

ter of 16—was away at school. This office, as he explained to his friends, was really where he lived. If he wished to lavish money on it—well, he had the money to lavish.

The window shades were down now. But in day time they commanded a wide view of far, cluttered roofs under a haze of smoke that thickened until the view was lost in it.

A big view, like that from the high mountain, whence Satan exhibited the kingdoms of the earth.

For this particular visit the office had been supplied with a white screen on a perpendicular easel which now stood at the further end. From his "telescope" Krom extracted a sort of magic lantern, a folding tripod, some photographic plates. He and Steinman placed the magic lantern, or projecting machine, on a tripod and adjusted the screen. Facing back from the screen, Krom put a chair in front of the tripod, inviting Harwood to occupy it. A brilliant funnel of light shot out from the magic lantern, striking the screen. Krom turned off the other lights and sat beside Harwood while Steinman manipulated the machine.

Three still pictures were thrown upon the screen. The first two were photographs taken in a park, showing fresh and brilliant natural colors. Harwood had seen still photographs in natural colors before, however. It was the third picture that interested him most.

In his father's house, as in nearly all other self-respecting American homes of that period there had been a stereoscope with "views" of Niagara Falls, the Grand Canyon, the capitol at Washington, and other famous scenes. The contrivance consisted of two square lenses under a leather hood which one held to one's eyes. A pasteboard card, containing two duplicate photographs of the view, was put in a movable clip in front of the lenses. When one looked at the photographs with the naked eye they were flat, like any photograph, with perspective, but without depth. Seen through the stereoscope, however, the pictures had depth and roundness.

He was vaguely aware of the explanation. Normal people have two eyes, so that within a certain limited field of vision they behold two sides of an object in relief, like a tree or a man. A photograph has only one eye and gives a flat image. For stereoscope views two photographs are taken—a right-eyed one and a left-eyed one, so to speak. When the duplicates blend, in proper focus under the lenses, one gets the effect of depth and roundness—as though one could walk away back into the picture and fairly look around the trees.

This third picture had that effect. It needed no argument to convince Harwood that if those two things could be combined in motion picture photography—the fresh, vivid natural colors and the stereoscopic effect of depth and roundness, one would have an invention with which one could sweep the board. In arranging for this meeting, Krom had said that he and Steinman had such an invention at the tips of their fingers. If that were true, it meant millions.

The little show being over, the three men sat down to talk, and then for the first time Harwood really took cognizance of the third one of the party—the dry wisp of a man with mangel, sparsely bearded face and noble brow, named Steinman. His manner reminded Harwood amusingly of a nervous, furtive little animal, at once eager and timid. He hooked his heels on the rung of the chair, put his hands on his small, up-thrust knees, listening to Krom's slow utterance with a kind of quivering intensity, now and then breaking in himself, speaking with a thick and guttural German accent; and, if he tried to tell of the invention, immediately running off into a technical jargon that was all Greek to the lawyer, so that Krom had to take the talk out of his mouth again, saying, with a good-natured drawl:

"Fraid Mr. Harwood can't understand that, professor." And with a smile to Harwood, "Hard for me to follow it myself unless it's written down and I can take my time. The nub of it is that we've got the invention. We can give you motion pictures in natural colors and in relief—like the stereoscope. We know we've got the principles right. Working out the apparatus will take time—might even take five, six weeks. The way I look at it, it'll cost you a couple of thousand dollars at the outside. All the professor and I are asking is grub and a place to work in. Then there'll be some materials and tools. As you might say, you'll grub-stake us."

Two thousand dollars was a trivial matter to Harwood. His mind was running on the immense possibilities of such an invention as these men promised. Already he knew a great deal about the fiscal side of the motion picture industry—to his cost so far.

"Of course, Prof. Steinman didn't have any money," Krom was explaining, presently, looking soberly at the lawyer, but one eye, with the

cast in it seemed dead, so it was oddly like being looked at by two men out of the same face. "Curlin knew about him through this article in the scientific magazine that I've told you about and sent for him. The professor didn't know anything about business, either."

He turned good-naturedly to Steinman as he said that, then back to Harwood, and the sober, rather drawing utterance continued:

"Curlin thought he had this color photography for motion pictures by the tail—some notions of his own. But he said he didn't have time to work 'em out. So he hired Prof. Steinman." The speaker gave a half titter, half chuckle. "Thirty dollars a week! Curlin don't believe in wasting money. Curlin's idea wasn't really any good, you know. The professor and I had to work out ideas of our own."

Steinman broke in eagerly. "Curlin's ideas! My goodness, Mr. Harwood, he never get anywhere with those ideas—just run round in a circle like dog bit its own tail. See now!" Gesticulating, he raced off in to his technical jargon again until Krom stopped him with:

"That's too deep for us, professor."

