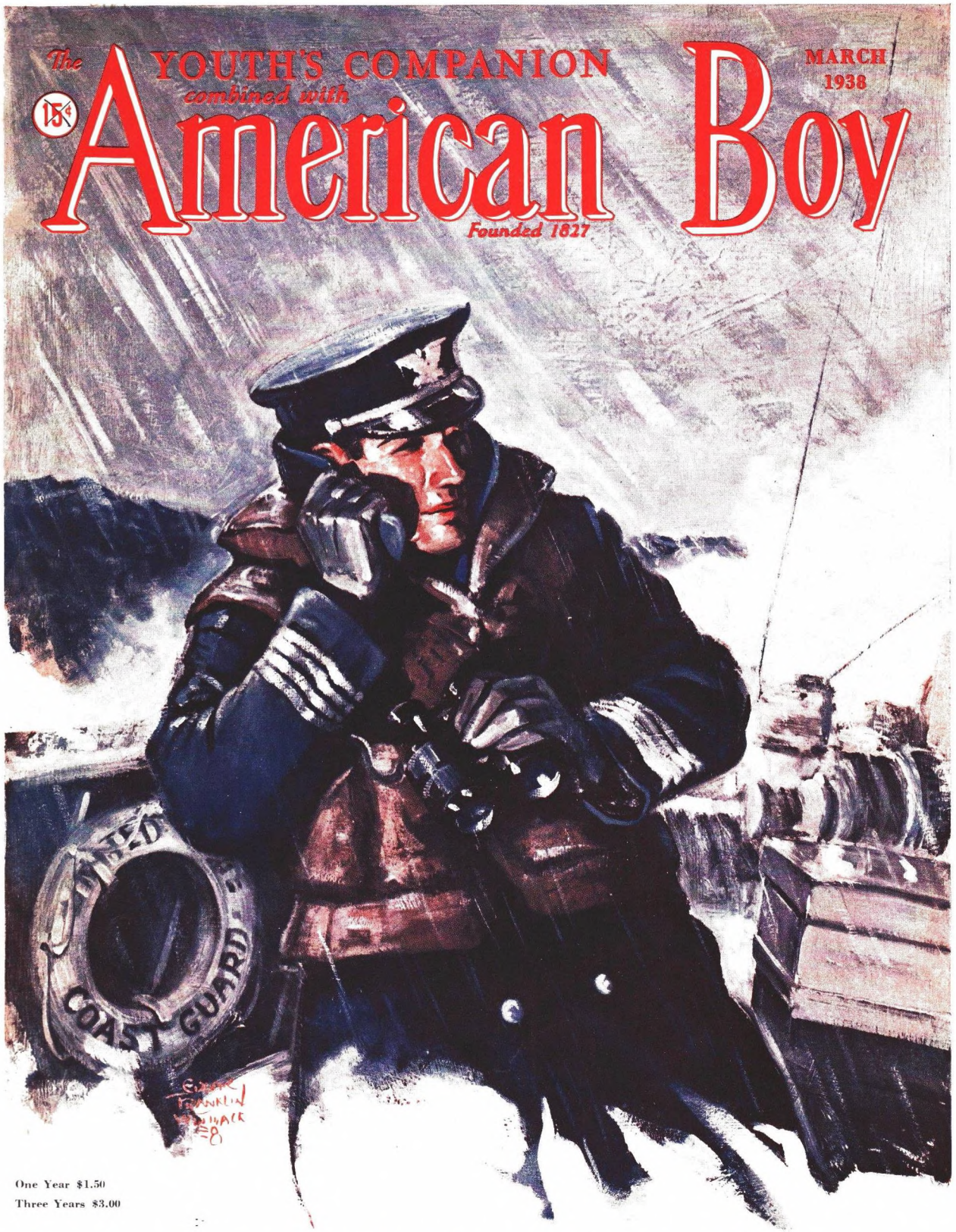


Coast Guard -- Boxing -- Navy -- Detective

IN THE MORNING MAIL

CONDUCTED by PLUTO the OFFICE PUP

The Youth's Companion, Combined with The American Boy for March, 1938, Vol. 112, No. 3. Entered as Second Class Matter Nov. 23, 1935, at the post office at Detroit, Mich., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Circulation, Business and Editorial offices: 7430 Second Blvd., Detroit, Mich. Published monthly. Copyrighted 1937 by The Sprague Publications, Inc., Detroit, Mich. Price 15c a copy, $1.50 for one year, $3.00 for three years in the United States, its possessions, and Canada. Elsewhere 50c a year extra.

PLUTO, the Office Pup, leaned back, surveyed the Monday morning mail, and smiled through his whiskers.

"Here's a reader, Gene Marks of Marcus Hooks, Pa., who has me right. He addresses me as B. C., meaning bone chewer. He might even say bone crusher, because when I bring my powerful jaws down on a bone—"

"B. C. might also stand for ball chaser, or blasted chump," the editor amended, "or bug catcher."

"If I have bugs it's your fault," Pluto sniffed. "Merlin Malehorn of Bradner, Ohio, picks the fleas off his pooch and says you ought to do the same for me. Why don't you quit picking flaws and start picking fleas? I think I'll start a movement. More flea picking and less flaw picking."

"Take your feet off the desk and put them on the flaw," said the editor, "and go to work."

"Your word is law. Feet, down to the flaw. I laugh, haw, haw, but your word is law," said the Pup. "Bob Douglas, De Quincy, La., suggests that we run a spread of pictures showing dogs of all breeds, as a sort of guide to prospective dog buyers."

"That's a swell idea," answered the ed. "We're doing that very thing in April. We'll show twenty or more leading breeds and give the important facts about each breed—also a few tips on training, care and feeding. What else is interesting in the morning mail?"

"Here's an East Aurora, N. Y., high school teacher, who uses William Heyliger's book, RITCHIE OF THE NEWS, as supplementary reading in his journalism class. A good idea, that, because RITCHIE—which ran as an AMERICAN Boy serial before it was published by Appleton's—is a gold mine of information about small-town newspapers."

Which makes the editor and the staff wonder if high school teachers realize how useful Heyliger's other vocational books could be as supplementary reading. As an introduction to mining, we can think of no better book than JOHNNY BREE, a story of a young worker in an iron mine. Or WILDCAT, a tale of the Texas oil fields that was highly praised by oil men themselves. Mr. Heyliger has written two stories of manufacturing and merchandising, MILL IN THE WOODS and LARRY MARSH, PACKER. He wrote up the electrical industry in STEVE MERRILL, ENGINEER.

Is your school using any of these books as outside reading in English, journalism, or vocational classes? We'd like to know.

"SIX-MAN football is marching along, right through the winter," Pluto yapped. "A girl reader, Lucille Clark, says that her school, Fort Shaw, Mont., played six-man for the first time last fall and won three games in a six-game schedule. Donald Scott, Timber Lake, S. Dak., reports that there are 125 students in high school and that they played regular eleven-man football last fall. They are, however, losing so many men by graduation that they're planning to play six-man in 1938."

"Yes," the editor added, "and Dr. A. R. Livermore says that some thirty schools around Smethport, Penna., are interested in starting a league. Jack Decker, Cambridge, N. Y., says that football material has been on the decline in the schools in his district. They, too, are planning a six-man league. Purdue University is planning to teach six-man football coaching in its physical education department. New leagues are springing up in all parts of the country, from Oakland, Calif., to New England."

"Jim Henry of Espanola, N. M., wonders if six-man will ever supplant eleven-man," Pluto said. "It won't. It will simply make real football available to the thousands of schools too small to muster twenty-two boys for a scrimmage. These schools want something more than touch football. They want an interscholastic game, with organized rooting, referees, and town support. And six-man fills the bill."

The official rules are available in the 64-page official handbook. For your copy send twenty cents to the Sports Editor, The American Boy, 7430 Second Blvd., Detroit, Mich. Now is the time to organize a league and plan a schedule for next fall.

Mordie Zemach, Minneapolis, apparently is waiting for the starter to shout "Go!"

"Mordie Zemach, Minneapolis, sends us a picture of himself in skates on a backyard pond. We're reminded that Connie Smythe, famous manager of the Toronto Maple Leafs, says that the place to learn hockey is on a small pond. The more crowded it is, the quicker you learn to handle a stick, dodge an opponent, and keep your feet in a mixup!

"Alaska Cruise enrollments are pouring in, Pup," the editor said. "I suspect that readers from every state in the Union will be on the train in Chicago next July 2, when our special cars pull out of the station bound for—"

"St. Paul, Mandan, Sioux Indians, Livingston, bucking horses, Spokane, Portland, Seattle, Ketchikan, Port Armstrong, Port Walter, life on the ocean wave, glaciers, waterfalls, mountains, hand-over-hand fishing, the Cascades, the Rockies, Coulee Dam, gold smelters, Helena, Billings!"

"You sound like a combination train caller and travel lecturer," the ed murmured.

"Just send me on that trip, Boss," Pluto begged. "I'll clean up on that Husky dog they're taking for a mascot. I'll train on the Husky and tackle a Kodiak bear. I'll Kodiak as I go. It'll be a snap."

"If you tackle a Kodiak it'll be a case of overexposure. Leave the cruise to the announcement on page 13 and get busy with those letters."

"Very well. I'll present a new author, R. G. Emery, who wrote the Army boxing story, RECRUIT MERRITT, in this issue. There's a picture of Lieutenant Emery on this page, and here's his thumbnail autobiography—"

I began the process of growing up (says Lt. Emery) in a small Minnesota town some twenty-eight years ago. Some time thereafter I made the acquaintance of THE AMERICAN BOY. Those were the days of Mark Tidd and Catty Atkins, and it was these two gentlemen whose influence caused me to feel that the business world, filled with sharp-eyed, quick-triggered fellows such as these, would be a fearsome place for me. So I decided to go to Annapolis.

On the day appointed I reported to take my examination in company with six other lads a great deal better prepared than I. We met at eight in the morning and were presented with a deadly booklet full of questions and a great many blank pieces of paper. I remember looking

(Continued on page 23)

Dogs climb higher in Hawaii, says Lt. Emery, author of "Recruit Merritt."

DECOYS in the SEVERN

It was beautiful. A four-inch blast of water smacked full into the face of the enemy.

by

Robb White, III

Illustrator: DUDLEY GLOYNE SUMMERS

MIDSHIPMEN Lee and Brewer stood tensely at the end of the pitch-black wing alley of Bancroft Hall and held the fire hose level. From down the main corridor they could hear the whisper of feet approaching, and they suspected that it would be only a second before a navy of plebes would meet them, armed to the teeth with fire hose and brooms.

Behind Lee and Brewer a rival plebe navy waited—breaths sucked in, hands trembling on wastebaskets of water, and brooms aloft.

Around them in the tight stillness they could hear the enemy gathering, moving in the main corridor. Some even thought they could hear the sliding of the canvas hose on the deck and the rattle of the brass nozzle.

As the faint sound drew closer Lee turned and hissed over his shoulder, "Stand by. Report when ready."

"Hose One, manned and ready," the captain of the hydrant whispered.

"Bucket Brigade, manned and ready," another captain said softly.

"The First Battalion of Brooms, manned and ready."

"Stand by!" Lee whispered, his voice sharp in the silence. "Aim!" he said to Brewer, as a shadow floated across the corridor mouth. "Fire!"

The figure leaped in front of him, crying, "Aha!"

It was beautiful. The hose stiffened in their hands; then a four-inch blast of water smacked full into the face of the enemy, knocking him staggering back into the corridor, spinning him around, finally dropping him on his face and rolling him up against the opposite wall.

And as the enemy rolled in the welter of water, Lee saw the sword. And riding proudly down a wave was a first classman's cap.

"Cease firing!" Lee snapped, his words cutting through the angry mutter of his men, who were straining for contact with the enemy. Lying in a muddle was "Regulation" Red Magruder, the demon for discipline. The enemy now was no ragged navy of plebes, but an able foe of long and recognized standing. "It's Magruder!" Lee whispered, fiercely.

For a second a hush like that of death fell on the men. Then there was sudden furious life. From a wing alley a horde of ghosts in wet pajamas jammed into the main corridor. The opposing navy, already aware of the dread presence of the Midshipman Officer of the Watch, joined in the retreat and for wild moments the place was full of plebes flying in all directions. Then the corridor was empty and silent except for the dribble of water from the relaxed fire bose, sprawling on the gleaming wet deck and still pointing at the figure of Magruder, who

The hilarious history of a well-soaked war

was awkwardly getting his sea legs under him again.

Then, from a room near Magruder, Midshipman Lee wandered, with Midshipman Brewer, a little puzzled, close behind. Dawdling along down the main corridor Lee suddenly stopped in his tracks, staring at the wet figure of Magruder sitting on the deck.

"My," Lee said, "what is *that?*" He and Brewer watched as Magruder got slowly to his feet, wrung water out of his clothes and began looking for his cap.

"I believe it's Mr. Magruder," Lee said, and picked up Red's cap from a puddle of water. Putting it on Magruder's head, he cried, "Mr. Magruder, what have they done to you?"

Red snatched the wet cap off his head and glared at the two plebes. Yanking his sword abeam, he said, "You two guys come with me."

"Yes, sir," Lee said, falling in step as Red went marching down the corridor.

Dripping water, Magruder strode in squshy shoes with Lee and Brewer on each side of him. Finally he said, "The rifle-range butts for you two smart plebes."

Lee stopped in his tracks. "Sir?" he gasped. "How can you do that to me?"

Brewer said, "Me, too."

Without a word Magruder went over to another fire hose and showed it to them. Lee looked at it curiously. "Fire hose," he said.

Magruder shook the thing angrily. "You think you can get away with that?" he demanded. "I ought to put you on the prison ship instead of the rifle ranges."

Lee was genuinely pained. "But, Red—I mean Mr. Magruder, what have we got to do with this?"

Magruder looked at him closely for a long time. "Well, who did it?" he demanded.

"Why, Mr. Magruder," Lee said in a hurt tone, "you wouldn't want me to tattletale, would you?"

"You didn't squirt me?"

Lee turned to Brewer. "How can he think such a thing, Mr. Brewer?" he asked.

"I don't know," Brewer said, his voice a little scared and indicating clearly that he didn't approve of the course Lee had taken.

"All right, if you didn't I'll find out who did," Red declared. "I'll turn out every plebe on this deck."

"We'll help," Lee suggested. "Tell us, Mr. Magruder—what happened."

"Shut up," Magruder snapped, striding off down the corridor.

"I know just how you feel, sir," Lee said.

Brewer said, "Me, too."

"Shut up!" Magruder snapped again.

As they marched down the long, dark corridor Lee drew a water pistol slowly out of his pocket and swung it around behind him. Taking a tentative squirt he hit himself in the shoulder. Then, swinging his hand out a little, he let fly again and listened to the water pattering against Magruder's head.

As Magruder grabbed the back of his head Lee whirled around peering into the darkness of the corridor. "Who did that?" Lee demanded. "Who *did* that?"

"Did what?" Brewer asked.

Magruder slowly lowered his hand and stood looking at Lee. "Somebody's going to get in trouble," he said. "Gimme that!"

"They certainly are," Lee said, slipping the pistol swiftly to Brewer, who didn't want it at all. "They can't do that to us, can they, Red?"

Brewer said, "Mr. Magruder to you."

"Mr. Magruder to you," Red barked. "Gimme that!"

"What, sir?" Lee asked, all innocence.

"Whatever it is you've got in your hand."

Lee cupped his hand to his ear. "What's that dripping? Do you hear something dripping, Mr. Magruder? Drip, drip, drip, drip?"

"Hold up your hands, Mr. Lee," Magruder said. Swiftly he searched Lee and found nothing. Then he turned to Brewer but not before Brewer had slipped the water pistol back to Lee.

Lee put the pistol in his pocket and straightened up haughtily. "I've never been so insulted," he declared. "After all we've done for you, Mr. Magruder. Drip, drip, *drip!*" he added as he stalked off to his room.

"Me, too," Brewer said, following him.

Lee and Brewer slept the sound sleep of the innocent that night, as Magruder turned out every plebe on the deck in his search for evidence such as wet pajamas, damp wastebaskets, or water-soaked brooms.

Reveille crashed through Bancroft Hall. Lee and Brewer stayed in bed until they heard the officer's footsteps coming down the alley; then they leaped up, threw the covers back, folded the mattress, and yanked open the door.

Magruder looked particularly neat and clean and angry as he stepped into their room inspecting. Lee and Brewer smiled pleasantly and gave him a hearty good morning.

Then Lee saw Brewer begin to swim through the air, his face distorted, his hands reaching frantically into space—but it was too late. Red was standing beside their table looking at a water pistol lying on the blotter. Slowly he reached out and pressed the trigger and a dribble of water scooted out, making a damp ring on the blotter.

Lee turned pale and staggered back. In a whisper he said, "The Black Hand. It's been here again!"

Magruder looked up at him and then stared at Brewer, who began thrashing around in the closet as if he had heard something in there. Finally Brewer staggered out of the closet, laundry draped around his neck. Gasping he said, "Ten of 'em—couldn't handle 'em all—got away."

Lee picked up the pistol with trembling fingers and looked at it. "This is the last warning," he said in a hushed voice. "What can we *do?*"

"Extra duty in the rifle-range butts this afternoon—four to six," Magruder announced and walked out.

Lee and Brewer were not in a good humor as they sat in the bow of the boat which was to take them to the rifle-range across the Severn River. Butts detail was no child's play—two hours in a trench, pushing a heavy wooden frame up into the air for people to pot at with rifles, pulling it down, pasting on a new four-foot target, pushing it up again as the smelly glue dripped down. No fun.

Lee glared at Magruder who stood in the stern watching the rest of the detail climb down from the wharf into the boat. "It's just authority," Lee declared. "Red couldn't ever hang things on us if he didn't have so many stripes on his sleeve. Anybody with enough authority can push people around."

"Especially people with water pistols," Brewer remarked, nastily. "Why don't you be a regulation midshipman, anyway?" he demanded.

Lee stared at him. "So it's mutiny."

Brewer was about to answer when one of the midshipmen who was getting into the officer's boat slipped and fell. Catching on the gunwale, he got only his legs wet, but as he pulled himself into the boat the officer in charge ordered him to go back to Bancroft Hall.

The midshipman smiled sheepishly. "I'm all right, sir. Just a little damp."

"You're out for the afternoon," the officer snapped.

The midshipman's face fell. He wanted to go shoot a rifle—he didn't have to work in the butts. "Won't take a minute, sir."

"We can't wait for landlubbers."

Lee watched the man walking dejectedly back toward Bancroft. Magruder ordered his boat to shove off for the ranges. Lee huddled down with his hand over his eyes, thinking. Brewer sat disconsolately beside him, chewing on a sliver of wood. "Life is *so* hard," Brewer said, at last.

Then Lee looked up with that unmistakable expression which always led to trouble. Brewer drew back nervously. "No, you don't. Count me out," he warned. "You aren't clicking these days, boy."

Lee's expression turned to one of bored scorn. "Very well. I shall go alone," he announced. Suddenly he stood up in the bow of the boat and screamed.

For awful seconds Lee teetered there, his arms flailing, one foot waving, his mouth wide open and full of horrible noises. Then he sailed out over the water, dropped swiftly, and splashed.

It took Brewer a few seconds to recover, but his reaction was swift. Lee was not going to get away with anything like that. Jumping to his feet, Brewer dived in after his friend, grabbed him rudely by the hair and pulled him gasping to the surface as Magruder ordered the boat to come around.

The officer in the other boat saw the whole thing and ordered his coxswain to come about. Soon the two boats were bearing down on Lee and Brewer. A sailor in Red's boat got a hook under Lee's belt. In a few minutes they were gasping in the bottom of the boat while the furious Red glared down at them.

The officer called across and instructed Red to take them back to Bancroft for the afternoon. "And bear a hand about it!" he ordered brusquely as his boat got under way again.

Lee wiped the water out of his eyes and peeped up at Red, who was eyeing him viciously. "Bee," Lee said.

"What?" Red snapped.

"Bee stung me," Lee said. "Big one. Zoom, zoom," he added, spiraling his hand like a bee in flight.

The boat put back to the dock and the two wet midshipmen crawled out. As they walked away Lee glanced over his shoulder at Magruder. "That's that," he said, pleased with himself.

"That's what you think," Brewer prophesied.

Red made no move for a couple of days. In fact his peaceful quietness worried Lee. He was afraid that perhaps he had broken Red's spirit, knocked all the fight out of him, and Lee would be sorry about that. He got the water pistol from its hiding place and put it into condition again. Just before noon formation he filled it to the muzzle and concealed it in his pocket. "I can't have Magruder thinking that we've given up," Lee declared as Brewer tried to persuade him not to take the water pistol.

(Continued on page 30)

Brewer's reaction was swift. Lee was not going to get away with anything like that. Jumping to his feet, Brewer dived in after his friend.

Flushed *from* Cover

by

Thomson Burtis

and

Inspector Frank J. Ellis

Illustrator: GRATTAN CONDON

Ikoff struggled madly. Twice he almost tore loose. There was an instant's breathless pause.

THE TENSION in the regional director's office was so tangible that youthful Inspector Donn Kelly felt as if he had walked into something solid. At his side, gangling Hal Peters, another new inspector in the immigration service, abruptly checked the humorous greeting on his lips, and the two surveyed in alert silence the three men who had been waiting for them.

Captain Jack Naylor, the head detective of the Los Angeles police force, was pacing up and down. The county sheriff was biting savagely at an unlit cigar. But the thing that startled Donn and Hal was that Regional Director Kelly, Donn's father and Hal's foster father, was gripping the arms of his chair so tightly that his knuckles were white.

The gray-haired, wise-eyed man spoke calmly enough, however. "Sit down, boys. You all know each other, I think. Go ahead, Captain Naylor."

As the two young inspectors sat down, the heavy, methodical Naylor proceeded to the point with celerity. "Donn, we been havin' that Sir Laurence Folsom you got deported watched in Mexico City. And we've found out for sure he's as dangerous as any man alive!"

"But he has one weakness." Donn smiled, though he was worriedly wondering what was the matter with his father. "He smokes Mallard cigarettes."

Naylor grinned acknowledgment of that weakness—Donn had broken a whole series of cases through the discovery of one of those expensive British cigarettes. With a nod, the detective went on.

"Here's what we've found out, with the help of the Mexican police and postal authorities. The half million dollars' worth of jewels stolen around here in the last three months, in three big robberies involving one cold-blooded murder, were mailed from Guaymas, Mexico, to Sir Laurence Folsom in Mexico City!"

"Which means," Donn said slowly, "that there's certainly a big smuggling ring working both ways—north and south. Those jewels had to be smuggled into Mexico."

"They're a smart bunch of *hombres* too!" Naylor snorted. "Now we've found out something else. Folsom is in touch indirectly with a Rumanian in this country named Serge Ikoff. And this Serge and two other foreigners are the boys we're sure did these robberies. But they're so smart we don't dare make 'em suspicious by tailin' 'em! And we haven't any real evidence against them. So what's the answer? Why, plantin' undercover men with 'em."

"And it appears," Mr. Kelly said with a smile which did not reach his eyes, "that I've trained the only two officers in the state who can do the job."

In a flash Donn understood the reason for his father's tension. Hard on a man, having to detail the two who meant most to him for the sort of duty this would be!

"In the first place," Mr. Kelly went on, "these three suspects are Europeans. Like most Europeans, they speak several languages."

"French most of the time, German once in a while," Naylor contributed. "And we know your dad trained both you boys, Donn, to speak everything except maybe Arabic."

"Furthermore," Mr. Kelly said, as though he had not heard Naylor, "you've both been around the world, know Europe well, and could pose as Europeans."

"And you know your way around when it comes to investigatin'," Naylor said, "and you can both shoot straight."

"Shooting won't help much, I'm afraid," Mr. Kelly said. He regarded the two with bleak eyes. "Here's what the job involves. You must win the confidence of these men and get them dead to rights. You'll have no official status. To let them know you're in the service would be fatal. You can't—"

"There ain't no flashin' a badge if the goin' gets tough," Naylor interrupted, worriedly emphasizing Mr. Kelly's words.

Mr. Kelly went on. "The sheriff and Captain Naylor asked that we lend you two for the job. I wired Washington. The secretary wired back that he hopes our service can do an impressive piece of work that will help law enforcement agencies everywhere in America."

He stopped, drew a long breath, and spoke again. "You've the right to refuse the assignment. As regional director, I hope you won't. As a father and a foster father, I can't help hoping you will!"

For a moment there was absolute silence. A thousand thoughts raced through Donn's mind, but his eyes met Hal's in a flash of swift agreement. After all, they could make only one answer.

"What do you mean you hope we'll refuse!" Donn demanded with a radiant grin. "You'd disown us both!"

Hal leaped to his feet and yelped, "Refuse! Do you know what I've been doing for two weeks? Sitting around bus stations, watching for an Italian who slid in without a passport. Refuse! Why, running down this gang is going to be a treat. I crave action!"

"That settles it!" the sheriff said with relief. "Now let's get down to cases. We'll—"

"If you don't mind," Mr. Kelly cut in, "I'd like to talk to the boys for a moment before you take them over."

The officers nodded, and walked out. The regional director got to his feet, and leaned against the window.

"It may take every bit of training you've had, boys," he said slowly, "and don't forget that these men will kill if they suspect you."

He paused. After a moment he turned to face them squarely. "You know this as well as I do but I'll say it anyway. You're representing the whole service, lads—and whichever way your luck breaks, the front pages of the nation will be telling the story. Now vamoose—and God bless you!"

A little after midnight some two weeks later, a tall, erect man of thirty-five, darkly handsome in his white suit, was swinging down the Strand, rapidly leaving behind him the lively amusement center of El Hondo Beach. Soon he had the walk to himself, with a row of beach homes on his left and the rolling Pacific on his right.

When he reached a side street not far from the pier, he turned up. On the corner on his right stood a small, unusually trim beach home, set in fifty feet from both the Strand and the side street. A high hedge screened its lawn and the path to the side door.

He turned into that path. He had proceeded a few feet toward the house when four men stepped out from the shadows of the shrubbery. Startled, the tall man stood motionless.

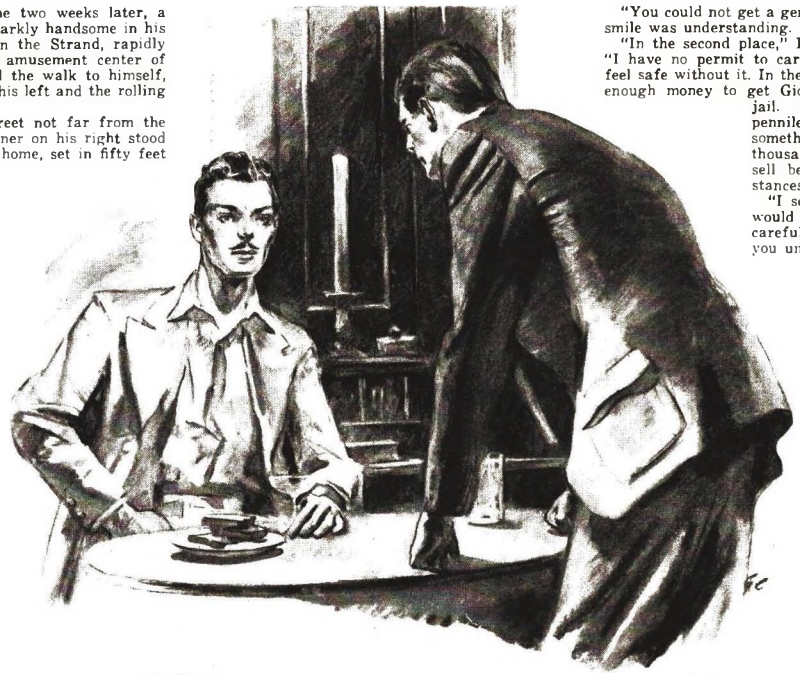
"Well, if it ain't Serge Ikoff, the card shark!" one of the quartet rasped mockingly.

"What does this mean?" asked Ikoff, in very precise English.

