

# "Steward, Four More of the Same"

BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

ILLUSTRATION BY CAPTAIN JOHN W. THOMASON, JR.

Colonel Roosevelt in his journeyings has run across many strange characters. This story of a character even stranger than Lawrence of Arabia is based on fact.

THE ship had been ploughing all day through the Red Sea. There had not been a breath of air. The smooth blue water rolled to each side in undulating ridges as the bow drove forward. Now night had fallen with tropical abruptness. The hull still radiated heat, but a gentle breeze cooled the sweat-drenched passengers.

The bar was on the front deck of the boat. The windows were open. The brown varnished tables and ornate carved panels gleamed in the electric light with all the meretricious ostentation of a Pullman car.

Around one of these tables four men gathered. They were in shirt-sleeves and the perspiration showed in dark blotches on their rumpled clothing. A white-clad bartender noiselessly set long frosted drinks in front of them. They clasped them lovingly. The cold of the glasses was like the hand of a trained nurse on a fever-patient's brow. Slowly sipping, letting the ice bob against their lips, they talked in desultory fashion of people and places.

All four were men of wide experience. All four had travelled and lived in many lands. They had seen not only the smooth surface of things but the under side, where the seams show.

One was from the Forest Service in

Burmah, where he had spent long, lonely days in the jungle. One ran a rubber-plantation at Penang. One was a shipping-agent from Shanghai. One, an American, was an automobile salesman in upper India.

Lazily the talk drifted from person to place—from Jan Bahadur to Chieng Mai. Gradually it centred on the great desert that lay to the north of them with its hidden fastnesses and immemorial mysteries. Some one mentioned Lawrence and the weird penance he was performing in the tank corps at Karachi.

The American salesman from upper India spoke:

Lawrence is not as strange a character to my way of thinking as a man I knew in "Mesopotamia" during the War. His name was Burrage—Albert Wither- spoon Burrage. He was the small, dark type of Englishman that is not English at all but Briton. Though small, he was wiry and always in the pink. Generally he was very quiet—the kind of a man who seems always to be waiting for you to say something. He had no sense of humor and was one of the most literal men I have ever known.

The Burrages were a middle-class English family from Manchester. The

father was a manufacturer in a small way. There were four children, three boys and a girl. They lived in a square, ugly brick house, furnished in typical mid-Victorian fashion — rosewood chairs, a heavy bronze clock, and a large chromo of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert on their wedding-day. Their life was as respectable and uninteresting as a leg of mutton.

Drab childhood turned into drab youth. Albert, whose very name was a reminder of the era his parents represented, went to a good ordinary school. At seventeen he graduated and became a clerk in the London Midlands Bank at Manchester.

The years rolled by. There was nothing to distinguish him in any way from countless other young fellows with white collars and limited horizons. Suddenly, when he was twenty-one, he began to bet on the horse-races and drink. For a while it passed unnoticed. Then he went on a pretty large party. His father heard of it. The respectable manufacturer was shocked to the core. There was an explosion. Albert was silent but unrepentant. After a stormy twenty-four hours the older man said he could not have Albert in Manchester disgracing the family name. He paid the boy's debts, got him a position in the Asiatic Bank in Cairo, and told him to get out.

Albert Burrage once described to me the start of that voyage. He sailed from Southampton. It was a gray, foggy day. The wire hawsers and railings were beaded with moisture. He stood by the companionway and watched the half-oranges, broken crates, paper, and refuse of all kinds washing to and fro in the oily water. He said he felt a bit down in the mouth.

Cairo is a delightful city. The streets

show fictitiously clean in the bright tropical sun. It is both East and South, and combines the attraction of both. By day the white plaster of wall and dome matches the clouds in the blue sky. Greasy natives throng the streets, driving ahead of them underfed burros laden with piles of merchandise. Occasionally a stately man of the desert strides by with proudly squared shoulders. The street venders shout their interminable cries.

By night the genii of the "Arabian Nights" transmute all into a fairy scene. The white buildings are bathed in moonlight. The shadows lie in pools of darkness. In the bazaars lights twinkle. Dim figures glide to and fro. Some stringed instrument twangs and a voice chants a plaintive monotonous melody.