The inventor cocked his head to one side and announced whimsically, "It's too deep for anybody! Those ideas of Gurlin's reach from top of the ocean to the bottom and never get anywhere! He insist, you see, it's in the camera! It's in the lens! He mage great big camera—so big!" He stretched his small arms to indicate. "Tage about five, six, seven pictures, one on top the other to get his colors. It can't be done!"

"No," Krom interposed, good-naturedly. "It couldn't be done. As I said, the professor and I had to work out our own idea—practically. But now Curlin ought claim the invention outright—and give us a week's pay and the boot. Seems to me that ain't fair." He appeared to be submitting the point to the lawyer candidly.

He had mentioned a contract before, in their first conversation on this subject, Harwood now asked, "Have you a copy of that contract?"

"I've got the contract itself," said Krom. "There never was a copy. He didn't even give the professor a copy—just kept the original himself. You can read it." He took a folded document from his inner pocket and handed it to the lawyer.

A question naturally occurred to Harwood—to wit: how had Krom gotten hold of this contract except by stealing it? But he did not choose to ask the question that was Curlin's affair. He read the contract.

It was skillfully drawn, but part of its contents was in technical terms which he could not understand. The gist of it was that Curlin had evolved the principles for making motion pictures in natural colors and with a stereoscopic effect of depth and roundness. Steinman was to work out the details under Curlin's supervision at a salary of \$30 a week. The invention when completed was to belong absolutely to Curlin.

Perhaps, as a matter of strict legal interpretation, the contract was binding. Harwood couldn't say positively about that without knowing more about the technical side of photography. At least the contract would afford a fine basis for a lawsuit over the ownership of the invention.

"You see what it is," Krom observed. "Rotten. I call it. The professor here has no money and no business experience. Curlin proposes to buy him body and soul—and brains—for \$30 a week; and hog the invention—when it's really the professor's invention and mine. Nothing fair about that, I say—or decent." He submitted that to Harwood with an air of candid reasonableness.

"No doubt about its being rotten enough," Harwood replied.

"Sure!" said Krom, and reached for the contract. "That's what I told the professor. It's just daylight robbery. Nobody's bound by a slave driver bargain like that."

The contract was in his hands then. Very coolly, as though the case had been fully argued and decided, he tore it into bits and dropped the bits into the waste basket. He then smiled soberly at Harwood and remarked, "And that's that, as they say."

The lawyer, in fact, was somewhat shocked. Simply tearing up a legal contract—which had probably been stolen in the first place—was a crude method of disposing of it. But after all that was Curlin's affair, not his.

In the course of the shutter litigation he had formed his own opinion of the irascible, pig-headed, bitter old camera maker; and he knew of some stinging comments which Curlin had passed upon him. The idea of the old curmudgeon having the tables turned upon himself, even in this crude fashion, secretly amused him.

Krom drew a big hand down a

side of his bearded face and observed, with deliberate gravity: "We don't propose to have Curlin hog this invention—give us a week's wages and the boot; but when we get it done, if there's anything owing to him, we'll pay it." That had the effect of putting the affair on a most honorable basis.

Steinman also nodded quickly and broke in: "Yess! So I say to Adolph. If anything is due, we will pay. . . . Me? What I want, Mr. Harwood, is chance to work out this invention—some grub, some place to work in peace. I haf this idea for motion picture in colors now 13 years—long before I know Gurlin. I worg what I can; but, my goodness, a man must haf grub, he must haf tools, he must haf shob to worg in, he must have some materials—in shord, he must haf liddle bit of money, yess? Me? I don't haf any liddle bit of money. I worg odds and ends times, when I can. So much disadvantage, you see. . . . I haf this idea of picture in relief—stereoscope—seven, eight years now. I haf plenty ideas, but, my goodness, whad can a man do with such ideas unless he got liddle bit of money? So I go with Gurlin." He pawed his beard.

"But I don't get peace then. He has all time running in. 'Why you do this? Why you don't do that?'—all the while sticking to his own foolish ideas—buzz, buzz. It keep a man distracted with a dog running in to bark at him all time like that. I haf this done year ago if I had peace and quiet to worg in. So I say, gif me peace and quiet to worg in, Mr. Harwood. If anything is due Gurlin we pay, yess?"

"We're just asking you to grub-stake us now," Krom reminded him.

It pleased Harwood to take the attitude of a generous patron to these hard used inventors. "Suppose I allow you \$50 a week apiece for living expenses while you're working it out?" he suggested, smiling.

"Fine!" said Krom, promptly.

"Very generous," Steinman concurred.

They talked then of what should be done with the invention. Harwood suggested that the best way would be to charge a royalty for the use of it—say 5 cents for each foot of film, or 10 cents. They'd have to study that over and see what the traffic would bear. Both Krom and Steinman concurred.

