

became regular and sure. She could go on this way forever. She was possessed of infinite strength, infinite endurance. This was nothing at all, just to keep going, on and on, on and on, forever . . . So long, they must be nearly there by now, they had been swimming so long. It would be good to see how far they had come, it would be encouraging, give her new strength. It cost amazing effort to twist her head and look; her neck seemed stiff. And then, she could not make herself believe what she was seeing. The shore was no closer, still far away. She must hurry! She jerked back into position to resume her stroke, but something had happened to the rhythm. She tried desperately to follow but the harder she tried, the more she floundered.

He was coming toward her, and she said, "No. No, really, I'm all right." But still he watched her, glancing back. Almost by accident she fell into his rhythm again, feeling strength come back to her, sharing the steady musical precision of the movement of his arm. It was a beautiful arm, she had not known before that a man's arm could be beautiful, but his was, the muscles sliding beneath the shining skin of his shoulder. But everything about him was beautiful.

That would, of course, be true of the man that she would love, the man she could not have. And there would naturally be something wrong with him, something to keep him from her always. It was quite true, just as he said, and it was better to accept the fact. Better, and easier. Much, much easier. It was restful, really, restful and rather pleasant. For she was tired . . . so tired. She needed rest. She must have rest, for if she resisted any longer, she would press the knife edge of that pain against her chest. But she need not resist. She could rest.

She had a right to rest, an inalienable right, which she would never give up, no matter how they tried to take it from her. Let them try, and she would fight. Fight furiously, to keep her right to rest upon the water, the soft sweet water; it was so gentle, so much more comfortable than sand. Sand was hard and dry and sharp, it would cut her face, sand would get in her eyes and mouth, for nothing could be more painful and shocking than sand against the skin.

She was coughing and crying, but still they would not let her alone. They kept on hurting her, over and over, crushing her, and shouting, so that the echoes of the shouts reverberated hollow and enormous, far away but coming closer, over and over, madden-

ingly. "When you can talk, Althea, tell me you're all right. When you can talk, Althea, tell me—"

"I'm all right," she gasped, and opened her eyes.

She saw the sand, then, very blurred and magnified about her face, before his hands lifted her and turned her over. He wiped her face, gently, and then her eyes could focus and see him looking at her, very close, his dark eyes brilliant. "Althea. Althea." The murmur was almost like a prayer.

There was something she wanted to say, something she had to ask him, but she could not remember. All she could think was that he looked different, somehow exalted, and she was too content for questions. All she could do was fall asleep, there in his arms.

WHEN she woke up, he was standing beside her, smiling down. She was dazzled, whether by the sun on his white shirt or by his smile she could not tell. She blinked at him and laughed, tears in her eyes. He helped her up and they started walking through the deep sand. Her feet felt dreamlike in their heaviness. He took her in his arms and carried her.

And it was then that she remembered. "All that way, you brought me in. What—what happened?"

"You mean my heart?" He stood smiling at her, his mouth sweet. "Nothing. It started kicking up, at first, and then—" He shrugged, incredulous, his eyes alight. "Your guess is as good as mine."

She could not take it in, all at once. It was too much. She felt lightheaded, dizzy, so that she had to tighten the clasp of her arms as he carried her, and the words on the signs they were passing danced in a crazy way before her eyes. "Danger," she echoed.

He stopped and looked at the sign. "I might have guessed," he said in a voice that didn't sound sorry, "if I'd been thinking."

"You didn't need to think," she told him, laughing a little. "You knew you could save me from any danger that came along."

"No." He looked at her steadily. "I'm not sure I knew that. Not then—"

"But now," she whispered. "Now you know."

She felt the lovely rough scrape of his face against her cheek as he nodded. "Now I know," he said. "And I have a hunch the Army doctors will know it, too."

His arms tightened about her as he started walking in long, swift strides toward the car.

THE END

Lady in Waiting

Continued from page 13

seem that Miss Crawford's earlier marital ventures with Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., and Franchot Tone made her appreciate Mr. Terry to the utmost. She was not moved by these whisperings; the Crawford lady is made of tough material. Behind those freckles, prominent eyes and red hair is a hard structure known as the brain.

Starting as the little Le Sueur girl of Texas, who disliked her stepfather and thought she was getting a bad deal from her mother, she had become an international star known even in Assam. With little education and few of the social graces to help her, she had made the leap from silent pictures to sound films with no difficulty whatever.

Until now, her life has not been happy. Her marriages before Philip Terry were failures and she was never sure that the fault might not be hers. It has been said that because of her unhappy childhood she has tried too hard for happiness. Whatever else may be said about her, she can't be charged with snobbishness. The surest way of getting a dirty look in Hollywood is to malign her before electricians, taxi drivers, photographers or studio employees. She is a quick lady with the open purse, as dozens of families in that cruel town can testify.

When she continued to read scripts sent her by Warner Brothers without finding one she could agree to act in, she finally asked them to take her off the pay roll. More than that, she had continued to refuse to work in

Never Goodby even though they offered her \$500,000 for that one picture. Later she had the satisfaction of a visit from Goulding.

"You saved my life on that one, Joan," he said. "It was no good. I see it now. If we'd made it, it would have ruined me."

Finally she found the story she wanted, a novel by James M. Cain called *Mildred Pierce*, a characteristically hard-boiled, hard-hitting Cain job which had been published five years before and which no studio had dared to touch. While she was waiting for a screen treatment to be done of it, she went back to her knitting and her gum chewing.

Through her good friends and others less good, she learned anew that the eyes of the town were upon her, most of their owners secretly hoping that she was through, but Crawford will not be through without a fight. If the script of *Mildred Pierce* is what she wants, she will go into battle with a determination that may not only save her but set her off on a new series of conquests. The court intrigues, petty bickerings, and secret knifings of Hollywood are a part of the only life she has ever known. When somebody once asked her if she didn't hate that part of Hollywood, the getting to the top by climbing over the prostrate bodies of everybody else, her face lighted up immediately. She stopped knitting, she stopped chewing.

"That's the part of it I like," she grinned. "I know all the tricks of that little pastime."

THE END



THE Heroes

I

EVEN in peacetime, aided by all that makes for speed and comfort, the journey from Africa's heart to the Mediterranean calls for the ultimate in human endurance. Two thousand miles of trackless desert, littered with camel bones and cut in half by the frowning barriers of the great Tibesti range. A horror of desolation where travelers burn all day and freeze at night, the stillness broken only by the scream of sandstorms.

An inferno of torment, yet General Jacques Leclerc and a small force of Free French covered the ghastly stretch in 39 days, entering Tripoli at the end to join their tattered banners with those of the victorious British Eighth Army. A military exploit worthy of a Hannibal, yet far more than that, for news of the heroic march lifted the soul of France, and fanned French courage into a sustained blaze.

Everything about Jacques Leclerc is epic. Captured by the Germans as they advanced on Paris, he escaped, despite severe wounds, and heard the radio call of Charles de Gaulle as he lay in hiding. Making his way to London by slow, secret stages, there was that in the eyes of the young captain—the "look of eagles"—that marked him fit for dangerous and daring assignments. "Drive Vichy out of our African possessions," ordered General de Gaulle, "and chase the Italians out of Libya." Just that brief command.

Landing in Nigeria, Leclerc found scattered bands of French colonial soldiers who had fled to British territory rather than take the oath of allegiance to Pétain and Laval. Packing some twenty-odd into two small boats, he sailed under cover of darkness and captured the important port of Douala. Hurrying on to Yaoundé, capital of the Cameroons, he dared the commander to fire on the Cross of Lorraine. So it was in every place from the Congo to Lake Chad. Garrison after garrison yielded to his appeals, and by 1941 the flag of Free France waved over the whole of French Equatorial Africa.

Now began a series of spectacular raids into Italian Libya. With Leclerc's veteran Colonials reinforced by wild tribesmen, he rode them in battered trucks on thousand-mile drives, striking at widely separated points with a suddenness that kept the Fascists in panic. Kufra, an oasis fortified until it was regarded as impregnable, fell before one of his swoops, prisoners outnumbering victors by ten to one. All through 1941, there-

JACQUES LECLERC

fore, he continued his Libyan raids, racing back and forth over deserts as though they were tree-lined boulevards.

These raids were successful enough, but indecisive, and in the late spring months of 1942, Leclerc, now a general, decided upon a sustained march to the Mediterranean. A call to General de Gaulle started a stream of supplies and—even better than arms and ammunition—several hundred young Frenchmen, boys of eighteen and twenty, who had fled France to train in England.

Now followed months of heartbreaking drudgery. Guns, ammunition, gasoline, foodstuffs, when landed at Cameroon ports, had to be hauled up the Congo on flat-bottomed boats to Ubangi, one thousand miles away; after that, the 600-mile trek to Fort Lamy over an almost impassable terrain.

