

McCLURE'S

Edited by Herbert Kaufman

FEBRUARY
1921

15¢



*In
This
Issue*

Owen Johnson,
Samuel Merwin,
Holworthy Hall,
Arthur Stringer, Zane Grey,
Garet Garrett, Fannie Heaslip Lea, Charles G.D. Roberts *and* Others

Painted by
Neysa McMein

McCLURE'S MAGAZINE, INC.

Volume 53
HERBERT KAUFMAN
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McCLURE'S



Number 2
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THE American Mind is conceded to be at once the most idealistic and the most practical of minds. Why?

Why do we produce inventors, but not scientists?

Why do we pursue amusement with such energy and apparently get so little enjoyment out of it?

Why do we pursue success so hard and, having attained it, seem unable to be happy over it?

Why are we so sensitive to foreign criticism?

Why are we so prone to practise "American Bluff"?

Why is the quality of our intellect in business so generally praised and the quality of much of our art and literature so equally criticized?



Harvey O'Higgins.

Where and How, considering it as an entity, did the American Mind originate?

And is there something wrong with it?

In a series of articles beginning next month in McClure's, Harvey O'Higgins and Dr. Edward M. Reede will answer these questions.

It is a series of articles that will challenge discussion.

Some folks will be angry, some will be pleased, but all will be interested.

Nothing like this series of articles has ever been attempted by a magazine.

They will be universally discussed.

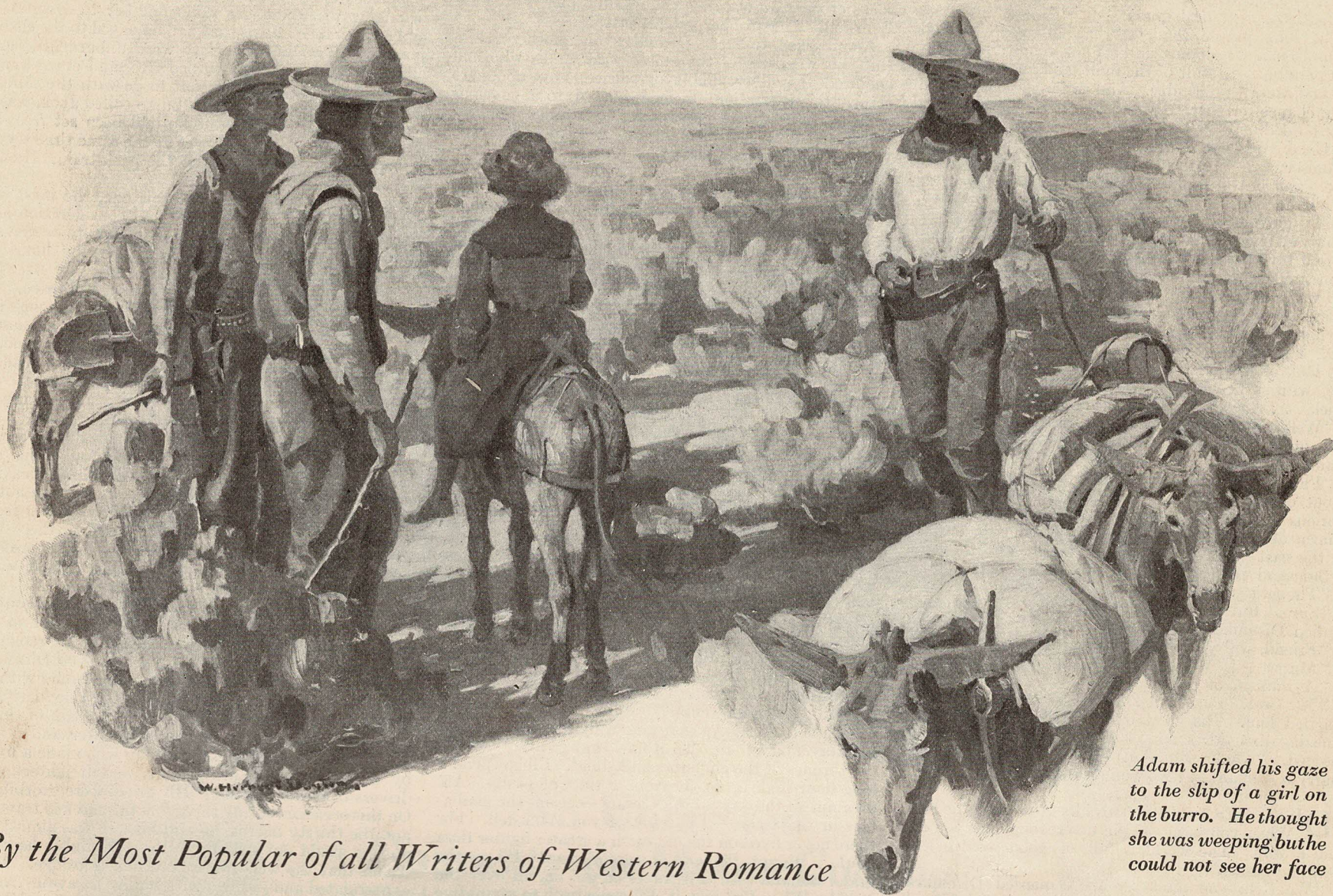
If you want to be up with the times you must read them.

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Published monthly. Entered as Second-Class Matter, February 19, 1917, at the Post Office at New York, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Entered as Second-Class Matter at the Post Office Department, Canada. Entered at Stationer's Hall, London. Copyright, 1921, by McClure's Magazine, New York, 25 West 44th Street, New York. All dramatic, moving picture, and other reproduction rights reserved. Subscription terms: In the United States, Mexico, Cuba, and American Possessions, \$1.65 per year. In Canada, \$2.00 per year. In all other countries in the Postal Union, \$2.65 per year. An order blank with the magazine is notice that your subscription has expired. The Editor assumes no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, but he will use all due care while they are in his hands.

McClure's Magazine, Inc., 25 West 44th St., New York



Adam shifted his gaze to the slip of a girl on the burro. He thought she was weeping, but he could not see her face

By the Most Popular of all Writers of Western Romance

The Wanderer of the Wasteland

by Zane Grey

Illustration by W. Herbert Dunton

"I'll break your bones—I'll wring your neck!" Adam Larey yelled to Virey, whom he was laboriously following up that rocky slope in Death Valley. Virey knew that Adam had once killed a man with his naked hands; no wonder then that the threat struck terror to the wife murderer whom Adam, helpless to interfere, had seen start an avalanche that closed over Magdalene Virey forever.

Virey, halting, set loose a boulder which in turn started a multitude of stones, but Adam was not to be retarded. The end of this tragedy was fixed; it had been set for all the years of Virey's life and back into the past.

Suddenly Adam heard a heavy penetrating sound—the rocks were heaving. The crash grew louder, more prolonged. He looked in the direction where he had last seen Virey. Very plainly he could be seen imbedded to his hips in the loose stones. He was chained, helpless.