"It means we're goin' to teach you to play an honest game," rasped the same voice. "You've been tryin' too many tricks on too many strangers, Mr. Ikoff!"

And the quartet closed in. Striking out savagely, Serge Ikoff threw off two assailants but two others seized him from behind and a horny hand around his mouth kept him from crying out.

"Knock him out—get him down!" barked a voice. "We'll take him farther away."



Deadly serious, Falcounier leaned forward and stared at Ikoff. "I do not know you," he said slowly. "You do not know me."

Ikoff struggled madly. Twice he almost tore loose. There was an instant's breathless pause. Then, as a man leaped on his back and another throttled him and a third tripped him, he was borne to earth. One of his assailants was under him, the rest on top of him. But a new voice broke in on the melee.

"What goes on here?" shouted the voice, in French.

It electrified Ikoff into a final convulsive effort. He managed to tear the hand from his mouth and gasped in French: "Help! Murder!"

Footsteps came bounding along the path, and a voice shouted indistinguishable words. One of the quartet swung a blow that landed just above Ikoff's ear, half stunning him. Then his assailants left him to lie weakly on the ground as they struggled to their feet to meet the newcomer.

They met him emphatically, for he proved to be an agile young man and he hit the rising quartet like a fullback cracking a line.

The two men nearest him had not fully regained their feet when he crashed his fist to the closer one's jaw, and then swung on the second. Both went down. But Ikoff, with his head clearing, saw the second pair leap on the stranger before that young man could spring aside—and the first two were getting to their feet.

The agile stranger tore loose from the second pair and leaped to the opposite hedge. The next second a gun was gleaming dully in his hand, and his snarling French needed no translation—its meaning was clear.

The four thugs froze.

The snarl of French broke off, and the young stranger seemed to grope for words. At last he brought out a fragment of English: "I—weel—shoot eef—" He relapsed into a torrent of French.

"Beat it, boys!" rasped the leader of the quartet, and as one man they tore through the hedge.

Neither the panting stranger nor the still dizzy Ikoff made a move to follow them. Ikoff found his tongue and said in French:

"I do not know how to thank you, my friend, but—"

"Ah, you understand French! But I must go, immediately. I hear footsteps, and I cannot afford to meet the police."

"Quick then! Into the house," the rapidly recovering Ikoff said swiftly, and in a moment he had unlocked the side door.

Just as it closed behind them, a policeman arrived and stood staring around him. He peered into the shrubbery, waiting a bit, listening, then shrugged his shoulders, and went away.

The young stranger let out a long breath. "May we not both clean up?" he begged. "At once—so that nothing will look suspicious if the policeman returns?"

Ikoff led the way through the darkness to a bathroom, and turned on the light. He stared at his rescuer with black eyes that slanted upward slightly.

He saw a tanned, square-faced young man with crisply curling blond hair and gray eyes, a young man who at first seemed of medium size but actually, Ikoff realized, was some six feet tall. The gray eyes were serious, the face set—until, suddenly, the young stranger grinned.

"We must stick by each other in a strange land, is it not so?" he said. "Now we clean up, and then I go, eh?"

But Ikoff would not listen to that. As soon as both had washed and brushed themselves, and Ikoff had changed to a fresh white suit, he insistently led the way to a cheerful living room facing the sea. Then he offered Rene Falcounier—the young stranger, with a little formal gesture, had given his name—a glass of wine.

Falcounier shook his head. "But if you perhaps have orange juice—"

"A Frenchman who doesn't drink wine!" smiled Ikoff.

"Under the circumstances, I dare not be at anything but my best," smiled his guest.

After getting the orange juice, Ikoff stood leaning on the mantelpiece, silent as he sipped his own drink. At last he spoke.

"I have no words to thank you for what you did. Had you not come I might have been crippled for life. Believe me, I will not rest until I have served you in return."

That he meant what he said was obvious; his sincerity was written in his intense face. He fell silent again for a moment; then went on: "You may confide in me freely. You are afraid of the police, you say?"

"When a man finds one who can talk his language, sometimes he talks too much," Falcounier smiled. "Yet—" abruptly his face grew desperately serious. "I am in trouble, and I need information, advice. I have a friend, and he has been in jail. I get him out on bail tomorrow. He can speak English, but we are both strangers in a strange land. I have a mind to ask your advice. I must warn you, however. Please believe that I do not mean to insult you, but I do not know you well. I warn you that should you prove to talk too much, I would revenge myself if it took me to my dying day!"

Ikoff nodded. He drew himself up, clicked his heel, and bowed. "Former Captain Serge Ikoff, of the Imperial Army, gives his word of honor to the man who saved him."

"Good. In the first place, I am in this country illegally, on a forged passport."

"You could not get a genuine one perhaps?" Ikoff's smile was understanding.

"In the second place," Falcounier went on slowly, "I have no permit to carry this gun, but I do not feel safe without it. In the third place, I have barely enough money to get Giovanni, my friend, out of jail. Then we shall both be penniless. And yet I possess something worth two hundred thousand francs that I cannot sell because of all the circumstances."

"I see—or, no, I do not see. I would not intrude," Ikoff said carefully, "but how can I help you unless I know more?"

"I have jewels!" Falcounier burst out. He leaped to his feet and paced the room. "How can I go to any dealer to sell them? They want to know who I am, where I got them. I am helpless!"

"Unless, perhaps, you find some private buyer who will pay cash and ask no questions?" Ikoff's dark eyes were curiously opaque now.

"Exactly! And how shall I find such a buyer? I do not speak the language here. I do not know the underworld, or the police methods. In Vienna, Berlin, Paris, Brussels, Antwerp—there I should be at home." Falcounier smiled.

But the next moment he was deadly serious. He leaned forward, his hands on a table, and stared at Ikoff.

"I do not know you," he said slowly. "You do not know me. You do not know how I got the jewels, except that I give you my word no one in this country could identify them. Understand? They have never been out of Europe before. I will give one-half the profits to the person who can dispose of them! There—I have told you my trouble."

He grinned his radiant grin again, threw up his hands, and shrugged. "Enough of trouble, eh? You feel like staying up a little more and we talk, eh?"

Talk they did. And as they talked, the experienced Ikoff became more and more impressed by the younger man. Falcounier, as he chatted casually, betrayed an amazing knowledge of the cities of Europe, their underworlds, and their police methods. Ikoff, himself a cosmopolite, began to feel that he knew less about the world than the boyish Falcounier. Hint after hint of Falcounier's life emerged—he had been born in the slums, sharpened by serving as cabin boy on vessels going around the world, educated by contact with many people in many countries.

What a background! Ikoff's admiring interest increased with the passing moments. And he could not forget how this very knowing young man had handled himself that night, against four husky opponents.

It was almost three in the morning when Falcounier departed for his Italian friend's cabin on the beach front, where he was staying. Ikoff had insisted that after some sleep he be allowed to drive Falcounier into town to get his jailed friend; so host and guest would meet again in a few hours. Falcounier's good night was light-hearted.

"And Giovanni—they have him in jail awaiting trial for drunken driving, is it not?" he said merrily. "Ah! Could they know who he is, it might be they would drop dead, eh?"

It was natural for Ikoff to turn that over in his mind after Falcounier had left, and natural for him to confide somewhat in the portly, bespectacled German and the thin-faced young Austrian who arrived home in the early dawn after gambling all night in Hollywood.

It followed as a matter of course that the latter two studied Falcounier with great interest at noon, when he arrived for breakfast preparatory to the trip to town. Falcounier was reserved, however, despite the friendliness of these courteous men of the world. Of places and public events he talked well; of himself or anything personally significant he would not talk at all.

"He is not, then, a free talker," Ikoff found a chance to murmur to the older man. "It is well."

Later, at the jail, Falcounier insisted that Ikoff come in with him while he posted bond for Giovanni.

The bond was posted and soon a tall, lathlike young man with tousled hair emerged from the barred inner depths. He hurled himself toward Falcounier, and the two embraced fervently.

"Rene!" cried the tousled ex-prisoner.

"Giovanni!" replied Falcounier.

They embraced again, the lanky Giovanni who was known in other circles as Inspector Hal Peters, and the dashing Rene Falcounier who was officially recorded as Inspector Donn Kelly. Streams of Italian flowed from their lips. The grinning Donn saluted Hal on each cheek, and at that young man's temporary amazement he started laughing.

The next instant the whole roomful—except for Ikoff—was laughing with them, and their own laughter was as honest as the rest.

Ikoff's face was a study as the three of them slid into his sleek open phaeton. These boyish young men were the most unusual criminals he had ever heard of, and therefore most dangerous. Courteously, Ikoff put them both in the back seat so they could talk. Donn, having learned in his preliminary investigation that Ikoff could speak Italian, said clearly to Hal in Italian:

"He does not speak your language. Let us talk in it."

Then he leaned forward, and said to Ikoff in French, "You do not mind if we discuss our private business in Italian? A thousand pardons."

Ikoff nodded smilingly and proceeded to drive slowly and listen.

First Donn described dramatically his meeting with Ikoff, and then went on to say that Ikoff was so nice a chap that he had confided somewhat in him. He hoped Ikoff might buy the jewels himself, or find somebody who would.

"Then," Donn concluded, "we shall have some money, and can make arrangements to be smuggled down into Mexico. But before we leave, we regretfully abstract from our genial friend Ruffo all his magnificent jewels—and the rest of our lives we do not worry!"

Ikoff, Donn saw as he talked, stiffened attentively at the mention of the great motion-picture star's name.

"You have seen Ruffo's jewels?" Hal asked excitedly.

"Indeed I have. Because I was your friend, twice I have been to dinner there. And his wife liked me and showed me the magnificent gems he has given her. There is one great diamond that can easily be cut into several. And such pearl necklaces! And rings and brooches not too unusual to be sold in Europe as they are. In American money, two hundred and fifty thousand dollars' worth of jewels, Giovanni. Think of it!"

"And it is right that Ruffo contribute to the poor," Hal declared blandly. "He can buy his wife many more jewels."

So they went through their carefully rehearsed routine, actors playing parts that involved life or death, while up in front Ikoff listened intently.

When the car came to a stop in back of Hal's isolated little cabin, two miles from the center of El Hondo Beach, Ikoff said smilingly, "You will both have dinner with us tonight, eh?"

They accepted, and Ikoff, after promising to call for them, left.

No sooner were they inside the cabin than Hal Peters opened his mouth and launched his daily protest. "Two days in jail!" he yapped. "Shut up in a cell. Starving. Stifling. Couldn't you—"

"Forget it," grinned Donn, "and listen. Ruffo is swell, co-operating in every way. The boys we hired to pretend to rough up Ikoff did a grand job. Now here's what we do next."

And for the next four hours the youthful inspectors discussed plans. They covered every contingency they could think of before Ikoff came back to take them home with him to dinner.

The dinner was excellent, and the easy talk in fluent French was enjoyable, though Donn and Hal realized they were being well pumped by the three Continentals.

Not, however, until all five were gathered in the cheery living room, did matters come to a head. Then, with his guests and his accomplices seated, Ikoff, standing at the mantelpiece, spoke with suave abruptness.

"Monsieur Falcounier," he said smilingly, "it is easy to see what you are. You are a European jewel thief, in this country illegally, wanted by the police, and anxious to dispose of some stolen jewels. You are, we may say, in our power. Is it not so?"

Donn stiffened. "Blackmail, eh?" he said slowly. Then he sprang up. "But what can you do? You have no proof of anything. You think you can get me deported? You swine! You—"

"Easy, son," the middle-aged German interrupted, with a swift glance at Ikoff.

Ikoff raised his hand deprecatingly. "You are wrong about us, Falcounier. Are we not foreigners too? Why should we try to get you deported? We want to help you, and we can. I may as well tell you that I do understand Italian. I know what you talked about this afternoon. We, too, have connections, we investigated, and we found out that all you said about Ruffo and your acquaintance with him is true. We are ready to talk business!"

At that point Hal, who had been coughing at intervals all the evening, was seized by a spasm of coughing that made the German glance at him sympathetically.

But Donn frowned at the interruption. When he could be heard he asked, almost defiantly, "What kind of business?"

"We can arrange to help you in your enterprise. We can safely smuggle you into Mexico. There our connections are of the best. We can help you dispose of your property—without risk."

For a moment there was silence. Then Hal was seized by another paroxysm of coughing. When at last it was over, Donn turned to him and raised his eyebrows. Hal gave a doubtful shrug. At that Donn turned again to Ikoff and said:

"We must think things over. Shall we talk again tomorrow? Tomorrow you will offer proof of what you say and who you are, eh?"

"Shall we say at dinner tomorrow night?" smiled Ikoff.

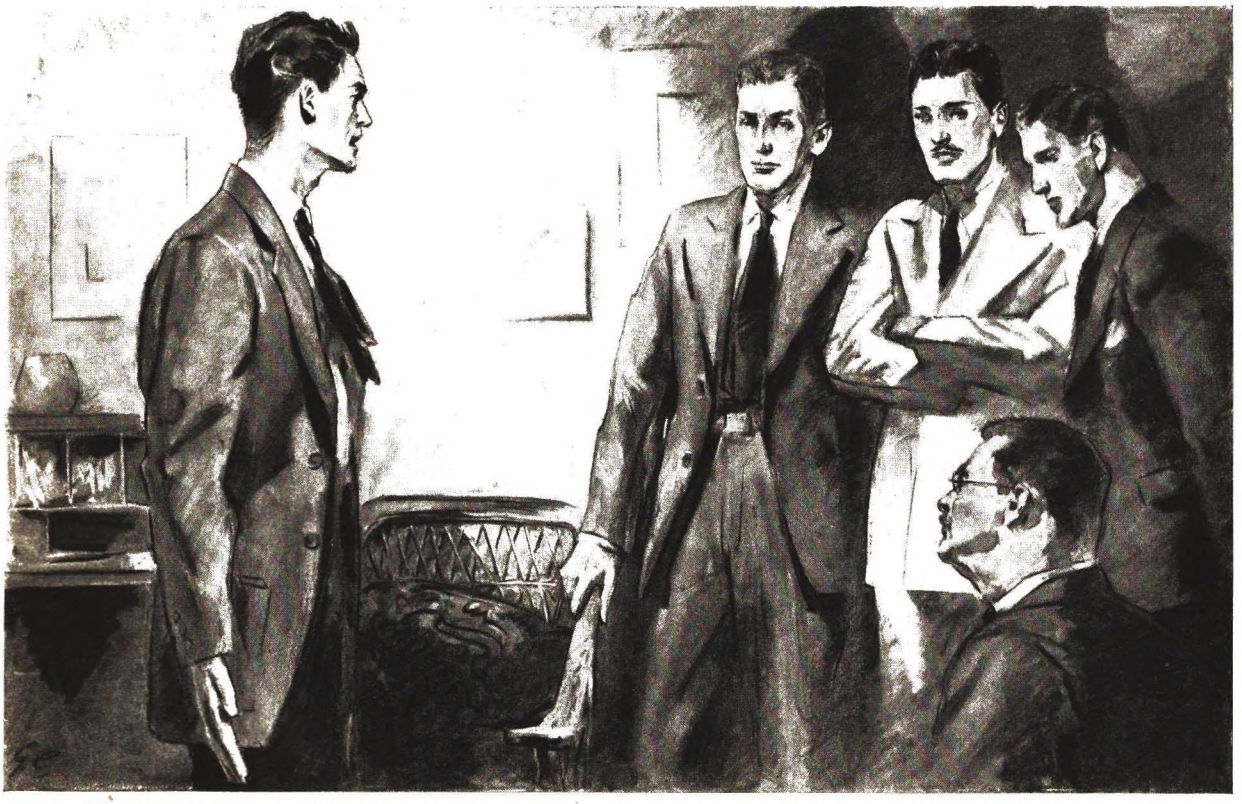
"With pleasure," Donn bowed.

It was after Ikoff had driven them back to their cabin that Donn said hopefully, "I think your phony cough went over all right, Hal."

The next afternoon he tested his theory. Calling Ikoff at five from a pay station, he said, "We are interested, but Giovanni has this terrible cold and should stay in. Will you not drive out to Giovanni's house after dinner so that we may talk?" He waited tensely for the answer.

"Why—yes," Ikoff agreed. The cough had been convincing.

(Continued on page 33)



"I mean this!" Hal stormed. "I never saw you before. So I protect myself. Ruffo is MY discovery. Therefore I set up the machine to protect myself. Understand?" . . . No answer except that ominous silence.

Trouble on the Survey Line

by

James B. Hendryx

The engineer growled, "A special constable of the Mounted! A kid like you—don't try to get funny with me."

"NUSSIR!" exclaimed Old Man Mattie, the queer, crackbrained old man who had been Connie Morgan's constant companion ever since the boy had found him starving to death in a tent several years before. "Nussir, Jack Cartwright, me an' Connie ain't goin' into the police!"

"What do you say, Connie?" asked Inspector Cartwright, ignoring the oldster's outburst. The three were in the office of the Fort Simpson detachment, with the inspector behind his flat-top desk. "I've already appointed you a special constable, but they know all about you down at Ottawa, and I'm sure the commissioner would be glad to make you a regular constable—maybe even a corporal. I believe your past record as a special constable would count."

"Nussir," reiterated the old man, his white beard thrust out belligerently. "Me an' Connie has got our own business to tend to. We can't fool around bein' no policemen."

"What is this important business?" asked the inspector, with a tolerant smile.

"What is it? Well, by jickity, Jack Cartwright, jest look at all the places we ain't been to an' don't know what they look like! I reckon there's more'n a million lakes an' rivers we ain't never seen even *this* side of—let alone the other side. And maybe some of them lakes an' rivers ain't even there! We'd oughta find out."

"Good night!" laughed the inspector, and turned again to the boy. "What do you say, Connie? We'd like to have you on the force. The work you've done on these three recent cases has been invaluable."

Connie smiled. "We were glad to help you out, Inspector, and we'll always help you out when we can, but I don't believe I'll sign on—not right now, at least. Mattie and I want to knock around a little first."

"Where do you intend to go?"

"Where?" exclaimed the old man. "I'll tell you where! I've been dang near all over this hull country in fifty years, but wherever I've been, there was alius more land jest beyond the furthest I'd got—an' them's the places we're goin' to."

The inspector shook his head slowly, as his eyes rested in kindly respect on the eager face of the old man. "I've heard of this thing they call the wanderlust, and I've seen plenty of men with itching feet—but never a man like you. Why, you must be seventy-five or eighty years old if you're a day."

"Shore I be. Mebbe a hundred—but that ain't nothin'. Don't you never read in the Good Book? Old Methusalem—he lived to be dang near a thousan'. Look what he must of saw! By jickity, I ain't got started goin' places—have we, Connie?"

"I guess not," laughed the boy. "I only hope—"

He was interrupted by a loud knocking at the door, and a young man burst in.

"Our transit man was shot!" he exclaimed as he strode toward the inspector's desk. "Shot and killed, and Crosart and his crew did it! It's the third time it's happened and—"

"Hold on," interrupted Cartwright, reaching for a pencil and paper. "Suppose you take it easy, and stick to straight facts. No guesswork. Sit down and take your time. Who are you, and who was the transit man, and where was he shot?"

"My name is Davis, George Davis, and I'm a rodman for the Eureka Oil Company. The transit man was Bill Hensley, and he was shot about twenty miles upriver from here."

The inspector jotted down notes. "There's a new company surveying in there, too, isn't there?"

"Yes, the Mackenzie River Development Company. That's Crosart's outfit. He's a crook, and they're trying to beat us."

"What do you mean—he's a crook?"

"He is. It's like this. Three or four years ago the Eureka Company sent a man named Channing into this country to buy up some existing oil leases, and he was murdered, after he'd bought up a lot of them. You know about that, though, because the police caught the murderer. Well, at that time Crosart was field superintendent for the Eureka, and he picked up a lot of information about the country and the leases. Presently he quit and formed a company of his own, the Mackenzie River Development Company, and they started in to run their survey, so they could file a description and tie up these leases before we could. The Eureka learned of it and put in its own survey, and we were beating them or had a good chance to. Then—this happened." Davis's voice jerked. "Bill Hensley was a hard-boiled guy, but when you've been working alongside a man it's tough to see him shot down."

Cartwright nodded sympathetically. After a moment he asked, "What did you mean when you said this was the third time it's happened?"

"It's the third time our instruments have been shot at. We've got a level crew working on contour work, and about three weeks ago our levelman set up his instrument, and then stepped away from it for something. While he was gone, several shots rang out from the direction of the M.R.D. survey line, and when the levelman returned to his instrument, he found it ruined—shattered by a bullet. He and his rodman ran toward the M.R.D. line and found Crosart and one of his men just starting to skin out a young moose. The levelman accused Crosart of shooting his level, and Crosart laughed at him, and pointed to the moose.

"'Here's what we were shooting at!' he said. 'There were three of us shooting, and if a stray bullet hit your instrument, it's just too bad. Of course, though, if you can prove that one of our bullets did the damage, my company will pay for it.'

"You see he realized that we were beating him, and he wanted to put our level out of commission. But we carried on with our extra level. The trouble wasn't over, though. About ten days ago, exactly the same thing happened to our transit—several shots, and the transit smashed by a bullet. This time Bill Hensley and I rushed over toward the M.R.D. line. We found another dead moose, and Crosart and two others getting ready to skin it out. And Crosart laughed again and promised to pay for the damage later—if we could support our claim. He kept grinning, and hinted that we were shooting up our own instruments. Which would be crazy.

"Then, this morning, Bill set up his extra instrument, and was sighting through it when a shot rang out from the direction of the M.R.D. line, and I saw Bill whirl sidewise, stagger a step or two, and fall down."

Connie Morgan and Old Mattie tackle a job for the Mounted

Illustrator: FRANK VAUGHN

"And where were you then?" asked Cartwright.

"I was holding my rod, a hundred feet down the line. That open rock country is spotted with clumps of scrub spruce, but I had an unobstructed view of Bill and the instrument. When I saw him fall, I called to Mike Breen, the axman, who was a few yards farther on, and we both ran toward Bill. As I ran I naturally looked over where the shot had come from, and I saw a man running a couple hundred yards away, over on the M.R.D. line. It looked like Crosart.

"But Mike and I ran on—we wanted to get to Bill. He was dead though when we got there—shot through the head."

"What did you do then—rush after the man you'd seen running?"

"No, I didn't. I was so sort of stunned that I couldn't think of anything but the police. I sent Mike back for the level crew, and dashed down to the river, grabbed some Indian's canoe, and paddled here as fast as I could."

"The wisest thing you could have done," said Cartwright. "We'll go up there and investigate. I know Crosart. He's a go-getter, and not too particular about how he gets what he's after, but I hardly believe he'd kill a man in cold blood. He was probably shooting at the instrument and missed it. He's a dead shot with a rifle, but apparently this time he held a little to one side. Even so, he was committing a criminal act that resulted in a homicide. It looks as though he'd got himself in bad."

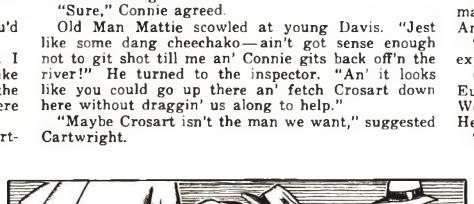
"We've had trouble with him ever since we started the survey," Davis frowned. "We licked his outfit in a good old knock-down fight over a portage trail around a rapids. But then Mr. Summerdale, our chief engineer, had to go back to Fort Chipewyan for some blueprints we'd left there, and we figure Crosart has got in some dirty work and delayed him—he should have been back in ten days and he's been gone three weeks. Now I'm wondering—maybe he's been murdered too."

Cartwright rose abruptly. "We'll get busy on this." He turned to Connie with a faint smile. "How about making good right off on that promise of yours? With Corporal Shedd upriver with Kemper, I'm short-handed, and I've got to leave Constable Ames on detachment. Will you come along and help me work this thing out?"

"Sure," Connie agreed.

Old Man Mattie scowled at young Davis. "Jest like some dang cheechako—ain't got sense enough not to git shot till me an' Connie gits back off'n the river!" He turned to the inspector. "An' it looks like you could go up there an' fetch Crosart down here without draggin' us along to help."

"Maybe Crosart isn't the man we want," suggested Cartwright.



"Ain't the man you want! Sometimes, Jack Cartwright, you talk like you ain't got no sense! Ain't this fella jest got through tellin' you it was him done all that shootin'? An' didn't you jest git through sayin' it looks like he'd got hisself in bad? An' besides—I know Crosart, an' I know dang well he done it!"

"How do you know?" grinned the inspector.

"'Cause I seen him kick a dog one time—that's why! The dog was a right good lead dog, but he was plumb wore out, the way Crosart had been drivin' his team, an' he laid down in the harness an' Crosart run up an' was swearin' an' kickin' him in the belly, an' then I come along."

"And what did you do?"

"Me? I throw'd down on him with my rifle an' I told him if he didn't quit I'd blow his dang head off—that's what I done."

"Did he quit?"

"Did he quit! Well, Crosart ain't runnin' about the country shootin' other folks without no head, is he? Looks like police inspectors is the only ones that kin git along without usin' their head. I guess me an' Connie better go 'long at that."

Connie and young Davis joined in Cartwright's shout of laughter. When it had subsided, the inspector called to Constable Ames to get a three-man trail outfit together, and turned to Davis. "This is Special Constable Connie Morgan," he said. "He's had a good many years of wilderness experience and two or three years of good, tough policing. And that's Old Man Mattie, who's been in this country since—well—"

"Huh," cut in the old man, "when I first hit this country the Mackenzie River wasn't nothin' but a little crick, and there wasn't none of this here dang surveyin' an' shootin' goin' on to keep me an' Connie neglectin' our own business to do the police's work. Well, let's go git Crosart. I'll help Ames with the outfit so we kin git goin' an' git back."

"Queer old codger, isn't he?" smiled the young surveyor when the oldster had gone. Then he sobered. "But I'm as anxious as he is to get started."

"We'll get off right away," the inspector assured him. "We can put good miles behind us before dark."

They camped that night with five or six miles of upriver paddling behind them. Early morning found them again on the river, and by noon they reached the Mackenzie River Development Company's camp, where the ten men of the survey party were seated on the ground about a fire eating lunch.

"Hello, Inspector!" Crosart called out. "Just in time for a bite." He called to the cook, "Get out some more plates and cups!"

"Never mind," said the inspector. "We never bother with a noon meal."

Crosart glanced from Old Man Mattie to the rodman, and shrugged. "All right—suit yourselves. Anything I can do for you?"

"Yes," answered the inspector. "You can do some explaining—maybe."

Crosart grinned insolently. "You mean about the Eureka crew claiming we shot up their instruments? Well, Inspector, the thing looks cockeyed to me. Here, we're beating them out and they—"

"That's a lie!" Davis exclaimed.

Cartwright turned on the young surveyor with a frown. "Keep still," he ordered sternly. "Go on, Crosart."

"Like I said, we've got 'em licked, and it looks to me as if they've been cooking up an alibi to square themselves with Summerdale when he returns. They were a little ahead of us when he left, and you bet he'll want to know why they got behind. So they've been shooting up their instruments—picking times when we're shooting at game. It's quite a racket."

"Hm," grunted Cartwright. "You say they shot up their own instruments. Did you hear those shots?"

Bill was sighting through the transit. Suddenly he whirled sidewise, staggered a step or two, and fell.

"Well—no, I didn't hear them personally. Both times there were three of us shooting at moose. But one of the boys told me he heard a shot from over in their direction the day they claimed their transit was smashed." Crosart paused and glanced toward his men. "It was you, wasn't it, Johnson, that heard that shot?"

One of the men nodded vigorously. "Sure, I heard it. While you fellas was shootin' at that moose, this other shot come from over by the Eureka line."

"What's your job, Johnson?" asked Cartwright.

"I'm level rodman."

"Were you on duty at the time?"

"Sure."

"Your level party, Crosart—does it work right up with the transit party?"

"No, they're back a ways."

"How far back?"

"Well, far enough so the outfits don't get in each other's way."

"How far?" persisted Cartwright.

"Well—three or four miles back."