It was to this city and this atmosphere that Albert Burrage, late of Manchester, came. All day long he worked at the bank and did well. He took a house with a high-walled garden in one of the suburbs. In the evening he was moderately social. Though he saw a good deal of the European society of the city, he took a keen interest in native life and spent much of his time studying the various languages, especially Arabic.

The years passed. One day the bank manager said casually to Burrage: "It would be an advantage to be a Mohammedan in dealing with the natives. I am sure you could understand their thoughts better." Quietly Burrage remarked: "I am a Mohammedan."

For a moment the manager was too surprised to speak. Then he tried to find out when and why this had happened. Burrage was as uncommunicative as usual. After half an hour's close questioning the manager got merely a

vague impression that it was a case of "When in Rome do as the Romans do."

After this he watched his subordinate more closely. Soon rumors reached him of strange happenings in the low plaster house where Burrage lived. Behind the high walls of the garden there were native women who were not there as servants.

Again the manager called the clerk and questioned him. "Yes, there are native women there," Burrage said. "They are my harem. You see, I am a Mohammedan."

This was pretty steep from the British point of view. There were certain things an employee of the Asiatic Banking Corporation did not do. A man might be a Mohammedan. That was his own personal affair. Keeping a harem was a gray horse of a very different color.

After considerable thought the manager told Burrage that he would either have to close his zenana or leave the company's employ. Burrage left the company's employ.

He had some money of his own, inherited from his mother. He continued living in Cairo in the house with the walled garden.

In the outposts of empire social lines are loosely drawn. This is necessary or there would be very little society. Men who wander to far-away places have generally a tolerant attitude toward life. They are apt to have done a number of things that might seem odd in Kew.

Burrage's faith and harem were politely ignored and he associated with his fellow Europeans. In the group that he knew were the German consul and his wife. The consul was a fat little Teuton, rather dull and pompous, with a round face that seemed to be always shining with sweat. His wife was a tall

woman with faded yellow hair and a flat white face.

Time passed. Everything seemed much as usual. Suddenly one morning the harem in the house with the walled garden and the German consul were left alone. Burrage and the German woman had bolted.

There was quite a stir. The fat little consul was furious. His dignity as representative of the German Government had been insulted. He had been shamed before all by an English clerk. He went to the authorities. The affair became in a mild way a *cause célèbre*. The British forbade Burrage the Near East.

Meanwhile the guilty couple had been living placidly at Constantinople. Abruptly they decided it had all been a mistake. The Frau went back to the consul, leaving Burrage alone.

One place in the world was forbidden to him, the Near East. Naturally that was where he wished to be. He disguised himself and drifted into Asia Minor. In some unknown fashion he made his way into Kurdistan, the roughest part of the country. There the natives are practically independent and as barbarous and courageous as they had been in the days when they rolled rocks on Xenophon and his battle-scarred ten thousand. Burrage dropped completely out of sight.

Some years later, word drifted to the British Intelligence that in the Kurdish mountains there was an Englishman who had great influence with the native tribes. He had gone native, and dressed and lived as one of them. He was married to the daughter of the most powerful of the native chiefs and was a big man in the country.

It was Burrage. How he had escaped being killed, by what means he had worked his way to power, will always

be a mystery. At no time did he tell any one what happened from the time he left Constantinople until he next appeared as a petty Kurdish princeling. Suffice it to say that there he was.

The troubled year of 1914 arrived. Suddenly in August, like a clap of thunder, the World War broke. The nations joined battle. England as usual had been caught unprepared. Her lazy good nature and pride had as often before brought her to desperate straits. Laboriously she was gathering her great but loosely knit strength.

I had worked so long by Englishmen in English possessions that I felt more or less English myself. It seemed to me that the least I could do, in return for the chance I had had of making my living in her possessions, was to stand by England now. I joined the forces and was sent to Cairo, where headquarters were established for operating in Palestine and Arabia and protecting the Suez Canal.

There I was detailed to the Intelligence Corps. We were all new to the job—men from tea-plantations, archaeological expeditions, or mere wanderers; with an occasional hide-bound regular who despised the rest and fretted himself into apoplexy, because he could not apply the army regulations which he had been brought up to consider infallible.

We had an office in a long, low building which heated to fever-pitch by noon and resembled an oven from then until after dark. There we struggled to organize the semblance of order.

