to see them, but they won't be able to see you."

Several policemen were standing in the room, silhouetted against the lights. The District Attorney called across to one who was near a door of steel bars, and the door was opened and five men were marched into the room and made to ascend the platform.

"Stand between those vertical lines," directed a sergeant brusquely. "Take your hands out of your pockets!"

"I don't know any of those fellows," whispered Eddie.

The five men were marched away at the command of the District Attorney, and five others took their place on the platform.

"Face front!" barked the sergeant. "Take your hats off!"

Eddie drew a long breath.

"That's Al Anslie in the centre," he whispered, and pointed a finger. "That man on the left there is the tobacconist. I don't know the others."

The identity parade continued, but Eddie failed to recognise any of the other men except the one with the scarred face, and Fats was released with the rest of the unrecognised and went off to report to Farra at his penthouse.

Reardon was with Farra, and Farra was lying on a table in a room fitted up as a gymnasium, being pommelled and kneaded by a stalwart masseur.

"They got ten boys from my club," Fats informed a broad, bare back, "and they got the cigar-counter man with a book on him. They got me, and I'd

(Continued on page 26)

It was not for vengeance alone that the masked rider struck at Jason Burr's sinister organisation. He was out to smash a tyrant's ambition to build an empire beyond the Rockies. A thrill-packed serial of the early West, when California was a pawn on the chess-board of a scheming nation, starring Bob Livingston



Read This First

The year is 1844 and the scene California, then a province of Mexico. But gold had been discovered by a powerful despot known as General Jason Burr, who conceives the idea of establishing a dictatorship with the aid of Imperial Russia.

The Russian Ambassador, Count Raspinoff, exerts his influence to supply Burr with ex-soldier colonists from the Tsar's army. These, together with the men already under Burr's command, form the nucleus of a force whereby the would-be dictator plans to seize control of the country.

Gold is the mainstay of Burr's ambitions, and he has opened a secret mine which he worked by captive labour. But the land on which it is situated is the property of a family named Loring, and the Lorings proving troublesome the father and the younger son are murdered.

Burr, however, has reckoned without Don Loring, the elder son of the family, who returns from U.S. territory for the purpose of exacting vengeance.

Under the alias of the Eagle, Don harasses Jason Burr with the aid of two Yankee frontiersmen known as Salvation and Whipsaw, and a priest named Father Jose. Then, gaining the interior of Burr's headquarters, he finds the plotter is holding as captives Doris Colton and her father, a mining engineer.

Discovering Burr's plan to seize California, Don organises a band of Vigilantes to combat him. Later, while the Vigilantes are besieged in their rendezvous, he learns that gunpowder is to be used to blast them out of existence.

Don, Whipsaw and Salvation intercept Burr's powder wagon, but during

EPISODE 7— "Wings of Doom"

a fight with a Russian, Don is knocked senseless in the vehicle as it rolls off the road into a deep gulch.

Now Read On

The Eagle's Horse

THE wagon, with its deadly freight, was hurtling down the declivity at a racking pace, and at the foot of the slope were those tumbled boulders against which it must dash itself with an impact that would explode the powder barrels.

To Petroff, who had leapt clear a few second before, it seemed that the career of the Eagle was fast drawing to a close.

Yet even while the Russian was gloating over that prospect Don Loring was collecting his wits and struggling to his knees on the floor of the runaway prairie schooner.

The young Californian realised his danger in an instant, and, serambling between the jolting kegs of gunpowder, he reached the driving seat of the wagon. Then he flung himself from the vehicle, hit the ground with a force that knocked the breath out of him, rolled through the scrub for a few yards and finally managed to check his descent by clutching at the twigs and foliage of a hardy shrub.

The wagon sped onward down the slope, and half a minute later it smashed into the rocks that littered the bed of the gulch; and in the very moment of impact the explosives which it contained went up with an ear-splitting roar.

A vivid blotch of flame sprang high into the air, and shattered fragments of timber were hurled in all directions. Debris fell around the spot where Don had come to rest, and a spreading pall of smoke came rolling aloft to envelop him. But by the time the fumes had drifted away the young ranch-owner was straightening up unharmed.

Away above him Petroff gave vent to an oath as he saw the masked, black-clad figure of the Eagle rising from the ground, and he cursed the fact that he no longer possessed his revolver, which he had lost during the scuffle in the wagon.

Without the weapon the Russian was not prepared to tackle Don, for he was fully aware that if the Californian had not struck his head in falling when the prairie schooner had lurched over the rim of the embankment he, Petroff, would never have been able to subdue so stalwart an antagonist.

Besides, Whipsaw and Salvation were up on the trail, and although the bigger of the two frontiersmen had been wounded, his diminutive companion was no mean foe.

Petroff therefore made himself scarce, and he had disappeared from view when Don Loring ultimately gained the summit of the slope to rejoin his friends.

Salvation was lying on the ground, clasping a blood-stained shoulder and swearing with the pain of his wound. Whipsaw was straddling the chest of the wagoner who had been dragged from the prairie schooner before its team of mules had been unhitched and the vehicle propelled towards the roadside.

The little fellow was belabouring his man with his fists, and he launched a blow that robbed Burr's hireling of his

senses just as Don stumbled across to Salvation.

Whipsaw retreated from the prone figure of his victim then and lent the Californian a hand as the latter was helping Salvation to stand up.

"We've got to get out of here," Don said. "Whipsaw, you ride double with Salvation on that sorrel of his. I'll take care of your mustang."

"Doggone it, I'll do my own ridin'," Salvation broke in. "I ain't no baby."

He made that declaration gamely, but his appearance belied his words, and Don knew full well that the wounded man would never be able to stay in the saddle without support. Consequently, he insisted upon Whipsaw mounting behind him, and when the two frontiersmen had climbed astride the bigger man's brone Don swung himself on to his own pony and took Whipsaw's riderless mustang by the rein.

They started out in the direction of San Antonio, but had not gone far when they saw the escort of the destroyed powder-wagon burst clear of the thickets into which they had been lured.

The bellow of the explosion had fetched them back towards the trail, and as they gained the spot where they had last seen the heavy-laden prairie schooner, Petroff appeared as if from nowhere. Then, with the hetman in the lead, the whole party charged in pursuit of Don and his companions.

The Californian and the two Yankee frontiersmen were now approaching a tract of forest-land, and on entering the trees Don spoke to Whipsaw in an urgent voice.

"We'll never keep ahead of those Russians with Salvation in this condition," he said. "Look, you get him to Father Joso's chapel in San Antonio, where he can have the attention he needs. I'll lead Petroff and his crew off on a false scent, and join you later when I've given them the slip."

Whipsaw was loath to have Don take the risk of capture while he escaped scot-free. But he knew the futility of arguing with the young rancher, and into the bargain Salvation seemed to be on the verge of fainting. In consequence, the little frontiersman fell in with Don's arrangement, and presently he and his comrade had vanished amid the gloomy depths of the woods.

As for Don, he turned off to the north, keeping just within the fringe of the trees so that Petroff and his men gained an impression of his white horse streaking through the shadows of the forest.

Don had no means of knowing whether they could see that he had separated from his companions. The fact remained that they took up his trail in a hody, every mother's son of them intent on running to earth the masked rider who had proved such a thorn in Jason Burr's side, and with the whole band spurring after him Don congratulated himself on having drawn them away from Whipsaw and Salvation.

The Californian was still in charge of Whipsaw's mustang, which was pounding along beside his own brone, and for something like a quarter of an hour he had no difficulty in keeping well in front of his enemies. Then his pony began to lose ground, a circumstance not surprising, since it had been pretty hard-worked the night before and had not obtained much rest.

Don realised that to stay on its back would be fatal, and skirting a tangle of brushwood that grew amongst the tree-stems, he disengaged his feet from his gelding's stirrups and switched

horses while momentarily hidden from the sight of his pursuers.

Transferring himself lithely to the mustang that had belonged to Whipsaw, he drove his own brone onward and then took cover amid the brushwood, and he was effectively concealed there when Petroff and the Cossacks rounded the mass of vegetation.

They caught a flash of the white pony Don had abandoned, but they were unable to tell that it was no longer carrying its master, and they pressed on determinedly, flailing their mounts and goading them with the spur. And shortly after they had gone by, the man whom they knew as the Eagle calmly emerged from his hiding-place and struck eastwards through the forest with the object of picking up the San Antonio trail.

Meanwhile, the cream-white gelding with which he had parted company was drumming its way towards the north, and, its saddle empty, it seemed to take on a new lease of life, so that it kept ahead of Petroff and his men for another mile or two—a dim-seen form galloping through the close-ranked trees like a tantalising will-o'-the-wisp that they could not overtake.

They caught up with it at last, however, and it was only then that they discovered they had been fooled. It was only then that they realised to their chagrin they had been chasing a riderless brone.

At what point during the pursuit had the Eagle left the gelding's saddle? This was a question which none of the Russians could answer, and it was all too clear that it would be futile to attempt picking up his trail now. Yet, in the midst of his disappointment at the masked rider's escape, Petroff hit upon a crafty scheme.

"We've lost the Eagle," he said, "but I think this horse of his is going to come in handy. Bring him along."

One of the Cossacks took charge of the gelding, and a moment afterwards Petroff was wheeling to lead the way across country in a southerly direction, his objective being the canyada which the main body of his troops were besieging.

He called a halt before he was actually in sight of the Vigilantes' hide-out, and, bidding his companions remain where they were, rode on alone.

As he advanced the sound of rifle and revolver fire reached his ears, and a little later he came in view of the position occupied by his squadron. Then he espied the artillery-piece that had been dispatched from Burr's stronghold the previous night.

It had been so placed that it commanded the ravine in which the Vigilantes were ensconced, and a group of gunners were assembled beside it.

Petroff cantered up to these men, and one of them saluted him.

"We're all ready to open the bombardment, sir," the fellow reported. "Is the powder on its way?"

"There will be no powder," the hetman answered gruffly, "and therefore there will be no bombardment. Get the field-piece hitched to its limber and prepare for retreat. We're moving out."

His instructions were carried out stoically, and in the meanwhile Petroff summoned the squads of carabineers who were lying amongst the scrub; and ere long the whole of the besieging force had mounted and was riding off in column, the field-gun bringing up the rear behind a team of plodding mules.

The departure of the Cossacks who had invested the canyada all through the night was greeted by a rousing cheer on the part of the Vigilantes. But that loud huzza, with its resounding note of triumph, only produced a sinister expres-

sion of crafty amusement on the features of Petroff.

Swinging along at the head of the squadron, he had soon rejoined the smaller party, who had been concerned in the fruitless pursuit of the Eagle. Then he led the entire column north under cover of a ridge that lay between them and the Vigilantes' hide-out, and finally he drew rein on a beaten track that was flanked by clusters of great boulders.

"Bring that gelding to me," he called out to the man who was in charge of the Eagle's pony.

The horse was fetched to his side, and, taking pencil and paper, Petroff carefully printed a message and pinned it to the brone's saddle. It was a message purporting to be from the Eagle, and that was the reason why the hetman had used printed lettering, fearing that the Vigilantes might be familiar with their leader's normal handwriting.

"Am hiding out in Stony Gulch," the message ran, "and need help. Come at once."

Petroff turned to the man who was grasping the white gelding's rein.

"Drive this horse in the direction of the Vigilantes' lair," he ordered, "but make sure that they don't see you. Unless I am mistaken, they will leave the canyada the minute they read this message, and we shall have them at our mercy then, for they must come this way."

His subordinate glanced at the note which the hetman had pinned to the gelding's saddle.

"H'in, a clever ruse, sir," he murmured. "But how do we know that the Eagle didn't work round to the canyada after we lost him? How do we know that he isn't at this very moment with the Vigilantes—or the Mounties, as they call themselves?"

"If he had made tracks for the canyada he would have been seen by the men who were besieging it," Petroff retorted. "Yes, even if he had effected a detour to come in from the far end of the ravine. I have already asked whether anyone joined the Vigilantes during the last hour, and have been assured that no one has done so. Now do as I have told you."

The man in charge of the gelding departed for the ridge that intervened between the Russians and the canyada, and presently he disappeared in a cospice on the summit of it. Meanwhile Petroff ordered the troopers of his squadron to conceal themselves amongst the rocks, and the field-gun also being hidden, the hetman alone was in view when the fellow who had been dispatched to the ridge came spurring back.

"The ruse worked, sir," he announced breathlessly. "I turned the gelding loose, and it went straight for the canyada. I waited to see what happened, and in a minute or two the Vigilantes came galloping out of their hide-out."

"And they're headed this way all right?" Petroff jerked. "They're headed for Stony Gulch?"

"Yes, sir."

The hetman promptly sought the shelter of the boulders with the Cossack who had returned from the ridge, and then he called out in a voice that was audible to the rest of the squadron.

"Wait until the Vigilantes are trapped between the rocks before you close in on them. And don't open fire unless you have to. I want them alive."

A silence now descended upon the scene of the ambushade, a silence that prevailed until Don Loring's Mounties hove into sight on the ridge, with the

veteran rancher Anderson in the lead and the white gelding by his side. Then, the thunder of hoofs becoming ever more distinct to the men who waited in hiding among the rocks, the band of Vigilantes surged down the Stony Gulch trail at headlong pace.

They reached the locality where the track passed through the boulders, and, with every man of the Eagle's supporters penned in between the rocks, the Cossacks under Petroff's command suddenly disclosed themselves in full force, moving out of their countless hiding-places on horseback and levelling their carbines at the luckless Mounties.

Taken completely unawares, Anderson and his comrades pulled up abruptly, and as they looked about them they realised how hopelessly they were trapped. A formidable party of the Russians barred the trail in front of them, another party had mustered in their rear, and on both sides the cluttered houlders seemed alive with fur-capped Muscovites.

"Keep your hands away from your guns, or we'll mow you down like rats!" came the voice of Petroff.

Resistance was futile. Each rancher was covered by at least half a dozen carbines, so heavily did the odds favour the Russians, and any attempt to stage a battle would have been suicidal. Slowly, reluctantly, the Vigilantes lifted their hands in surrender, and at a command from Petroff a group of the Cossacks rode in amongst them to disarm them.

The Bargain

ONCE again General Jason Burr received a visit from Count Raspinoff, emissary of the Tsar, and the two men were discussing their plans in the would-be dictator's study when the murmur of their voices was interrupted by a commotion in the patio.

Rising from his chair, Jason Burr strode across to the windows of his sanctum, and as he looked out he saw the Yankee renegades in his employ hurrying from all directions to greet the arrival of Petroff's squadron of Cossacks and their Vigilante prisoners.

Burr's piggyish eyes gleamed as he beheld the captives, and, turning to find that Raspinoff had joined him at the windows, he spoke to the count in a voice that rang with exultation.

"Do you see what I see?" he jerked. "Do you see what I see? By thunder, this means our enemy's back is broken!"

Raspinoff was scanning the prisoners as the Cossacks escorted them to a long, low shed where they were apparently to be housed.

"The Eagle's white gelding has been taken by Petroff's men," he commented, "but there is no sign of the man in black to whom it belongs. General Burr, if he has escaped your troubles are far from ended. He can still incite opposition—"

"Here comes Petroff himself," Burr interrupted. "We'll wait till we've heard what he has to say before we discuss the Eagle."

The Cossack hetman entered the study a few seconds later, and the general looked at him approvingly.

"I notice you've rounded up those cursed Mounties, Petroff," he stated.

"Yes, but not by blasting them out of their hide-out with gunpowder," was the reply.

"I know that. The driver of the powder-wagon showed up here a little while ago. So did a bunch of my men who were to have rubbed out the Eagle before the real powder-wagon put in an appearance. I gathered from their stories that the Eagle had been too

smart for us. But how did you manage to capture his Vigilantes, anyway?"

Petroff gave him a full report, and when the hetman had finished his narrative Raspinoff interposed a remark.

"You have done well, Petroff," he declared. "But the Eagle is still at large, and I have just been telling General Burr that he will continue to be a dangerous factor in this game that we are playing."

Burr took up the discussion at this juncture.

"His Excellency is right," he said. "The Eagle may stir up revolt against my regime, and I can't afford to have any unrest in my territory if I've got to meet trouble from the United States. But listen, Petroff, I think I know a way of laving the Eagle by the heels. You used his horse to trap his men. I'll use his men to trap him."

"How are you going to do it?" the hetman asked.

Burr's eyes narrowed thoughtfully.

"We know precious little about the Eagle," he mused, "but from our experience of him I figure he's one of these self-sacrificing fools who should have been born in the so-called age of chivalry. In other words, he'd throw away his own life to save his friends. Remember, for instance, how he risked the bullets of a firing-squad to rescue that fellow who answers to the name of Salvation."

Petroff failed to comprehend the project Burr had in mind, and Count Raspinoff seemed equally in the dark.

"Now, supposing," the general went on, "supposing I sent the Eagle a message, telling him that if he gave himself up I'd let his Vigilantes go free. I'm pretty well convinced he'd accept the proposition."

Raspinoff and the Cossack hetman glanced at each other dubiously. Then the latter spoke.

"If he did give himself up, would you let the others go free?"

"Of course not," Burr scoffed. "We'll delay their execution so that he can share their fate, that's all."

"How are you going to get in touch with the Eagle?" Raspinoff put in.

By way of answer, Jason Burr moved across to a cage that was hanging in one of the study windows. It was the cage containing the homing-pigeons which he had discovered in Doris Colton's possession.

"Any of these birds," the general said, "can be relied upon to fly straight to our man. Colton's daughter was caught last night in the act of sending a message to the Eagle by one of them."

He returned to his desk, and while Petroff and the count looked on in silence he wrote a few sentences on a sheet of paper. Then he folded the note tightly, and, removing one of the pigeons from the cage in the window, fastened the communication to its leg with a piece of strong twill.

He had scarcely accomplished this when there was a knock on the door, and as he called out in brusque response the figure of Doris Colton entered the room. For although she was not allowed beyond the gates of the fort she was at liberty to walk anywhere within its precincts.

"Ah," said Burr, grinning at her, though something in his manner belied the indulgent expression on his ugly face, "come right in, Miss Colton. What can I do for you?"

The girl was pale, and her fingers were twitching nervously.

"I saw the Cossacks arrive with those prisoners and I understand they're the Vigilantes," she faltered. "What are you going to do to them?"

Burr continued to smile at her.

"Well," he stated, "that depends on the Eagle. I'm just sending him a message, informing him that I'll turn his



"Right now I ain't feelin' so good," Salvation said. "But you wait till I'm on my feet again. I'll show them Cossacks that they can't make a dictator outa that rattler Jason Burr!"

friends loose if he comes here and surrenders. That's a fair enough trade, isn't it?"

"You mean—you're demanding his life in return for theirs?"

"That's about the hang of it, Miss Colton. How do you suppose he'll react to my suggestion? You regard him as a pretty brave man, don't you?"

A far-away expression came into the girl's lovely eyes.

"He's the bravest man I've ever known," she answered.

"Well, if he's as brave as you think he is, I'm quite sure he'll take me up on this proposal," Burr observed smugly.

"Bearding the Lion"

WHEN Don Loring reached Father Jose's chapel in San Antonio he found Whipsaw and Salvation already installed within the kindly old padre's quarters.

Stripped to the waist, Salvation was lying on a divan, and while Father Jose looked on, Whipsaw was doctoring the big fellow's wound, which was obviously paining the injured man to a considerable extent.

Moving to the burly frontiersman's side, Don knelt down by the divan.

"How do you feel, amigo?" he inquired solicitously.

Salvation raised himself with an effort. "Right now I ain't feelin' so good," he said. "But you wait till I'm on me feet again. I'll show them Cossacks that they can't make a dictator outa that rattler Jason Burr!"

"You betcha you will," declared Whipsaw. "But say, Don, you really think the Vigilantes will be able ter hold off the Roosians at the canyada, don't yuh?"

"There's no reason why they shouldn't," was the reply. "They've got plenty of ammunition now, and, defended by a mere handful of determined men, that canyada could be made impregnable against a whole army."

There was a pause, and then Father Jose spoke.

"My son," he murmured, "I do not know whether you have heard the news, but it is said that many towns in the south have thrown off the yoke of Mexico and pronounced allegiance to Burr. The people down there do not realise, of course, that their lot under the general will be far unhappier than it was under the Mexican Government."

"No, and by the time they do realise it they won't be able to do nothin' about it," Whipsaw struck in, "because the Russian Tsar will have shown his hand an' flooded the country with troops. The point is, what's Uncle Sam gonna say about it in the meantime? I can't see the American Government standin' for a province that borders the U.S. frontier."

Don Loring clenched his fist.

"The U.S. Government never will stand for it," he said, "particularly as they've had hopes of bargaining for the possession of California themselves. And let me tell you this, Whipsaw: I may have Spanish blood in me, but I'd welcome U.S. rule above any other in this province. I have certainly no feelings of loyalty towards a Government so incompetent as that of Mexico, anyhow."

Salvation entered into the discussion. "Remont and his regiment up in Oregon are the nearest U.S. troops ter Californy," he mused. "If they got their marchin' orders they'd be down at the Ortega Pass in a brace o' shakes."

"Yes, the Ortega Pass," Don agreed. "The one route open to an invading force. And Salvation, I'm convinced it will come to that—I'm convinced the people of California must look to the United States if they want peace and

prosperity in this territory. That's why we've got to prevent him from gaining a strangle-hold on the Sonoma Valley—the key to his ambitions—so that he will have no chance of concentrating his energies on defending the pass."

It was at this point in the conversation that a flutter of wings attracted his attention, and, turning his head, he saw a pigeon had settled on the ledge of a window near by. It was one of the pigeons which had belonged to Father Jose, and it had been smuggled to Doris Colton, and at sight of it Don started to his feet with an exclamation.

He had soon laid hold of the bird, and, espying a folded scrap of paper attached to its leg, he quickly unfastened the missive and read it. Then he looked at his companions with an expression of awe on his handsome features.

"What is it?" Whipsaw demanded. "A message from Miss Doris?"

"No," Don rejoined. "From Burr. He must have found out how Doris was passing information to us."

"From Burr!" Salvation ejaculated. "What's he say?"

"He says," the young Californian answered slowly, "he says that the Vigilantes have been taken and are imprisoned at his stronghold. He says that they will only be released if I give myself up in their stead. Should I fail to do so within twenty-four hours, they will be executed to a man."

Whipsaw gave vent to a cry.

"The Vigilantes—taken?" he ejaculated. "But it ain't possible. You said yourself the canyada was impregnable. It's a bluff, Don."

"I'm afraid it's no bluff. Somehow the Vigilantes have been trapped, otherwise Burr would not have wasted his time sending me this note."

"What are you gonna do, Don?"

"Go to Jason Burr's fort. The lives of those ranchers depend on me."

"But Burr will shoot yuh like a dog," Whipsaw protested. "Yeah, an' he'll massacre the Vigilantes whether you show up or not. You can't bank on a rattlesnake like him keepin' his word."

Don Loring gritted his teeth.

"Burr won't have the chance of shootin' me, or the Vigilantes either," he said.

A moment later he was hastening to the chest where he kept the suit of clothes that he wore as the supposed organist of Father Jose's chapel, and in the space of a few minutes he had rigged himself out in those garments, pulling them on over the sombre attire which was associated with his rôle of the Eagle.

"Don," Whipsaw appealed, "you're crazy if you think you can get away with that organ-player set-up. I know what you're gonna do. You're gonna pull the gag that let you into Burr's fort once before. But it won't work this time. Remember that hombre Pedro, the half-breed in the general's pay? He's seen yuh without your mask, an' he'll recognise yuh."

"I doubt it. I look a very different man in this guise, my friend. Anyhow, I'm going to take the chance of meeting Pedro face to face and being recognised by him."

Whipsaw bit his lip.

"All right," he grunted. "Have it your own way. But what am I gonna wear?"

"You're not coming with me," Don told him. "You're going to stay right here and look after Salvation."

It was in vain that the little frontiersman begged the Californian to let him travel to Burr's stronghold as well. Don would not hear of it, and shortly after-

wards he left San Antonio alone, riding a sturdy little mule which was owned by Father Jose.

Noon found him in the vicinity of the tyrant general's fortified hacienda, and as he approached the main gateway of the stronghold several men showed up there. One of them was the gangster known as Harris, and it was he who challenged Don.

"What do you want here?" he demanded.

Already Don had assumed the timorous manner that he affected as the organist of the San Antonio Mission—a manner which might well have disarmed the suspicions of the most mistrustful of men.

"I—I have a message for your commander," he said to Harris. "I—I was asked to—give it to him personally."

Harris frowned, and then, taking Don's mule by the rein, he conducted the animal and its rider into the courtyard, where parties of Cossacks and ruffianly looking outlaws were lounging about in idleness.

Amongst one of those groups Don noticed the figure of the half-breed Pedro, and in passing that particular knot of men he was careful to keep his face somewhat averted. Then his glance was attracted to a horse which was plunging restively at a hitch-rail near the main building of the stronghold.

The horse was his own white gelding, and it had obviously become aware of its master's presence. But Don gave no indication that he was familiar with the brone, of course, though Harris escorted him straight across to it.

A tall, powerfully built individual was trying to pacify the gelding. He was Talbot, Burr's chief henchman, and Harris addressed himself to him.

"This guy here wants ter see the general," he reported.

Talbot slid his eyes on Don, and then gave a slight start.

"Say, I remember you," he growled. "You're the organ-player that was here a few days back. What do you want this time?"

"I—have a m-message—for the—for the general," Don stammered. "It's—it's from the man who calls himself the Eagle."

Talbot seemed to become tense.

"The Eagle, huh?" he jerked. "All right, get down off that mule an' follow me."

Don was lowering himself awkwardly to the ground, and, indicating the porch of Burr's private residence, Talbot preceded him into the building.

They passed into a sumptuously furnished hall, and Talbot led the way to the general's study. The door of the room was half open, and as they moved towards it Don caught a glimpse of Doris Colton emerging from the apartment. But, though she cast a look in his direction, the girl did not connect him with the masked man whom she knew as the Eagle, and he gained only a momentary impression of her pale, anxious face before she turned to ascend a staircase leading to the upper floor of the house.

She disappeared, and by that time Don and Talbot had reached the threshold of the study, which was occupied by Burr, Petroff and Count Raspinoff.

A snatch of conversation reached Don's ears.

"In my opinion," he heard Raspinoff say, "a shrewd man like the Eagle will not come here."

"No?" Burr retorted. "Well, I'm counting on the fellow's peculiar code of honour. From my experience of him—"

But the general did not complete the

sentence, for it was at this juncture that Talbot strode through the doorway with Don shambling at his heels.

"Excuse me, general," Talbot announced, "but here's this organ-player back again. He claims he has another message from the Eagle."

There was a scraping of chairs as Burr, Petroff and the count rose to their feet and concentrated their gaze on Don Loring. Then the general stepped nearer to the supposed organist.

"A message from the Eagle, eh?" he barked. "Say, how is it he picks on you to deliver his messages?"

"I—I don't know. I only wish—he wouldn't pick on me. He makes me nervous—in those black clothes of his—and the mask—and—"

"All right, all right," Burr cut in. "What's his message, anyway?"

Don moistened his lips.

"Well, I—I haven't the slightest idea what he means," he blurted, "but he asked me to tell you that he'd be here five minutes after I arrived."

"Five minutes after you arrived?" Burr rapped out, and then: "Come on, friends, we'll get ready to receive our visitor!"

No further heed was paid to Don. With one accord, Burr, Petroff, Talbot and Raspinoff stampeded from the room, and, finding himself alone, the bogus organist from the San Antonio chapel promptly began to divest himself of the grey suit he was wearing.

Thirty seconds later he stood revealed as the Eagle, and, after thrusting the discarded suit under a couch and concealing his features with his mask, he plucked out a revolver and stepped forth into the hall.

Burr was at the front door of the hacienda with Raspinoff. Petroff and Talbot were hastening away in opposite directions with the general's orders ringing in their ears.

"Get the men to their posts. Tell them to grab the Eagle the moment he enters the courtyard. Bring out the Vigilantes and pick a firing-squad for them. Huh, so the Eagle thought I'd really set them free if he surrendered! He'll know different when we stick him amongst 'em and start shooting them down."

The great patio was soon transformed into a scene of activity, and the clamour that resounded within its confines only died down when the preparations for the Eagle's anticipated arrival had been completed. Then Jason Burr turned to Raspinoff.

"It won't be long now, count," he said, "before you have the pleasure of witnessing the mass execution of our enemies."

The emissary of the Tsar grimaced. "If you don't mind, general," he murmured, "I think I'll wait in the study until it's all over. I'm afraid I have a tendency to be a little squeamish on these occasions."

Burr shrugged his shoulders, and the count turned to retrace his steps. On his way to the study he saw no sign of Don, however, for the latter had dodged into an alcove, from which he only emerged when the Russian had passed by.

The coast clear, Don advanced stealthily to the doorway in which Jason Burr was standing, and, coming up behind the scoundrel, he glanced out into the courtyard to see the general's armed hirelings assembled in groups at every vantage-point, Cossacks and gangsters intermingling. Then his eyes became focused on a file of carabineers under the command of Petroff—furred-capped Muscovites who were levelling

their guns at a band of defenceless men, the condemned Vigilantes.

Don's face tightened, and, careful to remain hidden from the view of those in the courtyard, he thrust the muzzle of his Colt towards the tyrant in the hacienda doorway.

"Keep perfectly still, Burr," he drawled, "if you know what's good for you."

The general stiffened in every limb, and, half turning his bullet head, he gave vent to a smothered imprecation as he saw the masked figure of the Eagle behind him. But, his glance dropping to the revolver, he made no further sound or movement.

"I've kept my appointment, Burr," Don went on. "Now release my men."

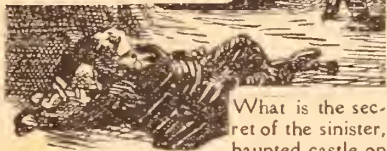
"Take it easy," the other croaked.

"Let's—let's talk this thing over."

"There's nothing to talk about. Do as I tell you, or I'll blow a hole clean through you. Release my men, give them their horses and disperse your own scum to their quarters."

There was no doubting the sincerity of the threat, and with the barrel of the revolver boring into his spine,

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Jason Burr suddenly called out to Petroff in an urgent tone:

"Hey, there, I've changed my mind! Turn those Vigilantes loose—let 'em take their ponies—and send 'em home."

Petroff could scarcely believe his ears. He gaped at Burr from the far side of the courtyard, but failed to see the black-clad form who was surreptitiously covering the general.

"Go on, do as I say!" General Burr shouted.

His instructions were carried out, the prisoners being set free; and when these had galloped from the stronghold with a bewilderment only exceeded by the wonder written on the countenances of Burr's own men, the general ordered his men to return to their cantonments.

"And now, friend Burr," Don said then, "we'll talk things over."

"I think it's time we all did some talking," another voice interposed.

It was the voice of Count Raspinoff. The astonishing commands of Burr must have reached his ears, and, dumbfounded at first, he had at length emerged from the study to perceive the reason for the change in the general's demeanour. And now the Russian was

close behind Don Loring, and was holding the point of a sword against the young Californian's back.

The sword was one which Raspinoff wore merely as a decoration. It was questionable whether he had ever used it as an offensive weapon. Nor did it prove of much value to him now, for, wheeling, Don struck it aside and closed with the man to hurl him to the floor and wrest the blade from his clutch.

The brief scuffle cost Don his revolver, however, for he was unlucky enough to lose his grip on it, and in an instant Jason Burr had dived for it and snatched it up. Yet ere the general could cover him with the fire-arm the younger man had brought the flat of Raspinoff's sword across the tyrant's hand.

Burr dropped the Colt with a yelp of pain, and it was as he uttered that cry that Petroff appeared unexpectedly on the threshold of the house with four or five of his Muscovite troopers.

They had entered truculently enough for the purpose of asking why the Vigilantes had been allowed to go free after proving themselves so dangerous to Burr's cause. But at sight of the masked, dark-clad figure of the Eagle they understood the situation immediately, and a chorus of guttural exclamations broke from their throats.

Out came their sabres, the steel scraping in the scabbards and flashing on high. In the same moment Don sprang back to put himself on the defensive, but in doing so he tripped over the corner of a low bench, and next second, even as he sprawled his length, the party of Cossacks rushed for him in a body to hack the life out of him with their razor-edged swords!

(To be continued in another grand episode next week. By permission of British Lion Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Bob Livingston.)

"OUR FIGHTING NAVY"

(Continued from page 10.)

Now, Captain Markham was under the impression that Pamela was in love with young Armstrong; moreover, he was convinced that he was destined to be a bachelor. Also, he was too old for a girl like Pamela.

"Good fellow, Armstrong," he remarked when they were alone.

"I think he's a dear, but—"

"But what?"

"But I'm not in love with him." Pamela looked at the captain in a manner that even that dense hero could understand.

An officer knocked and entered. He coughed discreetly because the captain's arms were around the girl.

"Your boat is alongside, sir."

"Tell them to make it fast," cried the captain.

"Aye, aye, sir!" cried the officer.

When the door had closed Markham turned eagerly to the girl of his dreams.

"Do you really mean it?"

Pamela laughed.

"Aye, aye, sir!"

It was Markham, and not the unfortunate Bill Armstrong, who took Pamela Bront ashore.

(By permission of Herbert Wilcox Productions, Ltd., distributed throughout the United Kingdom and Irish Free State by General Film Distributors, Ltd., starring Robert Douglas, Hazel Terry and Richard Cromwell.)

August 21st, 1937.

"I PROMISE TO PAY"

(Continued from page 23)

be down there yet only the guy had never seen me before. The heat's on, boss!"

"It's nice and cool in here," said Farra complacently. "I sleep under blankets every night."

"The D.A. is guarding Lang like he was the mint," raged Reardon. "They mean business."

Farra waved away the masseur and sat up.

"So they've got the boys," he said scornfully, "and for what? Assault and misdemeanor—usury and misdemeanor. Huh! The D.A. will have his little party, and a few stupid lugs will go away for six months. So what? I'll still be in business."

"Well, it's more than that, boss," protested Fats. "This guy Lang's always been a trouble-maker. You see, Whitehat and John Scully grabbed his pay-envelope one time, and I guess the D.A. figures that's robbery. And once Whitehat and Fancyface had to push him into a car and talk to him some."

Farra heard that with manifest misgiving and sent for Fancyface, who was in the pent-house.

"Did you hurt this fellow Lang?" he demanded harshly.

"No," replied the thug.

"Don't lie to me! You slugged him!" Farra pointed an accusing finger. "D'you know what that means, you lug? That's a murder rap, if they want to get technical. You force a guy into a car, and that's kidnapping! In this State you get life! If you do him bodily harm while he's in that car you get the hot seat—death! Can you understand that, you thick-skulled idiot? They've got Scully, and they'll pick you up any day!"

"But listen, Farra—" began Reardon.

"Shut up!" snapped the racketeer. "I said I'd give my boys protection, and I will. But no mouthpiece living can laugh off this rap. If a Grand Jury indicts the boys, they burn! We'll have to get Lang before he talks to a Grand Jury."

Foiled!

NEARLY a week passed, and then the District Attorney sent again for Eddie, who was conveyed to the Hall of Justice in a squad car.

"We go before the Grand Jury tomorrow," said Curtis, "and with your help I think I can get indictments against ten men. But they are all small fry not one-tenth of one per cent of the loan-shark racketeers in this city. We haven't even touched the higher-ups, and even if I do get indictments and convictions against these ten men the racket still goes on. It's not good enough!"

"Well, look, Mr. Curtis," ventured Eddie. "I think I've got an idea. Of course, you're the D.A., and I'm just a mug that got in with this mob because I needed fifty bucks and didn't have brains enough—"

"Don't apologise for having an idea, Eddie," urged Curtis. "You've got nerve, and I like it. What were you going to say?"

"Well, you picked up a couple of hooks—collection hooks, with the names of the people and how much they owe."

"That's so, but these people are afraid to talk."

"My idea is that maybe they might

listen to me, seeing as how I'm one of them. If I put it to them strong enough I think they might come through."

"Even then," said Curtis, "they couldn't identify the ringleader."

"No, but through them we can get more steers and more collectors, and then maybe—"

"Maybe we'll find the link we're looking for," Curtis completed. "It's not likely, but I'm willing to try. All right, I'll subpoena the lot of them. You be here at noon recess to-morrow, and I'll let you talk to them."

"You bet," said Eddie with enthusiasm, and rose to go. But Curtis stopped him as he was on the way to the door.

"Oh, Eddie," he said, "when this blows over I think I'll have a berth for you here."

Eddie gaped at him in mingled astonishment and gratitude.

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Curtis," he blurted, "but you know why I lost my job at Morse's?"

"Forget that," Curtis offered his hand. "I've forgotten it."

Eddie shook the hand with vigour.

"Is it all right if I tell my wife?" he asked. "I mean, about the job?"

"Certainly, Eddie," Curtis assured him. "Tell her by all means."

While Eddie was on his way back home in the squad car, with Gregg beside him and Martin in the front seat with the driver, Mary went out from the little cabin to do some shopping, leaving Judy in the kitchen to look after baby Bill in his crib.

Cautiously the back door was opened, and Whitehat slipped into the room. He had watched Mary leave the cabin.

"Hallo, girlie," he said with an ingratiating smile, "what's your name?"

"Judy," she replied. "What's yours?"

"Smith," he told her. "Your folks home?"

She shook her head.

"My mummy went to the store," she said, "and my daddy went in a car, and—"

"How would you like to go in a car?" he cut in.

"Have you got one?"

"Sure—just down the road. Say, let's you and me take a little ride."

He glanced across at the crib. "We'll take your little brother with us."

"Oh, that'd be fun!" she cried. "But my mummy said—"

"I met your mother at the store," lied Whitehat. "She told me to come up here and take you for a nice ride."

"She did?" Judy clapped her hands.

"Oh, goody, goody! Did she say I was to wear my sweater?"

"No," Whitehat moved over to the crib. "Come on, it ain't cold."

He was stooping to pick up the baby when the door from the lobby swung wide and a harsh voice rang out:

"Drop those hands!"

Whitehat dropped his hands—and swung round to face two burly plain-clothes men who had stepped into the room with guns in their hands.

"Say, what is this?" he gulped.

Mary, who had just returned, squeezed between the two detectives with a paper-bag full of groceries in one arm. Her right hand went to her throat, and she screamed.

"You guys have got me wrong," complained Whitehat. "I'm from the Capitol Laundry."

"Oh, no, fellow," drawled one of the detectives, stalking over to him and clamping a pair of handcuffs round his wrists, "we've got you right."

Whitehat was taken away prisoner, and Mary flung the bag of groceries on

the table to take Judy into her arms. "Why did you scream, mummy?" asked Judy wonderingly.

That afternoon Fats and Fancyface went to Farra's pent-house with the news that Whitehat had been arrested in the act of trying to kidnap Eddie's children, and Farra lost his customary suavity and used quite a lot of bad language.

"Now you get this straight," he said, after he had calmed down. "Up to now you mugs have drawn blanks, but this time you've got to put that guy out of the way."

"But not where you say, boss," objected Fats. "It ain't so easy. Now up where he lives it'd be a pip."

"Yeah," chimed in Fancyface, "why don't you let us finish him off up there, Mr. Farra? You don't want no slips-ups?"

"No, I don't want no slips-ups," raged Farra, "and there ain't gonna be no slips-ups. It'll be where I said, when I said, and you'll do it like I said. Now I ain't askin' you to go to the City Hall and bring me the mayor—I want one guy taken care of so that two hundred saps will get the idea. If he gets in there and starts whooping it up with those dopes who know plenty they'll forget being scared, and the next thing you'll be doin' is sitting on the hot-seat. Now get out of here—and put new rubber in your sling shots!"

Next morning in the Hall of Justice, the District Attorney appeared before the members of the Grand Jury and addressed them in impassioned tones.

"These men against whom I hope you'll bring indictments," he said, "are loan sharks. Now the loan-shark racket is the best organised, the most profitable, and unquestionably the most vicious of all rackets. It finds its victims among workers in shops, offices, factories—men and women who work hard for small wages, people who spend their lives on the fringe of actual want."

"It is amongst such people as these that your loan-shark steers operate, and obviously it is difficult to find witnesses against such criminals because they are frightened. But I've found one man—one man—who is brave enough to tell the truth. From the day I first talked to him I've had him continuously guarded, but in spite of that he feels that in coming here he is risking his life. And, gentlemen, he is right. Until these criminals are wiped out no witness against the loan-shark racket is out of danger."

One of the members of the jury, an elderly and dignified-looking man in horn-rimmed spectacles, seemed the least impressed.

"Then your office has been able to find only one witness, Mr. Curtis?" he said dryly.

"My office, which has never relaxed in its efforts to catch these criminals," responded the District Attorney warmly, "has subpoenaed many known victims. They are downstairs now, and I am hoping they will follow the example of this one man. I am hoping that within two hours the first of many witnesses against the loan-shark racket will testify before you."

Eddie at that moment was saying good-bye to Mary and the children, and Gregg and Martin were waiting for him.

"Eddie," said Mary, "you're shaking."

"Yeah," he admitted. "I've got a little stage fright. I never spoke a piece before. Good-bye, darling. I'll see you later."

He went out with the two detectives to the squad car in the road, and a member of Farra's gang immediately dived into a public telephone-box and rang up Fats. Gregg flipped a hand to two colleagues who were on guard outside the cabin, then followed Eddie and Martin into the car.

A policeman in uniform was at the wheel, and the car shot off towards the city.

"That's a couple o' swell kids you've got," remarked Gregg, who was sitting on Eddie's left.

"They sure are, Eddie," confirmed Martin on the other side of him.

"You think so?" The proud parent produced a number of rather worn snapshots from his breast pocket. "I got some pictures here of them," he said. "They're a little out of focus, but they're kinda cute. Look, the little girl—the little boy."

Gregg looked out through the window on his side of the car, and Martin looked out through the window on his side.

The End of a Racket

IN a spacious ante-chamber of the Grand Jury on the second floor of the Hall of Justice nearly two hundred victims of Farra's racket had been assembled, and most of them were standing because there wasn't room for half of them to sit down. Almost as many women as men were there, and they all looked very ill-at-ease.

The District Attorney spoke to them. "In a few minutes," he said, "there's a man coming in here to talk to you. His name is Edward Lang, and he is a victim of the loan sharks like yourselves. He is going before the Grand Jury this afternoon, but first I want him to talk to you because he's got a different slant on this whole business."

"He can talk his head off," growled a tubby little man, "but I'm not going to say a word. It isn't healthy."

"Me, either," averred another victim.

"All I ask of you," said Curtis, "is that you listen to what Lang has to say."

A black sedan was standing outside the Hall of Justice when the squad car containing Eddie reached the building. Fancyface was at the wheel of the sedan and Fats was beside him, peering out of the window with an automatic in his hand.

"All right," said Fats, "there he is."

Eddie alighted and walked towards the steps between Gregg and Martin, and he was on the third step when the automatic blazed twice. He collapsed with a groan and rolled down on to the pavement on his back, while horrified pedestrians stopped to stare and the two detectives whirled round and whipped out their guns.

The black sedan shot off up Centre Street; police whistles sounded shrilly, and the District Attorney rushed out from the building. Eddie was lifted up and carried into a room and the police surgeon was summoned. Within a very few minutes a dispatcher in the radio transmitter room at police headquarters was sending out a wireless message to all patrol cars in the city.

"Man shot on Hall of Justice steps. Be on the look-out for black sedan last seen speeding north on Centre Street."

The black sedan, avoiding other vehicles by inches, careered out of Centre Street into Fourth Avenue, reached Union Square and beat the traffic lights across it. But patrol cars were converging upon Fourth Avenue from east and west in the region of

Madison Square, and Fats became aware of two that were following.

"Cops behind us!" he shouted. "Step on it! In front of the Hall of Justice at noon. Farra's crazy!"

Fancyface drove madly on along the avenue, but the black sedan had been seen and police sirens were shrieking. At East Twenty-third Street all traffic had been stopped and patrol cars formed a solid barrier across the roadway. Fancyface looked back, saw that he and Fats were in a trap, and jammed on the brakes and the black sedan skidded on locked wheels into the barrier, and was instantly surrounded by police officers with drawn guns.

A crowd gathered, but was driven back; the doors of the sedan were opened.

"Come on out, you mugs!" commanded an armed sergeant.

Eddie had been shot in the back, just below the right shoulder-blade and in the upper part of the right arm. The police surgeon wanted to get him off to hospital immediately, but Eddie was conscious and determined. He was coughing blood and believed that he was on the point of death, yet he insisted upon being carried to a couch in the ante-room where the victims of the loan-shark racket were assembled.

The surgeon sat beside him, feeling his pulse as he lay back against a cushion coughing and gasping for breath; the District Attorney knelt near his head, filled with admiration for his grit, and nearly two hundred men and women stared at him agast.

Somehow he managed to turn in their direction and to speak, though speech was an agony.

"As long as there's only one of us," he panted, "they can scare him quiet. They can shoot one of us."

He coughed into a handkerchief that Curtis held for him, and several of the women present burst into tears.

"I got a wife and two kids, see?" he went on after a while. "I was twenty-eight a couple o' months back. Right now I can't let myself think that maybe to-morrow I won't be alive. I don't want to die, but I hate those crooks, so I—I figured that I ought to have a right to ask this much of you. Don't—let—me—die—for nothing."

The effort had been too much. A fit of coughing seized him and his head fell back, blood trickling from his mouth. Bill Seaver, who was present, cried out:

"I'll testify, Mr. Curtis!"

"So will I!" shouted another man.

"I'll talk!" shrieked a woman; and then, all of a sudden, every one of the victims became eager to give evidence.

Bill Seaver squeezed his way through the crowd to the couch with tears streaming down his face.

"You won't die, Eddie," he said brokenly. "You'll be all right—and we'll smash those rats out o' business!"

At police headquarters, Fats and Fancyface were questioned by Captain Hall after some of his men had put them through the third degree, and because they believed they were doomed for the electric chair on a charge of murdering Eddie they told everything.

Farra was arrested in his pent-house and brought down to headquarters. He faced the two prisoners brazenly enough, smoking a cigar, and he turned to Captain Hall with an air of injured innocence.

"These guys are crazy," he said. "I've never seen either of them before."

"Never seen us before?" bellowed Fats. "Why, we were his boys! He's the big shot—he's our boss! You can't take a powder now, Farra—you're in this thing, too, right up to your neck!"

"That's right," confirmed Fancyface savagely. "He said we were to hang around the Hall of Justice at noon, and when the sucker showed his face we was to plug him. He told us to kill him!"

Captain Hall's massive face beamed with satisfaction.

"Now that you've told your story," he said quietly, "I know you'll be glad to hear that the man you shot is still alive."

"How d'you like that?" Farra, in his utter disgust, betrayed himself. "These stupid lugs can't even shoot straight!"

The Grand Jury indicted Farra, the other members of his gang were arrested and imprisoned, and the trial was expedited. The loan-shark racket was smashed completely, and those concerned in it were sentenced to varying terms of penal servitude.

A month after Eddie had been swept off in an ambulance from the Hall of Justice to the Bellevue Hospital, he was able to sit up in bed and was well on the way to recovery. Mary visited him one afternoon to find him in quite a state of excitement.

"Hallo, darling!" he cried, and fished a letter from under his pillow. "Look at this!"

Mary kissed him and read the letter. It was from the District Attorney, and it ran:

"Hurry up and get well, Eddie, your job is waiting for you."

"He's kind of a nice fellow, eh?" suggested Eddie.

"I'll say he is!" She tucked the letter back under the pillow and slipped a soft arm round his neck. "Gee, Eddie, the doctor told me you were better, but I had to see for myself."

"You think you're smarter than the doctor, eh?" jeered Eddie.

"Sure," she nodded. "The doctor hasn't been married to you for over seven years. Oh, Eddie, I've been so scared!"

"Yeah I was scared, too," he confessed. "I was scared I'd never hold you in my arms again, or see the kids. Then I remembered that old crack—you know, the one about 'only the good die young.'"

She pressed her cheek against his and kissed him, and she said softly:

"Oh, Eddie, you silly fool!"

(By permission of Columbia Pictures Corporation, Ltd., starring Chester Morris, with Helen Mack and Leo Carrillo.)

August 21st, 1937.

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"OUR FIGHTING NAVY"—

Captain Markham, Robert Douglas; *Lieutenant Bill Armstrong*, Richard Cromwell; *Pamela Brent*, Hazel Terry; *Mr. Brent*, H. B. Warner; *President*, Noah Beery; *De Costa*, Esme Percy; *Admiral*, Frederick Culley; *Enrique*, Henry Victor.

"I PROMISE TO PAY"—Eddie

Lang, Chester Morris; *Richard Farra*, Leo Carrillo; *Mary Lang*, Helen Mack; *District Attorney Curtis*, Thomas Mitchell; *Captain Hall*, Thurston Hall; *Al Anslie*, John Gallaudet; *Judy Lang*, Patsy O'Connor; *Bernard George Wilson*, Wallis Clark; *Bill Seaver*, James Flavin; *Mike Reardon*, Edward Keane; *Fats*, Harry Woods; *Fancyface*, Henry Brandon; *Whitehat*, Marc Lawrence.



All letters to the Editor should be addressed to **BOY'S CINEMA**, Room 199, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Hollywood Rebel

Zasu Pitts has gone on strike. The owner of the fluttering hands and quavering voice has rebelled against collecting so many salary cheques.

Most screen personalities think they are busy if they make four or five pictures a year. Zasu has played as many as 35 rôles in twelve months. That means starting a new picture every ten days, with no rest in between. So Zasu has decided to accept only a few important rôles a year, say a dozen or so.

Zasu inaugurated her new policy by taking six weeks to complete her rôle in Walter Wanger's "52nd Street," in which she is featured with Ian Hunter, Pat Paterson, Leo Carrillo, and Kenny Baker. This will introduce Zasu in a new guise as singer and dancer.

Zasu's earliest ambition was to be a sweet girl heroine. Hollywood insisted that comedy was her forte. About fifteen years ago her talents as a serious actress were discovered, notably in "Greed." But it was too late. The public demanded her for laughs. She sighed, accepted the verdict, and watched her salary soar.

Although only 37, Zasu has appeared in more than 1,000 pictures. She cannot recall the titles of scores of them. For her first week's work in the studios she was paid £2 10s. Studios now clamour for her services at a three-figure salary. And still her admirers write that they don't see enough of her on the screen!

One of Hollywood's Strangest Sights

The sun over Hollywood recently looked down on one of the strangest sights since Samson went cavorting about with the jawbone of an ass. It was a collection of every trick horse, cat, parrot, owl, turkey, sheep, and duck, along with its owner, available in the film city.

This odd assemblage went to the Paramount studio in response to a call by Director Rouben Mamoulian, who needed the animals, not for a scene of the Ark, but to portray a period of life in Pennsylvania when the oil industry was first spawned in the last century.

It is part of the Irene Dunne starring vehicle, "High, Wide and Handsome," with Randolph Scott and Dorothy Lamour.

Mamoulian's call revealed that there were exactly 12 trick cats in Hollywood, 77 trained horses, an indeterminate number of sheep, seven parrots, 11 ducks, one turkey and one owl. The round-up was conducted by Russel

Pierce, of the studio property department, who found his job complicated by the fact that he had to bring in the owners as well as the animals and birds. This was done so that the said owners and not the studio would be responsible for their safety while working.

The necessity for trained animals resulted from the fact that they had to "stay put" or make certain noises, as the case might be. An unruly animal could have held up production for hours.

One of the horses had a particularly difficult rôle, but carried it off with aplomb. William Frawley was asleep in some hay, when the horse, on cue, walked up, and with his head shoved aside enough hay so that he could awaken the comedian with several licks on the face with his rough tongue!

"High, Wide and Handsome," which is one of Paramount's biggest pictures of the year, is a spectacular musical romance, with melodies composed by Jerome Kern.

Tough Guys!

Because of the physical risks he undertakes in his own special brand of leading-man rôles, Brian Donlevy, 20th Century-Fox star, has been elected a member in the Suicide Club, the exclusive organisation of Hollywood film-stunt men.

The executive committee, comprising Harvey Parry, Duke Green, Gordon Carveth and Allan Pomeroy, took time out during fight scenes with Donlevy in "Born Reckless" to induct him into the group.

Members of the Suicide Club all risk their lives hundreds of times yearly in creating screen thrills. Donlevy was told his ten-day stay in the hospital as the result of a fight injury in "Born Reckless" would be counted as the first step in his initiation.

Near His Work

Moore Marriott, the well-known British character actor who has an important rôle in "The Fatal Hour," the new Paramount film recently completed at Pinewood, is a film actor who is followed about by film studios!

Moore—whom everybody calls George—used to live at Edgware because it was handy for the film studios at Elstree. When the big fire at Elstree occurred, Moore decided to move, so he sold his place and built himself a new house in Buckinghamshire. No sooner had he moved in than it was announced that new studios were to be built at Pine-

wood—a stone's throw away. Shortly after, twenty-four film companies took over accommodation in the neighbourhood.

It must be fate—or perhaps merely foresight.

All For Art!

Going under a shower-bath of flying glass five times in one day, Loretta Young again proved herself one of Hollywood's pluckiest actresses:

For a scene in "Love under Fire," which is before the camera at 20th Century-Fox, she and Don Ameche were required by the script to fall of their hands and knees as an expert marksman shot out several window panes with a machine-gun.

Since they were within two feet of the windows, the shattering glass covered both of them for the five "takes" that were necessary. Miss Young was cut about the neck and arms, Ameche escaped without a scratch.

Goldwyn's £10,000 Make-up Bill

Because the Chinese of the 13th century were nearly all big men of six feet or taller, Samuel Goldwyn has found it necessary to spend £10,000 more than he intended on his new picture, "The Adventures of Marco Polo."

This bill will be for make-up alone, as on some days 40 to 50 extra make-up men will be required. Explanation is that most modern Chinese are small, so Goldwyn is able to use only a few of the Chinese actors in Hollywood as atmosphere players. Deficiency will be made up with hefty Russians and Mexicans of Mongolian countenance who will be transformed into authentic-looking 13th century Chinese by the artifice of the make-up department.

Costumes also are expensive. Every one of the hundreds of costumes to be worn in the film have been made at the studio. The biggest job was the making of chain mail for a thousand soldiers to wear in fighting scenes. Copies of rare prints from the Peking museum were loaned to the studio, and six months were spent in research. The total cost of the costumes is estimated at £30,000. In addition to this Goldwyn is spending £8,000 for saddles, bridles and harness, all of which had to be specially made.

Under construction for the past month is the picture's biggest set, a replica of a section of the Great Wall of China and the west gates of Peking. The wall section is 100 feet high and 200 yards long. The gates are 80 feet high with towers more than 100 feet high. This one set added £10,000 to the production costs.

"The Adventures of Marco Polo," marks the return to the Goldwyn studio of Gary Cooper, who first won recognition three eleven years ago in "The Winning of Barbara Worth." Other members of the cast include Sigrid Gurie, a screen newcomer from Norway, Basil Rathbone, Ernest Truex and George Barbier.

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BOY'S CINEMA

No. 929. EVERY TUESDAY October 2nd, 1937.

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Complete in This Issue!

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"The Crime Nobody Saw"

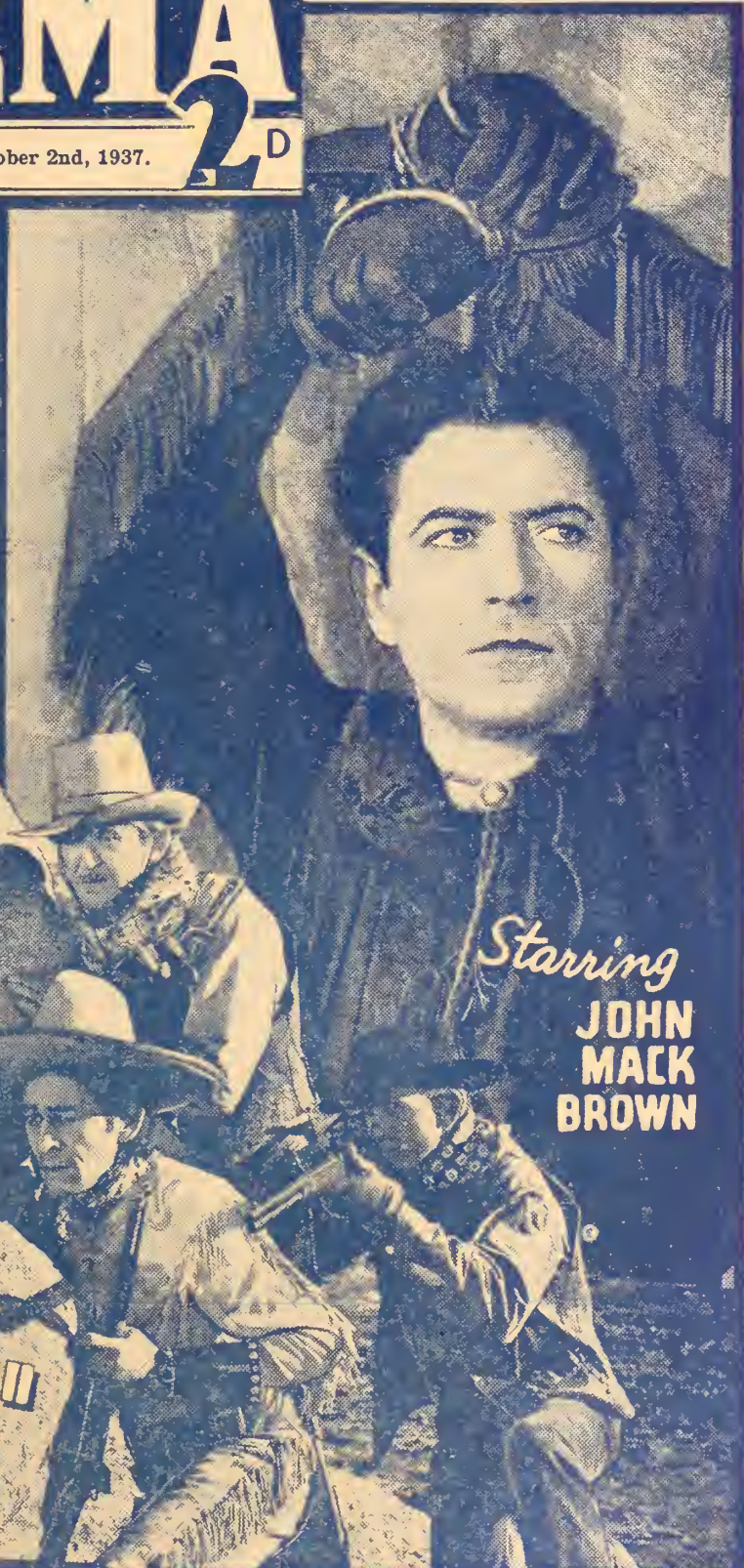
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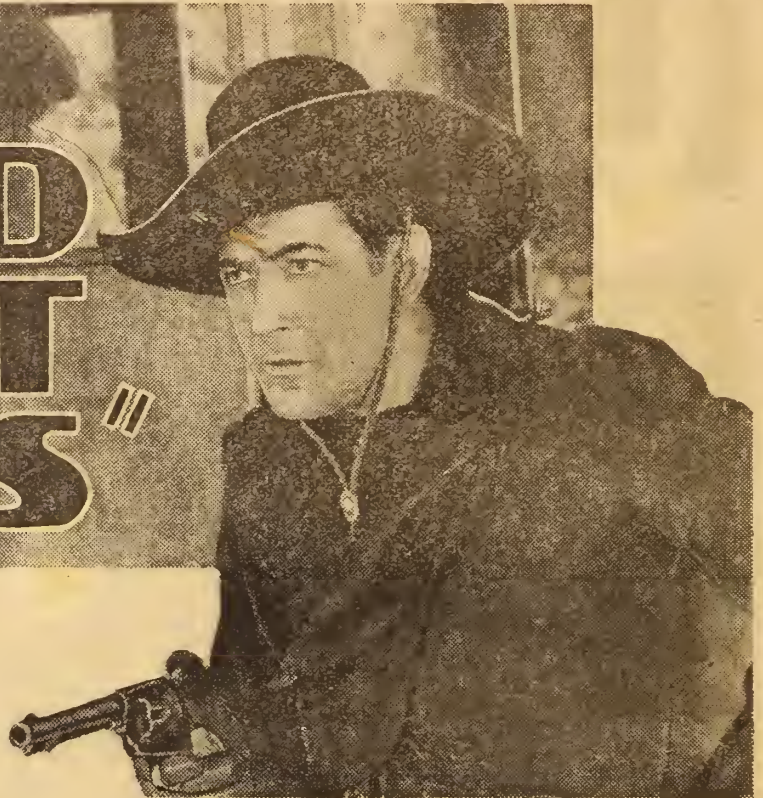


Into the bad lands of Arizona rode four staunch comrades of the Range, destined to match their wits and their prowess against an organisation of criminals who stopped at nothing to gain their own ends. A smashing serial drama of high adventure among renegades and Redskins beyond the Rio Grande, starring John Mack Brown

WILD WEST DAYS

EPISODE 1—

"Death Rides the Range"



A Brush with the Indians

THEY came riding through the foothills on the edge of the Gila Desert, with the scent of sage in their nostrils and the blistering Arizona sun striking against their backs. There were four of them—toughened, weather-beaten sons of the saddle bred on the banks of the Rio Grande in New Mexico, though they were far from their stamping-ground now.

The first member of the quartet was a handsome, six-foot American of twenty-five, square in the shoulder, deep in the chest, with sober features that could break readily into geniality. He was Kentucky Wade, bearing that nickname not because he hailed from the State in question, but because his parents had both been reared there before him.

Close behind Kentucky Wade was Trigger Benton, a long, lean fellow with a face burned to the hue and texture of leather, and the rear was brought up by Dude Hanford and Mike Morales, the former being a clean-cut buckaroo who was the youngest of the party, and the latter a bronze-skinned Mexican with flashing teeth and an inexpressible twinkle in his dark eyes.

The four of them were fast friends of long standing, and back home on the Rio Grande each had learned to throw a gun in the interests of law and order. At the moment, however, none of them had a thought for the six-shooters they were wearing on their hips. Kentucky, Trigger Benton and Dude Hanford held between their fingers nothing more ominous than the reins of their ponies, and Mike Morales nothing more sinister than a guitar on which he was strumming the refrain of a cow-camp ballad.

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He was acting as accompanist to Dude, who was rendering the song in a good, sonorous voice, and it was to the strains of the melody that the four comrades suddenly debouched from a pass in the hills and found themselves confronted by an expanse of rolling prairie. Then, as Dude and Mike Morales brought their ballad to a close, Kentucky Wade spoke in the slow-drawing accents of the south-west.

"Seems as if we should have come to some signs of civilisation before now," he observed.

"Yeah," Trigger Benton grunted. "Four days of hard ridin' without seein' a ranch-house. It don't seem possible."

A frown gathered upon his leathery forehead, and he was about to make some further comment when Mike Morales gave vent to an exclamation and held up his hand with a flourish characteristic of him.

"Lees'n!" he ejaculated. "Eet sounds to me like I hear wagon wheels."

There were no sharper ears west of the Rio Grande than this dapper Mexican's; and sure enough, within a few seconds of his uttering those words the head of a column of prairie schooners came winding up from a ragged arroyo that crossed the plain.

The four friends had paused, and they watched the long line of wagons lumber into full view. Then Kentucky Wade spoke again, an expression of perplexity on his good-looking countenance.

"They look like settlers to me," he said, "but they're pulling out of the same country we're making for, and immigrants don't usually travel east."

And then he checked, for at that instant he beheld a cloud of horsemen

assembling on a ridge away beyond the toiling wagon-train—half-nude horsemen painted and befeathered, mounted on shaggy mustangs, flourishing bows and rifles and tomahawks, the last-named weapons glinting wickedly in the sun.

"Indians!" Kentucky jerked. It was in the days when the West was young, an empire into which pioneering white men had only begun to filter during the past twenty or thirty years, and a band of marauding Redskins was no uncommon sight. Yet after four days in the wilderness—four days in the course of which they had not encountered a living soul—Kentucky and his companions were so startled by the sudden appearance of those savages that for a brief interval they made no move.

While the wayfarers from New Mexico sat motionless in their saddles the Indians mustered swiftly upon the ridge. Meantime the intended victims of the war-band had sighted the foe, and were hurriedly circling the wagons to form a corral, but the barrage of prairie schooners was by no means complete when the Redskins surged to the attack with demonic cries.

The familiar, blood-curdling death-yell of the Indian braves reached the ears of Kentucky Wade and his three comrades, and soon the remote but piercing clamour of those shrill voices was punctuated by the blatter of gunfire—the antique muskets of the Redskins being answered by desultory volleys from rifles and revolvers of a more up-to-date pattern.

On rushed the fiendish warriors of the prairie, and, though they were some distance from the scene of the action, Kentucky and his colleagues could have

fanced that they heard the swelling thunder of the Indian charge. But the foremost braves were not yet within bowshot of the wagons when Kentucky turned to address his three pardners.

"We can get within a hundred yards of the schooners by takin' that draw," he said tersely, indicating a dry gully that ran across from the spot where they had halted to the arroyo whence the settlers had issued a minute or two previously. "Come on, boys!"

Trigger, Dude and Mike Morales could not guess what was in his mind. But he was their accepted leader, and without question or hesitation they followed him at a gallop as he dipped down into the gully. Thus in the space of a few seconds they were reasonably close to the locale of the wagon-coral, and, flinging themselves from their brones, they scrambled up the slope of a sharp embankment with their forty-fives in their hands.

Gaining the summit of the acclivity they obtained a clear impression of the fight that was now being waged. There stood the coral of wagons, with too many gaps in the roughly formed circle; and there were the howling Redskins—rounding the barricades now in break-neck style, enfolding the defenders with musketry and arrows, and making sudden dashes that threatened to carry them within the ring of prairie schooners.

"Looks like they're gonna break through any second," Dude Hanford rapped out. "If they do, it will be all up with the whites. What's your play, Kentucky?"

"Spread out and start firing," was the laconic reply. "Make it look like there's a whole crowd of us."

He flung himself down amid the scrub that fringed the edge of the gully, and the others imitated his example, Dude selecting a vantage point a little to Kentucky's left, Trigger and Mike

deploying to the right. And an instant later four Colts were belching death at the Indians from an unexpected quarter.

The Redskins speedily became aware that they were being attacked by a party of newcomers, and, the first half-dozen shots from the gully unhorsing five of the braves, the remainder of the savages wavered uncertainly. Then all at once they broke formation and began to ride off in the direction of the ridge where they had first appeared.

The guns of Kentucky and his friends helped to accelerate the retreat of the warriors, who were almost out of range when the four white men remounted their brones and spurred towards the wagon-coral.

A few seconds later the quartet were within the ring of prairie schooners, by which time the Indians had realised how meagre were the reinforcements that had come to the aid of the settlers. But, though the Redskins wheeled to launch a second onset, the defenders were able to close up the coral of wagons before the enemy could draw near once more.

The combat was renewed, the Indian braves making furious attempts to break through the circle of schooners. Now, however, the improvised barricade was well-nigh impregnable, and the withering blasts of gunfire that challenged the warriors took heavy toll, so that in less than five minutes the savages were again retiring.

This time they did not rally, but vanished over the crest of the ridge, leaving half their number dead or dying on the plain. As for the settlers, they had sustained only a handful of casualties, and it was while these were receiving attention that Kentucky Wade and his friends were approached by an elderly man who seemed to be the leader of the wagon-train.

"Well," this individual declared, "I reckon we won't have no more trouble

with that partic'lar band of varmints, but they might've had our scalps if you fellers hadn't provided us with a chance of tightenin' up our defences. If you happen to be goin' our way, we'd be glad to have you trail along with us."

It was Kentucky who answered him.

"Thanks, old-timer," he said, "but we're heading west for a locale known as Paradise Valley. Maybe you can direct us there."

A frown seemed to gather upon the other man's brow, and he looked at Kentucky solemnly.

"Our wagon tracks will lead you right into Paradise Valley," he murmured, "but I wouldn't advise any friend of mine to go there."

"Why not?" Kentucky asked. "Indians?"

"The Indians are bad," the old fellow conceded. "But the whites in that district are worse than the Indians ever dared to be. That's why all these people here are pulling out and going back home to the east."

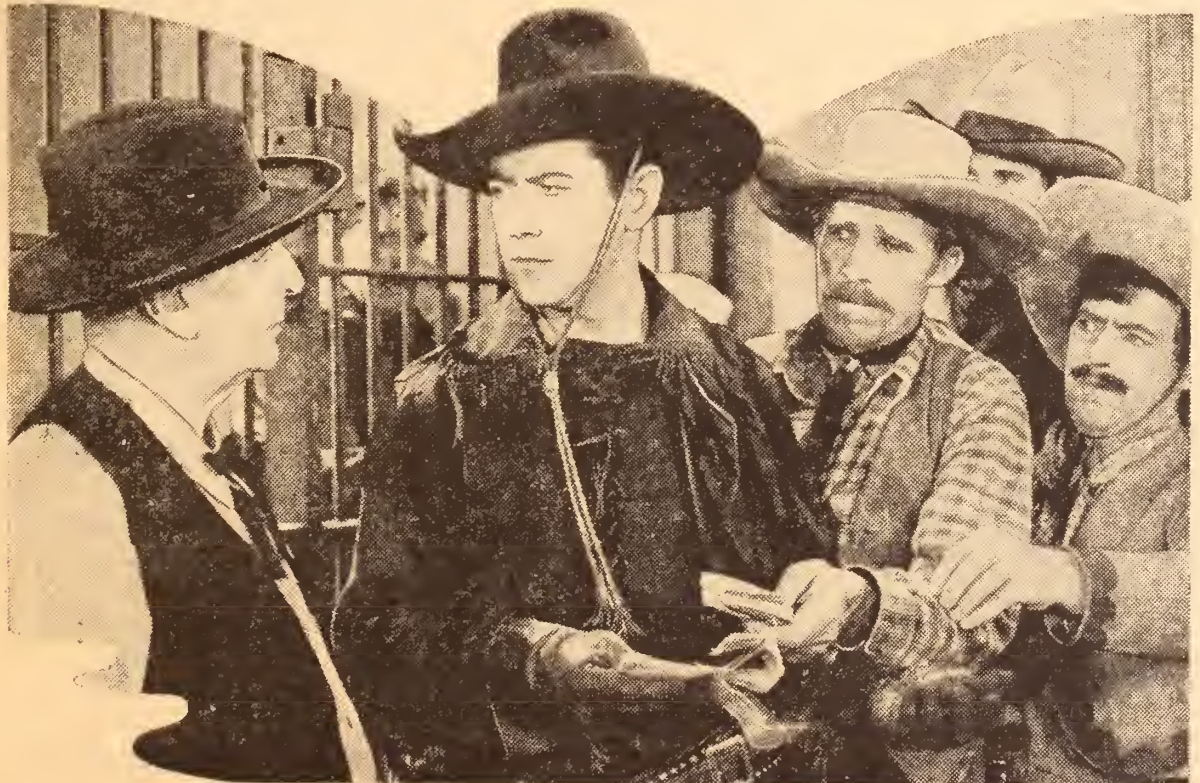
Kentucky Wade exchanged a glance with Trigger Benton, Dude Hanford and Mike Morales. Then he turned to the wagon-boss again.

"Do you happen to know a rancher in Paradise Valley by the name of Larry Munro?" he inquired.

"Larry Munro? Why, sure—he's one of the few decent men left there. I tried to persuade him to move out with the rest of us, but he wouldn't quit."

"No, Larry wouldn't," Kentucky mused. "Well, he's the man my friends and I want to see, and I'd be mighty obliged to you if you'd tell us exactly where his ranch lies."

The wagon-boss described the route to the Munro outfit, and, thanking him for the information, Kentucky and his comrades prepared to resume their westward journey. But prior to their departure the old man made a further effort to dissuade them from their project.



"There ought to be enough cash here to guarantee Larry's appearance on this trumped-up murder charge," Kentucky declared. "Now where will we find Judge Lawrence?"

"Why don't you turn back and ride with us?" he counselled. "I'm warnin' you that if you go into Paradise Valley—especially as friends of Larry Munro—you may never come out alive."

"I'm afraid that's a chance we've got to take," was Kentucky's reply, and a moment afterwards he and Trigger Benton were cantering out of the wagon-coral with Dude Hanford and Mike Morales.

They left to the accompaniment of shouts of farewell from the settlers whom they had encountered, and a little while later a fold in the landscape had hidden these from their view. Then, mindful of the directions they had received from the wagon-boss, they pushed on into a verdant expanse of country that was vastly different from the barren wastes they had crossed during the few preceding days.

It was in the early afternoon that they sighted a trim ranch-house ahead of them, and, judging it to be their destination, they made straight for it.

Even as they dismounted a girl emerged from the front door of the building. She was a stranger to the four callers, but they remembered that Larry had often spoken to them in the past of his sister, and when he had elected to set up as a rancher in Arizona he had told them that she had written to him, offering to give up a position as teacher at a school in Santa Fé, and keep house for him in his new venture.

Looking at her now, they saw that she was singularly attractive, with dark hair and dark eyes, a mouth as red as a rose, and the slender, supple figure of a girl who spent a good deal of her life out of doors.

She was dressed in riding-kit, and it was unusually becoming to her. Indeed, Kentucky Wade for one was profoundly impressed by the loveliness of her, though at the same time he was aware that the expression on her features suggested hostility.

"We're looking for Larry Munro, ma'am," he said to her. "Is he here?"

"What's your business with Larry Munro?" she countered suspiciously.

Kentucky regarded her in a whimsical fashion.

"We don't rightly know, ma'am, until we talk to him," he confessed. "You see, he sent for us—said he was in some sort of trouble. My name is Wade."

"Wade!" the girl ejaculated, her manner undergoing a complete change. "Kentucky Wade! Why, I might have known it! I'm Larry's sister—Lucy Munro."

"I kind of guessed that, ma'am," Kentucky rejoined. "But, since you seem to know me by name, maybe Larry's told you about Trigger Benton here—and Dude Hanford—an' Mike Morales."

He presented each of his comrades in turn, and after smilingly acknowledging the introductions Lucy Munro turned towards a window of the ranch-house, where the newcomers now observed the figure of a cowboy who had apparently been covering them.

"It's all right, Buck," the girl sang out. "These are Larry's best friends."

She turned to Kentucky and his partners again with an apologetic air.

"I'm sorry if I seemed a little unfriendly just now," she told them.

"But Larry wasn't fooling when he wrote to you and said he was in trouble, and I thought you might be some of the men who have been trying to scare him off his land. Gee, won't he be glad to see you, though!"

Kentucky nodded.

"We'll sure be glad to see him, too, Miss Lucy," he stated. "But supposing you let him know we're here."

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"He isn't around right now," the girl answered, a hint of uneasiness in her voice. "He left for town this morning without telling me, and when you showed up I was just on the point of going there myself—because—well, because he's made a good many enemies and I'm worried about him."

Kentucky addressed her crisply.

"In that case, Miss Lucy," he announced, "I reckon we'll ride along with you."

The cowboy known as Buck had emerged from the ranch-house by this time, and Lucy Munro dispatched him to a near-by stable with instructions to saddle a pony for her. Then, when he had returned with a mount, she climbed astride the animal, whereupon Kentucky Wade and his three friends likewise swung themselves on to their broncs.

"All right, Miss Lucy," Kentucky said. "Lead the way—and maybe while we're headin' into town you'll be good enough to give us the low-down on the situation."

The girl wheeled in a westerly direction, and the four men who had travelled from New Mexico in response to her brother's communication moved after her, Mike Morales first of all handling his guitar to the cowboy named Buck and requesting him to take care of it for him.

A little while later Lucy Munro and her companions had picked up a beaten track that wound through a belt of chaparral. It was a trail which led to a township that had sprung up when Paradise Valley had first been settled by white men—a township wherein Kentucky Wade and his friends were destined to recall the ominous warning of that veteran wagon-boss who had tried to dissuade them from penetrating farther into Arizona.

Under Arrest

TO all appearance the town of Brimstone was a thriving and prosperous settlement, but woven into the very roots of its existence were elements of vice and rascality which the efforts of a conscientious sheriff and an incorruptible judge had failed to erash.

Brimstone, founded by a group of hardy pioneers, had become the stamping-ground of a sinister organisation recruited from the scum of the West—gunmen, gamblers, renegades—human vultures who had not only driven honest, law-abiding citizens from the town itself, but who had made life intolerable for many of the ranchers owning property in that fair strip of territory known as Paradise Valley.

It had been difficult to collect evidence against the scoundrels responsible for the innumerable acts of violence that had been committed in and around Brimstone. Certain clear-thinking citizens, however, had formed the conviction that the lawless elements in the town were acting under the orders of some individual, or body of individuals, who were out to obtain a strangle-hold on the entire valley.

Yet it would have surprised those self-same citizens to learn that the headquarters of Brimstone's organised criminals were located in the offices of the local news-sheet, owned and edited by Matt Keeler.

On the day that Larry Munro left his outlying ranch to ride into town, Matt Keeler might have been seen in his private sanctum with half a dozen of his cronies, chief among whom was Doc Hardy, a stoop-shouldered man in the late thirties, whose sallow countenance wore an expression of smug complacency.

Keeler himself, the highly esteemed owner and editor of the "Brimstone

News," and a supposed crusader against the vice and villainy that reigned in the town, was a tall, spare man of about forty-five. Like Hardy, he was dressed in soberly elegant clothes which gave him an air of respectability, and there was nothing about him to suggest that he was the associate of criminals, though a keen judge of character might have observed that his puritanical face possessed certain defects—the eyes being too closely set, and the thin-lipped mouth indicating a streak of cruelty in his nature.

At the moment he was engaged in quoting the final paragraph of an article which had been written by himself and which had appeared in that morning's edition of the "Brimstone News."

"And it is this paper's opinion," he was proclaiming, in a dry, nasal voice that held more than a trace of amusement, "it is this paper's opinion that when peaceful settlers are driven from their homes by organised outlaws, it is high time the people of the whole section took matters into their own hands."

The statement was greeted with laughter by the other occupants of the room, and then Doc Hardy volunteered a comment.

"Comin' from you, Matt," he said with a grin, "that editorial is a classic."

Keeler laid aside the newspaper from which he had been reading.

"It's editorials like this that have fooled Brimstone and the whole of Paradise Valley," he remarked.

"Meanwhile, on my instructions, the boys have been going about their business, and in consequence nearly all the ranchers have gone, leaving us free to take over their property."

"Yes," Doc Hardy rejoined, "and when we get Larry Munro's place the organisation will control a fifteen-mile stretch of border. It will be easy then to slip over into Mexican territory from time to time—grab the cattle that are there for the taking—and run 'em back over the line."

Another of the company raised his voice. Known as Steve Claggett, he was a big, uncouth ruffian who had earned an ugly reputation for himself as a gunman.

"It might not be so easy to get Munro's ranch," he growled. "You take it from me, that hombre will put up a fight."

"Yeah?" said Doc Hardy, rounding on him. "Well, if it's a fight he wants, I reckon you know how to handle him, Steve."

"Steve ain't the only one in this outfit that knows how to handle the likes of Munro."

The words were uttered by a lank-haired customer who was seated on Claggett's left. The son of a renegade white man and an Indian squaw, he answered to the name of Buckskin, and he had inherited the worst qualities of both the races whose mingled blood flowed in his veins.

"You're right, Buckskin," declared Keeler. "There are plenty of men in the organisation who know how to handle Munro. On my authority Steve here has already offered him a price for his land, and if Munro continues to reject that offer—well, he'll go the way of other men who—"

It was at this juncture that the owner of the "Brimstone News" was interrupted by a man lounging near the window of the room, a swarthy, bearded man of unsavoury appearance.

"Hey, there's Larry Munro now, an' I he's stoppin' at the bank. Maybe he's ready to sell out."

The other inmates of the office crowded to the window, and saw a tall, strapping young fellow of twenty-five dismounting outside a building a little way along the main street of the town. He was Larry Munro, and after tethering his pony to a hitch-rail, he walked across the threshold of the premises outside which he had halted.

Keeler turned to the man who had first espied the rancher.

"Nevada," he said, "you and Steve Claggett get over there and see what you can find out. And if Munro isn't here to strike a bargain—well, now's as good a time as any for a show-down. You understand?"

The rogue who called himself Nevada inclined his head significantly, and, accompanied by Steve Claggett, made his way from the room, and some thirty seconds later the pair of them were abreast of an alley that separated the bank from a neighbouring saloon.

Here Claggett stopped short and indicated the passage-way.

"You wait in the alley, Nevada," he muttered, "and be ready to back up any play I make."

Nevada slunk into the fissure between the bank and the saloon, and with a lurch to the gun he was wearing on his hip, Steve Claggett strolled up to the doorway of the building into which Larry Munro had vanished.

As he entered the bank he saw the young rancher standing at the counter. He was in conversation with a man named Purvis, who was not only the cashier of the establishment, but also an essayer of precious metals, and Purvis was examining a chunk of quartz that Larry Munro had apparently handed over to him.

"It's not gold rock, Larry," Claggett heard Purvis say. "I can tell you that right now."

"There's some kind of metal in that ore, though," Larry Munro affirmed. "Look at those specks in it."

Purvis glanced up at that moment, caught sight of Steve Claggett in the doorway, but without making any comment, fixed his attention on the sample of rock again. Then he shrugged his shoulders and addressed Munro once more.

"I don't think this ore is going to add a cent to the value of your land," he said, "but I'll test it if you say so."

"All right," was the reply. "I've got one or two things to do in town, and I'll drop in on you to hear the result of your assay before I leave for home."

He moved away from the counter, and, as he did so, came face to face with Claggett, who eyed him through narrowed lids.

"Hallo, Munro," Claggett greeted. "I hear you've decided to sell your ranch."

The cattleman's tanned and rugged features seemed to harden.

"You heard wrong," he announced curtly.

"Yeah? Well I think you're makin' a mistake, Munro. If I was in your place—"

"You're not in my place and you never will be!" Larry broke in, and the sting in his voice whipped a dark flush into the other's countenance.

"It sounds like you're lookin' for trouble," Claggett growled ominously.

"No, but I ain't running away from any. And you can tell your boss, whoever he is, that he and all his hired killers are not running me off my ranch the Circle D."

Steve Claggett took a step nearer to Larry Munro.

"Are you huntin' that—"

"I don't hunt, Claggett! You heard what I said, and I reckon you know

what I meant—and if you don't like the sound of it I'm ready for any move you care to make."

Claggett's fingers were within six inches of his gun, and for an instant it looked as if he meant to draw. But he happened to know that Larry Munro was reputed to be pretty quick on the trigger when the occasion demanded, and, restraining the impulse to reach for his "iron" there and then, he affected to recover his composure.

"Aw, shueks, Larry," he protested, "there's no sense in you and me havin' any trouble."

"That's up to you!" the younger man snapped, and, pushing past him strode out of the bank.

He had scarcely departed when Claggett exchanged a meaning glance with Purvis, and then, plucking his revolver from its holster, the gunman slipped out on to the porch.

Larry Munro was at the hitch-rail. He had his back to Claggett and was preparing to swing himself into the saddle of his horse, but, as if warned by some sixth sense, he chanced to turn his head and caught the would-be assassin in the act of lifting his forty-five to take aim at him.

With a gesture that was as swift as sleight of hand Larry whipped his own gun from its sheath, and a split-second later the weapon belched flame and lead, the bullet scoring Claggett's wrist so that he uttered a yelp of pain and dropped his revolver without discharging it.

Immediately afterwards another shot rang out. It was a shot that came from the alley where Nevada had posted himself, but it missed by an inch, and before the gangster could fire again Larry had blazed at him and drilled him through the body.

Nevada pitched to the ground, and lay there lifelessly with his face buried in the dust, and hardly had he fallen than the street, which had been empty a moment previously, became thronged with men—men who came running from all directions to learn the cause of the gunplay.

At that Steve Claggett bent down and retrieved his six-shooter. He made no attempt to level it at Larry again, however, but instead he darted to the huddled figure of Nevada and snatched up the latter's revolver, thrusting his own into the dead man's holster.

The interchange of weapons escaped the notice of Larry, and it likewise escaped the notice of the approaching groups of citizens, amongst whom was the sheriff of Brimstone, a sturdy, grey-haired officer who had served the cause of law and order faithfully, although here in Paradise Valley the dice had been heavily loaded against him.

The sheriff was the first to reach the scene of the gun-duel.

"What's happened here, Munro?" he demanded.

"Plenty," Larry answered hoily. "Claggett and that hombre Nevada tried to get me!"

"That's a lie!"

It was Claggett who shouted the words. He was still kneeling beside Nevada, with the man's forty-five in his grasp and his own gun reposing in the fallen crook's holster.

"Munro started it, sheriff!" Claggett went on. "He shot Nevada without givin' him a chance to draw! Take a look at Nevada's gun an' see for yourself!"

The sheriff moved over to him, and, stooping, tugged out the revolver that Claggett had planted in the dead man's



"Why don't you let Larry Munro out of his cell and give him back his forty-five, sheriff?" Kentucky said with clenched teeth. "If we're going to hold this mob at bay, we've got to make every bullet count, and Larry sure knows how to use a gun!"

holster. Then, after examining it, he returned to where the young rancher was standing.

"This looks bad, Larry," he said solemnly. "Nevada's gun was on his hip and it ain't been fired."

"Of course it ain't been fired!" Steve Claggett ground out. "Munro shot him down cold. I drew because he turned his iron on me after he'd rubbed out Nevada, an' he'd have finished me as well if I hadn't spoiled his aim by puttin' a bullet past his head."

Larry was staring at the forty-five which the sheriff had removed from Nevada's body, but he riveted his attention on the weapon in Claggett's possession as the rogue broke it open to reveal that it had been discharged.

"Claggett," he rasped, "you've swapped guns with your side-kick. You're tryin' to frame me. You know darn' well you came outa the bank and tried to plug me through the back. Then, when I was too quick for you, Nevada took a shot at me from the alley, an' I had to drill him in self-defence."

"A pack of lies, sheriff!" Steve Claggett expostulated, wheeling towards the representative of the law. "I was the one that had to fire in self-defence. Yeah, an' I was lucky to come outa the ruckus with nothin' worse than a blistered wrist. But poor Nevada—he didn't have a chance."

Larry turned to face the crowd of bystanders who had assembled in front of the bank.

"Say, didn't anybody see what took place?" he appealed.

There was a movement among the onlookers, and a man named Hudson thrust his way to the fore.

"Yeah, I saw the whole business," he volunteered stoutly. "I was a-sittin' in my front window across the street, and it all happened just as you—"

Hudson stopped. He had suddenly become aware that a knife was being pressed threateningly against his back. It was a knife held in the dusky fist of the half-breed known as Buckskin, who had been one of the earliest arrivals on the scene of the affray.

Hudson recalled that more than one man who had offered to testify against the ruffianly elements in Brimstone had never lived to tell his story before judge and jury, so that for their own safety honest citizens had of late closed their eyes to many a dark deed.

"Go on," urged Larry, but Hudson had lost his nerve with that dagger surreptitiously caressing his spine.

"Well, I—I was on the other side of the street," he mumbled lamely, "an' everything happened so quick that I couldn't rightly say who started it."

The sheriff spoke.

"A fine witness you'd make, Hudson," he said; and then to Larry Munro: "I'm sorry, young feller, but I'll have to lock you up pending an investigation into this affair."

He relieved the rancher of his six-gun, and, summoning a couple of deputies who had joined the crowd, gave them instructions concerning the disposal of Nevada's body, after which he marched Larry Munro in the direction of the gaol.

Outside the bank, Steve Claggett exchanged a glance with the half-breed known as Buckskin, then looked up the street towards the offices of the "Brimstone News," where the figures of Matt Keeler and Doc Hardy were distinctly visible in one of the windows.

October 2nd, 1937.

Siege

HALF an hour after Larry Munro had been confined in a cell behind the sheriff's office, four men and a girl walked into the gaol and confronted Brimstone's representative of the law.

The girl was Lucy; the men Kentucky Wade, Trigger Benton, Dude Hanford and Mike Morales; and although the sheriff looked upon Larry Munro's sister with a kindly enough eye he regarded her companions with a good deal of suspicion.

"What do you strangers want?" he demanded, observing the forty-fives that were packed on their hips. "It ain't customary to walk into my office wearin' so much hardware."

It was Kentucky who answered him.

"We've no intention of using our hardware, sheriff," he said. "We're friends of Larry Munro and his sister here, and we've just learned that Larry is under arrest—and we'd like to know the whys and wherefores, that's all."

Before the sheriff could offer any response there was a shout from the cell in which his prisoner was lodged.

"Kentucky Wade! Dude! Mike! Trigger! Why, you old scorpions! It's all right, sheriff. They used to be law officers themselves back home."

The voice was Larry's, of course, and in another moment his friends and his sister were before the bars of his cell. Then while the sheriff looked on, the prisoner gave Lucy and her companions a detailed account of the shooting affray that had occurred outside the bank.

When he had finished his story, Kentucky Wade turned to Brimstone's guardian of the peace.

"Say, couldn't we bail Larry out, sheriff?" he asked.

"You'll have to see Judge Lawrence about that," was the reply, "and it'll probably cost you a heap of money."

Kentucky produced a wad of notes and glanced at Mike, Trigger and Dude.

"Come on, boys, shell out," he said, and without hesitation his three comrades parted with all the money that they possessed, so that Kentucky was holding a considerable sum in his hands when he addressed the sheriff again.

"There ought to be enough cash here to guarantee Larry's appearance on this trumped-up murder charge," he declared. "Now where will we find Judge Lawrence?"

The sheriff looked at his watch.

"He'll most likely be over at the Silver Dollar saloon," he answered. "He generally drops in there for a quiet drink about this time of day. I'll take you to him if you like."

Leaving Lucy with her brother, Kentucky and his friends accompanied Brimstone's representative of the law from the gaol, and two or three minutes later they were seated at a table in the Silver Dollar bar-room with the aforementioned Judge Lawrence, a portly old fellow of sober mien.

The sheriff introduced them to the judge, adding that he understood they were former law officers from the State of New Mexico. Then he went on to refer to their proposal concerning the temporary release of Larry Munro, whereupon Lawrence knitted his brows.

"Granting bail to a man accused of murder is a serious business, sheriff," he muttered.

"Judge," Kentucky Wade interposed, "if you knew Larry Munro as well as I know him, nothing could convince you that he's a murderer. He claims to have shot this man Nevada in self-defence, and I'm certain in my own mind that he did."

The sheriff of Brimstone leaned for-

ward at this point and spoke to Lawrence earnestly.

"I had to arrest Munro, judge," he said. "There was no alternative. But, personally, I'd rather trust his word than that of the man who accused him. I've never been able to pin anything on Steve Claggett, but I know he's a feller who's earned himself a bad record in other parts of the country. And come to that, Nevada wasn't my idea of a peaceable citizen either."

"Then you're in favour of granting bail, sheriff?" Judge Lawrence asked.

The sheriff nodded, and at that Lawrence stood up.

"Very well," he announced. "Since you recommend it, I'll make out the necessary papers and bring them over to your office."

He left the saloon there and then. As for the sheriff and the four men who had volunteered to put up bail for Larry Munro, they also departed from the building, repairing in the direction of the gaol-house. But they had scarcely trooped out of the Silver Dollar when one of the bar-tenders in the establishment beckoned to an individual leaning against the counter.

The individual in question was none other than Matt Keeler, and as he moved across to the barman the latter spoke to him in an undertone.

"Did yuh see them strangers that was here with the sheriff an' Judge Lawrence just now?" he whispered.

"Yes, who were they, Dan?"

"I dunno," rejoined the bar-tender, obviously an agent in Keeler's pay. "But they were talkin' about Larry Munro, an' it seems Judge Lawrence is gonna let Munro out on bail."

A sinister gleam revealed itself in Matt Keeler's eyes. Then he swung round and made for the street-door of the saloon—had almost reached it when Steve Claggett, Buckskin and several more of their ilk came in over the threshold.

Keeler accosted them, and addressed them out of the corner of his mouth, repeating the information that the barman had given him, after which he went on to outline a plan of campaign.

"Claggett, you break the news to the crowd and get 'em worked up," he said. "The rest of you boys support him. If you can stage a necktie party it will be one way of finishing Munro, and his land will be ours for the taking then, for his sister should be easy to handle."

He slipped out of the saloon, to locate Doc Hardy and to await the result of the orders he had given Claggett and his cronies. Nor was it long before those orders were being put into execution, for within a few minutes of Keeler's departure Steve Claggett was loudly haranguing the patrons of the Silver Dollar bar-room.

"I tell yuh, men," he shouted, "it's about time the citizens o' this town took the law into their own hands! Can yuh wonder that Brimstone has grown ter be a hang-out for all the outlaws in the territory when a guy like Munro can shoot a man dead an' then get his friends to buy him outa the pen?"

"It's the plain, unvarnished truth I'm givin' yuh!" he continued hoarsely.

"An' Buckskin here will bear me out!" "That's right," the half-breed corroborated. "We heard Judge Lawrence agree to turn Munro loose on bail. Now are we gonna stand behind a system that will set a killer free half an hour after he's committed his crime?"

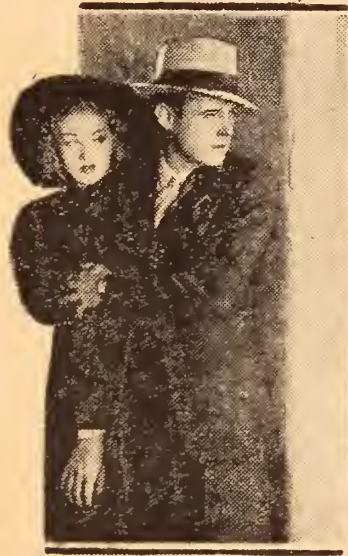
"No, no! You bet we ain't!"

The chorus was raised by those who had entered the saloon in company with Steve, Claggett and Buckskin, and by their example they inspired disaffection

(Continued on page 25)

A young doctor exposes, via radio broadcasts, a number of fraudulent patent medicines, his bitterest attack being aimed at a manufacturer of radium cures. This results in a bitter fight, in which the manufacturer tries every means to defeat the young doctor. A stirring drama, starring Robert Livingston and Grace Bradley

"LARCENY ON THE AIR"



Radium Poisoning

DR. LAWRENCE BAXTER held a bottle of tablets in his hand. His strong, young face was drawn with an angry frown.

"Kennedy Radium Products," he muttered softly. "Radium Rejuvenating Tablets. The miraculous twentieth-century tonic! Pal!"

A trim nurse knocked and entered. "Mr. MacDonald to see you, doctor," she announced; but he was so abstracted in his work that he did not hear. "Mr. MacDonald, of the Bureau of Pure Foods and Drugs, is here," she said more loudly.

"MacDonald?" he questioned. "Oh, yes; I asked the inspector to look round. Send him in, please."

A grim, stern-faced, big-shouldered man. A typical hard-bitten inspector, who stared curiously round the large laboratory.

"Howdy, Larry!" The inspector held out his hand. "Bless my soul, what are these monkeys doing here?"

"Experiments," was the laconic answer. "See that old ape?" He pointed to a cage. "Doesn't look too good, does he?"

"What disease is he suffering from?"

"It's not a disease, Mac—he's dying of a cure." He held up the bottle.

"Lying from taking Kennedy's rejuvenating tablets. That's the result of a three months' course of treatment."

"Well, you know what radium is good for—you know what harm it can do. Why kill a poor monkey?"

"This old fellow was suffering from old age, and he hadn't long to live, anyhow," Larry explained. "I've been

doing a good many experiments for your department, and I was not very keen on these tablets, so I tried them out on Sam. We want to stop Kennedy from killing humans. We've got to awaken people to their danger."

The detective nodded. "I've known for some while this stuff was dangerous," he stated.

"Then why don't you do something about it? There is a law—"

MacDonald interrupted with a bar-lr laugh. "Do you think Kennedy doesn't know the law?" He picked up the bottle from a table. "Look at his label. There isn't a definite claim on it. Suggested as a treatment for various complaints, and he also says it contains radium. Well, does it?"

"Yes." "That's all the law cares about."

"But, Mac, this man has to be stopped. He's a potential murderer."

"Your broadcasts are doing a lot of good," replied the inspector.

"But that is not enough," argued Larry. "We have to get to him. Why not get him into your office and I'll try to scare him?"

"Okay; but mind how you step. Kennedy knows all the answers."

In MacDonald's office the next day there was a meeting. Kennedy was a grey-haired, handsome man, with a hearty manner and friendly handshake. The inspector held out the bottle of tablets.

"This is your stuff, isn't it?" "Sure, that's one of my products," Kennedy seemed sure of himself. "So what?"

"Plenty."

"I presume, MacDonald, this is another of your warnings?"

MacDonald indicated the young doctor.

"You, no doubt, have heard Doctor Lawrence Baxter broadcast?"

"So you're the young medico who is determined to get me out of business. This is a pleasure," Kennedy said, with a beaming smile.

"Thanks," Larry answered, with a sardonic grin.

"He has something to say to you," stated MacDonald.

"I prefer to listen to him on the radio," laughed Kennedy. "I can always turn him off."

"I think you'll listen to this, Kennedy," tensely spoke the doctor. "I've been declaring over the air that this rejuvenator of yours is just the opposite—it's a destroyer of health. Maybe you'll stop smiling when I tell you that I have positive proof of what I'm saying."

"You amaze me, Doctor Baxter."

"That stuff caused a death."

"A death?" Kennedy questioned.

For the first time he seemed a trifle perturbed. "For the past three months I've been feeding it to a chimpanzee—it died last night."

Kennedy roared with laughter.

"A monkey!" he gasped at once. "I thought by the way you talked it might be a near relative." The smile vanished and he became serious. "But all joking aside, My medicine is grand stuff, and I'm strictly within the law."

"If it can kill a monkey it can kill a human."

"My dear Doctor Baxter, this remedy brings in a thousand testimonials a month," bragged Kennedy. "What do you say to that?"

"Do you think I don't know how testimonials are bought?"

"My dear boy, I assure you they were genuine, unsolicited, and many of them were accompanied by photographs." He took up his hat from the desk. "The next time you think you have to warn me—do so by telephone, as my time's valuable."

"Just a moment, Kennedy." MacDonald barred his way. "From now on your production is under suspicion. We'll appeal to every reputable drug firm to shut off your supply of radium."

"That doesn't worry me in the least. Good day, gentlemen."

"That rotten, low-down—" muttered Larry, when the door had closed.

"Now take it easy," begged the inspector. "What he says is right. The law has no teeth. There's nothing we can do."

"No, nothing we can do." Larry hesitated. "Unless, against his thousand phony testimonials we can find one—one person who's been hurt by taking his cure-all. Then we could get him."

An Advanced Case

KENNEDY sat in his huge room at the Radium Products factory.

Burke, one of his bodyguard, sprawled in a chair. Kennedy glanced at his watch and switched on a large wireless.

The voice of Dr. Lawrence Baxter filled the room.

"My subject to-day is Kennedy's Radium Rejuvenating Tablets. I have conducted exhaustive experiments with this dangerous drug to ascertain its harmfulness. The results of my test prove it to be a menace to the lives of the public. Mr. Kennedy is acting within the letter of the law in distributing this radium medicine—"

"He's sure asking for it," muttered Burke. "Why don't you let me take care of him?"

"Act like a grown man, Burke," grinned Kennedy.

"He's hurting our business."

"My business can hold out longer than he can."

"I am not attacking druggists and the makers of proprietary medicines in general," Larry stated in his clear tones. "I am talking about the exception. Radium Rejuvenator is the most dangerous of these. It claims to be the fountain of youth in capsule form. On the contrary, my friends, it ages you prematurely. It destroys vital organs and nerve fibres. If you have been taking any of these medicines for any length of time, and recognise the symptoms I have described, then you are a victim of radium poisoning, and I urge you to consult your physician at once."

Kennedy was no longer smiling as he switched off the wireless. He picked up a phone.

"Get my lawyer," he ordered curtly.

"I am not soliciting patients," Larry concluded his talk. "I will treat any sufferers from radium poisoning at my own expense. I intend to broadcast this appeal every time I speak over the radio."

The announcer informed Larry that Mr. Golden, the manager of the broadcasting station, wished to speak with him in his office. He walked down some corridors till he came to an ante-room. A very pretty, dark-haired girl jumped up from a lounge chair directly she saw him.

"Dr. Baxter."

October 2nd, 1937,

"Yes?"

"May I speak to you?"

"Just a moment, please," Larry smiled politely. "I'm wanted by the manager."

Mr. Golden was a thin, hairless, pallid individual.

"Dr. Baxter, I'm very sorry, but I am going to have to cancel your broadcast."

"Why?"

"Well, you see, this station is run on a commercial basis," the manager said nervously.

"Has somebody bought my time?"

"Oh, I'm so glad you understand. They offered three times the amount you were paying for a period of twenty-six weeks."

"Well, if it's just the question of a different hour—that wouldn't matter."

"I'm sorry, but that was the only available time we had."

"I see." Larry's eyes narrowed. "They really didn't want my time. They just didn't want to have any time. It wasn't a man by the name of Kennedy by any chance, was it?"

"Oh, no, doctor," the man answered much too quickly. "It's music—an Hawaiian orchestra to advertise some pineapples."

"Don't waste any more time explaining," Larry said with a hard smile. "Good-day."

Once again in the ante-room the pretty girl stopped him.

"Dr. Baxter!"

"I'm sorry I couldn't stop before. What is it?"

"I'm Jean Sterling," the girl said. "I suppose you've heard of my father, Professor Rexford Sterling."

"Yes—yes—of course." He was impatient to be gone—to tell Mac of Kennedy's latest trick.

"His work is somewhat similar to yours. He's publishing this monthly bulletin."

Larry hardly glanced at the paper which she gave him.

"All right, I'll take it for a year."

"Dr. Baxter, I'm not canvassing for new readers. My father would like to talk to you. In fact, he would like to sponsor you over a large station, where you could reach a greater audience. A daily programme, Dr. Baxter."

Now Larry sat up and took notice. This was a gift from the gods in a time of need.

"When can I see him?"

"Why not now?"

"It would suit me splendidly," agreed Larry, and followed the girl from the ante-room down to the entrance, where he helped her into his powerful two-seater car. A short ride took them to an imposing building that Larry knew had only been erected a few months before. A lift shot them to the top floor. The offices of "YOUR GOOD HEALTH" seemed very well fitted out, though the huge outer room only had one clerk, who was yawning over a racing paper.

"Hallo, Jimmy! Dad in?"

"Yes, Miss Sterling."

They entered a large room, where at a huge desk sat a round, bald-headed, learned-looking man. He was surrounded by phones and documents.

"Hallo, Dad. I've brought Dr. Baxter."

The fat man jumped up from his seat and held out a large hand.

"This is an honour, doctor," he cried enthusiastically. "I have the greatest admiration for your work."

The door into the outer office Jean had left open, and when Jimmy heard the name of Dr. Baxter, he put away his paper. He pressed a button that

made his phone ring. He spoke loudly.

"Yes, this is the office of 'Your Good Health.'" Pause. "What? Certainly not!" Another pause. "There isn't enough money in the United States Treasury to make us stop. You can't buy us. The analysis is going to be printed as it is. Good-day."

"Shut the door, Jean," said Professor Sterling. "Sit down, Dr. Baxter. I expect you can guess what my clerk was talking about. You've probably had the same sort of experience yourself."

"Very often," answered Larry. "Bribes, and when they fail—threats."

"That's inevitable when you tread on the toes of profit-makers on behalf of the defenceless, as you are doing. Your broadcasts have made a deep impression on me."

"Thank you, professor."

"I asked you to come here to-day to see if we couldn't join forces." The professor looked keenly at his visitor.

"Would you be interested?"

"What have you in mind, sir?"

"An hour on the air, sponsored by my magazine."

"Do you mean this?" gasped Larry, scarce crediting his good fortune.

"Of course he does," spoke Jean.

"That's why I came to the station."

"Well, I can't say how grateful I am," Larry said eagerly.

"Perhaps you won't be when I discuss your fee," chuckled the professor.

"Fee be hanged," cried the doctor. "There won't be any fee. I'll do it just because I—"

"Because you believe in what you're doing?" Jean said very seriously.

"Naturally." Larry smiled from the girl to her father. "Do you mind if I use your phone? I haven't called the office in hours."

Professor Sterling gave his daughter a slight wink as Larry got through to his laboratory.

"Any news, nurse? Baxter speaking."

"There's an old man waiting to see you," reported Nurse Nelson. "He says he came in response to your radio appeal."

"Hold him there," shouted Larry. "I'll be over in about ten minutes." He lunged up and turned to the professor. "You'll excuse me, won't you? An urgent case. We can talk about the details later." He held out his hand to the girl. "Thanks a lot for coming to the station. You don't know what this means to me."

Larry hastened back to his laboratory, and he was tremendously excited directly he saw the old man. Pete Andorka was a Greek. A quaint, nervous creature, very thin, with bloodshot eyes and shaking hands. He persuaded Pete to strip, and made several tests.

"What kind of work do you do?"

"I sell newspaper—twenty-eight year sell newspaper—same corner."

"Did you ever work in a paint-shop or a watch-dial factory?"

"No."

"In a match factory?"

"No. I tell you I sell newspaper."

"All right," Larry soothed the old man with a kindly touch. "Why did you decide to buy that medicine?"

"I want to go back to old country. I not see old country in long time," was the pathetic reply.

"You wanted to look younger?"

"Yah—yah—so I buy make-you-young pills."

"How long have you been taking them?"

"Long time—maybe six months. It not make me young. It make me more

old. Make me feel like you say on radio." He touched various parts of his body. "Hurt there—hurt here. Fresh air not come through."

"I understand," Larry nodded. "All right, you may get dressed now." He walked over to his nurse and lowered his voice. "Nelson, get me a private ambulance, phone Inspector MacDonald and tell him to meet me at the hospital."

On the way Larry told Pete there was nothing to worry about. He would be looked after free of charge and would soon be well. At the hospital he met MacDonald.

"All the symptoms of an advanced case of radium poisoning."

"Will he live?"

"I can't tell yet. Mac, I'm positive he got that way from taking Kennedy's pills, but the case would be thrown out of court if Kennedy could prove that my patient ever worked anywhere near radium. Check up on him, will you, Mac?"

"You bet I will." MacDonald gave a grin of appraisal. "Keep up the good work, Larry. We'll get this skunk Kennedy before we're much older."

The Patient Spirited Away

DR. LAWRENCE BAXTER was only too pleased to talk about other patent medicines and cures during his hour's broadcast.

"Your Good Health Magazine" wishes to thank you for the countless telephone calls, letters and telegrams received in response to our first broadcast," announced Jean at the commencement of the fourth broadcast.

"To-day I am going to devote my talk to a certain radiumised cough mixture. The advertisement says that it is just the thing for ailing children. An analysis of Swain's cough remedy shows it to contain enough radium to be dangerous to a hearty man, let alone an ailing child—"

Professor Sterling was at that moment interviewing Mr. Swain in person, who was spluttering with wrath.

"I admit Dr. Baxter may be causing you hundreds of cancellations. You see, Mr. Swain, you made a terrible mistake when you advertised that physicians recommended your medicine. Now, if you were a client of ours—"

"If I do advertise you'll forget about the analysis and shut the doctor up."

"Well"—the professor touched his finger-tips together and smiled like a cat—"I think that could be arranged."

That interview cost Mr. Swain the sum of four thousand dollars.

As Larry had nothing further on Kennedy until he had kept Pete under observation, he was quite willing to talk at the next broadcast about a certain Radium Hair Restorer patented by Jason Benner. The latter succeeded in quietening the professor with three thousand dollars.

At the end of the week Larry had a general talk.

"I'm sorry that television isn't in every home to-day," he announced. "So that instead of words I could show you the untold miseries brought on by these quack products. Then you would refrain from buying them. At this moment I have a patient in the Civic Hospital. A man condemned to death because of radium poisoning. His name is Pete Andorka. He was led to believe that some capsules would restore his waning vitality. I am now going back to hospital to see him to fight for his life."

Burke and Kennedy heard the broadcast.

"This guy is ten times as dangerous as he was, now he's on the air every day," Burke cried angrily. "Lemme take care of him, will ye, chief?"

"Burke, I want you to see that he doesn't get to the hospital in the next

hour. You know the set-up, but don't get caught," rasped Kennedy.

"Leave it to me," chuckled Burke. "He won't get there in a hurry—and when he does, he'll stay there."

When Burke had gone Kennedy got in touch with Thomson, his lawyer.

As Larry was about to leave the offices of Dr. Sterling he was accosted by Jean, who begged him to take her along to the hospital. She wanted to see the patient.

"He's not a pleasant sight, Jean."

"I know, but I've had a little share in what you're doing and I'd like to help same way."

When they drove away from the building a powerful car, with Burke at the wheel, and two men in the back seats, tailed them.

Burke waited his opportunity, and it was as Larry was about to make a left-hand turn that the crook dashed up on the inside and charged the two-seater. Larry saw the danger and pushed his foot down. The crook's car, armed with powerful steel bumpers, caught the doctor's car a sideways blow. It was sufficient to topple the other car over, but not the fatal crash that Burke had planned.

Badly bruised and shaken, they were assisted by a policeman from the wreckage. The officer announced that it was a hit-and-run car that had struck them and a patrolman was trying to tail the offenders.

"That was no accident, Larry," Jean said tersely. "I reckon you made a mistake broadcasting Pete's whereabouts."

"Let's get to the hospital," Larry hailed a taxi. "I don't see how he can come to any harm—that hospital is as safe as a prison."

Thomson, the lawyer, was a smirking, shifty-eyed rascal with a plausible manner. He obtained permission to talk with Pete, who was in a private ward. Kennedy waited outside in a private ambulance.

"You should have come to us in the first place," Thomson told the not very intellectual Pete. "I handle the insurance for these remedies. Baxter



"I checked on 'em through the Federal Bureau of Investigation," stated the inspector. "A couple of grafters, and pretty slick ones."

isn't helping you. He's waiting for you to die."

"Me die?" Pete was seared. "Sure you'll die," cried the lawyer. "And he has a big case. We want to save you. We want you to live so we can give you the best doctors—many doctors, not just one doctor. We're anxious to make good. If there's been any mistake about your medicine we'll give you a thousand dollars."

"A thousand dollars!" It was a fortune to Pete. "All mine?" "Yes, and all you've got to do is sign this paper." The lawyer produced paper and pen. "Sign and you'll be taken to a good hospital."

When Larry came to the private ward and found his patient gone he got in touch with the superintendent. The latter reported that Pete Andorka had been discharged. He had paid his bill and signed his release. He had been taken away by a man who said he was his attorney.

Larry sent Jean home in a taxi whilst he rushed off to report to MacDonald, whom he had already warned by phone.

"Any luck?" he demanded, rushing into the inspector's office.

"No," was the answer. "I checked with every private ambulance and hospital in the vicinity, but I haven't given up hope yet."

"Oh, what's the use?" The young doctor sank dejectedly into a chair. "I was a first-class chump all right. I talked too much."

"You're a bigger chump than you think you are," MacDonald opened a drawer and pulled out two large cards. "Look at these."

Two pictures from the Rogues' Gallery. Though the two men were wearing convict uniform it was easy to recognise Professor Sterling and his fat clerk, Jimmy. Almost in a daze, Larry read their records.

"When you told me about 'em, I figured they were too good to be true," MacDonald said with a twisted smile. "So I checked on 'em through the Federal Bureau of Investigation. A couple of grafters, and pretty slick ones."

"And the girl?"

"Nothing on her so far."

"What's their racket this time?"

"A variation of the shakedown. You blast a patent medicine over the air, and they promise the manufacturer immunity from your attacks in return for advertising in the magazine. So simple."

Larry's smile was bitter. "I'm the prize mug."

"Well, you're lucky you found it out when you did. Another month, and you'd have been working for Kennedy himself."

Larry looked up quickly. "And that's exactly what I intend to do," he cried.

Kennedy's Trump Card

PROFESSOR STERLING shifted uncomfortably in his chair and Jimmy mopped his brow, because Jean was being difficult.

"I've known for some years that some of your dealings weren't above suspicion, but when I came back from college you got me to come into the business of editing the paper. Maybe I didn't know how contemptible we were. Well, I do now—and I'm the worst of the lot of us."

"You've done nothing, my dear." The old man tried to soothe her. "Why shouldn't we fleish some of the filthy lucre out of these crooked patent medicine manufacturers?"

"I'm not thinking about them," snapped Jean. "I brought him here, October 2nd, 1937.

didn't I? I covered you all the way, haven't I? I've lied and tricked and cheated—"

"Now, Jean, that's a bit unreasonable," argued her father. "We haven't hurt him at all. We've kept our promise and given the doc his chance on the air. We've never interfered with him."

"No, you've used him to prepare your victims," Jean glared at them with angry determination. "You're going to check out of this racket voluntarily, or I'll tell Larry the whole set-up."

"Larry, uh?" Professor Sterling gave a resigned sigh. "That young man's work means an awful lot to you, doesn't it?"

"Yes. Can't we help him and quit thinking about ourselves?"

"Is that what would make you happy?" asked the father, and when she gave a vehement nod of assent he glanced at Jimmy. "Looks as if we'll have to turn to the right."

The door opened to admit Larry, who was all smiles.

"Howdy, folks? How are you feeling, Jean, after the accident?"

"Oh, I'm fine, except for a slight cut on my knee."

"That's good news," grinned Larry. "You look a bit depressed, professor. Anything wrong?"

"Dr. Baxter, we were just discussing the—er—advisability of re-organising our activities," the professor said haltingly.

"That's good—you need to."

"I don't quite get your meaning?" the professor asked with a puzzled glance at the doctor.

Larry looked at the two men with a mocking expression.

"When I came here I thought you were all on the up-and-up, until I found out you were an outfit of petty chisellers."

The professor looked uncomfortable. "Well, doctor, a man has to live, and I don't see what wrong—"

"Forget it," interrupted Larry. "How much did you collect this week?"

"We took—" the professor began, and then looked suspiciously at Larry. "What did you say?"

"I asked how much you took this week?" The doctor spoke harshly. "You'd better tell me."

"Six thousand dollars."

"Is that all?" sneered Larry. "You're amateurs. Well, we'll change all that. In the meantime I'll take fifty per cent in cash."

"Larry!" gasped the horrified Jean. "Well?" He looked at her inquiringly.

"You don't mean that?"

"I mean that I always look a gift horse in the face, even a pretty one."

"Skip what I said, dad," Jean looked towards her father. "The little girl is on her feet again, coming up for the second round."

"Well, professor, you have my terms." Larry spoke briskly. "Reorganisation is what you want, and we'll have no more of this cheap-rate business."

"Of course not," smirked the delighted professor.

"I'm going to be in complete charge," stated the pseudo-crook. "I'll tell you who, why and when to shake down the clients. Now our first customer that we're going after is our old friend, Mr. Kennedy, and we're going after him in a big way. I think Mr. Kennedy will be ready to listen to reason by the time we get ready for him. Oh, and Jean, you can help. Just give him the honeyed smile that you gave me."

"Anything you say, my boy, goes

with us," chuckled Sterling, and produced a piece of paper. "I have here a list of new victims"—he coughed—"I mean products, that need your immediate analysis. Do you think it wise to tackle Kennedy first, now these others seem—"

The professor broke off because the door opened, and into the room walked Kennedy, Swain and Burke. The professor and Jimmy had a bad attack of cold feet.

"Well, doctor, this is a surprise, but quite a pleasant one," affably spoke Kennedy, with a meaning glance at the people in the room. "I see all the partners are here." He gave his attention to Larry. "You know, doc, I thought I knew all the angles, but you've certainly dusted off a brand-new one."

"You're not wanted here, Kennedy," viciously spoke Larry. "Get out!" "Ha! Ha! That's a great act, doc," Kennedy roared with laughter. "But it's all right, you're among friends." With his hand he indicated his companion. "You gentlemen don't know Mr. Swain, do you? His cough syrup has been very profitable to you and your partners. Four thousand dollars you collected for a quarter column ad."

Larry began to get wise. His brain worked quickly. He must be very astute because it was obvious that Kennedy was very sure of himself. Swain must be the crook's master card.

"Have you the cancelled cheque, Mr. Swain?" Kennedy asked, and the other nodded. "You see, gentlemen, Mr. Swain is a member of my syndicate. The same as some of the others you've been paying attention to."

Larry grinned because he had been right about Swain.

"Gentlemen, I need your services as much as Mr. Swain does," stated Kennedy, looking round his eyes glinting triumphantly. They came to rest on Larry. "I could use a man like you, doc."

"Maybe I wouldn't care to go with you, Kennedy."

"Now, doctor, I should hate the idea of sending that cheque to the American Medical Association. It might cost you your licence to practise, and then you'd be of no use to me. So I'm keeping it, doc, but I expect a return for that kindness." He gave a sign, and Swain and Burke, who had watched but not spoken, moved to the door. "Now, you'll want some time to think over the many ways in which you may be of service to me." At the door he paused. "By the way, come to my Restorium to-night. The syndicate is having dinner, and you'll meet them all. I'll not take 'no' for an answer. Dinner at eight, shall we say?"

Larry spoke as if resigned to his fate. "Very well, dinner at eight."

"We shall be expecting you," Kennedy turned to the girl. "Of course, Miss Sterling, you'll come too, with the doctor and the professor. Good-day."

Kennedy walked to the lift. "Are you sure you can hold the doc in line?" Swain asked.

"As long as we've got that cheque there's nothing to worry about," Kennedy answered with confidence.

It was Jean who spoke first when Kennedy and his friends had gone.

"So your interest in the dear public was just an act," she said scornfully.

"And a pretty good act," was Larry's cheerful answer. "By the way, what was wrong with yours? Invited to a party and not even a smile for the nice man."

"And I thought you were a doctor!" cried Jean, and stalked out, slamming the door.



"You shall have the radium here by midnight," stated the man in black.

Larry is Arrested

AT eight o'clock all the guests had assembled at Kennedy's "Health Restorium" — amazing the number of businesses the man ran. After cocktails in a private room the party sat down at a long table in the main dining-room. Larry thought he had never sat down in such mixed company before—certainly the most crooked. Two of the guests were owners or manufacturers of patent medicines. A comical fellow named Andrews he imagined was in a similar position to Burke. Jean was the only woman present, and Larry guessed that her levity was forced. After the wine had gone round several times Kennedy roasted the syndicate, and in a short speech expressed a wish that there should be no hard feelings.

Over coffee and liqueurs the party became quite gay.

"With the doctor's co-operation we'll soon have the world by the tail," Kennedy said for all to hear.

"Oh, I'm afraid it's too late for that," said Larry.

"Doctor, don't be so gloomy. It won't take you long to undo any damage you may have done our business."

"That's not what I mean," Larry gave an impatient shake of his head. "I mean you've let your big chance go by."

"What do you mean—big chance?" questioned Swain.

"Listen, folks. You've got hold of radium, which, to the popular mind, sounds like a cure for anything that ails you, but you've missed the big chance."

"I think we've covered the field pretty thoroughly," Kennedy said, his brow furrowed in thought.

"I have my cough remedy," said Swain. "Stauber has a liniment for burns. Wilson has a hair restorer. Mr. Kennedy has a number of other products under his name."

"You, Mr. Swain, have to wait for somebody to get a cough before you can

sell your medicine. Mr. Stauber has to wait for someone to get burned before he can sell his." Larry spoke in a manner that drew every eye to him. "Mr. Wilson can only do business with bald-headed men. But not one of you have thought of putting out a product for the one sickness that everybody gets—and not just once or twice in a lifetime, but about twice a year."

Suddenly Jimmy, who always seemed to have a cold, sneezed.

"Our friend has explained what I mean," chuckled Larry. "The common cold, and there's no sure cure for it."

"By Jove, there's something in what you say," Kennedy spoke eagerly. "What an idea!"

"It's not only an idea—it's an accomplished fact."

"What do you mean by that, doctor?"

Larry squared his shoulders.

"I have a cold cure, and what's more it works. I tested a thousand formulæ that failed, but the thousand and first worked."

"Doctor Baxter, we all take our hats off to you," said Swain. "I'm glad you told us about it. We're made."

"We?" questioned Larry. "Mr. Swain, formulæ one thousand and one belongs to me."

A cabaret act with a girl singing "I'm Sitting on a Moon" caused the conversation to cease, but it gave Swain the chance to speak in a whisper to Kennedy.

"You're not gonna let him keep this to himself, are you?"

"Don't worry," Kennedy answered, and smiled in that chilly way that so many of his underlings feared.

When the cabaret act came to an end Kennedy leaned across the table and touched Larry on the shoulder.

"Do you mind coming with me, doctor?" It was the same as an order. "I have an idea."

Jean watched with worried perplexity as Larry and Kennedy went off arm-in-arm

in the manager's office Kennedy waved the doctor to a seat, and handed him a cigar box.

"No, thanks, Kennedy," he shook his head. "Well, what's on your mind?"

"I didn't realise when we talked this afternoon just what this association might mean," Kennedy explained in his frank way, "to both of us." He added this last bit with significance. He flicked the ash from his cigar, and went over to a wall safe. He returned with a sheet of paper. "All the people on this list make a radium product similar to mine, but they're not in the syndicate. Few of them can stand daylight, and have bad records."

"Is this a little gift for the professor?"

"And for you."

"Well, what's your cut?" demanded Larry, pocketing the paper.

"How about a little reciprocity. Such as—One thousand and one. After all, making medicine is my racket."

"No, Kennedy. I have a million-dollar radio audience and I'm just about ready to cash in on them," Larry said.

"Of course, there'll be a fortune in it for you," purred Kennedy. "Why not cut me in on it?"

"Well, simply because I don't see the advantage." Larry had set a lure and his quarry was being drawn, but he must not seem too eager. "I have the public ear—I have the formulæ—"

"And I have the manufacturing facilities—and the capital."

"Yes, I have to admit that." Larry agreed, then shook his head. "But the one thing that's indispensable, you can't supply."

"What's that?"

"Radium," tersely answered Larry. "And I'll need more than your whole syndicate uses."

A slow smile appeared on the master racketeer's face. "I can supply all you need—all you can use."

Larry simulated bewilderment.

"Are you forgetting that I was present when that old fox, MacDonald, shut down on you?"

"Forget it," Kennedy was smiling. "I can get all we need."

Larry shot out a hand.

"Then we'll call it a deal." His voice rang with enthusiasm.

The two men shook hands.

"Well, that's a great piece of work settled," Kennedy took the doctor's arm. "Let's get back to the party, Larry."

Larry avoided the eye of Jean, because he was quite certain that she was watching him with disdain and mistrust. The young doctor regarded the girl as a problem. She had tricked him, and yet he had the feeling that she disapproved very much of his present activities.

The dinner party proceeded merrily for some time, but Kennedy's face went red with anger when he saw MacDonald and a couple of plain-clothes detectives walking towards their table.

"Unless you have a search warrant and the proper officers I can have you thrown out of here," Kennedy said threateningly. "I've got a dinner party, and—"

"Forget it," rasped MacDonald. "I've got a search warrant and the proper officers, and I'll tell you what I'm here for. Just to look over this health factory of yours to see if a man by the name of Pete Andorka is hidden on the premises by any chance."

"If my guests will excuse me I will be charmed to show you round," Kennedy had recovered from his anger. "Will you follow me, please?"

Larry had become absorbed in his coffee, and did not once look up. Jean saw the sneering look that MacDonald gave to the bowed head.

After touring the many corridors and rooms, Kennedy at last conducted the officers to his laboratory.

"Don't forget to search the test tubes, inspector," mocked Kennedy.

Whilst Kennedy was showing the officers round Larry was able to make a copy of the names on the list that had been given him. The party was very merry and no one noticed. When he had finished he got up from his seat and walked round to Professor Sterling.

"Easy pickings with the compliments of Kennedy," he said in a loud voice, tossing the paper he had been given on to the table. "All of 'em drug manufacturers—with a record."

"Splendid." The professor rubbed his fat hands together. "I'll pay them a visit in the morning."

"Did you ever stop to think what this might mean to your career?" demanded Jean. "You'll get away with it just so long—"

"Long enough to make a lot of money," chuckled Larry. "Then I won't need a career."

Some minutes later Kennedy, with MacDonald and the two officers, came back to the table.

"The pleasure was all mine, inspector," sneaked Kennedy. "Would you and your Cossacks like a drink before you go?"

Without ceremony MacDonald pushed Kennedy to one side and stood behind Larry's chair. The latter looked round nervously.

"Well, I might have known you were playing ball with Kennedy," the inspector said in harsh tones. "In all my deals with the Bureau I never saw a doctor who turned out as black as you."

"Most dramatic, Mr. MacDonald," sneered Larry.

"What'd they pay you to hide Pete Andorka?"

"Well, if you must know, I'll tell October 2nd, 1937.

you. The sum represents about five years of your salary, as a trusted servant of the public." Larry stood up and laughed in the inspector's face. "You can't pin anything on me, and—"

Wallop! MacDonald, livid with rage, had brought up his fist with a mighty punch that caught Larry under the jaw. The doctor would have dropped if the inspector had not seized him and pushed him into the arms of the two officers.

"Here, you can't do this!" shouted Kennedy.

"Well, I've done it," snapped out the inspector. "Now I'm taking him out for questioning. Any objection?"

The party was silent, so MacDonald gave a sign, and the officers dragged the half-dazed Larry from the room.

"You're not going to let that guy get away with this, are you?" Burke hissed to his chief.

"Hold everything, Burke," Kennedy put a restraining hand on the gunman's arm. "The doc can take care of himself."

In the closed car Larry was given a restoring drink, and when MacDonald appeared was smoking a cigarette and chatting with the officers.

"That was the most welcome sock I ever got," Larry fingered his jaw.

"But you could have pulled it a little, Mac."

"I had to make it look real." The inspector stared down at the list of names Larry handed to him. "What's this?"

"A list of quacks who can stand a shakedown, but they can't stand the law. Kennedy denoted it as a goodwill gesture."

"I'll have them picked up to-morrow. Thanks, Larry." He put the paper carefully in his pocket. "Pete wasn't in the Restorium, and there's not much chance of picking up his trail. Kennedy's far too smart for that."

"He's not as smart as he thinks," stated Larry. "He fell for that cold-cure gag, hook, line and sinker. I'm on the inside, Mac."

"Well, you're playing with pretty bad boys, Larry."

"I know. Well, I just whetted Kennedy's appetite for big money, and in return he promised me a large quantity of radium." The doctor leaned forward. "Now, Mac, this is how I reckon we should get together. First of all—"

Kennedy Outwitted

JEAN STERLING had hurt her knee in the car crash, and as it was a little inflamed she made it an excuse to go round to Dr. Baxter's laboratory. Easy for a clever girl like Jean to get Nelson talking. The nurse complained bitterly that a doctor who could have hundreds of patients among the wealthy Society people preferred to mess about trying experiments with mice, monkeys and microphones. What few patients he had seldom got an account. He was always helping the Bureau of Pure Foods and Drugs and never making any charge.

Larry smiled gladly when he found Jean at his laboratory. The girl waited till the nurse had left them.

"Kennedy ready for a shakedown?" she asked, her eyes twinkling. "You fooled me yesterday, Larry, but I'm straightened up on you again."

"I don't know what you're talking about?"

"I don't know what your plan is," Jean answered. "But I do know you're not really thinking about fifty per cent. You're thinking about getting on the inside with Kennedy, so that you can trap him."

"Yes, you're right, Jean," Larry

admitted. "I want to stop him and his kind once and for all."

"I've been a fool—I should never have stopped believing in you."

"Well, I did a bit of stopping myself," Larry took her two hands in his. "Everything's going to be grand once this business is over. By to-morrow things will be popping, and I don't want you involved. I want you to get away with your father and Jimmy."

"But what about you?"

"Don't worry about me. You look after yourself and your father. You can tell him that I've straightened him with MacDonald, and that he and I are even. Your pop made use of me, but I made better use of him. Now, you run along, Jean, and stay away till it's all over."

MacDonald and his men were busy that morning rounding up all the chiefs in the firms mentioned on Kennedy's list. They protested and demanded their lawyers, but it didn't help them at all because MacDonald found sufficient evidence in every case.

Burke was the first to bring in a morning paper that contained news of the round-up of quack-medicine dealers and manufacturers.

"Somebody's stooled," snarled the gunman. "There's nobody knew except the professor, Jimmy and the doc."

"Better get the professor and Jimmy in here," Kennedy decided. "Maybe they can tell us something. The doc's okay."

"Don't say I didn't warn you, chief," muttered Burke, before going out of the room. "But I think these mugs are all phonies."

The professor and Jimmy were brought none too politely to Kennedy's office, and when they heard that all the people on the list Larry had given them had been raided they looked nervously at each other. It looked as if Master Larry had been using them for suckers. But the professor was not the sort of man that squealed. He told Kennedy they knew nothing about it.

"Well, Larry will be around any minute," Kennedy said tersely. "Maybe he can tell us something. So stick around."

Some minutes later Larry got out of a lift and came along a corridor towards Kennedy's room. The ante-room was empty save for one man, who jumped up at sight of the doctor.

"Pardon me, but could I trouble you for a match?"

"Certainly." Larry held out a box. "Here they are."

"A friend of mine used to be a patient of yours," the man said as he lit his cigarette. "A chap named MacDonald."

"You're Dan Kellogg," Larry lowered his voice. "He told me about you. Stick around."

"But I tell you nobody ever saw the list except Jimmy," the professor was saying as the doctor opened the door.

"Yeah; but don't forget the doctor," sneered Burke.

"Was I being paged?" Larry inquired blandly.

"We were wondering just how much you know about this?"

Kennedy showed him the headlines on the special edition.

"I know all about that," Larry laughed. "I did it."

"What'd I tell you?" snarled Burke, his hand on his hip.

Larry gazed at Burke's leering face with surprise, and then shook his head as if he was bewildered. He gazed sharply at Kennedy.

"You look annoyed, Kennedy; but can you tell me a better way to cut out competition? The professor was around those mugs after your party, and we'd

gotten our take. Why let them stay in business and cut in on our profits?"

Larry Baxter did his act so well and so calmly that Kennedy was convinced that he spoke the truth, though the surly Burke looked suspiciously at the doctor.

"It sounds phoney to me," said the gunman.

"Get out of here, Burke," rapped Kennedy. "And take Professor Sterling and Jimmy with you."

"That Burke fellow can't see an inch before his nose," Larry chuckled. "Maybe he's better with a gun."

"He's quick enough in an emergency," Kennedy replied. "Now I've assigned Andrews to assist you. He's had a lot of experience in my laboratories."

"With a few more experiments I hope to have the formula standardised. We'll be in production within forty-eight hours."

"Great work, doc," Kennedy looked closely at his new partner. "By the way, how did you come out with MacDonald?"

"Kennedy, you know what a grilling is?"

"I do."

"That's what I got," Larry shook his head. "But he hasn't got anything on me, except that list of names, and I guess now that he knows he hasn't got a chance of pinning anything on Kennedy Radium Products."

"Perfect this cold cure and you'll soon be worth a fortune," Kennedy smiled, well pleased. "You'll find Andrews waiting for you down in the laboratory."

Larry was able to carry out some research work of a technical nature far beyond the simple knowledge of Andrews. There was a small supply of radium, which he used for a number of picturesque experiments. At six in the afternoon he indicated to Andrews that enough work had been done for the day. The lights in the laboratory were switched on and the two men climbed out of the queer suits that protected the body from the dangerous radium rays.

"I feel like a deep-sea diver in this outfit."

"If you attempted deep-sea diving without the proper outfit what do you suppose would happen to you?"

"I'd drown."

"Well, if you work with radium without the necessary equipment you'll burn," Larry spoke casually, but he saw the nervous flicker of the assistant's eyelids. "How long have you been working for Kennedy?"

"About six years. Why?"

Larry leaned forward and stared into the other's face, then he laid his hand on the man's wrist and finally pulled down an eyelid.

"Any pain in your arms or legs?"

"No."

"Your breathing hard?"

"No. Why?"

Larry ignored the look of alarm in the other's expression.

"Have you worn a uniform always?" he asked. "I can see you haven't. Andrews, you'd better watch your step."

"What you mean, doc?"

"Certain signs I don't like." He looked round. "Here's Mr. Kennedy. I will talk to you later."

Kennedy was accompanied by a man whose face was unhealthily pallid and expressionless. He was garbed in black and never smiled.

"This is Dr. Baxter. How's it coming, Larry?"

"Oh, another day, I think. You get me a gram of radium and we're ready to start production."

Kennedy indicated his companion. "That's why he's here. He can get all we need."

"Can you get it by to-night?"

"I can easily meet your requirements by to-night. You shall have it here before midnight," the man stated.

Kennedy did not mention the man's name, and wisely Larry did not ask. But when they had departed the young doctor made some excuse to Andrews and went into the corridor. Seated in a waiting-room close to the laboratory was a man reading a paper.

"Pardon me, sir, have you a match?" asked Larry.

It was Kellogg who lowered the paper and held out a box of matches.

"There's a man with a black hat just gone out of the laboratory with Kennedy. Did you see him?" Larry asked, and Kellogg nodded. "Don't lose him. He's the one that gets the hot radium."

Kellogg waited till Larry had lit his cigarette before hastening out of the building to warn MacDonald.

Larry felt that the net was being drawn gradually round Kennedy; but he would not have been so elated if he had known that Jean had paid no heed to his suggestion that the staff of "Your Good Health" should go out of town. She told the professor and Jimmy

that she was much too fond of Larry to leave him when danger threatened. If Kennedy found out how he was being tricked no mercy would be shown to Larry.

"Your father's agile mind has a solution to the problem already," the professor comforted his daughter. "I know just how to get Larry out of all this."

The Trailing of Pete Andorka

LARRY was at the laboratory early the next morning as he had made an appointment to examine Andrews. He found that the man was a spineless creature and easily scared. He told Larry in shaking tones that he had got pains like the doctor mentioned and his breathing was hard.

"Andrews, let me see those fingernails," Larry shook his head after an examination of his hands. "I'm afraid I'm going to have to tell you the truth."

Now Andrews had agonising pains—all imaginary—and the sweat was pouring down his face. He begged the doctor to do something for him.

"People suffering from radium-poisoning build up an immunity in their blood, and a serum taken from them is your only hope," was Larry's verdict. "Unfortunately, I don't know where I can lay my hands on such a case."

"I know a guy what's got it!" hoarsely cried Andrews. "If I take you to him will you do it? Can you?"

"Of course I can," Larry looked at his watch. "If the place is not too far we could go now. I have half an hour to spare."

Larry was sure that Andrews was going to lead him to the place where Kennedy had secreted Pete Andorka, and was congratulating himself on his own cleverness, when the door of the laboratory burst open and there was Kennedy and Burke. Larry did not like the expressions on the faces of these two men.

"Have you brought the radium,



Larry ordered the male nurse to bind Andrews to a chair.

Kennedy?" Larry asked eagerly; and, when Burke laughed hoarsely, added: "Anything wrong?"

"Thomson just got through to me that the police grabbed Butler and he had the stuff with him," Kennedy said slowly.

"Butler? Is that the man who came to the laboratory?" Larry asked. "How did they come to pick him up?"

"Because you tipped off the cops," snarled Burke, whisking out a gun. "I knew you was phoney."

"Frisk him," ordered Kennedy.

"He ain't packing a rod," mumbled Burke.

There was an amused smile on Larry's face.

"Surely you don't think that I had any hand—"

"I don't think—I know," shouted Kennedy, his eyes blazing. "I don't suppose your highly scientific imagination could possibly tell you what reward is coming to you!"

"Oh, I don't mind that either, Kennedy," was the fearless retort. "We don't care how we get you. A murder charge is as good as any."

"I can fix that nicely," Kennedy eyed Larry mockingly. "I'm going to pick up your partners and the girl, and you're all going for a ride. There may be an accident up in the hills and all the occupants killed."

"I guessed you might be revengeful, so I warned them to leave town till you were behind bars. So you'll have to think up—"

Larry broke off. The laboratory door had opened and Jean had appeared.

"Apparently she didn't take your advice," Kennedy said softly. "Delighted to see you, Miss Sterling."

"Why didn't you leave yesterday?" Larry asked, his face drawn with anxiety at the danger that threatened the girl he now loved.

"I couldn't. I want to talk to you, Larry." She took his arm. "Come out into the hall."

"Not quite so fast, young lady," Kennedy pointed to Burke. "You don't think he's holding that for fun, do you?"

"I know all about you, and I'm not scared of you." Jean faced him defiantly. "Unless I call my father in ten minutes he and Jimmy will be down here with the police."

"Why, you little minx, you would dare to make terms with me!" Kennedy shouted. "Burke, Andrews, tie him to that chair." He watched the two men busy strapping Larry to a chair with ropes. "All right, that will do." He gripped the girl cruelly by the arm. "Now get your father on the 'phone."

"I won't."

"You will, or Larry gets his."

Jean knew that Kennedy would not hesitate to murder Larry before her eyes unless she obeyed.

"All right," she whispered.

"And don't get any bright ideas," Kennedy warned her.

Jean got through to her father.

"Dad, this is Jean; it—it worked. Larry'll be over in a few minutes. I can't say any more."

"That'd do fine," Kennedy laughed mirthlessly. "Now, boys, tie her up as well. I think you two will keep until we get back. We're going to collect your precious father and Jimmy. Make the most of your last moments together. Now you two men come with me."

Kennedy made Andrews lock the door and stand guard outside.

"Jean, darling!" Larry smiled across at the girl. "When we get out of this will you remind me to propose to you?"

"I will, if you'll remind me to accept."

October 2nd, 1937.

Larry strove hard to undo his bonds, but without success, and he had almost given up hope when there was the sound of a key turning. It was Andrews, and the man's face twitched nervously.

"Doc!" His voice was hoarse with fear. "You're not kidding about me being sick, are you?"

"Andrews, I'm past the kidding point. You're not getting any better. You can see that for yourself. Every hour counts."

"Doc, if you'll give me that transfusion right away I'll take you to the old guy. But if this is a gag I'll let you have it."

"If I do this and check the disease I expect you to give me a break, Andrews," Larry asked. "Is it a bet?"

"Sure, doc, sure!" lied the man.

"Okay, then. Untie both of us, because I may need Miss Sterling's help."

Andrews untied them with shaking hands.

"We'll need some medicine," Larry picked up a writing-pad. "Can you get a prescription made up right away? One of the boys could take it across the street, whilst we wait here."

"Just write it out, doc," Andrews cried, and, going over to a 'phone, asked for a messenger boy to come round to the laboratory.

Andrews only glanced at the prescription before handing it to the boy. Larry had written his message in a code known only to himself and MacDonald. The

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boy returned in about ten minutes with a small package.

"Did the druggist understand the prescription?"

"Yes, sir. He said he quite understood," the boy reported, and Larry had hard work not to grin with elation.

By now his warning should have reached MacDonald and the police!

Andrews busted them out of the building by a side door. The gunman was in such a panic that he was going to die that he did not reckon the consequences of disobeying Kennedy's orders. They were on the point of moving towards Larry's car when Jean clutched at the doctor's arm and pointed. They darted back in time to avoid being seen by Kennedy. They saw a big car pull up, and watched Kennedy and Burke get out first; Professor Sterling and Jimmy followed. Directly the four men had entered the building Larry darted towards his car. It was Andrews who took the wheel.

When Kennedy found the laboratory empty he was nonplussed. From a page-boy he learned that Larry, the girl, and Andrews had driven away not many minutes before. All he could think was that Larry had got free of his bonds and turned the tables on Andrews.

"The doc has made that fool Andrews talk," Kennedy rapped out. "He's either tricked Andrews into talking or forced him; but, whatever happened, I'm sure there's only one place they could have gone. We've got to go after them. Lock these other two mugs in the laboratory; we can settle them when we get back."

Andrews was so unsteady with his driving that he agreed readily to Larry taking the wheel; and did the doctor make the car move! Out of town went the car, and up in the hill country it took bends on two wheels. They came at last to a drive to a large, old-fashioned country house.

"What's this place?" Larry demanded.

"Kennedy's private institution for his own employees," Andrews explained. "He don't use it often."

The car pulled up before the front door, and after some hammering it was opened and a burly caretaker peered forth.

"The boss wants Dr. Baxter here to give Pete the once over," explained Andrews.

The door was opened and they entered. The caretaker took them down a corridor and rapped at another door. They were admitted into the sick-room.

Seconds to Spare

ON the bed lay Pete Andorka. The wretched man was moaning and groaning. Standing near the bed was a middle-aged man, wearing the uniform of a male nurse. The caretaker closed the door.

"Kennedy wants the doctor to look that guy over," Andrews explained.

Larry walked over to the bed and touched the groaning patient.

"Hallo, Pete," he said softly.

"Dr. Baxter!" Pete shot up in bed when he saw who it was. Fingers as thin as skeleton's clutched his hand.

"Thank heaven you're here! It hurts awful. I'm so sick—I'm—"

"We'll soon put you right, Pete. We're here to help you." Larry pushed the sick man back and glanced round. "Jean, put three of these tablets in a glass of water."

He handed her a small bottle.

The message that Larry had sent to MacDonald was to the effect that Kennedy must be trailed at all costs, and that it would more than likely lead to the place where Pete Andorka

(Continued on page 26)

Trickery and injustice were rife in Big Rock, and when Dick Hudson pitted himself against the men who held sway there it seemed as if he had taken on a superhuman task. Read how his purpose was at last achieved in this powerful drama of the Oklahoma cattle-country, starring Dick Foran and Jane Bryan



“STRANGE LAWS”



Land Rush

IT was the evening of the 21st of April, 1889, and the scene was Wichita Falls, near the border-line between the State of Texas and the former Indian territory of Oklahoma.

It was the eve of a memorable occasion that was to live in the annals of America. For, yielding to the demands of an expanding white population, the Federal Government had decided to concentrate the scattered Indian tribes farther to the north and throw open the hunting-grounds to land-hungry settlers.

Six million acres of virgin soil were now waiting to be staked out in claims in the territory of Oklahoma; soil that might be cultivated where previously it had yielded nothing but tumble-weed and scrub; soil on which towns might be built where previously the foot of man had seldom walked; soil that raised crops of mesquite grass where cattle might feed instead of dwindling herds of buffalo.

Oklahoma had been denied to the whites for too long. Much reduced in numbers since the days when they had been a barbarous race of killers, the Redskins there no longer required such vast tracts of fertile country. That was why it was only just that the remnants of them should be shepherded into a smaller reservation to make room for the Palefaces they had once hated.

And that was why Wichita Falls had become the rallying-point for an army of pioneers, a rendezvous from which eager bands of homesteaders and cattlemen might move up to the frontier the following morning, when the new territory would be officially announced as open for colonisation.

Hundreds of men and women had assembled at Wichita Falls, the majority being of good, honest, hard-working stock. But, as always when there was a chance of fortunes to be made, there was an element of rascality present—individuals who planned to batten like vultures on the hoped-for prosperity of the new and promised land.

Such an individual was Link Carter, a man with a black record and a band of hired gunmen at his beck and call. Yet, although his infamy had earned him a fairly wide-spread reputation in the State of Texas, it so happened that only a few of the people encamped at Wichita Falls were aware of his shady past. And none felt tempted to risk reminding him of it until a tall, strapping late-comer drifted into the great, sprawling camp as the dusk was coming down.

The fellow in question was Dick Hudson, who had once been a cow-puncher, but who had become a practising attorney when he had felt a desire to amount to something more than a herdsman and had elected to study law.

He came riding into the camp on a high-stepping brone, and he was singing a Western ballad in a fine tenor voice which drew attention to him, and which was one reason why Link Carter was made conscious of his presence so speedily. And on seeing him Link Carter lost no time in putting himself in the new arrival's path.

A well-built, sallow-featured and dark-haired man of some thirty-five years, Link Carter confronted the young lawyer and surveyed him mockingly,

“Well, well,” he said, his thin-lipped mouth twisting into an unpleasant sneer, “if it isn't the handsome shyster from the Panhandle!”

Dick Hudson had drawn rein. Now he slid from the saddle and regarded Carter placidly. He was about six-foot-two of red-headed Texan, topping Carter by an inch or so. His weather-beaten, good-looking face was genial in its expression, though in his ice-blue eyes there was a glint that spelled danger for men of Carter's ilk.

He remembered Carter well. When he had become a full-fledged attorney, he had acted as prosecutor at the hearing of a case in which the rogue had been defendant.

“What's the matter, Hudson?” Link Carter went on in a tone of insolent inquiry. “Did things get too hot for you back there in the Panhandle section?”

“Why, no,” Dick Hudson drawled. “No bunch of crooks ever ran me out of any section yet. But after I had the pleasure of sending you to a State penitentiary for two years there wasn't any work left for a good lawyer around the Panhandle area.”

Link Carter's brow had darkened at the reference to his sinister past.

“You've got a mighty sharp memory, Hudson, haven't you?” he graded.

“No, it's kind of poor,” was the mild reply. “Let's see, what was it you were charged with? Arson—forgery—or manslaughter?”

A snarl broke from Carter's lips, and on a sudden he launched himself at Dick Hudson with the intention of hitting out at him. But, though he had taken up the study of law, Dick Hudson had

not neglected that physical fitness which had singled him out in his cow-punching days as "a tough hombre in a scrap."

With his left arm he blocked the punch that Link Carter aimed at him, and in the same instant he brought across the packed knuckles of his right hand in a jolt that was like the kick of a wild mustang.

Carter went down, and lay where he had fallen for the space of about ten seconds, by which time people had come running from some of the buckboards and prairie schooners with which the immediate vicinity was dotted. Then the ex-gaolbird picked himself up, but, although he glared at Dick savagely and seemed as if he were tempted to reach for his hip and pull a six-gun, he thought better of the impulse and turned away.

It was at this moment that he was accosted by an elderly man, who had appeared on the scene together with a freckled lad of thirteen and a young and radiant girl, who was about twenty years of age.

"What's up, Carter?" the elderly individual demanded.

"Nothing," was the muffled reply. "This guy makes trouble wherever he goes, that's all. But forget it, Walton. I ain't soilin' my hands on him."

Carter slouched off, and Walton moved after him together with the girl, who directed a scornful and indignant glance at Dick before departing. On the other hand, however, the freckled boy of thirteen remained behind and sidled up to the stalwart cowboy-lawyer.

"Say, that was swell elegant," he declared enthusiastically. "That guy Carter needed takin' down a peg er two. Huh, I can't imagine what dad an' my sister see in him, anyways."

Dick smiled down at the lad.

"So those were your dad and your sister, eh?" he remarked. "Well, maybe Link Carter has his good points, though I never noticed any. But, by the way, son, you don't happen to know if there's a feller called Valley in this camp, do you?"

"Valley? Why, sure. C'mon, I'll show yuh where he is."

The boy proceeded to escort him through the clutter of wagons, and at the far side of the camp they came upon two men and a young woman who were engaged in preparing a meal. One of the men was Tom Valley, a bronzed Westerner of about Dick's own age, and at sight of the attorney he gave vent to a whoop.

"Dick Hudson!" he shouted. "Gosh, am I glad to see you?"

"I'm mighty glad to see you, Tom," Dick rejoined. "I heard you'd moved north to take a hand in this land rush."

"That's right, Dick. There's a lot of us in this camp plannin' to build a town at Big Rock, thirty miles over the line. Me and my partner here aim to open up a ranch outside the settlement, and to start a general merchandise store in town as well. That will give us two strings to our bow, see? But I don't believe you know my side-kick, do you?"

Dick was introduced to Bill Tidewell, a sturdy, square-jawed fellow with a warm and friendly handshake. Then, with pardonable pride, Tom Valley turned to the young woman who was near-by.

"And Dick," he said, "I want you to meet my wife. I suppose you knew I was married, didn't you? No, you didn't? Well, it's been a long time since we saw each other. Ruth, this is my ole pal Dick Hudson, the worst lawyer in Texas. You've heard me speak of him."

"I'm glad to know you, Mr. Hudson,"

October 2nd, 1937.

Ruth Valley observed smilingly. "But don't take any notice of Tom. He told me you were going to be the greatest lawyer in Texas."

Dick looked at her with a twinkle in his eyes.

"He's wrong either way, Mrs. Valley," he announced. "I'm going to be the worst or the best lawyer in Oklahoma, according to how things break for me. Yep, I'm figuring to settle in this same town of Big Rock that will rise out of the prairies up there."

"You are?" Tom Valley put in. "Well, you ought to have a lot of customers, if this rush turns out to be the same as others. There's usually a leavening of land sharks and claim jumpers in the offing when a new strip is opened. And speakin' of such-like vermin, your old friend Link Carter is here."

Dick nodded.

"I know," he commented dryly. "I just tangled with him."

He paused, and turned to see whether the freckled boy who had conducted him through the camp were still in attendance on him. But the lad had sauntered off.

"Say, Tom," Dick queried then, "Carter appeared to be friendly with a family named Walton. Who are these Waltons?"

Tom Valley fingered his chin.

"The old man seems to be in partnership with Carter and a bunch of Carter's friends," he answered. "He has his daughter with him—a mighty nice-lookin' girl named Janie, who's been over here for a chat with Ruth once or twice. Then there's the boy who was with you just now—Barty, they call him. We only know 'em casually, but it seems to me they're a little too decent to be mixed up with a hombre like Carter."

Further conversation on the subject of the Waltons was interrupted just then by the entry into the camp of a small detachment of U.S. dragoons. They were headed by a major, who caused every living soul in the camp to be mustered so that they might hear what he had to say.

"Friends," he announced, "the starting shot will be fired to-morrow morning at nine o'clock sharp, and I want to take the opportunity now of reminding you that when the signal is given it will be every man for himself in the race to stake claims. At the same time, I warn you that any person entering the territory of Oklahoma before nine o'clock in an attempt to steal a march on other settlers will for ever forfeit all claims he may make."

There was a murmur of approval, but it was not echoed by Link Carter, who stood a little apart from the assemblage with a group of scoundrelly looking cronies.

Carter grinned slyly at his associates, and then lent an ear to the cavalry major again as the latter rounded off his speech.

"I'd also like to give you folks a little friendly advice," the officer said. "You have about fourteen hours at your disposal between now and nine o'clock to-morrow morning, and I suggest you devote the better part of the time to getting a good night's sleep."

Link Carter apparently found something amusing in those words, for he winked mirthfully at one of his satellites, a notorious gunman from Dallas.

"A good night's sleep," he reiterated with a smirk. "How about it, Joe Brady? You gonna sing me a lullaby?"

"Huh, you watch out you don't get rocked to sleep on the back o' that pinto

of yours, boss," came the reply, delivered in a low tone of voice. "Say, when are you sneakin' out of camp, anyhow?"

"Ten o'clock, and by midnight I'll be over the border in Oklahoma. Then I'll snatch a few hours' rest."

"Don't doze too long," said Brady, whereupon Carter smiled a twisted smile.

"I won't," he said. "At nine o'clock I'll be high-tailin' it for Big Rock with an armful of stakes and a start on everybody."

Another of the group volunteered a comment. He was a frock-coated, middle-aged man named Abbott, and like Dick Hudson he was a lawyer, but a lawyer of ill-repute who specialised in earning reprieves for hardened criminals, and in turning his legal knowledge to their advantage.

"You'll have to watch out for the froopers who are guarding the frontier, Link," he muttered. "Also, folks are liable to miss you from the camp."

"I'll get past the soldiers all right," declared Carter. "As for the folks around camp, they'll be too busy lookin' after their own affairs to notice my absence. I'll wager that even old man Walton won't miss me."

"He doesn't know what you're plannin' to do, then?" Abbott queried.

Link Carter shook his head.

"No," he answered, "I didn't think it necessary to tell him. Not that he'd be likely to back out now."

Brady spoke again.

"What about this guy Hudson?" he asked. "I don't like the idea of him bein' around. He clamped down on you and me in the Panhandle section two or three years ago, an' he's dangerous. You say you had a run-in with him just now, an' I can't figure why you didn't plug him."

"In front of a crowd of people?" Carter retorted. "Don't be a fool. No, I left him for you, Brady. Listen, he's got a fast horse. I know the critter, for it's the one he always rides. But you've got a fast horse too, Brady, so if he's joinin' this land-rush keep track of him, and let him have a bullet in the back if you get the chance."

The foregoing discussion was carried on in a guarded fashion. Yet, although Carter did not know it, Janie Walton was standing within earshot and had not been able to help overhearing the substance of it; and presently, when the cavalry major and his escort had taken leave of the camp, the girl went off in quest of her father.

It did not take her long to locate him, and on joining him she addressed him tersely.

"Dad," she said, "I'm afraid we did that red-headed stranger an injustice by regardin' him as a trouble-maker. I mean the fellow who knocked Link Carter down. It seems Carter isn't the honest-to-goodness person we took him for, and, when you come to think of it, we ought to have suspected him if only on account of those shifty-looking customers who are always hanging around him."

The expression of bewilderment on old man Walton's face changed to one of dismay when Janie went on to give him a summary of the conversation which had reached her ears. Then when his daughter had brought her narrative to a close, he glanced at her wretchedly.

"This is terrible, Janie," he faltered. "But what can I do? I've got to stick with Carter now. I've sunk every cent I had into the purchase of equipment for this venture. I just can't back out, or I'm ruined."

Janie would have preferred bankruptcy to the dishonour of being

associated with a man who could stoop to such methods as those which Link Carter proposed to employ. But Walton senior was not so strong-minded as his daughter, and could not be induced to court financial disaster by breaking off relations with the scoundrel.

Notwithstanding the old fellow's attitude, Janie resolved to approach Dick Hudson, and although she was unwilling to say anything that might injure her father, she spoke to the young attorney bluntly enough when she had succeeded in tracing him.

"I understand your name's Mr. Hudson," she began, and when he had acknowledged this: "Well, Mr. Hudson," she continued, "are you going to make the ren into the new strip to-morrow?"

"I am," he told her. "I'd advise you not to," she said "I'm not at liberty to enlarge on the statement, but it's made for your own good."

Dick Hudson looked down at her steadfastly.

"Is that so?" he remarked. "Well, having bothered to give me advice, why not supply me with a few details?"

"The fact that I'm warning you ought to be enough," she responded in an evasive manner.

Dick compressed his lips. "All right, if you won't talk, I will," he informed her, utterly misunderstanding her motive in coming to him "You can go back and tell Carter, or whoever sent you, that I trailed all the way up here to get in on this land-rush—and neither he nor anybody else is gonna keep me out of it!"

Thus spoke Dick Hudson. Yet the following morning, when the settlers moved up to the frontier to be marshalled there by U.S. troops, and when the crack of the pistol released a living wave of horseflesh and humanity into the new territory, two men who had been present at Wichita Falls the previous night were absent from the throng.

One was Link Carter, who had stolen away from the camp under cover of darkness and who was now several miles nearer to Big Rock than any of those who had a mind to stake out claims there.

The other was Dick, whose horse had developed a lameness that debarred him from the frantic scramble to obtain sites in this country which was being thrown open for settlement.

By the time he discovered that his pony had been purposely, though not seriously crippled, the hindmost competitors in the land-rush were far across the border-line, and there was no hope of the young lawyer's staking out so much as a square foot of the Oklahoma terrain.

He did not know, however, that his failure to start with the rest had probably spared him a bullet in the back. For when Dick had found himself unable to enter the race, the gunman known as Brady had felt that he was relieved of the necessity of "taking care of him," and had dashed off in company with the remainder of the contestants.

The Town of Big Rock

THE site intended for the town of Big Rock, and every acre of land for miles around, had been staked out for an hour or more by the time Dick Hudson put in an appearance there.

The town-site presented a remarkable spectacle. Every kind of conveyance was there, and people were engaged in tacking up notices which advertised the various businesses they proposed to carry on when the settlement had been thoroughly established. But it was significant that on every hand strips of property had been claimed in the name of Link Carter.

Here was the site of a saloon which was to be owned by him. Here were numerous smaller plots which he was willing to sell at his own price. And, out on the range, there was a huge tract of pasture-land where he intended to set up as a rancher as well.

Consequently, when Dick showed up and Link Carter perceived him, the

ex-gaolbird was in high spirits, and accosted the young lawyer with an air of smugness rather than hostility.

"Well, if it ain't the 'late' Mr. Hudson!" he exclaimed. "I figured you'd come stragglin' behind with the rest o' the old women. H'm, too bad you couldn't have got here earlier, or you might have found a corner for yourself. But I'm afraid I own all the available property here, and I ain't just figurin' on selling to you—Mr. Hudson."

"Yeah, I see you've done pretty well for yourself," was Dick's comment. "The early bird, Carter, eh?"

There was a sting in the words, and the other man's eyes narrowed.

"You're not by any chance inferrin' I'm a 'sooner,' are you?" he demanded, using an expression that was applied to men who sneaked into a new territory before it was officially opened for settlement.

"I'm not inferrin' you're a sooner, no," Dick answered. "I'm calling you one, Link Carter, because I didn't see you anywhere around the camp at Wichita Falls this morning."

Carter's eyes blazed momentarily. Then, as he saw several of his cronies approaching, he beckoned to them in an ominous fashion.

"Boys," he said grimly, "for the benefit of those who ain't already acquainted with him, I want to introduce Mr. Hudson to you. Now—er—he's kinda gettin' in my hair, and I guess you all know what to do in a case like that."

The men apparently did know. They began to close in on Dick with the obvious intention of beating him up, but before a blow could be struck Janie Walton suddenly came into view.

"What's the trouble, Link?" she inquired, hurrying forward and addressing Carter in a tone that concealed her true opinion of him.

"Why, this shyster called me a sooner!"



Dick flung himself atop of him and clutched him by the wrist, forcing back the scoundrel's hand so that he could make no use of the forty-five.

"A sooner? Well but we're all sooner." Janie Walton glanced at Dick with studied irony as she made that observation. "You see, we rode horses and drove wagon-teams—whereas Mr. Hudson here, he travelled by turtle. And so, as we arrived sooner than he did—well, we're all sooner."

There was a guffaw at this, and the men who had been on the point of closing in on Dick drew back again with smirks on their ugly faces.

"Poor Mr. Hudson," Janie went on, to the delight of Carter and his accomplices. "We must take up a collection and buy him a real horse."

"I had a real horse," Dick ground out, "until somebody crippled him!"

Janie affected to turn her back on him scornfully.

"Oh, come on, Link," she said. "Don't listen to him. He's just sore because he got here late. Come on, there's a family over here who wants to buy one of your plots."

Dispersing his cronies with a nod, Carter accompanied her in the direction she had indicated, but he had not gone more than twenty paces when Janie Walton stopped and spoke to him in a very different tone from that which she had used in Dick Hudson's presence.

"Listen to me, Carter," she announced, "I walked you off for the simple reason that I wanted to prevent those rough-necks of yours from mauling that—that slyster, as you call him."

Carter slid his eyes on her.

"Oh, so the big lawyer-man needs a petticoat to protect him, eh?"

"If it comes to that, some of your friends may have needed protection, judging by that swollen jaw of yours. But I didn't want to see him going down under a whole pack of your satellites, Carter, and getting the worst of the fight in the end. I think Hudson ought to have an even break, to say the least—though I'm afraid that's something you may not understand."

With the words she swung away from him and walked off, and, after watching her thoughtfully until she was out of sight, Link Carter glanced back towards the spot where he had encountered Dick.

The cow-boy lawyer was no longer there, but Carter espied him in conversation with two men and a woman on a plot of land advertised as the site of a general store, the two men in question being Tom Valley and Bill Tidewell, and the woman, Tom's pleasant young wife.

Gritting his teeth, Carter sought out his confederates again, and, picking on Brady, he gave him a few terse instructions, whereupon Brady straightway betook himself to the locale of the future general store.

"Hudson," the man stated, interrupting Dick as the latter was talking to Bill Tidewell and the Valleys. "Link Carter wants to know when you're movin' on. He's rumin' things here, and he allows Big Rock ain't gonna be big enough for both of yuh."

"Is that so?" Dick Hudson drawled. "Well, you go and tell Carter that the firm of Tidewell and Valley have offered to rent me some office space, and I'm staying here to open up a law practice."

Brady's lip curled.

"You won't do no good as a lawyer," he sneered. "Because Walton's gonna be mayor; Carter's gonna be sheriff; me an' one o' the boys are gonna be deputies, and we've got a lawyer named Abbott that's better 'n you'll ever know how to be."

"Well, that's fine," Dick observed

cooly. "I like all my peas in one pod. It makes 'em easier to shell."

"Talk's cheap," growled Brady. "Not when you're talkin' to a lawyer," was Dick's facetious reply, "and if you take up any more o' my time I'll have to send you a bill."

Brady muttered something under his breath and moved away, and Dick glanced at Tidewell and the Valleys smilingly. But their faces were serious.

"I'd keep my eyes peeled for trouble if I were you, Dick," Tom Valley counselled. "Say, why don't you give up this law business and throw in with us? We've got a site here for a store, and a hunk of land farther up on the range that's the finest sweep of cattle-grazin' country I ever saw. Moreover, we didn't have to buy a single square yard of our property from Carter, and in short Bill and me would be glad to have you as a partner—wouldn't we, Bill?"

Bill Tidewell gave an emphatic assent, but Dick had no mind to abandon his legal calling; and sure enough, when the industry of a pioneering community had raised a trim township out of the wilderness, the young attorney set up as a champion of such people as were the victims of injustice.

He occupied an office which he rented in the premises erected by Tom Valley and Bill Tidewell on the main street of the new town, and he had no lack of clients. For it was not long before Link Carter had begun to infringe upon the rights of honest settlers.

Nevertheless, Dick was far from successful in the briefs that he undertook. He had justice on his side, and time after time the judge appointed by the Federal Government to preside as magistrate over the section was completely in agreement with him. But the forces operating against the youthful attorney were too powerful.

As Brady had intimated, Carter had become sheriff—after a scandalous election that was not an election at all; Brady himself and a gangster named Blade Simpson had been appointed deputies; old Walton, who seemed completely under Carter's thumb, had been elevated to the position of mayor; and Abbott had proved ready and willing to use his legal talents in their interests.

For the rest, "hand-picked" juries were assembled in the court for the one purpose of going against all the evidence Dick Hudson could muster, and verdicts that were the result of bribery were given against him again and again.

One evening, after the hearing of a case in which Dick as usual had been frustrated at every turn, Link Carter and his partisans repaired to the saloon which the ex-gaolbird had built near the south end of the town; and in a back room there Carter drank a toast to the success of his organisation.

"Well, boys," he said, looking round at his cronies with an expression of satisfaction on his sallow countenance, "we've just witnessed another setback for that guy Hudson—thanks to Abbott an' a jury that knew how to vote."

There was a chorus of appreciation, Abbott smiling modestly as it was rendered. But there were two men present who did not register the sentiments of the majority; one being Mayor Walton, who merely appeared uncomfortable—and the other, Brady, who showed signs of impatience.

"Say, boss," the latter grunted, "how much rope you gonna give Hudson, anyways? Why don't you

let me pick a fight with him an' shoot it out?"

Carter laughed easily. "Not on your life," he retorted. "I'm havin' too much fun watchin' him squirm. But listen, supposin' we forget Hudson for the time being and talk about that herd of cattle out on the range owned by Valley an' Tidewell? Blade Simpson tells me there's about a hundred head there, and only a couple of cowpokes guardin' them."

"That's right," put in Simpson, a hulking rogue with a growth of stubble on his chin. "It oughta be a cinch to-night—"

He was interrupted by Mayor Walton.

"Look here," the old man rapped out, "there's a limit to what I'll stand for."

Carter shifted his eyes upon him. "What are you beefin' about?" he demanded. "When you financed me in the first place, I promised you that I'd put big money your way, an' I've kept my promise, ain't I? You're gettin' your percentage out of all the dough we're makin' hand-over-fist."

"You listen to me, Link Carter," old Walton grated, rising to his feet. "I sank my last dollar in what I thought was a legitimate business venture, and even when I learned the kind of man you were I lacked the moral courage to back down. Yes, I'll admit, I've played ball with you in spite of my conscience and closed my eyes to many a shady deal whereby people have been swindled. But when it comes to cattle rustling I draw the line, and you can count me out!"

With that he stamped from the room, but, though his departure caused Link Carter's associates some uneasiness, Carter himself remained undisturbed.

"Don't worry about him," he stated. "He won't talk. He can't afford to. He's in too deep with us."

The Cattle Raid

LINK CARTER might not have treated Walton's rebellious outburst so lightly had he visualised the outcome of it. For, on leaving the saloon, the old man made straight for the house which he now occupied on the main street of Big Rock, and there he took his daughter into his confidence and told her that he had severed his connection with the town's crooked sheriff.

"Oh?" said Janie, whose relationship towards her father had been somewhat strained ever since the night before the land-rush. "And having gone so far with Carter, what's stopping you now, may I ask?"

"Janie," the old man begged, "don't take up that attitude. I know I've been weak, but, come what may, I'm not carrying out that scoundrel's instructions any longer. I've been a blind for him in many ways, but I'm not closing my eyes to cattle rustling, you can take it from me."

In a moment Janie's arm was about his shoulders, and her recent coldness to him was forgotten.

"Cattle rustling, dad?" she exclaimed. "What do you mean?"

"He's going to raid Tidewell and Valley's new herd to-night," her father answered. "I happen to know that they wouldn't take him in with them as a partner, so now he's going to help himself."

Janie's pretty face seemed to tighten.

"Dad," she said, "you've got to warn Tom Valley and Bill Tidewell. That's all there is to it."

"No, honey, I can't do that. Don't forget—if Carter and his gang are indicted on any testimony of mine, they'll denounce me for the part I've



"All right," Carter snarled. "I'm guilty on every count you've brought up against me, including the shooting of Tom Valley. But you'll never put a rope around my neck, for I'm blasin' my way out of this court!"

played in former transactions, and make sure that I go to gaol along with them."

Mayor Walton did not know it, but his conversation with his daughter had been heard by a third party in an adjoining room, and the occupant of that room was none other than the mayor's freckled, thirteen-year-old son, who had been undressing for bed when the earnest voices of his father and Janie had reached his inquisitive ears.

The discussion in the next apartment had still been in progress when Barty had chanced to see a group of horse-men mount up and ride away from the saloon across the street—Link Carter and Abbott waving to them from the porch of the building as they galloped off. And now the lad hurriedly threw on his clothes again and climbed out of the window of his first-floor bed room.

A few minutes later he was entering the general store that was owned by Tom Valley and Bill Tidewell, and as he crossed the threshold of it he saw them standing at the counter with Dick Hudson.

"It's no use," Dick was saying. "My experience in court to-day was the last straw. I guess it isn't on the cards for me or anybody else to beat Carter in this town by legal methods."

"I never before heard you talk as if you were licked, and amin' to run away," Tom Valley muttered, whereupon Dick thrust out his jaw.

"Who said anything about runnin' away?" he demanded. "I'm simply giving up my law practice, and biding my time for the day when Carter will overstep the mark, as his kind always do. And right now I'm accepting an offer to go into the cattle and store business of Messrs. Tidewell and Valley—if that offer still holds good."

Delighted ejaculations escaped Tom Valley and Bill Tidewell, and it was as they were elapping Dick Hudson on the back enthusiastically that Barty Walton came up to the counter. Then the boy proceeded to relate all that had

passed between his father and his sister, the faces of his three listeners darkening as they heard his story.

"I figured somebody oughta put yeh wise," the lad finished pathetically. "But listen, don't go an' do nothin' that would hurt my ole man. It seems like he's been in deep with Link Carter, but he's cut adrift from him now, an' I couldn't bear it if he was to end up in gaol."

Dick laid a hand on the youngster's shoulder.

"Your dad won't come to any harm, Barty," he declared. "If he stands up in a court of law and turns State's evidence, he'll exonerate himself from any small part he may have played in Carter's shady dealings."

He turned to Tom Valley and Bill Tidewell.

"Bill," he said, "there are plenty of honest citizens in this town, and I suggest you raise a posse amongst 'em. And Tom, I reckon Mayor Walton might appreciate it if you looked in on him and set his mind at rest. Meanwhile, I'll ride out to your range and see if I can help your cow-hands to keep those rustlers busy until Bill and the posse arrive."

Tom and Bill acquiesced in this arrangement, and shortly afterwards Dick was spurring out of Big Rock, setting his course for the north, in which direction lay the acres of pasturage belonging to his two friends. And about half an hour later, as he was pushing through a tract of brushwood, he heard a sudden blatter of gunplay that cut across the silence of the range.

Emerging from the thickets into the full light of the moon, he beheld a herd of steers swinging away to the east, and at the same time he descried a band of men dismounting to take cover in a small coppice. They were Carter's associates, headed by "Deputies" Joe Brady and Blade Simpson, and it was obviously their intention to dispose of the two cowboys who had been guard-

ing the cattle, and who had been forced to seek shelter when the gangsters had launched their onset.

These two herdsmen in the employ of Tom Valley and Bill Tidewell had opened fire on the rustlers, and now Carter's hirelings were evidently determined to wipe them out on the indisputable theory that "dead men tell no tales." With the cow-hands slain, there would be nobody to testify that any of Link Carter's associates had figured in the cattle-raid, and when the two punchers had been exterminated it would be a easy matter to round up the steers and drive them from the vicinity at the thieves' own leisure.

Such were the reflections that undoubtedly passed through the minds of the crooks. But while they blazed at the pair of cowboys who had challenged their presence on the Valley-Tidewell range, Dick Hudson effected a detour that brought him round to the vantage point where his friends' employees were located, and soon three guns instead of two were answering the fusillades of the Carter gang.

Out there on the moonlit prairie, the bellowing detonations of the forty-fives snote the air resoundingly, and leaden slugs sped on their mission of death. But Dick and the cow-hands remained unscathed, whereas a couple of the rustlers had been laid low when all at once Bill Tidewell's posse from Big Rock swept into view.

The crooks ran to their horses the moment they became aware of the newcomers' approach, but Joe Brady alone succeeded in reaching his pony and making his get-away. The others were overtaken, and resisting capture because they knew the penalty of cattle-lifting, they were shot down to a man in the point-blank gun-duel that ensued.

The firing had ceased when three late arrivals appeared on the scene. These were Tom Valley, old man Walton and Janie, and as they slowed up, Dick

Hudson made it his business to single out the girl.

"Say," he told her, "I'm sort of getting a new angle on you. Until to-night, I thought you were one of my worst enemies."

"If you'd taken the trouble to study human nature instead of law," Janie answered whimsically, "you might have come to the conclusion that I was trying to be one of your best friends, though I'll admit I was handicapped by the position dad was in."

"One of my best friends?" Dick echoed.

Janie Walton nodded.

"Yes. Do you remember how I warned you against making the land-rush? Well, I said at the time it was for your own good, and so it was. And I might add that I was the one who crippled your horse, to save you from getting a bullet in the back."

"Oh, you were the one who crippled my horse, huh?"

"But it didn't keep you from coming to Big Rock and hunting up trouble, did it? Well, maybe it's a good thing you did come, because I've a feeling that you're going to take on one court-case that you'll win—the case of Link Carter versus the State."

The Last Throw

LINK CARTER was alone in his office behind the saloon when Joe Brady stumbled across the threshold to acquaint the scoundrel with the news that his gang had been annihilated, and when he had received a full account of all that had happened Carter jerked himself to his feet.

"You say that Hudson showed up, and was followed a little while afterwards by a posse?" he rasped.

"Yeah," came the rejoinder, "and although I'm pretty sure that none of the posse or them two-cowhands could identify me as one of the rustlers, I ain't so sure about Hudson. He may have been pretty close to us afore he worked round to join up with the Valley-Tidewell punchers."

Link Carter began to chew his nails, and Brady eyed him irritably.

"What are you lookin' so anxious about?" he demanded. "I'm the one that's liable to be in a spot. You can easily say you didn't know a thing about this cattle-raid, even though all your pals was mixed up in it."

Carter swung round on him.

"Oh, so I've no cause to feel anxious, huh?" he ground out. "Listen, you fool, how d'you suppose Hudson and that posse found out about the raid? Walton must have squealed. I was wrong in thinking that he'd keep his mouth shut. He's spilled the works, and if he takes the witness-stand against me in a court of law I'm through. Not even Abbott will be able to figure out a loop-hole for me."

There was a silence, and then, his eyes narrowing, Brady tapped the butt of a six-gun that he was wearing on his hip.

"Well," he said, "I can take care of Hudson so he'll never testify against me."

Carter drew in a long breath.

"Yeah," he muttered. "Yeah, Joe, that's right. And I can handle ole Walton."

A few seconds later Brady was letting himself out through the front door of the saloon, which had been closed for the night, and it was as he emerged into the street that he saw a crowd of riders entering the town.

They were headed by Mayor Walton and Janie, Dick Hudson, Bill Tidewell and Tom Valley, and at sight of them Brady drew back into the shadows of the saloon's porch. Then, from that October 2nd, 1937.

vantage point, he watched the party break up and noticed Dick making his way alone towards the court-house which was about the most imposing structure that Big Rock could boast.

Brady had no doubt that the young lawyer was bound for the quarters of Judge Ben Parkinson, who lived close to the court-house and presided over it in the name of the Federal Government; and, as the street emptied, Brady made haste to intercept the big fellow.

"Where you goin', Hudson?" he asked softly, accosting him in a by-way that led to the court-house.

Dick looked at him steadfastly.

"I'm goin' to Judge Parkinson, Brady," he said, "to see about bringing you up for trial as a cattle-rustler, and Carter as an accessory before the fact."

"And I wouldn't try to stop me, if I were you," he added, detecting a suspicious movement of the gangster's right hand. "Because although I dislike bloodshed I once had the name of bein' pretty quick on the draw and I've neither given up totin' a gun nor lost the knack of using one."

It was a warning that Brady chose to disregard. In a flash he was reaching for his holster. But, swift as he was, Dick Hudson beat him to the trigger by a split-second, and as the cowboy-lawyer's "iron" belched flame and lead Carter's hireling pitched to the ground in a heap.

Alarmed by the shot, a crowd had soon collected, and it was a crowd that speedily expressed approval at the fate of Joe Brady, for there was more than one citizen amongst the throng who had reason to bear a grudge against Link Carter and all who had been connected with him.

Then, even as Dick was assuring the bystanders that he had in any case been compelled to fire in self-defence, a young woman put in an appearance and elbowed her way to the handsome attorney's side.

The woman was Ruth Valley, and there was a look of terror in her eyes.

"Dick," she panted. "Oh, Dick, Tom has gone to Carter's saloon for a show-down, and he's gone unarmed. He said he was going to give Carter a man-size beating before he let the law take care of him. I tried to stop him, but he wouldn't listen to me."

Dick gripped her by the arm.

"You mean to tell me Bill Tidewell let him go to Carter's saloon alone?"

"Bill wasn't there to prevent him. Bill had gone over to the Waltons' house. Oh, Dick, I'm scared! I—"

She stopped, for the report of a gunshot had interrupted her. It was a sound that seemed to come from somewhere near the south end of the town, and in a moment Dick was racing in that direction, with Ruth Valley and the crowd of citizens hurrying after him.

Sixty seconds later Dick Hudson was outside the back door of Carter's saloon, and was catching Tom Valley in his arms as the latter reeled out across the threshold of the land-shark's office with a bullet in his body—a bullet that had inflicted a mortal wound, for even as Dick lowered him to the ground the stricken man drew his last breath in a hollow groan.

His teeth clenched, Dick Hudson blundered into Carter's office. The rogue was not there, but the stalwart intruder caught sight of him in a kind of store-room; and Carter was engrossed in the task of extracting a spent cartridge-case from one of the cylinders of his revolver, with the object of replacing it by a fresh slug in order to cover up the crime he had committed.

"That won't do you any good, Link

Carter," Dick ripped out. "You're caught red-handed."

The crook swung round, and as he clapped eyes on his accuser he made a desperate attempt to turn the six-shooter on him. But ere the man could pull the trigger Dick was upon him and had struck him to the floor with a smashing right-hand punch.

Carter was still in possession of the revolver, however, and still in possession of his wits; and again he tried to direct the barrel of the gun at the lawyer.

Dick flung himself atop of him and clutched him by the wrist, forcing back the scoundrel's hand so that he could make no use of the forty-five. Then he succeeded in wresting the weapon from the fellow's grasp, and before another minute had elapsed he had battered the senses out of him with his bunched fists.

Outside, Ruth Valley was weeping distractedly over her husband's body; and when Dick appeared in the back doorway of the saloon, dragging Carter after him, the mob of onlookers who had gathered around the bereaved woman were all for dealing with the killer there and then.

But they were restrained by the young attorney who had beaten the land-hark into submission.

"Folks," Dick Hudson stated, "some mighty strange laws have been in operation here in Big Rock while Carter has been sheriff. But lynch law is no better than any that he ever obeyed, and that's why we've got to give him a fair trial, with Judge Ben Parkinson presiding."

And so, before that week was out, Link Carter stood arraigned in the court-house where case after case had formerly been decided in his favour. But now there was no "hand-picked" jury there to give a verdict that was all against the evidence; and Abbott, representing the defendant, made a poor showing when he found himself in the presence of twelve good men who were above bribery and corruption.

With Dick Hudson acting as prosecuting attorney, and the bench occupied by a judge who could scarcely conceal his distaste for the prisoner, the net of the law closed about Link Carter.

In the first place, Dick volunteered a testimony which left little room for doubt that the bullet that had slain Tom Valley had been fired from Carter's gun. Then he called upon Mayor Walton to take the stand, and proceeded to question him on his past association with the accused.

Old Walton did not spare himself in his indictment of the shady operations that Carter had carried out, and was speaking of the swindles the man had perpetrated when Dick cut in on him.

"All right, Mr. Walton," he said. "I think we all know now the methods Carter used when he pretended to sell plots of land to settlers, and tricked them with title-deeds which weren't worth the paper they were written on, and which enabled him to reclaim the properties and charge them rent. But there's just one other question I want to ask you. Did Link Carter make the land-rush according to Government rules and regulations?"

"I object," Abbott shouted. "My client's not on trial for breaking the rules and regulations governing a land-rush."

Dick glanced at him ominously.

"No, my learned friend," he said. "Your client is on trial for an offence far more serious than that. But if it pleases the court, I'm not only trying to establish the character of the prisoner—and those who consorted with him, Mr. Abbott—but I'm also endeavouring to

(Continued on page 28)

Three authors seek a plot for a play. They are still on page one when an intoxicated man wanders into their flat, collapses, and 15,000 dollars fall out of his pocket. Thinking he is a blackmailer, the three decide to build up a story round him, but everything becomes very involved when their subject is really murdered. Starring Lew Ayres, Ruth Coleman, Eugene Palette, and Benny Baker

"THE CRIME NOBODY SAW"



Three Authors in Search of a Plot

HORACE DRYDEN sat at the typewriter, his clean-shaven, round, bespectacled face the picture of patient gloom.

"Page 1," he ejaculated in a voice that resembled the first grave-digger from Hamlet.

Nick Milburn, in his shirt-sleeves, with his head buried in his hands, looked up angrily.

"Don't keep saying 'Page 1,'" he snapped. "I'm getting tired of it."

"Babe," Lawton walked to the table and poured himself out a drink. He was large and round, and, like Horace, he looked unhappy.

"He's got to say somethin'," he murmured. "We never get much further than the headin'. I wish I sold pea-nuts for a livin'. That's a man's job—writin' plays ain't."

Nick Milburn threw him an angry glance.

"You couldn't sell fresh fish to a starving seal," he retorted. "Haven't either of you got any ideas?"

Babe scratched his head ruefully.

"I'm beginning to think—"

"Marvelous," interrupted Nick witheringly. "In ten years' time something might result. Unfortunately Atherton will be here in half an hour."

"Know any other funny stories?" asked Lawton.

Silence then, while they all sat regarding the carpet as if it had done them some mortal injury. For John Atherton a month previously had commissioned them to write a play for him, and had parted with five hundred dollars in advance through the glowing accounts they had given him of a certain "wonderful idea." And now the money had come to an end.

Unfortunately, the play hadn't even come to a beginning. Horace had sat regularly at his typewriter and had neatly inscribed "Page 1" at the top of innumerable sheets of paper. Though that was about as far as he had ever got—beyond a line or two. Each one in turn had weighed in with suggestions, only to have them scornfully rejected by the other two.

Atherton, moreover, had been calling latterly with the persistence of a tax-collector, and though hitherto they had managed to stall him with fictitious stories of how the play was progressing, they knew only too well that his suspicions were aroused and the day of reckoning was at hand. He was to call that morning to "hear the play"—and though they knew only too well that he wouldn't hear it, they needed no telling that they would hear things.

And then suddenly into their gloomy silence broke the whirring of the outside bell.

Nick rose to his feet with a sigh. "And now for the day of judgment," he said as he walked to the door.

"The condemned man walked bravely to the scaffold," bleated Horace.

John Atherton walked briskly into the room, but he was eyeing them closely as they shook hands with him offensively while they expressed their delight at seeing him.

"We were only just talking about you," bleated Horace.

Atherton sat down in a chair, rubbing his hands.

"Fine, gentlemen," he said, "and so now I'm going to hear the play?"

It was not exactly a happy opening. Babe looked at the carpet, Nick looked at Horace, Horace looked like a cat

that has swallowed an outside in fish-bones.

Nick broke the painful silence.

"Well, I don't know that you really ought to hear it this morning, Mr. Atherton," he began. "It seems—a pity—to—er—tell it you before it's—er—quite complete."

"That's just what I was saying as you came in," urged Horace, picking up the cue. "It's so good that we don't want to spoil it for you."

Babe added his little piece.

"Quite right," he said. "In a day or two's time—"

But Atherton broke in with the calm finality of a judge pronouncing sentence.

"Oh, I don't mind a bit about its not being quite complete," he said calmly. "You can just tell me the main outline of the story. That will do quite well for me."

Horace swallowed. He could see from the faces of his companions that it would about "do" for all of them.

"You tell him the beginning of the plot, Babe," he murmured with charming modesty.

"Oh, I couldn't, really," exclaimed Lawton hastily. "It's Nick's story. He must tell it."

Milburn sent him a glance which should have annihilated him on the spot.

"How nice of you, Babe," he said between clenched teeth.

Atherton settled himself more comfortably in his chair.

"Go right ahead, Mr. Milburn," he said pleasantly.

Nick's opening, as a fictional flight composed on the spur of the moment, had points in originality if nothing else. Though as a play to be pre-

sented to an audience composed of other than congenital lunatics or mentally deficient infants, it was slightly lacking in conviction and probability. Though if it suffered at all in the latter two, it was certainly not wanting in dramatic force. Nick declaimed the story with tone and gesture that the late Sir Henry Irving might almost have envied.

All the same, it is scarcely likely that the great actor's envy would have gone beyond the dramatic force of the budding young author.

It began apparently on the steppes of Russia in the dead of night, and out of a perfect forest of "moujikis," "vodkas" and "vitch's" there emerged a lovely heroine in priceless sables and passionate tears, who was fleeing for her life in a drosky driven by a grand duke (in disguise)—he was really a grand duke, although he didn't know it, having been brought up as a butcher's assistant—to save her from the clutches of another grand duke who really wasn't one at all. And the first curtain fell in an impenetrable icy gorge, with the wolves closing in on three sides and the nearest village fifty miles away.

"Which, of course, is a magnificent situation," said the teller of the story, who had by now reached the end of his resources. "As Horace wrote the second act he must tell it you himself. It wouldn't be fair for me to do it."

Dryden's eyes thanked him. So did his gulp which suggested that something inside was seriously arguing with him. Lawton was scratching his head desperately in his endeavours to stimulate his brain to cope with Act 3, which he could see was coming his way.

Horace began:

"The lovely Olga Poppoffwitch—I mean 'vitch'—is now in the burning desert of the Congo." His statement seemed to suggest that she had jumped there from Russia. "The sun is streaming down upon the palm trees, and by her side stands her faithful white-maned camel. She—Olga, not the camel—"

But Atherton rose. And if his words, unlike theirs, lacked originality of expression, they certainly were not wanting in dramatic force. And the three who listened knew that the days of their procrastination were at an end.

"I'll have no more of your sabled heroines and your droskies and your white-maned camels," he stormed. "You're swindlers, cheats, rogues, charlatans—that's what you are! You've had my money under false pretences, and I don't believe you've ever written a line, tried to write a line, or could write a line if you tried for a hundred years. But you're not getting away with my money like this, let me tell you, so you needn't think you are. Listen, you fiction-fakers, you swindling swaggerers, you snatching snoopers, I'll give you till four o'clock this afternoon to produce my play. Four o'clock, and not one minute afterwards! And if it isn't ready, you can use your inventive geniuses on the magistrate and see what he'll have to say to it. Good-morning!"

As he walked out, slamming the door behind him, Babe walked slowly over to the table and poured himself out another drink, which he proceeded to pour down his capacious throat.

"Ain't it fun, ben' an author?" he queried.

"Darned funnier to know you are one," growled Nick. "You can bet your life I shan't give you away."

Horace had ambled over to the typewriter and sat down in front of it like a sick sheep.

"I've got as far as Page 1," he said.

October 2nd, 1937.

The Man from the Flat Opposite

THERE is nothing unusual when a man rings your bell and you find on opening the door that he is in a pretty advanced state of intoxication. Nor is there anything unusual in his announcing to you in drunken gravity what his name is and the fact that he lives in the opposite apartment.

But it is unusual when, having done these things, he brushes you calmly aside, and, walking straight into your flat, drops down on the divan as if it were his own and proceeds to fall asleep without taking the slightest notice of any of you.

And all this the man from the apartment opposite had done soon after John Atherton's exit and while the three friends were feverishly wrestling with the problem of producing a play by four o'clock that afternoon.

They stood staring at each other in bewilderment—at the stranger, too. He was a small man. He was wearing evening dress beneath his overcoat, and he had a black trilby hat, and a white flower in his buttonhole, and a white muffler round his neck. For the rest he wore large, rimmed pince-nez, and had a neatly trimmed beard and moustache.

"I don't know him," murmured Horace at length, "but as his name's Duval, and he lives opposite, and there's a Mrs. Duval living there whom I do know, we may assume, I think, that he's her husband."

"My dear Hobnes, you're marvellous," retorted Nick.

"I'll remember her nightly in my prayers," said Babe as he gazed disgustedly at the sleeping man.

"What would you say he was?" asked Nick presently.

But an answer came in a somewhat unexpected fashion, for the stranger turned over at that moment to settle himself in a more comfortable position, and something slid from his hand to the floor which brought a sharp exclamation from all of them simultaneously.

Nick stooped down in a flash.

"Gosh, fellows—it's money!" he exclaimed excitedly. And then running his fingers quickly over the roll of notes, he added in awe-stricken tones:

"Fifteen thousand dollars!"

They stared blankly at each other.

"It seems to me," began Horace thoughtfully, "that the sooner we get him out of here the better."

He looked at the roll of notes lovingly.

"Drunken men never remember where they've been," he added. "It will teach him a salutary lesson."

"Don't be a fool," retorted Nick angrily. "We aren't thieves."

"Atherton said we were—he ought to know," murmured Horace.

"We must turn out his pockets and find out some more. Get to it, Babe."

"Try it yourself. He's sittin' on most of 'em."

"Then help me hoist him and see if we can stuff some sense into him."

Babe lifted him to his feet, and they all three shouted at him while they shook him. But it was of no avail. His head lolled back and there was not the slightest sign of consciousness about him.

"What do we do now, Nick?" asked Babe, who was still supporting him.

Nick looked up from the notes in his hand.

"Go through his pockets carefully," he said.

He stood turning over the pages of a small black book which they had taken from the insensible stranger's breast-pocket. There was a heavy frown on his face.

"There's something mighty queer

about this chap," he said at length. "He's got a bunch of well-known men in this book, with their telephone numbers and certain entries of sums of money against each name. I wonder what the deuce it all means?"

"Looks to me like blackmail," remarked Babe laconically.

Nick looked up quickly.

"Jove, that's a notion," he replied. "Now, just one second and let me think. I've got an idea."

At length he spoke.

"Say, you chaps," he said. "I've got the whale of an idea, and it seems to me that there's money in it, too. We're goin' to ring up one or two of those guys whose numbers are in this little book and we're goin' to tell 'em that we've got Duval here in a dyin' condition, but wantin' to make a last statement before he pegs out. But he won't make it except in front of 'em."

"Where does that get us?" asked Horace.

"Use any atom of intelligence you've got," retorted Nick, "though I allow it isn't much. We're the police, you mutt, and each victim is goin' to pay to keep this matter hushed up."

Horace blinked at him helplessly.

"Oh, we're the police, are we?" he got out feebly.

"We are. I'm Inspector Milburn. Babe here will go and borrow Tim Harrigan's uniform—fake up a decent excuse, Babe"—Tim Harrigan was a sergeant of police who lived in the building, and a friend of Babe's as well—"while you, Horace, are—"

He paused for a moment, deep in thought.

"Now, what the dickens can you be?"

Oh, I've got it. You're a doctor—

Divisional Surgeon Dryden."

"Oh, I say, I've never been a doctor. I don't know what to do," expostulated Horace.

"You'll have nothing to do. You can talk a lot of high-falutin' stuff—they won't know what you're talkin' about—"

"But I don't want to be a divisional surgeon."

"You're not asked. You do what you're told. I'll do all the talking. You can endorse what I say when I ask you to do so. Now help me shove this guy behind the screen, and then Babe shall run away and get his uniform, and then we'll select three big names out of this book and call 'em up."

They decided on their three victims eventually. They were of the names of Brookes, Mallory and Underhill, all apparently men of wealth, from their addresses.

And Nick, when he had finished telephoning, turned to his companions with a grin.

"Seems to me we're on something good," he ejaculated. "Each one hummed and ha'ed and tried to bluff. But all three are coming right enough."

"I wish I weren't a doctor," wailed Horace.

Surprises for the Conspirators

AS the electric bell whirred out

Nick strode to the door and opened it, disclosing a tall, well-

dressed young man in the middle thirties with a small, dark moustache.

"I'm Inspector Milburn," he said coolly, "and may I ask if you're Mr. Brookes?"

"My friends and patients usually call me Dr. Brookes," replied the other easily. "What's all the trouble about?"

Horace's jaw dropped a yard, and he glanced despairingly about him as though he was contemplating making a hurried exit. Nick, however, closed the door coolly.

"Come right in, doctor," he said. "This is Sergeant Lawton and this is Dr. Dryden, the divisional surgeon."

"Charmed, I'm sure," murmured Brookes.

Horace stammered out that it was mutual, and looked rather like a man for whom the executioner has just called.

Nick proceeded in a business-like manner.

"Now, doctor," he said, "be good enough to tell us what your relations were with Mr Duval. As I told you, and as Dr. Dryden will also tell you, he can't possibly live for more than a few hours at the most."

"Sorry about that," replied the other. "He's an old patient of mine and I've treated him for some time past for chronic alcoholism."

He turned to Horace, whose mouth had opened limply at this unexpected new development.

"What's he dying of, doctor?" he asked blandly.

"Oh—er—quite a lot of things. But he can't possibly recover, I can assure you."

"Being his doctor, of course you have no objection to my having a look at him, have you?"

Nick, however, answered the question. He wanted no telling from the panic-stricken look on his friend's face that he had every objection to it.

"I really can't allow that, doctor," he said firmly. "Besides, there's no need for it. I have every faith in Doctor Dryden's opinion, and there is not the slightest need for another."

Brookes shrugged his shoulders indifferently. But he addressed Horace.

"You haven't yet told me what's the matter with him," he said persuasively.

Horace gulped and creaked like a fish newly grassed.

"As a matter of fact—" he began; but at that moment there came another ring at the bell, and Milburn hastily laid his hand on Brookes' shoulder.

"O n e moment, please, doctor," he said. "I must ask you to be good enough to step into the adjoining room. This is someone I'm expecting, and I'll go on with you in a minute."

As the door closed behind Brookes, and Milburn made for the front door, Horace wiped his face with his handkerchief.

"If this is another doctor, Nick," he bleated. "I'm going out through the window."

The next man who came in and who gave the name of Underhill was quite a different type from Brookes. For he was short and inclined to stoutness. He was clean-shaven, wore horn-rimmed glasses, and had a definitely truculent manner.

"Now then, what's all this about?" he demanded, as he came into the room.

"It has come to our knowledge," said Nick, in his very best professional manner, "that you not only

know this man Duval, who is dying in the next room, but have had extensive and rather peculiar dealings with him," he said.

Underhill's truculent frown deepened. "What's the big idea, inspector?" he queried. "Who's this guy Duval, anyway?"

But Nick shook his head.

"Better come clean," he said. "It'll save trouble in the end."

"I tell you," rasped Underhill angrily, "I haven't the least idea what you're talking about."

But sudden interruption came to Nick's assistance as he put his next question to Underhill and asked whether he had been in the building before, to which he received a flat denial. For at that moment a stout, round-faced coloured woman entered the room, but stopped short as she did so.

"Oh, I beg pardon, Mr. Milburn," she said. "I didn't know there was anyone here, and I thought it was a good chance to clean— Why, Mr. Underhill, how's you?"

There was a rather strained silence. Underhill was looking as if he could cheerfully murder the old woman, and Nick didn't miss it. He swung round on her.

"D'you know this gentleman, Ambrosia?" he asked gently.

A broad smile illuminated her face.

"Know him, sir? Why, sir, he's the owner of this block of apartments. Do I know my own mother?"

"Thank you, Ambrosia, that will be all."

"Thank you, sir."

As the door closed behind her, Nick spoke with his eyes fixed intently on Underhill.

"And now perhaps you're comin' clean, Underhill?" he suggested. "What were the relations between you and Duval?"

The other scowled.

"I refuse to say a word without my solicitor," he snapped angrily.

Another ring at the bell stopped Nick's answer. It was occurring to him that he hadn't got very far with his first two ventures, and he was wondering what to do. Hustling Underhill unceremoniously into an adjoining room he went to the door. Before him stood an exceedingly pretty and well-dressed girl.

Nick stood blinking a little. This was a development for which he was not prepared.

"May I ask what you want?" he queried politely.

"My name's Mallory—Kay Mallory. You rang my father up, and as he's not well I came along for him."

"Please come in and sit down. I've got a few questions I'd like to ask you, Miss Mallory."

But almost before she was seated she began, considerably to his surprise:

"You want to know doubtless what my father's relations were with Duval, and I can tell you just this. Duval has blackmailed him for fifteen thousand pounds, which my father was foolish enough to pay. Though what it was all about I just don't know."

Nick stared at her blankly. It was dawning on him that things were turning out far differently from his expectations. Her straightforwardness, her prettiness, and her very obvious distress worried him not a little.

"My dear Miss Mallory—" he began, but that was as far as he ever got, for at that moment Underhill rushed in from the balcony, his eyes bulging with fear.

"Quick!" he panted. "Duval's been murdered!"

They all spun round and stared at him. Nick was the first to speak.

"Come on, we'll buy it."

"Oh, for the love of Mike! I saw him lying on the couch behind the screen there—"



"Maybe you'll find a finger-print or two on that which will help," he said as he handed the ice-pick to the detective.

"I thought you didn't know him?"

"Oh, never mind that! I'm telling you—"

Brookes had come quickly into the room while all this was going on. He had gone at once behind the screen where they had laid Duval, and he now reappeared.

"It's quite true," he announced calmly. "Someone's murdered him. He's lying there with an ice-pick driven into his heart."

There was a deathly silence. Horace was positively goggling with fright.

Then one and all dived for the back of the screen.

They stood staring at the murdered man. Horace was wiping the perspiration from his forehead. Babe was looking particularly glum, while Nick was engorging his brains to try to discover what the proper duties of a police-inspector were at a moment like this.

Brookes was the first to speak calmly, but with slight sarcasm in his voice.

"Well, inspector, what happens now?" he asked.

Nick pulled himself together with a jerk. He realised that the situation had changed with startling rapidity; but he realised, too, that the time for fooling was past.

He spun round in a flash on Underhill.

"You were the first to discover the body," he snapped in his best professional manner. "What were you doing out of the room I put you in?"

"Why should I stay there?" retorted the other coolly. "I'm no criminal. I wandered out on to the balcony, looked in through the window, and saw this chap lying with the pick in his heart. D'you expect me to walk back into the room and take no notice of it?"

Nick bit his lip. The explanation sounded plausible enough. He addressed Brookes.

"What have you got to say for yourself?" he queried.

"I stayed put in my room," replied Brookes coolly. "You saw me come out of it, attracted by the noise I heard and the word 'murdered.' Why should I stay inside?"

Nick decided to play for time. It seemed the only thing to do.

"No one leaves this flat," he said. "Sergeant, you remain here with the body."

"Wouldn't our friend Dr. Dryden like to examine the corpse so that he can certify the cause of death?" asked Brookes politely.

Horace's face was a study. He was about to stammer out that he was perfectly satisfied with it when Nick interrupted sharply.

"I'm giving instructions here, not you," he snapped. "And when I want your advice I'll ask for it. Underhill, get back to your room, and you, Dr. Dryden, go with him and see he doesn't leave it. Brookes, you and Miss Mallory stay here with me. I'm getting to the bottom of this."

The Body Disappears

BABE LAWTON sat in a chair behind the screen with the dead body of Duval lying before him. And he was plunged in the deepest gloom. It seemed to him that Nick's alleged brain-wave had landed all of them into a mess a thousand times worse than the one in which they had previously been involved, and he was wondering vaguely how on earth Nick was ever going to get them out of it.

From the other side of the screen he could hear the voices of the three people. He could hear Nick doing most of the talking, and found himself wondering how he could keep his voice so calmly indifferent. He and Kay

Mallory seemed to be having a discussion, and he wondered what it was all about.

But from that moment he ceased to wonder, for something crashed in on his head, and the world faded into nothingness.

He sat up blinking, gradually made out Nick supporting him and the rest crowded round him.

"Something hit me," he murmured a little feebly.

"I'll say it did," replied Nick grimly. "We found you lying in a heap on the floor just now, and the person who did it was thoughtful enough to switch the lights off at the main and we've only just managed to get 'em on again."

Lawton blinked, stared. Duval's body should have been on the couch in front of him. But it was no longer there!

"Where—where's the body?" he managed to get out.

"That's what I want to know," replied Nick. "I hoped you'd be able to tell us. It's been good enough to disappear."

"It—it was there when I passed out," Brookes shrugged his shoulders.

"We've only got your word for it," he said.

Nick spun round on him in a second.

"What d'you mean?" he flashed out.

Brookes regarded him with a cynical smile.

"Trying to tell me," rejoined the other coolly, "that your pal here"—he indicated Horace—"is a real doctor! Because I'm telling you he's no more a doctor than Underhill here. So how do we know that this guy is a real policeman? He may have disposed of the body himself."

"Shouldn't be a bit surprised," growled Underhill.

There was rather an uncomfortable silence. Horace looked in the last stages of feebleness, and Lawton seemed by no means happy. Nick, however, refused to give in. Ideas had suddenly come to him, and more than ever now he decided to see this thing through.

"You're talking through the back of your neck," he replied sharply. "At any rate, I'm running this show, and none of you are leaving here. I'm going into the flat opposite to make some investigations, and I'm locking you all in here, whether you like it or whether you don't."

But even as he reached the door there came another ring, and as he opened the door he found himself confronted by a small, elderly looking man with a very worried face. Yet before he could speak there came a cry from Kay Mallory:

"Daddy!"

Nick's eyebrows went up.

"Oh, so you are Mr. Mallory?" he queried politely. "Please come in. We only wanted you to make the party complete."

Outside the flat he locked the door and pocketed the key.

"Gosh!" he murmured. "What the blazes of a mess! But I'm inclined to think I know the solution of it all. The only job will be to prove it. However—"

Inside the Duvals' flat Nick stood interviewing the old coloured woman. Though to her, because she knew him well, he had made a clean breast of the whole story from the beginning, begging her assistance before he finally decided to throw up the sponge and call in the police.

She listened open-mouthed.

"Gosh, Mr. Milburn, yo' sure have got yourself into a hole."

"It looks to me, Ambrosia, more like a bottomless pit than a hole," he answered with a smile; "but we won't

argue about that. I've got a shrewd idea who killed this man Duval, and I want to ask you one or two questions before I go any further."

"Go right ahead, Mr. Milburn. I'll sure be helping you all I can."

"This man Duval, who's been murdered. You know everyone in this building, Ambrosia. How often have you seen him?"

"Well, I've seen him coming home very drunk sometimes, sir."

"And Mrs. Duval? Was she fond of him?"

"Far as I know, Mr. Milburn. She used to talk a mighty lot about him."

"Did they go out much together?"

"Can't say I ever saw 'em together at all. I used to see her when I came to do this flat. Once or twice I've seen him. But I sure never saw them together."

Nick's eyebrows went up.

"Like that, was it? Did the lady have any boy friends?"

"Well, between you and me, sir, she had one particular one who used to come here quite a lot when her husband wasn't here. But he hasn't been here for quite a while, and, between you and me, I sort of fancy that he'd given her the go-by. And I reckon she was mighty sore about it. For she's a mighty good-looker, Mr. Milburn, and I reckons they don't sort of like bein' turned down."

"I'll say they don't," said Nick reflectively.

He stood by the open grand piano deep in thought. For what she had just told him was giving him an unexpected surprise, and seemed to make matters even more complicated than before.

"Anything more I can tell you, Mr. Milburn?" queried the old woman.

"Can't think of anything at the moment, Ambrosia."

"Then I'll be gettin' along with my work. I was just doin' the other room."

She bustled away, and he stood staring gloomily at the piano. The solution seemed to be farther away than ever. Quite thoughtlessly he started to tap the keyboard of the piano, but even as he did so he stopped, and a frown came to his face.

"That's funny!" he muttered.

It certainly was; though what followed was surely funnier still. For, as he proceeded to touch more keys, he was surprised to find that none of them would sound.

For a moment he stood frowning. Then he lifted the big lid. But even as he did so he gave a gasp and stood petrified with amazement. For there, huddled up inside the grand piano, was the body of Duval!

Ambrosia to the Rescue!

MILBURN never knew how long he stood staring at the dead man.

All he knew was that, as he stared, certain tiny things about Duval seemed suddenly to attract his attention, to invite his closer inspection. But even as they did so his breath came faster, and presently, with a trembling hand, he touched the small moustache on the corpse's cold face.

And then he gave it a sudden pull, though even as it came away in his hand he gave an excited exclamation and flopped heavily down on the music-stool.

"Gosh!" he exclaimed. "I believe I see it all!"

In a flash he had closed the piano, lighted cigarette, and, trying to control the trembling of his hands, closed the piano.

"Ambrosia!" he called out gently.

She came in, stood before him.

(Continued on page 27)

"WILD WEST DAYS"

(Continued from page 6)

amongst townsmen who had always been respecters of the law. Like wildfire a sense of resentment spread through the crowd, so that when someone gave vent to the words "lynch law," the grim phrase was echoed and re-echoed until the rafters of the bar-room rang with it.

And soon the Silver Dollar was emptying its mob of enraged humanity into the street, a mob headed by those who were secretly in the pay of Matt Keeler, but consisting mainly of honest citizens who were filled with righteous indignation, and who believed that justice in Brimstone had become a travesty.

"We'll show the rats in this town they can't get away with murder! When we're through with Munro, every other crook in this section will know what to expect!"

Cries such as these reflected the ugly mood of the crowd as they marched towards the gaol, and en route the throng was swelled in numbers by groups of loungers, while from a side-road came a further batch of ruffians belonging to Keeler's organisation—men who had presumably been sought out by the newspaper owner and detailed to join in any demonstration that might ensue.

Meanwhile, in the gaol itself, Kentucky Wade and his comrades were informing Larry Munro and his sister of the successful outcome of their interview with Judge Lawrence, and they were assuring the prisoner that they would do all in their power to help him exonerate himself, when suddenly the sheriff called to them from the outer doorway of his office.

"There's a mob headed this way!" he jerked. "I don't like the look of it!"

Kentucky hurried to the threshold, followed by Dude, Mike Morales and Trigger Benton, and the four of them beheld the solid phalanx of men who were advancing down the main street; beheld, well in the lead, two individuals who were strangers to them, though not to the sheriff.

They were Steve Claggett and Buckskin, and from a horse tethered outside the saloon the latter had obtained a lariat which was doubtless intended for Larry Munro's neck.

"You'd better close this door and get under cover, sheriff," Kentucky said tersely; but the other shook his head.

"I ain't never been scared by a mob yet," he stated. "I'm goin' out to talk to 'em."

With that he stepped forth on to the porch, and, holding up his hand, called out to the oncoming throng.

"That's close enough," he warned them imperatively.

The crowd paused, and for a moment seemed undecided. Then the rogue known as Buckskin lifted his voice.

"We got nothing against you, sheriff," he began, "but you've a prisoner in there that—"

"I've a prisoner in here that's going to stay where he is," the sheriff cut in, "safe in the hands of the law."

Once more there was a brief silence, which was again broken by Buckskin as the half-breed wheeled round to incite the mob.

"Are you goin' to stand there and let one man back you down?" he grated, and all at once the crowd raised a clamorous response, hurling cat-calls

at the guardian of the peace and working themselves up into a fury of determination.

Within a few seconds men were reaching for their hips, and, realising that they were in the grip of the blood-lust and that no amount of argument would bring them to their senses, the sheriff ducked back into his office and slammed the door.

As he bolted that door he saw that Kentucky and his three companions had drawn their six-guns, and, following suit, he addressed them curtly.

"All right, let 'em have it!" he rapped out. "But shoot over their heads first."

The one-time law officers from New Mexico posted themselves at the windows, and the sheriff took up a position alongside Kentucky. An instant later their revolvers were helching a challenge to the mob, the shots flying high above the press of angry men.

The challenge failed to restrain the crowd. Still led by Buckskin and Steve Claggett, the throng surged forward at the double and poured in a volley of bullets that whistled through the open windows of the sheriff's office or struck splinters from the frames.

"They're not fooling, sheriff!" Kentucky said grimly.

"Are you tellin' me?" was the older man's rejoinder. "Okay, fire into the thick of 'em!"

Again the forty-fives of the defenders blazed out, but this time with a vengeance, and, three or four of the rioters biting the dust, the rest of the mob scattered for cover. Then from innumerable vantage-points they proceeded to rake the windows of the sheriff's office with deadly fusillades.

The occupants of that office pumped lead at the besiegers resolutely, discharging their guns until the barrels of the weapons were hot to the touch and the air in the room foul with the reek of smoke. Meanwhile groups of the attackers were making frequent rushes at the gaol in the hope of carrying it by storm, but, suffering heavy casualties, these were forced to retreat again and again by the withering fire of the sheriff and his supporters.

It was during one of these attempted

assaults that a stage-coach rolled into the main street from the east end of the town, but, seeing what was afoot, the driver of the vehicle swung into a side turning, and presently Kentucky Wade heard the equipage draw up behind the gaol.

He paid little heed to the circumstance, for just then he was intent on the battle that was in progress—a battle that seemed likely to end in ultimate victory for the mob because of their overwhelming numbers.

Crouching at one of the windows with a fuming six-gun in his fist, Kentucky suddenly half-turned towards Brimstone's representative of the law.

"Why don't you let Larry Munro out of his cell and give him back his forty-five, sheriff?" he said through clenched teeth. "If we're going to hold this



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mob at bay we've got to make every bullet count and Larry sure knows how to use a gun!"

Without a word the sheriff removed a bunch of keys from his hip-pocket, unfastened the cell-door, and, as Larry emerged, pointed to a desk on which the cattlemen's six-shooter was lying. Next moment the released prisoner was striding towards that desk, but he was never destined to reach it, for a stray bullet that zipped through one of the windows plugged him in the shoulder before he had taken three steps, and with an exclamation of pain he tumbled to the floor.

Lucy and the sheriff fell on their knees beside him, the girl crying out in alarm. Kentucky joined the sheriff and Lucy Munro, and helped them to doctor the fallen man's wound. But, even when they had done their best for him, it was plain that he was suffering and needed expert attention.

"He's in a bad way," Lucy moaned. "Oh, if only we could get him to a surgeon!"

"A surgeon!" the sheriff reiterated. "A surgeon won't be much use to him if that mob out there lay hands on him. I wish there was some way of smugglin' him clear of the town and carrying him to the gaol in Yuma. He'd be safe enough there."

