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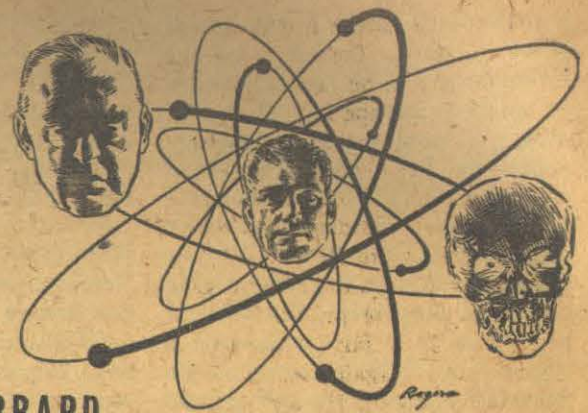
BY L. RON HUBBARD

THE END IS NOT YET



BY L. RON HUBBARD

THE END IS NOT YET

First of three parts of Hubbard's first post-war novel. A story of a few men against a dictatorship—and of the inevitable, the inescapable, result, whatever the determination, the high ideals and high courage of the rebels!

Illustrated by Rogers

INTRODUCTION

The street lay heavy with the grayish murk of fog, and no thicker or solid than this was the man who drifted to me that night, bearing a message and the tale that is told herein.

He was a square, triumphant man, with the solid, savage triumph of one who has but lately cheated death. His laugh was harsh, cynical, unpleasant to the ear; his speech was learned but careless from accustomed power; and the suit which bulged on his unstable bulk was tweed, gray as the fog, redolent as a laboratory.

I was writing at the time, hunched over the old secretary but favoring the fire—for cold bites an ancient wound and cold with fog is pain. That which I did was inconsequential now, pen scratches to outline dreams which would never be. I had been listening to the radio muttering as low as the sigh of flames in the grate. Russia had spoken her piece. France had felt her pride. And the United States and England blindly batted the specter of lost gain. Before spring, cold as the fog, unreasoning as the fire, war would come again, for the third time in my generation. The knowledge was clammier than the fog. World War III would be the Atomic War.

He did not enter at the door—that was double-barred against the parades which eddied into Seventy-fifth Street from Broadway. Nothing had come in the slightly parted window but the gray tendrils and the blare of a far off band—a sad band, yelling against the mouth of waiting oblivion. He was occupying a chair which, not mine, drifted with half-seen metallic glints in the chimney corner. Through him, quite easily, I saw my Sessions seascape of a plunging, storm-labored ship.

The smoothness of his appearance, of his coming, did not jolt my nerves despite the fact that these have decreased in resiliency since the last war. It was so quiet, so effortless, that visitation, that I found myself calmly regarding the visitor as though I had for long expected him.

I knew him, I thought. It was Professor MacIlwraith of Columbia. Recollecting myself, I started up and bowed, mechanically fumbling for my cigarette case and staring covertly around for the wine decanter. I realize now that the dreadful portents of the moment had so bemused me, the internationally idiocy had so saddened me, that nothing could have jarred.

"You," he said in his harsh, unpleasant voice, "are Charles Martel."

It was an accusation but it was accurate identification.

"Wine?" I said.

"As you see me now, Captain Martel, I could not well imbibe wine, no matter the thirst." He picked up a square hand and looked ruefully through it. "We have perfected this far, no further—if you can call it perfection at all. My voice comes clear to you?"

"Of course," I said. "Cigarette?"

The firelight flicked on his craggy face as he packed a thoughtful pipe, searching how to begin something. He turned and said something over his shoulder to some one I did not see and nodded at the reply.

"You did not appear very disconcerted, sir," said MacIlwraith.

"Am I supposed to be? What the gods and science propose—"

He looked at me with approval. "Then interplane travel does not awe you. Perhaps you have studied it here on this plane?"

"Durak wrote a book. People plucked matter from holes in space. A few have seen through for a moment or two. A ghost is a scientific fact, I suppose. Have you come here to prove it?"

"Perhaps," and he seemed to study me.

"Then you've picked an ideal night, professor. The Atomic War awaits and we'll all be ghosts of a real sort before many dawns whisk by."

He laughed again, at some length, as though I had said something truly witty. His manner toward me seemed less harsh and, released for an instant from the intensity of his gaze, I realized for the first time that my Sessions seascape really was seeing straight through him.

"Come all the way in," I said.

His laughter grew and there seemed to be others laughing about him although I saw nothing. It was a pleased, flattering sort of mirth.

"If I came all the way through," said the professor, "so far as we know, I would have to stay on your plane. I should make clear the fact that I am not the Professor MacIlwraith you know. I am but his counterpart."

"How is this?"

"Why, when Washington was struck, the time plane split. Didn't you know?"

"Struck? By what?"

"The German Atomic Bomb, of course. That was in early 1945, a long time ago."

"Lead us not into dizzy by-trails, professor. Washington was not struck."

"Captain, that was the split of the time planes. Our Washington was struck. Yours was not. It catalyzed our advance in time so that we are many, many years ahead of you. We have had two atomic wars, so much time have we lived while you lived so little. The first was in 1945, the second was several years after. We have traveled almost two generations while you have gone but five or six years. We have made technological advances about which you have not yet begun to dream. Not only am I the Professor MacIlwraith you know, but I am thirty-seven years older, remarkably preserved by our medical science. But come, that seems to be war I hear on your radio. Don't tell me that you failed to win the war in 1945, even with your Washington spared!"

"We won the war," I said. "Our coats were not touched. We hit Japan with two atomic bombs and then the thing was done. No one who was anyone here was hurt. War was still play. A big football game. Something to make bets on. Something to sell bonds and slogans about. Something to laugh and grow rich about. Nobody was hurt, professor."

"Your scientists?" he asked.

"They did nothing. What could they do. Go along. Take their pay. Give away their patents. Make new formulas for slaughter. Don't be hard on them. They tried to break clean but they couldn't. Nobody who mattered was hurt."

"Didn't you have a United Nations? What did it do?"

I smiled a little. The band was fading out but someone was getting a cheer on the corner. Several cheers. And the fog was thicker and colder in the room.

"Professor, politics has been a thousand years behind every other means of human advancement. This will always be true. Politics depends upon changing the minds of a great many people. Science depends upon a few accurate discoveries learned by a few people. It has always been so. And thus science is turned back to murder on a par with the villianies of the middle ages. The United Nations?" I laughed at him.

"Captain, what, may I ask, have you yourself done?"

I poured a small glass of wine, glancing for his permission. I examined the amber glow of it against the warm firelight. "I spoke. I wrote. People said I was bitter. Said the war had turned my mind. Said I was wounded and to be pitied but, fortunately, not to be taken seriously. Some called me the Prophet of Doom. I even made the Sunday supplements once. The Prophet of Doom." I drank the wine. "But mostly they did not talk at all, or think at all. There were a few others like myself. We drowned casually in a sea of indifference."

"You took no action?"

"What action could I take? Oh, we had a few ideas, we did a few things. For a little while three atomic scientists and an ex-naval officer and myself attempted to form a group to be known as the Allied Scientists of the World. We attended a meeting or two at Cal Tech. We corresponded with the people at Alamogordo. But the scientists themselves were too savage, to extreme, and though we decided that the proper function of the scientist was to benefit all mankind even if scientists themselves had to rule the world, there was too much prima donna in the top flight, too much bitterness in the ranks. We wrote a charter, a code. We were destroyed by lack of capital in part, but mostly by the tremendous inertia of the people. We had ideas. No one could agree. And now—"

The televisor was flickering with a long-range view of the Russian dictator addressing a crowded mass in the Red Square. The volume was turned too low to hear the announcer. Probably it was a recast with motion pictures, for Russia was too well censored to permit a direct scan, especially just now.

I sat for a little while looking at the screen, feeling the drifting fog outside, hearing the far off thud of a drum—the only instrument of the departing band to carry the distance.

"Charles Martel," said the square, triumphant man, "you have nothing with which to reproach yourself. But you have not yet done all you could."

There was no accusation in it, rather an invitation.

"When nations are in trouble and people starve, they inevitably turn to a Messiah," he continued. "So turned the American Indian when he could not longer prevail against the white man. Thus faced the civilized world under the onslaught of barbarians two thousand years ago. So will turn mankind once more.

"You are not aware of it, but you had a counterpart in our plane, just as I have one in yours. He worked, thought, organized and worked again. From the wreathing smoke of our ruins he raised a civilization greater than any of the past. He gave his life in the endeavor, but there are happy millions who worship him here now."

"My counterpart there?"

"Yes, that portion of you which took this plane. A god he is, a hero beyond the maddest story of any Valhalla. I know not what you can do. My visit, which will be my last, concerns only the placing in your

hands of the story and notes of the Charles Martel we know, the Charles Martel that you can be. Are you still interested in severing your present interests and embarking upon a career which here you took?"

"Where are the works?"

"You will have them in a moment, for they are the sole purpose of my visit. But I must impress upon you the importance of these documents and urge that you read them as soon as possible. It appears" and he motioned toward the televisor, "that you have very little time."

"Give them to me."

"No, not yet. You wonder that we have here achieved interplane travel while you have not. You wonder why we have sources of energy not available to you. I shall not attempt to explain exactly what this is, for I have a handbook here which details it, a book written long ago by your counterpart here, a book entitled, 'Negative Energy Flows: A Neglected Field with Some Notes on Future Potentialities in Life Creation.' The details here may or may not be known on your plane. Just as energy which you use as electricity was once inducible only by amber and useful not at all, so is negative flow now produced in your plane only with glass. Can you imagine a culture without electricity? Then you can see how lost I would feel in a culture without electricity and negative flow—which we have called viticity from its association with life currents and waves. Many of your greatest puzzles there on your plane must come from an inability to measure, produce or utilize this magnificent and powerful source of energy and life. You are living in a world run on it and yet you cannot even measure it. You have yet to tap the greatest reservoir of energy and power which will be available to man.

"Your atomic energy and, hence, an atomic war, may be a fixation with you. You break up atoms and destroy things. But what holds the atom together? You are using a low-grade force now, and have in consequence a puzzled science and, without insulting you I hope, a low-grade culture."

"You come at a very late time," I said. "Tomorrow, next week, next month we will be deluged with self-navigating, circumnavigating missiles. We may not even know our enemy and will strike out blind, perhaps to destroy all. Yes, you come very late."

"Perhaps. Perhaps not. But I come to tell you that if you on this plane could produce viticity, you on that plane may certainly produce the thing for which you have all proper notes. But I may overestimate your backwardness. It may just be that somewhere there some one—not you—has already made viticity. In that event do not hope for a mild atomic war."

"A mild atomic war!" I gasped.

"Aye," said MacIlwraith. "I said 'mild'!"

"You mean viticity is that much more powerful than electricity?"

"And attracting atoms within themselves is that much more powerful than fission. If it has been done on your plane, then do not sit and worry about atomic bombs. You'll not have just an atomic war. We had that this side, you know. Washington was struck and some other places in the world and we seem to have survived it—thanks to Charles Martel and the rest. But the war which devastated was not part of World War II. It was . . . but here are the books."

"Could I ask—?"

"Read the books," said MacIlwraith. "The story of Martel is written by his friend and is a biography meant to please. The others are volumes which changed our lives."

I did not realize that he had already begun to fade from my room, that only fog drifted where his chair had been.

Before the fire, in the center of the hearth rug, a volume began to appear, held in a spotlight of green which had no visible source. Another book grew and took body and then a third. The light faded and only the guttering fire splashed on the covers.

I took them and found them wholly solid. They were bound in scarlet and each was emblazoned with a great golden sword. The smaller pair were entitled: "Negative Energy Flows: A Neglected Field with Some Notes on Future Potentialities in Life Creation" and "Codes, Constitution and General Organization of the Allied Scientists of the World, with notes on Viticity Defense." After an interested examination I laid them by.

All my interest, for such is the ego of man, was focused upon "Charles Martel: A Biography by Le Chat a Faime."

And here is the story:

CHARLES MARTEL

A BIOGRAPHY

By

Le Chat a Faime

PROLOGUE

The prison darkness was sickening hot and the Negro in the next cell was moaning. Against the gray stone ceiling above the bunk of Charles Martel, Convict 168-353, marched or writhed the broken dreams of yesteryear.

For two heartbreaking years he had watched that dim parade each night when the lights blacked out and thrust away the grating steel and stone and for two endless sweating summers he had endured the heat. Two winters had frozen him here. Two autumns. Two springs had brought no hope.

For life.

Treason against the United States of America.

Attempting to overthrow the government by force.

Aid and comfort to her enemies.

For life.

He who held the only key to all the senseless whirl without these walls was buried alive within them.

For life. But would he live when

the millions had died whom he had sought to save?

And across the ceiling marched the hell in his heart while the Negro moaned and far off on the prairie summer lightning flashed. And down from the unseen ceiling the great blob of a face muttered, "I'll get you, Charles Martel. I'll get you if I have to beat all hell for evidence. I'll get you, Charles Martel!"

For life.

"You awake, Martel?"

He lay for a little while not answering. Jimmy knew he was awake. Jimmy was a yegg that could see in the dark.

"Want a cigarette, Martel?"

He took Jimmy's cigarette and in the flash of the lighter saw the thin, scared visage of the man. Jimmy's hand was trembling. He didn't like the dark, this frightened little man. He wanted to see a human face for a moment and see a cigarette glow and fade as human breath drew on it.

The parade was stale bones and rags, thin with being watched. But it would march and march as the years went on until it came to its end, an end which stopped with a cheap black box in the dirt of the prison yard.

