

# HAMPTON'S MAGAZINE

(THE NEW BROADWAY)

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# The Hybrid Hyperborean Ant



By Roy L. McCardell

Author of "Conversations of a Chorus Girl,"  
"The Jarr Family," etc.

Illustrations by Albert Levering

NOW that my friend and neighbor, D. Frank Dodge, has gone to the Bermudas for rest and recreation, I feel it is only fair, both to him and myself, to tell the whole truth of the strange results of his remarkable experiments with the family *formicidæ*, of which so much has been hinted at but of which so few of the real facts are known.

"They will not believe you, old man," said Frank to me, as I bade him good bye, whilst his man-servant tucked his rug around him, placed a cushion under his head, and made comfortable the worn, wan fellow, plucky still though he had lost the great fight of his life.

"They will not believe you," he repeated. "Let the heathen rave, I mean rage. It will all die out and be forgotten and they will stop bothering you, now that I have gone away."

But they haven't stopped bothering me. Hardly a day passes but that I receive fool letters from pseudo-savants, nature fakirs and would-be humorists, or am held up by vacuous commuting acquaintances and made the butt of the dreary wit of the smoking car about "Your friend's ant farm."

And, to make matters short, that is what Frank Dodge had—an ant, *a n t*, farm. But for an accident, but for the merest chance, he would be hailed to-day as the saviour of the Southern planter, as a benefactor to mankind and a Burbank of beneficial insect life; instead of being a nervous wreck,

slowly coming back to health and strength in the far Bermudas, a man anguished at the thought of his lifework swept away—stung still by the recollection of the jeers of the rapid, cackling mob that might even now be hailing him as the greatest man of his time. And here was I, his friend, left behind to share in the crackling jocosities that greet his name when, had not one thing happened, an incident turned to a tragedy, he might be fêted and famous and I be shining in his reflected glory.

So I will tell it. I will tell it truthfully, simply, plainly—for even the obloquy of fools becomes in time unbearable. Dear old Frank shall be set aright, and the world shall judge whether it were best to laugh or cry at the misfortune that overtook him at the moment that fame and fortune were within his grasp.

It all began when I received the appended letter from my old friend. That is, it began for me. With Frank it was the end in sight, after years of ceaseless effort, expense and experiment. Here is the letter:

D. FRANK DODGE

IMPORTER AND BREEDER OF ANTS

*The Largest Importer of Ants in America.  
Scavenger and Hybrid Hyperborean Ants Always on Hand. Special Rates to the Trade.*

ANT HILLS, Westchester Co., N. Y.

August 23, 1909.

DEAR MAC: Come out to Ant Hills to-morrow. Efforts crowned with success. No doubt about

proving every claim I have ever made for my hybrid hyperborean ants. The work of my scavenger ants you know. Agricultural Department of Washington pays \$10,000 for two million hybrid hyperborean ants for Texas. Prof. Twombly Jenks, F.N.H.S. (Fellow Natural History Society) will be here to take charge of them and proceed with them south. If what I claim, and you know they are and more, Government will award a million dollars and a gold medal. I'm as nervous as a cat. Come stand by me now in the hour of success as you have always done in the weary days of trial and defeat. Trap will meet you at station. As always.

D. FRANK DODGE.

The 9.27 train saw me aboard, and in due time I was alighting at Pelham and driving over with Frank's man in the trap to Ant Hills, Frank's farm and experimental station.

The whole six acres of Ant Hills, as many will remember, was surrounded with a high wire fence of fine fly screen, reinforced with half inch steel cable. Tangle-foot fly paper tacked along the supporting scantling rail at the top marked "No Thoroughfare" for Frank's busy insect friends.

A wait for a moment to close one great fly screen door behind me, before the inner one was opened, a space Frank facetiously termed "the ante-room." And then I was on my friend's domains, famous Ant Hills, the home of his ants "and other relations," as the poor fellow used to say, and the breeding place of his edible lobster ant, his most useful scavenger ant, and the even more remarkable hybrid hyperborean ant. This last was the intelligent and docile insect that Frank's patience and genius had originated to maintain cotton in its Kingship, and our beloved Southland as the King's greatest realm in the world!