It was then that Kentucky remembered Brimstone a little while, previously, and on a sudden he gripped the sheriff by the arm.

"Is there a back way out of the gaol?" he demanded.

"Yes. Why?"

"You saw that stage pull in, didn't you?"

"Yeah," the sheriff answered. "It's bound for Yuma, but—"

"If I can get Larry aboard it, maybe I can make Yuma with him." Kentucky interrupted. "Supposing you let me try it, sheriff, while you and my friends are giving the mob something to think about."

The sheriff pursed his lips.

"All right," he agreed. "It's either that or a lynching party. Go ahead."

Larry Munro was in a half-fainting condition, but, lifting him in his strong arms, Kentucky bore him from the office, and within the space of a quarter of a minute the two of them were alongside the Yuma stage-coach.

It had drawn up in a back street at the rear of the gaol, and the driver of the vehicle was perched on its box-seat, the picture of indecision.

"What's goin' on in this town?" he asked of Kentucky. "I'm supposed to stop at the Wells-Fargo agency, but the place is under fire."

"You'd better give up the notion of trying to reach it and head straight for Yuma instead," Kentucky advised him. "I've got a passenger here for you—"

He checked, becoming aware all at once that Lucy had followed him from the gaol, and, though he was averse to her undertaking the journey to Yuma, she refused to be separated from her brother.

It was in vain that he warned her of the danger she was courting. The girl was adamant, and in the end he helped her into the coach with her brother, he himself electing to follow on horseback.

His bronc, together with those of Dude, Mike, and Trigger, was tethered to a hitch-rail behind the sheriff's quarters. He swung himself astride it, and, with the stage-coach on the move, clapped his heels to the pony's flanks, calling out to the driver of the vehicle

in front of him to keep to the side roads until he was quit of the town.

Away went the coach, with Kentucky in close attendance. Yet even as the dust was rising thickly from hoofs and wheels, a party of men turned a corner some little distance away to spy the receding vehicle and the horseman who was galloping close to its tail.

The men were gangsters in the pay of Matt Keeler, and Claggett was among them. It was he, in fact, who had led the party round to the back of the gaol, with the intention of launching an attack from that quarter. But now he abandoned that project, and, exchanging a significant glance with his accomplices, he turned on his track and hurried in the direction of Keeler's office.

The other men filed after him, and soon they were confronting Matt Keeler and Doc Hardy in the former's private sanctum.

"Listen, boss," Steve Claggett reported. "I've got an idea Munro may have been smuggled outa town. We just saw the Yuma coach start up back of the gaol, an' a stranger was trailin' along with it—one o' them guys that was fixin' bail with Judge Lawrence maybe."

Keeler had risen to his feet.

"What are you telling me for?" he bit out. "Get after that coach. But wait, don't spread the alarm. Let the mob keep up the siege of the gaol, in case you're mistaken. You get after that coach like I told you, and if Munro happens to be aboard it—well, you know what to do."

Thirty seconds later Claggett and his party were spurring from the town, and, picking up the Yuma road, they had left Brimstone far to the rear when they crossed a low ridge and descried the stage and its attendant rider about a quarter of a mile ahead of them.

With Kentucky Wade galloping in close proximity to it, the vehicle was bowling over the trail at a good pace, and though Claggett and his accomplices gored their horses ruthlessly they had not gained on the fugitives to any appreciable extent, when all of a sudden another band of mounted men hove into view.

These were not white men. They were lank-haired warriors of the prairie—Indian braves armed with bow and musket—marauding savages to whom all Palefaces were hated foes. Out from a belt of timber they rode, midway between the coach and the troop of gangsters led by Claggett, and, failing to perceive the crooks but setting eyes on the stage and Kentucky Wade, they let loose a concerted yell.

Claggett and his confederates drew rein abruptly, and through narrowed lids they watched the Redskins swing on to the trail and give chase to the coach and its lone outrider. Then Claggett swung round.

"If Munro's aboard that stage them Injuns will fix him," he rasped. "But we'd better pull outa here in case they spot us an' take it into their heads to fix us as well. Come on."

The group of rogues lost no time in making themselves scarce, streaming back in the direction whence they had come. Meanwhile, to the west, the Redskins were pounding in pursuit of Kentucky and the coach, uttering the fearsome death-howl that was the battle-cry of their race, and discharging musket-bullets and barbed arrows at their prey.

(To be continued in another smashing episode next week. A New Universal picture, distributed throughout the United Kingdom and the Irish Free State by General Film Distributors, Ltd., starring John Mack Brown.)

"LARCENY ON THE AIR"

(Continued from page 14)

being hidden. With Jean he was on the way to the hide-out, but was in no immediate danger.

Kennedy and Burke, as they hurtled along the roads, did not know that the cops were watching for his yellow sedan car, and when they did see the car they followed at a discreet distance, so that he should not get wise.

The tablets soon soothed Pete Andorka into slumber. The male nurse watched the doctor, as if not quite sure if the proceedings were on the level.

"Strip to the waist—quick." Larry spoke sharply to Andrews, and, as the crook obeyed, he held out his arm for the clothes. In the jacket pocket of the coat was a gun. He waited till Andrews was stripped to his singlet before covering the two men. "Now reach for the ceiling—both of you"

Larry ordered the nurse to bind Andrews to a chair. Suddenly there was a screeching of brakes outside, and the doctor guessed it must be Kennedy.

"Jean, look that door, will you?"

A moment later Kennedy was banging on the door and demanding that it be opened at once.

"Stand away from the door, Jean," Larry ordered, and he spoke just in time.

A gun blazed, and Andrews, with a cry of pain, slumped in the chair.

As the doctor glanced at the unfortunate man the nurse seized the opportunity and rushed in, swinging his arms. Larry was taken by surprise and the gun was knocked from his hand. He fought back and with mighty punches dropped the nurse to the floor; but as Larry reached for the gun there came a tinkling of glass.

"Let that alone, doc," drawled Burke. "And keep 'em up."

Kennedy, with the help of the caretaker, managed to burst open the door. "You asked for it, and you're going to get it," he snarled out. "Let him have it, Burke."

A shot rang out and Jean screamed, but it was not Larry who dropped. A heavy body crashed against the window and smashed through to lie in a heap near Jean's feet.

"I've got you covered, Kennedy," said a calm voice, and Larry gave a sigh of relief to find that it was his old friend MacDonald. A second later the inspector and several officers were in the sick-room. "I got that prescription just in time, doc."

Larry pointed to the bed.

"There's Pete, Mac."

"Well, that makes our case water-tight. Who's this?"

"Andrews, one of Kennedy's men," Larry answered. "Kennedy shot him by accident."

"Take him away, boys," MacDonald said to the officers, and they seized the discomfited Kennedy. "Go easy with him, as he's more valuable alive. His conviction will be a warning to the quacks that they can't get away with it." He held out his hand to the doctor. "Good work, Larry! There should be a reward for what you've done."

"And here it is," chuckled Larry, and, with a grin, slipped his arm round the waist of the blushing Jean.

(By permission of British Lion Films, starring Robert Livingston as Lawrence Baxter and Grace Bradley as Jean Sterling.)

"THE CRIME NOBODY SAW"

(Continued from page 24)

"That boy friend of Mrs. Duval's?" he queried. "D'you think you'd know him again if you saw him?"

A broad smile came to her face.

"Why, Mr. Milburn, I'd know him anywhere."

"Fine. Then you'll have your chance. I'm going to blindfold you and lead you into the room opposite, where there are half-a-dozen people. And when I take the bandage off I want you to see if you can pick out the man who used to come and see Mrs. Duval. You don't happen to know if he had a key to the flat, do you?"

"I know he did, Mr. Milburn. I've been there when he let himself in."

"Better and better. Now let's put a bandage round your eyes and see if we can't have some fun and games."

He walked into his own flat, leading the old woman by the hand. They all stared, but Underhill spoke first.

"What in thunder's all this about?" he demanded.

"Merely a little experiment I'm about to conduct," replied Milburn easily. "I think it may show us the murderer of Duval."

But Mallory stepped forward. "I murdered Duval," he said. "He had got money out of me, and I got on to the balcony long before I came in here, and killed him."

"You're not to believe him," exclaimed Kay Mallory excitedly. "I've already told them that I murdered him for robbing my father."

Underhill spoke.

"Well, I've rung up the police, and they're on their way along. So maybe they'll tell us who the real murderer is."

Nick's eyes strayed from father to daughter.

"Let me see if I can tell you," he said coolly, and stripped the bandage from Ambrosia's eyes.

Just for a second her eyes roamed round the room. But the moment they came to Brookes she flung out an accusing finger.

"That's the man, Mr. Milburn, who used to come and see Mrs. Duval," she exclaimed triumphantly.

Brookes, who had changed colour, looked distinctly angry in the amazed silence that followed.

"May I ask how that proves I killed her husband?" he queried.

"You may," replied Nick, with his eyes fixed on the other. "And I'll tell you. There was no husband at all, and only recently you tumbled to it. Mrs. Duval, dressed to represent a mythical husband, lies doubled up in the piano in the opposite flat. And I am in a position to prove"—he wasn't, and knew it, but he was staking everything on one last throw—"that you are the only person in this room who has a key of the opposite flat. Want anything more?"

It was a duel between the two now, and the rest of the room looked on spellbound. For Brookes had gone pale, and his breath was coming fast as he faced his accuser.

But his eyes were those of a man whose enemies have at last closed on him.

"Aren't you clever, you fake inspector?" he sneered. "I wonder how you'll convince the police?"

And then, in a flash, out leaped a revolver from his pocket, menacing them.

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"Now who wins?" he snarled. There was no moving with that gun sweeping to and fro, and as he backed to the door there was evil triumph in his eyes.

"You weren't quite clever enough, Mr. Milburn," he said.

With the gun still covering them his left hand groped for the handle, opened the door. But only those who stood still and watched saw the three uniformed policemen, who were just behind him, about to enter.

But they had their hands on him in a second, and led him back into the room, demanding an explanation.

This time, however, Nick told the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, while Brookes, with police officers all round him, and one with a gun in his hand, made no attempt to say anything.

"So maybe you won't hold it up against me now," went on Nick at the finish, "that I did a bit of impersonation stuff. For, at any rate, I've given you the real criminal."

He handed the detective the ice-pick. "Maybe you'll find a finger-print or two on that which will help you come," he added.

Brookes had quite a record with the police department. As a doctor he had been able to carry on a trade with dangerous drugs, but the police had never been able to pin anything on to him. This murder would mean the finish for Dr. Brookes, and so the police were willing to take a lenient attitude towards the three conspirators. Kay Mallory was advised to take her father away for a holiday. She promised to write to Nick.

The police then took Brookes down to the police car.

Three men no longer gloomy now sat alone in their flat after Brookes, handcuffed, had been taken away.

Nick was whistling cheerfully, Babe was enjoying a drink, and Horace was sitting before his typewriter, and, for once, in a way, seemed eager to begin.

"Gosh, this will make the whale of a plot," said Nick, as he rubbed his hands together.

"And the police behaved darned decently about it," replied Babe. "Whatever made you tumble to Brookes, Nick?"

The latter settled down more easily in his chair. When he started to speak it was after the manner of a trained professor explaining a simple matter to a particularly obtuse infant.

"In the detection of crime, Babe—" he began.

Horace waited patiently until Nick lauded for breath. Then he spoke, loudly but firmly:

"Page 1," he said.

(By permission of Paramount Pictures, Ltd., starring Lew Ayres and Ruth Coleman.)

"STRANGE LAWS"

(Continued from page 20)

take the opportunity of showing that all those good people who were swindled by Carter can claim their property through forfeiture."

Judge Parkinson looked down at old man Walton.

"You may answer the prosecuting attorney's question," he observed calmly.

"All right," the mayor announced. "Carter did not make the land-rush according to rules and regulations, and every square inch of property he owns here is open to forfeiture. For, ashamed as I am that I've waited so long before denouncing him, I say now that he crossed the Oklahoma border on the night before the signal to enter this territory was given."

Link Carter had heard enough. He knew that Abbott's talents as a lawyer

had proved inadequate in this instance, and that Abbott himself was likely to find himself charged with sharp practice ere long. And he knew that he—Carter—had not only been exposed as a rogue and a swindler, but that the evidence concerning the death of Tom Valley had been sufficient to send him to the gallows.

But there on a table nearby lay the gun which had killed Tom Valley. It had been accepted as evidence, and had been set down there by an officer of the court, and with a bound Link Carter reached it and snatched it up.

"All right," he snarled, "I'm guilty on every count you've brought up against me, including the shootin' of Tom Valley. But you'll never put a rope around my neck, for I'm blastin' my way out of this court!"

Dick Hudson took a step towards him. There was a smile playing around the young attorney's lips.

"You don't think a loaded revolver would be left lying around within your grasp at a time like this, Carter, do you?" he remarked. "Just pull that trigger, will you?"

Link Carter did so, jabbing the forty-five at the handsome lawyer in the same instant. But the result was a harmless click, and next second Dick had seized the blackguard; and as Carter struggled vainly in the big fellow's vice-like embrace he heard the stern voice of Judge Parkinson addressing him.

"Link Carter, you are a self-confessed murderer, and by your own words you have relieved the jurymen of the necessity of bringing in a verdict. And for the crime which you have committed I now sentence you to be hanged by the neck until you are dead."

Link Carter had paid the penalty of his misdeeds, and Abbot was languishing in a distant penitentiary, when young Barty Walton and his father listened one night to the strains of music drifting through the sitting-room windows of the mayoral home.

For old man Walton was still mayor of Big Rock. True, he had resigned after the trial in which he had figured as a witness, but he had been re-elected amid popular acclaim.

The music to which Mayor Walton and his son were listening was provided by a guitar and a fine tenor voice; and both the guitar and the voice belonged to Dick Hudson, who was seated out on the porch with Janie.

"I can picture a home,
Just west of the sun. . . ."

Barty glanced at his father. "I wouldn't be surprised if they get married one o' these days."

"I think you're right, son," said the mayor. "Yep, I'll lay any amount o' money you're right."

(By permission of First National Pictures, Ltd., starring Dick Foran and Jane Bryan.)

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"WILD WEST DAYS"—*Kentucky Wade*, John Maek Brown; *Lucy Monroe*, Lynn Gilbert; *Dude*, George Shelley; *Trigger*, Robert Kortman; *Mike*, Frank Yaconelli; *Larry Monroe*, Frank McGlynn; *Keeler*, Russell Simpson; *Purvis*, Francis McDonald; *Doc Hardy*, Walter Miller; *Buckskin*, Charles Stevens; *Red Hatchet*, Chief Thunderbird.

"LARCENY ON THE AIR"—*Lawrence Baxter*, Robert Livingston; *Jean Sterling*, Grace Bradley; *W. MacDonald*, Willard Robertson; *Kennedy*, Pierre Watkin; *Jimmy*, Smiley Burnette; *Professor Sterling*, Granville Bates; *Andrews*, William Newell; *Pete Andorka*, Byron Foulger; *F. J. Thompson*, Wilbur Mack; *Burke*, Matty Fain.

"STRANGE LAWS"—*Dick Hudson*, Dick Foran; *Tom Valley*, David Carlyle; *Janie Walton*, Jane Bryan; *Army Officer*, Joseph Crehan; *Blade Simpson*, Milton Kibbee; *Walton*, Tom Brower; *Barty Walton*, Tommy Bupp; *Ruth Valley*, Helen Valkis; *Link Carter*, Ed Cobb; *Judge Ben Parkinson*, Gordon Hart; *Bill Tidewell*, Jack Mower; *Abbott*, Walter Soderling.

"THE CRIME NOBODY SAW"—*Nick Milburn*, Lew Ayres; *Kay Mallory*, Ruth Coleman; *Babe* *Lawton*, Eugene Pilette; *Horace Dryden*, Benny Baker; *Doctor Brookes*, Colin Tapley; *Robert Mallory*, Howard C. Hickman; *William Underhill*, Jed Prouty; *Ambrosia*, Hattie McDaniel; *John Atherton*, Ferdinand Gottschalk.

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"SLIM"

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High Tension Thriller

On his uncle's farm "Slim" Kincaid watches a gang of linesmen building steel towers to carry high-tension wires across country and aspires to become a linesman himself. "Red" Blayd, one of the men, helps him to do so, and the two become firm friends; but Slim meets Red's girl, and the two fall in love—with dramatic consequences. A powerful story of lives in jeopardy, starring Pat O'Brien and Henry Fonda



"A Job for Men!"

IN a ten-acre field, the property of a farmer, a steel tower was being erected to carry high-tension wires across country—one of many such towers that littered the landscape—and half a dozen linesmen were at work on different parts of the structure.

When finished, the tower was to be a hundred feet high from its four concrete bases, and the bases were forty feet apart in the form of a square; but as yet its height was no more than seventy feet.

From a big wooden pole fixed to one of the steel uprights a winch line ran through a pulley for the hoisting of heavy sections which had been bolted together on the ground, and from a smaller pole hand-lines dangled within a few feet of one of the bases for the use of "grunts," or ground workers. A motor-truck containing every variety of equipment was standing not very far away, and at times the power of its engines was used to work the winch-line.

Each linesman up aloft had a grunt down below to look after his needs; but Clarence Stumpy, known to his associates as "Stumpy," was squatting on an empty box at a safe distance from falling nuts or belts and singing in a raucous voice:

"Mother said to Mabel,
"Always tell the truth,"
But then the salesman came along,
Admirin' Mabel's youth—"

A misshapen hat was on his head, and he was wearing a very conspicuous plaid woolen jacket with his dungarees. His face was quaintly ugly, his green eyes were sleepy, and he was one of the most accomplished shirkers on the job.

Pop Traver, the bald-headed foreman of the gang, strode up behind him, and Stumpy sprawled upon the earth as the box was kicked from under him.

"Get up, Stumpy!" roared the foreman. "That steel ain't got no wings! It can't get up to Red by itself!" Stumpy scrambled to his feet.

"Yes, sir," he said, and joined the other grunts to help attach a latticed framework of steel to the winch-line. "Hi, come on here! Let's get goin'! Come on, you fellas, put that old steel ladder right up on top there!"

"Take it away!" Pop Traver shouted to the driver of the truck when the line had been attached, and up went the framework.

"Here it comes, Red!" Stumpy cupped his hands to his mouth to yell.

Two linesmen, straddling cross-pieces

of the skeleton high above, caught hold of the thing as it reached them, snub-wrenches flashed through bolt-holes to hold it in position. With almost incredible speed each linesman plunged a gloved hand into a bag on his belt, brought forth a bolt and inserted it into a hole beneath the one occupied by the snub-wrench.

"Right!" shouted one of the two experts, a thick-set and cheerful fellow whose name was Blayd and who was known as "Red" because the hair beneath his hat was of that colour. "Slack off!"

While these operations were in progress, Slim Kincaid, nephew of the farmer who owned the field, completed the plunging of a long furrow close to the base of the tower, stopped the two horses attached to the plough, removed their reins from around his neck, and jumped down from his seat to stare upwards.

He was a black-haired young fellow in shirt and trousers, both of which garments were considerably the worse for wear, but his face was clean and clean-shaven, and he looked far more intelligent than the average farmer's boy.

Pop Traver eyed this intruder with disfavour. Stumpy, having finished his task of the moment, sat down on

With All Good Wishes For Christmas From
And The New Year Your Editor

the empty box again and addressed him chidingly.

"Hi, there, country boy," he said, "you back ag'in?"

"That's what's the matter," responded Slim without shifting his fascinated gaze from the linesmen up aloft.

"How d'you expect to get your chores done if you spend all your time around here watchin' me build this tower?"

"I ain't got nothin' more important to do than watchin' you build these things," declared Slim; and then Pop Traver stalked over.

"Look here, son," he said severely, "I'm gettin' tired o' tellin' you to keep away from these towers before you get hurt."

"Who's gonna hurt me?" Slim lowered his head to inquire.

"Well, one o' those linesmen might drop a wrench or somethin' on your head."

"Do they do that often?" "You think they don't?" cried Stumpy, and swept off his misshapen hat. "Feel those bumps on top of my head!"

Red, at that moment, shouted down from his perch:

"Hi, Stumpy, you can't fill these towers with matches! Throw up some more two-inch bolts right away!"

"Yes, Red; yes, sir," Stumpy rose, took some bolts from a keg on the ground, and with a curious overhand throw hurled them upwards, one at a time.

"Don't take any notice o' that boy," Pop said to Slim, who was watching Red catch the bolts. "He ain't got the brains heaven promised a goat."

A linesman named Tom Mauders dropped a steel nut, either by accident or deliberate intent.

"Headache!" he shouted. "Head-ache below!"

Stumpy side-stepped the falling missile and looked up to jeer.

"You missed me ag'in, Tom! Next time I'll hold still and make you a better target!"

"Well, stay out o' the way, then!" retorted the offender; and Pop addressed him wrathfully:

"Hi, Tom! You get dropsy once more and I'm gonna send you down the road!"

"What d'you mean by 'send him down the road'?" asked Slim, as the foreman turned away from the tower.

"Five him!" was the reply. "Better than sending one o' those grunts home in a box. You'd better be careful, before you get hurt."

"I bet I can climb one o' those towers," asserted Slim.

"So could a monkey, but what good would he be when he got up there?"

"I could be some good up there."

"Listen, kid," said Pop seriously, "climbing a tower's only the first part of bein' a linesman. It's what you do when you get up there that counts. There'll be millions o' people depending on this tower line for electricity. It's got to feed power to trains, trolley-cars and factories. It's gotta carry light to streets, homes and hospitals. It's gotta be built so it'll never fail. That's line work, and it takes a linesman to do it."

"That's just what I wanta do," declared Slim with enthusiasm. "Ever since I've been watching your gang I—well, it just seems like I'm obliged to be a linesman. Will you give me a chance?"

Pop shook his head.

"Sorry, son, you're too young. This is a job for men, not boys."

"What were those men when they were my age—girls?"

"You stick to your farm," counselled Pop. "These men have had experience."

"Experience is just what I want," persisted Slim. "I'll never get to be a linesman ploughin' fields."

"Sorry, son," Pop gave him a pat of dismissal and looked at an old-fashioned watch. "Come on down and eat, boys!"

He walked off as the linesmen began to descend the tower, but Slim re-

mained to admire the agility with which they descended, and to marvel at Red and a man named Wyatt Ransstead, who slid down the lines in an endeavour to race one another.

Red won.

"All right, Stump," he said, "get the lunches, will you?"

Linesmen and grunts became seated on boxes and kegs and drums, and Stumpy brought them their lunch-boxes from the motor-truck. Slim advanced towards Red, and he said:

"I'm goin' to learn how to do that."

"Yeah?" Red's very blue eyes twinkled. "Think you can handle a rope better than you can handle a plough?"

"That's what's the matter," nodded Slim. "I'm gonna be a linesman. I'm goin' to wear a harness just like yours."

Red, who was acknowledged to be the best linesman in the whole outfit and one of the best in the whole country, did not even glance down at the safety-belt he was wearing; he looked instead at the patient horses attached to the plough.

"You'd better let those horses carry the lines," he said.

"Yeah," jibed a burly grunt named Griffin, "I s'pose you're gonna drive your old nags up the tower next?"

"I'd rather try that than stay on the ground like you do!" Slim retorted.

Griffin jumped up and advanced fiercely.

"Listen, clothopper, you couldn't climb anything!" he roared.

"I can climb you high enough to reach your mouth and shut it!"

A fight seemed imminent, but Red was instantly on his feet and between the pair.

"Take it easy, Griff," he said masterfully. "Sit down and eat while you still have your teeth."



"What do you know about it?" Corton demanded in a voice like a wisp. "There's something wrong here, and I mean to get to the bottom of it!"

Griffin retired scowlingly to the box he had deserted, and Red eyed Slim with approval.

"Say, kid, you're all right," he remarked. "So you really think you want a job here, eh?"

"More than I ever wanted anything," was the emphatic reply.

"All right, maybe we can do something about it. Come on over here."

He caught hold of Slim's arm and led him across to the foreman, who was sitting on a running-board of the truck with a very thick sandwich in his hand, half eaten.

"How about it, Pop," he inquired without any preliminaries, "you got a job for this kid?"

"He'll get yours if you don't quit that stuntin'!" snapped the foreman, and he glared at Slim. "Will you stop botherin' me? I told you before, this gang is full!"

"Oh, Mr. Pop," pleaded Slim, "I never wanted to do nothin' as bad as I want to be a linesman."

"Wait a minute, son, not so fast," rebuked Red, whimsically. "To be a linesman you've gotta start on the ground—be a grunt, and earn your way to the top."

"I'll do that!" Slim cried eagerly. "I'll do anything! I'll work for nothin' till you say I can do it!"

"Not on my job you won't!" declared Pop indignantly. "If a man's fit to hire he's fit to pay. Now, if I need a man I'll give you a break, but just now the crew's full and I can't use you."

"I'll remember that," said Slim fervently. "Thanks, Mr. Red. I'll be back."

He went off to the neglected plough quite joyfully, and Red said with a grin:

"Gee, I like that kid!"

Slim Gets His Chance

IT was late on the following afternoon that Tom Manders, working up on one "leg" of the tower, let go of a steel cross-stay while in the act of thrusting a snub-wrench through one of its bolt-holes and a corresponding bolt-hole in the structure.

The cross-stay fell, to the imminent danger of all who were below it, and Tom Manders nearly lost his balance.

"Headache!" yelled a linesman; and the long strip of steel, capable of killing anyone in its path as it gathered velocity, fell harmlessly to earth and bounced there.

Pop Traver craned his neck to shout:

"Are you hurt, Tom?"

"No," returned the linesman shakily. "I'm all right."

"How'd it happen?"

"I didn't catch it with the pin."

"Oh, you didn't catch it with the pin? Come on down before you fall down!"

Tom Manders descended slowly, possibly because he knew his fate.

"You get your money to-night," Pop informed him sternly. "You're through!" He shouted up to the linesman who had been working with the bungler: "Ed, you sign up for top man in the morning and take Manders' place!"

Slim, most opportunely, had completed a furrow quite close to the tower, and he scrambled down from the plough.

"Hi, Stumpy and the rest of you grunts," directed Pop. "pick up this stuff and put it on the truck so we can go home. Come on down, boys, it's quittin' time!"

Slim arrived, breathless and excited.

December 25th, 1937.

"Hi, Mr. Pop," he cried, "you need a man now, and I'm the man you need! You've just gotta give me a job!"

"Will you stop botherin' me and leave me alone?" Pop howled at him. "I'm busy."

"You promised me!"

Red looked down from the leg he was about to descend.

"Looks like he's got you, Pop!" he shouted laughingly. "You told him you'd give him the first job that was open!"

"I ain't sure he could cut it," the foreman objected.

"Put him on as a grunt with me—I'll teach him to cut it."

Pop rubbed his chin, frowning at Slim.

"All right, Red," he surrendered; "if you want the trouble of breakin' in a new grunt, he's yours. Report to camp at six o'clock in the morning, kid, and I'll sign you on as Red's helper. You'll be his grunt. That means you'll tend to all the hand-lines and do all the work to be done on the ground."

Slim beamed all over his face.

"I'll be there, sir," he said elatedly, and with his hands to his mouth, yelled up to his champion: "Thank you again, Mr. Red."

That evening there was dissension in the farmhouse, Slim's uncle objecting strongly to his departure, his aunt favouring his opportunity to do better for himself.

Aunt and nephew triumphed, and next morning Slim was up before daybreak and tramping through woods and fields to the distant camp, because the winding lanes of the district would have doubled the length of the journey.

In the grey light of dawn he looked down from a hill upon a veritable town of sheds and huts and tents, bounded on one side by a deeply rutted roadway and on another by a stream. Somewhere in the camp a man in a more or less white jacket was banging on a triangle to announce that breakfast was ready and about to be served in a long mess-hut.

Slim sped down the hill, entered a gateway, passed a whole string of motor-trucks, and came upon Pop Traver and Red Blayd.

"Well, look who's here!" exclaimed Pop. "Slim, you're right on time."

"Had breakfast yet?" inquired Red. "No, sir."

"Sign him up, Red," said Pop, "and then take him to eat, eh?"

Red took charge of Slim and led him to the open window of a hut in which the timekeeper functioned.

"How are you, skipper?" he said to the gloomy-faced man inside the window. "Givo us a startin' ticket."

"Okay." A pink card was thrust out upon a wooden flap in front of the window, together with a pencil. "Fill in your name, address, age, experience, and who to notify if you break the law."

Slim picked up the pencil.

"Break what law?" he asked.

"The law of gravity," replied the timekeeper. "Who do we notify if you fall off a tower?"

"Notify the guy that's underneath me to get out of the way," said Slim; and the answer pleased Red immensely.

The card was filled in and exchanged for a brass disc, and Slim soon afterwards became seated at a long table in the mess-hut with the members of Pop's gang and ate ravenously. He started to count the men present, but gave it up as hopeless because there were so many of them.

Subsequently, under Red's guidance, he reached a huge shed which served as a warehouse and contained every unimaginable thing necessary to the construction of power lines. Motor-trucks were being loaded outside it, grunts of various gangs were entering empty-handed and emerging fully laden with coiled ropes, picks and shovels, kegs of bolts, hook ladders, and all manner of hardware.

"Well, there's plenty to do," said Red.

"It's okay with me," said Slim.

Stumpy appeared with a box which was evidently as much as he could carry, and Red hailed him.

"Show Slim what to do," he said.

"Sure." Stumpy was only too delighted. "Slim, everything in this box has gotta go on that truck there. I'll let you help me. Share and share alike—that's my motto."

The box was thrust upon the novice.

"It's hard, but it's fair!" chuckled his tutor. "You had a good home, but you wouldn't stay there."

Red went off grinning, and Stumpy took full advantage of his pupil, who was called upon to carry from the warehouse to the truck everything that Stumpy ordinarily would have carried. Other grunts were amused and showed their amusement; but Slim was not a fool.

Griffin, with a cigarette between his lips, walked up to the novice when his arms were laden with a huge coil of rope.

"Got a match, Slim?" he asked facetiously.

Slim immediately dumped his load upon Stumpy, who was walking beside him with empty hands.

"Hold this for me," he said.

"Oh!" grunted the shirker.

The coil of rope was conveyed to the truck while a match was produced and struck, and there was laughter at Stumpy's expense. But Pop arrived on the scene in time to see Slim once more encumbered with implements while Stumpy accompanied him carrying nothing.

"You think that old Slim boy can't carry loads?" gurgled Stumpy for the benefit of his colleagues. "He can carry loads so big they oughta nail his shoes on and start feedin' him oats!"

Pop administered a swift kick.

"If you don't get to loadin' this truck," he threatened, "I ain't gonna feed you with nothin' but hemp!"

"Pop," complained Stumpy, "if you don't stop kickin' me there, even if I had a chance to sit down and rest, I couldn't!"

He carried his own share after that, but the grunts were not working quickly enough to satisfy Pop.

"Well, they ain't gonna bring that tower to us," he said. "Let's get away before them other trucks beat us to it. C'm on!"

Speed was increased, but Griffin growled:

"Looks to me like we're the first truck out every morning. Pop is sure makin' himself a good record out of our hard work."

"Slim," said Stumpy, "don't pay no attention to that old Griff. He's lazier than I am. If you think I ain't gonna make about the gruntingest grunt outa you, why you're plumb mistook."

After the truck had been loaded the linesmen and the grunts of Pop's gang climbed up upon it, finding more or less comfortable seats upon the materials that were to be used, and the truck set off along the roadway. Slim said to Stumpy, who was beside him on a box: "Red's a fine boss, ain't he?"

"Red ain't the boss," corrected Stumpy. "They asked him to be one when he fust come here, but he said his hands fitted a spud-wrench better than a pencil. They do fit a spud-wrench mighty good, too. Red's about the best linesman that ever buckled on a belt."

"How come they asked him to be a boss and he wouldn't?" asked Slim in astonishment, gazing at the broad back of his hero who was sitting up in front.

"How come anything about Red?" said Stumpy. "He does what he wants to do, not what other people wants. Nobody knows where he comes from, or where he's goin' to. But there ain't an outfit in the whole country wouldn't like to have Red work for 'em."

The unfinished tower upon the land that belonged to Slim's uncle was reached soon after the morning sun had risen over the hills, away to the east, and Slim began to do the things he so often had watched the grunts do before he himself had become one of them.

Before the day was out he had become quite good at hauling struts and stays and fish-plates up to Red upon a hand-line, and his skill at throwing up bolts and pins compelled even Pop's admiration.

Throughout the rest of that week he worked harder than any other grunt, labouring with zest; and when the toil of each day was over he practised the tying of knots, the splicing and coiling of ropes, and all the other things a grunt should know.

His hands were hard from farm-work, but they became blistered by the steel he lifted and carried, in spite of the heavy gloves he wore when at work. But his heart was in the work, and he did not make any fuss. He lived in a hut with Stumpy and two other men, and he thoroughly enjoyed camp life.

When pay-day came he lined up with the rest of the men to reach the window at which envelopes were being handed out by the paymaster, and after he had acquired his own envelope he was standing aside to contemplate with pleasurable surprise the amount he had earned when two flashily dressed men strolled up to him.

"Say, you make pretty good money here, don't you?" inquired one of them.

"That's what's the matter," laughed Slim. "When I'm a linesman I'm goin' to make a lot more."

"You don't have to wait that long," said the second man. "A smart fellow like you can make his money grow."

"What d'you generally do with your money?" asked the one who had spoken first—a gambler named Allerd.

"I'm fixin' to send most of it home," Slim replied.

"How'd you like to make twice as much money to send the folks?"

"How can I do that?"

"Well, I'll tell you. Did you ever hear of—"

"Hi!" Red came striding up to the group, and his voice was harsh. "It's a little early for your business, Allerd, isn't it? Why don't you lay off this kid?"

"Well, what's the harm of a little game?" challenged Allerd. "You play with us plenty yourself."

"Sure I do," retorted Red, "but I'm old enough to vote. Now, listen, I'm tipping you off to something, and this"—turning to the other man—"goes for you, too! If I catch you messin' around with this kid again I'll bust that kisser o' yours wide open! Now get out of here, both of you!"

The two opportunists made themselves scarce, but Slim was not at all sure that he appreciated Red's interference.

"What'd you do that for?" he asked.

"For your folks," replied Red.



Wilcox gripped Slim by the shirt with his gloved left hand, and in his right hand flashed a knife.

Trouble in a Pool Room

THAT evening, as was usual on pay-days, most of the men washed and shaved and changed into their best clothes to go into the nearest town and spend some of their money. Stumpy was going to meet a red-headed girl of his acquaintance, and Slim accompanied him.

Most of the linesmen had ears of their own, but the grunts were conveyed in a couple of motor-trucks, and after the evening meal there was a general exodus from the camp.

The town of Elliston was neither large, nor important. Electricity had not yet reached it, and the streets were lit by gas-lamps; but at least it contained plenty of shops, saloons, pool parlours, and places of amusement.

Slim, in his shabby best, witnessed the meeting between Stumpy and the red-headed girl outside a drug-store and then invaded a post office to send off some of his earnings to his aunt, in company with a quaint if badly written note:

"Dear Aunt,—Cold don't worry me, I feel swell. I am enclosing some money, and, auntie, I want you to use this money for anything you and uncle want.

"Your loving nephew,

"SLIM."

Having posted this letter, he was standing on the pavement, wondering what he should do next, when Wyatt Ranstead came along. Ranstead was the linesman who had tried to race Red down from the top of the tower and a thoroughly likeable fellow.

"Hallo, Slim!" he said. "Say, are you any good in a fight?"

"I can take care of myself," Slim cautiously replied. "Why?"

"Pop and Red are in a little game

down at the pool room, and it looks like there might be trouble. There are five of 'em, and they're pretty tough."

The fact that Red and Pop were in some sort of danger was quite enough for Slim.

"Where's the pool room?" he asked.

"Around the corner," Ranstead pointed, "but don't start anything until I get back."

Slim went off round the corner and found the pool room. There was a counter between its entrance and the first of the billiards-tables, and there was a heavily-built man behind the counter.

Slim acquired a cigar and paid for it.

"Where's the card game, mister?" he then inquired.

The man jerked a thumb in the direction of a door nearly opposite the counter, and Slim walked into a room in which Pop and Red were playing poker with three other men at a table, watched by two men who were standing. Amongst the players Slim perceived Allerd and the other gambler who had conversed with him outside the pay-office. Allerd was just gathering up some money he had won.

"What're you doin' here, Slim?" demanded Pop sharply.

"Lookin' for a poker game," Slim answered.

"I seen Ranstead down the street, and he told me there'd be one here."

"So this is the boy that isn't old enough to vote, eh?" drawled Allerd with a grin for Red.

"All right, so what?" retorted Red.

"Get out of here, Slim—the game's too steep for you!"

"Yeah, Ranstead told me all about it," said Slim, "but him and me figured I could hold up my end."

"How much money you got?" asked Allerd's companion.

"That's what you'll find out if you're good enough."

Pop laughed.

"You'll do, son," he said. "Pull up a chair and sit down."

Slim did so, and Allerd asked him if he wished to be included in the fresh deal.

"No, I'll watch a couple o' hands," Slim decided.

The cards were dealt, and Red was content with his hand—and Pop appeared to be content with his.

"Cards?" inquired Allerd, who had dealt.

"Three," said the gambler addressed. Three cards were flipped to him in place of three discarded.

"And two to the dealer," said Allerd. Slim, who had been watching intently, saw two cards exchanged and a third one palmed.

"I thought you was old enough to vote, Red," he said across the table.

"What're you talkin' about?" Red looked up from his cards to ask.

"You ain't old enough to count. He said he was gonna take two cards. He took three. So that's what's the matter!"

Allerd sprang up and smashed a fist into Slim's mouth, and instantly a first fight was in progress.

There were five men against three, but the three held their own magnificently. Pop was sixty-two, but he was hard as nails and used to handling men, and he knocked senseless a rat-faced fellow who tried to draw a gun.

Red's strength was immense. He felled two antagonists, and had Allerd by the throat when Slim saw the fifth crook about to pounce, struck out at him, and received a whack on the point of the chin that knocked him down against a wall in a very dazed condition.

Wyatt Ranstead burst into the room just then, dodged a chair that was flung at him, and locked the door before he joined in the battle. Contestants who had fallen rose again to attack, and the room resounded with blows and the noise of overturning furniture.

Slim recovered his wits to some extent and saw the cigar he had bought. Someone had trodden on it, but he reached out a hand to it, thrust it between his lips—and received a broken chair upon his head.

The battle ended as abruptly as it had begun, and the victors gazed at one another over prone bodies.

"Well, Pop," panted Red, "that's what I call cleanin' house."

"I haven't enjoyed a fight like this in thirty years!" declared Pop, snatching up his coat.

Red opened a window and flung up its bottom sash.

"Come on, let's get goin' before the law comes in," he urged. "Where's Slim?"

They found Slim sitting owlishly against the wall, the broken cigar in his mouth and a ruffian lying across his legs. His face was bruised and bleeding, but he smiled wanly as they raised him to his feet and held him.

"How are you, kid—all right?" asked Red.

"I reckon so," he muttered.

"Let's get outa here, then," said Pop.

"Wait a minute!" Red let go of Slim's arm to jerk Allerd up from under the table. "Listen, you," he said fiercely, "we figured you were runnin' a crooked game when you cleaned us out two weeks ago. Now don't be here when we come back next pay-day!"

The crook went down again from a blow between the eyes, and then Slim was helped out over the window-sill into a yard and the others followed. From the yard they reached another street with the sound of police whistles in their ears.

December 25th, 1937.

"Back to camp in a hurry!" gritted Pop.

Slim, who was feeling a lot better, fished from his coat-pocket a roll of notes he had snatched from the table at an early stage of the fight.

"For your folks," he said, thrusting the notes into Red's hand.

Fired!

SPRING merged into summer and summer waned. Many towers had been built, and insulators were being attached to one of them, when Red shouted down for a hook-ladder one morning. Stumpy obtained the ladder from the truck, and Slim fastened it to a hand-line.

"Comin' right up, Red!" he shouted. The ladder was hauled upwards and hung over a steel arm, the rope was slacked off and released, and Wyatt Ranstead began to descend the rungs of the swaying thing that dangled in empty space.

"I'll get this, Ran," said Red hastily. "You had a tough night."

"I'm all right, Red," Ranstead assured him. "You don't have to do all the work up here."

Slim held his breath as he watched the perilous descent. Ranstead had a string of insulators over his left shoulder, and it was almost sickening to see the way the ladder rocked and swung.

"Watch yourself, Ran!" cried Red from the arm to which he had fastened himself with his safety belt.

"Don't worry about me," Ranstead looked up to say. "I've had hangers before."

The words were hardly out of his mouth when one of his feet slipped, the weight of his body was transferred suddenly to his hands, and his hands let go.

"Headache!" yelled Red. "Headache below!"

Like a stone Ranstead fell to the ground, and he was dead before the horrified grunts reached the spot where he lay beside a litter of broken insulators.

Stumpy took off his hat and stood with bowed head; but Pop was more practical, though no less upset.

"You two get the stretcher," he said hoarsely.

There was always stretchers on the truck. Slim and Stumpy fetched one, the body of the dead linesman was placed upon it and carried back to the truck, and Pop and all the men in his gang rode with the body to the camp.

On the following morning Slim was conveying materials from the warehouse to the truck when Pop walked up to him with Red.

"That'll be all, Slim," said the foreman.

Slim deposited a keg of bolts and turned to stare.

"But we ain't finished loadin' yet, Pop," he expostulated.

"You are, son," returned Pop quietly. "You've finished for life."

Slim was aghast.

"What've I done?" he asked blankly.

"You've made good, kid," said Red, producing a safety-belt from behind his back. "Here's your harness. Strap it on!"

"You—you mean I'm a linesman?" Slim's head was in a whirl.

"I don't mean anything else," said Red, "and I wanta tell you something. If I catch you takin' any foolish chances—

Well, don't take any!"

"Thanks, Red."

"Congratulations, son," said Pop. "Good luck to you!"

Stumpy and the rest of the grunts and linesmen gathered round to add their congratulations. Stumpy, patting Slim on the back and chuckling, cried out:

"You think this old Slim boy ain't

goin' up in the world? You think he ain't gonna be about the highest climbin' linesman there is? I always said a linesman was nothin' but a grunt that'd lost his good sense—and now you've gone and done it, Slim! That's what you get for lettin' me learn you so much!"

Slim bore the laughter of the others for a few moments, then exercised his new authority.

"Go on, grunt," he said to Stumpy, "get that truck loaded!"

"Yes, sir, Mr. Linesman," bowed the humourist.

"Well, let's get at it!" rapped Pop. Slim rode with the linesmen on the truck, but at the base of the new tower he had qualms as he looked upwards.

"That's it, Slim," said Red. "That's where the trouble is. Get to climbin'!"

"Good luck, Slim," said Stumpy mournfully. "And don't drop nothin' now. I got quite enough bumps on my head!"

Slim found it easy enough to climb the tower with the aid of the bolts that protruded from the leg to which Red pointed; but Red was up another leg long before he reached the top and watched him from a cross-section member.

Slim was used to the appearance of the towers from the ground at all angles, but its appearance was utterly different from above, and seemed to change as he climbed. He felt badly encumbered by the bag of bolts fastened to his safety-belt, and he began to feel giddy and slightly sick. But he reached the top of the leg and clung to it.

"Nice going, Slim," Red called across to him. "You come up there just like a squirrel."

"Yeah," panted Slim, out of breath from fear as much as exertion. "I feel like a squirrel. Ground squirrel."

"All right. Hold on tight till you get used to it, and then take a look at the ground."

Slim looked down inside the tower, and the remoteness of the ground appalled him.

"Yeah," he gasped.

An X-brace was to be holted in position, and the grunts below were ready to raise it.

"Let's have it!" Red shouted down.

The X-brace rose, and Red explained to Slim how it was to be held at his end with his snub-wrench and bolted. But Slim was hanging on to the steelwork with both hands when the X-brace dangled on a level with him and Red made fast his end of it.

"You can't work with your hands full of steel like that!" he rebuked.

"You want me to let go of it?" gulped Slim.

"These towers'll stay up by themselves."

"I ain't worried about the tower stayin' up."

"Well, turn loose of it before you bend it outa shape!"

With his feet on a step-bolt, Slim gingerly freed one hand, fished out his snub-wrench, and tried to thrust its end through holes that corresponded. The X-brace evaded him, but at last he had it in position.

"All right, Slim," said Red approvingly, "holt her up!"

Slim endeavoured to obey, but the wrench slipped from his hand and went whizzing downwards.

"Headache!" yelled Red, and the grunts scuttled out of the way till the wrench had buried its point in the ground.

"Hi!" roared Red as he saw Slim wavering on his perch. "Droppin' one o' those is just an accident—goin' after it is suicide! That's not a parachute you're on, you know! Hi, Stumpy, put my wrench on that hand-line!"

"Your wrench?" exclaimed Slim.
 "Never mind. Let's get this bolted up."

The snub-wrench ascended and Red freed it from the rope.

"Here!"
 He hardly expected to be obeyed, but Slim walked steel to reach him and collect the wrench, and his face did not betray too much of the fear that was in his heart.

"Go ahead and finish it," directed Red, and back across the framework Slim went to deal with the brace.

As the morning progressed the novice became more accustomed to the height and more and more daring. He found that he felt vastly more at ease with his muscles relaxed than with them taut, and under Red's expert guidance he developed a sense almost more important to the job than sight.

Next morning, at breakfast in the mess-hut, Pop asked him if he liked it up on top.

"That's what's the matter," said Slim. "Am I doin' all right, Pop?"

"You're doin' fine," declared the foreman. "You're gonna be a real linesman."

Slim was delighted, but there was one thing on his conscience.

"Pop," he said after a while, "it wasn't Red dropped that wrench—it was me."

Pop liked him all the better for that confession, but he did not show it.

"Well, everybody makes mistakes," he drawled. "But remember, when you do drop a wrench, be sure it ain't still in your hand!"

He went out to superintend the loading of the truck, and Slim turned to Red.

"I'm sure obliged to you for all you learned me," he said.

"Well, I want to show you all I can," Red responded, "but I don't think I'll be with you very long."

"Where're you goin'?" asked Slim in dismay.

"Aw, I don't know!" Red gave an expressive shrug. "Somebody's squealed about Ranstead gettin' drunk, and it looks like there'll have to be an investigation. Some big shot's comin' down from the main office. Somebody's bound to get fired, and I don't want it to be Pop."

"What can you do?"
 "Wait and see. I guess you know what a transposition tower is now. If I'm not around, just watch yourself."

As they went out together from the hut the timekeeper came running towards them.

"Red!" he shouted. "Red, one of the company vice-presidents is down at the office and wants to see you right away."

"Down at the office?" Red uttered a scornful laugh. "Tell him if he wants to see me to come where I am."

"I thought you'd say that," remarked the timekeeper, and he went off quite gleefully in the direction of the camp office.

Red walked away to the bunkhouse he shared with other linesmen, and Slim walked with him.

"Well, kid," said Red, perching on the end of a long table in the deserted room, "that washes me up. You'd better not be here when the vice-president comes in."

"Why not?" challenged Slim.

"Because I don't feel like arguin' with any big shot, and I'm a cinch to run into trouble."

"I ain't been backin' away from trouble, have I?"

"You'll lose your job if you stay!"
 Slim dumped his safety-belt on the table.

"I didn't have a job when I came here," he said, "and I ain't gonna have one when I go. This is their job. I've just been usin' it."

In at the door strode a very indignant

man in a belted overcoat and a soft-felt hat. His name was Corton, and he was vice-president of the Empire Power Corporation. A cigar was in his hand, but he had not smoked it since he had received Red's message.

"Which one of you is Blayd?" he rasped.

"Mr. Blayd to you," said Red, whose back was towards the visitor, and he picked up a book from the table and opened it.

"Oh!" Corton did his best to keep his temper under control. "I'd like to talk to Mr. Blayd alone, if you please!" he said to Slim.

"Well, he doesn't please!" snapped Red. "Come on, what's on your mind?"

"I've come down here to investigate the death of Ranstead. What do you know about it?"

"I know all about it," said Slim. "I seen it."

"Well, what caused it?"

"He was heavier than air, and he just naturally broke the law—of gravity."

Red laughed, but Corton did not appreciate such levity.

"Blayd—er—Mr. Blayd, what do you know about it?" he demanded in a voice like a whip. "There's something wrong here, and I mean to get to the bottom of it! It's pretty queer when the foreman of a job won't tell why an accident happened and the men won't talk."

"We're talking," drawled Red, "but we're not sayin' anything."

"What would you say if I were to ask you whether that man had been drinking?"

"What would you say if I didn't tell you?"

"Now, look here," roared Corton. "I've given you fellows a chance to talk. If you don't come clean, I'm going to fire you both!"

Down went the book, and Red slid from the table.

"Is that all?" he inquired.

"Yes, that's all."
 "That's all I wanted to know!"



Two of the men knelt over Wilcox, and Steve and another man looked down at Slim.

Corton was grabbed by the collar and the belt of his coat and ejected from the hut.

"You're both fired!" he bellowed from outside it.

Red slammed the door and grinned at Slim.

"Well, fellow," he said cheerfully, "you might as well start packin' your things. We're gonna be lookin' for a new job."

"We?" questioned Slim eagerly.

"Sure. I'm in the market for a new side-kick. Don't you wanta go with me?"

"That's what's the matter," said Slim.

A Journey South

CORTON made no further attempt to investigate the rumour that Ranstead had met his death through drunkenness, but returned to New York forthwith. Red and Slim collected the pay to which they were entitled and spent the day in idleness except for packing.

Next morning, after breakfast, they stowed their belongings in the back of Red's open car while the others gathered round to see them off.

"You think Red and Slim ain't gonna travel faster than two wild geese with their tail-feathers on fire?" Stumpy inquired of no one in particular. "And I suppose you think Slim ain't so proud o' that belt he sleeps with it?"

"Well, Stumpy," said Slim, "I suppose when I see you next time you'll be a linesman."

"Me a linesman?" Stumpy's face registered horror. "Say, you couldn't get me up on one o' them there towers if there was an eagle up there layin' gold eggs! No, sir!"

Red got into the car at the wheel, and Slim settled down beside him. The sun was rising, and the day was fine.

"So-long, Slim!" waved Stumpy. "Any time you bump into anything you don't know about, why, just come back and I'll learn you."

Pop leaned over the side of the car to say:

"You're a good man, Slim, and I hate to lose you. I'll be havin' other jobs some day, and I'm countin' on you and Red to come back to me when I send for you."

"I'm mighty grateful to you, Pop," Slim declared with considerable feeling. "We'll come back the day you send for us."

"Gangway, boys!" shouted Red. "We're off!"

The crowd in front of the bonnet moved aside, and the car went slowly out from the camp.

"Pop," said Stumpy, "you think there don't go the two best friends you ever had?"

"I don't think," returned Pop gruffly, "I know! Come on, get to work, everybody! Get back on the job!"

Red drove away from the camp with a contented expression on his face and a cigarette between his lips. A federal highway was reached, but he did not increase speed upon its excellent surface. He seemed to be at peace with the world.

"Reckon we can get another job right away?" asked Slim with some anxiety after several miles had been covered without a word spoken.

"Sure we can," replied Red. "How much money you got?"

"Two hundred bucks."

"All right. That's two hundred reasons why you shouldn't worry about it, and I've got a lot more. Money complicates reasoning."

"What d'you figure on doin' with it?" asked Slim 'n surprise.

"Spend it. That makes everything

simple. Then we gotta go back to work again."

Slim dealt mentally with this strange philosophy.

"That's not what most folks do, is it?" he ventured.

"No, you're right." Red removed his left hand from the wheel to wave it contemptuously. "Most folks just settle down in one place for the rest o' their lives—to buy fancy funerals with! This world's a great place, Slim, and we're only here a little while. Don't you wanta see something of it?"

"That's what's the matter," said Slim, but added hastily: "I wanna do a lot more line work, too. I like it."

"Well, so do I," said Red. "We will do a lot more. Ah, that's the great thing about bein' a linesman—you get a chance to see something of the world and have a lot o' fun between jobs."

There were mountains in the distance, woods to the right and left, and the trees were beginning to take upon themselves the tints of autumn. Slim viewed the landscape without any great enthusiasm—it seemed to be empty of high-tension towers.

"Do all linesmen wander around like this?" he asked.

"Well," responded the philosopher, "if you follow construction work you've gotta go where the jobs are. Of course, if you want to settle down and get married you'd better get yourself a maintenance job with some company."

"I'm figurin' on raisin' a lot more towers 'fore I worry about raisin' a family," said Slim.

"And that's mighty good figurin'," said Red.

They were heading for Chicago, a fact which Red communicated to his companion in his own time—without communicating the fact that he had no intention of taking any job till after Chicago had been visited.

On the journey south, which occupied two days, they came upon several construction camps, and at some of them Red stopped awhile to converse with old acquaintances, and at one of them they spent the intervening night. The general foreman offered them jobs, but Red declined the jobs without even consulting Slim.

And so they came to Chicago, late in the afternoon of the second day, and the height of the buildings in the central part of that city astounded the country boy as he gazed up at them from the car.

"Red," he exclaimed, "these buildings are twice as high as them B extension towers we built at the river crossing!"

"Higher than that, Slim," said Red, "and you make 'em possible."

"I do?"

"Well, linesmen do. You can't have high buildings without elevators and electricity to run 'em!"

In State Street Slim pointed to the Dennison Hotel, a massive structure six hundred and thirty-five feet high.

"That's the biggest hotel I've ever seen!"

"Yeah," nodded Red. "You'll be seein' the inside of it pretty soon. That's where we're stoppin'."

"Us stoppin' there?" asked Slim in an awed voice.

"Sure. You know we build the towers that bring the juice to these places. I'm gonna show you what goes on inside 'em."

To Slim's disappointment, the hotel was left behind.

"Red, we passed it!" said he.

"Yeah," said Red. "We'll be back. I'm gonna show you the fanciest sight in Chicago."

"Fancier than that hotel?"

"Wait and see."

The car came to a standstill outside a white building in Madison Street.

"What're you stoppin' in front of a hospital for?" asked Slim.

"Same place," mused Red, contemplating the building. "Hasn't changed a bit."

"You been here before?"

"Yeah. First time I was here they carried me into the accident ward—feet first. Come on! See how it feels to walk in!"

They got out from the car and they entered the hall of the hospital. At the far end of the hall a nurse was about to pass through a doorway when Red caught sight of her and shouted:

"Cally!"

The nurse turned about, a vision of beauty in starched linen, and Slim gaped at her as she sped towards them and became embraced by Red.

"So you did come back?" she said in a voice that seemed to Slim to be full of music. "Oh, gosh, I'm glad to see you, Red!"

"It's great to see you," said Red, and held her at arm's length to feast his eyes upon her. "Well, I warned you I'd be back some day for another visit."

"How long this time, Red?"

"Same old story," he shrugged. "As long as the money lasts."

"Same old story—same old Red!"

"Well, you didn't expect me to change, did you? Oh—er—this is my pal Slim. Meet Mr. Kincaid."

A pair of singularly expressive hazel eyes enveloped Slim.

"How d'you do, Mr. Kincaid?" inquired their owner.

"I'm glad to meet you, Mrs.—" Slim mumbled.

"It's miss," she informed him smilingly. "But if you're Red's friend it's Cally—Cally Richards."

"That's what's the matter, then, Miss Cally," said Slim.

Red remarked that the reunion called for a celebration.

"Anything you say," laughed Cally. "I'm off duty at six o'clock."

"Listen," protested Slim, "you two wanta just be together. I ain't fixin' to get in your way."

"Ah, no, you're goin' with us, Slim," declared Red. "You know a lot about line work, but there's one thing I haven't shown you."

"What's that?" asked Slim.

"How to step up the high voltage in the bright lights. See you at your apartment, Cally. Come on, Slim!"

The End of a Spree

THE splendour of the Dennison Hotel almost took Slim's breath away; but Red booked a suite consisting of two bed-rooms and a sitting-room with characteristic nonchalance, and in that suite—which was on the thirtieth floor—they removed the stains of travel and changed into their best clothes.

At seven o'clock they collected Cally Richards from the flat in which she lived, and by half-past eight the three were sitting round a table in a brilliantly lit restaurant with the music of an excellent dance band in their ears and empty coffee-cups in front of them.

A waiter had presented the bill, and Red had paid it with the air of one possessing wealth. He looked across at Slim.

"So you kinda like it, eh, fellow?" he said.

"Swell!" breathed Slim. "But that's a sight o' money to pay for a dinner—even a dinner like this!"

"You can't get groceries like we've had at a construction camp," laughed Red.

"Well, look, let me pay my share."

"Save it and buy a spud-wrench!" Red got to his feet. "Cally, look after Slim, will you? I'll be back with enough dough to buy this joint!"

In Chicago gambling is done quite openly, and a roulette table was quite as much a feature of the restaurant as the dance floor beyond which it was situated. Red made his way to the roulette table, greeted the croupier as an old acquaintance, and found a vacant chair. Slim, remembering the pool parlour at Elliston, fidgeted in his seat.

"Reckon I oughta go over there?" he asked. "He might need me."

"No," said Cally, quite definitely, "he can take care of himself. Stay here and talk to me."

He settled down again, though not without misgiving. She looked wonderful to him in a semi-evening frock that set off her slim beauty, and he was quite sure that if he had been Red he would not have deserted her. He broke a long silence by asking how long she had known Red.

"A long time," she replied. "We're old friends. But tell me about yourself, Slim. How did you happen to become a linesman?"

Slim told her quite a lot about himself while Red lost money at the roulette table and time passed.

"Shall we dance?" she suggested.

"Well, that's somethin' I ain't never learned yet," Slim confessed.

"Then it's time you did, and that's one thing I can teach you," said she. "Come along!"

The band was playing a fox-trot, and upon the polished floor he held her with a feeling of exhilaration and did his best to master the steps.

"You reckon I could learn to do this if I kept at it?" he asked anxiously, as she guided him skilfully amongst other dancing couples.

"Of course," she encouraged. "You're doing beautifully."

The fox-trot was encored, and half-way through its repetition she told him in all sincerity that he was getting much better.

"You're a good teacher," said Slim fervently.

Red was back at the table when they returned to it. He had lost quite a lot of money, but he said complacently:

"Well, for once I quit ahead of the game."

"You mean you won?" asked Slim.

"No," was the reply, "but I've still

got some left. Enough for a few more nights. Come on, let's have a drink!"

Slim slept, that night, in a bed that was almost too comfortable, and he rose late to another day of excitement. In the evening Cally went out with them again, and she and Slim became more friendly than ever while Red gambled—and won.

The round of pleasure continued, and one morning Stumpy received a postcard from Slim with a picture of the Dennison Hotel on the back of it and this message on the front:

"Dear Stumpy.—On the other side is a picture of the hotel we're boarding at. 'X' marks the window of our room. Having a fine time. Wish you was here, only you couldn't live high like this on account of because you won't get off the ground.

"Yours truly,

"SLIM."

"P.S.—Red bought me a new suit today."

Stumpy showed the card to everybody in Pop's gang, and to anybody else who cared to see it.

That night, while Red gambled in the restaurant where he had gambled before, Slim danced with Cally till the band started a tango which was utterly beyond him. He was leaning against a gilded railing beside his partner when she said suddenly in a serious voice:

"Slim, why don't you give it up?"

"Give up dancin'?" he asked.

"No, of course not!" she replied.

"Line work. You know how dangerous it is!"

"Sure it's dangerous," he agreed.

"And it isn't only the danger," she went on, "it's the tumbleweed life. All there is to this construction business is working yourself out of one job and trying to find another."

"But I like it," said Slim. "It's fun to travel around workin' like we do."

"Sure it's fun." She gnawed her lip. "So is a parachute jump—if the parachute opens! Did you ever stop to think, Slim, that it's selfish fun? That it might be getting you into it deeper and deeper till it gets a hold on you, like it has on Red? So that you can't get out even if you want to?"

Slim glanced across at Red's flaming hair, conspicuous at the roulette table.

"But I don't wanta," he said. "Neither does Red."

"Yes, but you're young enough to quit and go back to that farm you told me about," she persisted, "or to do something."

"Cally, you don't understand!"

"Slim, I understood about line work the first time I ever met Red. He was on a job near here, working over live wire—hot wire! Something went wrong, and when he was brought into the hospital he was burned so badly that it was a week before they knew whether he'd live. It was eleven weeks before he could walk."

She sighed.

"I tried to get him to quit then," she said, "and I've tried since. But none of it did any good. He'll never quit!"

She looked into Slim's dark eyes, and her own were moist.

"So you see, Slim, I've learned a lot about linesmen. I've learned that it all adds up to one thing—that some day the parachute won't open!"

Slim knew, by this time, that he was very much in love with her; but she was Red's girl and not for him.

"That may work out for some folks," he growled, "but no one else will get hurt if my belt breaks. It's not like as if I had parents, or kids, or—a wife."

"Perhaps not now," said she, and changed her manner abruptly. "Well, if it's to be a short life, let's make it a merry one!"

On the following day, Red swept Slim into a jeweller's shop and to an assistant behind a showcase stated that he wanted



As they approached the leg of the tower from which Red and Kelly had fallen Stumpy held on to it as though to bar Slim's way.

to see something good enough for the "sweetest gal" in Chicago.

"We have some very beautiful engagement rings," said the assistant.

"Who said anything about engagement rings?" barked Red. "Show me something in—or—show me some bracelets. I'm lookin' for a present, not a future."

The assistant laughed at the jest and went off to get some bracelets.

"I believe that gny thought I was gonna get married!" scoffed Red.

"Aren't you?" asked Slim.

"No!" The negative was emphatic. "No, Slim, I've got my faults, but I'm not mean enough to tie Cally to 'em for life. I think too much of her to make a young widow out of her."

"What d'you mean?"

"Slim, supposin' Ranstead had been married and had a couple o' kids—where d'you think they'd be now? Linesmen haven't anything to offer a wife. Nope, this is strictly a roller-coaster career of ours."

Slim looked almost horrified, and Red laughed.

"Oh, some day I might settle down and get married," he said. "But until then the best thing I can give Cally is just what I'm givin' her—a nice good-bye present. You see, the moving finger having writ moves on."

Slim had no knowledge of the Persian poet Red had quoted and was puzzled.

"What're you talkin' about?" he asked blankly.

"Everything's simple again. We go back to work." Red fished out some notes amounting in all to about seventy dollars. "Incidentally, that's all we have between us and the next job!"

"No it ain't!" declared Slim. "You haven't let me spend a cent! I've still got two hundred bucks—that'll keep us goin'!"

"My boy," said Red in quite a fatherly fashion, "you shouldn't spend all your substance in riotous living. You may get old and need it some day."

"If you're so wise," retorted Slim, "why ain't you rich? Where's the eighteen hundred bucks you had when you hit this town?"

Red laughed.

"Where's the snow that was here last January?" he countered; and then the assistant arrived with quite a large assortment of bracelets.

The farewell party took place in Cally's flat, where a meal she herself had cooked was demolished. Over the coffee Red broached the subject of departure in his own casual fashion.

"Well, Cally," he said, "it's the old story, I guess. We've had a grand time and now it's all over. Slim and I are shovin' off."

Cally rose abruptly, her mouth all twisted as though she were on the point of tears, and she fled into her bed-room and closed the door.

"She sure hates to see you go, Red," said Slim hoarsely.

"You know I never figured she'd take it that tough." Red stared at the closed door, then took from his pocket a little package containing the bracelet. Cally's handbag was lying on a sideboard and he slipped the package into it, replaced the handbag, and moved towards the kitchen.

"Aw, we all need a drink!" he grunted. "I'm gonna mix a flock o' 'em!"

While he was out in the kitchen Cally reappeared from the bed-room and walked slowly over to Slim, who was still sitting at the table.

"Well, I—er—I guess it's all over but the shovin'," she said bitterly. "Oh, it's always been like this. I—I look up from my work and there he is. He plays until his money's gone, and all of a sud—

den he's gone! And this time you're going, too!"

Slim drew a long and uncertain breath.

"I guess it's the only thing to do," he said, avoiding her eyes.

She dropped into a chair beside him.

"Slim, will you write to me?" she asked. "Red never would, and I'd never know between visits where he was or—how he was." She laughed pitifully. "Now I—I won't know about you, either."

"I don't write good," said Slim, "but if you want me to—"

"Please do!" She stood up and put both her hands on his shoulders. "There's only one thing I—I'd like better. Oh, I'm off on the old subject again!"

"What's that?" Slim looked up into her face. "Quit line work? Cally, I can't! I like line work—and, besides, if I quit I'd have to leave Red. I like him, too. I reckon I like him about as well as—well as well as you do."

"Slim!" Her hands were holding his shoulders tightly when Red walked into the room from the kitchen with a tray in his hands and brimming glasses upon the tray. He stopped short to blink, then grinned and advanced to the table.

"Remember me?" he inquired quite pleasantly. "I don't want any complaints about these drinks, now—I mixed 'em myself. There you are, Cally."

Cally removed her hands to take the proffered glass in one of them.

"Where are you off to this time, Red?" she asked.

"Well," said he, putting down the tray, "the money's gone. Winter's comin' on. We're headin' where the climate fits our clothes." He raised a glass. "Cally, till we meet again!"

An Unexpected Visitor

CHICAGO was left behind early next morning, and Red drove south at what seemed to Slim to be an excessive speed. Thirty miles away from the city, on a very second-class road, he said pointedly:

"You could go faster, if we had a long hill to go down!"

"We will!" Red assured him. "We'll be goin' down the other side o' the mountains pretty soon!"

"Yeah?" grimaced Slim. "We'll be goin' down somewhere deeper than that! If they'd made this car to be a bullet there'd be a charge o' powder behind it, wouldn't there?"

Red did not reply, but shot up a long and winding hill, raising a cloud of dust behind the car.

The long descent on the other side of the hill was accomplished at such a speed, and with such a bumping, that Slim felt sure there would be a smash, and as a heavy motor-truck swung out from a side turning he held his hands over his eyes.

But the truck was avoided by inches, and Slim breathed again.

"I can't figure you out, Red," he complained. "Coming to Chicago you drove like a snail afraid it was too early. Coming out o' Chicago you drive like this! What's the matter? Didn't you like it there?"

"Sure," replied Red, "but that's behind us. Now I want to drive fast to see what's ahead."

It became evident that he had an objective, for in the afternoon of the following day, in a dreary region of sand and scribe some miles from an unattractive town called Cactus Thorn, he drove into a construction camp and hailed a stoutly built man who was noticeable for the length of his nose and the redness of his ears.

"Well!" exclaimed the man, and came hurrying over to the car to shake hands. "Red, I'm glad to see you! Pop wrote me you were headed this way. How are he and Stumpy?"

"Pop's fine," said Red, "and Stumpy's still talkin' about his pa. Slim, this is an old friend o' mine, Steve Vincent. This is Slim Kincaid, my partner, Steve—and I don't mind tellin' you he can really cut it."

"Well, if you're lookin' for work," said Steve Vincent, "you've come to the right place. I need a coupla good men right now."

"You don't need 'em any worse than we need the job," Red assured him; and terms were arranged.

"You're hired," said Steve. "Check in at the camp and start work in the morning. See you later."

The transmission lines in this part of the country were strung from wooden poles, instead of steel towers, and Slim was not used to working on poles. He quickly became expert at climbing them, however, with the aid of "gaffs," or spurs, strapped to the inside of his ankles, and for six weeks he and Red bolted cross-pieces to the tops of poles, fixed insulators to the cross-pieces, and ran wire.

Then, one morning, the general foreman of the camp arrived on the scene in his car and descended to talk to Steve Vincent, who was foreman of the gang.

"I've got bad news for you, Steve," he said. "I'm takin' Red Blayd away from you."

"Why, he's the best man I've got," protested Steve.

"That's why I'm takin' him! I'm makin' him foreman over at Camp Eight."

"Camp Eight?" Steve glanced at an ugly, long-faced fellow who was at work on the top of an adjacent pole. "That's gonna make Wilcox sore—he was counting on that job himself."

"Never mind Wilcox," said the general foreman, Sam Blake by name. "I want Red!"

"Okay—orders are orders." Steve shouted up to Red: "Hi, Red. I've got orders to send you over to Camp Eight as foreman. How about it?"

Red shouted down that he didn't want the job; but Slim urged him to take it.

"You'll make twice as much dough," he said.

"Yeah, and I'll stay up twice as late at night losin' it!" Red retorted.

"You go on over there as foreman and take me along as straw boss, see?"

"That's right." What Red wouldn't do for his own advantage he was prepared to do for Slim's. "I never thought o' that." He called down: "Okay, Steve, it's a deal!"

Howard Wilcox, a thoroughly unpleasant fellow, disliked by all the linesmen in the camp, had been listening and was furious. After Steve had walked away with the general foreman he descended from his perch on a pulley-rope and moved furtively along to the pole on which Red and Slim were working. They were sitting on frames held by pulley-ropes, and he began to unfasten the rope that held Red's frame.

Slim looked down. "What're you tryin' to do, Wilcox?" he bellowed.

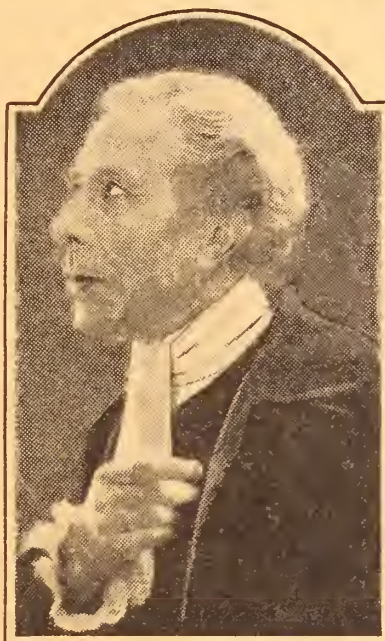
"Red's rig was slippin'," lied the linesman. "I wanted to fix it—that's all."

Slim descended his own rope with all speed.

"Red's rigs don't slip," he said fiercely, "not unless someone slips 'em!"

"Aw, now listen, Slim, you know I wouldn't do a thing like that," pro-

**NEXT WEEK'S
BUMPER NUMBER!**



GEORGE ARLISS

**—IN—
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"HILLS OF OLD WYOMING"

A thrilling tale of rustlers and Redskins, and Hopalong Cassidy, starring William Boyd.

tested Wilcox. "I just wanted to help."

"Don't give me that! I seen you monkeyin' with the knot!"

Wilcox showed his temper.

"You can't prove that, and you know it!" he roared.

"I ain't gonna try to prove it," said Slim. "Red's too good a guy to go to gaol for killin' a rat like you! Get away from that sling!"

Wilcox went off and climbed his own pole again, and Slim re-ascended his. But a few minutes later Red called down for a ladder.

"Hi, one o' you grunts, send Red's ladder up to him!" ordered the foreman.

"I'll do it, Steve!" Wilcox shouted, and he was down on the ground almost instantly. But Slim was down before the linesman had time to do anything with the ladder.

"You ain't rigging no ladder that Red works on!" he stormed. "I wouldn't trust a knot o' yours in a necktie!"

Wilcox gripped him by the shirt with his gloved left hand and in his right hand flashed a knife. Slim was holding a pair of pliers, and with them he defended himself.

The fight was too brief for anyone to interfere, but it was horrible to witness. The two staggered apart and fell upon their backs almost simultaneously, Slim badly wounded in the body just above the edge of his safety-belt, Wilcox with his face battered and torn by the pliers.

Two of the grunts knelt over Wilcox, and Steve and another man looked down at Slim.

"Get a stretcher, quick!" cried the foreman.

Red was down from the pole and over at the truck before any of the grunts could reach it, and he helped to carry his unconscious chum on the stretcher. Others carried Wilcox, and the two were conveyed to the camp on the truck, and from the camp to the hospital in Cactus Thorn by car.

Red drove the car, and Steve rode with him. At the hospital he directed the internes to leave Wilcox where he was till Slim had been put to bed.

"But he's got one eye knocked out!" protested Steve.

"If the doctor can't fix Slim up," declared Red grimly, "he won't need that eye!"

After what seemed an interminable wait in the hall of the hospital a little grey-haired doctor walked out to him from a ward.

"How is he, doc?" asked Red.

"Well," was the slow reply, "if there are no complications he'll be all right."

"You're quite sure now?"

"Yes," decided the doctor. "He'll have to stay here a long time, but as that wound didn't kill him I shouldn't think anything ever will! How on earth did he get it?"

"He got it in a trade," said Red. "A trade?"

"Yeah, for a broken head. Well, as long as he's gettin' along all right I guess we can patch up that other guy." Red turned to the two internes he had overawed. "All right, boys," he said, "bring him in! Thanks, doc."

The doctor had not exaggerated when he had said that Slim would have to stay in hospital for a long time. As a matter of fact, he hovered between life and death for several days, and a fortnight elapsed before he was able to write a note to Cally.

In the note he dealt chiefly with Red, and it was only in the last paragraph that he mentioned himself:

"Changed my address real quick, but

it ain't nothing very serious. I guess you better write to me here at the hospital for a few weeks."

The response to that epistle was swift and of an entirely unexpected nature. A nurse entered his ward one evening to inform him that he had a visitor.

"Oh," said Slim, "they must have finished up early out at the camp today. Send him in."

"It's not a him," said the nurse, and she went to the door and admitted Cally.

"Cally!" Slim had seen her so often in his dreams that he could scarcely believe he was gazing at her in the flesh.

"Are you glad to see me, Slim?" she asked, walking over to his bed.

"Glad? I've never been so monstrous glad about anything in my whole life! I've just been lyin' here thinkin' about you and dreamin' about you. I been writin' you another letter."

He held out a sheet of paper, but she put it in her handbag without even looking at it.

"I'll read it to-night," she said. "After this you—you won't have to write me any more."

"You mean you're gonna stay here?" asked Slim excitedly.

"I'm going to stay as long as—as you need me."

The nurse intervened to take Slim's temperature, and the thermometer was still in his mouth when Red walked into the ward—and stopped short in astonishment.

"Hallo, Red," said Cally.

"Cally!" Red advanced rapturously. "For the love o' Pete, I'm glad to see you! What're you doin' here?"

The nurse requested them both to go. "Mr. Kincaid is not allowed to have visitors for long," she said.

"Okay, sister," Red caught hold of Cally's arm. "I'll be in again soon, Slim. Come on, Cally, let's get something to eat."

Cally squeezed Slim's hand.

"Have a good night's sleep," she said, "and I'll be back to see you to-morrow. Good-bye, Slim!"

Slim Decides

RED took Cally to a restaurant in the town, and they had a meal together at a table in a little curtained recess.

"This is like old times, Cally," he said. "Gee, it's gonna be a big load off my mind to know you're looking after Slim after I'm gone."

"Where are you going, Red?" she asked quickly.

"Well, you see, I promised 'em I'd take care of a job way up the line if they'd let me stay here till Slim was out o' danger. Should complete the job in a month. Gee, I'm gonna miss that kid! Yeah, and we need money to pay the bills."

"How much?" asked Cally.

"A lot more than I'll ever make up there in a month."

Cally took from her handbag the bracelet he had bought her in Chicago.

"Will that cover it?"

He frowned at his gift.

"That's swell of you, Cally," he muttered, "but I—I bought that for you."

"I know," said she, "but what better use could we make of it than taking care of Slim? Look, let me handle this—I'll sell it and get enough to—well—to cover almost everything."

"Same old Cally, aren't you?" he laughed. "Haven't changed a bit!"

The winter daylight had faded to dusk before they entered the restaurant, and it was night when they went out from it.

"There's my car over there," said Red. "Let's travel. I could tell you a lot o' lies under that moon!"

"And there's my hotel right over there," said Cally, "and I didn't come here to look at the moon. I'm going to have a good night's sleep so that I can get up early and see the head of the hospital to-morrow."

Red protested that it had been a long time since they had seen one another.

"You've got a whole month to take care of Slim," he said, "and I've got to leave in a couple of hours."

"Same old Red," said Cally with a twisted smile. "Always leaving! Good-bye."

They shook hands on the pavement, and Red went back to camp in his car.

and Cally entered the hotel. She had arranged with the hospital authorities in Chicago to be transferred to the hospital in Cactus Thorn till Slim was well again, and next morning she took the place of the nurse who had been looking after him.

Slim was happy and progressed quite rapidly to convalescence. He had some characteristic cards from Stumpy and some brief epistles from Pop, and about a month after Cally's arrival the doctor pronounced him as good as new again.

"I could have told you that a week ago, doc," said Slim. "But I'm right grateful to you for fixin' me up so good."

"You'd better save your thanks for the nurse of yours," said the grey-haired little doctor with a twinkle in his eyes. "I never saw anyone recover so quickly as you've done since she's been taking care of you. And if I'm any judge, she's going to keep right on taking care of you!"

After the doctor had gone Cally entered the ward with a suitcase Red had bought for Slim in Chicago.

"Well, you've had your final examination," she said.

"Yeah," nodded Slim. "He told me I'm as good as new. D'you think I ain't glad to be gettin' out of here?"

"I'm glad for you, Slim," she declared, opening the suitcase on the bed he had deserted for good. "It's been a long siege, hasn't it?"

"It was till you came out here!" Slim began to toss things into the suitcase. "I don't know what I'd have done if you hadn't—"

"You don't have to thank me," she interrupted. "I wanted to take care of you and get you well again. Here, that's no way to pack—let me do it!"

She began to fold garments and to pack them neatly, moving from dressing-chest to bed, and back again, while Slim completed his dressing.

"Slim," she said suddenly, "where are you going? You're not going back to that camp?"

"I've got to, Cally," he replied. "I reckon the job's almost done, but—"

"Slim, I didn't come here just to nurse you," she blurted. "I came because I had to! When I heard that you were hurt I—I realised just how much you meant to me." Her voice wavered a little, and it sounded to him as though there were tears in it. "I—I found that I loved you—and after I'd been here a while I knew that you loved me, too."

Slim took her in his arms, though not without a feeling of guilt.

"I think I knowed about it first in Chicago," he confided in her ear. "I tried to fight against it then 'cause I didn't know how you felt—and then there was Red." He sighed heavily. "And there still is Red. He loves you, too, Cally!"

"No!" she cried. "No, Slim, I'm only a small part of his life. He never loved anything but gambling and wandering around and—line work. That's his life."

The door opened, and they started apart as Steve Vincent entered the ward. He had been a fairly frequent visitor, and Cally had come to know him and to like him.

"Hallo, Cally," said the foreman. "Hallo, kid—glad to see you on your feet again. Are you all right?"

"Fine, boss," declared Slim. "I was just fixin' to come back to work."

"Well, that's what I came over to see you about," Steve tugged at one of his very red ears. "The construction job finished up this morning—but we've got something better for you in the

maintenance. This is a good company, and we know you're a good man."

"Tell him you'll do it, Slim," pleaded Cally. "Don't you see what it means? I'll tell you for him, Steve. He'll stay!"

"That's fine," said the foreman. "You just keep listenin' to her, kid, and you won't go wrong. Well, I gotta get back to the office—I'll see you later."

He was on his way out when Slim stopped him with a question.

"Steve, what's Red gonna do?"

"Why," Steve replied, "he got a wire from Pop Traver about a construction job back East, and I guess he's gonna take it. So long!"

"Slim," said Cally, after the foreman had gone, "you just don't know how happy it makes me to think of spending the rest of my life right with you."

She was in his arms again, but Slim's face was troubled.

"I'm thinkin' about it, too, Cally," he said. "You're gonna spend the rest of your life with me, but not here—not if Pop needs us! The first thing we've got to do is to see Red and tell him the truth!"

Once more the door had been opened, and Red's voice rang out behind them, harsh and strained:

"What is it you wanted to tell me?"

They started violently and turned to stare at him, but they did not let go of one another.

"It ain't much, Red," Slim managed to say, "but we just naturally fell in love, and—we're fixin' to get married."

"Gonna get married, eh?" Red bore the blow extraordinarily well, compressing his lips. "Well, I don't know, that—that oughta work out swell—for you two. Great!" He advanced with outstretched hand. "Good luck, fellow! Good luck, Cally!"

Almost automatically they shook hands with him in turn, and then he was gone. Slim fastened the suitcase on the bed.

"How soon can you get your stuff together?" he asked.

"Stuff together?" echoed Cally blankly. "For what?"

"For travellin'. We gotta get married right away and catch the first train back to Pop. He wouldn't have wired Red if he hadn't needed us."

"But—but, Slim—"

"We'll get married here and go on there together."

"Yes," said Cally bitterly, "go on there—and then go on to another job, and still another, never knowing which one will be the last! I wouldn't mind you being a linesman a little longer, here in the maintenance where there's security and a chance to build a future, but if you go back to your old gang I'm going back to Chicago, and we're not going to be married!"

He stared at her in consternation.

"Do—do you mean that?" he stammered.

"Yes," she said definitely.

"That's what's the matter then!" He snatched up the suitcase. "Cally, I was a linesman before you knowed me, and that's the one thing about me I can't change to suit you. If you figure you can't stand it, why that's it!"

She walked out from the ward and slammed the door; whereupon Slim dived across to a window and opened it. Down in the street Red was starting up his car.

"Hi, Red!" bellowed Slim. "Red! Wait a minute! Wait—I'm comin' with you!"

Cally was in the hall as he dashed across it and out to the steps of the

building, and she was horrified to see that he was really going.

"Slim!" she cried imploringly; but Slim stumbled down the steps and scrambled into Red's car.

An Emergency Call

LATE in the evening of the 25th of December, Pop and the members of his gang were seated round a long table in the dining-room of a boarding-house in Brinkfield, New Hampshire. They had reached the last stage of a highly satisfactory meal prepared by their tall and buxom landlady, Mrs. Johnson, and Stumpy's tongue was wagging.

Down in the south of Illinois the weather was still mild and pleasant, but the State of New Hampshire was in the grip of a blizzard that raged all along the upper Atlantic coast. The wind was howling round the boarding-house, the air was thick with snow, and snow was already two inches deep upon the ground.

Mrs. Johnson did not expect any visitors on such a night, but the front-door bell rang suddenly and she crossed the hall to answer its summons. Red and Slim were on the top step, covered with snow and sheltering from the blast as well as they could in the narrow porch.

"Mr. Traver?" shivered the landlady in response to Red's question. "Why, he's eatin' his dinner! Just come right in, both of you."

A very warm greeting awaited the two in the dining-room. Stumpy cried:

"You think I ain't been pinin' for you boys worse'n that ol' red-headed girl's been pinin' for me?"

"Same old Stumpy!" laughed Red. "You been talkin' for twenty years!"

"Mrs. Johnson," said Pop, "these are the two boys I wanted you to save rooms for."

Mrs. Johnson said that she guessed they'd be wanting dinner.

"Well, we sure could stand it," said Red. "We've been sleepin' and catin' in the car for the last five days."

"That's terrible! I'll get you some right away!"

Stumpy and a man named Lafe Garretson gave up their places at the table, and Red and Slim sat down to a hearty meal.

"Well," said Pop, rubbing his hands, "this looks like old times. Just been waitin' for the day when my old gang'd be around me again."

"Is Joe Braithwaite still with you?" inquired Slim.

"No, Joe ain't with me any more," regretted the foreman. "You see, he got married, and his wife made him settle down and take a maintenance job."

"Yeah," chimed in Stumpy. "d'you think that woman ain't made Joe settle down worse'n a ground squirrel with the gout?"

There was a radio set in the room, and he switched it on right at the beginning of a news bulletin.

"Storm warnings are flying for the whole Atlantic coast as far south as Richmond," said a voice from the loud-speaker, "and all air-lines have suspended services. The weather bureau reports a falling temperature and rising wind velocity, and the storm is moving westward at the rate of fifty miles per hour. From all indications, the great

"Boo-oo!" Stumpy switched off the set. "That guy was freezin' me to death! You think we ain't gonna have a blizzard? You think you boys ain't gonna have to wear snow-shoes up them

(Continued on page 27)

Racketeers caused an old man's death when he held the winning ticket in a sweepstake. Two grandchildren, aided by a young reporter, seek the solution of the mystery and become involved in a counterfeit swindle. Starring Frankie Darro and Kane Richmond



"TOUGH TO HANDLE"

The Lucky Sweepstake Number

"EXTRA! Sweepstake extra here! Read your lucky number! Paper! Paper! Read your lucky number!"

The sturdy, thickset youngster with the square jaw and fierce, dark eyes yelled lustily as he held his papers. Quite a good trade he was doing, because a very great percentage of the American public were investing their savings every week in sweepstakes and hoping to get rich quick.

"Hi, gramp!" The boy caught sight of an elderly man coming slowly along the street.

"Hallo, Mickey." The old boy held out a shaking hand. "Give me a paper—maybe we won."

"Yeah—maybe is right." He handed his grandfather a paper. "The chances are a million to one against you."

"Well, somebody's got to win," said old man Sanford. "And I might be that one in a million. Just think, Mike, you could give up selling papers, and—"

"What, me give up this corner, after I had to lick seven guys to get it? Not likely!"

"Hey, kid!" A man rushed up. "Gimme a paper."

Grandfather began to amble away with his head buried in the paper.

"I'll see you supper-time, gramp!" the boy shouted, but the old man was so occupied with his paper that he did not answer.

Old man Sanford went down all the small prizewinners first, because he

knew he could not hope for a big win, but when he did not find his name among the lucky ones he glanced at the main prizes. Not a hope, of course! Suddenly his eyes centred on a number. It was mighty close to his own. He took out a slip on which he had written the number. It was the same.

"Don't tell me you've got a winning number, Sanford!" a hearty voice exclaimed.

The old man looked up eagerly at the smart, swarthy fellow grinning at him.

"Look here, that ticket you sold me—it's a winner!" Sanford exclaimed excitedly.

"Let me see."

"It is—says so clear as day."

"But that's impossible," the man exclaimed, taking the newspaper, looking at the paper and then comparing the number on the slip.

"Why do you say that? It's my number, isn't it?" Sanford cried. "That's the same as is on the actual ticket."

"Then there must be a mistake in printing the name, that's all." The fellow put the slip of paper in his pocket. "These newspapers are always getting the names mixed up. I'll see that you get the dough. You go right home and wait for me."

"That two dollars sixty I gave you is the luckiest money I ever spent, and as soon as I get the prize money I'm going to give you a little present, Jake."

"No, thanks." Jake shook his head and grinned. "It's your ticket—winner take all. I'll be seeing ya."

After a Story

THE City Editor of the "Tribune" was a busy man. He was in his shirtsleeves, his hair in disorder, and between writing and shouting instructions he was answering dozens of "phone calls.

"Yeah? Henderson, what you want? So he threw you out, huh? You go right back in there and get that story. That guy sold his winning ticket for ten dollars, and I want to know how he feels."

"But, boss, I already know how," came back the anxious voice of a reporter. "He must have been a dummy the way he expressed himself—he talked with his hands. He landed me a couple of beauties."

"Make him talk, even if you have to use a gun on him." The editor slammed down the receiver and had written about ten words when the bell shrilled again. "Hallo, yes—who? We haven't got anybody by that name. Oh, yes, we have. Just a minute." He put the receiver down and bellowed: "Gloria Sanford—telephone."

A pretty, brown-haired girl hastened into the office.

"Thank you, Mr. Kendall." She picked up the receiver. "Hallo, oh, hallo, grandpa. What's that? You have a winning number. Some woman's name on it?" A pause. "Yes, grandpa—right away." She hung up. "That's funny, isn't it, Mr. Kendall, my grandfather—"

"I heard you," interrupted the editor. "He's stuck with a phoney sweepstake ticket. Who sold it to him?"

"I don't know."

"McIntyre!" yelled the editor.

"Coming!" came the answer.

A tall, dark, strikingly handsome young fellow rushed to answer his chief's call.

"This girl's grandfather drew a winning number in the sweepstake," stated the editor.

"Is that so?" The young fellow smiled at the girl. "Do you remember, Miss Sanford, I'm the reporter who took you out to lunch to-day."

"You'll probably go on paying for my lunches for a long time," she answered, and looked at her boss.

"Mr. Kendall says the ticket is a fake."

"A fake?" The smile vanished.

"I'm terribly sorry, Gloria."

"Interview him," barked the editor.

"Find out who's behind it and who sold it to him. It's a racket. Get all the dope and we'll bust this graft wide open."

"Very good, chief."

"Wait a minute." The editor snorted as the two young people got to the door.

"Romance has spoiled a lot of scoops, McIntyre."

"And scoops have spoiled a lot of romances," retorted the young reporter.

"Go ahead." The editor, who was quite human, grinned.

Franco Gives Orders

YOUNG MIKE had sold a good many of his papers, so he left his corner and made his way down the street to the swing doors of the Red Domino, which was an obvious night club. He would have entered if a thickest man in a dark suit had not come out and gripped him by the collar.

"You stay outa here!"

"Why?" Mike demanded. "Mr. Franco told me I could come in any time I wanted."

"Yeah? Well, I say you can't. Now beat it!"

"Hey, mister, who'd you think you are?"

The man retorted by cuffing Mike's ears, and that roused the lad to fury. He dropped his papers, lowered his head and charged his tormentor. Crash! The big fellow landed on his back and got up yelling like an enraged bull. He rushed at the youngster, who was an adept at street fighting. Mike dodged and out went a foot. Crash! The fellow was down for a second time.

Mike leaped on the fallen man and did his best to strangle him. The man was on the point of flinging the youngster from him when Patrolman Reilly chanced on the scene.

"What's the idea trying to beat up a kid like this?" the patrolman demanded when the two had got to their feet. "Shame on you." He glowered at the big fellow. "Get going, buddy." The man slouched away, whereupon the officer grinned at the boy. "Michael, me lad, run along and peddle your papers."

"Let that be a lesson to you, Barney, me lad," the boy shouted after his enemy. "It's a good thing for you O'Reilly came along when he did, you big patooka."

Mike winked at the patrolman, and after picking up his papers hastened into the Red Domino, while the grinning cop walked down the street to see if Barney had any further arguments in mind.

But Barney had not stayed. In a side street he encountered Jake.

"Barney! You're the guy I wanna see," Jake shouted. "Old man Sanford just grabbed off a winning ticket on the sweepstake."

"So what?"

December 25th, 1937,

"Why, you're the guy that printed it."

"You're kidding."

"That's what you think." Jake showed the paper and the slip. "You slipped up some place in numbering those notes."

"By gee, what do we do?" Barney gaped at the paper.

"We better give Franco the low-down and find out what to do. Come on."

The two men hastened back to the Red Domino.

Meanwhile, Mike had been stopped by a waiter.

"Where you going, Mike?"

"I want to see Mr. Franco."

"You can't see Franco now. He's busy holding a kind of reception with a lot of folk in his office. Take a seat, Mike, and stick around."

"Okay, I've got lots of time," nodded Mike, and parked himself at a table in the deserted restaurant.

Not quite deserted, because there was one pasty-faced individual sagging in a chair with a glass of wine before him. Mike grimed, because whenever he came into the Red Domino this drunk was sure to be there.

In the big office of Mr. Franco were gathered a number of men who were standing round a large desk. Franco, a dark, pale-faced man with very intent blue eyes, was addressing them.

"It's in your hand. You can make this the juiciest racket in the country. The plates are ready for the next tickets on the sweepstakes. I'll have the books here in the next few days. Then I want each and every one of you to make a record sale. Our goal ought to be a million dollars on the next drawing."

"That's talking, Franco," came the general answer. "We'll sure get it. You can count on us."

"Go out and get your territory organised. I'm counting on every one of you." Franco went to a door hardly visible—it fitted so close to the panelled walls—and opened it. "Good-day, gentlemen." There was a satisfied smirk on the thin lips as he locked this door and went out to the outer office, where a pretty girl with attractively dyed fair hair sat before a switchboard.

"How did you like the pep talk?"

"It was a masterpiece," agreed Myra, who had been listening-in. "There isn't a foothall coach in the country that could have done better." Her eyes hardened. "Did you mean that soft soap you handed Clara?"

"Want me to think of you as a blonde, green-eyed mouster?" He chided and then put his hand on her shoulder. "Forget it, honey—only business. If a pat on the back and a little compliment make a customer happy, what harm is there in it?"

"None, I suppose," admitted the jealous Myra.

"Of course there isn't. Want to do me a favour?" He smiled as she nodded eagerly. "Then check with the engraver about the new plates and hustle him along all you can."

"I'll call him right away."

Franco went back to his room, and had scarcely sat down at his desk when the door burst open. Instantly he dived his hand into a pocket and whipped out a gun.

His eyes glinted when he saw it was Jake and Barney.

"What the heck d'you mean bursting in like that?" he demanded. "Well, what's on your mind?" He saw that something was amiss.

"I peddled one of those tickets to old man Sanford and it turns out to be a winner," spoke Jake. "Some woman

out in Iowa has the real number. There's gonna be a squawk." He tossed the slip on the desk. "There it is—Kg 13313."

"Sure this is right?"

"Absolutely."

"This isn't one of our tickets," Franco looked at Barney.

"There should've been another three in front of those numbers," Barney admitted, eyeing Franco nervously. "I thought I destroyed all of 'em off that plate."

"You once got seven years in the pen for thinking," Franco said with biting scorn. Then his eyes flashed to Jake. "I want that ticket back."

"It'll be a cinch to shut up old man Sanford," Barney cried.

That made Franco even more furious. "Now get this, you two." He glared from one to the other. "We're on the biggest thing we've ever pulled, and I'm not going to have it messed up by any rough stuff. Now get that ticket back."

When Jake and Barney had gone out by the private way Franco went down to the main restaurant, and an amused smile appeared on his face as he noted young Mike. It was audition morning, and Del Roy, an agent, had turned up with a number of acts.

"Hallo, Mr. Franco," cried Mike. "Here's your paper."

"Thanks, Mike." He tossed over a note. "Keep the change, son. Many a time I've had a paper on tick from you." He gestured with his hand. "Care to watch a try-out?"

"Gee, sure!"

The first act was a girl who tried to do a step dance and to sing. Mike frowned and Franco gave an understanding nod. The drunken man, apparently disturbed by the noise, woke up and hissed loudly.

The agent was furious and tried out another girl, who was a singer. The drunk hissed more loudly, and Mike thought he was right. The girl's voice gave him earache.

"I'm going to sock that drunk," cried the agent.

"He's my best customer," laughed Franco. "Opens and closes the club, serves himself—and pays."

All the rest of the acts were just as bad, and finally Franco told the agent to get out and stay away if he could not produce anything better. This gave Mike courage.

"Mr. Franco, I don't like to butt in, but do you need a girl singer?"

"The boy press agent, huh?" Franco said with an amused grin. "Don't tell me that you've got a sister."

"Yeah. How did you guess it?"

"Bring her around, Mike," Franco chuckled. "I'll listen to her."

"Do you mean it?"

"Of course."

"When shall I bring her?"

"Any time."

"Gosh, Mr. Franco, you sure are a swell guy." The boy stuttered over his gratitude. "Geo, I'll be getting along to tell her."

Mike hurried away. The restaurant was empty. Franco glanced across at the drunk man.

Tragedy

OLD Sanford was at home by himself. Very soon his two grandchildren with whom he lived would be there to rejoice in his good luck. Ah, someone at the door! It must be them.

It was Jake and Barney.

"Hallo, Mr. Sanford. Meet my friend," greeted Jake.

"Glad to meet a winner." Barney

held out a great hand. "Congratulations."

"My friend's going to fix up things about that ticket," Jake explained.

"Oh, that's fine," said Sanford. "Hand over that ticket," muttered Barney, who was on edge.

"Well, I—er—" The old man was not sure of this burly fellow.

"Make it snappy, Sanford," Barney cried tersely. "You know it takes time to fix things like this."

"I can't give anybody that ticket," quavered the old man. "It's my only proof I won."

"But you can't collect with the ticket in your pocket," argued Barney.

"And I'm guaranteeing this man," added Jake.

"I can't give you the ticket," Sanford was suddenly apprehensive.

It was more than Barney could stand, and he flashed out a fist that caught the old man a cruel blow on the jaw. He crashed back against the table and rolled to the floor.

"Get his wallet—quick!" Barney shouted.

"Why, it ain't here!" Jake cried a few moments later, after he had emptied every pocket. Suddenly he looked intently at the still figure, and bent closer. "Why, he's—he's—"

He got slowly to his feet. Barney heard that note of dread, and then he peered at the still face. With a cry he got to his feet.

"I didn't mean to do it, Jake."

Mike on his way suddenly saw ahead two figures that he recognised.

"Hey! Sis! Sis!" he shouted. "I've got swell news!"

"We know already, Michael, but it's not true," Gloria said in grave tones.

"It's not true!" The sixteen-year-old youngster scowled. "What do you mean, you know already it's not true? How do you know? You weren't there?"

"Where? Where's there?" asked Ed McIntyre.

"What in the world are you talking about, Michael?" asked his sister.

"Wait a minute! Wait a minute! One at a time!" Mike panted out. "First—I just met Mr. Franco. Second—I told him you got a swell voice, with looks, personality—"

"I'll say she has!" laughed Ed.

"Quiet! No remarks from the gallery," reproved the boy.

"And he says you can come over any time you want to and try out."

"Here, you don't mean Franco who runs the Red Domino?"

"Sure thing. Why?" Mike asked the young reporter.

"You can't sing there, Gloria," McIntyre said to the girl in appealing tones.

"That's just a dive."

"What do you mean—a dive?" cried Mike.

"It's an Al joint."

"Now, wait a minute, boys," Gloria saw that there was likelihood of high

words. "Maybe I'm not good enough for this dive or joint. Let's get on home and see grandpa. You see, Mike, he's got a lucky number, but we fear it's a phoney ticket."

They let themselves into the small flat and pulled up with a gasp at sight of drawers open and everything in disarray, then Mike saw that motionless figure on the ground.

"It's grandpa!" he shouted, and flung himself down beside the still figure. He lifted the head and then gave a cry as he felt blood. He looked round at the others. "I—I—I believe he's dead!"

"How could it have happened?" cried Gloria as she sank on to the sofa.

When the two men appeared in Franco's room he took one look at their ashen faces and his eyes narrowed.

"What did you do—bungle it?"

"I didn't have nothing to do with it!" whined Jake.

"If it isn't a secret—tell me about it."

"Old man Sanford croaked!" Barney stammered.

"I didn't do it!" Jake shouted hoarsely.

"We'll go into that later," Franco held out his hand. "Let's have the ticket."

"He wouldn't come through with it," Barney cried. "I didn't pull any rough stuff, honest; but he must have had a weak pump."

"Say, this puts me in a spot," Jake was shaking with fright. "I sold the ticket to the old man. I gotta get outa here, and it's up to you to help me!"

"You couple of fools!" Franco almost gave way to a wild outburst of anger. "And now it's up to me to save your worthless skins. All right, you mugs, get out to the plant and

stay there. I'll figure out something Go on, beat it!"

Franco was sitting at his desk in thought when there came a loud buzzing and a small lamp on his desk glowed red. He looked at it with a shade of apprehension. After seeing that both doors were locked, he went across the room to a bookshelf, which swung back when he touched a spring. Beyond was a small room. A man, hard of eye, stared intently at Franco.

"I don't often make mistakes in men," he said harshly, "but I'm wondering if I didn't when I picked you to take charge of things."

"What do you mean?" asked Franco.

"I know all about the Sanford mess."

"It was only an accident," Franco's tone was whining in the same sort of way as Jake's. "The boys were trying to get back a ticket we sold him."

"Why?"

"It was from the plates we destroyed—you know, with the right numbers. It turned up a winner."

"You should have paid him off."

"What!" Franco gasped. "Sixteen grand?"

"What's that to the millions we stand to make?" gritted out the man, who was the real noise behind this sweep-stake racket.

"But I thought—"

"Listen!" harshly interrupted that hoarse voice. "I'm doing the thinking for both of us—understand?"

"Ye-yes."

"Where's the ticket?"

"I don't know—they couldn't find it."

"If it shows up, pay it. Is that clear?"

"You're giving the orders."

"Best remember that, and we'll get along fine." The chief's eyes were ominous. "I know how to deal with those who fail or disobey me."



The man was on the point of flinging the youngster from him when Patrolman Reilly chanced on the scene.

McIntyre Becomes Suspicious

THREE young people sat disconsolately on a sofa. The doctor had been and said that death was due to heart failure brought on by striking the base of the skull on the table.

"Oh, Ed," Gloria sobbed on McIntyre's broad shoulder, "why did anybody do this to us?"

"Don't worry, honey, we'll straighten it up." He tried to comfort the girl. She had adored her grandfather, who had been so kind to them when their parents had died when they were mites.

"They went through this place like a cyclone." Mike stared round with hard, angry gaze. "I wonder who did it?"

"I don't know, but I believe it was somebody who was after that ticket."

"What ticket?"

"Your grandfather's sweepstake ticket."

"But you said it was a fake."

"It is," Ed drew his brows together in a frown of bewilderment.

"If it's a fake, what would anybody want with it?" Mike wanted to know.

"I hesitated to say anything about this until now, but it's better for you both to know what you're up against." McIntyre was very serious.

"What is all this mystery stuff?" Mike demanded.

"You needn't be afraid to tell us," whispered Gloria, drying her eyes.

"The doctor pronounced your grandfather's death as due to natural causes—heart failure—but I am convinced there is more behind it than that. Moreover, I think you two have had your suspicions on account of the disordered state of this room." McIntyre paused. "It is not necessary to call in the police on account of the doctor's verdict, but that depends on what we think is best. Now, let us take a few facts. First, your grandfather held a questionable sweepstake ticket with a winning number. Immediately after the winner was proved your grandfather was found dead. And we discovered your house in this condition. It's obvious that someone was after that ticket."

"Yeah, but they didn't find it."

"How do you know?" the reporter asked.

"Because I've got it here." Mike held out the ticket.

"Where did you get it?"

"Why, it was in the back of gramp's watch," the boy answered. "I guess he hid it there when he thought it was a lucky number. I found the watch on the floor."

Ed McIntyre turned the ticket over and held it up to the light.

"It certainly looks like the real thing," he declared, and looked at Mike. "I've got a good hunch that if we found out who sold this ticket to him we would solve your grandfather's death and learn who's behind the sweepstakes racket."

"I know who sold it to gramp," Mike said sharply.

"Who?" asked Gloria and Ed together.

"A fellow named Jake—he hangs out over at the Red Domino."

"One of Franco's boys, eh? Doesn't look so good for Franco," Ed argued.

"But Michael tells me that Mr. Franco is a fine man," Gloria interposed.

"And if you think Franco's double-crossing us, give us the low-down!" demanded the fiery young Irish newsboy.

"All that I can tell you is that Franco has been mixed up in a couple

of rackets. Mr. Franco is the brains of the whole set-up."

Gloria shook her head.

"Ed, I think you're wrong."

"What's more, I'll prove he's wrong," added Mike.

"How?" questioned Ed.

"Well, I'll bet if I take this ticket over to Mr. Franco and explain everything to him he'll do all he can to help."

"Maybe, though chances are a thousand to one Franco will tell you to run along and sell your papers—or he'll take the ticket away from you."

Mike jumped up.

"Just to prove you're wrong, I'm going to take the ticket over to Franco right now." He strode towards the door.

"Wait, Mike—you mustn't," pleaded Gloria.

"Don't worry, Gloria." Ed lifted his big frame from the sofa. "I'll go along and see that nothing happens to him."

There was a sprinkling of diners in the Red Domino when the two got there. Mike went off to find Franco, whilst McIntyre went into the restaurant. The boy would not allow the reporter to go with him, as he was so sure that Mr. Franco was on the level.

McIntyre found a table and had not been seated more than a few minutes when a very staggery man rolled to the table, mumbled some apologies and sat down. The drunk yelled for a waiter to bring him some brandy.

Franco was sitting in his office think about the words of the chief. He had to get that ticket back. Bad publicity might ruin the whole campaign and he would go out on his ear as a failure. One of the boys had suggested that the Sanford kids had the ticket, and he was wondering about this when a waiter announced that Michael Sanford was outside.

"Hallo, Mike!" cordially cried Franco when the newsboy was shown in. "How's my pal?"

"Not so good, Mr. Franco."

"What's wrong?"

"Have you heard about my grandpa being dead?"

"One of the men told me, Mike. I hoped it wasn't true," Franco answered.

"Still, I believe he was an old man. Probably it was shock that caused heart failure. Didn't he have a ticket that was very close to a winning number?"

"It was a winning number," cried the boy. "What's more, someone came in and half wrecked the flat."

"Wrecked the flat? What do you mean?"

"Well, they might have been after that fake sweepstake ticket somebody sold my grandpa."

"What makes you think it is a fake?" Franco asked.

"Well, it's listed as a winning number, but somebody in Iowa is listed as owner of the ticket." Mike fumbled in his pocket. "I've got the fake ticket with me. I found it in the back of my grandpa's watch."

Franco's eyes glistened as Mike produced the ticket, but he held out his hand in a casual sort of manner.

"Let me see it, Mike. Maybe I can help you."

"Gee, I knew you would!" Without hesitation the trusting youngster passed it over.

Franco studied it thoughtfully, peering at it through a magnifying glass, and then placed it before him on his blotter.

"You think this is a fake. Is that so, Mike?"

"That's how it stands, Mr. Franco." "As Jake sold you that ticket, I'll gamble it's the real thing, and, to prove it to you, I'll make you a sporting proposition." Franco spoke in a quiet, serious manner that seemed so sincere and convincing. "If this ticket is good it's worth sixteen thousand dollars, but if it is a fake, then it is worth nothing." He paused. "I'm prepared to give you five thousand for it here and now."

"You will?" gasped Mike. "Gee, I knew you'd help us out somehow."

"Is it a deal?"

"You bet!"

Franco counted out notes to the value of five thousand, shook hands warmly with the grateful youngster, and told him to run along home. But when the boy had left he got through on the phone to Myra—he wanted to see Bud and Spike at once.

Ed could not help being amused at the drunk, who kept on making strange noises.

"You all right?" McIntyre asked.

"Sorry, old man, but I'm just practising," mumbled the drunk. "Last night, when a sour tenor was singing, I got the hiccougs and couldn't hiss, so I'm just getting up steam. Pssss!" He grinned. "How was that one?"

"Grand! You come here often?"

"Every night."

McIntyre caught sight of Mike beckoning him, and he swallowed his drink hurriedly.

"Excuse me, but I got to be getting along."

"But the show is coming on in just a minute. You can hiss with me."

"I'll try to get back." The reporter knew it was best to humour drunkards.

"You carry on for both of us."

In the lobby Mike waved the money excitedly.

"Hey, Ed—look what Mr. Franco gave me!"

"What?" The reporter could not believe his eyes.

"Five thousand dollars!"

McIntyre grabbed him and put a hand over his mouth.

"Don't ever do anything like that in a place like this," he hissed. "Put it away. Maybe I had better look after it."

"I'd like to see anybody get it away from me," cried Mike, his fists clenched.

"Let's get out of here before anybody tries," urged the reporter.

They were hurrying along the street, which was quiet and deserted, when two men—Bud and Spike—sprang out on them. If they had not been taken by surprise they might have beaten off the attack, but the two crooks started the fight by lamming them over the head with short lengths of rubber tubing. Mike did manage to land one stinging blow to an unshaven jaw before he was laid low, whilst Ed landed a wild swing that made his man grunt. The sound of a police siren sent the stick-up men scurrying for safety.

It was McIntyre who recovered first and crawled over to the boy.

"Mike—Mike, are you all right?"

The boy sat up, rubbing his head; then he remembered and dived his hand into his pocket.

"Ed!" he gasped out. "They got the money!"

"I'm sorry, kid, but I guess that's just the way Franco planned it."

"Well, go back and see Franco." Mike staggered to his feet. "I'm gonna find out!"

"And we'll take the law with us," added Ed. "I'm ringing the police."

Franco's Last Chance

YOUNG Mike stalked into the Red Domino with his jaw set. He pushed into Franco's room without any ceremony with McIntyre and two detectives close behind him. Franco had been expecting some such visit.

"Hallo, Mike! I'm glad you came back," he cried, all smiles. "I wanted to talk to you. Mike, you were right about that dirty rat, Jake. That sweep-stake ticket was a fake."

This statement completely satisfied Mike, who was somewhat stubborn where opinions were concerned. He had made up his mind that Franco was on the level, and surely this proved it.

"You knew it was when you bought it," McIntyre had other views. "That's why you sent your thugs to stage the hold-up."

"What hold-up?"

Franco looked bewildered.

"The one that just got you back your five thousand dollars," sneered the reporter.

"So you've been held up and robbed?" Franco turned to the young Irish lad. "Do you believe that, Mike?"

"No, Mr. Franco, but it did look queer. Maybe some guy saw me show the money to Ed here."

McIntyre laughed shortly and strode up to Franco's desk.

"If this wasn't a cover-up, why should you give the kid five grand for a questionable ticket?" he demanded.

"I felt sorry for Mike and his sister Gloria. I merely took a gambler's chance," smoothly answered the crook. "If it worked out, I got sixteen thousand. If I lost I was out five."

"How did you know the ticket was no good?"

"I called Dublin," Franco smiled with complete assurance. "Then I called the police."

"Check on the telephone company, will you, lieutenant?" McIntyre requested of the chief detective.

The officer nodded and took up the phone.

"This is Lieutenant Detective Gray of the Homicide Squad. I want the superintendent." A pause. "I want to know if there's been a call put in from this phone for Dublin, Ireland. Yeah, I'll hang on." Seconds later he put back the phone and looked at McIntyre. "There was—about twenty minutes ago." His eyes were stern as he faced the smirking racketeer. "Okay, Franco, we'll see if we can pick up your slippery friend Jake. Sorry to have bothered you."

"Not at all. Drop in any time."

"This doesn't mean a thing," McIntyre said when the detectives had gone.

"Do you think I framed you?"

Franco gave Mike a sad, solemn glance.

"No, I didn't Mr. Franco; it wasn't my idea."

"Okay, Mike, I don't blame you." Franco took out his pocket-book. "I'm awfully sorry about your money—take this."

"No, thanks," vigorously cried Mike. "We can't keep taking money from you! Gosh! It's my fault you're stuck for five grand already."

"Bring your sister in," Franco thankfully put the pocket-book away. "I'll put her to work if she's as good as you say she is."

"Thanks. I'm sure you're going to like her."

Franco nodded to the reporter.

"I won't object at all if you print what's in your mind in to-night's paper, McIntyre," he said in magnanimous generosity.

"Wouldn't you like the follow-up better? It'll read something like this: 'Franco sues "Tribune" for libel.'"

"Away ahead of me, aren't you?" mocked Franco.

"When I break this story, Franco, you won't be in any position to appreciate it."

"Come on, Ed—come on!"

Mike tugged impatiently at his friend's arm. In his mind Ed was a good fellow, but dead from the neck upwards.

Franco smiled when they had gone, but the smile vanished when there came that buzz and the red light. His real boss flayed him.

"You're a petty larceny crook at heart, and you'll never be anything else," said the cold, condemning voice.

"I made dough before I ever met you," snarled Franco. "For two cents, Ed—"

"No, you wouldn't, not for two cents, nor two million. Nobody ever walks out on me, Franco. If you make one more blundering move—if you do one single thing without orders from me—" The speaker paused, and then added in a whisper that was almost a hiss. "It will be just too bad!"

The Drunkard's Disguise Penetrated

EDWARD MCINTYRE parked his hat and coat in the cloak-room and walked slowly, almost reluctantly, to the entrance of the restaurant. He looked a fine figure of a man in his dress clothes. Against his will he had come to this haunt. Gloria had insisted

upon going to see Franco, and she had been given a job in the cabaret as a singer. Ed felt he had to go along and see that no harm befell her.

Looking across the room, the reporter saw Gloria and her brother at a table. His fingers twitched and his brows knitted together in a scowl when Franco appeared and laid his hand on Gloria's shoulder. The reporter guessed the slimy trickster was paying some soft compliment. He was quite correct in his surmise. Somebody else was also taking a great deal of interest in Franco, and that was Myra. Franco had been to every rehearsal, and his car had taken Gloria home whenever it was wet.

McIntyre realised that he must find a table to sit down at, and grinned as two people stood up and indicated that they were leaving. Scarcely had he sat down when into the restaurant rolled the drunk. He made straight for the table.

"Well, well! If it isn't my old friend McIntyre," he said, swaying on his feet.

"Hallo!"

Ed was far from cordial in his greeting.

"Mind if I sit?" The drunk sank into a chair. "You look like you've lost your last million. How about a little drink to cheer you up?"

"Suits me. But, remember, no bisses when Miss Sanford sings," warned the young man.

"Hst!" It was a mixture of a hiss and a splutter. The drunk waved his arms. "Let's have a little attention here." A waiter appeared. "You know what I want." He peered at Ed through half-closed eyes. "What will you have?"

"I'll take the same," answered Ed, whose whole attention was on the platform because it was obvious that the band were getting ready for some act. Sure enough, Gloria was to sing.

Gloria sang divinely, and the crowded restaurant were enthusiastic. The



"It's grandpa!" he said. "I—I—I believe he's dead!"

waiter arrived with two glasses on a tray and placed the tray on the table. Ed glanced round and noticed that one glass was not as full as the other, and though it was closer to the drunk, whose name was apparently Reggie, he reached over and took it. Reggie's drink was certain to be red-hot, so he took a small sip. Then he took another sip and glanced round at Reggie, who was swaying on his feet and yelling "Encore." Finally, a head-waiter persuaded Reggie to sit down, and with an inane grin at Ed picked up the remaining glass. He tossed down the drink and then gulped as he clutched his throat.

"Was that too strong?" Ed inquired. "No. Bad liquor!" growled Reggie. "I'm going home."

The reporter noted that he walked remarkably steady. He tossed a dollar-note on to the table and went out after him.

"You're leaving early, Mr. Whitley," he heard the cloak-room attendant remark.

"Yes, not feeling too good."

Reggie Whitley rolled up the stairs of a comfortable apartment-house, fumbled in his pockets, sang a song in raucous tones, and, after much fumbling, got a key into the Yale lock. The door opened, and he staggered inside. He proceeded to lock the door and to become at once completely sober. He was studying some letters when there came a knock at his door. He swung round, eyeing the door apprehensively, and, finally, his hand in one pocket, unlocked the door. The reporter walked into the room.

"Well, well, look who's here! Come in—come right in!"

"That sarsaparilla seems to be a mighty potent drink, old man."

"Yes, potent enough for all practical purposes." Whitley waved him to a chair as he spoke. "So you have found me out, McIntyre. I don't know if it was deliberate or accidental. However, it doesn't make any difference—the result is the same."

Ed, with a wave of his hand, refused the offer of a chair.

"What's the big idea?" he demanded.

"I'm investigating the counterfeit sweepstake tickets that are flooding the country."

"You seem to know me, but I don't know you. I thought I knew most of the boys in the department. I'm crime reporter to the 'Tribune,' as I expect you know."

"Yes, and if you had recognised me, I'd have been disappointed," Reggie said with a grin. "You see, I just work up the evidence and turn it over to someone else to handle. I never appear in court—publicity would ruin my usefulness."

Ed nodded.

"Oh, I see—an undercover man."

Convinced that he had found an ally, young McIntyre accepted a drink and a cigarette.

"You must have discovered something that led you to the Red Domino."

"Suspicious—that's all," Reggie said, sipping his drink. "And I was just about ready to conclude I was wrong when you made your first appearance. I know how you news-hounds ferret out stories, and I guessed that the sweepstake racket must have led you to the Red Domino. Have you struck any leads?"

"Until to-night I thought I was up against a blank wall."

"You mean you stumbled across something?"

"It was more good luck than anything else," Ed admitted. "About a year ago I was able to help out a girl who was in a jam with the police—and

she has a bit of a record. Maybe you know her—Myra George?"

"The name isn't familiar."

"I saw her to-night at Franco's."

"Does she know him?"

"Undoubtedly. She works at the club," Ed answered. "And I should imagine she's as well in with Franco as she was with some people in the restaurant this evening. I saw her smile across at him."

"This is great news!" cried Reggie excitedly. "A fling at the bright lights with Myra, and I'll soon know everything about this racket."

"A swell idea, but there's one thing wrong with it."

"What?"

Reggie looked puzzled.

"I'll do the wining and dining with her," Ed said in determined tones.

Reggie argued, but Ed got his own way. They parted the best of friends. Ed went back to the restaurant, and when Myra was left alone at a table, went across and asked her to dance. The girl seemed delighted to see him, and when later on he suggested going to a theatre one night she accepted gladly.

Jake Becomes Panicky

McINTYRE spent quite a lot of money on Myra, and tried to act as if he were crazy about her. Ed's editor had advanced the money with the warning that Ed was likely to be out on his ear if he did not bring off a scoop.

The young reporter spent a whole week taking the girl out, and he thought that it was going to be easy to get something from Myra. Gloria seemed to be always at the Red Domino. Owing to the hours she had given up her job at the "Tribune." The pay for her act was three times as much as her salary as a typist, and Franco was talking about a contract at most advantageous terms.

One night Myra allowed Ed to escort her home, and he noted that her apartment was quite luxuriously furnished. She must be well in with Franco to afford a sitting-room.

"Mind if I ask you a question?"

"Not at all."

"How long have you known Franco?"

"I met him when I was singing in a cabaret at the Red Domino," she smiled at him. "Didn't know I could warble, did you?"

"No."

"I'll sing you a number that was written especially for me."

Myra may have been pretty, but Ed thought her voice compared with Gloria's was rotten, but he had to listen and pretend to think it was the most marvellous song he had ever heard. It was some while before he could lead the conversation back to Franco.

"Why are you so interested in Franco?"

Her eyes watched him steadily.

"Well, I did you a good turn once, Myra, and now you can help me out." He tried to sound non-committal. "It's my job to chase round after stories, and my chief is trying to start a campaign about the city's night life."

"You want something on Franco?" Her voice had hardened. "I can't say I bear the man any great love, so maybe I can help you. What do you want?" The 'phone in her room rang. "Excuse me a moment."

Myra closed her bed-room door.

"Yes, Spike, he's here now. Don't make any mistakes. Two of the boys will be around in a few minutes? Okay!"

It was a minute or so before Myra

came back to Ed, who was kicking his heels with impatience.

"Sorry to have left you," Myra said as she sat down on a couch beside him. "Some stupid dressmaker would bother me. Now, what is it you want to know about Franco?"

"You've been at the Red Domino some time, so I should imagine you know quite a lot," Ed answered. "Does he do anything else beside run the Red Domino?"

There came two rings at the bell, and Ed felt like sweating.

"Now, who can that be?" Myra cried. "Get rid of whoever is at the door, Ed, and I'll tell you."

Unsuspecting, McIntyre opened the door, and instantly two men leapt at him. Taken by surprise, the reporter was thrown to the floor, but he managed to get to his feet. He crashed his fist into one ruffian's face before the other thug got in a blow on the back of his head.

There was an early rehearsal the next morning at the Red Domino, and Franco, as usual, was present to listen to Gloria sing a new number.

"That was excellent, Gloria," he cried approvingly. "We'll use that number in the show to-night."

"Do you want to try it again, Mr. Franco?"

"No, Gloria, that'll do."

"Mr. Franco." A waiter appeared.

"May I see you for a moment, please?"

Franco went out of hearing.

"What is it?"

"Jake's in your office, boss."

Franco muttered a curse under his breath and hurried away to see what had brought Jake to the club.

Mike and Gloria were left alone.

"Gee, sis, you were tops," Mike told his sister. "I've been practising an act, and I want you to see it. Then you can tell me if it's good enough to show to Mr. Franco. If you think it's any good, then we might do a brother-and-sister act."

Gloria had known that her brother was tough. He was a grand little boxer and very quick with his feet. At the local gymnasium he had been quite the star pupil. Now the boy did a step-dancing act that amazed her. Not only was the dancing in good time, but he mixed his dancing with handspings, balancing, and dazing cart-wheels.

"That was good," Gloria said when he had panted for want of breath.

"You really like it?"

"I really do. Why don't you go and talk to Mr. Franco right away?"

Mike grinned.

"I'm practically there," he cried as he wriggled into his coat. "Better come with me, sis."

Franco stormed into his office and glowered at Jake.

"What do you mean by coming here?"

"They brought that reporter to the hide-out," stated Jake angrily. "I'm not going to be in on another murder."

"You're not, eh?"

"No. I'm skipping the country."

Franco eyed the cringing crook.

"Maybe you had better get out."

He went to his desk and stared intently at Jake. "But why are you so certain that McIntyre will be killed?"

Neither of them had heard the door open.

"Well, you know what happened to old man Sanford?" sneered Jake.

"Maybe you had better get out."

Franco answered. "The Sumaria sails at midnight. See that you're on board."

Franco saw Jake's hand go to his pocket, saw the man's staring eyes, and swung round in his chair. In the doorway were Gloria and young Mike.

Prisoners

MIKE had listened in horrified amazement to this callous conversation. His quick temper was roused at the manner in which this smooth-tongued rascal had gulled him.

"You double-crosser," Mike shouted. "Saying you were my friend and killing my granddad! And now you're planning to do the same to Ed."

"Close the door, Jake," rapped out Franco, and then he looked at the boy. "I'm sorry you found out, Mike."

Gloria, not quite comprehending what this all meant, was pushed into the room and the door locked behind her. She saw Jake covering them with a gun.

"What does this mean?" she demanded.

"It means that Mr. Franco is responsible for grandpa's death," cried her brother.

"I'm sorry you came in here, Gloria," Franco said in his smooth way. "I'm very fond of you—and Mike. But this makes everything a little different. Jake, tell Spike to bring the closed car to the side entrance."

"What are you going to do?" fearfully demanded the girl.

"What can I do? I'm sending you and Mike home." Franco turned his attention to Jake. "Tell Spike to hurry, and then you'd better beat it."

When alone, Franco paced his room. Though a crook, he was not all bad. To make things safe, Gloria and Mike should be taken for a ride, but the girl was so beautiful that he had not the nerve to give the order. Perhaps if he locked them up in the hide-out and waited till the money had come in for the sweep tickets he could make a get-away out of this racket, taking Gloria with him. It was certain that his

plausible tongue and the fact that he had money would make this a simple matter. He had an overwhelming confidence in his own powers to attract the opposite sex.

Franco was busy making his own plans when Myra walked into his room, and the woman was in a foul temper.

"What's going on between you and this Sanford girl?"

"You're not idiot enough to believe I care anything about her, are you?" he questioned.

"She's been here about a week, and all the time you've been following her around like a dog on a leash."

"I had to play up to her after what happened to her grandfather."

"By sending her home most days in your car? I saw her go off this very afternoon."

"Myra, I'm not sending her home. I'm sending her—"

"I don't care where you're sending her," Myra stamped her foot. "But I'm walking out of here once and for all."

Franco jumped up in alarm. "Don't be so hasty, my dear," he cried. "If you'll just listen a minute—"

"Not a minute! Not half a minute! I'm through!" she stormed. "I'd hate to be in your boat. The police picked up Jake a little while ago." She paused at the door, her face twisted into a mocking grin. "Just think that over."

Franco bit his lip and fingered his chin nervously. Once more he paced his room. Perhaps it was as well Myra was getting out—she would not interfere with his plans. He must think quickly. Jake would not talk at first, but if the cops put the third degree on that yellow crook he would talk and the whole racket would be exposed. Franco knew he must get out of the district with all speed. He grabbed up the 'phone and found that it was through to the exchange—Myra had evidently gone. He dialed a number.

"Hallo, Franco speaking. When will those new tickets be ready?" He smiled to hear that they were all ready. "Fire—deliver them to me here immediately."

Little did he know that Myra had been on the point of leaving when he had made his call and that she had listened in to his conversation. She listened in and heard him make more calls.

Within an hour a great pile of sweep tickets were delivered and these Franco feverishly sorted into bundles. He was finished when a number of men were admitted to his room.

"Boys, I called you here because I've got to go to Palm Beach on business, and I want you to get started selling the books," he announced. "I may be gone for some time and I don't want my absence to keep you from making a clean-up."

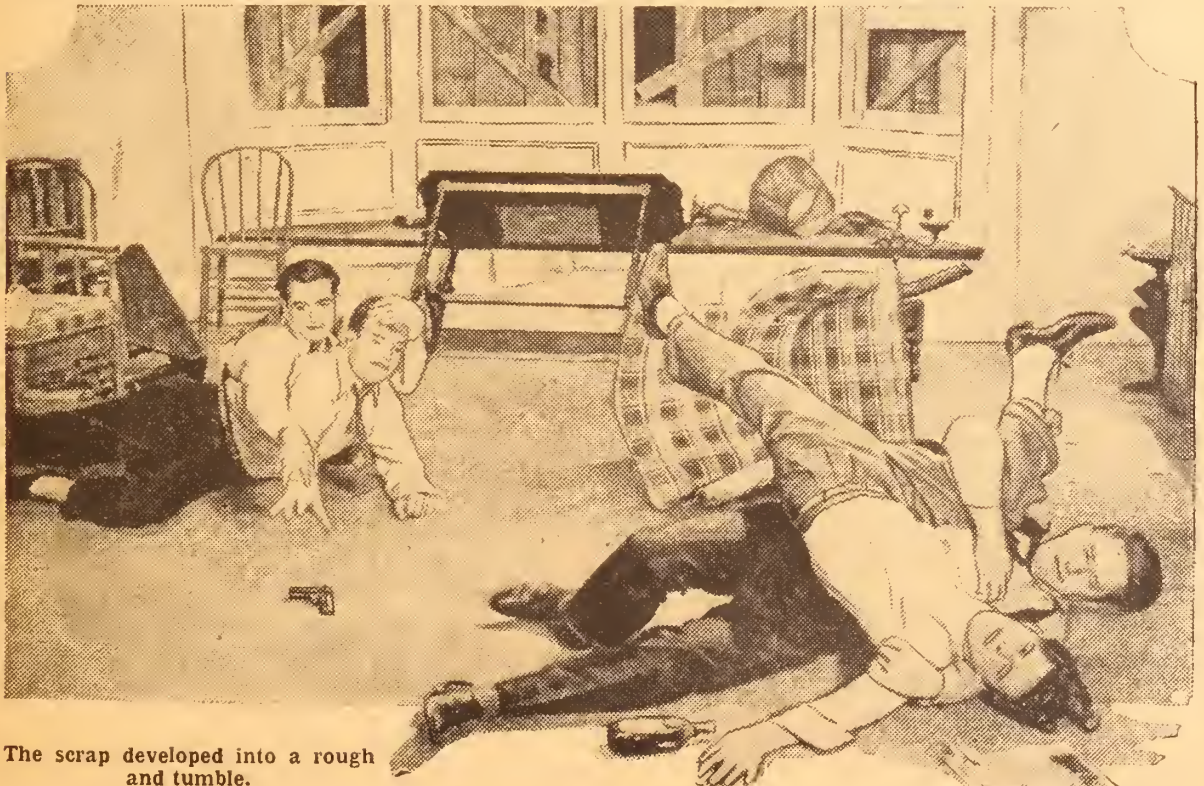
"We're not likely to run into any trouble, are we?" one seller asked.

"Not at all. If there is any suspicion on the part of the police, they'll be watching me down there. That will clear the way in all the other districts." Franco turned to one man who had brought out a cheque book. "I can't use cheques—I said cash."

The sellers had to pay for their books in advance. On settling-day they were able to claim a refund for any tickets not sold. There was a large pile of notes on Franco's desk when the sellers left. He chuckled as he stared at all this wealth, but he would not have smiled if he had known that Myra was at that moment talking to the chief.

"Franco's cashing in all the tickets and planning on making a get-away. I should imagine that he would go out to the plant first—you can catch him there."

Meanwhile, Jake was breaking under a terrific grilling, and the police knew that it would not be long before the rascal talked.



The scrap developed into a rough and tumble.

In the Nick of Time

GLORIA and Mike were taken in the closed car for a long ride and they guessed the car was dodging about so that they should not know the direction taken after leaving the Red Domino. They were blindfolded and led into a building, which Mike guessed was some sort of warehouse. They were pushed into a room. The other occupant was Ed.

The three prisoners found that there were massive bars over the windows, so that escape seemed impossible. The door was too strong to force, and moreover Spike and two other gangsters were acting guard in the outside room.—

It was young Mike who thought out a daring idea.

"Ed, come and give me a boost up here," Mike called out.

"What's the idea?" Ed demanded.

"See this bit of panelling where it ends and see that picture rail?" whispered Mike. "Well, I can stand on one and cling to the rail if you give me a boost up. Then you hammer on the door and say you want a drink of water. Tell them anything, but get them in here."

"I get it," Ed nodded, and gave the youngster a lift up. "But they'll see you."

"The door will open and hide me. Besides, these mugs won't suspect anything—they're too dumb!"

Ed hammered on the door.

"Hey, you!" he shouted hoarsely.

"How about a drink of water?"

"Dry up," came a hoarse answer.

"I want a drink!" Ed renewed his hammering. "I've got to have some water. Miss Sanford's fainted."

"All right. I'll give you some water," came the reply.

One of the other toughs decided that it would be best to go with Spike just in case the prisoners tried anything. He unlocked the door and Spike walked in carrying a jug. The other thug followed, keeping Ed covered with a gun.

"Here, what's the game?" demanded Spike, seeing Gloria near the window. "If you think you can play tricks you're mistaken."

Very quietly Mike pushed the door so that it did not get between him and the gunman, then the boy jumped on the latter's back and brought him crashing to the ground. Spike turned to see what was happening, and Ed hit him squarely on the point. The scrap developed into a rough and tumble.

The third gangster heard the commotion and rushed to the rescue. Mike was on his feet and crouching by the door. As it burst open, his hand shot out and gripped the man's wrist. A twist and a gun went clattering to the floor.

The expression on Mike's face was one of savage delight as he banged his fist into the man's face. The first gunman got to his feet, saw that Spike was holding his own with Ed and gripped Mike by the shoulders. The three went down in a heap.

Spike was hurled backwards by another great blow and sprawled on the floor. He tried to reach out for a fallen gun, but Ed kicked it into a corner. Spike staggered up and stopped another punch that put him out for the count.

Meantime, Mike was getting a battering between the two crooks, but he was landing out punishment in spite of the uneven odds. Ed dragged one gunman away, held him with one hand and socked him. That was two of them out. The third dived for the gun that had been wrenched from his hand, but Mike took a running dive at the man and down he came with a crash.

When Franco entered the building he

heard sounds of fighting, and drawing his gun softly tiptoed up the wooden stairs.

"Give me the gun," Ed ordered as Mike picked up the weapon. "See if you can find something to tie these rats up with."

"All right," Mike answered, and tossed Ed the gun.

Ed McIntyre watched the battered crooks closely whilst Mike prowled round the room in search of something to use to tie up their prisoners; finding nothing he went out of the room and began to explore. He found a spiral staircase that went down into the basement. Franco came into the guard-room about a minute after Mike went down the spiral staircase.

"Keep quite still," Ed was keeping a watchful eye on the gangsters. "You can stand up, but don't try anything as I shan't hesitate to shoot."

Spike and one man got to their feet, but the third was likely to stay out for a long while.

"Nice party we're having," Ed said with a mocking grin.

"Yes, isn't it?" drawled a voice behind him. "Drop that gun! Crude of you not to invite me. I hope my presence is not an intrusion. I hate to embarrass anybody, especially a young lady."

Never suspecting any danger, McIntyre had stood with his back to the half-open door. Franco had been able to slip into the room unobserved. Nothing for the reporter to do but drop the gun.

But the drawing voice of Franco had been overheard by the returning Mike. There was a fanlight over the door and by standing on a chair he could see through the dirty glass. Franco was standing within a yard of the door with the gun in his right hand and his elbow bent. Mike got down, quietly turned the handle and suddenly flung wide the door, which caught Franco a violent blow on the funny bone. Scarcely had the howl of agony left his lips than he got a violent blow in his stomach from a hard fist. He reeled back and that gave Mike time to grab up his gun.

"Get back there, all of you," Mike menaced Franco and the two gangsters. "I'm kinda itching to try out this gat on somebody." His keen eyes saw the bulging portfolio that Franco had been carrying. "Hold the gun, Ed, whilst I see what's in this." He tossed the gun to the reporter. "I bet my five thousand is in here."

"Sure it is and plenty more." Franco gave a resigned shrug of his shoulders. "Help yourself."

"No, thanks, Mr. Franco," muttered Mike, after glancing inside the case and noting that it was bulging with money. He tossed it carelessly into a chair. "Say, Ed, what d'you think I found down in the basement? A printing press and about a million of those phoney sweepstake tickets."

"That settles everything," Ed answered. "Mike, I guess it would be wise if you took Franco's car—or any car you can find—and go after the police."

"I think Gloria had better go alone," decided Mike. "You might need some help."

Up the spiral staircase came Reggie Whitley. He made no attempt to deaden his footsteps. Boldly he walked into the room and grinned as McIntyre covered him with a gun.

"Well, well, this is a pleasant surprise." Reggie surveyed the scene with an amused grin.

"Hallo, Whitley." The reporter lowered his gun point. "Mike, meet

Mr. Whitley. He's a special investigator on the case."

"You were the drunk," Mike said in admiring tones. "Corks, and I thought you were genuine."

If Ed and Mike had taken more notice of Franco they might have got a warning from the look of terror on his shifty face.

"Well, the Press seems to have wou again. Like me to take charge?" mildly suggested Reggie. "Just as you like, of course."

"Sure, take over these prisoners, Whitley." Ed handed over the gun. "I want to get on to my paper and let them have the story. Maybe I should call the police?"

"No." Reggie's voice had changed suddenly. The gun was pointing at the reporter. "This story is one your paper is never going to print, McIntyre."

"What do you mean?"

"That you got me wrong," sneered Reggie, and then his eyes narrowed to mere slits as he stared at the terror-stricken Franco. "So you thought you would run out on me, you rat! You know what happens to double-crossers?"

The gun roared, and Gloria gave a scream of horror as an expression of agony twisted Franco's face. His hands clasped his stomach and then with an awful groan he dropped in a heap, squirmed for a moment or so and then was still.

Men stealthily approaching the disused warehouse heard that shot. Lieutenant-detective Gray gave the signal to his men to hurry.

Whitley laughed as he stared down at the dead man, and then his gun swung round to cover the shrinking girl.

"Look here, Whitley." Ed was desperate with fear for the girl he loved. "These kids had nothing to do with this. If they promise to keep their mouths shut, will you let them go?"

"There's only one kind of people that never talk," was the ominous reply of the killer. "I'm taking no chances."

Whitley's finger tightened round the trigger, but before he could carry out his fell purpose a voice rang out from the doorway.

"Drop that gun!"

Whitley swung round, saw the police at the door and swung up the gun, but he fired a split second too late. The cop had shot first. The bullet smashed the arch crook's shoulder. A moment later he was being handled none too gently by the lieutenant's men.

"In the nick of time," gasped Ed. "That's the man you're after." He pointed to Whitley. "He's the ringleader."

"Put the handcuffs on the whole bunch," the officer ordered. "And take 'em in."

"You put up a great fight, Ed," Gloria said as the three went down to a waiting car.

"Mike did most of the fighting," Ed answered, with one arm round her waist. "But you deserve all the credit."

"Nothing more than Mike."

"Let's forget it," suggested the young hero. "We'll just keep it in the family."

"Haven't I anything to say about this?" Gloria argued.

"Not a thing!" chuckled Mike. "I'm the head of this family."

"Oh, no you aren't." Ed answered with a possessive glance at the smiling, happy girl.

"Well, I was," murmured Mike, and winked slyly and approvingly at his brother-in-law to be.

(By permission of Pathé Pictures, Ltd., starring Frankle Darro as Mike, Kane Richmond as Ed, and Phyllis Fraser as Gloria.)

The Concluding Chapters of:—



EPISODE 13—

“The Rustlers’ Round-up”

The Hunters Snared

KENTUCKY WADE and his bronc hit the surface of the river, vanished in a terrific smother of spray that shot into the air with an explosive effect reminiscent of the bursting of a bombshell, then came into view again as the cascade raised by their plunge was pattering in a myriad drops on the bosom of the torrent.

Kentucky had parted company with the saddle, but was clinging to the off stirrup, and he hung on as his pony started to swim for the far bank. Before man and beast were halfway across the river, however, the blatter of gunfire was resounding in their ears, and leaden slugs were smacking into the water all around them.

Looking back at the cliff-top from which he and his mount had dived, Kentucky saw the figures of the Indians and the half-breed Buckskin silhouetted against the blue skyline. They were blazing viciously at the ex-deputy, but their marksmanship was poor, and it was without so much as a scratch that the fugitive and his horse gained the opposite bank of the Gila River.

A few seconds later Kentucky and the palomino were under cover of a belt of thickets that ranged along the edge of the water, and from the shelter of those thickets the one-time officer of the law focused his attention on his enemies again.

They had ceased fire and seemed to be holding a pow-wow, and although they gazed frequently across the river, it was clear that none of them possessed the courage to imitate Kentucky's reckless example and plunge from the summit of the bluffs.

Apparently deciding to admit themselves baffled, they at last wheeled round and cantered away, and from his vantage-point Kentucky saw Buckskin separate himself from the troop of Indians, striking off in the direction of

Brimstone City, while the red men made tracks for their native village.

As for Kentucky, he now proceeded to follow the river downstream, seeking a means of returning to the other side of it. But he had been riding for an hour and a half before the heeling and insurmountable heights that guarded it on the west finally levelled out into a stretch of shallow pastureland.

There was a ford in this reach of the river, too, and at the urge of its master's heels the palomino splashed its way to the far bank. Then, as it plodded on to dry ground, Kentucky turned its head northward and set out for Brimstone.

He rode at a fast clip, and another hour or so must have elapsed when suddenly he espied a lone horseman issuing from a cleft in a bunch of low foothills ahead of him—a horseman whom he immediately identified as Buckskin, and who was no doubt returning from a brief visit to town.

Recognition was mutual, and without the support of his Indian allies Buckskin speedily betrayed the fact that there was a streak of cowardice in him, for he sawed abruptly on the reins of his mustang and made as if to turn tail.

Before he could resort to flight, however, Kentucky swung right-about and galloped off himself—not because he was scared of the half-breed, but because he had done some pretty fast thinking in the moment of clapping eyes on the man.

He wanted to capture Buckskin, and to take him alive, in the hope of forcing him to reveal the name of the scoundrel who was the secret leader of that organisation which had terrorised Paradise Valley. But he knew that in its “fagged” condition his palomino was not likely to overhaul the half-breed's mustang in a chase, and therefore he had hit upon the notion

of enticing Buckskin to play the rôle of pursuer and luring him into a trap.

Buckskin was fooled by the ruse. Recovering his nerve as he saw Kentucky spurring away in apparent alarm, he promptly kicked his heels into his pony's flanks and charged after the ex-deputy, and although a fair distance separated him from his quarry he presently drew his gun and pumped lead at the fugitive.

Not one of the shots discharged by Buckskin came anywhere near Kentucky, but the half-breed had an over-rated opinion of his skill with firearms, and consequently he did not doubt that he had scored a hit when the white man pitched sideways from his horse all at once.

Kentucky was riding at the time over an expanse of ground that was littered with big rocks, and he rolled out of view amongst the boulders. Then, as he heard Buckskin approaching to the tune of drumming hoofs, he scrambled up and weaved his way through the clustering rocks until he was some twenty or thirty paces from the scene of his fall.

He was unseated, of course, and he was none the worse for the tumble he had purposely taken, for he knew how to throw himself to the ground from a galloping bronc without sustaining injury.

Into the bargain he was clutching a lariat which he had removed from his saddle-peg an instant before he had left his horse's back, and, thus equipped, he waited until Buckskin reached the spot where he, Kentucky, had dropped from his mount.

The half-breed drew rein, and failing to desery the body of his foe, started to ride through the rocks in a puzzled fashion; and he was still searching for Kentucky when a lasso snaked towards him as if from nowhere, the noose falling neatly over his head and shoulders.

That nose was dragged taut as it encircled him, and, his arms pinned to his sides, Buckskin was wrenched out of the saddle and thudded heavily to the ground—so heavily, indeed, that several seconds elapsed ere he was able to collect his wits.

By the time the half-breed had regained his feet Kentucky was beside him, and, held powerless by the coil of rope, the swarthy captive turned a scared face towards the white man as the latter gripped him by the shoulder.

"I wasn't sure that a smart man like you would fall for so old a trick, Buckskin," Kentucky said tersely. "But now I've got you where I want you I reckon you're going to do some talking."

A hint of defiance appeared on the half-breed's evil countenance.

"You won't get notin' outa me, Wade," he panted.

"No?" Kentucky drawled. "We'll see about that later. But first I'm takin' you to a safe place, and I reckon none could be safer than that hide-out you and your friends once used. We aren't so very far from it, Buckskin, and it's the last place any of your outfit would be liable to drop in on."

He was referring to the cavern in which Larry Munro had formerly been imprisoned, and not long afterwards he was conveying Buckskin through the tumbling waterfall that screened it. Then, gaining that same compartment wherein Larry had been confined, he lashed the half-breed securely to a chair and took every precaution to assure himself that there was no chance of the rogue escaping.

Having satisfied himself on that score, he left Buckskin to his own bitter thoughts and made tracks for Brimstone, and, reaching the township as the sun was going down in the west, he was entering the main street at a trot when he saw Larry Munro come out of the Silver Dollar saloon.

He hailed the owner of the Circle D and cantered up to him. Then, after dismounting and tethering his bronc to the Silver Dollar's hitch-rail, he laid a hand on his friend's shoulder.

"I'm glad you haven't left town, Larry," he declared. "I've got plenty to tell you, and it's in connection with the gang that's been trying to fasten a strangle-hold on Paradise Valley."

Larry Munro eyed him ruefully.

"I'm through with Paradise Valley and its troubles, Kentucky," he said. "I've sold the Circle D, and Driscoll's got the deed to the outfit."

"Driscoll did have the deed to the Circle D," was the quiet rejoinder, "but I've got it now, pardner, and I'm handin' it back to you."

He produced the document in question, and turning it over to Larry, he launched into an account of the incidents that had led up to Tobias Driscoll's death and the ultimate capture of Buckskin.

"As to selling your ranch, Larry," he finished, "you were tricked into that transaction, as you can see now—and before he died Driscoll admitted it so he could go out with a clean slate. Consequently, I reckon you can tear up that deed and still call the Circle D your own."

"But that isn't all, Larry," he added. "Driscoll also told me that he'd discovered the main vein of your platinum strike wasn't in Apache Gulch at all, but in the north-east corner of your range—which is something you'd better check up on when you've got the time to do it."

There was a short silence, during which Larry Munro seemed at a loss for words that would express his

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emotions, though the look on his face was eloquent of the gratitude he felt for all that Kentucky had done. Then the latter spoke again.

"By the way, Larry," he asked, "have you seen Judge Lawrence around anywhere?"

The other nodded towards the saloon. "He's in there, along with the sheriff," he rejoined.

Without further discussion Kentucky mounted the steps of the Silver Dollar and thrust his way through the swing-doors of the bar-room, and Larry following him, the two friends had hardly entered the premises when a tall man accosted them.

He was Matt Keeler, proprietor and editor of the "Brimstone News," and he came forward and greeted Kentucky heartily.

"Hallo, Wade," he said. "How are you? Would you and Larry care to join me in a drink?"

"Not now, thanks," Kentucky refused. "I've got to talk to Judge Lawrence and the sheriff."

A flicker of something more than mere interest revealed itself in Keeler's eyes.

"Say, has anything happened that might make news for the paper?" he asked.

"Maybe," was the non-committal reply. "I'll let you know later, Mr. Keeler."

Already Kentucky had discerned Judge Lawrence and the sheriff seated in one of a row of alcoves, and leaving Keeler, he strode across to the two representatives of the law, with Larry Munro at his heels. Then, when he and his friend had joined the sheriff and the judge, he drew a pair of heavy curtains that enabled him to render the alcove more private.

"Gentlemen," he began, "I'm sorry to bust in on your conversation, but I've got a little job to do and I need your help to make it legal."

"Yes?" Judge Lawrence queried. "What kind of a job?"

"I've got that fellow Buckskin and I'm holding him a prisoner out in the hills," Kentucky explained. "I want to charge him with complicity in the killing of Tobe Driscoll—aside from which I think we might be able to grill a lot of information out of him concerning the gang that's been terrorising this section."

Both the judge and the sheriff were sitting bolt upright in their chairs now.

"What's that you say?" the sheriff jerked. "Tobe Driscoll's dead and Buckskin had a hand in his murder? Then why the heck haven't you brought that half-breed into town?"

"Because I doubt if he'd ever reach court," Kentucky returned. "I've just told you I believe we can get him to spill plenty of information, but the men he's liable to betray would make sure he didn't talk—even if they had to shoot him while he was in gaol."

He went on to relate the narrative he had already detailed to Larry Munro. Then he put forward a proposition he had in mind.

"My idea is for you, Judge Lawrence, to try Buckskin right where I'm holding him," he said, "and give him the chance of turning State's evidence. Does that idea meet with your approval?"

"Where have you got him?" the judge asked.

"In a cave back of a waterfall on Driscoll's range. Larry here was a prisoner in that cave himself, after he was ransomed from the Indians by that gang of kidnapers."

Old man Lawrence frowned, and then shook his head.

"No," he murmured. "I'm afraid your notion is a bit too irregular, Wade. But I'll tell you what we could do. The sheriff here could quietly escort Buckskin to Yuma, and he could be brought to a speedy trial in the courthouse there—before anybody could 'get' at him."

"Judge," Kentucky declared, "that's a good idea—"

He stopped abruptly. His attention had been focused on Lawrence, but suddenly, out of the corner of his eye, he had detected a slight fluttering of the curtains that screened the alcove from the main bar-room, and suddenly he knew that someone had been playing the rôle of eavesdropper.

And then, through the narrow chink between the fringes of the two wavering curtains, he saw a familiar figure turning sharply away to head for the swing-doors that opened on to the street—a tall, lean, dark-clad figure which there was no mistaking—the figure of Matthew Keeler!

The Fight at the Cave

NEITHER Larry Munro, Judge Lawrence nor the sheriff had observed Keeler, but they were aware of the shrewd expression that dawned on Kentucky Wade's handsome features, and they looked at him inquiringly.

"What's up, Wade?" the sheriff demanded.

Kentucky did not answer him at once. The suspicion had arisen in his mind that Keeler had some significantly good reason for having listened-in to their conversation, but on an after-thought he recalled that the man might have been merely exercising his instincts as a news-hound.

He realised that in any case he could not accuse Keeler of eavesdropping with any ulterior motive, and decided it would be best to make no mention of what he had seen, though at the same time he resolved to return to Buckskin's place of captivity at the earliest possible moment.

"I asked you if anything was wrong, Wade," the sheriff was persisting.

"Oh, no," Kentucky rejoined. "No. I—er—I just thought of something. I—well, as a matter of fact, I just remembered we've got four other prisoners over at the Circle D ranch. They haven't talked, and I figure they're not so likely to come across with any information as Buckskin, whose neck is in danger on account of what happened to Driscoll. But just the same, we might as well take them to Yuma as well."

Larry Munro interposed a remark.

"I'll attend to those four men," he said. "I'll high-tail it to the ranch and get the boys to bring them along to the cave behind the waterfall. We'll meet you and the sheriff there, Kentucky."

"And I'll meet you all in Yuma," Judge Lawrence cut in.

Larry, Kentucky and the sheriff rose to their feet and made their way from the saloon. Then, mounting their horses, they galloped off down the main street and separated as they swung out of town, Larry riding across the open country in the direction of his ranch, the other two men heading for the hills.

It was night when the sheriff and Kentucky reached their destination, and the waters of the cascade that screened the entrance of the cave were glistening under the rays of a mellow moon as the pair of them slid from their saddles and ducked into the cunning hide-away.

Buckskin's mustang was standing,

patiently in the cave-mouth behind the tumbling cataract, just as Kentucky had left the animal; and Buckskin himself was still tied securely to the chair in the rock-walled apartment where he had been confined.

The sheriff and Kentucky moved to the half-breed's side, and the younger of the two newcomers addressed the captive.

"Buckskin," he said, "the sheriff here has decided to take you to Yuma, and you're going to be tried there. What's more, I'm going to testify that you had a hand in the murder of Tobo Driscoll."

The half-breed eyed him truculently. "It'll be your word against mine," he muttered. "I ain't admittin' to anything."

"I reckon my word will carry more weight than yours, Buckskin—especially when Larry Munro gets up in the witness chair and identifies you as one of the men concerned in his kidnaping."

Kentucky paused, and then leaned closer to him.

"That isn't all, Buckskin," he added. "Driscoll wasn't able to say much before he died, but I found some papers on him, and I took the opportunity of running through them after I got away from you and the Indians. There wasn't anything in them to tell me who is the real brain behind the organisation you belong to, but you and Claggett and one or two others were mentioned in a way that don't leave much doubt as to the kind of activities you've been engaged in."

The half-breed looked uneasy, but volunteered no response.

"Buckskin, you're in a spot," Kentucky said to him deliberately, "and when you stand your trial in Yuma it might be to your advantage to make a clean breast of everything—and to expose the man you've been working for."

Still the prisoner made no reply, and by and by the sheriff spoke.

"Let's get this feller out of here, Wade," he suggested, "so we can be ready to hit the breeze as soon as Munro and his men show up with them other four hombres."

Kentucky nodded, and Buckskin was released from the chair. But his captors took the precaution of pinioning his arms with the rope which had bound him to that crude article of furniture, and, unresisting, the half-breed was conducted towards the mouth of the cave.

Here Kentucky took charge of the prisoner's mustang, and, followed by Buckskin and the representative of the law, he led the pony out through the cataract and walked it across to a group of rocks beside which his own brone and the sheriff's were standing.

There was nothing to do now but await the arrival of Larry's party and the gangsters who had been held in custody at the Circle D outfit, and about half an hour had elapsed when suddenly Kentucky's sharp ears detected the sound of approaching hoof-beats.

"I can hear a bunch of horsemen comin' this way now," he said to the sheriff. "It must be Larry Munro and his crowd."

Brimstone's guardian of the peace tilted his head to one side in an attentive attitude. Then all at once a frown gathered upon his brow.

"It's a bunch o' horsemen all right," he conceded, "but they ain't comin' from the direction of the Circle D ranch. They're bearin' down from the north."

Kentucky had already realised that himself, and he gripped the sheriff by the arm.

"Red Hatcher's Indian encampment lies to the north," he jerked. "Maybe

it's some of his warriors that are headed this way. We'd better get out of sight. Quick, hustle Buckskin into the rocks—I'll take care of the horses."

But he had hardly spoken those words when the horsemen whose approach had been audible topped a ridge a short distance away, and he saw that although the majority of them were Indians, there were several white men among them.

He recognised Steve Claggett, Braden the storekeeper, and one or two others whom he had associated in his mind with Buckskin, and it was instantly made clear to him that they and their Indian allies had not put in an appearance in the vicinity of the waterfall by mere coincidence. For on espying Kentucky and his companions they immediately opened fire on them.

Hot lead whistled around Kentucky as he was in the act of gathering up the reins of the horses, and, frightened by the ringing echoes of the gun-blasts on the ridge, the brones tore loose from his grip and swerved off towards the river. At the same time Kentucky heard a sharp cry of pain near by, and, turning, he saw Buckskin crumpling to the ground.

A bullet, intended no doubt for the sheriff, had missed the latter by a hair's breadth and drilled the half-breed, who lay where he had fallen and uttered never a sound when Brimstone's representative of the law stooped to drag him into the shelter of the rocks.

Kentucky joined the sheriff, and together they hauled the wounded man under cover. Then, crouching amid the boulders themselves, they plucked out their six-guns and took aim at their assailants.

The mixed troop of Indians and white men were starting down the slope of the ridge now in a body, but, blazing at them determinedly, Kentucky and the sheriff unhorsed four of them ere the band gained the foot of the declivity, and in spite of their



By the time the half-breed had regained his feet Kentucky was beside him, and, held powerless by the coil of rope, the swarthy captive turned a scared face towards the white man as the latter gripped him by the shoulder.

superiority in numbers, the attackers threw themselves from their ponies and burrowed down in a tract of scrub.

From the thick of that scrub they began to enfilade the rocks where the sheriff and Kentucky had gone to cover, Claggett and the other renegades using their six-guns, the Redmen using the rifles that Bradeu had traded to them from time to time.

Crouching amongst the big stones that offered them protection, Buckskin's two captors returned the fire of the enemy in resolute fashion. As for their half-breed prisoner, he remained in an inert posture behind them—oblivious, it seemed, of the shots that were whining about the rocky covert or chipping fragments of granite from the clustering boulders.

Presently the gunplay died down for a spell, and during that lull Kentucky spoke to the sheriff in a low voice.

"Those outlaws and their Indian allies knew we were here," he said. "They were tipped off to get us."

The sheriff nodded.

"I kinda figured that myself," he muttered, "from the way they began to sling lead at us the minute they came over the ridge. But who could've put them wise? You didn't tell anybody but me an' Judge Lawrence and Larry Munro that you were holdin' Buckskin here, did you?"

"No, but I've got a good idea who gave us away," Kentucky answered, "and if we ever get out of this jam I'm going to have a word with the hombre in question."

His companion bit his lip.

"If we ever get out of this jam," he retorted grimly. "But I doubt whether we will, son. The odds against us are mighty heavy, and if those rats get close enough to jump us it will be our finish."

But the outlaws and savages had no intention of making a direct onset upon the vantage-point occupied by Kentucky Wade and Brimstone's sheriff. Knowing as they did that such an onset must triumph by sheer weight of numbers, they were equally well aware that the two defenders might inflict heavy casualties on them before being overwhelmed, and Kentucky had made no mistake when he had cast doubts upon their courage.

Instead, the gangsters and their allies elected to employ a strategy which would entail less risk to themselves, even though it was bound to prolong the affair.

The council of war having been brought to a conclusion, the Indians stayed where they were and proceeded to resume hostilities, discharging fusillade after fusillade at the rocks which sheltered Kentucky and his comrade. Meanwhile Steve Claggett and his cronies commenced to sneak off to the left, probably hoping that the Navajo braves would keep the two defenders so busy that their own stealthy movements would escape notice.

But if the renegade white men did nurse any such hope, it was not fulfilled. For Kentucky and the sheriff were quick to perceive their game.

"The Indians are still in the scrub," the former ejaculated suddenly, "but Claggett and his side-kicks are worming their way out of it. They're going to circle round and try to take us from behind."

The sheriff gritted his teeth.

"I'll tend to them," he said. "You trade lead with them red devils, Wade. I'll keep my eye on Claggett and his party."

Kentucky concentrated his attention on the scrub, and, defiant of the bullets

that zipped viciously around his head, he fired at the flashes of the Indians' rifles. In the meantime the sheriff watched the figures of Claggett and the other renegades as they continued to crawl to the left, and he was still following them with his eyes when they changed their course and began to carry out a flanking movement that would fetch them to the rear of the group of boulders.

The sheriff made no attempt to pick them off yet, but bided his time, and, believing that they were unobserved, the gangsters eventually reached a point about a hundred yards south of the rocks. Then, rising to their feet, they started to pad cautiously towards those rocks, confident that within the next minute or so they would be emptying their revolvers into the backs of the two men ensconced there.

Their confidence was swiftly dispelled, for, having straightened up, they had taken no more than half a dozen steps when the sheriff's forty-five roared a challenge to their advance.

One of them was hit, and, screaming with pain, clapped a hand to his right knee-cap and pitched to the dust, where he lay grovelling. The others, scattering in alarm, sought safety in the lee of a few humps that rose like beehives out of the ground, and from behind these they opened fire.

Amidst the shelter of the rocks the sheriff spoke to Kentucky Wade tersely.

"I kinda surprised Claggett an' his party," he stated with satisfaction. "Right now they're eatin' dirt. How you makin' 'em out with them Injuns, son?"

"I think I've knocked off two of 'em," Kentucky returned. "Sheriff, if we can only hold out until Larry Munro gets here—"

And then he stopped, for he was interrupted by a hoarse cry that broke from the older man's lips, and, twisting round, he saw the veteran officer of the law fall back.

In an instant he was close beside the sheriff, and as he bent over him he perceived a stain of blood spreading over his shoulder.

"You'll—you'll have to hold out alone, Wade," the old fellow groaned, wincing. "They've plugged me—an' my arm feels like it's paralysed—my gun arm, too."

Kentucky took a firmer grip on his revolver and directed a glance southward through the rocks. As he did so he saw Claggett and his accomplices issuing into view and moving forward at the double. They were obviously aware that one of the defenders had been hit, and had summoned up enough courage to stage a headlong onslaught. Moreover, they were shouting to their Indian allies to close in from the north.

Kentucky braced himself. He expected no mercy from his foes; was convinced that both he and the sheriff would receive short shrift at their hands. But he made up his mind to give a good account of himself ere he was laid low, and he resolved there and then that Steve Claggett at least would precede him into eternity.

Yet, even as he was slinging out the hulking figure of Claggett and drawing a bead on the man, there was a startling outburst of gunplay from an unexpected quarter, and, wheeling confusedly, he saw a posse of horsemen sweeping through a cleft in the foothills to the west.

It was a posse consisting of Larry Munro and his ranch-hands, and riding stirrup to stirrup with the Circle D boys were Trigger Benton, Mike Morales and Dnde Hauford.

To the tune of bellowing Colts and pounding hoofs they came on in break-neck style, and at sight of them the Navajo braves who had risen from the scrub took to their heels and scuttled for their mustangs. And in the space of a few seconds the Indians were fleeing over the ridge where they had first appeared.

There was no escape for Claggett and his confederates, however. They had left their mounts in the scrub, and before they could circle back to them the men from the Munro ranch had intercepted them, forcing them to surrender at the points of their guns, then deftly snaring the rogues with lariats and marching them over to the cluster of rocks where Kentucky stood waiting.

"You just about got here in time, Larry," Kentucky greeted, as the rancher joined him with the rest of his party and the gangsters who had been taken prisoner. "But where are the four outlaws you were to bring along from the Circle D?"

"They're on the other side of the foothills there," was the reply. "I left 'em in charge of a couple of the boys when we heard the shootin'. The rest of us came on lickety-split. But you ain't alone, are you? What's happened to the sheriff—an' Buckskin?"

"Buckskin's got a bad case of lead poisonin'," Kentucky stated. "The sheriff has been drilled, too. Nothing serious, though. Just through the shoulder."

"Through the shoulder, eh?" grunted Larry. "Will he be able to make the trip to Yuma?"

A queer look dawned on Kentucky Wade's features.

"He won't have to make that trip to Yuma now," he said slowly. "We've got the gang, and I can give you the name of the man behind 'em. He's—Matt Keeler, Larry."

"Matt Keeler!"

Kentucky inclined his head.

"Yep, Brimstone's highly respected newspaper owner," he announced.

"What makes you so sure Matt Keeler is in on this, Kentucky?" Trigger Benton inquired.

"He was listening-in to my conversation with Larry and Judge Lawrence and the sheriff earlier this evening. I thought at the time he might just be snoopin' on account of that paper he runs. But now I figure different, and if the sheriff will let me deputise for him I aim to take care of Matt Keeler. Meantime you fellows can ride hard on the prisoners and fetch 'em into town."

Unmasked

THE hands of the clock above the long bar of the Silver Dollar were pointing to the hour of ten when Kentucky Wade entered the saloon.

There were only one or two customers on the premises, but Matthew Keeler was there, for it was now common knowledge in Brimstone that he had acquired the establishment on the death of its former proprietor, Doe Hardy.

Matt Keeler had his back to the bar, and he had been watching the swing-doors of the saloon expectantly, so that he perceived Kentucky the moment the latter crossed the threshold. But if the younger man's arrival caused him any surprise he did not betray the fact, and greeted the newcomer with his characteristic blandness of demeanour.

"Hallo, Wade!" he said. "What are you having?"

He accompanied the words with an inviting gesture—a movement of his hand towards the bar—but Kentucky ignored that gesture and looked him straight in the face.

"I'm having a show-down with you, Keeler," he announced.

A slight change came over the other's cadaverous features, a fleeting look of awareness that was swiftly succeeded by an expression of assumed perplexity.

"A show-down?" he echoed. "I don't think I understand you, Wade."

"You understand all right!" Kentucky bit out. "Keeler, I'm naming you as the head of the outlaw gang that's been terrorising Paradise Valley for more than a year."

There was a dead silence. Catching what had been said, the other occupants of the bar-room suddenly became mute and awestruck. Then Kentucky spoke again.

"You sent word to your men—probably via Braden—that the sheriff and I were going to take Buckskin to Yuma and see if we could make him talk. You told them to get Buckskin away from us."

Keeler found his voice.

"Wade, I don't know what this is all about."

"Don't bluff, Keeler," the younger man cut in. "When Larry Mumro and the sheriff and Judge Lawrence and I were talking privately in that alcove over there this evening, you were spying on us. You needn't deny it. I caught a flash of you turning away from the curtains."

Matt Keeler laughed easily.

"Oh, well, I'm in the newspaper profession, Wade, you know. When I scent a story—"

Again Kentucky broke in on him.

"You didn't wait to hear the end of the story," he said. "That's where you made your mistake. If you'd listened a little while longer you might have warned your men to make a quick job of dealing with the sheriff and me—before Larry Mumro and the Circle D boys showed up. As it is, we've got your whole gang hog-tied, and I reckon one or another of those hombies is liable to break down under a third-degree grilling."

Keeler's face had tightened, and he had clenched his hands involuntarily.

"Meanwhile I'm arresting you as a suspect," Kentucky went on quietly.

"You're arresting me!" Keeler's voice rose in sudden wrath. "Since when were you made sheriff of this county?"

"I'm not the sheriff, Keeler, but he's given me leave to deputise for him, and you're stepping across to the gal with me. Or do I have to use force?"

The owner of the "Brimstone News" answered those last words with a swift upward jerk of his hand—a hand that darted between the lapels of his frock-coat and closed on the butt of a revolver that was strapped to his chest. Yet even as he whipped the gun from its concealed holster the fist of Kentucky Wade crashed home against his jaw.

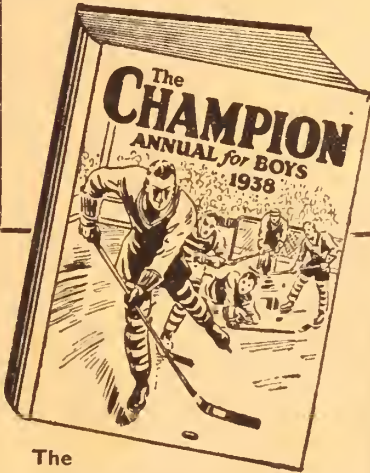
The punch travelled from somewhere in the region of Kentucky's hips, and all his weight and strength were behind it. Back went Keeler's head, and, tottering, he let his six-shooter drop to the floor and reeled against the bar. Then his knees folded beneath him, and all at once he crumpled in a heap.

Kentucky moved towards him and stooped to clutch him by the collar of his coat.

He had pulled him halfway across the bar-room when there was a clatter of hoofs outside the saloon, and immediately afterwards the long, lean form of Trigger Benton thrust his way into the Silver Dollar, halting abruptly as he saw Kentucky Wade and his captive, then smiling a twisted smile.

"So you got him, pardner, huh?" Trigger drawled. "Well, your guess

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hit the target fair an' square. I pushed on ahead of the others to let you know Keeler was our man all right, Kentucky."

"One of his side-kicks squealed on him?"

Trigger nodded. There was an expression of keen satisfaction on his leathery face.

"Yeah," he declared. "That guy they call Braden. He cracked soon after you left us, Kentucky—come out with a full confession. Cattle-rustin', gun-runnin' to the Injuns, the murder of Doc Hardy—them's just three o' the counts that Matt Keeler will stand trial for, and I guess they're enough to hang him."

Justice had been done, and Paradise Valley was no longer a hotbed of crime. Peace and prosperity had come to the section—especially as Red Hatchet, head chief of the Indians, had realised nothing was to be gained by waging war on a well-organised community which was no longer undermined by lawless elements.

A month or two after sentence had been passed on Keeler and his associates, and shortly after Larry Mumro had received a fabulous sum for the mineral rights on his property, three horsemen might have been seen preparing to take their leave of the Circle D Ranch.

They were Kentucky Wade, Mike Morales and Trigger Benton, and, as they climbed astride their broncs, Larry Mumro moved close to them.

"I sure hate to see you fellows hitting the trail," he said to them regretfully. "I was kinda hopin' you'd settle down in this part o' the country. You know, buy up some land hereabouts with that dough I made you take when I sold the mineral rights. Come to that, you could even make your home right here at the Circle D—if you didn't feel like rummin' a ranch of your own."

"You're a trier, Larry," Kentucky observed. "Even when we're on the point of makin' tracks, you still figure there's a chance of gettin' as to change our minds."

"Well, I managed to persuade Dude to stay, didn't I?" Larry countered.

Kentucky glanced in the direction of the ranch-house veranda, where, fingers strumming on his guitar, Dude Hanford was singing a cow-camp ballad to lovely Lucy Mumro.

"Don't kid yourself, Larry," Kentucky said. "You didn't have anything to do with persuadin' Dude to stay. Maybe if you had three more sisters as pretty as Lucy—well, maybe Trig and Mike and I wouldn't be bothered with the wanderlust, either."

He laughed, and then added, in a sober tone:

"But seriously, Larry, you know how it is with Mike and Trigger and I. We've been drifting around too long to settle down in any one place."

A little while later Kentucky Wade, Trigger Benton and Mike Morales were cantering across the range, and as they looked back from the crest of a hillock to wave farewell to their friends of the Circle D the melody of Dude Hanford's voice carried to their ears.

"Settin' easy in the saddle and a-singin' along. Singing a song of the sage."

THE END.

(A New Universal Picture, distributed throughout the United Kingdom and the Irish Free State by General Film Distributors, Ltd., starring John Mack Brown.)

December 25th, 1937.



GENE AUTRY
The Singing Cowboy
Star

"SLIM"

(Continued from page 12)

towers in the mornin' and dig your way back down?"

"Cold ain't gonna bother you none, Stumpy, the way I'll work you to-morrow!" promised Pop with a grin. "But if it's as bad as this to-morrow we can wait for a decent day, can't we?" asked Lafe Garretson rather plaintively.

"The company don't wait for decent days to pay you, do they?" Pop retorted.

Most of them were sitting round the fire, and Mrs. Johnson had cleared the table, when a motor-truck skidded to a standstill outside the house and the man at its wheel jumped down into the snow and climbed the steps.

Pop and the others were out in the hall directly they heard the sound of his voice at the door, and he brushed past Mrs. Johnson to address Pop.

"They want you and your gang down at the south sub-station right away!" he said urgently. "The storm's tearin' out our distribution lines. Truck's waitin' outside."

"We gotta go!" boomed Pop, and he started to put on a thick plaid jacket.

But Lafe Garretson made no move to get his overcoat.

"South sub-station?" he said in a scared fashion. "But that's all hot wire down there! Why, that yard's as hot as an electric chair—it'll be a death-trap in a storm like this. It isn't safe!"

"Whoever told you line work was safe?" Pop rated at him. "Sorry, boys. I don't like this any better than you do, but we're supposed to be linesmen. Come on, let's get her goin'! Be right with you, Mac. Oh, Mrs. Johnson, keep the heat on in the rooms, will you? We'll need it when we get back."

"I hate to see you go out in this awful weather," declared the landlady. "I'll keep some hot coffee for you."

"That's fine," Pop, with a muffled sound his neck and his coat-collar turned up about his ears, led the way out to the truck and the others followed, Lafe Garretson bringing up the rear.

The south sub-station was only about five miles away, but it was a most unpleasant ride. Half the town was in darkness before their destination was reached, but there was plenty of light outside the sub-station, for some of the cables had been blown across live cables between two of the towers and the flashing of the enrent was like continuous lightning.

"There's where the trouble is!" said Pop. "Come on, let's get her goin'!"

They swarmed down from the truck in the yard of the sub-station, and the linesmen approached one of the towers. But Lafe Garretson turned to Pop as Red began to climb the steel.

"It's no use, Pop," he said huskily. "I can't go up there."

"There's only two can'ts in this job," returned the foreman sternly. "If you can't cut it, you can't stop!"

"Well, I'm sorry," muttered the faint-hearted one. "I'm quittin'."

He turned and walked out from the yard; whereupon Red called across to Slim, who was climbing the opposite leg of the tower.

"Looks like this job is beginnin' to separate 'em!"

"Separate who?" Slim called back.

"The men from the boys. Hi, wait a minute! That's hot wire up there!

Stick close to me and keep your eyes open!"

"You boys be careful up there, now!" warned Pop from below as their two heads became surrounded by wires charged with eighty thousand volts of enrent.

At the top of the tower Slim and Red clambered out upon the bridge-like cross-section, there to swing precariously from their safety belts and restore loose cables to their proper positions in the teeth of a biting wind and at the risk of being "burnt."

While they were engaged upon this perilous task a taxicab drew up outside the boarding-house they had left behind, and Cally alighted from it, paid the driver, and scurried up to the front door.

Two days after Slim had left the hospital in Cactus Thorn she had received a note from him at her flat in Chicago, and she had set off by train next morning to find him. The driver of the taxicab had condescended to take her from the station to the boarding-house only after she had undertaken to pay him double the legal fare for the journey.

Mrs. Johnson opened the door to her, and in the light of a guttering candle on the hall table stared in astonishment. All the lights in the house had failed.

"Is Mr. Kineaid here?" asked Cally. "Oh—er—come inside—come in!" said the landlady and as Cally stepped into the hall she forced the door shut against the wind. "Who was it you wanted to see?"

"Mr. Kineaid," replied Cally. "Slim."

"Oh, Slim Kineaid? Yes, he's one of the new boys that arrived to-night. Why, no, he's not here. They're out workin'—they're all out workin'. They've been gone almost an hour."

"Out working to-night?" gasped Cally. "Where are they working?"

"Well," confessed the dame, "I don't know. Wherever it is that makes the

lights go on, I suppose. The lights are all out, so they haven't finished yet. Won't you come right in here and wait for him?"

OUTSIDE the sub-station, Red and Slim and the others had recaptured and restored nearly all the cables that had been blown astray, and were now taut upon their in-

stantly. "Pop looked up to go home!" Red, "we'll get a lot o' mugs are sittin' for the lights to work out a crossword puzzle!"

A few minutes later Stumpy said to Pop:

"You think them boys up on top ain't doin' about the best night's work ever done? You think they ain't cuttin' it up there where the wind's colder than my paw's heart? You think—"

"I think if you don't quit talkin' and go to work," interrupted Pop, "I'm gonna chase you up there with 'em!"

"You chase me up that tower?" snorted Stumpy. "You couldn't get me up there if there was a rattlesnake after me with red-hot teeth!"

Time dragged for Cally in the dining-room of the boarding-house, though Mrs. Johnson gave her hot coffee and chattered cheerfully. The sound of the front door being opened brought them both to their feet.

"There they are now, I guess!" exclaimed the landlady. But it was Lafe Garretson who stepped into the room, and she cried out at him: "Why, Mr. Garretson, where are all the others? Are you through?"

"Well, I'm through," growled the linesman, gaping at Cally. "I quit!"

"Quit?" echoed Mrs. Johnson scornfully. "Without turnin' on my lights? You're a fine linesman!"

"Mrs. Johnson," said Garretson defensively, "you don't know what it's like working right over hot wire."

"They're working over hot wire?" gasped Cally.

"Yeah—eighty thousand volts! Hot enough to burn a tower down. They're working right next to it and kiddin' about it!"

Cally snatched up her coat, but did not trouble about her hat.

"Listen, Mr. Garretson," she said frantically. "I have to get where those men are working. Will you take me? Please!"

Garretson yielded to her appeal and telephoned for a taxicab, and within twenty minutes they were on their way to the south sub-station.

Red was on the bottom rung of a hook ladder that swayed in space over a network of live cables when the taxicab stopped in the yard and she jumped down from it. Slim and a linesman named Kelly were dangling on their safety-belts, straining at a recalcitrant line which they were trying to get back on to its insulators.

From the bottom of the tower she looked up at them with the snow in her face and fear in her heart, and just then Red shouted:

"All right, Slim, go up and give Pop the signals. About half another inch!"

Slim pulled himself up on the steel-work, but as he did so Kelly cried:

"It's overstrained now, Red! We can't make it!"

"We've gotta make it!" insisted Red. "Give us another inch!"

Two linesmen on another tower were doing their best to feed the cable to Red. Slim yelled down:

"Let's have a hair more!"

With terrifying abruptness the cable

December 25th, 1957.

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"SLIM."—Red Blygd, Pat O'Brien; Slim Kineaid, Henry Fonda; Cally Richards, Margaret Lindsay; Pop Traver, J. Farrell MacDonald; Clarence Stump ("Stumpy"), Stuart Erwin; Hyatt Ransstead, John Litel; Lafe Garretson, Harlan Tucker; Griffin, Max Wagner; Allerd, Craig Reynolds; Tom Manders, Dick Purcell; Steve Vincent, Joseph King; Howard Wilcox, Joseph Sawyer; Mrs. Johnson, Maudel Turner.

"TOUGH TO HANDLE."—Mike Sanford, Frankie Darro; Ed McIntyre, Kane Richmond; Gloria Sanford, Phyllis Fraser; Franço, Harry Worth; Reggie Rhidley, Johnstone White; Myra George, Lorraine Hayes; Grandpa Sanford, Burr Caruth; Barney, Bill Hunter; Spike, Jack Ingram; Bud, Harry Anderson; Jake, Stanley Price; Mr. Kendall, Lee Phelps.

"WILD WEST DAYS."—Kentucky Wade, John Mack Brown; Dade Hanforth, George Shelley; Trigger Benton, Robert Kortman; Mike Morales, Frank Yaconelli; Lucy Monroe, Lynn Gilbert; Larry Monroe, Frank McGlynn; Keeler, Russell Simpson; Purvis, Francis McDonald; Doc Hardy, Walter Miller; Buckskin, Charles Stevens; Steve Claggitt, Al Bridge; Red Hatchet, Chief Thunderbird.

snapped, and as it snapped Red lost his balance and his grip upon the ladder and fell. The "hot" wires were immediately beneath him, but he managed to catch hold of a seven-foot string of insulators and he clung dizzily to the slippery things.

"Hold on, Red!" Slim and Cally called from the steel tower. Slim was perched on the edge of the tower. Kelly freed himself to grab at a rope and his hasty grip on the rope fell headlong.

There was a blind spot where he struck the charged wire with a sickening thud his mind struck the ground within a few feet of Cally.

Slim was scrambling down the swinging string of insulators to seize his chum and hold him till help arrived, when Red's numbed hands released their grip and he, too, pitched downwards.

Cally fainted, and she knew nothing of how Slim was hauled back to safety on a rope by his colleagues and brought down from the tower, a limp and unconscious figure drooping over Pop's shoulder.

In the office of the sub-station, five minutes later, she was kneeling beside a couch on which Slim lay with closed eyes while Pop stood beside her. Stumpy was gazing morosely down at two stretchers covered with blankets on the other side of the office.

Slim opened his eyes and remembered.

"Cally," he murmured.

"Yes, Slim?" she asked gently.

"Red—"

"Slim, please!"

He knew, then, that Red was dead, and his face became tortured with grief. "I don't know what to say, Slim!" growled Pop miserably. "You know how we all feel. You take it easy. We'll finish the job." He turned towards the rest of his men, who were standing bareheaded just inside the doorway. "Come on, boys!"

Slim and Cally were left alone in the office with the two dead linsmen; but almost immediately Slim started up from the couch and began to put on his overcoat and his safety-belt and his cap. "You're not going back up there?" Cally faltered.

"That's what's the matter, Cally," said Slim resolutely. "Red said I was a linsman."

She offered no further protest, but went out with him into the snow and the wind. As they approached a leg of the tower from which Red and Kelly had fallen, Stumpy held on to it as though to bar Slim's way.

"You ain't goin' up here no more to-night!" he asserted.

Slim thrust him aside without a word and started to climb.

"Slim," Cally called up as he ascended, "I'll be waiting for you!"

(By permission of Warner Brothers Pictures, Ltd., starring Pat O'Brien and Henry Fonda.)



All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 199, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Robert Taylor's Next Film

Following intensive research in the European locale of the story, Stromberg announced the other novel, "They Seek a Country," which Francis Brett Young, will be the next Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer starring vehicle for Robert Taylor. On a recent trip to the Continent, Stromberg, accompanied by Noel Langley who is writing the screen play, travelled through some of the country described in the novel.

"Before he returns from England on completion of 'A Yank at Oxford,' Taylor will begin preparations for his new rôle," Stromberg said. Director Jack Conway will accompany the star on his trip through English territory for background material, continuing the research which Stromberg and Langley began.

"They Seek a Country" is a dramatic narrative of an Englishman who transferred to South Africa to escape from prison and eventually wins the love of a girl who befriended him on the journey.

The rôle promises to provide Taylor with the most dramatic characterisation of his career, according to Stromberg.

Unusual Set Built for Film

One of the most unusual sets ever built for a motion picture was constructed at Warner Bros. studios for scenes in "Slim," our long complete story.

Simple in appearance but novel in its usage, the set consisted of a steel wire-carrying tower 100 feet high and, immediately beside it, a wooden tower 120 feet high.

The steel tower was for O'Brien, Fonda, Stuart Erwin, J. Farrell MacDonald, Dick Purcell and other male members of the cast, together with a crew of bona-fide linsmen hired from the Southern California Edison Company, to perform on.

The wooden tower, which, despite its bulk and weight, could be moved with jacks and rollers to any desired position around its steel neighbour, was for technical equipment, including cameras, microphone booms and their crews, together with Director Ray Enright and his staff.

Elevators permitted cameras and crew to follow the actors up or down the tower at any desired speed, or to work at any given level from the ground

to a height 20 feet in excess of the steel tower.

An example of the flexibility of camera equipment of the crew on the wooden tower was provided by one shot requiring a member of the crew of linsmen working on the steel tower to slide from the top to the ground on a rope. The camera followed the man perfectly as he whizzed down the rope and slowed up as he neared the ground. The full 100-foot drop required less than five seconds.

Did You Know That—

Carole Lombard started her film career as leading lady in "horse operas"—Westerns to you—with Buck Jones and Tom Mix.

Fredric March, star of Cecil B. DeMille's "The Rucancer," posed for commercial advertisements printed in national magazines before entering films.

John Boles, now co-starring with Gladys Swarthout and John Barrymore in "Romance In The Dark," served as an American spy during the World War.

While Hollywood can provide every type of actor and stunt man, there are only ten expert drivers who can handle six galloping horses attached to a thundering old stage-coach, and Joel McCrea had to learn the trick in a few hours for a scene in "Wells Fargo."

Working on a W. C. Fields picture may be a laugh for all concerned, but it is just a headache for the poor script girl who has to write down every change he makes in his lines, and in "The Big Broadcast of 1938" the comedian goes to town in a riot of ad-libbing!

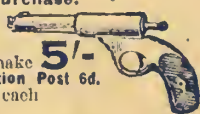
James Meade, former star football player for Rice Institute, makes his screen debut in "Buckaroo," which has been set as the release title for the new Zane Grey production, on the schedule as "Arizona Amos," in which Gilbert Roland, Marsha Hunt and Charles Bickford are featured.

Ernest Toch, who wrote the musical score for Paramount's "Peter Ibbotson," has been assigned to compose the background music for "On Such a Night." This film, produced by Emanuel Cohen, is based on events in the recent Ohio river floods, and calls for unusual orchestral effects.

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BOYS' CINEMA

No. 947. EVERY TUESDAY February 5th, 1938.

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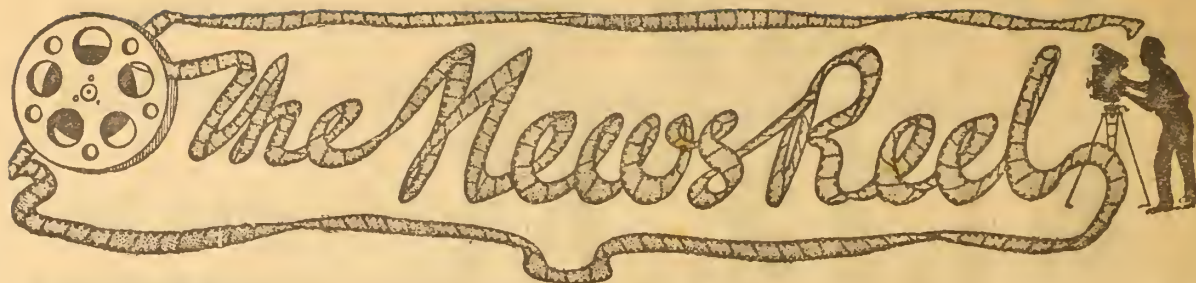
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INSIDE



The News Reel

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London, E.C.4.

My dear Readers,—Another of the superb coloured plates will be given away absolutely FREE in next week's issue, full particulars will be found on page 14. After that there will be three more weeks in which a plate will be given away, and in the issue dated February 26th you will find the full details of the Presentation Scheme which I mentioned last week. So be sure and make certain of getting a copy, because I can assure you that it is an offer that can never be repeated. It would be a sound policy to order your copy of BOY'S CINEMA from your local Newsagent NOW, otherwise you might find that he has sold out.

At all times I am pleased to hear from Readers and to answer any questions on careers, general knowledge, and film matters. Don't forget, a stamped addressed envelope will get you a speedy reply.

Your
EDITOR.

Comic Whale

The Ritz Brothers have just completed a whale of a comedy routine for Samuel Goldwyn's musical extravaganza, "The Goldwyn Follies."

The principal actor supporting the brothers in the scenes was a plaster whale, thirty feet long. Made to Ritz specifications by studio carpenters, it could do almost everything but talk.

Among its accomplishments were the ability to wink, to move forward and backward and to spout a stream of water with deadly accuracy a distance of twenty yards. The Brothers will testify to that accuracy. Their faces were on the receiving end of several of its volleys.

Mechanics which operated the sea beast were concealed in its spacious "innards."

When the routine was completed, the Ritz boys bought the whale.

Stunt Ace

Britain, like Hollywood, has a stunt squad, and its chief is thirty-five-year-old Manor Park-born Sam Lee, who has done more dangerous tricks for British films than anyone.

Sam, whose parents were on the stage, started films when he was seven, at a studio in Snaresbrook; he played urchins and got five shillings, a bottle of ginger beer and a ham sandwich a day. Joined a circus acrobatic troupe, and later became physical training instructor in the Army, winning the Challenge Cup for acrobatics.

Re-entered films in 1925 when he heard that someone was wanted to take a toss down some stairs. Sam took the job and got through without a scratch. Since then he has been constantly in demand, and although he has been knocked downstairs, has smashed cars and fallen into water innumerable times, he has had only one real injury—a broken leg.

He recalls the time when he had to jump off the top of the Eiffel Tower on to a platform fifteen feet below. He landed two inches from the edge, a thousand feet from the ground. He once fell off the Mauretania's boat-deck, sixty feet into the water, for a film, at 3 a.m. And he has been knocked out by all the best people—recently Victor McLaglen threw him through a window.

One of his earliest thrills was tight-rope walking across forty feet of wire

between two telegraph poles over a burning building. He saw the pole behind him catch fire, and just reached the other one before it crashed in flames.

He played the part of the irate pier-master in "Windbag the Sailor," whose pier is pulled from under him by Will Hay's tug. The local people who built the pier at Falmouth made a good job of it, using strong piles and heavy beams. Consequently, when the pier gave way and he fell into the water, real solid beams came crashing down around him, a blow from any of which would have meant serious business. He swam underwater and came up for air just in time to go down again to avoid more flying beams. The camera unit which had raced back to the tug punched him black and blue to make sure that he was really alive.

In his current film, "Strange Boarders," which Gainsborough are producing at Pinewood, he has the comparatively peaceful job of damaging a taxicab.

The only hint he can give to prospective stunt artistes is—to keep limp, try falling downstairs without contracting a muscle and see how little it hurts—or so Sam says.

Shaving With Egg

A dozen eggs were on call for the new Tom Walls' film, "Strange Boarders"—for shaving purposes.

Tom had to be photographed shaving in an art studio set near some very powerful lamps. He lathered with ordinary shaving soap, but he was too near the hot lamps, and wouldn't stay on; in fact, the more he lathered the less he got.

Then one of the make-up men suggested that the white of an egg whisked well and applied like shaving soap might do the trick—it did, and Tom, who was willing to try anything once, had to lather with egg twelve times for the sequence. His only complaints were that it felt a little slimy and one of the eggs was not up to scratch.

Jack Holt

Jack Holt, the famous he-man star of outdoor action and adventure films for the last two decades, was born with a natural love of life in the open and a desire to be an adventurer into the far romantic places of the earth. He has lived that sort of life, too; actually before he entered films, and vicariously on the screen.

Charles John Holt was born in Winchester, Virginia. His father, an Episcopalian minister, could trace his descent to John Holt, a Lord Chief Justice of England. His mother was a

(Continued on page 28)

NEXT WEEK'S THRILLING FILM STORIES!



EDWARD G. ROBINSON

IN

"THE LAST GANGSTER"

Public Enemy Number One was a ruthless, cold-blooded killer, and for a crime of vengeance the police were baffled, but finally got him on an income tax charge. His one thought on getting his freedom was his only son, but his old gang thought only of the money he had hidden. A powerful and thrilling drama of the underworld.

"AVENGING WATERS"

Ken Morley arrives at El Mirasol Ranch to find trouble between Mortimer, its new owner, and Slater, a rascally rancher who contends that his cattle have a right to graze on his neighbour's pasture-land. Slater causes a stampede and dams the head-waters of a stream that flows through Mortimer's property; but Ken stops the stampede and discovers the dam—only to be made captive by Slater's men. A rousing Western, starring Ken Maynard.

Also

Another episode of the grand new serial:

"RADIO PATROL"

Starring Grant Withers.

AND

ANOTHER FREE GIFT!

Because his brother Johnny has failed to make good in the Gobi Desert, where the Thatcher Petroleum Corporation are developing an oilfield, Chet Eaton goes to China on the eve of his marriage—and finds that he must stay there. Encouraged by the unscrupulous representative of a rival concern, Ho-Fang, a bandit chief, raids Chet's supply caravan, makes outrageous demands for money, and finally attacks the settlement in force. A blazing drama, starring Jack Holt



OUTLAWS *of the* ORIENT

Back to China

"THIS," said Leonard Claude Freemont Thatcher, chairman of the Thatcher Petroleum Corporation, "has just arrived from Kwei-Yong."

Across the rather ornate desk at which he was seated he passed to Chet Eaton, who had just dropped into a chair on the other side of it, a cablegram which read:

"Unless Gobi oilfield on full operating basis by end of the month General Moy Ku Ting will transfer franchise to Gobi Development Corporation.

"W. P. SNYDER."

Willard Percival Snyder was the resident manager of the Kwei-Yong branch of the Thatcher Petroleum Corporation; Chet Eaton was chief engineer of the concern.

"Looks bad, doesn't it?" said Thatcher.

"Oh, I don't know." Chet handed back the flimsy sheet of paper. "All you need is an extension of time."

"Do you think you'll have any trouble getting it?"

"Me?"

The word was exploded rather than uttered, and Chet's dark brown eyes and the set of his very strong jaw expressed both dismay and resistance.

"You're the only one who can save the situation for the company," said the middle-aged chairman gravely.

"I've heard that before," growled Chet.

"But it's true. You got the general

to arrange the franchise. You understand the people and the conditions."

Chet flung out a hand that held a half-consumed cigarette.

"Get this straight!" he gritted. "I'm not going back to China!"

"But we've sunk so much money in that field we can't afford to lose it now," protested Thatcher.

"Let Johnny handle it—he's on the job."

Thatcher bit his lip, dropped the cablegram on a very large blotting-pad, and said regretfully:

"Well, I didn't want to tell you this, but your brother's not making good."

For a few moments there was dead silence in the room, then Chet rubbed the back of his hand across his mouth and blurted:

"Why haven't you said something about this before?"

"I haven't had to," replied Thatcher, "until now."

"Well, that's different. But do you realize the spot you're putting me in?"

"All you have to do is get the franchise extended."

"I'm not thinking about the franchise. I'm getting married next month."

"Well, if you catch the 'plane to-night and take the China Clipper you'll be back in plenty of time." Thatcher turned to a dictograph and through it spoke to a secretary in an adjoining room. "Order a reservation on the China Clipper to-morrow for Mr. Eaton."

Chet stood up with an air of most unwilling surrender, a fine figure of a

man, and one more accustomed to command than to obey.

"Better get your things together," suggested Thatcher, "you haven't much time."

From the head office of the company in Broadway, New York City, Chet took a taxicab to a huge apartment-house in Fifth Avenue, facing Central Park. The sun was shining and spring was in the air; there were only four more days of April, and already the trees in the park were beginning to dress themselves in green.

Having dismissed the taxicab, Chet turned his back on the attractive scene, entered the apartment-house, and was swept up to the tenth floor in an elevator.

He was admitted to a sumptuous flat by a butler, who greeted him with a smile, and in the drawing-room of the flat he embraced the girl he had planned to marry in May. Her name was Alice Sylvester, and she was very beautiful.

"Oh, Chet, I'm so glad you've come!" she exclaimed. "I've just sent out millions of invitations and I've missed everybody we wanted."

"That's easy," he laughed. "Send out another million."

He led her over to a chesterfield and pulled her down beside him on its cushions.

"Listen, Alice," he said, slipping an arm round her waist, "would it be too tough if I left all the wedding preparations to you?"

She looked at him in rather blank

dismay and perceived that something had gone wrong.

"What's happened?" she asked.

"I've got to go to China," he replied. "Johnny's let the company down."

"What's he done?"

"Nothing, that's the trouble. But there's an important lease that has to be extended."

"But you can't go now, Chet."

"I've got to go," he returned gruffly. "Listen. Why can't we get married this afternoon and both go?"

"Chet, you're insane!"

"No, I'm not insane." He removed his arm from her waist to take both of her hands in his. "The trip will be our honeymoon."

"What about the people and the presents?"

"Forget about the people and keep the presents. We'd be married, wouldn't we?"

"We could be," she said bleakly, "if there wasn't a three-day marriage notice law in this State."

Chet drew a long breath. He had forgotten that circumstance.

"Well, I guess my idea wasn't so good," he lamented. "There's no way out of it, then. I've got to go."

"I understand," she nodded. "Yes, I guess you've got to go. But, Chet Eaton, don't you leave me waiting at the church."

He kissed her for that.

"Alic, you're a peach," he declared fervently. "Don't worry, I'll be back in plenty of time."

That night he caught a fast air liner from New York to Alameda, and next morning he embarked upon the famous flying-boat, China Clipper, bound for Hong-Kong.

From Hong-Kong he proceeded by boat and rail and road to the town of Kwei-Yong, familiar with the route because he had travelled it before when he had lived in China, and, reaching the town late at night, put up at an hotel managed by a European although it was staffed mainly by Orientals.

Willard Percival Snyder had retired to bed in his flat over the local headquarters of the Thatcher Petroleum Corporation when a telephone bell disturbed his slumbers. Chet had rung him up from the hotel despite the lateness of the hour.

The stocky little broad-faced manager had a great idea of his own importance, and, despite the fact that Chet had just completed a journey of several thousand miles, was not prepared to sacrifice any sleep on his account.

"I'll see you at the hotel in the morning, Eaton," he said primly. "About eight-thirty."

"Okay," returned Chet with a grimace; and he himself sought the comfort of clean sheets in a room that was fairly airy.

Next morning he breakfasted early, and he was standing on the front steps of the hotel, gazing out upon a typically Chinese scene, when a cheerful voice hailed him and a full-faced and full-lipped young fellow, brown-haired, clean-shaven, and wearing a cloth cap in conjunction with a lounge suit of very sporting cut, rushed up and grabbed him by the hand.

"Hallo, Lucky!" said Chet.

But Phelps was the young fellow's real name, and he was pilot of the company's aeroplane used as a means of communication between the oilfield in the desert and the office in the town. His happy-go-lucky nature, doubtless, was responsible for the name by which he was known.

"It's good to see you back again," he boomed. "Kwei-Yong hasn't been February 5th, 1938.

the same since you left. Oh, we've got a new landing field here, back of the office."

"Yeah?" said Chet. "How's the old crate?"

"Still safer than these things!"

Lucky pointed to a jinricksha which was approaching the hotel with Snyder in its seat and a coolie between its shafts.

The resident manager and the pilot ascended to Chet's room, talking on the way, and in the room Snyder advanced towards the telephone Chet had used the night before.

"I'll put a call through to the general," he said.

"Wait a minute." Chet raised a hand. "There are several things I want to find out before I talk to him."

"What do you want to find out?" inquired Lucky.

"What's wrong with the Gobi? What's the matter with Johnny?"

Lucky made a motion as though consuming a drink.

"Well, why didn't you cable me?"

"I'm the company flyer, not the boss."

Chet turned to Snyder.

"Why didn't you throw him off the job?" he demanded.

"What good would that have done?" shrugged the manager. "You're the only one that could stay up there without liquor. That kid's been flying down here every week."

"Yeah," said Lucky, "it's a good thing you're back on the job."

"Now get this through your thick heads," rapped Chet. "I came here to get a year's extension on that lease, and as soon as I get it I'm going back to the States."

Ho-Fang Listens

THAT afternoon Chet called by appointment at the very modern offices of the military guard, and was ushered into the presence of General Moy Ku Ting, a tall and rather handsome officer for a Chinaman. His eyes were Oriental enough, but his nose was straight, and the moustache beneath his nose would not have disgraced an American officer.

He spoke perfect English, though in a curiously stilted fashion, and he was quite friendly; yet he did not seem disposed to grant the desired renewal of the franchise.

"But our interests are the same, general," said Chet persuasively. "We're both trying to get oil for China."

The general spread his hands, hunching his shoulders almost like a Frenchman.

"My dear Eaton," he returned, "where your company has failed the Gobi Development Corporation assure us they can succeed. My government allows no alternative. Despite my personal desires I must close the contract with them."

"Then you haven't signed yet?" asked Chet.

"Mr. Sheldon is waiting outside now with the papers."

Chet knew Sheldon and his unscrupulous ways as local manager of the rival concern; but he knew the general, too, and he did not lose heart.

"If you grant my company a year's extension," he said, "I promise you there will be no failure this time."

"Promises cannot bring oil to China," responded Moy Ku Ting bluntly, "and you are making no progress. What assurance have I that your company will live up to its promise this time?"

"My personal assurance, general. Besides, if you turn this concession over

to a company that has had no experience in the Gobi Desert you might be defeating your own purpose."

"I realise that."

"Have I ever broken a personal promise to you?"

The general shook his head and for a few moments tapped upon the desk at which he was seated with a paper-knife shaped like a dragon.

"If, because of our personal friendship," he said, "I granted an extension, would you do something for me?"

"Name it."

"Remain here yourself until the work is completed."

That was a nasty blow, and one that made Chet wince. He rose from his chair and walked about the room with clenched fists, fighting a battle between his own desires and his duty to the company.

"You know, Mr. Eaton," said the general, watching him, "most of China's troubles have been caused by Western adventurers whose only ambition is to despoil our country. I respect your company, but my confidence is in you, and unless you agree—"

"All right, general," Chet broke in, walking back to the desk, "you have my word. Give Thatcher Petroleum another year and I'll stay until the job's finished."

Moy Ku Ting was a very observant man.

"I'm sorry if my demand causes you any inconvenience," he said, rising and offering his hand. "The papers will be ready for signature in two hours' time."

"Thank you," Chet shook the hand and turned towards the door; whereupon the general spoke into a dictograph on his desk:

"Send Mr. Sheldon in."

The two rival representatives met in the doorway, and Howard Sheldon, a thin-faced fellow with a long and pointed nose, eyed Chet with obvious surprise and dismay.

"Hallo, Sheldon," said Chet casually.

"Hallo, Eaton," returned Sheldon.

"I thought you were back in the States."

"I was," said Chet, and went on out.

Lucky was waiting for him in the outer office, where an almond-eyed girl was busy at a typewriter.

"Well?" he asked eagerly.

"I fixed it," said Chet, mainly between his teeth.

"Is that what makes you look so cheerful?"

"Aw, cut out the kidding!" Chet strode forth into a wide hall, and Lucky kept pace with him along the hall and out on to the front steps of the building. "Look here, I've got to send a cable to Alic. Tell Snyder to get those supplies out of the warehouse."

"Say," protested Lucky, "with the weather we've been having the trucks haven't been able to get through for two months—"

"I know that," Chet interrupted. "I'm going to caravan them through. You fly back and tell them I'm coming."

"Okay," said Lucky; "but you're a glibton for punishment."

"That's my business!"

While Chet was on his way to the post-office General Moy Ku Ting imparted to Sheldon the very unpleasant news that the Gobi Development Corporation were not going to be granted the concession that had seemed almost within their grasp.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Sheldon," said the general, noticing the expression of mingled rage and disappointment on

the representative's ugly face. "but ethics and common sense would have forbidden any other course."

"You mean you used me and my company to force your own terms on the Thatcher crowd?" suggested Sheldon bitterly.

"Certainly not!" denied the general stiffly. "Mr. Eaton's arrival has changed the whole situation."

Next morning a whole string of loaded camels set out for the Gobi Desert, passing slowly under the archway in the western wall of the town with their native drivers, and Chet rode with them on horseback beside a little Chinese servant of the company named Wong.

As the caravan wound its way along the road, that eventually lost itself in a wild waste of sand and scrub, an aeroplane came roaring overhead from the direction of the town, banked, turned and swooped low from one end of the long train to the other. Lucky's goggled but grinning face looked down over the side of the cockpit, and he waved a gloved hand in salute to Chet, then sent the machine climbing into the sky and vanished into the distance.

Chet turned to his little yellow-faced companion.

"Wong," he said, "you stay behind and keep them moving. I'm going up in front."

The nearest place of habitation to the oilfield that was being developed in the Gobi Desert was a small and entirely native village named Tak Tao, and it was nearly a hundred and fifty miles north by west of Kwei-Yong.

Sheldon flew to Tak Tao in an aeroplane belonging to the Gobi Development Corporation immediately after he had witnessed Chet's departure from Kwei-Yong, and having landed on the sand outside the little walled village, he made his way on foot to the Café of the Bronze Dragon.

This semi-underground resort, with its earthen floor and its clumsy tables, he knew to be practically the headquarters of Ho-Fang, a Mongolian half-breed who considered himself to be a war lord and called himself a

general. Ho-Fang's "army" consisted of a band of yellow ruffians, undisciplined but loyal to their master, and fully a dozen of them were lounging about the big smoke-laden room when Sheldon reached the bottom of the steps that led down to it from the street.

Ho-Fang was at a table by himself, drinking tea, a repulsive-looking man with scars upon his face, heavy-lidded eyes, and a moustache not altogether unlike a couple of rats' tails. Under a padded coat the haft of a long knife projected from a leather belt, and on his head was an extraordinary cap of fur.

Watched narrowly by the "soldiers," Sheldon walked over to the table, and Ho-Fang listened with expressionless features to what he had to say, drinking his tea and refilling the cup from a pot at intervals.

"Eaton is already on his way to the field by caravan," said Sheldon. "That's why I flew up here. You've got to work fast, Ho-Fang."

"General Ho-Fang," corrected the Mongolian in a deep and guttural voice.

"I'm sorry," nodded Sheldon. "General Ho-Fang. Now listen. What do you care for China? Anything you do is all right. Raid their supplies, destroy their pipe-lines, but don't let Eaton complete his contract on time."

Significantly, Ho-Fang held out his left hand, palm upwards.

"Certainly I expect to pay you for your services, general," Sheldon assured him.

In his own language, which was Kalmuk, Ho-Fang barked a command at his men, and they went out from the café.

"Now," he said, putting down his teacup, "we talk business."

The New Book-keeper

THE Gobi Desert is high above sea level and of vast expanse. For three days the caravan led by Chet progressed slowly across sand and scrub, pitching camp at nightfall, moving onwards again at dawn. Not a tree was to be seen in all the land-

scape, but here and there were patches of grass, at less frequent intervals wells of brackish water, and in the distance were the Yablouoi Mountains.

The foothills of the mountain range were reached during the morning of the third day, and it was then that Ho-Fang and his "army" swooped. The heavily laden camels were straggling patiently between rocks when rifle fire broke out to left and right of them. The coolies flung themselves flat, the animals stopped, and Chet put away a six-gun he had drawn as a score of Ho-Fang's men came riding out from their hiding-places.

Ho-Fang himself remained concealed, but his voice rang out from behind a tall boulder:

"Dismount! Take their guns!"

Chet, who was acquainted with a number of Chinese dialects, understood as well as the coolies what the harshly uttered words implied, and the barrel of a rifle within a few inches of his chest and the barrel of another in his back caused him hurriedly to unfasten the belt he was wearing and let it fall into the dust. Then he slid down from the saddle and stood with upraised hands.

Wong, his face a mask, had dropped the rifle he carried. The coolies flung away their weapons before they ventured to rise.

Ho-Fang rode out from behind his boulder and looked on with a smile of wicked satisfaction as the camels were turned and driven back along the rock-strewn way in company with the coolies and the horses. Then he, too, disappeared after his men, and Chet and Wong were left standing together in the blazing sunshine.

"Well, that's that!" gritted Chet. "Let's get going."

The oilfield, with its derricks and sheds and huts and cabins, was still a good ten miles away to the west, and they were trudging towards it when a foreman who had been superintending boring operations in the oilfield turned towards the camp, looking for Chet's brother Johnny.

The foreman, a tall, lean-faced and middle-aged expert who had learned



"You are the only man who can save the situation for the company," said the middle-aged chairman gravely February 5th, 1938.

his business in the oilfields of California, was named Speed, and his Christian name was Ernest, but he was known to everybody as "Red" on account of the colour of his hair.

Johnny Eaton, several years younger than Chet, was quite a handsome young fellow, but his clean-shaven face was beginning to show signs of dissipation; life in the desert had got on his nerves, and in the last six months he had taken to drinking far more whisky than was good for him—or for the Thatcher Petroleum Corporation.

He was sitting on the edge of a table in the office, a glass containing neat whisky in one hand and a half-smoked cigarette in the other, when Red Speed reached the doorway and shouted:

"Johnny, you in there?"

"What is it now?" Johnny put down the glass and walked none too steadily across the room.

"Why don't you get next to yourself?" Red took it upon himself to rebuke. "You're supposed to be the boss up here, and a fine example you're setting."

"I am boss," retorted Johnny, a trifle thickly, "and I don't need any advice from you. Well, did you take a boring to-day?"

"Yeah, they were pulling it out when I came over. Come on, let's take a look at it."

The two-seater aeroplane piloted by Lucky was standing on the sand not far from the wooden office building, and they passed it on their way to the spot where a rotary drill was at work. Johnny stooped to examine the mass of earth and rock brought up from the bore-hole—and also some very obvious petroleum.

"It looks good, Red," he said. "High gravity."

"Yeah," confirmed the foreman. "We oughta be able to send down the gun in two weeks and bring 'em in."

Lucky joined them, but almost immediately his attention became diverted to two figures plodding wearily towards the camp.

"Hi, fellows, look!" he exclaimed, pointing a finger.

"It's Chet!" cried Johnny.

Lucky ran to meet the travellers.

"Where's the caravan?" he inquired. "Couldn't it keep up with you?"

"If you think walking ten miles across the desert in riding-boots is any fun," snapped Chet, "you're crazy! We were hi-jacked."

"Hi-jacked?"

"Yeah. You've got to fly back and tell Snyder what's happened."

Johnny and Red came up just then, and the two brothers gripped hands.

"Chet, I am glad to see you," declared Johnny. "Say, but what's happened? What are you doing on foot? Where's the caravan?"

"I'll explain all that later." Chet caught hold of Johnny's arm. "I want to talk to you, Johnny. Tell the boys I'll see them in just a minute, Red."

He marched his brother into a cabin which had formed his own quarters before he had gone back to America, and in the plainly furnished living-room he said sternly:

"What's all this I hear about you spending most of your time in town drunk?"

"Chet," began Johnny half-defiantly, "I—I couldn't—"

"I left you in charge, didn't I? What kind of an example are you setting for your men? If you can't stay out here sober, how do you expect them to?"

February 5th, 1938.

"But it got on my nerves, Chet. I couldn't stand it."

"Well, you're going to stand it, and we're both going to stay here and see this thing through."

"I've been stuck out here for over a year," complained Johnny. "I'm quitting."

He dived into his bed-room, which adjoined the living-room, and he was pouring more whisky into a tumbler when Chet followed him.

"I'll tell you when we're quitting," rapped Chet; "and you might as well cut that out right now."

On the following morning Lucky flew to Kwei-Yong with a letter from Chet to Snyder. He reached the branch headquarters of the Thatcher Petroleum Corporation well before noon, and in the outer room of that office he greeted a little slip of Chinese womanhood who was typing at a desk, then turned to blink at another girl who was a total stranger to him.

"Well, now look here," he exclaimed, walking over to the desk at which the strange but beautiful white girl was writing in a loose-leaf ledger, "where did you come from? Say, I don't think you've met me. I'm—"

"Yes, yes, I know," interrupted the girl, looking him up and down with a pair of particularly luminous brown eyes. "You're the company's super flying ace. I think I'm going to swoon. Oh, you flyers are so wonderful!"

The sarcasm was wasted on Lucky.

"That's just what I was going to tell you," he informed her with a grin. "Well, I'm certainly glad to meet you, Angel-Face."

"The name is Miss Manning, Mr. Phelps."

"Aw, just call me Lucky."

"Okay, Lucky," was the freezing response. "And you may call me Miss Manning."

"I see. Well, in that case, Miss Manning, will you tell Mr. Snyder that Mr. Phelps requests an interview?"

The sarcasm was wasted on her.

"Mr. Snyder has been waiting and waiting," she said. "You may go in, Mr. Phelps."

"Thank you, Miss Manning." Lucky went to the door of Snyder's room and opened it, but he took a pea-shooter from the pocket of his leather jacket and turned to fire a pea at her bowed head before he crossed the threshold.

"Phelps!" exploded the resident manager, rising from his desk. "What are you doing? This is a business office, and I'm sick and tired of having you use it as a target range."

Lucky closed the door, advanced to the desk, and perched himself on a corner of it.

"I see you've decorated the front office," he remarked.

"Her name is Manning!" rapped Snyder.

"And she's the new book-keeper," nodded Lucky. "I know. Tell me something I don't know."

"That's impossible! What about Eaton? How is he?"

"Oh, same as always—growling and barking. Everything's under control, except he lost the caravan."

"Lost the caravan?" howled Snyder.

"Yeah." Lucky deserted the desk for a window overlooking the street in order to put in some more "target practice" there. "A bunch of half-breed bandits hi-jacked him. He had to walk to camp—ten miles."

An innocent pedestrian in the street received a pea in the back of his neck.

"Listen, you clown!" roared Snyder. "Give me some details!"

"Details?" Lucky looked round from the window.

"Yes, what happened? Who are the bandits?"

"Ho-Fang and his mob. They took everything from Eaton and left him to thumb a ride in the middle of the Gobi. Here, you'll find all you want to know in this."

Snyder snatched at a letter Lucky tugged from his pocket and offered, and Lucky shot peas at more people in the street while the letter was read.

"What does he mean by this post-script?" demanded Snyder. "'Have Lucky bring me a good cook by plane—one that won't give me indigestion.' What's the matter with the old one?"

"Don't ask me—I'm only the company flyer. All I know is that indigestion makes him awfully grouchy, and that guy's grouchy enough now. So you'd better send him a cook, and darn quick, too!"

On his way out from Snyder's presence Lucky stopped to have another word with Miss Manning—Joan Manning, to give her name in full.

"How good a cook are you?" he asked.

"That all depends upon for whom I'm cooking," she replied.

"Well, suppose you were to cook for me, Glorious?"

"In that case," said she, "I'm sorry, but I couldn't cook at all. Good-bye, Mr. Phelps."

"Okay, Precious," drawled Lucky, with a flip of his hand. "So-long, Cho-Cho!"

The little Chinese typist beamed and nodded, but Joan Manning became immersed in her loose-leaf ledger—and looked up too late because a pea had struck her on the head an instant before the outer door was closed.