The inspector smiled thinly. "Johnson, you must have remarkably good ears if you can tell at a distance of three or four miles that one shot came from a point only two or three hundred yards from the other shots."

"You mean," demanded Crosart, "that you think he's lying?"

"Yes," Cartwright answered calmly, "I do. I think you coached the wrong man, Crosart. You should have picked one of your transit men."

Crosart bristled angrily: "Look here, Cartwright, you're carrying things too far—calling a man a liar to his face, and intimating that I told him what to say. Suppose two of our bullets did accidentally hit their instruments—what are you going to do about it? If one wild bullet could hit an instrument, two could. Or a dozen, for that matter. It's just a coincidence!"

"It might be a habit," Cartwright said dryly. "I'm not thinking of wild bullets. I'm thinking of very accurately placed bullets, bullets fired by an expert marksman like—well, like yourself, Crosart."

"You mean you think I deliberately wrecked those instruments?"

"Exactly."

"All right—prove it!" cried Crosart defiantly.

"We'll try to do just that," the inspector replied. "Meanwhile, you're under arrest."

"Arrest! Me? You can't do that!" Crosart snarled. "I see your game. It's a frame-up!" He whirled on Davis. "You're smarter'n I thought you were—you planned this to get me jerked off the job so you can beat us out!" He flung back to face the inspector. "Cartwright, how much are the Eureka people paying you for making this pinch? You dirty crook!"

At the words, Old Man Mattie leaped toward Crosart and shook a long, skinny finger under his nose. "You shet up! Jack Cartwright ain't no crook! He's a fine man, instead of which you ain't nothin' but a dang dog-kickin' son of a gun—an' I hope I'll be there when they hang you!"

"Hold on there, Mattie—keep still," ordered the inspector, as he advanced on Crosart with a pair of handcuffs.

"This is an outrage!" stormed Crosart, as the cuffs clicked shut. "I'll have you busted for this, Cartwright! Even if I'd wrecked those instruments, all anyone could bring against me would be a petty charge, like malicious destruction of property, and you know it. I demand bail!"

"Murder isn't a bailable offense."

"Murder!" cried Crosart. "What—what do you mean—murder?"

"You're under arrest for the murder of one William Hensley, transit man for the Eureka Oil Company, and it's my duty to warn you that anything you say may be used against you."

Several of Crosart's men leaped to their feet. "It's a lie," cried one. "I saw their transit man several days after they claimed their transit was smashed!"

"Me too!" exclaimed another.

"So've I seen him," cried a third, "and besides, if he'd been shot, they'd have said something about it then. They're pulling a cheap trick, Inspector—don't fall for it! Likely their transit man's gone an' hid somewhere so they can make this fake murder complaint an' get Crosart off the job."

"The shooting of Hensley occurred yesterday," Cartwright replied evenly. "Not several days ago. The man was shot and killed at his instrument yesterday morning."

Instantly Crosart seized on the statement. "Yesterday morning? Say, I heard that shot! So did Kane, the axman, and Bronson, the transit man! I was ahead with Kane there, and we heard the shot—from the direction of the Eureka transit outfit—and I ran back to our transit, thinking maybe the Eureka gang might be taking a shot at it. But Bronson said everything was okay. Said he'd heard the shot, too; so we figured they were shooting some meat over there. Isn't that right, boys?"

Kane and Bronson nodded.

Crosart looked from them to the inspector. "See, Cartwright? That's straight goods—you've got to believe me. I take back what I said about you being a crook. Forget it. I was so sore I didn't know what I was saying. But don't fall for this fake murder. I'll help you get at the bottom of things—just turn me loose."

The inspector shook his head. "Can't do it, Crosart. You're going down to Simpson with me. Then I'm coming back here to sort out the facts. In the meantime, I'm putting a good man on the case—and I'm taking every rifle in this camp with me."

"But the men need the rifles," objected Crosart. "We're light on grub, and they've got to eat."

"We'll leave our rifles for the men and pick 'em up later," Cartwright answered.

At the water's edge, as he shoved off with Crosart and four rifles in the canoe, the inspector turned to Connie. "See what you can find out, son. I'll be back some time tomorrow."

Accompanied by Davis and Old Man Mattie, Connie walked over to the Eureka line. As they neared it, young Davis exclaimed in great relief:

"There's Mr. Summerdale! He's back! See—running the transit."

"Thought you said he was murdered," grumbled Old Man Mattie. "He don't look murdered."

Connie and Davis were still grinning when they approached the savagely busy engineer, who greeted them with a glare and, without waiting for introductions, ordered Davis to take the rod.

"About time you got back, Davis," he growled. "Did you report things to the inspector? When's he coming? And what's the idea in bringing this kid and his granddad in here to get underfoot?"

Davis gasped and Old Man Mattie snorted and Connie decided that he'd better introduce himself.

He said mildly, "I'm Special Constable Morgan of the Mounted, Mr. Summerdale. I—"

"The Mounted! A kid like you—don't try to get funny with me. I've got no time to be—"

"But, Mr. Summerdale, it's true," Davis cut in. "The inspector's been up here and he's ordered Constable Morgan to investigate the case. The inspector arrested Crosart and he's taking him to the fort, but he'll be back tomorrow himself."

Summerdale eyed Connie, and then grinned a little sheepishly. "Excuse me. My mistake. But you sure look young."

"Huh," exclaimed Old Man Mattie, "we might look too young to you, but you ain't nothin' but a cheechako, nohow."

"Um-m," said Summerdale, elevating his eyebrows. "Another member of the force?"

Connie grinned. "Only sort of ex-officio. I'd like to go back and talk to the level crew, Mr. Summerdale."

"Go ahead. Tell 'em I said to give you all the help they can. And when you're ready, call on Davis here, and he'll help you on this end. I'm glad they've got Crosart under arrest. The dirty crook succeeded in delaying my trip for a couple of weeks—hiring my guide to wreck the canoes. He smashed three of 'em on rocks before I caught onto him. That's why I didn't get back till yesterday. Well, good luck to you—I've got to get on with the work. The body's lying just as it fell. The men covered it with a blanket."

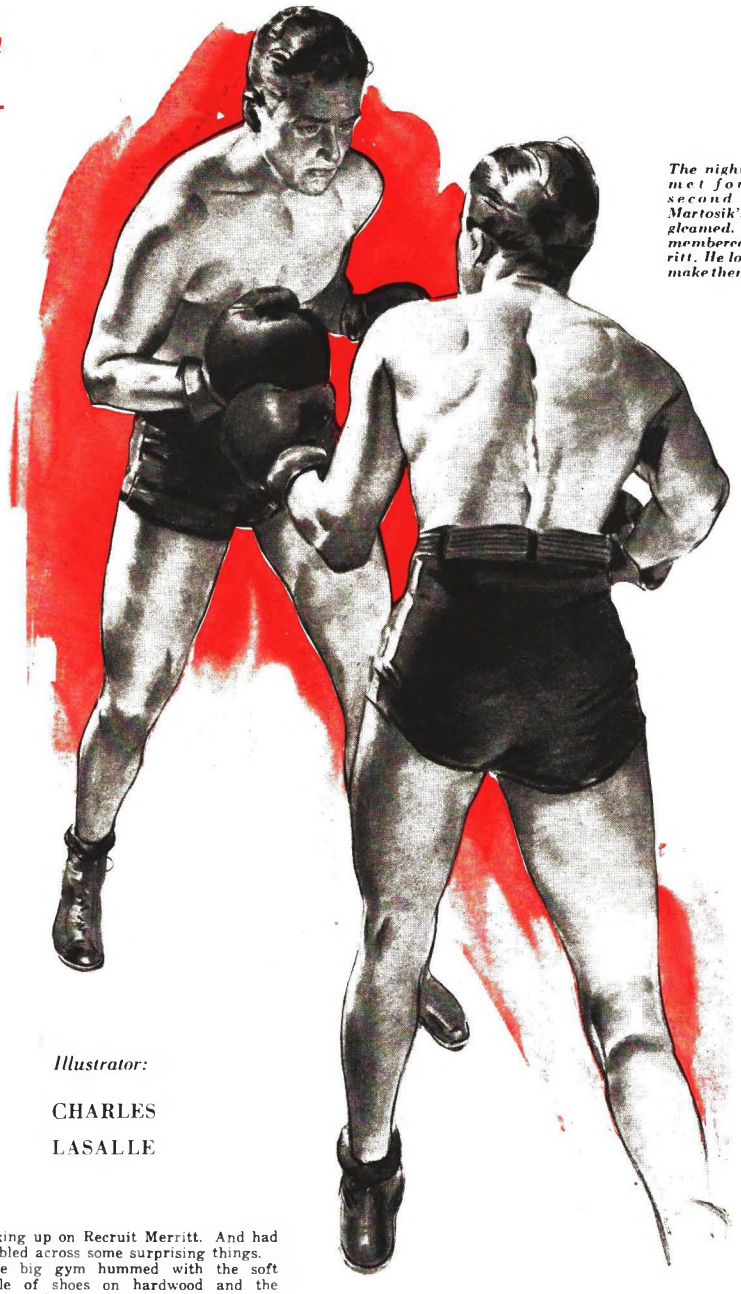
After examining the two damaged instruments, Connie went back to the level *(Continued on page 25)*

Get into the ring with the regimental boxer---

Recruit Merritt

by

R. G. Emery



The night they met for the second time Martosik's eyes gleamed. He remembered Merritt. He loved to make them quit.

Illustrator:

CHARLES LASALLE

RECRUIT MERRITT leaned on his elbows in a wide gymnasium window and looked down into the tropical Grizzly quadrangle.

The green-carpeted, hibiscus-bordered enclosure was sleepily alive. A double-ranked file of men in blue denims swung through the sally port, home from an afternoon on some fatigue detail. A burly, graying man with the three stripes and lozenge of a first sergeant on his "sun-tan" sleeves rolled out of the regimental restaurant.

Recruit Merritt thought: this was one thing turning out for a regimental boxing team could do for you. It kept unsympathetic top kicks from putting you on every lousy fatigue detail that came along. It kept you from pushing a lawn mower up and down the colonel's lawn or wielding a shovel on the new football field like any common laborer.

But even on the boxing squad there were minor irritations. One of them suddenly appeared at his elbow.

"Enjoyin' the view?" it inquired in an evenly balanced mixture of sarcasm and disgust. "Would you be interested in the fact that the rest of the squad is out doin' the roadwork which generally comes off about this time o' day?"

Recruit Merritt looked over his shoulder at Sergeant Panama Murphy, Grizzly trainer.

"Thanks," he acknowledged casually. And strolled out, leaving Sergeant Murphy with an expression that boded no good for his blood pressure.

A lean, easy-moving man in sweat shirt and dirty shorts came up. He asked, "Merritt again?"

Murphy growled: "Lieutenant, I'm telling you we've got to do something about that high-hattin' young monkey afore I lose my temper an' bust him right on that up-stickin' nose of his!"

Lieutenant Bing Hardy, coach of the Grizzly boxers, grinned down at his irate trainer's belt line.

"I wouldn't go to any such length as that, Murphy," he said. "You hung up the gloves a long time ago, you know. And Merritt—irritating as he may be—is a pretty fair light heavy."

"He is that. In fact he's one heck of a good light heavy. He'd be worth plenty points in the Bowl. But not the way he is now. No recruit can act the way he does and not get his tail stepped on, sooner or later."

"I know," Hardy agreed soberly. "I'll have to talk to Merritt, I guess."

The opportunity came at the beginning of a workout some days later. Hardy had delayed to do some checking up on Recruit Merritt. And had stumbled across some surprising things.

The big gym hummed with the soft shuffle of shoes on hardwood and the rhythmic thud of the heavy bags. Fifty sweating youngsters were intent on earning a place as one of the sixteen to carry Grizzly colors into the great Bowl. The Bowl, where they would meet the fighting men of nine other regiments. Air corps, artillery, engineers, infantry—all over the huge post, other squads like this were training.

But fifty wouldn't have been an accurate count on the Grizzlies. It was really forty-nine and Merritt.

Hardy found the big recruit lazily bouncing a medicine ball against the wall.

"Can't get in shape that way, Merritt."

"So Sergeant Murphy tells me," Merritt said, carelessly.

No definite disrespect, but . . . Hardy counted ten and tried again. "Merritt, I understand that you graduated from Blackwood Academy and had a year or two at Western University."

The tall boy was a bit startled, Hardy thought. But he said evenly, "That's correct."

"It wasn't entirely curiosity that led me to dig that up," Hardy said. "We like to know the educational background of the men we get. That's a rather unusual one for a soldier."

"I suppose it is," the recruit agreed, still waiting.

"It interested me particularly because I believe I know your father."

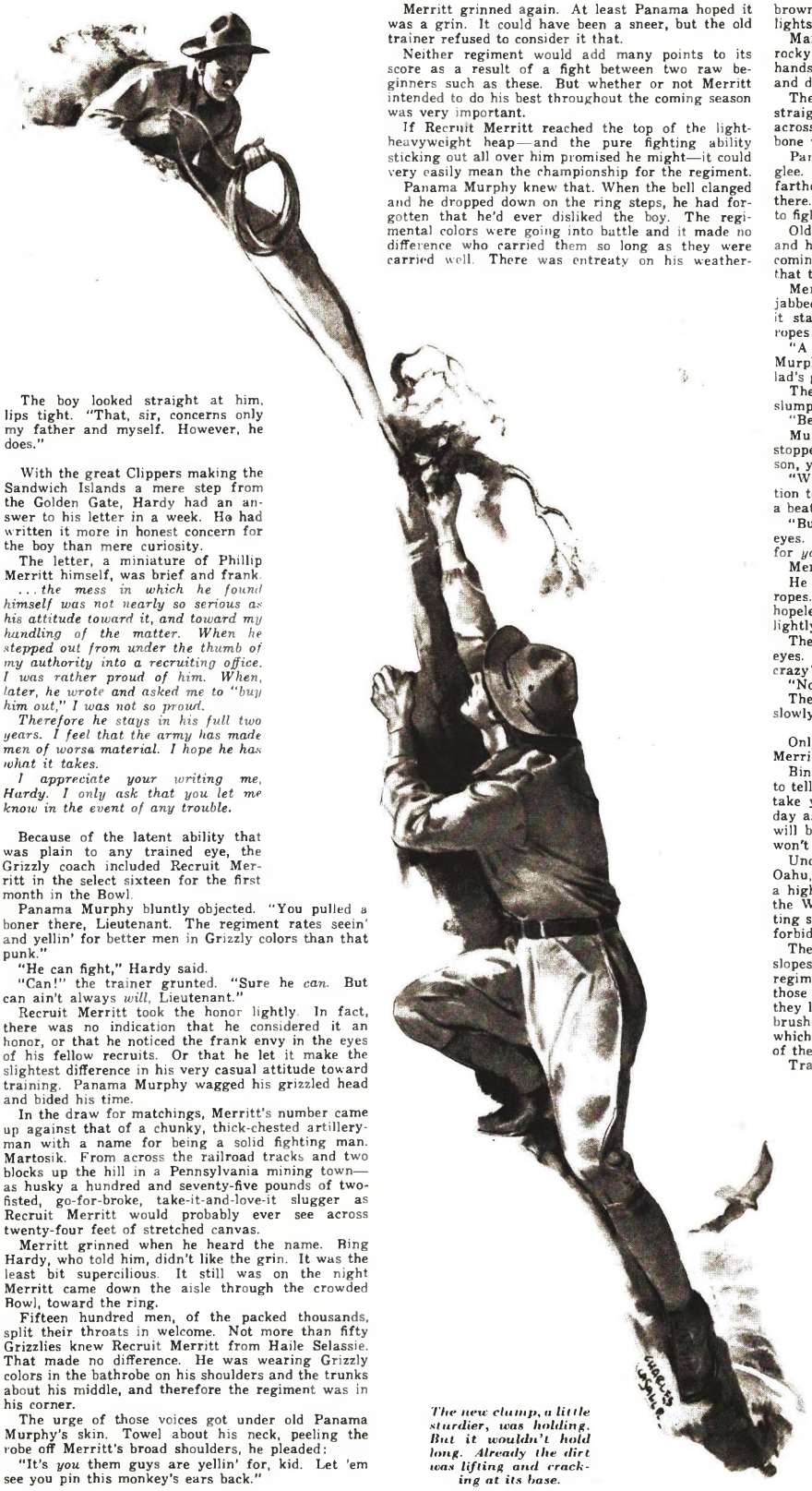
"A great many people do."

Hardy mentally ticked off his ten fingers again. He asked, "Merritt, how did you happen to come in the army?"

"I enlisted, sir."

Bing Hardy thought, "That's three times in as many minutes that I've been told to mind my own business. Maybe I'd better do it." But he had one more question.

"If you do come from San Francisco, and Phillip Merritt is your father—does he know where you are?"



The new champ, a little sturdier, was holding. But it wouldn't hold long. Already the dirt was lifting and cracking at its base.

The boy looked straight at him, lips tight. "That, sir, concerns only my father and myself. However, he does."

With the great Clippers making the Sandwich Islands a mere step from the Golden Gate, Hardy had an answer to his letter in a week. He had written it more in honest concern for the boy than mere curiosity.

The letter, a miniature of Phillip Merritt himself, was brief and frank.

. . . the mess in which he found himself was not nearly so serious as his attitude toward it, and toward my handling of the matter. When he stepped out from under the thumb of my authority into a recruiting office. I was rather proud of him. When, later, he wrote and asked me to "buy him out," I was not so proud.

Therefore he stays in his full two years. I feel that the army has made men of worse material. I hope he has what it takes.

I appreciate your writing me, Hardy. I only ask that you let me know in the event of any trouble.

Because of the latent ability that was plain to any trained eye, the Grizzly coach included Recruit Merritt in the select sixteen for the first month in the Bowl.

Panama Murphy bluntly objected. "You pulled a boner there, Lieutenant. The regiment rates seein' and yellin' for better men in Grizzly colors than that punk."

"He can fight," Hardy said.

"Can!" the trainer grunted. "Sure he *can*. But can ain't always *will*, Lieutenant."

Recruit Merritt took the honor lightly. In fact, there was no indication that he considered it an honor, or that he noticed the frank envy in the eyes of his fellow recruits. Or that he let it make the slightest difference in his very casual attitude toward training. Panama Murphy wagged his grizzled head and bided his time.

In the draw for matchings, Merritt's number came up against that of a chunky, thick-chested artilleryman with a name for being a solid fighting man. Martosik. From across the railroad tracks and two blocks up the hill in a Pennsylvania mining town—as husky a hundred and seventy-five pounds of two-fisted, go-for-broke, take-it-and-love-it slugger as Recruit Merritt would probably ever see across twenty-four feet of stretched canvas.

Merritt grinned when he heard the name. Bing Hardy, who told him, didn't like the grin. It was the least bit supercilious. It still was on the night Merritt came down the aisle through the crowded Bowl, toward the ring.

Fifteen hundred men, of the packed thousands, split their throats in welcome. Not more than fifty Grizzlies knew Recruit Merritt from Haile Selassie. That made no difference. He was wearing Grizzly colors in the bathrobe on his shoulders and the trunks about his middle, and therefore the regiment was in his corner.

The urge of those voices got under old Panama Murphy's skin. Towel about his neck, peeling the robe off Merritt's broad shoulders, he pleaded:

"It's *you* them guys are yellin' for, kid. Let 'em see you pin this monkey's ears back."

Merritt grinned again. At least Panama hoped it was a grin. It could have been a sneer, but the old trainer refused to consider it that.

Neither regiment would add many points to its score as a result of a fight between two raw beginners such as these. But whether or not Merritt intended to do his best throughout the coming season was very important.

If Recruit Merritt reached the top of the light-heavyweight heap—and the pure fighting ability sticking out all over him promised he might—it could very easily mean the championship for the regiment.

Panama Murphy knew that. When the bell clanged and he dropped down on the ring steps, he had forgotten that he'd ever disliked the boy. The regimental colors were going into battle and it made no difference who carried them so long as they were carried well. There was entreaty on his weather-browned old face as he squinted up into the glaring lights.

Martosik came with a rush, all bullet skull and rocky shoulders. He drove in, hooking with both hands. Merritt snapped a hard left to his forehead and drifted away along the ropes.

The artilleryman rushed him again. Merritt straightened him with another jab and shot a right across. The glove landed on the chunky man's cheekbone with a crack.

Panama Murphy hugged himself and rocked with glee. Martosik grinned too, and pulled his thick neck farther down between his shoulders. No science there. Maybe not much brains. But plenty of love to fight and not an ounce of fear.

Old Murphy knew about mugs like that. You jabbed and hooked and hammered and saw your target still coming back at you, hard and fast as ever. And that took it out of you.

Merritt stepped back and away, and jabbed and jabbed. When he threw the right, it whistled. Once it staggered Martosik, but he rebounded from the ropes and came swarming back.

"A fast, hard hitter and a sharpshooter, too," Murphy murmured. "The lieutenant was right. The lad's got what it takes."

The round ended and Merritt came back. He slumped to the stool, panting hard.

"Better throw in," he muttered. "I'm done."

Murphy's hand, reaching for the water bottle, stopped in mid-air. "Throw in!" he gasped. "Why, son, you're forty miles ahead of that lug!"

"What of it?" Merritt snapped. "I'm in no condition to go another round. And I don't intend to take a beating."

"But listen, son!" Murphy pleaded, tears in his old eyes. "Listen to them dog-faces yell. They're yellin' for *you*, son! You can't throw 'em down like that."

Merritt laughed. "Can't I?"

He rose calmly off the stool and slid between the ropes. Panama Murphy, on his knees, made a futile, hopeless grab at him, and stayed to watch him jump lightly down the steps.

The referee watched him, too, hardly believing his eyes. "What's the matter with your man—is he crazy?"

"No, sir," Murphy said. "Just a little tired."

The Bowl was so quiet it hurt as he clambered slowly down and followed Merritt up the aisle.

Only one Grizzly ever mentioned the matter to Merritt.

Bing Hardy said evenly, "I sent for you, Merritt, to tell you that you will report for boxing today, and take your regular workout. Today and every other day as long as you're a member of this regiment. It will be one time in your spoiled young life that you won't be allowed to quit."

Uncle Sam's military outpost on the Island of Oahu, in mid-Pacific, is spread over a shallow cup in a high plateau. To the west, the razorlike peaks of the Waianae Range gouge into the rays of the setting sun. To the east, the sullen Koolaus hump their forbidding backs.

The mountains have one thing in common. The slopes on one side drop steeply to the beach. The regiments on the plateau are charged with patrolling those beaches. So the men spend more time than they like to think about scrambling up and down the brush-clad spears of volcanic rock and age-cold lava which some ancient upheaval has lifted from the bed of the sea.

Trails must be broken down to the beaches. Observation posts must be set on cliff and crag so that the pathways of the sea can be watched. And every man is supposed to know all of it like the palm of his hand.

A few did. Old Sergeant Murphy was one. For years he had led file after file of lusty young defenders up and down narrow catwalks, "fit for nothin' but a mountain goat." Of late, though—since there were always two men guiding—Murphy had taken to bringing up the rear, where he could set whatever pace old lungs and creaky knees insisted upon.

Which was why, on this particular morning, Panama Murphy and Recruit Merritt were together. Starting up the sheer, threatening face of that ancient, tricky devil, Mauna Kapu—Forbidden Mountain.

Murphy was old and slow. Merritt was lazy; and he would have had no one to talk to even if he had bothered to keep up with the party. Merritt had no friends.

Not that he seemed to care. Apparently perfectly *(Continued on page 28)*

Take a Low-cost, 6,000-mile Vacation

We'll meet you in Chicago next July 2, Alaska-bound!

Aboard the Cordova there'll be a lively political campaign followed by an election of ship's officers. Winning candidates will then don officers' uniforms and experience the thrill of running a ship.

"EVERY fellow during his high school and college days," an educator recently said, "should take at least one travel vacation. Camp vacations build health. Work vacations provide experience. But travel vacations stimulate your curiosity, broaden your interests, and whet your keen appetite for knowledge."

And then the educator made a surprising statement. He said: "A month of travel is worth a year of school."

That's a strong statement, but when you think it over, it becomes reasonable. In commercial geography you read about coastwise shipping. How much better to see cargo booms hoisting freight from the hold of a ship!

You read about great dams and irrigation projects. How much better to see them! You read about mountains and capitals, wheatlands and fisheries. How much better to visit them and find flesh and blood people like yourselves, living in these far-off places!

Because we agree with the educator—and because travel opportunities for boys under competent leadership are none too plentiful—THE AMERICAN BOY has already run two cruises to Alaska and next summer will run another. A low-cost tour. An itinerary that includes rodeos, gold smelters, mountain drives, sightseeing in the cities of the Northwest, sailing up the magnificent Pacific Coast to nearly a score of Alaskan ports!

This was taken when Willard Hildebrand, cruise leader, was a varsity lineman on Michigan's national champions of 1932-1933. He has a store of locker-room yarns!

Meet Guto and her children! One of the two pups at Irwin's feet will be cruise mascot. The youngster will be almost full grown July 2.

Let's take a quick, day-by-day advance tour. First, however, we suggest that you send at once for the cruise folder containing the complete itinerary and all information on costs and program. Write the Cruise Editor, The American Boy, 7430 Second Blvd., Detroit, Mich., enclosing a three-cent stamp to cover mailing costs.

The cruise begins officially in Chicago, July 2, although if you live west of Chicago you may join at St. Paul, Mandan, Livingston, Spokane, or other points en route at a proportionate reduction in fare.

If you wish, one of our editors or cruise leaders will meet you on your arrival in Chicago and escort you to cruise headquarters in the Union Station. There you will shake hands with the leaders.

You'll meet Willard Hildebrand, six feet tall, two hundred pounds, lineman on Michigan's national championship football teams in 1932-33. Hildebrand is a forester with the U. S. Soil Conservation Service. He has spent a summer cruising timber in Alaska. He's followed moose trails on Isle Royale, spent four summers in leading boys' camps, and cooked trout steaks over a campfire.

You'll have many sessions with Hildebrand aboard train and steamer—sessions devoted to intercollegiate athletics, locker room chatter, game hunting and camping.

David Irwin, who startled the world a few years ago by crossing the Arctic Barrens alone, will be on hand. Irwin has spent five years in Eskimo villages and on traplines in the forbidding Endicott Mountains of Alaska. He has lectured and shown his movies to hundreds of schools and will bring them with him for programs aboard ship. The cruise mascot will be on hand too, Irwin's Husky pup, Guto the Younger. Guto's mother was Irwin's lead dog on Arctic trails, but Guto, brought up in New York state, is proud of his civilized manners and superior education. Guto will travel to Alaska in a portable kennel and will be on hand for all shore hikes. You'll say hello to the editors of the magazine and the Northern Pacific railroad man who will go along as tour escort.

You'll meet your companions for the six thousand-mile trip—readers of the magazine from Texas, Oklahoma, Massachusetts, Illinois, New York. Readers from most of the forty-eight states. At nine you'll board the special AMERICAN BOY cars, wave goodby to friends, and settle down for the first night of your journey. The Burlington train will take you to St. Paul where, on July 3, you will breakfast at the St. Paul Athletic Club with members of Minnesota's varsity football team.

That morning, your cars transferred to the Northern Pacific, you'll head west, through the wheatlands of the Red River of the North over the undulating plains of North Dakota where the horizon seems ever farther and farther away from your train window.

There'll be a stop at Mandan for a powwow with Sioux Indians, veterans of other days, dressed in buckskin and war bonnets. More cruisers will join the party at Mandan.

