

McCLURE'S

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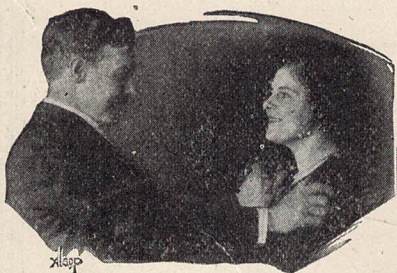
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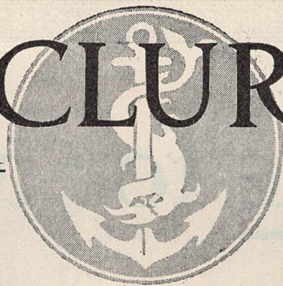
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The R. L. Watkins Co., Cleveland, Ohio

The Wanderer of the Wasteland

*In Which a Young Man
Discovers Life*

by
Zane Grey

Illustrations by W. Herbert Dunton

GUERD and Adam Larey were brothers in name only. Guerd, the elder, was handsome, selfish, domineering, dissolute, sinister; Adam, strong, pure-minded, every inch a man. A mother's love held in check the fires of jealousy and hatred until she died. The brothers then started West in search of fortune but the smouldering quarrel of years, without the mother's restraining influence, inevitably burst into flame. Ostensibly it was over a girl. The brothers separated, Adam determined to make his way alone. And he was happy, working hard, in love, (or was it infatuation?) when Guerd, now a gambler, and his companions, among them Collishaw, a sheriff of doubtful reputation, crossed his path. Inevitably the feud was renewed; again the ostensible cause was a woman, a black-eyed, passionate Mexican girl whose eyes were all for Adam, until Guerd, with his way with women, came and won her fickle fancy. In the fight that followed a revolver barked, Guerd fell away from Adam; a dark crimson spot stained his white shirt.

"Dead, by God, you'll hang for this!" was the threat of Collishaw, the sheriff.

But Adam, alive to his danger, hurled his revolver in Collishaw's face and escaped in the confusion. There followed days of flight, a narrow escape from his pursuers and then — the desert. Among the sand dunes, all but exhausted physically, his mentality unhinged from hunger and thirst, Adam dragged his weary way. Thoughts about water possessed his mind; he saw beautiful lakes which he could never find, he heard sounds of falling rain, of gurgling brooks.

"God has — forsaken me!" he cried in despair.

Lastly, as sight failed him and these haunting lies of moving water deadened in his ears, he began to wander in a circle.

CONSCIOUSNESS returned to Adam. He was lying under an iron-wood tree, over branches of which a canvas had been stretched, evidently to shade him from the sun. The day appeared to be far spent.

His head seemed to have been relieved of a hot metal band; his tongue was no longer bursting in his mouth; the boil of his blood had subsided.

Then he heard the rough voice of a man talking to animals, apparently burros. Adam endeavored to rise upon his elbow. Movement of body was difficult and somewhat painful; however, he managed to sit up and look around. Some one had made camp under this iron-wood tree. Hide-covered boxes and pack-saddles, with duffel and utensils of a prospector, were littered about, and conspicuous among the articles near him were

three large canvas-covered canteens, still wet. Upon the smouldering embers of a camp-fire steamed a black iron pot. A little beyond the fire stood a very short, broad man, back turned; and he was evidently feeding choice morsels of some kind to five eager and jealous burros.

"Spoiled — every darn one of you!" he was saying, and the kindness of his voice belied its roughness. "Why, I used to have burros that could lick labels off tin cans an' call it a square meal."



With the buzz of a huge bee caught in a trap, the snake lunged forward. Adam was inflamed. The savage urge in him then was to fall upon his prey and choke and tear and kill

Then he turned and espied Adam watching him.

"Hullo — you've come to!" he said, with interest.

Adam's gaze encountered an extraordinary looking man. He could not have been taller than five and a half feet, and the enormous breadth of him made him appear as wide as he was long. He was not fat. His immense bulk was sheer brawn, betokening remarkable strength. His dusty ragged clothes were patched like a crazy-quilt. He had an immense head, a shock of shaggy hair, beginning to show streaks of gray, and a broad face tanned dark as an Indian's, the lower half of which was covered with a scant grizzled beard. His eyes, big, dark, rolling, resembled those of an ox.

Adam's voice was a husky whisper: "Where am I — Who are you?"

"Young man, my name's Dismukes," came the reply, "an' you're ninety miles from anywhere — an' alive, which's more than I'd bet on yesterday."

The words brought Adam a shock of memory. Out there the desert smoked, sweltering in the spent heat of the setting sun. Slowly Adam lay back upon the blanket and bundle that had been placed under him for a bed. The man sat down on one of the hide-covered boxes, fastening his great eyes upon Adam.

"Am I — all right?" whispered Adam.

"Yes, but it was a close shave," replied the other.

"You said — something about yesterday. Tell me."

Dismukes fumbled in his patched vest, and fetching forth a stumpy pipe he proceeded to fill it.

"It was day before yesterday I run across you," began Dismukes, after a comfortable pull at his pipe. "My burro Jinny has the best eyes of the pack outfit. When I seen her ears go up I got to lookin' hard an' presently spied you staggerin' in a circle. I'd seen men do that before. Sometimes you'd run an' again you'd wag along an' then you'd fall an' crawl. I caught you an' had to tie you with my rope. You were out of your head. I thought you were done for. You couldn't make a sound, but all the same I knew you were ravin' for water. I fed you water a spoonful at a time, an' every little while I emptied a canteen over you. Was up all night with you that night. You recovered awful slow. I got you to swallow some soft grub, an' I guess you'll soon be pretty good. You'll be weak, though. You're awful thin. I'm curious about how much you weighed. You look as if you might have been a husky lad."

"I was," whispered Adam. "Hundred and eighty-five — or ninety."

"So I thought. You'll not go over one hundred an' twenty now. You've lost about seventy pounds."

"Seventy — pounds!" exclaimed Adam, incredulously. But when he glanced at his shrunken hands he believed the incomprehensible fact. "I must be skin — and bones."

"Mostly bones. But they're long heavy bones an' if you ever get any flesh on them you'll be a darned big man. I'm glad they're not goin' to bleach white on the desert, where I've seen so many these last ten years."

"You saved my life?" suddenly queried Adam.

"Boy, there's no doubt of that," returned the other. "Another hour would have finished you."

"I — I thank you. . . But — so help me God — I wish you hadn't," whispered Adam, poignantly.

Dismukes spent a strange gaze upon Adam.

"What's your name?" he asked.

Adam halted over the conviction that he could never reveal his identity; and there leaped to his lips the name that Regan had given him.

"Wansfell," he replied.

Dismukes averted his gaze. Manifestly he divined that Adam had lied. "Well, it's no matter what a man calls himself in this country," he said. "Only everybody an' everythin' has to have a name."

"You're a prospector?"

"YES. But I'm more a miner. I hunt for gold. I don't waste time tryin' to sell claims. Years ago I set out to find a fortune in gold. My limit was five hundred thousand dollars. I've already got a third of it — in banks an' hid away safe."

"When you get it — your fortune — what then?" inquired Adam, with thrilling curiosity.

"I'll enjoy life when I get it. I have no ties — no people. Then I'll see the world," replied the prospector, in deep and sonorous voice.

A wonderful passion radiated from him. Adam saw a quiver run over the huge frame, and felt the man's strangeness, his intelligence, and the inflexible will and fiery spirit. How strange men were!

At this juncture the prospector was compelled to drive the burros out of camp. They had come right up to poke noses in boxes and bags. Dismukes made a ferocious show of anger, roaring at them, and throwing rocks, but it was manifest that he threw to miss and that the burros knew he would not hurt them. They

trotted off a few paces, wheeled to face camp, and stood there stock-still, with long ears erect and forward, watching for another chance to make a raid. After this incident Dismukes attended to his cooking over the fire; and presently brought a bowl of steaming food to Adam.

"Eat this slow — with a spoon," he said, gruffly. "Never forget that a man starved for grub or water can kill himself quick."

Adam was not familiar with the kind of gruel given him, but the taste of it suddenly made him ravenous, so that he was hard put to it to comply with the prospector's advice.

During Adam's long-drawn-out meal the sun set and the mantle of heat seemed to move away for the coming of shadows. Adam found that his weakness was greater than he had supposed, rendering the effort of

sitting up one he was glad to end. He lay back on the blankets, wanting to think over his situation rather than fall asleep, but he found himself very drowsy, and his mind vaguely wandered until it was a blank. Upon awakening he saw the first gray of dawn arch the sky. He felt better, almost like his old self, except for that queer sensation of thinness and lightness. Dismukes was already astir. Adam got up and stretched his limbs, pleased to find that he appeared to be all right again, except for a little dizziness.

Dismukes evinced gladness at the fact of Adam's improvement. "Good!" he exclaimed. "You'd be strong enough to ride a burro to-day. But it's goin' to be hot, like yesterday. We'd better not risk travelin'."