"My turn," Adam shouted as he began rolling stones toward Virey. But he missed and missed again.

Could he never kill Virey as Virey had murdered his wife? Then there was a great roar, the slope trembled. It was the real avalanche. Adam sped to safety. When he turned to look for Virey there was no sign of him. Retribution had overtaken him at last.

Adam, whose flight to the desert followed the shooting of a ne'er-do-well brother, had had many adventures, but none as dramatic as the one just ended. Dismukes, a gold prospector who had won Adam's undying loyalty by saving his life, had sent him to Death Valley to try to save Magdalene Virey from a brutally insane husband—and this was how it ended.

He decided to leave Death Valley but no sooner was he out of it than a longing to return came to him and it

was lucky for Dismukes that he yielded to it. Bloody tracks led him to a camp of bandits who had attacked and captured the prospector.

There, without being seen, he saw at work a crude ore crushing machine usually operated by a horse or a mule. But in this case the motive power was furnished by a man—Dismukes. The first of the story of how Larey, or Wansfell as he was known in the desert, rescued his friend, how he crept up on the bandits in the rôle of a water-carrier, how Dismukes, using the machine to which he was tied as a terrible weapon, aided in the attack, has already been told.

SUNSET of that momentous and tragic day found Adam and Dismukes camped beyond the mouth of a wide pass that bisected the Funeral Range.

Adam felt well-nigh exhausted, and he would have been gloomy and silent but for his comrade. Dismukes might never have been harnessed to the beam of an *arrastra* and driven like a mule, and his awful treadmill toil in the terrible heat under the lacerating lash was as if it had never been. He was elated, he was exultant, strangely young again.

Always, to Adam, this giant prospector Dismukes had been beyond understanding. But now he was enigmatic. He transcended his old self. In the excitement following his rescue he had not mentioned the

fact that Adam had saved his life. Adam thought greatly of this squaring of his old debt. But Dismukes seemed not to consider it. All Dismukes thought of was the gold he had mined, the gold the claim-jumpers had mined—the bags of heavy gold that were his, and the possession of which ended forever his life-long toil for a fortune. A hundred times that afternoon, as the men had packed and climbed out of the valley, Dismukes had tried to force upon Adam a half of the gold, a quarter of it, a share. But Adam refused.

"Why—for Lord's sake?" Dismukes at last exploded, his great ox-eyes rolling. "It's gold. Most of it I mined before those devils came. It's clean an' honest. You deserve a share. An' the half of it will more than make up the sum I've slaved an' saved to get. Why, man—why won't you take it?"

"Well, friend, I guess the only reason I've got is that it's too heavy to pack," replied Adam. He smiled as he spoke, but the fact was he had no other reason for refusal.

Dismukes stared with wide eyes and open mouth. Adam, apparently, was beyond his comprehension just as Dismukes was beyond Adam's. Finally he swore his astonishment, grunted his disapproval, and then resigning himself to Adam's strange apathy, he straightway glowed again.

Adam, despite his amusement, and something of sadness, could not help but respond in a measure to the intense rapture of his friend. Dismukes' great work had ended. His long quest for the Golden Fleece had been rewarded. Life had suddenly loomed beautiful and enchanting. And now to look forward to ease, rest, travel, joy—all that he had slaved for. Marvelous past—magnificent future!

Adam listened kindly, and went slowly, with tired limbs, about the camp tasks; and now he gazed at

Dismukes, and again had an eye for his surroundings. Often he gazed up at the exceedingly high blunt break in the Funeral Range. What cataclysm of nature had made that rent? It was a zigzag, saw-toothed wall, with strata slanted at an angle of forty-five degrees. Zigzag veins of black and red and bronze ran through the vast drab mass.

The long purple shadows that Adam loved had begun to fall. His hands, and his jaw, too, were swollen and painful as a result of the fight, and he served himself and ate with difficulty. And as for speech, he had little chance for that. Dismukes' words flowed like a desert flood.

"Once, years ago, I was lost on the desert," he said, reminiscently. "First an' only time I ever got lost for sure. Got out of grub. Began to starve. Was goin' to kill an' eat my burro, when he up an' run off. Finally got out of water. That's the last straw, you know. . . . I walked all day an' all night an' all day, only to find myself more lost than ever. I thought I had been travelin' toward the west to some place I'd heard had water an' a ranch. Then I made sure I'd gone the wrong way. Staggerin' an' fallin' an' crawlin' till near daylight, at last I gave up an' stretched out to die. Me! I gave up — was glad to die. I can remember the look of the pale stars — the gray mornin' light — the awful silence an' loneliness. Yes, I wanted to die quick. . . . An' all at once I heard a rooster crow!"

"Well! You'd lain down to die near a ranch. That was funny," declared Adam. Life did play queer pranks on men.

"Funny! Say, pard Wansfell, there's nothin' funny about death. An' as for life, I never dreamed how glorious it is, until I heard that rooster crow. I'll buy a farm of green an' grassy an' shady land somewhere in the east — land with runnin' water — an' I'll raise a thousand roosters just to hear them crow."

"Thought you meant to travel," said Adam.

"Sure. But I'll settle down sometime, I suppose," replied Dismukes, reflectively.

"Friend, will you marry?" inquired Adam, gravely.

"Marry — ! What?" ejaculated the prospector.

"A woman, of course."

"My God!" rolled out Dismukes. The thought had startled him. His great ox-eyes reflected changes of amazing thought, shadows of old emotions long submerged. "That's somethin' I never *did* think of. Me marry a woman! . . . No woman would ever have me."

"DISMUKES, you're not so old. And you'll be rich. When you wear off the desert roughness you can find a wife. The world is full of good women who need husbands."

"Wansfell, you ain't serious?" queried Dismukes, puzzled and stirred. He ran a great broad hand through his shock of grizzled hair. His eyes were beautiful then. "I never had wife or sweetheart. . . . No girl ever looked at me — when I was a boy. An' these years on the desert, women have been scarce, an' not one was ever anythin' to me."

"Well, when you get among a lot of pretty girls, just squeeze one for me," said Adam, with a smile that was sad.

A golden flare brightened over the Panamint Range, silhouetting the long tapering lines of the peaks. Far to the west, when the sun had set, floated gray and silver-edged clouds, and under them a whorl of rosy, dusky, ruddy haze.

"Wansfell," spoke up Dismukes, "you need your hair cut."

"Maybe. But I'm glad it was long to-day when I got hit with the shovel."

"You sure did come near gettin' it cut then," replied Dismukes, with a hard laugh. "I'll tell you what your long hair reminds me of. Years ago I met a big fellow on the desert. Six feet three he was an' most as big as you. An' a darn good pard on the trail. Well, he wore his hair very long. It hid his ears. An' in the hottest weather he never let me cut it. Well, the funny part all came out one day. Not so funny for him, to think of it! . . . We met men on the trail. They shot him an' were nigh on to doin' for me. . . . My big pardner was a horse-thief. He'd had his ears cut off for stealin' horses. An' so he wore his hair long like yours to hide the fact he had no ears."

