

# The Little Doll Died



Down the aisle that dripping figure advanced, until it came right up with the newlyweds

By THEODORE ROSCOE

"I DID SEE one dead man brought back to life, at that." It was a startling enough thing to say, yet not half so strange as the story GLENNON had to tell me later.

We had met on a boat bound for Haiti; and as we neared our destination the talk turned to zombies—those soulless corpses which the natives believe have been raised from the grave by witchcraft, and go about as slaves to evil masters.

Glennon, now in the life insurance business, said that he had led a detachment of Marines in Haiti from '19 to '34. About zombies he expressed skepticism; yet he admitted—well, that thing about a man raised from the dead. And right on the heels of

that he said, "Are you interested in taxi-dermy?"

Before I could answer, he opened a shoe-box he had been carrying around with him, and showed me a little doll: seemingly a crude home-made specimen, the leather worn, the stomach spilling sawdust, the face resembling an old tobacco-juice-stained baseball.

And after that he plunged into his story . . .

IT BEGAN (Glennon told me) in a jungle outpost called Morne Noir, where I had been sent with a detachment of Marines to look for CHARLEMAGNE PERRAULT—an edu-

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cated Haitian who was leading a bloody revolt.

I built a stockade, tried to drill some miserable Haitian soldiers, then bogged down in the rainy season and sat down to wait. And in the midst of all this, civilization arrived, in the persons of WILFRED PEABODY, an absent-minded little scientist; his wife JENNY LOUISE, a hare-brained frilly blonde; and TERRENCE MCCOY, a charming, handsome Irishman and a past master of taxidermy.

In short order everybody in the place (except, apparently, Peabody) knew that Jenny Louise was crazy about McCoy; she fussed over him constantly, and paid practically no attention to her husband. McCoy for his part resisted her, gently and gallantly, pointing out what a swell guy Peabody was and recalling their long friendship dating from college days.

As for Peabody, he was much too busy on his big quest—trying to find a miniature Arawak mummy. The Arawaks, he explained, were a practically extinct tribe of aborigines who lived on the island when Columbus discovered Haiti. They had a secret for shrinking and curing the human body; and their midget-sized mummies were the rarest of all anthropological specimens.

THINGS were like that when word came to the village that Caco bandits under Charlemagne Perrault were going to attack the place with zombies. The population was terrified: half of them left town at once, and two-thirds of the loyal Haitians in the outpost had deserted by noon. To make things worse, Peabody had disappeared.

He came back at sundown, practically hysterical with excitement, bearing a miniature mummy that he had found in a mountain cave. . . . I didn't like it; I ordered them all to stay in the stockade from then on. That brought on a terrific scene between Peabody, who said he just *couldn't* give up his specimen-hunting, and Jenny Lou, who weepingly accused him of having no consideration for her.

It startled Peabody. He thought he'd been a good husband; he told Jenny Lou that he had saved twenty thousand dollars for her besides ten thousand in insurance, and had planned to surprise her when he retired.

The next morning he was gone again. It was raining, and the war drums had been beating. Jenny Lou surprised me by screaming for McCoy to go out and find her husband; and McCoy, gallant Irishman that he was, prepared to go at once. At the last minute she threw her white rain cape over

his shoulders, begging him to be careful and keep dry.

I couldn't let him go alone; so we took horses and guns and plowed through the mud after Peabody. At length we found his notebook, in a wild valley where the path forked in two detours around the valley rim. At McCoy's insistence we split forces; but when I heard shots I rushed back to the trail he had taken. It led along the edge of a cliff where a goat wouldn't have wanted to walk.

AT the fourth turn I found McCoy, behind his dead horse in a welter of blood, mud, and rain. He'd been shot; was writhing in pain and cursing the natives. Just around the next bend was Peabody's little donkey, dead in the path, one hind leg sticking out over the cliff-edge.

McCoy sobbed: "I was just overtaking him and he turned in his saddle . . . Them black scuts popped up in the bushes and let him have it."

Just before we started back I bent down and picked Peabody's little mummy out of the mud. It had been shot, too. And when we returned, Jenny Lou insisted on keeping it. She said, "I'll wait for him. He may come back. If Wilfred were to come back as a zombie . . ."

And she wouldn't budge. McCoy said, "There's only one thing to do: drag the lake at the bottom of that cliff." We did that—but we didn't find Peabody. Jenny Lou seemed satisfied: "So the Cacos did get his body. They've got to turn him into a zombie."

We argued. We pleaded. She *must* get out of Haiti. But when she answered, her voice was quiet as hardening cement:

"I'm going to stay." . . .

## CHAPTER VI

### ZOMBIES! ZOMBIES!

LISTEN! If she'd been unbudgeable before, you couldn't have moved her now with a team of horses. With Peabody missing from that lake, she was more than ever certain that the Cacos had snatched his body for their magical ghoulery.

Do you know what she did? She set to cleaning her husbands' clothes and polishing his equipment to have everything ready for him in case he returned. She was specially regardful of that evil little Arawak

mummy: had it set up on his work table with his microscope and other scientific gadgets, like some hideous kind of toy to lure him home.

It made me ill to see her housecleaning around that tent. Dead and gone, the little man was getting twice the wifely attention he'd had when he was on hand. Remorse on the woman's part, I suppose, not uncommon with widows.

But most widows don't expect their husbands back. You'd have thought poor Peabody had just gone away for the weekend.

The Haitian villagers had been steamed up before, and now they really got into the spirit of the thing. Those Negroes went around with eyes like saucers full of milk. Charms, amulets and voodoo rattles were selling in Morne Noir at holiday prices. Dead goats began to appear in trees, hung up as protection against evil haunts, and there was a rush on the *ouanga* market with top prices for anti-zombie powder.

Don't laugh, mister. If half of civilized New Jersey could lose its head over a mythical invasion from Mars, think of that jungle-blockaded village in the middle of uncivilized Haiti!

The place took on the atmosphere of a spirit medium's parlor, and I was fit to be tied. What with Jenny Lou's antics and the Negroes worked up to fever pitch, we began to see walking corpses in every night-shadow.

Yes, we. Marines have nervous systems, too. My men went out to mount guard after dark with their teeth rattling. I could feel my own thin veneer of civilization peeling away. All I had to do was blow out the candle and listen to those Caco drums thumping off in the *mornes* for a while, and I could glance up and see Peabody standing there in the moonlight, dead as a turnip, his yellow hair down over his eyes, red bullet-holes in his chest, making passes at me with his ghoulish, scientific hands.