This remark of Dismukes about the riding of a burro disturbed Adam. The kindly prospector meant to take him on to his destination. Impossible! Adam had fled

to the desert to hide, and the desert must hide him, alive or dead. The old thick clamoring emotions knocked at his heart.

"Wansfell, you'll not be goin' to Yuma with me tomorrow," asserted Dismukes, quietly.

The words startled Adam. He dropped his head. "No — no! Thank you — I won't — I can't go," he replied, trembling. The sound of his voice agitated him further.

"Boy, tell me or not, just as you please. But I'm a man you can trust."

The kindness and a nameless power invested in this speech broke down what little restraint remained with Adam.

"I — I can't go. . . I'm an outcast. . . I must hide — hide in the — desert," burst out Adam, covering his face with his hands.

"Was that why you came to the desert?"

"Yes — yes."

"But boy, you came without a canteen or grub or burro or gun — or anythin'. In all my years on the desert I never saw the like of that before. An' only a miracle saved your life. That miracle was Jinny's eyes. She saw you — miles off. An' such luck won't be yours twice. Only death faces you! . . . How did it happen that I found you here alone — without anythin'?"

"No time — I — I had to run!" panted Adam.

"What'd you do? — Don't be afraid to tell me. The desert is a place for secrets. You're not vicious. You're no — but never mind — tell me without wastin' more words. Maybe I can help you."

"No one can — help me," cried Adam.

"That's not so," quickly spoke up Dismukes, his voice deep and rolling. "Some one can help you — an' maybe it's me."

Here Adam completely broke down. "I — I did — something — awful!"

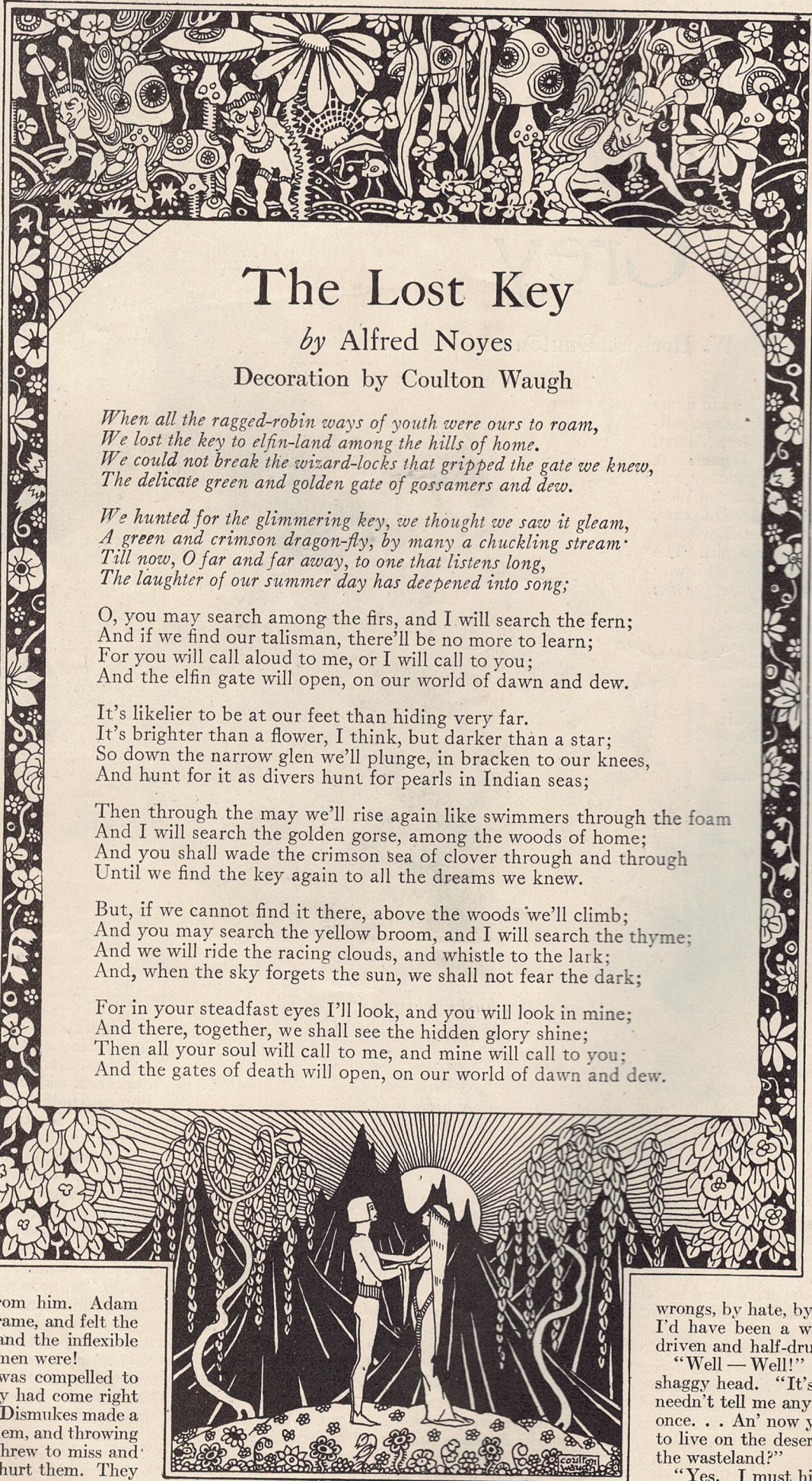
"No crime, boy — say it was no crime," earnestly returned the prospector.

"O my God! Yes — yes! It was — a crime!" sobbed Adam, shuddering. "But man — I swear — horrible as it was — I'm innocent! I swear that. Believe me. . . I was driven — driven by

wrongs, by hate, by taunts. If I'd stood them longer I'd have been a white-livered coward. But I was driven and half-drunk."

"Well — Well!" ejaculated Dismukes, shaking his shaggy head. "It's bad. But I believe you an' you needn't tell me any more. Life is hell! I was young once. . . An' now you've got to hide away from men to live on the desert — to be one of us wanderers of the wasteland?"

"Yes. I must hide. And I want — I need to live



The Lost Key

by Alfred Noyes

Decoration by Coulton Waugh

*When all the ragged-robin ways of youth were ours to roam,
We lost the key to elfin-land among the hills of home.
We could not break the wizard-locks that gripped the gate we knew,
The delicate green and golden gate of gossamers and dew.*

*We hunted for the glimmering key, we thought we saw it gleam,
A green and crimson dragon-fly, by many a chuckling stream.
Till now, O far and far away, to one that listens long,
The laughter of our summer day has deepened into song:*

O, you may search among the firs, and I will search the fern;
And if we find our talisman, there'll be no more to learn;
For you will call aloud to me, or I will call to you;
And the elfin gate will open, on our world of dawn and dew.

It's likelier to be at our feet than hiding very far.
It's brighter than a flower, I think, but darker than a star;
So down the narrow glen we'll plunge, in bracken to our knees,
And hunt for it as divers hunt for pearls in Indian seas;

Then through the may we'll rise again like swimmers through the foam
And I will search the golden gorse, among the woods of home;
And you shall wade the crimson sea of clover through and through
Until we find the key again to all the dreams we knew.

But, if we cannot find it there, above the woods we'll climb;
And you may search the yellow broom, and I will search the thyme;
And we will ride the racing clouds, and whistle to the lark;
And, when the sky forgets the sun, we shall not fear the dark;

For in your steadfast eyes I'll look, and you will look in mine;
And there, together, we shall see the hidden glory shine;
Then all your soul will call to me, and mine will call to you;
And the gates of death will open, on our world of dawn and dew.

— to suffer — to atone!" sobbed Adam.

"Boy, do you believe in God?" asked the prospector.

"I don't know. I think so," replied Adam, lifting his head, and striving for composure. "My mother was religious. But my father was not. And he dominated our family."

"Well — well, if you believed in God your case would not be hopeless. But some men — a few out of the many wanderers — find God out here in these wilds. Maybe you will. . . Can you tell me what you think you want to do?"

"Oh — to go alone — into the loneliest place — to live there for years — forever," replied Adam, with passion.

"Alone? That is my way. An' I understand how you feel — what you need. Are you goin' to hunt gold?"

"No — no."

"Have you any money?"

"YES. More than I'll ever need. I'd like to throw it all away — or give it to you. But it — it was my mother's. . . And I promised her I'd not squander it — that I'd try to save —"

"Boy, never mind — an' I don't want your money," interrupted Dismukes. "An' don't do any fool trick with it. You'll need it to buy outfits. You can always trust Indians to go to the freightin' posts for you. But never let any white men in this desert know you got money. That's a hard comparison, but it's justified."

"I'm already sick with the love men have for money," said Adam, bitterly.

"An' now to figure out an' make good all that brag of mine," went on Dismukes, reflectively. "I'll need only two days' grub to get to Yuma. There's one sure water-hole. I can give you one of my canteens, an' Jinny, the burro that saved your life. She's tricky, but a blamed good burro. An' by makin' up enough bread I can spare my oven. So, I guess I can outfit you good enough for you to reach a canyon up here to the west where Indians live. I know them. They're good. You can stay with them until the hot weather passes."

"But you mustn't let me have all your outfit," protested Adam.