"Buying Protection"

IN the afternoon of the following day Chet stood upon the platform of a derrick studying with expert eyes the shaft of the last well that had been constructed. In his tour of inspection he had found many things wrong, and his brother to blame for most of them.

That brother was standing sullenly beside him, and Red Speed was there as well.

"This should have been pulled at four thousand," said Chet. "No wonder you're getting hardly anything out!"

"That's what I thought, Mr. Eaton!" blurted Red. "But—" He broke off abruptly as Johnny scowled at him; but Johnny shouted:

"Go on, say it! I told you not to!"

Red made no response.

"What's all the argument about?" asked Chet.

"Well, I made a mistake," said Johnny defiantly. "So what?"

The noise of an aeroplane overhead caused them to look up. The Chinese workmen were scurrying for cover with cries of alarm because Lucky was celebrating his return from Kwei-Yong by swooping and rising and banking and turning as though playing leapfrog with the derricks.

"Look at that nut!" exclaimed Red.

Abruptly the stunting ceased and the machine descended to a perfect landing and taxied across the sand, raising a cloud of dust behind it. Almost outside the door of the office it came to a standstill, and Lucky clambered down from the front cockpit, looked into the rear one, and hoisted out from it what appeared at first to be a bundle of clothing, but proved to be a plump and quivering little Chinese woman who looked scared out of her wits as she was set down upon her feet.

"Well, how did you like the ride?" asked Lucky impishly.

Chet came striding up, and the practical joker turned to him.

"See what I've brought you?" he said. "Mah Ling, this is your new boss, Mr. Eaton."

"How do you do, Mah Ling?" said Chet, eyeing the dumpy little figure with some amusement.

Mah Ling burst suddenly into a torrent of Chinese, and finished up in English: "He's crazy!"

"You just finding that out?" laughed Chet. "Hi, Wong, show this lady to her quarters!"

Wong appeared from one of the huts and took charge of the new cook provided by Snyder, and Lucky accompanied Chet into the office.

"Well, where is it?" demanded Chet. Lucky handed over some papers from the branch office, but there was no eablegram amongst them, and Chet's disappointment was manifest upon his face.

"I see an awful future for you," chanted Lucky—"always grouchy, and unlucky in love."

"Cut out the kidding!" snapped Chet. "Where's the cable?"

"Maybe she wrote one and forgot to send it off."

"Yeah, maybe she did," said Chet bitterly.

Lucky turned to depart, but in the doorway he stopped short to stare at a band of armed horsemen who were galloping towards the settlement. As they drew nearer he recognised Ho-Fang, and he heard that self-styled war lord shout an order to his followers.

"Say," he gulped, "what do you suppose—"

"I sent for him," interrupted Chet quite calmly.

"You sent for him?" Lucky could hardly believe his ears.

"I know how to take care of that hi-jack. Beat it. I want to talk to him alone!"

Lucky went off to his own quarters, and Chet walked over to Ho-Fang, who had halted with his men some twenty yards away.

"General Ho-Fang?" he asked, looking up at the ugly brigand.

"You Mr. Eaton?"

"Yes—won't you come into the office?"

Ho-Fang swung himself down from his horse, rasped at his men to stand

guard, and entered the office with Chet. He seated himself with excessive dignity in a chair set against a rough counter, and Chet regarded him appraisingly.

"General," he said, thrusting his thumbs in the pockets of his riding breeches, "I understand this land is yours."

"I take this land," Ho-Fang replied. "Mine long time."

"Of course. Well, our office has made arrangements with the new Government, but since the land really belongs to you I think you should also profit. Say we pay you a rent of—"

"How much?" Ho-Fang held out a hand, palm upwards.

"That would be determined by our success."

The hand was dropped again, the furrowed head was nodded ever so slightly.

"Then it's a deal, general?" asked Chet. "I can expect your full co-operation? Equipment, pipe-lines, and everything will be safe, is that it?"

"I am General Ho-Fang," was the reply, "very honourable." The hand was held out again. "You pay now."

"Well, I'll have to take it up with the office first."

"Now!" insisted the brigand.

"All right, general." Chet moved round the counter to a safe upon the floor behind it, and he opened the safe and took some notes from one of its shelves.

Ho-Fang did not turn his head perceptibly, but his eyes were watchful.

"Suppose I pay you a small amount now," said Chet, returning from the safe, "just to bind the agreement? As soon as I get in touch with the office I will—"

"Good!" Ho-Fang rose and took the notes. "I will be back next week."

"That'll be fine," said Chet; and then his unpleasant visitor went back to his horse and rode away with his men.

Chet was standing on the low veranda

that stretched all along the front of the office building when Johnny joined him, in company with Red and Lucky.

"Chet," said Johnny, pointing a finger in the direction of the disappearing horsemen, "aren't those the bandits who—"

"Yeah." Chet cut him short. "Come inside and I'll tell you about it."

Red drifted back to the men who were working under him at the new well, and Lucky and the two brothers entered the office.

"I closed a deal with that fellow," said Chet.

"You closed a deal?" Johnny was amazed.

"Sure. I let him believe he owned this land, and I started him in a nice little racket. He's the racketeer, and I'm supposed to be the chump."

"What d'you mean, supposed to be?"

"There's too much at stake to have him for an enemy. I'm buying protection."

"Well," growled Johnny, "that wouldn't be my way! I'd have General Moy Ku Ting send some Nationalist troops down here, and—"

"Now, wouldn't that be fine?" derided Chet. "Start a little war, eh? We'd get a lot of work done then, wouldn't we?"

"Well," said Lucky, "I think buying him off is a swell idea, but who's gonna pay the tap?"

"The company," Chet replied.

"Are you sure?"

Chet shrugged.

"I'm going to have you take a letter into Snyder this afternoon," he said.

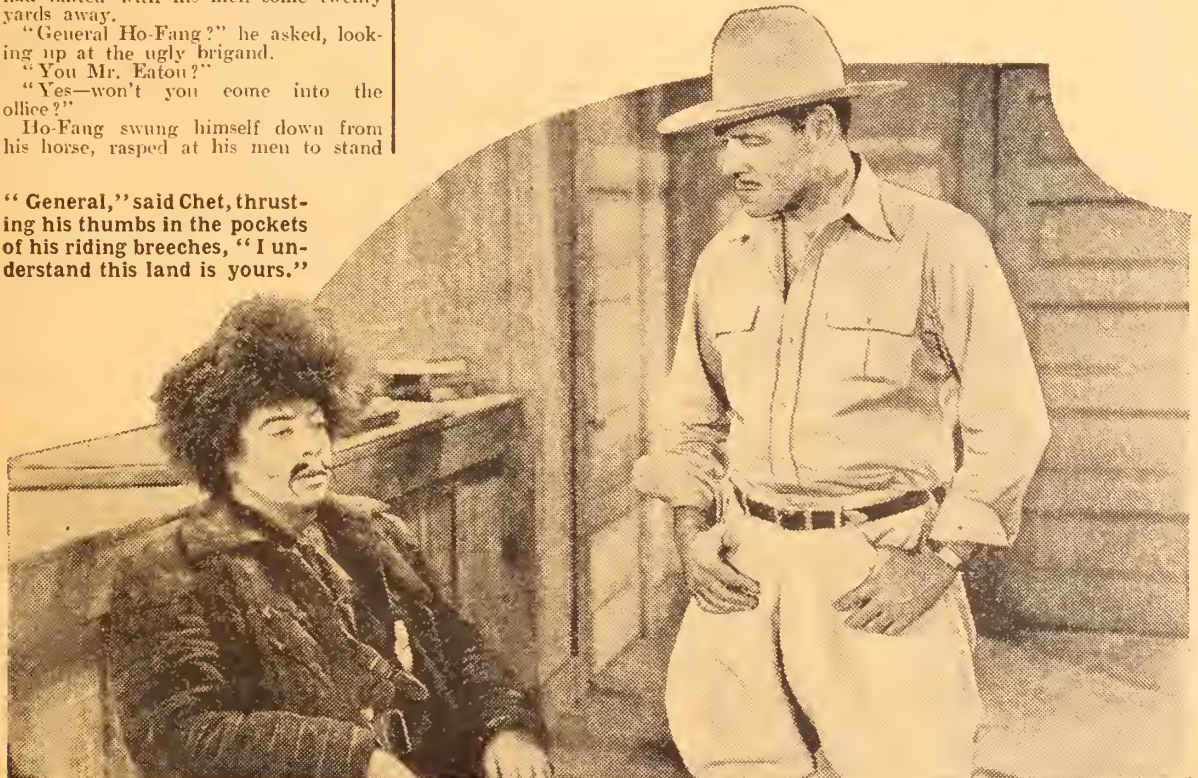
"Okay." Lucky made a grimace.

"After all, I'm the company flyer, and my home is a crate in the air!"

The evening meal that day was a great success. Mah Ling not only cooked it perfectly, but waited upon Chet and Johnny at table.

"Do you know," Chet said to her with enthusiasm, "this is the best food I ever had!"

"General," said Chet, thrusting his thumbs in the pockets of his riding breeches, "I understand this land is yours."



Mah Ling beamed all over her moon of a face.

"You like?" she purred.

"Sure! You married, Mah Ling?"

"Um," she nodded. "Me got husband."

"Aw, that's too bad! You know, you're the first woman I ever met that could really cook, and I was sort of hoping that—"

Johnny, with a snort of impatience, pushed his plate aside and flung down his serviette.

"I'm getting out of this rotten hole!" he cried, jumping to his feet. "You come back here to finish the field and take all the credit! You're making a fool out of me! I won't let you do it!"

He went off into his bed-room, and he was putting on a coat when Chet followed him there, disturbed by the sudden outburst.

"Where are you going?" he demanded, catching hold of his arm.

"I'm going to Tak Tao."

"Don't be a sap, Johnny; you're doing all right. If you want a drink, take one here. You don't have to go to town."

"No?" Johnny raged at him. "Well, I'm getting out of this dump, see? I'll take a drink wherever I want to, and you're not going to stop me!"

He wrenched his arm free and tried to thrust his brother aside.

"Get out of my way!" he roared.

"You're asking for it," said Chet grimly.

A violent blow was aimed at his jaw, but the blow was warded off, and Johnny went crashing to the floor from a sledge-hammer left between the eyes.

It was rough treatment, but it served its purpose. Johnny did not ride out of camp that evening.

Lucky got back from Kwei-Yong late in the afternoon of the next day, and as he climbed down from his machine and sped towards the office he waved a letter above his head. Chet ran out to him, and quite a subdued Johnny followed.

"Greetings from your pal Snyder!" proclaimed Lucky, handing over the letter with a flourish. "Just another monkey-wrench in the works!"

"I might have known that nit-wit wouldn't understand," raged Chet, tearing open the envelope, and he frowned heavily as he read the letter.

"Well, what does he say?" asked Johnny impatiently.

"No dough for Ho-Fang," Lucky took it upon himself to reply. "It's the principle of the thing he objects to. Boy, you should have seen him boil!"

Chet screwed up the letter from the manager.

"Well, what do you tell Mr. Ho-Fang now?" jeered Johnny.

"There's more than one way of skinning a cat," retorted Chet. "I'll handle Ho-Fang!"

"What are you going to do?"

"Keep right on the job until we get it finished! Come on, kid, let's look at Number Five!"

Ho-Fang Strikes Again

MONTHS of hard work followed. Chet paid regular tribute to Ho-Fang and forged ahead with the development of the oilfield, eager to get back to New York. Wells that had proved unproductive were closed down, and fresh wells were bored. Derrick after derrick was erected, and a second pipe-line was laid all across the desert to Kwei-Yong, buried beneath the sand and earth wherever it could be buried, but carried across gaps in the foothills and hollows among the dunes upon trestle bridges.

February 5th, 1938.

Chet's accounts became not merely complicated, but almost beyond any book-keeper's comprehension as a result of his endeavours to cover up the weekly payments to Ho-Fang, but the Thatcher Petroleum Corporation profited by his work as an engineer, and General Moy Kn Ting had every reason to be satisfied with the increasing revenue his Government derived from the concession.

But Howard Sheldon found the very pointed reproaches of the Gobi Development Corporation hard to bear. A considerable sum of money had been paid to Ho-Fang, on behalf of that corporation, to harass and hinder Chet in his labours so that the specified year should expire without any great success and the franchise should become lost to the Thatcher Company, and Sheldon knew quite well that he was in danger of losing his own job.

He flew to Tak Tao, and in the Café of the Bronze Dragon he interviewed the impassive bandit who had taken his bribes and done nothing in return since the capture of the caravan. Ho-Fang saw that he was in a fury, and that suited him well.

"Wait!" he commanded; and Sheldon suppressed his wrath till the gang of ruffians had been sent out from the building. "Well?"

"I don't understand how Eaton has got that field going," raged Sheldon.

"What have you been doing, Ho-Fang?"

"General Ho-Fang," corrected the bandit.

"At the rate he's going the whole project will be completed ahead of time. It's up to you to do something!"

Ho-Fang held out a hand.

"This is very big job," he said. "I want more money."

"Just show me some results," retorted Sheldon, "then I'll pay you."

Ho-Fang inclined his head.

"You are a very smart man, too," he murmured. "All right, you will see."

Two days after this conversation, Ho-Fang and his men set off across the eastern part of the desert, left their horses to graze on a patch of vegetation, and made their way along a winding trench beneath the bottom of which part of the long pipe-line was buried.

At the western end of the trench the big pipe emerged from the ground to pass across a wide rocky gap upon a wooden bridge, and there Ho-Fang gave instructions to Ming Yen, his repulsive second-in-command, and some of the men remained in the trench with their rifles while the others climbed the bridge and began to disconnect several joints in the pipe.

Crude oil was streaming down over the woodwork of the bridge, and Ho-Fang was nodding approval at the work of destruction, when the roar of an approaching aeroplane caused him to look up.

"Hurry! Hurry! Aeroplane!" he shouted in his own language. "Hide! Hide!"

The men on the bridge dropped from it in haste, and there was a general rush for the trench. But Lucky was in the aeroplane, returning from one of his frequent visits to the Kwei-Yong headquarters, and he had sighted the gang.

He came swooping down over the hills towards the bridge, and three of the bandits promptly flung themselves down on the sand and blazed away with their rifles. Those in the trench also opened fire; but Lucky defied the rain of bullets, cleared the bridge by no more than a couple of yards, saw the damage that had been done, and shot upwards to bank and turn.

On each side of the front cockpit a

machine-gun was mounted, and for the next five minutes or so Lucky thoroughly enjoyed himself. He raked the trench with machine-gun fire; he spattered bullets at the three out upon the sand; and he had the satisfaction of seeing some of the men fall and the rest scatter in all directions.

Ho-Fang, a rank coward at heart, had squeezed himself between some upright timbers of the bridge and a jagged wall of rock, and from that place of concealment he fired a perfectly useless pistol at the aeroplane as it soared away towards the distant camp.

Less than an hour afterwards, Lucky burst in upon Chet, who was hard at work upon some accounts in the office.

"I just caught Ho-Fang and his mob tearing up your pipe-line!" he cried.

"What?" Chet flung down the pen he was using.

"Yeah, they took a couple o' shots at me, so I had to let 'em have it!"

"Aw, you're crazy, Lucky! It can't be Ho-Fang—it must have been some other outfit."

"Well, whoever it was," said Lucky, "I shot 'em up, anyway!"

"Any mail?"

"Yeah." Lucky produced some letters and handed them over, knowing quite well that one was from New York addressed in a feminine handwriting.

"It's a good thing General Moy Ku Ting gave us permission to carry machine-guns."

Chet did not even hear that remark. He had torn open the letter from New York, and those words seemed to hit him in the face before he had read the whole thing through:

"... a month made little difference, but anything can happen in a year, Chet. If I am so much less important to you than an oilfield in a desert—"

"Bad news?" inquired Lucky, studying his gloomy face.

"Yeah," Chet replied most unhappily.

"Alice?"

"Given you the air? Well, you're the kind of a guy that shouldn't get married, anyway. Now, I always say—"

"Oh, shut up!" Chet bellowed at him.

"My loyalty to this company has kept us apart for over two years. No sooner do I leave this confounded country behind than back I have to come again! Well, it's not going to keep us apart any longer—I'm going back to the States!"

"But, Chet, you can't do that!" protested Lucky.

"Oh, can't I, eh? Just keep those motors of yours warmed up!"

"But who's gonna take your place?"

"I don't know, and I don't care!"

"Well, what about your promise to the general? Better think that over!"

He left Chet to recover at leisure from the bitterness created by Alice's letter, and the subject of departure was not mentioned again that day. Next morning he was in the office with Chet when the sound of hoofs sent them both to a window.

"It's Ho-Fang," said Lucky, and reached into a hip-pocket for a six-gun he kept there. "Now you'll find out!"

"Keep that gun where it is," barked Chet, "and I'll take care of Ho-Fang."

They went out together on to the veranda as the bandit and his horse-men drew rein facing it.

"Hallo, Ho-Fang," greeted Chet. "On time, as usual."

"General Ho-Fang," insisted the bandit in a very unfriendly voice.

"General!" scoffed Lucky. "He may think he's a general!"

"Shut up!" hissed Chet. "Shut up!"

Ho-Fang flung out an accusing hand.

"He killed three of my men!" he rasped. "I want more money!"

"You know why I killed 'em?" demanded Lucky. "I caught you wrecking our pipe-line!"

"Other men wreck pipe-line," corrected the bandit. "I fix."

It was quite true that the pipe-line had been mended, but that was after Lucky had flown away and was due to Ho-Fang's artfulness.

"He's a cock-eyed liar!" exploded Lucky.

"Don't I know it?" growled Chet.

"What he say?" inquired the bandit suspiciously.

"He didn't say anything, general." Chet motioned to Lucky.

"Beat it, you fool," he whispered; and then, as Lucky backed into the office: "You know, general, all flyers are a little bit crazy."

"From now on," thundered the "general," "you pay double!"

"All right," shrugged Chet; "but you'll have to wait until the money comes from Kwei-Yong."

"I wait one week—no more." Ho-Fang waved a hand, uttered a curt command to his men, and rode away with them past the little forest of derricks in the general direction of Tak Tao.

Chet re-entered the office, and he said severely to Lucky:

"What were you trying to do, get us all killed?"

"Never mind that," said Lucky. "Now I understand why the duchess can't balance your accounts!"

"What are you driving at?" growled Chet. "And who's the duchess?"

"The new book-keeper Snyder installed just after you got here. You're a smart guy, aren't you? Snyder says no dough for Ho-Fang, so you pad the pay-roll to shell out to that bandit!"

Chet did not attempt to deny the charge.

"What else can I do?" he returned wearily. "Snyder doesn't understand my problems, or even try to."

"Oh, well, what's the difference?" drawled Lucky. "You say you're leaving, anyway."

"Sure I am," declared Chet—"just as soon as I can fix it with the general, that is. But you can tell Snyder, hot or cold, I'm pulling out of here!"

Lucky Has an Idea

Lucky flew off to Kwei-Yong again, partly to deliver that message, partly to send a cable to Alice Sylvester for Chet; and in Snyder's room he took up his favourite position on a corner of the resident manager's desk.

"What does he mean, he's quitting?" howled Snyder. "He can't do that!"

"Maybe he can't," said Lucky, "but he's going to. He swears he's catching the next boat home."

The wide-faced little manager scowled through his gold-rimmed spectacles at a harmless calendar.

"Three months to go on the renewal of the franchise!" he barked. "What does he expect me to do?"

"Well," expounded Lucky, "he promised the general he'd stay, you know. He wants you to talk Moy Ku Ting into letting him go."

"What does he think I am, a hypnotist?"

"Don't ask me, I'm only the company flyer."

The door from the outer office was opened, and Joan Manning walked towards the desk with several sheets from a loose-leaf ledger in her hand.

"That fellow Eaton's enough to drive anybody mad!" said Snyder explosively.

"That's what I say," complained Joan Manning. "I can't straighten out his figures—anybody who could would be a wizard."

Snyder's temper was not improved by that statement.

"No other book-keeper ever had any trouble, Miss Manning!" he blared.

"But let me show you," she pleaded. "I haven't any time to waste upon your inability to balance our books! I don't think we require your services any longer!"

Lucky shifted from the edge of the desk to a chair at the end of it, full of sympathy for the unfortunate girl who looked so utterly dismayed.

"Oh, but you can't mean that, Mr. Snyder," she protested, almost in tears.

"I'm doing the best I can with Mr. Eaton's accounts, but look—"

She held out the sheets, but the manager waved them aside.

"Sorry," he snapped, "that's all!"

She went out, biting her lip, yet carrying her head high, and Lucky had a word to say in her defence as soon as the door was closed.

"Now, look Snyder," he objected, "it isn't fair to have anybody take the rap for Eaton's dizzy book-keeping."

"What are you talking about?" rapped the manager.

"Well, nothing." Lucky had no desire to give Chet away. "But the duchess is stranded out here, you know, and—"

"Are you trying to tell me how to run this office?"

"Oh, no, no—I'm only the company flyer. But I know a mistake when I see one."

"Now, hsten, Phelps; you run your ship and I'll run this office. The question is what are we going to do about Eaton?"

"Don't ask me," retorted Lucky. "You're running this office."

"Can't you think of anything?"

Lucky rose with a sudden idea in his head and made for the door.

"What's the matter?" demanded Snyder.

"I'll tell you later—I don't know yet whether it'll work."

Only the Chinese typist was in the outer office, and Lucky turned to her after he had gazed blankly at Joan Manning's deserted desk.

"Cho-Cho, where's the duchess?" he asked.

"She just left," was the reply. "Gone home."

Off went Lucky, out from the building into the street, and he shouldered aside yellow men and white to catch up with the girl, shouting:

"Hi, Duchess! Duchess! Duchess! Wait a minute!"

It was in a crowded market that he reached her side and stopped her.

"Duchess," he said, breathless from running, "how would you like a new job?"

"Doing what?" she asked.

"I've got an idea, but first I've got to find out if you are willing."

"Willing to do what?"

"Well, this is something different. Lucky found it no easy task to express what was in his mind. "All you've got to do is to—er—be nice and friendly to a guy—a lonely guy who's discontented."

"I thought you were a flyer," she said scornfully, "not a match-maker. Now, listen, Don Juan, I'm not making love to anybody, least of all you!"

"You've got it all wrong! If you don't like the idea you can always say 'No,' but you might hear what it is. All you've got to do is to go up to camp and make Eaton like you."

"Eaton?" she exclaimed.

"Yeah," he nodded.

"I want to break his neck, not his heart!"

"Well, you can work on his neck in your own time. You see, there's a dame back in the States who's giving Eaton the air, and for her sake he wants to leave the company flat."

"A break for the company, I'd say offhand!" decided the sufferer from Chet's fantastic method of trying to balance his accounts.



Three of the bandits promptly flung themselves down on the sand and blazed away at the swooping aeroplane with their rifles.

February 5th, 1933.

"If he leaves," declared Lucky, "the company's sunk!"

"Why?"

Lucky explained.

"I don't see what I can do about it," said Joan.

"Well, he might realise there are other girls in the world with you around, because you're perfect—just the type he'd like. You've got the looks, the brains, and everything."

"Thanks for the testimonial," she bowed mockingly.

"You could go up there to audit the books, see? Snyder couldn't do a thing about it once you're fixed—and you'd like to let him know where he gets down, wouldn't you? There are quite nice quarters up there, and there's even a Chinese chaperon waiting for you."

Joan was tempted.

"But supposing it doesn't work?" she questioned.

"It will!" Lucky averred. "But whether it does or not, I'll guarantee your passage back to the States."

"Well, you've got me there," she confessed. "I guess you know how badly I want to go back home."

"Okay!" said Lucky joyfully. "Well, come on—we'll get your duds and fly right back there!"

On the return journey to the camp Joan occupied the rear cockpit, with a suitcase at her feet and a handbag on her knees, wearing a leather jacket with which Lucky provided her; and Lucky did no stunting on that trip.

He landed neatly on the sand outside the office, and she discarded the leather jacket and readjusted her little hat with the aid of a mirror in her handbag after he had helped her down. The suitcase was left in the cockpit, and on the veranda he motioned to her to wait while he went into the building.

Chet sprang up from a chair at sight of him, eager for news.

"What happened?" he asked.

"Well," said Lucky, "Snyder hasn't had time yet to see the general."

"Did he send any money?"

"No." Lucky shook his head. "He sent a book-keeper."

"A book-keeper?" howled Chet. "What in the world did you bring a book-keeper out here for?"

"Aw, it wasn't my fault," lied Lucky. "It was Snyder's idea. Wait a minute!"

He went to the door and beckoned, and Joan stepped in over the threshold, neatly arrayed in a grey costume with a little blue scarf round her neck, and looking very self-conscious.

"Miss Manning," said Lucky, "this is Mr. Eaton."

"How do you do?" she murmured.

"How do you do?" said Chet, staring at her.

"No one seems to be able to decipher your accounts, Mr. Eaton. That's why I'm here."

"I'm sorry, Miss Manning," returned Chet stiffly, "but I have a peculiar way of keeping my books. I'm afraid you've made this trip out here for nothing. Besides, this is no place for a woman."

"Oh, I don't mind!" she said.

Chet shook his head, and the set of his jaw indicated quite plainly that he did not intend to let her stay.

"Don't be a chump," urged Lucky. "Snyder won't send any money until you get the books audited."

"What I say still goes," Chet retorted. "Take Miss Manning back!"

Lucky gazed wryly at Joan and scratched the back of his neck.

"Well, orders are orders, I guess," he said dolefully. "I'm just the company flyer."

At that moment Johnny walked into the office, gaped at Joan, and whisked off his hat.

"I didn't know we had a visitor!" he exclaimed.

Chet scowled.

"Oh, Miss Manning," he said, "this is my brother Johnny."

Joan and Johnny exchanged greetings.

"Why don't you see the lady to the plane?" said Chet.

"Oh, sure!" Johnny restored his hat to his head. "I'm sorry you have to leave so soon, Miss Manning," he said regretfully. "Can't we induce you to stay?"

She made a little gesture of dissent, and they went out together. Chet immediately wrote on a pad and tore off the sheet.

"I want you to send this cable," he said to Lucky. "I'm going over Snyder's head to Thatcher himself. If I don't get money to that half-breed Ho-Fang he'll be on the rampage. Now get rolling!"

Johnny and Joan had reached the aeroplane, and Johnny was leaning against the side of it, studying the girl with interest.

"What was the idea of your coming here, anyhow?" he asked. "No one could call it a joy-ride."

"I've been trying to figure that out for myself," she returned.

"Well, where's the next stop?"

"Kwei-Yong, I guess."

"Kwei-Yong? I haven't been there since my brother got back from New York, but I'll be down there before the week is over."

"Good!" said she. "Then I'll see you."

Lucky arrived, climbed on to a wing of the machine, and offered a hand to help her up into the cockpit.

"Okay, dneess," he said. "let's go."

Joan shook hands with Johnny, and after she had become seated and Lucky had started the engines she waved to him.



Johnny stood staring out through the window, trying to summon the courage he needed for a task fraught with infinite danger.

The End of Wong

THE machine rose up into the air beyond the derricks, and soon was flying over the foothills of the Yablonoi Mountains. But Ho-Fang and his men were waiting for it in a trench, not far from the trestle bridge where the pipe-line had been damaged and repaired, and Ho-Fang bellowed an order as soon as it was within rifle range.

Bullets rained all about the machine, and two of them became buried in one of the engines, putting it out of action. Lucky saw the grinning faces of the bandits down below, but had as much as he could do to bank and turn with only one engine running, and he made for the camp again.

In spite of the damaged engine he achieved a perfect three-point landing in a cloud of black smoke, and he was down on the ground almost instantly with a fire-extinguisher in his hands, from which he squirted foamite upon the overheated motor.

Johnny rushed over from a well to help Joan down from her cockpit, and she said bitterly as she descended:

"I seem to be popular with everybody around here!"

Chet dived out from the office to Lucky.

"What's happened?" he shouted.

"Your friends from Tak Tao put a couple o' bullets in the engine," replied Lucky, still busy with the fire-extinguisher. "I think I can fix it."

Chet turned away and bellowed for Wong, who came running over from the native workers' mess-hut.

"You know where to find Ho-Fang?"

"Um," replied the little Chinaman. "Tak Tao."

"All right," said Chet. "You go tell him he has to wait for his money, but it come pretty soon. Now hurry!"

Wong set off on horseback for the little village on the fringe of the desert, and he reached it before sundown. In the Café of the Bronze Dragon he found Ho-Fang sprawling in a chair at his favourite table with several of his men around him.

The men eyed Wong narrowly as he crossed the big room, but Ho-Fang did not move, and in his own dialect the little Chinaman delivered Chet's message:

"General, I am sorry to say Mr. Eaton asked me to tell you he cannot give you more money yet, but you will get it soon."

Ho-Fang remained as motionless as an idol.

"Did you not hear me?" asked Wong.

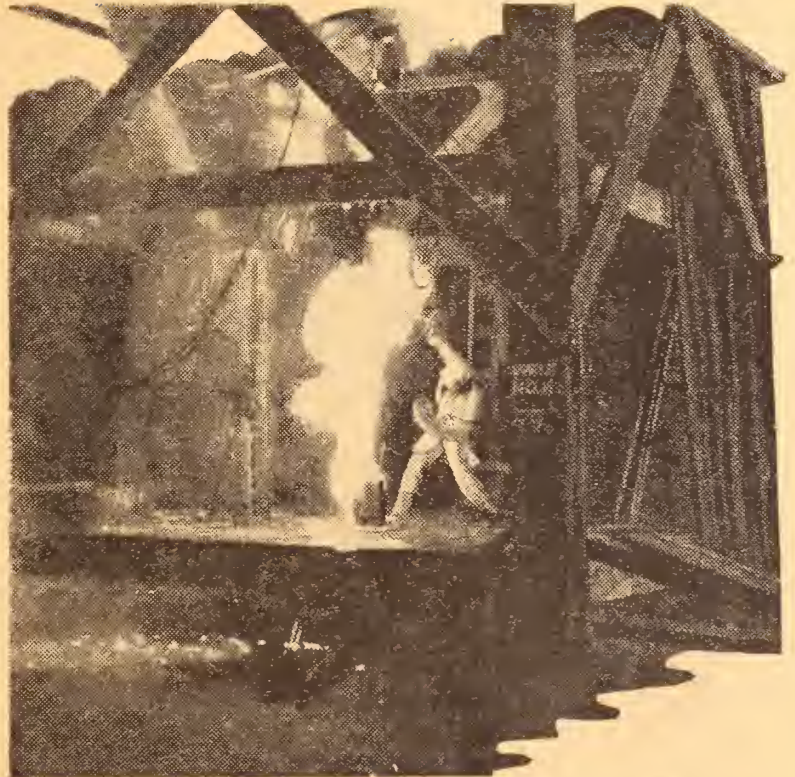
The bandit motioned with one finger, and the repulsive Ming Yen closed in on one side of the messenger and another man gripped his left arm. Ming Yen reached a hand to a knife in his belt, and a cold sweat of fear broke out upon Wong's brow.

"I am only a messenger," he faltered, "do not harm me."

The knife was drawn. "Please!" shrieked Wong. "I am a messenger. Don't harm me! Don't harm me!"

Ming Yen looked inquiringly at Ho-Fang, and Ho-Fang raised a hand and dropped it with a thud upon the table. The knife was raised, and its blade flashed downwards. Wong collapsed to the earthen floor with a cry that died in his throat.

That night Joan slept in a perfectly comfortable bed of the camp-variety, made up for her by Mah Ling in the cabin the Chinese cook herself occupied. Johnny and she had become quite friendly by that time, and Chet had



Time and again Johnny caught hold of the metal cap and tried to pull it down over the pipe that had become a volcano of flame.

accepted her as an inevitable guest until the engine of the aeroplane had been repaired.

Chet was quite pleasant to her at breakfast next morning, but breakfast was late, and he left her and Johnny at table after he had swallowed some tea and consumed some huttered toast.

Lucky entered the living-room as he went out, and Lucky said to the dumpy little cook:

"Step on it, Mah Ling; you'll have us bawled out for loafing!"

"Me no can help!" protested Mah Ling. "Wong go to Tak Tao, no come back. Me build fire and cook, too."

Lucky was served, and he devoured eggs and bacon with speed; but Johnny was in no hurry.

"You know," he said to Joan, "I don't think Ho-Fang is such a bad fellow, because if it weren't for him you wouldn't be here right now."

"Well, at least I'm popular with somebody!" laughed Joan.

"Popular? You're absolutely the —"

"You coming, Johnny?" interrupted Lucky, pushing back his chair.

"Why, sure—in just a minute," replied that rather infatuated young man. "Go ahead!"

Lucky departed, but he went no farther than the outside of the cabin, and through one of its windows he saw Johnny put a handkerchief over an empty glass and make passes above the handkerchief.

"What on earth are you doing?" asked Joan, watching him from the other side of the table.

"Magic," said Johnny, who hadn't had any intoxicating liquor for months, and he removed the handkerchief to grimace at the empty glass. "Do it every morning. Never have any luck!"

"Well, of course not," said Joan. "You haven't got your silk hat!"

"The magic book says it doesn't make

any difference," he informed her with mock gravity; and he spread the handkerchief over an empty plate and made more passes.

The plate was just as empty as the tumbler when he removed the handkerchief, but he uttered a contented "Ah-h-h!"

"What is it?" she inquired, leaning forward.

"One of those big, beautiful, indigestible doughnuts you used to get in the States!" he proclaimed.

"Oh! May I have half?"

"Well, maybe."

"Oh, please!"

"All right, but it's the only one I've had in years."

He divided nothing with a knife, and conveyed nothing to her own plate with much ceremony.

"Hector was never that stingy!" she pouted.

"Hector? Who's Hector? My rival?"

"Uhuh!" She made a pretence of picking up the imaginary piece of doughnut and eating it. "Hector drove the bakery truck when I was eight years old. He had little freckles across his nose—and he gave me doughnuts." "Doughnuts?" echoed Johnny.

"Why, I'd give you whole pies!" "Oh, no, you wouldn't," she demurred. "Hector wouldn't like it."

"That doesn't make any difference, because I don't like him, anyway." Johnny moved round to an empty chair beside her, and his face became very close to hers. "I bet you were a homely little kid."

"So?"

"Yeah, because you've grown up to be so pretty."

Lucky put his head in at the doorway, and he shouted:

"Hi, Johnny! Chet wants to see you right away in the office. You'd better hurry."

Johnny stood up. "Stick around this dump," he said to Joan. "We'll have doughnuts for breakfast every morning."

"All right," she nodded; and then he went out.

Lucky promptly went in and walked straight over to the table.

"Hi, duchess," he rebuked, "that's Johnny, not Chet!"

"I know," she responded meekly.

"I think he'd have kissed you in another minute."

"Oh, Lucky, whatever made you think that?"

"Well, never mind—but I've got eyes. You want to start getting Chet under control?"

"And you'd begrudge just one little kiss from Johnny?"

"Why, sure I would! After all, if there are any spare kisses that Chet doesn't rate, what's the matter with me?"

He stooped suddenly and kissed her on the lips; but Johnny had returned from the office, and he burst wrathfully in upon them.

"Now I know why you lied about Chet wanting me!" he cried.

"Oh, he didn't want you?" asked Lucky with an air of innocence. "Well, maybe I was wrong."

He went out, leaving the two of them with very flushed faces.

"Just who haven't you kissed around here this morning?" demanded Johnny jealously.

"Oh, don't be silly," said Joan. "You don't understand."

"I understand," he raged.

"Oh, Johnny, listen to me!"

"Tell it to Chet, or Lucky! And you can tell all your friends they can find me in Tak Tao."

He dived into his own bed-room, slamming the door violently behind him, and she ran out to Lucky, who was at work on the engine of the aeroplane.

"Lucky," she said in an agitated voice, "I didn't like this idea from the beginning, and I like it even less now."

Lucky deserted the engine.

"Why, what's the matter?" he asked, surprised and dismayed to see tears in her eyes.

"I want Mr. Eaton to know the truth."

"But why this sudden change? What's happened?"

"Well, something that— Oh, never mind. Are you going to tell him, or am I?"

Lucky puffed out his cheeks and scratched the back of his neck.

"I can't very well do that," he complained.

"All right, then I will!" She turned in a very determined fashion towards the office.

"Wait a minute!" Lucky flew after her. "Listen! You can't do that!"

But Joan entered the office and went straight to Chet, who was at his desk.

"Mr. Eaton," she began tremulously, "I want to straighten out a few things that you don't understand. I—I—"

"Wait a minute! Wait a minute!" howled Lucky, standing beside her. "I'll tell him. It's my fault, boss. I—I thought—"

"Have you two taken leave of your senses?" Chet broke in, staring from one to the other. "What are you driving at?"

"Well, I had an idea," blurted Lucky. "I brought Miss Manning up here to help delay your departure. I thought that— Well, it didn't work."

To the infinite surprise and relief of both culprits, Chet did not seem to be in the least annoyed; on the contrary, he grinned.

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"Miss Manning," he said quite affably, "are you really a book-keeper?"

"Yes, I am," she replied.

"Then I'll lay my cards on the table. I tried to make Snyder understand that I had to have money to buy protection from that half-breed brigand Ho-Fang. But he didn't give it to me, so I had to pad the pay-roll—and now I've got my books into such a mess that I can't even figure them out myself. I wonder if you could help me?"

"I'm sure I can," declared Joan. "May I look at the books?"

"I'll say you may!"

Lucky went back to the aeroplane, delighted that his scheme had not proved such a failure after all, and Joan became busy with the books.

"I must admit, Mr. Eaton," she said, about an hour later "that you were right when you said your methods of book-keeping were slightly peculiar."

"Well, you can't say I didn't warn you," said he.

In the Enemy's Hands

DARKNESS had enshrouded the desert, but Chet and Joan were still busy with the books in the lighted office, when Ho-Fang and his men rode up to the edge of the oilfield. There they all reined in their horses, except Ming Yen, and he rode on towards the buildings of the camp with the dead body of Wong across his knees.

Nobody saw him approach the office and drop his burden on the sand in front of the veranda, for the outdoor work of the day was over and the men were in their respective quarters. But Red Speed heard the beat of hoofs as Ming Yen galloped back to the waiting hand, and he looked out from the shack he shared with other white men. He ran to the office to report to Chet, and he stumbled over the dead body.

He looked into the office, and he saw Joan at the desk with Chet.

"Boss, will you come out here a minute?" he shouted.

"Yeah," Chet walked out to him, stepped off the veranda, and knelt beside the still form of the little Chinaman.

"Wong," he said, and gritted his teeth. "This looks like trouble, Red."

Lucky thrust his head and shoulders out of a window of the adjoining cabin.

"What's happened?" he asked.

"They've killed Wong," Chet answered.

"What?" Lucky deserted the window to make for the door; but Chet went back into the office.

"Where's Johnny?" he asked.

"He went to Tak Tao," Joan replied. "Or, at least, he said he was going there. I don't know when he left camp."

Chet turned to Lucky, who had just crossed the threshold.

"Stay here and take care of Miss Manning," he said. "I've got to go after Johnny."

Red had carried the body of Wong away from the buildings, and he was instructing some coolies to dig a grave when Chet found him.

"Get Burton and Jackson," he said, "and four horses. Johnny's gone to Tak Tao, and we've got to find him before Ho-Fang treats him the way he treated Wong!"

In less than five minutes Chet was galloping across the desert under a crescent moon with Red and the two white men he had specified; but Johnny had reached Tak Tao a full hour before, and he was at a table in the Café of the Bronze Dragon with a second bottle of wine before him when Ho-Fang and his ruffians descended the steps after they had returned from the oilfield.

Other customers of the establishment made themselves scarce as the brigand crossed the floor to his favourite table, but Johnny paid no attention to him whatever. The half-breed dropped into a chair, and from it eyed the drinker thoughtfully.

"Eaton's brother," whispered Ming Yen.

"So," nodded Ho-Fang, and then he rose and walked over to Johnny's table.

"Good-evening, young Mr. Eaton," he said. "I am very happy to see brother of my good friend. You drink with me?"

Johnny stared at him, saw that the other bandits were gathering round the table, and stood up without a word to put on the tweed coat he had discarded because of the heat of the semi-underground den.

"Ah, don't go," said Ho-Fang menacingly. "You be my guest—"

Still without a word, Johnny made to leave the table; but Ho-Fang shouted in Kahnuk, and Ming Yen's right hand went to the knife in his belt, while the others barred the way to the steps. Johnny sat down again, knowing quite well that escape was impossible.

"I say you be my guest!" Ho-Fang banged the flat of his hand upon the table, shouted for wine, and ordered his men to keep back.

A fresh bottle of wine was conveyed with fresh cups to the table by a slippered Chinaman, and Ho-Fang himself filled the two cups from the bottle and set one of them in front of the virtual prisoner.

"It is impolite for guest not to drink with host," he said.

Johnny spoke at last.

"Just what do you propose to do?" he challenged hoarsely.

"Prepare to make guest comfortable for long stay," was the ominous reply.

Chet and his companions had ridden into the village by this time, and had dismounted in the narrow street. But Chet found his brother's horse outside a tavern some little way from the Café of the Bronze Dragon—a tavern Johnny had visited first—and he wasted several minutes inside the place, looking into head-curtained alcoves and questioning the parchment-skinned proprietor.

He went out to the others, gazed up and down the street—and saw a lighted lantern hanging from a bronze dragon over a doorway.

"Let's try this one," he said.

The cup of wine Ho-Fang had set before Johnny was still untouched, and Ho-Fang considered himself insulted.

"You are very fortunate your brother is a wealthy man," he barked.

"If you think he's going to pay ransom for me," retorted Johnny, "you're crazy!"

"Oh, no," The brigand shook his head. "The message I sent to him by his servant Wong should convince Mr. Eaton I mean business."

Johnny knew nothing of what had happened to Wong, but he cried defiantly:

"You can't get away with this, Ho-Fang! There's a law in China that takes care of racketeers like you!"

"Here I make my own laws," boasted the brigand.

At that moment Chet descended the steps into the big room, alert and unafraid. He had left Red and the others in the entrance, but he was wearing a belt, and there was a six-gun in its holster.

He took in the situation at one swift glance, and he strode towards the table.

"Hallo, Ho-Fang," he said.

"General Ho-Fang," insisted the Mongolian half-breed, apparently in no

(Continued on page 26)

A New York gangster kills his lawyer and a tramp is arrested for the crime. Only one person can save him from the death sentence, and that is a girl witness to the killing. A broadcast fails to find her because she is in prison on a faked charge. On gaining her freedom she determines to get to New York by air, and stows away on a giant flying machine, where she is befriended by a Scotland Yard detective. A thrilling drama, starring John Loder and Anna Lee

'NON-STOP NEW YORK'



The Only Witness

WHEN Jenny Carr walked into a cheap open-all-night eating-house and ordered a cup of coffee and a ham sandwich she found that the price was twenty cents, and as she only possessed half that amount she had to content herself with coffee only. She went to a table and her eyes bulged so much with famished greed that a middle-aged fellow took compassion on her. Jenny had not eaten for two days, and though it was wrong to accept an offer of food from a strange man she had no scruples.

This food was such a long time coming, as it was New Year's Eve, that the man, whose name was Billy Cowper, invited her to come back to his apartment house where she could eat her fill.

The frank blue eyes of the girl studied the man, and she made up her mind that he could be trusted. Just before they left a little incident happened that she did not think much of at the time. A tough-looking man came up to her new friend and said that Brandt wanted to see him.

"Brandt can get himself another new lawyer for his dirty work," Cowper had answered. "I'm quitting and quitting for good."

"Brant'll have something to say about that!" growled the stranger, and vanished in the crowds.

In the taxi ride to his apartments Jenny frankly told the lawyer that she was down on her luck. She was English, back row of the chorus, and had come

out with a show from England and opened in Philadelphia. Sadly she shook her curls and said that the show had closed in Philadelphia. She was being shipped back to England to-morrow alone, as she was the only girl for whom they had not been able to secure another job.

"Well, isn't that a laugh," Cowper chuckled. "I'm sailing for England myself to-morrow."

Jenny was surprised at the sumptuousness of Cowper's apartment, but being a perfect little lady she made no comment. A long table was covered with viands that made her mouth water.

"All the eats in the world," laughed the man, and waved his hand towards a door. "If you want to take your coat off and have a wash you can use that spare room."

And in that room she encountered a man, or rather a ragged, dirty little scrap of humanity, who cowered down at sight of her. Though terrified, Jenny asked in severe tones what he was doing there.

"Don't be scared, lady," the man whined. "I ain't going to hurt you. I ain't going to hurt nobody. I was hungry, that's all."

The tramp had stolen up the fire-escape and had seen all the food on the table. A window was open and he had entered and he had snatched a cold leg of chicken when he had heard a key in the door. He had darted into the bedroom, where she had found him.

"Give me a break, lady," the wretch whined. "I ain't stolen nothin'—I

swear I ain't. Don't turn me in, lady."

Being a kindly, simple soul, the girl agreed to go back into the living-room, and, on the pretence of being cold, draw some heavy curtains that divided the room into two, forming a dining-room on one side and a small lounge on the other. This would enable the tramp to make the fire-escape. Jenny went to the room and Cowper smiled his permission for her to draw the curtains, and she was nibbling contentedly at a chicken bone when just the faintest sound told her that her friend the tramp had made his get-away.

Well, Jenny was not destined to enjoy this glorious spread because there was the sound of a key in the lock and three men strolled in. Jenny gave a slight gasp, because two were such big, tough-looking men, and the third a fat, affluent fellow in a fur-lined overcoat.

"Hope we're not busting up your party, Mr. Cowper," one of the newcomers remarked significantly.

"It's okay," the man in the centre said. "The lady's just leaving."

Jenny looked at her benefactor and saw he was not at all pleased at the intrusion, and that with difficulty he was restricting his temper.

"Would you like me to go?" "Maybe it would be as well," muttered Billy Cowper. "I'm sorry this should happen."

"All right. Thanks for all your kindness," Jenny picked up the largest chicken leg she could find. "Hope you don't mind me taking this with me. See you on the boat to-morrow."

"I hope so!" muttered Cowper, and he looked at the silent, fat man.

Now, Jennie did not know then that the silent man's name was Brandt, and that he was one of the highest racketeers in the United States. She would have shuddered if she had known his record of callous crime. She did not know as she went back to her diggings contentedly gnawing the chicken-bone that she was followed, and a considerable time was to pass before she learnt that the tramp she had befriended was arrested by the janitor as he was trying to slip away from the building.

When Jenny had gone, the fat man in the fur coat had smiled unpleasantly. He had heard that Bill Cowper was quitting, and he did not like people who quitted from his racket. Cowper, bravely and foolishly, had defied Brandt. He was tired and disgusted with the job of attorney to Brandt, with keeping him and his mob out of prison, and he hoped that he would never see the racketeer again. Brandt smiled and then shot him dead.

The next morning a thin, ferrety individual called at Jenny's lodgings and pretended that he was from the Emigration Department and learnt the name of the ship, the pier and time of departure, and that Jenny had left ten minutes before. Considering he had been watching the place for the last hour he did not need the last bit of information. In a side street a car waited, and here sat a plump, benevolent, smooth-cheeked man of at least sixty years. He cocked his head on one side as he listened and seemed very distressed. He hastened to a big hotel, where he was admitted to a magnificent suite. There were several men there, including Brandt.

"Pier II, 4.30," hurriedly exclaimed the plump man, whose name was Mortimer. "The girl sails to-day. I've got Harrigan for the job."

Brandt puffed lazily at his cigar. "Tell him to book a passage himself," decided the arch schemer. "He can do anything he likes, so long as he keeps her mouth shut."

"Isn't it a bit hard—the girl so young—so tender?" murmured Mortimer.

"She is the only person alive who knows that we were in that apartment last night," Brandt murmured. "A pity, of course, but there is no other course."

The early editions of the papers contained no mention of the crime, because it was not till midday that the body was found. No mention was made of the arrest of the tramp because it was only a vagrancy charge—then.

The liner was some hours out of New York before Jenny Carr found out from the purser that there was no Billy Cowper travelling to England on the ship. Just before sailing, some papers had been brought on board, and in the lounge Jenny saw the special edition containing the photo of Billy Cowper. "Times Square Lawyer Slain." She read with horror, and very white of face hastened to her cabin. The man Harrigan watched her with half-closed eyes.

The very next morning Harrigan complained to the purser that his cabin had been rifled of some valuable jewels. He was taken before the captain, and he stated that he had seen a woman leaving his cabin. Jenny was sent for and indignantly denied it. Her one small suit-case was fetched and there in a corner were gems worth a small fortune. The captain was in the position of a magistrate, and he ordered that Jenny be kept under lock and key for the rest of the voyage. Harrigan stated that he wished to prosecute, and the captain wirelessly for the police to meet the boat.

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What a home-coming for poor Jenny Carr! She was whisked off to a court and sentenced to a month's imprisonment. The sentence should have been heavier but the magistrate was not quite satisfied with Harrigan's story, and the girl was so passionate in her plea of innocence.

Brandt Decides to Visit England

WHEN the case of the man Abel came up for trial Brandt and Mortimer sat at the back of the court.

"So you just dropped in for a meal," the District Attorney said with biting contempt. "Just climbed to the fourteenth floor to get a crust of bread?"

"I was hungry—honest I was," whined Henry Abel, the tramp. "I swear I didn't do it. It must have been one of the other men."

"What were their names?"

"I don't know."

"What did they look like?"

"I don't know." Abel shook his head. "I was hiding on the fire-escape and only saw 'em through a chink in the curtains. I was scared, and I beat it."

"It is curious, Abel, that no one else has seen these men you speak of," persisted the D.A.

"But the girl did."

"Ah, so we're going back to the girl again!"

"She saw me leave while Mr. Cowper was still alive."

"Doubtless your attorney"—here the D.A. paused to stare across at the lawyer for the defence—"a man of the greatest attainments, has searched persistently for this missing witness."

"Sure he has," answered the prisoner.

"And your appeal has been spread far and wide?"

"Sure."

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"And she has nothing to fear in coming forward?"

"No."

"Then if your story is true, and if this girl really does exist—," The D.A. looked at the jury. "Isn't it rather strange we have seen nothing of her? I don't think this rather vague person ever existed."

"I'm going to England," Brandt whispered to his companion.

"But Scotland Yard, dear boy."

"What about it?"

"Let's face it—the name Brandt—it stinks," said Mortimer.

"That is why I'm not going to use it," Brandt retorted. "I'm sailing to-night, and you're coming with me."

"But, dear boy, I'm not popular in England."

"When the girl comes out of gaol none of us will be popular. She knows too much, and you're coming to stop her talking."

"But supposing we are seen together?"

"Don't worry—we won't be seen together."

"But on the ship as first-class passengers?"

Brandt smiled.

"You won't be a first-class passenger!" he said with a slight sneer.

They read in a paper that night that Henry Abel had been found guilty of murder in the first degree. The sentence of the court was that he be delivered to the warden at Sing Sing, there to be put to death in the manner prescribed by law.

The lawyer for the defence believed his client's story, and as a result the National Broadcasting Company issued a world appeal. If the girl would come forward a man's life would be saved.

The matter got into the English papers because it was thought that the missing girl was English, but the S.O.S. was not answered because Jenny Carr was in prison.

Brandt and Mortimer were masters at the art of disguise. Brandt travelled as General Costello, a distinguished officer from Paraguay, whilst Mortimer went steerage as a clergyman very much down on his luck. On arrival in England the general went to a luxurious hotel, but the clergyman went and obtained lodgings at the humble home of Mrs. Carr, the widowed mother of Jenny Carr.

Mrs. Carr was at Holloway to greet her daughter on the day of her release, and not one word of reprimand did she make. She took her daughter straight home.

Jenny Goes to Scotland Yard

ON the way Jenny told her mother how she had been sent to prison for something she had never done. Mrs. Carr consoled her daughter, and, having a great respect for the law, was not quite certain that Jenny was telling the truth. Mr. Carr had once been in prison for altering a cheque, and Jenny might have taken after her father. On reaching the dingy apartment house the mother and daughter went to their rooms in the basement. Jenny looked up when she heard heavy footfalls on the stairs.

"Who's that?"

"That's the new gentleman upstairs," explained Mrs. Carr. "Such a nice-spoken gentleman—sort of religious. He wanted to come down and meet you." The door opened and the new guest beamed at them shyly. "Good-morning, Mr. Mortimer, come right in!"

"Good-morning!" Mortimer rubbed his chubby hands together as he stared solemnly at Jenny. "So this is the little girl we've heard so much about?"

Mr. Mortimer accepted Mrs. Carr's offer of a cup of tea, and chatted brightly about nothing in particular. Jenny wished he would go, and moved restlessly round the room that was their kitchen and their parlour. Mr. Mortimer watched her furtively. Jenny picked up a daily paper, and, turning it over, saw a face that she recognised.

"My goodness, but I know that man!"

"Don't talk so silly, my dear!" Mrs. Carr looked over her shoulder. "Stop pointing at a murderer and come and have your tea."

With dilated eyes and little gasps of horror Jenny read how this man Henry Abel had been convicted of the murder of Billy Cowper, and was shortly to die.

"But he didn't do it!" Jenny cried. "You come and have your tea," begged her mother.

"I know he didn't—I was there!" "She's so imaginative, Mr. Mortimer," Mrs. Carr said in sorrowful tones. "When she was a little girl—always seeing elephants in the Old Kent Road. Now where are you going?" she added sharply, as Jenny picked up her hat and coat.

"Scotland Yard!" "Young lady," Mortimer came towards her, his hands held out pleadingly, "we know you've been through a trying experience which might make any girl suffer from delusions. Don't forget that you have just come out of prison. Suppose you did persuade the police that it wasn't an illusion—and that this man is innocent—after all, somebody did shoot Billy Cowper. How could you prove it wasn't you?"

"That's right, dear," Mrs. Carr put her arms round her daughter. "You sit down and drink your tea. Besides, I got a little surprise for you. They're rather shorthanded down at one of the offices what I chaps, and the manager said that if you would like the job you could have it."

Reluctantly Jenny stayed. The words of Mortimer had frightened her. They might fix the crime on her, especially as she had been in prison for the theft.

When Mr. Mortimer had gone she tried to bring up the matter, but she could not convince her mother.

"All right—you needn't believe me!" Jenny cried in anguish. "But it's true. Now he's in the death house and everybody's nice to him because they know he's going to die."

"Don't talk so horrible!"

"The day after tomorrow it is. And everyone in the prison will know it's going to happen. And he didn't do it!" Jenny heat her hands together. "Oh, what shall I do?" She grabbed up her coat. "I will go to Scotland Yard, no matter what you say!"

And when she left the house fat Mr. Mortimer followed her.

Inspector Jim

Grant amused himself playing patience whilst he listened to the tale of Miss Harvey, a dark, sparkling-eyed creature. He disliked her make-up and the reek of seent.

"Poor Mr. Abel! I think of him always as the man with the haunting eyes!" she cried dramatically. "Believe it or not, inspector, night after night, I've laid without closing my eyes, listening to his voice crying out to me in New York to come to his help."

"Why didn't you come forward before?" the inspector asked, moving a card and frowning over it.

"I would have done—only I couldn't bear to think of the publicity."

"What made you think there'd be any publicity?"

"Won't there be? Won't there be?" the woman demanded in sharp tones.

"First of all you could not remember the name of the boat you came over on," Grant said, without looking up. "You had no idea how many funnels she had, finally you said it was the Mauretania. Well, the Mauretania's on the scrap heap, and you've never been to America in your life. You're the fourth person who has come here pretending to be the missing witness. I'm sorry, but we're not supplying free trips to New York."

The good-looking young inspector just smiled when the woman began to rave about Scotland Yard. When she had gone he continued his game, and was so engrossed he did not hear a door open.

"I'm Jenny Carr, 127, Appleby Road, Southwark, and I went to New York to act in a play—"

The inspector glanced round. Another one. He sighed resignedly.

"I was bumped into by a man in the street," Jenny went on, gabbling out her words in her nervousness. "He was bumped off on New Year's Eve, and he took me to his flat—apartments they call them—and whilst I was there I saw a man—"

"Here—wait a minute—wait a minute," the inspector interrupted.

"But it's true."

"But I haven't said it wasn't," Grant opened a notebook. "Let's have the name and address first, and then the story afterwards."

Jim Grant took down her story, and even allowed her to draw a plan of the rooms. He thought she was rather attractive, and certainly her yarn was the best to date, though the bit about leaving the apartment gnawing a chicken-bone gave him his doubts.

"Can you tell me anything about these men you saw?"

"No. I didn't take much notice of them," answered Jenny. "I didn't dream they were going to be mixed up in a murder. I would remember one man if I saw him strike a match."

"Saw him strike a match?"

"I couldn't imitate him, but he did it in such an odd way. He was a big, fat man—greasy-looking."

"I'm afraid, Miss Carr, that there are a lot of fat, greasy men in this world." The inspector was gazing longingly at his cards. "Lots of people strike matches in queer ways. Are you sure you ever went to New York. This is not imagination—"

"Don't you dare lay hands on me!" stormed a voice, and into the room burst the portly Mr. Mortimer. He pushed the policeman away and rushed forward, arms extended. "Jenny! In the nick of time! You'll excuse me, inspector, won't you?"

"Any time you're passing, just break in," Grant's smile was a little mocking.

"My name is Mortimer." The fat man was all out of breath. "I lodge at the house of this unfortunate girl's mother."

"Don't you listen to him—he tried to stop me coming here!" stormed Jenny.

"Oh dear, oh dear!" Mortimer wiped his brow. "And Jenny just out of prison and her poor mother in tears."



Brandt smiled evilly and shot the lawyer dead.

"Don't listen to him, I tell you!" cried the girl.

"Don't be too hard on her!" Mortimer looked pleadingly at the inspector. "She's stage-struck—no job—a craving for publicity."

"Then there is no truth to her story?" asked Grant.

"Her claim to have been present at the Ruislip murder?" asked Mortimer. "Ruislip? I'm talking about a murder in New York."

Mortimer raised his eyes heavenwards.

"Is there no end to her imagination?" He turned to the inspector. "I begged her not to come here."

"Is it true you're an actress out of a job? Have you just come out of prison?"

"Yes, but——"

"And if you were announced as the missing witness you would get publicity!" stormed the inspector. He pointed to the door. "And publicity would help you to get a job as an actress. Come and see me when you've had your pearls stolen. Good-morning!"

"Well, of all the flat-footed——" began Jenny, and checked herself.

"Don't be too hard on her!" begged Mortimer.

"Don't worry."

"Then we won't hear any more about this?"

"As long as you go and leave me in peace!" Grant rapped out.

Mortimer heaved.

"Thanks, dear boy. Come, Jenny!" But Jenny had already gone.

Blackmailers

GENERAL FRANCIS XAVIER COSTELLO had a suite of rooms at the Hotel Majestic, and he was allotted a personal servant by the name of Spurgeon to attend to his needs. This valet was big like his master, but with very small eyes, and was the perfect valet.

He entered the room where Costello

reclined on a couch, and bowed over the tray he carried.

"A letter for you, sir."

The general took the letter and opened it.

"I am glad to say that we shall hear no further of the young lady. She got to Scotland Yard with two days in hand, but our friend in Sing Sing still goes to that uncomfortable chair."

Costello smiled. His underlings never failed him. He tore the letter up and tossed it into a waste-paper basket. He was unaware that those small eyes watched him covertly.

"Anything else, sir?"

"No. Tell the manager I do not wish to be disturbed, and particularly I do not wish to see reporters."

"New York reporters, sir?"

Costello eyed the man sharply.

"Why did you say New York reporters?" he demanded.

"Oh, nothing, sir!" the valet answered with his usual suave smile. "Your manner—I rather formed the impression."

"I have lived there," Costello admitted. "But I come from Paraguay. That is my heaven and my hell. And very soon I go back to my country. I shall be dictator or martyr. The President's palace or the firing squad. It is life. We live even when we die—in Paraguay."

"Yes, sir." Spurgeon bowed himself from the room. But when the general was out for an airing he collected those pieces of torn letter.

That evening he hung around a certain street till a flashily dressed man appeared. Mr. Pryor was a bookmaker among many other professions, and he eyed Spurgeon craftily.

"Mr. Pryor, I once supplied you with a letter acquired in the course of my professional duties," Spurgeon said in soft tones. "You resold it to a lady for fifty pounds."

"That's past history."

"I've found another letter just by

chance—much more valuable. I thought as you were interested in blackmail——"

"Me, interested in——" Pryor looked indignant. "How dare you call me a blackmailer! If I buy something somebody else wants that's business. For two pins I'd hand you over to the nearest cop. For two pins——" He paused. "All right, come inside!"

The two men entered the house where Pryor conducted his business, and soon were seated in a room where the doors were padded. Pryor trusted no one, not even his servants.

"Who dies in Sing Sing in two days?" questioned Spurgeon. "A gentleman called Abel. The missing witness, you've heard of her—somebody wants to keep her out of the way. I have a letter."

"Who's the letter to?"

"Finders keepers—you'll have to buy it."

"All right." Pryor tucked his fingers into his waistcoat and revealed the massive gold chain on his waistcoat. "Thirty bob."

"The police would give me more."

"How do I know it's genuine?"

"You don't trust me?"

"As far as I can throw a grand piano," sneered the bookie. "Three quid."

The price eventually struck was five guineas. Pryor studied the letter that Spurgeon had pasted together and decided he had got a good bargain. He rang through to the Majestic and learnt that General Costello had left and was flying to New York on the air mail.

"What are you doing to do?" asked Spurgeon.

"Buy a bathing-suit and swim after him!" snapped Pryor, and dialed another number. "Is that Atlantic Airways? Have you a private cabin? You have. I'll take it."

Spurgeon left and went straight to Scotland Yard. He was going to get all he could out of that letter. He saw Inspector Grant, and told a tale about



Grant opened a notebook. "Let's have the name and address first, and then the story afterwards," he said.

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a letter he had seen Pryor receive whilst he was in the bookie's office. He was too honourable to reveal all he knew.

"Judge my astonishment, Mr. Grant, when Sam Pryor rang up and booked a place on the Air Mail."

"What's he up to?"

"Business, Mr. Grant. Blackmail, if I may use the word."

All Spurgeon got from Scotland Yard was the handsome reward of five shillings. The superintendent had been present at the interview.

"Think there's anything to this tale?"

"Occasionally that double-crosser speaks the truth," Grant admitted. "It sounds to me that Pryor's got hold of some man tied up with a girl, and business men usually pay up."

"How'd you like a trip to New York?"

"Very much."

"I want Sam kept out of mischief," stated the superintendent. "You'd better book on the Air Mail. It's about time we had Sam behind bars—he's been out too long."

Meanwhile, Mrs. Carr had at last been convinced that Jenny's story was not imagination. When she heard that Mr. Mortimer had followed her to Scotland Yard and made that extraordinary statement, she realised that there must be something to her daughter's story.

"I was framed on the boat, mother. And now I've been framed again!" cried Jenny. "And you've just told me that Mr. Mortimer had his trunk collected just before I got back, and you remember seeing a New York label on it."

"To think that I may have been harbouring a murderer!" gasped Mrs. Carr. "I'll have his room fumigated from floor to ceiling."

"What are we going to do?"

"It's no good going to the police," murmured Mrs. Carr.

"If only I could get to New York," cried Jenny. "They'd believe me there."

"But it takes four days, and they electrify the poor gentleman to-morrow evening!" Mrs. Carr suddenly stiffened.

"Look!" She pointed to a poster on the wall. "I pined—took them from the travel bureau where I works. Kinda ornamental I thought 'em for the walls. Look what it says. London to New York in eighteen hours—fares sixty-five pounds."

"And we've only got seventeen-and-fourpence between us!" mocked Jenny. Her eyes suddenly shone with determination. "But I'm going to get on that plane somehow. Mother, we've got to do it!"

Non-stop New York

BY the side of a wharf at Southampton rested the giant air-liner. The service had started in 1938, and now in 1940 these giant machines flew daily across the Atlantic.

One of the first to arrive was a fussy, middle-aged woman and a boy with very long hair. The boy carried a violin-case under his arm, and all the officials paid respects to him, whilst reporters and Press photographers crowded round. Arnold James was a boy prodigy on the violin, and was going to America with his Aunt Veronica to open in New York. General Costello arrived about the same time.

"Who is that?" he asked a porter.

"The infant prodigy; plays the violin like an angel."

"Oh!" Costello shrugged his shoulders. "In my country we shoot them."

He passed into the huge machine, to

Sam walked across to the bunk, and from his pocket produced the letter.



he followed seconds later by Sam Pryor. From a steward Pryor found out that Costello's cabin was D.2.—he tipped the man a dud half-crown.

The prodigy would have liked to have gone on board, but the reporters surrounded him. The boy scowled because he knew his dear aunt loved all this publicity.

"Aren't you excited at playing with the Philharmonic?" a reporter asked.

"No, I'm not."

"Of course he is," interposed Aunt Veronica. "Dreadfully excited."

"Auntie is," the boy grinned. "It means dough."

"Arnold!" Her eyes flashed, and then she was all smiles. "Please excuse him—airplanes always excite him."

Standing quite close to the gangway were Jenny and her mother. There was an official at the gangway, and she had to get past that man somehow.

"Promise me you'll have a mustard bath afterwards and put a stocking round your throat?" whispered Jenny.

"Yes, dear, I will!" Mrs. Carr said in tragic tones.

"Good-bye!"

"Good-bye!" Mrs. Carr straightened her shoulders, clutched her umbrella and edged to the side of the wharf.

No one noticed her because everyone was so occupied with the boy prodigy, and sightseers just had to gaze at the mammoth flying machine. Mrs. Carr walked over the edge and screamed lustily as she fell—she screamed even more in the water. Everyone rushed to the wharf. It was Jenny's chance to walk casually up the gangway because the one official was busy flinging Mrs. Carr a rope. Aunt Veronica had pushed the boy towards the gangway because she was always frightened something was going to happen to him—whilst she went and had a look. Thus Arnold was the only person to see Jenny go up that gangway.

Jenny was inside and wondering where all the various corridors went when she became aware of a small boy at her side.

"You didn't give up your ticket."

"Didn't I?"

"Shall I give it up for you?"

"No, no, please don't bother—it's quite all right really."

"It wouldn't be any trouble," persisted Arnold.

"That's what you think," answered Jenny, staring over the boy's head. She could just see a dripping form in the midst of a small crowd. Her mother was safe. She did hope she did not catch a cold.

"I know why you want to keep it," Arnold interrupted her thoughts. "You collect tickets."

"Yes, that's it—how did you guess?"

"I do, too," the boy grinned. "I've got a marvellous collection. You give me your ticket and I'll swap it for two London to Leeds and a second-class to Vienna."

"What! For an air mail to New York? No fear!"

"I'll make it first-class to Vienna," said the young dealer.

"Arnold, what are you suggesting?" Aunt Veronica had arrived on the scene. "Don't take any notice of him, my dear. He's always inviting people to travel with us—so generous."

"I'll have another talk with you later," Arnold cried, as his aunt whisked him away.

"Yes—make it much later," prayed Jenny.

The next obstacle that Jenny encountered was a steward, who made persistent inquiries about luggage, and in order to avoid him Jenny tried to enter a cabin, which he informed her suspiciously was the control-room, but she got rid of him somehow. Her one hope was an unoccupied cabin, and a light of hope appeared in her eyes when she came to a door and there was no card in the reservation slot.

Five minutes before the giant was due to take off a taxi deposited Inspector Grant at the dock. The willing steward took his suitcase and led him to the door without a reservation.

"By rights your name should be on February 5th, 1938."

this door, sir," stated the steward. "But as you booked late there wasn't time." He turned the handle, but the door remained closed. "That's funny—seems to be closed. Shan't keep you half a jiffy, sir."

The steward returned in a few minutes with a key.

"Is there a Mr. Sam Pryor among your passengers?" the inspector inquired.

"Yes, sir. No. 15."

"Thanks."

"Excuse me, sir. Is he a friend of yours?"

Grant's sensitive mouth twitched.

"In a kind of way he is." He eyed the steward keenly. "Why?"

"Well, sir, perhaps you wouldn't mind giving him back his 'arf-crown." He handed it over with a sniff. "E ain't finished it."

The inspector studied the half-crown and laughed heartily because it was a very obvious dud. He tossed the steward a genuine half-crown and entered his cabin.

Considering it was an air-liner it was quite a commodious cabin, and after a quick rinse in the basin Jim Grant decided to unpack his bag and put his spare suit on a hanger in the wardrobe. The inspector had had a life full of experience, but it was quite a shock to find that the wardrobe had an occupant.

"I'm awfully sorry!" cried Jenny. "I didn't know that this was your cabin."

"It's a small world," remarked Jim, and motioned for the girl to climb out of the wardrobe. "You aren't by any chance a stowaway?"

"Oh, no!"

"You just live in wardrobes during the winter months?"

"Yes, that's right. Moths do, too."

"Come on—get out!" gruffly ordered the inspector, angry that this girl should ruffle his serenity so easily. Since she had visited Scotland Yard he had thought about her quite a lot. Terrible for so cool and calm a young man to grow fond of someone slightly mentally deficient.

"Where to?" Jenny's eyes did not waver.

"Anywhere. But get off this 'plane."

"Mr. Grant, I've a special reason for being here."

"I suppose you are going to tell me that you were there and Dr. Crippen had nothing to do with it."

"Don't be idiotic—I'm serious."

He studied her.

"Why are you so keen to get to New York?"

"I've told you once," she answered angrily. "And you wouldn't believe me. You're just a policeman—all your mind about is stringing people up. A lot you care if they're innocent or guilty."

"But you do care?"

"Yes, I do."

Grant fingered his chin.

"I've a good mind to let you get away with this."

She screwed up her small nose.

"Inspector Grant, I'm afraid you'll have to. I've a strong idea we're taking off." She darted to the door. "Thanks so much for our nice talk."

The steward got a shock to find the young lady coming out of the cabin, and was gaping after her when the inspector called him.

"Steward, that young lady who just went out is a Miss Carr." He produced a ten-shilling note. "She fancies herself as a stowaway."

"A stowaway! Who let her in?"

"Vo! did, for one. Now, listen. Go tell the captain I'll be responsible for February 5th, 1935.

her ticket, but don't let her know who's doing it."

"Yes, sir." The steward pocketed the money. "Nice-looking young lady, sir."

"That's got nothing whatever to do with it."

"No, sir," said the steward, and winked brazenly.

The steward found Miss Carr and placed her in a cabin that had not been reserved, and was going away this time the richer by a shilling when he heard a queer wailing noise. Round the corner came Arnold, and he was clutching a glittering instrument.

"I'm looking for an empty cabin, steward."

"Well, there isn't one. I've given it to the stowaway—I mean the—er—late arrival."

"But where can I practise my saxophone?"

"Oh, that reminds me!" The steward nodded his head. "The captain specially asked me to tell you not to play that on account of the passenger that's balmy."

"There isn't a passenger that's balmy."

"No, but there will be if you play that saxophone."

The Blackmailer Almost Foiled

GENERAL COSTELLO was reclining in his bunk. He selected a cigarette from a gold case, placed it in a long holder, and then with his left hand struck a match sharply. A moment later there came a knock at his door, and Sam Pryor entered.

"General Costello?"

"I do not talk with strangers."

"I'll do the talking," Sam walked across to the bunk, and from his pocket produced the letter. He turned it so that Costello could read, "Seen that before?"

Though the startled racketeer did not betray himself, he answered at once:

"Never!"

"That's funny!" purred Sam. "Because it's addressed to you. It's to tell you that they've got rid of the witness in the Abel case."

"Very kind of them to tell me." The general blew a cloud of smoke in Sam's face. "But why should it interest me?"

"Never mind the bluff, general. I want a thousand pounds for this letter."

"Do I misunderstand you, or are you a blackmailer?"

"We don't call it that."

"I meet so many. I am rich. They make a target of me."

"And I bet they score a few bulls-eyes."

"Usually it is a woman." The general yawned carelessly. "They make up letters from me—very bad letters. Sometimes I pay because I am a fool."

"That's enough, general!" snarled Sam Pryor. "Do I get the thousand pounds or do I go to the police?"

"Whether you go to the police or not depends on whether you stop this absurd nonsense. You bring me a letter I have never seen—"

"It was in your room."

"How do you know? Did you see it there? You did not. Someone sold it to you? Someone you trust?" The general laughed. "No, I see you do not!"

Sam Pryor fidgeted uneasily, but said nothing.

"You buy a letter from a man you do not trust and you try to blackmail General Costello." Again the racketeer blew smoke contemptuously in the other's face. "In my country, in Paraguay, I have had men shot for less.

Did you think to inquire at the Embassy? If you had they would have told you that I was in Paraguay when this murder was committed."

"Come orf it, general!" muttered Sam, but his tones had lost much of their aggressiveness. "I want money."

The general sat up.

"So you persist? Now I shall punish!" He slid from the bunk and went over to the 'phone on a table. "It is a matter for the captain. He will radio to my Government in Paraguay. I shall demand your arrest."

The bluff worked. Sam Pryor was scared. The last thing he wanted was the captain drawn into this. Suppose Spurgeon had double-crossed him—he wouldn't put it beyond that slick chiseller. Apologising and bowing, Sam Pryor backed to the door.

"I didn't mean it, general. It was only a joke."

"You should keep your fun for those who do not take it too seriously. Now leave me, please."

"Certainly, general. No offence, general." Sam opened the cabin door and got out. He stood there staring at the closed door, and a voice behind made him jump.

"So you didn't bring it off?"

"Well, if it isn't Mr. Grant?" cried Sam, quickly recovering from the shock of seeing an arch enemy. "Always pleased to see old friends."

"They're better than new ones."

Grant answered in grim tones with a significant glance at the closed door. "You don't look as if you'd been very successful with General Costello, which means you were on the wrong scent."

"I don't know what you're talking about." Sam raised his eyebrows in indignant denial. "It's difficult to notice scent when there's a policeman about."

"Sam, if you're thinking of looking round for a new victim—don't!"

"We workers never let up, Mr. Grant."

"So I gather." The inspector fumbled in his pocket. "By the way, you haven't change for half-a-crown, have you?"

"Certainly—anything to oblige. A shilling and three sixpences."

"Thanks very much." Grant took the money and handed over the half-crown. At that moment the steward appeared and he hailed him. The shilling and three sixpences changed hands. "With Mr. Pryor's compliments."

"What's the idea?" demanded the bewildered Sam.

"You look at that half-crown," chuckled the inspector, and strolled away whistling.

Sam, very depressed, went off to his cabin and pulled up sharply at the weird sounds that came from inside. He opened the door to find the long-haired boy prodigy playing his saxophone.

"What's the idea?" truculently demanded Sam.

"Auntie doesn't like me to play this—it's so common," explained Arnold. "So I came in here."

"Well, I hate it, so you can go away."

"But I've got nowhere else to go. They gave the empty cabin to the stowaway."

"Stowaway? What stowaway?"

"Mr. Grant's friend," explained Arnold. "I think he found her in his cabin. The steward told me."

Sam tried tweaking the prodigy's ear, but that gained for him only a howl of resentment; but an offer of money caused Arnold to grin. The boy

grinned when asked how much he wanted.

"Three shillings."

"How much?" snapped Sam.

"Two shillings."

"Don't let's be ungenerous." Sam dived in his pocket. "Make it half-a-crown."

After Sam had gone to his cabin Jim Grant knocked at the general's door and a gruff voice bade him enter. He explained that he was from Scotland Yard, and that he knew the reputation of Sam Pryor so well that he feared the general might have been worried by the man.

"It is a flea bite," Costello smiled. "In my country we are used to flea bites."

"Well, if he worries you any more just let me know."

"Thank you. You shall be my guest and kill him. You are a policeman—you will like it."

The inspector left the general's cabin and his face was thoughtful. He had studied Costello closely and though the light was not good the disguise and make-up were so perfect that he had not noticed any flaws. No harm in keeping the general under observation. On the way back to his own cabin he passed Sam's, and the click of the door made him glance round. Arnold came out, and then Sam's head showed, and the rascal had a finger on his lip.

"Blackmailing small boys?"

"Certainly not. You misjudge me."

"You look much more cheerful." The inspector gazed critically at the man. "Sam Pryor, have you got anything on the general?"

"I don't follow you, Mr. Grant."

"Well, you can't blackmail a man unless he's done something to be ashamed of."

Sam grinned mockingly and almost closed his door so that only part of his face could be seen.

"Perhaps he was once a policeman," he jeered, and closed the door with a slam.

Pryor Tricks Jenny

THE mammoth of the air covered mile after mile in almost monotonous regularity. There was a captain and three pilots, a crew of six, several stewards, a chef, a maid, and even a barman. By now more than half the Atlantic had been crossed. Most of the passengers were resting in their cabins, when Jenny, restless and worrying what was going to happen when she reached New York, went into the small and empty lounge.

Having little money Jenny was sipping some iced water when Sam Pryor poked his head round the door, gave a satisfied nod at seeing Jenny alone and entered. He stared through the windows down at the sea that shimmered silvery in the sun. Luck favoured him because the steward appeared and that gave him a chance to say something that he wanted Jenny to overhear.

"What rabin did you give Miss Carr?"

"D5, sir."

"Is that a nice one?"

"One of our best, sir."

The steward went up to the bar to collect some drinks, and the girl moved across to Pryor.

"Excuse me, did you say Miss Carr?"

"I did." Pryor watched the steward craftily.

"But I'm Miss Carr."

"Exactly," Pryor whispered, and noticed the steward leaving with a loaded tray.

"But—"

"I couldn't let you work your passage in the galley or be imprisoned as a stowaway."

"Thank you, it's very kind of you."

"Not a bit—pleasure to do anything for a friend of Jim Grant's."

"You haven't got anything to do with Scotland Yard?"

"Yes, quite a lot, from time to time," Pryor admitted.

"I didn't notice you when I saw Inspector Grant."

"Well, he's in a different part of the building; what we jokingly call the slim end, you know."

"I suppose you're in the classy part?" questioned the all-nuspecting girl.

"Well, I don't want to boast." His eyes became shrewd. "By the way, what exactly did you tell Jim Grant?" He saw her hesitate. "I will be frank with you, Miss Carr. My name is Pryor, Superintendent Sam Pryor of the C.I.D. Now I know you won't repeat this."

"Cross my heart."

"Jim Grant has been overworking. Such a nice fellow, too. A sort of nervous breakdown. That's why we're giving him this little holiday. I'm taking over his work."

"Then you'll be able to help me."

"Of course—of course. Now just what did you tell poor Jim?"

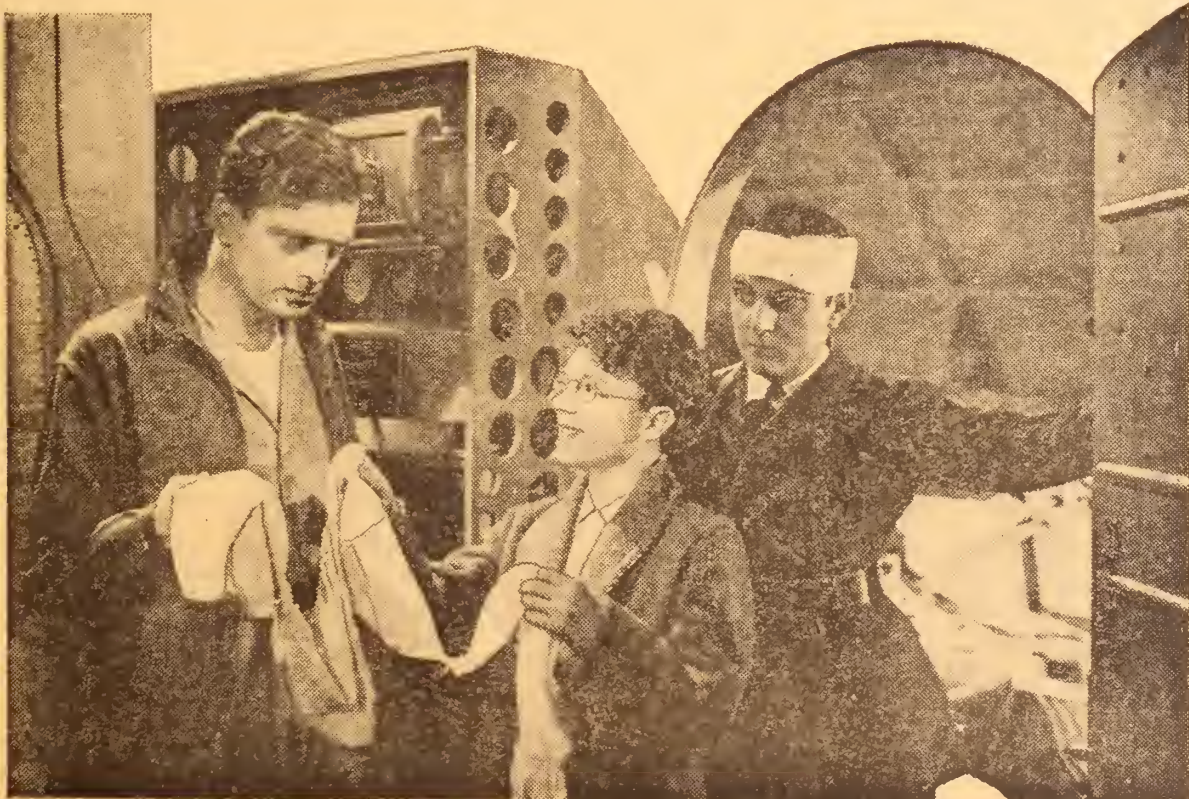
"That I saw the man who killed Billy Cowper," stated Jenny.

"My dear girl, do you realise this is very valuable information?" cried Sam.

"Of course I do. They're going to kill an innocent man to-morrow, and I'm going to stop it."

"Miss Carr, what you've told me rather alters my plans," Sam said with an air of great trust in the girl. "You didn't happen to notice if one of 'em was a foreign-looking chap, very military moustache—kind of bull-fighter?"

"There wasn't anybody at all like that. Two of them were quite ordinary, and the third—I didn't see



He produced a strip of grey silk. "This is a piece I cut out of Auntie's parachute," he told the inspector.

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his face properly—but he had a funny way of striking a match with his left hand."

Jenny demonstrated and Sam could hardly restrain his joy. He had been watching Costello closely and he had seen that curious way of striking a match.

"Don't breathe a word of this to anybody," Sam hissed dramatically. "And remember, don't call me superintendent in public, as I'm strictly incognito. Now you'd better get along to your cabin, but if you could get hold of that Arnold kid I'd like a word with him."

Being a curious-minded boy, Arnold was in the lounge in about two minutes. "Are you really a superintendent?" he asked.

Sam muttered under his breath. Of course that fool girl would go and let it out.

"Never mind who I am. I've a job for you." Sam gazed round, and was glad to see that they were alone save for the barman, who was yawning. "Now, we've a notion this General Costello isn't General Costello."

"Who is he then?"

"Can't say—confidential." Sam's voice became low and tense. "I want you to find out if he really comes from Paraguay."

"But I don't know anything about Paraguay."

"There's a town there called Villa Rica. Pretend you've been there, and mention some person whom you think is a big noise there. See if he rises to it. If he does, you're on another half-dollar."

"Suppose he gets tough, shall I knock him down?"

"No need to do that. Just threaten him with your saxophone."

General Costello was not at all pleased when he was disturbed by a small boy, who said he had a grandmother living in Villa Rica.

"If you come from Paraguay you must know Mrs. James," the boy cried. "Why, she owns half the place!"

Costello smiled at the boy and said he remembered Mrs. James, but it was a town that he did not often visit and so for the moment he had forgotten her.

"No one sent you to ask questions?" Costello demanded, when the boy gave a curious smirk.

"Oh, no, sir."

"Not a gentleman with a loud voice and a check suit?"

"Oh, no, sir," lied Arnold. "I only came because auntie didn't think you'd know grandma—because she thinks her common."

"You should tell your aunt to take a broader view of things, my boy," Costello said patronisingly. "Your grandmother is a very remarkable woman. Only don't tell auntie I told you so."

"No, sir, I won't," Arnold answered, and breathed a sigh of relief when he was outside the cabin, as General Costello could look terribly fierce.

Sam Underrates Costello

JIM was sitting in the lounge enjoying his dinner. He was hoping that Jenny might join him, but as there was no sign of her he feared she must be air-sick. Then Aunt Veronica came to pester him. Somehow she had found out he was a detective, and she explained volubly that whilst she was enjoying a nap Arnold had vanished. His hands were insured for ten thousand pounds. She dried her eyes and became shrill with anger when Arnold showed up and grinned at her brazenly.

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A steward brought her some soup, and that did not appease her.

"I can't eat soup in the air. I'm so nervous," Aunt Veronica fidgeted nervously. "Of course, I've never actually been in a crash, but I'm what you might call crash conscious. Steward, why doesn't this company provide parachutes for the passengers?"

"Seeing as 'ow we're over the Atlantic Ocean, they don't encourage mixed bathing."

That made Jim gulp over his soup. General Costello, sitting at a nearby table, frowned and put down his paper. It seemed to be all about the Cowper case and was not pleasant reading. Of course, Aunt Veronica had to talk to everybody, and she informed them that she put no trust in aeroplanes and that she had brought her own parachute.

Jenny entered and came over to Jim. "I hope you're feeling better?" she asked.

"I don't look like an invalid, do I?" gasped the surprised Jim.

Before Jim could think of anything else to say Sam Pryor appeared, and in a most familiar way whisked the girl off to the table where General Costello sat in lonely state. The inspector glowered at his fish.

"General"—Sam Pryor spoke in a voice that did not carry far—"I know you'll be interested to meet Miss Carr."

The general lowered his paper again and favoured the girl with a very cold bow.

"How do you do?" he murmured politely.

"Haven't I seen you before?" Jenny said, her brows furrowed.

"Alas, no," was the answer.

Sam leaned forward.

"Between you and me, and you won't let it go any further, Miss Carr is the missing witness in the Cowper murder case."

Costello smiled at the girl.

"How very exciting for you," he stated in his calm way.

"And I don't mind letting you into a secret." Sam's face was twisted into an ugly, sneering leer. "It won't be Abel that goes to the chair."

After dinner Jenny managed to get away from her escort and went to her cabin, and on the way she encountered Jim Grant.

"I'm sorry I couldn't sit at your table to-night," Jenny said in her frank, pleasant way. "You know, I didn't like you a bit when I met you at Scotland Yard."

"Thanks a lot," Jim said. "But I don't see why you couldn't have sat at my table."

"Superintendent Pryor insisted—" The effect of this remark on Grant was startling. He gripped her fiercely by the shoulder.

"Did you say Superintendent Pryor?" he demanded, and when she gave a little nod, he pushed her to one side. "Excuse me." And was gone.

Sam Pryor was about to knock at Costello's door when a cough stopped him.

"Hallo, inspector"

"Hallo, superintendent!" Grant spoke with ominous meaning.

"Er—er, yes, just a little harmless vanity, you know," spluttered the rogue.

"I don't know quite why you kidded Miss Carr you were a superintendent," Jim said, glaring angrily at Sam. "Perhaps she's told you she's a witness in the Abel case. She's told everybody else. Maybe you were after some information that you could turn into money."

"What a dreadful idea."

"Sam, you're wasting your time. In

the first place, I've got my eye on you. In the second place, I won't have you interfering with that girl. In the third place, she knows nothing worth speaking of about the murder. In the fourth place, I don't think she was there at all."

"In the fifth and last place, you may be most kind to children." It was the voice of Jenny. "But as a policeman you're just too dumb for words!"

Murder!

IT was nearing midnight. There were only three people in the small lounge, for all the others had apparently gone to bed. Jenny was there because she felt too restless to sleep. The death sentence on Abel was being carried out at noon, and the plane would land at New York in the early hours of the morning. General Costello was there and pretending to read the paper. The only other person was the tired barman.

Costello put down his paper.

"We go along the coast of Newfoundland?" he inquired in suave tones.

"Yes, sir."

"In how long shall we be over land?"

"In about half an hour, sir," answered the barman. "Will you be wanting anything else, sir?"

The barman retired to his quarters and Costello stared over his paper at Jenny. She was unaware of the scrutiny, and was fidgeting with the dials on a radio set. At last she got what she wanted.

"Albany, New York. The last-minute attempt to save the life of Abel, convicted murderer of William Cowper, the New York lawyer, has failed. The news was broken to Abel in his cell, where he received the grim tidings quietly. He thanked the warden for his helpfulness and calmly went to sleep, apparently without a thought of his fate."

"Perhaps he has a feeling that somebody is coming to help him," said Jenny, who had confided in Costello the reason for her hurried trip to New York. "It's funny to think that if anything happened to this plane—or I jumped through that window—they'd kill an innocent man and never know."

"That, indeed, would be a tragedy," said General Costello.

Restlessly the girl went to a window. "I wonder if that's the boat I came over on. She looks grand all lit up."

Costello moved to her side.

"There is a little platform where we can see better." He took her arm persuasively. "Shall we have a look before turning in?"

Quite unsuspectingly Jenny followed the man she thought was a general. He opened a door, and they went out on to a small gallery, where the wind almost hurled them off their feet. The general closed the door and braced his shoulders. Unconscious of danger, Jenny stared down at the liner.

The door opened, and there stood Sam.

"I'm surprised at you, general," he shouted. "Why, it's perishing out here. You don't want the young lady's death on your hands."

"It is rather cold," Jenny smiled at the man she still thought her benefactor.

"Run along to bed, my dear," Sam said in fatherly tones.

The two men bade the girl good-night in the lounge and then Sam grinned mockingly.

"In my country—in Paraguay—I have had men shot for less," he mimicked. "And as you're not General Costello—the joke's on you. My price was a

(Continued on page 27)

The formula of an invention calculated to revolutionise modern warfare—that was the secret which cost one man his life and involved others in a network of deadly intrigue. A smashing serial-drama packed with thrills, starring Grant Withers



Read This First

Pat O'Hara and Sam Maloney, police officers attached to the Los Angeles radio patrol, are summoned to the Wellington Steel Works, where John P. Adams is demonstrating a bullet-proof vest manufactured from flexible steel, a metal which he has invented.

The police have received an anonymous warning to the effect that an attempt is to be made on the life of Adams, with whose small son Pinky the two radio patrolmen happen to be acquainted.

It is a warning that proves to be genuine, for before Pat O'Hara and Sam Maloney can reach the steel works Adams is shot dead, and the formula of his invention disappears mysteriously.

A man named Selkirk is arrested on suspicion of having committed the crime, and it transpires he was formerly employed by Harrison, head of a steel company which has always competed with the Wellington plant. Into the bargain, it appears that Harrison considers he has some claim on the Adams invention.

The question of the formula is one of considerable importance to two Orientals known as Tahata and Zutta. The first of these exercises a strange hold over a man named Franklyn, who receives instructions from him to send four men to the Wellington Steel Works in order to search for the missing formula.

Meanwhile, Pat O'Hara learns that Selkirk has been visited in prison by his sister Molly, and that night he sees the girl enter the Wellington plant in the guise of a mill-hand.

She obtains the formula, only to be pursued by Franklyn's men. Then Pat takes a hand in the drama, but during a scuffle on a girder he is struck down with a blackjack and falls on to a kind

of conveyor that is carrying scrap-metal into the blazing jaws of a smelting furnace.

Now Read On

Getaway

THE furnace door yawned wide, and beyond it was the raging welter of flame towards which the insensible police officer was being carried. But even as the massive conveyor was on the point of entering the blazing confines of that furnace Pat O'Hara hestirred himself feebly, and next instant he had tumbled from the contraption on which he lay.

Up above, on the girder whence Pat had fallen, Henry Selkirk's sister gave vent to an exclamation of relief as she saw him pitch to the floor in front of the furnace and espied a number of workmen hurrying towards his prostrate form. Then she directed a glance at the rogue who had sent the policeman hurtling to the depths, and she immediately perceived that the fellow had straightened up and had turned to face her again.

Moreover, his three accomplices had now appeared at the far end of the girder.

Selkirk's sister was reminded of her plight and, clutching the precious formula that she had obtained, she whipped round and began to climb down the ladder she had been preparing to descend when Pat had attempted to engage the individual known as Watkins.

It did not take her long to reach the floor of the mill, but Watkins was pursuing her closely, and she had only sped some ten or fifteen paces from the foot of the ladder when she heard him drop from the last rung and start pounding after her.

A moment afterwards she set eyes on a heavy bucket which was suspended from aloft by a strong chain, and as she came abreast of this bucket she seized it and swung it back towards her foe with all her might.

It took him in the chest and he went down like a skittled ninepin. Nor did he manage to rise for about a quarter of a minute, by which time the resourceful fugitive was disappearing through the doorway of the mill.

Watkins' associates joined him as he was struggling up from the ground, and together all four of the men gave chase to the Selkirk girl. But in the meantime the latter was running like a hare across the yard of the Wellington Steel Works, her objective being a motor truck that was travelling slowly in the direction of the gates.

It was the same lorry on which she had stowed away in order to gain admittance to the Wellington plant, and, catching up to the vehicle, she scrambled over its tailboard a second time and was thus enabled to quit the premises unchallenged. As for Watkins and his confederates, they burst out into the yard just as the motor truck passed from view, and after scanning the enclosure in vain for their quarry the four of them moved across to the gates, trying to look as casual as they possibly could.

The regulations of the Wellington steel plant were unusually strict, since a good deal of government work was carried out there, and employees had

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"The Hypnotic Eye"

to show their passes whether coming or going. But Watkins and his cronies were equipped with forged permits, and, taking care to keep their faces averted as they showed the watchman these permits, they were allowed to depart without question.

Even as they filed out through the gateway a police officer showed up near the entrance of the yard. He was Sam Maloney, and, although Pat had instructed him to remain by the car, Sam had become weary of the inactivity of waiting, and now, after a brief hesitation, he exchanged a few words with the watchman and then strode into the works.

Only a minute or two afterwards Sam Maloney was brought face to face with Pat as the latter was assisted from the interior of the mill by a group of furnace men and machinists, and presently these were joined by none other than Wellington himself and Pinky Adams, who had his dog Irish with him.

It appeared that Wellington had sent for Pinky, inviting the boy to call at his office that evening, and, concerned over the young orphan's welfare, the steel magnate had been interrogating the lad regarding his future plans when he had received a message that something was wrong over in the mill.

Pat, badly shaken as he was by his fall, had now recovered sufficiently to give an account of all that had taken place in the works, and when he had told his story Wellington ordered his employees to assist Sam Maloney in carrying out a search of the whole premises for the Selkirk girl and the four men who had likewise been after the late John Adams' formula. Then, left alone with the steel magnate and the murdered inventor's son, Pat spoke in a thoughtful tone.

"I wonder who those guys were," he muttered. "The guys who were so dead-set on taking that formula away from Selkirk's sister, I mean?"

"I don't know, O'Hara," Wellington rejoined. "Your description of them doesn't fit any of the men who are in my employ, so far as I can recall. But whoever they are, I only hope they're rounded up."

Pat bit his lip.

"The formula's my chief concern," he said, putting his arm round John Adams' orphaned son. "It's worth a cool million dollars, and it's the rightful property of young Pinky here. And Pinky and I are good friends, aren't we, Pinky?"

The boy nodded, and a silence fell upon the trio, a silence that lasted until Sam Maloney finally reappeared on the scene.

"It's no use," Pat's burly comrade reported. "We've searched high and low, and there ain't a trace of that Selkirk girl or the fellers you described to us, pardner."

Pat O'Hara looked at him keenly.

"Listen, Sam," he said, "are you sure nobody left the yard before you came in?"

Maloney frowned.

"Well, a bunch o' men did stroll out, come to think of it," he admitted. "I couldn't say just how many, for I didn't take much notice of 'em, except to satisfy myself none of 'em was the Selkirk dame in disguise. Anyway, they all had passes."

"Oh, they all had passes." Pat reiterated the words in a sarcastic vein.

"Well, just the same they were probably the guys that you've spent the last half-hour trying to locate. Still, that doesn't account for Selkirk's sister."

"She didn't leave by the gateway, anyway," Sam declared emphatically.

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"If she had, I'd have spotted her—"

And then he stopped short, a disquieting possibility occurring to him, and, seeing the look of uneasiness that dawned on his moon of a face, Pat eyed him in a penetrating fashion.

"What's up, Sam?"

"Pat, a motor truck pulled out—that same truck she boarded so as to smuggle herself into the plant. You don't suppose—"

He did not finish the sentence. Pat finished it for him.

"That she boarded it again to make her getaway?" he said. "Of course she did, you sap. Aw, come on, we may as well get back to the car."

"What about your head, O'Hara?" Wellington interposed. "You took a nasty bump, you know. Hadn't you better come to our plant hospital and let the doctor have a look at it?"

"Thanks, Mr. Wellington," Pat rejoined, "my head's all right. But it might not be a bad idea to have Maloney's examined."

Later that night, in the suite they had rented at an exotic hotel down in the Oriental quarter of Los Angeles, the two foreigners known as Tahata and Zutta received a visitor in the shape of Franklyn, that pallid-faced individual who was a slave to the will of the first-named Asiatic.

Tahata stepped close to Franklyn as the latter put in an appearance, and he fixed the white man with his strangely compelling gaze.

"Well," he asked tensely, "have you done my bidding? Did you send those four men to the Wellington Steel Plant? Have you brought the formula?"

Franklyn stared straight ahead of him, hypnotised by the sloe-black eyes that peered into his own, his mind held captive by the influence of a stronger personality.

"The men failed," he answered slowly. "They were forestalled by a girl—a girl who is Selkirk's sister. I understand. The formula is now in her possession."

He went on to describe the events that had transpired at the mill, Tahata listening to him in a disgruntled silence the while. Then, when the white man had finished speaking, the Asiatic dismissed him with a gesture and turned to his own compatriot.

"This police officer who was on the scene to-night sounds like Patrolman O'Hara, our acquaintance of the morning," he said. "I gained the impression then that he was no ordinary guardian of the peace, Zutta. He struck me as being an exceptionally shrewd young man, and it seems he may be a dangerous one as well—from our point of view."

Zutta looked at him askance.

"This whole situation may become too dangerous for our liking, Excellency," he muttered. "Perhaps we should leave."

"No," Tahata made the pronouncement in deliberate accents. "No, we are not going to leave, Zutta—at least, not without the formula."

Harrison

THE following morning a car drew up near the city dump outside Los Angeles, and, alighting from the vehicle, a stockily-built individual made his way on foot down the road leading between the mounds of lumber that had been tipped on to the stretch of waste ground.

His objective was that shanty where John Adams and his son had lived after the inventor had sunk every cent of

his capital into his project for the manufacture of flexible steel, and on reaching the crude dwelling in question the newcomer glanced about him furtively before sidling up to one of the windows of the hut.

Thirty seconds later the man had satisfied himself that no one was at home and had forced an entry into the abode. Then he proceeded to carry out an intensive search of the shack, a search which ended when he came across a sheet of strong but pliable metal that was about a foot square.

Thrusting this under his coat, he made a hurried exit and retraced his steps to the car in which he had arrived, and not long afterwards he might have been seen driving into town, ultimately pulling up in the vicinity of a steel company's plant.

The premises were those of the Harrison Corporation, and the man who had ransacked Pinky Adams' home had no difficulty in gaining admittance to the office of the president's secretary, a young girl of attractive appearance.

That girl was known as Miss Day, and had been in Harrison's employ for several months, proving herself a highly efficient young woman. Even Harrison, who was not given to praise, and who often went out of his way to find fault with members of his staff, seemed to consider her well-fitted for the position she occupied.

He would have regarded her in a very different light, however, if he had been aware of her true identity. For this girl who went under the name of Day was in reality Molly Selkirk, sister of the man who was being held in connection with the Adams murder, and that same resourceful interloper who had entered the Wellington Works the previous night, to secure, for reasons best known to herself and her brother, the formula relating to the manufacture of flexible steel.

It was to Molly Selkirk, then, that the individual who had just come from the city dump now addressed himself.

"You might tell your chief that a Mr. Pollard is here to see him," he said. "He's expectin' me."

Molly Selkirk announced the caller, and in another moment the man was being shown into the inner sanctum tenanted by Harrison, of the Harrison Steel Works.

Thin and spare, with sharp, sour-looking features, Harrison was seated at a big mahogany desk. He glanced at Pollard expectantly as the door closed behind the visitor.

"Well, did you get it?" he demanded, little dreaming that his secretary had posted herself in an attentive attitude outside the door of his private office.

"Sure," Pollard answered, withdrawing from under his coat the sheet of metal he had found in the shanty home of the late John Adams. "It was a cinch."

Harrison picked up a 'phone, and asked to be connected with the company's laboratory. Then, having been put through, he delivered a brusque command:

"Send Stevens up here," he ordered.

Within a minute or two a studious-looking individual of about forty was making his way into Harrison's private office by a side door. He was wearing a white laboratory-coat, and was chief research chemist of the Harrison Steel Corporation.

"Stevens," Harrison said, handing over the sheet of metal Pollard had produced, "take a look at this."

The chemist examined the substance closely, and an expression of awe appeared on his face. Presently he gave a low whistle.

"Flexible steel!" he breathed. "I didn't think Adams or anybody else could ever make a go of it."

"What I want to know is—how he did it," Harrison retorted. "Stop whatever you're working on, and break that sample of metal down."

"I'm not sure I can analyse it, Mr. Harrison."

"You've got to," was the harsh rejoinder. "Listen, Stevens, if you can find out the components of that alloy and the process of manufacture I'll register the invention with the Patent Office. It won't matter to me who has the formula then."

Stevens took his leave with a dubious expression on his countenance, departing via the door by which he had entered. Then Pollard leaned forward and addressed Harrison.

"Say, wasn't that sample of metal the stuff I've been reading about in the papers this morning?" he queried. "And isn't that guy Adams your chemist mentioned the same feller that got murdered yesterday?"

Harrison eyed him narrowly.

"Did you ever hear about the man who got hurt because he wouldn't mind his own business?" he countered.

"Sorry," Pollard grunted in a tone of comprehension. "I didn't mean to speak out of turn. Well, if you ever have any other job you want done, you know where to find me."

With that he made his exit, passing out through the room occupied by Molly Selkirk, who was seated innocently at her typewriter by this time.

Once Pollard had gone, the Selkirk girl appeared to lapse into a deep reverie, no doubt meditating upon all she had heard while listening at the door of her chief's private sanctum. But, whatever the nature of her thoughts, they were interrupted in a little while by the buzzer of a dictograph on her desk.

She pressed down a switch, and a voice reached her. It was the voice of a doorman at the main entrance of the office building.

"Is Mr. Harrison in, Miss Day? A Radio Patrolman O'Hara wants to see him."

Molly Selkirk started. Then, after a moment's pause, she told the doorman to send the representative of the law up to her office, for it seemed to her she could do nothing else.

She herself had no desire to come face to face with any policeman, however. For, although she did not know this O'Hara by name, it occurred to her that he might turn out to be some member of the Force who had seen her when she had visited her brother at the station, and she was anxious to avoid any risk of being denounced to Harrison.

Consequently, she hid herself in a cupboard where her coat and hat were hanging, and shortly afterwards, through a chink in the door of that recess, she saw Pat O'Hara come into her room—whereupon she congratulated herself upon her prudence, for she recognised him immediately as the patrolman who had so nearly met his death in the Wellington mill the night before.

As for Pat, he now looked round the vacant office in an uncertain fashion. Then, hearing a movement in the adjoining room, he knocked on the door of that inner apartment and found himself a couple of seconds later in the presence of Harrison.

"I beg your pardon," the young policeman said, "but your secretary must have stepped out, and a cop

hasn't much time to waste. Er—you are Mr. Harrison, aren't you?"

"Yes," was the reply. "What do you want?"

"I've a few questions I'd like to ask you," Pat observed. "We're holding a man by the name of Selkirk for the murder of John P. Adams, the inventor. According to police records, Selkirk was sent to the penitentiary two years ago, largely on your testimony."

Harrison inclined his head.

"Yes. He was an employee of this company. Unfortunately, he embezzled a sum of money, and we had to prosecute him."

"I know all that, sir," Pat commented. "As a matter of fact, I really came here to find out if you could tell me anything about his sister."

"Sister?" Harrison echoed. "I didn't know he had one."

"He has one all right. She got away with the formula for Adams' invention last night."

Harrison's countenance took on an expression of the keenest interest.

"Well, that is news!" he declared. "It looks like theft runs in the Selkirk family. However, she can't possibly dispose of that formula—except to a foreign country. If'm, so you came here hoping to get a line on her from me, eh?"

"And you never even heard of her." Pat said wryly. "Too bad, sir. I'd sure like to have some dope on that girl."

"I'm sorry I can't be of assistance to the police in regard to her," Harrison returned, little dreaming that the young woman in question was his own secretary. "But John Adams was a good friend of mine, and if there's ever anything I can do to help clear up this case don't hesitate to call on me."

Pat thanked him, and was striding back towards the door when he thought

he detected a scuffle of feet just beyond it. But he gave little heed to the circumstance until he opened that door and caught a glimpse of a familiar figure retreating hastily across the outer threshold of the office attached to Harrison's—the figure of a girl whom he identified as Selkirk's sister.

Pat instantly gave chase, not even delaying the pursuit long enough to turn back and acquaint Harrison with the discovery he had made. Yet so fleet of foot was the girl that she had gained the street outside the steel company's premises before the radio cop managed to overtake her.

Sam Maloney was waiting at the kerb with the police car, and his face registered surprise as Pat joined him with the struggling captive.

"The Selkirk dame!" he ejaculated. "Nobody else," Pat rejoined laconically. "I don't know how she came to be there, but I caught her snooping in the office of Harrison's secretary."

His words told Molly Selkirk that he did not realise she was employed by the head of the steel works. Nor did she enlighten him on that score when she addressed him in an appealing tone.

"Listen," she began, "I—I wanted to see Mr. Harrison about my brother. His secretary wasn't there, so I started to open the door of his room, but I heard your conversation with him, and realised you wouldn't believe anything I said after what happened last night. Then I lost my head and ran away."

She felt that the story sounded lame, and it certainly made no favourable impression on her two listeners.

"Lady," Pat stated, "I'm not interested in fairy tales. Now, tell the truth. Why were you snooping around up there? How did you get into the Harrison Company's offices in the first place? And, most important of all, what have you done with that formula



"The formula's my chief concern," Pat said, putting his arm round John Adams' orphaned son. "It's worth a cool million dollars, and it's the rightful property of young Pinky here."

you picked up in the Wellington plant last night?"

The girl looked at him nervously.

"I'm not going to answer any of your questions at all—until I've talked to my brother."

"That can easily be arranged," Pat retorted. "We won't bother Mr. Harrison for the time being. You're going down to headquarters in this car right now."

He thrust her into the back of the police automobile, and, ordering Sam to take the wheel, climbed in beside the prisoner, and a few seconds later the vehicle was pulling away from the kerb and travelling in the direction of the city centre.

The Oriental Quarter

TWENTY minutes after quitting the neighbourhood of the Harrison Steel Works, Radio Car 11 drew up outside police headquarters, and out of it stepped Pat O'Hara, Sam Maloney and Molly Selkirk—to be confronted immediately by a dejected-looking boy who had just emerged from the station.

The boy was Pinky Adams, and he was holding his dog Irish on a leash, and at sight of him Pat spoke to him inquiringly.

"Hallo, kid!" he said. "What are you doing here?"

"A detective came an' fetched me from the dump early this morning," Pinky answered. "The Homicide Squad wanted to ask me some questions about—about dad. But what's the use of asking me questions, I'd like to know, when they turn loose the man that killed him?"

There was a wealth of bitterness in the boy's tone as he uttered that last sentence, which fell startlingly enough upon the ears of Pat, Sam and the girl who was in their charge.

"What's that?" Pat jerked. "They've released Selkirk?"

"Yes, they've let him go—the man that murdered my dad!" Pinky cried, unaware as yet that the girl with the two radio cops was Selkirk's sister. "Some lawyer came and got him out of gaol."

"When, Pinky?"

"Only a minute or two ago. There's Selkirk now."

The lad pointed along the sidewalk, and, turning their heads, the two police officers and their captive saw Henry Selkirk preparing to enter a closed car with a couple of other men some little distance down the street.

Pat and Sam were silent, but on perceiving her brother Molly Selkirk gave vent to a spontaneous cry.

"Harry!" she called, keyed up to a pitch of excitement by the knowledge that his release had been secured. "Harry!"

Her voice reached Selkirk's ears, and he swung round. Then, discerning her, he made as if to hasten along the pavement in her direction. Yet his companions, whoever they were, had no intention of permitting him an interview with his sister. On the contrary they seemed anxious to be off, and laid restraining hands on him.

He tried to wrench away from them, but their manner changed from persuasiveness to determination, and suddenly one of them thrust a gun into Selkirk's back, forcing him to enter the automobile and then scrambled in after him. At the same time the other man leapt into the front of the vehicle, and in an instant it was on the move.

Standing at the foot of the steps that led up to the main entrance of police headquarters, Molly Selkirk and her captors together with Pinky Adams were thunderstruck by the unexpected

turn that events had taken. But before that departing auto had gone fifty yards Pat O'Hara had found his voice.

"There's something phoney about those guys with Selkirk!" he rapped out, wheeling abruptly towards his colleague and the girl they had apprehended. "Sam, I'm going after them. You take his sister into the station and keep her there till I get back."

He had a last glimpse of Molly Selkirk's anxious face as he spun round to retrace his steps to the police car. Then a moment later he was in the driving-seat, and he had started up the engine and slipped the gear-lever home when he heard the rear offside door open and shut, and glanced round to find that Pinky Adams had jumped in behind him with Irish.

There was no time to order Pinky and his dog out of the car, for the auto containing Selkirk and his companions was already turning off down a side-road. Therefore, Pat crammed his foot on the accelerator without a word, and the police car surged forward in pursuit of the other machine.

The chase that followed was one that took Pinky Adams' breath away, for it was replete with hairbreadth escapes—a mad dash through the city's populous streets, with the whine of the motor rising high in the ears and the scream of tyres mingling with it on every corner that was turned. And meanwhile, well aware that he was being trailed, the driver of the other auto was setting the pace, cutting in and out of the traffic with a recklessness and a skill that few men could have excelled.

Pat could not excel him. But at least he was the fellow's equal, and kept track of the fugitive vehicle without losing an inch of ground, though in the first half-mile he came within an ace of colliding with other users of the road a dozen times.

Another half-mile had been covered when Pat suddenly picked up a microphone and spoke into the radio.

"Car One-One calling headquarters," he intoned. "Car Eleven calling headquarters!"

"Go ahead, Eleven," came an answering voice.

"Trailing blue sedan occupied by Selkirk and two men whom I suspect are kidnapers," Pat began, but was interrupted by the officer who had responded to his signal from the radio control-room at the station.

"Sure, we know. Maloney just reported the incident, O'Hara. Confine yourself to details of the suspect's car and the route it's taking."

Still driving with his foot hard down on the accelerator, still keeping his eyes on the auto in front of him, Pat went on talking into the microphone crisply:

"It's headed east right now—on State Street. A blue sedan—licence number 5M 2225."

"Five M, two-two-two-five? That's the number of a car reported stolen from a parking-place a few minutes ago. All right, O'Hara, we'll broadcast a general alarm to all radio patrols in the neighbourhood of State Street."

Pat replaced the "mike" and concentrated his whole attention on the automobile ahead of him. In the meantime, on the back seat of the police car, Pinky and Irish were being rocked from side to side by the wild swerves that Pat was making in order to forge his way through the traffic, and it was as he was picking himself up after having been bundled into a corner of the vehicle that the orphaned son of John Adams chanced to look out through the back window.

The boy at once discovered that a

third auto was involved in the chase—an open tourer that was speeding along in the same break-neck fashion as the radio car and the fugitive sedan—and all of a sudden he remembered he had casually noticed it standing in a side street opposite police headquarters when he had first issued from the station after the release of Henry Selkirk.

Pinky was a quick-thinking youngster, and it dawned on him that the occupants of the open car, a couple of men who were crouching slyly behind its windscreen, had been waiting near headquarters to aid and abet Selkirk's kidnapers in the event of any trouble occurring. But before he could acquaint Pat with his suspicion the tourer swept abreast of the police auto in a spurt that showed it was capable of terrific acceleration, and next second its driver was forcing the patrolman off the roadway.

The police car hit the kerb, and the impact ripped one of the tyres wide open, with a blast that was like the report of a gun. Another instant and the machine was slewing clear round in a terrifying skid, but luckily it kept squat to the ground and finished up half-way across the pavement on its four wheels.

The tourer responsible for bringing it to a halt raced on in the wake of the sedan, and both the automobiles in question were out of sight by the time Pat had climbed out of Car 11 with Pinky Adams and Irish. But the patrolman had recognised the two men who had been in the open vehicle, and after satisfying himself that Pinky and his dog were all right, he spoke to the lad grimly.

"Those birds in that tourer, Pinky," he said, "they were two of the guys who were after your father's formula at the Wellington Works last night. One was the fellow named Watkins, and the other was the man who answers to the monicker of 'Bill.' Huh, they certainly put the skids on us. But there's still a chance the sedan will be picked up by another police car."

A crowd was beginning to collect on the sidewalk, but, ignoring the questions that were fired at him, Pat set himself to the task of jacking-up his machine and changing the wheel whose tyre had been blown out.

It was a task that he had hardly accomplished when a message from headquarters came through on the auto's radio.

"Calling Car One-one. Calling Car 11. Blue sedan 5M 2225 found abandoned in front of 1337, Delacy Street. No trace of occupants. Car 27 standing by."

A quarter of an hour later Pat was driving into Delacy Street in company with Pinky and that youngster's canine friend, and there he found the blue sedan parked outside a deserted warehouse with Car 27 drawn up close at hand and a couple of patrolmen on the sidewalk.

Pat nodded to the other two officers and then glanced ruefully at the sedan.

"So they flew the coop, eh?" he grunted. "Did you see anything of them at all?"

"There wasn't a sign of them when we got here, Pat," one of the other officers announced.

"You didn't happen to spot a tourer anywhere in the vicinity when you showed up, did you?" was Pat's next query.

The answer was in the negative, and before any further conversation could take place the men attached to Car 27 received an emergency radio call ordering them to investigate a hold-up at a

bank on the south-east side of the city. Consequently Pat O'Hara, Pinky Adams and the dog Irish were left alone beside the abandoned sedan, and after a brief silence Pat addressed the boy in a gloomy tone.

"Well, kid," he said, "it looks like we've lost the scent. I guess Selkirk and his kidnapers switched over to the tourer here, and there's no telling where they might be now. If I had the licence number of that tourer we might still be in the hunt, but I didn't get it."

Pinky did not answer him at once. He was looking fixedly at Irish, who was straining at the leash by which he was being held.

"Say, Pat," the lad exclaimed suddenly, "I don't think Selkirk and the men with him switched over to the tourer. I think they walked away from here."

"What gives you that idea?" the patrolman demanded.

"Look at Irish. He's got his nose to the ground an' he seems as if he's doin' his best to drag my arm off. That's the way he acted after Selkirk was let out of the police station. Irish seemed to pick up his scent, and he fairly lugged me out into the street. Don't forget that scent is fresh to him, because it's only twenty-four hours since he chased Selkirk out of the shanty down at the city dump. And remember how he went for Selkirk when you arrested him for—for killin' dad."

Pat eyed the dog in a none-too-hopeful manner.

"You mean he's picked up Selkirk's scent now? I doubt it, Pinky. I know Irish is smart, but—"

The boy interrupted him. "I'm gonna give him his head, anyway," he declared. "Come on, Pat, let's see where he takes us."

He released the dog, and the animal promptly set off along the street with his nose close to the paving-stones, and, prevailing on Pat to accompany him, its youthful master started after it at a brisk walk.

For ten minutes man and boy followed Irish on his dubious quest, and by that time they had turned several corners and landed in a section of the city which was familiar enough to the police officer but completely strange to Pinky. For it was that locality known as the Oriental quarter, a realm of narrow by-ways peopled by swarthy aliens, and flanked by exotic buildings whose domes and minarets typified the East—buildings that exuded the flavour of rich spices, buildings that echoed the babble of foreign tongues, or invited the passer-by to pause and hearken to the strains of haunting pipe-music.

"This is the Oriental quarter, Pinky," the stalwart police officer informed him. "If you go right into the heart of it you can forget that you're in America."

Irish was still ahead of them, but what with the narrow, tortuous streets and the crowds of Asiatics thronging them it would have been impossible for Pat and the boy to keep him in view if he had maintained the steady trot at which he had covered ground when first he had been let off the leash.

Now, however, the dog was beginning to show signs of perplexity, and had soon slackened his pace considerably. If he had in truth been following a scent, it appeared that it was becoming increasingly difficult to detect—probably because it was well-nigh obliterated by the passage of so many other individuals over it.

At last, indeed, the animal came to a dead standstill, and, as Pat O'Hara

and Pinky moved alongside it, it looked up at them with an expression in its brown eyes that was almost human in its significance of defeat and frustration.

"Well," Pat muttered, after looking at the dog in silence for a spell, "if Irish was giving us a lead he's sure up a gum-tree now."

Pinky nodded.

"Yeah, I guess so," he had to admit, and then, following upon another interval of silence: "Say, Pat," he added, "how d'you suppose those guys were able to walk Selkirk right through these streets with so many people about? Surely Selkirk could have made a fuss if he didn't want to go this far with them."

"One of those men was armed," Pat reminded him. "Maybe both of 'em. If they did come this way, they very likely covered Selkirk from their coat-pockets and made it clear to him that he'd be well advised to go along with them quietly."

"And what did they want with him, I wonder?"

Pat drew down his brows thoughtfully.

"I don't reckon there's much doubt that their motive in kidnapping him had something to do with your father's formula," he replied.

Pinky had stooped to caress Irish's smooth grey coat. At the same time he was displaying a certain amount of interest in an open-air café outside whose entrance the dog had halted. Tables were dotted around in it under colourful sunshades, and dusky waiters were serving refreshments to groups of chattering Orientals who were seated at those tables. The place was obviously a favourite rendezvous of the better-class element in the "quarter," for there was scarcely a chair that was not occupied by some prosperous-looking immigrant from the continent of Asia.

Pinky ran his eyes over the unusual and intriguing spectacle presented by this café, with its picturesque, bustling attendants and its equally picturesque but lounging patrons. Then, turning his attention on Pat again, he broached the subject of Selkirk's release once more.

"Listen," he said earnestly, "there's something I can't make out—something that seems all wrong to me. How is it that a man held for murder can get out of gaol without first having to stand his trial?"

"Well, I guess Selkirk's lawyer must have had a writ of habeas corpus, Pinky. Yep, and those men who kidnapped him must have got wise to that and waited for him to come out—"

And then he stopped, for at that moment his glance came to rest on two men who had just stepped out of the nearby hotel's portals into the open-air café of the forecourt—two men who stood out in that setting because they were whites—two men who were none other than those rogues answering to the names of Watkins and Bill!

With an involuntary shout Pat started through the entrance of the

café, and almost simultaneously Bill and Watkins perceived him.

They turned tail at once and dived back into the hotel, and Pat, leaving Pinky and Irish, charged across the forecourt in hot pursuit, threading his way through the crowded tables that were dotted about it.

He did not know that he had also been seen from the windows of a room in the hotel—a room occupied by Tahata, Zutra, Franklyn and Harry Selkirk—the last-named being covered by a revolver held in the grasp of Tahata's secretary.

It was not towards this room that Bill and Watkins beat a retreat. Instead they rushed clear through the hotel lobby to an apartment at the rear of the building, and they were on the point of blundering into it as Pat entered the premises.

The police officer gained an impression of them as they reached the threshold of that apartment, and he noticed that Watkins lifted his hand and touched something over the door. Then both men disappeared into the room, and even as they vanished into its interior and slammed the door behind them Pat saw a section of the wall above the transom swing out and then down in a circular motion—an iron shutter in reality, as solid as the door of a bank vault, and slowly descending so as to form a barrier over the existing door.

Hurling himself forward through the lobby, Pat ducked under the shutter as it was lowering itself beyond a horizontal position. Then he gripped the handle of the apartment's door, but almost in the same moment he heard the rasping of a bolt within, and the door refused to budge in spite of his attempts to burst it in.

In the meantime the iron shutter was continuing its deliberate descent, and suddenly, as he was still struggling to force the door, Pat felt the heavy metal contraption fold in on him.

He squirmed round, only to find himself trapped between the massive shutter and the door beyond which Bill and Watkins had sought refuge from him; and, although he strove might and main to hold it away from him, the great block of iron moved against him with crushing pressure.

(To be continued in another sensational episode next week. A New Universal Picture, controlled throughout the United Kingdom and the Irish Free State by General Film Distributors, Ltd., starring Grant Withers.)

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February 5th, 1935.

"OUTLAWS OF THE ORIENT"

(Continued from page 12)

way surprised by the white man's abrupt appearance.

"Ho-Fang still goes!" Chet seated himself in a chair beside his brother, drawing the gun unobtrusively as he did so; and under the table he held the gun within a couple of feet of the brigand's paunch. "I've got you covered, and I understand Chinese," he warned, "so be careful what you say!"

Ho-Fang blinked, but otherwise did not move.

"Tell your men that Johnny's going out!"

In his own dialect Ho-Fang did so. "Go on," said Chet to Johnny, "and take it easy. Tell the boys I'll be with them directly."

Johnny rose and went slowly to the steps.

"Send your men out," directed Chet, after he had gone; "we're going to talk business."

Ho-Fang obeyed, and the members of his band mounted the steps to the street, and in the street looked sullenly on as Johnny mounted his horse and sat waiting upon it with Red and Burton and Jackson. Chet immediately brought his gun from under the table to the top of it, and for nearly two minutes he sat facing Ho-Fang, his eyes as cold as the steel that could spit death.

"Now get up and walk towards the door!" he rasped. And as Ho-Fang rose heavily to his feet he also rose.

Together they reached the foot of the steps, and there Chet stood in front of the defeated brigand.

"That's for Wong!" he suddenly thundered; and out shot his left fist with such violence that Ho-Fang's jaw was nearly dislocated by the blow that landed on the point of it, and he was unconscious before he fell.

Chet ascended the steps and saw the members of the band clustered round the entrance.

"Good-bye, general," he turned to shout down into the café. "Take care of yourself!"

Ming Yen was suspicious, but he moved aside, and Chet walked over to Johnny and the others and got on his horse.

"Come on, boys," he said, "let's get going!"

Paid in Full!

IN the cool night air of the desert, Chet had plenty of time for reflection as he and his companions galloped back towards the distant camp. He could not bring himself to regret that final knockout blow he had administered, but he realised that Ho-Fang would be swift to retaliate.

"Don't spare your horses!" he shouted. "We've got to get back just as soon as we know how! Ho-Fang will strike before the night's out, and we've got to be ready for him!"

Before they were half-way to the camp Ho-Fang had mustered the whole of his gang of ruffians, and was riding at their head with an aching jaw and a thirst for blood. But the camp was reached, and outside the office building Chet issued orders.

"See that the coolies are armed," he said to Red, "and send all the men over here."

Joan came running out from the adjoining cabin with Lucky, and uttered a cry of relief as she saw Johnny standing there. But she and Lucky had to

be content with what Johnny could tell them while Chet directed Burton to put away the horses and Jackson to help get rifles and ammunition from the shed in which arms were stored.

A period of intense activity followed, and crates full of rifles were on the veranda when the coolies were lined up in front of it, and Chet addressed them.

"Men," he said, "there's going to be trouble with Ho-Fang. Now, you were hired as oil workers, not as soldiers. There may be fighting to-night, and if any one of you wants to get out of it before it's too late now's your chance."

He called an intelligent-looking yellow man forward.

"Chang," he said, "tell them what it is."

Chang translated at some length into Cantonese, and he translated into English the replies the men made.

"These men all good Chinese," he declared proudly. "They say Ho-Fang not Chinese, or his army, but bad bandits from border country. They stay and fight."

"Give them rifles and ammunition!" cried Red.

Under Chang's command some of the coolies were distributed about the oil-fields, using the derricks for cover, and the rest were posted round about the buildings with Jackson and another white man. Red, Johnny, Lucky, and Burton mounted guard in the office with Joan, and Chet made a final tour of inspection.

He returned to the office in a stillness that seemed uncanny, and the half-hour of waiting that followed was almost more of a strain on taut nerves than actual conflict.

The two windows in the office were open, and at one of them Johnny and Lucky were crouched with rifles in their hands, and at the other Red had mounted a sub-machine-gun on the sill, and Burton was on his knees with a rifle. Joan was standing beside Johnny, an easy target for any creeping enemy, and Chet made her retreat behind the counter and sit down in a chair there.

"I'm getting fed-up with this suspense," growled Red.

"We'll hear from them soon enough," said Chet. "Lucky, how's that aeroplane?"

"All set and ready to go," Lucky replied.

"Machine-guns loaded?"

"Yeah, and there's half a dozen dynamite bombs on board, too."

"Good!" approved Chet.

The expected attack began with a direct raid on horseback. Ho-Fang evidently imagining that there had been no time for any elaborate defence to be organised. He swept with his men across the oilfield towards the buildings; but a coolie perched high on the timbers of a derrick saw the approaching riders and opened fire with a rifle.

One of the bandits pitched headlong from the saddle, and the others stopped at a harsh shout from their leader. A coolie who had crept under a motor-truck blazed away at them through the spokes of a wheel, and shots rang out from all sides.

Off went the horsemen into the darkness; but behind some rocks they dismounted, and then they crept towards the camp again on foot, at least fifty strong. They reached a trench and spread out in it, and the first intimation of their return was a volley of rifle fire that shattered the windows of cabins and shacks and caused several casualties among the defenders in the open.

Red raked the top of the trench with his machine-gun, but the bandits could not have chosen a stronger position, or

one from which more damage could be done.

"Keep them busy while I get to that aeroplane," said Chet, who had put on a leather jacket and helmet.

"All right, boss," said Red, and his machine-gun rained bullets at the distant trench while Chet slipped out at a back door of the office building and sped to the machine.

Lucky, firing out at the other window to help keep the enemy occupied, dropped his rifle and staggered backwards with a wound in his right forearm; and Joan promptly ran to him, led him away into the adjacent room, and washed and bandaged the arm with all the skill of a nurse.

"There's no bullet in it," she told him. "I guess the bullet's somewhere in the office, but it's ploughed up a lot of flesh, hasn't it? Sit still, I'm going to put that arm in a sling for you."

Chet reached the aeroplane, though it was almost a miracle that he did so without being hit, and he heaved himself into the front cockpit and started up the engines.

Off went the machine across the sand, and instantly the bandits' fire became concentrated upon it; but it rose into the air, went roaring over the foothills, and presently came sweeping back above the trench.

Chet rattled away with one of the machine-guns in its passage, and there was more than one casualty amongst the enemy before he soared off again to circuit the camp and return to the attack.

But Ho-Fang, meanwhile, had shouted to Ming Yen, and Ming Yen was creeping towards the nearest of the wells with a bomb. He hurled the bomb, and it exploded close to the base of the derrick of well No. 4.

The timbers were shaken by that explosion, the stream of oil from the well caught fire, and its blaze lit up the whole camp.

"There goes Number Four!" exclaimed Red; and Johnny immediately dropped his rifle and stood staring out through the window, clenching his hands and trying to summon the courage he needed for a task fraught with infinite danger.

Joan caught hold of his arm with both hands, and somehow that decided him.

"I've got to cap that fire!" he cried hoarsely. "Give me the asbestos suit, quick!"

"Oh, Johnny!" shivered Joan; but she fetched him the suit, and the gloves and the mask to go with the suit, and she helped him into the very clumsy garments.

Gunfire was still continuous outside, but Ho-Fang and his bandits had deserted the trench to take cover behind the rocks because Chet was sweeping back again in the aeroplane. Once more the machine-gun rat-tatted lead, hut to no purpose; and Chet flew off again.

Johnny became a target for bullets as he made his way to the blazing well, but he knew that Joan was watching him from inside the office, and the knowledge inspired him. He reached the platform and the open pipe, which had become a volcano of flame. The cross-beams of the derrick were alight, and blazing fragments of wood showered down upon him as time and again he caught hold of the metal cap and tried to pull it down over the pipe.

Ten times, at least, he was driven back by the almost intolerable heat just as success seemed assured; but at last he managed to get the cap down over the flaming vent and to fasten it there.

The well was saved, but the derrick was burning fiercely as he tottered back towards the office. He was a little less than half-way when a terrific explosion,

over by the rocks, caused him to fall flat on his face. Chet had flown back in the aeroplane and had dropped a dynamite bomb amongst the enemy sheltered there.

Slowly Johnny got to his feet again, and not another shot rang out during the rest of his journey to the office. He stumbled in over the step, and Joan was waiting for him with shining eyes.

"Johnny, I'm proud of you!" she cried.

Chet was high in the air again, grimly satisfied with the effect of the bomb he had dropped because half of Ho-Fang's men had been blown to pieces by it. But as the machine came roaring back he saw that the rest had run to their horses and mounted them, and before he could change his course they were riding furiously across the desert, the unmistakable headgear of Ho-Fang conspicuous in front of what remained of his "army."

Chet banked in a huge semicircle, then straightened out the machine and planed down above the heads of the fugitives, one hand over the side of the cockpit and a bomb in it ready to let fall.

Down went the bomb, and the aeroplane shot upwards a second before it exploded, almost at the feet of the horse Ho-Fang was spurring frantically towards Tak Tao.

It took Chet several minutes to circle back and look down upon the havoc he had created with the bomb. Ho-Fang and his horse had been blown to pieces, and the rest of his men were dead upon the sand.

Soon after Willard Percival Snyder had descended to his office next morning, from his quarters on the upper floor of the local headquarters of the company in Kwei-Yong, he sallied forth to call upon General Moy Ku Ting. There had been no word from the camp since Lucky had disappeared without expounding his "idea," and the resident manager was worried.

The general received him courteously, though he had no great liking for the self-important representative of the Thatcher Petroleum Corporation.

"An early visitor, Mr. Snyder," he commented.

"Yes," said Snyder. "The fact is that Eaton has sent me word that he wants you to release him from his promise to remain in China, general."

Moy Ku Ting raised his brows.

"For what reason?" he inquired.

"I've been waiting to learn that myself," Snyder complained. "Our plane is long overdue, and I have a feeling that something has happened at the field. There's a gang of renegades up there, headed by that half-breed bandit Ho-Fang, who has been causing trouble."

The general's brows descended in a frown.

"You should have brought this matter to my attention at once!" he said quite severely. "I can't understand why Mr. Eaton did not request my co-operation."

"Perhaps he felt that it would have precipitated open warfare," suggested Snyder.

"Nevertheless," returned the general, "we cannot tolerate such enemies of China within our borders. I believe this warrants my personal investigation. I shall fly to the oilfield immediately, and if you are as anxious as you say, Mr. Snyder, I think it would be well for you to accompany me."

"There's nothing I'd like better!" Snyder declared.

It was a military aeroplane of considerable size that conveyed the two

across the desert, and a flying officer was at the controls. The noise of twin engines in the sky brought everybody out from the buildings in the camp, and they stared in astonishment as the machine landed and first the general and then Snyder climbed down from it.

Chet walked forward to meet the entirely unexpected visitors, but Johnny rushed Joan away to the living-room of the adjoining cabin, and Red and the rest went back to their duties, save Lucky, who hovered on the veranda, his arm still in a sling.

General Moy Ku Ting explained to Chet the reason for his presence in the camp with Snyder.

"I was much concerned to hear of these activities of the brigand Ho-Fang," he said. "I only wish you had reported to me sooner. Do you need any troops for protection?"

Chet grinned broadly.

"You don't have to worry about those bandits, general," he said. "We've paid them off in full!"

"Eaton," barked Snyder, "how many times have I told you no pay-offs?"

"Well," shrugged Chet, "I suggest, Mr. Snyder, that you fire me. Come on into the office, general, and I'll explain things."

As the three stepped into the office, Lucky went off to the next cabin and burst in upon Joan and Johnny.

"Hi, duchess," he boomed, "now your friend Snyder is here maybe I can fix it for you to get your old job back."

"Thank you, Lucky," said Joan, "but I think you've done enough fixing."

"I see," nodded Lucky, "but I'll get you that ticket back home I promised you."

Joan turned to Johnny, whose face had dropped at this mention of a ticket.

"Johnny dear," she said softly, "how much do you think my ticket home should cost?"

Thus encouraged, Johnny's face brightened again—and he took her into his arms and hugged her.

"Well, let's see," he pondered. "Our home is going to be about a quarter of a mile down the sands—when it's built—and I think you can make a fair deal with Lucky for a rickshaw."

Lucky made a face at him.

"Well, now look here," he said disconsolately. "Why didn't you tell me you were going to fix everything up yourself, duchess?"

"Don't you have to make a report to Snyder?" asked Johnny pointedly.

"Oh, yes, Snyder," Lucky scratched the back of his neck with his left hand, gave one more glance at two radiant faces, and went slowly out to the office.

Snyder was in there, leaning against the counter; General Moy Ku Ting was shaking hands with Chet. Lucky dived away from the open door, and from a trouser pocket he took out his precious pea-shooter. He heard Chet say, in a very grateful voice:

"Thank you for relieving me of my promise, general. I'm sorry it's of no use inviting you to my wedding, but maybe you'll get an invitation to another one in Kwei-Yong. I rather fancy my brother is going to marry and settle down right here on the job."

"Well," said Snyder, "that seems to settle everything except my crippled flyer."

Lucky heard that, too. He stepped in at the doorway with the pea-shooter to his mouth—and Snyder clapped a hand to his face as a tiny missile struck it and rolled upon the floor.

"I'm afraid," laughed Chet, "he's far from crippled, Snyder!"

(By permission of Columbia Pictures Corporation, Ltd., starring Jack Holt.)

"NON-STOP NEW YORK"

(Continued from page 20)

thousand pounds." His face screwed up into a vicious grin. "Now it's twenty thousand! I've got something more valuable to sell—the right to murder an innocent young lady."

"Very well," Brandt gave a resigned shrug. "But I'll have to pay you in New York."

"Nothing doing. When we get to New York there'll be no little girl, and so the poor dog gets none."

"What do you think I am?"

"A man who travels with a roll of bills. Cash down and you can do what you like—no cash, and I'll be a father to the girl," Sam cried, his vicious nature uppermost. He would have sold his soul for money.

"I have not all that money in my pocket," Brandt answered. "But there is money in my baggage, but it is in the baggage room."

"Why did you put it there?"

"The custody of a solid British Air Company is better than carrying it on me—with people like you about." The eyes of the killer were mocking. "And the baggage room is locked. If you could open it with your nimble fingers, Mr. Pryor, I could grant your request. You've picked a lock before."

"That's as maybe, but I'm going straight."

"Pity," Brandt shrugged his shoulders. "It's my money, so it wouldn't be stealing. Twenty thousand pounds."

"All right," Sam decided. "I'm a bit out of practice, but I'll try."

Except for the steady hum of the engines, there seemed no other sound. Nobody was about, or so those two men thought. But Master Arnold was awake, and he saw them enter the baggage room. He followed, and cautiously peered inside. There he saw Sam Pryor bending over a safe deposit door, which was open, and Sam was fumbling inside. It was a big room and crammed with luggage, so that the boy could watch without being seen. He saw General Costello draw a gun and shoot Sam Pryor in the back.

Jim was awakened out of a sound sleep by the precipitous entrance of young Arnold, who shook the inspector violently and shouted that he had seen a murder committed.

"I saw it," Arnold shouted. "General Costello isn't General Costello at all, and he's killed Superintendent Pryor."

It took Jim about a minute to realise the gravity of the situation. Up to now he had thought Jenny a nice girl, but had pool-pooched her story, but if Costello had killed Pryor, who seemed to have been kidding everyone he was a superintendent, then it put a different complexion on things. He jumped into his clothes.

Jenny must have heard Arnold's excited voice because she had not started to go to bed. She followed the inspector and Arnold to the lounge. She stood with Arnold by the baggage room door as Grant stared down at the motionless body of Sam Pryor.

Grant cursed himself for being so slow-witted as never to have guessed Jenny was speaking the truth. He joined them outside the baggage-room and was just about to question the girl when Brandt appeared. He covered them with a gun. Under his right arm was a lumpy object.

"Stand still!" His voice was menacing. "If you move I shall be compelled to shoot. At the girl first, but I don't want to do it, as it might disturb the other passengers."

"Well, what are you going to do about it?"

The killer laughed.

"In a few minutes we shall be beyond Newfoundland," he explained. "I shall take my leave of you in Aunt Veronica's parachute."

Brandt backed away and then turned and ran. Jim Grant pelted after him, but the gunman was too quick. He gained his objective—the control-room, and once on the other side, locked the door. Without any compunction he shot both pilots, switched off the engines, then drawing back the emergency door flung himself into space.

Grant crashed his fist against the control-room door. A gasp of horror left his lips as he heard those muffled reports. Suddenly the 'plane gave a sickening lurch, and then followed a curious silence.

"What has he done?" gasped Jenny.

"Jumped off over land and cut off the engines to wreck the 'plane as well," Grant snapped out. "I've got to get into that control-room some way."

The captain came staggering and swaying along the corridor. He told Grant that the only way into the control-room was by climbing over the top of the 'plane. Jenny gave a cry of fear as Grant rushed off to the lounge. Though the machine was pitching and tossing he dragged open the door that led on to the small platform, where Jenny had been so near to death.

The machine was rapidly losing height and might at any moment go into a disastrous nose dive. Many times the rushing wind almost dragged Grant from his precarious hold, but he stuck grimly to his task for the lives of everyone in the 'plane depended on him. His hands were torn and bleeding as he clawed his way along the fuselage and over the roof of the 'plane. He looked down once and saw that the Atlantic was little more than a thousand feet below him. He found the emergency exit that the killer had opened, and a roll of the 'plane allowed him to edge his way over and tumble inside. He crashed into the inanimate figure of one of the pilots.

The sea was five hundred feet below them when he staggered down some stairs and opened the control-room door. The relief pilot hurled himself at the controls. The engines roared to life.

But in those seconds the 'plane had dropped another two hundred feet, and the pilot dare not attempt to immediately flatten out. Actually the pilot got the 'plane under control a bare fifty feet from the great waves of the Atlantic.

When the 'plane was cruising safely at two thousand feet Jim Grant got the captain to put through a wireless call to the police at St. John giving them all information and requesting them to search for the killer. A radio message was sent to Police Chief O'Brien in New York to stay the execution of Abel as there was new evidence that proved his innocence.

Aunt Veronica kicked up an awful song when she found her parachute had been stolen, and then wanted to know where Arnold was. They found him in a corner quietly playing his beloved saxophone.

"Poor old general," Arnold sighed, and played a mournful note.

"Why poor?" demanded Jim Grant.

"Well, you all complained so much about my sax being noisy that I borrowed 'auntie's' parachute." He produced from the saxophone a strip of grey silk. "This is a piece I cut out of it."

"I don't think the police will need that cordon after all," muttered Inspector Grant.

Abel was saved from the chair and Jenny became the heroine of New York. She had thousands of offers of jobs and even marriage, but she turned them all down, and when the boy prodigy made his bow at the opening recital of his tour Jenny and Jim were in the fourth row of the stalls. All the time the fourteen-year old virtuoso played his violin better than he had ever done, his bright, twinkling eyes watched them, and when Jenny's hand stole into Jim's great paw the boy had the impudence to wink.

(By permission of the Gaumont British Picture Corporation, Ltd., starring John Loder as Inspector Grant and Anna Lee as Jenny Carr.)

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"OUTLAWS OF THE ORIENT."

—Chet Eaton, Jack Holt; Joan Manning, Mae Clarke; Ho-Fang, Harold Huber; Lucky Phelps, Ray Walker; Johnny Eaton, James Bush; Willard P. Snyder, Joseph Crehan; Alice Sylvester, Bernice Roberts; Howard Sheldon, Harry Worth.

"NON-STOP NEW YORK."

—Jenny Carr, Anna Lee; Inspector Jim Grant, John Loder; Sam Pryor, Frank Collier; Arnold James, Desmond Tester; Mortimer, William Dewhurst; Billy Couper, James Pirrie; Brandt, Francis L. Sullivan; Mrs. Carr, Drusilla Wills; Steward, Jerry Verno; Aunt Veronica, Athene Seyler; Miss Harvey, Ellen Pollock; Abel, Arthur Goulette; Spurgeon, Peter Bull; Harrigan, Tony Quinn.



(Continued from page 2)

descendant of John Marshall, first Chief Justice of the United States. With such a professional background, it might have seemed natural that Jack should have been lured by the law or called by the clergy. But the indoor life that lawyers or rectors led did not appeal to him.

Realising, however, that he must obtain an education, young Holt selected a course which seemed most certain to lead into adventure. He chose engineering. His people finally agreed to this. The boy was entered for pre-engineering at Trinity Preparatory School in New York and, graduated from there, sent to the celebrated Virginia Military Institute in his native State for the completion of his studies.

While still a student at the military school, Jack demonstrated his enthusiasm for hard work of a dramatic turn by getting a job during vacations as a "sand hog," and worked on the great Hoboken tunnel for the Pennsylvania Railroad.

When he finished at the Virginia Military Institute, he went to the far-flung wastes of the Yukon frontier and found opportunities a-plenty for his restless, trouble-seeking spirit. At first he prospected for gold. Then, for a brief time, he was a mule skinner. Finally he obtained the most picturesque and dangerous job of all, as a U.S. mail carrier delivering the mail to remote trading posts by dogsled.

Finally, being slightly "fed-up" with the Frozen North, Holt decided to return to the States. Landing in Seattle, he drifted down into Oregon and back to the cattle ranch where, as a working "cow poke," he ran into rustling trouble and became a real hide-and-hair top-hand.

He had his start in pictures shortly thereafter when he was in San Francisco. A Hollywood picture company was there on "location." A double was wanted for a daring horseback leap scheduled for the star. Holt did the stunt, was offered a regular job, and has been in pictures ever since, a total of over twenty years, seventeen of which he has been a star or leading man.

Since starting his motion-picture career he has been on location in almost every part of the world, including China, the locale of his current "Outlaws of the Orient."

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PRIZE NEWS!
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See Special Announcement on Page 2



III
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At the end of this month I shall ask you how many of one or more kinds of stamps you've collected. It may be Bombers or Battleships, or perhaps Tanks and Destroyers together. Which . . . well, that's my secret!

So get busy, collect all the stamps you can so as to be right in front for the first prize-giving. I shall ask you which prize you want, too—the biggest collections of the stamps I call for will win. But don't send any yet; I'll tell you how and where when the time comes.

There you are . . . and Nothing to Pay! Isn't it great! THE EDITOR.

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All claims for prizes to be sent on the proper coupon (to be given later); no allowance made for any coupon or stamps mutilated or lost or delayed in the post or otherwise. No correspondence. No one connected with this paper may enter, and the Editor's decision will be final and legally binding throughout.

N.B.—You can also collect or swap Armaments Stamps with pals who read "Triumph," "Champion," "Magnum," "Gem," "Modern Boy," "Sports," "Budget," "Detective Weekly," and "Thriller."

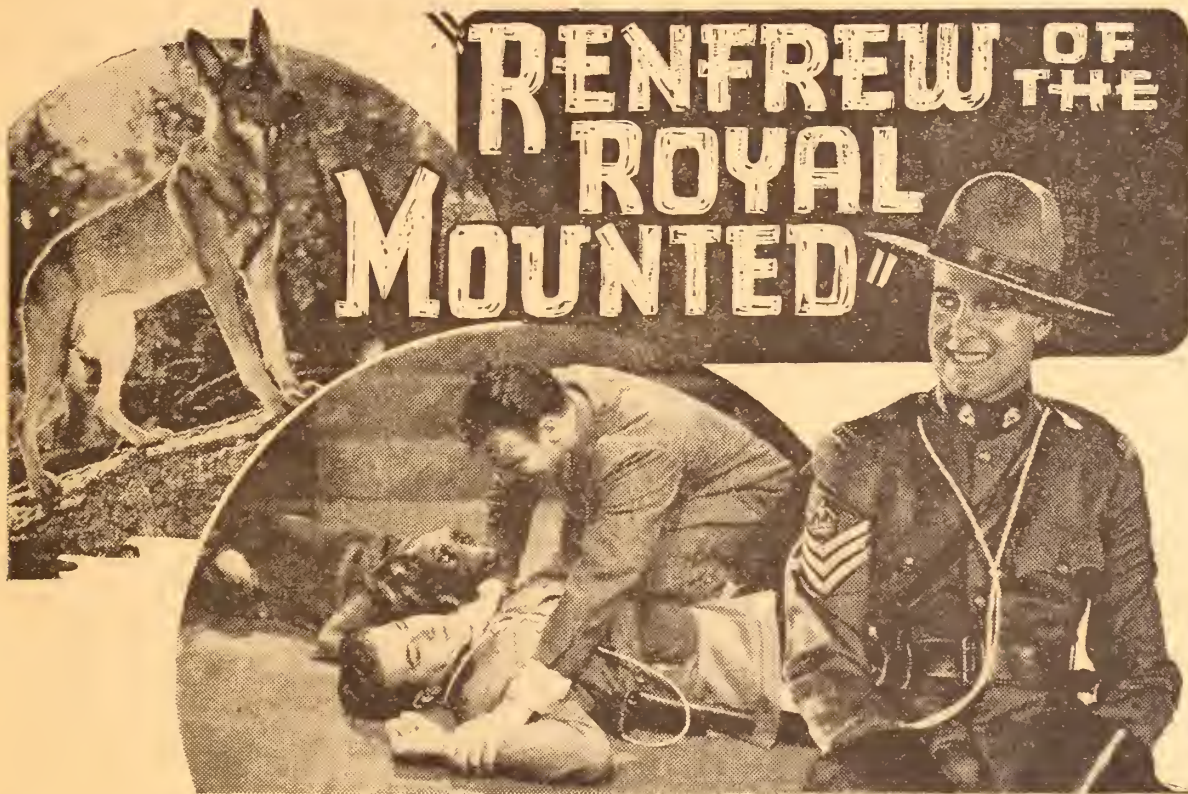
For Collecting Armaments Stamps



There are Eight More Stamps on Page 27!

OVERSEAS READERS, TOO! You pals who are far away—you're in this great scheme also, and special awards will be given for the best collections from overseas readers. There will be a special closing date for you as well, of course!

Counterfeit money is being smuggled into the States from Canada, and a Mountie is killed by a treacherous Indian member of the gang, but an intrepid sergeant of the famous force never falters from the trail until the crooks are brought to justice. A smashing drama, starring James Newill



Trout in Ice

IT was a barrier post between Canada and the United States. An elderly sportsman drove up, and his car was laden with rods and fishing kit. He was well known to the official in charge. The latter gave his baggage a cursory glance and marked it as being in order.

"Where are you going this time, Mr. Williams?" asked the officer.

"Well, I'm a little uncertain," replied the elderly sportsman. "When I came up a month ago I had permission to fish the Green River district and its lakes, and I had a most disappointing catch. All the fish ran small, and they were few and far between. The water was gin clear. Frankly, I'd like to try somewhere else."

The officer fingered his chin thoughtfully.

"Yeah, I'd heard the Green River was fishing very bad." He looked up to see a car approaching. "Now, why didn't I think of him?" He pointed.

"See that car? Well, you come along with me and I'll show you something."

The small van pulled to a stop at the barrier, and the officer grinned pleasantly at the driver.

"What luck this time, Duke?" he asked.

"Look in the back and see for yourself."

The officer unlatched the small doors at the rear of the van, and the sportsman gave a whistle of delight. There were almost a dozen huge blocks of ice, and embedded in each were a number of fine trout.

"That block on top is for you, officer," Duke called out.

Almost reverently the officer lifted out a block, and the sportsman's eyes bulged with excitement.

"Twelve-inch fish," he said. "And they look in grand condition. Where do they come from?"

"Pine Lodge," was the answer of the officer. "After crossing into Canada you keep this road for ten miles, then you fork left for the hills, and in some twenty miles or so you come to Pine Lodge. You're two thousand feet up and there are streams and lakes galore. Pine Lodge is run by George Hollis. Ever heard of him?"

"Can't say I have."

"He's won prizes and championships all over the world as a chef. Now he's got this health resort in the hills, and they say it has every modern comfort. Shooting, fishing, dance band and everything. Ain't that right, Duke?"

"It sure is," cried the driver. "I caught most of them fish this morning in a lake that ain't a mile from the lodge. Any sort of colourful fly, small and double hooked, will get 'em."

"By Jove, I must make a note of this." The sportsman was all smiles.

"Would I get accommodation there?"

"Sure," answered Duke. "We're pretty full—always are—but I'm mighty certain Hollis could take you. He gives preference to all sporting gents."

Duke went on his way after the officer had given him permission, and the sportsman, after giving the officer a substantial tip, hastened over the border.

Five miles down the road Duke pulled up at a lonely gas-station. He honked three times, and at once the

sliding doors of the garage rolled back. He drove inside and the doors slid shut. Three men appeared.

"Everything okay, Duke?" sang out a big fellow.

"Like taking toffee from a kid," Duke sneered.

The men opened the doors of the van and dragged out the ice blocks.

"Which one this time?" asked the man in charge.

"The one with three big 'uns."

They smashed the ice-block and took out the three trout. The biggest fish, when opened, revealed a small wad of notes, which were protected by an oil-skin covering.

"It's easy enough getting them past that dumb guy at the barrier," commented Duke. "But that paper ain't so hot."

The other man held the bills close to the light.

"Yeah, so I see," he muttered. "Pity, when we got such a swell set-up."

Meanwhile, in Canada, at the headquarters of the Royal Mounted in Regina, Inspector Newcombe was addressing his men.

"A lot of fake money is in circulation in the United States, and they have asked us to work with them in rounding up the gang behind this counterfeiting," he stated. "For a long while the United States Customs and police thought the money was being made on their side of the border, and they've rounded up nearly every forger in the land. Well, they reckoned to make someone do a squawk. They have methods for faking crooks talk, but they didn't get

much, except a whisper that the money wasn't coming from the States. Recently some of this fake money showed up at Winnipeg, and now we're pretty sure it is being forged in Canada and most of it being shipped across the border." He held up a note. "This is one of 'em. Now compare it with the genuine article and you can see it is a poor copy, but the man operating this business must be pretty cute. Somehow he's getting past our men and the officers of the United States. Well, it's got to stop! Pictures and records have been made of all forgers whom the States cannot account for, and to that I have added a few on this side. The inquiry has been going on for some while and the search has narrowed down to the Western Provinces."

After dismissing the men Inspector Newcombe had a talk with Constable Martin.

"You're riding out towards Wood Mountain, and I want you to link up with Sergeant Renfrew. He's only just settled that Brady kidnapping case—got his man, too."

"You sound as if you were surprised, sir," said the constable.

"Renfrew is the most amazing fellow. The last person in the world one would expect to be a Mountie," answered the inspector. "He goes around the country singing and enjoying himself, and yet he has a record that most of us envy."

"If those forgers are in Renfrew's district, sir, he'll get 'em," confidently opined the constable.

"I hope so. Well, give him all details, Martin, and this packet of pictures and records. Tell him I want results. Do you know where to locate the sergeant?"

"Heading for the Souris River, sir," the constable grinned. "There's some sort of a do organised by the lumbermen and their families. An annual affair, and Renfrew is going there to mix the sauce."

"Sauce?"

"Well, they roast game and venison on spits, and Renfrew is a grand cook, sir. There isn't a person that can beat him for making sauces. This is going to be a great day, because George Hollis, who was once a Continental chef, and now owns the Pine Lodge Sportsman's Hotel, is having a contest with him."

"One who makes the best sauce!" The inspector looked most indignant. "I've never heard of such a thing. Why, it must be contrary to regulations."

"I think we all know that Renfrew is a type all his own, sir," the constable smiled. "And I wouldn't have mentioned it if I thought Renfrew would be in any sort of trouble over it, but it's just one of his methods."

"His name, sir, is known for hundreds of miles as a friend of all good people and a demon where wrongdoers are concerned."

"Yes, I guess you're right." The inspector smiled a little. "He may have a curious way of working, but he does get results. Give him my regards and say that besides wanting results he and his men have got to sing at our summer concert on the twenty-second of next month."

The Barbeque

CONSTABLE MARTIN had little trouble in finding Sergeant Renfrew. In Mooso Jaw Canyon he heard the sound of distant singing. Hearty, powerful lungs were filling the

valley with melodious sound. He knew that would be Renfrew and his singing Mounties.

Sergeant Renfrew was tall, well-built and good-looking. There was a merry twinkle in the dark eyes and a pleasant smile to the firm mouth. There was a cut to his uniform that almost amounted to fastidiousness, and a jaunty tilt to the wide felt hat that was hardly according to regulations. His men were almost as smart. A dozen of them, and all willing to die for the sergeant, for whose gallantry and fearlessness they had the greatest respect.

Renfrew listened carefully to the instructions brought by Constable Martin, and studied carefully the pictures of criminals under suspicion. One picture in particular interested him, and that was of an ugly, but pathetic elderly man. This man Bronson was one of the cleverest engravers of counterfeit money in America. Bronson had been recently released from prison. Renfrew was given one of the counterfeit notes, and he knew this poor imitation was not the work of an artist. But Renfrew knew from reports received from Border Patrols that on the previous day Bronson had entered Canada. If this gang could get a man like Bronson to work for them they could flood the world with notes that would be hard to detect as forgeries.

If only Renfrew had known about this before, Bronson could have been followed. The report stated Bronson was going to Canada to join up with his only daughter.

Renfrew assured Constable Martin that he would round up the gang if they were in his territory, and promised to bring his men to sing at the summer concert.

The Mounties rode on their way, and at a secluded spot on the Souris River they found the Barbeque Festival in full swing. There were a good two hundred men, women and children at the great feast, and what a shout of welcome went up when they heard the singing and saw the bright uniforms amongst the pines.

True to his promise, Sergeant Renfrew had ridden a hundred miles or more to make sauce for their feast. The girls smiled at the handsome sergeant, but their hearts did not flutter very much because he was reputed to be a confirmed bachelor.

Renfrew received a warm welcome from young Tommy MacDonald. Mrs. MacDonald was present at the Barbeque, but Sergeant MacDonald had duties further up the river.

"I suppose when you get older you'll be a Mountie like your father?" chuckled Renfrew.

"Not me." The boy shook his head. "I'm going to be an engine driver. Much more fun."

"You'll think different one of these days," laughed Renfrew, and then looked round. "Hey, Johnson, where's my hated rival?"

One of the chief organisers of the Barbeque looked up from turning a spit on which a duck was basting, and smiled.

"Mister Hollis will be here, Jimmy. He say you very good fellow, but no make sauce."

A car appeared on the rough track through the woods, and out of it stepped a red-faced, hearty individual in astoundingly loud check clothes. He beamed from ear to ear and held out his arms as if he wished to embrace everybody.

"George Hollis, he come more than a hundred mile." He spoke with a strong accent. "Parbleu, he never forget a promise!" George liked people to think he was of French origin. "Ah, there is ze pauvre homme that think he can make sauce. I fill myself with compassion for him."

Sergeant Renfrew shook hands warmly.

"Well, popular opinion shall decide, George. I'm ready for the fray when you are."

The sergeant had considerable experience of Indian methods of cooking, and he knew certain herbs that gave a perfect blend to a sauce. Lustily did the sergeant respond to the general request for a song, and as he sang he made the sauce. Even the great George Hollis had to admit, after many shrugs of the shoulder, that he had smelt worse—but not much.

Afterwards the men decided to do a little fishing, and Hollis produced a rod, which he handed with loving care to Renfrew.

"Sergeant, I beg you to handle it with respect," said George. "It is a Hardy Special. A very good friend send it to me all the way from England. Feel the whip, my friend, but do not snap ze top. Look at ze line—fine as gossamer. And the flies. They are of my own making."

Renfrew examined the flies.

"This looks like a red spider with a bit of gold tissue wrapped round it. If they'll take that they must be hungry." He fingered the line. "Yes, this isn't so bad, though it can't have much of a breaking strain. Must say the balance of this rod seems good. I think it's wasted on you, George." The urge to make a cast was more than Renfrew could withstand. "Now watch me land the fly on that stone."

But when Renfrew tried to flick the line forward with a dexterous twist he was startled by a scream behind him. He turned to find that in flicking back his line to make the cast he had thought there was no one behind him. He had hooked an extremely pretty but very angry girl. She was trying to hold down her skirts and get the hook out of the silk at the same time.

Renfrew laughed and she glared at him.

"It is not in the least funny. You might have hooked my leg or my face."

"My humble apologies." Renfrew handed the rod to Hollis. "Permit me to remove the hook."

Her dark eyes were still full of anger when he had freed her.

"Lady, I'm sorry, but there had been nobody behind me a moment before, and I thought it was all clear." He smiled. "I must say it was a good catch."

"But you're not likely to land it!" retorted the girl, and angrily walked away.

Sergeant Renfrew walked across to Mrs. MacDonald.

"Who is that girl, ma'am?"

"Her name's Bronson. She's rented a small shooting cabin along the riverbank near the Indian village," Mrs. MacDonald answered. "Must be a bit lonely, though I did hear as how she were waiting for her father."

"Bronson, and she is waiting for her father," Sergeant Renfrew said softly. "That's curious. I must have a talk to Mac when he gets in. I guess I'll stick around till your husband shows up."

But that meeting was never destined to take place.

A Knife in the Back

PINE LODGE had originally been the residence of a wealthy financier, and when the latter had gone broke the place had been converted into a health resort. Situated in glorious country, the place was ideal for a holiday. Here one could indulge in riding, hunting, shooting and fishing, or laze around in the sun all day. Some months previous George Hollis had bought Pine Lodge and brought it right up to date with swimming-pools, central heating and a jazz band.

One morning a hotel car brought an elderly visitor from the railroad, which was twenty miles away. The newcomer was a heavily built man, small beady eyes peered from beneath bushy eyebrows, and he walked with bowed shoulders, as if in poor health. His glance at the people in the sun lounge was furtive. A liveried servant carried his suitcase up to the reception desk.

"I've been commissioned to come here to do some landscape pictures," the newcomer stated. "My name is Bronson."

"We were expecting you, sir," smirked the reception clerk.

"Yeah, we were expecting you," drawled a voice.

Bronson jerked round, and then recoiled at sight of the man who had approached so quietly. Nolan, the under-manager, was a clean-shaven, square-jawed individual. He was very correctly dressed, and he bowed in mock reverence.

"What's this mean? I don't understand," stammered Bronson.

"If you will step into the next room, sir, I shall be delighted to explain," murmured Nolan, holding open a glass door. "After you, sir."

Bronson looked as if he would have liked to have run, but he thought it better to obey. The door closed behind him.

"We always keep tag of our friends," Nolan's voice had hardened, now that

the door was closed. "Naturally, we imagined that you would like to see your old friends again when you came out of jug. We instructed an agent to get in touch with you and offer you the job of painting delightful scenic pictures for the Pine Lodge Hotel. You jumped at the chance—and here you are."

"You don't want me here to paint pictures!"

"How clever of you to guess that," mocked Nolan. "No, the chief—" He laughed as Bronson started. "So you haven't forgotten him? Well, he owns this place, and he had the idea that you would be able to board here free of charge in exchange for some simple engraving."

"I won't do it!" cried Bronson. "I've finished with all that racket. I'm running straight. When the cops bust up our joint most of the blame landed on me, and the chief swore that if I kept your names out of this he'd let up on me when I got out."

"I believe there was some such arrangement, but—" Nolan paused and shook his head. "But we have discovered that you are invaluable. We have a perfect set-up here, but no one, Bronson, seems to know the art of engraving. We have all the apparatus and necessary printing press, but our artist is not good. Only one person in ten is bluffed by one of his notes, and so the chief reluctantly came to the conclusion that we must appeal to you. Thinking you might prove a trifle difficult, we had to have recourse to this trick to get you here." He changed his tone. "There's a mint of easy money in this racket. We've got the cops completely baffled, and with you doing the engraving—"

"I won't do it!" cried Bronson. "I'm running straight! I'm on my way to join my daughter, and I'm not staying here a second longer."

A gun appeared in Nolan's hand.

"You're gonna do just as we say or else it'll be just too bad!" he gritted

out. "And now that the heroics are over we'll go and see the chief."

George Hollis beamed genially when Bronson was brought into his luxurious room. Bronson seemed more bowed than before. Hollis, for all his smiles, was a ruthless man. Once, desperately hard up when his wife had been ill, Bronson had come into contact with this man, and he had never been able to get free of his clutches.

Hollis listened to Nolan politely.

"I'm surprised you don't want to work in with us, Bronson," he murmured regretfully. "You shall have every comfort. We will send for your daughter and you shall be our guests. A little work for us, Bronson, is all we ask in return, then you can be free of us and have a nice little sum in your pocket."

"You said that before," cried the old man. "I swore when I was in prison that I was through with counterfeit work, and I mean it."

"He'll feel better when he's had a rest," George Hollis grinned at Nolan. "Take him down and show him our workshops and fix him with quarters. I'll see you later, Bronson."

The ex-convict was taken down some iron stairs into the cellars. What chance had he of refusing when Nolan had a gun, and there were two other men close at his heels. The room into which they flung his suitcase reminded him of his cell. In another room he found a young man working on a plate with the aid of a powerful microscope.

"Dugan, I've brought a companion for you," drawled Nolan. "This is Bronson."

"Bronson?" The pallid young fellow with the twitching eyes jumped to his feet. He seemed unusually excited. "This is marvellous. I've always wanted to meet such a great artist."

"Cut out the sentiment," sneered Nolan, and pointed to the table. "Get busy."

"I will not do it!" defiantly cried Bronson.

"I'll beat you to a jelly if you don't get busy," raged Nolan.



They were just in time to stop Nolan from hitting the older man.

Hollis and another member of the gang entered the room, and they were just in time to stop Nolan hitting the older man.

"Steady! Steady!" cried Hollis. "We do not want to hurt our guest. I think if we leave Bronson here to talk it over with his assistant he will realise the futility of argument. Come on, Nolan, I want to talk to you."

"Okay, chief."

"This daughter is a slight problem," George said when they were alone in his office. There was no trace of French accent, in fact, he spoke like a Bowery thug. "She will be expecting her father, and if he don't show up she may get in touch with the cops or the Mounties."

"We don't want the Mounties after us."

"I agree," Hollis sat back in his swivel chair. "We must persuade Bronson to send a message to his daughter to come here. Should Bronson not be willing, then I think we can do without his consent. Dugan can copy his signature, and I have in my desk a small drawing that he did for me once. We will send Pierre for the girl. He is to use no rough methods, but persuade the girl, with the aid of the message we will send, that her father needs her urgently. She must come at once."

Later that day Pierre, a half-caste Indian of evil reputation, slunk down to the river, and from beneath some bushes drew out a canoe. Tucked in his belt was a forged message from Bronson on one of the old man's own pictures. Then Duke and two men appeared with some heavy blocks of ice, in which were embedded some front.

"You might as well deliver these at Barrow Creek and get Jules there to give you a receipt."

"Not safe—plenty danger."

"You do as you're told! Now get going!" threatened Duke.

Sullenly the Indian climbed into his canoe and paddled out into mid-stream. For some miles he steered his craft cunningly amidst the boulders, and as the current was swift he travelled fast, but when the canoe reached the placid waters of a long, winding lake, Pierre proceeded with extreme caution.

Several times he had seen people on the banks, and it was suspicious for an Indian to be out alone in a canoe and heading for the border. Also Pierre was known to the Mounties.

There were rushes, strange, tall grasses and stunted bushes that provided cover, but this dodging in and out was causing a delay. The sun was getting low and Pierre decided he must venture away from the banks. A Mountie, walking his horse among the trees, spotted the lone Indian, and he cupped his hands and ordered the fellow to make for the bank.

Pierre's reply was to paddle furiously.

The Mountie cantered along the bank, keeping level and continually shouting the command for the Indian to land.

Realising that it was impossible to out-distance the Mountie, Pierre paddled furiously towards a small peninsula that jutted out into the lake. Directly he was hidden by the rushes he dumped the ice-blocks overboard, dragged the canoe into the rushes and fled.

Sergeant MacDonald, with his glasses, had located the place where the Indian had vanished and soon found the spot. He saw the canoe and was thinking of trying to get the Indian's trail when something in the water attracted his

attention. What was that object that caused a ripple?

Ho bent down and dragged to view a great block of ice containing frozen trout. Why should the Indian dump these fish so hurriedly. Ho found two more blocks and all he carried to dry land. MacDonald picked up a large stone and smashed open one block. He peered at the trout in his hand, but it seemed just a fish, but the third fish was bulgy. He gutted it and fished out a small water-proofed packet of notes.

The rushes parted and there stood Pierre. From his belt he whipped out a knife and flung it with deadly aim. It sank up to the hilt in the sergeant's back. With a groan the Mountie fell forward into the shallow water.

With callous indifference the half-caste wrenched the small packet of notes from the dead man's hand, salvaged the two intact ice-blocks and flung the remnants of the other block into deep water. Satisfied that he had left no evidence to convict him, the half-caste climbed into his canoe and paddled swiftly away.

Sergeant Renfrew camped out near MacDonald's cabin. Owing to Mrs. MacDonald's frail health she was allowed to stay with her husband at this lonely spot. By midnight she was alarmed that there was no sign of her husband. Renfrew and his men decided to find out why the usually punctual MacDonald was delayed. Renfrew picked up the trail of a horse and followed it to the peninsula. They found the sergeant's horse hitched to a tree. The footsteps clearly showed in the soft and treacherous ground of the peninsula.

They found the unfortunate sergeant lying face downwards in the water. Renfrew, with the help of a torch, soon spotted that a canoe had grounded. There were also the marks of incoasins on the bank, and as they led nowhere he guessed the killer had escaped in his canoe.

MacDonald must have seen the Indian acting suspiciously and trailed him. The Indian had knifed him in the back.

It was a terrible task that fell on Renfrew's shoulders, the comforting of a heart-broken woman and her child. Sergeant MacDonald had been one of his staunchest friends, and he vowed as he held young Tommy in his arms that the Mountie's death would not go un-avenged.

Renfrew and Lightning

VIRGINIA BRONSON was worried at the non-appearance of her father. He had promised faithfully to join her here and he was overdue. There had been no message at the telegraph-post for two days. It was lonely at the small hunting cabin. She wondered what she ought to do. Almost she had spoken to the Mounties, but she did not want to broadcast the fact that her father was an ex-convict. They might be evicted from Canada.

But when she came back to the cabin at dusk on the second night she gave a gasp when she found an Indian calmly squatting cross-legged on the floor. Pierre took out the message he had been told to deliver.

"Your father—he send me—letter explain," he said softly.

The girl took the scroll gingerly, as if suspecting some act of treachery. Indians had always been repulsive to her, and there was an intentness of gaze from half-closed eyes that made her feel very mistrustful of this strange visitor. But when she opened the scroll she found it was one of her

father's pictures—she would have known it anywhere. Then there was the message and her father's familiar signature.

"You know what this says?"

"Plenty well—start now!"

"Is my father in some sort of trouble?"

"Me not think so. You just come with me. Your father pleased."

The girl scanned the message again. Her father said she could place explicit trust in Pierre. She was to accompany the Indian at once and he would explain everything when he saw her. She was not to worry. But when she took out a suitcase the Indian raised his hand solemnly.

"No take baggage—go in canoe. Plenty everything where we go."

The girl was wearing riding breeches and she decided that if she had got to do a journey by canoe and probably some part on horseback she might as well go as she was. She pushed a toothbrush, a comb and some thin pyjamas into the pocket of a heavy overcoat, and with that slung over her arm she followed the Indian from the cabin.

The night was warm. They reached a river, and in the moonlight they travelled slowly till they came to a large lake. Virginia put on her overcoat as there was a cold mist rising from the water. The moon vanished and Virginia slept. Pierre paddled on with swift strokes. Once or twice the Indian would pause and look towards the distant banks, and several times he cupped an ear with a lean brown hand. There seemed hardly a sound except the ripple of the canoe through the placid waters.

Just before dawn Pierre headed towards the bank, and he had to paddle hard as there was now a strong current. Suddenly an opening appeared among the bushes and trees and there was quite a wide, deep river.

Virginia stirred and opened her eyes. She looked at her watch.

"Are we getting close, Pierre?"

"Plenty mile. Sun high time we get place."

The sun appeared, and it was so warm that Virginia took off her coat and lay back enjoying the beauty of the wild scenery. The trees, the streams that trickled over the rocks to the river, the leap and splash of trout, and the many birds in the trees.

The Indian ceased paddling, and after a moment or so the canoe began to drift with the current.

"Anything wrong, Pierre?"

The Indian stared intently back along the river and up at the hills that towered on either side of the river. He did not answer, but took up his paddle, but after going for a few minutes he paused again.

"What is it?"

"Think someone follow," fiercely replied the Indian.

"But why should anyone want to follow us?" Virginia asked.

This question Pierre ignored and went on paddling for a while. At the end of a straight stretch he made for the bank. They landed. Carrying the canoe, they threaded their way by a well-beaten track through the woods till they came to another river. This time they went swiftly down-stream, but in a deep stretch of the river where the current was not so rapid the Indian stopped paddling and his eyes glinted angrily as he shot out an arm.

Virginia turned and she gave a slight gasp to see a horseman riding along the cliff without any attempt at concealment. She could see it was a

Mountie, and besides a led horse there was a big Alsatian dog.

It was Sergeant Renfrew and Lightning. The dog was attached to the company, but would only admit one real master, and that was Renfrew. The sergeant always took the dog when moving by night, as Lightning would give warning of most lurking dangers. Moreover Lightning was a marvel at following a trail. Renfrew had learnt that Virginia had been several times to the telegraph office and he was certain that she was the daughter of Bronson, the forger. She was expecting someone, and that should be her father. He did not connect her, then, with the death of Sergeant MacDonald, but it chanced that he was in the neighbourhood of her cabin when Pierre and the girl appeared. When they disappeared among the shadows of the trees he followed stealthily and saw them embark. Renfrew hastened back to camp, saddled a spare horse and took Lightning. He had an idea that the girl might need a horse.

It amused him to note the perturbation of the Indian at sight of his scarlet uniform.

Renfrew made no attempt to stop them or catch them up, yet he maintained the same distance. Pierre tried paddling hard and shooting rapids at terrific speed, but whenever he paused in the smooth water beyond he had but to gaze towards the towering banks to see their persistent pursuer.

The Indian shot some rapids a mile long, and as the bank was broken and rocky, thought that the Mountie would have been left behind. Yes, there was no sign. The neigh of a horse, and this time saw Renfrew directly above him.

"I'll get him!" cried Pierre, and snatched up the shot-gun in the bottom of the canoe.

Renfrew was in grave danger of being murdered, and but for the intervention of the girl would have been, without doubt, badly wounded. Unusual sounds below made him turn his head. The Indian and the girl were standing up in the wobbling canoe and seemed to be struggling for the possession of a long-barrelled shot-gun. Virginia had no great love for the law after what had been done to her father, but she could not sit by and see a half-caste Indian shoot down a Mountie in cold blood. When Pierre had raised the gun she had tried to wrench it away.

The canoe suddenly capsized and the two occupants fell into the river. The current was strong now as there were rapids a short way ahead. Callously the Indian left the girl and swam towards the shore. Renfrew jumped from his horse. One glance below was sufficient to show that the girl, though swimming gamely, was powerless in this current. Without hesitation Renfrew leapt from the cliff in a magnificent outward dive. Scarcely had his body touched the water than Lightning had leapt from the cliff.

Virginia had sunk once when the strong arm of the Mountie went round her. They were now in a small rapid, and Renfrew contented himself with going with the current and keeping clear of all boulders. A stretch of water not quite so swift, and here Renfrew made his effort to get the girl to the bank. She was a dead weight in his arms. Gradually he drew nearer the bank, and then his feet touched slippery stones. With his limp burden in his arms he staggered ashore, and a few seconds later Lightning followed with the stotson of the Mountie between his teeth.

From the cover of a bush Pierre watched, and his hand slid to his belt, but he had no knife and the distance was too far. The Mountie put down his burden and began to scan carefully the bushes and the trees, and Pierre decided it was wise to get away. When it was dark he would return.

Renfrew laid the girl down under a pine and saw that her eyes were open.

"Thanks for stopping that Indian from plugging me. Now, don't talk, just relax."

Renfrew built a fire and fixed a blanket over a tree, then he proceeded to light the fire.

"Feel strong enough to get up and get out of those wet clothes?"

"I'm quite all right." Virginia struggled to her feet. "Thanks for getting me out of the river."

"You change and we'll talk afterwards." It was almost an order. "Wrap a blanket round you and undress behind that blanket. Dangerous to stick around in wet clothes."

Meekly the girl obeyed, though there was a rebellious light in her blue eyes.

Renfrew busied himself tending the fire. Peeping over the top of the blanket the girl marvelled at his skill at fire-making. In a few minutes he had got a small but heating fire going, and with very little smoke, and had erected a sort of bracket on which he could hang the wet clothing.

Soon the clothing was all drying nicely, and Sergeant Renfrew came back to duty. Out came a small notebook.

"Naturally, it is my duty to ask you a few questions." He moistened the end of a pencil, and gazed up at the pretty face peering over the blanket. "It is not done for a young white girl to go chasing round Canada with a half-caste Indian, and when they travel by dead of night it makes a person curious."

"So you were following us all the time." Virginia's eyes flashed. "Pierre kept on looking round as if he scented something. I don't see that it's any business of the Mounted Police if I choose to go out with an Indian."

"Oh, we're a most suspicious lot!" His eyes were twinkling. "First of all I want to know name, age, height, weight, address, occupation and even colour of your hair and eyes. We'll start with the name, please."

She told him, knowing full well that this information he knew already. She tried to find out why he had followed her, and all he would say was that the Indian seemed to be behaving in a manner that was suspicious and furtive, and it was his duty to follow. The fact that the half-caste had tried to shoot him rather went to prove that these suspicions were well founded. Her explanation was that she had been sent for by her father, who was on a fishing and sketching holiday. It was some little place in the mountains, and that she had no idea whereabouts now that he had driven away the Indian guide.

Renfrew did not persist with his questioning. Towards dusk he went down to the lake to see if he could shoot a wild duck for food or catch some trout. During that time Virginia made a discovery that confirmed her worst fears. His jacket he had left near the fire to dry, and in the pocket she found some photographs of wanted men. One of them was her own father.

This Mountie knew that her father was an ex-convict, and was trailing her so that she would take him to her father. But why should he want to find her father? The mysterious manner in which her father had sent for her sent a cold shiver down her spine. Her father was in some sort of trouble. He had promised faithfully that once free of the grim prison walls he would run



"Naturally, it is my duty to ask you a few questions," Renfrew told the girl behind the blanket.

straight—surely he had not linked up with his old companions.

Renfrew secured a duck and some trout, and he cooked both perfectly, and, though worried, Virginia quite enjoyed the meal. They turned in early. Virginia was given a bed not far from the embers of the fire, whilst Renfrew and his dog slept some little distance away.

Virginia lay there wide awake, staring up at the moon. What should she do? Sergeant Renfrew had told her nothing of what he intended to do on the morrow. She was his prisoner and must obey his orders. A twig snapped and she glanced round startled. A soft, hissing sound and she saw Pierre crouching, half hidden by the trunk of a tree. He was cautioning her against making any noise. Then he beckoned. The girl flung back the blankets. She was dressed save for her boots. A glance across at the sergeant showed that he was sleeping. She tiptoed across to the Indian, who laid his finger on his lip.

Silently they stole away.

A very faint whimper came from the dog, but this was instantly silenced by a hand over Lightning's mouth.

"Not a sound, old scout," Renfrew hissed.

Through half-closed eyes the sergeant saw Pierre and the girl take his horse and the led horse, saw them saddle up and then ride away into the darkness.

"I thought that Indian would come back," Renfrew said to his dog. "I counted on this happening. They'll lead me to her father's hide-out, and I hope it isn't too many miles away from here. Well, it's no good doing anything till dawn, so shut your eyes, pal, and get some sleep. We mayn't get another chance."

The Two Killers

DUKE and another of the counterfeit gang who was known as Tiny—the latter was six feet tall and was an ex-prizefighter—were sent for by George Hollis.

"Pierre should have been back," Hollis said to them. "Find out what's going on. I don't trust that half-breed. A Mountie's been killed, found with a knife in his back, and it sounds to me mighty like some of Pierre's work. If he's trying a snatch with the girl you gotta get busy. If you link up with Pierre and he's heading for Pine Lodge with the girl, then just say I sent you out as I was worried. I'll deal with Pierre when he gets here. I got a perfect set-up out here, and I ain't having any of my plans jammed." He handed them a packet of notes. "Here's the first batch of Bronson's engraving, and they're swell. When you've dealt with Pierre take them to Barrow Creek."

Some twenty miles south of the lodge the two ruffians were driving the small van along a rough road through the pines towards a Mountie outpost, where they intended to make some casual inquiries of the constable in charge, when they sighted two riders. Duke instantly recognised the dark-hued figure as being Pierre. They pulled up the car a moment later and Duke jumped out.

"Where you been? Chief got anxious and sent us out to look for you," Duke cried, giving the girl an appraising glance.

"Mountie trail canoe," drawled Pierre. "Take girl prisoner. Mo escape. Night I go fetch her, and we get away on Mountie's horses."

Duke heard how the Mountie had trailed them, of the capsizing of the canoe, and the rescue by the Red-coat. He heard the story through to the end. May 7th, 1938.

"Why did he trail you?" "Maybe suspect me kill Sergeant MacDonald."

"Did you?"

"No kill anyone!" lied the Indian.

"Where's this Mountie now—still trailing you?"

"No. Take horses in stream. No seent," answered Pierre.

"Know his name?"

Pierre shok his head, then pointed to the girl.

"She know."

"We're friends of your father's," explained Duke, with a grin that was supposed to be friendly. "Pierre tells me you've been pestered by one of these Mountie fellows. Do you know his name?"

Virginia hesitated. There was something furtive about this man. Still, what harm in telling? It would probably make them all the more eager to get her quickly to her father.

"Renfrew—Sergeant Renfrew."

"Sergeant Renfrew!" Duke hissed the name, and his whole face darkened as he glowered at Pierre. "So you would go and tangle up with that mug. Better get on up to the lodge with the girl." He lowered his voice so that the girl could not hear. "Tell the chief that Renfrew was trailing you and that we've stopped behind to bump him off."

At dawn Sergeant Renfrew and his dog took up the trail, and the Mountie grinned as the trail ended at a small river.

"An old dodge, Lightning, but they've got to come out of the river some place. Come on, pal." He waded through the rushing water to the opposite bank. "You go upstream, Lightning, and I'll go down. Bark if you pick up the trail. I'll whistle if I get it."

The barking of Lightning was heard some ten minutes later. Renfrew hastened upstream and soon came to the dog. On the bank were clean-cut hoof-marks. They resumed the trail, but Renfrew did not try to cover too many miles. There was no sign of rain to wipe out this trail, and he was husbanding his strength. After a while the Mountie came to a larger trail, and but for the uncanny instincts of the dog he might have been baffled.

"This trail takes me past Laidlaw's outpost," thoughtfully muttered Renfrew, examining a map. "I wonder if that sleepy individual will have seen them."

This outpost was close to a large but orderly lumber camp. Laidlaw, who was sprawled in a chair listening to a radio broadcast of a murder drama, jumped up at sight of the sergeant and his dog.

"You seem busy, Laidlaw," he commented dryly.

"I'm sorry, sir," the tall, pleasant fellow grinned. He looked and was most unsuited for a Mountie. Somehow he had become a member of the force, and so he had been posted to this quiet and desolate spot. "You see, nothing ever happens here, sir," he added, waving towards the radio. "This is my only excitement."

"Seen anything of an Indian and a girl?"

"No, sir, they haven't called here."

"They wouldn't have done that," grinned Renfrew. "They were riding two of my horses."

"They stole them from you?" incredulously questioned the other.

"They thought they did, but I let

them get away because I wanted to trail them. The trail's brought me here."

"To this shack?"

"No, no, Laidlaw, but to within a hundred yards." Renfrew answered with a shade of impatience. "I was hoping you might have seen them."

"No, sir. They were probably scared away by my radio," Laidlaw replied. "Can I do anything, sir? Follow this trail?"

"No, I think not. I don't think you'd fancy a knife in your back." The sergeant glanced at the radio. "Guess I'll get a report through to headquarters."

"Usually I go up to the lumber camp at this time," Laidlaw looked at his watch. "Could you carry on till I get back?"

"Sure—sure."

Laidlaw rode off towards the lumber camp. Renfrew sat down at the switch-board, but before making his connections paused to consider what he should say in his report. Lightning lay on the floor with his nose pointing towards the window.

Laidlaw had scarcely vanished among the trees when Duke and Tiny appeared. They knew that Laidlaw was a soft sort of sap, and they could gull him with some yarn about having important information to give to Sergeant Renfrew. Laidlaw would probably tell them why Renfrew was trailing Pierre and the trail Renfrew would most likely take; they would go to meet the sergeant, whom they would ambush, and that matter would be settled. Maybe they might come and bump off Laidlaw on their way back so that no one would know a thing about the shooting. They approached the shack quietly, just as Renfrew began to talk to headquarters: "Sergeant Renfrew reporting—"

Duke paused with his hand on the door-knob. He waved a hand to Tiny to stay stock-still. The crook heard enough to know that Renfrew was trailing Pierre, whom he suspected of the killing of Sergeant MacDonald, and that Renfrew thought the whole business was in some way linked up with the counterfeit note smuggling.

Duke tiptoed off the veranda to Tiny's side.

"Lucky we came along," he whispered. "Renfrew's inside. Pierre did kill this Sergeant MacDonald, and Renfrew is wise to it. Pierre's bluff didn't fool this Mountie, and he's on Pierre's trail. It'll lead him to the lodge if we don't stop him and quick. What's more the Mounties have been warned the notes are coming from Canada, and Renfrew is not only trailing Pierre but the girl as well."

"Why?"

"Because he knows she's Joe Bronson's daughter." Duke gripped the other's coat. "Listen, Tiny. I'm gonna walk right in and talk pretty to this sergeant. You get along to the open window and drill him. It's easy."

It might have succeeded but for the dog. Lightning showed no sign of having heard a thing, save that his eyes were half-closed and his ears pointed.

There was a rap at the door and Duke walked in. Renfrew thought it was some man from the lumber camp who had walked down to the post. The dog bared its teeth, and then the lean snout turned towards the window.

"Looked in to have a chat with Laidlaw," Duke remarked pleasantly. "Ain't he here any longer, sergeant?"

"Gone up to the lumber camp," Renfrew answered. "If you like to stick around he'll be back shortly." He saw the dog moving on its stomach towards

the window. "What's wrong, Lightning?"

The dog suddenly sprang straight for the window, and a moment later there came a scream—Lightning's teeth had fastened round Tiny's gun-wrist. Renfrew's mind acted quickly, and he guessed what might have happened if Lightning hadn't acted, and he turned in time to see Duke sliding his hand to his hip. Wallop! One stride Renfrew took, and then he lifted Duke clean off the floor with a fierce right-handed uppercut.

Duke got to his feet and made another effort to get to his gun.

"No, you don't, rat!" shouted Renfrew, and landed a stinging left.

The gun was jerked from the crook's hand and cluttered to the floor. Snarling foul oaths, the man rushed at Renfrew. He thought he knew every method of unclean fighting, but his low blows and kicks did not win him the fight. Renfrew had expected this sort of action. Duke did land one lucky punch that caused the sergeant to stagger backwards, trip over a rug, and crash to the floor. Duke swung up a chair, but the Mountie rolled to one side and missed the chair as it hurtled at him. When Duke made another dive for his gun his shoulders were seized in an iron grip; he was jerked round and stopped a blow in the mouth that nearly knocked his head off his shoulders. Feebly he waved his hand, and Renfrew got in two punches to the ribs that caused him to gasp. He would have sunk to the floor if the Mountie had not pinned him to the wall.

"So your dirty game failed," the sergeant cried harshly. "Your buddy aimed to shoot me in the back whilst you did the talking. Well, thanks to Lightning, you came unstuck and now I'll see you don't do any further harm." He whipped out a pair of handcuffs and secured the crook's wrist. "And now to deal with your buddy."

Renfrew found Tiny prone on his back with the dog snarling and snapping at the terrified killer. A curt command and the dog stood back. Renfrew yanked the ruffian to his feet and slugged him once. Tiny might have been a boxer, but that punch was a knock-out. A few moments later the two crooks, handcuffed together, sat limply on a bench inside the shack and watched malevolently as Renfrew went through the contents of their pockets.

Laidlaw gasped when he entered his room and saw a broken chair. He stared at the two prisoners in amazement and alarm.

"Tried to drill me," explained Renfrew. "But Lightning was too cute for them. Got a magnifying glass?"

"No, I haven't. You want one?"

"Yeah. To look at these notes. They seem kinda new to me." Renfrew held one up to the light. "But if they're forgeries they're mighty clever. I found a thousand dollars on that dark-haired killer, and it's a mighty lot of money. Have you got some wire?"

"Sure I have."

Laidlaw watched Renfrew make a loop in the wire and then dab his fingers in a water jug. He looked so puzzled that the sergeant laughed.

"Another way of making a magnifying glass," chuckled Renfrew. "This drop of water fixed in this way makes it almost as powerful as a glass when used with the aid of a strong light. Fetch the lamp closer."

Very carefully Renfrew examined each note, and he gave no sign when he saw in one note small letters worked into the scroll. The message was quite clear.

At once he got through to head-



"So your dirty game failed!" the sergeant cried harshly.

quarters, and the crooks heard him charter a special aeroplane to come to the mountain post at once.

"Look after these notes and these prisoners," ordered Renfrew. "Headquarters are sending my men up here at once. They'll stand by for further orders."

Three hours later an aeroplane landed, and it was Renfrew who flew the machine away, and the pilot remained behind. The sergeant was a qualified air pilot. When he had gone Laidlaw picked up the piece of wire. He wanted to try this novel magnifying glass out for himself.

The Accident

RENFREW had donned the pilot's overalls. A survey map showed him the exact position of Pine Lodge. Headquarters had been amazed when the sergeant had asked that the pilot fly one of the oldest machines to the mountain post, and as they regarded the young man as one of their most brilliant servants no arguments were raised, not even when he informed them that the machine might be wrecked. It was Renfrew's intentions to get into Pine Lodge without rousing suspicions.

Within an hour Renfrew was within sight of Pine Lodge, and a grim chuckle escaped him as he stared down. Adjusting his parachute, he prepared himself for the entertainment that he was going to provide for the guests and staff of Pine Lodge.

The guests noted idly the aeroplane flying at several thousand feet. True, one did not see a machine in this part of Canada very often, but they were all too lazy, lying in the warm sun, to take much interest. When the machine suddenly swooped down a thousand feet they did blink their eyelids and sit up. Someone commented that it looked as if the pilot was in difficulties. This was confirmed when the machine began to turn over and over. It fluttered earthward like a bird with a broken wing.

Now the guests were on their feet and excitedly pointing skywards.

Renfrew had perfect control of the old machine, and he rolled and side-slipped his craft in a manner that would have deceived the most experienced airman. The guests were convinced that nothing could save the machine, and that it was rushing to destruction. Naturally, some of the servants came out of the hotel to see what all the excitement was about, and they stared up at the plane. The engine must have cooked out and the machine got out of control. There were nasty air pockets over these mountains, and that was probably the cause of the trouble. How they gasped when they saw Renfrew at a thousand feet abandon his machine and jump.

A gasp of relief when the parachute opened and they could see the pilot floating slowly towards the ground. The machine, without Renfrew at the controls, went into a nose dive, but by some chance flattened out and skimmed over the tops of the pines. It crashed into the side of a hill, one wing crumpled up like matchwood and the machine stood drunkenly on its nose for some moments before collapsing.

The guests went rushing through the grounds in the direction of the parachute. They saw the airman hit the ground, saw him dragged for some distance until the parachute collapsed, but the airman made no attempt to rise. They thought he must be badly hurt, but Renfrew was only shamming.

They unfastened the parachute straps from his shoulders and lifted Renfrew to his feet, but he was limp in their arms and his eyes were closed. Six of the guests formed a human stretcher and hurried Renfrew to the lodge, where they dumped him on a settee.

Everyone crowded round to stare at the prostrate airman, and someone suggested loosening his clothing. Renfrew had hard work to suppress a grin when his overalls were opened at the neck and there came a general shout that it was a "Mountie."

Nolan was one of the staff gathered round that settee, and his face contorted into harsh lines as he saw that hated uniform. He rushed off to arouse Hollis, who was taking a rest.

"An aeroplane has crashed and the pilot jumped from his machine. His parachute filled out, but he was hurt badly on landing."

"Well, my friend, why look so excited," cried Hollis. "Haven't we got the reputation for being most considerate and kind. Give him the best room, get a doctor and see that he has everything."

"Yeah, but it's a Mountie."

"What?" That made Hollis sit up.

"Yeah, a Mountie!" cried Nolan. "They've brought him into the lounge, and I got the shock of my life when they opened his overalls and I saw his cursed uniform."

"What brings a Mountie to these parts?" pondered Hollis. "Guess I'd better look into this."

"He's coming round." A guest reported to the proprietor as Hollis appeared. "I think he was knocked unconscious when he landed. He's groaning, and I reckon he's hurt his back."

George Hollis pushed the people away and gave a start as he stared down at the groaning man.

"Renfrew!" he gasped.

Weakly Renfrew opened his eyes, gazed limply up at Hollis, made an effort to rise, and then with features twisted in pain slumped back.

"He is hurt bad." Hollis had remembered his rôle of French origin, and his words were accentuated. "Ze pauvre homme. I hope he is not too bad." He knelt beside the settee. "Renfrew, my friend, speak to me."

Renfrew opened his eyes and made a very good impersonation of a dazed man trying to focus his gaze. A slight smile appeared.

"My old pal, George," he mumbled. "What are you doing here?"

"I might ask ze same thing," cried Hollis. "You have crashed at Pine Lodge—my doorstep. Many times I ask you to come and see me, but never I expect you come thees way."

The dazed expression seemed to fade from Renfrew's face, but he gave a gasp of pain as he tried to sit up.

"Ah, my back!"

"Take it easy, my friend," begged Hollis.

"The old crate cracked up, George," weakly Renfrew explained. "First the engine started to miss, then an oil feed got jammed and I began to lose height. Saw your place and tried to make a forced landing, but she got out of control. I was warned against air pockets at about two thousand feet, and without an engine I was helpless. Bailed out at a thousand feet and here I am, though I seem to have hurt my back."

"Maybe you hit an old tree trunk," said Hollis. "Plenty trees I cut down to make clearing. Relax, my friend." The proprietor beamed round at his guests. "This is my very old friend, Sergeant Renfrew. Long time I know him. Only ze other day I have big contest with him at a Barbeque."

"A big contest, Mr. Hollis?" a woman guest murmured. "You mean a fight."

"Oui, oui, a big fight," laughed Hollis. "Who make ze best sauce, and I win easy." He beamed at Renfrew. "You stay here as my guest. I am ze happy man."

"I can't stay here." With face twisted, Renfrew stared up at the under-manager. "I gotta get to Saskatoon by nightfall."

"Why have you got to go to Saskatoon?"

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toon so urgent?" the latter demanded suspiciously.

"An Indian ran amok and killed a storekeeper. The Indian got away, and I want to get on the trail before the rains come."

"That Indian lucky man." Hollis shook his head. "You not go to Saskatoon even if I had a hundred aeroplanes. You sick man—I fetch doctor."

A doctor staying in the hotel gingerly felt the airman, who winced when his back was touched. The doctor said that Renfrew had strained his back, and that no bones were broken. He ordered rest. Renfrew gave a resigned shrug of his shoulders, and was carried to one of the best rooms in the lodge.

"What you make of it, chief?" Nolan asked after they had got the Mountie to bed.

"I think it's a good thing," Hollis grinned. "Renfrew is a very smart man and the longer we can keep him here under our eye the better."

"You don't think it's a frame-up?"

"Impossible," was the emphatic answer. "Though I did not see the crash, I've heard all about it from those that did. No one could have faked such a crash, and the doc assures me that the back is badly strained. No, it is just a trick of Fate."

"I wish the mug had been killed," gritted out Nolan. "Having one of them Red-coats around gives me the shivers."

"Renfrew's my friend, and thinks I'm a devil of a fine fellow," laughed Hollis. "I would be the last person in the world he'd ever suspect. Any sign of Pierre and the girl?"

"No, and not a word from Duke," Nolan was scowling. "I hope you're right, chief, about Renfrew, but what with Pierre not getting here and Renfrew showing up I'm kinda uneasy."

"Forget it! How's Bronson doing?"

"Slow," savagely answered Nolan. "Keeps on complaining about his eyes. Says prison life weakened 'em. I reckon it's a gag, and I've threatened to beat the hide off him if he don't get busy on that engraving."

"Go steady on him, Nolan," Hollis ordered. "He's an old man, but too valuable to lose. He's turned out some good stuff already, and we don't want to flood Canada and the States with spurious money. When Pierre shows up with the girl, let me know. I've got to figure out my angle on this father and daughter business. Maybe we can use the girl to make the old boy work."

"You mean threaten to do her in?"

Hollis nodded.

"Fix up quarters for her in the annex, where we can keep her under lock and key."

"I don't trust Pierre."

"There I agree." Hollis lay down on his couch, and pulled an eiderdown over him. "Some while back he threatened to talk unless he got moro money. That's why I want to see Pierre directly he gets here," Hollis yawned. "Maybe I'll fix Pierre so that he causes no more trouble."

"That's the talk, chief," approved Nolan, as he moved to the door.

Sergeant Renfrew had sipped brandy and murmured his thanks weakly, and eventually had been left alone. Whereupon he had got out of bed and donned his clothes. He was pleased with the way he had got into Pine Lodge and into the enemy's stronghold.

A sound took him to the window, and a satisfied grin showed on his clean-cut features. Two riders had arrived at the lodge. It was Pierre and the girl. He saw a groom take their horses. The half-breed made for a side door, and it was obvious from the drooping man-

ner of the girl that she was very tired.

From his pocket Renfrew took out the packet of pictures of wanted men. His lips curled in a sarcastic smile. What would some of the people in this place have thought if they could have seen them? Ah, hero was that smug-looking man, Nolan, who was supposed to be the under-manager. Renfrew read the man's record and whistled softly. A New York gangster, who had been in prison many times and was now wanted on a murder rap. He made a sketch of a dark, wavy wig, and fitted it on the picture of a sour, surly rascal, and it was something like Hollis. Being somewhat of an artist, Renfrew added a smile to the picture, and it was Hollis. The latter had many names and his record was mostly Continental. Last heard of in France and thought to be in the States, notorious as a forger and leader of crook organisations.

"George, eet ees too bad I find you out," chuckled Renfrew.

But his own position was precarious. Hollis would learn either from the girl or Pierre that they had been trailed by a Sergeant Renfrew, and then there would be trouble. He looked to his gun, opened the window, and slid down a pipe into the garden.

Gun Play

NOLAN brought Hollis the news that Pierre had brought the girl.

"I didn't ask for information, chief, but I did curse the half-breed for taking such a time getting the girl," he reported. "Also, one of the boys told me they came here on horses, and I spoke to Pierre. He mumbled something about plenty trouble with Mounties. I'm dead sure it was his knife that got MacDonald."

Hollis got off the bed.

"I'll see Pierre over in the annex and let two of the boys stand by—I may need 'em." Hollis gave a savage grin. "Take the girl into your office and keep her talking, but when I give you a call on the 'phone she is to be taken into my office. I shan't appear, because I'll be hiding in the big chair by the fire. Get her to talk about the trip up here. I will arrange for her father to show up when she's through with that tale, then you leave 'em alone as I want to hear what Bronson will have to say to his daughter."

Some time later the weary girl was taken by Nolan into his chief's office. Over the 'phone he had informed Nolan that his hunch was right about MacDonald. Pierre had knifed the man and done a lot of harm, but he would not cause any further trouble. After leaving Bronson and the girl alone he was to start dismantling the most valuable machinery—Renfrew's crash had been faked. Naturally, Nolan was far from comfortable as he sat in his chief's office, trying to appear at ease and encouraging the girl to talk, when the whole time his fingers itched to get at his gun, go up to Renfrew's room and drill the Mountie as he lay in bed.

Bronson appeared, and Nolan's lips curled as he saw father and daughter rush into each other's arms. Sentimental slop. Well, he did not care what the chief might think of doing, but he aimed to get that cursed Mountie disposed of, and he rushed up to Renfrew's room. How he cursed at sight of the empty bed and the open window. Now that Duke and Tiny were away there were only three outside members of the gang at Pine Lodge, and Nolan got one of them to keep a lookout for a Mountie prowling round the grounds.

The day was drawing to a close, and the light was going fast. Renfrew decided that he had better get through

to Laidlaw and get help. In his clothing he had concealed parts of a field telephone with connections that would enable him to tap in on any line. He clambered up a telegraph pole and would not have felt like smiling if he had known that a bearded ruffian was peering along the barrel of a shot-gun about fifty yards away and endeavouring to draw a bead on the intrepid Mountie.

Perhaps the fact that he was in full view of the lodge, and that it was not usual for a Mountie to go clambering up telegraph poles made Renfrew keep a sharp look out for anyone who might take exception to his actions. A slight movement among the bushes attracted his attention as he was connecting up his telephone, and with a shock he realised that a double-barrelled gun was pointing in his direction. Renfrew decided that his position was precarious and let go his hold. A fraction of a second later the gun roared and a large dose of shot whistled dangerously close. Renfrew jerked out his gun, but there came no repetition by the murderous attacker. The gunman had fled.

Nolan heard the shot and trusted as he gave orders about the dismantling of the plant that Renfrew had got his. It irked him that the chief was wasting all this valuable time listening to the futile remarks of the Bronsons.

But in Hollis' mind it was not a waste of time. He had great confidence in his own abilities. From the time he was a young man he had been running gangs and organisations. Once or twice in those early days he had been in prison, but in recent years he had proved far too wily for any police. He had got out of worse jams than this before. He must act coolly and calmly. The question of Pierre had been solved by a bullet—the wretched half-breed was now at the bottom of an old mine-shaft, and the body would be shifted later. Though he knew about Renfrew he did not think the Mountie would start anything that night. First he must solve the problem of the Bronsons.

Lying snugly, he listened to the conversation of the Bronsons. Mostly it was inquiries from the daughter regarding her father's health.

"But if your eyes are bad you shouldn't be working," Virginia argued. "You need the air and the sunshine. Hollis has got no power to force you to work for him."

"You don't know that man's power," mumbled the old man. "He'd frame me some way, but he's promised to let me go very soon."

"You vowed you'd go straight, dad. Now you'll be caught and sent back to prison. Sergeant Renfrew never lets up on his man."

"But he'll not follow you here, my dear."

"I don't know so much." Virginia could see that tall, athletic figure rescuing her from the overturned canoe.

"I thought that Pierre and I got away surprisingly easy. The dog never woke even when I stepped on a dead stick and it broke with a loud snap. I think he knew that I would never intentionally lead him to you. Father, we must get away from here at once."

"Where could we go, Virginia? Besides, Hollis is a revengeful man and would follow us."

"Father, why did they want you back with them?"

"Because their engraver has lost his grip. They've scared him so much that his work is poor, and his notes wouldn't deceive a child." Joe Bronson grinned bitterly. "That's why they got me back."

George Hollis decided that the girl knew far too much. She must not be allowed to go among the hotel guests and must be kept a prisoner. He would keep the old man working by using the daughter as a menace. If they should have to take flight from Pine Lodge it might be necessary to kill both of them. He pressed a button in the arm of his chair. It was the signal. Joe was ordered to go back to his laboratory, whilst Virginia was asked to go to her room. The girl

clung to her father's arm and refused to be parted from him.

Nolan, accompanied by the engraver who had lost his nerve, came into the chief's office. Hollis got up from his chair.

"Let her go down with the old man—it don't make any odds. If his daughter ain't with him he may refuse to work," muttered Hollis. "Any other developments? I thought I heard a shot once."

"That was Hansen shooting at that cursed Mountie. His door was locked, but he went out of the window," Nolan said. "Hansen saw him up a telegraph pole trying to tap in on a line. Hansen shot, and is not sure whether he hit Renfrew or not."

"That means he missed. I seem to be surrounded by fools," Hollis blazed. "Is all the apparatus dismantled?"

"Yes." The girl told Duke and Tiny that Renfrew was chasing them," Hollis went on. "And it seems that Duke went on planning to get Renfrew. How come Renfrew to be here and no sign of those two fools? I've a hunch that Renfrew beat them to it."

"Gee, chief, this sure looks like a jam. What we gonna do?"

"Get out and quick, and leave no evidence behind us," Hollis banged his desk. "We'll have to bump off the Bronsons to save our own necks."

"Kill the Bronsons?" The engraver whose nerves had gone was shaking from head to foot. "You can't kill the girl!"

"They know too much," barked Nolan. "The chief's right. It's the only way. How about Renfrew, chief?"

"He'll come snooping in here, and then I'll fix him!" gritted out Hollis. "We've got to wipe out all those who can split on us."

"Hallo, where's Snoopy gone?" Nolan turned to find the engraver had sneaked away. "He's gone to warn them."

Joe Bronson was sitting by an empty table when the engraver dashed into the room.

"You've got to get outa here!" the



"I can't stay here," said Renfrew weakly. "I gotta get to Saskatoon by nightfall."

fellow panted, his eyes twitching. "You're in grave danger. The chief plans to kill you both and—"

He got no further for Nolan had burst into the room.

"You squealing rat!" he shouted. "Get outa here! Scram!"

"Why should they die?" the man screamed. "They ain't done a thing." "Scram!" Nolan jerked out his gun.

The Bronsons clung to each other when Nolan had driven the man who had tried to save them away. They gasped as they heard the report of the gun. It was Nolan's way of settling any trouble. He had drilled the wretch through the back and flung the badly wounded man into the refrigerating plant.

"What are they going to do to us?" wailed Virginia.

"I led you into this," Joe Bronson was in despair. "We must get out before Hollis gets here."

The door opened and Hollis stood there, gun in hand.

"You've brought a hornets' nest about my ears!" he shouted to the girl. "And those that talk me pay the price."

"Spare her," begged old Bronson. "She'll never squawk."

"I'm not taking any chances." Hollis raised his gun and stepped nearer. His face was twisted with a fiendish leer.

Renfrew's Trick

SERGEANT RENFREW had found a part of the hotel that seemed cut off from the rest of the building. Things that went on here would not be heard by guests in the hotel. He forced a window and found himself in an empty gymnasium. A trapdoor revealed that there was a basement. Quietly he pulled up the trap and saw a floor about eight feet below him. He dropped down into a lighted passage. Hearing footsteps, he darted behind a pillar.

Nolan, driving a erring fellow before him, came into view. They vanished round a corner, and he heard the roar of a gun and a fall. He would have dashed out if Hollis had not appeared and burst into a room, leaving the door open.

Renfrew stepped closer and heard his threats. Hollis was about to shoot when a voice behind spoke curtly:

"Drop that gun!"

Hollis spun round. The Bronsons could hardly believe that in the very nick of time they had been saved.

"I can explain," Hollis bluffed to gain time.

"You'll do a lot of explaining later," retorted Renfrew. "I'm wise to your game; in fact, I've had my suspicions about you for some time."

"Look out!" Virginia suddenly screamed a warning.

Renfrew was just in time to fling himself sideways as a gun spat lead—Nolan had returned. The crook had followed Renfrew, but he got no chance of a second shot. The gun was wrenched from his hand and a fierce punch dropped him to the floor.

Hollis knew that he was cornered and that his only chance was to get Renfrew. No time to pick up the gun he had dropped. He rushed, and as the sergeant turned got in a fierce blow. Renfrew was hurled back against the wall and the gun clattered to the floor as his knuckles were bruised by the hard stone.

The two men fought fiercely all round the room.

"Let's get out of here and hide," Joe Bronson gripped his daughter's arm. "Maybe we can slip away."

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Dazed and bewildered, the girl allowed her father to push her out of the room. Seeing the door of the refrigerating plant open they rushed inside, and Virginia screamed as she saw the body lying there.

Renfrew landed a punch that broke two of Hollis' teeth, and the man had had enough. He dived straight at a window and crashed through the glass. Renfrew picked up his gun and gave chase. As he scrambled up a banking he saw Hollis pelting for the house.

Nolan, who had been lying almost out on the floor, got dazedly to his feet. He was in time to see the Bronsons rush into the refrigerating plant. With a mad laugh he staggered forward and slammed the door and locked it.

Sergeant Renfrew made to follow his man when a gun spat and a bullet whined close. So Hollis had another gun.

From behind trees, in the half light, the two engaged in a firing duel. Naturally, the shooting out in the grounds had roused the whole lodge, and people were running about the corridors demanding to know what was happening. Their only answer was the

roar of the guns outside. Some ventured to the windows and reported that they could see red stabs of flame.

Shot for shot the two men exchanged, and though bullets went close neither man was hurt. Renfrew darted from cover and got to another tree before Hollis could fire. Using some bushes the crook leader managed to get out of range. Renfrew then came after him, sparing his fire.

Renfrew worked his way to within twenty yards of Hollis, who was hiding behind a big tree.

"Come out!"

"You'll never get me!" taunted Hollis, and blazed a shot at Renfrew.

An almost maniacal expression of delight appeared on his flushed features as he saw Renfrew's gun misfire. The sergeant's gun-hand appeared round a tree, and again the weapon did not beheld lead. The chambers were empty. Now Hollis had the Mountie at his mercy.

Hollis fired once again, and when there came no response boldly stepped out of cover. Slowly and malevolently he walked towards Renfrew. The sergeant stepped out, with his gun lowered.

"And so, my friend, I settle your snoco for good!" chuckled Hollis. "It will give me great pleasure to kill you. Just one shot and all will be over."

Suddenly up came Renfrew's gun. There was a roar, and with a screech of agony Hollis dropped his gun—a bullet had smashed his wrist.

"An old trick, and you fell for it!" mocked the sergeant.

"You dirty double-crosser!" babbled the angry Hollis. "You tricked me."

"I not only had a second gun, but I also carry plenty of ammunition. Fancy you falling for that gag!" Renfrew produced handcuffs. "I think these bracelets will keep you from doing any further harm."

Renfrew snapped them over Hollis' wrists, and it gave him a certain amount of satisfaction when the man screamed with the pain. The sergeant glanced round as a huge car screeched to a stop and half a dozen Mounties, together with Lightning, piled out.

"What brings you boys here?"

"I read the message on that bank-note," cried Laidlaw. "It took me a long time before I got the drop of water fixed. Then I saw what Bronson had engraved on the note. We had had no message from you, so I talked it over with the boys, when they showed up, and we reckoned it best to come without orders."

"Good for you, Laidlaw," the sergeant answered. "Some of you boys surround this lodge, and one of you go inside and pacify the guests. Don't let any servants or officials try a walk-out. If you come across a rat named Nolan drill him on sight—he's a killer. Put Hollis in the car and watch him."

Renfrew darted back to the broken window. The place seemed strangely quiet. Was Nolan lurking somewhere? He jerked open the door, saw Nolan, and whipped back in time as the man fired. But the next shot came from Renfrew. The sergeant flashed back into the corridor before Nolan, who was still feeling the effect of the punch he had stopped, could act. Hollis' evil confederate staggered forward a few steps, the gun slid from his hands and he crashed in a heap.

Thump, thump, thump! What was that noise? It guided him to the refrigerating plant. He saw an old man beating feebly against the glass and choking horribly. The place seemed full of steam. Nolan had turned on the gas.

(Continued on page 27)

NEXT WEEK'S LONG COMPLETE FILM DRAMAS!



