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*"only a tribe of vast importance could
merit so wholly fearsome a crater."*

An Hitherto Unpublished Tale

From the Memoirs of Dom Nicolas de Caen (Celebrated in the Wondrous Sagas of that Crafty Sorcerer, James Branch Cabell).

By DAPHNE FRASER



AND the tale tells that in the province of Mirwen there lived a comely but not over gifted people, called the Llederiv. And in a curious situation they passed their lives: for endless deserts, yellow and without horizon, encompassed them on all sides; and in the center of their kingdom lay a bottomless pit. Not a day went by, moreover, but some luckless wight strayed too near the verge and fell in; or an insecure portion of the rim broke off bodily, taking with it in its plunge many forlorn wretches, who kicked and screamed as they fell.

In the beginning the Llederiv thought the Bottomless Pit a mark of national honor, for only a tribe of vast importance could merit so wholly fearsome a crater. But they were none the less frightened: not a man in all Mirwen but wished he might live in some orderly land where no ghastly abyss might, for all of him, open at his feet as he walked soberly about the town.

But one day came a tall and goodly man, whom the people called Slus, and he gathered a great crowd about him, and took them all to gaze into the Pit, crying aloud thus:

"The Bottomless Pit is bottomless no longer! Behold, brethren, it is paved solidly, no more than a yard from the top, with yellow gold, bejewelled with sards and with emeralds, with rubies, and amethysts, and with white pearls."

The multitude acclaimed the prophet with shouts, and feasted all night in his honor.

Now, since so goodly a man had revealed the glittering pavement, men saw it glowing before them and sang hosannas with joy. At last the fear of the ancient Pit was gone: a celestial certitude dwelt in their souls.

From that day the pious Llederiv adored the Bottomless Pit, which they named Chanaspe, the Blessed. If ever any miserable, doubting wretch crept to its edge, and gazing down, saw it dark and bottomless and fearsome as before, he discreetly said nothing, or, indiscreetly speaking, was stoned into the desert.

As many people fell into the Pit, it so happened, as before the Glorious Revelation of the Jewelled Pavement; but the Llederiv strove to avoid mentioning their names, deeming it blasphemous to attempt thus to deny the Liv-

ing Truth, as told to their forefathers by Slus, the Holy Revealer of the Golden Floor.

And thus it went for many years: all the youth were duly instructed as to the Eternal Verity of the Blessed Sidewalk: and if, when tremulously peering over the rim of vast Chanaspe, any misguided urchin dared to doubt the evidence of his own eyes, of his own heart, and of the Miraculous Chanaspic Teachings, he was didactically thrashed till he too saw the ancient golden pavement.

In time the Llederiv, taking somewhat for granted the Holy Mysteries of Slus and Chanaspe, came to spend their whole lives without ever going to see the hoary Pit, knowing by the Rational Faith that its floor, no more than a yard from the top, was paved with gold and studded with gems. But when they fell in—as they still did—they hurtled through the draughty chasm with as many shrieks as did their fathers before them.

Then one day came tall and goodly men who sought The Truth of the Matter. Some, incautiously reared, actually denied the Miraculous Asphalt: others deemed the question of its existence irrelevant. These men, kneeling on the crumbling edge, measured the circumference of the Pit with great accuracy. They likewise mapped out the rim, delineating its every curve, and forming laws for each indentation, each protuberance. So detailed, so correct, so wholly admirable was their work that the Llederiv were naturally reawakened by these splendid labors to the fact of the hoary Pit, gaping there in the center of the kingdom.

But then, alack, they were not content with the certain knowledge of every detail of its jagged edge. Timidly at first, and then in strident chorus, they demanded, "What of it?*" We and our brothers still fall into the Pit, which incidentally has a marvelous foul smell."

So saying, they clasped their noses with thumb and forefinger: and the tale tells that many subsequently released the forefinger, for a moment. . . .

And some, in madness or in woe, leapt headlong into the horrid gulf; some desperately cultivated eye-trouble, hoping once more to glimpse the gleaming pavement, no more than a yard below the top. . . . Sorry, sorry were the days.

But one man (thus concludes Nicolas) looked over the brink, and saw how truly bottomless and vile the Pit was; and he burst into laughter; and laughed and laughed.

*—Doubtless an anachronism: this expression is nowhere else encountered in the works of De Caen, or of many others, for that matter.

The Ring, Señor Richards.....

By ARTHUR ANDERSON



UT no, Señor Richards; perhaps your time is limited. You cannot spare the time from your business . . . I would not dream . . . Well, since you think you have time . . . Your choice is good; Bianchetti keeps the best cognac in the republic. That little man, he is—frowning his flabby face like a little Burmese devil—a good friend of mine.

Permit me—take this chair, Señor Richards: it faces the park, which you can see through the passing blur of autos . . . With your permission, Señor Richards . . .

Oh, the ring? The amethyst—have some cognac, Señor Richards; Bianchetti's latest importation, "Feu d'Or"—the amethyst ring of antique cut, set in this silver band several sizes too large for my middle finger? Only because of the benevolence of the saint there chiseled—the Virgin of Guadalupe, with her spiked halo—have I kept it safe on this finger where it does not belong.

Where it does not belong, Señor Richards; yes. An archiepiscopal ring, Señor Richards: a thumb-ring. Many times have I knelt before *Su Serenísima*—now in exile, in Rome (so it is officially known; but I know better)—and kissed this same jewel.

Banished from Mexico a year ago. Yes, he went to Rome, and has not returned—officially. But I know better. Banished, also, five years ago. But he knew his archiepiscopal seat: he left—officially; he returned—unofficially . . . Oh, at my house, Señor Richards; sometimes with Doña Matilde Puig—now resting in Heaven: sometimes elsewhere: it does no harm to tell you now—half the government knows his ways. The police are still looking for him—officially. They know his ways, Señor Richards, but they do not know him. A timid clerical? Not a bit of it! A power! A militant crusader of the church!

Well, perhaps he did not give me the ring outright. However, it is mine in effect . . . A little service I rendered him some years ago . . .

A good—sport, you Americans would say. Cognac—have two drops more, Señor Richards—cognac he could drink with the worst devil in my company. I met him first in this very place—no, not down here; he went upstairs through a private door from the hotel next to us. This when he was past sixty—upright in bearing, thin in every feature, stubborn as his own grey mule. Cognac and cigarettes from three to four, Señor Richards—fol-

lowed by the most austere of archiepiscopal Masses at five, in the cathedral just across the park. You can see its yellow spires piercing that sulphur yellow sunset cloud,—above that little woman keeping flies from her candy stand with a pink pom-pom.

That's the sort of man he was. But then the trouble started. Priests fled, the archbishop disappeared—his enemies said to organize the *Cristeros*. Perhaps; but I think I know better. He was stubborn — well, better say iron-willed. I would not welcome those times again . . .