Not until December 22 was the gigantic task completed, and trumpets sounded for the advance. In the little army of 700 Frenchmen and 2,000 tribesmen, the whites were as black and gaunt as the natives. Machine guns and hand grenades were their weapons for the most part, but overhead flew three old-style American bombers; ancient trucks and lorries furnished transportation.

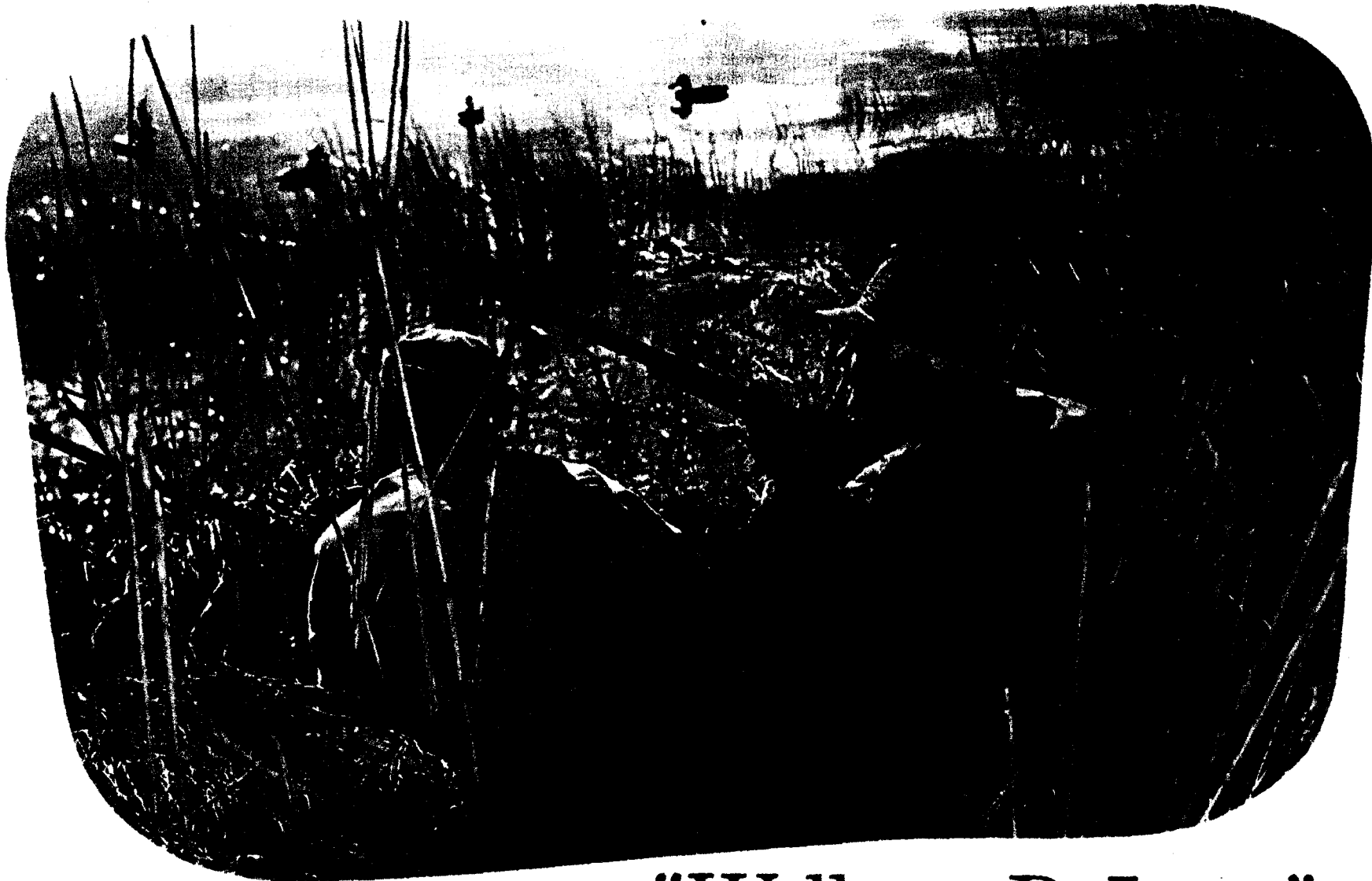
Mile after mile of desert, then the stony defiles of the Tibesti, and after that, more desert. Travel was entirely by compass, and sandstorms often compelled aimless wandering. But at last in the Fezzan, that vast, mysterious center of Libya that the Italians were never able to conquer fully, Leclerc's staggering army came to grips with the enemy. Spectral in their *djellabas*, the flowing white Arab dress, they fell on Umm El Ranab and El Gatrún, and then swept forward to capture high-walled Murzuq and the air base at Sebha—not sieges, but fierce assaults with hand grenades, knives and spears and machine guns. Far and wide, General Leclerc flung his little detachments, youngsters still in their teens often finding themselves in command of a convoy. Mizda, gateway to the Djeb Nefoussa area, capitulated after a fierce attack, yielding many prisoners and rich stores, and the Italians ran like sheep from historic Ghadames, the citadel of Islam.

On January 25, exactly 39 days after the start from Lake Chad, General Leclerc led his scarecrows into Tripoli, and as the wild tribesmen gasped at sight of the Mediterranean, the Frenchmen, cut off from the world for two years, embraced their countrymen in the Eighth Army, and consecrated themselves anew to the full deliverance of France. An epic with an epic end, for when the Free French entered Paris, gaunt, sun-blackened Jacques Leclerc walked at their head.

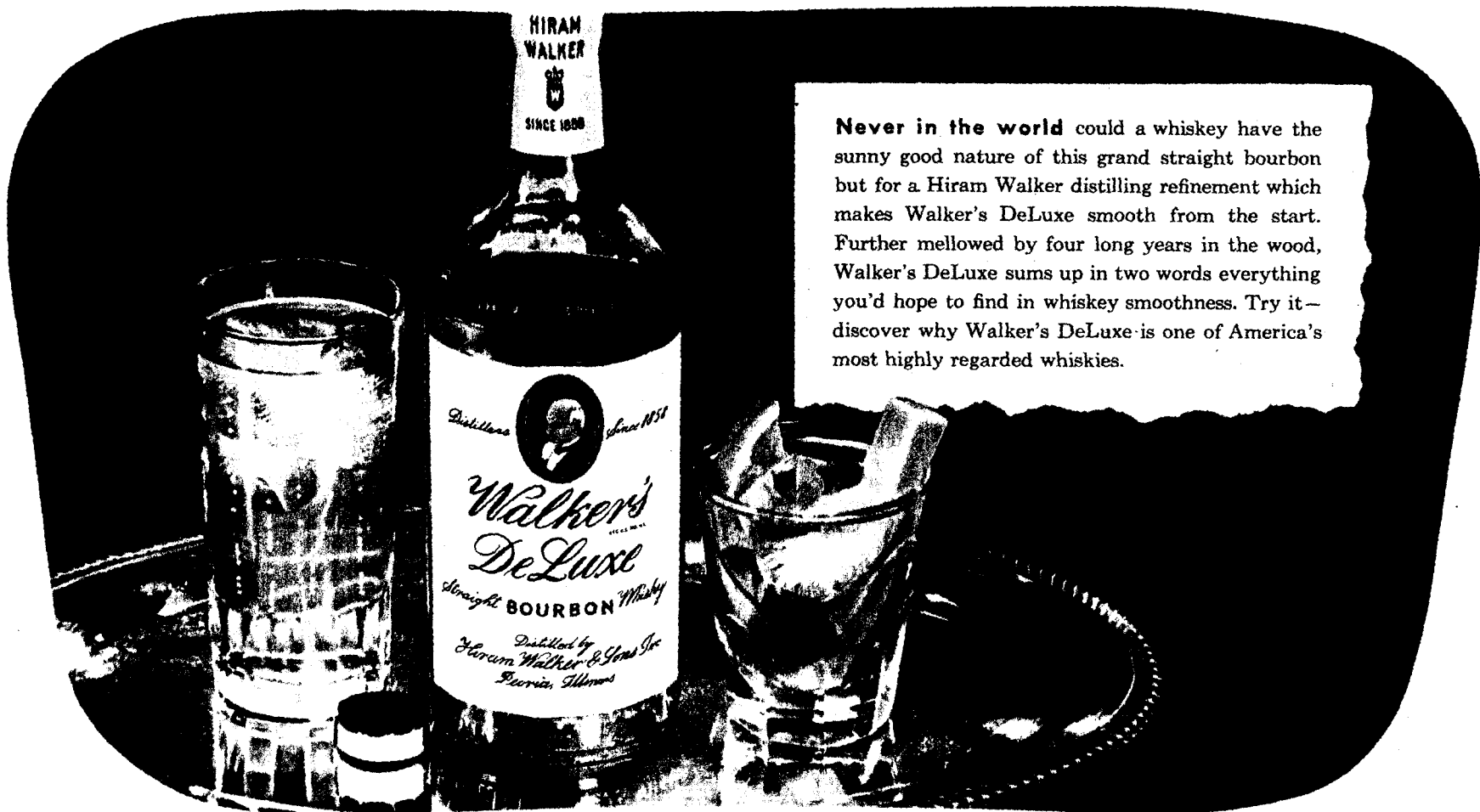
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A Case of Identity

Continued from page 12

encased in a solid, seamless plastic cover. In this process, the plastic melts and is bonded to the paper, so that card and cover are one piece. Thus it is impossible to pry the cover off without tearing the card. If acetone or some other chemical is used to dissolve the plastic, special inks on the card instantly change color.

