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The Broadway of It

BY ACHMED ABDULLAH

Illustrated by Dudley Gloyne Summers

THERE was a momentary break in his consciousness, a sense of vague yet abrupt dislocation. He felt it the second he pulled the trigger and sent the bullet crashing through his heart. His fluttering soul, winging away from the clay of his body, realized, with infinite, rather helpless regret, that Broadway had won and that he had lost. Immediately after his death he could still feel Broadway creeping in from the corner like a stony jungle, overwhelming him with its rank exuberance of concrete and steel and pinch-beck stucco.

Was it really Broadway? Was it not, perhaps, that other jungle, stinking and hot and swishy—Africa—unrolling its somber forests like a meaningless scroll, reaching out toward his fleeting soul with black, agonized hands?

Africa! He could hear the hollow sob of the war drums, spanning river and mountain; the clanking chains of the slaver's gang. Or was it the Broadway trolley shooting north, the roar of the Elevated over on Sixth Avenue?

Then his body stiffened. His eyes rolled up with a bluish, glassy stare.

II

THE shot had echoed down the narrow corridor, through the elevator shaft into the musty lobby, and out to the front door, where a pessimistic head porter with a wart on his chin was talking politics to a tall, neat chauffeur and a policeman whose swarthy-blue skin and quixotic nose gave the lie to a proper Celtic surname.

"Whattthehell!" the latter exclaimed all in one word, and rushed inside, a ponderous incarnation of law and order.

A woman screamed in a reedy soprano. In the stuffy dining-room that opened on a courtyard where a couple of potted palms waged a brave but losing fight against the

greasy soot, an elderly broker with a waxed white mustache and a large-pored, purple-veined face dropped his eye-glasses into the creamed tomato soup and splashed his starched shirt-front. The desk clerk gave his thumb an inky stab with the pen. People ran about aimlessly. They questioned one another. They were shocked, yet pleasantly conscious of the fact that tragedy was stalking among them.

"Who—"

"What—"

"A shot—"

"Gee whiz!"

Then hectic feet ran through the halls. Hectic fists banged at the locked door of room No. 29, broke it open; and so they found him dead, a bullet through his heart, curled up on the rug like a sleeping dog, one wizened old arm thrown across his face, as if to ward off the glare of Broadway that hiccuped in from the corner.

And finally came John W. Beatty, a newspaper reporter with a vulpine scent for news values and a sentimental soul, who, being a friend of the policeman, was allowed to sniff about the dead man's rooms and help himself surreptitiously to sundry scraps of evidence, with which to construct his next day's gothically head-lined splurge.

There were, for instance, a few age-yellowed letters, still faintly perfumed as if with the ghosts of dead violets, and tied with faded ribbon; a dried spray of lilac; an old newspaper clipping; and a locket that contained the picture of a young girl dressed in the height of fashion of four decades earlier. The tale that the reporter wove with these odds and ends was pretty and touching.

It might even have been true. There was no reason why it shouldn't have been; for it was sentimental as well as logical and dramatic.



coming a man familiar with the slang of Broadway, police-courts, city editors, and stool-pigeons, "honestly, I ought to be ashamed of myself!"

"Why?"

"Heard of Jabez Massingham, haven't you?"

"Jabez who?"

"Massingham. The old fellow who always sported the gray high hat and trousers with straps. Tall and lean. White imperial. Monocle. Lived for years at the Hotel Marquis, a stone's throw from

Broadway, but never set foot on Broadway itself. Sure you know!"

"Oh, yes! Awfully rich, isn't he?"

"WHO—" "WHAT—" "A SHOT—" "GEE WHIZ!"

He talked about it at length that evening as he sat facing the future Mrs. John W. Beatty across the clean, patched linen, the catsup bottle, and the plated silver of a little Broadway restaurant that differed from others of the vicinity by advertising neither French nor Hungarian nor Icelandic cuisine, but plain American cooking, from oysters on the half-shell to pumpkin pie.

"Honeybugs," he said, in diction unbe-

"Was. He killed himself to-day."

"Oh!" She was only mildly interested.

"He did." Beatty drew a sheaf of newspaper flimsy from his pocket. "I've been covering the story. Looked over his rooms. Consulted defunct newspaper files. Asked questions of a couple of old-timers. And now I'm sort of ashamed—"

"Why?"

"I feel like a ghoulish nosing after buried things—don't you see?"

She shook her head. Being a young and pretty girl, she was extremely practical, and had no use for vicarious sentiment. She respected sentiment only as it affected her personally.

"You need the money," was her sober comment.

