

The Barbarian

By F. V. W. MASON

Author of "Elephant Ju-Ju," "Captain Redspurs," etc.

*Where the legions of Rome
had failed, Cealwyn the North-
erner was making a single
handed attempt to capture
Syracuse*



Hand over hand Cealwyn
climbed—toward what fate?

LEADING UP TO THIS CONCLUDING INSTALLMENT

WHEN he was captured in his native England and taken to ancient Carthage, Cealwyn, son of a king, was made a slave. Joining with Varro, a Roman slave, and Lycursus, captain of the Spartan mercenaries in the city, he led a revolt. They escaped, but separately, and Cealwyn took with him Valeria, a Roman slave girl.

This story began in the Argosy for May 19.

Cealwyn and Valeria made their way to a near-by island, where Cealwyn joined a pirate crew. The pirates' ship, searching for loot, encountered the galley of Adherbal, one of the rulers of Carthage, and the man Cealwyn had

sworn to kill. Adherbal, the suffet, and Tiratha, the Suffeta, were taken prisoners. The beautiful Tiratha professed love for Cealwyn, and, although he did not return it, he managed to have her life spared.

The pirates fell out among themselves. After a battle, they departed, leaving Cealwyn unconscious on the beach. Valeria nursed him back to health, and the two of them were picked up by a passing Roman scout galley, whose commander recognized Valeria as a princess.

The Roman galley was headed for Syracuse, on the shore of Sicily, an ally of Carthage that was being besieged by Rome. In a great naval battle, Cealwyn became separated from Valeria, and was picked up by a Roman commander who ordered him hanged as a slave who had stolen Roman armor.

CHAPTER XXVI (Continued).

OLD FRIENDS.

FAINTLY, the threshing of oars broke in upon Cealwyn's consciousness and his smoke-red-dened eyes noted the approach of a line of Roman biremes which, having disposed of their enemies, were hurrying to join in the attack on Syracuse.

Four ships threshed by and Cealwyn was about to turn away when the fifth galley in the Roman line caught his attention. Strange, he had an impression of having seen it before somewhere. That green swan's head on the aplustre? The Vesta? No. That pirate galley which had been Verce-terix's? No. Suddenly he had it. Great gods, it was the galley Varro and Lycursus had selected for the escape from Carthage!

"Stand fast, rogue," growled the marines when Cealwyn squirmed sideways to get a better view. "You'll have all the sky to yourself in a minute."

The line was passing a good hun-

dred yards to the starboard, too far to be sure, yet he thought to recognize a straight-backed form on the after-deck.

"Varro!" he screamed suddenly. "Varro! Help me! I—" Then a horny hand was clapped over his mouth.

Thump-thump! Thump-thump! The galley with the green swan's head was by and pulling strongly.

"Who cried for Varro?" It was the gray haired Roman with the bandaged head who came striding forward again.

"This murdering lout of a slave, O noble Lucius."

Cealwyn suddenly succeeded in sinking his teeth in that hand which muffled his mouth and seized the opportunity to call out.

"Varro and I—slaves—Carthage together. He knows me."

It seemed an eternity that the bireme commander hesitated, then over his shoulder he called an order to the galley's trumpeter who picked up his curving instrument and sent five short notes winging over the water.

"If you have lied," the gray haired officer promised grimly, "I'll have you flayed alive!"

CEALWYN bit his lips while the bireme with the green swan's head circled left in obedience to the trumpet call and, after avoiding a smoldering quinquereme, drew alongside. What if he had mistaken that figure on the stern?

Quickly, his suspense ended when the figures on the stern could be seen in greater detail; there could be no mistaking the enormous bulk of Lycursus in his typically Grecian armor, nor the ex-tribune's erect figure clad in a severely plain lorica.

Great was the rejoicing which ensued when the two clambered up to the bireme's deck. Apparently Varro and Cealwyn's captor had once known each other, for they saluted and then nodded. But when Lucius held out his hand the man of Cannæ shook his head and dropped his eye.

"I am not worthy, noble Lucius," he muttered.

The other shrugged unhappily as he said, "Yet Marcellus now thinks the men of Cannæ fit to die for Rome—Well, what of this barbarian?"

"You will let him come with me aboard the Cahirra?" Varro demanded.

"Of course, since he is your friend. 'Tis lucky you passed when you did, else he'd have swung high as any of those rascals yonder," and the gray haired officer pointed to a quinquereme which rolled lazily halfway to the beleaguered city. From her main yard swayed and jolted a dozen black and contorted figures.

"Who are they?" Lycursus inquired carelessly.

"Roman deserters, most likely," Lucius replied. "Or mayhap pirates caught in the service of Epicydes."

Long before the Cahirra proceeded on her interrupted course the Roman fleet, worsted by the mighty engines of Archimedes, had drawn sullenly off, though the land attack was apparently being pressed with ever-increasing fury.

Once on the bireme again, Lycursus flung bearlike arms about the Celt and hugged him with boyish delight.

"By Zeus, I always swore you were too large to kill. Varro was sure the hook-noses had long since torn you limb from limb, but I said, 'Varro, that rascal's pulled through somehow, and we'll all get drunk together again some day!'"

"Celvenus! Now Artemis be praised!" Iskander and others of the Spartans now came running up and it warmed the wanderer's heart to see their joy at beholding him again.

Characteristically the ex-tribune, though he, perhaps more than any of the others, was devoted to the rescued Celt, paid his friend no attention until the Cahirra had found her place in the vast semicircle of ships Marcellus had arranged to blockade the trapped Carthaginian fleet.

By tens and twenties the Roman anchors went plunging down through water green-blue as Tiratha's eyes, but the Cahirra, detailed to the far left of line, was among the last to take position. Carefully, Varro picked a course through almost the whole of the entire battered Roman fleet, on which signs of elation were completely lacking; for though having accomplished its main purpose of beating back Epicydes's attempt to join the relieving fleet due to appear, Marcellus's squadron had dismally failed in its attack on the sea wall.

"Ten thousand curses," rumbled Varro, glaring at many-towered Syracuse. "This means a long and costly siege!"

In heading to her berth, the Cahirra swung around the stern of a huge quinquereme upon which some executions were taking place. Cealwyn, chancing to look at her, drew his breath in with a quick hissing sound that made Lycursus wheel about.

"What's amiss?"

"Look! I—I know him—" Cealwyn's fingers indicated one of those wretches who, firmly pinioned, was waiting to be swung off into eternity.

"Who is he?" the Greek demanded.

"Tothmes — an Egyptian pirate I met not long ago."

"Well, he's only an Egyptian corpse now," grunted Iskander when an armored decurion sent the burly, copper-skinned figure tumbling from the quinquereme's bulwarks. The pirate fell perhaps six feet before the yellow rope about his neck tautened like a cracked whip and the yard above creaked loud under the Egyptian corsair's weight; gruesomely, half a dozen other bodies already suspended from it began jiggling crazily.

Tothmes in Syracuse? Cealwyn plunged into a maze of conjecture. So Tothmes, having seized both Adherbal and Tiratha, and having murdered Verceterix, had hurried to Syracuse to claim ransom? Well, it had availed him little.

What of Valeria? He cherished a fierce hope that that galley he had last seen bearing down on the Vesta had been a Roman. That night he would make inquiry of the entire fleet, if need be.

WHEN the anchor splashed and the oars were drawn inboard, Varro stripped off his unornamented helmet with a weary curse.

"'Tis Pluto's own luck we could not have carried the sea wall."

"To Hades with the sea wall!" chuckled the Spartan captain who, with hot vinegar, had removed the last of sundry dark brown and red stains which had flecked his breastplate and greaves. "To Hades with Carthage and anything else that comes between me and my wine, right now. Mars and Bacchus are famous allies. Ho! Celvenus, are you become a Roman that you must mope when the fighting is done?"

And all the other Spartans were preparing to yield to the reaction from combat, but the Roman members of

this curious ship's company sat stonily about mending their gear and in low tones commenting on the day's struggle.

Cealwyn, however, joined the grim browed ex-tribune in the shade of an awning and listened to the latter's description of how, in the Iddibal's harbor, he and Lycursus had waited until the last possible instant, of how they had been chased far out to sea by three Carthaginian quinqueremes, of how, picturing the rich loot of Syracuse, he had prevailed on Lycursus and other Spartans to offer ship and service to the proconsul. Then, briefly, he dwelt on the series of furious land assaults which Syracuse's Punic garrison had so easily beaten off.

"So you see, Rome's fortunes stand or fall upon the outcome of this siege," the ex-tribune repeated. "And I fear me—but enough of this. Tell me of your adventures."

When Cealwyn had complied, the ex-tribune was studying his bronzed companion with a fresh interest.

"I find it hard to believe," he murmured, "that you are that same Celvenus who picked up the elephant fork—"

"In some ways—"

"In body only—" insisted the man of Cannæ. "Your speech and gestures are different. Why, you no more resemble the dull barbarian I first knew than—than those feather-purposed Greeks resemble Romans!"

"You flatter me—" Cealwyn said with a sad smile. "I am still dull, I can neither win the girl I love, nor seize the gift of power and great wealth when 'tis nigh forced into my hands—"

Varro passed a hand over his deep-set eyes. "That you admit your failure shows how far your

brains have developed. Nay, Celvenus, I believe now, as I have always believed, that in your skull lies the brain of a great general. The way you separate the essential from the unimportant, the way to have learned to act quickly after quick thinking. Nay, don't shake your head. I saw that on the night we escaped from Carthage—"

"I have learned but little." Abruptly Cealwyn changed his manner. "May I have some rowers? I—I would make certain inquiries concerning the girl, Valeria."