To prevent possible substitution of photographs, Whitehead has patented a method of making a checkerboard perforation on the part of the card where the identification picture is mounted. Even if the plastic cover is cut away over the photograph, the latter cannot be removed without breaking the perforated backing and destroying the intricate hairline engraved pattern on the reverse side of the card.

Whitehead & Co., which today does a gross business of nearly \$500,000 annually, started less than three years ago on a household-furniture loan of \$150. Forty-two-year-old Ned Whitehead, a native of Cape Charles, Virginia, formerly worked for a Los Angeles banknote company. His particular job was to try to develop a foolproof system of identification for companies whose employees were paid by check. Such a system would have two purposes: First, to make check cashing easier for the employees, who often had to pay high fees to commercial agencies for the privilege of getting their money. Second, to protect storekeepers and others against check counterfeiters.

The counterfeiting of checks has long been a major racket. Organized gangs obtain sample pay checks issued by large companies and then make up thousands of bogus checks. On paydays, they descend on the cities where the checks ostensibly are drawn, and unload as many as possible.

In the course of working on an identification system to end this racket, Ned Whitehead became an expert on watermarked papers and special inks, and then studied existing methods of laminating paper and plastic. Machines to do this work were cumbersome, expensive, and difficult to operate. They used live steam to heat the plastic, and cold water to cool it in the press. The process was slow and results often unsatisfactory.

Having a mechanical bent, Whitehead rigged up a small machine shop in his garage, and built a laminating machine of entirely new design. Hydraulic power supplied the pressure, electricity the heat, and an air-cooling system was substituted for the cold water. The time required to laminate a card was cut from five minutes to less than a minute, and the cost of the machines was reduced from as much as \$20,000 to \$350.

Whitehead had a total capital of \$6.50 when he demonstrated his machine for the

first time at the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation in 1941. He immediately received an order for cards for all employees, and within a few months, most of the aircraft and ship-building companies on the West Coast also placed orders.

Since going into business for himself, Whitehead has sold well over a million dollars' worth of counterfeitproof identification cards, and has more than a thousand of his machines in operation from Australia to Douglas Aircraft's Middle East Depot.

Whitehead assembles the machines in his small Los Angeles plant and supplies them along with the blank cards and plastic covers. The work of filling in the cards and laminating them is done at the plants where the machines are installed. Whitehead's profits derive not from the machines, but from the sale of the counterfeitproof cards and cellulose acetate thermoplastic which are sold as sets.

Safeguards Against Espionage

Whitehead's company would make a juicy target for espionage agents. Probably the rarest of all cards which Whitehead makes are those for members of the Combined Chiefs of Staff of the United Nations. Only a few hundred of these cards are in existence, and all leftover blanks are destroyed.

Whitehead's plant is considered theftproof. Besides armed guards and elaborate burglar-alarm systems, it is protected by a series of electric eyes and other devices which react in spectacular fashion when disturbed. As for Ned Whitehead, he thinks he is one of the most thoroughly investigated individuals in the U.S.

Far from thinking that the end of the war will mean the end of his business, Whitehead believes that, in the future, licenses, registrations, and identification cards of all kinds will be issued by his process. Furthermore, having developed an identification system which actually is counterfeitproof, he looks forward to applying it to the field of credit.

"The check counterfeiters are still busy," he says; "and it's still nearly impossible for a stranger to cash a check at a bank—or even a money order in a post office—without a birth certificate, a passport, an insurance policy, and a letter from the mayor. But I believe that the record of almost ten million cards without one successful alteration or duplication ought to convince everyone that a simple, unarguable means of identification is here at last."

Anyone who has ever struggled to raise money on a check in a strange bank will hope that the bankers agree with Mr. Whitehead.

THE END

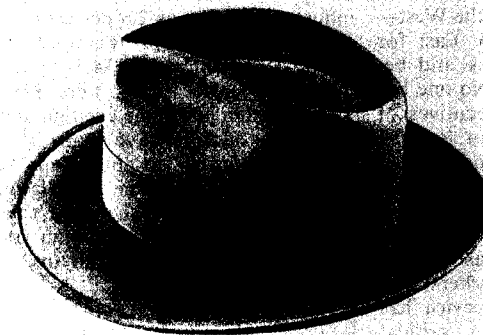


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One September day this year, American Airlines, United Air Lines and Pan American-Grace ordered 93 new commercial planes from Douglas, for about \$50,000,000. Four years ago, there would have been celebrations and dancing in the streets. Today, the industry on the Coast could produce all those planes in about a day and a half.

There are two schools of thought about industrializing the West Coast. Most of the old-timers regard the idea with horror and want nothing more than to go back to the old West of 1930, when tourists were the main industry. The other section of public opinion whoops up industrialization and talks about new Pittsburghs in orange groves, and airplane factories rolling out planes by the dozen every hour.

Polls among workers have shown that about half of them want to stay in the West—if they can get jobs. If not, back East for them. The others want to go back and become independent, on their own. No one has surveyed the stockholders and executives of the plane plants. What they want is some way to make a living without being pointed out as profiteering ogres who piled up billions out of the war and, once it was over, fired everyone out onto the street to starve.

While there has been much breast-beating on the Coast about lack of workers and the United States Employment Service has had the place designated as a critical manpower-shortage area for months, there has been no failure to meet production schedules, and some realists say that the workers might as well drain themselves away voluntarily, and that the more who do—as long as there are enough left to get out the needed ships—the fewer will have to be discharged suddenly when the Day comes.

The West Coast plants build the parts of the plane that last longest—the fuselage, wings and tail. Once a design has been set and 100 commercial planes have been produced, they probably will operate for years, with new motors from time to time. Few motors are made in the West, hardly any armament and only part of the instruments. As design settles down, there will be fewer changes, and there is no reason why a fuselage shouldn't last as long or longer than a Pullman car: It gets only a tenth of the rough treatment. Pullman cars last for a quarter of a century or more.

So Eastern engine and instrument makers are likely to have much more plane business after the war than the airframe builders. Once an air-transport concern is equipped with its necessary planes, its orders will dwindle rapidly. It will not be able financially, no matter how much it wishes, to order fleets of new ships every six months to take advantage of minor improvements. It is not likely that there will be any radical basic changes in design to force scrapping of present airline ships overnight.

Before the war, plane concerns were none too happy. One or two had commercial business that gave them work, in spurts. American design and engineering were concentrated on commercial types mainly, although there were a few Army and Navy trial orders. Nearly all the rest of the world was concentrating on military ships.

A Bonanza of Foreign Orders

Then orders began to trickle in from foreign nations—and this not only saved the industry, it may have saved us, and it certainly saved thousands of American lives.

First, it started our engineers thinking about military planes. Second, it produced designs. Third, it produced the know-how of building this type of ship. Fourth, it discovered a lot of "bugs" in production and performance. It was these four things we had, when our own war started, that we never would have had without orders from Britain, Holland, Norway, France, Siam, Iraq, Iran, Belgium and one or two other countries.

Without these orders we'd have had to waste a year or two—and the two vital years, at that—in getting started. As it was, when the emergency came, we were rolling—slowly, but rolling.

Before the war, the big Douglas plant at Santa Monica was employing about 3,000

Trouble in the Sky

Continued from page 11

workers. British orders shot this up to 7,600 in 1939, and from then on, the pay roll skyrocketed until, at the peak in August, 1943, there were 160,000 men and women at work. It was a similar story at North American, Northrop, Boeing, Consolidated Vultee, Lockheed, and Ryan. This didn't tell the entire story, either, because there were similar increases at the shops of the ten thousand sub and sub-sub and sub-sub-sub contractors all over the place. But profits failed to rise with expansion.

While the profits of general industry in 1942, for example, were 4.8 per cent, plane industry's profit was 2.6 per cent. (According to a SEC report for 1942, total sales for 34 aircraft companies were \$4,514,642,000; profits on this, after taxes, were \$115,403,000.) The spread in 1943 was even greater.