As I said before, he was officially not in the city. Churches closed, with soldiers guarding; his palace confiscated (no—not the building to your right, fronting the flame trees in the park—that building was confiscated a century ago); church property, held by faithful friends, somehow ferreted out and seized; the police nosing into *beatas'* wardrobes to see if he were hidden,—that was the atmosphere he lived in and thrived on for years. In my house he would stay, say for ten days—maybe a month,—until some minor official would pass us a word or so of warning; then he would move to a house lately investigated for a few days . . .

How? Beggars rags, Señor Richards,—and he made a most elegantly whining beggar; a gardener's overalls—with my regards and a choice shoot of carnations to Doña Beatriz; a carpenter's outfit, shellac-smeared and saw-dusty, and a note from me to Doña María saying the bearer could be trusted to fix her contraband private altar. Once I had him take the place of my chauffeur for an evening visit, but that was risky . . .

Thanks—just a drop more of cognac . . .

What kept us in constant chicken-skin,—pardon me—goose-flesh, was his habit of going out, when he knew he was being looked for, and taking up the trail of those hunting him. Then I would take his probable route, hoping to overtake him.

Once he came here; sat at this very table. I can see the spot his cigarette burned—there by your glass, Señor Richards, next the coppered frame of the table. He came in, in one of my suits, with some good, though quite apprehensive friends, sat down, ordered cognac, and led a vigorous conversation. I caught the news from a friend, and came straight down—arrived just as he had poured his last glass . . .

No, I could not very well occupy his table. I was about to draw up a chair—was just rasping its metal legs on the floor—when I caught a cryptic wink, a grey flash of raised eyebrows, a back-jerk of his black hat. I fell into the chair, Señor Richards: my head—it felt gone; my legs—they were gone. I could feel a thousand ants running up and down my spine.

"Cognac," I gasped to the waiter, who thought I was sick and ran off for it. And I took a dazed stock of the situation.

There, behind you, Señor Richards, behind *Su Serenísima*, the archbishop, sat—General Fuentes; General Fuentes, who had just arrived to stir up a stronger campaign to get him. And with him a colonel, Gabriel Fonseca—I knew him at school, in Denver; and with them the arch-agitator of the whole state—the whole republic . .

My colony of ants? You may smile, Señor Richards; you were not in my . . . The archbishop's ants? . . . Oh, the archbishop! I have said before that he was a magnificent sport. He was truly enjoying himself—at our expense, and that of General Fuentes. He even displayed this ring a little carelessly.

He gave me another wink, then called the waiter and prepared to go.

"*Mesero — ah, Juanito, la cuenta, and*" — here he lowered his voice, though I could hear him—or read his lips, "*—and also that of the gentlemen behind me.*"

He paid the bills, tipped the waiter, and gave him a sly wink and a card.

"Give the gentlemen this card and the receipted check—but not until they are ready to leave. Now don't forget. Oh, yes—take my regards to Señor Bianchetti."

Then he came to me, and whispered,

"Stay and watch the fun. I wish I could, but,"—he shrugged his shoulders, and tilted his head toward the general—"the fortunes of revolution . . ."

Then he bowed to old Bianchetti, and walked out in the midst of his friends.

I finished my cognac, paid my bill, and went to the general's table.

"*Qué tal, Gabrielillo!*" A good chap, Fonseca once was. Now sold body and soul to the government, and looking as if his valet had helped him into his breeches with a shoe-horn.

He introduced me.

"*Para servir a Ustedes, ciudadanos,*" I said, mumbling my name. "No, thanks, I have just had mine." I was mindful of *Su-Serenísima's* having paid their check. "And I should really be going—"

"We're through," said General Fuentes. "*Mesero — the check!*" He

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Only Fools and Americans

An English Episode

By LEWIS BURT LESLEY



HE crossing had been marred by only a few of the usual trials involved in such a voyage. To be sure there had been a long and lusty quarrel with the aged and aggressive English spinster who daily persistently appropriated my deck-chair. I was too eager about her country; asked far too many questions about bobbies and pence. In her eyes, before we had been on the high seas two days, I was a typical male of the species, and a glowing example of the "unspeakable" American. A visit to the States had but confirmed that dear old soul in her overwhelming love for her own countrymen, and there I was, placed by her side in the "deck-chair row," a constant reminder of her late unpleasant sojourn in the land where the citizenry runs as wild as the Indians of bygone days.

There was also that strange incident when we arrived at last at Plymouth, when I was singled out from all of the other passengers by the English customs officers to have my baggage examined. Isolated on the lower deck, with hundreds of amused spectators watching the humiliating performance, I clumsily unlocked trunk and suitcases for the over-rigid inspection. I will never know why I was chosen for that honor unless it was the work of the flapper school teacher from New York who ate at the captain's table.

The creature had not liked me from the moment when, just prior to our departure from Hoboken, she had posed dramatically before a group of tipsy movie-weekly cameramen to have a recording made of her farewell to the fatherland. She had heard my laugh and little did I dream how very complete her revenge was to be. Things would have been all right, no doubt, had I not won the first prize at the costume ball on the last night of the voyage. I should have realized how very hard the school-marm had worked for that prize. Shortly after the affair I saw her and the English spinster lady talking quietly and significantly together. The next morning occurred the episode of the inspection as we were landing on the shores of foggy England.

Such was the price of a laugh and a prize!

* * * * *

There is an English proverb which runs: "Only fools and Americans travel first class." I had never heard the phrase before, and certainly had not won such a classification from New York to Plymouth, for I had come on a slow boat and a cabin steamer at that. It was not until after my rather harrowing experience from London to Rochester town and return that I heard the

proverb for the first time from the lips of a very charming hostess at an English tea. And for the following reasons I kept strangely silent when the words were laughingly repeated for my benefit.

It all happened because I had been so desperately busy with my research work at the British Museum. A welcome check arrived from home with a brief note which read: "Use this for a real holiday." I had always loved Dickens' works and longed to see the country made famous as the home of the author and the scenes of many of his stories—Rochester. Therefore, when the check came I hurried to the American Express Company, told them of my plan, and left all of the details in their hands.

Late that afternoon I returned to the company's office, paid the bill and obtained my tickets all nicely done up in a very fancy envelope. Arrived at delightful Victoria Station, I showed my tickets and was instantly surrounded by an array of officials competing with one another in prolonged acts of politeness. It was not until much later that I learned that attached to the tickets was a note to the effect that I was in England on important business for the University of California. (And I was a mere Traveling Fellow for the department of history!)

At last I found myself in a first-class compartment where I was introduced to a Lord _____. During the entire journey his lordship regaled me with an endless stream of stories about his early years in India. Never again was anyone able to tell me that the English are a silent, reticent folk. No, the textbooks had been wrong on that point as on many others.

We arrived at Rochester and, much to my surprise, it turned out to be the home town of my recently-made friend. There at the station was his huge limousine and chauffeur, and, in all of the state in the world, I was escorted to the hotel—the quaint old Bull Inn, made famous by the Pickwick Papers.

"Give this gentleman the finest room you have," cried his lordship, who had insisted upon accompanying me into the hostelry.

Thus, in spite of all of my later protestations, to the best room in the hotel I was taken and deposited, bag and baggage. Pangs of pain arose at every thought of the forthcoming bill.

