

254

# fantastic

AND

## ADVENTURES



**THE BLACK ARROW** by JAMIESON WOOD

# The Black Arrow

by Jamieson Wood

**F**AITH UNIVERSITY was in dire need of a mental housecleaning. Professor Bertram, able psychologist, psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, master of all things woozy, was too close to the hub of wisdom to get the proper slant. Doctor Freud was not available. Beanpole Bevan was. In mentality, he crept. In stature, he soared. In reach,

his wing-spread matched a bomber. Destiny highly appraised these basketball assets and chose them as means to an end.

Less than an hour past, Beanpole's long basket, squarely sunk, pulled the cork on long repressed emotions. The students, the Faculty and the Board of Trustees were not accustomed to a win-



The members of the tribe watched the two warriors battle desperately, and their lusty shouts filled the air . . .

**It all began at a basketball game,  
but no one could know that it would end  
ten thousand years in the past among a  
race of Indians Time has forgotten . . . !**



ning team of any kind. That is why a bonfire on the campus, blazed high, wide, and handsome. And that is why a goggle-eyed beastie weaved around it, stomped, blared and shrieked from mouth to tip of tail. A dragon centipede made of people, male and female, about fifty-fifty, a few this side and many just t'other side of adolescence, and all steamed up fit to bust.

Three flash bulbs blinked in quick succession. Prior even to the dragon's birth, the members of the Board sniffed publicity in Bevan's deed. The Peopleston Courier could pigeon glad tidings to the world without. Yes, a full-page spread would lap lucratively along the shores of illiteracy where interest in old Faith gasped for breath.

Degerry, "U studio" news photog', pro tem, worked under great pressure. Five board members kibitzed—each differently—each suggestion pressed cornfully on Deggie's nerves. They parted. A feminine ear heard 'em snap.

"I'm telling you, Ma'm, I can't took no more. Got no more bulbs. Only had three. Got the dragon's head. That'll show megaphone Malley working the flash lights and Beanpole and the rest of the team ridin' on the fellers shoulders, that's important! And I've took the thousand-legger's middle—the fire off to one side 'll show the co-eds purty nice. They're shor important.

"And I've took the tail end of the wiggler, Splice 'em Presto! There's your dragon! But," Degerry added ruefully, "I'm a feared, Ma'm, Hardy Junior's mug woon't show amongst those present—my camery is self-respectin'."

"A. Hardy Stoneere Junior paid you for a *good* picture, didn't he?" snapped the Madame.

"Shor did! And—that's what I call *good*." Degerry sauntered off, head high. The Madame sauntered off, nose higher.

Healthy fires have a fuel habit. Easy reach trash was gone. The dearth threatened all things combustible, loose and unguarded, not too distant. There were such things in Peopleston. Peopleston was not too far. By custom decreed, its stable citizens retired before ten. Those less stable, if about, were usually not cognizant of their surroundings. Junior knew this and Junior had an idea. To embody his fuel concept in physical entities of size, should revitalize a 'glittering' prestige. So—Junior streaked for town. With him rode classmates three, each lacking courage not to. Mammoth and Pinhead slumped in the back seat, Shorty with Junior, at the wheel. Mammoth's massiveness assured adequate gravitational glue for the rear wheels.

Junior chose to speak:

"Remember, marble heads, anything goes that burns, provided—it makes a whale of a blaze!" Thoughtlessly he hummed, "That will be glory, yes glory for me."

"Sure! Sure!" Pinhead acknowledged loudly, whispering an aside to Mammoth.

"Sure! Sure! Big lugs always do things in a *big* way and they do it wits music!"

"Baloney! Pasty face don't lug. That's why we're here. His brain anchors him so close to the mud he'd desecrate the Lord's Prayer."

"Prize saps we were, taking his handouts for doughnuts. They were nothing but bull rings."

"Words of great wisdom!"

"Wisdom, heck! Pain in the snoot. He jerks the brass—we move!"

At the town's thin edge, Junior swung his darkened car into the shadows. The three male calves promptly returned with a garden gate and a dog house, each in value—trash, each in sentiment—treasure.

It was easy to tie the gate along the running board but the earthly home of a beloved canine was cause for pause. The little bulls perspired in tossing it atop the car for a one-way ride. Junior's assistance comprised a chain of unseemly remarks.

With two choice slabs of bacon in the bag, the "brain" swelled:

"Now for old Nick N. Shearem's candy stick! Make it snappy!"

**P**INHEAD shuffled off snaplessly Mammoth bucked. "Nothing doing, Stony! Old Jef needs all he owns. Four mows are on his cuff for me now. The dead beet clips from the whole 'U' would stuff a mattress. That pole flags down the only sure cash in his piggy bank. So—nothing doing and that's that!"

"Pipe down, you hippo! Get this," Hardy snarled, "When I toss lettuce to bone-heads, I'm paying for service. Furthermore, don't forget our honor system. Now—just suppose the Madam learned how two little marbleheads skidded through the last finals on timely tips from me."

The thought was not refreshing. If she *did* learn, it would be fatal, but not for big hearted Junior. From Freshman to current Senior year it was *his* apple which invariably offered top eye-appeal. Mammoth and Pinhead saw no way out and stepped from under the Dyonesian sword and along the way to J. Jones' Tonsorial Palace. Shorty's thoughts were hardly fraternal,— "Some day I'll sponge my slate with that big crocodile. Then—an irresistible force will meet an immovable object. And if his chin don't budge, the rest of him will have to come back later."

The fuel rustlers found the palace dark. Excepting on Saturdays, the old veteran retired early to a box-like rear

room called 'home'!

The objective in front of the shop was no ordinary traditional reminder of out-moded surgical skill once vested within the province of a barber. To Jef it was something exquisitely finer—this square hand-hewn sill from a pioneer home refashioned by Jef himself, meant something. Red and white stripes ran vertically, each as straight and clean as the shaft itself. A navy blue crown banded by thirteen facets carried a white star in each, while a gilded eagle finialed the apex.

Jef's oldest transient customer. Harry Davison travelling for Lifelong Hardware, had been told the purport of it.

"Them's are the colors of Old Glory and I aims to have 'em right! Ye see I have a lot o' young fellers tradin' with me. Now when I figger one is off-shade on his loyalty, I turns the chair aroun' so he has to look plum at that pole. Then, I dizzertate on peoples—ways to live—ways not to—on bad governments—good governments—and no governments at all—and of course, what the red, white and blue of our flag really means. So-o-o—all the while he sits thar gettin' his both eyes socked with the right colors and his ears boxed with the right doctern'. Then when I gets to askin' 'Wet'r dry? You can bet your bottom dollar that young sprout clim's down with his hair smooth and the kinks combed out of his twisted interlect! Yes sir, I do a little larnin' to them as needs it on my own account.

"The 'U' is all right—mebbe?—but it shor splotters its eddicatin so much, these younguns can't see through the fog. Pears to me some of them per-fessers spend their time huntin' fer all the mistakes we've made since we signed the Declaration. Then they chalk 'em up on the 'black-board' and blasts 'em with the durnedest lot o'

furrin isms, ists and ologies. And then, when the smoke clears away—presto!—the board is sweet and clean—only 'taint. Board's *no better* for the shoot-in', but it's still thar,—big enough to take it and the best durned *government* in the world. And that ain't the worst those higher larnin' wreckers do:

"A lot o' these younguns 'ha' been rared purty right. If they didn't ha' to go to Sunday School—fearin' a whalin' if they didn't—their folks tried to larn 'em right frum wrong by settin' purty good examples theyselves. Sort of easin' the idea to 'em painless, that ther folks was bein' moved in the kind ways they did things by Somethin' bigger than they was—Somethin' they couldn't explain—only knowed IT must be!

"Waal—what happens? Why a lot o' these younguns, purty straight thinkin' fur bein' decent, go into the 'U'. Then what? Them woozy wiseacres that can't figger 'mongst theyselves what the answer is, start shootin' with the sciences, usin' God's own tools He uses to make the unyverse tick, just to prove He ain't!

"Of course thar al'ays be outstandin' excepshuns, some worse, some better. Fer instance, mentionin' no names, thar's one smartaleck. Near as I figger it, he's a reg'lar bootlicker to them corkscrew larners. Pays for what he gets, but seems, it just magnerfys his importance flashin' a big green roll. I low he warn't rared right even if his old man is quite infloenshul.

"And then thar's just the opposite. A young feller standin' bout six four in his socks. Sometimes his hide seems so coppersy you'd swar he war part Injun. Waal I got no haircuts on my cuff fur him neither but the way he counts his twenty-five pennies, I speckerlate they didn't gravitate into his jeans through a fire hose. Never talks about his folks. Fact is he don't talk much

nohow. But he just be a doin' some-thin' decent for someone all the time. The 'U' haint spoiled him. Fixed Forbe's old squawkin' gate just because it was their sparkin' place as younguns. Doctored Beverly's old blind Bozo for weeks afore he went whar good purps go. And fer me, painted that pole three times a 'ready. And all this *I know* he done fer nothin'? Goin to be a doctor? Wall mebbe, or a preacher? Could be. And nice as he is a feller there's a little peach comes in occashunally. Folks may be rich but money hain't spiled her. When she shows up for a fancy hairdo, if I'm busy I al'ays feel like sayin' 'step down please, thar's a lady waitin'. She too is al'ays doin' somebody some good. All wool charity bazaarer,—sings like a angel. All the sky pilots know it. Man! How her voice kin smack the lid on an evaporatin' congregashun! Queer how when I think of the Injun feller, I al'ays think of her. Well mister,—what'll it be wet or dry?"

THE fuel rustlers well knew Jef's sentiments and as three of them viewed the shaft's outline in the shadowy darkness, they too, saw a certain majesty in it. Again rebellion flared and was stalled with greater vigor, Junior employed his ham-sized chamois-soft palm to gag Shorty's most stubborn verbal resistance.

"I'll tape your chatter-box if necessary! There's to be no skeleton dance tonight if I have to lay the three of you cold!"

And as the pole came up and was toted noiselessly to the car, Junior expressed satisfaction in his great achievement:

"That completes *my* fuel quota for the current festivity."

The gate, lashed along the left running board, obstructed entrance there,

so the pole was to be placed on the right, bottom end, well forward. Mammoth, alone on the front seat, would do the driving, and when all readied to go, Junior would sit between Shorty and Pinhead on the rear seat. He reserved this personal-safety detail for the moment. Well, Junior's satellites killed too much time in the lashing of the pole; so, Junior *extremely vexed*, stooped to menial labor. And so engrossed he grew, that when Hemingway's police dog, securely leashed a hundred yards away, gave a wolfish bark, square knots changed to granies. That bark should not have fretted Junior for there was something bruin, gooseflesh close, lumbering carward, tinkling—woofing, clanking his chains and in an evil mood to do bodily harm to mischievous humans. The satellite trio instantly recognized the bruin presence. Not so, Junior, until he heard the right rear door slam, leaving him outside with one alternative—to keep the car between himself and bruin. It was near the half-way mark of the fourth lap around, when the car shot forward under Shorty's guidance. And it was at this very moment that bruin came within cuffing distance of the western side of Junior's pants. He was not as safely ensconced upon the rear bumper as he had supposed for suddenly he sensed an impropriety in sartorial splendor and four parallel scratches that had appeared suddenly upon his person.

Junior would have chosen an early moment to slip gracefully from the speeding vehicle but he could risk no further lacerations of his tweeds or epidermis. So while hugging the bumper with the affection of a spider monkey, he stirred a witch's brew for his satellites—thoughts bubbling with jolly concoctions of slow torture and premeditated murder.

IN THIS unholy frame, Junior unwound himself from the bumper as the car stopped near the bonfire. His appearance, untidy of course, was more than a surprise to the trio. It was a horrid apparition. The satellites needed no verbal prodding to move silently in their respective orbits in unloading the fuel treasure. Bozo's old home and Forbes' gate went to their doom on the far side of the blaze, but not the pole. Hardy sought to smooth the dimples in his dented prestige by loudly ordering its disposal at a point near by. With Mammoth leading, the pole moved flameward. His bulk lent weighty argument but his inaudible, "Gangway!" warnings weakened the heraldic grandeur of the procession. What stopped the parade was a deep masculine voice:

"Nothing doing, *Stony!* That's Jef's. Take it back!"

Junior hurried forward along the opposite side of the pole, from Cyrus Jayson.

"Why *me?*" he asked. "I haven't done anything. Say you birds—Did I bring that candy cane in?"

"No," sorrowfully answered the trio.

"Bushwah!" drawled Cyrus.

"Tell it to him, big boy!" shouted a girl holding a ring-side seat to the ruckus which had sizzled almost unnoticed. Dot Sempleton did not like Junior's ways.

"Shut your trap, you big tub!" snapped Junior, "And for you, Sawbones, if I got the pole—so what?"

"That's a laugh. Admitting I lack the details of the recent episode, yon flickering flame lends mystic enchantment,—even more—a revealing light whereby I perceive base facts!"

Junior's jaw nose-dived while both his hands instantly side-slipped and snap-rolled to the former western region of his pants. Equally surprised by Cy's disclosure of Junior's disclosure,

the trio gaped at the mystic master of the occult as he continued,—

"Now, for the *so what!* You know *well* what that pole means to Jef. Haven't you any regard for his brand of sentiment? Besides that, Jef needs it to live; he can't feed on I-O-U's!"

"Ain't that too bad?" Junior shouted, "He's ready to check out anyway. When he's dead, he's dead. So, no more lip from this Sunday school sap! Gang-way!"

Shorty and Pinhead surged forward, holding fairly amidships on the same side, to balance the pole and stay clear in the final toss. The safety measure was needless. Cy gave a vigorous leap and sidewise push thus spinning the pole around. Naturally, it upset Junior physically. Mentally, he fumed. Scrambling to his feet, he made a healthy pass at Cyrus—and—missed!

Now Jason, embryo physician or not, knew the potency of a certain medicine. He was scrupulous in measuring it to the needs of the moment. The counter-irritant about the knees of Junior had reduced a painfully swollen ego but the reaction had been unfavorable. Hence Cyrus concluded that plaster applied close to the focus of infection should be given immediate trial. So, curving his right hand he plastered it over Junior's left ear with cyclonic rapidity. Although more upsetting to the patient, the cupping took immediate effect.

Dot Sempleton was visibly impressed by the gratifying impact. Later in the evenings she giggled the affair to Beatrice Melicent:

"When Cy hit that big palooka, it clapped like stacking plates at the Greasy Spoon!"

"Youch!" Bea exclaimed as Dot's hands climaxed her description.

"Oh baby! More'n youch! It was almost—'Quick! the smelling salts!'—By

the way, fellow, Where were you? Has the Great Magnet lost its pull, or, have you lost the iron in your blood?"

Beatrice hesitated, her eyes looking without seeing: "Could be, pal. I doubt he's human enough to be lonesome. Guess he's just a passingly interesting study in bronze, cold, unfeeling, insensitive to the deeper emotions."

"Gosh what a case."

Be that as it may, *Junior* solicited solitude—

However, he handed the keys of his car to the trio, before making himself scarce.

The satellites' assignment was not entered with enthusiasm until Cyrus offered to pilot them on his own bike as soon as the pole was ready.

"It might be safer that way," Cy said and he told them why:

That afternoon he overheard a conversation in the express office. A Professor Swartzmeister was vainly searching for a lodging for his bear 'Jo,' booked for a showing at the Peopleston Bijou. So Cy induced Jef to lease a shed back of his shop for the night. "And now" he said in conclusion, "Poor moth-eaten fuzzy is on the loose!"

**WHAT** the trio knew, Cy did not ask. He didn't have to. But he did have some difficulty in untangling three honest versions spouted at the same time.

Well, when Junior's car was not far from Jef's shop, Cyrus checked the pace. Soon they made out what he saw. The hole where the pole had been was hollowed to bath-tub proportions and within it a furry mound dreamed the happy hours away. Cy tossed overboard a little black box and whispered to douse the head lights, and stop. The trio thought they saw something trailing along behind Cy's bike. Then, only



their ears could 'see' in tantilizing darkness. A few half-hearted sniffs puffed to super dupers. A tinkling of chain dwindled to a deadly silence, to be broken suddenly by Cy's whispering shadow,—“All okey doke! Let's get busy!”

Peopleston was very old. It sprawled lazily both sides of a little creek and survived the snoozy years for no known reason, except one—old Faith. This was a pest and a cow. Well-heeled folks stomped and bellowed at the exuberance of youth. Realists piped down. Their few stores were stocked to pinch-hit with everything from razor blades to bobbie pins. The University had a different method of approach. It trumpeted to the thirsty in the Desert of Illiteracy through a handsomely-embellished voluminous brochure, alluringly illustrated. The silvery clarion, however, was too sweetly low to reach more than a V-mail cross-section of ears, American.

What the modest enrollment lacked in numbers it made up in wind—a battle-royal forum of theories political, religious and scientific, getting nowhere.

The pseudo-intellectual cyclone found expression in the puzzling personality of one Abigail Mardigras, A.B.; Ph.D.; Pd.D. To the students, she was 'The Madam,'—why so tagged, nobody knew. The monicker seemed a tailor-made fit, so nobody suggested alterations. At close range, she was an ice cube (dry ice), but distance did tricks. Middle years, bilious features and sombre costume melted gracefully into an attractive widowy composition.

Professionally, the Madam occupied unique, and, all-powerful positions;—As Dean of Women—an executive of steel, machine of precision—tolerance plus zero minus zero. Stringent rules

made the women's dormitory safe but a bleak colorless abode, bare of the 'homey atmosphere' featured by counterfeit half-tones in the brassy brochure. Not so her own office. Madras curtains softened the windows. An oriental softened the floor. Period furniture eased the eye—not the person. And an endless profusion of oils and ivories of gods, gargoyles and griffins, ested the visitor's reason. A few text books and a well-thumbed edition of Bulfinch—The Age of Fable, took the last breath of air in the room.

As 'Queen' of the Humanities, the 'blade of efficiency' carved out the courses; spiked all objections; pared down the credits. In studies, *mandatory*, the women got a tough break. Woe came a 'trottin' to any fair coed who failed to lap up a certain gooey mess with gusto, for, in class, the cutlass slashed with merciless force, and, in the office of the Dean, came hissing down with a haughty decisive sweep of self-created power.

Beatrice Melicent looked for the lark in his heaven. The morning was that kind as she hurried alone, earlier than usual, toward old pretentious Hub Hall. Far across the campus a black unsightly heap still smouldered and steamed from a final midnight hosing. Ugly as it was, it reminded her of an evening worth remembering, not for any romantic nonsense—the study in bronze saw with eyes that saw not—was, therefore, just a waste of makeup.

The sky was gloriously blue, the world softly green, the air so buoyant, she did not notice the steps up to the doorway. She made straight for the bulletin board, not that she anticipated finding anything of importance to her, merely to obey a routine mandatory rule. But this morning she did find a scratch-pad sheet reading,—“Miss

Beatrice Melicent will report immediately to the office of the Dean of Women. A. Mardigras."

BEA quickly removed the notice. She was glad she had been first to see the board and doubly so to find nobody else in the hall. The Madam had not attended Chapel. No doubt she was in her office, and this notice permitted no postponement. Bea proceeded at reduced speed down the corridor. She tapped gingerly, on the office door. At a muffled "Come in," she oozed through. The Madam parboiled her for fully a minute before asking her to sit down. Then reaching for an office copy of the brochure the doctor opened it with machine precision and said, in a droning monotone:

"This is to refresh your memory;—Here, under 'The Humanities'—(omitting irrelevancies) we find 'Course H-1 *Mythological Symbolism*—for female matriculants—*mandatory*. This course embraces a comprehensive survey of ancient, mediaeval and more recent priceless heritages of human fancy. Its objective is to cultivate the ability to recognize, associate and interpret emblematic configuration whenever encountered in the Fine Arts—Free or Dependent, or wherever these adorable treasures are seen or symbolized in poetry or prose.

"So vast is the subject, and so limited the time, the esthetic standards of Faith University necessitate restricting the study to mythical, legendary and other fictional, characters, of *true cultural worth*. These matchless pearls of allegory, from the romantic point of view, being of particular appeal to Woman, and a comprehensive knowledge thereof, widely interpreted, being of aid in relative evaluation of truly artistic concepts, this course is deemed of *first importance* to young women."

The Madam closed the brochure and leaned toward her target to fire at a more effective range:

"You are undoubtedly aware why you are here. I deem it incumbent upon me to supervise the welfare of each young woman and be observant of her conduct. *Your* apparent popularity with male matriculants should enhance your interest in lyric poetry, if not with mythology of the ancients, per se. Such is not the case. Your themes are juvenile. I am amazed that my-colleagues allow you more than conditional grades. Your critiques of the attributes accredited to mythical beings indicate gross inattention to *my* evaluation of the cultural worth of these *priceless heritages*.

"*I demand* that these *adorable treasures* strike a responsive chord in every student in my class. I hold that neglect of my teachings is tantamount to *failure* and, not merely in *this course alone!* I trust this warning will be sufficient!"

Beatrice sat motionless, too confused to think. . . . Recovering from the initial blast, she silently evaluated her own true self. She had ranked with the upper third for nearly four years. She loved romance. It was truly the breath and heart beat of myth and legend, yet why had she found Mythological Symbolism a thrilling dodo? Was it the personality of the Madam in the classroom? No. . . . What the ??? Why, the cunning plan to the entire course, *That* was it!

Generations of Yankee steam superheated by some forebears below the Mason and Dixon line, raced through 120 pounds of dazzling Miss America; —and—the pressure grew too great:

"Dean Mardigras," she snapped springing to her feet, "You have authority to grade, D-grade, or flunk any girl you choose. You are likewise privi-

leged to form opinions as to the cultural values of those 'priceless heritages' but you have no authority to demand acquiescence. I appreciate fully there are some 'matchless pearls' in the elaborate chain of World Art, fiction, and poetry, but that long chain of 'cultural worths' does not break abruptly at the four-mile limit!"

The Madam winced,—her lips drew taut—yet she made no answer. Beatrice drew a deep breath again.

"Has the policy of this school grown so alienated in cultural appreciation that no beauty or romance is seen in our own flower gardens! But how we're dosed with Appolo, Calliope, Clio, Erato, Shiva, Shamash, Haciman and oodles more of 'em—a virtuous and villainous messy stew poured in an endless stream ad nauseam! Is the world a blank from New Foundland to Alaska? I suppose no god or goddess, fairy, witch, ghost or dragon ever haunted a New World wilderness. Phooey! The high-brow build-up in your circus souvenir is a 'pip' for a three-ring show but the act is nothing but a lop-sided one-ring flop playing a long, long way from Home Sweet Home. I'm mad! And the madder I get, the more I see things you don't. *There is* beauty, poetry, prose, romance, myth and legend galore in just such 'adorable treasures' as these,—a Currier and Ives, Rip Van Winkle, Sleepy Hollow, the Raven, Romana,—and—*Hiawatha!* There's a *song* right down your alley! A wry smile crept over her face as Bea's temper tossed in her last chip,—"Say Doc, why don't you dish that out?"

FOR a full minute neither woman moved, neither woman spoke. The Madam's eyes closed slowly and her tense lips narrowed to two blue lines—ugly cords devoid of motion yet speak-

ing within. Then the normal mask returned to the Madam's face and normal sub-zero temperature returned to the spoken word:

"It is indeed interesting to learn that you intimate interest in things other than cosmetic artifice and personal adornment." She hesitated. Her lips were drying. Gaining control of her nerves, she continued:

"Regardless of your infantile comprehension of cultural worth, I must be fair. Therefore, speaking in the vulgarities of the street with which you are distressingly familiar, *you have asked for it, and—you are going to get it!*

"Acting upon your inference, I direct you to prepare a ten thousand word theme which shall treat of the mythology of the Red Races. Properly prepared, it will require no little research. The interior of the library will helpfully turn your attention from the gymnasium, amateur dramatics and popularity contests. I warn you, your final and deciding grade will rest upon the *informative* perfection of this thesis. The subject matter is of no cultural value.

"It will prove woefully drab, wholly lacking the sparkle, gaiety, buoyance, life and romance which has so brilliantly illuminated my classroom. It will be dry leaves, long dead, crumbling unto dust. Miss Melicent, you are excused."

Sentence was *passed*, not suspended, Bea thought as she drifted through a foggy door. Absolute failure stared at her from everything. Even a handsome rug just outside the Madam's door, shrieked as the Sun's rays sharpened its black-white striping. Let the gong ring! Classes weren't for her. Bea started toward a little-used side exit. She hoped she might even reach her room unnoticed.

She had taken no more than a step or two when the sound of a window opening and closing seemed to come from the Madam's office. But Bea was too concerned to be curious. She hurried outside. *There* she could not hear the house phone ring in Professor Bertram's office. Yet it did a few minutes later. The switchboard operator had a request to relay to him.

"This is the operator, Professor Bertram. Will you be available to conduct the 10:30 class in Mythological Symbolism, this morning? Doctor Mardigras is indisposed. This is her request."

With near automatism, Beatrice stooped, picked up a tiny trinket and rolled it in her handkerchief—"Poor Mother and Dad" was her all-absorbing thought. Classes were in session, and so few out of doors were within hearing, that a heavy step approaching, attracted her attention.

It was Junior on his way from the school's garage, heading for Doctor Hargrave's laboratory. Junior was one person, she didn't care to meet. An invulnerable friendship between the Madam and the Stoneeres was common knowledge. But curiosity took momentary possession as Beatrice looked closer. Under his left arm Junior carried two cumbersome books. From the hand of his right there dangled a large white rabbit gripped by his long pink ears. It kicked frantically. He was really in no mood to be bothered.

"Quit you darn albino mule!" he yelled, "Snicker Snee VII 'll cut the kick out o' you. The more pronto, the better." Beatrice waved a 'poker-face' hello. Junior didn't return it. He didn't have time—or inclination. A gust of wind toyed with his hat. His right hand shot upward to grasp it. Later on, Bea could not swear whether it was on the way up or down that the rabbit kicked

Junior in the face. The result mattered, not the precise instant, when the rabbit made its get away. As the animal bobbed along in a kangarooish frenzy, he apparently saw many inviting dark recesses in the black steamy debris of the bonfire. There seemed no other sanctuary in a vast expanse of early spring lawn.

"I hope you roast," Junior shouted as he wiped the kick from his face.

Despondent as she was, this was too much. Bea laughed. Junior scowled. "That goes for other dumb bunnies too," adding, "To please the Doc I hauled that beast all the way from the express office. Crate was too heavy. I left it in the garage. Thought I'd stand in Jake, but I'll spin a smooth yarn."

Bea's face had sobered, "You better hurry or be late for your 'story hour.'"

"Cut the shooting," Junior snapped, "You may be needing a *friend* some day. A friend in need is—very expensive, my Cutie."

**B**EATRICE was a deep dark blue as she walked on,—that invulnerable friendship between the Stoneeres and the Madam—the plight of the rabbit.

As she neared the dormitory entrance, Cyrus Jason rounded into the grounds. He roomed in town. A bicycle was his means of transportation. Spotting Beatrice he shouted, "Hie Lady! Why homeward so early?"

"O, I'm a mush I guess," she said as Cyrus stopped.

"What's it all about, you look down?"

Bea stalled. She pressed the rabbit incident as the reason for the spell of the blues. In conclusion she said, "You know when I was a kid I always wanted a white rabbit just like that poor little dickens. I've never outgrown it. And there he is—escaped dissection by a wiggle and now must

starve or roast to death!"

Cyrus looked at her searchingly, "I'm sorry for bunny myself but that tale is too short even for a rabbit. What's the matter with you?"

Beatrice swayed dizzily. Cyrus reached out his hand. "Steady! Little Girl." He urged her around to the little-used side door where they could park on the steps.

Beatrice tried being steady. Her lips quivered and the dam gave away! Cy's sympathies fell first, then,—his heart.

She was no longer just a fine girl with a voice that did queer things to him; no longer Miss Melicent. She was his own Saint Beatrice, canonized by Cupid, an angel in heaven, yet as near as the life in his heart. He was strong, but not strong enough to tell her so. Likewise he groped for words, "Bea" he stammered—"I—I—I wish you'd tell me what's gone haywire. Maybe I can help you."

Bea hesitated, yielding, when a hysterical stutter was well wound up, "Well if you mu-mu-must k-k-know. I-I-I'm in the dog-dog-house."

"It hasn't any door."

"But the Madam chained me up," she persisted.

"I'll sniff and snap the weakest link. Please give me the low-down Bea?"

She did. And he promised to keep it under his hat. That promise, he knew, would never be broken.

She told the whole story, finally voicing utter dejection:

"She has me Cy, I'm sunk and she knows it," her emotions welled again. Cyrus wanted to put his arm around her, yet a chap without a single tangible prospect, had no right. He could be no more than a real friend in need. When Beatrice had calmed enough to listen he said, "I've been thinking. You know, there's something phony about that course. I have a hunch the

Madam has been carting around a symbol of something for so long a time its old enough to be a legend but you can bet your life it isn't any myth."

Beatrice looked at him curiously. She said slowly, "Somehow your hunch clicks perfectly with her dreamy remark, 'It will be dry leaves, long dead, crumbling unto dust.'"

"Sure does. Men don't have to take that crazy course but I'm a trifle observing. A long time ago I noticed a tiny arrow-head pinned on the Madam's dress right over her heart. It was a peach. Since then I don't recall ever seeing her without it, and always sort of 'on the bias' as you might say. Now I opine this Mythological Symbolism is a sort a' sealed tomb holding not a trace of that which she once adored—a fire burning to the god of Hatred to damn a cherished memory. That *point* is a hair-shirt torture she endures to keep the fire burning. She seals this fetish in, by sealing it out—queer complex, isn't it? You see what I am driving at."

Beatrice nodded. "Yes, I *am* beginning to see. Why the gewgaws in her office reflect what you have figured out. And do you know Cy, that rough swastika Navaho rug just outside her office door gives her a chance to tramp on it going and coming. More hate."

"Fits the whole picture doesn't it. Say, little One, (pardon me Beatrice) which way does the swastika whirl?"

"To the left. I stood and gawped at it long enough waiting to get in."

"Are you sure the rug isn't upside down?"

"How dumb I am. No wonder it looked rough. What a crazy idea."

"Well I'd call it a compound complex. Walking on the rug face up—that's vengence of clabbered love. But wrong side up, that's *hate*. With no punches pulled. Yet it all adds up to

the . . ."

"Yes," Beatrice broke in nervously. "It all adds up to the fact that my crazy temper hit the bulls-eye when it ran berserk. And it gave the Madam a chance to take it out on me. And there's nothing I c-c-c-can d-d-do about it!" Again she wiped away the tears with the soggy wadded wisp. A fine red line trailed the stroke of her hand. Cyrus was tortured again with an insane (or, may be *sane*) impulse to draw her close to him. But, heavens—this was no place—a gold fish globe in broad day light. Capsized in her tears his eyes searched hopefully across the soft carpet of the campus. An early robin was pulling for his breakfast. "Look there" he exclaimed, "I've never seen one of those chaps cut up his wiggling meat very neatly and then eat bit by bit. That's etiquette!"

Cyrus glanced at Beatrice, hopeful of results. One look was enough, "Bea" he cried, "You have scratched your cheek, you are bleeding. Don't you feel it?"

SHE dabbed at her face and did feel a prickle through the linen. Quickly she opened her handkerchief, and both of them stared wide eyed! Beatrice was dumbfounded, Cyrus managed to say, "That's the *Point!* It's black Obsidian, where *did* you get it? Been holding back on me, eh?"

Bea swallowed hard, "Holding back, my foot! I didn't even feel it. Lucky I didn't scratch my eyes out with it. I picked that up on the walk on my way over here but I have been so upset I forgot it and didn't even notice what it was. I guess I picked it up about opposite the Madam's window."