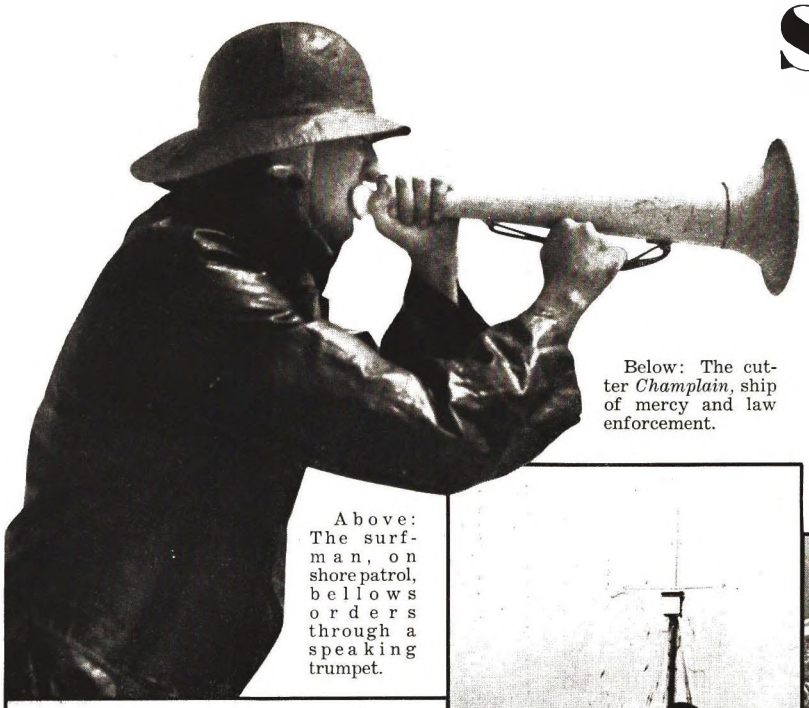
Then on, past wheatlands into badlands where Theodore Roosevelt once wore a sheriff's badge. The landscape will change into fantastic shapes where erosion has cut *(Continued on page 24)*

Left: Bronc busting at the Livingston Roundup! Below: Your ship will cruise into out-of-the-way Alaskan ports.

SEMPER

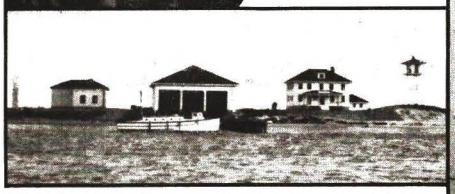
A BUSY SERVICE, the United States Coast Guard! In one year it will save 6,000 lives, help 36,000 persons in trouble, assist shipping to the value of fifty million dollars. Its cutters must catch smugglers, enforce marine laws, patrol icebergs, protect seals in Alaska and sponges in the Gulf of Mexico. Its planes drop hurricane warnings on unwary fishing boats. But here, in pictures, is the story of the service that is "always ready!"

Pictures by John Floherty and the U. S. Coast Guard

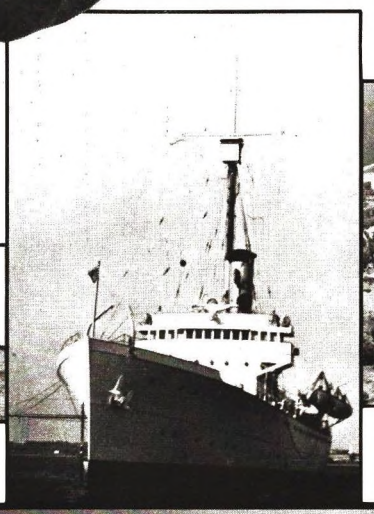


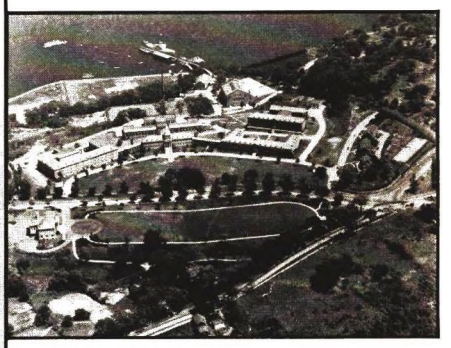
Above: The surfman, on shore patrol, bellows orders through a speaking trumpet.

Below: The cutter *Champlain*, ship of mercy and law enforcement.



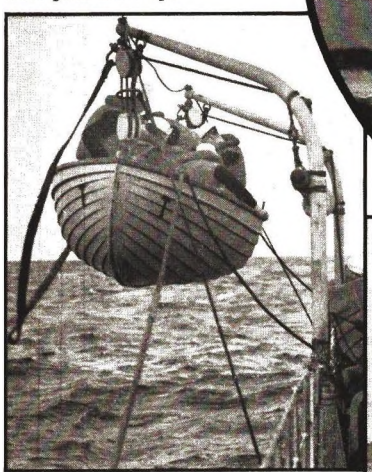
There are 275 stations like this encircling our country. At this one, Fire Island, 300 rescues were made in one year.





Here's the Coast Guard Academy at New London, Conn. Out of a thousand yearly applicants, fifty-one are selected by competitive examinations. The lucky ones go through a four-year course that includes training cruises to foreign ports.

Right: Guardsmen must launch their boats through the heaviest surf to reach stranded, wave-pounded ships.



In heavy seas, at full speed, guardsmen must be able to lower away their boats. They'll pull to a sinking vessel, take off survivors, or fish them out of the water, standing by until every man is saved.

Every year, huge mountains of ice float down from the Arctic into the North Atlantic shipping lanes. Since the Coast Guard took over the ice patrol in 1912, after the sinking of the *Titanic*, not a ship has been lost.

One Coast Guard job is to blow up floating derelicts. TNT is placed in the hulk and is exploded by means of a wire leading to the Coast Guard ship.

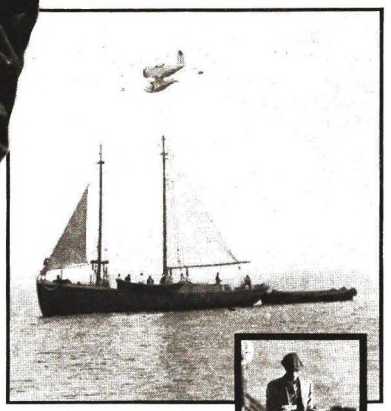
PARATUS!

It's the Watchword of the Coast Guard and Means

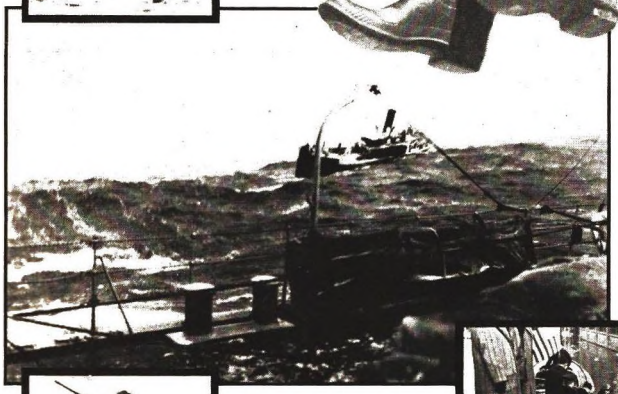
"Always Ready!"

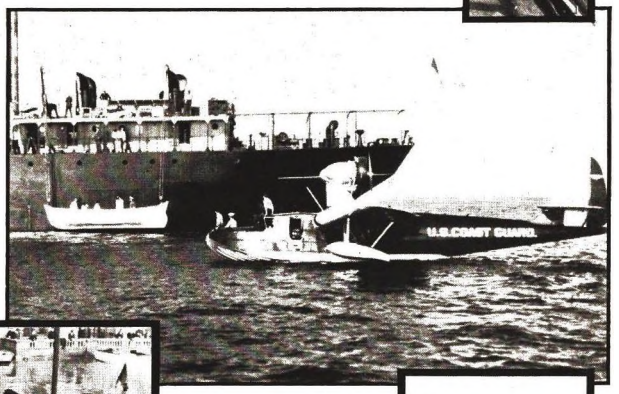
The breeches buoy (left) is hauled between ship and shore by the "whip"—the light line in the picture. The breeches buoy carries one survivor *over* the waves. The life car (above) carries seven *through* the waves!

Above and left: The Lyle gun shoots a line 700 yards. To the shot line is attached a sturdy three-inch rope which bears the weight of the breeches buoy.



Right: Over the unsuspecting fishing schooner the Coast Guard plane flies and drops a message in a floating container. A member of the crew reads it. Hurricane warning! The Coast Guard has forty planes, fifty pilots, nine bases.

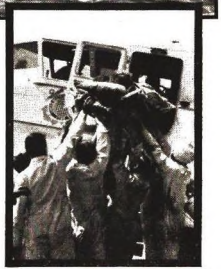




Rescue at sea! Left, an oilskin-clad Guardsman shoots a line to the stricken vessel. Above: Through raging seas Guardsmen will send their lifeboats, take off the crew, then tow the vessel to port.

Guardsmen may be called for inland flood duty too. Here they are, doing taxi service on the Ohio River.

Wireless from the *Samuel Q. Brown* out at sea: "Member of crew badly burned. Must go to hospital." The Coast Guard plane flies out, lands by the ship, takes off the man, and flies him to shore.



DOOM TOCSIN

by

Carl H. Claudy

The Preceding Chapters

IN THE thick darkness, Ted Dolliver leaped from the ladder that led up out of the Subterrestrian tunnel and landed on what felt like a metal platform or floor. He stood taut, listening. He heard no sound. Yet a sixth sense warned him of something lying in wait.

Hidden savages? The ruthless gold runner? Another of Subterrestria's gigantic reptilelike beasts?

Whatever the danger, he had to find Alan—if Alan were still alive.

Together, to serve humanity, Dr. Alan Kane, far-seeing young scientist, and Ted Dolliver, brawny explorer, had undertaken a strange expedition. With all civilization threatened by a flood of gold from some unknown source, the two had flown down a wild polar passage to explore the inside of the earth, find the source, and check the flood. Alan was convinced that some wealth-craving adventurer had discovered gold inside the earth and was taking it out by plane. He was so sure of it that he had undertaken the trip in spite of the deadly power of a mysterious underground tocsin, a giant bell feared by every queer little native in Subterrestria.

At the start of the expedition, someone had tried to wreck their plane; Ted suspected Hall Steenerson, a brutal explorer he had encountered in Africa. That was only the beginning of dangers. As they struggled through the weird forests of Subterrestria, bent on reaching the giant bell and getting information from those who rang it, they were attacked by one of the gigantic beasts, and narrowly missed death. Whenever the distant bell rang, they endured frightful agony, and only their protective suits and helmets saved them from annihilation. Then, as they neared the great golden dome that was the bell, Alan was kidnaped in Ted's absence.

Footprints indicated that he had been captured by a band of little natives led by a man who wore shoes; and Alan's pencil, tucked under their little camp stove, pointed to the bell.

"They've taken him there!" Ted groaned. "And he hasn't his helmet. If it rings—"

He had to reach Alan before the bell rang again. Was he inside the bell? It seemed likely. But when Ted finally reached the bell, he could find no way in.

It was Jamish who at last appeared and showed him an underground entrance. Jamish, the little native who had guided them through the forests and yet, Ted felt, was as likely to be foe as friend.

Jamish guided Ted to the ladder, pointed up—and vanished. Alone in the thick dark, desperately apprehensive, but driven by the knowledge that he was Alan's only hope of life, Ted climbed up the ladder and leaped to the metal floor. Then that sixth sense warned him. *Something* was ready to attack!

Chapter Twelve

FLASH in left hand, gun in right, Ted drew slowly back from the edge of the hole. Whatever was to come, he must not stumble into the opening to crash far below on that hard gold.

Then, drawing a long breath, he pressed the button on the flash and shot its beams in a low, rapid circle, whirling around to face all points of the compass in swift succession. He had just time to gain a swift impression of a vast black cavern shot with golden gleams when something struck him a violent blow on the forehead. As the stars came out and danced in constellations, Ted's last thought was, "So it *was* a trap—Jamish tricked me!"

When he regained consciousness he found himself lying on his back, bound but not gagged, with the light of a dimly flaming torch in his face. He turned his head—beside him lay Alan! He was bound too, but his eyes were open, smiling into Ted's.

"Alan!" Ted cried.

A sneering laugh above made him look up. A steely voice spoke. "So! We have them both, and both shall hear the tocsin from within!"

Ted stared up into the smoldering eyes of Hall Steenerson.

There was a moment of intense quiet. The cavernous interior of the great golden bell was eerie with shadows advancing and receding in the flickering lights of two torches. The air seemed heavy with danger. Yet Ted and Alan, lying there bound, betrayed no fear. Ted stared up at Hall Steenerson with scornful steadiness.

"So!" Steenerson said at last, speaking with a precision that suggested the foreigner. "It *is* the big man I saw in the athletic club, and again in the hangar where you kept your plane. And I am 'quite harmless,' am I?" He laughed softly. "In New York I suggested that we might meet later, and here we are!"

Echoes of his laughter ran up and down the golden walls like thin, metallic ghosts of sound.

"We'll do more than meet if you'll untie me!" Ted's savage voice started echoes that seemed to pound the air.

"So? Ordinarily I should rather enjoy a session with you, but right now I have not the time, I regret to say. May I suggest that you lower your voice? The reverberations are so unpleasant. The tocsin rings again tonight; so I must be far away. But you —you two will be *here!*" Steenerson's eyes gloated over his captives.

"Why hasn't the bell been ringing on schedule?" demanded Ted, principally for the sake of seeming unmoved by what Steenerson had said.

"Because I have not permitted it. I am in authority here. This is my land. No one else knows of it—no one. Not even Nagel Gelderlin!" Steenerson's voice was filled with satisfaction. "It is *my* gold, *my* land, *my* savages, *my* great bell—and interlopers must die, lest others know!" Again his eyes gloated.

He seated himself cross-legged on the rocky floor. "I will take time to discuss the bell ringing with you. It should be interesting. I have often wondered how they feel—those who hear the bell ring while inside. But I forget. You do not know much about the bell, do you?"

"You might tell us about it," suggested Alan, and Ted was a little shocked at the weakness of the voice.

"Are you hurt, shrimp, or just trying to kill the echoes?" he growled.

"I'm numb. I've been bound for twenty-four hours. Couldn't stand up if he'd untie me."

"I'll untie you—soon!" But Ted's voice held more confidence than he felt. How could he free himself? Steenerson would give him no chance that he could foresee.

As Ted restlessly turned his head, a gleam of metal caught his eye. To his left he saw his gun and knife, the helmets, and his knapsack laid out in orderly array, within five feet of him. For an instant, hope surged up. Then it died down. His arms and hands

Steenerson's flaming torches revealed the vast interior of the deadly bell, a golden chain, a massive clapper, and a thick rope that led away into some unseen opening.

were bound tightly behind his back, and his legs were trussed together like a chicken's. That gun might as well be in New York City, and the helmets too.

Steenerson chuckled; his eyes had followed Ted's.

"Those helmets," he said softly, "are very clever. I wish I had had one, for I have had to run far away when these savages play their queer games with the bell. But even if I were willing to let you put them on, I doubt they would be effective here. Have you seen the body of a native who has died the death?"

Neither Alan nor Ted answered.

"Perhaps you would like to see how the bell is hung, and how it is rung," went on Steenerson, patient with their unresponsiveness. "I will show you."

He got to his feet and raised his prisoners to a sitting position. Alan and Ted looked at each other, and looked away.

"I will take the torches so that you can see a little," Steenerson announced.

He lifted the flaming knots from their sockets in the golden floor, and walked slowly across the great cavern, his footfalls echoing until it seemed as if a regiment were tramping through. Tense, fascinated, Ted and Alan watched as he walked into the distance.

By the flickering light of the torches, they caught glimpses of the huge interior with the metal dome arching high above, its vastness more apparent from the inside than it had been from without. As Steenerson moved on, an enormous arch, flinging upward in a grand reach of curve, picked itself slowly out of the shadows. It was followed by another, another, another—until their wondering eyes beheld seven giant bastions, arches, rising from the floor to meet at some point high, high above.

"What engineering!" murmured Alan. "Were those arches carved from the solid mass of gold? And when? And by whom? Certainly not by these Subterrestrians of today."

"See—see!" cried Ted, in a low voice. "The chain!"

Hanging straight down, apparently from that invisible point where the supporting golden arches came together, a huge golden chain hung from some unseen pivot hundreds of feet overhead. At its lower end a mass of gold hung heavy, silent, still. A thick rope led away from it, into some unseen opening in the shadows. Evidently when the rope was pulled, the massive clapper swung against the metal.

"Never saw anything like that," murmured Ted. "Alan, we *are* up against it."

"Our chance will come. Can you break loose?"

"I don't dare try yet," said Ted. "I'm feeling the effects of being knocked out. What makes your voice so weak?"

"Camouflage!" answered Alan. "I'm hoping Steenerson will think I'm so feeble I'm helpless, and let me loose."

"Not likely. What about Jamish?"

"He's honest—a friend. Steenerson tricked him into bringing you here. When Steenerson let me write, I thought he saw me do it. Jamish is frightened. Steenerson's told me how all the natives hold him in deadly fear. He's practically a foreign king of the country."

Ted recalled what the natives who had captured him had said: "Jamish'n-erson—Jamish'n-erson!" Abruptly he realized that they had been trying to say, "Jamish and Steenerson—Jamish and Steenerson."

"I wonder—" he began, but Alan interrupted.

"Look, look!" he cried, and pointed with his chin.

Ted looked—in the light of the flaring torches, the great clapper swung far to one side! He and Alan watched it tensely. Both realized what a tremendous blow it would strike when those hundreds of unseen hands that pulled on the rope finally let go. Was the terrible tocsin to sound now while they were bound and helpless?

"What protects Steenerson?" Ted muttered.

The dark-faced man had turned and was coming toward them. He eyed them with a thin smile.

"Are you anxious about the bell?" he purred. "It will not ring—yet! It will not ring until I give the word. When I am not here, it rings twice every day to protect these tribesmen from others further south. No one knows when the bell came into being, who made the chain, cut the slit, built or carved the supporting arches, calculated the strains, devised this strangest of all forces. Interesting, isn't it?"

"Why doesn't the bell kill the natives?" asked Ted, curious in spite of himself.

"They eat a bitter root. It seems to offer some measure of protection from the deadly vibrations—an anodyne, an anesthetic, if you will. But I have been eating it for several years, and I cannot be within miles of the thing when it rings."

"So that was why Jamish wanted us to eat that stuff," mused Ted.

Something else had caught Alan's attention. "Several years?" he inquired. "But it's only recently the flood of gold has been noticed outside."

"The project required much preparation," explained Steenerson. "I discovered the hollow-earth country six years ago. It took me a year to get control of the tribe, through bribes, trade goods, parlor-magic tricks—they think I am a mighty god!" He laughed. "I couldn't use force. *I couldn't afford to let anyone know.* Then I needed organization. I got it through Gelderlin. I have taken out many tons of gold and will take out many more."

"You're certainly frank about it!" Ted snorted.

"Why should I not gratify your curiosity? It is a last small service I offer those who will soon hear the bell ring from the inside. It requires only two or three strokes to cause death. The tribe executes its criminals with the bell. You may have seen the shrunken body of a criminal, and the tortured face. Death by the bell is not pleasant. But you are brave; you will meet it with a smile."

Ted's jaw tightened in impotent fury.

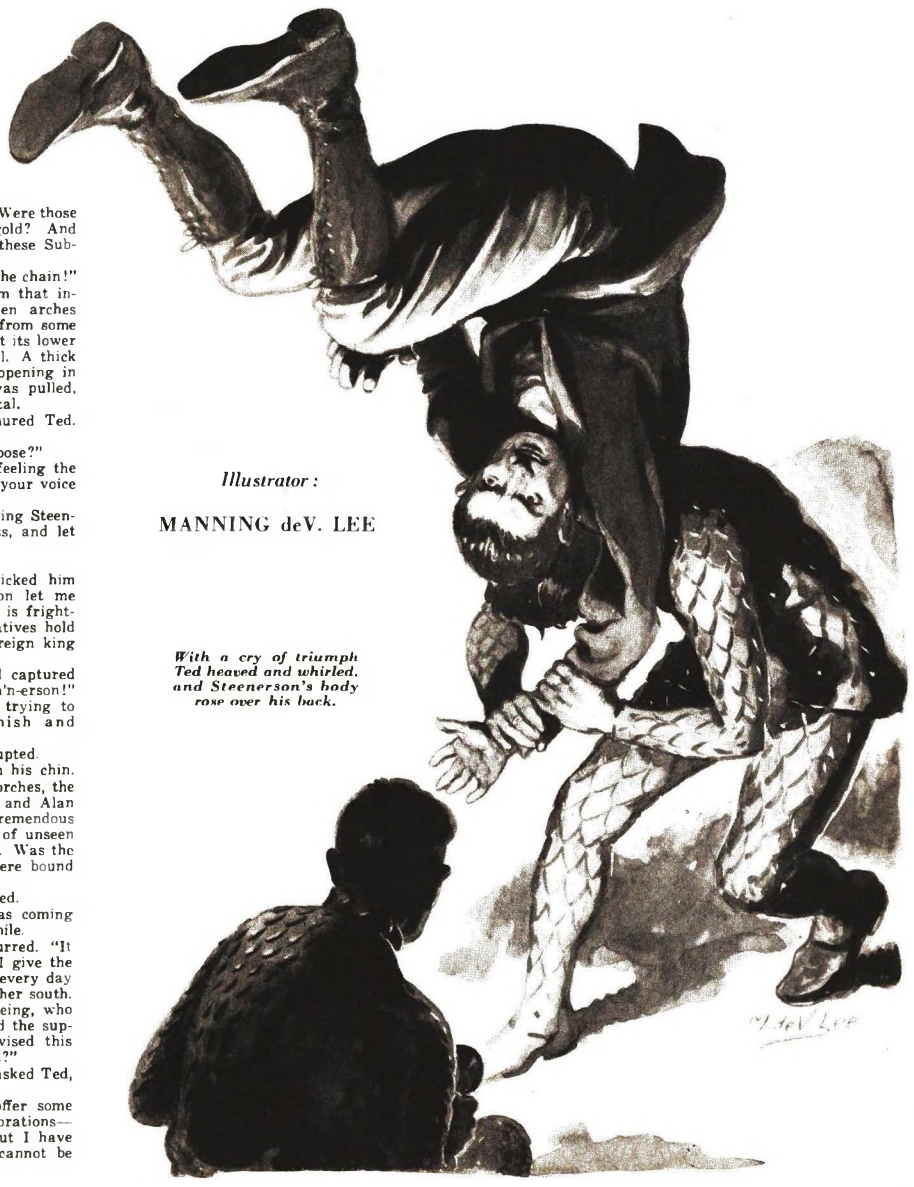
Steenerson laughed mockingly and went on. "It was clever of you to take my timing gears—yes, I have learned of that. But do not feel that you have inconvenienced me. I can fly your plane. It is ready for instant flight, is it not?"

Of course. Ted could have groaned. It had seemed best to leave the *Narwhal* ready, but now Steenerson could escape in her while he and Alan were suffering torment from the terrible vibrations set up by the tocsin.

"But I linger overlong!" Steenerson continued. "Neither Gelderlin nor Morton knows where I get the gold—nobody knows but the three of us here. Morton could tell me little of what you planned, Dr. Kane, but of course when I heard you had borrowed a plane from the government I knew—I made sure by being on the spot. Believe it or not, it was to warn you that I tried to see you. But your man Friday here wouldn't let me." He gave Ted's bound body a contemptuous push with his foot.

"You murderer!" Ted ground out. "You're the one who put that time bomb in the *Narwhal*. I knew it!"

"Of course," Steenerson admitted easily. "And much trouble it would have saved me had it worked. And much pain it would have saved you. Being blown to bits is far pleasanter, I assure you, than dying by the bell."



Illustrator:

MANNING deV. LEE

With a cry of triumph Ted heaved and whirled, and Steenerson's body rose over his back.

"Get out of here!" Ted yelled furiously, forgetting the echoes. "Get out! Get out!"

The sound blasted into the depths of the cavern and woke a torturing barrage of echoes. *Out, out, out!* came from the top of the dome, from the walls, from unseen depths, to beat from side to side. *Out, out, out!* The cry took on some of the sound of the bell; the syllables, tossed back and forth, held a corroding quality, a ghastly hollowness, a dolor and a misery prophetic of the real sound yet to come.

As the echoes died away Steenerson laughed. "A little chilling, is it not? But you are brave. Ah, why do you look so longingly at your gun? You cannot reach it. Besides—" He picked up the gun. With his amazingly strong hands slowly straining, he bent the steel of the barrel and tossed the gun down. Then he broke Ted's knife. "Surely," he said, "you will enjoy feeling that your only resource is your courage. And now—anticipation, they say, is half the pleasure. I will leave you to think. I will return to say good-by!" He bowed mockingly and strode away in the darkness, his footfalls echoing through the huge dome.

Alan and Ted listened in strained silence until the last of the echoes died away. Then Ted rolled over to Alan.

"See if you can untie my hands with your teeth!" he breathed.

Alan wriggled his bound body into position and attacked Ted's bonds. But after five minutes of ineffectual mouthing he gave up.

"The knots are all underneath," he said. "What next?"

Ted exulted at Alan's almost casual calm. "Good old shrimp!" he muttered. "Steenerson can't scare you, can he? I don't know what next. If he hadn't broken my knife—"

"And taken the pieces with him!" cut in Alan. "Didn't you see him pick them up?"

"Yes. You lie quiet and rest and let me think. I have an idea. Maybe—"

Alan relaxed as well as he could. His bonds cut into him and his reflections troubled him even more. He knew with appalling certainty what would happen when the tocsin sounded. There was nothing magical to him in vibrations powerful enough to kill. He thought again of the shrunken remains of the little ape man Jamish had mourned. Doubtless the helpless native too had lain here, bound and terrified, while the tribe pulled on the rope, swinging the huge pendulum, sending the clapperlike mass of gold smashing against the tocsin, wakening the prodigious crashing, the detonating, disintegrating alarms that cut through flesh like so many X-rays, clanging out life with dreadful torture . . .

A heavy half hour passed. At last Alan spoke. "Any luck?"

Ted did not answer.

Alan turned over, to look at his friend in the feeble torchlight. Ted lay on his back, his face purple with effort, his great shoulders straining. Alan saw the huge muscles bulge under the brown shirt. Knowing Ted's tremendous strength, he watched curiously, hopefully.

But Ted was making no headway. At last he relaxed, his breath a rushing sigh that echoed through the dome like the sigh of a mighty ghost.

"Too—tight!" he gasped. "They know how to tie—these natives."

Another heavy half hour of silence, while Ted gathered his strength for another effort. Every minute, Alan realized, brought nearer that mocking good-by Steenerson had promised. Every minute was one more in the procession that marched steadily toward a horrible death. . . . Were they to die in the dark? The light from the five-foot torches, thrust into holes in the rocky floor, was growing dimmer. Each torch was apparently a tree limb with a knot at the end, and the knots were burning low.

"The torches are going out, Ted," he said finally. "If you need to see for any other plan, you'd better hurry."

Ted grunted. Then to Alan's surprise he gave a sudden bark and broke into a roar of laughter that swept up to the dome and back again, rousing a clangorous ululation that hurt like a blow. Abruptly Ted checked his roar.

"What *is* it?" whispered Alan.

"I'm a fool, a dumbbell, an idiot!" responded Ted. "And so is Steenerson! He thought he was smart, tying the knots inside. He isn't so smart. Not Steenerson!"

"But what *is* it? Why all the self-denunciation?" whispered Alan.

"The torches!" cried Ted. "*The torches!*"

Without another word he started toward them, flinging his body over the rocky floor, careless of bruises. It was a long journey, almost ten feet. But he made it at last, stopping with his face close to the lower end of a slender limb. He bit with powerful jaws into the limb. Then, exerting all his strength, he raised his body—and the torch came from the hole.

With a smothered gasp of excitement, Alan flung himself over the floor to meet the torch as it crashed to earth. "Go ahead," he breathed.

Grimly Ted obeyed, shoving the flame against Alan's wrists as carefully as he could. It was awkward, handling a torch with only his jaws, trying to burn Alan's bonds without searing his hands or setting his clothes on fire. But Alan had understood without words why his hands must be risked and not Ted's. Ted clenched his teeth in the torch and worked doggedly.

"That's enough," said Alan at last, and Ted winced at the pain in the quiet voice. "It's giving."