"Don't I know it? Still—" Under the benevolent gaze of an ancient waiter with amazing pepper-and-salt side-whiskers, he reached across and patted her capable hand. "Just because I'm in love with you, I ought to respect other people's emotions. And here"—he pointed at his "copy"—"I'm digging up the old chap's forgotten love-affair—and a

he had bought, cash down, a certain ill-famed residence on lower Fifth Avenue which Tecumseh Smith, the Western beef king, had built for another man's wife—a house in which there had been talk of silver bath-tubs, and door-knobs studded with precious stones, and mantelpieces of priceless copper-glaze tiles taken from some ancient Spanish-Moorish stronghold in the Guadarrama Mountains, still redolent of the shadows of El Cid and the Abencerrage califs.

When—those had been the riotous days of the late sixties and early



darned unhappy one, too. Dog-gone it, I feel like a cannibal!"

Perhaps it was his remark that Massingham's love-affair had been unhappy which stimulated the pretty girl's curiosity. Women like the tragic—in somebody else's life. It gives the zest of contrast to their own happiness.

"Tell me," she said.

"All right!"

III

It seemed that a few decades earlier, coming nobody knew exactly whence, Jabez Massingham had taken an immediate spot-light on Gotham's motley stage. For

PEOPLE WERE SHOCKED, YET PLEASANTLY CONSCIOUS OF THE FACT THAT TRAGEDY WAS STALKING AMONG THEM

seventies, logically following upon the drab reaction of the Civil War—the other man's wife had run away with yet another wife's husband, and the Westerner had drunk himself to death in record time, McNeale Craven, one of the Albany Cravens, had purchased the place for Pearl Conway of

notorious reputation. There had been more scandal, more honorable names dragged through the slime of divorce-court and gutter press; and then had come Jabez Massingham's turn.

Superstitious people had been ready to lay odds that he would travel the road of his predecessors, the more so as there had been a great deal of speculation, in club and drawing-room and counting-house, anent his antecedents and the origin of his great fortune.

As to the former, he had been variously reputed to be an Englishman from the Bahamas, an unreconstructed Virginian, and a scion of French royalty using a *nom de guerre*; while, as to the latter, certain fantastic tales had drifted to the surface, never to be either confirmed by him or denied when asked a direct question by blunt man or flirtatious woman.

These tales—due in the first place to the alcoholic mouthings of a Liverpool ship's officer who had hailed him in a down-town bar with "Strike me pink! If it ain't Barbarian Massey!"—had grown like a snowball, fed here and there by scraps of gossip from returned globe-trotter or missionary or visiting Briton. Raw, incredible tales they had been—of deals in "black ivory," in slaves, along the African coast; of a white chief of the "iron tribe," the Bake-tes, when the latter had swept out of the north and raided the Congo; of the white chief's disappearance—with about four hundred Loango porters laden with gold-dust and ivory; how he had made toward Timbuktu, where he had treacherously sold his Loangos into slavery to the Tuaregs, and had then left the African stage.

"Hard, isn't it"—John W. Beatty turned to the girl—"to reconcile that dandified, perfumed, monocled old duck with"—he consulted his sheaf of flimsy—"the clank-clank of the slaver's gang and the foul miasma of African jungles?"

But those had been the years of America's first great wave of prosperity, when people went at the dollar, and went at it blind. It was before the phrase "business ethics" had been coined—perhaps as an apology for weakening stamina. And so New York had presently ceased to gossip, and Massingham had blended into the cosmos, financial and social, of the city.

Financially, he had become the associate of Kenneth E. Donnelly, the daring Wall Street operator. Socially, all New York

that laid claim to the title had turned out in toppers and Prince Alberts, in rose-point and silk and cut velvet, on the day when he had led to the altar of the Church of the Heavenly Rest Miss Judith Van Alstyne, who was twenty, with laughing eyes, a whorl of honey-colored hair, a broad, low forehead, and the whitest teeth in the world.

On his return from the honeymoon, instead of going to his residence on lower Fifth Avenue, which was being redecorated, he had taken a suite at the Hotel Marquis, in the Forties near Broadway—the little stuffy old hotel which, in those days, had been the last word in perfect service, up-to-date appointments, and proper pot-pourri of periods, from Saracenic to Italian Renaissance.

"Forty years ago to-day," said Beatty, "they returned from their honeymoon; and that very night he lost her."

"Must have died suddenly," said the girl.

"She did not die."

"No? What happened?"

"Nobody knows. Of course—coming to think of it—she may have died. You see, she disappeared. She walked over to a drug-store on the corner of Broadway, and she never came back."

