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Commencing:
A thrilling
secret service
novel by the
author who is
now Canada's
Governor-
General-
designate

By JOHN BUCHAN

I HAD just finished breakfast and was filling my pipe when I got Bullivant's telegram. It was at Furling, the big country house in Hampshire where I had come to convalesce after Loos, and Sandy, who was in the same case, was hunting for the marmalade. I flung him the fleshy case with a black-striped dotted pattern, and he had a fit.

"Hello, Dan. You've got the battalions. Or maybe it's a staff billet. You'll be a blighted brass-hat, coming it heavy

over the hard-working regimental officer. And to think of

the language you've wasted on brass-hats in your time!"

I sat and thought for a bit, for that name "Bullivant" carried a load of memories of the war, before the war, before the war. I had not seen the man since, though I had read about him in the papers. For more than a year I had been a busy battalion officer, with no other thought than to hammer a lot of raw stuff into good soldiers. I had succeeded pretty well, and there was no prouder man on earth than Bullivant when he had his men in line. He had written over the parapets on that glorious and bloody 25th day of September. Loos was no picnic, and we had had some ugly bits of scrapping before that, but the worst bit of the campaign I had seen was a tea-party to the show I had been in with Bullivant before the war started.

The sound of his name in a telegraph form seemed to change all my outlook on life. I had been hoping for the command of a battalion, and looking forward to being in at the finish with Brother Boche. But this message jerked my



I got into the row-
boat with the ruffian
and headed for the
ship.

thoughts on to a new road. There might be other things in the war than straightforward fighting. Why on earth should the Foreign Office want to see an obscure major of the New Army, and want to see him in double-time quick?

"I'm going up to town by the ten train," I announced.

"I'll be back in time for dinner."

"Take care," said Samson. "He's got a very nice taste in red tabs. You can use my name."

An idea struck me. "I expect a job on your staff if they give you a kit for wire, will you pack your own kit and mine and join me?"

"Right-o! I'll accept a job on your staff if they give you a corpsman. I'm to be up at seven down to eight, be a good chap and bring a barrel of oysters from Sweeting's."

I TRAVELED to London in a regular November drizzle, much cleared up about Wimbleton to watery sunshine. I never saw such London as I did. The houses seemed to have lost their bearings and broken out into all manner of boulders and uniforms which did not fit in with my notion of it. One felt the war more in its streets than in the notion of it. One felt the confusion of war without finding the pattern. I didn't say it was all right; but since August 1914, I never went to a town in without coming home depressed to my boots.

I took a taxi and drove straight to the Foreign Office. Sir Walter did not keep me waiting long. But when his secretary took me to his room I should not have recognized the man I had known eighteen months before.

His hair was grey and had drooped flesh and there was a stoop in the square shoulders. His face had lost its rosiness and was red in patches, like that of a man who gets too little fresh air. His hair was much greyer and very thin about the temples, and there were lines of overwork below the eyes. But the eyes were the same as before, keen and kind and shrewd, and there was no change in the firm set of the jaw.

"We must on no account be disturbed for the next hour,"

I can't think who told you about it. I hated the job, but I had to do it to prevent my subalterns from getting it. They were a lot of fire-eating young lunatics. If I had sent one of them he'd have gone on his knees to Providence and asked for trouble."

Sir Walter was still grimacing.

"Sir, I have your own caution. You have the rudiments of it, or our friends of the Black Stone would have gathered you at our last meeting really. I would question it as little as your courage. What exercises my mind is whether it is best employed in the trenches."

"Is the War Office dissatisfied with me?" I asked sharply.

"They are not. They are not. That is to give you a command of your battalion. Presently, if you earn a stray bullet, you will no doubt be a brigadier. It is a wonderful war for youth and brains. But . . . I take it you are in this business to serve your country, Hammy?"

"I reckon I am," I said. "I am certainly not in it for my money."

He looked at my leg, where the doctors had dug out the sharpened fragments, and smiled quizzically. "Pretty fit again?" he asked.

"Tough as a sambol. I thrive on the racket and eat and sleep well."

He got up and stood with his back to the fire, his eyes staring abstractedly out of the window at the wintry park. "It is a great game, and you are the man for it, no doubt. But there are others who can play it, for soldiering today asks for the average rather than the exception in human nature. You are a good soldier, Hammy, but you are not the best because you want to help England. How if you could help her better than by commanding a battalion—or a brigade—or, if it comes to that, a division? How if there is a thing which you alone can do? Not some esoteric business in an office, but something connected to which your fight at Loos was a Sunday-school picnic. You are not afraid of danger? Well,

in this job you would not be fighting with an army around

from his chain, and took a piece of paper from a drawer. It looked like an ordinary half-sheet of notepaper.

"I take it," he said, "that your travels have not extended to the East."

"No," I said, "hurting a shooting trip in East Africa. "Have you by any chance been following the present campaign there?"

"I've read the newspapers pretty regularly since I went to hospital. I've got some pals in the Mesopotamia show, and I am very keen to know what is going to happen at Cappadocia and Suez. I understand Egypt is pretty safe."

"If you will give me your attention for ten minutes I will supplement your newspaper reading."

Sir Walter lay back in an armchair and spoke to the ceiling. "It was the best story, the clearest and the fullest, I had ever got of any bit of the war. He told me just how and when and why Turkey had left the ranks. I heard about her grievances over the Suez Canal, her suspicion of England and the coming of the *Gesetz* had wrought, of Enver and his precious Committee and the way they had got a cinch on the old Turk. When he had spoken for a bit, he began to question me.

"You are an intelligent fellow, and you will ask how a Polish adventurer, meaning Enver, and a collection of Jews and gipsies should have got control of a proud race. The ordinary man will tell you that it was German organization backed up with German money and German arms. You will inquire again how, since Turkey is primarily a religious power, Islam had played so small a part in it all. The Sheikh-

ul-Islam, the religious leader of the Moslem world, is a Holy War and calls himself Hadji Mohammed Guilliam, and says the Hohenlohers are descended from the Prophet, that seems to have fallen pretty flat. The ordinary man again will answer that Islam in Turkey is becoming a back number, and that Krupp guns are the new gods. Yet I don't know. I do not quite believe in Islam becoming a back number.



he told his secretary. When the young man had gone he went across to both doors and turned the keys in them.

"Well, Major Hammy," he said, "I might as well have a chat with the firm." "How do you like soldiering?"

"Right enough," I said. "though this isn't just the kind of war I would have picked myself. It's a uncomfortable, bloody business. But we've got the measure of the old Boche now, and it's dogged as does it. I count on getting back to the Front in a week or two."

"What do you get the battalions?" he asked. He seemed to have followed my thoughts pretty closely.

"I believe I've a good chance. I'm not in this show for honor and glory, though. I want to do the best I can, but I wish to heaven it was over. All I think of is coming out of it with a white skin."

He laughed. "You do yourself an injustice. What about the forward observation post at the Lone Tree? You forgot about the white skin then."

I felt myself getting red. "That was all rot," I said, "and

you, but alone. You are fond of tackling difficulties? Well, I can give you a task which will try all your powers. Have you anything to say?"

MY HEART was beginning to thump uncomfortably. Sir Walter was not the man to catch a case too high.

"I am a soldier," I said, "and under orders."

"True; but what I am about to propose does not come within the scope of your ordinary soldiering duties."

I shall perfectly understand if you decline. You will be acting as I should act myself—as any sane man would.

I would not press you for worlds. If you wish it, I will not even make the proposal, but let you go here and now, and with you good luck with your battalion. I do not wish to perturb you, but you are a sensible soldier."

This piqued me and put me on my mettle.

"I am not going to run away before the guns fire. Let me hear what you propose."

Sir Walter crossed to a cabinet, unlocked it with a key

"Look at it in another way," he went on. "If it were Enver and Germany alone dragging Turkey into a European war for power, then no Turk could a rush job like this might easily find the right arms, officers, and Constantinople. But in the provinces, where Islam is strong, there would be trouble. Many of us counted on that. But we have been disappointed. The Syrian army is as fanatical as the hordes of the Mamelukes. The Serbians have taken a hand in the game, and the Greeks are not far behind."

There is a dry wind blowing through the East, and the parched grasses wait the spark. And the wind is blowing toward the Indian border. Whence comes that wind, think you?"

Sir Walter had lowered his voice and was speaking very soft and distinct. I could hear the rain dripping from the eaves of the window, and the hoot of far-off taxis in White-

"Have you an explanation, Hammy?" he asked again. "It looks as if Islam had a bigger hand in the thing than

we thought," I said. "I fancy religion is the only thing to hold up the world, except for the Chinese."

"You're right," he said. "You must be right. We have laughed at the Holy War, the Jihad that old Von der Goltz prophesied. But I believe that stupid old man with the big spectacles was right. There is a Jihad preparing. The question is, How?"

"I know," I said; "but I'll bet it won't be done by a pack of stout German officers in *peckhahs*. I fancy you can't manufacture Holy Wars out of Krupp guns alone and a few staff officers and a battle cruiser with her boilers burst."

"They are not fools, however much we try to persuade ourselves of the contrary. But supposing they have got some tremendous sacred sanction—some holy thing, some book or gospel or some new prophet from the desert, something which would cast over the whole ugly mechanism of German war the glamour of the old torrential raid which crumpled the Byzantine Empire and split the world. Venus, Mars, a fighting creed and the world still stands in the pupit with the Korean in one hand and a drawn sword in the other. Supposing there is some Ark of the Covenant which willadden the remotest Moslem peasant with dreams of Paradise? What then, my friend?"

"Then there will be hell let loose in those parts pretty soon."

"Hell which may spread. Beyond Persia, remember, lies India."

"You keep to suppositions. How much do you know?" I asked.

"Very little except the fact. But the fact is beyond dispute. I have reports from agents everywhere—peelars in South Russia, Afghan horse dealers, Turcoman merchants, pilgrims on the road to Mecca, sailors on Black Sea coasters, sheep-skinned Mongols, Hindu sailors, Greek traders in the Gulf, as well as respectable Consuls who use cipher. They tell the same story. The East is waiting for a revelation. It has been promised

the East and talk any language. They're the fellows for this kind of thing. I've seen Turks in the desert, except a chap who did something tame in a hotel at Kinsmen. You've picked about the most useless man on earth."

"You've been a mining engineer, Hannay." Sir Walter said. "If you wanted a man to prospect for gold in Barotse-land you would, of course, like to get one who knew the country, who could speak the language. I suppose the thing you would require in him would be that he had a nose for finding gold and knew his business. That is the position now. I believe that you have a nose for finding out what our enemies try to hide. I know that you are brave and cool and resourceful. That is why I tell you the story."

He unrolled a big map of Europe on the wall.

"I can't tell you where you'll get on the track of the secret, but I can put a limit to the quest. You won't find it east of the Bosphorus—not yet. It is still in Europe. It may move westward, or in any direction. It may be far west. But it is moving onward. If you are in time you may cut it in march to Constantinople. That is much I can tell you. The secret is known in Germany, too, to those whom it concerns. It is in Europe that the seeker must search—at present."

"Tell me more," I said. "You can give me no details and no instructions. Obviously you can give me no secret if I come to grief."

He nodded. "You would be beyond the pale."

"You give me a free hand?"

"Absolutely. You can have what money you like, and what men you like, and what help you like. You can follow any plan you fancy, and go anywhere you think fruitful. We can give no directions."

"One last question. What say you is important? Tell me just how important."

"It is life and death," he said solemnly. "I can put it no higher and no lower. Once we know what is the menace we can meet it. As long as we are in the dark it works un-

be quite at peace in the world again. And yet Sir Walter had called me to his office, and said that he himself had never have accepted."

"How does one make a great decision? I swear that when I turned round to speak I meant to refuse. But my answer was Yes and I had crossed the Rubicon. My voice sounded cracked and far away."

Sir Walter shook hands with me and his eyes blinked a little.

"I may be sending you to your death, Hannay—what a task-mistress duty is! If so, I shall be haunted with regrets, but you will never repent. Have no fear of that. You have chosen the roughest road, but it goes straight to the hilltop."

He took a sheet of paper and wrote three words: "Kasredin," "Kashan," and "I."

"That is the only clue we possess," he said. "I cannot construe it, but I can tell you the story. We have had our agents working in Persia and Mesopotamia for years—mostly in the offices of the Indian Army. They carry their names on their hats, and when one comes up to you and says he is a muleteer, and had been south with the Hashimites, he found out something, but his enemies knew that he knew and he was pursued. Three months ago, just before Kut, he staggered into Delmain's camp with ten bullet holes in him and a knife slash on his forehead. He mumbled something, and then died. I found him lying on the ground. Something coming from the west had told them nothing. He died in ten minutes. They found this paper on him, and since he cried out the word 'Kasredin' in his last moments, it must have had something to do with his quest. It is for you to find out if it has any meaning."

I folded it up and placed it in my pocketbook.

"What a great fellow! What was his name?" I asked.



one. Some star—man, prophecy or trinket—is coming out of the West. The Germans know, and that is the card with which they are going to astonish the world."

"And the mission you spoke of for me is to go and find out?"

HE NODDED gravely. "That is the crazy and impossible mission."

"Tell me more about this, Sir Walter," I said. "I know it is the fashion in this country if a man has special knowledge to set him to some job exactly the opposite. I know all about Damara-land, but instead of being put on Botha's staff, as I applied to be, I was kept in Hampshire mud till the campaign in South Africa. Afterward, when I was to be a man who could pass as an Arab, but do you think they would send him to the East? They left him in my battalion—a lucky thing for me, for he saved my life at Alut. I know the fashion, but isn't that just carrying it a bit too far? There must be thousands of men who have spent years in

checked and we may be too late. The war must be won or lost in Europe. Yes, but the English have been so long at war that they are distract ed. Europe and the great east may fail. The stakes are less than victory and defeat. Hannay."

I got out of my chair and walked to the window. It was a difficult moment in my life. I was happy in my soldiering; above all, happy in the company of my brother officers. I was asked to go into the enemy's camp on a quest of death, and I was asked to do it in the dead of winter, in the dead of lonely days and nights, of nerve-racking strain, of deadly weather I shivered. It was too grim a business, too inhuman for flesh and blood. But Sir Walter had called it a matter of state, and I had to do it. I was told that I was to be my own master. He could not give me orders, but was I not under orders—higher orders than my brigadier's? I thought myself incompetent, but clever men I thought me competent, or at least competent enough for a sporting chance. I knew in my soul that if I declined I should never

be quite at peace in the world again. And yet Sir Walter had called me to his office, and said that he himself had never have accepted."

"I have chosen my colleague," I said.

"Billy Arbutton's boy? His father died at Harrow with a broken heart. He used to bring him down to fish. Talking with a lean, high-bosomed face and a pair of brown eyes like a pretty girl's. I know his record, too. There's a good deal about him in this office. He rode through Yemen, which no white man ever died before. The Arabs let him pass, for they thought him stark mad and argued that the hand of Allah was heavy enough on him

Peter quickly caught the knife, held it in one hand and held his throat in the other and demanded an apology.

I WROTE out a wire to Sandy, asking him to come up by the two-fifteen train and meet me at my flat.

"I have chosen my colleague," I said.

"Billy Arbutton's boy? His father died at Harrow with a broken heart. He used to bring him down to fish. Talking with a lean, high-bosomed face and a pair of brown eyes like a pretty girl's. I know his record, too. There's a good deal about him in this office. He rode through Yemen, which no white man ever died before. The Arabs let him pass, for they thought him stark mad and argued that the hand of Allah was heavy enough on him

without their efforts. He's blood-brother to every kind of Albanian patriot, and also he used to take a hand in Turkish politics and got a huge reputation. Some Englishmen was once coming to see him. Major Blenkiron. Show me the scarcity of statesmen in Western Europe, and Mahmood broke in with, "Have you not the Honorable Arbutus?" You say he's in your battalion. I was wondering what had become of him, for we tried to get hold of him here, but he had left. He had joined the Black Arabs, and yes, that's the man. Buried deep in the commando forces of the New Army? Well, we'll get him out pretty quick!"

"I knew he had knocked about the East, but I didn't know he was that kind of swell. Sandy's not the clasp to buck about himself."

"He's a swell," said Sir Walter. "He had always a more than Oriental relish. I've got another colleague for you, like him."

He looked at his watch. "You can get to the Savoy Grill Room in five minutes in a taxi-cab. Go in from the Strand, turn to your left, and you will see in the alcove on the right-hand side a tall, thin, dark man in a suit, with a tall man sitting at it. They know him there, so he will have the table to himself. I want you to go and sit down beside him. Say you come from me. His name is Mr. John Scantlebury Blenkiron, now a citizen of the world, but born and raised in Indiana. Put this envelope in your pocket, but don't read its contents till you have talked to him, I want you to form your own opinion about Mr. Blenkiron."

I went out of the Foreign Office in as muddled a frame of mind as I had been when I first left the portal. I was most desperately depressed. To begin with, I was in a complete funk. I had always thought I was about as brave as the average man, but there's courage and courage, and mine was certainly not the latter. I sat down. Settled me down in a trench and I could stand being out as well as most people, and my blood could get hot if it were given a chance. But I think I had too much imagination. I couldn't shake off the beastly forecasts that kept crowding my mind.

In a moment I was up again. I would be dead. Shot as a spy—a rotten sort of ending! At the moment I was quite safe, looking for a taxi in the middle of Whitehall, but the sweat broke on my forehead. I felt as I had felt in my adventure before the war, but that was far worse, for it was more self-condemned as a personal failure. I didn't seem to have even a personal chance. I watched the figures in khaki passing on the pavement, and thought what a nice safe respect they had compared to mine. Yes, even if next week they were in the trenches, in the Hells, the Quarries, or the Quarries, or that ugly name at Home. I wondered why I had not been happier that morning before I got that infernal wire. Suddenly all the trivialities of English life seemed to me inexpressibly dear and terribly far away. I was very angry with Bullivant, till I remembered that he had been. My late was my own choosing.

When I was hunting the Black Stone the interest of the problem had helped to keep me going. But now I could see no problem. My mind had nothing to work on, but three words gibbered on a sheet of paper, "Arbutus, Arbutus, Arbutus." What had been convinced, but to which he couldn't give a name, I sat huddled in the taxi with my chin on my breast, wishing that I had lost a leg at Loos and been comfortably tucked away for the rest of the war.

SURE ENOUGH I found my man in the Grill Room. There he was, feeling solemnly, with a napkin tucked under his chin. He was a big fellow with a fat, sallow, clean-shaven face. I disregarded the fat, and sat down in the chair beside the American at the little table. He turned on a pair of full sleep eyes, like a ruminating ox.

"Mr. Blenkiron?" I asked.

"You have my name, sir," he said. "Mr. John Scantlebury Blenkiron. I am writing to you, if I saw anything good in this darned British warfie."

"I come from Sir Walter Bullivant," I said, speaking low.

"So?" said he. "Sir Walter is a very good friend of mine. Pleased to meet you, Mr.—or I guess it's Colonel—"

"Hannay," I said. "Major Hannay." I was wondering what he would say if I told him he had to help me.

"Allow me to offer you luncheon. Here, water, bring the *eaſe*. I regret that I cannot join you in sampling the efforts of the management of this ho-te. I suffer, sir, from dyspepsia, duodenal dyspepsia. It gets me two hours after dinner, and you can see before the bread-and-butter. So I am compelled to adopt a diet. My nutrition is in my diet, and boiled milk and a little dry toast. It's a melancholy descent from the days when I could do justice to a lunch at Sherry's and sop off oysters and devilled bones." He sighed from the depths of his capacious frame.

I ordered an omelet and a chop, and took another look at

him. The large eyes seemed to be gazing steadily at me without seeing me. They were as vacant as an abstracted child's; but I had an uncomfortable feeling that they saw me.

"You have been fighting, major? The Battle of Loos? Well, I guess that must have been some battle. We in America respect the fighting of the British soldier, but we don't quite catch on to the de-vices of the British generals. We expect them to be like the French who score among us rightways. That is it? My father taught at Chancery Lane, but these eyes have seen nothing greater than a Presidential election. Say, is there any way I could be let into a scene of real bloodshed?"

His serious tone made me laugh. "There are plenty of opportunities for personal prestige," I said. "The French Foreign Legion is full of young Americans, and in our Army Service Corps. Half the chauffeurs you strike in France seem to come from the States."

He sighed. "I did think of some belligerent stunt a year back. But I reflected that the good God had not given

"That's the best kind of neutrality I've ever heard of," I said.

"It's a right line," he replied solemnly. "Say, major, what are you lit fighting for? For your skin, for your Empire and the peace of Europe. Wash, those ideals don't concern us one cent. We're not Europeans, and there aren't any German trenches on Long Island yet. You've made the ring in Europe, and if we came butting in it wouldn't be the rules of the game. You wouldn't welcome us, and I guess God would be angry if that were the case. We mustn't interfere, and that was what our friend President Wilson meant when he opined that America was too proud to fight. So we're neutral. But likewise we're benevolent neutrals. As I follow events, there's a shank's blunt to be loose in the world, and it's going to be a long time now till sweet till is cleared away. It's time to start thinking now, and what we've got to take a hand in disinfesting the planet. See? We can't fight, but, by gosh! some of us are going to sweep blood to sweep the mess up. Officially we do nothing except give off Notes like a leaky boiler gives off steam. But as individuals we can do it up. I am a great admirer of the spirit of Jefferson Davis and Woodrow Wilson. I'm going to be sorry he didn't declare war on America at the beginning."

I WAS completely recovering my temper. This fellow was a perfect jewel, and his spirit purpose into me.

"I guess you British were the same kind of neutral when your admiral warned us the German fleet meant to shell us down in Manila Bay in '98?"

Mr. Blenkiron drew up in the middle of his boiled milk, and lit a thin black cigar.

I leaned forward. "Have you talked to Sir

Walter?" I asked.

"I have talked to him, and he has given me to understand that there's a disk on which you're going to boat. There are no files on that big man, and if he says it's good business then you can count me in."

"You know that it's uncommunally dangerous?"

"I guess so. But you won't do any leg-squeezing risks. You have got to trust him and give him a chance. What's life anyhow? For me, it's living on a strict diet and having frequent pains in my stomach. It isn't such an almighty lot to give up, provided you're not a prima donna. How's the ladies, how big is the r—?" About one o'clock in the morning, when you can't sleep, it will be the size of Mount Everest, but if you run out to meet it, it will be a hillock you can jump over. I won't think about rising and getting up to my neck in them and don't the r— road out."

I scribbled my address on a piece of paper and handed it to the stout philosopher. "Come to dinner tonight at eight," I said.

"I thank you, major. A little fish, please, plain-boiled, and a bottle of Chianti. I'll be back at eight, and I'll borrow your coach after the meal and spend the evening on your back. That is the advice of my noo doctor."

I got a taxi and drove to my club. On the way I opened the envelope. Sir Walter had given me it. It bore a number of jottings, the details of Mr. Blenkiron. He had done wonders for the Allies in the States. He had nosed out the Dumbas plot, and had been instrumental in getting the portfolio of Dr. Albert Von Spies' spied trial to murder him. He had been a partner in the firm that took over one of the big gun factories. Sir Walter had written at the end: "The best man we ever had. Better than Scudler. He would go through hell with a box of bismuth tablets and a pack of Patience cards."

I went into the little back smoking-room, borrowed an atlas from the library, poked up the fire, and sat down to think. Mr. Blenkiron had given me the filip I needed. My mind was beginning to work now, and was running wide over the whole business. Not that I hoped to find out what my friend had been up to, but I had a chair that would solve the mystery. But I was getting a sort of grip on a plan of operations. And to my relief I had stopped thinking about the risks. Blenkiron had shamed me out of that. If a sedentary dyspeptic could show that kind of nerve, I wasn't going to be beaten.

Sandy was devouring tea cakes with the serious resolution of a convalescent.

"Well, Dick, what's the news? Is it a brass hat or the boot?"

"Neither," I said. "But you and I are going to disappear

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A Foreword to Greenmantle

I WROTE *Greenmantle* in the first half of the year 1916, because *The Thirty-Nine Steps* found so much favour in the trenches and the hospitals that I was urged to do something more about Richard Hannay. There was a very real fear of a *jeopardy* at the time, and the author of *The Thirty-Nine Steps* was worried about the safety of his characters. The fall of Erzurum, too, was surrounded with a good deal of mystery at the time—some day I hope the full story will be told—and this gave the romancer a chance. Some of the characters were based on the known doings of real people. Sir Arthur Borthrom, for example, was partly drawn from an Oxford friend who became one of the most remarkable figures in the War, and Peter Pinxit was based upon my old hunter in South Africa. *Greenmantle* appeared in the autumn of 1916; just about the worst time of the Battle of the Somme. I remember vividly the pride I felt on finding that in dug-outs in the most unpleasant parts of the front it was taking the minds of many honest men off too urgent realities.

—TWEEDSMUIR

John S. Blenkiron the kind of martial figure that would do credit to the tested field. Also I recollect that we Americans were neutrals—benevolent neutrals—and that it did not become me to butt into the struggles of the effete monarchies of Europe. I had been a hunter in the big country, and, for I was lying sick during the Fluellen business, and I have never seen the lawless passions of men let loose on a battlefield. And, as a stood of humanity, I hankered for the experience."

"What have you been doing?" I asked. The calm gentleman began to speak.

"—Wasn't I a fool?" he said. "I just waited." The Lord had blessed me with money to burn, so I didn't need to go scrambling like a wildcat for war contracts. But I reckoned I would get into the game somehow, and I was. Being a neutral, I was in an adventurous position, and I had to be a pretty sharpshooter to get out of it. And then I reckoned I would have to leave the country. I had been here for the good of my country and we saw what was doing in Europe. I have counted myself out of the bloodbod business, but as your poet sings, peace has its victories not less renowned than war, and I reckon that means a neutral can have a share in a scrap as well as a belligerent."

Greenmantle

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are the only race on earth that can produce men capable of getting inside the skin of remote peoples. Perhaps the Scots are better than the English, but we're all a thousand paces better than the Chinese. Shao Wu was the wondering Sot carried to the pitch of genius. In old days he would have had a crusade or discovered a new road to the Indies. Today he merely roamed about, the spirit moved him, till the war sweep him up and dumped him down in my bath.

well gibberish to any Turk or German that found them.

The first, "*Karredin*," I could make nothing of.

"You mean Nasr-ed-din," he said, still munching crumpets.

"What's that?" I asked sharply.

"He's the general believed to be commanding against us in Mesopotamia. I remember him years ago in Aleppo. He talked bad French and drank the sweetest of sweet charmers."

I looked closely at the paper. The "K" was unmistakable.

"Kasredin is nothing. It means in Arabic the House of Faith, and might cover anything from Hagia Sofia to a suburban villa. What's your next puzzle, Dick? Have you entered for a prize competition in a weekly

paper?"
"Cancer," I read out.
"It is the Latin for a crab. Likewise it is the name of a painful disease. It is also a sign of the Zodiac."
"E. L." I read.

"There you have me. It sounds like the number of a motor car. The police would find out for you. I call this rather a difficult competition. What's the prize?"

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I passed over the paper. "Who wrote it? It looks as if he wrote it in a hurry."

"Harry Bullivant," I said.

Sandy's face grew solemn. "Old Harry. He was at my tutor's. The best fellow God ever made. I saw his name in the casualty list the other day. Harry didn't do things without a purpose. What's the story of this?"

"Wait till after dinner," I said. "I'm going to change and have a bath. There's an American coming to dine, and he's part of the business."

MR. BLENKIRON arrived punctual to the minute in a fur coat like a Russian prince's. Now that I saw him on his feet I could judge him better. He had a fat face, but not the sort that looks like a bear, and very muscular wrists showed below his cuff-cuff I fancied that, if the occasion called, he might be a good man with his hands.

Sandy and I ate a hearty meal, and the American picked at his boiled fish and sipped his beer with a smile. When he had cleared away he was as good as his word and laid himself out on my sofa. I offered him a good cigar, but he preferred one of his own lean black abominations. Sandy stretched his length in an easy chair and lit his pipe. "Now for your story, Dick."

I began, as Sir Walter had begun with me, by telling them about the puzzle in the Near East. I pitched a pretty good yarn, for I had been thinking about it, and the mystery of the business had caught my fancy. Sandy got very keen.

"It is possible enough. Indeed, I've been expecting it, though I'm hanged if I can imagine how the German's got up their sleeve. It might be any one of many things. Thirty years ago there was a bogus prophecy that played the devil in Yemen. Or it might be a ring such as All Wad Hela had, or a jewel like Solomon's necklace in Abyssinia. You never know what will start off a Jew. But I rather think it's a—"

"Where could he get his purchase?" I asked.

"It's hard to say. If it were merely wild tribesmen in the Bedawin he might have got a reputation as a saintly and middle-of-the-road worker. Or he might be a fellow that preached a pure religion, like the chap that founded the Semites. But I'm inclined to think he must be something extra special if he can get up on the whole Muslim world. The Turks and Persians wouldn't follow the ordinary new theology game. He must be of the Blood. Your Muhibs and Mullahs and Imams were nobodies, but they had only a local prestige. To capture all Islam he must be what is what we fear—the man must be of the Koreish, the tribe of the Prophet himself!"

"But how could any impostor prove that? for I suppose he's an impostor."

"He must be a con artist a lot of chaff. His descent must be pretty well known with, and there are families, remember, that claim the Koreish blood. Then he'd have to be rather a wonder on his own account—saithly, eloquent, and that sort of thing. And I expect he'd have to show a sign, though what that could be I haven't a notion."

"You know the East as about as well as any living man. Do you think that kind of thing is possible?" I asked.

"Perfectly," said Sandy, with a grave face.

"Well, there's the ground cleared to begin with. Then there's the evidence of pretty well every secret agent we possess. That all seems to prove the fact. But we have no details, and I suppose except that bit of paper," I told them the story of it.

Sandy studied it with wrinkled brows. "It beats me. But it may be the key for all that. A close as he can get. He can't give me orders, but he offers the job of going out to find what the miscreant is. Once he knows that, he says he can checkmate it."

"That's the point I was coming to. Sir Walter says this thing is about as important for our cause as big guns. He can't give me orders, but he offers the job of going out to find what the miscreant is. Once he knows that, he says he can checkmate it."

But it's got to be found out soon, for the time may be spent at any moment. I've taken the job. Will you help me? We're taking the job."

"I was studying the ceiling."

"I should add that it's about as safe as playing chuck-farthing at the Loos Crossroads, the day you and I went in. And if we fail, you can't help us."

"Oh, of course, of course," said Sandy in an abstruse voice.

Mr. Blenkiron, having finished his after-dinner recumbency, had sat up and pulled a small table toward him. From his pocket he took out a pack of Patience cards and began to play the game called Double Napoleon. He seemed to be oblivious of the conversation.

Suddenly I had a feeling that the whole scene was still human. Here we were three simpletons sitting in a room, projecting a mission into the enemy's citadel without an idea what we were to do or how we were to do it. And one of the three was looking at the ceiling, and another was playing Patience. The force of the thing struck me so keenly that I laughed.

SANDY looked at me suddenly and sharply. "You feel like that? Same with me. It's funny, isn't it? I mean, that whole-headed idiot is apt to win. We're to go on this mad trail wherever we think we can hit it. Well, I'm with you. But I don't mind admitting that I'm in a blue funk. I just got out of it, and to think such business was quite happy. And now you have bocked me out, and my feet are cold."

"I don't believe you know what fear is," I said.

"There you're wrong, Dick," he said earnestly. "I'm not the man who isn't to know what fear is. I have done some dastardly things, but I never started on them without wishing they were over. Once I'm in the show I get easier, and the time I'm coming out I'm sorry to leave it. But at the start my feet are icy."

"Then I take it you're coming?"

"Rather," he said. "You didn't imagine I would go back on you?"

"And you sir?" I addressed Blenkiron. "I'm going to be compelled to become a cog. He was completing eight little heaps of cards with a contented grunt. As I spoke, he raised his sleepy eyes and nodded.

"Why, yes," he said. "You gentlemen mustn't think that I haven't been following your most engrossing conversation. I guess I haven't made a mistake. I find that a game of Patience stimulates the digestion after meals and conduces to quiet reflection. John S. Blenkiron is with you all the time."

He shuffled the cards and dealt for a new game.

I don't think I ever expected a refusal, but this ready assent cheered me wonderfully. I couldn't have faced the thing alone.

"Well, that's settled. Now for ways and means. We've got to get to Constantinople, and to beat the biggest area of country we must go by different roads. Sandy, my lad, you're to get into Turkey. You're the only one of us that likes that sort of people. You can't get in by Europe very easily, so you must try Asia. What about the coast of Asia Minor?"

"It could be done," he said. "You'd better leave it to me. I'll find out the best way. I suppose the Foreign Office will help me to get to the jumping-off place?"

"Remember," I said, "it's no good getting too far east. The secret, so far as concerns us, is still west of Constantinople."

"I expect I'll blow on the Bosphorus by a short tactic."

"For you, Mr. Blenkiron, I would suggest a straight journey. You're an American, and can travel through Germany direct. But I wouldn't be surprised if the Foreign Office will allow you to pass as a neutral."

"I have considered that, sir," he said. "I have given some thought to the peculiar psychology of the great German nation. As I read them they're as cunning as cats, and if you play the same game they will outwit

you every time. Yes, sir, they are no slouches at sleuth-work! If I were to buy a pair of shorts and some dyed cotton dress like a Bapongi pants and go into Germany on the peace racket, I guess they'd be on my trail like a knife, and I should be shot as a spy inside of a week or doing something in the Moselle prints. But they lack the largest item. The man has a son. With your approval I shall visit the Fatherland as John S. Blenkiron, once a thorn in the side of their brightest boys on the other side.

"But it will be a different John S. I reckon he will have experienced a change of heart. He will have come to appreciate the great, pure, noble soul of Germany, and he will be sorrowing for his past like a converted gunman at a camp meeting. He's bound to be a son of the soil in the service of the British Government. I am going to have a first-class row with your Foreign Office about my passport, and I am going to speak harsh words about them up and down this metropolis. I am going to let the world by your election at my port of embarkation, and I guess I shall run up hard against the British Legations in Scandinavia. By that time our Teutonic friends will have begun to wonder what has happened to John S., and I am going to type a letter to the British mistakes in that soil. So when I get to Germany they will be waiting for me with an open mind. Then I judge my conduct will surprise and encourage them. I will confide to them that our John S. is not a bad old British corporal, and I will show the British lassies the meanest kind of cur. You may trust me to make a good impression. After that I'll move eastward, to see the demesnes of the British Empire in those parts. By golly, what a row that'll raise!"

"This is the 17th day of November. If we can't find out what we want in two months we may chuck the job. On the 17th of January we should forgether in Constantinople. Whoever gets there first waits for the others. I am sure that off the coast of Africa it will be conceded that the missing man has got into trouble and must be given up. If ever we get there we'll be coming from different points and in different characters, so we won't be a crew. I am a kind of odd fish around. Sandy, you know Constantinople. You fix the meeting place."

"I've already thought of that," he said, and going to the writing table he drew a little plan on a sheet of paper. "That lane runs down from the Kundish Bazaar in Galata to the Galata Bridge. There is a little old left-hand side is a café kept by a Greek called Kuprasso. Behind the café is a garden, surrounded by high walls which were parts of the old Byzantine theatre. At the end of the garden is a little Greek Gothic church of St. Simeon the Rich. It has been called in its time a dancing-hall and a gambling hell and who knows what else. It's not a place for respectable people, but the ends of the earth converge there and no questions are asked. That's the best spot I can think of for a meeting place."

THIE KETTLE was sizzling by the fire, the night was raw, and it seemed the hour for a whisky-punch. I made a brew for Sandy and myself and boiled some milk for Blenkiron.

"What about language?" I asked. "You're all right, Sandy?"

"I know German fairly well; and I can pass anywhere as a Turk. The first will do for evasions and the second for ordinary business."

"And you?" I asked Blenkiron.

"I was left out at Pentecost," he said. "I regret that I have not the gift of tongues. But the part I have chosen doesn't require the polyglot. Never forget I'm plain John S. Blenkiron, a citizen of the great American Republic."

"You haven't told us your own line, Dick," I said.

"I am going to the Bosphorus through Germany, and not being a neutral, it won't be very cushioned journey."

Sandy looked grave.

"That sounds pretty desperate. Is your German good enough?"

"Pretty fair; quite good enough to pass as a native. But officially I shall not understand German. I shall be sent from Western Cape Colony, one of Marta's old lot who after a bit of trouble has got through Angola and reached Europe. I shall talk Dutch and nothing else. And, my hat! I guess I am pretty well off about the British. There's a general lot of old codgers in the Taal. I shall know all about Africa, and be panting to get another whack at the *residence review*. With luck they may send me to the Uganda show or to Egypt, and I shall be sent to the Cameroons. If I'm to deal with Mohammedan natives they're bound to show me what hand they hold. At least, that's the way I look at it."

We filled our glasses—two of punch and one of milk—and drank to our next merry meeting. Then Sandy had to leave, and I waited in. The sense of loss again descended on me. The best plans we could make were like a few buckets of water to ease the drought of the Sahara or the old lady who would have stopped the Atlantic with a broom.

OUR VARIOUS departures were unassuming, all but the American's. Sandy spurned a busy fortnight in his submarine fashion, now in the British. More and more he was about the country to see old exploring companions, now at the War Office, now at the Foreign Office, but mostly in my flat, sunk in an armchair and reading. He left finally on December 1 as a King's Messenger. I was sorry there I know the King's Messenger would disappear, and some queer Oriental ruffian take his place. It would have been impertinence in me to enquire into his plans. He was the real King's Messenger, and the dabbler.

Blenkiron was a different man. Sir Walter told me to look out for squalls, and the twinkle in his eye gave me a notion of what was coming. The first thing the sportsman did was to write a letter to the papers announcing his departure. There had been a debate in the House of Commons on foreign policy, and the speech of some idiot there gave him his cue. He declared that he had been heart and soul with the British at the start, but that he was reluctantly compelled to take a new view. "I am told that the idea of Germany had broken the laws of God and humanity, and he reckoned that Britain was now the worst exponent of Prussianism going. That letter made a fine racket, and the paper that printed it had a row with the

But that was only the beginning of Mr. Blenkiron's campaign. He got mixed up with some mountebanks called the League of Democrats against Aggression, gentlemen who said that Germany was all right if we would only keep from her bad feelings. He addressed a meeting under their auspices, which was broken up by the crowd, but not before John S. had got off his chest a lot of amazing stuff. I wanted them, but a lot of them were not up to his snuff and such clogged nonsense. He said that Germany was right in wanting the freedom of the seas, and that America would back her up, and that the British Navy was a bigger threat to the peace of the world than the Kaiser's army. He admitted that he had once thought differently, but he was an honest man and not afraid to face facts. The oration closed suddenly, when he got a Brussels-sprout in the eye at which my mother said he swore in a very unpolished style.

After that he wrote other letters to the press saying that there was no more liberty of speech in England and a lot of scallywags backed up. In fact, he was a scallywag, far and further him, and he got kicked out of the Savoy. There was an agitation to get him deported, and questions were asked in Parliament, and the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs had his report. I was not at all surprised. I was beginning to think that Blenkiron was carrying his tomfoolery too far, so I went to see Sir Walter, but he told me to keep my mind easy.

"Our friend's motto is 'Thorough,'" he said, "and he knows very well what he is

about. We have officially requested him to leave, and he sails from Newcastle on Monday. He will be shadowed wherever he goes, and we hope to provoke more outbreaks. He is a very capable fellow."

The last I saw of him was on the Saturday afternoon when I met him in St. James's Street and offered to shake hands. He told me that my uniform was a pollution, and made a speech to a small crowd about it. They hissed him and he had to get into a taxi. As he departed there was just the one man in the left eye. On Monday I read that he had gone, and the papers observed that our shores were well out of him.

I sailed on December 3 from Liverpool in a boat bound for the Argentine that was due to put in at Lisbon. I had, of course, to get a Foreign Office passport to leave England, but after that my connection with the Government ceased. All the details of my adventure I have carefully thought out. Lisbon would be a good jumping-off place, and the rendezvous of scalpers from most parts of Africa. My kit was an old Gladstone bag, and my clothes were the relics of my South African wanderings. I let my beard grow for some days before I sailed, and as it grew fast, I went on board with a very hairy chin. I had a good time on the young Boen, My name was now Bright, Cornelis Brandt—at least so my passport said, and passports never lie.

There were just two other passengers on that beastly boat, and they never appeared till we were out of the Bay. I was pretty bad myself, but managed to move about all the time, for the frowns in my cabin were sickening. I had a good night, though two days and a night to wade from Ushua to Finisterre. Then the weather changed and we came out of snow-squalls into something very like summer. The hills of Portugal were all blue and yellow like the Kalahari, and before we made the Tagus I was beginning to forget I had ever left Rhodesia. There was a Dutchman in the cabin with whom I used to patter the sand and say "Good morning" and "Good evening" in broken English to the captain, that was about all the talking I did on the cruise.

He was a Swede, a prospector, transport rider, hunter and trapper, but principally hunter. In those early days he was none too good a citizen. He was in Swaziland with Bob Macrae, and you know what that means. Then he took to working for gold. Then he got into the States and joined the miners there, and what he didn't know about mining he wasn't. He knew that he was in the Kalahari, where he and Scotty Smith were family names. An era of comparative respectability dawned for him with the Matabele War, when he did uncommon good service to the British forces. Cet Sheldrake wanted to establish him in a home down Salisbury way, but Peter was an independent devil and would call no man master. He took to big-game hunting, which

WE DROPPED another of the quays of Lisbon on a shiny blue morning, pretty near warm enough to wear flannels. I had now got to be very wary. I did not leave the ship until I had had a leisurely breakfast. Then I strolled on deck and there, just casting anchor in the middle of the stream, was another ship with the blue and white funnel I knew so well. I calculated a minute before the other ship had reached the narrowest part of the Amra. Nothing could better answer my purpose. I proposed to board her, pretend I was looking for a friend, and come on shore from her, so that anyone in Lisbon who chose to be curious about me would have had a direct straight from Portugal to Amra.

I haled one of the adjacent ruffians, and got into his rowboat with my kit. We reached the vessel—she called her the *Henry the Navigator*—just as the first shoreboat was leaving. The crowd in it were all Portuguese, which suited my book. But when I went up the ladder the first man I met was old Peter Finsar.
 "What's this?" he said, looking at me. "I'm not fit to go with me when I went on trek. At the time when I left Africa two years before, I had lost sight of him for months, and heard that he was somewhere on the Congo poaching elephants. He had always a great idea of making things hum so loud in Angola that the Unite Government would have to step in and annex it. After he'd been there a year, he got sick and died."

Here was a piece of sheer monumental luck. Peter had opened his eyes and his mouth, and had got as far as "Alleswichtig," when I shut him up.

"Brandt," I said, "Cornelius Brandt. That's my name now, and don't you forget it."

He was a man of about five foot ten, very thin and active, and as strong as a buffalo. He had pale blue eyes, a face as gentle as a girl's, and a soft sleepy voice. From his present appearance it looked as if he had been biggest notions south of the Line.

"I am not going to see him now; and also you'll forget it. Who is the captain here? Is it still old Sloggett?"
"Jo," said Peter, pulling himself together. "He was speaking about you yesterday."
This was better and better. I sent Peter below to get hold of Sloggett, and presently I had a few words with that gentleman in his appearance. He looked as if he had been living hard lately. His clothes were the cut you might expect to get at Lobito Bay, he was as lean as a rake, deeply browned with the sun, and there was a lot of grey in his beard. He was fifty-six years old, and used to be taken for forty. Now he looked about to be taken.

"You've got to enter my name on the ship's books. I came aboard at Mossamedes, and now—*Coriolanus*."

"And my name's Cornelis Brandt."
At first Sloggett was for objecting. He said it was a felony. I told him that I dared say it was, but he had got to do it for reasons which I couldn't give, but which were highly hell's time.

"I got hung up on the Kafue," he said. "When I heard from old Letsitala that the white men were fighting I had a bright idea that I might get into German South West

from the north. You see I knew that Botha couldn't long keep out of the war. Well, I got a letter from him, all right, and then a sheaf of an officer's commission and commanded me with them for his food army. He was a very ugly man with a yellow face." Peter filled a deep pipe from a kudu-skin holder.

"Were you commanded?" I asked.

"No. I shot him—not so as to kill, but to wound badly. It was all right, for he fled first on me. Got me, too, in the left shoulder. But that was the beginning of bad trouble. I tried to eat my way out, and over the border among the Oranjes. I have made many journeys, but that was the worst. Four days I went without water, and six without food. Then by bad luck I fell in with 'Natalia—you remember, the half-caste child of the King of the Boers?—and the place which I bought when I came there with Carowab. It was a lie, but he held it to, and would give me no transport. So I crossed the Kalahari on my feet. Ugh, it was as slow as a vulture. I had fresh news every two weeks and weeks and weeks, and when I came to Lecow's kraal, I heard that the fighting was over and that Botha had conquered the Germans. That, too, was a lie, but it deceived me, and I went north. That was when I learned the truth. But by then I judged the war had gone too far for me to get any profit out of it, so I went into Angola to look for German refugees. By that time I was hating German worse than hell."

"What did you propose to do with them?" I asked.

"I had a notion they would make trouble with the Government in those parts. I don't specially love the Portuguese, but I'm for him against the Germans every day. Well, there was trouble, and I had a month's stay for a month and two. But before it pattered out, and I thought I had better clear for Europe, for South Africa was settling down just as the big show was getting really interesting. So here I am, Cornelis, my old friend, a strayed bird, will they let me join the Flying Corps?"

I LOOKED at Peter sitting there smoking, as imperturbable as if he had been growing tulips in Natal all his life and ran home for a month's holiday with his parents in Pekin.

"You're coming with me, my lad," I said. "We're going into Germany."

Peter showed no surprise. "Keep in mind that I don't like the Germans," was all he said. "I'm a Christian man, but I've deviled a temper."

Then I told him the story of our mission.

"You and I have got to be Maritz's men. We went into Angola, and now we're trekking for the Fatherland to get a bit of our own back on that damned English. Neither of us knows a German from a dog. We'd better plan out the route we were in—Kakamas will do for one, and Schut Drift. You were a Ngamaland hunter before the war. They won't have your dossier, so you can get in with us. I'll get me an educated African, one of Bopha's bright lads, and a pal of old Herzog. We can let our imagination loose about that part, but we must stick to the same yard about the fighting."

"I'm a hellfire," said Peter. (He had called me Cornelis ever since I had told him my new name. He was a wonderful chap for catching on to any game.) "But after we get into Germany, what then? There can't be more than half a dozen Englishmen. But once we're among the beer-drinkers I don't quite see our line. We're to find out about something that's going on in Turkey? When I was a boy the *predikheren* used to preach about Turkey. I wish I was better educated and remembered whatabouts in the map it was."

"You leave that to me before we get there. We haven't got much of a spoor, but we'll cast about and with luck will pick it up. I've seen some old enough when we hunted kudu on the Karoo."

Peter nodded. "Do we sit still in a

German town?" he asked anxiously. "I shouldn't like that, Cornelis."

"We'll go gently eastward to Constantinople," I said.

Peter grinned. "We should cover a lot of new country. You can reckon on me, friend Cornelis. I've always had a hankering to see Europe."

He rose to his feet and stretched his long arms.

"We'd better begin at once. I really wonder what's happened to old Solly Maritz, with his bottle face? You was a fine hand at the game when you was sitting up to the bone, and the Oranjes prayin' that Bets' lads would take my head for a start."

Peter was as though a mountebank, when he got started, as Blenkiron himself. All the way back to Lisbon he yarnt about Maritz and his adventures in German South Africa. I heard him out with interest. He made a very good story of our doings, and by his constant harping on it I pretty soon got it into my memory. That was always Peter's way. He said if you were going to be a poet, you must then you must do it,convince yourself that you were it, till you really were it and didn't act but behaved naturally. The two men who had started that morning from the hotel door had been boozed enough, but the two that returned were sober, sobered, Rehing to get a shot at England.

We spent that evening piling up evidence in our favor. Some kind of republic had started in Portugal, and ordinarily the girls would have been in a political temper. The war had quieted all these local squabbles, and the talk was of nothing but what was doing in France and Russia. The place we went to was a big, well-lighted show on a quiet street. I thought there were a lot of sharp-eyed fellows wandering about that I guessed were spies and police agents. I knew that Britain was the one country that doesn't bother about this kind of game, and that it would be safe to let ourselves go.

"I had Portuguese Lira," said Peter. He spoke it like a Lourenço Marques barkeeper, with a lot of Shanghaian jargon to fill up. He started on canapés, which I reckoned was a new drink to him, and presently his tongue ran freely. Several neighbours pricked up their ears, and soon we had a small crowd round our table.

We talked to each other of Maritz and our doings. It didn't seem to be a popular subject in that case. One big blue-black fellow said Maritz was a good man who would soon be hanged. Peter quickly caught his knife wrist with one hand and his throat with the other, and demanded an apology. He got it. The Lisbon *beau-savoirs* have not lost any lions.

AFTER THAT there was a bit of a squish in our corner. Those near us were very quiet and polite, but the outer fringe made remarks. When Peter said that I had the air of a ship's captain, this fellow was going to stick to England she was bucking the wrong horse, there was a murmur of disapproval. One decent-looking old fellow, who had the air of a ship's captain, flushed all over and straight out he stood up and stared at Peter. I saw that he had struck an Englishman, and mentioned it to Peter in Dutch.

Peter played his part perfectly. He suddenly shut up, and, with furtive looks around, began to jabber to me in a low voice. He was the very picture of the stage conspirator.