Ant Hills was familiar to me, but for the benefit of those who have heard of the place only as a gigantic hoax or joke that reacted upon its alleged perpetrator, I will briefly describe it.

Frank's neat bungalow, "Antlers," with its trim privet hedges and garden of old-fashioned flowers, all surrounded by a step-overable moat filled with viscid tar—to keep out visiting ants—was in the foreground, occupying with its private grounds

about an acre. The rest of the screened farm was given over to the Antery.

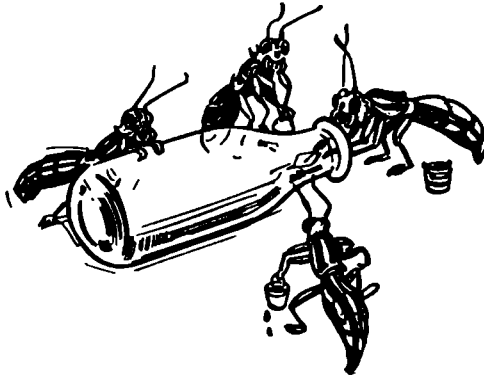
The visitor would have rubbed his eyes to see the *bizarre* surroundings behind the bungalow. The first things that engaged the attention were huge sets of painted canvas backgrounds representing tropical and jungle scenes. A tangle of theatrical grass mats and imitation palms and tropic plants, all of a rank and poisonous green color, occupied the foreground. There was method in this seeming mad-

ness, as Frank had long ago explained to me. The equatorial and sub-tropical ants, especially the larger ants from the Antilles, and the African termites, or true *Termes lucifugus*, for many years had died as soon as imported. My friend's experiments were thus at times at a standstill, although he had imported tropic timber, insects and fruits for the expatriated ants to feed upon. Yet the ants had lain in lethargic heaps and refused to eat or exercise.

After trying everything to aid in simulating in another clime their sunny homes, from phonographs imitating tropic sounds to placing them in heated sands, my friend at last decided that the equatorial and African ants were homesick for their own far tropic scenes.

As is well known, and has been constantly stated in the slurred and garbled accounts printed of his experiments, Dodge is a theatrical scene painter. It was through his success at his profession that he was enabled to make the vast amount of money he expended on his experiments with ants—experiments that covered twenty years.

The idea of the ants being homesick seemed almost ridiculous, but my friend Dodge was not to be deterred in ascertaining if it were so or not. He secured vast stretches of canvas and had laboriously painted two tropic scenes, when the failure of "The King of the Cannibal Islands" and several other comic operas of its kind gave him opportunity to secure tropical scenery sufficient for his needs at slight cost. And Frank's seemingly ridiculous idea was the



correct solution. The tropical ants *had* been pining for jungle scenes.

In homelike surroundings, with the painted tangle of the *rookh* before their eyes and the practical tangle of grass mats and artificial palms around them, the next importation of equatorial ants set briskly and even blithely to work, and reared ant hills twenty feet in height. It was as though they said, "Here are we home," for they burrowed so extensively that Frank was put to the expense of sinking a concrete wall ten feet deep all around the now rightly named Ant Hills.