"Of course." Varro laid an affectionate hand on Cealwyn's shoulder. "Anything in the Cabirra is at your disposal."

SO, toward sundown, the Celt, half dreading the knowledge he sought, commenced a round of the Roman fleet. All inquiry proved vain until, near the end of his quest, a decurion in a trireme of the Vesta class, replied he had seen the tribune's ship afire and, after some reflection, recalled that a Punic quinquereme crew had boarded her.

"You are sure it was a Punic galley?" Cealwyn insisted in a queer, monotonous voice.

The decurion shook a bandaged head.

"No, I was too damned busy about my business, but I thought I saw a blue horse's head on her prow. That's all I know—"

"I thank you, decurion—so." Thoroughly weary and despairing the Celt had himself rowed to the Cabirra and scrambled heavily up to deck.

"Why so downcast?" hailed Lycursus, lying sprawled on a cloak and busily casting dice with two of his stalwart subordinates.

"Where is Varro?"

"Gone for a gloomy conference with the rest of the Roman captains. Here, drink this, 'twill warm your gullet and drive away that lost dog look on your face."

Without thinking, Cealwyn seized the proffered horn and, at a single draught, gulped down the spiced red wine as though it had been mead.

"By Bacchus!" roared the Greeks in high good humor. "Did you mark that? Give old Celvenus another!"

Heart-weary, bone-weary, Cealwyn accepted a second horn, and drained that as well.

"Now by the golden zone of Aphrodite!" bellowed Lycursus, "you've got a rare technique with a wine horn. Here"—he held out the dice—"come, lad, try a cast and shake off this infernal gloom. You are getting nigh as dreary as these sad-faced Romans.

"By all the gods, will you look at all those barn owls moping on the prow!" Lycursus jerked a broad contemptuous thumb to a group of legionnaires who, crouching about a fire on the foredeck, talked in low voices or lay sprawled beneath their watch cloaks and stared fixedly up into the star-studded sky.

"Aye, come drink and throw with us," Iskander urged with a vinous chuckle. "We may all be worm food to-morrow. Live while you may, O barbarian!"

Smiling, Cealwyn shook his head.

"Nay," he replied. "I've a mind to visit the camp below the city—I've yet to see a Roman legion encamped—"

"You'll more likely see the sharp end of a Roman spear if you haven't the password," Lycursus commented. "They're plagued strict—by Artemis! They make war a business, not an honorable pastime."

Refreshed by the wine, Cealwyn crossed to the rail and there remained fixedly regarding the great city of Syracuse. How richly red was the glow of watch fires flaming on the towers, how fascinating the glow and sparkle of lights high up on the hills above the harbor! Somewhere over yonder, Valeria must be, unless she had perished in the flaming Vesta.

Valeria! His very soul cried out for her—Valeria! Valeria! Was she in danger? In pain? Suddenly he reached a decision and quietly slid down to the boat trailing beneath the Cabirra's stern and, casting it loose, began to row quietly off among the dim black hulls of the Roman fleet.

CHAPTER XXVII.

IN ENEMY HANDS.

THE iron shod spear butts of two Balearic mercenaries clanged loud on the stone floor, whereat the Captain of the Water Gate, a hatchet-faced Spaniard with features brown as a well tanned saddle, glanced up and frowned.

"Where did you catch this hang-dog rogue?"

"Below the water gate, O worthy Captain," announced the Balearian to Cealwyn's right and drew back lest water, dripping from his prisoner's sodden chiton, should wet his green and yellow kilt. "We heard him threshing about like a drowning cat, so Kulkas let down a rope to him."

Abruptly Cealwyn became suddenly conscious of the Gate Captain's pale brown eyes; they seemed almost feline in their keenness and innate cruelty. Forthwith, in the back of his brain an idea began germinating which fell in with his carefully evolved plan.

"Why drag this stinking offal into my quarters?" grunted the Spaniard. "'Tis Sosis who deals with spies. Away with him and have him crucified atop the sea wall to-morrow morning. We'll not be selfish, by Tanit, no! We'll let those stubborn Romans enjoy it, too!"

Hot, sweaty hands closed over Cealwyn's biceps, but he shook them off crying,

"Kill me and you kill yourself, O Captain of the Water Gate!"

"Heh?" The other, a Spaniard, spun about, bald head glinting in the lamplight. "What insolence is this? Nay, Kulkas—tell Sosis he'll favor me by having this impudent spy drawn and lest he be hungry after that, have his belly stuffed with salt."

Again the two Balearians commenced to tug at Cealwyn's arm but, resisting them furiously, he persisted in deep, ominous tones:

"Are you so eager to sign your own death warrant? Mabon! You look like an intelligent man!"

Face dark with fury, the mercenary captain leaped to his feet with a jingle of his chain armor. "Now may all the plagues of Egypt strike me if—" As though struck by a sudden thought, he checked himself and addressed the black browed guard called Kulkas, "Where was it you said you found this bold rascal?"

"Below the water gate, O worthy Mericus."

Deliberately seating himself once more, Mericus fell to tugging absently at the heavy gold ring dangling from his right ear lobe.

"And why will my life pay for your death?"

"Because," the prisoner replied, blue eyes and wet features very intent, "you are a mercenary in the employ

of Carthage," and he smiled enigmatically, somewhat reassured at the Spaniard's penetrating regard.

"How came you to the water gate?" the Spaniard demanded, frowning at the oil lamp beside him which sputtered and gave off a faint odor of sandalwood.

"I was prisoner of Marcus Numa, a naval tribune of Rome, aboard the Vesta, trireme galley."

A penetrating silence fell in the Spanish Captain's stone walled quarters which were bare of furniture, save for a few chairs, a leather-covered couch and some racks for armor.

"The vessel was sunk?"

"Aye, burnt—"

Mericus slowly began to scratch his sparse black beard, then abandoned the operation to gather a scarlet watch cloak more tightly about him, for the chill of that rock hewn chamber, located as it was beneath the mighty citadel of Ortygia, bit to the very bone.

"Sunk, eh?" In apparent indecision, the Spaniard's pale eyes wandered from one burnished suit of armor to the next, and with a copper soled cothrun he commenced to irritably tap on the stone floor. At last he straightened on his chair and fixed the prisoner with those menacing yellow eyes of his.

"You may go," he directed the guards. "I will question the prisoner in private."

Thinking furiously, Cealwyn tried hard to foresee the correct course, and stood motionless while the two Balearians, after raising spears in salute, tramped heavily out.

DELIBERATELY Mericus unsheathed his sword and laid it on the table before him. "Draw near," he directed. "What is in your mind?"

"Much of value to you, O Mericus."

The other's lips drew back from irregular yellow teeth.

"So? Well, remember this: lie to me and I will have every bone in your body broken one by one. *Were* you a prisoner?"

Cealwyn was amazed to find how easily his mind ran, how clearly he foresaw the other's questions.

"No," he replied promptly, "though I am no Roman, I was yet not their prisoner."

Slowly the Spaniard's shaggy black eyebrows became joined and his ringed hands clasped themselves above the sword hilt.

"What are the Romans saying?"

"Despite their defeat yesterday, the Romans," Cealwyn replied promptly, "are determined, and will, sooner or later, storm Syracuse. For a fact I know that Marcellus has sworn, when he takes it, to leave alive not one of the mercenaries he finds inside the city."

"You lie! He'd never dare say such a thing!" Up sprang the Spaniard with the lamp throwing his shadow gigantic on the ceiling, and began stamping angrily back and forth.

Finally, Mericus's head, bald where long use of a helmet had rubbed away the hair, jerked around, narrow eyes suspiciously aglint.

"What was that Marcellus swore?"

Cealwyn repeated the statement and added: "You can be sure that the proconsul will not abandon this siege until Syracuse is won."

"Bah!" The fox-featured Spaniard raised an impatient hand. "Talk! Talk! Though that old vulture waits twenty years he'll never take Syracuse, unless—" The speaker paused, his predatory eyes became very penetrating.

"Unless," supplemented the shivering prisoner, "he finds a friend within its walls."

"Silence! Would you dare to question my loyalty? By Moloch! I'll have your insolent tongue ripped out for this!"

Cealwyn deemed it better to say nothing. Was there a false ring to that indignation?

Scowling at the lamp before him, the Captain of the Water Gate continued: "But the truth is—we mercenaries are between Scylla and Charybdis. Besides," he added, "I have small cause to love Epicydēs, that Punic fool who thinks, because he is one of Hannibal's whelps, he can tell us old soldiers of Syracuse when to blow our precious noses.

"Well, he can't. We mercenaries fight Carthage's battles, die by the thousands for her and what do we get? Empty promises and leather tokens, such as Matho and Spendius got, or the dog's death such as they gave to Xanthippus, who saved them from the legions of Regulus. We get naught but scorn and contempt from these sweet-scented, do-nothings they send out from Carthage.

"Why, mark you," Mericus halted to finger his lavishly jewelled sword hilt so that it cast back the lamplight with a hundred brilliant flashes, "this very evening one of their high-and-mighty noblewomen called me a 'presumptuous barbarian jackal' because I invited her to dine here in the citadel!"

Cealwyn, well pleased with the other's words, still made no comment.

"**N**OW, on the other hand, that old he-wolf Marcellus, swears to exterminate us like so many rats—"

"Unless" — Cealwyn's blue eyes

caught and held those of the Spaniard — "the noble proconsul had cause to be—"

"To be?"