"But what—"

"Nobody ever found out. Massingham spent a fortune hunting for her. In vain. There was never a trace, never a clue—just as if Broadway had swallowed her! I guess that's why he kept on living at the Marquis. Must have had a sort of idea she'd return there some day. Waited for her forty years; then got tired of waiting, and—*bang!*"

He gave an involuntary shudder. He looked through the window, out at Broadway, at the tortured contours of roof and steeple and dome that etched a skyline of cold, elfin green, up at the moon that seemed stabbed on the pretentious flagpole of a motion-picture theater—fluttering there, like a helpless, gutted thing.

It made a pleasantly sensational, pleasantly tragic little tale in the next day's newspaper. It was good for John W. Beatty's reputation and pocketbook. And, we repeat, it might have been true. Indeed, it was true in every physical detail; but it was damnably wrong in the analysis of Jabez Massingham's essential motivation.

For that which had caused the latter to

kill himself after forty years had not been the waiting for the coming of his bride's feet, nor, finally, the getting tired of waiting; it had not been the puling, disemboweled memory of love, but the living actuality of fear. What had kept him all these years from setting foot on Broadway had been that same fear; and what had forced him to live on at the Hotel Marquis, a stone's throw from the Great White Way, had again been a concomitant of fear—the fascination of dread, that shivering, almost sensuous expectancy which the bird is said to find in the snake's flat, filmy eyes.

IV

HE became conscious of it, for the first time, that evening when he went out on the street to see what had happened to his wife. He walked to within a few feet of the corner of Broadway. Then he stopped.

He could not walk on. Fear, as yellow as a dead man's bones, as cold as clay, rushed upon him with a great whirring of wings. Suddenly, without premonition, it drew the vitality, the manhood, the courage from his body, as if with a merciless suction.

He stared straight ahead.

Beneath a sunset of crinkly copper, Broadway stretched northward and southward in an exuberant avalanche of masonry, of fretted stone, of metal made to resemble wood and wood to resemble metal. Thus he had seen it often, had even liked it, had been cynically amused by its blatant, stridently alive vitality.

But to-day, beyond the man-clouted attributes of the street, he saw something else. Felt it, rather; with an unclassified sixth sense, with a distinct and separate consciousness, with the force of an interior realization that was uninfluenced and untainted by the pulsing life about him.

He stood there, the monocle clamped in his left eye, his high hat slightly tilted to one side, his blue and gold necktie a thing of English perfection, his shoes and white spats immaculate. He stood there, crystallizing in himself the sneering, materialistic prosiness of the middle-aged dandy who knows that the secret of life's happiness consists in a meticulous attention to physical detail and outer gesture—and he felt that the roofs, the steeples and domes, flashing purple and red and canary-green beneath the coppery sky, were bending to

one another, were whispering to one another as trees bend and whisper in a storm. He felt Broadway as a living entity that throbbed with a puissant and mysterious rhythm. He felt the granite pavement heaving and shivering, breathing in the cool evening air with a sucking noise.

With the utmost deliberation he focused his eyes and perceived that the whole of Broadway, from its outer fringe of lights paralleling the sidewalks to its inner core of stone and steel, was jerking into motion, slowly and irresistibly; throwing a tall, grimacing shadow ahead of it, like a vanguard of evil; projecting itself like a knife-sharp wedge that would presently spread and swallow and overwhelm; rolling on like a wave, like a *what?*

And then, quite suddenly, he knew what it was, and his lips formed the words:

"Like a jungle!"

The next moment, with a sort of dull, hopeless finality, he thought:

"I could not escape it after all!"

And he thought of a day in Africa, years earlier, when by the side of a lean hawk-like Arab, a certain Yahiah Abu Ali, he had looked out from the brown bastions of Timbuktu toward a patch of jungle in the south. A phenomenon it had seemed, that creeping, coiling carpet of greenish-black, matted corruption, edging the clean yellow desert sands, feathering farther up into the gaunt hill bush.

"I'll be damned glad to get away from it," he had said.

The Arab had smiled.

"You can't get away from it," he had replied, rapidly snapping his fingers to ward off the little hunchback genies of misfortune. "The jungle hates you and me, because we—you and I—have enslaved it and its people, because we have cut through its stinking heart with rope and sword, and the chain of the slaver's gang, and the crimson torch licking over the villages in the clearings. The jungle will kill me here, some day. And you—"