And if I had the gollywoggles, imagine McCoy! Well, that Irish taxidermist was in bad shape, I could see that. He was

losing more weight than any of us in this struggle with Mr. and Mrs. Peabody.

Figure his feelings about Jenny Lou. After all the coy glances she'd given him. All the romantic sighs. Now it was all right to go around and commiserate her husband's loss; that's all right for a couple of weeks. But a widow should begin to get over it, especially a young, good-looking widow who needs a strong friend around to look after her. More especially when she's previously given that strong friend reason to think she might want looking after.

Then try to guess McCoy's bafflement when he found Jenny Lou galvanized into that granite statue. You can see how that zombie angle must've frazzled his nerves.

I'd hear them arguing in the tent—or rather, McCoy arguing.

"You can't go on like this, Jenny Lou. Wilfred's dead. I saw those Cacos shoot him. He had that mummy under his coat; you see those bullet-holes in the thing. They—they must've hit him in the heart. He—he must've died instantly, Jenny Lou."

"Poor, poor Wilfred."

"Sure, Jenny, I know. It's all of us loved Wilfred. I couldn't feel worse over me own brother. But it's you that's alive! it's you that wants takin' care of now. Let me take you out of this hell-hole, Jenny. Now poor Wilfred's gone—"

"They found his body in that cold lake, Terry! The Cacos! The witch doctors! If he should ever come back—"

"No, Jenny! The dead stay dead!"

"But until I've seen him have a Christian burial—"

**L**ORDY! I suppose I should've packed the woman off; detailed an escort of Marines along with McCoy and ordered her to the coast. But you can't tie up a white woman with rope and drag her.

Besides, I didn't have any real authority. My job was to operate a Marine outpost, and Mrs. Peabody was an American citizen in a foreign country in a state of war, and it was a damned dangerous trip

to the coast. Charlemagne's raiders were reported watching the trails for just such a break.

I dispatched a messenger to the district commander at Cape Haiti—the colonel who'd wished the Peabody expedition on me in the first place. No answer. Weeks later the dispatch bearer's skeleton was found in the jungle. Meantime the colonel had dispatched me an order that crossed my message. Reinforcements were needed elsewhere. I was to stick in Morne Noir and hang on.

So I hung on. Jenny Louise hung on. McCoy hung on. We all hung on. Mentally we were hanging by some pretty thin threads as those weeks dragged by. There's some gray in my hair, brother, and that situation put it there. And why McCoy's didn't turn white as snow, I don't know. Certainly he had it tougher than the rest of us. Peabody had been his best friend, and the widow's attitude must've just about driven him batty. I'm here to tell you that handsome Irishman could take it!

He set to work on Jenny Louise with a new tack. Fresh wild-flowers in her tent every morning. Little nicknacks of special food. Ignored all talk of her husband. Went back to his taxidermy under the palm tree, always forcing a cheerful grin when Jenny Lou appeared, always whistling, singing or humming.

It was a good show he put on for that widow. A darn good show. It must've nearly killed him, for he had all an Irishman's superstition and moodiness locked up inside him, as well as pride. He was as patient with that woman as a doctor at a bedside. Thoughtful every minute of the time.

But that didn't work, either. When he brought her flowers she'd sigh because she'd once ignored the flowers her husband had brought her. His taxidermy reminded her of the old days when Wilfred was around.

"Oh, Terry, if I'd only treated him better. If Wilfred ever comes back—"

"Jenny, you've got to get that out of

your mind right now. Wilfred's dead."

"But until I've seen him have a Christian burial—"

That phrase ran through those dark weeks at Morne Noir like a rune. A rune timed to the drums that beat at night. Tuned to the fact that Charlemagne had promised to turn all dead captives into zombies; that Peabody's little body had never been found; that Haiti is a land of hot jungle and moonlit mystery; that there are things in this world no white man understands.

Do you wonder the Marines contracted the shakes? That McCoy looked gaunt and tired and tight-strung as an overworked Irish fiddle? That all of Morne Noir talked about nothing but the Great White Doctor's second coming? Well, that state of affairs went on for twenty-four weeks. Six months!

It had to end, brother, take my honorable word. Either the Cacos were going to wipe us out, or we were all going stark nuts, or Morne Noir would blow sky high out of plain spontaneous combustion. From the home of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli, a Marine outpost never saw the equal of that situation!

So I wasn't suprised when McCoy disappeared. Like Peabody, early one morning without saying goodbye. Over the fence and out.

**H**E DIDN'T leave any tracks. When the top sergeant first noticed his absence and we set out to look for him, we didn't know where to start. After forty hours' search, I summoned in the scouts and gave him up as a goner.

The Irishman's vanishing dealt me an extra sweat-bath. His pumpgun and knapsack had vanished along with him, and it looked as if he'd pulled foot; but there was always a chance he'd been kidnapped. Those Caco devils were experts at that sort of business. They could sneak into a camp and steal the suspenders off a sentry without his knowing it till he discovered his pants were down. I didn't like McCoy disappearing in such a manner. Worst of

all, it left the Widow Peabody on my hands.

I'm afraid I lost my temper with the lady at this turn of events. I asked her into headquarters to tell her the word on McCoy, and I felt I knew her well enough by that time to give her a piece of my mind.

"Mrs. Peabody," I said, "I'm a soldier, not a judge conducting a court of domestic relations. However, I can't help making some fatherly remarks. With full sympathy for your status as a widow, I think you've treated your friend, Terry McCoy, like the devil. Your infernal nonsense about zombies has driven your last friend over the wall. Maybe he's been kidnaped by Cacos, but I'm inclined to think he couldn't stand this any more, and he's pulled out. In either case, he's liable to be killed."

Yes, and I said that with gestures. I was in the Marine Corps, not the Diplomatic Corps. Can you guess how that woman answered me? At news that McCoy had gone, she didn't bat an eye.

She said calmly:

"Don't worry about Terrence. He's so strong and confident; he could always take care of himself. Not like poor little Wilfred who really needs me."

"Mrs. Peabody," I began, speaking through my teeth, "your husband's been dead six months—"

"Captain Glennon," she said in a monotone, "until I've seen him have a Christian burial—"

Wow! It was too much for me, and it was too much for Haiti, right then. The long-fizzing powder keg went off. As if the widow's words, spoken like an incantation, had at last invoked the Saturnalia.

