

"The Gobble-uns 'll Git You" By

Old Pop Jacob of York County, Pennsylvania, was chagrined but not amazed when, one sundown, he discovered that his best Guernsey wouldn't milk. Pop Jacob knew exactly what had happened. The cow had been hexed—by one of his enemies of course.

He hurried to Mom Gartenweiler, the pow-wow woman up Pigeon Hills, and she spoke the words and made the passes—and told Pop Jacob to wait a day. Next evening the Guernsey let down. The hex was off her. And Pop Jacob gave Mom Gartenweiler a sheep for pay.

Collier's sent Mr. White into the Pennsylvania Dutch counties to talk to the bewitched and the bewitching and here is the result.

IT WAS a dark, dark night. A fine one, I thought, for a nice murder, and, as we blimped along through the ghostly hollows of Pennsylvania's Pigeon Hills, I couldn't help wondering if it hadn't been on such a night as this, only a week before, that Rehmyer had been beaten to death with chunks of stove-wood.

And why? Witchcraft!

Merely because an alleged pow-wower said it was necessary to clip the old man's back hair and bury some of it in a hole eight feet deep back of Hess' barn, in order to release the Hess household from the curse of a black magic, the harmless old farmer had been brutally killed.

It was all very gruesome; and yet here I was on my way to a meeting with one of the mysterious cult; a pow-wower, a man who could shackle witches, lay ghosts, dispel charms, and cure by the spoken word or the laying-on of hands.

The farther we drove the darker it got, and the rougher my personal goose-flesh, until finally, when I was least expecting to see one, we came suddenly to a house.

It was a very gloomy-looking house, and it was a cold night too. But none the less when we stepped up on the porch three shadowy figures arose and greeted us—with grunts.

"Is Rudolph here?"

Illustrated by
Kurt Wiese



"Right away the driver knew the horses were hexed. But he knew what to do. He took an ax and hit the wagon tongue a terrible blow. The strange fellow dropped dead!"



"The suspender buttons would all come off every time he dressed"

The old man pondered for a minute.

"I don't cure for everything," he said.

"I just cure mostly for the taking-off, for the stomach fever, for the liver-groin, for the weeds and for burns and for the stopping of the blood. My mother taught me the way and I do like this: For the stomach-fever I take a string and I measure the person from the cowlick on the back of the head to the middle of the bottom of the left heel.

"Then I take another string and I measure the right foot, and if the long string is not exactly seven times as long as the short string then I know the sick person has the stomach fever and I cure for it. I make the two strings into a trap. Three times I put the sick person through this trap, every time I say the words from the Bible, and in a few days he is well.

"For the cure of the liver-groin it is almost the same way. With the string I take the measure around the stomach and I say the words. But they are not the same words. And then I wrap the string around an egg and I put the egg in the fire. Sometimes the egg busts and the string burns up, and then I have

to do it all over again. I do this every day until the day comes when the string will not burn and then the sick person is cured."

Thus for two hours Rudolph told me of the wonders of pow-wow. It even works when applied to live stock, although at first he said that he couldn't cure for horses and cattle. Then he bethought himself.

"Yes, yes," he exclaimed, "I can cure for the sweeny in horses. Old Jenny Schwann taught me that. I do it like this: The first Friday in the time when the moon is taking on I get up before day.

"I speak to no one. I dress and I go to where the horse is and I rub the sweeny and I say the words, and then I come back. And all the time I must not speak to anybody—not a single word. Then on Sunday I go again to the horse, and then again on Tuesday. On Sunday when I come back if I meet someone I can talk, but on Tuesday no. On Tuesday I cannot talk but after Tuesday the horse is cured."

How to Bring Up Your Children

I inquired regarding certain other remarkable things about which I had been hearing a good deal of talk. I asked, for example, about pig troughs, mill hoppers, brier bushes, four-legged tables, and the best time to clip toenails. Rudolph knew all about all of them.

If you rub children against a pig trough they will not have the mumps; place them for a time in a mill hopper and they become immune to scarlet fever. Drag them backwards, three times, through a bramble bush and you needn't worry thereafter about whooping cough hitting the family. Pass them from hand to hand under a four-legged table, and around each leg, and it will cure the liver-groin. And above all things don't manicure your feet when the moon is taking on. If you do you will surely acquire a set of ingrowing nails.