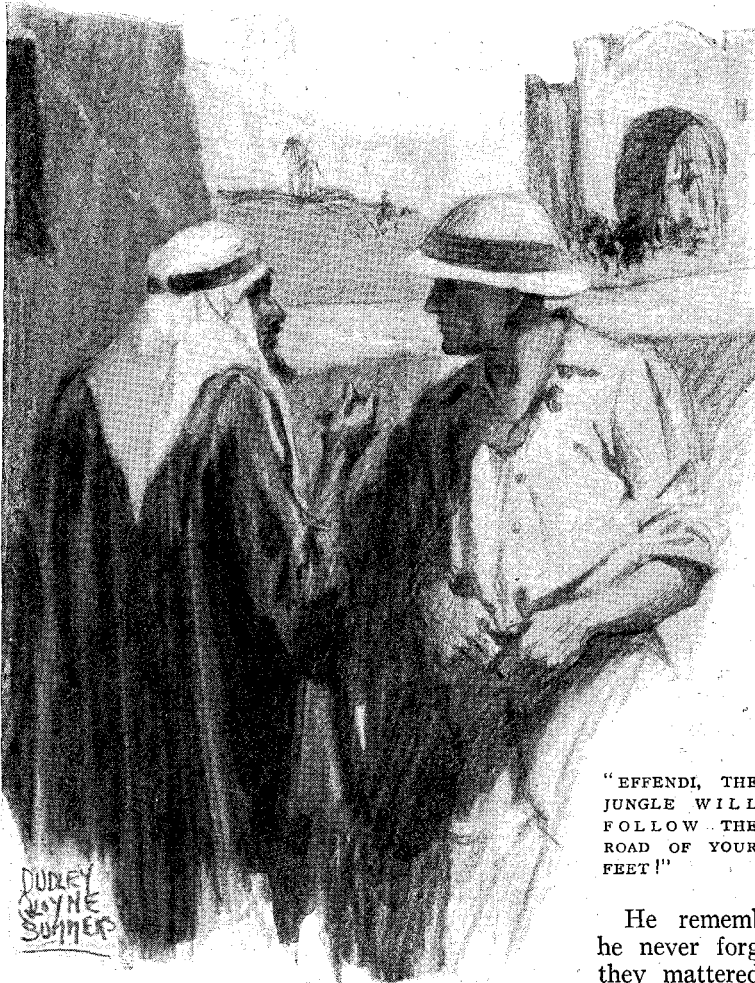
"I am going to America—to the clean land, the green land, the safe land!"

"Can even the fleetest horse escape its own tail? Ah, *effendi*, the jungle will follow the road of your feet! *Maktoub*—it is so written!"

V

"MAKTOUB—it is so written!"

The words came back to Jabez Massing-



"EFFENDI, THE
JUNGLE WILL
FOLLOW THE
ROAD OF YOUR
FEET!"

His eyes saw.
His ears heard.

He remembered noticing how steady his hand was—he was smoking a cigar at the time—and how, in the still air, the aromatic smoke rose up in a gray, blue-tinged plume. He remembered the lemon glow of the street-lamps. He remembered the thin, pretentious voices of two women passing by, and the ludicrous accents of a nondescript foreigner with an aquiline nose, vividly scarlet lips, and a spade-shaped Persian beard, who asked him the direction of Fifth Avenue. He remembered giving a rational answer in a rational voice.

He remembered other details; he never forgot them. Not that they mattered; but they were to him so many proofs of his sanity

when, for the sake of his soul's salvation, he would have preferred to believe himself insane.

He perceived a man with a scrawny, red neck stooping to tie his boot-lace; a girl with dark hair and strange violet-blue eyes stopping suddenly and looking at the moon with an expression of rather silly beatitude; a tall, thin man in black serge and a chocolate-brown bowler hat walking into a saloon with the undulating motion of a snake; a lumbering, optimistic negro in a short, shabby jacket that opened over an unlikely waistcoat of creamy brocade delicately threaded with gold and burnt-orange.

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All these things he perceived; and, neither before nor after he perceived them, but simultaneously, and with his rational five senses, he felt Broadway surging in upon him like an invincible, vengeful force.

So he stood there, staring straight ahead;

So he stood there, staring straight ahead;

So he stood there, staring straight ahead;

So he stood there, staring straight ahead;

and it seemed to him that, behind the crinkly, coppery sky of Broadway, as if through a wall of thin, crinkly, coppery glass, the other jungle—Africa's—was staring back at him, at the twisted memories in his brain, at the scarlet, mazed deeds of his forgotten years when, with his savage Bakete followers, he had danced in and out of the bush, scarring the hinterland with rope and torch.

He had not feared the jungle in those days. Secure in his ruthless strength of purpose, he had trod its foul solitudes, contemptuously careless of the narrow and slippery trails that seemed wiped over by the poisonous breath of the tropics into a dim and feculent slough which bubbled and sucked and reached out with spiky, cable-like creepers.

No. He had not feared it then. He had beaten and crushed it, had forced it to disgorge of its treasure in slaves and ivory and gold-dust.