The old fellow stood staring at us. "I don't very well understand this lingo," he said. "I know I do be of you, but what are you sayin' anything about England, I'll ask you to repeat it. And if so be as you repeats it I'll take either of you on and knock the face off him."

I took a deep drag after my own heart, but I had to keep the game up. I said in Dutch to Peter that we mustn't get brawling in a public house. "Remember the big thing," I said darkly. Peter nodded, and the old fellow, after staring at us for a bit, spat soundly on the floor.

"The time is coming when the Englaender

will sing small," I observed to the crowd.

We stood drinks to one or two, and then swaggered into the room. The door a hand span from my arm, and, looking down, I saw a little scamp of a man in a fur coat.

"Will the gentlemen walk a step with me and drink a glass of beer?" he said in very stiff Dutch.

"What kind of devil are you?" I asked.

"Gott stue England!" was his answer, and, turning back the lapel of his coat, he showed some kind of ribbon in his button hole.

"Angus," said Peter. "Lend on, friend. We don't mind if we do."

He led us to a back street and then up two pairs of stairs to a very stout little flat. The place was filled with fine red lacquer, and I guessed that art-dealing was his nominal business. Portugal, since the republic broke up the convents and sold up the big royalist granaries, is full of bargains in the lacquer and curio line.

He filled us two long tankards of very good Munich beer.

"Paus!" he said, raising his glass. "You are from South Africa. What make you in Europe?"

We both looked sullen and secretive.

"That's our own business," I answered. "You don't expect to buy our confidence with a glass of beer."

"So?" he said. "Then I will put it differently. Do you speak in the cafe I judge you do not love the English."

Peter said something about stamping on their grandmothers, a Kaffir phrase which sounded gruesome in Dutch.

The man laughed. "That is all I want to know. You are on the German side?"

"Yes, sir," I said. "I said, 'If they treat me fair I'll fight for them, or for anybody else that makes war on England. England has stolen my country and corrupted my people and made me an exile. We Afrikanders do not forget. We may be slow but we are sure."

"We two are not worth a great price," the German said. "We know the natives as no Englishmen can ever know them. They are too soft and easy and the Kaffers laugh at them. But we can teach them to fight so that they will not like devils, the fear of us. What is the reward, little man, for our services? I will tell you. There will be no

reward. We ask none. We fight for hate of England."

Peter grunted a deep approval.

"That is good talk," said our entertainer, and his close-set eyes flashed. "There is room in Germany for such men as you. Where are you going now, I beg to know?"

"To America," I said. "I may say we will go to Germany. We are tired with travel and may rest a bit. This war will last long and our chance will come."

"But you may miss your market," he said significantly. "A ship sails tomorrow for Rotterdam. If you take my advice, you will go with her."

This was what I wanted, for if we stayed in Lisbon some real soldier of Maritz might drop in any day and blow the gaff. "I am bound for Rotterdam," I said. "I am bound for Rotterdam," he repeated. "There is work for you in Germany—oh, yes, much work; but if you delay the chance may pass. I will arrange your journey. It is my business to help the wives of my fatherland."

He was a tall, gaunt man and an epitome of our doings contributed by Peter, who required two mugs of beer to help him through. He was a Bavarian, it seemed, and we drank to the health of Prince Rupprecht, the same blighter I was trying to do in at London. The man was a blighter, Peter unfortunately could not appreciate. If he could he would have enjoyed it.

The little chap saw us back to our hotel, and was with us next morning after breakfast. He was the sort of man who got on board about two in the afternoon, but on my advice he did not see us off. I told him that, being British subjects and rebels at that, we did not want to run any risks on the way. He was a Berliner and came up and searched us. But Peter took twenty pounds off him for travelling expenses, it being his rule never to miss an opportunity of spoiling the Egyptians.

As we were dropping down the Tagus we passed under the bridge of Alcantara.

"I met Sloggett in the street this morning," said Peter, "and he told me a little German man had been off in a boat at day-break looking up the passenger list. You was a right notion of yours, Cornelius. I am glad to see you going among Germans. They are careful people whom it is a pleasure to meet."

To be Continued

Green mantle

Another thrilling installment of this great story of the secret service

By JOHN BUCHAN

THE STORY: Major Richard Hannay, a young Englishman, being wounded in the Great War, is called to the War Office and given a job in the secret service.

The Germans, he is told, are plotting to capture the Moskovia, a passenger ship of the East, which would travel for the Allies to India and elsewhere. Hannay is to learn details of this plot. The only clue he is given is a paper bearing the words "Kasrulin," "camer," and "I.L." which an agent in the East brought in but could not explain before he was killed.

Hannay is to have two companions—Honorable Ludovic Arbuthnot, commonly called Sandy; and John S. Blenkiron, a rich American who has helped the Allies in the United States. They are to reach Constantinople by sea and land, and it is hoped that when they meet one of them will have secured the desired information. It is now November 17, and they must reach their objective by January 17.

Hannay proceeds to Lisbon and there meets an old pro-British friend, Peter Pienaar, from South Africa. Hannay has adopted the name Cornelius Brundt, and he and Pienaar plan to enter Germany together as *pro-German Boers*.

They accept expensive money from a German agent in Lisbon, and board a ship for Rotterdam en route to Germany.

THE GERMANS, as Peter said, are a careful people. A man met us on the quay at Rotterdam. I was a bit afraid that something might have turned up in Lisbon to discredit us, and that our little friend might have warned his pals by telegram. But apparently all was serene.

Peter and I made our way carefully on the voyage. We had talked nothing but Dutch, and had kept up between ourselves the rôle of Marta's men, which Peter said was the only way to play a part well. Upon my soul, before we got to Holland I was not very clear in my own mind what I should do best. Instead the danger was that the other side of my mind, which should be busy with the great problem, would get atrophied, and that I should soon be mentally on a par with the ordinary backwoods desperado. We had agreed that it would be best to get into Germany, and then, while the ship was at a quay, tell us of a train at Rotterdam, we decided to take it.

I had another fit of cold feet before we got over the frontier. At the station there was a King's messenger whom I had seen in France, and a war correspondent who had been trutling round our part of the front before Loos. I heard a woman speak pretty clearly, while the King's messenger, a burly Dutch fellow, doffed like a last a small crown. There were copies of the English papers for sale, and English cheap editions. I felt pretty bad about the whole business, and



Stumm's great hands clutched my shoulders. "Now go! Futsch! And remember I am your master."

wondered if I should ever see those homely sights again.

But the mood passed when the train started. It was a clear blowing day, and as we crawled through the flat pastures of Holland my time was taken up answering Peter's questions. He had never been in Europe before, and formed a high opinion of the farmers. He said he reckoned that the average farmer was a sleepy old fellow, but that in talk when we reached the frontier station and jolted over a canal bridge into Germany.

I had expected a big barricade with barbed wire and entrenchments. But there was nothing to see on the German side but half a dozen sentries in the field-grey I had hunted at Loos. An under officer, with the black-and-gold button of the Landsturm, beckoned us out of the train, and we were despatched to a large building which here bore a large stone bourse. They took us two at a time into an inner room for examination. I had explained to Peter all about this formality, but I was glad we went in together, for they made us strip to the skin, and I had to curse him pretty seriously to make him quiet. The men who did this were not bad-looking fellows, but they were strict. They took down a list of all we had in our pockets and bags, and all the details from the passports the Rotterdam agent had given us.

We were dressing when a man in a lieutenant's uniform came in with a paper in his hand. He was a fresh-faced lad of twenty, with short-sighted, spectacled eyes.

"Herr Beaufit," he called out.

I nodded.

"And this is Herr Pienaar?" he asked in Dutch.

He saluted. "Gentlemen, I apologize. I am late because of the absence of the Herr Commandant's motor car. Had I been in time, I would have been here to see you go through this ceremony. We have been advised of your coming, and I am instructed to attend you on your journey. The train for Berlin leaves in half an hour. Pray do me the honor to join me in a hook."

With a feeling of distaste we strolled out of the ordinary restaurant and followed the lieutenant to the station restaurant. He plunged at once into conversation, talking the Dutch of Holland, which Peter, who had forgotten his schooldays, found a bit hard to follow. He was unfit for active service because of his eyes and a weak heart, but he was a desperate fighter in that study requiring the use of wits in Germany. He had picked up the French and the Russians whenever she cared, but she was aiming at getting all the Middle East in her hands first, so that she could come out conqueror with the practical control of half the world.

"Your friends the English," he said grinning. "will come last. When we have starved them and destroyed their commerce with our under-sea boats we will show them what our navy can do. For a year they have been wasting their time in head and politics, and we have been building great ships and fortresses. My cousin at Kiel—and he looked over his shoulder.

But we never heard about that cousin at Kiel. A short sunburnt man came in and our friend sprang up and saluted, clicking his heels like a pair of toots.

These are the South African Dutch, Herr Captain," he said.

THE newcomer looked us over with bright intelligent eyes, and started questions. "What is your name?" It was well that we had had some pains with our story, for this man had been years in German South West, and knew every mile of the borderland from Kiel to the Rhine, and both Peter and I thought we remembered hearing him spoken of.

I am thankful to say that we both showed up pretty well. Peter had tried to perfection, not pitching it too high, and asking me now and then for a name or to verify some detail. Captain Zorn looked satisfied.

"You are the right kind of fellows," he said. "But remember"—and he beat his brows on us—"we do not understand slimes in this land. If you are honest you will be safe. If you are not, you dare to play a double game you will be shot like dogs. Your race has produced over many traitors for my taste."

"I ask no reward," I said. "We are not Germans or Germany's slaves. But as long as the fights against

England we will fight for her."

"Bold words," he said; "but you must know how your stiff necks to discipline first. Discipline has been the weak point of you Boers, and you have suffered for it. You are no more a nation. In Germany you put discipline into your head and into your heart. Come with us. Off with you now. Your train starts in three minutes. We will see what von Stumm will make of you."



"You know German?" Stumm asked sharply. "A dozen words," I said coolly. "Enough to ask for my dinner."

the telephone. He began by being dictatorial, then he seemed to be switched on to higher authorities, for he grew more polite, and at the end he fairly crawled. He made some remark about the weather, and then said, "I wonder if we would see some fellow whose title he could not translate into Dutch. I judge he was a great swell, for his voice became reverential at the mention of him."

HE TOOK US for a walk that morning after Peter and I had attended to our toilets. We were an odd pair of scallywags to look at, but as South African as a wait-a-bit horse. Both of us had ready-made tweed suits, grey flannel shirts with flannel collars, and felt hats with broad brims than they like in Europe. I had strong nailed brown boots. Peter's pair of tweeds were almost as bad, although Peter's effect and which made him look like a Chinese lady. He had a scarlet satin tie which he could hear a mile off. My beard had grown to quite a respectable length, and I trimmed it like General Smuts'. Peter's was the kind of loose flapping thing the *taasheur* loves, which means a shaved and powdered head once in a blue moon. I must say we were pretty solid pair. And South African would have set us down as a poor from the back veld who had bought a suit of clothes in the nearest store, and his cousin from some one-horse dorp who had been to school and thought himself the Devil of a fellow. We fairly shamed the sub-continent with the way we looked at it.

It was a fine morning after the rain, and we wandered about in the streets for a couple of hours. They were busy enough, and the shops looked rich and bright with their Christmas goods, and one big store where I went to buy a pocketknife was packed with customers. One didn't see many Englishmen, but there were a few here and there, some German-looking uniforms were everywhere, but their wives generally looked like dairymaids or office fellows. We had a glimpse of the squat building which housed the General Staff and took off our hats to it. Then we strolled the Marimant, and I saw a few what looked like half-baked children behind old Tipper's windows. The captain gave me an impression of ugly cleanliness and a sort of dreary effectiveness. And yet I found it depressing—more depressing than London. I don't know how to put it, but the whole big concern seemed to have no soul in it, to be just a big factory instead of a city. The houses were very like the houses in London, but you decorate its front and plant rose bushes all round it. The place depressed and yet cheered me. It somehow made the German people seem smaller.

At three o'clock the lieutenant took us to a plain white building in a side street with sentries at the door. A young Staff officer met us and made us wait for five minutes in an anteroom. Then we were ushered into a big room with a

That fellow gave me the best "feel" of any German I had yet met. He was a white man and I could have worked with him. I liked his stiff chin and steady blue eyes.

My chief reservation of our journey to Berlin was its communists. The special radio lieutenant fell silent, and for the most part we had the carriage to ourselves. Now and again a soldier on leave would drop in, most of them tired men with heavy eyes. No wonder, poor devils, for they were coming back from the Year of the Young Communist, which would be good to remember, but which of course I knew no German and the conversation I overheard did not signify much. It was mostly about regimental details, though one chap, who was in better spirits than the rest, observed that this was the last Christmas of misery, and that next year he would be holding a homecoming party.

The winter day was short, and most of the journey was made in the dark. I could see from the window the lights of little villages, and now and then the blare of ironworks and forges. We stopped at a town for dinner, where the platform was covered with drooping, hanging lanterns. We saw no signs of any search of food, and as the English menu we wrote about. We had an excellent dinner at the station restaurant, which, with a bottle of white wine, cost just three shillings apiece. The bread, to be sure, was poor, but I can put up with the absence of bread if I get a juicy fillet of beef and no good vegetables as will see in the Savoy.

A few hours later we were in Berlin, and I lay in our sleep, but I need have had no fear, for our escort slumbered like a hog with his mouth wide open. As we roared through the darkness I kept pinching myself to make me feel that I was in the enemy's land on a wild mission. The rain came on, and the pantomime of driving in the dark was like a lightning storm from the way we streaked along. As we went eastward the lighting seemed to grow more generous. After the murk of London it was queer to slip through garish stations with a hundred lights glowing, and to see long lines of lamps running to the horizon. Peter dropped off early, but I kept

awake till midnight, trying to focus thoughts that persistently strayed. Then I, too, fell asleep, and did not wake till morning, when we ran into a great busy terminus as bright as midday. It was the easiest and most unsuspecting journey I ever

The lieutenant stretched himself and smoothed his rumpled uniform. We carried our scanty luggage to a nearby hotel, and then started for our porters. Our escort gave the address of some hotel and we rumbled out into brightly lit empty streets.

"A mighty deep," said Peter. "Or is that the Germans are a great people?"

The lieutenant nodded goodhumoredly.

"The greatest people on earth," he said, "as their enemies will soon bear witness."



Illustrated by
DUDLEY GLYNNE
SUMMERS

polished floor on which Peter nearly sat down. There was a log fire burning, and seated at a table was a little man in spectacles with his hair brushed back from his brow like a popular violinist. He was his boss, for the lieutenant saluted him and announced our names. Then he disappeared, and the man at the table motioned us to sit down in two chairs before him.

"Her Brandt and Herr Plemann?" he asked, looking over his glasses.

But it was the other man that caught my eye. He stood with his back to the fire leaning his back on the mantelpiece. He was a tall man, mustached, a fellow, and a half foot if he was an inch, with shoulders on him like a shorthorn bull. He was in uniform, and the black-and-white ribbons of the Iron Cross showed at a buttonhole. His tunic was all wrinkled and strained as if it could scarcely contain his huge chest, and his moustache was deeply shadowed under his nose. That must have had the length of a gorilla's.

He had a great, lazy, smiling face, with a square chin which stuck out beyond the rest. His brows retreated and the stubby back of his head ran forward to meet it, while his neck below bulged out over his collar. His head was exactly the shape of a gorilla's.

He stared at me with his small bright eyes and I stared back. I had struck something I had been looking for for a long time, and till that moment I wasn't sure that it existed. Here was the German of caricature, the real German, the fellow we were up against. He was as hideous as a hippopotamus, but effective. Every bristle on his odd head was effective.

The man at the table was speaking. I took him to be a civilian official of sorts, pretty high up from his surroundings, perhaps an Under-Secretary. His Dutch was slow and careful, but good, too good for Peter. He had a paper before him which was addressed to me and from it. They did not amount to much, being pretty well a repetition of those Zorn had asked us at the frontier. I answered fluently, for I had all our lies by heart.

Then the man on the hearthring broke in. "It is to them, Excellency," he said in German. "You are too academic for these outland swine."

He began in the *taut*, with the thick guttural accent that you get in German South West.

He flung himself on a chair, put his elbows on the table, and thrust his face forward.

"You have come from a damned muddled show. If I had Maritz in my power I would have him flogged at a wagon's wheel, and then I would have him go to the gallows, and then I would flog them away. We could have raised a race that would have burned the English into the sea, and for lack of fuel let it die down. Then they try to fan it when the ashes are cold."

He rolled a paper pellet and flicked it into the air. "That boy Seitz is a fool, a stupid general," he said, "and of all you Dutch. As slow as a fat elephant and as greeedy as an ostrich."

We looked very glib and sullen.

"A pair of dumb dogs," he cried. "A thousand Brandenburger would have won in a fortnight. Seitz hadn't much to boast of, mostly clerks and farmers and half-castes, and no chisel and mallet. He is a good general, but it took Botha and Smuts and a dozen generals to hand him down. But Maritz?"

His scorn came like a gust of wind.

"Maritz did all the fighting there," said Peter sullenly. "At any rate he wasn't afraid of the sight of kloki like you."

"Maybe he isn't," said the giant in a crooning voice: "maybe he had his reasons for that. You Dutchmen have always a feather-bed to fall on. You can always turn traitor. Maritz now calls himself Robinson, and has a pension from his friend Botha."

"That," said Peter, "is a very damned lie."

"I asked for information," said Stumm with a sudden

and these were for certain the opinions that he then held. "No," he said, "that is true, *baas*."

"Then what in God's name can you do?" shouted Stumm. Peter mumbled some foolishness about nobbling Anglo-Germany and starting a revolution among the natives. Stumm flung up his arms and cursed, and the Under-Secretary laughed.

It was high time for me to chip in. I was beginning to see the kind of fellow this Stumm was, and as he talked I thought of my mission, which had got overlaid by my Boer. I had looked at it in my mind but had not seen it clearly. "Let me tell you, I *boer*." "My friend is a great hunter, but he fights better than he talks. He is no politician. You speak truth. South Africa is a closed door for the present, and the key to it is elsewhere. Here in Europe, and in the East, and in other parts of Africa. We have come to help you to find the key."

STUMM was listening. "Go on, my little Boer. It will be a new thing to hear a *baasboer* on world politics."

"You are fighting," I said, "in East Africa; and soon you will be fighting in greater Africa. The English are the world with little experience. I do not know where the places are, though I read of them in the papers. But I know my Africa. You want to beat them here in Europe and on the seas. Therefore, like wise generals, you try to divide them and have them scattered throughout the globe while you stick to your *baasboer*."

"A second Falstaff," said Stumm, laughing.

"Well, England will not let East Africa go. She fears for Egypt and she fears too for India. If you press her there she will send armies and more armies till she is so weak in Europe that a child can crush her. That is England's way. She will not let her *boer* go, and when she has got him she will let him go. So I see press and still press there, destroy the railway to the Lakes, burn her capital, pen up every Englishman in Mombasa island. At this moment it is worth for you a thousand Damaraland."

The man was really interested and the Under-Secretary, too, pricked up his ears.



It was touch and go but I jabbered excited Dutch at Dolly and he played his part well, smiling as if he were amused by the antics of a monkey.

politeness. "But that is all past and done with. Maritz matters no more than your old Cronjes and Krugers. The show is over, and you are looking for safety. For a new master perhaps. Who can bring? Who can bring?"

"What can you offer? You and your Dutch are lying in the dust with the yoke on your necks. The Pretoria lawyers have talked you round. You are not men enough to stand in a *boer* on the wall."

"South Africa is colored green. Not red for the English, or yellow for the Germans. Some day it will be yellow, but for a little it will be green—the color of neutrals, of nothing, of boys and young ladies and chickpeas."

I heard a noise and he was playing at.

Then he fixed his eyes on Peter. "What do you come here for? The game's up in your own country. What can you offer us Germans? If we gave you ten million marks and sent you back you could do nothing. Stir up a village now, that's all. Start a policeman. South Africa is counted out in this war."

"It can be done," said the former.

"It can be done," I said quietly. "We two are here to do it."

"We can keep our territory," said the former: "but as for pressing, how the devil are we to press?" The accused English held the sea. We cannot ship men or guns there. South are the Portuguese and west the Belgians. You cannot move a mass without a lever."

"I am ready for you," I said.

"Then show it me," he cried.

I looked at the door to see that it was shut, as if what I had to say was very secret.

"You need men, and the men are walking. They are black, but they are the stuff of warriors. All round your borders you have the remains of great fighting tribes, the Angoni, the Massai, the Mambanezi, and above them the Sotho of the north, and the dweller on the Upper Nile. The British took the black tribes and made do so well. But to get recruits is not enough. You must set whole nations moving, as the Zulu under Tshaka flowed over South Africa."

"It cannot be done," said the former.

"It can be done," I said quietly. "We two are here to do it."

This kind of talk was silly difficult for me, chiefly because of Stumm's grilles in German to the official. I had above all things to get the credit of knowing no German, and if you understand a language well, it is not very easy when you are interrupted not to show that you know it, either by a

"You have heard of me," he said. "I am the Colonel von Stumm who fought the Hereros."

Peter pricked up his ears. "Ja, haas, you cut off the chief Bavaria's head and sent it in pickle about the country. I have seen it."

The big man laughed. "You see I am not forgotten," he said to his friend, and then to us: "So I treat my enemies and so will Germany treat hers. You, too, if you treat me by a fraction of an inch." And he laughed loud again.

There was something horrible in that boisterousness. Peter was watching him from under his eyelids, as I have seen him watch a lion about to charge.

direct answer, or by referring to the interruption in what you say next. I had to be always on my guard, and yet it was up to me to be very persuasive and convince these fellows that I would be useful. Somehow or other I had to get into their confidence.

"I have been for years up and down in Africa—Uganda, the Congo and the Upper Nile. I know the ways of the Kaffir as no Englishman does. We Afrikanders see into the black man's heart, and though he may hate us he does our will. You Germans are like the English, you are too big folk to understand the small. Give me a try. 'Educate,' say the English. The black man obeys and puts away his gods, but he worships them all the time in his soul. We must get his gods out our side, and then he will move. He will move like the wind, as do as John Lepanta did with Shaka's rechabites."

"That's all in the air," said Stumm, but he did not laugh.

"It is sober common sense," I said. "But you must begin at the right end. First find the road that the arabs are using, for you—the Musulmans of Somaliland and the Abyssinian border and the Blue and White Nile. They would be like dried grasses to catch fire if you used the flint and steel of their religion. Look what the English sailors did in a crack of the desert, and only a dozen villages. Once get the flames going and they will lick up the pagans of the West and South. That is the way of Africa. How many thousands, think you, were the Mahdi's army? You never heard of the Prophet till they saw the black flags of the Emirs going into battle?"

Stumm was smiling. He turned his face to the official and spoke with his hand over his mouth, but I caught his words. They were: "This is the man for Hida." The other pursed his lips and looked a little scared.

STUMM rang a bell and the lieutenant came in and clicked his heels. He nodded toward me and the man away with you. We have done with him. The other fellow will follow presently."

Peter went out with a puzzled face and Stumm turned to me.

"You are a dreamer, Brandt," he said. "But I will not reward you on that account. Deans sometimes come true, when an army follows the visionary. But who is going to kindle the flame?"

"You," I said. "What the devil do you mean?"

"The Devil, you mean. You are the greatest people in the world. You have already half the Musulman lands in your power. It is for you to show us how to kindle a holy war, for clearly you have the secret of it. Never fear that we will carry out your order."

"We have no secret," he said shortly, and glared at the official, who stared out of the window.

I dropped my jaw and looked the picture of disappointment. "I do not believe you," I said slowly. "You play a game with me. I have not come six thousand miles to be made a fool of."

"Discipline!" Stumm cried. "This is none of your ragged commandos." In two strides he was above me and had lifted me out of my seat. His hands gripped my shoulders, and his thumbs gouged my armpits. I felt as if I were in the grip of a big ape. Then very slowly he shook me so that my teeth seemed loosened and my head swam. He let me go and I dropped limply back in the chair.

"Now, go! Faust! And remember that I am your master. I, Ulrich von Stumm, who owns you as a Kaffir owns his mongrel. Germany may have some use for you, my friend, when you fear me as you never feared your God."

As I stood dizzily away the big man was smiling in his horribleness and that little official was blinking and smiling, too. I had struck a dashed queer country, so queer that I had had time to remember that for the first time in my life I had been born without a soul. And now I knew it I really choked with anger. But that I had known Heaven I had shown no temper, for I remembered my mission. Luck seemed to have brought me into useful company.

NEXT MORNING there was a touch of frost in the air, and the sun was still which stirred my blood and put me in my spirits. I forgot my precarious position and the long road I had still to travel. I came down to breakfast in great form, to find Peter's even temper badly ruffled. He had remembered Stumm's last night and didn't like the memory; this he muttered to me as we rubbed shoulders at the dining-room door. We got no opportunity for private talk. The lieutenant was with us all the time, and at night we were locked in our rooms. Peter discovered this morning trying to get out to find matches, for he had the bad habit of smoking in bed.

Our guide started on the telephone, and announced that we were to be taken to see a prisoners' camp. In the afternoon I was to go somewhere with the others, but the morning was for sightseeing. "You will see," he told us, "how merciful is a great people. You will also see some of the hated English in our power. That will delight you. They are the torturers."

We drove in a taxi through the suburbs and then over a stretch of flat market-garden-like country to a low rise of wooded hills. After an hour's ride we entered the gate of what looked like a big reformatory or hospital. There were sentries at the gate and massive concentric circles of barbed wire through which we passed under an arch that was let down like a portcullis at nightfall. The lieutenant showed his permit, and we were in the lot across—brick-paved yard and marched through a lot more sentries to the office of the commandant.

He was away from home, and we were welcomed by his deputy, a pale young man with a hairless mouth. He was introduced in German which our guide translated into Dutch, and a lot of elegant speeches about how Germany was foremost in humanity as well as in martial value. Then they stood stiffly, looking at each other, and we formed a procession for a tour of inspection. There were two doctors, both middle-looking men in spectacles, and a couple of warders—under-officers of the good old ballyhooing sort I knew well. That was the comment which kept the German Army alive. Her men were used to being told off on the march; no more were the officers, even in crack corps like the Guards and the Brandenburgers; but they seemed to have an inexhaustible supply of hard, competent C.O.'s.

We made our way through washrooms, the recreation ground, the kitchen, hospital—the place was entirely for officers, and I expect it was a show place. Some American visitors were there, and half the women I saw there were true there were some pretty gaudy prissies away in South and East Germany.

I didn't half like the business. To be a prisoner has always seemed to me about the worst thing that could happen to a man. The German prisoners were not given me a bad feeling inside, whereas I looked at dead Boches with nothing but satisfaction. Besides, there was the off-chance that I might be recognized. So I kept very much in the shadow, whenever we passed anybody in the prisoners.

The few we met passed us incuriously. They saluted the deputy-commandant, but scarcely wanted a glance on us. No doubt they thought we were impulsive Germans come to see the show. They looked kindly fit, but a little puffy about the eyes, like men who get too little exercise. They seemed thin too. I expect the food, for all the commandant's talk, was nothing to boast of. In one room people were writing letters. It was a bit dark with the time of day, so to write and the windows were shut so that the atmosphere here was a cold frost. In another room a fellow was lecturing on something to a dozen hearers and drawing figures on a blackboard. Some old white khaki shirts were draped over any old chair that could pick up, and most wore greatcoats. Your blood gets thin when you have nothing to do but hope against hope and think of your pals and the cold against.

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I WAS moving along, listening with half an ear to the rattle of the dog's harness, when I pinched myself into what might have been the end of my misery. We were going through a sort of convalescent room, where people were sitting who had been in hospital. It was a big place, a little warmer than the tunnel, but still abominably fogy. There were about half a dozen men in the room, reading and playing games. They looked at us with half-lustre eyes for a moment, and then returned to their occupations. Being convalescents I suppose they were not expected to get up and salute.

All but one, who was playing *Patience* at a little table by which we passed, was very bad about it. I stopped to have a look at the fellow, locked away in an infernal German hole when they might have been giving the Boche his deserts at the front. The commandant went first with Peter, who had developed a great interest in private life. Then he went to the doctor, then a corner of waiting room, and then the second doctor and myself. I was absent-minded at the moment and was lost in the queue.

The *Patience*-player suddenly looked up and said, "I'm sorry, I'm afraid I can't speak. The doctor was a yard ahead of me."

I stumbled and spilled his cards on the floor. Then I kneeled to pick them up and gripped his knee. His head bent to help me and I smoke low in his ear. "I'm Hannay all right. For heaven's sake don't think I'm eyeing you as a patient."

The doctor had turned to see what was the matter. I got a few more words in. "Cheer up, old man. We're winning hands down."

Then I began to talk excited Dutch and finished the collection of the cards. Dolly was playing his part well, smiling as he was amused by the antics of a monkey. The others were coming back, the deputy-commandant with angry light in his dull eyes. "Coming to the prisoners is forbidden," he shouted.

I looked blankly at him till the lieutenant translated.

"What kind of fellow is he?" said Dolly in English. "He's the dog, he's the game and then jabbers High-Dutch at me."

Officially I knew English, and that speech of Dolly's gave me my cue. I pretended to be very angry with the very damned Englishman, and out of the corner of my eye the deputy-commandant grumbled like a sick jackal. After that I had to act a bit. The last place we visited was the close-confinement part where prisoners were kept as a punishment for some breach of discipline. They looked cheery enough, but I pretended to glower over the sight, and said so to the lieutenant, who passed it on to the others. I have rarely felt such a cat.

On the way home the lieutenant discussed the day's show with the other prison camps, for at one time he had been on duty at Ruhleben. Peter, who had been in quod more than once in his life, was deeply interested and kept on questioning him. Among other things he told me that they often got back prisoners among the rest, who acted as spies. If any plot to escape was hatched these fellows got into it and encouraged it. They never interfered till the attempt was actually made and then they had the right to say it was nothing the Boche liked so much as an excuse for sending a poor devil to "solitary."

THAT AFTERNOON Peter and I separated and I left behind with the lieutenant and I was sent off to the station with my bag in the company of a Landsturm sergeant. Peter was very cross, and I didn't care for the look of things; but I brightened up when I heard I was going somewhere with Stumm. If he wanted to see me again he must think me of some use, and if he was

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going to use me he was bound to let me into his game. I liked Stumm about as much as a dog likes a scorpion, but I hampered for his society.

At the station platform, where the commandant of the Landsturm saved me all trouble about tickets, I could not see my companion. I stood waiting, while a great crowd, mostly of soldiers, swayed past me and filled all the front of the station. An old man stepped to me gruffly and told me to stand aside before a wooden rail. I obeyed, and suddenly found Stumm's eyes looking down at me.

"You know German?" he asked sharply. "A dozen words," I said carelessly. "I've been a Windusk and learned enough to act for my master. Peter—my friend—speaks it a bit."

"So," said Stumm. "Well, get into the carriage. Not that one! There, thickhead!" I said, "I will sit in it, but the door was locked behind me. The precaution was needless, for the sight of Stumm's profile at the platform end would have kept the most brazen. I wondered if I had woken up his suspicions. I must be on my guard. I am not a sign of weakness, but I suddenly tried me in German, and that wouldn't be easy, for I knew it as well as I knew Dutch.

We moved into the country, but the winter was there with frost, and I was buying with papers and let me alone. I read a notice that one was forbidden to smoke, so to show my ignorance of German I pulled out my pipe. Stumm raised his head, saw me, and his face turned grey. He made me put it away, as if he were an old lady that disliked the smell of tobacco.

In half an hour I got very bored, for I had nothing to read and my pipe was *verboten*. People passed now and then in the corridor, but I did not notice them. I saw a man, then saw the big figure in uniform and thought he was the dux of a Staff swell who wanted soldiers. I thought of stretching my legs in the corridor, and was just getting up to do it when somebody slid the door back and a big figure blocked the light.

He was wearing a heavy sweater and a green flat hat. He saluted Stumm, who looked up angrily, and smiled pleasantly on us both. "Say, gentlemen," he said, "have you seen the Boche? An old man spoke to me gruffly and told me to stand aside before a wooden rail. I obeyed, and suddenly found Stumm's eyes looking down at me.

Stumm had risen with a braw of wrath, and looked over the rail. Then he seemed to hault and call himself, and the other's face broke into a friendly grin.

"Why, it's Colored Stumm," he cried. (He pronounced it like the first syllable in "stomach.") "Very good to meet you again, sir. I have the honor to present your acquaintance at our Embassy. I reckon Ambassador Gerard didn't cotton to our conversation that night." And the newcomer pumpled himself down in the corner carriage.

I had been pretty certain I would run across Bleakness somewhere in Germany, but I didn't think it would be so soon. There he sat staring at me with his full uneasiness eyes, reciting out platitudes to Stumm, who was not in the least moved by his effort to civil. I looked moody and suspicious, which I took to be the right line.

"Things are getting a bit dead at Salomon," said Mr. Blenkiron by way of a conversational opening.

Stumm pointed to a notice which warned officers to refrain from discussing military operations with mixed company in a railway carriage.

"Sorry," said Blenkiron. "I can't read the German language of yours. But I reckon that that notice to trespassers, whatever it signifies, doesn't apply to you and me. I take it this gentleman is in your party."

I sat and scowled, fixing the American with suspicious eyes.

"The colored," said Stumm. "South African Dutch, and he is not happy," for he did not like to hear English spoken.

"We'll shake on that," said Blenkiron cordially. "But who said I spoke English? It's good American. Cheer up, friend, for it isn't the call that makes the big wagtail, as

they say out west in my country. I hate John Bull worse than a poison rattle. The colonel can tell you that."

I said, "I know he was but at that moment we slowed down at a station and Stumm got up to leave. 'Good day to you, Herr Blenkiron,' he cried over his shoulder. 'If you consider your comfort, don't talk English to me again, sir.' That's the difference between the different breeds."

I followed him in a hurry, but was recalled by Blenkiron's voice.

"Stay, friend," he shouted, "you've left your grip and I he handed my bag from his shoulder to me. I saw the bag at the sight of recognition, and the last I saw of him was sitting sunk in a corner with his head on his chest as if he were going to sleep. He was a man who kept his wife well."

THESE WAS a motor car waiting—one of the grey military kind—and we started at a terrific pace over bad forest roads. Stumm had put away his papers in a portfolio, and flung me a few sentences on the way.

"I have not made up my mind about you, Brandt," he announced. "You may be a fool, or a knave or a good man. If you are a knave, we will shoot you."

"And if I am a fool?" I asked.

"You will be welcome car-fodder," he said.

"You cannot do that unless I consent," I said.

"Can't we?" he said, smiling wickedly. "People like us are not to be trifled with. Technically you are a rebel, and the British, if you go to them, will hang you, supposing they have any sense. You are in our power, my friend, to do precisely what we like with you."

He was silent for a second, and then he said meditatively:

"But I don't think you are a fool. You may be a sounder. Some kinds of scoundrels are useful. Other kinds are strong enough with a rope. Of that we shall know more soon."

"And if I am a good man?"

"You will be given a chance to serve Germany, the proudest privilege a mortal can have."

"The strange man said this with a ringing sincerity in his voice that impressed me."

The car swung out from the trees into a park bounded with saplings, and in the twilight I saw before me a big high house like an overgrown Swiss chalet. There was a kind of terrace with a stone balustrade, and a terrace with battlements which looked as if they were made of stucco. We drove up at a Gothic front door, where a thin middle-aged man in a dark uniform jingled the keys.

As we moved up the lighted hall I got a good look at our host. He was very lean and brown, with the stoop in the shoulder that ones gets from constantly on horseback. He had untidy grizzled hair and a ragged beard, and a pair of pleasant, short-sighted brown eyes.

"Welcome, my colonel," he said. "Is this the friend you spoke of?"

"This is the Dutchman," said Stumm. "His name is Brandt, Brandt, you see before you. He is from Germany."

I knew the course, of course; there weren't many in my profession that didn't. He was one of the biggest railway engineers in the world, the man who had built the Bagdad and Suez railroads and the Tigris lines in German East Africa. I supposed he was about the greatest living authority on tropical construction. He knew the East and he knew Africa; clearly he had been brought down for him to pass me through my paces.

A tall, thin, dark-skinned man came to my room, which had a bare polished floor, a stone, and windows that, unlike most of the German kind I had sampled, seemed made to open. When I had washed I descended to the hall which was hung round with trophies of travel. Daggers, Indian shields, Malai shields and one or two good buffalo heads. Presently a bell was rung. Stumm appeared with his host, and we went in to supper.

I was jolly hungry and would have made a good meal if I had a stomach, but had to keep jogging my wits. The other two talked in

German, and when a question was put to me Stumm translated. The first thing I had to do was to pretend I didn't know German and look listlessly round the room while they were talking. For then the second was to miss not a word, for then the third was to answer the question. The third was to be ready with a question of my own, and to show in the answering that I had not followed the previous conversation. Likewise I must not prove myself a fool in these answers, for I had to convince them that I was not a fool. This was done, and I felt like a witness in the box under a stiff cross-examination, or a man trying to play three games of chess at once.

I heard Stumm tell thegist of my plan. The engineer shook his head.

"Too late," he said. "It should have been done at the beginning. We neglected Africa. You know the reason why."

Stumm laughed. "The von Eismen! Perhaps, but her charm works well enough."

Gaudian glanced toward me while I was busy with the orange juice. "I have much to tell you of that. But it can wait. Your friend is right in one thing. Uganda is a vital spot for the English, and a blow there will make their whole fabric shiver. But how can we strike? They have still the coast, and our supplies grow daily smaller."

"With the English we have no friends, but have we used all the local resources? That is what I cannot satisfy myself about. Zimmerman says we have, but Tressler thinks differently, and now we have this fellow coming out of the void with a story which confirms my doubt. He seems to know his job. You try him."

THEHEREUPON Gaudian set about questioning me, and his questions were very thorough. I knew just what I had to say to get through, but I think I got out with credit. You see I have a capacious memory, and in my time I had met scores of hunters and pioneers and listened to their yarns, so I could pretend to know of a place even when I had never been there. I had once been on the point of undertaking a job up Tanganyika way, and I had got up that country-side pretty accurately.

"You say that with our help you can make trouble for the British on the three borders," Gaudian asked at length.

"I can spread the fire if someone else will kindle it," I said.

"But there are thousands of tribes with no affinities."

"They are all African. You can bear me out on that. They are all the same silly thing—they can go mad, and the madness of one infects the others. The English know this well enough."

"Where would you start the fire?" he asked.

"Where the fuel is dry. I went in the North among the Mussulman peoples. But there you must help me. I know nothing about Islam, and I gather that you do."

"Why?" he asked.

"Because of what you have done already."

I answered.

Stumm had translated all this time, and had given the sense of my words very fairly. But with my last answer he took liberties. What he gave was: "Because the Duranum thinks that the English are not dealing with the Moslem world." Then, lowering his voice and raising his eyebrows, he said some word like "Uhmensch!"

The other looked with a quick glance of apprehension at me, and I had better concentrate on the private. His Cigar-box said, "If Herr Brandt will forgive us, we will leave him for a little to entertain himself." He pushed the cigar-box toward me and the two got up and left the room.

I pulled my chair up to the stove, and would have liked to drop off to sleep, the tension at the table having made me very tired. I was accepted by these men for exactly what I professed to be. Stumm might suspect me of being a rascal, but all the same I was skating on thin ice. I had to sink myself utterly in the part, for if I did I would get no good out of being there. I had to keep my wits going all the time, and join the appearance and manners of a back-ved Boer with

the mentality of a British intelligence-officer. Any moment the two parts might clash and I would be faced with the most alert and deadly suspicion.

There would be no mercy from Stumm. That large man was beginning to fascinate me, and I could not resist him. Gaudian was clearly a good fellow, a white man and a gentleman. I could have worked with him, for he belonged to my own totem. But the other was an incarnation of all that makes Germany detested, and yet he wasn't altogether bad. I could see him as a German. I didn't like admiring him. I noticed he neither smoked nor drank. His grossness was apparently not in the way of fleshly appetites. Cruelty, from all I had heard of him in German South West, was his hobby; but he was not a sadist. He was a good fellow, and he had that kind of crazy patriotism which becomes a religion. I wondered why he had not some high command in the field, for he had had the name of a good soldier. But probably he was a big man in his own little empire, was a good Under-Secretary fellow had mentioned the day before to the Under-Secretary. There was not much in that. She was probably some minister's or ambassador's wife who had a finger in high politics. I could have caught the word "Bleibensdorf" had I expected to get to Gaudian, which made him start and look askance at me! But I had only heard a gurgle of something like "Uhmensch!" which wasn't any German word that I knew.

The heat put me into a half-dose and I began to wonder what the other people were doing. Where had Bleibensdorf been posting to in that train, and what was he up to at this moment? He had been hobnobbing with ambassadors and swells—I wondered if he had found out my anything. What was Peter doing? I fervently hoped he was saving himself, for I doubted if Peter had really tumbled to the delicacy of our job. Where was Sandy, too? As like as not bucketing in the hold of some Greek coaster in the Aegean. Then I thought of my battalion in the field, and of the English in the hills and La Bassee, hammering at the Boche, while I was 500 miles or so inside the Boche frontier.

IT WAS a comic reflection, so comic that it was almost painful. After trying again to find a way of stoking that stove, for it was a cold night, I got up and walked about the room. There were portraits of two decent old fellows, probably Gaudian's parents. There were enlarging photographs, too, of engineers, sailors, and the like picture of Bismarck. And close to the stove there was a case of maps mounted on rollers.

I pulled out one at random. It was a geological map of Germany, and with some trouble I found out where I was. I was an enormous distance from my goal, and moreover I was clean off the road to the East. To go to Bavaria I must first go to Bavaria and then into Austria. I noticed the Danube flowing eastward and remembered that that was our route to Constantinople.

Then I took another map. This one covered a big area, all Europe from the Rhine and as far east as Persia. I guessed that it was meant to show the Bagdad railway and the through routes from Germany to Mesopotamia. There were markings on the map, and I looked at them. I saw there were dates scribbled in blue pencil, as if to denote the stages of a journey. The dates began in Europe, and continued right on into Asia Minor and then south to Syria.

For a moment I was disconcerted, for I thought I had fallen by accident on the case I wanted. But I never got that map examined. I heard footsteps in the corridor, and very gently I let the map roll up and

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turned away. When the door opened I was bending over the stove trying to get a light for my pipe.

It was Stumm, his Gauleiter.

On our way there he put a kindly hand on my shoulder. I think he was moved by Stumm's manner, in which he was gentle, and that he was my friend, and he had no other language than a pat on the shoulder.

The soldier was in his old position with his elbows on the mantelpiece and his formidable great jaw stuck out.

"Listen to me," he said. "Herr Gauland and I are neither friends nor foes. You may be a scoundrel, in which case you will be in the devil of a mess and have yourself to thank for it. If you are a rogue you will have little scope for roguery. We will see to that. If you are a fool, you will yourself suffer for it. If you are a good man, we will have a fair chance, and it is for that we will not forget it. Tomorrow I go home and you will come with me and get your orders."

I made shift to stand at attention and salute.

Gauland spoke in a pleasant voice, as if he wanted to atoms for Stumm's impertinence. "We are men who love our Fatherland, Herr Brandt," he said. "You are not of that Fatherland, but at least you hate its enemies. Therefore you are allies, and trust each other like all. Our victory is ordained by God, and we are of us more than His instruments."

Stumm translated in a sentence, and his voice was quite solemn. He held up his right hand and so did Gauland, like a man taking an oath.

Then I realized something of the might of Germany. She produced good and bad, cads and gentlemen, but she could put a bit of the fanatic in them all.

I WAS standing stark naked next morning in that icy bedroom, trying to bathe in about a quart of water, when Stumm entered. He strode up to me and stared me in the face. I was half a head shorter than him to begin with, and he does not feel his stoutness when he has no clothes, so he had the pull on me every way.

"I have reason to believe that you are a liar," he growled.

I had been eddying round me, for I was shivering with cold, and the German idea of a towel is a pocket-handkerchief. I own I was in a pretty blue funk.

"A liar!" he repeated. "You and that swine Peter!"

With his best effort at surliness I asked what we had done.

"You lied, because you said you knew no German. Apparently your friend knows enough to talk treason and blasphemy."

"This goes back some heat."

"Tell you I have no documents. But I told you Peter could talk a bit. Told you that yesterday at the station." Pervertly I blessed my luck for that casual remark.

He evidently remembered, for his tone became more and more civil.

"You are a precious pair. If one of you is a scoundrel, why not the other?"

"I take no responsibility for Peter," I said. I felt I was a cad in saying it, but that was the bargain we had made at the start.

"I have known him for years as a great hunter, and a braggart. I have fought foul against the English. But more I cannot tell you. You have to judge him for yourself. What has he done?"

I was told, for Stumm had got it that morning on the telephone. While telling it he was kind enough to allow me to put on my trousers.

It was just the sort of thing I might have foreseen. Peter, left alone, had become first bored and then reckless. He had persuaded the lieutenant to take him out to supper at a bar. Peter's retort was that he had come by the lights and music—novel things for a backwoods hunter—and no doubt bored stiff by his company, he had proceeded to get drunk. That had happened in my experience with Peter about once in every three years, and it always happened for the same

reason. Peter, bored and solitary in a town, went on the spree. He had a head like a rock, but he gave in to the required condition by wild and noisy merriment. He was not fond of his cups, and not in the least wretched, but he was apt to be very free with his tongue. And that was what occurred at the Franciscana.

He had begun by insulting the Emperor, it seemed. He drank his health, but said he regarded him of a weak mind, and thereby satisfied the Gauleiter's nose. He was an officer—some tremendous swell—at an adjoining table had objected to his talking so loud, and Peter had replied insolently in respect of Germany. After that things became mixed. There was some kind of a fight, during which Peter calumniated the German army and all its female ancestry. How he wasn't shot or run through I can't imagine, except that the lieutenant loudly declared that he was a scoundrel, and why, how the upshot was that Peter was marched off to gaol, and I was left in a pretty pickle.

"I don't believe a word of it," I said firmly. I had most of my clothes on now and felt more courageous. "It is a plot to get him into disgrace and draft him off to the front."

Stumm did not storm as I expected, but smiled.

"That was always his destiny," he said, "ever since I saw him. He was no use to us except as a means to a man's man's end. Something else. Do you imagine, you fool, that this great Empire in the thick of a world war is going to trouble its head to lay snare for an ignorant *faulkeher*?"

"I wash my hands of him," I said. "If what you say of his folly is true I have no use for him. I have no companion and I wish him well. What do you propose to do with him?"

"We will keep him under our eye," he said, with a wicked twist of the mouth. "I have a notion that there is a lot more of this that still appears. We will investigate the antecedents of Herr Pleinart. And you too, my friend. On you also we have our eye."

I did the best thing I could have done, for what with anxiety and disgust I lost my temper.

"Look here, sir," I cried. "I've had enough of this. I came to Germany abominating the English and burning to strike a blow for you. But you haven't given me much cause to love you. For the last two days I've had nothing from you but impudent insults. The only decent man I've met is Herr Gauland. It's because I believe that there are many in Germany like him that I'm prepared to go on with this business and little else can I do. But I wouldn't raise my little finger for your *faulkeher*."

He looked at me very steadily for a minute. "That sounds like honesty," he said at last in a civil voice. "You had better come down and get your coffee."

I was safe for the moment, but in very low spirits. What on earth would happen to old Peter?

To be Continued

Green-mantle

More breathless adventures of an English agent in war-time Germany

By JOHN BUCHAN

The Story—Major Richard Hanney, after being wounded in the Great War, is to become a British Secret Service agent.

The German is to learn all possible about the Moslem population of the East, which would mean trouble for the British in India and elsewhere. Hanney is to learn details of this plot. The only clue he is given is a paper bearing the words "Kasredin," "cancer," and "e.r.," which an agent in the East brought him. He could not explain before he died.

Hanney is to have two companions: Hans von Stumm, a Ludwicksburg, commonly called Sandy; and John S. Blentz, a rick American who helped the Allies in the United States. The three plan to reach Constantinople by different routes, and it is hoped that when they meet one of them will have secured the secret information. It is on November 17, they must reach their objective by January 17.

Hanney proceeds to Lisbon and there meets an old pro-British friend, Peter Pienaar, from South Africa. Hanney has adopted the name *Coriolanus Brandt*. He and Pienaar enter Germany together as pro-German Boers, and are taken in charge by Count von Stumm, who is a Jew. Sandy, however, does not understand German though he pretends not to, and he hears von Stumm remark to an aide in German: "This is the man for Hitler."

Hanney is taken to see a "prisoner's" camp and his real identity is revealed when an English professor recognizes him. On a train he meets Blentz, who is travelling openly in Germany under the pretence that he has become a valid pro-German. The two plotters merely exchange glances.

Von Stumm takes Hanney to a big house in Germany and they continue with their German. Hanney states that he seeks a lot to assist an American who is Africa-bound, and two Germans consider his plan, Gaudion with disapproval.

Pienaar, who has been separated from Hanney, acts independently, and this causes the Germans to regard both with suspicion. Hanney manages to tell this suspicion, but he wonders what has become of Pienaar.

I COULD do nothing even if I wanted, and, besides, my first duty was to my mission. I had made this very clear to Pienaar at Lisbon and he had agreed, but all the same it was a bitter reflection. Here was that amiable, kindly, but the tender, the one man in the world he most detested on earth. My only comfort was that they couldn't do very much with him. If they sent him to the front, which was the worst they could do, he would escape, for I would have backed him to get through any mortal lines. It would be a long fun for them. One thing was to be deserved of it all. I wanted to help him and I didn't know what to do. I was absolutely alone now, and I didn't like it. I seemed to have about as much chance of joining Blentz and Sandy as of flying to the moon.