Don't laugh. Don't laugh at the pow-wow; and above all don't laugh at Rudolph as a practitioner of the art, because if you do you will be laughing at the honest beliefs of about seven tenths of the people who live in one of the most prosperous and thickly settled semi-rural sections of the United States.

It is astounding, but it is a fact, that in five counties adjoining, and including, York County in Pennsylvania the vast majority of the people, probably a million of them, no matter whether they live on farms and speak with an accent, work in factories, practice law, hold political jobs, bootleg, or run banks and handle big business, are addicted to pow-wow. They are not ashamed of it either. They are strong in the faith and therein, as Rudolph explained to me, lies the secret of the whole thing.

The honest pow-wow, he said, works always for good, and never for evil. But for it to be efficacious both parties to the transaction

Owen P. White

must believe in it. Thus the pow-wowers, although they see in the system nothing except the power of God, are working along the same lines of mental suggestion that were used by Émile Coué, the little pharmacist from Nancy, when he came over here a few years ago and in no time at all had everybody in the United States counting knots on a string and chanting a ditty about how much better they felt today than they felt yesterday.

There is a lot to this sort of thing. Scientific medicos recognize it under the name of therapeutic suggestion. Pow-wow therefore is nothing to be scoffed at.

The Pennsylvania Germans came by it legitimately. It was brought to this country in the time of Good Queen Anne and it has been handed down from one generation to the next. But note this: The power to pow-wow is not necessarily hereditary, but if it should happen to run through as a family characteristic it is never passed down from father to son, or from mother to daughter. It always alternates, in that a man derives his power and knowledge from a woman, and a woman gets hers from a man. Why this is I was unable to learn.

Pow-wow came into this country more than two centuries ago. Its practitioners were German farmers, who located in the hills of Pennsylvania, some distance west of what was destined to be the main highway of civilized progress. Civilization surrounded them in time, but until within comparatively recent years they have been in it and not of it.

The Pow-Wow's Background

As farmers—and there are no better farmers in the world—these Germans accepted anything and everything to better their agricultural condition, but not their cultural. In regard to their inherited ideals they had their own notions. They didn't want any education that would disturb them in the simple faith and customs of their forefathers.

Hence, so I was told in York County, in the rural communities, where these people have controlled things, it has only been within the past thirty years that the public school has become a tolerated institution. The old folks have never wanted the young ones, of the generations that have come on one after the other, to be taught things that would cause them to leave the farms or the faith of their fathers.