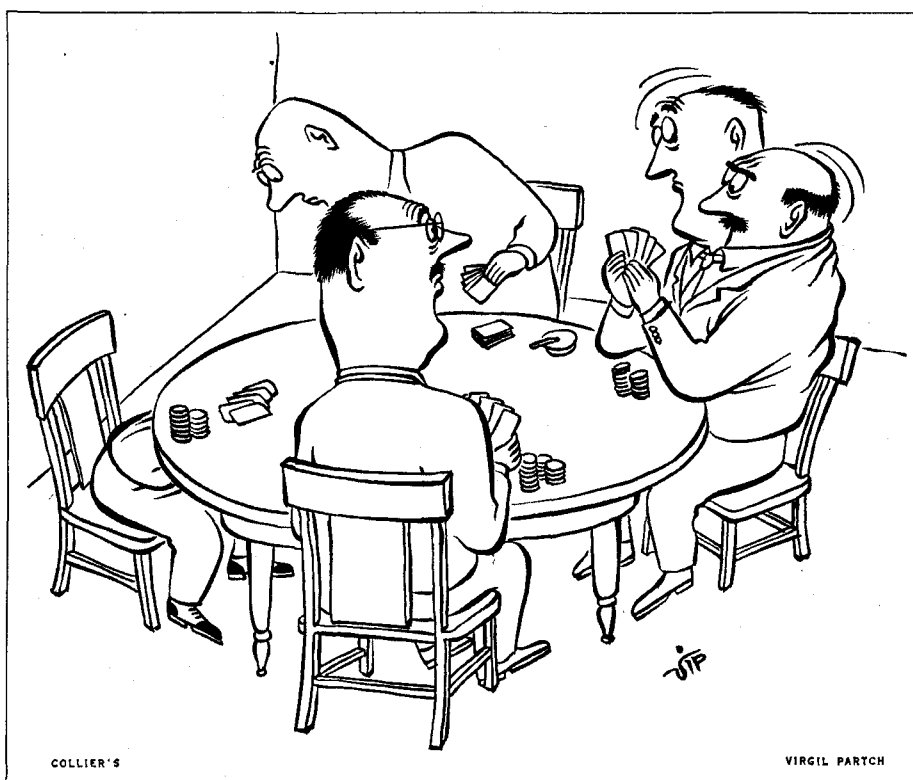
Various factors have made it impossible for plane builders to collect any reserves to tide them over between cancellation of government orders and the time they can get some more income from civilian sales. Stories of "huge profits" are just myths.

\$9,000,000. This represented the difference between the estimated cost of the planes and the actual cost when rolled off the line. This "renegotiation" prevented the company from building up any reasonable surplus, and from what surplus it managed to accumulate, the Treasury took so much in surplus-profits tax that the concern had little left.

This Boeing story is told in detail because it is more or less typical of all the companies.

There is another headache: What to do with returning veterans? The industry was hiring as many as it could, but the statistics were against it. Already it was employing 20,000 veterans, but more than 90,000 men and 600 women had quit the plants to go into the Army, Navy, and so forth, and the most optimistic estimate of the industry's employment figure after the war was 50,000.

The industry never had promised to re-employ veterans; such a promise would have been a fraud in face of the facts. But there was a certain amount of public criticism because the plane builders hadn't promised the impossible. Some agitators even went as far



Typical of the industry is Boeing, the great Seattle plant that builds Fortresses—and incidentally, paid out its own cash to design and build the first ones without any assurance that the Army would buy the ship.

Boeing's latest annual report shows that in 1943 their gross annual sales before renegotiation amounted to \$493,188,161. Their profit on this was \$4,482,870, or 91 one-hundredths of one per cent. This was a drop from 1.34 per cent in 1942, when gross sales before renegotiation were \$390,320,000, and profits came to \$5,238,000.

The companies have been victims of their own efficiency. Take the case, again, of Boeing. After developing the first Fortress at its own expense, it got an order for 39, which it delivered from July, 1939, to March, 1940. It got \$239,000 a plane—and lost a million dollars on the deal. It took 127,900 man-hours to build one ship, at a labor cost of 75 cents an hour.

A new edition of the Fortress came along in August, 1940. Boeing built 500; but now planning and engineering had reduced man-hours per plane to 34,300, while labor costs rose to 83 cents an hour. The plane now sold for \$189,361, although it was a better ship than the original.

Later, a still newer ship, still more complicated, was produced for \$115,560, although labor costs had gone to \$1.25 an hour. Man-hours were cut to 8,100 per ship.

One result of Boeing's efficiency was that, on its second contract, it had to give back to the government \$32,000,000; on the third,

as to assert that the plants should re-employ veterans, whether there was anything for them to do or not. Where the pay roll was coming from, these talkers didn't say. That was the companies' problem.

At the insistence of the Army, which wanted plants in "safe" locations, several big Coast concerns operated plants far inland built by the government: Boeing at Wichita; Consolidated Vultee at Fort Worth and Nashville; Douglas at Tulsa, Oklahoma City and Chicago; North American at Dallas and Kansas City, Kansas—as examples. To operate these plants, they had to steal technicians and experts and trained engineers from their home plants to get production going in the new ones. What will become of these plants, no one knows. Some may be sold to small manufacturers; some probably will be just abandoned. Coast plants, which now get thousands of items from subcontractors, probably will try to make most of these things themselves.

Plant ownership is in such a mess that it will take years to find out who owns what. Some plants are owned by the government; some were put up with federal money and are in process of purchase by the plane companies; others are owned by the companies. In some places, part of a plant is government owned, part privately owned. This drill press belongs to the taxpayers; this pipe-bending gadget over here belongs to the company. Even desks, chairs, filing cabinets and ink-wells have two ownerships.

Unscrambling the mess looks like a

lifetime job for an army of accountants.

There has been talk about converting some of the plants to make furniture, bathtubs, small cars, refrigerators and a score of other things. This plan has two strikes on it: It would require building up expensive new sales organizations and entering a highly competitive market in which no profit could be expected for some time; and most of the plane manufacturers would rather stick to what they know: building planes.

Another postwar problem is this: With desperate need for workers, all the plants started free services, ranging from complimentary weddings to fixing traffic tags and arranging for watch repairs, quick laundry service and minding the baby. These services ran into heavy money and they will have to be curtailed. But curtailing them may start labor trouble; but not until Japan quits.

The Future of Our Air Force

The industry, in recent huddles with General Arnold, has tried to lay out a postwar program that would call for a completely new Air Force every five years. That is, each year about one fifth of the Army's planes would be scrapped and replaced by the newest models, preventing the Air Force from becoming static, as France's did before the war. It would depend, of course, on what Congress—and public opinion—thought about it. After the last war, public opinion sank most of the American Navy's newest ships; after this one it may do the same thing with our air fleet.

There is tentative agreement among Army, Navy and some influential people in Congress that the industry ought to be kept going as far as possible on a schedule of continuous experimentation and a reasonable production of military models.

The industry, says Donald Douglas, isn't afraid of mistreatment by top Army, Navy and government officials who understand the reconversion problem.

"What we're afraid of," he said, "is the red tape and insistence on forms and long, slow procedures by small bureaucrats. When we were called on to convert our plants from peace to war, the government acted speedily and generously, and red tape was cut. We did the job—and more. Now it is only fair to ask that the government will help us convert from war to peace with equal speed and understanding of the problem. If the government doesn't do this, such small reconversion plans as we can put into effect will be hindered and delayed, resulting in a lot of unemployment and distress."

LaMotte T. Cohu, head of Northrop, thinks present concerns should concentrate on their specialties.

"We all know," he said, "that the future strength of aviation is vital to the safety and development of the country. When this war is over, the manufacturers who have been concentrating on top-flight military planes ought to go on concentrating on them. Northrop certainly intends to continue development and building of the Flying Wing, jet-propelled craft and other new types."

While most manufacturers seem to lean heavily on government orders—which may or may not appear—there still is the civilian market. Hall L. Hibbard, chief engineer for Lockheed, thinks there will be a market for 10,000 small, safe helicopter-type aircraft a month, selling for around \$1,500. Other concerns have plans for family planes.

But this market at present is something to dream about, and the realists of the business are not overoptimistic about its development for some years. And if it is developed, the auto manufacturers, with their sales forces all ready to go, might prove stern competitors.

The problem doesn't concern merely half a dozen companies. It concerns a quarter of a million workers, many of them with families, plus the thousands of small merchants whose income depends on the workers.

What they're all afraid of is that the wonder child of American production, who saved rich old Uncle Sam when the wolves were after him, may be left on the cold doorstep of the future, while the grizzled old industries go romping happily into the bright new world.