"I'm not. It's only the grub an' one burro."

"Won't you run a risk — with only two days' rations?"

"Wansfell, every move you can make on this desert is a risk. Learn that right off. But I'm sure. I'm what they call a desert rat."

"You're most kind," said Adam, choking up again, "to help a stranger — this way."

"Boy, I don't call that help," declared Dismukes. "That's just doin' for a man as I'd want to be done by. When I talked about help I meant somethin' else."

"What? God knows I need it. I'll be grateful. I'll do as you tell me," replied Adam, with a strange thrill stirring in him.

"You are a boy — no matter if you're bigger than most men. You've got the mind of a boy. What a damn pity you've got to do this hidin' game!" Under strong feeling the prospector got up, and emptying his pipe he began to take short strides to and fro in the limited shade cast by the iron-wood tree. Presently he turned to Adam and the great ox eyes burned intensely. "Wansfell, if you were a man, I'd never feel the way I do. But you're only a youngster — you're not bad — you've had bad luck — an' for you I can break my rule — an' I'll do it if you're in earnest. I've never talked about the desert — about its secrets — what it's taught me. But I'll tell you what the desert is — how it'll be your salvation — how to be a wanderer of the wasteland is to be strong, free, happy — if you are honest, if you're big enough for it."

"Dismukes, I swear I'm honest — and I'll be big, by God, or I'll die trying," declared Adam, passionately.

The prospector gave Adam a long steady stare, a strange gaze such as must have read his soul.

"Wansfell, if you can live on the desert you will eventually grow like it," he said, solemnly, as if he were pronouncing a benediction.

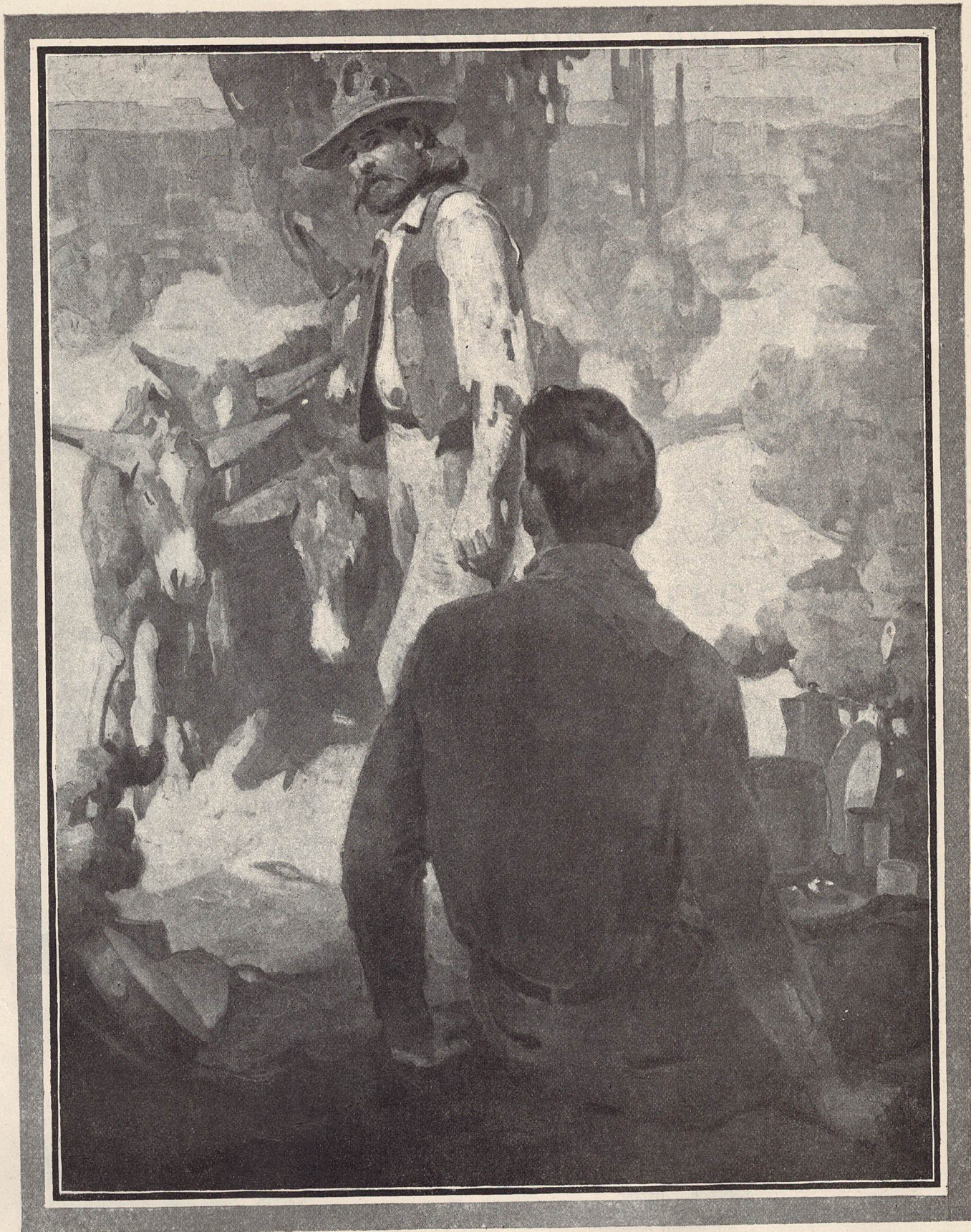
Adam gathered from this speech that Dismukes meant to unbosom himself of many secrets of this wonderful wasteland. Evidently, however, the prospector was not then ready to talk further. With thoughtful mien and plodding gait he resumed his short walk to and fro.

The hot day closed without Adam ever venturing out of the shade of the tree. Once or twice he had put his hand in a sunny spot to feel the heat, and it had burned. The sun set in the dull leaden pall, and all during twilight the heat veils rose from the desert. At length a breeze stirred the leaves and with it came some semblance of coolness. Dismukes threw pieces of dead iron-wood on the camp-fire. The night mantled down with its intense silence, all-embracing, and the stars began to glow white. As Dismukes sat down near Adam in the glow of the camp-fire it was manifest from the absence of his pipe, and the penetrating, possession-taking power of his eyes, that he was under the dominance of a singular passion.

"Wansfell," he began, in low deep voice, "it took me many years to learn how to live on the desert. I had

the strength an' the vitality of ten ordinary men. Many times in those desperate years was I close to death from thirst — from starvation — from poison water — from sickness — from bad men — and last though not least — from loneliness. If I had met a man like myself, as I am now, I might have been spared a hell of sufferin'. I did meet desert men who could have helped me. But they passed me by. The desert locks men's lips. I've opened mine for you because I want to do by you as I'd have liked to be done by. An' because I see somethin' in you.

"Men crawl over the desert like ants whose nests have been destroyed an' who have become separated from each other," went on Dismukes. "They all know the lure of the desert. Each man has his own idea of why the desert claims him. Mine was gold — mine is gold — so that some day I can travel over the world, rich an' free, an' see life. Another man's will be the need to hide — or the longin' to forget — or the call of adventure — or hate of the world — or love of a woman. Another class is that of bad men. Robbers, murderers. They are many. [Continued on page 51]



Adam's voice was a husky whisper: "Where am — I — Who are you?" "My name's Dismukes," came the reply, "an' you're ninety miles from anywhere — an' alive, which's more than I'd bet on yesterday"

The Wanderer of the Wasteland—[Continued from page 19]

There are also many men, an' a few women, who just drift or wander or get lost in the desert. An' out of all these, if they stay in the desert, but few survive. The Great American Desert is a vast place an' it is covered by unmarked graves an' bleached bones. I've seen so many — so many."

Dismukes paused while his broad chest heaved with a sigh.

"I was talkin' about what men think the desert means to them. In my case I say gold, an' I say that as the other man will claim he loves the silence or the color or the loneliness. But I'm wrong an' so is he. The great reason why the desert holds men lies deeper. I feel that. But I've never had the brains to solve it. I do know, however, that life on this wasteland is fierce an' terrible. Plants, reptiles, beasts, birds, an' men, all have to fight for life far out of proportion to what's necessary in fertile parts of the earth. You will learn that early, an' if you are a watcher an' a thinker you will understand it."

"THE desert is no place for white men. An oasis is fit for Indians. They survive there. But they don't thrive. I respect the Indians. It will be well for you to live a while with Indians. . . . Now what I most want you to know is this."

The speaker's pause this time was impressive, and he raised one of his huge hands, like a monstrous claw, making a gesture at once eloquent and strong.