Actually there was an explosion. The evening hush was shattered by a blast of gunfire. A bugle bleated the alarm. Somewhere a guard was squalling, "Charlemagne! The Cacos! It's Charlemagne!"

My men were rushing the gun-stacks; the village set up a wild shriek of, "*Zombies! Zombies!*" and all the spooks out of hell were running in the dusk outside.

## CHAPTER VII

### BLOOD RAN FAST

**I**T WILL be a cold day before I forget that attack on Morne Noir. A mighty cold day, that's a fact. I'd seen a couple of fights over in Nicaragua, and at Belleau Wood the Heinies bothered us a little; but that Morne Noir battle beat any muss I'd been in with the Marines. It was touch and go from the first shot to the last, and some things happened in that engagement that couldn't have happened anywhere but in Haiti.

I yelled at Mrs. Peabody to lock herself in my headquarters, and I beat it out to the stockade wall to take command. Those Cacos were hitting us with everything they had, and they had plenty.

Not just bullets, or stolen hand grenades, or machete knives. But drums. Jungle horns. Rattles. Goat-bells. All the voodooistic pandemonium and blood-curdling bedlam of which those black holy-warriors were capable.

Brother, at that sort of stuff those Haitian Cacos were past-masters of the Inner Shrine. They were all daubed up with ashes, bird feathers and magician's paint; hung from head to heel with *ouangas*, dried frogs and chicken-bones.

They were made up to look like zombies, those fiends; and they gave some first class impersonations, take it from me! Pouring out of the jungle, they raced through the village and swirled around the stockade, letting out such howls as could only come from lost souls fresh out of their graves. Myself, I was half convinced that swarm had been dug out of a cemetery.

The villagers scattered in terror, and the Haitian Guard I'd been trying to organize fled in panic before that charge. "*Zombies! Zombies!*" That was one of the things that could have happened only in Haiti.

The U. S. Marines had a scrap on their hands, then. What a scrap! By the time I reached the stockade wall bullets were flying from all directions; most of the grass



huts in the village were afire; the Cacos were storming our gate like demons.

All but one of the sentries got in in time. I felt sorry for that boy out there. A lad from Michigan. We couldn't rescue him. Luckily he was dead of a hundred bullets before those black butchers piled over him; they fell on him with their chopping knives, and when they jumped up their hands and faces were glistening red.

That sight brought my boys to their senses. You bet it did. They opened up with their Springfields and gave those Caco savages hell. I had my Colt working, and we had two old machine guns mounted near the gate ready to go. We opened fire at a hundred yards; uncorked another fusillade at fifty yards; then the machine guns were hammering and the din was like a canning factory.

Wow! Wow! Wow! That was a carnage. We cut those tar babies down in droves. We piled them in squirming chocolate heaps. We shot the feet out from under them, dropped them kicking, riddled them to sponge. At the stockade gate we stacked them up like creosote ties.

Brother, what a battle!

The British talk about Omdurman. Huh! Five minutes of that Morne Noir assault made Omdurman a Sunday School picnic brawl in comparison.

Those Haitian wild men gave us a workout, I tell you. They weren't zombies, but they kept on coming like zombies. Knock one dead and another took his place. Springfields, Colts and machine guns didn't interest them. For weeks Charlemagne had been pumping them up to a frenzy; their voodoo priests had told them their *ouangas* made them bullet-proof, and their magic-working undertakers had promised to bring them back to life if they were killed.

When we massacred one charge, the reserves started another. They made scaling ladders of corpses and came up the stockade wall like black monkeys. One chocolate rush managed to storm and dynamite the gate.

AN ORANGE blast shook the stockade, and I saw the gate disintegrate in splinters. On the wall my boys were giving them the bayonet. Machine guns were chattering; pistols barking; knives clashing; lead flying and ricocheting everywhere. Add smoke and red flame-light from the burning village, a smell of powder like brimstone, blood and mud, shrieks from the wounded, prayers from the dying, wild oaths in American accents from Tennessee to Massachusetts, crashing explosions and the voodoo battle screams of those Caco blacks—and you have a pretty fair picture of Hades.

Whew! You don't remember much in a scrimmage like that, but I remember this much. I was on the wall when the gate blew open, and I hollered for my top sergeant to bring hand grenades and raced with him to close the breach. That old topkick had been at Manila with Dewey, and he was a darn good bomber.

The blacks were pouring through the opening when we got there, and the old man and I tossed a shower of pineapples that turned the stockade entrance into Inferno. *Crash! Crash! Crash!* I saw five howling Cacos go to pieces like so many black-red jigsaw puzzles. That stopped the crush-in for a minute, but the mob behind was gathering for another rush; and I had my teeth in a grenade pin, preparing to throw, when the sergeant grabbed my arm.

"Captain! Look out!—the woman up there! My God!"

There's another thing that could have happened only in Haiti. Mrs. Peabody! Heaven knows how she got up there, but she was up on the stockade wall by the gate.

Get a picture of her up there in the flame-glare and smoke, the splintered gate below, Caco corpses piled up like cordwood, the stockade posts smeared with strawberry jam. Standing up there on that machine-gunner's platform, the gun disabled and the gunner sprawled dead at her feet: posed up there like granite with that expression on her face—that gray statue

of a fisherman's wife looking out to sea.

Great Jerusalem! Bullets were whining around her head like bumblebees. Black hellions were climbing the stockade not a dozen steps away; Marine bayonets were working like knitting needles; and bombs had almost blow the platform out from under her shoes. Yes, and in all that hell-scene she stood like rock. Unflinching. Calm. That figure in stone.

I don't wonder the dead Marine on the platform looked up at her with astonishment fixed in his eyes, mouth open. Hands folded on her breast, she was staring out over that screaming Caco mob and burning village as if she saw out there the shore on the other side of Jordan.

"I am waiting for my husband."

That's what she gave me when I climbed up there shouting, "Mrs. Peabody! Mrs. Peabody!" to grab her down.

You could've knocked me unconscious with a feather.

"I haven't seen him yet. But if Wilfred's out there—"

My Lord! I made to catch her around the waist and lift her down to the sergeant below; then something almost did knock me unconscious, and it wasn't feathers, either. Seeing we weren't throwing pineapples, that black mob rushed the gate. Chocolate, blue-indigo, fudge, peanut brittle, all shades of black and brown those devils stormed through.