He had thought that he had left it behind him forever; but now behind that thin wall of crinkly, coppery glass, he felt it creeping in with a huge, cosmic, vibratory movement, overlapping the edges of sidewalk and house and lamp-post, stretching forth tentacles. It had reached out and crushed his young bride; had sucked her under into its smelly, greenish mire; and still it kept creeping in.

There was a prosy, matter-of-fact policeman at the corner, swinging his club; and a girl in a bright blue cloak was crossing to the farther side. She was laughing at something; she did not fear Broadway.

"*Maktoub*—it is so written!" said Jabez Massingham; and never again, from that day on, did he set foot on Broadway.

VI

OF course, deep in his soul, he was a poet. Like Nero and Aaron Burr and Tamerlane and John Brown, he was a poet who lives his poems instead of writing them. For nobody except a poet would have plunged into the African jungles and traded there with gorgeous things like slaves and ivory and gold; nobody except a poet would have plunged into the turbulent Wall Street forum and speculated there in such fabulous, incredible values as N. P. and P. R. R. and M. K. T., and similar fantastic symbols.

And since to be a poet is to be an unconscious logician, he knew from the be-

ginning that it would be useless to hunt for his wife. It was only out of respect for public opinion that he set the necessary machinery into motion. The police, the newspapers, and the man in the street had their usual theories; they talked glibly about other women who had disappeared, to turn up, years later, in some drab house of ill-fame. They mentioned accidents and sudden loss of memory.

But Jabez Massingham knew that it was Broadway itself, and not its people, that had stolen his wife.

Broadway—the jungle—had made the first move, had scored the first point.

It made its second move, scored its second point, a day or two later.

For early one morning, standing in front of his hotel, Jabez Massingham saw that workmen were erecting a large wooden fence at the corner of Broadway—a fence surmounted by a sign with the legend:

MICHAEL O'BYRNE AND SONS, HOUSE WRECKERS

The desk clerk speedily confirmed Massingham's suspicions.

"Yes, sir," he said, "they're putting up a new office-building—fifty foot frontage on Broadway—takes in the corner—and twenty odd feet up our street. Good old Broadway is sure growing some, ain't she?"

"Yes," said Jabez Massingham, very gravely.

He understood that he had no time to lose. Broadway was creeping in, creeping in—that he must gird his loins and fight and vanquish this jungle as he had fought and vanquished the other in Africa. And, since in all the world's fights there is only the choice between two weapons, steel and gold, he chose the stronger of the two—gold. That very day he instructed his bankers to turn certain of his securities into cash, and called on Donald H. Pearce, senior partner of Pearce & Creegan, real-estate agents.

"Johnny," said Mr. Pearce to his junior partner, after Massingham had left, "what d'you think of it?"

"You mean his business judgment in buying that house? Well, he seemed to want it rather badly. He's paying a stiff price, don't you think?"

"I don't mean that. I want to know what you think of his human side. There's his pretty young wife—disappeared just a week or two back. Damned tragic, what?"

And here he comes, as cool as a cucumber, and talks dollars and cents. It's beastly!"

"Oh, but perhaps he's trying to forget," said the junior partner, who had married recently.

The junior partner was wrong. Jabez Massingham was not trying to forget. He could not afford to. He needed the memory of his loss as a counter-irritant against his fear.

He knew that to-day, by buying that house next to the corner of Broadway, he had scored a point—had temporarily barred the progress of the jungle. But what would the morrow bring? The jungle—he knew it of old—could always be stopped, for a time; then, suddenly, overnight, it would throw out its tentacles again—growing, crawling, creeping, sucking—contemptuously spanning the clearing that had been made with sweat and steel.

For a long time, that evening, he looked from the window of his bedroom toward Broadway. Against the silver and scarlet bars of sunset he could see the sharp contours of the houses, like great purple trees crowned with golden and black leaves. He could hear the voice of the street, motley, many-tongued, soaring in a great wind like trumpets of defiance and triumph.

And then the sun went down in three lonely shafts that looked like splintering rubies, and the night came; and with it rode fear.

VII

ONLY once, and then negatively, did he speak of this fear of his—or, rather, this secret, brooding knowledge which was upon his soul like a crimson brand. He mentioned it to a doctor of his acquaintance whom he met strolling down Madison Avenue.

"Doctor," he said, stopping him and addressing him with sudden vehemence, "I have"—his was an epic, slashing way of choosing words when the mood took him—"I have tasted the honey of virtue and the gall of sin, the honey of massive deeds and the gall of regret, and—"

"Aye!" interrupted the doctor, who was a Scot and, by the same token, a sardonic and argumentative seeker after philosophic truths. "And I tak' it ye have found all four o' them—virtue and sin, deeds and regret—alike, one as useless as the ither, heh? All wee toys for weakling, pap-fed

bairns. Did ye not find them so, Mr. Massingham?"