After breakfast I was told to get ready. When I asked where we were going, Stumm said we were to meet our own business, but I remembered that last night he had talked of taking me home with him and giving me my orders. I wondered where his home was.

Gaudion patted me on the back when we started and it made me feel sick to think that I was humbugging him. We got



into the same big grey car, with Stumm's servant driving him. The driver was the chauffeur. In a morning of fine frost, the bare fields were white with rime and the fir trees powdered like a wedding cake. We took a different road from the night before, and after a run of half a dozen miles came to a little town with a big railway station. It was a junction on some main line, and after five minutes waiting, we found

himself alongside different types of men. He is such a hand-some boy that he cannot just forget his kind. He may have plenty of brains as Stumm had, but he has the poorest notion of psychology of any of God's creatures. In Germany only the Jew can get outside himself, and that is why, if you look into the master, you will find that the Jew is not a Jew. German-type people.

After mid-day we stopped at a station for luncheon. We had a very good meal in the restaurant, and when we were finishing two officers entered. Stumm got up and saluted and were aside to talk to them. Then he came back and made his bow to him to a waiting room, where he told me to make till the train arrived. I was to be a porter and had the door locked when he went out.

It was a chilly place with no fire, and I kicked my heels there for twenty minutes. I was living by the hour now, and did not trouble to worry about this strange behavior. There was a violin and violoncello on a shelf, and I turned the pages left till I struck a silent note. Then it occurred to me to find out where we were going. I had heard Stumm take my ticket for a place called *Schandorf*, and after a lot of searching I found it. It was away south in Bavaria, and so far as I could make out less than fifty miles from the station. This was not encouraging, but I live there he would most likely start me off on the railway by the railway which I saw running to Vienna and then on to the East. It looked as if I might get to Constantinople after all. But I feared it would be a useless achievement, for what could I do when I got there? I was being hunted out of Germany without picking up the slenderest clue.

I put every ounce of weight I possessed behind the blow and caught him on the chin.

The door opened and Stumm entered. He stopped just inside the interval and to carry him higher. There was a proud light, too, in his eye.

"Brandt," he said, "you are about to receive the greatest privilege that ever fell to one of your race. His Imperial master is passing through here, and he saluted for a few moments. He has done me the honor to receive me, and when he heard my story he expressed a wish to see you. You will follow me to his presence. Do not be afraid. The All-Highest is merciful and gracious. Answer his questions like man."

I followed him with a quickened pulse. Here was a bit of luck I had never dreamed of. At the far side of the station a train had drawn up, a train consisting of three big coaches, chocolate-colored and picked out with gold. On the platform beside it stood a small group of officers, tall men in long grey-blue coats. They seemed to be mostly elderly, and one or two of the faces I thought I remembered from photographs in the picture press.

As we approached they drew apart, and left us face to face with one man. He was a little below middle height, and all muffled in a thick coat with a fur collar. He wore a silver helmet with an eagle atop of it, and kept his left hand resting on his sword. He was a man with a weary, weary paper, from which shone curious, numberless restless eyes with dark pouches beneath them. There was no fear of my mistaking him. These were the features which, since Napoleon, have been best known to the world.

I stood as stiff as a ramrod and saluted. I was perfectly cool and moderately interested. For such a moment I could have gone through fire and water.

"Majesty, this is the Dutchman I spoke of," I heard Stumm say.

"What language does he speak?" the Emperor asked.

"Dutch," was the reply; "but being a South African he also talks English."

A spasm of pain seemed to fit over the face before me. Then he spoke again.

"You have come from a land which will yet be our ally to offer your sword to our service? I accept the gift and hail it as a good omen. I would give you your race's freedom, but there were fools and traitors among you who misjudged me. But that freedom I shall yet give you in spite of yourselves. Are there many in your country?"

"Thousands, sire," I said, lying cheerfully. "I am one of many who think that my race's life lies in your victory. And I think that that victory must be won not in Europe alone. In South Africa for the moment there is no chance, so we look to other parts of the continent. You will win in the end. You have won in the East, and it now remains to strike the English where they least expect it. If we take Uganda, Egypt will fall. By your permission I go to make trouble for your enemies."

A flicker of a smile passed over the worn face. It was the face of one who slept little and whose thoughts roamed him like a nightmare.

"Thank you, sire," he said. "Some Englishman once said that he would call in the New World to redress the balance of the Old. We Germans will summon the whole earth to suppress the infamies of England. Serve us well, and you will be forgotten."

Then he suddenly asked: "Did you fight in the last South African War?"

"Yes, sire," I said. "I was in the commando of that Smuts who has now been bought by England."

"What were your countrymen's losses?" he asked eagerly.

I did not know, but I hazardred a guess.

"In the field some twenty thousand. But many more by sickness and in the accursed prison camps of the English."

Again a spasm of pain crossed his face.

"Twenty thousand," he repeated huskily.

"A terrible loss. We lose as many in a skirmish in the Polish meadows."

Then he broke out fiercely.

"I did not seek the war . . . It was forced

on me . . . I labored for peace . . . The blood of millions lies on the heads of England and Russia. The Empire of all God will yet avenge it. He that takes the sword

will perish by the sword. Mine was forced from the scabbard in self-defense, and I am guiltless. Do they know that among your people . . .

"All the world knows it, sire," I said.

He gave his hand to Stumm and turned away. The last I saw of him was a figure moving like a sleepwalker, with no spring in his step, amid his tall suite. I felt that I was seeing him on the far side of the world, more than any I had seen in action. Here was one that had loosed Hell, and the furies of Hell had got hold of him. He was no common man, for in his presence I felt an attraction which



I saw an electric light flashed and Stumm himself got out to examine the tracks.

was not merely the mastery of one used to command. That would not have impressed me, for I had never owned a master. But here was a human being who, unlike Stumm and his kind, had the power of laying himself alongside other men. That was the irony of it. Stumm would not have cared a tinker's curse for all the characters in history. But this man, the child of a nation of Stumms, had paid the price in war for the gifts that had made him successful in peace. He had imagination and nerves, and the one was white hot and the others were quivering. I would not have been in his shoes for the throne of the Universe . . .

ALL AFTERNOON we sped southward, mostly in a country of hills and wooded valleys. Stumm, for him, was very pleasant. His Imperial master must have been gracious to him, and he passed a bit of it on to me. But he was anxious to see that I had got the right impression.

"The All-Highest is merciful, as I told you," he said.

I nodded my approval.

"I am not merciful," he went on, as if I needed telling that. "If any man stands in my way I trample the life out of him. That is the German fashion. That is what has made



The bicyclist cried out and fell off his machine, but I didn't stop to investigate.



us great. We do not make war with lavender gloves and fine phrases, but with hard steel and hard brains. We Germans will cure the green-sickness of the world. The nations will again be safe. Power over soft flesh, and flesh over rotten leaves. The plowshare will cut its way through acres of mud."

I hastened to add that these were also my opinions. "What do your opinions matter? You are a thick-headed boor of the veld . . . Not but what," I added, "there is mettle in you slow Dutchmen, once we Germans have the chance to show it."

The winter evening closed in, and I saw that we had come out of the hills and were in a flat country. Sometimes a big sweep of river showed, and, looking out at one station, I saw a funny church with a thing like an onion on top of its spire. It must have been a new church, for it had not been in the pictures I remembered of the veld. I wished I had been given geography more attention in my time.

Presently we stopped, and Stumm led the way out. The train must have been specially halted for him, for it was a one-horse little place whose name I could not make out. The station-master was waiting, bowing and smiling, and outside the station was a small hotel. Nowhere else did we see sliding through dark woods where the snow lay far deeper than in the north. There was a mist frost at the corners, and the trees slipped and skidded at the corners.

We hadn't far to go. We climbed a little hill and on top of it stopped at the door of a big black castle. It looked enormous in the winter night, with not a light showing anywhere in the dark rooms. The man who opened it was a man who took a long time about it and got well cursed for his slowness. Inside, the place was very noble and ancient. Stumm switched on the electric light, and there was a great hall with black tarnished portraits of men and women in old-fashioned clothes, and many patterns of dead on the walls.

They seemed to be no sufficient reward for the old fellow said that food was ready, and without more ado we went into the dining room—another vast chamber with rough stone walls above the paneling—and found some cold meats on a table beside a fire. The servant present brought in a ham casserole, and on the cold side, the dinner. I wanted to have something to drink, but water. It passed me how Stumm kept his great body going on the very moderate amount of food he ate. He was the type you expect to swell by the bucket and put away a pie at a sitting.

When we had finished, he rang for the old man and told him we should be staying at the castle for the rest of the evening. "You can lock up and go to bed when you like,"

he said, "but see you have coffee ready at seven sharp in the morning."

Ever since I entered that house I had the uncomfortable feeling of being in a prison. Here was I alone in this great place with a fellow who could, and would, wire my neck if he wanted. Berlin and all the rest of it had seemed comparatively safe. I had a fish in the water, and I had been fishing at the worst make a bolt for it. But here I was trapped, and I had to tell myself every minute that I was there as a friend and colleague. The fact is, I was afraid of Stumm, and I don't mind admitting it. It was a new thing in my experience and I didn't like it. If only he had drunk and gorged a bit, I might have been more at ease.

We went up a staircase to a room at the end of a long corridor. Stumm locked the door behind him and laid the key on a table. That room took my breath away, it was so unexpected. In place of the grim bareness of downstairs here was a place of luxury and color and light. It was very large, but not in the sense that it was full of little recesses or in stations in them. A thick green carpet fully covered the floor, and the chairs were low and soft and upholstered like a lady's boudoir. A pleasant fire burned on the hearth and there was a flavor of scent in the air, something like incense or burnt sagebrush. A French clock on the wall told the time, but it was ten minutes past nine. Everywhere on little tables and in cabinets was a profusion of knick-knacks, and there was some beautiful embroidery framed on screens. At first sight you would have said it was a woman's drawing-room.

But it wasn't. I soon saw the difference. There had never been a woman's hand in that place. It was the room of a man who had a taste for the finer things in life, but no taste for soft delicate things. It was the complement to his boorish brutality. I began to see the queer other side to my host, that evil side which gossip had spoken of as not unknown in the German army. The room seemed a horribly hideous place, and I was more than ever afraid of Stumm.

The hearthring was a wonderful old Persian thing, all faint greens and pinks. As he stood over it he looked uncommonly like a bull in a china shop. He seemed to be bulging in the comfort of it, and sniffed like a satisfied animal. Then he sat down at an escritoire, unlocked a drawer and took out some papers.

"We will go now to Egypt and there take you from one of whose name and address are in this envelope. This card," and he lifted a square piece of grey pasteboard with a big stamp at the corner and some code words stamped on it, "will tell you where to go when you see the man in the mask book. Keep it faithfully and never use it save under orders of

in the last necessity. It is your badge as an accredited agent of the German Crown."

I took the card and the envelope and put them in my pockets.

"Where do I go after Egypt?" I asked.

"That remains to be seen. Probably you will go up the Blue Nile. Riza, the man you will meet, will direct you. Egypt is a nest of our agents who work peacefully under the noses of the English," he went on.

"I am willing," I said. "But how do I reach Egypt?"

"This boy was a pretty kettle of fish. I was to be packed off to Ceylon by ship, and I had to go to God knows where. I would get from Egypt to Constantinople. I saw all my plans falling in pieces about my ears, and just when I thought they were shaping nicely,

Stumm must have interrupted the look on my face as fear.

"You have no cause to be afraid," he said. "We have plans for you. You will be safe. You will be safe with a suspicious South African named Brandt, one of Marita's rebels. It is not difficult to have that kind of hint conveyed to the proper quarter. But the description will not be yours. Your name will be Van der Linden, a respectable Java merchant, a man from a family plain in the country of his native shores. You had better get your dossier by heart, but I guarantee you will be asked no questions. We manage these things well in Germany."

I kept my eyes on the fire, while I did some savage thinking. I knew I would not let them get the better of me till the day we got to Holland, and then there would be no possibility of getting back. When I left this house I would have no chance of giving them the slip. And yet I was well on my way to the East, the Danube could not be fifty miles off, and that way ran the road to Constantinople. It was a far, far better prison, I knew. I tried to get away Stumm would prevent me, and the oddness of that would go to join Peter in some infernal prison camp.

These moments were some of the worst I ever spent. I was absolutely and utterly baffled, like a rat in a trap. There seemed nothing for it but to go back to London and tell Sir Walter the game was up. And that was about as bitter as death.

He saw my face and laughed.

"Does your heart fail you, my little Dutchmen? You funk the English."

"I am nothing in this world to be feared except me. Pall, and you have cause to shiver. Play me fair and you had better never have been born."

His ugly sneering face was close above mine. Then he put out his hands and gripped my shoulders as he had done the first afternoon.

I said if I mentioned that part of the damage I got at Loes was a sharpened bullet low down at the back of my neck. The wound had healed well enough, but I had pains there on a cold day. His fingers found the place and it hurt.

There is a very narrow line between despair and blackness.

I had been given up the game, and the sudden ache of my shoulder gave me a new lift. He must have seen the rage in my eyes, for his own came cruel.

"The weasel would like to bite," he cried. "But the poor weasel has found its master. Stand still, vermin. Smile, look pleasant, or I will make pulp of you. Do you dare to frown at me?"

I shut my teeth and said never a word. I was choking in my throat and could not utter a syllable if I had tried.

Then he let me go, grinning like an ape.

I stepped back a pace and gave him my left between the eyes.

For a second he did not realize what had happened, for I don't suppose anyone had dared to lift a hand to him since he was a child. He blincked at me mildly. Then his face grew fat, and he laughed.

"I am going to kill you," he said quietly, and he flung himself on me like a mountain.

I was expecting him and dodged the attack. He was quite grimy now, but pretty helpless. The man had a gorilla's strength and could give me at least a couple of stone. He wasn't such an animal, though. He had a brain. I wanted to get out of the castle and absurdly out of training. He would certainly kill me if he could, and I saw nothing to prevent him.

My only chance was to keep him from getting to grips, for I could have beaten him in two if I had been strong. I moved on him on my left, and him on my right. I had a good eye. Black Moony at Kimberley had taught me to fight a bit, but there is no art on earth which can prevent a big man in a narrow space from sooner or later cornering a lesser one. That was the danger.

As we went forward we padded on the soft carpet. He had no notion of guarding himself, and I got in a good few blows. Then I saw a queer thing. Every time I hit him he blincked and seemed to pause. I guessed the reason for that. He had gone through life keeping the crown of the German eagle on his head, and every time he hit me he wasn't a coward by a long chalk. He was a bully, and he had never been struck in his life. He was getting struck now in real

earnest, and he didn't like it. He had lost his bearings and was looking for a right kind of chance.

I kept half an eye on the clock. I was hopeful now, and was looking for the right kind of chance. The risk was that I might tire sooner than he and be at his mercy.

Then came a time I have never forgotten. If you are willing to use any means to kill you, he will be apt to do you down unless you mean to kill him, too. Stumm did not know any rules to this game, and I forgot to allow for that. Suddenly, when I was watching his eyes, he landed a mighty kick at my stomach. If he had got me, this yarn would have had an abrupt ending. But by the mercy of God I was moving sideways when he let out, and his heavy boot just grazed my left thigh.

It was then that where most of the sharpened had locked, and for a second I was sick with pain and stumbled. Then I was on my feet again but with a new feeling in my blood. I had to smash Stumm or never sleep in my bed again.

I got a wonderful power from this new cold rage of mine. I felt I couldn't tire, and I danced round and dotted his face till it was streaming with blood. His bulky padded chest was no good to me, so I couldn't try for the heart.

He began to snort now and his breath came heavily.

"You infernal cat!" I said in good round English. "I'm going to knock the stuffing out of you," but he didn't know what I was saying.

Then at last he gave me my chance. He half tripped over a little table and his face stuck forward. I got him on the point of the chin, and put every ounce of weight I possessed into the blow. He went up in a heap and rolled over, upsetting a lamp and knocking a big China jar in two. His head, I remember, lay under the escritoire from which he had taken my passport.

I picked up the key and unlocked the door. In one of the glances I had given I had seen my hair and tidied up my clothes. My anger had completely gone and I had no particular ill-will left against Stumm. He was a man of remarkable qualities which would have brought him to the highest distinction in the Stone Age. But for all that he and his kind were back numbers.

I stepped out of the room, locked the door behind me, and started out on the second stage of my travels.

EVERYTHING depended on whether the servant was in the hall. I had put Stumm to sleep for a bit, but I couldn't flatter myself he would long be quiet, and when he came to he would kick the locked door to pieces. I made my way out of the house without a minute's delay, and if the door was shut and the old man gone to bed I was done.

I met him at the foot of the stairs, carrying a case.

"Your master wants me to send off an important telegram. Where is the nearest office? There's one in the village, isn't there?" I spoke in my best German, the first time I had used the tongue since I crossed the frontier.

"The village is five minutes off at the foot of the avenue," he said. "Will you be long, sir?"

"I'll be back in a quarter of an hour." I said. "I'll lock up. I get the key."

I put on my ulster and stepped out into a clear starry night. I ran down the avenue, my feet crackling on the hard snow, planning hard my programme for the next hour.

I found the village—half a dozen houses with one biggish place that looked like an inn. I went in and said, and as I approached I saw that it was some kind of a store. A funny little two-seated car was purring before the door, and I guessed this was also the telegraph office.

I marched in and told my story to a stout woman who wiggled her nose who was talking to a young man.

"It is too late," she shook her head. "The Herr Burgrave knows that well. There is no connection from here after eight o'clock. If the matter is urgent you must go to Schwandorf."

"How far is that?" I asked, looking for some excuse to get decently out of the shop.

"Ten miles," she said, "but here is Franz at the post-wagon. Fine, you will be glad to give the gentleman a seat beside you."

The sheepish-looking youth muttered something which I took to be assent, and finding off his cap he took it off and in manner he looked as if he were half drunk.

I thanked the woman, and went out into the car, for I was in a fever to take advantage of this unexpected bit of luck. I could hear the postman chipping Franz not to keep the gentleman waiting. Franz got out, he came out and flopped into the driver's seat. We started in a series of voluptuous curves, till his eyes got accustomed to the darkness.

At first we made good going along the straight, broad highway lined with woods on either side, the snow melting into the melting into haze. Then he began to talk, and as he talked, he slowed down. This by no means suited my book, and I seriously wondered whether I should pitch him out and take charge of the team. He was obviously thinking of being late for the conscription, and I could have done it with one hand. But by a fortunate chance I left him alone.

"That is a fine hat of yours, mein Herr," he said, and I took it off and handed him the peaked cap, the uniform. I supposed, of the post-wagon, and laid it on his knee.

Then he calmly took my hat and clapped it on his head.

"With this thing I should be a gentleman," he said.

I said nothing, but put on his cap and waited.

"That is a noble overcoat, mein Herr," he went on. "It goes well with the hat. It is the kind of garment I have always desired to own. Two days ago we had the Holy Christmas, when gifts are given. Would that the good God sent me such a coat!"

"You can try it on to see how it looks," I said good-naturedly.

He got out the car with a screech, and pulled off his blue coat. The entrance was soon effected. He was about my height, and my sister fitted not so badly. I put him on his overcoat, which had a big collar that buttoned round the neck.

The idiot behaved himself like a girl. Drunk and vanity had primed him for any folly. He drove so carelessly for a bit that he nearly put us into a ditch. We passed several cottages and at the last he slowed down.

"A post-wagon! I must have heard him announced." "Gretel would like to see me in the fine clothes which the most amiable Herr has given me. Wait for me, I will not be long." And he scrambled out of the car and hurried into the little garden.

I took a slow walk, looking slowly forward. I heard the door open and the sound of laughing and loud voices. Then it shun and looking back I saw that my idiot had been absorbed into the dwelling of his Gretel. I waited no longer, but sent the car forward to its destination.

Five minutes later the infernal thing began to give trouble—a nut loose in the antiquated steering gear. I unhooked a lamp, examined it and put the mischief right, but had a quarter of an hour to do it. The highway ran in a long forest and I noticed batches going off every now and then to the right. I was just thinking of turning up one of them, for I had no anxiety to visit Schwandorf when I heard behind me the roar of a great driving snow-bus.

I drew in to the right side—thank goodness I remembered the rule of the road—and proceeded decorously, wondering what was going to happen. I could hear the brakes being clapped on and the car slowing down. Suddenly a big grey horse stepped past me and as I turned my head I heard a familiar voice.

It was Stumm, looking like something that had been run over. He had his jaw in a sling and that was what had been broken. His eyes were beautifully burnt out. It was that that saved me, that and his raging temper. The collar of the postman's coat was round my chin, hiding my beard, and I

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Greenmantle

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had his cap pulled well down on my brow. I remembered what Blenkiron had said—that the only time he'd dealt with the Germans was naked himself. Mine was naked enough, for it was all that was left to me.

"Where is the man you brought from Anderbach?" he roared, as well as his jaw would allow him.

I preferred to be mortally scared, and spoke in the best imitation I could manage of the postman's high, cracked voice.

"He got out a mile back," Herr Burggrave, "I quavered. "He was a rude fellow who wanted to go to Schwandorf, and then change his mind."

"Where, you fool? Say exactly where he got down or I will wring your neck."

"In the wood this side of Gertnuf's cottage—on the left hand. I let him running away, and I put all the time I knew into my pipe, and it wasn't all acting.

"He means the Heinrich cottage, Herr Coloss," said the chauffeur. "This man is courting the daughter."

Stumm gave a groan and the great car backed up, and as I looked back I saw it turning. Then as it gathered speed it shot forward, and presently was lost in the shadows. I had got over the first hurdle.

But there was no time to be lost. Stumm would be back again and he would be tenacious after me any minute. I took the first turning, and backed along a narrow woodland road. The hard ground would show very few tracks. I thought, and I hoped the pursuit would think so. I had to get to Schwandorf. But it wouldn't do to risk it, and I was determined very soon to get the car off the road, leave it, and take to the forest. I took out my watch and calculated I could give myself ten minutes.

I was in a daze. Presently I came on a bit of rough heath, with a slope away from the road and here and there a patch of black which I took to be a sandpit. Opposite one of these I slewed the car to the edge, and started to walk. I had to get to a pitch forest—head-on to the darkness. There was a splash of water and then silence. Craning over I could see nothing but mists and the marks at the lip where the wheels had passed. They would be my tracks in daylight but covered at that time of night.

Then I ran across the road to the forest. I was only just in time, for the echoes of the splash had hardly died away when I heard the sound of another car. I lay flat in a hollow, held a hand over my ears, and brambled and looked between the pine trees at the moonlit road. It was Stumm's car again, and to my consternation it stopped just a little short of the sandpit.

I saw an electric torch flashed, and Stumm himself out of the car. He had tracks on the highway. Thank God, they would be still there for him to find, but had he tried half a dozen yards on he would have seen them turn toward the sandpit. If that had happened he would have been ten minutes adrift woods and most certainly found me. There was a third man in the car, with my hat and coat on him. That poor devil of a postman had died for dear of his vanity.

They took a long time to leave. They started again, and I was very well relieved when they went scurrying down the road. I ran deeper into the woods till I found a track which—as I judged from the sky which I saw in a clearing—looked me entirely due west. That's not the direction I wanted to go. I bore off at right angles, and presently struck another road which I crossed in a hurry. After that I got entangled in some confounded kind of enclosure and had to climb over it after a few moments of complaint with myself. Then came a rise in the ground and I was on a low hill of pines which seemed to last for miles. All the time I was going at a good pace, and before I stopped to rest I calculated I had put six miles between me and the postman.

My mind was getting a little more active now, for the first part of the journey I had

simply staggered from impulse to impulse.

As soon as I began to think, I saw the direction I had to take. I was in the woods, and I, with nothing except what I stood on—including a coat and cap that weren't mine—alone in midwinter in the heart of South Germany. There was a man behind me looking for my blood, and soon there would be a hue-and-cry for me up and down the land.

To make things worse my job was not to escape—though that would have been hard enough—but to get to Constantinople, more than a thousand miles away, and when I got there I'd get there as a tramp. I had to be sent there, and now I had flung away my chance.

My mother used to say that when you felt down on your luck you had to go to a decent person's menagerie. So I set out on my journey. The first was that I was well started on my journey, for I couldn't be above two score miles from the Danube. The second was that I had Stumm's pass. I didn't see how I could use it, but I had it, and I had plenty of money—fifty-three English sovereigns and the equivalent of three pounds in German paper which I had changed at the hotel. Also I had squared accounts with old Stumm. That was the biggest morsel of all.

I thought I had better get some sleep, so I found a dryish hole below an oak root and squirmed myself into it. The snow lay deep on these woods and was trapping wet up to my waist. All the same I lay down to sleep for some hours, and got up and shook myself just as the winter's dawn was breaking through the tree tops. Breakfast was the next thing, and I must find some sort of dried bread.

Almost at once I struck a road, a big highway running north and south. I trotted along in the bitter morning to get my circulation started, and presently I began to feel a little better. In a little I saw a church spire which meant Schwandorf. Stumm would not be likely to have got on my tracks yet, I calculated, but there was always the chance that he had warned all the villages round by telephone and that they might be on the lookout for me. But the risk had to be taken, for I must have food.

It was the day before Christmas. I remembered, and people would be holding day.

The village was quite a big place, but at this hour just after eight o'clock there was

I stood in the street, watching a wandering dog

I chose a little boy was taking down the shutters—one of those general stores where they sell everything. The boy fetched a very old woman who bobbed in from the back, fittering on her spectacles.

"*Gruss Gott,*" she said in a friendly voice, and I took off my cap. I saw from my reflection in a sashpan that I looked moderately presentable, though not of my best in the woods. I held her a step, and was watching from Schwandorf to see my mother at an imaginary place called Judentfeld, banking on the ignorance of villagers about any place five miles from their homes. I said my thanks, and she said I must be getting late to wait for it, since my leave was short. The old lady was sympathetic and unsuspecting. She sold me a pound of chocolate, a box of biscuits, the better part of a ham, two tins of sausages and a rucksack to carry them. I also bought a small coat, a coat-sash, a safety razor, and a small *Tourist's Guide*, published by a Leipzig firm. As I was leaving I saw what seemed like garments hanging up in the back shop, and turned to have a look at them. They were a kind of coat that Germans wear on their summer walks—tours—long shooting capes made of a green stuff they call *fedoras*. I bought one, and a green felt hat and an alpenstock to keep it company. Then I said good-bye to the old woman, who believed in a money Christmas. I departed and took the shortest cut out of the village. There were one or two people about

now, but they did not seem to notice me. I had been walking for two hours and walked for two miles till I halted for breakfast. I was not feeling quite so fit now, and I did not make much of my provisions, beyond eating a biscuit and some chocolate. I felt very weak and longed for hot tea. In an icy pool I washed my face and hands and shaved my beard. That razor was the worst of its species, and my eyes were running all the time with the pain of the operation. Then I took off the postman's coat and cap, and hurried them into some bushes. I was a clochardish German pedlar, with a green cap and hat, and an absurd walking stick with an iron-shod end—the sort of person who roams in thousands over the Fatherland in summer but is a rabid bird in winter.

The *Tourist's Guide* was a fortunate purchase, for it contained a big map of Bavaria which gave me my bearings. It was certainly not forty miles from the Danube—more like thirty. The road through the village I had left would take me to it. I had only to walk due south and I would reach it before night.

When I started out again I felt very stiff and the cold seemed to be growing intense. This puzzled me, for I had not minded it much in the morning. I was not used to the cold by nature, it never used to worry me. A sharp winter night on the high veld was a long sight chillier than anything I had struck so far in Europe. But now my teeth were chattering and the marrow seemed to be freezing in my bones.

The day had started bright and clear, but a wrack of grey clouds soon covered the sky, and a wind from the east began to whistle. As I stumbled along through the snowy undergrowth I kept longing for bright warm places.

From these pleasant pictures I returned to the beastly present—the thick snowy woods, the lowering sky, wet clothes, a hunted present, and a dismal future. I felt miserably alone and I couldn't think of any means to count. It struck me that I might be falling sick.

About mid-day I awoke with a start to the belief that I was being pursued. I cannot explain how or why the feeling came, except that it is a kind of instinct that comes to those who have lived much in wild countries. My senses, which had been numbed, suddenly grew keen, and my brain began to work double quick.

I asked myself what I would do if I were captured. I sat down and had a hard, jaw to avenge, and pretty well limitless powers. He must have found the car in the sandpit and seen my tracks in the wood opposite. I didn't know how good he and his men were, but I knew they were good. I knew that any ordinary Kaffir could have nosed it out easily. But he didn't want to do that. This was a civilized country full of roads and railways. I must sometime and somewhere come out of the wood. He could not be in the road ahead, and the telephone would be everyone on my track within a radius of fifty miles. Besides, he would soon pick up my trail in the village I had visited that morning. From the map I learned that it was in Great Britain it was like to be captured that night with me.

Presently I came to a rocky knoll which rose out of the forest, keeping well in shelter, I climbed to the top and cautiously looked around me. Away to the east I saw the village of a few simple huts and thatch roofs. West and south the forest rolled unbroken in a wilderness of snowy tree-tops. There was no sign of life anywhere, not even a bird, but I knew very well that behind me in the woods were men moving swiftly on my trail. I knew it was pretty well impossible for me to get away.

There was nothing for it but to go on till I dropped or was taken. I shaped my course south with a shade of west in it, for the map showed me that the direct road would soon strike the Danube. What was I going to do when I got there? I didn't trouble to think. I had fixed the river as my immediate goal and the future must take care of itself.

I was now certain that I had fever on me.

It was still in my bones, as a legacy from Africa, and had not been completely banished. I was with the battalions in Hampshire. The bouts had been short, for I had known of their coming and closed myself. But now I had no quinine, and it looked as if I were in for a long haul. It made me feel despondent, wretched and stupid, and I all but blanched into capture.

For suddenly I came on a road and was going to cross it blindly, when a man rode slowly past on a bicycle. Luckily I was in no danger of a clump of bushes, though he was not looking. I thought he was not more than three yards off. I crawled forward to reconnoitre. I saw about half a mile of road running straight through the forest and every two hundred yards was a bicyclist. They were all uniform and appeared to be acting as sentries.

This could only have one meaning. Stumm had picketed all the roads and cut me off in an angle of the woods. There was no chance of getting across otherwise. As I saw the men, I almost sickened. I had the horrible feeling that the pursuit might be following me from behind, and that at any moment I would be enclosed within two fires.

For more than an hour I stayed there with my back to the east. I didn't dare go out, and I was feeling so ill that I didn't seem to care. Then my chance came suddenly out of the skies.

The wind rose, and a great gust of snow hit me in the face. In five seconds it was so thick that I couldn't see across the road. At first I thought it was a new addition to my troubles, and then very slowly I saw the opportunity. I slipped down the bank and made ready to cross.

I almost half-drowned into one of the bicyclists. He cried out and fell off his machine, but I didn't wait to investigate. A sudden access of strength came to me and I darted into the woods on the farther side.

I must have run miles before the hot fit passed, and I stopped to rest. My bodily weakness was so great that there was no sound except the crush of falling snow, the wind seemed to have gone, and the place was very solemn and quiet. But Heavens! how the snow fell! It was partly screened by the branches, but it was falling in great flakes and everywhere. My legs seemed made of lead, my head burned, and there were fiery pains over all my body. I stumbled on blindly, without a notion of any direction, determined only to keep going to the last. For I knew that if I stopped I would drop dead.

Then the trees seemed to stop and I was walking on flat ground. It was a clearing, and before me twinkled a little light. The change restored me to consciousness, and suddenly I felt my head and my body the fire of my fever, and the weight of my limbs. I longed to sleep, and I had a notion that a place to sleep was before me. I moved toward the light and presently saw through a screen of snow the outline of a cottage.

I had no fear, only an intolerable longing to lie down. Very slowly I made my way to the door and knocked. My weakness was so great that I could hardly lift my hand.

"There were voices and a creak of a chair, and a certain sharp frosty window. Then the door opened and a woman stood before me, a woman with a thin, kindly face.

"'Gruss Gott,'" she said, while children peeped from behind her skirts.

"'Gruss Gott,'" I replied. I leaned against the doorpost and much forced me.

She saw my condition. "Come in, sir," she said. "You are sick and it is no weather for a sick man."

I stumbled after her and stood dripping in the center of the little kitchen, while weeping children stared at me. It was a poor place, scantly furnished, but a good fire burned on the hearth. The shock of warmth gave me one of those minutes of self-governance which come sometimes in the midst of a fever.

"I am sick, mother, and I have walked far in the storm and lost my way. I am from Africa, where the climate is hot, and your cold brings me fever. It will pass in a day or two if you can give me a bed."

"You are welcome," she said; "but first I will make you coffee."

I took off my dripping cloak, and crouched close to the fire. I gave the woman some poor washable stuff, but blesshed hot. Poverty was spelled large in everything I saw. I felt the tides of fever beginning to overflow my brain again, and I made a great attempt to set my hair straight before I was overtaken. With a smile I took Stumm's pass from my pocketbook.

"That is my warrant," I said. "I am a member of the Imperial Secret Service and for the sake of my work, I must move in the dark. I am a secret agent, a master, a will sleep till I am better, but no man knows that I am here. If anyone comes, you must deny my presence."

She looked at the big seal as if it were a talisman.

"Yes, yes," she said. "You will have the bed in the garret and be left in peace till you are well. We have no neighbors near, and the storm will shut the roads. I will be silent. I and the little ones."

My hands began to swim, but I made one more effort.

"There is food in my rucksack—biscuits and ham and chocolate. Pray take it for your use. And here is some money to buy Christmas fare for the little ones." And I gave her some gold from Gauß's portmanteau.

After that my reverie becomes dim. She helped me up a ladder to the garret, undressed me, and gave me a thick coarse nightgown. I seem to remember that she kissed me, and that she was crying. "The good Lord is here," she said. "Now the little ones will have their prayers answered and the Christchild will not pass by our door."

I LAY for four days like a log in that garret bed. The storm died down, the thaw set in, and the snow melted. The children played about the doors and told stories at night round the fire. Stumm's myrmidons no doubt beat every road and troubled the lives of innocent people. The fever worked itself out while I lay in peace.

It was a bad bout, but on the fifth day it left me, and I lay, as weak as a kitten, staring at the rafters and the old window. It was a leaky, draughty old place, but the woman of the cottage had heaped deerkins and blankets on my bed and kept me warm. She came in now and then, and once she brought me a brew of some bitter herbs which I could not identify. The hot chocolate porridge was all the food I could eat, and some chocolate from the slabs in my rucksack.

I lay and dozed through the day, hearing the voices of children, and the sound of getting strength hourly. Malaria, I lay as quickly as it comes and leaves a man little the worse though this was one of the sharpest turns I ever had. As I lay I thought, and my thoughts followed curious lines.

But then I thought of my own position. All that wild day in the sun it had seemed the merest farce. The three words Harry Ballyvant had scribbled had danced through my head in a crazy狂妄. They were present to me now, but coolly and safely in all their meaning.

I remember that I took each one separately and chewed on it for hours. *Kasrdin*—there was nothing to be got out of that. *Caser*—there were too many meanings, all blind. *x*—that was the worst gibberish of all.

Before this I had always taken the *I* as the letter of the alphabet. I had thought the *e* must stand for *enn*, and I had considered the *G* must mean *gauß*, and with *I* and *G* and *A*, *H*, *B*, *E*, *R*, and all the rest of them, I had made a list of about seventy at the British Museum before I left London. Now I suddenly found myself taking the *I* as the numeral One. Edly, not thinking what I was doing, I had written *I* on the paper.

Then I nearly fell out of the bed. Von *Einem*—the name I had heard at Gauß's house, the name Stumm had spoken 'bhind his hand, the name to which Hitler was probably the prefix. It was a tremendous discovery—the first real bit of light I had

found. Harry Ballyvant knew that some man or woman called Von *Einem* was at the heart of the mystery. Stumm had spoken of the same man with respect and in connection with the work I proposed to do in raising the Modern Africans. If I found Von *Einem* I would be getting very warm. What was the word that Stumm had whispered to Gauß? I was scared that worthy? It had been like *U-Boat*. I could only get that clear, I would solve the riddle.

I think that discovery completed my cure. At any rate on the evening of the fifth day—it was Wednesday, the 29th of December—I was up and about again. When the dark had fallen and it was too late to fear a visitor, I came downstairs and, wrapped in my green cape, took a seat by the fire.

As we sat there in the firelight, with the three white-headed children staring at me with wide eyes, the woman said, "I looked their way, the woman talked. Her men had gone to the wars on the Eastern front, and the last she had heard from him he was in a Polish boy, and longing for his dry native women. The thought brought little to her. It was an act of God. The thought was out of the sky, which had taken a husband from her, and might soon make her a widow and her children fatherless. She knew nothing of the causes and purposes, and thought of the Roman as the most numerous savages, menhers who had never been converted, and who would eat up German homes if the good Lord and the brave German soldiers did not stop them.

The place, as I have said, was desperately poor. The woman's face, the skin stretched tight over the bones and that transparency which means underfeeding; I fancied she did not have the liberal allowance that soldiers' wives get in England. The woman looked better now, though not as well as her mother. I did my best to cheer them up. I told them long yarns about Africa and lions and tigers, and I got some pieces of wood and whittled them into toys. I am fairly good with a knife, and I carved very presentable pieces of wood, a spinning top, and a rattle. The children went to bed hugging the first toys, I expect, they ever possessed.

It was clear to me that I must leave as soon as possible. I had to get on with my business, and besides, it was fair to the woman. Any moment I might be found here, and she would get into trouble for harboring me. I asked her if she knew where the Danube was, and her answer surprised me. "It is only an hour's walk," she said. "The track through the wood runs straight to the ferry."

Next morning after breakfast I took my departure. It was drizzling weather, and I was following very keen. Before going I presented my hostess and the children with two sovereigns apiece.

"It is English gold," I said, "for I have to travel among our enemies and use our enemies' money. But the gold is good, and you must take it. But I advise you to put it in your stocking foot and use it only if all else fails. You must keep your home going, for some day there will be peace and your man will come back to you." I was gone.

I heard the children shout the woman's name, and went off down the clearing. They had cried "Auf Wiedersehen," but it wasn't likely I would ever see them again.

The snow had all gone, except in patches in the corners. The ground was like a full sponge, and a cold rain drizzled in my eyes. After half an hour's steady trudge the trees thinned, and presently I came out on a knuckle of open ground clouded in dwarf junipers. And there before me lay the plain, a mile off a head-bounding mountain.

I sat down and looked directly at the prospect. The exhilaration of my discovery the day before had gone. I had stumbled on a worthless piece of knowledge, for I could not find out who Von *Einem* was. His person existed, and probably the great secret was probably living in some big house in Berlin, and I was about as likely to get anything out of her as to be asked to dine with the Kaiser. Blaenau might do something, but where on earth was Blaenau? I dared say Sir

Walter would value the information, but I took the risk to see Walter. I told him of Constantine, and was away from the people who really pulled the ropes. But if I stayed I could do nothing, and I could not stay. I must go on and I didn't see how I could go on. Every course seemed shut to me, and was as pretty a tangle as any man ever stumbled into.

For I was morally certain that Stumm would not let the thing drop. I knew too much, and besides I had outraged his pride. He would have the railway till the gates of hell, and he undoubtedly would have me. I waited much longer. But how was I to get over the border? My passport would be no good, for the number of that pass would long ere this have been wired to every police station in Europe, and probably to every station in America. What was I to do? What was I to be, set for trouble? What was I to do? I could not cross the borders by any railway. My studies of the Tourists' Guide had suggested that once I was in Austria I might find things slicker and more "out" of the way. I thought of trying to get to the Tyrol and I had thoughts of Bohemia. But these places were a long way off, and there were several thousand chances each day that I would be caught.

This was Thursday, the 30th of December, the second last day of the year. I was due in Constantinople on Friday. Friday, in Constantinople! I had thought myself a long way from it in Berlin, but now it seemed as distant as the moon.

But that big sullen river in front of me led to it. And as I looked across, I saw a cause by noonishight. On the far eastern horizon, where the water slipped round a corner of hill, there was a long trail of smoke. The streamers thinned out, and seemed to come from some boat well round the corner,

but I could see at least two boats in view. There must be a long train of barges, with a tug in tow.

I looked to the west and saw another such procession coming into sight. First went a big river steamer—it can't have been much less than 1,000 tons—and after came a string of barges. I counted no less than ten besides the tug. They were heavily loaded and their draught must have been considerable, but there was plenty of depth in the river.

A moment's reflection told me what I was looking at. Once ready, in one of the days when you have in hand, how little is just how the Germans manhandled their Balkan campaign. They were pretty certain of fishing Serbia at the first go, and it was up to them to get through guns and shells to do it. They were well prepared, pretty short in his first supply. Sandy said that they wanted the railway, but they wanted still more the river, and they could make certain of that in a week. He told us how endless strings of barges loaded up at the big factories in the Ruhr, which were to be brought the canals from the Rhine or the Elbe to the Danube. Once the first reached Turkey, there would be regular delivery, you see—as quick as the Turks could handle the stuff. And they didn't return empty. Sandy said, for instance, that they had Italian cotton and Bulgarian beef and Rumanian corn. I don't know where Sandy got the knowledge, but there was the proof of it before my eyes.

It was a wonderful sight, and I could have grumbled my teeth to see the hauls of ammunition and stores off of the enemy. I calculated they would give our poor chaps hell in Gallipoli. And then, as I looked, an idea came into my head, and with it an eighth part of a hope. *To be Continued*

Greenmantle

An escape from one war-time peril only leads an English Secret Service man into a greater one

By JOHN BUCHAN

THE STORY: During the Great War, Major Richard Hannay undertakes to learn details of a German plot to subdue the Moslems against the British in India and elsewhere. The only clue he is given is a paper bearing the words, "Karsavin," "cancer," and "L," which a British secret agent in the East brought in but could not explain before he died.

Hannay has two helpers—Sandy Arthrone and John S. Blenkiron, who later a risk to themselves. They agree to proceed to Constantinople by different routes. On meeting there, it is hoped that one of them will have learned the secret.

At Lisbon, Hannay meets Peter Piemar, an old pro-British friend from South Africa, under the pretense that they are bound together to help Germany in their war against the latter country. Hannay sees with him Cervantes Bressai.

They are met by Colonel von Stumm, a brutal German, and separated. Hannay goes with von Stumm to the latter's castle, and when von Stumm becomes suspicious of his real purpose, Hannay knocks him unconscious and escapes into a forest. After many adventures and hairbreadth escapes, he reaches the Danube, upon which a tugboat is pulling a string of barges.

THREE WAS only one way for me to get out of Germany, and that was to leave in such good company that I could not be asked no questions. That was plain enough. If I travelled Turkey, for instance, in the Kaiser's suite, I would be as safe as the mail; but if I went on my own I was done. I had, so to speak, to get my passport inside Germany, to join some caravan which had free marching powers. And there was the kind of caravan before me in the Eastern bazaars.

It sounds ludicrous, but I guessed that munitions of war would be as palely guarded as old Hindenburg's health. All the safer, I replied to myself, once I get there. If you are looking for a deserter you don't seek him at the favorite regimental public-house. If you're after a thief, among the places you'd be apt to leave unsearched would be Scotland Yard.

It was sound reasoning, but how was I to get aboard? Probably the beastly things did not stop once in a hundred miles, and Stumm would give me long before I struck a hulling-up. And even if I did get a chance like that, how was I to get permission to travel?

One step was clearly indicated—to get down to the river bank at once. So I set off at a sharp walk across squalid fields, till I struck a road where the ditches had overflowed so as almost to meet in the middle. The place was so bad that I had to wade miles to get away. And as I trudged, my thoughts were busy with my prospects as a stowaway. If I bought food I might get a chance to lie snug on one of the barges. They would not break bulk till they got to the Jordan's end.

Suddenly I noticed that the steamer, which was now abreast me, began to move toward the shore, and as I came over a low rise I saw on my left a straggling village with a church and a small landing stage. The houses stood about a quarter of a mile from the strand, and between them was a strip of rank-fringed marsh.

Soon there could be no doubt about it. The procession was coming to a standstill. The big tug nosed her way in and lay up alongside the



"I found a branch which led beyond the prison wall . . . I dropped from it into a stream."

Illustrated by
DUDLEY GLOVINE
SUMMERS

pier, where in that season of flood there was enough depth of water. Six tugs came to the barges and they also started to drop anchors, which showed that there must be at least two men aboard each. Some of them dragged a bit and it was rather a struggle to get into the main stream. The tug got out a gangway, and from where I lay I saw half a dozen men leave it, carrying something on their shoulders.

It could not be anything—a dead body. Some of the crew must have died, and this half was to bury him. I watched the procession move toward the village and I reckoned they would take some time there, though they might have wired ahead for a grave to be ready. Anyway, they would be long enough to give me a chance.

For I had decided upon a brazen course. Blenkiron had said you couldn't cheat the Boche but you could bluff him. I was going to put up the most monstrous bluff in the history of country-robbery. For Richard Hannay, Richard Hannay would walk through as a pal of the hunters. For I remembered the pass Stumm had given me. If that was worth a tinker's curse it should be good enough to impress a ship's captain.

OFCOURSE there were a thousand risks. They might have heard of me in the village and told the ship's party the story. For that reason I resolved not to go there but to meet the sailors when they were returning to the boat. Or the captain might have been warned and got the number of my pass, in which case Stumm would have his name on it. Or the boat might be captured by some ignorant fellow who had never seen a Secret Service pass and did not know what it meant, and would refuse me transport by the letter of his instructions. In that case I might wait on another convoy.

I had shaved and made myself a fairly respectable figure before I left the station. It was no use to wait for the men when they left the church, wait on that quarter-mile of straight highway. I judged the captain must be in the party. The village, I was glad to observe, seemed very empty. I have my own notions about the Bavarians as fighting men, but I am bound to say that judging by my observations, they are the dullest lot.

That funeral took hours. They must have had to dig the grave, for I waited near the road in a chump of cherry trees, with my feet in two inches of mud and water, till I fell chilled to the bone. I prayed it would not bring back my father, for I had only one, and of course I had very little tobacco in my pocket, but I smoked myself one pipe, and I ate one of the three cakes of chocolate I still carried.

At last, well after midday, I could see the ship's party returning. They marched two by two, and I was thankful

to see that they had no villagers with them. I walked to the road, turned up it, and met the vanguard, carrying my head as high as I could.

"Where's your captain?" I asked, and a man jerked his thumb over his shoulder. The others wore thick jerseys and knitted caps, but there was one man at the rear in uniform.

He was a short, broad man with a weatherbeaten face and a weary eye.

"I have a word with you, Herr Captain?" I said, with what I hoped was a judicious blend of authority and conciliation.

He nodded to his companion, who walked on.

"Yes?" he asked rather impatiently.

I preferred to keep my face, so I once took on that curious look which one person in authority always wears when he is confronted with another. He studied it closely and then raised his eyes.

"We're sir?" he said. "I observe your credentials. What can I do for you?"

"To take it you are bound for Constantinople?" I asked.

"The boats go as far as Rostchuk," he replied. "There the stuff is transferred to the railway."

"And you reach Rostchuk when?"

"In ten days, but we have to wait for the boats."

"I want to accompany you," I said. "In my profession, Herr Captain, it is necessary sometimes to make journeys by other than the common route. That is now my desire. I have the right to call upon some other branch of our country's service to help me. Hence my request."

His partner did not reply.

"I am telegraphing about it. My instructions are to let no one aboard, not even a man like you. I am sorry, sir, but I must get authority first before I can fall in with your desire. Besides, my boat is ill-found. You had better wait for the next boat and let Dreyton to take you. I lost my Walter today. He would not be here, but he always goes to the port—but he would not be persuaded. And last night he died."

"Was that him you have been hurrying?" I asked.

"Even so. He was a good man and my wife's cousin, and now I have no engineer. Only a fool of a boy from Hamburg. I have just come from calling on my owners for a fresh man, but even if I could get by the quickest train he will scarcely overtake us before Vienna or even Ikota."

I saw light at last.

"We will go together," I said, "and cancel that wire. For behold, Herr Captain, I am an engineer, and will gladly keep any of you company as we get to Rostchuk."

He looked at me doubtfully.

"I am speaking truth," I said. "Before the war I was an engineer in Damaraland. Mining was my branch, but I had a good general training, and I know enough to run a river-boat. Have no fear. I promise you I will earn my passage."

His face cleared, and he looked what he was, an honest, good-humored North German seaman.

"Come then, in God's name," he cried, "and we will make a bargain. I will let the telegraph sleep. I require authority from the Government to take a passenger, but I need none to engage me."

He sent one of the hands back to the village to cancel his wire. In ten minutes I found myself on board, and ten minutes later we were out in midstream and our tows were lumbering into line. Coffee was being made ready in the cabin, and as I was about to sit down the captain's blouse was scammed and scammed the place I had left.

I saw some curious things. On the first road I had struck on leaving the cottage there were men on bicycles moving rapidly. They seemed to wear uniform. On the next parallel road, the one that ran through the village, I could see others. I noted, too, that several figures appeared to be beating the intervals fields.

Stompin's cordon had got busy at last, and I thanked my stars that not one of the villagers had seen me. I had not got away much too soon, for in another half-hour he would have had me.

BEFORE I turned in that evening I had done some good hours work in the engine-room. The boat was oil-fired, and in very fair order, so my duties did not look as if they would be heavy. There was nobody who could be properly called an engineer, only a few fumblers, and a couple of lads from Hamburg who had been a year ago apprentices in a shipbuilding yard. They were civil fellows, both of them consumptive, who did what I told them and said little. By bedtime, if you had seen me in my blue jumpers, a pair of carpet slippers and a flat cap—*ad the property*—the deckhands, you would have known I had been born bred to the fime of river boats, whereas I had acquired most of my knowledge on one run down the Zambezi, when the proper engineer got drunk and fell overboard among the crocodiles.

