EVERY MEMBER OF THE FAMILY CAN FIND SOMETHING INTERESTING HERE TO READ

"THE CRACK IN THE BELL"

A STORY OF POLITICS IN PHILADELPHIA

BY PETER CLARK MACFARLANE

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CHAPTER XII

The Sign Will Not Come Down

THE telephone message of Buckingham's secretary summoning Jerry to the financier's office had found that young man clearing his desk and making ready to drop in on Ruth at the armory amid the confusion of preparation for the Trench Comforts Bazaar. Fortunately, there remained time to give himself this pleasure before going to Mr. Buckingham's office. Had Ruth read his paper, he wondered, but made sure that some one would have called it to her attention. This surmise proved correct.

"Oh, Jerry! Isn't it wonderful? Wonderful!" she exclaimed at sight of him—"the things the papers are saying about you. Oh, I'm so proud!"

And there was a sheen of admiration in her eyes that was almost the glisten that comes from happy tears. Jerry knew that if he could have asked her then—right then—but he couldn't. The young people were pressed apart by the crowding round of other ladies, young and old, who came up to smile on him and to congratulate or banter.

And when at length they were alone again Ruth's mood had passed over the peak of admiration and descended to a stage of less feeling and greater volubility.

"How is the franchise fight coming on? What a bold thing it was to do! Paul tells me it was all your idea. And where have you been keeping yourself these three days—hardly to telephone me even?" These were some of the words that tumbled helter-skelter from the girl's eager lips.

"I've been pretty busy," sparred Jerry, with an apologetic smile, "but I did write you two sweet little notes, didn't I?"

"And they were sweet. But notes are only notes," complained Ruth with a pout.

"Things have kept me traveling night and day," went on Jerry; "this bazaar construction, for one thing. But it's going, rather, isn't it?" and he looked round him at booths and stalls taking shape so swiftly amid the rip of saws, the beat of hammers, and a vast confusion of tongues and movement of human bodies as material for construction and decorations and stocks of goods on sale or exhibition were being hurried this way and that under the impelling hands of all sorts of labor, male and female, paid and unpaid, professional and nonprofessional.

"Beautifully!" approved Ruth with emphasis and carried on with a most engaging look of sympathy. "I won't complain," she said contritely. "You've done what I asked. But tell me about Sylvy."

Jerry's countenance fell. Sylvy was the reason why he hadkept away from Ruth these three days when so much was happening. No word had come from Kelly, and he did not want to tell her that he had lost the little Jewish girl nor to depress her with the story of Maldono's machinations, which already had beggared Aurentsky and might be expected to do worse if they were not checked. He gulped and stammered.

"The fact is, Ruth, we can't find Sylvy."

"Can't find her?" Ruth's face went white with a woman's intuition of the true ground for alarm.

Briefly Jerry related the story of Maldono's plot against Aurentsky and its apparent complete success.

"Jerry, that man must be punished!" Ruth declared, her eyes flashing determination. "He must be put under arrest immediately."

"He will be—just as soon as I can locate Aurentsky to swear to a complaint. And, by the way, we have a new member of our party—our Save-Philadelphia party," and he told her of Victor Rollinson.

"Isn't that just splendid!" declared Ruth, eyes aglow; "but it's rather absurd, don't you think, this not finding the Aurentskys? A whole family like that could hardly be blotted out. Let me"—and her eyes lighted with sublime faith in one whose power had never disappointed her—"Let me tell father. He'll find them for us in no time. It's almost like magic or—E. Phillips Oppenheim—the way father can reach out and pick a person out of the unknown. Why, we found you in twenty—"

The eager young woman, plunging on with encomiums of her father, interrupted herself at discovering that Jerry's expression had grown apathetic and almost unwilling.

"Ruth," he said, shaking his head solemnly, "I don't want you to mention Sylvy to your father."

"But why not?" The girl's face looked amazement.

"Trust my judgment in this one instance, that's all," urged Jerry quietly.

"There you go—perfectly manlike—'trust my judgment!'" reproached Ruth, rolling up "This, of ours, is a man's and woman's party," she declared. "It is based on the assumption of equal capabilities in the sexes. You and Victor Rollinson may outvote me, but you simply mustn't, mustn't resort to that ancient masculine 'trust-my-judgment' thing. That isn't to be done any more, you know. At least between us."

The picture Ruth made as, with a mixture of frowns and smiles, she urged her point was altogether charming. Jerry laughed admiringly and apologetically.