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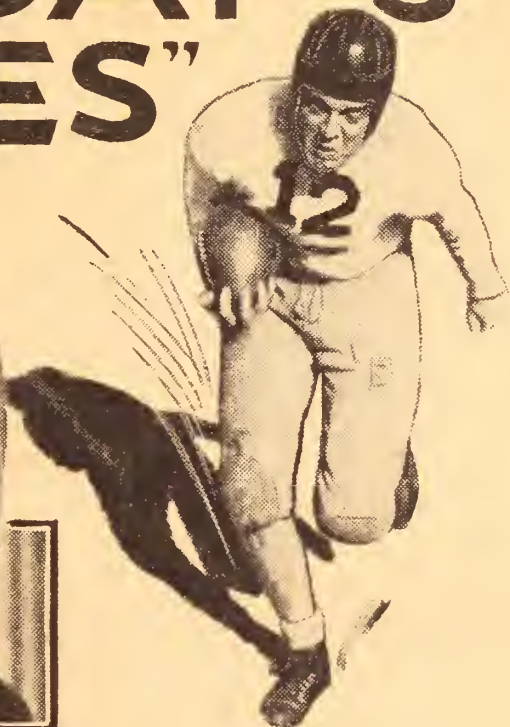
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"SATURDAY'S HEROES"



The Game That Kills

IN the train coming back from the game against Raymond Technical, Val Webster, star quarterback for Calton University, wasn't feeling very pleased with himself.

He was worried. There wasn't the slightest doubt he was going off his game. Not only he himself, but others had noticed it, too. Red Watson, ace sports writer, had been castigating him in his column, and had recently been heard to say:

"That kid's been around a pigskin so long he's beginning to act like a ham!"

Val had lost the eager keenness with which, as a youngster, he had approached football at High school. His eyes had been opened lately. He saw clearly that he was caught up in a huge racket, under the guise of sport.

He and his fellow players received so-called "presents," while the colleges got big and profitable gates for these exciting games that attracted thousands—and they called it amateur football.

Val was heartily sick of the whole slightly unsavoury business. Owing to the attitude of the colleges, the game he loved was deteriorating into a colossal money-making business.

He was aroused from his black thoughts by the loud laughter of his team-mates, directed at that ruggid, but comical clown, Dubrowsky—a lion on the field, but a good-natured butt off it.

"Lay off, you guys," Dubrowsky complained. "I'm tired after the gaff we took from the doc!"

That set them off on a new tack. Doc Thomas, their trainer, criticised

them on every opportunity, believing this line of action made them exert themselves all the more on the football field.

"Why, he was nice and gentle," said one. "Like a rubber in a turkish bath."

"Yeah, with brass knuckles," snarled Dubrowsky.

Burgeson, a tall, grinning lad, got up on a seat and, to the amusement of his pals, began parodying the trainer's exhortations.

"Never in my five years as coach have I seen such a demonstration of High school grand-standing! And here comes the worst offender, that one-man football team, Four Star Webster!"

Griming, Val pulled him down and took his place.

"Is that the best you can do? Watch an expert, boy," he cried amid laughter. "Why, you're not football players, you're a bunch of stage-struck ballet dancers! And Webster, if I want any advice from you, I'll ask for it! As long as I'm coach, I'll give the orders and you'll follow them!"

Everybody recalled his recent brush with the coach. The game against Raymond Technical had been won solely because Val used his own initiative and improved on the play ordered by the coach. They all turned guiltily at the sound of hearty clapping to find Doc Thomas, cigar in mouth.

"Always the actor!" he said sarcastically. "Well, maybe you'd like to know how your performance went over this afternoon. Here, see what Red Watson has to say about it!"

Handing the paper to Val, he swung away, leaving them to crowd round the

quarter-back. One excitedly pointed out a headline as Val sought the sports page:

"Ted Calkins, Union College captain, dropped from team—accused of being a ringer!"

All knew what that meant. Ted Calkins had exceeded his time as an amateur, playing five years instead of four.

"He's a friend of yours, isn't he?" asked one of Val's team-mates.

"My best," said Val grimly. "We played in the same High school team."

"That washes him up—he should have known you can't get away with that!"

"Union College knew all about it when they sent for him," said Val angrily. "And when somebody else found out, they left him holding the bag!"

Furiously he handed the paper to young Birdwell, who read Watson's report.

"After all the build-up, Val Webster turned out to be just another fumble-artist. This boy is suffering from a severe case of cerebellum magnum." To the obtuse Dubrowsky, chewing his gum like a cow chewing the cud, he added: "Big head, to you!"

"That guy!" exclaimed Dubrowsky. "I'm surprised he's got the nerve to ride on the same train with us!"

"Which reminds me," said Burgeson to Val. "Didn't you promise somebody a sock on the jaw?"

He was referring to a recent angry scene between the hot-headed young footballer and the sardonic journalist.

Val believed the man's comments were unfair, and had angrily promised to knock his block off if he printed any more like them.

"Yeah!" he growled, and went in search of Red Watson. His pals scuttled after him; this was going to be too good to miss.

Red Watson, having a quiet card game with some cronies, was just rising, saying:

"Well, let's call it even. I think I'll go and lie down for a while."

"That's right!" snorted Val, coming into the car at that moment.

His fist plunked on Red Watson's jaw. The sports writer sagged and collapsed in the aisle.

"Wow! What a sock!" muttered Dubrowsky, goggling.

"Hey, Red," exclaimed Val, kneeling down beside the man he had knocked out. "Red!"

"Go 'way," muttered Red dreamily. "I like it down here!"

Feeling a bit better, Val went to the observation car at the rear of the train, and was there buttonholed by the somewhat sheepish Burgeson, who wanted a loan.

"Twenty-five bucks be enough?" asked Val.

"Thanks," grunted Burgeson. "I'll pay you back in a couple of weeks."

"You don't have to wait that long," said Val. "I'll take your complimentary tickets for next week's game, and we'll call it square."

Burgeson agreed to this, and rose to leave as a charming, fair-haired girl came on to the platform. Frances Thomas, the coach's daughter, was by way of being a mascot for the team. She was the only reason why Val put up with the grumpy coach.

"What's this I hear about your taking punches at the Press?" she demanded, sitting down beside him.

"I had to do it," Val growled uncomfortably.

"I suppose you have to scalp tickets, too," she said coldly, referring to the fact that Val would sell Burgeson's tickets before the game. "You know it's wrong!"

Although he knew the whole business was a racket anyway, he found it hard to justify himself to this girl. Chaps like himself weren't proper students; they were kept at the college mainly for their football prowess, trained to attract big gates, then flung aside like Ted Calkins. But he found it hard to put his point of view.

"Well, I've got to live," he said lamely.

"Is ticket scalping the only way?" she said quietly.

"No," flared Val. "This football racket is fair to everybody but the players! They dug me up at High school, promised me the world on a gold chain, and what do I get? Board and room and a lot of kicking around!"

"And me?" she said demurely.

His face cleared. He took her in his arms.

"That's right," he laughed. "And I got the best of the bargain, too!" He kissed her. Neither noticed the brakeman who had come on to the platform, and was grinning down at them. "Fran, you are the most adorable, delightful, delicious, cr—er—"

"D-lovely?" suggested the delighted brakeman, and, in confusion, they escaped into the car.

That night, when dining with his team-mates in their special quarters, Val Webster was called to the door, and in the hall found a visitor—Ted Calkins, haggard of face.

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Val gripped his shoulders wonderingly.

"How are you, Ted?"

"I suppose you heard about my bad luck, Val?" said Calkins nervously.

"I did," Val nodded. "Tough, boy."

"I don't know where to turn," said Ted awkwardly. "I can't go home, with things the way they are."

"Stop worrying," Val urged. "What if you did play football five years instead of four? I bet your school knew about it all the time?"

"They did," said Ted grimly.

"Then why hold the bag?" exclaimed Val angrily. "Blow the whole thing wide open!"

"That would involve a dozen others," said Ted miserably. "I couldn't do it."

"The dirty hypocrites!" Val raged. "They'll let you take the rap for them every time. All they care about is big gates and publicity!"

They were interrupted by another caller for Val. Ted watched as Val sold him the tickets he had taken from Burgeson.

"Say, you're flirting with the legion of the lost yourself, selling those tickets!" he exclaimed when the man had gone.

"If I tried to live on the Athletic Board allowance I'd be too weak to lift a ball," shrugged Val. "Say, Ted, how are you fixed?"

"Well, I'm off the payroll," sighed the sacked football player. "I don't know where to go to look for a job. Nobody'll talk to me. You'd think I had leprosy!"

"Oh, well, don't worry," smiled Val. "I've got enough until you're set. Come and have some chow."

Ted hedged. He didn't feel like facing the other fellows. Val persuaded him to go and sit at the table.

But his fears were justified. As he sat there nervously, a player named Clemens began to make veiled remarks about ringers.

"Nix on the wisecracks!" said Val dangerously, glancing at Ted's white face.

"But I meant it," snapped Clemens. "If there's anything lower than a ringer—"

He said no more. In a blazing fury Val was on him, and sent him hurtling into a corner with a pile-driver to the jaw.

"Anybody else feel the same way?" he demanded, fighting down his rage.

Nobody did. The rest of the dinner passed off peacefully. But that night Val was awakened from his sleep and received new resolution to do something about this racket that had broken his friend.

Two detectives wanted to see him. They asked questions about Ted Calkins, and when Val wanted to know why, they told him tersely:

"Ted Calkins is dead. Suicide! Can you give us any reason why—"

"That wasn't suicide," roared Val to their amazement. "That was murder! When Ted was thrown off that team, the school was just as guilty as he was. He couldn't take it. He was a sensitive chap. You may call it suicide, but Calkins was murdered—by amateur football!"

Starting the Ball Rolling

NEXT day Val Webster left college football. It all happened with startling suddenness. Leaving a lecture on Cretan pottery with his classmates, he was stopped by the president, Dr. Hammond. With the head of the university was the coach,

and Meggs, the man Val had sold the tickets to the previous night.

As soon as he saw Meggs he knew what was coming, knew that he had been trapped by a spy. Before his classmates, Val admitted he had sold the tickets to Meggs and speculated similarly on other occasions. The president was sorry, but there was no option but to ask for his resignation.

In a blazing temper, Val gave it. He couldn't but think it was Frances, standing wide-eyed nearby, who had told her father of his transaction with Burgeson.

"Don't be sorry, doctor—anything but sorry," he growled. "Let me congratulate you—you and your spies!"

Frances followed him as he strode from the room, and caught him up out on the campus.

"Val, you don't really believe I had anything to do with—"

"Oh, no!" he said mockingly.

"I know what's in your mind," she retorted. "But you've got to listen to me."

"Oh, I get it," snapped Val, staring at her. "You wanted to reform me. Well, that was a pretty cute trick, telling your old man about the tickets!"

In his anger he was not responsible for what he said; she realised that and tried to calm him.

"I didn't tell him anything. You can't lose your head like this, Val!"

"Oh, they had me floored for a minute," he said bitterly. "But I'll show them they're not going to do to me what they did to Calkins. I'll turn this campus upside down. And don't think I won't!"

He left her then, and went straight to Dr. Hammond.

"I'll come straight to the point, Dr. Hammond," he gritted. "I make sixteen dollars on a game, and the school makes a quarter of a million. We're both racketeers, only I'm doing it in a small way."

"Your attitude only confirms the wisdom of our decision," said the president coldly, but his eyes were uneasy.

"All right, then," snapped Val. "Take a look at these cancelled cheques, with endorsements from every player for tickets they've sold to me. I'm taking these straight to Red Watson, of the 'Herald.'" He walked to the door, leaving Dr. Hammond gasping. "If you think I'm bluffing, look at to-morrow's paper. You can read, can't you?"

He left the president hastily picking up his phone.

Meanwhile, Frances was having a stormy interview with her father.

"You tricked him deliberately," she cried, "and he thinks I helped you!"

"Now, baby," he said soothingly.

"You don't understand these things. We all know that college football is leaky at the seams; but as long as we're part of it we've got to play the game."

"A game that makes one man carry all the blame!" she flashed.

"That's just it." He was off his guard. "Webster wanted to be the whole show."

"So that's the reason you fired him," she snapped bitterly. "You knew all along he was selling tickets."

"As long as a man behaves on the field," he sighed, "we've got to keep blinkers over our eyes."

She rounded on him.

"And now you're blinding yourself to everything this means to me!"

"Why," he said surprisedly, "I didn't realise he meant that much to you. I might try—"

The 'phone bell interrupted him. Dr.

Hammond was ringing in a very excited state.

"Thomas, we must reconsider the Webster matter—"

"Strange," grunted the coach, "I was just thinking the same thing."

"He's going to stir up a hornets' nest," stammered the president. "Yes, yes. We've got to head him off before he gets to Red Watson."

Coach Thomas promised to be right over. Abstractedly he told the eager Frances that Val was to be reinstated. Starry-eyed, she rushed out at once to tell Val the good news.

Val was in the drug store, whose soda-fountain was much patronised by the Calton students. Burgeson had buttonholed him, hoping he was going to say nothing about his part in the ticket affair. Otherwise Val, who had been one of the most popular fellows in the school, found himself more or less in Coventry.

"Oh, don't worry," he told Burgeson irritably. "I threatened to expose the whole outfit, but you know I'm not the type."

Dubrowsky, who served there as a waiter to earn a bit extra, called him at that moment to the 'phone booth. Val found Red Watson on the wire.

"I just heard about your dismissal, kid. It's tough!"

Val smiled. Red Watson was a decent scout. They were good friends, despite their quarrels, which he had to admit were due mostly to his own flaring temper.

"Yeah," he said casually. "Say, Red, I've been meaning to apologise for slugging you. Guess I flew off the handle."

"Forget it! Now, what's this trouble you're in? If they've given you a raw deal, I'll bust them wide open—" Red stopped suddenly. Val could hear noises in his office. "Hold on a minute!"

He had thoughtfully held the 'phone up, and Val, to his astonishment, heard the rich tones of Dr. Hammond.

"Greetings, Professor Hammond," Red was saying. "Hallo, coach! Have a seat?" Red was evidently enjoying himself. He spoke to Val next. "Now, let's see, where were we, Webster?"

"Mr. Watson," said Dr. Hammond hastily, "I think we can tell you more about this than he can!"

Red ignored him. To Val's surprise, the sports writer was talking as if replying to some long conversation.

"Him! Go on. Yeah! Who was to blame?"

"Say, have you gone crazy?" howled Val.

"Crazy?" said Red. "They are, if you have the evidence to prove it." Val heard him continuing, speaking to somebody on the staff, promising them a good story if they'd hold the space on the front page.

"I didn't say anything of the kind!" roared Val in desperation. "Don't you print that!"

"Don't worry, kid," said Red kindly. "I'll handle this just the way you want it."

Val realised he was putting on a bluff for the benefit of his anxiously listening visitors. Hammond broke in, unable to contain himself any longer.

"Just a minute, Mr. Watson. That young scoundrel is lying. He was dismissed because he's guilty. He's out, and out for good!"

Val, who had heard all this very clearly for the simple reason that Red thoughtfully held the 'phone up towards Hammond as he spoke, thought this a little hard, since he hadn't said a word. The young footballer's eyes blazed, and he clenched his fists angrily. "You wouldn't want your paper involved in a libel suit?" continued Dr. Hammond wheedlingly.

"I wouldn't think of printing this story—" said Red.

"Thank you," exclaimed the president, rising.

"—until I have checked it thoroughly," added Red brutally. When they had gone, he turned to the 'phone again. "Don't let it worry you, Val. I'm going to get to the bottom of this, and I want your help."

"Not now, Red," said Val quietly. "But I'll get in touch with you. So-long."

He went out into the store just in time to meet Frances. She was flushed, and, he realised with a pang, looking very beautiful. She drew him aside into a high-backed seat.

"All right, let's have it," he sighed. "Daddy and Professor Hammond have been looking all over for you," she whispered excitedly.

"Oh, I see," he grinned mirthlessly. "They're heading the posse."

A little hurt by his attitude, she told him what she had heard when the president 'phoned her father.

"What's the idea of lying, Frances?" he said coldly, for the talk in Red Watson's office was still very clear in his mind. "Only a minute ago I heard Hammond tell Red Watson that I was out for good."

"It—it must be a mistake," she frowned, aghast. "I don't understand!"

"I do!" he growled. "You can go back and tell your father that his little scene worked, that I'm clearing out!"

"Please!" Frances jumped up as he rose. "What are you going to do, Val?"

"You'll find out soon enough!" he rapped, and, leaving her, barged angrily through the swing doors.

He had no doubt now what he was going to do. He was going to start his campaign against the whole corrupt system of sham-amateur football. Calton's next game was to be with Weston College, a small place that hadn't won against the stars for over twelve years.

To Weston Val went, knowing the president, Dr. Mitchell, to be a fair-minded man, with the good of the game at heart. He interviewed Val with his



Baker, finishing his marvellous run, scored a last-second touchdown.

football coach, whose name was Banks. "I'll admit that technically I was in the wrong," Val concluded, after telling his story. "But not nearly as wrong as the system that preaches amateur football and plays professional!"

They were slightly hostile at first, suggesting Val was only trying to use them to get even with Hammond.

"That's not true," he declared. "I came to you because you're one of the few college presidents who's been quoted as having an honest viewpoint on this business. Dr. Mitchell, you have a chance to remake college football!"

For a long time he talked, outlining his plan, until they began to be impressed by his earnestness. He proposed making the game honest for the school—and for the players—by cutting out the hypocrisy.

Pay the players openly, give them the education they came to college for, and not drop them like hot potatoes when their usefulness was over, he continued, citing the tragedy of Ted Calkins.

Though convinced, Dr. Mitchell and Banks were doubtful about being able to do anything, for Weston was small and carried no weight with the big colleges. Swiftly Val suggested that if Weston could beat Calton in the forthcoming game, the others would be forced to listen.

He offered to help with the coaching, and at last Dr. Mitchell capitulated. Val suggested he get in touch with Red Watson, who would vouch for him any day.

The sports writer was at Calton, interviewing Dr. Hammond, when Dr. Mitchell at last got him on the phone. Red was standing right beside Hammond when he spoke to the Weston president.

"Mr. Watson," said Mitchell, "Val Webster wants to enter Weston. What can you tell me about him?"

"He's one of the finest boys I've ever met," said Red enthusiastically, with a sidelong glance at Hammond beside him, who was just congratulating himself on having persuaded Red to drop the Webster matter. "You can believe anything he tells you."

"Your recommendation," remarked Mitchell, "doesn't agree with a letter I got from President Hammond."

"That hypocrite!" exclaimed Red, enjoying himself; and Hammond, looking up, wondered what he was grinning at. "I wouldn't believe him any day!"

Mitchell was satisfied, and that very day Val Webster went to work with the Weston team, intent on their beating Calton so that the whole racket of college football could be ventilated.

Mind Over Matter

WHEN the day of the great game came around, Val had succeeded, with Coach Banks' backing, in knocking some of his ideas into the Weston team.

He had had a hectic time. He had enlisted Red's support, and almost lost it through knocking the sports writer down again in a burst of anger on learning that it was through Red's antics with the phone that he had broken with Frances.

He had become partly reconciled with the girl in Watson's office; then they had parted again in anger when she learned that in spite of his talk about keeping his temper and turning over a new leaf, he had just punched Red on the jaw. It struck him as be-

ing very silly, for they had both confessed that they loved one another.

But Val was concentrating all his energies on training the team. He had studied the players while watching them practising with Coach Banks. One, a dandified fellow named Baker, whose smart new football outfit brought gibes from his pals, had interested Val particularly.

This lad's temper seemed as fiery as his own. He was liable to blow up if anybody came near to tearing his garb. Also Val had met a queer veteran hanging round the field, Andy Jones by name. He called himself assistant coach, was dressed always in football clothes of twenty years ago, with a little cap perched ridiculously on his round head.

Andy had a colossal moustache curved like a ram's horns; he claimed that nobody could hope to play football unless they wore such a face adornment, which had been affected by the giants of the past.

Val had been inclined to smile at the old man until one day, when a call had come for a new ball out on the field, Andy had picked one up and hurled it out in an amazing throw. Val just gaped, while Andy smirked and twirled his moustache.

The quarter-back who had taken on the task of helping Weston to win had been very thoughtful. It seemed that Weston could never succeed by sheer good playing; but the application of a little simple psychology, as suggested to him by the characters of such fellows as Baker, might win if the right tactics could be evolved.

This was what he confided in Red Watson. And to his joy, Red did his part. The gist of his reports was that Weston hadn't a chance against the Calton team. The idea was to make the champions over-confident, to make them believe the game would be a walk-over for them, which was, on the face of it, the truth.

Red had been told why Val was so anxious for Weston to win, and having the good of the game at heart, the journalist was only too pleased to be of assistance.

Val had had a lot of trouble, cajoling and bullying the players—especially with the hot-headed Baker, who was inclined to flare up too easily. But Val, who knew all about hot temper, had cunningly worked on the lad. He was pinning a lot of his hopes on the dandified, though husky, young player.

On the Weston benches at the edge of the field, before the game started, Val drew his players around him and talked to them. They all knew by now that more than just winning this particular game depended on them. The whole future of college football was in the balance. If they won, they could force a change in the whole system.

"It's never been heard of before," Val explained, "but we're going to do it. We're going to let Calton make the first touchdown without opposition."

"Let them score purposely?" gasped Banks.

"Exactly," Val nodded. "I know those boys, and after an easy touchdown, they'll get over-confident and start loafing."

The team was enthusiastic, and as they went out Val drew Baker aside, and grinned:

"Oh, Baker, if you get your trousers dirty we'll buy new ones!"

Laughing, Baker went out with his team-mates for the start of the fateful game. Un in the press-box, with Red Watson, Frances was feeling glum; the game didn't seem the same without Val

down there on the touchline. But Red handed her a pair of binoculars and told her to look at the Weston benches, and she started joyfully when she saw Val sitting there.

Red, enjoying her wonderment, wouldn't explain a thing. He just told her to sit tight and watch, for the game wouldn't be over till the last whistle.

It went as Val anticipated. Calton scored an easy touchdown, and converted it skilfully, much to the amusement of the vast crowd.

In the privileged seats, President Hammond, sitting next to his rival, Mitchell, was crowing loudly. Already the Calton man knew what hung on the game; but he wasn't anxious. He believed this tin-pot little Weston team hadn't a chance. He grew a little anxious, though, when Red Watson came in answer to a message from Dr. Mitchell.

"Mr. Watson," said the scholarly-looking Weston president, "we need the co-operation of the Press."

"I think I know what you mean," said Red, glancing at Hammond. "And you can count on me."

"We want to take the smell out of amateur football," declared Dr. Mitchell. "Will you phrase that for me in college president style?"

"Two hundred and fifty-eight papers carry my column," grinned Red. "They'll all do you proud!"

"You know what happened to Ted Calkins," Mitchell went on, "to Val Webster, and many others?"

Hammond broke it anxiously.

"I'll appreciate it if you don't mention that Webster matter!"

"Very well, sir," said Red evenly, "I'll just take a rap at the whole system."

"This has all been thrashed out before," argued Dr. Hammond. "It's up to the Universities to handle it individually!"

"They've been doing that for years," snapped Mitchell. "Nothing ever came of it. It's time somebody took the lead, and that's what Weston is going to do!"

"You won't get a college in America to play you next year," stormed Hammond.

"When we beat you to-day," retorted Mitchell sweetly. "We'll be the big team. There'll be hundreds of teams anxious to play us on our own terms!"

Hammond expostulated further, but he couldn't move Dr. Mitchell and the sports writer from their purpose. However, he still felt confident his college would win.

The game was fairly even. With a magnificent push Weston had scored a touchdown but failed to convert it. The score stood at seven to six, in Calton's favour. On the Calton benches, Doc Thomas was raging, seeing all his own favourite attacks ordered by Val.

The crowd, which had come expecting to see a walkover, was in a ferment now. So were the Calton team, who expended a lot of energy in passing remarks about Baker's clothes, till that young man got redder and redder and wilder and wilder.

Val watched, tense, as the teams lined up for a new throw-in. The minutes were ticking past. He groaned as he saw slight disturbance out on the field. The crowd fell silent, then a great roar went up as Baker, red of face, began to run out of the pack. At that moment, the whistle blew. It was too late for Baker to leave the field and get on to the benches.

Peterson, the Weston captain, to

(Continued on page 27)

A wagon train is held up and all the members are killed with the exception of two small boys. Years later they are destined to meet under strange circumstances in this thrilling super-Western, starring Gilbert Roland and Charles Bickford

"THUNDER TRAIL"



The Attack on the Wagon Train

OLD John Ames, driving at the head of the wagon train through the mountains, sang lustily, reckoning that he had every right to do so. For he and the little band of men with him had cleaned up a fortune in the Californian gold fields after long and weary struggles, and they were now on their way to their homes in Missouri, where they could sit back at last and enjoy the fruits of their labours.

So old John Ames, as he drove the wagon, sang for very content. Somewhere about forty thousand dollars was to be his share of his years of hard work.

A fresh, young boyish voice came from behind him in the wagon.

"Aw, dad, can't you quit singin' for a couple of miles? I'm all wore out listenin' to you."

The old man threw a glance over his shoulder, grinned as he did so. He saw his two boys there, Dick, aged fourteen, already half-way to sturdy manhood, Bob, aged eight. Both of them were chips off the old block, he told himself, and he was as proud of them as a man could be.

"Son," he retorted, "you're just like your ma was—no car for music. How's that cut of Bob's comin' along?"

Dick, busily engaged in washing a nasty wound on his younger brother's shoulder, grinned as he replied:

"Good as new, or nearly. I reckon it will teach Bob not to try and ride any more wild burros. That donkey sure put his brand on him when he kicked him."

"Brand?" queried the old man. "What does it read?"

"Looks more like an 'A' than anything else."

"Well, ain't our name Ames? What's the matter with that?"

"Where are we campin' to-night, dad?" asked the boy as he came to the end of his first-aid.

"There's water up yonder," replied

the old man, pointing ahead. "Pine Lake, they call it. I reckon we'll make camp there."

"Gee, I'm hungry."

"Better take your gun," replied his father, "and see if you can get us some fresh meat for supper."

"All right."

He moved down to the end of the wagon where his horse was tied, and in a few minutes had the rope unfastened, was on the horse's back and away in search of game. Though one of the men shouted a parting warning to him as he rode off.

"Keep your eyes peeled for Indians, lad."

Dick waved a reassuring hand.

"Don't worry. I'll protect you," he retorted.

Resuming his singing, John Ames shook up the horses. He had no idea that for the last few miles of their journey they had been closely watched. Any more than he was aware of the fact that almost at that moment a rough-looking man on the mountainside who had been watching their progress through the valley was now setting spurs to his horse.

A few moments' hard riding brought the man to a camp beneath the trees where a dozen men were seated. The rider threw himself from his horse.

"Where's Tate?" he demanded.

"Over there, Jeff," answered one of the men pointing to where a short, thick-set man with a rather truculent jaw and a small bristling moustache sat on a rock sewing a saddle.

The man called Jeff addressed him laconically.

"Ames' wagons is comin' down through the valley," he said. "He's

bringing a packet of gold back from California to Missouri."

The other nodded thoughtfully.

"They said he struck lucky."

"He sure did. Looks to me they're headin' for Pine Lake for water. Do we drop in on 'em?"

A slow smile came to the other's face, though it was certainly not a nice smile.

"I'll say we do," he answered. "Mighty foolish for anyone to roam round these parts with a packet of gold. Saddle up quick, boys."

In a minute the men around him were on their feet, examining their guns, saddling their horses. From the expressions on their faces it was easy to see that they meant business. But it was equally easy to see that it was evil business.

It certainly was evil business. The attack was swift and sudden, as the bandits meant it to be. There was gold to be had and they intended to have it. So, one minute Ames and his little band, utterly unsuspecting of the danger that was stalking them, were peacefully preparing their evening meal, and the next death was encircling them, swift, sharp death, and their men falling right and left from the bullets of an unseen enemy who had crept up among the rocks on the surrounding hills. Though, as the bandits came riding down, they—the besieged—knew at least that it was no Indians who attacked them.

Ames' first concern was for his younger son, whom he bundled hastily inside the wagon and covered with a tarpaulin.

"Keep you down, son—don't you dare to move!" he exclaimed sternly.

He crawled down beneath the wagon with another of his men, fierce fury in his heart. Bullets were rattling all round him, and already he knew that four of his men had been laid low and perhaps had been killed. He found himself as he kept on firing wondering vaguely where his elder son was. He wished that he could warn him. The shots would probably attract his attention, he told himself, and he would ride up in a moment to see what was happening. His heart went down as he thought what a ready mark he would make.

He heard a groan at his side, turned to see that his companion had dropped his gun and had rolled over—was lying motionless. With a muttered oath he snapped the trigger as two of the outlaws swept past not thirty yards away, firing as they went. A grim chuckle slid from his lips as he saw one of them sag and crash to the ground.

"That squares—" he exclaimed, but the next moment something crashed into his forehead and everything slipped away.

Lee Tate and his lieutenant, Jeff Graves, stood looking down on the dead body of John Ames and the other dead bodies that lay all around them.

"Well, that's that," said Tate laconically. "Let's hope it's worth it."

Two of his men who had been rummaging in the wagon came staggering along, bearing a heavy chest between them. Tate's eyes lighted up as he saw it.

"That looks good," he remarked. "It's locked."

But a couple of shots from Lee Tate's revolver finished with the lock, and when he lifted the lid of the box and saw the gold which filled it he smiled.

"Reckon this little trip's worth while," he said. "Get busy, boys."

While the outlaws were loading their saddle-bags with the gold Jeff spoke.

"Don't you think we might let the folks blame it on the Indians, same as last time?" he suggested.

"Sure thing," replied Tate. "Get going."

They did, and very quickly. And in a few moments all of the wagons were ablaze and burning fiercely. But Jeff, who was standing close to the wagon where the gold had been found, suddenly happened to see a movement inside, and in a second his gun came out.

But a grin spread over his face as he pulled back the tarpaulin to disclose Bob; though the grin changed to a snarl, for Bob, as Jeff tried to haul him out, buried his teeth in the outlaw's thumb.

His arm went up savagely. His gun was in his hand, and that moment might have been the boy's last had not Tate, who was standing near, caught his arm.

"Easy up, Jeff," he exclaimed.

"What for? The darned little coyote

Bob, however, had slipped to the ground and was rushing away. But both of the men were after him in a flash, though it was Tate who caught him.

"Lemme go—lemme go!" screamed the boy as he struggled and fought.

"Let you go?" snarled Jeff. "Look at that thumb of mine!"

Tate was grinning. Killing men was one thing, but some queer streak in him was making him feel almost sorry for this boy.

"Aw now, son," he queried, "what you want to do that for?"

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"Lemme go—lemme go!" sobbed the boy. "I hate you!"

Tate was holding him, an amused smile on his face despite the fact that the boy was pommeling him with his small fists.

"Brave little cuss, ain't he?" he queried. "Not even scared of us." He addressed the boy, winking at Jeff.

"Why, son, what d'you want to hate us for? It was Jeff and me what drove the Indians off. Lucky for you we did or they'd have killed you."

He turned to Jeff.

"Take him back to the camp," he said.

"I'll take him, you bet," replied Jeff savagely.

A scowl came to Tate's face.

"And if you frighten him I'll feed you to the buzzards, and don't forget it!" he snapped.

Jeff stared at him in sheer amazement.

"Why, you don't mean to tell me—"

he began, but Tate cut him short.

"Shut up!" he exclaimed.

Jeff glared at him truculently.

"If you think I'm goin' to be a nursemaid to this yere kid—" he began, but the other's hand went to his gun.

"You do as I tell you," he rapped out. "Now get goin'."

But his hand still held his gun as he watched the other lead the now quietened boy away. From the expression on his face he had every intention of being obeyed.

He waited around after his men had gone, watching to see that the destruction of the wagons was complete. But as he heard the sound of a horse's hoofs he looked up quickly and his hand went to his gun.

But it came away, and he merely stood his ground, a smile on his lips.

Dick, for it was he, flung himself from his horse and strode up to Tate. His gun was in his hand and fury was in his young face. So David may have approached Goliath.

"What are you burning our wagons for? What have you done to my father?" he demanded.

Tate, smiling indulgently, merely shook his head. He could admire pluck when he saw it, and this handsome lad was already appealing to him.

"Wasn't me, son. I've only just ridden up. I should say it was the Indians."

Dick's eyes bored him fiercely.

"It was nothing of the kind. I saw you—I saw what you did."

Tate's eyes narrowed. He knew that if Dick had seen things he would be dangerous. But he tried once more.

"Now, look here, son—" he began in a conciliatory tone, but the other whirled in on him.

"Don't you lie to me! It was you and I saw it! You've killed my dad and you've killed my brother, and I'll

His gun came up in a flash, but Tate was quicker. In a second his arm had shot out catching Dick on the point of the jaw, and the lad staggered and crashed to the ground, striking his head as he did so against a heavy barrel.

Tate, with a scowl on his face, drew his revolver, though even as he aimed it he hesitated. Stooping down, he put his ear to the boy's heart. Then with a shrug of his shoulders he replaced his gun in its holster and walked slowly to his tethered horse.

Astride it he turned. The wagons were still blazing fiercely. And Dick Ames still lay stretched out on the ground with all the dreadful limpness of death.

In a quiet little valley with the trees all round him, his burro grazing quietly by his side and a fire blazing merrily before him, a man sat cooking his dinner and reading aloud from a well-thumbed little book.

He was a pleasant man to look at, obviously a Mexican, and he had a round cheerful face, a monstache which he kept constantly twirling, bright eyes, and a mouth that was always smiling.

He looked up from his book suddenly as the burro lifted its head and pricked up its ears.

"What's the matter, Fernando? You hear something?" he asked.

Evidently Fernando did. His ears remained erect. His eyes were staring at the bushes that lay ahead.

His master, too, was listening, and now he spoke again.

"I think you are right, my Fernando," he said. "We have a guest arriving."

He rose to his feet. But now there was a worried look on his face for the young man whom he saw approaching was looking far too weary and far too grave for a young man of his age.

But the Mexican hailed him with a smile.

"Buenos noces, señor. Please excuse my simple house. Maybe you will join me in my simple meal?"

As Dick threw himself on the ground without a word, the other took a plate and began to put food upon it. But though he continued to talk gaily his quick eyes had seen all sorts of things.

"You are young, if I may say so, señor," he said gently, "to be wandering all alone about a rough country like this. And you look very weary. But perhaps you have got the companion close by, is it not so?"

"No."

It was not a churlish "no"—it was not a "no" that suggested that Dick resented the question. It was just the negative of a young man who has lost all hope. And the Mexican looked sympathetic.

"No? You are all alone? Well, that's funny. Ain't you afraid your mother and father will worry?"

Dick's answer came slowly, miserably. "They killed my dad—they killed everybody."

"Oh, that's bad—very bad."

"He says it was the Indians," went on the boy between his clenched teeth, "but I know it wasn't."

He went on.

"He knocked me down—my head hit a barrel. I guess he thought I was dead and that's why he left me. I lay still a long time—everything was burned. And my dad—my little brother—I've got nobody now."

His head went down and sobs shook his body. The Mexican's arm went round him kindly.

"Please don't, chiquito," he said. "Sometimes the life is very cruel, and sometimes it is pretty good, too. I am what they call a prospector. I look for the gold over these mountains. One day I shall find it and get plenty rich. But there's one trouble. I need someone to help me. I have never been able to find nobody because I am very particular."

While he had been talking Dick had grown more composed, and the Mexican went on:

"Now, how would you like to be partners with old Lopez, the explorer? You are the first one I ever ask. And then maybe some day I can be your Mexicano papa, eh? Let me try, little fellow. I will try so hard."

But as Dick gripped his hand he knew what his answer was.

After Fifteen Years

THE scene was in a mine in the mountains with all the machinery and the noise and bustle incidental to a mine. A couple of wagons stood close to the rough track that led out to the road, and men were busy loading ore into them. From a shack nearby an elderly man emerged with a girl by his side—a pretty girl, too.

But both stopped as two horsemen came riding up the track towards them. An annoyed frown had come to the girl's face.

"Howdy, folks?" sung out the elder of the two riders.

"Howdy, Tate?"

"I hear you're earing a shipment across the hills, Morgan."

"Looks like it, don't it?"

Tate frowned. He was the big man in the town nearby, and was accustomed to get his own way in everything. Ever since the day when he and his men had wiped out John Ames' wagon train Lee Tate had forged steadily ahead.

But Jim Morgan had always been an obstacle from the start. And he was one now.

Yet he spoke quite smoothly, disguising the angry thoughts that were in him.

"I was kinda hoping you'd have decided to take me up, Morgan," he replied. "I made you a good offer for your mine, you know."

"Why?" demanded the other uncompromisingly.

"You know why. It touches my land, and I like room. Of course, it isn't none of my business, but earing ore over them mountains thirty miles ain't no joke."

"You're right, it isn't," put in the girl coldly. "But it wouldn't have been necessary if you had kept your promise, Mr. Tate. When you built your mill you said you'd handle our ore."

He knew it, too. He had only lately refused to do it because he fancied his refusal would make Morgan sell. And he coveted their mine. But he answered with an apologetic shrug of the shoulders.

"I've got my own ore to handle, Miss Amy. It ain't my fault if I'm too busy to handle yours."

Her lips curled slightly.

"A good excuse to make dad sell out, isn't it?"

"Aw, come now, Miss Amy, there ain't no need to get personal about it. I just can't handle your father's ore, that's all."

He turned to Morgan.

"I've made you a good offer, Morgan," he said. "You know what that low-grade stuff of yours runs."

"I do," answered the other quietly. "but it will run higher as we go deeper. You think you're a one-man town, Tate, but you just ain't one man enough. I ain't selling my mine to you or anyone."

He turned to his foreman who stood close by.

"Let's get goin'," he said.

As Tate and Jeff

rode away together Tate was scowling heavily. Then he laughed contemptuously.

"I guess I did the best I could," he said.

"Sure," answered the other cheerfully. "Nobody can't say you didn't try to stay peaceful."

"Better get going," said the other as they gazed at the dust of Morgan's two wagons which had just driven out of the yard.

"Right," replied Jeff as he put spurs to his horse.

Morgan and his man meanwhile drove their wagons steadily along, but Morgan was thinking deeply. He knew quite well that his final words had made a deadly enemy of Tate, but he wasn't worrying greatly about that. That Tate would make another move ore very long he was firmly convinced. Equally certain was he that it would be an underhand one, and at the moment he was racking his brains to think what it would be.

And then all of a sudden a shot rang out, and his startled horses leaped forward, tearing down the road, and he found himself tugging at the reins in his desperate efforts to check their fierce progress. Though the one quick glance he had made over his shoulder when the shot rang out, followed by several more which sang past his ears, had shown him that whereas he had escaped, his man following him had been shot and had pitched out into the road.

"Tate's men for a thousand," he muttered between his clenched teeth as he strained and pulled at his horses, vainly endeavouring to regain control of them. "And they've got Bill. But they've missed me, though, unless I can check these perishers—"

He knew he was in desperate straits now. He was nearing a long stretch of road among the mountains that wound and twisted badly. Here and there he knew were deep ravines at the side of

the road. Unless he could stay the mad progress of his horses, death, and a horrible one, might be his, too. And then suddenly something from below seemed to hit him—actually it was a big bump in the road—and the next moment he was on his back in the wagon clutching madly at the sides to save himself from falling off. And it was at that moment that out of the corner of his eye he saw a rider spurring down the side of the hill that lay on his left.

What followed then was almost in the nature of a dream wherein he lay watching, too worn out and bruised to move, and wondering vaguely who his rescuer could be, and whether he would succeed or fail. For the wagon was rushing through a narrow gorge swaying from side to side, and Morgan knew that at the end of it was a sharp turning with a drop on one side of over a hundred feet. Would his rescuer reach him in time?

He tried to struggle to his hands and knees, sank down unable to do it. They were getting nearer and nearer to the end of the gorge, Morgan could see the bend of the road coming. But his rescuer was just behind, and was gaining every minute. On went the wagon at a break-neck speed. Thirty yards ahead where the road bent sharply Morgan could see the edge of the road, the valley below.

Twenty yards, ten yards, with still that horse and rider thundering behind! Morgan closed his eyes, but even as he did so he felt a strong hand reach down, lift him up—knew that he had been saved.

And then everything faded away into nothingness.

Arizona Takes a Hand

DOWN in the mining town a young man got off the stage coach as it pulled up at the saloon, and with a smile on his lips strode into the building and straight up to the bartender.



Bob examined the watch that Dick held out to him.

"Hallo, Jack!" he exclaimed.

He was a tall, good-looking, well-set-up youngster, and except for his name there was nothing now to identify him with the little boy who had fought and sobbed and struggled so strenuously with Lee Tate and Jeff Graves fifteen years earlier among the blazing wagons of his dead father's train.

The bartender put out an eager hand, and a smile irradiated his face.

"Am I looking right at a mining engineer, or am I wrong?" he exclaimed.

"Well, I've got my diploma here to prove it," laughed the young man. "Hallo, dad!"

As Lee Tate entered Bob went quickly across to him and gripped him by the hand. For Tate from the start had seen to it that his tale of the Indians, by repeated telling, had made an impression. And because he had taken a real fancy to the boy and had determined to adopt him he had soon won him over by kindness and generosity.

So by now the memory of what had taken place fifteen years before was only just a memory—nothing more. Bob Tate, as he was called, knew nothing of the dark side of his adopted father's character. All he knew was a man who had brought him up, who had taught him to call him father, who had lavished money over him and had now brought him back from college so that he could make him a partner in his business.

Little wonder that he was as glad to see Lee Tate as the latter was to see him.

Said his adopted father:

"You grewed just about a foot in the last year, my lad. If you get any bigger the girls will be staking claims on you."

The young man laughed.

"I've seen lots of 'em," he replied, "but they none of 'em look as good as Amy to me. How is she?"

A worried frown touched Tate's forehead.

"She's pretty good," he answered carelessly.

"How's that mine of theirs?"

"Not too good. I've just been advising Morgan to sell."

Jeff entered the saloon at that moment and came straight across to Tate; but as he caught sight of Bob he put out his hand with a grin.

"Well, if it ain't Bob—grewed to be man's size. Want to see you, boss"—addressing Tate.

"I'll leave you to it," said the boy. "See you later, dad."

As he went out their eyes followed him.

"He's sure coming along," said Jeff.

"He is. What's on your mind?"

Jeff took the drink that the bartender had poured out.

"Morgan should never have tried to take that ore over the hill," he said carelessly. "An accident caught up with him and all the ore fell over the hill."

The ghost of a smile flickered round the other man's lips.

"Anybody get hurt?" he asked.

"I think Morgan's driver got killed."

"And Morgan?"

Jeff grinned evilly.

"The last I saw of the poor old gentleman was as he disappeared round a turn in the mountains. His broncs had bolted and didn't look like stoppin'. There's some dangerous bits along that road. Hope nothing didn't happen to him."

Once more that ghost of a smile came to Tate's lips.

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"Guess I'll walk round this evening and see if he's all right," he said.

"Don't want to butt in," exclaimed Jeff, "but it seems to me you're takin' a lot of trouble over that old mine."

Tate smiled slowly.

"Come into my office, Jeff, and I'll show you something," he said.

Jeff with outstretched hand let Tate pour the gold dust into it—whistled as he did so.

"Gee, that's mighty pretty!" he ejaculated. "Where did you get it?"

"Morgan's mine. I went there one night and cut out some samples. Run 'em through the mill and this is the result. Fifteen hundred dollars to the ton."

"We've got to get her!"

"That's what I aim to do."

"Morgan know anything about this?"

"Not a thing."

While this was going on Morgan was sitting propped up in bed at his house and Arizona was sitting by his side. For that young man and Lopez had brought him there after rescuing him. And Morgan, whose injuries were no more serious than a couple of broken ribs, had been relating the story of his mine and Tate's efforts to secure it.

"You may be better off than you think, if you do sell it, Mr. Morgan," said the young man. "Mr. Lopez, my adopted father has been discovering gold mines for years, but there's never been anything in them."

Lopez entered the room at that moment. He was a little older and a little greyer, but he still had the same smile.

"The senor is better?" he inquired courteously. "Is there nothing else we can do for you?"

"Nothing one can do for busted ribs," answered Morgan with a rueful smile, "except to let 'em set. But I owe my life to you both, and I shall never forget it."

They left him, and were saying goodbye to his daughter in the next room when Lee Tate came in.

"Evenin', Miss Amy. Heard your pa got hurt this afternoon, so came over to see him."

Had he been looking at Arizona he would have seen the instant recognition that leaped into the young man's eyes; and he would have seen the quick clenching of his hands. But he was busy with the girl, and when she introduced them Arizona merely bowed, despite the fury that was in him.

As Tate passed into the invalid's room he stood with his breath coming fast. For he knew Tate in a flash as the man who fifteen years before had killed his father and brother and the others. Through the window he could see Lopez outside with their horses, but now he wanted to stay. For in a second it had flashed in on him that this man Tate was not only a murderer, he was a swindler as well, and he was trying to swindle Morgan out of his mine.

Hearing his name suddenly spoken he turned, trying to control himself. He saw a tall, good-looking young man—heard Amy Morgan telling him that this was Mr. Tate junior.

Then he heard the girl rattling on, and sensed that she and this young man were something more to each other than just friends.

"Bob's just back from mining college, Mr. Lopez. He's been away for over a year."

"I'd better be getting along," Arizona managed to get out. He wanted to be alone now, to form some plan of campaign.

"No, don't you hurry—stay awhile,"

rejoined the other. "Amy and I have quite a lot to talk about."

They went out, leaving him alone. Through the open door that led to the next room he could hear Morgan's voice—a rather bitter voice, too.

"I guess you know without my telling you, Tate, that I've got to let the mine go."

He heard Tate's answer—smooth, silky.

"Well, I'm still ready to buy it. In fact, I'm willing to offer you a slightly better price for it now."

"Why?"

Arizona had heard the note of suspicion in Morgan's voice, but now he heard a kindly note in Tate's when he replied.

"My dear man, I'm sorry for you; and I ain't going to take advantage of a man who had his ore train stamped by a bunch of drunken fools."

"I reckon they was obeyin' orders," came Morgan's answer.

"That's a pretty big idea. Whose orders?"

Morgan's answer came dully. "I'm ready to sign," he said.

Arizona walked into the room just as Tate picked up the newly signed paper. But without a second's hesitation he plucked the paper from Tate's hand. And he addressed Morgan while Tate gasped with sheer fury.

"Mr. Morgan," he said, "you want someone to run your mine until you're right? My father and I are going to do it for you."

He turned to Tate without even waiting for a reply.

"We've changed our minds," he said and tore the paper into little pieces.

Tate, almost foaming at the mouth, found his voice at last.

"You've changed your mind?" he stormed. "Who are you and what's this got to do with you?"

Arizona's eyes bored him steadily. "I'm making this thing my business," was his rejoinder.

Tate swung back to Morgan, almost beside himself with rage.

"D'you mean to tell me you're letting this chap run your affairs for you, Morgan?" he demanded.

Morgan smiled. He had watched the scene with inward admiration. He was pretty certain that something lay behind all this.

"I think I am," he answered.

Tate's eyes narrowed as he glared at Arizona. He had lost, but he was telling himself that a day of reckoning would come.

"You're goin' to find, young fellow, that it don't pay to interfere with my affairs," he snarled as he flung out of the room.

The Two Brothers

IT was night-time a few days later, but a lot had happened during those few days. Morgan, acting on the advice of Lopez and Arizona, had cut the water supply to Tate's stamp mill, and Tate was breathing out threatenings and slaughter, openly stating that he would wipe them all out.

And now Arizona had slipped up quietly to Tate's office under cover of night. For he was determined to go through Tate's private papers in the hope of finding some definite proof that it was Tate who had killed his father.

He gained entry with the aid of a crowbar, and he was soon noiselessly rifling Tate's safe, which he smashed

(Continued on page 25.)

Death in many forms skulked amid the fastness of the African jungle, but no creature of the wilds was more ruthless a killer than the man known as Spider Webb, and it was against this man and his cut-throat gang that an intrepid youth and a beautiful girl pitted themselves. A serial drama of high adventure, starring Frankie Thomas



Read This First

The African river-boat Congo Queen, bound for Ambesi, is carrying a cargo of arms and ammunition destined for the Ivory Patrol, who police the hinterland of Panganyika. But that cargo never reaches Ambesi, for the ship is seized by a gang of cut-throats in the pay of Spider Webb, a notorious criminal.

Two people escape the massacre which attends the seizure of the craft. One is Tim Tyler, journeying up-country in the hope of tracing his scientist father, Professor Tyler, who has disappeared. The other is a girl who calls herself Lora Lacey, but whose real name is Graham, and who is out to bring Spider Webb to justice, knowing him to be the perpetrator of a diamond robbery for which her brother is unjustly serving a sentence.

Later, from the thickets to which they have taken, Lora and Tim see the crooks transfer the Congo Queen's cargo to a strange armoured car which the boy recognises as a "jungle cruiser" designed by his father.

Tim and Lora fall in with Sergeant Gates, of the Ivory Patrol, who escorts them to Ambesi. Later Gates and a detachment head north to investigate an attack on a white hunter named Conway, and, knowing that his father had been closely associated with Conway, Tim follows the troopers.

He meets a safari of natives led by Spencer, another hunter, and is talking to the latter when a shower of rocks are hurled at them by a group of savage apes. Spencer is knocked over a cliff, but clings to a shrub, and, while trying to rescue him, Tim and

one of the natives are also sent headlong.

Now Read On.

The Jungle Cruiser Again

LINKED by the rope with which they had hoped to rescue Spencer, Tim and the negro plunged through space, and in a moment Tim was crashing into that same shrub which the hunter had managed to grasp.

As Spencer had done before him, Tim clutched desperately at the twigs and foliage of the tough bush and succeeded in arresting his fall, but as the thick clump of vegetation swayed wildly to the sudden wrench which it sustained, the man who was already clinging to it lost his precarious hold.

Down went Spencer, dropping like a plummet to the bed of the defile. Then, immediately afterwards, the body of the native who had aided Tim in the ill-fated attempt to reach the hunter, streaked past the shrub which the white boy had seized.

He thudded to earth fifty feet below Tim, and, rolling over and over, came to rest within a few paces of the spot where Spencer had landed. As for Tim, he hung on to the bush that had saved him from sharing the negro's fate, and, while he hung there, great stones flung by the gorillas away up near the summit of the cliff continued to pound the terrace-like track on

which the safari had been gathered when the apes had first appeared above them.

Some of those rocks pitched off the ledge and tumbled into the defile, missing Tim by inches in their flight, and hitting the bed of the ravine close to the prone forms of Spencer and the native bearer. Presently, however, the rain of missiles ceased, and in the uncanny silence that ensued Tim contrived to detach the rope that was bound around his waist and make it fast to the shrub to which he was clinging.

By means of that rope he was able to lower himself to the base of the cliff, and as he touched ground he saw that the loose coils of the hempen line were still gripped tightly in the hands of the negro who had fallen from aloft. Yet the poor fellow had met his end, and it was in the grip of death that his fingers were locked. One glance at him sufficed to show that his neck had been broken.

Spencer had been luckier. Whereas the native had experienced a dead drop of a hundred feet and had landed head-foremost, the white hunter had fallen rather less than half that distance when he had ultimately lost his hold on the thick bush, and he had come to earth on his back. Moreover, he had alighted in a patch of stunted but dense scrub that was as springy as a mattress.

He was badly shaken nevertheless, and his right arm was still paralysed from the shoulder downwards as a result of the blow he had received when he had been knocked from the cliff-edge up above, and although he was conscious he seemed incapable of

EPISODE 3—

"Into the Lion's Den"

collecting his wits or uttering any sound when Tim stumbled over to him and knelt beside him. At any rate, he made no answer when the youngster anxiously questioned him regarding his injuries, and only stared at the boy dully.

A small stream meandered through the defile, and after a moment Tim hurried over to it and filled his helmet with water. Then he returned to the prostrate hunter, who seemed to recover to some extent when a refreshing draught of the cool liquid had passed his lips.

"By gad!" Spencer whispered then. "This is—the first time—I've ever used Dead Man's Pass—and it'll be—the last. I wish I'd believed—the stories I'd heard about it—"

He stopped short, for at that moment a sound which was strangely out of keeping with the wilds of Tanganyika became audible to him. It was the sound of an internal combustion engine, and as he raised himself on one elbow he saw to his amazement that an armoured car was approaching the defile from the south.

His first impulse on perceiving that machine was to make an effort to struggle to his feet, but Tim Tyler had seen the vehicle as well, and suddenly the boy thrust the hunter down and flattened himself in the scrub alongside him. For he had recognised that armoured car as the "jungle cruiser" which had been designed by his father and which had somehow come into the possession of Spider Webb and his out-throat gang.

"Lie still, Mr. Spencer!" Tim jerked. "Keep under cover! The men in that contraption aren't to be trusted!"

He went on to tell the hunter what he knew of those men, and while he was describing their character the jungle cruiser halted at the mouth of the pass. Then out of it stepped Webb, Garry Drake and their associates, and a few seconds later the rogues were climbing that track on which Spencer's safari had been assailed.

The natives of that safari who had sought cover from the rocks aimed by the gorillas, were still cowering under the projecting bulge in the cliff-face, whither they had found shelter from the missiles of their bestial foes. Even though the apes had now vanished from the upper ledge, the blacks shrank from the thought of quitting their haven, and they had not stirred from there when Spider Webb and his gang reached the point where the attack had occurred.

A volley from the guns of Webb and his men dispersed the negroes, however, and sent them scurrying along the terrace-like trail. It was a volley which echoed and re-echoed through the defile, and, down on the bed of the ravine, Tim Tyler looked at Spencer significantly as he heard it.

Neither he nor the hunter could see what was happening up above on that trail from which the two of them had fallen, but if they had been able to command a view of the track they would have realised soon enough that Webb and his gang must have witnessed the plight of the Spencer safari from afar, and had made for Dead Man's Pass with the sole intention of securing any loot on which they could lay hands.

And there was loot in plenty for the outlaws. The equipment belonging to the safari was alone of considerable value, and there was a large quantity of ivory tusks as well—tusks accumulated by Spencer and his employees

during a long sojourn in the northern wilds.

Equipment, stores, tusks—all had been abandoned by the bearers who had been so summarily dispersed, and Spider Webb and his minions lost no time in gathering up the spoils.

Unlike the safari, the crooks were not molested by the great apes who had lined the upper terrace a short time before. These did not reappear—perhaps keeping out of sight because of the shooting—and it was without incident that Webb and his party at length retraced their steps along the ledge-like track and descended to the jungle cruiser.

Only when the gangsters had regained the mouth of the defile did Tim and Spencer see them again, and something like an oath broke from the hunter's lips when he observed that the ruffians were heavily-laden with his possessions. Then, gritting his teeth, he watched them pile their plunder into the armoured car.

In the meanwhile, Tim was wondering whether the crooks were aware that he and Spencer were in the scrub, and intended to deal with them when they had stowed their loot aboard the "cruiser." But he was not destined to learn if that were the case, for all at once a band of horsemen hove into view some distance to the south of the defile, and at sight of them Webb and his accomplices made haste to scramble into the armoured car.

The oncoming horsemen wore the uniforms of the Ivory Patrol. They were the troopers commanded by Sergeant Gates, and with the non-com. at their head they charged towards the jungle cruiser.

The ponderous vehicle was soon on the move, however, and at a pace equal to that of a galloping pony it rolled into the defile and clattered past the patch of scrub in which Tim and Spencer were lying.

Shortly afterwards Gates and his detail swept by the covert that Tim and the hunter were sharing. Yet as on a previous occasion their pursuit of the armoured car was in vain, for, although the gorge seemed to be blocked at its northern end by a precipitous rock-face, there was a narrow "cut" leading off to the left and opening on to an extensive valley, and within a few seconds of the jungle cruiser negotiating this gap a shattering explosion brought about a cave-in that effectively stemmed the onrush of the troopers.

It was an explosion caused by the bursting of a grenade hurled from the armoured car, and the landslide that occurred as a result of it choked the fissure through which the vehicle had rumbled. As for Gates and his men, they were luckily short of the gap when the collapse took place, and, though baffled in their pursuit of the Webb gang, they might well have thanked their stars that they were not lying mangled under hundreds of tons of debris.

The troopers had no choice now but to turn in their tracks, and it was as they were coming back through the defile that Tim stood up and showed himself, noting as he did so the look of surprise that dawned on the face of Sergeant Gates when the latter recognised him.

"You!" the non-com. blurted, on drawing rein beside the patch of scrub. "What the blazes are you doing up in this territory?"

Tim answered him quietly, stating that he had set out from Ambesi for the north because he believed it was in these regions that his father had disappeared. Then he went on to describe

all that had happened after he himself had encountered the Spencer safari.

"But where did you and your men spring from, anyhow, sergeant?" he asked, when he had finished his story.

"We were bivouacked not very far from here," was the reply, "and when we heard shots a little while back we took horse to find out what the trouble was."

Gates now turned his attention on Spencer, and, though he had soon satisfied himself that the hunter had not been seriously injured, it was obvious to him that he had suffered a severe shaking. Consequently, he decided to send him down through the jungle to Ambesi with an escort of two or three troopers, and, on the natives of Spencer's safari reappearing timorously on the track above, the sergeant summoned them down into the defile, motioned to a group of saplings that grew near the mouth of the gorge and instructed the blacks to fashion a litter for their master.

The saplings served that purpose admirably, the stems being broken off short at ground-level and lashed together to form a stretcher on which Spencer was laid. Then Gates addressed Tim.

"You're going back to Ambesi, too," he announced.

The youngster began to protest.

"I can't go back, sergeant," he said. "My father's up here somewhere, and I've got to find him. Listen, you may be able to help me find him, and, if you do, it's more than likely that he'll be in a position to put you on the trail of Spider Webb."

"What makes you think so?" Gates queried.

"Well, I've already told you that the armoured car Webb and his gang are using is the one that belonged to my dad," Tim reminded him.

"Yes, you did tell me that," Gates conceded. "But look here, kid, my job up here is to investigate the attack on Jim Conway's safari, and I've an idea that a tribe known as the Batwongas may have been responsible for it. They're a bad bunch, who are rumoured to take their orders from a renegade white man, and in dealing with them I'll have plenty on my hands without the added responsibility of seeing that you don't get into any mischief. So I'm sending you back to Ambesi, and that's final."

Again Tim tried to expostulate, but the sergeant interrupted him.

"You heard me, son," he declared, "and it's no use you arguing. This territory up here is no place for a kid like you."

Lora Graham's Proposition

BORNE on the improvised stretcher by the black boys of his safari.

Spencer was being conveyed along the trail that cleaved the jungle and linked the northern wilds with Ambesi, and behind him rode three Ivory Patrolmen and Tim, the youngster having been provided with a spare pony that had belonged to Sergeant Gates' detachment.

As for Gates and the rest of his detail, they had returned to the base camp they had established, and more than two hours had elapsed since the party bound for Ambesi had separated from them.

During those two hours, the troopers who were acting as escort to Spencer and his employees had kept a close watch on Tim lest he should attempt to give them the slip and head northward again in spite of the sergeant's commands. But the lad had given every indication of being resigned to the idea of going back to Ambesi, and

now the three patrolmen had relaxed their vigilance, believing that the youngster had accepted his situation.

They were mistaken. For, as the dusk was gathering over the sky and the eternal gloom of the jungle was beginning to deepen under the approach of night, Tim contrived to draw his horse back a little, causing it to fall slightly to the rear so that a gap of a yard or two separated him from the troopers.

Gradually he increased that distance, till at last he felt it was safe to swing round and spur his mount towards the north. As for the patrolmen, they rode for several miles without being aware of Tim's defection. Indeed, the three of them had fallen into a drowse, letting their horses plod forward automatically at the heels of Spencer's bearers, and fully an hour must have gone by since Tim had parted company with them when one of the troopers suddenly awakened with a start—looked around him vaguely—then gave vent to a sharp ejaculation as he realised that the lad was missing.

His exclamation brought his comrades to their senses; and, the natives who were carrying Spencer having been ordered to halt, the khaki-clad police officers were soon galloping northward over the ground which had been covered.

They back-tracked for about a mile, after which they gave up their quest as futile, for they saw that they might search all night without coming across any trace of Tim. There were many paths branching off to right and left of the main trail, and for all they knew the youngster might have turned along any one of these to elude possible pursuit. They could not tell, for it was too dark to make out the imprints of hoofs in the soil and gain any indication of the route he may have taken.

Cursing the boy for his wilfulness, the three troopers returned to the spot where they had left Spencer and the

blacks, and, deeming to press on towards Ambesi, they resumed the southerly march with the prostrate hunter and his bearers.

They were not destined to reach the settlement that night, however. The negroes commenced to show signs of fatigue before long, and there were frequent stoppages for rest, so that it was not until well on in the following day that the party eventually arrived at Ambesi.

By that time Spencer had developed a fever, brought on without a doubt by the shaking he had sustained, and he was placed at once in the charge of the doctor who had attended Jim Conway.

In the meanwhile Conway had made rapid progress under the care of the medical officer attached to the Patrol's headquarters, and twenty-four hours of expert treatment and attention had worked wonders on him, the more so as he was naturally of a strong constitution.

He had been wounded high up in the left arm, and had lost a good deal of blood, but when the doctor had succeeded in staunching the flow of that blood he had speedily recovered from the effects of the injury, and into the bargain the delirious condition of his mind had subsided, so that he had been able to give a clear account of the manner in which his safari had been wiped out.

Contrary to the belief expressed by Gates, natives had not been responsible for the attack on Conway's expedition—nor had the gorillas of Dead Man's Pass figured in the onset. According to Jim Conway, renegade whites had been the culprits, and their motive had been theft—the theft of a valuable quantity of ivory he had been bringing from the north.

It was a story that created a sensation in Ambesi when it went the round of the settlement, and, when it was succeeded by news of Spencer's arrival and the circumstances in which he, too, had

lost all he possessed, the one topic of conversation along the waterfront was the brigandage which had cost the two hunters so dear.

Not long after the tidings concerning Spencer had become general knowledge, Lora Graham made her way to the depot of the Ivory Patrol. She had learned that Conway was on his feet again, and it had occurred to her that with his knowledge of the wilds he might be the very one to help her in the project which had brought her up-country. Therefore she sought out Captain Morgan, commanding officer of the Patrol, and through him she obtained an introduction to the hunter in question.

Her first impression on meeting him was more than favourable. Standing well over six feet, he was of powerful physique, and his ruggedly handsome countenance suggested candour and trustworthiness. He was, she felt sure, a man on whom she could depend.

"Mr. Conway," she said, as soon as they were alone, "I want to talk to you about these ivory thefts. It's impossible to believe, of course, that the men who robbed Spencer incited the gorillas of Dead Man's Pass to attack his safari, but I do think that those men intended to waylay him as they waylaid you, and were merely spared the necessity of using force by the chance onslaught of the apes. Also, Mr. Conway, I think I know a good deal about the leader of those men—Spider Webb."

Jim Conway looked at her thoughtfully. His left arm was wrapped in bandages that were concealed by his shirt-sleeve, but his wound had not altogether sapped the strength from it—a fact that was indicated by the manner in which he clenched his fist.

"Spider Webb," he mused. "Captain Morgan mentioned that name. Hub, I'd never heard of him until to-day, but if he's the rat who led the attack on



"Look!" the hunter rapped out. "A horseman—and judging by the way he's riding he's in trouble!"

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my safari I'd give ten years of my life to get my hands on him."

He was silent for a moment, and then he shrugged his broad shoulders.

"What's the use of talking, though?" he grunted. "I'm broke, I'm in no position to fit out another expedition and go looking for the man who robbed me, for every cent I had was sunk in that ivory I lost. I can only stay here in idleness and hope that some day the Patrol will catch up with him."

"You needn't stay here in idleness, Mr. Conway," Lora rejoined. "I think I have a proposition that may interest you. Listen, I came into the jungle ostensibly to hunt big game, but the game I'm really after is—Spider Webb. And, between us, you and I may land him, Mr. Conway. You know the country, and I hold a draft on the Ambesi Bank for an amount that should be sufficient to raise and equip a safari."

"There's just one thing," she added deliberately. "I'd like to make it clear that I want Webb taken alive."

Jim Conway was eyeing her curiously now.

"What do you want with this Spider Webb, anyway, Miss Lacey?" he asked her.

Lora hesitated for a few seconds, and then she looked him full in the face.

"I'll be frank with you," she said. "Mr. Conway, my name isn't really Lacey, but Graham, and my brother Donald is serving a ten-year sentence in the Territorial Prison down in Cape Province for a diamond robbery that he never committed. It was Spider Webb who committed that robbery, and the only chance I have of clearing my brother is to force a confession out of Webb."

She paused, then went on in an earnest tone:

"I'm moderately well off for money, thanks to a legacy I inherited from a relative," she continued, "and I'm prepared to spend every ha'penny of that inheritance in trying to establish my brother's innocence. After I succeed in doing that, I don't care what becomes of Webb. You can take out your own vengeance on him as you think fit."

"I see," Jim Conway murmured. "Well, if we catch up with Spider Webb I'll be satisfied with turning him over to the law and letting a judge and jury take care of him. When do we start, Miss—er—Lacey?"

"Then you accept my proposition," Lora said thankfully. "All right, Mr. Conway, we start just as soon as you feel up to it."

Conway nursed his injured arm.

"Doc claims I ought to give this 'wing' of mine a rest," he observed, "and he also suggests that I should give my whole constitution a chance to recuperate by taking things easy for a while. But I feel pretty okay, and as far as I'm concerned the sooner we get going the better I'll be pleased. I think I can get a safari together within twenty-four hours—picked natives at that—loyal, willing and, above all, reliable in a scrap."

He was true to his words, for when the sun rose the next morning he and Lora Graham were setting out for the north with a company of stalwart blacks, all of whom were in the prime of life except an elderly headman whose experience made up for his lack of physical qualities.

Hostile Bushmen

ON the afternoon of the day upon which Lora Graham and Jim Conway departed from Ambesi with their safari, Tim Tyler might have

been seen wading in the shallows of a river that wound through the bush.

He had spent over forty-eight hours in the northern realms of the jungle, hoping to pick up some clue regarding the fate of his father, and during that time he had kept a close look-out for Sergeant Gates and his men, for he had no wish to be discovered by them and packed south to Patrol headquarters under a second and more vigilant escort.

His object was to remain in the deep wilds until he had learned what had become of the parent to whom he was devoted, and he was keenly alive to the possibility of obtaining some information concerning him if he could come across the Webb gang and keep track of their movements.

The task of providing himself with life's necessities had not worried him in the interval. The jungle abounded in fruits and edible plants, and there were shoals of fish in the river that meandered through the thickets. He also possessed a carbine which rested in a sheath suspended from the saddle of the pony that had been lent to him, though as yet he had not used the weapon for hunting game—first because he had feared that any shooting might bring Sergeant Gates and his troopers upon him—secondly, because he preferred to save his ammunition in case he was attacked by wild beasts.

At the moment he was bent on spearing a fish or two by means of a stick that he had lopped from a tree the previous day. With a knife that he owned he had whittled one end of this stick to a point, and, when he had sallied into the river with it the day before, his efforts had not been unattended by success.

To-day, however, he seemed to have lost his cunning, and he had yet to make a catch, when suddenly his attention was diverted by something that appeared to be floating towards him on the current of the stream—something which he at first took to be a log.

But it was not a log, as he suddenly realised, and it was travelling at a much swifter rate than the current. It was an evil crocodile, and it was gliding smoothly and rapidly in his direction with deadly intent.

Giving vent to an exclamation of alarm, Tim wheeled and started back through the shallows for the bank, but the water impeded him, and the mud of the river-bed clogged his feet, so that the reptile, changing its course to head him off, seemed almost bound to intercept him.

Panting, he struggled onward, and he managed to outstrip the loathsome creature and gain the bank, though only just in time, for as he scrambled on to dry ground he heard the jaws of the crocodile snap within inches of his heels. Then he blundered away from the river's edge, and was congratulating himself on having reached safety when his right ankle fouled a looped and trailing vine.

He tripped and fell his length, and as he twisted round he saw that the crocodile was dragging itself out of the water. Next instant he was making frantic efforts to release his ankle, but it had been snared by the vine in such a manner that it was difficult to disentangle it, and while he fought to set his foot free the saurian monster from the river moved towards him with awkward gait.

It could not cover ground at the speed with which it could travel through the water. Nevertheless Tim must have been seized by it if an unexpected diversion had not occurred—a diversion

created by a jungle denizen who had already on one former occasion proved to be a friend in need.

Out of a clump of mangroves a leopard sprang. It was the leopard whose injured paw Tim had doctored a few days before, and, streaking to his rescue, it pounced on the crocodile with bared teeth and extended claws.

The scuffle that ensued was of brief duration, for the reptile that had crawled from the river was out of its element and no match for the agile panther which had attacked it. In thirty seconds, by which time Tim had succeeded in releasing his ankle, the saurian was beating a retreat into the water, and as it made off the boy who had so nearly fallen a prey to it stared breathlessly at the leopard to whom he owed his life.

"You again, boy!" he said in fervent accents. "That's twice you've got me out of a jam. Gee, you certainly know how to use those teeth of yours. I—I guess I'll call you Fang on account of them. Yeah, that's a good name for you, Fang."

The panther gazed at him steadfastly for a moment with its cat-like eyes. Then it turned and padded off into the jungle, and, after watching it until the thickets had swallowed it, Tim made his own way towards a small clearing where he had built a camp-fire and left his horse.

He had lost his taste for fish, and felt prepared to confine himself to a vegetarian diet. But as it happened he was destined to forgo a meal altogether, for as he came in view of the clearing where he had encamped he saw that his pony was no longer alone there.

A formidable band of aborigines were assembled in the glade—bushmen who were armed variously with assegais and clubs and whose brutal faces and half-nude bodies were hideously panted.

Had Tim been familiar with the north territory he would have recognised them from the markings on their features and chests as members of the dreaded Batwonga tribe—that race of blacks who resented the presence of strangers in their domain. As it was, he guessed intuitively from their sinister appearance that they were not likely to be well disposed, and he had the presence of mind to duck down amidst a patch of tangled undergrowth before they could desery him.

Obviously they had come upon his encampment by chance, and now they were displaying a lively interest in his horse. At the same time they were conversing in a barbarous tongue of which Tim could make nothing, but presently they began to scatter into the surrounding thickets, leaving two of their number beside Tim's pony, and it was clear to the boy that the savages had decided to make a search for the owner of the mount.

Several of the bushmen passed close to his covert, but failed to observe him and crept quietly on in the direction of the river. As for Tim, he waited until there was no sign of any of the warriors except the two who had remained in charge of his horse, and then, resolved to escape from the vicinity without delay, he worked round to the rear of those two individuals.

Once he had manoeuvred himself into such a position that their backs were towards him he made a sudden rush and leapt astride his pony, and before the pair of savages could grasp what was happening he had snatched the reins from their hands and clapped his heels to the horse's flanks.

The animal bounded off, Tim urging

it down a track that led to the south, and the creature was thirty yards from the glade ere the blacks there recovered their wits and hurled their spears at the fugitive, raising an angry outcry as they did so.

The spears missed Tim, flashing harmlessly over his head, but the cries of the two warriors who had thrown them were answered from a myriad points in the jungle, and within a few seconds three or four of the aborigines sprang out on to the trail in front of the youthful horseman.

They lifted their assegais threateningly, but the white youngster bent low in the saddle and dug his heels the harder into his pony, and in another moment he was charging the bushmen down.

The warriors were hurled to the ground by the horse's onset, and one of them screamed out as an iron-shod hoof stove in his ribs where he lay. The others were luckier, and escaped serious injury, but by the time they had regained their feet Tim had swung out of sight round a bend in the jungle path.

It was as he turned that bend that he saw a group of figures some little distance ahead of him. They were approaching from the south, and had debouched on to a stretch of more or less open ground that was flanked on the west by a steep ascent whose lower slopes were strewn with rocks and matted with clumps of scrub.

To his relief Tim perceived that they were not members of the hostile band which had scattered through the bush in quest of him. They comprised a safari, and they were led by Jim Conway and Lora Graham, both of whom the youth recognised almost immediately.

As for Conway, Lora and the natives in their employ, they had been quick to desery Tim, and, halting abruptly, the first-named motioned to the fleeing boy.

"Look!" the hunter rapped out. "A horseman—and judging by the way he's riding he's in trouble!"

"Why, it's Tim Tyler!" the girl by his side ejaculated.

Conway directed a sharp glance at her.

"Tim Tyler?" he echoed. "Did you say—Tyler?"

Lora nodded, but did not remove her eyes from the oncoming form of the young horseman, and as the latter drew rein in front of her she spoke to him with a note of interrogation in her voice.

"Tim!" she exclaimed. "What are you doing here?"

The youth scrambled from the saddle. There was an expression of intense excitement on his clean-cut face.

"I'll tell you that later, Miss Lora," he jerked. "There's no time for explanations right now. Listen, you and Mr. Conway and these natives who are with you have got to get under cover, or you're liable to find yourselves in the middle of a hornets' nest!"

"Hornets' nest?" Jim Conway interposed. "What do you mean, son?"

Tim pointed in the direction whence he had come.

"The thickets there are full of savages!" he panted. "They came across my horse and started searching for me, but I managed to sneak up on the pony and make a dash for it. I

And then he stopped short, for at that instant a chorus of fiendish howls arose from the edge of the bushwood from which he had galloped only half a minute before, and a swarm of painted,

half-nude bushmen leapt into full view from the tangled vegetation.

They were the blacks who had stumbled upon Tim's encampment, and they had speedily converged upon the line of his escape; and now, as they beheld the Conway safari, they raised their voices in a blood-curdling battle-cry and swept forward to the attack.

"Batwongas!" Jim Conway shouted. "The fiercest bunch of killers in Central Africa!"

He gripped Tim by the arm. "You were right," he said tersely. "We've got to get under cover! Those devils outnumbered us by five to one! See—that big cluster of rocks over there on the rise—we may be able to fight them off from there! Take Miss Lora up on your horse and make for those rocks! The rest of us will follow!"

Tim was prompt to obey. Helping Lora into the saddle, he climbed up behind her, and in another second he was urging his horse towards the tumbled boulders Conway had indicated, and as he and the girl rode off they heard the hunter call out instructions to the bearers of his safari in the native tongue.

Jim Conway had chosen his safari well. Without panic—indeed, with an orderliness that would have done credit to a squad of soldiery—the black boys from the settlement of Ambesi proceeded to retreat with the white hunter in the direction of the rising ground on the west, and as they retreated they volleyed the advancing Batwongas effectively with rifles that had been served out to them as an essential part of the expedition's equipment.

Unhurriedly they withdrew across the open terrain taking the same course as Lora and Tim, and sending the air with the blasts of their guns. And the Batwongas, raked with sleeted lead, were for the time being held in check as several of them bit the dust.

Meanwhile Tim and Lora were travelling at a fast clip, and soon they had reached the cluster of rocks to which Jim Conway had referred. Then, pull-

ing his horse to a standstill and drawing his carbine from its sheath, Tim slid from the pony's back and helped his fair companion to dismount as well.

Together boy and girl now made their way through the boulders, Tim leading his mount by the rein, and it was as they penetrated the rocks that they observed the yawning mouth of a cave in a stiff acclivity behind the clutter of great stones.

Thinking of Lora's safety, Tim at once resolved to hurry the girl into the shelter of that aperture. Yet ere he could do so his horse suddenly strained back, tearing its rein out of his grasp and turning to gallop off through the boulders—and next moment the reason for its behaviour was made known, for out of the gloom of the cavern a bristly, tan-coloured form emerged.

It was the form of a powerful lion whose presence the pony must have sensed, and at sight of it a hoarse cry broke from Tim, a cry that blended with a half-stifled scream uttered by Lora. Then, quick to recover himself, the boy drew a bead on the animal with his carbine, but even as he carried the weapon to his shoulder a second tawny figure issued from the cave, to be followed by another and still another.

Tim Tyler and Lora Graham had stumbled upon the lair of a troop of lions, and in a flash the armed youngster realised that although his carbine might take toll of the first brute he could never defend himself and the girl against the others. And that soul-chilling thought was looming in his mind when the denizens of the cavern sprang snarling at the youth and his terrified companion!

(To be continued in another gripping episode next week. A New Universal Picture, controlled throughout the United Kingdom and Eire by General Film Distributors, Ltd., starring Frankie Thomas.)

"THUNDER TRAIL"

(Continued from page 20.)

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"RENFREW OF THE ROYAL MOUNTED."—*Sergeant Renfrew*, James Newill; *Virginia Bronson*, Carol Hughes; *George Hollis*, William Royle; *Pierre*, Thundercloud; *Constable Laidlaw*, William Austin; *Joe Bronson*, Herbert Corthell; *Sergeant MacDonald*, Donald Reed; *Nolan*, David Barclay; *Tommy MacDonald*, Dickie Jones; *Duke*, Robert Terry; *Inspector Newcombe*, William Gould, and "Lightning" the Dog.

"SATURDAY'S HEROES."—*Tal Webster*, Van Heflin; *Frances Thomas*, Marian Marsh; *Red Watson*, Richard Lane; *Burgeson*, Alan Bruce; *Doo Thomas*, Minor Watson; *Dubrowsky*, Frank Jenks; *Coach Banks*, Walter Miller; *Baker*, Crawford Weaver; *President Hammond*, George Irving; *Ted Calkins*, John Arledge; *Andy Jones*, Al St. John; *President Mitchell*, Charles Trowbridge.

"THUNDER TRAIL."—*Dick Arizona*, Ames, Gilbert Roland; *Lee Tate*, Charles Bickford; *Amy Morgan*, Marsha Hunt; *Rafael Lopez*, J. Carrol Naish; *Bob Ames*, James Craig; *Jeff Graves*, Monte Blue; *Jim Morgan*, Barlowe Borland; *Bob Ames at 8*, Billy Lee; *Dick Ames at 14*, Gene Reynolds; *John Ames*, William Duncan.

with a heavy mallet. And it was then that he found the watch; and in a flash he knew it to be his father's old one.

He stood staring at it, breathing heavily. Here at last was all the proof he needed to make his suspicions certain!

And then a hard voice behind him made him whirl round. In the doorway was Bob Tate regarding him through narrowed eyes.

"What are you doing here?"

Arizona's lip curled.

"What d'you think?"

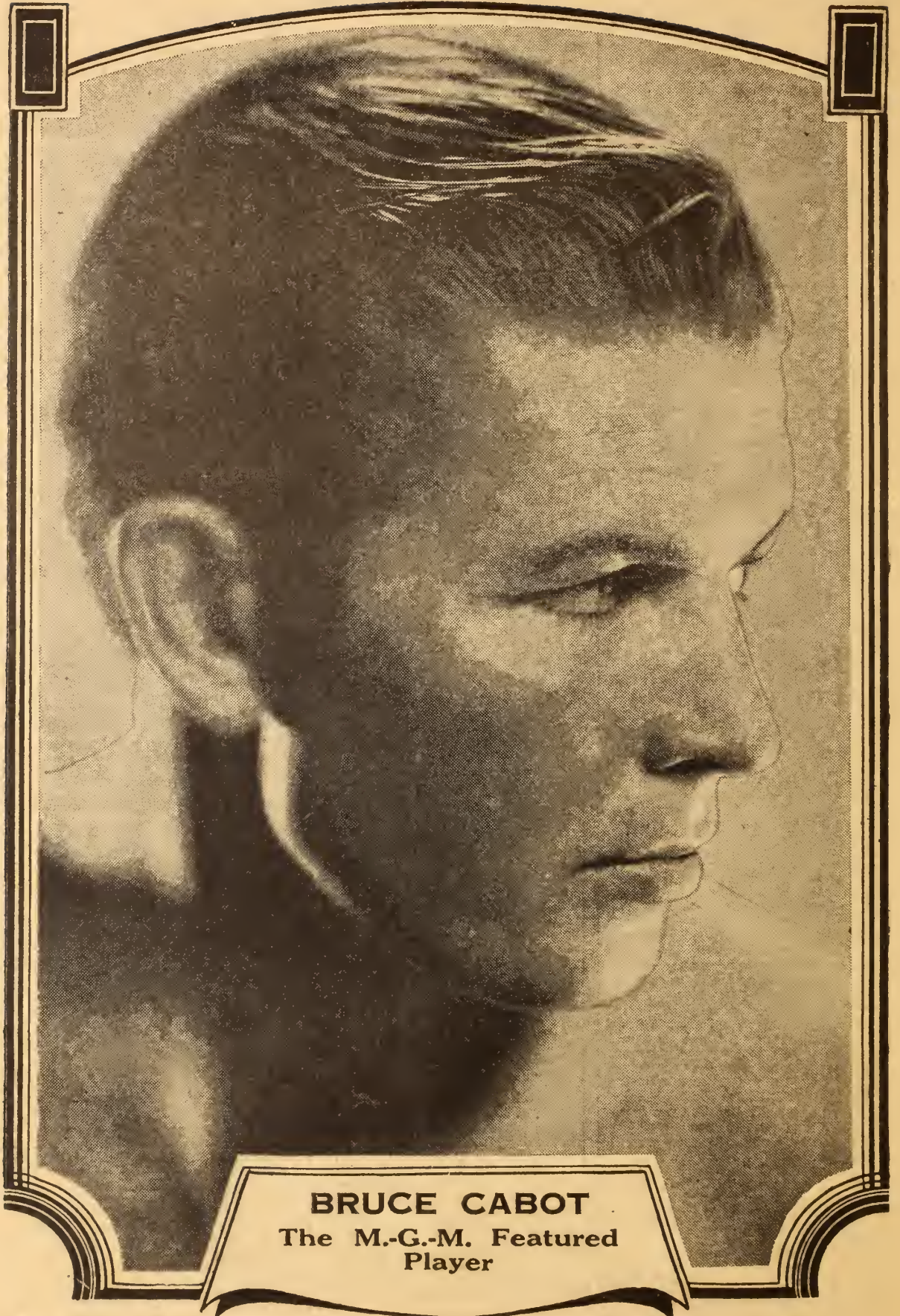
"You're just what dad told me you were," retorted the other contemptuously. "Just a cheap thief."

"You ought to know something about thievin'—and murdering, too!" flung back Arizona. "It seems to run in your family."

He sprang at him in a second, but Bob was ready for him, and his fist crashed into Arizona's face, sending him staggering back. But he came again in a moment, though this time more cautiously.

For quite five minutes the fight lasted, and each saw murder in the other's eyes as they lashed out furiously, struggling with each other. But at last a fierce blow on the jaw from Arizona sent Bob staggering to the floor, and in a flash the other was on

(Continued on page 27.)



BRUCE CABOT
The M.-G.-M. Featured
Player

"THUNDER TRAIL"

(Continued from page 25)

top of him. But even as he fell a gasp came from him, for Bob's shirt had been torn away in the struggle. And there, exposed to view, was a scar on his shoulder—and the scar took the form of an "A."

And then at last, amid the whirl of things, he managed to find his voice.

"Bob, Bob, you've got to listen to me. I'm—I'm your brother, Dick!" he gasped.

It was thus that Lopez found them ten minutes later. He had seen the fight through the window and had climbed up into the room. Bob was examining the watch that Dick was holding out to him, while he listened to the story that Dick was telling him with an expression of incredulity on his face.

Said Lopez with a puzzled expression on his face:

"But I do not understand. First you fight with the Senor Tate, amigo, and now you seem to be sorry."

"His name isn't Tate at all," replied Arizona quietly. "He's my brother. Now you both get out of here. I want to see Tate."

They had not been gone more than a few minutes when Tate came up into the office to find Arizona sitting there quite calmly with his father's watch in his hand.

Tate glared at him.

"What are you doing in my office?" he demanded.

Arizona got up coolly from his chair. He held out the watch and saw the start the other gave.

Then he spoke.

"You have an idea, Tate," he said, "about wiping out the Morgan family. But I don't think I'd try it if I were you. There was another nice old feller once who was heading back Missouri way with a packet of gold and a couple of kids. His name was John Ames, but he never reached Missouri."

He paused for a moment. He saw the fear in the other's eyes, but he went on relentlessly:

"You might remember, too, that if you start trying to wipe out the Morgan family, Bob Ames will be shootin' at you."

"What?"

The word came almost in a groan from Tate's lips, but Arizona only smiled.

"I put him wise to quite a lot," he replied, "only a few minutes ago. You see, he's my brother. My name's Dick Ames. You made a mistake, Tate, when you didn't kill all of us."

Tate stood there breathing heavily, swaying a little, too. He knew the game was up and the race was run, but now bitter rage was in his heart, blotting out everything else. All he wanted to do was to wipe out this man who had ruined all his plans.

Suddenly his hand flashed to his gun, but even as it was drawn clear of the holster, Dick's .45 spoke and Tate slid to the floor and lay very still.

And Arizona stood looking down on him, but there was no pity in his face—only a grim smile as he replaced his gun.

"I reckon that squares the account at last, dad," he said softly.

(By permission of Paramount Film Service, Ltd., starring Gilbert Roland and Charles Bickford.)

"RENFREW OF THE ROYAL MOUNTED"

(Continued from page 12)

Renfrew wrenched open the door, dragged the old man out, and then darted back to catch Virginia in his arms.

"Man—shot——" the girl gasped out, and managed to point her hand back at the refrigerating plant. "There—there!"

Once again Renfrew darted into the place, and the fumes made him choke and splutter. It was hard to see. By luck he stumbled over the body. His strong arms got the wretched engraver to his feet, and with his burden staggered to safety.

"He's alive—and that's all," said Renfrew.

"He tried to save us from Hollis," said Bronson.

In Hollis' office later Sergeant Renfrew heard the whole tale.

"Well, that's the end of the counterfeit smuggling ramp," he said with a satisfied grin. "Do you still dislike me, Virginia?"

"I never disliked you," Virginia flushed. "We owe our lives to you." She looked appealingly at Renfrew. "Will my father have to go back to prison?"

"Certainly not. The note lets him out and entitles him to some sort of reward," was the instant answer. "It was a brilliant bit of engraving. His message saying he was a prisoner at Pine Lodge and signed with his name was a masterpiece of skill. It brought me here post-haste."

"I think you're wonderful," murmured Virginia, when next day they walked arm-in-arm through the grounds.

"Maybe the admiration is mutual. Not often a girl would stick up for her father as you have done," Renfrew from his six feet grinned down at the girl. He pointed towards the dog, trotting on ahead. "Lightning thinks you're grand. I thought so the first time I saw you."

"When you hooked me?"

"It's the landing of the catch that's worrying me," boldly murmured Sergeant Renfrew.

(By permission of Associated British Film Distributors, Ltd., starring James Newill and Carol Hughes.)

"SATURDAY'S HEROES"

(Continued from page 18)

whom the ball shot out of the pack, saw his chance Baker suddenly leaped to action, all else forgotten, as the ball hurtled towards him. He caught it magnificently and began weaving through the startled Calton players.

Man after man leaped to drag him down; expertly, to the roaring crowd's delight, he warded them off and continued his lone, mad run, unconscious now of the fact that his clothes were in ribbons after their wild clutchings.

Val, with the crowd, was on his feet, cheering madly, beside himself with joy. Hammond was biting his nails, Mitchell smiling serenely, and just before the whistle ended the game, Baker, finishing his marvellous run, scored a last-second touchdown with two of the Calton men falling on top of him. Hats, sticks, coats and programmes soared into the air above the raving crowd.

Andy Jones, jumping like a jack-in-the-box, grabbed a mirror from a girl next to him, took out a pair of scissors and beamed all round him.

"Pardon me, I've waited years for this!" He trimmed the beautifully curling ends of his moustache, for he had sworn to nurture that moustache until Weston won a big game. As the ends fluttered to the ground, he veiled:

"I won't need these any more!"

During the excitement, Frances found Val on the bench, and they sat there, not caring who might be watching.

Val was cheerful at last; he had achieved his object. Weston had won, and the blow had been struck for the clearing up of the football system.

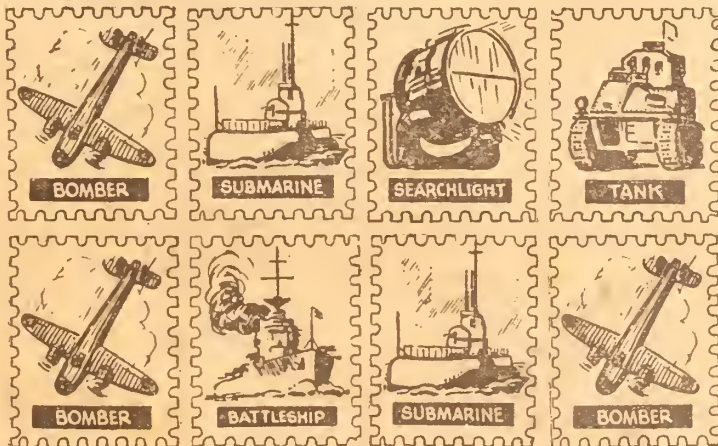
"I'll tell you the whole story," he said to the happily smiling girl. "You see, when I left here, I went over to Weston, and got to see Dr. Mitchell there—and Fran, that's the way it was!" Locked in a tight embrace, they sat there until the ground was almost empty. "Fran," he whispered, "you are the most adorable, delightful, delicious, er—er—"

A quaint figure popped up behind them. It was Andy, looking very strange with his short-cropped moustache.

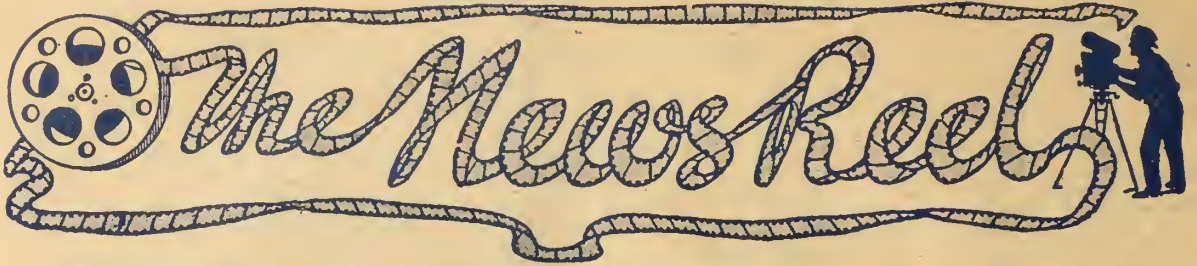
"D—lovely!" he exclaimed. "Now, don't you think we ought to go home?"

(By permission of Radio Pictures, Ltd., starring Van Heflin and Marian Marsh.)

CUT THEM OUT, LADS!



Here are eight more stamps for a collection. (See page 2).



The News Reel

All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 211, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Troublesome Sounds

Public Pests that create one of the biggest financial risks in motion picture production are usually the most minute things that could not disturb the tranquillity of a quiet home.

They are dangerous pests and anathema to all motion picture directors—particularly Clarence Brown, who directed Walter Huston, James Stewart, Beulah Bondi and a tremendous supporting cast in "Of Human Hearts" at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. They are as follows:

1.—The common house-fly can settle on a microphone and remain undetected until the film is developed and printed. It usually is not discovered until the scene is shown in a projection. The entire sequence has to be refilmed.

2.—An airplane that continues to hover over a studio holds up all actual shooting of scenes, causing a big loss.

3.—For a person to sneeze on the sound stage while the cameras are running means the scene must be retaken.

4.—Chirping sparrows often nestle in the high rafters of the sound stages. Production is always suspended while company employees scramble through the rafters to dislodge them.

5.—A stray cat frequently adopts a sound stage as its home and meows during the scenes, causing retakes. Cats have been known to have litters of kittens in dark places, making it difficult to find them.

6.—A squeaky shoe is magnified many times on the sound track. The company must shut down until the actor has made the long trek to the wardrobe department for squeakless shoes.

7.—Hammering off-stage is one of the more common worries. Work must be called off until the hammerer is located and a red-light signal system installed for him.

8.—Train whistles and motor-car horns, particularly on location, are nuisances to the director who is working against daylight and time. They cannot be controlled. The company must stand idle until they vanish.

9.—Quite often, studio visitors, ignoring the golden rule of silence on a sound stage, continue to whisper while a scene is being taken. The scene must be done over again.

10.—Forgetful studio workers occasionally read newspapers on the set while the scene is being filmed. When they fold or crumple the paper it is regis-

tered on the sound track like crackling thunder.

Travelling Hotel for Horses

Russell Hayden, the cowboy actor, is the proprietor of the world's most luxurious hotel of its kind, a travelling Ritz-Carlton for horses, which he designed for the use of his twelve trained motion picture mounts.

The equine hostelry provides the last word in comfort, having stall space for the dozen steeds and an automatic escalator for a gang-plank. The actor, who is featured in Producer Harry Sherman's "Hopalong Cassidy" series, conceived the idea of the horse hotel to relieve the cramped conditions of animals being transported.

Sauce from the Goose

Mother goose laid an egg. Not a golden one, to be sure, although the excitement caused by this act of Nature on the Walter Wanger set of "The Adventuress," made it appear for the moment that the golden phenomenon had actually happened.

During the filming of a dramatic train scene in which Leo Carrillo, as a Spanish soldier, and a group of peasants are travelling from one province to another, the excitement occurred. The faces of the passengers on the train were serious, befitting an atmosphere of war. Katherine de Mille, playing the part of a pretty peasant girl, clung to the last of her worldly possessions, a nice fat goose.

"Camera—ready—shoot," ordered Mr. Dieterle, directing "The Adventuress." The cameras began to grind. The faces of the people became grimmer. Leo Carrillo acted out his dramatic plea. Suddenly he laughed. And Miss de Mille's reactions certainly were not in keeping with the script.

"Cut!" shouted Dieterle. "What's going on here?"

Carrillo, still laughing, was unable to answer. But Miss de Mille meekly held up a nice fresh egg.

Mother goose had laid an egg and cooked the scene.

Doug Fairbanks, Junr., Aids Needy Extra

When elderly Henrietta Robbins, old-time extra in most of the silent pictures

**TUESDAY IS
"BOY'S CINEMA" DAY!**

which starred Douglas Fairbanks, senr., heard that Doug had returned to Hollywood and that Irene Dunne, Fairbanks, and some two hundred extras were on location in San Fernando Valley for RKO Radio's, "The Joy of Living," she spent most of a hard-earned dollar for bus fare to the scene.

Doug would remember her, she knew, and so that she got some much-needed work. But upon arrival she learned that the Fairbanks in the picture was Doug Junr., and that all extra parts had been filled.

Henrietta got the job, however. When Doug Junr. heard of her presence, he induced the director to put on another extra, and paid her cheque himself.

"The Kid" is Back

Jackie Coogan has returned, as a man, to the movies that made him famous as a child.

For the first time since he was a youngster, "The Kid" has been before the cameras in an important picture. Instead of a wistful moppet, Coogan is now a suave, smiling orchestra leader. He is tall and broad-shouldered, in the true leading man tradition.

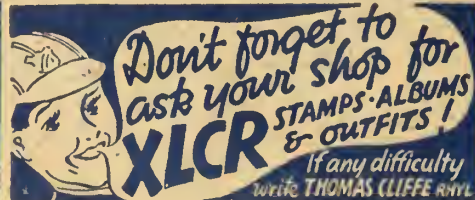
As he swings his baton at the orchestra he smiles at his bride, for Betty Grable appears with him in Paramount's "Swing, Teacher, Swing." She dances to the orchestra he conducts.

In playing the part of a band leader, the former child star does more than play a part. He puts into practice his vocation for the last three years. Jackie has had his own orchestra. He hopes to continue his career as an entertainer. "I don't know just what form it will take," he says, "but I want to continue at the business I have known all my life. I hope from time to time to make a picture. I am also interested in writing for the screen.

"Right now I'm trying to get together with Charlie Chaplin, and I am intrigued with the possibility of writing a screen play, and creating a character that will be a talking counterpart to 'The Kid' that I did with him."

Coogan is now twenty-two, and, with the exception of his appearance in a western three years ago, he has been away from pictures since he was fourteen.

In "Swing, Teacher, Swing" he appears with Burns and Allen, Martha Raye, Edward Everett Horton, Ben Blue and others.



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BOY'S CINEMA

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No. 964. EVERY TUESDAY June 4th, 1938.

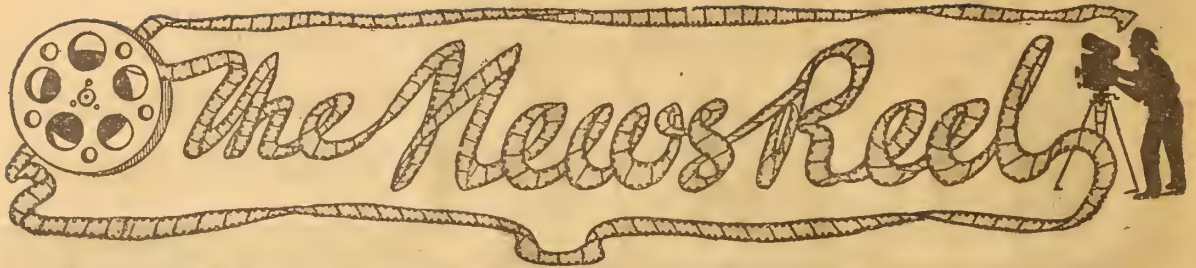
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Starring
Dick PURCELL
and
John LITEL

**"Missing
Witnesses"**

The
Baffling
Mystery
of a
MASTER
CROOK



The News Reel

All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 211, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Confidence is a Great Thing!

Jack Holt, the perennially popular screen star, has often boasted to his intimates and fellow-players that when he trusts a man he will risk not only his pocket-book but his life on that confidence.

During the filming of Columbia's "Under Suspicion," in which Holt plays his 200th starring rôle, he had the opportunity to make good that boast—as far as risking his life was concerned.

A mystery story, the plot contains a scene in which a rifle bullet crashes through a window, whizzes past Holt's head, and buries itself in the wall behind him. The script called for a close-up of the action, and Director Lewis Collins, a stickler for realism, called for an expert marksman.

Eddie Mack, one-time circus and army sharpshooter who specialises in such hazardous jobs around Hollywood, was selected for the task. Before the scene was staged, Jack, who is no mean marksman himself with rifle and pistol, insisted that Mack give him a sample of his prowess. As a result of this rehearsal by shooting tiny targets at a hundred yards, and also knocking the spots out of playing cards, Holt expressed himself as satisfied with Mack's perfect aim.

The scene was photographed not once, but several times until deemed perfect. Each time Mack sent a .30-30 slug whizzing within an inch of Holt's head as he sat in a chair. Not once did Holt even wince to spoil the scene. Asked about his own steel nerves afterwards, he replied:

"I just had confidence in him. And when I have that I'll go the limit with any man."

Interruptions on "The Saint in New York" Set

It took eight men armed with shot-guns to keep R.K.O. ranch quiet enough to make motion pictures one night recently.

Filming night scenes for R.K.O. Radio's "The Saint in New York," the sound track was repeatedly ruined by the yelps of coyotes who had been driven down from the hills by the recent heavy rains.

Each time the siren was blown for absolute quiet, the beasts took up their howling, interrupting dialogue between Louis Hayward and Kay Sutton.

Director Ben Holmes solved the problem by having eight prop men armed with shotguns deploy in a circle, fire their guns into the air prior to making each scene. The coyotes would remain quiet for several minutes after each volley, whereupon Hayward and Miss Sutton would go into their scene without extraneous noises.

Dummy Insured for 5,000 Dollars

If Charlie McCarthy should get smashed up in a car, train or plane accident, burned, blown away in a tornado, buried in an earthquake or land-

slide, or otherwise wrecked, ruined, lost, stolen, strayed or kidnapped, Edgar Bergen would be reimbursed by an insurance company to the amount of \$5,000.

"Charlie carries every kind of insurance imaginable," Edgar Bergen admits. "But the five thousand wouldn't begin to pay me for his loss. He's irreplaceable."

Charlie McCarthy, as everyone knows, is a wooden dummy. For eleven years Edgar Bergen has been trying to obtain a duplicate of Charlie, but has had no success. He has commissioned many wood-carvers to try to make replicas of Charlie's head, but the results were not satisfactory. Charlie, who is at present working with Edgar Bergen, Adolphe Menjou, Andrea Leeds and George Murphy in the Universal picture, "Letter of Introduction," has been presented with a chair of his own. The

chair is half-size, but bears his name in full-sized letters across the back, and when Edgar Bergen made the presentation, Charlie McCarthy expressed his appreciation by saying "that's darned nice of you, Bergen."

Five Hours in a Trunk No Fun

Frances Drake spent five hours in a trunk one day making scenes for "Lone Wolf in Paris" at Columbia Studios.

The story called for the petite actress to hide in a large wardrobe trunk belonging to Francis Lederer, who is co-starred with her in the picture. She did it to escape the gendarmes who were on her trail in a Paris hotel following a jewel robbery.

According to the script, Miss Drake was supposed to hide in the trunk, closing it after she entered. Then she was to faint and be rescued in the nick of time by Lederer.

All morning they rehearsed the difficult scene, and during the early afternoon made the "shots."

The scene was photographed in long shots and close-ups, Lederer carrying the inert Miss Drake to a couch nearby to revive her.

On the last scene Director Al Rogell was particularly pleased.

"That was a lily!" shouted the director, using Hollywood's term for a perfect scene.

"She couldn't have been more realistic if she had fainted," the director continued as he rushed in to congratulate the players.

Miss Drake did not rise from the couch.

Lederer continued to wave spirits of ammonia under her nose.

"I'm glad you liked it," Lederer said, "because she has fainted!"

Luckily it was the last "take." When Miss Drake was revived she went home to try and forget about trunks.

Asbestos Costumes for Chorus

For a stirring "devil-dance" number in Irving Berlin's "Alexander's Ragtime Band," twelve beautiful Hollywood chorus-girls were forced to wear costumes made of asbestos.

The asbestos suits were not dictated by any fear of flames, but the danger of injury from dry ice!

The girls are supposed to disappear into a heavy shower of steam after sitting on the dance floor for four bars of music in a ballet routine.

Instead of real, live steam, 20th Century-Fox technicians devised a huge trough covered with grill work. The trough filled with a ton of dry ice, gives forth an enormous amount of steam-like substance when big fans blow air up through the dry ice.

But to protect the dancing girls from the fumes, which are capable of burning a person, Dance Director Seymour Felix had the wardrobe department make up black and red lace ballet costumes of asbestos.

(Continued on page 25)

NEXT WEEK'S GRAND FILM DRAMAS!



JACK HOLT

"TRAPPED BY G-MEN"

In order to track down a gang of crooks who seem to have vanished off the face of the earth, Martin Galloway—acc G-Man—poses as a notorious bank robber and contrives the escape from prison hospital of a wounded criminal, who takes him to the mysterious hideaway. But his colleagues search for him in vain. A drama of desperate venture.

"HERO OF PINE RIDGE"

Disowned by the people he loved, Gene Autry travels the lonesome road, until fate crosses his trail and sends him whirling back into the middle of a range war with blazing guns and flying fists.

Also

Another episode of the jungle adventure serial:

"TIM TYLER'S LUCK"

Starring Frankie Thomas.

Transferred to a department specially created to deal with a mob of dangerous racketeers, Detective Bull Regan makes a number of blunders, but eventually—with the help of a girl wanted for murder—runs to earth the head of the whole criminal organisation. A first-rate thriller, starring Dick Purcell, John Litel and Jean Dale

"MISSING WITNESSES"



Caught!

IN East Twenty-Seventh Street, just round the corner from Third Avenue, a large dark-blue saloon drew up outside Joseph Hartman's modest little restaurant and five men got down from it and straggled across the pavement.

The smallest of the five—a mean-faced shrimp of a fellow with blue eyes inclined to stare—led the way past two shrubs in tubs that stood like sentinels on either side of the entrance and pushed open the door.

Hartman, a narrow-shouldered man of no great stature, and baldheaded except for two tufts of brown hair that sprouted thickly above his ears, was standing behind a counter upon which cigars and cigarettes were displayed for sale. There were only two customers in the place, seated at separate tables, but his brown eyes widened beneath bushy brows and his jaw dropped beneath a ragged brown moustache as four of the newcomers advanced towards the counter and the fifth remained at the door as though on guard there.

"Hallo, Hartman," said the diminutive leader harshly. "How about it?"

"I couldn't get the money if I wanted to, Macey," the proprietor of the restaurant replied in a nervous voice. "I don't make that much."

"We gave you till to-night, didn't we?" rasped Macey, known to the underworld of New York City—and to the police—as "Little Joe" Macey.

"But that's impossible," protested Hartman. "You've taxed me to the limit already for that Protective Association, as you call it, and now you want to raise the price!"

"It's the boss' orders. So what's the answer?"

With courage born of despair Hartman defied his persecutors.

"I'm not gonna pay another dollar in graft to you, or to your boss either!" he blazed. "I'm through! Now get out!"

Macey waved a hand to his companions.

"All right, boys."

The man at the door promptly pulled up a blind over its glass panel and blinds over narrower glass panels to right and left of the door. Two other men let down Venetian blinds over the windows, and the interior of the restaurant became hidden from the street.

Macey, with a sweep of his arm, sent boxes of cigars and packets of cigarettes flying from the counter in all directions. The other ruffian, who had been leaning against the counter chewing gum, snatched up a chair and with it began to smash the glass doors of cabinets.

"Stop it!" howled Hartman above the noise. "Please don't do that! Stop it!"

He dived round the counter in a frantic effort to protect his property, but was sent floundering backwards against a door from a hurricane of blows.

"I know what this is!" exclaimed a horrified male customer, bounding up from his seat at a table in a far corner of the room. "Let me out!"

Nobody tried to stop him, and he rushed out from the place bareheaded.

The door was slammed behind him, and the work of destruction continued. Mirrors on the walls were shattered with the aid of bottles that broke and splashed their contents upon the wreckage. A big coffee urn was sent rolling across the floor in a cloud of fragrant steam, and

Macey attacked the glass cover of a pin-table with the butt of a six-gun he took from his pocket.

"You're wrecking my business!" Hartman piteously complained and caught hold of the arm of the chewer of gum. "Please don't do that!"

The elbow of the arm sent him reeling against an ugly black-haired fellow who was attacking piled-up plates with a bottle, and the bottle smote him upon the forehead, just above the right eye, making a jagged wound there and knocking him down.

"Help!" he screamed. "Help!" The only remaining customer in the restaurant was a girl of about twenty who had been too horrified to move from a table at the back of the room. She saw a clear way to the door just as Hartman rose to his feet with blood streaming down his face, and she made a dash for it.

Out on the pavement of East Twenty-Seventh Street a young detective attached to the robbery detail approached Hartman's restaurant. His name was William Regan, but "Bill" had become "Bull" as a result of his strong arm methods with wrongdoers.

He was clean-shaven and quite good-looking, and in no way did he resemble the typical detective of fiction. A whimsical expression about his mouth, a pair of mild blue eyes, and an easy manner tended to deceive strangers, but he was an expert at ju-jitsu, he wielded a pair of formidable fists, and no crook in New York could beat him to the draw when it came to shooting.

The drawn blinds of the restaurant attracted his attention before the noise of destruction and the screams of Hartman reached his ears, and as he hastened

his steps he blew upon an official whistle.

He was about to open the door when the door was opened and the girl rushed out almost into his arms. He glimpsed frightened blue eyes, set in a beautiful face.

"What's your hurry, sister?" he demanded.

"Excuse me!" she cried breathlessly; and he made no effort to stop her because at that moment two of the wreckers dived past her to the saloon at the kerb, hurled themselves into it, and were swept away along the street.

The black-haired ruffian, Heinie Dowds by name, emerged to find Bull in his way.

"Get goin', mug!" he shouted menacingly.

"Who're you shoving?" inquired Bull, and with a sudden and apparently simple movement of one arm he sent Heinie Dowds sprawling at the feet of a patrolman who had just arrived on the scene in response to the summons of the whistle.

The ugly chewer of gum burst out from the doorway with Little Joe Macey, and Macey shouted:

"Take 'im, Chiv!"

Chivvy Predo launched a blow at Bull that should have laid the detective low, but Bull side-stepped it like lightning, and it was his attacker who thudded to the pavement. Macey whipped out his gun, only to find himself covered by a smaller, yet equally deadly, weapon in Bull's left hand which seemed to have got there by magic.

"Hold it!" rapped Bull; and the little crook raised his hands instead of attempting to fire.

"Up on your feet, you!"

Chivvy Predo rose with marked reluctance.

"You, too, Tarzan!"

Heinie Dowds received rough assistance from the patrolman.

"Come on, line up! This is the law talking!"

The three stood in a row, and Bull appropriated Macey's shooting-iron.

"Little Joe Macey, eh?" he drawled. "I gotta permit to carry that gun, copper," snarled Macey.

"Well, your permit's just expired."

Hartman tottered out from the restaurant, battered and bleeding and crying for help.

"What's going on here, anyway?" asked Bull.

"Officer, these men," faltered Hartman, "they wrecked my place—and now look—look what they did to me. They're crooks! Arrest them! I'm gonna testify against 'em. I'm gonna tell everything about their rotten racket. I'm gonna send 'em to the penitentiary!"

The Result of the Trial

BULL'S three captives were taken off to the nearest precinct station and charged, and two days afterwards Joseph Hartman gave evidence against them before a Grand Jury, with the result that they were committed for trial on two counts—extortion and violence.

At the trial the Deputy District Attorney conducted the case against them, and he lost no time in calling Hartman to the witness-stand. But Hartman's courage began to ooze away from him the moment he became seated in the chair on the stand, for Macey and his companions were at their own attorney's table almost facing him, and the two men who had escaped capture were glowering at him from the body of the court.

"How many men were party to this assault?" asked the Deputy District Attorney.

"Th—there were five of them who did it," stammered the witness.

June 4th, 1933.

"Will you relate exactly what happened?"

Hartman, whose forehead was decorated with sticking-plaster, tried to moisten dry lips with a tongue that was equally dry.

"Well, sir—er—the—the gangsters who'd been bleedin' me—they came in and de-demanded more money—and I—I told 'em I couldn't pay 'em. Then they went to work on my restaurant, and—and they wrecked it. But when I tried to stop 'em, they—they beat me up."

"Thank you." The Deputy District Attorney waved a hand in no particular direction. "And now, Mr. Hartman, I'd like you to take a look around the court-room. Do you see anybody here who was present when this happened?"

Hartman looked across at the three crooks. Heinie Dowds was eating peanuts out of a paper bag as though in no way concerned with the trial.

"Yes," he murmured.

"Will you point them out to the jury?"

"Those three men there."

"What part, if any, did these three men have in the affair?"

"Well—er—when the thing started these men jumped up from their tables and tried to help me."

The two men who had not been captured grinned at one another.

"Tried to help you?" exploded the astonished Deputy District Attorney.

"Yes," nodded Hartman, "they—they actually tried to stop the gangsters, but they—er—they'd wrecked my restaurant and then run out. Those men left the place after the men who'd assaulted me had gone."

Bull Regan sprang up from a chair at the Deputy District Attorney's table.

"He's lying!" he shouted. "He said it was Macey's mob that gave him the beat-up! Say, are you tryin' to make a monkey out o' me?"

"Order!" commanded the bailiff of the court in a stentorian voice; and the judge banged on the bench with his gavel.

"Officer Regan," he said severely, "do you want me to fine you for contempt of court?"

"No, your honour," Bull replied. "My tongue slipped."

There was laughter in which the prisoners joined, and Bull sat down muttering and indubly:

"The white-livered liar!"

Heinie Dowds helped himself to another peanut and tossed its shell into his own bowler hat, which was standing upside down on the table before him.

"Do you mean to say that these defendants are not the men you identified?" thundered the Deputy District Attorney.

"No, they—they're friends of mine," Hartman replied.

The judge leaned towards him.

"Mr. Hartman," he said, "I want to caution you that if you repudiate your sworn testimony before the Grand Jury—"

"It's no use!" blurted the unhappy witness. "I can't say anything!"

"Do you realise we'll have to send you to prison on a charge of perjury?" asked the judge.

"Yes, I know. But I have a wife and family, Judge. I'm alive now, but—"

The Deputy District Attorney intervened.

"If your Honour pleases," he said, "the prosecuting witness has evidently received a threat of death. I feel that there's only one thing to do."

With a gesture of helplessness he returned to his table and sat down behind it. Bull gritted his teeth, and then the judge spoke again.

"This is a sad commentary on justice," he said bitterly. "Bailiff, have a warrant sworn out for the arrest of this witness on a charge of perjury. The case against Macey, Predo and Dowds is dismissed. The prisoners are discharged."

Hartman left the witness-stand only to be taken into custody by a policeman. Heinie Dowds emptied the peanut shells from his hat into the paper bag and rose with his companions and the attorney who had defended them. Bull, thoroughly disgusted with the result of the trial, was standing by the rail that divided the well of the court from the seats of the public when Little Joe Macey walked up to him with an insolent grin.

"So long, copper," he jeered.

"How would you like a bust in the nose?" snapped Bull.

The three moved past him to a side door, and he was glaring after them when he caught sight of the girl who had run out from the restaurant. She was looking back at him from a door on the other side of the rail, and he recognised her immediately.

He pushed open a gate in the rail and hurried after her, but many people were leaving the court, and she was out in a broad corridor by the time he had squeezed his way through the crowd at the door.

He saw her disappear into the cage of a lift, and he reached the lift just as the gate was being closed.

"Next cage, please!" said the attendant, and the gate was slammed in his face.

He raced down the stairs, but there were three flights of them, and the girl had disappeared by the time he had completed their descent.

Hartman's own case came up for hearing four days afterwards, and he had no one to defend him. The wound on his forehead was healed, but he looked utterly dejected.

"Hartman," said the judge gravely, "do you know of any reason why sentence should not be passed upon you?"

"No, sir," confessed the prisoner.

"I regret that it is necessary to do this, but the courts are powerless to check the spread of organised crime so long as people like you, who have been victimised by criminals, refuse to testify against them. Upon your own admission that you are guilty of perjury, I hereby sentence you to State's prison for a term of five years."

It was a severe sentence, and murmurs of surprise and of commiseration followed its utterance. Hartman closed his eyes, and his head was bowed when a policeman touched him on the shoulder and helped him to his feet.

The Grand Jury sat that day, and the foreman—who had been compelled to give evidence against the timorous restaurant proprietor—addressed his colleagues in these terms:

"The Hartman case is only one of many such instances of terrorism by racketeers who have a strangle-hold on our city's business. Present law enforcement agencies have shown themselves incapable of dealing with this appalling situation. We need a new department, devoted solely to the cleansing of this city of racketeering crime. I suggest we appeal to the Governor!"

The Governor of New York State was swift to act upon the appeal made to him by the Grand Jury. He created the new department, and placed in charge of it Detective-Inspector Robert Leonard Lane, a distinguished officer of the Homicide Bureau, with the title of "Special Prosecutor."

Lane, a tall and quiet-spoken man of about forty with a clean-shaven and

intellectual face, lost no time in organising the new department at Police Headquarters, and one of the first things he did after he had got it into running order was to make a radio appeal to the general public from a studio of the American Broadcasting Corporation.

"This," he said, "is the first, and, I hope, the last time I shall make a public address during the career of this special criminal investigation. We are not embarking on a crusade against small-fry mobsters and hired thugs. We are out after the big fellows—the bosses of the underworld—and I need the co-operation of my fellow-citizens."

The newspapers had given considerable advance publicity to the broadcast, and Inspector Lane had a vast audience that evening. Joe Macey and nine or ten other men, including Dowds and Predo, listened to what he had to say in a room above a night club off Second Avenue.

"You'll need more than that, brother!" scoffed Dowds.

"There is to-day scarcely a business in this city," Lane's voice went on, "which does not somehow pay its tribute to the underworld—a tribute levied by force and collected by fear. I need the help of you business men who are being mulcted. Come to my offices. Tell us all you know."

A grey-haired grocer, in the living-room of his premises up in the Bronx, looked round from a radio set as his wife cried out excitedly:

"John, you can go down!"

"Not me!" he said with vehemence. "It's safer to pay off!"

"Without your co-operation," Inspector Lane continued, "this investigation will get nowhere. I want every citizen, high and low, rich or poor, who knows anything about this organised system of terrorism to come to my office and tell his story."

An Italian greengrocer in an East Side tenement, with his plump wife and his brood of children, flung up his hands.

"I'm a-go!" he cried, his brown eyes gleaming with excitement. "I'm

a-tella how dey ruined my vegetable business!"

"No, Tony, no!" protested the wife, who was holding a baby in her arms. "No! The leetle ones! Our little bambinos!"

Lane had nearly finished.

"With the evidence we collect from you citizens who have been victimised," he stated, "we shall begin an investigation of underworld characters that will lead us eventually to the men in control. The place for you to report is my office at headquarters. My investigators will respect your confidence. They will protect you. We must have witnesses—hundreds of them—men and women who will testify against the racketeers."

Transferred

THE day after Inspector Lane's radio appeal to the public Bull Regan ascended to the floor upon which the new department functioned at headquarters, entered a big general office, and opened a swing gate in a low partition which kept callers away from the desks of members of the staff.

A man at a desk just inside the gate sprang up to stop him.

"I'm sorry," he said, "but you'll just have to wait. The inspector will only be a few minutes."

Bull thrust the clerk aside and strode towards a door that bore the inspector's name.

"You can't go in there!" cried the clerk, a chubby-faced young fellow named Harris.

"There's no harm in trying," retorted Bull, and recognised a former member of the Homicide Squad at a desk to the left of the door. "Hi-ya, Pete?"

Pete returned the greeting, and Bull burst into a panelled room in which Lane was seated behind a flat-topped desk.

"Humm!" The inspector looked up at the intruder. "Detective Bull Regan, I suppose?"

"That's right," nodded Bull, removing his hat because a pair of very keen hazel eyes seemed to have become focused on it. "That clerk you got

outside didn't even know who I was."

"Would you like an apology?"

"Naw, that's all right, inspector. Skip it." Bull dismissed the matter with a flip of his left hand. "Well, how's the Pussyfoot Brigade coming along?"

"Pussyfoot?" Lane frowned. "Oh, I think we're going to do all right."

"Well, let me give you some advice. The trouble with you people around this place is you're all too soft. You act like those guys that come in here were doin' you a favour. You're up against hoodlums and gorillas in this department, the same as the rest of the force. Over in the robbery detail, when we get a bunch o' witnesses in, they talk!"

"Yes, I understand you're pretty good at that—or—sort of thing," said Lane with subtle sarcasm.

"I'm the best guy in the detail," Bull declared with no modesty whatever. "When they send me out after anybody, I bring 'em in."

"Congratulations."

Lane had been signing letters when Bull entered, and he went on signing them.

"They sent me over here to talk to you," said Bull after an interval of silence. "What've you got, a tough pick-up? I'm always willing to oblige."

"Thank you," Lane signed another letter and tossed it into a tray. "That's splendid."

"Well, what's the job?" Bull asked impatiently. "I'm working on a couple o' cases now, and I've gotta get back to the department."

"This is your department."

Bull blinked.

"You mean I've been—"

"Transferred." The last letter was signed and joined the others, and the brand-new Special Prosecutor looked up with a smile. "Yes, you're now on the Pussyfoot Brigade! Well, you don't seem very enthusiastic."

Bull made a grimace.

"I'm not," he declared. "I want action, not gab."

"Have you any idea why you were transferred to me?"

"I suppose it was on account o' the way I put the pinch on those 'hoods' at Hartman's."



Wagner's voice rang out, seemingly from his pictured self : " I know these three ! "

"For once you're right, Bull." Lane stood up and buttoned his double-breasted coat. "Now, I know that you don't scare easily. You're a hard-boiled, two-fisted cop."

"That's right."

"You're bull-headed and stupid. You know a lot about knocking a guy's teeth out and throwing him in the jug, but you don't know anything about using your brains."

Bull didn't like that at all.

"I tell you I've got the best record of arrests—" he began hotly.

"I know, I know," interrupted Lane. "More arrests than anybody else in the department, many of them unnecessary! A policeman's job is to protect the public, not to persecute it. Did anyone ever tell you that?"

"Yeah. Paragraph three, 'Instructions for Detectives.'"

"Oh, so you've read the book? That's splendid. Now, Bull, I'm going to give you a chance to use your head—and, if you don't, you'll probably end up as a night-watchman somewhere."

"Am I supposed to say 'thanks'?" snorted Bull.

"It would be better if you didn't say anything for once. Now, if we're going to work together, let's get a few things straight. Our job here is to find witnesses, to gain their confidence and persuade them to tell their stories. That doesn't call for strong-arm methods—it takes brains. Some of your best work will be done while you're sitting in a chair—thinking!"

"Desk job, eh?" growled Bull.

Lane leaned across the desk and pointed a finger at him.

"Another thing, Bull," he said sharply. "Remember that I'm the head of this department. I don't always tell all I know, and until you become the head man here I make the decisions."

"That's all right, inspector," returned Bull airily. "It won't take me long."

"What won't take you long?"

"To become head man here."

Lane grimaced, and a few minutes afterwards escorted his new assistant into the outer office and introduced him to the other members of the staff who were there.

"And this is Emmet White," he said, stopping at the last desk to be visited. "Detective Bull Regan."

Emmet White pushed back his chair and rose. He was a big, broad fellow, heavily built, a good two inches taller than Bull and rather pugilistic of appearance.

"How d'you do?" said Bull.

"Glad to know you," said Emmet White.

"Bull's just coming into the department, Whitey," said Lane as the two shook hands. "Look after him, will you?"

"Sure, chief."

"He'll show you how we do things around here," the inspector informed Bull, and then he went back to his own room.

"You'll get on to it easy," confided Emmet White. "It's just a matter of using your head."

Bull perched on a corner of the desk and lit a cigarette.

"Say, you're the copper who was in on that Hartman case, aren't you?" asked his new colleague.

"Sure. I had those hyenas all wrapped up and delivered, and then Hartman let me down."

Whitey rubbed his clean-shaven chin reflectively.

"You know there ought to have been somebody around that restaurant be-

sides Hartman who had the dope on Little Joe Macey's mob," he remarked. "Yeah," said Bull. "I wish I could find that dame!"

"What dame?"

"The one that bumped into me comin' out of Hartman's that night. She acted like she knew something."

"Couldn't you locate her?"

"Naw, couldn't get a line on her anywhere." Bull puffed a cloud of smoke into the air. "Then she showed up at the trial."

Whitey's grey eyes widened.

"Well, why didn't you freeze on to her then?" he exclaimed.

"She saw me first."

"Too bad. If we could get a line on Joe Macey's outfit it might lead us to the higher-ups. That's what the chief wants."

Bull pursed his lips and thought.

"Say, there's another restaurant right around the corner from Hartman's," he said suddenly. "Wagner's Chop House. If the Macey mob were makin' Hartman cough up it's a cinch they were doin' the same with Wagner."

"That's right," agreed Whitey, "and maybe Wagner will talk."

"I'll make him talk!"

"I'll go with you."

Bull Makes a Blunder

WAGNER'S CHOP HOUSE was a double-fronted but comparatively small establishment in Third Avenue, less than three minutes' walk from Hartman's premises. Frank Wagner, its full-faced and full-bodied proprietor, was standing behind a long, glass-topped counter, and talking across it to his head-waiter, when a long, black, saloon car drew up at the kerb and Bull and Whitey got out from it.

The two detectives would not have been flattered if they could have heard what he said as he caught sight of them through a window as they advanced towards the door.

"Those guys look like some o' Little Joe Macey's mob!" he exclaimed. "I'm going out the back way—tell 'em I've gone and ain't comin' back."

The head-waiter was between the door and a cash register on the counter when Bull and Whitey entered.

"Are you Wagner?" asked Bull crisply.

"No," was the curt reply.

"Is he here?"

"No, he's gone home."

"Where does he live?"

"I don't know."

Several early customers looked round from their tables, and the head-waiter rather lost his head.

"Why don't you let the man alone?" he burst out. "You're driving him out of business with your Protective Association—bleedin' him until he'll have to close up!"

"That's just what I wanted to hear," said Bull, and he flipped back the lapel of his coat to display a metal badge beneath it. "We're here to help him."

The head-waiter looked at the badge and signed with relief.

"Oh, that's different," he said.

"He'll be glad to see you. He lives at one-twenty-five East Ninety-Fifth Street."

Bull repeated the address in order to memorise it, thanked the man for the information, and went out to the saloon with Whitey.

East Ninety-Fifth Street was reached and the two climbed the carpeted stairs of an apartment-house, walked along a corridor on the third floor and halted in front of a door.

"This is it," said Bull, who had

checked a list of tenants in the hall below, and he banged on the door with his fist.

Wagner had entered the flat that was his home only a few minutes before, and was in the living-room with his wife, a fair-haired girl at least ten years his junior. He motioned to her, and she went over to the door but did not open it.

"Who's there?" she called out.

"Come on Wagner, open up!" shouted Bull.

She sped back to her husband, snatching up his hat from a chair on the way.

"Oh, don't let them find you!" she said agitatedly.

"What about you?" asked Wagner. Bull's fist assailed a panel of the door, and Bull's voice rang out impatiently: "Come on, Wagner, make it snappy!"

"They don't want me," said Wagner's wife, and she flung up the bottom sash of a window. "Hurry, Frank!"

Wagner, with the hat in his hand, scrambled out over the sill on to the iron rungs of a fire-escape, and she leaned out to watch him descend to an alleyway at the back of the building.

Bull glared at the closed door.

"They can't pull that stuff on me!" he raged, and tried vainly to burst open the door with his shoulder.

"Listen, Bull," urged Whitey, "go easy."

"Go easy?" scoffed Bull. "Say, what do you guys think you're running, a Sunday-school? You beat it down and cover the back way, Whitey—I'll handle this."

He backed across the corridor with the obvious intention of charging at the door, and Whitey tried to restrain him.

"Wait a minute," he cried. "You can't go burstin' in there like that!"

"There's no harm in tryin'," Bull retorted.

"Well, remember you're doin' it, but you're not raidin' a hop-joint."

Whitey ran off to the stairs, and Bull launched himself at the door. Twice his efforts were unavailing, but at the third attempt the lock gave way with such suddenness that he pitched headlong into the living-room and sprawled upon its carpet.

Mrs. Wagner faced him fiercely as he got to his feet.

"What do you mean by breaking in?" she stormed. "There's nothing here you want!"

"Where's Wagner?" he barked at her.

"I'm sure I don't know."

"Oh yes, you do!" He gripped a soft arm. "Come on, where did he go?"

"I don't know," she shrilled. "He hasn't been here since early this morning."

"Oh, he hasn't, eh?" Bull looked round the room and saw a half-smoked cigar smouldering on the edge of an ash-tray upon a low table. "Do you smoke cigars?"

"None of your business if I do!"

He let go of her arm to fling open the door of a bedroom which he invaded, and from the bedroom he darted across into a tiny kitchen. She was standing motionless where he had left her when he returned to the living-room and noticed the open window, but her hand went to her mouth as he thrust his head out over the sill.

"Oh, you got him out, did you?" he drawled, striding over to her. "You're not as dumb as you look. All right, sister, put your bonnet on!"

"Where are you taking me?" she challenged.

"Canoeing."
 "I won't go!"
 He gripped her arm again.

"Well, if you'd rather go without a hat—"

"Take your hand off me!" she shouted. "I'll call for the police!"

"Who d'you think I am, Kid Galahad?" With his free hand he displayed his badge, and her grey-green eyes widened at sight of it.

"This is a fine way for an officer of the law to act!" she said angrily. "I'll have you discharged for this!"

Bull marched her out from the flat. Other tenants had gathered in the corridor—mostly women—and they followed the detective and his fair captive to the stairs.

The long black saloon was where it had been left, at the kerb, but there was no sign of Whitey. Mrs. Wagner was bundled into the car, and Bull took the wheel beside her and drove off down-town to headquarters.

Whitey, however, had preceded him by a good five minutes, and Whitey was in Inspector Lane's room by the time he was ringing for the lift on the ground floor of the building. Frank Wagner, in a chair at the end of the inspector's desk, was explaining matters.

"I was badly scared, sir," he said. "I thought it was some of Macey's gangsters after me."

"I found him comin' out of the alley-way," Whitey supplemented. "He was scared all right, but I talked him into coming down with me in a taxi."

Lane picked up a pencil and stabbed his blotting-pad with its point.

"Now, Mr. Wagner," he said impressively, "if you can identify the crooks who've been collecting money from your restaurant men you'll be helping us to break up one of the worst rackets in the city."

The door from the outer office was flung wide, and Bull burst into the room with Mrs. Wagner.

"Here you are, chief!" he cried triumphantly.

Frank Wagner jumped up with a

startled cry. Lane also rose—and Bull stared at Whitey.

"Oh, so you ran out on me, did you?" he exclaimed.

"You said you'd handle it," Whitey reminded him.

"What's this all about, Bull?" inquired Lane. "Why have you brought this young lady in here?"

"You said you wanted somebody to testify against Macey's mob, didn't you?" Bull pointed a thumb at the girl beside him. "Well, the guy you want is Wagner—and she knows where he is!"

Lane smiled pityingly at the bungler. "This is Mr. Wagner," he said, "right here."

"And this is my wife," said Wagner indignantly.

"It wasn't necessary to bring Mrs. Wagner here," rebuked Lane. "He's the one we wanted to see, not his wife. I'm very sorry this happened. Regan, I think you owe Mrs. Wagner an apology."

"Apology?" echoed Bull. "Me?"

"Certainly. You brought her here against her will."

"I'm sorry, chief. I thought—"

"You should have thought twice!"

Bull, a trifle crestfallen, turned to the girl.

"Sorry," he said. "I'll take you back in a cab."

"Not while I'm conseious you won't!" she blazed at him.

"I'll take you home, dear," said her husband, picking up his hat; but that did not suit Lane at all.

"I'd like to talk to you first, if you don't mind, Mr. Wagner," he said smoothly.

Wagner nodded.

"You go on, then, Gladys," he said. "I'll be home later."

She looked at him in a half-scared fashion, but he assured her that it would be all right, and she turned towards the door. Bull hastened to open it for her—and was rewarded with a look that ought to have killed him on the spot.

Lane moved round his desk to another door.

"Now will you come with me, please?" he said to Wagner. "Bull, that night-watchman job is getting closer every minute!"

Bull flung down a cigarette he had been about to light and ground it beneath his heel.

"An Unusual Exhibit"

WAGNER was conducted by Inspector Lane into a special rogues' gallery on the top floor of the building—a room with a glass roof and consequently brilliantly illuminated. Photographs of members of New York's underworld were attached to movable screens at one end of the room, and at the other there was a narrow opening in the wall.

"Do you recognise any of these faces?" inquired the inspector, as he and Wagner stood before one of the screens.

"I—I can't say anything, inspector," stammered the chop-house proprietor, losing courage as he stared at a picture of Little Joe Macey. "Look what happened to my competitor, Mr. Hartman!"

"If you don't talk," said Lane gravely, "these men will continue to terrorise you until you'll be forced to close up."

"I'm in that fix right now."

"Well, don't let them drive you out—you drive them out. With your help I'll be able to send them all to prison, and you can keep your business."

Wagner gulped and came to a decision.

"All right, Mr. Lane," he said hoarsely, "I'll do it!"

Behind the opening in the wall across the room a man's face appeared, and Lane raised a thumb. But Wagner had not noticed the opening in the wall, and he did not see the signal.

"Now, take a good look at these pictures," said the inspector; and the unwilling witness did so.

"I know these three," he stated after a while. "That's Chivvy Predo. That's



Mary turned the pages of a loose-leaf ledger. "These aren't the books Jennings showed me!" she declared.



"She murdered Sturgis that night on the yacht," said the Inspector, "and pushed his body into the river."

"You bet I will. Now that I've made up my mind you don't need to worry about me going back on my story."

There was a burst of laughter in court at that last statement, and then the screen became a white blank, the current was switched off from the projector, and the blinds over the windows of the court-room were raised.

The three re-arrested prisoners scowled across the well of the court at Wagner, and his wife in a seat behind the rail clasped her hands and shivered. The attorney for the defence bounded to his feet.

"Your honour," he cried, "I object to this evidence as hearsay and ask that the jury be instructed to disregard it."

The District Attorney was swift to deal with his opponent.

"Your honour," he thundered, "the attorney for the defence should know that similar evidence has been passed as competent by a higher court."

"That is correct," confirmed the judge. "The evidence is admitted."

"You're marvellous!" Macey snarled at the defeated barrister.

The judge turned to the perjured witness.

"Mr. Wagner," he said, "in view of what you have just seen and heard do you still persist in your denial?"

Mrs. Wagner gnawed her lip while waiting for the answer that was almost inevitable.

"No, sir—I lied."

"Proceed with the witness," directed the judge.

The result of the trial, after that dramatic interlude, was a foregone conclusion, Macey and his two associates were sentenced to from two to five years' imprisonment, and—as one of the evening papers expressed it—"the State won its first victory in a drive to halt terrorists."

Wagner and his wife were rushed out of town by the police to avoid reprisals, and for more than a month no fresh cases of extortion with violence were brought to the notice of the authorities.

In the outer office of Inspector Lane's department one morning Bull sat motionless for nearly five minutes upon the desk of the clerk who dealt with callers, and the clerk, George Harris, began to wish him somewhere else.

"What are you doing?" he finally inquired.

"I'm working," Bull replied.

"Well, you don't look it."

"George," proclaimed Bull, bouncing off the desk, "I've just hit on a whale of an idea. I know somebody who'll put me wise to the head guy of all the rackets."

Harris looked sceptical.

"Who's that?"

"I figure that Little Joe Macey is pretty well fed up with the stretch in the 'pen', and if he figures I can do him some good up there he'll open up and tip me off as to who his bosses are."

"Good idea," approved the clerk. "I bet Lane went for it."

"Lane don't know anything about it," retorted Bull. "I'm gonna surprise him. I'm walking in here in the morning with a list that long of the higher-ups."

The list, according to his extended hands, was to be about a yard in length, but George Harris shook his head.

"I still think you ought to talk it over with the boss," he said.

"I'll talk it over with nobody till I crack these rackets wide open," declared Bull. "See you to-morrow."

Heinie Dowds. And that's Little Joe Macey—he's the leader."

Wagner got home before his wife because a squad car deposited him outside the apartment house, whereas she travelled by subway to the station at East Ninety-Sixth Street and walked the rest of the way.

As she approached the door of the flat a plain-clothes officer jumped up from a chair facing it.

"Just a minute, miss," he said gruffly. "Who did you want to see?"

"I'm Mrs. Wagner," she replied.

"Oh, excuse me. Go right in."

The lock had not yet been repaired. She pushed open the door and entered the living-room to find her husband there in his shirt-sleeves. She closed and bolted the door, and she said to him:

"Oh, Frank, I'm worried."

"Well, nothing can happen to me," he laughed. "They've got police all over the place."

"It isn't now that I'm worried about—it's after the trial."

"After the trial," he exulted, "Little Joe, Macey and his gangsters will be in the penitentiary."

"But there'll still be the heads of the mobs. They're the ones that keep 'phoning me every day, telling me that if—if you talk they'll kill you. Oh, for my sake, Frank, you mustn't testify against them. Promise me you won't!"

Partly as a result of her pleading and partly because he himself was afraid, when Wagner appeared in court to give evidence against the three men who had wrecked Hartman's restaurant and had extorted money from scores of tradesmen, he denied all knowledge of them.

"No," he declared vehemently, "I don't know anything, I tell you! I never identified anybody to Inspector Lane! I don't know who the men were!"

"I see," said the District Attorney, who was appearing in person for the

prosecution, and he addressed the judge. "Your honour, this looks like a repetition of the Hartman case, but this time the State is better prepared to handle the situation. I would like to place in evidence now a rather unusual exhibit."

"Proceed," nodded the judge.

Heinie Dowds had come to court armed with peanuts, but he ceased to devour them, and Little Joe Macey and Chivvy Predo turned this way and that as a rolled-up screen, attached to a side wall, was adjusted by one attendant and blinds were drawn down over all the windows of the court by other attendants.

On the table at which the District Attorney had been sitting a portable projector was set up facing the screen, and an operator connected flexes to it. The screen suddenly became illuminated, and on to it came a picture of Lane and Wagner—a talking picture, taken without Wagner's knowledge when they had stood together in front of the portrait gallery of crooks.

Wagner leaned forward in the chair on the witness-stand with a little gasp of dismay as his own voice rang out, seemingly from his pictured self.

"I know these three. That's Chivvy Predo. That's Heinie Dowds. And that's Little Joe Macey—he's the leader."

"And who's Macey working for?" inquired Lane's voice.

"I can't tell you that," came the reply; "but there's a big organisation behind them. He's only the head of the strong-arm mob."

"Haven't you any information at all about this organisation?"

"Nothing. I only know that these three men are the ones who were bleeding Hartman and me."

"Can you prove it?"

"Certainly. I've got a record of every cent I paid out."

"Now, Mr. Wagner, just so there won't be a slip, are you willing to give this evidence before a jury in court?"

Another Blunder!

BULL caught a train from Grand Central Station to Ossining, which is the nearest station to Sing Sing Prison, and after an interview with the warden in the great grey penitentiary, Little Joe Macey was brought to him in a waiting-room by a guard who immediately retired.

Drab prison garb and a hideous peaked cap did not improve the appearance of the little crook.

"Hallo, Macey," said Bull pleasantly.

"What d'you want with me, Regan?" rasped the prisoner.

"Maybe I came up to give you that bust in the nose!"

"Yeah?" The possibility was dismissed with a snuff. "Well, what's on your mind?"

"How do you like this hotel?"

"Rotten!"

"Huh!" Bull tilted his head. "You look as if you've actually been working. Where've they got you?"

"Diggin' a ditch."

In a yard outside the room a convict was cleaning windows. He had seen Macey marched along a corridor past one at which he had been at work, and he had moved along the wall to deal with another. The barred window of the waiting-room was open, and quite a lot of the conversation that followed reached his attentive ears.

"That's pretty tough work on a guy as soft as you," said Bull. "You ought to be able to finagle a better job than that."

"Can you tell me how I can get one?" challenged Macey.

"Can you tell me a lot of things I'd like to know?" countered Bull.

"So that's it! You want me to sing, eh? Well, there's nothin' doing!"

"You know best." Bull fished a packet of cigarettes from his coat pocket. "Have a smoke?"

"Yeah." Macey helped himself greedily and growled his thanks. Bull supplied a light and lit a cigarette for himself.

"S'posin' I did tell you something?" questioned the convict.

"I'd say you were plenty smart. Who are these guys you've been working for?"

"Just like that, eh? D'you think I'm batty? Well, it ain't gonna be that easy, because I don't trust coppers."

"Oh, you don't trust coppers, eh? Well, how's your own mob been treating you since you've been up here? I'll bet you they haven't even sent you a packet of tobacco."

"Haven't even sent me a postcard," confessed Macey, and added bitterly: "The rats!"

"That proves you're a sucker—and it took a copper to wise you up." Bull turned as though to go. "Well, so long, master-mind. You'll learn."

"Wait a minute, Regan," Macey said hastily. "Give me a chance to get in touch with my mouthpiece. I'll see you after that."

"Now," said Bull, "you're talking sense."

He left the prison by no means dissatisfied with the result of the interview; but that night in the mess-hall, just before the whistle of a guard brought the convicts to their feet at the long tables after the time allowed for the evening meal had expired, the "trusty" who had listened outside the window of the waiting room tossed a piece of bread into a garbage can.

At a second blast of the whistle the convicts turned to face the steel gate of the mess-hall, and at a third blast

they marched out into a yard. Several trusties remained behind to scrape the leavings from metal plates into garbage cans, and one of these surreptitiously retrieved the piece of bread, broke it open, and found inside it a little rolled-up scrap of paper.

He palmed the scrap of paper, and while scraping another plate over the can contrived to slip it into one of the supports of the galvanised iron handle.

That night the garbage can, in common with about nineteen others, was loaded on to a motor-truck belonging to the Acme Disposal Company, of Tarrytown, a firm that dealt with all the rubbish of the prison under contract.

On an unloading platform in the company's yard the foreman in charge thrust a pencil through the supports of the handles of all the garbage cans, and he found the scrap of paper and unrolled it. On its inner surface was written, in block letters:

"Macey is going to talk."

Next morning the managing director of the Acme Disposal Company, a man named Carl Heffner, travelled down to the city by car, and ascended to the fifteenth floor of an office building in Broadway.

He entered the general office of a stockbroker, and in it he greeted the girl who had rushed out from Hartman's restaurant. She was sitting at a desk with a typewriter in front of her.

"Hallo, Mary," he said. "Sturgis in?"

"Yes, Mr. Heffner," she nodded. "Go right in."

Heffner opened the door of an inner room labelled "Ward Sturgis, Private." At a big desk in the middle of the room the stockbroker was going through some accounts with his middle-aged book-keeper Jennings, and he looked up in surprise.

"Hallo, Carl!" he exclaimed. "What brings you down-town?"

Heffner closed the door and walked over to the desk.

"A note I got from a friend of ours up the Hud-on," he said, and handed over the scrap of paper. "What do you think we ought to do about it?"

Ward Sturgis, a long-necked man with rather a little face, a very little moustache, and a pair of piercing brown eyes, read the message and pocketed the scrap of paper on which it was written.

"I'll communicate with my branch up there," he said, "and they'll sell him out."

"You'll take care of it right away?" inquired Heffner.

"Right away."

"Thank you, Ward. See you at the club."

"Okay."

The visitor departed, and Ward Sturgis looked up at his book-keeper.

"Er—a friend of mine's over-extended in steel," he said, "and I'll have to sell him out. You needn't record the transaction, and I'll handle it personally."



"Don't let them take me!" Mary whispered imploringly. "Don't let them! I'll explain everything to you, Bull. Please!"

In the exercise yard at Sing Sing, in the afternoon of the following day, Little Joe Macey was lounging against a high wall, on the top of which an armed guard was stationed, when abruptly a fight broke out between several convicts within a few feet of him.

From all directions guards rushed towards the scene of combat, shouting to the offenders to "break it up," and hostilities ceased. But Little Joe Macey was lying on his face on the concrete, although he had taken no part in the affray, and the guard who stooped over him blew his whistle. The diminutive crook had been stabbed to death.

Bull, on arriving at police headquarters next morning, was summoned to Inspector Lane's room, and the inspector glared at him as he entered it. "You pulled a real boner this time!" he said scathingly. "I told you when you started to work for this department that I made the decisions. Didn't you realise that you'd be spotted, barging in like that to talk to Macey?"

"How was I to know they'd knock him over right in stir?" wailed Bull.

"No, I don't suppose you would think of such a possibility, but we did. We were going to do in a careful way what you've bungled. We'd have got to Macey without the underworld knowing it."

Bull sighed.

"I'm sorry, Chief," he muttered.

"All right," Lane stabbed a finger in his direction. "But remember, one more slip like this and you go out of here—and it won't be back to the robbery detail!"

Bull turned dejectedly to the door, but Lane called him back and held out a sheaf of papers.

"Think you can manage it?"

Bull took the papers, bit back a rejoinder he was tempted to make, and went out to the clerk.

On the other side of the low partition several people were waiting to see Lane, or one of his subordinates, and amongst them was the girl who had run out from Hartman's. But Bull flung the papers on George Harris's desk with his back to the partition.

"There you are," he growled.

"What's bunning you?" asked Harris.

"Aw, I work my shirt off around here, and all I get for it is a kick in the pants. That's gratitude for you!"

"How about takin' care of some of these customers?"

Bull did not even look round at the people who were waiting.

"Aw, they don't know anything," he scoffed. "I'll go out and dig up a witness who can tell us something. I'll show Lane!"

"Well, somebody has to talk to all these people here."

"There's only one person I want to talk to—and that's the girl that showed up at Hartman's trial."

He opened the little gate in the partition, and as he did so the girl of whom he had spoken touched him on the arm.

"May I speak to you for a moment, please?" she asked.

Bull did not seem to hear.

"I've got a hunch I could crack this case wide open," he said to Harris, "if I could find that name."

"I said I'd like to speak to you for a moment," insisted the girl at his side.

"Come back later," he growled without even a glance for her. "I got troubles of my own."

"But I've got to talk to somebody!"

"Well," said Harris, "who is it you want to speak to?"

Something vaguely familiar about the voice in which she had uttered those last almost frantic words caused Bull to

turn, and his brows went up and his jaw dropped.

"Say, you're the baby I've been looking for!" he ejaculated, and he grabbed hold of her, pulled her inside the gate, and rushed her over to his own desk.

"Sit down!" He dumped her in his own chair. "Now, sister, just who are you?"

"My name's Mary Norton," she replied, "but—"

"Listen," he interrupted, "I saw you coming out of Hartman's restaurant the night they wrecked the joint, and the second time I saw you you were hanging around the trial. What's the connection? Come on, let's have it!"

"Why, there isn't any." She shook her head and her golden curls with it. "I just happened to be in the restaurant, that night, and I went to the trial because I wanted to see what they would do with those gangsters."

"Then why did you put that burst o' speed on when you saw me?"

"Well, I thought you might call me as a witness, and I didn't want to get involved. I was afraid."

"I see," he grinned. "Just another phoney lead. All right, beat it—I thought you knew something."

"I do know something," she returned quietly and without budging. "I know the man who's head of all the rackets in town."

His eyes bulged in their sockets and he gripped her arm in a fashion that hurt.

"Say that again!" he exploded.

"I said that I know the man who's head of all the rackets."

"Well, why didn't you say that in the first place?" He jerked her up from the chair and rushed her across to Lane's room.

Mary Explains

INSPECTOR LANE listened incredulously to Bull's blurted repetition of what Mary Norton so quietly had stated. He made a note of her name and address, and he studied her intently as Bull pushed her into a chair at the end of the desk and stood behind her.

"Is this true, Miss Norton?" he questioned.

"Yes," she assured him. "I know that there's just one man running all these rackets."

"Well, that's more than we know." He leaned towards her. "And you know who this man is?"

"Ward Sturgis," she replied.

He repeated the name and wrote it down upon a pad beneath her own name.

"He's a stockbroker," she said. "I didn't know till yesterday that that's just a front."

"How did you find that out?" asked Lane.

"I'm his secretary. He also had a bookkeeper named Jennings. A few days ago the bookkeeper was checking over some accounts with Mr. Sturgis when a man named Heffner came in and handed him a note. Sturgis read it and said to Heffner, 'I'll notify my branch up there and sell him out.'"

"Did either you or Jennings see that note?"

"Yes, Jennings got a glimpse of it while Sturgis was reading it. It wasn't about a transaction at all, but something about Macey."

The inspector's hazel eyes widened.

"Oh, so that's it!" he remarked grimly.

"Jennings didn't know anything more about it," Mary Norton continued, "until he saw it in the paper that Macey had been killed. Then he told me about Heffner delivering the note. The books

at the office showed that Sturgis had been paying out thousands of dollars to this Heffner, and so the whole thing became clear to us."

"If what you've told us is true, Miss Norton," said Lane, "Ward Sturgis is the man we're looking for—the head of the whole system."

"And Heffner is his right-hand man," Bull added brightly.

"That's what Jennings and I thought," said Mary. "We knew Sturgis was planning to close the office and go to South America, and then we understood why. Your investigation was getting too hot for him."

"Why didn't Jennings come to us with that dope?" inquired Bull.

"He intended to—and I believe Sturgis suspected what he was going to do. Sturgis owns a yacht. He said he was going to sell it, and he asked Jennings and me to go aboard and take inventory. I was reluctant to do it, but Jennings thought we should—to avoid suspicion."

She paused to draw a long breath.

"I reached the yacht about an hour later than our appointment, and I found the cabin all upset as if there'd been a fight."

She opened a handbag that was on her lap and she took out from it a formidable automatic of blue steel.

"This pistol was lying on the table. I accused Sturgis of murdering Jennings, and he made a rush for me—said I'd never live to squawk to the police. I was terribly frightened, but I grabbed the gun and managed to hold him off with it and get ashore. I was so scared and excited that I hid out in an hotel till this morning."

The inspector motioned to her to lay the automatic on his desk.

"You say Sturgis intended to go to South America?"

"Yes," she confirmed. "He has interests down there. Maybe he's left already."

"I'll find out."

By means of a dietograph the inspector directed Harris to put an immediate check on all South American boat lines. "I want to pick up a man named Ward Sturgis," he said. "I'll have his description for you in a moment."

The description was provided, and Mary and Bull remained in the room while members of the staff outside it became busy telephoning to shipping offices, and to ships bound for South America which had already left New York Harbour.

Reports came in thick and fast, and in less than twenty minutes the inspector was able to say with confidence:

"Well, he hasn't pulled out yet!"

"That's swell!" exclaimed Bull. "Maybe I can grab him before he skips out o' town."

"Not you, Bull," barked Lane. "Send in Whitey."

"Oh, but Chief," protested Bull plaintively, "I've been in on this case from the beginning. I was the guy that first rounded up Macey. I dug up Wagner for you. And then, because I trip a couple o' times—"

Mary Norton turned her back on them and peered out at a window between the slats of a Venetian blind. The inspector caressed his chin and frowned.

"I don't know, Bull," he said. "I'm afraid I can't let you handle this."

"Aw, Chief, gimme a break," pleaded Bull. "If I flop this time you can kick me out as hard as you like—and I'll take it."

"All right," Lane waved a hand. "Take Miss Norton and see what you can find on that yacht."

"Okay, chief." Delightfully Bull



"What is this?" asked Sturgis in a strained voice. "Why did you call those men?"

slipped his arm through Mary's. "Come on, beautiful!"

"And when you get through," added the inspector, "meet me at Sturgis's office."

"I'll be there," promised the ecstatic young man, and he swept Mary out at the door.

The yacht was moored off a slipway on the East River, and within an hour the detective and the girl were in its main cabin. But the cabin was perfectly tidy, and Bull said disappointedly:

"Doesn't look like anybody's been on board for days!"

"Last night," declared Mary, "this cabin was a wreck. Sturgis was pulling papers out of that desk—and there's where the gun was lying."

Bull opened the door of a little cupboard set in the end of the desk and found glasses, a syphon, and a whisky bottle on the shelves. The glasses were clean, but the syphon was half-empty, and the bottle was not full.

"I rushed here to pick up the gun," she demonstrated.

Bull closed the door of the cupboard and stood gazing at her with appreciative eyes.

"Say, do you like spaghetti?" he asked all of a sudden.

"Yes," she replied, "but what's that got to do with it?"

"Just that you've got a dinner date with me to-night, after we get through at Sturgis's office. Come on, beautiful!"

They left the yacht, and from the waterfront they took a taxi-cab to the building on Broadway. A plain-clothes man was on guard in the corridor outside the stockbroker's office, and another plain-clothes man was sitting on the desk that had been Mary's. In the inner-room an official auditor was at Sturgis's desk, going through the books of the firm, and Inspector Lane was watching him.

Bull was motioned to silence, as he entered with Mary, and for a while the only sound in the room was the ticking of a clock. Then the auditor looked up at Lane.

"There's nothing wrong with these accounts, inspector," he said.

"Let me see those books." Mary turned the pages of a loose-leaf ledger with a gloved hand. "These aren't the ones Jennings showed me!" she declared.

"Dummies, eh?" suggested Bull.

"Are you sure?" demanded Lane.

"I'm positive!"

"All right, Harry," Lane said to the auditor, "skip it, and check the files in the outer office." He turned to Mary.

"Well, Miss Norton, it looks as though your employer hasn't left very much to work on."

"But what I told you was the truth, inspector," she averred.

"We'll get to the bottom of it some way. Meanwhile, keep in close touch with Detective Regan."

"I'll see to that," said Bull.

"Check the passenger lists of all planes leaving the Metropolitan area. Bull, and see that all the airports are covered."

Bull stared.

"Do you think he might grab a plane to-night?" he asked rather bleakly.

"He might. On the other hand, he might prefer to keep in hiding for a few days."

Bull slipped his arm through Mary's. "Come on, beautiful," he said. "We start haunting the airports."

He had reached the outer door with her when Lane called him back.

"I want you to keep close tabs on that girl," he said. "There's something queer about this set-up."

"Yeah, but she's on the level," returned Bull confidently.

"You seem to be taking rather a personal interest in this case," Lane

said with a twinkle in his eyes. "Oh, well, I suppose I would, too, if I were twenty years younger."

"I'll ask her if she's got a grandmother!"

"Wanted for Murder!"

THE haunting of the airports proved a tedious business, but the tedium was lightened by intervals for meals between the departure of machines and after the last nocturnal flyer had soared into the darkness of the sky.

Each day Bull and Mary spent at a different airport, operatives from Lane's department covering the others, but the vigil was in vain, and after the last machine had taken off from the flying field at Newark on the third night Bull said disconsolately to his fair companion:

"Well, that's another blank! Three nights in a row, and what's it got us?"

"Nothing," replied Mary.

"Well, I wouldn't say nothing. D'you like onions?"

"I'm not hungry."

He offered his arm.

"Now, listen," he commanded. "I'm only trying to put some food into you. You're tired, and it'll make you feel better."

She accepted the arm, and they had supper together in a little restaurant before they returned to New York. He took her home to her furnished flat on the tenth floor of an apartment-house in East Sixty-Sixth Street, ascended with her in a self-working lift, and stood beside her while she opened the door of the flat.

"How about having breakfast with me in the morning?" he suggested.

"Aren't you tired of seeing me day after day?" she inquired.

"I'm standing it pretty well. How about you?"

"Oh, I'm doing all right," she

laughed, "but I can't expect you to make a career out of me."

"Well, there's no harm in trying."

Having opened the door, she switched on the lights in a small but snug living-room and bade him good-night, but he followed her into the room.

"You know, Mary," he said, as she took off her hat and a light grey tweed coat, "if it wasn't for our professional pride in this case I'd hope we never find this guy Sturgis."

"Why?" she questioned.

"Cause when we do, the only time I'll be able to see you is when I'm off duty. Say, you're not tied up with any other guy, are you?"

"Why, no," she admitted, and he heaved a sigh of relief.

"That's all I need to know."

She went back to the door and held it wide.

"Bull, please," she said, "it's awfully late and you'd better go."

"Just to keep the records straight," said he, "we like each other, don't we?"

"Yes," she nodded.

"Well, there you are and here I am. What are we gonna do about it?"

"I don't know."

"Well, I do!" He took her into his arms and kissed her. "Good-night, Beautiful."

"Good-night," she murmured, and he went off whistling a gay little tune.

His happiness, however, was short-lived. Next morning, while he was having breakfast with her in a café, Inspector Lane entered the office of the Chief of Police in response to an urgent telephone message he had received.

The Chief of Police, a burly, middle-aged man named Elmer Davis, had another man with him—a shock-headed man with a ragged moustache, who was wearing a jacket over blue dungarees.

"Good-morning, chief," said Lane.

"Good-morning," returned Davis. "Well, your hunch was right, Lane—we recovered his body from the river this morning. The features are beyond recognition, but the marks on the clothing identify the dead man as Ward Sturgis. Mr. Casey, here, is the night watchman down at the slip. He's the one that reported hearing a shot and seeing a young woman running from the dock with a gun in her hand."

Lane produced from his breast-pocket a portrait of Mary which Emmet White had filched from her flat while she was at one of the airports with Bull.

"Mr. Casey," he said, exhibiting the portrait, "does this look anything like the young lady you saw?"

"Look like her!" exclaimed the night watchman. "It is her! I'd know her in the dark!"

The Chief of Police looked up at Lane.

"Have you the gun the Norton girl turned over to you?" he asked.

"Yes, here it is." Lane opened out a white handkerchief and inside it was the automatic.

"We'll take it to ballistics." The Chief of Police pushed back his chair and rose. "Mr. Casey, will you wait here? I'll want your sworn statement identifying the girl."

"Yes, sir," said the night watchman. "And you can have it."

The dragging of East River, in the region of the yacht, had not escaped the attention of newspaper men, and a special edition of the "Express" was on sale in the streets of the city before the ballistic expert at Police Headquarters had finished with the automatic and a bullet extracted from the head of the dead man.

June 4th, 1938.

"There's no doubt about it," was the expert's verdict, "the bullet that killed Ward Sturgis was fired from that gun!"

"And apparently," commented the Chief of Police, "Mary Norton is the girl who fired it."

"I'm afraid you're right," said Lane. "I'll send Regan over to Homicide and show them where to pick her up."

Bull had to report at headquarters every morning before proceeding to the airport of the day. Having lingered rather too long over breakfast with Mary, he left her outside the café and hurried off down-town—and he did not buy a newspaper.

He entered the big outer office of Lane's department to find the inspector at a tall desk in it, studying a handbill damp from the press.

"Good-morning, chief," he hailed, pushing open the gate in the partition and striding across the room.

"Good-morning," said Lane. "Have you seen this?"

Bull looked down at the handbill, and he gasped audibly as he saw on it a reproduction of Mary's portrait and above it the words: "WANTED FOR MURDER."

"Mary Norton!" he quavered.

"She murdered Sturgis that night on his yacht," said the inspector, "and pushed his body into the river."

Bull gazed at the picture with misty eyes.

"Aw, she couldn't do that!" he declared hoarsely.

"She couldn't? She did! I just got a report from ballistics. The bullet that killed Sturgis was fired from that gun she had. What're you going to do about it?"

Bull's eyes were still on the picture. "I don't know," he muttered.

"She was giving us the run-around, Bull. Everything indicates that Sturgis was a perfectly honest business man. So far as the racketeers are concerned, we're right back where we started from."

"Yeah."

"Well, I guess we'll have to pick her up."

Bull tried not to show too much emotion.

"Listen, inspector," he gulped, "do me a favour, will you? Can't we hold off on this until we're certain?"

Lane shook his head.

"I'm sorry, Bull, but it's out of our hands now. We'll have to turn our information over to the Homicide Squad."

"Oh, but there must be something wrong! How about that book-keeper Jennings? And who's the guy she's looking for if it isn't Sturgis?"

"Probably nobody at all. Turn everything you've got over to Homicide and let them worry about that. You'd better go along with them and show 'em where she is."

Bull gritted his teeth.

"Contact," he said miserably.

Tricked!

THE manager of the apartment-house in East Sixty-Sixth Street accompanied Bull and two plain-clothes men of the Homicide Squad to the front door of Mary's flat.

"Have you got a key?" demanded one of the detectives.

"Yes," said the manager, "but I—"

"Open it!"

The door was opened, and the four streamed into the little living-room. On the table lay a copy of the "Express" with its headlines concerning the discovery of Ward Sturgis' body in the

river and the girl with a gun who had been seen by the night watchman; but there was no sign of Mary.

One of the detectives dived into the kitchenette, and one into the bathroom. Bull made straight for the bedroom, looked round it, looked under the bed, and opened the door of a wardrobe cupboard. Mary was crouching inside amongst her own garments, and he seized hold of her arm.

"Don't let them take me!" she whispered imploringly. "Don't let them! I'll explain everything to you, Bull. Please!"

Fear was in her eyes, but he could not read guilt there.

"I'll be back," he whispered; and he closed the door and went out from the bedroom just as the two plain-clothes men were about to invade it.

"Not in there!" he said.

"Well, it's a cinch she's not far away," growled the plain-clothes man who had searched the kitchenette. "I guess we'd better send out a general alarm."

"Yeah," said Bull, "let's get goin'."

The manager, who had remained in the kitchen, led the way along the corridor to the lift, and they all descended to the hallway on the ground floor.

"You two run back to headquarters and send out your alarm," said Bull. "I'm gonna hang around here for a while and try to get a line on her."

The plain-clothes men went off, the manager retreated to his office, and Bull streaked up the stairs because the cage of the lift had shot upwards out of sight.

He was scant of breath when he reached the tenth floor, but he raced along the corridor. The front door of the flat was not quite shut, and he flung it wide and went across the living-room into the bedroom.

"Come on out!" he commanded.

There was no response of any kind from the wardrobe cupboard, and he opened its door—to find nothing inside it but the garments that were hanging from a brass rail and hat-boxes and hats on a shelf.

Back in the living-room he opened the double doors of a pantry, and then he opened a window and looked down a fire-escape outside it. He plunged into the kitchenette and into the bathroom, but the flat was deserted except for himself. He glared at the copy of the "Express" on the table, and he screwed it up in his hands and flung it across the room in a temper.

Nobody in Lane's department saw him again till the following morning, when he walked into the inspector's room and dropped wearily into a chair.

"What's the matter, Bull?" asked the inspector. "You look kind of ragged this morning."

"Did you ever have a dame make a sucker out of you?" howled Bull.

"Believe me, I'll get that little crook! I've seen over a hundred and fifty suspects in the last twenty-four hours. I've been in every precinct in this town. I've seen all the serevy dames that I ever want to see in my life—all except one, Mary Norton! And when I catch up with that double-crossing, two-timing little twist, I'll—"

A telephone-bell broke in upon his fulmination, and he held his peace while Lane dealt with the call.

"Inspector Lane speaking. Where? All right, hold everything just as it is!"

The telephone was replaced, and Lane

(Continued on page 23)

We gotta get handy, too. Right away we see about putting some barbed wire round this joint, and a gate with a lock, and we'll have half a dozen strong-arm guards to keep an eye on us. We're taking no chances."

Doyle was right when he suspected that these crooks would try to make trouble. Ferrari and Nick saw Watson and Parke that night.

"That guy's dynamite," Ferrari rubbed his swollen jaw.

"You were a fool to have made that crack about his wife," Watson muttered savagely.

"Guess she's his weak spot," opined Nick. "But she's in Peru, and that letter—"

"She's his only weak spot," interrupted Watson. "Wait till she gets a load of some of these Press clippings." He picked up a wad from the desk. "Together with her kid's letter. Mus. Duke'll be back here on the double. We'll tie that Harvard Hurricane to an apron-string!"

Susan Makes Plenty of Trouble

A CLOSE watch was kept at the harbour by Ferrari and his gang, so that the moment Susan stepped off the liner she was under observation. She entered a taxi and Ferrari's car pulled out behind the taxi. Ferrari gave Nick a significant glance when the town was left behind and the road taken was in the direction of the hills.

Ferrari knew that Mrs. Foster was dead nuts against boxing, and he guessed that it must have been some sort of money jam that brought Duke back to the game, luckily they did not know the real reason. Evidently Foster had got his wife out to Peru because she would make trouble, but what Ferrari worried about was the effect it was going to have on the ex-champion. Fogs and a breakdown had delayed the liner several days, and the fight for the

championship was that night. Time was precious. Just having a slight row with her husband was not going to get Bronski the fight. Ferrari had hoped to do some of his tricks round Lakeside, but the armed guard of ex-pugilists had squashed that idea.

Susan's taxi pulled up at the gate of Lakeside, and after some sort of conference Susan went inside, but the taxi waited. Ferrari decided to wait.

It was Mrs. Foster's passport that had proved to the guard her identity, and, not knowing quite what to do, they let her enter. She walked briskly up the drive, and there was a very determined look on her clear-cut features.

As it was the final day, Duke Foster was not doing too much—Pat did not believe in having a man over-trained. Duke was in a jubilant frame of mind. He was confident that he could win, and if he didn't it would be a grand fight—win or lose, it would be his last. Susan's father had been saved from prison, and had bought some stock or brought off a deal that would mean thousands, so he was all right. Pauline had secured a berth for him in the s.s. Peru that had docked that morning and was sailing the next day at midnight, so that, all being well, he should very soon be on the high seas, speeding to join his wife. Little did he know that his wife had landed from the s.s. Peru and that all she had heard and read about the last few days had concerned the struggle for the world's heavy-weight crown.

Susan arrived on the veranda and her expression was hard. For several years they had rented this beautiful bungalow, and what did it look like now? Nothing but pugs, boxing rings, outdoor gymnasiums and all the repellent things that go with fighting. A door opened and out came a grinning Barney, but that grin went like a flash at sight of Susan,

Susan was about to tell Barney a few things when a small voice called "Daddy," and she gave a gasp of horror at the sight of her son. Jimmy wore a pair of white shorts and boxing gloves. He had been having a scrap with Sammy, the son of the negro second, Snowflake. A lucky poke by Sammy had made Jimmy's nose bleed. To Susan it looked as if the child were bleeding to death.

"My darling!" gasped Susan. "Mommy!" Jimmy rushed into her arms.

"Sweetheart, you're hurt." "Aw, it don't hurt," growled Jimmy. "I just got a bust in the schnozzle, but you oughtta see Sammy, mommy."

What language! She whisked into the house, leaving Barney tongue-tied. "Run upstairs and get dressed!"

The boy heeded no second bidding, and went scampering up the stairs, yelling at the top of his voice:

"Mommy's home, daddy! Mommy's home—"

Pauline was discussing some matter of the publishing business when they heard Jimmy, and they looked at each other in startled amazement. The door of the study opened and there stood Susan.

"Well, I'm home." She tossed a package on to the table. "And here's Clara's novel—finished."

"Why—why, Susan," Duke stuttered, and then, realising it was his wife, held out his arms. "My darling, this is a surprise."

Susan accepted his kiss coldly, and her eyes seemed to bore into his.

"You're—you're going through with this fight, Duke?"

"Yes, dear; you see—"

"Regardless of the promises you made me?"

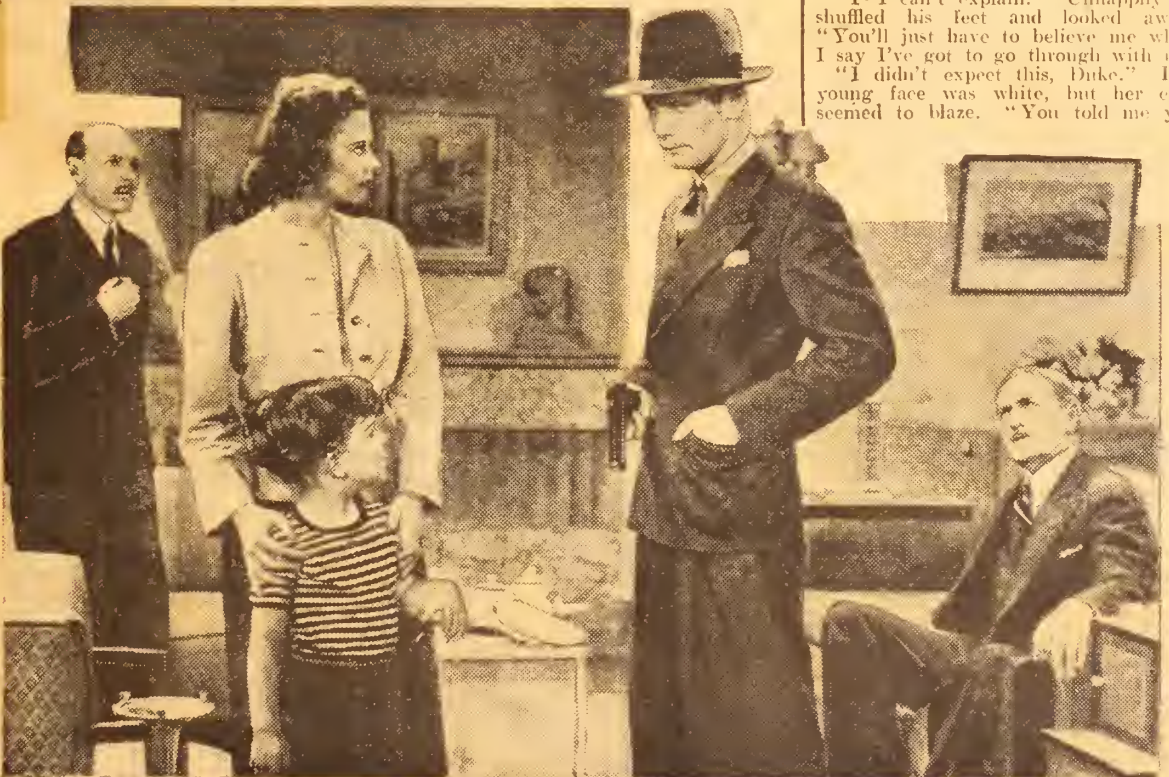
"You don't understand, Susan," he said as she drew away.

"I'm—I'm willing to," she whispered eagerly.

"I—I can't explain." Unhappily he shuffled his feet and looked away.

"You'll just have to believe me when I say I've got to go through with it."

"I didn't expect this, Duke." Her young face was white, but her eyes seemed to blaze. "You told me you



"Don't you touch any of us, you big palooka!" defiantly cried Jimmy.

were through with all this, and I believed you. I defended you when my father warned me that you wouldn't keep your promises. I was wrong."

"You weren't wrong," desperately cried Duke. "I'll keep my promises, dear, after this one fight. It means more than you realise—"

"Well, if it means so much to you —if all this is what you want—you have it now; but you have it alone." Her mouth twisted in an ugly sneer. "You should be very proud of yourself. You have made me look ridiculous. You've gone your own merry way knowing it would wreck our happiness—"

"Susan!"

"You can have your broken-nosed companions, your common friends, your prizefighters, fight fans—"

"Go ahead, sis," encouraged Pauline. "Get it all off your chest. Then we'll sit down and tell you a little story."

"I've listened to all the little stories I'm going to!" Susan cried hysterically. "I'm taking my child and his poor, bloody, little nose out of this environment. Go ahead and have your fight—I hope the acclaim of a million blood-thirsty maniacs compensates you. I'm going back to my father!"

Jimmy, eager to get back to his mother, pulled on a sweater, and without even washing, raced off to find his mother. Susan whisked him up in her arms and dashed out of the house.

Duke made to run after his wife, but Pauline jumped up.

"Take it easy," she cautioned.

"But she's leaving me!" She—

"You couldn't think of anything else but that fight to-night, Duke," Pauline said. "In spite of what sis thinks, I want my brother-in-law to get back his crown. Let father deal with her—he got us all in this mess."

Al Ferrari and Nick saw Susan reappear with the boy. Their glances were full of meaning. There had been a row and Mrs. Foster had gone off with her son. They followed the taxi and they saw the palatial flats that the car stopped outside. Later they found out that Mrs. Foster had gone to 406, the apartments of Arnold Corbin, and that gave Ferrari an idea.

Peters, Arnold Corbin's immaculate butler, was startled when the bell rang and he admitted Mrs. Foster. Then her father came hastening out of a bedroom.

"Susan!"

"Oh, dad, I'm so miserable," sobbed his daughter. "I'm so confused I hardly know what to do."

Jimmy looked gravely up. He could not understand what all this fuss and bother was about. Why was mother in tears?

"You—you found out about Duke fighting?" questioned her father. "Is that why you're back so unexpectedly?"

"Yes, dad—he lied to me—made a fool of me. I—I've left him—I'm through!"

"Grandpa"—Jimmy tugged at his grandfather's sleeve—"can't you fix it so mommy'll stop crying. Did daddy do something wrong?"

"Certainly he didn't, son, because you—" He hesitated. "It is really all grandpa's fault."

It was then that Susan heard the real reason.

"So, you see, his fight to-night saved me from disgrace," added old Corbin. "I might have even gone to prison, Susan. What Duke has done was a great sacrifice for a foolish old man. He didn't want you to know, because he feared it would hurt you."

Peters appeared with a tray.

June 4th, 1933.

"Perhaps a cup of tea, madam?"

"Never mind the tea, Peters!" Susan was on her feet, her face radiant. "Never mind anything except helping me back into a cab with my luggage."

"Two to one we're going back to daddy!" cried Jimmy, still not understanding what all the trouble was about. "Are we, mummy?"

"Yes, darling! Now! As fast as we can get to him."

They were almost ready to leave when the bell rang and Peters answered it. Ferrari and Nick pushed into the room. They closed the door. Corbin paused in the act of putting on his hat to stare at these strangers.

"Never mind the lid," sneered Ferrari. "You ain't going nowhere."

"You've Signed His Death Warrant!"

MRS. FOSTER stared at these two strange men, and a little thrill of fear went through her because their faces were so hard, cold and callous. She knew it was to do with the fight when Ferrari drew out a gun.

"How dare you break into my home like this!" bravely cried Corbin.

"Take it easy, grandpappy," sneered Ferrari, as he pushed the old man into a chair. "You might bust a blood-vessel."

"What do you want?" demanded Susan. "Is this robbery?"

"No, it's a social call."

"Don't you touch any of us, you big palooka!" shrilled Jimmy.

"Jimmy!" Susan cautioned her son.

"We'll have to entertain you folks for a few hours." Ferrari dropped into a chair, whilst Nick lounged near the door. "Just stay put, and nobody'll get hurt."

Jimmy suddenly shot out an accusing finger at Nick.

"Mommy, he's the man who posted my letter to you."

"How ya, kid?" grinned Nick.

"And I remember now, mommy," went on the boy. "The other man's the big daddy punched. Boy, did he stop a beauty?"

"Shut up!" snarled Ferrari.

"You can't scare my dad and you can't scare me!" the boy shouted.

"Yeah, we found that out," Ferrari laughed. "That's why we dropped in on your mother."

"What do you want with me?" Susan asked, tight-lipped.

"Sit tight, lady. You'll find out in just a minute." Ferrari picked up the 'phone and dialed a number. There was an interval of breathless waiting.

"Let me talk to Duke Foster. That you, Foster? Now, get this straight! You're supposed to be a smart guy, so take a dive in the fifth round and make it look good. If you don't you'll find your wife and kid in the East river—on the bottom!"

Ferrari was laughing evilly when he hung up.

"That kinda got him," he gloated. "He may try to trace this call, but as it was a dial call he won't succeed."

A minute later the 'phone rang. Pauline had remembered that Susan had said she was going to her father. Peters made to go to the 'phone, but stopped at sight of Ferrari's gun.

"Answer it!" Ferrari ordered the butler. "But remember Corbin ain't here. Mrs. Foster was here, but she went to an hotel. Any funny answers and you get lead."

Pauline reported to Duke that Susan had been to see her father, but as he was out she had gone with the boy to an hotel. She told him not to worry, and promised to get linked up with

every hotel in the city. Duke must go along to the stadium and she would ring him at his dressing-room. A harassed, anxious fighter went off with Doyle to the huge stadium and its terrific mob of fight fans.

Barney was already there, and he told the announcer that if he wanted to say anything it could be that Duke would flatten Bronski in the third round.

It was a strain for Ferrari, waiting for the fight, and after a while he ordered Corbin to switch on the radio.

"It won't be long before the championship fight is on," said an announcer. "It promises to be a real battle. Both men are in the pink of condition and confident of victory. I have here last-minute statements, lot from the dressing-rooms. Duke Foster says he'll flatten Bronski in the third round."

Angrily Ferrari ordered Corbin to switch off the radio. Actually at that moment Duke was begging Pat Doyle to call the fight off, and a triumphant Watson was saying that if he didn't fight the crowd would tear the place down. Pauline had not been able to trace Susan, and Duke was almost frantic. All right, he would go in and throw the fight. But Pat Doyle would have none of it. It was only some cheap chiseller's bluff.

Meantime the quick brain of Susan Foster was busy. She began to talk to Ferrari, and he did not mind telling her that the reason for this hold-up was because an interested party would lose a fortune if Duke won, but Bronski was going to win now.

"He'll go in there and take a hiding because he thinks you're on the spot."

"Duke would if he believed it. You can give orders to some fighters, but not Duke," argued Susan. "He's one of those clean-cut fighters that won't let his public down, and you can't make him. Did he win the championship because you let him? No! Did he give up the championship because you asked him? No! Duke takes orders from nobody but me. You heard the announcer say Duke was going to flatten Bronski in the third." She glared at Ferrari. "And he will!"

Ferrari shifted uncomfortably.

"I told you he wouldn't believe it," went on Susan. "I'm sorry he doesn't. I hate this fight racket. I'd like to see him take a beating—a real thrashing."

"Whatever for?" gasped Nick.

"If he wins that title again there'll be no living with him," Susan spoke viciously. "He wouldn't have dared signed up if I had been here. This victory will smash up everything. I'll not live with a brutal fighting gorilla. I only know that if I could send him into that ring to get beaten to a pulp that the public would kick him out and he'd retire permanently."

Corbin stared at his daughter in horror, whilst Jimmy set up a wail of anguish.

"Mummy, you wouldn't want daddy to lose."

"I do!" blazed Susan, and she looked intently at Ferrari. "I got back to find my son with a bloody nose. Fighting—disgusting! If I could get in touch with him now I'd send him in to take the most unmerciful beating a man ever took. I'd tell him we were never going back to him." She snorted with righteous fury. "I'd smash him!"

"Sister, you're talking sense!" decided Ferrari.

"What's the use of talking?" Susan seemed to go limp. "It's too late now.

(Continued on page 25).

Death in many forms skulked amid the fastness of the African jungle, but no creature of the wilds was more ruthless a killer than the man known as Spider Webb, and it was against this man and his cut-throat gang that an intrepid youth and a beautiful girl pitted themselves. A serial drama of high adventure, starring Frankie Thomas



Read This First

The African river-boat *Congo Queen*, bound for Ambesi, is carrying a cargo of arms and ammunition destined for the Ivory Patrol, who police the hinterland of Tanganyika. But that cargo never reaches Ambesi, for the ship is seized by a gang of cut-throats in the pay of Spider Webb, a notorious criminal.

Two people escape the massacre which attends the seizure of the craft. One is Tim Tyler, journeying up-country in the hope of tracing his scientist father, Professor Tyler, who has disappeared. The other is a girl who calls herself Lora Lacey, but whose real name is Graham, and who is out to bring Spider Webb to justice, knowing him to be the perpetrator of a diamond robbery for which her brother is unjustly serving a sentence.

Later, from the thickets to which they have taken, Lora and Tim see the crooks transfer the *Congo Queen's* cargo to a strange armoured car which the boy recognises as a "jungle cruiser" designed by his father.

Webb and his gang afterwards learn that the professor has discovered the whereabouts of a vast treasure of ivory, and the scientist is in their clutches when Lora makes contact with the rascal and pretends to throw in with them.

Actually, she plans to decoy them into an ambushade of Ivory patrolmen commanded by a sergeant named Gates.

Meanwhile, anxious as to the fate of Lora, Tim Tyler is roaming through the jungle in quest for her when he finds himself trapped between a lioness and a leopard. He leaps for the

branch of a tree, but the lioness springs on him and brings him down.

Now Read On

The Patrol

EVER afterwards Tim was to carry in his mind a vivid recollection of his feelings as he lay writhing on the ground with that murderous lioness atop of him. Ever afterwards he was to be a prey to memories that would sometimes haunt him in the form of nightmares even while he slept.

A roaring filled his ears, the roaring of the brute which had dragged him down and which was now bent on devouring him. Its hot breath was upon his face and throat, and the slavering drips from its wide jaws fell clamantly upon his skin. In another moment, he believed, those jaws would fasten on his flesh and rend him cruelly, and, horror-stricken at the prospect of so ghastly a fate, he closed his eyes to shut out the sight of the jungle monster's bared teeth.

Yet Tim was not destined to die. Convinced he might be that his hour of doom was at hand, but he was mistaken. For ere his powerful antagonist could sink her fangs into him, she herself was attacked by the dappled, feline creature which had cut off Tim's retreat—the leopard which had issued so unexpectedly from the thickets.

It was through no desire to aid the boy that the leopard assailed the youngster's foe. Apparently the cat-like animal had been sneaking through the undergrowth with the object of seizing Tim itself, and seeing itself in danger of losing its human prey to the lioness, it was only too ready to fight for the spoils of the hunt.

Launching itself forward with the speed of an arrow in flight the leopard landed on its rival's back, and next second both brutes were rolling over and over in the loam of the jungle path, filling the air with the tumultuous quarrel of their snarling voices as they battled for the mastery.

As for Tim, he suddenly found himself in no immediate danger from claw or fang. The lioness was no longer astride him, but was matched in desperate conflict with a traditional enemy of the Bush—and he, Tim, the intended victim for whom the blood-thirsty monsters were waging their combat, was free to take advantage of the situation and make good his escape.

Tim never knew which one of those brutes won the day only to discover that the quarry had vanished. True, the leopard was uppermost when the boy struggled to his feet and beat a retreat, but the lioness appeared to be giving a good account of herself, and whatever the ultimate result of the fight, the clamour of it was audible to Tim for a considerable period as he hurried through the jungle.

He must have covered a mile or so, indeed, before the sounds of the conflict died completely away, and even then he was unable to tell whether the

EPISODE 7—

"The King of the Gorillas"

grim tussle between lioness and leopard had ended, or whether he himself had merely travelled beyond ear-shot of it.

At any rate, he kept going forward at unabated pace, and he was turning a bend in the path when to his relief he saw in front of him the horse from which he had been thrown some time previously.

It had come to a halt, and hurrying towards it, Tim set foot in the stirrup and swung himself astride the pony's back. Then as he was settling himself in the saddle his glance fell upon the surface of the jungle track and he discerned the imprints of tyres once more.

They were identical to the imprints he had been examining when the lioness had scared his horse. They were without a doubt the imprints of the armoured car which was in the possession of Spider Webb and his gang, and he was instantly reminded of Lora Graham's disappearance from the camp established by the safari of Jim Conway, that hunter whose services the girl had engaged after her arrival at Ambesi.

It seemed clear to Tim that Lora had been carried off, hustled into the "jungle cruiser" and then driven to Webb's almost impregnable hide-out in the heart of the Ugambi Swamp, and the boy now decided to follow the tyre-marks in the hope that they would lead him to that point in the morass where the secondary trail through the quicksands began—the trail which the outlaws must now of necessity use, since the one formerly employed by them had been destroyed.

If he could find out where that second hidden trail commenced, Tim reflected, he could notify the Ivory Patrol. Then, a watch being kept on the locality, Gates and his detachment might succeed in rounding up the Webb gang the first time Spider and his hirelings came out of the swamp.

Such was the trend of Tim's thoughts as he proceeded to trace the tyre-marks down the moonlit pathway in the Bush, but an hour later his expectation received a severe setback, for he debouched on to a tract of country where the ground was of a sterile character and where the tangled vegetation of the jungle thinned out into meagre patches of scrub.

The imprints Tim had been following petered out on this stretch of terrain, the hard and crusty soil betraying no signs of the armoured car's passage across it. Nevertheless, the youngster started to scour the ground at random on the offchance of obtaining some indication of the route that the "cruiser" had taken after leaving the thickets of the Bush.

He searched far and wide without result, and another hour must have elapsed when he finally resolved to give up his vain quest. And then, even as he was on the point of turning back, he espied a column of khaki-clad horse-men wending their way over the sweep of more or less open country.

He recognised them as Gates and his detail, and he observed that a native was trotting alongside the sergeant's mount—the native who had been despatched by Jim Conway to inform the patrol that nothing was to be gained by lying in wait for Webb at Mafalla Falls.

Digging his heels into his pony's flanks, Jim rode towards the detachment, and a few seconds later he was confronting Gates, who looked at him in surprise.

"Hallo, kid," the sergeant greeted. June 4th, 1935.

"What are you doing away over in this strip? I thought you were in camp with Jim Conway, Lora Graham and that fellow Lazarre who deserted from the Webb gang."

"I was in camp with them," Tim answered. "But Miss Lora is in Spider's clutches by now, unless I'm mistaken."

Gates started at that.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

"This native told us that Lora's scheme to contact Webb and lead him into our ambush at Mafalla Falls had failed. He gave us to understand that Webb hadn't answered the message that was sent out via the jungle drums."

"That's right," Tim rejoined. "But to-night somebody kidnapped Miss Lora, for one of the natives of the safari discovered that her tent was empty and that the back of it had been ripped wide open by a knife. And I might add that I came across the tracks of the armoured car a mile or two from the encampment. I followed them through the Bush, but I lost them hereabouts."

"If you ask me, sergeant," he added, "Spider Webb was too cunning to answer Lora's drum-message directly and take the risk of walking into a trap. But he had her picked up after nightfall—in his own time and his own way—and instead of coming to her he's had her brought to him."

There was a silence, and then Gates drew his brows together.

"Say," he declared, "if that's the case Lora may still be able to carry out her original plan and get your father to decoy the Webb gang to Mafalla Falls, on the pretext of revealing the whereabouts of the elephants' burial-ground. Why, at this very moment those outlaws may be headed for the Falls—and here's us riding away from them!"

Tim looked at him in a tense fashion. "Gee, I hadn't thought of that, sergeant," he exclaimed. "But you're right, and we've got to make for Mafalla Falls as fast as we can."

The sergeant nodded briskly, then glanced at the native runner who was by his side.

"You go back to Bwana Conway," he instructed. "Tell him we think maybe Spider and his men go to Mafalla Falls after all. You savvy?"

"I savvy," was the negro's response, and in another instant he was breaking into a trot and directing his steps towards the thickets of the jungle, Tim giving him a parting hail and bidding him keep a look-out for a leopard or a lioness.

At the same time Gates gave his men the order to wheel, and presently the troop was spurring over the ground they had already crossed; and Tim made haste to set out after them, intent now on being present at the ambushade in which he hoped that Webb and his hirelings would be captured at last.

Into the Gorilla Country

WHILE Tim Tyler and the men of the Ivory Patrol were galloping in the direction of Mafalla Falls, the jungle cruiser occupied by the Webb gang, Lora Graham and Professor Tyler was approaching that locality from another quarter.

The machine had left the swamp behind it and was in close proximity to the Falls. It was so close to them, indeed, that there was no prospect of the outlaws being ambushed there, since the patrolmen were as yet nowhere in sight.

Standing in the rear portion of the armoured car with Tim's father, Lora

was a prey to misgivings on that very question of the ambushade. Knowing as she did that a runner had been sent to recall Sergeant Gates and his detail from the Falls, she had nevertheless anticipated that Webb and his party would make an early start from their lair in the Ugambi Swamp and reach the Mafalla cataract before the patrolmen had been withdrawn from that area. But unfortunately the jungle cruiser had developed engine trouble, and though repairs had been effected, the delay entailed had roused in the girl's mind the fear that her plan would go astray.

She had managed to communicate this fear to Professor Tyler, and thus when the armoured car arrived at the Falls and was brought to a halt there without Gates and his men instantly rushing from cover to surround it, neither Lora nor the scientist experienced any feeling of perplexity or surprise.

The stillness that reigned supreme over the locality only bore out the gloomy forebodings they had secretly shared. The patrol had departed, and the Webb gang was not fated to be taken in ambush.

The brooding thoughts of Tim's father and Lora Graham were interrupted all at once by the gruff voice of Spider Webb, who was grasping the jungle cruiser's steering-wheel, and whose crew of cut-throats were posted at the loopholes of the machine.

"Well, professor," Webb called out, "here we are at Mafalla Falls. Where do we make for now?"

Old man Tyler shot a swift glance at Lora. Then, after a moment's hesitation, he appeared to come to a sudden decision and advanced to where Spider Webb stood.

"Set your course for Kenya Pass," he muttered.

"Kenya Pass, eh?" Webb echoed. "Up in the gorilla country."

"Yes," Professor Tyler rejoined slowly. "Up in the gorilla country."

The gang-leader started the motor of the jungle cruiser again, and the vehicle pulled forward, and gathering speed it had soon left Mafalla Falls well to its rear and was no longer within sight or sound of that landmark when Tim and the stalwarts of the Ivory Patrol arrived there.

For all that, however, Gates was quick to realise that the armoured car had been in the vicinity, for his keen eyes detected traces of oil on the ground—oil which had dripped from some leaking sump or crankcase, he assumed, and which indicated the route taken by the jungle cruiser after its departure from the neighbourhood of the Falls.

With Tim by his side and the troopers behind him, Sergeant Gates proceeded to follow the trail left by that oil. Had he but known it, however, the armoured car was several miles ahead and was travelling at a speed which was equal to that of the fastest horse in his detachment, and it kept up that pace for hour after hour until it hove into view of Kenya Pass.

A sinister detile in a barrier of rocky hills, the pass reached northward, a link between the territories of Tanganyika and Kenya, yet a link which was seldom used because it held an ugly reputation. Men faring between Tanganyika and Kenya preferred to journey by other routes, and the natives in particular were chary of this darkly ominous ravine, for like that other mountain fissure known as Dead Man's Pass, it was said to be the haunt of giant and savage apes.

Spider Webb and his minions were well aware of this, and when they had learned that Kenya Pass was their destination the gang-leader's accomplices had betrayed a certain amount of apprehension, even Garry Drake fidgeting uncomfortably. But Webb himself had revealed no sign of alarm, and if he felt any it was far outweighed by the greed aroused in him as he conjured up a vision of the wealth which he hoped would soon be his.

There was nothing suggestive of nervousness in his manner now when he beheld the pass yawning before him and turned to Professor Tyler.

"Where do we park?" he inquired.

The diminutive scientist was peering through one of the windows of the jungle cruiser, his attention focused on the gap in the hills.

"Drive straight into the pass and keep close to the left-hand wall of it," he said. "I'll tell you when to stop."

Spider Webb obeyed him, and, bowling onward, the armoured car rumbled into the defile and described a somewhat zigzag course through the boulders that littered the bed of the kloof, the craggy cliffs on either hand echoing the throb of its motor.

Halfway along the ravine or kloof, a spring bubbled up amongst the rocks, and it was as the jungle cruiser came abreast of this that Professor Tyler laid a hand on Webb's sleeve.

"Pull up here," he instructed, and in prompt response the gang-leader drew on the brake of the vehicle.

"All right," the scientist remarked, when the machine had been brought to a standstill. "Now follow me."

He made for the door of the armoured car, and at an imperative gesture on the part of Webb one of the crooks opened it. Then, with the professor leading the way, the occupants of the jungle cruiser filed out into the moonlight, Webb's associates wearing an uneasy mien, and Lora seeming far from tranquil as well.

The vehicle had halted within a few yards of the scowling rock-face on the left-hand side of the kloof, and now Lora and the gangsters observed that a narrow ledge of a track wound up the precipice. This Professor Tyler started to ascend, and the other members of the party moved after him.

The track climbed steeply to a height of a hundred feet and then levelled out to a horizontal plane, running like a rough-hewn terrace along the façade of the cliff, and on to this terrace a number of sombre caves looked forth.

Before one of these caves the elderly zoologist paused.

"We go in here," he announced.

The statement caused Webb's hirelings to exchange anxious glances, and Webb himself hung back now, laying a restraining grip on the professor's arm.

"Wait a minute," he growled. "Why do we have to go in here?"

Old man Tyler regarded him calmly.

"It's the only entrance I know to the Burial-Ground of the Elephants," he replied in an even tone.

One of Spider's accomplices addressed the scientist in an inquiring manner. He was the individual known as Brent.

"You mean—the elephants come right up here and go through this cave when they know they're goin' to kick off?" he breathed.

"Yes," Tyler answered. "Some peculiar instinct must show them the way. As you probably know, no elephant that has died of natural causes has ever been found in the jungle. Throughout the ages, they've always

come to the burial-ground to end their lives."

A covetous look dawned in the eyes of the man who answered to the name of Brent.

"By thunder," he said, "there must be millions of dollars' worth of ivory tusks in that graveyard then."

"There are," the professor affirmed simply, and then, turning to Webb: "Look out for gorillas," he continued. "They abound in these parts. In fact, the natives taboo Kenya Pass altogether because a lot of men have disappeared in it and have never been heard of again."

Webb inclined his head.

"I know that," he grunted, tugging a revolver from a holster on his hip. "But if we happen to meet up with any of those apes, don't you try an' make a break for it. If you do, my first bullet will drop you, professor. Get that, and get it straight."

The zoologist made no response. His gaze had wandered to the wall of cliff on the other side of the ravine, and suddenly he motioned in that direction; and as Spider Webb and the other members of the party swung round and stared across the defile they detected grotesque figures moving to and fro along a number of ledges on the opposite rock-face—the figures of monstrous gorillas.

"There are the denizens of the pass," Professor Tyler declared. "They appear to be concentrated in full force on the far wall of the kloof, and let's hope they remain there, for they are signally resentful of strangers. I know that from experience."

Webb and his men watched the apes in a kind of awe-struck fascination. So did Lora Graham, and she and the crooks were still peering across the defile at those formidable brutes when all at once she became aware that urgent fingers were plucking at her sleeve.

It was Professor Tyler who was pulling at her, and as she looked quickly at him he beckoned to her, indicating that he wished her to follow him into the cave.

Spider Webb and his associates were all gaping at the other side of the ravine, and it seemed to the professor that while they were thus concentrated upon the activities of the gorillas there he and Lora might well stage a bid for their freedom.

Warily he edged into the cavern in the mouth of which he had paused, and Lora imitated his example. Then, as black darkness closed over them both, the elderly zoologist clutched the girl's hand and broke into a run with her.

Almost in the same instant an outcry went up behind them—an outcry precipitated by Garry Drake, Webb's lieutenant.

"Spider!" Drake ejaculated. "Old Tyler's given us the slip—yeah, and the Lacey girl has beat it, too! I told you she wasn't to be trusted!"

Lora was being dragged sharply to the right by the professor as she heard those words, and, though she could see nothing, she soon guessed that the scientist was guiding her along a branch tunnel. Meanwhile, from the commotion that had succeeded Garry Drake's shouts, it was clear to her that Spider Webb and his gang were swarming into the cave, but it soon became equally evident that the rogues had not noticed the branch tunnel and were blundering straight on into the depths of the main gallery.

As for Professor Tyler, he continued to wend his way along the side tunnel with Lora for a distance of some thirty or forty paces, the speed at which he piloted the girl through the opaque gloom making it plain that he was thoroughly familiar with his surroundings. Then suddenly he drew up with his fair companion, and a moment afterwards Lora heard him strike a match.

The flame of that match disclosed a startling scene to her. In the first place she and the professor were stand-



"Gorilla or no gorilla," Webb rasped, "you're headin' into that cave with me, you spineless little weasel."

ing in a kind of bottle-neck beyond which the cavern widened out into a roomy chamber equipped with several articles of furniture and a quantity of stores. It was a chamber that was also occupied by two massive boulders, one being situated near the spot where Lora and Tim Tyler's father had checked, the other close to a narrow passage that led off from the far side of the strange vault.

But the object which caught and held Lora's attention was a huge cage in which a monstrous gorilla was a captive, a gorilla that moved up to the bars of its prison as the flame of the match in the professor's fingers burned brighter.

Old man Tyler smiled dryly as he saw the expression of bewilderment on Lora's face.

"This has been my home these many months," he volunteered. "Here I have lived, studying the ways of the great apes which inhabit these parts. Yes, and they have come to accept my presence in the neighbourhood, so that the natives whose kraals are within sight of these mountains call me the King of the Gorillas."

"You mean you've tamed the apes?" the girl asked incredulously.

The professor shook his head.

"I wouldn't say that," he answered. "They don't molest me, but the majority of them fight shy of me. There is only one that I can claim to have tamed, and he is the one that you see in that cage. He and I understand each other, though I fear he would make short work of a stranger. It is on account of him that the other apes leave me alone. He is my guardian now."

Lora stared at him in silence for a few seconds, and then she glanced back over her shoulder into the darkness of the tunnel along which she and Tim's father had made their way.

"Do you think we're safe here?" she faltered. "Safe from Spider Webb and his gang, I mean?"

"No," the professor told her. "The cave down which Webb and his men have gone is a blind alley. I was lying, of course, when I said it led to the Elephants' Burial-Ground. Those crooks will, therefore, retrace their steps, and without a doubt they'll find their way here. But don't worry, I know how to stop them."

While he had been speaking he had entered his den and had escorted the girl to a table on which a lamp was standing. He lit that lamp now, and, as its beams flooded the rocky vault, he pointed to the massive boulder that was planted near the bottle-neck by which they had entered the chamber.

"I'm going to block up the approach to this lair of mine with that great rock," he informed Lora. "It's a precaution I used to take every night, and by means of that other boulder over there I was in the habit of protecting myself against intrusion from the passage at the far side of the chamber as well. I didn't altogether trust the gorillas, you see, and I had no intention of being caught off my guard by any prowling ape who might take it into his head to attack me."

"We won't concern ourselves with that other boulder now, however," he added. "My purpose is to hold off Webb and his gang so that while they're trying to force their way in here we'll have ample time to make off down the opposite passage. It winds back to the cliff-trail, and we can descend from that trail to the jungle cruiser and effect our escape."

Lora stared at the enormous boulder
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with which he proposed to keep the Webb gang at bay.

"You're not trying to tell me that you can shift that huge rock!" she protested.

"Hardly," Professor Tyler said. "Otherwise Spider Webb and his cut-throats would soon heave it out of their path. No, young lady, the gorilla I have tamed and trained is the one who shifts it."

With the words he strode across to the cage in which the ape was lodged, and he was in the act of liberating the animal when Lora gave vent to a terrified exclamation.

"Wait!" she panted. "Isn't that brute liable to attack me?"

"Don't be afraid," the professor answered reassuringly. "He's completely under my control, and he won't attack anyone if I let him know that the person concerned is my friend."

In spite of that statement it was with acute dread that Lora watched him release the gorilla. Then she became aware that he was talking to it in a curious guttural fashion that was unlike any human dialect she had ever heard, and she wondered whether it were possible that this remarkable man whose name was a byword in zoological circles had actually learned how to converse with the apes.

It certainly seemed as if that were the case, for without so much as a glance at Lora the gorilla to whom the professor was speaking shambled over to the ponderous boulder that stood near the bottle-neck whence Tyler and the girl had gained admittance to the rocky vault.

At that same instant a medley of cries came echoing along that tunnel—a medley of cries which warned Lora and the professor that Spider Webb and his hirelings had located the side passage and were hurrying into it.

Old Tyler remained where he was. He was still talking to the gorilla he had tamed, and the immensely powerful creature was now setting its mighty hands upon the boulder. Then, summoning up its giant strength, it commenced to heave at the rock, and slowly but surely the massive stone was rolled into the bottle-neck, obstructing it completely.

It was in position, and Tyler and Lora were hastening from the rocky chamber via the other outlet, when Webb and his accomplices reached the obstacle that had been moved into their path; and as the crooks swarmed close to that obstacle they gained an impression of the fugitives quitting the lamplit vault—saw them momentarily through narrow chinks between the ragged edges of the boulder and the walls of the passage that it blocked.

"There they go!" roared Webb. "And, by thunder, it looks as if the professor has a tame gorilla with him! Come on, get this boulder out of the way!"

Two or three of the gang held burning matches in their hands, but they dropped these and joined the other men in striving to dislodge the huge stone. Yet the combined efforts of the outlaws were unavailing and failed to budge the obstruction, and presently Garry Drake addressed Webb in a breathless tone.

"It's no use, Spider!" he blurted. "Twenty men couldn't shift it!"

Webb gave utterance to a terse response.

"You're right, Garry," he jerked. "Listen, old man Tyler must know of another way out. Turn back and head for the cliff-trail. He may be figuring to work round to it, grab the armoured

car and make his getaway. Quick, turn back!"

Thus was the professor's ruse divined by the gang-leader's intuition, and in helter-skelter style the desperadoes retraced their steps to the cliff-trail, where they looked down into the ravine to see the jungle cruiser standing a hundred feet below them—its motor silent, its door wide open as they had left it on filing from the interior of the machine.

"If you were right about Tyler figuring to work round to the cliff-trail, we've beaten him to it, Spider," said Drake. "But maybe you were wrong—just as wrong as you were in falling for that Lacey girl's story. I told you from the start that she was Lora Graham, the sister of that fellow who's doing time on your account down in—"

Webb interrupted him.

"Never mind about that," he snapped. "We're goin' to investigate these other caves that open out on to the trail. Come on, scatter and take a look around them—and if any of you meet up with the professor and the girl, bring down the ape that's with them before you do anything else."

He and his men proceeded to split up and examine the various fissures that yawned in the face of the precipice where the ledge-like trail ran parallel with the ravine-bed a hundred feet beneath, and it fell to the lot of a gangster named Becker to enter the farthest of those caverns—a cavern which was the very one that was linked up with Professor Tyler's strange den, and which provided him with an alternative outlet from his haven.

It was as Becker turned into that cave that he came face to face with Tyler and Lora, and in an instant he was covering them with a revolver, observing as he did so that there was no sign of the gorilla that Webb had seen in their company.

"Hold it!" Becker rapped out. "Stay where you are!"

Confronted by the armed ruffian, menaced by the six-shooter in his fist, the professor and the girl who was with him halted abruptly. Then, still keeping his gun trained upon them, Becker gave vent to a resounding hail.

"This way, Spider!" he shouted. "I've got 'em!"

His voice went echoing about the cliff—was still echoing when Tim's father took a desperate and ill-fated chance, flinging himself forward impetuously in an attempt to close with the outlaw.

Close with him the professor did, and he even managed to seize the scoundrel's wrist, but in that same moment the gun in Becker's hand belched flame and lead, and a bullet ripped into the older man's body.

Perhaps Becker had not intended to shoot, realising, as he must have done, that Webb did not want anything to happen to Tyler until the exact whereabouts of the graveyard of the elephants was revealed. Perhaps it was the sudden grip of the professor's hand on the gangster's that forced the latter's index finger against the trigger of the revolver. In any event the scientist staggered back with a hoarse cry of pain, and next second he was falling to the floor of the cave.

With the smoking six-gun in his grasp, Becker stared at the professor mutely for a brief space. Then he switched his attention on Lora, and it was as he did so that he detected a movement beyond the girl.

All at once, out of the dark depths of the cave, a gigantic form took shape. It was the form of the gorilla that the stricken scientist had tamed, and, its teeth bared in a malignant snarl, its eyes

seeming to blaze out of its hirsute, brutish countenance, it bore down on Becker with its tremendous arms reaching out for him vengefully.

A half-stifled scream broke from the lips of the gangster. He tried to discharge his revolver at the oncoming animal, but before he could fire he was caught in the vice-like embrace of those hairy arms and swept off his feet—was lifted on high and carried on to the trail, then hurled far out, to plunge shrieking through mid-air and to crash to his death amid the rocks away below.

Further along the ledge from which he had been flung, Spider Webb and the rest of the gang were now issuing from the other caverns in response to the hail that Becker had raised and the gun-blast that had so closely succeeded it.

It was with feelings of stark horror that they saw their hickless comrade cast to his doom, but Spider for one was quick to recover from the unnerving effect of that spectacle, and he blazed at the gorilla with a Colt forty-five he was carrying.

He missed the ape by inches, and the brute wheeled swiftly and turned back into the cave, passing the cringing figure of Lora and vanishing into the gloom, though whether it penetrated far into the tunnel's interior or lingered just out of sight the girl could not tell. She did observe, however, that in shambling by her its foot came into contact with Becker's gun, which had dropped from that rogue's clasp when he had been seized by the animal.

Lora picked up that weapon, and, standing with her back to the craggy wall of the cave-mouth, she prepared to defend herself—either against Webb and his cut-throats, or against the gorilla if it should reappear and attempt to vent its wrath on her, in some mistaken impression that she had been a party to the wounding of its master.

Meanwhile, Spider Webb was addressing his hirelings.

"Come on," he was saying thickly. "Becker sang out that he'd cornered Tyler and the girl, and we're goin' along to that cave to grab 'em!"

His men wavered, and one of them spoke in a tremulous tone.

"Not me, Spider," he faltered. "Not me. I ain't goin' along there to get what Becker got. You saw what that ape did to him."

Gloating at his craven associate, Webb laid hold of his arm.

"Gorilla or no gorilla," he rasped, "you're headin' into that cave with me, you spineless little weasel. And that goes for the rest of you, too."

He added the last words to his other accomplices, but none of them looked as if they had a mind to obey him, and the situation might have ended in open rebellion on the part of the gangsters if an unexpected diversion had not come about. For at that moment Sergeant Gates and his detail hove into sight, with Tim Tyler riding hard in their midst.

No sooner had they perceived the troopers than Webb and his ruffians made tracks for the bed of the defile, and in a quarter of a minute they were piling into the jungle cruiser, a burst of gunplay from the approaching patrolmen harrying them as they scrambled through the doorway of the contraption.

The machine lurched forward as the last of the rogues entered it, and it rapidly gathered speed—was seventy yards farther down the ravine when the troopers swept over the spot where the crooks had boarded it—and then, as Tim Tyler and the mounted police officers were charging past the spring near which

the armoured car had stood, they heard a voice calling to them from above.

They looked up and saw a girl on the cliff-trail from which Webb and his minions had descended, and Gates let out an exclamation.

"It's Miss Lora!" he said. "Hey, Tim, you get up there and see if she's all right. We'll keep after the jungle cruiser!"

Tim reined in, and, while the troopers forged on in pursuit of the armoured car, he slid from the saddle of his pony and started up the cliff-trail. Nor was it long before he had reached Lora, and as he joined her he caught her by the arm.

"What happened?" he demanded. "Are you okay?"

"Yes, Tim," she said faintly. "I'm—I'm okay. But your father—he's in that cave there—and he's—he's been shot."

The colour waned from the youngster's features, and, running past Lora, he dashed into the fissure she had indicated. A moment later he was beside

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his father, and as he stared at him, lying there in an inert heap, a wordless cry of anguish escaped him, for it seemed to him that the old man was dead.

Trembling with emotion, he began to sink to his knees, stretching out his hand to feel his father's heart as he knelt. Yet before he could lay a finger on the huddled body of the scientist a heavy, shuffling tread became audible to him, and all of a sudden a gigantic figure loomed out of the darkness of the cavern's interior.

It was the figure of the gorilla that had dashed Becker to his death, and with a deep-throated growl it fastened its great paws on Tim. Then, swinging the youth on high, it advanced towards the cliff-trail with him, intent on seiving him as it had served the professor's assassin!

(To be continued in another dramatic episode next week. A New Universal Picture, controlled throughout the United Kingdom and Eire by General Film Distributors, Ltd., starring Frankie Thomas.)

"MISSING WITNESSES"

(Continued from page 12)

looked at Bull with a callous expression on his face.

"This may be the answer, young fellow," he said. "They've just found some woman's clothing on one of the Hoboken ferries—a hat, coat and hand-bag."

Bull's jaw dropped and his face paled.

"You mean she's jumped in the river?" he gasped.

"Quite possibly. You'd better get up there right away." The inspector rose and snatched his hat from a peg. "Come on, I'll go with you."

A squad car conveyed them to the ferry office on the New York side of the Hudson River, and inside it Lane greeted a patrolman who had telephoned him and questioned the short and thick-set officer on whose ferry-boat a tweed coat, a black felt hat, and a black handbag had been found.

"Well, you see," said the officer. "I was comin' ashore last night after my last trip when I saw this stuff lyin' on the deck near the rail, and I—"

"Yes, yes," interrupted Lane. "but did anyone on the boat see the woman who wore these things?"

"Not that I know of," was the reply, "but—"

"They're Mary's, all right," intervened Bull, who had been examining the articles laid out on a desk. "I remember this bag—and this hat."

"Are you sure?" barked Lane.

"Absolutely!"

"All right," Lane turned to the patrolman. "Take charge of this stuff, will you, Ryan?"

On the way back in the car Bull was silent for quite a while.

"That dame's too smart to jump in the river!" he suddenly blurted. "Leavin' that coat and bag was just an act!"

Lane gazed at him sharply.

"You think so?"

"Sure! I've got a hunch she's not very far away, and I'll find her if you let me do what I want to."

"What's that?"

"Announce that we've captured Mary Norton."

"What?" The inspector looked puzzled.

"Yeah—so we can have a reception party at Grand Central Station. She's bound to turn up to see who we've got!"

Lane considered the idea and decided that it was worth trying, and next morning all the New York papers announced that Mary Norton had been captured and that the police were bringing her back from Buffalo to face a murder charge by the train that was due to arrive at Grand Central Station at ten o'clock.

Long before that hour a crowd of curious people—mostly females—thronged the station, and a plain-clothes man who hung about round the bookstall with Bull became annoyed because they kept getting in the way. "Saps!" he snorted. "I'll serve 'em right when they find they've come for nothin'!"

"Maybe we have, too," said Bull. "What time is it?"

The detective looked at his watch.

"Just after ten."

A few moments later the gates leading to Platform 22 were opened and the crowd surged towards them. Rail-

way policemen forced a way for passengers from the Buffalo train, and presently a tall plain-clothes officer appeared with a girl in handcuffs—a girl who bore no resemblance whatever to Mary.

"Here comes our Mary Norton," said Bull excitedly. "Now watch close for the real one."

The crowd milled about the station trying to get a good look at the supposed prisoner as she was marched slowly towards an exit, and many times Bull's companion thrust people aside.

"'Fraid it's a cold scent," mourned Bull, after the "prisoner" had disappeared; and then suddenly over a woman's shoulder he caught sight of Mary herself in a check coat near the destination board.

"No, it worked!" he cried, and dodging round the woman he scurried across to Mary and seized her by the arm.

