

him, Bullitt," he commanded. "We'll take him down an' tie him in his bunk—an' we'll leave 'im there until we're good an' ready fr' him. See?"

O'Keefe did not resist. They took him down. The mate produced some heavy rope and the captain tied him with his own hands. Then they left him. It was about dusk and the moon was due in a couple of hours. The captain and the mate then retired to the captain's room for supper. Each ate and drank with a keen anticipatory relish of the coming affair.

Now, for the last few days both the mate and the captain had been wining and dining to an extraordinary extent in honor of their guest, whom they had supposed to be Constitutional Smith. And, though intoxicants invariably arouse the captain's pugilistic instincts and put into him the strength and boldness of two men, they dulled his caution with reference to other things.

In his present condition he could fight almost any man to a finish, provided there was a man to fight. But he ought not to have attempted to tie a rope. He had undertaken too neat a task when he had tried to bind O'Keefe.

O'Keefe lay in his bunk and submitted without a murmur to the brooding; he had dealt with drinking men before, and he was counting on a slip somewhere—he knew not where. But he soon found out. He found that Jenks had been too overconfident. Jenks had bound him, but he had not bound him well enough. And he had not left a man on guard.

While the captain and mate were feasting up above, O'Keefe was struggling silently in his bunk below. The rope was a new and untried rope, and by dint of much wriggling he succeeded in starting one of the knots in it. Finally he was completely successful. The rest was comparatively easy work.

Finally Billington O'Keefe crept from his bunk and leaped silently upon the floor, a free man, so far as the rope was concerned. He climbed stealthily up the ladder and reached the floor above. There he found a small piece of lumber and with this in his hand, and his heart in his mouth, he crept aft. He passed the captain's stateroom and heard the hoarse shouts of laughter that proclaimed that the captain was just getting into condition. Still traveling toward the stern, he reached the deck. The dusk had deepened into darkness. Off on the horizon the moon was just beginning to make itself visible.

Forward, here and there, he could distinguish the figures of one or two of the crew. But aft, fortunately for himself, he was alone. This was highly necessary to his plan. Billington O'Keefe, from one standpoint, was going to do a very foolish thing. From his own standpoint he was doing the only thing that there was left to do. He did not doubt for one instant that behind him was a man who, in his drunken frenzy, would stop at nothing short of murder. And he did not relish standing up to be made the victim of another ferocious onslaught. He was determined to take his chances with old father Neptune. He had gathered on his way one or two hard, moldy crusts of bread and he had saved up a small store of provisions shortly after he had come aboard. He had done this with the idea of ultimate escape.

He reached the extreme stern. Out behind, over the water, there hung a fair sized dingy. A pair of oars lay in it. Billington O'Keefe seized the rope that held it in the davits and noiselessly released it, hand over hand. The boat gently lowered itself to the surface of the ocean and Billington O'Keefe leaped over the taffrail and followed suit. He was no sailor, but necessity, like experience, is a first-class teacher.

There was a strong breeze and the "Sarah Margaret" was scudding along under full sail.

Billington O'Keefe reached his row boat, cast off the blocks, seized the oars and adjusted them in the oar locks. Then, with a few strokes, he swung his boat about. Then, half raising himself in his seat, he turned and shook his fist vindictively in the direction of the "Sarah Margaret." It was goodbye forever, so he hoped. He grasped his oars and rowed for dear life. He didn't know where or how to go. But he knew one thing. The "Sarah Margaret" was scudding away in one direction and he was rowing steadily but surely in the other.

Below, the captain had sent Bullitt on deck to take a squint at the moon. Bullitt squinted. He saw more than one; he saw a multitude of moons—all of them was full, just as he was himself. He went back and reported.

The captain poured out two more large drinks. He drained one himself and passed the other over to Bullitt.

"Now," roared Captain Jenks of the "Sarah Margaret," "I feel as fit as a fiddle. Let's go and get that son of a seacock, and I'll knock him into the middle of next week in two shakes of a lamb's tail. By George, I will."

They went below to find Billington O'Keefe, impostor. Naturally they did not find him. The bird had flown. The captain swore and yelled with disappointment. He and Bullitt searched the ship without success. Then they set the crew to work, but without success.

Finally, one of the crew reported that the boat was missing from the davits aft.

Then the captain roared again. He was beside himself.

"Get a telescope!" he yelled to Bullitt. Together they scanned the moonlit surface of the sea. But upon it there was no small boat, no Billington O'Keefe.

Captain Holdworthy Jenkins, baffled, started in and licked every common seaman in the crew. And he started in with the man who had reported that the little boat was missing. Like many other people, Captain Jenks had little use for the bearer of bad news.

CHAPTER VIII.
The Principality of Swat.