"You are right," he confessed, "and I was absurdly, ridiculously, masculinely wrong. I should have explained and hereby I do. The Aurentskys are timid; they will be more fearful than ever now. They must not be frightened. If anything is to be done for them, it must be done by us—you and I and Victor—with methods that we will devise. For your father, in his vigorous way and with the instruments he would employ, to go after them would be, in all likelihood, to put the Aurentskys in a state of mind where we could never help them."

"That is perfectly reasonable, and I can understand it and assent to it. Always be reasonable—always let me understand things, won't you, Jerry?" urged Ruth with a sudden impulsiveness.

"Why, surely," agreed Jerry. "We shall undoubtedly locate the Aurentskys soon, and I'll take you into counsel immediately. I shall have to go now," he concluded, after a hasty glance at his watch. "I have an appointment with your father."

"With father—what about?" Ruth was again all delighted interest.

"Can't imagine. His secretary said he wanted to see me at four-thirty."

"Oh, it must be to rally you about the newspaper story, and to congratulate you on it," declared Ruth with enthusiasm. "It would be jolly to listen behind the door."

"I wonder if it would," reflected Jerry, going down in the elevator.

By good fortune his runabout worked his way through the downtown traffic with some minutes to spare. Having Sylvy on his mind, he resolved to use these in an effort to stir up Michael Kelly on the chance that he might reach him by telephone at the Democratic Club. Fortunately the district leader was there and presently his voice was heard on the wire.

"Why—er—can't just exactly locate that old bird yet," hemmed Kelly. "Fact is, not seeing him round, I sort of forgot it. Why, Kelly," reproved Jerry, "I thought you understood I was very much interested."

"Well, I did, Mr. Archer, but the fact is, all this newspaper talk about you knocking Jim Rand kind of backs me off the boards. When it comes to fighting the organization, you know, why that's another thing."

"Oh, I see," said Jerry, a bit curtly, "you do not wish to assist me?"

"Sure is, Mr. Archer I do——about the Aurentskys especially so's to get a crack at Maldono, but with the rumpus you're raisin' I got to mussyfoot, or I'm yanked up to headquarters for aid and comfort to the enemy—I know," said enemy. Understand?"

The personal friendliness of Kelly was unmistakable, and Jerry, who had depended a good deal on the division leader, chuckled re-

"Then I'm to expect then, Kelly?" he

"Leave it to me, mother," suggested Kelly. "If you don't get some-thing in a letter with-

THE PEOPLE IN THE STORY

JERRY ARCHER, who, with his elder brother, Paul, is actively continuing the business of the Archer Tool Works, is clubbed into unconsciousness and arrested by Patrolman Stronsburger when the young man, outraged at the policeman's brutal treatment of Morris Rosenzweig, comes to that prisoner's assistance. Rosenzweig has been taken into custody as the final step in the petty persecution arising from sectional differences in the "Bloody Fifth" Ward. Jerry is released from jail, his case dropped and Stronsburger "broke"—that is, requested to resign before being "fired"—as the result of the intervention of a family friend.

WILLARD H. BUCKINGHAM, financial genius and the most powerful man in Philadelphia. At his bed political bosses, as well as their underlings, move, and move fast. When Buckingham's daughter, **RUTH BUCKINGHAM**, tells her father that Jerry is missing, the great man calls **EDMUNDS**, an "unofficial official," on the long-distance telephone at Atlantic City. Jerry's release is due to the effective work of Edmunds, Buckingham's "press button." From

MICHAEL KELLY, a Corey division leader, Jerry, while resting in the Lafayette Club before returning home, gets his first lesson in practical politics. He learns that the "Organization's" primary object is "dealin' out jobs" and that just so long as it performs its part of the pact with his business and turns over Republican majorities in all legislative and national elections it will not be interfered with locally.

SYLVY AURENTSKY, a beautiful young Jewish girl, stops Jerry on the street as he is about to leave the club for his home and thanks him for his manly defense of the persecuted Rosenzweig. When she leaves him Jerry notices a sinister figure following the girl. Kelly informs him that the person is

JOE MALDONO, a thug, pickpocket and gunman, under political protection. When Sylvy refuses to go with him to a dance, the gangster revenges himself upon the girl's father by having him arrested on a trumped up charge. Aurentsky is compelled to sell his business and to pauperize himself in order to placate Maldono and to bribe the Magistrate to dismiss the case for lack of evidence. A shyster lawyer, Isaacs, also gets a share of the "profits." When Jerry goes to the police station to be arraigned, he learns that the charge against him has been dismissed. In conversation with the Magistrate, he finds that the "Judge" was a former desk hand who was rewarded with the important $3000 a year job by Jimmy Carey for turning over a certain number of votes regularly. Jerry solicits Kelly's aid in finding Sylvy and then turns to his friend

VICTOR ROLLINSON, a young lawyer, for support. Victor joins the "Save Philadelphia" party, and promises to proceed against Maldono.