The captain—they called him Schenk—was out of his head in the job. He was a Friesian and a first-class deep-water seaman, but, since he knew the Rhine delta, and because the German mercantile marine was laid on the ice till the end of war, they had turned him on to this show. He was bored by the business, and didn't understand it very well. The river charts puzzled him, and though it was pretty

plain going for hundreds of miles, yet he was in a perpetual height of anxiety and panic. You could see that he would have been far more useful in his element, either in the shoals of the Elms mouth, or beating against a northeaster in the shallow Baltic. He had six barges in tow, but the heavy flood of the Danube made it an easy job except when it came to going slow. There were two men on each boat, who had been told every morning to row as hard as they could. That was a funny business, for we never got to if we could help it. There was a dinghy belonging to each barge, and the men used to row to the next and get a lift in that barge's dinghy, and so forth. So men would appear in the dinghy of the barge nearest us and carry supplies for the rest. It was a most tiresome and slow business, and the lashed lads, very like the breed you strike on the Essex coast.

It was the fact that Schenk was really a deep-water sailor, and so a novice to the job, that made me get on with him. He was a good fellow and quite willing to take a hint, so before long he had two men on board who were willing to do all his dirty work, and I was doing my best to cheer him up. And difficulties came thick, because the next night was New Year's Eve.

I knew that that night was a season of gaiety in Scotland, but Scotland wasn't in it with the Fatherland. Even Schenk, though he was in charge of valuable stores and was voyaging against time, was quite clear that the men must



Peter and I, with a common impulse, took to our heels.





It looked as though they meant to take us alive, and that, I was very clear, should not happen. Better a bloody end in a street scrap than the tender mercies of that bandbox hero.

have permission for some kind of beans. Just before darkness we came abreast a fair-sized town, whose name I never discovered, and I was glad to get a night's sleep. The arrangement was that one man should be left to guard in each barge, and the other get four hours leave ashore. Then he would return and relieve his friend, who would proceed to do the same thing. I foresaw that there would be some fun when the first batch returned, but I did not dare to protest.

I was not the only one to act like a fool. And I was not the only one to do it.

for I had a half-nelson we might be scuttled there, but

Schenk took this *Syvestered* business so seriously that I would have risked a row if I had tried to argue.

The upshot was what I expected. We got the first batch aboard about midnight, blind to the world, and the others straggled in all night. I stood to one side, waiting for obvious rescuers, but next day it became too obvious, and I had to go ashore with the captain to try and round up the stragglers. We got them all in but two, and I am inclined to think these two had never meant to come back. If I had a soft job in a rat boat I wouldn't be inclined to run away in the middle of Germany, with the rest of them, and my fate would be to be scooped up for the trenches, but your Frisian has no more imagination than a haddock. The absences were both watches from the barges, and I fancy the monotony of the life had got on their nerves.

The captain was in a raging temper, for he was short-handed, and he had to do all the work, and he was short, but there was no superfluity of men in that township—nothing but boys and grandfathers. As I was helping to run the trix I was pretty annoyed also, and I sliced down the drunks with icy Danube water, using all the worst language I knew in Dutch and German. It was a raw morning, and I was through the river banks. I heard a noise, and I heard the dry crackle of wild geese going overhead, and wished I could get a shot at them. I told one fellow—he was the most troublesome—that he was a disgrace to a great Empire, and was only fit to fight with the filthy English.

"God in Heaven!" said the captain, "we can delay no longer. We must make shift the best we can. I can spare one man from the deck-hands, and you must give up one from the deck-hands."

That was arranged, and we were tearing back rather hard in the wind when I spied a figure sitting on a bench beside the booking office on the pier. It was a slim figure in an old suit of khaki; some cast-off duds which had long lost the label. He was a man with a thin face, and a thin body, and was specifically looking out upon the river and the boats and us noisy fellow with meek philosophical eyes. If I had seen General French sitting there and looking like nothing on earth I couldn't have been more surprised.

The man stared at me without recognition. He was waiting for me.

I spoke rapidly in Souta, for I was afraid the captain might know Dutch.

"Where have you come from?" I asked.

"They shut me up in *rost*," said Peter, "and I ran away. I am tired, Cornelis, and want to continue the journey by boat."

"Remember you have worked for me in Africa," I said. "You have lived just from Dumarland. You are a German who has lived thirty years away from home. You can tend a furnace and have worked in mines."

Then I spoke to the captain.

"He'll be good to me in my employ, Captain Schenk. It's mighty luck we've struck him."

He's old, and not very strong in the head, but I'll go half he's a good worker. He says he'll come with us and I can use him in the engine-rooms."

"Stand up," said the captain.

Peter stood up, light and slim and wiry as a leopard. A Starmer does not judge men by girth and weight.

"He'll do," said Schenk, and the next minute he was readjusting his crews and giving the strayed revellers the rough side of his tongue. As it chanced, I couldn't keep Peter with

me, but had to send him to one of the barges, and I had time for a short talk with him, when I told him to hold his tongue and live up to his reputation as a half-wit. That accursed *Syvestered* had played havoc with the whole outfit, and the captain and I were weary men before we got things straight.

In one way it turned out well. That afternoon we passed the frontier and I never knew it till I saw a man in a strange uniform come aboard, who copied some figures on a schoolroom blackboard on a nail. With my dirty face and general state of abasement in duty, I must have been an unsuspicious figure. He took down the names of the men in the barges, and Peter's name was given as it appeared on the ship's roll. Anton Blum. You must feel I'm a nigger," said Schenk, "said the captain. "To be scuttled by a policeman, who you give orders, I doubt not, to many policemen."

I shrugged my shoulders. "It is my profession. It is my business to go unrecognized and to be forgotten. I could tell you I was a driver, or a driver for miles and miles, and to be as brightly lit as a circus. After that, we were in big plains and the air grew pestilential cold. Peter had come aboard once for his nation, but he was usually left to his partner, for he was lying very low. But one morning, the morning of the 5th of January, when we had passed Buda and were moving through great sodden flats just sprinkled with snow—the captain took it into his head to get me to overhaul the engine-room. I had a short, slightly type-written list. I made a tour of the barges, beginning with the hindmost. There was a fine old stock of deadly weapons—mostly machine guns and some field pieces and enough steel to build up the Gallipoli peninsula. All kinds of steel were taken from the big four-inch crumps to rifle grenades and trench mortars. It made me fairly sick to see all these good things preparing for our own fellows, and I wondered whether I would not be doing my best service if I destroyed my big engine. Happily I had the common sense to remember my job and my duty to stick to it.

Peter was in the middle of the convoy, and I found him pretty unhappy, principally because he was not allowed to go ashore. His companion was an eye-sold, who I ordered to the lookout while Peter and I went over the lists.

"Cornelis, my old friend," he said, "there are some pretty toys here. With a scanner and a couple of clear hours I could do some things about as deadly as bicycles. What do you say to a try?"

"I've considered that," I said, "but we won't do. We're on a bigger business than wrecking munition convoys. I want to know how you got here."

He smiled with that extraordinary Sunday-school docility of his.

"It was very simple, Cornelis. I was foolish in the café—but they had told you of that. You see I was angry, and did not reflect. They had separated us, and I could see would treat me as dirt. Therefore my bad temper came out, for I know I do not like Germans."

Peter gasped hoarsely at the little bleak farms which dotted the German plain.

"All right I lay in *rost* with no food. In the morning they found me, and took me hundreds of miles in a train to a place which is called Neuburg. It was a great prison, full of English officers, and I am not sure whether the punishment was what the result of this treatment, for I could see no sense in it. If they wanted to punish me for insulting them they had the chance to send me off to the trenches. No one could have objected. If they thought me useless they could have turned me back to Holland. I could not have been more useful. I was a good workman, a good German man, whereas all their conduct hitherto had shown that they thought me a fool. I could not understand it."

"But I had not been one night in that Neuburg place before I thought of the reason. They wanted to keep me under observation, as a check upon you. Cornelis, you figured it out

This page contains very many big secret. So far, good. They evidently thought much of you, even Stenzen, though he was as rude as a buffalo. But they did not know you fully, and they wanted a check on you. That check they

found in Peter Piessar. Peter was a fool, and I knew that was the reason why he would later Peter would blab it. Then they would stretch out a long arm and snap you short, wherever you were. Therefore they must keep old Peter under their eye."

"That sounds likely enough," I said.

"It is. God's truth, it is. Peter. "And when it was all clear to me I settled that I must escape. Partly because I am a free man and do not like to be in prison, but mostly because I was not sure of myself. Some day my temper would go again, and I might say foolish things for which Cornelis would suffer. So it was very certain that I must escape."

"Now, Cornelis, I noticed pretty soon that there were two kinds among the prisoners. There were the honest ones, mostly English and French, and there were lousie-bugs. The lousie-bugs were treated apparently like the others, but not really, as I soon perceived. There was one man who passed as an English officer, another as a Frenchman, and a third as a German and a fourth as a Russian. None of the honest men suspected them, but they were there as spies to hatch plots for escape and get the poor devils caught in the act, and to worm out confidences which might be of value. That is the German way. It is the German way for a British soldier to think all men are gentlemen. I know that among men there are desperate *skellums*, so I soon picked up this game. It made me very angry, but it was a good thing to have a definite resolution to escape the day I arrived at Nuremberg, and on Christmas Day I had a plan made."

"Peter, you're an old marvel. Do you mean to say you were quite certain of getting away whenever you wanted?"

"Yes, I was. You see, I have been wicked in my time, and know something about the inside of prisons. You may build them like great castles, or they may be like a hacked *rowk*, only mud and corrugated iron, but there is always a key and a man who keeps it, and that man can be beaten. I knew I could get away, but I did not think it would be so easy. That was due to the bogus prisoners, my friends the spies.

"I made great pals with them. On Christmas Day, 1918, I got out of jail again. I think I escaped every one of them the first day. I bragged about my past and all I had done, and I told them I was going to escape. They backed me up and promised to help. Next morning I had a plan. In the afternoon, however, I had to go to the commandant's room. They treated me a little differently from the others, for I was not a prisoner of war, and I went there to be asked questions and to be cursed as a stupid Dutchman. He was not a stupid Dutchman, but he was not a very bright one. I kept them in the places on the second floor and distant by many yards from any staircase. In the corridor outside the commandant's room there was a window which had no bars, and four feet from the window the limb of a great tree hung down, reaching that limb, and if he were active as a monkey might descend to the ground. Beyond that I knew nothing, but I am a good climber, Cornelis."

"I told the others of my plan. They said it was good, but no one offered to come with me. They were very noble; they declared that the scheme was mine and I should have the fruit of it, for if more than one tried detection was certain. I agreed and thanked them—thanked them with tears in my eyes. Then one of them very secretly produced a map. We planned out my road, for I was going straight to Holland. It was a long road, and I had no money, for they had taken all my sovereigns when I was arrested, but they promised to go and send me up some to assist themselves to start me. Again I wept tears of gratitude. This was on Sunday, the day after Christmas. I settled to make the attempt on the Wednesday afternoon."

"Now, Cornelis, when the lieutenant took us to the Barracks, the commandant, remember, he told us many things about the ways of prison. He told us how they loved to catch a man in the act of escape, so that they could use him harshly with a clear conscience. I thought of that, and calculated that now my friends would have told everything to the

commandant, and that they would be waiting for me on the Wednesday afternoon. Then I reckoned I would be safely guarded, for they would look on me as safe in the net."

"So I went out of the window next day. It was the Monday afternoon—"

"That was a bold stroke," I said admiringly.

"The plan was bold, but it was not skillful," said Peter modestly. "I had no money beyond seven marks, and but one stick of chocolate. I had no overcoat, and it was snowing hard. Further, I could not get down the tree, which was a maple, and the branches as a blue gum. For a little I thought I should be compelled to give in, and I was not happy."

"But I had leisure, for I did not think I would be caught before nightfall, and, given time, a man can do most things. By and by I found a branch which led beyond the outer wall of the yard and hung above the river. This I followed, and then dropped from it into the stream. It was a drop of some yards, and the water was not deep, so that I nearly drowned. I would rather swim the Limpopo, Cornelis, among all the crocodiles that icy river. Yet I managed to reach the shore and get my breath lying in the bushes."

"After that it was plain going, though I was very cold. I knew that I would be sought on the northern roads, as I had told my friends, for no one would dream of an ignorant Dutchman going south away from his home. But I had a compass and a map from the map to know that our road lay south-east, and I had marked this big river."

"Did you hope to pick me up?" I asked. "No, Cornelis. I thought you would be traveling in first-class caravans while I should be plodding on foot. But I set on getting to the place you spoke of, where our big business lay. I thought I might be in time for that."

"You're an old Trojan, Peter," I said; "but so am I. How did you get to that landing stage where I found you?"

"It was a hard journey," he said meditationally. "It was not easy to get beyond the barbed-wire entanglements which surrounded Nuremberg—yes, even across the river. But in time I made my way, and was safe. I did not think any German could equal me in wild country. The best of them, even their foresters, are but babies in *veildraft* compared with such as me. My troubles came from the *veildraft* and cold. I met a pedlar who sold him my clothes and bought from him these. I did not want to part with my own, which were better, but he gave me ten marks on the deal. After that I went into a village and slept heavily."

"What did you do, Peter?"

"I do not think so. They had gone north, as I expected, and were looking for me at the railway stations which my friends had marked for me. I walked half and put a bad face on it. If I saw a man or woman looking at me suspiciously, I would stop at once and talked. I told a sad tale, and all believed it. I was a poor Dutchman traveling home on foot to see a dying mother, and I had been told by the Danube I should first travel the way to the sea to Holland. There were kind people who gave me food, and one woman gave me half a mark, and wished me God speed. Then on the last day of the year I came to the river and found myself drowning."

"What did you do when you resolved to get on one of the river boats?"

"Ja, Cornelis. As soon as I heard of the boats I saw where my chance lay. But you might easily have known me over a straw when I got on board, so you were."

"That was indeed good fortune, my friend."

"I have been thinking much about the Germans, and I will tell you the truth. It is only boldness that can baffle them. They are a most diligent people. They will think of all the possible ways, and not the impossible ones."

"They have not much imagination. They are like steam engines which must keep to prepared tracks. There they will hunt any man down, but let him trek for open country, and they will be at a loss. Therefore bethink you, friend; for ever

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Greenmantle

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boldness. Remember as a nation they wear spectacles, which means that they are always seeing.

Peter broke off to gloat over the wedges of geese and the strings of wild swans that were always winging across those plains. His tale had bucked me up wonderfully. Our luck had held in all heads, and I had a kind of hunch in the business now which had been wanting before. That afternoon, too, I got another fillip.

I came on deck for a breath of air and found it preferable after the heat of the engine room. So I lay down on the deck, hands to fetch me up my cloak from the cabin—the same I had bought that first morning in the Greek village.

"*Der grosse Mantel!*" the man shouted up, and I heard him. It was the same man, returned to us in my ears, and long after he had given me the garment I stood staring abstractedly over the bulwarks.

His tone had awakened a chord of memory, or, to be accurate, they had given me a taste to what before had been only blurred and dim. I could hear again the words which Stumm had uttered behind his hand to Gaudine. I had heard something like "*Ukousset!*" and could make nothing of it. Now I was as certain of those words as of my own name. They had been "*Greener Mantel!*" *Greener Mantel*, whatever it might be, was the name which Stumm had not meant me to hear, which was some talisman for the task I had proposed, and which was connected in some way with the mysterious von Elster.

This discovery put me in high fettle. I told myself that, considering the difficulties, I had managed to find out a wonderful amount in a very few days. It only shows what a man can do with the slenderest evidence if he keeps chewing and chewing on it.

Two mornings later we lay alongside the quays at Belgrade, and I took the opportunity of getting ashore. Peter had come ashore for a smoke, and we wandered among the battered riverside streets, and looked at the broken arches of the great railway bridge which the Germans were working at like beavers. There was a big temporary pontoon affair across the river, and I calculated that the main bridge would be ready inside a month. It was a clear, cold, blue day, and as one looked south one saw ridge after ridge of snowy hills. The upper streets of the city were still in ruins, and there was no sign of occupation where to could be got. I remember hearing English spoken, and seeing some Red Cross nurses in the custody of Austrian soldiers coming from the railway station.

It was here that I had done a lot of good to have had a word with them. I thought of the gallant people whose capital this had been, how three times they had flung the Austrians back over the Danube, and then had only been beaten by the black treachery of their own people. The English's coming in Belgrade gave both Peter and me a new purpose in our task. It was our business to put a spoke in the wheel of this monstrous bloody Juggernaut that was crushing out the little nations of Europe.

We were just getting ready to cast off when a distinguished party arrived at the quay. There were all kinds of uniforms—German, Austrian and Bulgarian, and amid them one stout gentleman in a fur coat and a black felt hat. He was the English ambassador, and before we began to jerk into line I could hear their conversation. The fur coat was talking English.

"I reckon that's pretty good noos. Gerners, it is, if the English have run away from Gallypoo, they can make noos consignments for the bigger game. I guess it won't be long before we see the British lion moving out of Egypt with some paws."

They all laughed. "The privilege of that speech may not be given to everybody."

I did not pay much attention to the talk;

indeed I did not realize till weeks later that that was the first tidings of the great evacuation of Cape Helles. What rescued me was the sight of Blenikron, as bland as a barber among those swells. Here were two of the missionaries within reasonable distance of their goal.

WE REACHED Rustchuk on January 10, but by no means landed on that day. Something had gone wrong with the unloading of the ship, and the port authorities insisted that we had to wait for the railway behind them, and we were kept swinging all day well out in the turbid river. On the top of this Captain Schenck got an ague, and by that evening was a blue and shivering mass, and the doctor said me and I needed I would stand to him. So I got the ship's papers and the manifests of cargo, and undertook to see to the transhipment. It wasn't the first time I had tackled that kind of business, and I hadn't much to learn about the cargo. I told him I was bound to go to Constantinople, and I would call Peter with me, and he was agreeable. He would have to wait at Rustchuk to get his return cargo, and could easily jump a fresh engine.

I waited about the hardest twenty-four hours of my life getting the stuff ashore. The landing-officer was a Bulgarian, quite a competent man if he could have made the railways give him the truck he needed. There was a collection of hungry German transport officers who had paid him off, and their sure aim being finally belligerent to me in body. I took the high and mighty line with them; and, as I had the Bulgarian commandant on my side, after about two hours blash-phemy got them quieted.

But the big trouble came the next morning when I had got nearly all the stuff aboard the truck.

A young officer in what I took to be a Turkish uniform rode up with an aide-de-camp. I noticed the German guards saluting him, so I judged he was a general. He came up to me and asked me very civilly in German for the waybills. I gave them him and he looked carefully through them, marking certain items with a blue pencil. Then he coolly handed them to his aide-de-camp and off he went to Turkey.

"Look here, I want these back," I said. "I can't do without them, and we've no time to waste."

"Presently," he said, smiling, and went off. I said nothing, reflecting that the stuff was for the Turks, and was natural, and to have some of its handling. The loading was practically finished when my gentleman returned. He handed me a neatly typed new set of waybills. One glance at them showed that some of the old items had been left out.

"Here, this won't do," I cried. "Give me back the right set. This thing's no good to me."

For answer he winced quickly, smiled like a dusky seraph, and held out his hand. In it I saw a roll of money.

"For yourself," he said. "It is the usual custom."

It was the first time anyone had ever tried to bribe me, and it made me hot up like a geyser. I saw his game clearly enough. Turkey would pay for the lot to Germany; Germany had paid for the lot to Russia; Russia would be double for the things not on the waybills, and pay to this fellow and his friends. This struck me as rather steep even for Oriental methods of doing business.

"Now look here, sir," I said. "I don't stir from this place till I get the right waybills. If you'll give me them, I will hand every item out of the trucks and make a new list. But a correct list I have, or the stuff stays here till Doomsday."

He was a slim, lop-sided fellow, and he looked very thin and angry.

"I offer you enough," he said, again stretching out his hand.

At that I fairly roared. "If you try to bribe me, you internal little haberdasher, I'll have you off that horse and chuck you in the river."

He no longer misunderstood me. He began to curse and threaten, but I cut him short:

"Come along to the commandant, my

boy," I said, and I marched away, tearing up his typewritten sheets as I went and strewing them behind me like a paper chase.

We had a fine old racket in the commandant's office. I said it was my business as a citizen of the German Government to see the stuff delivered to the port at Constantinople shipshape and Bristol-fashion. I told him it wasn't my habit to proceed with cooked documents. He couldn't agree with me, but there was that kind of Oriental with his face as fixed as a Buddha.

"I am sorry, Rasta Bey," he said; "but this man is in the right."

"I have authority from the Committee to receive the stores," he said evenly.

"The man is not our contractor," was the answer. "They are consigned to the Artillery commandant at Chataldja. General von Oesterre."

The man shrugged his shoulders. "Very well. I will have a word to say to General von Oesterre, and then come to this fellow who flouts the Committee." And he strode away like an impudent boy.

The harassed commandant grinned. "You have offended his lordship, and he is a bad enemy. All those damned Comitadjis are to Constantinople."

"And have that blighter in the red hat loot the trucks on the road? No, thank you. I am going to see them safe at Chataldja, or I'll shoot them all call them depots."

I sat a good while more, here and there an abbreviated translation of my remarks. Looking back, it seems pretty ridiculous to have made all this fuss about guns which were going to be used against my own people. But I'd been a soldier, and a good one, and a prude, and a prude was up in arms, and I couldn't bear to have a hand in a crooked deal.

"Well, I advise you to go armed," said the commandant. "You will have a guard for the trucks, of course, and I will pick you good men. They may hold you up all the same. I think that's what you want, but you're a soldier, but I'll send a wire to Oesterre and he'll make trouble if anything goes wrong. I still think you would have been wiser to humor Rasta Bey."

As I was leaving he gave me a telegram. "Here's a wire for your Captain Schenck." I slipped the envelope in my pocket and went out.

Schenck was pretty sick, so I left a note for him. At one o'clock I got the train started, with a couple of German *Landwehr* in each truck, and a Bulgarian in the engine. Presently I remembered Schenck's telegram, which still rested in my pocket. I took it out and opened it, meaning to wire it from the first station we stopped at. But I changed my mind when I read it. It was from one officer at Rustchuk, asking me to put under arrest and send back by the first boat a man called Brandt, who was believed to have come aboard at Abthafalen on the 30th of December.

I whistled and showed it to Peter. The sergeant was at Constantinople the better, and I prayed we would get there before the fellow who sent this wire repeated it and got the commandant to send on the message and have us held up at Chataldja. For my buck had got a bit of a kick in the side, and I was thinking I was going to take any risk to see them safely delivered to their proper owner. Peter couldn't understand me at all. He still hankered after a grand destruction of the lot somewhere down the railway. But then, this was a man of Peter's profession, and his hands was not at stable.

We had a mortally slow journey. It was bad enough in Bulgaria, but when we crossed the frontier at a place called Mustafa Pasha we struck the real savagery of the East. Had I not been a soldier, I would have been who had some notion of hustling, and, after all, it was his interest to get the stuff moved. It was the morning of the 16th, after Peter and I had been living like pigs on black bread and condemned tin stuff, that we came in sight of a black and white sign which I could have known couldn't be very far from the end.

It was jolly near the end in another sense. We stopped at a station and were stretching our legs on the platform when I saw a

familiar figure approaching. It was Rasta, with half a dozen Turks.

I called to Peter, and we clambered into the truck next our horse-box. I had been half expecting some move like this and had made a plan.

The Turk staggered up and addressed us. "You can get back to Rustchka," he said. "I take over from you here. Hand me the papers."

"Is this Chataldja?" I asked innocently.

"It is the end of your affair," he said haughtily. "Quick, or it will be the worse for you."

"Now, look here, my son," I said; "you're a kid and know nothing. I hand over to General von Oesterrie and to no one else."

"You are in Turkey," he cried, "and will obey the Turkish Government."

"I obey the Government right enough," I said; "but if you're the Government I could make a better one with a bib and a rattle."

He said something to his men, who unslung their rifles.

"Please don't begin shooting," I said. "There are twelve armed guards on this train who will take their orders from me. Besides, I and my friend can shoot a bit."

"For God's sake, get out very quickly," I can order up a regiment in five minutes."

"Maybe you can," I said; "but observe the situation. I am sitting on enough tobacco to blow up this countryside. If you dare to come aboard I will shoot you. If you call in your regiment, I will do the same. I reckon they'll be picking up bits of you and your regiment off the Gallipoli Peninsula."

He had put up a bluff—a poor one—and I had called it. He saw I meant what I said, and became silent.

"Good-bye," he said. "You have had a fair chance and rejected it. We shall meet again soon, and you will be sorry for your insolence."

He strutted away, and it was all I could do to keep from running after him. I wanted to lay him over my knee and spank him.

WE GOT safely to Chataldja, and were received by von Oesterrie like long-lost brothers. He was the regular gunner officer, a thin, dark, nervous-looking man with his guns and shells. I had to wait about three hours while he was checking the stuff with the invoices, and then he gave me a receipt which I still possess. I told him about Rasta, and he agreed that I had done right. It didn't seem to me that I deserved, because, you see, he got his stuff safe in any case. It was only that the wretched Turks had to pay twice for a lot of it.

He gave Peter and me luncheon, and was altogether very nice. I would have liked to talk about the war. I would have liked to hear what he had to say, for it would have been something to get the inside view of Germany's Eastern campaign, but I did not dare to wait. Any moment there might arrive a Turkish regiment to take us back. Finally he lent us a car to take us a few miles to the city.

So it came about that at five minutes past three on the 16th day of January, with only the clothes we stood up in, Peter and I entered Constantinople.

I was in considerable spirits, for I had got the final lap successfully over, and I was looking forward madly to meeting my friends; but, all the same, the first sight was a mighty dampener. The city was quite known what I had expected—a sort of fairyland Eastern city, all white marble and blue water, and stately Turks in saricipes, and veiled hours, and roses and nightingales, and some sort of atmosphere of magic and mystery. I had forgotten that winter is pretty much the same everywhere. It was a drizzling day, with a south-east wind blowing, and the streets were long troughs of mud. The first part I struck looked like a dingy, cold, subterranean city, and covered in mud, and endless dirty, sallow children. There was a cemetery, I remember, with Turks' caps stuck at the head of each grave. Then we got into narrow steep streets which descended to a kind of bog town, as it were. I used to be mosquito and miasma, and they were about

as impressive as factory chimneys. By and by we crossed a bridge, and paid a penny for the privilege. If I had known it was the famous Golden Horn I would have looked at it with more interest, but I saw nothing save a lot of small boats, with broken roofs and little boats like gondolas. Then we came into busier streets, where ramshackle cabs drawn by lean horses splashed through the mud. I saw one old fellow who looked like my notion of a Turk, but most of the population had the look of the common old-clothes men. All but the soldiers, Turk and German, who seemed well-set-up fellows.

Peter had paddled along at my side like a faithful dog, not saying a word, but clearly not approving of this wet and dirty metropolis.

"Do you know that we are being followed, Cornelis?" he said suddenly, "ever since we came into this evil-smelling dorp?"

Peter was infallible in a thing like that. The news scared me silly, for I feared that the take-over had come to us. But when I thought it couldn't be that, for if von Oesterree had wanted me he wouldn't have taken the trouble to stalk me. It was more likely my friend Rasta.

I found the ferry of Ratchi by asking a soldier, and a tall soldier, told me where the Kurdish Bazaar was. He pointed up a steep street which ran past a block of warehouses with every window broken. Sandy had said the left-hand side coming down, but must be the right-hand side going up. We plodded on it, and it led us to the filthiest place of all. The wind whistled up it and stirred the garbage. It seemed densely inhabited, for at all the doors there were groups of people squatting, with their heads covered, and scarcely a window showed in the blank walls.

The street corkscrewed endlessly. Sometimes it seemed to stop; then it found a hole in the opposing masonry and edged its way in. Often it was almost pitch dark; then would come a grisly light when it spread out to the width of several houses. To find a house in that mark was no easy job, and by the time we had gone a quarter of a mile I began to fear we had missed it. It was no good asking any of the crowd we met, they only look as if they understood any civilian tongue.

At last we stumbled on it—a tumble-down coffee house, with A. Kuprasso above the door in queer amateur lettering. There was a lamp burning inside and two or three men smoking at small wooden tables.

We entered. The walls stank still like tracole, which Peter anathematized. A negro brought it, and I told him in German I wanted to speak to Mr. Kuprasso. He paid no attention, so I shouted louder at him, and the noise brought a man out of the back part of the house.

He was a fat, oilish fellow with a long nose, very like the Greek traders you see on the Zanzibar coast. I beckoned to him and he waddled forward, smiling oily. Then I asked him if he would take, and he replied, in very halting German, that he would have a shrap.

"You are Mr. Kuprasso," I said. "I wanted to show this place to my friend. He has heard of your garden-house and the fun there."

"The signor is mistaken. I have no garden-house."

"Rat," I said; "I've been here before, my boy. I recall your shanty at the back and many merry nights there. What was it you called it? The place of pleasure and fun—the Garden-House of Sultan the Red."

He put his finger to his lip and looked incredibly sly. "The signor remembers that. But that was in the old happy days before war came. The place is long since shut. The people here are poor and angry."

"All the same I would like to have another look at it," I said, and I slipped an English sovereign into his hand.

He glanced at it in surprise and his manner changed. "The signor is a prince, and I will do his bidding." He clasped his hands and the sovereign appeared at his nose took his place behind a little side-counter.

"Follow me," he said, and led us through a long, noisome passage, which was pitch dark

and very unevenly paved. Then he unlocked a door and with a swirl the wind caught it and blew it back on us.

We were looking into a mean little yard, with on one side a high curving wall, evidently with bushes growing in the cracks of it. Some crazy-looking wood in broken pots, and nettles flourished in a corner. At one end was a wooden building like a dissenting chapel, but painted a dingy scarlet. Its windows and skylights were blacked out. A wooden door, tied up with rope, clapped in the wind.

"Behold the Pavilion," Kuprasso said proudly.

"That is the old place," I observed with feeling. "What times I've seen there! Tell me, Mr. Kuprasso, do you ever open it now?"

He put his thick lips to my ear.

"If the signor will be silent I will tell him it is sometimes open—not often. Men must amuse themselves, even in war. Some of the German officers have been here, you know, and but last week we had the ballet of Mademoiselle Cicci. The police approve—but not often, for this is no time for too much gaiety. I will tell you a secret. Tomorrow afternoon there will be dancing—dancing in the dimness. Only a few of my patrons know. Who, think you, will be there?"

He bent his head closer and said in a whisper:

"The Compagnie des Heures Roses."

"Oh, indeed," I said with a proper tone of respect, though I hadn't a notion what he meant.

"Will the signor wish to come?"

"Sure," I said. "Both of us. We're all for the young."

"Then the fourth hour after midday. Walk straight through the cafe and one will be there to unlock the door. You are newcomers here? Take the advice of Angelo Kuprasso and avoid the streets after nightfall. Steamwood is no safe place nowadays for quiet walks."

I asked him to name a hotel, and he rattled off a list from which I chose one that sounded modest and in keeping with our get-up. It was not far off, only a hundred yards to the right of the end of the street. We had to leave the door when we had begun to drop. We hadn't gone twenty yards before Peter drew very near to me and kept turning his head like a hunted stag.

"We are being followed close, Cornelis," he said calmly.

"Only a hundred yards and we were at a crossroad, where a little place faced a biggish mosque. I could see in the waning light a crowd of people who seemed to be moving toward us. I heard a high-pitched voice cry out a jabber of excited words, and it seemed to me that I had heard the voice before.

WE BATTLED to a corner, where a yell of building stood out into the street. It was our only chance to protect our backs, to hold off the crowd that came between us. It was only the work of seconds. One instant we were groping our solitary way in the darkness, the next we were pinned against a wall with a thirsty mob surging round us.

It took me a moment or two to realize that we were attacked. Every man has one special funk in the back of his head, and mine was to be the quarry of an angry crowd. I hated the thought of it—the mess, the blind struggle, the sense of unleashed fury, the fear of being torn to pieces, bludgeoned. It was a dark world to me, and I don't like darkness. But in my nightmares I had never imagined anything just like this. The narrow, fetid street, with the icy winds fanning the fitful, the unknown tongue, the people, the noise, the smells, the other ignorance as to what it might all be about, made me cold in the pit of my stomach.

"We've got it in the neck this time, old man," I said to Peter, who had out the pistol the commandant at Rustchak had given him. "The signor is a prince, and I will do his bidding." The crowd saw them and hung back, but if they chose to rush us it wasn't much of a barrier two pistols would make.

Rasta's voice had stopped. He had done

his work, and had retired to the background. There were shouts from the crowd—“Allowas and a word! *Klejtyov* constantly repeated. I didn't know what the meaning of the last, but now I know that they were after us because we were Bolsheviks and spies. There was no love lost between the Constantinople scum and their new masters. It seemed an ironical end for us, and we were destined to become we were Bolsheviks. And done in we should be. I had heard of the East as a good place for people to disappear in; there were no inquisitive newspapers or incorrigible police.

I wished to heaven I had a word of Turkish, but I was too nervous for a second in a pause of the din, and shouted that we were German sailors who had brought down big guns for Turkey, and were going home next day. I asked them what the devil they thought we had done? I don't know if any fellow thought us good German; anyhow, it only brought a pandemonium of cries in which that ominous word *Klejtyov* was predominant.

Then Peter fired over their heads. He had to, for he was at his throat. The answer was a clatter of bullets on the wall above us. It looked as if they meant to take us alive, and that, I was very clear, should not happen. Better a bloody end in a street strip than the tender mercies of that hand-to-hand bravo.

I don't quite know what happened next. A press drove down at me and I fired. Someone wounded, and I expected the next moment to be strangled. And then suddenly the screaming ceased, and there was a wavering splash of light in that pit of darkness.

I never went through many worse minutes than these. When I had been hunted in the past weeks they had been mystery enough, but this was absolute peril to us.

And yet I couldn't feel it was quite real. The patter of the pistol bullets against the wall, like so many crackers, the faces felt rather than seen in the dark, the clamor which was not a clamor, but a roar, fit the madness of a nightmare. Only Peter, cursing steadily in Dutch by my side, was real. And then the light came, and made the scene more eerie!

It came from one or two torches carried by a few fellows with long staves who drove their way into the heart of the mob. The flickering glare ran up the steep walls and made monstrous shadows. The wind swung the flames into long streamers, dying away in a fan of smoke.

And then a new word was heard in the crowd. It was *Chigonek*, shouted not in anger but in fear.

At first I could not see the newcomers. They were hidden in the darkness under their crimson light, for they were holding their torches high at the full stretch of their arms. They were shouting, too, wild shrill cries ending sometimes in a gush of rapid speech. Their words did not seem to be directly addressed to the crowd. A sudden voice came to me that for some unknown reason they were on our side.

The press was no longer heavy against us. It was thinning rapidly and I could hear the scuffle as we made off down the side streets. My first suspicion then was that the Turkish police. But I changed my mind when the leader came out into a patch of light. He carried no torch, but a long stave with which he belabored the heads of those who were still trying to flee.

It was the most ghastly apparition you can conceive. A tall man dressed in skins, with bare legs and sandal-shod feet. A wisp of scarlet cloth clung to his shoulders, and, drawn over his head down close to his eyes, was a long, thin, pointed kind of petticoat with the tail waving behind it. He capered like a wild animal, keeping up a strange high monotone that fairly gave me the creeps.

I was suddenly aware that the crowd had gone, and us was the last figure and his half-dozen complices, some carrying torches and all wearing clothes of skin. But only the one who seemed to be their leader wore the skull-cap; the rest had bare heads and long tangled hair.

The leader was shouting gibberish at me. His eyes were glassy, like a man who smokes

hemp, and his legs were never still a second. You would think such a figure no better than a mountebank, and yet there was nothing come in it. Fearful and sinister and uncanny it was; and I wanted to do anything to get him away.

As he shouted he kept pointing with his stave up the street which climbed the hillside.

"He means us to move," said Peter. "For God's sake let's get away from this witch-doctor."

I couldn't make sense of it, but one thing was clear. These maniacs had delivered us for the moment from Rasta and his friends.

Then I did a dashed silly thing. I pulled out a sovereign and offered it to the leader. I had only a kind of notion of showing gratitude, and as I had no words I had to show it by deed.

He brought his stick down on my wrist and sent the coin spinning in the gutter. His eyes blazed, and he made his weapon sing round and round. His curse maniac could tell curses well enough, though I didn't follow a word; and he cried to his followers and they cursed me, too. I had offered him a mortal insult and stirred up a worse hornet's nest than Rasta's pub.

Peter and I, with a common impulse, took to our heels. We were not looking for any trouble with demons. Up the steep narrow lane we ran with that bedlamite crowd at our heels. The torches seemed to have gone out, for the place was black as pitch, and we tumbled over banks of sand and splashed through running streams. The men were close behind us, and more than once I felt a stick on my shoulder. But fear lent us wings, and suddenly before us was a blaze of light and we saw the debouchment of a street into a more or less文明-looking shop. The others saw it, too, for they slackened off. Just before we reached the light we stopped and looked round. There was no sound or sight behind us in the dark lane which dipped to the harbor.

"This is our country, Corneille," said Peter, feeling his limbs for bruises. "Too many things happen in too short a time. I am breathless."

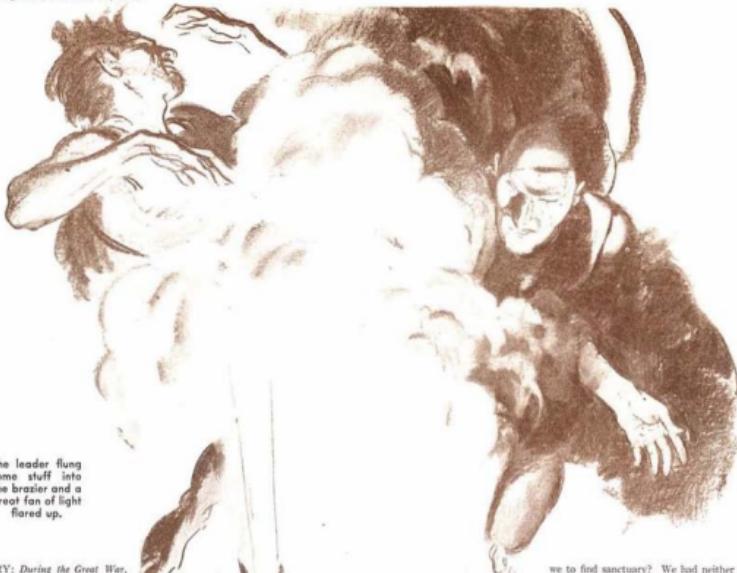
The big street we had struck seemed to run alongside one of the hills. There were lamps in it, and some calls to more or less文明-looking shops. We soon found the hotel to which Kuprasse had directed us, a big place in a courtyard with a very tumble-down-looking portico, and green sun shutters which rattled drearily in the winter's wind. The door was open, and people were packed to the door, mostly with German officers. With some trouble I got an interview with the proprietor, the usual Greek, and told him that we had been sent there by Mr. Kuprasse. That didn't affect him in the least, for we would have been shot into the street if I hadn't remembered about Stumm's pass.

So I explained that we had come from Germany with munitions and only wanted rooms for one night, and he took the pass and handed over a good deal, till it became civil and said he would do the best he could for us.

That best was pretty poor. Peter and I were doubled up in a small room which contained two camp beds and little else. And the room was so cold, though through the wind whistled. We had a wretched dinner of stringy mutton boiled with vegetables, and a white cheese strong enough to raise the dead. But I got a bottle of whisky, for which I paid nothing, and we managed to light a stove in one corner, close the shutters, and warm our hearts with a brew of toddy. After that we went to bed and slept like logs for twelve hours. On the road from Rustchuk we had had uneasy slumbers.

I woke next morning and, looking out from the window whereupon it was snowing. With a lot of trouble I got hold of a servant and made him bring us some of the treacly Turkish coffee. We were both in pretty low spirits. "Europe is a poor cold place," said Peter, "not worth fighting for. There is not one white man's land, and that is not Africa." At the time I heartily agreed with him.

To be Continued



The leader flung some stuff into the brazier and a great fan of light flared up.

THE STORY: During the Great War, Major Richard Hanney undertakes to learn details of a German plot to infiltrate the Moslems and the Bolsheviks in India and elsewhere. The only clue he is given is a paper bearing the words, "Kraeselin," "cancer," and "e. l." which a British secret agent in the East brought in but could not explain before he died.

Hanney has two assistants—Sandy Arbutine and John S. Blenkiron, the latter a rich and eccentric American. They agree to proceed to Constantinople by different routes. On meeting there, it is hoped that one of them will have learned the secret.

At Izipan, Hanney meets Peter Piemont, an old pro-British friend from South Africa; and, under the pretense that they are Boers who want to help Germany, they proceed to the latter country. Hanney never tells himself *Convoluted History*.

They are in Constantinople, a city of Germans, and separated. Hanney goes with von Stumus to the latter's castle, and when von Stumus becomes suspicious of his real purpose, Hanney knocks him unconscious and escapes into a forest.

After many adventures and hairbreadth escapes, he reaches the Black Sea, where he finds a British sailing vessel bound for Rasta. He persuades the captain to take him on as engineer; later Peter Piemont turns up and also secures a job. They have trouble crossing the Turkish frontier but finally reach Constantinople where they are attacked by a mob of Turks who think they are German spies.

I REMEMBER that, sitting on the edge of my bed, I took stock of our position. It was not very cheering. We seemed to have been ambushed, and our friends and who wouldn't forget it in a hurry. He had his crowd of Turkish riff-raff and was bound to get us sooner or later.

There was the maniac in the skin hat. He didn't like Hanney, and Hanney didn't like him. There were scores of some party hostile to the Young Turks.

But on the other hand, he didn't like us, and there would be bad trouble the next time we met him. Finally, there was Stumus and the German Government. It could only be a matter of hours at this rate for us to be picked up and sent to the gallows on our trail.

It would be easy to trace us from Chataldja, as scores they had us we were absolutely done. There was a big black dossier against us, which by no conceivable piece of luck could be spared.

It was clear to me that, unless we could find sanctuary and shed all our various pursuers during this day, we should be done in for good and all. But where on earth were

we to find sanctuary? We had neither of us a word of the language, and there was no way I could see of taking on new characters. For that we would have to go to the coast, and I could not live anywhere. Somewhere, to be sure, there was Blenkiron, but how could we get in touch with him? As for Sandy, I had pretty well given him up. I always thought his last words to me were "I'll be back to you, old man." He was probably somewhere in Asia Minor, and a month or two later would go to Constantinople and hear in some pot-house the yarn of the two wretched Dutchmen who had disappeared so soon from men's sight.

The result was that Kupremont was no good. It would have been all right if we had got him unexpected, and could have gone on quietly frequenting the place till Blenkiron picked us up. But to do that we wanted leisure and secrecy, and here we were with a pack of hours at our backs. The only hope lay in the fact that the German Government expected them we should be gathered in by Rasta, or by the German military police, or by the madman in the skin cap.

It was a stark impossibility to hang about on the off-chance of meeting Blenkiron.

It was with some bitterness that this was the 17th day of January, the day of our assignation. I had had high hopes all the way down the Danube of meeting with Blenkiron—for all I knew he would be in time—of giving him the information I had on the road to collect, and of piecing it together with what he had found out of one of the whole story which Sir Walter hungered for. After that, I thought it wouldn't be hard to get away from Rumania, and to get home through Russia. I had hoped to be back with my last load in February, having done as good a bit of work as anybody in the world. But it was a long time before any information would die with me, unless I could Blenkiron before the evening.

I talked the thing over with Peter, and he agreed that we would fairly up and do it. We decided to go to the hotel that afternoon, and to trust to the rest. It wouldn't do to wander about the streets, so we sat tight in our room all morning, and snogged old hunting yarns to keep our minds from the beastly present. We got some food at noon, and old matinée and a bottle of beer, and a bottle of whisky. Then I paid the bill, for I didn't care to stay there another night. About half-past three we went into the street, without the foggiest notion where we would find our next quarters.

It was raining heavily, which was a piece of luck for us. Peter had no greatcoat, so we went into a Jew's shop and bought a ready-made abomination, which looked

Green-mantle

Another thrilling instalment of this great story
of the Secret Service

By JOHN BUCHAN



With a guard on each side of us we stumbled out into the snowy street.

Hilda von Einem.



as if it might have been meant for a dissenting parson. It was no good saving my money when the future was so black. The snow made the streets deserted, and we turned down the long lane which led to Rathbelle's ferry and found perfectly dry snow. I do not think we met a soul till we got to Kuprasso's shop.

We walked straight through the cafe, which was empty, and down the dark passage, till we were stopped by the garden door. I knocked and it swung open. There was the bleak yard, with patches of snow, and a blare of light from the window at the other end. The door was open, and fiddles, and the sound of women's talk. We paid the negro at the door, and passed from the bitter afternoon into a garish saloon.

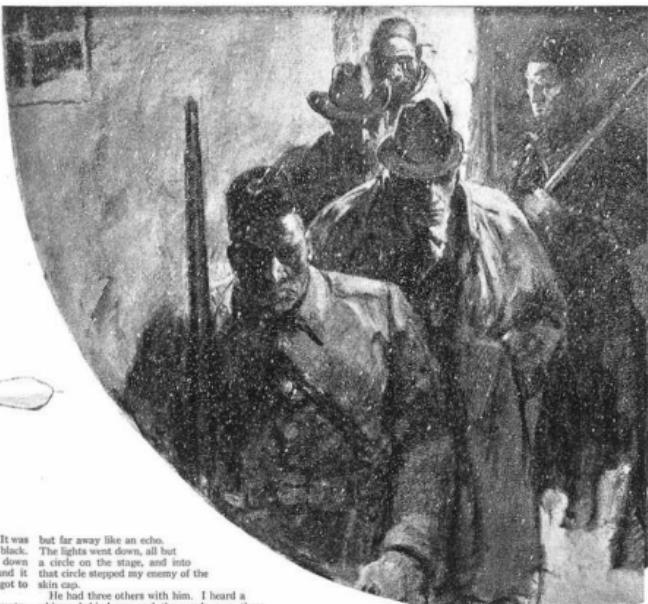
There were forty or fifty people there, drinking coffee and sipping beer, filling the air with the fumes of latakia. Most of them were Turks in European clothes and the rest, but there were some German officers and what looked like German civilians—Army Service Corps clerks, probably, and members of the Arasian. A woman in cheongsam fashions was tinkling at the piano. There were some short fenders with the officers. Peter and I sat down modestly in the nearest corner, where old Kuprasso saw us and sent us coffee. A girl who looked like a Jewess came over to us and took a French cigarette. She had a ring of a girl about her.

Presently a girl came on the stage and danced a sultana kraal, all a clashing of tambourines and wriggling. I have seen native women do the same thing better in a Moslemique kraal. Another sang a German song, a simple, sentimental thing, a golden hair and a white face, and a German present applied. The voice was so timorous and common that, coming to it from weeks of rough travelling, it made me impatient. I forgot that, while for the others it might be a vulgar dancing-hall, for us it was as perfunctory as a dog's bark.

Peter did not share my mood. He was quite interested in it, as he was interested in everything new. He had a genius for living in the moment.

I remember there was a drop-scene on which was disclosed a blue sea, with hills in the distance. As the tobacco smoke grew thicker and the fiddles went on squeaking, this tawdry picture began to mesmerize me. I seemed to be looking out of a window at a lovely summer landscape where there were no wars or dangers. I seemed to feel the warmth and the sweet fragrance of blossoms from the islands. And then I became aware that a queer scent had stolen into the atmosphere.

There were beaters burning at both ends to warm the room, and the thin smoke from these smelt like incense. Somebody had been putting powder in the flues, for surely the place became quite still.



but far away like an echo. The lights went down, all but a circle on the stage, and into that circle stepped my enemy of the silk cap.

He led these others with him. I heard a whisper behind me, and the words were those which Kuprasso had used the day before. These bedlamites were called the Companions of the Rosy Hours and Kuprasso had promised great dancing.

I heard a noise, and then we us, for they had fairly given me the horrors. Peter left the same, and we both made ourselves very small in that dark corner. But the newcomers had no eyes for us.

In a twinkling the passion changed from a common sordidness which had been in Chicago or Paris, to a place of mystery—yes, and of beauty. It became the garden-house of Suliman the Red, whoever that sportsman may have been. Sandy had said that the ends of the earth converged here, and he was right. I lost all consciousness of time and space—about Germany, from now on, was a faraway Jewess—and saw only strange figures leaping in a circle of light, figures that came out of the deepest darkness to make big music.

The figures were some stuff into the brainier and a great fan of blue light flared up. He was weaving circles, and he was singing something shrill and high, while his companions made a chorus with their deep monotones.

I can't tell you what the dance was. I had seen the Russian ballet just before, and some of the steps were the same. The dancing master had vanished. It was a window I was looking from, and I was gazing at the finest landscape on earth, lit by the pure clean light of morning.

It seemed to be part of the world, but like no world I had ever seen. It was like a wider, more gracious world. Indeed, I was looking at it first youth. I was feeling the kind of immortal light-headedness which only a boy knows in the dawning of his days. I had no longer any fear of these magic-makers. They were kindly wizards, who had brought me to a new world.