The town of Rochester is one of the most fascinating of all of the smaller English cities. It is off of the beaten tourist path and is a manufacturing center which has somehow retained much of its historical charm. The cathedral dates back to Norman times; nearby is Gadshill, where the immortal Dickens wrote and lived.

Finally the three days of my visit came to an end and, my bill paid (I was months recovering from the shock), I made my way to the depot. As is customary in all English stations, there was a train "guard" there whose business it was to see that passengers stood on the platform at the correct place for

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Fall Fancies

By MARIANTHE



HE had been reading Edward W. Bok on the advantages of cultivating a blank mind—not permanently, of course, but for the space of an hour or two. The idea, it seems, is to think of nothing and drop one's jaw. The result is delightful.

For ten minutes we had been gazing peacefully into the branches of the acacia tree, (according to formula), when the scene changed. No longer the old familiar white building with its rows of black windows—nor the various poses affected upon its lawns—nor the drone of busy youth absorbing knowledge. No. Instead we are six years younger.

All around are apple blossoms. The nurse has just said we may have the afternoon to ourselves. The day is perfect. Blue sky, blue sea, and in the distance the faint outline of Tillingford town.

Through closed eyes we idly finger the long grass. Moonwort daisies and mayflowers. We know that up in those woods behind us there are lady-slippers and young violets. In half an hour we shall stretch our newly found legs and slowly, for we are only convalescing from a lifetime spent on crutches, sojourn up into the lovely budding woods. Just now we are busy enjoying the delicious scent of apple blossoms. All around are smooth green slopes, rolling woods, pink and white orchards, and at our feet the blue waters of the Atlantic. The old red brick buildings where we have spent so many happy years, happy in spite of their infirmity, are solidly comfortable, and the delicate spires that reach into the sky are tinged with flaming sunlight.

Closed eyes and a dropped jaw! If we had only asked Miss Letty, (the nurse), for some paper. A blank mind, still too feeble to do much more than guide a faltering pen over countless pages of white paper, might not produce great literature. But . . . a blank sheet and a fountain pen are wonderful companions on a lonely afternoon.

Finally we can withstand the urge no longer. Through avenues of maple and northern pine trees we painfully reach a little woodland path. All around is a green light. Small brown birds sing in the branches, and hover, not quite sure of our intentions, on a gently bending branch. There is a gurgling of innumerable streams. Here a fallen log has stopped but for a moment one gay brook. There is a pungent scent of wet ferns, of fallen pine needles, and everywhere the same exotic scent of apple blossoms. Dimly down the hill we can hear the hospital's chapel bell ringing. Then silence once more. Green light . . . green light . . . and the sound of little waterfalls

Fifty feet on ahead we spy a flat grey stone. Below, a quiet pool of still brown water. Humbly we realize that that must be our goal for this afternoon, for in spite of our brave ambitions we are yet no stronger than a child of three when it comes to walking. Very gratefully we reach the flat grey boulder and rest.

Peace and quiet. Nothing to do but follow one's inclinations, so long as they do not reach beyond our poor physical strength. Nothing to do but read what one pleases—and fill one's mind with whatever flowers appeal to it.

Leacock for one. Not in his scholastic garb but in the whimsicality and foolishness of "Nonsense Novels," or "Frenzied Fiction." We could read volumes of such fluff. And then again there is Marjorie Pickthall. Well we remember the day when some kind soul, pitying our seemingly warped existence in the hospital, presented us with "The Lamp of the Poor Souls," if only for their sheer immaterial beauty.

Sitting here in the soft afternoon warmth of this June day we think how long this spot of beauty has existed. The countless winters, falls, summers and springs, that beauty has blossomed, matured, and fallen into grey decay. Here in the still solitude souls expand. Appreciativeness of life grows. Insight develops and with it an incapacity to enjoy the crowded walks of human thoroughfares.

I took a day to search for God
And found Him not. But as I trod
By rocky ledge, through woods untamed,
Just where one scarlet lily flamed,
I saw His glory in the sod.
Then suddenly all unaware,
Far off in the deep shadows, where
A solitary hermit thrush
Sang through the holy twilight hush,
I heard His voice upon the air.
And even as I marvelled how
God gives us Heaven here and now
In a stir of wind that hardly shook
The poplar leaves beside the brook—
His hand was light upon my brow.
At last at evening as I turned
Homeward, and thought what I had learned
And all that there was still to probe—
I caught the glory of His robe,

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Solitaire

By MARY WINDEATT

Is it any wonder
That I am thought queer
Who walk with the wind
In the fall of the year?

All across the moor land
Hearing young thrushes
In the red maple leaves
And withered brown rushes?

Walking in the night mist
Down beside the sea,
Hearing in the dark rain
Voices calling me?

Gazing out the whole night
At a rolling fog,
All huddled up
On a wet brown log?

Counting on my fingers
A funny old song,
Talking to myself there
The whole night long?

Is it any wonder
That I am thought queer
Who do such things
In the fall of the year?

Autumnal Measure

Bacchanale

By ROY BURGE

Under the stars, under the trees,
On the close-clipped sward of the forest lawn
The High Gods walk, stepping high, stepping free;
Dryads and satyrs, a nymph and a faun.

Then beat out the time with a shaggy thumb
Stamp it, and clutch at your partner tight.
To the strange, mad tune of a tight-stretched drum
The pagan gods walk abroad tonight!

Who can be laughing so loud out there
Where the black of the sky and the forest meet?
His fingers are caught in her long black hair
And a hyacinth wreath she has bound to his feet.

Then beat out the time with a shaggy thumb,
Stamp it, and clutch at your partner tight.
To the strange, mad tune of a tight-stretched drum
The pagan gods walk abroad tonight!

Bar the door, close up the shutters tight,
Light all the candles and stir the fired.
A soul may not dance with the things of night
Nor live on the things that the gods desire.


Then beat out the time with a shaggy thumb,
Stamp it, and clutch at your partner tight.
To the strange mad tune of a tight-stretched drum
The pagan gods walk abroad tonight!



"the desert wind was already blowing"

Bluff

By RACHEL HARRIS CAMPBELL

 HE day had been hot for Californian April and unbearably long. In the single room of the back-country school house, dancing heat mingled with the animal stench of small, tense bodies. The children, from first grade to eighth, from purest Nordics to golden-brown, black-eyed Mexicans, had been worse than so many imps. By four o'clock, Katherine Hunt, their very young teacher, was limp and teary. When the last "monitor" had clattered out of the room, she bowed her head on the smudgy arithmetic papers that littered her desk, and frankly sobbed.

A pair of high heels clicked across the floor; a five-and-dime brand of perfume made its presence felt. Katherine clenched a soggy handkerchief against her eyelids.

"Kit! Good lord! What's the matter, hon?"

Katherine raised her head. She even managed a faint excitement.

"Elsie! Where on earth did you drop from?"

Elsie Sommers dumped a brown fox scarf on the nearest desk, took off her gloves and hat, twitched her permanent wave into place.