"Friend Dismukes, I have ears, if my long hair is worrying you," replied Adam. "And if I had not had mighty keen ears you'd still be grinding gold for your claim-jumpers."

Then Dismukes burst out into another flood of talk. He told how the robber-band had surprised him at work, captured him at the point of a gun. They drove one of his burros to death. Then one of them evolved the idea of making a mule out of Dismukes. This idea was hailed as brilliant. Dismukes ground ore, and after three days he was wearing out, when Adam arrived.

"The leader of that gang was Black," said Dismukes. "He had been a road agent. I was on a stage he

held up once, ten years an' more ago. But it got too hot for him an' he took to the hills. He'd been jumpin' claims an' killin' lone prospectors all over the Panamints."

"Black? I've heard of him. Which one was he?"

"The hollow-cheeked fellow with the deep eyes. The one that yelled so awful when he went under the rocks of the *arrastra*. . . . You needn't look sick, pard Wansfell. That robber got his just deserts."

Adam tried to steer Dismukes on another track. But this wanderer of the lonely wastelands, who had acquired the desert habit of silence, now about to return to civilization, seemed incited to loquacious rallery, to eloquent persuasion, to strange reminiscence, and to Homeric invention. Always he returned to the subject of gold and of his future.

"PARD, I wish you were goin' with me," he said, and the slow sweeping gesture of the great horny hand had something of sublimity. He waved it away toward the east, and it signified the far places across the desert. "I'm rich. The years of lonely hell an' never-endin' toil are over. No more sour dough! No more thirst an' heat an' dust! No more hoardin' of gold! The time has come for me to spend. I'll bank my gold an' draw my checks. At 'Frisco I'll boil the alkali out of my carcass. An' shaved an' clipped an' dressed I'll take again the name of my youth an' fare forth for adventure. I'll pay for the years of hard grub. I'll eat the best an' drink wine — wine — the sweetest an' oldest of wine! Wine in thin glasses. . . . I'll wear silk next my skin an' sleep on feathers. I'll travel like a prince. I'll go to my old home. Some of my people will be livin'. An' when they see me they'll see their ship come in. They'll be rich. I'll not forget the friends of my youth. That little village will have a church or a park as my gift. I'll travel. I'll see the sights an' the cities. New York! Ha, if I like that place, I'll buy it! I'll be merry, I'll be joyful. I'll live, I'll make up for all the lost years. But I'll never forget the poor an' the miserable. I'll cross the ocean. I've met Englishmen in the southwest. Queer, cold sort of men! I'll see how they live. I'll go all over England. Then Paris! Never was I drunk, but I'll get drunk in Paris. I want to see the wonderful hotels an' shops an' theatres. I'll look at the beautiful French actresses. An' I'll take a fly at Monte Carlo. An' travel on an' on. To Rome, that great city where the thrones of the emperors still stand. I'll go spend a long hour high up in the ruins of the Colosseum. An' dreamin' of the days of the Cæsars — seein' the gladiators in the arena — I'll think of you, Wansfell. For there never lived on the old earth a greater fighter than you! . . . Egypt, the land of sun an' sand! I'll see the grand Sahara. An' I'll travel on an' on, all over the world. When I've seen it, I'll come back to my native land. An' then, that green farm, with wooded hills an' runnin' streams! It must be near a city. Horses I'll have an' a man to drive, an' a house of comfort. . . . Mebbe there'll come a woman into my life. Mebbe children! The thought you planted in me, pard, somehow makes me yearn. After all, every man should have a son. I see that now. What blunders we make! A roof over my head! An' a bed as soft as downy feathers! . . . Mebbe, O, my pard, mebbe the sweet smile of a woman — the touch of a lovin' hand — the good-night kiss of a child! . . ."

Next morning as Adam and Dismukes were leisurely packing their effects, a lone prospector with one burro hove into sight. And when he reached the camp he halted to chat. Adam let Dismukes do the talking, yet he felt interest in the prospector, and gave him studied glances. He was a medium-sized man, rather muscular, with a broad face, swarthy and wrinkled. His narrowed dim eyes were blue, and gazed out frankly, and with good humor. He told Dismukes he was going down into Death Valley and he asked no questions. He was not young and his outfit was meagre. Another lonely wanderer of the wastelands, dreaming his dreams! He talked of "float", which was surface gold, and of high-grade ores, gold, silver, copper, lead, manganese. He said some day a railroad would come into that country and make men rich. He spoke of borax as dirt. "I wouldn't stick a pick in thet," he said disdainfully.

Then he bade them good-bye and good luck and went his way, down toward the sombre valley that lay hidden under the red ranges. Adam felt a queer stinging sensation. He pitied and envied that poor prospector, passing down to the place where so many like him had found, not gold, but eternal peace. What strange long gaze Dismukes bent upon the receding figure!

Soon Adam and Dismukes faced the day's travel with the gait of men who had far to go and who knew how to make that distance. Adam's intention was to travel with his comrade out of the northern desert country. That meant many slow days. Dismukes

was going out of the desert, "inside" he called it, in the vernacular of old prospectors. Somewhere on the trail southward Adam would say farewell to his friend, and indeed expected it to be a long farewell.

"We'll have hell with this outfit of burros," declared Dismukes.

There were eight burros in the pack train, two belonging to Adam, the same number to Dismukes, and four strange burros that had belonged to the claim-jumpers. Two of these last were unburdened, and although they had been turned free, and even driven off, they wanted to and meant to go with the others. And one of them, a big black burro called Jack, was a mean customer. Now that he had been set free, he determined to remain free, yet at the same time try to disrupt the serene progress of the pack-train. Stones had no terrors for him.

On an extended march like this one, the most important and ever present duty and consideration and worry pertained to the burros. They had to be driven, they had to be kept together. Thus the hours of travel were concerned mostly with these perverse, yet faithful, and indispensable little beasts of burden.

Twenty miles a day, resting several hours through the fierce noon heat, the travelers made down across the Mojave Desert. To them, who had conquered the terrible element and desolation of Death Valley, this waste of the Mojave presented comparatively little to contend with. Still, hardened and daring as they were, they did not incur unnecessary risks.

The time was September, at the end of a fierce dry summer. Cloudless sky, fervid and quivering air, burning downward rays of sun and rising veils of reflected heat from sand and rock — these were not to be trifled with. Dismukes' little thermometer registered 130° in the shade; that is, whenever there was any shade to rest in. They did not burden themselves with the worry of knowing the degrees of heat while they were on the march.