"You *are* lucky! This all fits into the picture. She took the beating of her life this morning and she sensed you had a toe hold on her riddle so she couldn't

risk the wearing of the point another moment."

"And so, she tossed it out the window."

"Right! You're a wizard!" Cy enthused, "Well I figure it's yours. 'Losers—Finders—Keepers.' I bet you could wear it right over your heart and she would never let on she saw it."

Beatrice hoped inwardly that there would be no occasion for that—never!

To be sure that the point had not been lost, they again examined it. The pin-lock was perfect. It was backed with gold, this bright, indicating recent wearing. The pin was closed when found. Then Beatrice recalled another oddity about the Madam—she always wore black or some subdued shade. The apparel camouflaged the point. Conscience free but frowning, Beatrice attached the arrow head to the novelty bracelet on her arm where it surely would not tempt History to repeat. Feeling a little regretful she said,

"It'll do no good for me to go to the Madam and tell her I'm sorry."

"That's so. At least she must respect you now, but you would lose it that way. The only thing is to go through. How about meeting me in the library tonight around seven. We'll give some musty old books a good massage and gather up a basket full of notes. That'll be a good start. The rest will be easy. What say?"

Beatrice lacked the courage to say what she thought. "You're a great big darling!" She dissolved this in luke-warm oral skim milk.

"I'll appreciate a little coaching."

"Okeydoke! Now I got to get going. Dr. Hargrave wants my slant as a student on our pre-medic' course. I've dabbled a little with it you know. But remember I'll be seeing you around 7. Don't keep me waiting. A broken date annoys me. O!, before I go, I antici-

pate we'll break out within twenty-four hours with bad attacks of 'Rubraderma Mythogotis' so I prescribe two tickets to the Flicker Scratch tomorrow evening. Prof. Schwartzmeister you know is booked with a trained bear between the double features. What say?"

**G**IGGLING nervously over the Red skin Myth-disease she looked up at him smiling and said, "Don't keep me waiting. A broken date annoys me."

Cyrus did not confer with Dr. Hargrave. He had a more important furry matter on his mind. When Beatrice was safely out of sight he headed for the kitchen where Maggie operated this filling station.

Said she, "You're a queer sort of guy tip-toein' in every little while wid your fingers on your lips and givin' me that moth-eaten gag 'this is our secret' and never tellin' me what you be doin' with what you gets. Lasht evenin', a comb of honey. Nary a bit of it you ate. Now 'tis juicy carrots with whiskers on you do be wantin'. Here they are. God love ye! You spalpeen. Such secrets are not worth tellin'."

With these, an empty soap box and a few sticks, Cyrus headed for the charred heap across the campus.

As Jason tip-toed his exit through the door, Mammoth sought sustenance through another,

"Hello Maggie Old Palsie Walsie," he said, "Please just a few breakfast crumbs to tide me along. I feel weak."

"You're always waked! You should be. Wid carrin' your mornin' vittels, you should be trembling like an overloaded grocery wagon with its rear axle sprung. You'll ate us out of house and home. But better we take the chance of bein' evicted than you die on your fate. Here you are me b'y. But don't pull up that chair you spalpeen. Two legs you broke already and Jason was

a fixin' of em two hours. Just break another so I'll have good strong ones if you live long enough atin' yourself to death."

Between gulps and gobbles Mammoth mumbled incoherently, "You—my lifesaver! I—move —, I breathe, I am a living thing—again."

"You are? Well, if you are livin', you're no air-plant like Jason. He don't ate nothing. Lasht avenin' afore supper he bartered wid me for honey which he didn't ate. This mornin', tis' carrots which he don't ate. But he aint wake from fastin'."

Mammoth nearly choked between gulps. "You say he got the honey before supper?"

"Yes afore' supper and the big jam-boree. And twas no dude honey in a bottle. It was in a box, chewin' gum and all, like be-as mak' it."

"I got it" shouted Mammoth.

"Hevins, did you ate that too?"

"I did not but I know who did and it was'nt Cy. Thanks for the fuel. Charge it."

.. "Charge it. Bejabers, Tis time I stuck up a sign Vegetable Mortishun, for—DEAD BEETS. Go long wid you now. You have me grub. Now you be takin' me time. Shoo!"

Mammoth had news. The source was his to keep. Shorty and Pinhead had ears to listen to what he chose to tell them.

"So Cy baited the bear with honey," remarked Shorty. "But why, Most High Scoop, did he get it before supper?"

"You dumb egg, old Cy had planned to feed it to him anyway. He is a right guy!"

**B**EATRICE in entering her own room found a Special Delivery letter left under the door by the matron. It was from her mother. It was lengthy

and sobbed as follows:

At Home.

My Dear Dear Daughter:

Mother hardly knows how to begin to tell you what circumstances compel me to. Daddy and I are nearly frantic and if there were time, we would have you come home and then explain everything. But we know you are a strong little girl with a lot of common sense and will do your best to help us in this difficult position. We feel confident that what we have tried to do for our little girl, all these years, she appreciates deeply.—As much as I hate to tell you many things—I must. Some that I may mention, you may already know. But to make our position perfectly clear, I'll tell you everything. And this was what the letter told:

When Beatrice was a baby, the Melicents and Stoneeres were neighbors. Once when Junior was taken so ill he needed special attention, the Melicents took care of him in their home, as the Stoneeres' income was meagre. Later, the families drifted apart. The Stoneeres prospered. The Melicents' finances remained unchanged. Why this occurred was learned from a Mr. Revere, a broker in sound securities. But Melicent would not have learned this, had Stoneeres not rejected a more recent security offering. Feeling that Stoneere's confidence was lost, Revere submitted the proposition to Melicent. He accepted it. Through this the Melicents prospered. Revere, having vindicated his judgment, teased Stoneere about it. Enraged, he accused Revere of insincerity. The bitterness lasted. At first the Melicents were amused but rumors sprouted that Melicent and Revere had swindled Stoneere out of a mine. Revere was abroad then, on an extended journey and the Melicents, embarrassed called on their old friends. They ardently denied initiating the ru-

mor and casually wondered why Revere had left so suddenly.

However the damage was done. Business acquaintances doubted Melicent. To refer them to Stoneere would admit embarrassment. Revere's whereabouts was not definitely known, so gossip spread, even invading social affairs. Again the Melicents visited the Stoneeres. It was just after Junior was home for a week-end visit. So frantic was Melicent, he offered to sell the investment at cost. The Stoneeres gushingly refused, she even expressing a hope that Beatrice would become interested in Junior for he had mentioned her frequently. To further the matter, Mrs. Stoneere had arranged an exclusive social function for the following Saturday evening; had written Junior to invite Beatrice in person. The Melicents could see no way of refusing and in closing her letter. Mrs. Melicent wrote: "You, my dear, can help us so in being very nice to Junior. Daddy and I have always wanted you to choose for yourself in selecting a life partner, but with the turn that things have taken we so hope Junior's affection for you will be reciprocal! It means so much! We can not believe the Stoneeres are insincere and we would be broken hearted should you feel you were being sacrificed against your heart's desire. We would rather die in penniless disgrace than have you hurt.

Your loving, and confused,

Mother.

**B**EATRICE thrust the letter in her blouse, and her sobbing face in her pillow. Fate had toyed cruelly with her in less than two hours. A happy girl had suffered the threat of failure. True love had lifted her heart to the zenith of hope and unforeseen circumstances had dashed it to bits on her own abounding filial affection! Dear Cy was ordained to live in one world, she in another, as



far apart as heaven from earth. She, too, was doomed to wear obsidian over her heart in years to come.

At the noon hour, Dot Sempleton breezed into their room and found Beatrice dazed, if not half insane. Dot's eyes sauced, "What in the world is the matter with you?" she exclaimed, "You are as red as a beet, you've got a fever! Where is our thermometer? Your eyes are swelled to pop! Got the flue? Shall I call a Doctor? Maybe there is an epidemic! You skipped Myth Sym this morning. So did the Madam. 'Pop' Bert-ram took over and what an old dear he is."

Beatrice mumbled. Dot caught the words "live" or "die" and guessed the rest. "Praise be, so 't isn't a fever. Come on Pal just spill the whole works. It will relieve that stuffed up feeling!" The room spun as Beatrice searched for words. Some things she could tell,—her set-to with the Madam—the rabbit incident—Cy's proffered assistance—the movie date. And there were things she could not tell. Her mother's letter was a family affair. Finding the black obsidian was her secret, Cy's secret; he had touched it with his hands—it was priceless! Dot listened intently to what she told, noticing all the while, a strange wholly unnatural dreamy indifference. Dot pitied her but didn't dare to,— "Well if you aren't lucky! There was a Bea in our school and she was wondrous wise; she yumped into a bramble bush—and near' scratched out both her eyes; and when *he* thought her eyes were out, with all his might and brain, along came Cyrus Jason, to scratch 'em in again. How do you do these things." You'll land the A.B. and a C.Y. too, or my name isn't Featherweight Flossie."

Bea merely replied, "You're the best pal in the world, but you don't under-

stand. It isn't any use." Dot didn't understand. *That* worried her. She persisted in her own silly way.

"You better stick your finger down your throat!" That suggestion failed. She pondered desperately. She started on a new tack. She resorted to a fairy tale form in the telling with the hope to both interest and irritate her pal, as a way of relief from this strange mood. What she told was important . . . not how she told it. (Dot had overheard a conversation many years before between Mrs. Stoneere and Dot's own mother, during a social call.)

It started 'Once upon a time' . . . and went on to give Beatrice food for thought. It was a story of a horrid dragon and a winsome Miss. The Miss was named Abigail, but she didn't know the dragon's name. Nevertheless it was tall, dark and handsome. How the Miss met the dragon nobody knew. He didn't ride a white charger as a Prince Charming should; he worked nearly every day digging up old bones and chinaware. Abigail fell so heavy for the big bone rustler she grew equally interested in his work. She had inherited a little money and trailed around with the dragon, digging and sorting and writing. She, having no real home, and he, no castle, their abodes were under their hats, parked in the same lot at a respectable distance apart. Then came our entry into the First World War. Prince Charming grew restless, they quarreled over nothing and he volunteered, Abigail received just one letter from somewhere in France. And then, unlike the usual fairy tale 'thirty'—they didn't live happy ever after, for, Abigail heard no more.

Dot's colorful account impressed her roommate. All Beatrice could say was "So *there are* the dry leaves long dead. Dot you are a swell pal but please go on and let me alone. Don't stew about me, I'll make a stab at that darn theme

and go down with my boots on if I have to." It was a good bluff. Dot kissed Beatrice and hurried off with mascara, rouge and lipstick landing hit or miss as she made for the first afternoon class.

**B**EATRICE, alone, felt herself ossifying into a cold unfeeling machine—a second Madam. There was a schedule to be met.—A letter to her mother. It would be precise, dispassionate, and tinted with a superficial display of concern over her parents unhappy position. It would express an intent to comply with her mother's wishes. It would be affectionately cordial without over-emphasis. The steam in her veins of that morning was congealed to crystals of ice. With the letter completed she would get a cup of tea. Only Maggie would be present. She never minded being imposed upon. She would return to her room. Watch for Junior. She would walk outside and with nonchalance, cross his path. This would be in conformity with her mother's wishes. She would return to her room, feign a splitting headache, thereby satisfy Dot's anticipations. Later as per agreement, she would keep the library appointment promptly. Accept the aid, thank Cyrus courteously, casually break the date for the following evening and then return to her room—all—just like that!

The female machine clicked perfectly, according to plan until the crossing of paths with Junior, then, 'it' jammed! "Hello again!" was the best 'it' could do in tackling defective 'material,' having a noticeably swollen ear. Ah! here was something worth working on! "Why Hardy," exclaimed the machine, "How come?"

Junior, surprised, crawled neatly through the cat-hole with a characteristic tailor-made lie:

"Tripped in the dark, treasure hunting for fuel. Playing tag with watch-

dogs and rats is dangerous business! *Right here*, we'll have to do something about 'em. Just this morning I saw an educated rat sitting on the steps. Bold devil, I'd call him—ha! ha!"

For Mother and Dad, Beatrice could only say, "Sometimes, Hardy, you chant a funny lingo. If you and your folks weren't such nice people, I might think you were double-talking."

'She's off balance,' he thought. What a chance!" He spoke quickly, "Well, Beeb, I *am* a bit impetuous—a bit testy, perhaps—pure-quill splinter from the old oak. Say, by the way, girl, I'm glad I didn't have to hunt you up. Got a letter from Mom, the old dear. Came in the noon mail. The folks are throwing a party tomorrow evening. Impromptu affair. Informal. Mom would have dropped you a bid but didn't know how I stood in. I'll be leaving around 9 in the morning. How about it, kid?"

Nearly the last ounce of Bea's ebbing courage drained away in her reply, "O.K. It's a date."

Returning to her room, she found Dot already there.

"Here I am" she remarked.

"And much the worse for wear," said Dot, "Out with it!" she demanded.

"There's nothing worth telling."

"But don't forget your appointment."

"I'll be there."

"Gosh! You act like it's a date with an antedeluvian dentist."

"I'd rather have all my teeth pulled."

"Should be a thrill of a lifetime."

"It—will be"—Beatrice said slowly.

"It *should*, Dot snapped. I'd scrap the whole faculty for a 22-carat date like that. . . . You could leave out the brains too."

"The Madam's have been useful to her."

"Useful! 'Poor opiates' I'd call 'em. Bea there are a lot of darts in cupid's quiver."

"But not for me."

"Specialize if you want to. But if brains are trumps and hearts in the discard, you've a fist-full with a *photo mind* for a joker," Dot informed her.

"Sounds curious. Explain please?"

"Why Meggy, *my* boy friend, says Cy has a photographic mind. Dr. Hargrave wants him to give a demonstration. But your boy friend is—"

"Stop it Dot! Please, I have no boy friend."

"Sorry little one. My mistake. Any way Cy is a freak. He doesn't read like we do. He'll glance at a page and he has it. But he don't know how he does it. But he *can* do. And it's funny he remembers the whole mess."

BEA made no comment. Dot was not gifted with a photo mind but the observation she had, was in full blast. Beatrice was overly slow in changing her clothes, systematic, meticulous; from extreme care with her hair, to the fuss over her shoes. Dot's watch ticked full three minutes in the application of four drops of perfume—one on Bea's handkerchief—one under the lobe of each ear—the fourth dabbed over her heart.

"She's game," mused Dot to herself, "Three-quarters dead on her feet, but dolling up fit for a prom. Wonder what it's all about?"

The silence was oppressive to Dot. For relief, she said, "You know, Bea, I can just imagine the library session. He will plow up enough notes in fifteen minutes to keep you busy for a week. It'll be just volume after volume 'til the end."

"Yes," repeated Beatrice, disconsolately; "*To the end.*"

At supper, Dot anticipated an unpleasant all night session and fortified her inner self accordingly.

Beatrice minced through one cup of weak tea, one soda cracker and one

scanty spoonful of applesauce.

At a minute to seven she entered the library. Cyrus met her at the door. In a corner near the shelves there was ample table space and nobody to bother them. Placing a note book on the table Beatrice said, "What do we do now?"

Cyrus replied, "We are tackling something new to us. Let's see what books there are in the 970.1 section. Then over there in General Reference I'm guessing we'll find the Transactions of the Bureau of American Ethnology."

"How about stacking them up right here on the table," Beatrice suggested.

"Let's go!" he agreed.

The truth was, Beatrice craved action as an opiate. No volume was too heavy for her. As the books piled up Cyrus remarked:

"From the dust on *you*, these haven't been touched since Rip swallowed the knock-out drops."

"How about yourself," retorted Beatrice.

"Oh, I haven't noticed myself."

"It's almost time to begin."

With the last volume tossed on the pile Cyrus said:

"Now I suggest you jot down the titles, filing numbers, pages and notes and leave the reading to me."

Beatrice seated herself across the table with a note book spread open before her.

"Well here goes," said Cyrus. And quite as Dot predicted the work proceeded. Beatrice had great difficulty in getting down the reference quotations before Cyrus had enough brief summaries of the subjects to stagger a shorthand expert. But she did her best to hold the pace.

Only once did Cyrus interrupt the steady grind. He'd found a faded newspaper clipping between the pages of a certain volume. He handed it to Beatrice saying, I found it right here where

Brinton mentions the association between the Thunder Bird Myth and the American Eagle. What a grand bird Old Abe must a' been, Mascot to the 8th Wisconsin in the Civil War. Saw thirty-six engagements; mustered out after three years of service and died of old age, an honored veteran, in retirement. Always went into action from a staff along side the colors, brave as a lion. Our forefathers weren't so dumb in choosing Old Baldy as our National Symbol."

Beatrice glanced at the clipping. "Quite interesting," she remarked, handing it back for return to its file. As Cyrus replaced it he remarked, "The memory of him is precious to *all of us* now." This accidental interlude gave Beatrice a chance to catch up. It didn't last. Soon she was one volume behind, then two, then three and then, at a stand still. The first break on her speed was the shade of Cy's hair—it was never quite so black, so warmly soft, so neatly trimmed and combed—none, to her, so beautiful and glossy, as he bent beneath the lamp upon the table. The second decelerating force embraced Cy's features — strongly masculine — high forehead, sloping slightly—square chin, entrancingly dimpled; a nose, slightly equiline but not too much and not too little; eyebrows arched divinely over piercing black orbs which enacted every emotion of the moment; complexion flawless, swarthy—and a mouth with lips . . . she would never dare to touch! In her over-zealous scrutiny of his lips, she hopelessly bogged down, Cy caught her staring blankly at the note book with pencil point, immovable. "Hie there little girl, what's the matter?" And he smiled as only her man from God could do.

"I think we have enough to keep me busy."

"As you say," he replied. "Only I

thought we'd corral as many of these misty thingum-bobs as we could. Then tomorrow we'd sort 'em out and tomorrow evening we'd just relax."

BEATRICE couldn't speak, couldn't move. Cyrus met the enigma of his life. Across the table from him, Beatrice stared into space, silent, eloquent in beauty — exquisite—tantalizing—maddening! He tried to break the spell by gathering up the volumes. Some reached their proper places. He seated himself again. Perspiration moistened his forehead as he watched her intently. With the last faint flutter of courage, Beatrice whispered.

"There-will-be-no-evening-ever-for-us-again-Cy-I have-another-date."

"There will be no evening ever for us again Cy, I have another date."

Her cherished features took strange shapes with the welling of his eyes. He choked, made a vain attempt to speak, slumped forward on his arms. His powerful fingers clutched and clutched in convulsive torment. Unseeing, they closed upon her wrist—upon the bracelet—upon something sharp suspended from it.

The hands ceased their contortions. The body raised. The warm kindly blood of faint hope congealed. The features became transfixed. The old Cy was gone. The new Cyrus arose, came around to the other side of the table, assisted Beatrice with her wrap, gathered the scattered notes, placed them neatly between the covers, and followed her quietly from the room.

Drum Pond was tiny, round as its name, and hidden—a half mile distant. An orchestral croaking seemed to celebrate a rebirth of all nature. One frog with a booming crescendo loudly contested for admiration.

"What a whopper," said Cyrus, casually.

"Must be like one of those giants," said Beatrice. "He'd be worth seeing."

"We can walk that way."

A transport droned overhead. Glancing up, Beatrice remarked, "Must be off its course. Wonder where its heading?"

"Wonder where any of us are. There are times when one seems without chart or compass, yet are destined to navigate a boundless forbidding ocean, which encircles the whole *flat* world." Cy's hand swept toward the last farewell kiss of a day that neither, wished to forget, nor remember. A veil of mist lying low obscured the hilly horizon,—a ghostly illusion of a sea. Down the crescent walk toward the gate, a shadowy figure rounded an intercepting walk and disappeared behind the buildings. If it was Junior, Beatrice hoped he hadn't seen them. Once out of the gate they took a side road toward the pond.

"It's a beautiful moon, Miss Melicent," said Cyrus, "But it's threatening in the east."

"My eyes have bothered me a little, but I thought I saw some sharp flashes as we came out of the gate."

"Suppose you noticed the strange cloud formation in that thunderhead. Great long pinions stretching across the sky above the hills. A whale of a bird! One can appreciate why the aborigines introduced birds and animals into their polytheistic concepts."

This was not Cy at all. Neither was his cold, practical, critical, prosaic comments in rationalizing another people's religious viewpoints. He talked rapidly,—"The subject of your assignment, per se, is far more embracing than I had anticipated. It appears impossible to give the matter a truly comprehensive treatment in the meagre limits of your theme. I suggest the myths and legends be briefed under general classifications.

Then it appears appropriate to treat of the inclusion of these figments into the polytheisms of the Red Races . . ." On and on he rambled with cosmogonies, atheistic concepts, Biblical concepts, sacrifice (animal and human) in religious doctrines, eventually concluding his systematic 'brick-on-brick' building of an outline, by saying, ". . . They do never-the-less teach that the aborigines was by no means atheistic, but, on the other hand, deeply religious; therefore worthy of our sincere respect as true Americans."

Beatrice was speechless. For what purpose, this? Merely to assist her in obtaining a sheepskin—a dry symbol of academic achievement, drained of the blood of life,—the only thing in life that really mattered. What did she care for *cosmogonies* and polytheisms with only a few fleeting minutes left for her in all eternity! Couldn't she bring the old Cy back for just a speck of time before giving him up forever? The road was rutted from the winter's wear. Loose gravel made the walking difficult. Suddenly, she cried, "Ouch" and started to limp.

"Pebble, real or phantom, the walking *is* difficult. Shall I assist you?"

"Don't trouble yourself." She raised her foot and removed her shoe, shook out the *phantom*, almost losing balance. Cyrus stood unconcerned. How she hated to turn back! How she wanted to see the 'marine band,' surprised by intruders—to see silvery rings dot the water—to punctuate the hasty exit of the nervous musicians—but . . . it couldn't be!

"'Phantom pebble!' That was mean," she said, "What's the sense of a quarrel between friends?"

"Between acquaintances you mean. We have many acquaintances in life, but, few friends. Friendship is something deep, sincere, warm, dependable,

lasting—no mere expedient of the moment.

"I know we better start back!" They did. She lost all sense of the roughness of the road but she suffered the exquisite torture of sacrifice, of which Cyrus had so glibly spoken. The execution of happiness was yet to be endured.

WITHIN a few feet of the dormitory, Beatrice slowed the pace...! Her wrap slipped from her shoulders. Cyrus caught it, lifted it about her, grasping the neck band as he faced her. With numbing fingers he drew her face closer ever closer until she could feel his warm clean breath. His fingers gently relaxed—she was free!

"Good-bye Little Girl, forever," he whispered. He saw her lips tremble but he heard no words.

Beatrice watched him turn away and walked toward the parking rack for bicycles. She fingered the bracelet on her wrist, unfastened the point and pinned it squarely over her heart—but 'on the bias' as Cy had said it. When she stumbled into their room, Dot caught her before she fell.

"It's all over little one. It can't hurt any more," Dot said as she helped Bea over to her bed. She sobbed in an hysterical frenzy, Dot's arm about her urging her to hush fearful that all the girls if not the matron herself might aggravate a bad situation.

Turning to Dot with insane fury Bea said, "I hate you, Cy, Junior, his mother, his father, my mother, my dad! I hate everybody." Again she broke into hysterical sobbing.

"Seven specified cats out of the bag at last! You don't hate me. You love me like your own twin sister. As to Cy I am neither blind nor dumb. I know darned well you love your mother and dad as well as I do mine but somehow they are all mixed up with that big gorilla and

his folks, and now out with it!"

*Beatrice Incubated between papers.*

reached into her blouse and drew out her mother's letter and handed it to Dot. She lit a cigarette and started to read. She perused it once, and again. She lit another cigarette. She turned to certain pages and reread them and as she folded it she said, "So you shook off the finest specimen of the genus homo that ever trod the campus for a worthless spoiled devil raised by buzzards and fattened on greed... all to appease those gilded monsters who bore him. Didn't you read between the lines? What was the matter with you? You must a been so close to the crooked mess you couldn't get the proper slant."

"What else could I do?"

"Well at least you could of let me in. Why all those clever swindlers are using you for is a cover, until they have everything. Your pa offered his interest for what it cost him. His business is shaking from the gossip. And the next thing, your dad will appeal to Stoneere for a loan and probably put up the stock for collateral. Low lived shinanigan!"

"O what an idiot I have been, and he's gone Dot,—forever."

"Shush!" said Dot as some one tapped on the door. "We're in for it! Mrs. Ferguson, I bet!" She fanned the smoke away from the door and opened it a crack. "Oh, its you Mrs. Ferguson."

"Yes Miss Sempleton. I have a box for Miss Melicent. It was left at the office a few minutes ago. Good-night."

"Gosh what a relief," sighed Dot. Hefting it she added, "A fruit cake, a big mama. I have always loved you Bea but Oh how I love you now." She placed the box on the table. "Dry your eyes and give this a slant." She handed Beatrice a note.

Beatrice tore it open, "I—I—I c—ca—can't see a thing. It's all blurred. You read it."

"I—I—I c—c—ca—can't see a thing. It's all blurred." She shoved the letter back to Beatrice, "Anyway it is too p-p-personal. . . . Darn you we won't get dried out in a week. Even the clouds are bawling." Dot jumped for the window as a gust of wind brought in a sprinkle of rain.

Beatrice took courage and read:  
Dear darling adorable girl:

What harm is there in thus addressing you even though I cannot call you mine? Only my undying trust in God alone, has carried me through. For, when you told me tonight that there would be no evening, ever for us again, all that I had hoped to be for your sake, vanished. But, with the return of my reason I faintly discerned the fitness of His way, —the cords of affection, holding me to old Faith are parting—my *hope* parted from me tonight—for me, only a mission of helpfulness to others, remains, Pray that I may have the strength to bear it, whatever it may be.

As to myself I know little from whence I came. I think my name is Jason but I cannot be sure. I have heard my folks were good people and that I was born in the North woods. Kindly neighbors looked after me till I could struggle for myself. Why should such a one as I am, ever hope for such a one as you.

I'm going away—you to live in your world—and—I in mine. How strange it seems our lives were drawn so closely together only to veer away abruptly through some influence known to none but God and you. But, in my world, through all eternity I will love you.

Cy.

P. S. The parting gift herewith I trust will be welcome. It's paid for.

C.

**B**EATRICE untied the box and slowly lifted the cover. Something

with long pink ears, furry and white as alabaster, quivered inside. Torn between emotions she said, "It was only this morning I t-t-t-old my darling I always had wanted a white bunny. He didn't forget. I wonder how he caught it! I don't think Cy ever forgot anything in his whole life. I must go after him, I must!" Brilliant flashes of lightning brought them both to their feet.

"My gosh you can't go tonight. You couldn't get as far as the gate in a storm like this. He's safe. He may not sleep very well but you can bet he is in bed by this time. You go to bed and get up early. We'll set the clock and sneak to catch the early bus."

"No! No I must go tonight. That devil is going to hurt him, maybe kill him I don't know. Just this afternoon when we were talking, he made a crack about Cy and like an idiot I passed it up. I'll either find Cy tonight or die in the attempt!" Beatrice sprang for her wrap and sank to the floor.

Dot lifted her up and gently placed her on the bed. She threw a quilt across her.

To herself she said "The bestest, gamest little kid I ever knew, no man is worth it—well-excepting 'Meggy.' Sleep, pal sleep!"

After leaving Beatrice, Cyrus had prevailed on Maggie to help him with the rabbit penned up in the cellar. She found a discarded carton and while Cyrus wrote his farewell note, she put the rabbit in the box. And too, it was Maggie who took the box to the matron's office. "For you, me b'y, I'll do this, but for no other man on earth includin' me worthless huzhband. Bless his soul!"

Cyrus mailed cash to Dr. Hargrave to pay for the rabbit. Sought his bicycle and found it gone, "What's the difference?" he said. Passing the dormitory he stopped a moment glanced at Bea's



The rabbit pointed one furry paw at the startled man and then

window and muttered "good-bye little girl. Good-bye old Faith, good-bye all hope."

The wind more than the rain made the walking difficult. Up the road a darkened car was parked on the other side along the highway. He did not notice it. As he passed a tall oak, a man in a black raincoat crept from behind and followed close. His hand raised to await a flash of lightning for perfect illumination of his target! The flash came. Cyrus noticed its brilliance, and heard the deafening cannon like report. An instant later however, he neither saw nor heard.

All was oblivion—the gentle calm of quiet waters — deep — restful — the soothing balm of God.

How odd is life. How very strange may be the episode of death.

**O**F MAN'S perceptions, mortal, how strange is the dawn of consciousness! At times the gentlest stroke of a downy feather or the low buzzy of the busy bee may rouse the soundest sleeper. If man be immortal we may but wonder?

Was it the feathery touch of the tufted heads of long slender, grasses, rocking with laughter, which kissed the sleeping figure? Or, was it one of nature's tiny children babbling in a tongue strange to mortal ears? May be neither! The sleeper clad in the whitest buckskin, beaded, feathered, gestured blindly, "Go away!" as if to brush off the impish teasing thing. But it would not leave. "Up with you," it seemed to say.

Rousing a very very little, he opened his eyes and snapped them shut—that pesky sneezy tickle of the morning sun!





said in understandable words: "I am a friend to you, brother!"

Yet in the instant glimpse, he saw enough to rouse him slightly—just enough to listen. A bold mischievous intruder thrust his tiny white-whiskered twitching muzzle close, lest unfriendly ears might eavesdrop on a tete-a-tete unusual.

"How! White furry friend with long pink ears! Who may you be?" said he of buckskin, beads, and feathers.

"How! I am a friend to you and you are one to me," replied the furry ball.

"Such talk betokens *friendship*. But friendship is something deep, sincere, warm, dependable, lasting,—no mere expedient of the moment."

"Yea, verily. Friendship must be long worn to prove its quality. But alas! For me you see," said the little one as he looked at his tall. "In some ways I'm short! In necessity, my wits must serve

as my expedient."

"Ha! ha! your wit does serve you well. You are most confounding."

"Is not one's *self*, the most confounding?"

"That implies that I am you! But how can that be? If I am you and you are I then I must be beside myself."

"And there are others."

Oh, now am utterly confused—I am you and you are I, and there are others and each of us is two. Why there seems to be no end to a combination like that!"

"That has been one of the biggest problems in my family."

"Ha-ha! Mizzybo (How's that for a name?) Be serious. Your words are like the fox. Why do you seek me?"

"Got any spare carrots?"

"So that's it. No I haven't any. But you'd be welcome to them if I had."

"Well I am just out of luck. But you are a friend *indeed* I know."

"Maybe, but I don't know. I don't know who I am."

"What luck! You can choose your relations."

"At times that might be an advantage. But with me—worse still—I know not from whence I came or whither I am going."

"Doubly fortunate!" It dizzies a fellow looking backward and forward at the same time."

"But I know not which way to go. I have lost *all* hope."

"Just look in the right direction. Isn't hope always one jump ahead of you?"

"But it all worries me!"

"Then there's hope for you! The fellow who doesn't *know* or *care* who he is or *where* he's been or whither he is going, is surely in a pickle."

"Well you do cheer a fellow up. You're a much bigger friend than I supposed."

"Doesn't a true friend grow bigger, the longer you know him?"

"Your wit Mizzybo is truly your expedient! I'll have a time in keeping up with you."

"Who don't? Ta ta! I'll be seein' you!" Suddenly Mizzybo grew to an astounding size and disappeared in a cloud of brilliantly luminous dust; so 'Sand-Man' mystic, that he of buckskin beads and feathers could not resist. So ranged the Great Hare's character in part,—good friend, magician, mystic, or simple mendicant in need of a meal.

Whether real or phantom it was not Mizzybo who roused him this time. It was the menacing buzz of a busy bee! He sat up and he got up! With alacrity, he dodged the tiny droning bomber. Pondering his plight thought he, "Crazy dream that! Called him 'Mizzybo.' Wonder why? He asked for carrots. What are carrots anyway? He spoke as

if he knew me. I don't remember ever meeting him. In fact, I don't remember anything. And that is just what I told Mizzybo. Phantom or not he was a wise little rogue. I just said he was little. I'm not so certain about that either. He was a whopper before he left. Guess I'll be going. Which way to go? It makes no difference. The way of Mizzybo is well enough. Hope should be just a jump ahead of me."