"Er—grateful."

The mercenary captain's foul breath fanned Cealwyn's face as he whispered: "You are sure of this?"

With a calmness that was most convincing, the prisoner declared that the hard pressed proconsul would promise much to bring the siege to a swift and successful end. "'Tis a vital matter. A victory would bolster the morale of Rome and her wavering allies," Cealwyn added.

"So?" The Spaniard's black eyes bored like gimlets into his prisoner's pallid features. "Well, it's too risky—I'd be safer having you hanged at once."

To Mericus's amazement the shivering prisoner nodded. "Aye, for the moment—but what of the day when Marcellus's veterans pour over your walls? And they will some day. These Romans dare not admit defeat—"

"You're a glib rascal," Mericus remarked—"so glib I fear to trust you. However, what is there for me in such a risk?"

"The proconsul will not be ungrateful."

The bald captain uttered a contemptuous, snorting laugh. "Such risks call for more than gratitude; I want Roman citizenship, fifty thousand golden denarii and safe conduct for certain men I shall name."

"What of the other mercenaries?"

Mericus shrugged. "Am I their keeper? In times like these, it's every man for himself. Now listen carefully, if these terms are acceptable, tomorrow morning let the three galleys nearest the water gate display a red, a blue and a white flag in that order."

"It shall be done—" The Celt found it hard to speak. So he had guessed right—

Meanwhile, the Spaniard swung across his quarters to lift from its peg a crestless helmet; then selected another which he gave to Cealwyn, together with a thick blue cloak. "Come," said he briskly, "I will show you a point in the Tyche quarter where the wall is low. Customarily it is carefully guarded, but on the feast of Diana, tomorrow night, I will contrive to have it guarded by the proper sentries. What is it?"

"A moment—" Cealwyn had held out a detaining hand. "Before we go further I must know one thing."

Readily suspicious, the Spaniard drew back. "What is it?"

"Among prisoners to-day taken from the Roman ships—was there a woman?"

Mericus uttered a surprised laugh. "By Moloch of the bull's head, it is queer you should know of it—"

"She was golden haired?"

"Aye—"

"Brown eyed?"

"I did not notice—"

"Was she straight backed and of medium height?"

"Aye."

Anxiety indescribable was in Cealwyn's voice as he cried out, "She—she is safe?"

"As near as I know," the Spaniard returned carelessly. "She'll probably be offered for sale some two days hence—ought to bring a good price, too, provided her beauty hasn't been marred."

Cealwyn gripped the other's arm so tightly that Mericus winced and drew back amazed at the other's earnestness.

"Listen," he uttered, in a fierce undertone, "if you would have me save

your life and make your fortune, order that girl—she is Valeria Porsena—brought to the citadel and there keep her safe until the city is in Roman hands."

MERICUS stared a little, then his thin brown lips formed a mocking smile. "I see. But it may cause some trouble—"

"I'll pay you well for it," Cealwyn broke in.

"Well then, it shall be done if possible. Now mark you, I'll have your lady quartered with my concubines in the third tower from the water gate. You will charge Marcellus to leave that tower unstormed?"

"As I would my own house," promised the Celt grimly. "And now are we off?"

"No." While the Spaniard buckled on his sword of that famous Iberian steel which even Roman armorers could not reproduce, he went on, "Remember these points—your success depends upon it. First, the Hexapylon gate must be seized. 'Tis the axis of the inner fortifications. With that in your hands, the Tyche, Epipolæ and the Neapolis quarters must fall. Next, let the army below the city attack the Necropolis Gate and I, meanwhile, will open the water gate."

"Aye, but how are these attacks to be made together? A simultaneous assault would leave no doubt of the outcome."

Mericus considered a moment, then shrugged. "I cannot see how such a matter—valuable as it would be—can be arranged. No trumpet could carry so far—no flags can be seen at night—"

"But," Cealwyn interrupted, "fire can be. Is there no high place where a few men might show a flare?"

"No—well—perhaps. Ha!" The Spaniard's sallow features lit. "I have it—a flare shown atop the Treasurer's Palace might be seen from all sides— But 'tis plagued risky."

"To Hades with the risks—I'll run them!" Tanarus! So Valeria was a prisoner in Syracuse! But all too well he knew what sale into concubinage or shameful slavery would mean. He must hurry!

"It might be done," Mericus admitted presently. "Yes, especially to-morrow night; 'tis then we celebrate the Great Festival of Diana, guardian of the city—Moloch!" the Spaniard's vulpine features broke into a grin—"there's rare irony in that! Well, at any rate, I will show you the Treasurer's Palace and you will see what I mean.

"Here, pull on these sandals and take that sword. No one will dare halt or question me, but you had better look like one of my men."

During their progress along the massive ramparts between one tower to the next they met alert sentinels representing almost every nation of the world, but all passed the Spaniard and his silent companion.

It was an unforgettable hour that ensued during which the Celt asked numberless questions and Mericus, often halting on the worn stone parapet, would point out various strategic points of this vast city. Everywhere, the eye encountered stately porticoed villas, richly carved marble houses, huge peristyles composed of towering columns that were reminiscent of tree trunks. Dominating all these structures soared the hundred foot walls, so strategically perfect that they had never been stormed.

"Yonder," the Spaniard said, pointing to a many columned edifice loom-

ing up above a dark tangle of fig and olive trees, "is the Palace of the Treasurer. Do you see how it towers above all the city, saving only Fort Euryalus? That is where the signal must be given. When we reach the Hexapylon gate I will present you to one Sosis—a Syracusan who, for good reason, hates and fears the city's Carthaginian overlords."

Gradually, last details of the plot were arranged in a further conference with the Syracusan general and, feverishly, Cealwyn struggled to memorize his data.

Half an hour later his head was buzzing like a hive of bees when, with Mericus's connivance, he lowered himself to the foot of the sea wall and struck quietly for the riding lights of the Roman fleet.

BEHIND an oaken table that was without ornament, Marcus Claudius Marcellus, grizzled proconsul of the Roman Republic, laced powerful fingers together and then commenced to issue crisp instructions to the scribes seated at his right and left.

Each of these made his stylus fly over the yellow-red waxen tablets, for the grim old man talked quickly in clipped, high-pitched accents.

Standing before him in this severely plain cabin, and conversing in low monosyllables, stood men whose names were familiar to half the Western world.

Yonder Titus Crispinus, the heavy bodied and bull necked proprætor and commander of the army below Syracuse, was in conversation with the lean and bony Otacilius, sub-admiral of the fleet. Besides these, perhaps a dozen other tribunes and senators stood beneath the bronze cabin lamps.

All fell silent when the proconsul deliberately threw back his scarlet-edged white war cloak and got to his feet. So tall was this stern old man that his bald head nearly touched the deck beams above.

"So, then, it is understood; the attack will commence to-morrow night the instant that fire is seen on the Palace of the Treasurer."

Raising their hands in salute, scribes and weary staff officers tramped out.

"Bring in the barbarian," Marcellus directed. "I would have words with him."

A moment fierce old man and stalwart Celt stood gazing at each other. Then the Roman said, "You have plotted well—your ruse and your foresight, general, are remarkable. Now pray state what you wish as reward."

But the Celt shook his head. "Nay, most noble proconsul, when the city is yours that is time enough."

"*Perpol!* A barbarian disdainful of gold?" the proconsul ejaculated and looked with fresh interest at the man before him. "Indeed, my friend, you are a strange Northern. First, you reason that the mercenaries in the city *must* be corruptible, then—ah well." From his finger Marcellus pulled a heavy gold ring. "Take this—it will be your authority to-morrow night—you see?"

A tight smile creased the old man's lips—"I trust you, though the gods alone know why."

"One request—O most noble proconsul."

"Name it."

"When I enter the city to-morrow, I must have with me ten true men—"

"That has been arranged—and now friend Celvenus, time presses—"

"The request is," Cealwyn insisted, "that two trusted friends of mine—"

Marcellus picked up a papyrus scroll. "Take whomsoever you wish."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A TRAP?

VALERIA! Anxiety concerning her gnawed ever more persistently in his brain. In a siege things might so very easily go wrong. Then Cealwyn deliberately put further conjecture aside, for the boat, bearing Varro, Lycursus and the eight Romans who were to accompany him, was pulling steadily between the anchored galleys.

Luck seemed to favor the enterprise, for the sea was almost glassy smooth when they rounded Cape Panagia and pulled for the Bay of Thapsus, where, before long, the boat's keel grated on the sands of a cove overshadowed by the ramparts of the Tyche quarter.

These in turn were reared on the summit of a high bluff. Save for the stars, it was quite dark, and Cealwyn, glancing up at the walls, was even able to see a glow of light reflected from the city beyond.

Suddenly he started and whipped out his sword. A man in armor had risen from a clump of laurel and was striding down to him. It proved to be a Roman who, when he saw Marcellus's ring, saluted and whispered that the storming force was in readiness.

Utterly amazed was the Celt to discover that all about him lay a silent multitude so skillfully concealed amid trees, bushes and the long sea grass, that only the sharpest of eyes could have caught an indistinct outline here and there.

"Marvelous," whispered Lycursus. "Never have I seen a better ambush."

With his ten men equipped in the miscellaneous armor of mercenaries, Cealwyn set off up that goat path which Mericus had pointed out the night before, and soon felt long, dewy grass blades licking at his bare knees like so many tiny, cold tongues.

Almost before he realized it, they had arrived at the base of the wall, and there pressed themselves flat to its cold rough surface.