A moment and Alan's hands were free. Not stopping to untie his legs, he fell to work on Ted's bonds. Ten minutes of hard work with fingers hot with throbbing burns, and Ted stretched his great arms, rubbing his wrists. Then both began on their leg ties. They worked madly, hoping that the light of the torches would last until they were free, praying that Steenerson might not return.

Chapter Thirteen

AT LAST the ties were loosened. Slowly, stiffly, groaning with the agony of his stiffened arms and legs, Ted stuck the dimly burning torch back into the floor hole. Then he fell to rubbing Alan's legs and arms, numbed almost to uselessness by the long torment of tight bonds.

No one disturbed them. The torches still flickered faintly. No sound threatened danger. Yet as Ted worked, depression plagued him. When they were both so weak from blows and the long binding, how could they make their way down the ladder and through the tunnel to the opening he had entered with Jamish? Ted's spirits sank agonizingly low as he rubbed away to bring life back into Alan's legs.

Depression was in the Subterrestrian air, he knew, but the sight of Alan's burned hands was helping to weigh him down. If only Alan could have been the man to handle the torch instead of the one to endure the torturing burns. But they had both realized instantly, without words, that Ted's hands must be spared—Ted's hands had to be in condition to fly the *Narwhal* if they could reach her!

Then, too, the pair of them might encounter Steenerson, and Ted, the stronger of the pair, had to be in condition to fight. Left without gun or knife, he had to depend on his hands and his strength.

Yet the sight of Alan's burned hands was torment to Ted. "Hated to burn you!" he muttered, rubbing away at Alan's cramped legs.

"Of course. I know. Forget it, mastodon." Alan's blistered right hand raised itself to touch Ted's shoulder, and Ted's depression lifted a little.

For fully ten minutes Ted massaged vigorously, and strength flowed back into his own mighty muscles as he worked.

"Able to stand—walk?" he whispered finally. "The torches are nearly out."

"I'll try," answered Alan, but when Ted pulled him to his feet he stood swaying, and when Ted let go of him he sat down again weakly. "My legs are still asleep. Give me another ten minutes."

Ted reached for his knapsack. "See if the flash is in it," he whispered.

While Ted rubbed, Alan explored the bag, and as he did so, first one torch and then the other flickered, flared, and went out.

"Flash is here. Want it?" he inquired. "What are all the long packages?"

"Don't use the flash; stick it in your belt," commanded Ted. "The packages are explosives. Hang the knapsack around you. What's that?"

"Footsteps!" Alan breathed.

"Pretend you're bound," whispered Ted, hoping that they had not been seen before the torches went out. He fell back on the floor, his hands behind him. Was this Steenerson coming? If so, he must take him by surprise if possible. If Steenerson knew they were free, he might summon a horde of natives again to tie them up—if they didn't shoot on sight.

The footsteps approached slowly. Ted, lying flat, could see only the faint glow of torchlight, but his keen, trained ears told him that this was Steenerson coming, and that he came alone. Abruptly, the prospect brought new life to Ted. His muscles tensed and flexed; his benumbed weakness was lost in surging strength and anger. The memory of those he had seen Steenerson torture rose in his mind. Steenerson shouldn't torture Alan that way!

Ted was like a coiled steel spring of danger and determination as he lay staring back at Steenerson when the dark-skinned man paused and looked down upon his captives in the flickering light of the small torch he carried.

"I keep my promise, to say good-by!" Steenerson's voice was mockingly gentle. "Death comes to you soon. The bell will ring in half an hour. By then I shall be well up the coast."

Ted kept his face impassive. Would Steenerson see that the knapsack was no longer on the rocky floor? Would he note that the flash was in Alan's belt? Would he observe that their positions were somewhat changed?

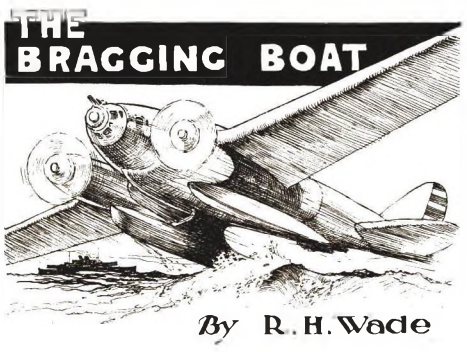
"It is a death I wish I could see!" sighed Steenerson. "Alas, it is so quick. Only ten or fifteen minutes of torment—*with no escape.*"

He bent over Ted, his dark face cruel and taunting. With a prayer that his muscles might serve him well, Ted sprang—sprang straight as a cat might spring, propelling his body with suddenly bent legs and the powerful urge of great shoulders. His hands caught swiftly and he clawed himself upright on Steenerson's body.

"The flash, Alan—turn it on us!" he cried as Steenerson's torch fell.

Ted's grip was but half taken when the big man's body responded to the surprising attack; Steenerson tore himself loose and whirled away. Alan flashed on the electric torch and Ted was after him instantly, seizing his one-time captor with savage hands.

Steenerson was strong and had not been bound. Ruthless as a tiger and swift as a cobra, he was no mean antagonist, even for Ted, a trained fighter who had met and conquered three and four enemies at a time.



By R. H. Wade

AT TIMES my world is wet and dull
(I am a Navy seaplane's hull)
But now I feel the water lash
Against my skin: and now the dash
Along the bay—a buoyant run—
Is over and I feel the sun
And friendly wind and know the sky
Is all around. I'm quickly dry;
While by my side on hurtling wings
Are sister ships; they're graceful things.
We're strung on heaven's vast lagoon,
A roaring necklace for the moon.
To Navy men the thrill is trite:
It's just another routine flight;
But down within my metal keel
I know a thrill they'll never feel.
Just think: I am a simple boat,
And yet—upon the *air* I float!

Steenerson fought off Ted's grasping hands with lightning blows. A good boxer, Ted was not minded to lay himself open to a blow on the chin. Fighting with rules in a ring is one thing—fighting for life in the wilds is another.

He taunted his opponent as they circled in the glare of the flash, Steenerson trying to get it behind him, Ted trying to avoid having it in his eyes. Then Ted saw Alan on his feet, looking for a chance to get in the fight.

"Keep out!" shouted Ted. "I'll do better alone." He hoped desperately that the argument would keep Alan out—a slight man might be killed in a fight like this.

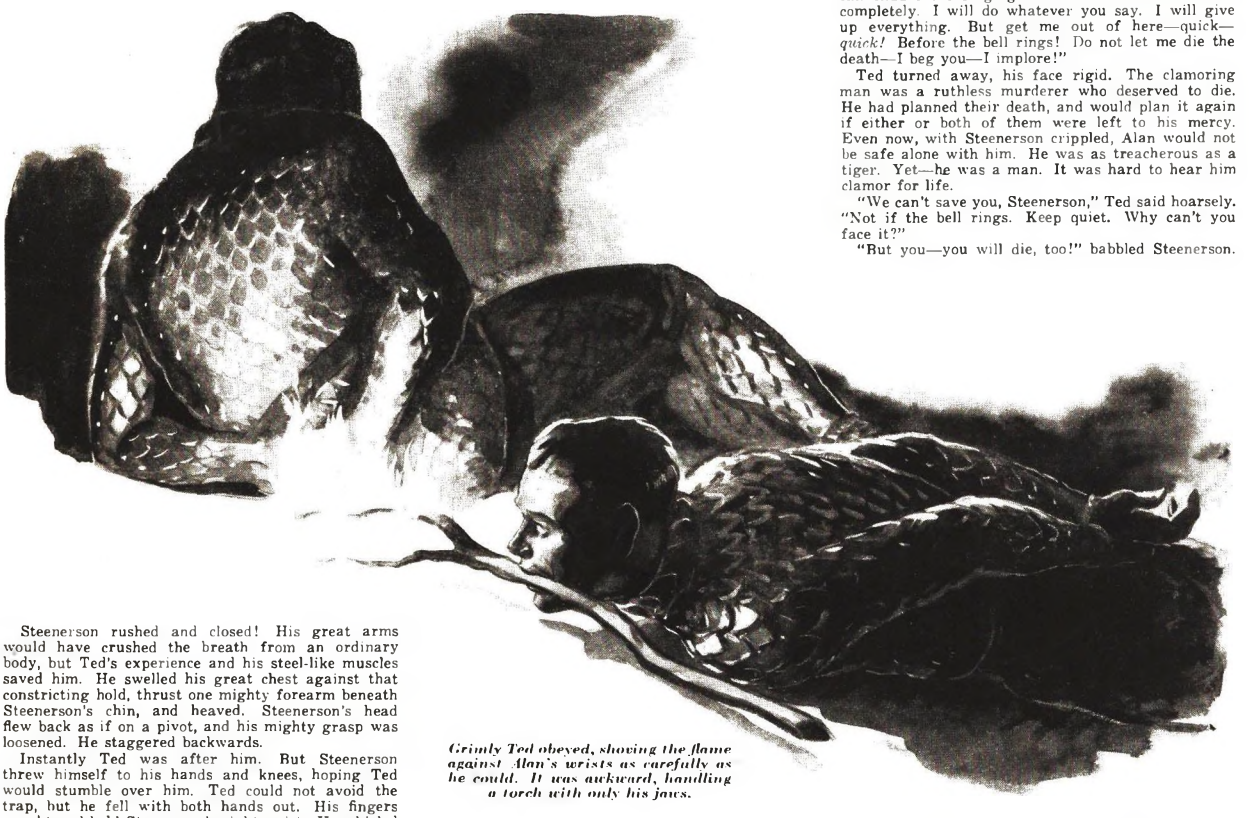
Steenerson tried to close in. Through Ted's mind flashed, "He's afraid of the bell—it rings soon. I'll stall!" For five minutes he avoided direct contact, dodging Steenerson's rushes and twisting away from his grasp. His blood was tingling now, and his confidence mounted high, perhaps too high.

Ted was tiring and Steenerson knew it. He sprang forward and tried a trick of jujitsu. Grabbing Ted's outstretched arm, Steenerson pushed, then yanked, heaving with all his might, and whirled to throw Ted over his back—a move designed to land the victim crashing and helpless on the floor.

But Ted was wise. Instead of resisting he made a powerful spring forward. In this yank-over-the-shoulder trick, a resisting body rises but a non-resisting body falls. Ted raised his knee and with all the force of Steenerson's pull, plus all the power of Ted's spring, it struck Steenerson's back. There was a *whoosh!* of expelled breath, and Steenerson fell, Ted on top.

But Steenerson was not at the end of his resources. Time was flying. The bell would ring shortly—and he was desperately afraid of it. He clutched Ted's throat!

For a horrible moment Ted was helpless, choking, unable to breathe. Blindly he struck, and luck was



Grimly Ted obeyed, shoving the flame against Alan's wrists as carefully as he could. It was awkward, handling a torch with only his jaws.

Steenerson rushed and closed! His great arms would have crushed the breath from an ordinary body, but Ted's experience and his steel-like muscles saved him. He swelled his great chest against that constricting hold, thrust one mighty forearm beneath Steenerson's chin, and heaved. Steenerson's head flew back as if on a pivot, and his mighty grasp was loosened. He staggered backwards.

Instantly Ted was after him. But Steenerson threw himself to his hands and knees, hoping Ted would stumble over him. Ted could not avoid the trap, but he fell with both hands out. His fingers caught and held Steenerson's right wrist. He whirled over, planted one foot on Steenerson's body and one on his neck—and Steenerson lay flat, his right arm taut to the breaking point in a wrestler's arm stretch, one of the most difficult holds to break. It has the great advantage of allowing the holder to rest, while the man held in the racking grip must exert all his strength to get upon his feet, using up precious energy.

"Got you!" muttered Ted. "*Got you!*"

Steenerson lay passive, gathering his strength. Again Alan moved forward.

"Stay back!" Ted grunted savagely. "Keep out the way." He twisted his hands in a fresh hold on Steenerson's wrist.

With a suddenness Ted was prepared for, the body beneath his feet lurched. Steenerson rose to one knee, his free hand thrust far out for balance. Ted let him rise, then gave the twist and fling that should throw the captive again flat on his back. But Steenerson was strong and Ted not at his best. With a gasp and a struggle Steenerson passed the half way point and stood upon his feet!

Instantly Ted let go, thrusting as he did so. Steenerson staggered, lost his balance, fell and rolled over—giving Ted time to spring to his feet. They faced each other, as they had from the beginning, with all to do over again.

with him. He hit Steenerson on the chin, knocking him loose—and again they were on their feet, breath coming in gasps.

That moment of terror filled Ted with ungovernable rage. Afraid of Steenerson, was he? *Afraid!* He dived forward, grasped Steenerson's right hand in both his hands, whirled and pinioned the big man's arm behind his back. As Ted lifted with all his failing strength, Steenerson cried out in pain.

Ted held him for a long moment, then untwisted swiftly. Pushing, then yanking, he used Steenerson's own trick, and Steenerson resisted! With a cry of triumph Ted heaved and whirled. Steenerson's body rose over his back, Ted brought it down, and Steenerson struck the rocky floor with a crash—and lay still, one leg sticking out at an odd angle.

Ted stood, gasping. Then he picked up the ropes with which they had been tied. In a moment Steenerson's arms were pinioned. But when Ted started to wind a rope about his legs he stopped suddenly. "Broke his thigh!" he gasped.

"What a fight!" ejaculated Alan. "Ted, you're elemental but grand! You make me feel useless."

"I appreciate—your keeping out," panted Ted. "Fighting's *my* job. Put on your helmet. The bell—will ring—almost any time."

Alan nodded. Before he obeyed, he relit Steenerson's torch, which had been extinguished by the tramping feet of the fighters. He stuck it into one of the floor holes.

"We may need the flash," he observed dryly, then adjusted his helmet and passed Ted his.

As Ted put it on, leaving the ear flaps open, Steenerson opened his eyes, dully. He looked up at Ted.

"You—have won," he muttered.

"Not yet." Ted's voice was grim with apprehension.

It roused Steenerson to realization. Suddenly fear shone in his eyes. "The bell!" he gasped. "*The bell!*"

Ted grinned without mirth. "Yes, the bell. It will ring soon. And *you* will be right here."

"So will you. It will ring any moment now," cried Steenerson. "Hurry, hurry! Get me out of here—save yourselves. Take me with you—I will guide you."

Ted shook his head. "You can't walk with a broken leg and I can't carry you. I'm too done in, thanks to you."

Steenerson's face worked with increasing terror and panic. "It is awful," he cried. "Awful! No one can endure the ringing in here. Look—I surrender completely. I will do whatever you say. I will give up everything. But get me out of here—quick—*quick!* Before the bell rings! Do not let me die the death—I beg you—I implore!"

Ted turned away, his face rigid. The clamoring man was a ruthless murderer who deserved to die. He had planned their death, and would plan it again if either or both of them were left to his mercy. Even now, with Steenerson crippled, Alan would not be safe alone with him. He was as treacherous as a tiger. Yet—he was a man. It was hard to hear him clamor for life.

"We can't save you, Steenerson," Ted said hoarsely. "Not if the bell rings. Keep quiet. Why can't you face it?"

"But you—you will die, too!" babbled Steenerson. "Those helmets are not strong enough. Not here, inside the bell. Oh, look—*look, look!*"

They followed his eyes. The great chain that supported the huge golden clapper was drawing still farther back. Slowly, inexorably, it moved toward the wall of the tocsin. Between the great arches it crept, slowly, silently, pulled by unseen hands—Ted pictured a whole tribe pulling on the rope, far away outside, far enough away to escape the deadliness of the sound—*pulling, pulling, pulling.*

"It's going to ring—*it's going to ring!*" screamed Steenerson. Incredibly he sprang erect on one leg. He hopped madly three steps, then fell, cutting his head, moaning in terror.

As he dropped, the huge pendulum began to gather speed. Hurriedly Ted and Alan fastened the flaps of the helmets and turned the switches. Both jumped as the unpleasant buzzing in their ears began.

The pendulum moved on. Alan counted seconds, calculating the height of the unseen pivot from the slowness of the swing. Ted watched it impersonally—he had known from the end of the fight that escape to the *Narwhal* was not possible in the few minutes that remained. He glanced at Alan. In the flickering torchlight his friend's face was alight with interest, without sign of fear. Ted exulted. Good old shrimp—he had more courage than men twice his size!

Faster, faster, faster the huge mass swung. Steenerson lay as he had fallen, crying weakly, sobbing in his throat.

Chapter Fourteen

THE pendulum struck the side of the bell and fell away. . . .

The crash was devastating. Like the bellow of a thousand huge cannon, like the roar of titanic thunder—a crashing, smashing, destroying blare that laid Ted and Alan prostrate to endure racking pain. The helmets protected them to a certain extent, but as the sound swelled to a death-dealing blast of stupendous volume, their bodies seemed to contract and cringe while taut nerves twisted in torment.

There was little impulse to thought. But Alan did think of his suits, wondering if they merely prolonged the torture or if, with the helmets, they might pull their owners through.

To Ted, looking blankly up into the dim vastnesses of the bell, the roof lifted in the air—up, up, up! And every ascent made more room for the swelling clamor, with its overtones of shrieks and cries, its harmonics of agony and corroding torment.

Alan saw the flame of the torch weave itself into strange patterns, responding to the blast of sound as the ocean had responded. It was crisscrossed with ridges of light, burning blue and red in strange designs. Then, as if tortured out of existence, it suddenly hissed into darkness.

Automatically, Alan groped for the flash. When he pressed the button, the light fell full on Steenerson. He lay as he had fallen, but with his body twisted and bent as if by some great machine. There were flecks of foam on his lips, and blood ran from his bitten tongue. Only his eyes implored, and these seemed filmed with the beginning of death.

For five minutes that seemed like five days the sound persisted. Then slowly, lingeringly, it died away. But even as they gasped in relief, and Ted struggled slowly to his feet, the rope of the chain tautened and again, inexorably, the huge pendulum drew to one side. Steenerson gave a cry. Ted could not hear it through his helmet but he read the words on the writhing lips.

"Kill me, kill me!" begged the gold runner. "Spare me more torture—kill me!"

Once more Ted turned away, torn by the pity of man for man.

He was racked, too, by anxiety for Alan. He looked down at him with deep concern. Alan's face was twisted in torment but his eyes were clear. He beckoned weakly. Ted knelt beside him, opening his ear flap to hear.

"Don't know—if can stand another," whispered Alan. "If not—glad it ended like this—together."

Ted crushed his hand. "Keep your nerve!" he cried. "I've a plan."

Hurriedly he fastened his ear flaps, then grabbed the knapsack. With that in one hand and the flashlight in the other, he staggered across the floor. Would he be in time? Would his plan work? Or would it only add to the unbearable power of the bell?

The rope on the pendulum drew the clapper on toward the side, slowly but relentlessly.

With trembling fingers Ted yanked a powerful Herculesium cartridge from his kit and thrust it close to the gigantic support of one of the great arches that flung upward to shadowy heights. It was a difficult job; the vibrations had affected his eyes, making them magnify. His fingers seemed hams, the cartridge a huge cylinder, the fuse a cable. Doggedly, however, Ted adjusted the explosive for action.

Then before he could light the fuse, the rope slackened, and again the huge clapper swung its slow arc across the bell, again it crashed out the golden doom, again the sound struck at them as with Thor's hammer.

Ted fell heavily; the vibration blow was terrific. He had the momentary impression of a wind as powerful as a cyclone—and the torture began again. He felt as if his blood were being sucked from his body, as if his brain would soon explode, as if knives pierced his vitals.

As the unspeakable overtones clamored, he heard a hundred giant bells, ringing now here, now there. Then, it seemed, they all struck at once. Resounding, stunning, stupendous, the huge vibrations swept him into an anguished daze made horrible by some all-pervading quality of revoltingness in the atmosphere—something sickeningly repulsive, ghastly and unclean.

Time stood motionless, it seemed. Seconds passed as hours. Every vibration tore at taut, tormented nerves. . . .

Slowly, at last, the reverberations died away. Slowly Ted recovered. His mind hounded him into action.

Alan. Back there. Steenerson—dead! Get up. Do something—something. Cartridge! Light—

He struggled to his knees, clutching the flashlight. Slowly he crawled to the arch where he had flung the Herculesium cartridge. With hands that shook almost uncontrollably, he struck a match and touched it to the fuse. Then, making an effort that took all the strength he had, he staggered to his feet and tottered back to Alan.

Once more the giant pendulum was moving to one side. Ted realized it with despair. Alan stirred feebly, looking up at Ted with a blank, unseeing gaze. Ted flashed the light in Steenerson's face—then turned it hastily away. Steenerson lay dead, face distorted, black tongue protruding, eyes staring.

The rope slackened and the pendulum swung. Groggy with agony but defiant to the last, Ted watched dully. They could not stand another crash, even with the helmets. He had failed. This was the end of the long trail he and Alan had tramped together.

"Been—good—life!" muttered Ted. "Been—good—"

The pendulum struck.

But at the same instant the Herculesium cartridge exploded! The crashing reverberation from the swinging clapper was swallowed in the scream of tortured metal as the explosive blasted the great arch. The crashing bellow of the giant tocsin changed to the shriek of a giant in pain. The sonorousness of the bell was gone. Its shriek became sepulchral, muffled; its clang became mere din; its malignant power grew less corroding. Within Ted surged new courage; he dared to hope. *Perhaps, after all, they need not die.*

The dolorous cadences died into whispers that ended in silence. Overhead the pendulum swung slowly back and forth, back and forth, ever shortening the length of its swing, as if those who pulled upon the rope had finished their task.

Ted knelt beside his friend. "Alan!" he cried softly. "Alan!"

For a moment he saw only blankness in the eyes that stared up into his. But soon realization flickered into them. It steadied, deepened, and Alan spoke.

"You risked using explosive? Good work, mastodon!" Then, after an instant of silence he asked: "Steenerson?"

Ted shook his head. He lay down beside Alan and made him remain quiet for half an hour. Finally, feeling some strength flowing back into his tortured body, he assisted Alan to his feet.

"What about Steenerson?" Alan asked again.

"Dead. There." Ted pointed the light beam at the withered body. Steenerson had shrunk, as if to a mummy of many thousand years. Ted thought of the small native on the bier of boughs. This, then, was the death of the bell.

"He deserved death," Alan said slowly. "But—"

Ted turned the light away. "Let's go. Here, I'll carry the kit bag. We'll hit for Jamish's tunnel."

It took all Ted's strength to get Alan safely down the ladder that led to the tunnel. And both found it a long, long walk to the open. But at last the flickering, spectral lights appeared—and then Ted and Alan were standing free, with the *Narwhal* a scant half mile away.

"Behind us," Alan mused weakly, "we've left a gigantic death-dealing mechanism, dating to an unknown culture of an unknown age, balked for the first time, doubtless, of its victims."

"We're going home!" Ted announced firmly by way of answer. Yet he made no move toward the *Narwhal*. He spoke again. "But first—"

"I know," agreed Alan, understandingly. "How many have you?"

Ted thrust his hand into the kit bag, feeling, counting. "Seven. That should be enough. Just enough. See here—we'll eat before I tackle the job. Maybe some hot chow would take that caved-in look off your face."

They reached the *Narwhal*, and Ted dug out cans and the alcohol stove. The warm food revived them both, and after a brief rest Ted found strength enough to whirl the *Narwhal* into the air for the short trip back to the beach where he had met the giant beast, sentinel of the golden dome—the dome that had been for centuries a dreadful instrument of torture.

"Coming with me?" asked Ted while they were still in the air.

"Of course!" answered Alan.

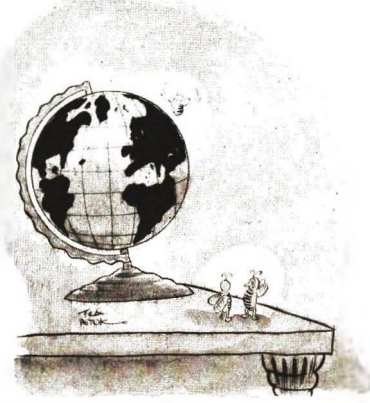
In the little rubber boat, they rowed to shore. With slow steps they walked to the outer edge of the great bell.

"What is your plan?" Alan asked.

"I'll wriggle into the slit, blow down a section of that palisade of bars, get into the interior, place a cartridge against each of the six arches still standing, and come hustling out again."

"Sounds all right. I'll help with the job in the interior."

Ted didn't argue; he knew nothing could persuade Alan to let him go back into that torture chamber alone. But blowing down the bars came first. He crawled into the slit; it took him five minutes to reach the bars. Then a ten-minute fuse should be ample. He got out a cartridge, laid and lit the fuse, his every move deliberate and sure.



"There goes that show-off on another non-stop flight around the globe."

It was without hurry that he emerged. "We have five minutes—let's go a hundred yards away," he suggested.

The detonation was muffled, dull. Returning to the bell, they crawled into the slit, to find that the explosion had shattered half a dozen bars—the way was open!

Side by side they walked on into the torture chamber, their faces impassive in the light from Ted's flash. Determination drove them on. But they shuddered as they passed the shrunken body of their enemy, and when they saw the huge clapper still swinging gently, both felt a clutch at the heart.

Ted placed three cartridges and Alan three. The fuses were set for fifteen minutes. Unhurriedly, Ted lighted them all—then he and Alan went back the way they had come. And it was with a sigh of relief that they greeted the "sunlight," as Ted insisted on terming the peculiar illumination.

On the beach they waited, watching, weary and pain-racked. Then six explosions, in as many seconds, awoke screaming echoes from the great bell—but they were harmless! Alan and Ted listened, unshaken, to the deafening roar of tormented metal as six arches crumpled under the power of the explosive. They gasped, however, at the sight they saw.

With its supports crumpling, the great golden dome suddenly trembled, cracked, *and fell into itself!*

As the echoes died away, Alan and Ted looked into each other's eyes, thinking the same thought. There would be no more terrible deaths, no more would the tocsin of doom suck blood and strength from human bodies; no more would savage justice or savage revenge find evil satisfaction in the torment of the bell. . . .

"Now what?" asked Alan at last, his face still shadowed by awe but his eyes alive with relief.

"Back up the coast. Rest a while. Then go home!" Ted answered.

"O. K. But first we'll quarry out a block or so of wealth for you. We can carry a million dollars or so in this heavy gold."

"Don't want it," answered Ted.

"But why not? I've plenty of course, but you need pay, and deserve plenty for a tough, risky trip like this."

"I don't want any of this gold. Get in the boat, shrimp."

Alan shook his head, and let it go at that. There was something in Ted's voice that stilled his protests.

They rowed out to the *Narwhal*, and Ted flew the big plane up the coast and anchored where they had first left her. Here their first act was to undress and get out of the suits that had played so great a part in their preservation. It was soon done. For almost at the first touch, the shimmering suits fell apart, leaving nothing but fragments.

"My word!" Ted said, awed. "Why, Alan?"

"Do you need to ask? The vibrations that killed Steenerson disintegrated those suits. If we hadn't had them on, those vibrations would have disintegrated us."

"Let's go home!" Ted urged, after a moment's silence. "I—I want a beefsteak and some French fried and a couple dozen of Oki's biscuits."

They were too tired out, however, to start at once. For the next two days they did nothing but rest, sleep, and eat. They knew they must recover some strength. Both were conscious of nerves badly in need of repairs; both had violent headaches and suffered from distorted vision. But forty-eight hours worked a cure and on the third day they were ready to leave.

"This is our last meal in Subterrestria," Ted remarked, stirring a steaming concoction. "Which suits me fine. Only—" his spoon slowed—"I hate to go without saying good-by to Jamish. It seems like forgetting a good pal. But I suppose he and his tribe are all hiding out somewhere, scared stiff."

"Probably. I've been watching for him though, thinking he'd pull himself together and come back to look for us."

"I'm going to row ashore and call! Here, you stir this, and don't let it scorch. If I find Jamish, we'll give him a farewell feed."

Ted rowed ashore and shouted: "Jamish! Jamish!" No answer. He strode toward the woods and called again and again: "Jamish, Jamish!"

At last he rowed soberly back. Silently he and Alan ate their deferred meal. Then they took off.

The *Narwhal* rose with a roar, but as Ted turned her blunt nose north, Alan gave a cry:

"Jamish! There he is, Ted. Look!"

