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VOL. IX, No. 3

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# THE FLAMINGO





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# THE FLAMINGO

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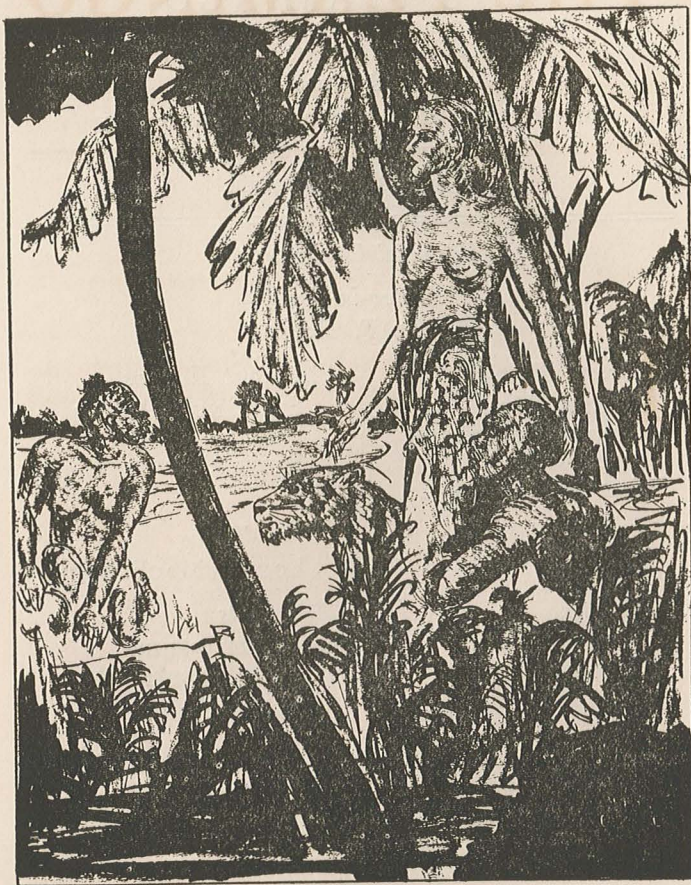
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SHE IS ALMOST WHITE IN COLOR.

# THE FLAMINGO

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## THE TIGER OF AMEN

*"The Tiger of Amen," by James F. Holden, is an exotic thriller with a monocle in its eye—suave, swift, surprising.*

JAMES F. HOLDEN

I was attracted to Sir Ronald Stillman from the start. He was one of those Englishmen one reads about, but seldom meets; a scholar, an Egyptian archeologist of established reputation, above all a man whose past life was shrouded in mystery. It was not Sir Ronald's great stature, nor his massive head, nor his brown eyes, which were luminous and deep-set, mirroring every thought, but rather his mouth which first drew my attention.

It was a red full-lipped mouth filled with even white teeth, not at all the straight, thin-lipped variety one associates with the conventional Englishman. I remember how I had stared at it, fascinated, the day I met Sir Ronald at the Explorer's Club.

He in turn stared back with an amused interest. Not taking his eyes from my face, he withdrew from his breast pocket a silk handkerchief and began wiping his lips. He wiped them, I observed, with an elaborate carelessness, a kind of gayness and suavity. My eyes surveyed him from head to foot. He was indeed immaculate, from brown tweed coat to feet, which were encased in a pair of bluchers of recent design and pattern.



"Splendid type of man," I thought.

He smiled, folding the handkerchief and replacing it carefully in his pocket. As he did so I observed a strange phenomenon. I could scarcely believe my eyes, for there upon the handkerchief were several curious pink-red smudges.

"It can't be—," I thought, "How odd, a man like that, to rouge his lips!"

Precisely at this moment Sir Ronald addressed me.

"Member of the Club?" he inquired affably.

"Yes," I replied, "an archeologist. My field of work was Egypt. I've spent two years there with Breasted, working on the upper Sudan. Trying to decipher Ethiopian cursive writing. Great problem, that."

Sir Ronald's eyes flashed. He leaned forward.

"Fascinating work," he exclaimed. Then, warming to his subject he went on, "I've given my life to it. You must certainly visit me in Devonshire where we can have a long chat, and you can look over my volumes of research. Yes, solving Ethiopian cursives is my one ambition and I believe I have the key to them."

I started, smiling with pleasure.

"Of course I've heard of your work, Sir Ronald, but I never dreamed——"

"Yes," he said, "I have the key. Also the solution." Here he paused, smiling significantly. He leaned further forward, weighing each word. "The solution," he continued, "is well in hand."

"Splendid," I said.

"Come to see me this week-end," he went on cordially. "I'm giving a hunt party for some friends and we'd be very glad to have you. Besides we can

discuss these affairs more fully in private. I'm retired now, you know—and this problem needs youth and vigor—a young mind."

He reached forward and slapped my knee.

I warmed inwardly, flattered and pleased by so much attention from this prominent man.

"I accept with pleasure, sir," I said.

"Then be on hand Friday afternoon."

"Should I bring my wife?" I inquired.

Sir Ronald looked me over coolly, his eyes quizzical.

"Your wife?" he repeated, "oh yes, of course. Why Mr. er——"

"Apperson," I supplied.

"Mr. Apperson, the fact of the matter is Lady Stillman is far from well. She's not up to entertaining."

"In that event, sir, I shall gladly come alone."

"Quite right, old fellow," he said hastily. "Fine, we'll have more time then for each other."

"Lady Stillman's condition is serious?" I asked.

A curious look flashed into Sir Ronald's eyes, not unlike that in a snake's devouring a rabbit, but it was gone in a second, succeeded by one of amiable good humor.

"My wife is ill," he said casually. "Nothing serious. 'Twill soon pass."

When the time came for me to leave my London flat and embark for Devonshire, my mind was in a whirl. I had heard several more striking and unusual things about Sir Ronald. His house, it appeared, was filled with relics and curios of Egypt, gleaned from his years of active archeology and taken from his excavations there. His most significant contribution to science was made on the Nile just north of Khartum,



in a locale known as the Isle of Meroe. Here, as head of an expedition sponsored by the University of Liverpool, he discovered a pyramid constructed in honor of Queen Candace, one of the most omnipotent rulers of ancient Ethiopia. He obtained from her tomb many relics of inestimable value to science. Relics now on exhibition in the London Museum.

Strangest of all, Sir Ronald had discovered his wife in Meroe, married her, and brought her back to England with him. She was, it seemed, of good lineage, directly descended from the queens of Ethiopia. Her name was Candace.

This partly explained Sir Ronald's attitude, I reasoned, partly explained the curious glint in his eye the day I first mentioned his wife to him. Ethiopians I knew were negroid, and it was not the fashion in England to have wives of negro stock, no matter how beautiful nor how clear-skinned they might be. I was anxious, too, to see her striking and unusual pet.

Lady Stillman, it seemed, owned a pet tiger, full-grown, of imposing stature, and tame as a domesticated kitten. It followed her everywhere, so the rumor went, and when she slept, it curled up on a large straw mat at the foot of her bed. No one I had talked to had actually seen Lady Stillman or her tiger, but gossip about both of them was widely prevalent. Candace, so I heard, was slender and lovely like a young willow. Her hair was straight and jet black. She wore it in a knot at the back of her head. Her figure was not unlike that of a young boy.

No wonder, then, I was anxious to meet Sir Ronald and his wife. My heart thumped expectantly as I arrived at the Stillman estate about four-thirty on a Friday afternoon. There was a tinge of frost in the air and the leaves on the giant oaks in the park were

turning red, green, and yellow. It was a mile's drive from the entrance to Sir Ronald's home. Finally I espied it, two-storied, low and rambling—spread out over a tremendous area. It was of peculiar architecture and resembled somewhat an overgrown, misshapen bungalow. I noticed with surprise there were no other cars in the drive. Sir Ronald, himself, met me at the door.

"Mr. Apperson," he began apologetically, "my wire couldn't have reached you. I've postponed the hunt until next week in the hope that by then Lady Stillman's condition will permit her to join us. Much jollier to have it a mixed affair, don't you think?"

"Why yes," I stammered. "Lady Stillman is improving, I trust?"

"After a fashion," he replied suavely, "Her condition is now quite favorable. A relief, I assure you."

Again he smiled and again I saw two rows of unusually white teeth, startling against the scarlet redness of his gums.

"Now you're here," he said, "come in. Stay over the week-end anyway. We can have a quiet chat and, if her condition improves, I hope you may meet Lady Stillman."

Needless to say I accepted the offer with unbecoming alacrity. The butler showed me to my room and, after I had washed and dressed, I descended to Sir Ronald's study.

"Come in," he called, "sit down and make yourself at home."

I hadn't remained upstairs any longer than necessary, in fact I had hurried my toilet for I had not the slightest idea where Lady Stillman's boudoir was—and so long as I didn't know, I took no chances of meeting her pet tiger.



Sir Ronald engaged me in conversation, asking me questions concerning my work in Egypt, remarking on the beauties of ancient art, and mentioning the cultural values to be derived from a study of archeology. At length I could contain myself no longer.

"Sir Ronald," I burst out, "excuse me for being impertinent, but is it true Lady Stillman owns a pet tiger?"

Stillman looked surprised. A certain look came into his eyes. The look of a man who sees snow-capped mountains in the distance, mountains he feels called upon to scale.

"Ah, yes," he murmured, "Penkhi."

"What's that?" I asked, puzzled.

"Penkhi, that's the tiger. He comes from an illustrious family, that boy. His great-great-grandfathers and grandmothers were the property of Penkhi the Great, ruler of Ethiopia, whose armies overran Egypt in the eighth century and added her to their domains."

"But do they have tigers in Ethiopia?" I asked, surprised, "I knew they had foxes, and jackals, and hyenas, but I thought the country too open for tigers—and too dry."

"So it is," Stillman assented with a nod, "but the first tiger was not a native of Ethiopia. She was captured in pregnancy, so legend tells us, on the slopes of the Ras Dahan, loftiest mountain in Abyssinia. Taken by one of the early Ethiopian kings, a skillful hunter, who captured her alive in a green-bough trap."

"Smart man," I observed, pretending to humor I did not feel. Something in Stillman's voice had impressed me more than I cared to admit, even to myself.

"Very smart," Sir Ronald drawled. "He brought the tiger back to Meroe with him to his summer palace.

After a time the beast gave birth to two cubs, a male and a female—and shortly thereafter grew quite tame. She and her descendants have been contented captives ever since. Penkhi," he mused, "is the last of an illustrious family."

He smiled again, his eyes far away.

"Yes?" I murmured politely.

"My wife," Stillman went on, "is descended from Amen, god of gods, ruler of Ethiopia. The priests, you know, always selected one child of the existing ruler and proclaimed him son or daughter of the God Amen. That child automatically became heir apparent to the throne."

"My wife," he mused, "is a direct descendant of the last Candace, and oddly enough the owner of the last tiger. She is descended from a son of the great Candace by a certain high priest. Her ancestors all lived in temples, and it was in a crude native hut, a rustic hand-hewn temple that I discovered my Candace and Penkhi beside her. When Ethiopia was conquered, you see, the temples remained inviolate. Thither the rulers fled and thither also the tigers. The Egyptians, the Romans, even the desert tribes, respected and feared the children of Amen. They and their descendants have remained unharmed even to this day."

He paused, significantly, I thought.

"Candace is the last Candace," he drawled, "and Penkhi the last tiger!"

An unaccountable tremor chilled my spine. His voice was even, unemotional, yet melodious—like the tinkling of ice in a tall glass.

"The last Candace," he repeated, rolling the words slowly as if he tasted them and found them pleasant, "the very last."

"Your wife is—," I began.



"My wife is beautiful," he interrupted, "slender as a young sycamore, versed in ancient lore and the language and customs of her people. She is almost white in color, strange contrast to the kinky-haired blacks I found about her. They revered and worshipped Candace. Wouldn't suffer a hair of her head to be touched."

"She is not lonesome?" I asked.

"Yes, sometimes, mostly at the full moon in spring-time and the red moon in autumn."

"The feast days of her people?" I asked.

"Yes," he answered shortly.

"And Penkhi," I queried, "does he enjoy England?"

"Oh the beast's all right anywhere, so long as he has his oats and barley."

"His what?" I asked surprised.

"His oats and barley. We feed him the same kind as that which grows in the Nile Basin. Years and years ago, the Ethiopians discovered it was bad policy to feed their tigers raw meat. Blood put ideas into their heads."

"Yes," I remarked, shuddering, "it would."

"Ever since one of the kings got chewed up," he continued, "the tigers have been on wheat and barley diet—that and, once in a while, cooked meat. They're quite happy and satisfied. Our Penkhi doesn't know what blood tastes like and neither did his father and mother before him. Candace keeps him on a leash outside of the house and in here he never leaves her side."

"If he should ever taste blood," I murmured.

Sir Ronald smiled and shrugged his shoulders. "Let's not cross bridges," he said.

I gazed at him in bewilderment, letting my eyes rove over the room.

He launched into a long explanation of his theory concerning hieroglyphics and their deciphering, ending up with a few words on Ethiopian, a writing whose meaning, he admitted, had long puzzled the greatest minds of the country.

"It is my one ambition to decipher that script," he stated, his voice rising in intensity and his fist pounding on the mahogany desk before him.

"Once, in Meroe, I killed a man to discover the key to that script," he added confidentially. "He was a small, kinky-haired black, no account 'specially. Had a curious ring, though, a ring with Ethiopian picture symbols—Ethiopian and Greek writing side by side. I commanded him to give me the ring and he refused. Then I pinioned his arms behind his back. My man burned the soles of his feet with a hot poker. Just touched them at first. Still the stubborn fool wouldn't talk. Finally, Saki really began to work on him—the poker was white hot."

Sir Ronald smiled reminiscently.

"I can still hear the black's screams in that little hut and I can still smell burning flesh. Unforgettable, that odor. We seared both feet away, still he wouldn't talk. So I got mad and stabbed him. Did a good job, too—cut him up a little. Slashed here and there for about ten minutes—then, growing tired of the sport, I went into my tent and came back with that golden hammer you see yonder."

My eyes roved over the thick carpets, the strange egg-shaped vases, and came to rest on one gold spheroid about the size of a shotput and attached to a golden chain. This reposed carelessly in one corner, like the egg of some strange bird.

Sir Ronald went on, half to himself, lapsing unaccountably from his story.



"I've spent half a lifetime in Egypt," he mused, "and most of it in the Sudan. But the mysteries of Ethiopian sign language still elude me.

He indicated the corner of the room. Again I noted the golden spheroid and chain I had remarked a few moments previous. The sphere was about the size of a croquet ball and looked to be quite heavy.

"An ancient Ethiopian weapon," he said. "Good chance, I thought, to try it out on that negro. So I drew off about sixty feet from him and swung the ball 'round and 'round my head, letting go of the chain at the right moment."