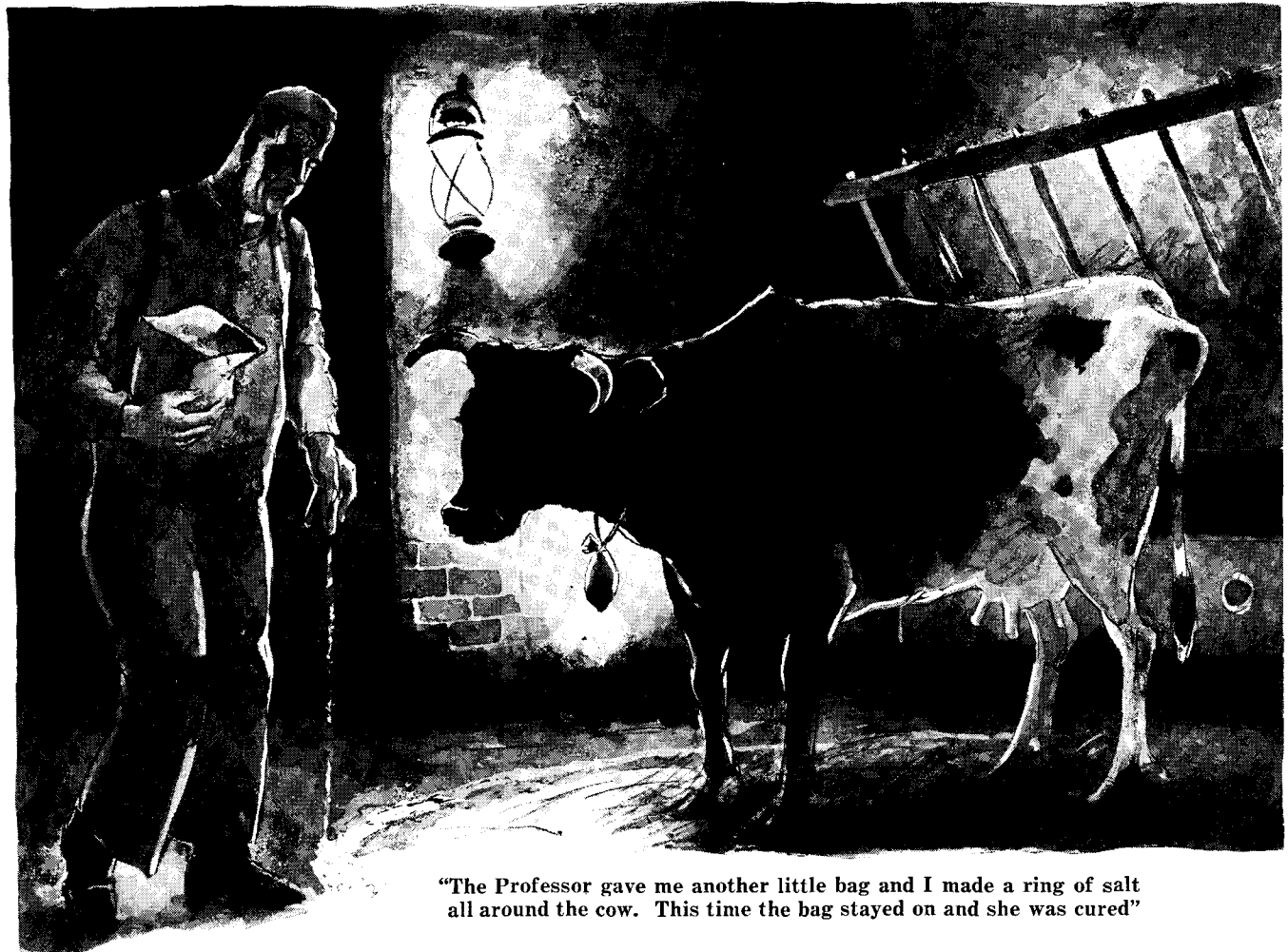
The mothers and fathers of the present generation of adult citizens of the pow-wow belt were all firm believers in the process, and hence it is a safe bet that seven out of every ten adults in those counties have been wrapped around table legs, parked in mill hoppers, dragged through brier bushes, rubbed against pig troughs, measured with strings, and talked over.

It seems to have worked. There are no huskier, healthier lot of citizens anywhere than are to be found in that part of Pennsylvania; and if you want to know how they got that way just ask some of them about the pow-wow.

I asked a man in York upon whose office wall there hung several diplomas. "It saved my life," he said.

I asked the secretary of the Kiwanis Club in another small town. This man has lived in Massachusetts for many years, but even that hasn't affected his belief, or his growth either.

"I thrived on it," he told me, "and it certainly cured my sister when she had erysipelas."



"The Professor gave me another little bag and I made a ring of salt all around the cow. This time the bag stayed on and she was cured"

Another business man showed me his arms. One was a mass of scars, the other was without a mark.

"I burned them both," he said, "severely. This one," and he indicated the scarred arm, "was not pow-wowed. The other was. Can you see the difference?"

I spoke to a prominent politician, who exhibited his right hand as a testimonial. He had picked up a chunk of red-hot iron and didn't drop it quick enough. His hand had been terribly burned. A pow-wower had breathed on it three times, made a few appropriate remarks, and that was all. The hand is without a mark. So there you are.

A Presbyterian minister told me he had seen pow-wowers stop blood flowing from a wound, and had known them to cure erysipelas. They are death on erysipelas. A young college man whom I met one night about midnight in the little village of Spring Grove told me that members of his family had been cured of it by the pow-wow, and a pow-wow doctor also told me of how he had had a bad case of it himself and that a brother practitioner had "cured for him" in three days.

They Know Their Limitations

The honest pow-wower doesn't charge for his services. If a patient wants to make him a gift that's all right, but there is no fee. Neither do any of them claim to have any ability to cure any organic ailments. They don't tackle tuberculosis or cancer; they don't set bones; they distinctly admit that there is plenty of pain and suffering in the world; they recognize the value of internal medicine, and they are perfectly willing to allow a patient, if he or she wants to, to be attended by a regular medico at the same time they are doing their stuff.