Water-holes well known to Dismukes, though out of the beaten track, were found to be dry, and so the travelers had to go out of a direct line to replenish their supply. Under that burning sun even Dismukes and Adam suffered terribly after several hours without water. A very fine penetrating alkali dust irritated throat and nostrils, and augmented the pain of thirst. Once they went a whole day without water, and at sundown reached a well kept by a man who made a living by selling water to prospectors, and freighters, and drivers of borax-wagons. His prices were exorbitant. On this occasion, surlily surveying the parched travelers and the thirsty burros, he said his well was almost dry and he would not sell any water. Dismukes had told Adam that the well-owner bore him a grudge. They expostulated and pleaded with him to no avail. Adam went to the well, and lifting a trap-door he peered down, to see quite a goodly supply of water. Then he returned to the little shack where the bushy-whiskered hoarder of precious water sat on a box with a rifle across his knees. Adam always appeared mild and serene, except when he was angry, at which time a man would have had to be blind not to see his mood. The well owner probably expected Adam to plead again. But he reckoned falsely. Adam jerked the rifle from him and with a single movement of his hands he broke off the stock. Then he laid those big hard hands on the man, who seemed to shrink under them.

"Friend, you've plenty of water. It's a live well. You can spare enough to save us. We'll double your pay. Come."

ADAM loosened his right hand and doubled up the enormous mallet-like fist and swung it back. The well-owner suddenly changed his front. And the travelers got all the water they needed.

This country, criss-crossed by trails, and arid desert though it was, every few miles showed an abandoned mine, or a prospector working a claim, or a shack containing a desert dweller. Adam and Dismukes were approaching the highway that bisected the Mojave Desert. It grew to be more of a sandy country, where water is always scarce. Another of Dismukes' water-holes was dry. It had not been visited for months. The one wanderer who had stopped there, lay half-buried in the sand, a shrunken mummy of a man, with a dark and horrible mockery in the eyeless sockets of his skull. His skin was drawn like light brown parchment over his face. Adam looked, and then again, and gave a sudden start. He turned the sun-dried visage more to the light. He recognized that face, set in its iron mask of death, with its grin that would grin forever until the brown skull went to dust.

"Regan!" he exclaimed. "Poor Regan! He was the man who named me Wansfell. Why he called me that I never knew — never will know."

Deep in the sand they buried the remains of Regan and erected a rude cross to mark his lonely grave.

The travelers plodded on their [Continued on page 56]

She Gambled with Fate for a Home and Happiness

KALEEMA was her name and she was leading lady in one of those wildly absurd, heroic little theatrical companies which play only small towns and usually only one night before flitting on to the next town by the owl train that makes all stops. The actors play "Camille," "East Lynne," "Oliver Twist," and more like them. And sometimes in the summer they get to New York and sun themselves on the sidewalks just above and below Times Square, though often after a lean winter they play through the hot months in traction parks and other summer resorts. Such is the background of KALEEMA's love story—KALEEMA, the young star, wild, fine, beautiful and brave. It is full of the gaiety, the pathos, the high tension of lives spent with magnificent gestures.

The author, Marion McClelland, knows the life of the road show intimately and in "KALEEMA" she has reproduced its very feel and color and atmosphere with amazing fidelity. "KALEEMA" has just been published by The Century Co., 353 Fourth Ave., New York City, and is sold at all bookstores for \$2.00.

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to work to learn it. — You have been so kind & so tactful in all your rehearsals & it has made me feel so anxious to do what you wanted. If you had scolded me I should have been frightened out of whatever good work I was capable of — but you never did that. — Please don't think for a moment that I have any false ideas of myself. I've got a splendid part & a big opportunity & I ought to be far better than I am. I've been treated awfully well & I mean to deserve it. I'm not very good at saying things, but I never forget. Sincerely yours, Clara Bloodgood."

Everything is grist that comes to the mill of the dramatist, and one may expect situations to crop up and be made the most of at the opportune time. Once when the Elliots were playing in "Nathan Hale", after the final curtain Clyde was back stage when Maxine and Nat Goodwin began to do the "cake walk" in a most humorous manner. "I will put that in a play for you," declared the dramatist, and so it appeared in "The Cowboy and the Lady." Those who remember the cartoons by C. D. Gibson for *Life*, when he first made his popular success, will recognize the similarity between one of them and the opening of the second act of "The Climbers", where, at a Christmas eve dinner party, while the coffee and liqueurs are being served, the ladies all drop something under

the table, and the men disappear after them, coming up with fans, handkerchiefs, gloves, etc. The part of "Johnny Trotter" was especially written for Ferdinand Gottschalk, who came from London to appear in it. Clyde thought it too small a rôle, and studied over it to improve it. One night when the two were in his study together he suddenly exclaimed, "I've got it!" and began laughing. "I'll make your part the most talked of in town," he explained. "I'll give you a catch word which will be on the lips of everyone. How's this — 'I'm no Dodo bird.'" Then he added — and this shows the innate dramatist in him — "If that is used often enough, and what is still more important, — if it is not used too often — it'll be a go."

The year 1901 was a busy and active one: "The Climbers" on January 21st; "Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines" on February 4th; "Lover's Lane" on February 6th; and then toward the end of the year "The Last of the Dandies", with Beerbohm Tree, in London, and again in New York with "The Way of the World" on November 4th, and "The Girl and the Judge" on December 4th. He was now at the height of his activity, and his friends were beginning to warn him, to beg him to go more slowly. For the next three years, he was to be in a perfect furor of work, and the papers were to cartoon him both in pictures and in verse, an excellent sample of the latter being

McCLURE'S for FEBRUARY

from the New York *Sun*, called "A Hurling Histrionicus."

"Swat,
And out of the glittering social grot,
Of the very Fitchiest, fetchingest lot,
Stirred in the scorching society pot,
Hot,
He plucks a wild, weird name and plot;
Whiz!
Through all the scenic mysteries,
The gayly appareled fantasies,
Likewise the dramatic unities,
He shoves his pen until he makes it sizz.
Biff!
Act I. — Act II. — Act III., as if
The thing were a cigarette to whiff.
Slambang,
The word goes out to the Broadway gang!
Hooray!
Clyde Fitch has written another play."

Clyde enjoyed such fun at his expense, and he knew that there was a certain amount of truth in what they said about him. But he could no more help it than he could help dramatizing the people he met at a dinner party. It was just his nature to do so, and there was no other explanation.

The next article of this series, "The Life Story of Clyde Fitch", by Montrose J. Moses, will appear in an early issue of McClure's.

The Wanderer of the Wasteland

[Continued from page 34]

weary way, following every water clue until they found a place to camp. How dreary and monotonous this region!

Dismukes led Adam off the well-beaten trail one day, up a narrow sandy wash to a closed pocket that smelled old and musty. Here a green spring bubbled from under a bank of sand. Water clear as crystal, slightly green in tinge, sparkled and murmured. A whitish sediment bordered the tiny stream of running water.

"Arsenic!" exclaimed Adam.

"Yes. An' here's where I found a whole caravan of people dead. It was six years ago. Aha! look here!"

Dismukes put the toe of his boot against a round white object protruding from the sand. It was a bleached skull.

"SOME other fellow's drunk to his death since I was here," said Dismukes. "Wansfell, I'm almost out of the desert, an' I'll never come back. I'm goin' to put up a warnin'." "Men mad with desert thirst never stop to read," replied Adam, sadly.