"Well," he smiled appreciatively, "I caught him squarely on the head. Crushed his skull clear to the jawbone. Saki dragged the corpse away and threw it to the dogs."

Lord Stillman's eyes lighted with the reminiscence.

"I've still got that ring, Apperson, but its meaning eludes me. Only one person could tell me"—he paused—"if she would, but——"

I gazed at him with uneasy interest.

"Yes?" I said.

I saw again that glint in his eyes. The glint that had reminded me of a snake with a rabbit.

"But she won't," he concluded and abruptly changed the subject. "Wouldn't you like to look about the grounds," he said. "We'll examine the ring later."

Sir Ronald took me outside, through his stables and outbuildings. "You know," he explained, "my wife is a curiously tender woman. She's very fond of birds and flowers. This garden, Apperson, is her sanctuary. Personally, I can't see her point of view. Never could—too sentimental for a man. She's particularly fond of humming birds, funny isn't it? Think she worships them, maybe they remind her of some re-

ligious bird in Ethiopia, who knows?"—"Well," he laughed, "here's where I have some sport anyway."

He sent his man back for a '22 rifle and when he returned, demonstrated the keenness of his eye by bringing down a robin on the wing at a distance of a hundred yards. He evidently relished this pastime, for in fifteen minutes he shot a bluebird, a woodpecker, and three skylarks—each of them punctured neatly through the heart and at ranges varying from 50 to 75 yards. His coup d'état, however, he reserved for the way home. Spying a humming bird in his garden, he took careful aim and fired. The little creature dropped instantly, trembled for a second, beating its wings upon the ground, then lay still.

"Got him!" Sir Ronald shouted, "how's that for sport?"

"You've got a keen eye," I replied, somewhat ungraciously, "nice shooting."

Sir Ronald flashed me a quick glance.

"Not bad," he said, "not bad."

Tramping up the walk to the rear door, he carelessly walked through a flower bed crushing underheel some late autumn blooms. Then leaning toward me, he whispered confidentially:

"You will probably meet Lady Stillman at dinner. If she acts strangely, please overlook it. Her illness has made her distraught and most excitable."

I nodded assent. Changing as fast as I could, I waited eagerly for dinner. Sir Ronald joined me in the lounge.

"Rye or Scotch, Apperson?"

"Rather not drink before dinner, sir. Have a spot afterward though."

Stillman poured himself half a tumbler of Scotch,



tossing it off at a gulp. His tongue caressed his red lips and he smacked them approvingly.

"You know, archeology's great stuff," he said, "fascinating work. Take that ring, for instance. Wait, I'll show it to you." I followed him into the study. Going to the far wall he pulled aside a picture disclosing a small wall-safe. In a moment he returned, the ring in his hand. He gave it to me.

I turned it over slowly, curiously. It was a small silver ring of unusual workmanship. The Greek letters were unlike any with which I was familiar.

"Ancient Greek characters"—I asked—"a secret code?"

"Yes," Stillman answered, "I can't begin to decipher them."

"These have great importance," I said, "They are of great significance to science."

Sir Ronald's eyes lighted with a fanatical gleam.

"Even more than that," he said. "Beneath the pyramids of Meroe, so legend tells us, lies the fabled treasures of Ethiopia, buried during the reign of the last Candace. There is, so the story goes, a hidden passage, the key to whose entrance is found inscribed on the walls of the pyramid itself, written in the familiar Ethiopian picture writing. The only catch is that no one has yet deciphered the meaning of any of the characters.

"How much money is hidden there?" I asked.

"Untold fortunes," his voice sank to a whisper and his eyes clouded, seemed looking again to the distant mountains—"and untold fame for the man who discovers them!"

He paused for a second, then went on.

"You know, Apperson, the secret lies buried with

the ancient priests. Only one of their kind could tell me—and only one of their kind is living."

"Candace," I prompted.

"Candace," he replied sibilantly, "and some day I have a feeling Candace will tell me her secret."

I didn't venture a reply. There was nothing much I could say. The silence that followed was deep and ominous. I looked about the room, looked at the vases, at the queer golden ball—instrument of death—lying in the corner. Sir Ronald remained silent. His lips were slightly parted, and a smile played about the corners of his mouth. He looked, I thought, not unlike an overlarge and subtly baleful gnome. What he was thinking, I couldn't fathom.

At length when he spoke, his tones were quietly matter of fact.

"You'll have to come out to the gym with me sometime. I like to perform for my friends. I've picked up quite a few strange tumbles and contortions in my jaunts over the world. Sometimes I entertain the boys at the club with them, bring down the house."

"Yes, I've heard them speak of it, Sir Ronald."

"My wife has another bone to pick with me of late. According to her I'm trying to supplant her in Pankhi's affections. Every evening about ten I put him through his tricks. You must come and watch tonight, Apperson—a sight, I promise you, you'll never forget."

"Gladly, Sir Ronald," I answered, not without trembling.

"Pankhi," he continued, "is a genius. For a vegetarian and a cooked-meat eater, he's truly a wonder!"

We got up and strolled into the lounge. Hardly had we taken seats when the drapes over the far en-



trance rustled slightly. They parted and in strolled the tiger. I started momentarily. Then, hardly recovering from my first surprise, I received another.

Behind the tiger walked, or rather glided, one of the most fascinating women I have ever seen. She was slender and lovely. Her black hair was done in a knot at the back of her head. It was unusual hair, jet-black in color, and had about it a softness and sheen impossible to describe. Her dark eyes, wondrously deep, were, I thought, profoundly sad. Her lips parted slightly, and she smiled as she saw the tiger stop and eye me suspiciously.

"Pankhi," she laughed, "go on up and say hello to the gentleman. He's our guest. Go on up and say hello."

Pankhi walked slowly to my chair. Hesitantly, I reached over and patted his massive head. His red tongue lolled from his mouth and I could see his large curved fangs, could see and feel the muscles in his great jaws. Pankhi seemed to relish petting. He put his head on my lap and began to purr, softly, then louder and louder. He sounded like the motor of a small car, far-off, slowly turning over. The experience was unforgettable.

Sir Ronald, amused, at last realized I had not yet formally met his wife. "Candace, darling," he said, "may I present Mr. Apperson?"

She crossed the room and gave me her hand.

"Charmed," I murmured, gallantly as I could, "charmed, Lady Stillman."

Candace smiled softly, shyly. Her speech was quiet; her voice rich and melodious. She asked me about London and the theater, and seemed much interested in all I could tell her.

While she was talking, the tiger crossed the room and put its head on Sir Ronald's lap. I saw him pat the beast and scratch it gently behind the ears. Pankhi purred louder than ever and, lifting his head, licked his master's hands. His great, red tongue worked slowly, systematically. It must scratch, I thought. Scratch like sandpaper. Finally, as if satisfied he'd done a good job, Pankhi curled up and lay down at Sir Ronald's feet.

Soon dinner was announced and we went in to the dining room. Lady Stillman proved to be a charming hostess. Her features, I noted, were not in the slightest negroid. They were straight and firmly molded, wreathed in the soft, tight folds of her lovely hair. She was indeed strikingly beautiful. Any man must have felt pride to be in her company.

"Ronald," she said at length, "did I hear shooting in the garden?"

"Yes, dear," he answered, smiling. "I was showing Mr. Apperson about and thought I'd amuse him by knocking off a few birds."

Lady Stillman's eyes grew suddenly moist. For a brief second, I thought, her soul must certainly have been in them, for they had the quality of dew sparkling in the moonlight.

"What did you kill?" she asked, trembling.

"Oh," Sir Ronald answered, "a robin, some blue-birds, a few skylarks, and, best of all, I brought down a humming bird at 20 feet. It was—"

"Ronald," she burst out. Her voice trembled. I noticed two tiny tears slip from her eyes and trickle slowly down her cheeks.

"Ronald, you've been shooting my birds again, after you promised—"



"Darling, I'm sorry," he said briefly. "Just sporting, you know."

Candace gazed at him, her eyes mute and appealing. Sir Ronald flashed her a smile, his fingers toyed with a red rose placed in a vase beside his plate. He looked at it for a few moments without speaking. Then, lifting it from the vase, he gestured with it in his direction.

"Candace raises them in the hothouses — quite pretty, don't you think?"

"Yes," I agreed, "beautiful."

Candace smiled her appreciation. Idly Sir Ronald's fingers toyed with the bloom. He pulled away at the petals, drawing them out one by one, allowing them to flutter softly to the snowwhite table linen. Soon the cloth about his plate was littered with petals. They were blood-red. They seemed, like Ronald's lips, only softer and possessed of a more natural beauty. Candace's eyes, I noted, were moist and very large, and had about them all the pathos of a wounded deer's.

I couldn't make out whether Sir Ronald deliberately tortured her, or whether he were merely careless. First the birds, and now the rose. Suddenly, I noticed his eyes. I've never forgotten them. Peering beneath lowered lids they gave her a glance of venomous malice, of unutterable, undying hate.

"The man must be mad," I thought, and a moment later found myself doubting my senses. For Sir Ronald beamed good-naturedly and placed the denuded rose-stem back in its vase.

"It was," he said softly, "a beautiful rose. A young, fresh and beautiful rose."

Candace gazed at him, hypnotized. Then, unaccountably, she excused herself and rose from the table.

She flashed me a quick glance. I caught it and nodded sympathetically. She slipped quietly from the room. Pankhi, who had been lying in the corner, got up and started to follow her, then changing his mind, walked over to Sir Ronald's chair and curled up beside it.

Sir Ronald's eyes were on his plate. His face was inscrutable, calm as a Greek god's. He didn't say anything more until we had finished dinner, then—

"Apperson, I've got some business to transact now, so I'm going to leave you in the library. If you get tired, stroll into my study. You'll find plenty to read there. I'll be back around ten, then I'll take you over to the gym and we'll put Pankhi through his paces."

I agreed and rising, strolled into the library. Sir Ronald left me in the hall, went for a moment into his study. Pankhi, I noticed, was close at his heels. After a minute I heard the click of his wall-safe, then a curious rumble from one corner of the study, like thunder, or the slow rolling about of a heavy ball.

"Sir Ronald's stubbed his toe on his golden ball," I thought, "his death instrument. Serves him right," I added parenthetically, "certainly serves him right."

Then I heard the safe door clink shut and Ronald's footsteps mounting the stairs.

"Got that ring," I thought, "going to give his wife another grilling. Poor thing—he'll never wring the secret from her. Never. It's part of her soul, part of her life and her inheritance."

Ronald walked slowly on the stairs. Walked as if he were carrying a heavy weight. Finally, I heard a door slam faintly. Then, except for the servants, I was alone downstairs. I walked quickly into the library. Everything seemed to be as I had last seen it. I looked into the far corner of the room, and started



violently. The golden hammer, the instrument of death, was missing! A vague fear tugged at my heart.

Impulsively, I ran for the stairs and mounted them two at a time. I rushed wildly about, opening and closing doors. Finally, I reached a long corridor and found, at its end, a locked door. Its panels were of polished oak and looked to be of great thickness. Pausing, I bent over and, putting my ear to the keyhole, listened. I could hear voices in the distance.

"You'll tell me now, my sweet," Ronald's calm voice came to me faintly, "you'll tell me now, my little flower, or I'll surely kill you."

The remainder of the sentence eluded me. There was a long pause and try as I might, I couldn't hear another sound. The silence was thick and oppressive. Then to my straining ears, came a high-pitched cruel laugh, a thin, clear shriek, and once again—silence. Frantically I beat on the oak door. I rushed downstairs and called the servants. They did their best to calm me, telling me not to be alarmed, that Sir Ronald often argued with his wife and that Candace never failed to control him.

Nervously I went into the study and paced to and fro. The clock, I noticed, said 9:30. The next half hour was the longest in my life. I grew more nervous listening to the steady ticking of the clock. I felt I must shout, and, although my lips moved, no sound came from them. Slowly the hands of the clock moved round.

Promptly at five minutes to ten, the door opened and Sir Ronald walked in. His hair was neatly combed and he had on a thick wool sweater, tennis shoes, and a pair of slacks. Pankhi as before was close at his heels. Sir Ronald's face, I noted, was wreathed in

smiles. His very bearing exuded confidence and good humor.

"The cat has swallowed the canary," I thought fearfully, "truly Candace has yielded him her secret." But Ronald gave me no time for meditation.

"Come into the gym, Apperson," he insisted, "And I'll give you a real show."

The three of us wound through corridors and narrow halls on the ground floor until we reached a small room. A room with thick mats strewn upon the floor. The door, I noticed, was steel-panelled, the windows closely barred, and the walls themselves of steel.

Sir Ronald let me stand near the door to watch the performance. He called a servant and had food brought for Pankhi. The man had some cooked barley and a huge piece of dried meat. The meat, Lord Stillman immediately threw to the beast, the bowl of barley he placed in the corner. The great animal tore at his meat with evident relish. Then he sat down and carefully cleaned himself. Finishing this, he strode to Sir Ronald's side.

"Well, old fellow," Ronald drawled, "ready to go?"

He stroked the beast's head and Pankhi licked his hand, licked it slowly, caressingly, with long strokes of his great rough tongue. Sir Ronald then led the beast to the center of the mat. Pankhi stood on his hind legs and wrestled with his master. He cheerfully allowed Ronald to tumble him about as he would. Then, tiring of this, Sir Ronald announced a new trick. Three of these followed in rapid succession.

Pankhi sat up and begged, his tongue lolling from his mouth; he rent and tore a straw dummy to pieces, worrying it with his cruel claws, and growling quietly to himself; he did his best to stand on his head and made a miserable mess of it.



I confess I didn't pay much attention to all this. I was so suffused with hatred for Sir Ronald I could hardly bring myself to look at him. I felt a sudden desire to fasten my fingers about his throat.

At length Ronald announced the final trick. Strolling to the far corner of the room, he picked up a large, round hoop. As he tested it in his hands the hoop broke, and he at once set about to fix it. Tacking together the broken ends of the ring, he accidentally scratched the palm of his right hand. It was just a tiny scratch, nevertheless the blood showed plainly.

Carelessly, he wiped his hand on a handkerchief and went on with the show. Wrapping cotton about the hoop, he wet it with kerosene and set fire to it. Then, holding it aloft, he called Pankhi. The flames leaped fitfully in the semi-dark room. Pankhi roared ferociously, then squaring off, he ran lithely across the floor and sprang neatly through the blazing circle. He jumped again through the hoop, keeping it up until Lord Stillman bade him cease.

"Great show, Apperson," he said, enthusiastically, "great sight!"

He called the beast to him and patted his head. The beast reached up and slowly, caressingly licked his master's hand. I watched them, fascinated, my fingers clasping the door-knob. Pankhi was taking his job seriously all right. I saw his red tongue move in and out, in and out, nearer, ever nearer to the little spot on Ronald's palm which showed red. Then he reached it, kept on licking, slowly, methodically.