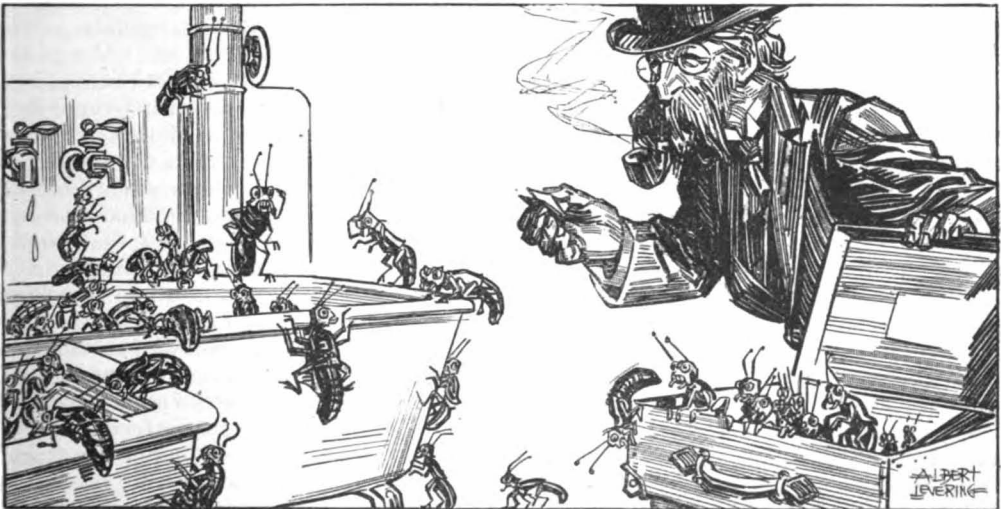
The visitor might also have marked the vast glass hot houses, the winter quarters of Dodge's insect friends, to which on the first indication of cool nights in September they would follow him at the sound of the clicked call he used, a crackling metallic instrument such as elevator starters signal with in big office buildings. Ants, as we all know, are the most intelligent of insects. They soon learned the sound of the call and the varied significance of the different signals Frank sounded upon it, from "First call to breakfast" to "Taps." The call to winter quarters was simply the prolongation of the call, "Follow me."

Much confusion was occasioned later when a plague of crickets came down upon the farm, and millions of the first hybrid hyperboreans, as well as many of the useful if not as valuable scavenger ants, died from

exhaustion trying to obey the sounds. The trained and domesticated ants, such as Frank had at Ant Hills, were all faithful and obedient mites. So they rushed continuously as the crickets made their constant and confusing calls—sounds made by their master, so the ants thought. This was the first disaster of the last days of Ant Hills, and led up to the final and irreparable tragedy of which I will tell anon.

Once in their winter quarters, the smaller sized and more portable tropic scenery being brought in to make the place homelike, the ants passed the winter industriously caring for their cows or *aphides*; an almost human husbandry to which all *formicidæ* are partial, as any natural history will tell you.

I will not go into the various details of my friend Dodge's experiments, or of how he endeavored to raise honey ants for the local markets. But despite several orders for them for freak dinners, and having them put on the menu at the Waldorf-Astoria and the Café des Beaux Arts for one season, Frank found them less appealing to New York appetites than *escargots*, or snails, have been. For the snails, at least, have expatriated Frenchmen and art students to call for them at Martin's or Mouquin's. And yet American visitors, especially New Yorkers, traveling in Mexico, will eat the succulent honey ant sold by the measure in the Mexican markets and even notoriety-desiring Pittsburgers and other *nouveaux riches* have



"AT HIS CLICKING COMMAND, 'GO TO IT,' THEY WOULD ADVANCE IN MYRIADS IN THE CAUSE OF HEALTH AND SANITATION."

them sent from our sister republic to be served at sensational banquets.

But that is not all. To show the superiority of those he had raised, Frank had Mexican honey ants sent him, sealed, turned them over to a well-known analytical laboratory, and proved conclusively that the ones shipped from below the Rio Grande were grossly adulterated with glucose, and were also preserved from fermentation by one tenth of one per cent of benzoate of soda.

To those who do not know of the honey ant, I may state that any work on entomology will explain that it is a *fermicid* of the genus *Myrmecocystus melliger*, one form of worker which receives and stores in its abdomen the honey gathered by other workers until it is round and distended with honey and almost as large as a small grape.

As regards the weird stories that my friend Dodge had bred, by large type selection and certain stimulating foods, a species of ant as big as a house dog, that is pure hyperbole—unless we consider that it could be likened in size to a very small sort of house dog.

The fact is that Frank, before he saw the practical use of the hybrid hyperborean ant in destroying the boll weevil pest—there, the secret is out!—had a wild idea that the edible *Giantigascutus*, or lobster ant as he called the largest variety he originated and bred, might be of great value in taking the place of the fast disappearing lobster as a viand for epicures.