Then slowly from the silence there distilled drops of music. They came like water falling a long way into a cup, each the essential quality of pure sound. We, with our elaborate harmonies, have forgotten the charm of single notes. The African natives know it well. I remember a learned man once told me that the Greeks had the same

art. These silver bells broke out of infinite space, so exquisite and perfect that no mortal words could have been fitted to them. That was the music, I expect, that the morning stars made when they sang together.

It was very slow. It changed. The glow passed from blue to purple, then to angry red. Bit by bit the notes spun together till they had made a harmony—a fierce, restless harmony. And I was conscious again of the skin-clad dances beckoning out of their circle.

There was no sound but the morning now. All the dancing youth had fled. The passion was beating in the air—terrible, savage passion, which belonged neither to day nor night, life nor death, but to the half-world between them. I suddenly felt the dances most monstrous, inhuman, terrible. I was about to have a taste of mortal blood. Cries broke from the hearers—cries of anger and lust and terror. I heard a woman sob, and Peter, who is as tough as any mortal, took tight hold of my arm.

I could not see these Companions of the Rosy Hours were the only thing in the world to fear. Rasta and Stumm were feeble simpletons by contrast. The window I had been looking out of was changed to a prison wall—I could see the mortar between the massive blocks. In a second I could see them being broken, and then I heard the more foul who-doctors. I felt the burning eyes of their leader looking for me in the gloom. Peter was praying audibly beside me, and I could have choked him. His infernal chatter would reveal us, for it seemed to me that there was no one in the place except us and the magic-workers.

THEN suddenly the spell was broken. The door was flung open and a great gust of icy wind swirled through the hall, driving clouds of ashes from the beaters. I heard a loud shout, and then the window beside us. For the moment it was quite dark, and then someone lit one of the flare lamps by the stage. It revealed nothing but the common squalor of a low saloon—white faces, sleep eyes, and frowny brows. The drop-scene was there in all its deformity. The Companions of the Rosy Hours had gone. But at the door stood men in uniform. I heard a German a long way off



Illustrated by
DUDLEY GLYNNE
SUMMERS



I noticed that the man shuffled fifteen of the oranges into a cluster. Blenkiron felt them and pushed two aside.

“Enter thy bodyguards,” and I heard him distinctly; for, though I could not see clearly, my hearing was desperately acute. That is often the way when you suddenly come out of a swoon.

The place seemed like magic. Turk and German turned over and over, and the floor was walled away. No one seemed to stop them, and then I saw the reason. Those guards had come for us. This must be Stumm at last. The authorities had tracked us down.

A sudden revelation leaves a man with low vitality. I didn't seem to care greatly. We were done, and there was an end of it. It was Klemet, the act of God, and there was nothing for it but to submit. There's a finality about the end of resistance.

The man was utterly and absolutely over.

A man who seemed to be a sergeant pointed to us and said something to Klemet, who nodded. We got heavily to our feet and stumbled toward them. We were led through a dark, narrow corridor, walked through the dark passage and the empty shop, and out into the snowy street. There was a closed carriage waiting which they motioned us to get into. It looked exactly like the Black Maria.

Both of us were like trees, with our hands on our knees. I didn't know where I was going and I didn't care. We seemed to be rumbling up the hill, and then I caught the glare of lighted streets.

“This is the end of it, Peter,” I said.

“The end of it, Peter,” I said, that was all our talk.

By and by—hours later it seemed—we stopped. Someone opened the door and we got out, to find ourselves in a courtyard with a huge dark building around. The prison, I guessed, and I wondered if they would give us blankets, for it was a cold night.

We entered a door, and found ourselves in a big stone hall. It was quite warm, which made me more hopeful about our cells. A man in some kind of uniforms pointed to the stairs, up which we plodded wearily. I was too tired to think, or in any way to forecast the future. Another warden met us and took us down a passage till we halted at a door. He stood aside and motioned us to enter.

I guessed that this was the governor's room, and we should be put through our first examination. My head was too

stupid to think, and I made up my mind to keep perfectly mum. Yes, even if they tried to make me talk. I had no kind of a mouth, but I believed not in giving them any.

I turned to Peter. “I wonder if they know what kind of salve Turk or bulging-naked German we should find inside.”

It was a pleasant room, with a polished wood floor and a big fire burning on the hearth. Beside the fire a man lay on a couch, and the table drawn up beside him. On that table was a small glass of milk, and a number of Patience cards spread in rows.

I stared blankly at the spectacle. till I saw a second figure. It was the man in the skin-cap, the leader of the dancing maniacs. Both Peter and I backed sharply at the sight and then stood stock still.

For the dancer crossed the room in two strides and grabbed both of my hands.

“Dick, old man,” he cried, “I'm most awfully glad to see you again.”

A SPASM of incredulity, a vast relief, and that sharp joy which comes of instant release came over across my mind. I had come suddenly out of very black waters into an unbelieveable calm. I dropped into the nearest chair and tried to grapple with something far beyond words.

“Sunny, I said, as soon as I got my breath, “you're an insectate devil. You've given Peter and me the fight of our lives.”

“It was the only way, Dick. If I hadn't come mewling like a tom-cat at your heels yesterday, Rasta would have got us both. I'm here to tell you, to tell you, You two have given me a pretty anxious time, and it took me a long time to get you safe here. However, that is all over now. Make yourselves at home, my children.”

“Over!” I cried incredulously, for my wits were still wool-gathering, and I had to think.

“You may call it my humble home”—it was Blenkiron's sleek voice that spoke. “We've been preparing for you, Major, but it was only yesterday I heard of your friend.”

I introduced Peter.

“Major, I said Blenkiron, “pleased to meet you. Well, as I was observing, you're safe enough here, but you've cut it mighty fine. Officially, a Dutchman called Brandt was to be arrested this afternoon and handed over to the German authorities. What German bony trouble that Dutchman was! I think didn't care in getting the body; but such are the lawless ways of an Oriental despotism. Meantime the Ustman will be no more. He will stink cease upon the midnight without pain, your poet wrote.”

“But I don't understand,” I stammered. “Who arrested us?”

“My men,” said Sandy. “We have a bit of a graft here, and it wasn't difficult to manage it. Old Moelendorff will be here in a few hours, and he'll take care of the mystery too deep for him. That is the adventure of a Government run by a pack of adventurers. But, by Jove, Dick, we hadn't any time to spare. If Rasta had got you, or the Germans had had the job of lifting you, your goose would have been jolly well cooked. I had some unequipped hours this morning.”

The thing was too deep for me. I looked at Blenkiron shuffling his Patience cards with his old sleepy smile, and Sandy, dressing like a bandit in his coat, with his leathern face as brown as his hair, arm tattooed with grimacing rings, and the fox pelt drawn tight over brow and ears. It was still a nightmare world, but the dream was getting pleasanter. Peter said not a word, but I could see his eyes heavy with his own thoughts.

Blenkiron helped himself from the sofa and waddled to a cupboard.

“You boys must be hungry,” he said. “My diabolism has given me half as usual, and I don't care to eat a meal. But I want to eat a meal. For instance, for you, I guess you'll be up to some after your travels.”

He brought out a couple of Strasbourg pies, a cheese, a cold chicken, a loaf and three bottles of chianti.

“Fiz,” said Sandy rapturously. “And a dry Heidiwick, too! We're in luck, Dick, old man.” I never had a more welcome meal, for we had starved in that dirty hotel. But I had still the old feeling of the Orient, and before I began I asked about the door.

“That's all right,” said Sandy. “My fellows are on the stairs and at the gate. If the Metrebs are in position, they may be able to hold us. But I want to keep off. Your face is blotted out, clean vanished away, and you begin tomorrow morning with a new sheet. Blenkiron's the man you've got to thank for that. He was pretty certain you'd get here, but he was also certain you'd arrive in a hurry with a good many enquiries behind you. So he arranged that you should look away and start fresh.”

“Your name is Richard Hartau,” Blenkiron said, “born in Cleveland, Ohio, of German parentage on both sides. One of our best men. He's a good fellow, and he's in the Governor's eye. You arrived this afternoon from Constantza, and I met you at the packet. The clothes for the part are in your bedroom next door. But I guess all that can wait, for I'm anxious to get to bed. We're not on a joyride, you know. We'll learn about the direction of our adventure. I'm just dying to hear them, but they'll keep.”

He gave Peter and me cigars, and we sat ourselves in armchairs in front of the blaze. Sandy squinted crosslegged on the heartheng and a tall old friend perched which he evidently had just now removed from his skin. And he began that conversation which had never been out of my thoughts for four really hectic weeks.

"I presume to begin," said Blenckires, "it's because I reckon my story is the shortest. I have to confess to you, gentlemen, that I have failed."

He drew down the corners of his mouth till it looked a cross between a music hall comedian and a sick child.

"I was going to look for something in the root of the hedge, you wouldn't want to scour the road in a high-speed automobile. And still less would you want to get a bird's-eye view in an airplane. That parable about the man who was looking for his keys and I've been searching on the piles, but what I was wanting was in the ditch all the time, and I naturally missed it . . . I had the wrong statue. Major, I was too high up and refined. I've been a grecian through Europe like Barnum's Circus, and living with generals and transparencies. Not that I haven't picked up a lot of noos, and got some very interesting sidelights on high politics. But the thing I'm looking for is to be found on my beat, for those that knew it weren't going to tell. In that kind of society they don't get drunk and blab after their tenth cocktail. So I guess I've no contribution to make to the Sir John Halliwell's mind, except that he's dead right. Yes, sir, he has hit the spot and rung the bell. There is a mighty miracle-working proposition being floated in these parts, but the people are too dead to them. They aren't taking in more than they can help on the ground floor."

Blenckires stopped to light a fresh cigar. He was lecherous then when he left London, and these were probably the last even. I fancy his journey had not been as far-lined as he made out.

"I've found out one thing, and that is, that the last of the Germanists in Europe is the last of the New East. That is what your statesmen don't figure enough on. She'll give up Belgium and Alsace-Lorraine and Poland, but she'll never give up the road to Mesopotamia. You have to be by the thousand miles from her. Sir Wallis is a pretty bright-eyed citizen, and he sees it right enough. If the worst happens, Kaiser will fling overboard a lot of ballast in Europe, and will look like a big wolf for the last bit left. The reason is if he has the road to the East safe, Germany's like a scorpion: her sting's in her tail, and that tail stretches way down into Asia."

"I got that deer in the woods made out that she was going to be dead easy for her to keep that tail healthy. Turkey's a bit of an anxiety, as you'll soon discover. But Germany thinks she can manage it, and I won't say more about it. It depends on him also, and she's not in a good one. I tried to find out, but they gave me nothing but eyewash. I had to pretend to be satisfied, for the position of John S. wasn't so strong as to allow him to tell me. I'll tell one of the neighbors, he looked wise, and spoke of the might of German arms and German organization and German staff-work. I used to nod my head and get enthusiastic about these, but I was all sorts of a fool. He's got a trick in his sleeve—that much I know, but I'm damned if I can put a name to it. I pray to God you boys have been clever."

His tone was quite melancholy, and I was moved enough to feel more glad. He had been the best friend with the best cause. It would be a good joke if the amateur succeeded where the expert failed.

I looked at Sandy. He filled his pipe again, and pinched back his skin from his brows. What was he thinking? Well, indeed, his high-boned face, and strained eyebrows he had the appearance of some mad mullah.

"I went straight to Smyrna," he said. "It wasn't difficult, for you see I had laid down a good deal of literature to trust. I labelled the town as a Greek moneylender from the Fayum, but I had friends there I could count on, and the same evening I was a Turkish gipsy, a member of the most famous fraternity in the World. And I had long been a member, and I'm blood-brother of the chief boss, so I stepped into the part ready made. But I found out that the Company of the Rosy Hours was not what I had known it in 1910. Then it had been run for the Young Turks and reform; now it had been after

the old regime and was the last hope of the Orthodox. It had no use for Enver and his friends, and the last of the old regime were the fewest of the Tenton. It stood for Islam and the old ways, and might be described as a Conservative-Nationalist cause. But it was uncommon powerful in the present. The reason for that was Enver's meddling with it. The dangerous thing about it was that it said nothing and apparently did nothing. It just bided its time and took notes.

You can imagine that this was the very kind of crowd for my purpose. I knew of old its little ways, for with all its orthodoxy it disliked a good deal in magic, and owed half its power to its atmosphere of the uncanny. The reason was that it was the last sort of the ordinary Turk. You saw a bit of one of our dances this afternoon. Dick—pretty good, wasn't it? They could go anywhere, and no questions asked. They knew what the other Turk was thinking, for they were the best intelligence department in the Ottoman Empire—far better than Enver's *Küdaglyah*. And they were popular, too, for they had always bowed to the king, to the *Asiatic*—the German who was squeezing out the life-blood of the Osmanli for their own ends. It would have been as much as the life of the Committee or its German masters was worth to lay a hand on us, for we cleaned up like swine, and we are not in the habit of sticking at trifles.

"Well, you may imagine it wasn't difficult for me to move where I wanted. My dress and the other things I had to have I travelled from Smyrna by the new railway to Panderma on the Marmora, and got there just before Christmas. That was after Anzac and Sevilia had been won, but I could hear the news hard at Canakkale. From Panderma I started to cross to Thrace in a coasting steamer. And there an uncommon funny thing happened—I got torpedoed."

It must have been about the last effort of a British submarine in those waters. But she got us all right. She gave us ten minutes to take to the boats, and then sent the blighted old packet and a fine cargo of 6-inch shells into the water. There were many passengers, so it was easy enough to get ashore in the ship's boats. The submarine sat on the surface watching us, as we wailed and howled in the true Oriental way, and I saw her go down with a splash in the minaret-tower. Who do you think it was? Tommy Elliot, who lives on the other side of the hill from me at home.

"I gave Tommy the surprise of his life. As we hung on the boat, I started the 'Flowers of the Forest'—the old version—on the antique stringed instrument I carried, and I sang the words very plain. Tommy's eyes bulged out of his head, and he stared at me in Enghish to know what the devil I was. I replied in the broadest Scots, which no man in the submarine or in our boat could have understood a word of. 'Maister Tammany,' I cried, 'what wad ye do? For the last time, lad into a castle! I'll gie ye your kail through the reek for this ploy the next time I forgether wi' ye on the top o' Caerdon.'

Tammy spotted me in a second. He launched till he cried, and as we moved off shouted to me in the same language to 'pit a stoot hert tae a stey bræ.' I hope to Heaven he had the sense not to tell my facts, or he'd have been a dead man. He never much approved of my wanderings, and thought I was safely anchored in the battalions.

"Well, to make a long story short, I got to Constantinople, and pretty soon found touch with Blenckires. The rest you know. And now for business. I have been fairly lucky—but not more, for I haven't got to the bottom of the thing nor anything like it. But I have got to the top of the *Asiatic*'s riddles. You know the meaning of *Kasvendin*?"

"Sir Walter was right, as Blenckires has told us. There's a great stirring in Islam, something moving on the surface of the waters. They have no bottom to it. The religious revivals come in cycles, and one was due about now. And they are quite clear about

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Greenmantle

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the details. A seer has arisen of the blood of the Prophet, and will restore the Khalifate to its former grandeur. In short, he is a prophet. His sayings are everywhere in the Moslem world. All the orthodox believers have them by heart. That is why they are enduring grinding poverty and profligate taxation, and that is why their most popular soldiers are up to the neck and dying without complaint in Gallipoli and Transcaucasia. They believe they are on the eve of a great deliverance.

Now the first thing I found out was that the Young Turks had nothing to do with this. They are unpopular and unorthodox and no true Turks. But Germany has. How, I don't know, but I could see quite plainly that the German Army General was regarded as a collaborator in the movement. It is that belief that is keeping the present regime going. The ordinary Turk loathes the Committee, but there are some officers peripherally extracted from Germany. It is not a case of Enver and the rest carrying on their shoulders the unpopular Teuton; it is a case of the Teuton carrying the unpopular Committee. And Germany's god is just this same Enver—the one he has come hand in hand in the coming of the new deliverance.

"They talk about the thing quite openly. It is called the *Kasab-i-hurriyet*, the Palladium of Liberty. The prophet himself is known as 'the Kaaba'—the Kaaba, and his four ministers are called also after jewels—Sapphire, Ruby, Pearl and Topaz. You will hear their names as often in the talk of the towns and villages as you will hear the names of the great English. But no one knew where Zimrad was or where he would reveal himself, though every week came his messages to the faithful. All that I could learn was that he and his followers were coming from the West."

"You will say, what about *Kasvevin*? That puzzled me dreadfully, for no one used

the phrase. The House of the Spirit! It is an obvious name, just as in England some new might call itself the Church of Christ. Only no one seemed to use it.

"But by and by I discovered that there was an inner and an outer circle in this mystery. Every cross between esoteric sides is known in the Committee here. I struck this side in Constantinople. Now there is a very famous Turkish shaka called *Kasvevin*, one of those old half-comic miracle-plays with an absurdly moving plot. It is a very old story, and would take a week to read. That tale tells of the coming of a prophet, and I found that the select of the faith spoke of the new revelation in terms of it. The prophet in that in this tale the prophet is aided by one or two few women who play much part in the pathology of Islam. That is the point of the tale, and it is partly a jest, but mainly a religious mystery. The prophet, too, is not called Enver."

"I know," I said; "he is called Greenmantle."

Sandy scrambled to his feet, letting his pipe drop on the fireplace.

"*How* how on earth did you find out that?" he cried.

Then I told them of Stumm and Gaulian and the whispered words I had not been meant to hear. The old man said to me the secret of a steady stare, unusual from one who seemed always to have his eyes abstracted, and Sandy had taken to ranging up and down the room.

"It is the heart of the place. That is what I always thought. If we're to find the Kaaba-i-hurriyet it is no good losicing among the Committee or in the Turkish provinces. The Committee in or the German-Dick, you should not have crossed the Dicke."

"That's what I half-feared," I said. "But on the other hand it is obvious that the

thing must come east, and sooner rather than later. I take it you can't afford to delay too long. I have to get out of here if we can stick it out here we must hit the trail . . . I've got another bit of evidence. I have solved Harry Bullivant's third puzzle."

Sandy's eyes were very bright and I had an audience on wires.

"Did you say that in the tale of *Kassandra*, a woman is the ally of the prophet?"

"Yes, in the *Sophocles*, 'what of it?'"

"Only that the same thing is true of Greenmantle. I can give you her name."

I fetched a piece of paper and a pencil from Blenkiron's desk and handed it to Sandy.

"Write down Harry Bullivant's third word."

"He promptly wrote down 'I.'"

Then I told them of the other name, Sturz and Gaufield had spoken. I told of my discovery as I lay in the woodman's cottage.

"The 'I' is not the letter of the alphabet, but the numeral. The name is Von Einen-Hilf-Einer."

"Good old Harry," said Sandy softly. "He was a dashed clever chap. Hilda von Einen? Who and where is she? For if we find her we have done the trick."

"I can't tell you that, gentlemen," he said. "I saw her no later than yesterday. She is a lovely lady. She happens also to be the owner of this house."

But I began to laugh. It was too comic to have stumbled across Europe and lighted on the very headquarters of the puzzle we had set out to wurdle.

But Blenkiron did not laugh. At the moment Hilda von Einen had suddenly become very solemn, and the sight of his face pulled me up short.

"I don't like it, gentlemen," he said. "I would rather you had mentioned any other name, but I have a hunch that she is in this city, but I have been long enough to size up the various political bosses. They haven't much to them, I reckon they would stand up against what we could show them in the United States. I have met her met the Frau von Einen, and that lady's a very different proposition. The man that will understand her has got to take a bigger size in hats."

"Why, that is just what I can't tell you. She was a great excavator of Babylonian and Hittite ruins, and she married a diplomat who went off three years back. It isn't what she has been, but what she is, and that's a mighty clever woman."

Blenkiron's respect did not depress me. I felt as if it last we had got our job narrowed to a decent compass, for I had been casting about for a long time. I told him where she was.

"That I don't know," said Blenkiron. "You won't find people unusually anxious to gratify your natural curiosity about Frau von Einen."

"I think that having out," said Sandy. "That's the advantage of having a push like mine. Meantime, I've got to clear for my day's work isn't finished. Dick, you and Peter must go to bed at once. I'll see you in the morning."

"I am in an amazement. Sandy spoke like a medical adviser."

"Because I want your clothes—the things you've got on now. I'll take them off with me and you'll never see them again."

"You've a queer taste in souvenirs," I said.

"Say rather the Turkish police. The current in the Bosphorus is pretty strong, and these sad relics of two misguided Dutchmen will be washed up somewhere near Sergio Point. In this game you must drop the curtain neat and pat at the end of each scene, if you don't want trouble later with the missing heir and the family lawyer."

I WALKED out of that house next morning with Blenkiron's arm in mine, a different being from the friendless creature who had looked vacantly at day before for secretary. To his wife, I said, "I am in amazement. I had a navy-blue suit with square padded shoulders, a neat black bow-tie, shoes with

a hump at the toe, and a brown bowler. Over that I wore a greatcoat lined with wolf fur. I had a small moustache, and one of Blenkiron's cigars in my mouth. Peter had been made to trim his beard, and, dressed in unassuming pepper-and-salt, looked with his docile eyes and quiet voice a very respectable student. Old Bullivant had done a job in style, for, if you'll believe it, he had brought the clothes all the way from London. I realized now why he and Sandy had been fooling around in my wardrobe. Peter's suit had been made to fit him, and the coat had been made to fit mine. I had no difficulty about the accent. Any man brought up in the colonies can get his tongue round American, and I flattered myself I made a very fair shape at the line of the Mediterranean."

The wind had gone to the south and the snow was melting fast. There was a blue sky above Asia, and away to the north masses of white clouds drifted over the Black Sea. What I saw seemed the most agreeable digest of cities now took on a strange beauty, the beauty of unexpected homes and tongues of grey water winding below cypress-studded banks. A man's temper has a lot to do with his appreciation of scenes. I felt a free man once more, and could use my eyes.

That street was a jumble of every nationality on earth. There were Turkish regulars in their queer conical khaki helmets, and Hittite ladies who had come to混杂 with Europe. There were squads of Germans in flat forage-caps staring vacantly at novel sights, and quick to salute an officer on the sidewalk. Turks in their carriages passed. And Turks are good Arab horsemen. Turks who looked as if they had come out of the Ark. But it was the rabble that caught the eye—a very wild, pinched, miserable rabble. Men in rags, life and soul worn out of them, you could see them down the street to the accompaniment of entreaties for alms in all the tongues of the Tower of Babel. Blenkiron and I behaved as if we were international tourists. We were stopped at one end and given a penny a second, passing comments in high-pitched Western voices.

We went into a cafe and had a cup of coffee and a cigarette each in the afternoon. Blenkiron's pipe had been closed, but now he took out some small nickels and planted five down on the table. The man cried down blessings and picked up three. Blenkiron's hand swiftly swept the other two into his pocket.

But seemed to me queer, and I remarked that I had never before seen a beggar who gave change. Blenkiron said nothing, and promptly we moved on and came to the harbor-side.

There were a number of small tugs moored alongside, and one or two bigger crafts—fruit boats, I judged, which used to ply to a decent compass. I had never seen such a Hittite port, so sun-baked, so pestilential, so dimmed from disease. We stopped at one of them and watched a fellow in a blue nightcap splicing ropes. He raised his eyes once and looked at us, and then kept on with his business.

Blenkiron asked him where he came from but he shook his head, not understanding the tongue. A Turkish policeman came up and stared at us, somewhat until Blenkiron stopped his coat as if by accident and displayed a tiny square of ribbon, at which he saluted. Failing to make conversation with the sailor, Blenkiron flung him three of his black, and said, "If you can smoke, friend, if you can't talk," he said.

The man grimed and caught the three neatly in the air. Then to my amazement he tossed one of them back.

The donkey began to grumble as it lay on the ground. "That boy's a connoisseur of tobacco," he said. As we moved away I saw the Turkish policeman pick it up and put it inside his cap.

The donkey lay by a long stretch on the coast of the hill. There was a man selling oranges on a tray, and Blenkiron stopped to look at them. I noticed that the man shuffled fifteen into a cluster. Blenkiron felt the oranges, as if to see that they were ripe, and pushed them aside. The man instantly restored them to the group, never raising his eyes.

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"This ain't the time of year to buy fruit," said Blenkirton as we passed on. "Those oranges are rotten as mud."
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"We were almost on our own doorstep before I guessed the meaning of the business. "Is your morning's work finished?" I said.

"Our morning's walk?" he asked innocently.

hour and I'll be at your service, Major."

That afternoon, after Peter had cooked a wonderfully good luncheon, I had a heart-to-heart talk with Blenkiron.

"My business is to get noos," he said; "and before I start in on a stant I make considerable preparations. All the time in London when I was yelping at the British Government, I was busy with Sir Walter arranging things ahead. We used to meet in queer places and at all hours of the night. I fixed up a lot of connections in this city before I arrived, and especially a noos service with your Foreign Office by way of Rumania and Russia. In a day or two I guess our friends will know all about our discoveries."

At that I opened my eyes very wide.

"Why, yes," said Mr. Britisher, "any nation that is willing to pay for your Intelligence Service is. I recollect it's a very good idea, the belligerents. You never talked about it in peace time, and you shamed the theatrics out of the wiles of Tootton. But you have these wires laid good and sure. I calculate there isn't much that happens in any corner of the world that you don't know within twenty-four hours. I don't say a single soul in the nose well. I don't take much stock in your political push. They're a lot of silver-tongued, no doubt, but it won't oratorise that is wanted in that racket. The William Jennings Bryan speech was a good example. It was like a chicken-coop, and those inside were all to be had as if their little run were all the world. But if the politicians make mistakes it isn't from lack of good instruction to guide them. They're not the sort of people to handle and could have been a pig's helpline. I'll phone for the Intelligence Department of the British Admiralty. Yes, sir, I take off my hat to your Government sleuth."

"Did they provide you with ready-made spies here?" I asked in astonishment.

In Germany I buried myself deep in the local atmosphere and never peeped out. That was my game for I was looking for someone in Germany itself, and didn't know, I failed where you succeeded. But so soon as I crossed the Danube I set about opening up my lines of communication, and I hadn't been two days in this metropolis before I found out my telephone exchange number. I called up and said, "I want to speak to you, for it's a pretty busy business." "We've got the caten cipher . . . No, it ain't my invention. It's your Government's. Any-
one, babe, babele or doted, can carry my messages—you see some of them today— it takes a minute to set the game, and it's a lot of fun to play with, and it's a lot of fun to out the results. Some day you shall hear it all, for I guess it would please you."

"How do you use it?" I asked.
"Well, I get early mous of what is going on in this cabbage-patch. Likewise I get news of all the important people. I can send a message to Mr. X, in Petrograd and Mr. Y, in London, or if I wish, to Mr. Z, in New York. What's the matter with that for a post office? I'm the best informed man in Constantinople, for old General Gavrilo Princip, he's a good man, but that, and Envoy prefers not to listen at all. Also, I could give them points on what is happening at their very door, for our friend Sandy is a big boss in the best-run crowd of mountebanks that ever fiddled secrets out of men's hearts. Without their help I wouldn't have cut myself out of the business."

"I thank you to tell me everything, Blenio," I said. "I've been playing a part, for

iron, I said. I've been playing a part for

the past month, and it wears my nerves to tatters. Is this job very tiring, for if it is, I doubt I may buckle up."

"Wearing a mild word," I said. "But I want to know another thing. It seems to me that the line you've picked is as good as could be. But it's a cast-iron line. It commits us pretty deep and it won't be a simple job to drop it."

He shook his head. "I reckon not. In the first place we haven't finished our enquiries. We've got Greenmantle located right enough, thanks to you, but we still know mighty little about that holy man. In the second place it won't be as bad as you think. This shock lacks cohesion, sir. It is not going to last for ever. I calculate that before you and I strike the site of the garden that Adam and Eve frequented there will be a queer turn of affairs. Anyhow, it's good enough to gamble on."

as good as a staff lecture. He made out that the situation was none too bright anywhere. The troops released from Gallipoli wanted a lot of refitment, and would be slow in reaching

ing the Transcaucasian frontier, where the Russians were threatening. The Army of Syria was pretty nearly a rabble under the amateur Duley. This was the main charge of a serious invasion of Egypt being undertaken. Only is Mesopotamia did things look fairly cheerful, owing to the blunders of British strategy. "And you may take it from me," he said, "that the old Turk mobilized a total of a million men, he has lost forty per cent of them already, and if I'm anything of a prophet he's going pretty soon to lose more."

He wore a long coat and enlarged on politics. "I reckon I've got the measure of the Young Turks and their precious Committee. Those boys aren't any good. Enver's bright enough, and for sure he's got sand. He's a stickler for fair play, and good chicken, but he backs the larger vicious side. He doesn't understand the intricacies of the job no more than a sucking-child, so the German boys play with him till his tender goes and he bursts a rivet. There is a *very* dog who wants to batter mankind with a club. Both these boys would have made good cow-punchers in the old days, and they might have got a living off it. Well, the gunpowder is all used up now, and I reckon the class of Jesse James or Bill the Kid, excepting that they're college-educated and can patter languages. But they haven't the original power of language the brutes have. A word clear, though. Their main idea is to get busy with their firearms, and people are getting tired of the Black Hand stunt. The hold on the country is just the hold that a man has over a brown trout over a cormorant's walking-stick. The cowboys heads in the Committee are growing shabby of them and an old fox like Djavid is lying low till his time comes. Now I don't believe arguing that a gunpowder king has got to be either together or they may have separately. They've got no grip on the ordinary Turk, barring the fact that they are active and he is sleepy, and that they've got their guns loaded."

"What about Greece?" I asked.

Blenkiron laughed. "It's not so sort of a happy family. But the Young Turks know that without the German boost they'll be struck up like Huns, and the Germans can't stand the Turks. They're wondering what would happen if Turkey got sick of the game and made a separate peace. The road would be open for Russia to the Aegean. Fergy of Bulgaria would take his gunpowder goods, and other mafioso would never waste a day thinking about it. You'd have Russia coming in on the Allies' side. Things would look pretty black for that control of the Near East on which Germany has based all her wisdom."

Kathy says that she's got to be prevented from all costs, but how is it going to be done?"

Blenkiron's face had become very solemn again. "It would be done under German eyes, I'm afraid. They game's mighty neat, but it's still a gosh."

"And that chance is a woman and an old man. I reckon our laundry has a bigger brain than any man I ever saw, and he's the real star of the show. When I came here I reported to her, and presently you've got to do the same. I am curious as to how she'll strike you, for I'm free to admit that she impressed me considerably."

"It looks as if our job were a long way from the end," I said.

"It's scarcely begun," said Blenkiron.

THAT TALK did a lot to cheer my spirits, of course, for I was still in my need.

It was a most diversified existence. I used to wake up in the morning, wondering where I should be at night, and yet quite pleased at the uncertainty. Greenmeat became a sort of myth with me, and the cost of living, if I may say so, was of course the way he was like. The nearest I got was a picture of an old man in a turban coming out of a bottle in a cloud of smoke, which I remember from a child's edition of the *Arabian Nights*. And he was a Turk, and had a fat dinner. Sometimes I thought of her as a fat old German crone, sometimes as a harsh-

featured woman like a schoolmistress with thin lips and eyeglasses. But I had to fit the East into the picture, so I made her young and gave her a touch of the languid hour in which she was always willing to snappish Blenkiron on the subject, but he shut up like a rat-trap. He was looking for bad trouble in that direction, and was disinclined to go after it beforehand.

We had two housekeepers. Our servants were two of Sandy's lot, for Blenkiron had very rightly cleared out the Turkish caretakers, and they worked like beavers under Sandy's eye. Sandy had been a boxer, and was well remembered after in my life. I walked about the city with Blenkiron, keeping my eyes open, and speaking very civil. The third night we were bidden to dinner at the residence of an old man in a long coat and set out in an ancient cab. Blenkiron had fetched a dress suit of mine, from which my own tailor's label had been cut and a New York one substituted.

General Stumm and the Metternich the Ambassador had gone up the road to Nish to meet the Kaiser, who was touring in those parts, so Moellendorff was the biggest German in the city. He was a thin, long-faced fellow, dressed very simply, and he was not very popular either with the Germans or the Turks. He was polite to both of us, but I am bound to say that I got a better friend when I entered the room, for the first time, than General.

I don't if he would have recognized me even in the clothes I had worn in Stumm's company, for his eyesight was wretched. As we sat down, I took off my coat and laid the table for confirmation, and so bringing every body into the talk. Not that he spoke a great deal, but all he said was good sense, and I liked the way he was saying it. Once or twice he turned to Moellendorff and I could see there was no love lost between these two. I didn't think I wanted him as a friend—he was too cold-blooded and aristocratic, and a snobbish way of saying it. Once or twice those steely black eyes as an empty. But it was no good denying his quality. The little fellow was all cold courage, like the fine polished steel sted of a sword.

I don't care to name a success at that dinner. For one thing I can't speak German, and so had a pull on Blenkiron. For another I was in a good temper, and really enjoyed putting my back into my part. They talked very little, and stuff like what they had done and were going to do, and Enver was great on Gallipoli. I remember he said that he could have destroyed the whole British Army if he hadn't been for somebody's cold shoulder, and when he was asked what it was. They were so bitter about Britain and all her works that I gathered they were getting pretty panicky, and that made me as jolly as a sandboy. The next I was not free from the same suspicion, and I told them all the bad things about my own country that I sometimes wake in the night and sweat to think of.

Gaudian got on to the use of water power in Asia, and that gave me a chance. "In my country," I said, "when we want to get rid of a mountain we wash it away. There's nothing on earth that will stand against water. Now you're an absolute novice in the military art, I sometimes ask why this God-given weapon isn't more used in the present war. I haven't been to any of the front lines. I've studied them some from maps and the like. Take your German position in Flanders, where you've got the high ground. If I were a British

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general I reckon I would very soon make it no sort of position."

Modestly he asked, "How?"

"Why, I've got it here. Wash away the fourteen feet of soil down to the stone. There's a heap of coalts behind the British front where they could generate power, and I judge there's an ample water supply from rivers and streams. I would like to wish you away in twenty-four hours—yes, the mate of all your big guns. It beats me why the British haven't got on to this notion. They used to have some bright engineers."

Enver was a tall, portly man, a mile, far quicker than Gaudian. He cross-examined me in a way that showed he knew how to approach a technical subject, though he might have much technical knowledge. He was going to give me a sketch of the building in Mesopotamia when an aide-de-camp brought in a chit which fetched him to his feet.

"I have gossiped long enough," he said. "My kind host, I must leave you. Gentlemen all, my apologies and farewells."

Before he left he asked my name and wrote it down. "This is an unhealthy city for strangers, Major," he said in very good English. "I have the power of protecting a friend, and what I have is at your disposal." This with the condescension of a king promising his favor to a subject.

The little fellow bowed me tremendously, and then disappeared me. I was said so to Gaudian after he had left, but that decent soul didn't agree.

"I do not love him," he said. "We are illiberal, but friendly—so. He is no true son of Islam, which is a noble cause, and despises liars and boaststers and betrayers of their salt."

That was the verdict of one honest man on another in Israel. The next night I got another from Blenkiron on a greater than Enver.

He had been out alone and had come back pretty late, with his face grey and drawn with fatigue. The four hours he had at his best of its kind—and the cold east wind played havoc with his dyspepsia. I can see him yet, boiling milk on a spirit lamp, while Peter worked at a Primus stove to get him a hot wash. He was using horrid language about his inside.

"My God, Major, if I were you with a sound stomach, I'd fairly conquer the world. As it is, I've got to do my work with half my strength, while the other half is in my intestine. I'm like the child in the Bible that had a fox gnawing at its vitals."

He got his milk boiling and began to sip it. "I've been to see our pretty landlady," he said. "She's dead, I am, and I hobbled off with a grip full of plans, for she's mighty set on Mesopotamia."

"Anything about Greenmantle?" I asked eagerly.

"There is, no, but I have reached one conclusion. I opine that the hapless prophet has no sort of time with that lady. I opine that he will soon wish himself in Paradise. For if Almighty God ever created a female devil it's Madame von Elsinore."

He sipped a little more milk with a grave face.

"That isn't my duodenal dyspepsia, Major. It's the result of a ripe experience, for I have had and am having judgment, even if I've a deranged stomach. And I give it as my considered conclusion that that woman's mad and bad—but principally bad."

To be Continued

In which the lady of the mantilla gives four adventurers several bad moments

THE STORY: During the Great War, Major Richard Havers, a British agent, and his German plot to infiltrate the Medes against the British in India. "The only clue he is given is a paper bearing the words, 'Kavordin,' 'cancer,' and 'e. I.' which a British secret agent in the East brought in but could not explain before he died.

Hannay has two assistants—Sandy Arboldine and John S. Blenkiron, the latter rich and eccentric American. They agree to proceed to Constantinople by different routes. On meeting there, it is hoped that one of them will have learned the secret.

At Lisbon, Hannay meets Peter Piessau, an old pro-British friend from South Africa, and, under the pretense that they are Borschi, who is to help German agents, he goes with the latter country.

Hannay names himself Constantine Blenkiron, and separated.

They are met by Colonel von Stumm, a brutal German, and separated. Hannay goes with von Stumm to the latter's castle, and when von Stumm becomes suspicious of his real purpose, Hannay kills him and escapes into the forest.

After many adventures and hairbreadth escapes, he reaches the Danube, upon which a tugboat is pulling a string of barges. He persuades the captain to take him on as ensign. Later, Peter Piessau turns up and also secures a job. They have trouble crossing the Turkish frontier but finally reach Constantinople, escape from a mob of Turks who think they are German spies.

Hannay meets Blenkiron and Sandy, and now he dresses as an American and masquerades as Richard Havers, of Cleveland, Ohio, a mining engineer who wishes to help Germany win the war. Blenkiron and Sandy have learned the meaning of the word "Zimrodin," which means "the place where the prophet is coming of a prophet," and this prophet, who means to restore Islam to its old purity, is named Zimrod and also is called Greenmantle. The "e. I." stands for a very clever woman, Hilda von Elsem, who is deeply implicated in the prophet plot and is characterized by Blenkiron as "mad and bad, but principally bad."

SINCE that first night I had never clapped eyes on Sandy. He had gone clean out of the world, and Blenkiron and I waited anxiously for a word of news. Our own affairs were not in good trim, for we were presently going east toward Marmarica, where, as we learned more about Greenmantle our journey would be a grotesque failure. And learn about Greenmantle we could not, for nobody by word or deed suggested his existence, and it was impossible, of course, for us to ask questions. Our only hope was that Sandy would want to go with the prophet's wheatears and his plane. I suggested to Blenkiron that we might do more to cultivate Frau von Elsem, but he shut his jaw like a rat-trap.

"There's nothing doing for us in that quarter," he said. "That's the most dangerous woman on earth; and if she got any wind of our intentions we'd be in for some difficulties I reckon you and I would very soon be in the Bosphorus."

This was all very well; but what was going to happen if the two of us were bundled off to Bagdad with instructions to wash away the British? Our time was getting pretty short, and I doubted if we could spin out more than three days. The Cairo Express, I had been told, had started with Stumm that night last night when I was about to be packed off to Cairo and saw no way of avoiding it. Even Blenkiron was getting anxious. He played Patience incessantly, and was disinclined to talk. I tried to find out something from the servants, but they only stared at me with a blank, uncomprehending look, the former, I think. I kept my eyes lifting, too, as I walked about the streets, but there was no sign anywhere of the skin coats or the weird stringed instruments. The whole Company of the Rosy Hours seemed to have melted into the air, and I began to wonder if they had ever existed.

Sandy was speaking Turkish. I took the hint that he was supposed to know any other tongue.

Greenmantle

By JOHN
BUCHAN



Anxiety made me restless, and restlessness made me want exercise. It was no good walking about the city. The weather had been bad again, and I was sick of the smells and the squalor and the flattened crowds. So Blenkiron and I got horses, Turkish cavalry mounts with heads like trees, and went out through the suburbs into the open country.

It was a grey, overcast morning, with the beginnings of a sea fog which hid the Asiatic shores of the straits. It was hard to find open ground for a gallop, for there were endless small patches of cultivation and the gardens of country houses. We kept on the high land above the sea, and when we were in a bit of open ground I saw a company of Turkish soldiers digging trenches. Whenever we let the horses go we had to pull up sharp for a digging party or a stretch of barbed wire. Coils of the beastly thing were lying loose everywhere. And Blenkiron nearly took a nasty toss over one. They were always being stopped by sentries and having to show out their passes. The ride did no good and shook us our livers, and by the time we turned home I was feeling more like a white man.

We jogged back in the short winter twilight, past the wooded grounds of white villas, held up every few minutes by transport wagons and command cars. The rain had stopped, and the air was sharp. I saw a very pale, gaunt horseman that crawled along the muddy lanes. As we passed one villa, shot in by a high white wall, a pleasant smell of wood smoke was wafted toward us, which made me sick for the burning veld. My ear, too, caught the twanging of a lute, which somehow reminded me of the afternoon in Kuprasch's garden-house.

I pulled up and proposed to investigate, but Blenkiron very testily declined.

"Zithers are as common here as fleas," he said. "You don't want to be flossing around somebody's stables and



The next second we had forced our horses on top of them, and the three were off like rabbits.

find a horse-boy entertaining his friends. They don't like visitors in this country; and you'll be asking for trouble if you go inside those walls. I guess it's some old Buzzard's harem." Buzzard was his own private popular name for the Turk who owned the place. I had a good mind to show him with a picture of a bird called the turkey-buzzard, and couldn't get out of the habit of applying it to the Ottoman people.

I wasn't convinced, so I tried to mark down the place. It seemed to be about three miles from the town, at the foot of a small hill on the broad side of the hill coming down from the Bosphorus. I fancied somebody of distinction lived there, for a little farther on we met a big empty motor car snorting its way up, and I had a notion that the car belonged to the walled villa.

NEWT DAY Blackiron was in grievous trouble with his dyspepsia. About midday he was compelled to lie down, and having nothing better to do I had out the horses again and took Peter with me. It was funny to Peter in a Turkish armen saddle, riding with the long Boor stirrup and the saddle of the Boor.

That afternoon was unfortunate from the start. It was not the mist and drizzle of the day before, but a soft Northern gale which blew sheets of rain in our faces and numbed our brittle hands. We took the same road, but pushed west of the horse-chasing parties and got to a shallow valley with a white vine growing over the rocks, and there was a very respectable road which brought us to the top of a crest, that in clear weather must have given a fine prospect. Then we turned our horses, and I shaped our course so as to strike the top of the long lane that came out on the town. I wanted to investigate the little villa.

But the horses for some reason had been a bit too giddy. It arose out of a sheep dog, a yellow mongrel brute that came at us like a thunderbolt. It took a special fancy to Peter, and bit savagely at his horse's heels and sent it capering off of the road. I should have warned him, but I don't realize that I had to. Peter had never been in a place he had not accustomed to mongrels in Kaffir kraals, took a summary way with the pest. Since it despised his whip, he out with his pistol and put a bullet through its head.

The echoes of the shot had scarcely died away when the row began. A big fellow appeared running toward us,

shouting wildly. I guessed he was the doc's owner, and proposed to pay no attention. But his cries summoned two other fellows—soldiers by the look of them—who closed in on us, unslinging their rifles as they ran. My first idea was to turn the horses and run, but the Boor was a dead weight in back, and they looked like men who wouldn't stop short of shooting. So we slowed down and faced them.

They made a savage looking as trix you would want to avoid. The shepherd looked as if he had been dug up, dirty ruffian with a straggling hair and a beard like a Turk's. The two soldiers stood stock still, with sulky faces, fingering their guns, while the other chap raved and snorted and stared pointing at Peter, whose mild eyes stared unblinkingly at his assailant.

The shephered was that neither of us had a word of Turkish. I tried German, and the two fellows looked at me and then stood staring at us, and it was fast getting dark. Once I turned my horse round as if to proceed, and the two soldiers jumped in front of me.

They jabbered among themselves, and then one said very slowly: "He . . . want . . . pounds," and he held up five fingers. They evidently saw by the cut of our jib that we weren't Germans.

"I'll be hanged if he gets a penny," I said angrily, and the conversation languished.

The situation was getting serious so I spoke a word to Peter. The soldiers had their rifles loose in their hands, and when they could lift them we had the pair covered with our pistols.

"If you right . . . I said, "you are dead." They understood that all right and stood stock still, while the shepherd stopped his raving and took to muttering like a gramophone when the record was finished.

"Dumb ass," I said sharply. "Quick, or we shoot." The tone, if not the words, conveyed my meaning. Still staring at us, they let the rifles slide to the ground. The next second we had forced our horses the top of them, and the three were off like rabbits. I sent a shot over their heads to scare them. Peter dismounted and took the guns into a bit of scrub where they would take some finding.

That hold-up had wasted time. By now it was getting very dark, and we hadn't ridden a mile before it was black night. It was an annoying predicament, for I had completely lost my bearings and at the best I had only a foggy notion of

the lie of the land. The best plan seemed to be to go on until we came to the town, and then hope of seeing the lights of the city, but all the country-side was so pocket that it was hard to strike the right kind of rise.

We had to trust to Peter's instinct. I asked him where our line lay, and he sat very still for a moment, then said, "I think it's to the left of the 'e' direction. It won't what I would have taken myself, but on a point like that he was pretty near infallible.

Presently we came to a long slope which cleared me. But at the top there was a light visible underneath a bank, which like the inside of a shell. As I stared into the gloom it seemed to me that there were patches of deeper darkness that might be woods.

"There is a house half-left in front of us," said Peter.

I gazed till my eyes ached and saw nothing. "Well, for heaven's sake, guide me to it," I said, and with Peter in front we set off down the hill.

IT WAS a wild journey, for darkness clung into patches of bog, and once my horse saved himself by a hair from going head forward into a grave pit. We got tangled up in strands of wire, and often found ourselves rubbing our noses against trees and bushes, and then we had to stop and make a gap in barbed-wire or horse-stones. But after a ridiculous amount of slopping and scrabbling we finally struck what seemed the level of a road, and a piece of special darkness in front which turned out to be a stone wall.

I argued with myself that we had done, so we set to groping along it, and presently found a gap. There was an old iron gate on broken hinges, which we easily pushed open, and found ourselves on a back path to some houses. It was clearly dusk, for masses of rotting leaves covered the road and the feet of it underfoot it was grass-grown.

We were dismounted now, leading our horses, and after about fifty yards the path ceased and came out on a well-made carriage drive. So at least we had a road again. The road was black as pitch. Evidently the house couldn't be far off, but in which direction I hadn't a notion.

Now I didn't want to be paying calls on any Turk at that time of day. Our job was to find where the rich old ottoman was, and have it after that to get to Gostanbridge in the dark. One side the long way, and the other the house, and it didn't seem wise to take the risk of tramping up with horses to the front door. So I told Peter to wait for me at the end of the back-road, while I would prospect a bit. I turned to the right, my intention being if I saw the light of a house to turn back and get the horse.

I walked like a blind man in that net-territ of darkness. The road seemed well kept, and the soft wet gravel muffled the sounds of my feet. Great trees overhanging it, and several times I wandered into dripping bushes. And then I stopped to rest in the shade, for I was getting very tired.

It was quite dark about ten yards away. And the strange thing was that it was a time I knew, about the last time you would expect to hear in this part of the world. It was the Scott air: "Cæ the yowes to the knowes," which was a favorite of my father's.

The Scott air had left my presence, for the air suddenly stopped in the middle of a bar. An unbounded curiosity seized me to know who the fellow could be. So I started in and finished it myself.

There was silence for a second, and then the unknown began again and stopped. Once more I chipped in and waited.

Then it seemed to me that he was coming nearer. The air in that dark tunnel was very still, and I heard a light foot. I think I took a step backward. Suddenly there was a flash of an electric torch from a yard off, so quick that I could see nothing of the man who held it.

Then a hand reached out of the darkness: "What the devil are you doing here, Dick?" it said, and there was something like consternation in the tone.

I told him in a hectic sentence, for I was beginning to feel really tired myself. "I've never been in greater danger in your life," said the voice. "Great God, man, what brought you wandering here today of all days?"

You can imagine that I was pretty scared, for Sandy was the last man to put me in his hands. And then next moment I heard a hand clamped on my arm and dragged me in a bound to the side of the road. I could see nothing, but I felt that his head was screwed round, and mine followed suit. And there, a dozen yards off, were the acetylene lights of a big motor car.

It came very slowly, purring like a great cat, while we

pressed into the bushes. The headlights seemed to spread a fan far to either side, showing the full width of the drive and its borders, and about half the height of the overhanging trees. A tall figure in uniform settled beside the chauffeur, when I saw dimly in the reflex glow, but the body of the car was dark.

It crept toward us, passed, and my mind was just getting easy again when it stopped. A switch was wrapped within, and the limousine was brightly lit up. Inside I saw a woman's figure.

The servant had got out and opened the door and a voice came from within—a clear soft voice speaking in some tongue I did not understand. Sandy had started forward at the sound of it, and I followed him. It would never do for me to be caught shuffling in the bushes.

I WAS so dozily by the suddenness of the glare that at first I blinked and saw nothing. Then my eyes cleared and I found myself looking at the inside of a car upholstered in some soft dove-colored fabric, and beautifully finished off in the dark wood of the dashboard. A tall, slender woman of black lace over her head and shoulders, and one slender jewelled hand she kept its folds over the greater part of her face. I saw only a pair of pale grey-blue eyes and the slim fingers.

It was Sandy. Sandy was standing very upright with his hands on his hips, by no means like a servant in the presence of his mistress. He was a fine figure of a man at all times, but in those wild clothes, with his head thrown back and his dark brows drawn below his skull-cap, he looked like some savage, lying out of an older world. He was speaking Turkish, and I could not understand him. I could only perceive, I took the hint that he was not supposed to know any other tongue, and it was he who was asking who the devil I might be.