Where was that knotted rope which Sosis had promised to leave a-dangle over this sheer barrier? Carefully, Cealwyn studied the mighty flanking towers which, to the right and left, soared black into starry skies.

"The rope," murmured Varro anxiously. "Has that accursed Sosis betrayed you?"

"Wait here—I'll look farther to the right." Promptly the party flung themselves flat, and, pulling dark cloaks up over them, became indistinct, almost invisible objects.

Shaken, Cealwyn commenced to stride along a path at the base of the wall, then halted to listen; but could hear nothing save the soft hissing of the sea some hundred feet below.

Where was that rope? He strained his eyes upward, then shrank flat to the wall.

Far above him had shone the brief shimmer of starlight on a steel headpiece. He braced himself for the blare of an alarm trumpet, but instead a rope came swaying and curling downwards to prove that Sosis and Mericus had apparently kept their words.

But hardly had he seized the rope end than on the wall there broke out a scuffle in which feet stamped furiously and the shivering clang of steel on steel rang loud.

"We are betrayed," growled Lycursus. "Now, by Artemis, I—" He

fell silent and pressed himself flat to the wall, for, grotesquely outlined against the stars, appeared the black outline of a man with arms wildly clawing at the empty air. He hurtled earthwards, struck the inclined slope below the path, and so bounced off down the slope to where the ambushed Romans must be anxiously clutching their spears.

"We are betrayed," panted Varro. "We must go back—"

IN the dread suspense Cealwyn hesitated, then a second figure, this time limp and leaden, momentarily blotted out the glowing stars, and, like the first victim, struck with sickening violence to roll off down the laurel-shrouded hillside.

What had happened? Had the traitors been caught at their work? Or had Mericus and Sosis just slain a pair of loyal sentinels? Too bad the corpses had rolled below; there was no telling anything from the ominous silence now reigning on the battlements.

"Wait here."

"Nay, let me go—" Varro pleaded.

"Orders!" Cealwyn snapped and, thinking of that night on the Byrsa, smiled grimly. Queer that to-night *he* was giving the commands! Gently Cealwyn eased his short, stabbing sword from its sheath and clamped his teeth on its cold, slightly oily blade before seizing that enigmatic rope.

Carefully the Celt braced his feet against the rough surface of the stone and then went up hand over hand. What fate awaited him on the summit? He wondered when his breath began to come in whistling gasps and light reflected on the crenellations above from the city grew even brighter.

Up, up. Sweat poured down inside the Greek breastplate he wore and his

arms felt as though they were motivated by sinews far too short for them. And now his heart commenced to drum like the hoofs of a chariot team for the summit was not a yard above him. He paused a moment, listening intently, but heard nothing save the braying of distant festival horns and the clatter of tambourines.

He set his muscles, then suddenly swung one leg over the cold, rough stonework and hauled himself astride the parapet. Almost with the same motion he whipped the sword from his mouth for yonder lay sprawled the corpse of a dark-browed soldier whose wide and vacant eyes stared fixedly at the sky. A helmet, twisted grotesquely sidewise on his head, lay with its plume almost touching his sandaled foot. Cealwyn was still eying the body when, from behind a spear locker, materialized a figure clad in a sable cloak. Sword in hand, Cealwyn flung himself forward, but the other whipped off a crestless helmet to reveal the square and brutal features of the Syracusan traitor called Sosis.

"Bid your men come up quickly," the Syracusan whispered in shaken tones. "I fear we are discovered. A few minutes ago two Carthaginian officers appeared—I killed them, but—"

Cealwyn nodded and, on leaning out over the battlement, was surprised to find that two of his party were already on their way up.

"Bid them hurry, hurry!" the traitor instructed anxiously. "We'll go on as soon as your ten men are up here. When we're well clear, your legionnaires below can take this section of wall from flanking tower to flanking tower unobserved. They understand that they are not to open the general attack until they see a flare on the palace of the treasurer?"

"Yes," Cealwyn replied, "not a man will move from this section of wall until the Hexapylon Gate is ours."

One last look Cealwyn cast into the darkness below and his heart leapt to see long lines of armored men bearing jointed sections of ladder which, like a magic river streaming uphill, toiled to the foot of the eighty foot battlement.

SCARCELY had Varro, last of the Celt's party, gained the wall than the Syracusan traitor led off with a haste which aroused deep misgivings. Mabon! but that rogue had an evil face. Still, there was nothing to do but to follow him down a battered flight of stairs which shone all bluish in the light of a moon now rising above the sea.

"Column of two," Sosis directed. "And if any one challenges, let the Spartan answer that you are special guards."

However, Cealwyn and his followers presented such a convincing counterfeit of what they purported to be, that the trip through the crowded and boisterous streets of the city was without event.

Apparently the festival was at its height, for from every direction half naked citizens of both sexes came reeling out of doorways, holding out flagons and belching loud toasts to Diana. But that grim detail of twelve only pushed them aside and with sheathed swords beat off the ribby curs which were forever snapping at their heels.

"Hail, Diana! Hail to the Huntress! Hail to Diana, Saviour of the City!"

The smell of wine, incense and hot humanity grew stronger still in the warm night air when, at last, the forbidding mass of the Hexapylon Gate loomed above the surrounding structures. Located, as it was, well within

the city's outwalls, the guards about it seemed few and interested in nothing other than revelers.

"How beautiful — let's go and drink—" Sosis, pretending to be more than a little drunk, flung a sweaty arm about Cealwyn's neck and patted the Celt's vermilion painted breast plates as he whispered, "There are less than six guards on duty. The others who should be here are away drinking. The next relief," his right eye winked elaborately, "is drugged and will sleep till their Manes hail Charon's boat."

"I must stay here," he continued, with his foul breath fanning Cealwyn's face—"to show your men how to jam the gate valves. Take four and go swiftly to the Palace of the Treasurer. You have but to follow this same wall and use the pass word 'Damippus' to take you into the palace grounds."

Two painted drabs staggered up, vigorously thumping tambourines and yelled obscene suggestions at the grave-featured detail. Varro contemptuously flung one of the unfortunate creatures aside, but Lycursus chucked the other under the chin and shook his head. "Nay—later, chick. Be here at midnight, when I come off duty—"

When the drabs had reeled on again Sosis continued: "A slave in my pay has carried some reed mats to the topmost terrace of the palace and a lamp will stand ready beside them."

While more revelers jostled the traitor, Sosis went on with a calmness that was in strange contrast to his previous agitation.

"So you have only to climb a long stair from the garden to the housetop, then set the matting afire."

Cealwyn, with anxious sweat trickling down his neck in cold little rivulets, nodded grimly, then, motioning to

Varro, Lycursus and a man called Cinna, forced his way through the crowd to a flight of stone stairs leading up to one of those time-worn inner walls which divided this pleasure-loving city into its six parts.

APPARENTLY Sosis intended to play fair for the word "Damippus" brought Cealwyn and his three companions quite unhindered to the gardens of the Treasurer's Palace.

Gradually more and more moon-silvered roofs glimmered and, like a gigantic spiderweb, the inner wall system could be seen in its entirety. Yes, and yonder, rising from a grove of carefully clipped cedars, appeared the white outline of those marble stairs which Sosis had said would lead to the roof of this sumptuous edifice.

Pulling war cloaks closer about them lest the moon draw some betraying gleam on their armor, the four dodged from one bush clump to another until they set foot to the stair and, proceeding very warily, commenced to climb, aware that loud and drunken voices sounded from the lighted lawn terraces below them.

The breathless four had one bad moment; a white peacock which had been drowsing on a marble balustrade suddenly uttered a harsh scream and, spreading lacy wings, circled down to the dark, wind-stirred pines in the garden. Voices broke out in comment as the four adventurers raced up the last steps to find themselves standing on a roofless platform of marble.

Their armor blued by the symbol of Syracuse's patron goddess, the four wide-eyed adventurers promptly crouched low behind the marble railing and wiped sweat from their helmet linings.

"But the mats!" Varro whispered

hoarsely. "Celvenus—where are the mats Sosis spoke of?"

"They must be here somewhere," Cealwyn flung back, but his heart seemed squeezed by the chill hand of a dead man. *The unfurnished platform was destitute of mats, and there was no lamp!*

"That cursed Syracusan has betrayed us," Lycursus snarled, powerful features becoming terrible in their wrath. "Let us go back and slay him, then warn the others ere they fall into the trap."

But Cealwyn held the Spartan's shoulder piece. "Stop," he hissed and pointed to the floor of polished basalt. "See that shred of grass? The mats were here once! Perhaps some steward, chancing to see them, has but recently ordered them below."

Varro, his eyes glittering beneath the visor of his Theban helmet, nodded. "Aye—and the Tyche wall is already in our hands—"

"Perhaps—" Cealwyn's brain seemed to seethe, like a curiously boiling kettle. *All this was a surpassingly clever snare for the Roman Army.* Dare he give that signal which might lure thousands of Romans to their death? Dare he withhold that sign which might give them that victory Rome needed so desperately? It was those shreds of broken matting which decided him and, with his crest asway in the moonlight he whirled, pointing towards a stair up which beat a feeble ray of lamplight.

"Get below! Find anything that will burn."

As if to mock the Celt's desperation, there broke out from the depths of the palace raucous shouts of laughter which bespoke the presence of many feasters. And then, as if to irrevocably seal the fate of the adventurers, guests

commenced to wander out into the hitherto deserted gardens, and so cut off all hope of an undetected retreat.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SORCERER'S DEN.