To this end, he bred them from varieties that assumed an almost lobster-like appearance, but through some strange freak of nature the ants that grew to the size of lobsters, and almost lobster-like in appearance, lost their pinchers. It was the demand for claws when the lobster ant was served that precluded them from ever becoming a successful substitute for the popular and costly crustacean. The red color of the cooked lobster was easily simulated in the case of the lobster ant by an application of aniline dye.

It was the clawless lobster ant that caused Mr. Thomas Sharkey, the sailor saloon keeper-gladicator, to make his famous *mot* when the waiter explained that the lobsters got to fighting and this one had lost its claws. Mr. Sharkey regarded the cooked lobster ant before him dubiously, and said, gruffly: "Well, take this one away and bring me the winner."

After that, Mr. Thomas Shanley and other Broadway restauranteurs refused to further endeavor to substitute the lobster ant for the real *Homarus americanus*, or true soubrette food.

It was about this time, when my friend Dodge could be seen going from restaurant to hotel carrying a special sized lobster ant in a shawl strap, that the rumor concerning his sanity first began to be bruited abroad—rumors as cruel as they were unjust. For Frank Dodge, humble savant and scientist, would have been a benefactor to mankind to rank with Benner, Harvey, Fulton, Burbank, any or all who have done mankind beneficial service beyond mundane comprehension or earthly reward. Here also is a fitting place to dignify with denial the slander that Frank Dodge was in the habit of grinding up red ants and selling them as "antichovy paste."

It was his scavenger ants that first turned my friend Dodge's thoughts to making what had been simply a hobby something of great practical benefit. His scavenger ants, as all the good housewives of Pelham and New Rochelle will testify, were unequalled as sanitary aids in the home. Manager Boldt of the Waldorf-Astoria; George Rector of the Café Madrid; Proprietor Regan of the Knickerbocker Hotel, all will tell you that so far as his scavenger ants were concerned, Frank Dodge was a man who should have been encouraged instead of jeered at and disheartened.

Hearing of a plague of moths, roaches or mice, or of stopped drain pipes from the kitchen sink, Frank Dodge, as a friendly service and also to keep his scavenger ants in



training, would appear on the scene with a tin dress suit case filled with the little workers for health and sanitation. All he would ask was an indemnity bond that no hot or even cold water be turned on while his insect sanitary corps were in the drains. At his clicking command, "Go to it," they would march in myriads and legions down cracks and crevices or through the sink strainer holes, and busy themselves until their work was fully done.

The appearance of the leaders, or foremen scavenger ants, as if to ask, "Anything else, sir?" was the signal the work was done. The sharp clicks on Frank's metallic call that meant "To quarters," would bring them all back into the tin suit case, tired but satisfied with the consciousness of good work well done.

But all this only leads up to the crux and climax of Dodge's efforts in *formicid* culture—his evolving of the famous hybrid hyperborean ant, a new variety of the crossed *Megalomyrmex septentrionalis* with *Termes lucifugus*. The resultant variety was the most docile and intelligent ant of all, a beneficial insect that would have destroyed the boll weevil and saved incalculable millions to the planter and the cotton factor, had not fate intervened.

Like all discoveries destined to benefit mankind, the great purpose for which the hybrid hyperborean ant was evolved was ascertained by chance. The hybrid hyperboreans were Frank's favorites, even above the lobster ant—bred for its edibility—and the scavenger ant, that blessing to the housewife. Frank had evolved the hybrid



FROM RESTAURANT TO HOTEL, CARRYING A SPECIAL SIZED LOBSTER ANT IN A SHAWL STRAP.

hyperborean, as he called it, by mating and crossing his best strains. The hybrid hyperborean was a sleek and graceful fellow, almost an inch in length.