At length Sir Ronald spoke, "Pankhi is affectionate today," he said, "Pankhi is unusually affectionate. He doesn't——"

Suddenly a terrific roar rent the air. It was followed instantly by a blood-curdling shriek. Pankhi

leaped upon his master, bowling him over with one sweep of his gigantic paw. Terrified, I opened the door and, flinging it to behind me, heard the latch click. As I raced down the corridor, Sir Ronald screamed again. Then quiet—once more the roaring of Pankhi. This, too, dwindled away.

"The Tiger of Amen," I thought, "is true to his original inheritance. He, too, likes fresh meat and blood."

Just as I reached the kitchen, my foot caught in a heavy object and I pitched forward on my face. Reaching forward to discover the cause of my fall, my fingers touched a smooth, round ball, attached, I found, to a chain. I took it forward into the light and examined it. It was gold, about the size of a croquet ball, and its sides, I saw with a start, were flecked with blood. Blood unquestionably—"the instrument of death," I thought, shuddering. Blood, several pieces of shattered flesh, and one long, unbelievably soft strand of jet-black hair.



## HELP FROM HOLLYWOOD

*"Help From Hollywood," by R. C., is a critical essay shedding light on one of our contemporary problems.*

By R. C.

THE American people are today in need of help. They need assistance in forming opinions; they need to be influenced in ways other than those offered by the present patriotic crusaders and demagogues. All Europe is preparing itself for trouble. Short-sighted dictators crush opponents with no regard for human welfare. Russia's economic set-up suggests change to a depression-tired America. Hitler's gang-rule offers suggestions to arduous politicians in this country. With a nation never too isolated for war, never too secure for bankruptcy, and never too utopian for revolution, immediate help must come from some source. Present attempts to control public opinion are not directed to benefit the United States as a whole.

Three main sources exist which are largely influential over the average citizen for his thought and opinion. All three have obvious limitations. The first, and perhaps, most powerful is the Press. In the newspaper world sensationalism is the order of the day. There are good newspapers in America, it is true, but their numbers are so small as to be incomparable with those colorful, flamboyant journals whose murder stories gain wider circulations. Even the best papers are controlled largely by advertisers. When advertising is heavy, one finds reading material unenlightening, censored, and usually conforming to the beliefs of the advertisers. Where advertising is light, one may find uncensored news, news that is often in

support of unpopular but important issues, but one also usually finds fewer readers.

Another means of reaching the public is by the Radio. The Radio's possession of "free speech" permits anyone to perform, whether it be Father Coughlin, Amos Brown, or even General Johnson. The Radio's "free speech" does not imply that its time is given away. The speaker, or his supporters, have to pay for it, and the price is by no means low. The supporters are in nearly every event the advertisers. Their products must be sold. Their speakers must be thoroughly American. They must appeal to a wide range of hearers. They must be entertainers. Except for one or two new influential voices, whose purpose no one seems to know, they must not utter a dissenting word. The Radio and the Press run hand in hand, and they are both heading America for a state in which a colossal publisher will be king, where a shouting priest will be first lieutenant, and a heckling senator will sound the court trumpets.

The third great power is the motion picture industry. This, alone of the three, seems to be on something other than a down-hill slide. As a power its influence is increasing. It is annually reaching a larger audience, a wider scope, than it has in past years. It is rapidly obtaining the greatest writers, actors, and producers possible. Five years ago one could not imagine writers or directors such as Hugh Walpole, Paul Green, or Russia's Bolislavsky exerting their efforts to produce superior cinema performances.

The rise of the "movies" may be accounted for in several ways. For some time the government tried to censor what Hollywood delivered to the world market. Restrictions were made, salaries were limited, and codes were established. The administration held a



closer rein over the motion pictures than it ever has, or than it has even hoped to hold, over the Press or the Radio. But Hollywood, experimenting with governmental advice, discovered that the regulations were not entirely necessary. Motion picture magnates found that better products brought better returns, that "he profited most, who served best."

The progress of the motion picture industry may be conveniently divided into three definite stages. In each of these stages one type of production has dominated the era. The first stage was characterized by "movies reeking of buffalo hides, cattle thieves, and unfaithful husbands on horseback." The next phase of Hollywood's development was inaugurated with the invention of talking pictures. The "cowboy thrillers" were discarded. The unfaithful husbands dismounted from their steeds and garbed themselves in evening clothes. The buffalo and cattle disappeared. Nearly every outburst of the producers called for a dance orchestra to accompany the heroine's love chant. Technicolor brightened up the "movie musical comedies."

The typical picture of today has neither the orchestra nor the color. The third stage has been under way for the past three or four years. Now, however, it has reached a peak hitherto not attained. The "thrillers" and the "romanitic stories about life among the 400" still remain, but they play an unimportant part compared to their former position of prominence. The current "movie" trend presents for American cinemagoers problems of the day fictionized for Hollywood's purposes. The past year has seen a new voyage on the part of the "movies" into the more timely, living, and important issues of the United States and the world generally. Literature has come to the fore in its popu-

larity. One can now look to Hollywood as never before for encouragement, instruction, and help.

The other predominating types are still being played, it is true, but for box-office successes producers are looking to new fields. "What Price Glory," "All's Quiet on the Western Front," and similar smashing hits of a few years back have more or less set the example for today's screen entertainment. These original hits have been followed by other adaptations from legitimate stage pieces and novels. A complete list of these productions would require endless labor, but a brief look at recent motion pictures clearly illustrates the tendencies which Hollywood has lately been following.

A few select "movies" stand out as most significant in reviewing the type for which the American public has been clamoring. A year ago the screen adaptations of Noel Coward's plays were resulting in long waiting lines at the theater entrances. Most important of this group was "Cavalcade," which was recognized by critics and enthusiasts alike as nearing the ultimate in motion picture drama. Following shortly after the "Coward craze" came the demand for adaptations from biographies of great lives. "The Wives of Henry VIII" and "Catherine the Great" were eminent examples of this trend. Although they did not fully meet the historical facts of their subjects, nevertheless, to a large degree they illustrated the life of the times and the general characteristics of the rulers. "Rasputin and the Empress" gave the public a close acquaintance with mass psychology in the event of a great revolution. Critics were quick to find fault when the interpretations of the adapters were broad, but regardless of the interpretations, the nature of the prod-



uct was certainly a great improvement over the preceding "wild west rodeo shows" and the "full dress cocktail cinema."

The past winter has witnessed a new high in "movie products," even a higher peak than the year 1933 reached. Such productions as "The Count of Monte Cristo," "The Barretts of Wimpole Street," "Clive of India," Charles Morgan's "The Fountain," and countless others illustrate the prominence which literature has held during recent months. The first of these was adapted from one of history's capital novels. The second dealt with one of literature's greatest families and one of England's superior poets. The life of Robert Clive interests one in its general study, but its principal importance lies in the difficulties the subject confronted, not only in Indian colonization, but in politics back home in London as well. "The Fountain" was a novel on war and its part in the private lives of those associated with it. Typical of many novels and motion pictures on the subject, it is highly important to America in its theme and philosophy. Since we can no longer rely upon either the Press or the Radio, we must turn to productions such as Morgan's novel, Coward's play, and other works of similar theme for an understanding of the events accompanying strife. Public opinion cannot be changed over night, but through Hollywood's influence upon the nation a thorough and close comprehension may be gradually constructed.

With the encouragement of California's "movie" artists, one of literature's leading fictionists has begun to live again. America responded gratefully to the screen production of Dickens' favorite work, "David Copperfield." In the novel the author combined art and propaganda in an effective denouncement of child

labor. Hugh Walpole adapted the book for the motion picture industry in a manner that brought joy to the theatergoers and profits to the producers. The United States today is confronted with problems parallel to those of nineteenth century England, early twentieth century Russia, and, perhaps, similar to the issues of every age and nation. Through the reproduction of historical events, clarification and understanding should of necessity ensue. More of the contributions of Dickens and other writers should be revived presently. The announcement has been made that Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" is being released. These revivals are only beginning to receive the acclaim and sympathy which they deserve. Their influence should be felt.

The outlook is even more encouraging when one considers the upward trend of the public in demanding more revivals and adaptations. Of course, propaganda, dressed in a colorful, patriotic gown, is being poured forth at frequent intervals through the efforts of publishers. One "chain store organization," in particular, controls one or more highly syndicated "news movie-tones" which are displayed week after week in theaters throughout the country. But the public is still turning out primarily to see the feature of the evening. When that feature is an exceptional one, as many have been lately, its power and influence outweigh that of the publishers.

The control of both the Press and the Radio may be lessened by a continuance of the type of product manufactured in California. Doubtless it is true that the "Power of the Press" is almost unlimited, but there are other powers whose potentialities are by no means small. So long as America keeps demanding the best in screen drama, and so long as Hollywood keeps sup-



plying that demand, one may look for better results than have so far been realized. The much-needed help cannot be expected any longer from the printer or the radio entertainer. It cannot be expected from the politician. If opinion and understanding should change for the better, one would realize that that change has been effected by a slow, gradual process, as is now, from all observations, beginning to take place. To some extent Hollywood has already played a leading part in this transition. In the future the "movies" should become an even greater influence in establishing thorough understanding.





SITTING ON THE LOG SHE STRETCHED OUT HER  
ACHING LEG

## MOLL'S REVERSION

*"Moll's Reversion," by John Bills, carries on the cycle of Brit and Moll. It is a typical bit of swamp lore—salty, pungent, weather beaten.*

By JOHN BILLS

THE last river flood had eaten deep into the western side of the shell mound. Several palmettoes, their foundations undermined, leaned riverward at precarious angles, their foot tentacles clinging in the death grip to the last of the mother earth which nourished them. Moll's shack—a grotesque hut of zinc, palmetto thatch and river flotsam which crowned the highest ridge on the mound—seemed forever drawn closer to that fifteen-foot brink and consequent destruction. But Moll, the woman of the river muck, was as stoical of the impending doom as the palmettoes.

To the west of the mound, where the swale grass grew to a horse's shoulder, two men were riding a tortuous trail. The midsummer sun cast no shadows, it blistered the muck between the grass clusters and a warm, mouldy smell seemed to tighten the nostrils. A lazy breeze passed over the coarse grass which rose and sunk like waves on a glassy sea; the great billows rolling ever northward, over the two horsemen whose head and shoulders appeared and vanished as half water-logged timbers do.

"Sure wasn't supposin' you-all could do hit; gittin' Moll t' singin' church music with that alki voice o' hern was one thing, but gittin' her t' sand her knees kneelin' an' prayin'—thet's jist miraculous." Mac, the lanky sheriff who still carried the bullet of the last of the notorious Ashley gang in his knee, had made



this trip with his friend, the preacher, every Sunday afternoon for months. "Yer a 30-30 at preachin'," he would argue when the minister suggested that it must be a bore for him to make the long trip each week, "but ye don't know this Moll. 'Sides, there's too many snakes in these here St. Johns river flats thet ain't on speakin' terms with Eves ner preachers."

Pointing to the river and changing the subject the minister said "The river's within her banks at last, Mac; it's like the valley of the Nile, miles wide, hundreds of miles long; someday it will feed millions."

"Ain't feedin' nuthin' now 'ceptin' gators an' hogs an' Moll. Sunset's pretty though, reflectin' cud-chaw-cows makin' their evenin' toilet by th' calm waters an' moccasins curled up in holes along th' river banks where nobody cain't see 'em till they prods holes through your boots."

Said the preacher—"I'd think they would kill the range cattle and the pigs."

"Sometimes git th' calves; but nothin' kills these here razor-backs. They takes rattlers an' moccasins fer appertizers. Say, did ye ever know how t' tell razor-backs from other hogs?"

"Well, I suppose it is a matter of their vertebrae and—"

"Vertebrae nuthin'. 'Tain't bristles neither. Jist lift one o' 'em by th' ears and iffen he balances snout down then he's a razor-back."

Moll met them at the door. Her shack had been cleaned, scrubbed in anticipation of the preacher's visit. Outwardly these last months had wrought a miracle in her and her habitation. The spiders and mud daubers had, of course, been forced to seek new corners and window ledges and even the ants and cock-

roaches had been disturbed in pursuing the even tenor of their ways. Moll had "got" religion; in fact religion had got her. Now when the red cardinal sang at sunrise, she prayed with such power that the bird flew quickly; when the babe in the crocus sack in the corner whimpered, she prayed with such fervor that her wee offspring forgot its colic and gleefully clapped her tiny hands. Even the memory of the child's father whom she had shot seven months before the baby was born no longer distrubed the perfect solace of her praying.

The preacher had noted the violent change in Moll's habits with much misgiving. He had charged certain cells in her booze-saturated brain but the spiritual peace which he longed to implant seemed beyond her capacity. She was still a razor-back whose taste had changed from moccasins to glow-worms.

"C'min!" the puffed lips moved, the huge body under the dressing gown like the gas in a half filled balloon. "C'min an' pray."

Moll did the praying. The baby clapped its hands. The preacher suggested that the Almighty's favor had been sufficiently besought by faint and often repeated amens. And Mac grinned in the open doorway. But it was to no avail. Only when the ebullitions of the balloon grew weaker and panting breath clogged the words did the prayer stop. Then a whimper from the crocus sack cradle. Then the cardinal lit on the open window ledge. And Mac's big pencil, with which he had been cleverly drawing a picture of a hog with a long snout and a snake in its jaws, was jerked from the whitewashed wall to disappear in his pocket.

An hour later the two men were again riding the trail through the long grass. "Guess th' Lawd heered her that-a-time" said Mac.



The preacher's head was bowed, his lips moving. But he said nothing. Embarrassed at his untimely frivolity, Mac kicked his horse and jumped ahead.

Then it happened. Mac and his pistol were a hundred feet down the trail when the minister's horse shied and threw him prone in the switch grass. The stunning sensation of his fall was instantly followed by a piercing, burning pain in his neck. A shiny, clammy thing slithered over his body. He shrieked with terror and pain, struggling to his feet.

"Wan't nuthin' t' do." Two hours had passed; Mac had carried his pastor in his arms while his horse trudged stolidly under the double burden through the swamps and darkening hammocks to town. The doctor's eyes were dry but the sheriff's cheeks were lined where the tears had coursed through the dust.

"Cut th' place open an' sucked hit but couldn't put no turnequet 'round his neck. Pisen right close to th' juggler. Legs was twitchin' when I got back to him—then they didn't twitch no more. Gawd! Me jokin' when he was prayin'; then runnin' off on him lik-a-that."

The lines on the brown cheeks began to glisten in the lamplight.

"Leave him to me now" said the doctor. "Where are you going, Mac?"

"Goin'?" I'm goin' t' tell Pete and Abe; then I'm goin' t' tell Moll. She'll hanker t' be at th' funeral."