HE TOOK long strides noiselessly. Every step of the trail seemed familiar. It was well worn. Many people had followed it. "To the left," he thought, "there's a pond where the cattails grow and where the frog with the voice of the big drum lives. Soon I come to the trail leading to the pond. I shall watch closely. It may be hidden."

A few strides further, he stooped to eye the ground for signs of the coyote or the turtle. Mah'ee the coyote would be most welcome. He would make Mah'ee glad, and have him walk with dignity beside him. First Man had been unduly harsh. What if his sole companion had been a bit neglectful? What gay coyote could relish guarding sticks—queer sticks that turned to humans and ran away? The thrilling urge to follow was just too much! Even humans have been weaker. So why heap bad medicine on all of Mah'ee's kind? It was unfair! If he chanced upon coyote, he would urge him to wear his plumed tail high, as did his forebear before he fell from grace.

Even to meet the lowly turtle would be something. From him he might learn the truth of legend. Was it so that another turtle held the world upon his back? Comforting reflections, these—but neither the coyote nor the turtle did he meet. However he was certain of a side path leading to the pond. Upon his hands and knees he crawled to note the

little things. A white man would give little heed to a spider web with a few hairs clinging to it. But to him it marked the path, and too, was food for thought.

The Great Hare had learned the art of weaving nets from spider and had passed this secret on to Man so that he might, with nets catch fish—how strange one thought begets another! To some, fish were food. Maybe he was one who ate of fish. He was not sure. He had given no thought to food. It seemed he had not tasted it for many days. In that pond there would be fish. He was growing hungry. And with increasing effort he crept into the vine tangled thicket where another thirsty creature no larger than a Mah'ee had left tell-tale hairs clinging to a web.

Reaching a break in the heavy growth, he stood up. The ground sloped slightly. Peering downward, blinding flashes from rippling water, bathed in sunshine, dazzled him. In one respect at least his memory had not failed him.

He hurried to the water's edge. There were reeds, cat-tails, lilly-pads, gracing no ordinary pond. It was an exquisite body of water raised far above the lesser category by a sublime primeval beauty to the resplendent majesty of a lake, a water unsullied by the muddying hand of Man. Tall spruce, dark green, close-packed about its shores, like giant arrowheads, steepled their lofty tips in defense of its crystal azure beauty from prying mortal eyes! In reverence to the Great Unknown, he bowed his head.

He could not weave a net. So with flint knife, he cut and stripped a man-high pine, pointing and barbing its tip. A few dead trees felled by a hurricane projected into the water. Scanning the depths for the darkest areas, he found a likely spot and stealthily crawled along a log lest his shadow disturb the finny creatures. In a deep blue spot was

a fine one! Waiting till it moved to the position he desired, his poised spear struck! He grasped the free end quickly and drew forth the shiny fellow from boiling foam. He had his food! And now for a fire with which to cook it. A *fire!* That would mean long labor. Even if he had it now he would not use it for, thought he, "I'm not hungry. The creature at my feet is from this lake, I want it not. This water and all its creatures belong to the gods and that is why the Earth Mother has so closely shrouded it from view."

Glancing skyward with outstretched arms, he asked, "Oh, Sun Father with shining shield, make known what I'm to do with this creature that I have so rudely snatched from sacred waters." His eyes plodded the turquoise sky for answer and chanced upon a winged creature, spiraling artfully closer, ever closer, to the water. Suddenly it swooped ripping the surface to a froth then beating vigorously with its graceful pinions, started an upward climb,—its mighty talons—empty!

"Oh you who speaks with the Great Voice, shall receive this gift!" said he of buckskin, beads and feathers. Holding his catch aloft, he said, "Come! Take it!"

THE bald eagle circled again, closer and closer, attracted by the shiny body of the fish. With the dart of lightning it dove and he with equal swiftness, tossed the fish high over the water. It never touched the surface. The eagle carried it to a lone tree and feasted to the fullest. Thought he, "Maybe he will return. I shall fashion a staff whereon he may rest." He cut and stripped a long branch, leaving two sizable shoots on its outmost end. Holding this in front of him he waited. The eagle took to wing, soared gracefully his way, hovered a moment and settled upon the

branch. As the stately creature plumed its feathers, he sensed it saying to him, "How my friend! How Belikana." In another moment it took off spiralling upward, gradually contracting to a speck. As the fading dot held his vision captive, it drew Belikana's mind—his very soul to the heart of heaven. If thus far, he had been adrift with neither chart nor compass, the final blending of the skyborn speck with the azure of infinite space, left him with a sublime sense of purpose for his being. Its nature he not yet knew. But he sensed that unseen gods would be his pilots. His words voiced the thought, "Surely *this* is a sign!"

In the dressing of its plumage the eagle had loosed two feathers. One, Belikana hid beneath his shirt. *No mortal eyes but his* would view it. It would give him courage. Then thought he, "Why not back to the well worn trail? This is hallowed ground. The trail will be easy to find. I need not seek the way I came."

So, following whichever immediate way appeared to offer the least obstruction, he started off. It was not long before his foot touched something very soft—a tiny beaded moccasin, bright, pliable, not long lost. "Now," he said to himself, "I have a real reason to carry on. I must find the little one. Thorns in the path of a tiny tot, may change its whole life's way." Long he searched. And when the Sun Father walked close to the earth—a babe with a bare and bruised foot, lay asleep before him. And—not just one babe, but two, alike as two grains of corn—the other with eyes swollen from insect bites. He gathered clean damp leaves of careful choosing and placed them gently over the eyes of the little one who could not see. In a nearby swamp he waded in for a lilly pad. He well-lapped its cleft. Dipped water with it, with which to bathe the

bruised foot. "*Fire,*" he thought, "if I had fire to keep them warm! They are truly cold! But here I have not that with which to make it." "Oh, Mizzybo," he said aloud, "If you were here, you could help me!"

With faith that Mizzybo would help, Belikana sought the tenderest bark in lieu of carrots. He could but rest and wait. It seemed his eyes had scarcely closed before a tiny twitching muzzle touched his hand. "How! Good friend!"

"How Mizzybo, you heard me! See, —I'm in need of fire. I'm certain you can get it."

Surprised beyond expression, Mizzy pointed to himself and shouted, "Who? *Me!!!!*" He thumped the ground in agitation, "For *you* I'll see to it but no other man is worth it."

"I knew you would not fail me. I have no carrots but here's the best I have to offer."

"Well,—let me 'have at' your toothsome morsels. For fire I must journey far." With gusto, he downed the luscious bits. "Ta, ta! I'll be seein' you!" said he, and bounded off.

Belikana then saw more, — His strange eyes followed every move of Mizzybo—a new experience, a gift of gods!

By canoe and paddle, Mizzy' coursed the waters of a distant stream. And where, along its banks, smoke curled from a wigwam roof, he put ashore. With stealth, he moved. And with a scrap of tinder-bark hugged closely, he made a play for pity; Pity of a maidens' heart for a poor meek and lowly creature atremble with the chill of evening. She carried him within the wigwam where embers burned. Thus came Mizzybo to fire, and soon—fire to the tinder! His escape was hasty—no less risky, with the maiden *and her sister* in pursuit! When out of breath within a thicket, Mizzy's friend Mah'ee took

over; and he, in turn, to hurry matters, gave the tinder to a birdie, brown of feather. Thus, by air was speeded fire in completion of its transport. And thus was burned a ruddy vest on Pilot Robin—'Robin Redbreast' as we call him.

It was Belikana's feet which roused him. They were much too warm. Grateful, he fanned the tiny fire and added fuel to it.

At dawn of the new day, he gathered berries for his infant charges but took no food himself. One who had spoken with the Great Hare and had received a sign from the eagle with the white head, must fast, lest his occult powers pass. Nothing should be done detrimental to his mission. If supplication to his deities remained unanswered it would be his own infractions of divine laws which interfered, not faulty hearing of the gods—the Redman, himself would be to blame.

THE three were ready and took the right direction, though he knew not why, excepting—where Mizzybo found fire, there should be other dwellings. Long they trudged to reach that distant winding creek. And far down its banks he saw the wigwam of the smoking roof. Beyond, as he had thought, were many more—a motley assortment,—in shapes, *grotesque*—in materials, sundry.

"Odd village this" thought he, "These very dwellings bespeak association of many tongues, living, I hope, in peace with one another."

What a picture Belikana scanned: Flimsy brushwood wickiups; many hide-walled cone tepees, topped with pole tips; low-domed wigwams; houses round and capped with grass; some with phantastic totems; open palm-thatched shelters; and a few long bow-roof structures wherein might dwell a number.

And there was *life!* Smoke curled from many fires and humans moved—

the warrior with his bow and flints—the squaw with papoose on her back—stone-dazed tillers of the soil—and artisans of many skills.

Beyond, the ground waved with many hills. There was the green of forest patches, shimmering blue-grey spots of distant waters, and still further, villages most remote yet like to the one, close by, but by distance lost—a distance blending with a sea encircling his queer flat world—a sea where islands were of pinpoint dots and watercraft, that none but the eyes of mind could find.

At sight of the nearby village Belikana's charges broke away. An eager and familiar face greeted them with open arms. But she failed to note their frantic gestures toward him, their benefactor. Punching her with their chubby fists and pointing, they tried to say "Him find us! Him know where we live! Him feed us! Him make us warm with fire—him *no make*, no come from no where."

"What you try to tell me?" she asked with a teasing laugh. "Man found you. He knew where you live He feed you. He make you warm with fire which come from no where! Jos-sakeer story! Where is man?"

They pointed and as Belikana slowly came closer, she no longer wondered how such a man could bring fire from 'nowhere'. Surely the Great White One's own blood trickled through his veins. The faint tan of her cheeks grew tinted as leaves of autumn.

"How!" she said; her heart pounding as if to burst, "My father will be grateful. He will give you many presents. My twin brothers have been gone two days."

"To see you is a gift which overpays me," he replied with truth. Within himself, he mused, "I have seen that face but I know not where." His brow furrowed. There were the all too familiar

eyes, the shapely nose, the little ears, the graceful lines of figure, the plaintive voice. Seeing her pass her hand across her forehead, he was not surprised to hear her say.

"Sometime, somewhere me know you. Me know no more."

"This is our secret. I am thinking the same thing," he replied.

In one respect they were on common ground. As she turned toward the wigwam of the chief she said, "Come you shall meet my father, Big Bison." With the twins clinging to her hands, Belikana followed.

In front of his wigwam sat the aged chief. The haze from the red willow bark within his pipe, framed a face etched by the cruel knives of many winters. Excitedly she told the finding of the twins. Then urged the stranger to come closer so that her father might see him better. It was a task for *him* to move but he struggled to his feet to greet the stranger warmly.

"You come long way! You shall have food." And to the girl he ordered, "Prepare him good meat. Big Bison speak with stranger."

Belikana protested. Too willingly she hurried off, paying no attention.

The old chief repeated, "You come long way?"

**H**OW to answer was a puzzle. "It is not far to the place where I found your babes. Before that I remember little. But in a vision, the Great Hare spoke with me. Other than this I know not. What if I know not from whence I came and who I am? I know the Great Hare who brought fire. I saw him take it and with this I warmed the twins. But how I saw him a far off, I know not."

The old man eyed him curiously. Awe and pity moulded his words, "You have eyes greater than eyes of the

eagle, yet you not know where you come from? You not know who you are?"

"And it is true, too," the stranger replied, "I care not from whence I came or who I am. I have eyes greater than eyes of the eagle and the eagle with the *white head* has shown a sign to me! A far off there is a lake hidden amongst the hills. There the eagle with the white head came and alighted upon a staff I held. Then did he name me Belikana."

"Truly" said Big Bison solemnly, "This is sign! If you no wish to eat. Then it is right—Your powers will be greater! Great Voice surely speaks to you. He manifests Himself through sign of eagle with white head."

"The Great White One—the Great Spirit—is mighty and All High. Truly he speaks through the Great Voice and works in strange ways;" Belikana sagely commented.

"You speak words of jossakeed—prophet! Remain with us. We give you food when again you eat. You will never be in want for raiment."

"Belikana thanks you, Sire. He has no place to go. He will strive to give wise counsel when you choose to have it."

The young woman overheard Belikana's decision as she approached to say the meat was ready.

"But I must not eat this day nor for two more days," he told her, "Lest the powers given me be taken from me."

"Strange talk," she snapped, "Meat is good. Man must eat."

"Sorry! Meat prepared by your hands must be good. In due time I shall eat. You will prepare the food, I know, when I return."

Plaintively she asked, "Where go?"

"I have a mission to fulfill. On this day and two more I must be alone."

"You are *jossakeed!* ! ! You go to speak with gods! You go to make God Medicine! But no own *parfleche?*" she exclaimed, astonished that he was a superman yet possessed no sacred medicine bag.

**N**EARLY every man and woman carried with them a *parfleche*. What odd bits in the way of charms which it might contain were known solely by the owner and were considered sacred.

Said Belikana, "I may be what you say I am. Truly I own no *parfleche*."

"Me have new *parfleche* given me. May me give it you."

"If it be your sacrifice to the Great White One, I will receive it. From you it will be doubly sacred."

In a fluster she hurried after the medicine bag and when she handed it to him he said, "This shall aid me in following the path which the Great White One chooses I shall follow. Now I must be gone. On the third day I will return."

Belikana showed a self-reliance, a purposeful light in his kindly eyes as he took leave. Her eyes followed him till he disappeared in the deep wood, she saying to herself,

"He is sent me by Great Spirit—Great White One. My heart tells me so."

**T**HERE was much excitement that evening within the village. A stranger from afar had come to them, bringing the twins. He was a good man and he would return in a few days to remain as one of their people. The Chief, Big Bison, that day had ordered the council to meet with him. And it was this meeting which Belikana, (now within the dense primeval forest), saw and heard, he knew not how.

The house or lodge wherein the

council met, was long, roomy, bark-walled and its roof arched throughout the length. Gathered about the flickering light within, sat warriors and artisans, among them, the venerated Medicine Man, Black Arrow, with them three years, - Venerated? - or - feared? —Which was it? Through his charms, harm had befallen many, and hardly none could vouchsafe with certainty, that even his herb medicines had proven efficacious. Yet every ritual for good or for evil purpose, every herb potion prepared had been paid for in advance. *Well* paid for too, he, setting the price to the last speck of ability, of the one to foot the bill, even to their enslavement to do his bidding should wampum be lacking.

Black Arrow scowled as he listened to the chief address the council:—

"Big Bison speaks to you of stranger who came to us this day. He brought with him, Big Bison's children, lost two days. He asks of us, nothing. He does not eat. He speaks strangely. He tells of speaking with Great Hare. A sign has come to him by shores of hidden lake. Eagle with white head came to him. Eagle with white head speaks with Great Voice. Stranger knew we were here. But he knew not *how* he knew. He does not know himself. He does not care! He does not know from whence he came. He does not care! He tells that eagle with white head named him 'Belikana'." He has gone into the forest to talk with Great Voice. He will return in three days to do my people much good. For, evil has befallen us many, many moons. Some of my people make much talk!"

"They say Big Bison closes his ears to them in council. But does not Big Bison permit each man to speak? Does Big Bison, not then rule fairly? They say they have little corn. But the people of Big Bison know that an evil

demon sometimes blights young corn. Do not people of Big Bison try to divide little corn some way so no man is without food? Can people divide more than they have?"

"No! No!" chorused a number.

The chief continued:—

"Big Bison wishes to be a good father to his people. Now let him who would not receive this stranger, as his brother, *speak!*"

Black Arrow arose, threw out his chest, strode majestically to the center of the group and spoke:—

"Black Arrow speaks! Black Arrow is one who talks with gods! How can one who knows not himself, or from whence he came, speak with gods? Stranger speaks with voice of demon, and, in demons does he take counsel! Black Arrow say, it is stranger who makes Bad Medicine, from far off. And so, young corn die. Now Black Arrow sees demon stranger come close to bring skull, to bring failure, to bring death to Big Bison's people." His voice was lowered to a whisper in making this prophecy. He knew every ear would strain to hear and be impressed the more.

With an all-wise air the gloom dispenser seated himself allowing others to join in protest. "We will no call this evil stranger brother." And there were others who seconded, yet in the shadows about the council fire, not one of all the muffled mouths which spoke could be correctly spotted.

**B**IG BISON rose and scanned all faces closely before he handed down his decision:—

"Big Bison wishes to be good father to his people. He does not wish them at war with one another, He, therefore, rules that stranger be received among his people, but *not as brother*, until by his wise counsel and making of *Good*

*Medicine*, he is proved worthy."

Upon adjournment, there was much muttering as the group filed out.

In the solitude of the deep wood where the wild creatures of the Earth Mother, spoke in many tongues, Belikana spent much time in gathering potent herbs. He recognized the mat first glance and knew their uses, yet, he knew not how he knew.

A sprig, or, perhaps no more than a leaf or two of each, he rolled into a compact, conglomerate ball, binding it firmly. He was not sure of its occult potency, as he was positive of the true medicinal properties of each of its constituents. The amassing of the herbs and the rolling of the ball, would fix in his mind, its many elements. Its presence with him constantly would keep him ever mindful of his entire "stock-in-trade" and the need to keep it up. He felt he was to be a prophet, and, as well, a true physician, to the best of his ability. And when, in either office, he was called in counsel, he would rely upon himself, calling only on the gods, when his earthly measures failed.

To gain the sanction of his gods for the tiny herb-ball symbol, he cached it beneath a stone during his solitary probation. There were other charms to be included in his lot of mystic medicines and, at the proper time, he would place them all within the sacred parfleche.

For a symbol (and reminder) of his duties as a surgeon, he sought a small half-broken twig to depict a fractured limb. He found just what he wanted. It was finger-size and he neatly bound it, then cached this too, beside his herb-ball charm.

The third, a most mystic symbol, was the feather from the eagle,—the feather that no other eyes save his had seen. This would keep him firmly humble in the presence of his gods. It would give him courage when he faltered.



How to get the fourth, and *final*, *charm of charms*—Belikana, did not know. If he could but secure it, he would have the ambition of ten men, for in it, he'd *find hope!* What was it? A lock of *her hair*, of course! He could not go to her and plead for it. No! That would need the courage of ten feathers of the eagle. Furthermore, if, in this manner, he secured it, its mystic potency would be lacking.

Now in his fasting, he grew weaker, and with weakness he grew drowsy in the contemplation of his problem. For the third time, Mizzybo came to him.

"What's got you down!" queried Mizzybo.

"Why, again I seek hope," replied Belikana, deeply dunked in melancholy.

"Webby memory. Spider woman's work," piped Mizzybo, "Remember pal, hope's just one jump ahead of you! Ta, ta! I'll be seeing you!" With a hind foot he drummed vigorously on the parfleche at Belikana's side and with a leap, was off into the forest. The neo-prophet shook himself. "Been dreaming, as usual," he mused. Casually if not thoughtlessly he opened the medicine bag for the first time. Within was a lock of soft and beautiful hair—the most beautiful he had ever seen. It was bound with a cord of sweet grasses. He drew it out and thrust it under his shirt next to his heart as his silent answer to the significance of the gesture. She, his hope was one jump ahead of him. The four charms benificent to his mission, he now had. The sign was yet to come, at which time he might place them all within the parfleche with certainty of their mystic value.

**N**EAR sundown of the fourth day, heavy clouds rolled up to shroud the clear sky in premature darkness. Faint lightning and low rolling thunder arrived without the more usual distant

heralding, as if the Great Voice was speaking to him alone. The sign had come! This was the time to place the ball of herbs, the stick, the eagle's feather and the lock of her hair within the sacred parfleche. As he closed the medicine bag, a blinding flash told him his period of fasting was over.

Gathering up his bulky bundles of medicinal natures, Belikana started on the long walk home. No other one but him, could tell with certainty what was in his own parfleche.

A little after daybreak, he wandered into the village, the twins espying him afar. They were the first to greet him.

With one on each knee, he seated himself outside Big Bison's wigwam to await an audience with the Chief. Naturally, he was just a little hopeful that somebody else would soon be up to prepare the morning meal for her father. To kill time and forget the call of the inner man, Belikana told the twins the story of the stealing of the fire which kept them warm. And as he finished, one of them punched him with a tiny thumb, "See, see!" he cried, "Birdie cook worm!" The little one pointed at a robin endeavoring to swallow an unusually large night-crawler, the wriggling morsel dragging against the robin's breast.

"Surely, he likes his food warm! That was a pretty big worm. He should have cut it up first. You watch and you'll see one of those fellows do that sometime!"

Other children and sleepy-eyed grown-ups emerged from motley grotesque dwellings. Smokes from many fires, with fumes all too-savory *blew his way*—it surely seemed so, anyway. The twins climbed down from his knees. Their own inner cravings smothered immediate interest in stories, no matter how fascinating. Belikana made no move to stop them as they beat

upon the hide-walls of *her* wigwam, shouting "Man come back!" Again and again they repeated the announcement with increasing persistence. Their words had been well-chosen. She *fully* comprehended their significance on the first repeat.

From her wigwam she hurried to the shore of the little creek. He stole a glance as she viewed herself in smooth reflecting water. Many other women came and went before she deemed herself presentable. In their morning chat, mutually interesting, Belikana adroitly avoided any reference to the tiny tress of her hair. Her keen eyes scanned his raiment, hopeful she would see the 'lock' up on his heart. "Where can it be?" she wondered.

She had heard of one *sure* way to a man's heart—the gastronomic trail. Then she was not so sure, for, he declined to eat of her tempting flavory steaming dish until her father tasted first—Big Bison deserved the greatest deference. Now courtesy at times makes trouble. Meat does not improve in over cooking. And so, she literally lifted her father from the arms of Morpheus. She was the only one who would dare to do so—she had a *way* with her.

Big Bison was a bit fretful in the morning light until his failing vision told him that the stranger had returned. The young man had kept his word, The Chief was hopeful that he would help his people. His old eyes were more observant than many realized. He saw huge bundles of various herbs and barks, piled upon the ground, yet he said nothing. However he *thought*. Black Arrow never gathered things like these—arnica—wintergreen—camomile and many others, new and strange. The herbs that Black Arrow gathered seemed of a different sort—they usually prolonged an illness or aggravated pain. The sick one required

many changes in the remedies, each at a cost to the patient or his family. And, of course Good Medicine rituals came high. But to be true to the will of the council, Big Bison held that Belikana's deeds must prove his worth. He listened intently to the stranger's story of his sojourn. Belikana could not well tell of his incredible seeing of the council meeting, without arousing the Chief's suspicion. So, after hearing all that could be told, the old Chief said.

"Belikana, you tell of strange visions. You receive sign from Great Voice. You see with eyes greater than eyes of eagle with white head. So, Big Bison rules you stay with us, to cast out evil spirits from my people, to heal wounds of battle, to heal wounds of hunt and to give wise counsel to my people. But, my people take you not as brother until you make *Good Medicine*—until you speak *true words* as prophet. Then will you be received as brother—then will you be recognized as shaman."

Belikana hesitated a moment, then shyly replied, "Belikana seeks nothing in return for what good he may do. The Great White One would so will it."

The Chief's daughter was glad that Belikana's acceptance speech was brief—the savory meat was losing its savor—the fire beneath the kettle needed frequent poking.

THE first few days were periods of adjustment for Belikana. Friendliness, reverential fear, suspicion and ridicule, all played their parts. He had little to say, yet his good offices as a doctor gained gradual recognition. He proved his surgical skill by the setting of a broken arm. The splints, he made himself and applied them at the proper time. Even less friendly members of the tribe learned to listen with deaf ears to Black Arrow's ridicule:—

"Belikana's *Good Medicine*? Ugh!

We should call him, '*He-Knows-Bad-Medicine.*'

This barb thrown at every opportunity should be a potent agent in propaganda. One of the things that vexed, particularly, was the generosity of patients calling upon Belikana's aid. Only when wampum or food or other articles of utility were thrust upon him, would he accept them—but never for himself. He passed them on to the truly needy, thereby allowing the giver the satisfaction of 'squaring accounts'.

The apparent handsome reward without a bargain for it was something new to Black Arrow. He tried it once. He gave an emetic where a sedative was needed. Subsequently he viewed family unity at close range—in fact, too close! He did not receive gifts in abundance of types anticipated, although he did receive many articles of utility—the heavy and more durable sort, projected with unerring accuracy. Naturally he returned to his accustomed mode of gouging emolument.

Belikana occasionally found odd moments to devote to a hobby—the twins needed toys. To make two tiny bows, drums, canoes, or knives as near alike as hands could fashion them, was not easy—precision production to close tolerances. Any differences were threats to peace on the home front. Yet, *his heart* was in the building of them. He could be near his hope as he fashioned them. She knew the latest gossip and when gossip lagged, her heart was singing in her voice. But when her father was about, she left the men alone. They would talk over her head, she told them.

Big Bison as a young buck had made *wonderful* toys. With dead-pan fervor he offered practical and impractical suggestions. It gave him a chuckling confidence in the stranger to see him politely blow chaff from wheat. Both

were learning much of one another.

One evening after the twins had been calmed to slumber by her sweet lullabies, she arranged her hairdo high as was the custom for a maiden. A spray of white violets was among her tresses and with emphatic nonchalance she passed him in the center of the village. Somehow he took notice. "She's even crushed the petals to release more fragrance," Belikana thought. There was no need for further invitation for a stroll. The Moon Mother, high overhead, threw sharp silver lances through the trees. Big Bison's daughter also trailed the heels of hope, yet she dared not closely follow. She wanted to know more of this strange good man. Maybe she could lead him into talking of himself—he might remember the place from whence he came. No remote star where dwelled strange godly creatures like himself. No world of the turquoise sky where spirits dwelled, but somewhere as real as the land of her own people. If such a place it was, on matter how far off, he would be a human like herself. She would have the right hope. Her world had been a little one. Distant ridges veiled in a misty haze bounded its extent. With thought of urging him to speak of places far beyond from whence he might have come, she pointed to the low flung dreamy mists, and said, "Great Hare smokes pipe! Must be heap big." He liked her dialect and tried his best to mimic it.

"Must be heap big—heap big smoke—heap far away."

"Great Hare live where you come from?"

He shrugged his shoulders. She tried a different approach,

"You come to my people to do good. To make them happy. To give wise counsel?"

"Great Voice show me sign. In Great Voice we have faith. With faith, me

try."

"All Big Bison's people no have this faith. No like rule of my father."

This was no squaws' gossip. He urged her on.

"Me see your people. Some grow much corn. Some little. Some have much wampum. Some have little. May be them who no like rule of Big Bison have little corn; have little wampum?"

"No! Many who like rule of Big Bison have little corn—little meat—little wampum!"

"Then why, some no like rule of Big Bison?"

"My father let each man talk. Then he rule the way of most talks."

"It is fair to so rule."

"But some say," she continued, "Big Bison's people are all papooses. Think like 'em. No can think big. No can speak big. They say Big Bison old man chief. No can think. No can see. No can do. So, Big Bison *rule*, no big no strong, Him very weak like old dead tree. Big wind come along puff! Blow him down, go squash on many people! So, people can no be happy."

**B**ELIKANA smiled. He pondered. He was curious to learn what the opposition offered, "May be they plant new kind of tree? Eh? Him grow big strong! No wind blow him down. Then all people be very happy under big strong tree?"

"No. They say Stonemen have big chief. He think more big than many chiefs! *He-heap big think.*" And she held up her little hands to measure the size of the Stoneman head.

"Funny man him must be like palmetto tree—all top."

"No! No like tree, like stones. Stone head, stone legs, stone arms, *all stone!*"

"Stone heart?"

She nodded as she pointed to the distant skyline. Stonemen live far off over

hills, may be over great water. They say Stonemen live in caves, and so no have light. So no can be happy."

"Why Stonemen no crawl out, so shield of Sun Father can give light to them?"

"Chief, he tell 'em, no room outside. He say he look. But he let no Stoneman come out,—look-see. Poor Stonemen!" She was serious, even sympathetic.

"Belikana see! Chief no let each man talk. *He think! He talk and they do!*"

She nodded and added an interesting bit, "Chief, he *Heap-Big-Think* like Sun Father! He make light for them, so no need Sun Father!"

"No need Sun Father? No need Moon Mother? No need Great Voice! May be he think Sun Father his papa," commented Belikana, with disgust.

A sinister agency guided from afar, smouldered within Big Bison's peaceful rule. Was it centered locally in one individual? He asked that question plainly. She hesitated in her answer . . . , "Me - think - they - speak - words - of - another."

"But who is he who no speak himself?"

"If me give name, he will make my people suffer much, may be, sometime?"

"What you mean? 'People suffer much.'"

"People are men. Men sometime are wampum."

"Belikana see" His brow furrowed, he did not like what he had heard. Yet he sought to reassure her, "Belikana he say he will make Good Medicine. You fear for your people. People, too are women! Why you no fear for yourself?"

"You no fear for yourself."

"Me should no think of *me*. Only of others. Me know not myself. So, me

have no right to think more of one than another."

He did not realize how uncertain *she* was about *herself* until she said, "Me know no who *me* am. Me know no from where me came. Running-Hoof bring me to Big Bison's people when me few moons old, Running-Hoof long gone to land of blue sky. But Big Bison me call 'Father,' he good to me; my people good to me."

"Your people good to me too!" he said.

She bit her lip, Why hadn't Earth Mother given her sense enough to heave a heart withering sigh after mention of Running-Hoof's heavenly abode, then, let the sigh do the rest?

Down the trail there was a huge moss covered log. Upon this soft green cushion they rested. Suddenly the evening air carried to them the booming voice of a giant frog,

"He must be heap big chief amongst his people!" she exclaimed.

"You know he live in hidden lake. Lake he belongs to gods. There me receive sign from Great Voice."

"Can you no take me there sometime? Would my eyes make dark its waters?"

"No! No make dark but make *more sparkle!*" he replied as he picked a squawberry vine which a moon-beam chose to kiss. He handed it to her. From the way she drew its tiny fragrant trumpets beneath her perfect little nose, he knew that he too, had overtaken himself—to overtake ones hope might hazard its loss. Better it remain a jump ahead.

On approaching the village he remarked, "Eagle with White head gave me name Belikana. Me not know what it means. What me call you?"

"Only you call me Chikeesikiss," she impishly replied. "You know what it means?" He did not.

THE new day gave additional burdens to Belikana. There was a troublemaker who talked much about himself and gave words for others to speak. He would discredit what he thought he knew of the council meeting as a dreamer's fancy. He would keep his ears open and his tongue still, so that which went into his ears, would not come out of his mouth. Throughout the day, he followed his accustomed routine. He walked among the people of the village, alert to every hostile inflection of an otherwise cordial greeting, every unfriendly glance, every slanderous comment.

And in this web of chat and gossip, he gathered flies of varied types,—harmless buzzers, many drones too lazy or indifferent to buzz, others loathsome from evil associations, and one pest above all others, fortified with a venomous sting shrouded with sanctity. To exterminate these pests would be a man's size job. Thriving as they did within the body politic, they were there through sufferance of the weak and the indifference of the strong, the latter calloused by self interest. Concerning these, Belikana sought counsel with Big Bison. Mayhap they might work together. Out of ear-shot of little pitchers as well as larger with much bigger ears, he made ready to pour forth his diverse impressions; — "Belikana has walked and worked among Big Bison's people with his ears cupped to see *that*, to hear *that*, which older ones may not. Would Big Bison wish to hear?"

The old Chief's eyes narrowed shrewdly;—"To be a good Father to his people, Big Bison must see through eyes of youth; hear through ears of youth. Hard stones will sharpen wisdom of many winters."