JIM RAND, a Councils lobbyist, has demanded $5000 from the Archer Tool Works to get a franchise for a spur track across Richard street through Councils. Jerry's father and brother are willing to pay the bribe, because their request has been ignored for weeks by the local legislative body. The young man, his sense of political justice aroused, refuses to bargain with Rand and finally wins his brother's support to fight Rand and the "Organization." Jerry's plan consists in erecting a mammoth sign over the factory stating that Government work is being held up, soldiers' and sailors' lives are imperiled because Jim Rand's bribe demand is beyond

MAX RISSMAN, a reporter, while on a visit to the Third and Dauphin streets station house, discovers the erasure on the "blotter" of the arrest of Jerry. He returns to the office with his story. Buckingham is surprised at Jerry's audacity and fearful of the political results of the sign and the exposé sends for the young man.

out any name signed to it that tells you what you want to know."

"That's a friendly intimation right enough," said Jerry. "Only let me add that I shall watch my mail with unusual anxiety for the next day or two."

"Gimme time! Gimme time!" urged Kelly, his voice getting far away as he prepared to disconnect.

At the exact hour of his appointment Jerry was waiting in one of Mr. Buckingham's tiny two-by-four glass walled reception rooms. A few moments later he was being ushered into the presence. The financier's glance was not the benign one with which he was accustomed to welcome his young friend.

"The old boy's peeved," was Jerry's irreverent reflection.

"How are your scars?" demanded Mr. Buckingham, rather gruffly.

"Almost healed," laughed Jerry. "I've forgotten 'em, in fact, or had till that absurd scream in the papers this afternoon. Have you seen it?"

"Seen it? I have been disgusted by it. And that isn't all. Look here! This is what they were intending to publish."

Mr. Buckingham, with a manner that was distinctly severe, reached into his drawer, produced the galley proofs and passed them over to Jerry, who unfolded them to his eye wonderingly, and read with wrath mounting.

"The hounds!" he exclaimed. "Dragging in Ruth's name and yours into a mess like that."

"It's your mess," said Mr. Buckingham accusingly. "They are merely connecting our names with yours because our lives are connected."

"But, Mr. Buckingham, they wouldn't dare—"

"They didn't dare," said the manufacturer grimly, "but I don't think we have you to thank for that."

"Certainly not to Mr. Buckingham. Of course, it's just the editor's second thought—just the natural sense of—"

"It was just the fear of the power I hold, Jerry—the financial power." And Buckingham's manner was no longer austere, but fatherly, which made what was said next all the more forcible. "The publication of that story would have humiliated me and Mrs. Buckingham beyond measure. I need hardly add that it would have made the continuance of friendship between you and Ruth impossible."

"Impossible!" gasped Jerry, incredulously.

"Exactly that," said Mr. Buckingham, with a certain air of the irrevocable, but also an air of regret, for it was very skillfully that his manner had been changed from one of autocratic reproof of that of an aggrieved friend. "Mrs. Buckingham was none too pleased with your encounter down there. Those things make talk and talk of a sort that in her circles is distinctly unpleasant. Now when you go on and make an attack on the reigning political power in that vulgar, spread-eagle fashion, you not only make a public character of yourself, but expose your friends also to the fire of unscrupulous enemies. The first weapon of those people is invariably slander and calumny. Why this very afternoon——" Mr Buckingham checked himself, gulped, changed his mind and went on with "Therefore, Jerry, I advise you to make peace with these people."

Jerry was astounded, but he controlled himself. Swiftly, but subtly, Buckingham had changed the front of conversational attack; Jerry must be subtle also.

"Mr Buckingham," he inquired, "would you make peace with a burglar you found looting your favorite bank, for fear that he would afterward slander you? Would you make peace with a slanderer?"

"When one is in the wrong, one has to get out any way one can," reflected the financier coolly taking the situation for granted.

"Mr. Buckingham, I am not wrong," said Jerry quietly, very quietly, but with a low vibrancy in his tones, the significance of which did not escape so keen a reader of character as the man to whom the remark had been addressed.

Mr. Buckingham was surprised and for the moment silent; he was taking time to reconstruct some of his strategy, since it had become so quickly obvious that Jerry was not going to be called off by a crook of the finger. There were even indications that if told flatly to desist he would refuse to obey; and open disobedience was something Mr Buckingham would not countenance. People might argue with him, but they must not disobey. Not wishing to force the young man into rebellion, Mr. Buckingham had recourse to diplomacy.