"Come on, you!" he roared.

"Bull!" she gasped.

Starting women began to gather round them and the plain-clothes man arrived.

"You beat it back and tell the inspector I've got her," directed Bull, propelling Mary towards a door marked "Private."

"Are you goin' now?" inquired the surprised officer.

"Not till I talk to this dame! There's a couple o' things I want to settle."

"Take it easy on the rough stuff, Bull," urged the detective.

"Beat it!"

Mary was bundled into a plainly furnished room to which defrauding passengers were sometimes conducted when caught, and Bull pushed her down into a chair and stood over her.

"You double-crossing little cheat!" he bellowed at her.

"No, I'm not," she protested. "Please believe me."

"Believe you, huh? Everything you told me I believed, and I'd have given you anything in the world. You know that!"

"Yes, Bull," she nodded. "I know."

"That night we were together you said you liked me—and the next day you let me risk my job to save you. Then you lammed out on me, leaving me holdin' the bag. What is it, a game? Come on, talk!"

She leaned back in the chair to look up into his face.

"You came to arrest me for a murder I didn't commit," she said quietly. "I didn't want you to turn me in while there was still a chance of proving it. That's why I ran away. Won't you believe me?"

"Why should I?" he retorted. "How about that gat you handed us? It's the one that did the job."

"It was Sturgis' own gun, I tell you. I never fired it. But someone saw me running across the dock with the gun in my hand the night Sturgis disappeared."

"Then if it wasn't you," challenged Bull, "who did murder Sturgis?"

"Sturgis isn't dead!"

"What?" he howled.

"The dead man they found was Jennings."

"Now listen, don't—"

"When I read the papers I realised what Sturgis had done. He killed Jennings, dressed the body in his own clothes, and threw it in the water."

"Say," exploded Bull scornfully, "have you been kickin' the Gong around?"

"You must believe me, Bull!" she cried. "You must! Don't you see?"

June 4th, 1935.

Sturgis made it appear he'd been murdered so that it would look like a closed case when the police finally got a line on him. He'd cut himself off from his underworld associates—probably double-crossed them. They'd think he was dead, and he could slip away to South America."

It sounded feasible, and Bull was impressed.

"Well," he said less fiercely, "why didn't you tell me that instead of runnin' out on me?"

"You wouldn't have believed me. I knew the only chance to clear myself was to find Sturgis and prove the body they found was not his. But I couldn't let another girl suffer for me."

"She isn't suffering any—that was a plant. Come on down to headquarters and tell it to the Homicide Squad."

She rose obediently, and he caught hold of her left wrist and tugged her towards the door.

The End of the Trail

WARD STURGIS, very much alive, had entered the booking-hall of Grand Central Station a few minutes before. He went to one of the windows and he said to the clerk behind it:

"Ticket and drawing-room on the next train to Miami."

"Yes, sir." The clerk provided the necessary slips of paper and received payment. "It leaves at three-forty this afternoon," he said as he supplied some change.

"I suppose I'm too late to see them bring in that—er—Mary Norton?" questioned the crook.

"Yes," the booking-clerk replied. "She was taken away several minutes ago."

"Oh, that's too bad." Sturgis walked out from the booking-hall into the station yard, where a porter summoned a taxicab for him.

He was waiting for it to arrive when Bull and Mary emerged from the building, and Mary caught sight of him.

"Look!" she shrieked. "That man!" Bull stared in the direction she indicated.

"What about him?"

"That's Ward Sturgis! Don't let him get away!"

"All right," said Bull, "but you're coming with me."

The taxicab had arrived and Sturgis had got into it. Bull rushed Mary across the yard to another one, heaved her up into it and flung himself down beside her.

"Tail that cab!" he shouted to the driver, pointing to the vehicle in which Sturgis was being swept out into Lexington Avenue.

The driver nodded, and a pursuit began which led west on Forty-Second Street and south on Fifth Avenue. Several times the leading cab was nearly lost to sight amongst the stream of traffic, and where Broadway crosses Fifth Avenue Bull was afraid his driver would not beat the lights.

"Come on, come on!" he bellowed. "Step on it, will you?"

The lights were beaten, the distance between the two cabs was lessened, and the driver braked hurriedly as the one in front swerved inwards to a kerb opposite a white-walled hotel.

Ward Sturgis alighted, paid his driver, and entered the building.

"Bull, be careful," said Mary agitatedly, as Bull opened the door on his right. "He's apt to start shootin'!"

"Don't worry about that," snapped

Bull. "Can I trust you to stay here and wait for me?"

"Yes," she replied.

"All right, you hold the cab." He jumped down on to the pavement. "Now be on the level with me for once."

There was no sign of Sturgis in the lobby or the lounge, so Bull made straight for the counter of the office.

"Where did that guy go that just came in here?" he demanded of the clerk. "Brown suit, black moustache, tall."

"You mean Mr. Hayes?" inquired the clerk.

"I don't know what his name is. Does he live here?"

"Well, yes." The clerk turned to a telephone switchboard. "Who's calling?"

"Never mind that stuff!" rapped Bull. "I'll announce myself. What's his number?"

"Two-o-nine, third floor."

Bull ran to the stairs, climbed them swiftly to the third floor, and reached a door numbered 209. He whipped out a gun, and with his left hand opened the door; and Ward Sturgis swung round from a bed upon which he was packing a suitcase.

"Don't reach for anything!" blared Bull. "I want to see you, mister!"

Sturgis scowled.

"This won't do you any good," he said. "I haven't any money."

"I'm not after dough," snapped Bull.

"Well, then, what do you want?"

"You'll find out when I get down to the Special Prosecutor's office!"

Sturgis picked up a folded shirt and placed it in the suitcase.

"I'm afraid you're making a mistake," he said. "Whom are you looking for?"

"A guy named Ward Sturgis."

"Well, aren't you a little late? I read about a man of that name being murdered."

"Yeah, but you can't believe everything you read."

Sturgis shrugged.

"Well, my friend," he said with an air of impatience, "my name isn't Sturgis. I'm a respectable citizen."

He turned towards a little bureau, but Bull promptly swung him round.

"Well, there's one way of finding out." Bull slipped the gun into his pocket and gripped the crook by the sleeve. "There's a girl downstairs who can identify you. Come on!"

Sturgis offered no resistance, but on the stairs he said warningly:

"You know I can collect damages for false arrest?"

"There's no harm in tryin'," retorted Bull.

The lobby was reached, and they stepped out from the hotel on to the pavement. Two taxi-cabs were at the kerb, but passengers were getting out from them, and the one Bull had left was there no longer. He stared blankly at the spot where it had been, and Sturgis did not fail to notice his consternation.

"Well, where's your girl?" he scoffed.

"That's what I'd like to know!" snorted Bull.

"Then perhaps you'll let me go about my business?"

"Yeah? Well, I'm gonna take you down anyway? Get in there!"

Sturgis protested, but he was made to enter a cab which was about to move away from the hotel, and Bull followed him.

"Police Headquarters," he said to the driver, displaying his badge, "and step on it!"

Half an hour after leaving the hotel

behind, Bull marched his captive across the big outer office of Inspector Lane's department and into Lane's room.

The inspector looked up from his desk, but Bull had eyes only for the girl who was sitting in a chair to the left of it—for the girl was Mary.

"Why didn't you wait for me?" he blared at her.

"I thought you were in trouble," she replied, "so I took the cab to look for a policeman. When I came back you'd gone, so I came here."

Bull thrust his captive towards her.

"What about this guy?"

"He's Ward Sturgis!"

Sturgis turned to the inspector as though bewildered.

"Why was I brought here?" he asked.

"Who is this young woman?"

"You know very well who I am!" Mary blazed at him.

"I've never seen her before," Sturgis said to the inspector.

"I'm Mary Norton, if that means anything to you!"

"Mary Norton?" Sturgis looked at her again, his brows raised. "It seems to me I've read something about you, haven't I?"

"I presume you have," said Lane grimly.

"So you prefer to take the word of a murderess against mine?" fumed Sturgis. "Is that the way you do things here?"

"Not at all." The inspector stood up. "There's a possibility of mistaken identity. Just what is your name?"

"Rupert L. Hayes."

"Well, Mr. Hayes, I'm going to ask you to co-operate with us for the sake of justice. Won't you please sit down?"

Sturgis sank into a chair.

"Of course," said the inspector smoothly, "you can prove your statement?"

"Of course."

"We have reason to believe that you're the individual this Special Department was intended to reach—the man who's the head of organised crime in this city."

"That," laughed Sturgis, "is ridiculous. You can't hold me on a charge like that—without proof."

"Well, that's true," Lane admitted quite frankly. "We haven't enough evidence to hold you. However, I'm going to ask you to remain here a little while longer."

"All right," said Sturgis, rather stiffly, "I'll wait."

"Thank you." Lane sat down at his desk again, picked up a pencil, and wrote upon a pad. "Put these calls through right away, will you, Bull?"

He tore off the slip on which he had written, folded it, and gave it to Bull, who went off into the outer office and sat down at his own desk, imagining that he was going to do quite a lot of telephoning. When he opened out the slip, however, what he found on it was this message:

"Come back in ten minutes and say 'yes' to everything I ask you."

For ten minutes by the clock on the wall Bull prowled about the outer office, and then re-entered Lane's room. Sturgis was drumming nervously on the arms of his chair with his fingers; Mary was standing by a window.

"You contacted those parties all right, did you, Bull?" inquired the inspector.

"Yes, I got them," nodded Bull.

"Did you talk to Hefner?"

"Yes."

"The strong-arm boys?"

"Yes, I got them all."

"And they said they'd be on dock?"

"Sure," said Bull. "They said they'd be right down."

"What is this?" asked Sturgis in a strained voice. "Why did you call those men?"

Lane turned to face him.

"There's a rumour going through the underworld," he stated, "about the man who controls the rackets in this city. They say he's double-crossed his friends and pulled out with all the profits. Those calls were to some of his former associates."

Sturgis sprang to his feet, his mouth working.

"What kind of a game are you trying to play?" he cried. "What's all this got to do with me?"

"Nothing," Bull took it upon himself to reply, "except that I told 'em you'd be leaving here in a few minutes—and they're waitin' to see you."

"You told 'em that?" yelled Sturgis.

"Sure."

"If you're an honest business man, as you claim," purred Lane, "that shouldn't disturb you. Bull, show the gentleman to the elevator."

Bull took possession of the crook's arm, and the crook went all to pieces.

"No, no!" he almost screamed. "I can't go out there! Those men are killers! It'd be certain death, and you know it! You've got to keep me here!"

Inspector Lane spread his hands.

"I've got nothing to hold you on," he said. "So far as I'm concerned there's no evidence against you as a racketeer, and you don't know anything about Jennings' murder. No, it's no use."

"What if I admit my connection with Hefner and the others?" quavered Sturgis desperately. "Will you give me protection? I'll turn State's evidence—I'll help you round up the whole gang. Only keep me here!"

"Frankly," said Lane, and his voice was suddenly harsh, "I prefer to save the State the expense of your trial. Get out!"

"No, I can't go out there!" screamed the wretched man. "They'll kill me!"

"And I can't hold you. Bull, take him out!"

"No, wait a minute!" Sturgis wrenched his arm from Bull's grip. "I'll take my chance in court. I killed Jennings. Now—now lock me up where they can't reach me!"

Lane spoke to Harris through the dictograph.

"Send in Whitey," he directed; and Sturgis was huddled in a chair when Emmet White entered the room. "Oh, Whitey, Mr. Sturgis will dictate a confession and sign it; then take him over to the Tombs."

"Okay, chief." The detective helped the quivering prisoner to his feet.

"Come along!"

The door closed upon the pair, and Lane transferred his gaze to Mary.

"I want to thank you for all you've

done, Miss Norton," he said appreciatively.

"You're going to be a very important witness for us. I think I'd better provide you with a bodyguard."

"Thank you, chief!" cried Bull, and caught hold of Mary's arm.

"Here we go, beautiful!"

(By permission of

First National Film

Distributors, Ltd.,

starring John Litel,

Dick Purcell, and

Jean Dale.)

"THE CALL OF THE RING"

(Continued from page 18)

He'll go in there and knock Bronski out in the third as he said he would."

"Sister, I'm going to give you a chance, but no funny business," said Ferrari, and he dialed a number. "Hallo, National Stadium? Give me Duke Foster's dressing-room. Mrs. Foster calling."

Susan's heart beat as she heard her husband's voice, and she schooled herself to act calmly.

"Duke, I told you not to take this fight," she gritted out. "Now you've been told that if you go through with it that Jimmy and I would be harmed. But, dear, that's not true! We're safe! Go out there and win that fight!"

Ferrari wrenched the 'phone away, his eyes blazing with fury. Almost he shot Susan there and then, but his calculating brain told him that her death would not gain him anything. He pushed Susan on to the settee.

"Don't let 'em outa your sight!" Ferrari ordered, and dashed from the room.

Nick went and sprawled in a chair with a gun on his lap. He leered at Susan evilly.

"Lady, that smart trick just signed Duke's death warrant."

"Where's he going? To stop the fight?" questioned Susan.

"No, he's going to stop Duke!" Nick held up his gun.

"You couldn't! You wouldn't dare!" cried Susan. "Don't you see even then you wouldn't win?"

Nick smiled.

"No, but we don't lose."

Jimmy to the Rescue

SUSAN thought quickly. She had saved the fight, but got her husband and all of them into terrible danger. This crook did not look as clever as Ferrari—could she bluff him? She racked her brains, and suddenly she had a daring idea.

Susan got up and said that if Nick had no objection she would put her son to bed. Jimmy wanted to stop and hear about daddy knocking out Bronski, but Susan was insistent. Nick said he'd come along with them.

"There's only one way to enter this apartment—through the front door," Susan said contemptuously. "We can't escape even if we tried."

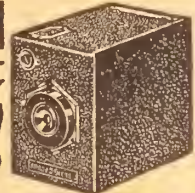
But as she went with her father and sonny she whispered to Peters to get Nick a drink. Brandy might dull the man's wits. She put Jimmy to bed, but

(Continued on page 28)

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THE GREAT ARMAMENTS RACE



MORE Prize News for you, pals! We're all set for the second month's lap in our Stupendous Stamp-Collecting Race. There are still Ten More "Hercules" Bikes, and 4,000 other super Prizes to be won. They're FREE, too!

Every week in BOY'S CINEMA we are continuing to print free Armaments Stamps—BATTLESHIPS, SEARCHLIGHTS, GUNS, and so on. There are now six different kinds to be collected. Just cut them out and stick to as many others as you can get hold of. And remember, pals, all the stamps you collected last month (except Bombers and Submarines, which we called in) can be used for this month's contest as well.

There are twenty stamps in all on this page, while if you also read other popular boy's papers like "Champion" and "Triumph," you will find more of these stamps in them to help give you a big total.

At the end of June, we shall again ask you how many of one or more kinds of stamps you've collected. Which stamps we shall ask for will be a close secret until then.

So go all out to get as many of these stamps as you can. Get your pals to do it, too—swap stamps with them if you like to make the "race" more exciting for everybody.

At the end of June, another Five Bikes and up to 2,000 of the other tip-top prizes will be given away! The biggest collections of stamps called for will win—and readers will be asked to say which prizes they want, too!

No stamps to be sent in yet—we will tell you how and where when the time comes!

OVERSEAS READERS, TOO! Those of you far away—you're in this great scheme also, and special awards will be given for the best collections from overseas readers. There will be a special closing date for you as well, of course!

RULES: Five First Prizes of £4 7s. 6d. "Hercules" Cycles and up to 2,000 other prizes will be awarded in order of merit each month during the contest to the readers declaring and sending the largest collections of the stamps called for. Cash value of any of the first prizes may be divided in case of a tie or ties for such prizes. Ties for any other prizes will be decided by the Editor.

All claims for prizes to be sent on the proper coupon (given at the end of each month); no allowance made for any coupon or stamps mutilated or lost or delayed in the post or otherwise. No correspondence! No one connected with this paper may enter, and the Editor's decision will be final and legally binding throughout.

This offer also appears in "Sports Budget," "Magnet," "Gem," "Modern Boy," "Triumph," "Champion," "Thriller," and "Detective Weekly."



"THE CALL OF THE RING"

(Continued from page 25)

in his clothes, and then she whispered in her son's ear what she wanted him to do when the chance came. Jimmy understood.

Nick came into the bed-room with a glass in his hand and saw the boy in bed. He was satisfied and went back to his brandy. Then Susan asked her father to go and talk to Nick and to make him sit in a chair so that his back was towards the open door of the lounge, so that he could not see what was going on in the corridor. Arnold Corbin succeeded, and cautiously Susan open the bed-room door. With her son in her arms she darted into the kitchen, and opened the dumb-waiter.

"Jimmy, you know what to do when you get to the basement? Get help for daddy," Jimmy nodded, and she closed the doors. She pressed a button and the lift vanished.

The janitor had his radio switched on and was listening to the fight. An old boxer himself, he was revelling in the contest. Down came the dumb-waiter and he did not hear the doors open. He was sparring around, living again his old fistic combats, when Jimmy's arms went round his neck.

"Stop sparring, mister!" piped Jimmy. "We gotta get a policeman. A man is upstairs with a gun."

"Keep quiet!" roared the exasperated janitor.

"There goes the bell for the second round. They're in the centre of the ring. Duke leads a hard right and hooks on the champion's ribs as they are in close. They separate, and Bronski charges in, but Duke sets him back on his heels with a beautiful straight left. Duke is fighting as if he'd never been out of the ring. His timing is lovely to watch. They're sparring now—Duke looking for an opening. Bronski goes down before a straight left. The champ's up. They're standing toe to toe and slugging it out. What a battle!"

"I want a policeman!" persisted Jimmy. "I want a policeman!"

When the round ended the janitor was able to listen.

"And they're gonna shoot daddy so he won't fight!"

"Your daddy?"

"Yes, Duke Foster. Come on, do something!"

"They can't do that to me!" yelled the janitor, darting to the phone. "I've got ten bucks on him. Gunme police headquarters!"

Within minutes a police car was on the way to the Fifth Avenue apartment, and several other cars were on their way to the fight stadium. Nick was in a very soured condition when the janitor opened the door of the Corbin flat with a pass key, and he gaped as he saw the policeman.

It was at the end of the third round when Al Ferrari got to a reserved seat. Under a newspaper he had his gun

ready, but he intended to use the gun only if Bronski were losing.

Ferrari eyed the combatants narrowly. The bull-like Bronski did not look in the best of shape, for one eye seemed to be closing, and there was a trickle of blood at the corner of his mouth. Duke Foster was dancing around and showed no signs of fatigue, nor did he seem to be marked. Bronski's fighting seemed to lack punch, and twice Duke landed heavy blows. Ferrari gradually brought up his gun. Police officers came into the stadium and walked down the gangway, their eyes alert for anyone behaving suspiciously. Big Bill Watson saw them, and wondered what was afoot, and his breath seemed to leave him when he saw Al Ferrari.

In the fifth round there was a flurry of punches, and when they broke away Bronski seemed to be sagging at the knees. He made a last wild rush, and stepping to one side Duke rammed home a blow that made that vast audience gasp. Everyone heard the thud of the glove. The champion spilled to the canvas and lay still.

An excited little man behind Ferrari stood up and looked over the gunman's shoulder. The paper had slipped and the gun was showing. Slowly Ferrari raised his arm.

"He's gotta gun!" screamed the little man. "Help, help!"

He was a brave little man because he grabbed hold of Ferrari's wrist, and by the time the gunman had got his hand free the police were on the spot. As the cursing killer was dragged away he heard the referee declaring Duke Foster the new Heavy-weight Champion of the World.

When the s.s. Peru sailed there were two very happy young people on board. Mr. and Mrs. Duke Foster were going on a second honeymoon.

(By permission of the British Lion Film Company, Ltd., starring Allan Lane as Duke Foster, Heather Angel as Susan and Genevieve Tobin as Pauline.)

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"MISSING WITNESSES."

Inspector Robert L. Lane, John Litel; Detective Bull Regan, Dick Purcell; Mary Norton, Jean Dale; Emmet White, William Haade; Little Joe Macey, Raymond Hatton; Heinie Dows, Louis Natheaux; Joseph Hartman, Michael Mark; Ward Sturgis, Harland Tucker; Frank Wagner, Ben Welden; Gladys Wagner, Sheila Bromley; George Harris, John Harron; Chivvy Predo, Earl Gunn.

"THE CALL OF THE RING."

Duke Foster, Allan Lane; Susan Foster, Heather Angel; Pauline Corbin, Genevieve Tobin; Jimmy Foster, John Russell; Pat Doyle, Joseph Crehan; Arnold Corbin, Frederick Burton; Barney, Ben Welden; Watson, Selmer Jackson; Parke, Clyde Dilsen; Al Ferrari, George Lynn; Nick, Victor Adams; Bronski, Art Lasky.



(Continued from page 2)

Robert Montgomery Can Take a Joke

Robert Montgomery recently proved that he has a sense of humour. He can laugh at himself.

The Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer star has made a collection of jokes, but most of the stories he tells present him as goat instead of hero. He revealed a few of them while resting between scenes.

"There was the time shortly after I had come to Hollywood when I had a day off from screen work. I awakened fairly early, saw the sun shining outside, decided to lay in bed and read a book.

"A knock came at the door and an urgent voice called to me. I told the voice to go away. A little later came another knock, slightly louder. Aroused, I shouted to the person to let me alone. Finally the telephone rang. I answered, and a voice informed me that the house was on fire. It didn't take me long to get up after that.

"On another occasion I was offered a chance of a good part in a motion picture if I could play polo. As I wanted the part, I assured the casting office that I was a five-goal man. They took me at my word, and I went to the polo field, rented horses, a teacher and a mallet. I took a terrible beating for a couple of weeks, skinned my knees and lost all dignity. I learned to play a good enough game to get the part and hold it."

Bob's funniest reminiscence concerns the veteran screen actor who worked with him in his first picture. The veteran kindly explained to the newcomer screen technique as compared to stage technique.

"If there hadn't been 'rushes' I would have been out of pictures before I fairly got started," chuckled Montgomery. "That chap stole every scene in which he appeared with me, made me look terrible. He had told me all the wrong things to do. When I taxed him with it on the set the next day, he informed me that what he had done was for my own good, that I would learn more quickly that way than any other."

Montgomery laughed loudest at jokes on himself.

Bing Crosby's Horses on the Screen

Bing Crosby's horses are to act in the movies.

That is the upshot of a deal closed between the star and Wesley Ruggles, the producer-director, who will use the Crosby stable in racing sequences, "Sing, You Sinners," in which Bing and Fred MacMurray head the cast.

According to the terms of the deal, Bing will put about twenty-five horses at Ruggles' disposal for scenes to be filmed at Santa Anita and the Pomona Fairgrounds, selecting one three-year-old for a "star part," that of "Uncle Dudley," the horse which saves the fortunes of Bing and his family in the picture.

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Boy's CINEMA

2^D

EVERY
TUESDAY
JULY 23rd 1938
N° 971



"MAKING the HEADLINES"

Starring JACK HOLT

A MYSTERY DRAMA OF
A STOLEN NECKLACE
AND A HOUSE OF
STRANGE HAPPENINGS

Police-Captain Lewis Nagel is transferred to a little town in which nothing ever happens, and his newspaper reporter chum, Steve Withers, "steals" a girl's necklace in order to make a story. But the necklace is stolen from Steve—and two murders follow. A most unusual thriller, starring Jack Holt



Promotion!

IT was evident that the headline across the front page of the "Morning Herald" was obnoxious to Alfred A. Kennedy, Chief of Police. He glared at it, stabbing it with his vision; he gritted his teeth, making a very ugly line of his mouth; and finally he hurled the offending paper from him across the desk at which he was seated.

"Nagel does it again!" he exploded.

The headline consisted only of five words—"Nagel Puts Heat on Gamblers"—and those five words did not seem to justify such violent wrath, especially as they reflected credit on the Police Department. But Lieutenant Lewis Nagel had a way of getting his name into print far too often.

Abruptly the door of the room was opened and McWade, the stocky little District Attorney, walked in at it, his hat upon his head and a half-smoked cigar in his hand. He looked down at the newspaper on the carpet, and he looked at the irate officer who had flung it there.

"About time you woke up, Kennedy," he said, "and called a halt on Nagel's publicity—or cut yourself in on some of it."

"Yeah," fumed the Chief of Police, "first thing I'll know Nagel will be wearing my badge and I'll be on the way out!"

"So would I," returned the District Attorney, "if I let my men worm their way on to every other front page. But not me! As long as I'm the boss I'll take the bows."

He planted a foot on the offending headline and took a puff at the cigar.

"What Nagel really needs," he went on with a twinkle in his grey eyes, "is July 23rd, 1935.

a larger field. One of the suburbs—Fairview, let's say. They've been having a lot of trouble with their goats over there. It seems to me that Nagel's just the man to keep them off the streets."

"It'd be a good move if I could swing it," growled Kennedy.

"That ought to be easy enough. Make him captain of the Fairview precinct."

Kennedy pursed his lips and shook his head.

"I doubt if he'd fall for it, Mac," he said with gloom. "No, I have a hunch he'd resign."

The District Attorney grinned. "What's wrong with a good resignation?" he inquired blandly.

The Chief of Police rubbed his chin, his somewhat heavy features relaxed, and his eyes almost sparkled. He turned to a dictograph and through it spoke to a sergeant in the outer office who acted as his secretary.

"Come in and bring your book right away," he said crisply.

A letter dictated to the sergeant was delivered to Lieutenant Lewis Nagel without any delay whatever, and its contents sent its recipient striding backwards and forwards across the floor of his own room at Headquarters, his lips compressed, his brown eyes frowning.

Lew, as his friends called him, was a man of action and looked it. He was a fine figure of a man, tall, strong, and a born fighter. Fearless himself, he was feared by wrongdoers. His dark brown hair was sleek and brushed well back from a high forehead; his dark brown eyes were almost disconcertingly keen; and as he prowled from desk to

window and window back to desk, his mouth was set like a steel trap beneath a mere smear of a moustache.

In the course of his stridings a framed photograph on the wall facing the desk drew his attention and he went over to it. The photograph was of a younger man than himself, whose clean-shaven face suggested a well-developed sense of humour and high spirits—a whimsical face, crowned with wavy brown hair. It was signed "Steve."

Lew eyed the smiling face as though it were the face of an enemy instead of that of his best friend, and he took the frame from its nail, carried it over to the desk and put it away in a drawer.

As he resumed his efforts to wear out a perfectly good carpet, the door from the corridor was opened and Steve Withers, the original of the scorned portrait, stepped breezily into the room. He was a reporter on the "Herald" and he was responsible for the headline. Lew bestowed one swift and by no means cordial glance upon him and reached the window again.

Considerably puzzled by so aloof an attitude, Steve Withers plaintively exclaimed:

"Hi, Lew, give yourself a break and say 'Hallo' to me."

"How are you, Steve?" grunted Lew, mainly over his shoulder.

"Hi, what kind o' talk is that?" protested the visitor. "You know I'm not the kind of a guy who goes around telling people how I am. Say, what's up? Something on your mind?"

"Yeah, plenty!" Lew returned to the desk and snatched up the letter he had received from the Chief of Police. "How's that for a pain in the neck?"

Steve perched on a corner of the desk and proceeded to read the letter aloud:

"In pursuance of my established policy to reward distinguished service, I have, after careful consideration, decided to promote you to the rank of captain. This necessitates transferring you to Department Forty-one in the suburb of Fairview, said transfer to become effective on Wednesday, the twenty-first of this month."

Lew had gone back to the window, his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat, and he was glaring out through a pane at nothing in particular.

"Congratulations!" said Steve, dropping the letter.

"Yeah," snorted Lew.

"Boy, will I be waiting to see that first picture of you in a uniform? If there's one thing I really go for in a big way it's uniforms with brass buttons."

The note of raillery was not lost on Lew. He stalked back to his chair and dumped himself in it.

"Lay off!" he snapped. "Fairview! Nothing's happened in that burg since Washington stopped and looked at a potato patch!"

"Yeah," drawled Steve, "and he only stayed eight minutes."

Lew snote the back of one hand against the palm of the other, and his disgust was manifest.

"Last two men Kennedy transferred there," he said, "resigned in less than three months—and the one before that took to checkers and ended by talking to himself!"

"Well," shrugged Steve, "maybe some day you're going to learn to play dumb and keep your face out of the papers. Kennedy likes the front page, too."

"Who's been putting me on the front page?" challenged Lew sourly.

"You asked for it, sailor—I gave it to you. But that's all over now."

Once you hit Fairview you'll be out of the newspapers for the rest of your life."

"You're telling me? The last arrest they made there was a rooster who muscled in on the yard next door! But here's one for your notebook—if Kennedy thinks I'm gonna resign he's in for a long, long wait! One thing about the Nagels, they don't quit under fire!"

A little sigh followed this defiant statement, and in quite a different voice Lew said:

"It's going to be pretty tough leaving the old hang-out—and my friends."

Steve chuckled and folded his arms.

"I didn't ask for a laugh," he commented, "but that certainly is one. Friends! You'll find out how many you have now that you're on the skids!"

"Say, I never thought o' that," gritted Lew, on his feet again and considerably dismayed. "Maybe you're right."

"Sure I'm right." Steve slid off the desk and made for the door. "And I'm no different from all the rest," was his parting shot.

From Headquarters he went straight to the offices of the "Morning Herald," and on the fifteenth floor he invaded the news editor's den.

Hallen Middleton was the news editor's name, and he was a portly and middle-aged person whose temper was uncertain and whose habit of tearing at his hair whenever he lost it had so reduced his thatch that recently he had become alarmed at its scantiness and had taken to having his scalp massaged every morning by a female expert.

When Steve burst in upon him he was enveloped in a big spotted sheet and the woman was at work upon his hair with some soapy but tonic fluid, some of which was trickling down his fat face.

"Hi, sweet child," boomed the intruder, "something terrific's just happened. Kennedy's transferred Lew Nagel over to Fairview!"

"What?" howled Middleton, opening

his eyes and closing them again in a hurry because the fluid stung.

"Know what that means, don't you? A bombshell all ready to burst wide open!"

The elderly massense wiped the fat face with a towel and stood aside. The owner of the fat face emitted a scornful noise.

"Nothing ever happens in Fairview but a Fourth of July parade!" he scoffed.

"Oh, yeah?" Steve moved nearer to the sheet-enveloped figure. "Then why is Kennedy sending his ace man over there? It's big, I tell you! Lew tipped me off. Now you put me on a drawing account, and I'll bring you a story that'll boost our circulation five thousand copies a day!"

Middleton had a sort of weakness for Steve, partly on account of his enterprise and efficiency, partly because he had more poise and a more engaging personality than most reporters. But the news editor was not easily to be deceived.

"If you're trying to treat yourself to a vacation," he rapped, "you're only wasting your time."

"All right, all right." Steve whisked up a telephone and stooped over Middleton with it. "If you won't take my word for it, call Kennedy yourself: ask him if he isn't sending Nagel to Fairview."

The news editor eyed the telephone, but his hands and arms were under the sheet.

"Any idea what it is?" he asked.

"Lew wouldn't tell me," fibbed the schemer. "He's bound to secrecy. Well, well, do I grab the scoop of the year, or do we let the opposition beat us to it?"

"Not while I have a hair on my head! Tell Bennett to fix up an expense account."

Steve replaced the telephone and sailed serenely towards the door.

"Sweet child," he said jubilantly, "you'll never know what you've done for me."



Steve made for the door. "And I'm no different from all the rest," was his parting shot.

"What?" bellowed the news editor. "For the newspaper," Steve turned to amend.

The elderly massense resumed her task as soon as the door was closed.

"Mr. Middleton," she said, "a few more treatments and you'll have a nice big crop of hair."

"Yeah," he retorted, "if I buy myself a wig!"

Thanks to Steve

THE town of Fairview, twenty-five miles from the city of Hartford, had its points as a residential district, but its inhabitants were far too law-abiding to provide the police with any real activity. Social functions were numerous enough, but crime did not exist.

The police-station was quite a nice building in Main Street; the charge-room was capable of holding fifty arrested persons simultaneously without any of them crowding against the high desk behind which Sergeant Handley passed most of his official time reading or dozing; the cells were lofty and clean, but untenanted; and Captain Lewis Nagel's own room was large, sunny, and quite well appointed.

Lew looked fine in his brand-new uniform, but after three weeks of almost complete idleness he began to feel that he would go crazy if something didn't happen. He had taken to playing checkers with Steve, and even at that game he was beaten.

One warm and pleasant morning he sent the board and such men as remained on it flying off the end of the desk with an angry sweep of his hand, and he said bitterly to his conqueror:

"Remember me? The name is Nagel—used to be an officer of the law—made an arrest occasionally. Now I can't even keep my king from being trapped! I'm going nuts!"

"Hi, hi!" rebuked Steve. "Why don't you give yourself a break and cool down? You don't hear me cheering about this burg, but even at that there's been something doing."

"Why, sure," scoffed Lew. "that riot call I answered yesterday for two lads stealing a water-melon!"

A little man in a striped suit, white-haired, and wearing pince-nez on a cord, had stepped into the charge-room from the street and approached the massive sergeant without being noticed because the massive sergeant was immersed in a magazine called "Soul Secrets."

"Morning, sergeant," said the little man. "Is Captain Nagel in?"

Sergeant Handley dropped the magazine as though ashamed of having been caught with it and sprang to his feet.

"Why, sure, just come right along," he said in a deep and booming voice; and he went over to Lew's room and rapped on the door.

"Mr. Keer to see you, captain," he announced, after he had been bidden to enter.

"Oh, come right in, Mr. Keer," exclaimed Steve; and then, as the little man swept off his hat and stood bowing in front of the desk: "Captain Nagel, I want you to meet Fairview's one and leading jeweller."

Sergeant Handley returned to his post of duty and his magazine.

"Pleased to meet you, captain," said the little jeweller.

"And you, Mr. Keer," nodded Lew. "About this diamond-studded badge our town is presenting to you. I'm downright sorry, but I'm afraid it won't be ready in time for—"

"Wait a minute, wait a minute!"

July 23rd, 1938.

Lew interrupted almost harshly. "What's this all about?"

Edgar Keer blinked over the top of his pince-nez and pinched his chin in a nervous fashion.

"Goodness," he exclaimed, turning to Steve, "I hope I haven't let the oyster out of its shell! I thought the captain knew all about this."

Lew scowled at Steve.

"Say, what are you trying to pull this time?" he rasped. "If this is another one of your—"

"Now, now, take it easy, Lew," implored the reporter. "I simply called a meeting of our leading citizens and suggested that they show their appreciation of Chief Kennedy's gift to their town—that's all."

Lew clamped his teeth together.

"There comes a time in a man's life," he hissed, "when killing is justified, and I think this is one of them." He summoned a wintry smile for the jeweller. "All right, Mr. Keer, I'll see you later."

"Anything you say, captain," murmured the embarrassed little man, and he was turning towards the door when there came a rap at it and Sergeant Handley reappeared.

"A lady to see you, sir."

The lady brushed past him into the room, elegantly dressed and with a floppy and semi-transparent hat upon her red-gold hair. She looked about forty-five and very self-possessed.

"Hallo, Edgar," she said brightly to the jeweller, "how well you're looking. Still on your milk diet?"

Without waiting for any reply she smiled at Steve.

"Oh, Mr. Withers! How very nice to find you here."

"Mrs. Wilder," said Steve, "I want you to know Captain Nagel."

Lew rose and bowed—and immediately became the target for a pair of admiring blue eyes.

"Oh, what is so awe-inspiring as a fine-looking man in uniform?" gushed their owner. "Would you believe it, captain, I—"

"Excuse me, Mrs. Wilder," Lew broke in rather stiffly, "but is there something I can do for you?"

Edgar Keer took his departure and the door was closed. But Mrs. Wilder in no way lost countenance.

"Oh, captain, I can tell you're as nervous as a witch," she tittered. "But you're not the only one. Every last member of the Ladies' Conversation and Get-Together Club is just living for next Thursday afternoon, counting off the minutes until you address them."

"When I do what?" gasped Lew.

"Oh, don't be so modest. When Mr. Withers told us you'd be happy to speak to us on crime every lady just bounced out of her seat and scrambled for the telephone. The beauty parlours have been working eighteen hours a day."

Steve looked at Lew, but Lew would not look at Steve.

"Listen, Mrs. Wilder," he said, re-seating himself at his desk and speaking quite coldly, though he felt hot enough about the collar, "just call the whole thing off. I'm an officer of the law, not a public speaker."

"Oh, but even an officer of the law can talk," cried Mrs. Wilder. "As a matter of fact, I've heard them."

"That's right," confirmed Steve, "so have I."

"There, you see?" Mrs. Wilder tilted her head and pointed a finger. "You haven't a leg to stand on. The question is—"

"Sorry, Mrs. Wilder, but I haven't

a minute to spare. I know a man who is about to commit a murder."

"Oh, captain, how perfectly dreadful! You must tell me all about it on Thursday."

"I'll be very happy to."

That emphatic statement to Mrs. Wilder indicated surrender. She asked Lew if he would prefer larkspurs or delphiniums as a decoration for the speaker's table.

"Well, I don't care," he said gruffly, and remembered his manners. "I mean, anything that suits you will be all right with me."

"How perfectly splendid!" She offered her hand. "See you on Thursday at two o'clock sharp. Good-bye."

"Thursday at two," nodded Lew.

Steve shook hands in his turn, and he escorted Mrs. Wilder to the door. He leaned against it, after it was closed, and he laughed quite heartily.

"Anything for a laugh, eh?" Lew rapped at him. "Well, this one's on you."

"Now there's gratitude for you," complained the reporter. "After I work myself to the bone, trying to build you back up again you talk like that!"

"If I ever tore loose and told that bunch of hatchet-faced dames what I thought of their burg they'd die of shock. I hate every inch of it, and you know it."

"Oh, you'd better not tell 'em that," counselled Steve, "not after the swell badge they're giving you."

"I'm telling them nothing."

"Oh, yes, you are, Lew. You just can't let me down after all I've done for you."

"Oh, I can't, can't I?" Lew gave a tight-lipped grin. "Well, I've got a picture of myself talking to the like of Wilder and her gang. What kind of a sap do you take me for?"

A Slight Mistake

THURSDAY afternoon came and Steve went with Lew to the town hall. Lew was conducted by Mrs.

Wilder to a platform at the top of a long lecture-room on the first floor of the building and sat beside that lady at a table upon which a big pot of delphiniums stood conspicuously. Steve found a seat amongst a lot of assorted females, and aside from these two there was no other male in the room.

Mrs. Wilder, having introduced Lew to the assembled members of the Ladies' Conversation and Get-Together Club, sat down to listen to what he had to say. Steve nursed his hat and composed his features.

Lew's subject was supposed to be crime, but he began with a few remarks about his appointment.

"And speaking of Fairview," he said, "during my short stay here I have grown to like the town."

Steve began to gurgle inside him.

"I've grown to like every inch of it."

The gurgle erupted into laughter, and several females turned to stare at the offender.

"In fact," added Lew, "I might go farther and say I've grown to love it."

That was altogether too much for Steve. His laughter became uncontrollable, and he rose and went swiftly out from the room. In a broad corridor he leaned against the wall, holding his sides, and he did not notice a girl who emerged from an office at the top of the staircase until she spoke to him.

"Pardon me, but you're Mr. Withers, aren't you?" she asked.

"Eh?" Steve recovered and looked round. "Yes."

"I've got a call for you."

He followed her into the office and he spoke into a telephone she had deposited on a blotting-pad. The voice of Hallen Middleton smote upon his left ear-drum.

"Say, how long d'you think you're going to get away with blowing yourself to a vacation?" it roared.

"Oh, it's you again?" returned Steve placidly. "How are you, sweet child?"

"You 'phone in a story before to-morrow, or don't ever show your face around here again."

"Well, what do you want me to do," purred Steve, "go out and rob a bank?"

"That would be better than robbing us!" blared the news editor.

When Steve ventured back into the lecture-room Lew was finishing his very informal address with a promise that he would not rest until he had made Fairview a one hundred per cent law-abiding community.

There was considerable clapping after he had sat down, and when it was stilled Mrs. Wilder gushed inanities and brought the meeting to a close. Admiring females clustered round Lew, lavishing praise upon him as he descended from the platform. The room began to empty and Mrs. Wilder took possession of him.

"Oh, captain," she babbled, "some day soon you must address our class on psychic meditation and telepathy—you know, the study of how my thoughts leap right out of my brain and into yours. Why, captain, do you know—"

A particularly beautiful and bright-eyed girl, wearing a tweed jacket over a dark frock and an Alpine hat upon her golden head, was standing near the wide-open double doors, and Mrs. Wilder broke off to hail her.

"Oh, dear Jeane, come here, darling. I want you to meet Captain Nagel. Miss Jeane Sandford, my niece."

"How do you do, Miss Sandford?" murmured Lew.

"Awfully glad to know you, captain," said Jeane, and her voice was as attractive as her face. "I really enjoyed it."

They walked out into the corridor together, and there a little dark-haired slip of a girl was hovering. She looked no more than sixteen, but actually was turned twenty. Lew had seen her making notes of his address.

"Oh, Claire darling, you're just in time to meet the captain!" Mrs. Wilder cried. "This is my nephew's wife, Mrs. Ronald Sandford, Captain Nagel."

Lew endeavoured not to look astonished. Steve, in the background, was feasting his eyes upon Jeane.

"Captain," said the girl-wife, "the minute you opened your mouth something happened to me, and I said to myself, I said, 'There's the hero for my next play.'"

Steve blinked.

"You wouldn't think she was clever to look at her," said Mrs. Wilder, "but she is—clever as sin."

"You must meet my husband, captain," said the surprising little creature quite composedly. "He'd be such a help to you. He's clever, too—studying to be a criminologist."

Steve joined the group with an air of importance.

"I'm from the 'Morning Herald,'" he stated. "How about a copy of your speech?"

"Funny what some people will do for an introduction," growled Lew under his breath.

The introduction took place, and Steve stood very close to Jeane.

"Mr. Withers, may I ask you something?" Mrs. Wilder clasped her gloved hand. "You were a problem child, weren't you?"

Lek grinned delightedly, but Steve uttered an emphatic "No."

"Now don't tell me you weren't," rebuked Mrs. Wilder. "That horrible laugh of yours in there positively indicates that you were."

"But that wasn't a laugh, Mrs. Wilder," protested Steve. "It—it's a disturbance of the nervous system."

"Oh, you poor dear man! How horrible of me to have referred to it. Did you hear that, Jeane? Mr. Withers has a disturbance of his nervous system."

"Really?" said Jeane incredulously. "I'm so sorry, Mr. Withers."

The five descended the main staircase to the hall below and crossed the hall to the front steps, Mrs. Wilder walking with the diminutive Claire, Steve walking with Jeane, and Lew tagging along behind with his peaked cap in his hand.

"This is one for Ripley," remarked Steve on the way.

"What is?" asked Jeane.

"That I could spend three weeks in this town without spotting you."

"But I've been here only a few days," she laughed, "visiting my aunt."

"Tell me, how do you like Fairview?"

"Too quiet." She gave him a mocking glance. "In fact, I don't quite see what a newspaper reporter or a policeman can find to do here."

"Oh," said Steve airily, "that's only because you don't know this town. Say, I could tell you things that happen here that would make your hair stand on end."

"How very interesting! Of course,

you can see I'm a bit grown-up for fairy tales, but if you have a good one—"

"Oh, you think I'm kidding you, eh? Say, why do you suppose the 'Herald' has its star reporter in this town?"

"I wouldn't know."

"And what do you suppose the chief of police told Captain Nagel when he appointed him over here? He said, 'Captain, I'm sending you to Fairview because you're the only man who can handle that hot spot.'"

They had reached the top of the steps and had paused there. Mrs. Wilder and Claire were down on the pavement; Lew was standing behind Steve.

"Well, maybe," said Jeane, "you two nice gentlemen can furnish a very bored girl with a little excitement. I've never seen a real criminal. Suppose you take me down to the goal and show me a couple of your worst ones?"

Lew shook his head and covertly jabbed a fist into Steve's back.

"I'm sorry, Miss Sandford."

"Yes, yes," said Steve glibly. "you see, we couldn't expose you to a lot of desperate gangsters and racketeers—there's no telling what might happen, even in goal. And don't think all the tough citizens of this community are behind bars, either. Why, the streets are full of them. Take that necklace you're wearing, for instance—"

He fingered the necklace that was round her smooth throat—a necklace of no intrinsic value, being composed of quartz and crystals.

"It wouldn't surprise me if some creature of the underworld yanked it right off your neck in broad daylight," he declared.

"Oh, Mr. Withers," she said with a very artificial sliver, "this is getting



Steve joined Lew on the terrace, and Ronald and Claire followed; but there was no sign of anybody in the grounds.

more terrifying every minute. But it would make a marvellous headline, wouldn't it? 'Robbery by daring daylight bandit. Captain Nagel hot on trail of thief. Arrest expected any minute.'

She smiled at Lew.

"Of course, you wouldn't handle the case yourself, would you, captain? No, you'd probably give it to one of your subordinates—you'd be too busy with your gangsters and racketeers."

The smile was transferred to Steve.

"And naturally a star reporter would never cover a little story like mine, would he, Mr. Withers?"

"Jeane darling!" called Mrs. Wilder from the pavement.

"Coming!" Jeane waved a hand.

"Sorry to leave such amusing company, but I must get off these dangerous streets before dark."

"That's a good idea," said Steve.

"Oh, wait a minute! See that man over there?"

He pointed to a very tall and certainly not very pleasant-looking man of about forty-five who was walking slowly along the opposite pavement.

"Yes," said Jeane, "what about him?"

"One of the most desperate characters in this country."

"Really?"

Steve nodded.

"Just finished a five-year term for robbery," he informed her, "but that's only half of it. Before that he did a ten-year stretch for second-degree murder."

"Thanks so much for telling me," she said quite gravely. "That's my Uncle Edmund."

"Ye— What?" stammered Steve.

"Your—your—"

But Jeane was already fitting down the steps to her aunt.

"Well, brother," said Lew most unkindly. "You sure led with your chin that time."

A Fake Burglary

MRS. WILDER lived in a very stylish house, occupying fairly extensive grounds, in one of Fairview's nicest thoroughfares known as Maryland Drive, and her nephew Ronald Sandford and his little wife Claire lived there with her.

Having visited the house several times since his arrival in the town, Steve was acquainted with its general lay-out, but during the afternoon of that day he prowled in its vicinity, and he had the satisfaction of glimpsing Jeane at the casement window of a bed-room which opened on to a balcony above a side porch.

In the region of eleven o'clock at night, with only the moon in a cloudless sky to watch his movements, he stole across the grounds to the porch, limbed some trellis-work beside it on to the balcony and tiptoed to the window.

The window was open and he slipped in at it over a cushioned seat. The bed-room was bathed in moonlight, and Jeane was fast asleep in an elegant double bed, her head upon a pillow on its right and one shapely arm flung across the other pillow.

For several long moments he stood gazing at her, then looked all round the room and went to a dressing-table that matched the bed. The necklace was in the second drawer he opened, and it was in his hand when a movement behind his back caused him to swing round.

Jeane had stirred in her sleep and turned over.

He stood clutching the necklace till July 23rd, 1938.

he was sure she was not going to waken, then slipped it into his coat-pocket and opened other drawers in the dressing-table and disarranged their contents as a burglar might have done. Finally he blew a kiss in the direction of the bed and got out at the window as noiselessly as he had entered.

From the balcony he clambered down the trellis-work; but one piece of it gave way beneath his weight, and he fell about six feet into a flower-border. He rose and fled, alarmed by the noise he had made, and before he was out in the road and running swiftly along it, Jeane was sitting up in bed very wide awake.

Mrs. Wilder, a light sleeper, was almost instantly out of her bed and enveloped in a very elaborate wrap. She opened the door of her room, and in the wide upper hall outside it she saw her nephew, Ronald Sandford, an ugly young man with rather a foolish face and eyes that blinked at her like an owl's from behind the lenses of a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles.

Slippers were on his feet, and he was wearing a dressing-gown over striped pyjamas.

"Did you hear anything?" asked Mrs. Wilder shrilly.

"Uhuh," nodded her nephew. "And saw a man running away, too."

"Not a burglar, Ronald—not a real one?" she cried excitedly. "Oh, why couldn't he have waited a minute? I've never seen a burglar!"

"Don't worry about him, Aunt Muffin," said the young man. "I'll have the scoundrel's finger-prints before you can count ten."

Claire appeared in pyjamas of almost a military cut.

"Oh, darling, wouldn't it be just wonderful if this turned out to be the plot I've been searching for?" she breathed, addressing her spouse as he made for the stairs.

Mrs. Wilder ran to the door of Jeane's room and banged on one of its panels with her fist.

"Jeane! Jeane!" she shouted.

"Hurry, sweet, we've got a burglar!" She opened the door to find that Jeane was already out of bed and speaking into a telephone.

"Hallo, police!" she said, as her aunt stood gaping at her. "This is Jeane Sandford, two-one-seven, Maryland Drive. I've been robbed!"

Sergeant Handley, rudely wakened from a nap in the charge-room at the police station by the noise of a telephone bell, responded sleepily:

"You been what? That's what I thought you said, but— Yes, we'll send an officer right away."

Lew was in his own private sitting-room, on an upper floor of the police station, when a bell summoned him to a telephone there. He had been about to retire for the night and was half-dressed.

"Nagel speaking," he said into the instrument. "What? Do you know any more jokes? Did you say Sandford?"

"Uhuh!" boomed Sergeant Handley's voice in his ear.

"Send a couple of men over. I'll be there right away."

In less than ten minutes Lew was at the wheel of a squad car and had left Main Street behind. In one of the residential thoroughfares, not a great way from Maryland Drive, he caught sight of Steve walking briskly towards the heart of the town, and he ran the ear up to the kerb and hailed him.

"Hi, where d'you think you're going this time of night?" he demanded

"Taking myself for a walk," Steve replied. "The old insomnia's playing a return engagement. Something up?"

"A robbery."

"What?"

"Climb in!"

Steve climbed in beside his chum, and the car shot forward.

"Strangest thing I ever heard," said Steve. "Must be your imagination."

"I wonder," said Lew.

By this time all the lights were on in Jeane's bed-room and all the family were in it. Ronald, busy with a magnifying glass at the casement window, turned to remark:

"I'm pretty sure the scoundrel's left his finger-prints here."

Claire, with a notebook in one hand and a pencil in the other, burst out:

"Jeane darling, please tell me I'm not dreaming! Think of it, right out of nowhere a sure-fire plot leaps right in my lap and sits there!"

Sergeant Handley and two sleepy policemen converged upon the drive from various parts of the grounds as Lew stopped the squad car below the front porch of the house.

"See anything?" questioned Lew.

"Not a thing!" chorused the three.

"Take another look round. Not you, Handley—you come with me."

The two policemen went off to scour the grounds again, and Sergeant Handley ascended to the front door with Lew and Steve. Mrs. Wilder opened the door to them, fluttering with excitement, and led the way up to "the scene of the crime," as she called it.

"Oh, Captain Nagel," exclaimed Jeane as they entered the room, "how nice of you to come yourself! And Mr. Withers!"

"Only too glad to be of service," Lew assured her. "Look around, Handley. Has anything been touched?"

"No, not a thing," said Jeane; but Mrs. Wilder modified that statement.

"Of course my nephew's been pottering around," she said. "You see, he's been traipping to be a detective. Come, Ronald, I want you to meet Captain Nagel and Mr. Withers."

Ronald tore himself away from the window to be introduced.

"What are your ideas on this case, captain?" he asked.

"Well, first, I'll have to find out what's been stolen," said Lew.

"My necklace," said Jeane.

"Now that's what I call a real coincidence," remarked Steve. "There we were, only this afternoon, talking about—"

"Yes," she interrupted, "and my face is slightly red at this point, and you can very easily guess why. Really, I apologise for everything I said."

"Oh, well," shrugged Steve, "you know how it is with mistakes. I make them myself."

"It isn't a very valuable necklace, but I'd hate to lose it. It was a gift from my Uncle Mark."

Lew, who had been looking thoughtfully round the room, asked where she usually kept the necklace. She replied that she was not quite sure whether she had left it on the top of the dressing-table or in a drawer.

"We were all awakened by the most terrifying noise," Mrs. Wilder declared. "You'd have thought the very roof was falling over our heads. Really, I thought it was the end of the world."

Sergeant Handley was studying the window-frame beside Ronald. Claire pointed to the bed.

"Would your mind showing me just where you were lying?" she asked.

"What?" Jeane looked round. "Oh, no; of course not. I was right here like this." She flung herself on the left side of the bed.

"It was the other pillow," blurted Steve.

"So it was," said she, sitting up abruptly.

"How do you know so much about it?" rapped Lew.

"Only the other pillow had the impression of a head." Steve explained without the slightest hesitation.

Claire made a note of that in her book.

"Isn't it wonderful, Muffin," she said, "the powers of detection these newspaper men have. I'm going to put you in my play, Mr. Withers—and you know what else I'm going to do? I'm going to make my play a mystery. And when you come into the scene, you're going to say: 'Seems mighty strange that Jeane's necklace was stolen on the eve of her uncle's anniversary.'"

Lew fastened on that last word.

"Anniversary?" he echoed. "What anniversary?"

"Uncle Mark's," Claire replied. "He'll have been dead a year to-morrow."

Steve, who had not forgotten his conversation with the news editor, asked Jeane if he could use the telephone, and he sat down on the bed to use the one that stood on a little table there.

Ronald, at the window, had covered the framework of the casement with dusting-powder and had blown away the surplus, revealing unmistakable finger-prints.

"I told you I'd find them there, didn't I?" he said triumphantly to the massive sergeant.

"Listen, I'm handling this!" snapped that indignant officer, "and the best thing for you to do is to keep your nose out of it."

"Well, if you'd try being my equal instead of my superior," Ronald retorted, "we might solve this crime."

Steve had got through to the "Morning Herald," and despite the lateness of the hour Hallen Middleton was still at his desk.

"Hallo, sweet child!" Steve greeted him. "This is your favourite reporter. Sure I've got a story. Give me the re-write."

"I'll take it myself," Middleton informed him tartly. "Spill it!"

Steve dictated:

"While visiting Fairview, Miss Jeane Sandford was robbed of a valuable necklace by a daring bandit who broke into her bed-room while she was fast asleep. Local police on trail of thief!" He looked up at Jeane, who was standing beside him, and he went on: "It's too bad you have no picture of Miss Sandford—it would be worth a front-page spread. What? Oh, but you haven't seen her!"

A few minutes afterwards, Lew decided that there was no point in remaining any longer on the scene of the crime.

"Don't worry about your necklace, Miss Sandford," he said. "We'll take care of it. Coming, Steve?"

"Just a minute," Mrs. Wilder intervened, "let's all think—I mean help me to concentrate." She picked up the telephone and held it in front of her eyes with a curiously rapt expression on her face. "Now, everybody keep still and look at this telephone. Far more things are solved by concentration than science ever thought of. All together, now!"

Everybody stared at the telephone,



Lew was left alone with the prisoner and gave him a tight-lipped grin that was distinctly reassuring.

except Lew and Steve: Lew stared at its holder. Steve looked at Jeane.

"Oh, it's no use, captain!" Mrs. Wilder lamented after a while. "I can't get a thing from the telephone."

Lew moved towards the door, but she put down the telephone and followed him.

"Oh, captain, may I see you alone a minute?" she fluttered.

"Why, certainly," said Lew, and they went out together.

Steve produced a notebook and pencil and led Jeane away from the others.

"Tell me, Miss Sandford," he said fatuously, "married?"

"Miss," she reminded him.

"Oh, yes! Er—contemplate it?"

"Some day."

He made a note of that.

"Do you mind if I tell my readers what kind of men you prefer?"

"Well, Mr. Withers, I'm afraid you have me there. I've never been quite able to decide. What would you suggest?"

Steve screwed up one eye as though giving the matter earnest attention.

"I don't think you should marry a business man," he said. "No, I think I'd say a literary man would be more your type."

"Yes?" murmured Jeane.

"Yes. And he should be tall and strong, with a sense of humour and a smile—a man who thinks you're the most wonderful girl he ever met."

She gave him an arch little glance and a smile to match his own.

"Well, you make him sound very attractive I must say," she admitted.

She went out with him to the stairs, which Sergeant Handley had already descended. Lew was in the hall at the foot of them with Mrs. Wilder, and he was saying:

"But what makes you think there's more behind it?"

"Because Mark gave the necklace to Jeane, and he'll have been dead a year to-morrow," Mrs. Wilder somewhat cryptically replied. "Oh, captain, it was too bad you weren't here for his funeral. You'd have thought he was a gangster—more flowers than you could count!"

"But what has that got to—"

"That's just what I'm trying to tell you. To-morrow, at midnight, all the Sandfords are gathering at the house on the top of Jackson Hill."

"For what?" asked Lew in a very puzzled voice.

"To hear Mark's will. It's going to be read."

"At midnight?"

Mrs. Wilder nodded.

"Poor Mark was a little queer—and out crazy, some people say. The 'Auction Room' is what they call his house. Every inch of it cluttered with things from all over the world. You see, Mark was a skipper of the old school. But the question is—"

"The question is," Lew anticipated for her, "why should Mark's necklace be grabbed just before the reading of the will. Is that right?"

"Yes, I can't understand it," Mrs. Wilder turned to Steve as he and Jeane reached the bottom stair. "Oh, Mr. Withers, I want to see you, too! If you should say anything about me in your newspaper, please remember that my first name is Rosalind, not Muffin. Poor, dear mother, bless her, first time she saw me said: 'Oh, doctor, she's as round as a muffin!'" The explanation was accompanied by a titter. "A silly name, of course, but cute don't you think?"

"Good-night," said Lew. "You'll hear from me in the morning."

Steve said good-night to Jeane, and he and Lew took their departure. Ser-

gent Handley was standing by the squad car with one of the policemen.

"Well?" barked Lew.

"Nothing doing, captain," reported the officer, whose name was Dilloway. "I searched the whole place and found nothing but a couple o' cats talkin' things over."

"Just what I expected. All right, boys."

Rendezvous at Midnight

INSTEAD of dropping Steve at the hotel in Grant Avenue, where he was living at the expense of the "Morning Herald," Lew drove him straight to the police station and marched him into his own room there. He closed the door and stood with his back to it, and then he said sharply:

"Well, where is it?"

"Eh?" Steve tried to look astonished. "Where's what?"

"The necklace?"

"Are you trying to insinuate that I—"

"Aw, quit your stalling!" thundered Lew. "What kind of a sap do you take me for?"

Slowly Steve put his hand in his coat-pocket, and slowly he brought out the necklace. He offered it to Lew with a sheepish grin, but Lew would not have it.

"Oh, you're not giving it to me!" he snorted. "I don't want any part of it. You know what I ought to do? I ought to lock you up!"

"Aw, come on, wipe that sour look off your face," urged Steve. "You know darn well I pulled this little stunt as much for you as for myself."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah. Laid my good reputation wide open to save you from going nuts. Besides, I didn't steal it—I only borrowed it. What's more—"

"Save your explanation for the little brown-eyed girl," barked Lew, and he turned and opened the door. "You're gonna hot-foot it right back with her necklace!"

"Eh?" Steve was horrified.

"Sure. That should boost your stock a hundred per cent! I've let you get away with a lot of stuff, but this is one time you've got yourself into a pretty mess."

"Listen," howled Steve, "do you think I'm going back there and say that I—"

"You're going back there and tell them that you stole it!" roared Lew. "That's exactly what you're gonna tell them!"

"Oh, now wait a minute, Lew. I don't feel so well to-night. Wait till to-morrow, anyway, till after I've had my oatmeal. Besides, they're all in bed!"

"That didn't worry you when you broke in," was the implacable rejoinder, "and I don't see why it should worry you now. Pull up anchor and shove off!"

"Doesn't it mean anything to you that we've been bosom pals for years?" wheedled Steve. "How do you expect me to look the world straight in the face again?"

"Are you going back by yourself," demanded Lew, "or do I have to take you?"

"All right, all right. I'm going." Steve dropped the necklace back in his pocket and went out across the charge-room into the night.

About forty minutes later, Lew was fast asleep in his own bed on the floor above, and the moon was shining right in his face, when a loud banging on the bed-room door shattered his dreams and caused him to sit bolt upright.

"Who is it?" he bellowed.

July 23rd, 1928.

"Steve!" called an anguished voice. "Open up!"

In his pyjamas Lew went to the door, and Steve was admitted.

"What are you doing back here?" Lew inquired harshly. "What happened?"

"Now, now, take it easy, Lew," implored Steve. "I'm standing right on the edge of a nervous breakdown."

"I don't care what you're standing on! Did you, or didn't you, return that necklace?"

"I did not."

Lew raised his fist as though to strike, and Steve shrank away from it.

"It was coaxed right out of my pocket," he mourned.

"If this is another of your stunts," threatened Lew, "you'll wish you never pulled it!"

"No, this is on the level," Steve sounded sincere. "I stepped in at Carroll's Bar on the way to pick up a double Scotch. Even you wouldn't expect me to face the Sandfords without a little inside help. And, so help me, Lew, when I felt for the necklace after I'd left the bar it was gone. I headed right back into the joint, but nothing doing—nobody knew anything about it."

"Is that straight?"

"So help me Hannah!" Steve held up his right hand.

"Did you know anybody in that bar besides the bartender?"

"No, there were a couple o' guys in there, but I don't know who they were."

Lew sat down on the edge of his bed and scratched the back of his neck.

"Well, maybe Muffin's not such a nitwit after all," he commented. "There may be more to this than we realise. You meet me downstairs, to-morrow night, at a quarter to twelve. We'll run up to that house, on the top of Jackson Hill."

Steve went off to his hotel, and he slept late into the next morning. The day passed uneventfully, so far as he and Lew were concerned, and at the appointed time the two set off for Jackson Hill in the squad car.

The house on the top of the hill was a large and rambling one, built mainly of stone, and silhouetted against the moonlit sky it had a mysterious and almost eerie appearance.

Neglected lawns surrounded it, and above its dark bulk a clock in a wooden tower was striking midnight as Lew parked the car just inside the drive and walked with Steve across the grass towards a terrace that stretched along the front wall.

Other cars upon the gravel below the front steps indicated clearly enough that the Sandfords had assembled in the house, and Lew led the way up to the terrace and along it to french windows through the glass panes of which a light shined.

There were curtains over the windows, but they were not drawn right across it, and Lew found that one of the doors was unfastened and managed to open it slightly without even a creak.

In what evidently was a spacious dining-room seven people were seated at a long table of polished oak, four on one side and three on the other. A chandelier hung from the ceiling, and cobwebs hung from the chandelier, but the light in the room came from two seven-branched candlesticks set upon the table.

Through a pillared and curtained opening at the end of the room part of the hall was visible, and as Lew and Steve watched a lean and elderly man with a long face, singularly thin about the jaws, crossed the hall into the room

carrying a lighted candle in a silver candlestick.

He set the candlestick down upon the table and took a long envelope from his pocket—an envelope bearing several wax seals.

"As Mark Sandford's attorney," he said in almost a sepulchral voice, "I greet you all."

"Looks like the Sandford handicap's about to get under way," whispered Lew.

Ceremoniously the lawyer, Stuart Hackett by name, seated himself at the head of the table. Jeane was on his right, dressed in black with a queer little fur hat upon her head. Mrs. Wilder, next to her, was also in mourning. On Mrs. Wilder's right was Edmund Sandford, the man Steve had pointed out to Jeane as a desperate character. Ronald Sandford was on the other side of the table, facing Jeane, and Claire was next to him; then came a full-faced and thick-lipped member of the family whose name was Herbert and who seemed to be rather the worse for drink, and beside him was a bold-eyed blonde who was his wife Grace.

Herbert Sandford said thickly and facetiously across the table:

"Hi, Muffin, did you ever try to say alum—alum—aluminum when you were tight?"

"Please, Herbert, please!" admonished the lawyer. "At least, show a little respect for your brother's memory!"

With a little preliminary cough he adjusted a pair of spectacles on his nose, broke the seals of the envelope, and extracted a document which he opened out.

"I shall now read the will you have all been waiting to hear," he announced, and he began to do so. "I, Mark Sandford, of lawful age and sound mind and not acting under duress, menace, fraud, or undue influence of any person, do declare my last will and testament as follows:

"You, my family, are now looking upon my old home for the last time. After this will has been read my house shall be locked by my attorney for ever, to be my home in death as it was in life."

Hackett looked over his spectacles at Mrs. Wilder.

"To my sister Rosalind, sometimes known as Muffin," he read, "I leave—my sympathy. A gabby and constant chatterer like Rosalind deserves nothing more. We shared no bond in life, so why in death?"

Mrs. Wilder winced and turned her head to look up at an oil-painting on the wall over the mantelpiece—a portrait of an elderly man dressed as a sea-captain. There were tears in her eyes.

"As the horses go to the post," Lew whispered to Steve, "Lady Muffin is scratched."

"To my brother Edmund," pursued the lawyer, "I am leaving good advice. He should learn to think and act for himself. Had he done so he would never have put his trust in our brother Herbert, who—as a so-called stockbroker—succeeded in draining him of every dollar he had. I worked too hard to accumulate my fortune to have Edmund squander any part of it."

Edmund Sandford folded his arms and dropped his head. Herbert Sandford chuckled audibly; but his turn followed.

"To my brother Herbert I leave regrets—regrets that I had to have him for a brother. Always selfish and impossible, the only sympathy I ever had for him was when he was foolish enough to take Grace off a trapeze and marry her. However, if she leads him

a wild fling it will not be on my money."

Herbert puffed out his lips and hicoughed. His wife made a grimace at him.

"That leaves two more at the post," whispered Lew.

"To my nephew Ronald," Stuart Hackett resumed, and his voice was like the voice of Fate. "I leave Claire. And to Claire I leave Ronald. As I myself leave both these fools, I feel that death has its compensations."

"That leaves one entry," Steve whispered to Lew. "Boy, what I'm going to learn about brown-eyes!"

The lawyer glanced at Jeane. "Now as to my niece Jeane," he read out. "Undoubtedly Jeane is the cream of the Sandfords, so I am leaving the disposal of my estate to her, in accordance with further instructions which she will find in the two centre stones of a necklace I have already given her."

Jeane gave a little gasp of dismay, and her hand went to her throat. She started to rise, but the lawyer motioned to her to remain seated.

"Please," he said, "there is still more. If, however, Jeane may have considered the necklace old-fashioned and did not think enough of me to have kept it throughout these years, she will find her pride to have been very costly. In such an event my attorney will open my sealed instructions and dispose of my estate, dividing it among such charities as he shall see fit to designate."

The will was folded and restored to its envelope.

"That is all," said its reader.

"But, Mr. Hackett," stammered Jeane. "I—I haven't the necklace."

"What?"

"It was stolen!"

Amid the excited chatter that followed, Lew whispered to Steve:

"You've sure made a mess of things this time!"

"Well, that changes everything," said Hackett with a frown. "Puts the burden of disposing of the estate right on my shoulders, doesn't it?" He produced another long sealed envelope from a pocket. "I have the instructions here. Naturally, I shall have to execute them right away."

The french windows swung wide, and eight startled faces were turned towards them as Lew burst into the room with Steve.

"Just a minute!" cried Lew, striding towards the lawyer.

"Captain Nagel!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilder. "What on earth—"

"I hope you'll pardon the intrusion, Mrs. Wilder," Lew interrupted, "but I felt sure we'd be needed." He addressed Hackett. "Miss Sandford reported the theft of her necklace to me last night," he said, "and as I can guarantee the return of it within forty-eight hours, I'd suggest that the instructions remain sealed until that time—if that meets with your approval."

"A very good idea, captain." The lawyer restored the envelope to his pocket. "Personally, I have no wish to assume so great a responsibility."

The Sandfords began to rise from the table.

"I'm so glad you were here, captain," said Jeane. "I don't know how to thank you."

"Don't try," returned Lew. "It's all in a day's work."

Herbert Sandford lurched over to the mantelpiece.

"Look, everybody," he guffawed.

"I'm darned if the wart on Mark's nose isn't getting bigger."

Everybody stared up at the painting. "A little bicarbonate of soda might shrink it a bit," said Grace, with a hard laugh.

"I don't think you're a bit funny, either of you," Jeane rebuked; and then Hackett suggested that as business was over they might as well all depart.

The Sandfords began to drift away across the hall. Jeane picked up a coat she had dropped on a chest there, and the lawyer blew out the candles in the seven-branched candlesticks and picked up the other one.

Steve walked down the front steps with Jeane, but Lew lingered on the pillared porch till Hackett emerged from the house and closed the heavy front door and locked it.

"Do you really think you'll recover the necklace in forty-eight hours?" inquired the lawyer, pocketing the key.

"Thinking has nothing to do with it, Mr. Hackett," replied Lew. "I'm positive."

Strange Happenings

LEW was at his desk in his own room at the police station, next morning, when Steve walked into it carrying a well-filled canvas bag almost large enough to be called a sack.

"You know, Lew," he said with a yawn, "I couldn't sleep all night for thinking about this thing."

"That makes two of us," said Lew.

"But suddenly I had a great hunch. The bag was deposited on the desk.

"So did I. Keer, the jeweller, is on his way over."

"What's Keer got to do with all this?" Steve blankly inquired.

"A lot," Lew raised his voice because he had heard a knock at the door. "Come in!"

The little jeweller entered, hat in hand.

"You sent for me, captain?" he asked.

"Yes, Mr. Keer," Lew responded briskly. "Could you make a necklace for me if I described it?"

"Oh, certainly!"

"You must understand this is a police matter, so not a word to anyone. This necklace must be made of large quartz, not expensive, each piece separated by a small crystal."

The little jeweller caressed his chin.

"Sounds like one I once made for poor old Mark Sandford," he said.

"He wanted it made just so."

"What?" Lew's brows went up.

"How well do you remember it?"

"Oh, perfectly! And, anyway, I still have the original design. In fact, I have a setting that's almost identical."

"What about the stones? Have you any of them?"

"Yes," was the reply, "but they're a lot cheaper than Mark's were."

"So much the better! Can you have that made for me by to-night?"

"If I rush it through."

"Well, then rush it, Mr. Keer."

The jeweller promised that he would do so and went off. Steve, who had been listening to the conversation with a puzzled expression on his face, burst out:

"Call me dumb, but I don't see what good another necklace is going to do you!"

"Give yourself time, and maybe you will," retorted Lew.

"All right," Steve helped himself to the telephone and rang up the "Morning Herald."

"We'll see how smart you are," he said. "Maybe I have a surprise up my sleeve, too."

Hallen Middleton was having his scalp massaged when the telephone-bell rang in his den, but he managed to answer the call and he recognised Steve's voice.



Steve held her because she seemed unable to stand alone, and Lew looked at her throat. "The necklace has gone!" he exclaimed.

"Say, what's got into you, calling me twice in the same week?" he blared with heavy sarcasm.

"Listen, sweet child," purred Steve, "this story oughta make your new hair leap right to your scalp. You ready? 'Organised thievery, which has been going on in Fairview for several months, has finally been traced to a ghost gang. This gang receive their name from the weird and mysterious way in which they work. More concrete evidence regarding them is expected within the next forty-eight hours; until then the police refuse to say anything for publication.' That's all."

The receiver was restored to the prongs of Lew's old-style telephone, and the reporter grinned at him.

"And that, my little chickadee, is only a sample," he said. "Do you know where you're going to find the headquarters of this ghost gang?"

"Sure," replied Lew, swinging to and fro in his swivel chair. "In Mark Sandford's deserted house. It doesn't take an overdose of brains to figure out that you're trying to put over a story—even though it doesn't make sense."

He reached a hand to the bag and rattled it, disturbing something inside that sounded like crockery.

"You're trying to sell me the idea of sneaking up to Mark's house to plant these fake activities for your phoney ghost gang."

"Right," confirmed Steve. "Beds that have been slept in—cards set for a table of bridge—"

"Dirty dishes in the sink," suggested Lew.

"Right again. A couple of current magazines scattered about."

"And then we pull a fake raid!"

"What a story, even though the gang have escaped! Fairview will be rid of them for ever."

"Stick around until to-night," said Lew, "and then you'll see things happen. Have a cigarette?"

Between half-past eight and nine o'clock, that evening, Lew and Steve mounted the front steps of the house on the top of Jackson Hill. The house was in darkness; the grounds were full of shadows because the moon was obscured by clouds.

Steve, who was carrying the canvas bag, was about to pass from the porch on to the terrace when Lew stopped him and tried the handle of the front door. He did not expect the door to be unlocked, but it was, and he opened it.

They stepped into the hall, and Lew took an electric torch from his pocket and switched on its light while Steve closed the door. For the better part of a minute they remained motionless, but not a sound reached their ears.

"We'll take the principal bed-room first," said Lew, "muss up the bed, and put the alarm clock beside it. Watch your step so you don't stumble and break those dishes."

They climbed the stairs the lawyer had descended the night before, and from the upper hall they passed into a front bed-room of considerable size. The beam of the torch picked out furniture that should have been under dust-covers, but was not. The sheets and blankets of a double bed were already in a state of disorder, as though someone had slept in it quite recently.

"Do you see what I see?" exploded Lew.

"Yeah." Steve picked up a newspaper from a chair. "Yesterday's 'Courier'!" he exclaimed.

July 23rd, 1928.

"If this is your idea of a joke," raged Lew, "you'd better head for the first exit."

"Are you trying to insinuate I'm responsible for this?" howled Steve. "Not me! All we need now is a deck of cards!"

The beam of the torch shifted from the bed to a table—and on the table cards were spread out as though someone had been playing Patience.

"And there they are!" said Lew.

With startling suddenness a nerve-racking din filled the room. It seemed to originate somewhere near the head of the bed, and Lew turned the light of the torch in that direction. Steve gasped at sight of a cheap alarm clock on a little table there.

"What's the matter, Handsome?" jeered Lew, as the din ceased. "You aren't frightened, are you?"

"That's a pretty feeble word for the way I feel," confessed Steve. "Let's get out of here!"

They went out from the room and down the stairs.

"You know I'm beginning to think there really is a ghost gang," said Steve.

"Maybe you're right," said Lew. "And whatever it is we haven't even scratched the surface."

They passed a bronze figure of a Japanese warrior, and came to one of the heavy curtains over the entrance to the dining-room in which the will had been read. Lew shone his torch into the room, and Steve looked over his shoulder.

It seemed at first that the room was empty, but just inside the entrance a body was lying on the floor—a man's body, face downwards. Lew knelt and rolled it over, and glassy eyes in a long, lean face stared upwards.

"It's the lawyer, Hackett!" he gulped. "And he's dead!"

Steve dropped on his knees beside his chum, and he saw that there was something in the dead lawyer's right hand.

"Part of the necklace!" he exclaimed.

Lew borrowed a handkerchief and with it secured the broken piece of necklace.

"It's not the right part," he said, after he had examined it. "Mark's instructions were in the centre stones." He rolled up the handkerchief and thrust it into a pocket. "Well, one thing is cleared up," he went on grimly as he got to his feet. "Hackett's the bird that took the necklace from you, and somebody caught him with it."

"And in their struggle," suggested Steve, "Hackett got the short end and a free ride to eternity."

"Whoever it was," growled Lew, "I hope he was dumb enough to leave his finger-prints."

He stooped to grope in the dead man's pockets, and Steve asked him what he was looking for.

"Mark's sealed instructions," Lew replied. "Well, they're gone, too! Get the coroner—I'll stay here."

"What's the rush?" objected Steve. "Once the coroner gets a whiff of this, every reporter in town will be in on the yarn."

"Will you forget about your paper for a minute?" rapped Lew.

At that moment there came a sound as of someone fumbling with the handle of the front door, and he streaked out across the hall and opened it. Sergeant Handley nearly fell in over the step, but recovered his balance, blinking owlishly in the light of the torch.

"Well, what are you doing here?" Lew demanded.

"I was just tryin' to help you, captain," Handley replied. "I saw a light and thought I'd better investigate."

"Well, now that you're here you can beat it right back to town and get the coroner! Don't stand there gaping at me—we've got a homicide on our hands! After you get the coroner, round up everyone of the Sandfords and take them to the police station. Get going, get going!"

"Just a minute, Handley!" Steve wrote in his notebook and tore out the page. "First chance you get 'phone that to the 'Herald' and tell them there'll be more to come."

Handley took the piece of paper and went off with it. Lew closed the door, and as he did so heard another door being opened somewhere at the back of the house. With Steve close behind him he dived down a passage into a big, bare kitchen—and Ronald Sandford and his diminutive wife Claire shrank back against a wall as the light of the torch blazed in their faces.

"Well, good-evening," he said curtly. "What are you doing here?"

Claire was holding a little notebook; Ronald was clutching a fingerprint outfit of modest dimensions.

"We saw a light in the house," muttered the amateur sleuth, "while we were out looking for—"

"Ronald!" cried his wife warningly. "Out looking for what?" rasped Lew.

"Atmosphere for my play," said Claire. "And we found it, too. This back door has been jimmed—isn't that what you call it, dear, jimmed?"

Lew examined the double back doors, and it was quite obvious that they had been forced. He opened them and descended half a dozen stone steps to a rear terrace beyond which were flower-borders and a lawn. The moon was clear of the clouds and it was almost as light as day out there. Steve joined him on the terrace, and Ronald and Claire followed, but there was no sign of anybody in the grounds.

"Look, darling, look, real footprints!" cried Claire, pointing down to a flower-bed. "The curtain of my first act staring me right in the face."

The footprints were plain enough to be seen. They were deeply impressed in the soft mould as though someone of considerable weight had jumped from the terrace into the bed, and in the middle of each of the heelmarks there was a star-shaped depression.

"Get back into the house," commanded Lew gruffly. "We're staying here until the coroner shows up."

"The coroner?" echoed Ronald.

"What's happened?" gasped Claire.

"Just an ordinary murder," said Steve.

"I'll have to warn you," barked Lew, "that anything you say will be used against you. I'm holding both of you on suspicion of having killed Hackett. As soon as I've finished with the coroner you'll go back to the police-station with me."

Tell-tale Fingerprints

SERGEANT HANDLEY was at his desk in the charge-room at the police-station when Lew entered it with Ronald and Claire about an hour and a half later. He ushered the two captives into his own room and went back to the desk.

"The Sandfords all here?" he asked. "Yes, sir," the sergeant replied. "I locked them up."

"You did what?"

"Well, you don't think I was taking any chances with that batty bunch, do you?"

"Well, sergeant," gritted Lew, "that's just dandy. You'll be promoted for this. Get your keys and let 'em out."

Followed by the sergeant and a bunch of keys he stalked off along a corridor into the gaol part of the building, and there were the rest of the Sandford tribe behind the bars of four adjoining cells.

"We've been waiting for you, captain," said Jeane unhappily.

"Holding us on suspicion for murder is absolutely ridiculous!" stormed Grace Sandford.

"I'm sorry," Lew apologised.

The doors were unlocked, the prisoners trooped out.

"Think nothing of it, captain," urged Mrs. Wilder brightly. "As a matter of fact, I was afraid this was an experience that had passed me by."

Herbert Sandford, swaying slightly on his feet, shouted wrathfully:

"It's a fine how-d'-you-do! A Sandford is locked up like a common criminal! I ought to sue you!"

"It's quite easy to understand how you feel, Mr. Sandford," said Lew, "but mistakes will happen. This way, please."

The prisoners were shepherded into his room, Edmund Sandford threatening to take the matter up with the District Attorney.

"Better be careful how you handle me, too!" shrieked Grace. "I come from a long line of fighters."

"All right, go and sit down!" barked Lew. "All of you sit down!"

They found seats about the room, and he stood facing them from behind his desk.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen," he said, "we're going to fit the pieces together till I find out which one of you killed Hackett."

"You can't implicate me in a thing like that and get away with it!" snapped Edmund Sandford.

"You're going to have a hard time not to implicate yourself," retorted Lew. "For a man with a clear conscience you seem to be quite a bit worried. When you found that Mark had left you without a cent you went back to the house to find what you could, didn't you?"

"Did I?" was the defiant challenge. "Well, that's for you to find out."

Steve, who had stopped at a drug-store to ring up the "Morning Herald," burst in upon the assembly with a broad grin on his face.

"Hi, Middleton told me to say 'Hallo' and give you all his love and kisses," he stated with humorous intent.

"Sit down!" rasped Lew, who was in no mood for levity. "Now I want to know what each one of you was doing at eight o'clock, and I want the truth. I'll start with you, Mrs. Wilder."

Mrs. Wilder declared that she was sitting in her room, reading up on basket-ball.

"You see," she explained, "several of the girls at the club are thinking of forming a team. I called out to Jeane to ask her how she thought I'd look in shorts. Oh, captain, I'm just dying to wear them!"

Lew strode over to Jeane, who was sitting beside her aunt.

"Is that right?" he asked.

"I don't know," she replied. "I wasn't there."

"Well, where were you at eight o'clock?"

Steve bounded up from his chair to protest, but Jeane said quickly:

"Thanks, Mr. Withers, but I'm per-

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fectly willing to answer. The theft of the necklace, together with Unele Mark's will, had rather upset me, so I decided to try and get my mind off things. I went over to the public library."

"That's easy to check," said Lew.

"No, I'm afraid it isn't. I'd forgotten it was a State holiday—the library was closed. It was about eighty-three when I got back home."

"Oh, eighty-three exactly," averred Mrs. Wilder. "I was just tuning in on my favourite radio programme, 'This side of Twenty.'"

Lew moved along to Herbert Sandford, who seemed to be half-asleep beside his blonde wife.

"And you? Are you sober enough to remember anything?"

"You've got nothing on us!" cried his wife. "We were at the movies."

"And we can prove it, too," said Herbert, sitting upright. "I've got the stubs right here."

He was fumbling in a waistcoat pocket when Lew happened to glance at Edmund Sandford, who was sitting in a low chair with his knees crossed. His right foot was extended, and on the rubber heel of his boot was a star. The glance became a fixed stare.

"What are you looking at?" asked the wearer of the boot.

"You!" snapped Lew. "Well, Edmund, it's all over but the hanging. You were at Mark's house to-night. You left your footprints outside the back door."

"Well, what if I did?" challenged

the suspect, springing to his feet with a steely glint in his dark eyes. "That doesn't make me out a murderer. I might have gone to the house to find out—"

"To find out where Mark hid his money!"

"Yes, maybe."

Ronald Sandford rose importantly. "Perhaps I could clear this thing up for you, captain," he said. "I'd like to take a fingerprint impression of all the Sandfords including myself."

He opened the little leather-covered case he was carrying and stood waiting hopefully.

"Go on, Lew, give him a chance," laughed Steve.

Lew nodded, and the would-be detective went straight to Mrs. Wilder, held out an inked pad, and marched her over to the desk.

"Wet your fingers on this," he said.

"You know, Jeane," said his victim, as she contemplated the black stuff on her hand after it had come into contact with the pad, "I've always told you there's nothing like clean wholesome fun."

"Now press your fingers on this paper," directed her nephew.

Her fingerprints decorated the sheet of paper he had taken from the case, and she stared at them.

"Aren't they funny?" she giggled.

Jeane's turn came next, then Edmund's.

"You're next, honey," said Ronald to his own wife.

While handkerchiefs were being used vigorously by those who had submitted, he took Grace Sandford's fingerprints and then her husband's.

"To complete the Sandford record," drawled Herbert, "you ought to go up to Mark's house and take his fingerprints, too."

Ronald ignored the unpleasant pleasantry.

"Well, now that I've got all the others," he said, "I'll take my own."

While he was doing so Steve remarked to Lew:

"Be a laugh if it did prove anything, wouldn't it?"

"Wouldn't it?" chuckled Lew.

Ronald walked over to Steve.

"Would you mind holding these a minute?" he asked, and Steve received the pad, the sheet of paper, and a magnifying-glass. They were thrust upon him so clumsily that his fingers became inked on the pad, but Ronald did not seem to notice the circumstance.

"Now listen, folks," said Lew sharply, as chatter broke out all round the room. "we're going to stay right here until I find out what each one was doing at eight o'clock, and—"

"I thought so!" broke in an exultant voice, and Lew swung round to see Ronald at the desk, magnifying-glass in hand and studying the sheet of paper in conjunction with a card he had taken from his pocket. Steve was wiping his smudged fingers.

"You thought what?" barked Lew.

"It worked!"

"What worked?"

Quivering with excitement, Ronald handed over the magnifying-glass.

"On this card," he said, "is a transfer of the finger-prints I found on Jeane's window frame after her necklace was stolen. Mr. Withers was kind enough to oblige with his impression. It's exactly the same as that one."

Lew compared the two sets of prints.

"You're right," he said loudly and with a heavy frown.

"Oh, of all things!" shrieked Mrs. Wilder.

"I don't believe it!" stormed Jeane, her eyes on Steve's very red face.

Herbert Sandford rose unsteadily.

"It only goes to show you never can tell," he proclaimed, slurring his words.

The other rose, Edmund declaring that he wasn't at all surprised.

"What have you got to say, Mr. Withers?" demanded Lew ominously.

"Captain," stammered Steve, "I—I don't know what to say. I—er—I—"

"There's nothing you can say!" Ronald shouted at him. "I suspected you all along."

"Yeah?" murmured Steve.

"Indeed he did," asserted Claire, "and I'm going to make you the thief in my play, because Ronald was sure it was you he saw running away from the house the night the necklace was stolen."

"But I couldn't accuse you till I had proof," said Ronald.

"Oh, but you must be wrong!" protested Jeane. "It just doesn't make sense!"

"You're not the only one he hoodwinked behind all this reporter stuff," Ronald retorted. "He probably knows plenty about the murder, too. I demand that you lock him up, Captain Nagel."

"Tell him where he gets off!" howled Steve; but Lew glared at him.

"I'm telling you where you get off," he thundered. "Where's the necklace?"

"You're the detective?" returned Steve quite angrily, "you find it!"

"Oh, smart guy, eh? You're under arrest!"

"What?"

"Don't 'what' me! You're under arrest!"

"But, Lew—"

"I'll have to warn you—whatever you say will be held against you."

"Oh," said Steve bitterly, "so that's how it is, is it?"

"Yeah, that's how it is."

"Then hold this against me and get it straight, because I'm only gonna say it once. I could be strung up by the neck for what I'd like to do to you."

While the others looked on, some with horror, some with more or less satisfaction, Steve advanced with clenched fists upon his chum.

"Go ahead and poke me in the nose," he blared, "but I still think you're—"

"If you don't shut up I'm liable to do just that!" threatened Lew.

"You're a brave guy, you are!"

With a sudden sweep of his arm that caught him in the jaw Lew sent the infuriated reporter blundering backwards into a chair, then opened the door into the charge-room and bellowed for Handley.

The massive sergeant appeared with celerity.

"Lock him up!" snapped Lew, jerking his thumb in Steve's direction.

"Mr. Withers?" gasped the astounded sergeant.

"Yes, lock him up!"

"Nobody's going to lock me up!" defied Steve, adopting a fighting attitude, but the sergeant caught hold of him as though he were a mere child, pinioned his arms behind his back, and bundled him out from the room.

"Captain," taunted Edmund Sandford, as Lew slammed the door, "how does it feel to know that you were barking up the wrong tree?"

"We all make mistakes?" growled Lew.

"Well," said Mrs. Wilder, "now that the clouds have lifted I think I'll July 23rd, 1938.

go home and try to make a contact with Mark. He always said give a thought to your departed and they'll give a thought to you."

"Just a minute," Lew raised an imperious hand. "There's still some unfinished business."

He went to the telephone on the desk and he asked the operator at the local exchange to put him through to the sheriff's office. The others waited, staring at one another, and presently he said:

"Hallo, sheriff. Nagel of Fairview speaking. I want you to seal a house up for me in the morning—sealed so tight that nobody can get in. Yes."

He replaced the receiver.

"I just want you all to know," he said, "that I'm helping you keep faith with Mark Sandford. You may go."

The Sandfords went, most of them in haste to get out of the building. Jeane was the last to reach the door, and he called her back.

"I want to see you," he said gravely. "Won't you sit down?"

She nodded and walked over to a chair near a steel filing cabinet, and he closed the door.

The Man in the Room

IT was not till he had returned to the desk and dropped into his chair behind it that he looked at her beautiful face, and then he saw that she was crying.

"Why the tears?" he asked gruffly.

"Steve, eh?"

She nodded miserably, wiping her eyes with a very inadequate handkerchief.

"It was awfully easy to like him," she said. "I would have bet my last nickel he was head and shoulders above anything like this."

"If I were you," he returned with a smile, "I'd still give him the benefit of the doubt." He dived a hand into his coat-pocket and brought out an almost perfect copy of the necklace that had been lost. "Here, I want you to wear this."

"My necklace!" she exclaimed in amazement.

"No," he corrected, "just a cheap imitation, but I want you to pretend it's the real thing and wear it for the next twenty-four hours. Be sure that everybody sees it."

She took the necklace, staring at him. "But what will I say about it?" she asked. "They'll be sure to question me."

"That's what I'm banking on," said he. "When's your next birthday?"

"The eighteenth of this month," she replied wonderingly. "That'll be a week from Thursday."

"Fine! I want you to tell everybody that your uncle's entire fortune is hidden in the house, but that the will provides you're not to receive it until your birthday."

She fastened the necklace round her throat.

"Do you mind if I ask what you expect to happen?" she inquired.

"Plenty. The one who has the real necklace will know it's a cooked-up story. More than that, they'll know I'm turning on the heat. That's why I'm having the house sealed—to egg them on."

"You mean you think someone will go back to the house?"

"Just as soon as they hear your story."

Three reporters from the city of Hartford had entered the charge-room from the street, and they were asking for Lew when he emerged from his room with Jeane and recognised them.

"Hallo, boys! I'll see you in a minute."

He escorted the girl to the front steps and went back to deal with the reporters.

"Now how about a statement on the murder?" asked one.

"Sorry, boys," he replied. "I haven't a thing to say."

"Not even a few simple words, eh?" asked another disgustedly. "I suppose you gave it all to Withers?"

"Yeah, I gave it all to Withers," said Lew. "In fact, I gave him the business. Take a look!"

He opened the door that led to the cells, and two of them went to bait Steve in his cage. The third lingered to say:

"You don't deserve it, Nagel, but I've got a news story I think you'd appreciate. Kennedy's been boosted to Commissioner."

Lew compressed his lips.

"What's that got to do with me?" he barked.

"Oh, nothing. I just thought you'd like to know he's making good."

"Thanks."

The reporter followed his colleagues, and Lew went to the sergeant's desk.

"On your toes, Handley," he said urgently. "Take some of your men up to the Sandford house right away. Lie low up there, and let anyone in that wants to get in, but don't let anyone get out. Understand?"

"Right, captain," nodded the sergeant; and then Lew made for the cells.

Steve was informing his persecutors that anything he said would be unfit to print.

"All right, boys, scram!" commanded Lew. "I'll see you to-morrow."

The three reporters departed none too willingly, and Lew was left alone with the prisoner and gave him a tight-lipped grin that was distinctly reassuring.

"Congratulations," said Steve. "What a show you put on, boy! I wouldn't have believed you had it in you."

"You weren't so bad yourself," said Lew, "but were we in a spot, or were we in a spot?"

"You can quote me as saying we were."

Lew opened the door of the cell, and they shook hands.

"It worked like a charm," said Lew.

"With you under lock and key, the Sandfords think I'm through with them. I'll lay you odds I have the whole thing cleared up before midnight. Before I turned 'em loose I let them know that I was having Mark's house sealed in the morning."

"Oh!" Steve chuckled. "You figure that whichever one of them killed Hackett will sneak up there to-night and try to find out what he was after—right?"

"Right! And we'll sneak back to the house ourselves."

"I'll have to buzz old sour-puss first," decided Steve. "I'll meet you there, eh?"

"Okay. But be careful what you say for publication."

Steve went off to telephone the "Morning Herald," and Lew made for the garage of the police station.

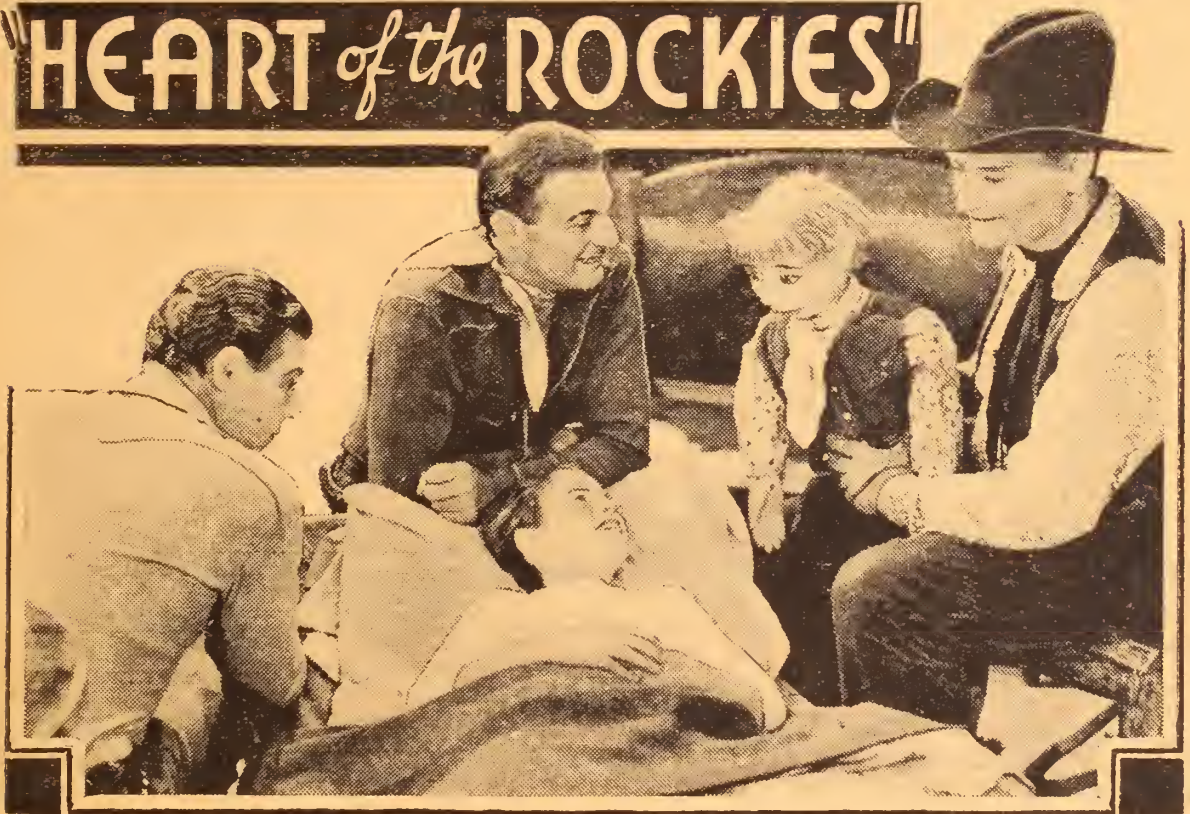
Half an hour afterwards, the squad car was standing under some trees just inside the gateway of the house on Jackson Hill, and Lew had found Sergeant Handley behind a bush facing the front of the house without the slightest difficulty.

"Are you sure nobody came in or out?" he questioned.

(Continued on page 25)

The Three Mesquiteers lose a lot of cattle and think that bears from the nearby game reserve are to blame, but they discover the truth and become involved with the wardens and a gang of unscrupulous trappers. Starring Bob Livingston, Ray Corrigan and Max Terhune

"HEART of the ROCKIES"



Menaced by Bears

THE Three Mesquiteers were not their usual cheerful selves as they made a tour of their ranch. The three friends who had had so many adventures together had a ranch at the foot of the Rockies, and working hard they made it pay handsomely, but recently they had been losing cattle. Three or four head a week, and they had a suspicion it was rustlers.

It was the tall, broad-shouldered Tucson Smith who saw the ragged, unshaven figure that tried to scuttle away into the bush, and it was Stony Brooke, the virile, handsome Romeo of the band, who snaked a rope over the man's head, whilst Lullaby Joslin, the big fellow with the ready wit, played with a gun in case the prisoner should prove dangerous.

They recognised their captive as Enoch Dawson. He belonged to a nomad mountain clan, who lived not many miles from their ranch, and existed by trapping wild animals. A crafty, unsavoury bunch of squatters was Lullaby's definition of the Dawson clan, and the only redeeming feature to the minds of the Three Mesquiteers were Lorna and young Davy. It puzzled them how so pretty a girl as Lorna could ever have been bred of such stock, whilst her small brother Davy was a freckled, open-faced young rip. They were to find out later that they were foster children.

Enoch showed no sign of fight, but he eyed the Mesquiteers malevolently.

"Start talking," ordered Tucson. "What were you doing on our range land?"

"And why did you try to duck out when we spotted you?" added Stony.

"Well, I was sorta surprised when I seen you Three Mesquiteers," mumbled Enoch. He hesitated. "And—"

"And having a guilty conscience you decided to beat it?" prompted Stony.

"You boys have got me all wrong," Enoch shook his head. "I ain't never touched your cattle. I was laying my traps for wild cats on your range when you come along. It's the animals in the National Park what's been killing your stock."

The Three Mesquiteers glanced round instinctively. They could see clearly the strong, close-weaved wire fence that enclosed the National Park that bordered their property.

"I can prove it," added Enoch.

The trapper led them through the woods to a clearing and pointed to a badly mauled young calf that lay dead near some brush.

"Skull's been crushed by a heavy blow," called out Tucson, the first to vault down from his bronc.

"Only a bear kills that way," explained Enoch. "You'll see a lot of bear tracks around here."

The Mesquiteers knew bear tracks when they saw them.

"Enoch, we're sorry we suspected you," Stony gouted apologetically.

"Well, that's all right," Enoch half smiled, showing discoloured teeth. "After this, when I want to do any trapping on your land I'll ask ya."

After strapping the dead calf to a saddle the Three Mesquiteers rode off, and Enoch Dawson watched them with mocking derision in his dark eyes. The poor fools quite thought bears got their cattle and were planning to go bear-hunting.

The Mesquiteers decided to ride close to the fencing of the Blackstone National Park game preserve. They sighted a herd of deer that tossed up their heads as they got their scent, but made no attempt to scamper away.

"My, but they're tame," cried Lullaby. "Bet they never heard a shot fired in their lives."

"They're gonna hear one now," answered Tucson, whisking a rifle from a saddle holster. "See that wild cat stalking them?"

Tucson missed, but his shots went close enough to make that wildcat decide the neighbourhood was unhealthy. They rode on their way, but the shots had been heard by the game wardens, who watched over the park. Good-hearted fellows, but very suspicious. They had reason to suspect that men had entered the game preserves in recent months and that deer had been slaughtered. Hearing these shots they decided it was game rustlers.

The Mesquiteers had not ridden far when they sighted a small bear and it headed for the game preserve. Tucson's rifle barked, but his shooting was not accurate enough at that range. The bear went into the park and the Mesquiteers jumped a gate in the wire fence. They fired with the rifle and their revolvers, but the bear got to cover behind a rock, and they were making disgustedly for the boundary when Lullaby pointed.

"Game wardens," he cried. "If they catch us in the park with firearms we'll be fined."

The Three Mesquiteers beat it for safety with four wardens in close pursuit. These range wardens wore a uniform July 23rd, 1938.

form not unlike that of the Canadian Mounted Police, though the chief colour was blue. They would not have succeeded in catching the trespassers if Lullaby's horse hadn't tripped and flung him from the saddle. Of course, they had to go back to help him, and that enabled the wardens to surround them.

"You boys weren't in any hurry to get out of the park, were you?" The speaker was a middle-aged man, who glowered at them from beneath bushy eyebrows. The other wardens were young men.

"Well—or—now that you mention it, Captain Brady, we were in a bit of a hurry," admitted Tucson.

"Well, I don't have to tell you the park regulations," Brady barked out. "Hand over your guns."

"We trailed a calf-killing bear in here from our range," indignantly explained Stony. "And it's got to be destroyed."

"Nothing doing, Stony," Brady was a strict adherer to the law. He prided himself that nobody ever broke any of the regulations of this park and got away with it. A stubborn man was Brady, and the preservation of the game was an obsession. "You know the law absolutely forbids shooting anywhere within the park boundaries."

"But look at our side of it, Brady," Tucson argued. "Your mountain lions and bears, which are encouraged to thrive here, come out of the park and they kill off our stock. In the last four months we've lost thirty head of cattle and—"

"That's your look out," Brady was not sympathetic. "You look after your cattle and I'll look after my game."

Suddenly from behind a distant rock a huge bear appeared, stood on its hind legs and showed its teeth in an angry snarl.

"No moth-eaten bear is going to kill my cattle and then laugh at me," raged Stony, and whipped out his gun, but before he could fire Tucson knocked up his arm. Tucson knew one might be

surrounded by bears, but one mustn't fire a gun in the park with Brady around. The gun exploded harmlessly.

If Tucson expected any thanks for what he had done he did not get it from Brady. The hard-faced warden had drawn his own gun.

"This is something I can't overlook," he said sourly. "Hand over your gun and make it quick."

There was nothing they could do but obey. How that bear must have laughed as it lumbered away up the mountain side.

"You can get your gun back at the ranger station by putting up the regulation fine," were Captain Brady's parting words.

The Three Mesquiteers were gloomy as they headed towards their ranch. It never rained but it poured.

"We've got to fight this thing to a finish or get out of the cattle business," Stony announced.

"There's more ways of killing a bear than shooting him in a game refuge," answered Tucson.

"What do you want to do—choke him to death with calf meat?" sneered Stony.

"Did it ever occur to you that Enoch Dawson and his mountain clan make a living trapping wild animals?" Tucson spoke meaningfully.

"I got it!" It was Lullaby who answered. "Let's pay 'em a visit."

The Dawson Clan

A QUEER youngster was Davy Dawson. Actually, he was a perfectly normal, healthy boy, but his queerness lay in the strange power that he seemed to possess with all animals. Perhaps it was his kindly nature and his sympathy for the wild creatures of the forests, but with small and large creatures alike he had the gift of making friends. The mountain lion and the big bear were too wild to be tamed, but given time and opportunity Davy might even have conquered them. This power was one of the reasons why the Dawson

Clan valued the boy's gift and made use of it.

This morning he was in the old barn that he was allowed to use for his pets. What a motley throng they comprised. Most of them very young and unable to look after themselves. Any animal or bird that had lost its parents, been injured or was starving was brought back to the old barn, and when fit and strong allowed to return to the wild. That morning he had freed two young coyotes, a young lion cub, several rabbits and a black maeaw. The latter he had found with a broken wing. One of his pets that he was not allowed to free was a large mountain bear. No one but Davy could go anywhere near the big fellow.

Davy's clothes were ragged remnants of Dawson's cast-off clothing, but in his small way he was content, though there were times when his eyes would fill with tears because the Dawson Clan could be cruel and very unkind. After releasing the bird he turned his head because his sharp hearing told him horsemen were approaching. Running to a mound of rubbish he scanned the valley and then saw the Mesquiteers approaching. His hands went to his mouth and the call of the coyote came from his throat.

The Mesquiteers heard and knew it was Davy. It was his special call signal to three of his best friends. Not often did they visit the Dawson Clan, but whenever they did they had a kindly word for Davy and his sister. They picked him up and tossed him playfully to each other when they had dismissed and Davy did not seem to mind.

"How's that new splint of yours for broken wings?" asked Lullaby.

"Gee, Lullaby, swell," the boy enthused. "You ought to see the bird I just cured. If I'd known you were coming I'd have kept him. Say, you ought to see all the patients I got in my hospital."

"Let's take a look at 'em," said Lullaby.

"You want to come, too?" Davy asked Tucson and Stony.

"No, thanks." The former shook his head and grinned. "Where's your father, Davy?"

"You mean my foster father, Big Ed Dawson?" said Davy, with a scowl. "You'll find him down at the pens, feeding the foxes."

The two Mesquiteers went off to find Big Ed Dawson whilst Lullaby followed the youngster into the barn, which was not unlike a miniature zoo.

Davy proudly displayed his patients. A cage with a badger that he had found badly shot, but was now recovering.

"You ought to be a doctor when you grow up," opined Lullaby.

"That's what I want to be," eagerly agreed Davy. "See that coon. I caught him in my trap line. Pa Dawson said I could keep him 'cause his fur wasn't prime, but I'm gonna let him go before it is."

"What about that mountain lion cub you raised last year?"

"Oh, I had to chase him back into the wilds before Pa decided to skin him—"

"You can get your gun back at the Ranger station by putting up the regulation fine," said Brady.





Stony stepped forward, took the trapper by the collar, and jerked him round.

sometimes he comes when he hears me give that coyote call. But I ain't shown you nothing yet." The boy fumbled in a hut, and brought out a baby fox. "Ain't he a pip?"

Big Ed Dawson was a heavy, coarse man with thick lips and large, blood-shot eyes. Their manner was almost furtive as they watched the two Mesquiteers, and when the latter grinned a greeting their manner changed. They listened covertly to their two visitors, and then Big Ed became quite unctious in his manner.

"Mighty nice of you to tell us about that mountain lion in Echo Canyon, boys," he said. "If we can get him it'll be a hundred dollars bounty you've thrown our way."

"Well, if you can get that lion you're welcome to it," answered Stony. "It leads up to what we came to see you about—the bounty on bears."

"There ain't no bounty on bears."

"We're paying that bounty, Ed," stated Stony. "Fifty dollars apiece for every bear hide you trappers can show us, and you keep the hides. It's the only way to save our cattle."

"I get ye," Ed Dawson gave Enoch a sly glance. "But you're gonna pay out a lotta money. Say, the whole Dawson family's over at the house this afternoon. Why don't you come over and tell 'em about it."

"That's a good idea," decided Tucson.

Enoch Dawson left the Mesquiteers talking with the head of the clan, because he wanted to find out what Lullaby might be doing. He guessed he would find Lullaby talking with Davy, and his beady eyes blazed when he entered the barn to find the two watching the antics of Nero, the big bear that had been caught in a trap. Owing to the fur being out of condition the animal would have been killed but for an idea of Big Ed Dawson's. Davy had been encouraged to tame the bear, and the experiment had been a most profitable success.

"Where's Tucson and Stony?" Lullaby asked directly he saw Enoch.

"Up at the house with Big Ed. You should join 'em."

Lullaby went out of the barn, and Davy would have gone with him if Enoch had not curtly ordered him to see that the bear was chained up. Enoch feared the bear because he sensed that the big brute hated him. When the bear was secured Enoch grabbed the boy by the coat collar and brutally slapped his face. The bear went nearly mad with rage as the youngster sprawled on the ground, holding his cheek.

"I thought I told you not to tell anybody about Nero," snarled Enoch. "Now stop yer snivelling and get into the house."

The pens were some distance from the old ramshackle ranch-house and its various outbuildings, and the Mesquiteers were strolling along chatting with Big Ed when the sound of music carried clearly. Big Ed grinned to himself as he saw their expressions. Though he was pretending friendship with the Mesquiteers he hated them, and if anyone liked the Mesquiteers then they earned his hatred. Davy was one such, but the boy was useful. Lorna was another, and he knew she was sweet on Stony. Well, he'd settled that little matter, and it was going to afford him much amusement watching their faces.

The Mesquiteers found that not only were all the Dawson Clan gathered in the big living-room but there were others present—trappers, hill folk and small settlers. The music was being provided by six or seven of these settlers whose chief instruments of sound were guitars and their voices. The room was decorated with streamers, and everyone seemed to be drinking and making merry.

"Who's getting married?" Stony demanded, because he knew that this was a wedding feast.

An Italian, swarthy of skin and dark of eye, came in rolling a hoghead of beer. Big Ed waved his hand towards

him, and Stony's jaw stiffened. Charley Coe was a half-breed trapper who was linked up with the Dawson Clan, and Stony did not like the fellow, and he was not surprised when two giggling girls brought Lorna from the next room. The girl was very pale and very frightened, but she was trying not to reveal her fear. They had dolled her up in tawdry finery. A very waxy, frightened sort of old woman put a comforting arm round her and gazed nervously across at Big Ed—Mrs. Dawson was scared of her bully of a husband. Charley slung the cask on to a table, pulled out the stopper and rammed in the spout. He drew himself a glass. It was obvious that the man was very tipsy.

The Mesquiteers just stood and watched the dancers, but Stony's hands clenched when Charley reeled across the room and tried to embrace Lorna. He stepped forward, took the trapper by the collar and jerked him round. Crack! Stony's fist had landed on his jaw. Charley fell and whipped out a knife, but Lullaby stepped forward and trod full weight on his wrist.

"This monkey isn't going to marry Lorna!" Stony shouted at old Dawson. "She's only a child."

"She wants to marry Charley," answered Big Ed, and glowered at the girl. "Don't you, Lorna?"

The girl was terrified of her foster parent.

"Yes—I—I—guess so!" she stammered.

"Well, I'm not going to let her marry him, and neither would you if she were your daughter. Do you men all want to go to gaol?"

"What for?"

Tucson pushed forward.

"I've got you, Stony," he said, and his big frame towered over Big Ed. "You're forgetting that this State has a law protecting children. She can't marry until she's sixteen whether she wants to or not." The smile of relief on Lorna's face was sufficient answer.

"And I guess we won't stick around for the wedding," added Stony. "'Cause now there won't be one."

Charley would have made mischief if he had not seen the look on Big Ed's face. He feared Ed just as much as the others did.

"Thanks for warning us," Big Ed mumbled in fawning tones.

Looking disgusted, the Mesquiteers departed, and Big Ed stopped Charley from using a gun when Lorna ran out of a side door to thank her saviours.

"What's the idea? Are the Three Mesquiteers running this family now?" Charley snarled viciously.

"Listen, you, if we fight with them ranchers we can't make any more out of 'em, can we?"

"No," Charley mumbled grudgingly.

"And right now we've got 'em so darned well fooled they come here to offer us a bounty of fifty dollars apiece for bears!" He laughed hoarsely. "That surprises yuh, don't it? We sell their beef to the Park hotels and sell the Park bears to them. What's more they was right about Lorna. One of these snooping inspectors might get wise and make it mighty hot, and we don't wanna get the wrong side of the law. But there's plenty of time, Charley, and I'm her guardian."

Charlie nodded and grinned:

"When we going bear hunting?"

Davy's Accident

It was not long before the wardens of Blackstone National Park heard about the Mesquiteers and their activities:

"The Mesquiteers had threatened to clear out every bear in the park," Captain Brady told his men. "And they're living up to their reputation for keeping their word. If you run across any of them on Park property, armed, make an arrest."

The Dawson Clan knew the forests and every niche and cranny in the mountains. They knew exactly how many wardens were watching the game preserve and how best to avoid them. A number of bears had been killed and the money collected from the Mesquiteers.

"Not a ranger in sight," Big Ed said one morning. "We'll take one more bear, and then we'll quit."

"Yeah, we want some time to cover a little cattle rustling later on," retorted his son Enoch.

"Davy, you run the trap line," Big Ed looked down at the small boy. "And remember, if you get caught you're trapping for yourself."

Big Ed rode off with the half-dozen men that he had picked for the bear trapping, but Enoch lingered for a parting threat.

"And if I catch you turning any more fur loose, you'll get a worse hiding than you had 'last time."

Enoch rode off and left Davy the unpleasant job of scuttling through the undergrowth to see what spoils were in the traps that had been set during the night. Being small and clever with animals it minimised the danger of detection. The clan had other and larger traps just outside the boundary fence, and the trap line often drove animals from the Park—that and an occasional shot. There were few tricks that the Dawsons did not know.

In the first trap there was a lovely little baby fox caught by the foot. Davy raised his stick to kill the fox because the skin would be valuable, then hesitated and glanced round. He was not being spied on by Enoch. If the baby fox's leg was broken he would have to kill it because he would not be allowed

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to take it to his hospital, but if the leg were not broken he would let it go free. The leg was not broken, and the fox scampered away to freedom. The sound of horse hoofs came to his ears, timed to the least sound, and he dived into a bush. It was two of the hated wardens, and they reined in their horses close to his hiding-place.

"No sign of the Mesquiteers!" announced Brady. "Well, keep your eyes open. They're working cattle around here somewhere."

Davy saw Brady, the head warden, take a trail towards the southern boundary, whilst his assistant vanished along an eastern trail. When the boy thought it was safe he ventured out of hiding, and when he came to the fourth trap gave an eager little cry—there was a lion cub imprisoned in a cleverly camouflaged cage. The little creature snapped at him.

"Don't be scared," whispered Davy. "I won't hurt you. I'll take you home to play with Nero." He put the cub down in order to close the trap, and when he looked round his capture was scampering away into the undergrowth. "Hey, come back here!"

Davy had quite a chase before he secured the cub. He had followed the cub out of the forest into a rocky clearing, and right on the edge of a cliff the boy made a successful sprint.

"What a cute pet you're gonna be!" chortled Davy.

The words were scarcely out of his mouth before part of the ledge on which he was kneeling gave way, but though he had very little idea of what was happening his hands did not release their grip of the cub. Zonk! Almost all the breath was knocked out of his body as he crashed on his back on to a hard flat rock. Whilst he lay there hugging the lion cub a veritable avalanche of stones slithered down, and when it was finished Davy found himself powerless to move. Was his leg broken? He managed to raise himself and saw that a huge flat stone had trapped him.

Meanwhile sounds of shooting had carried to the ears of Brady, who had decided to patrol a new sector of the Park, and he collected his wardens. Naturally, this small-minded official was certain that it was one of the Three Mesquiteers. Actually it was the Dawson gang killing another bear to sell for its hide and the fifty-dollar bounty.

The Mesquiteers were out rounding up their cattle. They were planning to keep the beasts as much as possible away from the Parkstone National Park. As they chased a refractory cow they did hear distant shooting, but did not pay much attention. The cow turned suddenly and went bounding along a track that they knew led to the river. They paused for breath as there was no further need to worry.

Then suddenly to their ears came the cry of a coyote.

Lullaby looked up from mopping his streaming face with a large bandanna.

"That was Davy calling," he stated definitely. "Maybe the kid's in trouble."

They waited, and the call came again. At once they set out along the boundary with the call getting clearer. Lullaby made a hoarse attempt to imitate it. They came to the wire fence, beyond which was the rocky clearing. Tucson took out some binoculars, and he gave a gasp as he realised why Davy had sent out his call. He could just see the boy lying on a ledge, apparently unable to move, and on another ledge only a yard or so above Davy was a huge puma. He took another look and saw the

squirming object that crawled across Davy's chest.

"Davy's on a ledge. Must have fallen over." Tucson handed the glasses to Stony. "He's got a cub with him and a puma that looks like springing down on him." He drew out the rifle, which had been recovered on payment of the fine, and raised it carefully. "I've got to take a long chance."

Of course, Brady and one of his men must come charging up. They had got on the trail of the Mesquiteers, and thought they had caught them in the act.

"Hey, drop that gun!" ordered Brady.

"Take it easy, Brady!" rasped out Stony, dropping the binoculars and whipping out a gun. "One word from you and it'll be just too bad. Take your time, Tucson."

The puma jumped to a rock lower down the cliff face and was crouching to spring when Tucson fired. Tucson drilled the cat through the head with a magnificent shot.

Brady was speechless to think that the Mesquiteers could commit such a flagrant breach of the law, and then cap everything by holding him up. It shimmered through to his sluggish brain that perhaps there was more behind this than just the shooting of a puma. He saw Tucson and Lullaby clambering through the boundary fence and running through the trees.

"If you'll pick up those glasses I dropped or use your own you'll see something peculiar about that cliff face," Stony gritted out savagely. "You'll see where that stream has hollowed out a small canyon something lying on a ledge, and it ain't a bear or a lion cub. If I hadn't held you up, that something might have been as dead as that puma."

Tucson and Lullaby could only get to the boy from the top of the cliff. He had dropped about twenty feet, and the two ranchers could see no foothold that would bear their weight.

"You all right, Davy?"

"My leg's hurt, Lullaby!" Davy called up. "He held up the ball of fur. "But look what I got here."

"That kid's sure got a lot of nerve." Tucson murmured admiringly, as he uncoiled his rope. "I'd better let you down, Lullaby."

"Don't move, Davy," Lullaby ordered as he fixed the rope under his armpits. "I'll be right down and get you."

It says something for the strength and mighty muscles of Tucson that he lowered Lullaby Joslin, who was a good thirteen stone, without an effort, but it was not quite so easy to drag the big fellow back, especially as there was a small boy and a lion cub as extra weight. A scurrying of feet and he glanced round to see Stony and the two wardens. The new arrivals put their backs into it, and in a very few moments Lullaby, Davy and the lion cub were safely on the cliff top.

"Where're you hurt, Davy?" Stony asked, and the youngster, wincing with pain, pointed to his leg. Expert but gentle hands ran over the boy. Stony looked at Brady. "His leg's broken."

"We'll phone from the ranger station," gruffly stated the warden. "We'll get a doctor to Dawson's by the time you get him there."

"Thanks," Stony looked fixedly at Brady. "We'll be back to face any charges you may care to make."

"That won't be necessary." Brady was at once on his dignity. "I suppose you were justified, but remember that the next time you draw a gun on me you'd better look out."

"Whether I pull a gun on you or ain't

is up to you!" angrily cried Stony. "I'm getting tired of your interference. Come on, Tucson, let's get busy cutting some poles."

"Well, I shall arrest you fellows if any of you dare come on to Park property with firearms," mumbled Brady, and, looking sourly at the other warden, jerked his head. "Come on!"

Bear Marks and Other Clues

NATURALLY, the Dawsons were furious to find that Davy had broken his leg, but wisely they kept their anger to themselves, and made no objection to a doctor being brought in to set the boy's leg.

The Three Mesquiteers were there, and it was Lullaby Joslin who had the clever notion of amusing Davy and keeping him distracted whilst the painful setting was carried out by bringing along Elmer. One of Lullaby's attributes was the art of ventriloquism, and Elmer was a talking doll. Kids for miles around loved to listen to Elmer, who was a shock-headed ruffian of a boy that sat on Lullaby's knee, and made them die with laughing with his stories and wisecracks. And though Davy's eyes often filled with tears and he gritted his teeth as the doctor worked he managed sometimes to laugh at all the funny things Elmer had to say. But at last the broken leg was set and put into splints, and the doctor and the Mesquiteers promised to come and see Davy every day. The doctor promised because Stony had whispered that the Mesquiteers would settle the account.

For a while the Mesquiteers lost very few of their cattle, and it was several weeks after Davy's accident that it started all over again. The three ranchers were annoyed because the Dawson Clan had killed a great number of bears and collected quite a lot of money.

One day they found a dead calf and near by were bear tracks, but on this occasion the quick eyes of Stony noticed a number of small holes. He examined them closely and then called Tucson. The big fellow looked at these holes and commented that each one was exactly the same size. He looked at Stony and read the look in the latter's eyes.

"When did you see Davy last, Lullaby?"

"A couple of days ago," was the answer. "And say, he gets about on that crutch I made him like nobody's business."

"What do you suppose punched all those little holes in the ground?" Stony asked.

Lullaby went down on his knees. "Looks like somebody's been using a pole."

"Or a crutch, maybe," Stony spoke with marked significance. "Davy's got a tame bear, too, hasn't he?"

"You're loco if you think that, Stony," Lullaby got the meaning at once. "Why, Davy wouldn't help rustle our cattle—"

"Well, he couldn't help himself if Big Ed or Enoch forced him," interrupted Tucson.

"Lullaby, when we get to Dawson's compare these bear tracks with Nero's, will you?" suggested Stony.

That afternoon the Three Mesquiteers headed for the hills and the valley where the Dawson Clan lived. They were leading two small horses. When within a mile of the barn where Davy kept his pets, Lullaby made the coyote call, and a few minutes afterwards the answer came back.

Only Lorna and Davy were at the barn. Lorna had not the same power

as her brother, but she got on pretty well with most of his pets. She looked an attractive picture even in her rough, faded clothes as she stood by the barn door smiling a welcome at the Three Mesquiteers. She was busy feeding the lion cub from a bottle. Davy came limping out on his crutch and grinned from ear-to-ear at sight of his three heroes. He dragged them inside to see his new family of porcupines.

"Gee, I'm glad to see you," the boy cried. "Was I glad when I heard that coyote call. What's kept you away?"

"We're losing our cattle faster than ever," explained Stony. "But let's see how fast you're getting along." He picked the boy up in his strong arms. "We got a surprise for you."

Davy looked at Stony in surprise as the Mesquiteer carried him outside. He was still more surprised when he was placed in the saddle of a small pony.

"How is he, cowboy?" chuckled Lullaby.

"He's swell. I'd like to ride him some time."

"I'm glad you like him because he's yours," explained Lullaby, and pointed to the slightly larger pony. "And the other one is for Lorna."

"You're awfully good." There were tears in Lorna's pretty eyes. "But we're not worth it. I don't know what to say." Suddenly she burst into tears.

"What's the trouble, Lorna?" sympathetically demanded Stony, putting an arm round her. "Tell me, you're among friends. Is it Charley Coe?"

"Big Ed's planning to move farther back into the woods," Lorna said between sobs. "I guess that means I'll have to marry Charley."

The Mesquiteers glanced at each other.

"When does Big Ed plan on pulling out?" Stony asked.

"Two or three days—maw's packing now."

"Well, don't you worry, a lot of

things can happen before then." Stony spoke jovially. "Here's your pony, young lady; see if the stirrups are okay."

Once Lorna was on the mettlesome pony she forgot all her worries. She stammered out her grateful thanks to the Three Mesquiteers.

A lumbering figure showed up and the small eyes were blazing. It was Charley Coe.

"Get down off that horse, Lorna," he shouted. "You ain't taking presents from nobody."

But when Charley attempted to drag Lorna from the saddle, the quick-tempered Stony took him by the shirt-collar and dragged him back. Charley lashed out and caught Stony very low, and that made the Mesquiteer see red. Wallop! He measured Charley with a right-handed punch that must have almost broken the trapper's jaw. He got to his feet and Lorna screamed because there was a knife in his hand. Stony just jumped and the two men rolled on the ground struggling for possession of the knife.

From nowhere materialised Big Ed, Enoch and several more of the Dawson Clan. Big Ed half drew a gun, but Tucson was quicker to the draw.

"Hold it!" he barked. "This is a two-man fight, so don't get any sudden ideas."

Charley was the bigger man of the two and a dirty fighter. He snarled like a wild cat as he strove to free his hand so he could drive the knife into Stony's ribs. A twist of his wiry body caused Stony to topple over and Charley for a moment gained the mastery. As he pinned Stony he tried to get his hand free. With an upward heave of his chest Stony rid himself of his enemy, and as Charley shot over his head a twist of the wrist caused the knife to fall. Stony flung the weapon into some bushes and waited for his man to rise.



Lullaby, Davy and the lion cub were hauled up the cliff to safety.

July 23rd, 1938.

The Dawson Clan were so intent on watching the fight and shouting hoarse encouragement to Charley that they did not notice Lullaby slowly edging towards the barn.

Charley was up and at Stony like a whirlwind. A wild punch caught Stony on the jaw and down went the Mesquiteer. Charley lashed out with his foot, but Stony's hands shot out and fastened round the mountaineer's leg. Down crashed Charley, and, locked in each other's arms, they rolled over and over—conveniently away from the barn towards some sort of storehouse. It enabled Lullaby to slip into the barn unobserved.

The men broke, staggered to their feet, and, when Charley rushed, Stony was able to land with a good left. Enoch slid out a gun.

"Get over there—get!" Tucson had seen. "Against that wall, all of you, and no tricks."

They exchanged furious punches, many of which missed. Already both men had landed with blows that would have clean knocked out most men, but these Westerners were tough. But Stony got in a bad way when, in falling, he crashed on to a stone and it seemed to paralyse his leg. He limped around trying to beat off Charley, who was quick to see the hated Mesquiteer was in trouble. A vicious uppercut caused Stony to drop, and, as he staggered up, Charley banged him in the face with both fists.

"Finish him, Charley, finish him up!" the mountaineers yelled.

Meantime Lullaby was busy in the barn. Being a frequent visitor, he was known to Nero, who recognised in this lunnan a man with a kindly nature. The bear snarled a little, but made no objection to Lullaby putting his foot on a piece of paper. Very carefully Lullaby took impressions and measurements. A sound made him glance round, and there was young Davy. The boy looked the picture of woe.

"I guess we won't be pals any more, Lullaby, now that you know I ain't been on the level with ya."

"It's not your fault, Davy, you couldn't help yourself," consoled Lullaby, tucking the paper inside his shirt. "Not a word about this, son. Just leave everything to your three pals."

Outside they found the fight still raging, and, if anything, in Charley's favour. Stony fell and lay still, and Charley stood over his fallen victim with his foot raised to stamp on his face. But Stony was only shamming, and those hands caught Charley's ankles and gave a violent jerk. The mountain trapper landed on the back of his head and got to his feet badly shaken. Tucson gave a sigh of relief when Stony began to wade into Charley with jabs and uppercuts. Soon Charley's face was sorely recognisable. Both eyes were closed, his lips were out and his nose streaming with blood.

Lullaby edged across to the fighters, and, as Stony backed away, giving his rival a chance to get up from the punch that had dropped him, Lullaby spoke out of the corner of his mouth.

"I got 'em!"

Stony made no sign that he had heard, but when Charley was on his feet, he hit the mountaineer all the harder, and finally ended the fight by tossing the almost unconscious ruffian over his shoulder like a bale of hay. Charley did not rise, but lay sprawled out, moaning feebly.

Stony dusted his hands and walked up to Big Ed Dawson.

"Listen, Ed, if you ever let Charley July 23rd, 1933.

Coe put a hand on Lorna again, I'll come back and finish what I started—see?"

"If Charley can't take care of himself, none of us is going to help him," muttered the treacherous trapper. "How about the bounty on them last three bears we ketches for ya?"

"We're heading back to the ranch for a few days, Ed," answered Tucson, pouching his gun. "We'll bring the money over to you when we get back."

"That's all right, Tucson; there ain't no hurry."

"You and your boys might keep an eye on our stock round these parts whilst we're gone," suggested Lullaby affably. "You'll be trapping on our range, anyhow."

"Be plumb glad to, Lullaby," Ed answered with a great grin.

Stony helped Lorna down from the horse. She had been too wrapt in the fight to think of moving.

"Don't you worry, Lorna," he whispered. "We'll be back."

When the Mesquiteers had gone, Big Ed, Enoch and the mountaineers went and stood over Charley. They laughed contemptuously.

"Do you think we can keep an eye on their cattle, boys?" Big Ed asked, as the mountaineers moved away without making an effort to help the fallen man. Their harsh laughter was heard by the Mesquiteers, who had paused to look at the impressions of Nero's foot.

A Range War

EARLY next morning Lorna and Davy sneaked off to the barn.

Time and again they came to the open door with pets in their arms. Davy sniffed when he let the porcupines go because he was frightened that the youngsters might not survive. Still Davy had to chance that because to stay here meant death. The Dawsons were leaving and Big Ed had ordered that all Davy's pets were to be killed with the exception of the bear.

"Is that all?" asked Lorna, freeing a squirrel.

"All except him and the lion cub," Davy pointed to the big bear.

"Maybe we could keep this one?" Lorna said, taking from a hutch the cub that had almost cost Davy his life.

"No, they all gotta go."

Davy took the cub from her arms and put it down outside the barn door. "Good-bye, little fellow," whispered the boy.

The cub was toddling away when a shot rang out and the cub dropped in its tracks and lay still. The two youngsters turned and there was Enoch, a smoking gun in his hands.

"I told you if you turned any more animals loose I'd give you a good hiding, and—" That was as far as Enoch got because of the hideous snarl that shook the barn. But for the rope the bear would have rushed at the trapper.

"All right, I'll let you off this time."

"Down, Nero, down!" ordered Davy.

"Untie him and bring him along," ordered Enoch. "But make sure he don't get close to me."

Some time later Big Ed Dawson came out of the hill bungalow and looked round to see if everything was as ordered. The women were busy loading up a prairie schooner and other carts, while a number of trappers and mountaineers were standing around with their horses or mounted. Lumbering up the slight grade came Davy and his bear.

"We'll be back by sundown, maw," Big Ed shouted to his wife. "Have everything packed and ready." With a cumbersome leap he managed to

struggle into the saddle of his big horse. "All right, start riding."

Big Ed Dawson was determined to have a final clean-up of the cattle of the Mesquiteers in these ranges, and then to move off to some rocky caverns on higher ground, where one could be hidden and never be found. This district was getting played out.

Soon, they encountered some of the Mesquiteers' cattle, which they butchered. They left a lot of blood around and one lacerated carcass.

"Darned if that bear ain't got the hang of it!" Enoch said with a laugh as he watched Nero paddling round, making clean impressions on the soft ground.

"He's left enough signs round here to account for a dozen cattle," gloatingly exclaimed Charley, who still showed signs of his fight.

"This is one way of getting even," Big Ed grinned, as he saw a carcass being strapped to a pack horse. "There's three hundred dollars out of them Mesquiteers' pockets as soon as we deliver this beef of theirs to the Park Hotel."

"And they ain't got a thing on us," rejoiced a pock-marked mountaineer named Reese.

"Enoch, them Mesquiteers still owe us a hundred and fifty dollars bounty money," savagely exclaimed Big Ed. "I sure hate to pull out without getting paid—"

"You ain't gonna pull out without getting paid," a voice drawled. "Start reaching!"

How Big Ed and those other members of the Dawson Clan gasped when from behind a fallen tree-trunk appeared the Three Mesquiteers. Then they began to back away.

"Staud still!" Tucson rapped out. "Stick your hands up!"

Big Ed, Charley and the rest raised their hands. Davy, who had been watching the marks that were to deceive his friends, had been wondering if they would show up unexpectedly. Being clever, the boy decided that he must not look too elated because Enoch would be just as likely to suspect him.

The bear had been roped to a tree, so that Davy was not close to his ferocious pet. Suddenly Enoch grabbed up the boy and held him in front of him as a shield as he stumbled backwards for the shelter of the trees. His action inspired Big Ed and the others to make a sudden dive for cover. The guns of the Mesquiteers roared, and one of the mountaineers flung up his arms, but Big Ed and Charley got away, and so did Enoch, whom the ranchers dare not fire at for fear of hitting Davy.

The mountaineers began to shoot back at the Mesquiteers, who were forced to take cover behind the fallen tree.

Captain Brady, patrolling with four of his men, heard the shooting and set out in the direction of the sounds.

Big Ed crawled across to the tree where Enoch was crouched.

"This is some of that brat's doing," he spat out. "He musta tipped 'em off. We don't want any squealers round this outfit."

Enoch leered as he got the chief's meaning, and, taking out his gun, held it by the barrel. He was going to batter in Davy's head. Big Ed saw and shuffled away because he wanted to be no party to the killing of his foster-child.

Davy screamed as the gun-butt was raised, and Nero, who had been prowling round looking for his young master, jerked at the rope. The cry for help came again. The Mesquiteers did not

(Continued on page 23)

Ride the danger trail with the pioneers of the Old West in this pulsing epic of the days when fearless prairie scouts took up the challenge of savage Redskins and murderous desperadoes. To the beat of thundering hoofs and to the blast of flaming guns this vivid serial runs its thrill-a-minute course, with hot action in every smashing episode and Ray Corrigan in its starring rôle



THE PAINTED STALLION

Read This First

Backed by Dupray, a scheming Spaniard who is Governor of Santa Fe, but who has received news that he is to be deposed by the newly-established Mexican Republic, a band of renegades led by one, Zamora, is preying on the wagon-trains that ply to and fro across the Western wilds with rich merchandise under their awnings.

The activities of these renegades are hampered by a mystery rider on a painted stallion, who has sworn to defeat outlawry and who again and again warns the bandits' intended victims of their danger by means of whistling arrows.

The year is 1824, and in that year an American frontiersman known as Clark Stuart is detailed by the U.S. Government to negotiate a trade treaty with the Mexican authorities. It is a treaty which Dupray is anxious to prevent from being concluded, and at his instigation Zamora incites the Indians to attack a wagon-train led by a trader named Jamison—a wagon-train with which Clark is travelling, and whose personnel also includes Jim Bowie, famous as the inventor of the bowie knife, and Kit Carson, a boy later to become renowned as a Western scout.

Perceiving Indian smoke-signals, Clark rides into the hills to investigate and falls in with a band of hostile Redskins and a party of renegades headed by Zamora. These pursue him, and, galloping back to the wagon-train, Clark finds it has already been attacked, though a timely warning from the Rider of the Painted Stallion

has enabled Jamison and his men to prepare for action.

Clark, discovering he is cut off from his friends, nevertheless attempts to get through to them. But a volley from his pursuers brings him down.

Now Read On

Paleface and Redskins

CLARK STUART himself had not been hit, but his horse had been struck dead, and in his plunge from the animal's back the scout had been dazed and badly shaken.

Lying there at the foot of the ridge, he was but vaguely conscious of the troop of Comanche Indians who were sweeping down the slope towards him, and as in a dream he heard the thunder of their mustangs' hoofs. Then the band of savages were all about him, a pack of hard-riding, shrill-howling demons—charging over the spot where he was huddled and careering onward to join those other Redskins who were already attacking the Jamison wagon-train.

The swarm of braves who had dashed down the ridge imagined Clark had been slain, and consequently none of them drew rein beside him, though in passing one of them took it into his head to discharge a musket at the frontiersman's prone body.

The blast of the firearm rang deafeningly in Clark's ears, punctuating the thud of the horses' feet, and the leaden ball from the weapon ripped into the ground an inch from his temple.

Meanwhile, the earth all about him was trembling under the impact of the cavalcade's hoofs, and as the fleet-moving shadows of ponies and riders surged over him he was powdered with the dust and dirt thrown up by the mounted warriors' onrush. Yet, miraculously it seemed, the clattering feet of the mustangs left him unscathed, no hoof trampling his prostrate form.

The Redskins forged past him, and, marvelling that he was still alive, Clark struggled to his knees. As he did so he gained a momentary impression of the group of renegades on the hilltop, but next instant his attention was diverted from them by the approach of a Comanche straggler who had failed to keep up with the rest of the Indian war-band.

The straggler had seen him rising, and flourishing a tomahawk, he bore down on Clark menacingly. In a second, however, the scout was upon his feet, and he side-stepped the brave's rush and then leapt up to clutch him about the waist.

He hauled the Indian from his mustang, brought him tumbling to the ground and drove his fist into the fellow's jaw with all his force. Then as the warrior became limp Clark straightened again and wheeled towards the Redskin's pony, which was

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"The Rider of the Stallion"

slithering to a standstill a few yards away.

Swiftly the frontiersman resolved to carry out his former intention of bursting through the Indian cordon which was circling the Jamison wagon-coral, and a flying jump took him astride the mustang of the brave he had knocked senseless. At the same time he heard a faint outcry from the renegades on the crown of the ridge—an outcry that was succeeded by a blatter of gunplay as they opened fire on him with their forty-fives.

Bullets zipped around him, but none of them took effect, and, twisting round, he cut loose with his own heavy six-shooter in retaliation. Twice his "iron" blazed, and he saw a couple of the outlaws reel in their saddles—saw the other four rogues recoil in alarm at such deadly marksmanship. Then he kicked his borrowed mount into a gallop and made for the scene of the battle that was in progress between the Jamison outfit and the Redskins.

The Comanches who had swept over the spot where Clark had been lying a minute or so previously were now merging with the savages who were enveloping the barricade of prairie schooners, and Clark headed towards the Indian cordon at top speed, trusting that he would be able to pierce it ere any of the warriors were aware of his presence.

Fortune favoured him. Intent on harrying the defenders of the train, the circling braves had no eyes for him until he was actually through their formation, and even then he was half-way to the corral before any of the Redskins realised that the buckskin-clad figure which had penetrated their besieging ring was that of a hated paleface.

Bow-shafts and musket-shots were directed at him as he was identified as a white man, but seeming to bear a charmed life, he gained the barricade unharmed, and in an instant he had abandoned his Indian mustang and bounded across a wagon tongue into the enclosure whence his friends were pumping lead at the enemy.

From the instant when he had pierced the Redskin ring his daring ride had been watched by the defenders on that side of the corral which faced the north, and a hoarse cheer greeted his safe arrival. Indeed, several men pressed around him with earnest congratulations on their lips, but Clark brushed through them and hastened across the enclosure, for among those who were posted on the south side of it he saw Jim Bowie, Trader Jamison and young Kit Carson, the latter busily engaged in loading spare rifles and revolvers.

"Hey, Jamison!" he called. "Jamison!"

In spite of the din of battle his stentorian voice carried to the ears of the wagon-boss Jim Bowie and Kit, and all three of them turned, uttering exclamations of thankfulness at sight of him. Then all at once through a gap between a couple of prairie schooners behind which the trio had taken up positions, Clark Stuart saw the skulking figure of a dismounted Red man who had somehow contrived to sneak close to the corral through the prairie grass.

The Indian was armed with a club, and his attention was focused on Jamison. In the instant that Clark set eyes on him he was preparing to spring into the corral and brain the trader.

The Redskin jumped, clearing an intervening wagon tongue, murderous

bludgeon raised on high, but simultaneously Clark's gun belched flame and death, and the scout's bullet took the warrior full in the chest.

The brave seemed to twist grotesquely in mid-air, then dropped lifeless to the ground. At the same time, however, half a dozen other warriors showed up, springing from a swathe of long grass which had enabled them, like their luckless predecessor, to steal within striking distance of the barricade.

Six-gun roaring, Clark went forward at the double. In the meantime, taking the alarm, Jamison and Bowie had spun around again and they promptly opened fire on the advancing Redskins, who were also volleyed now from other points in the wagon line.

That party of Indians were wiped out, and the last of them had fallen when Clark joined Bowie and Jamison and Kit.

"I'm glad you're here, Clark," said Jamison. "I was certainly worried about you."

"Yeah," young Kit Carson put in. "We thought you was gone for sure when the Injuns closed in on us without you showin' up."

"You were nearly right," the big frontiersman commented grimly. "But say, Jamison, you must've acted pretty smart to get the wagons corraled before the attack broke."

The trader briefly related how the column had been warned by the friendly but mysterious Redskin known as the Rider of the Painted Stallion. Then he glanced out beyond the sprawled bodies of the group of savages who had attempted to enter the wagon enclosure—out beyond those sprawled bodies to the swift-moving ring of braves who were encircling the corral on horseback.

"We're in a tough spot," he declared, "but I reckon we can hold these devils off—if they ain't reinforced."

He had scarcely spoken those words when Jim Bowie gripped his arm. The long, lean veteran of the plains was peering towards a dust cloud that had arisen in the distance, and presently a fresh band of Redskins became visible.

"Here's more o' the varmints a-headin' this way now, Jamison," he said, squirting a stream of tobacco juice from the corner of his mouth. "Yeah, an' they're powerful strong in numbers. It seems like every Injun east o' the Rockies was aimin' ter pay a call on us, if you ask me."

Clark Stuart bit his lip.

"You can take it from me that every brave in the Comanche nation is makin' for here, anyhow," he stated. "I learned that much when I went into the hills to investigate. Jamison, you said we're in a tough spot, but it's gonna be plenty tougher yet."

"An' talkin' about it won't make it any less tough," Bowie interposed dryly. "Come on, ef we're a-gwine to be massacred an' scalped we'll take a parcel o' these here Injun varmints ter perdition with us."

The guns of Clark, Jamison and Bowie were soon adding their bellowing reports again to the tumult of the rifles and the revolvers wielded by the other men of the wagon-train, and the fight wore on relentlessly, the clamour of it swelling as the attacking Comanches were joined by the band whose approach Jim Bowie had descried, and by further troops who came riding from all quarters of the compass.

Never had those prairie levels witnessed a combat so desperate, never

had the stilly air of the wilderness rocked to such uproar as that which sounded now—uproar of demoniac Indian yells, of pounding hoofs, uproar of flashing fusillades that ripped from the barricades in answer to the bluster of Redskin muskets and the hiss of Redskin arrows.

Amid the confused din cries of stricken men rang out piercingly—the cries of paleface and Indian blending in the common union of death. Behind the wagons grim defenders saw comrades reeling back with barbed shaft or musket-ball lodged in their bodies, saw familiar faces that had grinned at them oftentimes over camp-fires distorted now with anguish, spattered with blood. And raging at the loss of friends and partners, the living fired the more rapidly to avenge their fall, many a Comanche warrior biting the dust as rifle-bullet or six-gun bullet hit home.

The casualties inflicted on the Redskins were heavy—far heavier than those sustained by the men of the Jamison column. Yet the odds against the whites were tremendous, with the warbands of countless villages whirling about the corral, and gallantly as the hard-pressed wagoners fought, it seemed inevitable that sooner or later the Indians would force their way into the enclosure and overwhelm the palefaces by sheer weight of numbers.

No man was more sure of that than a hawk-nosed Redskin who had taken up a position on a knoll just beyond gunshot range of the beleaguered prairie schooners. He was the headman of the Comanche nation, and about him were gathered a number of subordinate chiefs.

These prominent individuals of the tribe were watching the battle keenly, conferring upon it with the shrewdness of generals studying the manoeuvres of troops, and waiting until they deemed that the time was ripe to go forward in person and lead the circling warriors against the wagon barricades in a final storming rush. But that triumphal moment was never destined to come, for while they were still gazing upon the scene of conflict a curious, high-pitched whistling sound reached their ears above the pandemonium of the fight, and suddenly an arrow fired from some point behind them embedded itself in the knoll on which they were assembled.

It was a whistling arrow, symbolic of the Painted Stallion's presence, and startled, the Comanche head-chief and his counsellors wheeled round.

On the rim of a bluff some little distance away they beheld the silhouetted figure of the stallion and its rider, and the latter promptly waved an arm in a significant gesture on perceiving that the Redskins on the knoll had turned.

There was no mistaking the import of that gesture. It was a silent command to withdraw the Comanche warriors from the fight and send them back to their villages, leaving the white men to proceed westward unmolested.

And it was a command that impressed the companions of the head-chief, who were no less superstitious than the majority of their race and who shared in the belief that the Rider of the Painted Stallion was no mortal brave, but a god of the prairie whose will must be obeyed.

They looked askance at one another and then at the head-chief. He seemed irresolute—torn between superstition and the desire to bring the attack on

the hated palefaces to a victorious conclusion—and after a mental struggle that was clearly written upon his red-bronze features he elected to defy the rider's bidding.

Staring at the bluff again he responded to the unknown's imperative gesture with a signal that implied negation. Then he half-turned towards the scene of combat, but scarcely had he done so when the Rider of the Painted Stallion discharged a second whistling arrow—an arrow which did not embed itself in the ground this time, but which tore through the ligaments of the head-chief's right shoulder.

That swift penalty of defiance dispelled the stubbornness from the Comanche head-chief's mind. Superstition becoming ascendant in him even as he writhed convulsively in pain, the shaft had no sooner been wrenched from his wound by one of his subordinates than he gasped out through trembling lips the order to call off the warriors.

Only a minute or two later the Red-skin bands who had encircled the wagon-train were drawing away, picking up their injured as they retired, and before very long the hills had swallowed the Comanches and not a living brave was in sight—unless it was the Rider of the Painted Stallion, who was still poised on the bluff.

Down in the corral of prairie schooners the men of the Jamison column gazed at that mysterious, silhouetted figure, realising that in some way or other the Rider had terminated the combat and delivered them from massacre.

They were not the only ones whose eyes were riveted upon the Rider of the Painted Stallion. Zamora and his renegade accomplices were also gazing in the Unknown's direction, though with feelings vastly different from those experienced by Jamison and his comrades.

The outlaws, grouped on the ridge where Clark Stuart had so nearly met his death, had watched the battle on the plain with an anticipation that had now given way to chagrin, and with black wrath stamped on their faces they

continued to glower at the distant figure of the Rider until the latter wheeled and vanished from their view. Then Zamora turned to Macklin, Oldham and Smith, that rascally trio who had "horned in" with the wagon-train and who had quietly separated themselves from it prior to the Indian attack.

"Curse that Rider of the Painted Stallion," he snarled. "The Redskins would have slaughtered the Jamison outfit to the last man if he had not interfered."

"Yeah," grunted Smith, "an' it looks now as if our own gang will hafta cut out that train after all—somewhere near Santa Fe. It'll be a tough job, though, Zamora. Them hombres down there can fight."

The Dago's eyes narrowed.

"Si," he muttered, "and it may be that the train will get through in spite of us. But Clark Stuart will not get through. He must not!"

Macklin spoke.

"Stuart didn't recognise us," that bearded ruffian declared. "The nearest he got to us was when he hollered out that the Injuns was on the war-paih an' we'd best head for the wagon-train—and you'll recollect he hailed us as strangers, which proves he didn't identify me or Smith or Oldham."

"Meaning that you and Smith and Oldham can re-join the column, hein?" Zamora queried.

"Yeah," said Macklin. "See, dusk's beginnin' to fall, an' we slip back to the wagon-train without excitin' any attention as soon as it gets good an' dark. Nobody'll notice us—an' I'll bet nobody noticed we weren't around when the Injun attack broke, either. Anyway, Zamora, we'll find an opportunity o' dealin' with Clark Stuart. You can lay to that."

Zamora was silent for a moment. Then he looked shrewdly at Macklin.

"You'd better leave Clark Stuart to Smith," he observed. "Smith can decoy him from the train somehow and finish him, then make tracks for the hide-out. You and Oldham can stay with the column. So long as you can avoid arous-

ing the suspicions of Jamison, you may be of more use to Dupray and me than you ever could be otherwise. In short, amigo, you and Oldham will continue to act as scouts for the column, so that you can inform us of any important moves Jamison may make in the course of his journey west."

Smith broke in on the conversation at this juncture.

"See here, Zamora," he protested, "if you think I'm gonna tackle Clark Stuart alone you'd better do some more figurin'. Stuart looks pretty much of a handful to me, an' I ain't makin' no play against him single-handed."

"You won't have to, my friend," the Dago replied. "You decoy him from the train, and three men will be waiting to help you account for him."

"What, yourself an' these here cripples?" scoffed Smith.

He indicated the gangsters who had ridden to the village of the Comanche head-chief with Zamora when the latter had persuaded the Redskin to assail the wagon-column. The two bandits in question had both been hit by the shots Clark had loosed off prior to his bold dash for the barricade of prairie schooners, and, although they had only been "winged" and were not seriously hurt, they were groaning with pain and looked as if they would be out of action for some little time to come.

"No," said Zamora in answer to Smith's derisive query. "Not myself and these 'cripples,' as you call them. I am going back to the hide-out with them. But I shall send four of the other men, and, if you can get Stuart to go with you to Boulder Notch on some pretext or other two days from now, you will find those men lying in wait there."

Boulder Notch

TWO days had elapsed, and, slow as was its progress, the Jamison column had proceeded many miles from the spot where the abortive Indian attack had taken place—and where, incidentally, Smith and Macklin and



"Take it easy, feller!" Bull Smith snarled. "You ain't gonna get nowhere by makin' a scrap of it."

Oldham had re-joined the train "with-out exciting any attention."

It was during the afternoon of that second day that Bull Smith contrived to drop behind the wagon-train for a spell, lagging so far to the rear that he was out of view of it. Then, after a while, he clapped spurs to his pony's flanks and set out to overtake the column, his horse being somewhat blown when he at length drew up with the long line of prairie schooners and outriders.

He galloped to the head of the train and singled out Clark Stuart, who was centering in advance of the column with Bowie, Jamison and young Kit Carson.

"Hey, Stuart," Smith blurted, "I swung off a little while ago ter see if I could pick up the trail of any game that might come in handy for the chuck-wagon, an' I came across a hombra that was stranded with a prairie schooner. It appears he's a settler headed for Santa Fe, an' he sure is in a jam. The off-side front wheel o' his schooner has come adrift from the axle."

Clark frowned.

"A settler?" he reiterated. "And he's travellin' through these wilds alone?"

"Yeah," said Smith. "A durned fool, I reckon. Still, I hated to leave him in the lurch, an' I told him I'd bring help back for him. Maybe you'd ride with me an' give him a hand. It won't take the two of us long to hoist up that wagon o' his so he can fix the wheel agin."

"Okay," Clark rejoined. "Where's this settler at?"

Smith answered him glibly.

"A place that I know as Boulder Notch," he informed the scout. "It's back a-ways an' a piece to the north."

Clark and Bull Smith swung round and clattered off in a north-easterly direction, the gangster's horse slightly in the lead, and about half an hour later the two men were entering a system of rocky hills. Then all at once Smith drew rein in a narrow pass strewn with great snags of stone and hemmed-in by sheer cliffs.

"Well, here we are in Boulder Notch," he announced.

Clark looked about him.

"Yeah?" he said. "Well, where's that settler an' his broken-down wagon?"

"There ain't no settler, Stuart," came the quiet response. "An' there ain't no broken-down wagon neither."

Clark swivelled his eyes on Smith sharply, and as he did so he saw that the fellow had drawn a six-gun and was covering him. At the same time he detected movements among the huge rocks that cluttered the pass, and suddenly four horsemen of unsavoury mien issued forth.

Clark's handsome face became tense, and his steel-grey eyes hardened.

"What's the idea, Smith?" he demanded.

"The idea, Stuart," Bull Smith said in a sardonic voice, "the idea is that you ain't goin' to Santa Fe. In other words, Stuart, this is trail's end for you."

There was a moment's silence, during which Clark regarded Smith steadfastly—no hint of fear on his countenance, only a challenging grinnence. Then all at once he snaked out his left hand, seized Smith by the right wrist, forced the rogue's gun aside and compelled him to drop the weapon by applying a pressure that brought a cry of pain to the man's lips.

Next second, however, the individuals who had appeared from amongst the

rocks were closing in on Clark, and, grappling with him, they dragged him out of the saddle, the big scout tumbling to the ground with his adversaries a-top of him.

He managed to wrench away from them, and, springing to his feet as they were likewise scrambling from the dust, he waded into them with his bunched knuckles, sending one outlaw sprawling with a terrific upper-cut and flooring a second with a full swing to the jaw.

But Smith's other two accomplices clinched with him, and were wrestling with him fiercely when those whom he had felled regained their feet and plucked out their forty-fives to level the weapons at him threateningly. Into the bargain Smith himself had slid from his bronc, and, running forward now, he snatched Clark's six-shooter from its holster and thrust the muzzle of the revolver against the scout's midriff.

"Take it easy, feller!" he snarled. "You ain't gonna get nowhere by makin' a scrap of it."

With that gun pressing into his stomach, with two of Smith's confederates grasping him by the arms and the other two covering him as well, Clark realised the futility of further resistance and resigned himself to his fate.

"All right," he said, "it looks like this is trail's end for me. But if you aim to blow a hole through me with that six-shooter I'd like to know why before you do it."

Bull Smith's eyes narrowed.

"Okay," he stated. "I'll tell you why. It don't—"

But the sentence was never finished, for at that instant he was interrupted by a noise that was all too familiar to him and his cronies. It was the strange, high wail of a whistling arrow, and even as Smith started at the sound his right wrist was pierced by the missile responsible for it.

Uttering an agonised howl the gangster let Clark's forty-five fall to the ground, and, staggering away, he looked up and saw the Rider of the Painted Stallion limned against the skyline above him on the western side of the Notch.

The other outlaws saw that figure, too, as did Clark Stuart. Then, in swift succession, three more arrows streaked from the Rider's bow, singing from aloft and rattling against the rocks amidst which the scout and his captors stood.

The two rogues who were holding Clark abandoned him and jumped for cover. So did the men who had been threatening the frontiersman with their guns. As for the scout, he was quick to take advantage of the diversion created by the Unknown Redskin, and, retrieving the forty-five that the anguished Smith had dropped, he vaulted astride his pony—a blaze-faced sorrel with which Jamison had supplied him to replace the mount he had lost two days before.

Next moment Clark was spurring from the Notch, and though a couple of belated shots were discharged at him by his foes both bullets went wide.

Before any other slugs could be sent in his direction he was clear of the pass and galloping through the hills, and, though he heard further shooting that told him the outlaws were now blazing at the Rider, he looked back and up to see that mysterious Indian retreating unharmed from the cliff-rim above the Notch.

The Unknown faced towards him and gave him a friendly wave, to which Clark responded. Then, the Rider wheeling and disappearing from his view, the scout pressed on at top speed,

and was well nigh out of gunshot range when Smith and his confederates came charging out of the Notch on horseback to give chase to him.

They did not pursue him for long, for it soon became clear that Clark's sorrel had the legs of their broncs, and after a two-mile dash during which the frontiersman steadily increased his lead the renegades swung off towards the north in a disgruntled fashion, leaving their quarry to ride on through the hills.

Quitting those uplands a little later, Clark picked up the route that the Jamison column had been following, and some thirty minutes afterwards, just as the shadows of evening were beginning to gloom over the wilds, he overtook the wagon-train and cantered to the head of it.

Among the outriders whom he passed en route to the fore-end of the column were Macklin and Oldham, and perplexity and dismay were revealed on the bearded features of the crooks as they saw him, for they had noted his departure with Bull Smith and had never anticipated that he would return.

Unaware, however, that those two worthies were connected with Smith, Clark spared neither of them a glance as he went by, and failed to obtain any inkling of the effect his presence produced on them.

A few seconds afterwards he was abreast of Jamison, Bowie and Kit Carson, and briefly he informed them of all that had transpired at Boulder Notch, his listeners hearing him out in an amazed silence which was broken at length by the wagon-boss.

"Why do you suppose Smith wanted to stop you from gettin' to Santa Fe?" Jamison demanded.

"It may have something to do with the Government treaty I'm carryin'," Clark rejoined after a moment. "I can't think of any other reason why a bunch o' bandits should try to rub me out. Anyhow, Smith wasn't what he pretended to be, an' we're well rid of him."

He dismissed the subject with those words, and, silence falling upon the leaders of the column again, the wagon-train lumbered on while the darkness of the night deepened—an early darkness that had been hastened by the onset of a dense rack of storm-clouds which had spread over the sky from the north.

That storm broke ere the column had travelled another five miles, and it was a storm of fierce intensity, the heavens opening their flood-gates and launching a deluge of rain upon mountains and prairie, thunder pealing through the void and vivid flashes of lightning illuminating the landscape in fitful blasts.

Through that raging storm the wagon-train pushed onward, heading for a ford in the Cimarron river, which lay across its path. It was a ford known to Jamison, Bowie and Clark as one of the few points where the crossing of the Cimarron might be safely effected, yet on reaching it they discovered the water was unusually high.

The lightning revealed to them a swirling torrent, black as doom, potent with menace, a quarter of a mile in width and threatening to overflow its banks in its wild onrush—a spectacle that caused Jamison to scrow his brows together in an uneasy manner.

"Looks bad," he said laconically, lifting his voice above the clamour of the storm as he addressed Clark and Bowie. "The melted snows from the mountains have sure raised the level. I've never

seen the Cimarron so high an' so turbulent."

"I reckon the wagons can make it, though," Clark opined. "It'll be tough goin', but, properly handled, the mule-teams will swim the schooners across. We'd better try it, Jamison. If we hold back, this rain is gonna swell the river a heap more, an' it may be impossible to cross over for weeks."

Jamison nodded.

"You're right, Clark," he declared, and then, by means of Bowie, he passed the word back along the column that the train was to go forward.

He himself led the way on horse-back, and wagon after wagon trundled into the river after him with accompanying outriders—ponies and mules losing their footing almost immediately, but swimming resolutely under the guidance of men who were expert in the handling of reins.

Amid peals of thunder, flare of lightning and cataracts of rain, the column struggled onward across the hazardous ford, and soon only one wagon and a handful of horsemen remained on the river's east bank—the horsemen including Clark Stuart, with whom young Kit Carson was waiting.

"Come on!" Clark sang out to the last wagon's driver, who seemed to be having some difficulty with his team.

"Get that outfit rolling!" The prairie schooner failed to move forward into the river, however, and in a burst of lightning Clark saw the driver signalling him agitatedly—and recognised the fellow as an individual named Elmer who was cursed with an innumerable stutter.

The scout spurred his pony towards the wagon, and the driver mouthed at him.

"C-C-Clark," he began, "I e-e-e can't g-g-gug-gug-get m-m-my—"

An outrider loomed up alongside Clark. He was known as Osear, was a cousin of the stuttering Elmer, and frequently acted as his interpreter.

"He's tryin' to tell yuh he can't git his team to budge, Clark," he explained.

The big frontiersman laughed. "Probably he can't say 'giddap' quick enough," he commented. "All right, Elmer, I'll take your schooner. You swim my horse across. And say, escort Kit Carson across with you. See that nothing happens to him."

He climbed aboard the wagon, and, gratefully, Elmer scrambled on to the blaze-faced sorrel the scout had been riding. Then, picking up ribbons and whip, Clark managed to urge the prairie schooner's team forward after a brief delay.

Meanwhile Elmer had joined Kit, and, gathering the rein of the boy's pony as well as the sorrel's, he headed into the river with the youngster.

Osear and the remaining outriders entered the swirling waters as well—all except two, and those two were Macklin and Oldham. The former had laid a hand on his associate's bridle, and, unobserved by Clark, was talking in an undertone to Oldham.

"Here's a chance to get rid o' Stuart," Macklin said, "a chance that's too good ter miss. Supposin' he was to git crowned over the skull out in mid-river. That team he's drivin' would be outa control, an' the wagon would be bound ter come to grief. It'd be the end o' him. Oldham, an', what's more, it'd seem like he'd been drowned by accident."

"By crackey, you're right, Mack," the other rogue jerked. "We can hang back—"

His accomplice interrupted him.

"No need fer the two of us to figure in this," he grunted. "I can handle Stuart alone. Maybe it would be better that way, anyhow. You go ahead. I'll hold up."

They separated, Oldham pushing into the torrent, Macklin swinging behind a clump of bushes—whence, in a flicker of lightning, he saw Clark drive forward into the river as well.

Macklin kicked his heels into his bronc's flanks and rode after the wagon, entered the water only a few yards in the rear of it and caught up with its tailboard. Then, hitching his pony's rein to the back of the prairie schooner, he climbed nimbly and silently into the vehicle's interior and crouched down among the bales of merchandise.

Clark handling the reins, the mule-team pushed farther and farther out into the surging flow of the river, fighting their way towards the west bank in the wake of the rest of the column and hauling their ponderous wagon after them. And inside the rocking, swaying prairie schooner Macklin waited sinistinely—waited until he judged the time was ripe for his murderous deed.

The wagon he had boarded was out in midstream before he bestirred himself, and, with Clark framed in front of him between the folds of the schooner's awning, the gangster drew a six-gun and slunk towards him, clubbing the revolver as he did so. Then he struck hard and true with the butt, and under the impact of that cowardly blow the frontiersman on the driving-seat threw up his arms and fell back senseless into the vehicle's interior.

The ribbons slid from his inert fingers as oblivion claimed him, and, instantly aware that masterful hands were no longer guiding them, the lead-mules began to plunge and struggle in their harness, thereby spreading confusion throughout the whole team.

Meanwhile Macklin was blundering to the tailboard, and in the space of a few seconds he had regained the saddle of his mount, unhitched its rein and steered the swimming bronc away from the wagon. And as he abandoned that wagon and its unconscious occupant to their fate, he saw the vehicle tipping crazily to the frenzied antics of its team—saw it break loose all at once from its base-frame—saw the drifting body of it start to roll over and submerge!

(To be continued in another gripping episode next week. By permission of British Lion Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Ray Corrigan.)

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"MAKING THE HEADLINES"

—*Captain Lewis Nagel, Jack Holt; Jeanne Sandford, Beverly Roberts; Steve Withers, Craig Reynolds; Mrs. Wilder, Marjorie Gatenon; Claire Sandford, Dorothy Appleby; Edmund Sandford, Gilbert Emery; Sergeant Handley, Tom Kennedy; Ronald Sandford, Corbett Morris; Grace Sandford, Shiela Bromley; Herbert Sandford, John Wray; Edgar Keer, Maurice Cass; Stuart Hackett, Tully Marshall.*

"HEART OF THE ROCKIES"

—*Stony Brooke, Bob Livingston; Tucson Smith, Ray Corrigan; Lullaby Joslin, Max Terhune; Lorna Dawson, Lynn Roberts; Dacy Dawson, Sammy McKim; Big Ed Dawson, J. P. McGowan; Charley Coe, Yakima Canutt; Brady, Hal Taliaferro; Reese, Gay Wilkerson; Ma Dawson, Georgia Winslow.*

"HEART OF THE ROCKIES"

(Continued from page 18)

hear it because of the roar of the guns, but Nero heard.

The bear parted the rope as if it had been twine.

Davy was trying to wriggle free when there came the hideous snarl of the bear and Enoch jerked round with a gasp of fear. Out came a mighty paw and clawed at his arm. He brought down the gun butt, but it only roused Nero to greater fury. Enoch was dragged down to the ground and began to scream hoarsely as Nero snarled over his victim. The trapper managed to free an arm and get the gun that had been wrenched from his hand. He fired once at the bear and that was all. Nero proceeded to hug Enoch till his ribs cracked and then to maul the poor wretch to death. Davy, hand to mouth, stood there watching the fearful scene. Though Enoch had been terribly cruel to him he would have tried to save him if he could, but the boy knew he could do nothing with Nero in this maddened condition.

The mountaineers were fighting and slowly retiring towards the copse where they had left their horses. Leaving two men to cover them they made a rush for their horses. Once in the saddle they spurred their horses and fled in all directions. The two men, who had expected Big Ed and the others to help them reach their horses, found themselves deserted. They dashed for their horses, but the Mesquiteers were not missing such easy targets.

It was Stony who found Davy. Nero was dead and lay sprawled across his victim. Even Stony shuddered as he looked at this gory spectacle.

"We'll be right back, Davy," he cried. "Stick around till we get back."

The Mesquiteers mounted their horses and went in pursuit of the Dawson Clan. Tucson and Lullaby went after two mountaineers, whilst Stony searched for Big Ed and Charley Coe and Reese.

Captain Brady Interferes to His Cost

THE Dawson Clan were scattered in all directions. Big Ed had ridden with Reese, and when they found that there was no one in sight reined in their exhausted horses.

"Let's get back to the cabin and start rolling," cried Big Ed.

Stony had sighted Charley Coe but had lost him in a valley. He was riding past a small clump of spruce when a shot rang out and a bullet whizzed past dangerously close. Turning, the Westerner saw Charley half hidden behind a tree. The rifle spoke again, and Stony rolled from his saddle but kept a grip on the pommel. It was an old trick and it bluffed Charley into thinking he had got his enemy. How the half-breed swore when he saw Stony draw himself back into the saddle when out of range.

Meantime, Captain Brady and his wardens had arrived in the vicinity. Scattered bursts of firing seemed to be coming in all directions.

"Must be the Mesquiteers," decided the captain. "Spread out, and this time we should get 'em."

Charley saw Stony vanish round a bend and knew that the Mesquiteer would double back along some other trail. He became panicky and rushed

to his horse. He scrambled into the saddle and went racing off at a gallop towards the mountains. A sound made him look round, and he muttered a curse as he recognised the piebald stallion that Stony always rode. He reined back his horse and turned to take steady aim with his rifle, but Stony had seen his quarry halt and at once swerved his animal off the trail. When Charley had wasted all his ammunition he fled once more to the security of the hills, but every time it seemed that Stony was nearer. He tried the old trick of doubling back on his trail when he came to a shallow stream. It saved him for a while as Stony guessed the trick but did not know whether Charley had gone up or down stream. The water was clear, but when it began to come down cloudy it told Stony that his quarry had gone upstream.

Charley reached a wide track that would lead him towards the Dawson settlement. Maybe he would find refuge there. But Stony was relentless and better mounted than the man he was pursuing. Long since the half-breed had flung away the useless gun. He dug his heels into his tired animal, but it was in vain. Nearer and nearer drew Stony until at last they were riding almost neck and neck. Stony hurled himself out of the saddle and his arms went round Charley's neck. Both men hurtled to the ground, rolled over and over and then tumbled down a slight embankment. But when they staggered up it was Stony who had the advantage, for his gun was drawn.

Along the track cantered Brady. He had seen from a distance the two riders. He sent his horse down the embankment and then vaulted lightly from the saddle.

"Give me that gun, Stony, you're under arrest!" he ordered, with a triumphant smirk.

"What do you mean, I'm under arrest?" gasped the enraged Mesquiteer. "Here's the man you want. We caught him and that Dawson Clan rustling our cattle."

"All right, I'll take you both back to headquarters," decided Brady, and stepped between the two men. "Give me that gun."

"Now listen, Brady!" cried Stony. "I warned you about bringing firearms into the Park," sneered Brady, taking the gun.

Charley Coe looked at the gun in the warden's belt. He was a desperate man. Once taken into custody and he was lost. They would find out lots of things about his past and many aliases he had used. He was wanted for murder down in Montana. His hand slid forward, and like a snake the gun was whisked out of the warden's holster.

The half-breed did not order the officer to raise his hands, but just callously shot him in the back. Brady collapsed into Stony's arms.

The Mesquiteer was stunned by the violence of the crime and for once seemed bereft of the power to act. Charley had seen his horse grazing some way along the trail, and the killer was into the saddle and away before Stony quite realised what had happened.

Gently the Mesquiteer laid the warden down on the ground, and one look told him that the wound was mortal. Rage seized Stony, and recovering his gun he dashed up the embankment. A shrill whistle and his horse trotted towards him. A leap and he was in the saddle.

Two of the range wardens riding

along this trail to link up with Brady heard the shot, and urging their horses to a gallop, were in time to see Stony Brooke riding away, but they observed Brady sprawled on the ground.

"He was shot in the back!" one of the rangers cried. "Stony did it. I was with Brady last time the Mesquiteers broke into the Park and I heard him use threatening remarks to the chief!"

Lorna Saves Stony

TUCSON and Lullaby, after securing the two mountaineers they had been after, rode back to the place where they had left Davy. The boy was there, leaning on his crutch, and without wasting time on explanations Tucson reached down and pulled the boy on to his knees.

"Where's Stony?"
"Dunno, Davy," answered Lullaby. "But we'll find him."

Big Ed and Reese got back to the big shack, and it was a relief to see none of the Mesquiteers there.

"We're pulling out right quick," he told his wife. "Everything ready?"
"We ain't quite loaded, Ed."

"Well, hurry up!" he shouted.

The hoarse voice of her foster-father brought Lorna out of the shack. She dumped an old case in the prairie schooner and then looked round.

"Where's Davy?"

"Oh, he'll be along directly," was the evasive answer. "Get busy."

A clatter of hoofs made him clutch his gun, but it was only Charley.

"Did you get rid of Stony?" Ed demanded.

"Yeah, but I had to plug a Park Range warden to do it."

"You dumb fool!" Ed gripped his arm savagely. "How did that happen?"

"I stuck around as you suggested, but I had no chance of shooting him," explained the half-breed. "We were fighting it out, when who should horn in but one of them rangers."

"Go on!" snarled Ed as the other hesitated.

"Stony had got a bead on me, but the warden stepped in between and ordered Stony to hand over his gun, which the big sap did, and it gave me the chance to get at Brady's—"

"So it was Brady!" Fury made Big Ed shake with rage. "So you got Brady's gun and shot him. Kinda thing ya would do, and then what?"

"Stony came after me, but this time I bided my time." Charley Coe grinned wolfishly. "And I know I hit him."

"Well, go grab an armful of stuff and help load those wagons," ordered Dawson.

Lorna had seen Charley Coe return and she had kept out of sight of the man she hated. She had seen him talking with Big Ed, and though she could not hear what they were saying she caught the name of "Stony" several times. He was wondering what had happened, when to her amazement a horseman came out of the woods. It was Stony and he was swaying in the saddle. Blood was streaming down his face and he looked a ghastly sight. Somehow he slid from the saddle and slumped the faithful animal so that it went cantering away into the woods. Reeling and staggering Stony made for the prairie schooner, and she watched him climb into the back of the wagon and vanish through the canvas curtains.

"Don't stand there," gruffly called out Big Ed. "Help yer mother or do

something. This ain't no time for dreaming."

Lorna took a load from her foster-mother and went with it to the wagon. She parted the curtains and climbed inside, and at first she saw no signs of Stony. She found him lying unconscious behind some sacks, and she was bandaging his head when the sound of horsemen made her peep forth. They were rangers.

"We're trailing Stony Brooke. He killed Captain Brady a short while ago," one of them called out.

"Ain't seen a soul round here all day, officer," answered Big Ed, who had been holding a gun inside his pocket. "Suppose he should come around?"

"Don't take any chances," answered the range warden.

"Don't worry none about that," Charley Coe spoke now. "We don't like him any better than you do."

Lorna found that the bullet wound in the forehead was a bad crease and not as serious as she had imagined. She put an old mattress round Stony so that he would be completely hidden from the driver. Then she went back into the shack and helped with the loading, and she managed it so that no one else went into the schooner.

"Stony's gonna have a hard time shaking them rangers," jibed the half-breed.

"Get on them wagons and we'll start moving," ordered Big Ed.

"Where's Enoch? And where's young Davy?" demanded the woman. "I ain't moving without 'em."

"Get going!" raved Big Ed. "We're picking 'em both up on the trail."

There was a smaller wagon and several carts, so that no one wanted to ride in the schooner. The girl looked out and saw that Big Ed was still arguing with his wife—Charley Coe was with them.

"Lorna, Charley Coe killed Brady." The whisper made her jump.

"Yes, I heard him tell Big Ed about it." Lorna knelt down beside him. "How are you, Stony?"

"Better, thanks to you." He managed a grin. "I've been almost conscious ever since I got into this wagon."

"I'm scared for you to stay here," whispered Lorna. "We're quitting."

"Yeah, I know. I came after Charley when he shot me and I decided to hide in this wagon till I got my strength back. I heard how the killing of Brady had been fixed on me. Lorna, I've got to bring in Charley to clear myself. Slip out and try to get word to Tucson and Lullaby, will you?"

"All right."

Lorna climbed out of the wagon and moved across to the pony the Mesquiteers had given her. She mounted and waited. Big Ed settled his argument by hitting his wife, and the woman went crying to the smaller wagon. Charley laughed and climbed to the box seat of the schooner in which Stony was hiding. Big Ed and Reese riding ahead guided the party.

Lorna rode along for a little way in the rear. Everyone was so anxious to get away that not much attention was given to the girl. Besides, where they went she would have to go, or so they thought. A bend in the trail gave her the chance to slip away into the trees. She raced the pony back to the place which had been her home for so many unhappy years. She would start the trail from here. She must find Tucson and Lullaby quickly. She

prayed that Davy would be with them. Luck favoured Lorna. Wisely the girl rode to the highest ground in the vicinity, and almost at once she saw a small procession passing across some grassland. She imitated the call of the coyote and galloped her pony madly towards them. She took bushes and ditches in her endeavour to get to them quickly. They waited for her.

"Stony came in wounded!" she panted out. "He followed Charley, who shot him in the forehead. But the wound isn't serious, though he's lost blood. Paw, Charley and Reese have hit the trail on a getaway and Stony is hiding in the largest of the wagons. He needs you urgently."

"Keep 'em covered, Davy." Tucson lowered the boy to the ground and tossed him a gun.

"Okay, Tucson," manfully answered Davy, pointing the gun at the two mountaineers. "They won't get away."

When Tucson and Lullaby urged their horses to a gallop it was Lorna who led them.

The Clean-up

WHEN Stony felt that his strength had returned he removed the mattress very cautiously and peered forth. His expression set in hard lines as he noted the back of Charley Coe. Like a cat he crept forward.

Charley must have heard some sound, because he looked round and saw Stony. He gaped in surprise and then fumbled for his gun, but Stony gave him no time to draw it. His fingers gripped the rascally fellow's wrists and he gave a tremendous twist. With a yell Charley let go of the gun, which clattered to the footboard and a moment later to the ground.

Stony dragged himself on to the driver's seat, and did his best to punch the wiry half-breed into oblivion. The horses, startled by all the noise and crashing, took fright and bolted. The schooner went rocketing past Big Ed Dawson and Reese, who gaped at sight of those two struggling figures. They charged after the wagon.

Then Stony and Charley, oblivious to their precarious position, fell from the driver's seat on to the crossbar, and the frightened animals went all the faster as the fighters bumped against their ribs whilst occasionally their punches landed on horseflesh.

Gradually Big Ed and Reese gained on the wagon, and they raised their rifles to try and get a shot at Stony.

Lorna, knowing the country even better than the Mesquiteers, took them by a short cut, and they topped the crest of a hill to look down on the trail. They could see the schooner swaying this way and that and completely out of control and the two men fighting, whilst close alongside rode Big Ed and Reese with rifles ready to shoot.

"You get Big Ed!" Tucson yelled at his friend. "I'll stop the wagon."

When Big Ed saw Tucson and Lullaby charging down the hillside he kicked his horse savagely and tore past the wagon. His only thought was his own skin. Reese saw him and wondered at the reason, and then he turned and saw the cursed Mesquiteers. He headed after his chief.

Tucson knew that the schooner could not continue for long at this mad pace, and if an axle broke or it overturned it might have disastrous results for Stony.

That intrepid fighter, heedless of his danger, tried to get his hands to Charley's throat. Charley by now was

in almost as bad a way as when he had fought Stony on a previous occasion. Stony was now on top, and Charley, as one of the horses lurched, slid off the crossbar, made a wild grab and then fell. A hoof caught him a resounding blow on his skull, and that was all Charley Coe knew for a considerable time.

Tucson swept alongside, and with one mighty leap was on the back of one of the wagon horses. With his boot he kicked at a bolt that held the crossbar shackled to the wagon. Suddenly the bolt gave and the horses shot forward. By now Stony had slipped between the crossbar and was hanging by his hands but clinging on for dear life. Tucson gathered up the loose reins and pulled back till his muscles almost gave under the strain. There was a crash behind as the schooner hit a rut and overturned, but the horses were slowing knowing that they were now in the hands of a master.

Lullaby went after Big Ed like a rocket, and it was not long before he drew alongside. His great arms were outstretched as he flung himself from his horse. Big Ed and Lullaby rolled from their horses and hit the ground with a thud, but Lullaby had seen that Big Ed was undermost. When Big Ed staggered dazedly to his feet it was to find himself menaced by a gun.

Stony let go when the horses were pulled to a stop, and lay on the ground panting from exhaustion. The capable hands of Tucson drew him to his feet.

"Are you hurt badly, Stony?"

"Well, believe it or not, but I guess I'm all right." Stony managed a grin.

Then two of the Park rangers appeared on the scene, and threatened Stony with a gun.

"Up with you hands, Stony!" one of them ordered.

"Oh, you're wrong again!" Stony shook his head. "Charley—Charley Coe shot Brady."

"It's true." It was Lorna adding her evidence. "I heard Charley tell Ed about it."

They went back to where Charley lay prostrate on the ground, and they were forcing water between the wretch's bruised lips when Lullaby appeared with Big Ed.

"Here's the ringleader of this rustling racket!" Lullaby called out, and he jabbed the end of his gun hard in Big Ed's ribs. "He'll talk plenty."

And when everything had been cleared up Lorna and Davy were fixed up in a shack close to the ranch of the Three Mesquiteers. Maw Dawson, who was a kindly soul at heart and had done her best in spite of a tyrannical husband to befriend the children, was allowed to live with them. It was going to be a very long while before Big Ed Dawson was going to see the right side of prison walls. And after a while Lorna went off to college and Davy to a school, but they went on the condition that they could spend the holidays with their new guardians—the Three Mesquiteers.

(By permission of the British Lion Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Bob Livingstone as Stony Brooke, Ray Corrigan as Tucson Smith and Max Terhune as Lullaby Joslin.)

"MAKING THE HEADLINES"

(Continued from page 12)

"Quite sure," Handley declared. "You know nobody ever gets by me." "I wouldn't bet on that!" Lew glanced all about the grounds. "I wonder what's happened to Steve—he should be here by now."

Accompanied by the sergeant, he mounted the steps to the porch. The front door was on the latch, and they entered the hall and made for the stairs in the light of the torch Lew carried. The upper hall was reached, and Lew opened the door of the bed-room he and Steve had visited earlier in the evening.

The bag of oddments Steve had proposed to plant about the house was lying on the floor where it had been left, but as the beam of the torch travelled from it to the bed a rough and unshaven man scrambled out from the bed with a cry of alarm and stood with his hands above his head. He was wearing ragged trousers and a dirty shirt.

"Stay right where you are!" rasped Lew. "Well, who are you?"

"Pitts," replied the man shakily. "Bill Pitts."

"What are you doing here?"

"Well, I—I—"

"Come on, what are you doing here?"

"Well," mumbled the man, obviously a tramp. "I've been stoppin' here quite a while. You see, it—it's no nice and quiet, and—"

"Yeah," Lew cut in harshly, "so nice and quiet that it's a swell place for a murder!"

"Murder?" Bill Pitts' eyes started nearly out of his head, and his jaw dropped.

"Turn him over to one of the boys outside," directed Lew, turning to Sergeant Handley. "Book him on vagrancy."

The captive was hustled down the stairs.

Steve had entered the grounds just after Lew had entered the house. He was lighting a cigarette under the trees, close to the car, when Jeanie flitted in at the gateway, and she started violently as he walked out into the moonlight.

"Boo!" he said. "I remember you! What are you doing here?"

"Oh, you did make me jump!" she exclaimed. "I thought you were in—"

"Yes," he laughed, "but I'm not the first guy to break gaol for the sake of a lovely lady." He caught sight of the necklace and pointed to it. "Oho," he said, "where did this come from?"

"Captain Nagel," she replied, "but I'd rather you didn't ask me anything about it."

"Oh!"

"You'll think me awfully silly, I

ROYAL NAVY

Boys may now enter between the ages of 15 and 17½ years. Full particulars are contained in the illustrated booklet "The Royal Navy as a Career and How to Join It," which may be obtained on application to the Recruiting Staff Officer, R.N. and R.M. (N), 85, Whitehall, London, S.W.1, or at any Post Office.

guess," she went on, "but I came up here hoping I might find something that would help clear you."

She looked adorable to him in the moonlight.

"Did anyone ever tell you that you had very nice eyes?" he asked.

"No."

"Well, you have. Only trouble with them is they don't give enough attention to me. They look a little worried, too."

"They are," she confessed. "I haven't been able to locate Aunt Muffin for hours. Call it a lurch, if you like, but I think she's in that dreadful house."

"Let's go and see," suggested Steve; and they walked together up the drive.

The Secret of a Wart

LEW was in the hall, looking into a cupboard there, when Steve opened the front door. He whirled round and shone the light of the torch upon the two invaders.

"About time you showed up!" he growled at Steve. "But I didn't expect you, Miss Sandford. What's the idea?"

"Aunt Muffin," Jeane replied. "I haven't been able to find her since I got home from the station."

"Anything doing?" inquired Steve.

"Yes and no," Lew frowned at Jeane. "Now that you're here," he said, "I'm going to have to ask you to stay out of sight. I'm expecting some guests, and if they saw you their game would be off. How's your nerve? Think you can sit in there for a while?"

He pointed to the dining-room with the torch, and it looked a place of ghostly shadows; but Jeane said bravely:

"Yes, I think so. I'm not exactly the timid type."

"Good," said Lew. "Take her in, Steve."

Steve led her past one of the heavy curtains, holding her arm. But just inside the room she stumbled over something on the floor, nearly fell, and uttered a piercing scream.

Lew rushed in with his torch, and its beam shone down upon the body of Edgar Keer, lying on his back on the carpet, one arm outflung. His eyes were open and staring; his bowler hat was lying upside down as though it had fallen from his head.

"The jeweller!" exclaimed Lew.

Jeane was clinging to Steve and trembling all over, and Steve whisked her out to the stairs.

"Sit here," he said; and she sank down on to the third stair, her right shoulder against the banisters.

"And I said I wasn't the screaming kind," she murmured ruefully.

"One more corpse," said Steve. "and I think I'll do a little screaming myself. Now stay right here—I'll only be a second."

He went back into the dining-room, and Jeane was in the dark. Down the stairs behind her crept the shadowy figure of a man, and suddenly a handkerchief held by two gloved hands descended over her head and was fastened tightly round her mouth.

She tried to scream, but could make no sound, and then she was raised bodily and felt herself being pulled up the stairs.

In the dining-room, Lew had covered the body of Edgar Keer with a dust sheet from a chair.

"Well," he said grimly, "one by one the pieces are going together."

"You think Keer was one of them?" asked Steve.

"He must have been—they did away July 2nd, 1938.

with him. I'm going to call the coroner."

"Call him?" said Steve. "How can you?"

"I had the 'phone connected."

A scream rang out from somewhere above the stairs, and they rushed out into the hall. Jeane had disappeared, and Steve streaked upwards.

"Jeane! Jeane!" he cried frantically.

Lew followed; the light of his torch lit up the half-landing—and there was Jeane, pale as any ghost, sitting up against the wall.

Steve lifted her to her feet, and held her because she seemed unable to stand alone. Lew caught hold of one of her arms and looked at her throat.

"The necklace has gone!" he exclaimed.

A sound that Steve did not even notice reached his ears, and he raced up on the stairs and into one of the front bed-rooms. Edmund Sandford was at a window, opening one of its casements, but he dropped his hand and turned as the light of the torch blazed upon him. Lew's official six-shooter was out in an instant.

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SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS

"Get away from that window before I blow your brains out!" he roared.

Edmund Sandford obeyed, raising his hands.

"Oh, so it's you again, is it?" he said, trying to speak naturally. "You think you've got something on me, don't you? You haven't!"

"Is that so?" retorted Lew. "Well, you can tell that to the jury!"

He strode over to the tall and unpleasant man, tucked the torch under his left armpit, and plunged a hand into first one pocket and then another of the captive's coat.

"I only came up to look for Mark's money," said the captive, less belligerently, "and that's the truth."

"Yeah, every word of it's the truth," jeered Lew, and from the inner breast-pocket of the coat pulled out the necklace that had been made as a decoy. "Now where's that letter of instructions?"

"My good man," said Edmund Sandford, "I wish you'd tell me."

"Okay. Get on downstairs!"

Steve and Jeane were sitting side by

side on the stairs, but they rose to give passage for Lew and his prisoner.

"Feel better?" asked Steve.

"Yes, I guess so," Jeane replied. "So it was Uncle Edmund who attacked me? I wish you'd take me away from here."

"All right," said Steve, and they went on down to the hall.

Lew was standing there with Edmund Sandford, and Steve was about to say that he was going to take Jeane home, when the front door swung wide, and Sergeant Handley bundled Ronald Sandford and his wife Claire in over the step.

"Captain, this is one you'll have to chalk up for me!" he boomed. "Caught 'em red-handed prowling around the garden!"

"That's not true!" cried Claire indignantly. "We were only looking for—"

"I know!" Lew broke in with scorn. "You were only looking for atmosphere for your new play."

"Yes," said she; "but the farther I get into it the less I like it."

Lew flipped a hand in the direction of the dining-room.

"Go in there and light the candles, Handley," he directed. "Inside, all the rest of you!"

While Handley lit the candles in the seven-branched candlesticks the others trooped into the room—and there was Mrs. Wilder, sitting in a chair she had turned away from the table and gazing fixedly up at the oil-painting over the mantelpiece.

"Muffin!" cried Jeane in surprise.

"Hash, child, be still!" rebuked her aunt. "Can't you see I'm concentrating?"

"Well, how long have you been here?" demanded Lew.

"I came straight here after you let me out of gaol, captain," was the reply. "I've been trying to communicate with Mark about this."

"Don't let her fool you, captain," said Edmund Sandford spitefully. "She's had her eye on that picture ever since Mark died."

"And why shouldn't I?" Mrs. Wilder bridled. "Everyone knows Mark said it was to be mine. Make no mistake. I intend to have it!"

"So far as I'm concerned, you can have it," snorted her brother. "I don't want Mark and his wart!"

Everybody looked up at the picture and at the excrecence on the painted features of the sea captain.

"Oh, it seems to me to be getting bigger all the time!" Mrs. Wilder exclaimed, and she rose and moved the chair to the fireplace and climbed upon its seat. "Why, it's not a wart, it's a button!" she cried, and she reached up a hand and pressed the button.

To everybody's amazement a hidden door in the panelling of the wall near the fireplace swung outwards. Claire Sandford shrieked; but Lew snatched out his gun and with it covered the opening in the wall because Herbert Sandford and his blonde wife Grace stood revealed behind it, apparently in a tiny room—and Herbert Sandford's right hand was on its way to a hip-pocket.

"Don't react for it!" roared Lew. "Come on out before I plug you!"

Slowly the two stepped out from their place of concealment, whereupon Sergeant Handley stalked over to them.

"Where's the necklace, and where are those instructions?" Lew asked sternly.

"What instructions?"

"Search him, Handley!"

(Continued on page 28)



GO on collecting all the Armaments Stamps you can—it's well worth your while! There are still Five More "Hercules" Bikes and at least 2,000 of the other grand prizes to be given away in the July contest, which will finish next week—for collecting the stamps BOY'S CINEMA is giving. There are five different kinds to be collected now—BATTLESHIPS, TANKS, DESTROYERS, and so on. Cut them out and try to get as many others as you can. All those you have collected so far (except Bombers, Submarines, and Searchlights, which have been called in) should be kept for this month's contest.

There are sixteen more stamps on this page. Add them to your collection right away, and remember there are more of these stamps to swell your total in other papers like "Champion" and "Triumph." And here's

✱ **A GOOD CHANCE!** This week's "Champion" contains **FOUR BONUS TANK STAMPS** in addition to sixteen others—making twenty in all.

Hurry up and collect all the stamps you can, because next week we shall be asking you how many of one or more kinds of stamps you have collected. Then the remaining Five Bikes and at least 2,000 of the other prizes will be awarded to those readers with the biggest collections of stamps called for. The rules governing the contest have already appeared and will be repeated next week, too.

OVERSEAS READERS are in this great scheme also, and special awards will be given for the best collections from overseas readers, for whom there will be a special closing date.

(N.B.—You can also collect or swap Armaments Stamps with readers of "Triumph," "Champion," "Magnet," "Gem," "Sports Budget," "Modern Boy," "Detective Weekly," and "Thriller." Stamps can be cut from all these papers, but no reader may win more than one first prize or share, of course.)



LOOK OUT FOR MORE STAMPS NEXT WEEK!

"MAKING THE HEADLINES"

(Continued from page 26)

The sergeant dealt expertly with Herbert Sandford's pockets, and from one of them he produced the missing part of the original necklace, and from the other the long envelope containing Mark Sandford's instructions.

Lew took the envelope, which had been torn open, and from it extracted a folded sheet of paper closely filled with a crabbed handwriting.

"Well, this'll be exhibit 'A' for the jury," he said, after he had scanned the written instructions.

"If it hadn't been for that puny little jeweller butting in—" Herbert exploded, and broke off abruptly as he realised that he was convicting himself.

"You wouldn't have got away with it," Lew informed him curtly. "I never fell for that drunken act. I'm holding you for the murders of Hackett and Keer."

"Oh, no, you don't!" blustered the accused man. "You've only got one charge against me, and that's of sneaking up here and trying to find Marks money."

"Yeah, and a fat chance he had with Hackett on the job!" cried Grace.

"Take your time, sister," said Lew, "your turn's coming."

"Listen, she had nothing to do with it!" shouted her husband.

"We'll leave that to the jury. So Hackett beat you to the hiding-place, eh?"

"Don't put words in my mouth. I don't want 'em! When I got here the wall was open and Hackett was in the vault."

"And in the tussle you got the instructions?"

"Supposing I did? That doesn't prove I killed him!"

"Finger-prints don't lie, Sandford, and you left yours on the part of the necklace that Hackett hung on to. Now, what about Keer?"

"He's told you all he knows!" stormed Grace.

"He hasn't started yet," Lew retorted.

Herbert Sandford's thick-lipped mouth was working.

"I had nothing to do with Keer," he said hoarsely.

"But you don't deny killing Hackett, do you?"

"I didn't kill him! I shot him in self defence!"

"And then you robbed him."

"All right, what of it? If I hadn't taken the necklace from Hackett, Keer would have done. He was in league with Hackett."

"And you made up your mind to do away with him, too."

"I'd like to see you prove that!" he bellowed.

"Well, you won't have to wait very long," said Lew. "Put the handcuffs on him, Handley. Better take her as well, for company's sake."

Two officers were summoned from the grounds with the aid of a police whistle, and the guilty man and his accomplice were taken away. Steve followed with Jane as far as the hall, and there he pounced on a telephone that was standing on a narrow table. He rang up the "Morning Herald" office and in course of time Hallen Middleton's voice sounded in his ear.

"Hallo, sweet child," said Steve. "Has the edition gone in yet? Not? Oh, that's swell! Ready? Police solve double murder and are holding—"

Lew bounded over from the open front door, where he had been watching the departure of the police with their prisoners.

"Wait a minute, wait a minute!" he commanded. "I'll do my own reporting this time!" He snatched away the telephone. "Hallo, Middleton! Nagel speaking. My name's not to be used, understand? What? Well, it goes something like this: 'Kennedy proves keen foresight. Kennedy anticipates crime by three weeks.'"

"Smear it on heavy, sailor," chirruped Steve. "That's the kind of stuff that will put you right back in town!"

"And that's where I'm heading," Lew declared. "Are you there, Middleton? 'Kennedy displays amazing judgment.' If Kennedy wants the front page, give him the whole paper! 'Kennedy transfers—'"

Mrs. Wilder had dashed out from the dining-room and was plucking at Lew's sleeve.

"Captain, captain," she cried, "I simply will not be trodden in the dust!"

"Hold on, Middleton," said Lew into the telephone; and then, to the indignant dame: "What are you talking about now?"

"Me!" she stormed. "Whatever this Kennedy man may have done, it was I who discovered that Mark's wart was a button and not a wart at all! At least give me credit for that!"

(By permission of Columbia Pictures Corporation, Ltd., starring Jack Holt.)



British Actor-Aviator Ordered to Stay on the Ground

Ray Milland, the young British actor who is one of the three leading players in Paramount's Technicolour cavalcade of the air, "Men With Wings," has been forbidden by Producer-director William A. Wellman to continue his flying until the completion of the picture.

Milland stirred Wellman's ire when he, with Dwight Peterson, transport pilot; Louise Campbell, leading lady in the film; and Marion Weldon, Paramount stock player, flew over the picture's kite-flying location and spoiled a "take."

Wellman had no idea who the offending aviator might be as the ship circled over the spot where he was making his man-sized kite flying scenes with Virginia Weidler, Donald O'Connor and Billy Cook. He got Joseph Youngerman, his assistant, to take the number of the ship and report it to the Bureau of Air Commerce.

"From now on," Wellman told Milland, "I want you to stay on the ground. That goes for Miss Campbell, too. We aren't going to have this aviation picture spoiled by an air crash of any kind."

Found on Their Own Doorstep

A movie company's search throughout the world for the royal decoration of the Hapsburg family, conferred only for the highest service to the crown, ended ironically in Hollywood recently.

After sending scouts to the principal museums of Europe in search of the decoration, of which there are not more than a dozen in existence, 20th Century-Fox found one within a few blocks of its Beverly Hills studio.

Count Rudolf von Stefenelli, who occasionally plays rôles in films, heard about the hunt and brought the Hapsburg award, a priceless emblem of gold, diamonds and pearls, to the studio. The Emperor Franz Joseph conferred the decoration a quarter of a century ago on Stefenelli's brother, who was commander of the emperor's bodyguard for twenty years.

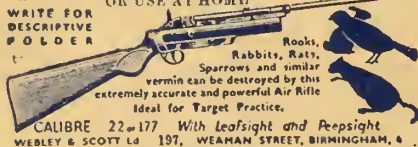
The medal was needed for a scene in "Suez," in which the honour is conferred on Tyrone Power who plays Ferdinand de Lesseps, builder of the canal.

The studio insured the medal for \$50,000 during such time as it is used on the set.

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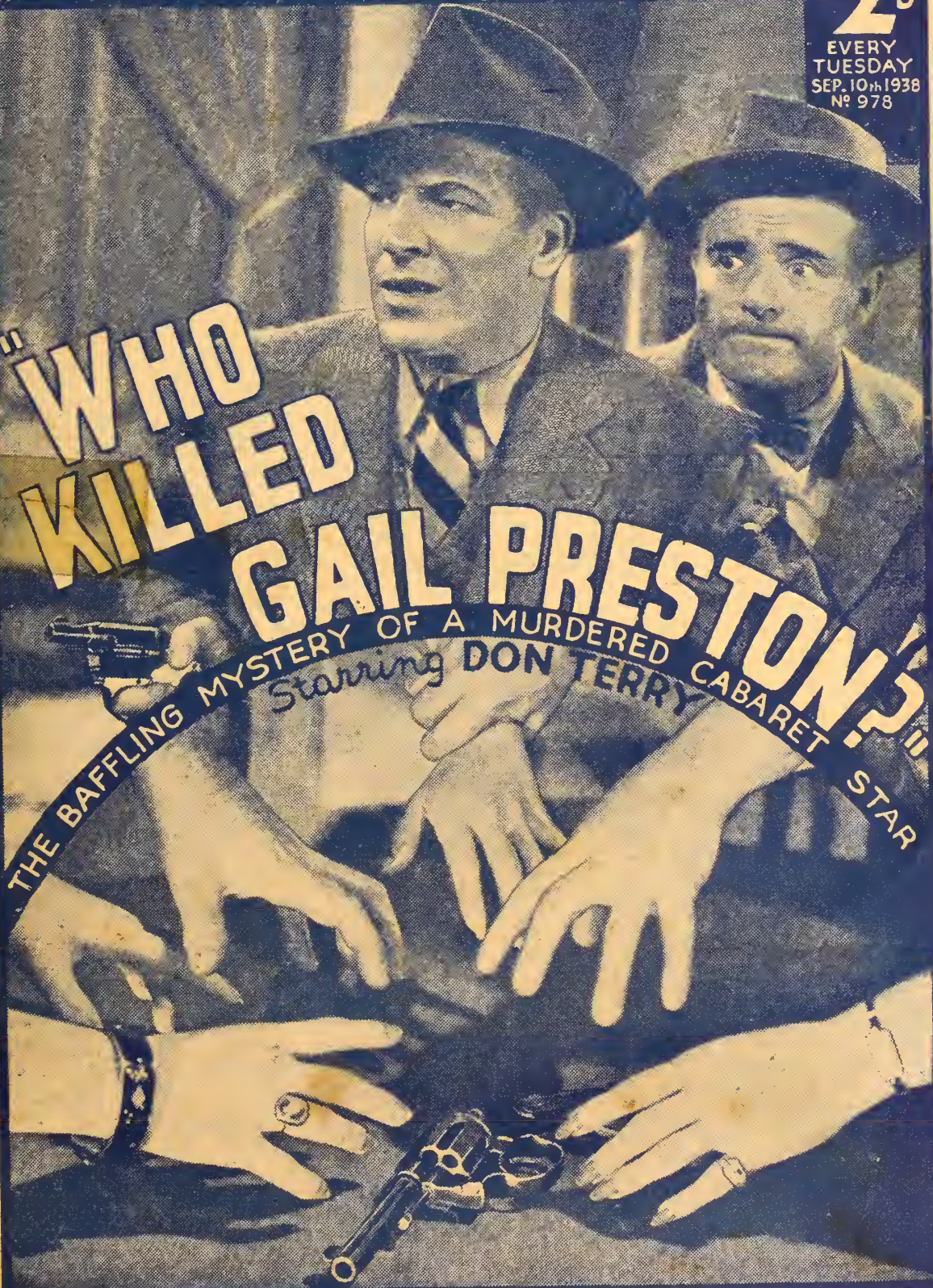
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Boy's CINEMA

2^D

EVERY
TUESDAY
SEP. 10th 1938
No 978



WHO
KILLED

GAIL PRESTON?

THE BAFFLING MYSTERY OF A MURDERED CABARET STAR
Starring DON TERRY

In full view of the patrons of the Swing Swing Night Club, and with the spotlight on her, Gail Preston, a beautiful cabaret star, falls dead with a bullet in her heart—and Detective-Inspector Tom Kellogg is called upon to solve the biggest murder mystery of his career. A real thriller, starring Don Terry

"Who Killed Gail Preston"



The Way of a Star

CREEPING along an iron gallery to iron stairs set at an angle, three men in convict garb descended to an area of polished floor, and, under the watchful eyes of guards who paced up and down other galleries, sneaked furtively past a circular platform upon which seeming convicts were playing some sort of dance tune, and began to execute a quaint and elaborate variation of the old-fashioned "Lockstep."

Under the galleries were rows of cells, and many of the cells were occupied, but the "prisoners" were men and women in evening clothes, who sat at tables covered with striped cloths—and paid for the privilege. For those who preferred not to be behind bars there were tables in the open on the fringe of the dance floor.

For this was no prison, though it possessed some of the trappings and much of the atmosphere of one. It was the Swing Swing Club, a popular night resort in Forty-Second Street, New York City, whose patrons enjoyed the novelty of going to "gaol" to enjoy themselves. Even its name was reminiscent of Sing Sing, the big penitentiary up the Hudson River at Ossining.

The writers were dressed as warders, and their manners were to match.

"Come on, come on! Get in here!" one of them said gruffly, as he unlocked and opened the door of a cell for a party of four. "And if you don't behave yourselves you get thrown out!"

The iron door clanged upon the willing captives, presently to be reopened by another "guard," inconspicuously carrying a menu card instead of a club.

"The Lockstep" came to an end, and the three who had performed it backed

away to the iron stairs with the sound of applause in their ears. As they disappeared from view a full-faced, youngish man, with very dark brows and fierce blue eyes, stalked on to the floor through a doorway into the floodlight of a lantern trained on him from a box high above one of the galleries. He was dressed as a head guard, but actually he was Master of Ceremonies. His name was Charles Waverly.

Removing his peaked cap, he raised it to impose silence.

"All right, all right, you mugs!" he said with exaggerated curtness. "Now, we're gonna give you our headline act, whether you like it or not, so just keep your seats and listen real hard while Gail Preston sings you a song."

He went off under a gallery as a beautiful girl in a low-cut gown of shimmering lamé appeared from the doorway, bowed to right and left, and stood near the leader of the band. Her hair was nearly black, her eyes were deep-set brown, and she had a very straight nose and a very determined little chin.

The song she sang was called, "You're the Greatest Attraction in the World." There was nothing particularly distinguished about the words, but the music was attractive and her voice was perfect. She had a style that had made her famous.

The leader of the band, a handsome young fellow, known professionally as "Swing" Traynor, though his real Christian name was Leonard, descended from his platform to make a duet of the last few lines of the song, and then the two bowed to prolonged applause, and he went back to pick up his baton while she made her exit.

Charles Waverly promptly took the floor and waved his cap.

"All right, pipe down, pipe down!" he shouted. "I'm glad you know good warbling when you hear it! Well, that's the end of our show for the time being. You laughed while we danced, now you can dance yourselves!"

The doors of the cells were opened, and most of the patrons rose from their tables and made for the floor as the band began to play a lively fox-trot.

Waverly was in his own dressing-room a few minutes later, and had discarded his cap and jacket and put on a dressing-gown, when he heard a knock at the door and went to it.

Gail Preston was in the wide corridor out of which most of the dressing-rooms opened, and his eyes lit up at sight of her.

"Oh, hailo, Gail!" he exclaimed. "Come in!"

She stepped past him into the room, and he closed the door and smiled at her. But she did not return the smile; on the contrary, she gave him such a scowl that he asked plaintively:

"Why, what's the matter, Gail? What's wrong?"

"You know what's wrong, stupid!" she blazed.

"Cut the flattery, Gail," he said wryly. "What's on your mind?"

"I've told you ten times, at least, that I want a bigger build-up on my introduction, and I intend to get it! I still happen to be the featured attraction around here!"

"Sure you are," he responded soothingly. "I'm not trying to hurt you out there—as a matter of fact, I'd do anything to help you." He went to put his arms round her. "You see, I—"

"Cut that out!" she stormed, breaking away from him. "I didn't come in here to play a love scene with you! All you've got to do is to take care of your job, and giving me a proper introduction is part of that job. See that you do it!"

"I'm sure from now on you'll have no complaints," he said; and then, as she turned the handle of the door: "Gail, do I have to go on playing second fiddle?"

"Second fiddle?" she echoed, with a scornful toss of her head. "You're not even in the orchestra!"

She flounced out from the room, paused for a moment in the corridor, then opened a door on the other side of it. Her angry face instantly became more angry still, for she had expected to find her own elegantly furnished dressing-room untenanted, and Swing Traynor was in it with a pretty golden-haired girl.

"What are you two doing in here?" she asked sharply.

"We came in to settle this thing, Gail," the band leader replied.

"Settle what?" she demanded.

"Ann and I are going to be married."

"That's what you think!"

As though dismissing a subject she did not consider worthy of discussion she swept over to a dressing-table and seated herself in a chair facing a semi-circular mirror, in the frame of which sixteen opalescent electric lamps gleamed. But the girl followed her, and said with spirit:

"You've got to listen to me! You may be my sister, but every chance you've had you've tried to come between us!"

"A very pretty speech," jeered Gail. "but you wouldn't be so proud if you knew a few intimate details about your charming boy friend."

"Why, what do you mean?"

Gail Preston sprang to her feet and faced the band leader.

"Do you want to tell her, Swing," she challenged, "or shall I?"

"If you can tell the truth," gritted Swing, "go ahead."

"I think you should know," the temperamental star said scathingly to her sister, "that Swing falls in and out of love very easily. I don't suppose he's told you that he was once in love with me?"

"You're wrong there, Gail!" cried Swing. "I never loved you!"

She winced as though he had struck her, and he went on:

"That hurts your vanity, doesn't it? You will find it hard to realise that there is somebody you can't dominate. Well, it's time somebody told Ann the truth about us. I was a musician without a dime to my name, and the great Gail Preston took a fancy to me. Remember, Gail? You told me you'd put me on top of the heap—told me you'd get me an orchestra of my own. Well, you certainly did those things. You gave me a foothold; but I had to do my own climbing."

"Go on!" snapped Gail.

"I was grateful to you—still am. I'd like to repay you in any way I can. But I never could fall in love with you."

Ann clung to his arm, and that added fuel to the flame of Gail's jealous rage.

"Now, you listen to me, Swing!" she said fiercely. "I made you, and I can break you just as easily! Beginning tomorrow, there will be a new orchestra leader in this club, and I'll go out of my way to blackball you in every other spot in town! You won't be able to get a job—I'll see to that personally!"

She flung out a hand at her sister.

"And you'll have to starve with him!"

You had a promising career, Ann; you might have been one of this country's finest music arrangers. But you're spoiling it all by choosing Swing. From now on you can do your own worrying!"

"Okay, Gail!" said Swing. "But remember this—if you try to come between Ann and me, it'll be the last thing you ever do!"

She whirled past them to the door, and she sped along the corridor to the office of Patrick Fallon, the proprietor of the place, who looked up from a desk as she burst in upon him. He was a thick-chinned man of about forty, with sleek dark hair and sleek manners, and he was in evening clothes because he was in the habit of mingling with his more regular patrons.

"Patsy, I want you to fire Swing Traynor!" she exploded.

"What for?" Fallon inquired mildly.

"Why, he's the most popular band leader I've had in the club."

"Either you fire him to-night, or I quit cold!"

Fallon was accustomed to outbursts of temper on her part, and in the ordinary way he was pretty good at humouring her; but this sudden demand of hers seemed to him to be beyond all reason, and he said rather stiffly:

"Now don't forget, Gail, that I still happen to be the boss around here."

"Maybe you are," she retorted, folding her arms with an air of defiance, "but you'll do as I say!"

He rose from the desk and he flung out his hands.

"You've got to give me time," he protested. "I'll get rid of him. Give me a couple of days. Give me time to get a new man."

She shook her head.

"Be reasonable," he pleaded.

"I'll expect to see a new orchestra leader in here by to-morrow night!"

"All right Gail," he surrendered with a sigh. "Anything you say."

She went out as abruptly as she had entered, and he sat down at the desk again, compressed his lips, scratched the back of his neck, and spoke into a dictograph.

"Send Swing Traynor in right away," he said.

A Call to Headquarters

WHEN Gail returned to her dressing-room, Swing and Ann had gone, but a black-haired and rather sinister-looking man with a pock-marked face, dressed as a chauffeur, was sprawled in an armchair.

"Since when do you wait for me in my dressing-room?" she blazed at him.

"I like it here," he returned with cool insolence. "What are you gonna do about it?"

"I'm getting tired of this! I'm going to—"

"You're gonna keep your pretty little mouth shut," he broke in, getting to his feet. "Is that what you were gonna say? Take it easy, babe."

She bit her lip.

"All right, skip it," she said. "Go home and put some dinner clothes on, then come back as fast as possible."

"What for?" he inquired.

"I want you to sit at a table in the café every minute I'm on that floor."

"What's the idea?"

"I want someone near me who knows how to handle a gun."

"Okay, Miss Preston, I'll be there."

He picked up his chauffeur's cap from a chair and went out; and for a few moments after he had gone she stood motionless, staring at the door he had closed behind him. Then, slowly, she went into an adjoining room in which she sometimes rested, and from the drawer of a quaint little table there she took out an automatic of blue steel.

The gun was in her hand when she heard someone enter the dressing-room.

"Who's there?" she called out.



Ann ran over, sobbing, and Swing ran after her. Tom caught hold of her arm. "Now will you sit down?" he said gruffly.

There was no reply, and she went swiftly through the doorway, holding the automatic. An enormously fat nigger, who was carrying the skirt of a grey costume over her left arm and the coat of the costume in her right hand on a hanger, stopped short with a little gasp of alarm on her way to an inset wardrobe.

"Why do you go sneaking around like that?" stormed the star.

"Land snakes, Miss Preston!" gulped the black dresser. "That sho' is a powerful-lookin' piece of artillery."

"Answer my question!" insisted Gail.

"I jus' got these from the cleaners."

The coat and skirt were indicated with a nod.

"Oh, I just wasn't expecting you, that's all Sarah!"

"Sho' looks like you was expectin' somebody," said the nigger, eyeing the automatic. "Do you want me to hang these clo'es, or do you wanna look at 'em first?"

"Put them on a chair," directed Gail. "I'll look at them later."

The skirt was deposited upon the arm of a chair, the coat was hung from the back of it.

"Now, get out and leave me alone."

"Yes, ma'am."

Sarah made herself scarce, and Gail sat down at the dressing-table and laid the automatic on it.

At almost the same moment, Swing Traynor walked into Fallon's office, and, though he had a shrewd idea as to why he had been summoned, it was in quite a casual manner that he said:

"Hallo, Patsy, what's up?"

"Plenty," was the reply. "Gail was in here just now, yelling her head off."

"What about?"

"She wants me to fire you."

"Fire me?" Swing appeared to be astonished. "What reason did she give?"

"She's money in the bank for me, Swing. She doesn't have to give reasons."

"Does that mean I'm through?"

Fallon nodded, then rose and perched on the edge of his desk.

"Oh, you'll be able to get another job!" he said consolingly. "Plenty of clubs in town would be glad to have you."

"If I'm that good," growled Swing, "why don't you let Gail Preston go? I can sing, Patsy—I can do any number she can. Why don't you give a guy a break?"

"I'm sorry, Swing," Fallon shook his head. "Preston has the name, and you haven't. There's nothing I can do about it, but I'll see that you get a couple of weeks' pay, and that'll give you time to look around for something else."

"Okay, Patsy, but I'm not through with Preston. One of these days she's going to get what's coming to her!"

"Forget it, kid," urged Fallon. "You aren't the first guy that's been double-crossed by that dame."

"No," said Swing savagely, "but I might be the last!"

Gail Preston was still sitting at her dressing-table, biting a painted fingernail, when a knock at the door disturbed her meditations.

"Who is it?" she called nervously.

"Stevens," replied a deep voice.

"Come in."

Jules Stevens, the man who entered the room, was her manager. He was middle-aged, full-bodied, and apparently very sure of himself. His fat face was clean-shaven, his dark hair was thin above his rounded brow, and there was something shifty about his light blue eyes. He was in evening clothes that did credit to his tailor.

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"Gail," he said, crossing the room and seating himself in a chair beside the table, "if anybody tells you that you haven't got the world's best manager, it'll be a libel. If I have to admit it myself, I'm tops."