THE swords of the four made a sibilant *zwe-e-ep* before they went leaping down a narrow stair leading from the palace's summit into the strangely furnished apartment they found below. It was tenanted only by a terrified black slave who quickly perished under Cinna's sword blade before he was aware of this sudden invasion.

"'Tis some sorcerer's den," Lycursus cried, recoiling from a maze of intricate models of wood which stood amid an array of weird glass instruments.

But Cealwyn only flung a quivering hand towards a table heaped with a confusion of parchment and papyrus rolls, all inscribed with curious lines in red and black. Occupying the center of the floor of this queer laboratory was a large frame filled with damp sand in which more geometric signs had been sketched.

Lycursus, red plumes waving, caught up a great armful of papyrus manuscripts; while Varro seized a reed floor mat of that type which had been intended to form the beacon. Cinna stood, with slowly dripping sword held ready, at a red and black painted door connecting with the palace's interior.

"Ha! This will serve." Cealwyn whipped off his helmet and with it masked a small oil lamp which stood burning dimly amid that maze of curious models and contrivances. "And now back aloft!"

Squarely in the center of the basalt

terrace Lycursus dropped his double armful of dry, rustling manuscripts, then turned to help Varro rip the grass rug in shreds.

"Quick! Quick!" panted Varro, gaunt face working queerly in the moonlight. "Let Cannæ be avenged!"

Sweating features yellowly revealed, Cealwyn stooped, whipped the lamp from under his helmet and thrust it among the papyrus rolls at the bottom of the heap of inflammables. Every nerve in his body hummed like touched harp strings when, like a red lance flung into the sky, a tongue of flame soared upwards.

Was the flame brilliant enough? He was reassured when, an instant later, the whole platform was revealed to the last detail by a fierce, throbbing glare. Now from the semi-darkness below broke out an amazed cry of "Fire! Fire!"

Like devils toiling about the Pit, Celt, Greek and Roman fed roll after roll of manuscript into the flames until, above the crackle of their signal fire, could be heard indistinct undertones like the uneasy sighing of a forest which prepares for a lashing by the elements.

Like the rush of a rising gale now arose from the north a terrible, deep-throated Roman cheer; from the southeast the wailing war trumpets of the fleet screamed like the voices of the Furies themselves; and to the south a battering ram commenced to thud against the Necropolis Gate.

HIGHER, ever higher, soared the flames until the top of the

Treasurer's Palace shone like the Pharos above the naval harbor at Carthage. Overwhelmed by a surge of undefinable emotions, Cealwyn could for the moment only stare across the

fire at Lycursus. Powerful, sheathed in perfectly fitting armor which in the fire light gleamed blood red, the Spartan captain seemed a very incarnation of the dread war god himself when he exultantly brandished his short two-edged sword and yelled defiance at the amazed Carthaginians below.

"Hail to Artemis Orthia!" he cried, then, with the fire light sparkling in his short yellow beard, added, "Now follow the sweetest moments of life—"

"Nay," contradicted Varro, sadly picking up a fragment of charred papyrus, "this night marks the end of a great city and a noble civilization; just as this flame destroys the patient work of some mathematician. But, since it must be Syracuse or Rome, why then—" His sword flashed on high as he shouted at the top of his lungs, "*Ave Roma!*"

Deliberately, the Celt locked his helmet cheek pieces tight beneath his chin, and then, in order to decide on a course of action, stared over the parapet into the moonlit darkness.

The first distinct sound he could recognize was from the Hexapylon Gate. Yonder could be heard the harsh clash of arms, followed by the piercing shriek of a stricken man. And now the first Carthaginian alarm trumpets commenced to blow frantically. Others far and near took up the breathless call to arms, summoning hurried detachments of soldiery which appeared buckling on equipment as they ran.

Too late! Like a deadly glittering tide, the Roman legions were pouring over the Tyche Wall and their fierce shout of "*Pro Roma!*" made the warm night air resound.

In the garden below, women guests raised a terrified wail and their escorts milled uncertainly about, calling out to know what had happened.

Almost as quickly as they had sprung into being, the signal flames sank into nothingness. Sobered by the chill gloom, Cealwyn abruptly realized he and the others were alone in the very heart of Syracuse.

"Below! Below!" Lycursus urged, tugging at Varro's sleeve. "We can get our pick of the loot—jewels for me, none of your heavy gold!"

"Nay!" Cealwyn snapped. "We will stay here in the palace. From this hill we can see what happens and, mayhap, better direct some of our detachments."

"Well spoken." Varro's hard hand closed over Cealwyn's. "By all the gods of Olympus, how well you have learned to use that handsome head of yours!"

His armor illumined from below, Cinna now appeared on the stair leading into the palace. "They're coming," he called, and lifted his round, nail-studded Theban shield to deflect the javelin which presently lodged quivering in its wooden face. In an instant the other three were at his side and savagely beating off the attack of a dozen Punic nobles who, half-armed, but warmed with wine and their own genuine courage, came charging upwards.

IN a united, furious charge, the four slashed at their unarmored opponents with such savage vigor that the mob of attackers gave way and fled, leaving some six of their number to dye a brighter hue the polished cedar floor of the laboratory.

"At them! At them!" Cealwyn was shouting.

"Drive them below."

Promptly Varro took up the cry, for he knew that in this, like most Punic and Syracusan homes, the private and

sleeping apartments were set off, by an elaborate door of brass grillework, from the public rooms and the servants' quarters. In short order the last Carthaginian was driven through it and Varro shot a series of bolts which offered at least a temporary barrier against any return of the bewildered masters of the palace.

A while ago Cealwyn had guessed that the Treasurer's Palace must be occupied by persons of extraordinary importance and, despite the furious conflict now raging throughout the Tyc̄he and Epipol̄æ quarters, a detachment of Syracusan guards appeared in the street below and, on being admitted, at once charged into that structure which had given the alarm.

"Nearly a hundred of them. Lucky they haven't thought of the stair from the garden," remarked Cinna, as he drew back from the window.

"We had better search this wing," Varro advised, "lest there be enemies hidden in here with us. Yonder grille," he nodded to the marvelously designed portal of brass, "is handsome, but 'twill be easy for these Carthaginian dogs to break down."

Without further delay the four commenced to range from one glittering apartment to the next, and found them all empty until Lycursus flung back the door of a chamber, walled in yellow marble. This proved to be a second laboratory filled with countless and intricate devices similar to those above, and there in a cerule chair in the center of the room sat an old man with beard and hair so white as to seem fashioned of cotton.

Fingers locked beneath his chin, he slouched, apparently lost in thought, with eyes studying the series of angles and tangents drawn in the damp, gray surface of a sand box.

From across the room Lycursus raised a panting hail, "Answer, old man! Are—other doors—this wing besides—brass one?"

Still muttering to himself in Greek, the seated figure stirred not at all and remained apparently oblivious to the torrent of resounding blows which already rained at that frail bronze door.

"Answer!" Bloodied sword held ready, the Spartan leaped across the glassy floor of yellow marble.

LOUDER grew the din of the Carthaginians. Cealwyn, then Varro, now arrived and peered open-mouthed into the laboratory.

"By the gods!" the latter gasped. "This must be the famous Archimedes himself."

A menacing figure in bronze, Lycursus now was towering over the pensive old man.

"Answer!" he roared above the rattle of blows on the grille. "Answer me! Is there another door?"

The Spartan bent low to catch an answer and thus the tip of his sword sheath struck the sand.

"Do not disturb my circles," was all that Archimedes said.

Though Varro cried out, "Spare him! Spare him! 'Tis Marcellus's orders," the Spartan uttered a harsh laugh.

"Circles? Nay, old dotard, I'll not disturb your circles, but I'll disturb that stubborn head of yours."

Like a sunbeam cast off a mirror, the mercenary's heavy sword flashed downwards and Varro uttered a horrified cry when the glittering steel sank deep into the great mathematician's head. Without a sound and with scarcely a struggle, the murdered genius slumped forward, his limp and bony right hand irrevocably disturbing

those calculations which his massive brain alone could understand.

"Marcellus will have your head for this!" Varro burst out; but the Spartan only laughed and whirled about on hearing the shattered doors clang apart.

"Scatter!" Cealwyn cried when, far down a colonnaded corridor, appeared a column of furious Syracusan and Punic soldiery.

Without hesitating, Cealwyn dove through a gorgeous red and gold hanging to the right, and began to run down a very long hallway that was lined with many statues. His cothurns banging loudly on the tile floor, the Celt feverishly sought some haven which might shelter him until the Romans arrived.

Ha! Yonder was a solid looking door of cedar reinforced with iron bands. In full stride he flung himself around the edge of the door, put his shoulder to it, and as quietly as possible slid its heavy bolts into place. A near thing! Gasping for breath, he spun about and found, to his joy, that this was a corner room; there was no other door; two windows grilled with graceful copper designs were the only other openings in its blue painted walls.

At the far end of this high ceilinged apartment a lamp burned upon a table and wrought lovely tints upon a magnificent amphora of iridescent glass. Suddenly the intruder gave a startled gasp, for standing beside the table and even more graceful than the amphora, was a tall figure clothed in a gorgeous tunic of amber colored silk that was edged with a rich yellow velvet.

As though stunned, the Celt swayed where he stood and the blood dimmed sword in his right hand wavered uncertainly downwards, for there, gaz-

ing upon him with an expression of utter amazement, stood Tiratha, of the house of Iddibal.

CHAPTER XXX.

A WOMAN SPURNED.

C"ELVENUS!" From beneath the jeweled fillet of emeralds securing her hair, Tiratha looked at him and her bright lips began to quiver violently.