"San Diego, of course, darling. The boss gave me the afternoon off and I breezed over to Mirador to see Aunt Flo. And coming back I saw your sign—Alta Vista Grammar School—and I says to myself, 'Isn't that Kitty Hunt's school?' The kids were coming out, so I calls to a little Mexic, 'Who's your teacher, kiddo?' He says, 'Mees Hunt,' so I came in. Now honest, hon, what are you making your eyes all red about?"

Katherine included the room and the world beyond it in one sweeping gesture.

"This!" she exploded.

"Yeah," said Elsie, calmly. "What of it?"

Katherine sobbed anew. "It's awful! I can't stand it! Why on earth did I ever want to teach? Why didn't I take a secretarial course, like you? You're making more than I do, and you don't have to put up with—this."

Elsie considered. "Well, there's other things. Besides, you'll be teaching in town next year, won't you?"

"Oh, I don't know!" Katherine wailed. "If things don't go better than they did to-day, I'll be fired! Elsie, it's awful! There's nothing to do but work! I haven't a car; I can't visit even the people that live *here*. And they

don't understand me; they think I'm too dressy, and I think they're dowdy! And the children—some of them are dumb! Great big boys still in grammar school! The Mexicans don't know much English—and I can't make out what they're saying. And they smell! . . . I haven't been to a picture show for months. I don't even get home to see the folks. Sometimes I think if I could have just one hot date—and didn't have to think about the next day's schedule And it's so *deserty* here. Everything yellow and hot and dry! I hate it, Elsie! I just hate it!"

Elsie looked puzzled. "What's come over you, kiddo? You were crazy to teach."

"Oh, Elsie, I never thought it would be like this! The children at the training school were clean! And I didn't dream how lonely I'd be, living in the teacherage. If I'm not promoted to a city school in the fall, I'll—I'll—quit teaching! I can't go on!" And the handkerchief was again called into play.

"Kit, you're coming for a spin! Yes, you are! I've a maroon sport roadster right outside, and it's dying for work. You just stick those papers in the drawer, get your hat, and lock up."

In a few moments they were flying down the road in a cloud of choky red-brown dust.

"Gee!" said Elsie Sommers. "Look at that bouganvillea vine! I'd sure like to have that all over *my* porch! You know, I've always liked this half desert country. It's so still—and kinda clean—"

Katherine was silent.

"You can look a long ways off, can't you? Look at those hills, would you? Blue and blue-green and violet! California's beautiful, yeah?"

"I—guess so, said Katherine, faintly.

"Boy howdy!" Elsie rejoined.

The sun had set, and the desert wind was already blowing cooler when the sport roadster stopped before the teacherage, next to the little school. Elsie shut off the engine, and they sat quietly, letting the wind push back their hair, and watching the stars pluck up courage to appear.

"Elsie," Katherine said softly, "You're a godsend. You've made me see things as they really are. I love the country. I adore my little school. The children are darlings usually—and they like me, Elsie. I was a coward to want to get out of it just for dates and dances and talkies. It's an adventure, isn't it, living here alone? I wouldn't miss such an experience for— for—"

"You're darn right," Elsie agreed. "The other things will keep. And think how many people would give their eye teeth to live out here, sort of next to nature! You don't know when you're well off, child."

"But you've made me see, Elsie. I'll not be lonely again. I know now it's an opportunity to show what's in me. I'll teach better for my first school's being a hard one."

"You bet you will!" Elsie opened the door. "Sorry I've got to scoot now, but—well, Kit, remember what I said—life's a big bluff, anyway. You've been bluffing yourself into thinking you're darn miserable. Now you bluff other people—the kids and everybody—and make them think there's nowhere on earth you'd rather teach than Alta Vista Grammar School. Keep a stiff lip, kiddo, and bluff till the cows come home!"

"I will," said Katherine earnestly. "Thanks, Elsie. You've done me a lot of good. Good-bye, dear. Come again some time!"

They kissed. Katherine waved from the bouganvillea-shaded porch and chinked a key in the lock. Elsie turned on the dashboard light, powdered her nose, started the engine. A moment, and she was spinning along, the night air cool on her face.

"Gosh!" she ejaculated. "Poor Kit! She's got a tough break. I wouldn't be in her shoes for a million. Can you picture little *Elsie* sticking it out a year on desert scenery and ambition? . . . Lord, I hope I'm stepping on it hard enough so I'll have time to dress decently before the boy friend breezes in to take me to the dance!"



California: a Bright Spot in the World of Science

By WM. T. SKILLING



CALIFORNIA is awakening to the worldwide spirit of scientific investigation. Soon she will open an eye some seventeen feet in diameter to gaze into the heavens in search of new knowledge. Already several discoveries of worldwide importance in various fields of learning have been made here, and several different centers of research are now attracting international attention of the physicist, the astronomer, and the chemist.

In physics the names of Millikan and Michelson are most suggestive of California's high rank in science. In astronomy the names of Hale, Adams, Hubble, Campbell, and others are well known for their discoveries. In theoretical chemistry, G. N. Lewis, head of the chemistry department of the University of California, has focused esoteric thought upon his theory of the atom.

As in the history of the race astronomy was the first-born science to be nourished in the cradle of civilization, so in this state it was the first to take high rank. And it is here that its greatest growth has more recently been attained. It was more than forty years ago that astronomical work was begun at the Lick observatory on Mount Hamilton, near San José. From the start this institution outranked any other similar one in the size of its telescope. Founded in the eighties by James Lick, whose body now lies entombed beneath the giant telescope, this observatory soon became the leader in astronomical research because of its superior equipment. Its 36-inch refracting telescope remained for about a decade the best in the world. Then its size was exceeded by four inches when the 40-inch Yerkes telescope was constructed to be used near Chicago.

The Yerkes telescope will probably long remain the largest refractor in the world, for soon after it was built the style in large telescopes changed from the use of a lens to the use of a concave mirror. California again gained astronomical supremacy by constructing a reflecting telescope of 60 inches diameter, followed a few years later by one of a hundred inches. Both of these are at Mt. Wilson near Pasadena. Now the proposed 200 inch instrument is also to be located in California.

For the past year San Diego has had a special interest in the 200-inch telescope because two of our mountains have been considered, among other places, as possible sites for the great observatory. The two local sites under

observation are at Volcan and Palomar. Palomar is said to show better atmospheric conditions than Volcan. Two other sites farther north are still being considered and no choice is likely to be made for a year or more.

In testing atmospheric conditions a small telescope of four inches diameter is used, but it has a compound microscopic eye piece so that its magnification is 7500. This remains pointed at the north, and every night several observations are made to see how much the star trembles or "twinkles." If it jumps from side to side under this powerful magnification the "seeing" is poor. If it remains steady the "seeing" is good. Cloudiness and haze are also observed at each station.

Preliminary experiments are now being made upon the method, which is a new one, to be used in the construction of the great mirror. A base more than a foot thick is to be made of melted quartz sand. Pure glassy quartz is to be pulverized and the powder blown through the flame of an oxyhydrogen torch. The quartz melts as it goes through the flame and then hardens again into a clear glassy surface upon the mirror. It is like rain falling and freezing to sleet, or like the modern process of varnishing an automobile with a blow gun.