"I suppose you receive fan mail, too?" she suggested dryly; but the sarcasm was wasted on him.

"I've arranged a new contract for you," he boomed. "You stay on here for another twelve weeks."

"That's fine," said she without the slightest enthusiasm, "but it's not what I wanted to see you about. There's a little matter of sixty thousand dollars you were supposed to handle for me during the past year. What happened to it?"

"Why, nothing happened to it," he replied. "Why?"

"Where's that statement of account I was supposed to get?"

"That takes time," he protested. "You can't arrange an accounting at a moment's notice."

"Maybe not," she said with a toss of her head, "but if I don't get those figures by to-morrow morning I'm going to the police."

He stared at her as though he could hardly believe his ears.

"Don't be silly, Gail," he expostulated. "My dealings with you have always been honest."

"I don't need a sales talk—" she began heatedly; and then a telephone bell rang in the other room and she pushed back her chair and rose. "Wait here!" she commanded. "I still want to talk to you."

She disappeared through the doorway, and Jules Stevens reached out a hand to the automatic he had noticed on the dressing-table and put it in his pocket.

Fallon was on the telephone. He had rung up to tell Gail that he had carried out her wishes in regard to Swing Traynor.

"When does he leave?" she asked. "Oh, that's fine! I knew you'd see it my way, Patsy—you're too smart to have me walk out of this place. I'll talk to you later about a new leader. I have a few ideas of my own."

She put down the instrument and went back to the dressing-room.

"Stevens—" she began. But Stevens was no longer there, and with frightened eyes she saw that the gun had gone too. She sped back to the telephone, and in an agitated voice she said to the girl who answered her call: "Police headquarters, quickly! I want to speak to Inspector Kellogg."

Detective-Inspector Tom Kellogg was sprawling in a swivel chair behind a desk in his room at headquarters, and his feet were on the desk and a soft felt hat was on his head. He was a capable detective, but by no means a typical one in appearance. When he was on his feet he towered above most people, for he stood six feet four inches in his socks. His shoulders were broad, his strength was tremendous, and his smoothly-shaven face was far more suggestive of a care-free young sportsman than of a successful sleuth.

Seated at the end of the desk and gazing intently into a crystal was Detective-Sergeant Clifford Connolly, a person of pugnacious aspect—with china-blue eyes that had a tendency to stare—and one not over endowed with brains. But Connolly had his uses, and Tom Kellogg tolerated him as an assistant, though there were times when the sergeant's now-fad of crystal-gazing got on his nerves.

Tom reached languidly for a telephone on the desk as its bell jangled.

"Hallo?" he said. "Yeah, this is Inspector Kellogg."

"This is Gail Preston, inspector," returned the voice of the cabaret singer. "I'd like you to come to the Swing Swing Club as soon as possible."

"Is that an invitation, Miss Preston, or is something really wrong?" Tom inquired.

"I'd rather not talk about it over the 'phone." Her voice sounded strained. "Will you come?"

"I have an appointment that'll keep me here for a while, but I'll be over as soon as I've finished."

"There'll be a table reserved for you, inspector," she informed him. "Good-bye."

Connolly looked up from his crystal as the telephone was replaced.

"Don't tell me who it was," he said brightly. "let me find it in this ball."

"I'll give you three guesses," jeered Tom.

Evidently the crystal failed, for after a while the sergeant ceased to stare into it.

"Gail Preston, the singer over at the Swing Swing Club," said Tom. "Must be looking for some free publicity."

"Aw, those dames think we got nothin' else to do but jump through hoops when they want us to. We got important work to do."

"Sure," yawned Tom.

With his hands to his forehead Connolly concentrated on the crystal again.

"Oh, there's an image!" he suddenly exclaimed. "It comes to me in the crystal ball—it's coming closer! I can see his head. It's George Washington. He wants to say something to me. What d'you want to say, George?"

Tom removed his feet from the desk and walked round it to see what all the fuss was about. An envelope was lying close to the crystal, and the crystal had enlarged the head of George Washington which was printed on a stamp that decorated the envelope.

"You sap!" exploded Tom. "It's a two-cent stamp!"

"Oh!" The disillusioned gazer blinked at the envelope that was thrust under his nose.

A Dive to Death!

FOR three-quarters of an hour the patrons of the Swing Swing Club were left in possession of the dance floor, and then the waiters dressed as guards ordered them back to their tables and Charles Waverly reappeared.

"Well, here we are back again, folks," he said in his gruff way. "The first number in the second part of our show to-night will be two well-known mugs that were sent up from Chicago for cheating audiences. Whether you like 'em or not, I give you Lolita and Ardo."

A Spaniard in white and a Spanish girl in black and white took the floor and provided a spectacular tango, followed by a whirlwind dance that looked far more dangerous than it was. While the tango was in progress the pock-marked Frank Daniels entered the café, transformed from a chauffeur into a seeming patron, and was conducted to an empty cell.

In another cell Fallon had joined two friends of his at a table, and evidently he had told them about Gail Preston's insistence upon Swing's dismissal, for one of them said indignantly:

"I wouldn't care how good that Preston dame was, Patsy, if I owned this club I'd throw her out on her ear."

She couldn't talk to me like that and get away with it."

"That's the difference between us, Shane," returned Fallon, lighting a cigar. "I own this place, and you don't. I run my business the way I want it."

"When that dame starts to yell," commented the other man, "it looks like she runs the business."

"I've got my reasons for having her around," said Fallon quietly. "When she gets too tough to handle I'll figure out my own way of getting rid of her."

The patrons clamoured for an encore of the whirlwind dance, but no encore was given. Lolita and Ardo bowed themselves off the floor, and Waverly stood in the middle of it to announce:

"The next number, ladies and gentlemen, needs no introduction. You all know Gail Preston, and those of you who haven't heard her sing don't know what they've missed. I'm just telling you that any one of you who doesn't applaud for at least ten minutes when she gets through with this next song will be given a parole and sent out of here. I'm warning you—you'll do it, or else!"

Abruptly the café was plunged into darkness and a spotlight from the electrician's box streaked down to envelop Gail as she emerged from the doorway at which she had been standing, a figure of shapely loveliness in a sheath-like gown of black satin.

"Here she comes now, folks," cried Waverly, "the sweetest and most beautiful little singer in the world—the human torch, Gail Preston."

He retreated round a corner of one of the end cells as the band struck up the introductory bars to a song about midnight and loneliness, and Gail moved forward in the beam of light.

Daniels sat alertly in his chair at the back of his cell, and his right hand closed round the butt of a gun in a shoulder-holster under his dinner-jacket.

Swing left the platform and stood waving his baton midway between the band and the temperamental star as she lifted up her voice. The door of one of the cells farthest from the beam of the spotlight was opened slowly, and a man in evening clothes moved furtively out past a "guard" whose attention was riveted on the singer.

As a big disc revolved in front of the limelight lantern the spotlight that shone upon Gail changed colour, and it was an amber light that illuminated her as she came to the last words of the song. Flinging out her arms in a tragic gesture she sang:

"...there'd be no hope in store,
If I knew I had to go through
This midnight—this midnight
once more."

There came a final crashing chord from the band and a burst of applause from the audience, and not many people heard three shots that were fired almost simultaneously, or noticed the jets of flame that accompanied them. But Gail Preston gave a piercing scream, and fell face downwards with a bullet in her heart.

Other women screamed, the lights of the café blazed again, and commotion followed. People sprang up from the tables round the floor; people streamed out from the cells. Two patrolmen burst into the club from Forty-Second Street to find a panic-stricken crowd trying to invade the cloak-rooms. One of the guards—a burly waiter in reality—made for the revolving front

doors to close them and collided with Tom Kellogg who was just entering with Connolly.

"Hi, what's the rush, buddy?" demanded Tom.

"Gail Preston's just been shot!" was the breathless reply.

"Wait a minute!" Tom addressed the milling crowd. "Nobody gets out of here until I say so."

"Hold on, hold on!" exploded the make-believe guard. "Who are you?"

"Inspector Kellogg, from police headquarters." Tom flashed his badge. "Have a couple of your men guard the doors, and don't let anybody in or out."

"All right, sir." The waiter put his broad back to the exit and shouted for assistance, while Tom and Connolly made their way swiftly into the café past more frightened patrons and reached the dance floor.

Ann was there, sobbing in Swing's arms. Fallon was staring down at his murdered star, and Waverly was standing with bowed head a little way off. Tom knelt beside the still form, felt at a pulseless wrist, and looked up at his assistant.

"Notify headquarters," he directed crisply, "send for the coroner, then take the names and addresses of everybody in here."

Connolly went off with a waiter to the nearest telephone, and Tom got to his feet.

"All right," he said loudly, "everybody get back to your tables. Nobody leaves the premises. Who owes this place?"

"I do," said Fallon sourly. "Who are you?"

"Inspector Kellogg."

Fallon gulped.

"Inspector Kellogg? What—"

"Miss Preston 'phoned me this evening and asked me to come over. Do

you know what she was worried about?"

"I haven't the slightest idea, inspector," the proprietor declared. "I was sitting at my table with a couple of friends. Miss Preston was singing, and the next thing we knew she was on the floor—dead."

The patrons of the place were being shepherded back to their tables by the waiters; but the man who had sneaked out from a cell while Gail was singing was still keeping out of sight.

"No sound of a shot?" asked Tom. "It was right at the end of her number," said Fallon, "and the applause was enough to have drowned the sound of a shot."

"Well, that'll help!" Tom took a step forward. "Who are you?"

Waverly, thus addressed, gave his name and added that he was Master of Cereponies.

"Where were you when she ended her number?"

"I was sitting over there in the wings by the band."

"Looks like anybody might have fired that shot." Tom glanced at Swing Traynor and at the weeping girl he was holding, then waved an imperious hand. "Sit down and make yourselves comfortable," he barked. "I have an idea we'll be here for a long time."

The members of the band resumed their seats on the platform. Swing led Ann over to a chair and Fallon returned to his friends. Time passed, and then Connolly reappeared with the coroner and his officer, and the coroner knelt beside Gail Preston.

"Shot," he said, without looking up. "We know that," said Tom.

Ann ran over, sobbing, and Swing ran after her. Tom caught hold of her arm.

"Now will you sit down?" he said gruffly.



Tom dropped on one knee to feel at the dead man's heart and wrist, and to study a pallid face.

"I think the bullet's in her heart," said the coroner.

With a sudden rush the man who had been hiding round a corner of the end cell made for a door that opened into an alleyway at the side of the premises, and he was brandishing a gun.

"Get away from that door!" he bellowed at the policeman who was stationed there.

Tom heard and raced after him, shouting:

"Hi, where are you going?"

The policeman was knocked aside with the gun, and the man got out at the door.

"Go out the front way and head him off in the alley!" cried Tom, and then he, too, was out in the alleyway, just in time to see the fugitive leap upwards on to the bottom rung of a vertical fire-escape attached to the wall.

The patrolmen came dashing on from the club as he started to climb, and they reached the foot of the fire-escape; but about fifteen feet from the paved way the fellow stopped and looked down, and the gun in his hand spat flame.

"Stand back!" shouted Tom.

A bullet struck the opposite wall and fell harmlessly near the feet of one of the patrolmen, and then Tom was on the bottom rung of the escape and mounting it swiftly. The fugitive scrambled upwards, dropping his gun, and reached a little landing beside a window that was shut and fastened.

He made no attempt to smash the window, but turned and stared wildly at the detective.

"Wait!" he cried in a voice that was almost a screech. "I did it! Sure I did it! I killed Gail Preston, and I'm not sorry!"

Tom was only a little way below him when he started climbing again, but without the gun to hamper his movements he seemed to have the agility of a cat, and the distance between him and his pursuer was increased.

Another window was passed, and the top of the fire-escape was reached. The self-confessed killer heaved himself off the top rung over a coping on to a flat roof, but as he stood upon the roof a policeman who had ascended to it from inside the club advanced towards him.

"You'll never get me alive!" he screamed.

"Wait!" yelled Tom, divining his intention, but with a shriek that was horrible to hear he hurled himself over the coping.

"Look out!" Tom's bellow warned the patrolmen, and they flattened themselves against a wall just in time to avoid being struck by the body that thudded to the concrete.

The detective scrambled down the fire-escape and dropped on one knee to feel at the dead man's heart and wrist, and to study a pallid face that bore unmistakable signs of dissipation during life, and while he was thus occupied, Gail Preston's coloured maid came along the alleyway, stopped short with a gasp of horror, and exclaimed:

"Why, it's Mr. Owens!"

"Who are you?" demanded Tom, springing to his feet.

"I'm Miss Preston's maid," replied the staid negress. "Wha-wah-what happened to Mr. Owens?"

"Owens?" Tom fastened on the name. "Who was he?"

"He—" Sarah became alarmed as her left arm was seized in a vice-like grip. "Whatta you gwine to do with me? I don' know nothin'! Honest I don'!"

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"Come on, sister," barked Tom, "spill it! Who was Owens?"

"I ain't sayin' nuthin'!"

"Okay," Tom turned to one of the patrolmen. "Take her to headquarters, Clancy. Maybe she'll talk there."

The Crumpled Note

TWO hours afterwards, Tom was in his own room at headquarters, and Connolly was sprawling in a chair with the stub of a cigar between his lips. Sarah was sitting on the very edge of another chair, sullenly protesting that she knew nothing.

"Why would Owens want to kill Gail Preston?" rapped Tom.

"I—I don't know," stammered the negress.

"Come on, sister, we're not playing games!"

"Well—well, w-what'll happen to me if I talk?"

"Nothing at all," Tom reassured her. "Tell me all about it."

Sarah endeavoured to lick her thick lips with a tongue that was drier than they were.

"All right," she surrendered, "I'll tell you. Mr. Owens was Miss Preston's husband, but she divorced him. He couldn't hold a job, and he was drinkin' all the time, and he kep' askin' Miss Preston for money. She supported him for a couple o' years after they was divorced, but I guess she got sick and tired o' givin' him money to buy liquor, and once they had a big argument and I heard Miss Preston say she wasn't gonna give him another cent."

"Well, thanks," Tom patted a very plump arm. "That clears everything up. You can go home now."

He crossed the room and opened a door; but Sarah seemed in no haste to depart now that she no longer was wanted.

"Ah hopes everything comes out all right," she said.

"Yeah, for you and us both," commented Connolly, and he bundled her forth into a corridor and closed the door.

"You know, Tom," he turned to remark, "that's what I call a considerate murder with no fancy trimmings. A chase—bang—bang!—and it's all over! Boy, we sure cleared that up in a hurry, didn't we?"

Tom nodded with considerable satisfaction; but at that moment another door was opened, and Curran, the little grey-haired ballistics expert attached to headquarters, stepped into the room in his shirt-sleeves.

"Hallo, Tom!" he said cheerfully. "I've got a little bad news for you."

"Bad news?" Tom frowned. "About what?"

"The bullet we took from Gail Preston's body was not fired from Owens' gun. He must have missed her entirely!"

From behind his back, where he had been holding it, the little expert produced a bullet to which a tab was attached by string.

"This is a thirty-two. Preston was killed with a thirty-eight."

"Hi!" howled Connolly. "You can't do that to us!"

"More than one bullet was fired from Owens' gun," Curran went on quite placidly, "but this isn't one of 'em. Someone else murdered Gail Preston."

With a sly grin for Connolly he went out again, taking the bullet with him, and Tom sat down at his desk to speak into a dictograph:

"Hallo, Standish?" he said. "Call the Licence Bureau first thing in the

morning and have them slap a padlock on the Swing Swing Club."

"Aw, Tom," said Connolly dolefully, "does that mean we've got to start this investigation all over again?"

"It sure does," gritted Tom. "We're going over to Gail Preston's apartment for a little look around. Come on, Chandu!"

Gail Preston's apartment was situated on the tenth floor of a huge apartment-house in West Seventy-Sixth Street, not very far from Central Park. A uniformed attendant accompanied Tom and his assistant to its front door, where he produced a key.

"Anybody else been up to this apartment to-night?" questioned Tom.

"I don't know, sir," the attendant replied. "We've just changed shifts."

"Well, shift into high and get that door open. We're in a hurry!"

The door was opened, and the two detectives crossed a comparatively small hallway into a large and rather showily furnished sitting-room. After standing in the middle of this room and looking keenly about him, Tom pounced on a handbag which was lying on the seat of an armchair. It was made of black silk, and just below its zip-fastening were two initials, stamped in gilt, "A. B."

"What does 'A. B.' stand for?" he asked.

"First two letters in the alphabet," Connolly promptly replied.

"Nice going!" Tom opened the handbag, and from amongst a variety of feminine articles inside it he fished out a crumpled piece of paper upon which a note had been written. "Get a load of that!"

Connolly took the piece of paper and with wide eyes he read the note:

"Keep quiet—we'll get out of this all right.—SWING."

A tiny click reached Tom's ears, and he swung round in time to see a door across the room being opened slowly a few inches and then closed again. He whipped a six-shooter from a shoulder-holster under his left arm, and with it in his hand went to the door and flung it wide. A wardrobe cupboard was revealed, and in it, amongst garments suspended from a rail on hangers, Ann Bishop was trying to conceal herself.

"All right, come out of there!" he said harshly; and then, as she timidly emerged: "Who are you?"

"Ann Bishop," she replied. "You're Inspector Kellogg, aren't you?"

"Look," said he, "I'll ask the questions. What are you doing here?"

"I'll answer that when I get—"

She broke off at the sound of a key being turned in the lock of the front door; and Tom said hurriedly and in a whisper to Connolly:

"Take the girl in another room, and no squawks out of her."

Connolly whisked Ann off into an adjoining room, and Tom dived into the wardrobe cupboard, leaving the door ajar.

Almost immediately Fallon walked into the sitting-room, gazed thoughtfully all round it, and went to a little desk near one of the windows. He opened a drawer on the desk and searched it, then noticed the handbag on the chair to which Tom had restored it, picked it up, frowned at the initials it bore, and dropped it again.

A bookcase next engaged his attention, and he was about to open one of its doors when Tom stepped out from the cupboard and startled him by inquiring sharply:

"Looking for something?"

Fallon took from his pocket the monkey-wrench he had picked up from the floor and held it out to Tom.



Fallon swung round and his jaw dropped.

"What are you doing here?" he exclaimed blankly.

"Everybody asks me questions," snapped Tom, putting away his gun. "but you're going to be different. You're going to tell me what you're doing here!"

"I came to pay off a war debt."

Tom grabbed hold of him and pushed him down into a chair.

"Listen, Fallon," he warned, "you're wise-cracking yourself right into a spot!"

"Now, wait a minute, inspector," blustered the proprietor of the night club. "I'm not involved in this murder, and, what's more, I don't intend to be!"

"Stay where you are!" thundered Tom. "The moment that incident happened in your place you were involved!"

"I thought the case was solved?"

"I changed my mind. I didn't like the murderer we caught, so I'm looking for a new one. Now, what were you looking for here?"

The answer was almost too glib, and not in the least degree convincing.

"Gail borrowed a valuable first edition from me and never returned it, and I came here to get it."

"So you're looking for a book in this apartment at four in the morning?" derided Tom. "Why don't you save those sort of yarns for your after-dinner speeches?"

"You can't pin this on me!" Fallon started to rise, but was pushed back again. "I had nothing to do with the murder!"

"That's what you have to prove, and you'd better talk fast."

"I've got nothing to say."

"Listen, Fallon, I'm giving you a break. Talk!"

Fallon sat breathing heavily for several moments, avoiding Tom's eyes. Then, slowly and reluctantly, he said: "I met Gail Preston several years

ago in London. I wanted to come to New York, and she helped me get a job. They let me in on a six-months' passport."

"And you overstayed your leave?"

Fallon nodded.

"The Immigration officers were after me," he confessed, "so I changed my name. Gail was the only one who knew it."

"What did you expect to find here?"

"She kept a diary, and my story's probably in it."

"Okay, Fallon. I'll believe you for the time being, but to-morrow morning you'd better see the Immigration Bureau. They may have something to say about your ease."

Fallon took out a handkerchief and wiped his brow with it.

"But I don't want to go back," he said hoarsely.

"Maybe you won't have to," retorted Tom grimly. "You have a good chance of landing in a real gaol! All right, beat it!"

Fallon rose and went out from the flat, looking considerably older than when he had entered it, and Tom went to the door of the living-room in which Connolly was waiting with Ann.

"Bring her in, Cliff," he said, and he eyed the girl with a frown as she appeared, took it for granted that she had been listening, and jeered:

"I suppose you collect first editions, too?"

"Practically," she responded quite calmly. "I was looking for that diary myself."

"Hi, that diary's beginnin' to look like the book of the month!" exploded Connolly. "It must be loaded with dynamite!"

"What are you afraid of in that diary?" asked Tom.

"Well, it had nothing to do with what happened to-night," Ann declared. "There are a lot of us who have personal affairs that are innocent enough, and we want them to remain personal."

"Maybe so," rapped Tom, "but housebreaking is still a prison offence."

"I have every right to be here!" she asserted.

"You and how many others?" he scoffed. "Fallon had a key."

"Well, I don't know anything about Mr. Fallon, but Gail Preston was my sister."

"Your sister?" He stared at her in astonishment. "Well, that's a new angle!"

"That diary doesn't have to be made public, does it?" she asked anxiously.

"Maybe, and maybe not. In any case, you hang around where I can get you if I want you. Someone has to do plenty of talking before this case is closed."

Gail Preston's Gun

ALTHOUGH neither Tom nor his assistant had many hours in bed that night they were at the Swing Swing Club by ten in the morning looking very little the worse for wear.

They made straight for the dressing-room that had been Gail Preston's, and found it untenanted; but they heard voices in the little room beyond it—and there they found Sarah packing garments in a big wardrobe trunk, and Daniels with her in his chauffeur's uniform.

Tom swept over to the negress.

"What are you going to do with Miss Preston's things?" he asked sternly.

"Miss Ann left word for them to be sent to Miss Preston's place," replied the enormous maid. "She wanted to look through them."

"Would you know if there was something missing?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you see anything of her diary?"

The negress shook her head emphatically.

"Miss Preston never kept nothin' here but her clo'es."

"Is everything accounted for?"

"No, sir—there's somethin' missin'."

September 10th, 1934.

Her gun. She used to keep it in that drawer, but it's gone now."

Tom went to the little table and he looked into the drawer.

"When did you miss it?" he turned to inquire.

"A little while ago, when I came here to pack."

"What calibre was it?"

The negress looked puzzled.

"I don't know, sir," she said, "but it sure looked wicked."

"I can answer that," said Daniels,

"It was a thirty-eight."

"And who are you?" barked Tom.

"Her chauffeur," Daniels replied.

"My name's Frank Daniels."

"When was the last time you saw the gun?"

"Last night."

"Did Miss Preston have any visitors just before she was killed?"

Sarah answered that question.

"Mr. Stevens, her manager, was here," she said.

"Where does he live?"

"I don't know, sir."

"He keeps his car in the same garage as Miss Preston," Daniels stated, and suddenly his dark-brown eyes widened.

"Say, I saw him there this morning, and he told the attendant he was going to Canada on business—said he was leavin' this afternoon."

Tom pointed to the telephone that was on the little table.

"Cliff, get headquarters for me, will you?" he said, and turned again to the dusky maid. "What's Stevens' full name?"

"Jules Stevens," she replied.

"Age?"

"About forty, I think."

"That's right," confirmed Daniels.

"And he weighs about a hundred and eighty pounds."

"Connolly obtained headquarters on the telephone, and Tom took the instrument from him.

"Find out where Stevens' office is," he directed, "and pick up a couple of men and look over his books."

Connolly departed with an air of importance, and Tom asked to be put through to Captain Long, of the radio communications department.

While he was waiting for the connection he ascertained from Daniels that the theatrical manager's car was a yellow roadster, and that its number was 34-528, and within a very few minutes a message was being broadcast to all patrol cars:

"Watch for new yellow roadster. New York licence, thirty-four dash five two eight, believed headed for Canada. Arrest driver, Jules Stevens, full face, clean shaven, blue eyes, brown hair, weight, one hundred and eighty pounds."

Within an hour Stevens was stopped on a federal highway up in Albany, and he did not attempt to deny his identity.

"Okay," said one of the officers who had stopped him. "Turn around—you're going back to town."

"What does this mean?" demanded Stevens heatedly.

"I don't know, buddy," was the reply. "I'm just working here. Get going!"

Tom was back in his own room at headquarters, and was manicuring his nails at his desk when Stevens was brought in to him.

"I won't stand for this!" the captive blazed at him. "I have business in Canada, and you have no reason for dragging me back here like a criminal!"

Tom dropped the nail-file and dived round the desk to grip him by one of the lapels of his coat.

September 10th, 1938.

"Come on, Stevens, let your hair down!" he said fiercely. "What were you doing with Gail Preston's gun?"

The fat face paled a little, but an answer was almost immediately forthcoming.

"Well, the gun was too big for her, and she asked me to change it for a smaller one."

"I understand you had an argument with her last night."

"So what?" challenged Stevens.

"It was just a business disagreement."

"What was it about?"

The answer to that question was not so prompt.

"Preston gets a sudden idea that she wants to go to Europe, and asks me for an immediate accounting of her funds."

"Why the argument?"

"Well, you can't toss off an accounting at a few moments' notice. I told her she'd have to wait."

Tom's brown eyes bored into the shifty blue ones.

"For a man who claims innocence, Stevens," he said, "you're doing a lot of lying. Gail Preston had no intention of going to Europe, because she'd just signed a new contract with Fallon."

"Well, she signed the contract after she made up her mind to go to Europe."

"Sure!" scoffed Tom; and then Curran, the little ballistic expert, entered the room with the heavy automatic that had been found on Stevens and taken from him.

"What did you find?" Tom inquired.

"That thing hasn't been fired since it was bought," Curran replied, and laid the automatic on the desk.

"I told you that!" cried Stevens with a show of indignation. "Why don't you guys pick on the right man?"

"We do sometimes," said Tom.

Curran went out chuckling, and Stevens turned in the direction of the other door, obviously imagining that he was at liberty to depart. But Tom stopped him.

"There are still a few things I'd like to know," he said grimly.

"What, for instance?"

"We've just gone over your books, and there's a small matter of sixty thousand dollars that's bothering us. Sixty thousand that belonged to Gail Preston—and you'll have to account for every penny of it before we're through with you! All right, you can go. But you'd better not try to slip town again—you'll be tailed from the moment you walk out of this building!"

The mystery of Gail Preston's murder was as far off solution as ever three days later when Fallon walked into Tom's room and found him occupied with some papers he had taken from a folder.

"What do you want here?" rapped the detective.

"You guys have got me in a spot," Fallon complained. "You won't let me out of the country because of the murder, and I can't even open my club, because you've got it padlocked. You've got me going and coming!"

"Reopening your club is the least of my worries."

"But with the club closed I'm losing my shirt!"

Tom pointed a pencil at him.

"Listen, Fallon, you squawk too much," he said. "When Preston's murder is solved you can reopen the Swing Swing Club, but not before."

"Yeah, but I—"

"Wait a minute!" Tom had a sudden idea. "Do you have many reserved tables at your place?"

"Why, of course," Fallon answered in some surprise. "Most of them are. Why?"

"Then you have a chart for your table lay-out, haven't you?"

"Sure—that's how we make our reservations. Just mark the name of the customer down on the chart."

"Have you one for the night Preston was killed?"

"Probably."

"Good!" Tom rose from the desk and put his hat on his head. "We're going to your place to have a look at that chart. Come on, I want to find out who was sitting at the tables towards the rear of the café."

The Monkey-Wrench

THE front doors of the Swing Swing Club were padlocked, but an officer stationed outside the building admitted the proprietor and the detective, and they passed into the thickly carpeted vestibule, out of which the café and the cloak-rooms opened.

"The shot that killed Preston," said Tom, indicating a spot just above his heart, "hit her about here at a slight downward angle. It may have been caused by the way she was bowing."

"Wait a minute!" Fallon moved across the vestibule to a switch-box in the wall. "I'll put on the lights."

"Fine!" Tom looked through glass-panelled doors into the café, which was in comparative darkness. He heard several clicks from the direction of the switch-box, but the gloom in the café persisted. "Nothing happened!" he exclaimed. "Nothing happened!" he exclaimed.

"Something's wrong," muttered Fallon, and Tom went over to him.

"Did you have the current turned off when you closed the club?" he asked.

"No." Fallon made a grimace. "I didn't figure to be closed this long!"

"You'd better call your electrician to have him fix it. I'll go and wait in the café."

There was a telephone-box at one end of the vestibule, installed there for the benefit of patrons. Fallon disappeared into it, and Tom pushed open one of the glass-panelled doors and entered the café.

The place looked more like the interior of a prison than ever, in the dim light provided by two very small windows high up in opposite walls, as he made his way past chairs and tables to the dance floor. He reached the spot where Gail Preston had fallen, and from it he looked up in the direction from which he imagined the shot to have been fired.

His gaze shifted from a dark gallery upon which a make-believe guard had paced to and fro, to the electrician's box high above it. The front of the box projected from the wall, and above it was another box in which two spotlight lanterns were situated.

It seemed to him that the shot might have come from the gallery, or from either of the boxes, but suddenly his attention was drawn to an iron ladder, fixed to the wall, which led up to the lower of the two boxes. The bottom of the ladder was hidden by a cell in front of it, but the upper part was visible, and a dark figure was ascending it.

"Hi!" he shouted, cupping his hands in his mouth. "Hi!"

The figure disappeared, presumably into the box, and he ran across the floor and found the bottom of the

ladder behind the cells. He climbed swiftly upwards, and he reached the lower box. It was empty, but a vertical ladder stretched up from it to the box above.

He started to climb this second ladder, but just as his head was on a level with a square opening in the floor of the upper box something struck him violently on the top of the head and he fell unconscious to the bottom of the ladder.

Fallon, having telephoned for the electrician, entered the café. He expected to find Tom on the dance floor, but as there was no sign of him there, or in any of the cells, he looked for him in the dressing-rooms and in his own office. The search occupied a considerable time, and the total disappearance of the detective puzzled him. He went back into the café, and as he roamed about it he shouted at intervals:

"Inspector! Inspector! Inspector Kellogg! Hi, where are you?"

He came to the foot of the ladder that led up to the electrician's box, and he was about to pass it when something fell to the floor almost at his feet. Wonderingly he stooped and picked up the object, and in the light of a match he found that it was a monkey-wrench. He dropped it in his coat-pocket and stepped back to stare up at the boxes.

He had informed the policeman outside the club that he had sent for the electrician, and as he stood there he heard the front door being opened. He ran to the glass-panelled doors and put his head into the vestibule.

"Who's out there?" he cried.

The electrician had made straight for the switch-box, but he turned about and said:

"Hallo, Mr. Fallon!"

Fallon went back to the ladder, and the electrician followed him.

"Something wrong?" he asked.

"There may be." The proprietor stared upwards again. "You'd better get up there and take a look round."

"Okay, as soon as I put on the lights." The electrician, a round-faced man named Mike Blake, returned to the vestibule.

"The main fuse is blown," he presently shouted into the café. "I can fix that in a minute."

Tom came to his senses, on the floor of the lower box, just as all the lights in the café blazed. In a dazed sort of fashion he pulled himself up into a sitting position with the aid of the ladder he had been in the act of climbing, and then slowly he got to his feet and leaned against the ladder.

His hat was still on his head, but his head was aching badly, and he was trying to collect scattered wits when Mike Blake found him there and exclaimed in astonishment:

"Hi, what's this?"

"Where did you come from?" asked Tom dully.

"Fallon 'phoned for me," said Mike. "I'm the electrician here. I was coming back to get my tools, anyway."

"Well, help me down below, will you?" said Tom. "That ladder looks like a picket fence!"

"What happened to you?"

"I don't know."

Tom stumbled towards the lower ladder, and the electrician helped him down it by crooking a hand under his arm and descending with him.

Fallon, on the floor of the café, held him round the waist as soon as he was within reach, and at the bottom of the ladder both men supported him. "What happened to you up there, inspector?" Fallon inquired.

"I don't know." Tom held his hands to his temples and tried to think. "I feel as though I'd been playing hide-and-seek with a ten-ton truck."

They were leading him towards a chair when Charles Waverly and Frank Daniels emerged from the doorway beyond which the dressing-rooms were situated, and Daniels was carrying a striped suitcase and Waverly was carrying a bag.

"We've got company," said Daniels.

"Look!"

"Yeah, something's wrong," decided his companion.

Tom, instead of sitting down, advanced to meet them.

"Well, this looks like home week," he said with sarcasm. "Where did you men come from?"

"I came back to pick up Miss Preston's bags," said Daniels.

"And I was picking up some of my own stuff," said Waverly. "What seems to be the trouble?"

Tom passed a hand over his forehead.

"You may know as much as I do about it," he growled. "When did you get here?"

"About half an hour ago," Waverly replied. "The cop let me in at the side door."

"I—I got here a couple o' minutes ago," said Daniels, rather hesitatingly.

Tom turned to the electrician.

"Say, where's that tool-box you were supposed to be looking for?" he questioned.

"I keep it in the men's cloak-room," was the reply.

"Do you keep a monkey-wrench in it?"

"Sure. Why?"

"We'd better take a look at that kit."

"What for?" Mike Blake looked aggrieved. "There ain't nothin' in it but tools."

Tom clapped a hand on his shoulder. He was beginning to feel like himself again.

"I agree with you, pal," he said,



Ann tottered over as Tom raised the limp form of the chauffeur-bodyguard. "Well, what could have happened?" she gasped.

"but there's nothing I want to see more than a lot of tools."

Fallon took from his pocket the monkey-wrench he had picked up from the floor and held it out.

"This must have dropped out of the electrician's box," he remarked. "I found it over by the ladder."

"Thanks." Tom took the wrench and made a face at it. "This may be the ten-ton truck I was talking about!"

He put it in his own pocket and went with Mike Blake to the men's cloak-room in the vestibule. Mike raised a flap in the counter across which hats and coats and sticks ordinarily were received by an attendant, and in the room of shelves and pegs behind the counter he took a small but evidently heavy toolbox from a corner and opened it.

"Well, there it is," he said. "What now?"

Tom stooped over the box—and suddenly brought out from it an ugly automatic.

"You got a permit to carry this?" he snapped.

"Sure I have," Mike replied quite calmly. "When you work in these cafes you don't get home till mighty late at night, and I always like to have a gun on me."

Tom laid the automatic on a shelf and turned over the tools in the box.

"Where's the wrench you said was in here?" he challenged.

"It oughta be there." Mike looked amongst the tools, but in vain, and he scratched the back of his head. "Who'd want to steal a monkey-wrench?"

"Maybe it wasn't stolen!" Tom held out the wrench Fallon had given him. "Is this it?"

The electrician turned the monkey-wrench over and over in his hands.

"It's mine," he frowned, "but how did it get where Fallon said he found it?"

"That's what I want to know!" barked Tom.

"What are you drivin' at?"

"Some day people won't ask me questions! How long have you been working here?"

"Oh, since the club opened—about three months."

"Where did you work before that?"

"I was head electrician at the Palace. Why?"

Tom ignored that question.

"How long did you work there?"

"Twelve years. I'd be there still, only—"

"Only what?" prompted Tom, as the electrician broke off with almost a frightened expression on his face.

"Say, what are you asking me these questions for?"

"Because I'm a crazy cop, that's why!" Tom's grin was not a pleasant one. "Let's have it!"

"Well," confessed Mike, "I was at the Palace when Gail Preston was doing a headline act there, and one night the mike went dead and spoiled her act. So she went to the manager and had me fired."

"You had good reason to hate her, then, eh?"

"Can you blame me, after being in one place for twelve years?"

"It wouldn't be enough reason to kill her, would it?"

"No, it wouldn't!"

"Do any of the other fellows know where you keep this box?"

"Well, they oughta know. I've never kept it a secret."

Mike Blake's face was not a particularly attractive one, but his manner

was not that of a crook. Tom gave him a long, keen glance, then picked up the automatic.

"Okay," he said. "It's a lucky thing for you this is a thirty-two—Preston was killed with a thirty-eight." He handed back the gun. "Now beat it with your box—I won't need you any more this afternoon."

From the cloak-room Tom went back into the café, and a few minutes later he was sitting at Fallon's desk, in Fallon's office. Daniels was facing him across the desk, and Fallon and Waverly were on the other side of the room, Waverly sitting on a couch, Fallon leaning against a window-frame.

"How did you happen to get a job with Miss Preston, Daniels?" Tom inquired.

"Well," replied that pock-marked young man, "I blew into town when a lot of the big Broadway stars were being spotted for hold-ups, and an agency put me in touch with her. She hired me for her chauffeur and body-guard."

Tom put an elbow on the desk and rested his jaw against his hand.

"Why did she need a bodyguard?"

"She went out a lot to different parties every night," said Daniels. "She never wanted sleep."

"What was the matter?"

Daniels shrugged.

"Well, if you ask me, she had something on her mind. She'd get so low you couldn't talk to her, and then she'd sit down and write a lot o' junk in that diary of hers."

Tom raised his brows.

"What does that diary look like?"

"Oh, nothing much," Daniels seemed surprised at the question. "I only saw the outside of it. It was bound in black leather."

"Okay. Where can I reach you if I want you?"

"Well, I'll be around for a bit—Mr. Fallon said he'd try to get me a job. You've got my address."

"All right," Tom waved a hand in dismissal, and the chauffeur-bodyguard went out to collect the suitcase he had left in the café; and then Tom looked at the other two and asked if either of them knew that Gail Preston had a sister.

"Everybody knew that," said Waverly. "Ann Bishop's her real name. Gail Preston was a stage name."

"What's the tie-up between Swing Traynor and Ann Bishop?"

Waverly professed not to know, but Fallon said:

"Oh, I can answer that. He used to take her out pretty regularly. Maybe they were going to be married; I don't know. By the way, I forgot to tell you Gail came to me the night she was murdered—came to me in this office—and told me I had to fire Swing Traynor, or she'd quit me cold."

"She did, did she?" Tom drummed his fingers on the desk. "What reason did she give?"

"She didn't!" Fallon replied with an expressive gesture. "She just said do it, or else—"

"Maybe I'd better have a nice long talk with Mr. Swing Traynor," remarked Tom; and he pulled a telephone across the desk and dialed a number on it. "Police headquarters?" he said to the operator who responded to the call. "Give me Cliff Connolly."

A minute later, Connolly's voice sounded in his ear, and he said tersely:

"Cliff? This is Tom. Pick up Swing Traynor immediately, and hold him for questioning. Yeah, right away."

An Arrest—and Its Sequel

SWING TRAYNOR was in Tom's room, and Connolly was rebuking him for being impatient, when Tom himself walked in at the door. The band leader faced him angrily.

"What's the idea of dragging me down here?" he bust out.

Tom turned to his grinning assistant. "Where did you find him?" he asked.

"Up at his apartment."

"Hmm! Around the corner from the club, isn't it?"

"Sure," nodded Connolly, "in Ninth Avenue."

"Very interesting." Tom dismissed the plain-clothes men who had helped to bring in the unwilling captive, and the captive was commanded to sit down in a chair.

"You didn't get along very well with Gail Preston, did you?" Tom barked.

"What gives you that idea?" countered Swing sulkily.

"Quit stalling, Traynor! Why did she want you fired?"

"Apparently she wasn't satisfied with my work."

"Did she ever complain to you about anything?"

"Sure," admitted the good-looking young man, "but did you ever know a star that blamed herself when something went wrong?"

"Are you asking me, or telling me?" snapped Tom. "Listen, Traynor, we'll get along a lot better if we both come right to the point. Where does Ann Bishop fit into the picture?"

Swing flinched ever so slightly.

"How did her name get mixed up in this?" he demanded hoarsely.

"Miss Bishop is a nice girl," said Tom. "I'd protect her, too, if I were in your boots."

"I'm not trying to shield anybody!"

"No?" Tom produced the crumpled note he had found in Ann's handbag.

"Ever seen this before?"

"Sure," returned Swing in a defiant voice, "I wrote it. So what?"

"I found it in Miss Bishop's handbag when I searched it."

Swing bounded to his feet.

"You've got a lot o' nerve, Kellogg!" he blared.

"Just a minute." Tom pushed him back into the chair. "She's under suspicion the same as anyone else. If you don't tell me the truth about this I'll have to get it from her."

Swing drew a long breath.

"You leave her out of this," he said.

"I sent her that note because she and I—well, we were going to be married."

Tom put the note back in his pocket.

"Did she know that you didn't get along well with her sister?"

"Yes."

"You're under arrest, Traynor!"

"What for?" howled Swing. "You have no evidence!"

"What do you mean by no evidence?" Tom retorted. "You and Ann Bishop fall in love. You meet opposition from Preston, and she's going to have you fired. That would give you a black eye in the profession."

"I tell you I didn't do it!"

"I think you did!" Tom's face was within a few inches of Swing's and his eyes were accusing. "If I'm wrong you'll beat the rap. Ring the bell, Cliff!"

The two plain-clothes men reappeared, and Swing was marched away in custody and charged with the murder of Gail Preston. The news of his arrest made front-page headlines in the evening papers, and soon after six o'clock Connolly hurried in upon Tom full of excitement.

"Guess who's out there waiting to see you!" he cried.

"Who?" Tom, who was at his desk, looked up from a report concerning quite a different case.

"Ann Bishop!"

Tom rubbed his hands together.

"Well, my friend," he said with considerable satisfaction, "it looks like our plan is beginning to work. Now, if we can get her to talk we'll have her right where we want her."

"Where's that?" asked Connolly.

"You ought to know—look in the crystal!"

Connolly took him seriously and sat down at the end of the desk with the crystal before him. But before he could start peering into the thing his superior barked at him:

"Go and bring her in, you fool!"

Ann was ushered into the room, a pathetic little figure dressed all in black, except for her gloves. Her face was tear-stained beneath a filmy veil.

"Hallo, Miss Bishop!" said Tom, rising to conduct her to a chair.

"Why did you arrest Swing?" she stormed. "He didn't kill Gail!"

"You seem very certain about that," said Tom.

"I am! I know Swing Traynor."

"What makes you so positive?"

"Because I know more about this business than you do!"

"Everybody knows more than we do," grumbled Connolly.

"Miss Bishop," coaxed Tom, "if you'll sit down and tell me about it I may be able to help you."

She sat down in the chair to which he had led her, collected her thoughts, and began:

"Well, Gail was infatuated with Swing, but he and I fell in love with one another, and we made no bones about it. But when we told Gail that we intended to get married she threatened to drive Swing out of the business."

"It seems to me," said Tom gravely, "that you're giving me a very good reason why Swing Traynor should have killed Gail Preston."

"That's not so!" she cried. "Swing and I were married the very day she was killed!"

"Very interesting, but proves nothing."

"Proves nothing? Why, don't you see it's impossible to believe that he'd marry me knowing he was going to kill my sister the same day?"

"Perhaps," conceded Tom, "but all crimes aren't premeditated."

"This one was!" she declared fervently. "It was so well planned that you haven't found the murder weapon yet!"

"Right again," said Tom, "but until that diary is found Swing Traynor is guilty."

She sighed and rose.

"Well, I'll go right over to the apartment now," she decided, "and look for it. Will you meet me there?"

"I'll be there in half an hour," Tom promised, and he escorted her to the door.

Connolly looked brightly up at him from the crystal, after she had gone, and he said with an air of wisdom:

"You know, I think the dame's right. Swing wouldn't knock over Preston the same day he was gonna marry her sister. That wouldn't be—er—ethical."

"I'm inclined to agree with you," said Tom, folding his arms and frowning at some law books on a set of built-in shelves, "but in the meantime, keeping him in goal may do a lot of good. It might bring the real murderer out into the open."

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"Doggone it, I sure wish I could get my hands on that diary!"

"You—and five or six others!"

"Yeah," drawled Connolly. "Maybe we should start a club, eh?"

The Diary

A NN opened the front door of the apartment that had been her sister's with a key that was her own, crossed the little hallway into the sitting-room, and went straight to the mantelpiece. She laid her handbag on the shelf, and from the middle of the shelf removed a tall vase of flowers which she deposited on the tiled hearth.

The flowers had concealed a little square door in the chimney-breast, and this she opened. Another door was revealed—the circular door of a circular safe set in the wall. She twisted a milled knob this way and that till the tumblers of the combination lock had fallen into position, and then she pulled open the steel door.

Among some jewel-cases in the safe there was a book bound in black leather; and this was in her hands and she was reading it when suddenly a man's arm swept round her throat and she was pulled backwards. The book fell into the fireplace, but the scream

she tried to utter was smothered by a hand that was clapped over her mouth.

Twenty-five minutes after she had entered the apartment, Tom and Connolly walked along the corridor from the elevator, and Connolly pressed the bell-button beside the front door.

There was no response of any kind from within, save the noise of the bell, and after an interval Connolly rang again.

"Thought that dame was gonna be waitin' for you?" he growled.

"The desk clerk said she came up twenty minutes ago," Tom held an ear to the keyhole. "There must be something wrong!"

He put a shoulder to the door, and his strength was such that the door flew open. He dived across the hallway into the sitting-room, and Connolly followed him.

Ann was lying on a rug in front of the fireplace with a handkerchief fastened tightly over her mouth, and her hands were tied together with a piece of rope. Her eyes were closed.

"Give me a hand with her," said Tom, and between them they carried her over to a chesterfield and freed her of her bonds.

Presently her eyelids flickered and she moaned. Her blue eyes opened, and she tried to sit up.

"Take it easy, kid," urged Tom gently. "What happened?"

"I—I don't know," she murmured; and then she stared across the room at the open safe, holding her hands to her head. "I—I'd just taken the diary out of that safe, but somebody must have seen me. An arm or something caught me round the throat, and something hit me on the head."

"Let's take a look at this place," said Tom. "You keep still, Miss Bishop. Cliff, you take the bed-room."

Connolly nodded and disappeared. Tom, remembering the wardrobe cupboard in which he himself had hidden on his previous visit to the apartment, went over to it and opened its door.

As he did so Frank Daniels fell out, flat on his back, and apparently unconscious. His arms were under him, a handkerchief was fastened round his mouth.

Ann started up from the chesterfield with a cry and tottered over as Tom raised the limp form of the chauffeur-bodyguard and yelled to Connolly to bring some water.

"Well, what could have happened?" she gasped.

"Looks like Daniels wanted to join Cliff's club," remarked Tom cryptically, and he dumped his burden into the nearest armchair and removed the gag.

He saw that Daniels' ankles were tied together with a piece of cord, and that his wrists were similarly united behind his back. He freed the ankles with a penknife, but the cord about the wrists was loosely fastened and easily undone.

Daniels opened his dark eyes as Tom whisked away the second cord.

"Hi, what's goin' on?" he mumbled, sprawling in the chair. But Tom turned to Ann, instead of answering.

"Did you see anything in that diary before it was taken?" he asked.

"Why, yes," she said, "seems to me I remember—why, it was about Daniels, about his being connected with some robberies."

Daniels seemed suddenly to recover full possession of his senses.

"I don't know what she's talking about!" he cried.

"What were you doing here?" Tom rapped at him.

"I met her outside on the pavement, and she said she was gonna send my back pay; but after I'd left her I remembered I hadn't given her any forwarding address, so I came up here."

"I can think of a better alibi than that, Daniels," said Tom sternly. "You came up here to swipe that diary."

"I'm tellin' you the truth," Daniels protested. "The door was open and I came in just as she was opening the safe. Then I was smacked on the head, and that's all I remember until I found myself in this chair and you unfastening me."

"There's only one thing wrong with that story, Daniels," thundered Tom. "It's a lie! You heard us ringing the bell and dodged into that cupboard. You did a pretty good job of tying everything but your hands. Now quit stalling. Where's that diary?"

Daniels' face became a mask.

"I don't know," he replied sullenly.

"Okay, pal, I'll let you have a talk with a couple of the boys down at headquarters. Cliff!"

Connolly appeared belatedly from a kitchenette he had found, and in his hand was a glass of water.

"He doesn't want any water now," said Tom.

"Can't I just even spill a little on him?" asked Connolly.

"Take him away!"

The glass of water was thrust upon Ann, who sipped at it, and the sergeant stood over Daniels.

"Oho, so you're gonna join my club, eh, palsy?" he jeered. "Come on, let's get going."

Daniels was jerked to his feet and propelled towards the door.

After he had gone, Tom searched the wardrobe cupboard thoroughly, and he found the missing diary in an otherwise empty suitcase. Much to Ann's delight he telephoned headquarters with instructions for Swing Traynor to be set at liberty forthwith, and on his way down-town in a taxicab he studied the diary.

Daniels had been subjected to third-degree methods, and was looking pretty much of a wreck by the time he was huddled into Tom's room and saw the diary lying open upon the detective's desk.

Connolly, who was still perspiring freely as a result of the part he had played in the browbeating of the prisoner under a blinding light, leaned against a wall and mopped his face. Daniels stalked about the room like a caged animal, his eyes wild and the muscles in his face working. Tom, in his swivel chair behind the desk, banged a hand on the diary and said imperiously:

"Stand still and start talking!"

Daniels stopped and turned.

"I've told all I know," he howled. "I wanted to sell the diary to the newspapers. I needed the money. I didn't kill Preston, and you guys can't pin the rap on me."

"How long were you working for her?" asked Tom.

"Three months."

"How much did she pay you?"

"Forty a week."

"Three months at forty dollars a week is about five hundred dollars. How do you account for the twenty thousand you had in the bank, every nickel of it deposited while you were working for Gail Preston? Where did you get it?"

Daniels gulped. Questions had been fired at him like bullets from a machine-gun in the room downstairs, September 10th, 1938.

but that question had not been amongst them.

"I don't have to account for the money I make," he cried.

"There aren't many ways you can make that much in three months, Daniels!" roared Tom, jumping to his feet and pounding the desk with a fist.

"How did you get it?"

Daniels gritted his teeth.

"Gambling," he said.

"Where?"

"Saratoga."

"When were you there?"

"About two weeks ago, over the week-end."

"That's a lot of money for a chauffeur to win at the races. I can think of other ways to make that money. Maybe you stole something—some jewellery?"

"That's a lie!" Daniels' eyes were on the open diary. "I had nothing to do with it."

"Stop kidding!" Tom put his hand on the diary. "The week-end you said you were at Saratoga Springs you were actually driving Miss Preston to a party at Connecticut Beach. You came back for her at seven-thirty next evening. During that afternoon some hold-up men knocked over the beach party and got away with ten thousand dollars' worth of jewellery."

"What's that gotta do with me?"

"She went to a lot of parties, and there were always some crooks around to pull a job." Tom flung out an accusing finger. "You tipped them off and gave them the layout of the places they were to knock over. Preston got suspicious. She kept tabs on you, and when she learned the truth she threatened to turn you over to the police if you didn't return all the stolen stuff. You had to get this diary, Daniels, if you could, because you knew those facts were in it."

"All right," blurted the cornered prisoner. "I was in on the robberies. But I didn't kill Preston."

"I didn't say you did," Tom dropped his voice to a conversational level. "Did any of those other crooks know that she was wise to their racket?"

"No, I didn't tell them a word about it."

"Okay." The detective dropped back into his chair. "Take him away, Cliff."

Daniels trembled as Connolly seized hold of his arm.

"What are you gonna do with me?" he faltered.

"What do you think?" retorted Tom. "Book you for robbery and suspicion of murder. And if you want to make it easier for yourself, you are going to disclose the names of those guys you worked with."

"But I didn't kill Preston, I tell you! Hold me on the robbery charges, okay, but you ain't gonna keep me here for killin' Preston?"

"No," drawled Connolly, dragging him towards the door, "we're only gonna keep you here because we like your face. Come on."

The Secret of the Spotlight

A LITTLE after ten o'clock that evening Mike Blake crossed the vestibule of the Swing Swing Club and entered the prison-like café. Most of the lights were on in it, for a thick-set and middle-aged watchman was making his rounds.

This watchman swung round at the sound of footsteps in the deserted place, but he waved a hand as he caught sight of the electrician.

"Oh, hallo, hallo, Bill!" hailed Mike.

"How are you?" returned the watchman. "What are you doin' here?"

"Oh, came over to get my overalls and clean up the joint," was the reply. "I've got a job—I'm goin' back to the Palace."

"That's fine," congratulated the watchman.

"You know, I'll be glad to get out o' this joint," Mike went on. "It gives me the willies."

Bill nodded.

"I'm used to it this way," he said. "Well, I'll be in Mr. Fallon's office if you want me."

He went off across the dance floor, and Mike climbed the ladder that led up to the limelight box. From the lower box he ascended to the upper one; but a very few minutes later he was down in the café again and making for the vestibule.

He dived into the telephone-box that was in the vestibule, and hurriedly inserting a nickel in the coin-box, dialled "O."

"Hallo!" he said to the operator. "Give me police headquarters quick! I want to speak to Inspector Kellogg!"

Tom was at his desk, studying the diary, when the call was put through to him.

"Inspector," said an agitated voice in his ear, "this is Mike Blake, the electrician over at the Swing Swing Club. I've just found out how Miss Preston was killed. Yeah, I was checking over the equipment, and one of the spotlights looked damaged. I started to fix it when—"

A shot rang out from somewhere in the vestibule, a shot that shattered the glass panel in the door of the telephone-box, and Mike slumped to his knees, dropping the receiver he had been holding; he clutched at a ledge on which a telephone directory was lying, and collapsed in a heap upon the cork-covered floor of the box.

Tom had heard the sound of the shot and the splintering glass without realising what it was.

"Hallo!" he said. "Hallo, Mike! Mike!"

There was dead silence on the line, and he replaced his own telephone and spoke into a dictograph.

"Get my car ready," he barked, "and have Cliff and Arnold meet me downstairs."

A squad car was standing at the kerb in Centre Street by the time he reached the pavement, and Connolly and another plain-clothes man were in the back of it, and the sergeant to whom he had spoken over the dictograph was at the wheel. He jumped in beside the sergeant and he said:

"Swing Swing Club as fast as you can make it!"

The night watchman was in the vestibule of the club when they entered it, and he stared at them.

"Say—" he began, but Tom thrust him aside and rushed to the telephone-box because he had caught sight of its broken panel. He tugged open the door and he stooped over the dead electrician.

"Shot in the back of the head while he was trying to call me!" he lamented. "Get the coroner, Arnold! Use this 'phone."

He backed out from the box, and he pounced on the watchman, who had sunk on to a divan set against the wall.

"I want to talk to you!" he rasped. "Has anyone else been here within the last hour?"

"No, sir," the watchman replied

(Continued on page 24)

For arresting a wayward, high-spirited heiress for smoking in prohibited areas a patrolman is rebuked by his captain, and in disgust hands in his badge. But he goes to the girl's rescue when he finds she is a cat's-paw for smugglers. Starring George O'Brien

"The BORDER



PATROLMAN"

The Wilful Heiress

THE Desert Springs Hotel was a fashionable resort on the American side of the Mexican border. Famous people—those with money—and those with indifferent health went there to take the waters or have a good time. The hotel was to play a big part in the lives of two people of very different stations.

One, at the beginning of this story, was riding across the barren wastes of the desert. A well-built, rugged, strong-jawed young fellow with a pleasant smile. He was a Border Patrolman, and his name was Bob Wallace. He rode up to a weather-beaten signpost, on which was painted "Mexican border, 3 miles, and Desert Springs Hotel, 1 mile." As he had his duty to perform and because he regarded the hotel as a place for the idle rich, he chose without hesitation the route to the border. There was a lot of smuggling going on, and he was out to catch the offenders.

At the hotel was Miss Patricia Huntley, who was very much one of the idle rich. She was fabulously wealthy, very good-looking, quite a star at tennis, riding and dancing, and had only one tie in the world—her grandfather. The old man tried hard to put a curb on the twenty-one-year-old heiress, but he found it an almost impossible task to guide or advise this grandchild of his. If she wanted to do a thing she did it.

On this day she played a guest a single at tennis, beat him hollow, and then, because she felt hot, dived straight into the swimming-pool, much to the horror of a number of respectable old ladies. Being the granddaughter of Jeremiah Huntley, she

could do this sort of thing. She emerged from the pool, borrowed some old boy's dressing-gown, and hurried off to the hotel. She sighted a tall, swarthy man in riding kit, and she hailed him eagerly.

"Courtney! Courtney! I thought we were going to have some tennis."

Courtney Maybrook left the elderly man to whom he had been talking in undertones to hurry towards her.

"Oh, I'm sorry, Pat." He smiled, revealing flashing teeth. "But I have had to attend to some important business." He looked at her. "Have you fallen in the pool?"

"No. I jumped in." The girl laughed gaily. "Don't you get as bad as grandfather. I thought people came up here to get away from business."

"Business will follow me," he smiled back. "But I hope to be free for the rest of my stay here. Now you run along and change."

The girl had dripped water all over the carpet in the lounge, but the management knew better than to complain. Upstairs, in their big suite of rooms, was a white-haired, tall, aristocratic old man, who was horrified at her appearance and ordered her gruffly to go and change immediately. When she appeared in riding clothes the old man stared at her severely.

"I can't see why you always want to be around with that Maybrook fellow. He's just a male clothes-horse."

"Now don't get yourself in an uproar, Grumpy," teased Patricia. "Remember your blood pressure."

"A lot you care about my blood pressure," he stormed. "You just do

things to annoy me. I tell you I don't like him."

"You will when you get to know him better." The girl picked up a 'phone. "Mister Maybrook, please."

The petulant, wilful young heiress scowled when she heard that Mr. Maybrook had gone out a few minutes before and would not be back for at least two hours.

Courtney Maybrook had some very urgent business. He rode to the Mexican border and to one of the loneliest spots. There was a wire fence with occasional openings, and there appeared to be not a soul in sight. He studied his wrist-watch and found he was ten minutes early. At four to the dot two horse-riders appeared round a sandstone cliff. A man and a woman, and they were coming from Mexico. Maybrook waited for them on his side of the boundary. The woman was a brunette, slight of build and attractive—she stared intently at Maybrook. The man was a sallow-faced, sneering type of fellow.

"Been waiting long?" asked the woman.

"Just a few minutes, Myra," answered Maybrook, and nodded to her companion. "Hallo, Frank."

The three people glanced round and then dismounted. The woman handed Maybrook her handbag. She pointed to the paste adornment just underneath the catch, and when Maybrook pressed it there was a click and it slid smoothly open to reveal a small cavity.

"Very neat," Maybrook said, and took out a small packet.

"Don't let Manning chisel you on this lot," commented the man called Frank. "They're worth fifty thousand if they're worth a nickel."

The woman came closer to Maybrook and slid her arm through his.

"Think you can stand my company for a few days, darling? Frank and I have decided to mutiny. We're tired of being buried alive in Mexico."

"Yeah! We thought we'd come back to our own country for the week-end," sneered Frank.

"But do you think that's wise?"

"Listen." Myra wrenched her arm away and her eyes were flashing. "I'm tired of being cooped up in that adobe shack."

"Oh, I know it hasn't been pleasant for you, dear," Maybrook murmured softly, and with sudden compassion put his arm round the woman. "You've been a good sport to put up with it as long as you have. Do you think it's been easy for me? I've missed you terribly. I'd like nothing better than that you stay at the hotel, but it would be a risk—"

"Nix! Nix!" hissed Frank. "Here comes the law."

Riding lazily towards them was Bob Wallace, of the Border Patrol.

Bob smiled regretfully.

"I'm afraid you folks are on the wrong side of the line," he announced.

"But we're Americans," answered the woman aggressively.

Maybrook gestured to Myra to be quiet. He knew the stubbornness of patrolmen, and bad temper would get them nowhere.

"They've been living in Mexico for a short while. Came over to spend a few days at the Desert Springs Hotel. Just for a little recreation," he explained in his pleasantest manner. "They heard I was there and made up their mind all in an instant. I got a message to say they had started and came out to meet them."

"Uh-huh." Wallace seemed satisfied. "Well, I hate to be a kill-joy, but they'll have to come through the regular port of entry."

"My name's Maybrook." The suave manner became more apparent. "I'm a guest at the Desert Springs. This lady and gentlemen are friends of mine. Couldn't I be responsible for them?"

"Sorry, Mister Maybrook."

"Couldn't you pretend you just didn't see us, officer?" Myra tried a dazzling smile.

Bob shook his head.

"Sorry."

"But that means going about ten miles out of our way," argued Frank, and intercepted a warning glance from Maybrook. "Well, I guess it's no good trying to go against these fool laws. If we have to go back, we have to go back. Come on, Myra."

Myra and Frank rode back across the border. Myra waved.

"I'll see you later, Courtney."

"I'll come over and see you," Maybrook called back.

The patrolman fingered his chin.

"I'm afraid I've offended your friends."

"Oh, I quite see your point," Maybrook answered, with a friendly smile. "I suppose if I were in your place I would have done the same." He held out a case. "Have a cigar?"

"No, thanks."

"Well, so long."

"Adios!" answered Wallace, and watched Maybrook till he vanished out of sight among the sandhills.

Courtney Maybrook hastened back to the hotel, and in the lounge was the same elderly individual. They retired to a corner, where Maybrook produced the small packet he had taken from Myra's handbag.

September 10th, 1933.

"Good stones!" Manning said after a glance through a glass at the gems. "Better than the ones you brought over last."

"I'm glad you like them," Maybrook answered, and laughed. "While I was getting them to-day from Myra and Frank one of those border cops spotted them cross the boundary and chased them back across the line."

"Did he—?" There was fear on Manning's face.

"No, he didn't get wise, but he certainly threw a scare into me."

"Well, maybe it's just as well," muttered the diamond fence viciously. "Make you a little more careful in future."

Smoking Prohibited

A BIG, fat, good-natured-looking simpleton was lolling about near the stables of the Desert Springs Hotel. What his exact position at the hotel was nobody knew, but he had been there a long time, lounging around and doing odd jobs. Everybody knew Chuck Owens. Also, he had a very reasonable voice and could twang a note on a guitar.

On the following afternoon he was busy studying a book on personality, as there was a Spanish lady whom he hoped to win by his manly conduct. She did not mind his singing, but when he became deadly serious she would laugh. He looked up at a chuckle to find Bob Wallace looking over his shoulder.

"Hallo, Chuck, I see you're studying to be a heartbreaker."

"Quit kidding, Bob. Don't you think I'm getting a strong personality?"

"You've got a personality all right." The patrolman glanced round. "But it smells a little too much of the stables."

"Yeah, but where else can I sleep—?" Chuck shook his head, then his beady eyes looked at Bob.

"What're you doing here?" "Captain Stevens put me on a new job. Which one of the guides in this hotel took a party over to the Grove yesterday?"

"Slim Martin, I think. Why?" "Captain Stevens wants me to read the riot act to him. Somebody went away and left something burning in the restricted area. It nearly started a brush fire."

"I bet I know who it was," eagerly cried Chuck. "Miss Huntley. She's always smoking, and she don't care where she throws 'em."

"Who's Miss Huntley?" "Miss Patricia Huntley from New York."

"Well, you better tip off Slim to keep her from smoking in restricted areas."

"You don't know Miss Huntley," Chuck grinned. "If she wants to smoke she's going to smoke."

"Is that so?" Out stuck Bob's chin. "Tell me some more about this dame."

Later Bob walked into the hotel and sought out Hendricks, the manager. The latter welcomed the patrolman with a friendly handshake—it was as well to be in with the law.

"What brings you here, Wallace?"

"I just want to tell Miss Huntley that it's against the law to smoke in restricted areas, that's all."

The manager's face became serious.

"Will you let me talk to her?" he asked. "You see, she's pretty quick on the trigger. You have to handle her very carefully."

"Yeah, I know. I've got a pretty good line on her from Chuck," Wallace grinned. "I've known her kind before. You can't handle them

with kid gloves. You've got to tell 'em straight."

From Collins, Jeremiah Huntley's valet, Bob learned that at this hour Miss Huntley usually went out riding with Mister Maybrook. He hastened round to the front of the hotel, and found the two about to set off for a ride. He pulled up sharply. Surely this sweet-faced girl could not be the notorious Miss Huntley?

"Miss Huntley?"—he doffed his hat—"Miss Huntley."

Now the smile and laughter had gone. He found himself staring at a haughty beauty whose eyes were disdainful and mocking.

"Yes, what is it?"

"Miss Huntley, smoking is prohibited in closed areas," Bob said with a nervous grin. "I should be obliged if you would be a little more careful in future."

The girl's answer was to laugh derisively. Maybrook turned his horse and moved closer.

"What is it, Pat?" he asked.

"It seems this young man objects to smoking," replied Patricia, and her pretty face twisted into a nasty grin. "Come on, let's not waste time."

Bob was staring after them when Chuck appeared and grinned.

"She sure is a prize, ain't she?"

"Prize?" questioned Bob sharply.

"I'd hate to win her in a raffle!"

Wallace would have gone to his horse if Chuck had not stopped him.

"Say, Bob, have you got a minute?" he asked.

"What do you want?"

"Have you noticed anything?"

"No. What?"

"I put some cologne on me." Chuck beamed like a big kid. "How do I smell now?"

"Terrible," was the terse answer.

It had suited Maybrook's plans that Myra and Frank could not come to the hotel, which he was using as a centre for his smuggling activities, because Myra was becoming somewhat of a nuisance. He had been attracted by her and they were unofficially engaged, but when Maybrook had seen Patricia Huntley he had changed his ideas. Why not marry this girl with the money? It would be easy to get control of her fortune, and she would make a good foil in some of his swindles. Maybrook was one of those smooth, sleek and courteous men that appeal to many women, and Patricia had made up her mind that he was the nicest man she had ever met.

They rode out to one of the restricted areas, hitched their horses to a tree and went to sit down on a fallen log. Naturally, Patricia asked for a cigarette, though there was a notice on a nearby tree-trunk saying that smoking was forbidden.

"We've been together a great deal these last two weeks, Pat. Enough for me to know that I care more for you than anyone I've ever met. We like a great many of the same things, and there's no reason why—"

"Now be careful, Courtney," the girl interrupted. "Or I might take all this as a proposal. Now don't look peevish, Courtney. I know you like me, and I like you. But somehow I just can't be romantic in the sunlight. I need a poetic background. A beautiful moon and a little soft music."

Ardently Maybrook leaned forward and strove dramatically by gesture and a hoarseness of the voice to convince her of his devotion. Both were unaware that a horseman had entered the prohibited area and had stamped out one small fire caused by a cigarette.

"Supposing I arrange all these things, Patricia," Maybrook cried, his hand to his heart. "What would you say then?"

"Put out that cigarette, please," a voice interrupted.

Patricia was startled and yet glad of the interruption. She was having a grand time with Courtney, but getting engaged was another matter. She wanted time to think over the proposal. So she grinned at Patrolman Bob Wallace and puffed out a cloud of smoke.

"Well, if it isn't the little tin soldier again," she said rudely.

"See that sign?" Bob pointed to the tree and its notice. "This is a closed area."

"Aren't you taking your job a bit too seriously?" questioned Maybrook.

The patrolman ignored him and stood over the girl.

"Put that out!" he ordered, but she went on smoking. "I guess there's no use talking to you, is there? All right. There's only one way to handle you, young lady."

Out came a book, in which Bill wrote a few words before tearing out the page. This he handed to the girl.

"Why, what's this?" asked Patricia.

"A citation! After you've had a talk with Captain Stevens, maybe you'll take this thing a little more seriously."

The girl took the form between her slim fingers and ripped it across. She puffed at her cigarette and laughed at him.

"Oh, look"—she held up the two pieces—"it got all torn."

"Oh, is that so?"

"Are you going to give me another one?"

"No." He leaned forward and whisked the cigarette out of her mouth.

"This time, young lady, I'm going to personally escort you to headquarters."

"Now, look here!" shouted Maybrook. "You're going a bit too far."

"You keep out of this," Bob said without turning his head.

"Come on, get on your horse, Miss Huntley." She did not move.

"You heard what I said. Get on your horse."

"I'd like to see you make me," was her defiant answer.

Bob Wallace took one stride forward and out went his arms. He whisked the girl up as if she had been a feather.

Maybrook rushed forward and Wallace freed his arm for a second to give the crook a push that sent him sprawling into a bush.

The girl wriggled and twisted, but in that grip she was powerless. He swung her into the saddle of her horse.

"Now ride, and don't try any tricks," he warned. "Because I'm taking you in whether you like it or not."

Some hours later Bob Wallace, with Miss Patricia and Maybrook, were facing Captain Stevens.

The patrolman stated that he had found the

girl smoking, and when she had refused to desist, he had been compelled to arrest her.

"Oh, captain, I've never been so humiliated in my life," retorted Patricia. "We simply went in there to rest. I was just lighting a cigarette when I looked up and saw the sign 'No smoking,' and, naturally, I didn't think of breaking any law. I was just about to put out this cigarette when this young man came in. I tried to explain, but he wouldn't listen. And the way he talked. Why, I never heard such language in all my life."

Bob Wallace stared at the girl in speechless amazement.

"I'm surprised at you, Wallace," rasped Captain Stevens.

"I'm just as surprised as you are, captain," Bob said.

"You should have seen the way he manhandled me," added Patricia.

"Wallace, this service does not approve of such high-handed methods," stated the captain. "You owe Miss Huntley an apology."

"Are you serious, captain?"

"Certainly I'm serious."

Bob turned to the girl, who was grinning triumphantly.

"Pardon me, Miss Huntley," he spoke in contrite tones, "I seem to have had a brain lapse. I can't quite recall using any abusive language or saying anything you could not repeat out loud. However, you say I did, and I'd be the last one to call a lady a liar. Therefore, I hope you'll forgive me." Then he faced his superior.

"Does that cover the situation, captain?"

"Yes."

Whereupon Bob ripped the star off his shirt and tossed it on the desk.

"I'm not in the habit of bringing false charges or using bad language. Because Miss Huntley is an heiress you take her word for mine. Okay, have it your own way." He pointed to the

badge. "You can keep that—I'm through."

Maybrook rode back to the hotel with the girl, who for once had little to say. She was feeling very ashamed of herself, though she did think the patrolman had taken a very high-handed attitude. Her companion was silent, because his nimble brain was busy scheming.

Two days later he sought out his fellow-conspirator.

"You seem particularly pleased with yourself this morning," commented Manning.

"I am. I've just been across the line to see Frank and Myra."

"Bring anything back with you?"

"Yeah. A swell idea!" He put his mouth close to the other's ear. "How much is the Borloff necklace worth?"

"Are you kidding?"

"No. What'll it bring?"

"Bring you a lot of trouble if you try to lift it," muttered Manning un- easily. "You're not thinking of—"

"Why not?" cried Maybrook. "No more dangerous than the trinkets that we've been bringing over. Of course, if you're afraid to handle it I'll get somebody else."

"I didn't say I was afraid to handle it," viciously answered Manning.

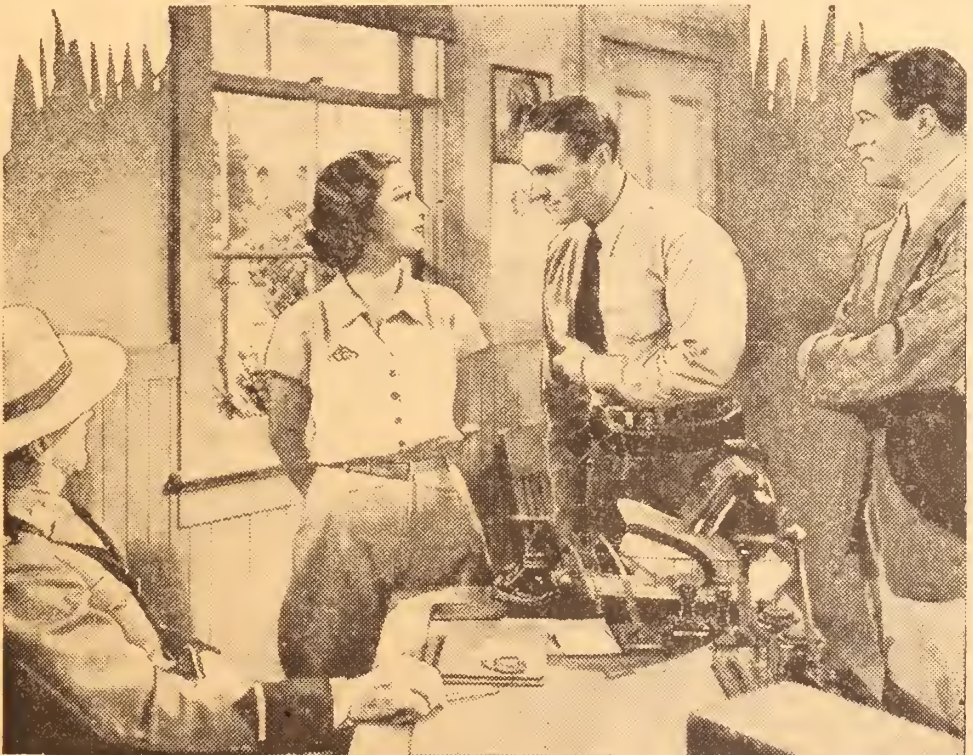
"When do you think you'll get it here?"

"Well, I can't say positively, but within the next few days." The suave rascal got up from his chair. "So stick around. You'll excuse me—I must go and see Miss Huntley and inquire if she has missed me while I have been away."

The Bodyguard and Guardian

JEREMIAH HUNTLEY put down the telephone and faced his grandchild.

"Well, I've done all I can, my dear," he remarked resignedly. "It appears that Wallace can be obstinate. Captain



"Pardon me, Miss Huntley," Wallace said with an apologetic smile. "But I seem to have had a brain lapse."

Stevens has told me that he has made repeated overtures to him, but he won't listen. The captain seems pretty mad because this young man appears to have been the most reliable and capable patrolman under his command."

"Then why did Captain Stevens make him apologise?" demanded Patricia.

"Because he thought there was no other course with the wayward Miss Huntley," was the old man's terse reply. "He intended to pacify Wallace after you had gone, but the chance did not arise. Now you seem to have driven a very straight, honest young fellow out of a job. Wallace refuses to be reinstated."

"Well, what are you going to do about it?"

"What am I going to do about it?" angrily exploded Jeremiah Huntley.

"I'm not responsible, am I?"

"He may need a job."

"You should have thought of all that before you started all this fuss."

"Well, I didn't think he'd quit his job over it. But maybe, grandpa, if you spoke to Mr. Hendricks he might find him something to do."

"I'll do nothing of the sort. I—"

"Now, now, Grumpy," interrupted the wayward girl. "Don't scold. I know everything you'd like to say, and for once you're probably right, but you simply must do something. Well, I must fly."

"Going riding with Maybrook, I suppose," snorted Jeremiah. "Pah!"

But when the girl had gone he summoned Collins and told him to get Hendricks, the manager, on the phone. Chuck was busy looking after some pigs, to his disgust, when he looked up to see Wallace.

"Hallo, pal!" Then his eyes opened wide. "Where's your uniform?"

"I outgrew it. In other words, I quit."

"I did hear something about you quitting, but I wouldn't believe it. What're you going to do now?"

"Oh, I don't know. Hendricks just sent for me, but I don't know what he wants."

"Maybe he's going to give you a job," Chuck suggested.

"Well, I could use a job. See you later."

Hendricks was at the reception desk, and he smiled a welcome at the ex-patrolman.

"Hallo, Wallace! Made any plans for yourself yet?"

"Nothing definite. I thought, from your message, maybe you had something in mind."

"Yes, that is—in a way. One of the guests spoke to me about you. I think it might be to your advantage to have a talk with him. All I know is that he asked me to have you come here and see him. You'll find him in suite 212."

"Okay," Bob answered. "Thanks a lot."

Upstairs went Bob and he knocked at 212, and the door was opened by Collins.

"My name's Wallace. I was sent by Mister Hendricks."

"Oh, yes, Mr. Wallace. Come in." The valet opened the door wide. "I'll tell Mister Huntley."

Bob stalled like a stubborn mule. "Huntley!" he rapped out. "Guess I must be in the wrong place."

"No, you're not," called out a voice. "Come over here, young man."

Reluctantly Bob came into the comfortable lounge and eyed the old man suspiciously. "Sit down and wipe that scowl off your face," added Jeremiah Huntley. "I heard all about that run-in you had with my granddaughter."

September 10th, 1933.

"Oh, you're going to give it to me, too, eh?"

"No, I'm not. I want you to know that I sympathise with you entirely."

"You sympathise with me?"

"Yes. What did they pay you on that job?"

"Not enough to retire on," Bob answered with a grin. "Why?"

"Well, I think you've been done a grave injustice," answered grandpa.

"And it's only right that I should compensate you."

"That's out." Bob held up his hand with a decisive gesture. "I don't want any of your money, Mister Huntley."

"Why not?" was the spirited demand. "You deserve compensation. I don't want you to harbour any ill-feelings towards my granddaughter."

"I don't."

"You don't?"

"No. The girl is spoiled. She's a good example of bad bringing-up."

"Huh! Bad bringing-up!" wrathfully cried grandpa. "I raised her myself, young man. I'll admit she's a trifle headstrong and a bit wilful, but that was born in her."

"It's born in a horse, too, until you break him of it."

"Are you comparing my granddaughter to a horse?"

"I simply mean the method of handling is the same. Once you slap a horse, it's easy to guide."

"Once you slap a horse on a horse," Jeremiah said thoughtfully. "If one could snap a horse on Pat! By gad, it's an idea!"

Some time later Patricia came in from her ride with Maybrook and went up to the reception desk.

"Let me have twenty-five dollars," she said to the clerk. "Please put it on the bill."

"Certainly, Miss Huntley." The clerk handed her the money and a form. "Will you sign the receipt, please?"

"You sign it," airily said Patricia, and stalked off with the money. Near the lift she sighted a broad-shouldered figure. "Oh, Mister Wallace!"

Bob Wallace lounged towards her, smiling pleasantly.

"Oh, Mister Wallace. I can't imagine what you think of me," impulsively cried Patricia. "I'm terribly sorry, and I'd like to apologise."

"Don't mention it, Miss Huntley."

"I don't know what possessed me to act the way I did. You were an awfully good sport about it. I wish you'd believe me when I say that I never did a thing like that before."

"Sure I believe you." His eyes were smiling. "Does that make you feel any better?"

"Heaps, if you really mean it. I didn't realise that things would end the way they did. That you'd lose your job."

"Oh, that's all right. I have another one."

"You mean here at the hotel?" she questioned, and he nodded. "Oh, that's splendid. As a guide?"

His lips twisted into a smile as he nodded again.

"Oh, I am glad! Perhaps I could impose on you some time to show me some of the more interesting sights."

"Any time at all, Miss Huntley. It would be a pleasure."

Maybrook followed the girl into the lift.

"Surely that wasn't Wallace I saw you talking to."

"Yes, it was. I met him accidentally. He's going to work here."

"Oh, I see." Maybrook frowned, then smiled at the girl. "I'll change and

meet you on the golf course in half an hour."

Maybrook was downstairs again in less than five minutes and he sought out Manning in the lounge.

"Did you see Pat talking to that man by the lift? You did. Well, that's the copper who stopped Frank and Myra at the border. He's going to work here. I don't like that."

"What're you worrying about?" asked Manning. "Didn't you say he was out of the service?"

"Yeah, but you know these guys. Once the service gets into their blood it never leaves them. Once a snooper, always a snooper."

"It does complicate things, doesn't it?" muttered the shifty, easy-scared Manning. "I think I'll run into Chicago. I have a little business to attend to, and when you're ready—you can send me a wire."

Patricia soon made use of Wallace's services to take her for a ride round the various ranches. She invited him to come in one night to dance, and found, to her surprise, that he did not step on her feet. Another evening she suggested a midnight bathe, and Bob was more than willing. The girl was pleased because Bob seemed to get on so well with grandpa. She found Bob better company than Maybrook.

One evening Patricia went off with Bob to the lounge for a soft drink, and Maybrook came after them.

"I looked for you after dinner."

"Oh, Bob showed me around the courals. It was very interesting. He's quite an expert on horseflesh."

"There's nothing strange about that, is there?" sneered Maybrook. "I imagine a great deal of Wallace's time has been spent around the stables. He should be able to pick out a good horse when he sees one, eh, Wallace?"

"Oh, sure," was the laughing reply. "Pick out a good jackass, too."

"We're not keeping you from any of your staff jobs, are we, Wallace?" angrily hinted the smuggler.

"Oh, no. They're all done." Bob made no attempt to go.

"The idea I'm trying to convey is that sometimes when two people wish to speak privately together—"

"Oh, you're not intruding at all. Mr. Maybrook," blandly interrupted Bob.

"Perhaps I don't make myself quite clear," Maybrook said angrily. "Do you suppose I could prevail on you to excuse yourself for a few minutes?"

"Oh, sure, I get it," Bob answered with feigned apology. "I'm sorry. I just remembered I had a date with your grandfather to play chess." He bowed to the girl and Maybrook.

"Hope you folks will pardon me for running away so abruptly. Good evening."

"Smart Aleek!" snarled Maybrook, as he stared after Wallace. Patricia giggled. "What's so funny?"

"You! Don't take him too seriously."

"Well, you seem to. Do you realise that I've hardly seen you at all this week. You've been with that copper all the time. Swimming together, eating together, riding together—you're together constantly, and I don't like it."

"That's too bad." Patricia's eyes gleamed. "You may as well understand, Courtney. I've never let anyone run my life, and I'm not going to begin now."

"You're about a week late with that decision, aren't you?"

"What do you mean?"

"Remember complaining about the

high-diving board that was taken down from the swimming pool? Why do you think that was done?"

"It was being repaired."

"That's what they told you. But Mister Wallace thought that it was too dangerous for you so he had it removed."

"Wallace?" She was amazed.

"Yes. Why do you suppose you weren't able to get that black horse to ride yesterday?"

"He's gone lame."

"Nonsense. Chuck told me that Wallace left strict orders for you not to ride that horse. So, you see, Mister Wallace has been putting the brakes on you quite effectually."

"But why should he?" shrieked Patricia.

"You think he's hanging around because he's interested in you personally?" Maybrook shook his head. "I believe that he's being paid by your grandfather for these little attentions. Everybody around this hotel is wise to what's going on and they're getting a good laugh out of it."

"They are, are they!" exclaimed Patricia, and her pretty features became quite vicious. "Excuse me a moment."

"I think that has put paid to Master Wallace," softly Maybrook murmured, as he watched the flying feet as she made for the lift.

The Handbag

BOB was sitting with the old man and praising his grandchild when a whirlwind with blazing eyes tore into the room. She shot out an accusing finger at Bob.

"Is he working for you?"

"Why, what do you mean?" stammered the old man.

"You know what I mean!" raged Pat. "Did you hire him?"

"Why, er, I don't know," Jeremiah Huntley said miserably. "I—er—you wanted to get him a job, didn't you?"

"Yes, but not as my keeper!" She rounded on Bob. "You sneak. You pretended that you like to be with me because I was such good company, that I did everything so well, and all the time you were a hired man."

"Now, now, Pat, please!" cried Huntley. "It wasn't Bob's fault. You see, you—you kept constantly doing things that embarrassed me."

"Embarrassed you, eh?" She caught at the word. "You don't know what embarrassment means. I'll embarrass you. I'll—I'll get drunk, that's what I'll do."

"You wouldn't dare."

"I'll show you whether I dare or not!" shrieked the spoiled beauty. "I'll show you what it means to be embarrassed. I'll get plastered—I'll roll in the lobby. I'll swing from the chandelier. I'll slide down the banisters. You watch me."

"Good heavens!"

gasped the old man, when the door slammed after her. "What am I going to do now? She'll do it."

Bob jumped up.

"No, she won't!" And his jaw stuck out aggressively.

"If she says she will, she will."

"This time she won't," vowed Bob. Patricia went to the bar and ordered a cocktail, but when she ordered a second the barman shook his head.

"I'm sorry, Miss Huntley, but I've been ordered to limit you to one drink every three hours."

She clenched and unclenched her small hands when she found the order had come from Wallace. She decided to go into the nearby town, but to get plastered one needed money. The cashier of the hotel was sorry, but he could not give her any money unless she had a signed "Okay" from Mr. Wallace. Next she tried her car but it would not start—Mr. Wallace had ordered the gasoline to be drained out. She got out of the car and saw Bob grinning at her.

"It'll be a lovely evening," he teased. "Like to go for a ride?"

"Not with you!" She stormed and flounced off.

Patricia retired to bed defeated. She lay awake most of the night trying to plan out some way of getting revenge on Bob. She woke up and gasped to find it was past ten. Always she had her breakfast in bed at nine, and she called her maid, Polly.

"I'm sorry, Miss Patricia," muttered the darkie. "But Mister Wallace gave orders that you were to have no more breakfasts in bed."

So Patricia was forced to get up, bath and come down to a late breakfast. What a look she gave Bob Wallace as she passed him for the dining-room. Not a word, but by the door she glanced, and just for a second the hard glint in her eyes vanished. But only for a second, and Bob did not

notice, because a visitor was registering at the office. Detective Riber of the Criminal Investigation was equally surprised to see Bob. They retired to a quiet corner.

"I didn't know the Border Patrol rated this kind of luxury."

"Oh, no. I resigned nearly two weeks ago. I've a private job now." Bob looked keenly at the older man. "What brings the sleuth to these parts?"

"A pity you hadn't stayed on with me—I could have used you," was the answer. "But that wandering spirit of yours cried for the great open spaces. Well, I can't say I blame you, for this is a grand spot." He smiled. "But you know very well I haven't come here for a holiday. I'm after the Borloff necklace. It was snatched in Mexico a short time ago, and the department thinks they may try to sneak it through here."

"Have you a lead or are you just working on a hunch?"

"We picked up a fellow named Manning in Chicago the other day," explained the 'tec. "A high-class fence. In going through his effects we found a receipted bill from this hotel and we figure he was hanging around here waiting for it when something probably scared him off. I want to see if I can pick up his trail from here. There's a twenty-five thousand dollar reward for the recovery of the necklace."

A pity the detective and this one-time assistant could not have overheard the conversation taking place in Room 183. It was Maybrook's room, and he was greeting Myra and Frank Adams.

"You're late. I expected you an hour ago."

"We're lucky to be here at all," growled Frank. "They've tightened up at the Customs Office. They're putting everybody through a wringer. Why,



"What did you do with that handbag?" Adams shouted at the girl.

they search you right down to the skin."

"They didn't find it on you, did they?" Maybrook demanded.

"Naw, I saw there was something wrong the minute we drove up there, so I sent Johnson back to the Hacienda with it."

"It's darned tough luck," complained Myra. "This one haul would have put us on Easy Street."

"And I ain't going to take any more chances coming through the fence again," stated Frank. "Shoot and ask questions afterwards is the orders I expect them Border Patrols have got."

"You two beat it back across the line right away," decided the leader.

"Fraid Miss Huntley will find out about me?" jealously cried Myra.

"Don't be silly, sweetheart. You're tops with me." He laughed, and rubbed his hands together. "I've been kidding that dame around because I've had a hunch that some time she was going to be a help to me." He picked up Myra's bag. "She's going to bring that necklace across the line for us. No Customs officer would suspect her, so you might take all you have out of this bag and make it look as new as possible."

Maybrook Tricks Patricia Into Mexico

THE wayward spoiled heiress found that she liked coming down for breakfast and that she did not mind being restricted to a drink every three hours. One moment she was livid with rage against Wallace and then she would have to admit a grudging admiration for the way he had outwitted her. But she was determined to prove the victor. She decided that some strong man must take up the cudgels in her cause—a real tough fellow. Chuck Owens looked just the right type.

Chuck was busy cleaning some harness and humming some tune about a family of frogs down on a farm when he heard sobbing. It was Patricia, in riding kit, and sobbing with her nose in her gauntleted hands for his benefit. Of course, the gallant lad wanted to know what was wrong.

"Oh, Chuck, I'm so unhappy. I can't stand it much longer. Oh, I suppose you think I'm a terrible baby, but if someone had been persecuting your sister or someone you cared for, what would you do?"

"I'd sock him in the nose."

"Oh, I bet you're awful strong," sighed the wheedler. "I bet you could sock a man a terrible blow."

"You said it, Miss Huntley. When I sock 'em they stay socked."

"I wish you liked me well enough to sock someone for me."

"It'd be a pleasure, Miss Huntley," cried Chuck, clenching his big hands.

"Would you do it to anybody, Chuck, no matter who it is?"

"You bet I would. Just lead me to him."

"Here he comes now. Remember what you promised." She lowered her voice. "Go get him."

Chuck swallowed when he saw it was the powerful Bob Wallace, but he remembered his promise and strode forward.

"Hey, you! I want to talk to you. You gotta cut out persecuting Miss Huntley. Or you'll have to answer to me."

"Say, you better get wise to yourself or I'll toss you over the wall," granted Bob.

"What are you waiting for?" demanded Patricia, as Chuck hesitated. September 10th, 1933.

"Why don't you sock him. You're scared, you big jellyfish!"

"Now don't take your spite out on him," warned Bob. "That's not being a good sport, you know."

"Don't talk to me, you big bully!" flamed the girl. "You can't make me do what I don't want to do, even if grandfather does pay you for it. And I'll get even with you for everything. How I hate you!"

"You don't hate me," Bob grinned mockingly. "You just dislike me a little."

"I'd like to slap your face."

"You do and I'll give you a good walloping," retorted Bob.

So Patricia reached out and slapped his face hard, and when he reached out to grab her she fled for her life. Every time she looked round he was behind her and gaining ground. She knew he would keep his word and give her a good hiding.

Maybrook had gone to the Huntleys' suite. He found everybody out except the valet. Mister Jeremiah was taking his daily constitutional walk, and Miss Patricia might be anywhere.

Then the door burst open and Patricia piled into the room. She flung herself into Maybrook's arms. The valet raised his eyebrows and discreetly vanished.

"What's the matter, Pat?"

"Wallace! He was going to beat me."

"He wouldn't dare to do a thing like that."

"You were right, Courtney." The girl freed herself. "It was all spite work on his part. He hates me, and would love to beat me. And to think that Grumpy Grandpa let him do these things to me."

"That roughneck must have hypnotised your grandfather." Maybrook was playing up to this tantrum.

"Well, I'm not going to let them treat me like this. I'll get back at them. I'll show them. I'll make them sorry they ever started anything like this." Patricia stamped her foot.

"That's the spirit," approved Maybrook. He picked up the packet he had put on a table. "Oh, I almost forgot what I came for. Like it?"

Some time later Bob went to the Huntley suite and found Jeremiah had just returned from his walk. He related the incident of the face-slapping and the old man looked worried.

"Maybe we've been going too strong on this thing, Bob. Pat's high-spirited."

"She has spirit all right."

"I suppose I'm an old fool. But I just can't bear to see her unhappy."

"Let's call the whole thing off," suggested Bob. "I guess it was a mistake to start this thing in the first place. Frankly, I like your granddaughter, Mr. Huntley, and maybe I hate to see her unhappy. Guess we're both a bit foolish." He held out his hand. "And I'm not keen to go on with it."

The old man said that Patricia had been so difficult since they had been trying to curb her activities that, for his own peace of mind, he agreed with Bob to let her go her own sweet, wilful way. He hoped that Bob would continue to look them up, but the ex-patrolman knew that for his own peace of mind he was going to give the Desert Springs Hotel a miss.

Downstairs he encountered Detective Riber.

"Bob, I've found out something." The detective drew him out of hearing of the guests. "Manning was very

friendly with a visitor here by the name of Maybrook."

"Maybrook?"

That startled Bob.

"Yeah. Say, what do you know about this Huntley dame?"

"What do you mean?"

"She and this fellow Maybrook are pretty pally, aren't they?"

"Yes, but what are you getting at?"

"Well, I know that some dame, an American, good-looking, has been taking trips back and forth from this hotel to Mexico," the detective explained. "And she's a friend of Maybrook's. If that isn't Miss Huntley, who is it?"

"But it's impossible."

"She carries the stones over and Manning buys them."

"But she doesn't need the money," Bob argued. "Her grandfather's worth millions, and she has a lot of her own."

"It isn't the money she's after. It's the thrill," was the detective's verdict. "I've been getting a line on Miss Huntley, and she's just about as wild as anything. I'm just hoping they try to sneak that necklace over. It'll mean twenty-five thousand bucks for me, and a good long stretch in the Federal prison for them—and the old man's dough won't save her."

Now Bob was thoroughly alarmed. He remembered the incident at the frontier and those two people he had turned back. He must find Patricia. He went to the telephone operator, and found that Miss Huntley was nowhere in the hotel, so he rushed upstairs to see her grandfather. The old man was standing in the middle of the room, holding a letter and shaking from head to foot.

"Bob! Bob!" He turned eagerly. "Read this! Read this!"

"Have you seen Patricia?" Bob demanded.

"Read this. Read this, was all the old man could say. "I just found it in my bed-room."

"Dear grandfather.—If you really cared for me you wouldn't hire a bully like Bob Wallace to humiliate me. Courtney loves me, and we have gone to Mexico to be married."

"PATRICIA."

"Heaven knows how long they've been gone," quavered the old man. "It's all my fault. I've been a fool!"

"Can I take your car?" Bob rapped out.

"Certainly take my car. Take anything."

And Jeremiah Huntley had scarce finished when Bob Wallace flung himself out of the room.

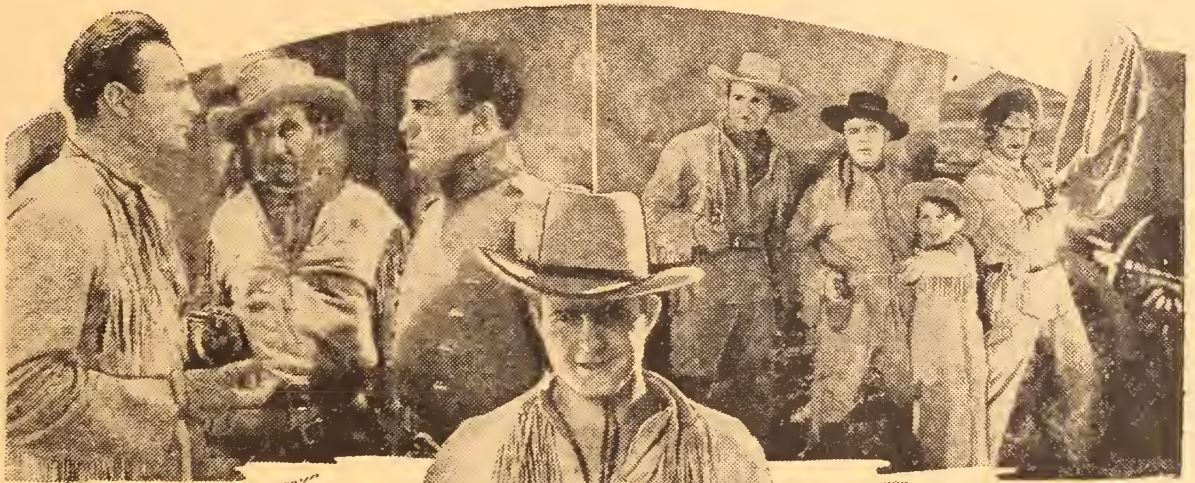
A Race With Time

COURTNEY MAYBROOK talked so smoothly and cleverly to Pat that the foolish girl imagined that he was the only genuine friend she had in the world. Also that defiant, wayward spirit of hers urged her to do something desperate. The handbag just won the game for the schemer.

They had no trouble at the border, because the officials all knew the Miss Huntley. Maybrook had taken good care to see she brought the handbag with her. Not only was he going to get that necklace into the States, but he was going to marry an heiress. He was going to have no compunction about deceiving Myra. Across the border he motored to Jiminez, the biggest town in the district—it was twenty miles from the border. At a certain café he was expected. The proprietor assured him that his message had been received, and

(Continued on page 23.)

Ride the danger trail with the pioneers of the Old West in this pulsing epic of the days when fearless prairie scouts took up the challenge of savage Redskins and murderous desperadoes. To the beat of thundering hoofs and to the blast of flaming guns this vivid serial runs its thrill-a-minute course, with hot action in every smashing episode and Ray Corrigan in its starring rôle



THE PAINTED STALLION

Read This First

Backed by Dupray, a scheming Spaniard who is Governor of Santa Fe, but who has received news that he is to be deposed by the newly established Mexican Republic, a band of renegades led by one, Zamora, is preying on the wagon-trains that ply to and fro across the Western wilds with rich merchandise under their awnings.

The activities of these renegades are hampered by a mystery rider on a painted stallion, who has sworn to defeat outlawry and who again and again warns the bandits' intended victims of their danger by means of whistling arrows.

The year is 1824, and in that year an American frontiersman known as Clark Stuart is detained by the U.S. Government to negotiate a trade treaty with the Mexican authorities. It is a treaty which Dupray is anxious to prevent from being conceded, and at his instigation Zamora incites the Indians to attack a wagon-train led by a trader named Jamison—a wagon-train with which Clark is travelling and whose personnel also includes Jim Bowie, famous as the inventor of the Bowie knife, and Kit Carson, a boy later to become renowned as a Western scout.

The Rider of the Painted Stallion saves the train by calling off the Redskins, who regard that mysterious figure as a supernatural being, and later the Rider rescues Clark from the clutches of some of Zamora's henchmen.

After learning the Rider is in reality a white girl, Clark and his companions reach Santa Fe, where they discover Dupray's association with the outlaws. Dupray makes his getaway, but later Clark picks up the trail of Zamora,

and shadows him to the gang's lair. The frontiersman is captured by the renegades, however, and though he staves a bid for freedom, he sets foot on a cunningly concealed trapdoor and plunges to apparent destruction.

Now Read On

Hemmed In

TUMBLING down the slope on to which he had been precipitated when the trapdoor had given way under him, Clark rolled headlong to the lip of the declivity. Then, where that steep gradient terminated abruptly in a sheer precipice which dropped to the bed of the gulch, the big frontiersman pitched wildly into space.

Luckily for Clark, however, there was a tough shrub growing just under the rim of the cliff at the point where he plunged into mid-air, and luckily for him he had the presence of mind to clutch it.

The bush held firm, and the scout's descent was arrested with a jerk. It was a jerk so violent that he felt as if his arms had been wrenched out of their sockets, and twin stabs of pain seemed to shoot through him from wrists to shoulders, but he hung on desperately, bobbing and swaying precariously, with the cliff-rim two or three feet above him, and the floor of the canyon hundreds of feet below.

For an interval of several seconds he continued to remain suspended in that hazardous and uncertain fashion. Then he focused his attention on the lip of the precipice for a brief spell, wondering if he could possibly regain it and climb out of this strange, abysmal fissure in the mountains—a fissure that was partially roofed in by beetling rock formation high overhead, so that an eternal gloom enshrouded it.

He speedily realised that although he was only two or three feet below the cliff-rim he could never hope to reach it. Into the bargain, he realised that even if he could have attained that slope down which he had rolled so helplessly he could never have negotiated the rocky projection that jutted out above the summit of the gradient like some monstrous porch.

He could only have made his way to the "chute" through which he had fallen, and would then have been faced with the task of clambering up through that dark hole which communicated with the lair of the Dupray Zamora gang.

Fingers locked amid the twigs and foliage of the shrub by which he had saved himself from destruction, Clark wondered grimly if he were doomed after all—wondered if he had merely delayed the inevitable end by clutching at that bush. It was certain, at any rate, that he could not hold on for long. Even if the tough clump of vegetation continued to bear the strain of his weight, his own strength would give out sooner or later and he would be forced to let go, falling disastrously to the depths of the gorge.

He looked down into the canyon, and a sensation of nausea swept over

EPISODE 9 :

"The Fatal Message"

him as he beheld the dim bed of it away beneath him, so that, his eyes recoiling from the spectacle, he averted his gaze. And then it was that he saw a ledge a little below him and somewhat to his right, a ledge that merged into a kind of track which seemed to slant steeply down the face of the rock to the very base of the cliff.

At sight of that ledge a feeling of hope was awakened in him, and he began to swing himself from side to side, pendulum-fashion, clinging tightly the while to the bush he had seized. Then all at once, when he judged that his body had gathered sufficient momentum, he released his grip on twigs and foliage as he was swaying towards the right.

He dropped on to the ledge that was his objective. It was perilously narrow, and for a breathless instant he was in danger of losing his balance and toppling into the void, but he flung himself down on the craggy shelf and managed somehow to prevent himself from rolling off it.

He lay there for several seconds, scarcely able to believe that he was safe. Presently, however, he braced himself with an effort, and, struggling to his feet, he commenced to wend his way down the track which sloped towards the base of the precipice.

That track was smooth and slippery, and in descending it he was in constant danger of losing his footing with fatal result. Yet he succeeded in gaining the bed of the canyon without mishap, and, arriving there, he turned after a moment's hesitation towards the left.

Stumbling along the gloomy gulch, he scanned the rock ramparts on each side of him and followed them upward with his eyes to their remote summits—upwards to beetling formations that permitted only a thin streak of moonlight to shine into the canyon. There was no means of ascending either of the precipices that hemmed him in, unless it were by the track which he had negotiated and which offered no escape from the fissure.

Then, after trudging vainly over a quarter of a mile of ground, he found his path blocked by a towering wall of cliff that checked further progress in the direction which he had taken.

He turned back and began to retrace his steps, walking in the wedge of moonlight that filtered into the gulch, and he was immediately below that high, remote shrub which had saved his life when he saw a man's boot protruding from a clutter of boulders near-by.

He moved over to those boulders and discovered the shattered, lifeless body of an individual whose dress indicated that he had been a Mexican of the educated class, and, looking at the wretch pityingly, Clark guessed correctly enough that he was Cordoba, the missing secretary of the new governor who had been despatched to Santa Fe to take the place of Escobedo Dupray.

Beyond a doubt the fellow had been sent to his doom through the trap-door which had been released under Clark's feet.

Thus reflected the big frontiersman, and shuddered to think that he himself might have been lying dead here as well if fortune had not favoured him—a mauled corpse like this luckless man who had been hurled to destruction hours before. Then a black rage took possession of the U.S. Government agent, and, in the throes of that emotion, he vowed to himself that if ever he escaped from these hills he would never rest until he had seen the Dupray-Zamora gang wiped out to the last man.

September 10th, 1933.

A little while later he was moving away from the huddled form of Cordoba and proceeding along the gulch, but he had not gone far before he was brought up short by another wall of rock that rose in his path.

The canyon was closed in at both ends. That much Clark's investigation had revealed, and, though the cliffs at this extremity of the fissure were no more than fifty feet in height, they were completely insurmountable, those on his right and left hand leaning so close towards each other that only a meagre vista of sky could be seen beyond their converging rims. In short, Clark was a prisoner in this sombre cleft of the mountains—with no prospect, it seemed, of ever gaining his freedom.

For all his courage, he groaned aloud as the full realisation of his plight was borne home to him. It would have been better to have shared the fate of Cordoba, he told himself, than to stand confronted by a situation such as this—a situation which must mean for him a slow, lingering death by the pangs of hunger and thirst.

Or had his foes perceived that he was still alive, he wondered, and would they appear above the canyon and open fire on him? If they did, he might expose himself resignedly to the doom's blast of their guns as a welcome alternative to a worse destiny.

But no, he thought. From the trap-door in the gang's lair only a small portion of the slope down which he had tumbled could possibly be visible. The renegades could not have seen him clutch that shrub a few feet below the cliff's brink and swing thence on to the track by which he had reached the bed of the cleft. They doubtless imagined that he had plunged to the rocks at the base of the precipice, and that the life had been smashed out of him.

Clark was right. Up in the cave from which he had fallen the trap-door had been re-set, and, convinced that the frontiersman was no more, Dupray and Zamora and their hirelings had returned to that inner compartment which was now the headquarters of the deposed Lieutenant Governor.

At the moment Dupray was seated at the table there, and, his accomplices gathered around him, he was thoughtfully examining the note which had been taken from Clark Stuart when the latter had been captured.

His scrutiny of that note had suggested a cunning scheme to Dupray, and presently he looked up at the rogues who were assembled about him.

"Stuart is dead," he remarked, fingering his smooth-shaven chin. "but no one knows that except ourselves—and I fancy, amigos, that we might make good use of his name."

Zamora eyed him in an inquiring manner.

"What do you mean, Excellency?" he asked.

Escobedo Dupray indicated the misgiving he had been studying.

"I refer to this note which Stuart wrote and which bears his signature," he announced. "It is a note requesting Jamison to muster his men, join forces with the garrison of the citadel and march from Santa Fe. It is a note in which Stuart declares that he will meet them three miles north of Tascosa Bend on the Rio Los Lunas, and then lead them to our hide-out."

He paused, then adopted a sly tone.

"We have every reason to believe that Stuart wanted the Rider of the Painted Stallion to deliver this note to Jamison," he went on. "According to Macklin and the men who captured Stuart, he

seemed on the point of handing the note to the Rider when he was surprised."

"That's right," Macklin interposed. "I reckon the Rider don't speak English too good, or Stuart would've given the message by word o' mouth. Anyhow, I calculate we ain't got nothin' to worry about, even though the Rider got away. That note will never reach Jamison now—"

Dupray silenced him with a gesture. "On the contrary, Macklin," he said softly, "I think it might be a good idea if the note did reach Jamison."

His associates looked at him blankly. Then Zamora found his voice.

"Are you crazy?" he blurted. "That message will bring the Jamison party and the presidio garrison within a mile or two of our hide-away, and when Stuart fails to meet them they're bound to start a search for him—a search that may fetch them all too close to this lair of ours."

Dupray smiled.

"I agree, Zamora, that our hide-out would be in danger of becoming discovered," he observed, "if this note were delivered to Jamison without alteration. But it so happens that Stuart's handwriting is not of copper-plate pattern, and lends itself to such alteration. For instance, take this word 'north.'"

He beckoned Zamora closer, and, consulting the note, pointed out the sentence in which Clark had proposed meeting Jamison three miles north of Tascosa Bend on the Rio Los Lunas.

"With a stroke of two of a pencil," Dupray continued, "that word 'north' could very easily be transformed into the word 'south.' Look, I will demonstrate what I mean."

He took out a pencil and craftily changed the word in question so that it read 'south' instead of 'north.' Then he glanced at Zamora again.

"You see?" he commented. "If Jamison received this message now, he and his men and the troops from the presidio would head for a point three miles south of Tascosa Bend, and, if they commenced a search for Stuart, there would be little chance of them extending their quest as far up as this locality."

Zamora frowned.

"That's true," he muttered. "But why send this note at all? What would be your purpose in sending it?"

"To draw the Jamison party from their wagon-campment," was the swift response, "and the garrison from the fortress. Then, amigo, you and your bravos could bear down on Santa Fe, plunder the Jamison prairie schooners of their merchandise—and, into the bargain, force your way into the citadel and obtain that official seal which belongs to the new Governor and which would be of such value to us."

His heinchman's eyes gleamed at that, and the other members of the gang exchanged appreciative glances.

"Ah, I understand, Excellency," Zamora breathed. "But tell me, how is Stuart's note to be delivered?"

"By an arrow launched into the wagon-campment," Dupray answered, "a whistling arrow of the kind used by the Rider of the Painted Stallion. We have several specimens here in this hide-out—arrows discharged by that meddler in the course of frustrating some of his best-laid plans. One of your men, Zamora, will take one of those arrows and fasten Clark Stuart's message to it. That man must be within bow-shot of the Jamison encampment before dawn, and, the moment he has sent the shaft on its way, he must make himself scarce, leaving Stuart's friends to imagine that

the Rider has been responsible for delivering the note."

"And what about the rest of us?" Zamora asked.

Escobedo Dupray leaned back in his chair. There was a complacent expression on his handsome, but sardonic, face.

"You and the remainder of the gang will be lying in wait and under cover," he said, "within a short distance* of Santa Fe. The messenger who delivers the note will join when he has played his part, and you will watch for the departure of the Jamison party and the garrison troops. You will then give them time to get well under way—well out of sight and sound of the town.

"When the hills have swallowed them," he added grimly, "you will close in on the wagon encampment and the presidio. Have I made myself clear?"

His henchman nodded.

"Perfectly, Excellency. Por dios! it is a clever scheme that you have thought out."

"S', a clever scheme," Dupray rejoined. "Take care that you do not bungle it."

Signal Fire

WHILE Dupray was outlining to his accomplices the plan that had occurred to him, Clark Stuart was brooding over the unenviable situation in which he himself had become involved.

Hemmed in between sheer walls of rock, banished as it were from the world of his fellow-men, he could see no likelihood of ever escaping from the rascally cleft wherein he was imprisoned, and he was trying to reconcile himself to the thought of long hours of suffering when all at once an idea flashed across his mind.

It suddenly dawned on him that there might be a chance of salvation after all—a chance of being rescued from his predicament by no less a personage than the Rider of the Painted Stallion!

He had forgotten that mysterious figure until this very moment—that white girl who wore the attire of a Redskin, who spoke the English language as if it were her native tongue but in a hesitant fashion which indicated it had ceased to be thoroughly familiar to her, and who was apparently bent on defeating the activities of outlaws and renegades.

She had fled when Zamora's men had surprised Clark, but when she had realized that the frontiersman had not made good his escape she may have finally turned back with the object of trying to find out how he would fare at the hands of the crooks. Even now she might be hovering in the locality where he had been taken prisoner, hoping to learn what had become of him, hoping to aid him in some way or other.

The possibility was one that induced him to make an attempt at sending forth a signal, on the off-chance that the Rider was in the vicinity and would perceive it, and suddenly he began to build a fire of sticks and twigs, of which there was no lack, for there was a considerable amount of scrub as well as rocks in the canyon.

He piled the brushwood on a patch of clear ground, and then by means of a couple of stones he managed to strike a spark and set light to the heap of scrub. Nor was it long before it was blazing fiercely and sending up coils of smoke—smoke that rose straight up into the windless, moonlit night, ascending from the cleft and billowing darkly above the cliff-rims that seemed almost to meet fifty feet above Clark's head.

Not anticipating that the signal-fire would produce any immediate result,

even if the Rider did happen to be in the neighbourhood, Clark collected more fuel and added it to the beacon so as to keep it ablaze. Indeed, he continued to feed that fire at intervals of every ten or fifteen minutes for hours on end, clinging to the hope that sooner or later the smoke from it would be espied.

He was, of course, alive to the possibility that the smoke might be seen by some of the Dupray-Zamora gang, but he had to take that risk, and in any case was ready to meet swift extermination from their six-guns in preference to awaiting the ravages of thirst and starvation. Yet the night wore on without any inquisitive face appearing in the gap between the beetling cliff-edges up above, neither friend nor foe answering the summons of that ascending smoke.

At length the stars began to pale in that restricted section of sky which was visible to Clark, and the grey light of a new day crept slowly over the vault of the heavens. By that time the trapped frontiersman had resolved to let his fire die out and seek slumber, for his eyes were heavy with fatigue, and he was actually stretching himself out on the ground drearly when he heard a familiar sound coming from somewhere beyond the rim of the cliff on his left.

Unmistakably it was the sound of hoofs striking upon stony soil, and, his weariness forgotten, Clark sprang to his feet with feelings of mingled eagerness and uncertainty. Then, after a pause, a human head came into his view—a head adorned by a thick halo of eagle-plumes—the head of the girl who was known as the Rider of the Painted Stallion!

Clark saw her lovely face peering down at him through the smoke that still rose from his signal-fire. She had dismounted, and was obviously kneeling at the cliff-rim, and as she made out his figure she gave a start. Then, as he waved to her, she ducked back out of

sight, and she did not reappear until another minute had elapsed.

She was now carrying a rawhide lariat in her hands, and she dropped the loose end of this within his reach; and it did not take him long to realise that the other end was made fast to the stallion she owned, for no sooner had he grasped the rope than the Rider turned and called out to the horse, and a moment later the big scout heard the animal move off and felt the rawhide line spring taut in his fingers.

He was pulled upward by that lariat, and in some fifteen or twenty seconds was hauled over the cliff's rim, whereupon he saw the Painted Stallion plodding doggedly away from him at a distance of about a score of paces.

The Rider had remained at the cliff-edge, and as Clark scrambled to his feet beside her she shouted to her steed and brought the creature to a halt at a single word of command. Then she faced towards the man she had rescued.

"All night I have searched for some trace of you," she said in her stilted mode of speech. "Then, chancing to pass this way, I saw the smoke of the fire you have made. It is well that I turned back last night when I—when I took courage, though I feared you had been killed."

Clark nodded slowly.

"If you hadn't found me, lady," he told her, "I reckon I'd never have got out of that cleft alive. It's not the first time I've been indebted to you for my life, either."

He went on to relate all that had happened after he had fallen into the hands of the Dupray-Zamora gang, and she listened to his story attentively, following the gist of it even if she did not comprehend it in detail. Then, when he had finished his narrative, she motioned to her horse.

"I will take you," she volunteered, "to Santa Fe. At least, I will take you within sight of your friends. But we



"Yes," the Rider said, pointing towards a defile in the hills. "The outlaws, they went that way—towards Santa Fe."

must guard against meeting the outlaws. In the night, while I was trying to find out what had happened to you, I saw a strong party of those outlaws riding westward."

Clark glanced at her sharply. "Westward?" he reiterated. "You mean—in the direction of Santa Fe?"

The girl inclined her head. "Yes," she said, pointing towards a defile in the hills. "The outlaws, they went that way—towards Santa Fe."

"In that case we'll bear south," Clark stated. "We don't want to run foul of those hombres. Listen, you drop me near the wagon-encampment where my friends are located and I'll head back into the hills with 'em and see if we can account for that bunch of renegades once and for all. Anyhow, I know where their hide-out is now. It's not in view from here, but it's located on the far slope of that ridge behind us."

He jerked his thumb over his shoulder, indicating a ragged promontory on the other side of the cleft from which he had been rescued. Then, in company with the Rider, he walked forward to the Painted Stallion, and shortly afterwards man and girl were astride that magnificent horse.

They struck south, and some time later crossed a ford in the Rio Los Lunas, along the bank of which river they proceeded at a brisk pace, and they had been following the course of that waterway for about an hour when all at once they descried a formidable cavalcade approaching from the opposite direction.

As that cavalcade drew nearer Clark discovered to his surprise that it was composed of Jamison and his men and the troopers of Santa Fe's presidio or fortress. Then his attention was diverted to his fair companion, who had also identified the oncoming horsemen. "Your friends," the girl said to him. "I leave you now."

Realising that she was timid of meeting strangers, Clark dismounted in deference to her wish to make off, and in another moment she was riding away at the gallop, the frontiersman dwelling thoughtfully on the strange temperament of this girl in whom audacity was so curiously blended with a feminine shyness.

He was still gazing after her receding figure when the approaching cavalcade reached him. It was a cavalcade headed by Jamison, Davy Crockett and the captain of the presidio garrison, and the leaders drawing rein beside him, Clark addressed the first-named.

"Well, Jamison," he declared. "I didn't expect to see you out here. What brings you from Santa Fe, anyhow?"

The wagon-boss looked at him in bewilderment.

"What brings us from Santa Fe?" he echoed. "Why, your note, of course."

He produced the missive Clark had scrawled the night before, and, as he handed it over to the U.S. Government agent, the latter examined it dully.

"Say, where'd you get this?" he demanded.

"It was fastened to a whistlin' arrow that was shot into the encampment just afore dawn this mornin'," Jamison answered. "What's the matter, Clark? You wrote it, didn't you? You wrote it an' got the Rider to see that it reached me, didn't you?"

Clark's good-looking features had become tense.

"I wrote it," he jerked, "but I never had a chance to send it to you by the Rider. What's more, it's been altered. Jamison, it's a trick—a trick to get you away from Santa Fe and leave the way clear for some move that the Dupray-Zamora gang have planned. The Rider

saw a big bunch of those renegades high-tailin' it west durin' the night!"

He reached up and gripped the other American by the wrist.

"Jamison, how many men are left at the wagon encampment?" he rapped out.

"Jim Bowie's there," was the hoarse response, "along with three more o' the boys an' little Kit Carson. The rest of the men are all here. And the presidio—that's been drained of practically the whole o' the garrison. There's only a handful of soldiers at the fort, actin' as bodyguard for Governor Alvarez. When I showed the governor your note, he figured like I did that as strong a force as possible had better be sent out to round up them bandits."

Clark laid a hand on the back of Jamison's saddle.

"Then Santa Fe's at the mercy of those outlaws," he grated, "and we've got to ride hard if we're gonna get there in time to checkmate whatever play they're aimin' to make. Slide forward, pardner. I'm sharin' your brone."

The Attack

THE quiet of early morning hung over the town of Santa Fe and the presidio that stood a little to the west of the old Spanish-American settlement.

In Santa Fe itself few citizens had as yet arisen from their beds. In the presidio, however, Governor Alvarez had already breakfasted, for after being awakened by Jamison when the latter had hurried over to the fortress with Clark Smart's note the representative of the Mexican Republic had not been disposed to resume his interrupted slumber.

At present he was in his study, poring over certain documents relating to affairs of State, and he was engrossed in the contemplation of these documents when suddenly a clatter of hoofs and an alarming outcry reached his ears through the open windows of his sanctum.

The commotion broke the silence of the morning startlingly, and, knitting his brows, Don Luis Alvarez rose from the chair at his desk and stepped quickly across the apartment which was his study and which had been Escobedo Dupray's in former days. A moment later he was at the windows, and, looking down into the courtyard, he saw a group of agitated figures near the gateway.

Half a dozen of them were soldiers,

COMING SHORTLY!

FREDDIE
BARTHOLOMEW

AND
MICKEY ROONEY

IN

"THE BOY FROM
BARNADO'S"

all that remained to garrison the presidio. With these were four men and a boy whom Don Luis recognised as members of the Jamison wagon-train—one of the men being Jim Bowie, and the boy Kit Carson.

The Americans had arrived on horseback, but had dismounted and appeared to be motioning out through the presidio gateway in a concerned fashion. Then all at once three or four of the soldiers hurried forward and closed and barred the fortress gates, after which the whole party ran across the courtyard in the direction of the governor's quarters.

Don Luis heard them enter the hallway below and heard the clump of their feet on the stairs, and, hastening from his sanctum, he met them as they gained the landing.

He addressed himself to Jim Bowie, who was in the lead.

"Why are you and your friends here, senior?" he asked in fluent English. "Is anything wrong?"

The veteran Indian fighter answered him tensely. His long-barrelled rifle was gripped firm in his horny hands. He was chewing, as usual, on a wad of black, strong plug tobacco, but his jaws were working more rapidly than was their wont, and there was a grim expression on his leathery countenance.

"Plenty's wrong, y'ur Excellency," he ejaculated. "Them renegade varmints that are back of Dupray, they're here in full force. Me an' Kit Carson and my pardners seed 'em beavin' down on the wagon encampment, an', knowin' we could never make a stand against 'em there, we mounted up an' high-tailed it for the presidio. Prompt-like, they chased after us, an' they're headin' straight for the fort."

He slipped the wad of chewing tobacco to the side of his mouth so that his cheek bulked incongruously, and Don Luis heard him grind his teeth.

"It looks ter me like the skunks must've knowed most of our men an' most o' your men was away," the fur-capped scout added, "or they'd never've dared ter show up at Santa Fe, I reckon."

Meanwhile the governor's features had taken on a look of alarm.

"Dupray's whole gang is here?" he said huskily. "And Dupray, he is with them?"

"No, we didn't see no sign o' him, y'ur Excellency," Bowie rejoined. "But that outlaw Zamora what Dupray used ter call his secretary, he's ridin' well in the fore."

A confused din became audible at that moment, a din as of blows being rained on stout woodwork, and little Kit Carson caught Jim Bowie by the wrist.

"That's Zamora and his bunch at the gates now!" the lad breathed.

"I guess you're right, son," the veteran Indian fighter answered, "an' I figure it won't take 'em long to bust 'em open."

He turned to Don Luis again. "We're outnumbered, y'ur Excellency," he stated crisply, "but maybe we can hold 'em off an' keep 'em away from your quarters if we pump lead at 'em from the windows of one o' the upper rooms here. We'll have the advantage o' position, anyways."

The governor motioned to a room on his immediate right, and the entire party swarmed into it, Bowie lending Don Luis a spare six-shooter that he was carrying, preferring for his own use the long-barrelled rifle with which he had earned himself so deadly a reputation in many a battle against hostile Redskins. As for the other three men of the

Jamison wagon-train, they were handling Colt forty-fives, while the half-dozen soldiers who had been left at the presidio were armed with carbines.

The defenders posted themselves at the windows of the room they had entered, Bowie ordering Kit Carson to crouch down on the floor well out of harm's way. In the meantime, at the other side of the patio which that upper chamber overlooked, the fortress gates were trembling under a resolute onslaught—an onslaught directed against them by Zamora and his accomplices, who had evidently dismounted and were hurling themselves in concert at the stout timbers.

The double gates flew wide within two or three minutes, and the attackers appeared in full view, whereupon the guns of the defenders blazed out a challenge, hot lead ripping into the thick of the outlaws and bringing down a couple of them, who fell dead in their tracks. Then the voice of Zamora was raised in shrill tones of command.

"Four of you stay outside," he called. "Keep clear of the gateway, and if any townspeople come from Santa Fe warn them off with a volley. The rest of you follow me."

Four of the crooks retreated and dodged out of the line of fire, taking charge of the gang's horses and focusing their attention on the settlement to the east. The others accompanied Zamora in helter-skelter fashion as the dago sprinted for a supply wagon that stood near a building on the left-hand side of the patio.

From behind the cover of that wagon and from behind a pile of stores that had been unloaded from it the gangsters discharged fusillade after fusillade at the windows of the room where Don Luis and his party were ensconced, and in response the defenders kept up a heavy fire on the position occupied by the renegades, the whole presidio echoing the blatter of the gunplay, and leaden slugs whistling to and fro on their missions of death. Then all at once, when the engagement had only been in progress a short time, there was an outbreak of shooting outside the fort.

The outlaws who had been left beyond the gateway were responsible for it, for, sure enough, a number of citizens had come out from Santa Fe and started across the open ground between town and military stronghold to ascertain the cause of the disturbance.

As Zamora had fancied, those citizens turned tail when the revolvers of the gang's "look-outs" belched at them threateningly, and they fled back to the settlement in disorder. Nor did they reappear—being content, it seemed, to leave well alone.

In the presidio, the stern gun duel wore on—without the crooks profiting by their advantage in numbers. True, they suffered only one more casualty—a gangster who exposed himself for a second too long in rising to take a shot at those upper windows, and who was drilled through the forehead by a bullet from Jim Bowie's gun. But the renegades inflicted no casualties on the governor's party, and, the latter apparently being well supplied with ammunition, Zamora began to fear that the combat might drag on for hours unless the defenders could be forced into the open, when the punier superiority of the outlaws must bring the fight to a speedy conclusion.

It was not long before Zamora had conceived a plan that was calculated to render the governor's quarters untenable; for the building near which the crooks were located was the storehouse

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of the presidio, and Dupray's chief henchman knew it contained combustible materials that could be used to set fire to the abode in which Don Luis' party was besieged.

To smoke out the defenders! That was the plan Zamora resolved upon, and he was hoping that after the Alvarez party had been compelled to evacuate the burning dwelling he and his men would still be able to gain the interior of the residence and obtain the governor's official seal before the blaze reached unapproachable dimensions. Then, with that seal in their possession, they would head back for the Jamison encampment and plunder the prairie schooners there at their leisure.

Zamora's scheme was soon being put into operation, and, in place of six-gun bullets, improvised flambeaux smothered in naphtha oil were directed at Don Luis' quarters—not at the windows of the room in which the governor and his supporters were ensconced, but through the open windows of other rooms, at the veranda which ran along the base of the dwelling's frontage, at the roof as well—flambeaux that were thrown with reasonably accurate aim, flambeaux that ignited the structure at a dozen points.

Within the space of half an hour the governor's residence was burning fiercely and dense clouds of smoke were pouring from it at every outlet, and, though the blaze had not as yet enveloped the room wherein Don Luis and his companions were gathered, the fumes of the conflagration were finding their way into it in ever-increasing volume.

The smoke billowed up over the face of the house and swirled in through the bullet-shattered windows of the apartment. It came in through the fissures around the closed door, and it seeped upward through crevices in the floorboards, mingling with the acrid reek from the defenders' guns, filling the room until the little party of besieged men and the boy who was with them, were choking and choking violently. Then at last Jim Bowie staggered back from the windows.

"I'm gettin' outa here!" he coughed. "I'm a-headin' down into the patio ter shoot it out with them desperadoes, an' my name ain't Bowie if I don't take one or two of 'em ter perdition with me afore they fill me full o' lead. Whaddya say, friends? Are you with me? Are you goin' out there to die fightin', or are you gonna stay here an' die like rats in a trap?"

Hoarse voices answered him in unison, the voices of men who knew they were doomed and who were ready to meet death by the bullet rather than by the crueler element of a raging inferno; and next moment those men were blundering with Jim Bowie towards the door.

The door was plucked open by the veteran who was leading them, and into even thicker clouds of smoke they plunged, and as they charged forth a diminutive figure started after them—the figure of little Kit Carson, bent on sharing their fate.

But Kit was not destined to follow them. Half-way across the room they had evacuated the boy tripped over a fold in a rumpled carpet, and, hurtling forward, he struck his head against the edge of the open door—with an impact that scattered his wits and left him lying there insensible amid the weltering fumes.

(To be continued in another powerful episode next week. By permission of British Lion Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Ray Corrigan.)

September 10th, 1938.

"WHO KILLED GAIL PRESTON?"

(Continued from page 12)

shakily. "No one's been here since I came."

Tom turned to Connolly.

"You and I are going up to take a look at that spotlight box," he said. "That was the one thing Mike mentioned on the 'phone. Sergeant, you stay here and keep your eye on this guy."

"Okay, inspector." The sergeant seated himself beside the watchman, and Tom and Connolly went into the café and climbed into the lower of the two boxes.

There was nothing in it except a house telephone attached to one of the walls and two complicated-looking switches depending from its ceiling. Tom looked at the switches.

"These must operate the lights," he decided.

"Where do they lead to?" asked Connolly.

"Probably up to the box above," said Tom. "Let's take a look."

They mounted the vertical ladder into the upper box, and there were two lanterns, standing side by side and facing a long and narrow opening in the front of the box. Through this opening they had a complete view of the café, and Tom saw that both lanterns were tilted to cover the dance floor below.

"We'll examine these things thoroughly," he said. "You look at that one, Cliff."

Connolly moved all round the lantern on the left, peering at it as though he were short-sighted; but he hadn't the slightest notion how it worked. Tom, examining the other one with more understanding eyes, studied the big metal disc in front of its lens, a disc in which there were a number of circular openings fitted with coloured screens, and noticed a wire attached to its crank.

He turned the disc first one way and then the other, and he saw that there was a hole in one of the screens. He looked along the wire, and then he gave a startled exclamation that caused Connolly to join him beside the lantern.

"Look at that!" said Tom.

Connolly's eyes bulged. A heavy automatic was fastened to the right side of the lantern, its muzzle pointing downwards to the exact spot where Gail Preston had been standing before she fell. A wire round the trigger of the automatic passed round a leg of the tripod upon which the lantern stood, and the other end of it was fastened to the crank of the disc.

"See the idea?" inquired Tom. "This colour wheel acts as a motor. When it spins round it tightens up this wire until it pulls the trigger of this gun. Whoever is standing in the spot gets the bullet."

He revolved the disc to demonstrate his meaning, but was careful not to tighten the wire sufficiently to fire the automatic.

"It sure must have taken some guy a long time to figure that out!" breathed Connolly.

"This is the gun that killed Miss Preston," said Tom definitely. "Remember, she got shot at the end of her number when the band was playing September 10th, 1933.

ing its loudest and everybody was applauding. That's why the gun wasn't heard."

"But if that's the gun that shot her," objected Connolly, "the wire oughta be still tight, oughtn't it?"

"No." Tom shook his head. "This wheel works on a spring. It turns around so many times one way, then the spring releases it, and it operates in the other direction. The wire only becomes taut when the amber screen is opposite the lens, I should judge."

"How about trying it?" suggested Connolly.

"Not now. Get the finger-print man, and have him take every print off this gun, then get the ballistics man, and have him check the riflings of the gun against the bullet that killed Preston. Tell the officer on duty not to let anybody in here—and meet me at headquarters when you get through."

It was past one o'clock in the morning, and Tom was half-dozing in his chair in his room at headquarters when Curran, the little ballistic expert, walked in at the door with the automatic that had been taken from the spot-light lantern. Connolly looked up from the crystal into which he had been gazing, and Tom sat bolt upright with a jerk.

"You've got the right gun this time all right," announced Curran, placing the automatic on the desk. "It checks perfectly with the murder bullet."

"So when we find out whose finger-prints were on that gun—" began Connolly.

In at the open door stepped a gloomy-looking man whose life was associated almost entirely with finger-prints, and Tom silenced his assistant with a gesture.

"What did you find?" he asked eagerly.

"Sorry, inspector," the expert replied, "there wasn't a mark on the gun."

"That's fine!" groaned Tom. "Now we can start all over again!"

Curran and his colleague exchanged glances and departed without another word, closing the door behind them. Tom drooped in his chair, his lips compressed and his brows knitted. But Connolly suddenly had what he considered to be an inspiration.

"Hi, wait a minute, Tom!" he exclaimed. "That guy's been tryin' to get that gun ever since he put it up there! He was tryin' when you got soaked with that wrench! If he comes back again we'll nab him!"

"He might come back," said Tom, "and he might not. But I'm not going to sit around and wait for him. No, we'll have to make that murderer return to the scene of the crime."

"Make him?" echoed Connolly. "How'd you expect to do that?"

Tom picked up a paper-knife, stabbed the desk with it, and threw it down again.

"Cliff," he burst out, "for the benefit of the murderer we'll re-enact the crime!"

"What for?"

"We're going to catch the murderer with his own contraption. Only one person knows there's a gun in that colour-wheel spot-light. Instead of playing it on the singer we'll play it on every suspect in the audience, and when it hits the murderer he's going to break, because he knows the gun can go off again!"

"Might work," conceded Connolly.

"It must work! Listen, Cliff, get hold of Fallon and tell him I want that club open again to-morrow night, and I want everything just as it was the night

Gail Preston was murdered. You'd better get your dinner-jacket pressed, too, because we're going to catch a murderer in style!"

Confession!

AT eight o'clock on the following evening the Swing Club was ablaze with lights; the waiters were in their places, dressed as guards; the band was on the circular platform at the back of the dance floor, and the people who had been present on the night of Gail Preston's murder had begun to arrive.

Connolly, in evening clothes he very seldom wore, checked off the names of the patrons in a little book as they entered the café, and a burly guard held a plan with the aid of which they were conducted to the tables they had occupied on the fatal occasion. They had been subpoenaed to attend, and some of them objected strongly to such compulsion.

"Why were we brought here?" one elaborately dressed female raged at Tom, never suspecting him to be a detective in his perfectly fitting dinner-jacket suit. "We had nothing to do with your silly old murder. We were going to the opera."

"Hi, listen, lady!" Connolly intervened. "You'll get all the uproar you want right here! Cell Three." He pointed with his pencil. "Now, get in there, and I don't want to hear a peep out o' you!"

Frank Daniels, brought to the club in custody, was shut in a make-believe cell, and seemed to find it little more attractive than the real one he had left behind for the time being. Fallon, in the cell he had used before, sat at a table with the same two friends.

At half-past eight, Tom went to Connolly, after satisfying himself that police officers were posted all over the building.

"Everybody here yet?" he inquired. "Yeah," was the reply. "Just checked off the last one."

"Fine!" Tom surveyed the setting for his reconstruction of the crime and was satisfied. "Well, I guess everything's all ready. Close the doors."

Waiters were standing about because they had nothing to serve; the guards on the galleries were pacing back and forth. Swing Traynor, in his striped suit as band leader, emerged from his dressing-room and joined Ann and Charles Waverly on the edge of the dance floor.

"Oh, I wish I knew what was going on!" Ann exclaimed nervously. "So does everybody else," growled Waverly.

"Kellogg certainly has something up his sleeve," commented Swing. Tom crossed the floor to them.

"I'm going to need your help to-night, Waverly," he said. "You know the routine of everything that took place the night Gail Preston was shot?"

"That's right," confirmed the Master of Ceremonies.

"I'd like to have you announce the show in exactly that order."

"I'll be glad to help you. It was in the second half of the cabaret show, and we started with the Spanish dancers."

"Well, they're here and ready," said Tom. "I'll just make an announcement."

He mounted the circular platform and turned his back on the band to address the people at the tables.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "you are gathered here for one purpose to-night. As you have been notified, we are re-enacting the scene exactly as

it took place the night Gail Preston was murdered. One of you here is the murderer—of that we are sure! Before this night is over we hope to arrest that person, and every other man and woman in this building will be instrumental in catching the guilty one. Start the show now, Waverly."

Waverly stood in the middle of the dance floor and raised the peaked cap he was wearing. Tom stepped off the platform and Swing took his place there. Ann shrank away under a gallery.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Waverly without any of the gruffness previously associated with his rôle of tough guy, "our first number will be a speciality dance by Lolita and Ardo."

The band struck up a tango, and he drifted away to a corner as the two dancers appeared. The spectacular tango was followed by the whirlwind dance, and, in spite of the circumstances, spontaneous applause rang out at its conclusion.

The artistes went off the floor, and Waverly walked over to Tom.

"This is the spot where Gail Preston's supposed to sing," he stated.

"Well, someone will have to take her place," Tom beckoned to Ann, and there was a sudden and complete silence in the café as she moved towards him. "Will you sing your sister's song, Miss Bishop?" he asked.

"Why, yes," she replied, after a very momentary hesitation, "I'll be glad to."

Swing Traynor hounded across to them and caught hold of Ann.

"Why should she take that chance?" he cried.

"What chance?" challenged Tom.

"It's all right, Swing," said Ann bravely. "I'm not afraid."

But Swing shook his head.

"If you don't mind, inspector," he said hoarsely, "I'll do the singing."

"That's okay with me," said Tom. "Announce Swing Traynor."

"Right." Waverly raised his cap and addressed the waiting audience. "Our next number will be a song by our orchestra leader, Swing Traynor," he called out, then backed away to a table that was unoccupied and leaned against it.

Up in the control-box, beneath the one in which the lanterns were situated, two police officers were plainly visible on either side of an electrician from headquarters. Tom waved a hand to them, and immediately the café was plunged into darkness, and the spot-light enveloped Swing as he moved towards the middle of the floor.

The band played the introductory bars to the song about midnight and loneliness while he waved his baton, and then he began to sing. The spot-light changed colour, and as it did so the beam shifted. Swing was left singing in the dark, and a green light blazed full in the face of Jules Stevens, causing him to blink.

A moment later the spot-light had turned red and was shining upon Frank Daniels in his cell. Swing went on singing, but everybody in the place watched the narrow beam of light as it moved on again, wondering who would be the next to be picked out by its glare.

The light turned blue, and Fallon started violently as it lit up his face. His two companions laughed mirthlessly, and then the light swung away to the right, became violet as it rested upon the surprised features of Connolly, and dipped towards the table against which Waverly was leaning just as Swing reached the last words of the song.

There came a crash of chords from the band, the violet light turned amber, and Waverly's face became distorted with fear. Before anyone could guess at his intention he whipped out a gun and fired again and again at the lantern, screaming at the top of his voice:

"Put out that light! Put it out, I say!"

Confusion reigned in the café. People who had been seated at tables round the dance floor fell over one another in their efforts to get out of the way. But Tom rushed across the floor from one side, and Connolly from the other, and Waverly was struggling madly with both of them when the whole café became flooded with light and a number of policemen forced their way through the frightened crowd.

Tom jerked a fist under Waverly's jaw, and he and Connolly gripped Waverly's wrist so that the gun he held was pointed upwards. One of the officers wrenched away the gun, and then the frenzied man went all to pieces.

"All right. I did it!" he screamed. "I killed her! If I couldn't have her myself, no other man was going to have her!"

Tom seized his wrists and clapped a pair of handcuffs round them.

"Okay, boys," he said grimly, "take him away."

Raving hysterically Waverly was carried from the club and taken down to headquarters, while the witnesses of the amazing confession—now that the excitement was over—almost fell on Tim's neck to congratulate him, but, with a broad grin on his face, he waved them aside and strode out of the premises after his prisoner.

A few days afterwards, Swing and Ann paid a visit to Tom in his room at headquarters. Stevens and Daniels were in gaol, the one on a charge of misappropriation of funds, the other for robbery; but Tom had pulled strings at the Immigration Bureau, with the result that Fallon had been given permission to stay in the country indefinitely, and was planning a grand reopening of the Swing Swing Club.

"Inspector," said Ann, "you'll never know how grateful we are to you. A

few days ago we were really in trouble, and now our future looks swell. Swing's still going to be band leader, and he's going to be starred."

"And what are you going to do?" asked Tom.

"I'm going to look after Swing," she replied happily.

"Well, bless you, my children," said Tom in a fatherly sort of fashion, though he was hardly any older than the band leader; and then he added thoughtfully: "You know, love's a funny thing—it seems to affect everyone in a different way. It's made you two happy, but it turned Waverly into a cold-blooded killer!"

(By permission of Columbia Pictures Corporation, Ltd., starring Don Terry, with Rita Hayworth, Wyn Cayhoun, and Robert Paige.)



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"THE BORDER PATROLMAN"

(Continued from page 18.)

Judge Alvarez would be across in a very short while to perform the ceremony.

They sat at a table, and Maybrook ordered some red wine. He raised his glass.

"Here's to the future Mrs. Maybrook."

Patricia's smile was a little sickly. For once she was feeling foolish and rather frightened. She wished she was back at the Desert Springs Hotel, and would not have minded a beating from Bob.

Two men entered the café, and Maybrook feigned surprise at seeing them. It was Frank Adams and a burly individual named Johnson. Maybrook brought them over to the table, made them have a drink, and finally persuaded Johnson to act as best man, with Frank as a witness—that would make the marriage ceremony legal.

Meanwhile, Bob had reached the border, and learned from the officials that a young lady and gentleman had crossed in an open car about half an hour previously. Bob reached Jiminez, and, with his knowledge of the lingo, tried to trace his quarry, but without success. He had an idea, and asked a street vendor how one got married in this town. He learned that Judge Alvarez performed all the services that were not conducted in a church. Off went Bob to the judge's house, to find from his housekeeper that that worthy gentleman had gone to the cantina to perform a marriage ceremony.

There was dancing in the cantina, and Maybrook insisted that Patricia dance with him, and as he took the girl off he gave a significant glance at the handbag on the table. Johnson went off to look for the judge. Frank slid a package out of his pocket, pulled open the secret compartment in the handbag, and thrust inside the Borloff necklace.

When the dance concluded the happy couple returned to the table. Frank looked at the bag and gave a slight nod. Johnson appeared to say that Judge Alvarez had arrived.

"Take him to the private room I have engaged for the ceremony," instructed Maybrook. "You go with him, Frank. I will conduct my bride-to-be to the room in about five minutes, when everything should be ready."

"The dame don't look so joyous," Johnson said to Adams as they walked across the dance floor. "She has all the earmarks of a scared rabbit."

"I don't blame her," sneered Frank. With triumph so close at hand an obstacle arose. Patricia said she could not go through with the ceremony.

"But you've let me make all the arrangements," cried Maybrook, trying to control his temper. "It's too late to stop now."

"I tell you I can't do it!" cried Patricia agitatedly.

"Now, you understand this," As Maybrook spoke his dark eyes glowered at her compellingly. "I haven't come all the way here to let you make a clump of me. Come on."

Patricia was dragged to her feet, the handbag was forced into her hand, and one arm linked with Maybrook's. She was in a state of collapse from uncertainty. She did not want to marry Maybrook just yet. She wanted time to think it over. If only she were back at Desert Springs. Suddenly un-

certainty vanished, and she knew she did not want to marry Maybrook now or at any time. By this time they had reached some stairs, and she began to struggle. With brute force the man drove her up the wooden stairs to the first floor.

"Pull yourself together, Pat."

Maybrook shook her violently.

"I'm not going to marry you!" Pat stormed as she tried to free her arm. "Let me go!"

Then up those stairs, three at a time, came Bob Wallace, and he did not hesitate. One twist of his fingers and he had freed the girl, then slap went his fist into Maybrook's face, and down went the man on his back.

"Have you married him?" cried Bob.

"No," answered the girl.

"Then we're getting out of here!" yelled Bob, and grabbed her wrist.

She was whisked down the stairs willingly.

Maybrook staggered to his feet as his two henchmen rushed out of one of the adjoining rooms.

"What happened?" demanded Adams.

"Wallace socked me." Maybrook nursed his aching jaw. "He's gone, and taken the girl with him."

"Where's the bag?" Frank asked.

"She's got it," Maybrook answered. "We've got to stop 'em."

A Fighter

WALLACE wasted no time. He started up the car and headed back for the line. It was a good car, luxurious, but not as speedy as Bob would have liked. On the way he explained why he had come after her and the nature of her intended husband's occupation.

"Of course I didn't know he was a smuggler," said Pat. "You know I wouldn't go in for anything like that."

"Then he must have intended planting the stones on you," decided Bob. "Did he give you anything to bring across the border?"

"No, he didn't have a chance."

"You don't know how lucky you are," Bob told her.

"I certainly got myself into a fine mess, didn't I?" She edged a trifle closer. "And it was all my fault." She glanced back suddenly. "There's a car following us. You don't think—"

Bob looked up into the mirror.

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"WHO KILLED GAIL PRESTON?"

Detective-Inspector

Tom Kellogg.....Don Terry

"Swing" Traynor.....Robert Paige

Ann Bishop.....Wyn Cayhoon

Gail Preston.....Rita Hayworth

Detective-Sergeant

Connolly.....Gene Morgan

Charles Waverly.....John Gallaudet

Patrick Fallon.....John Spaey

Frank Daniels.....Marc Lawrence

Jules Stevens.....Arthur Loft

Mike Blake.....Eddie Fetherston

Sarah.....Mildred Gover

"THE BORDER PATROLMAN"

Bob Wallace.....George O'Brien

Patricia Huntley...Polly Ann Young

Courtney Maybrook.....Roy Mason

Myra.....Mary Doran

Chuck Owens.....Smiley Burnette

Jeremiah Huntley William P. Carleton

Frank Adams.....Al Hill

Johnson.....Tom London

Riker.....George MacQuarrie

Hendricks.....Cyril Ring

Manning.....John St. Polis

"It's Maybrook all right and some of his friends."

"Why are they following us?"

"I don't know." Bob trod on the pedal. "But I'm not going to stop to find out."

Bob took bends in the rough road at speed, but he could not shake off the pursuers, who were in a more powerful vehicle. Maybrook gave orders for them to get within range and then shoot at the tyres.

It was barren, desolate country, and this border road was not used very frequently. Bob gritted his teeth, for there was a good ten miles yet to safety.

"I bet you're disgusted with me, aren't you?" shouted Patricia in Bob's ear.

"No." He forced a grin. "But I think you ought to have your head examined." There was the roar of a gun. "Nice guy you wanted to marry."

"I don't ever want to be reminded of him," cried the girl. "Besides, I didn't really want to marry him. I was just doing it for spite. I wouldn't have gone through with it. I don't suppose you would have even tried to stop me if it hadn't been for grandfather."

"We'll take that up at the next meeting," he said, swinging the car round a stony bend.

Wallace feared the crooks would shoot at the tyres. Suddenly there was a terrific explosion, a lurch, and a sickening, banging noise. A tyre had been hit.

Somehow he negotiated a bend, and then swung the car off the road. As it was a steep incline the other car was unable to stop, and went hurtling past, and that enabled Bob to drag the girl out of the car. It was his hope that they could lose their pursuers among these numerous sandhills.

"Think you can hold out?" asked Bob, after they had run about two or three hundred yards.

"Sure," she panted. "And I'll promise you one thing. You won't have any more trouble with me after to-day."

"You said a mouthful," he told her. "I won't be here after to-day. I'm going away."

"Why, where are you going?"

Patricia stopped.

"Now, don't start any of that business." He gripped her wrist.

"Let's get out of this jam first and have questions afterwards." He ducked as a bullet whined over their heads. "This is getting serious—it can't be just as they're after." Suddenly an idea occurred to him. "Here, let me have a look at that bag of yours for a minute."

"I threw it away soon after we got out of the car," the girl gasped out. "It was a present from Courtney."

"Oh, so he gave it to you. When?"

"At the hotel, just before we came over here."

Bob dragged her round a corner and into a narrow valley formed by winter floods.

"Pat, we've got to get that bag back." Bob jerked the girl to a stop.

"Now, you wait here and I'll go back and get it. If you crouch down by that ledge they should not see you."

"I'll go with you," spiritedly cried the girl.

The argument that would have followed was nipped in the bud, by the appearance of Maybrook and his two rascals. They had split up, and one of them, running along higher ground, had seen the two fugitives duck to cover. Bob was unarmed, so he could not do anything.

"Where do you think you're going?" sneered Maybrook, and laughed harshly.

(Concluded on page 28)

LINE UP HERE FOR FREE FOOTBALLS!

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for Scoring "Goals" with FOOTER-STAMPS

WHO wants to win a super Football? There are hundreds to be won free this month by "Footer-Stamp" collectors. "Footer-Stamps" are being printed every week in BOY'S CINEMA. They consist of pictures of six different actions on the football field, and the object of this great competition stamp-game is to score as many "goals" as possible by the end of September.

TO SCORE A "GOAL" you must collect a complete set of six stamps (they're numbered 1 to 6), made up of the following movements: **KICK-OFF - DRIBBLE - TACKLE - HEADER - SHOT - GOAL.**

The more stamps you collect the more "goals" you can score. (Note that the "goal" stamp by itself does NOT count as a "goal." You must get a set of the stamps 1 to 6 each time).

There are ten more stamps below, to add to your collection. Cut them out and try to score a "goal" with them, then keep all your stamps until you get some more goal-scoring stamps in next week's issue. If you have any odd stamps left over from the August competition they can be included, too.

If you want to score some other quick "goals" remember that "Footer-Stamps" are also appearing in "Sports Budget" and "Triumph." There are more "goals" waiting in those papers!

"Footer-Stamps" is all the rage—see that you're in it, so that we can send you a football very soon, maybe! Up to 300 more of the 1,000 Footballs offered are going to be awarded in the September competition for the readers scoring the highest number of "goals" with "Footer-Stamps" for the month.

Don't send any stamps yet. Wait until we tell you how and where at the end of the month. There's nothing to pay, remember!

RULES—Up to 300 Footballs will be awarded in the September contest to the readers declaring and sending in the largest number of "goals" scored with "Footer-Stamps." The Editor may extend or amend the prize list in case of too many ties.

Each "goal" must consist of a set of "Footer-Stamps," Nos. 1 to 6, inclusive—and all claims for prizes to be made on the proper coupon (to be given later). No allowance made for any coupon or stamps mutilated or lost or delayed in the post or otherwise. No correspondence! No one connected with this paper may enter, and the Editor's decision will be final and legally binding throughout.

(N.B.—"Footer-Stamps" may also be collected from the following papers: GEM, MAGNET, MODERN BOY, DETECTIVE WEEKLY, TRIUMPH, WILD WEST WEEKLY, THRILLER, SPORTS BUDGET and CHAMPION.)

Overseas Readers! You pals who are far away—you're in this great scheme also, and special awards will be given for the best scores from overseas readers. There will be a special closing date for you as well, of course.

Ten More
"Footer-Stamps"
To Save!



"THE BORDER PATROLMAN"

(Continued from page 26)

"You weren't in any hurry, were you? Give me that bag."

"I haven't got it," answered the girl. "Search Wallace," Maybrook ordered.

It was a big handbag and hard to conceal. It became obvious to Maybrook that the handbag was no longer in the possession of Wallace or Patricia, and yet he was certain she had taken it when she left the car. His deduction for this was the fact that the bag had not been found in the car.

"What did you do with that handbag?" Adams shouted at the girl.

"Tell 'em nothing!" cried Bob, his arms protecting the girl.

Whereupon Johnson and Adams, at a signal from Maybrook, dragged Wallace from Patricia and crashed their fists into his face. He fell backwards, appeared to hit his head against the cliff face, gave a groan, and went limp.

"You cowards!" Patricia shouted in horror.

"Pipe down, you!" Frank snarled at her. "Now, get this, sister. If you think anything of your friend, you'd better open up." He turned the gun towards the prostrate Wallace. "You tell us where that bag is, or we'll plug him."

"You wouldn't dare."

"Oh, wouldn't we?" Maybrook pointed his own gun. "I'm giving you about five seconds to make up your mind. One—"

"No, no, I'll tell you!" screamed Patricia.

"Now you're getting sensible, Pat. Where is it?"

"Will you promise not to hurt Bob?"

"Certainly. All we want is that bag," Maybrook spoke without a moment's hesitation. "You can have him, and welcome. Where's the bag?"

"I threw it away."

"Stalling won't save him," Maybrook gripped her wrist. "We mean business, and it won't do a bit of good to lie."

"I'm not!" Patricia answered, her eyes never wavering. "I tell you—I threw it away soon after leaving the car. Let me go, and I'll find it."

"I think she's telling the truth,"

Maybrook turned to his men. "You two had better stay here and keep your

eye on Wallace. I'll see whether she's telling the truth or not. Come on, Pat."

The girl went willingly, and when she had vanished with Maybrook round a bend the burly Johnson touched Adams on the shoulder.

"I think we pulled a boner letting Maybrook go down there alone. Suppose he pulls a sneak."

"I was thinking the same thing," Adams answered. "Leaving us with nothing but a copper on our hands. Maybe we ought to trail after him."

The prostrate man was far from out. He had feigned to be unconscious, and as their backs were turned he sat up, making no sound. His hands picked up a lot of loose sand, grit, and small stones.

"What about this copper?" Johnson asked. "We don't want to lug him along."

"Bump him off," was Adams' callous decision.

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As they turned Bob sprang to his feet, and the two rascals received a handful of sand and dusty grit in their faces. It went in their mouths, their ears, and their eyes, and they choked helplessly—they were momentarily blinded. Their guns were wrenched from their hands, and they stopped two punches that lifted them off their feet. When they did stagger up they found themselves covered with their own guns.

Wallace made them strip off their clothing and forced Adams to bind Johnson's arms behind his back. Then Bob did the same to Adams, put the two crooks back to back, removed their belts, and lashed them together. Then he went off to rescue Patricia.

The two rogues had not underestimated the crookedness of their chief. Finding the bag, he decided that he would abandon his companions. If he took Patricia with him he could use her as a hostage and perhaps he could get some padre to marry them.

"I won't go with you!" shouted the girl, as he dragged her towards the car. "I won't!"

"Now, you listen to me. I don't wanna get rough with you, Pat." Maybrook found it hard work dragging the girl towards the car. "But you're going with me whether you like it or not."

"They'll kill Bob if I don't go back!" screamed Patricia.

"Serve him right for meddling in my affairs," was the cold-blooded answer.

Bob was racing back the way they had come, and could see no sign of Maybrook and his prisoner. Then he heard a car being started, and guessed what it meant. Maybrook would not dare to head for the border, but would turn the car and race back to Jimenez. Bob remembered how the road was on a gradient, and there were steep banks on either side.

Maybrook turned the car, and was having all his work cut out trying to steer with Patricia struggling and clawing at his face, when a figure came hurtling from the top of some banking. Bob landed in the back seat, and he set about Maybrook with a will. The car did not crash because Patricia had the presence of mind to switch off the engine, and, when Bob had yanked Maybrook out of the driver's seat, to apply the hand-brake. To the girl's idea, it was the loveliest fight she had ever seen, and it amazed her that she should be so pleased to see the man she had almost married get such a hiding. When Bob finished the fight with an upper-cut she clapped her hands.

Bob dusted his hands, kissed Patricia and then went off for Adams and Johnson.

Some time later the three prisoners, securely bound, were in the back seat, and the car was heading for the border. Bob was driving, whilst Patricia grinned fiendishly at the three men and brandished a gun.

"Hey, you make me nervous," muttered the battered Maybrook. "You don't have to hold that gat on us."

Patricia beamed.

"Sorry, that's Mister Wallace's orders," she answered, and, bending forward, kissed the driver on the forehead.

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Boy's CINEMA

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EVERY
TUESDAY
No 979
SEPT. 17, 1938



"KIDNAPPED"

Starring

WARNER BAXTER

& FREDDIE BARTHOLOMEW

A TALE OF A SCOTTISH REBEL

The early days of the union between Scotland and England, when Alan Breck was the last rebel fighting for Scottish freedom. A stirring story of this stalwart fighter, a brave lassie and a boy named David Balfour, portrayed by Warner Baxter, Arleen Whelan and Freddie Bartholomew



A Mysterious Past

SCOTLAND in 1747. The Highland clans had twice rebelled against English rule. The rebellions had been crushed in blood, but there was still one man who refused the British yoke. His name was Alan Breck. The notorious outlaw gathered together a small force and rode for Edinburgh, rousing all the clansmen on the way that was possible. It was his last gamble for justice.

The Duke of Argyll, Lord Justice General of Scotland, was urged to sign a warrant for Breck's arrest, but those Scottish chiefs who had agreed to the union with England warned the duke that the outlaw was the popular hero and that such an act might cause the whole of Scotland to rise.

"While he is alive the country will remain in a ferment, so that we have no choice but to fight and kill," was the final decision of the duke. "You say the people will make a martyr of him. It is better to deal with one martyr than a nation of martyrs."

As a result a reward of five hundred pounds was offered for the capture of the traitor, Alan Breck, in the name of his Majesty George II, King of Great Britain and Ireland.

In a small village many miles north of Edinburgh one of those reward notices reached Dominie Campbell, who was the law-abiding schoolmaster of a small class of boys ranging from six to fourteen years of age.

The schoolmaster brought the notice into the class-room and rapped on his desk for attention.

"There's trouble among us again. Rebels riding by night and the King's September 17th, 1758.

troopers along the highway. There's one man behind it all. You know his name—Alan Breck. That man is a traitor to our King. Have no truck with him or his men. They will come to your houses at night and whisper and beg of your father for food and guns for the cause—a lost cause—Scotland's freedom. You've all taken with me the oath of allegiance. If you are faithful to that oath, Alan Breck and his men are your enemies."

When the class was dismissed Dominie Campbell came across to young David Balfour and bade him come across to the house. Kindly mother Campbell bowed her head when she saw them and made herself busy with the fire. The schoolmaster, as if weary, seated himself at an old desk, and from a drawer produced a long envelope.

"This letter came to-day from Newfoundland."

"It's from my father?" was the eager question.

"No, David." The schoolmaster looked at him sorrowfully. "It says that your father is dead."

The boy went very white, then pulled himself together.

"That is sad news, sir," he said with no sign of tears.

"Yes, but not as sad as it might be, considering you never really knew your father. He died a brave death." The schoolmaster handed over the letter. "Here, read it for yourself."

"I'll take it back with me to the class-room."

"Wait, there's something else. Things are not going to be quite the same now. David. You'll be leaving us." He produced another letter, very old, faded. "When your father left you here as a child he gave me this—

told me that if anything ever happened to him before he could come back for you I should send you to your uncle and to tell you to give him this letter."

The letter was addressed to Ebenezer Balfour at Edinburgh.

David was loath to go because Mr. and Mrs. Campbell had been like mother and father to him. Only vaguely could he remember the big man who was his father, and that for that reason the news of his death was not the terrible shock it might have been. But always David had been a dutiful lad and therefore he must obey the commands of this letter. Dominie Campbell knew little about this uncle except that he was reputed to be rich and lived in a castle.

So David's few possessions were put into a bundle. With this fastened to a stout stick the boy set out to trudge the two days journey to Edinburgh. He can be forgiven for having a quiet sniff on parting with the kindly Campbells. He promised to return and see them soon. And before the parting old Dominie prayed for the boy.

"Merciful Lord, let him go forth in righteousness, humble of heart, practical of mind, strict of purse, and let him honour God and King. Amen."

The Killing of Red Fox

IT was late in the afternoon of the second day that David entered a small village near Falkirk. It was his intention to push on for another five miles before seeking shelter in some cottage or a comfortable haystack.

The boy inquired from a portly, snuff-taking minister the way to Edinburgh, and had been shown the direction when a horseman dashed down the

street vaulted from his horse and ran up to a post in the market square, where there was a large bell. The violent clanking brought everyone running out of their cottages.

"Hide your valuables!" yelled the ringer. "The King's tax collector is coming!" There was a gasp from the villagers. "I saw him come over the hill, the same that was here before, the one we call Red Fox."

The news seemed to strike consternation in everyone because the villagers rushed to their homes and in a few minutes appeared with some of their taxable possessions, such as pigs, fowls, sacks of corn, cloth that had been weaved and even things such as furniture and bedding. David watched all this in amazement. After dumping their possessions in the woods the villagers returned to their homes for more, but it was too late. Down the street came a magnificent coach, with an escort of mounted soldiers riding on both sides. Their scarlet uniforms made a blaze of colour. The coach pulled up in the square and a door was opened. Out stepped the person whom these people called Red Fox, and David thought the same name fitted.

"There's a royal welcome for you." David could hear every word the man spoke. "You'd think a plague had struck the place. Hiding their shillings, that's what they've been up to. Captain Frazer, order your men to rout them out and assemble them in the square. I want every snivelling one."

A tavern keeper emerged from his hostelry with a mug of ale, which Red Fox accepted, and then shouted to the man to fetch out ale for the soldiers. The frightened fellow scuttled back to obey the order. Never had he been so terrified because by ill chance his private parlour housed Alan Breck and a number of his outlaws. Breck was there for a purpose. He had known of the intended visit of the tax-collector, and he was planning a daring coup that would enable him to recover the wealth Red Fox had filched from his victims.

David was herded together with the rest of the villagers and he kept close to the portly minister. He had sworn the oath of allegiance, but the brutal methods of this tax-collector and his soldiers made his blood boil with indignation.

"MacDougall, ten shillings tax." Red Fox leered at the minister when the portly one said he had no money. "Search him," came the order. "Don't hurt him!" shrilled David. "He's a minister—he's a man of God!" "Get out of the way! Get out of the way!" shouted Captain Frazer, raising his hand to slap the impertinent youth.

At that precise moment a shot rang out and Red Fox slumped to the ground in a heap.

David had been puzzled by the strange behaviour of a horseman whom he had observed watching everything from the shelter of a hedge. A rough, fierce sort of fellow and he had a gun. David had wondered whether he should tell Red Fox, but decided it would be wisest not to interfere. Then before he could do anything the gun had been swung up and Red Fox had fallen.

The bailiff, the tax-collector's assistant, bent over the still form and in horrified accents announced that his master was dead. Captain Frazer ordered his men to surround the village, search everyone for firearms, and shoot any that tried to escape.

"Captain, did you see who fired the shot?" the bailiff questioned.

"No, the boy distracted my attention," answered the captain.

"He was here for that purpose—an accomplice," decided the bailiff. "Get him!"

David had been edging away all this while, but when the soldiers at Frazer's order moved towards him he took to his heels in panic. From a window of the tavern Alan Breck had witnessed the whole incident. He surmised that the soldiers were after the boy because he had seen the face of the man who had killed Red Fox.

The boy was thinking that it was futile to try and escape when hands reached out and seized him. Before he could cry out a hand was clapped over his mouth, but he was able to turn his head. His heart missed a beat for he knew that this was Alan Breck. Things happened fast and furious after that. They whisked him round the back of a building and he was bundled into a saddle, someone held him firmly and then followed a night-mare ride. There were shouts and shots came very close, but Alan Breck and his followers made good their escape. They rode towards high ground, and in the dim light of dusk soon threw off the pursuit. Before a cabin in a quiet dell the rebels drew rein, and inside David saw again the man who had slain Red Fox.

"You blundering idiot, I told you there was to be no bloodshed!" raged Alan Breck.

David gazed curiously at the famous outlaw and had to admit that he was a handsome fellow. He would not understand fear. The killer was a shifty-eyed individual.

"I aimed as you told me," he whined.

"You were told to frighten the horses and start a runaway so I'd have a chance to get the money bag."

"I know, but is it my fault if Red Fox crossed my line of fire. I didn't mean to kill."

"I don't believe you!" blazed Alan Breck. "It was a chance to settle your score with Red Fox and you took it. Well, it's just what the Duke of Argyle has been waiting for—a chance to swing a few of us from the gibbet."

"But they've no proof—not a soul saw me."

"There was one who saw you, Jamie. This boy." The outlaw looked at the youngster curiously. "What is your name?"

"David—David Balfour," the boy said defiantly. "I know who you are"



"You blundering idiot, I told you there was to be no bloodshed!" raged Alan Breck.

—you're Alan Breck, a fugitive from the law. These men are rebels in a lost cause."

"Well, you're no coward, I'll grant you that," Breck seemed impressed. "Why do you say a lost cause?"

"Dominie Campbell—that's my schoolmaster—says so. He says we'll be better off under English rule. He says we'll have more trade and more food. Order's order, he says, and law's the law."

"You see, Alan, what he is!" harshly interrupted Jamie. "He'd blab, so we must fix him."

"You would have me murder a child?"

"It's him or me."

"There's only one thing to do, and that's to get you clear of the country," decided Breck, looking at the other grim rebels as he spoke. "Take him to Glasgow and put him on the first boat sailing for America."

"No, Alan, you can't send me away to a strange land!" Jamie cried hoarsely. "Everything I have is here—my house and my sheep and the girl I'm going to marry. Scotland's my home."

A shrewd, wiry fellow with a heavy jaw and fiery blue eyes stepped forward. Ian Douglas drew his chief to one side. Jamie was a coward, and if caught would talk. He advised Breck to find this girl and then ship them both out of the country. Other rebels called into the consultation agreed, and so Alan Breck decided to go to Glencoe to fetch Jeannie MacDonald.

"Take Jamie away, and keep close watch over him," Breck said at the end to Douglas. "I'll meet you at Tam Dale's in Glasgow."

All this while David had been moving step at a time towards the door, but it was Alan Breck who went after him when he did a run for it.

"Where do you think you're off to?" he demanded, holding the boy.

"Well, I was going to Edinburgh."

"I'd like to whisk you there on a broomstick, but I've no choice but to take you with me so that law-abiding tongue of yours won't wag," Alan Breck grinned at the lad. "We've got a long, hard ride before us."

Three in Hiding

ON the journey to Glencoe, David learned to admire Alan Breck, though he told the rebel that he did not in any way agree with his ideas. True, the English were being hard task-masters, but rebellion against their rule would not lessen the oppression of the Scots. They had many an argument, but at last they reached Glencoe.

Jean MacDonald was a slim, bright-eyed lass, and she listened gravely to all that Alan had to say. Her parents agreed that it would be best for the girl to go with the rebel leader to Glasgow, though they knew that parting with their daughter would be hard. As the Redcoats were always searching for Alan it was decided that Jean should pretend to be Alan's wife, and David their son. MacDonald had a horse and cart, and Jean was told to keep her shawl round her young features, as soldiers might be suspicious of David being her son. David was enjoying the adventure.

Thus did the MacKenzie family start off for Glasgow. Once or twice they were stopped but they managed to deceive the English patrols. And though David could have betrayed them he aided and abetted, because by now he had a great liking for Alan Breck, though still disagreeing with his views

September 17th, 1938.

and opinions. There was moisture in David's eyes when his new friends bade him good-bye at the nearest point for Edinburgh.

"We take the high road and you take the low," Alan shook the small hand warmly. "And sorry I am to be parting with you, lad."

"You may be sure, sir, that I'll hold my tongue," the boy said gravely.

"Yes, I know you will," the rebel smiled. "And good luck with your uncle, the laird."

In a little hostelry a drunken man would persist in drinking with the MacKenzies, but when no one was looking he beckoned Alan to bend near to his mouth. It was Douglas.

"They traced you to the MacDonalds. They know about the cart. They'll be searching here before long. When you leave you must try some new disguises. Get away alone. I'll take her to Jamie in Glasgow myself."

"I promised the MacDonalds I'd give her into Jamie's arms myself or they'd not have let her go," answered Alan. "So she goes with me, and with no one else. We'll beat across the west on foot to Invercraig and then take a boat to Glasgow."

That night soldiers came to the inn, but they kept up their pretence of being man and wife and as there was no boy with them managed to bluff the soldiers. In the morning they took to the hills and headed for Invercraig.

The Castle of Balfour

AT last David came in sight of Edinburgh. He was puzzled by the peculiar strange looks and queer remarks passed when he asked for the Castle of Balfour. One old woman quite scared him, for she was like a witch.

"Now you know where it is keep clear of the place!" she shrieked. "Blood built that place, and blood stopped the building of it. If you must go, tell the laird that all the decent folk about here call down a curse on him and his house. Black be their fall!"

"The Laird will never see you," another man told him.

"Well, I think he will," retorted David. "He's my uncle."

The track leading to the castle was nothing but stones and boulders. Horses and carriages could not come this way, and it puzzled David. It was well after dark one stormy, thundery night that a flash of lightning revealed the castle perched upon a crag. Dark and sinister it looked, but David was not daunted. It was beginning to rain and that made David hurry because he had no desire to get soaked. He crossed over a bridge, the parapet of which was broken, and up a twisty, weedy path towards the castle, which seemed to tower over him like some sinister giant. He came to a heavy door with a small wicket. There was a rusty chain that he pulled and he thought that a distant tinkle sounded. He waited, and was about to give a second tug when the wicket slid back and he saw a thin, wizened face, a mass of untidy white hair and two staring eyes.

"Go away! Get away from here!" this spectre cried. "Who is it?"

"I've come with a letter for Mr. Ebenezer Balfour."

"A letter!" A hand came through the grill. "Well, hand it to me and be off with you."

"I'll not!" stoutly answered David. "I'll deliver it as I was told—to my uncle."

"Your uncle?" How balefully those

eyes gleamed. "Just a minute." The eyes vanished and the grill closed. Then came the sound of chains and bolts being removed. The door swung open. A flash of lightning revealed the bent figure of a man in a shabby dressing-gown. He beckoned David, who stepped into a cold, stone-flagged hall. A candle was raised, and the spectro cackled. "Well, it's plain to see whose son you are. You're the spitting image of Alexander."

"You're Uncle Ebenezer?"

"Aye. Welcome—welcome, David, to Balfour Castle."

"Dominie Campbell sent me here and told me to give you this letter."

Ebenezer peered at the letter.

"So your father's dead then. Do you know what this is about?"

"You can see for yourself, sir, that the seals are unbroken." David was indignant.

"Aye, well, come along, David." Ebenezer closed the door. "I was just having supper."

Over the worst meal that David had ever tasted he learnt that his uncle lived in this vast castle by himself. There was dust and cobwebs everywhere and much of the furniture was broken. A small fire burnt in an open grate, and the old man protested when David wanted to put some more peat on the fire. Peat was two shillings a cauldron and mighty dear. The porridge for supper was sour and cold and the ale well watered. It was dawning on David that his father's brother was a miser. After a while Ebenezer remembered the letter and perused it.

"If there's anything in it that concerns me I'm anxious to know what it is, sir."

"Oh, no. It's just a letter written by your father many years ago—entrusting you to me."

The prospect of living with a miser in these bare walls made David shiver. It was also very cold in this vast dining-room. His uncle became immersed in the letter and that gave David a chance to walk round and explore. He picked up a dusty Bible from a table and turned to the fly-leaf.

"To Ebenezer Balfour, on his Fifth Birthday, from his elder brother—Alexander Balfour."

David closed the book and came back to warm his cold hands by the fire. Ebenezer put away the letter and got to his feet.

"Well, it's getting late, Davie, and I was forgetting the long journey you've had. So off to bed with you. You must be weary. I've got a fine room for you in the stair tower."

David went with his uncle to a narrow stone stairway. His uncle told him to go to the very top and then turn to the right.

"It's dark up there, sir. I'd be obliged to you for a candle."

"Nonsense, it'd be burning good money. Candles are sixpence a pound. Why, a brave lad like you shouldn't fear the dark. Go ahead with you." He pointed a thin, veined hand. "To the very top, mind you, then to the right. Good-night, David."

"Good-night, uncle."

Except for occasional flashes of lightning there was no light in this gloomy tower. The boy gave a cry as something brushed by his face. It was a horrible bat. Up and up he climbed, and it was a testing climb, because there was no rail and if he had slipped might have rolled into a void. He paused for breath, and then as the lightning flashed stepped for-

Alan Breck kept off the attack with his trusty blade.



ward. His foot was on the edge of a void. A stone slithered beneath his foot, but David managed to fling himself backwards. Down those stairs raced David, and Ebenezer gave a cry at sight of him.

"You sent me up there to—to kill me!" David accused.

"I said turn to the left."

"You said right. And there was nothing there—I'd have fallen."

"You're crazy, boy!" cried the old miser. "Why should I want to kill you?"

"To keep the estate—to stop me from getting it!" David accused. "My father was the elder, else he must have given you that prayer book and written it before he was even born. As the elder brother the estate was his, and so now it's mine, isn't it?" He held out his hand. "Give me that letter."

David was strong and Ebenezer but a wizened wreck of a man. The boy had to take the letter by force.

"Dear Brother Ebenezer.—The bearer of this is my son, David, heir to the lands and estates of Balfour. By our agreement you will take him to lawyer Rankeillor who has my last will and testament."

The miser sank into a chair and began to snivel over his story. David's father and himself had both loved the same girl, and they had quarrelled bitterly. To settle the dispute Alexander married the girl and Ebenezer had taken the castle, but should there be an heir Ebenezer had to relinquish his rights on the death of Alexander.

"I'm telling you all this so that you'll understand," whined the old rogue. "I want you to understand, so you won't be too hard on an old man and turn him out when you've got the right."

When David went to bed he chose a room on the ground floor and he bolted and barred the door. In the morning his uncle produced a much better breakfast and fawned over him

in a manner that made the boy sick. He was ready to give up the castle. He had been a wicked old man, and his only wish was that David would forgive him. After breakfast they set out for the city, and the old rascal drove along the coast as he had some important business at Leith.

David was interested in the shipping. His uncle left him to find a Captain Hoseason regarding a shipment of tobacco. An innocent-looking lad named Ransome invited David to come aboard one of the brigs and see what it was like below. David should not have been so trusting. He was flung into a locker room and the ship at once set sail. When the ship had been some hours at sea the captain, a burly, brutal, demon of a man, dragged David from the evil-smelling place.

"You'll keep your mouth shut. Davie, unless you wish to feed the fishes," threatened the captain. "Behave yourself and you shall be a cabin-boy." He cuffed David's ears. "Stand up and be a man. Better hurry up and get your sea-legs."

Thus was David kidnapped aboard the boat of one of the most rascally skippers of those restless times. A man who smuggled men and women, cut-throats and thieves and those whom the law sought. A pretty penny he charged them for passage money. Uncle Ebenezer had had to dip his hands in his money bags to rid himself of his cursed nephew.

The Escape from the Brig

DAVID BALFOUR was forced to do menial jobs about the brig. It was unwise to disobey because Captain Hoseason was a bully of the worst type and would flog a person on the least provocation. By curious chance this ship was in port when the two fugitives reached Invercraig.

Captain Hoseason tried to charge them sixty pounds for passage money, but this extortionate amount Alan got reduced to sixteen. This angered the rascally captain and he instructed his mate, Riach, to keep a sharp eye on

the pair. His suspicions were increased when he entertained Mr. and Mrs. MacKenzie to some hot rums in the saloon. It was David who served the drinks, and the rogue did not miss the look of amazement that passed between the boy and the two voyagers.

"I can't believe it of David," Alan said to Jean, when they had gone to their cabin. "Telling us those tall stories about his rich uncle the laird and that castle at Edinburgh, and all the time he's a cabin-boy on this foul brig."

"I'm sure he won't give you away," Jean answered. "He's foud of you, Alan."

"Well, I must be going. Jeannie," Alan said huskily.

"The great adventure is nearly over."

"It's just beginning. Glasgow—Jamie—and America."

"Beginning! To me it's the end," the girl cried. "I never promised Jamie really, and—well, I hadn't met you, Alan."

"Jamie's my clansman and I'm his leader," Alan spoke sternly. "I know I promised to take you to him in Glasgow, and that's what I'm doing. And I wish to heaven you were there now and married to him." Alan hastened out of the cabin.

Jean felt so worried about this tiff with Alan that after a few minutes she left her cabin and was making her way to the deck when she heard the captain's voice.

"Now, Davie lad, let's understand one another—man to man. If you don't tell me who that man is that calls himself MacKenzie I'll whack your head off. His name!" Silence, and then the sound of a blow. "Now you'll tell or you'll get it again."

Jean sped up to the deck. When a woman loves she can be unscrupulous. "We've got to get away, Alan," she cried, when she had found the outlaw. "Can't we take a skiff and make for the mainland? They know who you are."

(Continued on page 22)

September 17th, 1938.

A fearless young man ventures into a strange and hostile county after a trade pact, and there attempts to rescue a princess and free a country of a tyrant. Starring Gary Cooper



The Emperor's Daughter

IN the year 1274 the firm of Polo Brothers was the most important in Venice. Other merchants and importers envied their trade, but in this year the Polo Brothers came to a momentous decision. They had secured all the trade of the surrounding countries and realised that unless they opened up new channels the business would begin to go downhill. For this purpose Maffeo and Nicolo Polo detailed Mareo, Nicolo's son, to go as an Ambassador to China.

Marco was a tall, handsome young man, whom a great number of people regarded as a gambler and a waster, but he had been responsible for a great deal of the prosperity of his father's and uncle's firm. He had been sent on many such missions before and all had resulted in excellent trade pacts. It was arranged that he should be accompanied by Binguccio, an elderly, portly servant, who held up his hands in despair when he heard they were to travel across the world to China.

"The Orientals are a curious people, they do not trade as we do," Nicolo informed his son. "I want you back with agreements that will enable us to send our ships into the China seas. Now I have two things for you." He held up a sealed envelope. "One, a letter to Kublai Khan, the mightiest emperor on earth. That is where your journey ends—in his incomparable city of Peking. The other is more valuable." This time he held up a small bag. "Once I went away. My father gave this to me. He said—and I say to you—fill it with what you see on your way."

"But it will hold nothing but the smallest things," argued Marco.

"The smallest things have changed the world," Nicolo pointed to a map on an ebony table. "Here is your route. You sail first for the Port of Acre—a fortified city on the coast of Asia, now held by the Crusaders—from Acre, you go overland by caravan across the Arabian Desert into Persia—to

Samarkand—over the boundless plains of Tartary, and so into the great Land of Cathay. To the incomparable city of Peking, where lives Kublai Khan, ruler of the earth and the sun, the moon and the stars." He held out his hands. "Farewell, my son, Marco Polo. God's benison go with you."

Many moons were to pass and many were their adventures before the day came when they sighted in the distance the gleaming walls of Peking. Many hundreds of miles had been travelled on foot and they were footsore and weary. Binguccio so tired that part of the way his master had to carry him on his back. So they drew nearer to Peking and they were quite unaware that from the towers above the gates the approach of the two strangers had been noted.

Marco had keen eyes for the procession of people heading for Peking, and he smiled when he learned that most of them came from the warm south with silks, spices, gold and jade, from India with precious stones, and from the north with sables and ermine. There was a wonderful lot of loot in China. They came to the city wall and paused to rest close to a house that had been built into the outer wall.

A little meek, wise and aged Chinaman sat before the door of this house reading to two small children, a boy and a girl.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the merciful—"

"For they shall obtain mercy," Marco spoke in eager tones. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God—"

"You know those words?" questioned the amazed Chinaman.

"Yes, I know them. Are you a Christian?"

"No, but I want my children to learn the truths of all the philosophers."

Thus did Marco meet Chen Tsu and make his first friend. The Chinaman courteously invited the two travellers to step across his threshold and share their inadequate meal. That brought life back to Binguccio, though he found the food and the instruments used to consume it a problem. The food was spaghetti and the instruments chopsticks. They met Chen Tsu's tired wife and his reverend mother. One strand of spaghetti Marco placed in the small bag his father had given him.

Marco explained his mission, and the Chinaman looked grave.

"I advise you to be very careful when you enter the palace, Marco Polo. Kublai Khan is a good man and a just man. But he is surrounded by advisers who have little respect for the sanctity of human life. There have been rumours—" He paused nervously.

"Of what, Chen Tsu?"

"We have a proverb here: 'Too much gossip is the surest form of suicide.' So when you meet the emperor's Minister of State, a Saracen, named Ahmed, make every effort to convince him that you are no more than a friendly gentleman who wishes to see the world without treading on anyone's toes."

Suddenly there was a loud bang, and with a cry Binguccio leapt in the air. The children screamed delightedly. For the first time Marco Polo heard about a fire-cracker. Marco inquired about this strange invention and was taken into a back room that was not unlike a modern laboratory.

Chen Tsu explained that in his humble way he was a chemist. A combination of carbon and saltpetre, when touched with fire, puffed up harmlessly, but when contained in a case so that the vapours

could not easily escape, it would burst with great violence. He was able to eke out his humble existence by making these fire-crackers for illumination of holidays and festivals. Often the emperor commissioned him to make thousands of boxes for ceremonial occasions.

"I should think it might be a valuable weapon of war," Marco said thoughtfully.

They bade farewell to the kindly Chinaman and promised to return. At the city gates they were stopped by the guards, but when they heard it was Marco Polo, of Venice, the way was open at once. They had heard of his remarkable progress. Messengers bring immediate news of any stranger who sets foot in China, and Marco was surprised when the guard pointed upwards at an eagle. A canister was attached to the eagle's stomach. An officer appeared and ordered that Marco Polo and Binguccio be conducted to their quarters and their every wish gratified.

A bath, new clothes and a night's rest made a new man of Marco, though Binguccio complained bitterly of his blistered feet. In the morning Marco, eager to see everything, went for a stroll round the palace. Marco noted the splendid uniforms of the soldiers, the marvellous carvings, the marble statues and the general air of wealth. Eventually he found his way into the palace grounds.

In the throne-room the emperor was enjoying a game of soldiers. A huge mosaic map of the Tartar Empire had been built into the floor, and model Chinese soldiers, like hundreds of chessmen, were occupying strategic points. A gold rake helped to move and control pieces. The emperor was very fat and very jovial, and he stroked his chin and his long whiskers as he watched his Minister of State. Ahmed was tall, sleek, dark of skin and his eyes had a strange way of half-closing. He was

demonstrating that with ten thousand ships and a million soldiers the conquest of Japan should be finished in a few weeks. But the emperor shook his head. That would mean taking all the armies from the West, and they were necessary there for the rebellion in Kaidu's province.

"We need no army to deal with Kaidu," answered the crafty adviser. "His Tartar barbarians can out-fight our best generals." His eyes half closed and his lips became a thin line. "No! The greatest weapon we can use against him is—deception. Subtle poison!"

Tiring of the game, the emperor asked querulously who wished to see him to-day. A bevy of young and beautiful women to be chosen as attendants at his court; the Persian Ambassador and a stranger from the City of Venice in the Empire of Rome. He decided to see the ambassador first and the young women last. The ambassador, after much bowing and scraping, announced that his royal master wished to know when the emperor would dispatch to him the lady of his choice, his affianced bride, his future queen—the Princess Kukachin, the emperor's beautiful daughter.

Kublai Khan loved his daughter and he looked miserably at his Minister.

"The time has come when she must fulfil the marriage contract negotiated when—"

"Yes, I remember," interrupted the emperor. "But I hadn't noticed the passage of years and that she had ceased to be a child." He turned to the ambassador. "You may send word to your royal master that the Princess Kukachin will embark for Persia at the seventh moon."

But when messengers were sent to find Marco Polo they found that the Venetian was missing. Binguccio was informed that his master must be found at once. His master was talking with Princess Kukachin.

It had happened this way. Marco Polo had rested against a tree to admire the scenery and the beautiful gardens. The princess, with her charming hand-maiden, Visakha, was practising archery. Only such people as the emperor and the Minister were allowed in these grounds, so that Kukachin may be forgiven for shooting off arrows at random. Marco ducked behind a tree, and it was as well he did, for the arrow would have pierced his head. When the Princess tried to pull the arrow out of the tree a strong hand assisted her. She stared into the bold, admiring eyes of the Venetian. He did not grovel at her feet or mumble words of praise, but just held her hand till she snatched it away and demanded to know who he was.

"Marco Polo, from Venice."

"Venice? Is that one of our provinces?" asked the girl, whom Marco thought the loveliest creature he had ever known—and he had known a good many.

"No, it's a long way off. The journey took me years. It was a terrible journey, too; full of perils and hardships that would have defeated any but the bravest, strongest man."

"You think you're rather splendid, don't you?"

"Oh, no, that isn't my thought," he laughed lightly. "It's just what I've been told."

An amazed Chamberlain appeared to stammer out that his presence was sought after by the Great Khan. Marco smiled at the princess and raised his hand in a farewell salutation. He promised to try to see her again. The princess was speechless at this impertinence.

Marco Polo went to the throne and knelt before the emperor and was bade to rise. He explained that he had come to Cathay because he had heard of the wonders of the country. It was merely a trip—for educational purposes. Marco could see that nothing would be gained by mentioning a trade pact with this hawk-eyed Ahmed having the emperor's ear. It was a shock to him when the beautiful girl he had met swept gra-

Maffeo and Nicolo Polo detailed Marco, Nicolo's son, to go as an Ambassador to China



ciously into the throne-room and was introduced by the emperor as his only daughter, the Princess Kukachin.

"Marco Polo comes to us from Venice," stated the emperor.

"Yes, I know all about Marco Polo," answered the princess. "He has told me everything about himself."

The eyes of Ahmed narrowed. The emperor asked Marco to help him choose the most beautiful attendants for his court, and Marco did this by asking all the girls, "How many teeth has a snapping turtle?" Those who made wild guesses and those that answered "None" Marco rejected, but those who said they did not know he chose because, to his way of thinking, it proved them both honest and reasonable. The emperor was so grateful that he asked Marco if any lady of his court captured his fancy. Marco could not help glancing at the princess, and Ahmed's hand went to his sword.

"Ahmed," haughtily spoke the Daughter of Heaven, "have you any traitors or spies on hand for punishment? If you have, I suggest you take this Venetian and let him see how you dispose of them."

It was a task that gave Ahmed great pleasure. Marco Polo and Binguccio saw sights that day that made them shudder—sights that even the haughty princess knew little about. Ahmed had a portion of the palace set aside for his own use. He conducted them to a door, which, when it swung open, revealed a fifty-foot void. Ahmed struck a gong and immediately a covered drawbridge was lowered from the nearby building. They entered that part of the palace owned by Ahmed. They saw vultures in cages and saw skeletons that had once been prisoners, whom they had stripped of all flesh. They saw wild and ferocious animals, and eventually two of Ahmed's servants, a scared ruffian named Toctai and an ugly fellow named Bayan, brought in a wretched fellow who was an officer in the army of Kaidu, the rebel. He had been caught in the palace as a spy. Marco could not suppress a shudder as the man was thrown to the wild beasts.

"You are very observant, Marco Polo," sneered Ahmed. "That is an admirable quality. It will save you from the danger of casting your eyes in the wrong direction."

"And just what does that refer to?" Marco demanded.

"I leave that to your intelligence," mocked this sinister rogue.

Treachery that Failed

AT a suitable moment Marco Polo discreetly mentioned to the emperor that a trade pact with the firm of Polo Brothers might be a good thing for both countries. The emperor promised to consider the matter, and in the meantime Marco was to make himself at home in the palace. Marco saw the princess one day from his window. She was sitting by an ornamental pond, feeding the carp, and she was rather pleased when the Venetian appeared.

"Strangers are not supposed to come into these gardens uninvited," she informed him.

Marco just smiled and, somehow, the princess smiled back. And so they met every day in the gardens. He learned that when in her cradle she had become engaged to the King of Persia. She was pleased at the idea of marrying such a great man and becoming Queen of Persia. He heard the happy event was to take place at the seventh moon. She showed him a white stone image

and told him it was the shrine of the Moon Goddess. All maidens prayed to her that they would find a lover who is faithful, gallant and strong."

"And you're going to marry the King of Persia. You don't love him."

"He will put love in my heart."

Marco decided that he must give up seeing the princess because he was falling in love with her, so one day he explained his feelings as best he could and asked as a favour that he might say farewell with a kiss. But kissing was not an Eastern practice—they rubbed noses. Marco Polo had to teach Kukachin the Western practice of kissing, and after that the princess was quite sure she did not want to be the Queen of Persia.

Ahmed was seated in his quarters discussing with Toctai the rebellion in Kaidu's province. It must be put a stop to before the emperor learnt the truth about the taxes Ahmed had been collecting extortionately. For that purpose Toctai and Bayan must disguise themselves as Tartar tribesmen, join Kaidu's army and spread discontent in the army by making the soldiers believe that Kaidu was the one stealing their tax money. Later they were to kill Kaidu. The rebellion would be broken because his army would break up into warring factions. Bayan entered the room to report that he had seen the princess in the arms of the Venetian, and that made Ahmed draw Marco Polo into this plot.

The Minister told the emperor that Marco Polo was seeing too much of the princess, and that as his Majesty was going on an expedition to Japan it would be as well if Marco Polo were elsewhere. Why not send this clever young man into Kaidu's camp? He would be above suspicion and might even gain Kaidu's friendship. Then he could work with the secret agents and plot Kaidu's downfall. The emperor agreed and sent for Marco Polo. The latter did not at all relish the task.

"It is very possible that, upon your return, you will be very much nearer your coveted trade agreements," hinted the emperor.

"When would I start?" Marco asked.

"At once!" cried Ahmed, his eyes gleaming balefully. "You will be escorted by some of our most reliable men."

Marco returned to his quarters and ordered Binguccio to pack their few possessions, then in the dusk the Venetian wandered into the gardens where he had first met Kukachin. An arrow quivered in the same tree, and there was a silken cord attached to it. He followed that cord and it led to the princess' apartments. She was on the terrace to greet him and she was so frightened.

"You must not go to the West, to Kaidu's province." She clung to him. "Ahmed is trying to get rid of you. He'll never let you come back alive. No one will ever know what became of you."

"He could do it here as easily as anywhere else," answered Marco, and held her close. "But if I go on this expedition, and be of some value to the emperor, then—"

"Then what, Marco?"

"Then perhaps the Moon Goddess might tell you that you don't have to travel all the way to Persia to find a husband."

"She doesn't have to tell me—I know."

"My humblest apologies, daughter of Heaven, for this intrusion," came the smooth tones of Ahmed, as he appeared

on the terrace. "But I have come to tell Marco Polo horses are ready and it is advisable for him to start out with all possible speed."

"Your Highness, we may never meet again, so I beg leave to say farewell in the fashion of my native land." Marco pressed his lips gallantly to those of the princess and then said in a whisper that only Kukachin heard: "Send word if you need me."

In the narrow pass of Nung Po the cavalcade halted. There were horsemen in front of Marco and Binguccio and horsemen in the rear. At a signal from the lieutenant in command the horsemen drew their swords and rushed towards the two Venetians. Marco and Binguccio managed to drive their horses up an incline and over a ridge, but the little fat man was flung from his horse as it reared up in the air. The horsemen paid no heed but went after Marco. The Venetian slid down the other side, could not stop, and horse and rider slid over a precipice.

Binguccio had darted among the rocks when the horsemen returned and they did not bother to look for him—the chief man was dead, or so they thought. Marco landed on a ledge, rolled off it, and then over and over down a steep incline. Much battered, he came to rest in a bush by a narrow stream. It took Marco an hour or more to climb the cliff face and get back to the trail. There was no sign of the horsemen or his companion.

While way back in Pekin Princess Kukachin said good-bye to her father. Ahmed smiled. The China Sea was a powerful adversary, and one good typhoon might end the glorious reign of Kublai Khan. The princess was afraid because she saw the strange gleam in Ahmed's eyes and wondered if he were plotting treachery against her father.

Kaidu, the Rebel

MARCO bought a horse from a farmer for a gold piece, and after a vain search for Binguccio, went on his way. What luck when he sighted a staggering figure ahead. The servant was so frightened when he heard someone shout that he ran for dear life, toppled over a ledge and landed on his face in a muddy pond.

Very much the worse for wear, the two continued on their way. Marco now decided to return to Pekin to have a few words with Ahmed, but this plan was upset some days later by an encounter with a Tartar outpost. These long-haired, bearded men captured the two weary men, who were unable to make any sort of fight, and they were conducted to the camp of Kaidu, the rebel.

Kaidu was a powerfully built man, whose face was not as ruthless as one might have expected, but the big jaw was stubborn. He was a much worried man. There was much discontent among his men, the forces of Kublai Khan seemed to have vanished, so there was no one to fight, and he was cursed with a wife. Nazama was very beautiful, very loving, very jealous and very dictatorial. She was the one person of whom Kaidu was thoroughly scared. An officer had just reported another thousand desertions, a mutiny in the seventh corps, and, worse still, food was falling short.

"Kill the dirty spies! Death to Kublai Khan! Death to Ahmed! Death of a thousand cuts to these spies."

These shouts brought Kaidu out of his tent—Marco and Binguccio, with a

(Continued on page 25)

A drama of gangster rule, and of a young man and a girl who were involved with a criminal. Starring Chester Morris

"LAW OF THE UNDERWORLD"



Hold-up

PACING the dark paths of Central Park, completely oblivious to her surroundings, Annabelle Porter squeezed her tall young fiancé's arm. "Mrs. Brown," she murmured happily. "Mrs. Thomas Brown—" Her poorly paid work in a huge department store hadn't taken the freshness and sweetness from Annabelle's face.

Tommy Brown thought she looked particularly beautiful in the dimness, with her eyes shining like stars.

"Eleven hours and twenty-three minutes, then you won't be Annabelle Porter any more."

Suddenly she stopped.

"Tommy, I just thought, maybe when you took out your handkerchief on the subway—"

He grinned, taking a roll of bills from his pocket.

"One hundred and thirty-six dollars. We spent four at Coney—" His voice changed as two dark, menacing figures stood in their path. "What do you want?"

The older man, with a pale, lined face and glittering, snake-like eyes, said in a harsh voice:

"Could you spare a poor man a hundred and thirty-six bucks for a cup of coffee?"

Tommy looked down. The man's hand was in his overcoat pocket; something jutted significantly. The other man, round of face, similarly menaced the young people.

"Tommy," cried Annabelle, "call a policeman!"

"Good," grated Rocky Mosby, "he can call for your ambulance."

"Oh, give us a break," Tommy pleaded, "we're getting married on that money!"

"Maybe the girl is marrying you for the dough," Rocky sneered. "Now you can find out."

Tommy's face flamed, then whitened. There was something horrible about the glare of the hold-up man—ruthlessness and cold ferocity were in it.

A policeman passed, swinging his stick, eyeing them curiously. Tommy's mouth opened, then shut, as Rocky made a movement with his hidden hand. "I'll be lighting a cigarette in case he looks back," the crook muttered. "Get the dough."

"Say, if the boss ever finds out about this—" grunted his friend Bill.

"He won't," said Rocky coldly.

Bill's hands went to Tommy's pocket. The young man glared helplessly at the evil-faced Rocky.

"Hey, wait a minute. I know you! I've seen you around the apartment house where I work!"

Rocky started, then whispered:

"Listen, kid, maybe you do know me—but you wouldn't want to be a widower before you got married."

"Why don't you fight like a man?" snarled Tommy.

"How?" murmured Bill. "Like this?" His fist came up with shattering force. Tommy, unprepared for the blow, went back, thudding on the hard pathway, and before he could get up the two hold-up men melted away in the darkness.

Gene Fillmore's clean-cut, hawk-like face bore a slight smile as he was led into the apartment where his gang had gathered. He greeted Batsy, the quaint, somewhat dull-witted crook who opened the door, and his eyes shot to the paper they had been reading.

A front-page splash announced the appointment of Warren Rogers as the new District Attorney, who intended to wipe the city clean of racketeers. They had been chortling over it, bandying witticisms about the young lawyer.

Affectionately the gang-leader greeted "Dot" Palmer, the blonde night-club

singer to whom he was engaged. He was unconscious of the hate in Rocky Mosby's eyes, for he had no suspicion that Dorothy really loved Rocky and was just playing a double game with him for all she could get out of him.

"What's this I hear about a new D.A.?" demanded Rocky, his heavy lids masking his glittering eyes.

"I just left him," grinned Gene calmly.

"What—what? Say that again," chorused the amazed gangsters round the table.

"I just left Warren Rogers' apartment," said Gene coolly, seating himself at the head of the table. He had just dined with Rogers, for they were friends in the social round, where Gene posed as a good-natured playboy. Over a game of billiards he had heard Warren announcing his plans. Gene had even been asked to give up his polo and chase crooks instead. But since he happened to be one of the hidden men at the top of the gangs whom his unsuspecting friend was out to catch, he had declined politely.

The gang jeered derisively at the simplicity of Warren Rogers.

"Well, you're wrong, boys," said Gene crisply. "He's plenty smart, and plenty tough. But we're going to be just a little tougher. If we make our wrong move—"

"Is that all you wanted to tell us?" drawled a sleek-haired young gangster.

"Why, no, Frankie. As a matter of fact, I asked the boys to meet me here to see if you could dispose of a hundred and fifty thousand dollars' worth of jewellery."

Rocky lit a cigarette.

"I know a warehouse we can knock over, with a million bucks in furs."

"Rocky, our next job will be Mor-

to us Fifth Avenue jewellery store!" snapped Gene Fillmore.

"But I've got this fur thing all lined up! Get rid of the watchman and the whole place is ours."

"Rocky, we're not doing any jobs requiring butchering. I'm running this like a big business, with a minimum of risk. You're not thugs any more—you're gentlemen."

Everybody sensed the undercurrent of hostility between the pair. Gene believed in planning, pitting his wits against the forces of Law and Order. Rocky, jealous of him both as Dot's fiancé and leader of the gang, was a killer. He believed in force, the rule of the gun. Harshly he sneered: "Gene, you'd look real nice in a scout suit."

"That'll be enough from you!" snapped Gene. "We'll meet day after to-morrow and make all the arrangements."

"All right," Rocky growled. "You're the boss. But why do you have to mix with a cocktail and polo crowd all night long? Ain't we boys good enough for you?"

"Well, I'll tell you what we'll do, Rocky," said Gene sarcastically. "I'll loaf around here all night, and you can mingle in Society and find out where the big money is. The best people will welcome you with open handcuffs."

Rocky's eyes flickered murder as Gene bade them all good-night. He was having a final word with Dot when the door crashed open. Tommy and Annabelle burst in. Tommy's face was tense, frowning; hers slightly apprehensive.

"Stick 'em up, all of you!" he snapped, his hand gripping something in his coat pocket.

"All right, boys," smiled Gene, raising his hands. "Put 'em up—no rough stuff."

"Up on your feet! Line up here!" growled Tommy. "Now turn around." To Annabelle: "Frick 'em!"

"What's that?" she stammered.

"Go through their rear pockets and look for guns!"

Not knowing whether to laugh or groan, the gangsters allowed Annabelle to take their artillery. She shrank a little when she came to Rocky.

"Side pocket," he grinned.

"All right," growled Tommy. "Take his money and give me a hundred and thirty-six dollars."

Gene's eyebrows rose.

"You'll pardon me for butting into a private affair, but why a hundred and thirty-six dollars?"

"Well, you see," said Annabelle breathlessly, "we were going to be married to-morrow, and these two men held us up and took it all. That's how much it was."

"Stop talking," said Tommy brusquely. "Give me the money."

Then the lights snapped out as Gene took advantage of the lad's temporary slackening of watchfulness. Gene grabbed Annabelle. Rocky pinioned the struggling Tommy, and when the lights went up again the discomfited pair found themselves surrounded by gangsters. Frank exclaimed:

"Why, I know this boy! He works here."

"Call the police," snarled Rocky Mosby.

"Wait a minute, Frankie," snapped Gene.

"You can turn me in," muttered Tommy, "but let her go. She didn't have anything to do with it."

"I did!" Annabelle exclaimed. "If you turn him over to the police, I go, too!"

"Give me the money, kid," said Gene, not unkindly. "You know, you've both committed a serious offence. Why, you can get fifteen years in prison for this! You'd be old when you got out. Of course, it's my duty to turn you over—" He tailed off thoughtfully, and Annabelle shuddered. Fifteen years in prison!

"We're not criminals," Tommy snapped. "We're just trying to get our own money back!"

Annabelle looked accusingly at the sneering Rocky.

"That man said he'd kill us if we told the police!"

Bill, shuffling his feet, growled uneasily:

"Aw, chief, let's turn 'em over to the cops."

"I'll handle this," grated Gene Fillmore. "Right now, I want to hear more about that stick-up."

"Chief, you ain't gonna believe those kids, are you? We never stuck up nobody!"

Rocky shouldered forward, came close to Gene and stared into his eyes.

"Wait a minute! I'm not afraid of you, Gene. Sure we stuck up the kids. You've got this bunch buffaloed into letting you keep all the dough, and give us coffee and cake money. Well, I needed more, and the kids were handy."

Gene eyed him coldly.

"I keep you all on an allowance so you won't splurge all over town and give yourselves away. How many times have I told you to lay off small fry? Why take the chance for a couple of bucks?"

"Chances are in my line," growled Rocky.

"You're all a lot of crooks!" Tommy burst out.

"He's positively psychic," drawled Dorothy.

"Well, never mind what we are, young fellow," said Gene easily. "You've just stuck up a private apartment."

"Yeah," nodded Batsy wisely, "they got laws against that."

Gene grinned.

"But maybe you can help me. Do you want to do me a little favour, or would you rather go to gaol? It's up to you, kid."

Tommy and Annabelle, now thoroughly scared by the enormity of their act, exchanged glances.

"We'll do anything," muttered Tommy, "if you'll let us go."

Gene looked at the girl; wide-eyed, she nodded miserably.

"All right, it's a deal! We'll talk about the favour later, but remember, if you break your word, it's gaol for both of you."

Miserably they nodded before his stern gaze. Followed by the good-humoured jeers of the mohsmen, Gene took them to his own home to stay. He intended to give them a good time, gain their confidence, for he had an idea they would fit in with his plans.

Gunplay

THOUGH Tommy was still suspicious of Gene's intentions, Annabelle, overwhelmed by the luxury of the gang-leader's apartment, set out to enjoy herself. Despite his antagonism, the young man began to like the racketeer, who was of a different stamp from his gang.

When Gene took them to the Club Sultan, in which he had an interest, Annabelle forgot her troubles, for the night-club life was new and fascinating to her. Gene left them at a privileged table while he went to an inner

office for a gang meeting, and got down to business.

"Here is an enlargement of a candid camera shot of Morton's store. I want you to memorise every detail of it. This is Edward Larkin, the salesman. Morton is an old man, you won't have any trouble with him. But keep an eye on Larkin. The store opens at nine in the morning, but they seldom have any customers before nine-ten. If anybody should come in—you know, line them up against the back wall."

That was Gene's way—scientific, with every detail planned out in advance for a minimum of risk—but Rocky was impatient.

"We're wasting time," he sneered. "I can get in, and I can get out."

"Sure you can, Rocky. We all know that. But my way, you see, nobody gets hurt. Personally I prefer gaol for robbery rather than the chair for murder. How about you boys?"

They nodded agreement. Rocky's lips curled as Gene continued.

"Now, you all know what to do, and the exact time. Memorise your instructions and then destroy them."

He told them that at two minutes after nine Johnny and Bill were to start a fight outside the store—a real one. He made them all set their watches by his, so that there would be no hitch in the timetable.

"How about protection?" asked Rocky. "Who's carrying the machine-guns?"

"There won't be any machine-guns. If you pull a trigger on this job, Rocky, you won't rate a cent out of it."

"That's easy to say. Nobody will be shooting at you. I'm the one that's pulling this job. All you do is sit behind a desk."

"And give the orders," smiled Gene. "Maybe to those kids!" snarled Rocky. "But not to me!"

"Rocky, you're getting annoying!" Gene laughed coldly. "Speaking of those kids, go and get them."

Rocky turned to one of the others.

"Call the kids."

"I said you get them!" snapped Gene.

For a moment there was an eclectic silence as Rocky's pale face glared murder. Then he swaggered to the door. Everybody relaxed. Gene was the coolest man there.

Tommy and the girl were nervous when they came to the office. Gene tried to put them at their ease.

"It's all right, Annabelle, relax. Now I asked you kids to do me a little favour, you remember? That's why I bought you some new clothes so you could go into an expensive jewellery shop to-morrow and not look out of place."

"We're not going to do anything crooked!" declared Tommy.

"Now wait a minute, Tommy, wait a minute. All I want you to do is to ask to see some diamond rings. You won't like anything you see, and the salesman will put several trays on the counter."

"What for?" demanded Tommy suspiciously.

"The two thousand dollars I promised you," said Gene easily.

"Yeah, but we don't—"

Gene's voice hardened.

"And to keep you both from going to gaol for sticking us up at Frank's place." He turned his back on them. Tommy's arm went round Annabelle's slim shoulders. Misery was written on their faces, for despite Gene's friendliness, there was no doubt that they were caught in the toils of gangsterdom.

They had no means of knowing that it was Gene's intention only to use them for this simple job—then they could go their ways, for he didn't want them to get mixed up with the gang. There was no danger to them as he had worked it out. But next morning they were so nervous when they entered the jewellery store at the appointed time—nine o'clock—that they thought Larkin would see something was wrong. However, he put their nervousness down to shyness, and brought out tray after tray of rings, laying them on the counter.

Annabelle was admiring some expensive rings when an uproar started outside. Loud voices quarrelled discordantly, then came the thud of blows. Quickly a crowd collected outside the windows as Billy and Johnny slammed away at each other. The rest of the gang mixed with the spectators.

While Larkin's attention was distracted, Tommy and Annabelle seized the opportunity to hurry out. They edged round the milling crowd as a policeman forced his way through. Larkin was just putting the rings away when a cold voice snapped:

"Reach!"

Covering him was Rocky, with Batsy and Eddie, grim-faced, behind him. Old Morton, standing near his salesman, glared in horror. A hold-up! While the policeman was still struggling to get to the fighters, the crack of a shot sounded from inside. Rocky, Batsy and Eddie dashed out, hurling startled people aside. They leaped into their car. Out rushed Larkin, yelling distractedly:

"Help, stop those men! They shot Mr. Morton!"

Another shot barked as the car screamed away from the sidewalk. Larkin staggered, clasping his shoulder, and collapsed against the doorway as another policeman came running to his assistance.

At nine-seven Gene Fillmore grinned as he looked at his watch. All over by now, and without any trouble. He

grinned at Dorothy, who was still recovering from the surprise he had given her when he announced his intention of making this the last job and arranging for their marriage right away. She hadn't expected this, and wondered what the jealous Rocky would have to say.

Then the radio announcer's voice began barking a news flash.

"Armed bandits broke in Morton's Fifth Avenue store and escaped with over a hundred thousand dollars' worth of jewellery. When Mr. Morton lowered his hands slightly one of the bandits shot him in cold blood. Edward Larkin, the salesman, ran out to summon aid and was also shot at by the escaping thugs. His condition is reported critical."

Savagely Gene's voice ripped through the sudden silence.

"Rocky! Wait here for me, Dorothy.

We may have to move fast!"

Tommy and Annabelle had been waiting outside the Club Sultan in a panic for a long time when Gene's roadster screeched to a standstill beside them. Annabelle gripped his arm imploringly.

"We never wanted to get mixed up in this robbery and killing."

"All right," Gene snapped. "Come on inside. I'll attend to you later."

He raced into the deserted café, a place of dim shadows, with chairs piled on tables after the cleaners. With the youngsters behind him he came to a full stop as a soft voice drawled:

"Hallo, Gene!"

Sitting at one of the tables in the shadows with a gun resting before him, was Rocky Mosby. The killer had been tipped off by Dorothy that Gene was on the warpath. He had come prepared for a show-down in the only way he understood—with a gun in his hand.

With the bar at their backs they faced him as he rose, smiling mirthlessly.

"Get out of the way, kids! You're in the business now, like the rest of us. So you can watch me elect a new boss."

"Still ambitious, Rocky?" said Gene mockingly.

"Yeah, I like to tell people what to do. I hate to be told. I tried to tell you you needed a gun in this business. People respect you more." All the time he was watching Gene like a snake, ignoring the others.

"All right," grunted Gene. "Go ahead and shoot. Get it over with."

Rocky smiled.

"I like to see you squirm first. I've got something to say that might make you wriggle a little."

Gene grinned offensively.

"Been stealing cheese out of my ice-box, Rocky?"

"Funny guy, ain't you? Well, have a good laugh. While you were mixing with the best people I was taking out Dorothy. I suspect she loves me."

Only by a narrowing of his eyes did Gene Fillmore show his amazement.

"You're a liar!"

"You can check on us," snarled Rocky, raising his gun. "when you come back to haunt me!"

His hand contracted on the trigger, but with one amazing leap Tommy came at him, swung a lusty arm and sent the gun flying from the killer's hand. Snarling, Rocky bent swiftly to pick it up. Gene was on him instantly, smashing a blow to the jaw that sent him flying in a heap and picking up the gun himself.

"Thanks, kid," he drawled. "All right, stay where you are, Rocky."

Warily, Rocky began to rise.

"All right, boss, now it's your chance to shoot. But you won't. I ain't afraid of you. You never scared me. That's why I took your girl away. That's why the gang wants me to tell them what to do!"

Unwavering, Gene covered him with his own gun and snapped:

"Tommy, take Annabelle into the back room."

"Stick around, kids," Rocky invited. "I'm going to take that gun away from him in a minute."

"Rocky," Gene drawled, "you've



"Stick 'em up, all of you!" he snapped, his hand gripping something in his coat pocket.

been getting out of line lately. You're becoming a liability to the gang. I got a letter from Mrs. Winters this morning."

"So what?" grated Rocky, crouching watchfully.

"She called us a bunch of yellow rats," came Gene's cold, measured tones. "When her husband went to prison we promised to keep her going and send her money. She never got a cent. What did you do with the money, Rocky? The boys would like to know about that."

"Yeah?" scowled Rocky. "But you ain't gonna tell them. You ain't gonna tell them nothing. Why don't you shoot, you big shot?" He started towards Gene.

"Stay where you are, Rocky."

"You don't know how to fire a gun, do you, Gene?" the killer jeered.

"Well, I'll show you."

Like a striking snake his hand flashed to a shoulder-holster. The weapon was half out when Gene's gun crashed. Face contorted, Rocky coughed and crumpled to the floor. A killer even in death, he fired spasmodically as he rolled in agony, his automatic ripping shots at Gene. Bottles smashed to the floor, their contents splashing over Gene as he ducked. In a haze of gun-smoke he stared down at Rocky as the twitching body gradually became still.

Gang Law

"GENE, we're going to give you a fair trial. If the boys decide against you, I guess you know what that means."

A grim gathering faced Gene Fillmore that night. Dorothy Palmer sat alone, her eyes smouldering with hate. It was the singer who had come first on the scene of the shooting, and knelt, sobbing, by the body of Rocky Mosby.

"He was a rat," said Gene coldly when she accused him of shooting the killer in cold blood. "He tried to kill me."

Venomously she stared at him.

"The boys will get you for this."

Dazedly he stared at her.

"Then everything he said about you two was true, huh?"

"Figure it out for yourself!" she snarled, and when the gang came rushing to the scene she accused him point-blank in the face of the evidence of Tommy and Annabelle, whom nobody would believe.

Gene stared round at the grim faces of the men who were to try him. The law of the underworld decreed that a man accused of killing a fellow gang member should himself be the object of gang vengeance. It was obvious that although one or two were trying to be fair-minded, the general opinion was hostile to him. Dorothy had worked well on their minds.

Knowing his life depended on a hair-trigger, Gene had tried to square things with Tommy and Annabelle. They wouldn't accept the two thousand dollars he offered them, wishing only to be free of this atmosphere of robbery and murder. Annabelle, who admired his many good qualities, was still dazed at the discovery that he, too, could be a killer. Uncomfortable before her wonderment, he gave them their hundred and thirty-six dollars.

"Now beat it while you're still carrying it. You don't belong around this place."

As Tommy pulled her away, Annabelle exclaimed:

"But couldn't you run away before they try you?"

Gene laughed grimly.

"Sure, I'll tell you what I'll do."

September 17th, 1938.

I'll hide in my attic. That'll fool them. Go on, get out, will you, and stop worrying about me."