Belikana quickly concluded that Big Bison was no 'has-been in his dotage.' Therefore he could speak plainly yet

refrain from offending the kindly Chief.

"Are Big Bison's people partly to blame that so much evil has befallen them? In their hearts, do all thank the Sun Father for his shining shield that warms the corn? Do all thank the Great Voice—the Bird of Thunder—for bringing pollen to the corn—for bringing rain and moisture so that the Earth Mother may give corn to people? Do all invoke the spirits of the hunt that the bison may be plentiful? All such things do they do? Is it true that people *take!* but, are *all grateful?* Are not the prayers of many people for things they *want*, and, if the Great White One decides these things are not good for them, do they complain but do not *blame themselves?*"

"Big Bison *know you know*. He does not make his people do these things but he wishes they would with their own hearts. Many good people make prayers with their mouths and with their hearts, and if gods no hear, *do blame themselves*. Many other good people make no prayers with their mouths, but in their hearts are grateful for good things that come to them, and they give to others, good things as good people should. Even though they no see gods as Belikana does, they are good people. But Big Bison him has faith, which his fathers taught him."

"Belikana heard every wise word of Big Bison. It is right that your people give thanks themselves and from their hearts. It is right that you do not make them do so. Yet why have some lost faith?"

"Pay little wampum,' him say—'Great White One no hear; may be make Bad Medicine. But, pay much wampum; get Good Medicine—' Me make 'im hear!' 'Bah! Too much *wampum, wampum, wampum*. Big Bison no believe jossakeed story. Me no papoose, my people no papooses!'"

HE OF many winters pulled down the lower lid of his eye as both men chuckled. Yet Big Bison seriously wondered how this young unknown would defend the cause.

"Funny talk," said Belikana, "Great White One is deaf to little wampum. But for much, *he* makes Him hear. Is he bigger than the Great Voice.

"Oh, he just big wind in bag. Squeeze him out through mouth—make much holler." He puckered his dry lips in a vain attempt to whistle. Then, compromised with age, and puffed his cheeks.

"But if big whistle-talk costs much wampum, is that Good medicine for Big Bison's people?"

"No," snapped the chief, "And it is not good for many to walk on snow when there is no snow."

"Belikana is puzzled? Man could cover his eyes with his hands to keep out light when there is snow."

"And 'snow' are good people, they walk on as if they no see 'em, but they see wampum very good through fingers."

"It is the way with some people. Such ones are in many tribes yet are not of one blood as some say. Some gather much, some little. Yet when Great Voice makes very loud talk they forget wampum. They . . ."

"Yep! They no care about *wampum!* They only care about hole to quick crawl in where they make heap loud prayer to gods while Bird of Thunder flap! flap; r-r-r—" and he growled with a lusty roar.

"So it is that even they who walk on snow when there is none may sometimes find the faith they have lost."

"Big Bison now know you speak with authority from Great Voice so, him ask;—Do not these Wind-in-Bag and these He-Hide-His-Eyes peoples upset faith of people in Big Bison

rule?"

"These weeds and such weeds as these, do over grow the trail, do hide the way of peace, do make a nesting place for deceivers, traitors, thieves and killers, who would stop the tongues, conquer and enslave those who trust Big Bison rule—those who still hold faith in the Great White One. His Voice, The Great Dark Bird, the Bird of Thunder is all powerful! It is His white blinding arrows that uphold the Voice."

"Belikana speaks with great wisdom, so Big Bison ask,—If white blinding arrows make strong the Voice, will not many bows, many arrows, many knives, many shields, make strong, good people under Big Bison rule?"

"Is it right to use these things against a brother Redman?"

Big Bison scowled angrily, he was bewildered. This stranger who seemed of high authority, disdained the use of force. Was he at heart a coward? Big Bison gestured the streaking of his cheeks with paints of war. He gripped his flint knife hard and lashed out his answer, "When redman lights fire within him to welcome demon, him is not Big Bison brother! He tepee—longhouse—council fire of evil. Smash him and you smash meeting place of demons! It is better that redman ghost to walk and so give no home to weazel demon!" He buried the knife to the hilt in the hard ground, his face contorted to a mask of savagery.

Belikana smiled with steady eyes, "Now Belikana knows we can work together. For we are as poles to the great tepee, where we light our inner fires to welcome the Great White One, the Sun Father, the Great Voice, the Moon Mother, the Earth Mother. We are journeying toward the land of the Blue Sky, as brothers, though from different earth places. We are drawn closer to-

gether the farther we go. At death, our paths are closely narrowed, mayhap cross one another. Who knows? But thereafter, our paths diverge a little to then be free beneath the Great Blue Bowl. It seems the way of the Builder of the Great Tepee, that by being bound together as brothers and thereby being drawn toward one another, each helps to give the other strength and therefore strengthens all. Yet if the poles be divided one from another, this weakens all. The Great Tepee can not stand the onslaught of the storm. Much worse, still, is he who would stand alone feeding upon the blood of others. It is their blood we must save."

The young man arose as if to ask leave of the Chief. With a kindly gesture Big Bison motioned to him to sit down again.

"Big Bison, he made chief because he once strong warrior. He once make his people strong. He try to be good father to his people. Yet he no like man who no fight when he should fight for good people. So, Big Bison, war mad knife against brother. But, ha, ha! you when Belikana say, Is it right to use you fool Big Bison. You make him say what you *think*. So then me say Big Bison people must work together—make many bows—all these things. Keep poles of Great Tepee strong against storms."

Belikana nodded, "Many must be made and quickly!" Does Big Bison think there will be opposition?"

"Yes but Big Bison will make talk for many bows." He slapped his knee gripping them with a firmness that meant business.

THEY both arose, each determined upon the same goal but by different ways and means. The young man had avoided any reference to that which Chikeesikiss had told him about

the Stonemen. Her confidence was a seal upon his lips.

Big Bison had been equally scrupulous. What might be said would suggest adequate defense and stop.

In the matter of weapons, Belikana had seen few craftsmen among Big Bison's people. Flint was scarce, inferior stones were poor substitutes. Belikana wondered whether flint would even prove satisfactory—the potential enemy were odd. He had a vague recollection that no form of stone would be effective against the Stonemen, although they themselves hurled flints with killing force. Yet there was a value in providing customary weapons; there were those amongst the Stonemen who were vulnerable and obliged to obey the 'Heap-Big-Think.' Belikana had no heart in injuring these but the innocent would have to suffer with the guilty, if matters worsened. So puzzled was he that he sought the quiet of the woods to find the answer. At the lake he would feel completely at ease—a nearness to his gods about its waters. He found it more than tranquil! There was the cool soothing fragrance of green growing things, commingled with the gentle music of the birds. And most overpowering of all, the noiseless flutter of butterflies—these were an 'opiate.' Before he knew it, there came to him, the Wolf. He did not like its crafty way yet Wolf was in fashion, an oracle with an augury of forbidding nature. Wolf laid at Belikana's feet a bow with arrows saying, "Wolf gives these symbols of conflict, Wolf has given these to many people in far places. Sneak upon the enemy, kill, kill, kill! Yow! Yow! o-o-o-!" Wolf vanished quicker than he came and Magpie fluttered down to say, "Me saw Wolf he go many places, always give bow and arrow. Then man kills man."

"This is not good," remarked Belikana.

kana.

"No it is not good. But what can people of land of Mouse do when Stonemen kill? They must kill too!"

"In land of Mouse you say?"

"Yes in land of Chipmunk too!" Stonemen kill, kill, kill! And in far places Racemion of hard horn and jeweled head battles Angont, serpent of evil which sometimes hides beneath water."

Two other feathered commentators tuned in. They had not scooped the head lines but were no cub reporters. Said the dark one, "Raven has blacker news — Bear and Heap-Big-Think smoke peace pipe, peace pipe, Calumet."

"It isn't so!"

"O-o-oh! o-o-oh! yes they did," vouched Owl, perched near by. "Owl judge though, sometime old 'Heap' make 'gift' to Bear. Hex Hex! (It sounded like a cough through his chin feathers.) "You asleep. May be you wake up sometime."

Belikana sensed he might be drowning. But he could not wake until a crash of thunder did it for him. The sky told him this was no mere nightmare! Above him soared the Eagle with the white head, and above him the cloudy form of the Great Dark Bird. Belikana raised his arms in salutation saying, "Oh Great Voice,—Oh! Great Eagle with white head who knows Great Voice, Belikana has received your message."

He placed his four sacred tutelaries at the corners of a square upon the ground. In the center he again raised his arms, pledging, "Belikana will keep your message secret to carry out his mission. Belikana has faith, you know all things that have been and are to be."

Replacing his charms, he stepped beneath a cedar—his gods impressed



him that such trees were spared the flaming arrows of the Great Dark Bird.

The day was wearing on. An important meeting of the council was pending. Belikana should be present to support Big Bison's plea. He *would* risk to venture from beneath the cedar. But when about to move a spider dropped quietly upon his hand. Recalling the legend that it was friendly, Belikana gently lowered it to the ground saying, "Why you come to see Belikana now?" The spider's reply could hardly be construed as friendly—a paralyzing sting. Belikana instantly grew faint and slumped to the ground unable to move a hand. Then a white flaming arrow struck so close that he was blinded long enough for a very earthly thought, "Belikana know not what to do. He can not move. He can not see!" But he did *feel*,—a soft furry muzzle, all atwitch. "How Mizzybo it's you although I can not see."

"By carrots he knows my nose!" And loudly he shouted, "You're asleep or blind or something, just as Saucer-Eyes told you."

"I wonder if the judge is as wise as he thinks."

"A lot wiser than you think. He sees through things."

"I don't get it."

"Didn't he tell you that old 'Heap' might give Bear the double-cross. Well he has."

"Double-cross Oh me! I thought the judge had a tickle in his throat. How did you find out?"

"Oh I hop about a bit." Bear's in a tough spot."

"Belikana wonders if he has what it takes."

"When a good fellow is in a tough spot, there's no time to wonder. Why not hurry and give him some carrots? That's something in my language. Ta ta, I'll be seein' you."

Belikana pondered. Bear had been a friendly fellow so went the myths. Further, he was once a mighty warrior. Belikana hoped he would be one now. Why not give him some 'Carrots'—*honey* that would be 'carrots for the Bear.

SO INTENSE was Belikana's meditation he did not notice the passing of his temporary blindness until he saw the storm was over. Twilight was fading to the dust of evening. There was no time to spare in getting to the council fire. Well posted on world affairs he could speak with authority. He arrived in time to hear the Chief address the council. Big Bison sought his goal in his own way.

"Big Bison has told of stranger, Belikana. He did no eat for four days. He alone received sign from Great Voice. He get many herbs—make my people well—make Good Medicine. He asks nothing from my people. Big Bison believe him see with eyes greater than Eagle with white head. So, me think Belikana, Jossakeed—prophet. But Big Bison always take counsel. He will not make people take stranger as *shaman*. Let him who no take him as shaman, speak!"

A protesting voice arose, (it was not Black Arrow). "This stranger is not important. Some of Big Bison's people are. Stonemen are very important. He-Hides-His-Eyes who speaks and others, are very important. But we do not have voice with people of Big Bison. We have little corn—little meat. Stonemen have Heap Big Chief. *He* divide meat. *He* fair. Make Stonemen very happy. He show people in land of Chipmunk how to be happy. Chipmunk people join Stonemen people. All very happy. He shaw people in land of Mouse how to be happy. Mouse people join Stonemen people. All very happy. He make

peace talk with big Bear. Smoke peace pipe. All very happy! Now! Me say people of Big Bison join people in land of Stonemen. Then all be very happy."

Some loudly shouted approval. Big Bison remained silent. Then one of Big Bison's tribesmen arose. Said he, "Me have little corn, little meat, little wampum, but me can speak! People in land of Stonemen no can. Me *know!* Me come from land of Stonemen. Big Bison rule most speaks all same alike. Chief of Stonemen speaks and they *do*. Me no like to join Stonemen."

Many clamored to speak. The third one recognized, could no longer restrain himself, "Black Arrow speaks. He always speaks words of wisdom. People in land of Chipmunk and land of Mouse are very happy, and . . ."

Many voices crying "No! No!" forced Black Arrow to orate in brief, "Big Bison's people are divided and will make fight. Much blood will flow!"

The heavens roared in thunderous wrath. The meeting had taken a bad turn. To talk adequate defense, would now be useless. Turning to the stranger Big Bison said:

"Belikana may give us wise council. Let him speak."

He arose and raised his arms and eyes in supplication, "Oh Great Voice, You have spoken, guide my tongue that I might give wise counsel." Motionless he stood, until the stillness was like deep water. Lowering his arms, he fixed his eyes, first on one, and then on another, as he spoke, "Did Mouse and Chipmunk offer themselves as food to War Wolf willingly? Does one Mouse and Chipmunk assuage the hunger of War Wolf? Do these drops of blood but fan the flames of hunger? Does not War Wolf seek more meat with every added morsel? Will not War Wolf grow stronger, yet remain War

Wolf?" There was a seething of confused muttering, but the stranger quietly continued. "How can people of War Wolf be happy with great numbers? May be they think slaves would make them happy? Is it not better in light of Sun Father than in cave? Is it not better to travel to land of Blue Sky than to live in cave of War Wolf and eat that which War Wolf chooses to give? Has not the Bear who did trust, been knifed?"

Big Bison's eyes popped at this news, as Black Arrow sprang to his feet in the ensuing bedlam and rushed over to Belikana squaring himself and shouting, "Belikana—jossakeed!—*shaman?* Heh heh! Black Arrow makes Good Medicine to heal wounds of people which come in ways of peace. He would not have them suffer that he might fatten himself upon their wounds." He hesitated. The eyes of Belikana snapped but he spoke not. Black Arrow continued, "Belikana would have good people war yet would not fight himself — coward." With this, he slapped Belikana smartly across the face. The council grew tense. A good fight would be welcome. Many who were neutral doubted seriously whether Belikana was even a man, let alone a prophet.

ONE figure quietly stepped forward. He carried a medicine bag of unwieldy size and a hammer shaped pipe. In taking a place in the front row, he raised the pipe holding it to show an open palm. Black Arrow became completely at ease; he had proven he was master of his rival. As a coward would not fight why not show what a superior man he, himself, was, and thereby gain a host of new adherents? He-Who-Carries-a-Bag handed over the pipe. Black Arrow took it smiling and said, "Black Arrow slap Belikana to prove

that he is a coward but Black Arrow does not hate him. He does not strike a 'squaw' unless to teach her. Black Arrow has welfare of Big Bison's people in his heart. Belikana can do no good. He should go!"

There was faint protest. And an unhealthy number shouted, "Yea!" Black Arrow was pleased. He said, "Big Bison's people's wishes are his rule. They speak that Belikana should go, but me would have him go as friend so me hold out to him the Calumet of Peace."

Big Bison wondered for the moment whether he hadn't bet on the wrong horse. Belikana must have been asleep on his feet—at least his mouth was open when something as soft as a tissue football struck the back of his head. Those within the paper spheroid were not soft. They were fiendish in their aerial attack—hornets striking in all directions at Belikana's head. Belikana's reactions were not surprising. He moved to brush them from his face and cover his eyes. He was seeing through his fingers yet he did not walk. Big Bison noticed this. Black Arrow took advantage. He drew a formidable knife; ran a light finger along the flint; pressed his thumb to the tip, and laughed. He flourished it—shadow-boxed—gestured slashing of a throat—stabbed thin air with trip-hammer precision, whooped and yelled to further terrorize and gain supporters. If Belikana showed a sign of fighting, Black Arrow's followers would have to wager much to get a little wampum. Belikana did not move. His hands still covered his eyes and the hornets were still bizurk. Strangely they bothered Black Arrow not at all. With his hands upon his hips he leaned backward, yelling, "Belikana jossakeed, receiver of sign from eagle—liar—coward!" Then with tiger demon fury he lunged at Belikana but—somehow Belikana was not there.

Black Arrow was truly upset by getting off balance of his own free will through malice aforethought. His opener had been fast. Belikana's defense had been faster. Black Arrow's rejoicing gesture was black lightning! It was cunningly conceived, perfectly timed. He swung as if to slash off Belikana's scalp for souvenir. Naturally Belikana ducked, but not low enough to save the eagle feather in his hair. Down it fluttered and with the ecstasy of a lunatic, Black Arrow spat upon it. This was the last straw—the venom of a spitting adder. No eye could follow Belikana as he stripped for action and suffered even more, the persistent onslaught of the winged devils. He had no weapon. None was offered him. In his heart he sought his gods. An ear stinging report with blinding light through the doorway brightened the inner wall. Cupped ears had heard his prayer. And across his mind there flashed the thought of Ioskeha of the Hurons. He had used an odd instrument of battle and as the gods would have it, there was a decorative brace of them on the long-house wall, a leaping distance from him—*staghorns!* He sprang and ripped one free gripping it between the brow and bay tines. Its weight was not what he had hoped.

Big Bison's eyes grew wider. With understanding fervor, the old chief shouted, "Ioskeha." Even through Big Bison, his gods had spoken. It was time for him to speak, "Belikana cares not for himself He wishes to do no harm to any man. But he has a mission to fulfill. He *has* received sign from eagle with white head. Black Arrow insults symbol of Great Voice. Weapons must decide. Sacrifice shall be with blood!"

The pitch of excitement flamed! The contestants stood ready. This would be something different. Knife against

knife was not new; nor hatchet against hatchet; nor club against club or knife—all had seen such in war. But a knife against a crooked antler with no sharpened tines or crockets, *was* something! The crowd pressed close—for the hornets had vented their spleen. Without a hand clasp the contestants closed on one another—formidable knife against a weak and awkward weapon. But that horn was disconcerting as the legs of a chair against a lion. The prongs coaxed in completion 'keep your eyes on *me!*' So Black Arrow did not know which one to keep his eyes on and feared them all. They moved forward and backward to the right and to the left. Every time Black Arrow rushed for close contact he had to close his eyes and retreat. Suddenly Belikana lowered his guard too much and Black Arrow seized the opening, but he did not reach Belikana's heart. His left arm took a wicked glancing slice. A gratifying scarlet trickle gladdened Black Arrow's followers. With greater gladness to give first blood, Belikana showed all his wound and cried, "This—for *the gods!*" Now he decided to give the fans their money's worth. He had not thus far tried the antler offensively. It seemed too light in weight to strike with telling force. To raise it high enough would open his guard too much. Thus he pondered as the two sparred, plunged and parried. Once Black Arrow rushed too hard. He ran his cheek against the antler's foremost prong but from the scratch no blood did flow. It was disappointing. Every muscle in both lithe bodies were in action, the one combatant certain of his knife if he could get close enough. The other battler satisfied if he could wear his opponent down before loss of blood and hornet poison might weaken him too much.

This he knew very well.

**B**UT Belikana was growing light of head from bleeding. He could not place his feet just where he wished to. His strength to move about was gone. His wits were his last reserve. He opened his guard to expose his heart. Black Arrow took the bait and plunged too straight. Somehow his trusty pointed weapon became entangled with staghorn prongs. They twisted too quickly for him!—the knife clinked on the hard stony floor. Then there was a short flashing downward stroke of the horn upon Black Arrow's left ear. It clinked and clinked again as did the knife upon the hardened ground, but, no blood flowed where that ear belonged. It was like unto flint itself.

How the mystic charlatan escaped, nobody knew. With the hilarious disorder ensuing—who cared? Who looked after Belikana's welfare? Well, who would?—(Of course with Big Bison's assistance.)

The wound in Belikana's arm became infected. In a moment of consciousness, he called for tobacco. It should be powdered and pressed into the wound. Crude as it sounds, it was effective. Not long thereafter, recuperation seemed enhanced with restful sleep—but Belikana's eyes greater than the eyes of the eagle with the white head, were traveling far: A creature with a missing ear returns to his people—strange ones, and of three types, though by their moving spirit branded as one—kindly ones of flesh and blood compelled to do what the Big-Think ordered and forced to the darkest recesses of the Stonemen's cavern,—creatures as of flesh and blood yet of stone within, who could assume at will and without shame the form of the third and strangest type of all. Creatures much taller than their fellows, their body members *rock*, grey, dull, grotesque, repugnant giants, clinking

and grinding at every mystic joint; voices unearthly as they themselves, rasping cavernous as from within huge granite urns. Belikana cupped his clair-audient ears and furrowed his invisible brow to understand what any one was saying. Yet by bits of words and gesture, it was plain that Black Arrow unblushingly bedecked himself with a super glorified war bonnet. Hosts of admirers roared at his pugnacious gestures and war-drummed at every audacious rant. To hear him tell it, he was the lone hero, against as many as he had fingers and toes. Half were slain outright. The rest were fortunate to save their lives. What weapon had he? Only his trusty flint—he showed a gratifying stain upon it! To think! This, against countless arrows, knives, tomahawks, clubs—all mere 'feathers'! How did he lose an ear? Impertinent question to ask of an invincible one! Away with the traitor! Yet, he would explain,—a trifling matter—He intended telling of the amusing incident anyway. In the middle of the harrowing battle, he tripped! In the fall, his ear struck the horn of a stag, recently slain. (None had even heard of a stag in many moons, yet the Big-Think had inferred to the contrary.) So 'Doubt not him, but thy self!' thought they, and dutifully doubted themselves—wistfully hoping, of course, to find no one else who had seen even a track of a stag since Hector was a pup. Belikana gathered this from whispered mutterings and the shaking of heads. No! Black Arrow would not lightly push aside the fear of staghorn—for, he a god in his own black light, had lost an ear from it. Belikana made mental notes—Staghorn for defense. For offense, he would make Bad Medicine—'staghorn psychosis.' (Propaganda rampant, would have to serve for the genuine article, of which, there was none.)

FOR the moment the fear of staghorn was dulled by the intoxicant of self praise steaming from the Stoneman chief—it was as hashish to them. They would do his bidding. Run bizurkin legions for him. Belikana sensed this. Black Arrow felt sure of it. So when he demanded stupendous pressure against the sorely wounded Bear, the mighty hunters stood ready. He would make dramatic issue of the move. Black Arrow would save all from the giant furry menace. It would be butterflies in the eyes of Big Bison's people. They would sleep in their security and would be easy prey when the time came. Belikana felt sympathy for the Bear. What Good Medicine he could make, he not yet knew. He felt great concern for Big Bison's people. For if the Bear was lucky enough to reach his lair, he had to die from wounds or starve or—take to the sky as way of escape. The latter was the tale of jossakeeds—in time of cold Bear walked in the sky. In this event, an unexpected shading of the Sun Father's shield would be a threat to their life. Belikana had reasoned well though not quite far enough. For, no sooner had the Stonemen warriors started, than Black Arrow himself departed for the Place of Cold whereat Great Heads roamed. These bodiless riders of the storm blown along by their billowing growth of hair might be induced to become sporadic raiders. There was a 'zero hour' in truth, and not far off. The vicious plan roused Belikana from his vision. He took a deep breath with his eyes closed to avoid the distraction which seeing might cause. He had much to do . . . He had to plan the doing. He must help the Bear. He must urge Big Bison and his people to prepare against the cold to come. He must speed the making of weapons. He must secure all

staghorn within the village, and, himself, divide it. Each man, woman and child within Big Bison's rule must have a bit. Lastly a ritualistic dance to the Sun Father for protection in the days to come, must be arranged.

With his eyes still closed, Belikana sensed a warmth of hands that had been cold. First he thought "The Sun Father warms them as Belikana thinks of him." But a warm clean delicately scented breath, dangerously near, opened his eyes to reality. He tried to close them quickly. His timing was wretched. She withdrew her face and released his hands even more gently than she had been covering his. With casual indifference she said, "Belikana sleep long time! He much well now?" He wasn't sure about his heart. It wobbled and pounded badly in all directions. He hoped to motivate a re-inactment of the scene. Closing his eyes he trusted to luck. In a weak half whisper he said, "Belikana very tired." He sighed. He moved his hands about aimlessly, massaging the blanket. But—"No soap!" Her little hands did not cover his. She merely said, "Belikana see too many butterflies already."

"May be," he remarked meekly. His hope was still a jump ahead. This was as it should be for the urgency of the moment was great. Chikeesikiss did not read his thoughts when he asked, "Are we alone?"

"Many - ears - outside - can - hear," she gasped with triphammer catches of her breathing.

"Belikana wishes we take long walk, but he not strong."

"You no need take walk. Chikeesikiss help you to Big Bison's canoe when no one look. Chikeesikiss paddle. Belikana ride. Yes?"

Her features were aflame—dangerously so! Surely she was a goddess. The Moon Mother had never been so radi-

antly beautiful. He protested not. With her assistance he lumbered to his feet and when the coast was clear, he leaned upon her arm, making an unsteady way to the creek shore. With one heave she pushed her father's canoe half way into the water and commanded him in and down. He felt very foolish but he obeyed. Slumped in the bow, facing her was unconventional though comfortable—an optic feast!

From the air came the twitter of night birds, the hum of winged insects. Two little clouds, white and black—sandflies and No-see-Ems—blotched the sublimity of the Earth Mother arrayed in her finest. Chikeesikiss brushed at the flying pests so gracefully it seemed she would not even kill such ones as these. Belikana whacked with malice aforethought. If he could only be at the other end to shoo them from her lovely face.

As the canoe glided by the outskirts of the village, the pesky little clouds disappeared, leaving the grandure of twilight to them. It was then that the precise stroke of the paddle opened the musical well-spring of her soul. With her eyes piercing the distant vapor arising from the water, Chikeesikiss hummed a strange chant. It became a more teasing puzzle to him when her lips moulded the music into words. Had she improvised he wondered?

"In beauty I glide,  
With beauty before me, I glide,  
With beauty behind me, I glide,  
With beauty above and about me,  
I glide,  
It is finished in beauty,  
It is finished in beauty."

THE moment of silence which followed was Nirvana to them.

"Moon - Mother - could - no - make - song - so - like bird." If he intended to speak aloud it was surely alright with

her. If it was not his intention, the unintentional was perfect. Whichever the case she had a right to carry on. Her eyes twinkled as she casually remarked, "Chikeesikiss know she no sing like bird, but Belikana no talk, so Chikeesikiss think may be she can make Good Medicine like butterfly for Belikana." By all his gods, his hope was a day's long walk beyond his reach. Further she had let him know it plainly. Hadn't she sung, "In beauty I glide . . . I glide" . . . Never once *We* glide. He was nothing but a dumb nitwit, non-descript who know not from whence he came or whither he was going. With great misgiving, he ventured, "May be Chikeesikiss think she glides alone when she sing but Belikana was seeing no butterflies. Him was in canoe, too, and him saw more beauty than Chikeesikiss."

"You could no see *more*."

His heart urged him on, even though all the feathers of a thousand eagles would not have given him courage to look into her face.

"Oh! Yes! Belikana saw all beauty Chikeesikiss saw, and, too,—" Belikana choked. His words remained an unfinished symphony of affection.

A strangling smoke blowing lazily athwart the canoe had throttled the words of his heart. These precious words might have been spoken yet the fact remained he did not say them. The vile pungent stench had lashed him from forgetfulness of his mission. An evil, infinitely worse than the smoke was strangling all good ones like Big Bison's people. His mission was to do away with it.

There were tears in both their eyes but not all her tears were caused by a smouldering pile of carrion refuse without the village. In a dreamy despairing whisper she said, "This was no land of Blue Sky, even if Chikeesikiss think

it so." The thought cut deeply. Yet it hurt him less than what his courage commanded him to say, "Where Earth Mother is, the land of Blue Sky is not."

"Chikeesikiss know it much now."

Calm acquiescence displayed itself in the paddle as it silently dipped and again. Its rhythm urged Belikana to continue, "But where Earth Mother is, may be Chikeesikiss will work with Belikana to try make many good people would think it Land of Blue Sky?"

*This was* a stimulant, "Belikana, he make Good Medicine!" The pressure on the paddle was sudden and powerful. Belikana's chin thumped his knees. Rubbing them, he remarked laughing, "May be Good Medicine for Chikeesikiss, but heap quick Bad Medicine for Belikana."

Valuable time had been lost. He had a mission to fulfill! "Will Chikeesikiss stop paddle?" Of course she would. She spiked the soft creek bottom ooze with the blade. It held as an anchor. Then he whispered:

"Belikana saw much while sick. His eyes and ears go far. Belikana know Chikeesikiss no tell." As if to hear him better she crawled forward holding fast to the handles grip, and far enough so that with a little effort he might press his own hand over hers, (if he so chose.) He saw. He chose to help her hold yet his hand grasped below her own. Thus he held to his mission and quietly told her all he had seen.

"Chikeesikiss may be now see staghorn is Good Medicine for Big Bison's people. Belikana need all so can give small piece each one people. But, how can get?"

Chikeesikiss frowned. Her finger nails were sacrificed for ways and means. It was a harder nut to crack than Belikana realized.

"Belikana not know staghorn gone!"

Alarmed he asked, "Some people steal 'em?"

She nodded, "Must be, gone quick after fight. Guess Belikana know very little staghorn in village."

"May be some, —?"

"May be, but how get 'em?" for inspiration she resumed docking her nails. Belikana grew concerned.

"Chikeesikiss better hold paddle with one hand." Laughing, she awkwardly crossed her left hand over the paddle. Not easy to hold that way, she grasped the handle so close to his hand that, for his mission's sake, he wished he had worried less about the nibble on her nails. Yet, somehow the manicule conjured the nucus of a plan. Literally, she beamed,

"Chikeesikiss got think! Listen! Afraid people would like staghorn for shield. And Stonemen still hiding here would like steal staghorn away. Chikeesikiss think Belikana may not know who took 'em!"

"Belikana not know, but must get! How can?"

"Belikana remember story of jossakeeds about bones and things like bones? Remember sometime maybe Belikana see bones of bison set round and round? (her free hand made a circle) Well jossakeed say,—Sometimes bisons hop spring up alive from bones. Spirit he live in all bones. Belikana get think what?"

**H**E SAW! Wildly enthusiastic, he grabbed her free hand in both his own, "Belikana always had faith in Chikeesikiss." His truthful fervor added a decided tingle to his circulation. He outlined his scheme, building on her foundation of a legend.

"Belikana would start talk, he is making Bad Medicine so all stags will jump up alive and kill 'em, who stole staghorn! So thieves better be quick,

bring 'em back before 'em work! Yes?"

She agreed whole heartedly and asked, "But how Belikana start talk?"

"Oh Belikana go inside of tepee tonight and make much Bad Medicine talk. Chikeesikiss hear him. She tell secret to some squaws who know no can keep it. Talk then run away like grass fire!"

"Yes! and may be better say 'Better bring 'em staghorn back quick to council lodge. If squaws no know bones story me tell 'em!'"

"Staghorns will come back," Belikana chuckled. Bones were to rattle and ghosts to walk.

Holding her hand had been so spontaneous, Belikana did not realize he held it until she jerked it free to listen. A sound so faint, so distant, so new, had moved her hand for the hearing of it clearer—a strange and awful roar. He too listened.

"Yes Belikana hear, it is voice of Heap Big Bear in great pain. Stonemen hunters seek to kill him. It was to be. Much must be done and soon!"

Quickly though not rudely, he seized the paddle, wrenched it free from the silty muck and insisted he could guide the canoe down stream.

Curious to learn Big Bison's progress in awaking his people to impending danger, Belikana asked, "Are people making many bows and arrows?"

"People talk much. Make little. Big Bison no like it!"

"Belikana no like it either," he commented. She added no word. He grew equally introspective. Each conjured pictures of the future. When the canoe was beached, *her* abstractions took maternal form: By all his sacred charms he promised he would keep his blanket about him and assured her he had not overtaxed his strength. About to take their separate ways to avoid suspicion, he grasped her hand again



in both his own, whispering.

"Sometime Belikana try to do so good for Chikeesikiss but he feel he no never can do so much."

He straightway sought Big Bison and she, the women. The Chief, beside the fire in the open, was saying little—listening much. Belikana listened much, too, before making his presence known.