The reason for using quartz instead of glass, as was formerly done, is that quartz expands and contracts much less with changes of temperature. Grinding and polishing a glass surface is very slow because so much time is consumed in waiting for it to cool. Afterwards when in use temperature changes cause distortion that may blur the image.

The immense light gathering power of the 200-inch mirror can be better understood if we realize that it is as large as the floor of a room 17 feet square, and that all the light falling upon it from any given star will be focused at a sharply defined point upon the photographic plate or the retina of the observer. It will gather four times as much light at the present 100-inch telescope.

A new instrument for measuring the diameter of stars has just been completed on Mt. Wilson after several years of planning and construction. It is a fifty foot interferometer similar to the twenty foot interferometer with which some half dozen of the largest and nearest stars have already been measured. Nowhere else in the world has this line of work been attempted. Dr. Pease is now making preliminary tests with the new instrument and expects to be able to measure stars whose angular diameters are as much smaller than those already measured as the 50 foot instrument is longer than the 20 foot one.

The work of Dr. Hubble in measuring the distances to those remote ob-

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Scarlet and Grey

By HELEN C. HILL



AGAINST its grey-yellow surroundings the prison garden was only a tiny fleck of color for the eyes of the two hundred inmates to feast upon, a meager six feet of startlingly green grass with a single border of stunted zinnias flaunting their scarlet, bronze, pink and gold blossoms in brave courage against the merciless sun that day after day baked the quarried-out rock of the prison yard to an even harder flint. Grey yellow prison buildings, grey-yellow enclosing rock banks with their barbed-wire topping, grey-yellow barren hills on the "outside"; all formed of the same grey-yellow rock, dull and unchanging. Only that one minute spot of color near the prison gate. "Like a poster advertisement of heaven," Mac had called it, but he had only been in the prison a week then. He didn't say anything about it now, just looked with the rest of them. It was Mac's special privilege to care for the garden and he was standing bareheaded in the sun while he attempted to relieve the tiny spot of its scorching, but as the huge prison hose sprayed the green and scarlet alike, Mac's thoughts were many miles away, over the far side of the haze-dimmed blue mountains that showed above the barbed-wire fence on the north.

Home, Clara, little Jim—little Jim. Mac's fingers tightened on the hose with a jerk. He mustn't think of little Jim. He knew. He'd go crazy if he did. He'd seen an Englishman do that in here a year ago, only it was his wife, not little

A bunch of rubbernecks were trailing into the prison yard from the main building under the capable guidance of one of the screws. There were two boys who tittered at everything the screw said, four ladies, one of them self-consciously dressed in plus-fours, and a dignified elderly gentleman who carried an ivory handled cane. It was the usual polyglot mixture that daily came to gape at the prison and its inmates.

"Why don't you wait for the Lord to make it rain, Mac, 'stead of wasting perfectly good water?" The screw grinned at him as he went past. The same question he'd asked every day, every trip with the rubbernecks. Mac squinted up at the sun while the rubbernecks looked on curiously.

"We don't believe in God in this place," Mac growled.

The same answer he'd given the screw every day; every trip. It made the rubber-necks gasp a bit and gave them something to think about when they got home—to their little Jims. Mac himself, hadn't believed it at first, but he

did now. There wasn't any God, there wasn't any justice, there wasn't anything, but grey-yellow walls and Hell. Hell that had been handed him in the shape of a telegram yesterday—the day before—at the beginning of time. He didn't know just when.

"Little Jim dying."

That was all, except his wife's name at the end. Little Jim, always laughing, doubling up in a jolly knot if you poked a fore-finger at his small fat tummy. Candy smeared lips asking for kisses, chubby arms about your neck; broken toys, roguish mischief. Little Jim—dying. Little Jim—he mustn't think of Jim—think of something else.

Ruiz was standing above the row of blue denimed figures huddled tenaciously in the all too narrow shade of the cell block. He was braiding black and white horse hair into a belt to be sold to curio seekers at a counter in the prison building. Ruiz made extra money that way to send home to his wife and little girl. His kid was just the same age as little Jim. They'd talked about how funny that was. The horse hair was tied to an iron bar of the cell block and the long ends dangled and switched about under the manipulation of Ruiz's slim dark fingers. Wouldn't little Jim have a wonderful time trying to catch the tempting strands. Just like a kitten, that kid, couldn't let anything alone that moved.

The chunky, round faced Indian, Johnny Buck, was making a belt too, but his work was beading pearl grey leather with blue and silver and just a touch of rose. An artist, Johnny. Made more money that way than most men did on the outside. Mighty careless with his beads though. Why, if little Jim were here those beads would be in about six hundred places in nothing flat . . .

Joe and that long miner came from up Gold Hill way were at their everlasting game of catch, standing in the middle of the yard in their blue denim prison pants, arms and shoulders bare to the sweltering sun. Plup! Plup! Plup! Should think they'd get tired of it, hour after hour, day after day. Still little Jim always seemed ready to—mustn't think of little Jim. Go crazy like the Englishman.

It was getting hotter. Mac was beginning to feel dizzy. Maybe he'd get sun stroke and be sent to the prison hospital. Maybe he'd be able to forget for a little while. Must be a lot cooler beyond the mountains where the kid was. The doctors would take good care of him. Sure they would. Clara'd see to that. Wouldn't she? Nothing he could do. Nothing. Nothing. Maybe right now the kid was—*Mustn't* think of little Jim.

"Why don't you wait for the Lord to make it rain, Mac, 'stead of wasting

perfectly good water?" The screw was back again, another mixed trailing of curious eyed rubbernecks behind him. Mac hadn't seen him 'till he spoke.

"We don't believe in God in this place," Mac made his answer. His voice didn't sound like his own—queer and flat—no meaning to it.

The water had long ago started to run off the tiny garden and follow steaming paths of its own through the uneven rocks of the prison yard, and beyond, but Mac gave it no heed even when it formed pools about his clumsy prison shoes. The spray continued to drench the vivid green and scarlet and orange—like tears.

After a while the screw made his way once more to Mac's side. Alone, this time he changed the formula. His hand went to Mac's shoulder, and Mac clutched the hose tighter and braced himself.

"Long distance from your wife, Mac. The kid's better—he's going to be all right."

All right

All right! Little Jim was going to be *all right*!

"Thank God!" burst from Mac's twisted lips. "Thank God!" then he laughed crazily. The screw thought he was a bit off his head, but it wasn't that. He'd thanked God and he'd meant it, after all those days of not believing. It was funny. Little Jim was all right, and he'd thanked God.



The Last Time

By MARY WINDEATT



FOR the first time in his checkered career Sparrow was nervous; not for himself but on account of Limp and the girl. This was their first job. Gee, to think of all he'd been through since he'd been Limp's age. A good sight, he'd tell the world. Yes, sir.

A siren whistle somewhere out on the bay, now cloaked in thick fog, broke the night's stillness. Instantly Sparrow was alert. Ears cocked and ferret eyes probing the clammy mist, the veteran crook waited for the signal.