He watched the little yegg nervously twitch the cigarette between his lips. A year ago Jimmy had talked his whole life out. There was little to say which had not been said before. Charles Martel talked to no one.

"I got a feeling," said the yegg.

Martel shut off the parade with effort.

"I heard the radio in the shop saying something about Russia and England and Spain. I ain't smart like you, Martel. But I got a feeling." He paused, raised himself suddenly. "I got a feeling it ain't all right tonight."

"Go to sleep, Jimmy. It will be light in a few hours."

"No, this is different. My girl, I know she's gone. She ain't faithful, not like your boy. I got the cough and I'll never leave this place alive. I know that. But this is different."

"Go to sleep, Jimmy."

"No, listen, Martel. You're smart. You know about these things. You know about nations and wars and such. You're probably the smartest man in this place."

"Not smart enough to keep out of here," said Martel bitterly.

"It's the breaks. I make a clean job of it. I get the stuff in a bag and the bag out of the window. I hit a cop by accident. It's the breaks."

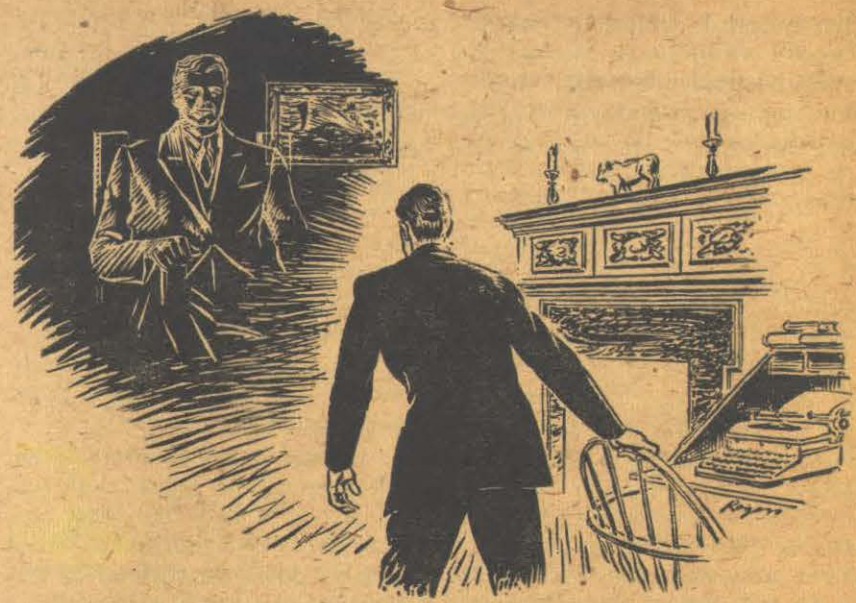
"Go to sleep, Jimmy."

"No, look. You see that last flash? That didn't look like lightning. It was yellow and green. It wasn't lightning."

Martel leaped from his bunk and clung savagely to the bars, staring at the sky. He recollected himself in a moment and turned back to drop wearily upon his blanket.

"I'm sorry, Martel. But I couldn't help saying—"

"That's all right, Jimmy. I didn't see the flash."



"But look, Martel, what color would it be if . . . if that was an atomic bomb? Green, wouldn't it? You know all about these things, Martel."

The little yegg was scared, not with a fear he could rationalize, not with any knowledge he had, but with the instinct of an animal who feels a breath of death.

A time elapsed and then, suddenly, Jimmy spoke sharply. "There! Look!"

The Negro had stopped moaning. The flash glowed upon the interior of the cell. Soon afterwards there came a shock through the earth and then a faint concussion in the air.

For a space the ugly stone pile seemed to have stopped living. Martel felt his heart hammering in his throat but he lay quietly on his bunk. He knew he was trapped. He knew that his boy was out there somewhere, unprotected. He was schooled in destruction and he knew how the ground must look under the spreading mushroom. But he lay still. The walls of the prison wretched and swayed. Something fell.

"Atom bomb? That was not an atom bomb. That was something a thousand times worse. What have I done?"

His voice was low. It could not have carried even to Jimmy. And yet it was as though he had announced the thing through the great speakers in the halls. As a car crashes against concrete the prison broke into frenzied, maddening sound.

Through the crazy din of screams, shaken bars and bawling men,

Jimmy cried, "Martel! Martel! Get me out of here! Get me out! We'll be fried! FRIED!"

"Shut up!" said Martel. "It was not that close. They can be seen for three hundred miles."

"No look. Martel, that wasn't no three hundred. That was ten, five. Why don't they open these doors?" And his fists began to beat against the lock and his voice joined a thousand more all screaming for the guards.

A siren began to yell and then rose to an aching incessant howl which drowned all else. A guard appeared at the end of the tier. He was newly awakened and his eyes were wild with fear. The lights were not yet on but there was scarlet and green light in the air. A searchlight swept into the tier. The lights flashed, flickered and went out.

There was yelling in the yard and bedlam in the walls. A car started up with a crash of gears and then slammed into something.

The guard looked irresolutely at the cell switches which would key open the doors. He looked at the forest of arms which reached at him. He was beaten back by the screams and turned to sprint away.

Martel went to the window and looked down into the yard. The main gate was open and three cars were starting through it, burdened with men in uniform. The searchlight swung in crazy arcs and beat, beat, beat at the tiny figures which followed the cars—all in uniform. A guard on the high wall threw away his gun and ran down the steps to disappear out of the gate.

The green and scarlet light struck against low clouds and rebounded again to earth. Summer lightning fluttered weakly on the horizon.

No one else left by that gate. The siren still screamed and the convicts yelled. But there was a deserted air about the place already as though death had set in.

"The dirty devils left us to starve!" shrieked the Negro. "Come back! Come back you—"

A change had come over Martel. The gray of the prison cloth was still upon his body but there was no defeat in his eyes. Jimmy turned from the door and whatever he was about to cry stuck in his throat.

By the light of a newspaper somebody had lighted for a torch, Martel seemed to have grown taller, stronger. There was a savage curve on his mouth which might have been a grin. There was bitterness and ferocity in his eyes. He seemed to be a man who could walk through steel and stone.

With an effort he tempered his expression. He stifled a laugh which beat for freedom in his throat.

For life?

He fought the laugh and sat down on the bunk. But there was a force in him, a brutal vitality which flowed like lightning from him. And Jimmy stood back to bars in awe.

Martel carefully modulated his voice, speaking just loud enough to be heard above the terror in that abandoned place.

"Give me your playing cards, Jimmy."

"You all right, Martel?"

"Give me your playing cards and a razor. And make those fools throw more packs up to this cell."

"But what—"

"Do as I command."

"Yes sir," said Jimmy. "What are we going to do?"

"Scrape cards and shred cellophane off your cigarettes. Gunpowder, Jimmy. I'm going to blow our way out of here."

The siren howled like a mad dog set loose upon the world.

FRANCE.

The dismal autumn rain soaked dirt from the cobbles of the broken courtyard. Along one wall ran a line of ragged pockmarks, plaster plucked with a leaden thumb, plaster which bore another substance in it here and there.

A lone, trench-coated man sadly gazed upon the scene, hands thrust deeply into his pockets, chin dropped on breast. He looked at a small, sodden bird which sat hopelessly on the remains of a tree, still like the man before the gloom of the place. Dawn was a lifeless thing which grayed the lowering clouds; it cast no shadow in a place where all was shadow. Beyond the wall, half-seen in mist, stood the jagged stones which had once raised a cross to God, but now a shattered hulk gazing somberly down on the rubble which had been France. The only crosses here were the seven posts which stood before the wall, posts which had been trees but were converted now so that they stood the height of a head. The performance of their office had chewed and carved their trunks the height of a breast. The bird sat brooding and the only courtyard song was the dismal gurgle of a spout which vomited leaden rain.

Charles Martel, if one can see correctly through the legends, the tales, the hero-worship, the blazing glory which later obscured all his past, must have been about thirty-five years of age. Through six long and arduous years he had served ceaselessly in the causes he believed to be right, and though some authorities trace his service to Spain at an earlier date, nineteen thirty-nine would seem to be his first European connection, for the reputation he must have possessed at that date as a scientist could not have been preceded by actual participation in war.

He had been employed in various capacities because of his basic skill as a nuclear physicist, but for the entire duration these employments had all been in the fields of espionage and intelligence under the Allies. Such activities are never blatant and all records of him were buried in the most secret files of Washington and London where they were later, of course, utterly destroyed. A large portion of any credit accruing from the interruption of the rocket missile and atomic research activities in the Axis powers which were Germany, Italy and Japan, was owing to him. Unseen, unknown, he had worked thoroughly and well.

But six long years of danger, arduous travel and combat leave deep marks on a man. And Charles Martel at this date was ill, nearly broken in body, exhausted and feverish in mind. Gone long ago were the naive dreams of glory in battle. Far behind him he had buried hypotheses and theories. The caldron of violence had boiled him down to the actualities, the hard values, to a clear and unshakable estimate of existence. He had killed. He had lived in rags and starved. He had learned the value of sleep in a white-sheeted bed and a cup of hot coffee. And he knew men, men and their governments. He knew these things and yet they were not yet wisdom for so swiftly had avalanched upon him the battering experiences of his immediate past that he had no respite in which to digest and really know.

He was tired and his heart was sick. There was pain in his body from the rain, the pain of old wounds and the far sharper miseries of mind which come from seeing too much too quickly and too long.

Another might have died or gone mad. Charles Martel was too strong even now, fractions of inches away from breaking though he might be. For there was a hard core in him that was himself, a core he had not known to exist in his university and his laboratory days. Men saw it without knowing what they saw and respected him.

Few knew him, not even his intimates in work, for the tasks of intelligence are hard and impress a secrecy into the depths of a man. There was a felt ruthlessness about him, a savage relentlessness, a power of being about him which commanded and received respect. And yet, as with all great hearts, there was a gentleness, too, born out of understanding and suffering which could go out to the helpless with as much strength as his savagery could strike the men who opposed him. He was too complex as an individual to be understood or labeled in a breath, which is the thing which probably brings down to us the many conflicting descriptions of him which gamut from sadist to saint. He was neither. He was a man whose nerve alone bore him up under the great burden of six long years of war.

Somberly he watched the bird which did not sing. They both were waiting and the rain came down.

A sort of shudder took him when he heard the files. The even thump of rhythmic boots, the clink of metal, the sodden slap of leather as the troop drew up, stopped, grounded arms and took the command at ease.

He looked at them then and found that they were French. But their faces went unseen below their dull helmets and such was the strange effect of rain that they appeared to be on the other side of some curtain and were not real at all but something badly dreamed and half remembered. The officer alone was human, nervously pacing up and down before the ranks, flicking at his boots with a crop, young and

inexperienced and very ill at ease. His pistol was holstered outside his raincoat and he touched its butt from time to time, quickly withdrawing from its black coldness. It was easy to see his mind. He had not been in the war; he had not killed his man. Today he would have to give the *coup de grâce* to eight. He had a little mustache of which he was probably proud but the blackness of it was startling against the pallor of his face. With worried and half-fearful eyes he gazed upon the leaden day.

The bird tenaciously kept his post before all this military preparation, clinging hard to one of the converted trees against a sudden gust of wind. The cathedral bell tower retained two eyes of air and stone and these looked sadly upon the courtyard. The mist thickened and the shattered bulk swam for a moment and then vanished. The officer glanced nervously at his watch and then ran to the gate to look down the road.

The lorry came with ponderous lurches, waddling through thick pools, slamming its canvas covers out and back, windshield swipes swinging like sluggish metronomes. It lurched through the gate and cast a final splash far from it before it halted in the yard. Two guards swung out of the cab and hurried to the rear where they undid the fastenings and permitted two more guards to step down.

With peremptory gestures the four called the burden out and when it did not come swiftly enough, two mounted up and yanked at the first man.

A French sergeant alighted from the cab now. In his grubby fist he carried a board on which paper was clipped, a board not unlike that carried by a grocery truck driver. He consulted it and counted the names on it with his pencil, then he counted the names backwards. Satisfied, he looked harshly at the eight men who had now been beaten into a ragged line behind the truck. He counted them with his pencil, counted them backwards and then did some arithmetic on his pad. He grunted with satisfaction and without saluting, thrust the receipt before the officer.

Taking the pencil, the nervous *teniente* counted the names, looked up and counted the prisoners. He was about to sign when he recalled something and with a frown looked at the paper.

"Siegfried Kline!"

One of the men in the line who stood sagging, hands tied behind him like the rest, replied, *"Hier."*

"Gustav Schwartz!"

"Hier."

And then rapidly, hardly waiting for the answer: "Josef Meinster, Ludwig Krantz, Stepan Draus, Franz Scharfenstein, Karl von Steel, Leutnant-Kommandant Gerber."

The line sagged back into hopelessness. The *tentiente* scribbled his signature on the slip and gave the board to the sergeant. A squad of men under a corporal detached itself from the ranks and came forward to thrust and hustle the

prisoners toward the posts. The sergeant looked after them, a twisted grin on his mouth. He spat and laughed shortly. The guards got back into the lorry and the sergeant took the wheel, backing the vehicle into the street and then lurching into some kind of gear-clashing motion, went away.

The officer gave directions as to the order of the men and the posts and had a sergeant pass out the black hoods and the ropes. He stood for a little, watching the prisoners being trussed, and then nervously exploded at his sergeant. There were eight prisoners but only seven posts. He argued with his second about it, waving the paper in the air, gesturing wildly with his crop.

"What shall I do? What shall I do? Oh, to be served by imbeciles, cabbages, camels!" He stabbed at the eighth prisoner as though he thrust into a sack of grain. "What shall I do with this one?"