The little town of Minbury filled the church and crowded the door, steps and windows. Moll was in one of the front seats; her bloated lips moved but there was no sound. As the procession formed to pass by the casket she staggered from the church, Mac following.

"Where be ye supposin' t' go, Moll?" he asked.

The river woman ignored the question. "Sows fights fer their shoats" she thundered. "Ye ain't even no sow."

"Drunk" snapped the long faced woman who had led the procession by the casket. Moll was staggering determinedly in the direction of the river.

"No, not drunk" said Mac. "Jist tarnation mad an' goin' wild agin."

It was midnight when Moll reached the mound. At first she had prayed as she slopped through the mud and water, but she prayed with profane viciousness. Then the prayers stopped, the profanity rumbled on. As she passed from the solemn blackness of the hammock her nostrils detected stale smoke—somewhere near there were dying fires. Then in the misty grey appeared dark shapes like huge mushrooms, or were they the bloated souls of the long forgotten mound builders themselves? Moll drew close to one and felt of it.

"Them's tents" she whispered, swaying her big body around them with the stealth and subdued growlings of one of the great cats that prowled in the Big Cypress Swamp to the east.

She turned in the direction of her shack. "Snorin' hogs," she growled. "Wonder be they revenooers. Ain't no business here."

For many nights past Moll had gone to sleep praying. It not only exhausted and soothed her system, but it also quieted the baby. But this night she could not pray; swearing seemed to stimulate her and she could not sleep. Finally she stepped out on the log which served as her doorstep, slipped and fell, turning her ankle. The physical pain drowned her anger



at God and man and she crawled under the shack. It had been several months since she had drunk from the jug, sand-covered near one of the foundation posts. Now she felt these months had been misty, nightmarish, unreal. Only the fiery liquor mattered.

Sitting on the log, she had stretched out her aching leg, tipped the jug to her lips and drank deep. "God kilt him \* \* \* dogged rotten of Mac lettin' th' snake git him. Rotten of God t' kill him. Mebbby that ain't no God. Them tent fellers—w'at t'hell they doin' here?"

She drank again. The pain in the ankle was leaving, slipping off into the gray mists. "T'hell \* \* \* God \* \* \* an' them tent fellers. Shoot 'em \* \* \* supposin' I gits bird shot. Mebbby I'll fire the tents an' smoke 'em out like coons."

A lazy breeze greeted the sunrise. The bloated form of Moll lay by the log like a decaying trunk of some wreck of the forest. The flap of one of the tents opened and a tall figure with shiny boots, a gay sweater and a Van Dyke beard stepped blithely forth.

"Oh, I say, fellows, it's jolly well time we scratched up the fiah and had coffee. And I say, wouldn't it be exciting if we had forgotten the sugah." As younger men emerged from the other tents he rambled on, "Beastly weathah; gets into the bones aftah a night on old Motha earth. But all a part of the pursuit of original research in the anthropological sciences, don't cha-know."

"Prof's spoofin' again; give him a tomato can and he'll bah, etc." Thus various students.

An hour later the strong sunlight awakened Moll. She rolled to her feet cursing; the pain in her ankle stabbed to her thigh; her head ached. Again she drank deep from the jug beside her. Then she re-

membered the tents and hobbled to the corner of the house. The Professor and his students were washing dishes, airing blankets, combing their hair; joking, singing, bantering.

He of the Van Dyke was talking. "I say, fellows, I wondah if that beastly woman they told us about is getting back from town today? Said she was at a funeral or wake or something—wasn't that what the farmer down the trail told us? Must be quite an exciting personage, don't-cha-think?"

A student suggested: "I move that the professor make an examination of her. The shack looks like her tribe had lived here since the mound was building. If she's Neanderthal type, Prof., we might take her back as a 'find' and mount her in the museum."

Moll understood only in part but she knew they were talking about her, laughing at her. Again the jug went to her lips. The pain in her leg was leaving, slipping down into the sand and shell like the drops which leaked from her rainwater barrel. A look of cunning came into her close-set eyes; she returned to the corner of the house and watched the intruders wielding pick and shovel at the edge of the mound. A wild sow, her back to her nest, is always cunning, cruel, fearless.

Half an hour later she lit her stove; in a black pot she mixed small pieces of palmetto cabbage, onions and hugh chunks of sow belly. Then she left the mess to boil and staggered loosely over to the rapidly deepening and lengthening pit where the young men were working.

"Who be ye an' what be ye doin'?" The question required an answer from the upper regions of the Van Dyke.



"Oh, I say, good morning, Mrs. . . . ah . . . Miss . . . ah. Well, to tell you the truth we are all from Robbins College at Little Park. I am Professor Van de Buck and these are all my students. This is indeed a rich field, Miss . . . ah; and a virgin one. Our nomadic, shell-fish eating forbearers must have delighted in this spot. It is quite the largest mound along the rivah, an original discovery, don'tcha-know."

Most of which was Greek to Moll. One word, however, had Biblical significance. "I been married" said she.

The professor stared, the Van Dyke moved. "I . . . I . . . Oh, I say, I didn't mean to pry into your private life, Miss . . . ah . . . Mrs. . . . ah . . . but you know your residence is really on a most historic spot. Why it must have taken millions of yeahs . . . probably during the ice ages . . . in the accumulation of this gigantic heap of gastropod and bivalve mollusks. And these broken arrow heads, although comparatively of recent times, are in flint not found within hundreds of miles. It is conclusive evidence, as it were, of an extended trade or commerce between the various Indian tribes."

"Doggone," said Moll.

Then, "Had goats here before. My ole man said as they cud feed whare th' hogs left off. Supposin' ye-all gits hungry after a while—I got me a palmetter stew brewin'. Nough fer all on ye."

"A wild sea and a rough passage" suggested one of the students as Moll departed. "But not a bad gal, that; better watch Professor Van de Buck, fellows. No romances on a scientific expedition; crossing of Aryans and Cro-Magnons not permitted under the laws of Florida, don't-cha . . . ah . . . Say, I'll bet that stew'll be a wow!"

It was. Crustless sandwiches in cellophane, tasty Java and Windsor's Delicious Preserves, Florida fruit, London packing, Japanned jars, Oxford selected, were waved aside for Moll's good old St. Johns River "palmetter" cabbage stew.

"Wow," said one. "Ugh . . . Ugh . . ." said another. "Bah," said a third.

And the fourth:

"Here's to the stew that 'Stew' can't stew;

We'll eat it till we bust:

Palmetter stew, that is the stew

For pithecanthropus."

"Really, Miss . . . ah. . . Mrs. . . . ah, . . . you have no ideah how much you have added to our enjoyment of the occasion," the Van Dyke suggested. "We will be breaking camp this afternoon but we will be back next week-end. It is suggested by some of the fellows that you cook up a big batch of the stew for our consumption upon our return. If you would be so kind, don't-cha-know, and we will of course properly recompense you foah your trouble."

"Say, feller, "spat Moll, "did ye ever cut down one o'them palmetters? Well, ye got sumthin' comin'." Then she wobbled back to the shack.

The following Friday afternoon Moll was prepared. Cutting down the palmettoes and breaking out the hearts had taken time and required the assistance of many a tip of the jug. But Friday night the big iron pot was on the camp fire filled with broken palmetto buds and big hunks of fat pork and many other appetizing morsels. There would be enough for all.

When the trucks came with the baggage and the budding anthropologists, Moll met them some distance from the mound and suggested that it would be cooler



for them to camp at the edge of the hammock—more shade and fewer mosquitoes. When the professor evidenced hesitation, she informed him that she didn't object to their digging up the mound but she was afraid of their camp fires so close to her shack. So the tents were pitched and Moll struggled out with her big pot of stew. She dished out ample helpings.

"Holp yerselves" she cried as spoons and forks began to scrape the bottom of plates.

"You first, professor," suggested one of the young men, "and dig deep."

"Sure, dig deep," Moll repeated. "Better cooked at th' bottom."

So, waving Moll's huge wooden spoon, Professor Van de Buck bent over and scooped to the bottom. He seemed to lift something heavy, something which clung until suddenly it gave way and flew out on the ground beside the bright fire. It was a hairy thing . . . a skin . . . an animal skin. And it had black and white stripes running from the bushy tail to the sharp nose.

The professor gulped and ran to the shelter of the bushes. The young men looked—startled green eyes, wild eyed, then shouted with laughter.

"Now how be ye supposin' thet critter gone an' got hisself in thare?" Moll asked softly. "Must be he got in after th' pork an' I kivered 'im when I put on th' lid afore I put hit on th' fire. Must be boiled, sort of."

"Maybe it's a baby dinosaur," suggested one.

"Mebby th' dinner-sour laid an egg in th' stew an' hit hatched," said Moll. Then she turned quickly and wobbled back to the mound.

Came midnight. Gusts of wind from the west; great, gray clouds dashing eastward over the palmet-

toes, flashes of moonlight through them. A quarter mile toward the river, a figure stumbling through the dense, dry swale grass. It appeared and vanished as the grass bowed and rose in the wind. It was Moll; in one hand a can of oil, in the other a shot gun and a box of matches.

"Must git th' wind right" she growled. She held up a moist finger to get the direction. Yes, she was on the direct wind-line to the tents. The fire would burn out in the hammock; it would not reach the shack.

A crackling sound—the grass stalks exploding. Tongues of red creeping through the grass roots. Smoke drifting over the grass tops. Red flames shooting upward, skyward; clouds of smoke, a wild roar. The prairie was afire. A mighty wind was sweeping it eastward.

And closely following over the hot, blackened grass-clumps staggered the figure of Moll. Again she was praying, shouting, cursing. It would not jump the slough to the south, not so long as the wind stayed . . . But was the wind changing? Was the upper smoke whirling southward? Again she raised a moist finger. No, it had not changed, the mound was safe.

Cursing, shouting, praying—praying for vengeance. Curse the God that killed the preacher and the sheriff who let him be killed. Damn the old billygoat and his litter. Damn everything. There is no God—only the jug and liquor—and fire. They would fry in their tents. They would run into the fire in their frenzy like flies and moths. They would burn like greasy pigs; they would burn and crack and char. What could their god do? God!

In her wild rage she had not noticed until she came to the edge of the slough. There was a narrow place a few feet ahead. The fires had leaped it; the wind



had changed, it was coming from the north. Over a front a mile long, the wild flames leaped eastward and southward. Even when the moon shone she could not see for the dense smoke barrier.

In a few minutes it would reach the mound, the deep bedding of dry leaves, grass and rubbish. It would reach the mound and the dry leaves and rubbish under the shack and . . .

"God," she cursed, "th' shack's goin' . . . can't git around this here fire . . . couldn't put her out nohow."

Panting, sweating, cursing, she raised her gun and emptied a shell of chilled shot in the direction of the camp. Maybe she might hit them.

The wind had changed quickly. It was now a gale from the north. The fire might not reach the tents but no living blade of grass or shrub would be left on the mound, the shack would burn like tinder—the thatched roof, the . . .

"God!" she cursed, "th' baby, my baby; what he left me an' I didn't know hit w'en I kilt him."

Frantically she ran, stumbling, falling, blackened by muck and ashes; wildly she shouted, cursing, sobbing, rushing into the flames then groping back, her great chest heaving, gasping. At times she fell exhausted. At times she ran to the right or left hoping to find a break in that roaring wall of fire and smoke.

She could not hear the professor arousing his helpers, then directing the quick removal of tents and utensils to low, wet ground where the flames would not reach. The chug of the truck motors, the flashing of their lights as they drove away to safety, did not reach her. Only she saw the flames reach the sides of the mound, a great conflagration even to the fronds of the palmettoes, as they caught in the leaves and rubble.

"A fine God!" she wheezed, "damn . . ." And her great bulk sank in the char and the mud and lay still.

But the high flames at the mound had aroused the professor. "Oh, I say, fellows, that beastly woman, she may be ovah theah." The Van Dyke, the tailored clothes were forgotten. There was something beneath the veneer which had taken Van de Buck through Yucatan and Thibet. Before his pupils knew, he was gone.

Ten minutes later he was back, hat gone, beard and hair singed, face and hands burned. And in his arms he clutched—a baby. It was cuddling to him.

"The old slut left it to roast. Jolly well I know that she set the fiah, slut that she is."

"Looks like a baby girl to me, Prof," said one.

"Needs feeding," said another.

"Bossy's malted; babies cry for it," said a third digging out a can of evaporated milk.

"Bah!" said Van de Buck. "Here, you hold it while I get blankets from my duffel. Babies must be warm and dry."

"How dry I am, how . . ." One voice started it; twenty were close at the finish.

\* \* \*

The sun rose red on a blackened prairie, a smouldering mound of debris and smoking logs. In the shelter of the hammock twenty young men slept in blankets on damp ground; a tiny baby girl slept in the arms of the older man.

And far back, where the dense hammock dipped into the impenetrable marsh, where the big cypress and the gum trees grew, Moll lay prone between a dying fire and a copper still. The jug beside her was empty.



## HERITAGE

By FRANCES PERPENTE

STRANGE that a meaning should become so clear.  
 This far beyond the fact when all the day  
 Is sharp and bright with cold and wild with air.  
 Why must years lie like water in the ground,  
 Turgid and dark and blind with thoughtlessness,  
 To bring at last the life-blood to the tree,  
 Leaping the stem and consummate just now  
 Within my hand in this fine, weighted fruit?

What is a grave? A scooping in the sand.  
 The earth is full of death—the world is green  
 And quivering with life. It is not death  
 That sends my fingers trembling to the leaves  
 Hoping to know you in a waking flower.  
 For I have found you now that your sad bones  
 Are mingled with the roots. I know your mind  
 Alone and lost and sick with disillusion.  
 I know your tenderness—clean as the sky.  
 Late, late, I find the strength to love your pain,  
 To love in you eternal verity.

## LITTLE SONG...

By MAXEDA HESS

MORE than all else I find it hard to keep  
 The writing on the cold slate of the mind  
 Legible and, in perspective, kind;  
 Whether awake or in some troubled sleep,  
 No benefit may come to hearts that weep,  
 Those little hates are scrawled and so do bind  
 Me with an unimportant grief. I find  
 The judgment of a sleepless night cuts deep!

Who listens for the stirring of a bird?  
 Who knows the dark earth-history of a stone?  
 The voices of a heart are seldom heard  
 In sad rebellion, crying out alone;  
 Think, then, that tears may crystallize the word,  
 Erase the lighter script and thus . . . atone?



## THE ENDURING QUEST

### AN ORIGINAL ONE-ACT PLAY

*"The Enduring Quest," by Marion Templeton. The stylistic sort of playlet one would like to see acted by Fontaine and Lunt.*

By MARIAN TEMPLETON

#### SETTING

A sleeping room, part of an old weather-worn house on an island off the southern coast of Florida. The walls, formerly cream colored, are stained and dimmed by tropical dampness and heat. The moldings are eaten, ravaged by termites.