"When the desert claims men it makes most of them beasts. They sink to that fierce level in order to live. They are trained by the eternal strife that surrounds them. A man of evil nature survivin' in the desert becomes more terrible than a beast. He is a vulture. On the other hand there are men whom the desert makes like it. Yes — fierce an' elemental an' terrible, but greater in another sense — greater through that eternal strife to live — beyond any words of mine to tell. I've met a few such men, an' if it's possible for the divinity of God to walk abroad on earth in the shape of mankind, it was invested in them. The reason must be that in development by the desert, in the case of these few men who did not retrograde, the spiritual kept pace with the physical. It means these men never forgot, never reverted to mere unthinking instinct, never let the hard fierce brutal action of survival on the desert kill their souls. Spirit was stronger than body. I've learned this of these men, though I never had the power to attain it. It takes brains. I was only fairly educated. An' though I've studied all my years on the desert, an' never gave up, I wasn't big enough to climb as high as I can see. I tell you all this, Wansfell, because it may be your salvation. Never give up to the desert nor to any of its minions! Never cease to fight! Thus you will repent for your crime. The secret is never to forget your hold on the past — your memories — an' through thinkin' of them to save your mind an' apply it to all that faces you out there."

Rising from his seat Dismukes made a wide sweeping gesture, symbolical of a limitless expanse. "An' the gist of all this talk of mine — this hope of mine to do for you as I'd have been done by — is that if you fight an' think together like a man meanin' to repent of his sin — somewhere out there in the loneliness an' silence you will find God!"

With that he abruptly left the camp-fire to stride off into the darkness; and the sonorous roll of his last words seemed to linger on the quiet air.

Adam stared out into the night where Dismukes had vanished. Something great had happened. Was the man Dismukes a fanatic, a religious wanderer of the wasteland, who imagined he had found in Adam an apt pupil, or who had preached a sermon because the opportunity presented itself? No! The prospector had the faith to give out of his lesson of life on the desert. And as Adam felt the mounting passion of conviction, of gratitude, his stirred mind seemed suddenly to burst into a radiant and scintillating inspiration of resolve to be the man Dismukes had described. Repentance! Expiation! True to himself at the last in spite of a horrible and fatal blunder!

"Oh, Guerd! Guerd, my brother!" he cried, shuddering at the whisper of that name. "Wherever you are in spirit — hear me! . . . I'll rise above wrongs and hate

and revenge! — I'll remember our boyhood — how I loved you! I'll atone for my crime! I'll never forget. . . . I'll fight and think to save my soul — and pray for yours! . . . Hear me and forgive — you who drove me out among the wanderers of the wasteland!"

Adam lay awake for some length of time waiting for Dismukes to return, but he did not come. The night grew lighter and the sky bluer owing to the increased brilliancy of the stars. Adam at length succumbed to drowsiness.

It was Dismukes's call that awakened him. His slumber had been deep and prolonged. The sun already tipped the eastern range rosy red. Adam felt no severe effects from his hard experience, except an inordinate hunger. After breakfast, while they were cleaning up the camp utensils, the prospector talked about burros.

"Now, Wansfell, you must learn all about burros," began Dismukes. "The burro is the most important part of your outfit. This desert would still be a blank waste, unknown to white men, if it had not been for those shaggy lazy lop-eared little donkeys. Think of that! Whenever you get sore at one an' feel inclined to kill him for some trick or other, just remember that you could not get along without him."

"Most burros are alike. They hang near camp, as you see mine, hopin' they can steal a bite of somethin' if you don't give it to them. They'll eat paper, or most anythin' except greasewood. They love paper off bacon. They never get homesick an' seem contented in the most desolate places. I had a burro that was happy in Death Valley which's the hell-hole of this wasteland. Burros are seldom responsive to affection. They'll stand great abuse. Never expect any thanks. Always patient. They are usually easy to catch. But they must know you. Only way to catch them is to head them off. Then they stop. Young burros are easily broke, an' will follow others. They must be driven. Never knew but one that I could lead. Don't forget this. They have the most wonderful endurance — never stumble or fall — an' can exist on practically nothin'. In the mornin' when you start off on your day's travel the burros are fresh an' they drive fine. But, in the afternoon, when they get tired, they think of tricks. They'll lie down — roll over on a pack — knock against a rock or tree. They'll get together in a bunch to tangle the packs. When a burro intends to lie down he humps his back an' wriggles his tail. It's hard to get burros across streams. Scared of water! I've had to carry my burros many a time. But they'll climb or go down the steepest, roughest mountain trail without fear. Burros have more patience an' good qualities an' also cussedness than any other beasts. They pick out pardners an' stick together all the time. A big bunch of burros will pair off regardless of sex. They bray at night — an' awful sound till you get used to it. Well, I guess that's an introduction to desert burros. It's all serious fact, Wansfell, as you'll learn, an' to your cost, unless you remember."

"I'll remember," he asserted, with conviction.

"DARESAY you will," replied Dismukes, "but the idea is you must remember before you get in trouble, not after. I can't tell you how to know a burro is goin' to trick you. I'm just givin' you facts as to the nature of burros in general. You must study an' learn them yourself. A man could spend his life studyin' burros an' then have lots to learn. Most prospectors spend half their time trackin' their burros. It's tryin' to find burros that has cost many a desert man his life. He's the camel of this Sahara — an' speakin' of that reminds me that this trip out I saw two camels."

"What?" queried Adam, incredulously. "Not real African camels?"

"Yes — the real old genuine camels from Africa," replied Dismukes, with such positiveness that Adam had but to believe him. "Regular hump-backed, shaggy ships of the desert. . . . There were two of them over here in a wild canyon in the Chuckawallas. Good water an' some grass, an' a place I never knew a white man but me to reach. These camels ran off when they saw me, but they came back. Needed water, as I found out. When they saw I was harmless they

stayed in the canyon, grazed with my burros an' got fairly tame. If I hadn't found a good pocket of gold I'd have caught them, an' tried to use them. Maybe I'll do it yet. They would be great to cover distance an' pack outfits on this desert. But ridin' one would be hell. An', of course, I couldn't keep up with camels on foot, like I do with burros."

"Dismukes! You can't be serious," exclaimed Adam. "African camels out here — wild on the desert!"

"Wansfell, it's a fact that you may see for yourself some day. An' the explanation is simple. I've long heard of camels on the Colorado Desert. An' twice I met prospectors who had seen some. Finally I met a fellow who told me how these camels came to get here. The government imported camels from Africa twice. They were brought across to New Orleans or Galveston — two good-sized bunches of them — the last in 1857, I think, an' they were for experimental purposes. The government believed camels would make great pack animals. An' they were tried out in the desert places. An' they worked fine as long as there was any drivers who knew how to manage them. The draw-backs were that the camels would scare every horse clear out of his skin, an' also they would wander too far from camp in search of food. So the experiment was a failure. Some of the camels were sold, an' some got away to wander out here into California. There are desert valleys in the mountains that no white man ever saw. An' perhaps camels from the Sahara have found a home in them."

"Well, I'll be darned!" ejaculated Adam.

"Wansfell, here's an idea," went on Dismukes, who appeared to respond to Adam's increasing interest in a way that hinted of a long-lost pleasure in the sound of his voice.

"If you want to do somethin' big — after you get well an' strong an' know the desert — go catch those camels an' make burros out of them. It could be done. I could do it. Just think! You could travel a hundred miles in no time. Ride so fast the heat would never bother you. Go easy from one good water-hole to another. Pack more grub than you'd use in a year. An' best of all, there are claim-jumpers an' robbers an' murderers of miners in this desert — bad men, ignorant an' superstitious, who would drop dead of fright at sight of a camel!"

"IT'S wonderful," replied Adam, "but, heavens, it's beyond me."

"Boy, you haven't got the gist of all my talk," returned Dismukes, earnestly. "I said that out here — alone — in this awful desolation — this naked earth — a man either becomes an animal or he becomes superhuman."

With that decisive conclusion the prospector appeared to have talked himself out for the present, and he devoted his efforts to a selection of parts of his outfit that manifestly he meant to turn over to Adam. His generosity filled Adam with consternation, but he was deaf to objection or appeal. At length having made the selection to his satisfaction, he went out to wake up the burro Jinny. As he led Jinny into camp all the other burros trooped along.

"Watch me pack an' then you try your hand on Jinny," he said.

Adam was all eyes while the prospector placed in position the old ragged pads of skins and blankets, and the pack-saddles over them, to be buckled carefully. Upon the horns of these were hung the boxes, one each side of the burro with even distribution of weight, and then on top and between came the bedding and canvas. It was all comparatively easy until it came to tying the pack on with a rope in what Dismukes called a hitch. This puzzled Adam sorely. However, after Dismukes had accomplished it, Adam believed he could make a respectable showing. He began to pack Jinny, and did very well indeed till he got to the hitch, which was harder to tie than it looked.

"Pack the canteen of water yourself," said Dismukes, as he led Adam out from under the tree and pointed west. "See where that long low sharp ridge comes down to the desert. . . . Well, that's fifty miles. Around that point lies a wide canyon. Indians live up that canyon. They are good people. Stay with them — work for them till you learn the desert. . . . Now as to gettin' there. Go slow. Rest often in the

shade of iron-woods like this one. Take a good rest durin' the middle of the day. As long as you sweat you're in no danger. But if your skin gets dry you need to get out of the sun an' to drink. There are several springs along the base of this range. Chocolate Mountains they're called. An' don't ever forget that water is the same as life blood. Go slow. Maybe you'll take two or three days to reach the Indian canyon. By keepin' that ridge in sight you can't miss it."