The bird had withdrawn to the wall where it waited soddenly. The lowering mists swirled and the gutter gushed under a fresh torrent. Dirt gritted underfoot.

"A moment, my lieutenant," said Charles Martel. "There is some error here. Karl von Steel is not scheduled for execution."

The French officer swung about as though the quiet voice had goaded him beyond endurance. "And who might you be?"

"I am Charles Martel, my lieutenant. Intelligence advisor to the Allied War Crimes Commission which ordered this execution."

"Ah! *Capitaine* Martel!" The officer looked at the list and then thrust it under Martel's nose. "Read. There on the seventh line. Does that not say Karl von Steel? And look, does this paper not read that these men are to be shot? Does it not? *Voila!*" And he turned his back to give more furious directions to his sergeant.

The noncom did not appear impressed. He chewed at a heavy peasant mustache until the tirade was worn down a little and then interjected that while sergeants were generally responsible for many things and while lieutenants, even if they were young, must have their respect, the solution, if one wished to find one, was quite simple. One merely had to let one man wait until seven were dead and then kill the eighth. And why all this formality. It was cold and the men were wet.

"Lieutenant," said Martel, less courteously. "I must ask you to stop this execution until the commission member and the staff are informed."

"Ah! And now the execution must stop. You hear what my sergeant has said. My men, my poor children are wet and it is cold. Besides the commission has stated that it will be here. *Voila!*"

Martel looked at the prisoners. They were being mauled about and masked like so many bayonet dummies. There was a time when human beings were given choice of a blindfold, a cigarette, a chance for a last word. Civilization, in its

stately progress, was falling back on a front or two.

Martel was raking his weary mind for the name of Karl von Steel and the crime. Had he been less tired, less numb, the result which now took place would have come much earlier. Anger paled his lips.

The aged man who, even in this sordid scene, retained some dignity and seemed not afraid was Karl von Steel. They had knocked his glasses off in fixing a hood to fit him and then, as the extra man, had thrust him aside to wait his turn while the others were yanked without ceremony to the posts and lashed.

With a hand which shook, Martel whirled the officer about. "There is a mistake here, my nervous little man. Dr. Karl von Steel is a famous Austrian psychiatrist, the foremost scientist in his field. He was never intended for execution. I brought him myself for a trial witness. You will please to place him inside and out of the wet."

Cowed for an instant by tone and eyes, the Frenchman suddenly shook free. The anger was contagious and he flew into a tirade. His authority was being questioned. Did the paper not say—

"Silence!" said Martel.

The officer stopped in mid-rise.

"You will deliver this prisoner into my hands," said Martel. "Two months ago I gave him my word he was needed only as a witness."

Sullenly demanding authority and being damned for asking, the officer suddenly snatched the old prisoner by the arm and hurled him at Martel.

"But he does not leave this yard until the commission gives me orders!" fumed the lieutenant. "And if the commission does not come—"

But the commission was arriving, or at least a few of its members. There were several press photographers and reporters in a car behind the sleek limousine which came first. A little bundle of allied flag on the limousine's radiator cap and a large gold insignia on the door gave the vehicle identity and as much pomp as it could manage in this rain.

Martel drew the old man back out of the big car's road. Dr. von Steel's gray hair, matted with the rain, got into his eyes and he thrust it back.

"Thank you, captain," said von Steel. "This is a gallant gesture, but I fear it is of no avail. I was tried in secret and condemned."

"This is another matter, doctor," said Martel. "You had my word that you were only needed as a witness. There has been some error here, I think."

The old man's lips curved in a proud but cynical smile. "I appreciate your interest, captain. 'Word' is something which the world has forgotten, I think. But then, you have—" he paused. He had been looking interestedly at Martel's face, into his eyes. "Forgive me, captain. I think your word means something to you." There was respect in his voice.

Martel nodded briefly. His anger

had not diminished and there was a flush on his cheeks. He bent down to look into the limousine the windows of which were steamed and streaming. The suddenly opened rear door almost struck him.

Out of the car, as he supposed some Roman general might have stepped, came Mr. Connover Banks, political advisor and head without title—the chairman notwithstanding even if named—of the Allied War Crimes Commission.

He was a small man, Mr. Connover Banks, but he swelled into something like stature each time before he spoke. He was flabby soft so that one could imagine picking pieces off him with finger and thumb. There was a hearty joviality about him in public but his black, small eyes were hidden well within the folds of his round, unhealthy face. He was picking bits of breakfast out of his front teeth and sucking them noisily from his little fingers.

"Martel! Well, well, well. My old friend Martel. Ready and on the job, I see. Sent a car around for you earlier. Get there? Fine, fine, fine. Well, I see we have our little friends all rounded up and ready for the trimming, ha, ha. Some friends of yours, here?"

"This man is Karl von Steel," said Martel. "There is an order here for him to be shot this morning."

"So?" said Connover Banks. "Well, there are so many, one hardly remembers them all. But if he's to be shot—"

"He won't be," said Martel.

"What? How's this?" And some of the oil went off his tongue and the words had the hint of a file on brass about them.

"Mr. Banks," said Martel, "this man is a doctor of the University of Vienna. He is an Austrian, not a German. He happens to be the world's foremost psychiatrist-diagnostician. He is a research scientist. His books are standard texts in every university in America."

"So?" drawled Mr. Banks. He stepped aside to let others out of the car and these went over to look at the prisoners. Among them was a French general, Chibault. Mr. Banks looked after them and showed an inclination to leave.

"But that is not the point," continued Martel. "Whether he is famous or not, he is a scientist. And he is a man. His life is not to be lightly taken. I gave him my word when I brought him here that he was wanted just as a witness. You yourself so informed me."

Mr. Banks looked diffidently at the prisoner. "He is a dangerous man. Every Nazi concentration camp had complete pamphlets of his works. One of his texts on frustration was used as a standard torture by the SS guards. Now."

"Mr. Banks, the doctor was a prisoner in Chateau Colaine from nineteen forty-one until six months ago. All his works were written before the war."

"Besides," said Mr. Banks, "the man is a socialist, probably a communist."

"I am not prepared to argue that," said Martel. "But—"

It was Dr. von Steel who interposed and said in good English, "Young man, you are incurring displeasure for my sake. I assure you it is useless. They have tried and convicted me—"

"I beg your pardon, Dr. von Steel," said Martel, "but there is something else here. Mr. Banks, I gave this man my word he was needed only as a witness. He could have escaped."

Mr. Banks smiled jovially. "Why, don't disturb yourself about that, Martel. The Nazis, like this man, broke their word all the time." He grinned through the torrent which ran from his hat brim.

"The difficulty," said Martel, "in fighting a war is to keep from sinking to the level of one's enemies. I gave my word, Mr. Banks, and I want that word kept!"

With a sly glance around him as though to be sure they were alone, Mr. Banks drew Martel slightly to one side and whispered, "This is pretty much out of our hands, old boy. The French had evidence we didn't count on. They took this one right out from under us. It's the French, you see, and that absolves us. Marshal Germaine—"

"Marshal Germaine is here in this town," said Martel. "I can reach him."

"By all means, by all means. There's a phone right inside there, Martel. Go see what you can do. Use my name, if you like."

Mr. Banks walked quickly away toward the group of officials. The preparations were well advanced now. The firing squad was filing up into position under the nervous orders of the lieutenant whose anxiety was increased by the presence of a general of his army.

Martel turned to Dr. von Steel and would have spoken but the doctor was holding out an envelope. "If you fail, captain, there's something you could do."

"I won't fail," said Martel, starting off.

"Wait, captain. There is always a chance, I know. But I have a feeling—Well, here." He twitched his bound hands about until they indicated his left jacket pocket. "There's a letter in there. I doubt these gentlemen would deliver it."

Impatient to be off, Martel took the letter from the pocket and hid it quickly to keep it dry.

"To my daughter," said von Steel. "I am not sure where she is. They have permitted no communication with anyone. Would you deliver it?"

"Certainly. But there'll be no need."

Martel ran across the yard into the broken building. It was a precinct station but there were no gendarmes about at this hour. He unhooked the phone and called the Grand Hotel.

There was considerable delay. The lines were few. The operator rang for some time before the hotel finally answered. The clerk was very sleepy and would not for a while admit that Marshal Germaine was there. After much coaxing and

fuming by turns, Martel managed to get him to send the porter to bring the marshal to the phone.

He managed to light a soggy cigarette with reluctant matches and puffed nervously on it without satisfaction. The wait seemed endless. He tried to peer out into the yard but could not without deserting the phone.

The line was buzzing peculiarly and with a flash of suspicion he hung up and called the operator back. No, he was not connected to the hotel. Yes, she would ring again but the lines were not many and perhaps the hotel had reasons for not talking to him— She rang. The sleepy clerk was antagonistic now. Yes, he had sent a porter. A liar? Of course he was no liar! Yes, he had sent a porter. For whom? Well—All right, all right, the gentleman need not be violent. Marshal Germaine. Very well, he would send for Marshal Germaine. But it was a very bad hour—Martel waited.

There was a ragged crash of rifles, deafening even here inside. It was succeeded by three more crashes in rapid order.

Inanely Martel wondered if the bird had flown away.

There was one single report—a revolver. It was reported six more times.

"Marshal Germaine speaking. Who? Oh yes, Captain Martel. Yes, yes, captain. How are you? . . . Dr. Karl von Steel? I can't seem to remember . . . Oh, yes. The scientist. Ah, too bad, too bad . . . Why, of course, captain. If you think there's any reasonable doubt. I'll send an order over immediately for a stay. Certainly."

"Thank you, marshal. It's a matter—"

"I quite understand, Martel. And I can't forget what you did for us after Dieppe. Glad to oblige."

Martel felt a tingle of cold upon him as he put down the phone. He thrust back and started toward the door.

There was the crash of a single volley.

Martel grasped the porch post with a crushing grip. The yard seemed to spin before him as though the rain which sliced down was composed of dancers which whirled and whirled and whirled. The line of men was filing off. He looked with the fascination of horror at what the French lieutenant was doing.

There was a single pistol report.

Martel turned and looked vacantly into the precinct station. It seemed to him as though laughter was rolling through the empty bareness of the place. Oily laughter which came now from the desk, now from the phone, now from the windows. The whole place was tipping crazily as though he were aboard an unsteady boat in a raging sea. His ears roared and his throat was too dry to swallow. Things seemed to be brushing against him, dancing around him, laughing.

With a hard wrench at himself he steadied his nerves and wits. He discovered he was talking to himself and clamped his jaw tight.

He turned and walked out into the yard.

One body of the first seven had been cut from its post. The others slumped, drenched with rain which darkened as it poured over their breasts. All trees were occupied.

The yard now had a drab pickup truck in it and the men of this were pushing the first body about on the post to cut it loose.

The lieutenant was white. He was trying to reload his pistol but after a little gave it up and thrust it into his holster. He went and sat down on a stone, recollected himself and leaped up to saunter with extreme and careful casualness back of the files which the sergeant was forming up.

A noncom from the pickup truck ran up to the officer and thrust a pencil and sheet at him. The officer signed and, folding the receipt, surrendered his own. The noncom carefully counted the names twice and then with the pencil counted the lifeless sacks his men were hauling about. He nodded and signed his name again. The springs of the pickup groaned. Small trails of darkness went between truck and posts.

The little bird stood soddenly on the wall and the rain came down.

Martel looked across to where Mr. Banks and the other officials had finished having their pictures taken. He waited by the limousine, oblivious of water, coldness, bodies and pooled blood.

Mr. Banks would have gone to the other side of the limousine but Martel shifted over.

Before either could speak, General Chibault cheerfully slapped Mr. Banks on the shoulder. "Well, leave it to you Americans. You'll teach us all a thing or two. Efficiency. Efficiency in bombing. Efficiency in rounding them up. And now efficiency in this. Speed, accuracy, timing. Amazing people. Now, take that last one, von Steel. I never would have thought a man like that would have been so closely connected with the torture camps if you hadn't told us, Banks. Efficiency, that does it. Speed, dash, accuracy. Well, let's all have another breakfast. At my place. Starved, aren't you?"

Martel barred their way. A motorcycle had drawn up.

"Mr. Banks, a stay in the execution of Dr. Karl von Steel was granted by Marshal Germaine." He was distracted by the messenger asking for Captain Martel and he took the envelope and ripped it open.

Looking at the paper which was thrust at him, Mr. Banks shrugged. "I am afraid I should have known this sooner, Martel."