Caught in a desperate scuffle, the sergeant was whirled away. A great blue-black Negro climbed at me, slashing with his machete. That big razor-blade took a slice from my left shoulder as thin as boloney. The pain dazed me, and it seemed I just stood there with an arm around that granite woman while the knife played a dazzle of lightning in front of my face.

It was a close shave that cannibal gave me, My, yes! His second swipe sheared the globe-and-anchor insignia off the front of my hat and took the crown clean away in front of my eyes. His third slashed the pistol holster from my hip. I'll never understand why the woman and I weren't chopped down.

Maybe that assassin caught the look on her face and paused in awe. I don't know. At any rate, my Colt finally fired and shot him four times through his watermelon lips. Even then it took him a minute to fall. Amazement formed on his Negroid features as his lower lip sagged; then blood came glugging out of his mouth; the butcher-blade fell from his loosened fingers, and with a sort of bow he stepped back off the platform.

Mrs. Peabody freed herself from my clutch to point off.

"There's a white man coming out there!"

## CHAPTER VIII

### CHRISTAN BURIAL

AND that's what almost knocked me unconscious. Not the blow from that chopper. Not the wild charge that followed, storming into the stockade like a cyclone. No, a white man *was* coming! A white man on a donkey! Pounding down the trail where it wound out of the night-hung jungle. Into the crimson fire-glare of the village. Through that holocaust of blazing hovels and straight for the stockade gate—a white man, or I'm a liar!

And how he came! Low in saddle over that donkey as if he were riding a motorcycle. Whooping at the top of his lungs. Aiming his rifle one-handed, the butt braced in the crotch of his arm, firing at everything in front of him. Yow! In the dust, smoke and fireworks I couldn't make out who it was; he was holding with his left hand some object up in front of his face for protection—something that looked like an old chunk of wood.

But whoever he was, he was a madman. Like a one-man cavalry charge, he slam-banged into that melee before the gate, and the Cacos squalled like tigers with a morsel in their midst. That white man's sun helmet was shot away; the donkey reared and stumbled under him; the blacks closed in, and I expected to see him hacked into a thousand fragments. But he wasn't.

No; through the dust-swirl I could see

him flaying at the blacks, one-handedly swinging his rifle—beating up that crowd into a screeching thresh. Still holding that brown thing up in front of his face as a priest holds a cross, he waded into that mob like a threshing-machine. What? Well, those Cacos were tumbling around like chaff. Jumping away. Screaming in fear, and running.

Running, I tell you. Dropping their guns and butcher-knives and legging it for the jungle pellmell. Howls of terror reached the black ears of those in the stockade, and they dashed to the entrance to see what it was. That gave my boys a chance to reload, and they gave the retreating fiends a blast in the sit-down.

That wasn't what kicked them out, though. What sent them flying was that white man in the gateway, roaring curses at them with that queer object shielding his face. It might've been a magic charm, a courage-melter, the sort of wizardish hoodoo that sends goblins back to their graves.

Anyway, it did something to those Cacos. There was a hundred-tongued squall of fear, and the next thing I knew the whole mob was bolting, panic-stricken.

Well, it's generally the other way around—it isn't usually the Marines who are rescued and send up the cheer. This time it was our turn. When the dust and din cleared away there wasn't a live Caco in sight to be shot at, and the Leathernecks in the stockade looked down and yelled themselves hoarse.

That was a wonderful rescue act. Just in the nick of time. The hero who'd pulled it off didn't realize it was over, either. Down there in the smoke-fogged gateway he was still swinging his rifle and capering with that thing held up in front of him, bellowing at nothing.

"Come on, ye dirty scuts! Blacklegs! Assassins! Try to get the white woman, will ya! Just try to get her from me!"

"Terrence McCoy!"

**I**D FORGOTTEN the woman on the platform beside me. Her cry broke through the cheering; brought that wild

man in the gateway to his senses. He looked up, thrust behind him the brown object he'd been holding, and yelled, "Sure, an' it's me, Jenny Lou!" His face was sweat-smeared, twisted out of shape, white as chalk; it took me a minute to recognize the big Irishman.

He tried to grin, climbing up to the platform where we stood, but he looked pretty cooked. Down in the stockade my top sergeant was gathering a bomb squad to clear the village outskirts of chance snipers; I snapped the order for pursuit, and while the boys chased out through the gate, we stood on that machine-gun platform staring at each other.

"Terry!" The woman's eyes filled with tears. She started to say something and broke off.

He said huskily, "You didn't think I'd left you, did you, Jenny? Me—th' McCoy?"

She said in a whispery voice, "It was brave of you to come back, Terry. You saved us."

He shook his head. "It was Wilfred who saved us, Jenny Lou."

"Wilfred!"

I couldn't tell you how she stared at that Irishman, or how he was looking at her. I know I was doing some first-class oggling on my own behalf. Perhaps you can imagine us up on that stockade wall: the village fires dying and the jungle-shadows closing in; faint shouts, cries, explosions drifting back in the night, and the scenery littered with the shambles of that incredible battle.

"It was Wilfred I was after when I hiked out of camp," McCoy was saying hoarsely. "Y'see, I went up in the mountains to try an' find him. Six months is a long time gone, but I thought maybe the Cacos—well—had kept it. Or maybe some Haitian peasant up there would know what had happened to the body. Anyhow, I couldn't stand you eatin' your heart out like you'd been. I thought I'd try."

She waited, wordless, as the man's voice stalled. His eyes roamed off to the distant silhouette of mountains. He said thickly,



"I had a hunch, Jenny; I don't know why. That cave up there, where he'd found that little Arawak mummy. Maybe there'd be some clue. Anyway, I went there." He paused to pull a breath. "Jenny—I found him."

"You—you brought him back?"

McCoy couldn't look at her. His eyes were here, there, everywhere. All this time he'd been standing with that something held behind him; now he coughed and shifted his feet, and on his forehead came a shine of sweat. My hair went up, frozen. McCoy's lips were moving, but his voice didn't seem to want to come.

He whispered, "Yes, Jenny Lou, I brought him back." Then the words came in a blurt, "It wasn't the Cacos that took him outa that lake; it was the Arawaks. Holy Mother! The Arawaks he'd been lookin' for—they'd found *him*. An' they'd took his body up there to that secret cave, an'— But it's that what scared those murderin' Cacos."