Chikeesikiss was right. People talked much. Evidently made little. Debate was loud and hot between warriors and craftsmen over many things. Women near by, noisily differed, in matters, agricultural. Belikana chuckled at hearing the old Chief end an argument with his own;—"Big Bison say if no can get flint for points, then get stone for clubs. If no can make clubs, then make shields and canoes. If no can make these, then make learn to run. Little talk is good. Much is little wind. Little wind is weak. No can blow Stonemen away. No can knock 'em down. Little wind has weak back. No coward can ride away on him. And so—little wind is nothing. But little *Do* of each Big Bison man is *MUCH!*"

The fiery candle of male debate was snuffed. But the tug of the women on two big bones grew hotter by the minute,—Dances to honor the Bird of Thunder would surely induce him to be overly generous with showers of pollen and rain for the new corn! No! That was not the way! Nothing worked so well as a barefoot walk in the nude about the corn patch in the dark of night. Chikeesikiss listened long enough. Gesturing silence, with all meekness she asked, "Why not all squaws no do both?"

Then, there was a very restful silence.

It was time now for Belikana to make his presence known. With the jerk of a thumb he drew the Chief to one side. He recounted his vision and

informed him of the plans afoot. The survivor of many winters said nothing until Belikana had finished. Then he grunted thrice, smiled hearty approval and knocked the ashes from his pipe.

To hasten his 'act' Belikana hurried to his own tepee. There cloistered, he featured fantastic frills and flourishes in a ritual, mystic; to War Wolf, the god,—Bad Medicine to thieves.

Chikeesikiss took her cue. She saw the light within. Heard weird howls to the hellish god of War. Appeals to him to give life to bones and things like bones, that they might buck and bite all thieves who stole 'em! Chikeesikiss screamed, waited for Belikana to stick his head out; then ran madly to a few good neighbors with wagging tongues.

**T**HERE were many softly-treading reasons why neither of the plotters could sleep soundly. One old squaw swore the ghosts of panthers sulked by night. Her aged warrior spouse, having misplaced his eagle feather insisted (with fingers in his ears) it could not be. So here, there and over yonder peaceful slumber suffered.

As the Spirit of Light invaded the eastern sky there were none, but two to see 'him.' These two were curious. Each collided with the other at the door of the council lodge. Though startled, they giggled, and as of one breath, said, "Me think staghorns may be many."

The dog paradise was, in amount, abundant; in quality, questionable; in variety, voluminous. Had the spirits in these bones and things like bones, sprung to life, they could have stocked a zoo. As the plotters sorted, disappointment grew. In the digging, once only, did Belikana show interest. A necklace!—Claws of a grizzly, sharp and menacing. She knew better than to ask him why he found value in it. At

last, in the lowest layer to the ground, they found pause to thank the god, so expedient in his 'boost.' But pitifully few were those horns of stag, returned by thieves; not timid souls who sought to be safe, not sorry. Belikana took official charge of the precious trophies. The remaining biological species, might have a use, he thought. There were signs of life about. Much for him to do. With the horns and necklace in a blanket, Belikana hurried to his own tepee. There, stored them. Next he sought Big Bison's knowledge of his people—an exact census of all men, women and children within the village. The Chief wrestled with the problem until his hair become tangled with much scratching. Then he appealed to youth by shouting to his daughter. She had anticipated the coming of the question and calmly handed over a sizeable bag filled with pebbles.

"These stones are as many as Big Bison's *village* people." Turning to her father as if to gain official sanction for sacrifice of their own protection for the welfare of the public, she asked, "Is that no well?"

"It is heap right," Big Bison answered putting his arm about her proudly—yet hoping that Belikana would not overlook her safety and that of the twins. Belikana said nothing, but in their presence he put four more pebbles in the bag.

Within the seclusion of his wigwam, he went to work, marking and dividing, piece for stone until the bag was empty. Tiny bits they were, excepting four brow-tine prongs, a trifle larger than the rest—Big Bison's family group would need more courage and protection than all the others. When the peoples courage weakens, unflinching bravery of their leaders, must survive. To her he gave the choicest of the 'dagger points' and he cautioned

her never for a single moment, to be without it. One pebble, he tossed away. Likewise he distributed the remaining three fragments to Big Bison and the twins. The peoples lot he gave to Chikeesikiss and suggested that her bucksome girl friend Laughing Mountain be appointed official checker. For each bit of horn transferred, she should take a pebble from the bag; thus there could be neither error or complaint. To traitors, these mystic bits would have no value, but Hell's homing pigeons, tarred with terror; were sure to carry unhappy tidings—Bad Medicine—the tumble-weed of fear, to roll far and wide, blown by winds of fact and rumor.

To Big Bison's people, a tiny bit of staghorn embedded in a warrior's club would add undreamed-of power to it. A midget shield adorned by a thumb-nail scrap should well protect a Red-man giant; and, should man or woman carry neither club nor shield, there was the *parfleche* in which to hide a staghorn charm.

WHEN the last bit was handed over and the last pebble tossed away, Chikeesikiss worried greatly—Had Belikana provided for his own protection? He carried neither club nor shield. What charms were within his own *parfleche* were *his* sacred secret. If he had thoughtlessly failed to count himself, he would evade a question on it. It would be useless to divide her staghorn bit for she possessed no all-high power. Thus she reasoned to the conclusion she must learn the truth through some ruse of her own devising.

Chikeesikiss's face betrayed her mood. Laughing-Mountain wondered why it sobered. She told her it was nothing that anybody had done. Her father noticed her gloomy manner and spoke to Laughing-Mountain about it.

Both badly worried, sought the 'doctor'—Chikeesikiss needed help. He did not tarry. He came too rapidly, tripping twice over his own agile feet. Each time he fell, it required repacking his burden of professional impedimenta—oodles of herbs, a dozen splints, flint scalpels (assorted), and mystic paraphernalia sufficient for a crystal gazer telling tales to gullibles. In brief, despite delays, he arrived at the side of his patient in nearly 'nothing' flat. He was the one excited, not she. She was neither comatose, nor in convulsions. Rather, she was calmly working at a loom, but her face looked drawn to the 'doctor's eyes. Her hands trembled in the weaving of a blanket for some nitwit whose name she would not give him. She was even irritable when he asked her. This sudden change in manner betokened illness, surely. Could it be a matter of the heart. Who was this nitwit? Thus did Doctor Belikana ponder as he watched in fascination the gorgeous color sceme unfold. How beautiful he thought if she found strength to finish it. He saw the odd cross symbol of the Morning Star, and too, the figure of the Great Dark Bird. And *now*, she wove in, a tiny hole—odd freak, it had a meaning. Oh yes! That would let the Spider Woman out. It was all so full of meaning, yet what it meant, in toto, could not be told. To tell would threaten blindness to the weaver. But she should not work—she was not well! If her care of him had been the cause, the more reason she should stop. He was strong of will and he so willed. He commanded her to quit! With reluctance she obeyed. Her hands and face were warm but not too warm. The beating at her wrist seemed regular—perhaps a trifle fast. Her food had been good food, the same as given him. About her temples and her forehead only, did he note a warmth

greater than he thought it should be. Dampened leaves, thereon proved worthless. She had no headache, yet the heat persisted. "Strange", he thought, "No herb Belikana knows, can help. Some demon is within her head. Must have him out! May be if Belikana paints with sand, he will come out. Belikana shall gather many sands, white—blue—red—black—yellow. If no can find sand, must find powders or other things. Must work quick! Chikeesikiss no well."

He rushed the gathering of the stuff and with his *unskilled* hand, poured a picture on the floor—an evil awful creature, for such, this demon must be. Urging Chikeesikiss to be seated in the framing circle of his picture, he touched the demon's head with a feathered wand, erasing it; then the forehead of Chikeesikiss. No soap!

"Must do more" he thought. He brushed up his entire work of art, walked east with the pot-pourri of colors and poured them to the North. Again, no soap! He reproached himself for employing a mystic remedy he did not fully understand. One last resort remained—the mystic charms within his own parfleche. He helped his little patient to her blanket. Requested her to close her eyes as he prepared Good Medicine—he hoped. Upon the floor and near her head he spread his sacred charms and with song and prayer he implored his gods for divine assistance. Chikeesikiss slowly rolled her head as his prayers continued, "Gods do hear! She move head to set free demon torment! That is what he thought, but not the reason for the motion.

Flat upon her balsam matted blanket Chikeesikiss could see little to one side even if her eyes were open. But if she rolled her head from side to side, and far enough, she could see

*much* in just one snap-shot blink. This she did. She saw four things, an eagle's feather, a ball, a splintered staghorn (???) bit, and last, the lock of her own soft hair securely bound with sweet grass! Her man-god was fortified! Her hair was precious—*sacred!*

SHE longed to sing, to dance, to laugh! But not too soon—lest haste breed suspicion. How slow it seemed he was in returning the mystic charms to the keeping of the *parfleche*. He knew he failed again—but he hadn't! Suddenly she opened her beautiful eyes, spoke to him, smiled, laughed, sang, until Belikana joyfully inferred he had over done his work. At this happy moment, poor old 'dad' and Laughing-Mountain, both thoroughly winded, trailed in, a trifle upset perhaps, in missing the miraculous cure—(Could it be, a bit disappointed, she wasn't as ill as they thought.)

Laughing-Mountain was flabbergasted, the chief not so. They had been victims of a swindle and parties to it. In a gasping breath, he whispered in Laughing-Mountain's ear "Chikeesikiss she sick like possum, he dead."

Bewildered, although happily convinced of the speedy efficacy of his hidden tutelaries, Belikana gathered up his drug-store and departed. There were other urgent matters on his mind which should wait no longer. One concerning the mass of bones which still remained within the council lodge. Among these, were skulls and ribs bison. He knew that Chikeesikiss could direct the best arrangement for a mystic purpose. He gathered them together and sought her help in toting the first arm-loads to a prairie area without the village where bison had been plentiful. They did this boldly and curious ones offered willing hands to make light the whole work. Even He-Hide-

His-Eyes was among the number and loudly did he wonder who the base thief was that stole the staghorns. Belikana had no need to wonder now. But he did wonder as to whom all the thief did rob. Some antlers surely were an aged warrior's treasures.

At the chosen site the skulls were placed around with the noses pointing in. Without the mystic ring he placed the bones remaining. Then with reverence Belikana implored the dieties of the herd to give them back the breath of life, asleep within those bones. For reasons of his own, He-Hides-His-Eyes then hid his eyes and walked away, never to be seen again by friend or foe.

Later in the day, Belikana started out upon a precautionary mission. Storms from the North, sudden and furious might spell destruction to ones, apathetic to warnings. What he had in mind was a fire to be kept burning safely, somewhere. Too, it would be a timely tribute to the Sun Father. Once white flaming arrows thrown from heaven had saved early Man from cold, but Belikana could not risk to ask his Dark Bird Friend to speak in a time of bitter cold to come, no one knew when. In Belikana's age, when wintry chill prevailed the Great Voice was still. Why he knew not. And too, the robin with the flaming breast would not be there.

Up in the hills there was a tiny cave where the Coyote dwelled. He would give Mah'ee a second chance to be a friend to Man. And so to the lair, he carried fire. Its warmth was soothing and as he drowsed. And in his dreaming, Mah'ee came to him and vowed he would win the right to carry his plumed tail high.

When Belikana awoke, he left the cave with a feeling he had accomplished one more defensive measure. On his way down to the village in a

patch of heavily-timbered woods, he chanced upon a hollow trunk of an old dead tree—a 'bee' tree copiously filled with the sweet of winged workers, long, long gone. What a treat for Big Bison's people! He marked the spot; the monuments, a trembling balanced boulder, and the tallest fir on the downward slope toward home. He climbed the fir high enough to be sure of bearings. But in a glimpse at a clouded sky, the Great Voice 'spoke' just once, and, in admonition. The blinding whip-like crack smote him with the thought 'Think not only of thine own!' And, he did some thinking. Humbled, he said, "O Great Voice, Belikana understands. Mystic Spirit in this nectar shall be shared with distant furry Giant battling for life. Belikana vow he will make Good Medicine and by mystic means dispatch it."

Then he hurried down to the village telling of his find. The people lost no time in bearing the sweetened burden down where it might be divided. He accepted his small portion for a most unselfish reason. He tasted not a finger sip from his own gourd cup. Quietly he withdrew from the swarm of human flies gathered about many sickly bowls. At his own wigwam he got the bear-claw necklace. In a secluded spot without the village, he dug a tiny pit and placed his sacred charms about it. Then holding the necklace and honey gourd above it, he prayed, "Oh Great Spirit who speaks through Bird of Thunder, Belikana begs that Good Medicine which he now make, shall give strength of food and strength of mighty claws to wounded Giant Bear!" He poured the honey into the pit and dropped the necklace on it, then covered both.

**F**OR Big Bison's people this day was done. The evening was for tall tales, song and chatter about a fire—with a

word or two about defense, calling forth more boasts, more chants to ward off evil, more loud and wistful thinking. Belikana realized this merry-go-round of wind was getting no where, fast. Big Bison had warned his people as to what they ought to do, so Belikana concluded to conserve his breath. He prayed for strength to carry him through the night for he had volunteered to watch the fires of Big Bison's family group. It would not be easy.

The Bird of Thunder was about. However, there was one cheering thought for the gloomy night ahead—the drizzle would be warm, so why yet fear the hairy demons from the Place of Cold? Why watch the fire? Only Belikana's word kept him from yielding to these tempting thoughts. While others slept, the gloomy drizzle started and for partial shelter, he sat half-way within his own wigwam. The fires refused there was nothing to do but keep his eyes on them—so easy—and—so alluring! With the warm gentle sprinkle of the drops, the fires flickered, danced and fluttered—flickered, danced and fluttered—fires flickered—fluttered—giant mystic golden butterflies flickered, danced and fluttered. Belikana, 'fire guardian drowsed; slept soundly at his post with his forehead pillowed on his knees. The few winged creatures of sunset hue became engulfed in myriads of scintillating rainbow colors—fluttering jewels of exquisite beauty. The colors darkened. Black fluttering shadows coalesced into huge swarms like bees and, these too, took form in shapes of men—shapes of traitors to Big Bison's people. Stealthy, wickedly, they moved about, quenching, smothering every fire indoors or without and worse still—stole all things with which to build one. Belikana struggled frantically to stop the criminals from taking his own good fire drill and tinder. But

his tongue and lips could not shape words. His limbs could not obey his will. Only his strange eyes moved about and saw.

To the outskirts of the village, his uncanny vision dogged their steps until the two-faced redskin devils slunk away, taking with them the few horses which Big Bison's people owned. It was all so fantastic, it could not be!

"Belikana dreams," he said to himself. The thought that he did dream, told him he must not sleep! It spurred his will again and his will this time aroused him. The rain had passed. The grey of dawn had come. The sky was clear. The fires were truly out! Cursing himself as a worthless sloth, Belikana sprang to his feet for better view. Not a spark of fire could he see,—not a wisp of smoke. Everything was wet, wet, wet. There was not a bit of fluffy tinder, or soft dry stick, or soft dry chip in which to whirl one that it might make heat. The butterflies were the imaginaries of dreams. The fiendish acts of traitors were the facts of vision. Belikana stood transfixed with the reality of it. So bewildered was he, he did not feel a sudden chill until he scanned the surface of the creek. Its motion slowed and before his very eyes it turned to sleek steel-hard ice. The surface of all things made by man or the Great White One turned frosty, and shrieking howls as of a million starving wolves of war, pierced Belikana's ears. His hands clapped over them to shut out the hideous noise. At the instant, he could not even think. Recovering from the momentary shock that that which was to be, had come, Belikana's first thought was for *her* welfare—her father's welfare—the welfare of the twins. He started toward the tepee where she rested with the little ones.

It was a few paces distant. If he

could quickly rout them out and rush them to Big Bison's wigwam, the four might stay close to one another and conserve their body heat. Thus they might survive the cold. He took no more than a step or two when the yowling eery monsters struck the outmost dwellings of the village. Belikana would have sworn he saw their dazzling long white hair roll and billow in the frigid blast, their slender wraith-like arms swoop down like silver lashes to rip, to tear tepee, wigwam, longhouse, totem, to tattered shreds, jack-straw splinters, while gruesome mouths spewed huge clouds of blinding, cutting sleet—no—not sleet, not snow, great razor chips of flint hard glassy ice!

**SO QUICK** the Great Heads came, Belikana was lifted and thrown sprawling through the entrance way. There was no time for whys and what-for's. Like a mad gorilla he swept the three he hoped to save, close to him—then pulled—jerked—pushed and jammed them out of doors and over to Big Bison's wigwam, and close to the trembling half-roused befuddled chief. In their ears he roared, "Lie flat! Stay close! Keep covered!" And upon the four of them he threw furred pelts and blankets—in fact, everything at hand which might make a protecting shield from cold.

For those he loved the most, he had done the best he knew. May be there was a chance to aid the nearest neighbors. He started, but failed to reach the out of doors. The mad raiders from the "Place of Cold" with one fell stroke, rolled down Big Bison's wigwam upon the helpless group. Trapped thus, it seemed they could not move—it nearly stopped their breathing.

The blow which felled Belikana, made everything go black. This soon

passed. He did not know how long he had known nothing. He knew that he still breathed, yet he could not breathe long. With the greatest effort, he pushed the hide walls upward and drew in a little air. The others moved. They were alive! With like efforts they made the breathing easier. Their exertions did even more than this—it maintained the circulation of their blood. None of them could tell, when the shrieking tornado wind lowered to a mournful whine—and—then, to the very stillness of death itself.

With the Great Heads gone, life seemed worth the effort. Belikana 'moled' himself forward making the way easier till all were out. Other survivors popped upward like prairie dogs in the untimely Arctic waste. They shouted in their joy of living but to endure the cold, they needed fire. Fortunately the splintered wood of many dwellings were now drying. Belikana prayed that Mah'ee had redeemed the honor of his ancient forebear. Big Bison's snow shoes were somewhere beneath the wreckage. Belikana dove under and in. The twins like all youth preferred to be in trouble. They too dove under but not in. Chikeesikiss jerked them hither by their heels. Giving loud voice to thwarted aims, Big Bison dosed them with his own choice elixir of the palm, as Belikana emerged, shoes in hand.

The going was difficult. The glow of morn illumed the sky as he climbed the last long ridge. The breeze was sharply bracing—the panther must be whining! Tears streamed from his eyes and as he glanced toward the coyote's lair, a shadow seemed to strut from the tiny cave, its plumed tail held high. If it was merely the imagery of tears, nevertheless it urged Belikana into too great haste. Suddenly he tripped and fell. With one shoe trapped in a deep

crevasse, the freeing of his foot allowed the shoe to fall beyond his reach. His ankle pained him badly so he belied forward. Within the murky darkness he forgot his pain—there were embers still aglow—and—and unburned dry twigs, neatly piled! He did not remember storing them—so the leaves on Mah'ee's family tree would droop no more. Belikana had the sorely needed fire, but he had no way to get it to Big Bison's people now.

The normal eyes of Chikeesikiss had been well trained for distance. Anxiously they had traced an ant-like speck plod slowly up the slope. Then suddenly she saw it not. Her father did his best to calm her fears. Big Bison would not admit his own. At the end of many anxious moments there was a wisp of smoke—then a distinct and single puff—then, another. Chikeesikiss shouted "Belikana find fire! Makes talk with smoke!" She waved her arms wildly in acknowledgment. "No can see so far," replied the chief. "But if Chikeesikiss raise hand for each smoke puff, me can say what Belikana talk."

The chief read the raising of her hand, the gist of the message was "Lost snowshoes, No can walk. No can bring fire down."

Big Bison had no time to send a rescue party before a second message came, in *all—too—rapid* puffs. Big Bison caught only snatches of it, "See Redmen—traitors . . . Stonemen . . . Quick . . ." Big Bison lost no time presuming what he failed to interpret: There were raiders coming. No Stoneman could pass over such a wide expanse of ice and snow for their bodies were too heavy; none but Redmen traitors could be raiders in attack. Knife, tomahawk, and club could stop the worst they had to offer, yet not a moment could be wasted in call to arms and cover. The nearest neighbor,

Knife-In-Teeth, most loyal warrior was in plain sight and hearing. Big Bison snapped, quick whispered orders to pass the word along and watched his people vanish before he himself took cover with the family. Belikana abruptly smothered his signal fire. The Chief reasoned; the raiders were close by. The defenders had not long to wait. With a wild blood-congealing whoop, knives clubs and hatchets shrunk a stone ring tightly about the village. There was no sound. It was the raiders turn to guess how much resistance they would meet.

**I**N THIS war of nerves Big Bison's people could do naught but wait. Again came that terrorizing whoop, much louder, echoing from hill to ridge and from ridge to hill. Then there was an awful silence—deadly—evil—fiendish. In all his years of war, Big Bison had never felt his nerves so tense. Just inside a snowdrift tunnel, he could see little of the village area. He could but hope for youthful strength of arm for one last moment.

Chikeesikiss with the twins were deep within the drift and half sheltered by the wigwam wreck. If Belikana were only there! Useless wishing! She busied herself by propping of the fallen bark wall overhead. She reached for one more stout fragment of the wigwam frame when a spear point flashed through the snowdrift wall straight toward her father's outstretched form. The very tip pierced his leathern shirt. The splintered bit of wood which Chikeesikiss held parried the deadly thrust. No foil ever moved so swiftly! That was not all she did. With one terrific lurch she seized the shaft and yanked it free from him who held it. Her father made a quicker move. It seemed he shot from the tunnel's mouth and before she could withdraw

the spear, she heard a moan and thump as of a body falling. Her heart was in her mouth as she crawled forward. Her fears were groundless—she found her father kneeling over a prostrate form, coolly wiping from his knife the blood of a traitor's heart—poor fool—poor bleeding bait to lure Big Bison from his hiding. Neither he nor Chikeesikiss realized their danger until the trap closed quickly—a soundless pincher movement one might call it.

As each warrior had been ordered to keep covered until a loud call to battle, even Knife-In-Teeth had heard no sound. And so, the ruse which merely cost a traitor's life, moved swiftly. Treasonous Redmen seized, disarmed, gagged and bound Big Bison and his daughter. With long raw-hide cords, they dragged them as logs of wood over the icy crust and down to the creek's shore. Its glassy surface would make the hauling easy. Only at this moment did Chikeesikiss see a crimson stain upon the breast of Big Bison's shirt. It told her much. Knife had clashed with knife before the final thrust. The old chief saw her eyes. His eyes told her that he was not badly wounded.

With a slipping sliding shuffle the raiders started off upon the mirror ribbon. Torture was their intent. The captives would tell much but the squaw might shriek in anguish. Beyond the village was a secluded spot,—this they sought. But a roar as of the Great Voice speaking and a tremble of the ice stopped their hearts from beating! It seemed the Earth Mother raged at her evil children's deeds. Yet it was not so. The mammoth balanced boulder with which Belikana marked the bee tree, was rolling down from Mah'ee's lair!

He of the eagle's feather, had seen much, thought quickly, worked fast to





The mammoth balanced boulder was suddenly rushing downward with thunderous speed . . .

loose it. And in its hard-packed slippery valleyed wake, Belikana 'tobogged' down. In one hand he held a smouldering brand. In the other, a queerly crooked branch, fircated, illusory—in motion, like unto a huge stag's antler. Just as the mighty hammer fell upon the icy creek, he of buckskin, beads and feathers shouted "Ioskeha." The gangster posse froze fast with fright. Some red skins mysteriously turned an ashen grey. Big Bison saw this. Chickeesikiss too. And both saw more,—the flint-hard ice, which, though cracked, had failed to crash, now instantly gave way beneath a load greater than a dozen boulders weight. Icy waters engulfed the inhuman creatures. The creek's soft slimy bed enshrouded them in silt. While those of grey, sunk quickly, a few red skinned traitor dupes met their fate more slowly. Frantic hands clung desperately to the long hidecords. Slowly their weight drew Big Bison and his daughter near and nearer to the flint-ice jagged hole—yet, neither reached it! Belikana acted faster than he was ever known to do. Across the tilting ice he dashed and with his knife slashed both hide-cord lines.

"**IOSKEHA!**" Was as a cry of war to all Big Bison's braves. Cold coiled steel nerves released their power! Ice-clad coverings spat forth the Chief's savage dogs of war, all confident of staghorn power, all confident of victory, all in unity repeating the same fierce cry, "Ioskeha!"

Red skinned pillaging ghouls had not planned things this way. This was battle! He who tried to pull a bow or wield a club found an uncertain tremble in his arm and he who would, but dared not hurl a flint, found courage only to prod the rest. Of course there were exceptions. Some had the courage

to hurl a flint, later finding cause to regret their action. Flints would boomerang. Yet Stonemen weapons were not all harmless. Many arrows found their marks. In hand-to-hand encounters, there were a few who placed too little faith in staghorn magic. Though brief, the foray raged with fury. And, throughout, there was a puzzling angle to it. Every hurler of a flint who became a casualty was carried away, but not so the others, although their weapons only, marked them from their vulture comrades. The would-be ghouls suffered heavy losses and fell back to safer distance. Then one came forward holding up what seemed to be a Calumet as jesture to an armistice. Belikana's discerning eyes saw it as it was. He told Big Bison. The grizzled chieftain made decision,—he alone, would give the answer. Creeping forward, he raised himself half kneeling. With his hands behind him, he sensed the balance of a large flint blade passed to him by Knife-In-Teeth. When he had the hold taught him by many wars, he sprang to his feet and shouted, "Ioskeha" yet made no further move until a battle hammer—no Calumet—whizzed pin-wheel fashion through the air and abruptly fell at Big Bison's feet. Surprise gripped the hammer hurler's arm. And truly petrified he was, when a white streak flashed forth from Big Bison's hand to sever the 'feeler' which had gestured peace. Wiser was he who had lost a hand. He did not touch, the knife, for he saw embedded within its grip a staghorn fragment. Thus ended the action of the moment. And as the brilliant shield of the Sun Father arched its fiery rim above the hills, those who would plunder the dead, moved off as if commanded to take cover. They did not yet see that there was something brighter than their own self appointed

deity, 'Heap-Big-Think!'

While the battle raged Chikeesikiss had not been idle. Since her rescue she had kept the only home-fire burning—the brand brought down from Mah'ee's cave. To this, she added a few precious scraps of half-dry wood, molded by the twins from beneath the wreckage of her father's wigwam.

Big Bison and Belikana were heartened by her efforts. This was no midget fire. It was Mah'ee's loyalty to man. It was survival to Big Bison's people. It was a gift, divine. No one yet should selfishly partake of its life-renewing warmth. First, through united effort it must grow to a sizable blaze in tribute to the great giver of it. Slowly Chikeesikiss backed away from the tiny blaze, lest she might steal a candle-worth of its meager heat. The shining shield of the Sun Father shown full upon her face. Her lips moved. And Belikana saw her face, the pink bronze beauty of it, the humility of her emotions written there. For a few brief moments she had been a Vestal Virgin over this precious gift.

Big Bison hailed Knife-In-Teeth that he might pass the word along for a heap big fire building, where all might gather in tribute to the Sun Father and then receive its warmth. And so from many wrecks of what were homes came fuel, much of it of doubtful dryness. Yet the blaze did grow and with it the hope and faith of all. With the fire at its peak, the overhanging blanket of smoke and mist rolled away and the warmth of the Sun Father's shield gave benediction.

**B**IG BISON had seen Winter nod and relax his grip upon the icy lash of bitter winds: While Hiyoka drowsed the gentle warmth of the heavenly disc would urge the snow to melt, the life-bloods of growing things to flow, the

furred and feathered children to move about and speak to one another. Then when happy voices grew too loud in their rejoicing, the Old Man from the Place of Cold would rouse and strike a stinging blow as if to shout, "So Ye did think Hiyoka slept, ye cringing creeping crawling things! The Ruler of the Winds is ever watchful, fools! Cease thy noisome chatter! Begone cur spawn of the Earth Mother!" And under the quick freezing lash of a northern blast they would scurry to cover, there to slyly await another nod of Hiyoka's head. Thus, in fitful, fretful pattern, the soothing shimmer of the Sun Father's shield would play against the sting of Hiyoka's cruel 'cat,' until the Old Man, beaten at the game, roused no more, for many sunny days. But never once, in Big Bison's memory, did Hiyoka's lash grow limp so quickly as on this queer day born in an untimely sub-sub-zero cold.

The morning sky grew cloudless. By noon, the icy mantel melted. The creek rose to super-flood proportions. And before the Sun Father rested for the night, every dwelling along the shores not washed away, had been saved only by quick moves to higher land.

The evening was depressing, ghostly. Rising, writhing, twisting vapors in forms bizarre, blown by shiftless breezes and illumed through a moonlit misty veil, meandered hither and thither—shimmering wraiths hunting for a place to rest, yet finding none.

Here and there under foot, the land which *was*, was *mud*, the sticky gooey kind that grips a foot with intent to keep it,—uninviting islets, yet each, a tempting refuge from roaring waters, impromptu ponds, a vast expanse of ocean lakes where a little creek sprawled in frenzied madness. On such a black gumbo haven, a canoe was grounded with Belikana and Chikeesi-

kiss in it. They had ferried, much and many. Neither had the strength to move. He slumped at one end. She none too gracefully reclined at the other. Said Chikeesikiss, "Me think Belikana see butterflies."

"Them no butterflies Belikana see," he mumbled, "Them are *bats!* Can no see them hang on Belikana's eyes?"

She giggled impulsively at the way he spoke. Then, sensing the terror of what he said, it chilled her to the bone. Bats! Harbingers of death—the Great White One forbid that Miclanteuctli's messengers should close his eyes before her own!

Quickly leaning forward to peer intently at his face through the gruesome moon-drenched pea-soup mist, she saw no bats! For an instant a mid-get gremlin made her wish she had seen something like a bat that might auger a redman's version of a big green apple torment. It would serve him right for scaring her half to death. Even more, that imp of temper in her moulded by the sight of great waters snapped her eyes and wagged her tongue.

"Too bad Angont no pinch-bite your stummick." She nose-dived in an immensely satisfying pout. Even a bit of this Huron water monster's flesh was poisonous, no doubt.

He laughed. He sensed her mood and loved her more for it, but, with a mission to fulfill, he crushed all petals of romance. His eyes swept the area beyond her as he quietly remarked:

"May be no should speak of Angont, his ears may be very close. Belikana hope he no see head of Angont or may be two-head, once face Sisiutl; but may be he *did!*"

Turning to see, she gave a low frightened cry. There was good reason. Either of these water serpents was a fiend. And where the shadowy vapors

seemed to spiral highest she saw a queer wriggling blend of many shapes. One did not change its sinuous, hideous, moon-painted contour. Worse, it came close, bobbing rhythmically, hissing in tune with each emersion of its huge repulsive slimy periscopic head. It grew more distinct. The sky was reddening. A number of Big Bison's people on a larger islet, carefully nursed a feeble remnant of the morning blaze. Its glow reflected from the mist. The prospect for the two isolated workers, was not rosy. Their mud islet was about two canoe lengths long. The monster Angont could strike much further than across it. The creatures mood was menacing to all water craft of Big Bison's people. Unfortunately there were rafts, dugouts and canoes still plying back and forth carrying food and implements of war for safe storing. And of course a few frail craft overloaded with poor but precious belongings of flood victims. None of those afloat or on mud shores realized the peril, excepting Belikana and Chikeesikiss. Of one tongue they shouted "Angont!" For some, their warning came too late. The monster instantly submerged and struck a deadly blow with his flint-hard giant horn. Logs and cargo of a raft flew asunder as if blasted by a submarine torpedo. Two of Big Bison's people were seen no more.