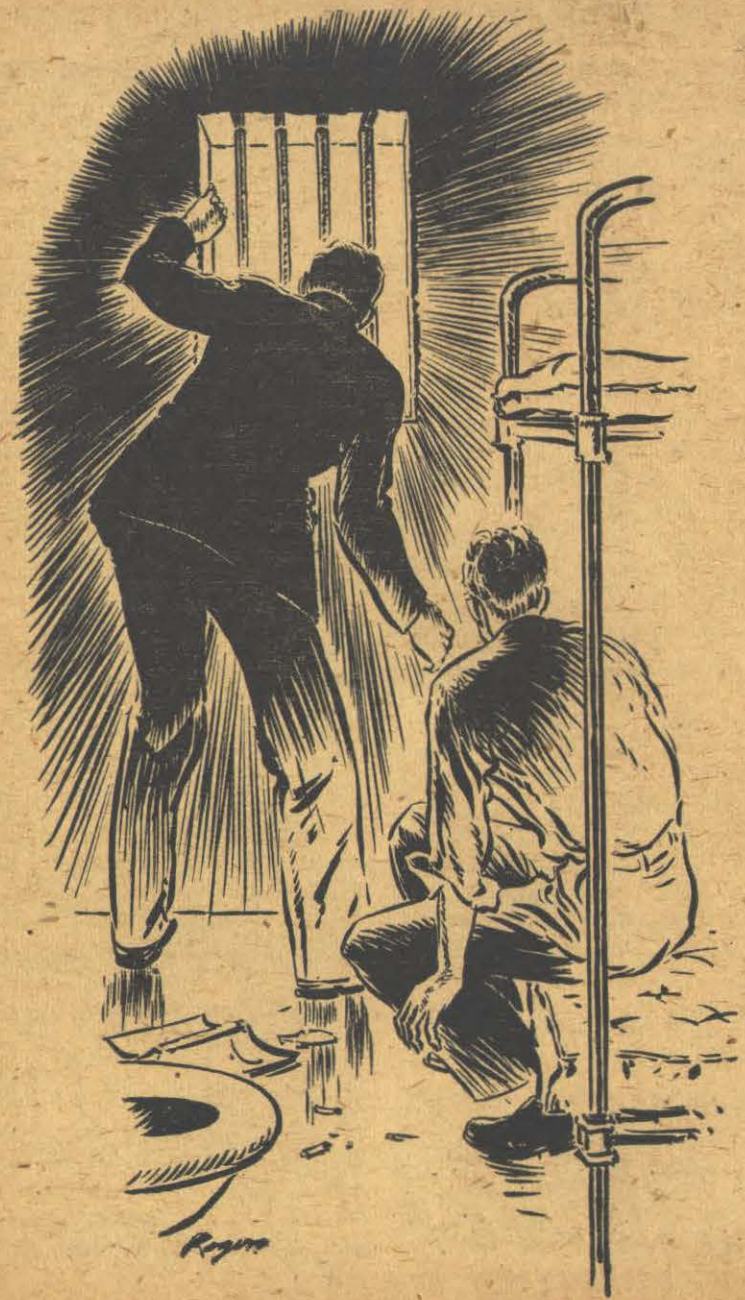
"You knew I was phoning the marshal."

"Say, old man," said Banks. "You look pretty bad. Probably a touch of flu coming on. Here, get in out of the wet and—"

"You knew I was phoning," said Martel.

"Captain—"

"That is a courtesy title. I am a civilian, Mr. Banks. I am employed—"



"You are employed as an intelligence officer, Martel," said Banks with sudden viciousness. "You are employed to do as you are told and to follow your orders. I knew nothing about your phoning. This stay was procured without any authority and I myself shall have to explain and apologize for you to Marshal Germaine—"

"You'll have to explain some day to a Higher Power than that, Mr. Banks," said Martel. "Dr. von Steel was innocent. The Nazis used anything any scientist had done just as the United States used whatever the brains England and the United States had to offer. Dr. von Steel has saved the sanity of millions of people."

"His work tortured a hundred thousand to death!" snarled Banks. "Now take care what you do. This is insubordination—"

"One has to have a superior to be subordinate, Mr. Banks. You caused me to break my word. You have used me this time. You have probably used me a thousand times as shabbily."

"Turn over to me instantly your lists, Martel. You are fired."

Martel reached with fury-shaken fingers into his trench coat. He got out matches at the same time. He tried hard to get a light going and failed. With a grab, Banks sought to seize the liaison and underground lists. He forgot these were the property of Martel. He knew how vital they were in locating men in all this tumbled wreck of Europe.

Martel ripped them a dozen times and stamped them into a bloody pool under his feet.

"You're fired!" cried Banks, tearing the cigar out of his mouth and spitting its fragments. "You're fired!"

"Mr. Banks," said Martel, "you may be a powerful political figure, you may be rich. But politics and money won't take away the fact that you've murdered a man this morning, murdered him as surely as if you'd sunk a knife into his heart with your own hand. You're drunk on killing. You're a rotten sadist, a coward! When a state touches a single hair on the head of an innocent man, when it murders without cause, that state is doomed, doomed as surely as Karl von Steel. If you've got a shred of conscience about you, if you've got a heart or even a dirty whipped rag of decency left—"

"Arrest this man!" cried Banks. "He's gone mad!"

Martel struck him across the mouth, struck him and smashed the cigar and the bloated face. Banks slammed back into the pickup truck door and fell forward again. Martel stepped aside and let him drop into the red pools which had spread there.

Stunned and shaking, Banks got up. He had caught himself with his hands against the cobbles and now those hands dripped darkly. Martel would have struck again but he paused at the sight of the hands, paused long enough for General Chibault and an orderly to grab him and throw him to one side.

Banks stood shaking a fist. "I'll get you, Charles Martel. I'll get you if I have to beat all hell for evidence. I'll get you, Charles Martel!"

They got Banks into the limousine and the cars went away. The pick-up finished its business and left. The lieutenant, with recovered spirits, marched away at the head of his men. Their military boots gritted against the fouled cobbles, metal clinked, leather creaked. The rhythmic beat faded into the rain.

Martel stood alone in the court-yard, holding the stay in a nerveless hand. He shook himself a little and looked slowly around. Nothing looked the same to him. The rain, the vomiting gutter spout, the rearing, shattered tower of the church. these were different, too.

The little bird preened its sodden feathers, but not to sing. In small, wary hops it came down to the first post and began to pick hungrily at the newly shattered trunk.

Martel looked at the bird, the pave, the pockmarked wall. His eyes were glazed as though he had been struck in every wound anew. There was a chill of fever on him from the swamps of Italy and the bitter day was hot upon his skin. Before him the world dimmed and cleared and dimmed again and all things wrapped themselves in unfamiliar cloaks and madly swirled about him.

He stumbled to the gate and slowly, numbly gazed back.

The little bird was eating and the rain came down.

The day was hot and the dust rose in orange curtains from the abandoned fields of Southern France, to speed in swirls through hamlet and village and race, as though mocking the lack of other traffic, whirlwind against whirlwind down the long, curving roads. Where rumbling, Roman catapults had groaned along, where the pageantry of chivalry was iron oxide and calcium amongst the ruts, where barefoot kings had on penance walked, a lonely man, leaning heavily upon a stick, limped southward.

There was weariness, not of the body but of the mind and soul, in every stumbling step, and there was a dazed wildness in his eye as though he knew not where he went.

But he did know. Clutched in his hand was a small, square envelope, much grimed, which said:

Anne von Steel
Villa Verite
Biarritz, France.

Now and then he stuffed it in the pocket of his dusty jacket but before a hundred yards had gone he consulted it again. He must be almost there. For the difficulty of his travel made the way very long. He was puzzled from time to time by his lack of money. In the dullness which submerged him there seemed to be a fact he should know about the money, a fact which he could not grasp.

He had asked a gendarme about it and that one, being a very old man who had seen much of war and understanding, had discussed

the possibilities of his having been struck and robbed. But the only name on which they could fasten was "Banks" and this obviously must be wrong.

A cart had brought him far, a driver of a truck farther. A slim officer of the army had given him a lift in a rattling old car and had recognized him and, alarmed at his condition, required much persuasion before the journey could be resumed.

The days and faces in them were all jumbled. People looked at him strangely, tapped their skulls and shrugged. The war. In the end it wrecked the finest of them.

An old woman who fancied she saw in him a resemblance to her son, exported to Germany as a laborer and never seen again, stopped to feed him milk and bread from a precious basket. When she touched his hand she found it hot and, looking more closely at him, saw that he was ill with a fever which bordered on delirium and yet could not persuade him to stop at her cottage.

"I have a message. I promised a thing," he muttered and, getting stiffly up, walked on.

It was a nightmare walk where strange faeries changed the pleasant day and green fields into a peopled world of weird shapes and stranger conversations. He was quite sane toward it. He knew that he was ill. But he could afford no energy expended upon a momentary rest or, so it seemed, upon a righting of the things about him.

He was at the University of California sometimes or at Cal Tech, arguing theories with professors with the next few years to prove him right, but whenever he caught himself at this talking he ceased ashamedly.

Odd bits of knowledge came floating back to him. Entire sections of his thesis on chain reaction—a thesis which had been often consulted of late and with some awe, a fact which he, buried in war, did not know—came back to plague him with their endless propoundings of nearly unsolvable equations so that sometimes as he rested he made aimless summation marks with his stick in the dust only to see what he did and hastily dust them out.

It was thus that the urchin found him. The boy was about thirteen but his face looked ages older. His clothing was gunny sacking and his shoes were sections of a discarded tire. He had a dirty mop of blond hair and calculating blue eyes. Fed and washed he might have been a very presentable boy but as he was, a beggar, a bit of jetsam in war's backwash, not even a self-respecting peasant would have touched him.

"Francs!" he demanded, standing squarely before the man. "Bread!"

The man looked at him idly but made no move to rise or fish in his pocket and the boy became bolder.

"Give me francs!"

The child came into focus, perhaps the first face he had clearly seen in all this travel.

"I . . . I have no money."

The boy's skeleton hands clenched. "I am an English gentle-

man. I do not have anything to eat. Francs!"

Looking at him more closely, the man blinked. "I have no money," he said in English.

The boy looked interested. "You are English?"

"I am American."

"I am an English gentleman."

After a little the man asked, "What is your name?"

"They call me Pierre, these French. The Americans called me Bud. My name is neither Pierre nor Bud. I am a gentleman. My father told me to say that. He said I was and that I should say I was for it is true."

"Where is your father?"

The child shut his jaw tightly and his eyes were wet for an instant. "Where are you going?" he asked suddenly.

The man showed him the crumpled envelope. The boy evidently had small command of reading for his lips moved in the difficulty of spelling it out. When he looked back at the man his brow contracted with insight.

"You're sick," said the boy accusingly.

"I must go to Biarritz," said the man, repeating what was by now an ancient formula.

"You are a gentleman," said the boy. "I can tell. You are a gentleman. Therefore I must help you." He said it in English, with a decided accent which mirrored both German and French influences.

"Thank you," said the man quietly.

"You have taken the wrong road," said the boy. "You should have turned two kilometers back and you did not. But I shall show you across a field to the right road."

"Thank you," said the man. "I am going to Biarritz." He rose and leaned on the stick.

"Mon Dieu," said the boy. "You are very weak. *Lieber Gott,* you must be as hungry as I. Come, I shall steal a chicken at a place I know and take you to Biarritz. You would die otherwise. I do this because we are both gentlemen."

"Thank you," said the man.

Five days later, with the grime of travel thick upon them, they came to the Villa Verite and while the man sank upon the top step the urchin pounded hugely with the great knocker.

A long silence followed, punctured now and then by fresh hammerings by the boy, and at last a bolt grated and the door, still retained by a chain, swung open. A careful inspection by an unseen person ensued and then the chain, too, was unhooked.

The boy gaped and his boldness melted into confusion. The girl on whom he looked was beautiful. Suffering had deepened that beauty and her eyes were soft and kind. The boy had a vague memory of his mother—such a person as this he remembered her, though she was only twenty.

The boy finally recovered his speech.

"My friend and I, we have brought you a letter," he said. "He has walked across France to bring it to you and with him I have traveled for five days. He has it in his hand."

The boy knelt to take it but the man gripped it tightly.

"It is all right," said the boy. "This is the place."

"What is her name?" muttered the man.

"What is your name?" said the boy.

"Anne. Anne von Steel."

As though realizing for the first time that he had arrived at his destination, the man thrust down with his stick and managed to stand again. He turned, looking at the letter to make sure it was all right and still there. He half extended it and then seemed to want confirmation from her. He looked at her face with feverish eyes.

He backed a step and finally tore his glance away. He looked about him as though to assure himself that he was not dead that he had come to confront an angel. Disbelieving he stared at her face.

She took the letter from him which he gave now with ease. Perhaps she would have spoken then, for her glance on him was curiously and oddly confused, but her eyes dropping saw the handwriting.

She had not known where her father had gone nor why. For three months there had been no word from him. Her cry was glad as she ripped the envelope but as she read she became paler and from her parted lips came a low moan.

The urchin looked at her with deepening concern and then, ashamed of his dirty hands but alarmed, he took her by the wrist and half supporting her led her into the house.

The man sat on the step for some time and then, finding the boy beside him once more asked, "Where is the letter?" And he ransacked his pockets.

"We delivered it," said the boy.

"Oh." And after a moment. "I saw a beautiful woman just now. Was that Anne von Steel?"

"Yes."

"Oh." He sat a while longer and then stood slowly. He looked out at the round, rolling surf and across the blue Mediterranean. Bewildered now that the purpose of weeks was gone, he was uncertain. It seemed as though his life had stopped there on the steps and that something was buried and forgotten and must never be dug out again.

A street cleaner on the ocean boulevard before the house stopped, stared and then hastily pulled his cap over his face and pushed his cart forward at a swift pace. The man took no notice of him.

Suddenly it seemed to the man that he had come home somehow. He looked at the front door which stood wide.

She filled his vision once more.

"I have been selfish," she said. "Please come—Why, you are ill!"

He smiled a little. "I don't feel very well."

"Help me," she said to the boy.

Together they aided the man into the house.

AFRICA, THE HIGH ATLAS.

The chamber was dark, dark un-

der the mystery of two thousand years. A temple once, built by unknown hands, supported by columns which were Grecian and yet not Grecian, it had housed many strange gods: Roman, Carthaginian, Vandal, Arab and Berber.

Oil pots sputtered under lighted wicks along the wall and threw poor light down upon the great marble table in the center of the room—a table which had grooves for sacrificial blood. On a throne above a mutilated, robbed and dishonored god showed the remains of a smile and an eye, gazing down upon the table where sat four men.