"More or less."

"And what are ye telling me for?"

"Aren't you a physician?"

"Well?"

"I want your help."

"Ye mean ye want something to quieten ye? To stop your nerves from jiggling because"—the doctor lowered his voice—"your poor wife—"

"No, it's something different. It's something deeper, much deeper. No, no"—as the other, almost automatically, drew out pencil and prescription-pad—"never mind your confounded bromides! Give me something for"—he paused—"for my soul."

"I'm not a priest, Mr. Massingham."

"But I'll pay you like a cardinal!"

The doctor shook his head.

"It's religion ye need," he said. "It helped good John Knox to combat the de'il, and it even helped King Charles the Fifth, who was a rank Papist."

"But it won't help me. I'm not the sort of a driveling ass to chew a theological cud. I want—"

"Mr. Massingham," the doctor cut in, apropos of nothing, "be those tales they're telling about ye true? Africa, I mean, and—"

"Yes!" Massingham answered defiantly.

"Then I know what 'll cure ye."

"What?"

"Ye need fear, man! The fear of the God of Wrath, the Lord of Israel! It 'll cleanse your proud soul of sins—fear!"

"Fear?" echoed Massingham. "Do I need fear?"

And then, to the other's utter consternation, he burst into roaring, almost maniacal laughter, and walked away without another word.

The doctor looked after him as he swung swiftly down the avenue, beneath the burning blue of a strong summer day, his gray high hat tilted very slightly to one side, his gold-headed cane crooked from his elbow, his white spats immaculate over bench-made shoes.

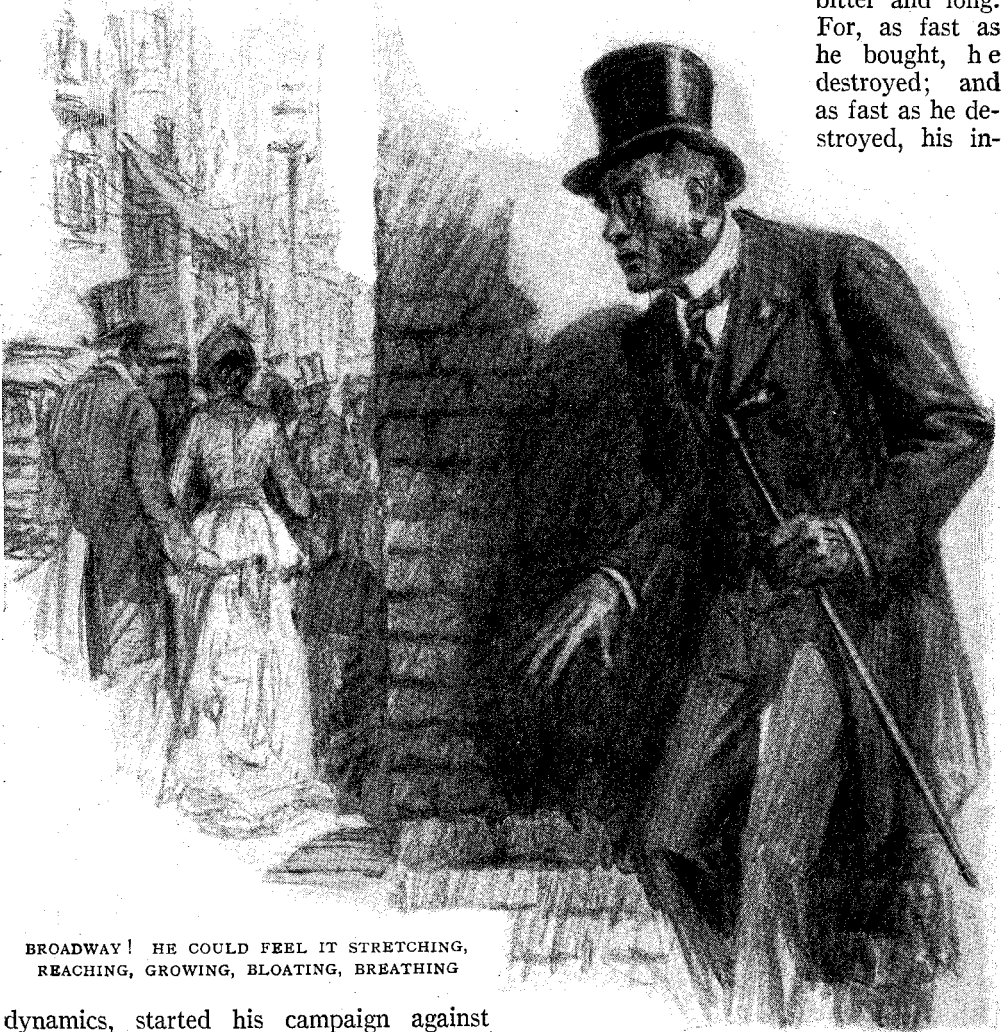
"Muriel," said the doctor that night to his wife, speaking of the happening, "if I wasn't such a good Presbyterian, and a scientist, d'ye know—I'd have crossed myself! Aye! I would indeed!"