Center upstage are French doors with south and west ocean exposures, leading on to a veranda with scattered pots of plants. Dilapidated Venetian blinds hang at unequal lengths on the doors. On each side of the French doors are worn, fan-shaped, reed chairs, and on each side of these a window with streaked, grey-blue voile curtains knotted back so as not to keep any air from the room.

Jutting out from the right upstage corner is a large bed canopied with mosquito netting drawn back, beside this a bed table cluttered with feminine trinkets and a thermos. Downstage right, a door leading to another room. Downstage right to center is a broad desk covered with manuscripts, scribbled sheets, etc.—writer's paraphernalia.

Left wall upstage is another window, and downstage an old oak dresser obviously whitewashed, the top cluttered with cosmetic jars and a large jewel case. The dresser mirror is clouded.

Off center left is a rattan couch, above which suspends a large rectangular palm fan. The negress sits over in left upstage corner on a mat and operates this with a cord attached to a ring which she slips over her finger. Beside the couch are water glass, headache cologne bottle and a small fan.

Rag rugs or grass mats are scattered over the floor. The entire effect is one of heat and lassitude, casual untidiness.

#### LIGHTING AND SOUND EFFECTS

These, of wind, rain and ocean waves, should develop with the action of the play, beginning with the sunset hour when

a faint glow permeates the room, no wind, and only a few laboring rolls of water on the beach. This increases along with the tension of the characters to a deep purple-red glow, slight puffs of wind as seen in the movements of the curtains, until it is dark outside and the wind is so strong that the doors and windows must be closed, and the ocean is rumbling heavily. The storm increases (rain effect and the sound of palm branches slapping against the house) then decreases slowly until it is moonlight, there is only a slight breeze, and only the rumbling of the ocean indicates the passing of a tropical squall. It is cool. During the storm, heighten the interior effect with the use of oil lamps.

#### CHARACTERS

Boone Kemper is young, blonde, suntanned, successful playwright with good sense of humor. He is completely engrossed in his writing. Here his conflict is between sympathizing with his wife and getting notes for his play. He is wearing a white sport shirt, white trousers or shorts, and straw sandals.

Dolores Kemper is slender, exotic, dark. She is an actress to the fingertips, her conduct and emotions running from one extreme to the other. She wears a flowing chiffon negligee, with train, that clings to her body because of the heat and dampness.

Capri is a casual, slovenly negress, fat yet picturesque in her get-up. She is barefooted, wears a bright kerchief on her head, and gold hoop earrings. She suggests little of the romanticism connected with her name.

The sophistication of Boone and Dolores is in sharp contrast with the setting. Their pacings and rantings and emotional outbursts are in contrast with Capri's monotonous fanning and un-excitability.

As the scene opens, Boone is seen sitting at his desk writing on the play. He is thoroughly engrossed and evidently discouraged with what he is doing. Occasionally he grasps a glass of ginger ale and swallows tensely. Dolores is reclining fretfully on the couch and raises on her elbow frequently to see if Boone is paying any attention to her. Capri is fanning slowly, monotonously, never breaking her rhythm.

Dolores: (Irritated) Capri! How can you sit there in this heat, hour after hour, not feeling, not seeing,



not doing anything but fan? \* \* \* (Turns her head toward Capri) Stop it! The monotony of it is driving me mad!

Capri: (Has been gazing out western window) Don't you fret, Miz Dolores. They's a wind coming tonight.

Dolores: Really, Capri? Are you sure?

Capri: Yes'm, ah'm sure. Ah kin tell f'um de coloh ob de sky.

Dolores: (Half sits up) Do you mean that this oppressive heat is really going to end? You're not just saying that to make me feel better?

Capri: (Nods head) You'll see it stahtin' in a little while—fust little puffs, 'n then long-winded ones.

Dolores: (Looks exultantly at Boone, lays back on couch) Oh, what joy! (Sees if he hears her) What a victory for me! (He is still engrossed in his writing) Now Boone won't be able to finish the heat scene in his play . . . (No response from Boone; piqued) Why he must isolate himself from the civilized world to dwell on this God-forsaken island—just for the sake of *wallowing* in atmosphere . . . (Relaxes unwillingly and frets) Oh, it's even too hot to argue. He does as he pleases anyway.

Boone: (Sighs) Well, that's that. (Throws down pencil, stands, approaches wife) Pretty oppressive, isn't it? (Lifts shirt collar from neck.) Even the ginger ale's flat.

Dolores: (Studies him a moment, trying not to forget her fretting in admiration) Darling, could it possibly be too hot for one as strong and as impregnable as you? (Sits up) Isn't this stifling heat what you crave, so your play will steam with tropical passion?

Boone: (Aside) That's a good line. (Looks back at desk)

Dolores: Isn't that what you want? Isn't that what you like? (Smiles sardonically) My dear, can it be that living on this island in a house simply reeking with decay has become intolerable to you?

Boone: (Smiles, leans over her) Love me just a little, hon?

Dolores: (Annoyed, rises from couch) I suppose it hadn't occurred to you to include in the play a beautiful woman who is slowly going mad from tortuous heat and isolation. I'm sure you could get an excellent case study by watching me! (She is standing with her arms tense at her side).

Boone: Oh, sweet. (Pleads, takes her in his arms) Don't get so riled up. You're as stiff as a cigar store Indian . . . (Caresses her) Personally, I like nice soft curves.

Dolores: (Annoyed) Oh, don't touch me!

Boone: (Withdraws so quickly she is disappointed) Just as you say. (Studies her for a moment) My love, I feel that you are tremendously pleased about something . . . Let's have it.

Dolores: (Idles toward him) Very well . . . If you're depending on this weather to keep you in the proper mood for writing, you're in for a sad disappointment, my beloved. This is one play of hot, tropical love you won't finish—not if it takes more sweating days and sleepless nights . . . (Turns to Capri, triumphantly) Isn't that right, Capri?

Capri: Ma'am?

Dolores: (Flaunts the words at Boone) There is going to be a wind tonight! Isn't that right?



Capri: (Rolls eyes toward western window) Yes, *ma'am!*

Dolores: Hear that, my fine fellow? A wind! And you can't write of a woman losing her mind in a fetid atmosphere when the wind is high!

Boone: (Raises eyebrows) So what?

Dolores: (Throws hands over head) Oh, a wind! A wind! (A sharp gust shakes the house. Dolores notices it nervously, but does not reject her role)

Boone: (Shouts) All right! (Mimics her action) A wind! My horse for a wind! Now what?

Dolores: (Coolly) Oh, I know all about your precocious literary talents, dear Boone, but when you start to pace the floor (paces) of your study praying for heat—and probably cussing too—I'll order Capri to open every door and window in the house—

Boone: Yes, dear?

Dolores: And let it blow and blow—through everything—so your papers will get messed up—and the ink bottle will smear all over them! (Defies him dramatically. A gust of wind disturbs papers on Boone's desk; sound of water washing over beach)

Boone: (Quiet for a moment, then laughs heartily) All that nice acting over a bottle of ink I don't use! . . . Darling, if only your fickle admirers could see their former favorite actress in action—

Dolores: Former favorite?

Boone: Well, that last effort of yours wasn't exactly a success, and—

Dolores: (Approaches him with feigned menace) Boone Kemper, do you mean to insinuate that I—

Boone: (Takes her in his arms, bends her to one side in a stage clinch) Forget your failure in the solace of my arms, Bernhardt! (Smiles boyishly) Let's have a kiss, huh?

Dolores: (Willing, but must pout) Oh, all right . . . You'll have your way no matter what I do . . . Now let me go. I'm—'Im sticky.

Boone: I guess the heat has been too much for you, hasn't it? (Dolores is delighted with his sympathy) If it makes you refuse my love. (His teasing conceit floors her) Seriously, though, Dolores, I do appreciate your taking things on the chin once in a while for my sake.

Dolores: A pleasure, m'lord.

Boone: By the way what I stopped writing for was to tell you—before you interrupted me with that little dramatic episode about the wind (unusually loud blast makes them both start) that I had finished the heat scene, so I don't need the heat any longer. (Noise subsides)

Dolores: (Collapses on couch) Of course, you would have finished by now. (Fatalistically) That's why the wind can come. (Curtains are blowing out; Capri todders around, peering out at the sky)

Boone: Certainly! I get a great idea. It calls for a rain scene. So I command the rain to fall . . . and it does. Perfectly simple.

Dolores: Do you command the roof to leak, too?

Boone: (Ignores her remark) Say that I need heat for a heat scene— (Capri slams west window)

Dolores: (To Capri) What are you fussing around for? You make me nervous.



Capri: I's just closin' de window.

Dolores: (To Boone) You need heat for a heat scene, and it heats up. You don't have to impress me with that! . . . You have everything pretty much under control, haven't you—wife, publisher, servants—even the climate!

Boone: (Is back sitting on desk) Oh ho! So you finally admit I control you!

Dolores: I never said any such thing!

Boone: Yes, you did. Tto be exact, you said I controlled (counts on fingers) wife, publisher, servants, and the forces of nature.

Dolores: (Affects rage) Oh! (Kicks negligee train behind her, strides over to French doors) You insufferable egotist!

Boone: (Smiles) Now darling, isn't that what makes me so irresistible to you? (Lights cigarette) You know, Dolores, I might even sympathize with you on this heat business if I didn't know you just couldn't bear staying in nice, comfortable New York while I gamboled away romantically—according to your imagination—with some seductive (looks at Capri and grins) golden-skinned island wench.

Dolores: (Faces him) Do you really suppose I was jealous?

Boone: Suppose? Darling, I know! Why else would I pick such a place as this for retirement? I thought even you would realize my complete isolation . . . Of course, dramatics critics with uncomplimentary reviews of your play had nothing to do with your becoming bored with New York! . . . So you descend

on me here, and take hours of time and peace from my writing—

Dolores: (Stamps foot, starts to pace floor) Go ahead! Say it! You've been on the verge of saying it for the last six months! . . . Tell me to my face you'd been better off if you hadn't married me! You'd probably written half a dozen Pulitzer prize plays by now if you weren't so hampered by a jealous wife!

Boone: (Follows her) Now, lambkins, you know you're wrong there . . . But darn it all, you *want* me to say it so you can give vent to that dramatic instinct of yours! (Grabs her) You'd like to have me beat you (Shakes her) and mop up the floor with you, so you could scream and yell—or act the sainted martyr.

Dolores: (Stunned) W-h-a-t?

Boone: That isn't all, my pet. I married you because I thought you'd make a swell pal. I thought you'd be interested in helping me struggle for fame. (Walks away from her a few steps) But have you done that? Have you even done what wives usually do? (Points finger at her) Have you settled a comfortable home for your husband? No! Have you ever inquired whether I like nutmeg in my custard? No!! We have cinnamon because *you* like it . . . (Sunset glow increases a little; wind blows fitfully; curtains flutter)

Dolores: But—

Boone: No 'buts' about it! Have you given me a baby to walk the floor with at night? No!!! . . . But you have demanded a penthouse, and servants, and a drizzle-eyed poodle—and you still expect me to cater to your tantrums!



Dolores: (Feigns whimper) But, darling—

Boone: Darling, nothing! (Aloof) There are those, my dear, who might think that you married me for a meal ticket.

Dolores: (Frigid) And just who are those people?

Boone: Oh! (Shrugs shoulders) rival actresses—

Dolores: (Stamps foot) Rival?

Boone: —and critics whom you've offended with your temperamental calisthenics. After all, you were broke—two complete flops in a row (Holds up two fingers)

Dolores: Ooooooh! (Sniffles) To think that you could talk to me like this, especially after I sacrificed a great career so as never to be separated from you—

Boone: Now, Dolores—(Is disturbed at approaching tears)

Dolores: —to be always on hand when you needed my inspiration . . .

Boone: Dolores, stop crying! You know I detest tears!

Dolores: (Takes tiny handkerchief from dress) To think that I came all the way from New York to join you on this—this miserable, dreadful island—because you wrote such pitiful letters about soul-killing loneliness and your need for my inspiring presence. And you know how I suffer from the heat . . . Oh, dear! (Sobs. Gust of wind, palm branches rattle noisily. Dolores is startled)

Boone: I'm sorry, pet. I'm so worried about the play that I had to let loose some way.

Dolores: (Pause) What? The play? (Pause) Oh! (Reverses the situation and shows concern for Boone) Isn't it working out all right? (Very sympathetic)

Boone: (To get attention, feigns dejection) No. As I see it the play's a complete failure. (Sighs) I might as well tear up what I've written. (Starts for desk)

Dolores: (Stops him, speaks maternally) If you do that, I'll have to administer a good spank . . . You're tired, poor darling. You've been working so faithfully during this awful heat. Capri, get Mr. Kemper some ginger ale, and see that it's nice and cold. (Capri shuffles off) Here, now you lie back on the couch and let me put some of this nice headache cologne all over your forehead. (She does with gentle strokes, kisses him.)

Boone: (Sighs contentedly) Mmmmm!

Dolores: There, darling. Feel better?

Boone: Mmmmm-hmmmm!

Dolores: (sits beside him, takes his hand) Now I'm going to sit right here beside you while you tell me all about the play. Now what seems to be the matter?

Boone: (Raises on elbow, speaks reluctantly as if not quite sure what he wants to say) Well, you see my heroine is faced with leaving her husband (Dolores nods understandingly) for the sake of the child, who is dying of fever—

Dolores: Oh, how heart-rending! (To audience) You'll have the sympathy of every woman in the audience directed toward her . . . (To Boone) Is the child his, too?



Boone: Well, yes—only he doesn't know it yet?

Dolores: How remarkable!

Boone: Glad you think so. I thought so myself. Well, I want to get the woman into a great emotional scene, provoked possibly by a storm (gust of wind) like a hurricane— (Another gust of wind startles both; they hide their concern quickly)

Dolores: (Interrupts) A hurricane? Isn't that some sort of dreadful storm, where trees go flying through the air—and tidal waves wash away islands?

Boone: Exactly! (Dolores is obviously nervous) Well, if I only knew how a woman would react to a storm like that, I could give the revelation of the hero's being the child's father more effect, if that revelation came from the lips of a woman in the agony of fearing death from the storm.

Dolores: How thrilling! (Rises, thinks a moment with eyes closed) Think how effective it will be on the stage—marvelous sound effects, unlimited opportunity for great emotional acting—(Opens eyes) Let's see now. (Sees Capri peering out up-stage window) Boone, this wind that Capri says was coming (noisy blast; Dolores shivers and sits closely, quickly to Boone) to be more explicit, it's here now—will it be high enough to set the mood for you?

Capri: (Turns) It sho' will be high 'nuff!

Boone: (Jerks head toward her) I overheard, Capri. Why did you say that?

Capri: Cuz it's true, Mistah Kemper. They *is* a wind comin'—higher'n this—a mighty high one!

Boone: (Looks at Dolores, eyes narrowing) Did you tell her to say that?