**K**NIFE - IN - TEETH had always lived up to his name but boasted of no skill in navigation. His canoe was top-heavy with bows and arrows. Its cargo would be no small loss and Angont seemed to know it. The disaster-out blow fell. The hull crashed. Knife-In-Teeth was once more put to test. His knife was truly in his teeth when he landed in the water. None but Belikana's owl-power normal vision re-

vealed his sorry plight. His lightning reason told him Knife-In-Teeth would give battle. He knew the odds and made decision. "He can no die this way! Chikeesikiss out, Belikana go alone!" But he was not quick enough to get her out. A shove of her own paddle sent Belikana sprawling. The canoe rushed straight for the combat area. Never had Chikeesikiss dipped a paddle with such consummate vigor. Belikana had just reached his battle station in the bow when the canoe approached the monster and the *man*. Belikana's hope was that the brute might be outmaneuvered. Knife-In-Teeth seemed to have so reasoned too, for he circled carefully about the huge undulating devil. Its great bulk compelled it to move ponderously. Its head 'packed the wallop.' The wily warrior watched to close in on a vulnerable spot without taking a killing thrust of the monster's unicornish horn. Belikana shouted a suggestion, "No can cut hide! Stab eyes! Eyes!" The idea sounded feasible if he, in the water, and they in the canoe, could coordinate. A double approach, head on, of both canoe and man might stop and keep the monster headed straight. Chikeesikiss maneuvered the canoe as Belikana wished and so precise that Knife-In-Teeth caught on. The monster stopped circling. It seemed bewildered. Then, with two lightning thrusts it tried to strike each foe in quick succession. The stab at Knife-In-Teeth fell short. The canoe was not so lucky. The tip of Angont's horn sent it spinning. With super human strokes Knife-In-Teeth took advantage, closed in, and did his best to reach an eye, but, his knife, too, stopped short! Angont's huge mouth opened and viciously snapped shut. They in the canoe knew not what it meant until they saw no ally in the water. Escape from the mon-

ster's wrath seemed near hopeless but possible. Belikana would never seek safety for himself. Her protection was a different matter. "No can fight Angont alone! Make quick paddle away! Very quick!" Then she spoke, "Belikana battle!" Thrusting the eagle's feather safely in his hair, overboard he went. He gave the canoe a violent shove away from the danger zone and started circling tactics. The plan failed miserably. Angont now moved in no predictable way. The immense body gyrated right and left. It undulated in great and irregular heaves. The water boiled. The mammoth head lashed and struck like the fist of a blinded giant. This was no cool and calculating beast of the sea. It was a water devil gone stark mad. Belikana had one choice only,—to keep clear from the crazy writhing hulk, ever watchful, ever hopeful for just a chance. It came. The monster quieted. A few swift strokes brought Belikana within knife reach of an Angont eye. He raised his blade and then knew not what hit him. Chikeesikiss saw it, it was Angont's head. She shrieked as Belikana sank. She thought quickly and acted quickly. She too stripped for action and rested athwart the beam of the canoe that she might be ready to ease into the murky water when Belikana's lifeless body might come up. Her chances of getting it were less than nothing, but nothing mattered now. Small claw-winged black 'butterflies' crossed and recrossed her mind. She told herself that she and she alone sent him to his death. Her eyes, ground razor-sharp by conscience rove the swirling waters. How soon she saw his body, she knew not. With an otter's speed she swam to it and entwined her strong fingers in his hair, vowing if he sank again she would sink with him. It was not the first time she had risked her life in such a way, but the first to



The huge bulk of the monster turned slowly and laboriously moved

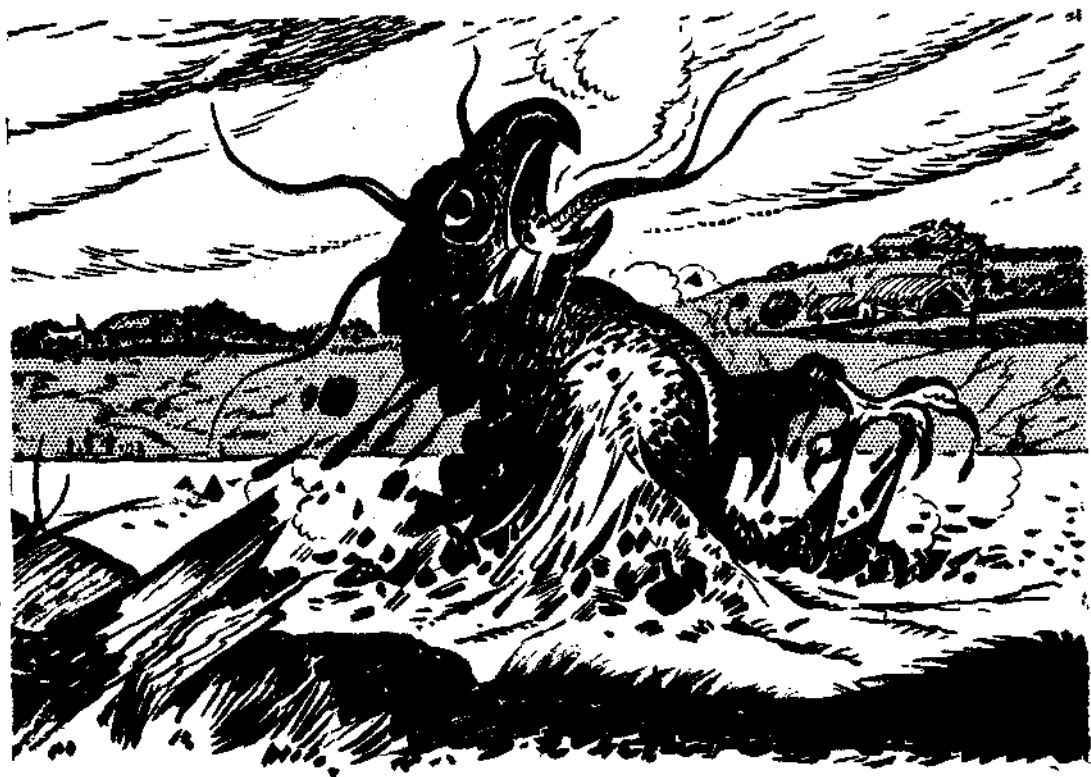
save the mere dead dust of hope.

Gradually she covered the distance to the canoe. If she could only get one of his arms over it! She tried. The god of chance tossed in a knife, Belikana's own, clutched in his fighting hand. The sharp edge hurt. It told her he was not yet dead. She grasped the wrist above the knife and worked around until their arms rested across the canoe. With short heaves she pulled him half way in. His face was down. She slapped his back until he gave an encouraging cough. She slapped him harder until she heard him sputter, "No more slap, Belikana he be good!" She pulled his knife fist to her lips. He sensed it not. The momentary consciousness had yielded to a freak of his uncanny vision. Again he mumbled, what seemed incredible, "Belikana see Knife-In-Teeth very, much alive.

He try cut way out Angont, but he no can do quite. He call help. Chikeesi-kiss must help Belikana wake quick with slap!"

She slapped until there was no doubt of his resuscitation. Taking a few deep breaths, he gradually raised his head, "Me go, but me and Knife-In-Teeth come back, you bet!" He dove so quickly.

Angont grew wildly mad. A warrior who carried a blade between his teeth and refused to die was no *hors d'oeuvre*. He was in truth a "hot potato." Chikeesikiss grew keenly alert for Angont's frenzy seemed to double. It shook, twisted, reared and roared and with one mighty heave the mammoth head rose half its body length above the surface and then sank limply down, not dead, but sorely wounded. Listlessly the huge bulk slowly turned



off toward dark forbidding waters and safety from the man-things . . .

and with the flood water current, laboriously moved off toward dark forbidding waters where "blind fish" saw not the ghastly glow of a self-ordained deity of evil. Sea power had met its match.

**CHIKESIKISS** was rewarded for her watchful waiting. After hauling a pair of tired battlers aboard, she chose to paddle. They could bail.

Lights had tricked the eyes of Big Bison's people. The ruddy hues from the towering fire blinded them from the outer darkness. They had heard the cry of Angont and had found much wreckage of his havoc, yet none living had seen the monster, nor was aware of his defeat. Even Big Bison's stoicism leaned inwardly to frenzy but when the trio stepped ashore with triumphant whoops, the Chief drew deeply upon

his pipe. The three versions of the encounter tallied as to Angont's size and fury. However, the majority of opinions held that Knife-In-Teeth deserved all the credit. He grinned with his knife between his teeth. Chikesikiss wondered to herself that the warrior accepted praise without a murmur. Belikana's vote had belied his thoughts. There had been no hero in that encounter, only a *heroine*. Thus the matter rested.

In the days of receding waters, there came much illness. Belikana's stock of medicine was sorely pressed. With his hope's aid in gathering herbs the cold had spared, he carried on without complaint. Some of the less resistant quietly passed to the Land of the Blue Sky. The number was fewer, by far, than thought possible. Belikana's luke-warm popularity jumped by leaps and bounds

in matters medical, in matters psychic. But in matters of bravery in the art of war, Knife-In-Teeth had no rival. Thus came to Big Bison, a 'headache' embodied in two heroes. It involved the future of his people, and too, his daughter.

The Chief had long hoped his people would recognize Belikana as their shaman. Now, when the time seemed near circumstances brought a complication. Big Bison felt his moons could not be many. A shaman could be chief. But a chief should know well the art of war. Knife-In-Teeth knew *this*. Could Big Bison risk suggesting that 'church' be joined with the 'muscles of the state,' without offending a most loyal warrior hero?

The old man would rest easier if he knew their will. Depressing weather, depressing thoughts brought on a weakness. Belikana's herbs and such, helped a little, though not enough. Big Bison vowed he would bring the matter to a head. At a meeting of the council he feigned unusual weakness and asked both his stalwarts to assist him to the lodge, thus could they be seated by him, one right, one left, chance fixing their positions. The congenial mood of all gave the chief the needed courage to broach a touchy issue. He permitted his two 'bowers' to assist him to his feet and requested they remain so standing to steady him while speaking.

Said he, "Big Bison can no speak long. Much cold, much heat makes breath short—may be too short. So, Big Bison wishes people to speak. These are times of war, yet people seem have forgot. When Heap-Big-Think seems far off because Great Heads and Angont go, peoples sleep too much. Such is like Spider Woman's web. No see Big Bison's warriors far off, so think they are not. Forget they

need corn, meat, arrows, knives, many of them. People forget. Many Redmen fools listened to loud talk of Heap-Big-Think. Such men can fall before common weapons. Big Bison pray that soon Bird of Thunder much more strong than Great Heads, much more strong than gods of sky, will strike Stonemen creatures too. But how long this will be Big Bison do not know. So he would have people make plan for long. People now must have chief strong in ways of war, wise in counsel, wise in ways of peace, so people will no more make war with one another. If Big Bison must leave his people soon, what then?"

THE venerated chieftain appeared exhausted. His aids eased him to his place upon the ground. Thus it left his dual candidates standing before the assembled council. The members had anticipated no such problem.

A young 'buck' swift of foot and fearless in the hunt, was first to break the hush. The stories he had heard of Knife-In-Teeth's exploits fanned his enthusiasm. He shouted his hero's name and others took up the cry until the name echoed and re-echoed. The great warrior raised his arm in grateful acknowledgement. And as if to give youth his fill, he gripped his flint as was his custom, drawing back his lips in a perfect pearly incisorial terrorizing smirk. Big Bison smiled and reached for slender stick extending from the fire pit. As he lit his pipe, he slyly watched his personal choice.

With all sincerity Belikana reached out his hand as if expecting nothing less for his good friend. Further he proffered Knife-In-Teeth his own flint blade. He accepted it and with blades in each hand he raised them in a dramatic gesture of full-drive warrior might, giving punch to the pose with a whoop that even made Big Bison shud-



der. Now it so happened that Knife-In-Teeth chose to step from the spot light with a grace that marked him a true brave. He held the two blades side by side and said, "Look see. Knives are same like, Belikana make 'em. He can make many more all same like. He can make bows all same like. Arrows too. Knife-In-Teeth did make good bows and arrows which Angont destroyed! But Knife-In-Teeth he learn how from good small bows and arrows Belikana make for twins. Me just make big ones like 'em. (Belikana fidgeted) More is this, me no much brave. Me just fight Angont because mad for sink canoe. All Big Bison warriors do more anytime. (Big Bison hoped this would be true *and soon*.) Warriors may wonder why he no say something before. Well it is like so. Knife-In-Teeth warrior long time. Squaw mama say him papoose teeth come see out by bite on stone knife. Well as time go by, it is, all time is not war. When no war is, Knife-In-Teeth he just Redman. May be he play like war but people no care. Even make laugh sometimes. Knife-In-Teeth sometimes wish he no bite on stone. But now beast War Wolf is chief of chiefs, so Knife-In-Teeth do just what he know. People somehow funny queer. Make much noise for him. And now may be Knife-In-Teeth funny queer too, to like noise people make. This is not good. Me no like what me know how to do. Me no Stoneman. Me is no so great brave as any Big Bison warrior who do as much yet did no bite on knife when he little papoose. But Belikana, he brave. When me inside Angont, me call for help. Somehow queer like Belikana see, hear and come to save me. He come to give life for brother. No man can do more!" With this he handed back the seer's own flint blade.

Belikana wished that he might 'tum-

ble-weed' away before the wild wind of a shouting council. Both men for the moment were oblivious of the ovation welling from many throats. When Belikana had a chance to speak his voice was low, clear, vibrant.

"Belikana is unworthy. In all truth, Knife-In-Teeth believes himself not brave. No warrior could be more so. And sometimes when one wonders why such a Big Bison warrior, will so risk life, Belikana thinks this is the reason. It is for those that do not take part in the council meetings, those who are the mothers of Big Bison's people and those who will mother Big Bison people yet to be. Warriors risk life that squaws may live, not as slaves but as mothers of free little ones. Such is the will of the Great White One Belikana believes. His will shall survive all opposition for some high reason no Redman can yet understand. Neither does a Redman know how to honor him excepting to show homage to lesser gods in some strange way bonded to His will. Redman can hear the Great Voice speak, can find the flint-hard thunder stones thrown by his flaming arrows. Yes! The Bird of Thunder, the Great Dark Bird is. No one can doubt. So too the Earth Mother is close and do all not see the shining shield of the Sun Father, the gentle rays of the Moon Mother. To all these lesser gods we should be grateful for the many gifts of light and life. No one can deny they are not. What strange earth creature but a fool or liar would set himself up to be as they? Yet a two-head one-face Sisiutl thing far worse than any liar would, as a god, bring misery, slavery, agony and death on all Big Bison people. Against this awful would-be master of all Earth Mother's children, Big Bison rages war and Knife-In-Teeth risks all. To them owe you all loyalty and devotion."

"Belikana came among you in performance of a mission. He remains to counsel and to suffer as the way of war may demand. Big Bison's mind need not be troubled. He has been and is a good father to his people. And to all the gods he has been grateful. Do not forget what a most loyal tribesman said to us many moons ago 'Me have little corn—little meat—little wampum—but me can speak. People in land of Stonemen no can speak. Me *know!* Me came from land of Stonemen! Big Bison he rule by most speaks all same alike'. That is the secret of Big Bison rule. He has, with wisdom, counseled with his people that he might *lead* them, not *drive* them. He may rest assured the one who follows him, will too, be wise and strong, yet gentle. Big Bison people would have none other as their Chief."

AN OPPRESSIVE silence was quickly broken. He who had shouted Knife-In-Teeth had found a new idol, "Belikana!" he screamed, "Belikana—shaman" the youth's ardor argued him to shout, "Belikana—Chief!" But he had listened well—his new hero would have scorned him for it. To call Belikana *shaman* was different. The title was, it seemed a key to a Pandorian pandemonium prearranged for prophet. The seer, stood speechless, flabbergasted, as a deluge of gifts poured in upon him. Feathered wands, rattles, skins of beast and serpents, masks, prayer rugs, blankets and all such as had to do with his high calling, flowed from the people's heart in a blast of whoops and laughter. How long the shaman would have stood there like a frightened simpleton, with his mouth wide open, no one could guess. A sizable bug however brought him down to earth. It was muddled by the din and sought quiet within the

lipped orifice of Belikana's face. No man was in the mood to weep. Big Bison locked his hands across himself for abdominal support and when Belikana spat forth the bug, Knife-In-Teeth rolled and kicked his heels in trying to catch his breath.

Realizing that something had been happening to him, Belikana grinned a terrafirma thanks for the many gifts. Of these there was one he noticed last of all. It had been tightly rolled and deftly pushed forward in front of his feet by an aged chief assisted by a warrior who oftentimes carried a knife between his teeth. This gift though last, was a blanket of exquisite beauty, with the Bird of Thunder its central feature. The air within the lodge was warm. Belikana's boyish urge to don the blanket, was far, warmer. So he donned it. It gave him poise and dignity yet he was not aware of either. His sense of being clad with the affection of Big Bison's people he did feel. And he forgot not that powers greater than himself had guided him to his new station. Yet he was a very nervous shaman from the sudden appointment *viva voce*. He paced. With each half turn many saw the central symbol of a god so near to all, gentle, beneficent, yet powerfully retributive upon brutal evil doers denying the Supreme Authority of the Great Voice. Belikana, stamping out his nervous tension, became profuse in thanks for each gift, except one—gorgeous but too sacred to be mentioned. His wearing of it had spoken louder than all his words. However he could not resist a word of gratitude to his 'patron saint,' and, too, the glorious Eagle with the White Head, symbolic of him.

In this eventful moment, the council was in the mood to listen. A shaman's words might be more impressive than those of a mere counselor. He

said, "These many gifts express thankfulness to one once called a stranger. Belikana feels as he has said before he is not worthy of great honor. What power he may have, has been given him, to carry out the purpose of the Great White One. To Him and to the lesser gods, gratefulness is due. As we know not how to honor the Great Unseen, we must let our rites and dances to the lesser deities suffice. At the time of great Cold, we have built small fires and fed them to be bigger. Yet we must admit that our zeal may have been prompted through necessity, not reverence. It is timely for us to show our thankfulness through a ritual of fire, actually at risk to ourselves. Some aged and infirm have perished. We have survived. Their going impresses us with the power of the evil warring on us. At times, the Sun Father's shield seems weakened. We wish to live. So to do, we must be toughened, worthy. We must not expect our gods to do for us what we can at least try to do for ourselves, nor side *with* us against the enemy if we are unworthy. We have withstood the icy blast from Great Head mouths. What flaming tortures are we prepared to meet?" The shaman suddenly halted his restless pacing. He eyed the council. He lowered his voice to a mere whisper, "Who in counsel here, will accept this challenge to courage?"

THE response as a rising race. The youthful hero worshiper and Knife-In-Teeth tied for 'first.' Poor Big Bison, last upon his feet, nearly 'dis-Blanketed' Belikana in his efforts to be first. Belikana had a problem. Unity in courage was the thinnest shell. How not to crack the shell with envy? This was a golden opportunity to discover fearless, youthful, agile leaders, yet in the spirit of the ritual, he said, "Knife-In Teeth knows men, knows pain. Let him choose

twelve who care not for the feel of flame. Each one, whitened well, shall bear a cedar fagot, circle round a central fire, chanting, dancing, pointing to it. And when the shaman whistle sounds, four bark bundles shall be lighted, one tossed toward the place of Dawn, where came both Life and Learning; one, wherefrom the warm winds come; one, the way the Sun Father goes—where Man may rest; and the last, to where dwells the Polar Star—the place of Tall Green Pines. The last three torches drive out demons who bring illness. Now shall all twelve dancers light their fagots, circle round the central fire, fast, and faster, each to try and touch his leader like departed spirits, radiant with the gift of fire. So let twelve be chosen who care not for the *lash* of flame!"

Knife-In-Teeth had a problem. There were too many to fill the bill. The shaman saw no reason why the number could not be greater. Even *that* youth should not be denied a place. Thus was the active cast selected.

Belikana raised his arms. There was instant silence, more quickly stabbed by a piercing shriek, a scrambling from atop the arched roof, a second alarming cry, a mingling of angry voices, human and half human, ugly, the shout 'Toskeha!'—feminine and threatening.

Belikana made prompt exit and reached *her* side, quicker than he called her name. How the shaman's youthful worshipping disciple took second place in egress even the lad did not remember. The youth thought he might have made his departure by stepping over, between, under, around, or on one or many council members, thence outdoors via an entrance or under a side wall, belly-flop wrigglewise. However, he was certain of one thing,—he trailed his hero by a very few paces, stopping as abruptly as he started, making no

sound. The latter was an honest error. He had emitted a terrific yelp. It was this which spoiled a scene romantic. For, Belikana had found his hope in no distress. She was of combatant mien, a bit ruffed perhaps, her hair disheveled, her eyes wide open, an upraised hand agrip a staghorn dagger, her feet most squarely planted. As per romantic custom, it was time to swoon for she had met the crisis. And, no doubt, she would not have missed a ship so good, had it not been for a yelp from a lively kid who'd placed too little faith in a staghorn bit. He'd taken the first painful taste of war from a flint's rough edge scoring across his back.

And so, romance fell before first aid, while Knife-In-Teeth assumed command as if action was in order. His questions scooped the news. A Stoneman in human form had gained ingress to the village and climbed the roof, while the council was in session. The smoke-hole afforded observation. Chikeeskiss had not seen him until a creaking sound snared her attention to a silhouette against the moon. The creature lifted and poised a stone. She screamed to stall and draw the fire on herself. But the prowler could not see her and so sought her out only to find a vixen armed and in a mood to kill.

**K**NIFE-IN-TEETH made prompt decision in re: one youth, sniped, and bent upon revenge. Big Bison's seasoned veteran put a restraining hand upon the boiling budding battler. Into his ear her poured question, "When Sun Father no walk, can owl see man better than man see owl?"

This was easy, "Man see eyes of owl first."

"So sure?"

"Any Redman know that."

"If creature no speak, how know

shining eyes are not panther?"

The boy dug a twisting toe into the ground. Inwardly he was insecure. He recalled no distinctive iris shapes. Knife-In-Teeth felt sorry for his pupil. He had been a boy who had learned how little he knew when he had known so much. To ease the searing pain that he must yet cause, the warrior threw an arm across the boy, asking, "Suppose that thing that walks like man whose eyes *no* glow, wait sneak-like to kill?"

The boy's words came hard, "Other man must better see than panther man-thing."

He looked squarely into the veteran's eyes and truly 'bailed out.' "And, me see too, if feet of young warrior move more fast than head when he have no staghorn with him, he may go way Sun Father goes."

"That is so!" said Knife-In-Teeth gravely, giving the boy a vise-like hug. Then he added, "When one surrenders, does he no give up knife?"

The youth reluctantly yielded his one and only crude treasure.

"Now get staghorn charm!" commanded his teacher. The boy did so 'and quick,' bewildered though he was.

Belikana a few paces away appeared intent upon whispered one-way converse with a young lady who refused to listen. He gesticulated pleadingly. Knife-In-Teeth saw her clap her hands over her ears. He chuckled. Belikana hadn't said a single word publicly about that blanket. He had 'blahed' about every other thing. You can visualize the Belikana—Chikeeskiss jam. Exhausted in trying to square himself, the shaman walked over to his warrior friend. He hoped he hadn't heard. The gentleman warrior let him think so.

"Me have talk with boy. He will soon be back.

"Yes, Belikana has had an ear to

Knife-In-Teeth's good teachings."

"Will Belikana say something too?" when Knife-In-Teeth is through? The boy rushed up to say,

"Me have staghorn charm."

"It is enough to say so. If in medicine bag, no man must see. Open mouth!" snapped Knife-In-Teeth. The boy's jaw fell with a machine precision. His eyes cried "What next?" The answer, gently placed across his teeth was a flint blade, Knife-In-Teeth's very own. The jaw closed with a power which would have snapped a lesser flint. The chin was high. The warrior leader turned to Belikana. Said the shaman, "The ways of war are harder than the flint,—Knife-In-Teeth would shield his warriors well that they may not sell their own blood cheaply. From his wise teachings, this young warrior's feet, henceforth, will not set pace for head, but head for feet. With such swift feet as his, his head must lead the way with wings. Belikana has faith that 'Flying-Knife' will prove worthy of his name."

The fledgling warrior's chin tilted higher as he removed the blade to say, "Flying-Knife now knows the risk he takes, but he has staghorn. It is more than charm, more than Good Medicine, it is part of weapon of stag with which he battles. It is part of 'the together' of all Big Bison people. If Flying-Knife be tine of horn which breaks in battle, what matter? There are many tines. Flying-Knife is not afraid do die."

The shadows took him whose courage moved with wings.

The eyes of both his heroes followed him to the curtain of the trees. As if to himself Knife-In-Teeth remarked, "His head now truly lead his feet." And aloud he asked, "You know who him is?"

"His father came from land of Stonemen!" said the shaman, equally ab-

stracted, "But they both are Big Bison people now."

CHIKEESIKISS had watched and listened. She hated herself for having teased her own man-god. Why a boy should take such risks, she knew not, but they knew. That was sufficient.

The night passed. Though to all, the hours seemed to moved with shackled feet. The day dawned and the Sun Father's shield moved no slower, no faster than any other day for Big Bison people. They knew how to fear; also how to forget if danger seemed not imminent. The next evening came, the great Sun dance with it, in climax cacophonous yet rhythmic with whoops and drums of war, as a martial epilogue to keep the people thoughtful. Youth had risked his all that Big Bison's people might be free. This night passed. Its hours also moved with shackled feet. A new day dawned. The Sun Father's shield shone brighter, moved slower than before. The people were jubilant. The Sun Father smiled. He had found their tribute pleasing. Belikana's teachings had been proven; the people, wise, in accepting him as shaman. Knife-In-Teeth grew exultant in the first few warm cloudless days. He pushed war parties further forward, that the people might provide more implements behind the staghorn wall. The aged Chief indulged himself by sleeping late to bask his joints in broad day warmth. Even Belikana whipped himself to keep from napping; Chikeesikiss, too. She told him so and something more disturbing. Too much water for the growing corn had become too little. Toiling squaws saw the dry crackling earth. Why had the Bird of Thunder ceased to speak? Were their gods jealous, envious, if humans showed honors on a few? Sensible questions, Belikana thought, yet his faith

was great.

The people should honor the Great Voice in befitting rites. He alone would appeal for rain. If the Great Dark Bird failed to answer, the shaman would take the blame. And so, the chant of the Ninth Night was held in flawless dance. The intoned song of feathered maskers gave the people hope—but—no rain came.

The nights grew dewless, the days cloudless. The Sun Father's shield became a blistering torch. Corn withered, shriveled, died and turned to brown and fragile parchment. The ground seemed fire hot. The thickest moccasins were poor protections to well caloused feet. The little creek that had once sprawled with an untimely flood narrowed to a trickle. The trickle ceased. A jagged line of stagnant stinking puddles were alive with larvae of countless pests. The puddles shrunk to dust.

Belikana's burdens awaited the last straw. His medicine dwindled. Earth Mother could give no more. The Bird of Thunder heard not his pleading to stop the killing thirst of Big Bison's people. Yes, the Great Voice cursed them by his absence. The Sun Father cursed them with his daily, deadly, damning, walking because an unworthy shaman had been chosen. Could it be that there was a unity of bloods between the Sun Father and an earthly evil—not a good SISIUTL lizard, an ugly phantom with two serpentine heads and a near-human one; a vile power making humans think as devils, making them to crush and torture all Earth Mother's good peoples; an ogre, which, to kill it, must have all its heads cut off?

Belikana had reason for so thinking. Even his Good Medicine seemed powerless. The Grim Reaper's sythe swept swaths far and wide sparing neither

sex, nor age, nor occupation.

The twins mummying from the withering heat, fell stricken. His hope's blood-shot eyes begged desperately—"Water! Food! Water! Can you no get even sacred water?" She had found the courage to ask so much.

"May be lake of gods do have water! Me try," replied Belikana. As he gathered chip-dry gourd flasks for travel to Creation's end, Big Bison tottered toward him, mumbling, in a parched ghostly rattle, "Belikana jossakeed, shaman! Bah! You no make Good Medicine. You make Bad Medicine! Go!" The mere gesture of command near upset the old Chief's shrunken frame. Belikana could not answer. He blamed himself.

Hours seemed days in reaching the region of the lake. Lake?—a sickening sight! No proud green-clad sentials there; just brown giant spectres propped upright in death; mummy guardians of a desert with a central puddle in it. But it was *water!*!! The shore was dry as bone. He ventured toward the pool but the sands gave way. With a desperate lurch he threw himself backward. Quicksand!—a mote as formidable as a wide cravass, a ring designed by Satan.

Though hobbled with sickening fatigue, Belikana's unrelenting will drove him up a slight rocky overhanging bluff bordering the sandy lure of death. There he stopped for breath. Suddenly a brilliant glint from a parched patch of grass trapped his burning eyes! At last a faithful god had heliographed to him alone, a vital message!

THE Sun Father's rays reflected from a blade of flint, exposed to view by long dry bended tufts of grass, pointing landward. Belikana smiled sadly at a brave Boy's flare for color—a feathered 'comet' tassel dangling

from the knife's sturdy hilt. A depression in the quicksand beach, below, and one lone ink-black head-size boulder resting on the harder lake bed just beyond the quicksand belt, gave Belikana leading clues:

Flying-Knife had trailed the man fiend, and there had waited, hopeful that he might conquer;—by knife, if the monster's metamorphosic flesh was vulnerable; or, by cunning trap, if not. There, for the last time, he'd watched; there, the craftier monster had espied him. The youth had thrown his knife; the man beast; the rock. It had either found its mark despite the youth's stag-horn charm, or Flying-Knife had dropped below for shelter, only to be trapped by sand which took his life. To clinch the shaman's theory, there hung from a dusty-dry branch of a withered oak a huge sleeping bat. And now the blade had been passed to the shaman's hands to carry on for him who was not afraid to die. Belikana fondled the blade as a precious infant charge of Destiny. And to carry out the fancied wishes of its mother, the guardian of the knife mercilessly spurred his limbs to move. They carried him no further than a clump of crackling brush. There his legs gave way, his strange eyes closed, his vision roamed as if drawn by power only understood by gods.

How far clairvoyance bore him mattered little but a tree he saw afar astounded him to the point of doubt of his own seeing. The smallest leaf could roof a council lodge. No Sequoia ever known could touch this tree's lowest branches. It had them surely and a girth so huge, a half day's walk might not encircle it. Strangely awed, the shaman's eyes were lured to scale its top-most branches. Dizzying with the climbing his vision plummeted to the ground. The jolt dispelled any doubt about a tree on earth. It was of heaven,

too,—perhaps the grand green way down which his hope had come to her dear earthly mother. Of course no human could see the super-giant's crest. A strange attraction urged that he see a stranger form within it; a huge shadow resting on a lower branch and bound with threads of glistening silver. Belikana seemed to see no more than half its body. It moved, twisted, wrenched, to free itself, from cursed gleaming thongs, shackling massive talons, binding sky-sized pinions, and no doubt the lofty head which even no seer could see.

His vision hurried closer but the nearer his eyes approached the tree, the greater grew a challenge. The trunk was a cliff-steep dark brown wall of bark which looked not curved but flat. Where the Great Dark Bird's talons gripped a limb, the shaman could see nothing but a formless blindfold-darkness, black as hope's last breath. Fate had blinded him to greater things that he might see the smaller,—a myriad of creeping, crawling, crafty, creatures along the foot of the great dark wall, defacing Earth Mother's face by being. Yet, the shaman reasoned, somehow through these ugly 'creatures' cunning, one deity was powerless, another had no course open but to walk across the sky as ordained by the Great White One, the All-Wise Architect of Heaven.

But how had these Stonemen captured the Bird of Thunder? Not one could climb a wall of wood, a mountain high. Even if many could so do, to truss this mighty one with silver cords would be beyond their skill.