But, fear or no fear, Jabez Massingham, who all his life had possessed the trick of

being able to separate his mental processes from inclinations and emotions, and who had decomposed success into a few plain, rather ruthless elements, as he would decompose a force in a question of abstract

stroy them, raze them to the ground, create a barren desert so as to give the jungle no point of support and leverage around which—and, later on, from which—to throw its choking lianas of steel and cement.

The fight was bitter and long. For, as fast as he bought, he destroyed; and as fast as he destroyed, his in-



BROADWAY! HE COULD FEEL IT STRETCHING,
REACHING, GROWING, BLOATING, BREATHING

dynamics, started his campaign against Broadway with the utmost care.

His plan was simple enough. He meant to stop the Broadway jungle from growing in his direction, from stretching out its slimy tentacles, from catching him and sucking him under; and, remembering his old African jungle lore, he realized that, to do this, he must make a barrier, a clearing which Broadway could not span.

It was not enough to acquire, gradually, as he raised the money, the houses that ran from the Hotel Marquis to the corner, and those across the street, as well as those behind the hotel. He must, furthermore, de-

come decreased. There were lawsuits, expensive judgments, municipal fines, assessments, the taxes going up in leaps and bounds. To pay, he would at times be forced to sell land instead of buying. Then Broadway would gain a foot here, a foot there—would sweep from the corner with an exuberance of masonry—and he would have to build a second line of defense, to buy more houses and raze them, to decrease his income again and again.

Came the days when New York capital, having had certain picturesque but unprof-

itable adventures in Western mines, recoiled on to its home ground and sought an outlet in real-estate development, parallel with successive waves of European immigration; and so Jabez Massingham—with people buying right and left, and land values soaring fantastically—found himself in a vortex of fiercest competition; buying and selling and trading, buying and selling and trading again; with ever and always Broadway creeping steadily nearer, crawling from around the corners with the crushing strength of great office-buildings and theaters and hotels.

Ten years—and he was still Jabez Massingham, the millionaire; but his millions were on paper. His income was eaten up by taxes and fines and assessments. He had become land-poor.

Twenty years—and he fought on, though he knew that the ultimate end was an assured thing, though he felt it at the back of his soul, blowing in from the Broadway jungle like the seven black winds of destiny.

Thirty years—and the Hotel Marquis, once the last word in elegance and modernity, had become a third-rate stopping-place for transients. But still Jabez Massingham stayed on; watching Broadway like a bird fascinated by a snake; feeling it crawl and creep and breathe; feeling it move, as if a single desire, a single hateful purpose, actuated the entire mass of stone and steel.

Forty years—and then the end came, very suddenly, rather prosily, in the words of the little gray-haired, wizen desk clerk who had been there ever since Jabez Massingham could remember.

"Good evening, Mr. Massingham."

"Hullo, Tom! Anything new?"

"No. Except"—the little old man coughed—"I guess I got to hunt me another job."

"Why?"

"They sold this hotel."

"Oh!" Jabez Massingham felt a sinister premonition. Sharply he drew in his breath. "Who—bought it?"

"The Excelsior people—you know—Excelsior Hotel, over on Broadway. Say they're going to buy the rest of the block by 'n' by, and then they'll put up one humdinger of a hotel. Great big place—Turkish bath and promenade and grill and everything, with the entrance on Broadway, and—I beg your pardon, what did you say, sir?"

"I said," replied Jabez Massingham gravely, "*maktoub!*"

"Sounds like Yiddish!"

"It's Arabic, and it means: 'It is so written!'"