Pleasant, handsome, in his luxurious office, it still pleased Harwood to be the generous patron. But there were considerations of a strictly business sort.

"You know how these things often go," he remarked to Krom, amiably. "Usually the inventor has no capital or business experience or business connections. It's a toss-up whether somebody'll not get his invention for a song. I'm already interested in the motion picture industry. I can take care of all the legal details properly. What's more important, I'm in a position to market this thing to the best advantage—see that nobody runs off with it. I think I can get a good deal more out of it than you could get alone. My idea would be two-thirds of the royalties to you and one-third to me—for promoting it and looking after the legal part and advancing the capital."

"That sounds perfectly reasonable to me," said Krom.

"Yess!" said Steinman.

"I'll draw a contract," Harwood continued. "Meanwhile you can go to work as soon as you please." He smiled genially. "Your salaries will start tomorrow."

Krom stroked his bearded face again, considering gravely, and replied: "About going to work—we'll need a place to work in. You see, Curlin is laid up now, but he sends word he's coming back to his office next week. He'll be sore. We've taken some of our stuff out of his shop—and that contract. Didn't seem any other way to do, unless we was going to lay down and let him rob us blind. Far's I'm concerned, I'd tell him to og to the devil. But the professor here is nervous. All he wants, as he told you, is a place where he can work in peace and quiet. He's nervous about Curlin."

Steinman gave one of his quick little nods and remarked, "He knock my head off if he finds me. A man can't do such work like this when he's got to be thinking all the while about his head getting knocked off."

An idea occurred to Harwood: "I've got a room up here on the roof that you can work in. I built it especially for a place to get away to when I wanted to concentrate—hermit's cave. You can work there. I'll show it to you."

To enter his handsome private office one passed through an anti-room, or cabinet, a dozen feet square—handsome, also ceiled with expensive wood. Leading the way and turning on electric lights as he went, Harwood opened a door in the west wall of the anti-room or cabinet. The door gave to a small, bare cement floored hall in which a flight of narrow iron stairs arose to the roof. Another door in this stairway hall opened to the public corridor outside the law offices, but

that door was locked now. The iron stairs had been put there when the building was erected for the use of workmen or janitors who might have business on the roof. Originally they ended above, in a little hutch from which one stepped out on the roof.

Harwood had been up there one day and suddenly found himself charmed with the idea of building a little cabin—a retreat—up there on the roof, to which he could retire when he wished to escape the incessant stream of callers and telephone summonses. He had arranged it with the owners of the building. So now the original hutch at the head of the stairs gave to a short passage which led into his retreat, and it had amused him to have the retreat built in resemblance to a ship's cabin, with round windows five feet above the floor. The room measured 15 feet by 25—furnished also in resemblance to a ship's cabin. The visitors looked around it with some astonishment.

"Make a very good workshop, I should say," Harwood commented. "You're welcome to use it as much as you like."

In fact, the sudden notion of this retreat had quite charmed him, and with restless energy he had set about getting it constructed, at once going to the owner of the building for permission, getting an architect to draw the plans, telling the builder it must be taken in hand immediately. For a little while shutting himself up here, alone on the top of the world, delighted him. But the novelty soon wore threadbare—as a child with many toys soon loses interest in the newest. In the last 12 months he had spent nearly 12 hours on the roof. But now that he had visitors who were evidently impressed, he wished to show the place off.

Janitors and workmen had other means of gaining access to the roof. Nevertheless, a door had been cut in the west wall of the cabin. Harwood opened it and led them out to a vast, strange view. In the foreground buildings could be distinguished; elsewhere only myriad lights and dim hints of structural shapes—as though the sky had fallen down and they were looking at the stranded stars and broken clouds from a great elevation. A wind blew from the west, and that, too, seemed interstellar, unearthly.

The walls of the building rose in a parapet four feet above the roof. Against the west wall, not far from the door to the cabin, stood a pair of wooden steps. Krom climbed them and looked sheer down the precipitous wall. "Look at this, professor," he invited; "step up here."

Little Steinman climbed the steps, bent over and looked down. Eighteen stories lay beneath them, but darkness exaggerated the effect of height; the twinkling lights far below might have been as deep down as hell.

A panic seized the small inventor. He had the actual sensation of hurtling immeasurably downward through that space. In a sudden collapse, his knees knocked together. The very marrow of his bones seemed to have a prevision that it was his fate to fall there. Starting back from the wall, he stumbled off the steps, picked himself up, and ran to the cabin door. In the light that flooded through it both Harwood and Krom saw that he was trembling. Krom laughed. Inside, the cabin Steinman took off his hat and wiped his noble brow with shaky fingers.

"My goodness!" he gasped. "If I worg up here I geep that door locked, I bed you!" Even Harwood laughed good-naturedly.