"Let me suggest a way out, Jerry," he said almost soothingly. "You are out of place in a fight like this. All your friends see that. Your business is manufacturing. In that everybody concedes you a wonderful future. Now you let an older and a more experienced man intervene at this point. **You take the sign down and I will see that you get your franchise immediately.**"

Jerry could not but be softened by the mellowness in Mr. Buckingham's manner; but neither could he yield his point.

"Mr. Buckingham," he said, "if you get us a franchise you will get it by dealing with that machine with which, as a matter of principle I have refused to deal. Isn't that so?"

"I will get it without quarreling, Jerry," replied Mr. Buckingham significantly.

"I don't want to offend you, Mr. Buckingham, nor to appear either unappreciative or disrespectful, but this attitude of yours, coupled with your immense power, I think, makes you really a dangerous element in the political situation in Philadelphia," argued Jerry. "You don't want to quarrel. You are a peace-loving man, and Philadelphia prides itself on being a peace-loving city, though what it often means by peace, I think, is a mere cud-chewing placidity in which it is undisturbed by any sort of too violent appeal to its conscience.

"The forces of evil capitalize that love of quiet, that popular resentment of anything which makes loud or unseemly noises in order to attract attention. They trade upon it. Because of your love of peace, Mr. Buckingham, is it not true that you, a thoroughly honorable man, are more or less in peaceful alliance with a political organization because it gives you what you demanded without a quarrel, though it practices piracy on citizens generally?"

Jerry smiled—gravely, but nevertheless he smiled—as if to apply a local anesthetic to the wound he may have made; but Mr Buckingham chose also to smile, a superior patient sort of a smile.

"Jerry," he responded, drawing a long breath, and then speaking in placid tones of large condescension: "I have lived a good while. I have seen a good many reformers great and small come and go. I have dealt with many administrations in my effort to do the best possible for the fiduciary interests which I represent. Things in the city gradually get better; but that betterment is not achieved by agitators. It is not accomplished through the newspapers. It is not won by noise and bombast and vulgar calling of names. It is made possible only by the slow and steady elevation of average standards of honesty in business and in politics."

"But how do those standards get advanced, if somebody doesn't pick them up and plant them higher. How do they do that without a fight?" argued Jerry again. "No, Mr. Buckingham, doubtless it seems presumptuous to you, presumptuous that a man so young as I, and with experience so limited, should differ with you, but I do. I must. You are wrong. Clearly wrong. **The beast has never bitten you. It has purred and done your bidding. It has bitten me. It is biting our business now, and we are not going to pay tribute; we are going to fight. The sign will not come down."**

(CONTINUED TOMORROW)

THE DAILY NOVELETTE

A WAR GARDEN

By CONSTANCE R. FINK

ROSE was a milliner, Hettie was a dressmaker and Edith was a stenographer in a big office downtown. They kept house together in a tiny apartment over Rose's "hat shop," and here it was that they were resting and "talking things over" one fine spring Sunday afternoon.

"I had a letter from Uncle Abner yesterday," announced Hettie from her comfortable position on the couch. "He never forgets to remember me on my birthday," and she held up a check.

"Twenty-five dollars," she announced gaily. "Think of it—a fortune. Just figure up how many French seams or pin-tucks I'd have to make to earn that much. Dear old Uncle Abner! Listen to what he says," and she read aloud from the letter:

"I am inclosing a little birthday remembrance from Aunt Sara and myself with our best wishes, and we hope that you girls will come up here as you did last summer and spend your vacation with us on the old farm. I am afraid that things may not be quite as pleasant as last year because there has been such a scarcity of farm labor that I shall have to let the whole west pasture go unplanted unless I can get some help very soon. Aunt Sara and I are not as young as we used to be, and I don't feel able to undertake the work alone. However, Aunt Sara is still just as good a cook as ever, and I know you will all enjoy your stay up here. So write soon and let us know just when you will come.

"Affectionately yours,

"UNCLE ABNER."

"When I hear a letter like that," said Edith, "I almost wish I lived out of town, somewhere, and could be a farmer."

Farmerettes

"Not a farmer—a farmerette," corrected Hettie lazily from her corner of the couch.

Edith laughed. "Well, farmerette then—I can just see a picture in my mind's eye of the three of us in nice, practical bloomer-alls—which Hettie would make for us——

"Yes, and they'd be brown," announced Hettie, waking up to show some animation. "I hate those old blue things they sell in the stores."

"And Rose could make us some good-looking sunbonnets," went on Edith. "Indeed, I think we'd make very attractive-looking farmerettes."