**J**UDAS! It had panicked those superstitious black men, and I tell you, it all but paralyzed me. McCoy brought it out from behind him, and my insides turned to ice. It wasn't any chunk of wood, mister. It was one of those shriveled little mummies, brown and leathery—twin brother to the one Wilfred Peabody had fetched into camp on that night so long ago.

Only it wasn't exactly a twin. That other had Indian features and the look of something centuries old. This one was newer, fresher looking, not so worn around the edges. And it didn't have Indian features. No, it had yellowish hair. A dome-shaped little head. Dried-up ears that stuck out like bat-wings. A studious look on its pinched-up, little dead face.

Yes, it looked like a little dead gnome. A little dead gnome no bigger than a doll, with a spindly frame and a head too large for the body and raisin-like eyes all squinted up from too much study. I didn't have to look twice to see it was Wilfred Peabody. Cured and mummified and shrunk by some gosh-awful embalming process.

Like one of those pictures in the dictionary: *Wilfred Peabody, reduced to one-tenth natural size.*

McCoy whispered, "I found him up there in that cave where he found the first one."

All the granite went out of Jenny Lou, like gray rock melting; I saw her start to slump, and I caught her before she could fall.

Later that night—with the stockade cleaned up and the jungle quiet—we went out on burial detail. First there were six Marines to sleep beneath the Stars and Stripes. Then farther off, under a big cottonwood tree, there was that pathetic little grave, hardly deeper than four shovelfuls.

We waited until the Marines retired, then walked out under the moon, just the three of us—Mrs. Peabody, McCoy and I—Mrs. Peabody carrying the little wooden box. Jenny Lou had long since gone beyond tears. She knelt by, silently praying, while I mumbled the funeral service and McCoy made four scoops with the shovel.

When it was done, the relief was terrific. The woman's face was calm, and a weight of tons seemed released from the Irishman's shoulders. He mopped his forehead with a wrist, and put aside the shovel, and turned to the woman, simply.

"You'll let me look after you? As he—would have wanted? You'll come home with me now, Jenny Lou?"

"Yes, Terry," she said softly. "I haven't been fair to you, either. If you want me—as soon as we can leave Morne Noir—I'll marry you."

Looking back, I saw them standing over that sad little grave. Hand in hand. I walked back into the stockade, and up in the black mountains the voodoo drums were pounding. But the Cacos had been beaten, and the thing was over. Wilfred Peabody had had a Christian burial.

## CHAPTER IX

### LAST BAPTISM

**S**O THEY were married, and everyone lived happily ever after? Well, I'll tell you about the wedding. No story is com-

plete without a wedding, it seems, and to finish this one off right I'll have to tell you about this one.

But first, we weren't able to get out of Morne Noir for some weeks yet. Charlemagne was wild about that Caco defeat, and he harried the district with snipers and sent bullets into the stockade every chance. But the atmosphere was better around Morne Noir. You know, it was. As it turned out afterward, the back of the Caco revolt had been broken by that battle—if the records don't give my outfit the credit for it, it's maybe because we didn't deserve the credit—anyway, that zombie scare was over. The Great White Doctor's return, coming back as he did, turned the trick.

Then Charlemagne was nipped off by an informer. That ended the war. As a chapter in the history of the U. S. Marines that one is a zim-blinger and worth recounting. A reward was put up for the Caco leader, and for twenty-five hundred bucks a Haitian turncoat offered to lead a Marine squad to the bandit's secret camp.

A Marine captain and six men disguised themselves with rags and burnt cork to look like Negroes, and sneaked through the enemy line at night and shot Charlemagne. It happened not far from Cap-Haitien, and if you think it didn't take nerve, tell it to the Marines. Where but Haiti could a thing like that have happened?

And now the wedding. As usual, with the war having petered out, a detachment arrived to relieve Morne Noir. We were bloody glad to get out of there, and nobody could have been gladder than Jenny Louise Peabody and big Terrence McCoy.

Plans were set for the church in Cape Haiti—somewhat reluctantly I'd consented to be best man and make the arrangements. The story got there ahead of us, and what with the revolt being broken and all, things were making for quite a shebang. The boys in my outfit were the only ones invited, but half the town seemed on hand, and we had a time keeping them out of the church. There was a plenty of flags and flowers and rum. Out in the street the Negroes were staging a carnival *bamboche*.

Because a boat was leaving for the States at midnight and there wasn't time to wait over, McCoy and I wangled the priest's consent for the ceremony at ten P.M. Rain was falling, but it didn't douse the celebration in the street—only muffled the dance-drums a little—and in the church the candles were right pretty.

So was Jenny Louise coming down the aisle in some Haitian lace she'd got somewhere, the old top sergeant escorting her and trying not to look as plastered as he was; and so was McCoy, if I may say so, all duked up in a clean white suit, rose in buttonhole, chin out handsome. He got a big hand from the Leathernecks in the pews until I snapped an order to remind them in church there wasn't any cheering.

I'd been afraid of trouble because of all the rum, but it went off well. The ceremony was as usual; then I snapped the boys in line along either side of the aisle, smart, with a canopy of crossed bayonets—a little honor gag I'd figured would please the married couple.

It was mighty impressive in the church, all candlelight and shadows, the arch of bayonets shining. But just as the newlyweds turned from the altar to start up the aisle there was a hitch at the church door.

I heard a stifled oath from the door guard. Scuffling. Outside there was some kind of hullabaloo; I thought a fight had started among the street dancers. Then the door blew wide open on a gust of rain that shook the candles, and the guard who'd been trying to hold it was down. Plop! Out cold as a glass eye.

I gasped, "Damnation!" then almost went out cold myself.

A FIGURE was standing on the threshold: a pale, water-drizzled, shadowy figure that might've been a conjuration from the night and rain. In the dark behind it, the Haitian crowd was wailing like Judgment Day. It started down the aisle, slow as a sleep-walker, advancing toward the altar with eyes like sockets full of witch shine. Nobody moved to stop it. That military wedding had frozen into waxworks.

Down the aisle through the arbor of bayonets that figure came. Rags dripping. Wet boots squeaking. Slow as menace. When it pulled up at last before the newly-weds, every other figure in church, except the priest, had solidified into an image like the saints on the walls.

I don't wonder that Haitian cleric went down on his knees in a jumble of robes and Latin prayers. Outside, the black mob was screeching, rioting. "*Zombie! Zombie!*"

That figure puddling the carpet before us looked like it, too. Clothes in muddy tatters. Hatless. Rickety frame whittled down to skin and bones. Starved shoulders barely able to support the domish head on which the skin had tightened and the flesh had waned, making caverns of the eyes and cones of the cheeks while the cheekbones stood out skull-like and the ears jutted like transparent winter leaves.