They both looked at me. Sandy with the slow unshaking smile of the lady with the bone-tinted grey eyes. They ran on my clothes, my brand-new riding breeches, my splashed boots, my wimpy-brimmed hat. I took of the last and made my best bow.

"Madam," I said, "I have to ask pardon for trespassing on your grounds. I am a fact, and my servant he's down the road with the horses and I have just noticed him—the two of us went for a ride this afternoon, and got good and well lost. We came in by your back door, and I was prospecting for your front door to find someone to direct us, when I bumped into this tall figure, who didn't understand my tongue. I'm American, and I'm here on a big Government proposition. I hate to trouble you, but if you'd send a man to show us how to strike the city I'd be very much in your debt."

"How can you never let my face?" "Will you come into this car?" she said in English. "At the house I will give you a servant to direct you."

She drew in the skirts of her fur cloak to make room for me, and in my muddy boots and soaping clothes I took the place of honor. She turned and spoke Turkish to Sandy, switched off the light, and the car moved on.

Women had never come much my way, and I knew about as much of their ways as I knew about the Chinese language. All my life I had lived in a small town, and rarely had a crowd at that. When I made my pile and came home I looked to see a little society, but I had first the business of the Black Store on my hands, and then the war, so my education languished. I had never been in a room with a woman before, and I felt like a fish on a dry sandbank. The soft cushions and the subtle scents filled me with acute uneasiness. I wasn't thinking now about Sandy's grave words, or about Blenkiron's warning, or about my job, or the part I had to play in it. I was thinking only that I felt mortally shy. The darkness made it worse. I was sure that my companion was looking at me all the time and laughing at me for a clown.

The door closed and a tall servant opened the door. The lady was over the threshold before I was at the step. I followed her heavily, the wet squeezing from my foot boots. At that moment I noticed that she was very tall.

She led me through a long corridor to a room where two pillars supported the shape of torches. The place was dark but for their glow, and it was as warm as a hothouse from invisible stoves. I felt soft carpets underfoot, and on the walls hung some tapestry or rug of an amazingly intricate geometrical pattern, with every strand as thin as a hair. The room between the pillars, she turned and faced me. Her furs were thrown back, and the black mantilla had slipped down over her shoulders.

"I have heard of you," she said. "You are called the Master. He is the American. Why have you come to this land?"

"To have a share in the campaign," I said. "I'm an engineer, and I thought I could help out with some business like Mesopotamia."

"Who's Germany's side?" she asked.

"Who's yes?" I replied. "We Americans are supposed to be

neutralists, and that means we're free to choose any side we fancy. I've for the Kaiser."

me. The eyes grew large and luminous, and I was conscious just an instant of some will bidding to subject mine. I was aware, too, in the same moment of a strange scent which recurred that of Blenkiron in Konya. I shuddered. I moved quickly, and for a second her eyes drooped. I seemed to read in them failure, and yet a kind of satisfaction too, as if they had found more in me than they expected.

"What life have you led?" the soft voice was saying. "I was about to answer quite naturally, rather to my surprise, 'I have been an engineer, and down and down the world.'"

"I have faced danger."

"I have fought in battles."

"The horses ride in the kind of sigh. A smile—a very beautiful thing—slid over her face. She gave me her hand. 'The horses are with the door now,'" she said, "and your servant is with them. One of my people will guide you to the city."

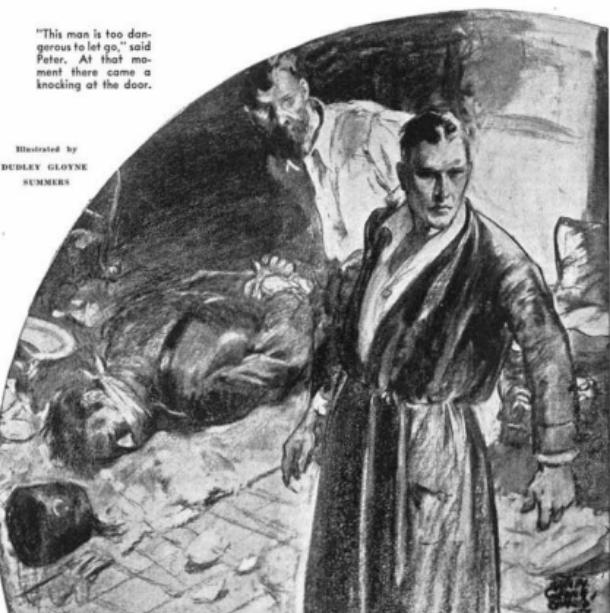
She turned away and passed out of the circle of light into the darkness.

Peter and I jogged home in the rain with one of Sandy's skin-clad Companions loping at our side. We did not speak a word, for my thoughts were running like hounds on the track of the past hour. I had seen the mysterious Hilda von Blenkiron in her true colors, and I had been hoodwinked into it with the subtlety of Indians and yet I was not angry. Suddenly the game I was playing became invested with a tremendous solemnity. My old astaponists, Stumm and Rasta and the whole German Empire, seemed to shrink into the background, leaving only the slim, slender woman with her pale grey-blue eyes. "Madam had," Blenkiron had called her, "but principally bad." I did not think they were proper terms, for they belonged to the narrow world of our common experience. This was something beyond that above it, as a cyclone or an earthquake is something beyond the decent world of nature. Mad and bad she might be, but she was also great.

Before we arrived our guide had plucked my knee and spoken some words which he had obviously got by heart. "The Master says," ran the message, "expect him at midnight."

"This man is too dangerous to let go," said Peter. "At that moment there came a knocking at the door."

Illustrated by
DUDLEY GLOVINE
SUMMERS



I WAS soaked to the bone, and while Peter had his bath I dressed. I went to my room to change. I had a rub down, then got into pyjamas for some dumb-bell exercise with two chairs, for that long wet ride had stiffened my arm and shoulder muscles. They were a vulgar suit of primitive blue, which I had never had out of my London wardrobe. As Captain Brandt I had sported a flannel night-gown.

My bedroom opened off the sitting-room, and while I was busy with my gymnastics I heard the door open. I thought at first it was Eisen, but he had a heavy gait, and was unlike his measured gait. I had left the light burning there, and the visitor, whoever he was, had made himself at home. I slipped on a green dressing-gown. Blenckens had lent me, and called forth to investigate.

My friend Rastak had come along by the table, on which he had laid an envelope. He looked round at my entrance and saluted.

"I come from the Minister of War, sir," he said, "and bring your passports for tomorrow. You will travel by train. And then his voice tailed away, and his black eyes narrowed to slits. He had seen something which switched him off the metals.

At that moment I saw it too. There was a mirror on the wall behind him, and as I faced him I could not help seeing my reflection. It was a man's image in the mirror, the Danube boat—blue jeans, *leder* cloak, and all. The accursed mischance of my costume had given him the clue to an identity which was otherwise buried deep in the *Borporos*.

I had been waiting for him to come as a man of quick action. In a trice he had whipped round to the other side of the table between me and the door, where he stood regarding me wickedly.

By this time I was at the table and stretching out hands for the envelope. My one hope was nonchalance.

"Sit down, sir," I said. "and have a drink. It's a filthy night to move about in."

"Thank you, no, Herr Brandt," he said. "You will burn these passports, for they will not be used."

"Whatever's the matter with you?" I cried. "You've mistaken the house, my lad. I'm called Hanau—Richard Hanau—and my partner's Mr. John S. Blenckens. He'll be here shortly. Never knew anyone of the name of Brandt, barring a tobacconist in Denver City."

"You have never been to Rustchuk?" he said with a sneer.

"Not that I know of. But, pardon me, sir, if I am not a man and a business man. I'm damed if I'm accustomed to be called by Dutch names or have my word doubted. In my country we consider that impolite as between gentlemen."

I could see my boy blust was having its effect. His stare began to waver, and when he next spoke it was in a more civil tone.

"I will ask pardon if I'm mistaken, sir, but you're the image of a man who a week ago was at Rustchuk, a man much wanted by the Imperial Government."

"A week ago I was toiling in a dirty little hooker coming from Constanza. Unless Rustchuk's in the middle of the Black Sea I've never visited the township. I guess you're pulling up the short straw. Come to think of it, I was expecting parents. Say, do you come from Enzer Damad?"

"I have that honor," he said.

"Well, Enver is a very good friend of mine. He's the brightest citizen I've struck this side of the Rhine."

The man was calming down, and in another minute his suspicions would have gone. But at that moment, by the crookedest kind of luck, Peter entered with a tray of dishes, and not noticing Rastak's look of alarm to the table and plumped down his burden on it. The Turk had stepped aside at his entrance, and I saw by the look in his eyes that his suspicions had become a certainty. For Peter, stripped to the shirt and breeches, had the look of a shabby little companion of the Rustchuk mob.

I had never doubted Rastak's pluck. He jumped for the door and had a pistol out in a trice pointing at my head.

"Bosse fortissimo," he cried. "Both the birds at one shot." His hand was on the

latch, and his mouth was open to cry. I guessed there was an orderly waiting on the stairs.

HE HAD what you call the strategic advantage, for he was at the door, while I was at the other end of the table and Peter at the side of it at least two yards from him. Those were the circumstances, and neither of us was armed. I made a determined step forward, not knowing what I meant to do, for I saw no light. But Peter was before me.

He had never let go of the tray, and now, as a boy skims a stone on a pond, he skimmed it across the room to the west. The man was opening the door with one hand while he kept me covered with the other, and he got the contrivance fairly in the face. A pistol shot cracked out, and the bullet went through the tray, but the noise was lost in the clatter of plates and crockery. The next second Peter had wrenched the pistol from Rastak's hand and had gripped his throat.

A dandified young Turk, brought up in Paris and Berlin, might be as brave as a lion, but he cannot stand in a rough-and-tumble against a back-buck hunter, though more than double his age. There was no need for me to help. Peter had his own way, learned from the art of knocking the sense out of a fool. He gained his advantage, and trussed him up with his own belt and two straps from a trunk in my bedroom.

"This man is too dangerous to let go," he said, as if his procedure were the most ordinary thing in the world. "The best quiet now till we have time to make a plan."

At that moment there came a knocking at the door. That is the sort of thing that happens in melodrama, just when the villain has finished his villainy. The first thing to do is to move to the feet and with rolling, conscience-stricken eye glare round the horizon. But that was not Peter's way.

"We'd better tidy up if we have visitors," he said quickly.

Now the sound of those big oak German cupboards against the wall which must have been brought in sections, for complete it would never have got through the door. It was empty now, but for Blenckens's hat box. In it he deposited the unconscious Rastak, and closed the door. "There's enough ventilation through the top," he observed, "to keep the air good." Then he opened the door.

A magnificent kavas in blue and silver stood outside, saluted and proffered a card on which was written in pencil, "Hilda von Eisen."

I would have begged for time to change my clothes, but the lady was behind him. I saw her in the doorway, the richly habored. Peter vanished through my bedroom, and I was left to receive my guest in a room littered with broken glass and a senseless man in the cupboard.

There are some situations so crazily extravagant that you have to laugh to meet them. I was almost laughing when that stately lady stepped over my threshold.

"Madam," I said, with a bow that shamed my old dressing-gown and strident pyjamas. "You find me in a dire predicament. Come home, making fresh tracks and was it the act of changing. My servant has just upset a tray of crockery, and I fear this room's no fit place for a lady. Allow me three minutes to make myself presentable."

She removed her head gravely and took a seat by the fire. I went into my bedroom, and as I expected found Peter lurking by the other door. In a hectic sentence I bade him get Rastak's orderly out of the place on any pretence, and tell him his master would return later. Then I hurried into decent garments and came out to find my visitor in a brown study.

At the sound of my entrance she started from her dream and stood up on the hearth rug, swinging the long robe of fur from her slim body.

"We are alone?" she said. "We will not be disturbed?"

Then an inspiration came to me. I remembered that Frau von Eisen, according to Blenckens, did not see eye to eye with

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Greenmantle

Continued from page 18—Starts on page 25

Young Turks; and I had a queer instinct that Rasta could not be to her liking. So I spoke the truth.

"I'm telling you that there's another guest here tonight. I reckon he's feeling pretty uncomfortable. At present he's trussed up on a shelf in that cupboard."

She did not trouble to look round.

"Is he tall?" I asked.

"By no means," I said, "but he's fixed so he can't speak, and I guess he can't hear much."

"He was the man who brought you this?" she asked, pointing to the envelope on the table. "He has the big blue stamp of the Ministry of War."

"The same," I said. "I'm not perfectly sure of his name, but I think they call him Rasta."

Now a flicker of a smile crossed her face, but I had a feeling that the news pleased her.

"Did he thwart you?" she asked.

"Why, yes. He thwarted me two or three times, but he will do good."

"He is a powerful man," she said. "A jackal of Enver's. You have made a dangerous enemy."

"I don't value him at two cents," said I, though I thought grimly that as far as I could see he was not worth a cent. "What was likely to be about the price of my neck?"

"Perhaps you are right," she said with serious eyes. "In these days no enemy is dangerous to a bold man. I have come tonight, Mr. Hanau, to talk business with you, as that is what you are. I have heard well of you, and today I have seen you. I may have need of you, and you assuredly will have need of me. . . ."

SHE BROKE off, and again her strange petrified eyes fell on my face. They were like a burning searchlight which shewed up every cranny and crack of the soul. I felt it was going to be horribly difficult to act a part under that compelling gaze. She could not征服 me, but she could strip me of my fancy dress and set me naked in the marketplace.

"What came you forth to seek?" she asked. "You are not like the stout American Blenkiron, a lover of shoddy power and a devotee of the flesh. You are not like me, nothing more than that in your face. You are on our side, but you are not of the Germans with their hankering for a roccox empire. You come from America, the land of pictures followed by millions of words and words. I ask, what comes you forth to seek?"

As she spoke I seemed to get a vision of a figure, like one of the old gods looking down on human nature from a great height, a figure disdainful and powerful, but with its own sense of inferiority. It kindled my imagination, and I answered with the stuff I had often cogitated when I had tried to explain to myself just how a case could be made out against the Allied cause.

"I can tell you that," I said. "I am a man who has followed a science, but I have followed it in wild places, and I have gone through it and come out at the other side. The world, as I see it, had become too easy and cushioned. Men had forgotten Greenmantle, and in soft, comfortable beds I remembered that the rules of their smug civilization were the laws of the universe. But that is not the teaching of life. We had forgotten the greater virtues, and I was becoming like a human being who goes west, and our own weaknesses. Then came war, and the air was cleared. Germany, in spite of her blunders and her grossness, stood forth as the scourge of earth. She had the courage, but can the blundering, the want of judgment, and the fatigues of the herd. Therefore I am Germany's side. But I came here for another reason. I know nothing of the East, but as I read history it is from the desert that the purification comes. When mankind is smothered with stains and peccades and painted abas a

wind blows out of the wilds to cleanse and simplify life. The world needs space and simplicity. This is the reason we have boasted of is a toy shop and a blind alley, and I hanker for open country."

This confounded nonsense was well received. Her pale eyes had the cold light of a fanatic. With her bright hair and the long eyebrows of her face, she had the same sense destroying fury of a Norse legend. At that moment I think I first really feared her; before I had half hated and half admired. Thank heaven, in her absorption she did not notice that I had forgotten the speech of Cleopatra of Egypt.

"You are of the Household of Faith," she said. "You will presently learn many things, for the Faith marches to victory. Meantime I have one word for you. You and your companion are to be executed."

"We go to Mesopotamia," I said. "I reckon these are our passports," and I pointed to the envelope.

She picked it up, opened it, and then tore it in pieces and passed it to the fire.

"The orders are countermanded," she said. "I have need of you and you go with me. Not to the flats of the Tigris, but to the great hills. Tomorrow you will receive new passports."

She took me by the hand and turned to go. At the threshold she paused, and looked toward the oak cupboard. "Tomorrow I will relieve you of your prisoner. He will be safer in my hands."

SHIS LEFT me in a condition of pretty blank bewilderment. We were to be tied to the chariot wheels of this fury, and started on an enterprise compared to which fighting against our friends at Kut seemed like a walk in the park. I was to be bound, I had been spotted by Rasta, and had got the envoy of the most powerful man in Constantinople locked in a cupboard. At all costs we had to keep Rasta safe, but I was very determined that he should not be handed over to the Turks. I wanted to be party to cold-blooded murder, which I judged to be her expedient. It was a pretty kettle of fish, but in the meantime I must have food, for I had eaten nothing for nine hours. So I went in search of Peter.

I had been waiting for my long-deferred meal when Sandy entered. He was before his time, and he looked as solemn as a sick owl. I seized on him as a drowning man clutches a spar.

He heard my story of Rasta with a lengthening face.

"That's bad," he said. "You say he spotted you, and your subsequent doings of course would not disillusion him. It's an American vice, but there's only one way out of it. I must have him in charge of my own people. They will keep him safe and sound till he's wanted. Only he mustn't see me." And he went out in a hurry.

I fetched Rasta from his prison. He had come to see me, and the old man lay regarding me with stony, malevolent eyes.

"I'm very sorry, sir," I said, "for what has happened. But you left me no alternative. I've got a big job on hand and I can't have it interfered with by you anymore. You're coming to prison a second time, future. When you know a little more you'll want to apologize to me. I'm going to see that you are kept quiet and comfortable for a day or two. You've no cause to worry, for you'll understand that I give you my word of honor as an American."

Two of Sandy's miscreants came in and bore him off, and presently Sandy himself returned. When I asked where he was being taken, Sandy said he didn't know. "They've got the order, and they'll carry them out to the letter. There's a big unknown area in Constantinople to hide a man, into which the *Kaglyk* never enters."

Then he flung himself into a chair and lit his old pipe.

"Duck," he said, "this job is getting very

difficult and very dark. But my knowledge has grown in the last few days. I've found out the meaning of the second word that Harry Bullard scribbled."

"'Conseil'?" I asked.

"Yes. It means just what it reads and no more. Greenmantle is dying—has been dying for months. This afternoon they brought a German doctor to see him, and the man gave him a few hours of life. By now he may be dead."

The news was a staggerer. For a moment I thought it cleared up things. "Then that busts the show," I said. "You can't have a crusade without a prophet."

"I wish I thought it did. It's the end of one stage and the beginning of another one. Do you think that woman will be beaten by such a small thing as the death of her prophet? She'll find a substitute—one of the four Ministers, or someone else. She's a devil incarnate, but she has the soul of a Napoleon. The big danger is only beginning."

Then he told me the story of his recent doings. He had found out the house of Frau von Einem without much trouble, and had performed what he called "service" in the servants' quarters. The prophet had a large retinue, and the fame of the minstrels—for the Companions were known far and wide in the land of Islam—came speedily to the ears of the Holy One. Sandy, a leader in this musical band, entered the house in Frau's favor and brought to the notice of the four Ministers. He and his half-dozen retainers became inmates of the villa, and Sandy, from his knowledge of Islamic lore and his ostentatious piety, was soon up to the confidence of the prophet. Frau von Einem had chosen him as an ally, for the Companions had been the most devoted propagandists of the new revelation.

As he described it, it was a strange business. The Companions were dying and often in great pain, but he stroked to meet the demands of his protectress. The four Ministers, as Sandy saw them, were unwordly ascetics; the prophet himself was a saint, though a practical saint with some notions of politics. Sandy's retainers, however, will were those of the lady. Sandy seemed to have won his favor, even his affection. He spoke of him with a kind of desperate pity.

"I never saw such a man. He is the greatest egomaniac you can picture, with a dignity like his prophet's. He is a philosopher and a poet, too—a genius if I can judge these things. I think I can assess him rightly, for I know something of the soul of the East, but it would be too long a story to tell now. The West is never far off in the Orient. It pictures him as laying in colors of effusiveness and luxury and gorgeous dreams. But it is all wrong. The *Kad* he yearns for is an austere thing. It is the austerity of the East that is its beauty and its terror."

"I don't want to argue things at the back of its head. The Turk and the Arab came out of big spaces, and they have the desire of them in their bones. They settle down and stagnate, and by and by they degenerate into that appalling subtlety which is their hallmark, the East's. And then comes a new revelation and a great simplifying. They want to live face to face with God without a screen of ritual and images and priesthood. They want to prune life of its foolish fringes and get back to the noble, simple, austere life of the desert. It is always the empty desert and the empty sky that cast their spell over them—these, and the hot, strong, antisepic sunlight which burns up all rot and decay. . . . It isn't in the West that the fiery heart of the human race. It isn't ours; it isn't as good as ours, but it's jolly good all the same. There are times when it grips me so hard that I'm inclined to foreswear the gods of my fathers."

"Well, Greenmantle is the prophet of this great simplicity. He speaks straight to the heart of Islam, and it's an honorable message. But for our sins it's been twisted into part of that damned German propaganda. His unwordlyness has been used as a curtain political mask for his creed of peace and simplicity for the furtherance of the last word in human degeneracy. My God, Dick,

it's like seeing St. Francis run by Messalina."

"She's been here?" he said. "She's been here, but I don't know what I mean by it. I invented some infernal nonsense which she approved of. But I can see one thing. She and her prophet may run for different stakes, but it's the same course."

SANDY started. "She's been here?" he cried. "Tell me, Dick, what did you think of her?"

"I thought she was about two parts mad, but the third part was uncommonly like insipidity."

"That's about right," he said. "I was wrong in comparing her to Messalina. She's something a dashed sight more complicated. She runs the prophet just because she shares his belief. Only with in him is sure and fine, is her prophet. You see, she's sure and fine, and she wants to simplify life."

"I know," I said. "I told her that an hour ago, when I talked more rot to the second than any mortal man ever achieved. It will come between me and my sleep for the rest of my days."

"Germany's simplicity is that of the neurotic, not the primitive. It is megalomania and egotism and the pride of the man in the Bible that wasted fat and kicked. But the results are the same. You can't get the simple and simplify; but it isn't the simplicity of the ascetic, which is of the spirit, but the simplicity of the madman that grinds down all the contrivances of civilization to a featureless meadow. The people are too used to serve the souls of their people. Germany wants to serve the inanimate corpus of the world. But you can get the same language to cover both. And so you have the partnership of St. Francis and Messalina. Dick, did you ever hear of a Superwoman?"

"There was a time when the papers were full of nothing else," I answered. "I gather it was invented by a sportman called Nietzsche."

"It's a day," said Sandy. "Old Nietzsche has been blamed for a great deal of rubbish he would have died rather than acknowledge. But it's a crass of the new, fatted Germany. It's a fancy type which could never really exist, any more to the Economic Man of the present day. Messalina is a type of humor which stops short of the final absurdity. There never has been and there never could be a real Superman. . . . But there might be a Superwoman."

"You'll get into trouble, my lad, if you talk like that. I mean to."

"It's true all the same. Women have got a perilous logic which we never have, and some of the best of them don't see the joke of like the ordinary man. They can be far more dangerous, for they can get right to the heart of things. There never was a man so near the divine as Joan of Arc. But I think too they can be more entirely damnable than anything that ever was breeched, for they don't stop still now and then to think about it. There never was a man so near the divine as Joan of Arc. There is no Superman. The poor old donkeys that fancy themselves in the part are either crack-brained professors who couldn't rule a Sunday-school class, or bristling soldiers with pinkie-toe heads who imagine that the shooting of a Dog of Flanders means a Napoleon. But there is a Superwoman, and her name's Hilda von Eisen."

"I thought our job was nearly over," I groaned, "and now it looks as if it hadn't well begun. But there's not all we had to do to was to cut the truth out."

"Bullivant didn't know. No man knows except you and me. I tell you, the woman has immense power. The Germans have trusted her with their trump card, and she's going to play it out all the way. She's got no one to tell her she's off the mark. She has set the ball rolling, and if need be she'll cut all her prophet's throats and run the show herself. . . . I don't know about your job, for honestly I can't quite see what you and Blenkinsop are going to do. I'm not clear about my own duty. She's been into the business, and I'm going to stick to it in the hope that I'll find a chance of wrecking it. . . . We're moving eastward tomorrow—with a new prophet if the old one is dead."

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"I don't know. But I gather it's a long journey, judging by the preparations. And he's going to be a bold country, judging by the clothes he's packed."

"Well, wherever it is, we're going with you. You haven't heard our end of the yarn. Blenkinsop and I have been moving in the best class as skilled Mesopotamian engineers are going to play Oil Haven with the British on the Tigris. I'm a pal of Enver's now, and he has offered me his protection. The lamented Rast brought our passports for the journey to Mesopotamia tomorrow morning, and he's been forced to turn up and put them in the fire. We are going with her, and she vouchsafed the information that it was toward the great hills."

Sandy whistled long and low. "I wonder what the devil you are with your Talk thing," he said, dashing dashingly. "Dick, Where, more by token, is Blenkinsop? He's the fellow to know about high politics."

The missing Blenkinsop, as Sandy spoke, entered the room with his slow, quiet step. I could see by his carriage that for once he had no dyspepsia, and by his eyes that he was excited.

"Say, boys," he said, "I've got something pretty considerable in the way of noos. There's been big fighting on the Eastern border, and the Buzzards have taken a bad knock."

HIS HANDS were full of papers, from which he selected a map and spread it on the table. "I've got to keep mum about the thing in this capital, but I've been piecing the story together these last days, and I think I've got it straight. A fortnight ago old man Nicholas descended from his mountains and scuppered the enemies of the Sultan of Karsipan, where the main road eastward crosses the Araxes. That was only the beginning of the stunt, for he pressed on on a broad front, and the gentleman called Kiamil, who commands in those parts, was not up to the job. The Sultan's forces were scattered and dislodged in from north and east and south, and now the Muscovite is sitting down outside the fort of Erzerum. I can tell you they're pretty miserable about the situation in that high place. Erzerum is a sort of a port of call to get fresh provisions to Erzerum from Gallipoli, but it's a long road and it looks as if they would be too late for the fair. . . . You and I, major, start for Mesopotamia tomorrow, and that's about the best time. The fort is bit thick, but it's supposed to John. We've missed the chance of seeing the goriest fight of this campaign."

I picked up the map and pocketed it. Maps were my business, and I had been looking for one.

"They're not going to Mesopotamia," I said. "Our orders have been cancelled."

"But I've just seen Enver, and he said he had sent around our passports."

"They're in the fire," I said. "The right ones will come along tomorrow morning."

Sandy broke in, his eye bright with excitement.

"The great hills! . . . We're going to Erzerum. Don't you see that the Germans are playing their big hand? They're sending the Greeks to the seat of danger in the hope that his coming will rally the Turkish defense. Things are beginning to move, Dick, old man. No more kicking the heels for us. We're going to be in it up to the neck, and heaven help us. . . . I must say I'm not going to be off, for I've a lot to do. *As you are*. We meet some time soon in the hills."

Blenkinsop still looked puzzled, till I told him the secret of that night's doings. As he heard it all the satisfaction went out of his face, and that funny, childlike air of bewilderment crept in.

"It's not for me to complain, for it's in the straight line of our duty, but I reckon there's going to be big trouble ahead of this campaign. In fact, I've got to say I've got to how. But I won't pretend that I'm not considerably scared at the prospect."

"Oh, so am I," I said. "The woman frightens me into fits. We're up against it this time all right. All the same I'm glad we're to be let into the real star metropolitan

performance. I didn't relish the idea of touring the provinces."

"I guess that's correct. But I could wish that good God would see fit to take that lovely lady to Himself. She's too much for a quiet man at my time of life. When she invites us to go in on the ground floor I feel like taking the elevator to the roof-garden."

TWO DAYS later, in the evening, we came to Angora, the first stage in our journey.

The passports had arrived next morning, as Frau von Eimel had promised, and with them a plan of our journey. More, one of the Companions, who spoke a little English, was detailed to accompany us—a wise precaution, for no one of his race a word of Turkish. There was no time to waste in learning it. I heard nothing more of Sandy or Greenmantle or the lady. We were meant to travel in our own party.

We had the railway to Angora, a very central point. German troops had tactics to the end of a transport-train. There was much to be seen of the country, for after we left the Bosphorus we ran into scuds of snow, and except that we seemed to be climbing on to a big plateau I had no notion of the landscape. It was a marvel that we made such good time for the last leg, and we arrived beyond anything I have ever seen. The place was crawling with the Gallipoli troops, and every siding was packed with supply trucks. When we stopped—which we did on an average about once an hour—we would find vast camps on both sides of the line, and often we struck regiments on the march along the railway track. They looked a fine, hardy lot of ruffians, but many were deplorably raw. There was no Turkish music about their tents. I wondered what the Germans could do the five hundred miles of road to Erzerum.

Blenkiron played Patience, and Peter and I took a hand at piquet, but mostly we smoked and yawned. Getting away from that last city had cheered us up wonderfully. Now we were on the open road, moving to the sound of the guns. At the worst we should not perish like rats in a sewer. We would be all together, too, and that was a comfort. I think we felt the relief which the men who had been with us for so long past felt when he is brought back to his battalions. Besides, the thing had gone clean beyond our power to direct. It was no good planning and scheming, for none of us had a notion what the next step might be. We were guests of fortune in Kismet, and that is a comfortable faith.

All but Blenkiron. The coming of Hilda von Eimel into the business had put a very ugly complexion on it for him. It was curious to see how he had changed since our first meeting of our gang. Peter did not care a rust; man, woman and hippogriff were the same to him; he met it all as calmly as if he were making plans to round up an old lion in a patch of bush, taking the facts as they came. But Hilda was a different proposition in arithmetic. Sandy and I were impressed—but we were too interested to be scared, and we weren't a bit fascinated. We hated her too much for that. She fairly shrank from our disapprobation. He said himself it was just like a rattle-snake and a bird.

I made him talk about her, for if he sat and brooded he would get worse. It was a strange thing that this man, the most impulsive and the most impudent, should be paralyzed by a slim woman. There was no doubt about it. The thought of her made the future to him as black as a thunder cloud. It took the power out of his joints, and if she was going to be much around, it looked as if Blenkiron might just as well commit suicide.

I suggested that he was in love with her, but this he vehemently denied.

"No, sir; I haven't got no sort of affection for the lady. My trouble is that she puts me out of countenance, and I can't fit her in as an antagonist. I guess we Americans haven't

got the right poise for dealing with that kind of people. They're like little gods, and at the same time left them out of the real business of life. Consequently, when we start one playing the Biggest kind of man's game we can't place her. We aren't used to regarding them as anything except angels and children. I wish I had had boy's upbringing."

ANGORA was like my notion of some place such as Amiens in the retreat from Mons. Many of the trees and transoms—the neck of the bottle, so to speak—arrived every hour, and the only outlet was the single eastern road. The town was pandemonium into which disturbed German officers were trying to introduce some order. The first thing that struck us was the heart of Anatolia wasn't a like hunting-ground for suspicious characters. Took our passports to the commandant, who vised them readily, and told us he'd do his best to get us through. We spent the night in a little hotel, where all the crew had one more little bedroom, and next morning I had my work cut out getting a motor car. It took four hours, and the use of every great name in the Turkish Empire, to raise a dingy sort of car, and another two to get the petrol and the tires. As for the price, we were lucky; we couldn't find him, and I was compelled to drive the thing myself.

We left just after midday and swung out into bare black down patches with scrubby windswept woods. There was no road here, at all, and we blazed from the instant which searched the marrow. Presently we climbed up into hills, and the road, though not badly engineered to begin with, grew as rough as the traffic itself. No wonder, for the traffic was like that one sees on the awful stretch between Cassel and Ypres, and there were no gangs of Belgian roadmakers to mend it up. We found troops by the thousands strung along with their impulsive Turkish faces, and the same sort of drivers, again drawn by sturdy little Anatolian horses, and, coming in the contrary direction, many shabby Red Crescent cars and wagons of the wounded. We had to crawl for hours on end, till we got past a black, jagged ledge where the drivers had cutstrip the first pass, and had a clear run for about ten miles over a low pass in the hills. I began to get anxious about the car, for it was a poor one at the best, and the road was guaranteed to sooner or later knock even a good one into scrap iron.

All the same it was glorious to be out in the open again. Peter's face was a new look and he sniffed the bitter air like a stag. There floated up from little mobile camps the smells of smoke and charred flesh. That, and the curious acrid winter smell of great wind-blown spaces, will always come to my memory as I think of that day. Every hour brought me peace of mind and resolution. I left as I had when we left the battlefront, a kind of keying-up and wild expectation. I'm not used to cities, and lounging about Constantinople had slackened my fibre. Now, as the sharp wind buffeted us, we on the high road to the right, we were on the road to the east and the border hills, and soon we should stand upon the farthest battlefield of the war. This was no commonplace intelligence job. That was all, over, and we were going into the unknown. However, the road in which might be the downfall of our enemies. I didn't reflect that we were among those enemies, and would probably share their downfall if we were not shot earlier. The truth is, I had got out of the nest of regulars, and was as a bird between houses and nations. I hardly bothered to think where my sympathies lay. First and foremost it was a contest between the four of us and a crazy woman, and this personal antagonism made the strife of armies only a dimly felt background.

To be Continued

Thunder over Erzerum
—von Stumm again—
and housetop trouble by
the waters of Babylon

THE STORY: During the Great War, Major Richard Hannay undertakes to learn details of a German plot to invade the Moslems against the British. His only clue is a paper bearing the words "Kastredin," "cancer," and "e. I.," scribbled by a secret agent before the latter died.

Hannay has two assistants—Sandy Arblaston and John S. Blenkiron, the latter a rich and dyspeptic American. They were sent to proceed to Constantinople by different routes and confer there.

Alone now, Hannay meets Peter Pienaar, an old pro-British friend from South Africa; and, pretending to be Boers who wish to help Germany, they enter the latter country. Hannay's real name is Cornelius Brundage.

Pienaar and Hannay are captured, and the latter is taken as a castle for a conference by Colonel von Stumm. The German becomes suspicious of the British agent's real purpose, whereupon Hannay knocks him unconscious and, after many thrilling adventures, reaches the Danube. Good fortune enables him to see Pienaar again, and they have a hot dispute with a Turk named Rastin. The two manage to reach Constantinople, where they are joined by Blenkiron and Sandy.

Blenkiron has been masquerading as an American pro-German; and Sandy, disguised as a native, has entered the employ of a beautiful German woman named Hilda von Einem who is engaged in扶助 the Moslems in the Caucasus. Sandy has learned the meaning of the mysterious scribbles on the paper. "Kastredin" is the title of an ancient story that tells about the coming of a prophet. This prophet—named Zimnald and also known as Greenmantle—had actually come, and is being clearly warned by "e. I." of the message, which is none other than Hilda von Einem. Sandy has been sent to the Caucasus to die from that affliction; in which case it is expected that the von Einem woman will find another "prophet" to take his place and continue her efforts to foment a holy war against the British. With forged papers which state they are friends of Germany, Hannay, Blenkiron and Pienaar, attended by a servant named Heslop, proceed to Constantinople. There they learn that Greenmantle is expected to rally the Turkish defense against the attacking Russians. Sandy remains in Hilda von Einem's employ.

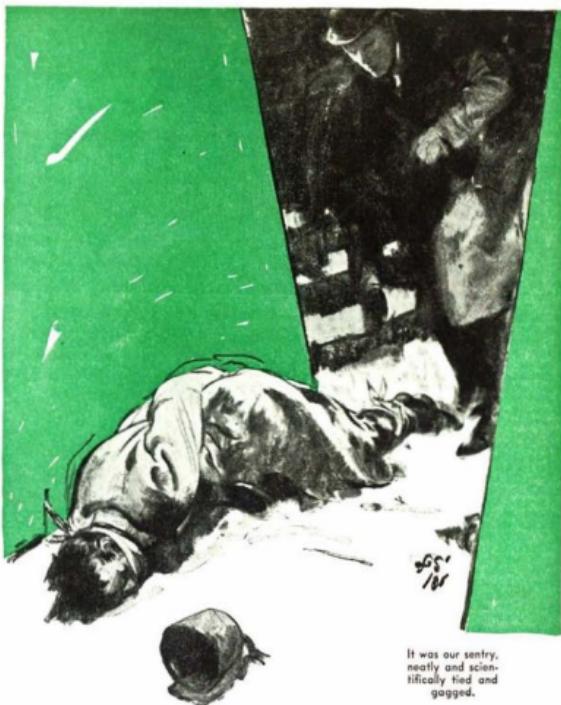
WE SLEPT that night like logs on the floor of a dirty khao, and started next morning in a powder of snow. We were getting very high up now, and it was perilously cold. The Companion—his name sounded like Hussin—had travelled the road before and told me what the places were, but they conveyed nothing to me. All morning we trudged through a big lot of snow, a blizzard at least, who swam along at a most agreeable pace with a free stride that I don't think I have ever seen bettered. I must say I took a fancy to the Turkish fighting man: I remembered the testimonial our fellows gave him as a clean fighter, and I felt very better that Germany should have lunged into the dirty snow. They halted for a moment, and we stopped too and hunched off. I had a few oranges and dried figs and a flask of very sour wine. I had a few words with one of the officers who spoke a little German. He told me they were marching straight for Russia, since there had been a great Turkish victory in the Caucasus. "We have beaten the Russians," he said. "But now it is Russia's turn," he said steadily, as if repeating a lesson. But he added that he was mortally sick of war.

In the afternoon we cleared the column and had an open road for some hours. The land now had a tilt eastward, as if we were moving toward the valley of a great river. Soon we were in a region of great desolation and desolation with a new look in their faces. The first lots of wounded had been the ordinary thing you see on every front, and there had been some pretense at organization. But these new lots were very weary and broken; they were often barefoot, and seemed to have lost their training to the point that in the stages of exhaustion, then would come a party limping along, so tired that they never turned their heads to look at us. Almost all were wounded, some badly, and most were horribly thin. I wondered why my Turkish friend behind would explain the sight to his men, if he believed in a great victory. They had not the air of the backwash of a conqueror's army.

Even Blenkiron, who was no soldier, noticed it.

"These boys look mighty bad," he observed. "We've got to hustle, major, if we're going to get seats for the last act."

That was all I could say. The sight made me mad. The faster, for I saw that big teams were happening in the East. I had reckoned that four days would take us from Ankara to Erzerum, but here was the second nearly over



It was our sentry, neatly and scientifically tied and gagged.

Greenmantle

By JOHN BUCHAN

Illustrated by Bradley Glynne Nommsen

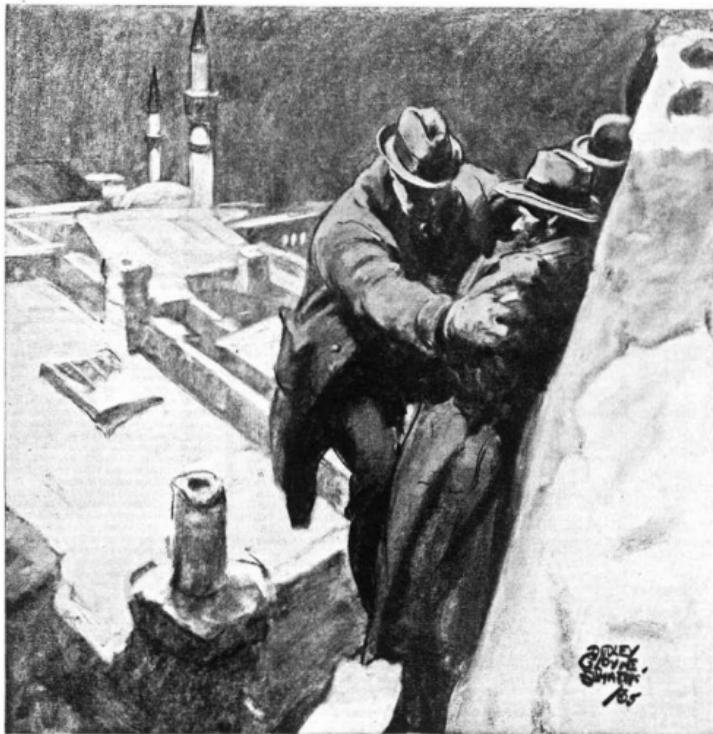
and we were not yet a third of the way. I pressed on recklessly, and that hurry was our undoing.

I have said that our car was a rotten old one. Its steering gear was pretty dicky, and the bad surface and continual hairpin bends of the road didn't improve it. Soot we came into sight, and the snow lay fairly deep, frozen hard and rutted by the heavy teams. The horses and mules were all dead, and were shaken about like beans in a blunder. I began to be acutely anxious about the old boshkhaner, the more as we seemed a long way short of the village I had proposed to spend the night in. Twilight was falling and we were still in an unfeated waste, crossing the shallow glen of a stream. Then, suddenly, a bridge had broken, and a bridge had been built over it which had apparently been freshly strengthened by heavy traffic. As we approached it at a good pace the car ceased to answer to the wheel.

I struggled desperately to keep it straight, but it swerved to the left and we plunged over a bank into a marshy hollow. There was a sickening bump as we struck the lower ground, and the whole party were shot out into the frozen slush. I don't yet know how I escaped, for the car turned over and by rights my head must have my back broken. But no one was hurt.

Peter was lying on his back, unconscious, and pulling the snow out of his hair, joined him. For myself I was feverishly examining the machine. It was about as ugly as it could be, for the front axle was broken.

Here was a piece of hopeless bad luck. We were stuck in the middle of Asia Minor with no means of conveyance, for we'd got a new car, but the old one had been left in the Caucasus. It was all but dark and there was no time to lose. I got out the petrol tins and spare tires and cached them among some rocks on the hillside. Then we collected our



We had no grip,
and if Blenkin
had stumbled, we
should all three
have been in the
courtyard.

Then something he saw
there made him cock his
eyebrows.

"Where did you steal
that?" he asked, but with
less assurance in his tone.

I spoke very gently.
"You seem to be the
victim of a mistake, sir.
There is no need to be afraid.
We are orders to report
ourselves at Erzurum without
an hour's delay. Whoever
hinders us will have
to answer to the Governor
of Armenia. We will be obliged
if you will conduct us at once
to the governor."

"You can't see General
Posselt," he said; "this is
my business. We have a
treasure from Siwas that two men
stole a car belonging to
one of Esmer Damad's
staff. It describes you all,
and says that two of you
are now wanted as bandits
of the Imperial Government.
What have you to say to that?"

"Only that it is rubbish.
My good sir, you have
seen our map. Our
errand is not to be cried on
the house tops, but five
minutes with General
Posselt will make things
clear. You are exceedingly
sorry for it if you
delay us another minute."

He was impressed in
spite of himself, and after
pulling his mustache
twice, he said, "Very well.
Presently he came back
and said very gruffly
that the governor would
see us. He followed him
along a corridor into a big
room looking out on the

river, where an oddish fellow sat in an armchair by a stove,
writing letters with a fountain pen.

THIS WAS Posselt, who had been Governor of Erzurum
till he fell sick and Ahmet Pasha took his place. He had a
peevish mouth and big blue pouches below his eyes. He was
supposed to be a good engineer and to have made Erzurum
impregnable, but the look in his face gave me the impression
that his reputation at the moment was a bit unstable.

"Yes, yes, I know," he said testily. "Are these the men?
They look a pretty lot of scoundrels. What's that you say?
They deny it. But they've got the car. What's that you say?
That, *Here, you*," and he fixed on Blenkin, "who the devil
are you?"

Blenkin smiled sleepily at him, not understanding one
word, and I took up the parable.

"Our passports, sir, give our credentials," I said.
He glanced through them, and his face lengthened.

"They're right enough. But what about this story of
stealing a car?"

"It is quite true," I said, "but I would prefer to use a
pleasanter word. You will see from our papers that every
authority on the road is directed to give us the best trans-
port. Our own car broke down, and after a long delay we got
some wretched horses. It is vitally important that we
should reach Erzurum without delay, with the liberty of
appropriating an empty car we found outside the inn. I am
sorry for the discomfort of the owners, but our business was
too grave to wait."

"But the telegram says you are notorious spies!"

I smiled. "Who sent the telegram?"

"I see no reason why I shouldn't give you his name. It was

whipped the skin from our faces. And always before us the long road unrolled, with somewhere at the end of it two armies clinched in a death grapple.

The road led through the desolations. We ate a set of meal in the car with the hood up, and left our weapons in the darkness, for the headlights were in perfect order. Then we turned off the road for four hours sleep, and I had a go at the map. Before dawn we started again, and came over a pass into the west of a big river. The winter dawn showed its great, straight, winding course among the sprinkled meadows. I called to Blenkin:

"I believe that river is the Euphrates," I said.

"So," he said, acutely interested. "Then that's the waters of Babylon. Great snakes, that I should have lived to see the lands where King Nebuchadnezzar grazed! Do you know the name of that big hill, master?"

"Ararat, as like as not," I cried, and he believed me.

WE WERE among the hills now, great, rocky, black slopes, and, seen through side glens, a hinterland of stony peaks. I remembered I kept looking for the castle I had seen in my dream. The thing had never been of particular interest to me, but I was pretty clear now that it did not belong to my South African memories. I am not a superstitious man, but the way that little *kaus* clung to my mind made me think it was a warning sent by Providence. I was pretty certain that when I closed my eyes it would be in the same place that I had seen it.

All morning we travelled up that broad vale, and just before noon it spread out wider, the road dipped to the water's edge, and I saw before me the white roofs of a town. The snow was deep now, and lay down to the riverbeds, but the sky had cleared, and again a space of blue heavens some peaks to the south rose glittering like jewels. The arches of a

bridge, spanning two forks of the stream, showed in front, and as I slowed down at the bend a sentry's challenge rang out from a blockhouse. We had reached the fortress of Erzurum, the headquarters of a Turkish corps and the gate of Armenia.

I showed the man our passports, but he did not salute and let us move on. He called another fellow from the guardhouse, who motioned us to keep pace with him as he stamped down a side lane. At the other end was a big barracks, with a sentry outside. The man spoke to us in Turkish, which Horsin interpreted. There was somebody in that barracks who wanted badly to see us.

"By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept," quoted Blenkin softly. "I fear, major, we'll soon be

I tried to persuade myself that this was merely the red tape of a frontier fortress, but I had an instinct that difficulties were in store for us. If Rasta had started wiring I was prepared to put up the brazenest bluff, for we were still eighty miles from Erzurum, and at all costs we were going to be delayed there before nightfall.

A friend of ours had us at the door. At the sight of us he cried to a friend to come and look.

"Here are the birds safe. A fat man and two lean ones and a savage who looks like a Kurd. Call the guard and march them off. There's no doubt about their identity." "I said, "Yes, sir." We had no time to argue and we'd like to be in Erzurum before the day. I said, "I will beg her to get through any formalities as soon as possible. This man," and I pointed to the sentry, "has our passports."

"Compose yourself," he said impudently; "you're not going on just yet, and when you do it won't be in a stolen car." He took the passports and fingered them casually.

Rasta Bey. You've picked an awkward fellow to make an enemy of."

I did not smile but laughed. "Rasta!" I cried. "He's one of Elter's satellites. That explains many things. I should like a word with you."

He nodded to the staff officer, and when he had gone I put on my most Bible face and looked as important as a provincial mayor at a royal visit.

"I can speak freely," I said, "for I am speaking to a soldier of Germany. There is no love lost between us, but I must serve. I need not tell you that. This Rasta therapist he had found a chance of delaying us, so he invents this trash about spies. Those Comitadjis have spies on the brain . . . Especially he hates Frau von Einem."

He jumped at the name.

"You have orders from her?" he asked in a respectful tone.

"Why, yes," I answered, "and those orders will not wait."

He got up and walked to a table, whence he took a long pipe and a cigarette. "I was torn in two between the Turks and my own compatriots. If I please one I offend the other, and the result is a damnable confusion. You can go on to Elterzum, but I shall send a man with you to see that you report to headquarters at once. You will, of course, not be obliged to take no chances in this business. Rasta's got a grievance against you, but you can easily hide behind the lady's skirts. She passed through this town two days ago."

Ten minutes later we were coasting through the slush of the narrow streets with a stolid German leutenant sitting beside me.

THE afternoon was one of those rare days so fine in the country now you have a spell of it every week as we had remembered several like it during our winter's training in Hampshire. The road was a fine one, well engineered and well kept, too, considering the amount of traffic. We were little more than a mile from the town before to let us pass train and transport without slackening pace. The fellow at my side was good-humored enough, but his presence naturally put the lid on our conversation. I didn't want to talk, however. I was trying to pass the time of day, but he said very little of it, for I had nothing to go upon. We must find Hilda von Einem and Sandy, and between us we must wreck the Greenmantle business. That done, it didn't matter so much what happened to us. As I reasoned it out, we could always get another way, and, unless they got a filip from Greenmantle, would crumple up before the Russians. In the rout I hoped we might get a chance to change our sides. But it was no good looking so far forward; the first thing was to get to Sandy's.

Now I was still in the mood of reckless bravado which I had got from bagging the car. I did not realize how thin our story was, and how easily Rasta might have a big graft at headquarters. If I had it would have shot out the German command that before we got to Elterzum, and found some way of getting mixed up in the ruck of the population. Hussin could have helped me to that. I was getting so confident since our interview with Hussin that I thought I could bluff the whole outfit.

But my main business that afternoon was pure nonsense. I was trying to find my little hill. At every turn of the road I expected to see the *castril* before us. You must know that even such a combatant as I have been can abhor high mountains. My father took me to Baanteland when I was a boy, and I reckon I have scrambled over almost every bit of upland south of the Zambezi, from the Hottentots Holland to the Zoutpansberg, and in the time when I was a boy I came to the hills of Mountans Sources. One of the things I had looked forward to in coming home was the chance of climbing the Alps. But now I was among peaks that I fancied were bigger than the Alps, and I could hardly keep my eyes on the road. I was pretty certain that my mind was among them, for that dream had taken an almighty hold on my mind. Funnily enough, I was ceasing to think it a place of evil omen,

for one soon forgets the atmosphere of nightmare. But I was convinced that it was a thing I was destined to see, and to see very soon.