One day in early October a slight dark man with a weather-beaten face entered. He was neatly dressed in ordinary civilian clothes. He came to me, as I was the nearest to the door, and said: "My name is Albert Witherspoon

Burrage. I know a bit about the natives in this end of the world. Could you tell me to whom to apply? I'd like to join up."

I directed him to the acting chief, a good though limited chap from the R. F. A. by the name of Brownell. After a brief interview Burrage was given the proper instructions as to how to proceed to get a commission.

Before he had finally matriculated some kind friend in Cairo turned up with the story of his past. Then there was hell to pay.

Brownell was all for firing him out, lock, stock, and barrel—officer and gentleman—his Majesty's service—and all that sort of business.

We civilians maintained that this was war, not army-post life, and that what we wanted were men who could help us win, regardless of whether they would be admitted to the best clubs. For some days we had it out hot and heavy, while Burrage maintained his usual imperturbable calm. Finally we won out, largely because Burrage furnished some information to Brownell which clearly demonstrated his worth. The ex-princeling of the Kurds became a subaltern in the British army.

Among our corps he had few friends. Indeed, I think I was closest to him of any, and by no stretch of the imagination could I have been called his intimate. However, I saw him on and off and occasionally spent an evening with him. It was in that way that I learned much of the rough outline of his life I have given.

Sometimes a stray sentence or two would give me a brief glimpse like a lantern-slide of his colorful adventures. Once he told me of discussing the Christian religion with some of the Kurd elders. They were all for adopting

it, but simply in addition to their polyglot faith. From what he said, I gathered that they felt there might be something in it, and they did not wish to offend any god who had power.

At another time a casual allusion to Burrage's son brought the statement that he had seen a native kill his son, not for treason to the state but merely for an infraction of family discipline.

Early in the War he volunteered for scouting in the enemy territory. Here he ran into all kinds of red tape, for he did not play the game according to the established rules. To begin with, he insisted on working by himself, for he was a lone wolf. To that no one objected.

His next idiosyncrasy was more serious from the official standpoint. Though he was familiar with the native customs and had lived for years as a native, he refused for some reason to disguise himself on his expeditions. He went into the enemy territory clad in British civilian clothes, or in his uniform. I have always thought that the uniform symbolized to him his redemption. That was all wrong from the standpoint of the service. The traditional spy either dressed himself in the uniform of the enemy forces, or at least as a native of the country he was travelling in.

Added to this, Burrage had a rooted aversion to written reports, which, as any one who has served in the army knows, are the fetich of the military. No amount of pressure could make him draw up those sheaves of papers that clutter official files, and more than once he was on the verge of court martial and dismissal.

The Powers that Be were wild. After his first few expeditions they gravely doubted he had been to the places he

enumerated. They could not see how he had reached them undisguised. It was only when the truth of his reports were attested by after-events that they grudgingly accepted him.

At length he became established as a sort of licensed libertine—the most irregular in our thoroughly irregular service.

He would start on his treks with the minimum of equipment—just what he could carry in his pockets. As some one put it, he lived on his boot-leather. For arms he had a Webley revolver. In the beginning he either walked or rode a horse. Later he used a battered Ford car.

He disappeared sometimes for weeks on end. We would think he had surely been killed when suddenly he would report again, a little thinner, a little more weather-beaten, but otherwise fit enough.

The deserts, with their infinite spaces filled by restless drifting sands, were home to him. He could thread them through the glaring hours of day when the horizon wavered like flame before his eyes, or at night when the shadows of the past seemed to people them with strange shapes.

The natives were terrified of him. We tried to find the reason but failed. They shut up like clams when we mentioned his name. When we asked him the secret of his power he laughed, and said it was merely a question of psychology.

The days passed. The history of his scouting-trips, were they known, would form a wilder tale of adventure than any told in the “Arabian Nights.”

Once, single-handed, he captured the leader of a notorious band which had done much damage to our troops. For some time they had been picking off



British stragglers; for Tommies are incorrigible and will stray like sheep, no matter what the regulations are and regardless of what the dangers may be. This chief, Razuli by name, was locally credited with being invulnerable to bullets or swords, because of some relic of the Prophet he always carried. He was a powerful bearded rascal, as brave and cruel as his ancestors who swept from their desert like a flame and all but conquered Europe. Our soldiers who fell into his hands were fortunate if they were killed resisting capture.