THE END

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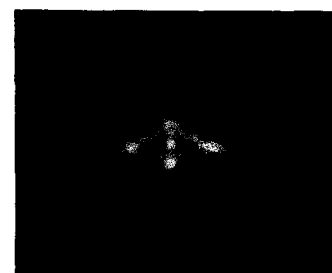
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REMEMBER THE MARINE CAPTAIN who led his platoon of amphibious tractors onto the beach in the first assault wave on Tarawa? . . . how, after all his men were killed, he pushed on and single-handedly wiped out a Jap machine-gun position before he was fatally wounded? . . . how, in his last letter home, he had written "The marines have a way of making you afraid—not of dying, but of not doing your job"? A stern example to us at home. BUY MORE WAR BONDS.

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1/2 "LIGHT WAVE"—after all surfaces of the several elements in a lens have been ground and polished to an accuracy of 1/2 "light wave"—1/100,000 of an inch—the assembled lens is brought to a lens bench for study and adjustments. The microscope shows the image of a pinpoint of light about 200 feet away—it appears as a tiny star. The size, shape, and color of the star image are determining factors in judging the optical quality of the lens.

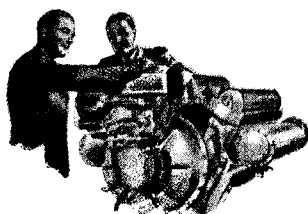


STARS BAD AND GOOD—On the left is a "bad" star, on the right a "good" star, as they appear in the microscope on the lens bench. At every point throughout its area—in a lens which passes muster—the star must be symmetrical as to shape and color, and not exceed a maximum size. Weird shapes and bright colors, such as seen at the left, mean rejection. Star images were photographed at 11° off axis.

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GASOLINE POWERS THE ATTACK — DON'T WASTE A DROP



BUY WAR BONDS AND STAMPS!

Cracking the Gothic Line

Continued from page 24

And it is awful to die when you know that the war is won anyhow. It is awful, and one would have to be a liar or a fool not to see this and not to feel it like a mystery, so that these days every man dead is a greater sorrow because the end of all this tragic dying is so near. There it was: the Gothic Line carefully planned so that every fold of the earth was used to conceal death, and the young men were walking into it, and because they have seen so much and done so much, they walked into it as if it were part of the day's work. A hellish day but still just part of the work.

It was the Canadians who broke into this line on the Adriatic side by finding a soft place and going through. It makes me ashamed to write that sentence because there is no soft place where there are mines and no soft place where there are Spandaus and no soft place where there are 88-mm. guns, and if you have seen one tank burn on a hillside you will never believe that anything is soft again. But, relatively speaking, this spot was soft, or at any rate the Canadians made it soft and they got across the mined river and past the dynamited villages and over the asphalt road and up into the hills and from then on they poured men and tanks into the gap and they gouged the German positions with artillery fire and they called in the Desert Air Force to bomb it and in two days they had come out on the other side of the Gothic Line at the coast of the Adriatic. But before that, many things had happened.

First of all, the main body of the Eighth Army moved from the center of Italy to the Adriatic coast in three days' time, and the Germans did not know it. That sounds very easy, too, written like that. What it meant was that for three days and three nights the weaving lateral roads across the Apennines and the great highways that make a deep V south from Florence and back up to Ancona were crowded with such traffic as most of us have never seen before.

Trucks and armored cars and tanks and weapon carriers and guns and jeeps and motorcycles and ambulances packed the roads, and it was not at all unusual to spend four hours going twenty miles. The roads were ground to powder by this traffic, and the dust lay in drifts a foot thick and whenever you could get up a little speed the dust boiled

like water under the wheels. Everyone's face was greenish-white with dust and it rose in a blinding fog around the moving army and lay high over the land in a brown solid haze.

The road signs were fantastic, too, because more than one hundred thousand men who could not speak Italian were moving through complicated unknown country trying to find places which would never have been too easy to find even with empty roads and complete control of the language. The routes themselves, renamed for this operation, were marked with the symbols of their names, a painted animal or a painted object. There were the code numbers of every outfit, road warnings—bridge blown, crater mines, bad bends—indications of first-aid posts, gasoline dumps, repair stations, prisoner-of-war cages and finally a marvelous Polish sign urging the troops to notice that this was a malarial area: this sign was a large green death's-head with a mosquito sitting on it.

Posting a Polyglot Army

Along the coast the road signs were in Polish and in English, and at one crossroads a mine warning was printed in Polish, English and Hindu. And everywhere you saw the dirty white tapes that limit the safe ground from the treacherous ground, where mines are still buried. On the main highways there were signs saying "Verges Cleared," which means the sides of this road have been demined, or "Verges Checked," which means the sides of this road have been rapidly swept and you can suit yourself, if you want to take a chance.

So this enormous army ground its way across Italy and took up positions on a front thirteen miles long. The Eighth Army, which was now ready to attack the last German fortified line outside the Siegfried Line, had fought its way to these mountains from the Egyptian border. In two years since El Alamein, the Eighth Army had advanced across Africa through Sicily and up the peninsula of Italy. And all these men of how many races and nationalities felt that this was the last push and after this they would go home.

We watched the battle for the Gothic Line from a hill opposite, sitting in a batch of thistles and staring through binoculars. Our tanks looked like brown beetles; they scurried up a hill, streamed across the horizon

and dipped out of sight. Suddenly a tank flamed four times in great flames, and other tanks rolled down from the sky line seeking cover in the folds of the hill. The Desert Air Force planes, which cavort around the sky like a school of minnows, were signaled to bomb a loaf-shaped hill called Monte Lura. Monte Lura went up in towering waves of brownish smoke and dirt. Our artillery dug into the Gothic Line so that everywhere cotton bolls of smoke flowered on the slopes. Our own air bursts now rained steel fragments over the German positions on Monte Lura.

The young British major who was directing this artillery through a radiophone said happily, "I must say! I do think our air bursts are doing very nicely!" The battle, looking absolutely unreal, tiny, crystal-clear, spread out before us. But there were men in the tanks and men in those trees where the shells landed and men under those bombs.

We had all been awake and roaming the countryside since five o'clock, when our first giant artillery barrage started. We were hot and hungry by now and we went to eat lunch in a tent about fifty yards from our own gun positions. The blast of the guns shook the tent and we could only talk between salvos. All that day and the next the noise of our own guns was physically painful. The Canadian brigadier commanding the brigade which was attacking this sector of the line amused us by outlining a postwar garden party he hoped to give.

Dinner would be served on a long wooden table covered with a rather soiled white cloth; the guests would sit on benches which had a tendency to tip over backward. In one corner of the garden a flat voice would start saying: "I am now giving you a short tuning call: Roger over Victory, Victory, Victory," and would go on saying this uninterruptedly for the rest of the evening.

Postwar Party with Sound Effects

In another corner of the garden some tractors would be organized to act like tanks and they would first race their motors, which is a sound like the end of the world, and then they would roll back and forth on screaming treads. In another corner of the garden some sort of radio apparatus would imitate the sound effect of six-inch guns firing, and it is almost impossible to believe how appalling the sound is. In another corner of the garden a dust machine imported from Hollywood would spray dust imported from the roads of Italy onto the guests. A waiter would then walk in and release one thousand flies at a time.

The dinner would consist of a slab of cold bully beef as appetizer, followed by not very heated-up meat, and beans and hardtack. For dessert there would be hardtack with jam. The tea would have been brewed that morning and would be coal-black and lukewarm. If the guests behaved nicely and did not complain too much, they would be given as a prize a finger of issue rum, a drink guaranteed to burn out anyone's palate. This being a perfect picture of our own meal except that issue rum was lacking, we had a hearty laugh at the expense of the brigadier's mythical guests.

Later—but I don't remember when, because time got very confused—we crossed the Foglia River and drove up the road our tanks had taken and there we saw the remnants of a tank battle. An American Sherman, once manned by an English crew, lay near a farmhouse: across the road a German Tiger tank was burned and its entire rear end had been blown off. The Sherman had received an 88 shell through its turret. Inside the turret were plastered pieces of flesh and much blood. Outside the Tiger, the body of a German lay with straw covering everything except the two black clawlike hands, the swollen blood-caked head and the twisted feet.

Some Canadian soldiers, who were sight-seeing, stood around the dead German. It is remarkable how quickly soldiers start sight-seeing where they have fought, perhaps trying now to discover what really happened. "Not much fresh meat on that guy," one of them said.