One day in passing through his flower garden, Frank had noticed upon a small peach tree a tent or cluster of the caterpillar of the brown-tailed moth. He had plucked it off, intending to burn it, when the thought struck him that perhaps here was insect food at hand for his ants. He bore the branch with the caterpillar cobweb or tent with him into the Antery.

The lobster ants refused it emphatically. A long diet on dead fish and chopped clams had perhaps vitiated their appetite for that kind of food. Even the scavenger ants hesitated as if asking whether

the caterpillars were a gift or an assignment.

But not so the hybrid hyperboreans. They devoured them ravenously. And from that time on, Frank used the hybrid hyperborean ants as destroyers of caterpillars, moth clusters, and San José scale on his own place and in the neighborhood.

Reading about this time of the ruinous ravages of the boll weevil in Texas, Frank sent to a friend of his in the devastated cotton belt for a large quantity of the ruined cotton plants covered with the cocoons and *pupa* of the pest. As he opened the box containing the infected cotton plants, the very presence of their destined prey seemed to excite all the hybrid hyperboreans in the Antery. They rushed from all quarters, the champing of their mandibles being plainly discernible.

As Frank advanced toward them holding

the cotton plants, the hybrid hyperborean ants jumped up in the air to a height of fully two feet, seized upon the boll weevils, and devoured them instantly. By this time, the very box that held the rest of the plants was pierced in ten thousand places so that it crumbled to powder. Without harming a fiber of such of the cotton as the boll weevil had spared, or touching a leaf or twig of the plants, the hybrid hyperborean ants destroyed in the twinkling of an eye every boll weevil of the thousands with which the plants were thickly covered.

The idea struck Frank like a flash that not only was the killer of the scourge of the cotton field found at last, but that in time the hybrid hyperborean ants would develop their embryonic jumping faculties so that, with the boll weevil wiped out, they could destroy, upon the jump as it were, the Western grasshopper plagues.

That night the originator of the edible lobster ant, the sanitary scavenger ant, and best of all, the hybrid hyperborean ant—the found-at-last destroyer of the boll weevil pest—wrote to the Department of Agriculture in Washington the news that was to cause hope to spring renewed in Southern hearts.

A courteous but somewhat skeptical reply was received from the head of the Entomological Bureau, Professor Twombly Jenks. But Mr. Dodge was neither to be denied nor discouraged. He sent half a hundred hybrid hyperborean ants to Washington, and the moment Professor Twombly Jenks brought these into contact with the boll weevils he had at the Entomological

Bureau for experimental purposes, my friend's contentions were proved.

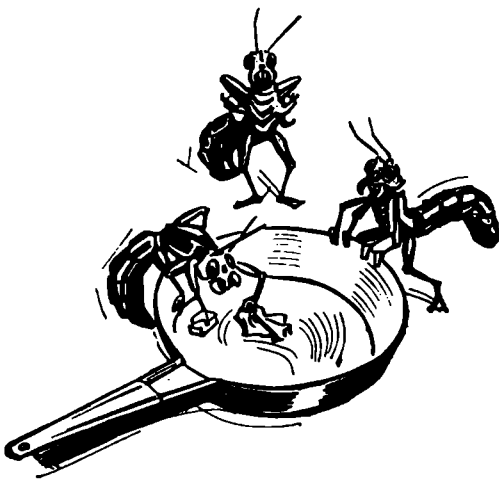
Now the hybrid hyperboreans, having had a second feeding of boll weevil, refused to eat anything else, and they starved to death while awaiting the arrival of more of their positively preferred diet from Texas—although, as my friend Dodge said, it is possible they missed the tropical scenery of Ant Hills and perished of nostalgia.

Scientists and government investigators, however, are slow to reach assumed conclusions. Professor Twombly Jenks was interested but not wholly convinced. An interminable correspondence now ensued, and poor Frank wavered so much between high hopes and most depressing despair that here began the nervous tendency that was to find its climax in collapse when the great final misfortune overwhelmed and struck him down.

At last the second supply of weevil infected cotton plants arrived in Washington, and passed through all the mazes of circumlocution, delaying detail and governmental red tape. Frank was at last advised, through letter 3096-B, form 181827, to send on a dozen more gross of hybrid hyperborean ants. He did so.