Lordy! The eyes looked at us through a streaming veil of long, yellow hair. Water dribbling down through the rags made a mud-puddle. In the candlelight it was terrible. Worse than that:

It was Wilfred Peabody! If I ever saw a man who looked as if he'd been resurrected by ghouls from the grave—

As if that weren't bad enough, he pointed a hooky, crooked finger at his former wife, Jenny Lou. He spoke; and if I live to be a million, I'll never forget that skullish croak.

"*Murderer!*"

Like that. And once again, dropping that word in the tomb-silence, baleful as all condemnation.

"*Murderer!* You thought you could get me out of the way, did you, Jenny Lou? So you could marry this handsome Irishman? But I've come back, Jenny—the husband who loved you—to claim my lawful rights and see there's justice done."

I couldn't hope to describe the way he said that. Chin on chest. Accusing finger pointed. I couldn't hope to describe the hush of horror in that church; the way we stood locked in appallment; Jenny Lou's face, aghast.

"Wilfred—Wilfred—You're not dead?"

"I wish I could die," he groaned. "I wish I could die. To come back and find you like this—to have to accuse the wife I loved—of trying to murder me!"

"Trying to murder you?" The woman's eyes were stark wide. "I?"

"Oh, don't deny it," he moved his head heavily from side to side. "Don't deny it, Jenny. I knew you were crazy about Terrence, but I never thought you'd do a thing like that. Then that day up there in the mountains—

"Your shots hit me, all right—killed my donkey. But they didn't kill me. That Arawak mummy I was carrying under my coat—those bullets hit that mummy. Knocked me out of the saddle, but the mummy cushioned the shock—bullets didn't penetrate my chest. You see I didn't die—"

"Wilfred!" the woman's voice scaled up to a cry. "*How?*"

"I DIDN'T die," the skullish voice intoned. "I fell from the donkey and rolled into the bushes. Off the path. Down that terrible slope. But I didn't go over the edge. I hung on. I couldn't crawl back up to the path; I couldn't defend myself, for I had no weapon. I knew you meant to kill me, then. So I crawled along the cliff-edge, through the bushes—crawled away.

"After a while the wounds hurt and I lay down. Clung there in the underbrush. I could hear you firing, but you didn't come after me. Then I lay unconscious for hours; I don't know how many. Next day an old Negress found me; carried me on a mule to her mountain hut way up near the Santo Domingan border where the Arawaks are—"

"Oh, my God!" Jenny Lou swayed, face in hands.

"I had fever." Her first husband's voice sank to an apparitional whisper. "I wanted to die. But she kept me up there—took care of me—for months. Just an ancient Negress—old and wrinkled—black—couldn't read or write—you wouldn't have called her civilized. But she was kind, gentle—even

if she did pray to Voodoo gods to save me—more heart than any white woman I've ever known."

His whisper harshened. "She wouldn't have tried to murder me. She wouldn't have shot a man—*her* man—for another—"

"But I didn't!" Jenny Lou tore aside her bridal veil with the cry. "I loved you, Wilfred! Loved you! Oh, I know I did a dreadful thing. You were always so preoccupied with your work—your research—I was jealous. I thought you'd lost interest in me. So I pretended to be interested in Terrence. Poor Terrence!"

"It was silly of me. Terrible! Just a foolish woman's sham. But I thought to make you jealous, thought you'd pay me more attention. Then that night when you told me how you'd been working, saving, all for me—I was sorry, wanted to tell you. But the very next morning you were gone. Oh, Wilfred!" She faced him, agonized. "How can you believe I tried to kill you?"

The twist on his ravaged face, then, was soul-curdling. He swept the wet hair away from his eyes to glare. His bony finger pointed.

"Because I saw you! You know I did! I heard your horse coming—turned in my saddle just as you rode around that big boulder behind me. Maybe it was dark and raining; maybe I'm near-sighted—your gun was firing, too. But you had it pulled up to hide your face—I saw your white rubber cape. *You were wearing that white rain-cape I gave you last Christmas!*"

**B**ANG! What an accusation that was. Like a silent bombshell; a bright explosion of mercury in my paralyzed brain. Outside the Haitian crowd was rioting, but inside that church you could hear the candle-beads drop. Nobody moved. Nobody seemed to breathe. And in that shattering moment I saw it all.

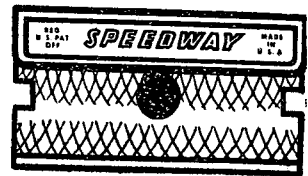
Little Peabody riding absent-mindedly along that mountain trail. Murder on hoofbeats shadowing up through gray mist behind him. That startled turn in saddle. Near-sighted eyes, glasses bleared by rain. Blinding gunfire; shock throwing him from his donkey; rolling head over heels, stunned, downslope to the edge of that abyss.

Then the murderer's gun keeps going—I'm across the valley—for me to hear. It must look like a Caco ambush, appear as one of Charlemagne's jobs. The assassin rigs up a scene of bloody battle; kills the horse as well as the donkey; sprawls down in the muddy path; shoots himself deliberately in the leg and hand; fires random shots and a couple of bullets down the valley in my direction for good measure.

When I get there the stage is set convincingly. But Peabody is alive, concealed by the bushes, crawling off stunned through the underbrush of that overhang. And he'd glimpsed the white rain-cape the killer wore as a masking hood—Jenny Lou's cape, which she'd loaned, on that rainy morning when we set out after Peabody, to McCoy.

I saw all that, and Jenny Lou saw it.

**USE SPEEDWAY DE LUXE BLADES**  
**FOR FAST, SMOOTH, ECONOMICAL SHAVES**



McCoy saw that we saw it, too.

That handsome Irish taxidermist! Wilfred Peabody's life-long friend! He'd been wearing Jenny Lou's white rain-cape when we set out to find the little Arawak-hunting scientist and bring him back to Morne Noir. He was the one who'd fired those murderous bullets from behind.

To kill Peabody and get his wife? Making certain that Jenny Lou, widowed, would come into a large bank account and ten thousand dollars insurance? Convinced that he, Terry, could marry himself into Wilfred Peabody's money? But McCoy must've had that in mind when we went out after Peabody that dark day. With murder in his heart and bullets in his gun he'd trailed his best friend, sent me off on a detour when we were getting close, and staged that ambush stunt.