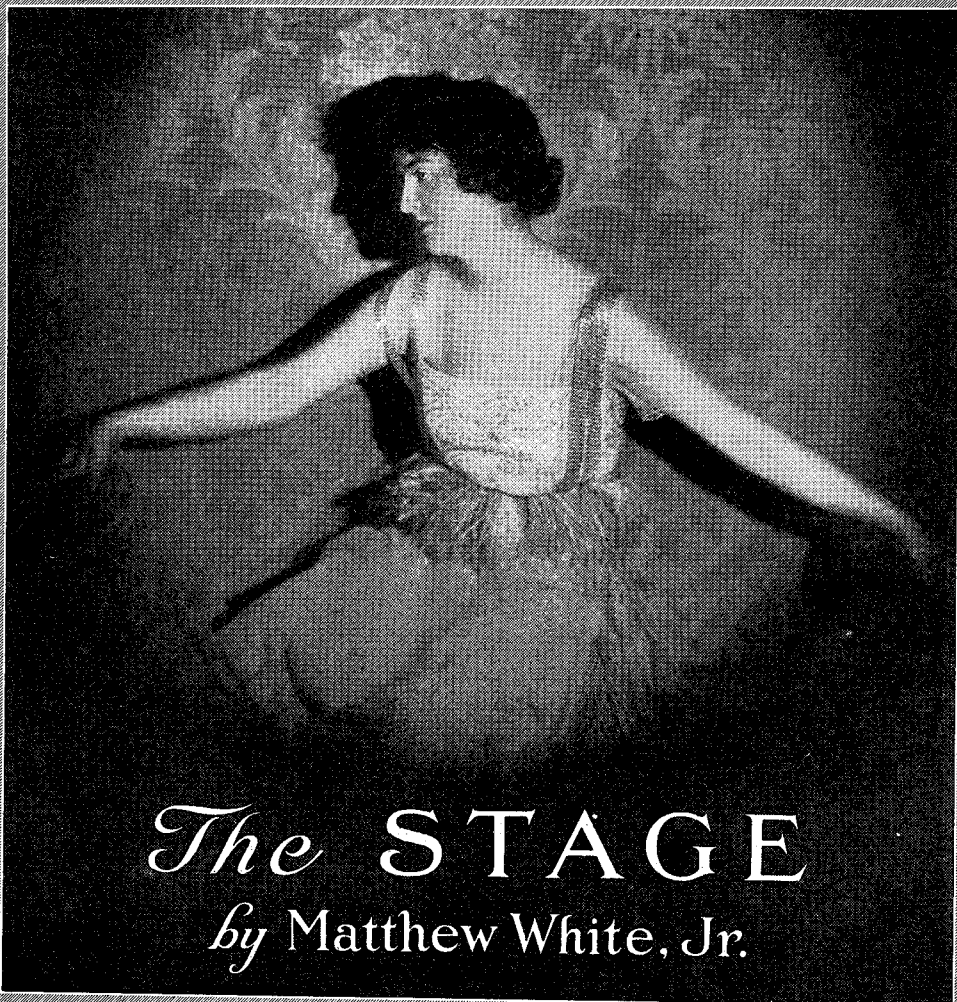
And then Jabez Massingham walked upstairs to his room and killed himself; and, even after his death, he could still feel Broadway creeping in from the corner like a stony jungle, overwhelming him with its rank exuberance of concrete and steel and pinchbeck stucco.

PAINTED PEOPLE

In tarnished frames they look down from
Walls wainscoted and old—
Ladies in ruffs and farthingales,
Knights debonair and bold,
A lordling, on whose jeweled glove
His hooded falcon swings,
Quaint babes, who grasp in dimpled hands
Their favorite playthings.

Some say that just as midnight chimes
Within the ancient hall,
These painted people leave their frames;
Again with hoop and ball
The winsome children play; fair dames
And ardent courtiers woo;
The falcon tries his wings once more—
Do you suppose 'tis true?

Mazie V. Caruthers



The STAGE

by Matthew White, Jr.

EDNA BATES, WHO HAS THE NAME PART IN "HONEY GIRL," THE MUSICAL-COMEDY HIT MADE FROM HENRY BLOSSOM'S HORSE-RACE PLAY, "CHECKERS"

From a photograph by Campbell Studios, New York

"HE won't be starred—doesn't even want to be featured." So I had read about Harry Beresford, now so thoroughly identified with "Shavings" that theatergoers have almost forgotten that in October of last year he made just as big a hit as the old man, *Peep o' Day*, in "Boys Will Be Boys," with the only difference that the latter piece failed, while "Shavings" proved a huge success.

I read the printed laudation of Beresford's modesty, and forthwith set it down to presswork. Then, just before the final matinée of "Shavings" at the Knickerbocker, last June, I had an interview with the actor, and found that if Colonel Sav-

age's publicity-writer had been intending to set up her subject as a shrinking violet, she had come short of the truth.

Beresford was starting to rub in his make-up when I reached his dressing-room, and by the time I left, just as the call-boy announced "Overture," he had not only expressed the fear that Colonel Savage would insist on his playing the part as a juvenile before he was through with it, but had sketched for me his idea for building up the major's rôle so that the audience would be more in sympathy with the man who eventually gets the girl.

"Most actors, I suppose," he explained, "are eager to appear younger, but to my