Darkness fell when we were some miles short of the city, and the last part was difficult driving. On both sides of the road transport and engineers' vehicles were parked and some of it strayed into the way. I noticed lots of small details—machine-gun detachments, signalling parties, squads of stretcher-bearers—which mean the fringe of an army, and as soon as the night began the white columns of searchlights began to grope in the skies.

And then, above the hum of the roadside, rose the voice of the great guns. The shells were bursting four or five miles away, and the gun crews had been as many miles distant. But it is that upland carpet of plain in the frosty night that sounds the most intimately near. They kept up their solemn litany, with a minute's interval between each—no *recoil* which rumbles like a drum, but that steady persistent roar of artillery exactly ranged on a target. I could just be bombarding the outer forts, and once there came a loud explosion and a red glare as if a magazine had suffered.

It was a sound I had not heard for five months and it fairly chilled me. I remembered him, and I had first heard it on a ridge before Laventie. Then it had been half afraid, half soothed, but every nerve had been quickened. Then it had been the new thing in my life that held me breathless with anticipation. It was the last thing, the thing I had shared with so many good fellows, my proper work, and the only task for a man. At the sound of the guns I felt that I was moving in natural air once more. I felt that I was coming home.

WE WERE stopped at a long line of ramparts, and a German sergeant stared at us till we saw the leutenant beside me, when he saluted and we passed on. Almost at once we dipped into narrow twisting streets, crowded with houses where it was a hard business to steer. There were few lights—only now and then the flare of a torch which showed the grey stone houses, with every window latticed and shuttered. I had passed my headlights and had only side lamps, so I had to drive very gingerly through the labyrinth. I hoped we would strike Sandy's quarters soon, for we were all pretty empty, and a frost had set in which made our thick coats seem as thin as paper.

The leutenant did the guiding. We had to present our passports, and I anticipated no more difficulty than in landing from the boat at Boulogne. But I wanted to get it over, for my hunger pinched me and it was four o'clock. Sandy's was still in the hours having before a quarry. The city was out of range, but there were strange lights on the ridge to the east.

At last we reached our goal and marched through a fine old carved archway into a courtyard, and thence into a draughty hall.

"You must see the *Sehnsuchtfest*," said our guide.

I looked round to see if we were all there, and noticed that Hussin had disappeared. It did not matter, for he was not on the passage.

We followed as we were directed through an open door. There was a man standing with his back toward us looking at a wall map, a very big man with a neck that bulged over his collar.

I would have known that neck among a million. At the sight of it I made a half-turn to bolt back. It was too late, for the door had closed behind us and there were two armed sentries beside it.

The sentries turned and looked into my eyes. I had a despairing hope that I might bluff it out, for I was in different clothes and had shaved my beard. But you cannot spend ten minutes in a death grapple without your adversary knowing you.

I went very pale, then relaxed him- self and twisted his features into the old grin.

"So," he said, "the little Dutchman? We meet after many days."

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It was no good lying or saying anything. I shut my teeth and waited.

"And you, Herr Blenkiron? I never liked the look of you. You bubbled too much, like all your Americans."

"I guess your national dislikes haven't got anything to do with the matter," said Blenkiron, calmly. "If you're the boss here, I'll thank you to cast your eye over these passports, for we can't stand waiting forever."

This fairly angered him. "I'll teach you manners," he cried, and took a step forward to reach for Blenkiron's shoulder—the game he had twice played with me.

Blenkiron never took his hands from his coat pockets. "Keep your distance," he drawled in a new tone. "I'll get you covered, and I'll make a hole in your bullet head if you lay a hand on me."

With an effort Stumm recovered himself. He rang a bell and fell to thinking. An orderly appeared with a tray which he laid on a table, presently a file of soldiers entered the room.

"I'm going to have you disarmed, gentlemen," he said. "We can conduct our conversations more pleasantly without pistols."

It was idle to resist. We surrendered our arms. Peter almost in tears with vexation,

Stumm swung his legs over a chair, rested his chin on the back, and looked at me.

"Your game is up, you know," he said. "These fools! That's what the Dutchmen were doing, but I had the human inspiration. I believed the good God had spared them for me. When I got Rasta's telegram I was certain, for your doings reminded me of a little trick you once played me on the beach of the road. But I am a man, and I can find this plump young party, and I'll talk to Blenkiron. Two eminent

American engineers and their servant bound

for Mesopotamia on business of high Government importance! It was a good lie; but if I had been in Cossack clothes I would have had a short life. Rasta and his friends are no concern of mine. You can trick them as you please. But you have attempted to win the confidence of a certain lady, and her interests are mine. Likewise you have offended me, and I do not forgive. By God," he cried, his

voice growing shrill with passion, "by the time I have done with you your mothers in their graves will weep that they ever bore you."

It was Blenkiron who spoke. His voice was as level as the chairman's of a bogus company, and it fell on that turbid atmosphere like acid on grease.

"I don't take no stock in high-falutin'. If you're a good man, then you're a good man. I guess you've hit the wrong man. You're like the sweep that stuck in the chimney, a bit too big for your job. I reckon you've a talent for romance that's just wasted in trifling. But if you're going to play the big shot, then you're going to have to know that I'm an American citizen, and pretty well considered in my own country and in yours, and you'll sweat blood for it later. That's a fair warning, Colonel Stumm."

I don't know what Stumm's plans were, but that speech of Blenkiron's put into his mind just the needed amount of uncertainty. You see, he had Peter and me right enough, but he hadn't properly connected Blenkiron with us, and was afraid either to hit out at all three of us, or to let Blenkiron go. It was lucky for us that the American had cut such a dash in the Fatherland.

"There is no hurry," he said blandly. "We shall have long happy hours together. I'm going to take you as a mate with me, for I'm a good sailor."

You will be a good sailor, I told me than in the town goal, for it's a trifle draughty. It lets things in, and it might let things out."

"Again he gave an order, and we were off again, each with a soldier at his elbow. The three of us bunched into the back seat of the car, while two men sat before us with their rifles between their knees, one got up behind on the baggage rack, and one sat beside Stumm's chauffeur. Packed into the car, we drove into the black streets, above which the stars twinkled.

Hussin had disappeared from the face of the earth, and quite right, too. He was a good fellow, but he had no call to mix himself up in our troubles.

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Greenmantle

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"I'VE OFTEN reflected," said Blenikron, "that miracles have left off happening." He got no answer, for I was feeling the walls for something in the nature of a window.

"For a reckon," he went on, "that it was a good old-fashioned copper-bottomed miracle to get us out of this in. It's plumb against all my principles. I've spent my life using the talents God gave me to keep things from getting to the point of rude violence, and so far I've succeeded. But now you come along, and you have a respectable middle-aged citizen into an aboriginal mis-up. It's mighty indicate, I reckon the next move is up to you, for I'm no good at the housebreaking stunt."

"No, I'm not surprised," I answered; "but I'm hanged if I'll chuck up the sponge. Sandy's somewhere outside, and he's got a hefty crowd at his heels."

I simply could not feel the despair which by every law of common sense was due to the case, so I just introduced me. I could still hear their deep voices, the yawn of wood and stone separated us from the upper air.

What vexed us most was our hunger. Barring a few mouthfuls on the road we had eaten nothing since breakfast, and our strict diet for the past days had not been generous we had some leeway to make up. Stumm had never looked near us since we were shoved into the car. We had been brought to some kind of hollow and left in a place like a winter cellar. It was pitch dark and after feeling round the walls, first on my feet and then on Peter's back, I decided that there were no windows. It must have been lit and ventilated by some lattice in the ceiling. There was a stick of incense in the place, nothing but damp earth floor and bare stone sides. The door was a relic of the Iron Age, and I could hear the paces of a sentry outside it.

When things got to the pass that nothing you can do will help you, the only thing is to live for the moment. All three of us sought in sleep a refuge from our empty stomachs. The floor was the poorest kind of bed, but we rolled up our coats for pillows and made the best of it. Soon I knew by Peter's snoring that he was the one who was asleep, and I presently followed him.

I was awakened by a pressure below my left ear. I thought it was Peter, for it is the old master's trick of walking a man so that he misses no note. But another voice spoke. It told me that there was no need to live to to rise and follow, and the voice was the voice of Hussein.

Peter was awake, and we stirred Blenikron out of his semi-sleep. We were bidden take off our coats and hang them by the door round our necks as contrary to do when they want to go barefoot. Then we tiptoed to the door, which was ajar. Outside was a passage with a flight of steps at one end which led to the open air. On these steps lay a faint thing, and as I went up to it I saw a man huddled up at the foot of them. It was our sentry, neatly and scientifically gagged and tied up.

The steps brought us to a little courtyard about which were the houses on the cliff. We halted with Hussein listening intently. Apparently the coast was clear, and our guide led us to one side, which was clothed by a stout wooden trellis. Once it may have supported fig trees, but now the planted plants had died out, and withered tendrils and rotten dung remained.

It was child's play for Peter and me to go up that trellis, but it was the dace and all for Blenikron. He was in poor condition and puffed like a grampus, and he seemed to have no sort of head for figures. But he was as good as his word, and started immediately till his arms gave out and he fairly stuck. So Peter and I went up on each side of him, taking an arm apiece, as I had once seen done to a man with vertigo in the Klood Ching, the Talmudic legend, a mighty thundershower when I got him panting on the top and Hussein had shinned up beside us.

We crawled along a broadish wall, with an inch or two of powder snow on it, and then up a sloping buttress on to

the flat roof of the house. It was a miserable business for Blenikron, who would certainly have fallen if he could have seen what was below him, and Peter and I had to stand to attention all the time. There began a more difficult job. Hussein pointed out a ledge in the wall, and as a stack of chairs to another building a slight ledge in this being the route he fancied. At that I sat down resolutely and put on my boots, and the others followed. Frostbitten feet would be a poor excuse for a kind of travailing.

It was a bad start. Blenikron, and we only get him past it by Peter and me spreading ourselves against the wall and passing him in front of us with his face toward us. We had no grip, and if he had slipped, we should have three of us been in the courtyard. But we got it over, and dropped as softly as possible on to the roof of the next house. Hussein had his finger to his lips, and I soon saw why. For there was a lighted window on the wall we had descended.

Some one was preparing me to walk behind and explore. The others had come and were soon at the far end of the roof, where a kind of wooden pavilion broke the line, while I tried to get a look inside. The window was curtained, and had two folding sashes which clasped in the middle. Through the curtains I could see a little bright room and a big man sitting at a table littered with papers.

I watched him, fascinated, as he turned to consult some documents and made a few steps toward the window before him. Then he suddenly rose, stretched himself, cast a glance at the window, and went out of the room, making a great clatter in descending the wooden staircase. He left the door ajar and the last sound heard.

I hurried in and gone to have a look at his prisoners, in which case the show was up. But what filled my mind was an insane desire to get a sight of his man. It was one of those mad impulses which utterly cloud right reason, a desire to see a man, any man, a crazy man in the dark. But it was so strong that I would have pulled that window out by its frame, if need be, to get to that table.

There was no need, for the flimsy clasp gave at the first pull, and the sashes swung open. I scrambled out after listening for steps again. I crumpled up the paper and stuck it in my pocket, as well as the paper from which I had seen him copying. Very carefully I removed all marks of my entry, brushed away the snow from the boards, pulled back the curtain, got out and refastened the window. Still there was no sound of his return. Then I started off to catch up with the others.

I found them shivering in the roof galleried. "We've got to move pretty fast," I said, "but I've never been hunting off Stumm's private cabinet. Hussein, old lad, d'you hear that? They may be after us any moment, so I pray heavens we soon strike better going."

Hussein understood. He let go at a snarl which led from one to another, for they were all of the same height, and only low parapets and screens divided them. We never saw a soul, for a winter's night is not the time you choose to saunter on your houses. I kept my eyes open for a while, but, and in about five minutes I heard it. A riot of voices broke out, with one louder than the rest, and, looking back, I saw lanterns waving. Stumm had realized his loss and found the tracks of the thief.

Hussein turned pale, and I turned and hurried us on at a breakneck pace, with old Blenikron gasping and stumbling. The shouts behind us grew louder, as if some eye quicker than the rest had caught our movement in the starlit darkness. It was very evident that if we got up the chase we should be caught, for Blenikron was about as useful on a roof as a hippo.

PRESENTLY, we came to a big drop, with a kind of ladder down to the foot of the wall, and leaped down to the left into a pit of darkness. Hussein gripped my arm and pointed down it. "Follow it," he whispered, "and you will reach a roof which spans a street. Cross it, and on the other side is a mosque. Turn to the right there and you

will find easy going for fifty metres, well screened from the higher roads. For Allah's sake keep in the shelter of the screen. Some where there I will join you."

He hurried us along the ledge for a bit and then went back, and with snow from the corner of his cap up the trail. After that he went straight on himself, taking strange short steps like a bird. I saw his game. He wanted to lead our pursuers after him, and he had to multiply the tracks, and trust to Stumm's fellows not spotting that they all were made by him.

But I was quite enough to think of in getting Blenckiron along that ledge. He was pretty nearly founder, he was in a sweat of terror, and as a matter of fact he was taking one of the biggest risks of his life, for we had no room to turn and had to depend on himself. I could hear him invoking some unknown deity called Holy Mike. But he ventured gallantly, and we got to the roof which ran across the street. That was easier, though, than getting it. It was no joke skirting the cupola of that tall, thin minaret. At last we found the parapet and breasted more freely, for we were now under shelter from the direction of danger. I spared a moment to look round, and thirty yards off, across the street, I saw a weird spectacle.

The minaret was parallel to the one we were locked on. I saw the flicker of the lanterns, waved up and down as the bearers slipped in the snow, and heard their cries like hounds on a trail. Stumm was with them; he was not the shape that sort of bear was. They passed us and continued to our left, now hid by autting chimney, now clear to view against the sky line. The roofs they were on were perhaps six feet higher than ours, so even though we were in the open, they were safe. If Husain was going to be hunted now, Erzerum it was a bad lookout for us, for I hadn't the foggiest notion where we were or where we were going to.

But as we watched we saw something most remarkable. There were now three or four hundred yards away, but on the roofs just opposite us across the street, there appeared a man's figure. I thought it was one of the hunters, and we all crunched lower, and then I realized the lean gaunt shape of Huseyin. He must have done his best keeping in the dark to the left of the pursuit, and taking big risks in the open places. But there was now, exactly in front of us, and separated only by the width of the narrow street.

He took a step backward, gathered himself for a spring, and leaped clean over the gap. Like a cat he lighted on the parapet above us, and stumbled forward with the impetus right on our heads.

"We are safe for the moment," he whispered, "but when they miss me they will return. We must make good haste."

The next half-hour was a maze of twists and turns, slipping down icy roofs and climbing icy chimney stacks. The star of the city had just risen from behind the hills below, and scarcely a sound. But across the great tattoo of guns beat in the east. Gradually we descended to a lower level, till we emerged on the top of a shed in a courtyard. Husain gave an odd sort of cry, like a demon or owl, and something began to fall below us.

It was a big covered wagon, full of bundles of forage, and drawn by four mules. As we descended from the shed into the frozen litter of the yard, the sound came out of the shadows and was low to Huseyin. Peter and I lifted Blenckiron into the cart, and scrambled in beside him, and I never felt anything more blessed than the warmth and softness of that place after the frosty roofs. I had forgotten all about my hunger, and only yearned for sleep. We were soon drawn out of the courtyard into the dark streets.

Then Blenckiron began to laugh, a deep internal rumble which shook him violently and brought down a heap of forage on his head. I thought it was hysterics, the relief from the cold, the joy of safety. But that wasn't. His body might be out of training, but there was never anything the master with his nerves. He was consumed with honest merriment.

"Say, major," he gasped, "I don't usually chase Indians for a living, but now how I didn't cotton to Colonel Stumm. But now I almost love him. You hit his jaw very hard in Germany, and now you've annexed his private file, and I guess it's important or he wouldn't have had me mighty set on steepling over those roofs. I haven't done such a thing since I broke into neighbor Brown's woodshed to steal his tame 'possum, and that's forty years back. It's the first piece of genuine animalism I've struck in this goddam country. I haven't had such a good old time since I took the trail of Cousin Sally Dillard" when we were hunting ducks in Michigan and his wife's brother had an apoplexy in the night and died of it."

To the accompaniment of Blenckiron's chuckles I did what Peter had done in the first minute, and fell asleep.

WHEN I awoke it was still dark. The wagon had stopped in a courtyard which seemed to be shaded by great trees. There was a faint light in the sky, the light of the air we had left the city and climbed to higher ground. There were big buildings on one side, and on the other what looked like the lift of a hill. No lights were shown, the place was in profound gloom, but I felt the presence of others beside Husain and the driver.

We were hurried, Blenckiron only half awake, into an outbuilding, and then down some steps to a roomy cellar. There Husain lit a lantern, which showed he had once been a soldier, from Old Boys still strewn the floor and the place smelt of apples. Straw had been piled in corners for beds, and there was a rude table, and a divan of boards covered with shagreen.

"In here we'll ask Husain," he said. "You will be safe here, but you must keep still till the Master comes."

"Is the Franklin lady here?" I asked.

Husain nodded, and from a wallet brought out a small book, now half disengaged, and a loaf of bread. We fell on like vultures, and as we ate Husain disappeared. I noticed that he locked the door behind him.

As soon as the meal was ended the others returned to their interrupted sleep. But I lay awake, now half disengaged, and a lot on many things. I got Blenckiron's electric torch and lay down on the divan to study Stumm's map.

The first glance showed me that it had lit on a treasure. It was the staff map of the region around Erzerum, showing the field trenches, with little notes scribbled in Stumm's neat small handwriting. I got out the big map which I had taken from Blenckiron, and made out the general lie of the land. I saw the thickness of Deva Boyan to the south, which the Russian guns were battering. Stumm was just like the kind of squared artillery map we used in France. I in 10,000s, with spidery red lines showing the trenches, but with the difference that it was the Turks who had built them. The map was in detail and the Russian only roughly indicated. The thing was really a confidential plan of the whole Erzerum *encirque*, and would be worth untold gold to the enemy. No wonder Stumm had been in a wax at its creation.

The Deva Boyan lines seemed to me monstrously strong, and I remembered the merits of the Turks as a fighter behind strong defenses. It looked as if Russia were up against a second Pleiades or a new Gaul.

Then I took to studying the map. South lay the Palamedes range, mountain, with forts defending the passes, where ran the roads to Mush and Lake Van. That side, too, looked pretty strong. North of the valley of the Euphrates I made out two big forts, one on each side of the river, the one from Oti. On this part of the map Stumm's notes were plentiful, and I gave them all my attention. I remembered Blenckiron's news about the Russian advance on a broad front, for it was clear that Stumm was taking pains about the flanks of the fortresses.

Kara Gubek was the point of interest. It stood on a rib of land between two peaks, which from the contour lines rose very steep,

So long as it was held was clear that no invader could move down the Ephphates glen. Stumm had appended a note to the peaks—"not fortified"; and about two miles to the northeast there was a red cross and the name "Przepolsky". I assumed that to be the furthest point yet reached by the right wing of the Russian attack.

Then I turned to the paper from which Stumm had copied the jottings on to his map. It was typewritten, and consisted of nine pages of notes. One was headed "Kara Gubek" and read: "In order to *seize adjacent peaks. Difficult for enemy to get batteries there, but not impossible. This the real point of danger, for if Przepolsky wins the peaks Kara Gubek and Tugta must fall, and enemy will be on left rear of Deva Boyan main position.*"

I WAS soldier enough to see the tremendous importance of this note. On Kara Gubek depended the defense of Przepolsky, and it was a brevet point if ever there was one, the weakness again. Yet, searching the map again, I could not believe that any mortal commander would see any chance in the adjutant's puns, even if he thought them underlined. That was information given to the Turkish and German staff. But if it could be conveyed to the Grand Staff he would have Exzern in his power in a day. Otherwise he would go on battering at the Deva Boyan ridge for weeks, and long ere he had won that, Kara Gubek would have arrived, he would be outmaneuvered by two to one, and his chance would have vanished.

My discovery set me pacing up and down that cellar in a perfect fever of excitement. I longed for wireless, a carrier pigeon, an airplane, or a horse to carry the note across half a dozen miles between me and the Russian lines. It was maddening to be wholly unable to use it. How could three fugitives in a ruined town where horse's nest of Turkey and Germany still sit and torment them, hope to send this message of life and death?

I went back to the map and examined the nearest Russian positions. They were clearly marked. Przepolsky in the north, the main force beyond Deva Boyan, and the southern columns up to the passes of the Palantakur but not yet across them. I could not know which was the nearest to us till I discovered where we were, and as I thought of this I began to see the rudiments of a desperate plan. It depended on Peter, now

slumbering like a tired dog on a couch of straw.

Hussein had locked the door, and I must wait for information till he came back. But suddenly I noticed a trap in the roof, which had evidently been used for raising and lowering the table. The trap was loose, rattling and might be unburred. I pulled the table below it, and found that with a little effort I could raise the flap. I knew I was taking immense risks, but I was so sure on my point that I disregarded them. After a few moments I gently pushed the trap open, and catching the edges of the hole with my fingers raised my body and got my knees on the edge.

It was the outbuilding of which our refuge consisted, a cellar, and the hole was filled with light. Not a soul was there, and I hunted about till I found what I wanted. This was a ladder leading to a sort of loft, which in turn gave access to the roof. Here I had to be very careful, for I might be overlooked from the roof. I was helped by the fact that there was a trellis for grape vines across the place, which gave a kind of shelter. Lying flat on my face I stared over a great expanse of country.

Looking north I saw the city in a haze of morning smoke and, beyond, the plain of the Ephphates and the opening of the glen where the river left the hills. Up there, among the snowy heights, were Tulta and Kara Gubek. To the east was the ridge of Deva Boyan, on which the snow was melting before the winter's sun. On the roads up to it I saw transport moving, I saw the circle of the inner forts, but for a moment the guns were silent. South rose a great wall of white mountains, which I took to be the Palantakur. I could see the tracks running to the passes, and the smoke of camps and horse lines right under the cliffs.

I had learned what I needed. We were in outbuildings of a big country house two or three miles from the town. The nearest point of the Russian front was somewhere in the foothills of the Palantakur.

As I descended I heard, thin and faint and beautiful, like the cry of a wild bird, the mournful notes of the mourners of Lazarus.

When I dropped through the trap the others were awake. Hussein was setting food on the table, and viewing my descent with anxious disapproval.

"It's all right," I said; "I won't do it again, for I've found out I wanted. Peter, old man, the biggest job of your life is before you!"

To be Continued

"She plays with souls for pawns.
She is evil — evil — evil!"

Green-mantle

In which Greenmantle
throws off his mask and
Peter Pienna goes to
the wars

By JOHN BUCHAN

Illustrated by Dudley Glynne Summers

THE STORY: During the Great War, Major Richard Hannay undertakes to learn details of a German plot to incite the Moslems against the British. His only clue is a paper bearing the words, "Kasredin," "cancer," and "x,"...," scribbled by a secret agent before the latter was killed.

Hannay, the latter a rich and dissolute American, they agree to proceed to Constantinople by different routes and confer there.

Alone now, Hannay meets Peter Pienna, an old pro-British friend from South Africa, and, pretending to be Boers who wish to help Germany, they enter the latter country, Hannay using the name Cornelis Brandy. Pienna and Hannay are separated, and the latter is taken to a castle for a conference by Colonel von Stumm. The German becomes suspicious of the British agent's real purpose, whereupon Hannay, known as a swashbuckler and after many thrilling adventures, reaches the Danube. Hannay forces himself to meet Pienna there; and, after a hot dispute with a Turk named Rustu, the two manage to reach Constantinople. There they are joined by Blenkiron and Sandy.

Blenkiron has been masquerading as an American prospector, Sandy, dressed as a native, has entered the employ of a beautiful German woman named Hilda von Eisen, who is very active in furthering German interests in Turkey.

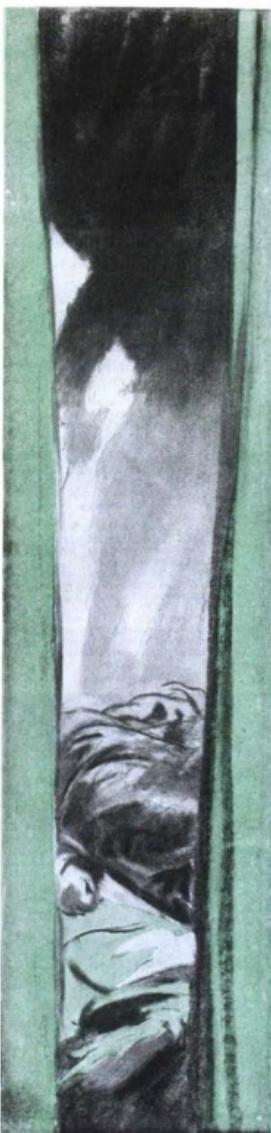
Sandy has learned the meaning of the mysterious words on the paper. "Kasredin" is the title of an ancient story that tells about a curse of a prophet. The prophet, named Zinard, and also known as Kasredin — he usually comes to us — is being cleverly used by "x," of the message, who is none other than Hilda von Eisen. "Cancer" means that the prophet is dying from that affliction; in which case it is expected that the von Eisen woman will find another "prophet" to take his place and continue the curse.

With forged papers which state they are friends of Germany, Hannay, Blenkiron and Pienna, attended by a servant named Hussin, journey toward Erzurum, where the mysterious Greenmantle is expected to rally the Turkish defense against the attacking Russians. Sandy remains in Hilda von Eisen's employ.

They are stopped outside Erzurum and confronted by the German, von Stumm. They are imprisoned but escape, and Hannay steals von Stumm's map, which would be invaluable to the Grand Duke who commands the Russian army just beyond the city. Hannay says to Peter: "The biggest job of your life is before you."

PETER scarcely looked up from his breakfast. "I'm willing, Dick," he said. "But you mustn't ask me to be friends with Stumm. He makes my stomach role that way."

For the first time he had stopped calling me Cornelis. The day of make-believe was over for all of us.



"Not to be friends with him," I said, "but to kill him and all his kind."

"Then I'm ready," said Peter cheerfully.

"What is it?"

I spread out the maps on the divan. There was no light in the place but Blenski-ron's electric torch, for Hussin had put out the rest. I had not been nervous, but things at once, for his intelligence work in the Boer War had made him handy with maps. It didn't want much telling from me to explain to him the importance of the one I had looted.

"This map is worth many million pounds," said he, wrinkling his brows and scratching delicately the tip of his left ear. It was a way he had when he was startled.

"How can we get it to our friends?"

Peter cogitated. "There is only one way. A man must take it. Once, I remember, when we fought the Matabele it was necessary to find out whether the chief Makapan was living. Some said he had died, others that he'd gone over the Portuguese border, but it became known that native could tell us and since his kraal was so defended no ranger could get through. So it was necessary to send a man."

Peter lifted up his head and laughed.

"The man found the chief Makapan. He was a very active old fellow, and was walking with a shotgun. But the man brought the chief Makapan out of his kraal and handed him over to the Mounted Police. You remember Captain Arcell, Dick?" Jim Arcell. Well, I'm laughing so much that he has to open a hole in his head, and had to have the doctor."

"You were that man, Peter," I said.

"Ja, I was the man. There are more ways of getting into kraals than there are ways of getting out."

"Will you take this chance?"

"For certain, Dick. I am getting stiff with doing nothing, and if I sit in houses much longer I shall grow old. I will be very happy, Dick, but I do not say I will succeed. It is now common knowledge I will be hurried, and you know hurry makes bad stalking."

I showed him what I thought the likeliest place—in the spurs of the Palaukants mountains. Peter's way of doing things was all his own. He scraped earth and plaster out of a corner of the room, and with a piece of chalk on the table, followed the contours of the map. He did it extraordinarily neatly, for all great hunters, he was as deft as a weaver-bird. He hurried over it for a long time, and combed the map till he must have got it by heart. Then he took off his glasses. There was a very good single Zeiss which was part of his outfit from Rasta's gunsmith, and I could see that he was going to follow an example and get on to the hotstop. Presently his legs disappeared through the trap, and Blenski-ron and I were left to our reflections.

PETER must have found something unconsciously interesting, for he stayed on the roof the better part of the day. It was a dull job for us, since there was no light, and Blenski-ron had not even the consolation of a game of Patience. But for all that he was in good spirits, for he had had no dyspepsia since we left Constantinople, and announced that he believed we were getting even with the Germans for their dastardly treatment. As for me, I was puzzled, for I could not imagine what was detaining Sandy. I was clear that our presence must have been from Hilda von Eisen. for she was a pal of Stumm's, and he must by now have been the man on Peter's map. How long could this secret last? I asked myself. We had no secret of our own, the whole outfit. Rasta and the Turks wanted our blood; so did Stumm and the Germans; and once the lady found we were deceiving her she would want it most of all. Our only help was Sandy, and he gave no sign of his existence. I began to fear that with him, too, there had been trouble.

As for me, I was truly depressed, only impatient. I could never again get back to the heathy stagnation of that Constantinople week. The guns kept me cheerful. There was the devil of a bombardment all day, and the thought that our Allies were thundering within half a dozen miles off gave me a pleasant thrill. They were there to support the defense. Hilda von Eisen and her prophet and all our enemies would be overwhelmed in the deluge. And that blessed chance depended very much on old Peter, now beheading like a pigeon on the hotstop.

It was not till the late afternoon that Hussin appeared again. He took off his Peacoat absence, but it was a lantern and it was the table. Then he went to the door and waited. Presently a light step fell on the stairs, and Hussin drew back to let someone enter. He promptly departed and I heard the key turn in the lock behind him.

Sandy stood there, but a new Sandy who made Blenski-ron and me jump to our feet. The pelt and skin-cap had gone,

the trouble about his successor . . . The four Germans would be no party to a wedding. They had been to the shrine and vowed that their task now was to make a tomb for their master and pray for the rest of their days at his shrine. They were as immovable as a granite hill, and she knew it. "Then they, too, died."

"Murdered," I repeated.

"Murdered . . . all four in one morning. I do not know how, but I helped to bury them. Oh, she had Germans and Kurds to do her foul work, but their hands were always open to her. They did for me. I have seen honest and vain people to the shambles and have abetted the dead when it was done. It will haunt me till my dying day."

I did not stop to console him, for my mind was on fire with his news.

"Then the prophet is gone, and the humbug is over," I cried.

"The prophet still lives. She has found a successor."

He turned up in his linen tank.

"Why do I wear these clothes? Because I am Greenmeintz. I am the Kaaba-i-huriyah for all Islam. In three days time I will reveal myself to my people and wear on my breast the green ephod of the prophet."

He broke off with a hysterical laugh.

"Only you, I see. I won't. I will cut my throat first."

"Cheer up!" said Blenski-ron soothingly.

"We'll find a way to get you out of that."

"There is no way," he said; "there is but death. We're done for, all of us. Hussin got you out of Stumm's clutches, but you're in danger every moment. At the best you have three days, and then you, too, will be dead."

I had no words to reply. This change in the bold and unshakable Sandy took my breath away.

"She made me her accomplice," he went on. "She could have killed her on the pretext of those three days. But she didn't. I did all she asked, and joined in her game. She was very candid, you know . . . She cares no more than Enver for the faith of Islam. She can laugh at it. But she has her own dreams, and they consume her as a saint is consumed by his religion. She was born in the day when the garden was hell, the days since have been the torment fires of Tophet. I think—it is horrible to say it—that she has got some kind of crazy liking for me. When we have reclaimed the East I am to be by her side when she rides on her milk-

Peter went hell-for-leather over a piece of ground that was being watered with H. E.

and then instead a long lissome tunic clapped at the waist and a broad girdle. A strange green turban adorned his head, and as he pushed it back I saw that his hair had been shaved. He looked like some acolyte—a weary acolyte, for there was no spring in his walk or nerve in his carriage. He dropped numbly on the divan and laid his head in his hands. The lantern showed his haggard eyes with dark lines beneath them.

"Good God, old man, have you been sick?" I cried.

"Not sick," he said hoarsely. "My body is right enough, but the last few days I have been living in hell."

Blenski-ron nodded sympathetically. That was how he himself would have reacted in the case of the lady.

I immediately accosted him and grabbed both his wrists.

"Look at me," I said, "straight in the eyes."

His eyes were like a sleep-walker's, unthinking, unseeing.

"Great heaven, man, you've been drugged!" I said.

"Drugged," he cried, with a weary laugh. "Yes, I have been drugged, but not any physical. No one has been doctoring my food. But you can't go through hell without getting your eyes red-hot."

I kept my grip on his wrists. "Take your old chaps, and tell us about it. Blenski-ron and I are here, and old Peter's on the roof not far off. Come on, Dick, after you."

"It's time to hear your voice, Dick," he said. "It reminds me of clean, honest things."

"They'll come back, never fear. We're at the last lap now. One more spurt and it's over. You've got to tell me what the new snag is. Is it that woman?"

"She's got a frightened colt. 'Woman!' he cried.

"Does a woman dream through the nether pit?" She's a she-devil. Oh, it isn't madness that's wrong with her. She's as sane as you and as cool as Blenski-ron. Her life is an infernal game of chess, and she plays with souls for pawns. She is evil—evil—evil . . . " And once more he buried his head in his hands.

IT WAS Blenski-ron who brought sense into this hectic atmosphere. His slow, belated drawl was an antiseptic against nerves.

"Say, boy," he said. "I feel just like you about the lady."

"Her life is not to investigate her character. Her Maker will do that good and save some day. We've got to figure how to circumvent her, and for that you've got to tell us what exactly's been occurring since we parted company."

Sandy pulled himself together with a great effort.

"Greenmeintz died that night I saw you. We buried him secretly by her order in the garden of the villa. Then came



THIS CHAPTER is the tale that Peter told me—long after, sitting beside a stove in the hotel at Bergen, where we were waiting for our boat.

He climbed on the roof and shinned down the broken bricks of the outer walls. The outbuilding we were lodged in abutted on a road, and was outside the proper *encinte* of the town. At ordinary times I have no doubt there would be sentries, but Peter and Hammus had probably managed to clear them off this end for a little. Anyhow he saw nobody as he crossed the road and dived into the ditch.

He knew very well that he must do the job in the twelve hours of darkness ahead of him. The immediate front of a battle is a bit too public for anyone to be hidden in by day, especially when two or three feet of snow makes everything kerpelkie. Now, Harry, he said to himself, kind of things referred to Peter's soul, for, like all Boers, his tastes were for slowness and sureness, though he could hustle fast enough when haste was needed. As he pushed through the winter fields he recited up to himself the psalms, and found the only ease the dirty weather. There was a high, gusty wind, blowing scuds of snow but never coming to any great fall. The front had gone, and the lying snow was as soft as butter. That was all to the good, he thought. It was clear, hard night would have been the devil.

The first bit was through farmlands, which were seamed with little snow-filled water furrows. Now and then would come a house and a patch of fruit trees, but there was no road. The fields and paths were crowded enough, but Peter had no use for roads. I can picture him swinging along with his bent back, stopping every now and then to sniff and listen, alert for the foreknowledge of danger. Who knew he could cover country like an antelope?

Soon he struck a big road full of transport. It was the road from Erzerum to the Palanstuken pass, and he waited his chance and crossed it. After that the ground grew rough with boulders and stones, and then trees, and then where he could now fast without worrying. Then he was pulled up suddenly on the bank of a river. The map had warned him of it, but not that it would be so big.

It was a torrent swollen with melting snow and rain in the hills, and it was running fifty yards wide. Peter thought he could have swum it, but he was very averse to a drenching. "A wet man makes too much noise," he said, and besides there was the chance that the current would be too much for him. So he moved up stream to look for a bridge.

In ten minutes he found one, a new-made thing of trestles, broad enough to take transport wagons. It was guarded, as he halfed himself up the bank, he observed a couple of long wooden huts, obviously some kind of billets. These were on the near side of the stream, about a dozen yards from the bridge. A man stood out in a light, showed it, and from within came the sound of voices. Peter had a sense of hearing like a wild animal, and he could detect even from the confused gabble that the voices were German.

As he lay in the dimmed somnolence over the bank, it was an officer, for the sentry saluted. The man disappeared in one of the huts. Peter had struck the billets and repairing shop of a squad of German sappers.

He was just going reluctantly to retrace his steps and get a good look at the German sentries when it struck him that the officer who had passed him wore clothes very like his own. He, too, had had a grey sweater and a Balaklava helmet, for even a German officer seemed to be very on the mits-winter side. And here he was. This caused to Peter to walk boldly across the bridge and trust to the sentry not seeing the difference.

He slipped round a corner of the hut and marched down the road. The sentry was now at the far end, which was lucky, for if the sentry came to the front he could throttle him. Peter, mimicking the stiff

German walk, swung past him, his head down as if to protect his face from the wind.

THE MAN saluted. He did more, for he offered conversation. The officer must have been a general soul. "It's a rough night, captain," he said in German. "The wagons are late. Pray God. Michael hasn't got a shell in his lot. They've begun putting over some big guns."

Peter grunted good-night in German and strode on. He was just leaving the road when he heard a great halloo behind him.

The real officer must have appeared on his back, for the sentry didn't even stir. A whistle was blown, and, looking back, Peter saw lanterns waving in the gale. They were coming out to look for the duplicate.

He stood still for a second, and noticed the lights receding west of the road. He was just about to dive off it on the north side when he was aware of a difficulty. On that side a steep bank fell to a ditch, and the bank beyond bounded a big flood. He could see a wild ruffle of the water under the wind.

On the road itself he would soon be caught; south of it the search was beginning; and the ditch itself was no place to hide, for he could be seen from the road. Peter dropped into it all the same and made a plan. The side below the road was a little undercut and very steep. He resolved to plaster himself against it, for he would be hidden from the road, and the water in the ditch would not be likely to explore the undercut sides. It was always a maxim of Peter's that the best hiding-place was the worst, the least obvious to the minds of those who were looking for you.

He lay till the lights both in the road and the ditch came nearer, and then he gripped the edge with his left hand, where some stones gave him purchase, dug the toes of his boots into the wet bank, and went down, the water splashing him, struggling to keep the position for long, but the muscles of his arms and legs were like whipcord.

The searcher in the ditch was soon tired, for the place was very wet, and joined his comrades on the road. They came along, running, flinging the lanterns into the trench, and exploring all the vicinity.

Then rose a noise of wheels and horses from the opposite direction. Michael and the delayed sentry were approaching. They dashed at a great pace, driven wildly and for one horrid second Peter thought they were going to spill into the ditch at the very spot where he was concealed. The wheels passed so close to the edge that they almost grazed his shoulder, and then they stopped at order, and then they pulled up a yard or two nearer the bridge. The others came up and there was a consultation.

Michael swore he had passed no one on the road.

"That fool Hammus has seen a ghost," said the officer testily. "It's too cold for this child's play."

Hammus, almost in tears, repeated his tale. "The man spoke to me in good German," he said.

"Ghost or no ghost, he is safe enough up the road," said the officer. "Kind God, that was a big one!" He stopped and stared at a shell-burst, for the bombardment from the east was growing fiercer.

They were discussing the fire for a minute and presently moved off. Peter gave them two minutes' law and then clambered back to the highway and set off along it at a run. The noise of the shelling and the wind, together with the thick darkness, made it safe to hurry.

He left the road at the first chance and took to the broken country. The ground was now rising toward a spur of the Palanstuken, on the far slope of which was a shell-burst trench. The night had begun by being pretty nearly as black as pitch; even the smoke from the shell explosions, which is often visible in darkness, could not be seen. But as the wind blew the smoke to the right about the time the patches of stars came out, Peter had a compass, but he didn't need to use it, for he had a kind of "feeling" for landmarks.

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Greenmantle

Continued from page 18—Starts on page 15

scape, a special sense which is born in savages and can only be acquired after long experience by the white man. I believe he could smell where the north lay. He had settled round the camp, and the Turk would try, merely because of its nearness to the enemy. But he might see reason to vary this, and as he moved he began to think that the safest place was where the shelling was heaviest. He didn't like the notion, but it sounded reasonable.

Suddenly he began to puzzle over queer things in the ground, and, as he had never seen big guns before, it took him a moment to fix his eyes. Presently he saw a shell fall elsewhere with a roar like the Last Day. These were the Austrian howitzers—nothing over eight-inch, I fancy, but to Peter they looked like leviathans. Here, too, he saw for the first time a big and quite recent shell-hole, for the Russians had been here. He was so interested in it all that he poked his nose where he shouldn't have been, and dropped plump into the pit behind a gun emplacement.

Gummers all the world over are the same—stony people, who hide themselves in holes and hibernate and morally dislike being detected.

A gruff voice cried "Wer da?" and a heavy hand seized his neck.

PETER was ready with his story. He belonged to Michael's wagon team and had been left behind. He wanted to be told the way to the bigger camp. He was very apologetic about his being there.

"It is one of those Prussian swine from the Marta Bridge," said a gunner. "Land him a kick to teach him sense. Bear to your right, muckinik, and you will find a road. And hold your horses, for there, for the Russians are registering on it."

Peter thanked them and bore off to the right. After that he kept a wary eye on the howitzers, and was thankful when he got out of their area on to the slopes of the Herd. He was a man of常识 that was familiar to him, and he defied any Turk or Boche to spot him among the scrub and boulders. He was getting on very well, when once more, close to his ear, came a sound like the crack of a dozen guns.

It was the field-guns now, and the sound of a field-gun close at hand was for the nerves if you aren't expecting it. Peter thought he had been hit, and lay flat for a little to consider. Then he found the right explanation, and crawled forward very warily.

Presently he saw his first Russian shell. It dropped half a dozen yards to his right, making a great hole in the snow and sending up a mass of smoke and a shower of snow and stones. Peter spat out the dirt and felt very solemn. You must remember that never in his life had he seen big shelling, and was now being landed in the thick of a first-class bombardment, with no preparation. He was so frightened that he defied any Turk or Boche to spot him among the scrub and boulders and look out into the true battlefield.

He told me it was exactly what the Prelate used to say the English would be like. After five or six more down the slope lay the Turkish trenches—they were dark against the snow, and now and then a black figure like a devil showed for an instant and disappeared. The Turks clearly expected an inferior force, for they were dropping incendiary calcium rockets and Verey flares. The Russians were battering their line and spraying all the hinterland, not with sharpnel, but with good, solid high-explosives. The place was a scene of hell as day for a moment, all smothered in a smokeless smoke and snow and débris, and then a black pall

would fall on it, when only the thunder of the guns told of the battle.

Peter felt very sick. He had not believed there could be so much noise in the world, and he had not believed there could be so much killing. Now, for a man to whom courage is habitual, the taste of fear—naked utter fear—is a horrible thing. It seems to wash away all his manhood. Peter lay on the crest, watching the smoke burst, and confident that any moment he might be called to the front. He lay and reasoned with himself, calling himself every name he could think of, but conscious that nothing would get rid of that lump of ice below his heart.

Then he lay motionless no longer. He got up and went for his gun.

But he ran forward. It was the crassest performance. He went hell-for-leather over a piece of ground which was being watered with H.E. but by the mercy of heaven he hit the shell. He took some time to get to his feet again, but, partly erect and sturdy on all fours he did the fifty yards and tumbled into a Turkish trench right on the top of a dead man.

The contact with that body brought him to his senses. That must come to all men sooner or later, though they may not after that unnatural panderization. The next moment a crump took the parapet of the trench some yards to his left, and he was half buried in an avalanche.

The shell had exploded, pretty badly cut about the head. He was once more thinking hard about his next step. There were men all around him, sulky dark faces as he saw them when the flares went up. They were holding the parapets and waiting hopefully for another shell to hit the trench. They paid no attention to him. I fancy that in trench units were pretty well mixed up, and under a bad bombardment no one bothers about his neighbor. He found himself free to move as he pleased. The bottom of the trench was littered with empty cartridge cases, and there were many dead bodies.

THE LAST shell, as I have said, had played havoc with the parapet. In the next spell of darkness Peter crawled through the gap and twisted among some snowy hillocks. He was no longer afraid of shells any more than he was afraid of a veld thundershower. But he was wondering very hard how he should get back to the Russians. The Turks were behind him now, but there was the biggest danger in front.

Then the artillery ceased. It was so sudden that he thought he had gone deaf, and could hardly realize the blessed relief of it. The Turks had stopped to have a rest, or perhaps he was sheltered by the lee of the hill. There were a lot of dead here also, and that he couldn't understand, for they were new dead. Had the Turks attacked and been driven off? When he had gone about thirty yards he stopped to take his bearings. On the right were the ruins of a large building set on fire by the guns. There was a blur of woods and the debris of walls round it. Across to the left he could see out further into the Herd, and the place he was in seemed to be a kind of cup between the spurs. Just before him was a little ruined building, with the sky seen through its rafters, for the smouldering ruins of the right gave a certain light. He wondered if the Russian firing line lay there.

Just then he heard voices—smothered voices—not a yard away and apparently below the ground. He instantly jumped to what this must mean. It was a Turkish soldier, a gunner, I think. Peter didn't know much about modern warfare, but he had read in the papers, or heard from me, enough to make him draw the right moral. The fresh dead pointed to the same conclusion. What he had got through were Turks, and they were through not their firing line. That was still before him.

He didn't despair, for the rebound from past had given him extra courage. He crawled forward, an inch at a time, taking no sort of risk, and presently found himself looking at the parados of a trench. Then he lay quiet to think out the next step.

The shelling had stopped, and there was that kind of peace which falls over times on two armies at a cost of a mile distant. Peter said he could hear nothing but the far-off sighing of the wind. There seemed to be no movement of any kind in the trench before him, which ran through the rock. The light of the fire he was dying, and he could just make out the mound of earth a yard in front. He began to feel hungry, and got out his packet of food and had a swig at the brandy flask. That comforted him, and he felt that his fate was easy. But the next step was not easy. He must find out what lay beyond that mound of earth.

Suddenly a curious sound fell on his ears. It was so faint at first that he doubted the evidence of his senses. Then the wind fell and came louder. It was exactly a same hollow piece of metal being struck by a stick, musical and oddly resonant.

He concluded it was the wind blowing in the branch of a tree against an old boiler in the ruined shelter cup. The sound was not exactly enough wind now for that in this sheltered cup.

But as he listened he caught the note again. It was a bell, a fallen bell, and the place before him must have been a chapel. He realized that an Armenian monastery had been marked on the big map, and he guessed it was the burned building on his right.

The thought of a chapel and a bell gave him a thrill of homesickness, and then suddenly the notion was confirmed. The sound was regular and concerted—dot, dash, dot—dash, dot, dot. The branch of a tree and the wind may play strange pranks, but they do not produce the long and shorts of this.

This was where Peter's intelligence work in the Boer War helped him. He knew the Morse, he could read it, but he could make nothing of the signalling. It was either some special code or in a strange language.

HE LAY still and did some calm thinking. There was a man in front of him, a Turkish soldier, who was on the enemy's pay. Therefore he could frame a plan with him, for they were on the same side. But how was he to approach him without getting shot in the process? Again, how could a man send signals to the enemy from a firing line without being seen? Peter found no answer in the strange confusions of the ground. He had not heard a sound till he was a few yards from the place, and they would be inaudible to men in the reserve trenches and even in the communication trenches. Therefore, if the last caught the noise, it would be easy to explain it naturally. But the wind blowing down the cup would carry it far in the enemy's direction.

There remained the risk of being heard by those paraded with the bell in the firing trench. Peter concluded that that trench must be very thinly held, probably only by a few observers, and the nearest might be a dozen yards off. He had read about that being the French fashion under a big bombardment.

The next thing was to find out how to make himself known to this ally. He decided that the only way was to surprise him. He might get shot, but he trusted to his strength and agility. He knew that he was almost certain to wearied. When he had got his safe, explanations might follow.

Peter was now enjoying himself hugely. If only those infernal gulls kept silent he would play out the game in the sober, decent way he loved. So very delicately he began to wriggle forward to where the sound was.

The night was now as black as ink round him, and very quiet, too, except for soughing winds and the gulls which had drifted a little in the lee of the ruined valley, and Peter's progress was naturally very slow.

He could not afford to dislodge one ounce of sand from the trench bottom on, now in greater volume. Peter was in terror lest it should cause before he got his space.

Presently his hand clutched at empty space. He was on the lip of the front trench. The sound was now a yard to his right, and with infinite care he shifted his position. Now the bell was just before him, and he felt the big ring of the iron bell which had fallen. He felt something else—a stretch of wire fixed in the ground with the far end hanging in the void. That would be the spy's explanation if anyone heard the sound of the bell.

Somewhere in the darkness before and below him was the man, not a yard off.

Peter remained very still, studying the situation. He could not see, but he could feel the presence, and he was trying to decide the exact position of the man and bell and their exact distance from him. The thing was not so easy as it looked, for if he jumped for where he believed the figure was, he might miss it and get a bullet in the stomach. A man who played so risky a game was bound to be a bad shot, and he would be a bad shot, if he should hit the bell, he would make a hideous row and alarm the whole front.

Fate suddenly gave him the right chance. The unseen figure stood up and moved a step, till his back was against the parados. He actually brushed against Peter's elbow, who held his breath.

THERE IS a catch that the Kaffirs have which would need special diagrams to explain. It is partly a kick and partly a blow, but it is practised on a man behind. It looks him as sure as if he were handcuffed. Peter slowly got his body raised and his knees drawn under him, and reached for his gun.

He got him. A head was pulled backward over the edge of the trench, and he felt in the air the motion of the left arm pawing feebly but unable to reach behind.