The shaman's mystic senses approached to hearing range. His vision could not see the 'bag of wind' haranguing for the crowd 'about it.' But his strange ears heard the rabble-rousers gloating gabble, "See! He no get loose—thanks and hail to our chief,

## FANTASTIC ADVENTURES

our flaming torch—blood of the Sun Father who, himself, obeys our chief's commands." The voice waited. In unison, all eyes lifted, seeing no more than the shaman saw, yet, hailed promptly for seeing nothing. The voice continued, "Many asked how our leader caught this little rain bird. Me tell you:

"When great cold come, fool bird roosts here. Sleeps like dead as always do when cold comes. Our chief of chiefs so planned. He make pow-wow with Spider Woman. *She* sneak quiet, wind web round bird so no can move feet, no can flap wings, no can move head, even no open eyes to make flaming arrows. Him *stuck!* ! ! (Roars of applause according to plan). More wind: Now what wampum Spider Woman think she get? Ha! ha! Oh is *big joke!* Ha! ha! . . . ! Spider Woman, Yum! yum! for carcasses of our enemies when dead! But it is *funny!* When dead they will be baked dry. Will have no blood. So she too starve, Ha! ha!"

**T**O HIMSELF the shaman mused, Chief of chiefs! Hah! That is a joke. *Cheat of cheats* he should say. But why he make pep talk?" The answer came forthwith: "You Stonemen here have make great war with Giant Bear. Soon, he will no be big dark beast. He will be white bear bag of bones. Good Medicine *honey*, from dirty Eagle beak, fat with wampum, do no good. Very soon, Stoneman will pull big claws, Bear get." Murderous whoops and chanting interrupted the bladdermouth's tirade. Belikana was thankful for his professional services well done. The seer might be an 'eagle beak.' His nose being absent, he couldn't check its contour. If it was a 'beak he hoped it could bite hard enough. He surely wasn't dirty, nor was he fat with wampum. In flesh, Belikana

was growing leaner daily, like all Big Bison's people, thanks to these Stonemen. The yowling died down and the voice resumed:

"Me now tell what will soon happen to Tacoma—heap big pile of mud! Soon we sniff him out. He no more puff hot smoke to bother Stonemen walking on him. Our Chief wanted to be good father to Tacoma—show him which way to spit. But he spit wrong way. So, soon we will pull his tongue of fire, close his red mouth tight. Sit on him." (More whooping and hailing according to plan). And much more hoping by Belikana that the Sun Father would feed Tacoma much more fire for a gratifying spray. At last the big wind reached its target: "Me have told much. Me now tell what we soon do for finish Big Bison people. We make our slave AW-PA-TO-TAW take last water. Even lake will have no water at all!" Belikana had heard enough. He rushed to command his corporeal self. Opening his blood-shot eyes he saw the Sun Father's lowering shield. If only he could be as active as he once was! He had not the strength to devise a bridge across the quicksand belt. Even were he strong there would not be time. Somewhere about, AW-PA-TO-TAW was captive. Soon there would be no water. Belikana's spirit weakened. His disconsolate eyes listlessly scanned the gold drenched trees of the distant shores. His gaze swept slowly to the right, to the left and back again, with soporific monotony. Occasionally his vision seemed to trip—to stumble. What was this thing he saw yet not well enough to trap his seeing? Belikana thought, "It seems so part of trees, me see it not." So was it until the sky turned to dripping blood as a cloud of the purest white sped by the spot, revealing in its wake a sky-hue change to the blue of the first night of





The great bird swooped closer and reached out with taloned claws for the knife . . .

frost. Belikana's inner mind spurred his vision. Perched upon the top-most branch of a leafless forest giant was the majestic Eagle that had given him a name. Struggling to his feet Belikana raised high the blade of Flying-Knife and shouted, "O true symbol of Great Voice, Great Dark Bird is helpless. With this blade sever web bonds so that all Big Bison people will not die—so that they may have freedom from the burning Stonemen yoke!"

The white head tilted forward to sense the wind's direction. The graceful pinions spread, moved surely as if controlled by an ace of aces. With a shriek that even Belikana's ears seemed stung stone deaf, the emblem of Liberty, took off! It circled wide and high that it might glide past the seer and catch the blade as on a day long gone, it grasped a gift tossed to it. With the blade in mighty talons, the bird spiraled high and higher until it seemed there was no ceiling to its climbing. As the air-borne dot blended with the sky, quite humanly Belikana's thoughts gave way to doubt, only to be chastised for doubting: "Must no have doubt! Must no lose faith! Flying-Knife can now move with wings as eagle! His spirit know no defeat! Know no death!"

Startled at the familiar voice of him he could not see, Belikana owned this was just Medicine magic of his own mind's conjuring. Yet he knew he was in possession of his senses and made concession until the clicking chatter of a bat convinced him that Flying-Knife had surely spoken from the grave. Thrice the shaman called his name but there was no response. Again he mistrusted his ears—even wondered he had seen an eagle. Despondent with doubt, he saw himself an abject failure. He would return and say so. Using a wind-felled branch for a staff, he, staggered

along from tree to tree and so made his way to a spot a hundred paces from the old shore line. Suddenly the ground gave way and he found himself within a tiny cave—home of bats—trap refuge of a dogged loyal warrior, who had tried to tunnel upward until death had freed his spirit so it in turn, might move with wings within a fearless living bird whose head was white. The boy's emaciated body was not yet cold. A rush of air, laden with the offensive odor of stagnet water in the lake's central pool, told much, yet introduced a question. Did he have staghorn with him? Surely not when the flint scurfed his scalp. Belikana pondered. Suddenly it dawned on him the reason for the feathered tassel on the blade. He had made a staghorn bite the central core. The episode grew clearer. Somehow each contestant had panther-eyed the other until the fiend had been first to 'draw' but not quick enough to be first to 'fire.' What damage the blade had caused, Belikana did not know. Yet the throwing of it left the youth without protection. His agility in dropping below the ledge, let him escape with a minor wound. When the quicksand gave beneath him, he gained refuge in the lake entrance by a forward lurch. The entrance was not visible from above. The depression in the quicksand was. The fiend could draw but one irrevocable conclusion from that obvious fact.

Belikana had so little strength he could do no more than try to cover the brave lad's form with dry grasses from above. But the Earth Mother took the burden from him. The cave's fragile roof disturbed by the unnatural opening in it, gave way just as Belikana made exit from it. He reasoned sanely in concluding that the words he'd heard were self reproof of a gallant youth about to die.

**B**ELIKANA'S wavering steps were few. Everything went black. He could go no further, but his mystic eyes moved with a speed he had not known. Strangely he willed a rise and fall of vision, clearing tree tops or even higher levels. Thus he could follow the eagle's winging. Flints and arrows hurled high. Scored flesh and blood wet plumage. Thought Belikana, "No evil power of air or earth can stop him! Had me such courage!"

Penalized for despairing, his clairvoyance failed. Again he was a lone be-deviled human. In this frame, he idly fumbled with his one time sacred charms;—"Feather he give courage. Belikana touch but no feel courage. He feel—no—he hears war drums. No drums, strange sounds which make like needles through him. Thumping sounds like many redmen feet all move together! Strange queer words, 'Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord! . . . He has loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword!' Belikana no understand but him must move. Queer sounds, queer talk, beat him, make him go! He must no stop!"

The shaman, man of courage, stood up and got in step with many mystic marching feet. Stubble, brambles, rocks, or ridges were mere invitations to test endurance. He had a mission to perform. An end in view! He would not fail his 'Hope'! But when he choked with smoke and saw an ominous glow ahead, he wondered. The village was afire. The nearest end aflame. He drove his stride. He must go through it to reach his Hope. Even in the confusion of it, wild eyes and venomous tongues spewed insults, but he refused to hear. The Wigwam of his hope was still intact. A tottering figure blocked the entrance. Hoarsely it whispered, "Stay out! Shaman—liar!" Belikana wrench-

ed a menacing knife from Big Bison's infirm hand, and staggered in! Chikeesikiss was startled from his unnatural voice. With gasps he managed to say, "Great Dark Bird will come bring rain. Must no have doubt! Must no lose faith! Could no get water. Until Great Bird bring water, Big Bison blood must live! So Belikana gives his own."

With lightning stroke, the shaman slashed his arm, slumped slowly forward with the bleeding member outstretched near the twins. He did not see Chikeesikiss shrink from her man-god's blood nor see her father stare wide eyed at one who offered his life for an old chief's own; nor did he know how much they both loved him now.

Unaware of his mortal self, Belikana's eyes greater than those of the eagle with the white head, started on their last mystic journey to parched lake which once was tranquil, exquisite—where once his ears had heard the night birds call. This time his eyes, his ears found no cause to rest! A strong detachment of Stonemen were talking in excited whispers, urging something lakeward. The thump! thump! of its body shook the whole Earth Mother. Exerting mystic effort to the limit, Belikana saw the huge squat outline poised upon the shore. It was AW-PA-TO-TAW, the Giant Frog, Stonemen's captive. Jabs of pointed weapons urged it to leap across the quicksand barrier—to quench its dust dry thirst—to drink the last of water. One pond-sized gulp dropped the surface level as if a giant drain had opened. Before a second draught things happened too quickly for a pen to keep pace in telling of them. The murky puddle funneled in a whirlpool swirl until a strange black stinking cross of logs came spinning once vowed he'd witnessed something upward into view. Another shaman

liked it, but that log cross was holy, bearing deities of all earth quarters on it. It was no rack of torture with ghostly bones of victims dangling from its whirling tips. The hellish nightmare speeded in its whirring, blurring, to the bursting of it, so rotten was its center. Not even liquid mud remained where once was water. But in the deep forbidding hollow, two strange green glowing phosphorescent eyes moved and stopped as if to say, "I'm rid of it! But not through! I've just begun to fight!"

There were bumps of mighty bodies as jets of steam spurted skyward. With a hissing roar a huge amphibian dragon clad in flint-scaled armor, wriggled upward. Belikana thought it RACEMION of Huron legend, the Water Serpent of the jeweled horns. Furious for the stealing of the sacred waters it was bent on satisfaction for the trespass—war at times breeds strange allies.

Up the sloping shore the creature wriggled, snorting, lashing, crushing all things which moved before it—a thousand thousand tanks in one long chain. Fortunate was any Stoneman who escaped for where one fell, a flattened splotch of broken rock remained. RACEMION thundered onward toward the land of caverns. Belikana's vision followed and detoured to the region of the tree. The winging eagle should be near it. He hoped he could see it. The upper branches of the super-giant were still tinted by the Sun Father's shield. The eagle was approaching and seeking altitude to reach the bonds about the Great Captive's head. As before, Belikana could not see this holy region. Only his own mind's imaginery could sketch the picture. Stonemen had had the eagle spotted. They scurried as ants disturbed by feet of human. Among them

was a queer long-legged devil creature being urged to climb. "May be have her try tie *him* too, or may be she go to quick fix damage," thought Belikana. At least the Spider Woman climbed fast and so high that Belikana's vision blurred. Like the mouse she came down on a life line of her own spinning—how she spun! Midway of her back was buried the blade of Flying-Knife—precision bombing. No frantic wounded mundane creature ever cut so wide a swath, once she realized the charming charm she carried. Frenzy seized those about the tree for now came intermittant flashing from the sky. The Great Dark Bird was free. The source of flashing lowered but Belikana's eyes could not see the Great One's head. The light was blinding. Retribution's roar came when the great wings moved. The blasts of air from the sky-sized pinions blowed Stonemen as tumble weed. Few about the tree found protection in their cavern world, for the Bird of Thunder's eyes flashed forth myriads of white flaming arrows. Some mystic stony bodies withstood the giant flint tipped missiles. But the thin earth crust roof of the entrance to the dismal world below did not long hold. The crater was of vast expanse. Those below in the deepest cavern nooks, found no escape, for the Great Dark Bird chose to free the *lake upon his back*, in one huge mass. Those without, met worse fate than those within. Hot grey stone bodies cracked as the cold cloudburst fell upon them.

NO SHAMAN had ever seen such carnage. In far places, he saw more; the Great Bear's huge expanding claws, drove more Stonemen in for slaughter. The shaman thanked his gods he had given greater strength and sharpness to them. The demon SIS-

IUTL form was dying, yet there were more Stonemen in distant places—TACOMA, smouldering volcano, still puffed clouds of smoke, too harmless; yet its day would dawn. Knife-In-Teeth would have much yet to do. So too, RACEMION god of many waters. Right now, the Bird of Thunder had a mission too: To quench the fires of a blazing village,—to refill a muddied bowl with sparkling silver,—to swell the little creek with bubbling laughter,—to quench the thirst of a parched Earth Mother.

Belikana knew not the lapse of time since he heard familiar voices. Nor did he know that he'd told, in feverish parts of a jigsaw puzzle the fate of Flying-Knife and what followed. Still more, he knew not how Big Bison and his daughter had fitted piece to piece, making not a perfect picture, but, enough. Other things however, he fully realized. The two that loved him most, had nursed him well although unaware that he too had pieced a jigsaw puzzle picture from brief scattered intervals of hearing, subconsciously imprinted on his mind. Chikeesikiss introduced the present interval of awareness: "Me think his eyes make blink!" "Me know his eyes no blink." Big Bison contradicted, "But he better had soon. If he keep on sleep like Bird of Thunder when Great cold come, Big Bison will no know what to do." The shaman knew the old Chief shook a puzzled head.

"But why good Father you no see butterflies? Was no much good in many pow-wows?"

Big Bison nodded, "Me no see butterflies because, War Wolf is *no yet dead*. Chikeesikiss remember how Belikana say very weak, 'War Wolf him like Sisiutl thing; one head dead, man face long gone, other head soon die.' Now Me, can no see butterfly till other

head is dead."

"But Belikana he say him soon die and my father think there is much good in many pow-wows. And it is so that peoples in land of dead Sisiutl head are no more hurt but can no make stones to throw. These things are good? Yes?"

Big Bison not sure of the goodness of it all was very much befuddled. He uttered a weak "Umph!" of agreement, but his head shook a violent "No!" he summed the muddle in his mind this way: "May be what come from pow-wows is not so good. Chikeesikiss must no forget other Sisiutl head is no yet dead, and Belikana still sleep!" The Chief's head hung heavy between his knees.

Chikeesikiss looked hopefully for a flicker of an eye lash, a twitch of a lip. The quiet was painful. It was then that the two watchers knew by seeing that they were awake. They saw right through the tepee wall,—the whole out doors,—then, saw nothing. But the blackness, was filled with more noise than either had ever heard before. When they were able to hear, a voice was not strong. Clearly it said:

"Other Sisiutl head thing soon die if . . ." The shaman waited. The 'if' was a tremendous issue.

"If what!" Chikeesikiss asked, excitedly.

"If it is right to strike like Great Lynx! That was him, but him no hurt."

Big Bison gasped at the ghastly thought, "Belikana mean like fire dragon, sometime called Light Thrower?" He gently rested his hand on the shaman's forehead, it wasn't feverish. He tapped his own head sadly as he looked at his daughter. He would humor him.

"One time Big Bison heard jossakeed story, Great Lynx live in lake; make hop from lake to lake. Now, Big Bison no ever see big fire ball hop out from water but this time me see fire ball

make heap big light and—bang; s-s-s-s! Must be somewhere no lake no more. Must be all dry like dust!”

“It is like Big Bison say. Belikana know this truly. Sun Father has given Great Magician great-secret of shining shield. Stonemen work like crazy ants while Bird of Thunder could no move but Sun Father no tell. Only Great Hare, Owl, Woodpecker, Porcupine, and Turtle learn secret while Big Bison people suffer from burning shield.”

“Suffering is often mother of great wisdom. Yet how has Manibozoho, Great Magician, made Bad Medicine like Great Lynx?”

“Belikana do no know. But, he know it is like thunderstones no more so big as blade of Flying-Knife. Eagle with white head can drop him, but should one kill so many as would Great Lynx?”

“War Wolf is cruel demon!”

“Would Big Bison drop thunderstone?”

“Would Belikana so do if War Wolf would no come back again no more!” encountered the Chief.

“Belikana no want to kill one Stoneman. He know Big Bison and his people no want to kill. It is a question hard as flint.”

**N**EITHER man could solve the question. Knife-In-Teeth's warriors were risking all. He should decide the issue. The warrior chieftain summed his thoughts in brief.

“If this Sisiutl head live too long, may be many squaws, many little one,—even Chikeesikiss may die. Now would Big Bison/would Belikana drop stone?”

“No! For me!” the girl broke in.

“Well, may be we send them many heap big black bats. Then if no quit, we drop 'im, Great Lynx thunderstone!”

“Me know where are bats and who has thunderstone but he no know he has him—*better had not drop!*” said Belikana.

“Who him?” shouted Knife-In-Teeth, “Me get 'im.

“Knife-In-Teeth he has him! But me no know it until Great Hare tell me, just soon after 'big bang' and things go black.” Cold perspiration dripped from the warrior's brow.

“And me did find him stone soon back. Me thought pretty to give, may be to Laughin Mountain, but him now not so pretty!” He quickly fished it from among his sacred trinkets in his own parfleche and gently placed it upon Belikana's blanket. Its glowing was uncanny. Knife-In-Teeth looked sheepish, saying, “Stone much too warm, Belikana know how to keep him good. Knife-In-Teeth might drop him, careless, then Great Hare work for nothing.” This weapon was beyond his understanding.

In ensuing days, Belikana grew strong enough to capture many bats in the region of the little cave. Knife-In-Teeth's far flung forces released them. Big Bison hoped. Knife-In-Teeth hoped and doubted. Belikana hoped and prayed to all his gods. If the black messengers would not yield tidings of surrender, he would have a heavy load.

The shaman kept to himself. Big Bison lacked the courage to inform him that the warnings availed nothing. Chikeesikiss would find him quicker, anyway. She realized the task before her. Her man-god was in a secluded spot outside the village. He was not aware that she approached though she made no effort to be quiet. He acted strangely, repeating over and over a queer little drama. He would build a tiny mound of earth, drop a pebble on it, scuff his foot to lay the whole mass

flat. Even when she spoke, he was concerned solely with the silly cycle of the falling pebble. She hoped she could erase the frown upon his brow.

"Belikana do he somehow see bats?"

"Oh, Belikana lately feel like he carry heap big stone. It take much breath so, no talk, only think, think!"

"Chikeesikiss no think Lynx stone so heap heavy. Can no see again?"

He kept it secured inside his shirt. As he drew it out he pretended it was truly heavy.

"Much pretty. Let Chickeesikiss hold him?"

"Too heap big heavy!"

"Me no fool! Belikana he say Lynx stone no so heavy as blade of Flying-Knife. Give it me?" She stamped her little foot and let him catch a smile upon her face. Slowly he handed her the stone. Carefully she took it and stepped backward out of reach. She did not smile. "Now Belikana must tell where is lake where lives Eagle with white head. If Belikana no tell, me run away and alone throw him stone!" She was serious. She had told him much.

"No! Belikana will take Lynx stone to Eagle even though his feet will have no wings." That night he made his way.

Late the next day, a mechanical man entered the village. Nothing startling afar off had happened. Chikeesikiss and her Father followed the automaton wondering what had gone wrong. A moment later when many villagers quaking with terror, shouted, that the Sun Father's shield had burst, father and daughter knew differently. The mechanical man halted to quell the fright of those that did not understand. He said, "That is no so. It is that last demon Sisiutl head is dead—that now for all Big Bison people and people like Big Bison people the Sun Father walks up, and not down. But for Stonemen people, he will walk only down."

**M** ECHANICALLY Belikana turned about and strode back the way he came. Big Bison understood. It was easy for him to tell his people. Chikeesikiss had a problem not so easy,—to lift a crushing load from off a conscience. Her eyes followed the measured pace until the trees blended with his form. The clock-work energy was soon spent. He fell as stiffly as he walked. Shattering blasts hammered upon his ears. Blinding flashes seared his eyes. Ghastly fingers pointed at him. Then he saw them not. Repetition deadened him until he sensed a friendly muzzle's nuzzle, seeming not so friendly as once it did.

"How old timer! Got any carrots?"

"Not a carrot, Sorry,—or am I? *You* got me into this."

"Who *me*?" he stroked a pink ear thoughtfully, "Well — Could be. But looks like the Sun Father offered no objections to our breaking phoney ties with a Bang! Must have had good long range vision."

"I see nothing good about it. I was a party to it."

"War Wolf is not good. But would you feed him more blood than less? Without the Lynx stone, many more Big Bison warriors and many more Stonemen would have died than did."

"Don't make sense to me."

"Track my chatter,—Time was when too many Stonemen were glad to die. Why?"

Belikana rubbed his chin. "Sacrificed themselves for an ideal."

"Make it idol. Ideal turns my stomach. But let's go on from there,—The going gets tough. The great Lynx takes a plunge. Looks like the Sun Father's shield blew up—a shattered idol goes down for the count."

"You conclude it leaves nothing to die for. But—I gave the Lynx stone to the Eagle." The shaman's conscience

seemed unrelenting.

"Knife-In-Teeth found no joy in his work. He had to do it. You saw no way of ducking yours. Now its the future that counts.

"But this peace is a *mess*." . . . . .

"Well its no 'pipe' but it can be if you make it so. Ta, ta! I'll be seeing you!"

The shaman came to himself muttering, Peace—mess—pipe—peace—mess—pipe—mess—peace—pipe—"

His addled thoughts took form. His conscience and himself saw eye to eye:—The Pipe of Peace, the sacred Calumet was Mizzybo's suggestion. In reflecting on the significance of the Calumet, he was concerned that his conscience had blinded him to the kindly tradition in victory. Reconciled that he was merely an instrument of destiny in what was, perhaps for the best, he could return and be once more a leader in causes, good. As a gesture of friendship what better then, than the Calumet of Peace. It would be symbolic of friendliness toward misguided creatures; a tribute of appreciation to All High Powers.

Big Bison agreed that to honorable warriors, such a gesture was in order. But conniving butchers, if still living, were not worthy. Knife-In-Teeth went further. They deserved to stew in their own fat. He was sure that Tacoma, Giant Bear, and little peoples in land of Mouse and Chipmunk felt likewise. Chikeesikiss had unquestioned faith in her man-god's ways. She volunteered to weave and pack a basket for the journey. In it she first placed tobacco, then the pipe and above that a crimson hatchet, a grass mat to cover, and lastly a few choice bits of meat for her men folks.

Big Bison and his warrior chieftain did not enthuse. The Practical Knife-In-Teeth asked one last question, "Just how will Pipe of Peace take away wish

to throw first stone sometime."

"If we fail to carry out that which has been found good after other wars, we may be suspected of being watchful of chances to sometime be first to cast a stone. Must no have doubt! Must no lose faith! Yet no one having faith need walk with blindfold. He should walk with eyes wide open, to confront that which is evil. He does no need to know, how good things may come if he does walk with Faith."

Big Bison yielded. "It is so", he whispered.

**K**NIFE-IN-TEETH was particularly impressed by the weather eye precaution. Every man under his command must not forget his staghorn charm; additional impedimenta, military, or gustatory, was one's free choice. Personally the warrior preferred to risk the inner man for a few days to assure the preservation of the hide. He provided himself with one large shield, one spare, not so unwieldy, a bow and one full quiver, one tomahawk, one weighty battle-hammer, his own flint blade—*at belt*—war-paint zero—these two concessions, his personal gestures of friendliness. At that he figured he was leaning over backwards.

Tradition taught there should be good-will offerings, Big Bison held these should be limited to food, Knife-In-Teeth insisted that should be of token volume only. Belikana viewed the project somewhat as a missionary surgeon,—an evil something was to be expurgated from living creatures. Just how, he knew not, but when this foul spirit would be removed, this would be a gift beyond all others—Stonemen would see the Great Earth Mother as others did and would no longer hold a stone to throw.

Before Sunset, the basket placed in Belikana's keeping had been sampled



down to its sacred contents. As berries and green tid-bits were immediately abundant, Belikana decided to fill the empty space. In dense timber, that night, he parked the basket close beside him. And in the black dark preceding dawn, a threatening wind arose. Hurriedly, the Shaman helped Big Bison to his feet, grabbing the basket and such things he could and joined the rest to gain open country before disaster might befall them. Luck was with them. Early that morning, Belikana sighted the huge rocky mass, marking the region of the Stonemen.

A splotch of grey rubble outlined a man form—Racemion hit hard in the 'mopping up'. A scattered group of Stonemen bodies were oddly cracked by the steam of flaming arrows. "Queer creatures, all dead, but me no like to see 'em. May be some, good", Belikana thought. What *good* he saw was in certain bodies where the stone was no deeper than the outer shell, the inner part decaying as in any human.

While the Shaman and Big Bison gave attention to war's havoc, Knife-In-Teeth sought a high point for observation, once he pointed to the horizon. Belikana hurried to his side and saw what seemed a distant stretch of water, a land beyond, yet no single sign of green about it. Said Knife-In-Teeth, "May be eagle him drop Linx stone there. Yes?"

"May be," Belikana was thankful this mission was friendly. Even nearby no one had seen a sign of living things. All hoped they would, for, they had with them sundry tokens of friendship. Of course her basket came first to Belikana's mind,—and then, an appetizing thought of berries, sweetflag, sweetbirch, and what not else, picked up the day before. Slyly, but not unintentionally, he raised the lid, peeked in and slapped it shut! "By the Great

Voice", he shouted to himself. "What reason it? Must no speak nothing. Must wait. Look, See!"

He grew visibly nervous; hoped they'd all soon see enough to tingle their nerves before becoming aware of his own tension. His wish was fulfilled. Many fresh odd footprints, almost cobblestone in shape, marked traffic to and from the crater entrance to the nether world. All grew tense. Knife-In-Teeth sought the lead. In hailing distance he shouted greetings, and back came response that sounded friendly. Taking greater courage, he unburdened himself of war trappings. Belikana took note and whispered, "It is well to so do. But not yet. One can be kindly, and still be strong." Just then a queer unshapely creature ambled forth followed by many others, blinking in the blinding sunlight, expecting to be slaughtered. Belikana touched the back of Knife-In-Teeth, "Now is time throw down teeth of War Wolf." Dramatically Knife-In-Teeth obeyed. Then came the parade of crippled, bewildered, man-like figures with limbs of rock, with clinking grinding mystic joints, all unsteady; one, with an arm cracked off, another, a hand, and a third who seemed doomed forever to look sideways. Such were they. Some made an attempt to smile, but so gradual was that, the face seemed set, even though it might be moving. "May be they have forgotten how and now it hurts. Such things should no be," thought Belikana. Stonemen voices were still harsh like urn-born 'echoes', yet nothing boastful in them.

**B**UT from the Stoneman group, there stepped the very creature that could not turn his head. He peered at them with full right eye as an Egyptian figure. Belikana faced a problem of his own with one eye on the stranger,

the other on the basket. The moment was at hand, he would be Belikana, Shaman, or Belikana fool! His fingers trembled as he cautiously raised the lid of his basket, wormed a free hand in, fished about a moment and with extreme care withdrew the Calumet and tobacco. He heaved a sigh as he placed the basket on the ground and put a blanket over it. The sacred bowl was of pipe-stone, hammer-shaped, its stem handsomely adorned with red, white and blue feathers and a fringe of eagle quills. He proffered the sacred Calumet and a stony hand reached out and took the precious pipe. As was the custom, the hand returned the pipe, so that the ceremonial might proceed with honor-binding solemnity. The Shaman filled the sacred bowl with the 'Great Spirit's' gift to Man. From a fire built by willing hands Belikana drew an ember and when smoke wreathed from the tobacco he tossed off the glowing bit. In tribute to the Great White One, he aimed the stem to the shining heavens,—then down in reverence to Earth Mother,—and to supplicate protection of the gods who ruled air, earth, and water, he moved in a circle with the pipe's stem level. He offered it again. The wry-necked Stoneman drew a few whiffs of smoke, puffed high and to the earth and about himself quite like the original gestures. Big Bison followed. Then those of lesser rank, friends and former foes in alternating turns to thus bind themselves in undying friendship, a solemn pledge, never to be broken. As Big Bison people came from many quarters, variants to the form were to be expected. In deference to all Belikana was the last to smoke, and so impressive was he, even Big Bison stood in awe.

Eager eyes in stony head grew hungrier as food gift tokens were unpacked from many baskets. And when appetite

threatened the dictates of decorum by a rush of the Stonemen leader toward the food, Belikana sought to check the frantic scramble by a hasty burial of the hatchet. Too hurriedly, he raised the basket lid to withdraw the crimson symbol. Just then, he didn't! A flash of fur shot from the basket and crossed the path of him whose head was fixed awry. It nearly upset the leader's balance and in about four hops it made the central entrance to the cave. Many Stonemen wobbled, as cry of "Michabo! Manibozho!" and all the other names that bunny knew, rang out from all directions. As usual there were 'Thomases'. Belikana himself was not certain that the white hitch-hiker was truly Mizzybo. And, being honest, he said, "Belikana say he no know who he is, but will call to him. Will his answer prove him there?" The 'Thomases' nodded, "Yes!" and so the Shaman stepped to the cave's mouth and called "How! Friend! How!" All heard the quick response, "How! Friend! How! Friend!"

"What say now?" "It is *him!*" chorused all. Even Belikana, strange to acoustical effects was convinced.

Now fear itself, turned rabid appetite to nausea. The Stoneman leader had lost all urge for food; and so, the Shaman urged him to composure, by bringing forth the crimson hatchet that it might be buried in closing gesture.

To give the basket to him who could not turn his head, seemed a peerless symbol of forgiveness. Belikana offered it. A stony hand shaking with fear reached for it—mystic medicine of dire nature might be imparted to it through contact with the Great Magician!

Much friendliness had been shown. The supreme surprise was still to come. Said Belikana;—"Our gifts of food, our Calumet of Peace were gladly given but there is another which no man can

give. This is life in flesh. Only Great Magician within cave can give this. Now all who wish this gift, go in!"

This was so fantastic, one Stoneman begged to ask,—“How we know this true?”

“Have you no seen, no heard Great Magician? Have you no heard Great Voice speak, and endured His wrath? Have you forgot great Lynx stone? Belikana has faith in Great Voice! You go in cave with as great faith and you shall walk in shining light of Sun Father!”

Misgivings were at an end. The men clinked their way awkwardly out of the cave. Stone arms waved clumsily. Raucous voices attempted words of gratitude. The sacred rites of the ceremony had been fulfilled.

THAT night when the blackness of the forest settled like a falcon's hood, Belikana slept soundly until the old sensation of long slender grasses touching his hand, aroused him.

“How Shaman” whispered Mizzybo in his usual lisping chatter. “Got any carrots? Pshaw! that's force of rabbit. But restricted circumstances recently compelled me to a prescribed diet.”

Belikana chuckled. “How'd it agree with you?”

“Oh berry well at first, but mighty rocky later—rocks and more rocks. By air I felt 'em, on 'em I landed, and later—O me! On me they plopped! When you left they were all broken up! Went all to pieces!”

“You got a union job?”

“Oh yeah! Well it was no pipe—the hardest one yet—one up and two down until I tapped my last reserve—I raised 'em with a laugh!”

“That's Good Medicine in any language! You made everybody happy?”

“That's impossible. One was very hard to please!”

“Who was that?”

“Oh that cockeyed tombstone. Asked for life in this world—and everlasting.”

“Wow! that's an awful long time!”

“I told him it was a big bite, but he said it was just his size—that he was a rock for punishment! So I took him at his word!”

“Mighty generous Mizzy'. You've always been true blue. Too you've proved that friendship is something deep, sincere, warm, dependable, lasting—no expedient of the moment.”

“Smile old timer. Forget the orchids! Sometime may be you can square it up with carrots! Ta ta! I'll be seeing you!”

Belikana swore by all his gods, someday he would do just that.