Now alone—for Batsy, who was on his side, was out on an errand—he faced his accusers and claimed the right to talk.

"What for?" snapped Dorothy. "You killed him, didn't you?"

"Look at yourselves, boys," said Gene. "What were you before I took over? Just a bunch of petty thieves. Do you fellows realise that this past year our receipts were over a million dollars?"

"All I got was fifteen grand," Johnny complained.

"Well, you're not the whole organisation. You're simply a wheel in the machinery."

"Yeah? Well, I'm a pretty big wheel."

"Besides that," said Gene, "I pay out a lot of money for your protection."

"May I inquire, Mr. Fillmore," said Dorothy acidly, "what all this has got to do with your shooting of Rocky?"

"It has this to do with it," he said curtly. "Under my leadership you've all kept out of trouble. If I was right in one thing, I've been right in another. Rocky disobeyed my orders, and he ended up by pulling a gun on me. Fortunately, I beat him to it."

"I was there," said Dorothy implacably. "He shot Rocky down cold. Didn't give him a chance."

NEXT WEEK'S COMPLETE FILM DRAMAS!



DON TERRY

"SQUADRON OF HONOUR"

As the result of a diabolical frame-up the National Commander of the American Legion is arrested for murder; and Dan Blaine, a young District Attorney, sets out to establish his innocence—and enlists the aid of a hundred thousand Legionnaires to capture the actual killer. A novel drama

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Also

Another episode of the fighting serial:

"THE PAINTED STALLION"

Starring Ray Corrigan

Bill glanced at Eddie and rose. "Well, that's enough for me, boys. Let's get going." And Gene knew that the verdict was against him.

Johnny protested. "Why can't we just kick him out of the gang and let it go at that?"

"He didn't give Rocky a chance!" snapped Dorothy.

"Well, frankly," grinned Gene, "I'm against it. But I guess I'm outvoted." With a bitter sting in his voice he added: "Well, gentlemen, after looking over this gang, all I can say is that New York is reasonably safe to-night. I'm not going to crawl. It is clear to me that I am the difference here between a well-regulated business organisation and a gang of thugs."

"We got along all right before you came," snarled Bill, and Dorothy Palmer smiled evilly: "And we'll get along all right after you're gone, won't we, boys?"

Johnny, Frankie, Eddie and Larry nodded grimly, and Gene read his doom in their faces. He shrugged, and they were preparing to leave when Batsy burst in cheerfully with the money from the Morton jewels.

"Hi ya, guys, I brought the treasury! Well, what's the matter, did I miss something?"

"Well, you missed all the speeches," drawled Gene, "but you're in time for the fireworks."

"Is that so? I brought along a few friends to see some fun. I didn't have any subpoenas, but I rounded up some witnesses!" And Batsy brought in Annabelle and Tommy, with a pale-faced woman in a dark costume who had once been pretty. Now she looked a very sick woman.

"I thought I told you kids to stay away from here!" Gene growled with more emotion than he had shown hitherto.

"Yeah, but Batsy here said it would help if we told about Rocky trying to shoot you!"

"You coached them swell, Batsy," sneered Dorothy. "Is that Gene's poor old mother?"

"Oh, I forgot to introduce you," said Batsy airily. "Fellows, this is Mrs. Winters."

The gang stared unbelievably. "Billy's wife?"

"Yeah," said the pale woman drearily. "I'm Mrs. Billy Winters. I guess I look a lot different than when Billy and me was running around together. When you ain't eating regular—" She broke off, coughing spasmodically. "Billy was in the wrong business, but he didn't realise that when he went to prison, I'd be left behind like this!"

"But how could that be?" gasped Bill. "We been sending dough regular!"

"By way of Rocky," drawled Batsy. "He was a nice boy."

"He kept the money for himself?" said Larry incredulously.

"Don't believe her!" snapped Dorothy, her eyes showing her fear that Gene would go free. "It's a frame-up!"

Bill swung on Gene. "Did you know about this?"

Batsy answered sardonically: "He showed me a letter from her, but he didn't think you guys would care about a thing like that."

Bill shrugged, staring at Gene. "The trip's off."

"That's what you think!" screamed Dorothy Palmer, her face twisted with hate, and she suddenly flashed a small automatic out of her handbag. Gene

(Continued on page 23)

The fearless Englishman, up against a mysterious enemy, risks his life in a dangerous mission. Starring John Barrymore and John Howard



A Theft and a Murder

IT was quite a merry little party assembled at Phyllis Clavering's villa in Switzerland, and Phyllis was happier than she had been for a long while. For it was on the eve of her marriage to Captain Hugh Drummond, and as he had promised faithfully that he had abandoned all his crime work and was really intending to settle down at last, his fiancée for once was content. For though she loved Drummond dearly and was secretly proud of his many daring exploits she had no fancy for being married to a man who was continually risking his life in the discovery of crime.

The time was just before dinner, and in the lounge-room were Drummond and his fiancée, their Aunt Blanche, and Sir Raymond Blantyre, millionaire, and head of the world famous Metropolitan Diamond Syndicate.

The door opened suddenly and Tenny, Drummond's impassive "man," entered the room. On a salver lay a small package which he presented to Drummond.

"Just arrived, sir."

Drummond glanced at it.

"More loot, darling," he said with a smile in the direction of his fiancée.

"Valuable, too, from the look of it. Hugh. Why, look at all the insurance stamps!"

She went on surprisedly as Drummond opened it.

"It's from Gwen and Algy! Why on earth didn't they bring it themselves? They'll be here any moment now."

She opened the letter and read as follows.

"Dear Hugh and Phyllis,—Look what daddy has just made in his lab! This

is our wedding gift to you, but don't tell anyone as it's a secret."

She looked up with a smile. "Don't suppose it matters much," she said, "as we're all friends. But isn't it rather wonderful? It really looks real, doesn't it, Sir Raymond? You're an expert on these things."

It certainly did look real. It was a large diamond about the size of a small nut. As it lay on its velvet bed it winked and glittered at them.

Blantyre took it and studied it with a slight frown on his face.

"You say this lady's father made this?" he asked incredulously.

"Oh, yes," replied the girl readily. "He's Professor Goodman, the famous chemist. He's been working on this for years—it's his hobby. It's rather a beautiful bit of glass, isn't it, Sir Raymond? For, of course, as it isn't real it can't be of any value, can it?"

He handed it back to her. Drummond was watching him with a slightly perplexed look on his face.

"Oh, no," answered the millionaire carelessly. "It isn't of any value, of course. But it's interesting all the same."

It was not until dinner was over and Blantyre had left that the subject came up again, for Algy and Gwen had turned up, and after the usual greetings had been exchanged Drummond turned to Gwen.

"Thanks for your present, Gwen," he said. "But might I ask the reason of all the insurance stamps?"

"Well, diamonds are worth it, aren't they, Hugh?"

"Diamonds are, old lady—but not manufactured bits of glass."

Her smile was a shade pitying.

"That's a real diamond, Hugh."

He stared at her.

"But you said your old man made it?" he queried.

"So he did. He's been working on the process for nearly twenty years, and this is the first real result. He showed it to an expert, without telling him he'd made it, and the expert offered to give him twenty thousand pounds for it straight off."

Drummond sat up in his chair.

"D'you mean that, Gwen?" he demanded.

"I most certainly do. And he says he can make all he wants to. He's as pleased as a dog with two tails."

"I'll say he is," replied Drummond emphatically. "He can make all the money he wants."

"Oh, that doesn't interest daddy in the slightest," answered the girl. "He won't try and make money out of it. All he's interested in is the fact that he can now do what he's been trying to do for years."

A worried frown came to Drummond's face as he got up from his chair.

"That sounds all good, my dear, but if this gets out—"

As he paused, Gwen broke in.

"It had better not, Hugh. Father doesn't want it known yet."

"I'm! Sorry about that. Sir Raymond Blantyre seemed a bit interested in it. He was here when your letter came, and he examined that diamond at some length."

Aunt Blanche, however, broke in here.

"My dear Hugh, don't be so ridiculous," she said. "Sir Raymond is a gentleman and one of the best known men in the whole of London. I'll tell him when I see him to-morrow that you don't want this thing talked about yet. Now bring Gwen and Algy and let them see your presents."

"Let's hope they're all safe," chimed in Longworth. "If the jolly old burglars were to get to work—"

"Nonsense," interrupted Aunt Blanche, "we've got a special detective guarding them day and night."

They went into the room where all the presents were laid out.

"Hallo?" exclaimed Drummond as he glanced round the room. "Where's our sleuth?"

"Popped out to have one," suggested Longworth facetiously.

"I must talk to him about—" began the other, but he swung round in a moment as a little scream came from his fiancée.

"Hugh, it's gone!"

"What's gone?"

"The diamond—the diamond that Gwen and Algy gave us. The case is here, but it's empty."

They stood together gazing at the empty case. Drummond's face was grave. But they swung round in a moment at a startled cry from Algy Longworth, who had been searching about in a corner of the room.

"And here's your 'tee, Hugh," he said as he pointed grimly to a figure that lay sprawled out inertly on the floor.

Drummond was across the room in a flash. Aunt Blanche had given a scream and collapsed into a chair. Gwen and Phyllis were clutching each other and their faces were white.

Drummond, down on his knees beside the unfortunate detective, spoke at last. "Ring up the police, Algy," he said. "This man's been murdered."

A Caller for Professor Goodman

PROFESSOR GOODMAN, elderly, dreamy-eyed, benevolent, was in his library when a maid entered.

"Two gentlemen to see you, sir," she said. "Sir Raymond Blantyre and his secretary."

The professor tapped his head thoughtfully.

"Ah, yes," he murmured, "I remember now. They made an appointment. Show them up, Mrs. Weevens."

Blantyre came into the room, a big, florid-faced man.

"My name is Blantyre, professor," he said. "This is my secretary, Mr. Roberts. As I told you on the 'phone, being the head of the greatest diamond syndicate in the world I am naturally curious about this new process of yours."

"Naturally, naturally," replied the other with a bland smile. "I suppose you are inclined to look upon me as a serious rival, Sir Raymond, but you needn't worry a lot. My interest is in my experiments. I shan't flood the world with my results for the purpose of making money."

A frown crossed the millionaire's face. "Forgive me for saying so," he replied, "but you have not yet convinced me that you can make diamonds."

The professor beamed on him. "No, my friend," he answered, "but I very soon shall. Now watch me closely."

No two people could have watched him more closely than did those two for the next twenty minutes. They saw him busy himself with queer evil smelling liquids which he mixed in front of them with exceeding great care; they saw him empty the result into a empty metal cup, and the cup itself enclosed in a cylinder which in turn was screwed tightly into a complicated machine. Then they saw him pull a switch and the sparks begin to fly.

They stood watching in dead silence. The noise of the machinery was deafening, the sparks were blinding. Presently flames began to shoot out and they

stepped back in slight alarm, but the professor merely shook his head as though telling them there was no need for fear.

Finally, he pulled a succession of levers and at last came silence.

"Gentlemen," he said impressively, "you have witnessed the birth of a diamond."

Said Sir Raymond with a frown: "Let's have a look at the diamond, professor."

The latter, with a pair of tongs, unscrewed the cylinder and removed from it a round black ball which he dropped into a vat of liquid which spurted up a cloud of steam.

Presently he lifted the black ball out. "There is your diamond, gentlemen," he said.

"That's not a diamond," said Roberts sneeringly.

"You don't think so?" asked the professor with a smile. "Let us see."

He picked up a small hammer, gave a few gentle blows to the black ball which shivered and broke. And there lay a glittering diamond!

"I can make those at a cost of a few shillings apiece," he said modestly.

Sir Raymond picked it up, examined it closely; studied it through his glass.

"Perfect," he pronounced. "Small, admittedly, but—"

"Ah, I shall do better later on. Sir Raymond. If I had an equipment like Dr. Botulian's—"

"And who's he?"

"You've never heard of him? Why, he's the great American scientist, now over here. Incidentally"—with a smile—"he is my rival."

Blantyre, who had been listening with the closest attention, now spoke.

"Professor," he said, "I will pay you fifty thousand pounds for this secret of yours."

The professor regarded them coldly.

"I'm afraid I'm not interested, gentlemen," he said.

"Name your figure then. I'll pay you anything in reason."

A slightly angry look appeared on the professor's benevolent face.

"As I have already told you, Sir Raymond, my invention is not for sale."

"But, professor, surely you can see—" began the other when Goodman cut him short.

"You're wasting your time and mine, sir," he said sharply. "I have been pleased to show you my invention. I have now the honour to wish you good-morning."

As Blantyre and Roberts came down the staircase together the millionaire was scowling.

"I wish to goodness you hadn't killed that detective," he said.

One hour later Drummond was interviewing Colonel Neilson, of Scotland Yard, though the latter's opening remark as Drummond entered the room was hardly encouraging.

"I never see you come into this room, Drummond, without wishing you a million miles away," he said crossly.

"Thanks for the kind thought," replied the big man cheerfully. "But you've got to listen to this one."

He proceeded to relate exactly what had taken place in the villa at Switzerland, Blantyre's hurried departure, the theft of the diamond and the murder of the detective.

"I've just come from Professor Goodman's," he went on, "and Blantyre's been there trying to get him to sell his process, and practically threatening him with things if he doesn't do so. Now give me the answer to that one."

Neilson was silent. He was never inclined to encourage Drummond too much because he was always a little

nervous of what he would do. But he could see there was something grave at the back of it.

"Sir Raymond is a most respectable man," he said abruptly.

"So's every criminal till he turns crook," retorted Drummond. "But it's pretty plain to me that he murdered that 'tee, and the next murder you'll hear of will be Professor Goodman. And if you won't be around to see it, I shall. Good-morning."

He went out raging. Neilson, with a smile, rang his bell and one of his clerks came in.

"Put a plain-clothes man on to Drummond," he said, "as he may get into trouble, and we've got to be there to help him out. And have two men watching Professor Goodman's house."

Sir Raymond Lays His Plans

BLANTYRE and Roberts called on Dr. Botulian that afternoon, for

Professor Goodman's chance remark had put an idea into the millionaire's head.

He began with an encouraging smile after he had stated who he was and the experiment that he had recently witnessed, for he had seen other things than mere interest show in the doctor's eyes during his recital.

"You and the professor are rivals, aren't you, doctor?" he asked blandly.

"We've both of us experimented along similar lines, if that's what you mean," replied the other guardedly.

"And you've failed where Goodman seems to have succeeded?"

The other stroked his small beard. There was a frown on his face which did not escape Blantyre.

"At present—yes."

"We are very interested in the Goodman process," said Roberts smoothly, "and we have made him a very handsome offer, but he declines to sell."

"I have an appointment with him this evening," murmured Botulian thoughtfully. "I'm taking him some of my equipment at nine o'clock."

Blantyre and Roberts exchanged glances. This was news, and interesting news.

"Supposing that—er—we kept your appointment for you?" suggested Blantyre ingratiatingly.

Botulian looked thoughtful, and Blantyre went on.

"We should be charmed to pay you five thousand pounds to keep the appointment."

Botulian's eyes narrowed.

"But I might hit upon the process myself later?" he murmured thoughtfully.

"When we should be delighted to buy you out at a high figure," replied the millionaire.

Botulian sat nodding thoughtfully.

"Exactly what have I got to do?" he demanded at length.

"Receive a cheque for five thousand pounds," answered the millionaire smoothly, "and remain here so that you have a perfect alibi."

"One of you gentlemen, I take it, intends to go as me?"

Sir Raymond rose to his feet with a smile.

"Let's say, doctor," he answered, "that whatever risk we take will be our own."

For some time after they had gone Botulian sat thinking deeply. Then at last he summoned his assistant.

"Well?" demanded the latter.

"You heard the suggestion?"

"I did. So you aren't keeping your appointment to-night?"

A smile spread over the doctor's face.

"That's where you're wrong, my dear

fellow," he replied blandly. "I am keeping it—but it will be well before nine o'clock. Poof, I can see their game! They're going to destroy his laboratory. All right—they shall. But we'll be well in front of them and we'll get Goodman away. And I fancy then that Blantyre will be ready to pay fifty thousand pounds instead of a paltry five."

Drummond had already had in the course of years too many rebuffs from the Yard to be inclined to take them seriously, so after his fruitless interview with Colonel Neilson he went straight back to Professor Goodman's house, where he, too, learned that he had got an appointment that night with Dr. Botulian. Though when later in the day the faithful Tenny who had followed Blantyre and Roberts after they had left Goodman's house, apprised him of the fact that these two had both called upon Dr. Botulian and had come away obviously pleased with themselves, his fears all leaped up again. For he was quite sure that something sinister had been planned, though he was entirely at a loss to understand what it could be.

All the same he had no idea of abandoning his investigations. He was firmly convinced in his own mind that Blantyre was planning something desperate, and he was determined to find out what it could be. So that evening soon after eight o'clock he was loitering round Goodman's house, dodging backwards and forwards about the shrubbery in his efforts to avoid the two constables who were patrolling the house. And it was while he was crouching down behind one of the laurel bushes that the faithful Tenny joined him.

"Dr. Botulian, sir, has just entered the house," he whispered. "The police stopped him, but he said who he was and he was allowed to go in."

"Funny," mused Drummond. "His appointment was for nine, and it's not half-past eight. Tenny, you must slip away from here and try and draw off

the police. I've got to get into the house and see what's going on."

He heard his man slip away and waited, listening. He was quite convinced now that something queer was on foot, and in a few minutes' time when no sound came to him he slipped from the shrubbery and was soon busy on one of the lower windows. But he swung round in a flash as a voice came from his elbow.

"Good-evening, Captain Drummond."

Drummond cursed him under his breath. Two stalwart constables were standing before him.

"It won't do, sir," went on one of them calmly. "We have special instructions from Colonel Neilson, sir, to take you off if we found you trying to get into this house. It would be wiser to come quietly."

Drummond swore softly but volubly. "You mean you're going to arrest me?"

"Afraid we've got to follow orders, sir. If you won't come quietly—"

But here Drummond interrupted them with a weary shrug of the shoulders.

"Oh, what's the use?" he exclaimed bitterly. "I'll come."

Neilson regarded him sternly as they brought him into his room.

"So you were still at it, were you?" he queried. "I've been looking for an excuse for some time to lock you up, Drummond, and now you've furnished it. You were trying to batter your way into that house—"

"To prevent a murder being committed."

"Oh, I've heard that tale before!"

He turned to the attendant constables.

"Take him away and lock him up," he said.

"But, colonel!" exclaimed Drummond desperately. "Even if you do lock me up, will you send someone up immediately to Goodman's house? I tell you—"

"I don't care what you tell me!" stormed the other. "I tell you that

there's nothing wrong with Goodman's house and—"

But at that moment the telephone-bell shrilled out, and he picked up the receiver, though even as he listened the expression of his face changed.

"What? There's been an explosion—the house has been wrecked—Goodman's house?"

He banged down the receiver, glared at Drummond, who was whistling softly under his breath.

"My car—quick!" exclaimed Neilson. "And you come along, too, Drummond!"

As they pulled up outside the house where the constable was holding back the crowd they saw only too clearly that there had been a serious explosion, for almost half the house was in ruins.

But even as they alighted from the car a slight, bearded man came forward in an obvious state of agitation.

"I'm Dr. Botulian," he said. "I'm looking for Professor Goodman's house. I have an appointment with him."

Neilson glared at him.

"What time?"

"Nine o'clock. I'm a bit late, I'm afraid, but—"

But at that moment Mrs. Weevens pushed her way forward and threw out an accusing finger at the doctor.

"There he is!" she exclaimed. "There's the blackguard who called on my master over an hour ago."

"Oh, but that's impossible!" exclaimed the doctor. "I have never even approached this house until now."

"Oh, you did. I saw you!" replied Mrs. Weevens.

"I can prove I didn't."

Neilson was rubbing his chin.

"I'm afraid, doctor, that this is a case for a magistrate to decide," he said.

"But you can't possibly arrest me," answered the other excitedly; but Neilson came in angrily.

"Can't I?" he retorted. "You evidently don't know—"



Drummond stepped back, his sword above his head. . . .

But a quiet voice came from his elbow.

"I shouldn't if I were you," it said. Neilson wheeled round furiously. Drummond was standing there holding out something.

"Take a squint at that which I found just now inside the house, colonel," he suggested, and there was a smile on his face.

The other snatched it from him, glared at it, and then glared back at Drummond, who went on quietly:

"That's why I say you mustn't arrest the doctor," he said. "That's a piece of a false beard or a false wig the same colour as Dr. Botulian's, so it looks very much as though—"

"Someone's been impersonating him? Great heavens!" exclaimed Neilson.

He swung round on one of the constables.

"Did you see anyone like Dr. Botulian arrive?" he flung out.

"Well, sir, a gentleman arrived, like this gentleman, who said he was Dr. Botulian, and he drove up with a big packing-case—"

"Which was probably filled with high-explosives," finished Neilson, now thoroughly angry. "Oh, you make me tired, the whole lot of you!"

The Trapping of Bulldog Drummond

IT was two days later, and Bulldog Drummond sat at his breakfast with the imperturbable Tenny motionless behind him.

"You are not getting on with your breakfast, sir," suggested the latter mildly.

"I'm not, Tenny. Things aren't going right, and I can't make it out. I've got a strong feeling in my bones that Goodman was never killed in that explosion. Yet if he wasn't—"

He left the sentence unfinished as he stared gloomily at his plate. At that moment the electric bell in the hall whirred out.

"Go and see who that is, Tenny," he said.

A few moments later the man appeared, ushering in Dr. Botulian.

"How are you, doctor?" asked Drummond smoothly. "What can I do for you?"

"The late Professor Goodman seems to have had a premonition that something was going to happen to him," replied the doctor as he sat down. "A week ago he sent me a letter requesting me in the event of his death to carry on his diamond experiments."

"I see. But may I ask how this affects me?"

"Merely that Goodman gave his notes to you for their safe keeping."

Drummond frowned.

"On the contrary, doctor, I begged him to do so and he refused."

Dr. Botulian, without a word, produced a letter which he handed to Drummond.

"Read that," he said laconically.

Drummond glanced at it. It read thus:

"Dear Drummond.—In the event of anything happening to me will you please turn over my notes to my old friend and colleague, Dr. Botulian?—"
"BERNARD GOODMAN."

Drummond looked up. There was a smile on his face.

"I naturally wanted to be quite sure," he said. "I admit that he did give me the notes. They're at the bank in my safe deposit. Perhaps if you will come back here this afternoon at four—"

"I could come with you now?" broke September 17th, 1938.

in the other eagerly; but Drummond merely shook his head.

"I'm not doubting you, doctor," he replied, "but out of fairness to my old friend I must verify his signature. If it's O.K., as no doubt it is, you shall have the notes at four this afternoon."

The other rose from his chair. "Thank you, captain. I'll be here at four," he said.

After he had gone Drummond sat fingering the letter and examining it closely. His eyes were narrowed. Tenny was watching him.

"Now this is highly interesting, Tenny," murmured Drummond. "I want a long envelope and half a dozen sheets of paper. I think I can most certainly say now that Professor Goodman isn't dead, after all."

One hour later he was seated in Colonel Neilson's room, and the latter was studying the letter which Botulian had given him.

"I suppose you're telling me that this letter is a forgery?" he queried at length.

"On the contrary, Gwen has identified it as her father's handwriting."

"Then why can't you give Botulian the notes?"

"Simply because Goodman never gave them to me."

Neilson stared at him.

"Then if Goodman never gave them to you—" he began, and then stopped. Drummond came in with a smile.

"Exactly."

"But that means—what exactly does it mean, Drummond?"

"One of two things, colonel. Now listen."

By the time he rose to go, Neilson was nodding grim approval.

At four o'clock Botulian entered the room and Drummond rose to meet him. But his greeting was strange, for he suddenly grasped the doctor's beard and gave it a violent tug.

"What the devil—what the—" spluttered the other; but Drummond came in with a smile.

"Forgive me, doctor. I must apologise, but a man obviously impersonating you came here this morning with this letter. Do you recognise it?"

He handed the other the letter which the latter himself had brought, and Botulian stared at it for some moments as if undecided as to what to say.

"This letter," he said at length, "was stolen from my house last night. I didn't report it to the police as it would make it public."

"And I merely pulled your beard just now, sir," replied Drummond airily, "to make sure you are the real Dr. Botulian. Tenny, give the doctor those notes."

Drummond stood chuckling after Botulian had left.

"My hat and revolver, quick, Tenny," he said. "I think he'll lead me all right now to Professor Goodman."

It was a long pursuit, but Drummond had been accustomed to long pursuits, and he knew furthermore now that the Yard men were joining in the chase and would follow him wherever he went. And that was quite good enough for him when eventually he tracked Botulian down to a little village in the Midlands. And so sure was he of those whom he believed to be following him that he went boldly up to the house and knocked at the door, which was opened by the doctor himself.

"Ah, come in, Drummond!" he exclaimed genially. "Do you know I had a sort of fancy that you'd be coming along."

Drummond's hand was in his pocket

on his gun, and he pushed it forward a shade ostentatiously.

"I shouldn't try any tricks, doctor," he said quietly. "I hold you covered."

"My dear fellow, I can see that. I'll go first and you can follow me if you like. Though I don't understand quite what this means."

"I most certainly should like," answered Drummond grimly. "But don't please let me see your hands go to your pockets. I'm horribly quick on the trigger."

He followed the other into a comfortably furnished hall, but he saw in a glance that it was empty.

"I want to see Professor Goodman," he said briefly.

Botulian smiled.

"My dear man, I'm not a medium. I can't bring the dead to life."

"Ah, but Goodman isn't dead, doctor. That letter you gave me was written within the last twenty-four hours. I know; the ink has been tested."

A dangerous light shone for a moment in the other's eyes, but he turned it away with a laugh.

"Well, we all make mistakes sometimes," he said. "Even Captain Drummond. Look out behind you."

But Drummond, smiling, shook his head.

"I'm not falling for that one, thank you, doctor," he answered. "It's a bit too old. I'll trouble you to—"

And then something crashed on his head from behind, and as he slid inertly to the floor he knew that he had fallen into a cleverly laid trap.

The Last Round

WHEN Drummond came to his senses it was to find himself in a small attic the windows of which were closely barred. And Professor Goodman was bending over him. In a few moments Drummond explained all that had occurred, but even while he was talking they heard the sound of bolts being drawn, and in another moment Botulian entered the room.

"Well gentlemen," he said as he surveyed them with an evil smile, "isn't it time we came to an understanding? I don't want blank sheets of paper, Drummond, such as you put into that envelope—I want the notes."

Said Goodman, after a pause:

"They're in my laboratory."
"Unfortunately your laboratory has been blown to bits, professor. But what you've done once you can do again."

"It will take a long time."

Botulian shrugged his shoulders. "With an able assistant like Captain Drummond?" he queried. "Surely not."

Drummond spoke then:

"And if we refuse?" he asked grimly. Botulian smiled.

"The consequences, I'm afraid, will be most unpleasant for both of you," he said. "Think it over."

While this was taking place Colonel Neilson was sitting in his room with an exceedingly worried expression on his face. Opposite him was Sir Raymond Blantyre, no less worried; but from an entirely different cause had Neilson but known it.

"And you can't give us any idea of what's been going on?" asked Neilson at length.

Blantyre threw out his hands. His plans had miscarried very badly, and he had a shrewd suspicion that Botulian had in some way double-crossed him. But he wasn't telling Neilson so.

"I know no more than you do," he protested. "I want to find my man

(Continued on page 23.)

Ride the danger trail with the pioneers of the Old West in this pulsing epic of the days when fearless prairie scouts took up the challenge of savage Redskins and murderous desperadoes. To the beat of thundering hoofs and to the blast of flaming guns this vivid serial runs its thrill-a-minute course, with hot action in every smashing episode and Ray Corrigan in its starring rôle



THE PAINTED STALLION

Read This First

Backed by Dupray, a scheming Spaniard who is Governor of Santa Fe, but who has received news that he is to be deposed by the newly established Mexican Republic, a band of renegades led by one, Zamora, is preying on the wagon-trains that ply to and fro across the Western wilds with rich merchandise under their awnings.

The activities of these renegades are hampered by a mystery rider on a painted stallion, who has sworn to defeat outlawry and who again and again warns the bandits' intended victims of their danger by means of whistling arrows.

The year is 1824, and in that year an American frontiersman known as Clark Stuart is detained by the U.S. Government to negotiate a trade treaty with the Mexican authorities. It is a treaty which Dupray is anxious to prevent from being conceded, and at his instigation Zamora incites the Indians to attack a wagon-train led by a trader named Jamison—a wagon-train with which Clark is travelling and whose personnel also includes Jim Bowie, famous as the inventor of the Bowie knife, and Kit Carson, a boy later to become renowned as a Western scout.

The Rider of the Painted Stallion saves the train by calling off the Redskins, who regard that mysterious figure as a supernatural being, and later the Rider rescues Clark from the clutches of some of Zamora's henchmen.

After learning the Rider is in reality a white girl, Clark and his companions reach Santa Fe, where they discover

Dupray's association with the outlaws.

Dupray escapes, and by a trick decoys the Jamison party and Santa Fe's garrison into the hills. Then his men attack the residence of a new governor who has arrived at the citadel.

Together with Kit Carson and Jim Bowie, three of Jamison's men and half a dozen soldiers have been left behind. These rally round the new governor and engage the outlaws, but the residence being set on fire, the heroic defenders rush forth to die fighting.

Kit, attempting to follow, trips and strikes his head against a door, losing consciousness.

Now Read On

To the Rescue

JIM BOWIE, Don Luis Alvarez and their companions were unaware of the accident that had befallen Kit, but even had they known that he was lying insensible in that room which they had evacuated they might well have considered it an act of mercy to leave him there.

The chances were that he would remain mercifully oblivious and that death would steal upon him painlessly. And what alternative could Bowie, Don Luis and their party have offered the boy if they had realised his plight and turned back to revive him? They

could only have shepherded him out of the burning residence to meet his end by a bullet, for Zamora and his blood-thirsty satellites were not of the breed to show mercy to anyone—not even to a lovable little fellow like Kit Carson.

As it was Kit seemed destined to die of suffocation, and not by a slug from a six-gun.

Down the stairs that led to the ground floor of the house went Jim Bowie, long-barrelled rifle clutched in his horny, calloused hands, weather-beaten face grim-determined in its expression. After him, revolver in fist, came Don Luis Alvarez, Governor of Santa Fe and representative of the newly-established Mexican Republic, and hunched in the rear of that elderly Hidalgo were Bowie's three comrades of the Jamison wagon-train and the half-dozen soldiers who had been detailed to remain at the presidio or fortress when the rest of the garrison had departed.

Through weltering smoke luridly coloured here and there with tongues of fire those eleven men fought their way to the front door of the dwelling. Then they charged out on to the veranda and out into the courtyard of the presidio, and as they appeared there in full view the air seemed to rock with a bellowing volley of gunplay that came from the position occupied by Zamora and the besieging outlaws.

Lead missiles ripped across the patio, dealing murder. One of Jim Bowie's fellow Americans buckled at the knees and sank riddled to the dust. Three of the Mexican troopers pitched headlong, lifeless. The survivors, unseathed, gave swift response to the

September 17th, 1938.

EPISODE 10:—

"Ambush"

fusillade—the other three soldiers, the governor and Bowie's remaining compatriots standing in front of the burning residence and shooting at the renegades, who had issued exultantly from cover.

Jim Bowie on his part was not content to stand still and trade lead with the outlaws across an intervening area that measured some forty or fifty yards. A wild light of battle had kindled in his eyes, vivid as the tongues of flame that were threatening to raze Don Luis' quarters, and his teeth were bared so that they lent an expression of indescribable ferocity and mad courage to his features. Indeed, he might have been likened in that moment to some Viking of old—berserk in the determination to slay before he himself was slain.

Savagely he rushed towards the muster of gangsters, and, rifle held low, firing from the hip as he ran, he accounted for two of his enemies. Then suddenly realising the weapon in his grasp was empty, he clubbed it in mid-stride and charged on.

It seemed miraculous that he had not already fallen dead, struck by an outlaw bullet, for the crooks had not been slow to concentrate their gunplay on him when he had dashed forward. Yet perhaps because there was something unnerving in the spectacle of his frenzied figure hurtling to the attack, the aim of the renegades was singularly inaccurate, and he was within twenty paces of them before a bullet tumbled him to the ground.

Even as he fell, Zamora and his accomplices became aware of a commotion outside the fort, and all at once the four gangsters who had been left on the watch beyond the gateway scuttled into the courtyard with loud cries of alarm.

"Beat it, fellers! The Jamison crowd an' the garrison—they're high-tailin' it straight for the fort! They're comin' up at full stretch, and it looks like Clark Stuart is with 'em!"

Such were the shouts raised by the men who had been posted outside the presidio, and Zamora and the other outlaws could scarcely believe their ears on hearing them. Then panic seizing the rogues, a general rush was made for the gateway—a rush which Zamora made no attempt to stem. Indeed, the dago would have led that precipitate flight if he had not been restrained for a moment by Macklin.

"Wait!" the latter jerked. "We ain't got what we came for, but we'll take somethin' away with us."

He pointed to the figure of Jim Bowie. The veteran scout was struggling to his knees in a dazed fashion, and was fumbling vaguely for his rifle, which had slipped from his fingers and was lying a yard or so in front of him. There was blood in his hair, but the bullet that had dropped him had not injured him seriously—had merely creased him.

"That hombre is Bowie," Macklin panted to Zamora, as he indicated the bemused frontiersman, "an' he's about as close to Stuart an' Jamison as a brother. We might find him a useful hostage if we took him along with us. Quick, let's pick him up!"

Anxious as he was to escape from the presidio, Zamora blundered towards Jim Bowie with Macklin, and the pair of them laid hold of the veteran, who made an attempt to resist but who was speedily struck senseless by a blow from the butt of Macklin's forty-five.

In another instant Bowie was being dragged towards the gateway, and though his captors were harried by a

burst of shooting from Don Luis and the other survivors of the party which had defended the governor's residence, the smoke that was swirling over the patio tended to spoil the aim of the unconscious scout's friends.

Unharmed, Macklin and Zamora hauled their prisoner out of the fort. Meanwhile, their accomplices were making off at top speed, and the Jamison crowd and the troopers who were riding stirrup to stirrup with the Americans from Independence were approaching the scene rapidly. But the newcomers were still some little distance away when Zamora and Macklin flung Bowie over the back of a spare mount which had belonged to one of the renegades killed in the attack on the presidio, the frontiersman's captors then springing astride their own broncs.

Macklin seized the rein of the pony across which Jim Bowie had been thrown, and, Zamora by his side, struck off at full pelt in the direction which the rest of the gang were taking. As for the cavalcade headed by Jamison, Clark and the captain of the Santa Fe garrison, they separated into two bodies, one giving chase to the bandits and pumping lead at the ruffians' fleeing forms, the other pushing onward for the fortress.

Clark and Jamison were among those who bore down on the presidio, neither of them having recognised the unconscious man who was in the hands of Zamora and Macklin. They had both been under the impression, in fact, that the figure which had been hoisted athwart the spare bronc had been that of a wounded outlaw.

Jamison's horse, carrying Clark as well as the wagon boss, was the first to enter the courtyard of the fort, and a few seconds afterwards the pair of them were confronting Don Luis Alvarez and the remnants of the little party which had held out against the renegades' onslaught.

Dismounting, Clark and Jamison glanced at the huddled bodies of the men who had been shot down by the outlaws. Then the wagon boss addressed himself to the Governor.

"I reckon none of you would 've been left alive, Don Luis," he said, "if Clark Stuart here hadn't met up with us out in the hills. We mighty soon found out from him we'd been tricked into leavin' Santa Fe, an' we turned back pronto. But where's Jim Bowie? I don't see him around."

"Your friend Bowie was carried off by two of those renegades," the Governor answered sombrely, at which piece of news Jamison and Clark looked at each other in dismay.

Then the U.S. Government agent found his voice.

"And Kit Carson?" he rapped out. "Have those coyotes carried him off as well?"

At that one of the two surviving Americans in Don Luis' party gave vent to an exclamation.

"Kit Carson!" he blurted. "Why, no, Clark, the outlaws didn't get him. He must still be inside the Governor's quarters—up in that room there."

He indicated the windows of the apartment which the little group of defenders had been forced to evacuate a short time previously, and Clark waited to hear no more. With a hoarse cry on his lips he bounded to the veranda of the burning building, and, hurling himself across the threshold of the residence, he fought his way through the dense clouds of smoke and ascended the staircase leading to the upper floor, where it did not take him long to find the room in which Kit lay.

Stumbling upon the boy's prone body, Clark gathered the lad in his powerful arms and then retraced his steps down to the hallway and the front door, choking and retching as the fumes of the conflagration assailed his throat and lungs with ever-increasing effect. Indeed, he was almost at the last gasp by the time he gained the courtyard, where Jamison and the Governor took charge of the rescued youngster and set themselves to the task of reviving him.

In the meantime the courtyard had become crowded with those men of the returned cavalcade who had followed Clark and the wagon boss to the presidio, and efforts were being made to quench the fire that had broken out in Don Luis' quarters. Nor were those efforts unsuccessful, although more than an hour elapsed before the flames were completely extinguished.

By then young Kit Carson had been restored to his senses and was more or less himself again, and he was assuring Clark, Jamison and Governor Alvarez that he was none the worse of his experience when the men who had spurred in pursuit of the outlaws were seen cantering towards the fort.

They brought with them the disappointing intelligence that the bandits had made a clean getaway, owing to the fact that their horses had been considerably fresher than the ponies ridden by the supporters of law and order. The crooks, it seemed, had turned east after entering the hill-country to the north, and although the outdistanced pursuers had done their utmost to stick to the fugitives' trail, they had lost the scent utterly amid the barren mountains.

On learning this Don Luis Alvarez looked at Clark Stuart gloomily enough.

"My friend," he said, "the events of this morning have compelled me to make up my mind on the question of your mission to Santa Fe. I know that we have not had a chance to discuss that mission thoroughly as yet, but under the circumstances it is impossible for me to negotiate any trade treaty with your government on behalf of the Mexican Republic while this province remains exposed to the depredations of these outlaws.

"I understand there is a clause in that proposed treaty which refers to a guarantee of adequate protection for American wagon-trains," he said. "And, placed as I am, I cannot take it upon myself to guarantee any such protection in this territory until Dupray and his associates have been stamped out."

Clark nodded gravely.

"I appreciate all that, your Excellency," he rejoined. "On the other hand, it may not be long before the Dupray-Zamora outfit are brought to justice. You see, I know where their hide-out is situated now, and although it's liable to prove a difficult place to storm, I reckon our combined forces ought to be able to take it."

The Governor bit his lip.

"Our combined forces, eh?" he murmured. "Senior, I cannot afford to send my garrison into the hills again. I cannot afford to take that chance, leaving the presidio open to further attack by those outlaws—indeed, leaving the whole town at their mercy. For you can be sure that if the renegades learned Santa Fe had been left practically undefended again they would circle round and repeat the onset they made to-day, and perhaps with more success. No, senior, from now on

the troops under my control will be kept close to home."

"It was a decision from which he would not budge, not even when Clark reminded him of Bowie's capture and appealed to him to lend aid in attempting the rescue of the veteran scout.

"I deeply regret the kidnapping of your friend," Don Luis said. "But I would be neglecting my duty to an entire community if I allowed myself to be swayed by considerations for the welfare of one man."

They were his final words on the subject—words that boded ill for Jim Bowie, who at that very moment was being conveyed through the mountains by the rogues who had taken him prisoner.

Still lying insensible over the pony across whose back he had been flung, Bowie was oblivious of his surroundings and of the band of ruffians who were galloping eastward with him, Macklin and Zamora having caught up with the rest of the fugitives by now. Nor had the captive recovered consciousness when the crooks reached their destination—that lofty cavern with its inner compartment wherein Escobedo Dupray had now taken up his abode.

Dupray was sitting alone in that inner chamber when his hirelings entered with the prisoner, and when he heard how the attack on the presidio had been frustrated he broke out into a torrent of abuse, concentrating his wrath upon Zamora so that the latter fairly squirmed under the deposed lieutenant governor's venomous upbraiding.

"I send you and your men to Santa Fe to plunder the Jamison wagons and to obtain for me the official seal of the new governor—and what do you bring me? News of failure—news that five of the gang have been killed—news that you have accomplished nothing! Por Dios, are you and your compadres a pack of spineless fools, Zamora? Are you completely without courage and initiative?"

Such was the sum total of Dupray's angry remarks, and in response to them Zamora could only protest that they were unreasonable, and that the ineffectiveness of the attack was due to one factor alone.

"Clark Stuart was responsible for halting us," he declared. "We believed he was dead, but we were wrong, and he must have fallen in with his friends and the troopers of the garrison and turned them back from the hills."

"That may be," snarled Dupray, "but it sounds to me as if you were an unexcusable time in driving the few defenders of the Governor's residence out into the open. You ought to have finished what you set out to do long before Stuart and his crowd showed up with the troopers!"

He paused, then directed an ugly glance at Jim Bowie, who had been thrown unceremoniously on to a rude couch.

"And what's the idea of bringing that fellow here, anyway?" he demanded. "Of what use is he to us?"

Macklin answered him.

"Twas me as had the notion ter bring him along," the gangster stated. "Either Clark Stuart or Jamison would give their right arms for him, an' I figured he'd make a good hostage. You know, Stuart found out where this hide-away is, an' we might have a little trouble here with the Jamison outfit an' the troopers before long. All right, we can tell Stuart an' the Jamison mob to sheer off or we'll rub out this pal o' theirs. That'll mean we'll only have the troopers ter worry about, an' I reckon we can hold out against them."

Dupray was silent for a while, and, his wrath appearing to abate somewhat, he lapsed into a thoughtful mood. Then all at once he looked at Bowie again, and, noting that he was still insensible, slid his eyes upon Macklin.

"I think I've got a better idea regarding this prisoner of yours," he observed. "Supposing, when he comes round—supposing we let him overhear us talking about the Rider of the Painted Stallion. Supposing I make out I've discovered that the Rider is encamped up in—Lost Canyada, shall we say? And supposing I mention that I intend to send three of you there to deal with that pest?"

"Well?" queried Macklin.

Dupray smiled craftily.

"If this prisoner of yours were then permitted to escape," he remarked, "I'll wager he'd carry word of what he'd heard straight to Clark Stuart, and, considering the friendship between Stuart and the Rider, there isn't much doubt in my mind that the U.S. Government agent would take the trail to Lost Canyada immediately—probably with Jamison and one or two others, but certainly not with the whole personnel of the wagon-train, since he'd only expect to meet three of our gang."

He leaned back in his chair, an evil glint playing in his deep-set eyes.

"Instead," he went on, "all of you would be there, lying in ambush. It

would be the end of Stuart, and anyone who happened to be with him—the end, at any rate, of a man who has proved a stumbling-block to us at every turn. Yes, it would be the end of Clark Stuart, and somehow I feel that with him out of the way our luck might change."

"If Jamison were with him it would be so much the better," put in Zamora. "The Americans of the wagon-train would be leaderless then, and it is my belief that if we can get rid of those two men—Stuart and Jamison—things will be a lot healthier for us. We—"

He was interrupted by a movement on the part of Jim Bowie, a movement which the veteran accompanied with a half-stifled groan.

"The prisoner is coming round, Dupray," Zamora hissed then. "Better get ready to pull that bluff about the Rider."

In Lost Canyada

IT was early afternoon, and at the wagon encampment near Santa Fe a conference was in progress, a conference attended by the entire personnel of the Jamison column, a conference at which Clark had done most of the talking.

"Well, I've put the facts before you, boys," he was saying now. "Don Luis won't take the risk of sending his troops into the hills, and it's not for us to try and tell him how to deal with the situation in his province. But, outside of the fact that Jim Bowie is in the hands of those renegades, every wagon team that tries to get from Independence to Santa Fe an' back is gonna be in constant danger as long as the Dupray-Zamora gang are operatin' in the wilderness."

"Clark's right, men," Jamison interposed. "All of us here know that their outlaws are a bigger menace by far than hostile Redskins, and, unless I'm mistaken, Clark wants us to make a drive against 'em—not only for Jim Bowie's sake, but also for our own sakes, but for the sake of every outfit that uses the trail between here and Independence."

The U.S. Government agent nodded in assent.

"I couldn't put it in cleverer words," he stated, "but I want to make it plain to everybody that we'll be up against a tough proposition if we do move in on these renegades. Their hide-outs is mighty well situated to withstand attack, and, even if we manage to storm it, the chances are that a lot of us will be put out of action in the process. I'd like all of you to realise that—before you thing of volunteerin' for this enterprise."

Jamison stepped forward and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Well, Clark," he declared, "whatever my men decide on, you've got one volunteer in me."

"An' here's another," struck in Davy Crockett, renowned frontiersman. "I don't belong in this outfit, but I'd follow you all to Hades, Clark—if Jim Bowie is in trouble there."

A spontaneous chorus now arose from the wagoners and outriders of the Jamison column, every single man pronouncing himself ready and eager to accompany Clark to the mountain lair of the desperadoes, and it was while those voices were resounding about the U.S. Government agent that the big fellow suddenly perceived a diminutive figure struggling towards him through the assemblage.

It was the figure of Kit Carson, and, reaching Clark, the boy spoke to him excitedly:

5 MORE BIKES! And Over 2,000 Other Prizes Won in the July "Armaments" Race!

Here's more winning news for thousands of "Armaments" Stamp collectors. The July entries have now been checked and every one of the 2,004 readers who sent in 323 or more Battleship and Tank Stamps has won the prize of his choice, while the following five collectors whose totals were the largest received, win the FIVE £4 7s. 6d. "HERCULES" BIKES:

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All prizes have now been despatched, and if you have not been successful, remember there's another prize opportunity in our Latest Collecting Scheme—FOOTER-STAMPS—on page 27. You must be in that, too!

"Jim Bowie's safe!" he panted. "Clark, Jim Bowie's safe! He's a-headin' into the encampment now!"

He was right. Astride a lathered bronc, the veteran frontiersman was bearing down on the scene from an easterly direction, and within another thirty seconds was drawing rein amidst his comrades of the wagon-train, who pressed around him with exclamations of thankfulness and congratulation.

Bowie interrupted them, however, calling for silence. Then he addressed himself to Clark.

"Listen," he rapped out, "the Rider o' the Painted Stallion is in danger. I heard that hombre Dupray tellin' his men that he'd seen her camped up in a gulch called Lost Canyada, an' I heard him say that three o' the gang had better start out and get her. Him an' his pack o' cut-throats seemed so hot-up over the prospect of finishin' her off at last that I managed to make my getaway an' grab myself a bronc, and here I am."

Clark Stuart's features had become tense.

"Lost Canyada!" he reiterated. "Where's that?"

"As far as I could make out from what Dupray said," Bowie rejoined, "it's about four miles north of Red Ridge, on the—"

"I know Lost Canyada," Davy Crockett broke in. "Clark, I'll trail along with you an' Bowie an' show you the way."

"Yeah, an' you can count me in on this, too," said Jamison. "Hey, listen, I reckon this needn't interfere with our drive against the gang's hide-out. While you and I an' Davy an' Bowie are makin' for Lost Canyada, Clark, the rest o' the boys can start for Dupray's headquarters. After we've horned-in on this attempt to wipe out the Rider, we can swing south and join up with 'em somewhere near Tascosa Bend."

Clark acquiesced in this suggestion, and, after bidding Kit Carson remain at the encampment, he and Jamison and Davy Crockett took horse and spurred in a north-easterly direction with Bowie, leaving the other members of the wagon-train to set forth at a more leisurely pace for Tascosa Bend, on the River Los Lunas.

The hoofs of their ponies drumming on the unbaked ground, Clark and his three companions galloped onward into the hills, little dreaming that they were following a course that was to lead them into a death-trap. Not for a moment did any of them suspect that they were the intended victims of a cunning plot whose motive was murder—and least of all did Jim Bowie suspect that he had been made the chief instrument of that plot, the innocent bearer of false tidings.

With Davy Crockett acting as guide, the quartet pressed on through the hills, and an hour after leaving the wagon encampment outside Santa Fe they might have been seen approaching a craggy, rock-strewn ravine that was hemmed in amongst the remote, barren mountains.

"That's Lost Canyada right ahead," announced Davy Crockett.

The four of them eased up, and, their brones travelling at a walk, moved forward into the gulch, unaware as they passed between the sloping walls of it that sinister eyes were watching them from above—the eyes of gunmen who lurked amid groups of boulders that littered the rims of the two acclivities.

Zamora and his cronies were in position, and well concealed, and there was not one of the dago's confederates whose trigger-finger was not itching to

send a bullet speeding towards the quartet who had entered the canyada. But Zamora had been insistent that the victims should be allowed to proceed well into the ravine before a shot was fired, and the outlaws held themselves in restraint.

Zamora himself would give the signal to rain death upon those four men below, and the signal would take the form of a bullet discharged by him and directed at Clark Stuart. Thus had it been arranged when Clark and his comrades had been seen approaching from afar.

Slowly the U.S. Government agent and his friends advanced along the rock-strewn floor of the canyada, scanning it in anticipation of spying the Rider or her stallion, never casting so much as a glance in the direction of the twin ridges from which their hidden foes were looking down on them. And yet, oddly enough, each one of the four began to feel conscious of a sense of misgiving, a nameless apprehension, a vague uneasiness that stole upon them as they penetrated deeper into the defile.

It has been said that men who live cheek-by-jowl with danger sometimes develop a curious instinct, a sixth sense, which tends to warn them of an enemy's presence before that enemy has revealed himself to the eye. Such might have been the case now as far as Clark, Davy Crockett, Jamison and Bowie were concerned, for there was not one of them whose career had not been fraught with hairbreadth escapes and desperate situations. On the other hand, it may have been the deathly silence which reigned over the gulch that communicated to them a feeling of tension and nervousness.

At any rate, none of them gave any audible indication of foreboding, each trying to dismiss the premonition from his mind as something that was unfounded.

"It's mighty quiet, an' if the Rider's around she ain't keepin' much of a look-out," Bowie said presently, "or she'd have spotted us by now an' showed herself."

Clark fidgeted in his saddle. "Maybe we got here too late," he muttered anxiously. "Maybe those outlaws have been and gone. Maybe she's—"

He checked all at once, for his keen eyes had detected imprints on the ground ahead—the imprints of hoofs which led from the eastern end of the defile and then split up, one set of tracks turning off up the canyada's left-hand slope, the other swinging across to the slope on the right.

"Say," he ejaculated, "a whole bunch of horsemen seem to have been here pretty recently, unless I'm mistaken. Take a look at these."

He dismounted to examine the imprints more closely, and his companions followed suit. Then, having scrutinised those tracks, Clark raised his glance towards the summits of the acclivities on each side of the defile, and it was as he was conning the ridge on the right that he espied a man's head lift into view above a craggy boulder.

He recognised the face that was disclosed. It was the face of Macklin, and at sight of that ruffian the big frontiersman gave vent to an exclamation and whipped his six-gun from its holster.

Realising he had been spotted, Macklin ducked. In the same instant Clark's revolver belched flame and lead, the smashing report of the shot splitting the silence of the canyada startlingly,

the bullet clipping splinters from the boulder behind which Macklin had crouched down again.

And then pandemonium broke loose in that remote ravine of the northern hills. From all points along the rims of the twin promontories that overlooked the defile the forty-fives of Zamora and his satellites gave grim response to the missile discharged by Clark, puffs of gun-smoke issuing from the gangsters' coverts, deadly slugs zipping viciously around the ambushed quartet in the canyada and kicking up spurts of dust and stones.

The ravine echoed and re-echoed the blatter of the fusillade, and the tumult of the shooting and the ugly whew of lead struck terror into the mounts of Clark Stuart and his friends, the animals plunging and eavorting wildly. Indeed, those belonging to Jamison, Crockett and Bowie tore their reins free from their masters' hands, and suddenly the brones were wheeling to stampe out of the canyada in panic-flight.

Headless of their owners' stentorian cries, the ponies dashed from the defile, leaving Crockett and Jamison and Bowie without the slightest prospect of escaping from the death-trap—for, if there had been some slender chance of each of the four ambuscaded pioneers beating a retreat on horseback and regaining open ground to show the outlaws a clean pair of heels, there was certainly no hope of any of them except Clark accomplishing such a project now.

Clark alone had retained control of his horse. Yet he had no impulse to swing himself astride the creature and seek safety by galloping out of the canyada and abandoning his comrades to their fate. Instead he yelled to the other three men to burrow down amongst a cluster of rocks hard by, and as they made for those rocks he accompanied them in a blundering fashion, dragging his scared sorrel after him.

As on many another occasion, the gun-play of Zamora and his rascally crew was not characterised by any outstanding degree of accuracy, or Clark and his friends would have been struck down by the opening salvo. As it was, they reached the nearby rocks without so much as a scratch being inflicted on them, and from the shelter of these natural breastworks of granite they began to pump retaliatory bullets at their foes.

Clark plied his six-gun resolutely with his right hand, the while he maintained a grip on his bronc's rein with his left. Jamison and Davy Crockett likewise handled revolvers, blazing away at the canyada's rims. As for Bowie, he added the whip-like crack of his long-barrelled rifle to the booming detonations of his partners' forty-fives and the reverberating volleys of the Zamora gang's "irons," and of the first dozen shots loosed off by the four men on the ravine's bed three hit home.

"I reckon we've got the best 'vantage-point we could've found on the floor o' this here canyada," Jamison presently vouchsafed, as he was reloading the chambers of his six-shooter. "An' if we can keep pickin' off them coyotes on the slopes we may come outa this ambuscade alive yet."

Davy Crockett glanced at him. "You're sort of forgettin' that our ammunition may run out long afore all them bandits have emptied their cartridge belts, Jamison, ain't you?" he rejoined.

There was a brief silence, and then Clark spoke.

"Davy's right, old timer," he said to

the wagon boss. "Their ammunition is liable to outlast ours. In any case, if we're still here at nightfall they'll be able to sneak down on us in the dark an' jump us, and if they come to grips with us it will mean our finish. They're six to one against us."

He paused, and laid a hand on Jamison's arm.

"There's just one chance for us," he stated. "If I can get out of here with my sorrel I can ride south, contact the boys and bring 'em here leather-to-split. I hate to leave you, but none of us will see another sunrise if the four of us stay where we are."

The wagon boss compressed his lips.

"If you could get outa here," he breathed, "I reckon Davy an' Bowie an' I could hold these outlaws off until you showed up with the boys. But I doubt if you'd ever win your way clear o' the canyada, Clark."

"I'm gom' to try, anyhow," the younger man declared. "You and Jim Bowie and Davy Crockett do your best to keep me covered while I'm makin' my break."

Without another word he spun round towards his horse and set foot in stirrup. Then, throwing himself lithely into the saddle, he spurred for the western end of the ravine.

Immediately the fire from both sides of the canyada was redoubled, rascally desperadoes starting up from their covets to concentrate their attention on the U.S. Government agent's flying figure. Yet those ruffians who had shown themselves so spontaneously were soon flinging themselves down again, being subjected in turn to sharp shots from the rocks amid which the departing frontiersman's comrades were ensconced.

Thanks to the gun-play of Jamison, Bowie and Crockett, the gangsters on the rims of the canyada failed to keep up the furious fusillade with which they had challenged Clark's bid to escape, and, though a bullet ripped through a fold in his buckskin tunic and another seared across his left wrist, the big scout swept forth from the ravine at top speed without serious hurt and veered off to the south.

"He made it!" Jamison cried exultantly, as Clark disappeared from sight. "He made it!"

Bowie offered a curt retort. His steel-grey eyes were fastened on the south slope of the defile.

"Yeah, Clark made it all right," he barked. "But unless I miss my guess, there go three or four o' the Zamora gang for pick up hosses an' set out after him."

He motioned to a group of handits who had straightened up and who were turning to vacate their posts, and, perceiving all at once that Macklin was one of them, Bowie fell a prey to the impetuosity which was at times so characteristic of him.

"There's that treacherous varmint what joined your wagon train at Independence, Jamison!" he shouted. "I'll get him—if it's the last thing I do!"

Rifle clutched in his hands, he blundered from the rocks to obtain a better view of Macklin, but his two companions laid hold of him.

"Don't be a fool, Bowie!" Jamison panted, his fingers locked on the veteran's arm. "Come back under cover!"

With Davy's aid he dragged the old Indian fighter into the shelter of the rocks before any harm could befall him, and, Bowie putting a curb on his own

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recklessness, the three friends settled down to a prolonged gun duel with the outlaws who still manned the canyada's slopes.

In the meantime Macklin and those who had detached themselves from the party on the south rim had vanished beyond the scope of the ambuscaded trio's vision. As Bowie had guessed, they were hurrying towards their broncs, which were concealed some little distance away, and soon they had mounted up and were giving chase to Clark Stuart.

By then Clark was a hundred yards from the mouth of the canyada whence he had escaped, and he was travelling at full pelt over the route by which he and his friends had approached the defile. Their gaze riveted on him, Macklin and his cronies gouged the flanks of their horses with their spurs and swarmed down a long gradient that slanted towards a stretch of level terrain their quarry was crossing, and for a spell it seemed as if they might head him off. But, becoming aware of their headlong rush in his direction, the frontiersman bore away to the right.

Frustrated in their hopes of intercepting him, Macklin and his confederates reached level ground and pressed after him, blazing at him as they rode—failing, however, to bring him down.

Onward to the tattoo of drumming hoofs sped the U.S. Government agent and his pursuers, and before long it was apparent that Clark's sorrel had the legs of the gangsters' broncs. Yet, even as the frontiersman was congratulating himself on possessing a mount that was more than a match for those of his enemies—even as he was telling himself that he would continue to push westward until he had outstripped the crooks and could safely swerve on to his original course again—he beheld in front of him a dark, ragged cleft that seemed to extend north and south as far as the eye could see.

It was a sinister chasm that cut clear across his path, and as he gained the edge of it he discovered that it was fully two hundred feet in depth and of a width that no pony could have spanned at a jump. His escape, in fact, was completely balked by that fearsome abyss—nor was there any chance of eluding his foes by turning to right or left, for they were bound to head him off if he did so and drive him over the cleft's brink to his doom.

There was nothing for it but to stand his ground and shoot it out with the pursuers, and, wheeling to face them, he raised his six-gun. As he drew trigger, however, the hammer of the weapon fell with a harmless click, and, realising that the revolver was empty, he fumbled at his cartridge belt in desperate haste.

Meanwhile the group of outlaws headed by Macklin were coming up fast, but all at once the rogue who had once been a member of the Jamison wagon train seemed to divine Clark's plight, and, calling a halt on the instant, he brought up his forty-five and took aim at the frontiersman as the latter was still endeavouring to reload.

Deliberately he sighted his gun on the figure of the U.S. Government agent, assuring himself as he "drew a bead" on Clark that at this close range he could not miss, and deliberately he curled his finger around the trigger.

(To be continued in another thrill-packed episode next week. By permission of British Lion Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Ray Corrigan.)
September 17th, 1938.

"KIDNAPPED"

(Continued from page 5.)

"Who knows?" he demanded.

"The captain—I heard them in the roundhouse. I went to look for you and they were saying that they were going to turn you in at Glasgow and get the reward."

"So that's how the wind sets—it's that lad, David. He must have told."

"Quick, Alan, get the skiff!" cried Jean, and she did not tell the truth.

David Balfour gritted his teeth and glared defiantly at his tormentor. What with the bullying of the captain, Ransoine, the other cabin-boy, Riach, the mate, and fed on filthy food, he had just about had enough, and when the captain raised his belt for a second time the boy acted. He picked up a heavy ornament from a table and it caught the captain right in the stomach. The boy was out of the roundhouse and racing for the deck—he would rather drown than stay another moment on this brig. He came upon Alan and Jean prepared to launch a skiff.

The rebel half drew his sword.

"You little sneak!" he hissed. "I thought I could trust you, but you told who I am."

"No."

"You did—you're the only one aboard who knew—you told them that I was Alan Breck."

The mate had been stealthily creeping along the deck to see what was going on, and when he heard the name of Alan Breck he rushed below to tell his master. David saw that flying figure, but there was no time for words now as a number of the crew led by Captain Hoseason had appeared on deck. The boy helped Jean with the boat while Alan Breck kept off the attack with his trusty blade. How the boy's eyes gleamed as he had glimpses of the wonderful swordsmanship of the rebel. He saw the point catch the mate under the heart. At last the boat was lowered and Jean slid down a rope.

The ropes were cast off and a shout from Jean told Alan that the boat was away. He dived from the poop and was helped into the skiff. Vigorous rowing soon brought them to an island, and as there was a thick mist Alan decided to stay there till the dawn. It was then that he learned from Jean that she had made it up about the captain knowing he was Alan Breck. She had done it because she did not want to go with Janie.

"David, I've misjudged you," the rebel cried. "But if you didn't tell them I was Alan Breck, who did?"

"You did yourself, you big blunderhead," retorted the lad with spirit. "On the deck when you called me a sneak and shouted out your own name."

"I'm sorry, lad," Alan held out his hand. "Shall we be friends from now on? True friends that trust and help each other always?"

"True friends it is, sir, but I still wish you weren't a rebel."

Condemned to Death

EBENEZER BALFOUR was invited to the offices of Mr. Angus Rankeillor, the lawyer, and there he met a Mr. and Mrs. MacKenzie, who pretended that whilst collecting driftwood by their cottage on a lonely island they had rescued a half-drowned boy. They expected Ebenezer to do right by then for tending him. "Not a shilling,"

September 17th, 1938.

was the miser's answer, but they persisted and asked for the same amount that he had paid Captain Hoseason for the kidnapping.

"The lad claims he's the rightful heir of Balfour," stated Alan Breck, "and you paid Hoseason to get him out of the way. We can keep our mouths shut, but you'll pay us the sum you paid Hoseason—two hundred pounds."

"Twenty pounds was the bargain," screamed the miser.

The door opened and in walked the lawyer, David, and one of the clerks. Ebenezer realised he had been tricked into a betrayal, and he railed and cursed, but when he went he knew that Balfour Castle was his home no longer.

Rankeillor had been a willing accessory to this trickery. He had always loathed Ebenezer Balfour, and although a lawyer and not a soldier he had admired the pluck and perseverance of Alan Breck in a lost cause.

Jean was all smiles because, when they had reached Glasgow, it was to find that the cowardly Jamie had taken the first boat to Newfoundland. She stated firmly that she was not going back to Glencoe and that she was never leaving Alan. They were discussing the possibilities of getting married when a commotion in the street took them to the windows.

Of all the bad luck Ebenezer must bump into Captain Hoseason. The rogue had come to Edinburgh because at the docks in Glasgow he had heard something that told him his quarry had flown, and the covetous rogue was after the reward. Ebenezer howled that he had contracted for the captain to take the lad to the Carolinas, and instead he had been flung off near the Isle of Mull. David had escaped drowning, and now he was a pauper. At once Hoseason guessed the identity of the two people who had tricked Ebenezer, and as the result soldiers rushed to surround the lawyer's office. Alan Breck tried to get away down a drain pipe and down an alleyway, but it was too late. They arrested him for the murder of the King's tax collector.

The only satisfaction that David had was that lawyer Rankeillor was able to have Ebenezer and Hoseason arrested for kidnapping, which was a crime punishable by hanging.

If only they could have got hold of Janie a confession might have been secured. Jean would even have married Jamie to save Alan's life. The court sentenced Breck to be hung and his body to swing in chains at a gibbet. The prisoner was asked if he had anything to say.

"You can hang me for hanging's sake, but not for murder," his voice rang through the court-room. "Of that I stand innocent. Nor can you hang me for treason, for how can a man be traitor to King or country that he has never called his own."

The Duke of Argyll was alarmed. The erection of the scaffold seemed to have thrown the whole of Scotland into a ferment. This man Alan Breck was even more of a national hero than his Grace had imagined. Deputations of clansmen called on him and begged him not to hang Alan Breck.

"Grant us his life," one clansman cried, "and we swear to submit to English rule."

"Your offer's absurd. Alan Breck would never be loyal to King George. With that man alive there can never be peace between England and Scotland. Alan Breck must hang."

The duke granted the last request of the condemned man. Jean and Alan were married. They dragged him back

to his cell after the ceremony. David Balfour would not despair, and in desperation he resolved to see the duke, and he managed to get into the duke's palace.

The duke was pacing his room. Every langman selected for the task had either turned tail or had been abducted by the clansmen. He was wondering if he should get another company of Grenadier Guards from Berwick when he realised he was not alone. A slim lad.

"Who the devil are you?"

"Please, your Grace, please let Alan Breck go free. You musn't hang him. He's innocent. I know the man who killed Red Fox. I saw him—it's a man they call Jamie. I'm no rebel, sir, but Alan Breck is my friend and we're pledged to help each other always. And if you'll be so good as to pardon him, sir, I can keep him out of Scotland. You see, I'm the Laird of Balfour."

"And what makes you think he'll stay there?" chuckled the duke.

"There is a lass who has a way with him, sir. If you'll only spare his life, sir."

"No, his fate's decided," rasped the duke. "I cannot change it."

But the duke was so impressed by young David that he visited the rebel in his cell, and after talking with the rebel knew that this frank-eyed man could never be a murderer. He gulled Alan Breck into talking of the cause for which he fought and his reasons. The duke offered a bargain to the condemned man. He would guarantee to do all the reforms that Alan sought, if Alan for his part would beg the mob gathered together for the hanging to disperse.

"Tell them to return to their homes in peace—for the sake of the country we both love," suggested the duke, and Alan Breck promised.

There was a vast crowd to see the hanging of Alan Breck, and when the rebel appeared on a balcony of the court house the crowd surged forward shouting his name. It would take but a spark for these dour Scotsmen to charge through the soldiers. Alan raised his arms.

"Scotsmen, my people! The duke and I have bargained. He has promised to lift the burden of our taxes. In return I have pledged you to peace. Let there be no rioting, revolt or bloodshed."

"What about you, Alan Breck?" they cried.

"Alan Breck has asked naught for himself!" The duke stepped forward. "Yet, because of him, we are a people united for the first time—united, God willing, for all time. In the face of such service to the Scotland he loves more than life itself, I feel it my bounden duty to alter the sentence of hanging to exile."

The departure of Alan Breck and his wife was almost in the same category as one given to a prince. The clansmen were there to bid him farewell, and they vowed to see that the Duke of Argyll fulfilled his promises.

"Why don't you come along with us, David," Jean said shyly to our young hero.

"I'd like to, but I've business to attend to," was the simple, frank answer.

"After all, I am the Laird of Balfour, and I must grow up to be a good Scotsman."

"That's right, David, your place is here," Alan Breck cried as he bade the boy farewell. "Scotland for ever!"

(By permission of 20th Century Fox, Ltd., starring Warner Baxter as Alan Breck and Freddie Bartholomew as David.)

"LAW OF THE UNDERWORLD"

(Continued from page 12)

grabbed her before she could fire, wrenching the weapon from her hand.

"No you don't, Dorothy! Give me that. You know how I hate guns. Beat it!"

Her eyes blazing, the woman snarled sneeringly past the group of silent gangsters, and without another word, left the office.

"Sweet kid, that one," grinned Batsy. Late that night, the singer, spurred on by the desire for revenge which filled her whole being, phoned Warren Rogers and gave him the tip that if he raided the Club Sultan he would pick up the whole mob concerned in the Morton Store affair. Surprised as he was, the District Attorney promised to attend to it at once, and come round to her apartment with police protection, for now that she had taken the plunge, Dorothy Palmer was a creature of nerves, fearing the vengeance which would fall on a squealer.

But the only people the squad of twenty police picked up when they raided the club were Annabelle and Tommy. Gene and Batsy, who had been having a late meal with them after the ordinary patrons left, had doused the lights and ducked out the back way when they heard the thunderous knocking on the door that announced the police swoop.

Annabelle and Tommy, hiding under a table, were spotted by the eagle eyes of Captain Gargan and ordered sternly to come out.

"We didn't do anything," panted Tommy, helping the girl to her feet.

"Honest," cried Annabelle, "we were just sitting here, eating, and you burst in, and—"

Gargan grinned at her.

"Yes, sure, the place has been closed for an hour, and you're just sitting here eating! We'll take those kids in, anyway!"

Meanwhile, out in the back alley by which they had escaped, Gene turned to Batsy.

"I can't let the kids take the rap for this! We can thank Dorothy."

"Don't you worry about her," said Batsy grimly. "I'll take care of her!"

Third Degree

"YOU'RE sure the raid went off all right?" Dorothy Palmer looked nervously at Warren Rogers and his assistant, Barton, a lean-faced man with pince-nez glasses. "Then your boys will have a little surprise for you when you get back to the station. An old friend of yours, named Gene Fillmore, will be there!"

Warren Rogers' brow clouded. "Fillmore—Gene Fillmore? What's he got to do with it?"

The woman enjoyed the annoyance in his tone.

"He's what the newspapers mean when they talk about a crime wave. How much protection are you going to give me?"

"All that's necessary." Warren's tone was brusque, for in spite of the fact that she was giving him valuable information, the District Attorney found the whole thing distasteful. He took the phone as the station rang, then turned to her again. "All they picked up in that raid was a couple of kids. Now what's all this about Gene Fillmore?"

"I tell you it's true! He's the man

you want. He hired those two kids for the Morton robbery."

"Let's check on that, Warren," suggested Barton.

"We'll see you later," said Rogers to the woman.

They had just shut the door when a shot cracked from the window. Dorothy Palmer gave a little sigh and crumpled. When the lawyers and the two policemen with them dashed back, they caught a glimpse of Batsy's face just disappearing from the window.

Hastily he began clattering down the fire-escape. But a patrolling policeman who had heard the shot spotted him. The cop's revolver roared. Batsy threw up his arms, swayed, and toppled from the escape, to land with a dreadful thud on the concrete fifty feet below. The trail of death started by Rocky Mosby had ended with the shooting of Dorothy Palmer and the death of her executioner.

Warren Rogers could see that the woman had died instantly.

"I can't believe Gene had anything to do with this," he muttered, kneeling by her body. "The more I think of it, the more preposterous it seems. What could I possibly accuse him of?"

"Maybe this is Exhibit A!" Barton began going through an ornate bureau. He handed Warren Rogers a cheque. It was made out to Dorothy Palmer for one thousand dollars, and signed by Gene Fillmore.

"That's Gene's signature all right," said Rogers grimly. "I want to talk to those two kids. You boys wait for the coroner."

But Annabelle and Tommy, scared as they were, yielded nothing on cross-examination. They denied knowing anybody by the name of Gene Fillmore, and said Dorothy Palmer must have been lying when she linked their names with the crime.

"We never heard of any Gene Fillmore," said Tommy. "If he's the man you're after, why don't you arrest him and leave us alone?"

"Because if we arrest him now, we'll never be able to make it stick. That's why I want you two. I want to build up a case against Fillmore so that no jury on earth will fail to put him in the electric chair."

Warren Rogers' determination hardened when he took the pair to the hospital, and Edward Larkin, still weak and ill, positively identified them as the people who had caused him to lay all the trays on the counter. He couldn't understand the motives of Annabelle and Tommy, but he intended to knock the truth out of them for their own sakes.

Leaving Annabelle in his office, he took Tommy

into a grim, darkened room, where the only light was a strong spotlight which shone directly on the prisoner's face. Here Rogers, Barton and Captain Gargan fired questions at Tommy till his brain reeled. Nervously he toiled at his collar, his face streaming with sweat. But still he wouldn't admit anything.

"Tommy," said Rogers sternly, "I've given you every chance, but you're making it tougher and tougher for yourself. You have a fine sense of loyalty, but it's misguided. You've got to look to the law to help you now."

"Kid, we call this the singing-room," Gargan grated. "Because sooner or later everybody sings in here."

Warren Rogers allowed Tommy to see Annabelle for a moment in the hope they would say something. Outside, he listened with Gargan.

"They're listening to every word we say," Tommy whispered, holding Annabelle close. "No matter what they do, we can't talk. If we talk, they've got us."

"But Mr. Larkin identified us!"

"They can't prove any connection with the gang unless we talk!"

Rogers came in expectantly. Their expressions decided him.

"You don't leave us any choice," he said. "The rest is up to you."

He gave the sobbing girl a chair in his office. She was racked with anxiety. What was happening to Tommy in the hands of those hard-faced men? Calm-faced, Rogers pretended to read a book, while the girl fidgeted. The clock ticked slowly on. No sound came from the inner-room.

It wasn't until Gargan looked in that she broke.

"He hasn't broken yet," he snapped. "But he will."



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"All right, don't let up. Keep pounding those questions."

"Don't!" shrieked the girl. "Don't beat him any more, please! I'll tell you! We were hired to go into Morton's and we were part of the gang!"

Warren Rogers smiled with satisfaction as she buried her face in her hands, but when Tommy was brought in they still wouldn't implicate Gene Fillmore.

"I'm asking you to testify that Gene Fillmore hired you!" snapped Rogers.

"We don't know any Gene Fillmore. It was—it was Rocky who hired us!" Tommy glanced round frantically. "Rocky did!"

"Take them back to their cells," said Rogers wearily. To Barton he added: "They've got courage. Too bad it's wasted."

The only thing left was a bluff, and to carry it out the young lawyer went to call on Gene Fillmore, and noted with grim amusement that he was giving a party before sailing for Europe. Smiling aside Gene's chaff, he brought up the subject of Dorothy Palmer.

"You know her pretty well, don't you?"

"I've heard of her," said Gene lightly. "She's a night club singer. Has a good voice."

"You know her better than that," said Warren grimly. "You gave her a cheque for a thousand dollars."

Gene laughed.

"Well, why the mystery, Warren? Of course I gave her a cheque!"

"She was killed last night," said Rogers quietly, "and you're involved."

"Really? Well, what d'you want me to do?"

"I think you'd better come down to my office."

"It won't take long, Warren? Remember, I don't want to miss my boat."

"I hope you don't," said Rogers meaningly as Gene excused himself to his guests.

Captain Gargan met them directly they entered Warren's office.

"Mr. Rogers, Tommy and Annabelle have just signed a confession admitting that Gene Fillmore is the head of the gang!"

Tommy jumped up furiously.

"We did not! We never said a word about you!"

"If you didn't know Gene," put in Rogers swiftly, "how did you pick him out so quickly?"

Dismayed, Tommy turned away. Gene smiled his appreciation of the clever trap.

"Frankly, I don't know what this is all about. Who are these children—yours?"

"Take them into the next room," Warren ordered. "No use stalling, Gene. We've got you."

"Got me? On what grounds?"

"I'm afraid you're headed for the chair. You were back of the Morton job."

"Really? What makes you think so?"

"Perhaps this sounds flattering, but it was such an ingenious job that it would take a mind like yours to conceive it."

"Why, I'm surprised at you, Warren! The courts call that imagination, not evidence."

"Gene, I wasn't even sure myself until those kids picked you out. Dorothy Palmer told us about them and Rocky and the Morton job. It all fits in with your European trip."

"It's the testimony of a dead woman against mine," said Gene coldly. "and you know, Warren, frankly I'm conceited enough to think I'll be believed."

"Who are you after?"

"You'll never get me," smiled Gene.

"Gene," said Warren earnestly, "let's forget for a minute which side of the fence we're on. The real tragedy of this is not Dorothy Palmer, or the Morton Store—it's those two youngsters in there. Those two kids are just as guilty of murder as the gunman who did the actual shooting."

Gene's lips curled scornfully. He was

"We've also got this," said Warren sombrely. "a sworn confession from those kids, saying that they were part of the gang."

"You mean those kids confessed to murder?"

"Read it!"

Gene laughed softly as he read.

"Well, this doesn't involve me at all. That's a very cheap trick, Warren."

The attorney shook his head.

"No, I'm just being honest with you. I'll admit we could have pushed those kids a lot further, but they would never have willingly implicated you. But it's just a question of time."

"Who are you after?"

"You."

"You'll never get me," smiled Gene.

"Gene," said Warren earnestly, "let's forget for a minute which side of the fence we're on. The real tragedy of this is not Dorothy Palmer, or the Morton Store—it's those two youngsters in there. Those two kids are just as guilty of murder as the gunman who did the actual shooting."

Gene's lips curled scornfully. He was

convinced a jury would never convict the youngsters, and he held to his belief. When an assistant wanted to speak to Rogers alone, and was asked to go into the next room, Gene found them sitting there in a strained silence.

But Tommy jumped up angrily.

"Look, you got us into this, now get us out of it!"

"I'm sorry, kids," muttered Gene.

"You're sorry. Words don't help any. Get us out of this." Tommy was frantic by now, his nerve breaking.

"D'you want us to die?" Gene shook his head grimly. "Well, then, tell them you sent us. Tell them you made us go!"

"Gene," Annabelle pleaded, "if you'd only tell them you sent us to the jewellery store we could go free."

"Stop it, will you?" rasped the gangster. "Why should I worry about your problems? I've got plenty of my own!"

"You've got to help us out. We don't want to die!" Tommy's voice broke.

"Neither do I. Maybe if I can get out I can hire lawyers to fight for you."

Then Warren came in, carrying some papers.

"Gene, in case you've changed your mind, here's a confession all ready to sign."

"Why should I, Warren? Do you think I'm crazy?"

"I've got these kids," said Warren grimly. "They haven't a chance."

"Well, how would my signing help them?"

"I might go easy," Rogers shrugged, staring into his eyes.

"That isn't enough," snapped Gene Fillmore. "I want the unconditional release of Tommy and Annabelle!"

Tense silence gripped them all as the attorney stared at the gangster. Then he handed a foolscap sheet of Gene.

"Here are the two confessions. Sign yours and you can tear up theirs."

With tears in her eyes, Annabelle stared at Gene. His face had whitened, the jaw muscles standing out like cords. He was fighting an inward battle. The desire for life was strong. But he couldn't see these innocent youngsters suffer for the crime that had really been Rocky's. Firmly he gripped the pen and wrote his signature. Without a word he handed his confession to Warren Rogers, and took the confession of Tommy and Annabelle.

"Gene, it's too bad a man with your brains went wrong. You'd have been a big shot in legitimate business."

When he left the trio alone for a moment there was silence. Then Annabelle said haltingly:

"Is there anything we can do for you?"

"No, thank you, Annabelle," he said with a return of his former grim humour. "Mr. Rogers will make me very comfortable." He tore up the confession and gave the pieces to the girl. "There's a little present from me to you. Now get out of here, both of you, and don't ever come back!"

When they left, after Annabelle had planted a sly kiss on his cheek, Gene Fillmore lit a cigarette with steady fingers and strolled to the window. Warren Rogers gripped his arm.

"Come on, Gene."

"Oh, just a minute!" said Gene, without turning, "I want to watch the kids go out."

(By permission of Radio Pictures, Ltd., starring Chester Morris and Anne Shirley.)

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"KIDNAPPED"

Alan Breck Warner Baxter
David Balfour Freddie Bartholomew
Jean MacDonald Arleen Whelan
Duke of Argyll C. Aubrey Smith
Captain Hoseason Reginald Owen
Ebenezer Balfour Miles Mander
Jamie Ralph Forbes
Ranke'ller H. B. Warner
Riach Arthur Hohl
Minister MacDougall E. E. Clive
Dominie Campbell Halliwell Hobbes
Ransome Donald Haines
Douglas Maroni Olsen
Red Fox Leonard Mudie

"THE ADVENTURES OF MARCO POLO"

Marco Polo Gary Cooper
Princess Kukulchin Sigrid Gurie
Ahmed Basil Rathbone
Binguccio Ernest Truex
Kaidu Alan Hale
Kublai Khan George Barbier
Nazama Binnie Barnes
Chen Tsu H. B. Warner
Bayan Stanley Fields
Toctai Harold Huber

"LAW OF THE UNDERWORLD"

Gene Fillmore Chester Morris
Annabelle Porter Anne Shirley
Rocky Mosby Eduardo Ciannelli
Warren Rogers Walter Abel
Tommy Brown Richard Bond
Dorothy Palmer Lee Patrick
Batsy Paul Guilfoyle
Captain Gargan Frank M. Thomas
Bill Eddie Acuff
Eddie Jack Arnold
Johnny Jack Carson
Barton Paul Stanton
Frank George Skegley
Larry Anthony Ward

"BULLDOG DRUMMOND'S PERIL"

Colonel Neilson John Barrymore
Captain Hugh Drummond John Howard
Phyllis Clavering Louise Campbell
Algy Longworth Reginald Denny
Tenny E. E. Clive
Doctor Botulian Porter Hall
Aunt Blanche Elizabeth Patterson
Green Longworth Nydia Westman
Professor Goodman Halliwell Hobbes
Sir Raymond Blantyre Matthew Boulton
Mrs. Weevens Zeffie Tilbury
Roberts Austin Freeman

"THE ADVENTURES OF MARCO POLO"

(Continued from page 8)

number of other prisoners, were the cause of the uproar. Kaidu went to the throne-room in the big tent to pass judgment, and he had scarce sat down when he was joined by Nazama. He scowled fiercely and ordered the first case to be brought before him.

Soon Chung, captain of the second corps, had wilfully and brutally put to death eight of his men without giving them benefit of trial. The witnesses against Soon Chung were the men of his own command, and they demanded the death of this murderer.

"All right, Lord Kaidu, put me to death," cried the officer. "But if you do you'll find that no soldier in this army will obey any command from any officer—including you."

"I'll have to think this over and make a decision later," announced Kaidu. "Next case." He turned to whisper to Nazama. "That Soon Chung is one of the worst brutes in the army, I'd like to kill him with my own hands, but I daren't punish him publicly." He looked up and saw Marco and Binguccio. "Who is this?"

"My troop was camped last night in the Meiji Pass and we caught these two men spying on us," was the report.

"My name is Marco Polo, Lord Kaidu," spoke the prisoner. "I am a representative of Polo Brothers, honourable merchants, and this is my servant. We come from Venice." He decided on a daring experiment. "I could tell you how to settle the case you have just heard."

Kaidu gasped at such effrontery and was going to have the prisoners immersed in boiling oil, but Nazama stayed him. She liked the build of this tall, handsome stranger. Let him first speak. Marco was ordered to step forward, and he spoke his suggestion very softly. Kaidu listened and smiled.

"Soon Chung, I acquit you of the charges against you and set you free," Kaidu called out, and the officer was freed. Then the rebel turned to the soldiers of Chung's command, who were also under arrest. "And I will also set free any man who kills him."

Soon Chung gave a cry and ran with his soldiers chasing after him. His death was not very pleasant. Thus ended the life of one of Ahmed's treacherous agents. Kaidu was so delighted that he set Marco and Binguccio free. He noted the interest in Nazama's eyes and that made him even more happy—this stranger should keep his jealous wife intrigued whilst he flirted with one of her serving wenches.

By his quick wit Marco had saved their lives, but he was very much a prisoner though he was given fine raiment and a special tent. In the days that followed he had to talk much about Venice and his people, and to pay especial attention to Nazama. It was a relief to find that kissing was not known among the Tartars, but he got rather tired of rubbing noses with the rebel's lovely but dangerous wife. In this camp Marco found one more treasure for his little bag—it was a lump of coal. It was found in the valleys and used for fuel. All the while Marco was thinking how to get back to Peking.

Marco feared that all was not well in Peking, and he was right. News came to Ahmed that the emperor's mighty army had been swept away in a typhoon, and only a handful had reached the shore in safety. The same day as this news arrived the Persian ambassador put in another appearance. He brought a jewelled casket, in which was a necklace for Princess Kukachin. Ahmed's eyes glistened. He had the ambassador cast to the vultures, and he took the casket to the princess. She was not pleased to see him in her apartments. She refused to accept the necklace, and said that her father would punish him for daring to come to her unannounced.

"Disaster has overtaken your father and his army!" Ahmed cried, his eyes triumphant. "I have decided, princess, that you will not have to undertake the long and tiresome journey to Persia, for I have decided on the seventh moon you will be my wife. You will share my throne and my glory as sovereign of the greatest empire the world has ever known."

"You inhuman beast!" she cried in horror. "You don't at the moment think me qualified to be your husband," Ahmed smiled mockingly. "But time will convince you of your error. I have had seventy-eight wives already, and I have profited by experience."

When alone the princess summoned her maid Visakha and told her the dire news that her father was probably dead and most of the mighty army destroyed. She must



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go to the Tower of Eagles and dispatch one of these birds with a message.

"How far would he have gone?"
"He would be in Chingtien by now," thought the maid. "If he travelled fast."

"He would travel fast!" cried the princess. "Send the eagle to Chingtien."

That eagle was sighted by some of Kaidu's men on outpost duty, and it was shot down and the message was brought to Kaidu's tent. The rebel handed the message to his prisoner.

"Tell Marco Polo that I need him," Kukachin had written, and she had drawn a small arrow.

"You're quite a lady's man," mocked Kaidu. "What's your secret?"

"Kaidu! Let me go back!" desperately pleaded Marco. "She is in danger. I must help her."

But Kaidu had found a companion for his wife and he refused. He warned Marco not to try to escape. Marco went off to his tent in a rage. He paced up and down, and then went outside to try to think. It was then that he saw Toctai, and recognised him by the scar.

The rogue had managed to get into the Tartar camp, and Marco soon found out the man had bribed his way to the position of night guard to Kaidu's tent. Now Toctai did not know that his master had planned to destroy Marco, and when the Venetian beckoned him to his tent he thought that Marco had just acted up to Ahmed's instructions. Suspecting nothing, he told Marco much news of importance. He had heard from Ahmed. The princess was a prisoner and would soon be Ahmed's wife. Very soon Ahmed would rule the whole of Cathay—directly Kaidu was dead.

To Binguccio's amazement his master aided and abetted the scheme to kill Kaidu, but when Toctai did rush in to pierce the sleeping Kaidu with his lance it was the shield held by Marco that deflected the blow.

"That is one of Ahmed's men!" Marco cried as the guard rushed in. "Seize him!"

"Traitor! Traitor!" the wretch screamed as they dragged him away.

"You saved my life!" gasped the grateful rebel.

"It was nothing personal, Kaidu," blandly answered Marco. "It's just that I'd do anything to annoy Ahmed."

After that the two men had a heart-to-heart talk, and Kaidu explained why he was in revolt against the emperor.

"Because my people have been taxed to the point of starvation. I don't mind paying proper tax to Kublai Khan, but I won't pay taxes to Ahmed for his private treasury. I and my people would rather die fighting."

"Ahmed!" Marco snapped his fingers. "So he's the cause of your rebellion. I don't blame you. There is one more thing you ought to know."

"What?"
"You must take your army to Pekin, storm the palace—"

"My army against all the forces of Kublai Khan."

"Kublai Khan and his forces have gone to war against Japan, and Ahmed is in command at the palace. That's what the message from the princess meant. Ahmed is going to marry her and make himself emperor."

"Ahmed! Emperor of China!" shouted Kaidu. "Better the Black Plague."

"You're the only one to prevent it. The road to Pekin is open to you. No one can stop you."

September 17th, 1938.

"But the palace walls. I have no siege machinery."

"You'll have to leave it to me to get you through the walls," Marco said with confident assurance.

The Siege of Pekin

AHMED was preparing for his wedding when Bayan appeared to report that the emperor was returning.

"With the whole army?" Ahmed asked in alarm.

"No, only his bodyguard—a few hundred men. We could kill them all before they reach the palace gates."

"Let them come in," decided Ahmed. "Welcome his Majesty with the usual ceremony. Do as I say!" he cried as the man hesitated. "And bring the princess here at once."

A weary, sorrowful Kublai Khan was surprised to find so much gaiety in Pekin. Why all these flags and banners? He found it was in preparation for a wedding. In his own throne-room he learnt from the mocking lips of Ahmed the name of the bridegroom. Ahmed placed a document before the frightened old man.

"It is necessary for you to sign this at once. It is merely formal acknowledgement that when I am married to your daughter and you are dead, I am recognised as the rightful heir to your throne."

"You black-livered traitor!" cried the emperor, and called for his guards in vain. He refused to sign until Ahmed whipped back some curtains to reveal Kukachin gagged and bound tightly to a post close to a cage full of hungry vultures, who were straining at their chains to get at her. The emperor signed the fatal document.

Ahmed clapped his hands.

"Release the princess!" he ordered of his slaves. "And see that she dresses for the marriage ceremony."

It was a surprise to Chen Tsu to see Marco Polo again. The Venetian had no time to waste on philosophies. He wanted all the fire powder that the little chemist possessed, and it was for Ahmed's wedding festival. Also Chen Tsu must help him get into the palace, and the little Chinaman made him strip, then he painted his body a rich brown and garbed him in the scanty attire of a Malay. Finally, Marco wound a turban round his head and gave instructions about the destination of the fire-boxes he had ordered.

Kukachin had been dressed by Visikha for the ceremony, but the unhappy princess was contemplating committing suicide by throwing herself from her balcony when a strange, brown-skinned man appeared. What a cry of delight when she recognised Marco, but he had no time for kissing. He told her to delay the marriage ceremony as long as she could. A cry from the walls brought him out on the balcony. He rushed back to his princess.

"It's Kaidu at last!" he cried. "I must go and open the gates to him. I will return, beloved."

From the citadel tower Ahmed saw Kaidu's approach, and he gave orders that all the gates to the city be closed but the west gate and the gate to the palace. As Kaidu charged into Pekin followed by his soldiers the palace gate closed in his face. Then the west gate closed, and Kaidu's army looked as if it were trapped. Arrows began to pour down from the walls and ramparts on the Tartar soldiers.

But by the palace gate there was an innocent-looking horse and cart. It had bolted up the street, and from one

of its numerous boxes gunpowder had streamed. Chen Tsu had done his work well. The horse was freed and the trail of gunpowder fired.

Those gates went up in a sheet of flame, and then the Tartars charged into the palace in a surprise attack.

Meanwhile, in the palace the princess had done everything possible to delay the ceremony, but at last she had been forced to stand before the priest. Yet when she had to make her vows she prolonged them.

"I, Kukachin, of the house and blood of Genghis Khan through my father, Kublai, the Khan of Khans, and my royal mother Tofar, who was the daughter of Ildabar, who was the daughter of Queen Dir-See—" It was at that precise moment that the palace gate went up in the air.

Ahmed shouted to the girl to go on, and she was starting all over again from the beginning when the doors of the chapel burst open and there was a wild-eyed man holding a knife and sword. Then the villainous schemer recognised his enemy and drew his sword.

Ahmed fought with desperate fury, but before this young giant he had to give way. His sword broke. Marco seized the man in his arms, and it was on the edge of the void that separated Ahmed's quarters that they struggled. The emperor held his daughter close as the two men fought like furies. Marco broke his enemy's hold, pushed him over the void, and held him for a moment.

"I shall be going through Damascus soon, Ahmed!" cried Marco. "I'll tell your seventy-eight wives what has happened to you." He shook off the clinging fingers and Ahmed crashed to his doom.

Not many minutes later Marco brought Kaidu into the presence of the emperor. The rebel was surprised because he thought Kublai Khan was away fighting Japan.

"We beg to welcome you, our honoured cousin, Lord Kaidu!" cried the emperor, with something of his old pomp. "We understand that you and your people have been victims of injustice. The cause of that has been removed. It will never be repeated. I have assembled the most beautiful maidens of our court, and I beg leave to present them to you as a slight token of my high regard. You will take them with you, as your wives."

Everybody laughed, and everybody seemed happy. Marco whispered to Binguccio that now was the time to secure the trade agreements. Meanwhile he would go with Princess Kukachin into the gardens and feed the fish. The Oriental moon smiled down upon them. The two young people sighed happily, for it was the seventh moon.

"You should go across the sea to become the Queen of Persia."

"Yes."

"It's a perilous journey, but we Venetians are the world's best sailors as well as the world's best business men." He put his arm round her slim shoulders. "I think you should ask your father to appoint me as your protector on the voyage."

"I'll ask him, Marco Polo—and he'll agree." She snuggled closer. "How long does it take to get from here to Persia?"

"Oh, years and years." He kissed her. "I might even lose my way and find myself in Venice."

(By permission of United Artists Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Gary Cooper as Marco Polo, Sigrid Gurie as Princess Kukachin, and Basil Rathbone as Ahmed.)

ARE YOU IN OUR GRAND COLLECTING SCHEME?



ARE you collecting FOOTER-STAMPS? They're all the rage, and you really must be in this wonderful scheme! This is what to do: Every week in BOY'S CINEMA we are giving "Footer-Stamps"—pictures of six different actions on the football field. The object of this great stamp-game being to score as many "goals" as possible in time for the second prize-giving next week, when up to 300 footballs are to be awarded.

TO SCORE A "GOAL" you must collect a complete set of six stamps (they're numbered 1 to 6), made up of the following movements: **KICK-OFF—DRIBBLE—TACKLE—HEADER—SHOT—GOAL.**

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We give ten more stamps this week. Cut them out and try to score a "goal" with them; then keep all your stamps until you get some more in our next issue.

If you want to score some other quick "goals" to swell your total, remember that "Footer-Stamps" are also appearing in "Sports Budget" and "Triumph."

Keep at it, pals, because the September contest will close next week, and we shall then ask you how many "goals" you have scored. Up to 300 of the FREE Footballs are going to be awarded then—for readers scoring the highest number of "goals" with "Footer-Stamps" for the month. More footballs will be given in the next month.

Don't send any stamps until we tell you how and where next week, when the closing date will be announced. RULES: Up to 300 Footballs will be awarded in the September contest to the readers declaring and sending in the largest number of "goals" scored with "Footer-Stamps." The Editor may extend or amend the prize list in case of too many ties.

Each "goal" must consist of a set of "Footer-Stamps" Nos. 1 to 6, inclusive—all claims for prizes to be made on the proper coupon (to be given next week). No allowance made for any coupon or stamps mutilated or lost or delayed in the post or otherwise. No correspondence! No one connected with this paper may enter, and the Editor's decision will be final and legally binding throughout.

(N.B.—"Footer-Stamps" may also be collected from the following papers: "GEM," "MAGNET," "MODERN BOY," "DETECTIVE WEEKLY," "TRIUMPH," "WILD WEST WEEKLY," "THRILLER," "SPORTS BUDGET" and "CHAMPION.")

OVERSEAS READERS! You pals who are far away—you're in this great scheme also, and special awards will be given for the best scores from overseas readers. There will be a special closing date for you as well, of course!

**Ten More
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To Save!**



"BULLDOG DRUMMOND'S PERIL"

(Continued from page 16.)

Roberts. Why he should disappear is a mystery to me."

"Mystery?" ejaculated Neilson. "It's all a mystery. Goodman blown to bits, Botulian gone, Roberts gone, and now Drummond gone."

"And you've no idea where Drummond can be?"

"They've found his car abandoned in a village called Market Rutherford."

"Not very helpful," replied the millionaire as he got up from his chair. "Well, I hope you'll find him and clear this thing up."

The moment he had gone Neilson picked up the telephone and spoke into it.

"Blantyre's just leaving the building. Have him closely followed. I fancy he knows something," he said.

Actually there were others besides Colonel Neilson who had had the idea of scouring Market Rutherford in search of Drummond, for Longworth, his wife, and Phyllis Clavering having heard from Neilson that Drummond's car had been found in the village had immediately rushed down there post-haste, and the trio were doing a house-to-house visitation in the hope of learning something about the missing man. And chance brought Phyllis after many failures to the house where he had been made prisoner.

Botulian, who opened the door himself to the girl, was only able to repress a start with difficulty when she told him her errand. But his smile was disarming as he invited her into the house, for he was anxious to know exactly what was going on.

She in her turn suspected no trap. He had given his name readily enough to her, and she had recognised it in a moment. And as he expressed surprise at her fiancé's disappearance and she had no idea of the part he had been playing, she told him all she knew readily enough. Finally she rose to go, but here he spoke, and now her heart missed a beat at the expression on his face.

"Sorry to have to disagree with you, my dear young lady," he said, "but I shall have to keep you here for a bit."

She stared at him. Fear had suddenly leaped into her heart.

"What d'you mean?" she managed to get out; but she had already guessed.

"Just what I said, my dear. You see, Captain Drummond happens to be here, and my prisoner; and you know far—"

But she never heard the rest of the sentence. She made a wild rush for the door, but Botulian was on her and another man had appeared suddenly. And despite her frantic struggles her hands were quickly bound behind her and she was flung on to the sofa.

Botulian addressed the man. "That will do," he said. "She won't give us any more trouble now, I think."

The man slouched away, and the girl heard a door slam in the distance. Botulian spoke quietly but venomously. "If you're thinking of screaming, I shouldn't," he said. "Because you will be gagged then, and it won't be comfortable."

"What d'you want with me?" she demanded.

A pitying smile came to his lips. "Actually I didn't want you at all," he replied. "But as you were silly enough to butt into my affairs I'm sorry to have to say that like your fiancé—"

He shrugged his shoulders. "Seems a pity, I admit, having to kill both of you, but what am I to do? It's your own fault."

Her eyes half closed. A deadly fear was surging over her, but as she opened

Drummond leaped into the hall, snatching a sword from the wall as he did so. But Botulian had emerged from his hiding-place, and now the girl saw with horror as he slashed at Drummond with the whip that he evidently was well accustomed to handle. And it seemed to her as he went on slashing at her lover furiously, holding him well at bay, that there could be only one possible end to this dreadful contest.

She was struggling furiously all the time as the two men circled the hall. Botulian was lashing fiercely, savagely, and raw weals were showing on Drummond's arms. Then suddenly an extra savage lash from the whip snapped Drummond's sword in two, but in a flash Drummond had snatched down another from the wall. And this time he hurled himself at Botulian regardless of the whip, pinning his arm against the wall.

It was a scene she never forgot. Botulian's other hand had gone up over his head and his eyes were terror-stricken. Drummond had stepped back and his sword was above his head. He seemed to be gloating over his success.

"Like it, Botulian?" he jeered. "Don't—don't!" screamed the other. And then a quiet voice came from behind.

"Drop that sword, Drummond, you're covered. By Jove, Roberts, your disguise is perfect!"

Drummond spoke then. "This isn't Roberts, Sir Raymond, it's Botulian himself."

He heard a startled exclamation from Blantyre, but his voice was level when he spoke again.

"Afraid it won't matter a lot to you either way, Drummond," he said. "I've got the whip hand now and—"

But the words died in his throat as another voice broke in, and Drummond realised in a flash that it was Neilson.

"I think not, Blantyre," he said, and in a moment the room was filled with policemen, and both Blantyre and Botulian were in handcuffs and Phyllis was in her lover's arms.

Neilson was studying Botulian closely. "So you're Dr. Botulian, after all?" he queried. "But I'd like to know—"

"Oh, that's easy, colonel," interrupted Drummond. "Sir Raymond here can put you wise if only he'll talk. Eh, Sir Raymond?"

And then as the other merely scowled, Drummond went on easily:

"Goodman wouldn't sell, and Sir Raymond here tried Botulian, and the good doctor agreed to make an appointment with the professor and let Roberts take his place. That was to be his alibi. However, a better idea occurred to him, and he turned up an hour earlier and—oh, well, I'll fill in all the blanks later if you want 'em."

Neilson elucked grimly. "We'll make a detective of you yet, Hugh," he said.

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them again a wild thrill surged across her, for at that moment on the staircase behind Botulian she saw a shirt-sleeved figure creeping stealthily down—a figure that even as she saw him lay a finger on his lips. Drummond!

But Botulian had seen the hope leap into her eyes. And in a flash he had slipped behind the thick curtains.

For a few seconds there was deathly silence. Drummond came creeping stealthily down the stairs, and Phyllis saw that there was a gun in his hand. She guessed that he had failed to see where Botulian was hiding, and she was signalling him frantically with her eyes.

Lower and lower came Drummond, his gun in his hand sweeping circles. He had failed to see Botulian, who now had a whip in his hand. And then suddenly the girl gave a scream as a long, sinuous tongue leaped out swiftly from behind the curtains and Drummond's gun clattered to the floor.

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TUESDAY
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"SQUADRON OF HONOUR"

Starring **DON TERRY**

A hundred thousand Men on the Trail of a Cold-blooded Killer

As the result of a diabolical frame-up the National Commander of the American Legion is arrested for murder, and Dan Blaine, a young District Attorney, sets out to establish his innocence—and enlists the aid of a hundred thousand Legionnaires to capture the actual killer. A novel drama, starring Don Terry with Mary Russell, Marc Lawrence and Thurston Hall



The Way of a Schemer

SOME little trouble had been experienced in getting the horses lined up for the Thompson Handicap, the sixth race on the day's card at the Imperial Racetrack, Claremont, but the three-year-olds were off, at last, to a perfect start.

Green Bay, the favourite, took the lead almost immediately, and held it for more than three-quarters of a mile; but a horse that makes all the running in the early stages of a mile and a half race seldom wins, and long before the straight was reached Green Bay had fallen back, and Apple Pie was in front.

"Come on, Round Robin!" shouted Norman Craig, a thick-lipped and rather ugly fellow of about thirty-six, who was seated between two other men in Box 8 on the grand stand.

The horse he had named was lying seventh, and had not been mentioned by the commentator whose voice issued at intervals from loudspeakers in every enclosure.

"Attaboy, Skyrocket!" bellowed the man on Craig's right, whose name was Steve Lawlor, and who might have been good-looking—in a sinister sort of way—but for the fact that his face was heavily pock-marked.

Skyrocket had not been mentioned up to then, and Craig bestowed a scornful grin upon its supporter.

"Come on, Round Robin!" shrieked Eve Rogers, a beautiful girl next to the third man, and her sea-green eyes glistened with excitement.

The third man, John Blair Kimball, an arms magnate who owned horses, remained silently intent upon the race, and the voice of the commentator rang out:

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"Apple Pie is still leading by a length. Round Robin is now second, and Skyrocket is in third position. Green Bay and Firebird have faded, and it looks like they'll finish out of the money. They're rounding the last turn—and here they come into the straight."

"Come on, Round Robin!" cried Eve Rogers.

Five furlongs from the judge's box, Round Robin, Skyrocket, and Apple Pie were running head and head.

"They're running so close together," boomed the voice from the loudspeakers, "it's anybody's race! It looks like a blanket finish!"

The three horses swept past the winning-post apparently in a dead line, and Craig exclaimed:

"Not a whisker between them!"

Eve Rogers, who was Kimball's secretary, asked eagerly which won.

"Too close for the naked eye," Lawlor declared.

"Oh, chief," Craig began, "did you ever see anything like that? I—"

Kimball silenced him with a jerk of his arm which was followed by a jerk of his head.

"That man's the reason for our being in this town," he said in an undertone.

Craig looked round over his shoulder and saw a heavily built man, of distinguished appearance, descending the steps of the grand stand in company with a broad-shouldered young giant whose clean-shaven face suggested strength of purpose.

"Who is he?" Craig inquired.

"Robert Metcalf," was the reply.

"National Commander of the American Legion."

"Who's the young fellow?"

"I don't know."

The "young fellow" was Dan Blaine, and he was District Attorney—and not at the race meeting for pleasure.

"There's another bookie," he said to Robert Metcalf, and the man he had indicated whispered hurriedly to a client who had been about to make a bet:

"Nix—there comes the D.A. See you later."

Bookmakers are not allowed by law on the race-tracks of California. Dan turned to an attendant who was standing on one of the steps.

"Can you tell me where Mr. Tanner's office is?"

"Right down this aisle," was the reply, "and then take the first stairway to your right."

Dan and his companion went off along a gangway between the rows of open boxes; and just then the voice of the commentator was heard again:

"Result of the sixth race. Round Robin first, Skyrocket second, and Apple Pie third."

"I win ten dollars!" rejoiced Eve Rogers. "Thanks for your tip, Mr. Kimball."

Kimball smiled indulgently.

The amplified voice of the commentator arrested the progress of people who were making their way to the totalisator building which was situated at the back of the stand:

"One moment, ladies and gentlemen.

May I have your attention, please? Mr. Lou Tanner, operating director of this track, has asked me to announce that the current meeting has been granted a ten-day extension by the State Racing Association. New stable entries and a schedule of important handicaps will be offered for your pleasure. Thank you."

Kimball rubbed his smoothly shaven chin.

"Very convenient," he remarked. "Boys, how would you like to see the Kimball colours entered on this track?"

"You're not serious?" Craig turned to stare. "They pay off in peanuts here!"

"I'm not interested in the pay-off," returned Kimball. "With my horses entered, they'll think I'm in town merely for the races." He rose to his feet. "I'll see you two at the hotel later. Miss Rogers and I are going to call on Mr. Tanner."

Dan Blaine and Robert Metcalf were in Lou Tanner's office by this time, and the full-faced and somewhat flashily dressed operating director was scowling at the young District Attorney.

"Look here, Blaine," he exploded; "the mere fact that you're D.A. doesn't give you the right to tell me how to run my race-track!"

"Just a minute, Tanner." Dan's voice was stern. "Long before you got this extension you came to an understanding with the commander. What we thought was a gentleman's agreement."

He emphasised the word "thought," and Metcalf said:

"You gave us your word that this meeting would positively end as of to-day, with the result that we set the date of our Convention so that the track would close before the legionnaires came to town."

Tanner shifted uncomfortably in his chair behind a littered desk.

"Well, I took it up with the board," he growled, "but I was overruled."

"Don't alibi, Tanner!" rapped Dan. "You're the board at this track. You lay down the rules."

Tanner became defiant.

"All right, so what?" he challenged. "Convention or no Convention, this track stays open. And you can't stop

me, because it's a licensed and legitimate business."

"There are some things about it that are neither licensed nor legitimate," retorted Dan. "Under-cover bookies, for instance!"

"Aw, now you're just jumping to conclusions."

"Maybe he is," Metcalf thundered, "but here's one conclusion you can bank on—a hundred thousand legionnaires are not coming to town for your personal benefit. These boys have better uses for their bard-earped cash."

Tanner spread his hands.

"I'm doing them a favour by keeping the track open," he asserted. "The boys'll be out for a good time, and I'll give 'em—"

"A good rooking!" Dan scornfully completed.

A telephone-bell rang, and Tanner answered the call. His secretary in the outer office informed him that Mr. Kimball wished to see him about a stable entry.

"I'll see him right away," Tanner responded. "I'm practically through with these gentlemen." He put down the telephone and rose to his feet. "The track stays open, and that's final."

"All right, Tanner," said Dan grimly, "but remember I'll have a squad of men watching this place like hawks. And if we pick up one under-cover bookie around here, be prepared to take what's coming to you."

Kimball was waiting with Eve in the outer office, and as Dan and Metcalf emerged from Tanner's room the arms magnate advanced towards them.

"Mr. Metcalf, I believe?" he said in well-assumed surprise.

"Yes," nodded Metcalf.

"My name is Kimball. I think we've met before—in Washington."

"Of course," Metcalf recalled, "at the Gridiron dinner."

"Correct. This is Miss Rogers, my secretary."

Metcalf bowed and introduced Dan, who gazed at Eve with open admiration.

"Mr. Tanner will see you now," said the secretary; and Kimball explained that he was about to enter some horses for the following week's races.

"We'd rather hear you were withdrawing them," said Dan.

"Why, is there anything wrong?" asked Eve.

"Well, that's not the point," said Metcalf. "It's just that the extension period clashes with our American Legion Convention."

"It might prove somewhat distracting to the boys," added Dan.

"And to their pocket-books," suggested Eve with a smile.

"I see," said Kimball gravely. "May I offer a suggestion?"

"Why, certainly," welcomed Metcalf.

"There's an old saying, 'In a multiplicity of counsellors there is wisdom.' Why don't you gentlemen have dinner with us this evening, and we could talk the thing over?"

"Well, thank you," murmured Metcalf, "but we don't want to trouble you with our problems."

"It would be a privilege, I assure you."

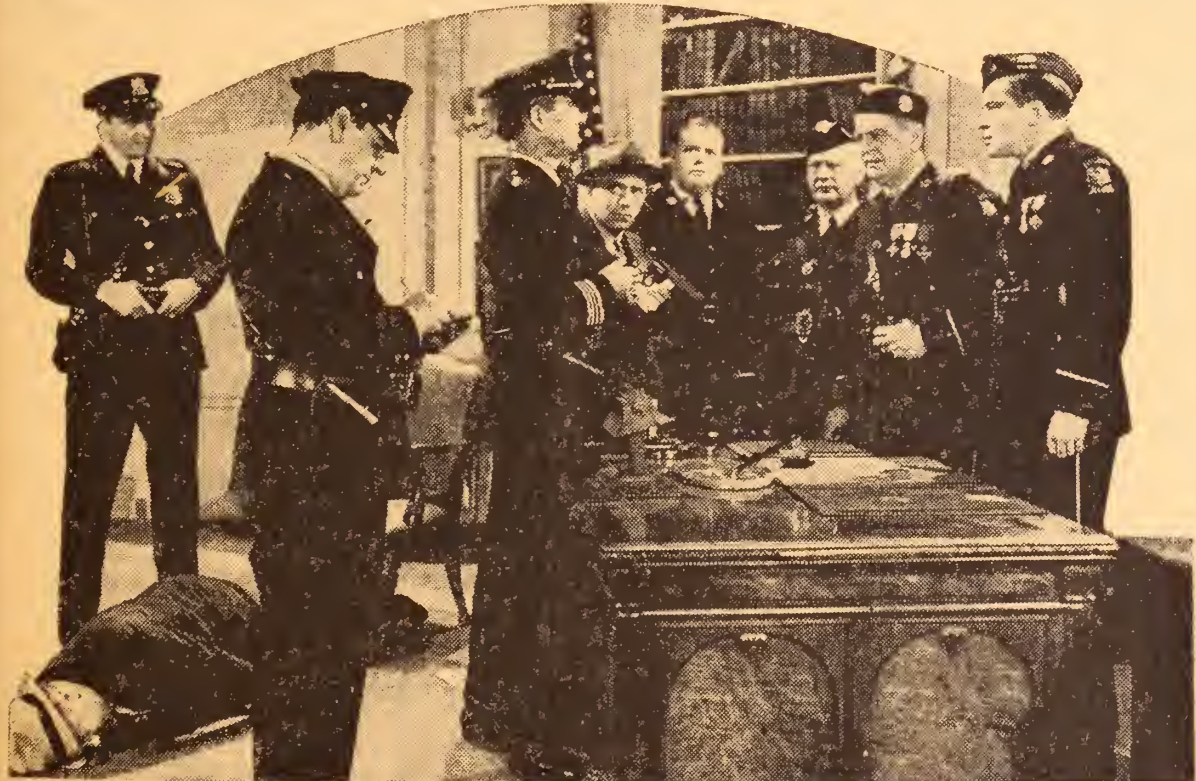
"That's very kind of you," said Dan, his eyes on Eve; and Kimball promptly assumed that the invitation was accepted.

"At the Union Hotel, then, at eight," he said.

"We'll be there," promised Metcalf.

The secretary opened the door of Tanner's room, and as Kimball and Eve walked in at it Dan and Metcalf went out at the other door. The grand stand was empty; the enclosures were emptying.

"Who is this Kimball?" inquired Dan curiously, on the way to the ear park.



Finley took out a handkerchief and with it picked up the gun. "A silencer, eh?" he barked. "One shot fired. Whose gun is this?"

"One of the most dangerous men in America," Metcalf replied.

"What?" Dan stopped short in astonishment.

"He represents the arms and munitions industry."

"Why should he want to do us a favour?"

"We'll find that out to-night," said Metcalf, "at dinner."

Dan Makes an Appointment

THE Union Hotel was the largest and most expensive of all the hotels in Claremont. It towered above other buildings in Franklin Avenue, and its dining-room was a magnificent pillared apartment.

The table at which Dan and Metcalf sat opposite Eve and Kimball that evening was close to one of the gilded pillars and just sufficiently remote from the orchestra that provided a musical accompaniment to a well-chosen meal.

Eve looked exquisite in a gown that set off her slim shapeliness, and Dan found her all the more attractive because she had brains as well as beauty. Over coffee and liqueurs Kimball informed his two guests that he had not entered any of his horses in view of what had been said.

"Incidentally, commander," he went on, "I talked with several stable-owners this afternoon about withdrawing theirs."

"Yes?" Metcalf raised his brows slightly.

"I don't think it would be difficult to kill that racing extension," Kimball waved a half-consumed cigar. "After all, you can't have a horse race without horses."

"Poor Mr. Tanner!" laughed Eve. "None of you see it from his standpoint. And, you know, there are two sides to the issue."

"Sure," said Dan, "our side and the wrong side!"

"I'm afraid," said Kimball, "we older folks don't view things quite the same as you younger ones." He winked at Eve. "I feel sure you'd prefer the attractions of the roof-garden."

Eve was quite ready to act upon the hint.

"I might, if I could find a trustworthy guide," she murmured.

"You've found one!" Dan instantly declared. "Will you excuse us?"

"Of course," encouraged Kimball.

Dan and Eve crossed the room in the direction of the lounge and the elevators, and Kimball followed them with his eyes.

"They make an attractive couple, don't they?"

Metcalf ignored the question. He had accepted a cigar, but the cigar was still unlighted in his hand.

"Let's not beat about the bush, Kimball," he said almost brusquely. "You asked me to come here because you wanted something. What is it?"

"I'll get right to the point," Kimball struck a match and held it across the table so that Metcalf had practically no option but to accept a light and smoke the cigar. "There's a statute before Congress called the 'Arms Control Bill.' Are you familiar with it?"

"Thoroughly."

"Then you know that it prohibits the sale of arms to private individuals." Kimball extinguished the match and dropped it into an ashtray. "A very unfortunate piece of legislation."

"For the arms manufacturers, you mean," said Metcalf pointedly.

Kimball smiled, but not as though he were amused.

"Now I'll get right down to cases, September 24th, 1938.

commander," he said with an air of bluntness. "At the moment Congress is about evenly divided on the Bill. But I feel certain that if the American Legion were to go on record as being opposed to it—"

"Just a moment," Metcalf interrupted sharply. "Your idea of the American Legion is not entirely correct. To begin with, we're not a political organisation."

"Of course not," purred Kimball, "but as mere citizens the Legion is entitled to express its opinion, and the opinion of any two million citizens is bound to have a potent effect on Congress."

"Granted. But there's one little point you're overlooking."

"What's that?"

Metcalf spoke slowly but with warmth.

"We're not interested in the defeat of the Arms Control Bill," he stated.

"In fact, we'd like to see it pass."

"Why?"

"Because the unchecked traffic in firearms is responsible for the wholesale arming of criminals."

"But what about the law-abiding citizen?" countered Kimball. "This Bill would render him defenceless against armed criminals."

"Step the supply of firearms at the source and you'll have no armed criminals. In fact, crime would take a nose-dive. There's nothing so yellow as an underworld rat without his gun."

"Well, I guess that's all in the way you look at it. You see it one way, I see it another." Kimball leaned across the table. "I could offer you great incentive, commander, to see it my way."

"I'm afraid you couldn't," said Metcalf.

The roof-garden of the Union Hotel formed a perfect setting for romance, under the stars of a June night, as Dan and Eve leaned together against a parapet high above Franklin Avenue. It was not really dark, but it was dark enough for the city spread beneath them to be invested with an almost fairy-like charm.

"How long are you going to be in town?" Dan inquired.

"About a week," Eve replied.

"A week? That's rather short, but I think I can arrange it."

"Arrange what?"

"To show you some of the high-spots of the city."

She tilted her head at him.

"Won't you be rather busy with your convention?"

"Oh, I'll manage," he assured her.

"How does it happen that a busy District Attorney finds time to bother with the Legion?"

"It does crowd me a bit," admitted Dan, "but it's worth it. The Legion is a great organisation."

"Oh, yes, of course," she nodded, and added slyly: "It's good politics, isn't that it? Helps to further your career."

If a man had dared to say such a thing to him he would have been furious; but he could not be furious with her.

"For a young lady who's old enough to vote," he rebuked, "you show very poor judgment. Some people do things for unselfish reasons—or hadn't you heard? Maybe it's the business you're in that—"

"What's wrong with our business?" she interrupted. "It's legitimate, like any other."

"I have a conclusive argument against that."

"Let's have it."

"It's down at the Legion Post." He pointed northwards over the parapet.

"Come there to-morrow, and I'll show you around."

"It's a date," said she.

They descended to the dining-room soon afterwards, and Kimball and Metcalf rose from their table as they approached it.

"Well, how was the roof?" asked Kimball.

"Very illuminating," Eve replied.

"We'd better run along, Dan," said Robert Metcalf. "Busy day to-morrow."

After the arms magnate and his secretary had been bidden good-night, Dan turned again to Eve.

"Don't forget that appointment to-morrow," he said.

"Don't worry, I'll be there."

Craig Takes a Look Round

NEXT morning, members of the American Legion poured into Claremont from all parts of the country. They arrived by train and car and motor-coach; men who had served in the Great War and now were part of a great peace army in uniforms of navy blue.

The barracks at the Legion Post, in Harrison Avenue, had engulfed more than five hundred of them by the time Dan entered the hall of the main building, and there were thousands still to come.

In one corner of the hall more than a score of legionnaires had gathered round four comrades who were professional singers and who were rendering an old army song as a quartette. Near the foot of the stairs that led up to the executive offices a clever mimic, named Sid Hinkle, was entertaining another little crowd with one of his stories, and Dan paused to listen to the variety of voices in which the story was told.

He himself was dressed in a lounge suit and a soft felt hat, but he was recognised by men from as far away as Texas and Oklahoma.

"Good work, Sid," he said when the story was finished. "Tell 'em another."

"Okay, Dan."

The mimic embarked upon some more impersonations, and Dan ascended the stairs and passed through a large ante-room into an office where Robert Metcalf was seated at a massive desk, an imposing figure in his uniform as National Commander, with three other officers around him.

"Good-morning, gentlemen."

Dan saluted and walked over to the desk.

"Chief, the race-track extension is practically a bust," he said. "Most of the stable-owners have withdrawn their entries."

"Splendid!" boomed Metcalf. "That will settle Tanner's hash!"

"You don't seem to like this Tanner," commented one of the officers, a bulky State Commander named Denton.

"I should say not," returned Metcalf emphatically, "and I'm not particular who knows it either."

An orderly entered the room to announce:

"Mr. Tanner to see you, sir."

"Speak of the devil!" exclaimed Metcalf. "You'd better see him, Dan. I might be tempted to break his neck."

Dan nodded and went out into the ante-room, where the race-track director was waiting.

"Hallo, Tanner!" he said. "How's business?"

Tanner glared at him.

"I want to see Metcalf!" he snapped.

"He's busy," said Dan. "Very busy."

"You guys think you've put something over on me, don't you?"

"Gobel?" Dan exclaimed. "Why, that's the man who was reported missing three days ago!"



"It looks that way."
 "All right, you win." Tanner changed his tone. "But if Metcalf'll only meet me halfway, I'll give the Legion a break."
 "You'll give the Legion a break?" echoed Dan incredulously.
 "Sure—if you'll get the stable-owners to re-enter their horses, I'll put on a Legion Derby."
 "It's out!" Dan flipped a hand contemptuously.
 "But I'll give the Legion half the take."
 "It's still out!"
 "What do you know about it?" demanded Tanner, losing his temper. "I'll take it up with Metcalf."
 "I told you he's busy."
 "Well, I'll find out for myself!"
 He turned towards the door Dan had closed behind him, but was promptly pulled away from it.
 "Wait a minute, Tanner," said Dan firmly. "I'll give the commander a memo of your proposition. You're going out!" He beckoned to the orderly. "Show this man the door!"
 Tanner was practically bundled out to the stairs.
 About half an hour afterwards Dan was mingling with some of his old war-time comrades in the grounds of the Post, and Robert Metcalf was still in conference when John Blair Kimball entered the ante-room with Craig and asked the orderly to tell the commander that he had called to see him.
 The orderly disappeared into the office, and Kimball said in a low voice to Craig.
 "Study the lay-out carefully. Make a mental photograph of it."
 Craig nodded; and then the State Commander with Metcalf came out from his room, followed by the orderly, who said:

"This way, please."
 Kimball and Craig passed in at the double doors.
 "How are you, commander?" said Kimball. "My associate, Norman Craig."
 Metcalf bowed behind his desk.
 "How are you, Mr. Craig?" he said. "I'm glad you came, Kimball. I want to thank you for killing that racing extension."
 "Oh, that's quite all right!" returned Kimball affably. "If there is anything else I can do for you, just call on me."
 "Same terms?" asked Metcalf with a smile. "No strings?"
 "No strings."
 Craig had been taking stock of the room.
 "Do you mind if I look round?" he inquired.
 "Of course not," Metcalf replied. "Help yourself." He pointed to double-doors in the wall on his right. "Take a look at the museum."
 Craig thanked him and went off into the adjoining room, in which all manner of war trophies were arranged upon baize-covered boards, and flags decorated the walls. He opened another door and looked out into a wide corridor that led to the stairs and the hall.
 Kimball said to Metcalf:
 "You know, commander, I haven't given up hope that you may change your mind on that Arms Control Bill."
 "Not a chance!" Metcalf's face hardened, and his voice had an edge to it.
 "You could write your own ticket with our industry—an important executive post, if you like, with financial security for life. Or we'll back you in

a political career. Just name your preference."
 "You're barking up the wrong tree, Kimball! I'm for that Bill heart and soul. In fact, I'm going to ask the Convention to go on record in its favour!"
 "Well," said Kimball, in no way abashed, "I guess I'm wasting my time."
 "And mine!" was the sharp rejoinder.
 Craig reappeared from the museum, and he and Kimball departed together. A big black saloon was waiting for them outside the Post, and in it they returned to the Union Hotel, where they ascended to the sitting-room of the suite Kimball had booked on his arrival in Claremont.
 A desk had been installed in the sitting-room at his request, and he sat down at it.
 "Get me the classified telephone directory," he said; and Craig found the desired volume and handed it to him.
 He turned the pages till he came to one headed "Costumes," and Craig looked over his shoulder as he exclaimed:
 "Here's the very thing! Gobel's 'Costumes and uniforms rented and repaired. Theatrical make-up a speciality.'" He tore out the sheet and handed it over. "Go down there and arrange everything for to-morrow morning. And mind it's all finished before the parade starts."
 "Right," said Craig, and he folded the sheet and put it in his pocket.
 Eve arrived at the Post about an hour after her employer had left it, and Dan, informed of her presence, hastened across the hall to meet her.
 "I'm glad you kept your promise," he said. "Come on, and I'll start you
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right on your sight-seeing tour with Exhibit 'A.'"

He led her to the stairs, and up the stairs and along the wide corridor to the door Craig had opened.

"Post Museum," she read, and crinkled her brows at him. "Museum for what?"

"A special collection of war trophies," he replied. "The commander's pet hobby."

They entered the big room, and she gazed with interest at the guns and swords and bayonets, and other army weapons displayed upon the baize-covered boards.

"Well, your organisation and ours show the same line of goods," she remarked mockingly.

"We show them for quite a different purpose," said Dan, grave as any judge. "Some of those guns were carried into battle by our boys—and all that came back were the guns."

She had not paid any attention to the flags about the room, some of them in tatters, but he marched her over to one of them.

"This flag," he said, represents the outfit that went through Chateau Thierry. That one, the boys who made the big push at the Marne."

"That's very impressive," she murmured.

"The whole story of the Legion is impressive," he assured her. "It's a story of marching men. During the war they marched to take trenches and to kill. When the war was over they marched the city pavements, trying to find a new meaning and place in life. Do you remember those days?"

She shook her head.

"I was rather young then," she said. "So was I," said he, "but not too young to realise that we'd returned to a world that had to be made all over again—made to an ideal of peace."

"Was that the sole purpose of the Legion?" she questioned.

"Not entirely. The Legion was formed to help us take up life where we'd left off before the war. We had difficult adjustments to make. We needed direction, encouragement, a sense of unity. We finally got it from men like Commander Metcalf."

She looked up into his earnest face.

"Frankly, I never saw it in that light," she confessed. "To me the Legion was a sort of Lodge of grown-up Boy Scouts, waving flags and making a lot of noise. But, after your eloquent address, I'd say it has its points."

The Crime of Jerry Johnson

THE streets of the city were gay with streamers and banners when Norman Craig alighted from a taxicab at the corner of Bryson Avenue, shortly before eight o'clock next morning, and made his way on foot down that thoroughfare to the semi-underground establishment of Hans Gobel, theatrical costumier and make-up specialist.

Descending worn steps into an area, he opened the door of a shop which seemed—at first sight—to be crowded with historical characters, because costumes of various periods were displayed on dummies. A glass-fronted case behind a long counter was full of wigs and masks.

The opening of the door set a bell jangling in a room at the back of the shop, and Hans Gobel appeared. He was a tall and elderly man with a pronounced stoop, obviously German of origin, and he eyed his visitor with surprise.

"Ah, good-morning, Mr. Johnson," September 24th, 1938.

he said. "Why, you've got here a lot earlier than I expected."

"Well," said Craig, "I want to be out of here before the parade starts."

"That will be easy," Gobel consulted a watch. "It's only eight o'clock. I think I will have you fixed up in considerably less than an hour so that your best friends won't know you."

"Okay," said Craig, "let's get started."

He was conducted into a room not unlike a hairdresser's saloon in appearance, and he became seated in a chair in front of a large mirror.

At five minutes past eight Kimball rang up the Legion Post.

"Hallo!" he said to the orderly who answered the call. "Can you tell me at what time Commander Metcalf will be in his office this morning?"

"The commander will be here at nine-thirty," was the reply, "for a few minutes before the parade."

"Nine-thirty? Thank you." Kimball hung up his own instrument, then removed it again to dial another number—and a bell rang in the hall of Lou Tanner's house, which was situated not very far from the racecourse.

A lean-faced butler answered that call.

"Mr. Tanner's residence," he said.

"I'm calling for Commander Metcalf," lied Kimball in a voice as little like his own as he could make it. "He'd like to have Mr. Tanner come to the Legion Post at nine-twenty this morning."

"But Mr. Tanner is still asleep," protested the butler.

"This is a matter of great importance to Mr. Tanner," insisted Kimball, "and nine-twenty is the only time the commander can see him."

"Very well," surrendered the butler, "I'll waken him immediately."

"Thank you," said Kimball. "Oh, and will you please tell Mr. Tanner to go right through to the commander's office?"

The butler ascended to his master's bed-room, but Tanner was sleeping heavily because he had gone to bed none too sober, and it was not till after he had been shaken by the shoulder that he wakened and sat up, blinking owlishly.

"Sorry, sir," apologised the butler, "but Commander Metcalf wants to see you at his office in the Legion Post promptly at nine-twenty."

"Nine-twenty?" echoed Tanner.

"The party said it was extremely important, sir."

Tanner became wide awake and jubilant.

"Important!" he exclaimed, flinging back the bedclothes. "It must be about the Legion Derby—I knew that'd get him! Got any clothes ready for me?"

At twenty minutes to nine Norman Craig stood in front of a mirror in Gobel's make-up room. He was dressed as a legionnaire from Kansas, and he bore no resemblance whatever to his own ugly self.

His hair and his eyebrows had become grey, and a grey moustache had been attached with skill to his clean-shaven upper lip. Grease-paint had aged his face, a black shade was over his left eye, and he was wearing steel-rimmed spectacles.

"There, how do you like it?" inquired Gobel, rubbing his hands with the satisfaction of an artist.

"Looks all right," said Craig.

"What a laugh you'll have on your friends when you pass them like a perfect stranger."

"You've made a good job of it, Mr.

Gobel." Craig paid twenty dollars as a deposit on the hire of the uniform. "I'll see that you're well taken care of," he said, and went out through the shop.

On the pavement at the top of the steps Steve Lawlor was waiting with his hands in his pockets. He looked at Craig, and Craig nodded, then walked briskly away. Lawlor descended the steps and entered the shop.

"Good-morning, sir," said Gobel, walking out from the back room as the bell rang. "What can I do for you?"

Lawlor did not reply, but slowly he took his right hand from his coat pocket, and Gobel backed away in alarm from an automatic that was pointed at him.

"What do you want?" he gasped. "Don't do that! Don't do that!"

Lawlor fired. There was a silencer on the automatic, so that no shot was heard by passers-by, or by anybody in the upper part of the building. But Gobel fell against a dummy dressed as a pirate, and the dummy fell with him to the floor.

At the corner of Bryson Avenue and Fifth Street, Craig beckoned to the driver of a passing taxicab, and in the cab he was conveyed to the Legion Post. Scores of legionnaires were gathered round the front of the main building; many more were talking in groups upon the steps, and he passed unnoticed up the steps and lurked behind a stone column at the top of them, waiting and watching for Tanner.

At nineteen minutes past nine a dark grey saloon drew up at the foot of the steps and the race-track director got out from it. A man who was selling poppies promptly pounced on him.

"Poppy, mister?"

Tanner bought a poppy and put it in his buttonhole. Craig entered the hall, mounted the stairs at the top of it, and slipped into the museum. Tanner, in accordance with the instructions given to his butler, made straight for the ante-room of Metcalf's office.

"Good-morning," he said to the orderly on duty there. "Is Mr. Metcalf in yet?"

"Why, no," was the reply, "but he'll be here for a few minutes at nine-thirty."

Tanner said he would wait.

"Is he expecting you?" asked the orderly.

"Yes," said Tanner. "He told me to go right into his office and wait."

The orderly opened one of the double doors, and Tanner walked into the deserted office and sat down in a hide-covered chair. Craig, in the museum, had put on gloves. He took a six-shooter from a pocket of his tunic, wiped it carefully with a handkerchief, then opened the door at which he had been listening and stepped into Metcalf's office, holding the gun behind his back.

Tanner looked round at him and rose.

"Oh, hallo, buddy," he said. "You want to see the commander, too? My name is—"

The gun spat fire without any report, and clutching at his chest he made a gasping sound in his throat and fell face downwards upon the carpet.

Craig put away the gun, stooped over him to make sure that he was dead, then raised him up and put him back in the chair in a sitting position. He looked round the room, saw a periodical on another chair, and snatched it up to close two limp hands upon its edges.

Having done this he went swiftly back into the museum and closed the door. He heard a sound as of marching feet

and ran to a window that overlooked the parade-ground. Hundreds of legionnaires were marching out to join comrades already lined up in the roadway.

He went out from the museum to the top of the stairs, and he was standing there with the gun in his gloved hands, when Robert Metcalf mounted the stairs to reach his office and caught sight of him.

"Well, soldier," said Metcalf, "you ought to be with your outfit. The parade's almost ready to start."

"I only wanted to see you for a minute, commander," said Craig, speaking with the accent of the State from which he was supposed to hail. And he held out the gun by its barrel.

"What's this?" Metcalf stared at the weapon.

"Well, you see, sir, the boys back at our post wanted to make you a little present, and we heard about your collection of war tools, so we all clipped in and got you this."

Metcalf took the gun and examined it with pleased eyes.

"Well, that's very kind of you," he murmured. "It's a neat little job, isn't it? Silencer built right into the gun."

"Yeah," said Craig, "one of the boys is a gunsmith. He made it up special."

"What post did you say?"

Craig hadn't mentioned any particular post, but he responded glibly enough:

"Smithfield, Kansas."

"What's your name?"

"Jerry Johnson, sir."

"Well, you tell the boys I'm very grateful, Johnson. Drop in and see me again when I'm not in such a hurry, will you?"

Craig shook the hand that was offered, and then Metcalf entered the ante-room, and Jerry Johnson disappeared never to be seen again.

In his own office Metcalf stared at the figure in the chair.

"Hallo, Mr. Tanner," he said rather gruffly, "what can I do for you to-day? Going to see the big parade?"

He went to the desk and laid the gun on it; and then, surprised at receiving no answer, he went back to the huddled figure.

"I say, Tanner—"

As his hand touched the dead man's shoulder the periodical fell to the carpet, and the dead man pitched forward on his face and lay still. For a few moments Metcalf was too horrified to do anything but stare down at the body; and he was as breathless as if he had been running when he opened one of the doors into the ante-room and shouted to the orderly there:

"Get the Chief of Police—and get Dan Blaine! They're at the start of the line of march!"

The Grand Parade

THE news of Tanner's murder reached the ears of reporters who were on the spot to write up the parade almost as soon as Dan and tall, thin, and sharp-featured Chief of Police Finley were informed of it. The start of the parade was delayed, and reporters were already in Metcalf's office, plying him with questions he could not answer, when Dan and an elderly State commander entered it in company with Finley and two patrolmen.

All the reporters were driven forth, save the diminutive representative of the "Star," and they promptly monopolized telephones in the rest of the building.

"Yeah," one of them stated excitedly to his news editor, "Lou Tanner stretched out stiff in Metcalf's office

with a slug in him! Motive? Well, I figure Tanner's been gunning for Metcalf ever since he queered his track meeting. He finally cornered him in his office, and Metcalf beat him to the draw. Yeah, okay, I'll stick around and get some more for the first edition."

Metcalf, standing behind his desk with Dan on one side of him in uniform and Colonel Forsythe—the elderly State commander—on the other, said hoarsely to the Chief of Police, who was kneeling beside the body on the floor:

"I can't understand it!"

"You and Tanner never liked each other, did you?" challenged the "Star" man.

Metcalf did not answer and Finley got to his feet.

"Where's the gun?" he asked.

"Here it is," said Metcalf.

Finley took out a handkerchief and with it picked up the gun.

"A silencer, eh?" he barked. "One shot fired. Whose gun is this?"

"Mine," Metcalf replied. "It was just given me for the post collection."

"Who gave it to you?"

"A legionnaire."

"You know him?"

"Well, not exactly. I just met him a few minutes ago. He said his name was Jerry Johnson, Smithfield Post, Kansas."

Finley wrapped the gun in the handkerchief and put the handkerchief in his pocket.

"Tell us what happened, commander," he said brusquely; and one of the patrolmen, who had been making notes in a book, licked the point of his pencil because it needed sharpening.

"Well," Metcalf began, "I dropped in here to see if there were any last-minute messages before the parade started. The legionnaire who gave me

the gun was standing at the top of the stairs out there."

He detailed what had taken place, repeating his conversation with Craig almost word for word. He described how he had found Tanner, apparently reading in the chair.

The Chief of Police asked him what Jerry Johnson was like, and his description was so complete that everybody in the room felt that they would recognise such a man if they were to see him.

"Well," said Finley, "if such a man exists we'll find him. Meanwhile, Bob, this is the most disagreeable duty I've ever had to perform, but I'll have to take you into custody."

Metcalf was aghast. Dan burst out indignantly:

"You don't believe the commander had anything to do with it?"

"It's not what I believe," Finley replied unhappily. "You know the law as well as I do, Bob. Tanner, a known enemy of yours, is murdered in your office. You're found with the body and a gun on your desk with one shot fired."

Metcalf bowed his head.

"I'll go along with you, Henry," he said.

"But what about the parade?" expostulated Forsythe. "The commander has to review it. A hundred thousand legionnaires are out there waiting for him!"

"Yes," said Dan. "Look, Finley, if you have to take the commander why can't you do it after the parade? The reviewing stand will be surrounded by a police escort. He won't be out of your sight for a minute. What's more, the parade will be a big show-up for the police—a chance to look for Jerry Johnson."

Finley gnawed his underlip. He hated to arrest an old friend, and Dan's argument seemed to him a sound one.

"Okay." He turned to the officer



Gripping Lawlor by the shoulder and the front of his coat, Dan said fiercely: "If you don't come clean I won't answer for the consequences!"

who had been making notes. "Phone headquarters. I want a hundred more men detailed to the line of march—they'll get their orders later." He offered his hand to Metcalf, who clasped it appreciatively. "We'll do everything we can to find Jerry Johnson."

But Jerry Johnson had ceased to exist. Craig, in his make-up and borrowed uniform, had entered the Union Hotel and sneaked up the stairs to a bed-room on the fifth floor, and he was his own normal self again when he strolled into the sitting-room of Kimball's suite.

Kimball was pacing the carpet, a cigar between his lips that had long since gone out. He stopped and turned to view his accomplice with manifest relief.

"No hitch?" he asked anxiously. "No hitch." Craig dropped into a chair. "What do you want me to do with the uniform—burn it?"

"I should say not." Kimball was emphatic. "Put it away for safe keeping."

Craig's heavy-lidded blue eyes widened.

"But why?" he asked blankly.

"In my negotiations with Metcalf I may have to produce Jerry Johnson."

"How?"

"Gobel's body, dressed in that uniform, may do very well. Yes?"

The "yes" was in response to a knock at the door. Lawlor was in the corridor with a parcel under his arm which contained all the clothes Craig had been wearing when he had entered Gobel's shop.

"Lawlor!" he called back.

"Come in!"

Lawlor entered the room and he tossed the parcel to Craig.

"Well?" barked Kimball.

"Everything went off according to schedule."

"Excellent!" Kimball moved to the desk and dropped the half-consumed cigar into an ash-tray. "Now about that uniform. We may need it, but we don't want to keep it here. Pack it in a bag, Lawlor, and leave it in the cloak-room at the Union Station without delay."

There came another knock at the door, and Kimball pointed to an adjoining room.

"In there, quick!"

Craig and Lawlor made themselves scarce, and Kimball went to the door and opened it. Eve was in the corridor, wearing a costume and a little hat that went well with her golden-brown hair.

"Don't you want to see the parade, Mr. Kimball?" she asked eagerly. "It's already started."

"I'll be right along," he nodded. "You get out on the balcony."

She went off along the corridor to a balcony in the front of the hotel, and he stepped back into the room and opened the door of the one that adjoined it.

"Lawlor," he said, "bring the ticket for that bag back to me."

"Right!" said Lawlor.

In column of fours the men of the American Legion were marching along Franklin Avenue, when Kimball joined Eve on the flag-decked balcony. A band had passed, but the drums were still rolling, and the sight was a most impressive one in the Juno sunlight. Army trucks followed the men on foot, and the trucks were full of legionnaires in khaki and steel helmets. State commanders marched with their own contingents.

"Isn't it thrilling?" cried Eve.

"I didn't know you were responsive September 24th, 1938.

to parades," said Kimball dryly, glancing at her flushed face and very bright eyes.

"Oh, it's not the parade," she averred, "it's what it stands for. Those boys are a part of American history."

The pavements were thronged with people waving flags or handkerchiefs; faces were at every window that overlooked the roadway. At the top of the Avenue, on the fringe of Franklin Park, a stand had been erected and draped with bunting. The mayor and other important members of the community were seated on the stand, and Kimball and Dan were there with the Chief of Police and a uniformed sergeant.

Kimball was looking down upon the marching men without any very great interest when he noticed that police officers were diving in and out amongst the columns. They were looking for a legionnaire answering to the description of Jerry Johnson.

"I wonder what the police are up to?" he muttered involuntarily.

The people on the stand rose to take the salute as the men of the Legion began to pass beneath them. A perspiring police-sergeant reached the back of the stand by way of one of the paths in the park, climbed the ladder-like steps at the back of it, and approached the Chief of Police.

"Report on Jerry Johnson, sir," he said breathlessly, and handed over a telegram.

"Okay." Finley glanced at the telegram, then crumpled it and stowed it in a pocket.

The long procession passed; the mayor replaced his silk hat on his head and turned to Metcalf.

"Well, commander," he said with enthusiasm, "that was the most inspiring spectacle I've ever witnessed!"

Some way about the park, the legionnaires had turned into Market Street, and out of Market Street they turned again, headed for Harrison Avenue and the Legion Post. The sound of the drums died away in the distance, and the people on the stand began to disperse. Dan, who had seen the sergeant approach Finley, asked the question that had been on his lips for more than ten minutes:

"Did your men find out anything?"

"Plenty!" Finley turned to the commander who had borne himself so well. "There's no Smithfield Post record of Jerry Johnson."

His words were a bombshell. Kimball compressed his lips.

"Let's go, then," he said hoarsely.

By the time the legionnaires were back at the Post, newsboys were outside it with papers they had no difficulty in selling. In the barracks and all over the parade ground men discussed the murder mystery, and were flamingly indignant about the arrest of their National Commander.

"The papers are just trying to boil up a story!" was the verdict of one.

"Yellow journalism, that's what it is!" exploded another.

"Listen to this, boys!" cried a man on the front steps of the main building, and he read aloud from the "Star":

"The commander described Jerry Johnson as an elderly legionnaire, dressed in his parade uniform, with a patch over his left eye and wearing glasses. Unless Johnson is located, Metcalf will speedily be indicted for murder."

"Murder!" echoed a man from Ohio. "We've gotta do something about this, and do it quick!"

"A Hundred Thousand Detectives!"

EARLY in the afternoon, Kimball was at his desk in the sitting-room of his suite at the Union Hotel, talking to Craig and Lawlor, when the house telephone-bell rang. Craig answered the call, because he was nearest to the instrument attached to a wall.

"Okay, thanks," he said, and turned to Kimball after he had hung up. "Dan Blaine is on his way from below."

"I want to see him alone," Kimball stated, and Craig and Lawlor were in the adjoining living-room when Dan knocked at the door and was admitted.

"Oh, come right in, Mr. Blaine," said Kimball. "Sit down."

Dan dropped into an armchair and was offered a cigarette, which he declined.

"You sent word that you had something vital concerning Commander Metcalf," he said.

"Oh, yes—yes, of course." Kimball rubbed his chin. "Metcalf seems to be in a pretty tight spot."

"We know that," snapped Dan.

"It would be worth a lot if he could be cleared of this charge, wouldn't it, Blaine?"

"Naturally."

"I may be in a position to do just that."

Dan sprang to his feet.

"Well, what are you waiting for, if you can do anything?" he cried.

"All in good time." Kimball waved the cigarette he himself was smoking. "Please remain seated."

Dan sank back into the chair.

"Now understand," said Kimball impressively, "anything I may say is in strictest confidence—can't go beyond these walls. Otherwise I shall have to say this meeting never took place."

"Very well," agreed Dan.

"If I were to produce Jerry Johnson, the Commander might be exonerated. Right?"

"Right."

"And, speaking modestly, he'd be somewhat indebted to me."

"Of course."

"Then if I should produce Jerry Johnson, all I ask is the commander's pledge."

"What pledge?"

Kimball blew a smoke-ring.

"That he will ask the Legion to go on record as being opposed to the Arms Control Bill," he replied slowly.

Dan bounded to his feet again.

"I'm just beginning to understand you, Kimball," he blazed. "You'd let him go to the chair, knowing him to be innocent!"

"I know nothing of his innocence," declared Kimball, spreading his hands palms upwards. "So far as I know, he did kill Tanner."

"I could take you to headquarters and have you questioned until you told us what you do know!"

It was a threat, but it seemed merely to amuse the arms magnate.

"I'm afraid you'd waste your time," he said mildly. "I haven't said I know anything. I'm simply in a position to offer you a bargain."

"We don't want any of your bargains, Kimball! We'll take our chance with the jury."

Kimball raised his dark brows.

"Why not let Metcalf decide that?" he purred. "After all, it's his life that's at stake, not yours."

"All right," growled Dan. "I'll tell him. But you can have his answer right now. It's 'No!'"

He thundered the word, and he strode out from the room. But on his way to the city gaol he thought over what

Kimball had said, and when he joined Metcalf in a gloomy cell he actually pleaded with him to accept Kimball's offer.

"Listen to reason, Chief," he urged. "It's your last resort. Unless you agree to Kimball's terms, this murder charge is going to stick."

"Then let it stick," said Metcalf doggedly. "I'm not doing business with Kimball."

"But he says he can exonerate you." "In return for which I'm to agree to have the American Legion oppose the Arms Control Bill. No, Dan, I'm not trading my self-respect for my freedom."

"I knew you'd say that," exulted Dan, "and I told Kimball so."

"Good boy!" Metcalf clapped an approving hand on his shoulder.

"Yes, but we've got to beat this case, in spite of Kimball." Dan frowned at the little barred window high up in the wall at the back of the cell. "I'd give a good deal to find out what he knows about it."

"So would I," said the prisoner. "Do you think he could have framed you?"

"Perhaps. But I don't see how." "I don't, either, but it's an angle."

After a visit to his own office, Dan went to the Post and called a meeting of all the State Commanders for eight o'clock that evening. The meeting took place in a concert-hall there, and every commander was present. Dan addressed them from the platform Sid Hinkle and other entertainers had occupied during the afternoon.

"I've called this meeting," he said, "to consider a grave situation. You all know that our National Commander is facing a charge of murder. What you don't know is that powerful interests have guaranteed him his liberty if the Legion opposes the Arms Control Bill! I'm telling you this because I feel that you should have the privilege of decid-

ing for yourselves whether or not the commander's personal jeopardy should affect your action on the Bill."

It speedily appeared that opinions were divided. After the first shock of surprise caused by Dan's statement, voices rang out from various parts of the hall:

"Forget the Bill—let's get our commander freed!"

"We oughta support the Bill, no matter what happens!"

The voices became a babel, and Dan turned to Colonel Forsythe, probably the oldest commander present.

"Ask the chairman for the floor," he said.

Forsythe did so, and Dan managed with difficulty to obtain silence.

"State Commander Forsythe," he announced.

The elderly colonel, standing up in the body of the hall, expressed his views in his own downright fashion.

"I realise that a human life is at stake," he said, "but on the other hand there is a great principle involved—one that affects the well-being of millions of citizens. The American Legion, like the American Constitution, is committed to support the greatest good for the greatest number. Therefore I say we should support the Bill, regardless of the consequences to our commander."

"What?" howled a commander from Pennsylvania. "That's heartless!"

"What's the idea?" challenged another officer. "You out for the chief's job?"

No one who knew Forsythe and his record would have dreamed of making any such suggestion, and the speaker was booed. Once more Dan restored order, and then Comander Denton asked to be heard.

"I move," he said loudly, "that we take an active hand in clearing the commander. His vindication is our vindication."

There was a burst of cheering, and

then a State Commander named Mason obtained a hearing.

"You called this meeting," he said to Dan, "to deal with a serious problem. Have you any solution in mind?"

"Yes, I have," Dan promptly replied. "Boys, I want you to face this problem as we faced problems during the war. In those days we took trenches—we took machine-guns—we took whole towns. Now, somewhere in this city, there is one man who is a menace to law and order. Why can't we take him?"

"Who says we can't?" shouted a commander at the back of the hall, and others chimed in with: "Just turn our men loose!" "What are we waiting for?"

"Colonel Forsythe," said Dan, "will you make a motion that this convention stay in session until we take this man?"

Forsythe, on his feet, raised a hand. "I so move!" he cried.

The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

"But we can't take the law into our own hands," said Dan. "We'll form a committee to work with the police."

A committee of five, including Dan himself, was appointed then and there, and they were all in Dan's office at the City Hall, next morning, when the Chief of Police called there to report.

"We've combed the town and found nothing," he lamented. "I'd like to put more men on the case, but the force has its hands full with all these visitors in town. As it is I've got a dozen detectives on the job."

"How many?" asked Todd, a State Commander with the face of a comedian, who quite often was thought to be joking when he was in deadly earnest.

"A dozen," Finley repeated. "I wish I could spare a hundred."

"Chief," said Dan, "how would you like to have a hundred thousand?"

"Eh?" Finley looked startled.



Dan said sternly, as Craig turned his head to scowl: "This is the beginning of your last mile!"

"A hundred thousand," repeated Dan.

"You say the police need more men," Colonel Forsythe chimed in. "We'll give you an army mobilised for action!"

"That's right," confirmed Todd. "A hundred thousand men who believe their commander is innocent."

"A hundred thousand detectives at your beck and call," said Dan. "All you have to do is deputise them."

"What can they do?" asked Finley. "They'll spread a dragnet even a fly couldn't creep through!"

"It's kind of irregular."

"It's a man-hunt on the side of law and order," said Forsythe.

"They won't rest until their commander is exonerated," added Dan.

"It might work at that," decided Finley. "But remember your men are not the police—only special deputies acting under the police authority. All right, then. Captain Riley will supervise your operations."

Dan shook hands with him. "Fine, chief!" he said warmly. "With a set-up like this we'll have our man in no time!"

He addressed the four commanders in turn.

"Haynes, you take charge of messages and reports. Todd, since you own the largest fleet of taxi-cabs in town, you direct transportation. Denton, you cover all city outlets—railway-stations, airports, bus terminals, and so on. Colonel Forsythe, you work with me on the Kimball angle. I want the shadow of a legionnaire to cross the paths of Kimball and his crowd at every turn. Wherever they are, wherever they go, just keep at them till we break them down."

Eve Finds Two Clues

WITHIN an hour the Union Hotel was surrounded by members of the Legion and invaded by them. Some loitered in the lounge; others posted themselves upon the staircases, and a dozen of them patrolled the corridors of the fifth floor.

When Kimball, or Craig, or Lawlor went out from the hotel, legionnaires closed in upon them and went wherever they went. Taxi-cabs belonging to Commander Todd were always at hand, so that not even a car could get away without being followed.

Eve remained in the suite all morning, but she was not left in peace. At frequent intervals legionnaires rang the bell and brought her to the door on one pretext or another. By one o'clock she had answered the bell at least twenty times, and she viewed the twenty-first caller with angry eyes.

"Can I interest you in a copy of the 'American Legion Magazine,' lady?" he asked politely.

"I said 'No' when you were here half an hour ago!" she stormed.

"Not me," said the legionnaire. "Maybe one of the other boys."

"Well, this is for all of you!" And she slammed the door in his face.

The calls continued, and she hung a card on the door upon which she had written, "Do not disturb." But the card made no difference whatever.

During the afternoon Craig walked out from his own room with an unlighted cigarette between his lips, and instantly a legionnaire was standing before him with a flaming lighter in his hand. Lawlor had his shoes cleaned by a negro in Franklin Avenue, and two legionnaires had theirs cleaned on either side of him.

All through the day this sort of thing continued, and the vigil was not relaxed September 24th, 1935.

at night. Eve endured more calls next morning, but by the afternoon she had made up her mind to go and complain to Dan about what seemed to her to be a pointless persecution.

Legionnaires followed her as she went out from the hotel. She dropped her handbag on the pavement, and before she could stoop to pick it up a legionnaire was offering it to her. She snatched at it and made for a taxi-cab at the kerb, and immediately a legionnaire opened the door of the cab for her.

"Drive me to the Legion Post," she said.

"Right," said the driver, looking round from his seat; and he, too, was a legionnaire.

Dan was standing behind a desk in an office at the Post when she was conducted into his presence by an orderly. He had a smile for her, but she had no smile for him.

"What's the meaning of this nuisance campaign?" she blazed. "You've called out the army, the G-men, and the riot squad to annoy me, and I have a right to know what it's all about!"

"And, of course, you haven't the slightest idea?" he said.

"No! That's why I'm here!"

He walked round the desk and pointed to a chair.

"All right, sit down, please," he said. "I'll explain."

She seated herself in the chair, but did not lean back in it. Her green eyes seemed to emit sparks.

"Just what do you know about the man you're working for?" asked Dan, standing in front of her with folded arms.

"Not very much," she admitted. "He's a considerate employer, the work isn't hard, and he pays me well. I couldn't possibly ask for anything more."

Dan unfolded his arms to point a finger at her.

"Suppose I were to tell you that he's in a position to clear the commander of that murder charge, but won't do so unless we meet his terms?"

"That's absurd!" she cried. "What could Mr. Kimball know about that murder?"

"That's what we'd like to know!"

"Oh, I see—and you figured you'd find out through me! Well, let me tell you, Mr. District Attorney, your trick won't work!" She jumped up from the chair and tossed her golden-brown head. "In the first place I don't believe you!"

Dan caught hold of her arm. He thought she looked beautiful, even in a temper, but he wanted co-operation not defiance.

"Will you please forget that I'm the District Attorney?" he asked earnestly.

"This isn't just another murder case to me; it's a deeply personal matter. Won't you sit down and talk it over?"

She sat down in the chair again, less stiffly this time, and she nodded.

"Of course, Metcalf is your friend," she said in a very much milder tone, "and it's hard for you to believe that he's guilty."

"I know he isn't guilty," returned Dan emphatically. "I ought to know the man he is—I've been close to him ever since I ran away to war. I was fifteen years old, and if ever I needed help it was then! I got it from my Company captain—Bob Metcalf. And during the years that followed I got a lot of other things from him—things that count the most in the making of a man. He's the best friend I ever had, and as innocent of this murder as you are!"

All trace of resentment had dis-

appeared from her face while he was speaking.

"I can understand how you feel about it," she said, "but why are you telling me this? What can I do?"

"A lot," he replied gravely, "despite what you think. I believe Kimball holds the answer to the whole thing. If you'd only co-operate with us—"

"How?" she interrupted.

"You're close to Kimball. By keeping your eyes and ears open you might learn something that would help us. You might search his rooms, his clothes, or his desk. I don't know just what you might discover, but it might quite possibly be something that would give us a clue to work on. You're the only one that can help us." He flung out his hands. "Will you do it?"

She frowned at him and rose.

"I'll think it over," she said slowly.

"I'm counting on you," said Dan.

No legionnaires troubled her any more that day, but they haunted Kimball and Craig and Lawlor as assiduously as ever. Some hours after breakfast on the following morning, Craig went to the window of the living-room of the suite at the hotel and stood glaring down at the legionnaires in the street below.

"It's getting under my skin, Kimball," he turned to complain bitterly. "Everywhere I go I find a soldier on my trail! If you don't believe it, look out here!"

Kimball did not move from the chair in which he was reading a morning paper. Lawlor joined Craig at the window.

"It gives me the willies!" he exploded.

"Let's get out of town," urged Craig. Kimball flung down the newspaper.

"What's there to be afraid of?" he scoffed. "There isn't a thing they can pin on us. I want you two to go out more than ever—act as though it doesn't affect you. When Dan Blaine learns that this amateur sleuthing gets him nowhere, he'll be glad to listen to my terms."

The door between the living-room and the sitting-room was ajar, and Eve had crossed the sitting-room from her bedroom in time to hear that last remark.

"What terms?" she asked, appearing suddenly in the doorway.

Kimball sprang to his feet and glared at her.

"Since when do you enter without knocking?" he demanded harshly.

"I'm sorry," she said, "the door was open. Mr. Kimball, there's something I'd like to ask you."

"Miss Rogers," snapped Kimball, "you're paid to be my secretary, not to ask questions!"

"But—" she began.

"That'll be all!"

She drew back into the sitting-room, and she closed the door; but she had heard enough to convince her that Dan was right, and she listened at the key-hole.

"Come on out with me," she heard Kimball say, "and I'll give you an object lesson in how to out-stare Mr. Blaine's tin soldiers. We'll have lunch at the Ambassador's, after we've jaunted round the city, and see if they'll dare to sit at our table there."

The three went out, not very long afterwards, and then Eve began a systematic search of the suite. She went through all the drawers of the desk in the sitting-room, but found nothing that could be of any possible use to Dan. She searched the sideboard in the living-room, the dressing-table and a tallboy in Kimball's bed-

room, and even his clothes in a wardrobe.

Failing to find anything there she invaded first Lawlor's bedroom, and then Craig's; and in a pocket of one of Craig's coats she discovered the crumpled page torn from the classified telephone directory.

Colonel Forsythe and Commander Todd were with Dan when she arrived at the Post in a taxicab and was shown into the office. She told Dan of the conversations she had overheard; she told him of her search; and she gave him the torn-out page.

"Gobel!" he exclaimed, fastening on the advertisement of that costumier and make-up expert. "Gobel? Why that's the man who was reported missing three days ago! Did you find anything else?"

"No," Eve replied, "except that I did notice, while going through one of the cupboards, that Lawlor's bag was missing."

"Bag?" said Dan. "What kind of a bag?"

"A black gladstone, with the initials 'J.L.' on it."

"Boys," boomed Dan excitedly, "we've got some checking-up to do! Now you go back to the hotel, Miss Rogers, and act as though nothing had happened. You've been simply grand, and I can't tell you how grateful I am."

In the Hands of the Legion

WHILE a hundred legionnaires were visiting the cloak-rooms of railway stations and airports, and the offices of hotels in quest of the missing bag, Dan and Colonel Forsythe paid a visit to Gobel's establishment, where they interviewed Mrs. Gobel, a fat but most unhappy-looking woman.

She produced her husband's day-book at Dan's request, and the very last entry in it was one dated June 21st: "American Legion uniform, rented to Jerry Johnson. Deposit paid, twenty dollars."

"The last entry Gobel ever made!" Dan commented; and Forsythe, looking over his shoulder at the book, drew in his breath with almost a hissing noise.

"And that's the date of the parade," he said, "and the date Tanner was murdered."

"I've got a feeling my husband was murdered, too," grieved the woman. "He just seems to have vanished off the face of the earth. And he never was away from home before without letting me know he was going."

"He may be just held somewhere," soothed Dan, though he doubted it. "Have you got that uniform in the shop?"

"No," she replied, wiping her eyes, "it hasn't been returned."

"Well," Dan said to his companion, "this is beginning to mean something. A legion uniform is missing and a black gladstone bag. We've got to find that bag!"

The bag was located before many hours had elapsed in the cloak-room at the Union Pacific Railroad station where Lawlor had left it.

"Here's one with 'J. L.' on it," said the clerk who produced it. "But I

can't give it to you without the ticket—or police authority."

The legionnaire who had located the bag dived into the nearest telephone-box and rang up the Chief of Police, and burly Captain Riley set out for the station. The black bag was taken from the cloak-room to the Post, and in Dan's office it was opened. Inside it was the uniform Craig had worn in the character of Jerry Johnson.

"It fits Metcalf's description of Jerry Johnson's outfit perfectly," said Todd. "So now," said Forsythe, "all we have to do is to pinch Lawlor."

"Not yet," objected Dan. "We still have no actual proof that he did it."

"Quite enough to warrant an arrest," contended Captain Riley.

"And spoil everything," said Dan. "Well, what are you going to do?"

inquired Denton. "Get me Sid Hinkle," Dan said to Todd; and then to Captain Riley: "Get Chief Finley to come over here."

The mimic arrived ten minutes before the Chief of Police; but it was not

until the Chief of Police had arrived that Dan explained what was in his mind.

"It's a long chance," he wound up, "but it's worth taking."

"Well, you're the District Attorney," growled Finley, "and maybe your idea is a good one, but all you've got is a theory, and if it doesn't work out you put yourself and the police in an awful spot."

"I know," agreed Dan, "but it's our only chance to crack this case. I'll take the responsibility. Sid will come through all right."

Finley contemplated the mimic with very dubious eyes.

"Is he that good?" he questioned.

"Show him," directed Dan; and Sid Hinkle slid off the arm of a chair on which he had been perched and said calmly:

"Chief, did you ever hear yourself talking back to yourself?"

"What d'you mean?" asked Finley blankly.

"Go ahead, Sid," said Dan. "Maybe your

idea is a good one," mimicked Sid, so perfectly that it might have been Finley himself speaking, "but all you've got is a theory, and if it doesn't work out you put yourself and the police in an awful spot."

Finley was amazed.

"All right, then," he surrendered, "go ahead and try it. And good luck."

"Right!" Dan

walked over to the mimic and caught hold of his arm.

"Sid, we're calling

on Kimball. I want you to study his voice—catch every inflexion. Get it?"

"Sure," drawled Sid, "that's easy."

Kimball was in, when they reached the hotel, and he received them in the sitting-room of the suite—after he had sent Craig and Lawlor out from it. He appeared to be very busy at the desk when they entered, but he pushed some papers aside and invited them to be seated.

"Well, gentlemen," he said smoothly, "I presume you've come to tell me that the Legion has decided to oppose the Arms Control Bill? I'm very glad the commander has seen fit to change his mind."

Dan took full advantage of the opportunity thus presented to mislead the crook without actual falsehood.

"The commander doesn't know anything," he returned. "We're doing this on our own."

"Oh!" said Kimball a trifle sharply. "Well, in that case I shall do nothing about Metcalf until the convention passes the resolution."

"That's all right," Sid Hinkle assured him. "Just leave it to Dan—he'll get it passed."

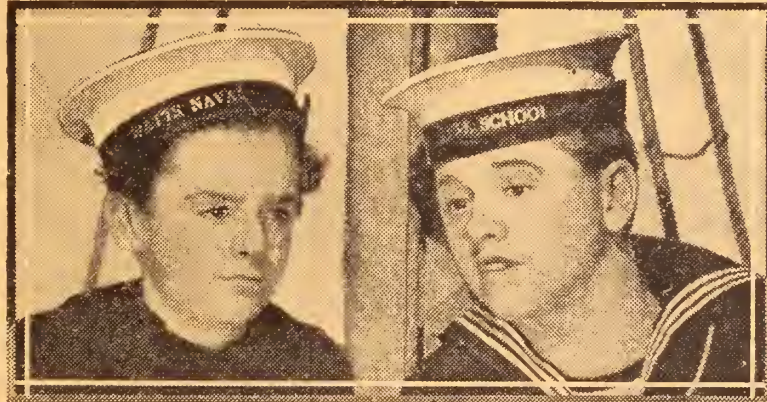
"Then it's a deal, gentlemen," Kimball made no attempt to conceal his satisfaction. "If you'll deliver, I'll deliver."

Sid Hinkle fished some tickets from his pocket.

"And now that the Legion's supporting you," he chirruped, "it's only right that you support the Legion. Ten dollars, please!"

He offered the tickets with his right

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hand, and held out his left hand for the money.

"Cut it out, Sid!" rapped Dan.

"None of that!"

But Sid persisted, and Kimball produced a well-filled wallet.

"What are they?" he inquired.

"Fight tickets for to-night's Legion bouts at the Stadium," was the reply.

The tickets changed hands and were paid for.

"Sid never misses a chance to sell something for the Legion," said Dan, as though thoroughly disapproving of the transaction.

"Oh, it's quite all right," laughed Kimball, "I guess I can stand it. I'll give them to the boys. I'm sure they'll be glad to go."

"Don't you like prize-fights?" asked Sid innocently.

"Well, they're a bit too brutal for my simple tastes."

It was not till they were in the elevator, on the way down to the street, that they dared to chuckle at that statement.

By a quarter to eight that evening the Legion Stadium was crowded with legionnaires and townspeople, and the band that had led the parade was providing music pending the first event. Dan, in the vestibule beside Colonel Forsythe, was beginning to wonder whether Craig and Lawlor would make use of the tickets when he caught sight of them descending from a taxicab at the foot of the steps.

Two other taxicabs were close behind, and they disgorged legionnaires who followed the pair.

"Here they come!" exclaimed Dan. "Don't let them out of your sight. When they come out, bring them over to the Post. Let me know when they're on their way."

"All right," said the colonel; and he signalled to some of his men who were waiting in the vestibule.

Craig and Lawlor entered the building, gave up their tickets, and were conducted to two seats quite close to the ring. A legionnaire was on either side of them; legionnaires were behind them, and in front of them; but after the reassuring news they had received from Kimball it did not occur to them that there could be any significance in the circumstance.

A battle in the ring between two light-weights, one from Oregon and the other from Nebraska, provided the audience with plenty of amusement, but came to an inglorious end in the sixth round with both contestants on the mat. Other minor events followed, and then came the main event of the evening—a fifteen-round contest between two well-matched heavy-weights, both members of the Legion, which lasted till close on midnight and resulted in a knock-out for the challenger.

As the crowd streamed out from the stadium, Craig and Lawlor became separated by legionnaires who thrust their way between them, and by the time the concrete at the foot of the front steps was reached each crook was surrounded so closely by determined men that neither of them could get away.

They were hustled towards the main building of the Post, Colonel Forsythe leading the way with one group, Commander Todd with the other.

"Say, what is this?" howled Lawlor, trying in vain to break loose.

"Silence in the ranks!" shouted Todd.

Craig used his elbows to no purpose. "Keep your hands off me!" he roared.

"We haven't touched you yet, buddy," said one of the legionnaires.

September 24th, 1938.

Both men were compelled to move with those who moved around them.

"Where're you taking me?" demanded Lawlor furiously; but no one answered the question.

Sid Hinkle ran on to the main building and joined Dan at the entrance to the hall.

"The boys are on the way over with Lawlor and Craig," he reported.

"Good," said Dan. "Forsythe will grill Craig in the museum, and I'll handle Lawlor downstairs."

Tricked!

AT one o'clock in the morning Eve rang up the Legion Stadium and was answered by a legionnaire in charge of the cleaners. On Kimball's instructions she asked at what time the bouts would be over.

"They were over an hour ago," was the reply.

Kimball received this information with more concern than he cared to show.

"There's something wrong," he decided. "Craig and Lawlor were to come right back here. Get me the Chief of Police."

For the better part of an hour Craig had been subjected to third-degree methods in the museum at the Post, while Lawlor was being badgered and roughly handled in an underground room with a powerful light immediately above his head; but neither captive, as yet, had shown any signs of breaking down.

Dan, gripping Lawlor by the shoulder with one hand and twisting the front of his coat with the other, so that it was tight about his throat, said fiercely:

"If you don't come clean I won't answer for the consequences!"

"I've come clean," Lawlor declared, perspiration streaming down his pock-marked face. "I—I don't know a thing about that uniform."

"Come on, Lawlor," thundered Dan. "You admit the bag is yours."

"Suppose it is?" was the defiant retort. "You've had it in your possession long enough for anybody to have put a uniform in it, and I wouldn't know a thing about it. It's been done, you know."

In the museum, Colonel Forsythe had taken Denton's place to interrogate Craig.

"What happened to Gobel?" he rapped.

"Never heard of him," Craig replied, just as he had replied many times before to the same question.

"You might as well come through. We've got Lawlor's bag with the uniform in it!"

"Well, that's Lawlor's funeral, not mine!"

At twenty minutes past one, a legionnaire put his head into the museum to announce that Colonel Forsythe was wanted for a moment, and Forsythe left Haynes in control and went out from the room. Captain Riley was in the corridor.

"How's Craig?" he asked. "Is he spilling?"

"Not yet," the colonel replied.

"You'll have to release him."

"What?"

"Finley's orders. Tell Craig he's free."

The colonel gritted his teeth.

"Where is Finley?" he asked rebelliously.

"He's down in the basement with Dan Blaine." Riley turned towards the door of the museum. "Come on! Are you setting Craig free, or am I?"

Craig was set at liberty, and he went off without troubling his head about Lawlor. Forsythe descended to the

basement, and he found Dan arguing with the Chief of Police outside the room in which ten legionnaires were looking after Lawlor.

"Well, Craig's gone," said the colonel bitterly.

"What's the idea of turning him loose?" Dan snapped at Finley.

"We can't keep him here indefinitely," was the reply. "Kimball's smelt a rat, and he's threatening to phone the Governor. You'd better let Lawlor go, too."

"A few more minutes can't make much difference," objected Dan. "I've got to break him down before Craig spills the news to Kimball."

"All right," Finley agreed reluctantly, "but if he doesn't crack in ten minutes we'll have to let him go."

"Okay," Dan turned to Forsythe. "Get Sid and the others."

Ironically enough, Craig travelled back to the Union Hotel in one of Denton's taxi-cabs. Eve had retired to her room, but not to bed; Kimball was alone in the sitting-room when Craig entered it.

"What happened?" rasped Kimball, jumping up from the desk.

"The Legion ganged up on us at the fights," Craig replied, "and tried to make us talk."

"Where's Lawlor?"

"He's still there. I don't know what he's told them, but they've dug up his bag and that uniform!"

Kimball's jaw dropped.

"We'd better start packing," he said gruffly.

By this time Dan was back in the underground room, standing over Lawlor with clenched fists, and Sid Hinkle was outside the room with Finley, Colonel Forsythe, and other members of the Legion. Captain Riley was leading against a wall.

"It may interest you to know," Dan blared at Lawlor, "that we've got Kimball upstairs, and he's not doing so well!"

"Very interesting," sneered the incredulous captive.

"It's funny how these master minds crack even sooner than mugs like you. That's because they'll do anything to save their own skins."

"Isn't that too bad?"

Dan's left fist hovered within a few inches of scornful lips, and his right arm jerked Lawlor's chin upwards.

"Better spill it, Lawlor," he hissed, "before we drag it out of you. The boys are getting mighty impatient!"

The door was opened, and a tall legionnaire burst into the room.

"Mr. Blaine," he cried, "Kimball's confessed!"

Dan whirled round on the intruder. "I thought I left word I wasn't to be interrupted?" he roared.

"I'm sorry," said the legionnaire. "I thought you wanted him in here."

"Hold him out there until I've finished with Lawlor. Meanwhile, suppose you get Kimball's statement for the record."

"Sure." The legionnaire went out, leaving the door slightly open, and the sound of marching feet was heard, because Sid Hinkle had given a pre-arranged signal, and legionnaires who had been waiting for it had begun to advance along a stone-flagged passage.

But Lawlor believed it was all a trick to make him confess, and he said derisively:

"Who d'you think you're kidding? I wasn't born yesterday."

Outside the door, Sid Hinkle winked at the Chief of Police, and the Chief of Police said sternly:

(Continued on page 25)

Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy go to Switzerland to sell mouse-traps, but from the lack of ready cash are compelled to take jobs on as waiters, and, through a famous composer and his mischievous wife, are drawn into an hilarious adventure



Mouse-Traps

THE Alpen Hotel naturally was situated in Switzerland. It was quiet and select, very well run, and three thousand feet above sea level. The business was quiet, and Luigi, the manager, rubbed his hands together when he heard that Mr. Victor Albert, the greatest operatic composer living, was honouring his hotel with a visit.

Edward, the composer's secretary and adviser, had come on ahead to arrange all details. Expense did not matter as long as certain wishes of his master were carried out. Luigi agreed and asked these conditions. First of all, every room in the hotel would be rented so that there would be no strangers in the place. That was a condition that delighted Luigi. All the staff must wear Tyrolean costumes, which Edward had brought with him—even the manager must wear one. The idea being that the composer could have the right atmosphere to work on his latest masterpiece. Luigi agreed to this wish of the famous maestro, though he did not fancy himself in Tyrolean costume. The date and length of the stay was arranged, and then Luigi asked if Mr. Albert's wife was coming as well.

"No, no!" Edward waved his hands in horror. "Absolutely no! The maestro is to be alone."

Victor Albert drove out in ordinary clothes to Pontresina, and hero he changed into Tyrolean costume. Then in a mule-drawn cart the great composer continued his journey up the mountain to the Alpen Hotel, which was two kilometres distant. The chauffeur looked after his dark-skinned

attractive master and thought him a little mad.

All the staff, the manager, and Edward were there to greet Victor Albert when his mule eventually completed the journey and he was given a right royal welcome. The composer beamed with delight. Free at last. His wife had no idea where he had gone, and Edward and the chauffeur were sworn to secrecy. Now he could compose his great Tyrolean opera in perfect surroundings.

But he reckoned without his wife and Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy.

Some little way from the hotel was a small alpine village, and as Victor Albert came up the mountain road in his mule-cart the two adventurers were not far behind in their antiquated sleigh.

The villagers were puzzled by the advent of these two strangers. They were all wrapped up in furs as if travelling to the North Pole, and it was summer in Switzerland. Their absurd bowler hats made their attire look even more ridiculous. They cast aside several moth-eaten rugs, and Stan endeavoured to ring a large bell. He had forgotten that he had stuffed it up with paper to stop it jangling. At any rate he got it working at last, and the people all turned out thinking there was a landslide or a fire.

"Mouse-traps!" Ollie bellowed.

When the people realised what the two friends were trying to sell they laughed and went back into their houses. Nothing daunted they unloaded a number of small traps and a trap that would have caged a lion, and approached the first house. Stan dropped the huge case on Ollie's foot, and that caused the fat fellow to yell.

He gave his thin friend a look and banged on the knocker.

"Good-morning, madam." Ollie doffed his bowler gallantly. "Could we interest you in a nice mouse-trap. We have the latest inventions."

Before the woman could answer her husband appeared in the doorway. He bit savagely on his large pipe and scowled.

"We don't want any mouse-traps." "Oh, let's look at one, anyway," begged the wife.

"We don't want to look at any."

The woman put her hands on her hips.

"If I want to look at a mouse-trap, I'll look at a mouse-trap."

"I said no!" shouted the man.

"I said yes!"

"I said no!"

Whereupon the woman slapped her husband's face, and to Ollie's horror the husband slapped his wife back. The woman slapped her man, and he slapped her again. They did this several times until Ollie thought it was time to do the gallant act, so he reached forward and slapped the man. Whereupon the woman glowered at Ollie, produced a frying-pan and banged Ollie on the head.

"Don't you dare hit my husband!"

"Oh, mama, that was nice of you!" The husband kissed his wife. "Now I think it over, if you want to look at a mouse-trap, look at one."

"No, papa, mama change her mind." She drew her husband inside. "We don't want to look at no mouse-traps." The door slammed.

Ollie sighed and Stan sighed, and then they put on their bowler hats. They put back the mouse-traps and

With a flourish Ollie held out a bank-note.



they re-entered the sleigh. Ollie looked severely at his friend.

"This is your idea. Coming all the way from America to Switzerland to sell mouse-traps. What ever gave you that idea?"

"Well, I thought there'd be more mice here than anywhere." Stan looked as if he were going to cry.

"Why, may I ask?"

"Don't they make more cheese here?"

"Oh!" Ollie spoke impatiently. "Do you realise we've been here for two weeks and we haven't sold a single mouse-trap and we're flat broke?"

"Does that mean we haven't any money?"

"Idiot!"

"I don't think we're going to the right places," Stan said hurriedly. "Suppose you were a mouse and you wanted something to eat—where would you go?"

"Well, I'd go where there was cheese, of course."

Stan beamed with pleasure. "Where there's more cheese there's more mice," he announced. "Why don't we go to the cheese factories and sell them?"

"Let me give that a little thought," retorted Ollie, digging a finger into his second chin.

There was one factory in the village, so they went to it. They took their strange-looking packages into the showroom of the owner. Emil was a portly, crafty little man. They did not make a good impression because Ollie, who had carried the smallest packages, placed them on the floor whilst he mopped his brow, and Stan, carrying the large mouse-trap, proceeded to trip over them, but Ollie with the large trap, and send the fat fellow flying. Ollie hit the counter, lurched into a stand containing a hundred and one kinds of cheeses. Ollie sank to the floor, and the cheeses, mostly round like cannon balls, rolled on to Ollie's head.

"What are you trying to do—wreck my place of business?" rared Emil, and then proceeded to call Ollie all the

rudest things he knew in the German language.

"Just a moment. Just a moment. Pardon this odd intrusion!" cried Ollie when Emil stopped for breath. "We really mean no harm. Don't get yourself a-flutter, there's no need for alarm. We're selling something that you need, so won't you listen, please?"

"We'll rid your place of all the mice, and we'll also save your cheese!" added Stan.

"Save my cheese?" questioned Emil. They proceeded to carry out a demonstration by drilling mouse-holes in the floor and getting out their best mouse-traps. Unfortunately Stan drilled a hole in a gas-pipe, and then lit a match to find the curious smell. A jet shot up through the floor that singed Ollie's pants. They had to plug all the holes they had bored. Fortunately Emil was not present at this firework display, and he did not find it out till after they had gone, and by the time the fire was out his cheeses weren't as good as they had been. Serve him right because he played a dirty trick on our two friends.

Emil had some no-good Bovanian francs. True there were big denominations on the notes, but they were quite worthless. Also Emil had acquired this Bovanian money, when Bovania was not out of liquidation, in a manner that was somewhat shady. The money was worthless but dangerous. Therefore he bought all the mouse-traps and gave the two Americans what they thought was a small fortune. Ollie was so pleased that he presented Emil with the mule and sleigh. They went off to the nearest hotel to celebrate and spend some of their five thousand francs on a really magnificent spread. They would go to the Alpen Hotel, which had a restaurant that catered for casual travellers—a pity Victor Albert had not insisted upon renting that as well.

What a banquet they had, and Ollie, after studying the menu, beckoned a waiter.

"Bring me a large slice of apple-pie and a demi-tasse."

"Yes, sir." The waiter bowed and turned to Stan. "And you, sir?"

"I think I'll try some of that demi-tasse," mumbled Stan. "Oh, and—er—bring me a cup of coffee."

The waiter gasped, and went and ordered a coffee for Oliver and two for Stan. Then Luigi, still rubbing his hands, approached their table.

"I hope everything is to your satisfaction?"

Everything was until the waiter showed up and reported there was no apple-pie. Luigi said he could have any other kind of pie, but that would not do for Ollie. He would have apple-pie or nothing. The manager sent for the chef.

The chef was swarthy, had a hooked nose like an eagle, very fiery eyes, and looked like a gipsy. He had fierce Romany blood in his veins. He was sorry, but he had no apple-pie; and Ollie told the chef just what he thought of him. Luigi vowed that the chef should go unless he produced this apple-pie for these customers.

"Make a hundred apple-pies!" stormed Ollie.

"Yeah, and make me an apple-dumpling!" cried Stan.

But it could not be done because there were no apples in the hotel.

"I am sorry to cause you this inconvenience," murmured Luigi, almost bent double with apologising. "I promise you it will never occur again."

Ollie puffed at his cigar.

"Well, just skip it. Bring me the bill!" He lolled or sagged back in his chair. Luigi called, and the waiter appeared with the bill. Ollie hardly glanced at it, and with a flourish handed Luigi a banknote. "Take it out of that and bring me the change in American currency."

"This is a funny joke!" Luigi cried, and shook with laughter. "You Americans give always to me a sense of humour." Ollie looked blankly at Stan, and very politely they joined in the laughter. That Luigi did not like. "Now, stop the monkey business and

give-a me some real money so I can pay the bill."

Then they learnt to their horror that this money was only good in Bovania, and when they suggested going to Bovania, heard that there was no such place. Luigi's remarks when he heard they had no other form of money out-rivalled Emil's.

"Don't drink that coffee!" As Stan tried to gulp the demi-tasse. "You come with me."

They were escorted into the kitchen, where the chef showed his teeth in a nasty smile.

"They come here to-day with great pretence, and they haven't any money in their pockets," Luigi announced. "What-a you think of that, Franzlhuber? After so much fuss about the apple-pie they cannot pay the bill, so-a I put them-a to work. You will tell-a them what to do."

The chef picked up a carving-knife and looked at it in a manner that made the two victims shiver, and when he smiled and flashed his eyes they shook at the knees.

"And if they break any dishes—for every dishes they break they work another day!" finally decreed Luigi.

The chef nodded, and Luigi departed.

"You remember what the boss said?" The chef picked up a plate. "For every dish you break you work another day. Hold this!" He tossed it to Ollie, and, of course, the fat fellow dropped it. Then the chef began to toss plates at them, and when about twenty lay broken on the floor he stalked up to a blackboard and put twenty strokes on it.

"By the time you leave this place the grey hairs of your beard will be trailing on this kitchen floor." And laughing most horribly the chef left them to their unhappy thoughts.

Anna

STAN and Ollie were very depressed, especially when they looked at the blackboard. Every time they managed to get those wretched cross marks wiped off the slate somebody would barge into them and crash would go several plates, so that they looked like spending the rest of their days at the Alpen Hotel. The chef was a tyrant.

After they had been there about a week, came a day when everything went wrong for everybody. Stan came bursting into the kitchen, and Ollie was carrying quite twenty plates. Not only did all those plates crash, but the fat fellow also knocked over a dresser. By the time the chef had finished with the slate, it was nothing but ticks.

The great Victor was enjoying his holiday and doing some grand work on his opera, when his studio door was flung open and a most ravishing beauty rushed into the room.

"My darling!" Victor jumped to his feet

and swept the girl into his arms. He kissed her once, then pushed her away. His smile of joy gave place to a scowl. "What are you doing here, Anna?"

"Aren't you happy to see me?"

"Why did you follow me?"

"But, darling, I am your wife!" She glanced across at the composer's obvious upset manager. "Edward, I think he's forgotten who I am. Will you please introduce me to my husband."

"Certainly, Miss Hoefel."

"Edward!" spoke Victor Albert severely.

"Why did you run away from me and"—Anna pointed to his Tyrolecan shorts—"why the disguise?"

"This is not a disguise," her husband answered angrily. "This costume is to get me into the mood to write my greatest operetta."

"But, Victor darling, I don't understand. You've always written your greatest music with me, and the critics have all acclaimed you."

"The critics have acclaimed me?" he sported. "Ha, ha! That's good! The critics have acclaimed me!" He picked up a paper. "Just listen to what this Vienna journal says: 'Anna Hoefel's singing is divine.' Is my music mentioned? No!" He picked up another paper. "'Anna Hoefel's new operetta is a sensation.' In small print at the end: 'Victor Albert is the composer.' You're a success. I'm just a P.S. But that's all over now. This is one time the critics will not be blinded to the merits of my music by your lovely voice. You're—you're going home and—" He paused for effect. "And you're going to stay there."

"My home is with you."

"Please try to understand." Victor spoke with the air of a martyr. "With you beside me I could never, never, never compose music about a

simple, unsophisticated girl that a peasant could fall in love with."

"You think a peasant wouldn't fall in love with me?" demanded the beautiful Anna.

"A peasant fall in love with you?" Victor held his sides with mirth. "Imagine a peasant falling in love with the prima donna of the Albert Theatre. Why he'd be scared to death of you. Now, darling, will you please go and leave me in this peaceful atmosphere where I can compose undisturbed."

"All right, I'll go back to Vienna." Anna's eyes flashed. "You go ahead with your foolishness, but don't come crying to me at the last moment to sing your masterpiece."

Anna stalked downstairs in a fine fury, and she sat down in the empty lounge to regain her composure. Enter Stan and Ollie. Stan fell over a sweeper, upset a vase of flowers, and knocked Anna's handbag off the table. Ollie picked it up and with a simper handed the girl the bag, whilst Stan grinned sheepishly.

"Thank you."

"The pleasure's all mine, madam." Gallantly spoke Ollie, raising the bowler that never seemed to leave his large head.

"At least the help around here is courteous." Anna was amused.

"Well, we can't help being helpful." Ollie sighed. "You see, we're a couple of American gentlemen temporarily embarrassed."

"Yeah," whispered Stan. "We wash dishes."

Anna was easily able to persuade the two friends to tell the tale of their dire distress.

"Do you mean to say you had to stay here in this hotel because you couldn't pay for your dinner?"

"Absolutely!" Ollie nodded his head.

"Thank you, boys." Anna smiled in



Stan was so confused that instead of pulling the piano he was pushing it.

her friendliest fashion. "You've given me an idea."

So Anna went to the restaurant, and no one in the hotel except her husband and Edward knew that this was the great Anna Hoefel. So she sat down and ordered all the most expensive things on the menu, and when they presented the bill she found she had mislaid her purse.

Stan and Ollie had been sworn to secrecy and Ollie was all of a flutter. He felt certain he was in love. Anna had told them she wanted to stay in the hotel, but she had only told them her stage name, and made no mention of the fact she was married to Victor Albert. They thought she was some little chorus girl wanting a free holiday. They were quite excited until they reached the kitchen, and Stan succeeded in tripping over a mop and knocked some plates off the kitchen table. The chef's language was a trifle harsh, because this breaking gag was getting rather expensive. He tossed Stan a couple of white chickens and told him to pluck out the feathers.

Stan felt quite depressed as he sat outside in a box and plucked at a chicken. Ollie appeared carrying some pails of water and had to sit down for a rest. A St. Bernard dog, with a Red Cross satchel on its back and a little barrel lashed to the collar, ambled into the scene and proceeded to go to sleep in the sun.

"How often do they fill those barrels?" Stan asked.

"Every time they become empty." Ollie gave Stan a suspicious look.

"What's on your mind?"

"Nothing."

Ollie wagged a fat finger. "That brandy is put there for a humane purpose, and anyone that would stoop so low as to touch it without just cause should be shot."

"He certainly should," mumbled Stan, his eyes on the barrel. "Do they save people in the summer-time?"

"No, only when it snows."

Ollie went off hurriedly because the chef had appeared. Stan leered at the dog and it came closer, but when his hand crept round to the barrel there came a deep growl. He tried several times, but the dog wasn't having any. Stan stared unhappily before him and plucked the chickens aimlessly; a white feather fluttered to the ground, like a snowflake. Stan plucked out a whole handful of feathers and tossed them up and they made a small snowstorm. Stan began to get busy on those chickens, and when he threw up handfuls of feathers and then lay on the ground moaning, the St. Bernard crept to his side and did not growl when Stan removed the small barrel.

Meanwhile, Victor was busy with his operetta, pleased that he had got rid of the wife of whom he was at most times so fond. He would not have been so pleased if he could have seen the pretty new chambermaid. She came slyly into the room and began to flick a duster around, but Victor was too busy to notice. He wondered whether he might compose a similar tune to "Mine to Love," which had proved so successful. He would run over the tune and see if it could be altered. He began to sing as he played and his singing was nearly as good as his playing. Anna listened spellbound by the lilt of the tune.

"I only know you're mine to love, you—"

"You gave a new design to love," trilled Anna.

"Be still, my heart, be still."

"We haven't lived until this moment,"

September 24th, 1933.

with its thrill of—" Anna ceased abruptly because Victor had realised at last he was not alone.

He stalked up to her. "Take off that silly costume and get out of this hotel!" he ordered.

"I think the costume is charming," mocked Anna. "And, besides, the manager insisted I should wear it. Don't you think I make a pretty chambermaid?"

"I won't have you interfering with my work," shouted Victor, when she had told him of the trick she had played. "Edward!"

Edward rushed in and pulled up at sight of the girl.

"Why, Miss Hoefel, how charming!" he cried. "You look just like the girl for our new operetta!"

"You idiot!" stormed Victor. "Can't you see this is one of her tricks." Scowling fiercely he turned on his wife. "This hotel isn't big enough for the two of us. I shall ask Edward to fetch the manager and have him get rid of you at once."

"What a tasty morsel for the Vienna newspapers," snapped Anna. "I can see the headlines, 'Famous composer has wife thrown out of hotel.'"

"You wouldn't dare!"

"You leave me no alternative." She flicked the duster under his nose. "I'm sorry, sir, but I can't stay here arguing. I must finish my duties."

"Edward, this is all your fault," raged the maestro when the door had closed. "Get me a place where I can be alone and work in peace away from everybody."

Edward returned in a few minutes and led his master to the open window. He pointed proudly.

"A nice quiet place, sir, where you can work and nobody can disturb you."

"A tree house!" Victor smiled, as he looked up at the small house constructed in the branches of a lofty pine. There was a swinging wooden bridge from the tree house to a steep path on the convenient adjacent mountain. "That's perfect," he approved. "Have my piano sent up there at once."

A Piano and a Gorilla

LUIGI sent for Oliver and informed him that he and Stanley were to take a small upright piano to the tree house. The fat fellow went off to find his friend, and found him lying in a heap of feathers, snoring lustily, with the St. Bernard close to his side. Oliver sniffed, then he went closer and sniffed again, and lastly he saw the barrel. He picked it up and shook it—it was empty. Stanley opened one eye, grinned from ear to ear, and murmured hoarsely:

"I ought to be shot!"

Oliver managed to get Stanley to his feet. The sinner swayed dizzily and grinned inanely all the time his friend was telling him just what he thought of this act. After which he took Stanley firmly by the arm and marched him up to the rooms of Victor Albert to get the piano.

Stan was very uncertain on his feet and gave a start, upsetting a dish of fruit on the piano. Ollie was furious when Stan picked up an apple and held it out to him—he knocked it out of his hand. Stan's eyebrows went up in bewilderment and he grovelled on the floor till he found the apple. He felt very happy, so he proceeded to bounce the apple on Ollie's head as if it were a tennis ball. Ollie was getting ready to pulverise his friend when Anna appeared. Ollie lowered his head and gave her a coy look.

"Are you afraid of me?"

"Why, no, ma'am."

"Do you like me?"

"Well, yes, ma'am!" gasped Ollie.

"I like you and your sister," mumbled Stan, and became quiet when Oliver gave him such a look.

"Is your friend all right?" Anna asked Ollie. "He seems a little unsteady."

"He has a knack of getting us into trouble," explained the fat fellow. "And as fast as I get him out of a mess the deeper he manages to get me."

"We'll have to help each other," Anna said, with a dazzling look at her latest conquest. "Better get busy with that piano, because here comes this composer fellow and he has such a horrible temper."

They got the piano out of the room on to a landing. Ollie had had his shins barked because Stan's pushing was somewhat erratic. He was so angry that he gave his friend a push and, roused at last, Stan pushed back. Now, Ollie was not standing for such rebellion and gave Stan a very hard push, and the smaller man catapulted back against the piano, which was at the top of the stairs. The piano did a beautiful toboggan slide down those stairs and did not stop when it got to the bottom because it had casters.

The piano went into a tea lounge, scattered a number of visitors, upset several tables, caused a waiter to drop a tray full of cups and saucers, across a terrace and down some stone steps into the courtyard. Ollie went running after it, Stan had fallen down the stairs, and just as the piano was thinking of sliding down the road Ollie got to it. Then Stan appeared and they clutched at the piano.

From the sounds inside the hotel all was not well, and Ollie gave his friend an agry push and pointed to the hill. They managed to hoist the piano on to a dolly, and then they started to push the piano which, though small, was no light weight. They had not gone far when a small dog-drawn cart appeared. The dog was a St. Bernard and it had a barrel round its neck. Stan felt drawn towards it. Ollie gave a snort of anger and went after the offender and grabbed him, whereupon the piano ran backwards and gave them such a nasty wallop in the stern.

Back to the job of getting that piano up a mountain-path that got steeper and steeper and narrower and narrower. To those born and bred in the mountains it was a gentle slope, but to these two it seemed about a one in three gradient. They puffed and pushed, and several times Ollie looked towards the edge of the precipice. It was only a thousand foot drop. Stan was still a bit fuddled and several times would walk on the very edge of this narrow track, and then, when the two exhausted fellows were within thirty yards of the swing-bridge, the piano would not budge. They pushed and pushed, but it had no effect.

"See what it is," ordered Ollie.

Stan managed to edge round the piano with his feet so close to the edge that Ollie kept on swallowing with nervous excitement. Stan opened one eye and shut the other and then found that the cause of the trouble was a large stone. This with much struggling, he succeeded in uprooting and staggered with it to the edge, but when he tried to throw it nearly threw himself as well. Finally he put the rock down, kicked it violently, and gave a yell because it hurt his too. The rock slid over the precipice. When Stan had recovered he got a grip on the piano, but was so confused that instead of

pulling he was pushing. A yell from Ollie as the piano began to move backwards awoke Stan and he desisted.

Ollie managed to get him back to his old place, and once more they started to push the piano to the top of the incline. Here they were able to rest. The view may have been wonderful, but Ollie felt he was perched on the edge of a cloud. A hasty glance at this wooden bridge with its rope rails had done nothing to quieten his nerves. He pushed Stan towards the bridge.

"See if it's safe."

"Huh?" questioned Stan.

"See if it's strong enough to hold us."

"Well, if it's not I'll let you know," said Stan and charged on to the bridge as if it was the widest and safest of structures. He reached the tree house, hopped on to the veranda, waved to Ollie and then darted back on to the bridge, which swayed alarmingly. None of them saw a long, hairy arm that came out of the doorway of the tree house and then vanished. It happened that a performing gorilla had escaped from the village and had picked out the tree house as a hide-away.

Stan got back to the mountain path.

"Say, I'm not going across that bridge."

"You just went across it," shouted Ollie.

"Did I?" That seemed to floor Stan.

After some arguing they decided to try to get the piano across, and they got on to the bridge. Stan pulled and Ollie pushed. They got well out when a wheel of the dolly caught in a crack in the boarding, so they lifted the piano forward. Ollie forgot the dolly, put his foot on it, and it slid from under him, and Ollie did a beautiful somersault. He crashed head-first through the bridge, but was caught by his large feet.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" he yelled "Stan, help me! Stan! Stan!"

Stan looked all round and wondered where his pal had gone.

"Come and get me!" yelled Ollie.

"I'm slipping! Come and get me!"

Stan looked over the piano and gave a squeak at sight of the feet and Ollie hanging head-first. He reached down and caught his chum's hands, and after much struggling a white and shaken Ollie was back on the bridge.

"I'm going to see if the rest of these slats are safe," said Ollie when he had recovered from his fright, and he pushed past Stan and the piano. He reached the house platform. "Everything's okay," he called back. "From now on it's going to be easy sailing."

Oliver returned to the back of the piano, and the two men got it back on to the dolly, which by some miracle had not gone shooting down into the valley. They did not know that they had an interested spectator. The large gorilla had shuffled out on to the platform and was watching them with keen interest.

They moved it several yards and then rested. Stan, now pushing, blinked his eyes and gaped.

"I see a monkey."

"It doesn't surprise me a bit," cried his friend. "If you don't quit drinking brandy you'll be seeing pink elephants. Now, get on that piano. Come on!"

So they strained once more over the piano, and the gorilla shuffled on to the bridge. A hairy hand scratched Ollie's leg and he looked suspiciously at Stan. He bent once more over the piano, and then someone raised his bowler hat and put it back again.

"Everything ain't just all right," Ollie said, half glancing round. He did not see the gorilla, who was huddled down close behind him. "Come on, before I get jittery."

Then the gorilla smote him hard in the back.

"Oh!" gasped the fat man

Then Ollie did look right behind him and he let out a yell of terror. Stan saw and jumped backwards and half fell through the hole in the bridge. The gorilla gave a snort of fury and waved his hairy hands. Ollie scrambled over the piano.

Stan dragged himself to safety and sprinted up those slats to the safety of the mountain path.

"Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh!" Ollie was yelling.

The gorilla braced his feet, gripped the ropes and began to sway the bridge by sudden jerks of his huge body. Ollie was unable to move, and clung to the rope rail.

"Oh, oh, oh!" he kept on moaning.

The bridge was not used to this sort of treatment, and the ropes began to fray as they rubbed against the slats. The swaying of the bridge seemed to delight the creature because he swung all the harder, and the heavy piano added its efforts. Ollie expected to be tossed off that bridge at any moment. One strand went and then another. A crack like a pistol-shot and that bridge went in the centre.

The piano went hurtling downwards into the valley and the gorilla went spinning over and over after it. The piano hit a shelving ledge and smashed into splinters, and the gorilla hit a tree and then went over and over down a steep incline.

Stan had reached safety, but Ollie went hurtling towards the mountain face. His stomach acted as a buffer, and he hung there completely winded. Faint moans came from him as he hung on with the tenacity of desperation. The bridge was now hanging like a rope ladder. Stan went down this ladder and had to make matters worse by stepping on his pal's head.

"Get your feet off my head!" Ollie yelled.



"That money is sufficient to get you both out of Switzerland, and I suggest that you go quickly because I am a very jealous man," said Albert.

Stan removed himself and slowly and painfully Ollie drew himself upward. Stan reached out and was nearly dragged off the ledge, but at last two exhausted men lay puffing and blowing on that narrow road. Some time later they staggered back to the Alpen Hotel to report the loss of the piano. Victor Albert almost tore out his hair.

The Alpenfest

HAVING captured the affections of Stan and Ollie, the beautiful Anna was out to get some more scalps. She'd show her husband that she could play the part of a Tyrolean maid and vamp the whole hotel if she wanted to. She had done some smiling at the chef.

"Do you like me?"

"Like you? I love you." The chef clapped his hands to his heart. "Ever since I see you in this hotel my heart goes bumpety-bump."

"Oh, you're so sweet!" coyly cried Anna, and long eyelashes concealed the mischief in her eyes.

Meanwhile Victor was pacing up and down his room, and giving Edward a poor time.

"You're the biggest idiot in creation. Now that you're arranged everything in your usual fine fashion and the piano is ruined, what am I going to do?"

"I have everything under control, sir, as usual," smoothly replied Edward. "There will be another piano in here in a week."

"A week?" screamed Victor.

"In the meantime, sir, why not use the organ in the lobby?"

Now Stan and Ollie were working in the lobby. The plate-breaking business was more than Luigi could stand. They couldn't break the organ. No, but they did their best to put it out of action. Stan was working at scrubbing some stairs that went up to the floor above, and the pipes of the organ were against these stairs. Ollie had a bucketful of soap and water, and this bucket was a queer affair because it had a cork stopper in the side, and Stan dipped his brush so vigorously into the bucket that he knocked out the bung. Out poured the soapy water, and it went down one of the pipes.

Anna appeared, and that stopped them working.

"I've never thanked you boys properly for helping me get into this hotel."

"Well, it was a mere nothing combined with a terrific pleasure!" cried the love-lorn Oliver.

"Will you tell me something?"

"Certainly." Ollie wiped his hands and hid the mop behind him.

"If you really didn't know me would you think I was really a peasant girl?"

"I'll say I would!" cried Ollie. "The prettiest peasant girl I've ever seen."

"Oh, you sweet thing!" Anna cried, and ran off laughing.

Oliver sat down on the floor and looked about him in a dumb, confused sort of way.

"What's the matter?" Stan asked anxiously.

"I don't know."

"I know," Stan nodded his head.

"You're in love."

"How can you tell?"

"It's easy. Look at the silly, sloppy look on your face. Do you mind if I tell you something?"

Oliver was in such a state that he did not mind anything.

"She's in love with you, too."

"How do you know?"

"Any dumbbell can tell that. If you play your cards right you've got her right in the hollow of your hand."

September 24th, 1938.

"Tell me some more, Stanley."

"There's nothing to tell!" cried the wise man. "All you've got to do is to go and let her know. Why don't you do it like the gay Caviars in the olden days?"

"The Caviars? What did they do?"

"Well, when they were in love they used to go by the light of the moon and serenade their lady fair."

"But suppose she's in love with someone else?" argued Oliver.

"Faint heart never won fair lady."

They had no chance to discuss the matter further as Victor Albert came striding into the lobby, and seated himself before the organ. Beautiful music came from the organ, and the two adventurers listened until a strange gurgling intervened. Large bubbles came out of the organ stops and floated round the room.

Victor did not see them, but he was annoyed with the organ and worked savagely with his feet. A whole lot more bubbles and then music again. The two watchers imagined they must have been dreaming, until the organ again gave forth awful grunts and gurgles and bubbles poured out of the pipes.

A bubble floated towards Oliver, and Stan poked at it with his finger, broke the bubble and poked Oliver in the nose. Victor went on playing, and after a while got used to the bubbles which floated all round the lobby. One seemed to vanish into Ollie's ear, and Stan blew so hard to get it out that he nearly broke his pal's ear-drum.

That night, when the hotel had gone to rest, Oliver, accompanied by his squire, set out to serenade his lady. Ollie had some poetry and a bouquet of flowers, whilst Stanley was armed with a musical instrument of the trumpet species known as a tuba.

Outside Anna's window they stopped, and Ollie nudged his friend. Stan took a deep breath, and a raucous sound shattered the night. Stan took another breath and tried one of the stops, and that produced a shrill sereech. But after a while he got better and managed a sort of bugle call. A window opened and there was Anna.

"What are you doing here?"

Ollie giggled and held out the flowers. "Thank you."

"He's got something to tell you, too. Haven't you?" encouraged Stan, as Ollie seemed tongue-tied.

"If you love me like I love you, I'd love you better than Irish stew," read Ollie from his piece of paper.

"Thank you. Your poetry is most touching," Anna giggled.

"I wonder if you'd give me a—a—" Ollie flookered.

"Yes?" encouraged Anna.

"A chance to take you to the Alpenfest to-morrow."

"The Alpenfest?"

"It's going to be a big holiday," explained Stan.

"Yeah, and all the countryside gathers here for merry-making," Ollie added. "There'll be gipsy fortune-telling, dancing and singing."

"It gives me an idea!" cried Anna. "Will you help me?"

"I'd do anything in the world for you," promised Ollie.

"Then meet me here to-morrow morning at sunrise and I'll tell you my plan." She blew a kiss to them both. "Good-night."

When the window had closed Stan nudged his love-struck friend.

"We forgot to serenade her."

"Let's do it now."

Stan blew on the tuba valiantly, and Ollie managed some words of a song

called "Let me call you sweetheart." Now the chef had the bed-room above Anna's, and this noise woke him up. He looked out, saw the serenaders, and dumped their enthusiasm by pouring a pitcher of water over them.

"You dumbbells!" he snarled at them. "What are you playing music for at this hour?"

"Why, we're serenading," Stan explained in his simple way.

"Serenading who?" the chef demanded.

"His sweetheart," said Stan. "You know, Anna, the new chambermaid. He's in love with her. Look at the silly, sloppy look on his face."

"Well, let me tell you something." The chef shook the pitcher in a threatening manner. "I want you to know that you're wasting your time as Anna is in love with me. She's my girl. If I catch either of you two talking to her again I'll skin you both alive!"

Damply they gazed upwards at his fierce face.

"Anna isn't your girl," began Ollie. "Why—"

"Get out!" raged the chef. "If you haven't gone in two seconds I'll come out after you."

Stan and Ollie decided that it would be better if they got back to their quarters, which was the attic over a disused stable.

On the morrow the Alpenfest was held in the courtyard of the hotel, and everybody in the locality was there to sing and make merry. Our two friends had risen at the crack of dawn, and the chef who had come to inform them that if they imagined it was a holiday for them they were mistaken was livid to find their beds empty. He informed Luigi, who said he hoped he never saw those two again because everything seemed to be going wrong since they had shown up. His bill for crockery was going to be enormous.

They had met Anna at the appointed place, and they had sneaked off to the village. The girl had made all her plans. They were surprised that this chambermaid should have so much money—they had thought she was almost as poor as themselves. She got some picturesque gipsy outfits for her two cavaliers and would not let them wear their dreadful bowlers. They bought false moustaches to complete the disguise. Anna was dressed up as a fortune-teller, and she kept a thin gauze veil over her face. They hired the best caravan.

Stan and Ollie were on the driver's seat, and Anna stood in a little doorway behind them. She looked all mysterious. Her escort fingered their moustaches and kept an eye open for the chef.

"Do you think they'll recognise us?" whispered Stan.

"Why even your own brother wouldn't know you."

"But I haven't got a brother."

Ollie frowned.

"Well, the brother that you haven't got wouldn't even know you."

"Don't worry, boys," Anna told them. "And if you are discovered they can't do anything to you."

"Certainly not," agreed Ollie.

"Remember what the chef said," mumbled Stan. "He threatened to skin us alive."

"Stop worrying, boys!" cried Anna. "Please go ahead."

The caravan proceeded slowly up the hill, and arrived at the courtyard just after a spectacular flag dance. The crowd of people made way for the mysterious caravan. Ollie reined in the horse, and solemnly raised his arms.

(Continued on page 23)

He joined up with them, and as he drew rein before the foremost horseman in the cavalcade he saw that the boy Kit Carson was present among them.

"What's this?" he demanded. "I thought I made it clear that Kit was to stay in the encampment near Santa Fe."

A sturdy individual by the name of Kendrick answered him.

"Yeah, we know that, Clark," the latter said ruefully, "an' we left him at the encampment all right. But it seems he up an' trailed us, for soon after we stopped here at Tascosa Bend accordin' to plan, he comes trottin' along on his pony as cool as yuh like. I figure the only way to make that little maverick stay outa trouble would be to hog-tie him."

"That's what you should've done," Clark grunted, with a reproachful glance at Kit. "But since he's here he may as well stick with us. Come on, we're hittin' the breeze for Lost Canyada, and we've no time to lose."

Kendrick looked at the big frontiersman sharply.

"You sound like somethin' was wrong," he said. "Where's Jamison, Bowie an' Davy Crockett, anyhow?"

"They're ambushed up there," was Clark's terse reply. "It's pretty clear to me now that Dupray made a dupe outa Jim Bowie. The Rider wasn't trapped in Lost Canyada at all. Instead, Dupray's men were lynin' in wait for the four of us, and they opened up on us as we were walkin' our horses down the ravine. Jamison, Bowie and Crockett lost their mounts, but I managed to keep ahold of mine, and after we'd traded lead with those renegades for a spell I made a dash for it and got out into the clear."

"It was a chance in a thousand," he added, "but it came off, and if we hurry we may be in time to save Bowie and the others. They're well under cover among a bunch of rocks, and so long as their ammunition holds out they ought to be able to keep Dupray's gang at bay."

He made no reference to his encounter with the Rider of the Painted Stallion, for in his anxiety to return to the scene of the ambushade he was averse to launching into any detailed narrative. Thus it was without further delay that he and the men of the Jamison wagon-train set out for the north, turning their backs on Tascosa Bend.

Kit Carson was in their midst at the outset, but ere long the youngster was left well to the rear, for his diminutive pony could not keep up with Clark's sorrel and the brones of the other men. Nevertheless, the boy spurred after the rescue-party doggedly and succeeded in keeping them in view throughout that headlong gallop towards Lost Canyada, where murderous foes had snared Jamison and his two comrades.

As for Clark Stuart, he rode well to the fore, leading the cavalcade over the sterile terrain of the forbidding mountain country, through ragged gulches, across stone-strewn ridges, through tracts of dry, tangled scrub that gained some poor nourishment from a soil parched by the blistering sun of the great South-West. Then at last the band of hard-riding pioneers drew within earshot of Lost Canyada, and realising that a brooding silence hung upon the locality, the U.S. Government agent became a prey to a sense of dread and misgiving.

Had his dash for help been in vain? Had he and his companions arrived too late to be of any aid to Jamison, Bowie and Davy Crockett? Were those three redoubtable stalwarts of the frontier lying dead among the clutter of rocks

where he had left them—slain by the ruthless outlaws who owed fealty to Escobedo Dupray?

Such were the dark thoughts that oppressed Clark's mind as his sorrel bore him nearer and ever nearer to the mouth of Lost Canyada with the men of the Jamison column strung out behind him, and they were thoughts that persisted until the lie was given to them by the muffled blast of a shot somewhere in the ravine.

It was answered by a desultory volley, and Clark knew that at least one of his friends was still alive.

Was it too much to hope that all three of them were in the land of the living?

He pressed on at the head of the rescuers, and inside another minute he and the men of the wagon-train were surging into Lost Canyada amid a thunder of hoofs and a smother of dust.

Instantly they beheld groups of sinister figures edging down the rocky slopes of the ravine—the figures of Dupray's hirelings. These were tentatively descending towards the bed of the defile as if to converge upon a knot of boulders there, and they were blazing away at those boulders, from amongst which bullets were being discharged at them in response.

The crooks, it seemed, had finally plucked up courage to close in on their prey, but they were never destined to make the "kill," for Clark and the rescue-party took in the situation at a glance, and next moment their guns were roaring a challenge to the renegades.

The slopes of the Canyada echoed and re-echoed the tumult of the newcomers' opening salvo, and the very air seemed to tremble with the concerted outburst of that fusillade.

Pandemonium broke loose in the defile, a pandemonium dominated by the resounding blatter of firearms and punctuated by the whine of lead and the cries of stricken men, with the beat of hoofs forming a sullen undertone to the din. Not for long did the clamour prevail, however, for although Dupray's men stood their ground for some thirty seconds half of them were wiped out by the gunplay of Clark and his party by the time the rescuers had penetrated to the depths of the Canyada.

The desperadoes on the left-hand slope suddenly gave way and, turning tail, scrambled up to the rim of the acclivity, whereupon those on the right-hand slope followed suit, and harried by shots from the revolvers and rifles of the Jamison faction, the survivors of the Dupray gang had soon picked up their horses and thrown themselves astride their saddles.

They made off in an easterly direction along the twin summits of the ridges that framed the defile, and they dipped down on to a level expanse of prairie beyond it, joining forces there and sweeping onward in full flight. Meanwhile, the men of the wagon-train had shown an eagerness to give chase, and would have pushed after the fugitives if Clark Stuart had not restrained them.

"Our mounts are plenty blown and lathered, boys," he told them, "and we'd never catch up with them coyotes. We know where their hide-out is, anyway, and we can afford to take things easy, I reckon. Besides, our first concern is to find out if Jamison and Bowie and Davy Crockett are all right."

He had hardly spoken the words when the wagon-boss and Jim Bowie were seen to emerge from the bunch of rocks where they and Crockett had been ensconced, and cantering over to them with the men of the column, Clark addressed Jamison and the veteran Indian fighter in an anxious voice.

"I'm glad you two fellows are okay," he said. "But what about Davy? They—they didn't get him, did they?"

It was Bowie who answered him.

"Don't you worry none about Davy, Clark," he stated, taking out a stick of black tobacco and biting off a wad of it. "He got clipped by a slug just afore you showed up. It took away his fur cap an' put a crease in his skull—shook him up a li'l, but he'll be right as rain in a minute or two. He's a-settin' among the rocks back there collectin' his wits."

Clark dismounted and accompanied Jamison and Bowie into the midst of the boulders, where he discovered Davy Crockett seated on a flat slab of stone. Sure enough Davy was little the worse for the injury he had received, and within the space of some sixty seconds was in full possession of his faculties again.