The island of Swat is one of the many unnoticed bits of land in the Pacific ocean, and many vessels have anchored there, but for a short period of time, only to weigh anchor and proceed.

An article on the island of Swat may be found in at least one of the late encyclopedias, but the searcher after knowledge must be careful to distinguish this island of Swat from the other principality of Swat, which is located in the north-western part of India. And, though both of these principalities bear the same name, it is doubtful whether in any sense they have ever had any connection, the one with the other. It is probable that the derivation of the name in the one instance was different from the derivation of the name in the other. It is, of course, possible that some of the inhabitants of the island might have drifted in ages past into India, or vice versa. However, the two countries are separated in this age not only by distance, but by customs and habits and other characteristics as well.

The inhabitants of Swat were well enough in their way, and the majority of them weighed enough, too; but they were 2,000 odd years behind the times. In appearance they seemed to be a cross between the African and the Mongol. Their men were handsome and their women were beautiful; but they were almost hopelessly stupid.

These people of Swat were not a warlike race, as savage races go, but they had ideas of their own and they were sticklers for those ideas.

But, as has been said, they were stupid. This is true of other races. The traveler in Cairo or Alexandria may sit upon the veranda of a modern hotel, equipped with every modern convenience and luxury and invention, in the midst of people who are the foremost representatives of the twentieth century, and he may look over the railing and out upon the street and see myriads of men and women who dress and act and talk as did their ancestors thousands of years ago. The natives apparently have not moved forward; civilization springs up about them, but they remain the same.

Thus it was with the inhabitants of Swat. Each of them was the same old two-and-sixpence that he would have been centuries ago. Each lived in the same old way, plowed in the same old way, dug houses in the same old way, lit fires in the same old way—and they were all happy.

This sluggishness was due in great part to the fact that the inhabitants of Swat constituted a very close corporation. They were separated by many miles from any other island, and they were jealous of their own right to exclusiveness. They did not visit, and they did not invite. It was due further to the fact that they did not encourage the encroachments of the whites. At some period in their history the white men had maltreated and abused them, and they were through with white men for good and all—at least that is what they hoped. Vessels stopped there, it is true. Sometimes the white men went ashore and attempted to make a trade or two, but they were received with scant courtesy, although not with active hostility. But the white men cared but little for the place. For it was as uneventful and unproductive a place as might well be imagined. Upon the island of Swat there was positively "nothin' doin'" at any season of the year. Other islands and other countries invariably have some commodity or commodities desirable or useful in some way to the inhabitants of civilized countries, but not so the island of Swat. For Swat was sui generis—one of its own kind.

From one standpoint the island of Swat would have been a study for those who are interested in what are known as "community interest" governments. For among themselves the people lived a peaceable life; strife was known only at the end of many years; every man divided with his neighbor, and save for the Akoond and his immediate retinue—which was, however, small—no man lived better than the other. There was nothing to fight for. There was little or no fighting over the women, for the women considerably outnumbered the men, and each man had his quota of wives. And even if one man happened to fancy the wife of another and win her, the latter seldom made a fuss. A wife more or less, what did it matter? And so they lived their inoffensive lives in the same manner and with the same aids and utensils and devices as did their forefathers in the year one.

And the akoond? Well, after the manner of all nations, ancient and modern, the akoond was chosen from among the rest by reason of just one quality which he

alone enjoyed. The akoond invariably was the strongest man, and because of that he was the czar, the sultan, the absolute ruler. His word was law. Is it not so everywhere? Are not the leaders chosen in monarchy or democracy for their strength and that alone? It may be financial strength, intelligent strength or the strength and ability to influence men, but it is always for strength that men are selected, from the ward leader up to the president of the United States. And when all is said and done the selection and election of rulers is always a lottery, and it may be just as well to choose leaders for their physical strength as for ability in any other direction.

At any rate, just so long as the akoond could hold his own he maintained his supremacy; but the office, like the prize ring championship, was always open to new comers. The husky youngsters of Swat were told time and again by their parents that some day, who knows, they might be future akoonds of Swat. And the few of the youth who had ambition immediately went into training from the day almost that they were able to walk. But the akoond himself, a huge black man, with rather a sinister countenance—the others as a rule were brown and pleasant of face—generally was able to hold his own, for there were many claimants of the crown, and the onslaughts of these claimants constantly kept him in very fit condition. At one time he came very nearly going under, for, by virtue of a happy thought of one of the young men, a syndicate of claimants was formed, which agreed not to disturb the akoond for at least a year or two, during which time it was quite evident he would become somewhat fat and unwieldy. At the appointed time the members of the syndicate, by a process of elimination and preliminary trials, chose their best man, and he met the akoond. But the akoond was a man of too large experience and he knew too many tricks, and the great heir presumptive syndicate of Swat, like many another trust, failed signally.