The next move of the prospector was to take Adam around on the other side of the tree and wave his hand at the expanse of desert.

"NOW follow me an' get these landmarks in your mind forever. Behind us lies the Chocolate Range. You see it runs down almost southeast. That shiny black mountain standin' by itself is Pilot Knob. It's near Yuma, as you remember. Now straight across from us a few miles lies a line of sand dunes. They run same way as the Chocولات. But they're low — can't be seen far. Do you make out a dim gray strange-lookin' range just over the top of them?"

"Yes, I see that clearly. Looks like clouds," replied Adam.

"That's the Superstition Mountains. You will hear queer stories about them. Most prospectors are afraid to go there, though it's said Pegleg Smith's lost gold mine is somewhere in there. The Indians think the range is haunted. An' everyone who knows this desert will tell you how the Superstition Range changes somehow from time to time. It does change. Those mountains are giant sand dunes an' they change their shape with the shiftn' of the winds. That's a fact, but I'm not gainsayin' how strange an' weird they are. An' I for one believe Pegleg Smith did find gold there. But there's no water. An' how can a man live without water? . . . Well, to go on, that dim purple high range beyond the Superstitions lies across the line in Mexico. . . ."

Adam could not for the moment safely trust himself to speak. The expanse of desert shown him, thus magnified into its true perspective, now stretched out with the nature of its distance and nudity strikingly clear. It did seem to glare a menace into Adam's face. It made him tremble. Yet there was fascination in the luring deceitful Superstition Range, and a sublimity in the measureless sweep of haze and purple slope leading north to the great peaks, and a compelling beckoning urge in the mystery and unknown that seemed to abide beyond the bronze ridge.

"I'll never forget your — your kindness," said Adam, finally turning to Dismukes.

The prospector shook hands with him, and his grip was something to endure.

"Kindness is nothin'. I owed you what a man owes to himself. But don't forget anythin' I told you."

"I never will," replied Adam. "Will you let me pay you for the — the burro and outfit?" Adam made this request hesitatingly, because he did not know the law of the desert, and he did not want to offer what might be an offense.

"Sure you got plenty of money?" queried Dismukes, gruffly.

"Indeed I have," rejoined Adam, eagerly.

"Then I'll take what the burro an' grub cost."

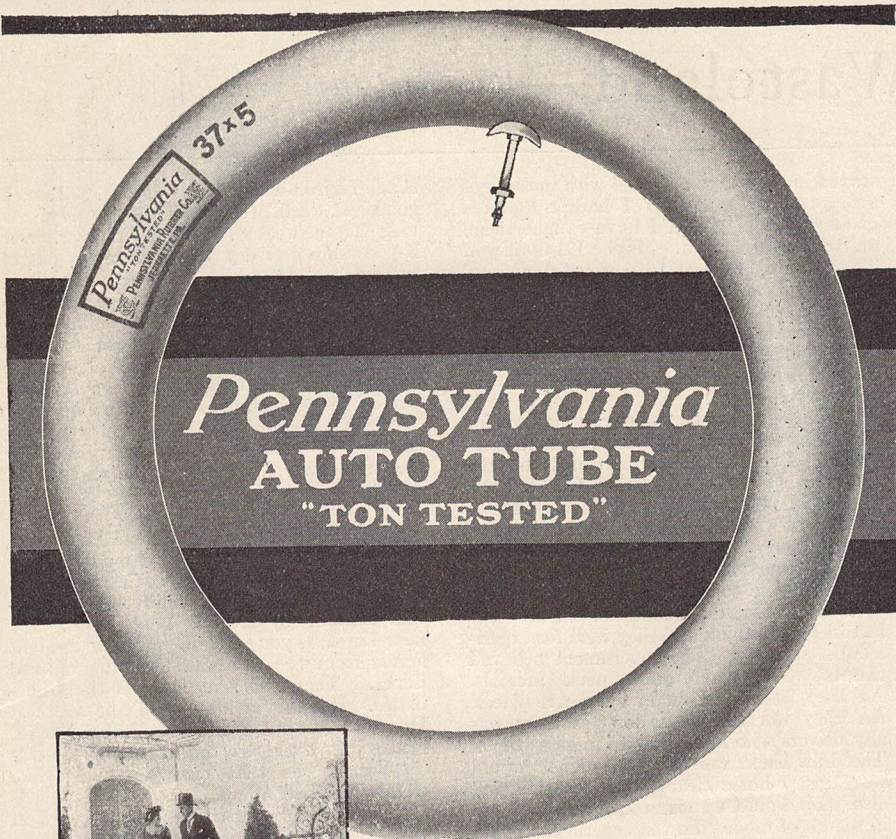
He named a sum that appeared very small to Adam, and receiving the money in his horny hands, he carefully deposited it in a greasy buckskin sack. He put this back into a cavernous pocket with the serious air of a man who placed strange value upon money.

"Wansfell, may we meet again," he said in farewell. "Good luck an' good-bye. . . . Don't forget."

"Good-bye," returned Adam, unable to say more.

With a whoop at the four burros and a slap on the haunch of one of them Dismukes started them southward. They trotted ahead with packs bobbing and wagging. What giant strides Dismukes took! He seemed the incarnation of the dogged strength of manhood, yet something ludicrous clung about him in his powerful action as well as in his immense squat form. He did not look back.

It surprised Adam that Jinny evinced no desire to trot off after the other burros. Evi-



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dently, for Jinny, the incident was closed. Adam started her westward.

Not until he felt a drag in his steps did he think of his weakened condition. Resting a while in the shade of a tree he let the burro graze on the scant brush, and then went on again. Thus he traveled, with frequent rests, until the heat made it imperative for him to halt till afternoon. About the middle of the afternoon he set forth again.

A direct line westward appeared to be bringing him closer to the slope of the mountain; and it was not long before he saw a thick patch of green brush that surely indicated a water-hole. The very sight seemed to invigorate him. Nevertheless the promised oasis was far away, and not before he had walked till he was weary and rested many times did he reach it. To find water and grass was like making a thrilling discovery. Adam unpacked Jinny and turned her loose, not however without some misgivings as to her staying there.

Though he suffered from an extreme fatigue and a weakness that seemed to be in both muscle and bone, a kind of cheer came to him with the camp-fire duties. Never had he been so famished! And when in all his life had beans and rice and coffee, with bread as hard as rock, tasted so good?

SOME time during Adam's slumbers a nightmare possessed him—a hideous dream of murder—of a haunting ghastly face—of his bloody hands—and of an awful pursuit. At the moment he was about to be captured he awakened, cold with clammy sweat and shaking in every limb. With a violent start of consciousness, with fearful uncertainty, he raised himself to peer around. The desert night encompassed him. It was near the morning hour. Low down over the dark horizon line hung a wan distorted moon that shone with weird lustre.

Dawn roused him to his tasks, stronger physically, eager and keen, but more watchful than he had been the preceding day and with less thrill than he had felt. Jinny stood near-by with drooping ears, evidently taking a last nap before the business of the day. When he happened to turn his back for a few moments Jinny roused out of her sleep and made her way into camp with a honesty that gave him misgivings as to her sincerity. And presently Jinny stole some of the bread right out of the hot oven. This bread was the first Adam had ever baked, and he had a great many more doubts about it than he now had about Jinny. After tasting it himself he vowed that Jinny was to be congratulated if she ate it.

Adam packed in half an hour and was traveling west when the sun rose. As long as he walked steadily, driving the burro, seeing new ground and different objects, his mind concerned itself wholly with them; but when he sat down to rest in the shade of a tree and there came a break in the train of sensations, then began an encroachment of gloom. He continually drove this away and it continually returned.

The sun was still high and hot when Adam resumed travel, but it was westerling and the slanting rays were bearable. After he got thoroughly warmed up and sweating freely he did not mind the heat, and was able to drive Jinny and keep up a strong stride for an hour at a time. Darkness overtook him, and he was compelled to make dry camp.

On the following morning, when he had been tramping along for an hour or more, he espied far ahead the unmistakable green patch of thicket that heralded the presence of water. The sight stirred him. He walked well that morning, resting only a couple of hours at noon; but the green patch, after the manner of distant objects on the desert, seemed just as far away as when he saw it first. The time came, however, when there was no more illusion, and he knew he was getting close to the place. At last he reached it, a large green thicket that choked the mouth of a narrow canyon. He found a spring welling from under the mountain base, sending a slender stream out to be swallowed by the sand.

What a relief to find water! It tasted good and felt good on his sunburned face. Adam gave Jinny a drink before he unpacked her. There was a desirable camp-site, except that it lacked dead fire-wood close at hand. Adam removed the pack. Then he started out to look for some dead iron-wood or mesquite to burn.

There did not appear to be any iron-wood in that section, dead or alive. All the desert growths, mostly greasewood and mesquite, were young and green. Adam searched in one direction and then in another, without so much as finding a stick. Next he walked

west along the rocky wall and had no better success, until he came to a deep recession in the wall, full of brush; and here with considerable labor he collected a bundle of dry sticks. When he bent over to gather them into an armful, his right hand touched something soft and velvety. It moved. Quick as a flash Adam jerked his hand away. Then kicking apart the bundle he soon espied a great black fuzzy spider with hairy legs and buff markings on his body. The creature looked as aggressive as it was ugly.