"Well, it sounds very nice," said Rose, "and I'm sure nobody'd like to get out into the country more than I, but I'm afraid the idea isn't very practical. Not one of us knows a thing about farming."

"Well, we could learn," came the quick response from the couch, and Hettie sat right up straight in her excitement. "I've got a plan. I'll make the bloomer-alls and Rose'll make the sunbonnets and then——and she paused expressively——"and then we'll go up to Uncle Abner's and hire out as 'farmerettes' and help him plant the west pasture. It will be just the same as a war garden."

For two weeks all was excitement in the tiny apartment over the hat shop. Letters were written to Uncle Abner and Aunt Sara, bloomer-alls were industriously stitched and hemmed and sunbonnets were gathered and ruffled most becomingly, and then the hat shop was closed. Hettie's thimble was packed securely away and three happy, excited girls found themselves almost tumbling off the train and into Uncle Abner's car, in which he drove to the station to meet them.

"This is not play, you know," said the old gentleman, smiling as they drove along. "It means 'up with the birds and to bed with the chickens.'"

"Oh, yes, we know that," said Rose, "but that's better than sitting up half the night putting a 'georgette facing' on Mrs. Millionaire's hat. Anything's better than that," she finished vehemently.

"Well, Aunt Sara and I have decided that we would let the west pasture to you three girls," said Uncle Abner; "we'll wait for the rental money until the end of the season, and then you can pay us out of the profits of your farming. Aunt Sara will board you, and I guess she won't be too hard on you," and his eyes twinkled, "and we'll see what kind of farmers you'll make."

There followed two such happy, busy months that Edith declared that she was spoiled for "punching the typewriter keys forever." Brown as young Indians, the three girls kept faithfully to Uncle Abner's rule of "up with the birds and to bed with the chickens," and many a night they were glad enough to creep into Aunt Sara's soft white beds, for aching arms and backs and sunburned faces were the penalties they paid for days of planting and weeding and "potato-bugging" in the west pasture.

And then the Hawes boys came home—Malcolm and Ezra—bringing with them a college friend, Keith Hartwell. Newly graduated from a distant agricultural college and filled with enthusiasm, the three boys set to work to make the Hawes farm one of the show places of the country round about.

New Jobs

But their own work did not keep them so busy but that they could now and then ride over to lend a hand or give advice to the three young farmerettes in the west pasture.

"Aunt Sara thinks we ought to go down to the lake shore tonight to see the moon," said Hettie, one evening at supper, trying to appear quite unconcerned. "Malcolm asked me if he might come along, and I thought you wouldn't mind," turning to the other two girls.

"Why, Ezra spoke to me about it this morning," confessed Rose, rather shamefacedly, "and I promised to go with him, so you'll have to excuse me this time."

"And Keith and I planned over a week ago to go down to the lake the very first night that the moon was full," announced Edith with some embarrassment. Whereupon, catching the gleam in Uncle Abner's eye, the three burst out laughing, none the less heartily because the joke was on them.

"Off with you, off with you," cried Aunt Sara, shooing them out like chickens and the three girls sped down the path to the lake shore.

"Dear little farmerettes," said Aunt Sara softly, some hours later, as she and Uncle Abner sat on the porch, now bathed in the soft, shimmering, silvery moonlight. "It has been a happy time for them."

The three white-clad figures dainty and girlish, with no trace of either bloomer-all or sunbonnet, came slowly up the path, each with a tall, dark, masculine figure silhouetted by its side in the shadow of the moonlight.

"Farmerettes!" echoed Uncle Abner. "farmerettes—diddlesticks. Farmers' wives is much nearer the truth, I'm thinking," and he and Aunt Sara went indoors.

Tomorrow's Complete Novelette—"A FATEFUL FALL."

STEALTHY TERROR

By JOHN FERGUSON

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CHAPTER VIII (Continued)

SO WE settled ourselves down to talk of many things, passing the hours with phases and facts of the wild life of the forest and moor, subjects that have always a great fascination for me. It was quite impossible for them to rush us in any way. The windows were close-shuttered. No light could show outside. And our guns stood handy. For perhaps two hours they gave no sign of their presence. Indeed, the only sound one heard in the intermittent pauses of our talk was but the excessive hooting of the owls in the wood behind the house. I think we were both drowsing a little, tired with our vigil, and with most of our subjects worked dry, when we both started into acute attention. It was a curious little cry that seemed to come from the far end of the passage where Jock was on guard. We sat up staring at each other. I couldn't say I had heard anything and, except for the fact that the gamekeeper had started up, too, I might have thought it was nothing. The big dog still slumbered on. Forsyth held up his hand warningly.