It has been said that the inhabitants of Swat had no love for the white man. This is literally true. But every rule is known by its exceptions. The inhabitants were deeply religious and superstitious, as was natural and to be supposed. They believed in divinities and signs. In fact, it was because their ancestors had believed white men to be divinities, and because the divinities had taken them in in a dastardly way, that they tabooed all white men as a class.

One day, however, a few of the natives were sitting in a group upon the beach. They were there not without a purpose. Far far out, a mere speck upon the expanse of ocean, was an infinitesimal object slowly moving in upon them.

From a mere atom upon the face of the water this thing became an aggregation of atoms. When it came into full view it turned out to be a man—a white man, bared to the waist, and rowing steadily but feebly in a small dory. From time to time he turned and looked toward the shore. Then he turned and rowed again. The group of natives finally rose to its feet and stood in expectant attitudes upon the shore at the very water's edge. The white man was very near. Suddenly he summoned all his strength, pulled a mighty stroke upon his oars, and as the boat, under its influence, shot ahead, he dropped back into it, completely fagged out. He had fainted from exhaustion.

The black men gathered round about him and pulled him from his boat, which had been battered by the waves, and laid him flat upon the shore. They gazed upon him for an instant. Then a wild hubbub rose among them. For one man, an old one, was pointing with long, lean finger to the middle of the white man's bared breast.

The other yelled with excitement. Then one man ran to a low shed some distance away and fetched a gourd. Its contents he hurriedly poured down the white man's throat.

The white man coughed and spluttered and revived. Then two or three of the group, still pointing excitedly to the white man's chest, lifted him and carried him through the constantly increasing crowd far up into the grove of trees. There they set up a series of howls and brought forth first, another retinue of men, and last, but not least, a black man of gigantic proportions.

The excitement heightened. The black man stepped into the center of the group. Once more they pointed to the white man's breast. The black man took one look and then, without hesitation, he made a low obeisance to the white man, and especially to the white man's breast.

There was nothing which would have been ordinarily remarkable about the white man's breast except that upon it, tattooed in a variety of colors, was the figure of a snake, coiled and just ready to strike. But the black man, grasping the white man's hand in his own and touching him upon the breast, suddenly raised his head and looked into the air.

In front of the group stood a grotesque building of a crude manufacture and from the center of the building a long, strong pole rarsu itself toward the sky. And upon

the top of this pole there was perched something that at first the white man could not make out. Finally, however, he discovered what it was. It was nothing more or less than a crude image of a serpent. This serpent was coiled and its head was poised just ready to strike. It was the counterfeit presentment of the tattooed figure on the breast of the white man. Then the white man understood. The snake was the god, the guiding spirit of the men about him. And he, the white man, had upon his breast none other than the holy mark. He was a man among men, this white man. He understood that at once. The black man, of course, was the Akoond of Swat. The white man was none other than Billington O'Keefe. (To be continued.)

An Easily Won Race

Dr. James M. Anders, of Philadelphia, who believes that violent athletic exercises have a harmful effect on the arteries of the young, said the other day:

"I should like to see all the more violent forms of athletics reduced to the moderation that a fat friend of mine advocates.

"My friend is six feet tall, and he weighs 250 pounds. One day a slim youth said to him:

"You, I fancy, can't do much in the way of running."

"Oh, I don't know," my friend replied. "Would you like to race me for a dinner?"

"Indeed I would," said the other, and he gave a loud, mocking laugh.

"Well," said my friend, "I carry about one hundred and fifty pounds more weight than you, and that, in a hundred yard dash, ought to entitle me to five yards handicap."

"I'll give you five yards handicap," said the slim youth.

"And will you let me choose my ground?"

"Gladly."

"The two, with a half dozen witnesses, started forth at once for the race. My friend led the crowd onward till he came to a very long and narrow alley. He walked into it for a distance of five yards. Then he halted. He blocked the alley up completely; between the tall brick walls there was just room for his burly shoulders, and no more.

"Take your place five yards behind me," he said to his opponent, "and when I count three start. But you can take your time. I am going to take mine."—New York Tribune.

Lessening Temptation

"Well, Caesar," said Colonel Kaintuck, "I hear you've joined the church?"

"Yes, sah," the old darkey replied. "I sho' has."

"That means you've reformed, of course."

"Oh, yes, sah, co'se it do."

"Well, now let's see how you'd stand temptation. Let's suppose a case. Suppose you were coming across my property, Caesar."

"Yes, sah."

"And you saw some object that belonged to me. Suppose you saw a great, big, fat, juicy watermelon. You wouldn't steal it, would you?"

Caesar shifted uneasily from one foot to the other.

"Look yere, Kernel," he blurted finally, "kyant you make dat obyek somepin else besides er watermillyn, sah?"—Pittsburg Post.



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