According to the primitive faith of the pow-wowers, and of the people who believe in their powers, there is as much truth in the demonology of the Bible as there is in any other part of the Book. They believe with as much high-

power fervency in the personality of a Devil whose influence is all wicked as they do in the personality of a benign God whose energies are all exerted in the opposite direction. Therefore, as Rudolph said—although he emphatically assured me that he himself wouldn't ever have any traffic with the evil one—if a good man can call on a good God to help him do good to his fellows, just so a bad man can invoke the assistance of the Devil when he wants to get even with an enemy.

And do they believe this? And do they do it? Down in civilized Pennsylvania the hills are infested with hard-working, seemingly intelligent grown people whose trust in, and fear of, the powers of black magic is just as implicit as that of Cotton Mather ever was. They bear enthusiastic witness to the necromancy of witches, they have faith in the casting of spells, they have been present at the ousting of devils, and they rely upon charms for their own protection.

I wanted to meet a man bewitched. It was no trouble at all. It would have been harder, maybe, to meet one who wasn't, or hadn't been. For that purpose I dropped in at the office of a county detective. He laughed, stepped to the window, looked out and hollered at the first man who went by: "Hey, Carl, come in here, I want to talk to you."

The man entered, I was introduced, and the detective said: "Tell us about the man who bewitched the horses and fell dead."

"Oh, yes," answered Carl, "that was a long time ago. I was standing by the mill where another man was loading his wagon with wheat. A strange fellow he came up and stood beside me. 'Watch now,' he said, 'and we will see some fun. The horses will not pull.' Well, the driver he got on the wagon and just like the strange fellow said the horses would not go. The driver whipped them; still they would not go, and right away he knew they were hexed. But he knew what to do. He took an ax from the wagon, he got down and he hit the wagon tongue one terrible

blow. The strange fellow dropped dead!"

"But have you ever been hexed yourself?" I asked Carl.

"Why, of course I have. Once I remember it was on the cow. She got sick and down and there was nothing I could do. The doctor he came and gave her some medicine but it was no good. Then I went to the Professor and I told him and he gave me a little bag which he said to tie with a string around the neck of the cow. I did that and right away the cow got up and began to eat.

The Professor to the Rescue

"I went off to the field to work and when I came back the cow was down again, and the bag, which was around her neck, was gone. The witch had got it. I couldn't find it anywhere. I went back to the Professor and I told him and he gave me another little bag and this time he said I was to make a ring with salt all around the cow. I did that. This time the bag stayed on her neck, she was cured for a long time, and when she got sick again I killed her.

"That very same night the big hog died and after that everything went wrong. I lost more than seven hundred dollars in stock that winter and then, finally, I went to the Professor again.

"This time he gave me a wooden peg which he said I was to drive in the barn, in a certain place by the door, with three blows from the hammer. I did that and then, as long as I lived in that place, I had no more trouble. Then I moved and right away I was hexed again. We couldn't make any butter come on the cream. We churned for two days and got nothing, and then I got mad. I took the big knife; I made it red-hot in the fire. I stuck it in the cream and right at that very minute the neighbor woman, who had put the hex on me, burned her hands on the stove in her kitchen.

"But she doesn't stop putting on the hex. She does it all the time. One day I was shooting rabbits and I got over on her land, and she saw me and laughed. 'You can't (Continued on page 48

Wings of



The Story Thus Far:

MILLARD DELAVAN, an orphan, the son of a once famous actor, is dismissed from the United States air force on the charge made by Captain Lastry of striking an officer, Captain Lastry himself, and of cheating at cards. Stacked against him are the facts that he is adept at card tricks and that he comes of German people.

Major Henrichs, thinking the charge absurd, befriends the boy and through his brother, Judge Henrichs, secures Delavan a job with the Arrow Aero Manufacturing Company. The job doesn't last long as Lastry happens to be inspector of the planes and he plants a few seeds of poison.

At Judge Henrichs' home Millard meets Joyce Van Deusen and the attractive aunt, who turns out to be the woman because of whom Millard's father was supposed to have committed suicide.

He meets also Madame Mitzi Seidler, a German agent, and when the judge, who is to be appointed head of the United States Intelligence in Switzerland, offers him the job of working against Mitzi and of preceding him to Switzerland, he jumps at the chance.