The Secretary of Agriculture, the Washington newspaper correspondents, and Whitelaw Reid's ex-social secretary were all present when they arrived. The hybrid hyperborean ants attacked the boll weevils so fiercely and so murderously that Whitelaw Reid's ex-social secretary fainted at the sight, and the experiment ended in some confusion. The Washington papers, of course, played up the society aspect of the affair, giving two columns to the account of the swooning of the ex-social secretary who was the White House cotillion leader during that administration. They also printed his pictures, one taken before he fainted, and one afterwards, but both showing him in correct evening attire.

The Washington correspondents of the New York, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, and San Francisco papers all followed the example of Samuel Blythe of the *New York World*, who set the fashion that session of Congress of treating all events transpiring at the capital in a humorous light. Thus it was that in one paragraph they described the hybrid hyperborean ants as lighting on to the boll weevils like magazine editors on to second night seats at the theaters. But





"FRANK BEGAN TO BRUSH OFF THE ANTS, WHICH STARTED TO CRAWL BACK TO THE ANTERY."

the great news that a White House cotillion leader had swooned at the same time, because some coarse person had eaten all the macaroons, was given the first page, right column position in even the metropolitan papers. And the greatest epoch in entomology, the fact that the hybrid hyperborean ant had been discovered to be the speedy destroyer of the boll weevil, was thus passed almost unnoticed.

After Professor Twombly Jenks had recovered from his agitation over the prostration of the White House's favorite cotillion leader, and that gentleman was able to sit up and partake of his usual afternoon tea with watercress sandwiches, my friend Dodge was again communicated with and assured, in the usual cold and formal official verbiage, that there was no doubt as to the efficacy of the hybrid hyperborean ant in eliminating the boll weevil as a factor in the cotton crop's destruction.

Mr. Dodge was further informed, after three months' correspondence, that following certain experiments to be conducted by Professor Twombly Jenks in person at Ant Hill, the government would award him \$10,000, and Congress would be urged to vote him a million dollars and a gold medal: provided said further experiments were equally successful upon a large scale and a practical test bore them out.

Mr. Dodge was likewise advised that to secure even the preliminary \$10,000, and to place Professor Twombly Jenks in a posi-



tion to make the practical tests in the cotton fields of Texas, a supply of a billion hybrid hyperborean ants would be necessary, possibly more, as Professor Jenks had not yet figured out by integral calculus just how many

thousands of the pest destroyers would be needed to the acre. The hybrid hyperborean ants must also be guaranteed to stand the Texas scenery, and have no homesick qualms or yearns for the painted jungle back-drops of the late musical melange "All Girls and Glitter," or "Old King Kafoozelum," or "The King of the Cannibal Islands," and other canvas vistas of comic opera jungle-land saved from the store house to make Ant Hill homey for the transplanted equatorial *formicida*.

Frank Dodge, however, was jubilant. He gave an ant-bake to the Niagara Hose of Pelham, the Neptune and Relief Hose of New Rochelle, and the Millionaire's Fire Company of Larchmont, selecting a Saturday for the ant-bake when the millionaires of the Larchmont Fire Company would have a half-holiday from Macy's, Wanamaker's, and the Siegel-Cooper stores, and could get home on the 1.33 train.

This ant-bake cleared the Antery of all the lobster ants. Frank then distributed the scavenger ants generously among the actors' boarding houses around Seventh Avenue, from Thirty-eighth to Fiftieth Streets, and farmed out the rest to Costar, the Insecticide King on Sixth Avenue, so that he could turn his attention solely to



increasing the flocks of hybrid hyperboreans. He kept these quiet and unmolested, supplied them with all the boll weevils he could get shipped to him, and let nature take its course.

Race suicide has no part or portion in the social life of the hybrid hyperborean ant, and with a nervous glee that bordered almost on hysteria, my poor friend Dodge saw his Antery soon contain two billion of the docile and intelligent hybrid hyperboreans, always his favorite of the thoroughbred *formicidæ*. And thus the eventful day drew near that was to bring Professor Twombly Jenks, of the Entomological Bureau, Department of Agriculture, to Ant Hills, Westchester County, New York.