Outside, partly seen through a long tunnel, lay the jagged brown brutality of the Atlas Mountains and the coastal plain far beyond and far below. From here one might have seen Hannibal disembark or the smoke which had been Carthage. Partly in the view stood a Berber soldier, swathed round with dirty djellaba, a bandoleer glittering over his shoulder, a fine German rifle serving as an elbow rest and staff. Between the plain below and the soldier lay a landing field, hacked out by excited and confused soldiery and forgotten by more easily confused generals. Sheep nibbled now at the sparse grass and all traces of wheels had been carefully covered.

The four at the table had been silent for some time. This quietness they had in common, for there was much in each on which to brood. Their other bond was science.

Jaeckel, the great physicist was idly stirring the masses of papers before him, his great hands dwarfing the rest of him, an old man except for the nervous, high flame which burned in his brilliant eyes.

"I don't," he said at last, "see that we can do it. It is too risky a thing. While we are not hunted, we must not risk being so."

"Every day a plane goes out," said Dr. Thorpe. "It could do more than bring back books, reports and an occasional man. I say it must." He was a bony angular man of great vitality and a habit of stabbing with his finger as he talked. He stabbed it now at Murtowsky and Bethel. "We sit here and do nothing while we are faced with the most damnable plot the world has ever seen. We sit here and do nothing while the entire field of science is in very great danger of perishing. A war of such ferocity, that the last one will look tame, will break out in a matter of years. And yet we sit here and do nothing. All we need is a fiddle, gentlemen."

"Rome," said Murtowsky in a gloomy voice as dark as his beard, "is already dead. We can rescue and assemble and perhaps even hope when there is no hope." He turned his sad doleful glance on Bethel. "What chance have four or even four dozen against the world?"

"I suppose that goes for you, too," said Thorpe, also looking at Bethel.

The one they addressed coughed and looked at the shattered god. The thing always offended his Christian senses and he wrenched his weak blue eyes hastily away. He swallowed hard.

"Meekness will triumph in the end," said Bethel. "The world will succeeed in blowing itself apart and if God wills—"

"God seems to have precious little to do with this," said the atheist Thorpe. "It looks more to me like devil's work."

Jaeckel smiled thinly, his famous colleagues, Thorpe, the Englishman who hated war as much as any warrior ever hated foe, and who was willing to be quite bloody about it; Murtowsky, the great Russian surgeon, supposedly dead in the purge in spite of all his great heart experiments; and Bethel the mild metallurgist of Norway—rarely failed to wrangle amongst themselves at this meeting every day.

Jaeckel was hard and factual. He had quit the Germans in 1943 when they had called upon him for atomic work. He had been unseen by the world ever since. His laboratory in an old mine nearby was waiting for him and he restrained an impulse to stalk out.

Coldly Jaeckel said, "If you gentlemen wish, we can go on playing dead for years and years. Personally I think it is a coward's rôle. We have positive evidence that a group headed by one man, Jules Fabrecken, is promoting a war between the United States and Russia. And we know definitely that that war will probably wipe out half of the population of each country. Furthermore, gentlemen, that group hunts down our brothers of science, arrests them, shoots them, or picks their brains, and hides them in dusty vaults where they cannot benefit humanity.

"I agree with Thorpe. We are here gathered to save science and I agree with him that we do very little about it."

Dr. Thorpe would have launched forth again but he looked at Jaeckel and subsided.

"Jules Fabrecken, through Connover Banks, caused the execution of von Steel," said Jaeckel, "for no other reason than that von Steel was working as a psychologist upon a new ideology. Hardly a day passes but what Professor Haus sends us information from Biarritz to the effect that another scientist has either been shot or has disappeared."

"The reason the Fabrecken crowd does this," said Thorpe, "is obvious. The best brains in the world today are scientists. A new weapon, a new invention, a new system of economics could very well completely upset the large and valuable interests of the Fabrecken crowd. They have seen what the atomic bomb could do. But now that they have made certain that Russia also has an atomic bomb and are trying their best to engage Russia in a war with the United States, the elimination of scientists who cannot be bought becomes paramount to them. The scientists must either be hired so that a finger can be kept on their inventions and research or they must kill them on some trumped-up charge.

"They are operating by their own lights," he continued. "It seems outrageous to them that any change should occur in the world to upset their way of life. And perhaps it is only blindness which permits them

to sit idly by while millions of human beings die as the result of their creeds. But whatever it is, it's vicious. The first and foremost reason why we assembled here was to try to prevent what they were doing."

"We are doing something," said Bethel peevishly. "We are bringing back books." And he pointed at the vaults under the temple. "And we are rescuing scientists whenever we can. You don't for a moment think we could actively block the Fabrecken crowd, much less aggressively oppose them, do you? What folly that would be!"

"It would be very difficult," said Murtowsky gloomily.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," said Thorpe, "you make me ashamed of you. If Jules Fabrecken were to get wind of this hideaway, he would have no slightest compunctions in having us all shot. What are we? rabbits? that we sit here waiting. If we only had some bold spirit, a leader who could make things right. Who could protect the world of thought, invention and advancement against Fabrecken and his like. If we only had a leader. For, unless we take an aggressive stand all that we know and call culture is going to disappear."

"We can rescue our fellow scientists from trouble with our means," said Bethel, "and we can safeguard wisdom. That is all."

Dr. Thorpe, however, was not quite through. "Gentlemen, as an economist I can show you where to get more money. We have planes, pilots, barracks, dispersal bases and, with Haus, a fine intelligent corps. What weak spirits have we here if we, reputedly greatest in our lines, cannot thrust forth into this world and put a stop to madness which cannot do otherwise than cause a war so swift, so final, so completely devastating that every other war in history will seem as tame as a boy's cricket match. We are sadly in want of spirit!" He stood up in disgust.

"We pay the penalty of our anarchy," said Jaeckel. "But a moment, Dr. Thorpe. There was another matter in the Haus report. Your indulgence please."

"By all means," said Thorpe, sitting down with a glare at Murtowsky and Bethel.

"Haus reports to us that the Power has the name of Charles Martel high on its list and that it is only a matter of time."

"Charles Martel!" said the Russian, showing enthusiasm for the first time. "Ah, a brilliant mind. He aided my escape through the German lines and we had some famous talks. He spoke of something which he called the life current, the binding force just the opposite from electricity. He said it was far more powerful than electricity and yet we didn't even know enough to measure it. He said any fission is essentially tame compared to this *viticity* as he called it. Ah, a brilliant mind, gentlemen, a brilliant mind!"

"I have heard of him," said Bethel.

Thorpe alone looked puzzled and uneasy.

"Haus," continued Jaeckel, long suffering with interruptions, "states that Martel might be at Biarritz."

"Ah," said Thorpe. "But this is something which bears explaining. Haus and our intelligence headquarters is at Biarritz. Martel is at Biarritz. Martel left the field of science in nineteen thirty-nine and has developed nothing brilliant since. Why? Because he served as an intelligence officer, the Allies using his fine command of nuclear physics to detect operations in that field by the Axis. He served in other intelligence capacities until the end of the war and then was drafted to the Allied War Crimes Commission. Connover Banks, gentlemen," he added in a low, hard voice.

"Connover Banks?" said Murtowsky. "Linked with Martel? I do not believe it!"

"There is much to suspect here," said Bethel. "But it is difficult to think of the great Martel in such odd company."

"Odd company!" snorted Thorpe. "Fiendish, wicked, brutal, sadistic, greedy—"

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," said Jaeckel. "Haus only wonders if anyone amongst our people would know more about this. It is very shaky business indeed."

"I say don't take a chance," said Thorpe. "Kill him and keep Haus safe. Haus is important—"

"Well, well," said Jaeckel. "Somehow, Dr. Thorpe, I have a feeling that I have heard your sentiments somewhere before." And he held a mocking hand aloft in a Nazi salute. He smothered the papers again. "I took the liberty of asking before we met. Our young men know nothing but good of Martel—"

"He arrested and had von Steel shot!" said Thorpe.

The other three stared at him.

Jaeckel did not even have to glance around. "I suppose, gentlemen, that that settles everything. I shall microradio Haus tonight to be careful of him."

"Do," said Murtowsky, with a disappointed sigh. "And he was such a fine nuclear physicist. Such fine ideas. Too bad."

"We might tell Haus to . . . er—" and Bethel made a gun of his thumb and forefinger.

"He is a great scientist," said Jaeckel. "We have all done strange things in our days. We have helped make weapons that murdered millions, all of us, wittingly or not. We have no direct proof that he brought down von Steel. If he did—well, when the world goes down, if he is still alive, he can have his trial and a fair trial."

"After which we can shoot him," said Dr. Thorpe.

"After which," said Jaeckel, "we will be just."

"And shoot him," said the timid Bethel.

They folded up their papers and slowly filed out into the African sunlight and the old god with the shattered face sat quietly and smiled.

MEXICO.

His fine head thrown back, his large, intelligent eyes looking far

out across the plains of Mexico, Jules Fabrecken took his ease on the veranda of his hacienda and listened to the reports of Mr. Connover Banks. Now and then, like the sun flashing upon the silver conchas of one of his *vaqueros* in the fields before him, his greenish eyes would spark, sole sign of interest in his beautifully molded face.

Jules Fabrecken's aristocratic hands plucked idly at the heavy silk which covered the chair arms, now agitatedly over some detail of the report he did not like, now strokingly as though he touched a purring cat.

Throned there, Jules Fabrecken looked like majesty. In every curve and color of him one could see the power which he held. The vast realms he commanded, the mighty structures he had designed or seized, the millions of workmen throughout the world all seemed to be not scattered over the surface of the globe but concentrated here, filling the man with something beyond a common spirit. And yet there was something drugged about him, something sleeping, perhaps the conscience which he had long ago found to be an excessive burden.

A genius of finance, a master of industry, a wizard of complex politics, it was part of that power that he could restrain surface vanity to such a point that scarcely anyone beyond the strata of the economic and governmental lords of earth had heard of him. Obscurity was no stranger to him. Indeed few on earth had had more obscure beginnings. His family had been poorer than poverty itself and he had been hurled into the streets almost as soon as he could walk and there some defect in his character had implied to him that the world was an evil place and that the hands of all mankind were clenched threateningly before his face, ready, yea eager, to crush his teeth down his throat.

He had run errands for a seaport's lowest scum, he had feasted from garbage pails, he had cheated and sold out his comrades, he had crouched in misery starved for care, for sympathy, his very savageness in the face of travail making him unapproachable.

From the gutter he had watched the fine carriages go by, but unlike the usual fanatic he had not jeered, he had yearned. By menial services, amid belly-twisting privations, he had fought his way through school, supposing that once he had a fine education, all gates would open. And then he had learned that gates open only to the well born, the heirs to glory others had made, and from this rebuff he took again a lesson that everything was organized to cast him down.

Like most men who had suffered danger from the multitude as one of the multitude, Fabrecken had scant love for his brother man. His friends he conceived to be given him for his own use and he used them. Society had shut the gates against him. By picking locks he had opened them to begin one of the most fantastic careers of capitalism the world had ever seen.

He knew what was good for Fabrecken. He made the mistake of thinking that it would be good for everyone. To him man was blind and needed an overlord. And it never occurred to him that the overlord they needed was not Jules Fabrecken.

Quietly, many years before, he had closed a life as a common attorney in the Scandinavian countries and had begun to build. Cautiously, certainly and infallibly, he had worked himself to the crest of Scandinavian industry, pulling into his own two hands the final controls of steel, coal, transport and communication. But this was not sufficient to his dreams, scarcely less than a beginning of his empire.

He had found an obscure Austrian corporal, a man mad with vanity and blinded with hatred and by the judicious issuance of funds and political directions, Fabrecken had brought about the absorption of all German industry by the German state and then the utter destruction of the German state itself and the death of the no longer obscure corporal with it.

And though this left one Fabrecken with virtual industrial monopolies in Europe, financed by the war expenditures of the late German state, it was not yet the end of his dreams.

And there he sat in Mexico, listening quietly, dreaming behind his eyes, balancing his ledgers. He had shaken free of the last stigma the war had attached to him, he was on the verge of ending his Mexican

exile. His vast holdings awaited him. Quietly he listened to his friend Connover Banks and quietly he planned.

Jules Fabrecken had the unfortunate conviction that the world needed to be saved.

Banks continued his report on his own activities. He appeared very much at ease, occasionally dragging on a cigar, punctuating his remarks with smoke-plumed gestures. All the falsity of his donned personality was here dropped, all his forced bon-hommie, all his subterfuge. For a long time now Banks had worked with Jules Fabrecken and in that Banks knew himself inferior in genius to Fabrecken, Banks could recognize the dream.

Finance, governing heads, atomic production and other incidentals disposed of, Banks turned now to the theme of his recent activities.

"You know that science outfit I told you about before, Jules. Well, I think I've got them pushed out of the picture. Practically nothing has been heard of from that quarter since I nailed von Steel."

Fabrecken sat up straight with great attention. "Aha! So you managed that!"

"Well, one might say it more or less managed itself."

"Good!" said Fabrecken heartily, slapping Banks on the knee. "You know, Connover, that is the one thing which can stand in front of us. The one thing! *Ach,* these idealists! All practical considerations fail to reach them. Why, the fools don't even fear for their own lives. Irrational!"

Fabrecken stood up and faced Banks. "That is the one thing which worries me. We have laid careful plans. We have loaned money to almost every government official we can use. The structure is almost completed and soon the world can look forward to a long, unbroken prosperity. But since the day you told me the scientists of Europe were determined to take a strong stand against good, sound conservative government such as we propose, I have worried."

"I can't see why," said Banks. "What can a few thousand crackpots do against guns and money?"

"Ah, but you still continue in this strange blindness," said Fabrecken. "Can't you see it, Connover? The plague of the earth is the idealist! He comes prancing out with a spacious philosophy, armed with pamphlets, braying wild speeches, screaming down all orderly conducts and experience and suddenly there is war!