Adam and Dismukes spent half a day at that arsenic spring, under the burning sun, suffering the thirst they dared not slake there; and they erected a rude cross that would stand for many and many a day. Deep in the cross-piece Adam cut the words: "DEATH ARSENIC SPRING! DON'T DRINK! GOOD WATER FIVE MILES. FOLLOW DRY STREAM BED."

Dismukes appeared to get deep satisfaction and even happiness out of this accomplished task. It was a monument to the end of his desert experience.

Next day the travelers came to a wide, hard-packed road winding in and out between the bare hills. They had reached the road where the long twenty-and-thirty-mule teams hauled the great wagons of borax down to the works at Daggett.

Adam had never been in the borax fields, but he had heard of these mule teams, and of hardship and toil so terrible that most workers died in a few months. These stories had interested Adam. The desert had developed in him defiance of the terrible, the impossible, the unattainable.

Darkness intervened before Adam and Dismukes reached a water-station along the road. They camped near it, and while Dismukes went for water, Adam set about other camp chores.

Then he joined Dismukes who was conversing with the men at the water-station. Excepting one young driver, they were a hard lot.

"Hell," snarled a red cadaverous-faced individual, with a hollow cough, "it ain't possible fer any man to work long in them mines. It'll kill him in a few months. An' as fer drivin' one of them teams of thirty mules — why, only a crazy man or a fool would try it."

The young driver, who sat dejectedly upon a box, bent over and hid his face.

"Reckon you're right," he said.

While he sat there with bowed head, Adam listened and watched; the other men indulged in a harangue on the evils of working for the borax mines. Often the mines had to be closed down because it was impossible to employ men to dig the borax and drive the mules. Few men who worked in the dust-laden holes of blasting heat had been known to stand it any length of time.

"Wal, it's out an' out suicide," declared the cadaverous-faced individual. "I quit. I'd starve to death before I'd go back. . . ."

"Chuck the job, Carricks," said the other man. "Go to huntin' gold."

"But a fellow's got to have money," spoke up the driver, Carricks. "They owe me two months' pay and I'm strapped. If I quit they'll take their time giving me my wages. And I've got a sick wife down at Daggett."

"Hard luck, Carricks," replied one of the men, roughly sympathetic. "It's a hell of a world. You've got to stick to drivin' them mules."

The young man lifted a face in which Adam read some of the torture he had suffered himself. It was an honest face, not yet hardened by desert life, and it was not without plucky spirit.

"Son, come here. Let me talk to you," said Adam, with blunt kindness. And as Carricks complied, Adam drew him out of earshot of the others. Dismukes joined them. "I heard what you said. Now you're in a tough fix. But maybe it's not so bad."

"It couldn't be worse," returned Carricks, rather huskily. "I've lost my nerve. That gray mule kicked me an awful belt. I can just walk. But I can't hitch up the rest of them mules, and I hadn't the guts to tell."

"We'll help you hitch up," said Adam.

"Much obliged. You're kind, stranger. And I wish I could tell you I could drive the devils. But I'm afraid I can't. They've bluffed me. And if I quit my job the boss will hold back my money. . . . And my wife — my baby —"

Here his husky voice broke and failed.

"I'll drive the mules for you," said Adam. How the dark shade lighted out of the young man's face! He stammered incoherent words. Dismukes gruffly cut him short.

"Come on over to our camp," he said.

Wonderingly, Carricks walked between the two men, beginning to talk eagerly to one and then the other, changed, radiant, no longer incredulous. When they got to the camp, Dismukes turned to Carricks.

"You're new out here?"

"Yes, I am," replied Carricks.

"Had some hard knocks?"

"I sure had. But I never squealed till now."

"Come west to make a home?" went on Dismukes.

"Yes. My wife's lungs are weak. But I know she'll get well here, if I can only —"

"Sure, she'll get well," interrupted Dismukes, and then he turned to Adam.

"Wansfell, I reckon you're goin' to drive those ornery mules a while for this lad," he asserted.

"You've read my mind," declared Adam. "An' we've reached the partin' of the trails. . . . Well, it's as good here as anywhere. An' I guess better."

He fumbled in one of his packs, and after a moment, brought forth a small canvas sack, which he handed to the young man.

"Lad, there's a little gold dust for your wife an' baby," he said, with a rich note in his bass voice. "I'm Dismukes, an' my pard here is Wansfell. An' I'm sayin' to you, don't give up because you've got some hard knocks from bad men an' ornery mules. The west is full of both. But there are other kinds of men — such as you'll be some day if you go straight an' fight straight. You've got to fight to be a real man, an' that's the good of life."

An hour later Adam watched Dismukes drive his burros out on the lonely trail. The rolling voice of Dismukes, sonorous and splendid, still rang in Adam's ears: "Pard, we're square! . . . Good-bye!" Adam, deeply agitated, watched Dismukes stride down the barren trail, behind his bobbing burros, watched him stride on into the lonely glaring desert, until he vanished in the gray monotony.

When the following March came, Adam had been a week plodding southward over the yucca plateaus of the Mojave.

The desert had changed its face. The weather was that of an exquisite eastern day in June. Gone like the glaring colors was the heat. It was a joy to tramp along, to feel the warm pleasant sunshine on his back.

TOWARD sunset Adam was down on the trail around the western wall of San Jacinto. Coming toward him were two men and two burros, one of which appeared to have a rider. Presently, they appeared to see Adam, for they halted. When they started on again they sheered a little off a straight following of the trail. Whereupon Adam, too, sheered off a little, so as to pass near them. When they got fairly close he saw two rough looking men, one driving a packed burro, and the other leading a burro upon which was a ragged slip of a girl. When nearly abreast, Adam hailed them.

"Howdy, stranger," they replied, halting.

"Come from inside?"

"No. I'm down from the Mojave," replied Adam. "How's the water? Reckon you came by the cottonwoods?"

"Nope. There ain't none there," replied one of the men, shortly. "Plenty an' fine water down the trail."

"Thanks. Where you headed for?"

"Riverside. My gal hyar is sick an' pinin' for home."

Adam had been aware of the rather sharp scrutiny of these travelers, and that they had exchanged whispers. Such procedures were natural on the desert, but in this case they struck Adam as peculiar. Then he shifted his gaze to the girl on the burro. He could not see her face, as it was bowed. Apparently she was weeping. She made a coarse drab little figure. But her hair shone in the light of the setting sun—a rich dark brown with glints of gold.

Adam replied to the curt good-bye of the men, and faced ahead to his own course. Then he heard low sharp words: "Shet up!" Wheeling, he was in time to see one of these men roughly shake the girl. Something made Adam hesitate and wonder; and presently as he proceeded on his way, the same subtle something turned him round to watch the receding figures.

"Humph! Somehow I don't like the looks of those fellows," muttered Adam. "They said no water at the cottonwoods. Either they lied or didn't know. For there certainly must be water in a spring the Indians have used for hundreds of years!"