"Whew! A tarantula!" exclaimed Adam. "And I put my hand on him! . . . Suppose he had bitten me! Well, this isn't remembering the advice of Dismukes. I've got to think before I act."

Adam's first and natural instinct was to kill the tarantula, but he resisted it, and with considerable interest he studied the huge spider until it crawled away. Whereupon he gathered up the bundle of wood and trudged back toward camp.

Before long he imagined he saw smoke. "Queer how those smoke trees fool a fellow," he said. And even after he thought he smelled smoke, he was sure of deception. But upon nearing the green thicket that hid his camp he actually did see thin blue smoke low down against the background of rocky wall. The sight alarmed him. The only explanation which offered itself to his perplexity was the possibility that a prospector had arrived at the spring during his absence and had started a fire. Adam began to hurry. His alarm increased to dread.

When he ran around the corner of thicket to his camp-site he did see a fire. It was about burned out. There was no prospector, no sign of packs. And Jinny was gone!

"What—what?" stammered Adam, dropping his bundle of sticks. A sense of calamity beset him evilly. He ran forward.

"Where—where's my pack?" he cried.

The dying fire was but the smouldering remains of his pack. It had been burned. Blankets, boxes, bags had been consumed. Some blackened utensils lay on the ground near the charred remains of his canvas. Only then did the truth of this catastrophe burst upon him. All his food had been burned.

Some moments elapsed before the stunning effects of this loss had worn off enough to permit Adam's mind to connect the cause of it with the disappearance of Jinny.

After careful scrutiny of tracks near where the pack had lain, Adam became convinced that Jinny was to blame for his destitution. His proofs culminated in a handful of unburned matches that manifestly had been flung and scattered away from the pack. This clue was conclusive. The tricky burro, taking advantage of Adam's absence, had pulled the canvas off the pack, and in tearing around in the boxes for morsels to eat she had bitten into the box of matches and set them on fire.

"I didn't think—I didn't think!" cried Adam, remembering the advice of Dismukes. "Too late!"

OVERCOME by the shock, he sank upon the ground and fell prey to gloomy and hopeless forebodings. He had no sense, nor any luck. He was unfit to cope with this desert life!

"I'll lie down and die," he muttered. But he could not so much as lie down. He seemed possessed by a devil who would not admit the idea of surrender or death. And this spirit likewise seemed to take him by the hair of his head and lift him up to scatter the tears from his eyes. "Why can't I cuss the luck like a man—then look round to see what's got to be done?"

Adam did not, however, swear at his ill luck; but he derived some satisfaction by calling Jinny a few of the worst names he had heard since his arrival in the west. Then he strode around in search of her. Neither sight of her nor a single hoof-track rewarded his persistent efforts. Jinny had made good her escape. When Adam gave up all hope of finding the burro the hour was near sunset and it was high time that he should decide what to do.

"Go on—to the Indian camp," he declared, tersely.

No other idea asserted itself. He decided to start at once and walk in the cool of night, keeping close to the mountain wall so as not to lose his way. Already he must have covered more than thirty miles of the fifty described by Dismukes. His spirits rallied. Going back to the camp scene he carefully gathered up all the matches and placed them with others he carried in his pocket. He found his bag of salt only partly consumed, and made haste to secure it. His canteen lay beside the spring.

The ruddy sunset and the stealing down of twilight and the encroaching blackness of night had no charms for Adam now. He saw, but only with outward sight. His weariness increased as the hours prolonged themselves. Short frequent rests were more advisable than long ones. The canopy of stars seemed in procession westward; and many a bright one he watched sink behind the black slope of mountain toward which he was bound. There were times when his eyes closed involuntarily and all his body succumbed to sleep as he toiled on. These drowsy spells always came to a painful end, for he would walk into a thorny mesquite. Adam saw a weird misshapen moon rise late over a dark range to blanch the desert with wan light. He walked all night and when dawn showed him landmarks now grown familiar he had a moment of exhilaration. The long low-reaching ridge of mountains loomed right before him. When he rounded the sharp blunt corner his eyes were greeted by the sight of a deep-mouthed canyon, full of palms and other green trees. He saw a white stream-bed and the shine of water, and what he took to be the roofs of palm-thatched huts.

"I've got there—this is the Indian canyon—where Dismukes told me to stay," said Adam, with pride in his achievement. A first sight of what he took to be habitations cheered him. Again that gloomy companion of his mind was put to rout. It looked worth striving and suffering for—this haven. The barrenness of the desert all around made this green canyon-mouth an oasis. It appeared well hidden, too.

With steps that no longer dragged, Adam began his descent of the canyon slope. At length he reached the wide bed of white boulders, strewn about in profusion, where some flood had rolled them. In the center of this bed trickled a tiny stream of water. Following the stream-bed he made his way up into the zone of green growths, a most welcome change from the open glare of the desert. He plodded on perhaps a mile, and then another, without reaching the yellow thatch of palms.

"Will I—never—get there?" panted Adam, almost spent. "I made sure—it was—only a little way. . . . Oh, how this desert—fools you!"

But he kept on, cheerful in spite of weariness, grateful for the green that comforted his sun-burned eyes, and for the feel and murmur of a breeze.

Finally Adam reached a well-defined trail leading up out of the stream-bed. He followed it to a level flat, covered with willows and cottonwoods, all full-foliaged and luxuriantly green, and among which stately palms, swaddled in huge straw sheaths of their own making, towered with lofty tufted crowns.

Suddenly Adam emerged from the green covert into an open glade that contained palm-thatched huts, and he uttered a little cry of joy. But it took only a second glance to convince him that the huts were deserted. And Adam's joy was short-lived. Hastily he roamed from one hut to another. He found great clay water-jars, and pieces of broken pottery, and beds of palm leaves through which the lizards rustled, but no Indians, nor any signs of recent habitation. Dreading to abandon hope of finding trace of dwellers, Adam searched everywhere over that bench, and even climbed the far slope in the hope of seeing them; but it was all in vain. He could not find even a footprint. Dragging himself back to the glade of huts he fell exhausted in the shade.

"Gone!—gone!" he whispered, hoarsely. "Now—I'll starve—to death!"

His eyes refused to stay open and sleep glued them shut. When he opened them again it was to the light of another day. Stiff and lame, with a gnawing at the pit of his stomach and an oppressed mind, Adam found himself in sad plight. Limping down to the stream he bathed his face and quenched his thirst; and then, removing his boots, he saw that his feet were badly blistered but fortunately not in the soles. He decided to go barefoot, to save his boots and to give the raw places a chance to heal.

Then without any more reflection he wrought himself into a supreme effort of will; and it was so passionate and strong that he believed it would hold as long as intelligence governed his actions.

"My one chance is to live here until the Indians come back," he decided. "To go out on the desert—weak as I am—would mean death. There's water here, and green growths. It's an oasis where animals, birds, living creatures come to drink. . . . Maybe a lost burro or an Indian pony. I must eat. I'll never give up till the last breath leaves my body."

His first move was to make slow and careful examination of the trails. One which led toward the mountain bore faint traces of footprints that a recent rain had mostly obliterated. He lost this trail on the smooth rocky slope. The others petered out in the stones and sage. Then he searched along

portable bed of palm leaves. They seemed to retain the heat of the day. The hut had an open side facing the east. When Adam lay down to go to sleep he experienced a vague inexplicable sense that the very strangeness of the present circumstances was familiar to him. He was very tired and very sleepy, and there was an uncomfortable empty feeling within him. He looked out and listened, slowly aware of a great soft silent black enveloping of his environment by the desert night.

In the dim gray dawn he awoke and realized that it was hunger which had awakened him. And he stole out on his imperative quest. He did not see the sunrise or the broadening day. His instinct was to hunt. Doves and blackbirds visited the stream; and a covey of desert quail seemed tame; but owing to over-eagerness and clumsiness he did not succeed in killing a single one. He followed them from place to place, all over the oasis, until he lost sight of them. He baited his two traps with cactus fruit and set them. And he prowled into every nook and cranny of the canyon oasis. Lizards, rattlesnakes, rats, ground-squirrels rustled from his stealthy steps. It amazed him how wary they were. He might have caught the rattlesnakes, but the idea of eating them was repugnant and impossible to him. The day passed more swiftly than had yesterday. Its close found him so tired he could scarcely stand and with gnawing hunger growing worse. The moment he lay down sleep claimed him.

Next day he had more and better opportunities to secure meat, but he failed through haste and poor judgment and inaccuracy. That day he saw a hawk poise high over a spot, dart down swiftly, to rise with a squealing rat in its claws. Again he saw a shrike, marked dull gray and black, sail down from a tree, fly very low along an open space of ground to avoid detection, and pounce upon a lizard. In these actions, Adam divined

his first proof of the perfection of desert hunters. They did not fail. But he was not thus equipped.