Had not "Robinson's Regal Railroad Shows" raised its tents in nearby Mount Vernon that fateful day, my poor friend would now be a millionaire, the acclaimed benefactor of the farmer and the planter, the wearer of a medal from Congress, and the most popular man in America, instead of hiding in the Bermudas as he is to-day, as discredited, though most unjustly so, as Dr. Cook.

"Robinson's Regal Railroad Shows" raised at daybreak its dingy round-tops on the vacant lots adjoining the koumyss factory in Mount Vernon. A high wind tore to tatters the gaudy banners that told the wonders of the greatest zoölogical congress ever gathered beneath canvas, together with the pictured representations of the rarest pathological specimens, or human curios—"The Blue-Faced Boy," "The Four-Legged Girl," "The Lion-Faced Lady," and "Bosco the Snake Eater, Who Eats 'Em Alive! He Bites Their Heads Off! He Grovels in a Den of Loathsome Reptiles! An Exhibit for the Educated and a Show for the Sensitive and the Refined." So read the precious banners that had been destroyed.

An agonized appeal over the telephone to Frank Dodge, scene painter, came from old man Robinson himself. He couldn't come? Frank Dodge couldn't come? Would he desert a friend, an old friend, in his hour of need?

Frank looked at his watch, hesitated, and was lost. He would come over to repaint the banners, after telephoning for his assistants at his New York scenic studio to come out. He himself would lay out the work, but he must be back at Ant Hills by noon, as Professor Twombly Jenks would

arrive on the 2.22 to experiment with the hybrid hyperborean ants and the boll weevil pest.

Mr. Dodge hired an auto and started for Mount Vernon, not heeding that his tamest hybrid hyperborean ants were clinging to him in myriads. I was with him at the time, and unfortunately called his attention to the fact. Shouting for the head ant keeper to leave the gate open, as the hybrid hyperborean ants had developed the homing instinct since being fed boll weevils and would not now voluntarily leave or stay away from their feeding grounds, Frank began to brush off the ants, which promptly started to crawl back over the road toward the Antery. He was not rid of the last ones until we had reached the circus grounds and the damaged menagerie tent and banners.

In a few hours Frank had order out of chaos. Nothing occurred to mar or delay the work of restoring the gaudy banners that depicted the fauna in the animal tent or the human freaks in the side show, save a little excitement over the escape of some animals from a cage that had been overturned and broken by the wind. When it was stated that the animals that escaped were some South African specimens not dangerous unless annoyed several keepers were sent after them, and Frank kept on quietly directing his men who had arrived from New York within an hour of being 'phoned for. Had Frank known what animals those were that escaped he would not have whistled so gayly, and better had I presented a real revolver to his head than the "pocket pistol" I handed him to take a liquid shot from—for I was told but gave no heed.

We returned a little late from the banner restorations, for Frank was not the one to leave an old friend in distress until he saw that distress alleviated.