You cannot note everything that happens

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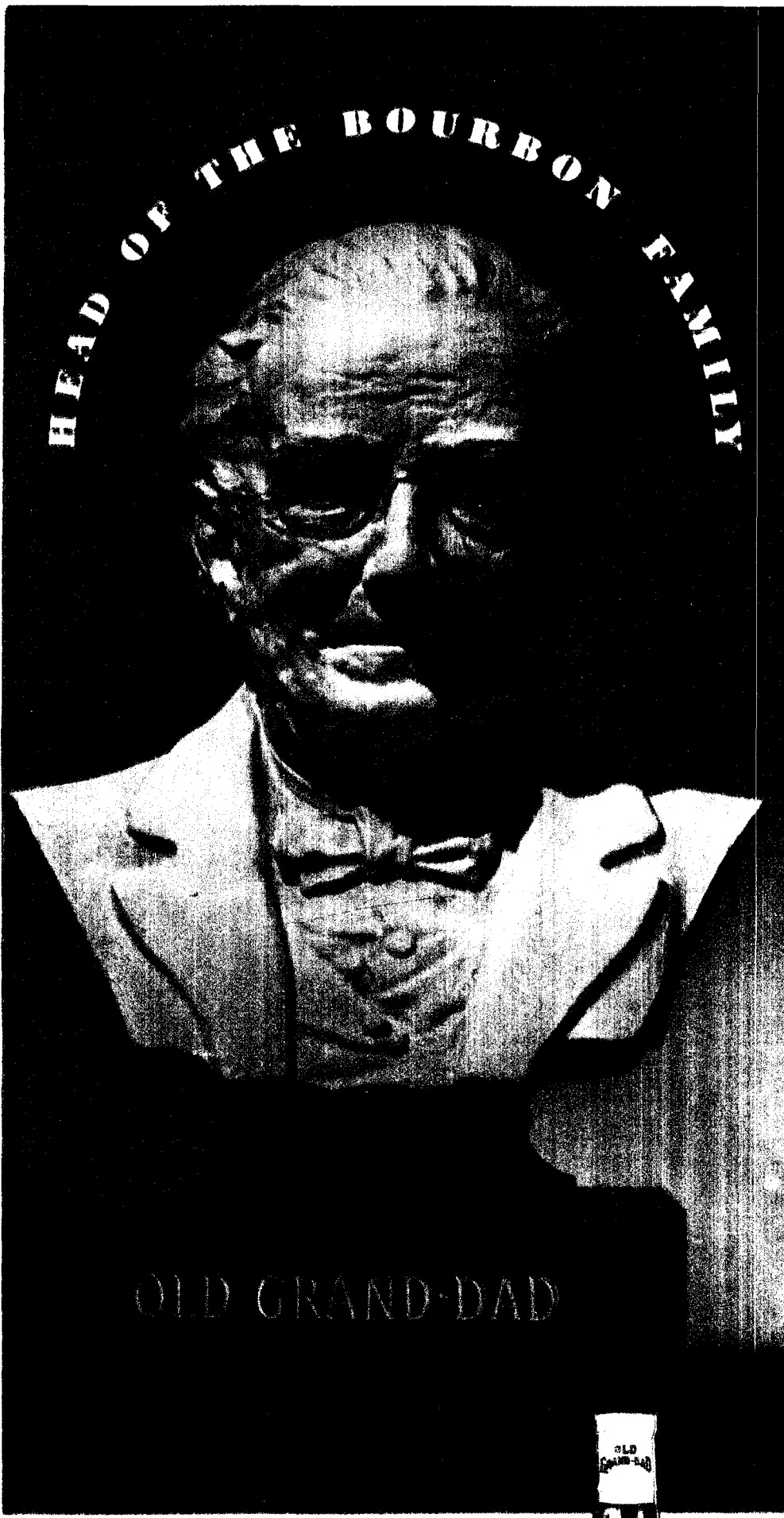
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during a battle; you cannot even see what happens and often you cannot understand it. Suddenly you will see antlike figures of infantry outlined against the sky; probably they are going in to attack that cluster of farmhouses. Then they disappear and you do not know what became of them. Tanks roll serenely across the crest of a hill, then the formation breaks, you lose most of them from sight, and then in what was a quiet valley you unexpectedly see other tanks firing from behind trees. On a road that is quite empty and therefore dangerous, because nothing is more suspect at the front than the silent places, you see a jeep racing in the direction of a town which may or may not be in our hands. And when you imagine you have found a nice restful place to camp in for a few minutes, German mortar shells start landing.

A battle is a jigsaw puzzle of fighting men, bewildered, terrified civilians, noise, smells, jokes, pain, fear, unfinished conversations and high explosive. A medical captain in a ruined first-aid farmhouse speaks with regret of a Canadian padre who volunteered as a stretcher-bearer to carry wounded men out of the mine fields in the river bed. The padre lost both his legs, and though they rushed him out, he died at the first hospital. Bloody stretchers are stacked all around and now a jeep arrives with fresh wounded. "Come back and see us any time," the medical captain says. "Get some more wire splints, Joe."

A group of English tankists drinking tea outside a smashed house on Monte Lura invites you into their mansion, which is mainly fallen beams and the rubble of masonry. The place smells unbearably, because of two dead oxen at the side of the road. One of the soldiers who had his tank shot from under him that morning is waiting for another job. He hopes the war will be over in time for him to celebrate his twenty-first birthday in England.

There is a Canadian soldier dead on another roadside with a coat laid most lovingly over him. If you lie to yourself you can almost imagine he is asleep. There are two captured 88-mm. guns with a welter of German paper spread around them, for apparently the Germans also are slaves of paper work. Among this paper is a post card with a baby's picture on it addressed presumably to one of the gunners from his wife. And no one feels the slightest pity.

There is a young Italian woman wrapped in a blanket on the doorstep of a poor little hovel that one of our shells had hit during the night; this was in a town the Germans held until a few hours ago. She wakes up and starts to laugh, charming, gay and absolutely mad.

There are twelve parachutist prisoners, the crack troops of the Germans, standing in a courtyard guarded by the Canadian who captured them. They are all young and they wear the campaign medals of the Crimea as well as the medal of Italy. These were the men who held Cassino all winter. You start talking to them without any special feeling and suddenly like a shock, it occurs to you that they really look evil: the sadism which their General Kesselring ordered them to practice in Italy as they retreat shows now in their mouths and their eyes. They are simply a different race of men, and one turns

away from them sickened and cold and hoping that such as these will truly perish from the earth.

There was the fat old Italian in Cattolica who had worked for twelve years on the Pennsylvania Railroad and who was now trundling his pitiful possessions home in a handcart. The Germans had occupied Cattolica for three months and had evacuated the citizens one month ago, and during this month they looted with horrid thoroughness like woodworms eating down a house. What they did not wish to steal they destroyed: the pathetic homes of the poor with smashed sewing machines and broken crockery and the coarse linen torn to shreds bear witness to their pointless cruelty. This old man was going home to a gutted house but he was a healthy, happy old man and he was overjoyed to see us and he invited me to visit him and his wife the next day. The next day his wife was dead, as the Germans came over that night and plastered the little town with antipersonnel bombs.

The Canadian troops I had seen two days ago going in to attack the Gothic Line were now swimming in the Adriatic. The beaches were laced with barbed wire, but holes had been cut through it, and engineers appeared with the curious vacuum-cleanerlike mine detectors to sweep the beach, and the infantrymen, sunburned the color of expensive leather, beautifully strong, beautifully alive, were bouncing around in the flat warm sea and racing over the sand as if there was nothing terrible behind them and nothing terrible to come.

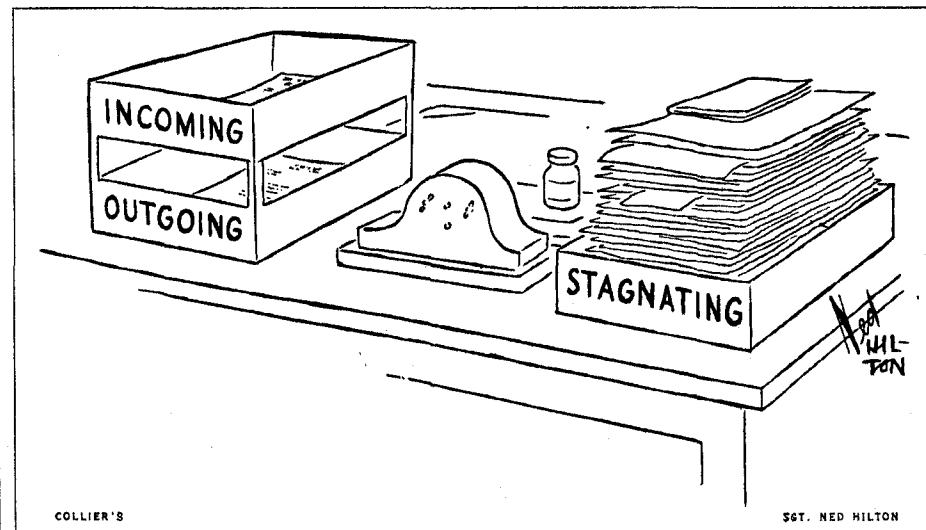
"In the Midst of Life is Death"

Meantime you could sit on the sand with a book and a drink of sweet Italian rum and watch two British destroyers shelling Rimini just up the coast, see German shells landing on the front three kilometers away, follow a pilot in a parachute slowly sinking toward the ground after his plane had been shot down, hear a few German shells whistle overhead to land two hundred yards farther down, and you were getting a fine sunburn, and life seemed an excellent invention.