Burrage made up his mind to get him. He laid his plans carefully. Through devious bazaar rumors he found that the chief's weak spot, like that of many a good fighting man before him, was women. In two different villages he had small harems which he used to visit at every opportunity. In order to prevent surprise he always left his body-guard on the main road some distance from the town, and rode in and out alone.

Burrage determined to ambush him. Alone, as always, he set out. He picked a place close to one of these villages where the main road led through a desolate and barren country. Here he lay in wait night after night.

One evening word reached him that Razuli was with his women. All night the Britisher lay in a ditch near the road, his eyes searching for a moving shape, his ears straining for the hoof-beats of a horse. Twice people passed him—once a man driving some donkeys, once a peasant on foot. Through the early hours the blackness covered him like a blanket. Toward morning the moon rose and flooded the country with its light. The scarred hills showed blotches and stripes of black where gully and hummock gathered the shad-

ows. The twisted scrub-bushes seemed like strange animals.

The cold of early dawn had begun to stiffen and cramp the Britisher's limbs when the baked earth telegraphed that a horseman was coming from the town. Tense for action he waited. Suddenly in front of him loomed a rider. The light of the setting moon fell on his face. It was Razuli.

What happened then no one knows. The following afternoon Burrage passed through our picket-lines leading Razuli prisoner.

It was toward the end of 1917. We were beginning to develop our plans for the great offensive which finally crumpled the Turkish power. Burrage's reports were of great value.

One day he left to obtain information regarding a certain powerful native chief who was supposed to be ready to come over to our side if proper inducements were held out. Burrage was directed to report the result of his work within three days. He did not come back.

Our troops were advancing. A week later a sweating column of leathery khaki figures tramped into the town of Ghisa. It was a typical Eastern village. Long rows of mud-walled native houses lined the dusty street. There was not a sign of life except for a few scrawny chickens and some skeleton pariahs that slunk snarling into the houses.

There, in the centre of the street, the sun beating down on it, stood a Ford automobile. The tattered top was coated with a thick layer of white dust. Sitting behind the wheel was a man, his head sunk on his breast. The British sergeant leading the advance-party did not need the horde of flies that rose at his approach to tell him that the man was dead.



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From a drawing by John W. Thomason, Jr.





It was Burrage. There was a bullet through his head, and blood and dust were caked on his face and chest.

Some three or four days had passed since he had been killed—shot from one of the houses as he stopped his car. Dead though he was, the natives' horror of him had still remained. Though the grim figure had sat there for days, neither man, woman, nor child in the

village had dared approach the automobile.

For a moment there was silence when the American finished his story. Then the planter from Penang who was stirring a diminutive bit of ice that floated in the half-inch still left of his drink, looked up. "Steward," he said, "four more of the same."



## We're on the Air

BY ROY S. DURSTINE

A leading figure in the advertising world, a pioneer in radio advertising, Mr. Durstine gives an inside view of broadcasting, and indicates vast possibilities for the future of radio.

ON an inside wall of the broadcasting studio is a double-glass window. Through it you can look into a sound-proof space slightly larger than a drawing-room on a Pullman car and known as the control-booth.

An engineer twiddles the dials and watches the instruments on his board as vibrations from the studio outside are brought into the booth by direct wire and turned into sound by the speaker in the corner.

A group of men and women are engaged in an occupation unknown five years ago. They are programme-directors, production-managers, radio-engineers, and announcers. They are "getting a balance."

Outside in the studio a brass band of fifty musicians is ranged on one side of

the microphone. An orchestra of forty more is spread on the other side. The band has just finished a rousing march.

The leader looks inquiringly through the window. The people inside nod encouragingly.

"You might tell him to bring those fiddles a little closer," some one suggests as one of the programme-managers starts for the studio.

"And we'll want more of those chimes in this '1812 Overture,'" adds some one else.

"Shall we get the balance on that next?" asks the programme-director as he goes to the door.

"Yes—that overture uses both the band and the orchestra."

"And the fire department!"

"With cannons!"

"If we can get that into the mike