There was murder in his heart again as he stood there, exposed, at the foot of the altar. In the light of the church candles his eyes were balls of yellow fire. All the handsomeness went out of him at a rush. He gave one wolf-like howl—the howl of the assassin caught red-handed just as his fingers closed on the prize money. Whirling, he snatched up a silver candelabrum; hurled the sacred candles at Peabody's head.

Talk about the return of Enoch Arden! In a flare of crashing constellations the little scientist went down. I'm glad I had one good sock at Terrence McCoy. Lashing out without time to aim, I nailed that wife-stealer a bash in the nose that sent him plunging over backward into the holy water.

He needed that baptism; it was going to be the last he'd ever get. Caroming off the stone fount in a shower, he went leaping and screaming over the pews, filling the church with a horde of wild oaths, knocking down a pile of prayer books, clawing his way through a shrine.

His last defilement was to smash Saint Christopher the Protector. Pictured in stained glass, the good saint went to smithereens as that black Irishman went shattering out through the window.

He got away. By the time the Marines could pull themselves together and rush outside he was gone. In the devil's hurly-burly of the street, the flittergibbet of lights and rain, the uproar of zombie-panicked natives, Haitian police, yells and thumping dance-drums, he vanished in the night. Cape Haiti with its crooked streets and hovels, its maze of dark alleys and smells was a haven for such a guy. A rat can always find a hole.

Five days afterward he was seen by a peasant, heading inland for the Santo Domingan border. I guess he figured the States might be too hot for him and he'd better lie under cover for a while.

Anyway, at the time there was only that boat he had reserved for his honeymoon. We went out there that night to make sure he wasn't aboard. Then our Marine patrols combed the town until long after midnight before they gave him up as a bad job.

I went back to the church to find Peabody.

That blow on the head had given him an ugly gash, but Jenny Louise was looking after him. They sat together in a quiet pew while she bathed his face. Off in the vestry the poor priest, dazed, was taking care of papers to revoke the wedding and restore Mrs. Peabody to her lawful status as Wilfred Peabody's wife.

The little professor was begging Jenny Louise to forgive him.

"To think that I could have mistrusted you so."

"But it was my fault." She was hugging him close. "I loved you so, I wanted to make you mistrust me!"

And she'd married that McCoy cur because she hadn't wanted to hurt a friend of Wilfred's. Lord!

I tiptoed out. Across the night-hung town the sounds of rioting voodoo-drums and yelling Marine patrols were breaking the peace and quiet. The peace and quiet of an island that hasn't had any since Columbus waded ashore, there, with civilization in 1492.



## EPILOGUE

GLENNON finished his story and a bottle of Scotch at the same time, and leaned back in his chair, wiping his lips, throat, cheeks, forehead. We were cruising in under the shadow of a mountainous headland, and, the wind cut off, the air was a dead weight flavored with custard, muggy.

Clouds and pale, soundless lightning drifted around the mountaintops; in lavender twilight, bay and headland were two shades of purple. Listening, I thought I could hear drums. It may have been my imagination. Real or imaginary, the sound came in through the porthole and joined something in the smokeroom atmosphere I didn't like.

"Glennon," I said—and I know *my* voice was husky—"that was a devil of a yarn!"

The ex-Marine captain grunted. "If anyone told it to me I wouldn't believe it, so I don't expect you to."

He didn't understand my expression. "What I don't see," I explained, "is how Peabody came back a second time. I mean, if McCoy's shots didn't kill him—just wounded him slightly, and he was up there in the mountains all the time, not dead at all—well, where did his mummy come from? The shrunken little mummy of Peabody that McCoy found and brought back from that mountain cave?"

Glennon shook his head, somber-eyed.

"To begin with, he didn't find that mummy up in that cave. He took it up there with him, see? McCoy had been stalemated. Here he'd gone and killed Peabody—or thought he had—so's he could get Jenny Lou and her money. Then instead of falling into his arms at word of her husband's death, the way McCoy'd expected, Jenny didn't give him any time.

"Huh! She turned into stone and refused to budge out of Morne Noir, insisting her husband might come back as a zombie. That must've got on McCoy's nerves plenty. Her carrying on, declaring she wouldn't move till she'd seen her husband's body have a Christian burial."

Glennon interjected an oath. "No wonder McCoy was anxious to find the body. Can you imagine his feelings when he went up to that lake to get it and it wasn't there? He was stymied. Scared, too, I'll bet. Murder-guilt on his soul and Haiti full of spooks, he must've been on tenterhooks to get out of there. He had to put an end to that zombie talk and take Jenny Lou out of Morne Noir. With Peabody missing completely, he was stuck. So he made that mummy—"

"Made a mummy!" I gasped.

Glennon nodded, grim. "That Irishman was a clever scoundrel. What's more, he was a taxidermist—knew how to stuff animal skins and preserve hair. Remember Peabody calling him a greater artist than Akeley? He was an artist, all right. A genius. Well, he had his tools there in camp and a lot of scraps around to work with—bits of animal skin, tanned leather, stuffing and whatnot. Probably cut off and bleached some of his own hair for the wig. What he really made was a dummy, not a mummy."

"George!" I gulped. "And pretended to go out and find it so he could bring it back to Mrs. Peabody to convince her her husband was dead!"

"And she could give him a Christian burial," Glennon said. "Can you beat that for brutal deviltry? That Irishman was a rattlesnake. I'm convinced he didn't give a whoop for Jenny Lou, either. Not until he heard Peabody tell the woman he had twenty thousand for her in the bank and ten thousand worth of insurance. It was the day after that when McCoy tried to knock Peabody off. All McCoy was after was that money.

"Why even when McCoy pulled that rescue act, coming back to the stockade and fighting the way he did, he wasn't rescuing Jenny Lou; he was rescuing his chance to marry a widow worth thirty thousand dollars. A handsome guy, yes. Lots of chest, lots of jaw, lots of fine black hair and twinkling blue eye and blarney charm. But give him a chance at a woman with thirty thou!"

He gestured violently.

THE ex-Marine captain looked off through the porthole and swore. We were close to the headland now. Purple jungle slid by as we moved on a bay of indigo glass. There was a hot-house smell, like orchids and warm manure.