"What caused the French revolution? Idealists! And it all but wrecked France. What caused every upheaval in the social orders of man? Idealists! They come storming into the picture. They have nothing and they hate anyone who is smart enough to own a shirt and suddenly there is war and slaughter, blood in the streets. And does this advance man? No!

"Connover, we are the only ones who can advance man. We employ men to perfect manufacturing processes, then we set up factories. We stabilize a country's economy. We give men ways to earn and eat and work and be comfortable. And when we have standardized his living, when all is well, then the only thing we have to fear is some raving lunatic who can catch the attention of the idle and thoughtless and stampede them into useless, entirely uncalled-for action. The result is chaos."

"Well, these scientists," said Banks, "weren't really demanding that anybody fight anybody. They claimed that nationalism was the cause of wars and they said that now there was an atomic bomb man couldn't risk another war and there—"

"Just so! So they stop further wars, they wanted to create one. This is folly. They can't even think, those people. There are always the haves and the have-nots. The have-nots will eternally war to take away whatever is possessed by the haves. This is a natural order of things. Men are very far from equal. Why, look there. See that *vaquero?* Could he run this hacienda? No! And yet the stupid fool thinks he should own it. Mental agility must always be rewarded. And if we have the agility to monopolize the industrial world, then certainly we are entitled to the profits therefrom.

"Connover, we live in an anarchy of industry. Competition is a political catchword. Some people think it is necessary while anyone with intelligence knows that monopoly is the safest possible means of satisfying the needs of men. It can be proven by theoretical economics that monopoly is most likely to benefit the individual man.

"What we seek to do is create a monoply which will halt this useless waste of materials and energy. Once done, this will give the world peace and prosperity for hundreds of years. But I cannot impress upon you too strongly the danger which lurks in the garrets and alleys. Some wild fanatic may always be expected who, without any experience or hope of gain, will seek to overthrow an existing regime in the name of progress."

"Von Steel," said Banks, "is out of the way. But there may be others. We managed to catch up with almost all of his organization in Europe."

"Exactly. There may be others! Connover, if we wish to succeed, we must be vigilant. And in the name of future peace we must be merciless. Once we have established ourselves we must assure ourselves of lasting success. It is a primary right of every government to protect itself. New inventions, crackpot philosophers, unhinged labor-leaders, these alone can ruin us. And I promise you that if we are ruined, so is civilization. All we seek to do is perfect the existing economic and industrial pattern and then hold it so. The plan is simple even if the working is complex. Once Russia and the United States are out of the way, the field is clear. These alone, as existing governments, are strong enough to oppose.

"Man deserves his future peace,

Connover. And we can create it for him and then keep it. It will not be long before we can accomplish it."

"What happens," said Banks, "when my European work is over?"

"For the moment, continue your vigilance. Continue to act the fool, the vengeful representative of outraged powers. Wear your fine clothes and smoke big cigars. Be the typical industrialist turned patriotic. Meantime recruit one way or another the scientists we need and put aside those we don't—for not the least of an industrial monopoly, Connover, is a monopoly on potential creation—"

"I don't exactly like," said Banks, "the role of executioner. It gets my guts sometimes. Jules, I wasn't cut out to be—"

"Don't worry about it. Your American interests will be as nothing compared to the future structure. I can appreciate what you mean. But who else can we trust but ourselves? Keep up the rôle. Big cigars, big talk. And soon, when the situation looks right you will become attorney general of the United States. And the military there will become alarmed with Russia's preparations. And Russia will have its atomic bombs thanks to us. But then, you know the plan. As soon as we can we will push the button and our people everywhere will act. And after that, Connover, prosperity.

"We have to grit our teeth awhile at our tactics. The ends justify the means. Remember always that we are putting a final end to the anarchy of industry and with that the anarchy of nations. And all we have to fear is the wild-eyed fool with a two-penny idea who will stampede the unthinking world against *us*—the only ones who can possibly bring stability to the hell on earth men have been calling life."

RIVIERA.

The ebullient bursts of laughter which came from the beach did not seem sufficiently out of place, that brilliant summer day, to cause such close interest on the part of an old, shabby eccentric whose pursuit of street cleaning was entirely neglected. He clung to the stone wall above the bright yellow sand and nervously scratched the backs of his legs with his toes one at a time and wriggled continually down and out of sight whenever he thought he might be observed. His eyes hid behind centimeter thick spectacles and his twisted face lurked behind an enormous white mustache. He was perpetually on the verge of running and hiding but each time a gloomy fascination pinned him to the spot.

Before the clear, calm blue of the Mediterranean, Charles and Anne Martel, with an English waif called Buckingham, played with an enormous striped ball.

Buckingham was fourteen but very light for his age and so had been knocked solidly out of his corner of the triangle for three times running to land in a great spurt of yellow sand. Each time he lay and howled dismally like a dog and then, beginning a laugh which seemed by its very force to propel him from the ground, bounded back to his post to take new punishment.

Just now, Anne having thrown him the ball, he suddenly reversed direction and pitched it back at her so solidly and so suddenly that the great soft blob of air and rubber quite launched her. Buckingham, on his part, was ready to bellow a triumphant cry but this had no more than started from his throat than it occurred to him that he might have injured her and before the sand had well settled around her he had flown to her side.

"Oh, Anne, forgive me! Please, Anne, speak to me! Anne! Are you hurt?"

She lay back with eyes closed, limp, scarcely breathing. But the effect of this imposture was so heart-rending upon the boy, who broke into real wails and begged for Charles to come, that she laughed suddenly and uproariously into his face and seized his mop of blond hair to roll him in the warm sand.

Buckingham was so entirely relieved that she could have hit him with bricks and he still would have laughed joyously. After a little she let him up and said she'd race him into the water and so away they went to burst through the surf and send showers of glittering spray like diamond fountains above them.

Laughing in his turn, Martel recovered the ball and sat upon it, looking after them.

What a change had come over him in a year and a half! Had anyone said war to him he would have looked up quite blank and wondered what war was meant. His sandy hair was no longer gray about the temples and the lines about his eyes had vanished. He laughed easily and often and whistled as he went about. The great strength of him was visible in every corded muscle of his brown body.

The eighteen months had been good to him. But for the first six, struggling with finances, searching incessantly for food, Anne had often wondered if his eye would ever light again or his laugh ever sound. But faithfully she had kept to her task, knowing no rest, thinking of herself not at all, pushing back all the terrors and horrors of her life with a strong self-denial which at last had banished them from view.

Charles was writing courses on nuclear physics for the French Academy's distribution and with long uncollected royalties on previous works, was mending their fortunes. But his prize work which he most enjoyed was a book, nearly completed, called "Negative Energy Flows: A Neglected Field with Some Notes on Future Potentialities in Life Creation," a work which absorbed him deeply. But it was Anne to whom he devoted his interests and when she had become Mrs. Charles Martel in the small chapel near their smaller home, Martel had thought he would never feel richer if he made all the money in the world.

He called her Anne of Austria and bought her baubles and bonbons and nosegays wherever they could be found. He made her a queenly

crown of cardboard and then when she took it so well, gave her the real gold one he had wheedled out of an impoverished nobleman nearby. The sun came up and went down to the east and west of Anne and Martel felt himself an emperor at least.

She was so busy with collecting the rent on the villa—which she had let to a manufacturer from Italy who seemed to possess great and mysterious hoards—and running their own cottage and coaxing provender out of tradesmen and copying manuscripts for Charles in addition to the enormous primary task she had set herself, that she was hardly aware of the change in herself. But she looked like a girl of sixteen and there was a youthful bloom upon her and laughter in her eyes which never had been there before.

Buckingham had crept into their lives, an English boy, abandoned in the fall of France, without any slightest notion of what had happened to his people or whether he had relatives alive. Years of privation had reduced him to a bony shadow, had nearly destroyed his memory, and had taught him tricks and usages which no high-born English lad had ever known before.

Charles and Anne had scrubbed his body and his heart, had filled him full of vitamins and food, and had talked of sending him to England some day. But that talk grew desultory and for some months had not been heard at all. Instead Anne had taught him English all over again, complete with an accent and "By Jove" and Charles had begun a technical education in soil so fertile and quick that Martel was nearly burst with pride. Buckingham would have swum an ocean or walked barefoot to the Moon if he had thought there was the slightest necessity to do so in the cause of his foster parents. And outside of a propensity for waking up everybody with a terrific nightmare in which he was being bombed or tortured or starved, Buckingham fitted well into the household. No son ever considered himself more fortunate in parents and no parents ever so respected and loved a son.

The little man on the walk above twisted and darted his lensed eyes about, looking closely at Martel in puzzlement and then ducking only to be drawn into staring again as though he was a needle and Martel a magnet. He was entirely unable to make up his mind whether this was Charles Martel or not and the direful consequences one way and the hoped for relief the other kept him spiked to the spot. But Martel was not paying any attention to him for there were other people about and who would notice a street cleaner?

Who? Some minutes before a low gray car had crept down the street and parked directly across from the hand cart which the little man had abandoned. In it were three men, heavy and purposeful and until now very quiet.

One of them smoked an eternal cigar and gazed at the beach with a placid air of having forever in which to work. He was plump and

comfortable, satisfied with existence in general and particularly with his own.

The second man was from a rougher mold and about as oily as sandpaper. He had a photograph in his hand which he was comparing with thoroughness—a faculty which he substituted for brains—which almost wore it out.

"I guess you got him, Mr. Banks," rasped the second man. "This here picture and that there street cleaner's the same man or I'll eat 'em both." He clapped his jaw shut as though already masticating this strange food and looked with some servility at Connover Banks.

The third man was French, portly and flustered. He was the head of the Sanitation Department and he had an eye on his future. "I assure you, Mr. Banks, I assure you with a certainty that this thing I did not know! A dangerous criminal, a very dangerous one if I am to believe . . . but of course how could I otherwise than believe—"

"What nationality was he?" smiled Banks.

"Oh, but of course how could he be anything but French? His papers—"

"Papers!" laughed Banks. "No, no, Gritter. Don't arrest him. Always so anxious, eh, Gritter. But not yet. That man on the beach, you know him? I think it would be very profitable to wait and find out just why our little street cleaner is so interested in Captain Charles Martel." He continued to smile pleasantly. He could wait.

Anne and Buckingham came yelling out of the surf, the famous round-rollers of Biarritz. The boy, displaying one of those odd skills in which he had been so long and painfully trained by war, had caught a fish in a cleft in the rocks. He raced up to Martel and displayed his triumph, waiting with eager blue eyes for the master's praise. It was a ten-pound beauty, a prize indeed to a house two days without meat.

While Charles pronounced him a very prodigy amongst anglers, Anne went swiftly into the small beach bathhouse and came out shortly afterwards, still arranging her hair, dressed for the street.

"And whither goest Her Highness?" said Martel.

"I have a date with a man," said Anne, looking sly—or looking what she supposed to be sly—for such an expression would have been strange indeed on that bright young face.

"I'll tear his heart out," said Martel.

"Oh no you won't, sir. He's promised me fresh greens and a dozen onions, and we can't dine on fish alone. Besides, he thinks you're wonderful."

"So that makes it fine," said Martel, pretending great ferocity.

"Aw, she's talking about old Can-can Thibault," said Buckingham. "I swear, you'd think she was royalty the way that grocer scrapes and paws in front of her. I guess I know. He even forgave me—" he stopped and blushed.

Martel looked down at him. "What have you done now?"

Buckingham looked unhappy and

then, with the air of one who is happy to have but one life to give for his country, straightened up and blurted, "I took three heads of cabbage off his stand with a pole and hook three months ago and he had put a bell on the last one."

Martel sighed. "Didn't you have money to pay?"

"Sure I had money to pay, but a fellow has to keep his hand in! I was going to pay—"

They were both laughing at him so, for a moment, he appeared undecided and then wriggled himself into a suitable stance which was supposed to be contrition. But he couldn't hold it and suddenly burst out laughing, too. He knew they knew they had convinced him about stealing. He wouldn't steal now, not for anything. He was a gentleman, wasn't he? Charles said so.

Martel went into the bathhouse and changed his clothes and when he came out, both Anne and Buckingham were gone, the latter bound for home and a quick cleaning of his prey.

Possibly Martel's life would have gone on as happily as it had in this interlude if the old man on the walk had not beheld him now, face to face, dressed.

The thick lenses peered, the mustache quivered. With a terrible squirm and a moan, the eavesdropper forgot all caution. The man *was* Charles Martel.

Dropping broom with a clang against the handcart, the street cleaner sprinted up the walk with only one thought—to put distance between himself and Martel.

Puzzled and instantly alert, Martel searched his memory for that face and manner and then, with a startled exclamation, darted up the walk in pursuit.

"Professor Haus!" cried Martel. "Wait!"

But the suddenly titled street cleaner had no mind for waiting. Biarritz had become much too small. The perfectly rounded combers, so delightful to the painter, had lost their enchantment. The green, pink and yellow villas and houses which stepped neatly up the mountains, the grape arbors, the lemon groves, the olive trees, the impressive hotels and pleasant lanes had all, every one, formed a gigantic plot to imprison him, and his heart hammered like a machine gun more from terror than exertion.

"I must get on. *Ach,* I must get on!" And he got on with remarkable agility so that he was shortly sprinting up a steep, winding street between two villas. The grade was too much for him but the danger was too pressing to allow him to stop. One hasty glance he threw over his shoulder to discover that Martel was less than a hundred feet behind him, and then he sped with renewed energy. But it was an energy sucked upon by terror and he resorted to a hare and hounds trick.