Dolores: Did I—? (Gets up) Capri, do you hear that? He thinks we're in collusion.

Boone: (Unassured) Capri, how can you tell?

Capri: (Points vaguely out of doors) Look't de sky where de sun is settin'. (Whispers) It's de coloh ob blood! (Here the glow in the room is ominous red; curtains are blowing)

Boone: (Aside) 'Look't de sky where de sun is settin'.' Nice rhythm, that. (Laughs to relieve his concern) No, Capri, you're wrong there. Don't you recall hearing me say sometimes: "Red sky at night is shepherd's delight"? (Looks to Dolores for assurance)

Capri: (Shakes head so emphatically that the print 'kerchief slips to one side) No suh, Mistah Kemper. Mebbe foh orange red you say dat—but not for *blood* red . . . Look't dat red fan ovah theah where de sun is settin'. It's goin' to blow de wind this way.

Boone: (Dashes over to window) By George, she's right . . . (Looks at Capri, then Dolores) Is that all you've told her to say?

Capri: Ah don't need tellin', Mistah Kemper. Look't de ocean wheat ovah theah by de watah. It's puh-ple. Dat's de sign of a bad storm. Look't de ocean. It's heavy. It's restless—getting ready to travel. (Capri has to close doors and windows; goes off right downstage door)

Boone: (Looks from Capri to Dolores, not knowing whether to be frightened or not) Hey, is this just a little joke between you two?



Dolores. (Covers her concern in assuming a superior attitude) To think that a supposedly intelligent man would take stock in the colorful imaginings of an ignorant negress! Why, it's—it's inconceivable!

Boone: (Flushes with anger, then looks at Dolores knowingly) Huh! I'm not so unintelligent that I can't call your bluff, my love. Really (walks back to desk while speaking), if you must lecture me on cowardice to bolster up your own courage . . . (Capri re-enters with oil lamps, putting one on desk and other on left upstage wall bracket)

Dolores: Capri, what are you putting those awful things around for? What's the matter with the electric lights?

Capri: De machine dat makes 'em go has stopped runnin'. (Boone and Dolores look at each other. Boone recovers first. Neither will let the other see their concern)

Boone: (Blusters) Say—you don't think for one minute that I'm scared of a little wind?

Capri: Tain't goin' to be a little wind, Mistah Kemper. It's goin' to be *plenty* big. (Shuffles across room as they watch her) If you-all 'll excuse me again, I'll go fetch de chickens 'n put 'em in dat empty room off de kitchen.

Dolores: You'll do no such thing, Capri. (To Boone) What does she think this house is—a primitive hut where pigs sleep under the bed and hens under the table?

Capri: Them chickens ain't a goin' to like it when the wind carries off their coop, ma'am. Their roost is too low near the grond. They'll just natchilly drown!

Dolores: (Giggles nervously) There's a good line for your play, love—chickens drowning in wind.

Capri: (At right downstage door) It'd be more trooful, Mistah Kemper, if'n you said they drowned when de island got covered with *watah*! (An apprehensive silence follows her exit)

Dolores: Did you hear what she said—the island covered with water?

Boone: (Scratches head to hide nervousness) Picturesque speech, hasn't she? Ought to fit in nicely with what I have here. (Makes notes at desk)

Dolores: (Infuriated) Oh! Do you mean to sit there juggling words while our lives are in danger?

Boone: But, darling, you know how important the play is—

Dolores: Oh! So the play is more important to you than I am—dead or alive!

Boone: No, dear (He is keenly interested in her conduct) but I just—

Dolores: (Watches him a moment, then speaks with almost hysterical voice) Just! You'd just sit there worrying over sentence structure and let me float away to a watery grave! . . . You brute!

Boone: (Forgets his nervousness in watching her; speaks softly) Splendid, darling! Scribbles note. Storm is increasing; it is raining hard)

Dolores: (Ranting and pacing) What an ignominious end to a glorious career—floating away with chickens and pigs—out into the ocean (Looks down at herself)—food for the sharks!

Boone: (Can scarce contain his delight in her behavior) Bravo, madam! Magnificent! . . . I'll ad-



mit you'd be a tasty bite—a little peppery in spots, perhaps, but on the whole, quite delectable. (Storm is really on now)

Dolores: (Ignores his pleasantry) Think of it! Dying on a God-forsaken place like this—with no last curtain. (Boone takes notes while watching her) Just death! No hourly press notices of my waning breath! Just death! (She is very dramatic now, sinks moaning on to the couch)

Capri: (Enters, slouches around, peers out windows, mumbles. Wind forces open the French doors and scatters papers on Boone's desk. This is accompanied with a terrible roar and crash. Capri struggles to close the doors and finally sits against them)

Dolores: (When the doors open and the crash is heard, screams) Boone! Don't let the sharks get me! (The crash has frightened Boone also. They collide into each other's arms in midstage) Oh, darling, I'm so glad you're so strong!

Boone: Hold tight, darling!

Dolores: (Frantically) I don't want to die! I want to live!

Boone: If you die, I'll have to die with you!

Dolores: (Cannot forsake her actress temperament) Oh! How beautiful—inseparable in life, together in death! (The word death makes Boone very uncomfortable) Oh darling, I want you to know—before we die—that I've always loved you—no one else. Tell me you love me, too! (Kisses him fervently)

Boone: I do, darling, completely! (They listen to the storm a moment)

Dolores: Let's kiss for the last time—and then die! (They do so, then wait to be struck dead, but nothing happens. They relax slowly. At this point Capri should have just closed the doors, shutting out some of the noise of the storm. Dolores is still expectant; Boone relaxes)

Dolores: (Bewildered, yet happy) Darling! We're still alive!

Boone: (Kisses her; agrees whole-heartedly) Wonderful feeling, isn't it? (Idea occurs to him; he breaks away) Excuse me a moment, sweet. (Dashes to desk to scribble notes)

Dolores: (Paces floor; another crash is heard; wrings hands) How much longer will this torture continue? Must we be killed by degrees?

Boone: (Watches her; aside) Great! (Scribbles more)

Dolores: You mean you like this? You like dying by inches?

Boone: (Still writing) Yes! No! I mean—

Dolores: (Exasperated even in her anxiety) You mean nothing in the world exists but your desire to write that play!

Boone: But, love, isn't that courageous of me? Here—in the face of death (Dolores winces)—inescapable death (Dolores lets out a sob) I think only of my art.

Dolores: (Goes to his arms) Oh, if only you could give me some of your courage!

Capri: (From line above: 'Wonderful feeling,' gets up and reluctantly approaches western window.



Water is trickling over the sill. She sniffs cautiously and tastes it) Lord ha' mercy! It's salty!

Boone: (Pushes Dolores away) What? (Dashes to window with Dolores tagging after) Salty? Are you sure? (Tastes)

Capri: Ah's too sure f'my own good!

Boone: My God, Dolores! It is salty!

Dolores: (Hysterical) Then the ocean is rolling over the island! (Capri shuffles to right upstage window to look out) We're trapped! It's a tidal wave!

Boone: It can't be! (Dashes back to desk) Dolores, I can't die! I haven't time! My play—I—(Frantic)

Dolores: (At his heels) But, darling, we can die together like you said!

Boone: What the hell! . . . (Paces floor, tearing hair) No posthumous work! . . . (Sees her large metal jewel case on dresser; dashes over; dumps contents) Ah ha!

Dolores: (Screams) My jewels! What are you doing? (Pulls at him)

Boone: It's just what I need. (Paces back to desk as he speaks) I'll put the manuscript in here and seal the edges with tape. Then when the rescue party digs for our bodies, they'll find the play intact!

Dolores: (Clutches at him frantically; the house is shaking; Capri is turning round in circles) But you told me to find solace in your arms! How can you think more of a piece of paper than me? (As she hampers his efforts to store the play, he gives

her a push. She sprawls onto the floor and sits howling. Storm is abating some)

Boone: (Finishes taping edges of case) There! (Holds box aloft) Now death be damned! (Pause; notices Dolores on floor) Dolores! (Goes to her) What are you doing on the floor? Are you hurt?

Dolores: Go 'way, you brute! (Kicks heels) Don't touch me!

Boone: (Thunderstruck) Capri, your mistress has gone crazy! Quick! The smelling salts!

Dolores: (Fighting off his attentions) I don't want smelling salts! So! It wasn't enough to drag me away from New York to live and die on this island! You had to beat me too!

Boone: Huh?

Dolores: You know you beat me, you big bully! And when I take this to court, I'll show the jury my black and blue spot! Then you'll have a nice assault bill to pay!

Boone: (Sits back on heels, surveying her curiously) I'll be—(Laughs) Just where are those black and blue spots you'll show the jury?

Dolores: (Rolls over on side, points to part of anatomy half way between waistline and knees) Right here! (Meanwhile the storm is decreasing)

Boone: (Laughs heartily; crawls over to desk, rises and scribbles some more) Won't they be delighted! (Laughs) Especially when they see your bow legs!

Dolores: (Scrambles to feet) My bow legs! I never heard such insulting things! How dare you make fun of me!



Boone: (Sees that she is really offended) Oh, darling, forgive me! (Can't stop laughing) But the thought of you—(ha)—in court—(ha)—showing the jury (points at her legs and roars)

Dolores: (Rages silently for a moment, then her anger gives way before his laughter) Well, it hurt! . . . Anyway, they'd appreciate me more than you do! (Meanwhile the storm has quieted down considerably; Capri timidly opens the door, peers out, is satisfied to let it stay partially open)

Boone: Impossible, darling! No one could appreciate you more than I do. Why you're indispensable to me!

Dolores: (Melting) Really?

Boone: Dolores, my beloved, how could I write without your inspiration, without your help? Look! (He takes her over to desk, shows her notes he has scribbled)

Dolores: What's that?

Boone: A whole scene for the play. You gave me everything I needed—all the emotional outburst I had to have for the scene where the woman reveals her great secret while in mortal fear of being killed in the storm . . . You were magnificent, darling! . . . If only you could act as well as that when you appear in this play!

Dolores: (Thinks a moment, walks away a few steps, speaks nonchalantly) Why shouldn't I act as well in the play?

Boone: Well, you're bound to be good, of course. But darling, you were so consumed with the idea

of death and drowning—so utterly afraid of the storm—

Dolores (Coolly) Yes?

Boone: —that you—you forgot yourself! You were revealed as primitive, elemental woman fearing for her life against the insuperable odds of a violent storm. (Meanwhile Capri opens other door and windows, retires to her corner)

Dolores: I—see.

Boone: You were beating your hands against fate! Your fear was a universal fear! Oh, beloved, you were gorgeous!

Dolores: (Reclines slowly on couch, gently pleased) You didn't know I had it in me, did you, dear?

Boone: Well—

Dolores: (Speaking seriously, half rises to face him) Darling, you didn't suppose for one minute that I was really afraid of that little squall? That I actually believed what I was saying?

Boone: (Snorts) Why, you were paralyzed with fear!

Dolores: (Sits up quickly) It seems to me that I did some pretty active floor pacing and hand wringing for a person paralyzed with fear!

Boone: (Restrains self) Just-what-are-you-getting-at?

Dolores: (In a superior way) Just this, darling. Before the storm was so bad, you were telling me that you'd have to chuck the play because you didn't know how to write up a woman emotionally distraught with fear during a storm? Remember?



Boone: Yes.

Dolores: Well, the storm obligingly appeared (Relaxes) and I obligingly did one of the best bits of emotional acting of my whole career.

Boone: Oh, so you weren't afraid at all?

Dolores: (Laughs lightly) Of course not! . . . But I must say, dear, that after you tasted that salty trickle coming in the window, your courageous exterior soon vanished!

Boone: (Stands) Now you're accusing *me* of being scared!

Dolores: Oh, no! Not in the least. I'm just reminding you that you did a fine piece of revealing yourself as 'primitive elemental man distraught with fear' . . . Really, for a moment, I feared you might—do something drastic!

Boone: For instance?

Dolores: Well, you've read, haven't you, sweet, about people taking their own lives, rather than face death?

Boone: (Snorts) Say, listen. You passed off your fear by saying you were obliging me with a fine piece of acting. Well, I'll grant you that.

Dolores: Generous, aren't you?

Boone: But even you ought to realize that you can't act alone. You have to have stimulus, response, conflict! (Calmly) Well, I was just giving you—a—tit-for-tat!

Dolores: (Looks at him, feigning disgust. He looks down at her in superior way. Their glances meet and hold. They become serious for a brief second,

then both laugh heartily, extending right hands and saying) You win! (They laugh and kiss. The storm has abated now, only the faint rumbling of the ocean remains. Faint moonlight appears)

Dolores: Darling, look! The storm has passed. (She goes to the door, her gown flows behind her in the breeze. She poses consciously) Ooooh, how gorgeous!

Boone: (Joining her) Heavenly sight, isn't it?

Dolores: (In a high voice, very obviously acting) How symbolic this night has been of our love . . . We lose sight of it in petty fretting and neglecting each other; then we rid ourselves of all that poison in a great emotional trial—and emerge clean, serene, with a love as infinite as that heavenly sky so beautiful in the moonlight!

Boone: (Kisses her tenderly) Lovely, lovely woman!

Dolores: (Shows tendency to remain sky-gazing and sighing. Boone walks back to his desk; sits facing the audience. An idea is forming in his mind.)

Boone: (Suddenly) Dolores!

Dolores: (As if far away) Yes, dear?

Boone: I just got a swell idea for a one-act play!

Dolores: (Turns, comes down to him) Dear! Tell me!

Boone: I can take the kernel of the idea of this big play (places hand on jewel box containing the manuscript)—two people proving their love to be stronger than fear of death—only have the setting on that island in the Pacific where that active volcano is erupting now!

Dolores: Yes?



Boone: Have the man torn between dashing away to safety and leaving the woman—

Dolores: (Interrupting) She could be too weak from fever to be moved.

Boone: Swell! —leaving the woman to die alone, or he could choose to remain and die in her arms.

Dolores: (with idolizing look) Ooooh Boone! How marvelous! (Faces audience; dramatizes self) Think of the love scene—fervent vows of undying love—the red glow from the volcano casting shadows over the stage—

Boone: (Interrupting) Look! I could finish this play (indicates jewel case again) going over on the boat.

Dolores: Let's leave tomorrow then. Capri— (Capri rises and approaches them slowly)

Boone: Good: And when we get there, let's try to find a house up on the side of the volcano. Think how much better I can write when I'm *right up there!*

Dolores: (Grasps his arm) Think of watching the animals and natives fleeing past the cottage, away from the burning lava flow . . . It'll take a lot of extras and sound effects to stage properly, but the effect will be worth it! . . . Oh, I can't wait. Quick, Capri! The asbestos suits! We're going volcanoing!