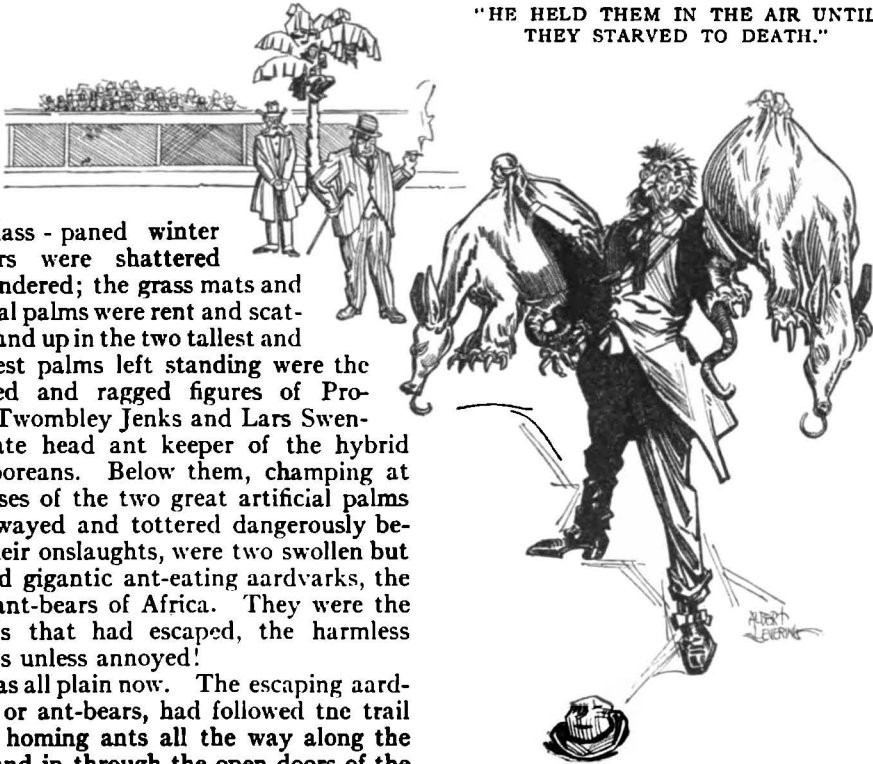
"That old boy, Twombly Jenks, will be hollering for me, I'll bet," said Frank laughingly, as we neared Ant Hills.

He spoke truer than he knew. As we reached Ant Hills the shrill cries of a querulous-voiced old man rang upon our ears together with hoarse curses that Frank knew at once emanated from his head ant keeper, the only assistant that day on the place.

Springing from the vehicle, Frank dashed through the still open high screen gates.

What a scene of destruction met his eye. The tropic back-drops were torn to tatters;

"HE HELD THEM IN THE AIR UNTIL THEY STARVED TO DEATH."



the glass-paned winter quarters were shattered and sundered; the grass mats and artificial palms were rent and scattered; and up in the two tallest and strongest palms left standing were the battered and ragged figures of Professor Twombly Jenks and Lars Swenson, late head ant keeper of the hybrid hyperboreans. Below them, champing at the bases of the two great artificial palms that swayed and tottered dangerously before their onslaughts, were two swollen but enraged gigantic ant-eating aardvarks, the great ant-bears of Africa. They were the animals that had escaped, the harmless animals unless annoyed!

It was all plain now. The escaping aardvarks, or ant-bears, had followed the trail of the homing ants all the way along the road, and in through the open doors of the very citadel of my poor friend's golden hopes.

Into Ant Hills came the great ant-bears, driving their capacious snouts among the two billion docile and intelligent hybrid hyperboreans that were to exterminate the boll weevil scourge from the cotton fields and make the fair South smile again!

But where were the hybrid hyperborean ants? One glance at the still enraged *Orycteropus capensis* answered that horrific question. The giant aardvarks, or great ant-bears, were harmless unless annoyed. The efforts made by Professor Twombly Jenks and Lars Swenson, head ant keeper, to save the hybrid hyperboreans had evidently annoyed them.

My poor friend Dodge went raving mad. In the ebullitions of his super-Berserker rage he fell upon the two aardvarks, or great ant-bears of Africa, and seizing one in each

hand held them in the air until they starved to death.

And nobody will believe that, either.

When my poor friend was conscious again, and the brain fever that had wasted him for weeks had passed, I whispered to him hopefully: "Cheer up, old man, we'll start all over."

But he raised a thin wan hand and shrilly screamed: "Never again!"

Anyway, the report Professor Twombly Jenks made of the final experiments (Agr. Dept. Bulletin 398764) ended forever any hope of further government recognition of experiments to destroy the boll weevil with the docile and intelligent hybrid hyperborean ant. Besides, not a single one of these succulent (to them) insects survived the ravenous onslaughts of the giant aardvarks, the *Orycteropus capensis*, or great ant-bears of Africa.