All during the hot period of the day, when birds and animals rested, Adam practised with his crude weapons. His grave serious eagerness began to give way to instinctive force, a something of fierceness that began to come out in him. It seemed every moment had its consciousness of self, of plight, of presaged agony, but only in flashes of thought, only fleeting ideas instantly repudiated by the physical. He had given a tremendous direction to his mind and it spent its force that way.

The following morning just at sunrise he located the covey of desert quail. They had sailed down from the sage-slopes to alight among the willows bordering the stream. Adam crawled on the sand, noiseless, his sling-shot held in readiness. He was breathless and hot. His blood gushed and beat in his veins. The very pursuit of meat made the saliva drip from his mouth and made his stomach roll with pangs of emptiness. He glided through the willows, never rustling a branch. The plaintive notes of the quail guided him. Then through an opening he saw them—gray sleek plump birds, some of them with tiny plumes. They were picking in the damp sand near the water. Adam, lying flat, stretched his sling and waited for a number of the quail to bunch. Then he shot. The heavy pebble sped true, making the gray feathers fly. One quail lay dead. Another fluttered wildly. The others ran off through the willows. Adam rushed upon the crippled quail, plunging down, swift and hard; and catching it, he wrung its neck. Then he picked up the other.

"I got 'em! I got 'em!" he cried, elated, as he felt the warm plump bodies. It was a moment of strange sensation. Breathless, hot, wet with sweat, shaking all over, he seemed to have reverted to the triumph of the boy hunter. But there was more, and it had to do with the physical reactions inside his body. It had to do with hunger.

Picking the feathers off these birds required too much time. Adam skinned them, and cleaned them, and then washed them in the

stream. That done he hurried back to his camp to make a fire and cook them. A quick method would be to broil them. He had learned how to do this with strips of meat. So he set about it. His hunger prevented him from waiting until the fire was right, and it also made him hurry the broiling. The salt that he had rescued from his pack now found its use, and it was not long before he had picked the bones of these two quail.

Adam found that this pound or so of meat augmented his hunger. It changed the gnawing sensations, in fact modified them, but it induced a greedy hot hunger for more. It enlivened his sensibilities to the need for food. An hour after he had eaten, as far as appetite was concerned, he seemed worse off. Then he set out again in quest of meat.

The hours flew, the day ended, night intervened, and another dawn broke. Success again crowned his hunt. He feasted on doves. Thereafter, day by day, he decimated the covey of tame quail and the flock of tame doves until the few that were left grew weary, and finally departed. Then he hunted other birds. Quickly they learned the peril of the white man; and the day came when few birds visited the oasis.

NEXT to invite Adam's coming were the ground-squirrels, the trade-rats and the kangaroo-rats. He lived off them for days. But they grew so wary that he had to dig them out of the ground, and they finally disappeared. At this juncture, a pair of burros wandered into the oasis. They were exceedingly wild. Adam failed to trap one of them. He watched for hours from a steep place where he might have killed one by throwing down a large rock. But it was in vain. At last in desperation, holding his naked knife in hand, he chased them over stones and through the willows and under the thorny mesquites, all to no avail. He dropped from exhaustion and weakness, and lay where he had fallen till the next morning.

The pangs of hunger now were maddening. He had suffered them, more or less, and then alleviated them with meat, and then felt them grow keener and stronger until the edge wore off. After a few more meatless days the pains gradually subsided. It was a relief. He began to force himself to go out and hunt. Then an exceedingly good stroke of fortune befell him in that he killed a rabbit. His strength revived, but also his pains.

Then he lost track of days, but many passed, and each one of them took something from him in effort, in wakefulness, in spirit. His aggressiveness diminished daily, and lasted only a short while. The time came when he fell to eating rattlesnakes and any living creatures in the oasis that he could kill with a club.

But at length pain left him and hunger, and then his peril revealed itself. He realized it. The desire to kill diminished. With the cessation of activity there returned a mental state in which he could think back and remember all that he had done there, and also look forward to the inevitable prospect. He chewed leaves and bark; he ate mesquite beans and cactus fruit. After a certain number of hours the longer he went without meat the less he cared for it, or for living. But when, now and then, he did kill something to eat, his instinct to survive flashed up with revived hunger.

His skin turned brown and shriveled up like dried parchment wrinkling around bones. He did not recognize his hands, and when he lay flat on the stones to drink from the stream, he saw reflected there a mummified mask with awful eyes.

He seemed no longer real. The hot sun, the pleasant wind, the murmur of bees, the tinkle of water, the everlasting processional march of the heat-veils across the oasis—with all these things his mind seemed happily concerned. At dawn when he awoke his old instinct predominated, and he searched for meat. But unless he had some success this questing mood did not last. It departed as weakness and lassitude overbalanced the night's rest. For the other hours of that day he lay in the sun or the shade—it did not matter—and dreamed as he starved.

As he watched thus one drowsy noon hour, seeing the honey-bees darting to and fro, leaving the flowers to fly in a straight line across the oasis, there occurred to him the significance of their toil. He watched these flying bees come and go; and suddenly it flashed over him that at the end of the bee-line there must be a hive. Bees made nests in trees. If he could find the nest of the bees that were working here, he would find honey. The idea stimulated him.

The Etherial World

An article by

Sir Oliver Lodge

Which Contains a *New Thought*

The distinguished Scientist and investigator of Spiritualism takes no dogmatic attitude; he places his case before you with great moderation. He does not command you to believe in his cause; he tries to get you into the proper mental attitude to consider the matter calmly, dispassionately, without prejudice. Then he puts forward for your consideration—a new idea.

In the October McClure's

the sand-bars of the stream for tracks of living creatures; and he found many, from wild-cat tracks to the delicate ones of tiny birds.

He had a knife and a pair of long leather boot-strings. With these, and a bundle of arrow-weed sticks, and a tough elastic bow of iron-wood, and strips of bark, and sharp bits of flinty rock, Adam set to work under the strong inventive guiding spirit of necessity. As a boy he had been an adept at constructing figure-four traps. How marvelous the accuracy of memory! He had been the one to build traps for his brother Guerd, who had not patience or skill, but who loved to set traps in the brier-patches for redbirds. To what extremity a man could be reduced! The dexterity of his idle youth to serve him thus in his terrible hour of need! He remembered then his skill at making sling-shots. He had a strong rubber band doubled round his pocket-book. Sight of it thrilled him. He immediately left off experimenting with the bow and went to making a sling-shot. His difficulty was to find cords to make connections between the rubbers and a forked prong, and also between the rubbers and a carrier of some sort. For the latter he cut a triangular piece out of the top of his boot. But where to get the cords? Bark would not be pliable and strong enough. Somewhere from the clothes he wore he must extract cords.

THE problem proved easy. His suspenders were almost new and they were made of linen threads woven together. When he began to unravel them he made the discovery that there was enough rubber in them to serve for a second sling-shot.

When the instrument was finished he surveyed it with satisfaction. He had no doubt that the deadly accuracy he had once been master of with this boyish engine of destruction would readily return to him. Then he went back to work on the other contrivances he had planned.

A failing of the daylight amazed him. For an instant he imagined a cloud had crossed the sun. But the sun had set and darkness was at hand.

In one of the thatched huts he made a com-



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Adam had never heard how bee-hunters lined bees to their hives, but in his dire necessity he instinctively adopted the correct method. He watched the bees fly away, keeping them in sight as long as possible, then he walked to the point he had marked as the last place he had seen them, and here he watched for others. In half an hour the straight bee-flights led to a large dead cottonwood, hollow at top and bottom, a tree he had passed hundreds of times. The bees had a hive in the upper chamber of the trunk. Adam set fire to the tree and smoked the bees out. Then the problem consisted of felling the tree, for he had not the strength to climb it. The trunk was rotten inside and out. It burned easily, and he helped along the work by tearing out pieces of the soft wood. Nearly all the day was consumed in this toil, but at length the tree fell, splitting and breaking to pieces. The hollow chamber contained many pounds of honey.

Adam's struggle then was to listen to an intelligence that warned him that if he made a glutton out of himself it would cause him great distress, and perhaps kill him. How hard it was to eat sparingly of the delicious honey! He tried, but did not succeed. That restraint was beyond human nature. Nevertheless he stopped far short of what he wanted. He stored the honey away.

All night and next day he paid in severe illness for the honey of which he had partaken. The renewed exercise of internal organs that had ceased to function produced convulsions and retching that made him roll on the ground as a man poisoned. Life was tenacious in him and he recovered; and thereafter, while the honey lasted he slowly gained strength enough to hunt once more for meat. But the fertile oasis was now as barren of living creatures as was the naked desert outside. Adam's hope revived with his barely recovered strength. He pitied himself in his moments of deluded cheerfulness.

During these days his eyes scanned the bronze slope of mountain where the tracks of the Indians had faded. They might return in time to save his life. He hoped in spite of himself. The desert had locked him in.

HOW little the human body required to subsist on! Adam lived long on that honey; and he gained so much from it that after it was gone the hunger pangs revived a hundred times more fiercely than before. They had been deadened, which fact left him peace; revived by a wind-fall of food, they brought him agony. It drove him out to hunt for meat. He became a stalking spectre whose keen eye an insect could not have escaped. Hunger now beset him with all its terrors magnified. To starve was nothing, but to eat while starving was hell! Tighter and tighter he buckled his belt until he could squeeze his waist in his long skinny hands so that his fingers met. Whenever his pains began to subside, like worms growing quiet, then a rat or a stray bird or a lizard or a scaly little side-winder rattlesnake would fall to his cunning, as if in mockery of the death that ever eluded him.