(Curtain draws slowly on this last speech)

## IMAGINARY INTERVIEW

*"Imaginary Interview," by Reginald Clough. A satire with good intentions.*

By REGINALD T. CLOUGH

(Between Dr. Zealous, a professional director-producer-actor of an amateur company, but a fairly good outfit, nevertheless, and Mr. Earnest, a young, ambitious writer who has taken his first crack at dramatic criticism. Zealous is ever on the lookout for the supreme in the drama. Earnest, due to his youth, works on the trial and error method, trying to find the public's wants, and erring by giving it to them. Dr. Zealous has recently produced what the polyannic consider a smashing success, and mighty fine it is, too, but though approaching the ultimate, there are one or two minor faults. Mr. Earnest, eager to help and generally observing, uncovered the faults and did not call it the hit of the century. He is being admonished. It is almost high noon, both Zealous and Earnest are hungry, but art comes before meat-loaf. This is in part the setting. Now you may go on with the story.)

Dr. Zealous: When you write a review, you should learn to say something in it.

Mr. Earnest: I admire your individuality, Dr. Zealous. Nearly everyone liked my article.

Dr. Z.: They probably didn't think about it. It was too personal.

Mr. E.: (plaintively) I wanted to help improve your production. When I find things in a book with which I disagree, I mention them. When there are evils of society existing, they should be removed. When I find something wrong in a play, I think I should write about that too.

Dr. Z.: Yes, and there is room for improvement in your review. The trouble is, you don't know what a criticism should be or what it should do. You



didn't help me at all. Here I am, trying to build up an organization. I have myself to think for. I have slaved for six weeks on this play. It is highly successful. And then you come along and do your best to tear down all my work. That is perfectly obvious.

Mr. E.: (cowering before the formidable onslaught) I never intended to tear it down. I meant to aid in strengthening it. It isn't perfect.

Dr. Z.: That's true, but it's the best thing that has happened along in this vicinity in many a day. The Chamber of Commerce thought it was splendid.

Mr. E.: So did I.

Dr. Z.: Why didn't you say so? For the past two years I have been doing superb work in my line. I must have my say in the newspapers. You people must listen to me. You don't give me enough publicity. Besides, you criticize my work too severely.

Mr. E.: There were one or two imperfections, however. If you are to continue with your play, those must be removed.

Dr. Z.: Yes, but that is my job. I don't need you to tell me about them. Why, I sent your review and a professional review to a disinterested friend of mine, and he didn't know they were even about the same play.

Mr. E.: Well, if my review had been like his, I could probably get a job too.

Dr. Z.: Why did you say that my opening night was a dress rehearsal?

Mr. E.: I didn't. I said that it was a dress rehearsal compared to the second performance.

Dr. Z.: I want the truth told when it deserves to be told. I have a wonderful organization here.

Mr. E.: I don't question your ability at all. How many times had your full cast been in rehearsal before the opening night?

Dr. Z.: That's beside the point. I saw it myself the first night. I liked it very much.

Mr. E.: I don't expect you to hate yourself for your work.

(All during this time there has been no antipathy between the two subjects. They are still cool about the whole business. Perhaps they are cool because they are both artists, in their line, of course. Or possibly neither is an artist. But, at least, both of them are pseudo-artists of the species which hang around literary tea-parties listening to neighbor Jones read his [or more probably] her outburst on the heroic couplet, meanwhile trying to keep up with Jones on the angel cake and mint-flavored frosted ices.)

Dr. Z.: Do you think that criticism should be objective or subjective?

Mr. E.: Neither: I think that all criticism should be injective. I think that the critic should inject in his subjects the inspiration always to do better.

Dr. Z.: That is true, but my work reaches an unusually high standard. You didn't commend it half as much as you should.

Mr. E.: I said that it was the best amateur production I had ever seen.

Dr. Z.: It was distinctly professional. You weren't specific enough in the faults you did find.

Mr. E.: I said that I couldn't imagine an eighty-five-year-old man hopping and skipping like a ten-year-old boy on the first day of his summer vacation.



Dr. Z.: Criticism must be impersonal. It must be objective. All art must be objective. The reviews of the New York critics are subjective; they are ruining the drama (pronounced with the mid-western slant on the Oxford version of the *a*.)

Mr. E.: One can like or dislike a thing, can't one, Dr. Zealous? I realize that criticism should be objective, but I think that it should be subjective too. If you take either one away, I don't believe that you would have much left.

Dr. Z.: The subjective element should be eliminated. Paul Green says so.

Mr. E.: Oh, yes. He's that fellow who writes for the movies, isn't he?

Dr. Z.: Paul Green is a great playwright. He is also a great philosopher. He is in Hollywood at present, yes.

Mr. E.: He's prostituting his art, being in Hollywood, don't you think?

Dr. Z.: Certainly not. After all, he has to earn his bread and butter.

Mr. E.: I'm afraid that Mr. Green likes steak and caviar pretty well.

Dr. Z.: That's beside the point. He says that criticism should be completely objective.

Mr. E.: That to me, Dr. Zealous, is like picking up a book and saying to yourself, 'Now, if I close my right eye and look at this thing just with my left, will I see it better, or will I accomplish more if I leave my right eye open and close my left?'

Dr. Z.: I thought that your review was sophomoric. It was not coherent. It had absolutely no unity. It

was poorly written. You are one of these people who are quick to comment, but if I am successful, as I doubtless will be, you will climb on the bandwagon to ride with me.

Mr. E.: (who has never seen a bandwagon and doesn't know what makes one go) You are the first person who hasn't like my review.

Dr. Z.: I understand that most of your writing instructors told you that it was good, but do they know about the theater?

Mr. E.: They were talking about the coherence of my article.

Dr. Z.: My disinterested friend in New York said that it was terrible. He didn't know what play it was about.

Mr. E.: Perhaps he was too disinterested.

Dr. Z.: Why, there is no one here who is even qualified to review my productions.

Mr. E.: Naturally you can't expect to have Benchleys and Atkinsons at your beck and call, especially when you have only an amateur company.

Dr. Z.: The trouble is that you haven't the background.

Mr. E.: I have a better background than anyone else around here.

Dr. Z.: You have never taken any courses in acting or in play producing or directing. If you want to review, why don't you get some practical experience?

Mr. E.: I haven't time for everything. I have regular classes which I must take.



Dr. Z.: I think that you had better take some courses with me before you try to write another criticism. Then perhaps you can do better.

Mr. E.: And you aren't qualified to criticise my criticisms. What do you know about journalism?

Dr. Z.: I have a first-hand knowledge of the field. I have a perfect right to criticize your reviews.

Mr. E.: Have you ever been a critic? What practical work have you done?

Dr. Z.: I taught journalism for two years.

Mr. E.: Do you call that practical experience?

Dr. Z.: I wish that you would make your praise a little more obvious. I don't want to have any more student reviews of my plays, particularly at this time when I am trying to get money to further my interests.

Mr. E.: You mean that I can't review any more of your plays?

Dr. Z.: You certainly cannot. When I made this arrangement, I said that I wouldn't object to student reviews as long as there was a faculty review beside it on the page. There was no faculty review beside yours. Just think of the impression that your review must have given people who couldn't see my play!

Mr. E.: It wasn't my fault that there wasn't any faculty review beside my criticism. Anyway, I think that's an assinine plan.

Dr. Z.: I can take no chances. I have my work to do, and I have the interests of the whole community in my hands. The Chamber of Commerce, the

Woman's Club, and the Alumni Association are all standing solidly behind me. I can't let them down.

Mr. E.: I wish you the best of luck. I am always interested in art. I shall always be interested in your dramatic work. Only I wish that you would let me review some more of your plays.

Dr. Z.: That is out of the question. I have my reputation to uphold. I have my salary to maintain. I must have members of the faculty review my plays. They will be fair. They will bestow praise where praise is so obviously due. They are my friends.

Mr. E.: My dear Dr. Zealous, do you think that if I were going to write a story, I would take it to my mother or my best friend for impersonal criticism? Absolutely not! I would take it to a disinterested party. That is the only way I can get impartial criticism. Naturally you will get flattering reviews if your friends criticize your plays. But seriously, though, do you truthfully think that's the best way to reach perfection in your work?

Dr. Z.: That is beside the point.

(And at this point the young, ambitious, thwarted reviewer is overcome with the subjective, objective, and aesthetic elements in dramatic art. The meat loaf is probably calling him, too. Anyway, he concludes the lively interview by making his exit from the scene. Dr. Zealous, who believes that another milestone has been passed, that another obstacle has been overcome, begins to turn hand-springs, all the while singing a song which starts, "Now is the time, I am the reason, June is the season, etc., etc." The young, ambitious, thwarted reviewer catches only a few of the words. The rest are all drowned in his profound thoughts about the subjective, objective, and aesthetic elements of his art.)



## PROBLEMS OF SANTO DOMINGO AND HAITI

*"Problems of St. Domingo and Haiti," by J. B., shows that the author has a first-hand acquaintance with his subject.*

By J. B.

**E**IGHT HUNDRED miles east from Florida lies the island of Santo Domingo, alias Haiti, the Hispaniola of the Spanish Conquistadores. Cradle land of European civilization in the western hemisphere, treasure land of pirates and English freebooters, old before its time. That island today constitutes a real problem for the people of the United States.

The people of Santo Domingo and Haiti are of Southern European origins and culture; a different language, a Latin jurisprudence; supersensitively proud of their antecedents; foolishly jealous of big, rich Tio Sam.:

A people long misgoverned, largely illiterate, poor; their country heavily in debt to Europeans, their treasury empty, helpless; yet their hearts thrilling with patriotism, proud.

A people who judge Americans—as all people must—not by the flowery words of the Department of State, but by what that Department *does*, what those crude samples of Americans who would exploit St. Domingo's natural resources *do*.

And all Latin America watches!

The other aspect of the problem raises questions of national defense—the government at Washington must look with trepidation upon the prospect of naval bases by European countries and Japan so close to the United States, so controlling by location in the de-

fense of the Panama Canal. Since the time that President James Monroe enunciated his doctrine, conditions in our country and these Latin American countries have greatly changed. Now in times of general peace, at least, we are prone to assume a charitable and Christian attitude towards those peoples who have greatly suffered through political tyranny and economic distress. From our legislative halls and from thousands of pulpits the demand has gone forth that we assume a Big Brother fraternalistic attitude toward the Dominicans and Haitians. Yet of those Americans who have accurate knowledge of conditions in these countries, the majority are contriving, self-seeking. And we have few trained representatives; no well planned forward-looking policy.

And all Latin America knows this!

The eastern portion of the island has been intensively developed in the production of sugar cane by American capital—but sugar has no price and the barefooted peons are without work, and hungry. In the mountains of the interior and in the northern and western sections tobacco, tree cotton, sisal and other less important agricultural pursuits furnished a precarious livelihood but all of these are now of low price and without active foreign markets.

"When the people laugh and drink and dance," said my friend, Don Jose, the Creole, who had spent forty years of his eighty among the Dominicans, "we may expect evolution. But when they no longer dine and dance, the dragons of *Revolucion* come from their caves up on the mountain sides and breathe fire and destruction over the fertile plains."

And in Santo Domingo from time to time during the last two decades the dragons have multiplied and the peace-loving peons, whose most exquisite pleasure



seems to come from watching cocks with bright steel needles attached to their spurs fighting on a Sunday afternoon, have learned to carry blue steel under their shirts. At a reception of the Governor of Porto Rico in 1913 there were four ex-presidents of the Republic of Santo Domingo as guests. One was black, one was brown. Torn by such economical and political disturbances the masses of the people have come to plod the deep ruts worn by habit and necessity to their thatched shacks, to frugal meals of rice and codfish, to children who will always make the ancient "mark" if perchance it happens that one of them must sign his name.

Under American control neighboring Porto Rico has developed since 1899. Its population, already overflowing, has increased over one-third. Strange irony of fate—American medical skill eliminating the dread hookworm has resulted in a density of population far beyond the capacity of the island. American capital and stimulus has pushed forward conditions in Cuba until their revolutions partake of the nature of major engagements. But in the last revolution in Santo Domingo there was but one unconfirmed casualty with a complete change of government. The "outs" got "in" and those who had been "in" rather effectively got "out"—with the island treasury. And there are practically no free hospitals, no clinics to keep down the death rate.

In the early nineteen-twenties European governments whose nationals held large claims against Santo Domingo and Haiti threatened intervention. The Monroe Doctrine was about to be flouted. Surely the United States could not enforce its super-constitution over the western hemisphere and aid and abet these island republics in defrauding their foreign creditors.

So marines were landed in Haiti—just five hours before the arrival of a French man-o'-war. They took over that country's finances, installed sanitation, built roads, policed, medicated. And the marines landed in Santo Domingo where good roads and bridges, pure water supplies, beneficent laws still evidence the efficiency of their work.

But in Haiti and Santo Domingo the Marines are hated? Why? The answer is to restate our problem. Then add that no people like to be "policed" by "foreigners," and the militaristic and social qualities of the average marine may not be altogether conducive to international amity when bared among these super-sensitive people.

As a result of ever changing policy and secret treaties of European governments in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the island first settled by Spain was divided. To France went the western one-third, to Spain the eastern two-thirds. The present independent republic of Haiti, the west portion, speaks a polyglot French. Its capital investments are largely French owned. But since that time a century and a quarter ago when Dessalines and Yellow Fever drove the French regimentals into the Caribbean, Haiti has been the Black Republic. And since that time its history has been one of revolution, bloodshed, poverty and reckless chaos. A count of faces at Port au Prince will show at least a 99% negroid majority.

Tourist guides emphasize the atrocities of the monster Christophe and his Citadel; guides point to the crumbling palace of Sans Souci, where the mad dictator finally ended his life with a gold bullet. But probably even more dramatic and terrible is the brief flash of President Sam, the last dictator before the American occupation. This fanatic, upon entering



the Presidential palace, had several hundred of his political opponents thrown into jail. Then one night he decided that dead opponents were safer than living ones and he had them all shot. The next day the populace of Port au Prince, maddened by the murder of of their relatives and friends, stormed the French legation and literally hacked Sam into a hundred pieces. Then Washington had to act and the marines landed.

The harbor at Port au Prince faces west to the Panama Canal. It is a splendid harbor. Good statesmanship would seem to require that no flags other than the Haitian and Stars and Stripes should float from the customs house by the water front. This notwithstanding the rantings of our eminent American senators and the obeisance of presidential appointees, one of whom recently bowed before an ancient mammy and kissed her hand. The marines have been withdrawn from Haiti, the marines who were hated, but who policed well. And although the sewers in Port au Prince are still open ditches, the same marines did install an adequate water supply that the people might have clean drinking water and the ditches might be flushed.

In many ways the solution of the problem of the Black Republic is further in the future than that of Santo Domingo. Black gesticulations and liberty inspired tongues may bring applause in Washington, but they will never give energy to the lazy musels and the phlegmatic minds of the great mass of the people.