"Wait!" he whispered. "If it's anything, Jock will speak louder next time."

I took a glance at my watch; it was half-past two. The sleepless hours of the night were over. Very soon it would be dawn. We waited listening; but there came no further warning from the dog. I knew that a strenuous day lay before me, and as Forsyth had been urging me to go and have a sleep, saying that the Aberdeen was sure to give us plenty of time, even supposing he too were to fall asleep in his chair, I went upstairs to lie down. It was beginning to strike me as very extraordinary that no attempt had been yet made to force an entrance. From the window I could just discern the dark ghostly outlines of the trees against the sky; the sky was of the dull gray texture which it takes on when the dawn is imminent. But down below, the deep shadows cast by the trees were numerous enough to have hidden an army. I was sorely tempted to open and look out; it would have relieved me from that feeling of being cooped up; but it would have been very dangerous, I knew, and would expose myself to the risk of being shot. Then I remembered that there was a skylight in the bath-room on the slope of the roof which could be lifted up noiselessly, even if it chanced for once to be shut. So, carefully, to avoid disturbing my mother, whose room I had to pass, I made my way along to the bathroom. I could, of course, use no light, which would have shown, but I needed none.

This part of the house had been a modern addition to the original building, and its roof was at a considerably lower level than that of the first part.

Still, I knew that without a ladder it was equally impossible to scale, and there was no ladder available. Yet the first thing I saw when I entered was a pair of legs dangling in the air from the skylight.

Had my eyes not grown accustomed to the dark I should not have seen it at all. My impulse was to shout a warning to Forsyth below, but somehow I did not. The man, whose body entirely filled the narrow aperture, was carefully feeling with his feet for something to support his descent. They were spidery legs, and his feet were shoeless. Seeing them I thought I might await developments, for I was most unwilling to set up any alarm that would rouse the house. Now I thought I recognized the legs as belonging to my Russian Pole of yesterday, the peddler with the yellow box, and he, if you remember, was a little man. I thought I could manage him with the help of the big bath towel that was hung on the rack to dry. I got this novel weapon ready. Suddenly the legs went together, slightly bent for a moment, and the fellow landed noiselessly on the floor. He wasn't, however, well there before my wet towel was over his head and we both full length on the ground.

He was so surprised at first that he never uttered a cry or attempted any resistance. When he did, the cry was strangled and feeble, and his struggles in my arms were useless. He was safely trussed up in less time than it takes me to write this account of it. I sat on him while I considered what next to do. It seemed to me that their plan of operations had been to send the small man inside to open a door or a window through which the whole gang might rush us. That was perhaps why they had waited for a little light. But how had he reached the skylight? That puzzled me; I stood up on a chair and peered cautiously through. Then I saw. Quite close to the window rose the dark column of the kitchen chimney. There was something round it. In a minute I saw it was a rope, and I could see against the sky that the rope, stretched taut, went at a sharp slope up among the boughs of a big chestnut tree at the edge of the wood. The distance was no more than twenty feet, and clearly they had swung the rope first round the chimney, made it fast below, and then carried the free end high up the chestnut tree.

The Russian Pole, who you may remember was not without some experience of seafaring life, had quietly let himself slip from the tree on to the roof. Very likely it was the first rattle of the rope on the slates that had disturbed the Aberdeen. After that they made no noise. It was clever—I had to admit that. It was perhaps the only possible way. Into that stoutly shuttered house, with well-armed and determined men to defend it, they could not break a way. They had to find a method by which they could outwit both dogs and men. Well, they would have to lose more time.

Let them find out that their scheme had miscarried by waiting! They would be finely puzzled at the absence of any sign of either failure or success.

I wanted to have a look at the fellow, but of course dared not strike a match. They would be watching eagerly enough. Let them. The dark house had swallowed up the messenger, and would be as silent as before. Anyhow, I judged we might count on half an hour, so I picked up the man, got him under my arm, and carefully made my way downstairs and along to the dining room. Forsyth had his gun up as I entered the open door, but recognizing me he lowered it, staring. The fuzzier, however, didn't like what I carried, and came round sniffing, with low growls.

I explained hurriedly, while Forsyth passed his hands through the man's pockets. He extracted, first, a revolver from the breast pocket, and then from the belt a long sheath-knife. I took possession of both. The revolver was a Browning, and might be useful to one later.

"Now let's have a look at him," I said as I unwound the cord of my dressing gown which fastened the towel round his head and body.

"The peddler with the yellow box!" cried Forsyth.

"Joseph Dewinski!" I cried, astonished.