It came. Somewhere up near the black warehouse behind him, a low answering whistle floated down. So the kid had made it after all. Well, so far so good.

Sparrow answered the call. Then behind an empty barrel on the pier he waited for his two confederates to join him. He heard a boat scrape the wharf, and almost immediately Limp was beside him.

"Got 'em, Sparrow?"

The voice was a whisper of intense eagerness.

"Yeh, I got 'em," the leader responded. "Got the whole bunch of 'em."

The one who was, that night, being initiated into crime, laid an admiring hand on Sparrow's arm.

"Let's have a feel," he begged. "You know, Sparrow, I ain't never had a peek at real sparklers!"

"Lay off, sonny," Sparrow said roughly. "Not a peek till we got them safely hid over to Joe's."

Then, as though he feared the other might misconstrue his command, he added:

"It's all right, Limp. Just a little rule of the game, that's all."

"Aw, gee"

The boy's voice died away regretfully. Sparrow smiled to himself there in the darkness of the pier. He liked Limp a lot. A good kid, but too enthusiastic. With training he might amount to something. He had brains—Limp had. And that was a good deal more than lots of people owned. Sparrow wasn't going to stand by and see the youngster make any false moves. Nor the girl, either. It was up to him to see them through right, especially tonight, the first time that either of them had ever played the game. Yes, sir. He was going to do just that.

The two sought the dripping steps that led down to the water. Somewhere out in that fog a boat was waiting. Queen had been told to bring it in at seven. It was two to the hour right now.

As Sparrow thrust a cautious foot down the first rung, his eyes caught the looming shape of a small dory slowing up. He lifted his head to the boy up above with a smile of assurance.

"All right," he called softly. "Come on. She's here!"

The girl was a good kid, too. Right on the dot.

They rowed away in silence from the ladder out onto the mist-enshrouded bay. Even to Sparrow, there was some of the old time thrill in the affair. This was his last job in the old business. Tonight he was forty. Forty years old—and twenty-five of them spent in dodging the police.

Twenty-five years in a legitimate calling might have got him a pension or a medal or something, Sparrow thought. Well, his business tonight would net him a lot more than a pension or a piece of tin to wear on his Sunday clothes. In a package concealed against his breast were rubies — probably worth five hundred grand.

He watched the hunched up figure of Limp in front of him, rowing steadily through the gloom. Nice build he had. On the seat ahead of Limp was the girl. Good little kid, Queen. Too good for this kind of a racket. Perhaps, in a year or two, he'd be able to see that she wouldn't have to be mixed up in it any more. He'd be forty-two then—not so old.

He reached into a pocket and drew out a package of gum—Juicy Fruit.

"Pass away the time," he explained to the silent Limp. "Treat the lady first, though."

He leaned back in silent enjoyment as the girl's laugh floated back to him from the prow of the boat.

In ten minutes they had reached Johnny's pier. From there to Uncle Joe's was but a short distance. Child's play. Gee! How often he had made that trip! Joe was a good friend of his. Frequently he had lain low there while the law strove to hunt him down.

Joe owned a shop, a nice quiet little place. Not many people did business there. Things were livelier through the back door than through the front.

Well, this would be the end of all those thrilling times for him. He was through with the whole business. Not that he had done so poorly in it. Oh,

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Antiquity of Night

By RACHEL HARRIS CAMPBELL

We of this age, adream in towns,
Scarce know how night goes by
With marching pomp of armed stars
Across the ancient sky.

We never hear the phantom wind,
Now dead so long ago,
Wander to seek, a whimpering ghost,
For towns it used to know . . .
Nor see the proud high-priestess Moon
Bear up her sacred fire—
She that was Isis known in Thebes
And Astaroth in Tyre.

The war of surges aeons old
On shores that fall and rise
We never dream, that in young towns
Endure to close our eyes.

Hands

By ARVILLA PETERSON

My hands design a common vase,
And paint it gold,
And lift it up to other hands—
And hands take hold.

Eyes worship its gold finish,
And thoughts change all within—
Making a vase of beauty
Out of a vase of sin.

Thus, stone ideals are shattered,
Knocked from off high stands,
Replaced by painted vases—
Because of hands.

Only Fools and Americans

(Continued from page 11)

embarking on the section of train for which they held tickets—first, second or third class.

Taking my place among the waiting third class passengers (for I was determined to avoid any more India-minded lords on that return trip) I was at once approached by the guard who asked to see my ticket. The instant he saw the damning bit of evidence his face clouded up as he led me patiently away from the crowd.

"I do not know what I am going to do, sir," he said sadly, "I am afraid that there will not be a first class compartment on this train. What, oh, what am I going to do, sir?"

"Why that is easily settled, my good man," I replied, "I will go right in with the third class passengers. In fact, I will be most happy to do so."

"Oh, no, no, sir, that would be impossible. Your ticket calls for a first class accommodation and that is what we will have to give you."

At last I realized what tradition and lack of change meant to Englishmen. I was doomed to the terms of that beastly ticket and it was my duty to resign myself to the fate before me.

The train finally arrived, but only after the guard had worked himself up into a fine fit of near-hysteria over what seemed to him to be nothing short of a cul-de-sac. I watched the train pull in, praying that the guard's worst fears were to be confirmed. But such a simple solution was not forthcoming. Imagine my surprise when the guard came running over to me, his face wreathed in the happiest of smiles.

"Oh, sir, I am glad to be able to report that *our* problem is at last solved. A private car belonging to Viscount ——— is being returned to London for the remainder of a large hunting party, and now you are to have the whole car to yourself. Thank heavens, sir, my conscience is clear—I can send you on your way first class."

What a ride that was! At every station between Rochester and London where the train stopped for passengers, hordes of curious cockneys peered into the wide windows of the car in which I sat in regal splendour.

"It's the prince of ——— !"

"The rummy bloke, with all his money"

So the gibes ran their course. When the train at last pulled into Victoria Station I hurried to my simple little hotel to recover from the effects of my escapade. I had learned my little lesson about giving the American Express Company *carte blanche* in the matter of the purchase of railway tickets, and, also, I hope you can now understand why I maintained my silence when my hostess at tea that day quoted the saying about "fools and Americans."

The Ring, Senor Richards.....

(Continued from page 9)

chewed his words, seeming to filter half of them through his moustache, and swallow the other half.

"*Señor general*," said Juanito—I knew him well, and he half smiled at me,—“the gentlemen behind you paid the bill, and one of them directed me to give you his card—”

The general's face shed a murky radiance, at first, from under his Lucifer's eyebrows; but before I could tap this table twice—as I do now—the devil in him sprang out.

He jerked his cap off, threw it across the floor—it hit Bianchetti's office door over there,—and kicked his chair back six metres; you can see the dent—that chair at the next table.

"*Demonios!*" he roared in a military confusion of syllables, then some nameless north Mexican oath. "*Fuentes—Ballesteros—do you see? Do you see this? The archbishop!*"

"*Mesero!*" he screamed. "*Hola, mesero!* Which way did he go? Call my orderly! Get the police commissioner! Bianchetti! Someone get Bianchetti!"