Ted gazed down through a funnel-like rift in the spectral atmosphere. Below them, a lonely little skin-clad figure stood with arm upstretched in farewell. Jamish had conquered his fear and come to say good-by.

"Stout fellow!" muttered Ted. He dipped the plane in a magnificent salute and shouted down: "You're a great guy, Jamish. Take care of yourself!"

And the *Narwhal* roared on.

The journey home was almost without incident. It was marked, however, for both by a change of mood. Their depression lifted as they sped out of the great central opening at the north pole. The dolor and misery of mind that both had suffered since first they had sped into the interior simply blew away with the northern winds. Alan thought the spectral fires of the interior of the earth might have affected their brains. Whatever the case, their spirits rose with every mile they made away from Subterrestria and the shattered remains of the tocsin of doom.

They stopped at Greenland for more gas; then the *Narwhal* took them home.

Alan wanted to go at once to Washington and report; Ted insisted on a wait of a few days until they again oriented themselves to a lesser air pressure, a greater gravity. Nor would he go with Alan.

"I can't talk without spilling things, and you can. You just won't tell those fellows anything!" he explained.

Well he knew that Alan would not disclose where they had been or what they had done lest others follow Steenerson's example and bring new chaos to a world that has gold enough.

So Alan went alone to Washington to report that the quest was finished and the flood of gold completely dammed. All questions he met with evasive answers. All offers of reward he declined. As soon as possible he headed back home.

Back in the familiar apartment, with Oki making biscuits and broiling several pounds of steak, he looked down at Ted, loafing contentedly on the *chaise longue*.

"Mastodon, you need money. *Why* wouldn't you bring out a block of gold?"

A queer look came into Ted's eyes. "All right, if I've got to, I'll tell you. I want to forget things. That gold wouldn't let me. Every time I used any of it, I'd think of ghastly flickering lights, and that awful clamor and torture . . . and shrunken bodies. . . . See?"

Alan's nod was understanding. Yet he smiled a little as he recalled, "And at the start you had such a hard time believing things!"

But it is only in the lamp light and together that either he or Ted can smile at any thought of that adventure. In quiet hours alone, in wakeful moments in long nights, each hears again the stupendous sonorousness of the great bell, and each, hoping the other will not know, shudders at the memory of the tocsin of doom.

(THE END)

George Long *and the* Movie Sign

by Ray W. Sherman

Safe Driving No. 2

NO HOME WORK Friday night. So George Long let his eye roam to the sign over the Orpheum Theater as he drove to the station to meet his father's six-ten train.

This, thought George, is going to be a swell evening. Mary Grange won't have any home work either, the picture is June October in *The Mystery of the Attic*, and that colored comic must be the sidesplitter Bob was talking about this—

And then it happened.

A crabby old gentleman by the name of Samuel Bailey, who tended people's furnaces on days when he didn't forget, let out a roar as George's fender poked him in the shins, and shook his gnarled cane and declared he was going to sue various and sundry persons for fabulous amounts.

"Now why," groaned George under his breath, "did I have to pick out him to hit?"

For from nowhere Samuel Bailey had appeared in front of George's car and before George could stop, the crabby old fellow was leaning on the front of the car, clutching a handful of ornament and delivering a loud oration.

From the nearest corner came a policeman, attracted by the yells of Samuel and the gathering crowd. Main Street was blocked. The policeman tried to ascertain what it was all about and as near as he could gather from Samuel's statement there had been murder. It took the policeman some time to jot down all the names and numbers and things required by the desk sergeant—and George was ten minutes late meeting his father.

"Smatter?" demanded Dad Long.

"Old Sam Bailey jumped in front of my car," explained George.

"Hurt him?"

"No. Guess not."

"Humph!"

"Don't know how it happened," George explained. "I was driving up Main Street and the first thing I knew there he was—right in front of the car. I stopped dead in my tracks. But the bumper brushed him a little, he roared like a bull, the cop wrote it all down, and Sam says he's going to sue you and me and all our relations."

"Forget it," said Dad Long. "Insurance covers it. He probably isn't hurt anyway. I'll report it and they'll have a doctor on him before he has time to get all tied up in dirty rags."

George told his story to the insurance man and it turned out not too difficult to pacify the uninjured Samuel. The insurance man said he guessed the old fellow was pretty much to blame and George felt relieved. But he wouldn't have felt so easy had he suspected what really had happened, for it marked George as a punk driver.

He had done the unpardonable thing. He had taken his eyes off the road when seconds counted. George had become adept in handling a car. In emergencies his reaction time was fast. He had narrowly missed several times but had managed to avoid even a pinged fender since his earliest driving days.

The scientific analysis of what happened was something like this. George was doing around thirty, as were other cars on this light-controlled main thoroughfare, when he passed the moving picture theater. He let his eye wander to the sign. His eye was off the street only a single second. But in that second the damage was done.

At thirty miles an hour, his car was going forty-four feet a second. Multiply your miles per hour by one and a half and you'll have close to the feet per second you're doing. In the sixtieth part of a minute that George's eyes were off the street, his car went forty-four feet without a driver. A ton and a half of metal and rubber and stuff floated along Main Street with no control and with a powerful engine pushing it.

George planned always to be able to stop in the clear distance he could see ahead. He had been schooled in the old basic principle of never outdriving his eyes. But in this case his eyes quit driving for a while. Old Samuel saw the car coming and decided to cross the street, knowing the car should be able to stop if it had to. It would slow down at least, he figured. So he started across. But the car kept coming. Then the old man became terrified. He stood still and began to yell. George began to screech his brakes. He almost made it. He went ahead only a half foot after the bumper touched the pedestrian. Six inches would have avoided the accident. And George had wasted eighty-eight times six inches when he flicked his eye to the sign for the sixtieth part of a minute.

Thousands of drivers do this. They look at signs, at scenery, at nothing at all, or turn their heads to talk with passengers in the rear seat. And thousands of them get away with it. But every year a few of them crack up. Nobody can ever tell that it was the "eyes off the road" that did it, for there's no way of knowing. The driver might suspect the truth but he won't tell. Generally he's too upset to remember much about it. Then the policeman under "cause of accident" writes "exceeding the speed limit" or something of the sort, the reason gets into official records at Washington and elsewhere, and there is a great hue and cry about "speed" when speed had nothing to do with it. George's speed was safe if he had watched the road.

But you can't keep your eyes on the road all the time? Then don't drive. Driving is hard work. If you aren't willing to work at the job, let someone else drive. If you're doing sixty on an open country road and flick your eye to the scenery for two seconds your car has gone 176 feet, a thirtieth of a mile, without a driver.

There's this to be said about it too: The eyes-off-the-road driver makes riding miserable for those who ride with him and there is no greater offense in driving than that. One should always keep his passengers comfortable physically and at ease mentally.

Some drivers turn corners at speeds that chuck the rear-seat passengers sidewise. Remember that there is little for the rear-seat passengers to hang onto while the driver has the wheel for support. In approaching a corner, slow down and make the turn easily. Your passengers may not realize what made

Mr. Edsel Ford says:

"You get more fun out of driving if you drive well—just as you get more fun out of baseball if you are a good player. This article will help you to be a better driver."

Edsel Ford

the ride so pleasant but they will remember that they enjoyed riding with you.

But mental ease is far more important. A person can stand a great deal physically but strains on the nerves can be damaging. They certainly can ruin an otherwise enjoyable trip. Even people who know little about driving sense that a person is or is not a skilled driver. No matter how little they know, they know you can't drive blindfolded, and that's what the driver is doing who is constantly looking away from his job. Passengers are often thoroughly miserable.

You may drive with roving eyes and you may feel you still have built up a good driving record. That may all be true but the fact remains that it is punk driving and really good drivers don't do it. A skilled driver knows more than merely how to handle a car. He knows he is the sole control over a couple of tons of metal and things—and over the lives and happiness of his passengers.

Next month: Have you ever come up behind a slow truck, your own car going seventy? How much stopping distance did you allow yourself? Read Ray Sherman's April article.

IN THE MORNING MAIL

(Continued from page 2)

over the questions with more curiosity than interest, and devoting an hour to a painstaking essay entitled "Why I Like Basketball." That was the only question in the entire booklet with which I felt at home.

Having devoted two hours to the booklet I rose to leave. A large man at the door informed me that it took *four* hours to write this examination. I went back to my seat and looked over the booklet again. In it I found a section containing questions for the *Military Academy* at West Point. So, to use up my time, I wrote a West Point exam and added, word for word, my essay on basketball.

Some time later, the Representative of my district wrote me that I had finished last in the Annapolis exam but was at the top of the list for West Point. (Nobody else had submitted a paper for West Point.) There was a vacancy at West Point. The Representative would appoint me if I wished to go. In fact there was no way of his *not* appointing me! I was the only candidate for the vacancy.

I graduated from the Military Academy in 1930, having learned a great deal about football, boxing and other things. Since then I have been in other places, all of them hot. But Hawaii, where I have been stationed for the past two years, is the only place I have found where bulldogs can be taught to climb palm trees.

"NO BOY can appreciate your magazine quite fully," writes Walt Schoeder, Vienna, Austria, "unless he is away from home. I am studying at the Academy of Music here in Vienna and have been here over three years. I've been reading the magazine for many years and I'll continue to do so until I get a beard. Since I've left the U. S. THE AMERICAN BOY has become especially dear to me."

Schoeder's letter reminds us that the magazine is one of the ties that binds travelers to their home land. One of the travelers is Charles Brueggerhoff, San Luis Potosi, Mexico, whose father is with the American Smelting & Refining Company at that place. Charles asks for more Claudy stories, more football, basketball, baseball and aviation, all of which are coming.

"Robert M. Smith, Austin, Tex., is having cousin trouble. The cousin gets Bob's copy of THE AMERICAN BOY and Bob has to track it to the cousin's house. Bob doesn't want to hunt for his magazine when he's all set for an installment of *Doom Tocsin*.

"Richard Hile, Madison, Wis., wants Renfrew. Coming. Pat Ebert, Bemidji, Minn., wants more air adventure. Coming—a new series of Alaskan air adventures by Frederic Nelson Litten, in May and thereafter."

Space, as it has a habit of doing, is running out. Write the Pup when the spirit moves. His autographed portrait goes to the writers of letters quoted in this department.

Take a Low-cost, 6,000-mile Vacation

(*Continued from page 13*)

the red soil into turrets and castles and ramparts.

As you sleep that night, your train will roll down the Yellowstone Valley past the snowcapped region of the Little Rockies, and when you wake up you will be at the foot of the towering crags of the Absarokas, the great peaks that stand guard over Yellowstone Park.

The train will pull into Livingston, Mont., and as you pile out for breakfast in the station dining room you'll notice that the town is dressed up for a festival, the streets decked with streamers and pennants, the sidewalks crowded with ranchers in broad-brimmed hats, cowboys in leather chaps, and Indians in mixed dress. A colorful, excited crowd gathered for the famed Livingston Roundup.

In the morning you'll have time for a dip in the Yellowstone River—or, if it is too cold, a stroll along its banks. You'll watch the parade. In the afternoon you'll have a reserved section in the grandstand for three hours of bronco riding, steer throwing, roping, and barebacked races.

Grizzled braves will meet you at Mandan, N. Dak.

All the next day you will be in the Montana and Idaho Rockies, climbing over the Continental Divide, twisting through canyons, following the shores of deep-blue lakes where fishermen are angling for cutthroat trout.

At Spokane that evening you'll see the roaring falls that provides the city with its electric power, swim at the Y, and have dinner in the banquet hall of the Davenport Hotel.

More cruisers will join at Spokane, and the night of July 5 your train will take you down the historic Columbia River valley to Portland for a brief interval of sightseeing on the morning of July 6.

Seattle, built on seven hills overlooking Elliott Bay, will give you a day and one-half of thrills. Special busses will take you past Lakes Washington and Union, through the University of Washington campus, along the waterfront where ships from the Orient and South Seas are docked. The morning of July 7 you will take the streamlined ferry *Kalakala* across Puget Sound to the Bremerton Navy Yards where you'll board U. S. Navy ships. At the Frye Hotel you will meet for the first time the far western members of your party.

In the afternoon you will get settled on the *Cordova* which, for the next dozen days, will be an AMERICAN BOY ship. Late in the afternoon the gangplank will be hauled up, lines cast off, and the *Cordova* will steam north through Puget Sound, with the snowy peaks of the Cascades on the east and the Olympics on the west plainly visible in the afternoon light.

We'll have our own cruise doctor aboard and a western university graduate who will act as editor of the *Malemute*, mimeographed cruise newspaper.

There'll be no dull moments aboard the *Cordova*. When you're not looking for glaciers and waterfalls along the mountainous Inside Passage or going ashore to inspect canneries, totem poles, and salmon streams, you'll be holding round-table discussions with Irwin, Hildebrand, and other cruise leaders.

Below decks, Irwin will show his movies of Eskimo life, seal hunting, and dog teaming. He'll tell you how a violin saved him from hostile Eskimos, and how a man can outlast a blizzard at fifty below, with only a sleeping bag for shelter. Guto will assist with a few yaps of approval.

There'll be deck golf, ring toss, and shuffleboard tournaments with worthwhile prizes to the winners. There'll be a ship election with cruisers assuming the mantles of captain, mate, radio officer and engineer for a day. Treasure hunts, amateur night, songfests, and yarn-spinning will fill the hours.

Craig, Klawock, Port Armstrong, Deep Cove, Port Herbert, Waterfall, Big Port Walter and Little Port Walter, Wrangell and Ketchikan—at these ports hidden in the lee of high mountains the *Cordova* regularly calls to leave boxes of food and supplies and pick up crates of salmon, barrels of herring, and oil. You'll hear the creak of hoisting machinery and watch the slings disappearing into the hatch. You'll see Indian and Filipino cannery workers. In crystal-clear harbor waters you'll drop your hook and line into schools of plainly visible fish and haul up bass, cod, and baby sharks.

Eleven to fourteen days of cruising, depending on the number of ports of calls the ship must make, and then back to Seattle. Going east, your train will take you into the Cascades while there is yet light to see the cliffs and canyons and giant Douglas firs of the mountains.

The next day you will spend at Coulee Dam in Western Washington. This

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project, greater than Boulder Dam, eventually to cost a quarter billion dollars, will store the waters of the Columbia River in a lake 151 miles long. These waters will be used to irrigate 1,200,000 acres of Western Washington desert and provide electric power for cities and industries.

The dam, eventually to be 4300 feet long and 550 feet above bedrock, will be approaching the halfway mark when you visit it. Construction will be under way, full blast, as you inspect the works.

At Helena, the next day, you will see ore smelters and rock crushers. Helena was once a boom mining town. Today it is the spick-and-span capital of Montana.

At Billings you will leave the train and climb into special busses for a ride over the famed Red Lodge Highway, which winds through the Montana and Wyoming Rockies at altitudes above 10,000 feet.

The cruise will officially come to an end in Chicago, on or about July 24, with a breakfast at the Union depot—your last get-together with friends from many states. Then you, too, will be an alumnus of The American Boy Alaska Cruise—a rapidly growing army bound by a common experience into lasting friendship.

In Chicago, leaders will arrange to see each cruiser to train or buss for the trip to his home town. In Seattle, cruisers will be given telegraph blanks on which to wire their homes the hour of their arrival in Chicago.

Further details are in the cruise folder. Since enrollments must be limited in order not to crowd the *Cordova* we suggest that you send for the folder today.

Trouble on the Survey Line

(*Continued from page 10*)

party. At his request, the levelman accompanied him farther back and set up his instrument on the exact spot the ruined one had occupied. He then led the way to the place where the moose had been shot. Deploying about through the scrub, Connie and Old Man Mattie succeeded in finding two empty cartridge cases. One was a .300; the other a .303. And Connie noted that from where the .300 shell was picked up the instrument offered a clean-cut target at a distance of a hundred and seventy-five yards. A hit at that range would take good shooting but wasn't impossible.

Pocketing the shells, Connie returned to the transit party and, with Davis's help, repeated his investigating procedure, using the damaged transit to mark the spot where Hensley was shot. This time they found three empty cases, a .300, a .303, and a 30-40. As in the case of the level, the instrument offered a clear target from the point where the .300 shell was picked up. And the range was about the same.

"Good shooting," said Connie. "Done by an expert marksman. Funny that after two perfect hits he'd miss the next time so far as to kill the transit man. Hensley had his eye to the instrument, and the bullet caught him square in the temple, didn't you say? That would be well above the middle of the instrument, and both wrecked instruments were hit almost squarely in the middle."

"You mean," asked Davis, "that you believe Crosart deliberately tried to kill Hensley?"

"It certainly looks as though whoever killed Hensley tried to kill him."

"It was Crosart all right!"

"That," Connie said dryly, "needs proving. We'll examine the body now."

He found that Hensley had been shot in the left temple, and that the bullet, passing behind the left eye, had come out at the corner of the right eye, shattering the bone. He examined the wound with his glass, then drew the blanket over the body, and turned to Davis.

"Show me now where you were standing when you heard the shot."

"I was right at the next stake." Davis led the way. "I stood right here, facing Hensley, holding my rod for a sight. He was adjusting his instrument, with his eye to the eyepiece."

"And the shot came from where?"

Davis pointed to the southwest. "From over there, in the direction of the M.R.D. line."

"You started to run toward Hensley as soon as you saw him fall?"

"Yes. I heard the shot, and saw Hensley fall. Then I yelled for Mike, and ran."

"When did you see the other man running—the man you thought was Crosart?"

"While I was running toward Hensley. I was about here." Davis walked toward the instrument, pausing midway. "You see, it's quite open here. I could see him running across the rocks over there along their line."

Connie nodded. "That checks with what Crosart told the inspector—that he ran back toward his own instrument when he heard the shot. Only he said the shot came from this direction."

"He lied!" exclaimed Davis. "He ran just after he shot, and probably he figured I saw him; so he told that story. He's clever all right."

Connie nodded, and stood silent, drinking in every detail of the terrain between the two lines. Finally he turned to Davis. "When you first told your story, you said that both times the instruments were smashed there had been several shots fired, but the time Hensley was killed you heard only one shot. That right?"

"Yes. I'm sure I heard only one shot."

"All right. And if you'll show me where Mike was, I guess that'll be all you can do for me right now."

"But—aren't you going over to hunt for the empty shell, the way you did in the other two places?" asked Davis.

"No. We wouldn't find any shell. Where was this axman?"

With a puzzled frown Davis turned and led the way back, past freshly cut stumps of small spruces and underbrush. He paused on the edge of a tiny natural clearing and pointed to a cluster of small stumps. "Mike was clearing out this clump of brush. He threw down his ax right here, and ran after me to Hensley."

Connie's eyes searched the ground.

"Look here," cried Davis, "you don't think Mike shot him, do you?"

Connie grinned. "No. Hensley was shot with a gun, not an ax." He stepped into the small clearing, his eyes still intent on the ground. "Someone's camped here recently," he said.

"Yes, an Indian family—man and squaw, and a couple of kids. They had their tepee right square on the line here. The man was a surly cuss—pretended he couldn't speak English. Hensley had told him he'd have to move his outfit—told him a couple of times and got plenty emphatic. But the Indian never budged. We were right up to the edge of the clearing, and Mike and I were going to have to pull the tepee down next thing we did. But I guess the Indian pulled it down himself after the shooting, and vamoosed. Scared stiff probably."

Connie nodded. "Do you know his name? Or where he was going?"

"No, I don't. Say! I see what you're after. Maybe the Indian saw Crosart shoot! If he did, we've got Crosart!"

"First we've got to get the Indian."

"Perhaps he hasn't gone far," Davis suggested. "That probably was his canoe I took to get to Fort Simpson."

"I'll look for him presently. You can go on now and join your party, but will you send that axman, Mike, back here? I want to talk to him. Tell Summerdale he can bury Hensley whenever he's ready. And ask him to take good care of the ruined instruments. So long—and thanks for your help."

When Davis had gone, Connie walked back along the Eureka line to the damaged transit. On reaching it, he turned at a right angle, and walked swiftly toward the M.R.D. line. After proceeding a scant fifty yards, he paused and glanced about him. Then, closely followed by Old Man Mattie, he began searching the ground at the base of the

(*Continued on page 26*)

small clumps of scrub in the vicinity, dropping to his knees at each clump. Finally, at the seventh or eighth clump, he gave a grunt of satisfaction, stood up, and peered between the screening branches toward the transit, which stood in plain view. He dropped to his knees again, stared hard at a scuffed place in the ground, and suddenly reached out to pick up a tiny crumpled object near the base of the clump. He smoothed it out and placed it between the leaves of his notebook, got up and turned to Old Man Mattie.

"Well, we'll go back to the clearing now and wait for Mike."

"Huh," grunted the oldster. "You're goin' to lots of bother. Everyone knows that dang Crosart killed that feller. Davis an' Summerdale an' Jack Cartwright and everybody says so."

"Things have to be proved though," Connie pointed out.

The two walked back to the clearing, where the boy examined the few sorry bits of refuse left by the Indians—a filthy scrap of cloth, a short bit of rotten rope, and the few remaining pages of an old magazine. Connie flipped through the latter, then folded them and placed them in his pocket.

"Looks like them siwashes can read, eh?" observed Mattie. "Or else they like to look at the pitchers. But what do you want of that old paper? You ain't got no time to read—you got to be provin' things." His tone was scornful.

Connie merely grinned. "Somebody's coming," he remarked. "Guess it's Mike."

The man came swinging on and announced, "I'm Mike Breen. Ye wanted to see me?"

"Yes. You were working near here when Hensley was shot?"

"Yis, sor—right back there."

"You heard the shot?"

"Sure an' I did—an' then Davis yelled to me an' we run over to Hensley—but he was dead agin we got to him."

"And did you see anyone else running?"

"I did. Over yonder on the M.R.D. line. 'Twas Crosart, the dirty, murderin' hound!"

"Did he have a gun?"

"I couldn't say if he did er didn't. But he must of had."

"Tell me what happened after you found Hensley dead."

"I wint an' got the level crew, an' we covered Hensley wid a blanket. Which was all we could do. So the level crew wint back to work agin, an' I wint on swampin' out the line."

"Where were the Indians when you went back to work?"

"Makin' tracks away from here. They'd tore down their tint, an' was packin' their stuff to the river, an' movin' fast. Ye can't blame 'em for not likin' the neighborhood."

"Was the Indian man at the tepee when the shot was fired?"

"No, he was off huntin'. I seen him go. But he probably didn't go far, an' he must of headed for his tepee right after the shootin'. If he saw it, he ain't plannin' to be no witness fer the police." Mike Breen grinned a little.

"You said the Indians headed for the river. But Davis thinks it's their canoe he took to go down to Fort Simpson. Did they camp on the river bank?"

"I couldn't say—the river's a mile away. But there was another Injun family camped there, an' this Injun from the clearin' maybe borried a canoe."

"That's all, for the present anyway. Thanks, Mike."

"Ye're welcome. An' I hope ye find the Injun an' bring him back for a witness, sor. Hensley was a hard one, but Crosart had no call to be murderin' him."

Mike Breen disappeared down the survey line, and Connie and Old Man Mattie struck off toward the river. When they reached it, they found an Indian family camped a few hundred feet downstream. A middle-aged Indian sat smoking a pipe as he watched a fat squaw mending a fish net, while several children played near by.

Connie spoke to the man in English: "Who is the Indian who was camped about a mile back there?" He paused and pointed. "The family went away yesterday. Which way did they go?"

The man only stared stolidly at him. Connie tried again, using a native dialect. No answer.

Old Man Mattie chuckled. "You might try French talk, er German, er mebbe Chinee. Can't you see them folks is Cree—an' you was talkin' Chipewyan?"

"I don't know any Cree," said Connie. "Do you?"

"Huh," snorted the oldster, "I'd think everyone would know Cree. It's a dang sight easier'n Chipewyan." With that, he spoke rapidly for a few moments, then paused for the man's answer, and reported:

"He says he don't know the man's name an' don't know which way he went. But he's lyin', 'cause he does."

Connie frowned. "Tell him I'm a policeman, and he'll get in trouble if he lies to me. Tell him I know that family went away in his canoe—you notice there's no canoe here."

Again Old Man Mattie rattled off a speech and waited while the other talked at some length. He turned back to Connie with a chuckle.

"He claims you ain't no police, 'cause you ain't got no uniform, an' besides you ain't old enough to be none. He claims him an' his woman an' kids was off on a hunt yesterday, an' when they come back their canoe was gone. It's a good lie an' he'll stick to it."

"Tell him I am too a policeman," Connie said impatiently. "Tell him why I haven't got a uniform."

The oldster shook his head: "Nope—it wouldn't do no good. He thinks I'm lyin', an' he knows I'd stick to my lie, same as he sticks to his'n. If you want to foller this here other siwash, we better git goin'."

"But—which way? Did this Indian give you a hint?"

"He didn't give me nothin'. But a man's got to use his head, ain't he? Them folks headed upriver yesterday, an' they'll go somewheres around Fort Chipewyan, onlest we overtake 'em."

"How do you know?"

"Two ways. First off, that siwash know'd about that shootin' an' you bet he know'd Davis took his canoe an' hit out down the river fer the police. So he'd head upriver, an' fast—siwashes hates to git mixed up in white folks' doin's—specially where the police is concerned. Then, them siwashes was Slavis an' so they'd hit fer their own country, up around Slave Lake."

"How do you know they were Slavis?"

"That canoe we've got—the one Davis stole off'n 'em—is a Slavi canoe. But the canoe they're in now is a Cree canoe. So if you want these folks, we got to look fer a Slavi family in a Cree canoe, headin' fer Slavi country."

"Fine!" exclaimed the boy. "That's good work, Mattie. Let's go!"

"Huh," grunted the oldster. "There ain't nothin' to this here policin' if a man uses his head."

"Can you talk Slavi?"

"Shore. I hung around Slave Lake fer years. I know most of them Slavis—all the old ones, I guess."

Tearing a page from his notebook, Connie scribbled a few words; then cut a stick, split the end, fixed the note in it, and thrust it in the ground. "Tell these people that this is police business and not to touch this or the police will punish 'em. Inspector Cartwright will come back tomorrow, and when he learns from Breen where we went, he'll come here, and he'll get this note."

Old Man Mattie talked, and the Indian nodded vigorously. Then he turned and spoke to the squaw, and the children, pointing first at the stick and then at Connie, whereupon his family disappeared into the tent, casting fearful glances back at the boy.

"Come on," said Connie, "we'll pick up the canoe where we left it and hit upstream."

When they were on the river, Connie grinned. "Mattie, you said that siwash wouldn't believe I was a policeman, but I notice you didn't have any trouble making him believe it when you told him about that paper. An' his wife an' kids looked scared to death of me."

"He, he, he," chuckled the oldster, "that ain't why they was scairt. I didn't tell 'em you was a police—that wouldn't of done no good, an' they might of fooled with that paper an' lost it. I told 'em you was crazy, an' thought you was a police. Them siwashes is scairt of crazy folks—they think they've got some kind of evil spirit in 'em. So you don't need to worry about that paper—none of them siwashes would touch it with a ten-foot pole."

"Good," laughed Connie. "Thanks for putting me right with those siwashes."

For three days they pushed on, pausing at every Indian camp to inquire for the missing Indian but getting no information. Then, late one afternoon, they came to a camp at a creek mouth where two canoes were drawn up and one of them was a Cree canoe.

As they landed, a tall Indian stepped forward, gazed intently into the oldster's face, then seized his hand and spoke rapidly in the native tongue.

"Well, by jickity, if it ain't old Crooked Horn hisself!" exclaimed the oldster. Followed then, much palaver in the native tongue, after which Mattie turned to Connie. "This here's Crooked Horn—I saved his life onct, a long time ago, an' he ain't never forgot it. I told him you was in the police, an' wanted to talk to the siwash that come upriver in that Cree canoe. He says it's his brother, name of Waiting Bird—he slipped into the bush when he seen us comin'. Crooked Horn says he'll go git him."

"Fine," said Connie. "Tell him to go ahead."