And so, indeed, it was. He stood there just gibbering with rage, in impotent fury, the superior, calm, masterful disdain clean knocked out of him for once. It was pleasant to me to look on him then and to remember the airy insolence, the quite gratuitous insolence, of his parting salute to me on the night when I got possession of the Little Eitel paper. But if you ask how it came to pass that I had not recognized him in the peddler with the yellow tin box, I cannot answer. I can only say that the thing was so. Perhaps it was simply because Dewinski did not will me to recognize him then. Perhaps I was on the point of it when the shots were fired. I do not know. Yet the strange fact remains that Forsyth, looking on the man in his own character of Joseph Dewinski—if this really was the man himself, and not one of his many parts—saw in him the peddler with the yellow box, while I, seeing him as a peddler, saw not the Joseph Dewinski. As I say, I merely state the fact, without pretending to have any explanation.

He was an evil man, Joseph Dewinski; there were elements in him that might have belonged to the Enemy of Mankind himself. God forbid that I should speak harshly or uncharitably of a man who had to pay such a terrible price for his crimes; but, if the truth is spoken, he was a man who loved evil with a disinterested devotion, and followed it as an ideal. Frail in health as I judged him to be, fragile in body as I knew he was, behind the outer physical impotence were mental powers not surpassed by more than three, or possibly only two, of any of the men of intellect I have known.

I am not sure, even now, that he was of Hebrew blood; but it would be charitable to think he was, and that the age-long oppression of that race was responsible both for the physical incapacity and the perversion of his mental gifts.

"You ken the fellow then?" said Forsyth.

"I recognize him," I answered.

Dewinski almost smiled on me. He was certainly not without vanity, and he took, and appreciated, the distinction that was lost on the gamekeeper. He was recovering the habitual sangfroid which I had so severely damaged by my rough handling.

"Could I have a drink?" he asked. "And may I sit down?"

Motioning him to a chair, I poured out a little peg of whisky and passed the cigarettes.

"That which made me a libre penseur," he remarked, making a wry face at the drink, "was the thought that if Intelligence lay behind Creation, the merely physical would never have been given any kind of superiority over the intellectual."

Forsyth at this resumed his chair.

"Meaning," I said, "that I, the fool, got the better of you, the wise man."

"You put it crudely, Abercromby, but—well, you take my point." He shrugged.

I was nettled. A man may be an athlete without being imbecile; and physical degeneracy is no guarantee of mental genius. Perhaps I might with fairness have pointed out to him that I had had to match his gang with something more than thews or muscles; but I preferred he should continue to think of me as a simple fellow, incapable of penetrating into the Little Eitel's secret. It was not impossible that he was provoking me into such a proof of my cleverness as would let him know to what use I had put the paper.

"Perhaps," I said, taking his first point, "it would be for the good of your soul, and the health of the society in which you mix, if you could see that victory sometimes depends on qualities that are neither intellectual nor physical, but moral."

This speech affected his face in much the same manner as his first sup of whisky had done.

"Spoken like a true Scotsman," he cried, and I marveled at the man's varied knowledge of racial idiosyncrasies. He crossed one leg over the other and flicked the ash of his cigarette on to the carpet. "Now," he continued, "won't you sit down and let us consider that?" He smiled in his feline way, and, as usual, there was a sneer.

To this invitation to the use of my own chairs I gave a curt nod of refusal.

"Sorry," I said. "You consider it yourself, while I go and have a look at your friends outside."

"They must be considering what next to do since you are absent."

Dewinski did not like that. The pitfall of all high intellect is that it is apt to imagine that an inferior quality of intellect is nonexistent.

(CONTINUED TOMORROW)

'DREAMLAND ADVENTURES"

By DADDY

THE WAR OF THE FROGS

A complete new adventure each week, beginning Monday and ending Saturday.

CHAPTER II

General Hopper Is Captured

(General Hopper and his Frog army, having declared war on the Snakes, ask the help of Peggy, who in a previous adventure has been crowned Princess of Birdland. Peggy, made tiny through a blade of grass from a fairy ring, goes to war mounted on the back of Mr. Swallow, who acts as her flying horse.)

PEGGY flew back to Frog Island and found General Hopper on a high rock where he could view his entire forces.

"With this wonderful army I can conquer the earth," he boasted loudly as Peggy alighted beside him.

"It is fine," agreed Peggy, "but have you seen the Snake army?"

"No, but I'm sure it can't compare with mine. Just wait and see how they run when we come hopping and croaking at them."

"If they run I'm afraid they'll run toward you. What will you do then?" Peggy asked.

"Why, we'll pound them and pound them!" croaked General Hopper confidently. "And when they see how strong we are they'll surely streak it."