Adam turned again to gaze after the little party. He had nothing tangible upon which to hang suspicions. He was just slowly answering to one of his peculiar feelings.

"I'll go back," said Adam. Tying his burros to greasewood bushes near the trail he started to stride back over the ground he had covered. For a while he peered through gathering shadows just able to see the moving darker spots on the gray sand, and then twilight hid them. He kept on. After a while he caught a glimmer of firelight. They had made dry camp hardly five miles beyond the place where Adam had passed them. This seemed an unusual procedure, because better camping sites could have been found all along the mountain wall.

As Adam stalked out of the gloom into the camp he saw both men busy with preparations for the meal. The girl sat in a disconsolate attitude. She espied Adam before either of the men heard him. Adam saw her quiver and start erect. Suddenly one of the men rose with his hand going to his hip.

"Who goes thar?" he demanded.

Adam halted inside the circle of light. "Say, I lost my coat. Must have fallen off my pack. Did you fellows find it?"

"No, we didn't find no coat," replied the man, slowly. He straightened up with his hand dropping to his side. The other fellow was on his knees mixing dough in a pan.

Adam advanced with natural manner, but his eyes took swift stock of that camp.

"Pshaw! I was sure hoping you'd found it," he said, as he reached the fire. "I had a time locating your camp. Funny you'd come way off the trail, down in here."

"Funny or not, stranger, it's our bizness," gruffly replied the man standing.

"Sure," replied Adam, with apparent good nature. He was close to the man now, as close as he ever needed to get to any man who might make a threatening move. And he looked past him at the girl. She had a pale little face, too small for a pair of wonderful dark eyes that seemed full of woe and terror. She held out thin hands to Adam.

"Reckon you'd better go an' hunt fer yer coat," returned the man, significantly.

In one stride Adam loomed over him, his leisuely, casual manner suddenly transformed to an attitude of menace. He stood fully a foot and a half over this stockily-built man, who also suddenly underwent a change. He stiffened. Warily he peered up, just a second behind Adam in decision.

"Say, I'm curious about this girl you've got with you," said Adam, deliberately.

The man gave a start. "Aw, you are, hey?" he rasped out. "Wal, see hyar, stranger, curious fellers sometimes die sudden, with their boots on."

Adam's face gathered for swift action. Keeping a sharp gaze riveted on this man he addressed the girl: "Little girl, what's wrong? Are you—"

"Shet up! If you blab out I'll slit your tongue!" yelled the fellow, whirling fiercely.

"Girl, don't be afraid. Speak!" called Adam, in a voice that rang.

"Oh, save me!" she cried wildly.

Then the man, hissing like a snake, was reaching for his gun when Adam struck him. He fell clear across the fire, and rolling over some packs, lay still. The other one, cursing, started to crawl, to reach with flour-whitened hand for a gun lying in a belt upon the sand. Adam kicked the gun away and pounced upon the man bearing him down, and burrowing his face in the sand. Then placing a ponderous knee on the back of the man's neck he knelt there, holding him down.

"Girl, throw me that piece of rope," said Adam, pointing.

She shakily got up and threw the rope to Adam. In short order, he bound the man's arms behind his back.

"Now, little girl, you can tell me what's wrong," said Adam, rising.

"Oh, they took me away—from mother!" she whispered.

"Your mother? Where?"

"She's at the cottonwoods. We live there."

Adam could not see her plainly. The fire had burned down. He threw on more greasewood and some sage that flared up with sparkling smoke. Then he drew the girl to the light. What a thin arm she had! "You live there? Then he lied about the water?" asked Adam.

"Oh, yes—he lied."

"Who are these men?"

"I don't know. They camped at the water. I—I was out—gathering firewood. One of them—the one you hit—grabbed me—carried me off. My mother's sick. She didn't know what happened. She'll be terribly frightened. . . . Oh, please take me—home!"

"Indeed I will," replied Adam, heartily. "Come now. Walk right behind me."

Adam led the way out of camp without another glance at the two men, one of whom was groaning. The girl kept close at Adam's heels. Suddenly he remembered that she had no shoes.

"You'll stick your feet full of cactus," he said. "You should have on your shoes."

"I have no shoes," she replied. "But cactus doesn't hurt me—except the cholla. Even the Indians think cholla bad."

"Let me carry you, little girl."

"I can walk."

So they set off on the star-lit trail, and here she walked beside him. He gazed out across the level gray and drab desert. Whatever way he directed his wandering steps over this land of waste, he was always gravitating toward new adventure. For him the lonely reaches and rock-ribbed canyons were sure to harbor some humanity that drew him like a magnet.

All at once a slim rough little hand slipped into his. Instinctively Adam closed his own great hand over it. That touch gave him such a thrill as he had never before felt in his life. It seemed to link his strength and this child's trust.

"It was lucky you happened along," said the girl. "They were bad men. And oh! I was so glad to see them—at first. It's so lonely. No one ever comes except the Indians—and they come to beg things to eat—never to give. I thought those white men were prospectors and would give me something mother would like. We've had so little to eat."

"That so? Well, I have a full pack," replied Adam. "Plenty of flour, coffee, sugar, bacon, canned milk, dried fruit."

"And you'll give us some?" she asked, eagerly, in a whisper.

"All you need."

"Oh, you're good!" she exclaimed, with a throb of joy. "You see the Indian who packed supplies to us hasn't come for so long. And our food gave out little by little. Mother starved herself for me. She'd say she didn't want what I'd cook. Then I'd have to eat it."

"Isn't your mother able to get about?" asked Adam, peering down at her.

"Oh, no. She's dying of consumption," was the low sad reply.

"And your father?" asked Adam.

"He died two years ago. I guess it's two, for the peak has been white twice."

"Died?—here in the desert?"

"Yes. We buried him by the running water where he loved to sit."

"Tell me—how did your parents and you come to be here?"

"They both had consumption long before I was born," replied the girl. "And they both were going to die. They had tried every way to get well, but the doctors said they couldn't. So they started west in a prairie-schooner. I was born in it, somewhere in Kansas. They tried place after place, trying to find a climate that would cure them. But father never improved till we got to this valley. Here he was getting strong again. Then my uncle came and he found gold over in the mountains. That made father mad to get rich—to have gold for me. He worked too hard—and then he died. Mother has been slowly failing ever since."

"It's a sad story, little girl," replied Adam.

"But your uncle—what became of him?"

"He went off prospecting for gold. But

he came back several times. And the last was just before father died. Then he said he would come back again for me some day, and take me out of the desert. Mother lives on that hope. But I don't want him to come. All I pray for is that she gets well."

"So you've lived all your life on the desert?"

"Yes. Mother says I never slept under a real roof."

"And how old are you?"

"Nearly fourteen."

"So old as that. Well! I thought you were younger. May I ask how you learned to talk as if you had been to school?"

"My mother was a school-teacher. She taught me."

"What's your name?"

"It's Eugenie Linwood. But I don't like Eugenie. Father and mother always called me Genie. What's your name, Mister?"