The tall Indian disappeared into the bush to return some ten minutes later with another Indian—an older man with a flat, unintelligent face.

"Do you speak English?" Connie asked.

The man nodded: "*Oui*—lit' bit, savvy Eenglis, mebbe-so French talk—work long tam Missr Gaudet, Fort Norman."

"Do you know Inspector Cartwright?"

"*Oui*—Fo't Simpson."

"That's right. He's a good man. He treats the Indians fairly."

"*Oui*—good mans."

"All right, I'm a policeman, too. I want you to go back downriver with me. There was a man killed near where you were camping, and Inspector Cartwright wants to talk to you about it. Savvy?"

The man hesitated, then turned to Crooked Horn, and talked earnestly for a few moments. Finally he turned back to Connie.

"*Oui*, I'm go. De polis want me—no good I'm ron 'way no mor'. Crooked Horn tak' care de 'oman, de l'il babies. Me—I'm tell de polis 'bout dat."

"Good," Connie replied, "we'll start now. With luck, we'll be back there tomorrow."

That evening as the three sat around a little fire, Connie talked earnestly with Waiting Bird, while Old Man Mattie listened. And the next evening, closely followed by Mattie and the Indian, he walked into the Eureka Oil Company's camp just as the outfit was about to sit down to supper. Inspector Cartwright greeted the boy with a trace of impatience:

"I've been waiting three days. Davis says you've been running down a witness—I hope he's good. Yes, I found your note, and maybe you remember

that all you said was, 'Gone upriver—back as soon as possible.' When the siwash that's camped there told me a young crazy man had left it, I was about ready to believe him. How come he thought you were crazy?"

"Ask Mattie," Connie grinned. Then he sobered. "I've brought in the man I went after—the siwash who was camped here the day of the shooting."

"Good—if he saw it, and if he'll talk. And anyhow you dug up some pretty convincing evidence right here on the spot. Summerdale says you found empty cartridge cases right where Crosart and his men stood when they fired at those instruments?"

"Yes," answered the boy, "I did. Both instruments were smashed with bullets fired from a .300."

"And Crosart's rifle is a .300," nodded Cartwright—"the only one of that calibre in the outfit. Well, at least he doesn't force a dirty job on his men—he does his own shooting. Let's hear what your siwash has to say. I hope he tells a straight story."

"He does," Connie said gravely, and motioned to the Indian. "This man knows you, Inspector, and I believe you know him—Waiting Bird. He says he used to work at Fort Norman."

"Sure, I remember him!" exclaimed Cartwright as the Indian stepped forward, a smile lighting up his dull face. "*B'jo, m'sa,*" Waiting Bird said pleasantly. "You feel pret'good, eh, no?"

"I'm feeling fair," Cartwright admitted with a faint grin. "Connie, you'd better question him."

Connie had expected that, and he had his first question ready. He put it very quietly.

"Waiting Bird, who shot the man who was killed near your camp a few days ago?"

Cartwright, Summerdale, Davis, and all the others in the Eureka outfit leaned forward to catch the Indian's answer. Could he describe Crosart well enough to identify him for a jury?

Waiting Bird said simply: "I'm shoot heem."

The circle gasped incredulously. But Connie checked their exclamations.

"Tell them why, Waiting Bird," he said.

"He bad mans. I'm shoot heem so he no kin shoot ma 'oman—ma li'l babies."

"What do you mean?" ejaculated Cartwright. "That man wouldn't have shot your wife and babies!"

"*Oui*, he shoot um pret' queek. Me, I'm shoot heem firs'. He com' to me an' say: 'You git 'way. You mov' you camp—go 'way.' But I'm ain' move ma camp—me. Two day mor', man com' wit' ax an' cut de brush in by ma camp. Nudder man's hol' oop de painted stick. Den de bad mans com' long wit' de talk-fas' gon—set oop de gon, an' I'm go roun' an git behin' de bush an' look, an' he sight de gon ri' on ma tent an' ma 'oman an' babies is in de tent."

As Waiting Bird paused, Cartwright's eyes sought Connie's in a look of compassionate comprehension.

Waiting Bird went on. "I'm know heem just wait till de man cut de brush so he kin git de good aim, an' w'en he sight de talk-fas' gon agin, I'in shoot heem ri' on de head, so he no kin keel ma 'oman an' ma li'l babies."

A long moment of silence followed. Then Cartwright spoke.

"That wasn't a gun, Waiting Bird. The man wouldn't have hurt your woman and babies."

"*Oui*, I'm know 'bout de talk-fas' gon," Waiting Bird insisted. "See um, wan tam, oop Edmonton. De so'ger mans got talk-fas' gon. He set de gon oop on de t'ree leg, sight um, lay on de belly an' pull de trig'—*put put put put put put*—shoot so fas' no kin count."

"Machine gun!" Summerdale exclaimed. "He saw 'em practicing on the target range in Edmonton, and thought the transit was a machine gun—and figured Hensley was going to blow his family to bits because he hadn't moved his camp!"

The inspector nodded gravely. "Hensley was a rough talker, you said. So he alarmed an Indian who knew both too much about machine guns and too little—and the thing happened. Hensley was the victim of his own rough tongue and circumstances."

"What will you do with the Indian?"

"Take him up to Fort Saskatchewan to stand trial. We can't let these natives get away with a homicide."

"But," objected Summerdale, "the poor fellow thought he was doing right. He was only defending his family. What do you suppose he'll get?"

"Life imprisonment probably. They won't make it a first-degree murder."

"Life imprisonment!" protested the chief engineer. "That isn't right! That man's no criminal."

The inspector motioned for Connie to take the Indian out of earshot; then he said: "Life imprisonment will be the sentence. It must be. But my report on the matter will fix things. The man will serve a year—or maybe two—then he'll be pardoned. He must lose his liberty long enough to make him realize the gravity of his act."

"Anyway," said Summerdale, "it was Crosart who smashed our instruments all right—and he's been well punished. His arrest cinched our completion of the survey ahead of his outfit, and our field notes and papers are already on their way to Edmonton. You can turn Crosart loose, for all of me. He's had punishment enough in losing these leases. And I want to tell you, Inspector, that young constable of yours is all right!"

"We think so," replied the inspector, glancing affectionately toward the boy, who was returning after rustling a plate of food for Waiting Bird.

"He did fine work on this case," Summerdale declared. "I certainly thought Crosart was guilty of that killing."

"Nussir!" exclaimed Old Man Mattie who had been standing by unnoticed. "Nussir, me an' Connie know'd he wasn't. Crosart ain't no murderer—he ain't nothin' but a dang dog-kicker!"

"Guess that's right," grinned Connie, coming up.

Cartwright eyed him severely. "What I want to know is how you found out Crosart was only a dog-kicker. How come you suspected Waiting Bird? Complete your report, Constable Morgan."

"Yes, sir. It was this way. The minute I looked at Hensley's body I knew he hadn't been killed by a high-power rifle. A solid-jacket bullet would have drilled nearly through, and a hollow-point or soft-nosed bullet would have made a much larger wound where it came out. The bullet that killed Hensley was a soft lead slug that shattered the edges of the bone. Then I began working on the direction the shot came from. Crosart said it came from this direction and Davis said it came from Crosart's. Well, they were both telling the truth. I found the place where the killer stood—it was between the two lines." Connie paused.

"I'll bite," said Cartwright. "How'd you know it was the place?"

"There was scrub that would hide the killer, and a clear view of the transit, and the ground was scuffed—and I found a shattered piece of paper that was the wadding of the charge. Then over where Waiting Bird had been camping I found these few pages from an old magazine he'd picked up, and I'd seen siwashes use scraps from magazines for wadding in their old rifles. The piece I'd picked up and the pages corresponded—same paper and same type, I mean. Guess that's all."

"An' it's plenty," Old Man Mattie grunted. "Me an' Connie done some neat policin'. It's easy when you know how."

"Looks that way," grinned Cartwright. "Funny that other siwash thought you were crazy, Connie. You don't seem much addled to me."

THE BATTY CORNER

BATTIES that baffle! Here are TEN, selected by our Staff Batographer with the aid of his Battiscope which is put together entirely by Nuts, and guaranteed to be the screwiest instrument ever invented.

Take your pulse frequently as you work on these Batties, and be sure the count does not exceed 1800 BPM (Batolutions per minute). If it does, look on page 31 for the answers to all ten questions.

1. When Angus, trusted retainer, sets forth on a motor trip through the Scottish highlands with the son and daughter of Lord Shortbreeks MacScanty, he is advised by the parsimonious nobleman that he may wire in case of trouble on the road, but to send no telegram exceeding ten words.

After the party has been gone for a fortnight the following telegram is received from Angus:

"BRUISES HURT ERASED AFFORD ERECTED ANALYSIS HURT TOO INFECTIOUS DEAD."

What was the information contained in Angus' ten word telegram?

2. On a chill November day a cat and a squirrel are descending an old walnut tree. There is a nut on the tree and a gray fieldmouse on the ground at the tree roots. As to cat and squirrel, which sees the nut and which the mouse?

3. A man climbs a tree 21 feet tall. The tree has limbs spaced three feet apart. How many limbs are there on the tree?

4. The Duke of Twiddletwirp was sitting in the library of his swank town house in London reading the latest American novel. Finally as Big Ben tolled the hour of one A.M. the Duke placed a leather bookmark bearing an oriental design between pages eleven and twelve of the novel and replaced the book in the wall case with its leaded glass panes. Then turning out the lights he took a knife and an onion from his tailcoat and silently peeled the vegetable. This done, and without turning on the lights, he rolled the onion through the doorway into his recreation room. Still in the dark he selected his favorite billiards cue, sank a few shots, then racked the cue with its fellows in the ebony rack sent him by the Rajah of Putentake. Thereupon he retired.

In this narrative what act of the Duke's was impossible of performance?

5. Which of the following words is the correct designation for a beekeeper? Bebeerine. Opthalmologist. Pediatrician. Beaker. Apiarist. Beautician. Begem.

6. A frog imprisoned at the bottom of a 30-foot well is making his escape. He leaps up three feet but slips downward two feet with every hop. How many hops will be required before the frog gains freedom?

7. The skippers of the four-masters *Bilgeful* and *Wallower* engaged in a sailing race from the harbor wharf to the Thirtymile buoy and back, a distance of thirty miles each way. The *Bilgeful's* sailing speed was ten miles per hour over the entire course, while the *Wallower* made eight miles per hour on the outward leg, and twelve miles per hour on the homeward leg. Which vessel won the race?

8. Picture a four-cornered room, in each corner a cat, ahead of each cat another cat, and a cat on the tail of every cat. How many cats are in the room?

9. My watch is ten minutes slow but I think it is five minutes fast. Your watch is five minutes fast but you think it is ten minutes slow. We plan to catch a train which leaves at four o'clock. Which one of us is successful? (Answer this question without resorting to pencil and paper.)

10. Punctuate the following sentence so that it will make sense:

Smith where Jones had had had had had had had had had had the examiner's approval.

Recruit Merritt (*Continued from page 12*)

content, he strolled along ahead of the panting older man. They took a steep slant through spiky algarroba, then over a knoll and down into a sunless glade, rank with wild banana and sword grass. The next knoll was higher. At the rise beyond, the trail began to zigzag.

The foothills were behind. Now the real work began. Above them, the sheer face of the mountain hung in dizzy slants and creeping rises. Not much more than 4,000 feet in actual, plumb-bob height, but nearly four miles of narrow, back-breaking trail the way you had to go it.

Merritt took the rise with the springing, tireless surge of powerful young legs. Old Murphy labored along behind. The lush green mats of the cane fields fell away below. A puffing little engine, dragging a string of flats along the narrow-gauge tracks through the cane, looked like a crawling beetle.

When old Murphy shifted the coil of half-inch safety rope to his other shoulder, it left a dark line of sweat on his faded denim blouse. As he and Merritt rounded a sharp angle of rock, a puff of breeze, cool and wet from the sea tumbling a half mile below, struck their faces. Murphy sighed and opened his mouth to drag it deep into parched lungs.

But it hit the uptilted brim of Merritt's broad campaign hat and sent it whirling over the cliff edge. Merritt snatched at it, and barely caught his balance on the crumbling lip of the path.

"Wear your chinstrap down," Murphy

growled, "an' you won't be losin' good hats."

Merritt laughed, still looking after it. Then he said, "It isn't lost. It caught on a clump of lantana, about ten feet down. I'll get it."

"You'll do no such thing. Git goin' up this trail," Murphy ordered. "The outfit ahead'll have to wait long enough for us, as it is."

Panama Murphy was a noncom, and a senior one. And an order was an order. But not to Merritt. He wouldn't know—as Murphy did—that the red soil of Hawaii is loose volcanic ash. Roots are not much firmer in it than they would be in sawdust. He had never stepped on an apparently solid ton-weight boulder and found, after it crumbled and threw him, that a lump of weathered lava is little better than so much clay.

He saw only that the cliff-side shelved out for a few feet before it dropped away to nothingness. The hat had caught on a gnarled scrub at the edge of the shelf. Laughing at an old man's caution, he caught a tough branch and swung down.

Reaching the hat was simple. He jammed it firmly over his ears with his free hand and started back.

The lantana hadn't taken much strain on the way down. Its short roots had no more than stirred and loosened in their powdery red stuff. Coming back—supporting the lifting tug of a hundred and seventy pounds—was a different matter.

Merritt caught a wrist-thick stem and pulled himself up, reaching for a new grip with his other hand. The stem came away from its moorings in a shower of dirt. Merritt, off balance and falling, grasped frantically for another hold. Before he got it, his body to the waist was dangling above six hundred feet of empty space.

The new clump, a little sturdier, was holding. But it wouldn't hold long. Already the dirt was lifting and cracking at its base. Merritt knew it. Murphy knew it, but he wasn't wasting any time thinking about it.

His movements were suddenly twenty years younger, quick and sure. Before half of the few seconds which Recruit Merritt had left him were up, Murphy had made a hitch in the safety rope and slapped the loop down along Merritt's shoulder.

"Git your leg through that loop," Murphy snapped. "Pull it up around your thigh an' do it quick!"

Merritt freed a hand and set the loop for his foot. Old Murphy wasn't watching. He was looking for an anchor. There was thirty feet of the rope. Twenty of it was down with Merritt. And there wasn't a sizable tree within a hundred feet.

There were two rocks imbedded in the trail beside him. But he couldn't be sure they could be trusted. And the rope, once Merritt's full weight hit it, would cut through the soft dirt underneath them like a knife through cheese.

The rocks were close together, though, only some six inches apart. Old Murphy did the one thing he could think of. Taking a double turn of the rope about his right wrist, he threw himself along the trail behind the rocks, his right arm through the crevice between them.

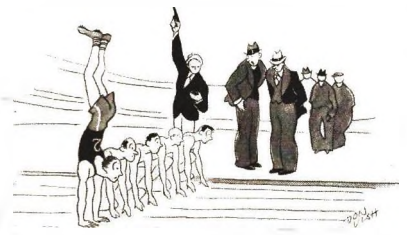
"All right, son," he called. "Just take it easy. I got you snubbed, an' the officers' party'll be along in a few minutes, an' pull you up."

Almost before he finished saying it, there was a low snap, and a thrashing of brush below him. He might have heard another snap when the shock of Merritt's fall reached his own right shoulder, wedged between the rocks. But by that time, old Murphy wasn't hearing very well.

Thirty minutes later Bing Hardy came along with the officers' party. He saw the queerly twisted body lying motionless in the middle of the path. He dropped to his knees behind the two rocks and stared at Sergeant Murphy's right arm.

The two turns of the rope about Murphy's wrist had cut into the flesh. The hand was swollen and purplish in color. Following down the rope, Hardy saw another hand, just above the lip of the precipice, a hand with nails broken and bleeding but fingers still locked, white-knuckled, about the rope. He looked back at Murphy.

"The old fool!" Hardy swore brokenly. "He used himself as an anchor. Somebody get hold while I pry this rope loose from his wrist."



"Gurney's bunion must be bothering him again."

A dozen strong hands hauled Recruit Merritt back to safety while Hardy, cursing in a flat monotone, straightened old Murphy out on the path. He probed with gentle fingers at a distorted, caved-in shoulder.

At his side, Merritt said, "Why—why, he's hurt!"

Hardy looked up briefly into Merritt's white, strain-drawn face. He said, "About how long has he been dangling you at the end of that rope?"

"I don't know. It seemed like hours," the boy whispered. "He said he had me snubbed. But I thought he meant a—a tree, or something. How could he have held me that long?"

"He couldn't," Hardy said shortly. "He couldn't possibly. But he did. You wouldn't know how things like that are done, Merritt."

They buttoned two coats down the front, with their sleeves drawn inside. A burly captain came panting up with two wrist-thick eucalyptus branches torn from a tree down the trail. They slid them through the sleeves and lifted old Murphy gently to the improvised stretcher.

The big captain picked up one end. Hardy bent down for the other and almost bumped his chin on a broad shoulder.

Merritt said quietly, "Let me take it, sir."

Bing Hardy had always known that the Mauna Kapu trail was tough. With nothing but himself to carry, it was tough. With nearly two hundred pounds of dead weight swaying between two men on springy eucalyptus shoots, it was plain torture. He discovered that when, a quarter mile down the cliff, he spelled the big captain. The captain was a dripping wreck.

But no one relieved Merritt. A dozen asked, a dozen times. Merritt, mouth tight in a new, grim line, shook his head as many times, without a word.

He was at the stretcher end until they gently propped old Murphy up in the back seat of a reconnaissance car at the foot of the mountain and started for the hospital with him.

After they finally had Murphy safe, there were deep lines at the corners of Merritt's mouth and his eyes were too bright. If Bing Hardy noticed, it was because he was looking for it. Not because Merritt gave any other sign.

They put old Murphy's dislocated shoulder back in place, and his torn muscles took up the long task of knitting themselves back together. In a day or two, Murphy had taken his place as ranking storyteller and most querulous patient in Ward 17. The regiment heaved a sigh of relief and forgot.

Merritt didn't forget. Bing Hardy watched him and knew that. The big recruit was the first man in the gym, and the last to leave. And that grim, dogged set never left his mouth.

It was still there when he asked Hardy, "Lieutenant, is there any chance of my getting into the Bowl again?"

"Do you think you deserve it, Merritt?" Hardy asked.

"Not particularly, sir," Merritt told him, evenly. "But I'm not asking a favor, either. The regiment needs points and I'll guarantee to get them."

"The regiment may not want to see you there."

"I can take that, too."

Hardy said suddenly, "All right, Merritt. I'll put you back."

"Thanks, sir." Merritt turned away. Then he swung back slowly. "I *would* like to ask a favor, sir. Could you get me Martosik again?"

Hardy said, "I guess I could. No one else wants him."

Merritt said, "I want him."

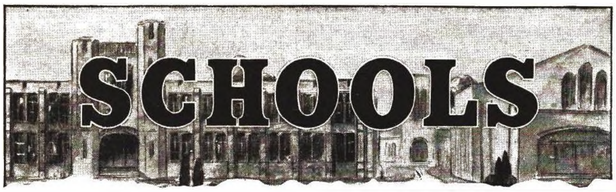
He got him. Martosik had learned a lot in the two months since he had met Merritt in their mutual debut in the Bowl.

And he had come to realize that his Slavic ancestors had bequeathed him a stamina and endurance which these other softer men couldn't match. He accepted Merritt's challenge with pleasure.

The night they met for the second time, Martosik's eyes gleamed as he watched Merritt come into the ring. He remembered Merritt.

Merritt came down the aisle and up the steps through dead silence. The

(Continued on page 30)



regiment remembered Merritt, too.

If he felt that silence, the big recruit gave no sign. Except that his lips may have been a little tighter.

Martosik wouldn't have noticed that. At the bell, he came swarming out, head lowered against that snapping left, swinging with both hands. He meant to put the pressure on.

Before he ever reached ring center, a right-hand smash caught him squarely on the chin. Martosik staggered long enough for the surprise of being met on his own terms to register. By that time, a crashing left had rocked him back another step, and another right was on the way.

Catching his balance, the big artilleryman grinned through the rain of leather and gleefully threw it back. For the next three minutes, it didn't seem to the gasping crowd that either man moved his feet.

Three rounds is not very long, as fights go. Your champion will have hardly begun to sweat, in that time. But the champion knows how to pace and save himself for grueling later rounds.

To start throwing gloves at the opening bell and never stop until you hear the bell again is a different matter. To fight at that frenzied pitch, hardly breathing from one round's beginning to its end . . . well, your champion would have more sense than that.

Merritt didn't. Maybe he thought of it fleetingly at the end of the first when he saw Martosik go back to his corner, seemingly undamaged.

But he came out the same way in the second. And the third. Martosik did no backing up, either. This stuff was right down his alley.

In the third, he proved that he was in better shape than Merritt. Merritt's change of attitude in the gym had come a little late. His punches began to lose their steam. He was no longer keeping Martosik off by sheer pounding.

Martosik felt the power going out, and came driving in for the kill. A clubbing left, high on the cheek, upset Merritt.

The recruit didn't try to take a count. But wobbly legs took just so long to do their job. He was up at five. Martosik had the range and an overhand right sent Merritt down again. He came up painfully.

The second in his corner, subbing for Panama Murphy, looked around for Bing Hardy as Merritt struck the canvas the third time. The second gestured mutely with the towel.

Something snarled in his ear, and the towel whipped out of his fingers. He looked up at old Murphy, his right arm slung inside starched khaki.

"Git away from here!" old Murphy growled.

To the boy on the floor, Murphy gestured frantically with his good left hand. Murphy thought he saw a glimmer of intelligence in Merritt's glazed eyes. Murphy rumbled sounds, deep in his throat; sounds of confidence, encouragement, entreaty.

And Merritt made it. At nine, he heaved his left glove off the floor and brought it waveringly into line with Martosik's chin, just as Martosik rushed again. The left found the chin.

"That's it, son," old Murphy breathed. "That's it! Jus' keep him off. Less'n a minute to go."

But Murphy was talking to someone he had known a month before. This new Merritt snapped Martosik's head back again with that piston left. Merritt's knees had almost stopped their wobbling. The next time the left tilted Martosik's chin, Merritt set himself and drove his right hand home hard.

Martosik tried to get up. But tired elbows gave way and he collapsed, motionless, as the referee's arm came down for the tenth time.

Through pandemonium, Bing Hardy shoved his way toward Merritt's corner. Merritt had come back to stand staring at Murphy.

"Hello, Sergeant," the boy said. "I see they let you out."

"Yeh," old Murphy grunted. "Nice fight."

Merritt only said, "Thanks, Sergeant." But Hardy saw his eyes.

Bing Hardy turned and went back, glancing once at the big clock over the ring. He had a letter to get off in the morning.

Decoys in the Severn

(Continued from page 1)

"My advice is to let him think anything he wants to," Brewer said, "as long as it doesn't begin with Lee and Brewer. And we've got a date for the movies this afternoon, remember."

"My friend," Lee said, "we're as good as at the movies this minute. In another minute we will also have let Magruder know that we have not yet begun to fight."

Brewer's frenzied protest was cut short by the gong for formation.

The battalion formed on the parade, long lines of white cap covers and bright buttons; and the C.P.O. began reading off the day's orders.

Lee and Brewer, side by side, stood stiffly at attention and gazed at Magruder's motionless back. The orders droned on. Finally they were ready to march off to the mess hall . . . platoon leaders were turning on their heels . . . voices shouted commands.

Lee drew the pistol out of his pocket and got ready. When he saw Magruder shift his foot back to turn, Lee shot from the hip. A line of water flashed in the sunlight and smacked behind Magruder's ear. Steadily it played there, then drooped down and stopped. In the moat behind the platoon a tin pistol bounced on the concrete and lay still.

Magruder gave no sign that he had even felt it. Marching along beside his platoon he barked orders as usual, directing them to the mess hall. But as the platoon marched into the hall, he dropped back beside Lee. "Report to the Reina dock this afternoon. Four o'clock. Butts detail," he said.

Lee marched on as if he hadn't heard. Magruder ordered the platoon to fall out. When Lee trotted toward his seat he stopped him. "Did you hear what I said?" he demanded.

"Something about butts detail," Lee answered.

"Yeah, for you."

"Me?"

Magruder nodded.

Lee smiled. "Without any evidence, Mr. Magruder?"

"Evidence?" Red asked sweetly. Then his tone changed to a low growl. "Butts—this afternoon—for you—get it?"

"Aw, now, Red—I mean—aw, look," Lee pleaded. "You know, my Uncle Thaddeus—I haven't seen him for years—might come this afternoon. Can't you put it off to another afternoon?"

"*This* afternoon," Magruder snapped.

Brewer laughed discreetly as Lee sat down. "Nice going," he whispered—and Magruder was upon him. "You, Mr. Brewer, butts too."

"Hanh, hanh," Lee sneered as he began passing food.

Again Lee and Brewer sat disconsolately in the bow of the boat, waiting to leave for the rifle ranges. The officer's boat shoved off. Brewer punched

Lee and said, "Listen, now—no bees."

Lee turned indignantly. "Can I help it if there are bees?"

Brewer repeated, "No bees."

"O. K. No bees. We'll just be putty and take this unjustified punishment."

"You can murmur all you want to but—no bees," Brewer insisted, "or Magruder'll really hang it on us."

Lee stared. "Look what he's done already. Can you forget that? Convicted and sentenced us without a jury, without even a trial. You know what I call it?"

"Naw," Brewer said. "What do you call it?"

"Rank misuse of authority," Lee said, as he saw Magruder pushing his way toward them.

Stopping in front of Lee, he looked at him for a long time and said, finally, "No bees. See?"

Lee looked up brightly. "Sir?"

"No bees."

"Oh, O. K." Lee waggled his finger angrily at space and shouted, "No bees!" Then he said, "Look, can I go home now?"

Red stared at him. "What for?"

"I got to play class baseball this afternoon maybe," Lee said.

"No," Magruder said.

Lee looked pained. "Why, Mr. Magruder, don't you want me to die for good old 1941?"

"I'd love it," Magruder said, and shouted to the sailors to cast off.

In a few minutes the boat was in the middle of the river. The firing-detail boat had disappeared around the point and there was nothing ahead but the butts detail officer waiting on the wharf. At last Lee turned sternly on Brewer. "It's the principle of the thing," he announced. "It's our duty to do something about it. Why, Red Magruder is undermining the entire naval system."

"He's a menace all right," Brewer agreed. "So you sit still. Another fast one out of you and Magruder'll clap us both on the Ship."

"Now, look, how can he do that if we don't break any regulations?"

Brewer thought it over. "I don't know, and I don't care," he announced.

"I do," Lee said, solemnly. "I think there ought to be a test of strength—Us versus Magruder."

"*You* versus Magruder," Brewer amended. "I'm through."

Lee looked pained. "You know what I call that?"

"Naw," Brewer answered. "What do you call it?"

"Desertion," Lee said, frowning hard at the butts detail officer as the boat neared the dock. Then he clutched his breast and struggled to his feet, gasping, "Oh, my heart!" In a second he was waving like a flag, still clutching his breast and going, "Eeeeeeee!" in a loud voice. Gradually his legs failed him, he toppled to one side and before the amazed midshipmen could grab him he had gone under the water.

Pandemonium broke loose in the boat as Lee failed to come up. Some of the midshipmen were suspicious. And all of them remembered that Lee and Brewer had escaped butts detail by getting wet. So, with the perfectly good excuse of saving a classmate's life, they began to go over the side as Lee's bubbles drifted away astern and Magruder tried to stop the boat. Even Brewer joined the exodus. Magruder finally got the motor stopped and quieted the few plebes left.

Then he stood in the stern, gazing at the bobbing heads of his charges. Strangely, the expression of anger on his face gave way, and Magruder began to smile. He ordered the sailors in the boat to man the hooks.

Slowly, with the motor just turning over, the coxswain maneuvered the boat from man to man while sailors and midshipmen dragged the floating men over the side. At last there were only two left in the river—Midshipman Lee and Midshipman Brewer.

Magruder put his hand up over his eyes and looked all around as though he were an Indian. Then he said calmly, "Turn back, coxswain. Full speed ahead for the Academy docks."