Glennon drew a breath and murmured, "Haiti!" He rounded in his chair. "Remember what I said at the start: you never get to know Haiti as well as Haiti gets to know you? Well—it got to know Terrence McCoy."

I stared and could feel perspiration wetting my forehead as Glennon, speaking, reached for that shoebox in front of him. I'd forgotten about that little box and its contents while he'd been telling his story.

"It got the low-down on that Irish taxidermist." Glennon paused, one hand on the box-lid. "You never can tell about Haiti. There's things go on in those mountains out there a white man wouldn't believe.

"Take those Arawak Indians, now. Me, I wouldn't've believed they existed. But this summer I had to come down here on an insurance investigation—to show you how funny things are. After I retired from the Marines I had to do some thing so I signed up with this insurance company.

"Because I knew Haiti, they sent me down here on this case—planter died of fever, that was all, but the Haitian officials got all balled up with the idemnity. Any-

way, I settled the business over in Port au Prince, and then just for old times sake I thought I'd travel across the island and pay a visit to Morne Noir."

Glennon stood up out of his chair and leaned, a little unsteadily, over the shoe box.

"Listen, mister! I was passing through a shabby mountain village—place hasn't even got a name—when I saw a little voodoo doctor's hut, and this thing hanging in the door. By heaven!"

Lifting the lid, Glennon glared down at the contents of the box—that frowsty, tobacco-colored bogle which looked like a worn-out leather doll. Glennon pointed a shaky finger.

"See the black hair? That pugged up little face? Mister, the last time I heard of that Irishman was fifteen years ago when he was big as life and on his way inland to the Santo Domingan border. This is no doll, my friend. This is no imitation. That place where it's come unsewed"—he pointed—"that sawdust is spilling out of an appendicitis scar."

I couldn't speak, looking down.

Glennon closed the lid and looked up at me. Moisture beads shone on his temples.

"You can't fool Haiti," he said softly. He tapped the little mummy-box with his finger. "This is th' real McCoy."

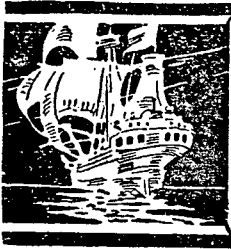
THE END

# "I Talked with God"

(Yes, I Did—Actually and Literally)

and, as a result of that little talk with God some ten years ago, a strange new Power came into my life. After 43 years of horrible, sickening, dismal failure, this strange Power brought to me a sense of overwhelming victory, and I have been overcoming every undesirable condition of my life ever since. What a change it was. Now—I have credit at more than one bank, I own a beautiful home, own control of the largest circulating newspaper in my County and a large office building, and my wife and family are amply provided for after I leave for shores unknown. In addition to these material benefits, I have a sweet peace in my life. I am happy as happy can be. No circumstance ever upsets me, for I have learned how to draw upon the invisible God-Law, under any and all circumstances.

You too may find and use the same staggering Power of the God-Law that I use. It can bring to you too, whatever things are right and proper for you to have. Do you believe this? It won't cost much to find out—just a penny post-card or a letter, addressed to Dr. Frank B. Robinson, Dept. 139, Moscow, Idaho, will bring you the story of the most fascinating success of the century. And the same Power I use is here for your use too. I'll be glad to tell you about it. All information about this experience will be sent you free, of course. The address again—Dr. Frank B. Robinson, Dept. 139, Moscow, Idaho. Advt. Copyright 1939 Frank B. Robinson.



# Argonotes

## The Readers' Viewpoint



**M**AYBE you thought we had been stuffing the ballot box in defense of ARGOSY's new cover. But we haven't been doing that; we have simply printed the comments as they came in. Today we have on hand a letter from the opposition, and we hasten to present it, strong in our belief in the democratic system. The minority must not be stifled in this department.

### CARL CROSSWILER

It has usually been my custom to add a short word with my renewals about my views of the stories in ARGOSY. I do not recall them at the moment now, and lack the time to check over copies, but I, among others do remember "The Harp and the Blade", and from the way it ended, I hope to see a sequel sometime; it would be too bad just to drop Finnian for good—the way he wound up.

There were others, serials, novelets and shorts that were good, and of course some not.

I was among those annoyed when the pages dropped from 144 to 128 and then to 112, and was contemplating ending my subscription. Have decided to stay with you a while yet.

Frankly I don't care for the new type of cover to any great extent; after all, it's just the same thing. The ship is all right, but why not a small illustration in the panel below? Pictures, the more the better, always dress up a story, or magazine, and add appeal to many who judge a book or yarn's possible interest by the pictures.

Good as some of the stories are, if all illustrations were dropped, I think I'd drop from the subscriber's list. They help you form an opinion of the locale, or characters, action, etc. And I imagine would help sell the magazine on the stands too. Some might buy it now because of the new get-up, but others, still strangers to it, noting the same cover and no illustrations, week after week, would hardly be enticed, whereas some interesting illustration might stand a chance of inducing them to buy.

And contrary to some who have commented, I hardly feel that all covers were melodramatic,

bloodthirsty, gory, etc., so that the magazine had to be smuggled home under one's coat. Too, this is supposed to be a sort of red-blooded man's world (I hope) more or less, and one should be admired for reading something with zest and zing to it, instead of, er, ah, how could I express it?—a book of limpid poetry, or what-not?

Oh, well, mine is just one man's opinion, not carrying a great deal of weight. Have missed novels by Burroughs, Luke Short, Bennett Foster for some time. Also a good western by Brand. The Kildare series is out of my line. Anything historical, Western, South Seas, China, etc., as well as the Goldsmith air yarns, is my meat. The more the merrier. And now, until next renewal time, *Adios*.  
HILLSBORO, Mo.

**P**LEASANT to hear from Mr. Grosswiler, and his remarks about the cover are interesting. Right now he should be fairly satisfied with what he finds inside the magazine because there's the Goldsmith serial, and a new Western by Bennett Foster begins next week.

You'd think the editors could remember, at once, any ARGOSY story mentioned. Well—editors change, memories slip.

Now here's a request for information. If any of you can identify the story mentioned below, please let us know and we'll get in touch with

### LOUIS WARD

About six years ago ARGOSY published a serial based on the fact that a sailor had fallen and disappeared from a ship while members of the crew were witnessing the mirage of a strange city. Special notation of this was made in the magazine at the time and I am anxious to obtain the name and author of the story.

Thanking you for any help you can offer.  
STATEN ISLAND, N. Y.