"You have to pound a snake awful hard to kill it," declared Peggy, remembering her own experience in fighting the Rattlesnake when she saved the Giant of the Woods. "I don't think you Frogs will be able to pound hard enough."

"We'll not have to pound very hard," replied the general. "They'll go scooting as soon as they see our numbers."

"Numbers don't count unless they have a punch in them. That's what my father says of the Russians. You haven't any weapons that will really hurt the Snakes, while they have strong bodies, deadly fangs and killing poisons. They'll crush you and eat you."

"Supposing they do kill a lot of us," argued General Hopper; "while they are eating those that fall we will have them at our mercy."

"Would you like to be one of those killed?"

"Noo!" replied the general doubtfully. "And I don't propose to be. I'll be up in the air on the back of my flying horse."

"You can't possibly win by force. You'll have to use strategy," insisted Peggy.

"What's that?" asked the general.

"Fooling 'em," replied Peggy.

"I'd rather fight 'em," insisted General Hopper. "There's more glory in winning that way.

Peggy saw that there was no use arguing with him. He was so puffed up over the size of his army that he wouldn't listen to common sense.

"What is your plan of attack?" she asked. The general hesitated.

And away Mr. Swallow flew for the Giant's castle

"Oh, I haven't any regular plan," he answered at last. "We'll just pitch into 'em and lick 'em."

Peggy was getting more and more disgusted over his stupidity. She wondered how he had been made leader of the Frogs. She decided it must have been because he looked like an officer. It was foolish of the Frogs to elect him, but, foolish or not, she had to do something to save them, for she felt that when they marched against the Snakes they would be marching to sure destruction.

"We must have a plan," she declared, "and try to make our losses as small as possible."

She guided Mr. Swallow back to the edge of the ravine, Rattler Glen, as Mr. Swallow called it. General Hopper reluctantly followed. He would much rather have stayed and posed before his army, but Blue Jay, acting as his flying horse, carried him off before he knew what was going on.

"If we could roll stones down on the Snakes we might be able to kill a lot," figured Peggy, looking up at the steep, rocky walls of the glen.

"We don't have to do that," insisted General Hopper. "We'll just come swimming across in vast numbers, climb up here by the easy slopes rising from Marshland, shout our battlecry, 'Cro-a-k 'em. Cro-a-k 'em! Cro-a-k 'em!' and those Snakes will just streak it. Won't it be fun?"

Many Birds were now coming to greet Peggy. They included Bob Olink, Reddy Woodpecker, Judge Owl, Homer and Carrie Pigeon, Blue Heron, King Fisher and a lot of others. Judge Owl frowned on General Hopper and hooted:

You can hop, hop, hop,
But your top, top, top
Has an wit, wit, wit,
Not a bit, bit, bit.

Bob Olink explained the matter to Peggy: "The Frogs have gone to war in a good cause—the freedom of Marshland," he said. "And we Birds want them to win, for the Snakes are our enemies, too. But the Frogs don't know how to fight. That's why we sent for you."

"I can fight!" blustered General Hopper. "Show me any Snake I can't whip." With that he leaped from the back of Blue Jay and strutted up and down, swelling out his chest.

Peggy saw a stir in the grass behind General Hopper. As he uttered his boast a head arose—the glistening head of a Blacksnake. The Birds scattered instantly.

General Hopper, warned by the flight of the Birds, glanced around and saw the enemy. His jaw dropped, his boastfulness vanished, his legs shook. He tried to leap, but caught his foot in the grass and fell. In a second the Blacksnake had pounced upon him and in another instant General Hopper was disappearing down the Snake's throat.

"Quick! Rescue him!" cried Peggy. But the Birds only fluttered farther away. "Isn't there any one of you brave enough to save him?"

At that King Fisher darted down like a flash. He seized the Blacksnake by the tail and struggled upward again. The astonished Blacksnake opened wide his mouth and General Hopper fell out. The Blacksnake writhed up toward King Fisher, but the bird, carrying him over the edge of the cliff, dropped him. The Snake fell squirming to the rocks far below.

General Hopper didn't wait to see this. The instant he found himself free he took a mighty leap from the edge of the cliff and dived well out into the river. Then he swam frantically under water for Frog Island.

"Hurrah!" cried Peggy, as she saw the Blacksnake drop over the cliff. "Now I know how we'll conquer the Snake army, but we'll need the Giant of the Woods to help us."

And away Mr. Swallow flew for the Giant's castle.

(In the next chapter Peggy visits the Giant and meets Billy Belgium for the first time.)

"CAP" STUBBS—Sammy's Not a Bit Obliging

By EDWINA