In Switzerland Millard, by deceiving Mitzi, gets himself appointed to a position in the German Intelligence. The Chief, important in this service, takes Millard to Charleville, to try out a small British plane that had come down behind the German lines. Millard takes it up high in the air and finds himself being followed by two German planes and fervently hopes that he hasn't been sent up for target practice.

IV

IT HAD been Delavan's first thought to make a long sweep to the south—a sweep wide enough to give him a view of that stupendous battle-line which had been drawing its length across the pages of history for nearly four years. But it suddenly dawned upon him that if in this flight of observation he were spotted by a German plane unacquainted with his mission, his pursuit of adventure would be ended as soon as it had started.

"One clip of cartridges," he thought, already slackening his speed, "and I'd be shuffling off this mortal coil so fast it would look like a hand-spring."

Besides, the two Fokkers which had followed from the Charleville flying field had evidently been given instructions not to let him get too far away.

Roaring past him now, they began turning him to the right by crowding on his left quarter—as a traffic officer on a motorcycle will crowd a speeding motorist against the curb.

"I love to choose and see my path," thought Delavan; and guessing that the heavier Fokkers would need more speed than himself to keep at the same elevation, he gradually closed his throttle.

Slowly but surely the distance widened between himself and his two attendants, and suddenly seizing the moment, Dell asserted his independence by swinging to the left instead of the right and heading back for Charleville.

THE Fokkers turned and thundered after, this time rising above him and then bearing down ahead in order to crowd the lighter plane to earth.

"It ought to work again," Delavan told himself, closing his throttle. The heavier machines, trying to slow to the same speed, lost their elevation; and suddenly opening everything wide, Dell leap-frogged over them and side-slipped down to the landing field below.

"Very well done!" exclaimed the Chief. "Captain Schureman, who was watching with me, says he wishes that you were in his unit. But we have better things in mind, *hein*? So now we return to town and see if the uniform fits you."

They drove back to the hotel of the *Lion d'Argent* where, Dell was later to learn, the Intelligence units of three adjoining sectors assembled their reports for transmission to General Headquarters at Spa.

"This was my work before I went to Switzerland," said the Chief. "I am glad to be transferred back again where I can step out if I wish with no fair lady waiting to take my picture with a

Captain Dufresne hurried over to greet Delavan. "Again, Lieutenant Sangster!" he exclaimed

camera concealed in her hat—where I can sit inside and no good Serbian tries to pot me with a cheap revolver. Now we will go to my office, and there we should find the uniform waiting for us—"

It was a British uniform of the Royal Air Force smartly tailored with its swanky cut and silk linings. Dell tried on the coat.

"With a few alterations, yes," critically nodded the Chief. "I will send for a tailor, and while we are waiting, we will see what was found in the pockets."

The first item was a letter addressed to "Lieutenant William J. Sangster, Royal Air Force, in care of the British War Office."

"The postmark is New York," said the Chief. "The letter, as you see, from a young lady—"

Dell, skipping the contents, with a warm feeling around his ears, turned to the signature, "Babs."

The second item was a picture of a wistful-eyed girl in a red morocco pocket-case.

"Probably Babs," thought Delavan, and, remembering the start and the end of the letter, he added, "I hope so—or Jove has laughed again."

The third item was a metal disk. On one side was the number "317" and on the other the stamped insignia of the R. A. F.

This and about twenty pounds in

English money completed the inventory.

"And that is all," said the Chief, glancing at a page of notes. "From the type of his engine, the direction of his flight, and various other data, such as the amount of petrol remaining in his tank—it is deduced that he came from the British field unit stationed at St. Pol behind the Vimy sector. Whatever happens, therefore, I would advise you to keep away from St. Pol. There are many things in espionage which are difficult to account for—but there are few things harder to explain than a sudden change of identity."

THE tailor soon arrived—a blue-eyed elderly Bavarian. In frowning silence he chalked the shoulders and cuffs of the coat, using that tailor's shorthand which seems to be universal in all languages—and then with a stiff salute he carried the coat away with him.

"I wonder what *he* thinks of the war—" Delavan asked himself. And one thought suggesting another, he added, "If wars were like whaling expeditions, everybody getting a share of the profits, I wonder how much most of the men in this war would ask for their shares today if they could sell out and go home. . . ."

Not much, he guessed.

"Now!" said the Chief.

From a filing cabinet he drew a large-scale map of the French district south-east of Rheims. Attached to this was a