So that he was driven, a gaunt and ever gaunter shadow of a man, up and down the beaten trails of the oasis. Soon he would fall and die, be sun-dried and blow away like powdered leather on the desert wind. By his agonies he measured the inhospitableness and inevitableness of the wasteland.

One morning huge columnar clouds, white as fleece, with dark gray shades along their lower borders, blotted out the sun. How strangely they shaded the high lights! Usually when clouds formed on the desert they lodged round the peaks and hung there. But these were looming across the wasteland, promising rain. A fresh breeze blew.

Adam was making his weary round of the oasis, dragging one foot like a dead weight after the other. Once he thought he heard an unusual sound, and, with lips wide and with bated breath, he listened. Only the mocking solemn silence! Then he plodded on again with the eyes of a ferret, roving everywhere.

He had proceeded a few rods when a distant, but shrill whistle brought him to a startled and thrilling halt. It sounded like the neigh of a horse. Often he had heard the brays of wild burros. In the intense silence, as he strained his ears, he heard only the labored muffled throbs of his heart. Gradually his hopes, so new and strange, subsided. Only another mockery of his memory! Or perhaps it was a whistle of the wind in a crevice, or of an eagle in flight.

Parting the willows before him as he walked, he went through the thicket out into the open where the stream flowed. It was very low, just a tiny rill of crystal clear water.

He was about to step forward toward the flat rock where he always knelt to drink when another sound checked him. A loud high buzz, somehow startling! It had life.

Suddenly he espied a huge rattlesnake, coiled in the sand, with head erect and its rattles quivering like the wings of a poised humming-bird. The snake had just shed an ugly brown scaly skin, and now shone forth resplendent, a beautiful clean gray with markings of black. It did not show any fear. The flat triangular head, sleek and cunning, with its deadly jewel-like eyes, was raised half a foot above the plump coils.

Adam's weary hopeless hunting instinct sustained a vivifying galvanizing shock. Like a flash he changed, beginning to tremble. He dropped his sling-shot as an ineffective weapon against so large a snake. His staring eyes quivered like the vibrating point of a compass-needle, as he tried to keep them on the snake and at the same time sight a stone or club with which to attack his quarry. A terrible excitement animated him and it was paralleled by a cold and sickening dread that the snake with its pounds of meat would escape.

Adam stooped down to raise a large rock in his hand. He poised it aloft, and aiming with intense keenness he flung the missile. It struck the rattlesnake a glancing blow, tearing its flesh and bringing blood. With the buzz of a huge bee caught in a trap the snake lunged at Adam, stretching its mutilated length on the sand.

It was long, thick, fat. Adam smelled the exuding blood and it inflamed him. The savage urge in him then was to fall upon his prey and clutch it with his bare hands and choke and tear and kill. Stone after stone he flung, missing every time. Then the rattlesnake began to drag itself away over the sand. Adam tried to bound after it, but he was so weak that swift action seemed beyond him. Still he headed off the snake and turned it back. Stones were of no avail. He could not hit with them, and every time he bent over to pick one up he got so dizzy that he could scarcely rise.

"Club! Club! Got—have club!" he panted, hoarsely. And spying one along the edge of the stream, he plunged to secure it. This moment gave the rattlesnake time to get ahead. Wildly Adam rushed back, brandishing the club. His tall gaunt form, bent forward, grew overbalanced as he moved, and fell. He got up and reached the snake in time to prevent it from escaping.

Then he swung the club. It was not easy to hit the snake crawling between stones. And the club was of rotten wood. It broke. With the blunt end Adam managed to give his victim a blow that retarded its progress.

Adam let out a hoarse yell. Something burst in him—a consummation of the instinct to kill and the instinct to survive. Hot and mad and weak he staggered after the crippled snake. The chase had transformed the whole internal order of him. He was starving to death, and he smelled the blood of fresh meat. The action infuriated him and the odor maddened him. Not far indeed was he then from the actual seizing of that deadly serpent in his bare hands.

But he tripped and fell again in a long forward plunge. It brought him to the sand almost on top of the snake. And here the rattlesnake stopped to coil, scarcely two feet from Adam's face.

Adam tried to rise on his hands. But his strength had left him. And simultaneously there left him the blood madness of that chase to kill and eat. He realized his peril. The rattlesnake would strike him. Adam had one flashing thought of the justice of it—one sight of the strange cold deadly jewel eyes—one swift sense of the beauty and magnificent spirit of this reptile of the desert, and then horror possessed him. He froze to his marrow. He was only a fearful animal, fascinated by another, dreading death by instinct. And as he collapsed, sagging forward, the rattlesnake struck him in the face with the stinging blow of a red-hot iron.

Then Adam fainted.

(To be continued)

Shall the Direct Primary Stand?

(Continued from page 28)

of unanimous agreement as to date by the states is remote.

The fact that, under the direct primary system, candidates are nominated before the party platforms are adopted, also is admitted to be a great weakness even by its warmest advocates. Because there is no statement of principles which party candidates are expected to hold and maintain, it is possible for the demagogue in a primary contest to take both sides of any given issue, varying his position to suit the temper of his audiences. For example: to one audience he may advocate government ownership of railroads, and to another oppose it.

Lacking a platform of principles it is also possible for an organized minority to capture the nominations, without revealing its purposes and—since post-primary platforms are usually made by the nominees—then to adopt a platform which misrepresents the wishes of the majority of party voters.

The absence of a platform also tends to transform primary contests into rival campaigns of personal boasting and promises, with frequent scandalous attacks on the personal character of rival aspirants. Not even the dignity of the presidential office is sufficient to protect those who aspire to it from such shameful charges. During the primary campaign in South Dakota one of the leading presidential candidates stated in an advertisement that his rivals were circulating rumors that he was a drunkard and a more or less disreputable character, generally, quite unfit for good society, let alone the White House.

"The fact that the platform is not adopted until after the primary is held is a weakness of the system," says Senator Borah. "One remedy would be to hold a convention and adopt the party platform before the primary."

That there is something wrong with the primary system is indicated by the action of nearly every state legislature at each of its sessions. Amendments, additions, alterations, eliminations are constant. And in many states, for example, New York, the movement for the repeal of the primary law and a return to the old convention system is

recurrent and seems to be growing. In Illinois, at the next session of the legislature, it is expected that a bill will be pushed to limit the voting at direct popular primaries to the nomination of United States Senators, members of Congress and the State legislature and Governor. Some of the minor state officers will be made appointive and others will be nominated at a party convention. But opponents of the system take the position that little is to be gained by this constant patching. According to them, the people have demonstrated by their action—or lack of action—that they do not want to be bothered by too frequent elections; that they have neither the time nor the willingness to attend to all the details of nominating and electing minor officials; in accordance with Anglo-Saxon tradition all they want is to retain the power to punish incompetent and unsatisfactory public servants and to reward those who are able and honest.

If this theory were carried out political parties would remain purely voluntary and self-regulated organizations, permitted to conduct their party affairs without governmental interference. Such interference, critics of the primary system say, destroys party responsibility, weakens party organization, confuses political issues and makes it easier for bipartisan machines to manipulate and control nominations.

The direct popular primary system, they submit, has not proved itself successful. It has brought many new and dangerous evils into our public life. It has lowered the standard of talent and ability among our public servants.

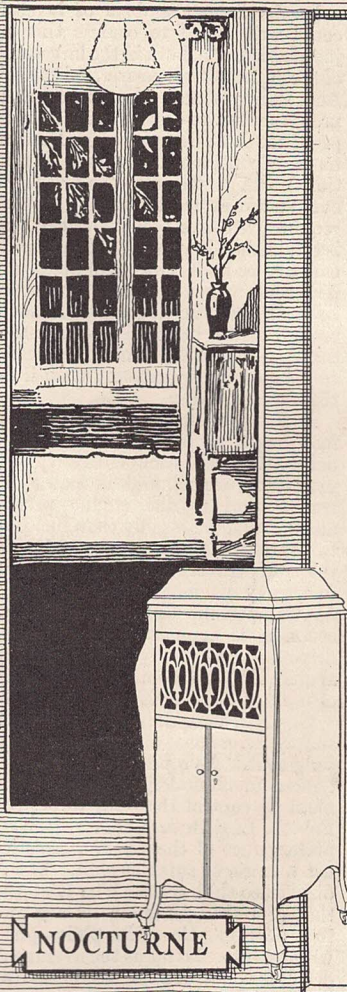
"In America," writes William Allen White, "we have broken—more or less—the hold of business on our politics. But what do we gain by turning government over to a lot of fourth-raters?"

And so it goes—arguments pro and con. It is evident that something is wrong. Have we made a mistake in abandoning the old representative system of government so completely? Should the direct primary system be abolished altogether or should we amend it in an effort to make it workable? It is for the voter to decide.

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