People scraped chairs back; a few dropped bottles; someone yelled, "*Muera el traidor!*" A lady fainted. Most remained silent, sympathizing with or fearing for His Eminence.

In the confusion that followed, I saw the opportunity, and perhaps my best move, in slipping out to get his orderly.

And so I left, probably fortunately for me.

I was still worried when I reached home and found the archbishop in my study, reading *El Diario Independiente*—as if nothing untoward had happened.

"It was nothing," he said, and laughed. "But I am afraid you, my poor José, were worried out of your senses for a while."

When he left—I think Fonseca may have pointed the finger of suspicion at me—he moved to Doña Matilde's, and, in parting, left me his ring . . .

Beautiful, is it not, Señor Richards? See the delicate lines . . .

"A souvenir, José," he said, smiling at my objections. "No, you must keep it. Take care of it for me—you know they might get me any time, and they would not give you the ring—not they."

* * *

Thus, Señor Richards, thus it happened. Let us take a last drop of cognac and then leave.

Mesero! Ah, Juanito, give me the check. We have just been talking about the archbishop—do you remember when he was here last? Hah, you rascal! . . .

No, Señor Richards, you must permit me . . . It is my privilege . . . Is this your brief case?

Fall Fancies

(Continued from page 13)

Where the last fires of sunset burned.
Back to the world with quickening start
I looked, and longed for any part
In making saving Beauty be
And from that kindling ecstasy
I knew God dwelt within my heart.

The soporific effect of a warm day, a blank mind, and apple blossoms, have made us hearken back to Bliss Carman's "Vestigia." Poems like these are beauty's own excuse for being. We think that if some kind fairy would grant us our heart's desire, we should wish thus: "Let me write of such things as will bring joy, peace, and thanksgiving into some lonely souls. Let me, through the magic power of my pen, lighten the burden of those whose eyes cannot turn to the heights, whose labor-warped souls have lost the power to create heaven for themselves. Let me portray beauty and truth so that having read, tired souls will find hope and respite from the harsh road of Life's little ways . . ."

And now that we have gone philosophizing again, the sudden quietness of the woods beats a warning in our ear. The afternoon is coming to a close. A sound of restless chirpings and twitterings in the branches and among the green spears of sedge delights us, although it must needs serve as a firm reminder that our brief holiday is nearly over. We glance around regretfully. Must all this be left? Oh, that all the world could know of this beauty spot of the earth, this little heaven hidden in this remote part of the globe, with nothing to break the even tenor of its solitude but the rushing of crystal water and the call of hermit thrushes! Perhaps tonight, when our poor feet ache and pain so much that staying abed becomes unbearable, we shall try to tell a little of what we have seen, hoping thereby to forget ourself in the unspeakable joy of setting down on paper these dear memories.

A blue haze is slowly coming up from the sea. Yellow lights twinkle and gleam from the buildings below. Grey spires are no longer flame tipped. Now they are but faint etchings against a sky of ash rose and lavender. To the east the lights of Tillingford town come slowly out, one by one. The water across from us becomes a deep, fathomless stretch of indigo, and behind, the woods are a dark green blot in the deepening dusk.

Ah yes! We had expected it. At the foot of the hill a white garbed figure is beckoning impatiently. Our nurse is the best person in the world, but she just isn't poetic. She can't imagine anyone enjoying an hour in the woods alone. We had the worst time getting her to let us have the afternoon to our-

self. She wanted to teach our errant fingers to concentrate on the latest crochet stitch. Now that we have overstayed our time, she is probably furious. She will slam our malted milk down on the tray tonight, and glare unmentionable things at us when we cough protestingly. She will probably think we have caught cold. She will be right.

We do not hurry one little bit. Repeated experiences have taught our contrary self that it is just as well to be hung for a sheep as a lamb.

* * * * *

It has suddenly become much brighter. A kind of yellow haze instead of the blue. It is really quite warm. Why . . . oh yes . . . that was six years ago. Six years ago! For propriety's sake we lift our jaw. Instantly what was a blank mind becomes fused with one dominant idea. It is Wednesday. It is ten o'clock. Mr. Lesley has a boring eye when dealing with late comers. What to do?

With a calmness born of long experience we go gently toward the auditorium. Vaguely there comes to us some ancient saying . . . that about a sheep and a lamb



California a Bright Spot in the World of Science

(Continued from page 21)

jects called spiral nebulae or "island universes" has attracted attention of both the scientist and the public. Recently using the data recorded on a photographic plate of such a nebula so dim that an exposure of 45 hours on nine successive nights was necessary Hubble estimated its distance as seventy-five million light years.

This "fossil" light, when it reaches us brings its message of what was happening to this distant neighbor at a time much earlier than that pictured to us by the earliest fossil bones of man.

The limits of this article would be exceeded by a recital of other striking achievements of this research center, the Mt. Wilson observatory. It is by far the largest and best equipped observatory in the world.

Pasadena is fortunate in having a second institution of growing fame. The Institute of Technology, primarily a school, is also a research center. Milikan's work upon the "Cosmic Rays" is known to all scientists and to the general public. This summer he has been to the shores of Hudson Bay to test the effect of high latitude upon this rain from the skies of super X-rays. He has carried his instruments into the high mountains of this continent and South America. He has taken measurements by night and by day to see if they came from the sun. They come from all directions day and night. They are indeed cosmic. Evidence seems to indicate that they originate in "empty" space by virtue of hydrogen atoms changing into helium, oxygen, and iron—possibly into other elements.

A very recent development at the Institute of Technology has been the production of an X-ray tube giving a more powerful and penetrating beam of rays than has ever before been made possible. Several glass cylinders of the kind used to contain gasoline at service stations were fused together end to end, making a tube thirteen feet long. In this huge tube a higher voltage can be used than ever before. A force of 600,000 volts drives the electrons against the tungsten target at one end of the tube with 90 per cent of the speed of light. The resulting X-rays generated will penetrate two feet of lead. They resemble radium rays.

Another unique institution at Pasadena is the Seismological laboratory out beyond the Colorado street bridge. The finest equipment possible for the purpose is found here. A number of subsidiary stations throughout Southern

California are supplied with a seismograph, and report all data automatically registered to the central station.

It is partly by means of such work as is done here that the earth's iron core has been revealed. Seismographs throughout the world register the time of arrival of every earthquake shock, and from the speed of travel through the earth inferences as to its constitution can be drawn.

Neither Stanford University nor the University of California should be omitted from a roll call of research centers. Dr. Ryan's high voltage laboratory excelled everything else of its kind when established four years ago. It is capable of handling a current of two million volts, a force that can carry it across a gap of many feet in a tremendous flash. Here in California, where we transmit current for hundreds of miles at a voltage of a quarter of a million, such laboratories are necessary, in order to learn the habits of electricity when at high potential.

At Berkeley in the chemistry department there have been outstanding discoveries of commercial value, but the theories of atomic structure announced a few years ago by Dr. Lewis and popularized by the writings of Langmuir, of the General Electric Company, have resulted in wide discussion. The Lewis-Langmuir atom model satisfied the chemists but not the physicists. The Bohr model satisfied the physicists and not the chemists. So both theories evidently fall short of the whole truth.