A few minutes later Krom took a final survey of the room and announced to the lawyer, "It'll be a fine place for us." That cast in his left eye oddly divided his expression, yet Harwood was aware that the man looked at him with admiration—as at a wizard who, with a wave of a wand, could produce snug cabins high in the air.

And at that moment Harwood had some such feeling about himself—a penetrating and exultant faith in his star. If he said "Flat!" there would be a cabin in the air. He felt himself armed and buckled, a familiar of Fortune. For this affair of the photographic invention had fallen in pat, just when it was needed.

He was the son of a country clergyman who had finally resigned from the ministry and become elected to congress. After finishing law school an introduction to Josiah Cutter of Cutter, Ellis & Martindale had opened a wide door of opportunity. He had married Cutter's daughter, Josephine, who at her father's death inherited a fortune which the newspapers generously estimated at \$2,000,000. At his wife's death her will gave him one-third outright, and two-thirds as trustee for their only child, Mathilde. The fortune then actually footed up a million and a quarter, of which three hundred thousand was represented by the house on

Lakeshore Drive and the country place at Oconomowoc.

There had been some poor luck. Harwood had a genteel and conservative attitude toward gambling in stocks which his clerical father would have approved. But in order to secure a greater income he sold some high class low interest bonds and invested in bonds and several new western irrigation projects. His friend, Sam Holden thought highly of the projects. Finally there was a loss of \$140,000. A burned child dreads fire, and for two years Harwood let the securities in the strong box alone.

The farm implement consolidation, however—threshing machines and tractors being the chief products—was one of which half a dozen experienced and able men of his acquaintance thought highly of. The preferred stock would pay a steady 7 per cent, while the common stock—50 shares of common, as a bonus, with every 100 shares of preferred—ought easily to pay 8 or 10 per cent. His firm handled some of the legal details; even canny Tom Ellis, senior member of the firm, went into it. What better guide could a man have? But the merger went into bankruptcy, Harwood's loss was a hundred and twenty-five thousand.

Those two items made a hole in the estate which must be repaired. In the boom year of 1919 anything and everything, it seemed, was bound to succeed. The inebriate air of that time naturally affected a man as sanguine as Harwood. A concern whose legal business was done by Ellis, Martindale, Harwood & Smith owned, or leased, some 30 successful motion picture theaters in Chicago and nearby towns. That business was like the mine—simply coining money with the regularity of a machine. The concern formed a consolidation with three others of like nature. In order to control their raw material, so to speak, the consolidation bought the Hilde Photoplay company, which produced motion pictures. Having control of the raw materials, an even bigger contact with the public was desirable, so many other motion picture theaters were bought or leased—at vastly inflated boom prices.

The boom collapsed, and Silver Crown Amusements, Inc., mostly collapsed with it. The stock at present was occasionally traded in on the curb at five cents to the dollar. Harwood had \$600,000 invested in it. As affairs stood, his share of the estate was quite gone, and his daughter's share—for which he was accountable as trustee—was more than half gone.

The situation might have been desperate. But when Letitia Belknap—widow of Arthur Belknap, landlord and real estate operator—returned from the seashore and Lenox in the coming fall her engagement to Nathaniel Harwood was to be announced. Her fortune was not less than \$10,000,000 in real money. Harwood still believed in his star.

That, roughly was the juncture of affairs when his motion picture invention fell in pat. Harwood had not the slightest idea of treating the inventors otherwise than most honorably and generously. They should have two-thirds of the royalties. But his mind was already running eagerly to the formation of a company which would control the company. With such a lever in his hand Silver Crown Amusements, Inc., would quickly ascend the precipice down which it had fallen. If these two odd, shabby chaps could give him a patent on motion pictures in vivid natural colors and in relief—well, he'd look out for the rest.

Just two odd, shabby chaps and three still photographs—that was all he had so far. But he felt in his bones that they were going to give him what they promised. At least he could well afford to risk a couple of thousand dollars on the venture.

In the lightest, most casual way, he several times thought of pig-headed, miserly, ridiculous old Simon Curlin, the camera maker—whose contract, probably, had been stolen and whose rights may have been slighted in other respects. But he thought of Curlin only with a smile of amusement. The pound-of-flesh old curmudgeon might look out for himself.

Krom and Steinman took possession of the roof room, coming and going through the ante-room, or cabinet, in front of Harwood's office. But a difficulty at once developed—as Krom good-naturedly explained. The queer, shild old "professor" was nervous all the time, obsessed by a fool idea that Curlin was going to pop through the door and throw him off the roof. He wanted to get out of town somewhere; and Krom really thought that would be much better, for then the old man could keep his mind on the work in hand.

Harwood considered that a moment good-naturedly and had a solution:

"All right," he said. "I'll take him up to Slow River—nice quiet country town. I lived there for several years when I was a boy. I

(Continued on Page Seven.)