Jamison turned to Clark then.

"Well," he announced, "you an' the boys got here just about in time. We'd run pretty low in ammunition, an' I guess them outlaws realised it, for, as you saw, they'd begun to sneak down on us in preparation for a final rush that would've meant the end of us. But what's the next move, Clark?"

The younger man squared his powerful shoulders.

"The next move is to make tracks for Dupray's hide-away, Jamison," he said. "We're gonna do what we planned to do when we left Santa Fe—attack that hide-away and shoot it out with the rats who are holdin' up the Trade Treaty between Mexico and the United States. And we stand a better chance of success now than we did before, Jamison, for we inflicted heavy casualties on those outlaws just now, and didn't lose a single man ourselves."

With that he moved clear of the rocks, and Jamison and Bowie and Crockett following him, the four of them rejoined the men of the wagon-train and found that little Kit Carson had arrived in the defile.

"Hallo," exclaimed Jamison at sight of the lad, "what's Kit doin' here?"

"He trailed the boys to Tascosa Bend," Clark interposed. "Wouldn't stay at the encampment near town. I've a mind to send him back there under an escort, only we'll need every man for this attack on the renegade hide-out."

Kit, looking at his benefactor, observing the expression of indecision on his handsome, weather-beaten face, made haste to launch an appeal.

"Aw, Clark, don't send me back," he begged. "Don't even think of it. I wanna be in at the finish—I wanna see you an' the boys fix them outlaws once an' for all."

The U.S. Government agent eyed him sternly for a moment. Then he smiled in spite of himself.

"Okay, you little scamp," he assented. "You win. But get this and get it straight. You keep well to the rear of the column, and when we draw within range of that renegade hide-out see that you stay out of harm's way, understand?"

"I understand, Clark," the lad murmured.

Clark moved now towards his sorrel and swung himself astride the animal. As for Jamison, Bowie and Davy Crockett, they shared mounts with three of the cavalcade of horsemen whom the U.S. Government agent had led to their rescue, and a few seconds later the whole troop was riding eastward through Lost Canyada at a steady clip.

The Hide-out

PUSHING through the hills at the best pace their somewhat wearied broncs could maintain, Clark and his comrades made fair enough progress, and the late afternoon found them only a few miles from their objective.

In the interim the journey had been uneventful—a journey through realms that seemed devoid of any living thing save themselves and their horses. But now, as they were wending their way through a pass in the mountains, they suddenly perceived a figure on the crown of a slope that rose upon their left.

It was a figure in Redskin garb, wearing the feathered head-dress generally associated with a personage of some importance among the Indians. It was a figure mounted on a black and white steed, and by this circumstance Clark immediately identified the individual.

"The Rider of the Painted Stallion!" he ejaculated, involuntarily pulling his sorrel to a standstill.

The other members of the column likewise reined in, and from the saddle of a bronc which he was sharing with a sturdy freighter Jim Bowie addressed the U.S. Government agent.

"You're right, Clark," he said. "That's the little lady what's been a friend to us more'n once, sure enough, an' it appears to me she's makin' signals."

Clark inclined his head, recalling how the girl had intimated during their last meeting that she had certain information to impart concerning Dupray's lair.

"I reckon she wants to have a word with me," he commented. "Listen, Jim, you know the exact whereabouts of the outlaw hide-out. You take the boys there and close in on the renegades. I'll follow up after I've heard what the Rider has to say. And, by the way, see that young Kit Carson doesn't get in the way of any lead."

In another moment he was separating himself from the cavalcade and spurring towards the slope on the left, and after a laborious climb that tested his horse severely he gained the point where the Rider of the Stallion was awaiting him.

He saluted her, looking at her inquiringly as he did so, and after returning his greeting with a movement of her hand she spoke to him solemnly.

"When I saw you earlier to-day," she began, "I told you I had found out something about the hide-out of Dupray. I knew you would like to crush that villain and the men who work for him, and I believe I can show you how. Come with me, and I will guide you to a tunnel which seems to link up with the cave that he and his gang have made their headquarters."

Clark's eyes gleamed with interest. "You mean you've discovered a back way into Dupray's lair?" he queried.

"I think so," was the answer, "although I am not sure."

Clark turned his head and gazed in the direction of the band of horsemen from whom he had detached himself. They were trotting eastward steadfastly, bent on exterminating the rogues who had rendered the trails so hazardous for merchant wagon-trains such as the one they had manned. Already they were out of hail, though they kept glancing back towards the promontory on which their comrade had joined the Rider.

Clark reflected that if there were indeed a back way into Dupray's lair, then there would be every prospect of hemming in the treacherous Spaniard

and his minions and bringing the imminent battle to a swift and victorious conclusion. The Jamison faction could be split up into two forces, one making a direct frontal assault against the crooks' stronghold, the other executing a detour that would have for its climax a surprise onset from the rear.

At any rate, the information tendered by the Rider of the Painted Stallion was worth investigating.

"Lead on," the big frontiersman said to the girl. "I'll follow you."

The Rider wheeled, and Clark moved after her as she set out in a somewhat northerly direction. A few seconds afterwards the two of them were descending into a barren valley, the men of the Jamison column being lost to their view, and there then ensued a rapid journey through the heart of the mountains.

Before long the Rider veered eastward, and in another half-hour she was halting beside a sombre aperture in the face of a towering ridge.

As Clark drew abreast of her she indicated that dark fissure.

"There is the tunnel I spoke of," she told him. "The cave which Dupray and his men have made their headquarters is on the other side of the ridge."

"And what makes you think this tunnel might be connected with the renegades' hide-out?" he asked.

"I have seen some of the Dupray gang using it," she explained.

Clark was silent for a brief interval. Then he slipped his feet from his stirrups and swung himself to the ground lithely.

"You wait here, young lady," he instructed, addressing himself to the girl who was known as the Rider. "I'm going in there to make certain your hunch is right. If it is, then I figure

we've got Dupray and his scum where we want 'em."

The girl leaned down and placed a slender hand on his arm.

"Be careful," she warned him, with a touching expression of concern on her beautiful countenance.

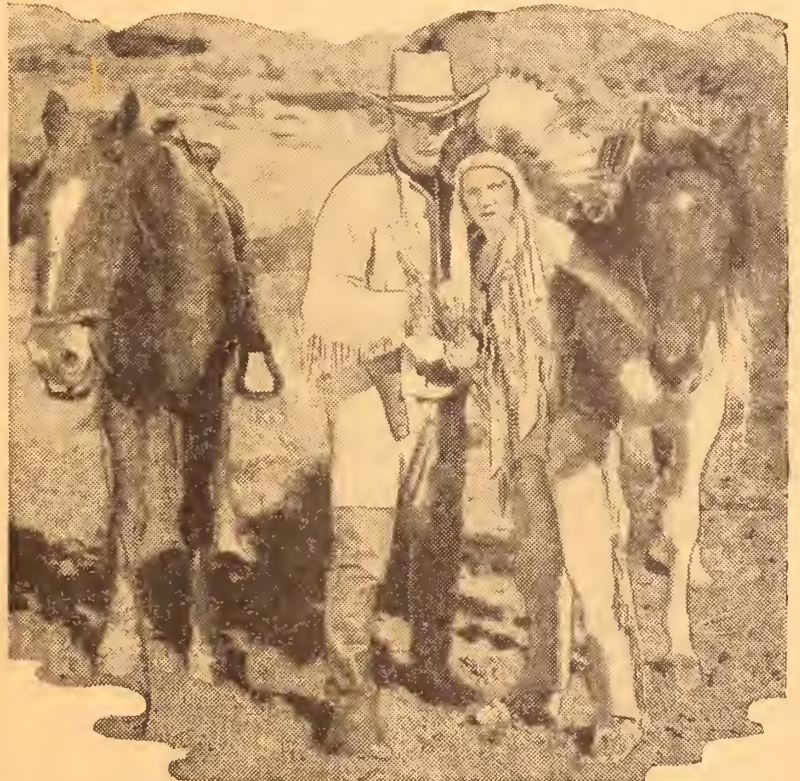
He pressed her fingers reassuringly, then plucked his six-gun from its holster and advanced into the tunnel, and before he had taken a dozen steps he was enveloped in a gloom so opaque that he could not have seen his own hand before his face.

He felt his way through the darkness, presently becoming aware that the floor of the tunnel was sloping upwards, and he judged that he had covered a distance of about three hundred yards when all at once he saw daylight ahead of him.

A few paces more and he found himself in surroundings that were familiar to him. He was in the cave to which he had once been conveyed as a prisoner—the remote mountain cave that was the lair of Escobedo Dupray and the latter's band of cut-throats.

None of the rogues were visible, but near the right-hand wall was a bunch of horses, saddled and ready for riding, their reins tied to an iron ring that was bolted to the rock, and in the left-hand wall was that crude door opening on to the compartment that had been furnished with table, chairs and bunks so as to accommodate the outlaw gang in some degree of comfort.

The door of that improvised room was ajar, and the gleam of the naphtha lamp that stood on the table shone forth into the main cavern and merged with the daylight that slanted through the mouth of the hide-away. No sound came from the apartment, however, and when he approached the open door on tip-toe and cautiously peered round the



"You sure helped me out of a tight corner, young lady," he declared. "I reckon it would've been all up with me if you hadn't appeared on the scene."

corner of it, Clark discovered that the room was untenanted.

He calculated that Dupray and his confederates must be out on the steep declivity which fell away into the gulch that the cave's principal entrance overlooked, and hardly had he formed this conclusion when he heard a voice ring out in a tone of command somewhere beyond the mouth of the cavern—a harsh, malevolent voice which he instantly identified as that of Santa Fe's deposed Lieutenant-Governor.

"All right!" that voice grated. "Let them have it!"

Hard upon the words there came a smashing blatter of gunfire. It was a volley whose echoes mingled with a second belching fusillade, which was answered by an outburst of shooting from a point more remote, and then the uproar of battle developed into a confused medley of reports as the firing became hotter and more ragged.

In the half-light of the gang's stronghold Clark took a tighter grip on his revolver and edged towards the cave-mouth. He had satisfied himself that the Rider's suspicions regarding the tunnel on the north side of the ridge had been correct, and he fully intended to turn back and circle round so as to rejoin the Jamison crowd and then lead a storming-party to the cavern via the communicating tunnel. Yet he was tempted to take stock first of all of the position occupied by the crooks, and with that project in mind he crept forward until he was on the very threshold of the cave's main entrance.

He immediately perceived Dupray and his minions to the right of the cavern mouth. They were on the boulder-strewn ledge that ran across the face of the hillside on which their hide-out was located, and they were blazing furiously at the men of the Jamison column, who had entered the gulch below and who had dismounted to seek such cover as was available at the foot of the slope.

From innumerable clumps of scrub or clusters of rocks the freighters who had crossed the Western wilderness in defiance of the renegades' villainous activities were pumping lead at the Dupray gang in response to the outlaws' gun-play, and even as Clark swept the scene with his eyes his attention was attracted to the figure of Zamora, the deposed Lieutenant-Governor's henchman-in-chief.

The lynx-eyed dago had ducked aside from a boulder behind which he had been crouching and had scuttled towards Dupray, who was standing in the shadow of a massive rock with three or four other members of the gang.

"Wo'd better get out of here by the back way," Zamora blurted, and in spite of the din of the shooting Clark heard his high-pitched words distinctly. "We're not strong enough in numbers to be sure of keeping those hombres down there at bay. Don't forget that half of our men were wiped out over at Lost Canyon to-day."

Dupray answered him in a curt tone. "I know that," he snapped, "and we are getting out of here. But we are not going without the loot we have amassed in the last two years, and we are not going until I have made certain that Jamison and his *compadres* cannot pursue us. I mean to see that we have a long start and plenty of leisure to find new headquarters."

"You mean we are going to fetch the loot from the cache farther along the hillside, then retreat through the cave after setting a time-fuse that will blow up the entrance to the stronghold and prevent anyone following us, just as we

always planned to do if we were ever in a corner?"

Dupray nodded. "Something like that," he replied. "Only it has occurred to me that Jamison and his men are bound to guess there is a back way out of our lair, and if they were to ride round to the north side of the mountain they might succeed in intercepting us. I intend to make certain that they do not ride round to the north side of the mountain."

Zamora looked at him keenly. "And how do you propose to do that, amigo?" he demanded.

Dupray motioned to the enormous rock by which they were standing. Poised on the ledge like some huge, craggy watch-tower, it was balanced precariously over the mouth of the gorge, and that mouth was a narrow bottle-neck between two sheer, scowling walls of cliff. Only in the inner depths of the ravine did the sides yawn wider in slopes that were possible of ascent, though they took on a steep character again where the eastern end of the gap was boxed in by a transverse precipice.

Indeed, the bottle-neck was the only means of entering or leaving the gorge except by way of the cave that had been the headquarters of the Dupray gang, for towards their summits the north and south walls of that pocket in the mountains steepened sharply and became insurmountable ramparts over their entire length.

And all this Escobedo Dupray was taking into account as he indicated the mighty erag in whose shadow he and Zamora stood.

"If this rock were dislodged and tumbled into the gorge," he said, "it would completely block the entrance to the ravine, and no amount of effort on the part of Jamison and his *compadres* could shift so massive an obstacle. In other words, they would be shut in."

"They could climb over the rock," Zamora argued.

"Yes, I grant you that they could climb over the rock—on foot. But their horses could never negotiate it, and there would be no prospect of Jamison and his crowd pursuing us. Now do you understand?"

Without waiting for any rejoinder from his second-in-command, he turned towards the knot of gangsters who were hovering near at hand and barked an order to them.

"Heave this rock over the cliff," he instructed. "Come on, get to work. It should be easy enough to topple it to the bed of the gorge, poised as it is on the very brink of the ledge."

The rogues to whom he had spoken prepared to exert themselves, and with one accord they set their shoulders against the huge erag. But before they could send the rock hurtling into space Clark intervened.

He had heard enough to realise that Dupray and his accomplices would bid fair to make a clean get-away if the plan conceived by Santa Fe's former Lieutenant-Governor were put into execution. As for Clark's design to bring a storming-party round to the rear of the renegades' line of defence, via the tunnel in the north side of the mountain, such a move was no longer to be considered. He was faced with a situation in which he must act alone and act fast.

Gun tight-clenched in his bronzed fingers, he stepped out on to the broad, split ledge that overlooked the gorge. Before him some half-dozen of Dupray's hirelings were kneeling among the smaller boulders that littered the terrace, and were firing into the ravine. Ho would have to keep an eye on them,

he told himself, while at the same time he held in subjection Dupray, Zamora and the ruffians who were about to heave yonder massive erag to the depths.

"Tell your men to leave that rock alone, Dupray!"

The big frontiersman's voice cut sharply across the uproar of the gun-play that was sounding about the terrace and spread sudden confusion amongst the outlaws. Those who had been trading lead with the Jamison faction twisted round with startled expressions on their rascally countenances and gaped at Clark in awe. Dupray, Zamora and the group who had set their shoulders against the erag above the ravine's mouth likewise wheeled and stared at Clark blankly.

There was no need for the U.S. Government agent to repeat his stern command. With Clark's revolver trained on him, Dupray lifted his hands in a seared fashion and slid an anxious glance at the men whom he had detailed to dislodge the massive erag.

"You heard the Americano," he jerked huskily. "Leave that rock alone."

The crooks he had addressed raised their arms submissively in accordance with his bidding. So did Zamora, letting fall a pearl-handled six-shooter that he had been holding in his fist. But out of the corner of his eye Clark detected a suspicious movement on the part of one of the gangsters who had been engaged in the gun duel with the men of the Jamison column.

The outlaw in question was none other than Macklin, apparently little the worse for the injury that he had received earlier in the day when he had been winged by an arrow from the bow of the Painted Stallion's Rider.

Macklin tried to "draw a bead" on Clark, but with a lightning-like gesture the latter switched his revolver upon the bearded renegade and almost simultaneously a leaden slug burst from the big frontiersman's long-barrelled Colt with a racketing smash.

He did not aim to kill the bandit, but merely to disarm him, and his bullet shattered Macklin's right wrist. Yet the hour of final reckoning had come for that treacherous rogue who had once ridden as a scout for the Jamison wagon-train, for dropping his forty-five with a yelp of pain, the scoundrel tottered backwards between a couple of boulders and staggered to the very edge of the terrace—staggered into full view of the pioneers who had left Santa Fe to do battle with the Dupray gang, and whose fire had subsided when the gun-play of the outlaws had ceased so abruptly.

The lull that had occurred in the general engagement was broken as Macklin's reeling figure appeared on the rim of the ledge. From the gorge below a medley of reports rang out, and a swathe of bullets ripped upwards in the gangster's direction.

The man was riddled by those missiles. A dozen of them pierced him and, his eyes glazing, his body distorted in the agonies of death, he plunged from the terrace and went rolling towards the bed of the ravine in a smother of dust, for at the point where he had fallen the ground sloped away in a long, oblique gradient.

Meanwhile, Clark had riveted his attention on the other gunmen who had been blazing at the Jamison party prior to the diversion he himself had created.

"Drop your hardware," he told them grimly, "and get over beside Dupray and the rest of the gang. Come on, do as I say and make it snappy."

The renegades obeyed him and discharging their "irons," moved sullenly along the terrace to the huge crag by which their leader and the other members of the outlaw band were standing. Then, keeping his prisoners covered, Clark edged in the direction of the slope down which the ill-fated Macklin had tumbled.

He did not immediately show himself to his friends below, however, lest they might mistake him for an enemy and open fire on him with disastrous result. Instead, he lifted his voice to make known his presence to them before stepping out into the scope of their vision.

"All right, boys," he sang out, "you can come up now. Nobody is gonna try to stop you, for I've got Dupray and his mob herded here in a bunch with their hands in the air."

There was a silence, a silence terminated all at once by a faint hail from the bed of the gorge, and the frontiersman recognised the unmistakable accents of the veteran Indian fighter, Jim Bowie.

"Well, I'll be durned! Pardners, 'twas Clark Stuart that spoke that 'eece or I'm a Dutchman!"

Clark saw fit now to reveal himself to his friends of the wagon-train. Passing between two of the boulders that had sheltered Dupray's gunmen, he exposed himself to the view of the pioneers in the ravine below, and on the instant more than a score of figures started up from scrub and clustering rocks—the familiar figures of his comrades of the trail, with Jamison and Bowie and Davy Crockett well to the fore. And at the same time little Kit Carson appeared in the mouth of the box-canyon on his diminutive pony, entering the gap from some point just beyond it where he had seemingly been ordered to remain out of harm's way.

Down in the ravine all eyes were raised towards Clark, and suddenly Jamison called to him.

"Where in tarnation did you spring from?" the wagon-boss shouted. "How'd you find your way up there?" "Never mind that," Clark answered. "Come on up and take these rats off my hands."

His words met with prompt response. Hurrying forward, the men below started to ascend the slope.

In the meantime Clark had concentrated his whole attention on his prisoners again, but he was unaware that a sinister form was stealing towards him through the boulders that dotted about the ledge—the form of a mission-bred Navajo Indian whom he might have identified as Topek, that retainer who had served Dupray when the Spaniard had held the post of Lieutenant-Governor of Santa Fe.

Inexperienced in the use of firearms, Topek had taken no part in the gun-fight which had been in progress when Clark had advanced from the cave, and had been lying low amongst a group of rocks to the left, inactive and concerned only with the object of keeping under cover. That was why Clark had not observed him, and he failed to detect his presence now as the Redskin crept up behind him with a chunk of stone clutched in his hand.

Nearer and nearer Topek drew to the unsuspecting white man. Then all at once he straightened up and leaped on Clark, bringing down that stone on the frontiersman's head with full force.

(To be concluded in another stirring episode next week. By permission of British Lion Film Corporation, Ltd., starring Ray Corrigan.)

"SWISS MISS"

(Continued from page 18)

"Ladies and gentlemen!" he cried. "With your kind permission we will introduce the greatest prima donna that ever thrilled a cantata. Romany Rose."

Victor was on a balcony with Edward, and he stared intently at the veiled singer as she was assisted down from the caravan. A number of musicians stepped forward. Anna had arranged what they should play by giving them a very generous money gift. It was a gipsy song.

"If you should read within my eyes, but one desire could you say 'no' to me? And if my breath upon your lips should fan the fire, could you say 'no' to me?"

There were a lot more words like these, but it was not the words that mattered—it was the beautiful voice of the singer. Then she twirled a tambourine, and Ollie gasped to see such graceful, amazing dancing.

"Edward," Victor turned to his manager. "Go down and bring that gipsy up to my room. Tell her I want to sign her to a contract."

Edward hesitated. "How about Miss Anna, sir?" he said, twisting his hands together. "I don't think she's going to like this very much, sir."

Victor laughed heartily. "You mug, don't you recognise her?" he cried. "That is Anna!"

Some time later Ollie informed Stan that it was their duty to find out what had become of Anna. She had been gone too long. So with some misgiving they entered the Alpen Hotel and walked up the stairs. They knew she was with Victor Albert, but outside his door was a notice suspended to the handle: "DO NOT DISTURB."

"Well, can you beat that?" gasped Stan.

"I suppose we had better go downstairs," murmured Ollie. "I shall speak most severely to Anna—" He broke off to nudge Stan. They were not alone.

"What are you two doing up here?" demanded the chef.

"Who?" asked Stan. "You!" The chef laughed unpleasantly and came nearer. "I could pick you two out in a million."

Stan and Ollie decided that the best thing they could do was go, and they flew down the stairs. The chef went after them, bellowing all kinds of threats.

"I'll skin you alive!" They were dodging about behind the desk when the phone rang and Stan took off the receiver.

"It's for you. Important!" He held out the receiver.

The chef snatched it, and, of course, the call wasn't for him at all.

By now the two pals were desperate, and Stan picked up a large vase. It was a wild throw, but the chef ran right into it, and it smashed to pieces on his head. He crashed to the floor, and when he staggered to his feet it was in time to see his two enemies vanish into the kitchen.

"Now I've got them," thought the chef.

The chef was not in a very good temper. He had witnessed a meeting between the new chambermaid and Victor Albert. They had embraced, and the chef in jealous anger had rushed off to report the matter to

Luigi. That worthy was getting rather tired of the chef—the broken plates had been the latter's idea. Luigi had gone off to interview Mr. Victor Albert and had grovelled to the ground when he found out that Anna, the chambermaid, was the great opera star and wife of the composer. He vowed that the chef should find some other hotel to ruin with his ideas.

Meanwhile the chef combined with the two friends was doing some wrecking down in the kitchen. All the staff were out at the Alpenfest, and they had the place to themselves. They dodged round tables and rushed from one room to another. There were a series of kitchens and pantries, and one could leave the main kitchen, charge through two pantries, into a smaller kitchen, into a dish-washing scullery.

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September 24th, 1935.

two more pantries and back into the main kitchen. It was like running round a tree, except that the chef might have won this marathon by locking a few doors and thus destroying the chances of Stan and Ollie of escaping, but he was so blinded with rage and jealousy that it never entered his head. And strange to relate it was Stan who first showed any glimmering of intelligence.

Ollie had become exhausted and was panting after Stan, with the chef not far behind and armed with a carving knife. Ollie made a spurt, and, knowing he must have a breather, had flung one of the pantry doors shut in the chef's face and leaned his bulk against it. The chef huddled himself futilely at the door. Stan, sprinting, completed the circle and gave a gasp when he came to the pantry. Luckily, the chef was making so much noise banging and charging the door and using bad language that he did not hear Stan. Stan darted out of the pantry and then had the brainwave. Why not lock the chef in and make him a prisoner?

This Stan did, and then rushed off to tell Ollie. The two conspirators then bolted the other side, and Ollie beamed as if the whole victory was due entirely to his own cleverness. There were holes in the pantry doors for ventilation, and the arms of the chef came through fumbling for the lock.

They seized his arms, and with dishcloths bound the chef's wrists together. "Let me go! Free my hands!" screamed the chef. "If you don't I will cut you up into small pieces!"

"We don't trust you, my friend!" Ollie shouted back, as he made the dishcloths more secure with some string. "A man who could be so low as to make us break plates in order to keep us prisoners in this hotel is capable of anything."

"If we'd got some pay it wouldn't have been so bad," added Stan. "Why, we didn't even get any tips."

"You're right, Stan!" Ollie stood back and stared at the squirming hands of the chef. "I think that should hold him for a while. I feel quite exhausted."

"But we're not finished yet, Ollie!" gasped Stan. "You've got to rescue Anna."

"Let's go and fud her." Ollie hurried towards the kitchen door. "Come on!"

They went back up the stairs, and still the notice about not to disturb was on the door.

"Why don't you try the handle?" Stan suggested.

Ollie tried and the door was open. They entered, and did they gasp. Anna with her arms round Victor Albert's neck.

"What's the meaning of this intrusion?" cried the composer, who was a nice fellow, but so easily got bad-tempered. "Can't my wife and I have a little privacy?"

Edward, who had been detailed to see that his master was not disturbed, rushed in from the landing to throw out the two intruders, but Anna motioned to him to keep in the background.

Anna explained in her nicest manner why she had pretended she was a poor chorus-girl, and had deceived them. Everything was all right now between her husband and herself. She was to take the star part in Victor Albert's new operetta.

Ollie looked caustically at his friend. "I thought you said I had her in the hollow of my hand," he hissed.

"Well, you did have, but you couldn't have played your cards right." Stan

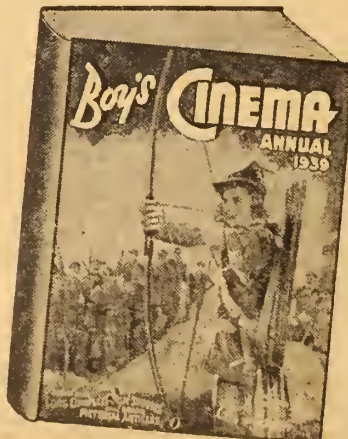
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scratched his head. "Perhaps it's for the best."

"Get out!" Ollie looked fierce. All this while Anna had been whispering to her husband. Already she had told him about the two kindly, foolish fellows who had helped her and how they were like prisoners at the hotel because of an unpaid bill. Now she whispered was his chance to help them.

"Boys, one moment," Victor Albert cried, with a somewhat theatrical gesture. "My wife tells me that you have rendered her a service. Also, I have heard of your temporary embarrassment and that you wish to end your days in good old America." He tossed over a packet of notes. "That money is sufficient to get you both out of Switzerland, and I suggest that you go quickly because I am a very jealous man."

"Stupid!" cried Anna, kissing her husband on the forehead. She shook hands with the two amazed-at-their-own-luck friends. They must write when they got back to the States, and if they ever ventured away from their native land there was always two seats for any show in which she might be starring.

They collected their fur coats and they took one last look into the kitchen. The chef had half-kicked down the door, and when they bade him farewell his snarls were almost inhuman. So they left the Alpen Hotel and doffed their bowlers in farewell.

"That chef really annoyed me." Ollie linked arms with Stan. "He was almost as unpleasant as that gorilla."

"Gorilla! Gorilla!" Stan beamed. "Oh, I remember the gorilla. What happened to it?"

"When the bridge broke it fell a thousand feet into the valley below."

"I shouldn't have liked that. Poor fellow! Do you think he was hurt?"

"Do I think!" Ollie turned on his friend in disgust. "If you fell a thousand feet would you be hurt? You would not only be hurt but you wouldn't know you had been hurt, because you would be dead. That gorilla is dead, and, without wishing to seem heartless, I can't say I am overburdened with regret. That beast nearly deprived me—" He broke off to stare at Stan. "What is it? What are you nudging me for?"

"I see a monkey." "So you remarked once before," reproved Ollie. "And I wondered after the brandy it wasn't pink elephants."

"But I did see a monkey, didn't I, Ollie?" miserably questioned Stan. "And as I haven't had any brandy I suppose that means I can't be seeing a monkey. This one's on crutches."

"Crutches!" exclaimed the startled Oliver. "Where?"

"Hobbling along after us," said Stan. Oliver stared intently and gave a gasp. The bandaged gorilla, who was limping after them at a surprising speed was none other than their old friend, and when they quickened their pace the gorilla let out growls that made their hair stand on end. They ran, and for a while the gorilla kept close to their heels, but he was not in the best of training for a race. With a snarl of baffled rage he halted, whirled his crutch round his head and hurled it with all his might.

Bong! It was a bullseye. Stan and Ollie sat down suddenly, and then slid down the mountain in a miniature avalanche.

(By permission of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Ltd., starring the world-famous comedians, Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy.)

"SQUADRON OF HONOUR"

(Continued from page 12)

"Okay, Kimball, start talking!" Sid spoke, but it was in Kimball's voice.

"I was told I'd be accorded a measure of clemency," he said.

"That's right," confirmed Finley, "if you give us the names of all others implicated. Who killed Tanner?"

"Craig," Sid replied; and Lawlor, in his chair under the powerful light, caught at his breath.

"How was he dressed at the time?"

"He wore a legionnaire's uniform," said Sid, and Kimball himself might have been speaking. "He rented it from a theatrical costumier. The name of the costumier was Gobel."

"Go on," rapped Finley. "What happened to Gobel?"

"Lawlor killed him, to make sure he couldn't talk."

Inside the room, Lawlor bounded up from his chair in a fury.

"The yellow rat!" he yelled, struggling with the legionnaires who caught hold of him. "That won't get you anything; you'll burn anyway!" His voice rose to a screech. "He planned both killings! He made Craig shoot Tanner to frame the commander, then he forced me to plug Gobel and dump him!"

Dan knocked him back into the chair. "All right," he said grimly; "that's all we wanted to know."

He went out to Finley.

"Well, you heard it."

"Let Riley have him," said Finley. "We'll pick up Kimball right away."

Flight!

KIMBALL was in his bed-room at the hotel, fastening the straps of a bag, when Craig walked into it carrying a suitcase.

"Have my car brought to the rear entrance immediately," Kimball directed. "Better take Miss Rogers along with us."

"What for?" asked Craig disapprovingly.

"She may prove useful if things get too hot."

Craig went to a house telephone attached to the wall; Kimball went out through the sitting-room to Eve's bedroom and knocked on the door.

"Get your coat," he said curtly, as she opened the door and appeared fully dressed. "You're coming with us."

"Where?" she faltered.

"Never mind where!"

"But what for, at this time of night?"

"Don't ask me questions! Start moving!"

She went to a wardrobe and got her coat, and he waited in the doorway while she put it on; but her hat was still in her hand when he grabbed hold of her arm and whisked her out across the sitting-room into the corridor.

Craig was already at an automatic elevator, and had pushed the button that actuated the cage. Eve put on her hat while the cage was ascending, and then she was bundled inside, and the three descended into the basement of the hotel.

"Go on, go on!" commanded Kimball roughly, as they stepped forth into a bare corridor with a concreted floor, and Craig led the way to stone steps

that led up to the rear entrance of the building.

A man from the hotel garage was standing beside a black seven-seater saloon parked in a narrow roadway there.

"All right," said Kimball, and he dismissed the man with a ten-dollar note and opened the front door of the car. "I'll drive. You sit in front with me, my dear. Craig, you get in the back."

The luggage was stowed in the back of the car, and Craig got in with it. Kimball helped Eve up into the front seat and took the wheel, and the car shot off along the narrow roadway, turned a corner into an off-shoot of Franklin Avenue, swung right into Inman Street, and became headed north.

The city had been left behind, and it was speeding along a deserted federal highway, by the time several taxicabs drew up outside the front of the hotel, accompanied by a squad car containing the Chief of Police and Captain Riley. Dan and Todd and Denton alighted from one of the taxicabs; legionnaires sprang down from the others.

"Cover all exits!" directed Dan, and he and Finley and Riley entered the hotel and ascended to the deserted suite on the fifth floor.

The open door of the sitting-room suggested flight, but every part of the suite was searched, Dan hoping against hope to find Eve—possibly bound hand and foot and shut in a cupboard. Riley returned from Craig's room to Finley and Dan in the sitting-room.

"What did you find?" Dan asked anxiously.

"Nothing," was the reply.

"The girl's clothes are in her room," said Finley, "but they seem to have taken the girl with them."

Dan leaned over the desk to dial a number on the telephone there.

"Legion Headquarters?" he said. "Blaine talking. General order for

mobilisation. Contact sheriff's office and have him block all roads leading out of the city. Look for car containing Kimball, Craig, and Miss Rogers. I'll be right over."

He left the telephone in the hands of the Chief of Police to dash off downstairs and give instructions to Denton and Todd, then drove back to the Post



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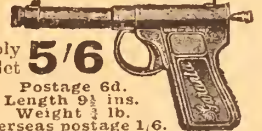
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September 24th, 1938.

to superintend the rounding up of all the members of the Legion.

Todd telephoned to the manager in charge of his own extensive garage and told him to provide twenty-five more taxi-cabs at once. Denton telephoned orders for all the men under his command to get out on to every road leading from the city.

Within a very few minutes a dispatcher in the radio room at Police Headquarters was sending out a message:

"Calling all cars! Calling all cars! Stop and hold a black seven-passenger saloon, District of Columbia licence G-two-two-three. Two men wanted on murder charge. They may be armed."

Over and over again the message was repeated, and it was picked up by patrol cars on every highway. Dan, having done all that could be done at the Post, joined Finley in the radio transmitter-room at Police Headquarters and stood beside the switch-board there. A quarter of an hour dragged by, with only the monotonous drone of the dispatcher to break the silence, and then the operator looked round to say:

"A patrolman on Bridge Road reports a car answering description passed five minutes ago, heading north."

"Call every town north of here, and order the roads blocked," urged Dan, and Finley nodded approval and barked orders at other operators.

Five minutes afterward word came through that a black saloon, heading north, had been seen on highway 63. A fresh message was sent out by radio:

"Calling all cars. Car heading north on highway sixty-eight—sixty-eight. Get up there!"

It was time for action. Dan telephoned to Colonel Forsythe at the Post, and cars and taxi-cabs filled with legionnaires set off for the highway. Legionnaires already on other roads were diverted to that one as soon as they reported their whereabouts. Outside Police Headquarters Dan scrambled into a squad car beside Riley, who took the wheel, and Finley and two other officers occupied the back seat.

Twenty miles out of the city, on a highway that led to the town of Westville, Dan shouted urgently:

"Take that dirt road—it's a short cut to sixty-eight."

The squad car was travelling at nearly seventy miles an hour, but Captain Riley achieved the sharp bend into the minor road with nothing worse than a sideways skid in the dust of it, and the car raced onwards.

Ninety miles north of Claremont a barricade of packing-cases and barrels had been built in haste across highway 63, and police-officers with cars and motor-cycles were waiting at a safe distance behind it.

The barricade had been completed only a few minutes when the black saloon approached it at a speed of sixty miles an hour, and the headlights shone upon the boxes and the barrels.

Craig cried out in alarm; Eve caught at her breath and slid to the floor; but Kimball did not even remove his foot from the accelerator. Straight at the barricade he charged, and broken woodwork flew in all directions as the saloon crashed through it.

Startled officers fired at the tyres as it whizzed past them, but their aim was none too good, and the saloon held on its way.

"Well, we made that one all right," gulped Craig, mopping his face with a handkerchief.

September 24th, 1933.

"Calling all cars! Calling all cars!" droned the voice of the dispatcher from loud-speakers in patrol cars behind and ahead. "Car is still on highway sixty-eight. Passed first barricade. Heading for the second one."

The second barricade, five miles north of the broken one, was a more formidable affair of poles on trestles as well as packing-cases. A police sergeant who had been superintending its construction heard the wireless message as he leaned against the side of his car, and he shouted a warning:

"He's liable to be along here any minute now!"

He looked over the barricade, and presently he saw the glare of headlights some distance away in the darkness of the road.

"Here he comes now!" he bellowed. "Come on, everybody, get out of here!"

Men heaved themselves over fences, scrambled through hedges. Cars shot off with officers on their running-boards to pull up a hundred yards or more from the obstruction.

The black saloon swept onwards towards that obstruction, Kimball crouched over its steering-wheel, the speedometer registering seventy miles an hour. Eve slid to the floor again and covered her eyes with her hands. Craig yelled frantically from the back seat:

"The road's blocked! We're trapped! Stop, chief, it's suicide!"

But Kimball did not even slacken speed. Just as he had charged at the first barricade so he charged at this second and more formidable one. There followed a crashing and a rending; boxes and poles went up into the air; but, as by a miracle, the saloon cut its way through with an empty orange-box perched grotesquely upon its bonnet.

A barrel rolled the full length of the car's roof and collapsed upon the concrete as it fell; shots rang out from both sides of the highway, but without effect. But though the saloon sped onwards it had not escaped damage. Its fender had been broken, and its front wings crumpled so that one of them scraped against a tyre. One of the headlights had been smashed; the engine laboured, and water was streaming down from the broken radiator.

The needle of the speedometer fell away from seventy to sixty, from sixty to thirty-five. Police cars from behind the first barricade were following one another through the gap in the second

barricade, and police cars from behind the second barricade were in pursuit.

Far away along the highway, to the south, the squad car driven by Riley was tearing along at nearly eighty miles an hour, and in the rear of the squad car raced a whole procession of taxicabs and cars of every description, all of them filled with legionnaires.

Twenty miles north of the second barricade, where the broad highway dipped towards a wood on the left and a deep ravine on the right, Craig looked back through the rear window of the saloon because a light was shining through it.

"We're being followed!" he cried. "Step on it!"

The saloon gathered speed on the downward slope, but Kimball was afraid that the tyre scraped by the wing might blow out at any moment, and he gripped the steering-wheel with all his might. A bend was passed, the open woodland was reached, and momentarily the lights of the pursuing cars were lost.

Eve, down on her knees on the floor, had noticed that the ignition key was in its slot. She put a hand on the dashboard as though about to rise, and she switched off the ignition.

"What are you doing there?" Kimball rasped at her; but the key was withdrawn, and she hurled it through the broken window beside her.

The saloon slowed to a standstill, and Kimball struck her violently in the face, knocking her backwards against the seat and the door, then turned to Craig.

"Come on!" he shouted. "Into the woods! It's our only chance!"

The two scrambled out from the car and dived in amongst the trees, knee-deep in bracken.

"They wouldn't find us under this stuff," panted Craig, after they had covered a quarter of a mile.

"They would!" snapped Kimball. "There'll be thousands of them here directly! We can't get too far from the road!"

They stumbled on, and the bracken was left behind; but in the denser part of the wood brambles impeded their progress, and many times they stumbled over rabbit-holes and fell over sprawling roots.

Eve had been knocked half-unconscious by Kimball's brutal blow, and it was only in a dazed sort of fashion that she heard the grinding of many brakes and the shouts of many voices. She tried to rise, but sank back upon the seat; and she was huddled there when Dan opened the door beside her and the light of an electric torch was in her face.

"Eve!" he exclaimed, and put away the torch to hold her hands. "Are you all right, Eve?"

His voice, using her Christian name, acted like a restorative.

"Yes," she murmured faintly, "I'm all right."

Finley looked in at the other door.

"Which way did they go?" he demanded.

"They—they went into the woods," Eve remembered with an effort.

The Chief of Police rushed off to give orders to the assembled officers. Dan instructed two legionnaires to stay with Eve and look after her, then consulted with Haynes, Todd, Denton, and Colonel Forsythe. More than a hundred vehicles of one sort or another had become parked at the side of the highway, and more than a thousand legionnaires were waiting for the word of command.

They were lined up in columns of fours, and Dan addressed them.

(Continued on page 23)

THIS WEEK'S CASTS "SQUADRON OF HONOUR"

Dan Blaine Don Terry
Eve Rogers Mary Russell
Robert Metcalf Thurston Hall
Lou Tanner Arthur Loft
Steve Lawlor Marc Lawrence
John Blair Kimball Robert Warwick
Norman Craig Dick Curtis
Commander Todd George McKay
Commander Denton

Eddie Featherstone
Colonel Forsythe Ed Lo Saint
Chief of Police Finley Ivan Miller
Captain Riley Harry Strang
Sid Hinkle Jimmy Hollywood

"SWISS MISS"

Stan Laurel Himself
Oliver Hardy Himself
Anna Albert Della Lind
Victor Albert Walter Woolf King
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THIS WEEK'S "FOOTER-STAMPS"



STOP! This is the end of the September "Footer-Stamps" Competition and up to 300 more of the Free Footballs are now going to be given away to the readers who have scored the highest number of "goals" with "Footer-Stamps" so far.

First of all, there are ten more stamps here depicting six different actions on the football field. Cut them out and try to score another "goal" with them, or use the stamps to finish off any partly completed "goals" you may have.

TO SCORE A "GOAL," remember you only have to collect a complete set of the six stamps (numbered 1 to 6), made up of the following movements: KICK-OFF—DRIBBLE—TACKLE—HEADER—SHOT—GOAL. (Note that the "goal" stamp by itself does not count as a "goal.")

If you want to score some other quick "goals" to swell your total, remember that "Footer-Stamps" are also appearing in "Sports Budget" and "Triumph" each week.

Now when you have scored as many complete "goals" as possible with the stamps you have collected, write your total ("goals," NOT separate stamps) in the space provided on the coupon below.

Add your name and address to the coupon also, then cut it out whole and attach your sets of goal-scoring stamps only to it. Post in a properly stamped envelope to:

"BOY'S CINEMA," Footer-Stamps" (September),
1, Tallis House, London, E.C.4. (Comp.)

so as to reach there not later than **FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30th, 1933.**

OVERSEAS READERS—you are in this scheme also and special prizes are to be awarded for the best scores from pals outside the British Isles. In *more* case, send in as directed above, but note that the closing date is extended to **MONDAY, JANUARY 2nd, 1934.**

Now when you have sent in your September "goals," keep any old stamps you have in readiness for the October competition, which starts next week. More "Footer-Stamps" will be given, and still more of our Prize Footballs will be offered.

RULES—Up to 300 Footballs will be awarded in the September contest to the readers declaring and sending in the largest number of "goals" scored with "Footer-Stamps." The Editor may extend or amend the prize list in case of too many ties.

Each "goal" must consist of a set of "Footer-Stamps" Nos. 1 to 6, inclusive—all claims for prizes to be made on the proper coupon given this week. No allowance made for any coupon or stamps mutilated or lost or delayed in the post or otherwise. No correspondence! No one connected with this paper may enter, and the Editor's decision will be final and legally binding throughout.

(N.B.—"Footer-Stamps" may also be collected from the following papers: GEM, MAGNET, MODERN BOY, THRILLER, DETECTIVE WEEKLY, TRIUMPH, WILD WEST WEEKLY, SPORTS BUDGET and CHAMPION.)

..... "BOY'S CINEMA"

"Footer-Stamps" (September)

Write in bold figures the number of "goals" you have scored with "Footer-Stamps" and attach your sets of "goal-scoring" stamps to this coupon.

I agree to accept the Editor's decision as final and binding.

Name.....

Address.....

N.B.—No responsibility taken for incorrect totals.

"SQUADRON OF HONOUR"

(Continued from page 26)

"Attention!" he shouted. "When I give the word, advance in skirmishes around this clump of woods. When you have completed a circle round it, close in towards the centre and keep a sharp look out. Any other men of the Legion you meet will join you. Detail fours, left march!"

The whole wood was encompassed, and when the circuit was complete the closing-in began. It was a slow process, and dawn was breaking long before the heart of the wood was reached.

Kimball was the first of the two fugitives to hear the sound of voices in the distance, and he caught at Craig's arm.

"Wait!" he said breathlessly, and raised a hand. "Listen, there's someone on our trail!"

Craig listened, and he heard a rustling in the undergrowth that suggested the movement not of one man but of an army.

"Better climb a tree," he suggested in a panic.

"And he caught like a couple of 'possums?" scoffed Kimball. "No, come on!"

They plunged further into the depths of the wood, never dreaming that their pursuers were all round them. Daylight succeeded dawn and strengthened, the first rays of the rising sun made glorious a sky flecked with white clouds. The legionnaires and the police had become united and were advancing together; but some of the legionnaires near Dan became impatient and wanted to dive across a sudden clearing.

"No!" Dan roared at them. "Keep closing in towards dead centre, otherwise we might give them an opening!"

The advance continued; the circle of men became smaller and smaller, till it was six deep, seven deep, eight deep.

The very heart of the wood was reached, and Captain Riley was beside Dan behind the forked trunk of a tree when he flung out a hand and cried:

"There they are!"

Kimball and Craig had stopped short on a grassy knoll because their way was barred on every side. Breathing

heavily they stood side by side with raised hands, weary and beaten, and the legionnaires and the police closed right in on them. Dan, striding forward, gripped them both by a shoulder. "Frisk 'em, boys!" he directed; and then, as Craig turned his head to scowl at him, he said sternly: "This is the beginning of your last mile!"

The prisoners were hustled rather roughly by the legionnaires back to the cars, where they formed into a revengeful procession to escort the crooks back to the scene of their crimes.

Eve sat happily beside Dan in a box at the Legion Stadium on the last day of the convention. Kimball, Craig, and Lawlor were in gaol awaiting their trial; the Legion had passed a resolution in support of the Arms Control Bill and forwarded it to Washington; and Robert Metcalf, a free man and an honoured one, was standing in the middle of the ring—now draped with flags—in his uniform as State Commander.

Every seat in the vast building was occupied. The Mayor of Claremont had said a few appropriate words, and now Metcalf had risen to address the assembly.

"And so, fellow legionnaires," he said in his deep and pleasant voice, "we are bringing this convention to a close. Your personal devotion to me has been most gratifying, but far more gratifying to me has been your loyalty to the principles for which the American Legion stands.

"From the inception of this organisation our policy has been to render service to the community in all emergencies, but actually our real work begins where emergencies end. The American Legion was born as a consequence of the Great Emergency of nineteen-eighteen. Since then we have devoted ourselves to the building of good citizenship and to the safeguarding of our national institution. Let us continue, by active example, to reaffirm our faith in peace and in the aims of democracy."

While the legionnaires were shouting themselves hoarse with approval, Dan took Eve into his arms and kissed her.

(By permission of Columbia Pictures Corporation, Ltd., starring Don Terry, with Mary Russell, Marc Lawrence, and Thurston Hall.)



Star Learns Language of the Studios

Hollywood has a language all its own. This is what Francisca Gaal, the Hungarian actress, is learning between scenes of Paramount's "Paris Honey-moon"—her second American picture—from Bing Crosby, Shirley Ross, and others of the east and crew of the new Continental romance.

A "tea-cart," for instance, is not a four o'clock fancy. That is Hollywood jargon for the sound mixer's apparatus resembling a tea wagon.

A "federal job" is a command from the front office or a complicated order.

A "free ride" is a lunch "on the company," or an offer to dine out.

"Spauk the baby" is a slang demand from the electrician to his assistants. He wants a small spotlight lowered a few notches.

Here are some more expressions from Hollywood's dictionary:

"Fishpole"—a sound engineer's handloom for putting the microphone into close quarters on the set.

"Mike"—the microphone.

"Playback"—amplifying a recording just made.

"Wax"—a gramophone record.

"New deal"—the director is satisfied with the scene and is ready to start shooting another. After this order the camera equipment is moved for the next "shot."

"Gaffer"—electrician.

"Best boy"—assistant to the head electrician.

"Scoop"—arc light resembling a shovel.

"Jockey wall"—removable background.

"It's a lily"—the scene is satisfactory.

"In the can"—the scene has been satisfactorily taken and the sound recording perfect.

"Gobo"—black cardboard that goes between lights and subject to cut off part of beam.

"Broad"—a wide lamp reflector.

"Barrell"—a long, round lamp.

"Bloop"—a light marking the film for synchronisation purposes.

"Cut"—a command from the director to stop cameras.

ROYAL NAVY

Boys may now enter between the ages of 15 and 17½ years. Full particulars are contained in the illustrated booklet "The Royal

Navy as a Career and How to Join It," which may be obtained on application to the Recruiting Staff Officer, R.N. and R.M. (N), 85, Whitehall, London, S.W.1, or at any Post Office.

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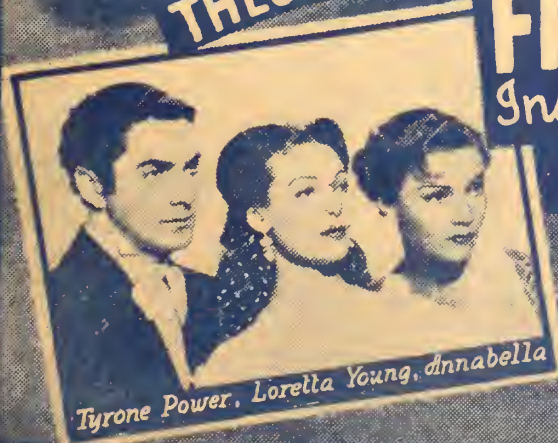
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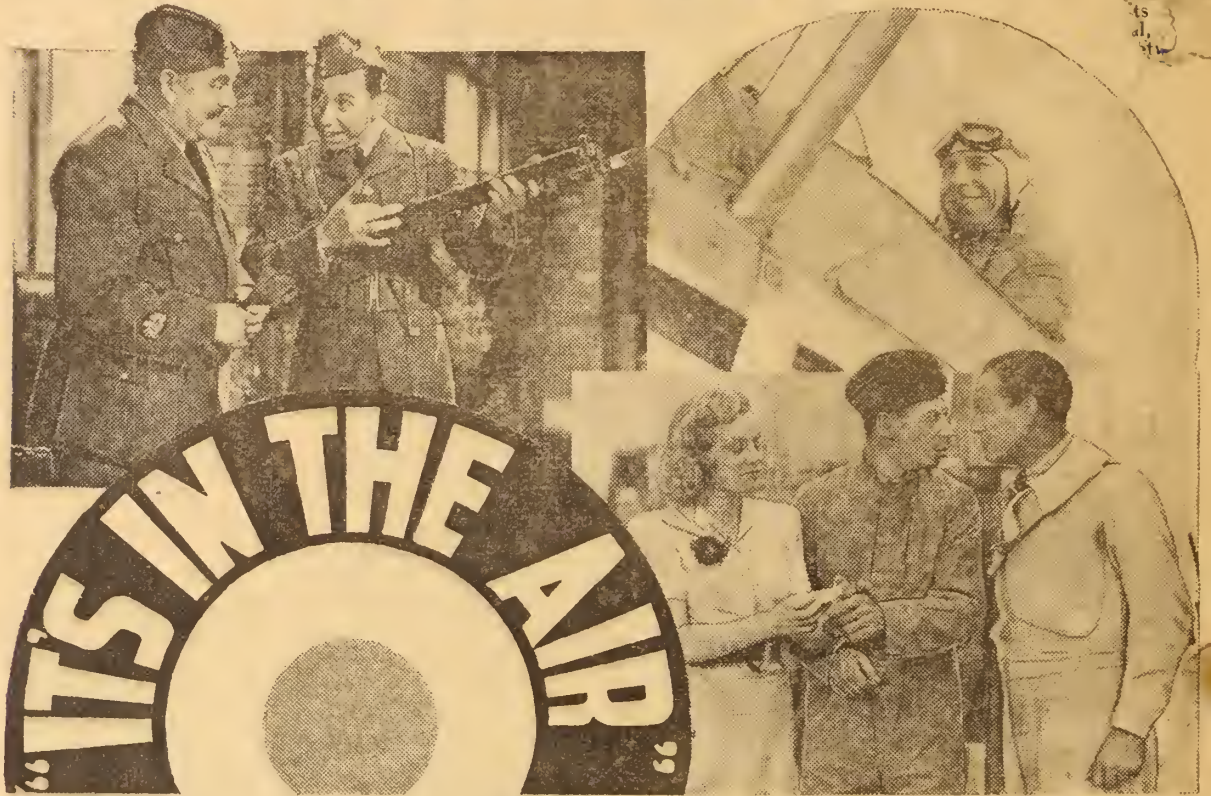
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The Bungler

AT Frogley, on the outskirts of London, they held a mock air raid. R.A.F. machines would come over and drop flour bombs, and the inhabitants had to imagine that some of these bombs contained gas. Territorial units were combining with members of the local A.R.P., and those of the latter who excelled themselves were to be chosen as wardens.

Maroons went off to signal the approach of enemy aircraft, and everybody rushed for trenches, cellars and bomb-proof shelters, and donned their gas-masks. Lorries with anti-aircraft guns and searchlights got busy. The town hall had been made into a casualty clearing station, with nurses and orderlies in attendance, not forgetting the mayor, who was wearing his chain of office, and ready to hand out diplomas to those people who did their jobs thoroughly.

Officers and orderlies kept on dashing in and reporting certain streets fully darkened and all people in refuges wearing gas-masks.

"Now there's only the report on Frogley Row and we're complete," stated an officer. "If I may say so, Mr. Mayor, this is by far the most efficient bunch of candidates examined in any district."

The prospective wardens were lined up and wearing gas-masks when there was a crash outside. Someone had knocked down a fire bucket, then swing-doors opened to admit a young man who stood there with a sheepish grin on his face. He was a clean-shaven, pleasant fellow, but his countenance was not that of a high intellectual—he was holding a large suitcase, and February 25th, 1939.

was followed by a large sheep dog. The dog was wearing a gas-mask.

The mayor gaped, and so did every one.

"Frogley Row okeoke!" reported the newcomer.

"Where the devil's your gas-mask?" the officer demanded.

"There it is," grinned the fellow, pointing to the dog.

The officer gave him one look and then shouted to an orderly to sound the "All clear," and for a message to be passed to aircraft that the exercise was complete. After which he asked the candidates to parade before the mayor, who would hand them their certificates, after which they would be supplied with uniforms.

The fellow with the sheepish grin shuffled forward, but stopped by the officer.

"I shan't need you."

"What?"

"Not the right type."

"You mean I don't get a uniform?"

"Certainly not."

"But I've brought my suitcase to take it home."

"I'm sorry, but you've failed," the officer informed him.

George Brown realised he had been rejected, and disconsolately he wandered through the swing-doors. An electric light illuminated a poster advising all young men to join the Air Force. He shook his head sadly.

"Come on, Sernifly."

Followed by his dog, George wandered down a corridor, and his head was bowed.

"Hallo, Bluebottle! Hallo, Bluebottle—Microbe calling Bluebottle."

That startled George. What an ex-

traordinary conversation! He realised the voice was coming from a room whose door was slightly ajar, and being curious, he peeped inside. Never had George seen so many gadgets, bulbs and wires. A soldier was seated before a mass of gadgets and speaking into a funny little thing.

"Air raid precaution exercises completed," stated the soldier. "Over to you."

Whereupon a voice from the ceiling boomed out:

"Your message received okay. Will remain on transmission to you while aircraft return to base."

George's mouth gaped open as he realised the voice came from a loud-speaker.

Then the soldier turned and saw him.

"Hallo, who are you?" he asked.

"George Brown." George shuffled forward. "Grand set you've got. Suppose you can get most stations with that?"

"If I wanted to," answered the operator. "But at the moment I'm only interested in keeping in touch with aircraft." He pointed across the room. "Mind breaking the left of those two big switches for me?"

"I don't want to break anything."

"I mean pull the lever."

"Me?" questioned George, and when the operator nodded, moved over to a big switchboard and eyed the two levers nervously.

"The left switch."

George's hand went out, and the operator pushed back his chair. He rushed forward and jerked George to one side.

"If you had touched that one it

would have fused the whole outfit." He pulled the lever.

"Sorry, it's my right and left," answered George with a fatuous grin. "Always getting them muddled—daft, isn't it?"

"Just going in to report." The operator moved over to the door. "Do you mind stopping here a few minutes?"

"Me? No, of course not."

"If any messages come through, let me know at once. And don't touch any of the switches."

George sat down on the vacated chair, with his large suitcase beside him. Scrufty curled up on the floor. George proceeded to examine the various dials with great interest, and he had an awful desire to twiddle some of these knobs. Suddenly the loud-speaker became alive.

"Hallo, Microbe. We're at 8,000 feet. It's perishing cold, and I'm bored stiff. What about putting on a hot gramophone record to cheer me up?"

George half got up to go and look for the operator, when he saw a switch marked transmit. He pushed it over and then waited—he had expected the whole place to blow up. Then he looked round and saw the funny little thing into which the operator had been speaking.

"Hallo, Bluebottle. Microbe at the mike."

"Hurry up with that music, Microbe."

"Microbe will now give you some hot music," George promised, and opening the large suitcase, brought out a ukelele.

George had a pleasant voice, and he certainly knew how to use a ukelele. His fingers seemed to writhe over those

strings, and it was a rollicking ditty that he sang.

"Did you enjoy that, Bluebottle?" he asked anxiously, when he had concluded the fourth verse.

"That's a swell record," answered Bluebottle, whose real identity was Corporal Craig. "I must get it. What's its number?"

George decided he had better switch off quickly. He walked over to the panel with its two levers. Had the operator said the left or the right lever, and if the left, which was the left? Of course, he had to pull down the right.

Woof! The room went up in smoke, and George went flying through the air. Scrufty crouched low and managed to get his nose back in the gas-mask before looking for his master. George, much singed, was hanging precariously from a gas bracket. He had lost the seat of his pants and his face was like a nigger's.

The Dispatch

GEORGE BROWN was in the garden of the small cottage that he shared with his sister Anne. The cottage was their own, and they found that after pooling their small allowance they could manage quite comfortably.

Occasionally George did some work, driving lorries, temporary chauffeur, gardening—a sort of odd-job man. He was a little worried about Anne because she was getting married soon, and that meant he would be on his own. "You're a nice sort of brother, I must say."

George looked round guiltily at his sister, whose pretty homely features were marred by a frown of disapproval. Following the direction of her gaze, he looked at the rose tree

he had pulled up. As usual, it was the wrong one.

A motor-bike came clattering along the quiet road, and as Anne was engaged to a young fellow in the Air Force, and he came to see them more often than not on a motor-bike, it was natural that she should run to the gate.

"Why, it's Bob!" came her glad, surprised cry.

George grinned from ear to ear. Bob Bullock was a real smart young fellow, and he thought his sister a lucky girl. He wished he could be sharp and alert like this promising young Air Force boy. He nodded his approval as Anne and Bob embraced—he wished he had a girl.

"What are you doing here, Bob?"

"Just been delivering some letters to Sir Philip Bargrave," Bob explained, and held out a hand as the brother shuffled forward. "Hallo, George."

"Turned out nice again," greeted George, and looked over the low wicket garden gate. "That's a fine bike you've got."

"And moves. I'd back myself against any other dispatch rider in the Air Force," Bob laughed. "Do you mind putting it in the shed?"

George was delighted at such trust.

"Ee, I will an' all."

"Listen, Anne, can I change my clothes here and leave them for a day or two?" Bob asked, as he walked up the path with his arm round his girl.

"Of course, but why?"

"I've got three days' leave before joining Glenbridge Aerodrome for a week's training, and I'll be able to pop over and see you every evening."

He looked at his wrist-watch. "But I must step on it. I'm catching the bus from the end of your road in half an hour, and that just enables me to



"Where the devil's your gas-mask?" the officer demanded. "There it is!" grinned George, pointing to the dog.

ated a jolly good through train from Frogley Junction to Cornwall."

"Oh!" Anne was disappointed. "Anne, I must. I haven't seen the old people for nearly a year, and it's the last chance before we get married."

George got the motor-bike away in the shed after getting the handlebars all mixed up with his braces, and then he came inside to learn from Anne what all the bustle was about. The sister packed him upstairs to see if he could help Bob. That young man handed over his service clothes to George whilst he got into a comfortable lounge suit.

"Smart, aren't they?" George looked at the tunic. "I wish I had a smart uniform like that."

"Easy. Join up!"

"I've tried, but they won't have me."

"Chest?"

"Hands." George showed them. "I always get muddled with my right and left."

Anne called out that Bob had better hurry, so the dispatch rider ran his hands over his clothes, took a few odd things out of his pockets and raced downstairs. George went with him to the end of the road, and when he got back his sister ordered him to put Bob's clothes away so that they wouldn't get creased. It was then that George found the package in the inside pocket of the tunic. The letters "O.H.M.S." were startling enough, but the address was more so: "Sir Philip Bargrave, Bargrave Manor," and at the bottom "By dispatch rider."

George rushed down to his sister and showed her the dispatch. Bob had had a lot of these things to deliver, and this was one he must have overlooked. He feared Bob would get into trouble.

"We'd better post it," suggested Anne.

But George argued that that would be fatal, as "By dispatch rider" was written on the envelope. Anne said she would go over in the next bus, and George would not agree.

"You'd have to say Bob forgot it, and you can't forget important letters like that in the Air Force," stated George. "Bob'd get shot at dawn. I know. Leave this to me."

Some short while later the motor-bike was once more outside the cottage. Then George appeared, all resplendent in Bob's uniform, with Scruffy barking and leaping around—anticipating a ride.

"George, I don't like it," said Anne. "I'm sure there's a better way."

George climbed on to the motor-bike.

"Ee, I feel grand in these." He held himself very erect.

"But it's a serious crime to wear a uniform you're not entitled to."

"Not so serious as Bob forgetting the letter. You wouldn't like him in trouble, would you?" George waved his dog away. "No, Scruffy, dispatch riders don't have mascots. Stay with Anne like a good dog."

With a roar the motor-bike woke to life, and George fairly shot down the road. He had been used to riding a very second-hand two and three-quarter horse power, single cylinder, and this was six horse power, and twin cylinder.

Scruffy was most indignant. His master never went out without taking him, and with a wriggle he broke free from Anne's restraining grip. The dog went pounding down the street after George, who was steering a somewhat erratic course. He found the sidecar hard to control, and the

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added horse power was thrilling, but disconcerting.

George's generous idea of saving his sister's sweetheart was going to cause a terrific sensation. He was heading straight for trouble, and it started because Fate decreed that at the moment he was heading in a somewhat precarious manner for the residence of Sir Philip Bargrave that an important interview was going on between the politician and Wing Commander Hill, of Glenbridge Air Station. Sir Philip knew little about flying, but as a member of the Cabinet he had been detailed to send in a report on the "Fighter," which had been undergoing secret tests at Glenbridge Air Station, which was only a few miles from his residence. He promised the C.O. that he would visit the station on the next Thursday.

"She'll outclimb any aircraft in the world," enthusiastically stated the C.O. "I'll have the new fighter flown down by ten o'clock, sir."

There was a roar outside in the drive, and the commanding officer went to the window to see if it were his car. His driver had gone off to get a gasket repaired. The C.O. saw a motor-bike come dashing up at a great speed, saw a gardener just miss being run over and the machine halt before the door. A moment later a smart parlourmaid entered the study.

"A dispatch rider has just brought this, sir."

"Thanks." Sir Philip was more interested in his glass of sherry.

"Would you mind, sir, if I asked your dispatch rider to drop me at the aerodrome?" requested the C.O., who was itching to get away.

"Of course not," Sir Philip answered. "I'll see you next Thursday, about ten."

Now, if George had not paused to apologise to the gardener and smile at the housemaid, he might have got safely away, but George was enjoying himself in this fine uniform. Made him feel a man. Then the C.O. appeared.

"You're going to drop me at Glenbridge Aerodrome."

"But I don't know the way, sir," cried George, trying to stand to attention as he had seen soldiers do on parade.

"I'll show you." Whereupon the C.O. finished the argument by getting into the sidecar. "Quick, I'm in a hurry."

"Yessir," meekly answered George. His heart was beating fast and his mind was in a whirl. He managed to start the machine, and was so upset that he let the clutch in so suddenly that the powerful machine shot forward.

The C.O.'s eyes bulged as they charged a flower-bed, but in the nick of time George swung back to the drive. At a good forty miles an hour the machine sped through the gates.

"Left."

Naturally, George, in his panic, swung the machine to the right.

"I said left!"

"Sorry, sir," gabbled George, and proceeded to turn at the same pace. The C.O. found himself right in the air, and thought the machine was going to overturn, but by some miracle George managed to turn, and the sidecar wheel bumped back on to the road. George nearly went wrong at the cross-roads, but a glorious skid, the missing of a signpost by inches, and the race went on. A race because the motor-bike was going so fast that all the C.O. could do was hang on for dear life. They cornered on one wheel.

"Don't mind me!" bellowed the C.O.

"Very good, sir!" shouted back George, and took the next corner at an even faster speed.

The journey was uneventful for at least half a mile, until George dared to take a sideways glance at the officer just to see if he were looking at him suspiciously. That gentleman was too intent on the road.

"Look out!" yelled the C.O. "Left, man—left!"

George went to the right, charged through an open gate, slithered through a muddy yard, charged through a flock of chickens, did a marvellous skid and whistled through another gate, back on to the road.

The commanding officer removed a chicken from his lap. Suddenly he held up an egg.

"Look what you've done now!"

"Not me, sir," grinned George.

"The hen!"

Five minutes later there came a warning sign denoting road repairs, and then where widening was being done a board with four words: "ROAD CLOSED — KEEP RIGHT." Of course, George went to the left, charged straight through a wooden barrier, with bits of wood going in all directions, slithered over some unmade road full of pot-holes, climbed a heap of stones, and slithered down to the real track.

"Shorter this way, sir," brightly remarked George.

At last Glenbridge Air Station was sighted, and never had the C.O. felt more relieved. He was supposed to be a man who did not know the meaning of the word "Fear," but the last twenty minutes he was going to remember for the rest of his life. George flashed through the gates before the sentry quite knew what was happening, and with all brakes screeching, the motor-bike and side-car pulled up exactly before the orderly-room.

Noticing the C.O. making a gesture, George had enough sense to get out of the saddle and open the side-car door. Two chickens fluttered out with much squawking. George touched his cap and stepped back, with the idea of getting on the machine and beating it. "One minute," snapped the C.O. "I've got some letters for headquarters. You might as well take them. It may be quicker than by post."

"But it may not be, sir," spluttered George.

"If you take 'em half as fast as you brought me, they'll be there before I've written them." The C.O. felt jocular now that his feet were on terra firma. "I'll have them ready in about half an hour."

The sergeant of the guard appeared as soon as the commanding officer had vanished.

"Put your motor-cycle outside the garage."

"But—but—"

"Hurry up. Put a jerk into it!" roared the sergeant.

"Jerk into it? Yes, sir," George let in the clutch so suddenly that one wheel missed the sergeant by inches; desperately George grabbed the handlebars, and skidded round in a circle and went roaring over some gravel to where he saw a number of cars. By some miracle it was the garage.

In the Air Force

GEORGE parked his machine, and hands in pockets sauntered round looking at things. The thrill of being at an aerodrome had banished his fear for the moment. He approached timidly a small machine, and



They all yelled with laughter as a mixture of partly water and whitewash squirted out over George's face.

looked at it keenly, but backed away when a mechanic bobbed up from the cockpit. He returned to the garage, and was wondering what he should do next when there came a familiar twang. Someone had a ukelele or banjo, and at once his inquisitive nature was roused, and he could not resist the temptation to go and investigate. He came to a building, and now the sound was louder. He frowned a little, because the person handling the ukelele did not seem to know much about it. He peered through an open window.

An elderly man was seated at a table, and before him was a propped-up ukelele-teacher; now and again the man would peer intently at the book and then grasp the ukelele as if it were something that would explode. Twang! George's sensitive ears twined at these discords, and he decided that it was his duty to render some help. He found an open door and a corridor, and at the end another door, slightly ajar. George never noticed the white letters that proclaimed that this room was the office of the sergeant-major and the order "Knock before entering."

The sergeant-major was so engrossed, trying to master the ukelele, that he did not hear George. The young fellow shuddered when two more discords irritated his ear-drums.

"If you bend the middle finger a little more—and keep the thumb up—"

That was as far as George got, because the sergeant-major thrust the instrument into a drawer as if it were vermin and spun round.

"Why the blazes don't you knock before coming in? Can't you read?"

"I—I just thought—"

"You've no right to think."

"But I'm only trying to help, sir." George should have known better than to answer back a sergeant-major. "If you take it by the neck—"

"I'll take you by the neck!" bellowed the N.C.O., his large neck swelling and the eyes under the bushy eyebrows almost sticking out of his head "Get out!"

George decided it was wisest to leave, and the pleasant smell of food drew him towards the canteen.

A burst of laughter made him move over the tarmac to see what was caus-

ing the merriment. He grinned as he saw a canteen trolley, around which a number of airmen were gathered, and George surmised that the tea, coffee, and food were not the only attractions—he had caught a glimpse of two girls wearing serviceable overalls and white chef's hats.

But George did not know the cause of the merriment. There was a smug, self-satisfied, cocky young corporal, by the name of Craig, and he loved practical jokes. He had put a trick bun on a companion's plate, and when the victim had pressed the bun he had been squirted by some sort of white liquid. Corporal Craig was the aircraft radio operator, who had requested Microbe to let him have some hot music, but George did not know his identity then, or he might have given him a wide berth.

The airman who had got the liquid in his eye took it in good part.

"You wait, Craig," he cried, "I'll get even with you!"

"Have to get up mighty early," chortled Craig in his arrogant, boastful manner. "Hallo, who's that?"

"Dispatch rider from headquarters," answered the airman. "I saw him arrive just now with the C.O."

"Headquarters, eh?" Craig was interested. Like most of the men at the aerodrome he had a hearty contempt for anyone on "The Staff." He picked up the trick bun and handed it to one of his cronies. "Here, fill that up. This is where we have some fun." He cupped his hands. "Hallo, there!"

George stopped dead.

"Me?" He tapped his chest.

Craig nodded, all smiles.

"What about a coffee?" he shouted.

George thought a coffee was a mighty fine idea and he shuffled forward. He grinned at the two girls. He had no great time for girls, mainly because he was shy of them, but he did think the fair-haired girl with the laughing, merry blue eyes was rather nice. It was this girl Peggy who handed him his coffee.

"From headquarters, aren't you?" asked Craig.

"Yes, that's right—headquarters."

"Have a bun?"

"No, thanks."

"Oh, go on!" Craig cried persuasively. "I bet it's as good as anything you get at headquarters." He

indicated Peggy. "Made by her own sweet hands."

"Well, in that case," answered the polite George, and took the bun and tried to bite it.

How they all yelled with mirth as a mixture, partly water and whitewash, squirted out. It was some moments before George realised what had happened, then he grinned in a sickly, apologetic manner that somehow made Peggy feel rather ashamed.

"I was going to wash my face, anyway," said George.

"Must have our little joke, you know," chuckled Craig.

"Ee, you're welcome," answered the good-natured George.

Meanwhile, what about Scruffy? That dog was not in the least like a whippet, but he had persistence. He had reached the residence of Sir Philip Bargrave just as George went roaring off to the aerodrome. Scruffy sat down for a rest and then went off on the trail, and in the end reached the aerodrome. It was the sergeant of the guard who caught the tired dog and read on the collar. "Yew Tree Cottage, Frogley." He ordered one of the men to put the dog into an empty guard-room.

George could have done with Scruffy's care and attention, because the practical jokers were having a great time. Whilst George drank his coffee, Craig managed to get hold of his handkerchief, liberally sprinkle it with pepper, and push it back into the victim's pocket. A bugle sounded recalling the airmen to work, so that George was left alone at the trolley with the two girls.

Corporal Craig swaggered off with a heavily built airman, whom everybody addressed as "Nobby."

"How you getting on with our sergeant-major's daughter?" he asked.

"Oh, Peggy!" Craig laughed smugly. "She's all over me."

George was a little embarrassed at being left alone with these two girls, though they were not paying him any attention, being busy discussing a sale they had visited.

"Perhaps I'd better be getting back to headquarters."

Peggy, who up till then had been a little sorry for this stupid fellow, was at once against him when he mentioned

headquarters. She gave him a look of contempt, and then turned her back.

"Funny how being at headquarters turns some people's heads," she remarked to her friend.

George decided that he was not wanted and, what's more, it must be time the C.O. had finished those letters. He came round the corner of a hangar and pulled up sharply. Two or three sandbags lay on the ground, and across one was resting a gun and the end of this gun seemed to be resting on a tripod. A number of airmen were crouching down, whilst one fellow was coddling the gun.

"Load!" shouted the N.C.O. in charge of the class.

"On aim, sir," reported the man at the gun.

"Open fire!"

George realising that he was very close to the line of fire jumped back behind the hangar. Whilst the gun was doing its rat-tat-tat he was standing with his fingers in his ears. Then something interfered with his vision. George gaped his horror. It was the pretty girl Peggy, she was carrying a basket and evidently going on a shopping expedition. She must cross the line of fire.

George peered round the hangar, but everyone seemed too busy to pay him any attention, and the noise was deafening. He kept on pointing and waving his hands, but it had no effect, so there was only one thing for it. George rushed towards the girl, and before she had time to resist had flung her to the ground.

Nobby and Corporal Craig were working inside the hangar, and it was Nobby who drew the N.C.O.'s attention.

Peggy struggled vainly to rise, but George was holding her down. The machine-gun class saw the incident and the firing ceased, so George let the girl go. She struggled to her feet, and her print dress was badly soiled.

"You've got a nerve!" Peggy cried, hardly able to control herself.

"Oh, no, it's nothing really," modestly answered the hero. "Any time you—"

"Thought that was a funny way of getting even, didn't you?"

"No, no, no!" George was completely taken aback.

"If that's your idea of a joke, it's not mine."

"But it wasn't a joke. You see—" George turned and pointed at the machine-gun crew. His eyes opened wide. "They're laughing!" gasped the amazed George.

"And here's something else for them to laugh at!" shouted Peggy, and she handed George a beautiful clip across the cheek. Then she grabbed up her basket and stalked off, head held high. George saw that the men seemed more amused than ever, and it puzzled and bewildered him.

"That'll teach you to get fresh!" the N.C.O. called out.

"It's nothing to laugh at!" George went up to him and spoke indignantly. "You might have killed her."

"Now don't try to kid me you didn't know they were blanks."

"Blanks?" gasped George, as the truth dawned on him.

He decided to get away from the laughter of these airmen, and he went towards Hangar D, where Corporal Craig and Nobby were working. Needless to say, the corporal had taken a very poor view of the incident.

"Hey, here a minute!" he called out harshly.

Nobby, hands on hips, had been watching. A touch on his shoulder made him look round. It was one of the new bunch of recruits.

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"Could you give me a hand with this boot?" requested the recruit. "I've got a nail in it. Perhaps you could knock it out on that bench."

"Let's have a look," said Nobby, who held the recruit's rifle and handed it to Craig, who took it very unwillingly.

The recruit rested a hand on Nobby's shoulder as the airman first of all examined the recruit's boot to find out whereabouts the nail was situated. Craig moved forward to meet George.

"That girl happens to be a friend of mine," gritted out Corporal Craig.

"Well, it was like this," began George. "You see, I—"

A flight sergeant came into the hangar and walked up to the corporal.

"Flight commander wants your log-book," he stated.

"Okay!" answered the corporal, and handed the rifle to George. "Hold that."

George accepted it obediently. Craig went over to a shelf to collect his log-book when he noticed through glass windows a squad of recruits near the orderly-room. He saw the sergeant-major numbering off the squad, and the corporal's cunning, wicked eyes lit up when the S.M. began ragnie because there were fifteen in the squad, and it should be sixteen. Craig glanced round and saw that Nobby was still busy on the recruit's boot—what a chance for putting this headquarters fellow in his place. He dashed back to George.

"Better take that outside."

"Me?" George was foxed.

"Very strict in the regulations here," solemnly stated Craig. "Rifles near petrol-tanks and all that." He stepped back as George tried to hand him the rifle. "Sorry. Flight commander wants me." Then he jumped forward and gripped George by the arm. "Look out! There's an officer coming." He pushed the bewildered George towards the other side of the hangar. "Quick! Through that door!"

There were a lot of questions George wanted to ask about these regulations and why the gun could not be handed to its rightful owner, but before he could get any words out he was through a small door, which slammed behind him.

The sergeant-major looked round and saw what he imagined was the missing recruit.

"Where the devil have you been?" he thundered.

"Me?"

"Yes, you! Don't hurry, though. We'll wait." The S.M. had his head lowered like a bull and his eyes were glaring.

"But—"

"Fall in at the double!" the S.M. almost foamed.

Somehow George found himself one of a line of recruits, who were all trying not to grin.

"I'll teach you to burst into my office," hissed the S.M. "And trail arms when you come on parade next time."

"But I'm not—"

"When you address me—say 'Sir.'"

"Sir?" questioned George.

"Yes—sir!"

"Well, sir—"

"Silence in the ranks!" This time the S.M. went and breathed on George from a very close range, and his moustache seemed to twitch as he added: "One more word from you and I'll have you up before the C.O."

"Yes, sir," meekly cried George.

The sergeant-major then stepped back, squared his shoulders and spoke sharply: "For inspection—port arms."

George thought it would be best to

try to do what the others were doing, but his efforts at copying were not good.

"Pull back the bolt," whispered the recruit on George's right.

George pulled back the bolt and somehow got it right out. He tried to get it back, but it would not fit, so he stuffed it into his pocket. The manner in which he clutched the rifle made the S.M. scowl when he at last reached him. The S.M. pushed and shoved at George until the latter was holding the rifle correctly.

"Put your thumb over the bolt!" cried the S.M. as he grasped the muzzle of the rifle with the intention of looking down the barrel. As the recruit seemed such a fool he thought it best to put one hand on the barrel—otherwise the butt might land on his toe. "Filthy! Can't see a thing!"

"Can't you, sir?" helpfully spoke George. "Let's have a look."

The sergeant-major almost expired when he found that the recruit was not at the other end of the gun, and had stepped out of the ranks.

"What the devil do you think you're doing? I told you to keep your thumb on the bolt."

George produced the bolt.

"I did my best, sir, but it's come unstick."

"Get back into the ranks." The S.M. was livid. "I'll teach you who's in charge here."

George, the bolt back in the rifle, found himself back in the ranks and conscious that for some reason all these men were laughing at him.

"I will now demonstrate the slope arms," stated the S.M., and executed the movements. "One—two—three. Don't be afraid of your rifle. Slap it into your shoulder—it won't hurt you. Don't forget to throw your rifle up." He did the movement several times. "Now let's see you do it. Don't forget—throw your rifle up. Squad, 'shun—slope arms!'"

George determined that he must try his best and jerked up his rifle so swiftly that he failed to get a proper grip on it; it sailed through the air and landed on the sergeant-major's foot.

Corporal Craig, watching from the window, was almost doubled up with mirth. He turned and saw that the recruit had got the nail out of his boot.

"I wouldn't go out on the parade ground just yet," Craig advised. "Better wait until you can slip out unnoticed."

The sergeant-major, after telling George that he ought to be in a home, stood the awkward squad at ease whilst he demonstrated the "Ground arms." George was so hot and exhausted that he took out his handkerchief, mopped his brow and wiped his nose. The sergeant-major was just showing how the rifle should be laid on the ground parallel to the right foot when George sneezed. The S.M. leaped to an upright position with obvious anxiety for the seat of his breeches. He saw the smirks.

"I'll teach you to laugh on parade!" he shouted and glared at George. "And as for you, you'll laugh on the wrong side of your face before the day's out!"

Once more he demonstrated the movement, and again George used the handkerchief. George's sneeze was just like tearing cloth, and once again the S.M. jerked upright. He was busy telling George a few things when the commanding officer appeared. At once the S.M. called the squad to attention and stepped smartly up to his officer to salute.

George looked desperately round, and at that moment Craig pushed the recruit through the doorway. George slipped out of the back row, where he

had got to by mistake. The recruit stepped across the short space, grabbed the rifle, and took his place in the ranks.

"How are the new recruits, sergeant-major?"

"Speaking for fifteen of them, sir, I've seen worse," was the report. "But the sixteenth is the worst I've seen in thirty years' service."

The commanding officer decided to inspect the squad and asked the S.M. to point out the bad recruit. Of course, the wretched George could not be found. The S.M. had sixteen men, and yet the smirking idiot had vanished. When he reported this the C.O. looked at him suspiciously, and asked if he were seeing double. George had hidden behind a sentry-box, but when he tried to tiptoe towards the protection of a hangar the S.M. saw him.

"There he is, sir!" the S.M. shouted and pointed. "Come back here, you!" The C.O.'s eyes opened wide.

"But he's no recruit," he said. "He's a dispatch rider from headquarters."

"A who, sir?" The S.M. was staggered.

"Drove me here only a few minutes ago." The C.O. gave his sergeant-major a nasty look. "I'll see you in my office later." Then he looked at George. "The letters are not ready yet."

The squad was dismissed, but the S.M. ordered George to remain behind.

"Get back to your headquarters and never let me see you again."

"But those letters—"

The S.M. had stalked off—he just could not talk to George. George scratched his head and wondered what he should do. A kindly disposed airman told him to wait in the guard-room. There was a telephone there, and when the guard was called out it was his chance to make a call. He got through to Frogley 214 and spoke to his sister. What should he do? She told him that he must wait for the letters. If he didn't they might find out about Bob, who would be court-martialled. He hung up hurriedly as the sergeant of the guard appeared.

"Who was it?"

"Wrong number," George answered quickly. "I wish they'd hurry up with those letters."

"I'll let you know when they're ready," gruffly stated the sergeant. "Best go along to the canteen."

Seruffy had bitten through the rope that had held him prisoner some time before George came into the guard-house. He got out through a window.

Craig Gets More Laughs

GEORGE wandered off towards the canteen. It was now almost dark, and the idea of driving that powerful motor-bike was a problem; still, if he could only get away from this place it would be something, even if it meant pushing Bob's machine all the way to Frogley.

The canteen was full of airmen off duty. They were playing cards, billiards, chess, reading papers, chatting and generally relaxing. Behind the long counter Peggy was on duty, and nearby lounged Corporal Craig and Nobby.

"Look, he's still here." Nobby nudged his friend.

"Hey, Romeo!" called Craig, and when George paused in front of him asked: "Have a bun?"

"I want to speak to the young lady I met this afternoon," stolidly stated George.

Craig turned so that George could see that the girl behind the counter was Peggy. Then the corporal called her name and pointed to George.

"Look who's here."

"Why, if it's not Mr. Headquarters!" cried Peggy, with a nasty laugh. "Their pet practical joker."

"I'm sorry about messing up your dress," humbly spoke George. "I'm afraid I sort of lost my head."

"You certainly did."

"Won't you let me apologise?"

"Fraid I'm rather busy," was her haughty answer.

This caused Craig considerable amusement. Peggy filled a tray and went off to see to the wants of the various customers, whilst George stared unhappily after her.

Somebody began to bang out a tune at the piano, and an N.C.O. came up to Craig and asked him to sing one of his comic songs.

"I'm not in the mood," he answered, and pointed at George. "Ask him. He's full of gags."

"What can he do?"

"Everything I expect—sing—dance—play any musical instrument."

"I can play the uke a little," stated George.

Naturally, Corporal Craig did not believe this for a moment. He knew the S.M. had a ukelele in his room, so he whispered into Nobby's ear to go get it. George's eyes glistened when Nobby pushed the instrument into his hands, and Craig chuckled because he felt certain that he was about to witness the further humiliation of a person to whom he had taken a distinct aversion. The corporal shouted for silence, and then said with a sneering grin that one of the big shots from headquarters wanted to sing to them. This was greeted with ironical cheers. Peggy looked at Craig, and there was an angry glint in her eyes. One could take practical joking too far. It was time that Craig ceased up on this poor mug from headquarters. Then George twanged the ukelele lovingly, perched himself on the edge of a table and began to sing. The laughter died away and soon everyone was crowding round—no need to tell these boys that here was a musician.

The smirk on Craig's face vanished because he realised that fact as well. Some of the words of the song were very funny, and it made the corporal furious to hear the laughter and to see Peggy was smiling.

"Pretty good, I must say," was his condescending comment at the end.

"And I wrote it myself," George said with pride.

"You did?" Now there was almost hero-worship in the eyes of the sergeant-major's daughter.

The boys shouted for another tune, and George sang them the same ditty that he had broadcast at the request of Bluebottle. It was not very long before Corporal Craig recognised the tune and the voice.

"Funny thing, but when I was night flying I heard that very song relayed from Frogley," the corporal stated sharply, when the applause was at an end. "What's more, the voice was the dead spit of yours."

George realised this unfortunate coincidence might mean his unmasking, and he stared hopelessly at the corporal. Luckily, the latter had to take a back seat as there was a yell from the appreciative audience for more. The only tune that George could think of that would appeal was about a sergeant-major, and so he sang it.

It was a comedy number with numerous sallies at the expense of all sergeant-majors. As most of the men went in fear and trembling of this mighty personage they were at first apprehensive, and then gave full vent to the laughter. Most unfortunate that the sergeant-major should hear the twanging of the ukelele and enter the canteen to find out who was playing it so perfectly. The S.M. listened to one chorus and then, like a madman, he intervened and informed George that his next place of abode would be the guard-room.

The poor, unfortunate George was pushed into a room, and at once a shaggy form bounded forward—it was



The bucket flopped over the sergeant-major's head with a clang.

Scruffy. The S.M. came in to question the prisoner and was amazed.

"Is that your dog?" he asked suspiciously—everything about this young fellow aroused his suspicions.

"Yes."

"But I thought you'd just come from headquarters?"

"Yes, yes—I have——" stuttered George.

"Followed you down, I suppose," was the sarcastic comment.

"Well, he used to be my dog," lied George. "But I gave him to someone who lives near here," he added as a bright after-thought. "He must have heard that I was down for the day."

Peggy went with Corporal Craig to find out what had happened to the unfortunate ukelele player, and they heard from the sergeant about the dog, and the girl was allowed to see the dog after George had been taken away to have an unpleasant five minutes with the C.O.—the S.M. hoped it would be unpleasant.

When Craig saw the address, "Yew Tree Cottage, Frogley," he jumped to the truth that George was not from headquarters.

"Obviously a fraud—probably not in the Air Force at all. I'd better let the sergeant-in-charge know."

"Dave, if he's not in the Air Force," Peggy paused, "he might have thought those were real bullets."

After a certain amount of persuasion Peggy convinced Craig that it would be best that nothing be said that night. She would take the dog back in the morning and find out.

The S.M. came out of the orderly-room to inform George that defaulters would be seen by the C.O. in the morning, and that he would spend the night in Number 4 barracks.

"But the letters?" argued George.

"They'll be posted."

The unscrupulous Corporal Craig saw George searching for Number 4 barracks, and with the idea of more fun pretended to be very sorry for his little jokes. Naturally, George told him about having to stay the night in barracks, and at once Craig's eyes glinted. He offered to show George the way, and he showed the unfortunate young man into the S.M.'s quarters.

George was amazed to find such a comfortable place with proper rooms, beds and everything. He was such a guileless person that he never suspected further trickery. Craig covered himself by saying that there had been a lot of improvements lately, and it was a new idea of the authorities to give fellows rooms just like home.

"Ee, it's champion," cried George.

Corporal Craig departed, and nearly died of mirth once he got out of the building. George took a bath in the fine bath-room, and as he could not find the bed-room switch he put out the light by the simple method of taking out the bulb. There were two beds, and he chose the one on the right, and being dogged tired was soon asleep.

The S.M. came in a long time later, cussed when the light would not work, undressed, took a bath, and had his usual snooze. Peggy always came and kissed her father good-night, and George was almost under the bedclothes, except for a bit of forehead. She kissed his forehead and tiptoed out of the room. Some five minutes later the S.M. woke up, tried the lights, remembered they would not act, muttered and got into the empty bed.

Peggy was up early, and took Scruffy over to Frogley in one of the lorries going that way. She saw Anne and learned all about the subterfuge of Anne's brother. Anne begged Peggy to

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help George, because he had only done it to save Bob.

"Don't worry. I'll see he gets away all right," Peggy promised, and patted Scruffy. "Your master will soon be home, Scruffy."

Peggy returned to camp, and now her opinion of George had undergone a big change. He was a sort of martyred hero.

Meanwhile, George was in even worse trouble. An orderly had brought the S.M. his usual early morning tea and found two occupants in the room, and, naturally, imagined it was a friend. He fetched another cup of tea, and both men sat up in bed to enjoy it. George gave a yell when he saw his room mate, and most of the hot tea went over the sergeant-major. George was the first case that morning before the C.O.

The S.M.'s chief complaint was about a song, which was both insubordinate and insulting. There were further incidents, but the C.O. said he would deal with one at a time—he wished to hear the song. The S.M. had to confess that he possessed a ukelele, and squirmed at the amused gleam in his superior's eyes. An orderly was sent for the instrument.

Meantime George had been thinking hard, and trying to scheme out some fresh words. It was a shock for the S.M. when George trilled out a doggerel all about the most wonderful S.M. the Air Force had ever known, how the men idolised him and what he did for them.

"Can you see anything very wrong in that?" the C.O. asked of the adjutant when the song had ended.

"Sounded very complimentary to me, sir."

"But the words are different, sir," the S.M. almost bellowed.

"Words often sound different at 10 o'clock at night," the C.O. answered, knowing that his S.M. did not disapprove of alcoholic refreshment. "Case dismissed."

"Do you mean I can go, sir?" cried George, and beamed. "Thank you, sir."

"Give Aircraftsman Bullock his papers," ordered the C.O. When George had been marched from the room he looked at his chief N.C.O. "I'm surprised, sergeant-major. A man from headquarters. This is the sort of thing that gives a station a bad name."

"But last night, sir——"

"What happened the night before often appears different in the morning," snapped the C.O. "Don't forget fire drill at 9.30."

The S.M. went out red in the face—he had almost forgotten to salute. His big hands shook as he scowled at the papers in his hands. Then he noticed that A/e Bullock had been posted from the Air Ministry to Glenbridge Air Station for the annual week's training.

George was on his machine and almost on his way when the sergeant-major stopped him. He was Aircraftsman Bullock 2814—had he forgotten that he had been posted here for a week's training? George would have argued, but he capitulated when the S.M. threatened to put him under arrest.

"Number 4 Barracks," ordered the S.M. "Don't make any mistake about it this time. Report to me on the parade ground in half an hour."

Learning to Serve His Country

GEORGE found Number 4 Barracks all right, and someone told him when it was time to fall in for the fire-parade. He was ambling across the parade ground about 9.20 when Peggy darted out of a hangar and gripped his arm.

"I've seen your sister this morning."

"What?" George almost jumped out of his skin.

"She told me the whole story, and I'm going to help you get away."

"It's very good of you," George managed a grin of gratitude. "But I'm afraid it's too late."

"Why too late?"

"They've found out that Bob's coming here for this week's training, so they won't let me go."

"But you can't impersonate Bob for a whole week."

"I'll save him from being court-martialled, anyway."

"But it's a serious crime wearing a uniform you aren't entitled to."

"It'll be just as serious for Bob if they catch him over that letter."

"Well, I think it's jolly sporting of you," Peggy said admiringly, for she was touched by his devotion.

"If it wasn't for that lop-eared, red-nosed-lah-di-dah-sergeant-major——"

"Look out!" hissed Peggy.

He saw the dreaded man approaching, and stiffened to attention.

"Hallo, daddy," she cried, and George just gaped vacantly.

"Why the devil aren't you on fire drill?" raved the S.M.

"I'm just going, sir," George answered, and beat it at the double.

Peggy had had to explain all that she had found out about George to Corporal Craig, and that worthy was by now sick of the sight of a person who was rapidly becoming a rival. After some argument he had agreed to say nothing, but hinted that it was only for Peggy's sake that he would keep his mouth shut. At the fire drill he whispered in George's ear that he knew the truth and was now on his side. Actually, he was planning more humiliation for the unfortunate George.

"Do exactly as I tell you and you can't go wrong," Craig whispered.

"Grab a bucket of sand and follow me up that ladder."

A ladder had been run up to a window of the barracks and the idea was to put the fire out with sand. George was not good at clambering up ladders, especially when carrying a heavy bucket of sand. The sergeant-major came along to see if the drill was being carried out to schedule, and paused almost underneath the ladder. George rested on the ladder, and his left hand held the bucket. Craig looked down and saw this hand touch the side of the ladder and promptly stepped down a rung on to George's fingers. The sand went all over the S.M. and the bucket flopped over his head with a clang. George was horrified, and he knew that Craig had stepped on his hand on purpose.

Craig and George scrambled up the ladder and through the window. The S.M., livid with fury, removed the bucket in time to guess who had inflicted this injury to his dignity. He went up the ladder after him, but by that time George had reached the ground through an escape chute. Nobby had witnessed the incident, and he was not so friendly with Craig.

"Now's your chance to get even," he said out of the corner of his mouth, handing George the nozzle of a fire hose. "Belt him over the head as he comes down the chute."

But Craig at the window above had seen and heard. When the S.M. demanded where Bullock was, he told him that George had gone and suggested that the S.M. if he wanted to get down quickly should use the chute. The idea was distasteful to the big man, but to use the stairs when all the other airmen had heard Craig's suggestion, was out of the question. He went down the chute, George thought it was Craig, and

gave him a good wallop with the fire nozzle.

"What the devil do you think you're doing?" yelled the S.M., when he had got free.

George gave one horrified gasp and staggered back in terror. He cannoned into a T-spanner of a fire-hydrant, causing it to swing round. The hose filled rapidly, and then out shot a column of water. The S.M. was bowled over, so were a number of the men, and George could not hold the squirming thing. The nozzle went up in the air and Craig, laughing up at the window, got it right in the face.

That evening Peggy came into her father's study to find him practising on the ukelele. Rather unwisely she suggested that Bullock should give him some help.

"Bullock! Never mention that man to me again," he flared. "I'll teach him to hit me on the head."

"Don't be too hard on him, daddy."

"He's on extra sentry-go now. I'll learn him."

"Perhaps if you were a bit kinder to him and helped him with his drill"—Peggy slipped an arm round her father's neck—"he might help you with your uke."

"Bah!" snorted the S.M.

There was a discreet knock, and it was Corporal Craig.

"Good-evening, sir," said the N.C.O. with a smirk. "Peggy asked me to take her over to the canteen."

Peggy was getting a little tired of the attentions of the corporal, but she made no comment in front of her father.

"I never asked you to take me to the canteen," she said, when they were outside.

"No, I took your wish for granted."

"You've got a nerve."

"And you've promised me a lot of good marks for keeping my mouth shut." Craig was unperturbed by her indignation.

They went across to the canteen, and Corporal Craig got a good laugh out of poor George, who was pacing solemnly up and down with a rifle that seemed like a ton weight. His amusement made the girl look at him with indignation. At one time she had thought herself in love with Craig, now she knew it was the reverse.

The canteen was full of men because there was to be a concert in a few days, and the talented ones were having a practice.

George was standing at ease outside his sentry-box when the S.M. appeared. George hurriedly shouldered arms and tried to look like a statue. Peggy's words had had their effect. After several brisk remarks the tone of the S.M. became quieter, and he begged George to try to do his duty properly instead of driving him off his head. After which he coughed and asked how George used his fingers on a ukelele.

"You must bend the middle finger more at the second joint, then it's free of the fingers on the outside," eagerly explained George.

The S.M. was quite pleasant until he realised that George had handed him his rifle to hold whilst he did a demonstration. The S.M. handed it back sharply, blew out his cheeks, and went off spluttering, but he did not forget about the middle finger.

Corporal Craig was incensed because Peggy was all sympathy for George and was most indignant when he made disparaging remarks about the bogus airman. It roused his evil nature, and he went across to the stage where some of the men were decorating it with paper streamers and balloons. Some of the latter had faces painted on them,



The pilot waited while George clambered into the forward cockpit . . .

and Craig managed to borrow one. Cautiously he made his way to a window just above the sentry-box. He clucked because the bayonet of George's rifle was level with the window. With great difficulty he suppressed his laughter as he fixed the balloon to the bayonet.

The S.M. went to his office, got out his ukelele, and found to his joy that this middle finger tip was a great help. He felt so pleased that he decided to be more lenient with Bullock. Perhaps the fellow would respond to kindness. He came out on to the parade ground, and George was standing smartly to attention. The balloon contained gas, so that the S.M. did not observe it in the half light.

"That's more like it. Now you look something like a sentry." The S.M. actually smiled. "Any moment the C.O. will be passing on his rounds, and I want you to 'Present Arms' smartly."

The C.O. and adjutant appeared, and the S.M. gave the order to "Present Arms." Horror of horrors. The S.M. saw the balloon, and so did George. George did the only thing possible, he prodded the balloon with his bayonet. Bang! It did not sound so loud thirty yards away, and all the C.O. saw was the S.M. stagger because George had prodded the balloon almost in his face.

"Was that a hiccup, sergeant-major?" asked the C.O. "Did I see you stagger?"

"No, sir, you see—"

"In future kindly take more water with it," the C.O. interrupted, and went on his way.

The S.M. waited till the officers were out of hearing, and then he thrust his angry visage within inches of George's twitching features.

"Get out of my sight and never let me see you again."

George beat a hasty retreat, glad to escape with his skin.

From Vi, another canteen girl, Peggy heard all about a sentry with a balloon tied to his bayonet. It was the funny fellow from headquarters, and then Peggy gave Corporal Craig such a dirty

look. She lifted the flap of the canteen.

"Where are you off to?" Craig asked. "To stop him before he gets into more trouble," was her retort. "I think it's a shame playing tricks on him like that."

The swing doors of the canteen opened and a dejected George entered and seated himself moodily at a small table.

Craig was thinking what devilment he could get up to when an orderly touched him on the shoulder. The C.O. wanted him—he had been detailed as radio operator for to-morrow's test of the new fighter.

"Be back soon, Peggy." Craig stuck out his chest. "The C.O. just can't get on without me."

Peggy did not answer, because she was not listening. All her thoughts were with George. She went over to his table.

"What's the matter?"

"Oh, nothing."

"Yes, there is."

"I was just thinking how right they were never to have let me join the Air Force."

"What d'you mean?"

"I'm no good—every time I try to be smart, something goes wrong."

"Is this anything to do with the balloon?" Peggy asked.

"Craig, wasn't it?" He looked at her and she nodded. "Nothing to do with me, I know, but it beats me why you're so fond of him."

"Who said I was?" the girl said sharply. "Has it ever occurred to you that I may have to play up to him to keep his mouth shut about you?"

"You mean—you do it for me?" He was incredulous.

"In a way—yes."

That brightened George up a lot. She whispered that they could not talk there, and he followed her behind the counter into the small pantry beyond. In the privacy of this room Peggy said how sorry she was about smacking his face, and now that she knew why he had collared her, she had a very different opinion of him

It ended by them telling each other that they liked each other a lot. Then Peggy pulled back a cloth and revealed her father's ukelele—she did not explain that she had purloined it when his back was turned.

"From now on you're going to show everyone what you're made of," Peggy spoke determinedly. "The boys liked your playing the other day. Now's the chance to give them another treat—make yourself popular."

"I'll show 'em!" exulted George, and grasped the uke as if it were a machine-gun. "You leave it to me."

When Craig got back from his interview with the C.O. it was to find George and Peggy perched on a table, George playing, Peggy singing, and all the lads joining in the choruses. Corporal Craig literally gritted his teeth.

Escape

At nine the next morning most of the men of the aerodrome were on parade. George, wearing overalls, had been detailed to "D" flight. A flight sergeant dressed the squad, inspected them and reported "All correct." The chief fly in George's ointment was the fact that Corporal Craig was next to him, and that individual kept giving him murderous glances. Then the flight commander spoke a few words.

"As reception flight, we shall have everyone's eyes on us, so mind you put on a good show. Corporal Craig, have everything ready for a complete test of her radio as soon as she lands."

"Yes, sir."

"She's to be flown with full war-load, so have bombs and ammunition loaded immediately. That's all."

"Flight dismiss!" hoarsely shouted the sergeant. "Get up bombs and ammunition."

George found himself holding a torpedo-shaped thing that weighed to his mind a ton, and he was scared pink he'd drop it—he nearly did when he saw Peggy standing at the side of a hangar and beckoning him urgently. He got the bomb to the dump, and then managed to join the girl.

"Quick!" she gasped out, "Anne's just arrived and says Bob is reporting at the orderly-room."

"What? He can't do that."

"He's just back from leave and is furious with you for trying to take his place."

"But they'll find out about the letter."

"That's his funeral. The point is that he's reporting. Then they'll arrest you and you'll be given six months for wearing that uniform."

"Six months?" George was horrified.

"You must escape before they find you out." The girl pointed. "You see the farm there? If you can slip across to it when nobody's looking, there's a lane which leads down to the Frogley road. It's your only hope."

Corporal Craig missed George and looked round suspiciously. He spotted them whispering together, and came across—his face a thundercloud.

"Look here, I've had about enough of this," he shouted angrily. "I said I'd keep my mouth shut on conditions. And they were not that you should spend your time fussing over this little squirt."

"Who said I was a squirt?" George clenched his fists.

Peggy intervened.

"He's worth a hundred of you," she said, her eyes blazing.

"Oh, is he?" Craig grinned unpleasantly. "That settles it. I've kept my mouth shut long enough."

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"No, please," begged Peggy, regretting her hasty words. "You mustn't tell them."

"And I hope they give him nine months," Craig said, and left them.

"I'll see what I can do." Peggy clutched George's arm. "But get away quick. It's more important than ever now."

"Oh, mother!" murmured the unhappy George.

"Good luck!" cried Peggy, and rushed off in pursuit of Craig.

George dithered. How could he charge, walk or sneak across the flying-field without being spotted?

There was a roar overhead, and everyone gazed skywards. The new fighter had arrived. The flight sergeant bellowed to his squad.

"Harris! Wilson! Look after the chocks and see they're tight under the wheels. Charge, starboard wing-tip." He saw George. "Come here, you. Stand by the port wing-tip."

The unlucky George found himself a virtual prisoner. He became resigned to his fate. He heard Nobby telling someone that he had never seen such a perfect landing, only an ace pilot could get her down without crashing. George was not interested.

Peggy arrived breathless outside the S.M.'s office, and then Craig appeared.

"Have you told him?"

"Of course. Now look here, Peggy, do be reasonable—" But Craig was pushed to one side.

The flight commander went out with the pilot to look at the new fighter. As Sir Philip was expected any moment, it was decided to keep the

engine ticking over. Then Corporal Craig was called up and introduced.

"I'll just check over the gear, sir, and perhaps you'll run her up for a ground test."

"Okay," agreed the pilot. "Give me a shout when you're ready."

Meanwhile Peggy was pleading in vain with her father to spare George. Certainly not! Would she have her father neglect his duty?

"I wouldn't even if I liked him."

"But I love him."

"What! Him?"

"Yes."

"Nonsense!" the S.M. cried. "You're just putting this on to try to save him."

"No, no, I'm not." There were tears in Peggy's eyes. "Honestly I'm not."

The sergeant-major was in a quandary, but he was saved from the awkward situation by an orderly, who reported that Sir Philip's car was arriving. The S.M. rushed out to receive the great man.

Sir Philip got out of his car, shook hands with Wing Commander Hill, and stated that before he saw the new fighter go through a test he would like to inspect the airmen in their barracks. The S.M. grabbed an orderly, told him to tell the sergeants to get every man into barracks, and heaven help anybody if they were not spotless.

George had to leave his post by the aeroplane and join the airmen dashing towards barracks. George decided it was his chance. He dodged behind a door, waited till all the men had gone, and then crept back into a hangar. He was thinking of making a rush for it when round the corner came an airman.

"Didn't you get my message?"

Bob recoiled.

"Yes."

"Then what are you doing here?"

"You might ask yourself that."

"Me?"

"Coming back and spoiling everything," argued George. "Both of us'll get it in the neck now."

"I've done nothing."

"But they'll find out about you not delivering the letter."

"It was never meant to be delivered," said Bob. "It was a duplicate—for reference only."

"You mean I—"

"Look here, George, I know you were only trying to be helpful and I'm grateful. So now I'm trying to help you. Don't you realise that every day you wear that uniform makes the crime worse? You've probably earned about twelve months already."

"Six—nine—twelve," George looked round desperately. "I'll be in for life if I don't hurry."

"Now's your chance," urged Bob.

"I've got to go and report."

George crept out of the hangar. Nobody about anywhere. He went stealthily across the tarmac towards the farmhouse.

The pilot and Corporal Craig, naturally, had stayed with the machine. The pilot asked if there were a telephone, and Craig said there was one at the far side of the hangar.

"I'm all ready for ground test, sir."

"Good. I'll run her up after I've telephoned."

"If there's anything wrong, sir, that won't give me much time to make it good."

"Oh, all right," grumpily agreed the pilot, and was walking towards the hangar when he spotted George.

(Continued on page 24)

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The

PAINTED DESERT

The Banning Claim

BIG, smiling Bob McVey was quite willing to allow Carol Banning and her grandfather to stake out a mining claim on his ranchland. Directly he met her, Bob had grown fond of Carol, who was pretty and high-spirited.

Privately he was of the opinion that the mine was useless. But when Hugh Fawcett, a mining promoter who had tried many times to get all mineral rights on Bob's land, took a hand in the game, Bob began to sit up and take notice.

From a note he found in the shack near the workings, when the occupants were away, Bob discovered that Fawcett was reporting to old Mr. Banning that samples only showed slight traces of tungsten.

Grim-faced, Bob rode into Dry Creek with Placer Bill, his burly, good-humoured assistant, taking with him another sample for assay. Leaving Bill to await the report, he called on Hugh Fawcett, a big, hard-faced fellow with little of the business man in his appearance, but a whole lot of the toughness of the mining camps.

"I've been expecting you to drop in," Fawcett grinned.

"Fawcett, just how much did you have to do with Banning's staking that claim out on my range-land?" Bob demanded.

He knew the Fawcett method very well. The promoter promised small prospectors to back them with expenses, then when they had slaved to find out the possibilities of the mine, forced them to sell to him for a song.

"It might be your range-land," Fawcett growled, "but you don't own the mineral rights."

"As long as I run cattle on that land, I won't have any mines cluttering it up, especially," Bob added offensively, "any that you're interested in."

"I'm not only interested in the Banning claim, but I also own the mine," Fawcett grinned, and held up a quit-claim deed on which Bob could plainly see Banning's signature.

"How'd you get hold of this quit-claim deed?" Bob growled.

"Banning came in to see me one day. He was in a spot and needed money. Through sympathy I took the claim off his hands for three thousand dollars."

Bob was unaware that Banning had only left the office just before he arrived. The old man, faced with Fawcett's refusal to advance him the promised money to repay his outgoings on equipment, had been bullied into accepting not three thousand, but five hundred dollars in return for his signing over the mine to the crook.

At that moment Banning was over at Yukon Kate's saloon, and one of Fawcett's men, sent by the promoter, was getting back the whole five hundred in a poker game.

Bob didn't know all this, but he knew Fawcett.

"You never did anything out of sympathy in your life. You probably gyped Banning out of his mine, figuring I'd pay off to keep from being annoyed."

"Maybe you're right, and maybe you're wrong," Fawcett drawled.

"However, I intend to start developing the Banning claim immediately."

"Then you have another think coming, Fawcett! You may own the Banning claim, but you'll never work it, because I won't let you or any of your men cross my land."

Bob's tone was very forceful, but Fawcett still smiled.

"You can't bluff me. I've been in the mining business too long. I know my rights."

"And I've been around crooks like you long enough to know where I stand. I can throw you into a lawsuit that will keep you from crossing my land for the next ten years."

"You've got me all wrong," said Fawcett mildly. "I bought the Banning claim so that he could take his granddaughter back East where they belong. Of course, if you want to make me an offer, it would save trouble. Lawsuits cost money."

Bob laughed.

"All right, I'll make you a deal. I'll give you two thousand dollars if you'll endorse that quit-claim deed over to me, and sign an agreement never to engage in any mining ventures on any land that I own or lease. What do you say?"

"Well," Fawcett grinned, "anything to avoid trouble."

The deal was carried through when Placer Bill came in whistling and carrying a sheet of paper.

"What are you up to now, Bob?" he grunted.

"I just bought a mine," Bob smiled.

"Here's the assay report on those ore samples," Bill chuckled, his bright little eyes twinkling.

Bob read it, and slowly a grin spread over his face, while Fawcett looked uneasy.

"Listen to this," he said: "'Two-tenths copper, trace of gold, point one-six silver, and seventy-five per cent tungsten.'" Fawcett gasped, and his face purpled as Bob read a footnote from the assayer: "Bob, this is the highest grade stuff I ever saw. Shoot the works!"

Roaring with laughter, Bob and Placer Bill left Fawcett sitting blankly in his office, and rode out of town to have another look at the claim.

For once, the crook had been beaten. He had signed away for two thousand dollars a claim that might be worth a fortune.

All unaware of the moves that had been made, Carol Banning rode into town a little later, her pretty face worried as she looked for her grandfather.

There sounded the crash of a shot from Yukon Kate's, and Carol began running along the boardwalk, a vague dread gripping her.

She burst into the saloon, which was in a ferment, with the acrid tang of cordite hanging on the air.

Her grandfather was crumpled on the floor and as she knelt by him, her face white as paper, it needed no expert knowledge to see that he was dead.

The man who had done it—a hard-faced scoundrel in wideawake hat and black frockcoat—was standing above him with a smoking gun still in his hand. Banning had accused him of cheating in the poker game—and it suited Fawcett's purpose well to have the old man out of the way.

Stricken dumb, Carol knelt by her grandfather, tears blinding her. Yukon Kate herself, a bulky woman who had pioneered in the Klondike, and had been wooed unsuccessfully by Placer Bill for the past twenty years, came striding over with a gun in her hand.

"I ought to blow you in two, Bart," she snarled.

"He did it in self-defence," growled one of Bart's friends. "I saw it!"

"Get out," said Kate tensely, "and don't ever show your ugly mug in my place again. Go on, you two—get out!"

She watched them slink out, then turned to the girl, taking her by the shoulders.

"He's dead Kate," Carol muttered brokenly.

"I know, honey," Kate murmured, and, half-supporting the grief-stricken girl, took her into her own sitting room.

Fawcett's Trickery

A FORTNIGHT later a new firm started work on the Painted Desert. The Banning-McVey Mining Company came into being. It was Bob's idea, when he learned with a bit of a shock that Carol still believed she owned the claim.

The girl had been staying under Kate's wing, recovering from the shock of her grandfather's murder. Kate herself, finding the mining fever gripping her once more, had been analysing samples brought by Carol, and had discovered the high content of tungsten.

Excitedly she mortgaged the saloon for every dollar she could get and joined up with Carol. But when they reached the claim, they found Bob and Placer Bill, helped by the ranch foreman, Steve, already blasting to discover the best means of driving the galleries.

Bob, who had fallen badly for Carol, didn't want to hurt the girl, even

though she was far from polite, and declared she hated the sight of him. He offered a partnership, with himself putting up the money for equipment.

"What are you up to, anyway?" Placer Bill whispered hoarsely, when Carol and Kate had gone a short distance away to talk over the offer. "Why don't you tell that hot-headed young filly that you own this mine? Show her the deed!"

"Now look," said Bob seriously, "she doesn't even know her grandfather sold the deed. In trying to get me over a barrel, Fawcett gypped her out of a good mine."

Yukon Kate was busy trying to win over the girl.

"Well, he can't keep me from working this claim," snapped Carol, staring angrily across at the young rancher. "I know enough laws to know that any mining tenant holds the rights to cross any leased land."

"Suppose he didn't like what you were doing," Kate argued. "He could cause you plenty of trouble."

"Oh, how I hate him!" Carol stamped her foot.

"Well, that's okay by me," Kate grinned, "but don't let your hatred interfere with the mine. He's got money, and that's something we haven't got!"

Carol turned on her in surprise.

"What about that money you raised on the saloon?"

"Oh, that little dab isn't enough to get us started. Besides, we need somebody like Bob McVey. He's a fighter, and I never heard of a mine yet that didn't start a fight."

Realising that she was behaving foolishly, Carol gave in. The contract was signed that night at Bob's ranch, while Steve and the men provided a background of music and cowboy songs, arranged by Bob, to try to get Carol to like him a little better.

With his usual energy, Bob started ordering machinery and hiring skilled labour. News of this caused Fawcett to make another move. Already he had offered Bob fifty thousand dollars for a half-share in the mine; not even the fact that he had increased this to a hundred thousand could persuade Bob to let him in.

"Listen, Fawcett," he had growled; "get it through your head—I don't want any business dealings with you whatsoever!"

In a tearing rage Fawcett rode back to Dry Creek. Now he was laying plans to drive out Bob and Carol. The young rancher had borrowed money from the bank on a ninety-day note—which meant that if he didn't pay up within that time, the bank would foreclose and move in on his property.

As it happened, Heist, the banker, had already made his own arrangements with Fawcett. The mining promoter bought the note from him.

"Well, good enough, Heist," he grinned. "I'll take these off your hands right away, but don't loan McVey any more money." He snarled the last words, for his rebuke was still rankling.

"I understand, Mr. Fawcett," said the banker smoothly. "And when you make out your cheque in payment for these notes, don't forget to add the full interest for the ninety days."

"Fair enough," said Fawcett. "Keep this under your hat."

He called in two brutal-looking toughs who were lounging outside, and gave them instructions.

"Bob McVey has just borrowed fifty thousand dollars from the bank to de-

velop the Banning claim. Now, you two are the best hard-rock miners in the district." Burke and Kincaid smirked at one another. "You won't have any trouble going to work for him. When that money is spent for buildings and equipment, and McVey finds out he can't borrow any more money, I want things to begin happening that'll keep him from delivering any ore!"

So Burke and Kincaid went to work for the Banning McVey Company. Things were moving fast. Huge quantities of timber had been delivered, tunnels were being bored and engine and milling sheds were going up.

In the cabin which served as an office, Carol and Kate did most of the office work, while Bob worked like a Trojan keeping things running smoothly. He came in one day waving a sheet of paper.

"There's the contract, folks! North-Western Steel has agreed to take our entire output, and they'll pay on delivery at the railroad at Dry Creek."

"That's swell!" beamed Placer Bill. "Look, this is the first stuff to come out of the mill. Within a week we'll be running full blast."

But Kate pointed out that they had only twelve days left before the note became due at the bank, and Carol, who was still distant with Bob, reported that cash was running low. Bob wasn't worrying very much about the cash, although he agreed with Kate that Heist, the banker, couldn't be trusted any farther than she could throw one of the mine buildings. There was a chance that Heist might not renew the note.

"Bill," the young rancher ordered, "get the wagons and mules together as fast as you can. As soon as the concentrates come out of the mill, we'll haul them into town."

Bill was hurrying out when Steve came in with anxious news.

"It's about the timbering in tunnel No. 3," he reported, "I just came through there, and it looks like the whole drift's about to cave in."

Bob whistled.

"All right, Steve, we'll go and have a look at it. I'll be back, Kate." He grinned at Carol, who turned away, and strode out of the shack.

Yukon Kate went over to the girl.

"Why don't you come off your high horse, Carol, and act a little more human round Bob?"

"I don't like him," said Carol coldly.

"Now you're talking like a spoiled child! You know very well Bob has put every penny he could get hold of into this mine, and he has worked day and night to get it into running order."

Carol looked down, then she suddenly smiled, and a slow flush spread over her face.

"I guess I have acted like a fool," she confessed. "I don't really dislike him."

"I know, honey," said Kate softly, patting her arm. "I feel the same way about Bill, even if he ain't worth the powder to blow him up!"

Meanwhile, carrying lights, Bob and Steve had gone deep into one of the tunnels. Grimly Steve pointed out one of the roof beams. It was badly cracked, and sagging dangerously in the middle.

Bob reached up and tapped it gently with the butt of his gun. "I feel the same way again, harder and then he and Steve leaped backwards as an ominous creaking sounded.

With a tearing noise the timbering gave. Bob and Steve pressed themselves against the wall of the tunnel as

many yards of the roof came down with a rush and a roar, filling the narrow space with choking dust.

Luckily other beams had held, but the tunnel at that point was partly blocked by a waist-high barrier of rocks and rubble.

Seething with anger, Bob ordered miners in that sector to stay out of it for a while.

"Who supervised this timbering?"

"Tom Burke," he was told. "He's foreman of the night shift."

Fighting mad, Bob went in search of Tom Burke.

A Beating for Burke

FAWCETT'S henchman was washing in the bunkhouse when Bob strode in. Scenting trouble, miners off duty blocked the open doorway. Burke looked round when Bob came in.

"What is it, boss?"

"Pack up your things and get out of here," Bob snapped. "You're through."

"I don't get you," said Burke, his little eyes gleaming angrily.

"The timbering you put in No. 3 just caved in. Luckily no one was hurt."

Burke was a big man, bulkier than Bob. Calmly he took a towel and started drying his face.

"Why blame me? Accidents are bound to happen sometimes."

"Well, this was no accident," Bob rasped.

"If you think I'm going to take that kind of talk, you're all wrong!" snarled Burke. Suddenly flinging the towel aside he lashed out a swinging blow that took Bob by surprise.

The blow caught him on the jaw with terrific force, hurling him to the floor. Sprawling there, he rolled over, and leaped to his feet as Burke came at him again.

There was an exchange of blows at close quarters, then Bob hurled Burke right back against the bunks with a mighty hook to the jaw.

Blood was trickling from his own mouth. He gave Burke no mercy, going after him and battering him fiercely.

Burke wilted and grunted with pain as Bob drove short-arm blows to his stomach, then clicked his teeth together with swings to the jaw when his guard dropped.

Kate and Carol had joined the crowd at the doorway. Burke was too far gone to notice anything except that merciless rain of blows. He was half-blinded, puffing hard and bleeding from the nose and mouth. Head down, he came at Bob desperately, arms flailing.

Coolly Bob avoided his wild swings, measured him up, and sent in a crashing right to the chin that hurled the crook back over a table. It splintered under him, and he ended up in a corner, all the fight knocked out of him.

"When I said you were fired," Bob panted, "I meant it! Now get out of here."

Sullenly Burke nodded, holding his aching jaw.

Bob turned to Steve as his foreman handed him his hat.

"Thanks, Steve. It'll take us about a week to clean out that tunnel. Which means we've got to have more money for the payroll. Put every available man to work on that cave-in and run three shifts. I'm going into town."

Outside the bunkhouse, he found Carol waiting with Kate.

"Here," said the girl softly, coming close to him, "you'd better let me clean up that for you."

Surprised, Bob glanced at Kate, who grinned and nodded meaningly. He

smiled into Carol's bright eyes as she wiped the blood from his mouth.

"Thanks," he said calmly, and left the two women smiling at each other.

His call on Banker Heist with Placer Bill was fruitless. Heist talked glibly about bad business conditions making it impossible for him to advance a further ten thousand dollars. His real reason became plain when he remarked that Bob would have to see Fawcett about renewing his notes.

"Fawcett? What's he got to do with it?"

"I needed some ready money a few weeks ago," Heist said, avoiding Bob's eyes, "so I sold the notes to him."

"Oh, I understand!" growled Bob. "Thanks."

He and Placer Bill went out gloomily. It was clear Fawcett had got them into a nasty position. They had spent every cent, and couldn't even redeem the notes.

"If we don't get back there and ship enough ore," Bob pointed out, "he'll be in the mining business instead of us."

"Well, I don't see how, you're going to do it," Bill groaned, scratching his stubbly chin. "The men haven't been paid for the last couple of weeks, and, unless we can kick in some dinero next pay-day, we're gonna have to shut down."

"Well, we're not going to shut down," said Bob forcefully. "We're going right back to that mine get hold of the boys and round up all the cattle on my ranch—and that'll meet the payroll!"

But arriving back at the mine they found more trouble. Kate and Carol had been attracted from the office by a sudden silence which meant the stoppage of the machinery. The men poured from the workings, and gathered



Desperately they fought, the tang of the burning fuse in their nostrils, and in their minds the knowledge that any of the other charges might explode at any moment,

in an angry group about Kincaid, Burke's friend, who was making a heated speech.

"Men, are you with us?" he roared. "We're tired of this—two weeks without pay!"

"Now, you all listen to me," Kate shouted. "You'll all get your money as soon as the ore is delivered."

Jeers greeted her.

"We're all fools to work for a bunch of crooks that won't pay us!" snarled Kincaid. "How do you know we're going to get our money? I'm in favour of going right now. Are you with me?" There were yells of agreement. "An' if we don't get what's coming to us, we'll wreck the place!"

Then Bob, his face black as thunder, strode in amongst them roughly, and hurled Kincaid aside.

"Get out of here! Now, listen to me, fellows. I know you haven't been paid and I know you've all worked hard up to now. And you'd still be working if it wasn't for Kincaid riling you up with a pack of lies!" There were dissatisfied murmurs. He raised his voice, drowning them. "All right, all right! You'll get your money. I'm shipping my entire herd of cattle to market immediately. Now I'll promise you time and a half for playing ball, if you go back to work. Isn't that fair enough? What'd you say?"

The temper of the crowd changed at once. The men began streaming back to work, and Carol and Kate sighed with relief. They had felt powerless until Bob came on the scene. Carol was even more glad that she hadn't attempted to work the mine by herself. Kate was right when she said a fighter was needed.

Kincaid, like Burke, was turned off the workings. But sprawling on the ground where Bob had hurled him, he had heard enough. And that night, when Steve and Placer Bill, with Bob's cowboys, were driving the herd to Dry Creek, Fawcett and a gang of roughs awaited them in a narrow canyon.

The cattle were moving slowly and peacefully, until Fawcett's men, yelling and firing, charged down on the fringes of the herd, taking Bob's cowboys by surprise.

Bellcwing, the cattle started to run, streaming helter-skelter down the canyon. Furiously Placer Bill and his pals exchanged shots with raiders, but the damage was done. The cattle were in a hopeless, thundering stampede.

The rumble of their flight drowned the yells and the reports of the guns. Their work done, Fawcett's men melted away into the darkness. Placer Bill and his men formed an angry group, watching the cattle stream away down the canyon and spread out over the open country beyond.

"Well, there's one thing in our favour, Bill," Steve growled. "They're heading towards town."

"Yeah, but I reckon we'll lose half of them before we get them rounded up again."

"Well, come on, let's get it done," Steve sighed.

As it happened, they didn't lose as many as they thought. After terrific labours they arrived, tired but triumphant, at the railroad depot. And the cheque from the meat-packing company was large enough to pay off all the back wages and leave some over.

Once more the mine started producing with a certain smoothness. But Bob and the others knew it would be a race against time.

Runaway Wagons

THE sun was setting when Fawcett and Kincaid and another man sat their horses at the top of a slope
February 25th, 1939.

and watched the wagons leaving the mine. There were two mule-trains of a score of animals, each train drawing two wagons.

An old-time driver took the reins of the first team, while Bob himself took the second, perched on the wagon, which was piled high with sacks of ore. An armed guard accompanied each driver.

"Looks like they're getting off to a good start," remarked Kincaid, as the sound of cheering and the crunch of wagon wheels rose to the watchers.

"They'll never get that ore to town if I can help it," Fawcett gritted. "And I think I know how to stop them. Let's go over to the canyon."

They wheeled their horses and galloped away into the gathering darkness, while the two wagon teams lumbered on their long journey. Bob had left Placer Bill in charge at the mine, expecting to be back the day after to-morrow. The mule-wagons were slow, but he believed they would do the job all right.

On they plodded, until some hours later they left the fairly open desert and took the trail that dived down between the walls of a huge canyon.

Fawcett, watching from a high point, grinned with satisfaction as he saw the wagons appear, their big wheels grinding slowly over the rocky ground.

"It's mostly down-grade to the canyon," he growled. "And if we can get them rolling fast enough, they won't be able to make that bad turn at the edge of the rim—two thousand feet to the bottom!" He pointed away to where the dark abyss yawned, with the narrow trail skirting the top of the terrifying precipice.

"Now get down there and stampede those mules! Clark, you take that lead outfit. Kincaid, you take McVey!"

The three scoundrels rode carefully amongst the rocks, getting nearer to the wagons. Clark was the first to attack. Yelling and firing, he swept suddenly down a short slope as the driver of the leading team was preparing to edge his animals down the increasing slope of the trail.

The guard fired and missed. Clark emptied the chambers of his revolver, then, still yelling, dashed away.

His work was done. Snorting, the mules had started to gallop. Ordinarily they could never have done it, pulling the heavy wagons. But the slope, and fright, helped them, and once started on the down-grade they couldn't stop.

The plod-plod of their hoofs rose to a thunderous beat; the scrunch of the wagon wheels became a menacing rumble. The leading team was stampeded!

Down they rushed, gaining speed every moment, nearing the dangerous bend every second, the driver straining every muscle, trying to pull them to a stop. Sweat broke out on his forehead as he realised the impossibility of doing so—all he could do was hope to steer them round the bend.

The guard was pulling on the rope which connected the brakes of the two wagons. A smell of burning rose. The brakes could not hold that great hurtling weight.

Bob stared in horror as he saw the leading team tearing away from him. But he had little time to think about that—for, hardly had the first attacker disappeared, when Kincaid dashed from behind a heap of rocks and swerved up alongside Bob's team before his guard could fire.

Crack! Kincaid's revolver flared. He slashed the mules with his whip and dashed away again, pursued by a stream of bullets from Bob's guard. He turned

as he neared the rocks and snapped back a shot.

It was a lucky one. The guard groaned and fell back, clapping his shoulder.

Bob flashed him one glance to see whether he was safe on top of the pile of sacks, then had to devote all his attention to the mules. Despite his great strength, he couldn't drag them out of their mad stampede.

Bob was in an even more terrible position than the leading driver, for his guard was helpless and could do nothing to assist by straining on the brakes. Faster and faster the team raced, gathering momentum down the slope.

Clear above the grinding of the wheels and the pounding of the hoofs, he heard a scream of metal as the leading team took the bend. He heard a vague shout from ahead, saw a wheel go over the edge of the bend.

With amazing quickness it was all over. The leading wagons toppled over, remained poised for a minute right on the edge of the precipice, then began the long, crashing drop to the bottom of the chasm.

The mules tore on, for the driver had cut their traces before leaping at the very last moment with the guard. Faintly the sound of the great crash rose up as the wagons hit the bottom and were shattered to a thousand pieces.

Bob's teeth were gritted as he strained back on the reins. His brain was racing in tune with the mad hoofbeats of the mules. One wagon lost! Half the results of their labours gone to ruin in one terrible minute!

He must save the second load!

"Look out!" his guard yelled, leaning dangerously over the edge of the wagon, hanging right out over the colossal drop. "We'll go over the rim!"

"Hold on!" Bob shouted. "I'm going to try to make it!"

There was one second of fierce straining, with the grinding of the wheels in his ears as they swerved right round on the very edge of the trail, sending rocks and dirt showering into the abyss.

Then they were round, past the danger point, and rushing along a level section of the trail. Lying right back, Bob at last managed to slow the mules and, by terrible exertions drag them to a standstill. Trembling, the mules stood there, while Bob, panting and sweating, dropped the reins and leaped down to meet the driver of the other wagon as he came running along the trail.

"I'm sorry I lost the wagon, Bob," the old-timer muttered, "but—"

"You couldn't help it, Jim," said Bob, patting his arm. "So forget about it. I want you to take this outfit on into town and get Hank to a doctor. Here's your bill of lading. I'm going back to the mine and try to bring another shipment of ore through."

He borrowed the horse and gun of a rider who had been following the wagons, but had been unable to keep up with them when the mad stampede down the slope started.

"Stick with it, Jim?" he called as he rode away. "Do your best to get through!"

Back along the trail he tore.

Crack! The report of a gun sounded from the shelter of some rocks, where Clark was still watching. The bullet hummed wide, and Bob tore onwards, turning in his saddle to send shots winging back.

Clark got on his trail, determined to stop him from getting back to the mine. Furiously Bob rode on, carrying on a running gunfight with the crook. Then, at a bend in the trail.

(Continued on page 23)

A Cossack racketeer is enraged when a son he has not seen for twenty years comes under his charge, but the son proves even tougher than himself. The father falls into the hands of the law and is sentenced to prison for a long stretch, and the son joins a cavalry regiment that is guarding the prison to try to help his father escape. Starring Akim Tamiroff, Leif Erikson and Frances Farmer



The Coming of Johnny

MIKE BALAN stood scowling in the doorway at the woman who sat facing him. And when Mike Balan scowled his men said that things usually happened. For Mike was a tremendous man, with massive shoulders and arms and hands as strong as a gorilla's, and almost as ruthless. And he had a temper to match. Originally a Cossack, with all their most savage traits, he had drifted over to America. There he had fought his way up by his fists and guns and was now head of the biggest meat racket in the country, and feared by everyone of the organisation he controlled.

Yet there was no fear in the eyes of the woman who sat so quietly gazing at him as he stood in the doorway. She was an elderly woman, and though her face was strong and steadfast there lay a shadow behind her eyes.

"What do you want?" Her answer came quietly.

"You haven't changed a bit, Mykola." He laughed harshly as he lowered his big bulk into a chair. This woman had been his wife, but twenty years had elapsed since he had last seen her, and he was ready to make short shrift with her.

"You have," he retorted. "I wouldn't marry you now."

"You wouldn't have the chance. I've been married to a good and honourable man for many years."

His eyes narrowed.

"What d'you want from me?" he demanded. "Money? You get no more money from me."

She smiled, but it was a scornful smile.

"I want nothing from you. I came here to give you something."

He was curious at once, but he affected indifference.

"It must be something very special fine," he jeered.

"It is. It's your precious son."

He sat up in his chair in a moment. Memory stirred in him swiftly, but he beat it down. He laughed contemptuously.

"I don't want him," he said as he lay back again in his chair. "I won't take him. When you left me you made big fight for our son. You made me promise never to see him again. Well, I keep my promise. Besides, what can I do with a little boy, hey?"

"You crazy Cossack," she retorted "D'you think time has stood still for your son? He's over twenty."

There was another pause. Memory was stirring again. The man picked up a bottle that was by his hand, poured himself out half a tumblerful of neat whisky, and tossed it off.

"What d'you call him?" he growled.

"Montgomery. I sent him to one of the best schools in the country. I had tutors for him—"

"And raised a pet. I know."

"A pet?" Her voice was shrill as was the laugh that followed it. "He went to the best military schools. He broke all the rules, he got into fights. He ran away. D'you know what he said when I told him I was going to ask you to send for him?"

"What did he say?" he asked curiously. For a son who fought, broke

rules, and ran away from school was beginning to appeal to him.

"He said, 'Don't bother, mother. I'll look in on the old man and size him up.'"

Balan was up out of his chair in a flash, his big moustache bristling.

"That fresh kid said that about me—me his father?" he roared. "Don't you ever let him come near me."

But all she did was to laugh as she moved to the door.

"He's out at your house now," she said calmly. "The only reason I took the trouble to come and see you at all was to warn you not to send him back to me because he was too much for you to handle."

For five full minutes after she had gone Mike Balan stormed up and down his office raging and swearing. Then presently he threw himself into a chair, yelling for one of his men.

"Glinka," he exclaimed when the man appeared. "Go up to my house where you will find my son waiting. Kick him out into the street."

But he stopped the man before he had gained the door.

"Wait a minute! He said he would size me up, did he? Well, I will size him up. I will go and kick him out myself."

Montgomery, in the meanwhile, was sitting in Balan's house in a room furnished with almost barbaric splendour. Round him stood five men eyeing him curiously and suspiciously. From their faces and appearances it seemed to Montgomery that they were hardly likely to be engaged in legitimate enterprises.

They in their turn were a little puzzled at this good-looking, strapping young fellow with the jolly, smiling face who was regarding them so coolly, yet so absolutely indifferently.

"Say," he demanded presently, "are you five cut-throats really my father's home team?"

One of them answered him with a scowl.

"I cannot believe you are his son. You don't look like him and he never told me he had a son."

The young man laughed.

"Well, they never told me I had a father, so we're quits. Is he anything like you birds?"

"He don't resemble me none," growled one of the others.

"Let him stay," snapped the man who had spoken first, but he spoke with a grim relish. "Mike will hauld him when he comes."

Montgomery's eyebrows lifted.

"Oh, I see, just a bunch of good pals, eh?"

An angry retort was on the other's lips, but at that moment Balan stood in the doorway. And a hush fell on the room like the hush in a forest that precedes the coming of a storm. Balan stood glaring at his son. Montgomery regarded his father with slightly knitted brows.

"What the devil are you doing in my room? Didn't they tell you that no one can come into my room?"

"They did."

"Then what do you come in for?"

"Because I wanted to see it."

"You wanted to see it, eh? You think already my house belongs to you, eh?"

"I don't want your house," replied Montgomery contemptuously.

Balan took a step forward, taunting him.

"So my house is not good enough for you, eh?"

"I never said that," answered the young man quietly.

Balan turned, appealing to the others.

"D'you know what his name is? Montgomery! Isn't that a pretty name?"

He roared with laughter, but the young man spoke.

"Stop laughing!"

Balan did stop, too. But he seemed almost dumb with amazement.

"You tell me—to stop—laughing?" he managed to get out at length.

"I do. And if you don't I'll sock you."

Balan literally gasped.

"You'll sock—me?"

In a moment he had whipped off his coat. Montgomery was removing his in leisurely fashion and rolling up his sleeves. Balan was regarding him almost incredulously.

"You mean—you want to—fight me with your fists?" he demanded.

"Of course I do. Don't talk so much. Come on."

It was an amazing fight to those who looked on, for if they expected to see Balan knock the young man senseless at the beginning—and they were accustomed to see it with most men he fought—they met with a surprise. For they soon saw that this young man was not only capable of taking punishment, but he was also capable of giving it. And within the first few minutes he had landed Balan a blow that sent him staggering back against the bookcase.

Yet perhaps what surprised them most was the Cossack's attitude. For all he did was to grin appreciation of the blow, and the next minute was on top of Montgomery bearing him to the ground by sheer force of weight. But they saw Montgomery wriggle from his

grip and once more Balan staggered back from a tremendous punch.

"Glinka," gasped Balan, "it's a good thing you didn't try to kick him out."

But the next minute they were at it once more, pounding and punneling each other for all they were worth until once again Balan was on top of Montgomery. But as the young man with a tremendous effort hurled him backwards on to the floor, Balan held up his hand. He was laughing.

"Welcome, lad, welcome! You can fight—indeed, you can fight as my son ought to fight!"

He leaped at him, flinging his arms round him like a great bear, hugging him, and kissing him on both cheeks.

"Ostap!" he shouted. "Get us a fine big lunch and we will welcome my son. Borscht, pirochky, and a pail of caviare. This is my son, and I'm going to call him Johnny."

"Goes with me, Mike," rejoined the young man.

Balan roared with delighted laughter. "Calls his old father 'Mike,' " he shouted. "What a son! What a son!"

Mike Balan Decides to Quit

THE friendship that had started so strangely grew rapidly every day.

For Montgomery, or Johnny as he was now called, very soon showed his father that fighting was not the only thing he could do. Though as soon as Balan saw that he was a horseman equal to himself his delight was boundless. To a true Cossack no man is worthy of the name of man until he is one with his horse.

Yet Johnny, who found his new life vastly entertaining, had found something else of intrigue. That was Trina, the pretty, fair-haired niece of Mike Balan's steward. Though this only served to add to Balan's delight. Trina, he declared, was a good girl and a fine girl. They would make a splendid pair.

But as the months slipped away Mike Balan gradually began to get more thoughtful. He knew that he was living chiefly now for this wonderful son of his, and it was worrying him quite a lot to think that that same son had no idea of the nature of the business in which he was engaged.

He faced the problem squarely. Things had been getting a little dangerous lately. He decided that he would take a long trip abroad and take his son with him. He had plenty of money with which to do it. Trouble might happen if he stayed too long, and Johnny mustn't be mixed up in trouble. He was too good for that.

He approached him on the subject that evening. They had been bathing together and were drying themselves.

"And you like the idea of a trip, Johnny? We go round the world together, eh?"

"Swell, Mike."

"And we will put all the past in the bath and wash it away and forget it all."

"But how about the business, Mike? I thought I was to come into that with you?"

The other spoke gravely after a pause. "Johnny," he said, "I must tell you something. My business is what they call a racket."

It was out now, and he waited. But much to his relief the young man's answer came indifferently.

"I don't care what your business is, Mike."

"Ah, but you don't understand, Johnny. I have many gangs working for me in this country. They go out and raid cattle for me."

The young man laughed.

"They've hanged men for that, Mike," he said.

"I see you don't believe me. But it is true. I am a cattle thief. That is why you cannot come into my business. You are my son."

It was some moments before the young man spoke.

"I thought you were kidding, Mike," he said.

"It makes a difference, eh?" asked the other quickly.

It did, and Johnny knew it, but he wasn't going to admit it.

"Not with you and me," he replied. "It's not for me to tell you what to do. Whatever you do goes with me. What boat do we take?"

Balan laid his arm affectionately on the young man's shoulders.

"We'll take the first boat," he said. "We will start out fresh and clean, you and I, Johnny, and stay so. Now let's go and get a rest, for we leave—"

He had risen from his seat while he was speaking, but the sentence was never completed. For the words died in his throat. In the open doorway stood three men whom he knew in a moment to be Federal agents.

And Mike Balan's dreams faded away into nothingness.

"Come on out, Balan," said one of the three men. "We want you."

Balan spoke quietly.

"Who are you?"

"Federal Bureau of Investigation."

"What is the reason of your visit?"

"There are about a dozen reasons," retorted the other. "Get your clothes on quick."

Balan addressed Johnny who was just behind him.

"Johnny, fetch me my clothes," he said.

"Stay here!" snapped the agent.

"Who are you, anyway?"

"I'll show you who I am," exclaimed the young man as he launched himself at him. But Balan caught him in his arms and held him back.

"Johnny, Johnny, don't!" He forced Johnny back. "Johnny, if ever you want to see me again you'll do as I tell you now," he whispered. "You can help me."

For a few moments the young man was silent. Then at last he spoke.

"Whatever you say goes, Mike."

"Come on now, quit stalling and get into your clothes, both of you," said the agent.

"Of course we will," replied Balan with surprising politeness. "Do not think that either of us have any intention of disturbing the peace. All we want is—"

He had been playing with his bath towel while he had been talking. From the corners of his eyes he had seen that the other two Federal agents had gone into the adjoining room. In a flash he had the towel over the head of the man to whom he had been talking.

"Quick, Johnny, quick!" he exclaimed. "Make your getaway while the gin's good. You promised, you know."

When the other two men came running in finally to overpower Balan and haul him away there was no sign of Johnny.

In Leavenworth Prison

MIKE BALAN walked dully along the prison corridor with the warden at his heels. For a month in solitary confinement, and he had just been released from that, will freeze the soul of any man.

Hope had very nearly died within

him now. Only resentment remained and a recklessness that would risk anything for freedom. For the Federal authorities had made no mistake. The evidence produced at his trial was overwhelming and he had been sentenced to a long term of imprisonment.

Yet he had taken it calmly enough. He had his son and a hundred powerful friends. For a time he would have to accustom himself to the loss of his freedom and all that it meant to him, but he had never a doubt that Johnny would come to his rescue and set him free.

Now, however, he had nearly abandoned all hope. For a year had passed away and never a word of any sort had come from his son, and he knew that it should have done if Johnny still remembered him. For even the strictest surveillance of prisoners has never succeeded in keeping them entirely out of touch with the doings of the outside world. Time after time news filters through in strange and mysterious ways and the strictest vigilance on the part of the authorities has never altogether succeeded in stopping it.

The guard swung open the door of his cell, shoved him in, locked and double locked the door. The man who shared his cell with him hardly glanced at him as he sat down on the bed with his head resting wearily on his hands. But a whisper from outside brought Balan's head up. He was up on his feet in a second.

He stood there, clutching the bars. The convict who was sweeping the corridor spoke in low tones with his eyes on the passage.

"This got passed down the line while you were in solitary, Balan. Your kid's done a sneak. Not even his momma knows where he is."

He moved away as swiftly as he had come. Balan's companion, who had been listening to the conversation, spoke.

"That ain't no news to you. Everyone in this joint knows by now that you've got a son who took a run-out powder on his old man."

But Balan hardly seemed to hear him. It seemed to him the final blow to all his hopes as he stood holding the bars of his cell.

"I must get out of here," he muttered. "I must get out of here!"

One hour later he stood in the presence of the warden, and the latter was regarding him with a worried frown on his face. For he was by no means a harsh man, and he tried to temper justice with mercy as far as he could.

"Sit down, Balan," he said. "You're out of punishment again. What are you going to do about it? You can't win out here, you know, by trying to be tough."

Balan nodded without a word. And

the warden was just about to address him again when the squealing of a dog outside brought him to his feet. He strode across to the window. Outside he saw a couple of small boys who were fastening a large tin can to a dog who was squealing piteously.

"Stop that!" he called out. "Get off at once and leave that dog alone or I'll have you spanked."

He came slowly back to his table. He failed to notice that a sudden new light had dawned in Balan's eyes.

"It burns me up to see anyone ill-treating an animal," he said. "Ah, I see it does the same to you. Well, to get back to your affairs. What are you going to do, Balan?"

The other's answer came readily enough.

"I shall play the game in future," he said.

The warden nodded briefly. He knew the genuine when he saw it. He pressed a button on his table and his secretary appeared.

"Notify the deputy and assign this man to work to-day," he said.

An hour or so later Balan with others was marched out to the prison cemetery with picks and shovels. But Balan, out in the open air once more, was momentarily happy. For in an adjoining field a squad of mounted government troopers were going through their riding exercises, and every now and then Balan would pause in his work to watch their riding and dream once more of the days when he and Johnny rode together, indulging in all those daring exercises of horsemanship so dear to the heart of every Cossack.

"Get on with your digging!" snapped the guard, and Balan with a sigh resumed his work once more. But in a few moments the guard's voice snapped out another, sharper command.

"Cease work! Look out there!" They scattered quickly. They saw

that there was need of it. For they suddenly saw that the horse of one of the troopers, evidently out of control, was bearing desperately down upon them. And as it hurtled over the fence which separated them from the parade ground it was only by a superhuman effort of the rider that the horse was guided clear of the half-finished grave and came to a halt on the very edge.

But simultaneously Mike and another man had run forward and grabbed at the horse's bridle and were holding it as the rider dropped from the saddle. Though Mike Balan's heart was thumping furiously as he realised the rider was no other than his son!

Johnny, however, was patting his horse coolly.

"What's the matter with you, old feller? What's got into you? Oh, I see, your stirrup buckle's gouging you." He slipped a note swiftly into Balan's hand, speaking under his breath.

"Couldn't manage it before."

As the guard came up he addressed him with a smile.

"Sorry if I disturbed any of your old customers."

The other grinned.

"It relieves the monotony a bit," he replied grimly.

In his cell later on Mike Balan and his fellow prisoner read the note together.

All it said was:

"Get assigned to Farm 2."

All the happiness and trust in the world were in Balan's face.

"What d'you say to my Johnny now?" he demanded.

"Pretty good for a start. But he doesn't tell us how to get to this Farm 2."

But Mike Balan was laughing softly, happily.

"We will get there somehow," he said. "They keep horses on Number 2 Farm. Maybe soon we will get there."



One of the guards grabbed Balan by the shoulders and pulled him back.

Farm Two

OPPORTUNITY, it is said, knocks at every man's door, but he is not always quick enough to hear it and take advantage of it. Balan was working on one of the prison roads one day a week later when happening to look up from his work he saw one of the convicts who had just loaded a cart full of rubbish start belabouring the mule who was unable to draw the heavy load.

A scowl came over his face. At any other time and in any other place he would, with his love of animals, have handled the situation quickly and summarily. But for the first time he was hesitating. His promise of good behaviour had earned him work. A bad mark against him now for unruly conduct would send him back to solitary confinement with little hopes of realising Johnny's schemes for his freedom. With a sigh he turned back to his shovel.

And then suddenly he saw the warden coming round the corner and an idea surged into his brain. The convict was still belabouring the mule, and in a second Balan had reached him. With one huge hand he hauled him from the cart. With the other he sent him crashing into a heap of stones.

Two of the guards rushed forward, and one of them grabbed Balan by the shoulders and pulled him back.

He stood before the warden ten minutes later. The deputy warden sat watching.

The warden spoke coldly.

"Well, Balan, what have you got to say for yourself? I really had hopes that our last talk had done you some good. Yet now in front of my eyes you get into a fight with another inmate."

"Mr. Warden, I couldn't help it. I tried hard not to touch him, but I see him hitting that mule, and when I see anyone hurting an animal something rises up in me, because I cannot see a man hurt an animal. Even my cell-mate, he couldn't—"

He let his voice trail away. He could see that the warden had begun to smile strangely. There was a moment's silence, and then the warden looked up.

"I think I understand, Balan," he said quietly. "Do you understand anything about horses?"

For the first time since he had been in prison Balan really smiled.

"But everything!" he replied. "I am a Cossack, Mr. Warden."

"You know we have horses at No. 2 Farm?"

Balan nodded gravely. He certainly did.

"Men who work there," went on the warden, "are put on their honour. Do you know why we can afford to do that, Balan?"

"Because no one would take advantage of the warden's kindness," replied the Cossack smoothly.

But the warden spoke gravely, ignoring the remark.

"Because you're in a Federal Institution," he said. "Jump your time here, and a local force will chase you. But do so on Farm 2, Balan, and the entire power, machinery and authority of the United States Government will hunt you down and bring you back. Or leave you where you're caught."

He turned to his deputy.

"Arrange for this man to work at Farm 2," he said. "And see that his cell-mate, 83478, goes too."

When Mike Balan had been sentenced first of all and assigned to Leavenworth Prison, Johnny's first act had been to join the Army under the name of Johnny Simpkins. For he knew that he would ultimately be assigned to the February 25th, 1939.

cavalry school, whose headquarters were close to the prison. Actually, during the first twelve months he was merely watching and waiting, and having no thought at all but the release of Mike, he set himself out to earn promotion by hard work and good conduct.

His unfailing good humour, his skillful horsemanship and ready courage won him popularity quickly. It was not long before he attracted the attention of Sergeant Flynn, and any trooper who found favour in the eyes of that hard-bitten man was destined eventually to climb the ladder.

So by the time that Balan was transferred to Farm 2 Johnny had been made a corporal, and though there were times when his conscience pricked him for the double game he was playing, he gritted his teeth and strove to push out uncomfortable thoughts from his mind. For it was uncomfortable to have to think that not only was he, a sworn loyal member of the Army, secretly planning for the escape of a prisoner, but that to succeed in it was meaning that he himself would have to desert as well.

One evening while on leave he slipped quietly and by devious ways down to an old wharf, where he found Trina waiting for him. For she had come to the town also trying to plan for Balan's escape, and the two, meeting, had joined forces in a moment.

She greeted him eagerly.

"I've got word through to Glinka," she said. "I've told him I'm in touch with you, and he's coming along to meet us to-night. He's tried to see Mike, but they wouldn't let him."

"He'll be seeing him soon," said Johnny hopefully.

She moved a little closer to him.

"Johnny, I'm afraid for you. If anything happens to you—"

"Nothing's goin' to happen to me," he replied almost roughly. "I've got every detail of the getaway set. It's as quick and simple as daylight—even to my going over the hill."

A puzzled frown came over her face.

"Over the hill?" she queried.

His laugh was harsh.

"It sounds prettier than 'desert,'" he replied. "I think I hear Glinka coming."

The other came up like a shadow. He spoke in low tones.

"They wouldn't let me see him, but I'm going to be allowed to see him tomorrow."

"Then get this down pat," Johnny replied. "Tell Mike to make his break on Friday night. Tell him to hide out in the silo until I pick him up on Sunday afternoon. And tell him that I'll have the horses and uniforms for him."

Johnny Rides Out

SERGEANT FLYNN was sitting in his office with his feet on the table, smoking and reading, when a man came in.

"Good-evening, sergeant."

Flynn studied him with some disapproval. He saw a small, rather furtive-looking little man. And he had a strong dislike to small furtive-looking little men.

"What is it?" he asked uncompromisingly.

The other cleared his throat and endeavoured to appear at ease.

"I've got to see someone in charge."

"I'm in charge," replied Flynn curtly.

"What's the trouble?"

"I was assaulted downtown the other night by a soldier. I've found out his name."

"What is it?"

"Simpkins. Johnny Simpkins."

Flynn's eyebrows lifted in mild surprise.

"You don't say!"

"And I've found out something else, sergeant," went on the other, annoyed that he had made so little impression. "He's the son of a Federal prisoner in the penitentiary and—"

But he stopped suddenly. Flynn had risen from his chair.

"You dirty, snooping little scavenger," he exclaimed. "You get out of here quick, before I lay my hands on you."

He took a step forward, but the other was out of the door in a flash.

Flynn stood deep in thought. There was a frown on his forehead. All sorts of uncomfortable thoughts were beginning to drift into his mind. A couple of uniforms and a couple of horses had unaccountably disappeared only recently and the colonel was angry about it. And if what this man had just said to him was true—

He looked up as Johnny entered the room.

"Colonel wants to see us both, sergeant," he said laconically.

They stood before the colonel, but Johnny had already guessed what the trouble was.

"Corporal, what do you know about those two O.D. uniforms checked out of troop supply?" asked the colonel.

Johnny knew a lot, but he wasn't saying it.

"Copied them as per list, sir."

"Where did you get the list?"

"I gave it to him, sir," replied Flynn.

"Were there two horses on the list, too?"

"I—I think so, sir."

An angry frown came to the other's face. He spoke coldly.

"Sergeant," he said, "it is not the custom in the Army for a man to make out a list and not even know what's on it, or to sign without reading what you sign. Until these uniforms and horses are found, I'm relegating you to Duty Sergeant. That's all."

They went out silently together. Johnny's conscience stabbed him furiously. This man who had just been reduced was his friend. Through him he had gained promotion.

"I say, sergeant—" he began, but the other interrupted coolly.

"Quite all right, son," he said. "I know it wasn't your fault. I can rely on you, I know, not to let me down."

Johnny was sitting moodily that night in the mess-room listening to the radio, yet scarcely hearing anything. For the knowledge of the temporary disgrace that he had brought to the man who had befriended him was still weighing heavily on him.

But he started suddenly as the music faded away and a voice spoke:

"We interrupt our programme for a special news flash. All in the vicinity of Leavenworth are asked to pay particular attention. Two convicts escaped from the Federal prison about an hour ago and are still at large. They are believed to be dressed in army uniforms and to be riding army horses."

The voice died away and the music began again. But Johnny didn't hear it. Resolution had come to him at last, and his mind was made up. A little pale, but with his head held high he strode across the room just as Flynn came in. Johnny spoke quietly.

"Sergeant, I've come to tell—" he began, but the other interrupted him quickly.

"Colonel's orders. You're to take a squad of men at once, to go to Number

(Continued on page 26)

A ruthless tyrant held sway on Treasure Island, a man who was prepared to go to any lengths to accomplish his life's ambition. It was against this malign scoundrel that a young man and a girl pitted their courage and resourcefulness. Read how they fared in this thrill-packed serial of high adventure and stark drama, starring Don Terry and Gwen Gaze



Read This First

Treasure Island, down in the Caribbean Sea, is owned by an unscrupulous American known as Carter Collins, alias the "Shark." It is towards this island that pretty Toni Morrell journeys for the dual purpose of learning the identity of her missing father and seeking pirate booty which is said to be buried there.

Larry Kent, friend of Toni Morrell and star reporter of the San Pablo "Courier," a Florida newspaper belonging to a publisher named Westmore, is also headed for Treasure Island. His object is to investigate the mysterious disappearance of another Pressman, Thorndyke, who had been despatched to the island to check up on sinister rumours that have reached the outer world concerning Carter Collins' domain.

Together Larry and Toni reach the island in a launch picked up by a liner on which they were travelling to Cortez, nearest port of call to Collins' sea-girt retreat. Once ashore on Treasure Island, however, they are attacked by guards in the Shark's pay, and while Larry fights those guards Toni obtains refuge in a hut some distance away.

She falls through a trap-door in the floor of that hut, and finds herself in a dark tunnel peopled by hooded men who close in on her!

Now Read On

Captain Cuttle

HER eyes becoming accustomed to the darkness that had descended upon the tunnel as the trap-door above her had swung back into position. Toni Morrell again perceived the hooded forms of the men into

whose presence she had fallen—perceived them dimly as they continued to advance upon her.

She was not lacking in courage. Her determination to journey to this isle of ill-repute, the subject of so many ugly rumours, had in itself been proof enough of her fortitude. Yet she could not have denied now that she was mortally afraid, and she screamed piercingly in her terror, her shrieks ringing the more loudly through the subterranean passage as she felt a hand grasp her by the wrist.

"Quiet!" a voice commanded. "Quiet!"

There was a gruffness in the speaker's tone, but despite this the voice was not menacing, and, stilling her cries, peering at the owner of that voice in the gloom, Toni made him out to be an individual of hulking physique. At the same time she sensed somehow that his attitude towards her savoured more of the inquisitive than the threatening.

"Who—who are you?" she faltered. "Who are you, and who are these men with you?"

"My name's Dreer, if that means anything to you," came the reply, "and these men with me are diggers that work for Carter Collins. I'm their foreman, and I have to see that they stick to their job. But who are you? Another of the Shark's victims?"

Toni covered at mention of that evil-sounding name.

"The Shark?" she echoed fearfully.

"Yeah—otherwise Carter Collins, the owner o' this island. A fiend who has gone mad in his search for the buccaneer treasure that's supposed to have been buried here centuries ago."

He had scarcely spoken those words when the trap-door above swung open again, and immediately afterwards the ray of a torch shone through the aperture. In the bright glow of that light which fell from aloft Toni saw that the man who had addressed her and who was gripping her wrist was carrying a whip, and that he and the "diggers" to whom he had referred were clad in sackcloth—like the unfortunate wretch who had died aboard the steamer Dolphin after being picked up in the drifting launch.

Hardly had she observed their garb when Dreer's subordinates recoiled with a medley of exclamations, covering their faces as they raised that outcry. Dreer himself also drew back, releasing Toni and blinking up at the light which shone through the opening above.

"Tako away that torch, will you?" he shouted. "Put it out! Put it out! The men's eyes can't stand it after weeks in these accursed tunnels! I can barely stand it meself, in spite o' bein' allowed to go up in the open air every, so often!"

He was answered by a cackling voice. "Ho, you lubbers down there don't like the light, don't ye? All right, get back to your diggin', ye human moles that Carter Collins has enticed on to his island. Get back to your job of delvin' amongst the tunnels. Go on, get back to your work, Mole Men! Dreer, take that whip o' yours and make 'em step lively!"

Dreer did not wield the whip. Even had he been minded to do so it would

EPISODE 2:—

"Revolt of the Mole Men"

not have been necessary, for with the brilliant ray of the torch playing on them the diggers stumbled off along the tunnel piteously, like men temporarily blinded.

Dreer followed them, and as he and his subordinates departed, the man with the torch began to descend from the trap-door via a steep ladder which Toni now described, the girl also observing that the trap-door did not close as it had formerly done, having apparently been wedged open.

A second or two later the man with the torch was beside her, and she saw then that he was the individual who had stared in at her through the window of the hut up above. She saw, too, that he had the appearance of a seafaring man, and that in place of his right hand a villainous-looking iron hook protruded from under his sleeve. Yet his face did not strike her as being nearly so frightening as when she had first set eyes on it a few minutes previously, though there was an expression of singular craftiness upon it.

"I'm Cap'n Cuttle," he said sharply, on reaching her side. "And you? Who are you, young woman?"

The girl answered him in tremulous accents.

"Toni," she rejoined. "Toni Morrell."

He stared at that, as if the name was familiar to him. Then he bent a penetrating gaze upon her.

"Morrell?" he jerked. "Did you say Morrell? By thunder, if ye're lyin' to me—"

"I'm not lying to you," Toni protested. "I'm telling you the truth. What does my name mean to you, anyway?"

He made no response to that question, but turned his head in the direction which Dreer and the diggers had taken, as if wishing to satisfy himself that they were out of earshot. Then he leaned towards the girl with a secretive air.

"Keep quiet an' do as ye're told," he muttered. "Maybe ye've found a friend. Maybe I'll be that friend, even though it suits me to cruise along o' Carter Collins—an' I might mention that a friend can come in mighty handy for people as find their way to this island uninvited. Now turn around an' walk down that tunnel. Go on, turn around an' walk—and keep walkin'."

He directed the ray of the torch past her shoulder, and, glancing round, she noticed that another tunnel branched off from the one into which she had fallen. She hesitated to enter it, however, and was looking at it askance when Captain Cuttle repeated his instructions imperatively—so that, resolving to put her faith in the hint of friendship that he had given her, she moved towards the other passage and advanced into it as he had commanded.

Captain Cuttle watched her until she had disappeared from view. Then he wheeled and climbed nimbly up the steps that led to the hut above, the torch held in his left hand, the iron hook that served him in place of his missing right hand clawing raspily on the ladder's rungs.

Once in the hut he hastened to the door of the dwelling, and, opening it, he stood on the threshold and listened in an attentive manner, his head cocked on one side.

To his ears came the sounds of strife—sounds that issued from among the rocks not far from the hut—sounds that indicated Larry Kent was still battling with the guards in Carter Collins' pay.

Larry, in fact, was fighting like a madman, and, although the two rogues who had pounced on him had been rein-

forced by three other look-outs and by Collins' agent, Grindley, the strength of the opposition only seemed to inspire the young reporter to herculean efforts.

Again and again his bunched fists battered home against the villainous faces of his swarming foes. Grindley he laid low with a flashing upper-cut that stretched the fellow senseless. The shore-guards, in their striped jerseys and bell-bottomed slacks, he knocked down in swift succession, as if they had been skittles in a bowling-alley, and notwithstanding that they scrambled up time after time to renew the combat, he finally broke away from them and sprinted like a hare in the direction he had seen Toni Morrell take earlier on.

Running through the rocks as his enemies were mustering for pursuit, he came upon the clearing occupied by the stone hut where Toni had sought refuge, and as he espied Captain Cuttle standing on the threshold of that hut, he made straight for him, bundled him back into the interior of the dwelling and stepped in after him, slamming the door behind him as he entered.

Recoiling before the newspaper man, Cuttle glowered at him.

"Take it easy, young feller," he bit out. "Ye're on dangerous ground."

"You're telling me!" Larry retorted fiercely. "Listen, I don't know who you are, but have you seen anything of a girl around here? Come on, answer me—and talk fast!"

Captain Cuttle nodded towards the open trap-door.

"If you mean the Morrell girl, she went down there," he grunted.

Without pausing to launch any further questions, Larry bounded to the trap-door and started to climb down the ladder that reached to the underground realms below. As he gained the foot of that ladder Cuttle descended the rungs as well, shutting the trap-door in the process, and, joining the newspaper man, the skipper shone his torch towards the passage along which Toni had vanished.

"Go down there an' keep goin'," he said to Larry. "You'll eventually find the girl ye're lookin' for. She's on her way to a big house that stands a mile east o' the point where ye beached your launch."

Larry glanced at the tunnel Captain Cuttle had indicated, then switched his eyes on the old sea-dog again.

"Say, who are you, anyway?" he queried.

"Captain Cuttle's the name," was the reply. "Cap'n Cuttle, what's been on this island longer than any livin' man, and what has his quarters in a cabin aboard an old frigate that's set high an' dry among the rocks not far from Carter Collins' home. But ye were askin' after the Morrell girl, an' I've told ye where ye may find her."

Larry stared at him in silence for a spell. Then without another word he turned and made his way into the passage Toni had entered some time before, and presently the gloom of that passage swallowed him as it had swallowed the girl.

Captain Cuttle remained by the ladder, a thoughtful expression on his face, and a quarter of an hour must have elapsed ere the strange little seafaring man bestirred himself and shuffled over to a rock ledge on which a graven image in the form of a large frog was standing.

With a queer smile playing about his lips the skipper pressed one of the button-like eyes in that graven image, and at once the mouth of the sculptured frog yawned open, whereupon Cuttle spoke into it.

"Callin' Mr. Collins," he intoned. "Callin' the Shark!"

The words were transmitted to the lounge of Carter Collins' sombre residence, and Collins was in that lounge, receiving a report from Grindley, who had joined the owner of Treasure Island only a minute or so previously, and whose swollen jaw testified to the punishment he had recently received at the hands of Larry Kent.

Cuttle's voice interrupting the story Grindley was retailing Carter Collins turned sharply towards the basinet helmet which adorned the sideboard that stood against one wall of the room, for it was through the visor of the helmet in question that the old sea-dog's call had reached the apartment.

"Yes, captain, what is it?" Collins interrogated, bending towards the microphone that was concealed behind the visor.

"Your lady visitor is headed your way through the tunnel that leads from the hut near Crossbones Cape," came the response, "an' her gentleman friend is a-followin' her. That makes two more to divide the treasure with, hey?"

A raucous laugh in the skipper's voice succeeded that last comment—a comment which the Shark chose to ignore, but which seemed to irritate Grindley.

"Why don't you get rid of that old fool?" the latter snarled. "You ought to have thrown him off the island when you bought it. He gets on my nerves."

"If you had as much brains as Cuttle we'd probably have the treasure by now," Collins retorted, at which Grindley's upper lip curled derisively.

"Brains!" he scoffed. "He's as nutty as a fruit cake."

The Shark's eyes narrowed.

"You think so? Well, I don't, Grindley. But go on with your report."

"There's not much more to tell," his henchman growled. "I stowed away in that launch just before Kent and the Morrell girl li-jaeked it, and I was mixed up in the fight that your guards started when they tried to grab that smart-aleck reporter. Say, how did one of your Mole Men manage to make a break, anyhow?"

"Through carelessness on the part of Dreer. Don't worry, Dreer won't be so lax again. I've told him what will happen to him if any of the other diggers stage a getaway. H'm, I'm glad to hear, anyhow, that one of the shots we took at the Mole Man you refer to was effective—and that he died before he could say too much."

There was a silence, and then Grindley spoke again.

"What do you intend to do about Kent and Toni Morrell?" he asked. "I've found out that Kent is a pal of Thorndyke's, and as for the girl—well, I'm pretty sure Faxton gave her his half of the treasure map."

"But she may not have that half of the map on her," the other countered. "She may have memorised it. In any event, I'm going to give her a pretty free hand for the present—and her friend Kent, too. We'll see that they don't get off the island, but otherwise we'll treat them well enough for the time being and simply keep watch on them. If the girl thinks she and Kent have nothing to fear, she may get careless and give us some kind of a lead on that buried hoard of untold wealth I've been trying to find for years."

He paused, and a baleful glint showed in his eyes.

"Yes, she may get careless," he repeated, "and give us some kind of a lead that I can link up with my half of the map. Then with the treasure in my grasp—well, it will be curtains for her and Kent."

The Mine

ON leaving Captain Cuttle and entering the tunnel along which Toni had preceded him a little while earlier, Larry Kent felt his way forward through gloom that was at first almost opaque, but after blundering round a bend in the passage he saw a dim gleam of light ahead of him.

It proved to be the light of a lamp riveted to the rock wall of the tunnel, and in his onward progress he encountered several more of those lamps—all of them so shaded that they were calculated to be easy on the eyes of men who were doomed to spend most of their working hours in darkness.

Larry also came upon other passages that forked out of the one he was following and indicated to him that there was a perfect maze of subterranean corridors under the crust of the volcanic island. These other passages he ignored, however, keeping to that along which Captain Cuttle had despatched him, and at long last he turned a corner and discerned a small, wizened, white-haired customer standing beside a sort of dresser whose shelves were laden with bottles of wine.

The individual by the dresser was attired in the livery of a manservant, and he came forward to greet Larry as the young reporter put in an appearance.

"Ah, Mr. Kent, my master is expecting you," he said with a civility that did not ring true in Larry's ears. "I have already conducted Miss Morrell to him. She seemed greatly troubled on the score of your safety, and my master had some difficulty in setting her mind at rest."

Larry eyed him with suspicion.

"And who is your master?" he asked.

"Mr. Collins, of course. Some call him the Shark, and me the Pilot Fish, because I am generally to be found by his side. But my right name is

Hawkins. Er, will you come this way, Mr. Kent?"

Larry followed him dubiously, holding himself in readiness for any eventuality, and a little later he was accompanying Collins' butler up a flight of stone steps. These terminated before a rock wall, but as Hawkins set his puny shoulder against that wall a section of it swung aside, and in another moment he and Larry were stepping through into the actual confines of the Shark's magnificent yet strangely oppressive residence—a residence of bleak stone, richly furnished, but in an antique style that had no semblance of real comfort—a house whose gloomy adornments repelled rather than attracted.

Larry and his guide had issued on to a wide staircase that dipped towards a spacious hall, and the panel by which they had gained admittance to Collins' home closing with a thud behind him, the newspaperman glanced uneasily over his shoulder. Then he looked at Hawkins, but next instant his eyes travelled past the butler and down to the centre of the hallway below.

There at a table laden with choice foodstuffs and agleam with silver cutlery and sparkling crystal sat Carter Collins, Toni Morrell, Grindley, and two other men and a woman whom Larry was later to know as Doctor X, Professor Gault and Zanya, that trio whose presence on the island the Shark considered necessary and who had been forced into his service.

At sight of Toni among that company of diners the reporter hurried down the stairs with Hawkins at his heels, and as he reached the table Toni started up from her chair to greet him fervently.

"Larry!" she gasped. "Thank heavens you're safe! I—I was worried about you!"

She was interrupted by Collins, who had also risen.

"And I have been doing my best to reassure her, Mr. Kent," the owner of Treasure Island observed smoothly. "I'm afraid I must apologise for the reception that was accorded you when you landed, but my guards have orders to check up on all strangers, and they are sometimes a little too enthusiastic. I shall reproach them, as I have already reproached Grindley here for taking it upon himself to employ tactics of which I disapprove."

He motioned to the rogue who had felt the weight of Larry's knuckles, and who now avoided Larry's eyes as the newspaperman directed a cursory glance at him. Then the reporter looked at the Shark again—uncertainly, not knowing what to make of his demeanour.

"You're Carter Collins," he said. "I recognise you from pictures I've seen of you."

"Yes, I am Carter Collins," was the reply. "But permit me to introduce my friends here."

He presented Zanya, Doctor X and Professor Gault, then invited Larry to take a vacant chair beside Toni, and when the representative of the San Pablo "Courier" had done so, spoke again in that same smooth tone.

"And now may I ask why you have honoured me with a visit to my humble home?" he inquired.

Larry's rugged face wore a grim expression. He was eyeing Collins narrowly. He did not trust the man, in view of all that had happened, and he sensed that his air of courtesy was a sham—a veneer that hid a character ruthless and despotic. Yet when he answered Collins' interrogation his voice was quiet, for he felt it was advisable under the circumstances to keep his temper in check.

"I work for a newspaper in Florida," he stated. "One of our men—a chap named Thorudye—was sent down here



In the bright glow of that light which fell from aloft Toni saw that the man who had addressed her and who was gripping her wrist was carrying a whip. *

to write a feature story on that volcano which dominates this island, and not having heard from him for several weeks my chief assigned me to the job of finding out what had happened to him."

"Thorndyke?" Carter Collins reiterated. "H'm, I can't recall anyone by the name of Thorndyke ever having visited this island. Can any of you?"

He looked round the table at Grindley, Professor Gault, Doctor X and Zanya, and they shook their heads, the last three with an uneasy mien that Larry was quick to notice.

"I'm afraid you're down here on a wild goose chase, Mr. Kent," Collins murmured then.

Larry did not think so. He was convinced that Carter Collins had lied, and that the others had backed him up in a denial that they knew to be false. He made no comment, however, and a brief silence ensued—a silence that Treasure Island's owner was the first to break.

"Miss Morrell," he remarked, turning his attention on Toni. "before Mr. Kent arrived on the scene you were telling us why you were here. If I remember rightly you mentioned that you had reason to believe your name was not really Morrell, and that your father, whom you have never seen, was down on this island. May I ask what makes you think he is here?"

"An old friend of his—a Captain Tom Faxton—gave me to understand that this is where I might locate him," the girl rejoined.

The Shark slid a glance towards Grindley, and then assumed a meditative expression.

"Faxton?" he mused. "Captain Tom Faxton? No. I don't believe I ever heard of him. Er, did he by any chance ever refer to treasure being buried here?"

Toni regarded him impassively.

"Yes, he did refer to treasure," she said. "But he merely touched on the subject, repeating the rumours that one usually hears about this place. I—"

And then she stopped, for at that instant there came a startling interruption, an interruption in the form of a muffled explosion which seemed to take place deep below ground and somewhere to the west of the house, the floor of the hall trembling slightly to the prolonged reverberations of it.

The company around the table looked at one another sharply. Then Grindley spoke, shrugging his shoulders.

"The Ghost is talkin' again," he announced.

"The Ghost?" Toni Morrell echoed dully.

"Grindley is referring to the volcano," Professor Gault interposed. "The old-time buccaneers who once made this island their headquarters used to call it Ghost Mountain, on account of their leader's method of dealing with any of his followers who incurred his displeasure. Known as the Black Pirate, that leader removed rebellious members of his enthrone band by having them taken up to the crater of the volcano and thrown into the molten lava. His men came to believe that the peak was haunted at nights by the spirits of his victims. Hence the name 'Ghost Mountain.'"

"We just call it the 'Ghost,'" he added. "And when it is a little more active than usual we often say the 'Ghost is talking again.' But there is no cause for alarm. There hasn't been a violent eruption here for two centuries, and in my opinion—"

Carter Collins cut him short. The owner of Treasure Island had risen from his chair.

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"I'm not interested in your opinion, professor," he rapped out, "nor in your talk of Ghost Mountain. For that explosion we heard didn't come from the crater of the volcano as Grindley and you seem to imagine. It came from under the ground, and, unless I miss my guess, from the tunnels with which Nature has honeycombed this island."

He had scarcely spoken when a voice was heard issuing from the lounge adjoining the hall. Transmitted to the house via the microphone in the basinet helmet or the sideboard in that lounge, it was a voice which was couched in urgent accents, and a voice which Collins immediately recognised as Dreer's.

The Shark turned and hurried into the lounge, closing the door after him, and in a few seconds he was in conversation with the foreman in charge of his diggers.

"Yes, Dreer?" he barked. "What is it?"

"I'm callin' from the tunnels, Mr. Collins,—I was the response. "That explosion—I guess you heard it—it was caused by some o' the Mole Men. They got hold of that last depth bomb the professor manufactured to guard the approach to the island. They got hold of it and fixed a detonatin' cable to it. They planned to blow up the house, an' you with it, but luckily for you they misjudged the location of your home."

Carter Collins gritted his teeth.

"Dreer," he rasped, "your job is to keep watch on the Mole Men. You made one slip to-day when you let one of them stage a getaway. Now you let some of them make an attempt on my life—"

"I didn't know what they were up to," Dreer's voice broke in protestingly. "I hadn't any idea of what was goin' on until I came across them, heard 'em talkin', saw one of 'em ram down the plunger of the detonator and then heard the blast away along a side tunnel that they'd mistaken for the main one. Listen, Mr. Collins, you can't blame me for this. I can't keep a check on the movements of all of these men. Besides, you don't realise the mood they're in. They were tricked by you into comin' here, and they're plenty sore at the raw deal they're gettin'."

Collins spoke tersely.

"They'll know what a raw deal is if I set my guards on them," he said.

"By thunder, if I could spare any of the guards for spells of duty in the tunnels they'd make sure those Mole Men didn't get up to any mischief, but the island's shores have got to be watched for meddlesome interlopers. Anyway, I'll see that an example is made of the diggers responsible for letting off that mine. Meanwhile, you get back to your post, Dreer."

With that the Shark retraced his steps to the hall, and rejoining the group at the table there, he glanced at Larry and Toni.

"You may consider yourselves guests in my house," he said, "but I have just received news that compels me to shelve for the time being my duties as a host, and I suggest you retire for the night. Mr. Grindley will show you to your rooms."

Larry and Toni frowned, but thought it best to conform to his wishes, and neither of them having much appetite for the food on the table, they rose with Grindley and accompanied the latter up the staircase that ascended from the hall.

Reaching the head of that staircase, Grindley conducted them down a long corridor, finally halting between two doors situated on opposite sides of the passage.

"This is your room, Miss Morrell," he announced, indicating the door on the right. "And yours is on the left, Kent."

Bidding each other "good-night," Larry and Toni entered the apartments to which they had been conveyed. Larry discovering his to be furnished in a style similar to that which characterised the hall, a ponderous four-poster bed with a heavy canopy being the principal object in the room.

The young reporter paid little heed to that bed, however. He had no intention of retiring yet, and after waiting a minute or two he quietly opened the door of the apartment and looked out into the corridor.

Grindley had departed, and, having satisfied himself on that score, Larry stepped across the passage, knocked on the door of Toni's room, and called to her in a low voice.

She admitted him at once, and he entered to find her in an apartment almost identical to the one which had been placed at his disposal.

"Larry," she said, "I knew you'd want to have a talk with me. What are we going to do? I—I'm afraid of that man Collins. There's something about him that scares me, and in spite of his manner I'm sure he means us harm."

"I don't trust him any more than you do, Toni. I'm sure glad you didn't tell him about Faxton giving you his half of the map. You've still got it, haven't you?"

She nodded.

"Yes. It's in the haft of the dagger, and I've got the dagger on me. I half-expected Collins would have me searched, for he must have a good idea I know something about the chart. Grindley is in his pay, and Grindley was after that half of the map when he forced his way into my cabin aboard the steamer Dolphin. And Collins is out to find the treasure, Larry. I know that."

She told him of her encounter with Dreer and the Mole Men, and when she had mentioned Dreer's reference to the Shark's quest for the spoil of the buccaneers Larry was silent for a moment. Then he addressed her earnestly:

"I don't know why Collins didn't have you searched, Toni," he said, "unless it was because he isn't sure that you have your half of the map with you, and wants to give you plenty of freedom in the hope that you'll inadvertently guide him to the long-lost hoard. Anyhow, our best plan is to wait and see what happens, and trust to luck. One thing I feel certain of—he won't let us off the island if he can help it."

Toni bit her lip.

"I don't want to leave the island," she declared, "until I've learned the identity of my father. In any case, I think I may have found a friend in Captain Cattle."

"You mean that old seafaring man with the hook."

"Yes," Toni answered. "If he was on the level—"

She broke off all at once, and caught at the reporter's sleeve.

"Larry," she exclaimed, "perhaps he's my father! He's been on this island longer than anyone else, and when I told him my name it seemed to startle him. Perhaps he's my father, but for some reason best known to himself didn't admit it to me."

Larry considered that possibility—was still considering it when suddenly a sound like a clap of thunder smote the air. It was a sound that resembled the explosion which had occurred in the

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"THE PAINTED DESERT"

(Continued from page 14)

he suddenly pulled his horse to a standstill and, taking steady aim, fired at the pursuer.

Clark was taken by surprise. He reeled in his saddle as the heavy six-gallon bullet tore into his shoulder. Bob galloped on, disappearing into the darkness, while Clark, clutching his shoulder, joined Fawcett and Kincaid.

"We got one of the outfits, but the other one got through," Kincaid was just reporting to his chief.

"What about McVey?"

"He got through," mumbled Clark. "He turned his outfit over to the other and headed for the mine on the guard's horse. He beat me to it."

"That means but one thing," Fawcett grunted angrily. "He'll load a couple more wagons and start out again, and this time he'll have plenty of armed men."

"There's only one way to stop him, and that's to wreck the mine! Clark, you beat it into town and tell Burke to come out here. Kincaid and I'll meet him at the mine!"

Unaware of his enemy's new plan, Bob reached the mine, his horse in a lather of sweat. Carol and Yukon Kate came running out, and a crowd of miners joined them.

"No time for questions, folks," Bob rapped. "We've got to get ten tons of ore milled and loaded to-night. Can we do it?"

"Yes!" A mighty shout.

Bob told them how the wagons had been stampered.

"I bet Fawcett had something to do with it!" Kate snapped.

"So do I," growled Placer Bill, his big fists clenching.

"You're probably both right," said Bob. "but there's no way we can prove it. Now listen"—he turned to the men—"there's a thousand dollars bonus for the bunch that gets the first wagon loaded. Go to it!"

Full of enthusiasm, the men rushed away to the workings. Carol and Kate busied themselves preparing coffee and sandwiches. Bob himself rolled up his sleeves and joined the miners, despite his previous exertions. As he had told Carol:

"If we can't get two wagon loads full of ore into town to-morrow, we're going to be out of the mining business!"

Feverishly the work went on all through the night, the mills pounding away, crushing the crude ore brought from the galleries by small trucks. By the time dawn broke over the hills, the second wagon was pulled up under the loading platform and relays of men were hurling sacks of the tungsten ore into it.

Gulping a cup of coffee, Bob supervised the hitching up of his mule-team, with Carol standing beside him. Steve and all the boys from the ranch were to accompany the wagons this time, and Placer Bill was already perched on Bob's wagon behind the driver's seat, rifle in his hand.

"We're all set, Bob! Ready to go!" he called.

"Good! See that everything's clear," Bob replied.

He climbed to his seat, waved to Carol and Yukon Kate, and they were off again. Slowly the two wagons began to move.

"Kate, I'm afraid," murmured Carol. "Suppose something happens to him?"

"You love him, don't you?" said

Kate. "Well, in that case you might as well know something you're bound to find out sooner or later."

"What d'you mean, Kate?" Carol's eyes were wide.

"Well, Bill told me you never did really own this mine."

Carol's hand went to her mouth as she stared after the slowly retreating wagons. Then she and Kate whirled round as there came the wail of a siren from the direction of the workings, repeated at regular intervals.

Everybody stood stock-still, eyes wide with speculation.

"It's the emergency signal!" roared Bob, pulling his team to a standstill. "Come on, Bill!"

Followed by Bill at a slower speed, he raced back to the workings, where a crowd of men had already collected.

"What's the trouble? Who set that signal off?"

"I did, Mr. McVey," said a grey-haired man in a miner's helmet. "I just found a big charge of dynamite in tunnel No. 3 that didn't belong there, so I thought I'd better get the men out and find out what's going on!"

"Nice work!" rapped Bob, clenching his fists. "Take the women down by the wagons, quick! Come on, Bill!"

A tense silence fell as Bob and Bill raced to the nearest entrance. If there were more charges in there the whole mine might go up at any moment!

Dynamite

WHILE attention was concentrated on the mills and loading platform, Fawcett and his two assistants had found it easy to enter the workings. With the knowledge gained by Burke and Kincaid while they were working there, the crooks were able to place dynamite charges at the points where it would do most damage.

Fawcett and Burke were working on the large charge when Kincaid joined them.

"I got the two upper drifts and the big charge on top all set," he announced.

"All right," grunted Fawcett. "Soon as we get this set, we'll light them up."

They had already lit one or two of the remoter charges when, faint and far away, the regular wails of the siren were heard.

They speeded up, gradually working through the tunnels towards the biggest and final charge.

There Bob and Placer Bill, rushing round a corner with lights in their hands, found them as they set off the last fuse. Fawcett whirled round, pulling his gun.

Bob came on him like a cyclone, smashing a furious punch to his chin that sent him hurtling into a corner.

Placer Bill took on Kincaid, and Bob mixed it with Burke. Desperately they bashed away at each other, the tang of the burning fuse in their nostrils, and in their minds the knowledge that any of the other charges might explode at any moment.

Bob and Placer

Bill smashed their opponents down, and Bob dragged Kincaid to his feet, while Fawcett was just shaking his head and recovering.

Then, far away, they heard a dull boom, and Kincaid's face turned paper white. To the watchers outside that first explosion made a startling sight. A great slab of the mountainside seemed to be hurled outwards in a cloud of dust, followed by a gout of yellow, dirty smoke.

Carol hid her eyes, not daring to think what might be happening to the man she loved in those dark tunnels.

The explosion was far enough away to leave the men in the tunnel in momentary safety. But Kincaid was now cowering in Bob's grasp.

"We got to get out of here," he whimpered. "The whole mine will go up at any minute!"

"Shut up, you!" snarled Burke, and got a blow across the mouth from Bill for his pains.

"What d'you mean?" snapped Bob.

"It was Fawcett's idea! He had Banning killed, and now he's trying to wreck the mine so he can take it away from you."

Bob turned to Bill while the regular monotonous wails of the siren, softened by distance, broke the silence. He heard a scuffle, and was just in time to see Fawcett scramble to his feet and dash away round a bend in the tunnel. The game was up!

"You take these fellows out of here!" Bob ordered Bill. "I'm going after Fawcett!"

Burke and Kincaid were only too glad to rush away ahead of Placer Bill, making for the open. They knew better than Bob what was likely to happen at any moment, for they had laid and lit the charges.

Bob swung round and started to run along the tunnel in the direction taken by the fleeing mines promoter.

He had gone only a few steps when a terrific roar sounded ahead, round a bend. Bob was hurled backwards, staggering before a mighty blast of hot air. The roof ahead of him caved in with a crash. Dirt and flying stones rained on him, stinging his head and face, so that he had to fling his arms up to protect his eyes.

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THE ROYAL NAVY

When the dust cleared, he saw that the tunnel was completely blocked. Fawcett must have been right on top of that charge when it exploded. There was no hope for him.

Bob turned, and was not ashamed to run like a hare back along the dark passages, running a grim race with death. When the next charge went off, he might not be so lucky. The horrible fate that had overtaken the crook might be his, too.

He dashed out into the open, waving away the men who were still waiting at the tunnel mouths. Down the slope he dashed, yelling for everybody to run for their lives.

Men came racing after him, tripping over, rolling over and over down the loose slope in their mad dash.

Placer Bill, gripping the trembling arms of Burke and Kincaid, was standing by the wagons with Carol and Kate, watching tensely, when Bob and the mob with him cleared the buildings. Out across the open ground they streamed—then Carol gasped as two more charges exploded with mighty concussions, shaking the ground they were standing on.

The whole of the mountainside seemed to collapse, falling with surprising slowness. A great shower of rocks, small stones and yellow dust mushroomed outwards and crashed on the loading platforms and the mills.

Bob and his men had got clear just in time. Even so they were pounded by flying stones as they ran, and by the time Bob joined his friends he was covered with dust.

White-faced, Carol ran to him and flung her arms around him. With an arm round her waist, Bob stood staring glumly at the wreckage. Rumbling crashes still sounded as rocks, loosened by the explosions, careered down the slopes. The wooden buildings had been pounded to matchwood, and as the noise died down, thin streamers of smoke rose on all sides.

"Fawcett planned that," Bob said quietly, "and got caught in his own trap. These two fellows confessed everything. All right, boys, tie them up and turn them over to the sheriff."

Bob watched Burke and Kincaid being escorted away on horseback, with their hands tied behind them. Then he helped Carol up on to the leading wagon. With Kate and Placer Bill sitting behind them, he took the reins and once more the wagon-loads of ore got on the move.

"Well, Carol, I guess we'll have to start all over again. But as soon as we deliver this ore, we'll have enough money to start rebuilding."

"You're the one that'll have to start rebuilding, Bob. I know now that you own the mine."

Bob glanced at her averted face, and grinned. "You mean you don't want us to be partners?"

"Yes, but—" She stopped, blushing.

Bob's muscular arm went round her as Steve and the other riders started surging.

"Well, couldn't we start a new partnership—for life?" he chuckled.

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"IT'S IN THE AIR"

(Continued from page 10)

"Hey, you!" he called out. "Come over here."

George shrugged his shoulders. It was fate.

"Run up the engine while I telephone."

"Run it up, sir?"

"Yes, they want to test the radio"

"Please, sir, couldn't you get some-

one else, sir?" cried George. "I—"

"Don't be silly," interrupted the

pilot, who had a girl he had to tele-

phone. "She's just like any other

machine. The clocks are in position,

so you're quite safe. Go on—don't

dither."

"Very good, sir."

"You'll find the throttle on this side

—and be careful how you hold the joy-

stick."

"Careful, sir?"

"You might press one of the

machine-gun triggers."

"And that'd be wrong, sir, wouldn't

it?"

"Very," the pilot laughed. "Partic-

ularly as they're loaded with ammu-

nition."

George approached the machine

nervously. Before climbing in he

looked round for a last hope of being

able to make a dash for it. The pilot

pointed towards the machine, and

George realised there was no alterna-

tive. The pilot waited whilst George

clambered into the forward cockpit.

Craig, deep down in the observer's

cockpit, was busy examining the radio.

The noise of the engine drowned all

sound.

Peggy and Anne turned the corner

of the hangar. Anne had come down

with Bob, and she had brought Scruffy.

The two girls were talking about the

fate that threatened poor George, but

the watchful eyes of Scruffy recognised

the overalled figure clambering into

the machine, and with a woof he was off

to greet his lost master.

Scruffy barked furiously round the

machine to attract George's attention,

but the engine drowned the sound.

George thought he had better do things

properly, so fitted on the pilot's helmet

and then looked round nervously.

Craig's head appeared over the rear

cockpit, and he could only see the back

of the pilot's helmet.

"All ready, sir!" he shouted.

George heard a distant voice, and

did not realise it was Craig. He was

looking round for the throttle, and he

found it as Scruffy observed the rope

attached to one of the choeks. The

dog gripped it in his teeth, and away

came the choek.

The aeroplane hesitated for a moment

on the remaining choek, then swung

round, slipped over a corner of the

choek, and careered madly across the

aerodrome.

What a Pilot!

GEORGE had hurt a finger, and

Peggy had put a bandage on it.

Just a minute scratch, but it

would decide to come undone and get

all mixed up in the throttle and the

quadrant, thus preventing him pulling

back the throttle.

Suddenly he glanced ahead and saw

some trees hurtling towards him. Sudden-

ly the loop of the bandage broke.

He grabbed at the joy-stick, which he

thought was some kind of brake, and

next moment George was staring at

the sky. Corks! He was off the ground and soaring towards the clouds. He managed to glance over the side, and suffered an acute attack of vertigo when he realised the distance he was from the earth.

All this while Craig thought it was the real pilot who had taken off. He spoke into a mike.

"Apparently no time for ground test. We're already in the air. Hope you can hear O.K."

Now it chanced that the C.O. and Sir Philip were in the radio-room, and the latter was being instructed how one could keep in touch with craft in the air, when Craig's message blared forth on the loudspeaker.

"Hallo, sir," gasped the C.O. "She's taken off."

"Why?" demanded Sir Philip.

"Must have been some misunderstanding."

"Never mind. I'm quite ready."

The two men hastened outside in time to witness the machine soaring upwards. What they did not see was the frantic efforts of the pilot to get out of the telephone-booth. A lorry had pulled up outside the door, so close that he could not open the door. The pilot was frantic, because he could see the fighter in the air.

George pushed the joy-stick forward, and next moment he was diving straight for a hangar at two hundred miles an hour.

"Being a bit reckless, isn't he?" questioned the C.O.

"Well, I expect the fact that I'm watching, you know," smugly murmured Sir Philip. "Better pass him a message saying that I'm watching and ready to see what she can do."

The C.O. entered the radio hut, whilst the adjutant stood by Sir Philip to answer any questions.

George grabbed the joy-stick as he saw the earth approaching. Just in time. The machine whistled over the top of a hangar. The ambulance, with its stretcher-bearers, thought they were going to have work to do. The machine zoomed upwards, and somehow, at the top of the zoom, George got into a loop. It was about the quickest loop on record, so both men had no chance of falling out. Needless to say, Craig was strapped in. George, out of the loop, and gasping like a stranded fish, decided that that stunt might happen again, so he fixed the straps so badly that he got into an awful mess. He got free in time to prevent the machine removing the roof of "D" barracks.

Craig bobbed up.

"Message from Sir Philip!" he called out. "Show him all you know."

"I don't know anything!" cried the frantic George.

Craig leaned forward, and did his eyes bulge at sight of George. He tried to grip George as if it might restore his reason. That made George push the joy-stick forward, and once more the machine was hurtling earthwards.

"Pull the stick back!" the corporal screamed.

But George did not hear, and the machine dived towards two of the hangars. All the airmen flung themselves flat, and by some lucky chance George had enough sense to pull back the stick. The machine flattened out, roared between the two hangars, zoomed upwards, skimmed over some trees and began to climb.

"What a pilot!" acclaimed Sir Philip. "Brilliant!"

At the top of the climb the machine stalled, and then started a spin that made George feel like a top.

The pilot had at last gained the attention of the lorry driver, and on getting free he rushed off to find the C.O. He found this officer in the radio hut.

"Who the devil are you?" demanded the C.O.

"The pilot of that machine!" he raved. "That's one of your mechanics up there. Took off while I was telephoning."

"Mechanic? Which one?"

"I don't know. Face like a horse and a row of teeth like a graveyard."

"But this is awful!" muttered the C.O., as he realised the full purport of the pilot's statement.

"Who's at the controls?" the radio operator asked.

"That half-witted uke player," came Craig's answer.

"Uke player?" The C.O. looked at his sergeant-major.

"I might have guessed it."

"Guessed what?"

"It's a man who's been masquerading in Air Force uniform, sir," explained the S.M. "I was just going to report him, sir."

"Just going to! What the devil's the use of that?" raved the C.O. "If Sir Philip finds out, it'll mean court-martial for me and everyone on the station. What the devil are we going to do?"

"Pass instructions and hope for the best, sir," suggested the pilot.

"Then for heaven's sake get busy!" cried the frantic C.O. "Somehow or other that fighter must be got down and the man arrested without Sir Philip knowing."

"Now listen carefully." The pilot took over the microphone. "I'm going to pass instructions for landing—"

"If you think I'm going to sit here while he tries to land, you're all darned well mistaken!" came the frantic bellow from the loudspeaker.

Corporal Craig took off his helmet and pushed it into George's cockpit.

"Those are your friends wishing you luck!" Craig shouted, as he fiddled with his parachute. "Sorry I can't stop, but I've got an urgent appointment."

Whereupon Corporal Craig jumped, and George looked round and was in time to see him drop. The parachute opened and floated gracefully earthwards.

George had staggered out of that spin about five hundred feet from the ground. How he did it was a miracle that took him many months of training to find out.

It was the operator who suggested to his C.O. that if Corporal Craig had left his helmet with the ear-phones attached, the pilot might be able to hear the messages.

"If you can hear me, push the stick to one side and lower the wing!" the pilot called out.

George heard, but, of course, he overdid the instructions, and the fighter tilted over dangerously, and proceeded to execute a series of barrel rolls. Those below watched in horror.

"There's no doubt he can hear all right," the pilot said with bitter sarcasm.

"Brilliant! Brilliant!" Sir Philip was rubbing his hands. "But who told the operator to jump out?"

"I expect he's had about enough, sir," the adjutant said with feeling.

"Enough?" Sir Philip was most indignant. "He should consider it a privilege to fly with such a pilot. Go and find out the name of the pilot. I wish to be the first to congratulate him on landing."

Meanwhile, the pilot was trying to advise George.

"Pull back that lever to the left."

Of course, George pulled the one on the right, and as a result the under-carriage retracted under the fuselage.

The adjutant appeared.

"Sir Philip's delighted, sir," he reported. "And wants to know the name of the pilot."

At that moment George, trying to adjust Craig's helmet so that he could hear, stood up to get some more cable, and his foot pushed against the joystick. The machine went into a steep dive. It was hurtling earthwards vertically. The stretcher-bearers got out their stretcher and rubbed their hands—a job at last.

"This is the end!" cried the C.O., staring upwards from the window of the radio hut.

The machine hurtled towards the tarmacs, came out of the dive at the critical moment, and whistled through the open door of a hangar. Everyone waited for the crash, but George had got used to guiding the machine, and he whistled through the open doors at the other end of the hangar. He zoomed upwards.

Feeling frantically round, George saw a red knob and decided to press it. Two bombs hurtled earthwards, and an old barn went up in smoke. Sir Philip thought it was a marvellous shot.

Peggy came into the radio hut and saw the looks on the faces of all there.

"What's the matter, dad?" she asked.

"Matter?" snarled the S.M. "That half-wit of yours is at the controls."

"It's hopeless." The pilot turned to the C.O. "He can't even understand right and left."

"I think I could make him understand." Boldly Peggy stepped forward.

"May I try?"

"I don't care who tries!" hopelessly cried the C.O. "Let the whole world try."

George was a speck in the heavens. He had got over his nerves. He had learnt how to keep this whizzing greyhound of the air flying a fairly even course. It was rather fun banking, but he could not stay up here all day.

"George, it's Peggy speaking. Listen carefully."

"Tell him to press forward the lever on his left," whispered the pilot.

"Press forward the lever on the side of your bandaged finger," was the way Peggy gave her instructions.

"It's worked! It's worked!" shouted the C.O., as the retracted under-carriage came down to landing position. "But he's bound to crash when he lands."

The C.O. decided that Sir Philip must not be a witness. He instructed the adjutant to take Sir Philip into the mess, and to prevent him seeing this madman land.

"Wind back the wheel on the no-

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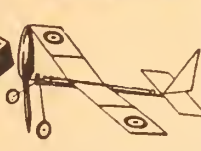
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February 25th, 1939.

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bandage side," instructed Peggy, prompted by the pilot. "Pull back the throttle, bandage side. Ease the stick back—not too much—not too much," as the nose of the machine went up in the air.

"Press left foot forward," cried the pilot.

"Press foot forward—bandage side," cried Peggy.

George had a perilously close shave with a tree, then he skinned a hedge, but he was now only a short distance from the ground. Could he make it?

"Well done, George," cried Peggy. "Keep everything where it is and hold tight."

George closed his eyes in anticipation of the crash, gripped the joystick firmly as he had been told, and by a fluke made a very fair landing.

"It's all right," cried Peggy. "You're down!"

No one had bothered about Corporal Craig, but it might be of interest to some that he alighted right in the middle of a sewage farm!

The sergeant-major was all for going out and arresting George, and the C.O. would have agreed if the adjutant had not appeared.

"Sir Philip's finished a whole bottle of sherry," he stated. "And is now phoning headquarters recommending the pilot for promotion."

"But how can he get promotion if he's not even in the Air Force?" wildly demanded the C.O.

The S.M. had left the radio hut and was hurrying across the tarmac. There was a crowd round the machine. The S.M. gripped George by the shoulder. It was then that the C.O., who seldom ran, came panting into the picture.

"What the devil are you doing with that airman?"

"He's not an airman, sir, he's—"

"Of course he's an airman," the C.O. spoke loudly for all the men to hear, then he jerked the sergeant-major close to him. "Or, if he's not by to-morrow morning, the Air Force will be short of a sergeant-major."

"You mean I can join the Air Force and learn to fly, sir?" cried George.

"Of course you can," cried the C.O., and did a most astonishing thing—shook George's hand.

Then Craig, not very pretty and not smelling too sweet, staggered forward.

"I can tell you something about him, sir," he shouted vindictively.

"You keep your mouth shut!" the C.O. shouted at him. "You're under arrest for deserting your machine."

And at the concert the biggest hit of the evening was Corporal George Brown when he sang his famous ditty, "It's In The Air."

"It's in the air,
This funny feeling ev'rywhere
That makes me sing without a care to-day

As I go on my way,
It's in the air,
It's in the air,
There's great excitement here and there,

The sun is shining ev'rywhere
And Spring makes ev'rybody sing.
It's in the air,
Zoom, zoom, zoom, zoom,
High and low
Zoom, zoom, zoom, zoom.

Here we go,
It's in the air
I feel so smart and debouair
I must warn each lady fair,
Beware, look out and have a care,
It's in the air,
It's in the air!"

(By permission of Associated British Film Distributors, Ltd., starring George Formby.)

February 25th, 1933.

"ESCAPE FROM YESTERDAY"

(Continued from page 18)

Two prison farm, and to follow those two men who have escaped. You are to bring them back alive or dead."

For some moments Johnny stood still; Flynn was watching him.

Then at last he spoke almost mechanically.

"Yes, sergeant."

Flynn laid his hand on his shoulder. "I rely on you. Corporal Simpkins," he said quietly. "You're in the army, remember."

"Yes, sergeant."

Twenty minutes later Johnny and his squad rode out. The men confided in each other that they had never seen him looking so stern.

The Last Round-up

HIGH up in the old disused silo, with the darkness closing up around them, two men stood in the shadows. Desperate, hunted-looking men they were with guns in their hands. When they addressed each other, after gazing steadily out of the opening before them at a horseman who had just ridden up and dismounted, it was in low, puzzled tones.

"It's Johnny."

"Something's up. He wasn't due until day after to-morrow."

Balan peered over.

"What's up, Johnny?" he said softly.

The man below answered slowly and with dreadful reluctance in his weary voice.

"I've come to take you back, Mike," he said.

It came as a thunderbolt to Balan. It struck him momentarily dumb, depriving him of all senses. He scarcely even saw his companion lift his gun. It was not till he heard the shot that he leaped to the opening just in time to see Johnny stagger and fall.

"You've killed—my—son!" he said.

Then he swung round, and his gun spoke twice in quick succession. As the other crumpled up he knelt by his side.

THIS WEEK'S CASTS

"IT'S IN THE AIR"

George Brown.....George Formby
Peggy.....Polly Ward
Commanding Officer....Garry Marsh
Sergeant Major.....Julien Mitchell
Corporal Craig.....Jack Hobbs
Sir Philip Bargrave C. Denier Warren
Adjutant.....Michael Shepley
Nobby.....Hal Gordon
Anne Brown.....Ilena Sylva
Bob Bullock.....Frank Leighton

"THE PAINTED DESERT"

Bob McVey.....George O'Brien
Carol Banning....Laraine Jolunson
Steve.....Ray Whitley
Placer Bill.....Stanley Fields
Hugh Fawcett.....Fred Kohler
Kincaid.....Max Wagner
Burke.....Harry Cording
Yukon Kate.....Maude Allen
Heist.....William V. Mong

"ESCAPE FROM YESTERDAY"

Mike Balan.....Akim Tamiroff
Johnny Simpkins.....Leif Erikson
Trina.....Frances Farmer
Oklahoma.....Lynne Overman
Colonel Stuart.....John Miljan
Sergeant Flynn.....J. M. Kerrigan
Glinka.....Vladimir Sokoloff

"I had to do it! I had to do it! He was my son and if you've killed him—"

He stopped. From without came the sound of laborious, dragging footsteps. The dying man smiled.

"He ain't no quitter that son of yours," he said. "I reckon I only winged him. Say, Mike, let's do this every day. It relieves the monotony and—"

Balan stood staring down at him. He heard Johnny's voice behind him.

"Who's that?"

"My friend—Oklahoma," replied his father.

"Dead?"

"Yes. Are you hurt, Johnny?"

"It's nothing. I've come to take you back, Mike."

Silence for a moment, with the dead man lying between them. Balan spoke slowly, just like his old self.

"It's too bad we couldn't see more of each other, Johnny. But I don't think in a hundred years I would know you better."

"I've come to take you back, Mike," repeated the boy dully. "Oh, why didn't he shoot straighter?"

He had lowered his gun miserably. Balan laid his hand on his shoulder.

"Because it is your fate to be a good man, Johnny," he replied with his old smile, "and nobody can avoid his fate. I find now I can't wash the dirt off as I thought I could. It sticks, and sticks. So we have to say good-bye, Johnny, because it is your duty to bring me in and—"

The next moment his fist had caught the younger man under the jaw, and he saw him stagger back and slide to the floor. For one brief second he stood there gazing sadly down on him.

"Good-bye, Johnny," he murmured, and in a few moments was down the stairs. Outside stood Johnny's horse, on to which he leaped and spurred away.

Actually he had no idea of where he was going, and it was not until he came to the swollen, flooded river barring his way that he drew rein. But even as he turned his horse he heard sounds of galloping hoofs, and a troop of horsemen came in sight, shouting to him to surrender.

"Good-bye, Johnny!" he whispered once more, and set his horse to the stream.

The troopers pulled up their horses on the bank. They had been in time to see horse and rider whirled on to the jagged rocks; they had been in time to see Balan wave farewell to them before the turbid waters swallowed him up.

(By permission of Paramount Pictures, Ltd., starring Akim Tamiroff and Leif Erikson.)

"OUR SERGEANT MAJOR"

Sung by
GEORGE FORMBY

"He sticks out his chest,
Two pillows in his vest,
A bolster under his rotunda
Our Sergeant Major,
His medals break our hearts,
He won them playing darts,
And while competing who was cheat-
ing?"

Our Sergeant Major!
He's far away the worst friend we've
ever had,

When he's far away we'll be mighty
glad,

In the canteen bar,
You know what sergeants are!
When we've past out, who's the last
out?

Our Sergeant Major!"



All letters to the Editor should be addressed to BOY'S CINEMA, Room 194, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Miss He Must

A visitor stared in awed silence as he watched Marksman Ben Southland, high-powered rifle at his shoulder, spray leaden slugs into the swamp water, inches from the moving body of Peter Lorre. It was for a scene in 20th Century-Fox's new picture, "Mr. Moto in Porto Rico."

After the scene had been made the visitor was introduced to Lorre, who plays the title rôle.

"Aren't you afraid you'll be hit?" he queried.

"Of course not," Lorre replied soberly. "If Mr. Southland hits me he loses his job."

Film Stars of To-day are Tough

To-day's generation of film stars is the hardest working, most earnest and by far the most versatile in all the history of films. Stars of yesteryear were cream-puffs by comparison.

So declares Tully Marshall, prominent screen actor since 1916, who has seen them all come and go, and knows the difference between pictures past and present from his own experience. Marshall, whose latest rôle is in David O. Selznick's "Made for Each Other," co-starring Carole Lombard and James Stewart, says:

"You hear a lot of talk about how hard actors worked in the good old

days, but don't believe it for a moment. Why, when I was in such pictures as 'Intolerance,' 'He Who Gets Slapped,' and a lot of the other silents, it wasn't half as tough as it is now.

"Admittedly, we used to handle our own make-up, and we had no doubles for dangerous scenes in those days, but we didn't have to go home nights to memorise and practice dialogue, we had no microphone dangling over our heads on the sets, and our production schedules, compared to present ones, were virtually 'quickies.' It was even possible for an actor to walk on the set unprepared, for the director could talk to him while shooting was in progress, and guide his actions. Now it's study, study, and more study, between scenes, at meal times and on Sundays. For a soft touch, I'll take the old silents."

Marshall, who was on the stage for twenty-three years before he entered films, starting before the invention of the first movie camera, plays a dual rôle in "Made for Each Other." He is the Higgins twins, and talks to himself on the screen.

Hollywood Stars at Play

There's never a dull moment at a Hollywood party.

Whenever entertainment begins to lag, various guests are called upon to delve into their respective bags of tricks with

results that would undoubtedly amaze their "fans."

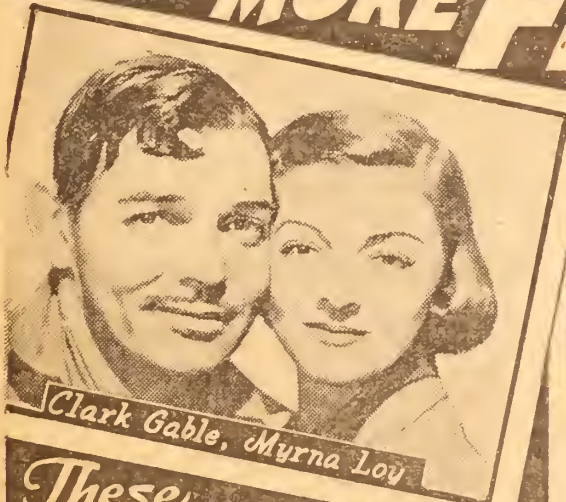
Joan Crawford, who recently completed her first dancing rôle in five years in the production, "The Shining Hour," is generally the target of all who desire to learn the last word in ball-room dances. Joan has them all at the tips of her toes, and holds informal classes whenever requested during an evening of fun.

Music lovers are always happy to corner the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer actor, Melvyn Douglas. Although few know it, Douglas is a pianist and composer of real merit, and hours of evening get-togethers are spent about the piano over which Douglas presides, performing request numbers for the crowd.

Whenever the party is in need of laughs, Mickey Rooney is called on the carpet. As a tiny lad, Mickey excelled in impersonations, and he has lost none of his talent. They are all good-natured caricatures which never fail to provoke gales of laughter from the guests.

The parties and gatherings numbering Jeanette MacDonald among the guest list are never complete without a song from the star. Her favourite stunt is to sing a duet with a recording. Nelson Eddy is another song specialist, and Virginia Bruce is an ardent exponent of the community song spirit, playing accom-

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payments for the group on the piano. Then there are Maureen O'Sullivan and husband, John Villiers Farrow, who never fail to baffle guests with a clever mind-reading stunt, and Judy Garland, who can get a hard-boiled egg down through the neck of a milk bottle in some amazing way that no one so far has found out.

As far as Frank Morgan is concerned, well, give Morgan a pack of cards and he can keep any number of guests amused for hours. His selection of tricks runs into the hundreds.

Thus, the entertainment problem in Hollywood solves itself. The custom for informal "get-togethers" has developed talents in the stars that even they, themselves, didn't know they possessed.

"Wild Bill Hickok's" Guns Bark Again

The guns which Gary Cooper carried as Wild Bill Hickok in "The Plainsman" will bark again in "Union Pacific."

Owned by Cecil B. DeMille, they were recently taken down from the peg in his office where they have hung for two years, and buckled on Joel McCrea.

Brilliantly nickel-plated, with horn handles and mounted in slim black holsters, they are supposed to be exact copies of Wild Bill Hickok's own guns. McCrea uses them in the rôle of a "trouble-shooter" assigned to keep peace along the right of way as the Union Pacific, the first transcontinental railway, is being laid across the States.

He Learned About Muscles From Vic

Standing among the many Arab extras working in "Chasing Danger" at 20th Century-Fox, is one fellow who doesn't have to depend on movies with a desert background for his bread and butter.

He is known simply as Abdullah, and his story is worth noting.

During the war, when Victor McLaglen was Provost-Marshal of Baghdad, Abdullah was a ten-year-old youngster—member of a band of Arabs who roamed that sector. McLaglen ran across him one day on the desert and brought him to Baghdad, making a home for the young fellow. During the next few years Abdullah learned about boxing and the English language under Victor's tutelage. He finally went to

America with McLaglen eighteen years ago. Since then Abdullah has fought professionally in America and other countries. During this period he made a careful study of the human body's nerves and muscles, and to-day he is recognised as one of Hollywood's leading masseurs.

Among those he helps keep fit are Culbert Olsen, the Governor of California; such stars as McLaglen, Ronald Colman, Marlene Dietrich, Walter Connolly, the Ritz Brothers, the Marx Brothers and Warner Baxter, and many lawn tennis stars, including Ellsworth Vines, Fred Perry and Donald Budge.

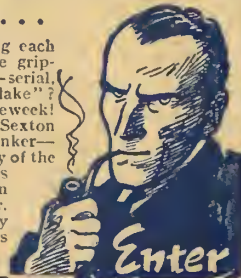
Abdullah, who maintains his offices at the Beverly Hills Tennis Club, is at present conditioning Director Ricardo Cortez, Preston Foster, Lynn Bari, Wally Vernon, Henry Wilcoxon, Harold Huber and Joan Woodbury during production of "Chasing Danger."

Do You Know?

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"HIDDEN TREASURE"

(Continued from page 22)

tunnels, but it did not issue from those subterranean realms below Treasure Island's surface. It came from the direction of the volcano known as Ghost Mountain, and it was followed by a second, a third and a fourth report.

At the same time the windows of Toni Morrell's room were illuminated by lurid gleams of preternatural fire, and, wheeling towards those windows, she and Larry gained an impression of the volcanic peak that dominated the island—a peak that was capped now by a welter of flame amidst which showers of debris were seen to be hurtling on high.

Whether the explosion in the tunnels had affected the volcano, or whether the activity of the crater was due to causes which were in no way connected with the attempt to destroy Collins' house, Larry and Toni did not know. But it was plain that Ghost Mountain was threatening an eruption such as Treasure Island had probably never experienced since the outbreak that had scattered its buccaneer inhabitants two centuries before.

As Toni Morrell and Larry Kent gazed through the windows another thunderous blast resounded over the island, and, awe-stricken, they beheld a fresh cloud of debris fly aloft from the mountain peak. Almost simultaneously a tremor seemed to run through the sinister home of Carter Collins, alias the Shark, and the walls, floor and ceiling of Toni's room quivered violently.

"Larry!" the girl cried out in horror. "Larry, we're caught in an earthquake! Larry, the house is shaking! It's going to collapse! It's going to collapse!"

(Is Captain Cuttle the long-lost father of Toni Morrell? Will she discover the secret of her identity, and the whereabouts of the pirate hoard that lies buried on Treasure Island? What will happen to Toni Morrell and Larry Kent, hemmed in as they are by stark perils? Don't miss next week's sensational episode of this gripping serial, published by kind permission of Columbia Pictures Corporation, Ltd., starring Don Terry and Gwen Gaze.)

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