"Mine is Wansfell."

"You're the biggest man I ever saw! I thought the Yuma Indians were giants, but you're bigger."

Presently Adam saw the dark gray forms of his burros along the trail. Jenny appeared to be more contrary than usual, and as Adam drove her ahead with the other burro she often lagged to take a nip at the sage. During the several miles farther down the trail Adam was hard put to it to keep her going steadily. The murmur of flowing water soon reached Adam's ears, and then big cottonwoods loomed up, and beyond them the gleam of starlight on stately palm-trees. Adam, peering through the shadows, distinguished a thatch-roofed hut.

"We'll not tell mother about the men," whispered the girl. "It'll only scare her."

"All right, Genie," said Adam, as she led him to the hut. Dark as pitch it was inside.

"Mother, are you awake?" called Genie.

"Oh, child, where have you been?" rejoined a voice, faint and weak, with a note of relief. "I woke up in the dark. . . . I called. You didn't come."

Then followed a cough that had a shuddering significance for Adam.

"Mother, I'm sorry. I—I met a Mr. Wansfell. And he came with me. He has a new pack of good things to eat. And oh! mother, he's different from those men who were here—he'll help us."

"Madam, I'll be happy to do anything I can for you and your little girl," said Adam. "Sir, your voice startled me," replied the woman, with a gasp. "But it's a voice I trust. The looks of men in this hard country deceive me sometimes—but never their voices. . . . Sir, if you will help us you will have the gratitude of a dying woman—in torture of dread for her child."

The darkness was intense inside the hut, and Adam could see nothing.

"You can—trust me," he said, presently, very low. "My name is Wansfell. If I may—I'll stay here—serve you—look after your little girl till her uncle comes."

"At last—God has answered my—prayer!" exclaimed the woman, pantingly.

DAYLIGHT showed to Adam the cottonwood oasis as he had it pictured in memory, except for the palm-thatched hut. He was hard at camp duties when Genie came out. The sun was rising, silver and ruddy and gold, and it shone upon her as she knelt beside the running water. While she bathed there, splashing diamond drops of water in the sunshine, she seemed all brightness and youth. But in the merciless light of day her face was too small, too thin, too pinched to have any comeliness.

"Good morning, Genie," said Adam, cheerily. "Of course you can help me. There's heaps of work. And when you help me with that I'll play with you."

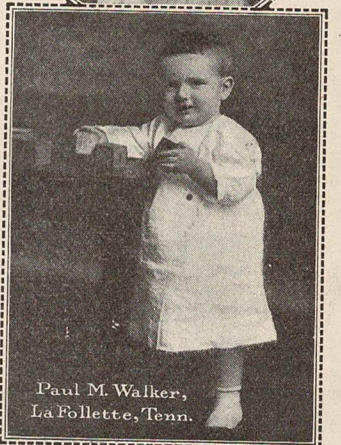
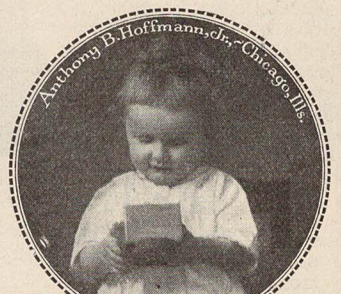
"Play!" she murmured, dreamily. She had never had a playmate.

Thus began the business of the day for Adam. When breakfast was over and done with he set to work to improve that camp and especially with an eye to the comfort of the invalid. He knew the wonderful curative qualities of desert air, if it was wholly trusted and lived in. On the shady side of the hut he erected a wide porch with palm-thatched roof.

Mrs. Linwood managed to get out to her new quarters. Her pleasure at the change showed in her wan face. The porch was shady, cool, fragrant. She could look right out upon the clean brown beautiful streams where they met, and at the camp-fire, and at night she could see it blaze and glow, and burn down red.

"Mrs. Linwood, sleeping outdoors is the most wonderful experience," said Adam, earnestly. "You feel the night wind. You look up through the leaves to the dark blue

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"Alas! We always feared the chill night air," sighed Mrs. Linwood. "Life teaches so many lessons—too late."

"It is never too late," returned Adam.

He set himself to further tasks, and soon that day was ended. Other days like it passed swiftly, and each one brought more hope of prolonging Mrs. Linwood's life. She improved in some mysterious way that seemed of spirit rather than of flesh. As day after day went by, she manifestly grew stronger. Adam came at length to understand that the improvement was only a result of the inception of faith she had in him.

One day, Mrs. Linwood called Adam to her while Genie was absent.

"Will you stay here—take care of Genie—until her uncle comes back?" she queried.

"I promise you. But I think you should not want me to keep her here too long," replied Adam, earnestly. "She has her life to live. Suppose he does not come back in a year or two? My dear woman, do not fondly imagine men always come back out of the desert."

"Ah! I hadn't thought of that. You are—right. . . . What then—is your idea?"

"Well, I'd wait here a good long time," said Adam, soberly. "Then if Genie's uncle didn't come, I'd find a home for her."

"A home—for Genie! . . . Wansfell, have you considered?—That would take money—to travel—to buy Genie—what she ought to—have."

"That part need not worry you. I have money. I'll look out for Genie. I'll find a home for her and give her a start."

"You'd do—all that?" whispered the woman.

"I promise you. Now, Mrs. Linwood, don't distress yourself. It'll be all right."

"It is all right. I'm not—in distress," she replied, with something new in her voice.

"Oh, thank God—my faith—never failed!"

"Wansfell—listen," she whispered, with more force. "Genie is not poor. No! . . . She's rich! . . . Her father found gold. . . . He slaved at digging. That killed him—but he found gold. It's hidden inside the hut—under the floor—where I used to lie. . . . Bags of gold!—Wansfell, my child will be rich!"

"Well! . . . Oh, but I'm glad!" exclaimed Adam, in amazement.

"Yes. It's wonderful. It sustains me. . . . But I've worried so. . . . My husband expected me—to take Genie out of the desert—to find her a home. Alas! that joy can never be mine! . . . I've worried about that money—Genie's uncle—John Shaver is his name—he's a good man. He loved her. I think—he'll be a father to Genie."

"Does he know about the gold that will be Genie's?" asked Adam quickly.

"No. We never told him. My husband didn't trust John—in money matters. John drove hard bargains. But he was honest. . . . Wansfell, if you'll say you'll go with Genie—when her uncle comes—and invest the money—secure it for her—until she's of age—I will have no other prayer except for her happiness. . . . I will die in peace."

"I promise. I'll do my best," he declared, fervently.

The next time she spoke to him was that evening at dusk.

"Wansfell—you remember—once we talked of God," she said, very low.

"Yes, I remember," replied Adam.

"Are you just where you were—then?"

"About the same, I guess."

"Wansfell, what do you call the thing in you—the will to tarry here? The manhood that I trusted? . . . The forgetfulness of self? . . . What do you call this strength of yours that fulfilled my faith—that enables me to die happy—that will be the salvation of my child?"