"Come closer," she murmured, studying him from black horsehair crest to clumsy cothurns. "Come closer. Are you indeed alive—? Or—or are you the shade of that Celvenus I love?"

Overwhelmed in a surging tide of emotions, Cealwyn made no response. How indescribably beautiful she was, how very like some dark and mysterious jewel.

"I—I thought you dead," she cried in a strangled undertone.

"Evidently," he spoke at last in a lifeless monotone. "You lost no time in deserting me when the Egyptian—"

He fell silent at the stricken look which now dominated her suddenly pallid features.

Then she hurried up to gaze intently into his ruddy, sweat-streaked features.

"Nay, by the Sacred Veil of Tanit, I tried my best to kill Tothmes. When I turned and ran it was to seize that first javelin which missed you; but he caught me and dragged me back to the galley where his villains were murdering your friend the Gaul.

"Oh, my Celvenus!" Her cool small hands passionately encircled his arm and she lifted a face, radiant with joy. "Celvenus, in what hells have I not dwelt since I thought you dead! Ah,

my adored one, smile on me a little!"

When he remained silent she continued to misunderstand his restraint.

"On the honor of the Iddibals I swear I did not desert you. Gladly would I have died at your side, but that accursed Egyptian was too strong—two weeks back he surrendered Adherbal and me to ransom, here in Syracuse."

"Ah, Tiratha." A vast wretchedness seized the Celt. "How can I—if you but knew."

With a joyful cry she flung slender, jewel-decked arms about his neck and raised a soft, eager mouth. "I cannot! All I know is that you have risked everything to come to me—to seek me out."

He stared at her in amazement. "But you do not understand. Listen!"

In through the grilled windows beat the clash of arms and the distant yells of combatants locked in a final struggle. Carelessly, she waved a small hand.

"A drunken riot," she laughed. "All Syracuse is drunk to-night—I had planned to attend the Lord Treasurer's feast but, at the last moment, I had no heart. Ever haunting me was that memory of you lying there on the blowing sand— Ah, Tanit be praised that that nightmare is past!"

Closer she pressed her soft and fragrant body to the vermilion painted breast plate.

"O my Celvenus, I have such plans for you. The Romans *must* lose, cannot you understand? Syracuse is provisioned for a year, and before that time our great Hannibal—"

SLOWLY he loosed her embrace to hold her at arm's length, but his blue eyes were very gentle as he said,

"O noble Suffeta, even yet you do not understand.—It—it was not you I came to seek in Syracuse."

The lovely olive features paled a little, then stiffened in incredulity.

"Not I?"

"Nay."

"Not I?" she repeated breathlessly and fell back a step, great blue-green eyes ablaze—all her softness gone. "Ha, I have it! 'Tis that plagued serving wench you love! How history repeats itself!"

Her eyes shone like angry emeralds and her small body seemed to contract like that of a leopard about to strike.

"Well, by the horns of Moloch, you shall not have her! You cannot have her! Do you understand?"

"That is possible," Cealwyn said stonily, "but I shall want no one else."

The pain stamped on her features struck Cealwyn to the heart. Tiratha now stood with lips compressed, her right hand furiously revolving a huge emerald ring on the left.

"You will not want her," she choked.

It seemed hardly his own voice that put the single word, "Why?"

"Because," Tiratha spoke with a grim satisfaction that was dreadful to the silent listener, "like any other runaway slave, the wench Valeria has been branded! Aye, on forehead and both cheeks, and 'twas this very morning your lovely woman's tongue was cast to the dogs of the street."

"You lie!" Terrible in his fury, the Celt raised his sword.

"Do I? Nay, you *know* I do not. Last night Adherbal spied her among some prisoners—the Roman vixen!"

Valeria mutilated, made dumb! The whole palace seemed to rock beneath his feet.

Taking advantage of his stunned si-

lence, Tiratha stepped close once more. "You have wit, Celvenus—at least I used to think so—and—and once you did not find me wholly unattractive." Her voice (in his numbed ears) was now that of one who was desperately pleading for more than life.

"Be not a fool, Celvenus! Would you rather look upon a mangled hag for life than enjoy beauty, riches and power with me?"

So violent was her emotion that her words seemed to be flung out by some explosive force; but the Celt's helmeted head slowly sagged forward until his chin pressed the cold bronze of his cuirass.

"Answer me," she pleaded. "Am I not right?"

"Valeria," he muttered. "My poor, poor Valeria. What woe I have brought on you!"

As though stung by a steel barb, the Suffeta recoiled. "Swine of a barbarian! Ass! Clod of a savage!" She broke off when outside sounded the noise of heavily running feet—the pursuers at last. Now harsh Punic voices yelled on the far side of the door.

"Ha, so they have tracked you down?" Quivering in every fibre, Tiratha threw back her jeweled head. "Ho! Outside there, to me, the Suffeta! Help! Help!"

Then as an armored body crashed against the door she commenced to curse the motionless Celt with the most fearful imprecations. Down upon his head, she called the wrath of every evil god known to the Western world.

CEALWYN looked in her furious, sea-green eyes. Because the beating on the door had suddenly ceased, her voice filled the whole lamp-room.

"May all the demons of the sea, the

sky and the air harass and—" Suddenly, Tiratha faltered and though her lips moved, no sound came forth; then, in a series of little jerks, her arms sank and suddenly she flung herself down to clasp his bare knees just above the tops of his greaves. "O Celvenus, my beloved, forgive me! Not a word of that did I mean! But I love you, love you so! Take me as your handmaiden, aye, even as your concubine, if there is no other way. Without you—"

Gently, Cealwyn raised her to her feet.

"You are distraught, Suffeta, and I am glad you have revoked the curses, but now—"

A new trample of feet sounded in the hall and the fierce cry of "*Pro Roma!*" made its ceiling ring. Wide apart flew the oblique eyes of the daughter of the Iddibals.

"*Pro Roma!*" she faltered. "What—what is this I hear?"

"It is the voice of the Romans," Cealwyn replied quietly. "The city has fallen into their hands."

"Then—it—it was not a riot I heard?"

"Nay," Cealwyn replied and was amazed to find so little sense of triumph. "It was I who, to keep an oath I made in Carthage, led the Roman legions over the wall of Tyche."

"What oath?"

"That, to avenge a sister ravaged by Adherbal and his men, I would see the rich and mighty of the Punic race lie trembling at my feet." While the noise of combat grew louder he passed a quivering hand over his eyes—"But that must have been another Celvenus; my goal won, I find there is naught but unhappiness for all of us—you, myself—and my Valeria—"

"Open, open!" When deafening torrents of lance butts fell against the

panels, Tiratha straightened and turned away.

"Have no fear," Cealwyn called. "Your life is safe."

He turned and in harsh Latin shouted out who he was, but the frenzied attackers only hammered more furiously and presently a statue used as a ram shattered the wood work until the door tottered on its hinges and fell, disclosing a group of wild-eyed, blood-splashed legionnaires who clutched gleaming spears.

"Back! On the proconsul's command!" Cealwyn wrenched from his finger and held up that ring which Marcellus had lent him, and such was legion discipline that even in this mad hour the *principes* fell back at the command. The centurion impatiently dashed blood from his cheek and stepped through the shattered door, scanned the ring and promptly raised his hand in salute, then hurried out, but paused to shout over his shoulder.

"All prisoners must be taken to the square below the Hexapylon Gate."

Then the invaders swept on.

"I am sorry," Cealwyn said, "but you understand. Your life I can, and will, save, but—"

"I understand," Tiratha nodded. She had returned now to that far end of the room where he had first found her. In one hand she was holding a goblet cunningly formed of gold and mother-of-pearl; in the other that great emerald ring, the stone of which was pushed aside to reveal a little cavity beneath it. "To you, Celvenus!" she cried and raised the goblet on high. "To you, my one love."

IN four mighty leaps he covered the length of the room, but ere he had arrived she had drunk the last of that ruby fluid in the goblet.

"'Tis good wine." Smiling a tremulous smile, she suddenly seated herself in a chair. "It heals wounds to the soul—"

"What have you done?" he burst out hoarsely. "There was no need. Here," he caught up an alabaster water jar, "drink this quickly." She had already gone pale, he noticed, and her bright lips quivered a little at the corners.

"Too late, Celvenus, my beloved." Very straight she sat in the chair, her eyes simply enormous. "Never would an Iddibal shamle at Marcellus's triumphal chariot wheels!"

"Tiratha! Tiratha!" he cried.

"One last gift I have for you—one you will not spurn like all the rest." She spoke thickly, and it seemed that her lips were weighted with lead. "But first—you must kiss me once—as—as a lover kisses his bride."

How strange it was to hold this lax, fragrant body in his arms and to press a lingering kiss to lips that were growing perceptibly colder.

"It grows dark," she whispered fearfully. "Oh—Oh—hold me tight, Celvenus—tighter yet." Gradually her dark head sagged back until it rested on his arm. "My last—hope is gone. Even you knew—Valeria—you—you would not come to me—"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that I lied—Adherbal saw her, but the Roman wench—last—I heard—was unharmed.

"Tanit! How I burn! And—ah, Celvenus—love—is strange in its ways—is—is—it—not?"

Even as he looked, the white, blue-veined lids fluttered wearily downwards, then slid open again, but there was now no light in the sea-green eyes; they were like the darkened windows of a deserted house.

Deeply moved, he laid that limp, jewel-decked form on a divan and raised his sword in salute.

"Hail to thee; ever courageous," he murmured. "Had my courage been as great as yours, we might have fulfilled your dreams—and been rulers in Carthage."