By sun up the party resumed their journey, all light of heart excepting him of buckskin beads and feathers. Belikana was terribly depressed, even Mizzybo had noticed it. War Wolf was dead. The Shaman's mission was accomplished. What was left in him for his hope to admire? He shielded his innermost misgivings rose from the rest as best he could. The homeward journey was not the way they came. A little longer route had been chosen. There was an open place where buffalo (more correctly bison) once ranged in great numbers. Many of the party hoped—Belikana wondered—would any be there now. The prairie came in view and the shaman saw reward for a former mystic effort. Here he had arranged mystic bones in a great white circle, taught him by one he yearned to see. A dark brown wave of no less than twenty thousand beasts, rolled slowly toward a gulch far out of sight. A drive was on! An agile hunter masquerading in bison head and hide, was the decoy luring the broad brown mass. The pressure of the herd urged cautiously by many of Big Bison's people

would soon push a handful of beasts over the precipice. Crippled by their fall, speedy spear and speedier arrow would dispatch them without needless suffering. The redmen found no sport in hunting. It was a means of living.

The distance to the village shortened. And as the party entered, smiling faces greeted them at every turn. And the most precious one, his *hope*, truly beamed upon the Shaman.

A bison hunt, called for dance and chant, that hunters might return in safety, might bring much meat, and that the gods might replenish the losses in the kill. Young folks played games. This was a time for merrymaking.

Belikana paid little attention to these things. Chikeesikiss was his interest. To her he told all, even to his last chat with Mizzybo. Gradually he realized there was a reason for his depression. Could it be that all Stonemen would, in flesh, always walk in the light of the Sun Father? Chikeesikiss sought to reassure him.

"What matter? Mizzybo gave them chance. They would not now break faith for so heap big gift. Has Belikana lost his faith?"

"Me have faith in staghorn. Always keep him with you!" Holding up his parfleche he added, "But Belikana have no faith now in Good Medicine he make, even though his heap great charm is more precious than tresses from Moon Mother."

A blush grew upon her face. A babble of excited voices interrupted their talk about things mystic. Strange bronze men, claiming to have been Stonemen were bringing many horses to the outskirts of the village. They wished to see the Chief. They wished to see the Shaman; he would know them.

Surely he did; there was that fellow who had lost a hand and the other

chap with a wry neck. The man who spoke, Belikana did not know:

"Through mystic gift from Great Hare, we men of flesh now walk in light of Sun Father. We bring horses we have taken and many more. We would make big talk with Chief."

Elated, the Shaman welcomed them as friends and led them before Big Bison. The Chief equally exultant agreed to accept no more than the number of horses that had been stolen. And to further the spirit of good will, he ordered a feast to be enjoyed by all.

ABOUT mid-afternoon Belikana again sought out his hope. At day's end the place where the moss-clad giant fell, should be a delightful spot veiled in haze from the pipe of Mizzybo. Near sun down, the eyes of humans might see mischievous pukwudjies of the jossakeeds. Perhaps Chikeesikiss would enjoy the merry sight of tiny fairy folk gliding down a thousand golden rays! Belikana himself had little interest in these impish creatures. It was music in his heart that sought expression. And so, the tryst was made. Belikana made further preparations for the romantic sunset ramble. In wooded spots, late blossoms bloomed in riotous color. With his arms loaded with gorgeous flowers he soon returned and with the bashfulness of a little boy he pressed them toward her. Hugging the mass of poises she kissed their fragrant petals and trudged off by his side. After a few paces some of the blossoms fell. He picked them up and in a few steps the same thing happened again. At last Chikeesikiss reproached herself for clumsy hands and in jolly exasperation, she pushed them into his arms saying, "Belikana take! Me no can carry." The fragrant burden was very bulky in the transfer. Sometimes cupid has a reason. For a few moments the

mass of flowers rested between them—their eyes within each others—their lips close but not close enough to touch. Still they were in sight of the village.

Soon the old log loomed in view. It was a welcome sight. Belikana rested the blossoms at her feet and selected from their number the prettiest with which to ornament her hair. Over the evening air there came a familiar, "Guglum gu-glum!" of the giant frog with the voice of the big drum. So loud was the booming, the sacred waters seemed not far away. Teasingly Chikeesikiss queried.

"Can no take me there some time?"

"May be tomorrow. May be even tonight!"

There was no time for her to make decision. Behind them snapped a twig as if from the prowling of a big cat. They arose and wheeled to face the intruder, but too late! Chikeesikiss staggered clutched at her heart and fell before he could catch her. A shaft, long, slender, ebony-black protruded from her lifeless breast. Half-insane, Belikana withdrew the damnable thing. Its tiny tip—perfect in workmanship—was black obsidian.

Gently he straightened her contorted little body and covered it with flowers. Upon the ground he saw a tiny beaded bag, her own parfleche containing, Good Mystic Medicine that he had made. He, a dolt, an idiot, who fooled her with his own conceit of possessing all high power to do strange things. He grabbed the bag to toss it from him. The sight of it was driving him stark mad. But as he touched it the bag seemed empty. Gently he opened it, to find one charm only—a single lock of coarse coal black hair, none other than his own. With trembling fingers, he opened his own parfleche and found—*five* articles, one of them the bit of staghorn he had given her. In the trans-

fer of the flowers she had transfixed him with her charms for opportunity to assure his safety.

In strange bewilderment he made his way to the village. Big Bison listened stoically to his confused account of the tragedy. The old man asked one question only,—“In what direction did the killer go?” Belikana had not seen him. He did not know, but the shaft was proof enough. Who was the murderer.

Belikana stood as in a trance. Big Bison gave directions, Knife-In-Teeth gave commands. Bronzed men who once were stone, cursed in murderous words their former leader for violating the sacred oath of peace. All these things Belikana heard. Then he raised his arms as if he himself, would take command. He stripped off his shirt and drew forth the flint he long had carried. To the angry crowd he shouted:

“This vengeance is not for you. It is for Belikana alone. Good friends, farewell!”

Revenge chiseled deep furrows between his eyes as he placed the flint between his own hard teeth. He turned and raced for the place of murder. In the twilight he could still see shadowy outlines. Keenly he searched for the monster's position at the time of murder. From there he might track him down. At last he found the spot and when he found it all the avenging killer instincts of his forbears welled in his hand which reached for the blade between his teeth. Before him was a solid rock, strangely shaped crouching like a man and about it were scattered bits of raiment, a bow, and quiver. Two living piercing dents where eyes would be, stared in unending terror. Belikana could not scalp a head of stone but he could stab the living eyes. He raised the blade to strike when queer word-ghosts restrained his arm, “life in this

world, and *everlasting*—"he was a rock for punishment."

Here before him was arrogance, cruelty, perfidy—all things villainous—embalmed in stone, destined to ever view, the place of murder of all hope. To destroy this thing's ability to see would destroy the punishment of sight. Belikana sheathed his knife, and covered his own tormented eyes with both his hands, saying "Vengeance is not for Belikana." He turned from the unholy spot. There was a last wish to be fulfilled. He sought out the whitest birch and with his own hands fashioned the slenderest branches into a rustic litter. For cord with which to lash it, he sought tough vines. Then upon it, he placed the body of his hope. In her hands he placed her parfleche and his own, lastly blanketing the whole with blossoms that she might sleep in beauty. Raising the head of the litter he dragged it into the shadowy vastness of the forest. Eerie moonbeams illumed the path. A tiny owl voiced a mournful, "Ho! ooo!"

**N**EAR midnight he reached the soft green-black bowl, filled with glittering silver. Nearby on a rise of ground was a little tree reaching out broad, open, almost leafless branches in supplication to the stars. Using two fallen saplings as a ramp, he raised to the tree's caressing arms, the precious symbol of his hope. Then looking up he said:

"You, my Chikeesikiss are with me now beside this sacred water which belongs to none but gods." Forlorn and bleeding from the forest brambles, he looked heavenward, thinking, wondering. As if in mourning the Moon Mother veiled her shining face. A flash and trembling rumble echoed from shore to shore. Great tears from heaven mingled with his own.

"O Great Voice," he cried, "If Belikana's mission is fulfilled, send a white flaming arrow to his heart that he may go on with her." There was but the faintest rumble. Again he pleaded.

"O Great Voice, hear me, Belikana can not bear this endless torture! He beg you send white flaming arrow that he may go on with her." Still there was but the faintest rumble. Belikana grew desperate. Again he cried, "What has Belikana done that he should no do, or what has he failed to do? He can not bear this torture." There was no answer. He pondered deeply. Once more he pleaded.

"Oh Great Voice hear me. If Belikana's mission is fulfilled, he beg you send white flaming arrow to his heart that he may go with her. And when Stone demon has so long reflected on his evil ways that he begins to see beauty in shining light of Sun Father, the silvered glory of Moon Mother and feels the loving warmth of Earth Mother and wishes to reflect these blessings from himself to others, then pray send to him Great Magician so that he may live again in flesh."

This time the Shaman's prayer was answered.

**T**HE time, 3:55 A.M.; the place, Peopleston garage; proprietor, Joe Mason; the customer, a Mr. Barton.

"Motor purrs like a kitten. Here's your dough. *Thanks* for helping me out," said Barton as he raced the engine of the car. The *thanks* was an extra five.

"Gosh," gasped Joe, "Thank you!" As he turned to open the garage door he exclaimed, "Can you hear that wheezy jalloppy outside? I bet it's old Doc Bailey's."

It was. The Doctor himself walked in before Joe had the door half opened.

"Mornin' Joe, I'm in a fix. Old man

Harvey had a slump and I've got to get there quick. When I need my bus the worst it ups and lays down."

"Can't do magic Doc, but I got an ideer. Mr. Barton here is headin' up Harvey way. Nice fellow him. You can thumb him for a lift."

Barton was more than willing. And just as they reached the outskirts of Peopleston the car slowed to a stop.

"Dog gone, out of gas," exclaimed Barton. "In my rush Joe and I both forgot about checking my tank. But luck is with us I guess. Don't I see a gas sign on that little store?"

"Sure do, I'll rout out Johnnie Kerr and phone Mrs. Harvey while you're filling up. She'll be scared pink by this time!"

A few minutes later the Doctor returned walking slowly. "Too late," he said, "The old gentleman passed out ten minutes ago. But I'll ride out and pay my respects, if I may."

"Sorry Doctor he had to go, but I'll be glad to have your company."

As they started off again the Doctor remarked, "Mighty bad storm we had last night. Lightnin' hit two or three places in town. Pretty early in the season, but it has been tolerable warm lately."

"Storm surely was sharp. Hope the roads are clear. I've got to cover four hundred miles today. Got mixed in a traffic accident a few months ago that darn near killed me. A fool up in Hoopersville, racing about ninety, turned left without signalling, crowded me into a light post, and I passed out. Got out of the hospital only a couple of weeks ago. Don't know yet who the fool was. But my attorney wrote me he has a line on him and one star witness. But he never mentions names in letters. Has to see me today and that's that."

"Darn these wreckless drivers any-

way! Funny thing for a doctor to be saying. Oh! Look there! Split from top to bottom and branches all over the place!"

George Barton threw on the brakes. "It's worse than that, Barton exclaimed. There's a double-barreled job for you if they are still alive."

A man in a black raincoat lay face to one side, a little in back of another. The man in the raincoat still gripped a dark-red sock filled with sand. His other hand held a rag and tow-rope, the face was partially masked. The figure in front was resting in quite similar position. It was clad in a worn topcoat. One arm embraced a couple of books. Barton started to drag the branches off while the Doctor felt the bodies.

"They're warm anyway," he said. "As I figure it, the shock knocked them both out, but the wallops from the branches kept them quiet. See both of 'em got nasty scalp scratches. And I reckon this bandit fellow never got a chance to 'black-jack' the other fellow, but as close to it as the thunder-bolt let him. Darn peculiar isn't it."

After the Doctor carefully examined both of them, he said, "They are both alive, but I think they better rest as they are for a while. When we can safely move them we better take them up to the "U" before we notify the sheriff. The chap with the books, is probably one of the students." Opening one of the books, he added, "Sure enough, Cyrus Jason, Faith University. Now although we remember all of the facts as to their positions and conditions we found them in, I think someone in authority at the "U" ought to come down here now, for we can't be sure they both will come through. The University is only about a quarter of a mile. You wouldn't mind running up

there and routing out the first party you can. But I wouldn't say anything about this other chap being a bandit. The less fuss the better at this time of the morning. I will stay here and work over the fellows and keep them going."

"Count on me," replied Barton, forgetting his urgent meeting, "I'll be back."

The first light he noticed was in the women's dormitory office. He rang the bell three or four times, received no response, then started tapping on the door. Dot heard the gentle knock. She hadn't slept a wink because of watching Beatrice in her exhaustive sleep. Sticking her head out of the window, Dot stage-whispered, "Say you down there, not so much rumpus! What's up!"

**B**ARTON hastily introduced himself, told what he could and why the Doctor wished some one in authority would come down immediately and see them before moving them up to the University.

"Leave it to me!" replied Dot, she drew her head in and rushed over to Beatrice. She shook her. "Bea dear, wake up!" Beatrice mumbled something and Dot shook her again.

Beatrice replied incoherently, Mizzybo gave chance—heap big gift—Belikana lose faith—"Dot shook her again. "Hey you! Bea, wake up! Quit your crazy chatter." But Beatrice mumbled on.

Growing frantic, Dot rushed to Mrs. Ferguson's room and told her of Mr. Barton's call. She hurried back to her room-mate and found Beatrice jabbering more mystifying bits, as if talking to herself. "—He no like my father Big Bison. He no like Belikana." Hesitating she then faintly mumbled, as she held her hand to ear, "Chikeesikiss hear gu-glum!" and loudly "Can no take me there some time?" Bea's face

twitched. She clutched at her heart. The sharp point of the obsidian arrowhead pricked her breast. Opening her eyes widely she cried, "Where am I?"

"Right here pardner! but you scared me half to death. Talking about a banana, and your father being a big bison and you hearing a gu-glum and some place you wanted to go! Where the—have you been!" Beatrice fully awake, interrupted, "You big dummy! I didn't say banana, I said Belikana, may be I did say Big Bison was my father. That was right."

"Globe trotter, Magic carpet stuff. Now get this you wanderer. Cy, is okey doke. Got a little shock from lightning in the storm last night, but he's alive and they will be bringing him up here in a few minutes. Another fellow was struck at the same time. Do you savvy?"

She did. She arose faster than Mizzybo from the basket. And being fully dressed from the night before, she muttered a psuedo—cussword as she slipped her right foot in to her left shoe, then asked:

"Where is he Dot? Where is he?"

"Calm yourself little one. He's somewhere along the Peopleston road in care of a Dr. Bailey and a Mr. Barton."

"I'm on my way! As Bea rushed out, Dot threw a wrap around her, whispering loudly, "Mrs. Ferguson is sending one down there now!" It was useless to try and stop her.

Professor Bertram's car was passing the dormitory. Beatrice hailed him and begged a ride. As the car started the old gentleman asked, "Is Mr. Jason a special friend of yours?"

"Well—I hope so." She blushed. Her jittery condition was a welcome tonic to the aging Professor.

In two or three minutes he re-



marked, "There they are. The elderly gentleman is Dr. Bailey, the broad shouldered fellow is probably Mr. Barton. They have the stranger pretty well tied up. And there's Mr. Jason. They're still working on him. But don't worry and for goodness sake don't shake yourself to pieces."

"Oh Professor, I'll just die, I know I will if Cy doesn't pull through!" Bea said.

"Bail out kid! May be you can do more than the M.D. for him." Professor Bertram made an impromptu introduction all around, but when he glanced at the bandit he exclaimed, "Oh me! Oh My! If it isn't Hardy Stoneere Jr.! What a mess!

Beatrice successfully suppressed her urge to strangle Hardy before imposing her assistance on the good Doctor. For a time the Doctor wished Miss Melicent was in darkest Africa or the middle of the Gobi desert. But when he saw her frantic flutter, the nervous rubbing of Cy's hands and the occasional kisses she shyly planted on unbandaged portions of his face, he admitted she had something on the ball.

"Gosh all hemlock," he said, "I've been working on that chap for half an hour to keep his heart ticking. Now this kid takes my case away and I wouldn't be surprised if she wouldn't have him talking before long. Don't love beat hell!"

The three men laughed in spite of the serious situation. Although Junior showed little sign of coming to, the old Doctor thought his condition even better than Cyrus'. The men chatted quietly about the 'unfortunate mess' as the Professor had termed it—Cy's sterling character—his financial handicap—Junior's father, chairman of the board—the school's reputation—the necessity, if possible, of keeping the whole matter hushed up.

Beatrice meanwhile, kept up her feverish attention. She threw off her wrap and tossed it over Cyrus.

Dr. Bailey, with professional eye on his patient, noticed Beatrice suddenly hold her ear close to his patient's lips. She grew greatly excited and increased her efforts. Then in desperation, she looked at Mr. Barton, pleading, "Oh Mister, please do something for me. You know the dormitory. Tell my roommate in 206 to bring down the box I received last night. Tell her never mind why. Please don't ask questions. Just hurry. I'm not crazy."

Barton fell victim of feminine appeal. The Professor and the Doctor gasped in unison! "What the . . ."

THE immediate situation put both men on the inactive list. The morning chill grew noticeable. Said the Doctor, "I think they'll both pull through but I don't dare move then yet, and I think it will be more comfortable if we had a little fire.

"That's an idea! I have an old box in the back of my car and we'll have a fire in two jiffies. And—eh—Don't you think it's safe to move Junior over a few feet. A few branches around him might screen him from anyone passing. They'll think we're tourists and will keep on going. *We've got to keep this hushed up.*"

The Doctor agreed and by the time the fire was built Barton returned with Dot carrying the box. Naturally he had told her more of the general situation. Beatrice grabbed the hat box and in less than a jiffy had pressed the muzzle of a very lively rabbit against Cyrus' hand. Then they heard his voice! "How! Friend How! No Mizzybo, I haven't any carrots. What are carrots anyway?"

Beatrice instantly countered with the next riddle saying in a queer little

whisper, Ta ta! I'll be seeing you." With this she planted bunny solidly in the box and turned to Dot, "Hold down the lid, Pal, but for Pete's sake, don't sit on it."

She then renewed her incessant chatter until Cyrus spoke, very plainly, Belikana's last prayer, "Oh! Great Voice, hear me . . ." Even Beatrice gasped at this. She shouted back in his ear, "You are with me Belikana, jossakeed, Shaman! You who received the sign from the Great Voice!"

The onlookers were more puzzled than ever when Cyrus opened his eyes, looked at Beatrice, closed them again as if in collecting his senses, and opened them once more, saying:

"Chikeesikiss, Bea, dear little girl, what was it you said?"

She repeated, and added "Mizzybo is O.K. Now, wake up and give him some carrots." Lifting bunny out of the box again, she tucked him beneath Cyrus' arm. The warmth quieted Mizzybo's shivers, but not the normal quiver of his nose. Cyrus roused, this time. "Say how do you know about Mizzybo?"

"Dreamed it I guess. You said something that sounded familiar to me so I carried on in the same line."

"Why, Bea, I've had the darnedest dream! I didn't know who I was or where I came from. I was a Shaman and a medicine man. And you were a foster daughter of an Indian Chief."

"And—the last thing I remember, Bea replied, was a walk with you and a lot of flowers. We heard the giant frog and then something hit me in the heart and that was all."

"Well that ruined me," he said smiling.

The two talked rapidly comparing details of their dreams. High spots matched remarkably well; so well, that the puzzled group listening in, were

amazed. Dot offered testimony to verify the truth, of the coincidence in dreams. Gradually Cyrus grew more and more aware of the others present and understood he had been shocked by lightning. Nothing more.

As a psychical or psychological case, this was of intense interest to both of the older men. At the very least, there must have been powerful and factual emotional stimuli in back of it all. Experienced in the ways of youthful hearts, they knew they were to tread on tender ground, so they 'walked gingerly' in their inquiry. Beatrice yielded reluctantly but admitted there had been a very sad parting after a not too enjoyable study period in the library on the preceding evening. They had perused numerous volumes on Indian mythology and had crowned the evening with a lovers' quarrel. She had returned to the dormitory. Cyrus had started for town. Willing to assist in the solution of the peculiar case Cyrus carefully answered a question of the doctor: "I recall I was walking along headed for town—pretty much down—and just before I got about this far, there was a terrific crack of lightning. Instantly there came to my mind an Indian superstition I had read in the library,—if an Indian was struck by lightning and recovered from it he became clairvoyant—a prophet, perhaps. That was about all I recall. The rest was this dream."

"THAT was what I was after," exclaimed the Doctor. "Now, folks here is my conclusion: It was *not* the bolt which Mr. Jason remembers that hit this tree. He wouldn't be able to recall that one. So, there must a been an ensuing bolt, a couple of seconds later. This struck the tree and shocked both boys. But the last 'mental picture' which Mr. Jason had, was the

superstition and its association with lightning. It seems possible, everything considered, he might have had the same sort of a dream if that fellow over there had really hit him with the 'black-jack.' We have reason to believe that this was *his* intent, but not a bit of evidence he carried out his plan. The bruise on Mr. Jason's head is not the usual place for a blow to fall when delivered by a person at the rear of the victim. That bruise came from a branch of the tree exploded by the bolt, and that wallop kept Mr. Jason asleep. Presumably the other fellow got a similar dose. Queer, of course, but just one of those things that occasionally happens. The rest of the solution I place in the hands of our learned Professor. As I understand it psychology and psychical phenomena are his meat."

Cyrus made a vain attempt to break in, but was obliged to wait patiently to learn who tried to hit him. Barton was offering no comment but was listening with intense interest. Professor Bertram was conservative in his theory: "Oh! I'm no authority. Usually I'm extremely skeptical of alleged telepathic communications. But in this case, I don't know. The scene was set to perfection,—both parties had concentrated their attentions on the same subject mater. This quarrel badly upset them from the emotional standpoint. Quite apparently the young man gave up hope of the young lady. The lightning naturally evoked the Indian superstition. The young lady went to bed pretty much out of sorts and . . ."

Dot rudely interrupted, "Say Professor, she blame near passed out. I watched her all night. I think she was unconscious."

Professor Bertram smiled, "Well now there you have it. The young lady was thoroughly exhausted and in perfect condition to receive telepathic

communication from a mind which at that time dominated over hers. The fables of myths which wove themselves into the dream are probably not precisely as recorded by authorities. And such fragments quite possibly were selectively associated with real incidents of the last twenty four hours. To illustrate, consider just a single selection;—the dragon dance about the bonfire. Remember Mr. Mally and his flashlights? Now note how the memory of this would quite naturally lead to the selection of the jewel giant water serpent myth. So I could go on and on. It is a strange case worth recording, if the young folks have no objections?"

"What say, Cy?" Bea asked.

"It's O.K. with me if the Madam will accept it in lieu of the theme!"

Bea had never mentioned the quarrel with her. Cy's remark passed everybody but Barton.

"May I ask a question?"

"Go ahead," said the Professor.

"Well, I'm curious to learn what Mr. Jason just referred to?"

Beatrice sprang up and faced Barton. "Please don't press that question!"

Barton paled as if he had seen a ghost.

"For God's sake, girl," he shouted, "Where did you get 'Black Obsidian?' I found that arrowhead years ago!"

In spite of her embarrassment she gave an honest answer at last. "I found it yesterday morning."

Cy was overly eager to verify this. "She *did* find it. The woman who threw it away didn't want it any more."

"Who was *she*?" asked Barton, hopefully.

"Miss Abigail Mardigras, A.B.; Ph.D.; and N-U-T if you ask me," said Cy, very much himself.

"Don't you mean Abigail Marden?"

"Well Mardigras is her monicker at

the U. Isn't it Professor?"

"Quite so. Quite so. This is so upsetting! In fact, at her request I took over her class in Mythological Symbolism, yesterday morning."

The conversation went on with a more increasing tension:

"Suppose you Miss Melicent loan the point to Barton and let him find out if this lady hasn't missed it?"

Barton flushed at the thought.

Cyrus calmed him down.

"Are you or have you been an archaeologist?"

"Surely, prior to the World War, and I found that point not far from Chilli-cothe, Ohio. Although I have never told it before, I found it within the skeleton of a young woman, and I have often wondered if it hadn't penetrated the heart of the girl of long ago. To identify the point, if Miss Melicent will turn the hook that holds the pin, just half way round, the gold back mounting will open. Try it!"

"Jeepers, creepers, a death-head, a skull!" Bea shouted and passed it around.

"Yes, a tiny flaw in the stone. Quite appropriate? Eh?" Well after giving the point away, I lost interest in that work—the war, and all—shell shock—months in the hospital."

**B**EA handed the point to the archaeologist: "It's yours Mr. Barton. If you choose to give it away again, please tell the lady I'm very sorry I lost my temper."

"Gosh! *Thanks!* If Dr. Mardigras is Abigail Marden, I hope we'll both be glad you lost your temper."

Realizing that Barton was probably an authority on matters Indian, Cyrus was curious to know why the eagle in the dream, named him "Belikana."

"Couldn't have called you anything better, said Barton. It's Navaho, BEL-

IH-KAH'NAH, meaning American. You're *that!* Some texts give brief vocabularies. That *stuck* with you!"

Bea hesitantly queried, "Now why, do you suppose, that I told Cy, only he could call me 'Chikeesikiss'?"

Barton frowned thoughtfully, most mysteriously, *vexingly*, then he laughed and said:

"Follow this—SHIH-KEH. Translates as 'young woman,' and SIH-KISS as 'friend,'—in other words 'girl friend!' Oh gosh, how I could go on. Your *real* name Beatrice Melicent means 'happy sweet singer,' and Cyrus Jason—sun healer; those are just 'happenstances' in the meaning of names according to Clarke."

Cyrus was satisfied with being an American and a sun healer but he couldn't understand why he was in on that terrible Lynx stone episode.

Barton sought to explain: "You picked up the myth like the rest of them. And in the dream, you cooked up this *wholly preposterous* 'vest pocket' meteor to stop slaughter. In putting it in use, you were the fall-guy."

Junior had by no means, been neglected. Dr. Bailey had made no effort to rouse him but at this moment, he had cause for alarm:

"Say my patient here is wide awake, staring like a lunatic over his left shoulder. He's trying to speak but can't."

All but Beatrice and Cyrus rushed over to Junior's side. Cyrus insisted on knowing who this other patient was,—that fellow who had planned to hit him. Beatrice told him, and in spite of her protest, he crawled over to Junior. He bent low and whispered in Junior's ear. Instantly Hardy's eyes, welled with tears and he spoke volubly. He said he had heard much, for many minutes, but couldn't speak. It was Cyrus words of forgiveness that unlocked his tongue.

He made open confession of harmful intentions and offered no defense of his actions excepting to say it wasn't all his fault. His parents had raised him to be nothing but a spoiled brat. Now he loathed them. He felt alone in the world but knew not why. He verified Barton's surmise. The Madam's name was Marden. His parents had known her many years. She had had an affair of the heart and because the man had ceased to correspond apparently without cause during the war, she gave him up and changed her name, hoping to forget. Of recent events, Junior admitted his lack of patriotism, his disinterest in R.O.T.C. in which Cyrus had been a leading figure. He had burned with chagrin over the bonfire defeat and had been eager for revenge. A letter from his mother the preceding morning, enclosed a note from his father. It offered him the very opportunity he craved. Stoneere, Senior was up against it from a traffic accident of months preceding. Cyrus was the star witness against him. His non-appearance at the pending trial would be most opportune. So Junior planned the rest. Cyrus verified this. He had seen an accident and had received a letter from an attorney telling him he would be summoned to appear in court for the prosecution, but had no knowledge of who owned the two cars involved. Barton sensed it was his own case and by checking on date and circumstances, found it was.

**J**UNIOR grew increasingly nervous and emphasized that he was ashamed of himself and his parents. He vowed he would have them pay and pay well. And further, he assured Beatrice that her parents would have no cause to fear the future. With so much freely spoken, no one present had the least desire to call the sheriff. More-

over, Barton was in a most forgiving mood, not for the Stoneere's Senior, but because of a very penitent Junior.

To hush up an odd situation, Cyrus suggested a squib for the Peopleston Courier:

"A. Hardy Stoneere, Jr., and Cyrus Jason, very close friends and both of the senior class of Faith University, were badly shocked by a thunderbolt while on their way to town during our recent unprecedented storm. The well-known local physician Doctor Bailey is pleased to advise mutual friends both have completely recovered."

All heartily agreed and Barton offered an additional suggestion:

"Friends, isn't it timely we bury the hatchet in absolute silence about the unpleasant angles of this little episode in our lives and resolve to bind ourselves in undying friendship. I have a new pipe. It's not double stemmed. Neither has it feathers. But I think the Great Spirit will forgive us in the ceremony of the Calumet. Father Sun is showing his shield; the pipe is red and we have an open fire."

"But where's the little red hatchet?" asked Bea.

"How about the little red sock?" said the Phoenix reborn.

"Perfect," said Barton. "The ladies will witness. Their integrity is unquestioned."

And so, the Calumet of Peace was solemnized, briefly, but without omissions. And when the 'red hatchet' was laid to rest in Mother Earth, Junior broke the silence:

"Surely makes me think."

"Makes us all think," said Cy, "There's more truth than poetry in legends. Don't think me facetious when I speak of this 'iron man' I now hold in my hand,—we send this silver medium of exchange promiscuously without a thought of the legend on it. Yet

who will deny its motto 'In God We Trust' is the Good Medicine of our personal welfare—our Nation's life."

"Wasn't I the 'rock for punishment?' Guess I'll join the Marines soon," said Junior, adding "and if the Doctor permits I'll say Cheerio! I have a 'mission to perform.'"

As Junior's car pulled away, Doctor Bailey drew Professor Bertram to one side:

"When that lad said he loathed his folks and felt alone, he had good reason. His name through adoption, is really Stoneere, but he was born a Johnson. An old practitioner does not forget his first few patients. I attended his mother, a fairly well-to-do widow when the Stoneere family first called me in.

"They were apparently foreigners and were employed occasionally at odd jobs for the widow. Her condition was hopeless. Later I heard that Mrs. Johnson willed her all to the Stoneeres for the care of her boy. And I have also heard they had no little trouble in the matter of that will. Do you think that he should know?"

**U**TTERLY upset, the Professor answered, "I must have time to think. This world is so disturbing! And now look! There comes Hanley's sputterer. Hope he isn't bringing more upsetting news!"

As Hanley stopped his motorcycle and handed the Professor a telegram, he said, "Folks at the 'U' told me you were here. This is sad news. So be prepared."

Shaking fingers opened the envelope. After reading the message he silently handed it to the others and then remarked:

"I'll reply later. Thanks Mr. Hanley."

The wire read:

"BEFORE COMA — STOP — A. HARDY STONEERE SENIOR BEGGED I WIRE YOU IMMEDIATELY — STOP — REASONS OBVIOUS — STOP — HE AND WIFE FATALLY INJURED WITHIN LAST HOUR — STOP — REAR END AUTO COLLISION NEAR HERE — STOP — BODIES OF GUNMEN IN FOLLOWING CAR NOT YET IDENTIFIED.

R. E. SMITH, M.D.,  
ETHERTOWN JUNCTION  
HOSPITAL.

Now Bailey could no more delay a word of consolation; nor Dot defy that Sand Man's domination; nor Bertram well avoid a friendly obligation; nor Barton well decline his breakfast invitation. Thus logically *four* from *six* left two.

Said Bea to Cy, "That accident was very queer?"

"Those words are from my mouth,— I hope. It remains to be proven that it was any racketeer affair. Remember the Navaho rug and how the Sun can bless it every morning; and too, how seldom, they say, the old boy ever missed an evening meeting of the Board?"

"Sure do! It's funny, Cy, how they leave no rug unturned to promote a 'cause.' Gosh I hope there isn't going to be another World War!"

"Why worry, 'Chick,'" said Cy. "I wonder how Drum Pond looks about now?"

"Can you no take me there sometime?"

Cy said no word. Instead he drew Bea close and kissed her for the first time. Then, lifting Mizzybo by his long pink ears, he placed a resounding smack between his very white whiskers and said, "I've not forgotten the carrots, brother!"

THE END