Coming back to Southern California we find Professor Michelson just now striving to complete a series of determination of the velocity of light. For several years he worked between mountain peaks many miles apart. His result of 186,285 miles a second obtained between Mt. Wilson and Mt. San Antonio, twenty-two miles apart, is accepted as the most reliable value of this fundamental constant. But now, working over a distance of a single mile on the level cow pastures of the Irvine Ranch, a space easily measured, he hopes to check and, if possible, improve the accuracy of the value already found.

This time the ray of light travels in a vacuum, for an iron pipe thirty inches in diameter and a mile long forms the track. Mirrors are placed in the ends of this pipe, the air is drawn from it by a pump, and the beam of light is thrown back and forth until it has completed five round trips. Then it is measured by a rapidly rotating mirror.

The mirror is an inch and a half block of glass upon which are ground thirty-two reflecting surfaces. It is rotated at a known speed, so rapidly that each jet of light reflected from one of its faces finds the next adjacent face ready to receive it after its 10-mile trip, requiring about one eighteen-thousandth of a second.

Space and time are too short to mention achievements of our agricultural research stations.

Most of us must be content with the humbler, but perhaps no less important work of learning and teaching what the pioneers in science have discovered, but it is gratifying to know that our state stands in the front rank of actual research and discovery.

The Last Time

(Continued from page 26)

no. Probably he had a bigger bank account than most men his age. But he was tired. Was going to take a little rest. Yep, he'd made up his mind. This night was positively the last time.

That phrase—"The last time" had been in his thoughts pretty regular of late. Almost he hoped the night would be a little spicy, just for old time's sake. Or no, he didn't either. There were the kids to consider. Darn good kids, Limp and Queen. None better.

The boat drifted against a small pier and the three climbed out and mounted much the same kind of ladder as that which they had recently used a quarter of an hour before.

"Say, Sparrow!"

It was Queen, and at the sound of her voice the man felt himself grow all warm and tingly. Gee, she was a cute kid, all right. He'd show her a thing or two about the business that would put her on easy street for life. He kind of hated to see a nice little trick like that wasting her time when he could show her just as easy how to get things quick.

"Yeh?" he said softly. "What is it?"

"Where you going to take that cut glass? The dicks are on to the old safe now, ain't they?"

The old safe had been a hole in the floor in the back parlor of Long Jim's coffee shop. It had been all right until Long Jim had made too much whoopee one night. But how in the heck had the girl known about it? He hadn't told her. But still, she was smart. Kept her ears open. She'd heard one of the boys say something about it likely.

He smiled a little as they left the evil smelling wharf behind them and entered into a labyrinth of dark passages.

"Yeh—I'm wise to that, kid. Uncle Joe's the one for us now. Always remember that, you youngsters. You see, I'm aimin' to quit tonight."

"Quittin'?"

The two young voices echoed his words with cautious surprise.

"Not getting cold feet, are you?" asked Queen with a laugh.

Sparrow smiled.

"No, not cold feet," he replied slowly. "Just going to turn over a new leaf, that's all. Tired of this old racket. Going to take a rest and enjoy my profits."

"Yeh?" questioned Queen, with another laugh.

"Yeh," he replied grimly.

Their path now led through a maze of lanes and dwellings of dubious character. There was little time for conversation; they were getting close to a side street where occasional loafers lurked. Of course there were ways of fixing these undesirables, but Sparrow had always shied at anything like that. Play safe always, had been his motto for twenty-five years. The dicks might be handled all right with anything else but murder. But there were hardly any who got by with that.

A glimmer of light from between two black buildings told them that they had reached their destination at last.

"All right. Your part now, sister," murmured Sparrow. "Hop to it and let's see you manage by yourself."

The girl laughed, nervously, Sparrow thought. There wasn't much she had to do, though. Merely walk over and knock on Joe's door and give the word.

His eyes followed her slim figure through the murky half light as she left the darkness of the alley and threaded her way across the vacant yard. Even at that distance he could sense her hesitation. She seemed to be afraid of something. Then the "double-double" knock resounded and he felt relieved. Hadn't lost her nerve after all. Great little girl, she was. Yes, sir.

He waited in fitful silence as he saw Joe's door swing slowly open and a cone-shaped flood of light sweep across the can strewn alley. It was all right. They could go.

"Come on, Limp," he said genially. "The old gent's home."

He sauntered across the yard, a swaggering fluttering feeling in his breast. Joe would most likely stake him to five hundred grand at least. He'd divide it up with the kids, and then lead the pure and simple for the rest of his days. Of course he'd see to it that he didn't lose sight of the other two and that they had a little inside dope now and again. But he'd certainly try his darndest to get Queen to cut out the dirty stuff. A kid with an angel face had no business messing around with thugs. What she wanted was a home a real home with all the trimmings

He stumbled suddenly, mentally cursing himself as he did so. Gosh, he was getting old at that rate. Well, he might be down, but not for long.

He tried to get up but there was something wrong some place. His head felt funny. There was a queer tingling sensation in his back. Gee, what had happened, anyway? Not a dick. He knew dicks didn't stab people, usually. Though there had been that time down to Casey Flint's—two—no three—

years after he'd started out in the game. He was only eighteen then. He'd have to tell the kids about it.

Involuntarily his hand went to his breast where the package of rubies rested. But there were cool slim fingers that felt so pretty and soft that stopped him. His head spun but he couldn't do anything about it, somehow.

"Quick," murmured a girl's voice. "Hold him just for a sec. Tough old guy, Limp. Been in the racket for years—a whole lot longer than we have . . ."

Sparrow was conscious of footsteps going softly away, over packing cases and down the alley. He knew Limp had tripped over a tin can. There were an awful lot of tin cans around that dump.

Some place there was a boat waiting—tied to a slimy ladder. Maybe he could get to it. The package on his chest seemed to have been moved. Maybe he had dropped it on the way. No . . . no . . . of course he—Sparrow—could not have done *that*

Perhaps he shouldn't have come out tonight. Still, it was his last night at the business. Tomorrow he'd be a fine guy with a wad so fat you could . . . do things like a gentleman

Sparrow's jaws came down suddenly on the Juicy Fruit and clamped tight.

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The advertisers have made it possible for El Palenque to appear on the usual scale this year. The staff urges its readers to mention the magazine in patronizing them.

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As Seen from This Issue

The editor notes with joy that in this, the first issue of the year, the interest of students and faculty has been so great as to leave no room in the magazine for lengthy editorial comment.

This is encouraging at a time when everything, from business depression to the excitement entailed in moving to the new site, combines to make all enterprise uncertain and sporadic.

This issue, as may be seen by a glance at the contents, is largely the

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product of our "regulars" but there have been an encouraging number of contributions from new writers, all of whom, of course, could not hit the mark for this number. The editor urges all present and future contributors to remember that material not suited to one issue is often held over and published in the next.

We particularly wish to acknowledge the co-operation of the Art and English departments in getting *El Palenque* before the student body.

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