Momentarily numbered to all else, he stood gazing fixedly at that lovely, pallid form only half concealed beneath the amber tunic. How vividly the emeralds glowed in the sable splendor of her hair!

As if to rescue him from his wretched coma, there sounded the furious call of a legionary trumpet in a street outside. Aroused, he became aware of arms clashing loud in the depths of the great palace.

CHAPTER XXXI.

VENGEANCE.

IF Valeria was not in the third tower of the Ortygia citadel where, then, would she most likely be? Perhaps dead, perhaps struggling in the arms of some victory-flushed legionnaire, perhaps trapped in one of those houses now commencing to burn so brightly throughout the doomed city.

Drawn by the sound of that furious fighting, Cealwyn ran down a hall littered with the bodies of men who lay with that peculiar flatness of corpses. Hurdling the body of a eunuch that lay huddled like a small hillock of fat beside a table, he came upon a wide stair leading to the depths of the palace.

There, on peering over a baluster he could see, by the light of three huge brass lamps, the last stand of a large party of Carthaginians.

Ringed around by an almost equal

number of legionnaires, the swarthy nobles and their followers fought like the brave men they were, and even as the Celt's foot struck the lowest step of the flight, luck seemed to desert the Romans.

Two of them fell suddenly beneath the crashing blows of a Punic captain who wore a Corinthian helmet of copper which hid all his features, save a tuft of his black beard.

"*Pro Roma!*" Cealwyn flung himself into the struggle. Never had he engaged in such furious fighting as that taking place between these veteran troops of Carthage and Marcellus's tough legionnaires. He caught a brief glimpse of Lycursus raging back and forth, panting, bleeding from half a dozen wounds, but swinging his heavy sword with seemingly tireless energy. The Spartan's blazing red crest had been half shorn away and his armor was dented in many places, yet he fought shield to shield in the front rank.

Then, even as Cealwyn slashed at a Syracusan officer in splendid gold-mounted armor, he saw Varro fighting just beyond the terrible Spartan.

"*Pro Roma!*"

At the sight of the Celt's large armored figure leaping towards them, the Carthaginians wavered, but came on again. Beneath the three swaying lamps, the struggle raged towards a climax as, one after another, men of both sides sank beneath the showers of blows which filled the gloomy court with sparks when steel shattered and rasped on steel.

"Oh-h—Artemis!"

From Cealwyn's left rose a fearful cry. Lycursus, simultaneously assailed by two Numidian spearsmen, had momentarily exposed the unarmored space beneath his right armpit, and into

this that tall Carthaginian in the Greek helmet had driven his sword point.

As Lycursus's head snapped forward with a violence that sent his helmet's crimson plume swirling out in front, his knees gave way jerkily, but still the Spartan slew one of the Numidians ere he dropped helpless to hands and knees with a scarlet cascade staining his battered armor. Lycursus was wounded! Lycursus, who had given him the first kind word in Carthage—Lycursus, his firm friend, was down!

Raging, Cealwyn slew the second black, then charged at the dark skinned Punic warrior in the Corinthian helmet.

His first slash was dextrously parried, but the blow, glancing upwards, knocked the helmet from his enemy's head.

It was Adherbal—dark, powerful and gorged with battle.

"Hah! 'Tis the barbarian!" he panted.

A hundred infuriating pictures flashed through the Celt's brain, but he said nothing, only stepped back to aim a second blow. In parrying the Suffet's stroke he stepped on a spear shaft, was thrown off balance and reeled back, but succeeded in sidestepping at the same time. *Clang!* He caught Adherbal's hissing cut on his shield. Then with speed of a cat's strike his sword flickered out twice; once his thrust was stopped by the other's breast plate, and the second time that gleaming point barely slipped through the armhole of Adherbal's cuirass. It inflicted only a slight cut, but it did something to the Carthaginian's arm that forced him to lower that trefoil-shaped elephant hide shield he had been so expertly employing. Abruptly the elation faded from Adherbal's face and, roaring like a

wounded bear, he retreated a step or two.

PASSIONS, savage and primitive as life itself, surged into Cealwyn's heart. In a moment now Creoda's shade might rest in peace! Uttering a ringing shout he sprang forward, but his foot descended in a pool of blood and he lurched heavily sideways, tripped on a limp, warm body and fell flat. Before he could make a move to recover, the sword of the towering Gaulish mercenary licked across his left shoulder and sent the blood spurt- ing forth.

He knew he was doomed, for above him gleamed the terrible sword of Adherbal. Down it flashed. He braced himself for the sting of the blade—but felt nothing. He looked up—what had happened? Adherbal was swaying backwards, coughing violently and weakly trying to wrench from his neck a short hafted javelin.

Weak, and at the same time strangely strong, came Lycursus's voice.

"Farewell, O Celvenus—my—my friend."

Dazedly, through the legs of struggling combatants, Cealwyn could see the Spartan's body heaved up on his left hand; the other was in the attitude of a man who has just finished a cast.

"Hail to thee, Artemis Orthia!" Lycursus cried, and, with a soft clashing of armor, the mercenary sank forward a brief instant before Adherbal's dark body slipped to the bloodied pavement.

The last Carthaginian was down almost before Cealwyn realized it, and Varro, efficient as ever, was shouting a brief farewell before marching the surviving Romans off to the scene of some other conflict.

Weakened by the Gaul's sword cut and shaken to the depths of his being, Cealwyn rose and, with faltering steps, crossed to Lycursus's body, there in humble acknowledgment to grip those reddened thumbs in a final farewell.

"Peace to your soul," he whispered and was glad that the Spartan lay as he had wished to die, encircled by the bodies of enemies and with a fierce smile on his brutally handsome features.

Valeria—again he could think of her—he'd look through the palace. Perhaps, since Adherbal had lodged here—? With this in mind, he numbly pulled back the bolts on a door to his left. Promptly it flew open and a rush of evil-smelling figures burst through it. They were slaves escaping from the ergastulum.

Terrified, yet delighted at their freedom, they streamed past him, or hesitated, uncertain as to which way to go. The women among them shrieked at the sight of the heaped corpses and writhing wounded that lay in horrible confusion at the foot of that broad stair.

"Losing too much blood," Cealwyn decided when the shirt beneath his cuirass became warm and sticky. "Better look after that cut." Strange, how awkward his fingers were when he tried to knot a scarf about his wounded arm. Yes, it was bleeding fast, a lot faster than he had imagined. Better get out into the light; besides, it was getting very cold in the palace.

Painfully he stooped and, catching up a spear, used it for a walking stick. Yes, he'd better go upstairs and rest a minute; that hurrying crowd of escaping slaves was almost ended.

His helmet presently felt unbearably heavy, so he pulled it from his head and let it fall clanging on the ground.

Walking stiffly he started for the staircase, but was amazed to find that suddenly it had become steep and tall as the Byrsa itself.

Perhaps that door yonder would lead out into the garden where he could get away from the cloying, musty smell of spilt blood and torn entrails. Staggering a little, he started for that black door only to halt after a step or two.

There, materializing uncertainly amid the semi-gloom, the lovely features of Valeria seemed to waver before his eyes.

"All nonsense; I'm delirious." He weakly waved his right hand to dissipate the phantom. "Be all right when I—I—get—some—fresh air."

He started forward, but the floor began to sway violently, like the deck of the Vesta under way. To steady himself he sank on one knee—ah, that was better—he'd surely be all right, once he got to the open air. But now the floor seemed to tip upwards under his hands. Up! Up! To keep from sliding off he sank flat across the hairy legs of a dead legionnaire.

"Valeria!" he gasped. "Valeria!" Valiantly he tried to rise, but the effort proved too great, and, very suddenly, he sank forward to become another of those tumbled figures which lay scattered about with the three brass lamps picking out dull high lights on their battered armor.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE REWARD.

STILL very weak from the loss of blood which had so nearly cost his life, Cealwyn lay on the litter which had borne him from the Cabirra to the flag galley.

By the warm and kindly afternoon

sunlight it seemed that the smoke-blackened walls of Syracuse were not quite so desolate as they had appeared in the early morning. Most of the fires which had smoldered during the past two days had at last been extinguished by the victorious Romans who now patrolled the streets in powerful detachments.

Mechanically the Celt ran his eye over the Roman fleet, now gay with many bright flags and banners. Each ship, as a further symbol of victory, had set a captured helmet atop its mast and just now the galley altars were sending up into the sky soft blue clouds of grateful incense.

By the foot of the leather litter Varro sat, gazing moodily out over the water, much as he had back in Carthage. Years older he looked, and very tired. Significantly, his war cloak was still of a neutral and faded blue and not the martial red of a Roman tribune.

"I wonder why the proconsul summoned me," he remarked to the Celt. "You, I understand, will be well paid for your services. It is only right; without your help the city might well have defied us another year. The proconsul himself admits that— You will be a very rich man, Celvenus—and happy."

Cealwyn raised his head a little and the short, red hair covering it glistened like a copper shield set in the sun.

"I shall ask for a trireme, a little gold, and that is all."

Varro smiled. "You are easily satisfied."

"I said nothing of being satisfied."

"So then your Valeria is lost to you?"

"Doubly. I know now, all her vows to the contrary, she could never be

happy with a barbarian nor living a barbarian's life. Aye, Numa was right—being born a Celt I can never be a Roman— That is plain, is it not?"

"Terribly so, my poor friend."