"Manhood?—Strength?" echoed Adam in troubled perplexity. "I'm just sorry for you—for the little girl."

"Ah, yes, sorry! Indeed you are. But you don't know yourself. . . . Wansfell, there was a presence beside my bed—just a moment before I called you. Something neither light nor shadow nor substance—something neither life nor death. . . . It is gone now. But when I am dead it will come to you. I will come to you—like that. . . . Somewhere out in the solitude and loneliness of your desert—you will face your soul. . . . You'll see the divine in man. . . . You'll realize that the individual dies, but the race lives. . . . That your soul is immortal. . . . That this Thing in you is God!"

When the voice ceased—Adam bowed his head, and plodded over the soft sand, out to the open desert where mustering shadows enclosed him—a man bent under the Atlantic doubt and agony and mystery of the world.

The next day Genie's mother died.

Long before sunrise of a later day Adam climbed to the first bulge of the mountain wall. On lofty heights his mind worked more slowly—sometimes not at all.

The sunrise solved Adam's problem. His kindness, his pity, his argument and reason and entreaty had all failed to stir Genie out of her mute misery. Nothing spiritual could save her. But Genie had another mother—nature—to whom Adam meant to appeal as a last hope.

He descended the slope to the oasis. There, near a new-made grave that ran parallel with an old one, mossy and gray, sat Genie, clamped in her wretchedness.

"Genie," he called sharply, intending to startle her. He did startle her. "I'm

getting sick. I don't have exercise enough. I must begin to walk again."

"Then go," she replied.

"But I can't leave you alone here," he protested. "Some other bad men might come. I'm sorry. You must come with me."

At least she was obedient. Heavily she rose, a thin shadow of a girl, hollow-eyed and wan, failing every hour. Adam offered his hand at the stream to help her across. But for that she would have fallen. She left her hand in his. And they set out upon the strangest walk Adam had ever undertaken. It was not long, and before it ended he had to drag her, and finally carry her.

Next day he took her out again, and thereafter every morning and every afternoon, relentless in his determination, though his cruelty wrung his heart. Gentle and kind as he was, he yet saw that she fell into the stream, that she pricked her bare feet on cactus, that she walked farther and harder every day. Nature was as relentless as Adam. Soon Genie's insensibility to pain and hunger was if it had never been. Thus by action, and the forcing of her senses, which were involuntary, he turned her mind from her black despair. This took days and weeks.

One morning he missed her. Upon searching he found her flat on the grassy bank of the stream, face downward, with her thin brown feet in the air. He wondered what she could be doing; and his heart sank, for she had often said it would be so easy and sweet to lie down and sleep in the water.

"Genie, child, what are you doing?"

"Look! the bees—the honey bees! They're washing themselves in the water. First I thought they were drinking. But no! . . . They're washing. It's so funny."

Genie responded slowly to the Spartan training. She had been frail, at best, and when grief clamped her soul and body she had sunk to the verge. The effort she was driven to, and the exertion needful, wore her down until she appeared merely skin and bones. Then she began to mend. Little by little her appetite improved until at last hunger seized upon her. From that time she grew like a weed.

Adam, giving himself wholly to this task of rehabilitation, added a thoughtful and interesting appeal to her mind. At once he made two discoveries—first, that Genie would give herself absorbingly to any story whatsoever, and secondly, that his mind seemed to be a full treasure-house from which to draw. He who had spoken with so few men and women on the desert now was inspired by a child.

[The next instalment of "The Wanderer of the Wasteland" will appear in McClure's for March]

The Story of a Great Dime Novelist

by Fred C. Kelly

IN a secluded little cabin, in the heart of a Maine forest, dwells a man who would be quickly estimated almost anywhere as probably somebody in particular.

Just a few months short of seventy the man is, but his figure is that of an athlete. Everything about him suggests vigor. No shrunken muscles, flabbiness, no roly-poly tummy in his lap, no double chin, and no bloodhound-like wrinkles in his face.

His hair and mustache and eyebrows are snow-white. The top of his head is as bristly as the back of the average caterpillar. He even has a good thatch of vigorous white hair on his sinewy hands and forearms.

The face is that of a man who not only lives out-doors but greatly enjoys doing so. It is a clean-chiseled, shrewd face, but full of good humor. The eyes twinkle with cordiality. Though nearly seventy, this man can walk farther, swim better, and chop down more trees in an hour than most of us who are still in the thirties.

It is perhaps just as well to admit before proceeding further that this rugged old fellow in the cabin in the Maine woods is John R. Coryell. And John R. Coryell is one of the greatest writers of nickel libraries, dime novels, and other thrillers published in paper binding, that ever lived.

The reason Coryell is such a sound physical specimen to-day is because dime novel writing made serious demands on his physical endurance and he found it necessary

years ago to keep in constant training in order to hold his job.

Thousands of youngsters, now grown to manhood, have been spanked for reading the works of Coryell. They were so thrilling that parents forbade them as too likely to keep boys awake nights. The books were moral enough, but exciting.

It was Coryell who invented Nick Carter and wrote the first half-dozen Nick Carter novels.

He was the first man to write romantic novels under the name of Bertha M. Clay!

He was the first author to enter into direct competition with Laura Jean Libbey. His writing name, when he did that, was Julia May Edwards.

Scores upon scores of serials under other brands, each one literally packed with thrills, were turned out by Coryell.

Besides all his activity in the great field of thrillism proper, he wrote reams of mildly exciting tales for juvenile publications—*Youth's Companion*, *Harper's Young People*, *Golden Days*, *Wide Awake* and others.

Moreover, Coryell was, I believe, the first man to go in for novelizing plays. He wrote the novelization of Denman Thompson's "The Old Homestead"—Neil Burgess's "The County Fair", and other successes of that far off period. Altogether, he has had more than two hundred novels published in book form.

For five years Coryell wrote under con-

tract 100,000 words a month of serials containing nothing but romance and excitement.

As a general thing, he had two or three serials running simultaneously. And there was a period when he kept six of them going at once! In order to do that, he was obliged to write an 8,000—word instalment every day in the week—one day for each serial. Frequently he was forced to finish one story and start on the next one without ever coming up for air.

Though one of the greatest quantity producers of thrills of his time, Coryell himself cares nothing for the kind of adventure and excitement that he has packed into his stories. He gets his own thrills in watching his garden grow, or catching glimpses of the deer, ermine, foxes, and other creatures of the forest.

"My garden," he says, "gives me the same big thrill every spring just as if it was the first garden I ever had. Adventure? Bless your heart, last year my wife and I remained in the cabin all winter. Frequently we had six feet of snow right outside the door, on the level. To get our supplies in the face of such an obstacle of nature was of itself a daily achievement that comprised a delightful adventure."

I asked Coryell what had given him the biggest thrill of his career. Promptly he told me: "I was riding along on a street car one day many years ago and saw a man reading a copy of the *Youth's Companion*. I leaned