Historians will think about this campaign far better than we can who have seen it. The historians will note that in the first year of the Italian campaign, in 365 days of steady fighting, the Allied armies advanced 315 miles. They will note this with admiration because it is the first time in history that any armies have invaded Italy from the south and fought up the endless mountain ranges toward the Alps. Historians will be able to explain with authority what it meant to break three fortified lines attacking up mountains, and the historians will also describe how Italy became a giant mine field and that no weapon is uglier, for it waits in silence, and it can kill any day, not only on the day of battle.

But all we know who are here is that the Gothic Line is cracked and that it is the last line. Soon our armored divisions will break into the Lombardy plain and then at last the end of this long Italian campaign will become a fact, not a dream. The weather is lovely and no one wants to think of what men must still die and what men must still be wounded in the fighting before peace comes.

THE END



Japan's Neck is Out!

Continued from page 18

Plan 3: A direct invasion of Luzon from Saipan.

Plan 4: Invasion of Luzon by way of Mindanao and other southern Philippine islands with possible further support from Saipan.

On paper, the first two plans seem the most popular. Smashing straight from Saipan to Formosa or the China coast would be daring, and save time.

I don't pretend to know whether our High Command expects to follow this bold route or not. But I do know that many of our admirals consider it a very hazardous operation, and not necessarily the quickest way of achieving our objective.

Examining Plans 1 and 2:

The combined Japanese fleet almost certainly would enter the battle. We are anxious enough to get at that fleet—but under certain conditions. In either of these campaigns, the conditions of battle might be about the worst imaginable for us.

The Japanese naturally would make us come to them. They would fight as near their own supply and repair bases as possible, and within easy range of their land-based



"Get Out and Vote!"

aircraft. And for us, that would mean fighting 1,500 miles from our nearest base, depending almost entirely upon carrier-borne planes for air cover.

Even to come within range of the Japanese fleet, or our invasion objectives, our armada would be forced to run the gantlet of continuous enemy submarine and land-based air attacks for several days and nights.

No matter how good we might be, we would take a heavy battering in these circumstances. If the Japanese succeeded in knocking out enough of our larger carriers early in the action (which they certainly would try to do), we might well face the prospect of costly defeat.

Some military observers believe this is exactly the type of battle for which the Japanese have saved their fleet. It is the one way they might still hope to win, because their natural advantages would go far toward offsetting our material superiority.

Consider also the invasion objectives themselves: Formosa, the target under Plan 1, is the most heavily defended of all Japan's island possessions. It is almost twice the size of New Jersey, and could very easily be reinforced from China.

Invading Formosa would have little in common with our earlier task-force operations against the tiny islands of the central and south Pacific. It would be much more like invading a continent.

The objective of Plan 2, a port on the coast of south China, undoubtedly would be much easier than Formosa to take, but not to hold. Our 2,000-mile supply line, flanked by by-passed Luzon and Formosa, would soon be known among us by some such name as the Corridor of Death.

Of course, our military leaders are not easily discouraged by risks or difficulties. The military experts who cite the dangers in Plans 1 and 2 do not do so in the spirit of defeatism. They have no doubt that America could manage either of these campaigns, if necessary. But they regard this direct route to Japan's life line as the slowest route.

We can understand this if we imagine the extensive preparations which would have to precede such an offensive. The difficulty is not so much one of ships and planes and men as it is of establishing a base with adequate facilities to accommodate them.

Potentially, Saipan is such a base, but not today. Saipan's facilities are being expanded rapidly, and powerful task forces operating from there soon will be inflicting slashing wounds on Japan's neck and face. But Saipan itself is almost 6,500 miles from its own main source of supplies and materials in the United States. At least a year or more may be required to fit it out for the enormous invasion force we would need for a direct thrust at Formosa or China. Frankly, our Army and Navy would like to behead Japan much sooner than that.

Plan 3 is a Saipan-based invasion of Luzon, which would carry the Stars and Stripes back to Manila, Bataan and Corregidor.

This obviously would be a much simpler operation than Plans 1 or 2. We would not have strong enemy air and submarine bases on our flanks as we approached our objective. Luzon is not as heavily fortified, or as easily reinforced, as Formosa, and we could expect important assistance from a friendly native population in the Philippines, at least after we had landed.

But we would still have to plan on a full-dress battle with the Jap fleet, again under conditions more favorable to them than to us.

Minimum Risk with Plan 4

Plan 4 calls for the invasion of the southern Philippines from New Guinea, and a gradual march northward to Luzon. This is the much-advertised MacArthur plan, beginning with the invasion of Mindanao. In its earliest stages, at least, this is the easiest of the plans thus far considered.

Plan 4 consequently calls for a much smaller invasion force than the earlier plans, and provides near-by bases capable of supplying and protecting these forces. Under these circumstances, we should be able to overrun all of Mindanao—and quickly.

With Mindanao in our possession, Luzon loses much of its value to the Japanese as a major fortress. Their air and naval bases are brought within range of our heavy land-based bombers, and our invasion forces can approach Luzon through the central Philippines with adequate air cover.

This plan seems like the easiest and quickest approach to Japan's throat, mainly because we hold Saipan. Saipan may not yet be ready to base our entire fleet, but it is a powerful enough threat to keep Japan's navy and air force in the north, while we secure our new foothold in Mindanao.

We assume that American air bases in Mindanao and the central Philippines could neutralize Japanese air bases in Luzon and force the Japanese fleet to retire to home waters.

Once that is achieved, an invasion of Luzon from Saipan and the southern Philippines would be co-ordinated with the attack from the south, simply to speed the descent of the ax on Japan's neck.

From whatever direction that blow may fall, Japan already is preparing for the inevitable, and for what she knows will follow. Her leaders already have virtually written off the body of their empire as lost. Not since our landing on Saipan has any Japanese war lord dared to suggest that Japan can successfully defend Singapore, the Netherlands Indies, or even the Philippines.

The extent of Japan's despair was evident at Saipan, and it is equally evident in every recent official statement from her war lords. They know that Japan must prepare for an American invasion of her home islands.

The Japanese know their empire is about to be beheaded. Their last hope is that they can somehow prevent us from picking that bloodied and battered head out of the dust and holding it aloft as a warning to future aggressors.

THE END



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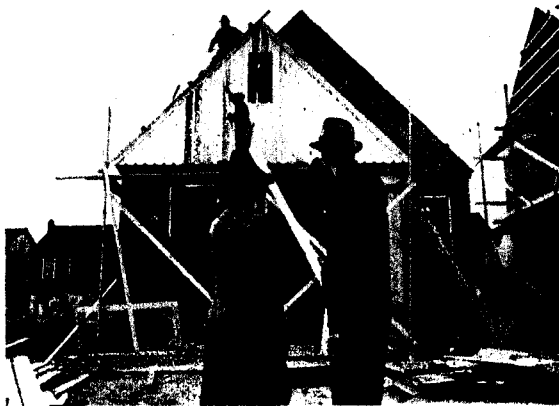
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are things
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SAVE FOR CHILDREN! It costs money to have a child, to raise a child. But where's the father or mother who would tell you it isn't worth every penny it costs and more? Save now . . . while the money's coming in . . . save to have and enjoy your children while you're young!



SAVE FOR COLLEGE! If you went to college yourself, you want your children to go, too. If you didn't—that's a double reason you want them to have the good life you missed. Start your college fund now—while you're earning good money. It will come in mighty handy.



SAVE FOR A HOME! A house of your own, a garden to dig in, room-to-grow for the children—every man and his wife want that. Houses are high-priced, hard to get, now. But there'll be a lot of home building after the war. Why not save for *your* house now—while the saving's good?