"My thanks, Varro. In your own harsh way you have ever been my true friend." He shrugged. "Since we must live on until the Fates cut short our threads—I was thinking that we might depart in this galley I shall ask for, to the kingdom of Egypt. I heard some talk of war betwixt Ptolemy and the Nubians. Now, here's my plan—"

He broke off short, for there arose from the other Roman vessels a joyful outcry. Those Carthaginian ships which had been captured in the harbor of Ortygia were now setting sail for Rome, in their holds the untold wealth of Syracuse, as well as such of the wealthy Carthaginians who had escaped the sack of the city.

ALL at once marines, stationed at intervals along the flag galley's deck, stiffened to rigidity and saluted with their spears when the proconsul appeared, his scarlet and white war cape lazily twisted by the wind. With brief, deliberate motions he was brushing brown incense grains from his hands and at the same time pausing to survey in silent satisfaction that long double line of captured vessels which, shorn of their blue horse head prows, were pulling slowly through the whole Roman fleet.

At last the proconsul turned and, followed by two lictors and four gorgeously armored tribunes, came swinging up to the head of the companion where Varro, a dark and colorless figure in his plain cuirass and crestless helmet, stood waiting his doom with head humbly bent.

"Quintius Varro," began the pro-

consul in stern tones, "why have you dared to disobey the decree of the Senate and presumed to command Roman troops? When I permitted you to serve with the fleet it was understood that you were not to do more than lend the aide of your fellow mercenaries."

Cealwyn watched the ex-tribune's leathery features quiver at the word "mercenary." He alone knew how it stung the proud ex-Roman.

"I—I have no excuse, O proconsul," Varro faltered, "save that I—I love Rome. What I did in Syracuse seemed to be for her good—"

The proconsul bent his iron gray head to scan a scroll of parchment one of his aides thrust forward.

"Was it indeed you who raised the slaves and mercenaries on the night of Gisco's triumph and burned a part of the Carthaginian Byrsa?"

"With the help of the gods, this barbarian"—all unconsciously Varro used the old term—"and a Spartan now dead, we tried. But we failed our main purpose— Their accursed Zaïmph still exists."

Stonily the four hawk-featured tribunes a Marcellus's back folded their arms and fixedly regarded the man in plain armor.

"You have heard," Marcellus remarked. "What is your opinion, tribunes?"

"This!" The first aide held out his right hand, palm turned upwards. The second, the third and the fourth followed suit.

"So be it. Bring that thing here." Abruptly the proconsul beckoned forward a lictor who carried a wooden box. From it the grizzled old man removed a small object.

"Advance, Quintius Varro; and receive back your knightly ring. We are

of the opinion that you have more than blotted out your part in the shame of Cannæ."

A gasp of indescribable joy burst from the ex-tribune's lips and tears started from his eyes.

"I—I am not worthy; O most noble Marcellus."

"You have atoned," Marcellus insisted gravely. "I pledge my word that the Senate shall, in due season, restore your rank and citizenship."

The four glittering aides hurried forward to embrace and congratulate the reinstated veteran.

When they had done, Cealwyn painfully raised himself on one elbow and held out his hand.

"I am so glad for you, Varro, and I—I will ever be your debtor. Perhaps some time we shall meet again—Farewell."

"Nay, I'll see you later—" Varro, face quivering a little, turned away, for the proconsul was frowning at this breach of etiquette, and was impatiently fingering his parchment scroll.

"To your ship, Quintius Varro," snapped Marcellus, "and give thanks to Mars."

Only Roman discipline could have sent Varro tramping stiffly off down the runway with that redeeming gold ring gleaming bright on his left hand. But Cealwyn understood.

NOW the proconsul drew near the litter of bull's hide upon which the wounded man lay, and said crisply:

"I have ordered you here because the city," he remarked dryly, "seems to be mine. Now, perhaps, you will state your demands? And—er—I am prepared to be generous."

Cealwyn, gray-faced, struggled up, facing that image-like old man.

"I thank you; but I—I have had reward enough," he said in a calm, passionless tone. "I have seen the might of Carthage laid low. I have seen my enemy lying dead—And what I most would have is not in your power to give me, O most noble Marcellus."

Below his long upper lip the pink tip of Marcellus's tongue appeared and he thoughtfully wetted his pale lips while his sharp gray eyes regarded the wounded Celt.

"Be not too sure, barbarian. The powers of a Roman proconsul are great."

"Can you restore a lost dream?" Cealwyn demanded with a half smile.

The Roman commander made an impatient gesture with his bald head.

"A love affair, I suppose. *Perpol!* all this love nonsense is rubbish. By all the gods of Rome! You, a born soldier—a military genius in the making—talk of love! Your plan for the intaking of Syracuse was most able."

Cealwyn's thin jaw dropped a little. Great Mabon! Could this, the commander of a Roman army, actually be commending, nay praising, a barbarian?

He realized that he should have felt elated, he knew it very well, but still the joy proved a hollow one.

"I thank the noble Marcellus," he murmured. "But since the affair I mentioned is ended, I have decided to take service with King Ptolemy."

The Roman almost snorted, and his gray brows met in a contemptuous frown. "Pah! Why waste time with those soft-handed Greek degenerates? They'll be ours before long—" He hesitated. "And why do you disdain the Roman service?"

"Because," Cealwyn replied slowly and distinctly, "I grow weary of being patronized, of being called 'sav-

age,' 'barbarian,' even as you did a moment back."

"Your spirit is worthy of a Roman citizen—"

"But I am not one—and that is that."

Marcellus nodded. "And that, I imagine, has to do with this plagued woman. Well, on with our business. Cladius, give me that stylus and you, lictor, hold the tablet."

Into Cealwyn's fingers was thrust a silver stylus.

"Can you write your name?"

"Only that," Cealwyn replied with a flush. "Varro taught me once."

"Sign the tablet."

"But why?"

"Sign it, I say!" thundered the proconsul, and Cealwyn, awed by the old man's ire, obeyed.

THEN, almost before he knew it, the lictor was thrusting upon his left hand a heavy gold ring, and Marcellus was holding out his hand.

"Greetings to Celvenus, naval pro-tribune of Rome."

"Protribune?" Cealwyn's tongue stuck in his throat. "You jest—I—only Roman citizens can hold such a rank—"

Marcellus pointed to the tablet in the lictor's hand. "When you signed that you became a citizen— How did I know of your longing? Numa, the naval tribune, has spoken to me of the whole affair. And Numa was right. Valeria Porsena could far less easily become a barbarian than you, who have a truly Roman spirit, could become a Roman."

The galley seemed to rock as in a grip of a violent storm. What was Marcellus saying? Was he mocking him? Cealwyn sank back and closed

his eyes to calm a sudden and overwhelming dizziness.

When, some minutes later, he opened his eyes again the flag galley's well-pumiced stern was deserted save for two figures. One was that of a dark-haired young man who carried his left arm in a sling. It was Numa, straight-backed as ever, smiling a broad smile. And the other?

Cealwyn felt his whole body suddenly go cold and warm by turns. The other was Valeria. Such a Valeria as he had never seen; a Valeria clad in the yellow edged white robes of a noblewoman and with her glorious hair built up in that Roman mode which made the most of the rich curls at her brows.

"May I present to the Lady Valeria one Celvenus, a naval protribune of Rome?" Numa strove to make the question light, yet, at the last moment, he was patently overcome with the gravity of the moment. "I—I wish you both well," he cried, then turned and limped hurriedly off down the companion.

Lovely as that goddess he had once imagined her to be, Valeria darted across the sunlit deck and, as she knelt beside the threadbare litter, there burst from her throat a cry that was half a sob.

"Celvenus! O my beloved Celvenus! How different you look than when I found you last, blood splashed in the Palace of the Treasurer."

"Then—then it was no phantom I saw?" the Celt burst out, his last doubt disappearing like a wisp of fog in the sunlight.

"Not unless it is a phantom you now behold."

And Cealwyn was very sure it was no phantom which pressed soft, warm lips to his.

THE END

The Men Who Make The Argosy

STOOKIE ALLEN

Creator of "Men of Daring," "Women of Daring"

JUST another college athlete who got out into a world which had no particular demand for athletes. That was yours truly in 1924 on finishing four years of alleged studying at the University of Texas. True, Branch Ricky of the St. Louis Cardinals offered me a tryout as a pitcher, but at that time I was keeping company with a red head in San Antonio whose folks didn't exactly care for ball players. I thought something artistic would please them, so I hurried off to Chicago and studied art for a year.

Got tired of starving and started out to see the country. I saw the South and Southwest from the brake beams for a couple of years, ending up in Borger, Texas, where an oil boom was in progress. I became a roughneck for the Marland Oil Company, worked up to a tool dresser, and then was promoted to be an oil scout with an automobile. Thereupon, the price suddenly fell out of oil and 2,800 of us were fired the same day.

I headed for Jackson, Miss., to play ball. Three days later I had ruined

my arm pitching before I was in shape.

The Mississippi obligingly flooded the State of Louisiana, making plenty of work for everybody down in that country. I got a job with the Standard Oil Company on a seismograph crew. Our job was to row

around through the flooded swamps and look for gas bubbles coming up through the water. When we found these bubbles a charge of dynamite was set off and the vibrations were caught on an instrument.

This was great sport, but it soon played out. I moved over to Natchez where a huge pipe line was being laid across the river from

floats and tugs. This lasted all summer. I was all set to go to Venezuela when I ran across a job drawing animated cartoons for the movies and took it instead. After that I became a United Press sports cartoonist. About three years ago I started doing drawings and articles on the lives of adventurers and heroes. It has been so fascinating that I'll keep on as long as ARGOSY readers "can take it."