"Be still," whispered Peter in German; "I mean you no harm. We are friends of the same side. Do you speak German?"

"Nein," said a muffled voice.

"English?"

"Yes," said the voice.

"Thank you," said Peter. "Then we can understand each other. I've watched your notion of signalling, and a very good one it is. I've got to get through to the Russian lines somehow before morning, and I want you to help me. I'm English—a kind of English as we're on the same side. If I let go your neck, will you be good and talk proper?"

The voice assented. Peter let go, and in the same instant slipped to the side. The man wheeled round and flung out an arm but it was too late.

"Steady, friend," said Peter: "you mustn't play tricks with me or I'll be angry."

"Who are you? Who sent you?" asked the puzzled voice.

Peter had a happy thought. "The Commandant of the Royal Guards," he said.

"And we are friends indeed," said the voice. "Come out of the darkness, friend, and I will do you no harm. I am a good Turk, and I fought beside the English in Kordofan and learned their tongue. I live here now, and the English have always regarded my family and slain my twin brother. Therefore I serve the *Musky Jaws*."

"I don't know what the *Musky Jaws* are, but if you mean the Russians I'm with. I've got news for them which will make English tremble. The question is, how I'm to get to them, and that is where you shall help me, my friend."

"How?"

"By playing that little trick of yours again. Tell them to come within the next half-hour, and a deserter with an important message. Tell them, for God's sake, not to fire at anybody till they've made certain it isn't me."

The man took the blunt end of his bayonet and squatted beside the bell. The first stroke was a clear, sharp note which floated down the valley. He struck three notes at slow intervals. For all the

world. Peter said, he was like a telegraph operator calling up a station.

"Send the message in English," said Peter.

"They may not understand it," said the man.

"Then send it any way you like. I trust you, for we are brothers."

After ten minutes the man ceased and listened. From far away came the sound of a trench gong, the kind of thing they use on the Western Front to give the gas alarm.

"Then when they will be ready?" he said. "I cannot take any message in the darkness, but they have given me the signal which means 'Consent.'"

"Come, that is pretty good," said Peter. "And now I must be moving. You take a lead, Dick. When you are far enough up to the north get me to beat a quick retreat, for it will be all up with that city of yours. And tell your folk, too, that they're making a bad mistake letting those fool Germans rule their land. Let them hang Eover and his little friends, and we'll all be happier once more."

"May Satan receive his soul!" said the Turk. "There is wire before us, but I will show you a way through. The guns this evening made many rents in it. But hasten, for the city may be here presently to repair it. Remember there is much wire before the other lines."

PETER, with certain directions, found it pretty easy to make his way through the entanglement. There was one bit which scraped a hole in his back, but very soon he had come to the last posts and found himself in open country. The place, he said, was a great plain, a great plain where he had been horribly as he crawled among them. He had no inducements to delay, for he thought he could hear behind him the movement of the Turkish working party, and was in terror that a flare might reveal him and a volley account for his death.

From one shell hole to another he wormed his way, till he struck an old ruinous communication trench which led in the right direction. The Turks must have been forced back the last week, and the Russians were now in the place. The water in the trench was half full of water, but it gave Peter a feeling of safety, for it enabled him to get to his head below the level of the ground. Then it came to an end, and he found before him a great, dry, open space.

The Turk, in his signal had mentioned half an hour, but Peter thought it was nearer two hours before he got through that noisy entanglement. Shelling had made little difference to it. The uprights were still there and the old strands still enough to touch the ground. Moreover, he had no wire-cutter; nothing but his bare hands. Once again fear got hold of him. He felt caught in a net, with monstrous vermin waiting to pounce on him from above. At any moment a flare might be sent up, and he would be a sitting duck. He had altogether forgotten about the message which had been sent, for no message could dissuade the ever-present death he felt around him. It was, he said, like following an old lion into bush when there was but one narrow way in and no road out.

The guns began again—the Turkish guns from behind the ridge—and a shell tore up the wife a short way from him. Under cover of the noise he made good his yards, leaving large portions of his clothing in the strands. Then quite suddenly, when hope had almost died in his heart, he felt the ground rise steeply. He lay very still, a star-rocket from the Turkish side lit up the place, and in front of him a rampart with the points of bayonets showing beyond it. It was the Russian hour for stand-to.

He raised his cramped limbs from the ground and shouted, "Friend! English!"

A face looked down at him, and then the darkness closed down again.

"Friend," he said hoarsely, "English."

He heard speech behind the parapet. An electric torch was flashed on him for a second. A voice spoke, a friendly voice, and the sound of it seemed to be telling him to come over.

He was now standing up, and as he got his hands off the parapet, he seemed to feel bayonets near him. But the voice that spoke was kindly, so with a heave he scrambled over and flopped into the trench. Once more the electric torch was flashed, and revealed to the eyes of the onlookers an indescribably dirty, lean, midgeted man, with a bloody, torn, and apparently a rag of shirt on his back. The said man was seeing friendly faces around him, grimed cheerfully.

"That was a rough trek, friends," he said; "I want to see your general pretty quick, for I've got a present for him."

HE WAS taken to an officer in a dugout, who addressed him in French, which he did not understand. But the sight of Stumm's plan worked wonders. After that the man was sent to the rear, coming out of the trenches, and then over swampy fields to a farm among trees. There he found staff officers, who looked at him and looked at his map, and then put him on a horse and hurried him away. At last he came to a big soldier's house, and was shown into a room which seemed to be full of maps and generals. The conclusion must be told in Peter's words.

"There was a big man sitting at a table, and when he saw me he said, 'Look at him, my heart jumped out of my skin. For it was the man I hunted with on the Panguee in '98—him whom the Kaffirs called 'Buck's Horn,' because of his long curled mustache. He was a prince even then, and now he is a very great man.' The big man had a hand-axe and gripped his hand and cried, 'Hoe geet het, Mysker,' and he knew me and shouted in Dutch, 'Damn, if it isn't old Peter Pienaar.' Then he gave me coffee and ham and good bread, and he looked at my map."

"What is this?" he cried, growing red in the face.

"It is the staff map of one Stumm, a German *akelaw* who commands in your city," I said.

"He pointed at it close and read the markings and the names and the information which you gave me, Dick. And then he flung up his arms and laughed. He took a loaf and tossed it into the air so that it fell on the head of another general. He spoke to them in their language, and they too laughed. There were one or two run out as if on a hunting, and I have never seen such merrymaking. They were clever men, and knew the worth of what you gave me."

"Then he got to his feet and hugged me, all dirty as I was, and kissed me on both cheeks."

"Before God, Peter," he said, "you're the mightiest hunter since Nimrod. You've often found me game, but never game so big as this!"

IT WAS a wise man who said that the biggest kind of courage was to be able to sit still. I used to feel that when we were getting shelled in the reserve trenches outside Verneilles. I felt it before we went over the parapet, and I felt it when I went on the last two days that I was there. I had simply to set my teeth and take a pull on myself. Peter had gone on a crazy errand which I scarcely believed could come off. There were no signs of Sandy; somewhere he had been a hero, and I had been in his own battles, and I was tormented by the thought that he might get jumpy again and wreck everything. A strange Companion brought me food, a man who spoke only Turkish and could tell us nothing. Hussar, I think he was, about the age of 25. If I could only have done something to help on matters I could have soothed my anxiety, but there was nothing to be done, nothing but bare and bread. I tell you I began to sympathize with the general behind the lines in a battle, the fellow who makes the plan which others execute. Leading a charge can be nothing like so nerve-shaking a business as sitting in an easy chair and waiting on the news of it.

It was very cold, and we spent most of the day wrapped in our greatcoats and

buried deep in the straw. Blenkiron was a nervous man. There was no light for him to play patience by, but he did continue to play. Peter slept a lot of the time, and when he was awake talked as cheerfully as if he were starting out on a holiday. He had one great comfort—his dyspepsia was gone. He sang hymns continually and believed in Providence that he was square with his duodenitis.

My only occupation was to listen for the guns. The first day after Peter left they were very quiet on the front nearest us, but in the late evening they started a terrible racket. The next day they were still, but from dusk to dusk, so that it reminded me of that tremendous forty-eight hours before Loos. I tried to read into this some proof that Peter had got through, but it would not work. It looked more like the opposite, for this was a period of comparative quiet, and I knew the frontal assault was still the Russian game.

Two or three times I climbed on the house-top for fresh air. The day was foggy and damp, and I could see very little of the country. I turned my back to the southward along the road to the Palatinsken, and the slow wagon loads of wounded returning. One thing I noticed, however. There was a perpetual coming and going between the house and the city. Motors and moustachioed officers were seen in the morning and departing, and I concluded that Hilda von Einem was getting ready for her part in the defense of Erzerum.

These ascents were all on the first day after Peter's going. The next day when I tried them, I found it closed and heavily weighted. This must have been done by our friends, and very right too. If the house were becoming a place of public resort, it would never do for me to be journeying roofward.

Late on the second night, Hilda von Einem passed. It was after supper, when Blenkiron had gone peacefully to sleep and I was beginning to count the hours till the morning. I could not close an eye during these days and not much at night.

Hilda had not light a lantern. I heard his key in the lock, and then his light step close to where we lay.

"Are you asleep?" he said, and when I answered he sat down beside me. "The Master bids you come," he said, "and the morning three hours before dawn."

It was welcome news. "Tell me what is happening," I begged; "we have been lying in this tomb for three days and heard nothing."

"The guns are busy," he said. "The Allies have come to this place every hour, I know not for what. Also there has been a great search for you. The searchers have been three, but they were sent away empty. . . . Sleep, my lord, for there is wild work before us."

I did not sleep much, for I was strung too high with expectation, and I envied Blenkiron his non-epicetic sleep. But for an hour and a half I doffed my cap, and the nightmare came back. Once again I was in the throat of a pass, hotly pursued, straining for some sanctuary which I knew I must reach. But I was no longer alone. Others went with me, many I could not tell, for when I tried to see them they were dissolved in mist. Deep snow was underfoot, a grey sky was over us, black peaks were on all sides, but ahead in the mist of the pass was that curious *eastel* which I had first seen in the *Wolfskopf*.

I saw it distinct in every detail. It rose to the left of the road through the pass, and above a hollow where great boulders stood out in the snow. Its sides were steep, so that the snow was slipping off in patches, leaving streaks of glistening white slate. The *Kreuz* at the top did not rise sheer, but sloped at an angle of forty-five, and on the very summit there seemed a hollow, as if the earth within the rock-rib had been dug out by some giant's hand. This was often the way with a South African *eastel*, and I knew it was so with this. We were straining for it, but the snow clogged us, and our enemies were very close behind.

Then I was awakened by a figure at my side. "Get ready, my lord," it said. "It is the hour to ride."

To Concluded

Greenmantle

By JOHN BUCHAN

Masks come off and guns roar in the smashing climax of this great secret service story

CONCLUSION

LIKE sleepwalkers we moved into the sharp air. Hussin led us out of an old postern gate into a dark place, an orchard to the shelter of some tall evergreen trees. There horses stood, champing quietly from their nosebags. "Good," I thought, "a feed of oats before a big effort."

There were nine beats for nine riders. We mounted without a word and filed out in a group of three to where a broken path marked the beginning of cultivated land. There for the matter of twenty minutes Hussin chose to guide us through deep, clogging snow. He wanted to avoid any sound till we were well beyond earshot of the house. Then we struck a by-path which presently merged in a hard highway, running, as I judged afterwards by the map. There we delayed no longer, but deployed rapidly to the dash.

I had got back all my exhilaration. Indeed I was fatigued with the movement, and could have laughed out loud and sung. Under the black canopy of the night perils are either forgotten or terribly alive. Mine were forgotten. The darkness I galloped into led me to freedom and friends. Yes, and success, which I had not dared to hope and scarcely even to dream of.

Hussin rode first, with me at his side. I turned my head and saw Blenkiron behind me, evidently mortally unhappy about the pace we set and the mount he sat. He used to say that horse-exercise was good for his liver, but it was a gentle amble and a short gallop that he liked, and not this mad healer-shelter. His thighs were too round to fit a saddle-leather. We passed a fire in a hollow, the bloum of some Turkish unit, and as the horses shied violently. I knew by Blenkiron's face that he had lost his stirrups and was still riding on his horse's neck.

Beside him rode a tall figure swathed to the eyes in wrappings and wearing round his neck some kind of shawl whose ends floated behind him. Sandy, of course, had no European ulster, for it was months since he had worn proper clothes. I wanted to speak to him, but somehow I did not dare. His stammer forbade me. He was a wonderful fine horseman with his fine English hunting seat; and it was well, for he paid no attention to his beast. His head was still full of unquiet thoughts.

Then the air around me began to smell acrid and raw, and I saw that a fog was winding up from the hollows.

"Here's the devil's own luck," I cried to Hussin. "Can you guide us in a mist?"

"I do not know," he shook his head. "I had counted on seeing the outlines of the hills."

"We've a map and a compass, anyhow. But these make slow travelling. Pray God it lifts."

Presently the black vapor changed to grey, and the day broke. It was little comfort. The fog rolled in waves to the horses' ears, and riding on the head of the party I could but dimly see the next rank.

"It is time to leave the road," said Hussin, "or we may meet trouble."

We struck to the left, over ground which was for all the world like a Scotch moor. There were pools of rain on it, and masses of tangled snow-laden junipers, and long reefs

of wet slate stone. It was bad going, and the fog made it hopeless to steer a good course. I had out the map and the compass, and tried to fix our route so as to round the flank of a spur of the mountains which separated us from the valley we were aiming at.

"There's a stream ahead of us," I said to Hussin. "Is it fordable?"

"It is only a trickle," he said, coughing. "This accursed mist is from Eliot." But I knew long before we reached it that it was no trickle. It was a hill stream coming down in spate, and, as I soon guessed, in a deep ravine. Presently we were at its edge, one long whirl of yeastly falls and brown spray. We had to get horses over it as to the topmost cliff of the Palmitukan.

Hussin stared at it in consternation. "May Allah forgive my folly, for I should have known. We must return to the highway and find a bridge. My sorrow, that I should have led my lords so ill."

Back over that moor we went with my spirits badly damped. We had none too soon a start, and Hilda von Eltzen would round her head and endeavor to calm us up. Hussin was forcing his pace, for his party was to great as mine.

Before we reached the road the fog had blown back and revealed a wedge of country right across to the hills beyond



"I have done with you," she cried. "You have scorned me, but you have dug your own grave."

the river. It was a clear view, every object standing out wet and sharp in the light of morning. It showed the bridge with horses driven down across it, and it showed, too, cavalry pickets moving along the road.

They saw us at the same instant. A word was passed down the road, a shrill whistle blew, and the pickets put their horses at the bank and started across the moor.

"Did I not say this mist was from Eliot?" growled Hussin, as we mounting round and round leaped back on our tracks. "These Zulus have been here, and I am sure it is them."

I was for trying the stream at all costs. The cavalry beyond the bridge were moving up the other bank. "There is a path through the hills that I know, but it must be travelled on foot. If we can increase our lead and the mist cloaks us, there is yet a chance."

It was the last horse, plodding up to the skirts of the hills. We had the pursuit behind us now, and that put an edge on every difficulty. There were long banks of broken scree, I remember, where the snow slipped in wreaths from under our feet. Great boulders had to be circumvented, and patches of bog, where the streams from the snows first made contact with the plains, mired us to our girths. Happily the mist was down again, but this, though it hindered the chase, lessened the chances of Hussin finding the path.

It was the last horse, plodding up to the skirts of the hills. There was the jolly and the rough mule-track leading upward. But there also had been a steep, quite recent from the marks. A large scar of raw earth had broken across the hillside, which with the snow above it looked like a slice cut out of an iced chocolate cake.

We stared blankly for a second, till we recognized its hopelessness.

"I am for trying the crags," I said. "Where there once was a path, there is still a path."

"And he picked off at their leisure by these marksmen," said Hussin grimly. "Look!"

The mist had opened again, and a glance behind showed me the pursuing close up on us. They were now less than three hundred yards off. We turned our horses and made off eastward along the skirts of the cliff.

Then Sandy spoke for the first time. "I don't know how you fellows feel, but I'm not going to be taken. There's nothing much to do except to find a good place and put up a fight. We can sell our lives dearly."

"That's about all," said Blenkiron cheerfully. He had



Sandy and the Companion slipped over the parapet in the final shadows before dawn.

suffered such tortures on that gallop that he welcomed any kind of stationary fight.

"Serve out the arms," said Sandy.

The Companions all carried rifles slung across their shoulders. Huskin, from a deep saddlebag, brought out rifles and handpistols for the rest of us. As I laid mine across my saddlehorn I saw it was a German Mauser of the latest pattern.

"It's hell-for-leather till we find a place for a stand," said Sandy. "The game's against us this time."

Once more we entered the mist, and presently found better going on a long stretch of even slope. Then came a rise, and on the crest of it I saw the sun. Presently we dipped into a bright depression, looking out over a broad glade. A road was winding up it in a pass in the range. I had expected this. It was one way to the Palatinean pass, some miles south of the house where we had been lodged.

And then, as I looked southward, I saw what I had been watching for days. A little hill split the valley, and on its top was a bank of rocks. It was the *caostal* of my persistent dreams.

On that I promptly took charge. "There's our fort," I cried. "If we once get there we can hold it for a week. Sit down and ride for it."

We bucketed down that hillside like men possessed, even Blenkinson sticking on manfully among the twists and turns and slithers. Presently we were on the road and were racing past marching infantry and gun teams and empty wagons. I noted the road was a good one, and the sun was just now going up. Huskin screamed some words in Turkish that secured us a passage, but induced our crazy speed left him staring. Out of a corner of my eyes I saw that Sandy had flung off most of his wrappings and seemed to be all a dazzle of rich color. But I had thought for nothing except the little hill, now almost fronting us across the shallow glen.

NO HORSES could burst that steep. We urged them into the hollow, and then hastily dismounted, laid aside the packs, and began to struggle up the side of the *caostal*. It was strewed with great boulders, which kinda gave a kind of cover that very soon was needed. For, snatching a glance back, I saw that our pursuers were on the road above us and were getting ready to shoot.

At normal times we would have been easy marks, but, fortunately, the sun and streamers of mist had clung about that hollow. The rest could feed for themselves, so I stuck to Blenkinson and drugged him, wholly breathless, by the least exposed route. Bullets spattered now and again against the rocks, and one sang unpleasantly near my head. In this way we covered three-fourths of the distance, and had only

the bare dozen yards where the gradient eased off up to the edge of the *kreast*.

Blenkinson got hit in the leg, our only casualty. There was nothing for it but to carry him, so I swung him on my shoulders, and with a bursting heart did that last leg. It was the last leg, too, for the Companions had joined us, and we all got safely to the *kreast* and a short scramble took us over the edge. I laid Blenkinson inside the *caostal* and started to prepare our defense.

We had little time to do it. Out of the thin fog figures were coming, crashing in cover. The place we were in was a natural redoubt, except that there were no loopholes or sconces. We had to show our heads over the edge to shoot.

The Companions were hit by the surprise of the gunners, who had been given a field of fire. I pointed the gun and waited, and Blenkinson, with a white face, insisted on taking his share, announcing that he used to be handy with a gun.

I gave the order that no man was to shoot till the enemy had come out of the rocks on to the glace. The enemy ran right round the top, and we had to watch all sides to prevent them getting round us or rear us. I had to shoot from the rocks, so my aimments had not been needed.

We were all three fair shots, though none of us up to Peter's miraculous standard, and the Companions, too, made good practice. The Mauser was the weapon I knew best, and I didn't miss much. The attackers never had a chance, for their only hope was to rush us by numbers, and the whole party being not above two dozen, they were far too few for that. We had them, so I laid the gun across my shoulders and at least one mile, while the rest fell back toward the road. In a quarter of an hour it was all over.

"They are dogs of Kurds," I heard Huskin say fiercely. "Only a Kurdish *ghissar* would fire on the livery of the Kalish."

Then I had a good look at Sandy. He had discarded shawls and wrappings and stood up in the strangest costume man ever wore in battle. He had a broad belt, a scabbard reaching well below his middle, he had a wonderful silken jiblah or ephod of a bright emerald. I call it silk, it was so silk. I have never known, so exquisite in the mesh, with such a sheen and depth in it. Some strange pattern was woven on the breast, which in the dim light I could not trace. "I'll want no rarer or costlier garment was ever expected on a bed, with him in it."

Sandy seemed unconcerned by his garb. "That's only the *overtire*," he cried. "The *opera* will soon begin. We must put a breast-work up in these gaps or they'll pick us off from a thousand yards."

I HAD meantime roughly dressed Blenkinson's wound with a linen rag which Huskin provided. It was from a ricochet bullet which had chipped into his left shin. Then I took a hand with the others in getting up earthworks to complete the circuit of the defense. It was no easy job, for we wrought on with the bare hands, and the dirt and gravel below the snowy gravel. As we worked I saw a stock of our baggage.

The *caostal* was a rough circle about ten yards in diameter. Its interior filled with boulders and loose stones, and its parapet about four feet high. The mist had cleared for a considerable space, and I could see the immediate surroundings. West, beyond the hollow was the road we had come down, where now the remnants of the party were clustered. North, the last fell steeply down a ridge, the boulders to the south, after a dip, there was a ridge which shut the view. East lay another fork of the stream, the chief fork I guessed, and it was evidently followed by the main road to the pass for I saw it crowded with transport. The two roads seemed to converge somewhere farther south out of my sight.

I guessed we could not be very far from the front, for the main gunners were evidently in the hollows, the roar of the field-pieces and the deep boom of the howitzers. Moreover, I could hear the cluster of the machine-guns, a regular note between the halting of boulders. I even saw the bursting of Russian shells, evidently trying to reach the main road. One big fellow—an 8-inch—landed not ten yards from a convoy to the east of us, and another in the hollow through which we had come. These were clearly ranging shots, and I could see the observation posts on the heights to mark them. If so, they might soon try a curtain, and we should be very near its edge. It would be an odd irony if we were the target of friendly shells.

"By the Lord Harry," I heard Sandy say, "if we had a brace of machine guns we could hold this place against a division."

"What price shells?" I asked. "If they get a gun up they can blow us to atoms in ten minutes."

"God! the Russians keep them too busy for that," was my answer.

With anxious eyes I watched our enemies on the road. They seemed to have grown in numbers. They were signaling, too, for a white flag fluttered. Then the mist rolled down on us again, and our prospect was limited to ten yards of vapor.

"I cried: "they may try to rush us at any moment. Every man keep his eye on the edge of the fog, and shoot at the first sign."

everything ground deathly quiet. Blekinson's squeal, as he knocked his wounded leg against a rock, made every man start.

THEN OUT of the mist there came a voice.

It was a woman's voice, high, penetrating, and sweet, but it spoke in no tongue I knew. Only Sandy understood. He made a sudden movement as if to defend himself against a blow.

The speaker came into clear sight on the glaci's a yard or two away. Mine was the first face she saw.

"I come to offer terms," she said in English. "Will you permit me to speak?"

"I can do nothing except take off my cap and say, 'Yes, ma'am,'" Blekinson, snugged up against the parapet, was cursing furiously below his breath.

She climbed up the *kras* and stepped over the edge as lightly as a deer. Her clothes were strange—spurred boots and breeches over which fell a short green kirtle. A little cap skewed with a jewelled pin was on her head, and a cape of some dark, heavy material shivered about her shoulders. She wore gauntlets on her hands, and she carried for weapon a riding whip. The fog crystals clung to her hair, I remember, and a silvery film of fog lay on her garments.

I had never before thought of her as beautiful. Strange, uncanny, wonderful, if you like, but the word beauty had too kindly and human a sound for such a face. But as she stood with heightened color, her eyes like stars, her poise like a will-o'-the-wisp, I had to confess that she had her own loveliness. She might be dead, but she was also a queen. I considered that there might be merits in the prospect of riding by her side into Jerusalem.

Sandy stood rigid, his face very grave and set. She held out both hands to him, speaking softly in Turkish. I noticed that the six Companions had disappeared from the *castrum* and were somewhere out of sight on the farther side.

I do not know whether she said, but from her tone, and above all from her eyes, I knew that there was pleading—pleading for his return, for his partnership in her great adventure, pleading, for all I knew, for his love.

His expression was like a death-mask, his brows drawn tight in a little frown and his jaw rigid.

Then he came back — walking slowly up the slope and carrying something in his arms.



"Madam," he said, "I ask you to tell your business quick and to tell it in English. My friends must hear it as well as me."

"Your friends?" she cried. "What has a prince to do with these people?" You don't know, but not your friends."

"My friends," Sandy repeated grimly. "You must know, madam, that I am a British officer."

That was but another deep a clang staggering stroke. What she had thought of his origin God knows, but she had never dreamed of this. Her eyes grew larger and more lustreous, her lips parted as if to speak, but her voice failed her. Then by an effort she recovered herself, and one of that strange and silent glow of youth and ardor. It was again the unshakable mask I had first seen.

"And these others?" she asked in a level voice.

"One is a brother officer of my regiment. The other is an American friend. But all three of us are on the same errand. We came east to destroy Greenmantle and your devilish ambitions. You have yourself destroyed your prophets, and now it is your turn to fail and disappear. Make no mistake, Madam, the belly is overfull with that sacred garment into a thousand pieces, and sooner or later the garment will go to waste. The people wait today for the revelation, but none will come. You may kill us if you can, but we have at least crushed a lie and done service to our country."

I WOULD not have taken my eyes from her face for a king's ransom. I have written that she was a queen, and that is not a matter of doubt. She had the soul of a conqueror, for not a flicker of weakness or disappointment marred her air. Only pride and the stately resolution looked out of her eyes.

"I said I came to offer terms. I will still offer them, though they are other than I thought. For the fat American, I will send him home safely in your own country. I do not make war on such as he. He is Germany's foe, not mine, You," she said, turning fiercely on me, "will hang before dusk."

"I do not care if my life had been so plenteous. I had got my revenge at last. This woman had singled me out above the others as the object of her wrath, and I almost loved her for it.

She turned to Sandy, and the fierceness went out of her face.

"You seek truth," she said. "So do I, and if we use a lie it is only to break a greater. You are a household name in spirit, and you alone of all men I have seen are fit to ride with me on my mission. Germany may fail, but I shall not fail. I offer you the greatest career that men have known. I give you a task which will need every atom of brain and sinew and courage. Will you refuse that destiny?"

I do not know what effect this vaporing might have had in hot scented rooms, or in the heat of a noonday sun, but on that cold hilltop it was as unsatisfactory as the mist around us. It sounded not even impressive, only crazy.

"I stay with my friends," said Sandy.

"Then I will offer more. I will save your friends, too, so that share in my triumph."

This was too much for Blekinson. He scrambled to his feet to speak the protest that had been wrung from his soul, forgot his game, and lay his hand on the ground with a groan.

Then she seemed to make a last appeal. She spoke in Turkish now, and I do not know what she said, but I judged it was the plea of a woman to her lover. Once more she was the proud beauty, but there was a tremor in her pride—I had almost written tenderness. To listen to her was like horrid treachery, like eavesdropping on something pitiful. I know my cheeks grew scarlet and Blekinson turned away his head.

Sandy's face did not move. He spoke in English.

"You can offer me nothing that I desire," he said. "I am the servant of my country, and her enemies are mine. I can have neither part nor lot with you. That is my answer, Madam von Eisen."

The woman's restraint broke. It was like a dam giving before a pent-up mass of icy water. She tore off one of her gauntlets and hurled it in his face. Impalacable hate looked out of her eyes.

"I have done with you," she cried. "You have scorned me, but you have dug your own grave."

She leaped on the parapet and the next second was on the glacis. Once more the mist had fled, and across the hillside the glaci's lay in the pale and meagre light that was breaking.

Turk and I waved her hand to them, and hastened down the hillside.

But at that moment I heard the whistle of a long-range Russian shell. Among the boulders there was the dull shock of an explosion and a mushroom of red earth. It all passed in an instant of time: I saw the gunners on the road point their hands and I heard them cry; I heard a kind of sob from Blekinson, and I saw Sandy, too, before I remembered what had happened.

The next thing I saw was Sandy, already bound.

The gun had fallen off, and the hair was breaking loose. The face was white, but there was no wound or bruise on it.

"She was killed at once," I heard him saying. "Her back was broken by a shell-fragment. Dick, we must bury her here. I have seen her she liked me. I can take her no return but this."

We set the Companions to guard, and with infinite slowness, using our hands and our knives, we made a shallow grave below the eastern parapet. When we were done we covered her face with the linen cloak which Sandy had worn that morning. He lifted the body and laid it reverently in its place.

"I did not know that anything could be so light," he said.

We set the Companions to guard, and with infinite slowness, using our hands and our knives, we made a shallow grave below the eastern parapet. When we were done we covered her face with the linen cloak which Sandy had worn that morning. He lifted the body and laid it reverently in its place.

"I did not know that anything could be so light," he said.

IT WASN'T for me to look on at that kind of scene. I went to the parapet with Blekinson's field-glasses and had a stare at our friends on the road. There was no Turk there, and I guessed why, for it would not be easy to use the men of Islam against the wearer of the green epaulet. The enemy were German or Austrian, and they had a field-guns. They seemed to have got it laid in our fort; but they were waiting.

As I looked I saw behind them a massive figure. I seemed to recognize Stumm had come to see the destruction of his enemies.

To the east I saw another gun in the fields just below the main road. They had got us on both sides, and there was no way of escape. Hilda von Eisen was to have a noble pyre and goodly company for the dark journey.

Dusk was falling now, and the sky was filled with the stars of the winter sky. The artillery were busy all around the horizon, and toward the pass on the other road, where Fort Palantien stood, there was the dust and smoke of a furious bombardment. It seemed to me, too, that the guns on the other fronts had come nearer. Deva Bayon was hidden by a spur of hill, but up in the north white clouds like the streamers of evening, were hanging over the Euphrates glen, and when the firmament hummed and roared, it seemed as though it had been struck.

As I looked, the gun to the west fired, the gun where Stumm was. The shell dropped ten yards to our right. A second later another fell behind us.

Blekinson had dragged himself to the parapet. I don't suppose he had ever been sheltered before, but his face showed curiosity rather than fear.

"Pretty poor shooting, I reckon," he said.

"On the contrary," I said, "they know their business. That's the way to do it."

The words were not out of my mouth when one fell right among us. It struck the far rim of the *castrum*, shattering the rock, but bursting madly outside. We all ducked, and baring some small scratches no one was a penny the worse. I remember that much of the debris fell on Hilda von Eisen's grave.

I pulled Blekinson over the far parapet, and called on the Companions to take up their stations on the high side of the hill. But as we showed ourselves shots rang out from our front, shots fired from a range of a few hundred yards. It was easy to see what had happened. Riflemen had been sent to



hold us in rear. They would not assault so long as we remained in the *castral*, but they would block any attempt to find safety outside it. Stumm and his gun had us at their mercy.

We crouched below the parapet again. "We may as well toss for it," I said. "There's only two ways—to stay here and be shelled or try to break through those fellows behind. Either's pretty unhealthy."

But I knew there was no choice. With Blenkiron crippled we were pinned to the *castral*. Our numbers were up all right.

BUT no more shells fell. The night grew dark and showed a field of glittering stars, for the air was sharpening again toward frost. We waited for an hour, crouching just behind the far parapet, but never came that ominous familiar whistle.

The Sandy rose and stretched himself. "I'm hungry," he said. "Let's get out the food. Here—Here! We've eaten nothing since before daybreak. I wonder what is the meaning of this respite?"

I fancied I knew.

"It's Stumm's way," I said. "He wants to torture us. He'll keep us hours on henter-bunks, while he's over yonder exulting in what we think we're enduring. He has just enough imagination for that. He should rush us if he had the men. As it is, he's going to blow us to pieces, but do it slowly and smack his lips over it."

Sandy yawned. "We'll disappoint him, for we won't be worried, old man. We three are beyond that kind of fear."

"Meanwhile we're bound to do the best we can," I said. "We've got the exact range for his whereabouts. We've got to find a hole somewhere just outside the *castral*, and some sort of head-cover. We're bound to get damaged whatever happens, but we'll stick it out to the end. When they think they have finished with us and rush the place, there may be one of us who can make a bolt through old Stumm. What do you say?"

They agreed, and after our meal Sandy and I crawled out to prospect, leaving the others on guard in case there should be an attack. We found a hollow in the glaciis a little south of the *castral*, and, working very quietly, managed to enlarge it and cut a kind of shallow cave in the ice. It would be no use against a direct hit, but it would give some cover for flying fragments. As I said the situation, Stumm could land as many shells as he pleased in the *castral* and wouldn't bother to attend to the flanks. When the bad shelling began there would be shelter for one or two in the cave.

Our enemies were watchful. The riflemen on the east bank, Verner flares at intervals, and Stumm's lot stood up a great silent sent. I remember that just before midnight hell broke loose round Fort Palantukin. No more Russian shells came into our hollow, but all the road to the east was under fire, and at the fort itself there was a shattering explosion and a queer silent glow which looked as if a match had been hit. For about an hour the firing continued and then it died down. But it was toward the north that I kept turning my head. There seemed to be something different in the sound there, something sharper in the report of the guns, as if shells were dropping in a narrow valley. The rock walls reflected the echo. Had the Russians by any blessed chance worked round that flank?

I got Sandy to listen, but he shook his head. "Those guns are a dozen miles off," he said. "They're no nearer than three days ago. But it looks as if the sportmen on the south might have a chance. When they break through and get into the valley, they'll be puzzled to account for the remains of us." We're no longer three adventurers in the enemy's country. We're the advance guard of the Allies. Our pals don't know about us, and we're going to be cut off, which has happened to advance guards before now. But all the same, we're in our own battle-line again. Doesn't that count?"

I cheered me wonderfully, for I knew now what had been the weight on my heart ever since I accepted Sir Walter's mission.

It was the loneliness of it. I was fighting far away from my friends, far away from the true fronts of battle. It was a shadow which, whatever its importance, had none of the exhilaration of the main effort. But now we had come back to familiar ground. We were like the Highlanders cut off at Cité St. Augustine on the first day of Loos, or those who had been at Festubert of whom I had heard. Only, the others did not know of it, would never hear of it. If Petty Officer Blenkiron he might tell the tale, but most likely he was lying dead somewhere in the no-man's-land between the lines. We should never be heard of again any more, but our work remained. Sir Walter would know that, and he would tell our story to the world, that we had gone out in our country's service.

We were in the *castral* again, sitting under the parapets. The same thought must have been in Sandy's mind, for he suddenly laughed.

"It's a queer ending, Dick. We're simply vanishing into the infinite. If the Russians get through us we will never recognize what is left of us among the scattered fragments of battle. The snow will soon cover us, and when the spring comes there will only be a few bleached bones. Upon my soul it is the kind of death I always wanted." And he quoted softly to himself a verse of old Scots ballad:

"Mony's the aye for him maks mane,
But nane sal ken whar he is gane,
Ower his white banes, when they are
bare,
The wind bell salt blow for ev'rnair."

"But our work lies," I cried, with a nod of my head. "We're not the ones to do the job that matters, not the men that do it. And our job's done. We have won, old chap—won hands down—and there is no going back on that. We have won any way; and if Peter had a slice of luck, we've scooped the pool . . . After all, we never expected to come out of this thing with our lives."

Blenkiron, with his leg stuck out stiffly before him, was humming quietly to himself, as he often did when he felt cheerful.

"Feeling good?" I asked.

"Fine. I'm about the luckiest man on God's earth, major. I've always wanted to get into a big show. I've never seen it work out so well as in a family house like me, living in a steam-warm house and going down town to my office every morning. I used to envy my old dad that fought at Chattanooga, and never forgot to tell you about it. But I guess Chattanooga was like a scrap in a Bowery bar compared to this. When I meet the old man in Glory he'll have to listen to some to me . . ."

TIT was just after Blenkiron spoke that we got a reminder of Stumm's presence. The gun was well laid, for a shell plumped near the edge of the *castral*. It made an end of one of the Conventions who were gunned there, badly wounded, another, and a fragment gashed my thigh. We took refuge in the shallow cave, but some wild shooting from the east side brought us back to the parapets for we feared an attack. None came, nor any more shells, and once again the night was quiet.

I asked Blenkiron if he had any near relatives.

"Why, no, except a sister's son, a college boy who has no need of his uncle. It's fortunate that we three have no wives. I haven't any regrets, neither, for I've had a mighty deal out of life. I was thinking this morning that it was a pity I was going out when I had a wife and a son to bring me to reason. But I reckon that's another of my mercies. The good God took away the pain in my stomach so that I might go to Him with a clear head and a healthy heart."

"We're lucky fellows," said Sandy; "we've all had our whack. When I remember the good times I had I could sing a hymn of praise. We've lived long enough to know our sins and then we come into some kind of decency. But think of those boys who have given their lives freely when they

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Greenmantle

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scarcely knew what life meant. They were just at the beginning of the road, and they didn't know what dreary bits lay before them. It was all sunshine and bright-colored, and yet they gave it up without a moment's doubt. And think of the men with wives and children and homes that were the biggest things in life to them! For fellow like us to shirk would be black cowardice. It's strange, isn't it? But when others shirk their teeth and went forward, they were blessed heroes.

After that we fell silent. A man's thoughts at a time like that seem to be double-powered, and the memory becomes very sharp and clear. I don't know what was in the others' minds, but I know what filled my own.

I fancy it isn't the men who get most out of the world. They are always buoyant, and cheerful, and most fear to die. Rather it is the weak-engined souls who go about with dull eyes, that cling most fiercely to life. They have not the joy of being alive which is a kind of earned of immortality . . . I know that my thoughts were chiefly about the jolly things that I had seen and done; not regret, but gratitude. The pain of all of blue and grey the world seemed itself before me, and hunter's nights in the bush, the taste of food and sleep, the bitter stimulus of dawn, the joy of wild adventure, the voices of old staunch friends. Hitherto the war had seemed to make a break with all that had gone before, but now the war was only part of the picture. I thought of my battalion, and the good fellows of it who had fallen on the Loos parapets. I had never looked to come out of that myself. But I had been spared, and given the chance of a greater business, and I had succeeded. That was the tremendous fact, and my mood was humble gratitude to God, and exultant pride. Death was a small price to pay for it. As Blenkiron would have said, I had got good out of it.

The next day was getting bitter cold, as happens before dawn. It was frost again, and the sharpness of it woke our hunger. I got out the remnants of the food and wine and we had a last meal. I remember we pledged each other as we drank.

"We have eaten our Passover Feast," said Sandy. "When do you look for the end?"

"After dawn," I said. "Stumm's want daylight to get the full savor of his revenge."

SLLOWLY the sky passed from ebony to grey, and black shapes of hill outlined themselves against the sky. A wind blew down the valley, bringing the acrid smell of burning, but something too of the freshness of morn. It stirred strange thoughts in me, was the strange vigor of the blood which was never to be mine again. For the first time in that long vigil I was torn with a sudden regret.

"We must get into the cave before it is full light," I said. "We had better draw lots for the two to go."

The choir fell on one of the Companions and Blenkiron.

"You can't count me out," said the latter. "If it's your wish to find a man to be alive when our friends come up to count their spoil, I guess I'm the worst of the lot. I'd prefer, if you don't mind, to stay here. I've made my peace with my Maker, and I'd like to walk quietly on His call. I'll play a game of Patience to pass the time."

He would take no refusal, so we drew again, and he fell to Sandy.

"If I'm the last to go," he said, "I promise I don't miss. Stumm won't be long in following me."

He shook hands with his cheery smile, and he and the Companion slipped over the parapet in the final shadows before dawn.

Blenkiron spread his Patience cards on a flat rock, and dealt out for the Double Napoleon. He was perfectly calm, and hummed to himself his only tune. For my-

self I was drinking in my last draught of the hill air. My contentment was going, I suddenly felt bitterly loath to die.

Something of the same kind must have passed through Blenkiron's head. He suddenly looked up and asked, "Sister Anne, Sister Anne, do you see anybody coming?"

I stood close to the parapet, watching every detail of the landscape as shown by the reviving daybreak. Up on the shoulders of the Parapet, the snow was lying over the edges of the cliffs. I wondered when they would come down as avalanches. There was a kind of crag on one hillside, and from a but the smoke of breasted was beginning to curl. Stumm's gunners were awake and apparently holding council. Far down on the main road a convoy was moving—I heard the creak of the wheels two miles away, as it still was.

Then, as if a spring had been loosed, the world suddenly leaped to a hideous life. With a growl the guns opened round all the horizon. They were especially fierce to the south, where a *regale* beat as I had never heard it before. The one glance I cast behind me showed the gap in the hills choked with flames and dust.

"In my eyes were on the north. From Erzerum tall tongues of flames leaped from a dozen quarters. Beyond, toward the opening of the Euphrates glen, there was the sharp crack of field guns. I strained eyes and ears, mad with impatience, and I read the riddle.

"Sandy," I yelled, "Peter has got through. The Russians are round the flank. The town is burning. Glory to God, we've won, we've won!"

And as I spoke the earth seemed to split beside me, and I was flung forward on the grave which covered Hilda von Einem's grave.

AS I picked myself up, and to my amazement found myself unscathed, I saw Blenkiron rubbing his eyes out of his eyes and arranging a disordered card. He had stopped humming, and was singing aloud.

"Say, major," he cried, "I believe this game of mine is coming out."

I was now pretty well mad. The thought that old Peter had won, that we had won beyond our wildest dreams, that if we died there were those coming who would exact the uttermost vengeance, rolled my heart like a fever. I sprang on the parapet and waved my hand to Stumm, shouting defiance. Rifle shots cracked out from behind, and I leaped back just in time for the next shell.

The charge must have been short, for it was a bad miss, landing somewhere on the glaci. The nest was better and crashed on the near parapet, carving a great hole in the rock as it fell. This time the armament stopped, by a fragment of memory, but I felt no pain. Blenkiron seemed to bear a charmed life, for he was smothered in dust but unharmed. He blew the dust away from his cards very gingerly and went on playing.

"Sister Anne," he asked, "do you see anybody coming?"

Then came a dud which dropped neatly into the near parapet. I was determined to break for the open and chance the rifle fire, for if Stumm went on shooting the *caissons* was certain death. I caught Blenkiron round the middle, scattering his cards to the winds, and jumped over the parapet.

"Don't apologize, Sister Anne," said he. "The game was as good as won. But for God's sake drop me, for if you wave me like the torch of freedom I'll get plagued sure and good."

My one thought was to get cover for the next minutes, for I had an instinct that our vigil was near its end. The defenses of Erzerum were crumbling like sand castles, and it was a proof of the tenseness of my nerves that I seemed to be deaf to the sound. Stumm had seen us cross the parapet, and he started to sprinkle all the surroundings of

the east. Blenkiron and I lay like a working party between the lines caught by machine-guns, taking a pall on ourselves as best we could. Sandy had some kind of cover, but we were on the bare farther slope, and the riflemen on that side might have had us at their mercy.

But we were safe from them. As I looked east, the hillside, a little before had been held by our enemies, was as empty as the desert. And then I saw on the main road a sight which for a second time made me yell like a maniac. Down that glen came a throng of men and galloping limbers—a crazy, jolting crowd, sprawling away beyond the road to the stony slopes, leaving behind it many black dots to darken the snows. The gates of the south had yielded, and our friends were through them.

At that sight I forgot all about our danger. I didn't give a cent for Stumm's shells. I didn't believe he could hit me. The fate which had mercifully preserved us for the first time of victory would see us through to the end.

I remember hauling Blenkiron along the hill to find Sandy. But our news was anticipated. For down our own side glen came the same broken tumult of men. More; for at their backs, far up at the throat of the pass, I saw horsemen—the horsemen of the pursuit. Old Nachous had must his cavalry in.

Sandy was on his feet, with his lips set and his eye abstracted. If his face hadn't been burned black by weather it would have been pale as a dishcloth. A man like him doesn't make up his mind for death and then be given his chance without being wrung out of his bearings. I thought he didn't understand what had happened, so I beat him on the shoulders.

"Man, d'you see?" I cried. "The Cossacks! The Cossacks! God! how they're taking that slope! They're into them now. By Heaven, we'll ride with them! We'll get the gun horses!"

ALITTLE knoll prevented Stumm and his men from seeing what was happening farther up the glen, till the first wave of the rout was on them. He had gone on bombarding the east and its environs while the world was cracking over his head. The gun had been left behind on the hillside road, and down the hill among the boulders we crawled. Blenkiron as lame as a duck, and me with a limp left arm.

The poor beasts were straining at their pickets and sniffing the morning wind, which brought down the thick fumes of the great bombardment, and the improbable babble cry of a broken army. Before we reached them that maddened horde had swept down on them, men panting and gasping in their flight, many of them bloody from wounds, many tottering in the first stages of collapse and death. I saw the horses seized by a dozen hands, and a desperate fight for the gun horses. But as we halted, our eyes were fixed on the battery on the road above us, for round it was now sweeping the van of the retreat.

I had never seen a rout before, when strong men come to the end of their tether and only their broken shadows stumble toward the refuge they never find. No more had Stumm, poor, broken-winded, fit for him those coming down that hill. I was rather hoping that the two of us might have a final scrap. He was a brute and a bully, but, by God! he was a man. I heard his great roar when he saw the tumult, and the next I saw was his monstrous figure working at the gun. He swung it south and turned it on the fugitives.

Both of us fired it. The press was on him, and the gun was swept sideways. He stood up, a foot higher than any of them, and he seemed to be trying to check the rush with his pistol. There is power in numbers, even though every unit is broken and fleeing. For a second to that wild crowd Stumm was the enemy, and he had strength enough to be one. The wave flowed round and then across him. I saw the butts of rifles crash on his head and shoulders, and the next second the stream had passed over his body . . .

That was God's judgment on the man who had set himself above his kind.

Sandy gripped my shoulder and was shouting in my ear.

"They're coming, Dick. Look at the grey devils!" Oh, God be thanked, it's our friends!"

The next minute we were tumbling down the hillside. Blenikron leaping over my leg between us. I heard dimly Sandy cry out, "Oh, well done our side!" and Blenikron declaiming, but I had no voice at all and no wish to shout, I knew that tears were in my eyes, and that if I had been left alone I would have sat down and cried with pure thankfulness. For sweeping down the glen came a host of grey cavalry, little grey horses, a cloud which stayed not for the rear of the fugitives, but swept on like a flight of rainbows, with the steel of their lanceheads glittering in the winter sun. They were riding for Ezerum.

Remember that for three months we had been with the enemy and had been beaten twice by the All-Holy Army. We had been cut off from the fellowship of a great cause, like a fort surrounded by an army. And now we were delivered, and there fell around us the warm joy of comradeship as well as the exultation of victory.

WE FLUNG caution to the winds and rode stark mad. Sandy, still in his emerald coat and turban, was scrambling up the farther slope of the hollow, yelling greetings in every language known to man. The leader saw him, with a word checked his men for a moment—it was marvellous to see the horses reined in in such a breakneck ride—and from the squat horse of a trooper who had wheeled toward us. Then a man in a grey overcoat and a sheepskin cap was on the ground beside us wringing our hands.

"You are safe, my old friends!"—it was Peter's voice that spoke—"I will take you back to our army, and get you breakfast."

"No, brother! Let you take us home," said Sandy. "We've had the rough end of the job, and now we'll have the fun. Look after Blenikron and these fellows of mine. I'm going to ride knee by knee with your sportsmen for the city."

Peter spoke a word, and two of the Cossacks dismounted. The two I knew I was mounted in the lead of a group, galloping down the road up which the morning before we had stridden to the *cashtol*.

That was the great hour of my life, and to live through it was worth a dozen years of slavery. With a broken left arm I had little hold on my beast, so I trusted my neck to him and let him have his will. Black with

dirt and smoke, hasty, with no kind of uniform, I was a wilder figure than any Cossack. I soon was separated from Sandy, who had two hands and a better horse, and seemed resolute to press forward to the very van. That would have been suicide for me, and I had all I could do to keep my place in the bunch I rode with.

It was glorious! what an hour it was! There was loose shooting on our flank, but nothing to trouble us, though the gun team of some Austrian howitzer, struggling madly at a bridge, gave us a bit of a tussle. Everything fitted past me like smoke, or like the mad *flaw* of a dream just before waking. I knew the living man, the dead man, and the comaraderie of men, but all dimly, for at heart I was alone, grappling with the realization of a new world. I felt the shadows of the Palantulken glen fading, and the great burst of light as we emerged on the wider valley. Somewhere before us was a pall of smoke seamed with red flames, and beyond that a dark, still, silent land. At that time I was dressing, crooning daff catches of song to myself, so happy, so deliciously happy that I dared not try to think. I kept muttering a kind of prayer made up of Bible words to Him who had shown me His goodness in the land of the living.

But as we drew out from the skirts of the hill, and the smoke began to thin, I awoke to clear consciousness. I felt the smell of sheepskin and lathered horses, and above all the bitter smell of fire. Down in the trough lay Ezerum, now burning in many places, and from the east, past the silent forts, horsemen were closing in on it. I yelled to my comrade, "Look where we're nearest, that will be first in the charge!" They were happily and shouted their strange war-cries. As we topped the last ridge I saw before me the van of our charge—a dark mass on the snow—while the broken enemy both sides were flinging away their arms and scattering in the fields.

In the north, now nearing the city ramparts, was one man. He was like the point of the steel spear soon to be driven home. In the clear morning air I could see that he did not wear the uniform of the invaders. He was turbaned and rode like one possessed, and against the snow I caught the dark sheen of emerald. As he did it seemed that the horses of Turan were stricken still, and stood by the roadside with eyes strained after his unfeeling figure.

Then I knew that the prophecy had been true, and that their prophet had not failed them. The long-looked-for revelation had come. Greenmantle had appeared at last to an awaiting people.

The End