The drenched men murmured delightedly. But the coxswain said, "Dere's a coupla more of 'em, sir."

"Couple more whats?" Red asked.

"Middies. See 'em, aft dere?"

Red did not turn his head as he said, "Where? I don't see any more."

The coxswain started to turn the boat toward them, but Magruder pushed the tiller amidships. "I said the Academy landing," he snapped.

"Yeah," the coxswain said, "but dere's a coupla more of 'em."

"Go ahead," Red ordered.

As Lee started swimming furiously toward the boat, he heard the coxswain say, "You goin' to leave 'em?"

"Leave what?" Red asked.

"Dem middies!"

"What middies?" Red asked.

"Dem aft."

Red finally turned his head. Lee sighed with relief and stopped swimming, sure of his victory at last. "Oh, those," Magruder said to the coxswain, "they're decoys."

Lee treaded water and looked at the butts detail officer, who was beckoning furiously to him and Brewer.

Brewer was watching him too. Finally he turned to Lee, his face sad. "Red's left us," he said, slowly. "We got to go to the butts all by ourselves."

Lee looked around at the fast disappearing boat and the too-wide expanse of the Severn River between them and the Academy docks. "Yeah, and all that work in the butts for just the two of us." Lee spat some river water and demanded: "Do you know what I call that?"

"Naw," Brewer said. "What do you call it?"

"Mutiny," Lee said as he started swimming angrily toward the rifle-range docks and the waiting officer.

Batty Corner Answers

(*Continued from page 28*)

1. BRUCE IS HURT. HE RACED A FORD. HE WRECKED IT AND ALICE IS HURT TOO. IN FACT SHE'S DEAD.

2. The cat sees the nut and the squirrel the mouse, for a cat backs down a tree while a squirrel descends head foremost.

3. Eleven limbs. The tree seven and the man four.

4. Placing a bookmark between pages 11 and 12 of an American-made book is impossible as they are both on the same leaf.

5. Apiarist.

6. Twenty-eight hops.

7. The *Bilgeful*. She made the entire course in six hours. The *Wallower* made the outbound leg in three and three-quarters hours, and the homeward leg in two and one-half hours, or a total of six and one-quarter hours.

8. Four cats. The cat "in front" is the cat in the corner diagonally opposite. Each cat sits on his own tail.

9. You catch the train and I miss it. I will try to arrive a short time before 4:05 by my watch. But 4:05 by my watch is 4:15 train time. You will try to arrive a short time before 3:50 by your watch. But 3:50 by your watch is 3:45 train time.

10. Smith, where Jones had had "had had," had had "had"; "had had" had had the examiner's approval.

STAMPS

WHETHER you are a beginning stamp collector with but a few stamps or a seasoned collector with a valuable album, it is important that you keep informed about the stamp market as reflected by the stamp advertisements in the columns adjoining this department. Read EVERY advertisement for somewhere in these columns you may find a bargain in the very stamps you need to round out your collection.

by Kent B. Stiles

PASCUA is Spanish for Easter. In the southern Pacific, 2,000 miles west of Chile, is an island called Pascua on Spanish maps, Easter Island on English. Its native name is Rapa Nui. Pascua was discovered by a Dutch admiral on Easter Day in 1722; hence its name.

Easter Island was claimed by Spain in 1770. But in 1887 a Chilean naval commander, Policarpo Toro Hurtado, was ordered by his government to make a survey of Pascua. In the following January he made purchases of island territory from the Pascua natives—and on Sept. 9, 1888, Chile formally took possession.

So this year Chile is releasing stamps inscribed *Cincuentenario Isla de Pascua*—signifying the fiftieth anniversary of the acquirement of Pascua.

This historical series is to have appropriate designs. The 1-peso value will present a likeness of the naval commander, familiarly known as Toro. On the 50-centavos will be a portrait of Eugenio Eyraud, a missionary of the Franciscan Brothers in Valparaiso, who before his death in 1868 had bestowed apostolic services in Pascua and established a Catholic mission there. The 1.20p will bear the head of Jose Manuel Balmaceda, the Chilean president who, in the face of protests by several European powers, proclaimed annexation of Pascua in 1888. The 20c will show a map of South America with the geographical positions of Pascua and Chile designated. The 30c will picture a sailing vessel, the *General Banquenado*, which for thirty years made voyages between Pascua and the Chilean mainland.

Although this stamp was released in 1937 it is typical of hundreds British Colonies will release in 1938.

But it is the design of the 10c which seems most attractive. This will illustrate statues which are among the strangest archaeological remains in the world. These are native idols found standing on Pascua. Ranging from three to thirty-six feet in height, they were cut from compressed volcanic ash obtained at the Rano-Raraku volcano. Some of the images weigh fifty tons each and were dragged into position with round pebbles used as rollers.

1937 in Retrospect

A REVIEW of philatelic 1937 discloses that approximately 1,800 major and minor varieties of stamps were released, more than in either 1936 or 1935. Literally hundreds of postal items appeared in Spain as a result of the Civil War, and if a substantial number of these are finally recognized for official chronicling in the Scott catalog, then a revised reckoning may reveal 1937 as the hobby's most prolific year since 1922.

More than 170 governments contributed to 1937's output. Seventeen of these each issued 25 or more stamps, the leader being Nicaragua with 67, followed by Guatemala, French Equatorial Africa, Ecuador and Venezuela. Of the seventeen leaders, eight are Latin-American countries, and it is interesting to note that nearly one-fourth of the year's stamps emanated from Latin-America.

Uncle Sam's 1937 record was high in comparison with recent years. Nineteen stamps were released at Washington—16 commemoratives, 2 air stamps and 1 revenue.

The year's newcomers to the family of stamp-issuing governments were Aden, which Great Britain made a crown colony; Burma, which Britain detached from India; and French Equatorial Africa, which France created by the merging of Chad, Gabon, Middle Congo and Ubangi.

An outstanding feature of 1937 was the deluge of commemoratives. In this respect all records were broken. More than 800 of these specials appeared, whereas the highest total in any previous year was 798 in 1935. More than 40% of all of 1937's stamps are commemoratives—a percentage without precedent. About 130 governments contributed, the leader being Guatemala with 43, followed by Italy, Cuba, Russia and Rumania. The United States tied with Southwest Africa for eighth rank. All these specials postally recalled some ninety different events, the coronation of Britain's King George VI being the most fruitful.

Nearly 300 air mail stamps appeared in 1937, as compared with 225 in the previous year. All but 99 of 1937's "airs" were released by Latin-American countries, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Venezuela and Peru together accounting for 120. Twenty-six governments contributed such paper.

More newspaper and postage due stamps appeared in 1937 than in 1936 but there were fewer official, semipostal, special delivery and overprinted provisional items.

—and 1938 in Prospect

HERE is Uncle Sam's 1938 stamp-issuing program—with each item subject to approval of America's No. 1 philatelist, President Roosevelt.

A new regular series will be begun, and possibly completed, before the year closes. It will comprise the current twenty-five values, plus probably 4½c and 18c. Carrying out an idea which Mr. Roosevelt conceived a few years ago, some of the stamps will present portraits of presidents. Possibly all of them will, although the high values may be pictorials. If present plans mature, the presidents honored will include the twelve who have not yet been remembered—John Adams, John Quincy Adams, Van Buren, William Henry Harrison, Tyler, Polk, Fillmore, Pierce, Buchanan, Johnson, Arthur and Coolidge. (Herbert Hoover will not be included because living men are not postally recalled.) The stamps will probably be inscribed with the dates of the men's administrations rather than the dates of births and deaths, and it is purposed to release them in the order of those administrations, thus presenting Washington first. The color scheme is not yet available.

July 27 should bring a commemorative, probably a 3-cent, in connection with the celebration of the tercentenary of the founding of New Sweden, now Delaware. Design not yet selected.

Some time in the summer another Northwest Territory commemorative may appear—to coincide with the arrival at Marietta, Ohio, formerly the Territory's capital, of a covered wagon which is duplicating a 1787-1788 trek of settlers from Ipswich, Mass., to Marietta. Value, color and design of stamp is not yet known.

United States Senator Guffey of Pennsylvania is asking for a stamp to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Lincoln's Gettysburg speech, in November of 1863. There is a strong possibility that this will appear if the Presidential set does not interfere.

On July 1 will be released another $1 duck-hunting permit revenue stamp.

If transatlantic air mail service is placed in operation this year, a special stamp, perhaps a 12c, is purposed.

Should the President agree with the postal officials, three suggested additional Constitution "sesqui" stamps will be deferred until 1939. This trio would recall the

Native idols found on Pascua serve to illustrate this commemorative of Chile.

STAMPS CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

STAMPS

Continued from page 32

first American Congress, the inauguration of George Washington as president, and the creation of the United States Supreme Court. Those events occurred in 1789, and postal executives feel they should appear logically in the "sesqui" year, not in 1938.

Thirty British possessions have placed orders with the Crown Agents for the Colonies at London for "new reign" stamps —paper with portrait of George VI. Other governments under the British flag will do likewise, and it is expected that at least 500 George VI stamps will be in circulation by the close of the year.

One French possession (French Guinea) released late in 1937 a new regular series of 22 values and is adding 10 postage dues, making 32. Three others (Mauritania, Somali Coast and St. Pierre and Miquelon) have ordered similar sets, and reports from Paris are that twenty other French colonies will do the same in 1938—all of which promises more than 700 varieties.

The following were announced on January 1, and a few of them appeared during January and February:

Settlement of Bay of Honduras commemoratives (British Honduras). Definitives to replace overprinted provisionals (Burma). Sokol Festival winter and summer sports issues; International Philatelic

This stamp pictures the proposed "Palace of the Soviets," planned by Russia as the world's tallest building.

Exhibition "specials"; a Republic twentieth anniversary series (Czechoslovakia). "Winter relief" semipostals, and a stamp honoring Authur Schopenhauer, German philosopher who was born in Danzig on February 22, 1788 (Danzig). United States Constitution commemoratives (Dominican Republic and Honduras). A set recalling the birth of Father Francesco Xavier Billini a century ago (Dominican Republic).

Also Franco-Lebanon Treaty commemoratives and a Beirut-to-Marseilles air stamp (Lebanon). Additions to current "modernization" series (Japan). Two new regular sets, one inscribed in English and the other in French (New Hebrides). North Pole "conquest" commemoratives (Russia). A series with likeness of the boy king Ananda (Siam). Semipostals (Surinam). Stamps commemorating the founding of "New Sweden" in Delaware, and a set recalling the birth, on Jan. 29, 1688, of Emanuel Swedenborg, Swedish scientist, philosopher and theologian (Sweden). Kruger National Park pictorials (Union of South Africa). An extended set of "airs" (Venezuela). A new series with head of King Peter II, and Unknown Soldier memorial inauguration paper (Yugoslavia).

And other hundreds of stamps will appear which have not yet been announced. Indeed, 1938 may be the most prolific since the World War.

LITTLE ROOM remains for this month's chat for beginners and we will devote it to a brief discussion of a subject to which the average collector pays too little attention—namely, preservation of vision.

One of philately's essential tools, from the standpoint of personal health, is a magnifying glass. Get a good one—and use it! Don't strain your eyesight examining designs and inscriptions without the aid of such a glass. Excellent vision during adult life is a precious asset, and science, having produced the magnifying glass, enables the individual to preserve that asset.

Don't pass this subject off as something unimportant. Inscriptions on many stamps are so minute that it is not possible to read them with the normal vision. In other instances, postal cancellations blot out parts of larger type and portions of designs. There are minor variations to be discovered, and perforations to be counted. Constant examination without the help of a glass will surely, in time, affect one's eyesight.

Study your stamps during natural daylight whenever possible. If research must be done evenings, let it be under only the best of artificial light.

Don't buy a tiny one-eye glass because it happens to be cheap; that would be wrong economy. Get a large one with a broad surface and a powerful lens so that all examining can be done with the vision of both eyes simultaneously.

The *right* glass will pay dividends in preservation of sight!

Stamp Collectors, Notice!

When a stamp dealer mentions "approval sheets" or "approvals" in his advertisement, it means that each person answering the advertisement will receive sheets of stamps sent on approval.

An approval sheet contains stamps attached to it. Under each stamp is marked the dealer's price. The collector may purchase any of the stamps at the prices indicated. All stamps NOT purchased are returned to the dealer; and, at the same time, money is sent to the dealer in payment for any stamps which are kept.

Approval sheets should be returned within the time specified by the dealer. No stamp should be removed unless the collector intends to purchase it. When returning sheets, the collector should tell the dealer specifically whether he wants further ones sent on approval.

A dealer advertising in The American Boy is not supposed to send approval sheets to collectors unless his advertisement clearly states that they will be sent.

Flushed from Cover

(*Continued from page 7*)

Three hours later, at eight o'clock, five very alert men were gathered in that isolated cabin, which shook from time to time as a particularly big breaker thundered in. Hal Peters lay limply on the couch, though he was in perfect health except for a nervousness so acute that lying down was agony. Donn moved about easily, making his guests comfortable, but his nerves were as taut as Hal's—the next half hour might mean success or it might bring death.

For hidden in the room was a tiny dictaphone, connected with a recording machine in a soundproofed closet, taking down with damning impersonality every word spoken in that room.

It was a game played for appallingly high stakes, played by two youngsters against three experts. But it had to be played.

"Gentlemen," Donn said quietly, as soon as all were seated, "you know much about us. We know nothing about you."

"Before more is said, may we see your passport?" the German asked with a disarming smile.

Donn produced the forged passport, pointing out its false places. The three nodded at each other, satisfied.

"We identify ourselves the same way," Ikoff said, and showed Donn their forged passports. "Now we are even."

Then, drawn by the lure of the Ruffo jewels that Hal and Donn could steal so easily, he explained cautiously that he and his companions were also jewel thieves, with powerful connections. And Donn and Hal, asking deferential questions, played their desperate game warily. One question too wise, and their goose would be cooked. A few all-important questions unanswered, and the case would not be complete.

Ikoff and his friends gradually revealed many things: that they had committed the three big jewel robberies; that they were in touch with a ring which smuggled the jewels into Baja California; that from there other operatives took the jewels to Guaymas and on to Mexico City—and that Sir Laurence Folsom was the head of the ring!

Detail by detail, the story came out, to the accompanying undertone of the coast-line surf, the swish of a stiff breeze sweeping over the deserted beach, and the mournful bellowing of a distant foghorn as the mist swept in from the sea.

"And so," concluded Ikoff, "we count ourselves in on that Ruffo robbery, eh? We guarantee you safe transportation to Mexico and final disposal of the jewels in Amsterdam, Holland. Better than that, in Mexico we pay you off twenty-five thousand dollars each in American money. Moreover, we will co-operate with you in future—"

A huge breaker thundered in and thudded near the shore with an impact that shook the cabin to its foundations. A picture on the wall swayed perilously, then fell. Donn's heart seemed to stop. Hal leaped to his feet. A deathlike silence crept over the room.

For where the picture had been, all five men could see, dangling from its cone, the little black disk that was the microphone of the dictograph.

In the face of sudden deadly menace, a man may act almost instinctively, planning as he acts. Before Ikoff or his friends could move, Donn shrieked a wild French imprecation, leaped across the room, and ripped the microphone from the wall. He whirled and

sprang at the white-faced Hal. For a single second his eyes begged Hal to understand — then his fist crashed against Hal's jaw, and Hal sagged back unconscious across a heavy arm-chair.

But Donn could not stop at that. Furiously, as if crazed with rage, he bent over the sagging body and battered at it with flailing fists, shouting accusations in French. He had only one thought—to save them both, he must make the three who watched believe that Hal alone had tricked them. He seized Hal's limp body and swung it up savagely as if to hurl it down on the floor.

Then, as he had hoped, the three interfered. They took Hal's body from him, and lowered it to the floor. But not gently. And when they closed around Donn, their eyes were wolfish.

Ikoff said grimly, with a thrust of his thumb toward Hal, "Let him live a little longer," and all three stood silent, watching Donn.

He could feel their distrust. But there was nothing to do but drive ahead. "As you will," he snarled. "Come—we will find the recording machine. It must be in the closet!"

He whirled and rushed into the next room. The silent, hard-eyed trio followed him.

"See the wires?" snapped Donn. "And the closet door is locked. We will break it open!"

He picked up a heavy chair and crashed it against the door again and again until it split and he could reach in and unlock it.

He threw it open. Inside was the recording machine, whirring almost soundlessly. On it was a pile of records, with a device to slide the used record off the top when the needle reached the edge. Savagely, Donn lunged forward, tore the records from the machine, and smashed them to bits on the floor. Then, panting, he pointed to a second wire.

"That must lead to where Giovanni could turn the machine off and on! Come on—we will find out."

He rushed back into the living room, shoved out the couch where Hal had been lying, and revealed the little switch that controlled the machine. Then, straightening, he confronted those ominous eyes.

Still silent, the trio scrutinized him.

Donn refused to recognize their distrust. "And now," he said with a thin smile, "we attend to him, eh?" He thrust at Hal's limp body with a contemptuous foot. "It is a foggy and windy night, my friends. There is no one within half a mile of here. I myself will take him out in a boat, and the sea will swallow him up!"

It was the German who spoke first. His words were mild, but his eyes were hard behind his glasses. "Take it easy," he said quietly. "We're not killing any policeman."

"Policeman!" Donn said scornfully. "Giovanni is no policeman. I have not known him forever, but I have bailed him out of jail more than once. You have seen me do it, eh, Serge? He's just a dirty rat who was planning to blackmail us."

Out of the corner of his eye he saw Hal move. Had he come to? If only he could catch his cue!

"Blackmail us?" The German shrugged.

"Yes! It is clear. He meant to plant these records somewhere and then demand most of the profits of the Ruffo robbery in return for them! You see?" Donn gazed from face to face.

No one spoke and he did not dare wait for an answer.

"Now listen," he rushed on. "If you doubt, we will bring him to! And we will get the truth from him, if we have to hold matches to his feet. We will learn where we stand!"

At last Ikoff spoke. One colorless word. "Yes."

"I will bring him to—like this!" Donn said, and stepped astride Hal's body. Holding up Hal's head with one hand, he slapped him briskly with the other.

Hal's eyes opened, and a fleeting gleam in them told Donn that Hal understood everything.

"Get up!" snarled Donn. "Will you tell the truth, or shall we burn it out of you?"

Hal struggled to his feet.

"Talk!" snarled Donn, and pinned his desperate hope to Hal's inventive genius.

Hal gazed from face to face. Then he spoke, with amazing belligerency. "No, you need not torture me! And if you have queer ideas in your head, get them out—all of you. I know what you think. You think I'm a double-crosser, and set up this machine to trap you all, and make you give me big money. Well, I'm not so big a fool—I know what a double-crosser would get from men like you! I'll tell you why I set up that machine. I set it up to protect myself. To make sure that Rene Falcounier and Giovanni Garello get what is coming to them!"

"What do you mean—exactly?" the German asked mildly.

Donn was watching Ikoff and the Austrian. If they reached for their guns—

"I mean this!" Hal stormed. "I never saw you three before. All I know is that Rene and I lay our plans to get Ruffo's jewels—and then you three move in and say you will take us and the jewels to Mexico and give us twenty-five thousand American dollars apiece. How do I know you would not kill us both in Mexico? Or refuse to give us the money? So I protect myself. Ruffo is *my* discovery. Therefore I set up the machine to protect myself—with the records I could command fair play! Understand?"

No answer except that ominous silence.

"Listen!" Hal said scornfully. "I admit you have a right to be suspicious of me. But killing me will not get you anywhere. If you feel you cannot trust me, keep me prisoner—tie me up and gag me and lock me up and guard me! Let Rene arrange to spend a night at Ruffo's house and get the jewels. Then take me to Mexico with you and we will divide our gains. I can do no harm locked in a closet—even if I wished to!"

There Donn plunged in. The lure of big money might make these men agree, seemingly, to Hal's proposal—he must play up to Hal.

"Ah, Giovanni!" he exclaimed. "Now I understand. Gentlemen, I did wrong to doubt him. But you—you are not sure of him. Then why not follow his plan? You lock him up and watch him. Tomorrow night I call up Ruffo and say I am in town for the night and will stay at his house. Pouf! The servants sleep in a separate building. I chloroform him and his wife so that they will not wake up, I get the jewels, and before two in the morning we are all on our way to Mexico!"

"Where did you get the machine?" the German rasped suddenly.

"In the jail was a private detective—a cook," Hal answered readily. "He got out on bail too. I bought it from him cheap, and he installed it while Rene was not here."

The German exchanged glances with Ikoff and the Austrian, shrugged, and turned. "Anything we decide to do, we decide and we do at our house," he said flatly. "And for the present I will take charge of your guns."

So back to the other house they drove, with Donn in the front seat and Hal in the back, both unarmed. Donn was cold with apprehension. He had sacrificed those precious records to save their lives—but their lives still hung on a thread. Their captors' greed for money had saved them temporarily, but the first mischance that aroused further distrust might be the end of everything for them both . . .

They were there, driving into the garage. At the German's command, Donn led the way from the garage into the kitchen, and on into the living room. Maintaining his air of confident ease, Donn paused by a table. He glanced down—and death peered up at him from three little white objects.

In an ash tray on the table lay the butts of three Mallard cigarets!

Donn forced himself to be casual. "I didn't know any of you men smoked Mallards," he said. "I haven't seen one since I was in London."

"Ah! Sir Laurence has come up from Mexico City!" the Austrian exclaimed with relief. "He'll know what to do."

"I informed him of the Ruffo plan," nodded Ikoff. "But there must be something else of importance to make him dare to—"

A key was turning in the front-door lock. As Donn and Hal stood rigid, eyes on the hall, a tall, hatchet-faced man admitted himself.

"Greetings, lads," he said airily, and turned to close the door.

He swung around and stepped toward the wide entrance from hall to living room. And then he stopped, his eyes staring into those of the young immigration inspector who had once caught him and deported him.

Donn was still and white. For a moment Sir Laurence was still, too. Then, as though nothing could spoil his British aplomb, he came forward. The German, Ikoff, and the Austrian, sensing something, were motionless.

"My word," Sir Laurence said casually. "Inspector Donn Kelly of the Immigration Service, eh? I've been afraid that I'd have to put an end to your brilliant career."

In the taut, fleeting moment that followed, there flashed into Donn's mind one of the things his father had taught him—that while a man is telling you what he is going to do to you, you can often get the jump on him.

The next instant, as Sir Laurence Folsom took a step forward, Donn's voice rang out: "Hal!" And with the cry, he leaped for the front door.

He flung it open. Hal was at his heels. As they hurled themselves out, two shots thudded into the jamb.

"Around the house!" snapped Donn.

They rushed across the porch and vaulted the railing as a bullet whined over their heads. Keeping to the cover of the wall, they rushed for the hedge bordering the walk to the side door. Crouching, they ran low behind it, with random bullets singing around them, and escaped into the blanketing fog.

Then, as windows were lighting up all around the neighborhood, they heard the motor of Ikoff's car roar into life.

They raced to a house that was lighted. In a few seconds the door opened, and they explained themselves. In less than a minute the police radio station in Los Angeles, prepared in advance for that call, was on the line. In another minute, over their startled host's low-wave radio, the panting young inspectors heard the tingling words:

"Calling all cars! Calling all cars! Pick up black Brandon phaeton, license number 3B-8654, carrying the jewel thieves wanted for the three big robberies, and Sir Laurence Folsom. Now in El Hondo Beach . . . Calling all cars! Calling all cars! Pick up black Brandon phaeton—"

Within the hour, the police had stopped the sleek black car and taken four prisoners. And at a slightly later hour Captain Naylor, Mr. Kelly, and a group of experts were huddling together over the wreckage Donn had made of the dictograph records. A detective lieutenant surveyed the eight parts of one record that had been pieced together and nodded contentedly.

"That's all right," he said. "Or at least it can be fixed so it'll play enough to make proof."

"Not that you boys' testimony wouldn't have clinched the case anyway," Naylor rumbled, "in all probability. But now we've sure got those guys. So Sir Laurence thought he was smart, giving us the slip in Mexico City, did he? Nice work, boys."

"What do you mean, nice work?" snorted Hal. "It was perfect—in a small way."

"And I'm tired," yawned Donn. "In a big way!"

MARCH 1938

YOUTH'S COMPANION combined with American Boy

VOL. 112 NO. 3

Cover Painting by *Edgar Franklin Wittmack*

Published Monthly by

THE SPRAGUE PUBLICATIONS, Inc.

GRIFFITH OGDEN ELLIS, *Editor* — ELMER P. GRIERSON, *General Manager*

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Remit by check or money order. On newsstands, 15c a copy.

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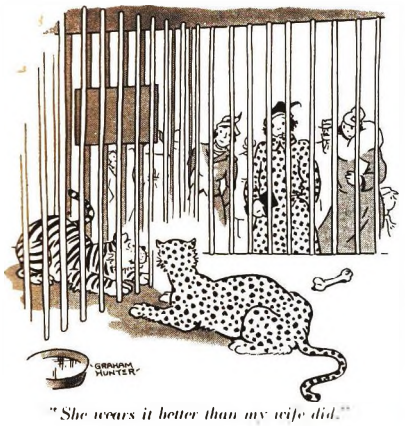

"She wears it better than my wife did."

His Best Job

"What was the best job you ever did?" inquired the first barber.

"I once shaved a man," replied the second barber.

"Go on."

"Then I persuaded him to have a haircut, shampoo, facial massage, singe, seafoam, electric buzz, tar-spray, and tonic rub."

"What then?"

"By that time he needed another shave."

Do Something!

The absent-minded sergeant had three "awkwards" under his motherly wing, initiating them into the mysteries of drill.

"Form fours!" he yelled.

His pupils looked startled and wildly counted themselves.

"Please, sergeant, there's only three of us," said one timidly.

"Well, dash it all!" barked back the instructor, "threem threees, then."

Preparedness

Betty: "Waldo is such a dear! He is going to teach me to play cards so that I'll know all about it after we are married."

Jean: "That's nice. What game is he going to teach you?"

Betty: "I think he called it solitaire."

Woolgathering

Ned: "Did you take a motor vacation last summer?"

Ted: "No. I took a Scotchman's vacation—stayed home and let my mind wander."

Queer

"'S funny it never repeats itself to me," said the student, poring over a stiff history exam.

Trading Jobs

The navigator and the chief engineer had an argument as to who was the most indispensable in operating the ship; whereupon the navigator agreed to take a try at the engineer officer's job and the engineer officer agreed to take the bridge.

After about half an hour's running, the ship stopped and the navigator crawled out of the engine-room hatch. His clothing was wet from perspiration, and his features were covered with grease and grime.

"It's no use," said the navigator. "I can't seem to make the blamed thing go again."

"Certainly not," said the chief engineer. "We're aground."

Good Evidence

The magistrate fixed the policeman with an inquiring eye.

"And what caused you to think the prisoner was not in possession of his right mind?" he asked.

"Well, Your Honor, I found him in Trafalgar Square throwing his walking-stick into a fountain and urging the lions on Nelson's Column to go in and fetch it."

What He Lacked

Victim: "That young fellow who had the next chair was a fine barber. Why did you send him back to barber's college?"

Head Barber: "He had an impediment in his speech, so I sent him back for a post-graduate course in conversation."

Absent-minded

He flew through the air
With the greatest of ease;
But the funny part was
He forgot the trapeze.

Rural Free Delivery

A Kansas farmer stopped at a bank to see if he could get a loan on his farm.

"It might be arranged," said the banker. "I'll drive out with you and appraise it."

"You don't need to bother," said the farmer, noticing a huge cloud of dust rolling up the road. "Here it comes now."

Applying the Rule

Employer: "Why did you take a whole day off yesterday? You asked for only half a day."

Clerk: "I remembered, sir, that you yourself told me never to do anything by halves."

Taking No Chances

Poet: "Does the editor live in an apartment house?"

Office Boy: "No; he lives in a bungalow in the suburbs."

Poet: "Thanks. Then I won't present this poem 'Beautiful Snow' to him."

"Gosh, things are quiet. Not a news event in two days."

"Best News you've ever heard about Pants!"

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