Professor Haus turned the end of the villa and darted instantly into a garden door which he slammed behind him.

He pressed anxious ear to the panels and his eyes bulged hugely behind his glasses while his old heart sought to spring straight through his ribs.

He heard Martel stop and cast around him and then start away. But his triumph was brief. A huge voice behind him bellowed:

"What are you doing here?"

Haus whirled and there against the soft, Oriental garden was the roughest butler he had ever seen. But butlers were nothing to the old professor beside Martel. Haus leaped like some demented chimpanzee for the fellow's throat and the giant screamed in terror and scrambled hastily back, tripping over a pot and falling with it into a flower bed. Haus left him with an arbor of crushed geraniums and darted across the main court.

A tea table was bringing a belated breakfast to two old men. The table was a portable affair and its pilot was an ex-soldier who felt that valor before his employer would not go unrewarded. He made a barrier out of the table at a strategic moment and Haus crashed into it. Pilot and table, cups and pastry and chocolate tangled up in a horrible crash. But Haus was afoot, running and halfway over the wall. He stopped for an instant at the top and glanced back at the ruin he had left but the sight of Martel coming through the gate acted as a strong projector upon him and Haus was flying at doubled speed up another lane.

There was a lemon grove to his left and beyond that a ditch which made a sort of earthwork and Haus changed his course for this fortification. He knew he could not run much farther. He flopped over the top of the rampart and went up to his ankles in an irrigation ditch. Promptly, as though the shock of the cold water had restored his courage, he peered back over the parapet and from his pocket drew a 9 mm. Luger. He put a shell under the firing pin, estimated the range and waited.

Martel had been slightly detained by the necessity of apologizing for his intrusion and helping first the butler and then the ex-soldier to his feet and finally by going out the gate and around the wall—for there was too much silver plate in his right leg to permit athletic ascents.

He stood for a moment at the corner where he should have discovered Haus and, not finding him, got his breath back. He pushed a hand through his dampened sandy hair to take it out of his eyes.

"There is no fleetness like the wicked's!" said Martel and grinned. This was an awful lot of trouble he was going to just to tell a man that he needn't run halfway across Europe out of fear.

His practised eye explored the way with an expertness cultivated only by the surpassing danger of hunting that most deadly animal—man. He found the footprints in the dusty furrows of the lemon grove. He traced them a short way through the trees. But he did not move from the spot.

Affecting the most casual manner ssible—but not so casual that he whistled—he sauntered back along the villa wall and vanished.

Haus watched him. But Haus knew a thing or two and he promptly shifted his position until he was around a bend in the irrigation ditch and could command his old spot. He then gave twice as much attention to the area back of the ditch as he did to that before it, carefully marking down all cover, sketching how it would be utilized. And then, for all his precaution, his hands began to sweat and he began to tremble. He knew that this was all wrong.

He waited for nearly ten minutes and still nothing happened. Suddenly an awful fear took him and he whirled.

Martel was fifty yards away, behind Haus, having come into the ditch from the farthest end.

Haus threw a quick shot and sand leaped off the bank while the ricochet howled away on dismal wings.

At the first sign of Haus' turning, Martel went over the bank. He was entirely under cover when the shot arrived.

"Professor Haus! Don't shoot. By the gods, you give a man a lot of trouble."

"Keep your distance, captain! By this I do not mean to be taken!" And he shook the Luger at the empty scenery down the ditch. "You throw your gun into sight and I promise you dot I will let you go!"

Martel made no answer and there was no sound. This unnerved Haus. He did not dare to rise up to see if Martel was still on the other side of the ditch and he dared not go away and so expose his back. What was Martel doing?

Presently there came an answer to that. On a twig plucked from a lemon tree, a white handkerchief was exposed to view.

"A trick!" cried Haus. "Come up, your hands into the air."

"Put down your gun, professor. This is no trick. I am not with any government anywhere and I haven't the slightest interest in taking you. That's why I chased you. To tell you that."

Haus blinked and fidgeted with his Luger. Oh, if this were only true. What a lot of running away it would save him! He was very tired of running away, was Haus.

Silence ensued but the twig was still in view and the handkerchief was fluttering. Haus speculated. He knew nothing but good of Martel, but one gets out of the habit of trusting—yes, and hoping, too.

"You stand up as you say if this iss true, Martel."

"Stand where you are, professor," said Martel coolly.

Haus leaped half a foot into the air. The voice had come from behind him!

"Don't turn," said Martel. "Lay your Luger down on the bank. Carefully now. I wouldn't want you to get sand in it."

Haus trembled and tears started into his eyes. He pushed down a sob and laid the gun as he had been directed.

"Good," said Martel.

"You von't take me away," said Haus.

"I'm afraid I must," said Martel, retrieving the Luger.

"But I tell you—Ach, how horrible. All these years and now—"

"But I shan't take you any farther than to dinner," said Martel. "Turn around, Haus."

Haus' nerves were buffeted enough without this. But he turned, head lowered, lip trembling. He opened his eyes to stare at the Luger which, unaccountably, was extended to him butt first. Hope struggled up behind the thick lenses but still he wouldn't touch the gun. This was an old trick. Bait. Shot in self-defense.

"Take it!" said Martel. "Put it in your pocket."

Haus finally took it, saw that it was still loaded and then put it in his pocket. He looked at the extended hand for a little while and then, with a long, shuddering sob took it and sank down on the bank to cry uninterruptedly for four solid minutes.

Martel looked down at the curving white beach and the flags on the hotel roofs. He puffed on a cigarette and admired the scrubby hills. After a little while he went down and retrieved his pocket handkerchief, which he gave to Professor Haus.

"Blow hard," said Martel.

"Now come along," he added. "My boy caught a wonderful fish and dinner will be ready in no time."

Haus blew his nose and wiped his misted glasses and combed the tears of relief out of his huge mustache, and soon came along very handsomely.

In the dining room of the small cottage, Professor Haus picked his teeth with a bone of the fish and gazed with benign satisfaction upon the lace-covered board and its empty dishes, upon the silver service of the buffet, upon Anne and Buckingham.

He was garbed in one of the latter's jackets—for he quite would have disappeared in a coat of Martel's—and a pair of that young bandit's slippers, and having washed mustache, face, hands and ears, Haus looked entirely different from the street cleaner of a few hours before. The great lenses sparkled, the rough voice was softened by occasional chuckles.

Martel had not told Anne anything other than that Haus was an old friend. Had he added that he and Haus had been swapping shots and crossing trails for years, Anne would have been frosty, and had Martel added that one of these shots had just missed him, Anne would have been savage to the little professor. As it was she merely identified his speech as having a Polish accent and thought very little about him otherwise. She did, however, experience an uncomfortable feeling when she left the table as though she was departing from an era through which they had passed happily. This she put aside and motioning to Buckingham to come on and leave the men alone, there was shortly heard the distant rattle of dishes in the kitchen as that worthy began to wash dishes and the mutter of a history lesson going forward the while.

Haus beamed upon Martel, took

the proffered brandy glass, sniffed at the fine liquor, and toasted Anne.

"Royalty, my old friend," said Haus. "Not less than royalty. Such charm, such beauty, such grace. Ah, it carries one back to the great days of Warsaw, the balls, the fine dinners, the jewels and lights and music. *Ach,* my dear Martel, how rich you are. I give you Lady Anne."

Martel was certainly nothing loath and they toasted her twice.

"And your boy, the urchin you—"

"He's no urchin," said Martel quickly.

"Ah, yes," but Haus had his suspicions. "He seems quite devoted to you. Dot is a fine thing, to have a boy devoted to you. And a handsome fellow. Of course, there is something in the way—"

"Buckingham is a good lad," said Martel, quickly divining that Haus felt antipathy toward the boy on no other grounds than that Buckingham was already taller than Haus, that he hated Germans.

"Of course. Tell me, my old friend, what have you been doing with yourself these past few years?"

Martel told him back to eighteen months and that quite simply. But as he spoke he had the odd feeling that he had been born eighteen months ago, had lived that life and was now laying it aside.

"And now you," said Martel.

"*Ach,* there is little enough to tell. When war broke out, you know what I was doing."

"Certainly. You were trying to swamp the world with German culture," laughed Martel. "And what a violent effort it was!"

Haus looked at him fixedly and set down the brandy glass. "You believe maybe something. You believe maybe I helped start this war?"

"Well, as Hitler's foremost political scientist—"

"You believe I tried to start a war with cannons? You believe I meant for men to get killed over silly stupidities? You think maybe I meant for airplanes to bomb cities and millions to be dumped in common graves? You think this?"

And thereupon Haus startled Martel by laying his small ball-on-a-stick head down on the table and weeping until the portieres shook with the violence of it. Martel urged brandy, but Haus would have none of it. Martel tried patting him on the shoulder consolingly, but Haus only wept the more.

Only the appearance of Anne, attracted by the wails, made Haus stop and rapidly dry his eyes upon a napkin and wipe his glasses in a furious effort to be utterly calm and collected.

"The war," smiled Martel.

But as she went out carrying the last few dishes, she stopped in the doorway and looked back wonderingly at Haus. Suddenly she stopped and came into the room again. She looked hard at the guest.

"At last!" said Anne. "Professor Haus! Certainly, I know you professor. You lectured at Vienna in nineteen thirty-eight and the SS guards stopped you!"

"There!" cried Haus. "There! Now you see, captain? You see. Tell him, dear lady. Tell him!" And he pranced back and forth behind his chair, now pointing to Martel, now nodding vigorously at Anne.

"Yes, what happened?" said Martel, amused.

"Why, he was speaking about science being truth and went so far as to advise that the Viennese scientists get out if they wanted to keep on thinking or some such thing, and then an SS spy leaped up on the stage and thanked the audience right in the middle of the lecture and they hustled the professor away in a staff car. I remember well because he was to have had dinner that night at our house and father came home to tell us about it. We were very upset, but father discounted it only to be imprisoned the very next year when he would not co-operate with them."

"See, see, see!" cried Haus, jumping about. "Thank you, my dear lady. *Heraus mit der Nazis!*"

Martel was quite surprised but he spoke to conciliate the old man and get him seated again. The bait of another glass of brandy accomplished this.

"Well, now at least you have partaken of the promised dinner," said Martel. "A bit late, perhaps, but pleasant nonetheless, I hope."

"Indeed. Dinner to a starving man now. Dinner to a heartbroken if vell fed political scientist den. Ah, my dear lady—"

But Anne had returned to the kitchen and the door, still swinging, gave punctuation to Buckingham's

chant about King Charles Fifth . . . Netherlands . . . stabled . . . an—

"So they weren't popular with you?" said Martel.

"Nazis? Popular? *Ach,* und me a Pole! Bah, I spit on the Nazis, I grind them under my feet. I tear out their—"

"Not so loud," said Martel.

Haus came half out of his chair and poked his lenses fearfully about him and under the very silver before he realized what year this was and where this was.

"Tell me, then," said Martel, "what you really did."

Haus fortified himself with a strong slug of brandy, hitched his chair sideways and spoke in a very confidential voice.

"I was a trained ape. Trained mitt hot pokers and the food away taken. A trained ape. My family in Poland was—" He sucked back an imminent tear— "And before war started I was confidence itself. Yes, I thought the brain of Haus—this poor, withered old apple of a brain—was greater than that of any Nazi. Vell, maybe my brain was great, but what I lacked was the cruelty. The cruelty of the beast. The sadism. I was not enough of a brutal murderer or a coward. Zzo! I was wrong.

"In nineteen hundred and thirty-three they needed me. Ah, they flattered me. I was teaching at the University of Berlin and three of my pupils came to me and said they had found a better position for me. It paid marks like to planets a train would take days. It gave things. My family was poor. There was little to eat. And all they said was, 'Here, great Professor Haus, you who are the world's greatest living authority, perhaps the greatest who ever lived, on political sciences, you to whom nothing human or political is any mystery, permit us at your feet to sit and become informed of how to make Germany a great, prosperous, peaceful nation, respected among all nations, admired as is the sun.' And I said yes.

"So they came. Nobody at my feet sat but many before my book sat. And when a year I had worked they came to me and said, 'Herr Professor Haus, Der Führer thinks you a genius. Come teach this master of all Germany how to be a great ruler.' Und I vent.

"Now maybe I should have remembered what happened to der writer Machiavelli when he wrote the 'Prince.' A great book, the 'Prince.' A great work. A demonstration of great political genius. And what happened to Machiavelli? *Ach,* to a Nazi it should not happen. Minister Colbert of France, he read how to become powerful, he forgot to read how to be a great ruler. Cardinal Richelieu? He read how to be a great manager of kings and lands, but forgets how Machiavelli says to make kings and lands happy. Napoleon? Frederick? Catherine? *Ach,* but you know the story. I forgot the story.

"'Professor, my dear old friend,' says the arch-fiend Hitler. 'My staff and guide, my dear Haus. Teach me how should Germany great become. Please teach a willing pupil.'

"Und ZZZzo! I teach him, der . . . vell, anyway, I teach him. And to the sentences and ideas which he already knows, he agrees, you see?"

"A man isn't likely to learn more than he knows," said Martel. "Brandy?"

Haus took the brandy and gulped it down. "Ah, yes. He hears what he knows already and the rest he does not hear. I sit and talk of peace and happy people and food and great admiration by the world und dot Hitler! *Ach, der*—vell, anyway, he hears nothing.

"Then he says, 'Herr Professor, make me a program to create Germany the greatest nation in the world.' And I go and make him a little personnel essay all about it, mitt drawings and statistics, all very neat. And when this he gets, he says, 'But my dear professor, all you have written concerns the German scientist, not the people.'