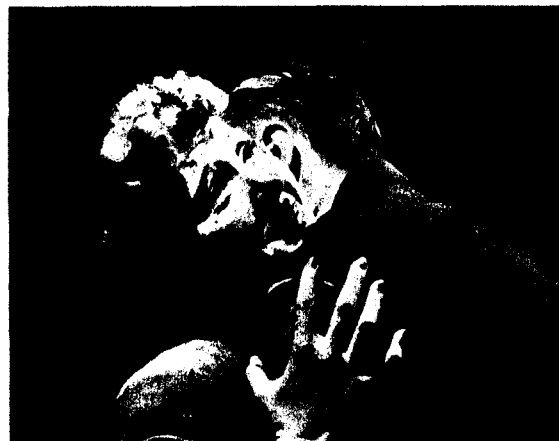
SAVE FOR A TRIP! Today's no time to travel. But after the war—aren't you rarin' to go? To the ocean or the mountains, to Yellowstone or the Smokies, to Mexico or the new Alaska highway. Sensible saving today can finance glorious spending for you and the whole family then.



SAVE TO RETIRE! Sooner than you think, the day will come when a little shack in Florida or a place in the country looks better to you than an active life in town. Social security is good—but it won't pay for all you want unless you supplement it by planned saving.



SAVE FOR SAFETY! Money's easy today! But everybody can remember that it wasn't always that way—and it may not be again. The man who has a little money laid by, helps prevent depression—and is in a lot better shape to ride out hard times if they come.



SAVE TO SAVE AMERICA! It's the money you *don't* spend that helps keep prices down. And only by keeping prices down—saving, not spending—can we head off inflation, keep America a stable, happy place for our boys to come home to. For *your* sake, for *theirs*—SAVE!

**4 THINGS TO DO to keep
prices down and
help avoid another depression**

1. Buy only what you really need.
2. When you buy, pay no more than ceiling prices. Pay your ration points in full.
3. Keep your *own* prices down. Don't take advantage of war conditions to ask for more—for your labor, your services, or the goods you sell.
4. *Save.* Buy and hold all the War Bonds you can afford—to help pay for the war and insure your future. Keep up your insurance.

**HELP
US
KEEP**

PRICES DOWN



"A bluestone diamond," the old man said, stretching his hand out. A smile went over the boy's face. "For how much 'd you sell it?" he asked

DIAMONDS COME FROM

Africa

BY MARIANNE ROANE

ILLUSTRATED BY WALTER KLETT

THE hamburger stand was very small, with only ten stools, but everything in it was neat and white, and the counter-
man stood happily polishing white mugs. He was alone with one customer when the door opened and the boy and girl came in arm in arm, their shoulders touching lightly.

The customer, an old man in a brown coat, who sat hunched over the counter, shot a keen glance at them as they took the two seats nearest the wall and began talking to each other in low tones. The boy had carried books and notebooks for both of them and now he put them on the counter in two piles. When the counterman had taken their order the girl immediately flipped open her notebook and began to show the boy something in it with the point of her pencil.

While the counterman threw flaps of hamburger on the hot plate, the old man sat fiddling with a bun in front of him, turning and turning it, now and then looking at his right hand that did the turning. Then suddenly he put the bun down and held out his hand.

"A bluestone diamond," he said. "Yes, sir, a bluestone diamond!"

Nobody spoke. The counterman came up with a mug of coffee in each hand, and the boy handed the girl sugar.

"A bluestone diamond," the old man said again, stretching his hand out toward the boy who sat three seats away from him. "The rarest in the world."

The boy looked up, but he did not glance at the tiny blue flash on the man's hand. "Is that so?" he said.

The old man snarled and his voice broke frighteningly. "What you mean—is that so? You call me a liar?"

For a moment the other three in the little place all turned to look at him. He had the flaring nostrils and mobile mouth of an actor, and in the bright light his face twitched dramatically.

The boy was embarrassed. "No, sir," he said. "I don't know anything about diamonds, that's all."

"A bluestone diamond worth thirteen thousand if she's a penny," the old man said, his mouth working over the cud of some secret joke. "You wouldn't believe that, not knowing diamonds."

A smile went over the boy's open face.

"For how much 'd you sell it?" he asked, smiling while he chewed.

The old man shook his head. "Not for sale," he said. "Not this one. This one is lucky. I'm sixty-two and I can pay thirteen thousand for luck." His voice changed. It was no longer hard, matter of fact, but soft and full of promise. "From the mountains of the Corolados," he said, as one recites a poem. "From the mountains of the Corolados." He nodded his head and sighed.

The girl looked at him sharply now that his head was turned away. "Carolina," she said softly, under her breath. "Do you mean Carolina or Colorado? Where in Colorado would you find diamonds?"

But he had heard and leaned forward to look at her, so that she lowered her eyes to the coffee spoon in her hand.

"Corolado," he said. "From the mountains of the Corolados." His voice fell into a compelling singsong when it touched the word. He stared down at the ring on his finger. The boy and the girl looked, too. The stone was not large, but in the diffuse light it burned blueness. The white glow from the tubes on the ceiling was like stage light on the man's white hair.

HE EMPTIED his mug and then, putting on his faded hat, he said good night to no one of them in particular and walked to the door. At the door he suddenly turned around, holding it open as if he had forgotten something or was waiting for someone. His eyes went over the room looking, but only the boy had turned to watch him leave. For an instant both were quite still, and then the old man nodded and said good night again, this time to the boy alone.

As soon as the door closed behind him, the girl swiveled around on her stool to watch him go down the street. His shoulders were bowed but he walked neither heavily nor unsteadily.

When the girl swung back, the counterman looked at her, and she said, "Maybe he was drunk."

The counterman rocked his head back and forth. It might have been polite agreement or polite disagreement.

"Don't you think he was drunk?" she said to the boy. "I mean, it isn't possible that that's true. Where would he get a diamond?"

"He might have found it," the boy said smiling. "I think he looked like a miner. He kind of walked like a miner." He smiled at something that was not in the room.

The girl put down her pencil. "Would a miner very likely own a diamond and dress like that?"

"It's a lucky diamond," the boy said. Something pleased him. "If you have blue luck on your hand, what else do you need?"

"Crazy!" the girl cried. "He must have been crazy, or else he was playing a practical joke on us." Somehow her voice lost a little of its assurance. "Corolado," she said. "Who ever heard of Corolado?"

"That," said the boy, "is the likeliest thing—that he was playing a joke on us. You know all the time he talked I thought of Paul Bunyan and Huck Finn and all those. And yet, of course, the unbelievable part is the one thing that's absolutely true about Paul Bunyan."

The counterman put down his towel and said surprisingly, "When I was in the Navy, there was a man on the U.S.S. Greer come from Corolado. He lived on the Corolado River, west coast of Africa."

"A river isn't a mountain," the girl said quickly.

The boy's face lighted up. "Diamonds come from Africa," he said. "And sometimes a river is a mountain. Sometimes a river and a mountain and a god are the same thing and have the same name." His face was hopeful and happy as he spoke.

The girl snapped her notebook shut. "That doesn't have a thing to do with it," she said. "I don't see how you can get it so mixed up. All you need to do to find out if that's a real diamond is take it to a jeweler. You've got to be scientific."

The boy did not answer.

"Thirteen thousand!" she said. "Where would he get a diamond worth thirteen thousand?" She looked into her coffee cup and emptied it with a decided gesture. "You talk about rivers and mountains, and what he looked like. But that isn't evidence. You haven't any real evidence." She had slid off her stool when she found the new word, but now she got up on the perch again with her back to the counter, sharply searching the boy's face.

He sat with his eyes downcast, his teeth

working in silent protest on his upper lip.

There was a certain confusion in her eyes. "I mean," she said more carefully, "you're going on conjecture . . . you believe something that can't be proved definitely." She began pulling her books toward her, patting their edges until they formed a smooth, solid rectangle.

"That's the trouble with you—with us," she went on, and a light flush splotted her cheeks. "You're a romantic, you don't care about proof, you've always ignored facts. That's the reason I've never—I mean I'd like us to be able to work things out, but people have to have something in common, don't they?"

The boy watched her hands caressing the books quickly and precisely, but he said nothing.

"I've never heard of a bluestone diamond," she said. "Have you ever heard of such a thing?" her voice was almost pleading with him.

THE fan on the wall wailed softly, and the counterman stood mournfully wiping dishes. The boy turned and turned the plate on which his hamburger had been.

"I mean," the girl said weakly, "the only real evidence would be if you took it to a jeweler. But you'll never be able to do that—" She put no period to the sentence, staring at something that was hidden in it.

The boy sighed and began putting nickels and dimes on the counter, his eyes blankly shuttered. The girl's face was worried and confused. When the boy got up slowly to open the door for her she came toward him, clutching her pocketbook, walking so slowly that he was finally forced to look at her.

Her face must have held a question to which he had the answer, for he began to smile. The smile pulled up his eyebrows and looped his mouth into the comically deprecatory mask of the good winner who wants to minimize his victory. As she walked under his arm that was holding the door open for her, she lifted her face up to him.

"All right—the Corolados," she said haltingly and a little embarrassed, like someone trying a new language. Her face still mocked the words, but her voice already trembled at the edge of promise. "From the mountains of the Corolados."