The largest school in Port au Prince faces the principal park. Directly opposite is the ornate presidential palace. The school is of one story frame and zinc construction with four or five rooms. In front of the school is a statue of their liberator, the man whom

they boast as the George Washington of Haiti, Toussaint l'Ouverture. It was modelled and cast in France. It was once gaudily painted; the paint is weather worn and peeling. And tropical rains have undermined the foundation so that the statue stands at a precarious angle. Surely a people whose highest conception of education, whose keenest appreciation of patriotism evidenced by the dilapidated condition of Toussaint l'Ouverture's statue will remain a problem for long generations to come.

A culture census of Haiti would probably show that the peons from the mountains who ride donkey back into Port au Prince's market before sun up, their saddle bags bulging with bananas, vegetables, live poultry, pigs, are representative of those who live in the outlands. The rhythm of the rada drums, the mysticism of the voodoo seem hidden back of their dull, staring eyes. They sell to the market verders, the black, bare-footed creatures in the market who squat on the clay floor with little piles of native beans, fruits, yams—all on scraps of old newspapers—about them. There are chickens straining at cords to reach the corn; pigs, slaving, with bound feet tugging to reach the breadfruit.

And over all a stench.

And such a census would show those who dwell in towns idly chatting, gesticulating, jabbering on the street corners. Tomorrow? They don't call it "ma-nana" in Haiti—so why worry—may never come. Enough unto the day is the evil thereof, or the good. Maybe Uncle Sam will provide the morrow. If not, the morrow must take care of itself. Why should an independent Haitian worry?

Perhaps it is the tropics; perhaps it is that subtle mixture of black, brown, convict yellow and renegade



white; perhaps it is poverty, illiteracy, public corruption or instability. Perhaps it is just that it is. At the Haitian lunatic asylum some miles from Port au Prince I saw many demented sitting in their own filth, clawing at bars, whining as anthropoids do when in pain. This may not be a true picture of Haiti, but it is sufficiently accurate to show a problem.

But after all the neglected landmarks of Haiti are only contemporaries of Plymouth Rock and Jamestown. In St. Domingo the family trees go back many more generations. There is the ruin of the castle of Diego Colon, son of the great Christopher, who first ruled Hispaniola. The walls still stand; there are remnants of mural paintings on the adobe; and old mahogany timbers, harder than the rock. The old city wall which defied Drake and the pirates, the tree where Columbus tied the Santa Maria—any mulatto wharf rat will show you where the cables cut into the trunk; the sun dial that Isabella had something to do with.

But of all else—the Cathedral. It stands to the east of the Plaza where the señoritas ambulate their charms and the marines were over inquisitive—as proof of the eternal stability of the crown and faith of Castile and Aragon. Rocked by the eternal surge of the volcanoes, torn by mighty Caribbean storms, marvel of architectural skill—it stands. In its vaults the bones of clergy who ruled millions. In its holy-of-holies the lead casket with the mortal remains of the Great Admiral, the world's supreme navigator and explorer, Christopher Columbus—Christobal Colon to his countrymen.

The interior of the island is very mountainous and but sparsely settled. Huge volcanoes long since dead rise from the Caribbean to a height of nearly 11,000

feet. In the rainy season mountain freshets rush through the valleys to spread out and vanish along the arid coastal regions to the south.

In these mountain districts, especially in Santo Domingo, there are scattered hamlets of Whites whose ancestors came to the New World from the barren inlands of Spain. A crude log fence may surround a couple of acres of land. Within it are gardens and flowers, a half dozen houses tinted white or red with a wash made from the clay soil. These houses are walled with palm slabs, thatched with palm leaves. There is little furniture upon the dirt floors. The passing rider is invited to stop, to have a cup of coffee and bread; if the hour be late the best cot in the headman's house is offered in proof of true hospitality.

A bit of old Spain transplanted to Hispaniola, the traveler muses. Surely here are few problems, and in fact none save the providing of schools and of further creature comforts which these mountaineers appreciate and desire.

In another settlement in some other valley the cheek bones of the inhabitants are high, their hair straight and coarse, their skin brown. These are the descendants of the Carib Indians—of the few whom the ruthless enslavement of Spain spared. Legend tells that most of the Caribs, rather than submit to serfdom took their own lives, an entire village joining hands and jumping over cliffs. Here again the traveler meets with the ready hospitality of the outlands.

Along the coast, however, and in the inland towns where the elevation is not such as to chill the marrow in black bones during the winter, the population is preponderantly negro and mulatto. These are the revolutionists, the elements which in Santo Domingo con-



stitute the great economic, if not social and political problems.

When my friend, Don Jose, and I rode into the little town of San Juan late one January evening and inquired for a hotel, we were directed to a shack with a bar in the front room, a greasy table and several dilapidated chairs in the dining room and a cackling, grunting assortment of fowls and animals in the rear yard. After long delay and much haggling our hostess caught, killed and fried a chicken and from the stygian conglomeration of old greases spooned out black rice and beans. In the sooty flicker of a rag absorbing oil from an abandoned tomato can, we ate. Don Jose nonchalantly tossed the remains of a drumstick over his shoulder. There was a rush of canine feet, the growls of half famished dogs behind us, under the table, under our chairs. Clearly the garbage man was not needed.

And perhaps the marines are not needed. There are those who think that Uncle Sam has been somewhat of a garbage man. Certain it is that the problem is too complex for any immediate solution. That does not relieve us of our responsibility, however, to adopt a policy and stick to it.

## MISS TRINDWELL

*In his sketch, "Miss Trindwell," John Beaufort presents a social type some of us may have known.*

By JOHN D. BEAUFORT

I MET her at one of the Cranes' cocktail parties, those bi-monthly rituals to which "everybody" goes—everybody except the people I know. But I had promised old man Crane at least once a week, when we chanced to meet in the elevator, that I would be sure to come out. This afternoon he had cornered me. It was the very day of the Crane fiesta. Mr. C. is a large, bluff individual

"Of course you're coming," he announced, lifting me into the taxi. And we were off.

I was standing by the piano gazing at Mrs. Crane's coiffure and wondering why it looked like a section of stuffing from a bargain mattress.

"Why, you're Mr. Birchard, aren't you?" asked a voice, heavy with cheer. "Yes, of course," it went on without waiting. "We met at Sally Dean's. You remember, before she left Bob—I'm Martha Trindwell, you silly man," she added, noting my confusion.

Miss Trindwell seated herself on the piano bench. She was dressed in a long silver affair and wore a small black hat intended, I expect, to lend dash. Her skin was a sort of shiny white, except for a large pimple on her chin, which she stroked affectionately now and then. I don't know why it was, but I was convinced that were she to stand before a lamp, she would have proved to be translucent.

"Yes, poor Sally," she said. "Of course I never could understand how they were married in the first



place. He was so much the outdoor man—a sort of grownup child of nature. And she, poor girl, inevitably got hay fever after a day's outing in the country. The children have gone to the grandmother. Three of them. They'd been married five years, Sally and Bob, I mean. Isn't love blind, though?"

There was demoniac glee in her voice as she said this. I nodded assent. Miss Trindwell struck off a chord on the piano.

"Do you play?" I asked.

"Flatterer! No, of course I don't. Just play at it."

I realized this when her modulations were brought to a conclusion by a little difficulty with a minor seventh.

"Yes," said Miss Trindwell, apparently agreeing with herself, "I can never see a piano without thinking of the Hortons. Did you know the Hortons?"

I was about to answer in the negative with the added information that it didn't really matter as I hadn't even known the Deans. But Miss Trindwell was too quick for me.

"They were such nice people. No one can ever see why she did it. But he wanted the piano in one corner and she wanted it in the other. Alice Horton was never the girl to give in. One week-end, she went off to visit her mother. When she got back, he had moved it to his corner and had it fixed to the floor. It must have been an awful fight because Billy Rankin—you probably know him, he composes—well, he bought the piano and you can see the axe marks on the front right leg. It's really a scream."

I nodded, laughed, and wondered inwardly why any of the aforementioned information should be characterized as a "scream."

"Oh *do* have another," urged Miss Trindwell, as cocktails came round again. She held my glass out for me, pressing her fingers ever-so-slightly against my hand as she did so. I hardly had time to feel awkward and dissent, when she was off again.

"And of course you knew about the Emersons . . ."

I could see by this time that the fact that I did or did not "know" about the Emersons held little significance.

"Yes, she was a manicurist, but an awfully nice girl. Harry had made a lot of money in some kind of gadgets and wanted to settle down. He made her life miserable reminding her of all he had taken her away from and how much he'd given her. Harry was an old bachelor and he should never have married anyone so young," said Miss Trindwell significantly.

"Anyway, about a year after they were married, Grace's uncle, who had run away to China years before, died and left her just oodles of money. Naturally, she walked out on Harry.

"So you see," said Miss Trindell, after a pause—the first pause she had indulged in—"you men mustn't be too sure of yourselves."

"No," I interrupted defiantly, "indeed we mustn't!"

"But you've got to stand up for your rights and Martha Trindwell would be the last woman to want to see a man hen-pecked. I always think of Teddy Rosner. He was such a nice boy, with the most beautiful eyelashes. You have nice eyelashes too, Mr. Birchard. Well, Teddy just adored Arline. She was an artist, rather bad, but he had enough money. Every summer, she'd leave him to go to some arty colony. One year, he visited her. She'd always forbidden it. Anyway, when he arrived on the scene, she was en-



tertaining about eight people for breakfast, and apparently they *hadn't just come in for breakfast!*"

"She made an awful row and went right back to town with him to get the divorce. He was so shocked, he's never quite recovered, poor boy."

There was real melancholy in her voice as she said this.

Old man Crane came up. "Well, Drexel, how are you making out?" he said to me.

"Fine, thank you, but I must be getting along now . . . Thanks so much . . . Excuse me, Miss Trindwell . . . Where can I find Mrs. Crane?"

"She's over there by the piano. Good night. Come again."

I turned to leave. But Miss Trindwell placed her arm through mine and came along.

"I'm going with you," she said. "Must get down town for dinner."

"Charmed," I murmured.

Going down in the elevator, Miss Trindwell scrutinized me carefully.

"Of course," she reassured herself finally, "you're not Mr. Birchard, you're Mr. Drexel. We met at the Hales', didn't we, the day after Marty Gowen blacked both his wife's eyes? Yes, that was it! Of course you knew about the Gowens . . ."

Unfortunately Miss Trindwell and I were going in opposite directions so I have never been informed on the Gowen tragedy. Incidentally, I do not know the Gowens.

## IN THE JUNGLE

*"In the Jungle," by Harry Edmonds, is a sketch from life which the author met with in his travels in Indo-China.*

By HARRY EDMONDS

NEAH had worked hard in the rice fields that day. He walked briskly toward the village. A slight breeze whisked away the beads of sweat from his brown sturdy body. He felt a great contentment as only those know who exert every muscle under a glowing tropical sun.

Neah loved his wife and two children and in a few months his wife would bear him another. He hoped it would be a boy. He dreamed of talking to his son while at work and watching him grow. His son would be strong and help him in the rice fields. When Neah grew old he would only have to beat the rice. He could smoke his pipe all day long. He could drink more wine, because he would not have to get up before seven in the morning. Yes, Neah wanted a boy.

Neah shouted a cheery greeting to his neighbor as he passed on to his own hut. He was one of the best liked men in the village, and always led his fellow hunters into the field. His wife was the envy of both men and women, she was beautiful.

Neah's little girls ran out to meet him. He picked them up and carried them into his bamboo hut. "But where is Senai? I am hungry and there is nothing cooking." Putting the children down on their small feet again Neah went into the next room. His wife was lying down. Her shoulders were shaking, and she was sobbing convulsively. He knelt down beside her. Turning her over he clasped her hands and



looked into her eyes. They were red and her cheeks were swollen. "But what is the matter, my wife Senai? You have the fever?" She shook her head. She clasped him about the neck and kissed his forehead. "But what is the matter, my wife?" Again she sobbed and remained speechless. "Talk, woman, I am tired and hungry." "My husband . . ." Her voice was hoarse. Neah leaned closer so he could hear.

"I was in the tobacco field. I leaned over to cut a leaf. I was pushed to the earth. It was that French official. His white face came closer. His breath was strong with wine. I spit my betel-nut juice full in his face. He laughed. I called for help. He hit my head against the ground. He placed his knees on my breasts. It was of great pain ... I do not remember more."

Neah knew the French official. He was tall and strong with a fine face and blue eyes. On his trips out from Sigon he would bring little gifts to Neah and his family. Neah would drink with the official, but just enough to warm his blood. It was too bad that the official always drank much. The head *Moi* Chief when he had visited Sigon said that the official was well liked. There were always many beautiful women around him. The official told Neah that some day he would return to France. There his girl was waiting for him. He would get married and have children just like Neah.

Neah stood erect behind the large bamboo clump at the edge of the spring. The moon was full. He watched the shimmering surface of the now crystal pool. From time to time he glanced at the glittering camp-fire of the French officers. Neah knew that the white people always drank of water before sleeping.

When he had taken that fine Monsieur Honerat hunting, it was Monsieur's custom to drink water before retiring. A frog leaped into the pool. The even ripples sparkled.

Neah grew tense, for a man was walking unsteadily down the path. The man was carrying a pail, and singing. He fell over a clump of grass and laughed drunkenly. Kneeling at the edge of the pool, the French official put his pail in the water. The large knife came down with the same deft movement as it had done many times in the rice fields. The moon shone down on the ruby red pool. The even ripples sparkled and then disappeared.

Seven days had passed. Neah was working in the rice fields. As he trudged along in back of his water buffalo he thought of the official. "But why did it happen?" He pulled in the buffalo, and stepped up from the water on a clump of grass. There he sat meditating. He heard a purring which grew louder. Startled, he looked about the field but saw nothing. The purr grew into a roar. Neah looked up in the sky. A huge bird was circling overhead. This must be the bird that men rode on. The official had tried to tell him about it, but Neah could never quite understand. The bird flew towards the village. All at once there was a loud explosion that shook the clump of grass.

Neah ran across the watery field. Soon he was on the village path. A half mile more and he would be there. He came out into the clearing. All was confusion. Shrill cries, men and women running about, screaming children. At the edge of the village his friend Lung's house was on fire. He ran over the burning logs in the direction of his own house. Where was it? It couldn't be—yes there was his pet pig



pinned between two logs. He saw two feet through the flames. Dashing into the fire he picked up the body and staggered back to safety. Laying it down, he knelt beside it. Most of the flesh was torn from the face. It was unrecognizable. His glance fell on the battaque which the woman was wearing. It was his wife's, hadn't he seen her wash it many times in the river?

Neah stood erect over the still form of his wife. His neighbors were gathering around, but he did not see them. He was staring into the sky. The smell of burning flesh pounded his nostrils. His sturdy body began to shake. Arms outstretched he shouted to the sky—"But why did it happen—But why did it happen?"