"So I tell him, 'The people need food and peace, to raise children and amuse themselves and happy be. The scientist in Germany can create food and health. The one asset which Germany has is her scientific man. Her warriors, phooy! War after war she has lost and will lose with her warriors. Pig-heads, her warriors! Nobody ever won a war. Nobody anywhere.'

"'A successful war would make the world respect Germany,' says der . . . vell, anyway, he says so. And I say, 'Already the world respects Germany. All the chemistry in the world is led by Germans. Physics. Engineering. Led by Germans. Everywhere, people know this. If German scientists could have all they needed with which to work, they would control all the industry in the world and be thanked for doing so, and everybody would be happy and nobody would get killed, which is stupid.'

"Der . . . vell, he smiles. 'Control all industry? Scientists?' 'Industry,' I say, 'and all is industry now. Make Germany the fount of such great discoveries and developments that the world is free from disease and suffering. Germany will be great. A thousand years of human greatness will result and everywhere you go everybody will shout 'Long Live Germany, the greatest nation on earth!'

"ZZZZo! In two days he sends for me again. Und this time, how nice he is! 'Herr Professor Haus, a school you make for me. A nice big school. The money I give you. And in this school you teach all you know about races and peoples everywhere. Your idea, it is wonderful. So make a school so we learn what the world needs every place and what the world knows and does not know. Und what the world is doing and what the world is not doing. All this you will make for me, Herr Professor.'

"'What else can I do? I go and the school make. I am all excited. Haus takes a hand in building a new world, a magnificent world. And for a year I build the school and teach and give books to the young instructors. Und everything is going fine. But there is one trouble. I have not enough informa-

tion to teach what I am supposed to teach. More data. And more data. What do they do in South America? Who should be made happy in the United States? What peoples are down-trodden und why? Und what can a German scientist do to untrod them?

"ZZZo! Back to der . . . vell, I see Hitler. I tell him. 'Ah, Herr Professor, my good and loyal friend, for you I was about to send. I have heard that once you wrote a book on the procuring of information.' And, thick-skulled imbecile that I am, I say yes. 'Herr Professor, for me, then, you will construct a textbook on how to do this thing. And more. You take an active part in making it so. Then we can find out all the fine things you want to know everywhere. And there is one especial thing I want you to do. I want you to have for me an always up to date list of the scientists of the world, what they are doing and why and how soon they will finish. Then the German scientist can work harder and solve his problems better.'

"To me this seems very beautiful. Und so I go and I make up a book. Did I know I was writing the basic intelligence system for Germany? Did I know that dot pig-brain Rudolph Hess would add to it all the Japanese methods he had learned by way of torture and counter-espionage? Did I know I was about to hound millions of people from their wits out? No, I write a book. Like Machiavelli I hand out wisdom und nobody reads but the first page und crazy go.

"ZZZZZZo! When the school is running und geopolitics is getting taught, when the book is written and an intelligence bureau I start, who comes to see me? Der . . . vell, was it Hitler? NO! It was a squad from the SS guards and they keep me under lock and key like a criminal. And I don't see the school. And I don't lecture on my book. But all day long reports I sit and file about scientists. And if I complain, the SS guard is there to see nobody shoots me. And if I want to know what is really happening, why they say they can't distract me with petty things because I am so great. And there I sit and make up dossiers on all the scientists in the world and wonder if I am a prisoner or if I am just protected.

"Comes Austria. I go. The troops are nice to me. The officials bow from the hips to me. I start to make an address and I am arrested like a bread stealer. *Ach!*

"I see Hitler. I complain. I say I will no longer make up dossiers on scientists or help because I see so plain it is to war he is going. The world he has by the teeth and yet to war he is going. *Ach*, dot—vell, he was not bright, God roast his soul. He calls me his Herr Professor but I tell him no more information, no more geopolitics, no more anything. Und he pulls out a photograph of my dear, dear wife and my two liddle poys—"

Haus stopped and sobbed.

"What did he do?" said Martel.

"So I work until nineteen hundred and forty-three making dossiers. I find out about your atomic bomb. I find out about the people and the projects. I learn about submarine mousetraps, about bazookas. I list new scientists, where they work and what they do all through the world, und all I can have happen to hurt the Nazis is to suppress information which would really help.

"ZZZZZO! I suppress one piece of information too many and away I have to run. Run away I could because the Russians territory have taken and my wife and little boys are in their hands. So to the Russians I go, full of hope. I get through their lines und they take me to a commissar and the commissar says yes, my wife and children are in Russian hands and a photograph he shows me. And then he makes me swear I will behave if they'll keep me out of jail and the—" Haus choked with suppressing the volley of violence which sought to escape.

"I go back to Germany as their spy. With you I swap shots. With the Germans, I swap shots. Me, an old man. I act like a common spy. And the Russains are worse than the Germans. Worse! They are so stupid they will not even ask me for the mine of information I carry in my head. But finally a bullet I stop and in the hospital a general sees me and suddenly realizes who I am. *Ach*, if I had just died there!

"Back to making dossiers I go. But do the Russians want Nazi scientist dossiers? Himmel, no! They want allied dossiers. They want to know what all the scientists are doing. So I reconstruct the system. And then what? Why, the pigs will not believe anybody had done so much anywhere and they threaten to shoot me.

"But the Russians forgot they had made me a spy. They forgot I could also spy in Russia. Und I learn dot my vife, my liddle poys—"

He really broke down then and wept without restraint for three and a half minutes. Brandy had no charms.

"What happened?" asked Martel.

"So there is no use to stay and away I run. But the French in nineteen forty-four will only arrest me. Nobody will touch me. I contact undergrounds, both sides. The pigs get more and more stupid in a war. I run and run and run and—" He controlled himself and wiped hard at his glasses. "I become a street cleaner in Biarritz and here I have been for three years."

"Passport?"

Haus was suddenly touched in his professional pride. "Would the greatest intelligence officer in the world have any trouble with passports?"

Martel laughed and poured the brandy. "You are quite right, professor. There were very few intelligence men worthy of the name. And you were the greatest in Germany without question, if not in the whole world. But I despair to think how you would clear your name."

"*Ach*, to clear my name I would give my arm! Only for this reason

have I maintained liaison with some of my old workers."

"What? You retain contacts?"

"Of course. I have amassed documents and documents and perhaps in a little while I can prove I was an unwilling Nazi and a forced Russian. Captain Martel, you no idea have what it means to be brains amongst wooden-skulled thieves and idiots. Would I work to kill millions? To bring unhappiness to millions upon millions more? To ruin countries all for the sake of the extension of some national dominion? What matters it at all whether Germany or Russia collects Polish taxes if the personal freedom of the Pole is guaranteed? What does it matter if the whole world is owned by one man or a thousand men so long as the individual is happy and can pursue his natural vocations? Did it matter whether Charles the Fifth or Henri the Second ruled Europe in fifteen fifty? Was there any choice between their stupidity and profligacy? Then what is the difference now? Individual freedom, the dignity and nobility of the individual man is the important thing. Patriotism was a mechanism invented by Machiavelli who played upon a man's natural love of his soil to enslave his heart to a king. King is not soil. The trick of patriotism is to make it seem so. Nations rob and pillage and tax. A few wax fat on the sweat of the millions within it. Freedom? There is no freedom not allowed by the vested interests of the world. Freedom? There is nothing but slavery anywhere. Advertising, propaganda—what difference? Buy France! France will make you free! Buy Russian, Russia will make you free! Bah! A plague ove take the cunning and sadistic minds which call themselves political and are in fact industrial and capitalistic tools. Is there any freedom today? Is there any freedom anywhere that is true freedom? If a man behaves in the feeling that he is free it is because he has been taught a certain connotation for freedom in his extreme youth and if he follows that rigid connotation, he is 'free'. But is he? Or is he hemmed and guided and spurred and spurned the instant he begins to display any talent for original thought. He is free like the ox, my friend. He is given his oats so long as he behaves and pulls the cart that carries his national flag.

"Nationalism will destroy this world, Charles Martel. For the mind which is revered through all the world is the mind of greed and avarice. The only mind which can benefit humanity is that which works and gives all it has to bring happiness to the world. But no hat tips to the altruistic mind and the kind heart. All headgear sweeps to earth when greed and avarice as represented by money and selfish power rides the juggernaut into the scene. Think on that, Charles Martel. Think on that. Unless all mankind realizes that unless it learns to support and revere those mentalities and personalities which can improve man's chances of survival, those very wits will be used as tools in the hands of petty schemers prominent in the histories as great leaders, to enslave, enfeeble and finally destroy Man. Before five years are out, there will not be enough left of the United States, Europe or Russia to get together the information required to make and strike a match. The criminals will perish with the innocent. But what is satisfaction like that to a dead man? Man and this culture deserves to live, Martel. Who is there to make sure they live? Nobody, my host, nobody!"

For a little while Martel sat and watched his guest in silence. The little man, who substituted nerves and motion where others used muscles and appearance, was quite exhausted and wrung out by his violent discourse. It took three large glasses of brandy and two fresh napkins to retore his equilibrium.

"Mr. Connover Banks," murmured Martel, "would call you a 'Communist'."

"A communist!" cried Haus, all fluttery on the instant.

"No, no. I would not. You don't know Connover Banks."

"Ah, but if he would call me a communist or a socialist or a democrat or a double-blue-eyed stinkpot for uttering those sentiments, then I know Mr. Connever Banks. Such men, and don't think I don't know them, brand anything which would unseat them with a name which they have carefully made detestable to everybody so nobody will listen to truth. I am no German. I am no Russian. I am a political scientist and the finest in the world. What do I care for flags or government—"

Martel hurriedly stopped him. "No, no. I share many of your sentiments. But what is this you say about five years; why five years?"

Haus instantly became the conspirator. He hitched his chair sideways though it moved not a quarter of an inch. He regarded all the doors with grave suspicion and even seemed half-minded to look under the candlesticks. In a hoarse whisper he said, "Martel, I trust you. I am expert at reading faces. I see that you are honest. My good friend, Jules Fabrecken and his crowd have given an atomic bomb to Russia and all the facilities to produce more. They are seeking to promote a war between the United States and Russia for those two countries alone, in all the world, oppose them. Fabrecken only wishes to maintain the *status quo* in the world of economics and invention. If no new ideology and no new weapon or defense against the atomic bomb appear then Russia and the United States will cease to be a menace to him. He will become, in effect, the dictator of the whole world. Connover Banks, your former employer on the Allied War Crimes Commission is the chief lieutenant of Jules Fabrecken.

"The first interest of Fabrecken is to prevent any new ideas from arising and to do this he is either killing, capturing or buying off every scientist he can lay his hands on. There is a small group organized to oppose him. We need the brains and initiative which you can offer. For *ach Gott*, you sure displayed them in the recent war.

But this is a bigger war than that one.

"If the world falls under the complete dictatorship of Fabrecken and his crowd you can kiss your science good-by and the dark ages all over again will start. It is impossible for us to stop an atomic war but it is possible for us to save what we can of science and maybe, who knows, maybe we can completely overthrow and defeat Fabrecken before all mankind is thrown in the gutter."

"I have suspected this," said Martel. "I have seen the signs but how do you know?"

"I," said Haus, "am the greatest intelligence scientist in the world. I have files, I have means, I have names, I have contacts. The group even has a secret headquarters in a place not likely to be found. I tell you all this because I know you are honest. I tell you this because we need your help. *Ach Gott,* how we need it."

"You have files," said Martel.

"*Ach,* yes, und a laboratory. Please, Charles Martel will you help us?"

Martel sat quietly for a little while. "You really have the evidence that Fabrecken means to let the war between the United States and Russia go through? Then, by keeping all new thought corraled for his own personal use to rule the world?"

Haus, tears in his eyes, nodded vigorously. You come to my house to-night at nine and I will tell you more. You will help?" They were at the door now.

"Shall I come with you now?" asked Martel.

Haus shook his head violently. "Still for a little while streets I must clean. But tonight at nine? *Ja?*"

They shook on it and soon Haus the street cleaner was handed out the door with many compliments to Anne, many bows to Martel and even an effort to be nice to Buckingham.

"A funny little man," said Anne.

But Martel hardly heard her. So great was his preoccupation that Buckingham was alarmed and stood in the doorway for some minutes, looking at the stairs where Charles had vanished and into the street where Haus had gone.

Suddenly Buckingham grabbed a cap from a peg. He kissed Anne on the cheek on his way through the parlor and in reply to her pursuing query, said mocking Haus:

"*Ach,* a hunch I got," and rapidly went on his way.

A chill hand clutched at Anne's heart and she rose from her sewing to call him back. But then she sank into her chair. Rule her world she might, but there were some things on which men were entitled to act alone.

She began to sew and found, suddenly, that her work was blurred by her tears.

TO BE CONTINUED.

RAT RACE

BY GEORGE O. SMITH

The idea was to build an electronic gadget; that it turned out to be a rat trap was purely accidental. And that it turned out to have the highly undesirable effects it had—

Illustrated by Cartier

"You're nuts," came the reply, but the voice on the telephone was jovially reproving rather that sarcastic. "I can't do anything about this order."

Peter Manton blinked. "But it has a Four-A-One priority."

Brannon nodded—invisibly, of course—and said, "Sure you have a top priority. Anything your lab wants has top. But darn it, Peter, the best priority in the world isn't going to buy you a dozen mousetraps that are nonexistent."

"But—"

"Besides which, that building you're in is about as rat-proof as a sealed gasoline can. There isn't an item of comestible in the place."

"I know that. And the mice can go hungry for all I care. But the mice don't seem to understand that bringing food into the place is not only forbidden by law but dangerous."

"But there ain't a mousetrap in the country. Ding bust it, Peter, mousetraps take spring wire, and